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Exploring the effects of focused
communication tasks on the acquisition of
complex grammar structures by advanced
learners of English

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OŚWIADCZENIE

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Introduction

The study of the role of grammar instruction has had a long and important role in the history of second and foreign language teaching (cf. Ellis 2001). Its central role in language teaching had remained uncontested until the late twentieth century. During that time grammar was thought to be sufficient to actually acquire the target language as it was considered its essential component. The grammar-translation approach to language learning with its unquestioned focus on abstract linguistic rules rather than on communicative functions of the target language lost its hegemony when foreign language teachers began to seek alternative ways of helping learners actually apply the rules they knew in real communication. The *Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis* of Krashen's (e.g. 1982) *Monitor Theory* posited that conscious learning and unconscious acquisition are two unrelated and distinct processes, and the role of formal instruction is limited. The new perspectives claimed that foreign languages were best learnt with little or no provision of formal instruction of grammar, which gave rise to *the Natural Approach* (Krashen and Terrell 1983) or the *Direct Method*. The overall impact of instruction on the acquisition of formal features was also questioned by the proponents of *Universal Grammar* (e.g. Cook 1994), who maintained that second language acquisition occurs through interaction between universal *principles* and input, which leads to *parameter resetting*.

The contemporary SLA research is driven by a number of important question areas and one of them is the role of form-focused instruction (VanPatten and Benati 2010). Although the issue whether grammar instruction itself is beneficial seems to have been resolved nowadays (e.g. Long 1983a; Norris and Ortega 2000; Nassaji and Fotos 2004; Ellis 2006a; Spada 2010), since this stance is embraced by the majority of theorists, researchers and methodologists, there are still numerous issues which continue to generate

discussion and debate, e.g. the role of *focus on form* vs. *focus on forms* (Long 1997; Doughty and Williams 1998b; Pawlak 2007), the role of corrective feedback (e.g. Mackey 2006; Lyster and Saito 2010; Ellis 2009b, 2010a) and the influence of individual differences on instructed acquisition of specific grammatical features (e.g. Robinson 1997a, 2001a; Dörnyei 2005, 2009b; Pawlak 2009b). De Graaff and Housen (2009: 727) make a valid remark on the importance of research into the effects and effectiveness of L2 instruction when they claim that:

(...) the study of L2 instruction has practical and theoretical significance. Its practical significance arises from the assumption that a better understanding of how instruction affects L2 learning may lead to more effective L2 teaching; its theoretical importance is related to the understanding of how the brain processes linguistic input of various kinds to arrive at linguistic representations in the mind.

Among a plethora of controversial issues connected with form-focused instruction there is the question about instructional options which can foster the process of learning grammatical structures so that students develop high levels of accuracy in the target language. There is broad consensus that learners need to have opportunities to encounter, process, and use the new forms in their form-meaning relationships so that they can become part of their interlanguage (Nassaji 2000; ; Ellis 2002b; Larsen-Freeman 2003; Pawlak 20005; Nassaji and Fotos 2010; Spada 2010). Bearing this in mind, the verification of the utility of diverse classroom procedures taking into account the specificity of a particular educational context seems necessary. Although the investigation of the effectiveness of a given pedagogical option is, in Ellis's opinion (2005c: 714), not an easy task, isolating the different instructional techniques is a recommended way to assess their contribution to learning lest pedagogic recommendations that could be incompatible with the requirements and characteristics of the target group be put forward.

The research project reported in the present dissertation stems in large part from the researcher's own experience as a language learner and a language teacher. It is driven by the question why it is so that despite knowing grammar rules and being aware of exceptions and subtle differences, students often make errors and avoid more advanced structures, and apply ready-made everyday expressions and language chunks when it comes to spontaneous use. In order to explore the issue and find some answers to the question, the author acquainted herself with the literature on instructed second language acquisition, where, among a number of illuminating texts, Ellis's article (2005b) was found. It presents

a number of specifications and solutions to the debate on effective language instruction. One of the principles that Ellis proposes states that “learners need the opportunity to participate in communicative activity to develop implicit knowledge. Thus communicative tasks need to play a central role in instruction directed at implicit knowledge” (2005b: 13). It cannot be denied that recent years have seen a growing interest in the use of tasks in the process of foreign language teaching (see e.g. Nunan 1991, 2004; Ellis 2003; Skehan 1996, 2003). Various tasks are believed to contribute to the acquisition of language forms and promote successful language production. Nevertheless, as Nassaji (2000: 242ff) observes, many second language acquisition researchers argue that activities focusing solely on message conveyance can be inadequate to foster the development of accurate language use and that some focus on form is necessary in communicative classroom contexts (e.g. Swain 1985; Lightbown and Spada 1990; Doughty 1991; Spada and Lightbown 1993; Robinson 1996; DeKeyser 1998; Lightbown 1998; Norris and Ortega 2001; Piechurska-Kuciel 2005). In the book devoted to the place of form-focused instruction in the Polish educational context and pedagogical implications concerning effective grammar teaching, Pawlak (2006: 480) argues: “not only should learners be familiarized with the relevant generalisation and provided with extensive practice in the form of controlled text-manipulation, but (...) they should also be afforded copious opportunities to use the features taught in relatively spontaneous communication, which can be fostered through the application of text-creation activities, or, better yet, focused communication tasks”. Having acquainted herself with the available literature on focused communication tasks (e.g. Loschky and Bley-Vroman 1993; Ellis 1997b, 2003; Fotos 2002; Nunan 2004; Pawlak 2004a, 2006), the author decided to investigate their effectiveness with regard to the instructed acquisition of complex English structures by advanced learners in the Polish educational context at the advanced level.

The present dissertation consists of five chapters, the first three of which provide the relevant theoretical background concerning the concepts, positions and empirical research related to form-focused instruction, and the last two present and discuss the findings of a study conducted among L2 learners of English at the tertiary level. Chapter One, intended as an introduction to the complex field of form-focused instruction, attempts to present different perspectives on grammar and outline various definitions and meanings of grammar in order to explore its role for second language acquisition and form-focused language instruction. Linguistic knowledge, of which grammar is a constituent, is

addressed in the discussion of the two commonly known and widely investigated notions: explicit and implicit knowledge. Another concern of Chapter One are the various theoretical positions either rejecting or supporting formal instruction. The discussion of the non-interventionist approaches, advocating the need to replicate naturalistic acquisition in the language classroom includes such positions as the Identity Hypothesis (cf. Bley-Vroman 1988), Interlanguage Theory (Selinker 1972), UG-based Approaches (e.g. Chomsky 1965; White 2007) and Krashen's Monitor Model (1977, 1981, 1982). What follows is the presentation and evaluation of the theoretical arguments which constitute a convincing case for the need to accord an important role to form-focused instruction in the foreign language curriculum. Among the perspectives discussed are Processability Theory (Pienemann 1984, 1998), the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt 1990, 1994, 1995, 2001), Input Processing Theory (VanPatten 1996, 2002a, 2002b, 2004), Skill-Learning Theory (Johnson 1996), Interaction-based theories (Long 1983b, 1996; Swain 1985, 2000, 2005), connectionist approaches (N. Ellis 1998, 2003) and Sociocultural Theory (Lantolf 2006). Chapter Two, in turn, discusses the various approaches to grammar teaching and the particular procedures of form-focused instruction as advocated by leading specialists in the field. It explores an array of options teachers can draw upon in directing their learners' attention to the formal aspects of the target language with a particular attention being given to focused communication tasks whose effectiveness was investigated in the course of the *quasi experiment* presented in this thesis. The main concern of Chapter Three are the outcomes of empirical investigations into the effects of instructional techniques on the acquisition of grammar. Taking into account a range of presentation, practice and feedback microoptions, numerous research findings testifying to the effectiveness of grammar teaching are presented. The aim of Chapter Four is to describe the design of a *quasi-experimental* study which attempted to explore the effectiveness of focused communication tasks on the instructed acquisition of past counterfactual conditionals and modal verbs in the past by advanced learners of English. The chapter includes information concerning the methodology and procedures applied throughout the process of data collection, data analysis and the interpretation of the results. Finally, Chapter Five reports the findings of the study. The analysis and discussion of the results is followed by a set of tentative suggestions and recommendations which, in the opinion of the author, could prove useful for foreign language teachers and provide them with some concrete specifications. The guidelines are firmly grounded in the Polish educational context, taking account of its

realities and constraints. Although the pedagogic proposals are primarily meant to be incorporated to grammar teaching at the advanced level (C1), it is the author's firm belief that they could also apply to teaching formal aspects of language at other levels, for example B1 or B2. Being aware of the limitations the research project and the tentative nature of the implications, the author hopes that these practicable solutions will contribute to the increased efficiency of instructed second language acquisition among learners who aim at becoming fully competent users of a foreign language.

Chapter 1: Issues in grammar learning and teaching

Introduction

Language, which is the main medium of expressing oneself to the world and other people, can be defined in a number of ways, taking into account different interacting levels and perspectives. One of the definition says that language is a “dynamic process of pattern formation by which humans use linguistic forms to make meaning in context-appropriate ways” (Larsen-Freeman 2003: 142). When it comes to the process of learning a second/foreign language, the goal of most language learners is developing communicative competence, understood as a synthesis of an underlying system of knowledge and skill needed for communication. In the concept of communicative competence proposed by Canale and Swain (1980), knowledge refers to the (conscious or unconscious) knowledge of an individual about language and about other aspects of language use. According to Canale and Swain (1980), there are three types of knowledge: knowledge of underlying grammatical principles, knowledge of how to use a language in a social context in order to fulfil communicative functions, and knowledge of how to combine utterances and communicative functions with regard to discourse principles. Canale and Swain (1980) argue that the study of grammatical competence is crucial to the study of communicative competence. They point out that grammatical competence will be an important concern for any teaching approach which aims at providing learners with the knowledge of and ability to determine and express accurately the literal meaning of utterances. Grammar, being an indispensable component of grammatical competence, is therefore of crucial importance as far as the development of language skills and the mastery of a foreign language is concerned.

The question which needs an answer, then, is “what is grammar?” For most people, it is a set of rules, which, when applied accurately, will ensure correct and standard language use. Linguists, on the other hand see it as an internal subconscious system, acquired and developed by language speakers. Drawing on the definition of language presented above, Larsen-Freeman (2003: 142) sees grammar as “one of the dynamic linguistic processes of pattern formation in language, which can be used by humans for making meaning in context-appropriate ways”. Various SLA theories have ascribed different meanings and roles to grammar, they have presented its types and characteristic features, and attempted to establish its role in the process of second language acquisition. The aim of the present chapter is to present different perspectives on grammar, outline various definitions and meanings of grammar with a view to exploring its role for second language acquisition and form-focused instruction. The term *grammar* will be defined and analysed, together with its numerous interpretations and classifications, such as descriptive/prescriptive, pedagogical/reference, or static/dynamic. Linguistic knowledge, of which grammar is a constituent, will be addressed in the discussion of the two commonly known and widely investigated notions: explicit and implicit knowledge. In the next two subsections of the chapter, the author will address the question as to how learners learn a second language. In order to explain the issue in terms of the role of grammar teaching in SLA, various theoretical positions either rejecting or supporting formal instruction will be presented.

1.1. Perspectives on grammar

Of the many issues surrounding the teaching of grammar, the most controversial seems to be whether to teach it at all. The important role of grammar, which was the core of language learning and teaching, appeared to be no issue of debate till the 1960s when the early research on naturalistic L2 acquisition questioned the effectiveness of grammar instruction as it had been found that learners pass through orders and sequences of acquisition independent of the formal teaching of rules (Pienneman 1984; Rutherford 1987). It was then argued (e.g. Corder 1967; Krashen 1981) that grammar instruction played little or no role in second language acquisition as students had their own internal syllabus for learning grammatical structures and most of them were not able to learn the more advanced constructions or use them in spontaneous speech. However, thanks to

research aiming at comparing the effects of grammar instruction with naturalistic learning (e.g. Green and Hecht 1992; Long 1983a; Pica 1983), it was proved that the acquisitional processes of instructed and naturalistic learning did not differ, but the learners having the benefit of grammar instruction progressed more rapidly and achieved better results. Moreover, as demonstrated by the metaanalysis carried out by Norris and Ortega (2000), evidence began to accumulate that grammar teaching was effective and beneficial for second language acquisition and contributed to the growth of both implicit and explicit knowledge (Ellis 2006a: 85).

Many people, both in L1 and L2 contexts, perceive grammar learning as learning rules, or information about the language form, which means that they develop their declarative, explicit knowledge of grammar. This knowledge is believed to transform and generate the actual use of the structures taught. Although it appears that the prescribed rules give students a kind of security, they do not take into account form-meaning connections and the explanations offered do not often reflect actual use. Some language users identify grammar with the form of the structure, understood as the accurate ordering of words, the correct affixation, or the proper use of articles. The danger, however, is that the student concentrates only on the surface structure of the sentence and does not take into account the meaning. Hence, there is a need for learners to discover the other dimension of grammar which is *resource*. Woods (1995), basing on Littlewood (1981), suggests that grammar may help us communicate and, by choosing the appropriate form, which is as important as choosing the right lexical item, one can precisely express the meaning, particularly at more advanced levels of proficiency. It seems that it is grammar that, on one hand, enables the user to convey the message he or she intends to get across and, on the other hand, allows the interlocutor to interpret it appropriately, hence constituting an essential resource in communication.

Taking into consideration the actual educational context, Swan (2002) presented seven bad reasons for teaching grammar and two good ones. In his view, teachers' decisions about introducing particular grammar aspects are often not supported with careful planning and thinking about their students' needs and expectations. Grammar is often taught because there exist rules to be taught, although they do not necessarily have to be crucial for successful communication. Another reason is the tidiness of grammar rules, an attribute that stands in contrast to vocabulary which is vast and overwhelming. Moreover, grammar is often taught due to its testability and the feeling of security it gives both to students and teachers. Language educators might have had certain prior experiences

connected with studying immense rules of grammar, which is why they now view it as the most important element of language. They may regard it as a device which will work properly only if learnt fully, and, in their opinion, lack of knowledge of all the subtleties will lead to a complete breakdown in communication. Last but not least, grammar is believed to empower the teacher and to determine correct behaviour, which is still expected to have its role in some authoritarian societies. On the other hand, irrespective of all the negative reasons and misconceptions about grammar teaching, Swan (2002) emphasizes the need to teach formal properties of language for two reasons: the first one is the ability to be understood by other speakers, which will lead to successful communication. Secondly, grammar may be of great importance when it comes to the process of integration into L2 society. In some social contexts, particularly among educated and professional language users, it is highly desirable to use advanced, complex structures and accurate language.

Nowadays, there is a strong conviction among second language acquisition experts that teaching grammar makes sense and contributes to the development of communicative competence (e.g. Nassaji and Fotos 2004). Nevertheless, a controversial problem which is still open to debate and awaiting concrete solutions is how to establish connections between form, meaning and use, and find the best way to teach grammar for implicit knowledge, which, in the opinion of most SLA researchers (Ellis 2006a: 95), is responsible for linguistic competence and enables spontaneous communication. In order to draw definitive conclusions about the most effective ways of teaching the formal features of language, grammar needs to be defined and explained, taking into account its different types and dimensions. The evolution of grammar teaching methods will also be presented with a view to exploring the various perspectives on the role of grammar in second language acquisition.

1.1.1. Definition of grammar

A complete and precise definition of grammar appears difficult to construct. Psychologists, linguists and educators manifest different views and there have been several approaches to the analysis of language, starting from structural and syntactic transformational-generative descriptions, moving on to semantic and pragmatic dimensions, which aimed at understanding how grammar helps convey the intended meaning of the message. The

number of meanings the concept of grammar has may depend on who, where and why uses the term (e.g. Batstone 1994a; Odlin 1994; DeCarrico and Larsen-Freeman 2002; Cullen 2008; Larsen-Freeman 2003, 2009b; Bruton 2009). According to Bastone (1994a), grammar is multi-dimensional: it is a formal mechanism, a functional system for signalling meanings, or a dynamic resource which both users and learners call on in different ways at different times. If used in instructional settings, grammar usually refers to rules and formal features of the target language and may be called *reference grammar* or *pedagogical grammar* if it concerns the structures and rules compiled for instructional and assessment purposes (see 1.1.3.). Larsen-Freeman (2009b: 518) also mentions the *teacher's grammar* which is an account of structures and rules compiled for instructional purposes especially for teachers. When it comes to linguistics, grammar accounts for the mental representations of language, possessed by native speakers with regard to the formal aspects, and is called *mental grammar* (VanPatten and Benati 2010: 91). Another definition states that grammar is the information about what is acceptable and unacceptable in a given language for its native speakers. In this respect, grammar may be discussed using two perspectives: *descriptive and prescriptive* (see 1.1.2.). Grammar may also come in focus of a given linguistic theory, in which case it is called *linguistic grammar*.

Each of these definitions is multidimensional, because it includes implicit and explicit grammars, universal and language-specific grammars, those which describe the actual language and those which specify how it should be used (Larsen-Freeman 2009b). Grammar may be discussed using two general linguistic theories: the *generative* and the *cognitive*. In his chapter on cognitive linguistic theories on grammar and grammar teaching, Broccias (2008) compared the generative view to a traditional one, whereas the cognitive view to a “more general fashion” (2008: 68). According to the generative perspective, the centre of language is syntax (e.g. Chomsky 1995), and as far as the cognitive perspective goes, the major role in language is accorded to meaning (e.g. Langacker 2008). These two views correspond to the *syntactocentric* and *communication* perspectives (Purpura 2005: 5). In the *syntactocentric* view, grammar is seen as a systematic way of predicting the knowledge of an ‘ideal’ speaker. Sets of rules or principles are employed to construct all well-formed and grammatical utterances in the language. This definition places the main emphasis on the structure of clauses and sentences, and leaves the meaning and use of the forms to other approaches, such semantics and pragmatics. The syntactocentric approach to grammar can provide teachers with plenty of information concerning grammatical features

and the rules that have to be applied. This information may be necessary for syllabus design, materials preparation, instruction and classroom assessment (Purpura 2005). When it comes to the *communication perspective*, the main objective are not the structures of the language, but language is seen as a system of communication, in which grammatical forms are used to convey a number of meanings. In the communication perspective, grammar is “only one of many resources for accomplishing something with language” (Purpura 2005: 7), and it is discussed with regard to why and how the linguistic forms are used within and beyond a sentence. The communication perspective takes into account the particular context, which makes the speaker or writer employ a given structure, or, in other words, attempts to investigate the relationship between the grammatical form used and the meaning that is expressed. The following sections will present different views and models of grammar, postulated by language scholars. The role of grammar in different teaching methods will also be discussed with a view to showing how it has evolved through the years.

1.1.2. Prescriptive and descriptive grammar

The first distinction to be made is between *prescriptive* and *descriptive grammar*, because these two differ considerably. Prescriptive grammar encompasses the correct use of language prescribed by a set of rules which are not subject to change or cannot be ignored. Thanks to the rules the distinctions between correct and incorrect forms are depicted (DeCarrico and Larsen-Freeman 2002). The prescriptive approach may also account for the distinction between a standard and non-standard variety of language, often labeling the first one as good and the other one as bad. Such a perspective was obligatory in the past and the fact that somebody used appropriate language rules often determined the person’s educational and social status. Undoubtedly, standard grammar also had its role in unifying the society, codifying language varieties and regional dialects, as well as allowing for smooth communication between communities and people of different generations (Swan 2005b: 70). Prescriptive grammar is also called ‘traditional’ (e.g. Purpura 2005), as it was originally based on Latin and Greek which provided extensive descriptions of linguistic forms along with exceptions to the rules. Nowadays, prescriptive grammar is seen as somewhat artificial, as “much of the time, though not always, decisions about what is good

and bad are essentially arbitrary and do not often reflect any crucial principle of language or thought” (Odlin 1994: 1). *Descriptive grammar*, on the other hand, is seen as a slow but persistent process, in which the actual language in use needs to be observed and described. The rules provide a specific path towards well-formed structures and they often represent speakers’ unconscious knowledge. As it takes into account unconscious knowledge, descriptive grammar attempts to tap the actual language produced by native speakers during their real language exchanges (Swan 2005b). Its aim is not to judge the language in terms of its accuracy and correctness, but to observe it for its distinct features, possibilities of use and grammaticality. The scope of interest of descriptive grammarians is vast; they are more detailed in their investigations than prescriptive linguists. It is also worth mentioning that while prescriptive grammar concentrates mainly on morphology and syntax, descriptive grammar also takes into account phonetics, phonology, semantics and lexis (cf. DeCarrico and Larsen-Freeman 2002).

Descriptive grammar may be further subdivided into two types: formal and functional (Larsen-Freeman 2001a). *Formal grammar*, the most influential example of which is Chomskyan transformational-generative grammar (1965), is concerned with the structures and how they operate in the overall system. According to Chomsky (1965), grammatical competence is “the knowledge of a finite system of rules that enables an ideal language user in a homogeneous speech community to generate and understand an infinite variety of sentences” (Larsen-Freeman 2001a: 35). For Chomsky (1965), input, which is imperfect, ill-formed and incomplete, cannot construct a basis for successful language acquisition, and therefore he came up with the idea of Universal Grammar innately possessed by humans. As Larsen-Freeman (2001a: 34) states, “formal grammars take as their starting point the form or structure of language, with little or no attention given to meaning (semantics) or context and language use (pragmatics)”. In response to Chomsky (1965) and his Transformational Theory, Dell Hymes (1972) developed a functional model which focuses on how language functions in discourse. It was an extension of the generative model and emphasized sociolinguistic and pragmatic functions, as “the rules and principles composing the language system can only be adequately understood when they are analysed in terms of the conditions of use” (Dik 1991: 247). Functional grammars, as explained by Larsen-Freeman (2001a: 34), “conceive of language as largely social interaction, seeking to explain why one linguistic form is more appropriate than another in satisfying a particular communicative purpose in a particular context”. Functional grammar

sees meaning as the most important aspect to be analysed, and grammar looked upon from this perspective is a resource for making and exchanging meaning (Halliday 1994). One of the models developed on the basis of functional grammar is called *Systemic Functional Grammar* or *Systemic Functional Linguistics* (Halliday 2002). The theory is concerned with the notion of language function. While the syntactic structures of language are considered important, the central position is for the function of language, i.e. what language does and how it does it. Halliday's (2002) Systemic Functional Theory takes into account the social context, its features, possibilities and constraints with regard to language. It acknowledges the importance of three types of meaning in grammatical structure: ideational meaning (representing our experience and inner thoughts), interpersonal meaning (representing our interactions with others), and textual meaning (representing how coherence is created in spoken and written language).

1.1.3. Pedagogical and reference grammar

As long as prescriptive and descriptive grammars are fields of study for linguists, applied linguistics focuses more on *pedagogical grammar*. Pedagogical grammar draws on formal and functional grammar (see 1.1.2.), and it relies on corpus linguistics, discourse analysis and pragmatics with a view to preparing learners not only for constructing accurate grammar structures but using them meaningfully and appropriately (DeCarrico and Larsen-Freeman 2002: 20; Larsen-Freeman 2009b). Little (1994: 99) considers pedagogical grammar a “slippery concept”, because there is no consensus as to how to define it. Greenbaum (1987), in turn, characterizes pedagogical grammar as a mixture of descriptive and prescriptive statements (see also Dirven 1990). In the opinion of other grammarians (e.g. Chalker 1994; Odlin 1994; Taylor 2008), pedagogical grammar is the type of grammar constructed especially for language teachers, teacher trainees, course or syllabus writers and language learners, and resembles a descriptive approach rather than a prescriptive one, as it is interested in a wide range of structures. Odlin (1994: 1) understands pedagogical grammars as “the types of grammatical analysis and instruction designed for the needs of second language students”. Taylor (2008: 38) presents a similar view, defining pedagogical grammar as “a description of a language which is aimed at the foreign language learner and/or teacher, an whose purpose is to promote insight into, and thereby to facilitate the

acquisition of, the foreign language”. This view is also supported by Dirven (1990), who emphasizes the role of pedagogical grammar in promoting and guiding learning processes in the acquisition of a second language. Hunston and Oakey (2010: 3) conclude that pedagogical¹ grammar is concerned with “how grammar of a language might best be described for learners, and how it might best be taught to learners”.

When it comes to educational settings, Corder (1988: 127) saw pedagogical grammars as “textbooks in the methodology of grammatical presentation”, which do not have to be consistent with one grammatical theory. He identified four stages of grammar instruction: provision of data on and examples of the target language, descriptions and explanations, induction exercises and, finally, hypothesis-testing exercises (1988: 134). Also Taylor (2008: 38) noted that “pedagogical grammar will differ from a linguistic grammar with regard to both content and presentation”, because it will use only those concepts and terminology which are easily accessible to the learner and/or teacher. It does not mean, however, that pedagogical grammar is a simplified grammar; quite contrary, it should attempt to present “even the idiosyncratic and language-particular as coherent and systematic” (Taylor 2008: 39). Purpura (2005: 22), in turn, takes the stance that “pedagogical grammar represents an eclectic, but principled description of the target language forms, created for the express purpose of helping teachers understand the linguistic resources of communication”. He argues that foreign language teachers need to be able to rely on formal pedagogical theory, rather than draw only on their experience, reflection or the textbook. Understanding the system and being aware of its characteristic features and exceptions will make it easier for language educators to customize this information to their instructional contexts and their learners’ needs. Mitchell (2000), in her overview article on grammar instruction, notes that the available research has not yet determined which model of acquisition should be employed for pedagogic grammar, but, according to her observations, “increasing emphasis is placed on process and functional approaches to grammar (...), on the relationships between discourse-level features, lexis and sentence grammar, and on the distinctive grammar of spoken language” (Mitchell 2000: 291). Even so, more empirical evidence is necessary to draw definitive conclusions about the effectiveness of particular models for FL instruction. This is a description of the grammar of a certain language, which explains how words, phrases, clauses and sentences are constructed.

¹ Hunston and Oakey 2010 use the term *pedagogic* but the meaning *pedagogical* is the same according to PWN Oxford Dictionary.

Reference grammar is often contrasted with pedagogical grammar and the main distinction lies in the purposes for which the two are used (Greenbaum 1987). Reference grammar may be used by native speakers of the language or by those who are interested in the language for consultations or scientific purposes. It is designed according to universal structural categories and with a view to teaching someone *about* the language and giving readers a reference tool for looking up specific details of the language (Crystal 1987). Greenbaum (1987) points out that reference and pedagogical grammars may sometimes overlap, but he recognizes one difference between them. In his view, a reference grammar book is intended for self-help and offers a comprehensive coverage of the formal features of the language, whereas a pedagogical grammar book is more like a course book, designed taking into consideration the length of the lesson, the psycholinguistic rationale, the level of difficulty of a particular language feature and the possibility of applying the structures in practice by means of exercises.

In her chapter on pedagogical grammar, Chalker (1994) presents a number of different perspectives and definitions of the concept. On discussing the principles and problems connected with pedagogical grammar, she comes to the conclusion that pedagogical grammar can be used for reference or can be graded to meet a particular language level. When compared with reference grammar, it does not aim to explain all the subtleties of the language, as its main goal is to help learners learn a language or help the native users understand it. Pedagogical grammar can be of help both for learners and teachers and is likely to combine both the prescriptive and the descriptive approach in attending to language rules.

1.1.4. Static and dynamic views of grammar

Having acquainted oneself with the types of grammar outlined above, one cannot disagree with Batstone (1994b: 224), who says that “one of the most striking characteristics of grammar is that it is multidimensional: we can choose to regard it from any of the wide range of possible viewpoints”. Batstone (1994b) distinguishes between two perspectives on grammar: a *product* perspective and a *process* perspective. The product perspective accounts for the analytical approach to language which is divided into discrete parts, connected with formal properties or functional characteristics. The product perspective on grammar is shared by both formal and functional frameworks, as well as pedagogical

grammars, which choose to adopt the analytical approach to language. The view which sees language as a product has been criticized severely (e.g. Crookes and Long 1992), because such grammar cannot be internalized in the learners' minds immediately after it is taught. The opponents of learning grammar as a product claim that there is no direct equality between what is taught and what is learned. On the other hand, teaching grammar as a product equips learners with a clear and explicit framework which is helpful for establishing learners' rules and facilitates their motivation (Brumfit 1984). The *product* approach to grammar and language learning "has its place" (Batstone 1994b: 227), but it should be supplemented with an approach taking into consideration the *process* perspective which accounts for actual language use and its semantic and pragmatic dimensions. The *process* perspective, which sees grammar as a dynamic process, holds that grammar is "a resource which language users exploit as they navigate their way through discourse" (Batstone 1994b: 224). According to the process perspective view, language users select specific grammatical forms depending on a great number of conditions generated by immediate communicative needs. Grammar *emerges* in the process of communication when the decisions concerning the selection of forms are made on a real time basis. The perspective stresses the non-linear character of grammar, its contingency and dependence on diverse context factors. The main aim of process teaching is then to encourage learners to focus on meaning and to use the language effectively in particular contexts. The dynamic nature of grammar is well reflected in the term *grammaticization* (Batstone 1994b) as well as *grammaring* (Larsen-Freeman 2001b, 2003). When it comes to *grammaticization*, Batstone (1994b: 230) suggests it is an approach "in which learners begin with words, which they combine and modify through the application of grammar". Batstone argues that through a gradual movement from lexis to grammar, learners build a more sensitive model of grammar because they are allowed to raise their awareness in terms of how the language system is structured.

Another model which treats grammar as a skill or dynamic process rather than a static area of knowledge is proposed by Larsen-Freeman (2001b, 2003) and is called *grammaring*. In her opinion, the static and homogeneous view of language advanced by de Saussure (1916) and Chomsky (1965) ought to be abandoned. If grammar is not to be perceived as a set of facts about language, the noun *grammar* acquires a new dimension of meaning and becomes a verb: *to grammar*. The term *grammaring* itself involves the idea of activity, process and dynamicity. According to Larsen-Freeman (2003: 25ff), grammar and language are dynamic because, first of all, they develop over time, which implies

evolutionary changes and, secondly, they are subject to constant modifications in the process of making decisions in real-time communication. The next type of dynamism, called organic, is the intersection of the first two ones. As Keller (1985, cited in Larsen-Freeman 2003: 30) rightly observed, changes in the micro level behaviours of particular language users result in the macro level changes of the whole system. Last, but definitely not least, there is the dynamism of every learner's interlanguage system, whose major characteristic is being in a state of flux. Larsen-Freeman supports her views with the opinions held by other linguists and grammarians, e.g. Batstone (1994b) and Rutherford (1987: 36-37), who argue that "although language has characteristics that lend themselves to the machine metaphor, it has a great deal to it that also suggests very aptly the metaphor of organism". In accordance with the dynamic nature of language, grammatical structures must also be seen as dynamic, meaningful and used in a particular context. Larsen-Freeman (2003: 34) suggests treating "the morphological and syntactic subsystems as a resource for making meaning in context-sensitive manner". In this sense, three dimensions of a grammatical structure have been proposed: form, meaning and use. As can be seen from Figure 1., the framework takes on a form of a pie chart where the wedges represent structure (form), semantics (meaning) and pragmatics (use/function). The wedge concerned with structure contains information about how a given structure is constructed and consists of the visible or audible units (the sounds, written symbols, inflectional morphemes, function words and syntactic structures). The second dimension is meaning and it includes information about the lexical and grammatical meaning of a structure, which is determined by the use of the structure itself. The third, pragmatic dimension, concerned with use, deals with "meaning potential" (Larsen-Freeman 2003: 35), i.e. what people mean by the language they use in terms of social functions and discourse patterns. In other words, the three dimensions ask three questions: How is the unit formed?, what does it mean? and when and why is it used?

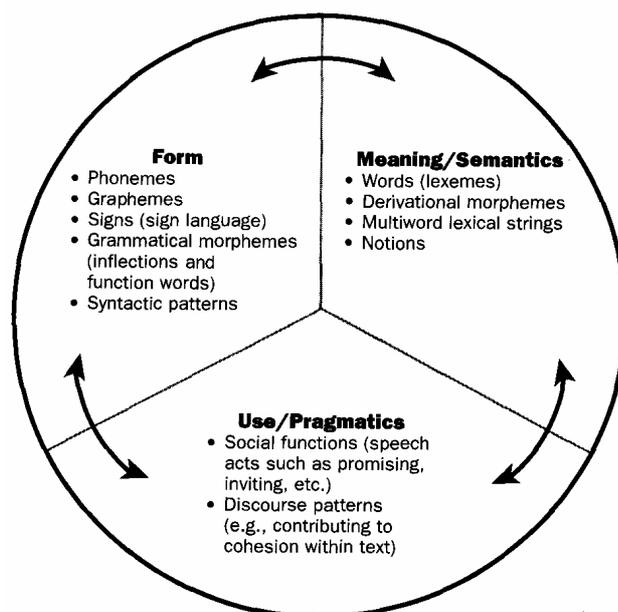


Figure 1. Prototypical units of the three dimensions of a grammatical structure (adapted from Larsen-Freeman 2003: 35).

It is necessary to remember that Larsen-Freeman emphasizes equal importance of all the three parts of the framework and she stresses the interconnections between them with a change in any one dimension having consequences for the other two. As she writes “a difference in form always spells a difference in meaning or use (...) Conversely, if the meaning or use wedges change, this will affect the form wedge. The system is holistic (...) The parts of the system mutually interact” (2003: 44). At the same time, Larsen-Freeman concedes that there is usually one of the three dimensions that makes the “greatest long-term challenge to language students” and so the choice of the dimension to be focused on largely depends on the students’ needs. The *challenge principle* that she puts forward allows “(...) for pedagogical reasons (...) to focus student attention on one of these dimensions within the whole” (2003: 45). What is more, in Larsen-Freeman’s opinion, the three dimensions are learned differently and, therefore, each should be taught in a different way. For example, the development of the semantic dimension may require making various kinds of associations, and in order to facilitate the pragmatic dimension, it is necessary to develop learners’ sensitivity to context by means of, for example, role play activities which can allow learners to notice how the selection of linguistic forms is affected by interaction variables (Larsen-Freeman 2003: 43). Larsen-Freeman is aware that it may be a challenging task to address all the three dimensions, and she posits that “it should be enough to

recognize that it is important to be able to fill in all three wedges for anything we teach. Not being able to do so for a particular wedge of the pie can help provide direction for where we need to work to fill in the lacunae in our own understanding” (Larsen-Freeman 2003: 48). In accordance with the main premises of the form-meaning-use framework, language instruction takes on a new dimension, because it is not limited to the knowledge of the rules any more, but it aims to provide the learner with the right context to create accurate, meaningful and appropriate utterances (Larsen-Freeman 2003: 143). As Larsen-Freeman (2001a: 225) points out, “By thinking of grammar as a skill to be mastered rather than a set of rules to be memorized, we will be helping ESL/EFL students go a long way toward the goal of being able to accurately convey meaning in the manner they deem appropriate”.

Larsen-Freeman (2003: 154) enumerates seven steps that can be taken to promote grammaring in a classroom. These include making learners aware of the three dimensions of grammar, i.e. form, meaning and use, analysing the structures, involving students in consciousness-raising activities, and encouraging them to engage in hypotheses formation and testing. Mistakes are granted the role of gifts to help students explore the language. Explicit explanation of regularities but also exceptions makes learners feel safer. Finally, the teacher’s attitude towards the very process of learning leads to boosting learners’ enthusiasm and interest in dealing with the complexities of the target language.

The contrast between the static position of grammar and the dynamic view of grammaring is related to theoretical aspects of second language acquisition and the pedagogical implications for teaching language in an educational context. An asset of product teaching is providing learners with salient and *noticeable* language features, which is believed to foster the learning process according to *the Noticing Hypothesis* (e.g. Schmidt 1990, see also 1.3.2.2.). Grammaring, on the other hand, is connected with *Sociocultural Theory* (see 1.3.2.7.) where educational success is believed to be the outcome of interactional processes in which the participants of communication exchanges engage. Language seen from the dynamic perspective is compared to an organism, which grows, has its plasticity, multiple interconnections, and the ability to be creative (Rutherford 1987: 37). Teaching grammar as a process also finds its implementation in communicative, procedural and task-based teaching (Pawlak 2006a: 42). According to Batstone (1994b: 225), “Both process and product perspectives are influential in language teaching. The distinction, in brief, is between the careful control of language *for* the learner (as product), and the creative use of language by the learner (as process)”. In other words, while the

product view provides learners with greater control of language, the process perspective enables them to use language creatively. Batstone argues that the two perspectives are part of a continuum of instructional options teachers might decide to employ (1994b: 235).

1.1.5. The place of grammar in different teaching methods

The history of language teaching consists to a great extent of the claims and counterclaims for and against the teaching of grammar. It has always been the central debate in foreign language teaching. The origins of interest in grammar may in fact lie in the beginnings of humanity, or perhaps in the first attempts to travel and explore the unknown world, as “it has been suggested that interest in grammar is a natural outcome of contact with people speaking a language other than their own” (Robins 1997: 14-15, cited in Fotos 2005: 654). Grammar started to be studied formally in the third century BC, when scholars compared and analysed various Greek literary texts, e.g. Homer’s. Until the 18th century, studying a second or foreign language meant analysing grammar in the written form. The analysis was based on the rules devised originally for Latin and Greek, and the language was divided into eight categories: nouns, verbs, participles, articles, pronouns, prepositions, adverbs and conjunctions. These parts of speech were then to be practised in written texts to help master the skill of faultless translation. Although in the 18th century the English language itself became an area of analysis, this traditional approach to teaching English as a foreign language based on Latin or Greek is still present in many educational contexts and is commonly known as the *Grammar-Translation Method*. Teacher-student interaction in this method involves checking and improving students’ knowledge of grammar, i.e. the ability to memorize the rules and recite them. DeKeyser (1998: 50) talks about a “happy side effect” of such procedures which is the ability to actually use the basic structures. According to Dörnyei (2009a: 273), the popularity of this approach is attributable to two reasons: first of all, it is safe and easy to implement, especially in huge heterogeneous classes, and, second of all, it is easy to test by means of multiple choice tests.

The 20th century linguists analysed language according to three new subsystems: phonology, morphology and syntax (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991), and the approach became known as structural or descriptive linguistics. Structural linguistics together with behaviorist psychology gave rise to the *direct* and *audio-lingual approaches* to second

language teaching. They focused on spoken fluency, contrary to the grammar-translation method, which produced language users who were unable to communicate even though they possessed considerable knowledge of grammar rules. The use of drills was quite extensive for the two methods: teachers following the *Direct Method* employed meaningful drills, whereas those advocating the *Audio-Lingual Method* used very controlled mechanical drills, such as repetition, substitution or transformation drills. As far as the Direct Method is concerned, although it was communicative purpose that was the major aim of teaching, the design of a syllabus depended largely on contrastive analysis and contained highly structured sequences of forms often presented via explicit grammar instruction. In the Audio-Lingual Method, accurate production was achieved with the help of drills and repetitions, which had in fact little to do with the communicative character of real interaction and the learners' actual needs. According to Dörnyei (2009a: 275), "the audiolingual method made a principled effort to operationalize the promotion of implicit learning processes in classroom activities in order to develop productive, communicative language skills in the learners". As soon as Chomsky (1957) proposed his generative theory of language, the focus on surface forms was largely overturned. Chomsky viewed language as an innate generative process consisting of two dimensions: the surface structure (the forms) and the deep structure (the meaning). The term *Universal Grammar* was coined to represent the syntactic universals for all languages and with its advent explicit grammar instruction received new interest. The cognitive approaches which originated from Universal Grammar relied mainly on transformational and generative grammar theories. The theories stated that language contained a finite number of possible structures and rules which learners were able to understand and produce, which was why teaching grammar should be a priority and aim at developing analytical linguistic skills (Hinkel and Fotos 2002: 4). These structures and rules were believed to serve as a basis for the creation of an infinite number of utterances. The problem, however, was the gap between the learners' knowledge of grammar rules and their ability to actually use them in authentic communication. Therefore, it was necessary to base the syllabus on communicative functions which would depend on the communicative needs of the learner.

With the need for urgent communicative ability and the development of humanist approaches, *communicative language teaching* (CLT) came into being. It was used primarily with learners at basic levels and included no formal grammar instruction but provided plenty of meaning-focused input to help students acquire the target forms and

vocabulary naturally. The “communicative reform movement” (Dörnyei 2009a: 276) was launched in the 1970s and its main focus was “the elaboration and implementation of programs and methodologies that promote the development of L2 functional competence through learner participation in communicative events” (Savignon 1990: 210). A number of different definitions of communicative language teaching were offered and the most controversial issue seemed to be the possibility of implementing a structural component to a CLT lesson. In his influential book on teaching methodology, Littlewood (1981: 1) defined communicative language teaching in the following words: “one of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language, combining these into a more fully communicative view”. Even so, the idea of practising grammar was completely rejected in Krashen’s (1977, 1981) *Monitor Model* (1.3.1.4) and replaced with the need for the provision of plentiful comprehensible input, which was believed to foster the acquisition of forms and to facilitate the development of speaking skills. It was the notion of *comprehensible input* that proved to considerably affect communicative pedagogy and gave rise to the *Natural Approach*. Other methodologists and educators (e.g. Celce-Murcia 1991; Ellis 1994a; H. D. Brown 2001; Larsen-Freeman 2001b) did not, however, support the idea of complete abandonment of explicit grammar instruction, believing that accuracy was essential for effective communicative functioning at an advanced level. As Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991: 304) argue, “while comprehensible input may be necessary and sufficient for SLA, instruction may simplify the learning task, alter the processes and sequences of acquisition, speed up the rate of acquisition and improve the quality and level of SL ultimate attainment”.

In order to incorporate grammar teaching into communicative pedagogy, a new perspective on grammar teaching was proposed. Communicative language teaching therefore experienced a change: “one that includes increased recognition of and attention to language form within exclusively and primarily meaning-oriented CLT approaches to second language instruction” (Spada 2007: 271). Taking into consideration theoretical recommendations (Pienemann 1984; Schmidt 1990, 1995) and research into the effectiveness of instructed language acquisition, Long (1991) proposed three dimensions of grammar teaching: *focus on form*, *focus on forms* and *focus on meaning* (see 2.2). The new phase was labeled *principled communicative language teaching*, and the authors of the term formulated the following description of the concept:

In sum, we believe that CLT has arrived at a turning point: Explicit, direct elements are gaining significance in teaching communicative abilities and skills. The emerging new approach can be described as a principled communicative approach; by bridging the gap between current research on aspects of communicative competence and actual communicative classroom practice, this approach has the potential to synthesize direct, knowledge-oriented and indirect, skill-oriented teaching approaches. Therefore, rather than being a complete departure from the original, indirect practice of CLT, it extends and further develops CLT methodology (Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurrell 1997: 147-148).

The directness of principled CLT does not mean a back-to-grammar tendency. Rather, it attempts to extend the traditional teaching, restricted to grammar, to the explicit development of other language areas and skills necessary for successful communication. According to Dörnyei (2009a: 302), “the essence of the principled communicative approach (...) is the creative integration of meaningful communication with relevant declarative input and the automatization of both linguistic rules and lexical items”. In this way, *task-based language teaching* (TBLT), which, according to Ellis (2003), is a version of CLT, came into existence and the *focus on form* approach became the major field of interest when it comes to second language acquisition research. One of the well-known researchers into task-based language learning and teaching, Skehan (2007), claims that:

Although the term [communicative language teaching] is still very widely used, a task-based approach to language teaching is more associated with a) an acceptance that Focus on Form is essential; b) the belief that it is not enough to explore the creativity and engagement of tasks, rather they need to be related to acquisition and language development; and c) the belief that tasks and the conditions under which tasks are implemented also need to be researched and claims about them subjected to testing (Skehan 2007: 290).

According to Dörnyei (2009a: 280), *focus on form* (Long 1991) has become one of the key themes in SLA theory over the past decade. The instructional approach associated with the concept is *form-focused instruction* which covers the pedagogical applications of the theoretical principles and psycholinguistic premises connected with focus on form. It must be remembered, however, that form-focused instruction is usually considered much broader than focus on form and has a number of possible definitions. Both form-focused instruction and focus on form will be explained thoroughly in Chapter Two which is concerned with options in form-focused instruction and aims at the exploration of their effectiveness for second language acquisition.

Throughout the last decades, the role of grammar in the teaching methods has undergone major changes. Celce-Murcia (2001: 3) rightly observes that “Language teaching is a field where fads and heroes have come and gone in a manner fairly consistent

with the kind of changes that occur in youth culture”. The grammar-translation method emphasized the importance of explicit knowledge, the audiolingual methods aimed at language mastery by means of rote learning and drills, and, finally communicative language teaching focused on learning through participation in meaningful communication. Contemporary language teaching, having been influenced by research and experience, seems to no longer rely on one particular teaching method. In fact, its proponents do not believe in the necessity of existence of a teaching method as such (Dörnyei 2009a). We have reached a *post-method* era (Kumaravadivelu 2001, 2006), where it is no longer the best method that is searched for, but it is believed that a combination of various instructional options can best facilitate language learning in a particular context. Therefore, there is a pressing need to explore the effectiveness of particular teaching options for specific groups of learners so that they can develop their linguistic knowledge and fulfill the communicative functions which the contemporary world requires of them.

1.2. Types of linguistic knowledge

Linguistic knowledge consists of various components, depending on the theory that accounts for particular phenomena and introduces certain distinctions. Among the various components of L2 knowledge, it is possible to distinguish the *competence-performance* distinction (Chomsky 1957, 1965), the *representation-processing* distinction (Juffs 2004), the *declarative-procedural* distinction (DeKeyser 1997), the *explicit-implicit* distinction and the *item-rule* distinction. The competence-performance distinction is one of the oldest and best recognized; yet DeKeyser (2009) regards it as not very useful, because it does not take into consideration the aspect of processing. In contrast to the competence-performance distinction, the representation-processing distinction aims to find out what processes take place when somebody listens, speaks, reads or writes. DeKeyser (2009: 120) argues that “the nature of processing depends on the nature of representation”, but since the two processes have not been fully investigated, it is difficult to account for certain behavioral phenomena. The declarative-procedural distinction, in turn, is increasingly in use by SLA researchers and differentiates between the knowledge *that* and the knowledge *how*. The distinction is central to models of skill acquisition, but it has also been employed by SLA (see 1.3.2.4. *Skill Learning Theory*). The dimension has often been equated with the

explicit and implicit dimension, but DeKeyser argues that they are not exactly the same, as declarative knowledge “is not necessarily accessible to awareness” and procedural knowledge “can be the result of proceduralization and (partial) automatization of declarative knowledge, and still allow or even require a certain degree of conscious access” (2009: 121). The *item-rule* distinction provides an explanation of how learning rules may become easier by means of *items*. Since the use of rules can be time-consuming and effortful, it is useful to store some rules and combinations as items, e.g. irregular verb forms. The item-rule distinction works not only for inflectional morphology, but also for long sequences of words, which results in the production of *formulaic language* (e.g. Myles et al. 1998).

The concepts which are going to be explored in more detail in the following section belong to the *explicit-implicit* dimension, because there is a general consensus that linguistic competence is a matter of implicit knowledge. This is visible in the fact, for example, that Gregg (1989, 2003), who is a follower of the generative theory, differentiates between *knowing that* and *knowing how* and also N. Ellis (1996a), the representative of connectionist approaches, recognizes implicit and explicit knowledge, with the caveat that it is implicit, intuitive knowledge that is of prime importance for language abilities (N. Ellis 2005). The fact that both innatist and connectionist approaches share a common base may help establish the roles of explicit and implicit knowledge in L2 acquisition and production, the relationship between them and their unique contributions.

1.2.1. Explicit and implicit knowledge

The distinction between implicit and explicit second language knowledge is of vital importance for instructed language acquisition. Hence, different theories account for the characteristic features of the two types of knowledge and acknowledge their roles in SLA. When it comes to defining explicit and implicit knowledge, Bialystok (1981) asserts that there have been a number of terms used by different psychologists to refer to the distinction: *objective* vs. *personal* (Polanyi 1958), *knowledge* vs. *belief* (Scheffler 1965) and *knowing that* vs. *knowing how* (Ryle 1949). As far as explicit knowledge is concerned, Ellis (2004: 229) lists a plethora of different terms to label this dimension of knowledge, such as *language awareness, metalinguistic awareness/abilities/performance, analysed*

knowledge, conscious knowledge, knowledge about, declarative knowledge or learned knowledge. Although these terms overlap, they do not carry precisely the same meaning. Therefore, there is a need to label and define more precisely the two types of learners' knowledge which play such an important role in the process of second language acquisition.

Explicit knowledge is usually defined in terms of awareness: it is the conscious mental representations that a learner forms. It is analyzed, abstract, and explanatory (Ellis 1994a: 84). Because it is analyzed, this knowledge can be categorized (Ellis 1994a) and organized (Bialystok 1981). In his article attempting to define explicit knowledge and present the possible ways of its measurement, Ellis (2004: 245f) formulates the following definition of explicit knowledge:

Explicit L2 knowledge is the declarative and often anomalous knowledge of the phonological, lexical, pragmatic and sociocritical features of an L2 together with the metalanguage for labeling this knowledge. It is held consciously and is learnable and verbalizable. It is typically accessed through controlled processing when L2 learners experience some kind of difficulty in the use of the L2. Learners vary in depth and breadth of their explicit L2 knowledge.

According to Ellis, it is “the conscious awareness of what a language or language in general consists of and/or of the roles that it plays in the human life” (Ellis 2004: 229). In other words, explicit knowledge may be viewed as part of declarative memory which is only to some extent related to the process of learning and actual language performance. Explicit L2 knowledge is often associated with effortful processing and is sometimes used as a synonym for *declarative knowledge* (Hulstijn 2005). Paradis (1998) calls explicit knowledge *metalinguistic knowledge* and makes a distinction between this type of knowledge and implicit knowledge, which may be particularly useful in the context of formal instruction:

It is (...) important to distinguish between implicit linguistic knowledge and metalinguistic knowledge. The former is acquired incidentally, is stored in the form of procedural know-how without conscious knowledge of its contents, and is used automatically. The latter is learned consciously, is available for conscious recall, and is applied to the production (and comprehension) of language in a controlled manner. Implicit linguistic competence is acquired through interaction with speakers of the language in situational contexts. Metalinguistic knowledge is usually learned through formal instruction (Paradis 1998: 428).

Taking into account the above definition, it may be concluded that explicit knowledge is acquired intentionally and learners are consciously aware of it and can verbalize it once it is acquired. On the other hand, implicit knowledge is acquired

incidentally and can be used without conscious awareness (Hinkel and Fotos 2002; Temple 2005). Ellis (1997b) suggests that the learner may in fact not be aware of ever having learned something which he or she is capable of doing. Also Reber (1989: 230) argues that “a considerable portion of memorial content is unconscious”. Bearing in mind that implicit L2 knowledge contains information which may be automatically and spontaneously used in language tasks, it is considered to be a major component of native speakers' grammatical competence (Brown 2000). Seen from this perspective, implicit knowledge may be divided into two types: *knowledge of items* and *knowledge of rules* (Ellis 1997b). Native speakers know both a great number of words, language chunks and formulaic language, as well as large numbers of rules which allow them to produce new utterances. Therefore, although native speakers are able to judge the grammaticality of sentences, they are often unable to provide an appropriate explanation for their choices. Ellis (1997b: 111) argues, then, that “implicit knowledge of L2 items and rules comprises the learner’s interlanguage system”. Little is still known about implicit knowledge, as it becomes visible in actual performance only, which poses a considerable challenge for researchers who need to find suitable instruments of data collection to measure it. Naturally, it is possible to reflect on one’s performance and make implicit knowledge become explicit (Ellis 1997b).

Table 1. Key characteristics of explicit and implicit knowledge (adapted from Ellis 2005a: 151).

Characteristics	Implicit knowledge	Explicit knowledge
Awareness	Learner is intuitively aware of linguistic norms	Learner is consciously aware of linguistic norms
Type of knowledge	Learner has procedural knowledge of rules and fragments	Learner has declarative knowledge of grammatical rules and fragments
Systematicity	Knowledge is variable but systematic	Knowledge is often anomalous and inconsistent.
Accessibility	Knowledge is accessible by means of automatic processing	Knowledge is accessible only through controlled processing
Use of L2 knowledge	Knowledge is typically accessed when learner is performing fluently	Knowledge is typically accessed when learner experiences a planning difficulty
Self-report	Non-verbalizable	Verbalizable
Learnability	Potentially only learnable within The ‘critical period’	Learnable at any age

The key characteristics distinguishing explicit and implicit knowledge have been presented in Table 1 and the distinction was elaborated on by Ellis (2005a), who

investigated the two types of knowledge using the following criteria (see also Ellis and Loewen 2007):

- *Awareness*

While studying child first language development, Karmiloff-Smith (1979) distinguished two types of data: *epilinguistic* data and *metalinguistic* data. The first type describes a child's intuitive awareness of implicit grammar rules (e.g. knowledge that a sentence is incorrect) and the latter depicts conscious awareness of errors in a sentence and the ability to explain the source of error. According to Karmiloff-Smith, children display epilinguistic behaviour prior to metalinguistic, which means that the development of their implicit knowledge allows the construction of their explicit knowledge which is a conscious representation of rules. Bialystok (1991) found that second language acquisition is similar and only when learners are ready to process explicit rules, are they of any use to them.

- *Type of knowledge*

In 1983 Anderson introduced his distinction between *declarative* and *procedural* knowledge and claimed that one dimension of knowledge can be gradually restructured into the other. Declarative knowledge being explicit and factual is often called *knowledge about*, whereas procedural knowledge is implicit, automatized and responsible for action within real time constraints; therefore it is often labeled *knowledge how*.

- *Systematicity and certainty of L2 knowledge*

The claim that implicit knowledge is more systematic than explicit was tested by various researchers (e.g. Reber et al. 1991; Tarone 1988) and it was found that interlanguage grammars representing implicit knowledge are systematic to some extent, contrary to explicit knowledge which often happens to be inaccurate, imprecise and variable. Implicit knowledge appears to be more certain and correct, while explicit knowledge is likely to cause confusion, misunderstandings and errors.

- *Accessibility of knowledge*

The distinction between explicit and implicit knowledge is also made on the basis of their level of accessibility, i.e. implicit knowledge is used automatically, unlike explicit knowledge which is monitored and processed consciously. The issue of accessibility is the cause of a considerable debate among many researchers (Krashen 1981; Hulstijn 2002a; DeKeyser 2003) and no definitive conclusions have been offered yet, as it has been

impossible to clearly distinguish automatized explicit knowledge from implicit knowledge in terms of how quickly the two types can be retrieved from the system.

- *Use of L2 Knowledge*

Another potential difference between implicit and explicit knowledge was found by Bialystok (1982), who analysed language tasks according to two criteria: *analysis* and *control*. She provided evidence for the claim that various tasks necessitate the use of different types of knowledge: implicit knowledge is employed automatically during performance, whereas explicit knowledge is used to solve a linguistic or a communicative problem.

- *Self-report*

Explicit and implicit knowledge differ in the extent to which learners can verbalize them. Generally, it is explicit knowledge that can be verbalized, although the ability to explain grammar may vary from student to student and be connected with their familiarity with metalanguage. Nevertheless, as evidenced by Dienes and Perner (1999), the degree of explicitness or implicitness may be established on the basis of the way a speaker deals with a given problem. Implicit knowledge, on the other hand, is not verbalizable and if there is an attempt to verbalize it, one has to develop its explicit representation.

- *Learnability*

The idea of learnability is closely connected with age: it is generally accepted that explicit knowledge can be learned at any age (Bialystok 1994), while implicit knowledge cannot. Therefore, it will be more difficult to learn an L2 item absent from a learner's L1 in an implicit way after a certain age, although the same item may be learned explicitly with no major problems. There are also some conflicting views on the learnability of explicit knowledge. Whereas Krashen (e.g. 1982) argues that only simple structures may be learned successfully, Green and Hecht (1992) provide evidence for the claim that advanced language features can also be learned with regard to explicit knowledge.

Despite plentiful research which has investigated the effects of instruction on learning (e.g. Norris and Ortega 2000) and the theoretical considerations on language instruction, there appears to be no consensus on how instruction facilitates language learning in the most effective way. One of the principles of instructed language acquisition proposed by Ellis (2005b) states that "instruction needs to be predominantly directed at developing implicit knowledge of the L2 while not neglecting explicit knowledge". It is

indeed widely acknowledged that linguistic competence is primarily a matter of implicit knowledge which should be the ultimate goal of any language teaching process. Different theorists make contradictory claims about how to foster this procedural and unconscious type of knowledge and much controversy is caused by the role of explicit knowledge in the development of linguistic abilities, particularly in terms of implicit knowledge. In order to understand the two dimensions of the language user's knowledge and answer the question whether explicit knowledge contributes to the development of implicit knowledge, it is necessary to get acquainted with the possible relationships between the two types of knowledge. Resulting from the ongoing debate on the role of explicit knowledge in SLA, three different hypotheses have been formulated: *the strong interface hypothesis*, *the non-interface hypothesis* and *the weak interface hypothesis*.

The *non-interface* hypothesis, advanced by Krashen (1981), states that implicit and explicit knowledge, which are associated with the concepts of *acquisition* and *learning*, are mutually exclusive and there is no possibility of explicit knowledge becoming implicit. According to Krashen, explicit knowledge which is learned has no influence on implicit knowledge which is acquired, because "learning cannot turn into acquisition" (Krashen 1985: 42-43). He argues that explicit teaching of grammar is fruitless, as an average learner is not able to apply the explicit rules in monitoring their communication. He also argues that only simple grammatical rules can be learned consciously. This position is also supported by Paradis (1994), who claims that the two dimensions of knowledge are located in two completely different parts of the brain and operate in two neuroanatomically distinct systems; therefore the connections between them are unlikely. Paradis claims that: "not only are implicit and explicit knowledge of language subserved by different cerebral memory systems, but they have different contents, and hence one cannot become the other" (1994: 405). While he does reluctantly agree that they may interact with each other, he strongly rejects the possibility of the transfer of knowledge from one to another. Apart from Krashen and Paradis, also Hulstijn (2002b: 211) argues that L2 explicit knowledge of grammar cannot convert into implicit knowledge through automatization, because there is no "automatization of rules".

On the other hand, there is the *strong interface* position, first introduced by Sharwood Smith (1981), who claimed that explicit knowledge can be converted into implicit by means of practice, and subsequently taken up by DeKeyser (1998) in his Skill-Learning Theory. For DeKeyser, the crucial question is whether explicit knowledge

resulting from instructional treatment could eventually become fully automatized (2003: 328). As he comments, (2009: 126), “the presence of one [explicit knowledge] is conducive to, or plays a causal role in the development of another”. In his opinion, explicit knowledge may transform into implicit if learners practise the structures with regard to both comprehension and production. Students must be engaged in extensive practice of using the target language while relying on their declarative knowledge located in their working memory. DeKeyser (2007b: 8) understands practice as “specific activities in the second language, engaged in systematically, deliberately, with the goal of developing knowledge of and skills in the second language”, and suggests that this practice may take different forms, from repeated use, via processing instruction, to communicative drills, which will eventually be followed by real-life and real-life-like two-way communicative practice (DeKeyser 2009: 131). N. Ellis (2005: 308) provides support for DeKeyser’s way of thinking, when he claims that “slot-and-frame patterns, drills, mnemonics, and declarative statements of pedagogical grammar (...) all contribute to the conscious creation of utterances that then partake in subsequent implicit learning and proceduralization”.

Between the two contradictory approaches, there is the *weak interface* position (Ellis 1993), which holds that explicit knowledge of L2 items and structures may convert into implicit, but usually does not (Ellis 1995a: 89). Ellis (e.g. 1995a, 2005a) believes that explicit knowledge can facilitate the development of implicit knowledge because it helps learners deal with the input they receive. This kind of knowledge may help them carry out “cognitive comparisons” (Ellis 1995a: 90) between their interlanguage and the target language input, or during feedback. So, in Ellis’s view, explicit knowledge contributes to the detection of L2 features in the input. According to Schmidt (1994), who rejects the idea that acquisition is entirely unconscious and implicit, the two types of knowledge form a continuum rather than create a dichotomy. Schmidt (1994, 2001) in his *Noticing Hypothesis* (see 1.3.2.2.) supports the weak interface hypothesis and agrees with the opinion that explicit knowledge can contribute to “registration of the occurrence of a stimulus event in conscious awareness and its subsequent storage in long-term memory” (N. Ellis 2005: 317). In other words, thanks to explicit knowledge, learners will find it easier to notice the target structure in the input and then monitor their own output comparing it with the input. Ellis (2005a) mentions three versions of the weak interface hypothesis. According to the first one, the transfer of explicit knowledge into implicit is possible only if the learner is developmentally ready to acquire the form (Pienneman 1989). The second one posits that

explicit knowledge can facilitate the development of implicit knowledge indirectly by making relevant features salient and thus enabling learners to attend to them and to notice the gap between the input and their interlanguage (N. Ellis 1994). Finally, the third position claims that the output produced using explicit knowledge may be converted into input helpful for implicit learning mechanisms (Sharwood Smith 1981).

The three hypotheses described above provide a basis for three different sets of implications for language teaching. The noninterface hypothesis encourages the *zero grammar* approach and provides justification for early immersion programmes and early variants of task-based teaching (Krashen 1985, 1994). On the other hand, the interface hypothesis “claims that explicit knowledge can be converted into implicit knowledge as a result of practicing specific features of the L2. It provides a clear justification for teaching explicit linguistic knowledge” (Ellis 2005b: 54). The strong interface position leads to the application of PPP (presentation, practice, production) with its procedures of explicit introduction of the structure, controlled practice followed by a free production stage, during which learners are expected to use the rules in semi-authentic situations. Finally, the weak interface hypothesis provides support for giving attention to grammatical forms by means of explicit instruction which “by changing expectations, helps focus attention on forms and meanings in the input, a prerequisite for subsequent reprocessing” (Schmidt 2001: 10). The focus on form approach and consciousness-raising tasks (Fotos 1994; Ellis 1993) are recommended here as they encourage students to deduce grammar rules on the basis of the data provided, which may facilitate the process of creating form-meaning connections.

1.2.2. Measuring implicit and explicit knowledge

Since it has been widely acknowledged that learners’ interlanguage is equated with implicit knowledge, a need arises to establish operational definitions for the theoretical constructs of explicit and implicit knowledge so as to be able to measure the two dimensions. Most researchers have encountered numerous problems when they attempted to determine the nature of knowledge acquired by the learners. In the metaanalysis of FFI research, Norris and Ortega (2000) decided to cross examine a number of different studies and found that one of the greatest problems was the validity of outcome measures. The 49 studies on instructed SLA which were coded by Norris and Ortega according to the type of knowledge

that was measured provided to be biased in favour of testing explicit, declarative knowledge rather than requiring the participants of the studies to deploy language knowledge in spontaneous communication. Norris and Ortega noted that “the observed instructional effectiveness within primary research to date has been based much more extensively on the application of explicit declarative knowledge under controlled conditions, without much requirement for fluent spontaneous speech” (2000: 486). According to Doughty (2003: 271), who attempted to interpret Norris and Ortega’s metaanalysis and provide some constructive advice on researching FFI, “the essential difficulty is that most of the outcome measures do not appear to be measuring L2 ability in any valid sense”.

Due to the fact that various instructional practices in use nowadays are believed to bring about different effects, many teachers evaluate their students’ linguistic knowledge through various testing measures, such as multiple choice, grammaticality judgment tests, completing sentences with the correct form or constructing accurate sentences. Some language educators go even further as they infer their students’ knowledge of the target language on the basis of various communication tasks which require different skills from learners. It is also becoming widely accepted that linguistic knowledge contains two types of knowledge: explicit and implicit. DeKeyser (2003: 319) emphasizes the importance of developing reliable “pure” measures of implicit and explicit language knowledge so that the debate over the relationships between the two types of representation can be resolved and the role of explicit knowledge in the formation of the implicit dimension can be established.

A question arises as to how to tap the two dimensions to obtain an accurate picture of learners’ ability. The relationship between implicit and explicit knowledge has been examined by a number of studies. The early studies included, for example Hulstijn and Husltijn (1984), Seliger (1979) and Sorace (1985). Whereas explicit knowledge was operationalized by means of learners’ explanation of specific language features, implicit knowledge was measured in written or oral language performances. The study by Green and Hecht (1992) attempted to investigate the explicit and implicit knowledge of secondary school and university learners. On the basis of a set of sentences containing grammatical errors which the participants of the study were asked to correct and state the relevant rule, they found that although the learners were able to correct 78% of the sentences, they could only state the correct rule in 46% of the cases. Green and Hecht observed that the learners’

ability to correct the errors exceeded their ability to explain the rules, and concluded that the learners' explicit knowledge allowing them to provide the rules was only a subset of their implicit knowledge thanks to which they were able to correct the errors.

Macrory and Stone (2000) attempted to investigate secondary school learners' acquisition of the past perfect tense in French. They measured their perceptions of what they knew about the target structure by means of self-report, their actual knowledge in a gap-fill test, and their ability to use the tense in free written and oral production. The results of the tests provided support for weak relationships between students' perceptions, their controlled performance and their use of the tense in the spontaneous production. Macrory and Stone (2000) concluded that what they termed *language-as-knowledge* and *language-for-use* might have derived from different sources: instruction about the rule system and routines practiced in class, thus explaining the observed disparity.

A study by Hu (2002) was conducted with a view to investigating to what extent explicit knowledge was available for use in spontaneous writing. 64 Chinese learners of English were asked to complete two spontaneous writing tasks first, then they did an untimed error correction task and a rule verbalization task, followed by another two spontaneous writing tasks and a timed error correction task. Hu (2002) assumed that the untimed correction and the rule verbalization tasks would raise the participants' consciousness of the forms in focus. The learners increased their accuracy of the six structures that Hu had chosen for the investigation during the second writing task, which led him to suggest that they might have become aware of the need to attend to specific language forms. Hu (2002) concluded that metalinguistic knowledge can be mobilized in L2 performance although he admitted that it was possible that the learners did not actually use their metalinguistic knowledge in the writing tasks, which could have implied they relied on their implicit knowledge only.

A study definitely worth mentioning is DeKeyser's (1995) attempt to investigate the effects of two kinds of form-focused instruction – explicit-deductive and implicit-inductive – on two kinds of rules in an artificial grammar. The participants of the study were involved in a computerized judgment test which required them to indicate whether a sentence matched a picture, and a computerized production test, which required them to type in a sentence to describe a picture within 30 seconds. The researcher also asked the learners to complete fill-in-the-blank tests to make sure they understood the rules. The learners taught by means of explicit-deductive type of instruction outperformed the other group, which led

DeKeyser (1995) to conclude that explicit instruction with practice fosters second language acquisition, at least in the case of simple grammatical forms. These results notwithstanding, DeKeyser (1995) was also aware of his inability to state clearly to what extent the production task allowed for monitoring by explicit knowledge.

While acknowledging the importance of the above mentioned studies, Ellis (2005a) expresses his concern about the employed instruments of data collection with regard to the measurement of explicit and implicit knowledge and provides several reasons why they should not be used in research. When it comes to explicit knowledge, it was measured on the basis of learners' ability to explain the rules. Both Ellis (2004) and Bialystok (1979) consider it an inappropriate tool as it requires not only the knowledge of the target feature, but also metalanguage and the ability to provide explanations. With regard to implicit knowledge, although spontaneous production tasks seem to be the best way of eliciting this type of representation, there is usually a possibility that learners access at least some of their explicit knowledge. On the basis these problems connected with instruments measuring the two types of knowledge, it seems crucial to design appropriate tools of data collection which would require learners to reveal the two types of knowledge and their characteristic features. Ellis (2005a) proposes that test designers should take into account seven criteria which allow making a distinction between implicit and explicit knowledge:

- *Degree of awareness*

It describes the extent to which learners are aware of their linguistic knowledge. On the two ends of the continuum are words: *feel* (explicit knowledge) or *rule* (implicit knowledge).

- *Time available*

It refers to the time pressure under which learners are during performing a task (activating their implicit knowledge) or the ability to plan their responses (explicit knowledge)

- *Focus of attention*

It is concerned with the question whether the task aims at fluency and meaning (implicit knowledge) or accuracy and form (explicit knowledge)

- *Systematicity*

It measures whether learners are systematic in their responses to a given task; implicit knowledge should produce more homogeneous responses than explicit knowledge.

- *Certainty*

The criterion of certainty is based on the assumption that learners are more confident while using their implicit knowledge than while applying explicit knowledge. According to Ellis (2005a: 152), the level of certainty may be difficult to establish.

- *Metalinguage*

The criterion of metalanguage is mainly connected with explicit knowledge, as learners explaining things using metalanguage will rely on their explicit knowledge, not implicit.

- *Learnability*

The issue of learnability is connected to age and it is assumed that early L2 learning will result in higher implicit knowledge, whereas higher levels of explicit knowledge will be observed with learners who started the process of language learning later via formal instruction.

In accordance with the requirements proposed above, Ellis (2005a) conducted a study which attempted to develop and examine research instruments intended to measure explicit and implicit knowledge separately. The target structures were 17 problematic (error inducing) language forms and included both morphological and syntactic features. The structures represented both the early and late forms in terms of the sequence of acquisition (e.g. Pienemann 1989). Building on the work of Han and Ellis (1998), Ellis (2005a) designed five tests which meet the requirements and hence are believed to tap the two dimensions of linguistic knowledge. In order to measure learners' implicit knowledge, elicited imitation tests, oral narrative tests or timed grammaticality judgment tests were employed. The design and procedures recommended for these tests are explained in detail in 4.6.3. The proposed tools for measuring explicit knowledge were untimed grammaticality judgment tests and metalinguistic knowledge tests. The tests were designed in accordance with the four of the criteria mentioned above (i.e. degree of awareness, time available, focus of attention, metalinguistic knowledge). Having correlated the results of the tests, Ellis concluded that the tests measure two different constructs. He found that the imitation test and the metalinguistic knowledge test are the best instruments to measure implicit and explicit knowledge, respectively. On the basis of his findings, Ellis (2005a) argues that it might be possible to develop relatively independent measures of the two types of knowledge. ~~Given~~ ^{Given} that the assessment of knowledge may have various purposes, the question of measuring explicit and implicit dimensions, addressed so often by researchers and methodologists, appears to be of great importance and value for SLA. To assess learners'

implicit or explicit knowledge, one needs to take into account a number of factors, such as the cognitive processes underlying the construction of either type, the characteristic features of both kinds of representation and the types of task which can elicit the particular kind of knowledge (Doughty 2003). Ellis (2005a: 168) claims that unless explicit and implicit knowledge are distinguished, “it will not be possible to test the interface and noninterface hypotheses that lie at the center of much current debate in SLA”. Undoubtedly, more expertise in the laborious field of measuring learners’ knowledge is needed to develop such instruments of data collection in which samples of learner performance can be consistently elicited and the data obtained from the assessment instruments can be used to make valid claims about what a learner does or does not know (Purpura 2005). When stating his principles of instructed language learning, Ellis (2005b: 19) proposes that “in assessing learners’ L2 proficiency, it is important to examine free as well as controlled production” and observes that free constructed response, such as a communicative task, corresponds most to the kind of language that is used naturally during real life communication. Ellis stressed the importance of developing valid and reliable instruments of measuring linguistic knowledge again in 2006a, when he called for more research investigating the effects of grammar instruction on implicit knowledge and recommended employing such methods that “tap into learners’ ability to use the grammatical structures they have been taught in communication (especially oral communication)” (2006a: 103).

1.3. Theoretical perspectives on instructed second language acquisition

There are a number of reasons one needs to consider when discussing the question whether foreign language teaching should or should not incorporate grammar instruction, and if so what options ought to be recommended for language teachers (e.g. Richards and Rodgers 2002). As the need to explain the rationale for either rejecting or recommending direct pedagogic intervention is of vital importance for language researchers and teachers who attempt to find the best ways of L2 teaching, there have been many attempts to investigate empirically the process of second language acquisition, taking into consideration not only the features of the language system, but also other cognitive and affective factors which undoubtedly influence learning; mainly various instructional options. The results of

empirical investigations into the process of SLA have provided evidence for the existence of immutable orders and sequences of language development (Ellis 2008a).

The debate on the effectiveness of grammar instruction takes place at two fundamental levels. The first level takes into account the general advantages coming from any instructional intervention, and the second attempts to find the best solutions and compare the efficacy of different instructional options (Doughty 2003). This section will attempt to explain if and how instruction affects the two types of linguistic knowledge which have already been described (i.e. explicit and implicit language knowledge). It aims to examine the origins, characteristics and implementation of the two possible perspectives on language teaching. The positions either advancing or criticizing formal instruction will be outlined and the theoretical underpinnings which have exerted a significant influence on language pedagogy will be presented. The non-interventionist positions, whose followers believe that language learning should resemble naturalistic conditions, include the Identity Hypothesis, Interlanguage Theory, UG-based Approaches and Krashen's Monitor Model. The facilitative role of grammar instruction, in turn, has been recognized by Processability Theory, the Noticing Hypothesis, Input Processing Theory, Skill Learning Theory, Interaction-based Theories, Connectionist Approaches and Sociocultural Theory.

1.3.1. Non-interventionist positions

The role of grammar in the foreign language curriculum was questioned by a number of researchers who analysed language data both in instructed and naturalistic settings. The findings of their studies provided evidence in support of a relatively predictable acquisitional order and the alleged *built-in* syllabus for grammar acquisition (e.g. Corder 1971; Krashen 1982). This, together with the dissatisfaction with the results of formal grammar instruction which was unable to change the order of acquisition, led some SLA researchers to propose a complete rejection of formal teaching of rules and structures due to the lack of observable advantages of grammar intervention. The non-interventionist position claimed that the target language is acquired incidentally and implicitly through exposure to comprehensible input and "the only contribution that classroom instruction can make is to provide comprehensible input that might not otherwise be available outside the classroom" (Krashen 1985: 33-34). Moreover, the proponents of the *zero option*

recommended the abandonment of any forms of explicit error correction treating it as harmful for the acquisitional process (Krashen 1982). The following subsections will be devoted to the presentation and discussion of the theoretical approaches which provided a basis for the non-interventionist positions in SLA.

1.3.1.1. Identity Hypothesis

The Identity Hypothesis, also called *Creative Construction Hypothesis*, was formulated after a series of studies comparing the processes of acquisition of L1 and L2 (e.g. Newmark 1966; Ellis 1985a; Bley-Vroman 1988). It proposes that SLA is very much like L1 acquisition, as learners form and test unconscious hypotheses on the basis of the input they receive from the environment (VanPatten and Benati 2010). In other words, it hypothesizes that the language acquisition device which is believed to be responsible for L1 acquisition is available to L2 learners (Ellis 2008a). The results of the empirical investigations (mainly morpheme studies) conducted by e.g. Dulay and Burt (1974), Ervin-Tripp (1974) and Cook (1977) showed that there were many parallels between first and second language learning, particularly in the early stages of development, such as the occurrence of intralingual errors, the use of formulaic expressions, the silent period, or structural and semantic simplifications. The most important similarity was, according to researchers, the order of acquisition, which in the case of L2 was impervious to language instruction. This observation, together with the assumptions formulated by nativists that language is an innate construct independent of external factors, led to drawing the conclusion that:

the functions of early sentences, and their form, their semantic redundancy, their reliance on ease of short term memory, their overgeneralization of lexical forms, their use of simple order strategies all were similar to processes we have seen in first language acquisition. In broad outlines, then, the conclusion is tenable that first and second language is similar in natural situations (Ervin-Tripp 1974: 126).

As already mentioned, the hypothesis claims that the strongest similarity between L1 and L2 is the order and sequence of acquisition, but while the acquisition of L2 negatives and interrogatives resembles that of L1 negation and question formation, learning other forms, such as articles, copula and the auxiliary verb 'be' does not. To be more precise, they are acquired earlier than in L1 and irregular past tense forms are acquired later

by L2 learners when compared with L1 learners (Ellis 2008a). There are also other discrepancies found between first and second language acquisition, and taking them into account, Bley-Vroman (1988, 2009) proposes the *Fundamental Difference Hypothesis*, stating that child L1 acquisition and adult L2 learning vary considerably. In his view, “the domain-specific language acquisition of children ceases to operate in adults, and (...) foreign language acquisition resembles general adult learning in fields for which no domain-specific learning system is believed to exist” (1988: 25). Bley-Vroman is supported in his claims, at least partially, by Larsen-Freeman (2003) and H.D. Brown (2000), who observe that there are definitely more discrepancies between children and adults, especially when one takes into account the individual differences. Basing on Bley-Vroman (1988), Ellis (2008a: 108) explicates the differences between L1 and L2 acquisition in an outline, which is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Differences between L1 and L2 acquisition (adapted from Ellis 2008a: 108, based on Bley-Vroman 1988)

Feature	L1 acquisition	L2 (foreign language) acquisition
Overall success	Children normally achieve Perfect mastery of their L1.	Adult L2 learners are very unlikely to achieve perfect mastery.
General failure	Success is guaranteed.	Complete success is very rare.
Variation	There is little variation among L1 learners with regard to overall Success or the path they follow.	L2 learners vary in both their degree of success and the path they follow.
Goals	The goal is target language competence.	L2 learners may be content with less than target language competence and may also be more concerned with fluency than accuracy.
Fossilization	Fossilization is unknown in child language development.	L2 learners often cease to develop and backslide (i.e. return to earlier stages of development).
Intuitions	Children develop clear intuitions regarding what is a correct and incorrect sentence.	L2 learners are often unable to form clear grammaticality judgments.
Instruction	Children do not need formal lessons to learn their L1.	There is a wide belief that instruction helps L2 learners.
Negative evidence	Children’s ‘errors’ are not typically corrected; correction not necessary for acquisition.	Correction generally viewed as helpful and, by some, as necessary.
Affective factors	Success is not influenced by personality, motivation, attitudes, etc.	Affective factors play a major role in determining proficiency.

Despite the differences listed above, it cannot, naturally, be denied that there exist common features between the language systems of children learning an L1 and adults learning an L2 (Ellis 2008a), the strongest being the acquisition of syntactical structures, but there is also evidence for similarities in the acquisition of vocabulary (Singleton 1999) and phonology. The similarities are also clearly observable in informal learning situations when learners produce language spontaneously. VanPatten (2004) recognizes the differences and similarities between languages in his *Fundamental Similarity Hypothesis*, according to which input-dependence and internal grammar are believed to be typical of both L1 and L2.

Undoubtedly, making comparisons between L1 and L2 acquisition is a complex process, which is evidenced by the lack of uniformity of the obtained research results. Nevertheless, the importance of the Identity Hypothesis cannot be understated, particularly in its weaker versions, and its influence on classroom procedures has been remarkable. Since L1 and L2 were believed to be acquired much in the same way, it meant huge changes for teaching procedures. Following the assumptions of the hypothesis, teaching foreign language should be as natural as possible and resemble real life contexts, which was hoped to create facilitative conditions for successful second language acquisition. Such pedagogical implications were in accordance with Corder's opinion that "efficient language teaching must work with, rather than against, natural processes, facilitate and expedite rather than impede learning" (1981: 77). The belief had its strong impact on teaching methods, especially the Natural Approach (Krashen and Terrell 1983), Communicational Teaching Project (Prabhu 1987) or early immersion programmes (Swain 1985).

1.3.1.2. Interlanguage Theory

Interlanguage Theory, which is to some extent compatible with the *Identity Hypothesis*, is based on empirical investigations concerning learners' errors and the developmental processes. In contrast to *Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis*, whose aim was to justify procedures for predicting errors, "interlanguage theory constitutes an attempt to explain errors" (Ellis 1990a: 51). Interlanguage Theory had its profound influence on the study of second language acquisition and brought many changes to different perspectives on language learning. According to the theory, a second language is viewed as a rule-governed

system, similarly to the first language produced by children, and learners are described as “intelligent and creative beings proceeding through logical, systematic stages of acquisition, creatively acting upon their linguistic environment as they encountered its forms and functions in meaningful contexts” (H. D. Brown 2000: 215). Learning a language is regarded as a process of trial and error, done through constant hypothesis testing, which finally allows learners to succeed and approximate the system used by native speakers.

The term *interlanguage* (IL) was coined by Selinker (1972), but there are also other labels for the transitional system built by learners while they develop their L2 competence, such as *transitional competence* (Corder 1967), *approximative system* (Nemser 1971), or *idiosyncratic dialect* (Corder 1971). These terms describe two related but still different concepts. First of all, *interlanguage* may describe the “structured system which the learner constructs at any given stage in his development” (Ellis 1990a: 47), but it also refers to Corder’s (1971) *built-in syllabus* formed by a series of interlocking systems. Despite these differences, the three concepts assume that the language produced by learners is distinct from their L1 and L2 constituting a separate linguistic system (H. D. Brown 2000: 216). The main assumptions of *Interlanguage Theory* were outlined by Nemser (1971), who claims that:

- (1) an approximative system is distinct from L1 and L2 at any given time;
- (2) the systems form an evolving series;
- (3) approximative systems of learners at the same stage of proficiency may coincide in a given contact situation.

The principles of interlanguage development listed by Selinker (1972) attempt at specifying the cognitive processes responsible for second language acquisition in the following way:

- (1) Language transfer: L1 interference is believed to be plausible.
- (2) Transfer of training: interlanguage restructuring may be a result of instruction.
- (3) Strategies of L2 learning: “an identifiable approach by the learner to the material to be learned” (Selinker 1972: 37).
- (4) Strategies of L2 communication: “an identifiable approach by the learner to communication with native speakers” (Selinker 1972: 37).
- (5) Overgeneralisation of target language rules.

The five processes listed above, constitute the ways in which the L2 system is believed to be internalised by the learner.

The subsequent discussions on interlanguage and its role in second language acquisition are mostly concerned with its three major features: *permeability*, *dynamism*, and *systematicity*. The L2 learner's interlanguage is *permeable* as it is subject to constant change and evolution, depending on the situations and contexts a learner encounters. Interlanguage is also *dynamic*, which accounts for the ongoing process of revising the data and accommodating new hypotheses about the target language system. Whereas the two features mentioned above support the variability of interlanguage, the third one depicts its stability. L2 learner language is *systematic* in the sense that learners base their performance on their own existing rule system, similarly to native speakers. Therefore, it is difficult to evaluate a learner's grammar in terms of the target language rules, as these rules may in fact differ from the internalised rules of the interlanguage, which makes the evaluation doubtful. Saville-Troicke (2006: 41) also adds another feature of interlanguage, namely that it is a *reduced* system, both in form and function. These characteristics refer to less complex forms (e.g. omission of inflections) and the limited range of communicative needs (for learners having contact with their L1 community).

Having established that learner language is systematic, dynamic and permeable, researchers set out to answer questions about the processes responsible for interlanguage construction and the nature of interlanguage continuum. In order to explain the progress learners make along the interlanguage continuum, they use the concept of *hypothesis formation* and *hypothesis testing*. Corder (1967) proposes that there exist common features between L1 and L2 acquisition, such as forming and testing hypotheses about the target language, which are believed to evidence the internal processing of the system. According to this view, learners are exposed to input and grammar structures present in the input and create their own *hypothetical grammars* which they later test during comprehension and production. Apart from external sources, those mental grammars are also constructed internally on the basis of L1 transfer or due to the process of overgeneralisation. Learners' competence may be observed in their performance, which may at times contain correct or incorrect utterances. Pawlak (2006: 128) notes that the process of L2 acquisition "involves gradual complexification, with successive internal grammars being more sophisticated than their predecessors". The question that arises is where the starting point of the interlanguage continuum is. There have been a number of hypotheses concerning the issue (e.g. Corder 1977; Selinker 1972), but the position adopted today holds that "the system is composed of numerous elements, not the least of which are elements from the native language (NL) and

the target language (TL). There are also elements in the IL that do not have their origin in either the NL or the TL” (Gass and Selinker 2008: 12).

Irrespective of where the beginning point of the interlanguage continuum is, most learners never reach its end, meaning target language competence, however it may be defined. This process, called *fossilization*, is experienced by the vast majority of learners and cannot be remedied by instruction. Although it may happen that a learner produces the correct L2 form even if it is fossilized in the interlanguage as incorrect, he or she is likely to *backslide* towards the wrong form, when concentrating on meaning or experiencing a difficult communicative situation. According to Selinker and Lamendella (1978), the causes of fossilization which are responsible for the recurrence of inaccurate forms in the language may be *internal* (e.g. changes in the neural structure of the brain due to age) or *external* (e.g. lack of learning opportunities), which may at least partially answer the question why some learners are more successful than others, as “relative success can be defined in this approach as the level of interlanguage development before learning stops” (Saville-Troike 2006: 42).

The pedagogical recommendations originating from Interlanguage Theory bear much resemblance to the implications based on the Identity Hypothesis. The main assumption is to create conditions as similar to naturalistic acquisition as possible, with special attention paid to developing learners’ interlanguage in the direction of L2. The teaching options to be implemented are effective remedial work depending on the nature of the incorrect form and changes in the syllabus. It is proposed that syllabi should follow the developmental sequences evidenced by research (Ellis 1990b) or that learning should be actually limited to creating conditions for meaningful interaction. Hence, grammar teaching should be reduced to the minimum. It is believed that “when provided with opportunities for communication, the learner would not only learn how to communicate but, in the process, would also acquire the knowledge of the linguistic system” (Ellis 1990b: 56). This idea contributed greatly to the construction of more complete and cohesive L2 acquisition theories, one example being the *Monitor Model* proposed by Krashen (1982), which is described later in the present chapter.

1.3.1.3. Approaches based on Universal Grammar

Universal Grammar (UG) is based on Chomsky's (1965) transformational-generative grammar which aims to provide a universal description of language behaviour revealing the internal linguistic system to which all humans are predisposed (Radford 1988). According to Chomsky, the knowledge of a language consists of two types of knowledge: *principles* which are shared by all languages and *parameters* which are language specific. In Cook's words, language knowledge contains "principles that do not vary from one person to another and parameter settings that vary according to a particular language a person knows" (1994: 25). To explain the concept, Cook employs the metaphor of a video recorder which needs two elements to function: the machinery, the same for every item sold, and the tuning function utilized by the user depending on the specific circumstances. The principles are just like the machinery part that every human mind is born with. Principles and parameters constitute the particular rules or their variations typical of one language. Since the knowledge of principles and parameters is postulated to be inborn and the human species is believed to be DNA-coded for language, children are assumed to have the ability to process the input they receive and consequently construct appropriate L1 grammar, because UG constrains and guides the acquisition towards the mastery of the mother tongue (e.g. White 2007: 38).

While the Universal Grammar model is generally accepted as a valid explanation of first language acquisition in children (e.g. Bley-Vroman 1983; Schachter 1990; Spada and Lightbown 2002), its plausibility for second language learning has been widely debated. As far as SLA is concerned, the issue of fundamental importance is L2 learners' ability to reset their L1 parameters if they are different from their L2 parameters. It has been suggested that "resetting of parameters occurs when appropriate input data from the environment interact with the information contained in UG" (VanPatten and Benati 2010: 122). Nevertheless, it is not certain whether all parameters can be reset and to what extent L1 parameters are transferred to L2 from the beginning. When it comes to determining the role of Universal Grammar in second language learning, there have been a number of various positions describing the development of L2 knowledge. The generative perspective assumes that if the model accounts for first language competence, it may well provide an explanation for nonnative competence (Corder 1967; Selinker 1972;). Mitchell and Myles (2004: 78), however, note that there are a number of factors, such as the cognitive maturity of learners, the knowledge of other language(s) or motivation that deserve consideration before evaluating the role of UG in second language acquisition. Mitchell and Myles (2004:

77ff) and also Ellis (2008a) have proposed four ways in which Universal Grammar can contribute to second language learning:

- *Full access view*: the whole of UG is available to second language learners to the same extent as to first language learners, and the process of L2 acquisition mirrors L1 acquisition.
- *No access view*: the position goes in line with the Fundamental Difference Hypothesis (Bley-Vroman 1988); the role of UG is denied, as it is no longer available due to maturation processes; learners must rely on general problem-solving strategies; the process of second language acquisition is explained on the basis of cognitive theories, such as e.g. Multidimensional Model (Meisel 1997).
- *Partial access view*: learners are assumed to have access to the principles of UG; therefore they do not make ‘impossible errors’ (Gregg 2001), but they cannot use the full range of parametric variation, particularly those parameters in L2 which are different from L1 (Schachter 1996). It means that some parameters could be available for L2 while others not, or only to a certain extent, which all in all results in the possibility of an indirect UG access.
- *Dual access view*: it proposes that adult learners have access to UG, but there is also general problem-solving processing present and operating; it competes with UG and as a result of the interference between the imperfect problem solving skills and the language specific model, adults cannot achieve full L2 competence (cf. Felix 1985).

The four positions outlined above provoke different forms of debate about the process of second language acquisition, the most controversial of which is the role of negative evidence (see 2.3.3.). Since the full access view supports the idea that it is sufficient for learners to interact with input and use their UG mechanisms to achieve second language mastery, the need to provide negative evidence does not really exist. One cannot escape noticing, however, that adult learners are unlikely to become native like, which may be explained by the critical period hypothesis (Ellis 2008a: 625). Therefore, providing such learners with negative evidence through both corrective feedback and explicit instruction may be facilitative for the development of their language skills. The assumption that negative evidence plays a role in UG-based L2 acquisition, i.e. it can activate UG, has been discussed from different points of view (e.g. Schwartz 1986; White 1991; Carroll 2001), but, as Ellis (2008a: 628) concludes, “there is increasing evidence that negative evidence is available, usable and actually used by L2 learners”. Adopting the no

access view which assumes the primary role for general problem solving skills, one has to reject the assumptions of Universal Grammar and rely only on the cognitive approach to L2 acquisition. In this situation, since the resetting of parameters is not possible, the role of negative evidence in constructing L2 knowledge is undeniable, especially in adults. When it comes to pedagogical implications, it seems reasonable that grammar intervention which includes explicit instruction and corrective feedback should be implemented in language teaching procedures. It is also difficult to evaluate the dual access view unequivocally, as one cannot precisely state which system is being used by a learner, so in fact drawing verifiable conclusions may be impossible (cf. Cook 1985). As far as the partial access view is concerned, the proponents of the UG framework (e.g. White 1991) recognize a facilitative role of explicit information in teaching about what is ungrammatical in L2, particularly when there is a need to help learners reset the parameters that differ in L1 and L2. Despite this, UG-oriented scholars (e.g. Schwartz 1993; Towell and Hawkins 1994) reject the facilitative effects of form-focused instruction, claiming that negative evidence does not contribute to the development of the L2 knowledge system and the effects, if any, are not long-lasting. Apart from the four views discussed above, Universal Grammar may also help us understand the variability of success achieved by second language learners. Analysing language progress in accordance with the rules of UG, Savielle-Troike (2006: 52) concludes that not all learners have the same degree of access to UG. Some may be more perceptive than others in their ability to analyse L2 input using their L1 parameter settings. What is more, different L1s and L2s may result in differential transfer or interference and, taking into account that the quality of input is variable, it is possible that learners will reach different degrees of access to UG also for lexical features.

Although there are a number of advantages of Universal Grammar, it does suffer from some weaknesses. Trying to understand the process of second language acquisition with the implementation of the Universal Grammar Theory would involve neglecting explicit pedagogic intervention and instruction in forms. Doughty and Williams (1998a: 201) express their concern about the possibility of implementation of UG-based approaches to educational contexts, saying that:

If a UG-based explanation were to prevail, regardless of whether a role for explicit and negative evidence in SLA is rejected or accepted, then teachers would simply have to wait for the results of linguistic research to determine precisely what resides in UG and do their best to provide triggering data in their classes.

Many researchers doubt whether the innate language module is available after the critical period, and there are even some who deny its existence at all. Apart from that, Ellis (1994a: 359) mentions a number of theoretical and methodological weaknesses of the Universal Grammar approach, such as imprecise definitions of some important concepts, the risk of distortion of research results caused by variability of learners' performance, and too much reliance on grammaticality judgment tests as instruments of measuring learners' intuitions or implicit knowledge (Lightbown and Spada 2006). Another weak point of UG is that its early version took into account mainly syntax, neglecting other subsystems of language and the processes responsible for their acquisition which are believed to contribute to general language knowledge. However, the fairly recent *Minimalist Program* formulated by Chomsky (1995) needs to be mentioned here, for it has broadened the scope of interest of UG-based SLA theory, "aiming to provide a principled account of the mapping of meaning to sound. As a result UG-oriented SLA researchers are now interested in almost every aspect of the linguistic knowledge of L2 speakers" (Ellis 2008a: 585). The minimalist position, which is a response to the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, also contributes to the diminution of the role of L1 as it emphasizes such general processes of language learning as hypothesis formation and hypothesis testing (Ellis 2008a: 361). UG-based approaches also suffer from their scope of interest, as it is competence connected with the formal language properties that UG is concerned with rather than with how linguistic knowledge is used in performance (Pawlak 2006; Ellis 2008a). Moreover, other social and psychological factors which have been shown to play a role in second language acquisition are not taken into account by UG-based approaches, either. When it comes to methodology, UG-oriented researchers prefer experimentally elicited data, with grammaticality judgment tasks being employed most often (Ellis 2008a). Although they require learners to make assessments of some kind with regard to what is allowed and disallowed in the language, which is advantageous from the point of view of UG, they are not appropriate for all students (in terms of literacy) and tend to generate variable responses, which is perceived to be a major problem of reliability (Ellis 2008a: 586). As far as the validity of grammaticality judgment tasks is concerned, learners rely on both explicit and implicit knowledge while doing the task, which makes it impossible to measure implicit knowledge only, which in fact is the main assumption of UG-based theory. Last but not least, as Skehan rightly observes (1998), the theory is constantly being reformulated, which does have its good points for the overall

study of language, but may also cause a great deal of confusion for those researchers who have embraced a particular version of the theory.

Irrespective of the weaknesses, Universal Grammar, being a sophisticated tool for linguists and researchers, makes it possible to advocate specific hypotheses and verify them empirically. What is more, thanks to its reliability as a tool for linguistic description, it is possible to account for the existence of developmental stages and the influence of other languages, which may allow researchers to conclude that there are some aspects of SLA which depend on purely formal language properties (Ellis 2008a). Universal Grammar Theory has also created a theoretical background for a number of other methods and approaches which acknowledge the importance of meaning-focused instruction and has also contributed to the development of a non-interventionist position to language pedagogy, being the basis, for example, for Krashen's (1981, 1982) Monitor Model which is discussed in the next section.

1.3.1.4. Krashen's (1981) Monitor Theory

Monitor Theory, called "one of the most ambitious and influential theories in the field of SLA, and one that is probably the most familiar to language educators" (VanPatten and Williams 2007: 25), was first proposed in the late 1970s in a series of articles (e.g. Krashen 1977) and then refined and expanded in the early 1980s (Krashen 1981, 1982, 1985). It was a response to the growing dissatisfaction with language teaching methods based on behaviourism. The theory attempts to account for a variety of phenomena in language acquisition, from age differences to the effects of instruction. Although it does not explain the specific processes responsible for learning, it is the first theory to propose a language-specific model of acquisition, it assumes that acquiring L1 and L2 are essentially the same, and that linguistic knowledge is an innate ability. Krashen's approach has been described in five hypotheses which provide the major assumptions about how the target language is acquired. Short descriptions of these hypotheses follow:

(1) The acquisition-learning hypothesis

The basic premise of the acquisition-learning hypothesis is that language acquisition and learning are two distinct ways of gaining second language knowledge and they are stored separately. Krashen (1981, 1982) claims that learners possess two systems of knowledge

which is closely related to the distinction between implicit and explicit knowledge; an *acquired* system (implicit knowledge) and a *learnt* system (explicit knowledge) (Krashen 1982: 10). Acquisition refers to the “subconscious process identical in all important ways to the process children utilize in acquiring their first language” (Krashen 1985: 1) whereas learning describes the “conscious process that results in knowing about language” (Krashen 1985: 1). Acquisition is believed to be the result of natural interaction which has a meaningful purpose, and learning is the result of classroom procedures, where the target language is the object of instruction but not necessarily the medium. In Krashen’s (1982: 83-84) words, “language acquisition (...) happens in one way, when the acquirer understands input containing a structure that the acquirer is ‘due’ to acquire (...) There is no necessity for the previous conscious knowledge of a rule”. The most important claim about the difference between acquisition and learning is the idea of meaningful communication, which may take place both outside and inside the educational context, but the key factor is the real communicative purpose which will encourage and trigger subconscious processes in the case of acquisition, contrary to conscious attention to form while learning. The problem raised by a number of researchers is the difficulty in differentiating between a learner’s subconscious and conscious processing. According to Krashen (1982: 83), “a very important point that (...) needs to be stated is that learning does not ‘turn into’ acquisition”, as the two types of knowledge gained by means of these two routes will never interact nor unify into one. Therefore, he proposes that formal instruction should be abandoned as its effects will not help learners communicate spontaneously. This is because even though students know the rules and practice them, the knowledge that is learnt cannot be converted into implicit knowledge and become available for real-life use (*non-interface position*).

(2) *The monitor hypothesis*

The monitor hypothesis accounts for the actual application of the learned and acquired knowledge and supports the view that the acquired system (implicit knowledge) is central to language knowledge and performance, whereas the learned system (explicit knowledge) is accorded a secondary role. Krashen states that “learning has only one function, and that is as Monitor or editor” and is used to “make changes in the form of our utterance, after it has been ‘produced’ by the acquired system” (1982: 15). The conclusion is that it is acquisition that is given the major responsibility for the production and fluency of language. The three conditions under which the monitor can be used successfully are:

1. The speaker or writer has enough time to exercise the monitor.

2. The speaker or writer is focused on form.
3. The speaker or writer knows the rule.

As stated above, the Monitor may be used only if there is enough time for learners to pay conscious attention to form (accuracy), but one has to admit that the everyday contexts of communication (especially speaking) do not usually allow careful monitoring of one's language. The Monitor may be employed more often during writing, "especially planned and carefully constructed writing for which there is time to apply consciously learner rules" (VanPatten and Benati 2010: 108). Krashen (1985) differentiates between three types of Monitor users: there are *monitor over-users* who do not want to make mistakes and constantly check their language against the rules they have learned; their speech may be slow and non-fluent. On the other end of the continuum, there are *monitor under-users*, who seem not to care much about their accuracy and do not use their Monitor much; their speech may be fluent but not very correct. In between, there are *optimal-users of monitor*, who are able to use the Monitor appropriately and it does not impair their output. Although such a division may exist, it is problematic to estimate when learners use their acquired or learned knowledge. As far as SLA research is concerned, the extent to which learners rely on their acquired or learnt system is of great importance when it comes to estimating learners' explicit and implicit knowledge.

(3) *The natural order hypothesis*

The natural order hypothesis is based on the findings that second language acquisition processes operate according to a certain sequence. On the basis of research into second language morpheme acquisition orders (e.g. Dulay and Burt 1974; Larsen-Freeman 1975), Krashen concludes that "we acquire the rules of language in a predictable order, some rules tending to come early and other late. The order does not appear to be determined solely by learners' mother tongue, nor by formal simplicity and there is evidence that it is independent of the order in which rules are taught in language classes" (1985: 1). The natural order hypothesis has been criticized for not taking into account individual differences or language transfer. The methodology of the morpheme studies which Krashen based upon was also weak, as these studies addressed learners' production accuracy rather than their acquisitional orders.

(4) *The input hypothesis*

The Input Hypothesis is connected with the *Natural Order Hypothesis* as it claims that learners progress along the developmental path by receiving and processing

comprehensible input. Comprehensible input is the language that a learner is exposed to at the level $i+1$, i.e. just beyond the learner's language level. The letter i stands for the learner's current competence and $+1$ is the next step in the developmental sequence. In this view, any other level of input: either too simple (e.g. $i-1$) or too difficult (e.g. $i+4$) will not be of any use for the learner's acquisitional process. Krashen (1985: 2) proposes that:

if input is understood, and there is enough of it, the necessary grammar is automatically provided. The language teacher need not attempt deliberately to teach the next structure along the natural order – it will be provided in just the right quantities and automatically reviewed if the student receives a sufficient amount of comprehensible input.

The Comprehensible Input Hypothesis has come under much criticism and has been the subject of a heated debate as the main unresolved problem is what exactly constitutes i and $i+1$. Krashen argues that *roughly tuned input*, i.e. the input that learners receive in their natural or educational contexts, will automatically include various levels of input, and he believes that different learners will find the levels of comprehensible input appropriate for them. In his view, as long as students are exposed to communication focused on meaning rather than form, they will spontaneously access and use what they need. It means they do not actually need to produce the language before they are ready to do so, because otherwise their acquisitional process may in fact be hindered. According to Krashen, the provision of rich and comprehensible input is not only the necessary condition for successful SLA but it is a sufficient one (VanPatten and Williams 2007: 28).

(5) *The affective filter hypothesis*

Since Krashen (e.g. 1985) believes that comprehensible input is the *sine qua non* of second language acquisition, he also distinguishes various levels of accessing it by different learners. He accords that role to the so-called *affective filter* which determines how much comprehensible input a learner is able to take in. Krashen (1982: 31) claims that "(...) the Affective Filter Hypothesis captures the relationship between affective variables and the process of second language acquisition by positing that acquirers vary with respect to the strength or level of their affective filters". In other words, there are learners whose attitudes towards the second language are not optimal or they do not seek contact with the language, and hence their affective filter will be high, leading to little input accessing those parts in the brain responsible for SLA. On the other hand, if learners are willing to learn a language and open to input, their affective filter will be low and allow more input to get through and be processed by the brain. The Affective Filter Hypothesis may help us understand the

different levels of success reached by language learners, but the evidence in support of Krashen's theory is still inconclusive and based mainly on immersion programmes in Canada, which he considers highly successful, and the results of instruction in the USA, which in his opinion serves as evidence for minor effects of pedagogical intervention (VanPatten and Williams 2007: 28).

Krashen's ideas have been challenged by a number of psychologists (e.g. McLaughlin 1978; Odlin 1986) and linguists (e.g. White 1987) as suffering from a number of limitations. First and foremost, there is much controversy over the issue of no interface between acquisition and learning. According to McLaughlin (1990: 627), it is difficult to measure acquisition and learning empirically and therefore he rejects "the distinction that assumes that it is possible to differentiate what is conscious from what is unconscious". In order to distinguish between acquisition and learning, Krashen asked learners to use introspection and report whether they did grammaticality judgments based on *rule* or on *feel*. McLaughlin (1978) questioned the reliability and validity of such procedures and claimed that subjective and introspective evidence could not support the conscious (learning) unconscious (acquisition) distinction. The non-interface position was also criticized by Gregg (1984: 82), who argued that "if unconscious knowledge is capable of being brought to consciousness, and if conscious knowledge is capable of becoming unconscious – and this seems to be a reasonable assumption – then there is no reason whatever to accept Krashen's claim, in the absence of evidence". Also Gass and Selinker (2008) doubt the logic of the idea that nothing learned formally can be used in spontaneous language production, as it would mean that the same information is stored in two non-cooperative parts of the brain, which seems unlikely.

Apart from psychological constraints, there are also other limitations from which Krashen's Theory suffers. The main problem seems to be Krashen's (2003) insistence that learnt knowledge (explicit) does not facilitate the development of and cannot contribute to the acquisition of the acquired knowledge (implicit). This claim has become known as the *non-interface position* (see 1.2.1.). The findings on which Krashen (1979) based his proposals often came from morpheme studies which are not entirely conclusive and reliable because they address accuracy rather than acquisition, they are deficient in terms of statistical analysis and take into account few grammatical items (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991). Moreover, the idea that neither practice nor error correction enables learnt

knowledge to become acquired knowledge causes considerable controversy. Krashen's claim that comprehensible input is sufficient for second language acquisition can be easily rebutted. Firstly, when one considers the problem from a pedagogical perspective, it becomes evident that it is an extremely strenuous task to provide learners with such input that would meet the requirements of being comprehensible for at least most learners in heterogeneous classes. According to the Input Hypothesis, it is input itself that promotes acquisition and at no time should learners be forced to produce language and interact with one another. Long (1996) and Swain (1995a, 1995b) oppose the idea and suggest that it is modified interaction that learners use to attend to problems in their interlanguage and introduce any alterations in the output they produce. It is in this way that the processes of target language acquisition are facilitated.

Despite the criticisms concerning the methodological and theoretical aspects of Krashen's Monitor Model, his ideas became very influential among educators and their teaching procedures, which led to the implementation of the *experiential strategy* (Stern 1992). First of all, Krashen's claim that learned (explicit) knowledge is of minor importance for communication and does not contribute to the development of acquired (implicit) knowledge generated questions about the usefulness of grammar teaching and error correction. Although Krashen (2003) acknowledges some benefits of correcting learners' errors and providing them with the knowledge of rules, he does not believe they will be of any help for language acquisition in general. As a result of such a way of thinking, the structural syllabus with its careful design taking into account language features and their complexity should also be rejected in favour of appropriate communicative activities which would help learners proceed along their natural orders. Furthermore, since the Monitor Theory is an example of a *comprehension approach* (Celce-Murcia 2001), speaking is of no major value for second language acquisition and is believed to emerge when the learners is ready. Finally, taking into account the importance of the affective filter, teachers should avoid creating stressful situations and provide learners with the best conditions available lest acquisition might be hindered by high filter.

When it comes to the actual pedagogical implications introduced by the Monitor Theory, one needs to mention Communicative Language Teaching, immersion programmes, content-based instruction and the Natural Approach which have all relied to some extent on Krashen's proposals. What is more, Krashen's ideas encouraged much second language acquisition research conducted with a view to confirming his theories or

finding counter evidence to his claims, which undoubtedly has advanced our understanding of second language acquisition (Mitchell and Myles 2004; Lightbown and Spada 2006). Krashen himself is very firm in his claims to this day and concludes that “ these hypotheses have not only survived well over the years but have also proven to be useful in other areas of language education” (2003: vii). In his evaluation of Krashen’s proposals, Pawlak (2006: 143) acknowledges their appeal to a number of teachers and provides a very reasonable comment, stating that “after all, who would disagree that there should be more acquisition and less learning in traditional language classes, that it is essential to have as much exposure to the L2 as possible, and that we should comprehend the language we read or hear if we are to acquire it.”

1.3.2. Interventionist positions

While the non-interventionist positions can be credited with making a number of cogent assumptions and drawing some important conclusions, it appears that the results of the contemporary research support the idea that grammar instruction is beneficial for the process of second language acquisition. In the studies comparing the effects of various types of instruction with naturalistic learning (e.g. Doughty 1991; Norris and Ortega 2000; Pawlak 2006), it was found that instruction does indeed make a difference and is worth incorporating into the language curriculum. Although it must be accepted that there are fixed orders and sequences of second language acquisition which are resistant to grammar intervention, form-focused instruction can foster the process of learning and contributes to the more accurate production of language features, particularly at higher levels of learning (e.g. Larsen-Freeman 2003). Having presented the non-interventionist perspectives, their assets and disputable points, the author now intends to acquaint the reader with a number of theoretical positions which posit that pedagogic intervention is an integral part of the process of instructed language learning and brings considerable benefits for the process of second language acquisition. The discussion will focus upon such influential positions as Processability Theory, the Noticing Hypothesis, Input Processing Theory, Skill Learning Theory, Interaction-based theories, connectionist approaches and Sociocultural Theory.

1.3.2.1. Processability Theory

Processability Theory (PT) is believed to grow out of the *Multidimensional Model* (Meisel, Clahsen and Pienemann 1981, Clahsen, Meisel and Pienemann 1983), which was based on the findings of the study on the acquisition of German by adult migrant workers with little or no language instruction. The findings of the studies allowed the researchers to conclude that the regularities in learner language are the product of cognitive procedures that govern those linguistic operations which are possible to be handled by learners (Ellis 2008a: 458). Processability Theory, formulated on the basis of the premises of the Multidimensional Model and Pienemann's further research (1998, 2003), holds that:

(...) at any stage of development, the learner can produce and comprehend only those second language linguistic forms that the current state of the language processor can handle. It is therefore crucial to understand the architecture of the language processor and the way in which it handles an L2. This enables one to predict the course of development of L2 linguistic forms in language production and comprehension across languages (Pienemann 2007: 137).

Pienemann suggests that "once we can spell out the sequence in which language processing routines develop we can delineate those grammars that are processable at different points of development" (2005: 2). Processability Theory, then, seeks to find out how learners acquire the procedural skills that operate on the linguistic knowledge they build. Drawing upon Levelt's (1989) work on speech production, the computational model of Kempen and Hoenkamp (1987) and Garrett's work (1982), Pienemann proposes that language processing according to PT has the following features (2007: 137):

- Processing components operate largely automatically and are generally not consciously controlled.
- Processing is incremental, i.e. a processor can start working on the incomplete output of another processor.
- The output of the processor is linear although it may not be mapped onto the underlying meaning in a linear way.
- Grammatical processing has access to a temporary memory store that can hold grammatical information.

The basic logic behind PT is that learners cannot access hypotheses both about the first and the second language that they cannot process. It also affects changes in the

interlanguage system and the process of L1 transfer. Moreover, the extended version of PT holds that the initially acquired L2 grammar depends on the default relationship between the meaning and the way this meaning is expressed. Pienemann (2007) claims that his theory accounts both for receptive and productive language skills. Ellis (2008a), however, argues that the features mentioned above are clearly connected with producing output, which makes the Processability Theory a theory of language production, in fact, as it does not account for the processes of language comprehension nor the interaction between comprehension and production. Nevertheless, Ellis admits that one may call the Processability Theory a second language acquisition theory as it “it proposes that the processing procedures are hierarchical and are mastered one at a time” (Ellis 2008a: 8). Learners are believed to possess a *Hypothesis Space*, which develops with time according to the following hierarchy of processing resources (Pienemann 1998: 87):

- (1) lemma access; words; no sequence of constituents;
- (2) category procedure; lexical morphemes; no exchange of information – canonical word order;
- (3) phrasal procedure; phrasal morphemes;
- (4) simplified S-procedure; exchange of information from internal to salient constituent;
- (5) S-procedure; inter-phrasal morphemes; exchange of information between internal constituents;
- (6) subordinate clause procedure.

Each of these processes may be distinguished by means of the nature of the grammatical information that a learner requires. Pienemann (1998: 80) explains the hierarchical nature in the following way:

The procedure of each lower level is a prerequisite for the functioning of the higher level: a word needs to be added to the L2 lexicon before its grammatical category can be assigned. The grammatical category of a lemma is needed before a category procedure can be called. Only if the grammatical category of the Head phrase is assigned can the phrasal procedure be called. Only if a phrasal procedure has been completed and its value is returned can Appointment rules determine the function of the phrase. And only if the function of the phrase has been determined can it be attached to the S-node and sentential information be stored in the S-holder.

According to Pienemann (2007), Processability Theory is constructed with the help of a universal processability hierarchy which may operate and predict *developmental trajectories* for any language, language specific sequential developmental routes and also

the differences between the particular trajectories. In the process of L2 development, learners accumulate various grammatical structures, rules and exceptions to those rules, which then develop individual developmental trajectories that interact with the overall developmental programme. Processability Theory explains in this way both the universal stages of development and the individual variation within these stages (Pienemann 2007: 138). Pienemann employed his model to account for the acquisitional processes both in morphology and in syntax, and across languages (German, English, Swedish, Japanese). The results of the ZISA project (Mitchell and Myles 2004: 114f) which aimed at analysing the acquisitional processes of learners of different L1 backgrounds learning German provided support for the existence of a clear developmental route in the acquisition of the German word order.

There are two main questions that need to be answered for a complete understanding of the process of second language acquisition. First, there is the *developmental problem*, addressing the issue why learners follow universal stages of acquisition, and second, there is the *logical problem*, namely how it is possible for learners to have the knowledge of features they have not encountered in the input. The two modules aiming to address these issues are based on *Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG)* (Kaplan and Bresnan 1982) which is compatible with the architecture of the language processor and aims to be psychologically plausible, that is, take into account the cognitive features of language. The pedagogical implications of the learnability or processability model have been proposed in the *Teachability Hypothesis* (Pienemann 1984, 1989, 1998). Its predictions are as follows (Pienemann 1998: 250):

- Stages of acquisition cannot be skipped through formal instruction.
- Instruction will be most beneficial if it focuses on structures from ‘the next stage’.

Drawing upon the Teachability Hypothesis, teachers should introduce linguistic forms in the order similar to the natural order of acquisition. The classroom syllabus should then be designed in accordance with the learners’ internal syllabus, as it would facilitate the development and acquisition of L2 features. Recommendable as it may be, it is hard to implement in educational contexts for a few reasons. First of all, the knowledge of acquisitional orders is still inadequate and incomplete; secondly it is difficult to estimate the exact developmental levels of particular learners, which is even more complex due to the variability and diversity of language learners in one group (Lightbown 1998: 179). In his criticism of Pienemann’s proposals, Nunan (1994: 262-263) pointed to the advantages

of formal instruction in structures which are far beyond learners' processing capacity, as it may actually foster the acquisitional processes of the less complex features. Pienemann's (1998) recommendations were also questioned by Spada and Lightbown (1999), who provided evidence that the relationship between the developmental stage and the effectiveness of instruction is not always direct, as one needs to take into account learners' L1. Last but not least, there is the issue of explicit and implicit knowledge, with Ellis's claim (1997b, 2002a) that explicit knowledge may not be acquired in the same fixed sequence as implicit knowledge, which casts doubt on the possibility of applying the Teachability Hypothesis to explicit knowledge. Undoubtedly, the theoretical provisions of Processability Theory are worth consideration as they perceive grammar instruction a facilitative teaching option; however, the actual and accurate implementation of the assumptions proposed by the Teachability Hypothesis appears difficult as far as typical educational contexts are concerned.

1.3.2.2. The Noticing Hypothesis

Schmidt's (1990, 2001) original proposal of the *Noticing Hypothesis* came from his own experience as a learner of Portuguese (Schmidt and Frota 1986). Having kept a diary for some time, he observed that there were some features of language present around him all the time which his language system started to acquire when he, the learner, noticed them consciously. It is obvious that language learners are exposed to more input than they are able to process and they need some kind of device to help them detect or isolate the language features that they are exposed to. Gass, Svetics and Lemelin (2003: 498) explain it this way: "language processing is like other kinds of processing: Humans are constantly exposed to and often overwhelmed by various sorts of external stimuli and are able to, through attentional devices, *tune in* some stimuli and *tune out* others".

On the basis of his experience and also psychological theories of learning, Schmidt (2001) hypothesized that language learners are not able to acquire a particular language feature until they have attended to it and noticed it in the input, i.e. when they register the form that has not been attended to before. In this way, he challenged Krashen's Monitor Theory and his views on implicit, subconscious acquisition vs. conscious learning. The Noticing Hypothesis, which claims that "noticing is the necessary and sufficient condition

for the conversion of input to intake for learning” (Schmidt 1994: 17), acknowledges learners’ internal processing capacities. It argues that if a learner pays attention to the features of language in input and interaction, then he or she may in fact generate more intake, i.e. the language which has been processed and may be incorporated into the linguistic system. Schmidt claims that learners must pay attention to *surface elements* in order to acquire them. To be more precise, he states that “the objects of attention and noticing are elements of the surface structure of utterances in the input – instances of language, rather than any abstract rules or principles of which such instances may be examples” (Schmidt 2001: 5). Nevertheless, it is not clear yet what these surface elements of language input are. Schmidt compares noticing to *apperception* (Gass 1988) and *detection within selective attention* (Tomlin and Villa 1994). What he emphasizes, however, is that noticing should be separated from metalinguistic awareness as clearly as possible, because they are two separate processes. Schmidt (1995) claims that the two levels differ, because awareness at the level of *noticing* involves “the conscious registration of the concurrence of some event” (1995: 29), whereas awareness at the level of *understanding requires* “recognition of a general principle, rule or pattern” (1995: 29), which is not necessary for input to be initially processed. Long and Robinson (1998: 24) quote Schmidt’s (1993b: 26) explanation of how he differentiates between *noticing* and *understanding*:

I use *noticing* to mean registering the simple occurrence of some event, whereas *understanding* implies recognition of a general principle, rule, or pattern. For example, a second language learner might simply notice that a native speaker used a particular form of address on a particular occasion, or at a deeper level the learner might understand the significance of such a form, realizing that the form used was appropriate because of status differences between speaker or hearer. Noticing is crucially related to the question of what linguistic material is stored in memory (...) *understanding* relates to questions concerning how that material is organized into a linguistic system (Schmidt 1993b: 26, cited in Long and Robinson 1998: 24).

If noticing is necessary for second language acquisition, a question arises as to how noticing takes place. Schmidt (1990) proposes that such factors as the frequency of a form, perceptual salience, instruction, the current state of learners’ interlanguage, and task demands all play an important role in directing attention and bringing some features of input into awareness. Schmidt (2001: 23) stresses the importance of instruction which draws learners’ attention to forms, because “many features of L2 input are likely to be infrequent, non-salient and communicatively redundant, intentionally focused attention

may be a practical (though not a theoretical) necessity for successful language learning”. On the basis of their diary study on the process of generating intake from input, Schmidt and Frota (1986) advance the claim that intake results from *noticing the gap*, i.e. conscious comparisons learners make between the input they receive and the language they already possess and normally use. According to the researchers, learners are also able to observe that their linguistic skills are inadequate to express the precise meaning they want, which is called *noticing the hole*. In doing so, learners are able to reflect on what is noticed, seek to understand its significance, and finally experience insight.

There have been different views on the role of attention in second language acquisition. Tomlin and Villa (1994), for example, in their analysis of attention in language processing from a cognitive perspective, described attention with regard to its three components: *alertness*, *orientation* and *detection*. They argued that detection, defined as “cognitive registration of stimuli” (1994: 190) is required for the processing of input and making it available for further processing. In other words, awareness is not necessary for the detection of input and language development. Robinson (1995), in turn, found some common features in the two views of the role of awareness in L2 processing and suggested that detection occurs before noticing in the acquisitional processes, and it is at the level of noticing (i.e. attention plus minimally a low level of awareness) that the linguistic data are available for further processing (see also Leow 2006). Taking into account the views presented above, it appears that the Noticing Hypothesis and its role for second language acquisition attracts as much support as criticism. On one hand, the view that noticing is responsible for input becoming intake before the actual process of incorporation of the new linguistic forms into the learner’s interlanguage is acknowledged by such specialists as, for example, Ellis (1994b, 1997b) and Skehan (1998). What is more, Gass (1988), Rutherford (1987) and Sharwood-Smith (1981) claim that noticing is the first stage of language acquisition. Also Batstone (1994a: 100) describes noticing as “the gateway to subsequent learning”. Sharwood-Smith (1981) and Rutherford (1987), however, oppose the view that noticing and *noticing the gap* (Schmidt and Frota 1986) must be conscious processes only. The conscious nature of noticing the gap is also a controversial matter in the view of Ellis (1997b) who acknowledges the validity of Krashen's (1982) argument that the range of linguistic features is too vast for all of them to be acquired consciously. Although in Schmidt’s opinion “SLA is largely driven by what learners pay attention to and notice in target language input and what they understand the significance of noticed input to be”

(2001: 3-4), his hypothesis has come in for much criticism, of which the most serious comes from Truscott (1998) who concludes that “the foundations of the hypothesis in cognitive psychology are weak” and “the hypothesis is not based on any rational theory of language” (1998: 104). Truscott (1998) proposes a weaker version of the Noticing Hypothesis and argues it is only necessary for the acquisition of metalinguistic knowledge, that is the ability to manipulate words, complete gap-fills, manipulate sentences, and state grammar rules. Truscott’s arguments regarding formal instruction, noticing and metalinguistic knowledge must definitely be taken into account when appraising the Noticing Hypothesis as he appears to be very meticulous with regard to presenting his opinions, which he supports with the results of a wide range of empirical studies in second language acquisition.

The Noticing Hypothesis has had a profound influence not only on research into second language acquisition, but its premises can also be implemented more practically in form-focused instruction. Definitely, the *focus on form* approach relies on the Noticing Hypothesis, as there a number of activities aiming at helping learners *notice the hole* and *notice the gap*. Activities that promote noticing the hole are those in which “learners feel the need to use a form they lack, presumably the task-useful or, better still, the ever-elusive task-essential activity” (Williams 2005: 682). When it comes to activities promoting noticing the gap, the presence of an IL form to which the TL form can be compared is required. It may be done by means of corrective feedback, when the provision of negative evidence is necessary or helpful (Williams 2005), for example by means of a recast (see section 2.3.3. in Chapter Two).

1.3.2.3. Input Processing Theory

According to its proponent, Bill VanPatten, Input Processing Theory is not a model of second language acquisition, but it accounts for form-meaning connections made by language learners, which is one of the processes involved in second language acquisition (VanPatten 2007: 127). VanPatten et al. (2004: 4) argue that form-meaning connections are “a fundamental aspect of both first and second language acquisition. All but a few L2 learners pursue meaning first, in an effort to communicate and to understand the world around them”. In order to be acquired, form-meaning connections must undergo three

processes which may be called stages: making the initial connection, subsequent processing of the connection, and accessing the connection for use. Holding the belief that making form-meaning connections is a central component of the process of language acquisition and drawing on the work of other language researchers (e.g. Tomlin and Villa 1994), VanPatten makes four assumptions about input processing (2004: 7):

- (1) learners' prime focus is on the extraction of meaning from the input (e.g. Krashen 1982);
- (2) learners must notice things in the input for acquisition to happen (Schmidt 1990);
- (3) noticing is constrained by working memory limitations regarding the amount of information to be processed during real time computation (Just and Carpenter 1992);
- (4) learners may rely on certain universals of input processing but may also use their L1 input processor.

Taking into account the assumptions formulated above and the findings of research on how the incoming data are processed, VanPatten (1990) has proposed a set of principles accounting for language learners' input processing. They have been subject to constant amendments and improvements and some subprinciples have been added to explain the detailed processes happening during input processing. The following set of principles is based on the version proposed by VanPatten in 2004 (7-18).

- P 1. *The Primacy of Meaning Principle*. Learners process input for meaning before they process it for form.
 - P 1a. *The Primacy of Content Words*. Learners process content words in the input before anything else.
 - P 1b. *The Lexical Preference Principle*. Learners will tend to rely on lexical items as opposed to grammatical form to get meaning when both encode the same semantic information.
 - P 1c. *The Preference of Non-Redundancy Principle*. Learners are more likely to process non-redundant meaningful grammatical form before they process redundant meaningful forms.
 - P 1d. *The Meaning-Before-Non-Meaning Principle*. Learners are more likely to process meaningful grammatical forms before non-meaningful forms irrespective of redundancy.

- P 1e. *The Availability of Resources Principle*. For learners to process either redundant meaningful grammatical forms or non-meaningful forms, the processing of overall sentential meaning must not drain available processing resources.
- P 1f. *The Sentence Location Principle*. Learners tend to process items in sentence initial position before those in final position and those in medial position.
- P 2. *The First Noun Principle*. Learners tend to process the first noun or pronoun they encounter in a sentence as the subject/agent.
 - P 2a. *The Lexical Semantics Principle*. Learners may rely on lexical semantics, where possible, instead of word order to interpret sentences.
 - P 2b. *The Event Probabilities Principle*. Learners may rely on event probabilities, where possible, instead of word order to interpret sentences.
 - P2c. *The Contextual Constraint Principle*. Learners may rely less on the First Noun Principle if preceding context constraints the possible interpretation of a clause or sentence.

The first major principle (P 1) and its six subprinciples describe the general issue of the primacy of meaning in input processing. The second major principle (P 2) and its three subprinciples account for how sentences are interpreted by learners. VanPatten's latest revised version of input processing principles was proposed in 2007. He also presented a review of important aspects which need to be taken into account when analysing input processing during second language acquisition. First of all, there is the form-meaning connection, which explains how a real world referent or semantic notion is encoded in a grammatical form. Next, the notion of processing stands for mapping meaning and function onto formal properties of language by a learner. Then, there is the process of parsing, which indicates that learners assign syntactic structure to input sentences. Finally, L2 learners must confront effortful comprehension, as they have to develop the ability to understand, and the activity of comprehending may limit the processing resources as learners engage in the analysis of a sentence (VanPatten 2007: 125).

The Input Processing framework has been supported by evidence coming from different sources and various studies, the account of which was presented by VanPatten (1996). The first way of supporting input processing was by means of output data obtained from first and second language acquisition (e.g. VanPatten 1996). In order to provide evidence for the primacy of meaning, researchers also investigated learners of natural L2s (Lee, Cadierno, Glass and VanPatten 1997; Wong 2001). The third type of support for the

principles of Input Processing has been sought in introspective techniques, such as think-aloud protocols (Mangubhai 1991). Last but not least, studies in cognitive psychology were drawn upon to acknowledge the role of input processing in comparison with implicit learning (e.g. Carr and Curran 1994). Although the principles and implications of Input Processing Theory have been widely investigated and reviewed (e.g. VanPatten and Cadierno 1993; VanPatten and Oikennon 1996; Collentine 1998; Mystkowska-Wiertelak 2010), VanPatten et al. (2004: 20) call for more research in the field of form-meaning connections and input processing. According to the researchers, “it should now be clear to everyone that there will never be *a* theory in SLA. Instead, most likely there will be multiple theories and models that account for different aspects of SLA”.

Input Processing Theory does indeed explain one aspect of the process of second language acquisition, which is of major importance and principal value for successful language learning. Namely, it acknowledges the importance of input and the beneficial effects of reception-based language instruction which helps learners restructure their interlanguage. When it comes to classroom procedures based on the tenets of input processing, VanPatten (e.g. 2002a) has come up with the idea of processing instruction (PI) in which three characteristic components can be distinguished: the initial grammar and processing explanation, referential activities which force learners to make integrated form-meaning connections and affective activities in which learners express opinions, beliefs and are engaged in processing information about the real world (see also 2.3.2.2.). In other words, input processing activities encourage learners to attend to forms during meaning-oriented activities. For example, if students are asked to carry out certain commands provided by the teacher, they need to match the imperative form to its use in a meaningful way (Fotos 2001). Another example may be a carefully planned communicative task, e.g. a focused communication task, in which learners need to use a particular language feature in order to complete it successfully. Input Processing Theory then ascribes a major role to form-focused instruction in a foreign language classroom; yet the type of intervention proposed seems to be limited to reception-based instruction only.

1.3.2.4. Skill Learning Theory

Skill Learning Theory, which represents the strong interface position (see 1.2.1.), proposes a developmental model of various skills, from initial learning to advanced proficiency. The theory covers not only linguistic skills, but also other cognitive and psychomotor abilities and may use both quite theoretical and sophisticated terminology (as is the case with applied linguistics) and refer to down-to-earth, practical activities (such as training football players). The main premise of Skill Learning Theory is that different learning processes, which are similar during particular stages across various skills and domains, lead to proficient behaviours, and that this phenomenon may be accounted for by a set of basic principles typical of the processes of learning (DeKeyser 2007a: 97). The theory has its origins in Anderson's (1983, 1995) Adaptive Control of Thought (ACT) Model and McLaughlin's (1990) Information Processing Theory, both of which have contributed to the skill-learning model of L2 acquisition. In the model of learning proposed by Skill Learning Theory, the development from declarative to procedural stages of knowledge resembles the development from controlled to automatic processing in many respects. Every human being proceeds from the declarative stage (explicit knowledge *that*) which is learning the rules consciously to the procedural stage (implicit knowledge *how*) which indicates that the knowledge has become acquired and automatized. The declarative stage, which in the case of language involves explicit knowledge of grammatical rules, accounts for the acquisition of isolated facts and rules and is often slow and monitored. With practice, the processes of proceduralisation and restructuring (McLaughlin 1990), which involve processing of larger pieces of information and qualitative changes in the learner's knowledge, operate, and attentional resources for higher level skills facilitate efficient, smooth performance (Saville-Troike 2006: 75). In the case of language then, learning requires the development of implicit knowledge, understood as target-like communicative behaviour resulting from fully automatized explicit knowledge.

To understand the process of second language acquisition according to Skill Learning Theory, one needs to present the three stages which take place during transforming declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge. Prior to the actual analysis, it is necessary to mention the terminological subtleties as the theory accounting for so many learning processes has also employed various technical terms. Generally, all the researchers have agreed on the three stages of development, their names being: *cognitive, associative* and *autonomous* (Mitchell and Myles 2004), *declarative, procedural* and *automatic* (Anderson 1983, 1995), or, in more practical terms, *presentation, practice, production*

(Byrne 1986). Every stage is different in terms of the nature of knowledge, its application and the actual behaviour it causes. The first stage begins the process with gaining knowledge about a certain skill without really applying it in practice. A learner is simply aware of some specific information which he or she acquires via observation of others who are actually engaged in the behaviour to be learned, but more often than not it is simply done in the form of verbal transmission from those who know to those who do not. Sometimes it may be a mixture of the two, when an expert demonstrates the behaviour and explains the necessary conditions and steps to follow. The next stage aims to transform the declarative knowledge into procedural in the process of proceduralisation, which, according to Anderson et al. (2004: 1046), is not a very demanding task, when relevant declarative knowledge is available and can be applied while performing the target behaviour. This is the role of practice, and, as DeKeyser (2007a) points out, in the case of language learning, communicative practice is what constitutes the best opportunity for the knowledge to become finely-tuned, i.e. to reduce the time needed to perform the task, to decrease error occurrence and to lower the amount of attention required. According to the traditional view, practice involves the use of mechanical drills, employed by the audiolingual and oral-situational methods of language teaching (Richards and Rogers 2002). DeKeyser (1998), however, acknowledges the importance of practice whose main aim is *behaviour* rather than *structures* (see also Lightbown 1985). Drawing on Anderson's Skill Learning Theory, DeKeyser (1998: 49) argues that:

(...) proceduralization is achieved by engaging in the target behaviour – or procedure – while temporarily leaning on declarative crutches (...) Repeated behaviours of this kind allow the restructuring of declarative knowledge in ways that make it easier to proceduralize and allow the combination of co-occurring elements into larger chunks that reduce the working memory load.

When the knowledge has become proceduralized, there is still much effort required to make it automatized, consistently available for spontaneous use and error-free. The indispensable role of practice in the automatization process is also emphasized by DeKeyser (1998: 49), when he argues that “strengthening, fine-tuning, and automatization of the newly acquired procedural knowledge are then a function of the amount of practice, which increases speed and reduces the error rate and the demand on cognitive resources”. Even if all those requirements are met, there is no guarantee that the automatized language will be perfect, as there are other factors which may be responsible for some problems and inadequacies in

an individual's performance (DeKeyser 2007a: 99). The proponents of Skill Learning Theory also admit that the acquisition of some aspects of the target language may involve implicit learning and allows initial procedural representation (DeKeyser 1998).

When it comes to the pedagogical implications of the Skill Learning Theory, one needs to mention Johnson (1996) and his belief that the combination of form-focused and meaning-focused instruction can facilitate the development of implicit target language knowledge. He proposes that *explanation* of a language feature may prove facilitative for the acquisitional processes, although he claims that instruction involving *hints* and *demonstration* may be more effective in constructing declarative knowledge than "elaborate and precise explanation" (Johnson 1996: 108-109). Johnson (1996) has also introduced the concepts of *DECPRO*, or *proceduralization*, and *PRODEC*, or *declarativization*. The first one is similar to the three-stage process outlined above, and the second one accounts for how implicit knowledge acquired during communication takes part in constructing its explicit representation. In practice, *PRODEC* encourages language awareness activities in order to create conditions for conscious analysis of the language, and *DECPRO* proposes planning activities for students in a way that they can direct less attention to forms than they actually need, for example by setting time limits or task cognitive complexity. A more recent pedagogical proposal has been formulated by DeKeyser (1998, 2001) who attempted to characterize successful language practice and sequence the activities in a lesson. In his opinion, mechanical drills are useless for creating form-meaning relationships, and suggests that in order for explicit declarative knowledge to develop, teachers need to employ activities with no time limit, such as fill-in-the-gap, transformations or translation. On the other hand, he recognizes a facilitative role for communicative practice to foster the growth of implicit procedural knowledge, which could be implemented by means of communicative tasks where there is even more focus on meaning and more freedom on the part of the learner. A similar opinion is expressed by Ellis (2003: 146), who claims that "to change behaviour (i.e. develop automatic processes) it is necessary to provide practice of the actual behaviour itself. In the case of language learning, behaviour must entail attempts to communicate. Thus, for practice to work it must involve learners producing the target structure in the context of communicative activity". When it comes to regular teaching contexts, Skill Learning Theory provides a theoretical justification for the application of the PPP procedure, when a language feature is first explicitly presented, and then practiced; both in structure- and meaning-oriented activities, which aims at fluent target language performance.

To conclude, Skill Learning Theory has a number of advantages, one of them being its applicability to a plethora of learning processes and various language subsystems. Second language acquisition is explained in the same way as other models of learning, which definitely adds to its appeal. Moreover, the research conducted to analyse the acquisition of skills is methodologically well-grounded, and its findings constitute a valuable source of information on the nature of language learning. Nonetheless, due to the scarcity of empirical evidence, “it would be premature to try to design an entire teaching methodology on the principles outlined here” (DeKeyser 1998: 62). The ACT model proposed by Anderson has also been applied to the field of language learning strategies by O’Malley and Chamot (1990). Finally, it provides considerable support for the provision of explicit language instruction, both in terms of language rules and also other linguistic skills necessary for successful communication.

1.3.2.5. Interaction-based theories

The Input Hypothesis (see 1.3.1.4.) advanced by Krashen (e.g. 1982) posits that the availability of comprehensible input is the only sufficient and necessary condition for language acquisition to take place, with the caveat that the learner’s affective filter must be low enough. In response to Krashen, Long (1983b) advanced the Interaction Hypothesis (IH) which claimed that although comprehensible input is necessary, more attention should be paid to the interactional processes between learners. Through interactions learners may be led to notice things they would not notice otherwise, and this noticing can affect acquisition. Long emphasizes the importance of such interactional modifications as comprehension checks and clarification requests (see 2.3.3.1.) for the facilitation of acquisitional processes. Together with Long, also Hatch (1978), Pica (1994), Gass (1997), and Gass and Varonis (1989) argue that it is conversational interaction that is the necessary condition for L2 acquisition. When learners have the opportunity to interact with others, they may introduce qualitative changes to the input, modify it, make it more comprehensible and as a result continue the conversation. According to Gass and Mackey (2007b: 184), negotiation for meaning seems to be a feedback-rich environment where “input can be uniquely tailored to individual learners’ particular strengths, weaknesses, and communicative needs, providing language that is in line with learners’ developmental levels”.

On the basis of his research investigating conversations between native speakers and non-native speakers with native speakers, Long (e.g. 1983b) noted differences between these two language users in terms of conversational management. Conversational adjustments the native speakers and non-native speakers used included, among others, confirmation and comprehension checks, clarification requests, self-repetitions or paraphrase. Speech was slower and assisted with gestures (Mitchell and Myles 2004: 167). When learners encounter problems while communicating, they must *negotiate for meaning* and this negotiation is seen as facilitative for language development. In this way, input is modified and becomes more relevant to the particular interlocutor's language level. The first formulation of the Interaction Hypothesis was based on the following three claims:

- (1) Interactional modification makes input comprehensible.
- (2) Comprehensible input promotes acquisition.
- (3) Interactional modification promotes acquisition.

The revised version of the Interaction Hypothesis was proposed by Long in 1996 and it gives more attention to the role of corrective feedback during interaction. In the new version of Interaction Hypothesis Long claims:

It is proposed that environmental contributions to acquisition are mediated by selective attention and the learner's developing L2 processing capacity, and that these resources are brought together most usefully, although not exclusively, during *negotiation of meaning* (emphasis original). Negative feedback obtained during negotiation work or elsewhere may be facilitative of L2 development, at least for vocabulary, morphology and language-specific syntax, and essential for learning certain specifiable L1-L2 contrasts (Long 1996: 414).

According to Long (1996), conversational modifications that assist interlocutors in negotiating for meaning provide learners with the target language data, which can be beneficial for language development. They facilitate acquisition because they “connect input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways” (Long 1996: 452). Among the facilitative ways of modifying conversations in dyadic interactions, there are:

- input modifications (e.g., stress on key words, partial self-repetition);
- semantically contingent responses (e.g., recasts, repetition);
- conversational modifications (e.g., confirmation checks, comprehension checks, clarification requests).

In other words, the Interaction Hypothesis suggests that the more opportunities for interaction and negotiation there are, the more beneficial effects can be expected with respect to second language acquisition thanks to the provision of positive and negative evidence. More specifically, it posits that acquisition is facilitated when interactional modifications lead to comprehensible input. It also acknowledges the positive role of feedback which fosters acquisition, and, finally, it stresses the importance of pushed comprehensible output, based on Swain's (1985) Comprehensible Output Hypothesis, which is considered in detail below.

Swain (1985) expanded on Long's Interaction Hypothesis when she introduced the *Comprehensible Output Hypothesis*. She believes that too much weight is given to input and emphasizes the role of output in second language acquisition. In contrast to Krashen's (e.g. 1982) *comprehensible input*, Swain argues for the importance of *comprehensible output*. In order to understand the Comprehensible Output Hypothesis, one needs to define comprehensible output. Using the definition proposed by Swain (2005), comprehensible output is an improved version of a learner's earlier version in terms of its informational content and/or its grammatical, sociolinguistic, or discourse features. According to Swain (1985), learners encouraged to produce comprehensible output will pay more attention to how the message should look with regard to the formal aspects of the language, and not just to the message itself. Swain, who based her claims on the observations of French immersion programmes in Canada, argues that it is during the actual production of the target language that learners become aware of their weak and strong points in terms of linguistic skills, and are motivated to find some ways to express their intended meaning, which is how they develop their communicative competence. The role for output, apart from the practice function, is to develop learners' interlanguage system. Three main functions of output were delineated by Swain (1995b: 128, 2005) in the expanded version of the Comprehensible Output Hypothesis:

- the noticing/triggering function (consciousness-raising role): producing output is an opportunity for language learners to notice gaps in their knowledge and notice that they do not know how to convey the meaning they need;
- the hypothesis-testing function, which allows learners to test the hypotheses they have formed about the target language; positive and negative feedback may also help learners confirm or reject their hypotheses;

- the metalinguistic function (reflective role): learners may reflect on their own target language use, and their output serves a metalinguistic function enabling them to control and internalise linguistic knowledge.

Mitchell and Myles (2004: 174) explain the three functions in the following way:

(...) the activity of producing the target language may push learners to become aware of gaps and problems in their current second language system (first function); it provides them with opportunities to reflect on, discuss and analyze these problems explicitly (third function); and (...) it provides them with opportunities to experiment with new structures and forms (second function).

A number of studies have been conducted to investigate the role of modified interaction in comprehension and second language acquisition. The findings obtained by, for example, Pica et al. (1987), Gass and Varonis (1994), Loschky (1994), Pica (1994), and Mackey (1999) have provided evidence in support of Long's Interaction Hypothesis, as interactional modifications proved to be more effective for developing comprehension of input than linguistic modifications. Pica et al. (1987: 750) found that "interaction resulted in input that was more complex than input that was modified according to conventional criteria of linguistic simplification". Moreover, because of negotiation of meaning, non-native speakers have been found to internalize various useful communication strategies (Gass and Varonis 1994) and developed their language skills (Mackey 1999: 565). Pica (1994) suggests that opportunities to negotiate meanings can be facilitative for language learners because they help them obtain comprehensible input, they provide them with feedback on their own use of L2, and they prompt learners to modify their own output so that it can be understandable for the interlocutor. Swain's proposals concerning the contributive role of output for second language acquisition have also been investigated (see 3.3.2.2.). The studies have provided evidence in support of the facilitative role of output for vocabulary acquisition. As far as grammar is concerned, the results are incomplete and inconclusive, and the benefits of *pushed output* remain hard to demonstrate, which is why more research is recommended.

Because there is still little research into the role of modified interaction in second language acquisition, the two hypotheses have attracted considerable criticism for a number of reasons. The first problem is connected with the difficulty in identifying the actual moments of message negotiation as some learners may be reluctant to admit their lack of understanding or they will not modify their output. As Ellis (2008a) suggests, there is a

great need to attend to individual learner differences in the research investigating Interaction-based theories. Pica (1996) notes that negotiation may work with students at certain levels and what students negotiate is mainly lexical items and larger syntactic units, not morphological features. The Interaction Hypothesis cannot then explain acquisitional processes connected with all aspects of linguistic competence. Griggs (2005) argues that although the Interaction Hypothesis may be appropriate for native and non-native speakers' exchanges, it does not help much for learners of the same L1 and similar language levels. Having analysed the corpus for his study, Griggs (2005: 409) observed that the gap between the learners' interlanguage systems is small, learners can always rely on their common L1, and information gap tasks do not necessarily make students focus on form to negotiate meaning. Similarly, Pawlak (2004d) found that the amount of negotiation can depend on the instructional setting and the number of students sharing their L1. Irrespective of the problems connected with the Interaction-based approaches, the Interaction Hypothesis and the Comprehensible Output Hypothesis have generated considerable interest in the field of SLA, as "no theory of L2 acquisition is complete without an account of the role played by interaction" (Ellis 2008a: 260).

When it comes to the particular instructional choices implementing the assumptions of the Interaction Hypothesis and the Output Hypothesis, one needs to mention the role of error correction. In the course of interaction, be it the conversations between learners or learners and teachers, students receive "information concerning the linguistic and communicative success or failure of their production" (Gass and Mackey 2007b: 178). Long (1996) argues that recasts, as an implicit correction technique, assist acquisition by "providing opportunities for cognitive comparison" (Ellis 2008a: 256). Although they may be beneficial for language acquisition, as has been indicated by Long (2007), they are not always effective, which has been evidenced by empirical evidence (see 3.3.3.). Another implication of the Interaction Hypothesis is *focus on form* instruction (see 2.2.3.), where learners attend to form during a meaning-centred activity, for example in a communicative task. According to Doughty (2001: 211), negotiation of meaning and form is characteristic of focus on form as it "involves learners briefly and perhaps simultaneously attending to form, meaning and use during one cognitive event". A number of instructional options which rely on Interaction-based theories may be employed in a foreign language classroom, among which there are collaborative tasks which encourage learners to self-reflect on the language they use. In this way, learners produce *language-related episodes* (LREs), defined

as occurrences of self-reflection on the part of the learner concerning language use (Pawlak 2006).

1.3.2.6. Connectionist approaches

Connectionism, which is probably one of the most influential emergentist models, is a nonlinguistic approach to studying language acquisition, tied with psychology and general learning (VanPatten and Benati 2010). Current connectionist models, also referred to as *parallel distributed processing (PDP)* (Rummelhart and McClelland 1986) or *neural networks*, attribute the process of second language acquisition to the exposure to a plethora of linguistic features learners encounter. It is the frequency with which a given feature is encountered that makes it possible for learners to develop a strong network of connections in the brain, thanks to which the particular elements are activated in the learner's mind (e.g. N. Ellis 1998). Connectionism sees the brain as a "computer that would consist of neural networks: complex clusters of links between information nodes" (Mitchell and Myles 2004: 121). The human mind is organized to search for associations between elements it encounters and, if need be, to create new links between them.

When it comes to applying the model to language learning, according to N. Ellis and Schmidt (1997: 153), learners pay attention to regular language forms (grammatical and morphological regularities) which they notice in the input and on this basis they construct patterns which are strengthened by frequent activation as a result of exposure to language. The main proponent of connectionism, N. Ellis, has outlined the major assumptions of the connectionist model of language learning in a number of articles, and argues that learning is based on simple mechanisms (N. Ellis 1998), language is exemplar-rather than rule-based (N. Ellis 2002a), and learning a language involves learning constructions, understood as "recurrent patterns of linguistic elements that serve some well-defined linguistic function" (N. Ellis 2003: 66). In other words, "simple learning algorithms may be far more powerful than were previously recognized" (Elman 2001: 305). What is more, according to N. Ellis (2001, 2002a, 2002b), learning is a process of gradually strengthening associations between elements, and rule-like representations may arise out of the network of associations that learners build. In other words, connectionism does not advocate that learning rules is the basis for the development of linguistic knowledge

(Dörnyei 2009a: 90). It is also claimed that processing is carried out in parallel rather than serially and there is a major role of working memory in the processes mentioned above (Rumelhart and McClelland 1986; N. Ellis 2001). Although N. Ellis (2005: 306) argues that “the bulk of language acquisition is implicit learning from usage”, he acknowledges that learners need to attend to regularities in the input and notice the language features consciously; therefore explicit learning does undoubtedly have its place in second language acquisition. N. Ellis (2006) also recognizes the role of L1 in L2 acquisition, as he claims that learners in the early stages of acquisition apply L1 grammar rules and L1 phonological categories to their target language. Gradually, having had more exposure to the target language input, learners create their L2 networks which become independent of their mother tongues. According to N. Ellis (2007: 78), the linguistic competence of an individual is the result of a combination of two things: “the memories of all of the utterances encountered in communicative situations, and the induction of regularities in those utterances based on frequency”. Rule-like behaviour does not then imply rule-governed behaviour (N. Ellis 1996b: 364). As N. Ellis concludes, “frequency, recency, and context are likewise the three most fundamental influences on human cognition, linguistic and non-linguistic alike” (2007: 80).

When it comes to exploring the role of connectionism in second language acquisition, there are three studies worth mentioning: by Rumelhart and McClelland (1986), Sokolik and Smith (1992), and N. Ellis and Schmidt (1997). Rumelhart and McClelland (1986) investigated the acquisition of past tense forms by means of a particular PDP system. On the basis of their findings obtained in the simulation, they concluded that a “reasonable account of the acquisition of past tense can be provided without recourse to the notion of *rule* as anything more than a *description* of the language” (Rumelhart and McClelland 1986: 267). The second study aimed at the investigation of French nouns and the acquisition of their gender. Sokolik and Smith (1992) designed a computer-based model which was able to learn the gender without relying on rules. The findings of the study (Sokolik and Smith 1992: 50) provided support for connectionist theory, as “gender can in principle be assigned during relatively low level perceptual analysis without the application of explicit rules”. Finally, N. Ellis and Schmidt (1997) sought to explore a more complex process, i.e. the acquisition of plural morphology. Having devised an artificial language, they measured regular and irregular instances of plurals, and concluded that associative mechanisms are sufficient to account for the acquisition of plural morphology: “These

effects are readily explained by simple associative theories of learning. It is not necessary to invoke underlying rule-governed processes” (N. Ellis and Schmidt 1997: 152). Many researchers have argued against the dominating role of frequency in language acquisition, which is, undoubtedly, in the connectionist perspective, perceived as “an all-pervasive causal factor” (N. Ellis 2002a: 179). The followers of connectionist approaches claim, however, that there may be other factors responsible for fostering or hindering the process of second language acquisition. These include the level at which a particular language pattern is noticeable in the input, or the regularity with which the pattern occurs (Saville-Troike 2006: 81).

The most widely known connectionist SLA model is, according to Dörnyei (2009a: 95), *The Competition Model* which is an attempt to explain theoretically how the properties of input control language learning and language processing. It was formulated mainly by MacWhinney (2001) and its main premise is that the distributed connectionist network links the form of an input utterance to its function and meaning in context. In order to understand the function of a sentence, the receiver must look for *cues* in the input. These cues are believed to compete with one another and the winning clue determines the actual meaning of the message (Dörnyei 2009a: 95). The cues may be of different sources and features: they may be connected with the word order, grammatical markers, or semantic plausibility. Their strength depends on their reliability and availability in the input. According to MacWhinney (2001: 76), the Competition Model “provides a minimalist, empiricist prediction for the ways in which cues are acquired”. As for empirical evidence, MacWhinney (2008) mentions the experiments which were aimed to measure how conflicting cues affect the comprehension process. Later on, the scope of the competition model was broadened in MacWhinney’s (2008) *unified model of language acquisition* (see also Dörnyei 2009a) which takes into account the processes of both L1 and L2 acquisition. According to Ellis (2008a: 479), the Competition Model is an important construct within the theories of SLA, because it takes into account a number of important aspects, such as “the role of L1, the effect of input, and the gradual way in which native-like ability is acquired”. As far as the role of instruction is concerned from the connectionist perspective, it may bring beneficial effects, as “the primary mechanism of explicit learning is the initial registration of pattern recognizers for constructions that are then tuned and integrated into the system by implicit learning during subsequent input processing” (N. Ellis 2007: 84). Explicit instruction is thus viewed as an important device which helps learners recognize

and attend to regularly encountered forms in the input. The *power law of practice*, the effects of which are greatest at early stages, is also mentioned as a factor qualifying language acquisition. Practice is believed to stimulate connections in the brain, allowing learners to link frequent behaviours, which results in remembering and using language chunks and formulaic language. Finally, production practice also develops performance skills as language forms become more automatized and ready for immediate implicit use. When it comes to pedagogical implications connected with the Competition Model, the important role of feedback must be recognized. A *learning-on-error* model was proposed (McDonald 1986), according to which the weights of specific form-function mappings are changed, when a learner receives corrective feedback in response to an incorrect utterance that he or she produced. Apart from that, in his commentary on implicit and explicit processes, MacWhinney (1997: 278) acknowledges the value and necessity of explicit instruction, saying “giving learners clear access to relevant information is never a bad idea”. As he writes (1997: 278):

Students who receive explicit instruction, as well as implicit exposure to forms, would seem to have the best of both worlds. They can use explicit instruction to allocate attention to specific types of input (...) narrow their hypothesis space (...) tune the weights in their neural networks (...), or consolidate their memory traces. From the viewpoint of psycholinguistic theory, providing learners with explicit instruction along with standard implicit exposure would seem to be a no-lose proposition.

1.3.2.7. Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural Theory has its origins in the writings of the Russian psychologist L.S. Vygotsky (e.g. 1978). Vygotsky’s theory argues that cognitive development, including language, is the outcome of social interactions, in particular these which occur between individuals coming from different culturally formed settings. In practical terms, developmental processes take place when individuals participate in cultural, sports, linguistic, social or institutional events. Although it is undeniable that human neurobiology is indispensable for higher order thinking, it is in fact interaction with social or material environments through which the central forms of human cognitive activity develop (Lantolf and Thorne 2007: 201). According to Sociocultural Theory, productive skills (speaking and writing) mediate thinking, and learning is believed to take place when individuals interact

within their *zone of proximal development (ZPD)*, which stands for the metaphorical location where the learner is able to perform at a more advanced level because there is some kind of support from their (more proficient) interlocutor.

The central premise of Sociocultural Theory is *mediation*, which Lantolf (2000: 80) explains in the following way:

The central and distinguishing concept of sociocultural theory is that higher forms of human mental activity are *mediated* [italics original]. Vygotsky (1987) argued that just as humans do not act directly on the physical world but rely, instead, on tools and labour activity, we also use symbolic tools, or signs, to mediate and regulate our relationships with others and with ourselves. (...) Included among symbolic tools are numbers and arithmetic systems, music, art, and above all, language. As with physical tools, humans use symbolic artifacts to establish an indirect, or mediated, relationship between ourselves and the world. The task for psychology, in Vygotsky's view, is to understand how human social and mental activity is organised through culturally constructed artifacts and social relationships.

Taking into account the above quotation one can conclude that language is seen as a *tool for thought*, or a means of mediation. According to Lantolf and Thorne (2007: 206), we use language to regulate our mental activity through *private speech*. The characteristic features of private speech are its abbreviation and the meaning it carries. Some examples of this kind of speech in English may be: *OK, Sorry, or Oh!*. The instances of private speech have been widely observed among L2 learners, both in naturalistic and formal settings (Mitchell and Myles 2004). What is of particular importance in the contemporary world is the changing role of language with the new technological inventions being introduced to everyday life. New forms of communication (or mediation) such as text-messaging or the Internet have definitely added new characteristics to the traditional written or spoken forms of communication (Lantolf 2000).

When it comes to considering the implications of Sociocultural Theory for second language acquisition, there is a need to analyse how learners acquire language while they collaborate and interact with others. The study by Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) was aimed at investigating second language development during scaffolded teacher-learner talk. According to the researchers, the idea of scaffolding is to “offer just enough assistance to encourage and guide the learner to participate in the activity and to assume increased responsibility for arriving at the appropriate performance” (Aljaafreh and Lantolf 1994: 469). On the basis of recordings of their students' speech, they came up with a *Regulatory Scale* to rank the teachers' interventions from implicit to explicit corrections. It was concluded that if the students succeeded with the feedback on the implicit end of scale, it

evidenced their becoming more independent and more proficient. The researchers claim that the reduced need for regulation from other interlocutors supports the *microgenetic development* within the learner's Zone of Proximal Development. Among a number of studies conducted with a view to exploring the role of interaction for second language acquisition seen from the sociocultural perspective, there is a study by Nassaji and Swain (2000), who recommended using collaborative dialogue as a technique facilitating conscious reflection on language form and use. The study aimed at comparing the effectiveness of feedback on the two learners' acquisition of articles. While one learner was provided feedback within her ZPD, the other received random feedback. Nassaji and Swain (2000) found that providing feedback within the learner's Zone of Proximal Development resulted in the substantial improvement of the learner, contrary to the effects of randomly selected feedback. The researchers argue that their results are "consistent with the Vygotskian sociocultural perspective in which knowledge is defined as social in nature and is constructed through the process of collaboration, interaction and communication among learners in social settings and as the results of interaction within the ZPD" (Nassaji and Swain 2000: 49).

Nowadays, ZPD is seen not only as involving novice and expert, but also novice and novice, or learner and learner interactions, and peer interactions, such as pair and group work, as well (Wells 1999: 333). In support of the claim that linguistic development follows from peer collaborative interaction, several studies have been carried out (cf. Lantolf 2006). Of particular relevance here may be the study by Donato (1994), who investigated peer interaction during focus on form activities, performed by adult English learners of French. Having observed the participants of the study during planning sessions and oral presentations, Donato found that out of thirty-two cases of scaffolding, twenty-four had been repaired thanks to collaborative interaction and concluded that "in this way, independent evidence is given that peer scaffolding results in linguistic development within individual" (1994: 52). Lantolf (2000), however, claims that although peer assistance may bring positive effects for learning everyday functional language, it may not be as effective for the development of academic language.

The ideas presented by sociocultural theorists may be quite irrelevant to the researchers favouring the Chomskyan distinction between competence and performance or the principles of Universal Grammar. This is because here language learning is perceived as a social process, taking place in the Zone of Proximal Development which is followed

by individual development. Irrespective of some theorists' criticisms connected with what constitutes the actual process of learning, Sociocultural Theory may appeal to language teachers, who can view it as a source of new interesting and motivating ideas for their learners. Undoubtedly, in this theory, learners are treated "active constructors of their own learning environment, which they shape through their choice of goals and operations" (Mitchell and Myles 2004: 221). As far as the relevance of Sociocultural Theory for form-focused instruction is concerned, it is definitely the importance of dialogic interaction (Swain 2000) that needs to be mentioned. This kind of interaction may enable the teacher to create favourable contexts in which learners may develop their language and, when necessary, be aided and assisted by the teacher-facilitator of the learning process. In this way, learners may progress from other- to self-regulation, and interaction (e.g. by means of scaffolding) is intended to assist them in constructing zones of proximal development (Ellis 2008a). Instruction should definitely be meaning-focused, it should also be assisted with collaborative dialogues encouraging students to self-reflect (Swain 2000), and it ought to include corrective feedback so as to provide learners with the necessary scaffolding (Aljaafreh and Lantolf 1994).

Conclusion

The aim of this introductory chapter was to provide a background for the more thorough consideration of particular instructional options that can be used during form-focused instruction. It has been the author's intention to present various perspectives on grammar to show how it has evolved through the years. An attempt has been made to discuss numerous theoretical concepts related to the notion of grammar including deliberation on such terms as descriptive and prescriptive grammar, formal and functional grammar, and pedagogical and reference grammar. Next, the static and dynamic views of grammar were presented in order to stress the value of the process perspective on grammar and the importance of not only the formal, but also the pragmatic and semantic dimensions of a grammatical structure. With the knowledge and awareness that is available to researchers and teachers nowadays, it appears that prescriptive approaches to grammar have been substituted with descriptive ones. Thus, grammar is no longer seen as a set of fixed patterns creating a faultless product, but rather as a process prone to constant changes and modifications or improvements.

Since language competence is believed to be a matter of developing implicit knowledge (e.g. Ellis 2006a) which is hence of vital importance for foreign language pedagogy, the explicit-implicit dimension was explored taking into account both the psychological and linguistic theories. The question about how instruction can facilitate the development of implicit knowledge is one of the most debatable among contemporary language researchers, and therefore the author found it necessary to present different perspectives and views on the potential of interface between explicit and implicit knowledge. In order to determine the nature of the knowledge acquired and used by learners, SLA researchers need reliable instruments which would enable to measure L2 ability in any valid sense (DeKeyser 2003; Doughty 2003). As one of the objectives of the research project included in this thesis was to investigate the effects of focused communication tasks on learners' explicit and implicit knowledge, an overview of relevant studies attempting to tap learners' explicit and implicit knowledge was also included.

Although the role of grammar instruction in foreign language pedagogy has always been subject to considerable controversy, thanks to the contribution of the SLA research (e.g. Norris and Ortega 2000; Spada 2010), we are aware that language acquisition may have different faces and various processes may take place in the human mind (Spada and Lightbown 2002: 126). It seems inevitable that one has to come to terms with the fact that second language acquisition cannot be accounted for through the application of one single theory. The complexity and multidimensionality of the processes will have their influence on language learners, who also constitute an incredibly heterogeneous group due to the differences in their cognitive and affective features. Nowadays, there is little disagreement that L2 learners need grammar instruction to learn to communicate grammatically (e.g. Doughty 1991). Most SLA theories acknowledge the usefulness of pedagogic intervention and provide empirical evidence in support of form-focused instruction. Nevertheless, there are still many questions to be answered, because, as Dörnyei (2009a: 283) argues:

Given the variety of existing approaches in form-focused instruction, we need to examine which of these is preferable to or more effective than others. Past studies addressing this question are in agreement that the answer depends on a whole range of factors such as the target linguistic form, the curriculum, the characteristics of the learners, the dynamics of the language class, and the instructional style of the teacher, amongst others.

The major challenge for the contemporary teachers and researchers is determining how to define and characterize the grammar which learners need and how to help them acquire the

target language features (Larsen-Freeman 2001a). In order to meet the needs of language learners and the expectations of the modern world, one needs to discuss and investigate the effectiveness of a variety of teaching approaches and techniques which are aimed to foster language acquisition and develop communicative competence. The particular options in form-focused instruction will be presented and discussed in the following chapter. Its aim is to explore some concepts that may be considered uninformative and confusing (Dörnyei 2009a), i.e. *form-focused instruction* vs. *meaning-focused instruction* and discuss the three options in language teaching which are *focus on forms*, *focus on meaning* and *focus on form*. Moreover, a number of taxonomies concerning various form-focused choices will be presented with a view to identifying the possible factors responsible for the choices made by language teachers. Finally, a practical division of the techniques into presentation, practice and corrective feedback options will be delineated, and the diverse grammar teaching techniques will be evaluated with special attention being paid to focused communication tasks whose contribution was explored in the research project described in Chapters Four and Five.

Chapter 2: Options in form-focused instruction

Introduction

The central role of grammar in the language curriculum was relatively unquestionable for many years and it would have been unthinkable to imagine language instruction without grammar until the late twentieth century when new theories and approaches started to emerge. They were concerned with the role of explicit vs. implicit learning and tried to establish whether learning occurs through conscious manipulation or unconscious processes taking place while being exposed to input (e.g. N. Ellis 1994). With the advent of Krashen's (e.g. 1981) Input Hypothesis, the instruction of forms was no longer considered necessary for language acquisition. Classroom procedures were to resemble naturalistic contexts on the basis of the assumption that language can be acquired from exposure to comprehensible input only. The communicative approach advocated the exclusive use of meaning-focused activities in a foreign language classroom (e.g. Prabhu 1987). With time, however, it turned out that the rejection of formal instruction was premature. The complete abandonment of grammar teaching proved unsuccessful as learners were unable to achieve high levels of grammatical accuracy even though they had plentiful opportunities for meaningful practice (e.g. Swain 1985; Lightbown and Spada 1990; Doughty 1991; Spada and Lightbown 1993; Robinson 1996; DeKeyser 1998; Lightbown 1998; Norris and Ortega 2000). New perspectives on grammar instruction in foreign language classrooms, based on emerging theories of language learning and teaching, introduced new dimensions of form-focused instruction and generated a number of novel teaching options. As Burgess and Etherington (2002: 433) stated: "grammar is being rehabilitated (...) and recognised for

what it has always been (...): an essential, inescapable component of language use and language learning”.

The first chapter of the present dissertation has considered the general importance of grammar for second language learning and teaching and presented an overview of the theoretical justifications with regard to the role of formal instruction for second language acquisition. Drawing on the claims of major theoretical positions, one cannot refute the firm arguments which postulate an important role of instruction in a classroom context. The aim of the present chapter is to discuss the various approaches to grammar teaching and the particular procedures of form-focused instruction as seen by leading grammarians and SLA researchers, bearing in mind that:

the acquisition of the grammatical system of an L2 is a complex process and almost certainly can be assisted best by a variety of approaches. But what is important is to recognize what options are available, what the theoretical rationales for these options are, and what the problems are with these rationales (Ellis 2006a: 103).

Being characterized by a number of definitions, the concept of form-focused instruction needs to be investigated. This will be complemented with a discussion of the widely debated approaches to grammar instruction, which are *focus on form* and *focus on forms*. The author will provide different taxonomies of grammar teaching options as a backdrop to the presentation and evaluation of the common instructional techniques divided into three groups: presentation options, practice options and corrective feedback options. Special attention will be paid to focused communication tasks, the effectiveness of which was investigated in the research project reported in Chapters Four and Five.

2.1. Form-focused instruction vs. meaning-focused instruction

The role of different types of instruction has been the focus of much recent second language acquisition research. The first distinction with regard to the type of instruction can be between *form-focused instruction (FFI)* and *meaning-focused instruction (MFI)*. They usually stand in juxtaposition as both of them are often perceived as two distinct and separate means of language learning and teaching. Whereas the first is considered by many to mirror traditional language teaching, based on structural or notional syllabi, and *the Grammar-Translation Method*, the other one resembles natural and communicative

approaches, such as immersion programmes (Long and Robinson 1998), and is also called *communication-focused instruction* (Housen and Pierrard 2005). Ellis (2001: 13) defines FFI as “instruction where there is some attempt to draw learners’ attention to linguistic form”, and MFI as “instruction that requires learners to attend only to the content of what they want to communicate”. There have been a number of attempts to define the two terms, (e.g. Stern 1990; Widdowson 1998; Ellis 2000b; Dörnyei 2009a), some of which have resulted in constructing contradictory definitions, and Williams (2005: 671) even risked the conclusion that FFI “has come to mean different things to those who have adopted the term”. Therefore, in order to understand the distinction better, it is warranted to account for the various perspectives on what these two approaches mean for different applied linguists and researchers.

Form-focused instruction is one of a number of terms referring to teacher instruction in the formal aspects of language. According to Long (1997: 6), FFI:

is an umbrella term widely used to refer to any pedagogical technique, proactive or reactive, implicit or explicit, used to draw students’ attention to language form. It includes focus on form procedures, but also all the activities used for focus on forms, such as exercises written specifically to teach a grammatical structure and used proactively, i.e., at moments the teacher, not the learner, has decided will be appropriate for learning the new item.

The idea behind the *umbrella* label was also adopted by Ellis (2001: 2), who called it a “cover term” in his definition of FFI, when he argued that “FFI includes both traditional approaches to teaching forms based on structural syllabi and more communicative approaches, where attention to form arises out of activities that are primarily meaning-focused”. The term was also explained by Doughty and Williams (1998b: 4), who observed that “the phrase *form-focused instruction* is variously used to denote the teaching of linguistic forms in isolation, as well as to describe teaching that integrates attention to forms, meaning and use”. In her reviews of research on form-focused instruction, Spada (1997, 2010) admits there is much controversy over the precise definition of FFI. She presents various accounts of what FFI means for different researchers and clearly explains her understanding of the notion, stating:

For the purposes of this paper, form-focussed instruction (hereafter referred to as FFI) will mean any pedagogical effort which is used to draw the learners' attention to language form either implicitly or explicitly. This can include the direct teaching of language (e.g. through grammatical rules) and/or reactions to learners' errors (e.g. corrective feedback).(...) Long's focus on form and my use of FFI are not identical. The essential difference between the two is that Long's definition of focus on form is restricted to meaning-based pedagogical events

in which attention is drawn to language as a perceived need arises rather than in predetermined ways. The term FFI is used here to refer to pedagogical events which occur within meaning-based approaches to L2 instruction but in which a focus on language is provided in either spontaneous or predetermined ways (Spada 1997: 73).

The definition presented above is clearly different from Long's (1991) focus on form, which takes into account only the spontaneous language use, and it goes in line with Ellis's (2001) understanding of FFI, which is clearly seen in the comparison of definitions provided by Williams (2005: 672). The other labels, which do not always mean exactly the same, encountered in multiple articles or chapters on second language acquisition, are, for example *instructed second language acquisition* (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991), *instructed second language learning* (Gass and Selinker 2008), *formal instruction* (Ellis 1994a, 2008a), *code-focused instruction* (Doughty and Williams 1998b), or *grammar teaching* (Hinkel and Fotos 2002). For the purpose of this thesis, the author has adopted the definition proposed by Spada (1997:73), Ellis (2001:1) and Pawlak (2006: 28), according to which form-focused instruction covers "any pedagogical effort which is used to draw the learners' attention to language form either implicitly or explicitly" (Spada 1997: 73).

As already mentioned, meaning-focused instruction is usually contrasted with form-focused instruction. According to Ellis (2000b), the key difference between the two notions is how language is treated. In meaning-focused instruction, language is viewed as a tool and the role for the learner is that of a language user, which stands in contrast to form-focused instruction, where language is treated as an object to be studied by the learner. Therefore, during meaning-focused instruction, learners are engaged in "using the TL to convey messages in tasks requiring information-exchange, problem-solving or opinion-sharing rather than focusing on any specific aspect of the code" (Pawlak 2006: 18). The theoretical underpinnings of MFI derive from the *comprehensible input hypothesis* (Krashen 1985, see section 1.3.1.4. in Chapter One), the *comprehensible output hypothesis* (Swain 1985, see section 1.3.2.5. in Chapter One), and also the *interaction hypothesis* (Long 1996, see section 1.3.2.5. in Chapter One). Meaning-focused instruction can therefore be distinguished from FFI with regard to the data to which learners have access during their process of language acquisition. MFI is characterized by the provision of *positive evidence*, i.e. samples of language which present what is correct, possible and acceptable, whereas FFI relies more on providing *negative evidence*, which is to show the learner what is incorrect, impossible and unacceptable in the language. Meaning-focused instruction assumes then that "language is best learned through the comprehension of input

and through the noticing of form-function mappings which results from the learners' own attempts to actively negotiate meaning in interaction" (Housen and Pierrard 2005: 9). On the other hand, form-focused instruction assumes that certain grammatical (and not only) features may be unnoticed in the input unless learners' attention is drawn to them. In this view, a target language feature will be internalized only if it is *noticed* (see 1.3.2.2.), thus ensuring conversion of input to intake. As recapitulated by Pawlak (2006: 20), the proponents of MFI tend to believe that positive evidence is sufficient for successful language acquisition, while the supporters of FFI do not take it for granted, as, in their opinion, it will not suffice to create the right conditions for achieving full mastery of the target language. The question whether meaning-focused instruction is sufficient to ensure success in foreign language learning has caused heated debate among various SLA researchers. The arguments formulated by both the proponents of a purely communicative approach as well as those who recognize the need to complement it with formal instruction were presented by Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen (2001b: 408) in their review of relevant studies. The outcomes of empirical investigations suggest that meaning-focused instruction does not constitute adequate grounds for successful mastery of the target language and needs to be supported with focus on the formal aspects of the target language (e.g. Long 1991; Swain 1995a).

On the basis of the above discussion, it is evident that there has been much controversy over the precise definitions of the two types of instruction. Nowadays, however, the greatest importance is attached to providing theoretical justifications and empirical evidence for the interpretation of the constructs introduced by Long (1991). *Focus on form* and *focus on forms* will be presented and discussed in the following sections and when it comes to *focus on meaning*, which exemplifies a non-interventionist instructional approach and concentrates on conveying meaning only and therefore cannot be treated as a form-focused approach, its most important assumptions and features will be delineated below. *Focus on meaning* is an approach supporting no formal attention to linguistic features and therefore no grammar intervention. As visible in Figure 2., *focus on forms* and *focus on form* denote two different types of form-focused instruction, and, as such, they stand in contrast with *focus on meaning* (Option 2 in Figure 2.), which, according to Long and Robinson (1998: 18), is "an equally single-minded" option to *focus on forms*, originated from *Cognitive Anti-Method*. This view of classroom language learning is also known as the *Minimal Language Teaching Programme* and its main assumption is that

teachers should not interfere with the learning process (cf. Newmark 1966). The approach is based on the assumption that adolescents and adults are able to analyse linguistic data subconsciously just like small children and, what is equally important, are capable of accessing Universal Grammar, its principles and parameters. Several researchers have investigated the concept (cf. Long and Robinson 1998) and discussed it with regard to incidental or implicit L2 learning from exposure to abundant, naturally modified comprehensible input, which would be adequate for successful foreign language acquisition. The argumentation behind the idea is that languages are best learned when they are treated not as objects but as means of communication serving the real communicative purposes of learners. Hence came the construction of an *analytic syllabus* (Wilkins 1976) which is organized in terms of real language learning aims. Also Prabhu's (1987) *procedural syllabus*, Krashen and Terrell's (1983) *Natural Approach*, many early immersion programmes and some content-based EFL instruction may qualify as focus on meaning. Undoubtedly, the approach has its followers, particularly among those who advocate the non-interventionist perspective to language learning, providing evidence for positive relationships between recognizing and respecting the learner's internal syllabus and acquisition. Contrary to *focus on forms*, it does not expect immediate production of correct utterances and aims to facilitate the learning process mainly by positive rather than negative evidence.

When compared with *focus on forms* and *focus on form*, *focus on meaning* suffers from several problems which are discussed by Long (1997), and Long and Robinson (1998). They conclude that *focus on meaning* possesses a number of drawbacks. First of all, during the educational process, learners' needs are not analysed and maturational constraints which may hinder language learning, such as the loss of access to innate language learning abilities, are ignored. It leads to the learners' inability to achieve mastery in terms of accurate L2 production. Long (1997) also points to the fact that comprehensible input cannot constitute a sufficient condition for successful language learning and that some L1-L2 grammatical differences cannot be learned from positive evidence, i.e. exposure, only. This brief characterization allows the author to conclude that although *focus on meaning* may be invaluable in developing communicative ability in young learners or highly proficient students, it seems feasible and necessary to draw learners attention to form via form-focused instruction, the dimensions of which are defined and analysed in the subsequent sections.

2.2. Dimensions of form-focused instruction

Nowadays, one of the greatest concerns among applied linguists is to find the most effective ways of grammar instruction (e.g. Doughty and Williams 1998a; Lightbown 2000; Norris and Ortega 2000; Pawlak 2007). A number of form-focused instruction options can be distinguished, for example with regard to the degree of their explicitness: starting with implicit instructional techniques, such as input flood, input enhancement and recasts (Long and Robinson 1998), to more explicit options such as controlled focused activities, overt error correction or deductive presentation of rules (Sharwood Smith 1993). Another important distinction in FFI would be between comprehension (input-based) and production (output-oriented) techniques.

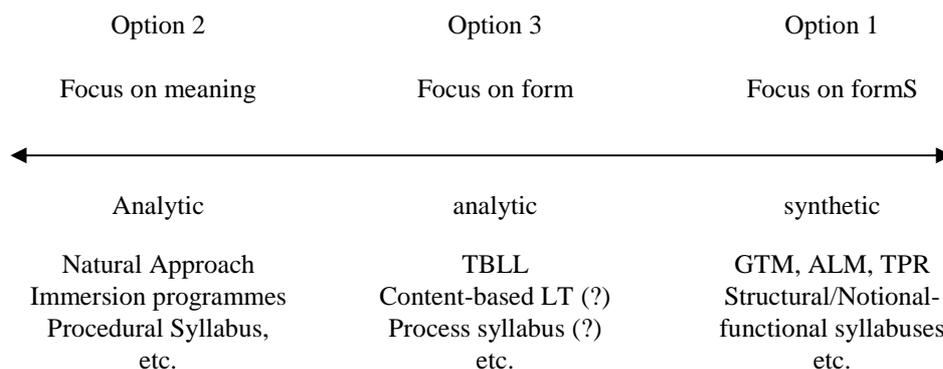


Figure 2. Options in language teaching (adapted from Long and Robinson 1998: 16)

Apart from the distinction between *form-focused* and *meaning-focused* instruction, which was presented above, grammar teaching may also be discussed in terms of three other dimensions proposed by Long (e.g. 1988, 1991). They bear some resemblance to the form-focused vs. meaning-focused dimension in that they concentrate on the degree to which learners need to attend to grammatical features during the process of second language learning. The labels *focus on form* and *focus on forms* were introduced by Long (1991) and they continue to be subject to a number of different interpretations. The third approach, called *focus on meaning*, excludes any attention to the formal features of language; therefore it cannot be, by its very nature, included in the discussion of form-focused instruction. According to Long and Robinson (1998: 16), all three approaches

constitute a continuum, as may be seen in Figure 2. above. Similarly, Doughty and Williams (1998b: 4) argue that *focus on forms* and *focus on form* cannot be treated as two distinct dichotomies, but “rather focus on form entails a focus on formal elements of language, whereas focus on forms is limited to such a focus, and focus on meaning excludes it”. Looking at the theoretical background concerning focus on form and focus on forms, Sheen argues that:

In terms of the theoretical underpinnings of these two options, there is a fundamental difference. ‘Focus on form’ derives from an assumed degree of similarity between first and second language acquisition positing that the two processes are both based on an exposure to comprehensible input arising from natural interaction. However, it is also assumed that there are significant differences in the two processes: that exposure is insufficient to enable learners to acquire much of the second language grammar, and that this lack needs to be compensated for by focusing learners’ attention on grammatical features. ‘Focus on forms’, on the other hand, is based on the assumption that classroom foreign or second language learning derives from general cognitive processes, and thus entails the learning of a skill – hence it’s being characterized as a ‘skills-learning approach’ (2002: 303).

Despite the fact that the difference between the two approaches appears to be clearly distinguishable, unfortunately, due to the heated debate concerning the two concepts (cf. Doughty and Williams 1998b) and various definitions provided in literature (e.g. DeKeyser 1998; Lightbown 2000; Norris and Ortega 2000), there is no clear distinction particularly between *focus on form* and *focus on forms*. Therefore, it seems valid to present in separate subsections the various ways in which the two notions are understood and implemented.

2.2.1. Focus on forms

According to Michael Long (1997), *focus on formS* (Option 1 in Figure 2.) is nowadays considered to be “a traditional, or even Neanderthal” (Long 1988: 136) approach. In its primary meaning, it “always entails isolation or extraction of linguistic features from context or from communicative activity” (Doughty and Williams 1998b: 3). Ellis (2001: 17) defines focus on forms as an approach in which “the teacher and students are aware that the primary purpose of the activity is to learn a preselected form and that learners are required to focus their attention on some specific form intensively in order to learn it”. When the forms-focused approach is employed, the language is divided into separate units,

such as words, collocations, morphemes, sentence patterns, functions, etc., prior to the actual learning process. These segments are presented and taught one at a time, according to the synthetic syllabus (Wilkins 1976) designed beforehand, and the decisions concerning the order of introducing the forms are usually based on frequency, valence and difficulty (Long 1997). According to Long and Robinson (1998: 16), such practices “(...) either largely ignore language learning processes or tacitly assume a discredited behaviorist model”. In Long’s opinion (1997: 2), “focus on forms lessons tend to be rather dry, consisting principally of work on the linguistic items, which students are expected to master one at a time, often to native speaker levels, with anything less treated as error, and little if any communicative L2 use”. The classroom procedures which origin from this approach include, for example, explicit provision of grammar rules, memorization of short dialogues, linguistically modified texts, transformation and error correction exercises and display questions. Long (1997) presents a number of weaknesses that focus on forms suffers from and some problems it may cause. These are as follows:

- (1) no needs’ analysis resulting in teaching language learners do not need or the other way round;
- (2) artificial language in pedagogic materials leading to language *usage* and not language *use*;
- (3) ignorance of language learning processes and research findings, assuming the principles of the behaviorist approach;
- (4) leaving learners out of syllabus design, believing they learn what is taught;
- (5) boring lessons leading to lack of motivation and attention;
- (6) focus on forms produces many more false beginners than finishers, as SLA is not a process of accumulating entities.

Notwithstanding the reservations which may be caused by the implementation of the focus on forms approach, it needs to be stated that it may be conceptualized in a different way, as observed in e.g. Celce-Murcia et al. (1997), DeKeyser (1998) or Sheen (2002, 2003) who attach importance to meaning and message exchange, but at the same time believe that “given the great difficulty of grammar and vocabulary of a foreign language, these can be learned effectively neither incidentally as a by-product of communicative activity nor simply by means of problem-solving activities” (Sheen 2005: 282). What is proposed then, is that declarative knowledge (explicit knowledge) is transformed into procedural knowledge (implicit) by means of practice (DeKeyser 1998, 2001), in

accordance with the assumptions of *Skill Learning Theory* (see section 1.3.2.4. in Chapter One) and the *strong interface position* (see section 1.2.1. in Chapter One). Also Ellis (2005c: 716) rightly points out that: “instruction typically involves combinations of options”, which is why it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about the effectiveness of one type of instruction or the other. He presents a taxonomy of the main options in forms-focused instruction which are: explicit FonFs (deductive and inductive), implicit FonFs (non-enhanced input vs. enhanced input), structured input, production practice (controlled and functional) and negative feedback (implicit and explicit). Learners are required to master each feature in isolation and then, hopefully, they are believed to synthesize all the components and use them in communication. Sheen (2002, 2003) believes students can proceed according to the following lesson stages designed by the teacher:

- (1) providing understanding of the grammar by a variety of means (including explanation in L1, pointing out differences between L1 and L2);
- (2) providing exercises entailing using the grammar in both non-communicative and communicative activities for both comprehension and production;
- (3) providing frequent opportunities for communicative use of the grammar to promote automatic, accurate use.

The rationale for using each stage is supported by empirical evidence obtained from numerous research studies (e.g. Day and Shapson 1991, 2001; Fotos and Ellis 1991; VanPatten 1996; Muranoi 2000; Norris and Ortega 2000).

On the basis of the research findings, Ellis (2005c: 719) attempts to draw some tentative conclusions about the effectiveness of different options in focus on forms instruction as follows:

- (1) Explicit instruction may be more effective than implicit instruction when learning is measured in test-like performance.
- (2) Consciousness-raising tasks catering for discovery-based explicit instruction are as effective as didactic explicit instruction at developing explicit L2 knowledge and also afford opportunities for meaning-centred communication.
- (3) Irrespective of whether input-processing instruction is more effective than production-based instruction (see section 2.3.2.2. in Chapter Two), structured input clearly contributes to L2 learning and may prove a useful option for the development of self-instructional materials.

- (4) Functional grammar teaching (see section 1.1.2. in Chapter One) results in learning, whether this is measured in test-like or more communicative performance.
- (5) Negative feedback may contribute to learning especially if it is pitched at a level appropriate to the learner's developmental stage.

Regrettably, more empirical evidence is needed to testify to the general effectiveness of the focus on forms approach, in particular when compared with focus on form, since the available research is scarce (Sheen 2005; Pawlak 2007).

In his discussion of the current issues in grammar teaching, Ellis (2006a: 101-102) states that “grammar has held and continues to hold a central place in language teaching. The zero grammar approach was flirted with, but never really took hold”. It seems that the focus on forms approach is quite popular among language teachers in many contemporary educational contexts, especially foreign language settings, as visible in available course books and observed by such specialists as Pawlak (2006, 2007) and Pawlak and Drożdżał-Szelest (2007). The most common and typical focus on forms lesson follows the *presentation-practice-production (PPP)* procedure, where a single grammatical structure is introduced deductively or inductively in a meaningful context, and then a number of *text-manipulation* (2nd stage) and *text-creation* (3rd stage) activities follow. The ultimate goal of instruction is the development of the ability to communicate spontaneously, which, however, is hardly ever achieved. It may result from a number of factors, the most debilitating of which could be neglect of the production stage (Pawlak 2006). Among the reasons for implementing focus on forms approaches may also be the fact that “some of the proposals falling under the rubric of focus on form and task-based teaching are incompatible with the inherent limitations of foreign language settings and not necessarily more effective than the instructional options which have turned out to be successful for so many learners” (Pawlak 2007: 170). In order to be able to draw definitive conclusions about the effectiveness of either approach, one needs to investigate the other option which is *focus on form*. This is done in the subsequent section.

2.2.2. Focus on form

Focus on form (Option 3 in Figure 2) attempts to combine the strengths of *focus on forms* and *focus on meaning* and overcome their limitations. It is motivated by the *Interaction*

Hypothesis (see 1.3.2.5.), according to which SLA is based neither on purely nativist principles nor on purely sociocultural approaches. The main assumption of the focus on form perspective is that “it overtly draws students’ attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication” (Long 1991: 45-46). Language is attended to as a tool and a means for communication, and any focus on form is always learner-originated during some kind of meaningful exchange, which is how, as Long argues, the learner’s internal syllabus is respected. It must be remembered that “the usual and fundamental orientation is to meaning and communication, but factors arise that lead even the fluent language user temporarily to attend to the language itself” (Long and Robinson 1998: 24).

Focus on form often consists of an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features – by the teacher and/or one or more students – triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production (Long and Robinson 1998: 23). Since it is believed that certain features of language, both grammatical and lexical, can go unnoticed in the input unless the learner’s attention is drawn to them, the purpose is to encourage learners to notice these features in accordance with the *Noticing Hypothesis* (see 1.3.2.2.). According to Schmidt (1990, 1994), who claims that noticing is a conscious process, attention is necessary for the acquisition to take place. Therefore, learners should pay attention to forms in the input, as it may allow them to notice gaps and holes, and assist their interlanguage development. The theoretical underpinnings for implementing focus on form in a foreign language classroom have been revised by Ellis (2008a: 827-828) as follows:

- learners have the opportunity to engage in meaningful language exchanges in order to become ready to use the new forms spontaneously;
- full acquisition of the new form is possible only when the form is attended to while using the language in a meaning-focused task (see also Long 1991);
- taking into account learners’ limitations while attending to content and form in the input (VanPatten 1990), it is believed that learners concentrate on the meaning first during a communicative activity;
- therefore, there is a need to incorporate techniques for learners to attend to form during a communicative activity, as they may help learners briefly draw their attention to form, meaning and use during one cognitive event (Doughty 2001: 211).

Although the initial definition of *focus on form* (Long 1991) included two important characteristics, which were a meaningful and communicative purpose of the lessons and the

incidental nature of attention to form, the latter was not so strictly respected as some planned intervention is now allowed, which is visible in the available research (Lightbown 1998: 194; Williams 2005: 671). Taking into consideration planning issues, Doughty and Williams (1998a) suggest *proactive* and *reactive* types of focus on form. When the teacher adopts a proactive (planned) focus on form approach, specific, previously prepared, instructional techniques will be employed (e.g. input enhancement, focused communication tasks) in order to make learners focus on a given form (Loschky and Bley-Vroman 1993; Samuda 2001), or in the case of general proactive focus on form, the teacher may increase the amount of planning time for students or give instructions which will focus their attention on accuracy (Foster and Skehan 1996; Ortega 1999). In the case of a typical, spontaneous, reactive focus on form, the teacher's decision to address a particular structure always results from the students' problems while performing a task or an activity. Then, either a mini lesson is conducted with explicit focus on form or a more implicit approach is employed to focus students' attention on the problematic structure which may involve error correction (e.g. VanPatten 1993; Lightbown and Spada 1994).

A different division of *focus on form* was also elaborated on by Ellis (2008a), who talks about *incidental* (*reactive* in Doughty and Williams 1998a) and *planned* (*proactive* in Doughty and Williams 1998a) focus on form: the first described as extensive attention to form while performing an unfocused task, the latter involving intensive attention to form during a focused task. Both proactive and reactive focus on form may be directed at a specific language feature, i.e. *intensive*, and general, i.e. *extensive*. The intensive dimension implies that a given form is specifically targeted, for example by means of recasting. As far as extensive focus on form is concerned, it may naturally be *reactive* as is the case with correction of different forms, or as suggested by Ellis et al. (2001b) *preemptive*. Preemptive focus on form implies that the teacher anticipates specific problems resulting from a given activity and may decide to preempt this possibility by focusing on the form briefly by providing both positive evidence, e.g. a text with the enhanced forms (Williams 2005: 674) and preemptive negative evidence, e.g. a short explanation of rules (Gregg 2001: 170) about the form in question. In such a situation, the incidental character of focus on form is believed to be maintained. Reactive and preemptive focus on form are problem-oriented, but the difference lies in the nature of this problem (Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen 2001b: 414). Reactive focus on form addresses a performance problem, whereas the role of

preemptive focus on form is to address an anticipated or a potential problem resulting from the gap in students' knowledge.

Apart from planning, another feature which may determine the classification of focus on form techniques is *obtrusiveness* (Doughty and Williams 1998a; Doughty 2001), which is the degree to which a given pedagogical option interrupts the processing of meaning during message communication. Obtrusiveness is a complex issue, as it remains unresolved whether, and if so, to what extent, the interruption of the flow of communication affects language learning (Williams 2005). In other words, it needs to be investigated if awareness is necessary to convert input into intake. Several attempts have been made so far to examine processing of form and meaning, with the results being inconclusive. On one hand, the studies reported by e.g. VanPatten (1990), and Overstreet (1998) provide some evidence against simultaneous processing of form and meaning; on the other, Rosa and O'Neill (1999) and Schmidt (1995), for example, argue that explicit instruction and greater awareness result in learning more advanced structures and greater gains, which was also confirmed by a number of empirical studies (e.g. DeKeyser 1995; Robinson 1996; Spada and Lighbown 1993, 1999; Nassaji and Swain 2000; Ellis 2002c). In their meta-analysis of studies on the effects of instruction, Norris and Ortega (2000: 500), provide clear evidence for the facilitative role of focused L2 intervention, which, as the authors' conclude: "results in large gains over the course of an intervention". It is assumed, then, that some interruption in order to direct learners' attention to a form is required. Doughty (2001: 227) presents three criteria which must be met if a pedagogical intervention is to be considered unobtrusive:

- the primary focus is on meaning;
- the FonF targets arise incidentally;
- learner attention is drawn to forms briefly (and perhaps overtly).

Bearing in mind that the above-mentioned requirements are not always met, as is the case, for example with the incidental nature of FonF target, one needs to acknowledge that there can be different degrees of obtrusiveness. Another decision which needs to be made pertains to the extent of explicitness of FonF activities; an aspect which still causes a lot of controversy among language teachers and researchers who are concerned with the optimum level of obtrusiveness.

Before focus on form may be implemented in the foreign language classroom, there are some decisions a teacher must make. On a more general level, it must be remembered

that instruction should take into account learners' developmental readiness and it has been suggested that neither focus on form nor focus on forms should be introduced with learners of low literacy and with beginning learners (Spada and Lightbown 1999; Ellis 2006a). Instead, teachers should wait till their students have acquired basic structures and vocabulary which make it possible for them to communicate. Another important consideration to take into account are learners' needs and interests as far as the most effective way of drawing their attention to form is concerned (Doughty 2001). In addition, it will doubtlessly be more difficult to employ the focus on form approach in those educational contexts where the number of students does not allow for much individual feedback and teachers are obliged to strictly follow the curriculum (cf. Pawlak 2007).

When it comes to the particular decisions which need to be made before the actual implementation of the focus on form approach, the first decision is whether to opt for a *proactive* or *reactive* stance (Doughty and Williams 1998a: 198). While the reactive stance requires the teacher to react on the spot and deal with learning difficulties as they arise (Long 1991), in the case of the proactive stance, which involves planning, it is advisable to take into account such aspects as: e.g. individual learner differences, developmental sequences, input quality, formal and functional complexity and L1 influence. Especially in the case of the proactive approach to focus on form, a question also arises as to which forms to actually focus on. The decisions must be informed by the teacher's knowledge concerning learning difficulty (usually based on error analysis) in terms of learners' implicit and explicit knowledge, students' current stage of development and the order of acquisition (Pienemann 1989; Doughty and Williams 1998a: 215ff), and first language influence. Another decision to be made is the choice between *sequential* focus on form, where TL features are presented and discussed separately from communicative activities, and *integrated* focus on form, where the presence of a meaningful component is required (Spada and Lightbown 2008). Its aim is to draw the learner's attention not only to the *form*, but also to *meaning* and *use* (Larsen-Freeman 2003). Doughty and Williams (1998a: 245) suggest that "the degree of effectiveness of focus on form ultimately depends on the level of integration of the learner's attention to all three aspects of form, meaning and function in the TL".

As far as the syllabus is concerned, the proponents of *focus on form* recommend that the analytic syllabus with no preselection of linguistic items be included. The contents of the syllabus are pedagogical tasks or the curricular subject matter in the case of content-

based approaches (Long and Robinson 1998: 23) which are to serve as a basis for developing learners' language according to their present or future needs, and it is also believed to be more reflective of the internal syllabus. Some of the teaching options which may be employed by the focus on form approach are closed problem-solving tasks performed in pairs, explicit negative feedback in response to low-proficiency learners' problems, or implicit negative feedback, such as recasts, provided in response to children's and adults' language problems. These techniques will be revisited in the relevant sections devoted to the presentation of instructional options.

Although Long (1991: 47) argues that "a systematic, non-interfering focus on form produces a faster rate of learning and (probably) higher levels of ultimate SL attainment than instruction with no focus on form", the approach has encountered voices of criticism, concerning in particular the pedagogical implications for educational contexts. According to Sheen (2003), for example, there are several problems with implementing the focus on form perspective in the foreign language classroom (Sheen 2003: 226):

- there is no grammar syllabus, as the central planning feature is the task structure;
- when extended grammar instruction is required, grammar-problem-solving tasks are preferable to explicit explanation, which does not always work (e.g. White 1998);
- there is very little research on the actual differences in the effects of instruction involving focus on form and focus on forms (Sheen 2000, 2003)

As mentioned above, in order to decide whether focus on form or focus on forms instruction is more effective, one needs some firm evidence coming from thorough, meticulously designed research. Ellis (2008a: 872ff) argues that studies comparing the two approaches to grammar teaching are still few and far between and the heated debate on what exactly focus on form and focus on forms involve does not help solve the problem. Although the distinction between *focus on form*, *focus on forms* and *focus on meaning* could create a basis for discussing various instructional techniques in a FL classroom, the actual options employed by foreign language teachers are often a combination of different techniques and options. It appears that one method can no longer constitute a basis for either research or teaching as foreign language pedagogy has entered the *postmethod era* (Kumaravadivelu 2001, 2006). Therefore, the discussion on the particular teaching options relevant to teaching grammar, presented below, will not proceed according to the classification into focus on form and focus on forms approaches, but will use the more general term of *form-focused instruction*. The pedagogical intervention employed in the

research project (for details, see section 4.5. in Chapter Four) does not meet the requirements of *focus on form* as proposed by Long (1991), and it cannot be considered *focus on forms*, either. Hence it was decided to use the concept form-focused instruction, as understood by Spada (1997: 73) and Ellis (2001:1), for whom the term “is used to refer to any planned or incidental instructional activity that is intended to induce language learners to pay attention to linguistic form”.

2.3. Delivering form-focused instruction in the foreign language classroom

Form-focused instruction in an educational context may be implemented using a number of techniques and procedures. Traditionally, grammar teaching was defined as presentation and practice of discrete grammatical structures (Ellis 2006a: 84). This view, which is still visible in some textbooks, is thought to constitute an overly narrow definition, as the possibilities offered for contemporary teachers go far beyond presentation and practice only. Nowadays, there is a whole range of frameworks specifying the options that can be employed in form-focused instruction (e.g. Doughty and Williams 1998a; Ellis 1997b, 1998, 2001; Norris and Ortega 2000; Pawlak 2004a, 2006; Nassaji and Fotos 2010). For this reason, Ellis (2006a: 84) proposes a broad definition of grammar teaching, arguing that:

Grammar teaching involves any instructional technique that draw learners' attention to some specific grammatical form in such a way that it helps them either to understand it metalinguistically and/or process it in comprehension and/or production so they can internalize it.

According to Stern (1992), identifying specific instructional pedagogical strategies is a way of proceeding beyond the concept of method which is too narrow to account for effective language teaching or provide a basis for reliable research. He presents three broad groups of strategies that can be *teaching strategies* (i.e. concerning specific instructional practices), *timing strategies* (i.e. connected with the number of classes and their distribution) and *social strategies* (related to group size and composition as well as the extent to which instruction is teacher- or learner-centred). They may combine in various ways and are visible in “all kinds of different techniques and activities” (Stern 1992: 31). Grammar teaching options definitely belong to the category of teaching strategies; however, it cannot

be denied that teaching language structures involves other strategies as well, particularly when a regular educational context is taken into account.

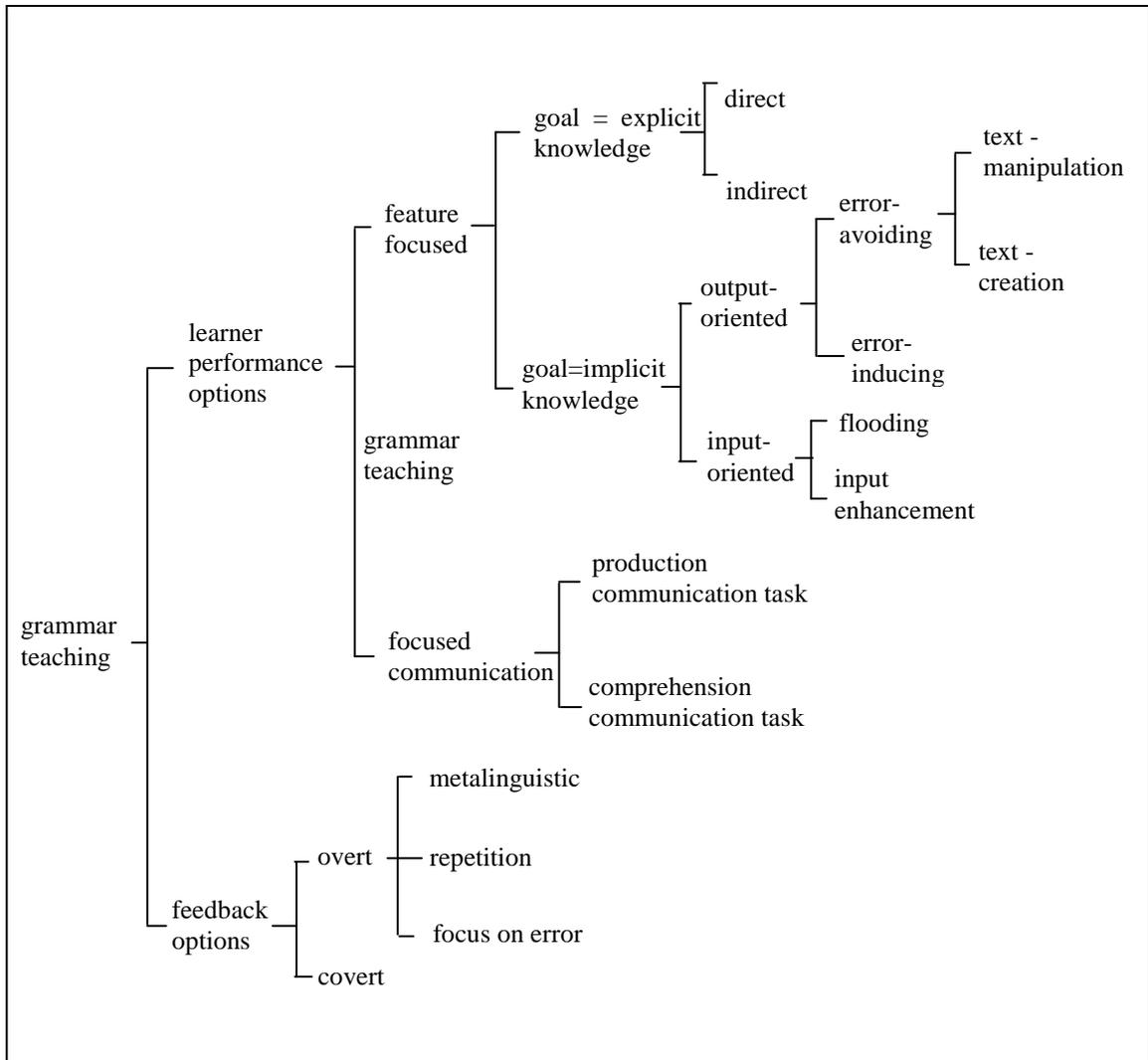


Figure 3. System of methodological options in grammar teaching (adapted from Ellis 1997b: 79).

One possible framework of options in grammar teaching was presented by Ellis (1997b) and is depicted in Figure 3. In Pawlak’s (2006: 255) view, it “seems to be the most wide-ranging, fine-grained and reflective of the teaching practices employed in language classrooms”. Ellis emphasizes the relationship between the particular techniques and procedures and psycholinguistic processes relevant to language acquisition. As can be seen

in Figure 3., the first division is made into *learner performance options* and *feedback options*. Feedback options may be further divided into *overt* (explicit) and *covert* (implicit). *Overt correction* is directed at drawing the learner's attention to a specific grammatical error, and three types of overt feedback may be distinguished (e.g. Spada and Lightbown 1993): metalinguistic feedback, repetition of an erroneous utterance and focus on error. *Covert feedback*, on the other hand, resembles the kind of feedback used in first language acquisition by parents or caretakers. It is implicit and usually takes on the form of a recast (see 2.3.3.1. in this Chapter) or a clarification request (see 2.3.3.1. in this Chapter), which do not interrupt the flow of communication. Learner performance options may be divided according to two categories: *focused communication* and *feature-focused*, which may resemble Long's (1988, 1991) distinction between *focus on form* (2.2.2.) and *focus on forms* (2.2.1.). Focused communication tasks may be of two kinds: production tasks and communication tasks. They are intended to direct learners' attention to particular grammatical structures during a meaning-focused activity and will be explored in greater detail in section 2.3.2.4. of this Chapter. Employing feature focused activities, which are, in Long's (1991) point of view, associated with the focus on forms approach to language learning, may lead to the development of two types of knowledge: explicit and implicit. In the case of grammar teaching with the purpose of developing learners' explicit knowledge, *direct* (deductive) and *indirect* (inductive) options may be distinguished. As Ellis (1997b: 84) comments, "in explicit grammar instruction the purpose is to teach about grammar so that learners construct some kind of conscious, cognitive representation which, if asked, they can articulate". Deductive (direct) form-focused instruction informs learners in terms of metalinguistic knowledge about the structures being taught. By contrast, inductive (indirect) explicit instruction is based on the positive evidence of using a particular language feature and on the basis of the data provided learners are expected to construct the actual rule. When it comes to instruction aiming at implicit knowledge, Ellis (1997b) differentiates between *input-oriented* (comprehension) and *output-oriented* (production) practice. Input-oriented options, which are widely recognized for their role in second language acquisition by, for example, Input Processing Theory and the Noticing Hypothesis (see 1.3.2.), include input flood and input enhancement. Output-oriented practice, which is directed at production of the target language feature, may be further divided into *error-avoiding* and *error-inducing* options. The former type, designed to help learners avoid errors, is typical of production-based practice activities, such as text-manipulation and text-

creation activities, while the latter, aimed at the elicitation of specific errors, is not so popular but has its supporters as well (Tomasello and Herron 1989), although the effectiveness of using error-inducing options has not been widely acknowledged. Ellis (1997b: 91) finishes his analysis of different teaching options with the following words: “the construction and implementation of a grammar lesson or even a grammar task is likely to involve the selection of several options”, which on one hand may bring positive effects for the development of learners’ knowledge, but on the other poses methodological problems for researchers.

Another taxonomy of instructional options in grammar teaching is the computational model of L2 acquisition, which is based on the *computational metaphor* (cf. Lantolf 1996), and it is, according to Ellis (1998), currently dominant in SLA. According to this model (Ellis 1998, 2008a), which is shown in Figure 4., form-focused instruction can facilitate language development in several ways. Point A depicts instruction directed at input to make specific language features more salient and thus noticeable while learners try to understand the meaning of the message in a reading text or listening passage. These techniques are *input-based options*. The next moment in which instruction occurs is via explicit instruction (Point B), which attempts at making learners understand L2 rules and learn them. Point C refers to *practice options* which are intended to foster the production of a specific target feature. The last way (Point D) in which instruction can affect language development is via negative feedback, when learners are shown that their performance was incorrect. These options are called *corrective feedback*.

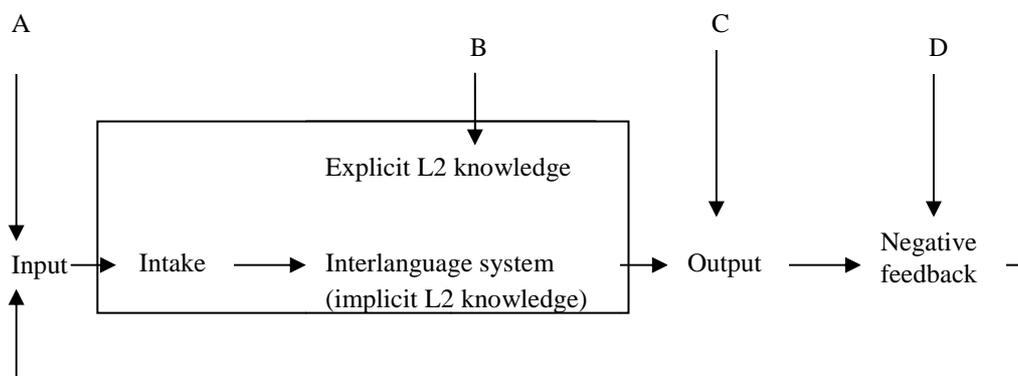


Figure 4. A computational model of L2 acquisition (adapted from Ellis 1998: 43).

Apart from the two taxonomies presented above, instructional options have also been categorized according to the degree of obtrusiveness of attention to form during instruction (Doughty and Williams 1998a). Such a taxonomy is presented in Figure 5., and it takes into account only those tasks and techniques which “are either inherently or sequentially integrated in terms of focus on form and meaning or use” (Doughty and Williams 1998a: 257). Therefore, the options which represent only isolated metalinguistic information are not included as they do not qualify as *focus on form* in their definition. The taxonomy aims to provide information about the extent to which a particular activity interrupts the flow of communication, i.e. it is unobtrusive or obtrusive to the process of meaningful production in the target language. Doughty and Williams (1998a) also characterize instructional options according to the features of focus on form they possess, such as *learner attention and involvement, learning condition, integration, inclusion of metalinguistic information, provision of input and/or output and the provider* (teacher or student). When it comes to learner attention, it may be directed (e.g. garden path technique), or attracted (e.g. input flood). Learner involvement may be a necessary condition for the technique (e.g. in consciousness raising tasks), or not vital (e.g. input enhancement). The learning condition describes whether the technique is deductive (e.g. input processing) or not (e.g. recast). The integrated character of an activity is visible in, for example, input enhancement, whereas its sequential nature, for example, in consciousness-raising tasks). When it comes to metalinguistic information, it is included, for instance, in the debriefing stage of interaction enhancement, and excluded from input flood. The techniques may be input-based or output-oriented, and for example the dictogloss activity represents both of these features. It is also important to determine the technique provider, who can be either a teacher (e.g. recasts), or a learner (e.g. the reflection stage of a dictogloss). Norris and Ortega (2000) attempted to use these guidelines to construct a classification of instructional options in their meta analysis of research on L2 instruction, but it turned out that they had to eventually come up with a new construct, based on the studies themselves. Consequently, they distribute pedagogical procedures according to explicit and implicit dimensions and classify the options in terms of attention focus into *focus on meaning, focus on form* and *focus on forms*, as presented in Figure 2. above.

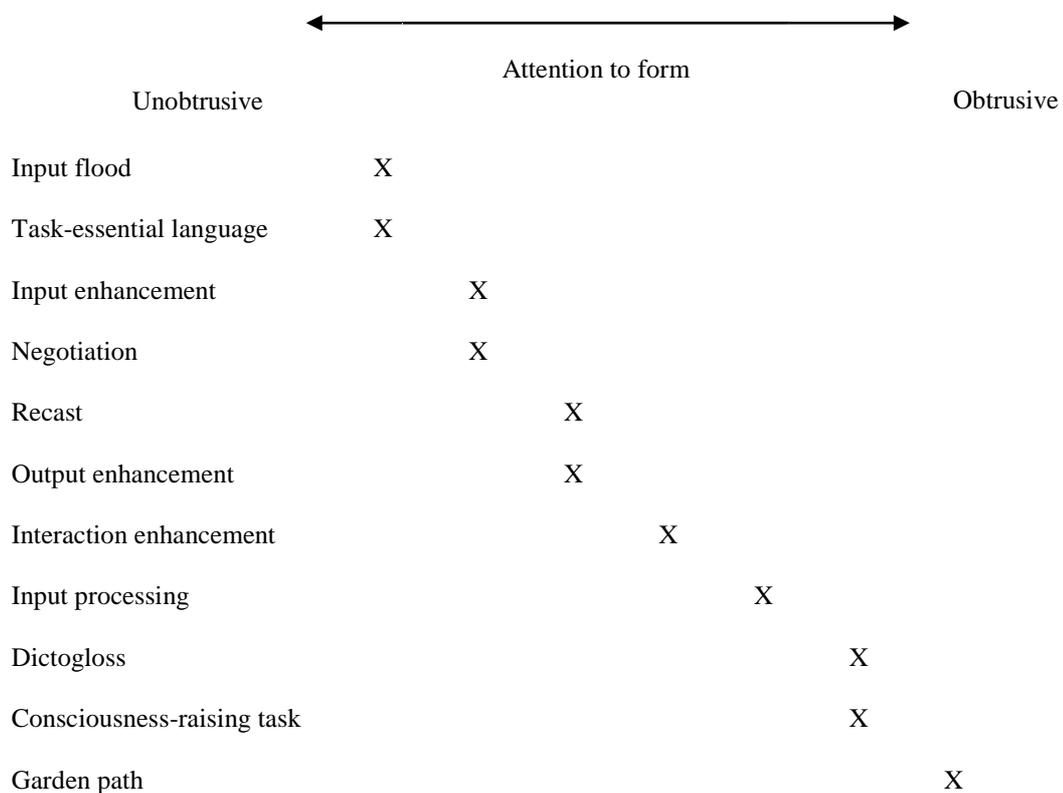


Figure 5. A taxonomy of degree of obtrusiveness (adapted from Doughty and Williams 1998a: 258).

For the purpose of this work, the analysis of the instructional options will proceed according to the classification of the techniques into three categories: those employed for the presentation of language features, followed by those responsible for language practice, and, finally, the last group of options will represent the different options for corrective feedback. It should be noted that the options presented here are not mutually exclusive and different combinations are possible and even welcome in language lessons. This is because, as Pawlak (2004a: 7) thoughtfully comments: “the effectiveness of many of them [options] will be constrained by the learners’ level of proficiency, the amount of time teachers have at their disposal or the inherent properties of the language form being taught”.

2.3.1. Instructional options used for presentation

Form-focused instruction, understood as an approach to grammar teaching which is commonly associated with drawing attention to the features of the target language (Housen et al. 2005: 238), has been subject to a considerable deal of criticism from the proponents of more meaning-focused approaches (e.g. Long 1991). The advocates of explicit instruction claim that explicit knowledge is not constrained by developmental sequences and learnability limitations postulated by SLA research (e.g. Pienemann 1984) and consider it useful for learners who “perceive learning as a cognitive process leading to explicit knowledge of the language. Such learners focus on the characteristic features of the language, (...) make an effort to acquire a conscious and conceptual knowledge, (...) want to know how the language functions, how it hangs together, what words mean, how meaning is conveyed and so on” (Stern 1992: 334). Irrespective of the arguments put forward by the supporters of more implicit instructional techniques, presentation options which prevail in contemporary educational contexts are often aimed at explicit knowledge, which may be considered convenient and safe for teachers, as “in explicit grammar instruction the purpose is to teach about grammar so that learners construct some kind of conscious, cognitive representation which, if asked, they can articulate” (Ellis 1997b: 84). A similar definition is presented by DeKeyser (1995: 380), according to whom explicit form-focused instruction involves “some sort of rule being thought about during the learning process”. All in all, the main purpose of explicit grammar instruction is to help learners develop their explicit knowledge (see 1.2.1.), i.e. raise their consciousness of the target language feature: its form, meaning and use. Later on, this knowledge is aimed to aid learners in producing meaningful utterances during unplanned discourse. Schmidt (2001: 10) confirms the importance of explicit instruction claiming that its major role is that “by changing expectations, it helps focus attention on forms and meanings in the input, a prerequisite for subsequent reprocessing”. In his summary of investigations concerning explicit and implicit learning, Dörnyei (2009a: 272) concludes that the combination of explicit and implicit learning could be most beneficial and effective, because the available evidence indicates that exposure to input and communicative practice does not suffice for the development of fully proficient and accurate foreign language users.

Within the concept of form-focused instruction directed at explicit knowledge two options need to be distinguished: *direct (deductive)* and *indirect (inductive)*. In the case of

the deductive approach to grammar teaching, learners are provided with metalinguistic descriptions of the targeted feature followed by the examples encountered in context, whereas the inductive approach first provides learners with data illustrating the target feature which they are required to discover for themselves (DeKeyser 1995: 380). According to Sharwood-Smith (1981), direct (deductive) grammar presentation may be subject to a number of modifications such as the degree of its explicitness (i.e. the rule is presented fully or only partially) and elaboration (i.e. it may take various amounts of time). The rules concerning a particular language feature are usually presented either in oral or written form, most of the time at the beginning of the lesson and most likely it is the teacher who is the source of information. Apart from explicit verbal explanation, there are various other options at teachers' disposal connected with ways of presenting a given language feature. They may, for example, choose to employ demonstration, charts, formulas, iconic devices, or pictures (Pawlak 2006: 267). Teachers may also resort to using the L1, but although the reliance on students' mother tongue may be justified at times, particularly for crosslingual comparisons and very complex rules, Pawlak (2006) advises explanations in the target language first. When it comes to the presentation of rules, Swan (1994: 46ff) proposes six requirements for successful pedagogic rules:

- Rules should be true.
- Rules should show clearly what are the limits on the use of a given form.
- Rules should be clear.
- Pedagogic rules should be simple.
- Explanations must make use of the conceptual framework available to the learner.
- Rules should answer the question (and only the question) that the student's English is 'asking'.

Deductive grammar teaching may be appealing to language teachers for a number of reasons: it is time-saving, provides the learner with a kind of mental map, recognizes the intelligence, maturity and preferences of especially adult learners, allows a principled coverage of language features and ensures well-organized classroom management (Thornbury 2000; Johnson 2001). On the other hand, this kind of teaching has been subject to considerable criticism, as it promotes a teacher-centred approach, may be discouraging and boring for younger learners and is still connected with both the Grammar-Translation Method and the PPP procedure, both of which are very much out of favour nowadays (e.g.

Long 1997; Skehan 1998). Therefore, it has been argued that “educationally, the inductive stance is probably to be preferred” (Stern 1992: 150).

As already stated, inductive grammar teaching involves providing learners with a number of examples which illustrate the use of a particular language structure. Having acquainted themselves with the examples, learners make attempts to arrive at the rule, or some kind of generalisation which may be observed on the basis of the data provided. It is believed that employing discovery activities in the foreign language classroom may be more advantageous than using the deductive approach as it is more motivating for students who construct rules which are more meaningful, memorable and serviceable. Inductive learning, “which is more appropriate” (H. D. Brown 2001: 365) in most contexts, is believed to be more engaging, as learner autonomy is undoubtedly fostered and the mental effort required to solve the language problem may activate language processing at a deeper level (Thornbury 2001). In Larsen-Freeman’s (2009b: 528) view, the inductive approach may be especially recommendable for complex rules, “which are difficult to articulate and internalize”. In order for learners to be able to discover the rules, it is beneficial to employ databases of spoken and written language, i.e. *corpora* and *corpus-based* resources, which not only contain numerous instances of authentic uses of particular language features, but also facilitate the process of finding patterns and regularities in the target language (Pawlak 2006).

All these advantages and benefits of inductive grammar teaching notwithstanding, researchers and practitioners express their dissatisfaction with some of the problems that applying discovery grammar teaching causes. First of all, the process of discovering a rule may be time-consuming, which may be of critical importance as far as a typical educational context is concerned. Moreover, with complex language features, it seems more effective and helpful to state the rule directly to prevent learners from constructing erroneous hypotheses which will then take time to be reformulated. Larsen-Freeman (2003, 2009b) goes one step further, taking the stance that even the best pedagogic rule does not reflect the true nature of grammar; therefore she claims that it is necessary to guide learners to understand the *reason* why things are the way they are when it comes to the functioning of foreign language grammar. It may be done by means of reducing the arbitrariness in grammatical rules by providing meaning-based explanations. Having been presented to learners, the rule may be applied in various tasks illustrating its use, the aim of which is to encourage learners to analyse the data, draw conclusion about the regularities in the data

and develop their metalinguistic knowledge of the structure being taught. The scope of metalinguistic knowledge can vary, as it is “a scale of knowledge ranging from the fairly primitive kind that very young children have, more easily captured by the term *awareness* to the highly sophisticated technical knowledge possessed by descriptive and theoretical linguists when they talk about language structure” (Sharwood Smith 1993: 172). Last but not least, individual learner differences and preferences must be taken into account. As Fotos and Ellis (1991: 623) rightly remark with reference to consciousness-raising tasks, “some learners may not wish to talk about grammar. They may find it a boring topic, or they may find it difficult to discuss because they lack the basic metalinguistic knowledge needed to do so”.

When it comes to research on the effectiveness of the two approaches (see 3.3.1.), there is still much to be done, but there is some empirical evidence in favour of deductive rather than inductive grammar teaching as far as their role in second language acquisition is concerned (Robinson 1996; Erlam 2003a). Therefore, irrespective of all the positive appeal connected with employing indirect grammar instruction, one needs caution and balance to ensure the selection of the best solutions for a particular learning context. The factors that doubtlessly need to be taken into consideration are syllabus requirements, time and materials available, learners’ cognitive styles, goals and preferences, and also teachers’ beliefs which may be difficult to modify (cf. Pawlak 2006).

A discovery activity which is believed to be good way of helping students generalize about language use are *consciousness-raising tasks* (CR), which typically serve as an example of explicit inductive activities. A CR task, representing an input-based option (see below), is defined by Ellis (1997b: 160) as “a pedagogic activity where the learners are provided with L2 data in some form and required to perform some operation on or with it, the purpose of which is to arrive at an explicit understanding of some linguistic property or properties of the target language”. CR tasks may be inductive, in which learners “are supplied with L2 data and are required to induce an explicit representation of a target language structure” (Ellis 1997b: 160), or deductive, in which a description of the target language feature is provided and learners are requested to use this description in the L2 data. The data itself may be of different types and origins and learners may perform a number of different activities using these data (cf. Ellis 1997b). Consciousness-raising is connected with the *weak interface hypothesis* (see 1.2.1.), based on the assumption that learners need to understand the particular grammar choices before the restructuring process

can take place (Thornbury 2001: 100) and that the teacher's task is to provide learners with activities which will allow them to understand and be able to interpret the particular rules and structures. In more theoretical terms, explicit knowledge can contribute to the "registration of the occurrence of a stimulus event in conscious awareness and its subsequent storage in long-term memory" (N. Ellis 2005: 317). It means that if learners have the explicit knowledge of the target language feature, it is easier for them to notice and detect the feature in the input they receive. As Ellis argues (2002d: 169), "the aim of this kind of grammar teaching [CR] is not to enable the learner to perform a structure correctly but simply help him/her to know about it". In a similar vein, Rutherford and Sharwood Smith (1985: 280) state: "CR is considered as a potential facilitator for the acquisition of linguistic competence and has nothing directly to do with the use of that competence for the achievement of specific communicative objectives, or with the achievement of fluency". When it comes to the practical application of consciousness-raising tasks, Ellis (2002d: 168) presents the typical features which make CR tasks distinct from other form-focused tasks and these are as follows:

- (1) There is an attempt to isolate the specific linguistic feature for focused attention.
- (2) Learners are provided with data which illustrate the targeted feature and they also may be supplied with an explicit rule describing or explaining the feature.
- (3) Learners are expected to utilize intellectual effort to understand the targeted feature.
- (4) Misunderstanding or incomplete understanding of the grammatical structure by the learners leads to clarification in the form of further data and description or explanation.
- (5) Learners may be required (though not obligatory) to articulate the rule describing the grammatical structure.

Indirect consciousness-raising tasks are of even greater value when they involve various modes of interaction (e.g. pair and group work), as the need to cooperate and solve problems together resembles real communicative contexts for which learners need to prepare (Ellis 1998; Pawlak 2004a).

Implications from the research on CR (see 3.3.1.1.) as far as the instruction is concerned are fairly positive. This is because it has been shown that CR tasks can help learners develop awareness of the new forms, or, in the case of complex grammar features, which cause learning problems, they may trigger students' noticing, a condition necessary for the acquisition of these features (Ellis 1997b). It must be remembered, however, that, due to their nature, CR tasks do not cause immediate changes in learners' ability to produce the

target language. Taking into account individual differences, such as learners' age, intelligence and motivation, it appears reasonable to employ CR tasks with due care and balance. CR tasks could be seen as a means of facilitating explicit knowledge, which in the long run can contribute to achieving the ultimate goal – the development of target language competence, which, in the opinion of most SLA researchers (Ellis 2006a: 95) is a matter of implicit knowledge.

2.3.2. Practice options

DeKeyser (2007b: 8) understands practice as “specific activities in the second language, engaged in systematically, deliberately, with the goal of developing knowledge of and skills in the second language”. While there is no doubt that the ultimate goal is the development of implicit (procedural) knowledge, its explicit (declarative) dimension may be useful in a number of situations, and therefore extensive practice is very important as it:

(...) has to bridge the gap between the initial presentation of the L2 knowledge (in traditional deductive learning from the teacher's presentation) or the initial hypotheses formed on the basis of the input (in more inductive learning, be it implicit or explicit) and the desirable end stage of fully proceduralized grammar (DeKeyser 2009: 130-131).

It is obvious, then, that the taxonomy of the instructional options with regard to form-focused instruction must include practice options. They may be divided into different groups of techniques employed with a view to practising a given target language feature. The framework of practice options proposed in this thesis includes a distinction between explicit vs. implicit options, input-based vs. output-based options and controlled vs. communicative practice options. All of these dichotomies are discussed below. A separate section within practice options is devoted to focused communication tasks which need to be investigated in greater detail as their contribution was subjected to investigation in the research project presented in Chapters Four and Five.

2.3.2.1. Explicit vs. implicit practice options

The distinction between explicit and implicit practice options appears to be clear and straightforward: in the case of explicit options, “learners construct some kind of onscious, cognitive representation, which, if asked, they can articulate” (Ellis 1997b: 84). Text-manipulation and text-creation activities, for instance, are examples of explicit practice options. Implicit practice options, on the other hand, do not involve overt knowledge connected with a given language feature, but the feature is practiced by means of the manipulation of the language input to which learners are exposed, or via production practice when learners perform communicative activities, for example in input flood. Ellis (1997b: 84) explains that: “in implicit grammar instruction learners are asked to engage in practice of some kind. In this case, the aim is that the learners should learn the target structure to the extent that they can use it not just when they are consciously attending to it but also when they are engaged in meaning-focused communication”. Although most implicit practice options are directed at production (see Ur 2001), it is also possible to design input-based implicit techniques to encourage learners to “undertake a kind of form-function analysis of the structure” (Ellis 1997b: 85) on the basis of the input which is usually organized in such a way that the targeted language feature is illustrated.

An example of a task which attempts to draw learners attention to form with the major focus directed at meaning may be a *dictogloss* (Wajnryb 1990). A typical dictogloss has three stages: lesson, modelling and reflection (Doughty and Williams 1998a: 258). First, the teacher reads a short continuous text containing numerous examples of the target form twice and students’ task is to take notes (Doughty and Williams 1998: 239). Next, students are asked to work in pairs or small groups to reconstruct the text on the basis of what they have written down individually. In order to come up with the final version, they must reflect on their use of the target language, negotiate and test their hypotheses, cooperate and use metalanguage, all of which, as research shows (e.g. Swain 1998), may result not only in their noticing the gaps and holes in their interlanguages, but may also foster the learning of the target language features. According to Wajnryb (1990), a dictogloss is a valuable activity because it “allows learners to try out the language, that is to try out their hypotheses and subsequently receive more data about language (...). Through active learner involvement, students come to confront their own strengths and weaknesses (...) In doing so, they find out what they need to know” (Wajnryb 1990: 10). It needs to be emphasized, however, that implementing dictogloss tasks in regular classes is an undertaking beset with difficulties. This is because not only is constructing successful

dictogloss tasks a demanding task in itself, but also, while performing the task, learners need plenty of time, should be provided with an appropriate model and be given adequate feedback on their work. The potential threat of the abundant use of L1 cannot be understated here, either. All this can make language teachers rather reluctant towards applications of the procedure in classroom practice. The effectiveness of the dictogloss procedure has been explored in a number of studies, the outcomes of which will be presented in section 3.3.2.1. in Chapter Three.

It must be stated at this point that the above discussion concerned an example of a specific explicit instructional option. A dictogloss possesses the characteristic features of both input-based and output-oriented explicit techniques. It has been decided that the other instructional techniques, which may be directed at either explicit or implicit knowledge will be analysed in the next sections, devoted to comprehension and production practice. The relevant information concerning their explicit or implicit aim will also be provided there. When it comes to input and output practice which is the main concern of the next section, among a number of options to choose from, the author has decided to discuss *input flood*, *input enhancement*, *input processing*, and *interpretation tasks*, all of which belong to input-based techniques. As far as output-based options are concerned, *text-manipulation* and *text-creation activities*, plus an error-inducing technique called *garden path* have been considered valuable for presentation.

2.3.2.2. Input- vs. output-based practice options

Input-based options (also known as *comprehension-based options* or *structured input techniques*), together with *output-based* options (*production-based options*) are included in teaching techniques which, according to Stern (1992: 339), “encourage the learner to approach the new language globally and intuitively rather than through a process of conscious reflection and problem solving” and thus aim at developing learners’ implicit knowledge. The importance of input and output practice is acknowledged by Willis (2010: 11), who argues:

We need to offer learners ample exposure to language. Only through this exposure can they find opportunities to sift through the complexities and the extent of the language system. At the same time we need to offer learners ample opportunities to use the language. Wordings are a means to an end, not an end in itself. Only by wide experience of language in use can

learners refine their meaning system. And only by refining their meaning system do they create the need for more precise wordings and so find reasons to develop their grammar.

Theoretically, input-based options are based on the interactionist theories and a computational model of L2 acquisition (see section 2.3. in this Chapter), according to which, for the acquisition to take place, learners must comprehend and process input. Output-based options, on the other hand, have their origins in two theories of SLA, the first of which is sociocultural theory (see section 1.3.2.7. in Chapter One) which claims that learning is the outcome of social interaction which encourages learners to produce new language forms (Ellis 2006a). Output-based options may also serve as an opportunity for plentiful communicative practice, which, according to DeKeyser (1998) and skill-learning theory (see section 1.3.2.4. in Chapter One), allows explicit knowledge to become implicit (see also the discussion of the strong interface position in section 1.2.1. in Chapter One).

The most common meaning of the word *input* is “language data that the learner is exposed to, i.e. the learner’s experience of the target language in all its various manifestations” (Sharwood-Smith 1993: 166). What is important to language teachers and language researchers is that target language proficiency may develop as a response to input or may fail to do so in spite of that input. Even if input is understood by the learner, i.e. it is *comprehensible*, it may be processed for meaning alone, which results in no change of the interlanguage system with regard to the formal properties of the language feature. Hence the need for *input-based instruction*, also known as *comprehension-based instruction* (VanPatten and Cadierno 1993), which has three major functions: learners should notice the targeted language feature, comprehend its meaning and rehearse the feature in short-term memory, based on the assumption that it is easier to manipulate the processes responsible for intake than to make learners restructure their interlanguage systems (Ellis 2008a: 873). As Schmidt (2001: 30) explains: “people learn about the things that they attend to and do not learn much about the things they do not attend to”. Therefore, teaching with the use of input-based options involves designing such grammar tasks which “do not require learners to engage in production but instead focus their attention on specific structures and help them to understand the meaning(s) which these structures realize – to induce them to undertake a kind of form-function analysis of the structure, as this is exemplified in input that has been specially contrived to illustrate it” (Ellis 1997b: 87). It must be remembered that some input-based options available for language teachers are more explicit and some more implicit. Learners could be requested to attend to input with numerous examples of a

specific form to make it more salient for them, or they could be asked to answer some questions concerning a text or listening passage to make sure they understood and processed the language feature. The techniques providing enriched input are *input flood* and *input enhancement*. The second group of input-based techniques involves *input processing instruction* which makes use of *structured input* and *interpretation tasks*.

Input flood is a technique in which students' attention is drawn to a particular language feature by incorporating numerous instances of it in meaningful input (Larsen-Freeman 2009b) in accordance with Doughty and Williams's (1998a: 236) principle that "the more opportunities there are in the input for learners to notice a linguistic feature, the more likely they are to do so". The aim is to enhance the perceptual salience of a given feature through increasing the frequency of its occurrence in the input. Apart from making certain language features more frequent, another role of input flooding may also be to encourage learners to produce the target form in the future, i.e. *prime* it. According to Mackey and Gass's (2006: 173), "syntactic priming is a speaker's tendency to produce a previously spoken or heard structure". Input flood can occur both in speaking and writing (i.e. spoken or written texts) and an example could be having learners listen to a passage about historical events in which a great number of past simple sentences are used, which learners are expected to notice.

Input enhancement is another technique of making language features more salient, but this time not only with regard to frequency but also their appearance or sound. Visual input enhancement is an implicit and unobtrusive means of drawing learners' attention to form contained in the written input (Doughty and Williams 1998a). It is usually done by means of combinations of various formatting techniques such as bolding, capitalizing or underlining, which is sometimes assisted with explicitly asking learners to pay attention to the highlighted forms. Input may also be enhanced by means of oral or body language techniques, such as special intonation, stress patterns or gestures. Input enhancement originated from consciousness-raising techniques which are intended to make students aware of new language features in the input using various means of highlighting them. Sharwood-Smith (1991, 1993) came up with the notion to describe the ways in which language features can be made more salient in the input to be recognized and attended to by learners. The major assumption of input enhancement is that learners must attend to formal features in the input. In particular, they must pick up and process linguistic examples that their internal mechanisms can subsequently use as data for the developing system. It

appears to be a safer label than *consciousness raising* as there is never enough certainty that learners' consciousness was actually raised as a result of the teacher's attempts (Sharwood-Smith 1991; Pawlak 2006). In their book on key terms in second language acquisition, VanPatten and Benati (2010: 95) define *input enhancement* as directing learners' attention to formal features of the language while at the same time maintaining a focus on meaning, i.e. it entails any effort to make formal features of the language more salient to learners. VanPatten and Benati (2010) distinguish two types of input enhancement: *positive*, which involves manipulating input in certain ways to make formal features more obvious to learners (e.g. louder voice, increased acoustic stress, bolding or highlighting), and *negative* input enhancement which is basically feedback: the teacher draws a learner's attention to his or her incorrect production in order to signal that the target norms have been violated. This technique will be discussed in more detail in the section devoted to corrective feedback options.

Another implementation of comprehension-based grammar teaching is the *structured input* component of VanPatten's (1996) *processing instruction* (PI). VanPatten (1996) argues that interlanguage development is a result of learners processing input and not from their efforts at production, although it may help them automatize forms they have already internalized. Instead, he proposes to accomplish direct intervention in interlanguage development through *input processing instruction*, whose main aim is to "alter the processing strategies that learners take to the task of comprehension and to encourage them to make better form-meaning connections than they would if they were left to their own devices" (VanPatten 1996: 60). Input processing instruction begins with *explicit instruction* directed at helping learners overcome default processing strategies. It is the time when learners are first informed about the target structure, "they are told what to pay attention to and what to notice and why they must change their processing (Doughty and Williams 1998a: 240). Then they are requested to work on *structured input* activities, which are understood as activities requiring learners to process L2 data that has been specially designed to induce *noticing* of the targeted form and that can only be comprehended if the targeted form has been processed (Ellis 2005c: 717-718). This stage of the lesson comprises first of all *referential activities* "for which there is a right or wrong answer and for which the learner must rely on the target grammatical form to get meaning", and, subsequently, *affective activities* "in which learners express an opinion, belief or some other affective response and are engaged in processing information about the real world"

(VanPatten 2002a: 766). The main feature of this type of instruction is that it relies on input-based options and aims to replace the *default processing strategies* that are a feature of interlanguages (e.g. the assumption that the first noun in a sentence is always the agent) with such responsible for a particular target language feature, which is intended to encourage learners to make better form-meaning connections than they would without PI.

When it comes to *interpretation tasks* (IT), which are, according to Ellis (2008a: 875), “essential feature of input-processing instruction”, they bear much resemblance to the structured-input stage of IP. The main principles for the design of such tasks are (Ellis 1997b: 155):

- (1) Learners should be required to process the target structure, not to produce it.
- (2) An interpretation activity consists of a stimulus to which learners must make some kind of response.
- (3) The stimulus can take the form of spoken or written input.
- (4) The response can take various forms, but it should be non-verbal or minimally verbal.
- (5) The activities can be sequenced to require learners to attend to meaning, then notice the form and function of the structure, and, finally, identify and correct errors.
- (6) As a result of task completion, learners should understand the form-meaning connection of a particular structure
- (7) Learners can benefit from the opportunity to negotiate the input they hear or read.
- (8) IT tasks should require both personal and referential responses from learners.
- (9) As a result of task completion, learners should have the knowledge of common errors and correct usage of a particular structure.

Ellis (1995: 94, 1997b: 152) outlines three main goals of employing interpretation tasks. These tasks should enable learners to identify the relationship between a particular language form and the meanings and functions it realizes. They also ought to enhance input, thus getting learners to attend to a potentially non-salient feature and promoting noticing. Finally, the aim of IT tasks is to trigger the process of cognitive comparison, which aids learners in noticing the gap in their interlanguage systems. In practice, interpretation tasks can be designed to reflect these three aims by means of three stages: in the first one learners are supposed to comprehend the input and the meaning of a specific grammatical structure, then learners are asked to attend to the important features of the structure, which is followed by a task in which students are encouraged to produce their

own output and make cognitive comparisons between their performance and the features of the structure (Ellis 1997b: 153).

As far as classroom implementation of comprehension-based tasks is concerned, Pawlak (2006: 298ff) acknowledges the benefits of using such tasks as an alternative to more traditional approaches, but at the same time expresses his concern about their effectiveness and applicability in regular educational contexts, pointing to several problems that their implementation may cause. The time of instruction is usually limited to two or three hours per week, teachers are reluctant to change their ways unless they are convinced the new techniques are worth it, and they may not be prepared adequately to design proper interpretation tasks. All these difficulties notwithstanding, Pawlak acknowledges the appeal of input-based options; yet he suggests that they should be integrated into longer instructional sequences. In Ellis's (2006a: 99) view, it is extremely difficult to evaluate the superiority of one type of tasks over the other, as:

both options are likely to involve input-processing and production. For example, it is quite conceivable that in an input-based approach, individual students silently produce the target structure, while in a production-based approach, an utterance produced by one student serves as input for another. It is, therefore, not surprising that both options have been shown to result in acquisition.

Apart from input-based options, which, though attractive, do not suffice for accomplishing successful second language acquisition (see section 3.3.2.2. in Chapter Three), it is possible to make use of output-based options, which provide learners with opportunities to produce the targeted feature. The current meaning of *output* is that it not only represents the product of acquisition or the means by which learners practice their language for fluency, but it is also believed to play an important role in the process of second language acquisition, as learners need to employ their cognitive resources to produce language (Izumi 2002). In other words, thanks to the requirement of producing output, learners have the opportunity to process those language features which would not be necessary for simply comprehending input. In proposing the *Output Hypothesis*, Swain (1985: 249) argued that producing the target language (TL) may serve as “the trigger that forces the learner to pay attention to the means of expression needed in order to successfully convey his or her own intended meaning”. Apart from that, *comprehensible output* may help learners notice features of the target language, especially to “notice what they do not know, or know only partially” (Swain 1995b: 129), which in the long run is

aimed to make them *avoid errors*. Therefore, it is believed that output-based tasks which are both “system-stretching, in that they push the learners to use their full grammatical resources, and awareness-raising, in the sense that they allow learners to become aware of gaps in their current state of interlanguage development, are crucial elements in a pedagogy designed to provide the required focus on form” (Cullen 2008: 223).

When it comes to theoretical grounds for production practice, most SLA theorists express their doubts about output-based options contributing to interlanguage development. The controversy is connected with the assumption that the carefully designed pedagogical techniques, which are mostly directed at explicit knowledge, can lead learners to the ultimate goal of learning which is implicit knowledge. These reservations are related to the *Interface Hypothesis*, particularly *the strong-interface position* (see 1.2.1.), which holds that it is possible for explicit knowledge to become implicit by means of plentiful communicative practice (DeKeyser 1998). Irrespective of the claims that production options are usually mechanical and promote rote learning (Pawlak 2006), which testifies to the teachability aspect being ignored (see section 1.3.2.1. in Chapter One), contemporary teaching materials contain a plethora of production-based teaching techniques (Ellis 2002c). Voices about the necessity to integrate output-oriented activities in form-focused instruction are expressed by a number of researchers, such as Ellis (1998: 51), who suggests that “although production practice may not enable learners to integrate entirely new grammatical structures into their interlanguages, it may help them use partially acquired structures more fluently and more accurately”. In a similar vein, Schmidt (1994) argues that successful acquisition involves both a *skill aspect* and a *knowledge aspect*. For this reason, it is believed that text-manipulation activities can contribute to automatization of the explicit knowledge that learners possess, and text-creation activities will help learners gain greater control of the features that have already entered their implicit knowledge, but cannot yet be accessed with ease. Therefore, it seems warranted to claim that production-oriented practice may turn out facilitative for converting their explicit knowledge into implicit, or at least to improve their access to those structures that have been already partly acquired.

Output-based options may be more controlled or more communicative, and they will be analysed taking into account this criterion in the next two sections. The production options, which are going to be presented are *error-avoiding* and *error-inducing* techniques: *text-manipulation* and *text-creation activities* as well as *garden path technique*. Focused

communication tasks will be discussed separately in section 2.3.2.4., because, being the main concern of the research project, they require a more detailed analysis.

2.3.2.3. Controlled vs. communicative practice options

Instructional options may be categorized not only according to being input-based or output-inducing, but also in terms of their communicative nature. Prior to discussing the actual options, it is worth looking at the traditional classification of classroom procedures into *drills* and *exercises*. *Drills* may be divided into several types, such as *mechanical*, *meaningful* and *communicative* (Paulston and Bruder 1975), but their main feature is that they usually require one correct answer. Mechanical drills focus only on language form and can be performed with no attention given to meaning, e.g. passive voice transformations. Meaningful drills are more developed, as they require some processing of meaning, but learners are not required to produce any previously unknown information, e.g. *Is it his car? No it is her car.* Finally, communicative drills involve communicating actual content unknown to the interlocutor before, e.g. *What were you doing yesterday evening? I was watching TV.* In comparison to drills, *exercises* tend to be thought of as more open-ended and allowing several acceptable responses (Stern 1992; Ellis 1997b). The two types discussed here do not, however, constitute two distinct ends of practice, but are rather seen in terms of a continuum, ranging from highly controlled drills and text-manipulation activities to more communicative forms of practice, such as text-creation activities. The greatest freedom regarding communication is given to students in focused communication tasks which are going to be discussed in the next section. Most of the time it is error avoidance that is given top priority; therefore activities are designed in such a way that grammatically correct structures are highly expected and the risk of inaccurate target language use is minimized (Pawlak 2004a, 2006).

As regards controlled instructional options typical of error-avoiding techniques, one may differentiate between *text-manipulation* and *text-creation* activities. *Text-manipulation* activities provide learners with sentences they will be asked to produce and but there is a need to operate on them in some way, by e.g. filling the gaps, choosing the correct option, transforming or completing the sentence. *Text-creation* activities, on the other hand, require learners to construct their own sentences in which a particular language feature should be

applied. An example could be picture description or translation. Although they bear much resemblance to production-based focused communication tasks, described in the next section, the main difference is that learners are fully aware that the aim is to practise a specific grammatical structure, therefore, as Ellis (1997b: 90) suggests, “they treat them as opportunities to practise rather than as opportunities to communicate”. As far as sequencing these activities in a lesson is concerned, Ellis (1998: 50) writes: “a well-established methodological principle in current grammar teaching is to begin with text-manipulation and then move to text-creation activities. In this way teachers hope to push the learners from controlled to automatic use of the target language”. Despite these common procedures, there is little empirical evidence that moving from controlled to free practice will develop learners’ implicit knowledge (Ellis 1997b). The question which also arises while implementing *text-manipulation* and *text-creation activities* is which of these work better for L2 acquisition, but no conclusive findings have been obtained yet.

Apart from error-avoiding techniques which constitute the backbone of production-oriented FFI, the other output-based option is connected with *error-inducing*, but it is rarely incorporated into classroom teaching. An example of an error-inducing production-based technique is a *garden path technique*. The rationale behind using this technique is the belief that when learners test their hypotheses when anticipating common learning problems, they may attain higher levels of accuracy by drawing their attention to errors made in the process of generalization (Doughty and Williams 1998a). Nation and Newton (2008: 140) give the following example of a typical garden path technique. In the example, the student is corrected and thereby is made aware of the exception to the grammatical rule.

(1) *Teacher: Here is a sentence using these words: think and problem. I thought about the problem. Now you make one using these words: talk and problem.*

Learner: We talked about the problem.

Teacher: Good. Argue and result.

Learner: We argued about the result.

Teacher: Good. Discuss and advantages.

Learner: We discussed about the advantages.

Teacher: No. With discuss we do not use about.

Tomasello and Herron (1988, 1989) conducted two studies exploring the effectiveness of the garden path technique for college-level learners. On the basis of their

findings, they concluded that FFI is most effective with techniques of the error-inducing kind. However, their proposal was considered premature for advancing definitive conclusions due to methodological and theoretical doubts connected with their studies, which, overall, should make us circumspect about implementing the option into classroom teaching (Pawlak 2004a). Irrespective of these doubts, it seems garden path techniques could be effectively incorporated into FFI, particularly when it comes to such areas of grammar as irregular past tense forms, comparison of adjectives, singular and plural, or inaccuracies resulting from L1 interference (Pawlak 2006).

2.3.2.4. Focused communication tasks

Focused communication tasks, which differ from situational grammar exercises in the way that at no time are learners informed of the specific linguistic focus and thus pay primary attention to message content, draw attention to a particular language feature only incidentally (Ellis 2003: 141). As argued in the weak interface position of the *Interface Hypothesis* (Ellis 1993, see section 1.2.1. in Chapter One), formal instruction and explicit learning are generally thought to have an indirect and often delayed effect on interlanguage development. For this reason, Doughty and Williams (1998c: 2) argue that one way of facilitating language learning is to combine explicit instructional treatment with tasks characterized by a communicative purpose, as “pedagogical interventions embedded in primarily communicative activities can be effective in overcoming classroom limitations on SLA”. Also, the main claim of the *Interaction Hypothesis* (Long 1996, see section 1.3.2.5. in Chapter One) is that communication may help learners acquire new forms when input is made comprehensible through negotiating for meaning, (e.g. Pica, Young and Doughty 1987: 213), which is visible in the example below:

(2) NS: *Do you wear them every day?*

NNS: *Huh?*

NS: *Do you put them on every day?*

As can be seen from the excerpt above, negotiation for meaning may help make new forms and their meanings transparent in the input, with the result that they can be more easily

acquired. According to the *comprehensible output hypothesis* (Swain 1985, see section 1.3.2.5. in Chapter One), acquisition takes place when learners are ‘pushed’ into producing output that is more grammatical, like in the example presented by Ellis (1997b: 210):

(3) NNS: *He pass his house.*

NS: *Sorry?*

NNS: *He passed, he passed, ah, his sign.*

The necessity of incorporating communicative activities into form-focused instruction is also acknowledged by cognitive linguists, such as Langacker (2008: 73). According to *Cognitive Grammar*, language is a construct of a number of conventionally established elements (e.g. lexical items, formatives, grammatical constructions, sound patterns, etc.) which are learned as units. These units, however, may differ from the actual instances of language use, which are called usage events. Langacker (2008: 81) proposes, then, that learning a language:

requires the specific, usage-based learning of a vast array of conventional units. (...) It suggests the importance of providing the learner with sufficient exposure to representative uses of a given unit. Ideally, moreover, this exposure should occur in the context of meaningful exchanges approximating socially and culturally normal usage events. In this respect the usage-based approach resonates with the natural approach to language teaching.

In order to be able to explore the effectiveness of focused communication tasks in instructed second language acquisition of grammatical structures, a precise definition of a *task* is indispensable. A number of different proposals have been suggested (e.g. Long 1983b; Prabhu 1987; Skehan 1998; Ellis 2003) and the most general division was offered by Nunan (2004), who distinguishes between *real world target tasks* and *pedagogical tasks*, where the main difference is whether the task is used beyond or in the classroom. As far as a pedagogical task is concerned, various definitions have been constructed as well (e.g. Skehan 1998; Bygate et al. 2001). Ellis (2003: 16), for example, defines a communicative pedagogical task in the following way:

A task is a workplan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real

world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills and also various cognitive processes.

Nunan's definition (2004: 4), which describes a pedagogical task as "a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form", is in line with Ellis's (2003) in the sense that both of them acknowledge the interrelatedness of form and meaning and their importance for the effective expression of various communicative functions. There are two main arguments for the implementation of communication tasks in classroom teaching. According to Griggs (2005), they provide a favourable learning situation, because learners produce more language, they are responsible for their learning process and, finally, by creating a nice classroom atmosphere, students' motivation may be on the increase. Griggs (2005: 407) argues that communication tasks "place learners in the centre of the learning process by creating an interactional framework in which they solve language problems in order to fulfill communicative needs". Having been exposed to the task which contains a gap between different sources of information, students usually work in groups or in pairs to partake in communicative interaction. Second of all, communication tasks help bridge the gap between language learning in an educational context and the actual language use in the real world (Nunan 1991), and therefore they are believed to contribute incidentally to learners' linguistic development, with regard to both fluency and accuracy (Ellis 1997b; Brumfit 1984).

Communication tasks can be characterized according to two types: *focused* and *unfocused* (Nunan 2004; Ellis 1997b, 2003). In the case of *unfocused communication tasks*, the designer of the task does not offer any prominence to any particular linguistic feature. During the performance of the task learners are not obliged or encouraged to employ particular language structures; the situation should resemble 'natural' communication in which the language used is broadly determined by the content of the task (Nobuyoshi and Ellis 1996: 263). Focused communication tasks, on the other hand, are examples of functional production practice (Ellis 2005c: 718), i.e. they are designed to employ a particular linguistic feature, although not in a way that makes the learner pay more attention to form than to meaning. Therefore, they are also referred to as *structure-based communication tasks* (Loschky and Bley-Vroman 1993) or *implicit structure-based tasks*

(Fotos 2002). While there are some objections and doubts about classroom activities that are planned with specific linguistic features in mind, suggesting that focus on specific grammar forms would not probably cause any restructuring of the learner's interlanguage (e.g. Long and Robinson 1998), Lightbown (1998: 195) refutes such arguments claiming that:

(...) classroom activities that tend to elicit specific linguistic features need not be awkward and unnatural. They can incorporate the principles of communicative language teaching and task-based instruction, while, at the same time, maximizing the likelihood that learners will have adequate opportunity to be exposed to, use and receive feedback on a wider range of linguistic features. Teachers are not traitors to the cause of communicative language teaching if they plan activities in which they know that learners will almost inevitably need to use specific language features.

Communication tasks can become focused either through *design* or through *methodology*, and, in their influential paper, Loschky and Bley-Vroman (1993: 132) argue that "it is possible to construct tasks which involve grammatical knowledge in various ways, and to varying degrees". As far as the design is concerned, there are three major features focused communication tasks can possess: *task-naturalness*, *task-utility* and *task-essentialness*. Loschky and Bley-Vroman (1993: 132) define the three criteria in the following way:

In task-naturalness, a grammatical construction may arise naturally during the performance of a particular task, but the task can often be performed perfectly well, even quite easily, without it. In the case of task-utility, it is possible to complete a task without the structure, but with the structure the task become easier. The most extreme demand a task can place on a structure is essentialness: the task cannot be successfully performed unless the structure is used.

In other words, task-naturalness expects the learner to employ the form naturally; for example, while hypothesizing about the past it seems natural to use modal verbs in the past (e.g. *Tom may have done it*), but other ways of expressing the meaning are also possible (e.g. *Perhaps Tom did it*). When it comes to task-utility, the task is supposed to be easier when employing a particular language feature, although the feature is not crucial for performing the task. Fotos (2002) provides an example of a situation in which learners were asked to compare two cities implicitly encouraging them to use comparative adjectives, which were to simplify the task and bring positive results for the task completion. As far as task-essentialness is concerned, the idea is that in order to reach the aim of the task,

learners need to use a specific grammatical construction. Fotos (2002), for example, prepared a task in which it was essential for the learners to use different locative pronouns to complete the task. As long as meeting the requirements of task-naturalness and task-utility is possible for the task designer, it may be difficult to construct a task in which a particular language feature is essential for its completion, because “the inherent redundancy of language and the availability of rich contextual clues in many tasks obviate the need for learners to use any particular grammatical structure” (Ellis 1997b: 211). In the opinion of Loschky and Bley-Vroman (1993), this criterion is the most difficult to meet, as learners are prone to sidestepping the grammatical focus while performing a communicative task (Ellis 2002a: 25). When the design procedures fail to elicit the targeted language feature, a solution could be found in the methodological choices made by the language teacher. This is because through the teacher’s use of brief explicit instruction and corrective feedback, particularly in the form of *request for clarification*, the learner may be indirectly encouraged to employ the target language feature. Although the communicative nature of the task is threatened by the focus on form initiated by the teacher, the task will probably remain communicative for the learner who perceives the clarification request as a need to improve the quality of the message. Tasks designed and conducted according to these suggestions may constitute a valuable instructional option for teaching grammar.

Focused communication tasks can be “a powerful instruction tool in any language classroom where the emphasis is laid not only on acquainting learners with relevant rules but also ensuring that they will be put in the service of successful communication” (Pawlak 2006: 264). Ellis (2003) proposes *task-supported language teaching* and claims that focused communication tasks are a useful option in supporting formal instruction with the communicative dimension. Focused communication tasks provide learners with a considerable opportunity to actually use the structures they are taught and convey real messages, which is what most of them may hardly ever do outside of a regular educational context. By means of focused communication tasks learners’ implicit knowledge is automatized and, moreover, the transformation of their explicit knowledge into implicit knowledge may be facilitated. Facing the problems of the contemporary language teaching, which suffers from lack of time and expects quick results, focused communication tasks may also serve as an indispensable option for review work or remedial teaching (Pawlak 2004a, 2006; Fotos 2002).

It has to be emphasized that designing focused communication tasks poses a considerable difficulty not only for average language teachers, but even for SLA specialists, which makes it hard to believe that true focused communication tasks can be implemented in classroom teaching on a regular basis. Loschky and Bley-Vroman (1993: 125-126) argue that “in most common information gap tasks, learners seem to be able to exchange information solely through use of semantic- and pragmatic-based strategies combined with their background knowledge. Such tasks, then, may do more to develop strategic than linguistic competence”. This weakness of communicative tasks has encouraged L2 researchers’ interest in “devising methods of focusing on form without losing the values of communication tasks as realistic communicative motivators, and as opportunities to trigger acquisitional processes” (Skehan 1996: 42). The design is especially challenging when learners are to produce the required grammatical feature, but comprehension-based focused communication tasks, an example of which is presented by, for example, Doughty (1991), are not easy to construct for an average language teacher, either. These tasks, also called *interpretation tasks* (Ellis 1995) or *structured-input tasks* (VanPatten 2003), have been presented in section 3.2.2. above, devoted to instructional options categorized according to whether they are input- or output-based. As already mentioned, the success of implementing focused communication tasks may be dependent on both design and methodological procedures. It has been attempted to discuss the design criteria, but it also seems to be of vital importance to describe how the difficulties in making learners attend to form can be overcome from the methodological perspective. This may be done by means of corrective feedback options which will be outlined in the section below.

2.3.3. Corrective feedback options

Having discussed the instructional options suitable for the procedures connected with the presentation and practice of a given grammar structure, the next way of influencing the learning process is via corrective feedback, or, as Larsen-Freeman (2003: 123) puts it, “evaluative information available to learners concerning their linguistic performance”. Error correction can without doubt be found among the most controversial issues in grammar teaching, with some researchers pointing to the negative role of feedback in causing debilitating anxiety, and others highlighting the advantages of correcting learners’

non-targetlike performance for the process of language acquisition (Larsen-Freeman 2009b). The provision of feedback is also seen as crucial for the production of modified output, because, in Swain's (1995: 131) opinion, "modified, or reprocessed output can be considered to represent the leading edge of a learner's interlanguage".

Corrective feedback has been described and analysed by means of many typologies. One such classification which has become very common among language teachers is accuracy- and fluency-oriented feedback. When it comes to the effectiveness of accuracy-oriented feedback, on the one hand it may become useful for the process of proceduralization of explicit declarative knowledge of a specific grammatical structure (DeKeyser 1998) and may help learners *reduce the hypothesis space* (Schachter 1991); on the other, however, Lightbown (2000: 446) criticizes immediate and explicit error correction, claiming that "learners' interlanguage behaviour does not change suddenly when they are told they have made an error". There are reasons to believe that corrective feedback is more effective if it takes place in the context of communicative activities, in which conveying the meaning is the most important (Ellis 1998; Lyster 2001; Pawlak 2004a), particularly when it comes to form-function mappings (Ellis and Sheen 2006). Johnson (1988: 93), in accordance with *Skill-Learning Theory* (see 1.3.2.4.), argues that "learners need to see for themselves what has gone wrong, in the operating conditions in which they went wrong". He emphasizes the importance of feedback in the process of learning a foreign language, suggesting that the best instructional sequence is *learn-perform-learn*, which means that learners must have the opportunity to receive feedback after or during the *perform* stage by means of *mistake correction*. Such assumptions may also be grounded theoretically on the premises of the *Interaction Hypothesis* and the *Output Hypothesis* (see 1.3.2.5.), both of which attribute an important role to reactive negative evidence in promoting learners' noticing the gaps and holes in their interlanguage and encourage them to modify their output. The basic distinction which regards corrective feedback is between *explicit (overt)* and *implicit (covert)* feedback. The former is characterized by direct, deliberate attention to a specific grammatical error, while the latter is typical of child-directed speech, which does not interrupt the flow of communication. Six types of negative feedback were presented by Lyster and Ranta (1997), who made this distinction on the basis of their analysis of the interactions in immersion classrooms (cf. Ellis 1998: 52; Lyster 2001: 272), where they observed the use of the following feedback options: recasts and explicit correction, both of which provided learners with the correct target language features, and another four:

clarification request, elicitation, metalinguistic clues, and repetition, labeled as *negotiation of form* (Lyster 2001), as they provide learners with signals which are intended to facilitate self-repair. For the purpose of the present work, the particular techniques used in corrective feedback will be first presented using the division into implicit vs. explicit options. Another distinction which is input-based vs. output-based error correction will be discussed in the subsequent section.

2.3.3.1. Explicit vs. implicit feedback options

Feedback provided in the context of communicative activities may employ a number of various implicit and explicit techniques. Implicit feedback occurs when the corrective force of the response to a learner error is masked (Ellis 2006a: 99). As far as explicit feedback is concerned, the learner is told directly what the error is, or is given metalingual information relating to the correct form (Long and Robinson 1998). When it comes to the effectiveness of one approach or the other, there are some research findings suggesting that it is explicit feedback that is more effective than implicit and contributes to making cognitive comparisons which are believed to facilitate learning (e.g. Lyster 2004a; Ellis et al. 2006; Ellis and Sheen 2006). At the same time, however, implicit feedback is more compatible with focus on form approach, as it ensures focus on meaning (Long 1996). Muranoi (2000) suggests that implicit feedback is more effective when intensive focus on a preselected form is employed. A thorough revision of studies addressing the impact of the explicit and implicit feedback options will be presented in section 3.3.1.3. of Chapter Three.

As far as explicit feedback is concerned, it is possible to distinguish four instructional options: *explicit correction*, *metalinguistic feedback*, *elicitation* and *repetition*. *Explicit correction* refers to a situation in which a teacher indicates precisely what was incorrect by offering negative evidence and provides the learner with the correct version and positive evidence at the same time. *Metalinguistic feedback*, which is defined by Lyster and Ranta (1997: 47) as “comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the learner’s utterance” involves asking questions and expressing doubts with regard to the correctness of a student’s utterance, but the teacher does not provide the learner with the correct option. The metalinguistic information the student receives may contain some grammatical metalanguage referring to the particular error, or the error is

attended to by means of a metalinguistic question which attempts to elicit the explicit information about the rule from the learner. *Elicitation*, in turn, may include at least three techniques (Lyster and Ranta 1997: 48): the teacher may elicit the correct form by asking the student to complete a sentence (e.g. *No, it's not that. It's a...*), the teacher may ask a question (e.g. *How do we say X in English?*) and, finally, the teacher may ask the student to reformulate their utterance (e.g. *Try to say it in a different way*). The last explicit feedback option is *repetition* of the student's error in isolation, which is usually assisted with the teacher's special intonation to highlight the error. Lyster and Ranta (1997: 48) claim that repetition may occur with all types of feedback, with the exception of recast, which is an example of implicit corrective feedback and will be presented in detail below.

Recasting, various definitions of which have been offered by a number of researchers (e.g. Long 1996; Lyster and Ranta 1997; Sheen Y. 2006) represents implicit feedback options. Long (2007: 2) defines a recast as "a reformulation of all or part of a learner's immediately preceding utterance in which one or more non-target like lexical, grammatical etc. items are replaced by the corresponding target language form(s), and where, throughout the exchange, the focus of the interlocutors is on *meaning* not language as an object". What is worth mentioning is the observation made by Nicholas et al. (2001) who point out that learners may not necessarily be aware of the fact that recast is to provide them with the correct version of the language. The study by Mackey et al. (2000) provides evidence that learners are not aware of the corrective force of the recasts and therefore they do not attend to the reformulated morphological features. It is connected with the implicitness of recasts, which may hinder learners' noticing which, in nature, requires at least some conscious attention (Schmidt 2001). The issue of the implicitness of recasts will be further investigated below when different types of recasts are presented (see also Ellis and Sheen 2006; Lyster and Saito 2010).

As already mentioned, a recast involves the interlocutor reformulating a learner's utterance or the incorrect part of the utterance in accordance with the target language norms. An example of one type of a recast is presented below (Mackey et al. 2003: 37):

(4) NNS: *An in the er kitchen er cupboard no on shef.*

NS: *On the shelf. I have it on the shelf.*

NNS: *In the shelf, yes OK.*

The example presents a situation when the NS provides a correct version of the NNS's erroneous utterance, which is intended to make the NNS notice errors and provide him or her with the targetlike model. The production of the correct model by the interlocutor (e.g. the teacher) serves then as positive evidence, i.e. information about which forms are grammatical and acceptable in the target language (Mackey 2006: 406). As a result of the NS's recast, the NNS produces the utterance which is correct in terms of pronunciation and the use of article, but still incorrect as far as the preposition is concerned. In their study on corrective recasting, Doughty and Varela (1998) employ a different technique of recasting, by means of two moves: (a) a teacher repetition of a learner's error, with emphasis placed on the erroneous word(s), and (b) a reformulation of the complete learner utterance, as presented in the example below:

(5) *L: I think that the worm will go under the soil.*

T: I think that the worm will go under the soil?

L: (no response)

T: I thought that the worm would go under the soil.

L: I thought that the worm would go under the soil (Doughty and Varela 1998: 124).

According to Doughty (2001), recasts are important correction strategies because they are fairly unobtrusive and occur within meaning-focused activities. They are also quite natural for teachers and are employed frequently. The fact that the teacher has corrected the wrong form by means of a recast does not imply that the learner will immediately uptake the correct form, as seen in the example above, which is true about any type of correction in fact. The effectiveness of recasts may depend on a host of various factors, such as learners' level of literacy, their proficiency, language aptitude, age, anxiety, motivation or the linguistic target (Ellis and Sheen 2006; Larsen-Freeman 2009b; Ellis 2010a; Lyster and Saito 2010). The need to adjust feedback to individual learners has also been acknowledged by Long (2007: 114-115), who argues that "there is some evidence that recasts, like instruction in general, are differentially frequent and effective, depending on setting, learner age, proficiency, and type of L2 structure (...) as well as developmental stage and task". Another type of implicit feedback employed in language teaching are *requests for clarification*. They indicate to students either that their utterance is incomprehensible to the teacher, or that the utterance is ill-formed, which makes it necessary for the learner to

repeat or reformulate it in some way. Hence, from the perspective of the learner, the use of a clarification request may result from the teacher's problems with the comprehensibility or accuracy of a specific utterance (Lyster and Ranta 1997: 47). An example of a request for clarification taken from Mackey and Philp (1998: 339) is as follows:

(6) *NNS: Here and then the left.*

NS: Sorry?

NNS: Ah here and one ah where one ah one of them on the left.

NS: Yeah one's behind the table and then the other's on the left of the table.

As can be observed from the above example, negotiation for meaning is done in the form of a clarification request (*Sorry?*) as a response to the incorrect utterance. When asked to clarify, the NNS modified the original sentence to make it more comprehensible for the NS.

Although the types of feedback have thus far been presented as dichotomous, corrective feedback also differs with regard to the degree of explicitness. Implicit feedback, represented here by recasts and requests for clarification, and explicit feedback, the examples of which are explicit correction, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation and repetition, are believed to influence to a different extent the learner's implicit knowledge and explicit knowledge, which may finally affect language acquisition processes. When it comes to error detection and error correction, explicit feedback seems to promote the cognitive comparison that aids learning with more likelihood than implicit learning. Ellis et al. (2006) compared the facilitative potential of implicit and explicit feedback options and, on the basis of the empirical evidence, they argue that metalinguistic explanation and recasts constitute the best exemplars of explicit and implicit corrective feedback. What Ellis et al. (2006: 365) emphasizes however, is the need for classroom research as it is not "easy to extrapolate the results obtained from laboratory studies that involve one-on-one interactions to classrooms in which the teacher interacts with the whole class. (...) ecological validity can only be achieved through classroom-based research".

2.3.3.2. Input- vs. output-based feedback options

Apart from the implicit/explicit distinction investigated above, feedback may also be analysed taking into account whether it is input- or output-based (Ellis 2006a). Input-based feedback models the correct form for the learner (e.g. by means of a recast) and output-based feedback elicits production of the correct form from the learner (e.g. by means of a request for clarification). When it comes to categorizing the feedback options discussed above, it could be stated that *input-based* options include recasts and explicit correction, while among *output-based* techniques there are clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation and repetition, although it is difficult to be precise here due to a potential contribution of a number of factors. Still, such a division goes in line with Lyster's (2001) distinction between recasts and explicit correction and the remaining options, which he labeled *negotiation of form*, where learners are encouraged to engage in peer- or self-repair by means of different signals from the teacher.

When it comes to the application of input- and output-based corrective feedback, it is worth mentioning Muranoi's (2000) proposal of *interaction enhancement* (IE). She came up with an interesting procedure involving corrective feedback which may be employed while performing communicative tasks. Muranoi (2000) took into account Kowal and Swain's (1994) recommendations concerning the role of collaborative language production tasks and output in making learners aware of the gaps in their knowledge, raising their awareness of form-meaning-function relationships and providing them with opportunities to obtain feedback. *Interaction enhancement* is a type of *reactive* focus on form and consists of three phases based on Di Pietro's (1987) *strategic interaction*:

- (1) *rehearsal phase*: students work in pairs to solve the problem outlined in a scenario which contains many instances of the target feature;
- (2) *performance phase*: the teacher and one of the students perform the scenario in front of the whole class; errors involving the target form are addressed by means of requests for clarification and if the learner fails to self-correct, corrective recasts are employed; these interactional modifications serve as input enhancement (the incorrect form is enhanced), as well as output-enhancement (learners are pushed towards self-~~correcting~~);
- (3) *debriefing phase*: the interaction is evaluated in terms of the accuracy of use of the target language feature and the communicative goals.

This three-phase structure helps L2 teachers organize interactive tasks effectively and incorporate focus-on-form treatments into communicative tasks in an organized manner. According to Muranoi (2000: 663), "this study suggests that IE treatments that

systematically combine such instructional techniques as output enhancement, input enhancement, problem-solving tasks, and explicit grammar instruction can be beneficial for guiding EFL learners to restructure their interlanguage systems". She also found that the effects of instructional treatment were durable and the procedure worked with less marked language features. When it comes to focused communication tasks, interaction enhancement may help teachers elicit the forms in focus at the same time leaving the final decision to learners, which goes in accordance with the requirements for the design of FCTs.

In their meta analysis of classroom-based oral feedback studies, Lyster and Sato (2010: 295) comment that "the field of classroom feedback research has grown dramatically over the last twenty years". Undoubtedly, it is connected with the growing importance of error correction, the advantages of which have been acknowledged not only by SLA theoreticians, but also language teachers concerned about their learners' progress. One of the issues generating abundant debate is whether implicit or explicit feedback is more effective and facilitative for the process of second language acquisition, and there are various positions on the matter. Seedhouse (2001: 368-369) argues that "teachers are avoiding direct and overt negative evaluation of learners' linguistic errors with the best intentions in the world, namely to avoid embarrassing and demotivating them. However, in doing so, they are interactionally marking linguistic errors as embarrassing and problematic". On the other hand, Long (1996: 452) advocates the use of implicit forms of corrective feedback, "which immediately follow learners utterances and maintain reference to their meaning". Irrespective of the degree of feedback explicitness, Pawlak (2004a) suggests that, as far as classroom setting is concerned, "what teachers should keep in mind is that the value of particular feedback options depends to a large extent on the learners' level of proficiency, their familiarity with the form in question, or the objectives of a particular lesson or task". It seems then reasonable to employ the appropriate forms of feedback, having first become acquainted with the learners whose individual features may influence the success or failure of a particular error correction option (Aljaafreh and Lantolf 1994).

Conclusions

As has become transparent from the theoretical considerations presented in Chapter One, placing a sole emphasis on message conveyance is inadequate for successful second language acquisition in terms of accuracy, appropriateness and precision of the target language. Learners' attention to the formal properties of the target language may be drawn by means of several approaches, among which focus on forms and focus on form generate the most heated debate, which unfortunately appears difficult to be resolved when it comes to the best option for supporting the foreign language advancement. As Pawlak (2006: 252) rightly concludes, "general recommendations are clearly insufficient to serve as a basis for effective language pedagogy and they are of dubious value to practitioners who are often oblivious to the considerable controversy surrounding grammar teaching". What seems reasonable then is to acquaint foreign language teachers with a wide range of instructional options which may be at their disposal when needed. After all, the knowledge of various techniques which could be employed for presentation, practice and feedback stages of the lesson could enrich and improve the procedures of instructed learning and, ultimately, foster target language acquisitional processes. The main concern of the present chapter have been the techniques and procedures that teachers can employ during form-focused instruction. Prior to the possible ways of their design and implementation, different taxonomies of the microoptions were presented. Among the host of options outlined in the present chapter, major attention was given to focused communication tasks, the effectiveness of which was explored in the quasi-experiment presented in Chapters Four and Five. Taking into account the theoretical recommendations advocating meaningful practice within form-focused instruction, it seems warranted to claim that focused communication tasks ought to receive their due place in pedagogy and attention from both researchers and language teachers. Apart from discussing focused communication tasks, the author found it important to present other pedagogical choices connected with presentation, practice and feedback. They have been described with respect to their implicit/explicit character, input- or output-orientation, and finally, taking into account their controlled/automatic nature. Bearing in mind that the typical educational context is characterized on one hand by limited time and resources, and on the other by growing social pressure on young generations connected with the need to become competent foreign language users, form-focused instruction should make use of such procedures and options which would aim to meet not only the curriculum requirements, but also, or even most importantly, take into account the needs of particular learners, as well as their individual cognitive and affective

characteristics. Larsen-Freeman (2003: 140) rightly points out that “grammar teaching (any teaching!) is a complex process, which cannot be treated by repeating the same set of procedures while expecting the same results”. It is hoped that the pedagogical proposals presented in this chapter can create a point of reference for foreign language teachers. Apart from describing the actual techniques and the ways in which they can be implemented, one also needs to gauge their effectiveness by examining the empirical evidence obtained from research. The results of pertinent studies exploring the value of different instructional options in form-focused instruction will be discussed in Chapter Three of the present dissertation.

Chapter 3: Research into the effects of different types of form-focused instruction on the acquisition of grammar

Introduction

The role of grammar instruction in foreign language pedagogy has been subject to a great deal of controversy for many years. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the question is not so much whether grammar instruction helps learners gain proficiency in a foreign language, since this problem seems to have been resolved empirically (e.g. Doughty 1991; Ellis 2001; DeKeyser and Juffs 2005), but what type of teaching is most effective (de Bot, Lowie and Verspoor 2005: 84). Among the plethora of issues which require relevant attention from researchers and educators, there is the effectiveness of different techniques and procedures that are at teachers' disposal when it comes to introducing and practicing particular grammar features. Numerous studies have been conducted to help determine what constitutes effective instruction when it comes to grammar structures; yet the obtained findings are often difficult to analyze and interpret due to the conflicting nature of the results and the methodological problems from which the research often suffers (Norris and Ortega 2000; Pica 2005a, 2005b; Ellis 2006a; Spada 2010). These problems notwithstanding, empirical investigations have undoubtedly enriched our knowledge of the processes of language learning, provided us with information on the effectiveness of different pedagogical options, as well as helped us better understand the timing and intensity of instruction and its place in the curriculum.

The first chapter of the dissertation has evaluated the role of grammar in foreign language teaching and presented various theoretical recommendations concerning the role of formal instruction in second language acquisition. Chapter Two has discussed the

different approaches to grammar teaching and provided a taxonomy of a number of instructional options which can be employed by language instructors in various educational contexts. The aim of the present chapter is to acquaint the reader with the findings and methodology of contemporary research in the field of form-focused instruction, with a particular attention given to the research on instructional techniques and their effects on second language acquisition. The chapter begins with a brief historical sketch regarding research into grammar teaching and describes the current methodological choices concerning the available types of such research. This serves as a backdrop for the next part of the chapter which concentrates on recent empirical investigations into instructional techniques and their effects on the acquisition of grammar. A considerable portion of the reviewed research is devoted to focused communication tasks, the role of which was explored in the study presented in Chapters Four and Five.

3.1. Evolution of research into grammar teaching

In his introductory chapter to *Form-focused instruction and second language learning*, Ellis (2001) acknowledges the role FFI plays both for language researchers and teachers. Whereas researchers want to test various hypotheses connected with second language acquisition, teachers aim at creating conditions for effective pedagogic practice. According to Ellis (2001: 2), “FFI constitutes an area of enquiry, then, where the concerns of researchers and teachers can be brought together”.

As far as the early research into form-focused instruction is concerned, three main types of studies may be distinguished: *global method studies*, *comparative studies* of instructed and naturalistic learners and *classroom process research* (Ellis 2001). Since the *sine qua non* of language pedagogy in the 1960s and 1970s was the belief that effective language teaching involves teaching target language structures, the main *language teaching controversy* (Diller 1978) was how to teach these structures most efficiently. The *method oriented* research attempted to compare explicit deductive (as in the Grammar-Translation Method) and explicit inductive (as in the Audiolingual Method) grammar instruction (Ellis 2008a: 848). To make the findings more reliable, large-scale research projects were conducted to compare the long-term learning outcomes of the two methods. For example, the early study conducted by Scherer and Wertheimer (1964) compared the Grammar-

Translation and Audiolingual Method among different levels of college students. The results showed that the first method worked better for developing reading and writing skills, and the latter improved learners' listening and speaking more. As Ellis (2008a: 848) concludes, "each method resulted in learning 'products' that reflected the instructional emphasis". Unfortunately, other studies (e.g. Hauptman 1970; Smith 1970) turned out to produce inconclusive findings and were unable to demonstrate the superiority of either method. In the opinion of a number of researchers, the main shortcoming of these studies was drawing attention to the *product* of teaching and not to the *process*, i.e. what actually happened in the classroom (e.g. Pawlak 2006; Ellis 2008a).

The second area of interest which became prominent in the 1970s and was inspired by research into first language acquisition, concerned *naturalistic conditions* of L2 learning and their possible outcomes with a view to improving instructional techniques in actual educational contexts (e.g. Hatch 1978). Investigating the effects of untutored language learning in which learners followed their own internal syllabus and order of acquisition independent of the native language and age factor (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991), researchers began to question the effectiveness of formal instruction. Hence, they undertook research attempting to *compare* the levels of language attainment among instructed and uninstructed learners, and to determine whether grammar instruction may affect the natural order and sequence of acquisition. The empirical evidence they obtained suggested that instructed learners progressed more rapidly and were able to achieve higher levels of proficiency (e.g. Long 1983a; Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991), but as far as the order and sequence of acquisition were concerned, the results showed no impact of FFI (e.g. Pica 1983; Ellis 1984; Pienemann 1984). The conclusion based on the research was that "FFI only works by promoting the processes involved in natural language acquisition, not by changing them" (Ellis 2001: 4). The claim was also supported by Long (1983a: 374), who argues that "there is considerable evidence to indicate that second language instruction does make a difference" for children as well as adults, for both intermediate and advanced learners, no matter what instrument of measuring acquisition was employed, and irrespective of the quality of the environment (i.e. acquisition-rich vs. acquisition-poor).

When the effectiveness of form-focused instruction became a matter of doubt and debate (e.g. Krashen 1985), comparative method studies lost their popularity and were replaced with another strand of research, i.e. *classroom process research*. It was concerned with "obtaining accurate and detailed information about how instruction was accomplished

through the observation and description of teaching-learning events” (Ellis 2001: 4). At the beginning, studies of this kind concentrated on corrective feedback and various taxonomies of error treatment options were designed (e.g. Allwright 1975; Chaudron 1977; Long 1977). Subsequently, the scope of research was broadened to include various kinds of interactions occurring in language classrooms (e.g. van Lier 1988) to finally investigate the relationships between these interactions and actual learning outcomes (e.g. Allen et al. 1990).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, research into the effectiveness of form-focused instruction became more attentive to whether learners learned the specific grammar structures that were taught to them (e.g. Ellis 1997b, 2001; Doughty 2003). Accordingly, studies were designed either to verify some theoretical positions, such as, for example, Krashen’s hypothesis that teacher intervention cannot affect the learner’s acquired system (Lightbown 1985; Pica 1985), or they attempted to address more practical issues with a view to finding solutions to learners’ problems with the acquisition of complex language forms (e.g. Harley 1989; Day and Shapson 1991; White 1991). The empirical evidence obtained on the basis of these studies allowed researchers to conclude that form-focused instruction facilitated accurate production of targeted features in both planned and unplanned discourse, although it did not affect the natural sequence of acquisition (Ellis 1997a, 2003a). Parallel with the research concerning the effects of formal instruction on learners’ knowledge of grammatical structures, studies were conducted to explore the impact of form-focused instruction on the order and sequence of acquisition. Such studies included comparisons between instructed and uninstructed learners (e.g. Pavesi 1986; Ellis 1989), and their findings confirmed the outcomes of earlier research in this area, as instructed learners “followed the same orders and sequences of acquisition as naturalistic learners but that they proceeded further and more rapidly” (Ellis 2001: 6). The experimental research conducted by Pienemann et al. (1988) provided evidence for the immutability of developmental patterns, but at the same time it also showed that instructed learners may progress more rapidly thanks to teacher intervention targeting the structures next in line to be acquired in the natural order (Pienemann 1989: 37). These findings led to the formulation of the *Teachability Hypothesis* (see 1.3.2.1. in Chapter One). Quite opposite results were obtained from experimental studies conducted with the purpose of testing the *markedness hypothesis* which claims that teaching marked structures will enable learners to acquire the implicated less marked structures as well. The findings (e.g. Gass 1982)

suggested that learners are able to acquire the marked structure concurrently with the unmarked one which is acquired first in natural settings. However, there have been controversies concerning the meaning of *acquisition* (see section 3.2. below, and Gass and Selinker 2008: 58), which might have caused various interpretations of the findings.

The most contemporary research into the effectiveness of form-focused instruction, which was conducted in the late 1990s and the early 2000s, was affected to a large extent by the developments in the theory of second language acquisition which found certain relationships between language learning and various aspects of cognitive psychology (e.g. information processing, skill-building theory). The theoretical positions which acknowledge the role of cognitive psychology in language acquisition are the *Noticing Hypothesis* (Schmidt 1994, see 1.3.2.2.), *Input Processing Theory* (VanPatten 1990, see 1.3.2.3.), *Skill Learning Theory* (Johnson 1996; DeKeyser 1998, see 1.3.2.4) and the revised version of the *Interaction Hypothesis* (Long 1996, see 1.3.2.5.). They have undoubtedly added a new dimension to the research areas amenable to investigation. With these theoretical positions in mind, researchers have explored the effectiveness of different instructional options, which has made the actual findings more relevant to the concerns of practitioners. The metaanalysis conducted by Norris and Ortega (2000), which confirmed the effectiveness of form-focused instruction, allowed the authors to identify the main research areas and draw the following conclusions about various types of instruction (Norris and Ortega 2000: 418):

- 1) the effectiveness of implicit and explicit approach for short-term L2 instruction (e.g. Alanen 1995; DeKeyser 1995; Robinson 1996);
- 2) the impact of raising learners' metalinguistic awareness of specific L2 forms (e.g. Fotos 1994; Swain 1998);
- 3) the comparison of the effects of drawing learners' attention to specific forms during meaning-focused tasks and an exclusive focus on meaning and content (e.g. Leeman et al. 1995; Williams and Evans 1998);
- 4) the role of negative feedback and the effectiveness of its different types (e.g. Nobuyoshi and Ellis 1993; Doughty and Varela 1998; Pawlak 2004b, 2004c);
- 5) the value of input processing instruction as opposed to traditional grammar explanations and practice (e.g. Cadierno 1995; VanPatten and Oikkinen 1996);
- 6) the effectiveness of comprehension and production practice for learning grammatical structures (e.g. DeKeyser and Sokalski 1996; Erlam 2003b).

The studies mentioned above are primarily of experimental design, although there are also a number of descriptive studies which investigate in detail classroom processes in which teachers integrate form and meaning (e.g. Lyster and Ranta 1997; Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen 2001a, 2001b; Lyster 2001; Panova and Lyster 2002; Loewen 2003; Pawlak 2005). The descriptive nature is also visible in the research devoted to the teacher decision-making concerning the selection of grammatical structures to be targeted, timing and manner of instruction (e.g. Borg 1998, 1999b). As noted by Norris and Ortega (2000: 502): “a more complex agenda has begun to unfold within L2 type of instruction research”, as instructional options are explored taking into account a range of additional moderator variables, such as:

- 1) learner individual characteristics, such as age, language aptitude, intelligence, learning style, or memory (e.g. Skehan 1998; Robinson 2001a);
- 2) linguistic factors, such as the relative structural complexity of L2 forms (e.g. de Graaff 1997; DeKeyser 1998, 2005);
- 3) cognitive variables, such as the stage of interlanguage development and the degree of noticing (Pienemann 1998; Schmidt 2001);
- 4) pedagogical choices, such as the timing, duration and intensity of instruction (e.g. Lightbown 1998; Doughty 2001).

As might be expected, there are “few certainties” (Ellis 2001: 12) regarding the actual research findings, because the studies suffer from a number of weaknesses, among which the most severe seem to be the paucity of replication and follow-up studies, the application of various research methodologies and the imprecise operationalization of instruments concerning the effects of FFI (Ellis 2001b). Also Norris and Ortega (2000, 2001) and Spada (1997, 2010) express their concern about the limitations of FFI research and advise caution when interpreting its results and drawing definitive conclusions. When it comes to the recommendations for future research into FFI, Ellis (2006a) argues that two issues are of particular importance: first of all the research should address key pedagogical problems and offer some practical guidelines for language teachers, and second, attempts to resolve the controversy over the relationship between explicit and implicit knowledge ought to be undertaken. Naturally, there are areas in need of some improvement, such as research design, the instruments used for measuring learners’ knowledge and reporting procedures. Irrespective of the weaknesses and problems that research into form-focused

instruction encounters, however, when taking into account the evidence obtained from the available studies, the following tentative conclusions may be drawn (Ellis 2005c: 716):

- 1) Grammar instruction results in greater accuracy in testlike performance.
- 2) Grammar instruction does not enable learners to beat the natural route but it is effective in helping them to progress more rapidly along it.
- 3) It may not be necessary to fine-tune grammar instruction to the learner's developmental stage.
- 4) Grammar instruction can contribute to learners' metalingual understanding of L2 grammar rules but doubt exist as to the utility of this kind of knowledge.
- 5) When grammar instruction does have an effect, this effect is durable.

Commenting on the previous three decades of FFI research, Ellis (2001) observes that researchers have become interested in other languages than English and they have conducted their research in different instructional contexts (second vs. foreign language teaching contexts). The reviews of classroom research undertaken by e.g. Nassaji and Fotos (2004), Lightbown (2000) and Mitchell (2000) have shown that there have also been considerable improvements with respect to methodological rigor and sophistication. The particular methodological choices in studies of form-focused instruction will be given thorough consideration in the following sections of this chapter.

3.2. Types of research on FFI

According to Ellis (2001, 2005e), similarly to classroom research in general, empirical investigations into form-focused instruction usually represent two broad research traditions: *confirmatory* and *interpretative* (Anderson and Burns 1989; Nizgorodcew 2009), although *hybrid research* is becoming more and more common. Confirmatory research can be found in *correlational* (comparative) and *experimental* studies, where the learning context is manipulated and quantitative analysis is conducted to draw conclusions and generalize about the processes observed. Interpretative research, on the other hand, is typical of *descriptive* and *ethnographic* studies usually carried out in real classrooms, where the analysis of the processes is mainly qualitative and not necessarily aimed to produce general conclusions. There seem to be some tensions between the followers of the quantitative and qualitative approaches and, according to Lazaraton (2000), who analysed the published

articles in four professional magazines over the period of seven years, the vast majority of studies (88%) employed the quantitative analysis approach, whereas only 10% were qualitative in nature. It seems, however, that the situation is bound to change now that a number of research issues require employing qualitative measures, as is the case with, for example, the impact of individual differences on second language acquisition. In order to discuss the results of various studies exploring a variety of instructional options, it is worth presenting the particular types of research in greater detail first to understand the procedures and aims employed in each case.

The main aim of any research into form-focused instruction is to “examine the effect of a particular instructional treatment on learners’ acquisition of a specific linguistic form or a range of such forms” (Pawlak 2006: 77). In order to do so, one needs to operationalize *acquisition* by means of such measurement instruments which will meet the requirements of the study and make it possible to answer the research questions. According to Gass and Selinker (2008: 58), acquisition may be operationalized in three ways:

- the first appearance of a correct form in creative speech, or its onset;
- a certain percentage of accurate forms;
- provision of a particular morpheme in over 90% of obligatory contexts in a sample of a learner’s speech.

While the first and the third option do not constitute satisfactory operationalizations of acquisition, in most FFI studies acquisition is understood as *target language accuracy*, in the sense that “the more accurately a learner uses a feature, the more it has been acquired” (Ellis 2001: 33). Although this definition is far from perfect as it does not take into account the variability and non-linearity of interlanguage development, it seems to be the only reasonable solution in cross-sectional studies, where “the linguistic performance of a large number of subjects is studied and the performance data are usually collected at only one session” (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991: 11). When it comes to the instruments measuring acquisition with respect to explicit and implicit dimensions of learners’ knowledge employed for the present study, they were described in section 1.2.2. in Chapter One and will also be discussed in section 4.6. in Chapter Four.

Apart from designing instruments which will measure acquisition, it is also of crucial importance to choose the linguistic target (Ellis 2008a). The key criterion is problematicity, i.e. the language feature should pose some kind of difficulty for the participant of the study. Problematicity can be discussed from different perspectives. Some

studies may investigate a target feature which has already been addressed by previous research and proved difficult for the subjects. Another possibility is to equate problematicity with grammatical complexity, assuming that when a feature is grammatically complex, it is going to be difficult to learn. There are, however, certain doubts about such an assumption (DeKeyser 1995; Robinson 1996). Ellis (2008a: 839) concludes that “it is necessary to consider what is easy/hard for the particular learners participating in the study”. The researcher’s awareness of problematicity of a given structure must also be based on the knowledge concerning acquisition sequences and the relevant linguistic and psycholinguistic theories. The sections that follow are concerned with different types of research which can be employed to investigate form-focused instruction in laboratory and classroom contexts.

3.2.1. Confirmatory (quantitative) research

The confirmatory tradition of research is interventionist in nature. It means that the experiment to be conducted is carefully designed, it uses random sampling and all the variables that might affect the results of the study are controlled (Ellis 1997b). It is typically theory-driven, and it seeks to compare different instructional approaches or test a particular hypothesis (Ellis 2008a). When it comes to form-focused instruction, such research is represented by comparative and experimental studies, and, when it is conducted in classroom contexts, it is mainly quasi-experimental in nature.

Comparative studies (also called correlational) seek to establish relationships between different sets of variables (Ellis 2005d). When it comes to second language acquisition, they attempt to compare the ultimate level of achievement of instructed and naturalistic learners with a view to investigating the potential differences in the order or sequence of acquisition of grammatical features (Ellis 2001: 27). The problem here is the clear and definite classification of learners into instructed and uninstructed on the basis of the setting only, as there are always factors which need to be taken into account (e.g. out-of-class exposure to L2). Another problem is lack of any data on the actual instructional treatment to which the learners were subjected since it is not the aim of comparative research to investigate this issue. Hence, considering such weaknesses, the demise of comparative method studies has been observed (Ellis 2001).

Experimental studies, on the other hand, are characterized by the manipulation of the instructional treatment provided to learners. Later, the learning outcomes of the different treatments are measured. By conducting experiments, researchers attempt to investigate the magnitude of the effect of instruction on language proficiency. Experimental studies can be carried out in laboratory-type settings, in which case both real and artificial languages can be involved, or real classrooms, where obviously real language is targeted. The laboratory setting allows for the precision in the research design and methodology, as any extraneous variables may be controlled and there is the possibility of replicating the study with all the subtle details. Long and Larsen-Freeman (1991: 20) argue that “all factors save one are held constant”, which makes it possible to observe the cause-effect relationships between the instructional treatment and the outcome, and draw generalizable conclusions. A drawback of laboratory experiments may be lack of *ecological validity*, since to be ecologically valid, a study must approximate the real-life situation that is under investigation (see also section 4.4. in Chapter Four). Such validity is rather strong in the case of classroom experimental research studies, often labeled *quasi-experiment*, as there is no random assignment of subjects to groups. Despite high ecological validity achieved thanks to the inclusion of a real classroom setting, the specificity of an educational context may threaten the design of the research project with a number of variables, which are difficult to control and check.

Irrespective of whether the research is conducted in a laboratory or in a classroom, every researcher who aspires to meeting the requirements of experimental research, should follow a scientific path, which starts with formulating hypotheses which are then “tested in a manner that will allow for generalizable findings” (Ellis 2001: 28). Unfortunately, these requirements are often not met, which results in considerable difficulties in comparing particular studies and drawing definitive conclusions (Norris and Ortega 2000, 2001). One reason is that researchers may wish to investigate a number of different variables and the relationships between them. Secondly, the research design may lack pre- and post-tests and a true control group. In addition, there are also problems with providing the details concerning the procedures of the treatment and lack of clarity when reporting the results (Ellis 2001; Norris and Ortega 2001). As discussed in section 3.1., experimental studies conducted to this day have explored the effectiveness of instruction with regard to the type of instruction, the type of the learner and the type of the target language feature (De Graaff and Housen 2009: 741).

3.2.2. Interpretative (qualitative) research

Interpretative FFI research contrasts with confirmatory research and its quantitative perspective, as it promotes qualitative procedures of data collection and analysis. It may be divided into two strands: *descriptive* and *introspective*. Such research adheres to what Van Lier (1990) calls the *emic principle*, i.e. an attempt to understand how a social context works through the perspectives of the participants, and the *holistic principle*, i.e. trying to understand something in terms of its natural surroundings. By applying these two principles in research practice, it may become easier for teachers to compare their own educational settings to those investigated in a particular study (Ellis 1997b: 19). Another feature of interpretative research is its subjectivity, which means that although one of the aims may be constructing some theoretical premises, it focuses mainly on practical issues, and assumes that the dialogue between researchers and teachers plays an important role for understanding the actual processes occurring in a classroom.

The subjective nature of interpretative research may, however, cause several problems, one of which is the risk of accepting vague or false accounts. In other words, the participants of a study may be mistaken in their perceptions, or, may simply not tell the truth, which is why interpretations need to be thoroughly examined. Another problem is the abundance of information provided by the participants, which may impede the recognition of the real problems. According to Ellis (1997b: 20), the major problem that interpretative research needs to face is precision. When it comes to the relationship between the researcher and the teacher, it must be acknowledged that the researcher is still very much outside the researched situation, which makes it hard for him or her to get really engaged and interested. Consequently, instead of offering some practical guidelines and comments for practitioners, researchers tend to present barren conclusions drawn on the basis of their studies and leave teachers to their intuition and their own resources.

The descriptive type of interpretative research generally examines the kinds of language produced by teachers and learners in classroom contexts. It can be further divided into two types: one takes into account the language produced by learners, and the other one is interested in all the classroom discourse to see how teachers handle instruction in the forms of the language (Ellis 2001). As far as the first type is concerned, an ideal way of examining learners' output with regard to the changes in their interlanguage is by means of longitudinal studies, but such an approach is very infrequent due to problems with

collecting adequate data from learners who, in Chaudron's opinion (1988), come from teacher-centred classrooms where teacher talk prevails. Another problem may be students' dropping out which makes it impossible to investigate the progress of particular learners. In order to overcome the problems with obtaining relevant data from students, various techniques are employed by researchers to elicit an adequate amount of language samples which could be fairly spontaneous. Corder (1981), for example, came up with the idea of *clinical elicitation*, where learners are asked to e.g. describe pictures, write compositions or engage in guided conversations (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig 2001). Although descriptive studies have their indisputable advantages, as they make it possible for researchers to examine how instruction affects interlanguage development, their main weakness is the difficulty in finding the precise elements of FFI which are responsible for success or failure in the acquisition of specific language forms. In order to solve this problem, detailed study of instructional discourse would be required (Ellis 2001).

When it comes to form-focused instruction, many studies represent the descriptive approach. These studies have typically attempted to examine preemptive and reactive focus on form (see section 2.2. in Chapter Two), with particular attention being drawn to incidental focus on form. It was done by means of "recording and transcribing of samples of instructional discourse and the construction of data-driven taxonomies of discourse moves, instructional options, teaching strategies, etc. (Ellis 2001: 30). Even though such studies provide an invaluable source of information about actual classroom processes, their findings are hard to compare as they present their own descriptive taxonomies and, they are concerned with the incidental nature of instruction. It is often impossible to pretest learners, because they may address different language features during the recorded lesson, which consequently makes it a considerable challenge to prepare a posttest for the group of students. All in all, it is possible to examine learners' uptake only and durable effects of acquisition appear difficult to be explored, although, as Swain (1995b) has shown, not impossible, as individualized posttests can be administered.

Introspective studies are based on field observations of classrooms, and retrospective and introspective reports from teachers and learners. They "seek to examine what beliefs the classroom participants have about FFI and what their views and interpretations of specific FFI events are" (Ellis 2001: 31). According to Nunan (1994), the process of observing individuals and reflecting on their thoughts, feelings and reasoning processes is one of the few data collection methods available for going beyond observable

behaviour and attempting to access the underlying mental processes that are responsible for that behaviour. Introspective studies target both learners and teachers and they rely on think-aloud protocols, interviews, or questionnaires. This methodology offers different techniques for generating verbal protocols which vary in the time interval between task performance and the time of the report. These may be *concurrent verbal protocols*, *immediate retrospection* and *delayed retrospection* techniques. The instruments employed by introspective studies are thought to lack validity and reliability but they may serve as an important source of information about learners and how they understand the learning process. It is believed that the validity and reliability of introspective data can be improved through training learners and employing the same procedures and materials. Introspective techniques may be also supported with retrospective data, which will compensate for the weaknesses and may add a new dimension to the analysis.

3.2.3. Hybrid research

Apart from the two common traditions mentioned above, contemporary researchers have come up with the idea of *hybrid research*. It is also called *mixed methods research* as the design of a study may include both quantitative and qualitative methods (Chaudron 2000, 2003). Ellis (1995: 203) argues that hybrid research “seeks to establish cause and effect, but also to uncover the processes involved in language use and language learning. It aims to provide explanations, while at the same time increasing understanding”. When it comes to L2 classroom research, Ellis (2008a: 781) argues that hybrid research “whether evidenced through the eclectic use of different descriptive approaches or through a mixture of descriptive and experimental approaches has much to recommend”. An example of such research could be Williams’s (1999) study in which she employed exploratory, qualitative and statistical procedures, to explore classroom interaction qualitatively in a real educational setting and employed statistical methods of data analysis. Researchers’ interest in hybrid research is motivated by their need to investigate not only the raw language data, but also to understand the social and mental processes which influence second language acquisition (Ellis 2001; Pawlak 2009a). Another example of hybrid research could be Egi’s (2007) study, in which the relationships between learners’ interpretations of recasts and their L2 development were investigated. Apart from tailor-made tests measuring the

learners' individual problem areas, immediate recalls and stimulated recalls were used to obtain data concerning their ways of interpreting recasts as corrective moves.

3.2.4. Action research

As already mentioned, one of the greatest problems in language teaching is the gap between the concerns of researchers and practitioners. Ellis (1997b: 22) suggests that in order to improve the situation “teachers should become more than consumers of theories and research; they should become researchers and theorists in their own right”. One form of teacher research that is commonly advocated is *action research* (AR), seen as “a means by which teachers can monitor their own practice” (Long 1983c: 268). There are different types of action research (Ellis 1997b), but the most beneficial one seems to be *practical action research*, defined by Carr and Kemmis (1986: 162) in the following words:

Action research is simply a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices and the situations in which the practices are carried out.

In other words, this type of “research is undertaken by teachers in their own classrooms with a view to improving classroom practices” (Ellis 1997b: 23); therefore it may also be called *teacher research* (Hopkins 1985). Although there are voices of criticism concerning the quality and usefulness of action research (cf. Brumfit and Mitchell 1990), “the principal criterion for evaluating a piece of action research is not the significance of its findings for others, but rather the value of the experience of undertaking it for the researcher him or herself” (Wells 1994: 28).). In her two articles on action research, Burns (2005a, b) presents numerous advantages of employing action research in the field of ELT, and she also perceives it as an opportunity for teacher development which may even lead to institutional changes (2005a: 247). All in all, action research is seen as an indispensable means of investigating local classroom contexts and it is recommended that researchers draw more attention to the results of action research and on their basis design more formal studies of exploring form-focused instruction (Ellis 1997b: 206).

3.2.5. Research synthesis

As more and more studies investigating the effects of formal instruction are published (cf. De Graaff and Housen 2009), which take into account different variables and are designed according to various research perspectives, it appears difficult to draw generalizable conclusions and to formulate pedagogical implications. Therefore, a very helpful tool for language researchers and also teachers are attempts to synthesize research (Norris and Ortega 2007). Research synthesis emerged in the 1970s in response to the dissatisfaction with the weaknesses of the traditional reviewing approaches. It became a formal methodological approach and “since the 1990s its application to synthesizing primary research in a variety of fields has become widespread” (Norris and Ortega 2006: xi). For Norris and Ortega (2006: xi), *research synthesis* “pursues systematic understandings of the state of knowledge that has accumulated about a given problem across primary research studies. Its foremost purpose is to integrate available research evidence, such that both patterns and inconsistencies may be identified with precision”. Among the meta analyses which reviewed studies on the effects of form-focused instruction, there are those conducted by Norris and Ortega (2000), Ellis (2002b), Russell and Spada (2006), Spada and Tomita (2010), or Lyster and Saito (2010). Other reviews have been conducted by Doughty and Williams (1998a), Long and Robinson (1998) and Spada (1997, 2010). These sources will be referred to while discussing the empirical evidence for the effectiveness of particular instructional options.

3.3. Empirical investigations into the effectiveness of options in FFI

One of the goals of research into form-focused instruction is to gain insights into the processes and mechanisms of second language acquisition. Only when these processes and mechanisms are correctly understood, is the appropriate pedagogic approach likely to be implemented in a particular educational context. De Graaff and Housen (2009: 727) express a similar opinion arguing that :

The study of L2 instruction has practical and theoretical significance. Its practical significance arises from the assumption that a better understanding of how instruction affects L2 learning may lead to more effective L2 teaching; its theoretical importance is related to the understanding of how the brain processes linguistic input of various kinds to arrive at linguistic representations in the mind.

De Graaff and Housen (2009: 735) rightly point out that the effectiveness of instruction in second language acquisition may be a function of at least three groups of factors: the type of instruction, the type of language features targeted for instruction and the type of learner who receives the instruction. This review of research will attempt to present the relevant studies concerned with the type of instruction, in particular with the options teachers have at their disposal when they introduce and practice target language features. Although a number of different taxonomies of instructional options have been proposed (see section 2.3. in Chapter Two), “the psycholinguistic and practical validity of these taxonomies have yet to be demonstrated” (De Graaff and Housen 2009: 736). Due to the ongoing debate concerning the classification of FFI, the review of research into instructional options will be organized in terms of their application in one of the three areas: presentation techniques, practice techniques and corrective feedback techniques. These instructional options, the effectiveness of which will be discussed here in terms of empirical evidence, were explored in detail in Chapter Two. It needs to be noted at this point that, because corrective feedback is often treated as a component of *reactive focus on form* and referred to as *output enhancement*, rather than an independent instructional option (cf. Pawlak 2006), some research involving corrective feedback will be mentioned when the effectiveness of various practice options is explored.

3.3.1. Research into presentation options

When it comes to research into presentation options, two approaches are usually investigated, namely the effectiveness of deductive vs. inductive explicit grammar instruction, but they do not seem to be the major areas of interest among researchers. Norris and Ortega’s (2000) metaanalysis, which is the most thorough attempt to cross-examine the effectiveness of grammar instruction to this day, reveals that out of 77 studies chosen as a basis for their synthesis of research into form-focused instruction, only three investigated the relative effectiveness of deductive and inductive instruction, which implies that this area of second language acquisition is rather neglected. Norris and Ortega (2000) classify instructional treatment as explicit when learners have the metalinguistic rules explained to them (i.e. the deductive approach), or when learners are directed to discover the rule by attending to the form in context (inductive approach). Erlam (2003a: 242-243), whose

study is also reviewed in this section, uses a more universal conceptualization of deductive vs. inductive, i.e. deduction is a process “that moves from the general to the specific”, and induction is a process that “moves from the specific to the general”. On the basis of the metaanalysis, it was found that explicit types of instruction reached statistically significant advantage over the implicit ones. The studies that were chosen for analysis by Norris and Ortega were Herron and Tomasello (1992); Robinson (1996) and Shaffer (1989). For the purpose of this review also Seliger’s (1975), Abraham’s (1985), Rosa and O’Neill’s (1999) and Erlam’s (2003a) studies will be discussed with a view to drawing conclusions about the effectiveness of deductive and inductive approaches to grammar teaching.

When it comes to the instruments of measuring learners’ knowledge employed by researchers, only Erlam’s (2003a) study included a measure of oral language production, and in four other studies the participants were asked to produce language in the written form (Abraham 1985; Shaffer 1989; Herron and Tomasello 1992; Erlam 2003a). The remaining studies employed comprehension tests to measure the subjects’ acquisition of the target language features (Seliger 1975; Robinson 1996; Rosa and O’Neill 1999). Except for Erlam’s research project (2003a), no study used measures of both language comprehension and language production. As far as time pressure tasks are concerned, Rosa and O’Neill’s (1999) study included an assessment task which required a time-pressured response. When it comes to the results of this task, both groups (deductive and inductive) made significant gains, but there were no statistically significant differences between them. The participants of Robinson’s (1996) study were timed during their grammaticality judgment posttest. Robinson found no statistically significant advantage for inductively or deductively instructed learners. In Erlam’s (2003a) study, learners were asked to produce a timed picture narration with verbs required to describe an action depicted written underneath each picture. The scores obtained on this task suggested that the deductive approach is more beneficial than the inductive one. Another timed pressure task was a written production task, in which the deductive group scored significantly better than the inductive and the control groups. Finally, Erlam (2003a) employed a timed listening comprehension test, the findings of which also provided support for the superiority of the deductive way of teaching. Taking into account the measures of explicit and implicit knowledge which were presented and evaluated in section 1.2.2. in Chapter One, the analysis of these studies reveals that implicit knowledge was measured in only some of them. According to the requirements formulated by Ellis (2005a) on the basis of his psychometric study, only the

research projects by Erlam (2003a), Rosa and O'Neill (1999) and Robinson (1996) could aspire to estimating the levels of implicit knowledge.

As can be seen, the findings of the studies are inconsistent when it comes to determining the effectiveness of these two instructional approaches. It is important to note that most studies, with the exception of Shaffer (1989) and Erlam (2003a), who worked with high school learners, involved adults. As a result, it seems warranted to claim that the outcomes could have been affected by age differences, thus making the comparisons difficult. For Herron and Tomasello (1992), it was inductive instruction thanks to which learners obtained better results, whereas in the studies conducted by Robinson (1996), Erlam (2003a) and Seliger (1975) it was the deductive approach that proved more advantageous. Abraham (1985), Rosa and O'Neill (1999) and Shaffer (1989) did not find any significant differences between the effectiveness of the two types of instruction, although in Shaffer's study the inductive approach seemed to produce better results.

The question whether the effectiveness of grammar instruction depends on the structure taught has also been a matter of investigation; however in most reviewed studies more than one structure was targeted and only one study (Robinson 1996) investigated the relationship between the type of instruction and grammatical structure. Robinson (1996) did not manage to find a direct connection between the degree of structural complexity and the effectiveness of either approach, but assumed that the effectiveness of instructional treatment may depend on a particular linguistic feature. Erlam (2003a), who investigated the effectiveness of deductive vs. inductive approach on the acquisition of French direct object pronouns, hypothesized that the inductive approach "is more likely to facilitate the learning of morphological rather than syntactical aspects of language" (Erlam 2003a: 256). Ellis (2006a: 98), in turn, suggested that "simple rules may best be taught deductively, while more complex rules may best be taught inductively". This somewhat controversial position was challenged by Larsen-Freeman (2001b: 264), who argued that "when a particular linguistic rule is rather convoluted, it may make more sense to present a grammar structure deductively".

Apart from the research comparing deductive and inductive approaches to explicit grammar instruction, another strand of research investigates the effectiveness of particular discovery options which may facilitate the introduction of formal language features. Ellis (1997b, 2003) and Fotos and Ellis (1991) suggest using *consciousness-raising tasks* (CR) to incorporate a linguistic focus in task construction. Although these tasks may be employed

both in the presentation and the practice stage, it was decided to include samples of relevant research here, as they typically belong to inductive grammar techniques. A number of studies have sought to investigate the effectiveness of CR tasks in language acquisition (e.g. Fotos and Ellis 1991; Sheen 1992; Nobuyoshi and Ellis 1993; Fotos 1993, 1994; Leow 1997; Mohamed 2004; Nitta and Gardner 2005; Eckerth 2008), nevertheless it is still a question of some concern what exactly is likely to be learned from them.

Fotos and Ellis (1991) compared the effects of direct consciousness-raising by means of grammar explanation and indirect consciousness-raising by means of a CR task on Japanese college students' ability to judge the grammaticality of sentences involving dative alteration. They found that both methods resulted in significant gains in understanding the target structure; however the gains generated by traditional instruction were more long-lasting. Fotos (1994), in turn, conducted an experiment to investigate learners' noticing on the basis of two types of grammar consciousness-raising treatments: teacher-fronted grammar lessons and interactive, grammar problem-solving tasks. She designed her research by dividing the subjects into three different treatment groups which were taught indirect object placement, adverb placement and relative clause usage by means of communicative input. The findings revealed that the two types of grammar consciousness-raising brought about positive effects and promoted significant levels of noticing of the target language structures in subsequent communicative input.

Another study exploring the effectiveness of consciousness-raising tasks was conducted by Yip (1994). In her research project investigating the influence of employing CR tasks on the acquisition of ergative verbs which cause a great deal of difficulty for all learners, she found that CR tasks can be effective and claimed that "the overall results as reflected by the posttest are encouraging" (Yip 1994: 136). After CR session treatments, the learners improved dramatically in their ability to judge the correctness of ergative constructions in English. This led Yip (1994) to conclude that CR tasks help direct learners' attention to the incorrect uses of target language features. At the same time, however, she stressed the importance of multidimensional analyses which would consider the relationships between CR tasks and a variety of other factors, such as individual differences or the nature of the linguistic form. Only then will it be possible to implement the conclusions drawn from research in classroom teaching.

An interesting study was also conducted by Mohamed (2004) who examined learners' perspectives of the effectiveness of CR tasks. The findings indicated that learners

had no strong preferences for deductive or inductive tasks ,and they found all of them useful for gaining knowledge about the target language. In general, the findings demonstrated that CR tasks are an effective learning tool and can be used to raise learners' awareness of linguistic forms irrespective of the level of proficiency, but "they would need to be used in conjunction with other varieties of tasks in order to cater for all learning styles and needs of the learners, and to create the environment which is conducive to the acquisition of both form and meaning" (Mohamed 2004: 233).

As can be seen for the evidence provided above, although not without its problems, research into consciousness-raising tasks has provided compelling evidence that this explicit instructional option does have pedagogical benefits in that it can help "raise the learners' consciousness about the existence of linguistic features which they would otherwise ignore" (Ellis 1990b: 169). In other words, thanks to CR tasks learners may become aware of a certain linguistic feature which they are not able to process initially because of its complexity or which they would simply not notice. It has also been claimed that C-R can help facilitate acquisition, triggering conversion of the explicit knowledge the learners develop into implicit knowledge. One needs to remember, however, that CR tasks do not produce immediate results, because their aim is not to make learners produce a given structure spontaneously, but, rather, to facilitate its understanding.

All things considered, there are no grounds to agree with Stern's (1992) and H.D. Brown's (2001) assumptions that it is the inductive way of grammar teaching that should be viewed as superior and more beneficial than the deductive approach. The empirical evidence coming from the studies mentioned above clearly testifies to the prevalence of deductive grammar teaching, at least with adults, and also teenagers to some extent (Erlam 2003a). The ultimate decision as to employ a deductive or inductive approach to teaching a particular language feature will depend on a number of factors and circumstances, a point which is raised by Pawlak (2004a: 279), who argues that:

(...) there is a need to strike a balance between direct and indirect ways of developing learners' explicit knowledge, as both of them can prove effective depending on the language form targeted, learner characteristics, or such practical considerations as the intensity of instruction and the time available for lesson preparation. It is perhaps safe to say, as is the case with other pedagogic options, that variety is at a premium where the value of particular choices cannot be unequivocally determined.

3.3.2. Research into practice options

Although a number of second language acquisition researchers agree that exposure to language is not enough (Swain 1985; DeKeyser 1998; Lightbown and Spada 1990; Doughty 1991; Spada and Lightbown 1993; Robinson 1996; Norris and Ortega 2000), the question which instructional options bring most beneficial results still inspires them to explore the role of presentation, practice and feedback in form-focused instruction. N. Ellis (2002a: 175) argues that “language acquisition can be speeded up by explicit instruction”, but the mere provision of pedagogical L2 rules will not suffice to turn learners into fluent language users (e.g. Ellis 2006a). Since the acquisition of form-meaning mappings is a slow process, it requires active use of the target language, both in its receptive and productive dimensions. Fotos and Ellis (1991: 605) claim that “there is now broad agreement that learners need opportunities to engage in communication based on an exchange of information”. Such a claim is based on Long’s *Interaction Hypothesis* and Swain’s *Output Hypothesis* (see 1.3.2.5.). Due to the great variety of practice options, the research into the actual practice techniques and procedures is quite rich. For the purpose of this thesis, the investigation of the empirical evidence concerning practice choices in form-focused instruction will be conducted taking into account the different characteristics of these options. It will proceed according to the same sequence as the one followed in Chapter Two which provided information regarding the theoretical justification and definitions of particular options. Various practice techniques will be evaluated with respect to their explicitness or implicitness, being input- or output-oriented, and, finally, their controlled or communicative nature. A separate section will be devoted to research into the effectiveness of focused communication tasks, which are the instructional option investigated in the present study.

3.3.2.1. Research into explicit vs. implicit practice options

A key issue for understanding second language acquisition seems to be the relationship between explicit and implicit knowledge, in particular, however, it is important to determine whether these two types of knowledge are completely distinct (e.g. Krashen 1981) or whether explicit knowledge can contribute to the development of implicit knowledge (e.g. Sharwood Smith 1981). If one adopts the view that explicit knowledge

helps learners acquire implicit knowledge (e.g. Fotos and Ellis 1991), it becomes clear that practice in form-focused instruction should include activities the aim of which is to develop learners' explicit and implicit knowledge. In the metaanalysis conducted by Norris and Ortega (2000), three studies were mentioned which attempted to investigate the effectiveness of explicit and implicit instruction (Doughty 1991; Alanen 1995; Williams and Evans 1998).

The first study, conducted by Doughty (1991), compared the effects of *meaning-oriented instruction vs. rule-oriented instruction*. The targeted form were relative clauses, the acquisition of which was investigated among twenty intermediate-level learners of English from different L1 backgrounds. The students were divided into three groups (two experimental and one control) and, first, all of them were asked to read a text containing relative clauses. Then, the meaning-oriented group was subject to pedagogical intervention including lexical and semantic rephrasings and sentence clarification strategies (i.e. input enhancement). The rule-oriented group received instruction including explicit rule statements and on-screen sentence manipulation. The control group simply read the text again. Doughty found that both experimental groups outperformed the control group in their ability to use relative clauses. No difference between the two experimental groups was observed, with a caveat that the group that received input enhancement achieved better results as far as the comprehension of the content of the text was concerned.

When implicit instruction including input enhancement was compared with explicit instruction, the latter was usually found superior. In Alanen's (1995) study, for example, there were four groups: a control group, an 'enhanced input only' group, a 'rule only' group and a 'rule + enhanced input' group. The enriched input took the form of two short texts in which the target features were italicized. The main findings obtained on the basis of a sentence completion task, a grammaticality judgement task and a rule statement task provided evidence for the advantage of the two latter groups (rule only and rule + enhanced input) over the first two ones (control and enhanced input only). No differences were observed between the first two or between the latter two groups. It must be mentioned, however, that the period of instruction was short, which could have influenced the results obtained by the enriched input group.

Last but not least, an attempt was made by Williams and Evans (1998) to compare the effects of two types of pedagogical intervention, one of which included enriched input, and the other contained enriched input integrated with explicit instruction and corrective

feedback. They investigated the effectiveness of these types of instructional treatment on the acquisition of English participial adjectives and present passive. When it comes to participial adjectives, the explicit instruction group did better than the other experimental group and the control group on both grammaticality judgment test and a sentence completion test. As far as present passive is concerned, both the implicit and explicit groups outperformed the control group on a sentence completion test, but no statistically significant differences were observed on a narrative test. The general conclusion Williams and Evans offer (1998: 155) is that “focus on form is indeed useful and should be integrated into communicative curricula”. However, the findings they obtained also suggest that the effectiveness of a technique depends on the mental readiness to internalize a particular form, which obliges the teacher to be aware of the emergent forms in his or her students’ interlanguage.

Apart from comparing implicit vs. explicit instruction, it makes sense to include here empirical evidence connected with the use of a dictogloss, because it is a technique in which attention to form directed at explicit knowledge and the overall focus on meaning aimed at the development of implicit knowledge are integrated. The effectiveness of a dictogloss has been tested empirically in a number of studies, usually by means of tape-recorded interactions which were analysed in terms of the occurrence, focus and effectiveness of *language-related episodes* (LREs), defined as “any part of a dialogue in which students talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or other- or self-correct” (Swain 1998: 70). Researching dictogloss tasks is considered a challenge due to the poor quality of students’ talk and difficulty in the interpretation of the results (Pawlak 2006). These problems notwithstanding, dictogloss-based tasks have been found to be effective with regard to learners’ noticing, remembering and producing correct language forms (Kowal and Swain 1994, 1997; Lapkin et al. 2002). For instance, the study by Pawlak (2003a), which aimed at exploring the effectiveness of the dictogloss in the Polish educational context, provided evidence for the usefulness of this task with respect to English tenses (present perfect and past simple) and conditionals. On the basis of the obtained findings, Pawlak (2003a: 377) concluded that “tasks of this kind can be employed to provide students with meaningful practice in the use of structures which they find problematic and presumably facilitate the process of their acquisition”.

All in all, the studies presented above confirm the results of the metaanalysis conducted by Norris and Ortega (2000). Explicit instruction seems to be more effective

than implicit although there are some details requiring further analysis and consideration such as the complexity of the form in focus or the choice of instruments measuring acquisition. Explicitness or implicitness of various instructional techniques is only one of many criteria that can be taken into account when investigating the effectiveness of various pedagogical choices. Another distinction which is worth taking into account are comprehension and production practice techniques. As this chapter follows the sequence of the previous one, they will be the concern of the next section, which is then followed by a section devoted to empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of controlled vs. communicative practice options.

3.3.2.2. Research into input-based vs. output-based practice options

When it was established that grammar instruction does bring positive effects in terms of second language acquisition (e.g. Doughty 1991; Long 1991; Norris and Ortega 2000), the question concerning the effectiveness of particular instructional options in FFI became one of the most often addressed by the SLA research. The value of input- and output-based options is among the most often explored areas of research with most of the studies attempting to compare the learning outcomes when either comprehension-based or production-oriented instructional options are employed.

The research on the particular input-based techniques (see section 2.3.2.2. in Chapter Two) has provided some insightful conclusions with respect to fostering foreign language acquisition. The studies on enriched input (i.e. input flood, input enhancement) are generally motivated by Schmidt's (1990) *Noticing Hypothesis* (see section 1.3.2.2. in Chapter One) and usually belong to one of the three categories: studies designed to examine whether the enhanced language features are noticed by learners, studies designed to check whether enriched input promotes acquisition, and studies comparing the effectiveness of enriched input with other instructional options (Ellis 2008a: 373). As far as the influence of enriched input on noticing is concerned, there are conflicting findings. The study by Jourdenais et. al (1995), for example, provided some evidence that input enhancement is helpful for noticing targeted language features. They found that learners were more likely to make explicit reference to the target forms during a writing task and commenting on it if they had previously read texts with typographically highlighted

features. The students were also reported to use past tense more often when they had read enhanced texts than when the text was unenhanced. The outcomes of the study were confirmed by the findings reported by Izumi (2002, 2003). On the basis of the results of her studies, Izumi (2003) claims that visual input enhancement promotes noticing of the target language features, whereas Leow (2001) and Leow et al. (2003) argue that visual input enhancement does not facilitate noticing with respect to the actual learning gains. When it comes to the effectiveness of enriched input in L2 acquisition, the research conducted thus far has also produced conflicting results. For example, Trahey and White (1993) and Trahey (1996) investigated whether enriched input is sufficient for learning English adverb placement which is used according to different rules in their L1 French. It turned out that although the learners were able to learn the correct position which was incorrect in French, they also used another position which was incorrect in English, but correct in French. Both studies produced the same results with respect to learners' performance. Leeman et al. (1995), in turn, investigated the effects of input enhancement on the acquisition of preterite and imperfect verb forms. The forms were highlighted in the written input, learners were asked to pay attention to them, and they received corrective feedback from the teacher. The results of the posttest showed that the experimental group instructed by means of enhanced input outperformed the other, unenhanced input group. The effectiveness of visual input enhancement has also been compared with other input-based instructional option, i.e. input flood. While some studies found positive effects of visual input enhancement over input flood on learning of grammatical items (e.g. Lee 2007; White 1998), others failed to do so (e.g. Izumi 2002, 2003). The studies mentioned were designed according to various methodologies and employed various techniques of data analysis; therefore the results obtained from such research are often contradictory and elusive. Nevertheless, it was found that "learners exposed to enhanced texts outperformed learners who read unenhanced texts" (Lee and Huang 2008: 322-323) but the effect size was very small ($d=0.22$). Although it is impossible to draw definitive conclusions, Lee and Huang (2008: 325) rightly observe that:

Primary researchers have drawn conflicting conclusions on the effectiveness of visual input enhancement on grammar learning, and the meta-analytic data presented here confirm that the results are inconclusive in the extant research. We believe the findings presented in our synthesis indicate the divergence of methodological features of the primary study groups as one of the factors that generate such undeterminacy of results.

Apart from investigations devoted to exploring the role of enhanced input, research into input-based practice aims to determine the value of *structured input* option which has been tested empirically in a number of studies and usually compared with output-oriented practice. The effectiveness of input processing instruction was first investigated in the study by VanPatten and Cadierno (1993) among university level learners of Spanish. Two different types of instructional treatments were explored: production practice and comprehension practice (interpretation). It was found that, on the comprehension tests, the learners who received interpretation training in Spanish word order rules and the use of object pronouns outperformed the learners who had the benefit of production training. The same finding was obtained in a replication study by Cadierno (1995). On the basis of their findings, VanPatten and Cadierno (1993) and Cadierno (1995) concluded that processing instruction (input-based) is more effective than traditional production practice. They believe that “traditional presentation and practice do not enhance how learners process input and therefore do not provide intake for the developing system” (1993: 238). In their conclusions, they agree with Krashen (1982), who talks about two distinct systems of acquired competence and learned competence, where the latter is the result of learning and does not cooperate or contribute to the underlying competence used by the language module (see section 1.3.1.4. in Chapter One).

In order to refute arguments that it was explicit instruction rather than input processing that affected the learners’ results in the two studies mentioned above, VanPatten and Oikennon (1996) investigated the role of explanation and *structured input* in processing instruction. They compared three groups of learners: a processing instruction (PI) group that received explicit information, structured input activities, and feedback (as in VanPatten and Cadierno 1993); a structured input group (SI) that only received structured input activities and brief feedback pointing to correct or incorrect language, but no explanation why, and an explicit information group (EI) which received explicit information about the target structures and the particular input processing strategy that negatively affects their correct interpretation. The structures taught were Spanish object-verb-subject sentences with object pronouns. The instruments of data collection were sentence-level interpretation tasks and production tasks. The results of the study showed that structured input alone is sufficient to improve interpretation and production skills, and the provision of explicit information language forms is not necessary, or even beneficial, for processing instruction. The conclusions that were drawn on the basis of VanPatten and

Oikennon's (1996) study were so controversial that a number of researchers decided to replicate it and measure the same variables. Wong (2004), for example, conducted a study to examine whether the results obtained by VanPatten and Oikennon (1996) would be generalizable to other language features. On the basis of her findings, she argued that the contribution of explicit information is negligible, thus confirming VanPatten and Oikennon's (1996) opinion that structured input is sufficient to cause gains in production and interpretation of the target forms and that explicit information plays no important role. Apart from Wong (2004), also Benati (2004) investigated the effectiveness of explicit information vs. structured input in terms of learners' ability to interpret and produce Italian third person future forms. When it comes to interpretation, the input processing group and the structured input group improved more than the explicit information group and they were not different from each other both on immediate and delayed posttests. When it comes to the production tests, all the groups improved: the input processing group improved more than the explicit information group but was not different from the structured input group. Benati (2004) concluded that structured input is sufficient for learners to correctly process and produce the target structures, although he also acknowledged the possible minimal effect of explicit information. Finally, Farley (2004) set out to replicate VanPatten and Oikennon's study (1996), but this time with two experimental groups only: the input processing group (receiving explicit information) and the structured input group. He attempted to examine the effectiveness of the instructional options on the acquisition of complex Spanish subjunctive forms. The results were somewhat contradictory to the previous studies, as, although both groups improved their scores significantly, it was the input processing learners who outperformed the structured input learners on interpretation and production tasks. Farley explained this difference in outcome in terms of the nature of the target form and concluded that "explicit information might have helped learners see the form-meaning connections in the structured input activities more quickly and reduce the item by item analysis the structured input participants might have undertaken" (2004: 238).

A recent attempt to verify VanPatten's (2002a, b) claims was made by Marsden (2006) who explored input processing under classroom conditions by conducting two experiments which compared the effectiveness of *input processing* and *enriched input*. While input processing is a kind of grammar instruction which aims at changing the ways in which learners attend to input data so that they pay attention to form-meaning mappings, enriched input is an instructional technique where learners listen to or read a text where the

target structure has been highlighted somehow (see also section 2.3.2.2. in Chapter Two). Marsden (2006) found that the learners instructed by means of enriched input did not make any progress on the oral narrative test, contrary to the learners subjected to input processing, who made considerable gains and were able to carry them over as long as 14-16 weeks after the posttests. The lack of improvement in the enriched input group suggests that the brief explicit grammar and processing explanation which took place in both experimental groups was not solely responsible for learning gains made by the input processing learners. This could support claims made by researchers in the studies mentioned above.

The research conducted by VanPatten and the subsequent research projects have been subject to considerable criticism. First of all, the studies carried out by VanPatten and Cadierno (1993), and VanPatten and Oikennon (1996) did not include any instruments that would measure the learners' ability to employ the target language feature in unplanned language use. VanPatten and Sanz (1995) included a measure of free production in the form of an oral video narration test in their study, but while the written measure provided evidence for a significant advantage of input processing instruction, the oral test did not show any statistically significant difference between the group instructed by means of input processing and the control group.

In addition to research projects exploring the value of input-based options, also the role of production practice in language acquisition has been a source of both theoretical debate (DeKeyser et.al 2002; VanPatten 2002b) and empirical research, good examples being the studies conducted by DeKeyser and Sokalski (1996, 2001), Allen (2000), Erlam (2003b) and Morgan-Short and Bowden (2006). DeKeyser and Sokalski (1996, 2001), for example, compared the influence of processing instruction and output practice on the acquisition of the Spanish direct object and conditional forms. In the case of direct object pronouns which are an example of a structure which is hard to comprehend but easy to produce, no differences were found between groups for comprehension and production tasks. When it comes to conditionals which serve as an example of a structure which is easy to comprehend but hard to produce, no significant differences were found either. The results provided a basis for the claim that "comprehension and production skills in an L2 are to some extent learned separately" and led them to conclude that "VanPatten and Cadierno's (1993) results cannot be generalized" (DeKeyser and Sokalski 2001: 105). Similar results were also obtained by Collentine (1998) and Salaberry (1997). The

outcomes of this research were, however, questioned by Allen (2000) who conducted a thorough revision of DeKeyser and Sokalski's (1996) and Salaberry's (1997) studies and concluded that both of them do not really replicate VanPatten and Cadierno's (1993) investigation. Therefore, they cannot really constitute sufficient grounds for the claims that their authors formulated. The study by Allen (2000) was a conceptual replication of VanPatten and Cadierno's (1993) study, and the only differences that were observed in the design were the grammatical structure, which was the French causative, the inclusion of an open-ended production task and a larger sample size (Allen 2000: 72-73). The results stood in contrast to VanPatten and Cadierno's findings. When it comes to the interpretation task, both types of instruction were equally effective, and as far as the production task is concerned, traditional instruction involving production activities turned out to be superior to processing instruction. Allen concluded that her study "found that the results of VanPatten and Cadierno (1993) are not generalizable to the French causative even though the instruction in both studies attempted to alter the same input processing strategy (...) It may be that processing instruction is effective only for certain grammatical structures" (2000: 80).

Another study investigating the relative effectiveness of structured-input instruction and output-based instruction on the acquisition of direct object pronouns in French was conducted by Erlam (2003b). The results of the research project provided evidence in support of pedagogic intervention in general, as both experimental groups improved significantly in comparison with the control group on all tests. When it comes to comprehension tests, it was the output group that performed better than the structured input on the posttest, which stands in contrast to VanPatten and Cadierno's (1993) study, but the gain was not carried over to the delayed posttest, while it was so in the structured input group. Erlam (2003b) was also interested if structured input enabled the learners to produce the target structure as effectively as output-based instruction. Again, the output group outperformed the structured input group on all measures of production. Erlam (2003b: 577-578) provides a possible explanation why output-based instruction was so effective. In her opinion, it was the meaning-oriented nature of practice activities that might have affected the effectiveness of output-based instruction. Moreover, the students' attention to form might have been induced by the input they received while performing their tasks. The third possible reason for the effectiveness of output-based instruction is that "it aided automatic use of the target structure" (Erlam 2003b: 578). In the general conclusion to her study,

Erlam (2003b) recognizes the undeniable value of input-based instruction. However, she also acknowledges the importance and contribution of meaning-oriented, output-based instruction, as “the overall greater gains made by the output-based group in this study suggest that the meaning-oriented nature of instruction may play a key role in SLA. There is also some evidence that output-based instruction may be more effective when language measures require a pressured response” (Erlam 2003b: 579).

Apart from the three studies discussed above, the effectiveness of output-based instruction was also explored in the study by Morgan-Short and Bowden (2006). The targeted form were the Spanish preverbal direct object pronouns, the same structure as in VanPatten and Cadierno’s (1993) study, and the effects of processing instruction and meaningful output-based instruction were measured on comprehension and production tests. Morgan-Short and Bowden (2006) found that both processing instruction and meaningful output-based instruction led to improved performance in terms of the interpretation and production of the targeted structure. Similarly to Erlam’s (2003b) study, also in this experiment, the output group performed worse on the delayed posttest in comparison with the immediate posttest, which might indicate more stable effects of processing instruction. Despite the loss, however, the result of the output group was still significantly better when compared with the pretest result, which testifies to the fact that both instructional conditions led to improved performance (Morgan-Short and Bowden 2006: 53). Taking into consideration various factors that might have affected the results of the learners on the different measures, Morgan-Short and Bowden (2006: 59) offer a conclusion that “meaningful output-based instruction can, like processing instruction, lead to linguistic development, at least when practice is meaningful and leads learners to make form-meaning connections” (2002a: 762) recently asserted that “output may play a number of important roles in language development” and that, in fact, it plays a facilitative role in acquisition (VanPatten 2004), he strongly contests the claim that “using a form in one’s output is a direct path to acquisition” (VanPatten 2004: 27), which suggests that acquisition does not appear to be dependent on output. The role of output can, however, be grounded on the theoretical assumptions of the *Output Hypothesis* (see 1.3.2.5.) which holds that although input is essential to SLA, output might also affect acquisition both directly and indirectly and entail syntactic processing. The research motivated by this hypothesis has provided substantial evidence for the contribution of output practice (e.g. Izumi 2002; Izumi and Bigelow 2000; Izumi et al. 1999; Swain 1995).

The assumption that comprehension and production skills are two corresponding systems developed thanks to input and output practice was investigated by Izumi et al. (1999) and Izumi and Bigelow (2000). Their aim was to find out if output would change the learners' subsequent input processing and promote interlanguage development. The form in focus was the English past hypothetical conditional; one group of learners were subjected to output opportunities and subsequent exposure to relevant input, and the second group received the same input for the sole purpose of comprehension. The effects of the treatments were measured in two types of tasks: a text-reconstruction task and a guided essay-writing task, which were delivered in reverse orders in the two studies. The results indicate a significant improvement in both groups, which suggests that both output and input practice lead to the development of language skills. A conclusion that may be drawn on the basis of the two research projects (Izumi et al. 1999; Izumi and Bigelow 2000) is that output "might have beneficial effects on linguistic development in addition to – not in opposition to – the crucial role of input" (Morgan-Short and Bowden 2006: 38).

It must be remembered that the studies described above have employed various designs, investigated different output-based options and compared them with some specific input-based techniques. Therefore, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions, because the treatments and assessment tasks are not equivalent across the studies and they are substantially different from those used in PI research in that the treatments (Morgan-Short and Bowden 2006: 39-41):

- (1) did not provide explicit information designed to alter any learner processing strategy (DeKeyser and Sokalski 1996; Nagata 1998; Erlam 2003b);
- (2) reduced the meaningfulness of input activities (DeKeyser and Sokalski 1996; Salaberry 1997; Erlam 2003b);
- (3) did not control event probabilities (Allen 2000);
- (4) the output group performed some interpretation activities during treatment (Allen 2000).

Also, substantial differences could be observed when it comes to the assessment as:

- (1) comprehension instead of interpretation tests were given (DeKeyser and Sokalski 1996; Salaberry 1997; Nagata 1998; Erlam 2003b);
- (2) no sentence-level production test was included (Allen 2000);

(3) production tests were either scored so as not to give credit for partially correct answers (DeKeyser and Sokalski 1996; Salaberry 1997) or only particular morphological aspects of the target form were considered for scoring (Erlam 2003b).

A thorough investigation of production-oriented and reception-based approaches to teaching English grammar in the Polish educational context was conducted by Mystkowska-Wiertelak (2010). In her four studies, she attempted to explore the different instructional options and their effectiveness in teaching complex grammar structures to advanced learners of English. The first study was devoted to interpretation tasks. Mystkowska-Wiertelak compared the effects of such tasks and traditional grammar teaching on the acquisition of inversion, but was unable to draw definitive conclusions about the primacy of one approach over the other. As she comments, “the findings of the experiment imply that both approaches, the traditional and comprehension-based, affected the learners’ performance both in terms of production and reception” (Mystkowska-Wiertelak 2010: 156). In her second study, she compared input processing and production practice and the findings she obtained did not confirm VanPatten’s (1993) claims. This is because the group instructed by means of input processing did not do better than the production practice and control groups, not only on the production tests but also on the measures of reception. The researcher hypothesizes that such a situation can be partly ascribed to the type of instruction typical of the Polish educational system where production practice is commonly used. Nevertheless, the tests showed that both approaches affected learners’ performance; hence Mystkowska-Wiertelak argues that it is legitimate to say that a combination of the two approaches, reception-oriented and production-based, constitutes the most advantageous solution to the problem of grammar instruction in the language classroom. Having hypothesized that the most successful instructional approach would involve both output- and input-oriented options, Mystkowska-Wiertelak (2010) designed a study to investigate the effects of such an approach in terms of the acquisition of reported speech in English. The results provided evidence for her assumption, although they stand in contrast to the majority of research into processing instruction, as no prevalence was shown of reception-oriented instruction over production-based treatment. In her last study, Mystkowska-Wiertelak (2010) explored the development of implicit and explicit knowledge through the use of structured input activities. She employed different research instruments to tap the reception and production of causative *have* with respect to explicit and implicit knowledge. On the basis of the data analysis, the researcher found that

the members of both experimental groups appeared to benefit from the pedagogic intervention. But what is of particular importance is the recognition of the role of cognitive and affective variables. Mystkowska-Wiertelak (2010) argues that it might have been individual differences that affected the learners' performance rather than the mode of instruction in a particular group.

It is evident from the above discussion that input-based and output-based options have received a considerable deal of interest from the researchers who have been seeking the most effective instructional options for instructed second language acquisition. It should be noted, however, that the studies differ in terms of design, the forms in focus, the scope of interest, instructional treatments, the number of participants, the instruments of data collection and data analysis. It seems, therefore, that more research is needed to ascertain the effectiveness of the particular options. Irrespective of the differences in the treatments and assessments used, a number of conclusions can be drawn from the results of studies that have compared input- and output-based instruction. Such an attempt was ventured by Erlam (2003b: 565), who commented:

The results from structured-input instruction research to date suggest that it is crucial to consider what structured-input instruction is opposed to. There is evidence to suggest that structured-input instruction may not be superior to meaning-oriented, output-based instruction. There is also evidence to suggest that the advantage for output-based instruction may be greater on tests of language production that require a pressured or unplanned response.

When it comes to pedagogical implications derived from the research, Morgan-Short and Bowden (2006: 59) claim that "the results of our study seem to support the use of meaningful output practice as well as meaningful input-based practice in the L2 classroom environment as a means for building fluency and accuracy, not only in later stages of instruction but also during early stages of instruction of new forms". This conclusion seems to stand to reason when the results of the above studies are taken into account. All of this indicates that comprehension-based and production-oriented practice should be viewed as complementary for the facilitation of acquisitional processes. On the one hand, input-based options help learners overcome the limitations connected with processing constraints and are believed to affect implicit knowledge directly (Pawlak 2006); on the other, output-based techniques assist the acquisition of the partially acquired structures whose process of internalization is ready to begin. In other words, they foster the processes of automatization of explicit and implicit knowledge. Production practice also seems to be one of the most

commonly employed techniques in the available teaching materials. The debate concerning the superiority of one group of techniques over the other appears very difficult and perhaps not so much necessary for the benefit of learners, as, according to Ellis (2006a: 99), “in practice, both options are likely to involve input-processing and production (...) It is, therefore, not surprising that both (...) have been shown to result in acquisition”.

3.3.2.3. Research into controlled vs. communicative practice options

While the general effectiveness of input-oriented vs. output-oriented options has been investigated in the previous section, this section will be devoted to presenting empirical evidence for the role of particular techniques divided into two categories: controlled and communicative. Controlled and communicative instructional options create a continuum and by moving from text-manipulation to text-creation activities teachers are believed to encourage learners to use the target structure automatically (Ellis 1998). Production practice may be helpful in facilitating more fluent and accurate use of partially acquired structures (Ellis 1998: 51), a claim which has been supported, for example, by DeKeyser and Sokalski (1996).

When it comes to research into error-avoiding activities, the study by Castagnaro (1991) is an empirical investigation of the effectiveness of text-manipulation and text-creation activities in the acquisition of complex noun phrases by Japanese college students. They were divided into three groups and all of them received a picture of a kitchen. The control group was asked to simply practice labeling objects in it. The first experimental group was required to complete a blank-filling exercise based on the picture and designed to practice the construction of complex noun phrases. The students in the second experimental group were requested to work in pairs and describe the kitchen objects in their own sentences. It was found that the EFL learners who were given the opportunity to engage in free production and interaction outperformed the other groups on a posttest measuring their ability to produce complex noun phrases, which indicates that text-creation activities are superior to text-manipulation activities. The findings of this research project testify to the effectiveness of production practice, particularly such employing different modes of interaction.

A quasi experimental study comparing the effects of controlled and communicative practice on the acquisition of past counterfactual conditional was conducted by Pawlak (2007) in the context of a Polish secondary school. The two experimental groups were subject to two types of instructional treatment: focus on form and focus on forms. While the focus on form approach included multiple opportunities for meaningful practice, such as comprehension tasks related to the texts read or heard requiring the processing or use of the target forms (e.g. matching, completion, putting sentences in a chronological sequence, questions) and focused communication tasks (i.e. such necessitating the use of past unreal forms for their successful completion) in which various forms of explicit and implicit feedback were employed, the focus on forms approach contained a number of text-manipulation and text-creation activities assisted with immediate and overt correction of errors. As the author of the study comments, “the treatment applied in the FonFs group broadly followed the PPP sequence, with the caveat that the three stages were extended over a series of lessons and the free production phase was sufficiently emphasized” (Pawlak 2007: 178). The participants’ performance on a discrete point grammar test and a dictogloss task, revealed that the two types of treatment had a similar effect on learners’ explicit knowledge since the scores were significantly higher than in the control group. When it comes to implicit knowledge, estimated on the basis of a dictogloss task, the two experimental groups improved significantly in comparison with the control group, but neither the FonF nor the FonFs approach proved to be superior. According to Pawlak (2007: 186), the results show that “gradual progression from rule presentation, through text-manipulation activities, to free production (...) is effective, contributing to the ability not only to manipulate TL forms in controlled exercises but also to use them accurately in relatively spontaneous speech”. The conclusion drawn by Pawlak (2007) regarding the usefulness of the two approaches and the instructional options they include was that focus on form and focus on forms should be integrated in classroom practice, because it might serve ~~learners’~~ **productive** practice usually aims at the development of accurate and fluent language. However, there is also another approach to helping learners achieve this aim: this is by the application of error-inducing techniques such as the *garden path*. It is relevant at this point to mention two studies conducted by Tomasello and Herron (1988, 1989). In one of them, they compared the effectiveness of two types of instruction in problematic constructions likely to induce overgeneralisation and transfer errors among beginner learners of French. One treatment involved explicit instruction, and in the other, referred to

as *down the garden path*, typical errors were induced and then immediately corrected. The findings of their study indicate superior performance on the part of learners who receive metalinguistic information and corrective feedback after they are put into a situation where they are likely to make the error (i.e. after being led down the *garden path*) than learners who receive metalinguistic information before they are put in situations where they are required to use the target forms. Tomasello and Herron (1989) offer the following explanation for their findings: first of all the *garden path* technique enabled the learners to conduct a ‘cognitive comparison’ between their incorrect utterances and the correct language features, and, second, motivation was raised, which made the learners more interested in target language rules and exceptions. The results of Tomasello and Herron’s studies (1988, 1989) may also provide support for the role of negative evidence embedded in corrective feedback which is going to be explored in section 3.3.3. of this chapter.

3.3.2.4. Research into focused communication tasks

Focused communication tasks are one of the many possible instructional options that can be included in form-focused instruction. As mentioned in section 2.3.2.4. in Chapter Two, they may be of two types: comprehension-based (e.g. Doughty 1991; Ellis and He 1999), or production-oriented (e.g. Ellis 1997b; Nobuyoshi and Ellis 1993; Muranoi 2000). In order to provide a full account of empirical research into focused communication tasks, it is necessary to begin with Savignon’s (1972) study. In her frequently cited research project, she explored the effectiveness of communicative tasks with regard to the acquisition of grammatical and communicative skills of three groups of learners of French. Instead of laboratory pattern drills, one group had the benefit of an extra hour of instruction including communication tasks. According to the author of the project, “by encouraging students to ask for information, to seek clarification, to use circumlocution and whatever other linguistic and nonlinguistic resources they could muster to negotiate meaning, to stick to the communicative task at hand, teachers were invariably encouraging learners to take risks, to speak in other than memorized patterns” (Savignon 1991: 264-265). When test results were compared at the end of the 18-week, 5-hour-per-week program, it turned out that learners who had engaged in communication in lieu of laboratory pattern drills for one

hour a week outperformed the other two groups on communicative measures, but not on linguistic skills measures where they reached the same levels as the other groups.

In yet another study investigating the role of focused communication tasks, Doughty (1991) attempted to estimate their effectiveness in a foreign language classroom with regard to helping learners gain control over the targeted linguistic features. She employed a reception communication task in which learners were asked to read a text containing a number of relative clauses (the target structure). The students were divided into three groups: the control group, the first experimental group that received explicit information about relative clauses, and the second experimental group in which learners were asked to read the text on the screens of their computer monitors. In order to understand the text, they could make use of a computer dictionary and a special 'explanation' window where the original sentences were clarified. The results of the study provided support for the use of focused communication tasks, because learners who completed this task outperformed the other experimental group in terms of the ability to comprehend the text. When it comes to production skills, both groups manifested the same level of their ability to use relative clauses, which was significantly higher than in the case of the control group.

Another study investigating the effectiveness of focused communication tasks was conducted by Ellis and He (1999); yet it must be mentioned that it is more focused on lexis, which makes it also interesting to observe how FCTs affect the acquisition of this area of language. Ellis and He measured the relative effects of premodified input, interactionally modified input and modified output on the comprehension, recognition and production of directions containing new English words among fifty intermediate-level students of English. They employed a focused communication task in which the subjects were given a matrix picture of an apartment and small pictures of furniture to be placed in the picture on the basis of directions they were asked to listen to or produce. The results which Ellis and He (1999) obtained showed that the group that had the opportunity to produce and modify their directions outperformed the two other groups with regard to comprehension, recognition and production of the target language features. Despite the advantage of the output group, Ellis and He (1999: 297) argue that "reasonable levels of comprehension can be achieved in all three conditions", which suggests that focused communication tasks of the *listen-and-do* type can lead to high levels of comprehension. The results were also encouraging for the three treatments in the case of the students' ability to recognize the targeted items. As might be expected, the scores on the production measure were lower

than on the two previous ones, with the output group outperforming the two others significantly. The researchers explain the effectiveness of the negotiated output with reference to sociocultural theory, which argues that “learning hinges not so much on richness of input, but crucially on the choices made by individuals as responsible agents with dispositions to think and act in certain ways rooted in their discursive histories” (Lantolf and Pavlenko 1995: 116).

As already stated in the previous chapter (see section 2.3.2.4.), designing focused communication tasks is a challenge, particularly in terms of task-essentialness. One of the methodological solutions to the problem is the use of implicit and explicit techniques of error correction that draw learners’ attention to form while the task is being performed. Requests for clarification encouraging learners to modify their output were employed in Ellis’s (1997b) and Nobuyoshi and Ellis’s (1993) studies which attempted to investigate whether focused communication tasks lead to more accurate production and whether employing this instructional option has long-term effects. There were six participants in both studies (three experimental and three control) and the target structure were past tense verb forms. The learners were asked to perform two jigsaw communication tasks and were told that the events happened in the past. One group of students received requests for clarification targeting every utterance which contained a wrong application of the past tense verb. The control group, on the other hand, received general requests for clarification which did not result from the incorrect use of the past tense verb forms. The findings of the study provided some support for the use of requests for clarification, as the two learners in the experimental group manifested significant gains, both in the short- and long-run. The third member of the experimental group did not show any improvement. While acknowledging the limitations of the study related to the small sample, Ellis (1997b: 215) proposes that “pushing learners to make their output more comprehensible leads to linguistic development” at least in some learners. He believes that students must be developmentally ready to acquire the target feature. Moreover, it is also important what they are interested in: functions or structures. The researcher hypothesizes that learners must be structurally oriented in order to improve their accuracy in pushed output. The conclusion drawn by Ellis (1997b) on the basis of his small scale study is that employing requests for clarification does not compromise the communicativeness of the task and encourages some learners to improve their language in terms of accuracy. However, in the researcher’s opinion, it is impossible to draw general conclusions, as “it does not follow it will work in other teaching

contexts or for other grammatical structures” (Elis 1997b: 216). Requests for clarification have been often investigated in a number of studies devoted to the effectiveness of corrective feedback, and these will be the main concern of the next section devoted to research into feedback options.

Another small scale study was conducted by Samuda (2001) who explored the effectiveness of communicative tasks for nine adult learners of English at a pre-intermediate level. The forms in focus were modal verbs *must*, *may*, *might* and *could*. The task attempted to elicit the target features, but since the input data did not contain any target structures, the learners’ attention was only to be attracted to the areas of *probability* and *possibility* to ensure the use of the forms in focus. The task was organized according to the following stages: the pre-focus stage, which was built around an unplanned, oral activity and required the teacher’s non-interventionist position. The next stage was the language focus stage, which consisted of both the *implicit focus*, i.e. the teacher took the role of a co-communicator, concentrated on the meaning only and emphasized the meaning subtleties, and the *explicit language focus*, in which the teacher focused the learners’ attention on the form-meaning relationships. Finally, there was the post-focus stage, when the students yet again worked on posters and the teacher’s role was of that of an observer. The comparison of the output data, collected on the pre- and post-focus stages clearly showed that the target features were used more often both in oral and written output, and in terms of accuracy the written output was 100% correct. The researcher suggests that “what this output does indicate is evidence of initial form-meaning mapping and, as such, evidence of intake that could be available for further processing” (Samuda 2001: 136).

A study definitely worth mentioning when exploring the effectiveness of focused communication tasks was conducted by Muranoi (2000) who attempted to investigate the effectiveness of a communicative instructional procedure termed *interaction enhancement* (IE) on the acquisition of English articles by 114 Japanese university students. The procedure, described in detail in section 2.3.3.2. in Chapter Two, involves the use of negative feedback provided by the teacher (recasts and requests for repetition). The study was also motivated by the question whether explicit information is necessary for students who receive implicit negative feedback for successful acquisition of the target linguistic feature. The instructional treatment was based on Di Pietro’s *strategic interaction* (see section 2.3.3.2. in Chapter Two) which employs scenarios “to create contexts in which learners are led to use the target language naturally” (Muranoi 2000: 631). For the purpose

of the study, scenarios were used to both lead the learners to interact with each other, and to encourage them to produce the language feature accurately. In other words, the researcher pushed the learners to produce output and provided them with negative feedback so that the incorrect forms could be noticed and corrected in the modified output within the framework of strategic interaction. The results of the study provide support for the value of interaction enhancement, as the positive effects lasted at least five weeks. It was also found that the group which obtained explicit information about the target language feature outperformed the other experimental group, deprived of formal debriefing, on all posttests. The general conclusion Muranoi (2000) draws is that there is a need for integration of explicit form-focused instruction with meaning-focused activities. As she comments, “this study suggests that IE treatments that systematically combine such instructional techniques as output enhancement, input enhancement, problem-solving tasks, and explicit grammar instruction can be beneficial for guiding EFL learners to restructure their interlanguage systems” (2000: 663).

In yet another study, Mackey (1999) aimed at investigating the connection between interaction and second language development with regard to question formation in English among 34 lower-proficiency level of English. The communicative tasks Mackey (1999: 567) used were story completion, picture sequencing, picture differences and picture drawing, and their aim was to “a) provide contexts for the targeted structures to occur and b) provide opportunities for the interactional adjustments”. She divided her students into five groups: interactors (tasks carried out in NS-learner pairs), interactor unreadyies (the same as interactors, but the participants were at a lower developmental level), observers (watched the NS-learner interactions, no active participation), scripted (tasks carried out with NS but according to a premodified script used by NS; therefore no negotiation took place) and controls. The results of the study showed that conversational interaction facilitated second language development. Mackey (1999) found that only the students who actively participated in the interactions demonstrated a significant level of development. Additionally, the interactor groups significantly increased their ability to produce questions on the delayed posttest, as well. Mackey’s (1999) findings provide clear support for Long’s *Interaction Hypothesis* (see 1. 3.2.5.) in the sense that “interactional modifications led to SL development and more active involvement in negotiated interaction led to greater development” (Mackey 1999: 583).

Apart from the investigations into the various aspects of design and methodology of focused communication tasks and their effectiveness for the acquisition of second language features, there are two studies worth mentioning due to the qualitative analysis of data obtained from students participating in immersion programmes. Day and Shapson (1991, 2001) conducted a study among 315 immersion learners of French to investigate the effectiveness of various communication tasks (i.e. linguistic games and activities) on the acquisition of French conditionals. The instructional treatment also involved a cooperative-learning approach to maximize student interaction and use of the conditional in communicative situations, and group- and self-evaluation procedures to encourage learners to develop conscious awareness of their language use. The students were divided into two groups: the experimental and the control one and the instruments for measuring their linguistic knowledge included cloze tests, written compositions and oral interviews. On the basis of their findings, Day and Shapson (2001) observed that classes which had experienced an approach that integrated formal and functional procedures, i.e. analytic and communicative activities, made significantly higher gains in their ability to use the French conditional on the written test. Although the improvement was insignificant as far as speaking is concerned, the experimental groups obtained better results than the control group on this test as well, which was evidenced by the results from individual class data. Day and Shapson (2001) provide several possible reasons for the relatively small gains on speaking tests. They believe it might have resulted from “a commonly observed lag between assimilation of a new rule and its automatization in speaking” (2001: 75) and the competition between the previously automatized data. The high levels of variation among groups on speaking tests and numerous interlanguage forms observed in the data may also explain the lack of statistically significant differences. All in all, however, they believe that “the improvement of immersion students’ oral and written grammatical skills can be achieved through curricular intervention that integrates formal, analytic with functional, communicative approaches to language teaching.

In another study, Griggs (2005) attempted to assess the role that communication tasks play in developing oral skills. This qualitative analysis focused on the language performance of the most successful student and her development with regard to *past simple* and *present perfect* over six tasks. The researcher observed the evolution of a French student Sandrine, who appeared to overuse the present perfect tense, but thanks to the tasks became aware of the functional distinctions between the two tenses. Griggs (2005) analysed

the gradual progression of the subject in terms of her use of the past tenses with the application of the same rules as in their native language which are different from those in English. With time, Sandrine began to produce the target features conforming to the rules of the target language. Griggs (2005: 421) explains the change in the following way:

As it is difficult to attribute Sandrine's sudden adoption of target language rules to recent exposure to positive input, it is more feasible to suppose that she is attempting to bring her past tense output into line with pre-stored declarative knowledge. This knowledge, acquired in formal language learning settings, has remained inert until she has had sufficient exposure to the language to be able to use the knowledge to generate production rules corresponding to target language norms.

Taking the above into consideration, the contribution of communication tasks does not seem to lie in the natural communicative and acquisitional processes that the tasks may generate. Rather they may be seen as an opportunity for learners to construct their own production rules suitable for the communicative needs and conform these personal rules to the target language requirements.

As already stated, the difficulties involved in designing focused communication tasks have been at least partially overcome by means of methodological devices such as corrective feedback options. Corrective feedback, which is the main focus of the next section, is one of the most widely investigated options in form-focused instruction. In their excellent review of feedback options, Lyster and Saito (2010: 295) write that "the field of CF research has grown dramatically over the last 20 years". It seems impossible to implement form-focused instruction in contemporary educational contexts without various types of corrective feedback which can take the form of interactional modifications, such as recasts or request for clarification. The next section will be devoted to empirical research into a number of corrective feedback options in terms of their effectiveness and role in promoting the acquisition of particular linguistic features.

3.3.3. Research into feedback options

As illustrated in section 2.3.3. of the previous chapter, the effectiveness of corrective feedback, which is one way in which learners can be provided with negative evidence, has been an area of considerable discussion. On the one hand, there are researchers

acknowledging the importance of both negative and positive evidence in second language development (e.g. Gass 1997; Long 1996, 2007), but, on the other, there are those convinced of the facilitative role of the positive evidence only (e.g. Krashen 1981; Truscott 1999). The critical voices notwithstanding, Ellis (2008a: 885) acknowledges the value of corrective feedback and asserts that “there is clear evidence that corrective feedback contributes to learning” (see also Lyster and Saito 2010). Corrective feedback may be explored in two types of setting: classroom and laboratory. It has been reported that the differences between the findings of classroom and laboratory research are huge (Nicholas et al. 2001; Ellis and Sheen 2006; Spada and Lightbown 2009). Therefore, it appears reasonable to pay primary attention to the research conducted in real educational settings, because: “classroom-based studies are most likely to lead to a better understanding about the kind of interaction that occurs in classrooms where the teacher is the only proficient speaker and interacts with a large number of learners” (Spada and Lightbown 2009: 159).

In the present discussion, the effectiveness of error correction will be assessed on the basis of research published over recent years. Apart from discussing the results of particular studies exploring choices in corrective feedback, the author will also mention the findings of the latest metaanalyses of research in this area, among which there are Russell and Spada’s (2006) examination of fifteen studies, Mackey and Goo’s (2007) synthesis of twenty research projects devoted to corrective feedback, and Lyster and Saito’s (2010) metaanalysis of fifteen quasi-experimental studies on teacher-student interaction in classroom settings. Similarly to the corresponding sections in the previous chapter, corrective feedback will be investigated in two parts, which emphasize its typical features and characteristics: explicit vs. implicit feedback options and input-oriented and output-based feedback options.

3.3.3.1. Research into explicit vs. implicit feedback options

The effectiveness of explicit and implicit forms of corrective feedback has been investigated by a number of studies. In their overview of the relevant research, Ellis, Loewen and Erlam (2006) analyse eleven studies which are of vital importance for assessing the role of feedback. Although the studies have one common feature, i.e. they attempt to examine the usefulness of implicit and explicit feedback options, they differ in

many respects (e.g. type of research, instructional treatment, operationalizing explicit and implicit options, instruments of data collection, the provision of explicit information prior to the activity), which is why it is difficult to compare them. Taking into account the differences both in the design and purposes of these studies, it is hardly possible to draw definitive conclusions; yet Ellis, Loewen and Erlam (2006) attempt to pinpoint some general implications resulting from these research projects. They observe that “the results point to an advantage for explicit over implicit corrective feedback in studies in which the treatment involved production” (Ellis et al. 2006: 349). The studies in which such results were obtained include: Carroll and Swain (1993), Muranoi (2000), Carroll (2001), Havranek and Cesnik (2003), and Lyster (2004a). Some studies, however, did not reveal significant differences between the effects of explicit and implicit feedback techniques (e.g. DeKeyser 1993; Kim and Mathes 2001).

When it comes to empirical evidence testifying to the effectiveness of explicit vs. implicit feedback options, one of the first studies was conducted in a laboratory setting by Carroll and Swain (1993). They investigated the influence of several different types of oral feedback on the acquisition of dative alternation among 100 Spanish adult learners of English. Their results provided clear support for the value of corrective feedback as all the groups (explicit and implicit) outperformed the control group. Additionally, the group which received *explicit hypothesis rejection*, in which learners were told they had made an error and given an explicit metalinguistic explanation, performed significantly better than all the other groups.

In another study attempting to explore the relative contribution of explicit and implicit feedback options, Ellis, Loewen and Erlam (2006) employed partial recasts and metalinguistic explanations to measure their effects on the acquisition of past tense *-ed* in terms of explicit and implicit dimensions of learners’ target language knowledge. The findings of their study provided clear support for the greater effectiveness of explicit feedback over implicit, both with regard to explicit and implicit knowledge. Ellis et al. (2006: 363) give several reasons for the advantage of this kind of feedback:

- explicit corrective feedback in the context of communicative activity can facilitate the conversion of explicit knowledge into implicit knowledge;
- explicit feedback is more likely than implicit feedback to be perceived as overtly corrective;

- metalinguistic feedback, in comparison to recasts, seems more likely to lead to greater depth of awareness of the gap between what was said and the target norm, thereby facilitating the acquisition of implicit knowledge;
- metalinguistic feedback does not intrude in the communicative flow of the activity.

Apart from investigations concerned with determining the general advantages of explicit and implicit feedback, research findings provide support for the use of particular error correction options (Nagata 1993; Rosa and Leow 2004). When it comes to research into implicit corrective feedback, a recast seems to be the option explored most often (e.g. Lyster and Ranta 1997; Doughty and Varela 1998; Mackey and Philp 1998; Iwashita 2003; Philp 2003) and the most recent studies include those conducted by Lyster (2004a), Ammar and Spada (2006), Ellis, Loewen and Erlam (2006), Ellis (2007), Loewen and Nabei (2007), Y. Sheen (2007) and Yang and Lyster (2010).

A good illustration of research investigating the effects of recasting on L2 learning is an empirical study conducted by Doughty and Varela (1998) in the context of a content-based ESL science class in the United States. In this case, the instructor provided learners with corrective recasts whenever past or conditional errors were encountered in speaking and writing. The findings of the study provided support for the usefulness of recasts as the learners who were corrected in this way manifested greater gains in accuracy and made a higher total number of attempts at past-time reference than the control group. The effectiveness of recasts was also examined by Mackey and Philp (1998) who investigated ESL learners' interlanguage development of question forms by comparing groups of ESL learners who received interactionally modified input with learners who received the same input containing recasts. Their results show that when it comes to more advanced learners, interaction with recasts may be more beneficial than interaction alone for the development of production skills concerning the targeted forms. Moreover, Mackey and Philp (1998) suggest that recasts may be beneficial even when they are not incorporated into learners' immediate responses.

When it comes to studies that examined the effects of recasts without any particular target, a weaker impact of such corrective feedback has been reported. In the often cited classroom study by Lyster and Ranta (1997) recasts did not prove as effective as in laboratory studies (e.g. Nicholas et al 2001), contrary to other feedback options, such as elicitation, clarification request, metalinguistic cue and repetition. Lyster and Ranta (1997), for example, reported that only 18% of teacher recasts were immediately followed by

student repair. The results then, along with the results of other recast studies focusing on particular forms (e.g. Doughty and Varela 1998; Mackey and Philp 1998), confirm the claim that recasts do not affect L2 learning when they do not focus on specific forms. On the basis of his research, Lyster (e.g. 1998, 2004a) concluded that implicit recasts may be misinterpreted by learners as a comment provided by the teacher, not as negative evidence. In addition, the analysis of the data showed that teachers did not use recasts for corrective purposes only; instead, they sometimes used them in reaction to students' accurate use of the L2 as well as for corrective purposes. He claimed, therefore, that "it remains unlikely that students perceive any corrective purpose in such recasts" (Lyster 1998: 75). The studies by Mackey, Gass and McDonough (2000), Philp (2003) and Nassaji (2009) corroborated Lyster's claims, as it was found that learners often failed to perceive recasts that contained morphosyntactic reformulations as corrections.

The considerable difficulty with assessing the role of recasts is also caused by their controversial nature concerning explicitness or implicitness (see also section 2.3.3.1. in Chapter Two). Research findings (e.g. Ellis and Sheen 2006; Y. Sheen 2006; Loewen and Philp 2006; Nassaji 2009) have demonstrated that recasts may be used in a number of ways, which may reveal their implicit or explicit character depending on the context or the form in focus. Nassaji (2009), for example, investigated the implicit and explicit forms of two feedback types: recasts and elicitation. Forty-two adult learners of English participated in task-based interactions and received various forms of interactional feedback. The results indicated that, in both cases, "the more explicit forms of each feedback led to higher rates of immediate postinteraction correction than did its implicit forms. Learners were also more likely to remember their corrections when the feedback was more explicit than implicit" (Nassaji 2009: 439; see also Nassaji 2007).

To conclude the discussion about recasts, it cannot be denied that "recasts have become one of the most commonly studied features of interaction" and they proved facilitative for second language acquisition (Mackey and Goo's 2007: 440). Ammar and Spada (2006: 548), however, take on a different position, claiming that "the review of some of the L2 recast literature highlights a tension between theory and empirical findings". On the one hand, recasts are unobtrusive, implicit, and contingent on the learners' intended meaning, but, on the other, empirical research has yet to provide clear evidence for the value of these corrective moves (Ammar and Spada 2006; see also Ellis and Sheen 2006). In the introduction to their study on form-focused instruction practice and feedback, Yang

and Lyster (2010: 237) argue that “comparing the effects of different feedback techniques only in accordance with their implicit or explicit nature thus remains problematic. An alternative and more categorical way of classifying feedback types is to distinguish between input-providing CF and output-pushing CF”. They claim that input-providing and output-pushing feedback engages learners in different levels of cognitive processing, which “arguably involves cognitive comparison in working memory in the case of input-providing CF and retrieval from long-term memory in the case of output-pushing CF” (Yang and Lyster 2010: 237). Given this claim, the next section will be devoted to empirical evidence concerning the effectiveness of input- and output-based feedback options.

3.3.3.2. Research into input- vs. output-based feedback options

In their meta analysis of feedback options, Lyster and Saito (2010) use a distinction proposed by Ranta and Lyster (2007) between *reformulation*, which “includes recasts and explicit correction because both these moves supply learners with target reformulations of their non-target output” (Ranta and Lyster 2007: 152), and *prompts*, which “include a variety of signals, other than alternative reformulations, that push learners to self-repair” (Ranta and Lyster 2007: 152). This distinction appears to meet the criteria of input-providing feedback (reformulation) and output-prompting feedback (prompts), respectively. Both input-providing feedback options (e.g. recasts, explicit correction), and output-prompting feedback options (e.g. elicitation, metalinguistic clues, clarification requests, repetition) may be both explicit and implicit. The research exploring the effectiveness of input-based and output-based options has provided substantial evidence for the usefulness of corrective feedback. In the majority of studies, the effectiveness of these two types of options has been measured by contrasting two feedback techniques: recasts and prompts (e.g. Lyster 2004a; Ammar and Spada 2006; Lyster and Mori 2006).

A good example of research into input-based and output-based feedback options is Lyster’s (2004a) study in which he examined the differential effects of prompts and recasts on the acquisition of grammatical gender in French among 10-11-year-old immersion students. To be more precise, he investigated the effects of four different form-focused instruction conditions: recasts + FFI, prompts + FFI, FFI only, and a control group. He used two written tasks (i.e. binary choice and text completion) and two oral tasks (i.e. object

identification and picture description) in three testing sessions (i.e. pretest, immediate posttest, delayed posttest) to measure the effects of the treatments on the participants' knowledge of the target feature. The findings of the study revealed that the group instructed by means of prompts outperformed the control group significantly on all the measures (two written tasks and two oral tasks) during the immediate and delayed posttests. When it comes to the recast group, it outperformed the control group on five out of the eight measures. The performance of the recast group was at a similar level to the results obtained by the no feedback group whose members outperformed the control group significantly on four out of the eight measures, which suggests that recasts were only marginally more effective than no feedback. The conclusion drawn by Lyster (2004a: 428) is that "(...) with respect to corrective feedback, the study contributes significantly to debates with both theoretical and practical relevance by confirming that recasts, when compared to other feedback options, are not necessarily the most effective type of feedback in communicatively oriented classrooms".

In their investigation of feedback options, Lyster and Mori (2006) explored two types of feedback: recasts and prompts, representing input-providing and output-prompting options, respectively. In their opinion, "prompts and recasts can be seen as complementary moves with different purposes for different learners in different discourse contexts" (Lyster and Mori 2006: 273). They were interested in the distribution of different feedback options in French and Japanese immersion classes, the effects of these options on uptake and repair, and, finally, the possible reasons for the similarities and differences across the two instructional settings with regard to feedback types and their influence on second language acquisition. On the basis of the results of their own study and taking into account the findings of the previous research in the field of interactional feedback, Lyster and Mori (2006) found a relationship between the typical instructional treatment occurring in the classrooms and the type of feedback which brings positive results. They introduced the notion of *instructional counterbalance* and outlined it in their *counterbalance hypothesis* which posits that "instructional activities and interactional feedback that act as a counterbalance to the predominant communicative orientation of a given classroom setting will be more facilitative of interlanguage restructuring than instructional activities and interactional feedback that are congruent with the predominant communicative orientation" (Lyster and Mori 2006: 294). The studies presented above were conducted in immersion settings, the study by Ammar and Spada (2006) investigated the effectiveness of input-providing and

output-prompting options in a foreign classroom context. The instructional intervention targeted third person possessive determiners *his* and *her*, and the researchers attempted to estimate the effectiveness of these instructional options with regard to L2 development for two groups of learners with different levels of proficiency. The findings provided clear support for the use of corrective feedback during communicative activities since the two CF groups benefitted significantly more than the group deprived of corrective feedback. When it comes to the effectiveness of the particular options, it was found that prompts were more effective than recasts with low-proficiency learners and as far as the highly proficient group is concerned, both prompts and recasts were equally useful. Ammar and Spada (2006) provide two possible reasons for the general greater effectiveness of prompts. In their opinion, not only was this technique of error correction explicit and clear for learners, but the learners also got multiple opportunities to produce the target form in reaction to the teacher's prompts. On the other hand, it is very likely that the learners corrected by means of recasts did not perceive them as means of correcting their errors. Ammar and Spada (2006: 566) were unable to provide clear-cut evidence for the prevalence of one feedback option over another and they concluded that:

The effectiveness of any CF technique needs to be evaluated in relation to learners' proficiency levels. The target feature and context are two additional variables that require consideration because previous research has revealed that the effects of a CF technique can be selective and can vary from one context to the other. Only continued, systematic research designed to examine these variables will provide definitive information as to which CF techniques are more effective.

The discussion of empirical research concerning the effectiveness of explicit vs. implicit, or input-providing vs. output-prompting feedback options, can be summarized with the statement that "it is effective to employ CF in response to students' nontargetlike production because it contributes to target language development over time" (Lyster and Saito 2010: 294; see also Spada 1997: 77). The results obtained provide evidence for a number of tentative conclusions concerning the role of corrective feedback options in second language acquisition. It appears that recasts, prompts, and explicit correction all yield significant effects; however prompts yield large effect sizes and prove significantly more effective in the within-group contrasts than recasts. Finally, the effects of recasts and prompts cannot be underestimated in comparison to those of explicit correction (Lyster and

Saito 2010). These findings notwithstanding, research into feedback options still seems to fail to investigate a number of important issues, a shortcoming that is noted by a number of specialists. Ellis (2007), for example, mentions the necessity to explore the effects of different kinds of feedback on different grammatical structures. Nassaji (2009) calls for research into explicit and implicit dimensions of particular feedback types. Loewen and Nabei (2007), in turn, recognize the need for consideration regarding the instruments of measuring the effects of corrective feedback. When it comes to formulating pedagogical implications, it seems crucial to explore actual classrooms, so that suitable feedback options can be recognized and applied in particular learning contexts. As Larsen-Freeman (2003: 136) rightly points out, “it is unlikely that there is one feedback strategy that is better than others for all occasions (...), teachers need to develop a repertoire of techniques that can be deployed as appropriate. Effective use of strategies results when teachers adapt their practice to their students’ learning”. The contributive role of corrective feedback when it comes to second language acquisition seems undeniable as the provision of negative evidence directed at a particular language feature during fluency-oriented language practice does affect not only the explicit, but most of all implicit knowledge. When it comes to the role of feedback in focused communication tasks, it appears that it could prove beneficial for constructing and reconstructing learners’ form-meaning mappings and increase their control of the formal features of the target language.

Conclusions

The main aim of Chapter Three was the presentation of research findings into instructional techniques and procedures in form-focused instruction and their effects on the acquisition of grammar. First of all, the author provided a brief historical outline of the research into grammar teaching and presented various types on research methodology employed while exploring the effectiveness of form-focused instruction. Since it has been established that grammar instruction brings positive results for second language acquisition (e.g. Doughty 1991; Doughty and Williams 1998a; Ellis 2001; DeKeyser and Juffs 2005), the vast majority of contemporary studies of grammar address a more detailed question, namely what kind of grammar instruction works best (e.g. Ellis 1997b). The present chapter has attempted to investigate the relative effectiveness of different options in form-focused

instruction. It took into account inductive and deductive approaches to presenting target language features, explored the effectiveness of practice options with regard to the different qualities they represent, and, finally, presented empirical evidence for the usefulness of corrective feedback provided in the context of communicative activities. As focused communication tasks are of critical concern for the research project described in this dissertation, a separate section was devoted to presenting the relevant research into the effectiveness of this instructional practice option. Following the advice of Mitchell (2000: 27), who stresses that “grammar teaching needs to be supported and embedded in meaning-oriented activities and tasks, which give immediate opportunities for practice and use”, the author decided to conduct a quasi-experimental study to explore the effects of focused communication tasks on the acquisition of complex grammar structures by advanced learners of English. Chapter Four will include the aspects connected with the design and methodology of the research project, and Chapter Five will present the results of the study and attempt to draw appropriate conclusions and formulate pedagogical implications stemming from the research.

Reflecting on the quality and responsibilities of the contemporary SLA research, Ortega (2005a, 2005b) defines it in the following way: “Instructed SLA research investigates formal L2 learning and has as its ultimate goal the understanding and improvement of instructional (curricular, pedagogic, formative) practices within educational settings, across the many different contexts in which formal L2 learning matters” (2005a: 319). Although “no area of second and foreign language learning has been the subject of as much empirical and practical interest as grammar teaching” (Borg and Burns 2008: 456), there are still no clear answers. Undoubtedly, “one size does not fit all” (Ammar and Spada 2006: 566) and the findings of experimental research nowadays suggests that the effectiveness of form-focused instruction may actually depend on more than one factor, namely the learner, the type of language knowledge, the type of instruction provided and the nature of the form in focus (Housen et al. 2005). The existence of so many issues that call for researchers’ attention pose a considerable challenge and difficulty in terms of conducting valid and reliable studies. Irrespective of the conditions and problems faced by contemporary classroom-based SLA research, Spada (2005: 336) still believes that “there are also many rewards, the most gratifying being when pedagogical development, or change, or both, takes place as a result of one’s own work and is viewed by teachers and students as valuable”. Following Spada’s belief and hoping for the

possibility of actual improvement of learners' grammar, the author decided to conduct a classroom-based study which explored the effects of focused communication tasks on the instructed acquisition of past counterfactual conditionals and modal verbs in the past.

Chapter 4: Methodology of the research project

Introduction

The first two chapters of this dissertation have provided an overview of the key concepts in the field of form-focused instruction as well as the theoretical foundations for instructed second language acquisition. Chapter Three has discussed the fluctuations of research into grammar teaching and presented a number of studies exploring the effectiveness of form-focused instruction, drawing the reader's primary attention to the issues connected with different aspects of practice. This chapter is the first of the two related to the research project exploring the use of focused communication tasks in form-focused instruction at advanced level. It will start by presenting the research questions and the operationalisations of the relevant concepts. Next, it will discuss all the main issues relating to the design and execution of the study, which was conducted with a view to exploring the impact of focused communication tasks on the acquisition of the English past unreal conditionals and modal verbs in the past by advanced learners. The choice of the targeted forms for this research project was motivated both pedagogically: as these two structures were observed to have been causing a great deal of concern, and methodologically: relying on the previous research in the field (e.g. Fotos 1995, 2002; Day and Shapson 2001; Pawlak 2007). The chapter will also concentrate on the details of the research design, participants, treatments, and data collection tools. Reliability and validity issues will be addressed, as well.

The motivation for undertaking this research project was twofold. The issue whether learners do actually learn the structures they are taught has long been under debate among numerous researchers (e.g. Krashen 1981; N. Ellis 2002; Fotos 2005). The theoretical

justifications either favouring grammar intervention or rejecting it have been overviewed in Chapter One. One solution to the tensions between various types of instructional options and their learning outcomes was proposed by Fotos (2005), who claims that integrating grammar instruction with communicative activities may bring positive results as far as effective form-focused instruction is concerned. Having acquainted herself with theoretical recommendations advanced by e.g. Ellis (2002, 2006a, 2008b) and Doughty and Williams (1998b), and taking into consideration various approaches to language research proposed by e.g. Brown and Rodgers (2002), Dörnyei (2007), Mackey and Gass (2005) and Gass and Mackey (2007) the author decided to explore the role of focused communication tasks in grammar instruction at an advanced level. Along with the theoretical underpinnings there came the purely pedagogical perspective and hope for the improvement of grammar instruction, resulting from the situation at the researcher's workplace. The fact that the students at the Teacher Training College had difficulty using complex structures in spontaneous speech caused a considerable deal of concern not only for their grammar teacher but also for other language educators, particularly in regular classes, where English was treated as a tool for communication. Although both input and output grammar practice tasks and written tests proved the students' knowledge to be sufficient the ability to use them in spontaneous communication was unsatisfactory, which may have indicated that the learners had not yet succeeded in incorporating the structures into their implicit representation. The students either avoided the advanced structures, applying easier ones instead, or produced them incorrectly, with respect to form, meaning and use. Naturally, this situation concerned not only the two structures under study; however, as mentioned before, these two appeared to be most appropriate to be examined. Therefore, the researcher felt it was absolutely necessary to take some action and, following Lightbown, try to "identify and better understand (...) the impact that certain type of instruction may have on FL/SL learning" (2000: 438). The author found that the problem was a common one among other language educators; suffice it here to mention Willis (2010: 6), who admits that he is "horribly familiar with the situation in which learners can produce a language form under controlled conditions, but cannot produce the same form spontaneously".

The chapter begins with the presentation of research questions and the justification for the choice of the two structures under study. What follows is a description of the design

of the study, including the methodology and procedures applied throughout the process of data collection, data analysis and the interpretation of the results.

4.1. Research questions

The main aim of the study was to explore the short- and long-term effects of focused communication tasks (1.3.3.2) on the acquisition of two grammatical structures in English: past counterfactual conditionals and modal verbs in the past. The distinction between the two experimental groups was the specific instructional option that was given primary attention for the purpose of the study. Isolating the different instructional options is a recommended way of assessing their contribution to learning and draw conclusions about their pedagogical effectiveness (Norris and Ortega 2000; Ellis 2005c). The area of interest was both explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge (see section 1.2.1. in Chapter One). More specifically, the present study sought to address the following research questions:

- (1) Does form-focused instruction facilitate the development of explicit and implicit knowledge of past unreal conditionals (3rd conditional) and modal verbs in the past?
- (2) What is the effect of employing focused communication tasks on explicit and implicit knowledge of unreal past conditionals (3rd conditional) and modal verbs in the past in comparison to text-manipulation and text-creation activities?
- (3) Do focused communication tasks affect productive and receptive explicit knowledge of the two structures under study?
- (4) Are the effects of the instructional treatment durable?
- (5) Does the effectiveness of instructional treatment differ depending on the forms in focus?
- (6) What is the relationship between students' attitudes towards learning grammar and their learning experiences and the effects of instruction as revealed in tests?
- (7) What is the impact of individual variation, understood as students' attitudes towards grammar instruction, learning experiences and opinions on the instructional treatment on the development of implicit and explicit knowledge of past unreal conditionals and modal verbs in the past?

4.2. Choice of target forms

The observation of the students and their language problems as far as the application of advanced structures was concerned encouraged the decision of conducting the research project. The choice of the linguistic target to be studied depended on a few factors and was assisted by the recommendations proposed by Ellis (2008a: 839). From a plethora of linguistic areas which the students found difficult, two English grammar structures were chosen for the study: past unreal conditionals and modal verbs in the past. It was hoped that the study would have a remedial effect on the learners' knowledge with regard to these language features. The researcher was aware that the participants of the study must have been exposed to the targeted structure before and must already have been instructed in the field of conditionals and modal verbs in the past. It had been decided, however, to research these structures for two reasons: because of their relative complexity for first-year students and also because of their frequency/presence in various tasks accessible to the researcher. A number of such tasks where the use of the structures is essential (Loschky and Bley-Vroman 1993) had to be constructed for the purpose of the study. The two structures will be described here separately, followed by a discussion of (amongst others) their complexity of form, meaning and functions. Finally, the process of selecting the particular language exemplars for inclusion in the study will be described.

4.2.1. Third conditional

Conditional sentences are forms that convey the relationship between two actions where one action is the reason or the occasion for the other (Aitken 1992: 95). They can describe imaginary, uncertain or real circumstances and situations and the potentiality of events actualizing if certain stipulations are met. They are generally grouped into four broad categories (Parrott 2000: 231; Swan 2006):

type 0. If you heat water, it boils.

type 1. If it rains tomorrow, we won't go out.

type 2. If I had a million dollars, I would give up my job.

type 3. If I had seen the other car, I wouldn't have hit it.

These are the common types found in most ESL course books, although, according to Hwang's identification (1979, as cited in Pawlak 2007: 174), there may be seventy conditional tense-modal patterns naturally occurring in writing and speech. Fulcher's (1991) written corpus study of 299 utterances using *if*, most of which were conditional, identified 20 different *if* forms in academic, narrative, and journalistic writing. The 3rd conditional (*if* + *past perfect*, *would have* + -en) accounted for only nine (or 3%) of the total, which was also one of the reasons why the structure was chosen as the target of intervention. The researcher's aim was to measure the effects of classroom grammar instruction and she did not want to risk the participants' abundant exposure to the structures in question out of the educational context, as it could unduly impact the findings. In its standard form, past conditional sentences are usually constructed with two clauses: the 'if' clause containing a past perfect verb, accompanied by a perfect modal verb in the main clause, both of which refer to the past. It is possible to reverse the clause order, which does not cause much change in meaning or emphasis. In order to achieve emphasis, one can use inversion techniques in the 'if' clause. In addition to inversion, the conjunction 'if' can be substituted with other conjunctions or phrases having a similar meaning (Parrot 2000: 237). As far as its meaning is concerned, the third conditional is the past counterfactual conditional describing a situation which is assumed not to have happened. This meaning provokes the contexts in which it is used: excuses, regrets, expressing relief. Another typical use is presenting alternatives to something that had already happened, often with a tone of blame (Yule 1998: 129-130). It is important to note that the meanings of conditional sentences are also dependant on the kinds of modal verbs used in them. Though it is often assumed that the inclusion of some modal verbs in both the 'if' and the main clauses is incorrect, they are often found in both clauses simultaneously and are part of informal spoken English (Azar 2002: 418).

Since past conditional sentences can express a wide range of functions and their form may indeed result in clauses that are long and difficult for learners to process and remember (Parrot 2000: 231; Thornbury 2001: 7), "the so-called third conditional is typically taught at a relatively advanced stage, both because of its syntactic complexity and because it expresses a concept that is itself fairly opaque, i.e. hypothetical past time" (Thornbury 2000: 97). Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) cite a survey conducted by Covitt (1976) that found that conditionals ranked fifth (behind articles, prepositions, phrasal verbs, and verbals) among the most serious teaching problems encountered by ESL

teachers in the Los Angeles area. Berent (1985) confirmed students' difficulty in learning conditionals in his study including speakers of twenty different L1s, and, what is particularly relevant to this context, found that past counterfactual conditionals were the most difficult to produce. Due to the problems inherent in the teaching and learning of conditionals, even advanced students either tend to avoid complex conditional forms, having developed strategies allowing them to communicate effectively without conditional sentences, or they seem to confuse conditional forms which refer to the present and to the past.

One way of solving such problems is to incorporate grammar interpretation tasks (Ellis 1995: 98) to draw students' attention toward how the form and meaning interact. Moving towards tasks promoting production, problems with meaning and use can also be addressed by providing learners with a clear context or situation typical of the past unreal conditional (Azar 2002: 419). Fotos (1995, 2002) presented explicit structure-based interactive tasks, designed to raise students' consciousness of the correct usage of present and future conditional forms using *if*. On the basis of positive research results obtained from first-year university students, she suggested that those tasks were a useful communicative activity to improve proficiency and interaction. DeKeyser and Sokalski (2001) investigated the differential role of comprehension and production practice in their study where Spanish conditionals were one of the research areas. They found that for conditionals output practice was better than input practice for both production and comprehension tasks. A study dealing precisely with English past unreal conditionals was conducted by Pawlak (2007). The third conditional was taught by means of two approaches to grammar teaching: *planned focus on form* vs. *focus on forms*. The participants of the *quasi-experiment* were 102 senior high school students, divided into two experimental groups and a control group. The findings of the study obtained from paper-and-pencil tests and dictogloss tasks proved the durable effectiveness of grammar instruction for past unreal conditionals, without a significant predominance of one studied approach over the other. The author concluded that *focus on form* and *focus on forms* should be combined in classroom practice rather than viewed as mutually exclusive (Pawlak 2007: 186), pointing particularly to the Polish educational setting, but the claims seem to be valid for the general educational context as well (e.g. Fotos 2005).

4.2.2. Modal verbs in the past

Modal verbs in the past are usually treated as a subcomponent of a wider concept, i.e. modal verbs whose form, albeit simple, “disguises a fairly complex set of functions” (Yule 1998: 85). The core modal verbs are: *can, could, may, might, will, shall, would, should, must* (Carter and McCarthy 2006: 638). According to Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999: 80), “modal auxiliaries are one of the more difficult structures that you as an ESL/EFL teacher will have to deal with”. The reasons for this claim lie in the formal difficulties modal verbs cause: their form with lack of subject-verb agreement, lack of intervening infinitive *to* when preceding a verb, adding *not* to create negation, inversion when forming a question and finally no progressive and past form (except for *can*). Modal verbs are placed first in the verb phrase and are followed by a verb in the base form which cannot be another modal verb. An additional source of difficulty may be other multiword forms which function semantically much like true modals and are called *periphrastic modals*. These include forms such as for example *be able to, be about to, used to, be allowed to, be obliged to, be supposed to*. Periphrastic modals do not exhibit the same formal properties as true modals and they behave syntactically more like main verbs.

Having briefly reviewed the basic forms of modal verbs, their meanings need to be taken into consideration. Yule (1998: 88) says that “English modals typically convey some indication of the speaker’s perspective or attitude with respect to the situation or state of affairs being described”. Here, we deal with two types of modality: *epistemic* modality, referring to deductions or conclusions, and *root* (or deontic) modality indicating the speaker’s awareness of what is socially determined. In other words, epistemic modality is based on the speaker’s or writer’s judgement or interpretation, e.g.

He must be overweight. (strong conclusion)

He may be overweight. (weak conclusion)

On the other hand, root modality is defined as a requirement from the speaker or writer, e.g.

You must work harder. (obligation)

You may work harder. (permission)

The two distinctions presented above may be helpful in understanding the differences in the use of each modal and the various types of meanings conveyed by modals in English.

As far as teaching modal verbs is concerned, course books link them to particular communicative functions: requesting, offering, asking for and granting permission, advising, suggesting and inviting (Parrot 2000: 120; Tyler 2008). Although these common labels may be a helpful way of identifying the different uses of modal verbs, the categories may in fact overlap, which makes the distinction problematic. Another source of difficulty for learners is that “modal verbs have more than one meaning or function, and that it is usually only the context which makes clear which of these is intended” (Parrot 2000: 123). Possible similar meanings can be carried by different modal verbs, e.g. possibility can be expressed using *may*, *might* or *could*. On the other hand, various aspects of obligation must be expressed applying different modals (*must*, *have to*). Taking a closer look at the teaching options connected with perfect modals, Celce-Murcia and Hilles (1988) claim that the complexity of modals and periphrastic modals is connected with their social-interactional character in the way that their use is socially constrained. The reason for learning difficulty may be the somewhat artificial semantic perspective while teaching rather than a social-interactive one. A solution to this problem could be including situational factors, social functions and other sociolinguistic variables so that the lessons will be richly contextualized and provide a variety of examples. They suggest story telling, games and problem-solving activities meet the requirements. Thornbury (2000) presents a sample lesson aiming at teaching *should have done* using a generative situation, which supports the idea of providing the learner with context to generate several examples of the targeted grammar item. Tyler (2008) attempted at making the theoretical insights connected with modal verbs accessible to language teachers by providing a cognitive linguistics perspective and presented some materials which could be used for teaching modals. Her explanation of the theory is assisted with charts and diagrams to make it more comprehensible both to the teacher and the students.

When it comes to language acquisition research examining modal verbs, one can observe that it is a quite rarely explored area probably due to the complexity and multifunctionality of modals, which may affect the analysis of the data. The majority of studies familiar to the author deal with modal auxiliaries in their present aspect (e.g. Gibbs

1990; Tyler 2008; Hinkel 2009) and not all of them are related to teaching (e.g. Turewicz 2004). An interesting study may be the one conducted by Sterlacci (1996), who used a focused communication task (problem solving) to elicit modal verbs for offering advice. The results she obtained proved that 83% of students' suggestions included at least one example of such forms. The potential problem was that the students' suggestions were in the written form, which might have encouraged the use of explicit rather than implicit knowledge. Nevertheless, Sterlacci's findings indicate that it is possible to create a focused communication task in keeping with the requirements of its construction. To the author's best knowledge, no attempts at researching modal verbs with the perfect aspect have been made. For the purpose of this study it was decided to analyse the following modal verbs in the past: *must have done*, *should have done*, *ought to have done*, *could have done*, *may/might have done*, *needn't have done*, their interrogative and negative forms. The motivation behind choosing modal verbs in the past as an aspect to be examined while researching the effectiveness of form-focused instruction originated from the problems the students revealed while producing the target language spontaneously. Apart from that, the complexity level of modal auxiliaries is high enough to hope that it was the instructional treatment that generated the differences in the students' interlanguage and not some form of out-of-class exposure.

4.3. Participants

The subjects were forty-five full time BA programme students of English at the Teacher Training College, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. The Teacher Training College is an institution of higher education specializing in educating foreign language teachers. The profile of a college graduate is a person with not only advanced language skills, but, most importantly, someone qualified to teach a foreign language at different levels of education, possessing proper knowledge of its culture, literature and general insight into pedagogy and psychology relevant to the Polish educational context. A student beginning his or her education at the college has three years in a full time or extramural learning programme to master language skills, obtain the requisite content knowledge and develop the abilities necessary for the profession of a foreign language teacher. During the first year, it is mainly practical language skills that are given attention. Every full time

programme student has 360 hours of English as a Foreign Language per year, which is taught in the form of blackboard classes. According to the *European Credit Transfer System* (ECTS) description, the course develops the main language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking at level B2, as well as expanding students' knowledge of grammar and pronunciation. The reading course focuses on improving reading strategies adequate for various genres. Writing classes cover practising narration, description, dialogues, letters, and CVs. The listening component is based on various types of authentic recordings such as interviews, conversations and news programmes. In speaking classes, students expand their vocabulary and practise the language of description, instruction, and discussion, as well as situational phrases and expressions. The pronunciation course trains students in the sense of the sound system and intonation characteristic of the standard variety of English (British or American). It mainly aims to develop their ability to correctly produce English sounds and the main intonation contours. As far as grammar is concerned, the students have two ninety-minute grammar lessons a week, which comprises 120 hours throughout the academic year. The classes deal with the main grammar areas and include a broad spectrum of exercises. Grammar classes are supposed to systematize grammar problems already familiar to the student and ensure accurate usage. Generally, the English as a Foreign Language course is aimed at preparing the student to use English in communicating with others about matters of everyday life, at not too high a level of abstraction. Its aim is to develop a high level of control over the target language, which ensures high accuracy and lack of discomfort in the interlocutor. Simultaneously, the student develops passive and active knowledge of English so as to be able to continue his/her studies which include theoretical subjects taught in English. This requires a regular build-up of vocabulary and the balanced development of all language skills.

The participants of the research project were attending the first year of the college at the time of the study. The students were enrolled in the programme on the basis of their results on the secondary school leaving exam, or on the basis of an entrance exam. This level of English could be ranked as B2+ according to *Common European Framework*. One has to bear in mind, however, that there were also students either above or below this level. Undoubtedly, the sample was far from being homogenous, with a number of students displaying relatively high levels of achievement and others experiencing problems with various language areas. The students were divided into three random groups, two of which were experimental and the third was the control group. All of them completed the written

tests and took part in the recordings: both individually and in pairs. Prior to the testing and treatment procedure, the participants were asked to complete a background questionnaire. Its aim was to obtain information about the students' personal history and educational background as far as English was concerned, with a particular focus on English grammar. The analysis of the responses revealed that, on average, the first-year student had been learning English for nine years, which indicates that the learning process started at a relatively early age, while attending primary school. Apart from formal education experience, the respondents had the benefit of English instruction at courses (48%) or via private tuition (47%) and 47% had studied individually at home. Thirty-two students (71%) reported having used English abroad and among these eight people also spoke English at work and three people at language courses. Thirteen students had never been abroad before. When asked for opinions about their English level at the outset of their student career, thirty-one respondents evaluated it as good, ten as very good, four as adequate. During the first months of their studies, thirty-eight participants (84%) stated that apart from college instruction, they also studied English on their own with a course book (31) or in other (unspecified) ways (7). Five students reported no self-study due to lack of time (2), lack of ideas (2) or heavy workload at the college (1). Two participants did not answer the question. In view of this, one may conclude that the majority of the students were highly motivated to learn the language. All the students admitted having different forms of contact with TL outside the college. The kind of exposure was, however, mainly limited to browsing Internet sites (89%), watching films with English subtitles and listening to songs in English (93%) and reading books and magazines in English (84%). All these forms of contact require mainly passive linguistic knowledge and do not encourage any real production of the target language. As far as actual language performance is concerned, nineteen students (42%) reported using English for communication with English or American native-speakers and twenty-five respondents (55%) used English to contact friends coming from non English-speaking countries.

4.4. Research design

The research project was designed following the recommendations of the leading researchers in the field of form-focused instruction (e.g. Doughty and Williams 1998b;

Norris and Ortega 2000; Ellis 2000a, 2002b, 2006a). Ellis (2006a) argues that it is important is to recognize the available options and attempt to analyse their theoretical backgrounds. He believes that “The fact that so much controversy exists points to the need for more research. One of the greatest needs is for research that addresses to what extent and in what ways grammar instruction results in implicit knowledge” (2006a: 103). Taking into account the educational context, its realities and constraints, and having acquainted herself with literature on language research in general (e.g. Mackey and Gass 2005; Dörnyei 2007; Gass and Mackey 2007a), the author decided to conduct a quasi-experimental study taking place in an authentic learning environment with no random assignment of subjects. DeKeyser (2003) and Gass (2003) propose the term *ecological validity* to describe the quality of research conducted in a classroom environment, which appears to bring more valid results than treatments provided under controlled conditions. N. Ellis and Schmidt (1997: 146) argue that laboratory research suffers from several weaknesses, such as: one aspect of language analysed, a very short time of the study, application of programmed computers and teaching devices rarely used in education, and atypical participants of the study. All these factors which may endanger a study’s ecological validity have been excluded from the present project. As the researcher was the regular teacher of both experimental groups, the project also fulfilled, at least partially, the requirements of *action research* (Wallace 1998, see also section 3.2.4. in Chapter Three) with the practical aim of improving the teaching procedures for this particular educational context. Describing action research, Burns comments that “one common thread is that participants in a given social situation or classroom are themselves centrally involved in a systematic process of enquiry arising from their own practical concerns” (2005a: 241). As mentioned before, this research project was generated by the actual problems involving complex grammar structures to which a practical solution was hoped to be found.

As Table 3. presents, there were three groups of students who took part in the study. The discrepancies in the numbers of students between groups were due to two reasons: there were two classes of British phonetics, attended by the students from group 1 and 2 and the groupings were identical for other practical English classes. Group 3 included those students who had chosen to master their pronunciation according to American standards. The dissimilarity was also caused by the instances of the students’ drop-out, which made it necessary to discard the data obtained from these subjects. The information about the participants’ gender is included mainly for the reader’s interest. It should be stressed,

however, that the data obtained from the research instruments were not analysed according to the participants' gender.

Table 3. Participants of the study.

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Number of participants	12	13	20
Number of males/females	3/9	2/11	6/14

As mentioned before, the researcher was the regular teacher of groups 1 and 2. Group 3 served as a control group and was taught by a different teacher, who kindly agreed to have her group involved in the study. Having consulted the necessary details with group 3 grammar teacher, it was decided to postpone the instruction of the two forms under study until after the delayed posttests had been administered. The importance of the control group proved invaluable. It served the purpose of comparison and allowed the researcher to find cause-and-effect relationships of the particular types of grammar instruction (Mackey and Gass 2005: 148). One of the recommendations for improving the quality of FFI research proposed by Norris and Ortega (2000: 81) is to “incorporate pretests and posttests as well as true control groups in experimental and quasi-experimental study designs, to identify better the amount of observed effects attributable to instructional treatments”. Also Doughty (2003: 261) mentions as one of the fundamental problems “no direct comparisons of either instruction or exposure conditions with true control groups”. Bearing all these factors in mind, the researcher decided to include a control group, even though it caused some changes in the students' learning schedule.

As two different TL structures were examined, the research project actually consisted of two separate studies, sharing, however, the major characteristics, including the participants of the project. Besides, both studies were designed in the same manner, conducted applying equivalent procedures and the instructional treatment was analysed employing the same gathering data instruments. The exact design is presented in Table 4. For the purpose of this study, two abbreviations will be used to distinguish the two experimental groups: *FCT* for the group in which focused communication tasks were used (2.3.2.4.) and *CPA* for the group in which contextualized practice activities were employed (2.3.2.3.). In accordance with the recommendations of leading SLA researchers (e.g. Norris

and Ortega 2000; Ellis 2002b, 2006a; Nassaji and Fotos 2004), an attempt was made to establish the levels of the participants' implicit and explicit knowledge at different points of the study, which provided information about the durability of the instructional gains. Bearing in mind that "particular outcome measure categories could account for differences observed in the effectiveness of different treatment" (Norris and Ortega 2000: 471), a battery of tests to measure different types of knowledge were designed. The tests constructed for this particular study included: written tests to measure explicit knowledge (cf. 4.6.3.1.), an elicited imitation task (cf. 4.6.3.2.) and a focused communication task (cf. 4.6.3.3.) to access implicit knowledge. Each of these research instruments was used three times: as a pretest, posttest and delayed posttest. In order to avoid the risk of the practice effect, three versions of every test had been prepared by the researcher. The details concerning the content and organisation of the data collection tools are provided in section 4.6. Apart from these, in order to obtain more data on the students' actual production skills representing their procedural (implicit) knowledge, three sets of classes were observed and audio-recorded three times, as a pretest, posttest and delayed posttest, which made a total of twenty seven lessons. The details concerning the recordings are explained in 4.6.3.4. The research schedule, according to which the whole study was conducted is presented in Table 5. One academic year comprises thirty weeks and the project was designed to be carried out in accordance with this premise.

Table 4. The design of the study.

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
PAST UNREAL CONDITIONALS	Experimental Focused Communication Tasks (FCT)	Experimental Contextualized Practice Activities (CPA)	Control group
MODAL VERBS IN THE PAST	Experimental Contextualized Practice Activities (CPA)	Experimental Focused Communication Tasks (FCT)	Control group

Table 5. Research schedule.

WEEKS OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR	PROCEDURE
1, 2	Pilot study
3, 4, 5	Improving the research tools on the basis of pilot study
6	Background questionnaire
8	3rd conditional: written pretest
9, 10	Classroom observation – pretest Students’ recordings – 3rd conditional – pretest
11, 12	3rd conditional – instructional treatment: groups 1 and 2
13,14, 15	Students’ recordings: 3rd conditional – posttest ; Students’ recordings: modals in the past – pretest 3rd conditional: written posttest, modals in the past: written pretest
16, 17	modals in the past – instructional treatment: groups 1 and 2
18, 19	Students’ recordings: modals in the past – posttest; modals in the past: written posttest
20	Classroom observation – posttest
21, 22	Students’ recordings: 3rd conditional – delayed posttest, 3rd conditional: written delayed posttest
23, 24	Students’ recordings: modals in the past – delayed posttest group 3, modals in the past: written delayed posttest
24, 25	Classroom observation – delayed posttest
26, 27	Students’ recordings: modals in the past – delayed posttest groups 1, 2 modals in the past: written delayed posttest 3rd conditional – instructional treatment: group 3
28, 29	modals in the past – instructional treatment: group 3 Final questionnaire

The research started with a pilot study conducted with a view to improving the instruments of data collection (cf. 4.6.). Having introduced the necessary changes, the researcher began the process of data collection, first with the help of background questionnaires (cf. 4.6.1.) and pretests. The pretest observations and recordings of other classes were also carried out. The actual instructional treatment focused on of the first grammar structure (3rd conditional) started in week 11 for the two experimental groups. The treatment procedure is explained in detail in section 4.5. of this chapter. As far as the control group is concerned, their grammar lessons were devoted to the instruction of gerund and infinitive constructions at that time. The focus shifted to the instructional treatment for modal verbs in the past in week 16. One may notice that the two structures were introduced one after another with a three-week break. Only when the written and oral posttests for 3rd conditional had been administered and the written and oral pretests for modal verbs in the past had been carried out, was it possible for the researcher to begin the instruction in the second structure under study. While the two experimental groups were dealing with modal verbs in the past, the control group was taught relative clauses. The instructional treatment for modal verbs in the past is presented in detail in section 4.5. in this chapter. The delayed posttests took place at least a month after the posttests. The timing was especially important for the control group whose grammar teacher had to wait with introducing the two structures under study. After the last classroom observation had been completed, group 3 was finally able to receive the instruction in the 3rd conditional and modals in the past from their grammar teacher. The administration of the final questionnaire in week 29 aiming at obtaining insight into the students' opinions on the instructional treatment to which they had been subjected was the last classroom procedure connected with the project. The details concerning the questionnaire are presented in 4.6.2.

It should also be stressed that every effort was made not to draw any special attention to the two structures under study between the posttests and delayed posttests. The researcher talked to other teachers at the college to avoid potential tasks and materials dealing with these grammar areas, and even though unreal past conditionals and modal verbs in the past may have come up in some texts and lessons, that appeared to be extensive rather than intensive use. Obviously, there might have been students who worked on these structures on their own or with their tutors, but such situations could not be excluded or prohibited. As far as research ethics are concerned, the author of the project did her best to obey the ethical rules and principles connected with designing and carrying out a study. At the

beginning of the academic year, the students were acquainted with the research project, its questions, aims and the procedures involved. They knew the aim of the project was to try to find some ways how to teach grammar more effectively, so that students would not have so many problems with applying the structures in their language. The participants were made aware that their results were completely confidential and would not be shown to their teachers or influence their final course marks in any way. The researcher did not explain the details of the study design and the differences in instructional treatment between the experimental groups to avoid the potential risk of the Hawthorne effect, stating that participants of the study may change their behaviour due to the fact of being observed, which consequently may affect the results (Dörnyei 2007: 54). To protect the participants' identity, no real names are used in the thesis when reporting the results. All the tests and recordings were administered with the students' consent.

4.5. Instructional treatment

Typically, grammar instruction comprises a separate subject as far as institutions of higher education are concerned, at least in modern languages departments. Most year-one English philology students are exposed to 60 hours of grammar instruction per academic year. At the Teacher Training College in Poznań, which was the place where the study was conducted, 120 hours of grammar instruction are scheduled, which is a third of the total time devoted to practical English teaching programme for year one. The remaining components are all given 60 hours annually, and they are reading/speaking, listening/speaking, writing and pronunciation. The grammar teachers decide in advance which grammar problem they will attend to and there is no one order according to which particular rules are introduced and practiced, as there is no set course book to be followed and the teachers are autonomous in their decisions concerning the syllabus. The procedures employed by grammar teachers during instructional treatment are diverse, and very often go in accordance with Ellis's observation:

Instruction typically involves combinations of options. For example, a fairly typical grammar lesson might begin by asking learners to read a dialogue in which examples of the form have been italicized (Implicit Instruction/Enhanced Input). This might be followed with a formal presentation of the form to be taught (i.e. Explicit Instruction/Deductive). The students could be asked to complete a number of exercises of the fill-in-the-blank kind (Production

practice/Controlled) before finally attempting a role play to provide an opportunity to use the form they have been practicing in free production (Production practice/Functional) (2005c: 716).

Undoubtedly, the decisions as to which steps and procedures to apply are dependent on a number of circumstances and factors, among which one could list the structure taught, the students' and teacher's preferences, the time and materials available.

The instructional treatment took place during regular grammar lessons taught to first-year students on the same days in both experimental groups. The procedure was identical both for conditionals and modal verbs. The instruction took two weeks; i.e. four grammar classes, each of which was 90-minute long. At the same time the students in the control group covered the other grammar topics and their grammar teacher confirmed that neither conditionals nor modals were taught.

The instructional treatment included the same procedures in the two experimental groups during the first three lessons. For both the FCT group and the CPA group, the treatment started with input-based instruction by exposing the students to a written text (see Appendices L, M) containing plenty of examples of the 3rd conditional or modals in the past, which was to resemble the input enhancement (see 2.3.1). All the instances of the target structure were visually enhanced by means of different font type, italics and bolding. Next, the students answered comprehension questions connected with the text (i.e. true/false statements, gap fill, open questions). This part of the lesson aimed at helping the learners make proper form-meaning connections while processing the input (1.3.2.3.) by familiarizing them with the context and ensure their understanding of the meaning of the targeted structures. At this point, the students were not asked to produce the targeted structure. What followed was the analysis of the examples of the feature from the text when the teacher elicited the rule by, for example, concept questions which check meaning and understanding of the structure and guide the learner toward clarifying the rule. The next step was drawing general conclusions concerning the form, meaning and use of the grammar area. There was also time allotted to discussing all the subtleties connected with the two forms under study. Most of these were exemplified in the text provided at the beginning of the lesson. Metalinguistic explanations were supplied as a response to the students' actual queries, connected with the text they read and the exercises they did. The various examples and contexts that the students were provided with encouraged the shift of attention to the form, but it was integrated with meaningful practice in the majority of cases.

The next three classes were entirely devoted to practice, both input- and output-oriented (2.3.2.3.). Comprehension practice, which came first, included such tasks as two-answer alternatives, multiple choice and grammaticality judgement, whereas production practice was organized by means of the following types of tasks: completing with the correct form, transformations and translation. Employing both types of practice was motivated by *Skill Learning Theory* (see section 1.3.2.4.) to help the students develop both their comprehension and production skills. Ellis (1998) recognizes output-based grammar activities of two types: *text-manipulation activities*, which are highly-controlled, such as paraphrasing, sentence completion or translation and *text-creation activities*, in which learners are guided into producing their own sentences using the target structure, for example creating a story, a dialogue or writing a composition. Ellis recommends to begin with text-manipulation and then proceed to text-creation activities, as it helps learners move from controlled to automatic use of the target structure. Such a procedure was followed in this study. It needs to be mentioned here that during the instructional treatment both explicit and implicit feedback (see section 2.3.3.) was provided to the students.

The fourth treatment session was designed to apply two distinct types of practice in the two experimental groups. One group of subjects spent the whole lesson performing various focused communication tasks (2.3.2.4.), in which the students were free to choose the structure they wanted to use in order to achieve their communicative goal (DeKeyser 1998: 58). The tasks (Appendices N, O) aimed at eliciting the production of real life communication; the students exchanged information, opinions, experiences on different topics. The tasks were designed in such a way that the use of the targeted structures was highly desirable and advisable to express a particular meaning and reach the communicative goal. At no time, however, were the students encouraged or advised to employ the structure under study. The students performed the tasks in pairs or small groups and there was also a mingling activity when they worked with various people. The process of constructing and finding the tasks for the lessons was itself very strenuous and demanding, as it was crucial to meet the three requirements of a focused communication task: task-naturalness, task-utility and task-essentials, proposed by Loschky and Bley-Vroman in 1993. As Pawlak (2006: 257) accurately concluded, focused communication tasks promote incidental learning, in contrast to feature-focused activities (2.3.2.2.) which cater for intentional learning with a clear focus on the rule in question. And it was the latter type to which the other experimental group devoted their time during the fourth class. The members of the CPA group continued with various text-manipulation and text-creation

activities in which the students were required to use the targeted features. Even a cursory look at contemporary teaching materials and course books indicates that this type of practice is still an integral component of grammar instruction popular among a great number of teachers at different levels. Some activities prepared for the lesson in fact bore resemblance to focused communication tasks, but the main difference was the fact that the subjects were instructed which structure to apply for a given activity.

4.6. Procedures of data collection and analysis

In order to ensure meeting the criteria of a valid study and to enable thorough interpretation of the results, a triangulation of research methods was used. For the purpose of the study the following research tools were employed: background and final questionnaires, three sets of written tests, individual recordings, pair sessions recordings, and, finally, audio recordings of other regular classes. All the forty-five students took part in each type of the data collection procedure. The only exception was the twenty-seven regular classes, which could not unfortunately escape sporadic absences. While the data obtained from pretests, immediate posttests and delayed posttests were being analysed, the individuals who were not present in the lesson were not taken into account.

A pilot study was conducted in order to establish the appropriate design, procedures and materials for the main study. The background questionnaire and the tests were piloted with fifteen year-one students from the Teacher Training College in Września at the beginning of the academic year 2007/2008. The pilot study was carried out mainly for organisational and technical purposes to check whether the instructions, the tasks and the recorded sentences were clear, understandable and unequivocal for the students. The conclusions drawn from the results obtained from the written tests and the observations made during the oral tasks helped the researcher improve some tasks and clarify some of the questions.

4.6.1. Background questionnaire

The main purpose of the background questionnaire was to obtain the necessary information about the participants, particularly about their English learning experience, their attitudes

towards grammar and their techniques of learning it. Another important reason was to find out how much out-of-class exposure concerning English the students had, which appeared to be of major importance when analyzing the results of the in-class study (see 4.2.). The results of the pilot study enabled the researcher to draw conclusions connected with the issue of questionnaire design (cf. Dörnyei 2003). On the basis of these, some Likert-scale response-type questions and additional categories were introduced into the survey, all questions were clarified, some were reworded, and the researcher decided to personalize the respondents' answers by asking them to elaborate on their responses. It was believed that such a procedure would allow for a more thorough exploration of the issues connected with the processes of learning and teaching grammar.

The proper questionnaire consisted of three parts: the first one dealt with personal information about the students and their learning history, the second tapped the students' opinions on grammar, and the third asked about their experiences with learning English, particularly grammar. The questionnaire was designed as a supplementary source of data to support the results obtained from the main research tools, meaning the tests and the recordings. The questions in the survey fell into the following formats: closed questions, open-ended questions, multiple choice questions, checklist questions and ranking questions. The format of the questions was thoroughly checked for clarity and wording, relevance and length. The questions were clearly typed and additional space was provided for open-ended responses (see Appendix A for a complete background questionnaire). The questionnaire was anonymous, standardised, uniform and consistent across subjects (Brown 2001: 77), the language used was Polish and it was distributed by the researcher to the first-year students during a lecture at the college in week 6. Prior to the actual administration of the questionnaire, a brief verbal explanation was provided and instructions were given. The participants were told that they could respond in Polish to minimize the risk of imprecise answers or the inability to express their views clearly in the target language. Any additional questions were directly addressed. The respondents present during the lecture filled in the questionnaire on the spot, having thirty minutes at their disposal, and the absentees were asked to complete it at home and return to the researcher at the college. All the forty-five questionnaires administered in this way were returned and all the participants were thanked for their assistance.

The first category of questions aimed at obtaining detailed information from the respondents about themselves and their learning history. The students were asked to

provide biodata concerning their age, sex and educational background. Here, the researcher asked how long the participants of the study had been learning English, if the previous learning experience took place in an institution, or/and tutoring or/and through self-study. It was also vital to establish the amount of exposure to the foreign language and what kind of contact it was. The respondents were also requested to assess their level of English and rank grammar areas in the order of difficulty. These were followed by three open-ended questions concerning grammar, the process of learning a particular structure and the effects of learning it. The researcher asked many personal questions to make it possible to observe and analyse the development of particular individuals and check whether the potential differences would influence the participants' scores on the consecutive tests.

The second part of the questionnaire included nineteen statements concerning grammar. The students' task was to decide whether they agreed with them, disagreed or had no opinion with respect to a particular issue. For the benefit of the students, instead of using the general concepts typical of teaching grammar structures (form, meaning, use, deductive, inductive approach, explicit, implicit), which could be quite abstract for a first-year student, the statements included real language examples, for instance connected with passive voice or the present perfect tense (see Appendix A). The results obtained were intended to help establish to what extent the knowledge of grammar played an important role in learning a foreign language for every respondent. The author of the project is aware of the possible shortcomings connected with the choice of only three options; still, the fact that a three-item scale was employed enabled the researcher to divide the students into three groups; those convinced of the necessity to learn grammar, those who found grammar unnecessary and those students whose attitude towards learning grammar was indifferent or unspecified. Such a division was hoped to help examine the relationship between the students' attitudes towards grammar and their learning experiences and the effects of instruction (see 5.4.). In order to elicit more thorough responses, there was an additional space provided under each statement for the students to write their opinions. The respondents' points of view constituted a valuable source of information for the researcher. It has to be mentioned that the students shared their opinions willingly, which undoubtedly enriched the qualitative analysis of the data. Out of 855 answers obtained from all the participants, only 124 (14%) lacked additional argumentation and support for the respondents' decisions.

The third part of the background questionnaire dealt with the students' individual experiences connected with learning grammar. Here, a Likert scale was applied with a four-item scale for all thirty eight statements. The participants were asked to choose one answer (1-always, regularly; 2-often; 3-rarely; 4- hardly ever, never). The multiple choice style of questions enabled the researcher to group the learners' individual preferences and also provided important information about the actual techniques used in the schools they had attended.

The analysis of the data from the background questionnaire was conducted according to the following procedure. First, the collected questionnaires were numbered and read by the researcher. Additional notes and comments were made in pencil on the margins. Then the data from the forty-five questionnaires were transcribed into the computer, which allowed their being processed using Microsoft Office Excel. The results obtained were presented in the form of tables and figures, illustrated by quotations from the questionnaire and accompanied by detailed descriptions. The relationship between the findings based on different research tools was discussed and the interpretation of the results was provided, together with the implications of the project for further research. On that basis, conclusions concerning the answers to research questions were drawn which are presented in Chapter 5.

4.6.2. Final questionnaire

The final questionnaire which was administered during a lecture in week 29 was anonymous and the language used was Polish. It aimed to check whether the students had actually changed their attitudes towards grammar as a result of the treatment, how they felt about the instruction they had received, if they observed any positive/negative aspects of it, etc. It was also an interesting way to observe the students' development as learners who had been studying English for the whole year and at the same time had obtained much information about the learning process in their English methodology classes. That could undoubtedly foster their autonomous way of thinking and learning. The relationship between the results obtained in the final questionnaire and the scores on the tests is touched upon in Chapter 5. The final questionnaire had not been piloted before with other students, as the questions and statements included in it were based on the actual project and inherently connected with the proper participants of the study.

The questions in the questionnaire fell into the following formats: closed questions, open-ended questions, multiple choice questions, checklist questions and ranking questions. The format of the questions was thoroughly checked for clarity and wording, relevance and length. The questions were clearly typed and additional space was provided for open-ended responses (see Appendix B for a complete final questionnaire). Prior to the actual administration of the questionnaire, a brief verbal explanation was carried out. The participants were told that they could respond in Polish to minimize the risk of imprecise answers or the inability to express their views clearly in the target language. Any additional questions were directly addressed. The respondents present during the lecture filled in the questionnaire on the spot, having thirty minutes at their disposal, and the absentees were asked to complete it at home and return to the researcher at the college. All the forty-five questionnaires administered in this way were returned and all the participants were thanked for their assistance. The questionnaire was composed of three sections: the first one concerned the students' personal information to confirm the data obtained from the background questionnaire, the second one dealt with the tests administered, and the final one investigated the students' opinions on the grammar instruction they had received. As far as the tests are concerned, the participants were asked to determine the level of difficulty for each particular task type. To be more precise, they were requested to rank the tests according to *very difficult*, *difficult*, *medium*, *easy*, *very easy*. This was done to compare the students' opinions with their actual results in the tests. Moreover, the participants of the study were asked whether it would make any sense to administer the tests again at the beginning of year 2. Initially, it had been the researcher's plan to observe the students for a longer period of time; however, on the basis of the responses obtained in the questionnaire, it was decided to abandon this idea, as the participants seemed to be tired of the project and were not willing to continue with its implementation. The third part of the questionnaire aimed to provide information concerning the students' views on the grammar instruction they had received during the quasi experiment. Here, the students in two experimental groups (1 and 2), who had been subjected to the instructional treatment, were asked to share their opinions about the grammar intervention. Such questions would have been pointless in the control group, as it had had no benefit of instruction of the two aforementioned structures during the research project. The students were requested to recall what was happening in their grammar lessons while unreal past conditionals and modals in the past were being practiced. They were provided with eighteen statements and had to

indicate their responses using a five-point Likert scale (*definitely agree, rather agree, hard to decide, rather disagree, definitely disagree*). The respondents were also encouraged to support their choices with their own opinions, for which appropriate space was provided under each statement. Apart from the questions about the instruction proper, the third part of the questionnaire also included statements connected with general classroom management, believed to be an important element of any lesson. Moreover, the researcher requested the students to self-assess their knowledge concerning the 3rd conditional and modals in the past with a view to analysing the relationship between the learners' perceived progress and the actual results of the tests (see section 5.4.).

4.6.3. Tests

While the questionnaires served the purpose of obtaining general insight into the participants' learning process, which was hoped to facilitate the interpretation of the findings, the research questions listed in 4.1. could only be explored with the help of such instruments which can measure the subjects' knowledge prior to the treatment, immediately afterwards as well as after a longer period of time. Therefore, both in the case of the 3rd conditional and modals in the past, the instructional treatment was preceded by pretests, and followed by immediate and delayed posttests. Among a wide range of options to test the learners' skills, there are those involving production, clearly measuring the effects of learning, as being able to produce a linguistic feature accurately and appropriately is often taken as the ultimate proof of having acquired it. It is also purposeful, however, to use measures not involving production, as they may be more sensitive and allow for the analysis of subtle changes in a learner's interlanguage. Therefore, comprehension questions were also employed as a testing procedure. All the participants took part in both written and spoken tests. The written tests were constructed to measure the participants' explicit knowledge in a largely monitored manner, and the spoken measures aimed to elicit the structures in the course of message conveyance to establish the levels of implicit knowledge. There has been a considerable amount of controversy over the instruments of measuring explicit and implicit knowledge. The research tools employed to estimate the two types of knowledge in this study were chosen, verified and constructed in accordance with Ellis's (2005a: 151) key characteristics of explicit and implicit knowledge presented in

section 1.2.1. of Chapter One, and their operationalizations (Ellis 2005a: 152) depicted in Table 6. below. The features of the tests measuring implicit and explicit knowledge are illustrated in Table 7. On the basis of this analysis, it was concluded that the tests meet the requirements necessary to measure explicit and implicit knowledge. In order to investigate more precisely whether the written tests and oral recordings tapped different types of knowledge, Pearson correlation coefficients (Dörnyei 2007) between written and oral posttest results were calculated for 3rd conditional and modals in the past. The correlation for unreal past conditionals was about 0.5 between written tests and oral tasks, and for modals in the past it was 0.35 between written tests and oral tasks. On the basis of these results, one may assume that they measure different things, most probably different types of knowledge.

Table 6. Operationalizing the constructs of L2 implicit and explicit knowledge (adapted from Ellis 2005a:152).

Criterion	Implicit knowledge	Explicit knowledge
Degree of awareness	Response according to feel	Response using rules
Time available	Time pressure	No time pressure
Focus of attention	Primary focus on meaning	Primary focus on form
Systematicity	Consistent responses	Variable responses
Certainty	High degree of certainty in responses	Low degree of certainty in responses
Metalinguistic knowledge	Metalinguistic knowledge not required	Metalinguistic knowledge encouraged
Learnability	Early learning favored	Late, form-focused instruction favored

Table 7. Design features of the tests.

Criterion	Written test	Elicited Imitation Test (individual)	Focused Communication (Tasks)	Communicative tasks during regular classes
Degree of awareness	Rule	Feel	Feel	Feel
Time available	Unpressured	Pressured	Pressured	Pressured
Focus of attention	Form	Meaning	Meaning	Meaning
Metalinguistic knowledge	Yes	No	No	No

Having consulted the methodological literature (e.g. Dörnyei 2007) and other research in the field (e.g. DeKeyser and Sokalski 2001; Pawlak 2006), the researcher was made aware of the danger of the *practice effect*, which could have influenced the results and complicated the interpretation of the data. Hence, it was decided to create three different versions of each test for every structure, i.e. three written tests for the 3rd conditional (Appendix C) and for modals in the past (Appendix D), three sets of elicited imitation test for individual recordings for the 3rd conditional (Appendix E) and for modals in the past (Appendix F) and three sets of communication tasks for pair recordings for the 3rd conditional (Appendix G) and for modals in the past (Appendix H). Every set was used once as a pretest, posttest or delayed posttest with the three study groups. Although there was some risk that the three versions of each measure would not be of equal difficulty, attention was given to preserving the context and balance the lexical and grammatical level of the tests. Each new test had been modeled on the first one of its type. The tests had exactly the same layout, contained the same types of tasks and everyday vocabulary lest there should occur any misunderstandings. The reliability estimate for the three versions of the written tests and elicited imitation tests was established on the basis of the tests' results by means of tabulating Cronbach Alpha. Table 8. presents the value obtained for the written tests and the elicited imitation tasks. According to Dörnyei (2007: 207), internal consistency estimates should approach Cronbach Alpha = 0.8. From the data included in the table it appears that the values obtained were satisfactory and the items in the tests had much in common, hence constituting reliable data collection instruments for pre-, post- and delayed posttests. The details concerning the particular test types and the procedures for their administration are presented in the subsections devoted to each data collection instrument separately.

Table 8. Reliability estimates for written tests and elicited imitation tasks.

	Written test Unreal past conditionals	Elicited Imitation Task Unreal past conditionals	Written test Modal verbs in the past	Elicited Imitation Task Modal verbs in the past
Cases Valid	45	45	45	45
Cases Excluded	0	0	0	0
Cronbach Alpha	0.863	0.806	0.892	0.780

Both the written and the oral tests were analysed employing the following procedures. Having been checked and transcribed, the answers were grouped according to

three categories: correct, interlanguage, incorrect. Correct answers, accorded 1 point, were the responses which were appropriate in form, meaning and use for the context provided. Interlanguage forms, given 0.5 point, were such answers which, although appropriate for the context, lacked a fully correct form. Finally, the form was granted 0 points and labelled incorrect if the form, meaning and the use were inappropriate for the context or situation. The next step was calculating accuracy percentages by dividing the number of correct answers (awarded 1 point) by the overall number of obligatory contexts. This enabled the researcher to observe how accurate the learners were at a particular stage of instruction. Apart from accuracy percentages, means and standard deviations were also computed. The data obtained were normally distributed and standard deviations were comparable; therefore the analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to compare the differences between the three groups on the same test. To assess the significance of the differences in the students' performance on different tests, repeated measures ANOVAs were run. The effect size, aiming to indicate the standardised difference between two means, was established with the help of *Cohen's d*. The statistical procedures are accounted for in detail in 4.7.

All the tests were scored by the researcher herself according to the criteria described above. The recordings obtained from oral tests and class observations were transcribed, coded and analysed by the researcher as well. Any doubts and problems with the marking scheme were discussed with the grammar teachers at the college, native speakers included. As already mentioned, the tests constructed for the purpose of the research project were to tap two types of the students' knowledge: the explicit and the implicit knowledge of the two grammatical structures under study. For the sake of clarity, first of all, the instruments designed to measure explicit knowledge will be described, and, subsequently, the research tools aiming at estimating the participants' implicit knowledge will be presented.

4.6.3.1. Explicit knowledge: written test

The written tests, designed to measure the students' explicit knowledge of unreal past conditionals and modals in the past, were all constructed using the same format, the same types of tasks and everyday vocabulary to avoid misunderstandings. Similar contexts for the use of the structure in question were provided both for the 3rd conditional and modals

in the past (see Appendices C and D). Every test was administered in all the three groups on the same day, and the subjects had about 20 minutes for its completion, with the caveat that if more time was needed, the students were allowed to take more time to finish.

Each of the three versions of the test consisted of the following six components which supplied the students with instructions in Polish. The first two comprised comprehension tasks, which aimed at tapping the receptive knowledge of the two structures. The untimed grammaticality judgement task included ten sentences, six of which were erroneous. Ellis argues (2004) that given unlimited time learners have the opportunity to reflect on the sentence, and thus draw on their explicit knowledge. The students' were to decide whether the sentences were correct or not. If the sentence contained an error, the subjects were to correct it; if not, they were to mark the sentence as accurate. In order to avoid the students' guessing, the sentence could also be marked with 0, which meant the subjects were not sure whether it was right or wrong. The next task included five sentences of a multiple choice type. The students were asked to choose the correct option out of four provided to complete every sentence. The next four exercises included output-based tasks (see section 2.3.2.3. in Chapter Two) and aimed to tap the students' productive knowledge. The first one was completing the ten sentences with the correct form, about which Ellis says that "a fill-in-the-blank exercise might invite the use of explicit knowledge, but it does not guarantee it, as learners are obviously able to complete the exercise by drawing on their implicit knowledge" (2005a: 147). Being aware of this threat, the researcher included very precise instructions for the students to complete the sentences with the correct form of the 3rd conditional (or modal verbs in the past). It was hoped to draw the participants' attention to the required form and thus ensure that they would apply the appropriate rules to complete the sentences. Two types of transformations with five sentences each comprised tasks four and five. As far as task four is concerned, the transformation was quite controlled, as the students were asked to create a new sentence starting with a given phrase on the basis of the context provided. Task five could be done more freely, as there were no restrictions on how to construct a new sentence. The final text-creation task was story completion. Given some clues or a short story, the students were asked to continue with at least five sentences. It should be noted that the tasks in the productive part of the test were sequenced according to the level of freedom which was allowed.

The maximum number of points for each written test, both for the 3rd conditional and modals in the past, was 40, i.e. one point for every item. All the tests were corrected

according to the key by the researcher herself. If there occurred any doubts, she consulted other grammar teachers or native speakers. Table 9. presents the students' sample responses on the written tests. The subjects obtained 1 point for each correct answer. The incorrect answers were subjected to analysis and they were divided into two groups: 1) interlanguage forms: where a part of an answer was correct; 2) wrong forms: where both the form and the use were incorrect.

Table 9. Students' sample responses for written tests.

	3rd conditional	modals in the past
Correct	<i>If Mike had come with us, we would have had a great time. Had I not baked a cake, I would have bought one instead. Had it not been for public relations skills, Donald Tusk would not have won the election.</i>	<i>She shouldn't have spent all your money, because now you will have to borrow it from somebody else. She needn't have bought an extra scarf for every child. My student couldn't have met Prince Harry.</i>
interlanguage	<i>The water in the pool would have been warmer if the sun had shone the whole day. If Henry hadn't lent me the tools, I wouldn't be able to fix the car. If we had some food with us, we would have fed the hungry children.</i>	<i>He could have have his car in the garage. Mark should have give Ann the money. I should have choosed a better travel agency.</i>
incorrect	<i>Had not been the criminal sentenced to death, but he would have been imprisoned for life. If you did not left the window open, the burglar would not get in. Hadn't it been for you help, I wouldn't have given up long ago.</i>	<i>Mark should give Ann the money he borrowed. She needn't have to change her hair colour. John's boss might have a sleepless night.</i>

While the written tests were supposed to access the participants' explicit knowledge of the unreal past conditionals and modal verbs in the past, it was the implicit knowledge of the two aforementioned structures that was of major interest to the researcher. For the purpose of the study, three different measures of implicit procedural knowledge were employed: An elicited imitation test, a focused communication task performed in pairs and communicative activities observed during regular classes. The justification for tapping implicit knowledge employing the aforementioned instruments will be provided when describing the actual implementation procedures for each of the measures.

4.6.3.2. Implicit knowledge: elicited imitation test

Elicited imitation tasks have been employed by a number of researchers to measure second language competence (Ellis et al. 2009). One of the reasons for their popularity in language testing is its reconstructive nature (Munnich et al. 1994). It means that, when students hear a sentence, their attention is drawn to meaning and form, and process the sentence according to the rules which are internalized in their memory. Consequently, learners spontaneously correct the ungrammatical utterances, which allows for the analysis of their linguistic knowledge. In order to tap the students' implicit knowledge, one needs to meet certain criteria while constructing elicited imitation task (cf. Erlam 2006, Ellis 2006b, Mackey and Gass 2005: 55ff, Gass and Mackey 2007a: 76ff). First and foremost, the reconstructive nature of the elicited imitation task must be ensured by focusing the participants' attention on meaning (Erlam 2006: 469). The results of Erlam's study (2006) designed and conducted employing such procedures clearly indicate that an elicited imitation task requires the participants to process, rather than repeat, language stimuli. Apart from the relatively easy and straightforward administration and scoring, another asset needs to be mentioned. Not like many other instruments measuring implicit knowledge, this test allows for targeting a specific language structure, which undoubtedly adds to its value as far as tapping into students' implicit knowledge is concerned.

Every version of the elicited imitation test was completed in one-on-one meetings between a researcher and a participant of the study. The students were told they would hear twenty sentences. At no point were the participants of the study explicitly informed that they would be hearing sentences containing errors. The sentences had been recorded before by one speaker using professional equipment to ensure uniformity and audibility. The vocabulary was of everyday use to avoid misunderstandings in meaning and ensure comparable complexity. The sentences were general opinion statements and the task for the participants was to briefly express their own opinion by saying whether they agreed, disagreed or had no opinion, and then repeat the correct sentence. All the responses were audio recorded. Because of 'the opinion part', students concentrated on the meaning of the sentence rather than the form. That is why, at the moment of repeating it, the potential correction was rather subconscious and thus the knowledge drawn upon could be viewed as implicit. There was a 15- or 20-second pause after each sentence (depending on the length of the sentence) for every student to express the opinion and repeat. If a student did not repeat a sentence, or missed a part of it because of lack of time, the teacher did not allow him or her to listen to it once more. It was based on the assumption that the students were

expected to employ their implicit procedural knowledge and it could have turned into explicit declarative knowledge if they had been given more time. The participants had been informed of the task procedures before each test by means of an audio recording.

As mentioned before, each test consisted of twenty sentences and every student could score a maximum of twenty points. Scoring was based on whether the learners successfully repeated or corrected the target structure in each sentence. Table 10. presents the students' sample responses on elicited imitation test, grouped according to the three criteria: 1) 1 point: correct sentences (correct sentences: repeated; incorrect: corrected by students); 2) 0.5 point: interlanguage forms; 3) 0 points: no form was supplied or incorrect sentences in form and use. Although this type of scoring does not seem to be recommended for elicited imitation tests (Ellis 2005a: 156), the author decided to apply universal procedures for all the tests to ensure comparability with the results obtained from other tests. In accordance with Ellis's recommendations (2005a: 156), the "scores were expressed as percentage correct" in this project as well. The elicited imitation test was only one of the instruments to measure the participants' implicit knowledge. The next research tool, a focused communication task, was applied to access implicit knowledge of the two structures during the process of communication in pairs, which was expected to add a new dimension to the overall analysis.

Table 10. Students' sample responses on the elicited imitation test

	3rd conditional	modals in the past
Correct	<i>If the miners had obtained a pay rise, they wouldn't have gone on strike in December. Had the last Christmas been white, more people would have gone skiing.</i>	<i>China shouldn't have started interfering in Tibet affairs. Robert Kubica can't have cheated during the last Formula 1 race. George Bush should never have become the President of the USA.</i>
interlanguage	<i>If the weather last Christmas was worse, there would have been more car accidents. If students didn't find out about the vocabulary test (Misztal), they wouldn't have started to do the exercises. If I hadn't eaten so much at Christmas, I wouldn't put on weight.</i>	<i>The paparazzi must gone mad when they followed Princess Diana in the Tunnel. Politicians shouldn't have talk about politics with priests during the last campaign. My grammar teacher needn't have gave us so many tests in the first semester</i>
incorrect	<i>If doctors wouldn't go on strike, there wouldn't be elections in October. If white people wouldn't conquer some...(not finished) If Adam Małysz wouldn't won so many ski jumping competitions, he wouldn't be awarded the Sportsman of the year 2007.</i>	<i>They should paint the college walls months ago. The explosion of World Trade Center in 2001 might be an accident. Robert Kubica must be disappointed when he found out that he didn't win the race.</i>

4.6.3.3. Implicit knowledge: focused communication tasks

According to Ellis (1994b, 2002b), implicit knowledge requires automatic processing, or, in other words, it involves little or no language monitoring. Free language production would then be considered as the most reliable instrument of accessing implicit knowledge. As far as classroom research is concerned, such a quality could be reached by asking students to perform communicative tasks, which ought to resemble real-life situations. For the purpose of the study, three versions of focused communication tasks (see section 2.3.2.4. in Chapter Two) were constructed both for the 3rd conditional and modals in the past (Appendix G, H). The same task was applied to the three groups on one test not to risk different performance results caused by subtle differences in the tasks. Prior to launching the experiment, the researcher had familiarized herself with the literature on communication tasks (e.g. Nunan 1991, 2001; Ellis 2003) and had found some examples of activities which would meet the requirements. One has to acknowledge, however, that designing focused communication tasks is a demanding task itself. As mentioned earlier (see section 2.3.2.4. in Chapter Two) Loschky and Bley-Vroman (1993) distinguish three ways in which a task can be designed to incorporate a specific target language feature. These are task-naturalness, task-utility and task-essentialness (see 2.3.2.1.). Doughty and Williams (1998a: 210) acknowledge that task essentialness may be difficult to achieve: “Given that task essentialness is an elusive component, task naturalness and task utility may be more realistic to aim for in developing classroom activities.”

As far as the procedure for the administration of the spoken measure is concerned, the students were randomly assigned to pairs within their groups before the first pretest and worked with the same partner during the whole study. Pair sessions recordings were not administered on one day due organizational problems, but each test took place within one week to make the results as reliable as possible. Having acquainted themselves with the task, the participants had about 8-10 minutes for its completion. They were not prompted in any way to use a particular structure or produce a certain number of utterances. Their

interaction was recorded by means of a dictaphone placed on the desk in front of the interlocutors. Later on the conversation was transcribed and analyzed. The data obtained from each student were subjected to an analysis by means of a combination of the different procedures. These, first of all, involved determining the number of obligatory contexts for the suppliance of 3rd conditional and modals in the past. The obligatory context was calculated by adding all the correct answers, interlanguage forms which required the use of either structure and the incorrect utterances in which the 3rd conditional or modals in the past should have been used. It was a particularly strenuous task for pair recordings, where each student had his or her own number of obligatory contexts to calculate. This number was different for each test as it depended on the actual amount of language produced to perform a given task. To make the task as free in terms of communication as possible, the participants of the study had not been told how many sentences they had to produce nor how long their utterances ought to be. They were informed that the task was to resemble a natural conversation/opinion exchange between two people. When analysing the transcripts, it was found that although the message and quality of the language were relevant to the task, the subjects sometimes avoided the structures under study. It could have happened in accordance with Gass and Mackey's observation that "even though asking learners to engage in a certain genre of communication may help to encourage particular sorts of language use, speakers do have the freedom to avoid using language with which they are not completely comfortable" (2007: 135). The lack of comfort might have been revealed by the students' employment of communication strategies, both avoidance (e.g. topic or message abandonment) and compensatory (e.g. using circumlocution, or paraphrasing). Table 11. presents sample sentences produced in the course of focused communication tasks. The samples of speech in which the subjects employed communication strategies and did not include the two structures in question were not taken into account when calculating obligatory contexts. These contexts estimated on the basis of the focused communication task performed in pairs were categorised according to the three criteria, similarly to the previous tests' procedure: 1) 1 point: correct sentences; 2) 0.5 point: interlanguage forms; 3) 0 points: no form was supplied or incorrect sentences were used; by 'incorrect' one understands both the wrong form and the wrong use or overuse of the structure. The accuracy percentages and the means were calculated for all the tests to analyse the students' changes in the level of implicit knowledge. As the two grammatical structures subjected to analysis differ in some respects, the design of communication tasks

was dependent on their characteristics and the potential contexts of use. Therefore, the description of the actual tasks with examples provided is presented below.

Table 11. Students' sample responses for pair recordings

	3rd conditional	modals in the past
correct	<p><i>If I hadn't gone to Greece I wouldn't have so many friends in Poznań and I wouldn't have so many memories.</i></p> <p><i>If I hadn't met these people, I would have had definitely worse time there.</i></p> <p><i>If I hadn't started to study here, I wouldn't have met people from Turkey, people from other countries.</i></p>	<p><i>I could have been robbed.</i></p> <p><i>The reason might have been that she wasn't ill.</i></p> <p><i>The woman may not have given me the money.</i></p> <p><i>You should have studied more.</i></p>
interlanguage	<p><i>If I haven't gone (hadn't gone) there, I wouldn't have met my best friend Ania.</i></p> <p><i>If I didn't go (hadn't gone) to Scotland, it might have changed the way I now live.</i></p> <p><i>If I had studied more, I would have been (would be) on the second year now.</i></p>	<p><i>You might have leave it somewhere. (left)</i></p> <p><i>Something might have went better. (gone)</i></p>
incorrect	<p><i>If I didn't get (hadn't got) to college, I wouldn't move (wouldn't have moved) to Poznań.</i></p> <p><i>If I wouldn't be (hadn't been) there, I don't know what I would do (would have done).</i></p> <p><i>If now I would study on the second year (studied/were studying), I had problems (would have) with this knowledge.</i></p> <p><i>If I would have had to learn (had to learn) in Gniezno, I haven't learn (wouldn't learn/be learning) English now.</i></p>	<p><i>What could happen? (could have happened)</i></p> <p><i>They might have an accident. (might have had)</i></p> <p><i>He must not heard you. (can't have heard)</i></p> <p><i>Something must went wrong. (have gone)</i></p> <p><i>I don't know how he could have done this thing. (could do)</i></p>

In order to elicit spontaneous responses from the students which would contain the instances of unreal past conditionals, it was necessary to come up with three different sets of focused communication tasks: for the pretest, posttest and delayed posttest (see Appendix G). The focused communication task that was designed for the 3rd conditional resembled elicited narrative described by Mackey and Gass (2005: 87). It was based on an activity from *Grammar practice activities* by Penny Ur (2001: 82). The students were requested to reflect on their past and list the things they were glad about and the things they regretted and come up with ideas about contrary-to-fact situations. In order to avoid potential misunderstandings, the subjects were instructed in Polish and they were requested to talk about their experiences with their partners, sharing memories, offering comments and inventing hypothetical situations. The pretest task encouraged the students to share their memories of the things/events they were glad about or they regretted. Together with

their partners they were also asked to speculate about their life without these events. For the posttest, the task was to look back on the previous year and draw conclusions about positive and negative events. As far as the delayed posttest is concerned, the participants were asked to recall their previous or most memorable holidays and discuss the changes they had caused in their lives. The students were given about a minute to plan their responses on every test and then 8-10 minutes were devoted to the completion of the task. There was no interference on the part of the researcher as the activity was taking place.

In order to access the implicit knowledge of modals in the past, i.e. *could have done*, *might have done*, *should have done*, *must have done*, *needn't have done*, their interrogative and negative forms, it was necessary to construct a task that would require the students to apply the different modals in a conversation. It was decided to prepare a role play (see Appendix H) following Gass and Mackey's description (2007: 138) for the pretest, posttest and delayed posttest. When each student in a pair received a different set with two short roles to ensure the use of various modals, they had to present their situation and then discuss it with their partner trying to speculate about the possible reasons or results and giving advice to each other on how the situation could have been prevented. To summarize, there were four short roles for every dyad on each test. The roles the subjects performed dealt with everyday life topics and students' problems to personalize the responses and create a context for spontaneous conversation. The students had about a minute to read their roles and the whole task lasted for about ten minutes. There was no interference on the part of the researcher.

4.6.3.4. Implicit knowledge: observations of regular classes

The third instrument of data collection intended to measure implicit knowledge were the recordings of regular lessons. It had been decided that apart from individual and pair oral tests it would be highly recommended to observe the participants' actual performance during subjects where English was the tool of communication. Having first discussed the research project and its assumptions with the other teachers, the researcher chose three subjects to be observed, recorded and analysed. These were two practical English classes: listening/speaking and reading/speaking and one content class: British culture. The subjects were taught by three different academic teachers, the same in every group. The students

were divided into three groups for the practical English classes and only into two groups when they attended British culture lessons. It did not, however, cause any serious problems, since the researcher simply needed more recording equipment to make the voices clear and audible. The students were usually recorded in pairs or in triads so that the researcher did not have difficulty recognising and transcribing the particular utterances. The teachers had been acquainted with the timetable of the research project and they knew when to expect their lessons to be recorded. Table 12. presents the observation schedule for all the classes involved in the study. In order to elicit the structures in question from the participants, the teachers together with the researcher chose such topics and prepared such tasks which would require the use of the 3rd conditional and modals in the past. Because the aim was to tap implicit knowledge, the instructions accompanying particular tasks could not openly state or encourage the students to use the two forms in question. As can be seen from the table, altogether twenty-seven lessons were observed. During each of them, dictaphones were placed near every pair or triad. All the recordings were transcribed by the researcher and the transcripts of the interactions generated on the pretests and the posttests were analysed separately for each subject. The procedures used involved calculating the number of obligatory contexts, determining the numbers of correct (awarded 1 point) and incorrect uses understood as the use of both the wrong form and the wrong use or overuse of the structure, determining the number of interlanguage forms (awarded 0.5 point), calculating accuracy percentages by dividing the number of accurate forms by the overall number of obligatory contexts, and estimating the means by dividing the total score made up of all answers (correct, interlanguage and incorrect) by the overall number of obligatory contexts (see Table 13).

Table 12. Regular classes observation schedule.

	Culture Teacher DO	Listening/Speaking Teacher AJ	Reading/Speaking Teacher UZ
Group 1 experimental			
Date	Wednesday 13.45.-15.15.	Wednesday 10.15.-11.45.	Friday 10.15.-11.45.
Pretest	Scotland	Elementary, my dear Watson	Emigration
Immediate Posttest	Religion	Moral Dilemmas	Natural Disasters
Delayed Posttest	Media	Films	Extreme Situations
Group 2 experimental			

Date	Wednesday 13.45.-15.15.	Tuesday 13.45.-15.15.	Friday 8.30.-10.00.
Pretest	Scotland	Elementary, my dear Watson	Emigration
Immediate Posttest	Religion	Moral Dilemmas	Natural Disasters
Delayed Posttest	Media	Films	Extreme Situations
Group 3 control			
Date	Wednesday 15.30.-17.00.	Wednesday 12.00-13.30	Friday 12.00.-13.30.
Pretest	Scotland	Elementary, my dear Watson	Emigration
Immediate Posttest	Religion	Moral Dilemmas	Natural Disasters
Delayed Posttest	Media	Films	Extreme Situations

Table 13. Students' sample responses during regular classes

	3rd conditional	modals in the past
correct	<i>If he had been arrested in Poland, he would have been treated another way. If we had been in her position, we wouldn't have complained. Had Scott planned it better, it wouldn't have resulted in the death.</i>	<i>She must have suffered. He might have taken drugs. There could have been a rescue expedition.</i>
interlanguage	<i>If Jesus hadn't been crucified, there wouldn't have been such religion. But for their death, they wouldn't have to drag everything. I would have take him by his hand.</i>	<i>They might have feel frightened. She must have knew something. He could killed them.</i>
incorrect	<i>Polish diplomacy wouldn't change. He would go down first. If they didn't kill him, he could kill Ruth.</i>	<i>They shouldn't make these mistakes. How could they have done it? He couldn't have walked. He must have joined Indians.</i>

Undeniably, one of the potential weaknesses of collecting data during the usual teaching process observed during regular lessons was the fact that the lessons on pretest, posttest and delayed posttest were different, planned to reach various aims via multiple tasks and activities. In order to minimalize the risk of obtaining data which would not be very reliable due to a diversity of confounding variables, all the elements which could remain intact throughout the whole observation period, were, to the author's best knowledge, preserved. Among these were the following procedures: all the tasks had been planned to be performed in dyads or triads, the tasks were of similar difficulty as far as vocabulary and grammar were concerned (B2+, C1), the students worked in the same groups, the language of instruction was English, at no time were the subjects encouraged or

instructed to use the structures in question and no other teachers or assistant teachers took part in preparing the materials for the lessons. It was assumed then, that, technically, the material obtained from the twenty-seven lessons constituted an adequate source of data to help establish the students' level of implicit knowledge. The researcher is aware that such a data collection technique is rarely used, particularly in exploring form-focused instruction; nevertheless comparing the results obtained from different sources may enrich the analysis with various perspectives. Moreover, one of the reasons for undertaking the research project was the actual students' performance in other classes and their teachers' commentaries and complaints; hence the author's interest whether the instructional treatment would introduce any changes and hopefully improve the situation. The main aim of the observation was to access the students' implicit knowledge of the 3rd conditional and modal verbs in the past at different stages of the research project. Therefore, the lessons where the use of the two structures was unnoticed or negligible were not considered in the analysis. The details concerning the content of every observed lesson together with the data collection procedures and the justification for rejecting some of the data are explained in the subsequent subsections.

Listening/Speaking

As far as the listening/speaking classes are concerned (see Appendix I), all the three lessons constituted adequate material for the analysis of the participants' implicit knowledge as the students' provided a great amount of data containing the two structures in question. The pretest lesson was based on a task *Elementary, my dear Watson* taken from *Advanced Communication Games* by Jill Hadfield. The students worked in pairs or groups of three and were to find the murderer on the basis of hints given to them step by step. They had to speculate, negotiate opinions and draw conclusions. A sample of an exchange that took place in the first experimental group on the pretest is presented below:

- (8) *Student A: I think he was killed because he was so rich*
Student S: Maybe his wife had an affair. Maybe he was hit with a blunt object.
Student M: It might be.
(another clue) THE WINDOW WAS OPEN.
Student S: I think it was for the evening breeze...
Student A: Or maybe the one who killed him wanted to leave it like that. Everybody thought he ran away through the window but he didn't...

Student S: Because it was too high

Student M: I don't know how it can be connected. It doesn't have to be the second floor...

(another clue) THERE WAS A CIGARETTE BUTT ON THE TABLE

Student M: One option was that he was smoking or the murderer was smoking

Student A: Probably, it could have been the murderer

Student S: If he was doing it habitually, he wouldn't think of it...

Student M: Yeah, but he could have left the cigarette end because he had to run away, if someone saw him...

Student A: I don't think a murderer has time to smoke when he kills somebody.

The posttest lesson was organized around two tasks. The first one focused on bizarre or uncommon situations which the participants had to discuss in small groups. The other task was a role play for pairs. One person was a therapist while the other one was a patient. Patients were given cards with some problems or illnesses. Together with their therapists they were requested to find solutions or try to answer the question if it was possible to prevent the situation and why/how. Then the students changed pairs and also their roles so that various language functions were employed. The delayed posttest lesson was connected with watching short fragments of films which contained some difficult situations or moral dilemmas. The students were given questions to discuss on the basis of the fragments they had watched. They worked in pairs and each opinion exchange was followed by a whole group discussion.

Reading/Speaking

The three reading/speaking classes (see Appendix J) constituted the second group of lessons to be observed and analysed with a view to accessing spontaneous use of past unreal conditionals and modal verbs in the past. To the author's great regret, it has to be stated that not all the lessons proved successful as far as the elicitation of the targeted forms was concerned. The pretest lesson focused on the topic of Poles' emigration to the UK. The students were requested to read an article from a British magazine and later on they were given roles to discuss the reasons for and the results of the process. They were also asked to imagine life in Poland in twenty years' time talking about the consequences of emigration and taking the roles of emigrants from the article. The vast majority of the students did the task, understanding it, however, as a present situation, not as one connected with the past. Consequently, they used the 2nd conditional and modals referring to the present or future.

Perhaps it was connected with the fact that at the time the study was being carried out, the issue of Polish emigration to the UK was present in the media, students' families, etc. Therefore, they might not have treated it as past and were not able to discuss the reasons for such situations. Hence, the lesson could not be taken into account when measuring the students' implicit knowledge as their use of the structures under study was negligible. Unfortunately a similar situation could be observed in the case of the posttest lesson. This time the topic was environment and natural disasters. The students watched a short fragment of the film *The Day after Tomorrow* which describes a potential situation in 2025 when the world comes to a final climate and environment disaster. Again a role play task was designed in which the students were the ones who miraculously survived and were able to compose a spoken or written message to their forefathers to try to prevent the disaster. The aim was to encourage them to create sentences in the 3rd conditional and modals in the past. However, almost all the students talked and wrote using either the 2nd or mixed conditionals and also their use of modals in the past was rare. A short excerpt is included below to present the students' actual utterances:

(9) *Student P: You should be aware what might happen*

Student J: If we got such a message from those who lived a hundreds later, we wouldn't do anything with it.

Student W: I am not sure that people would be more interested in environmental issues if they would get such a shocking message.

Student P: probably they would think about it. They would start changing

Student W: They would try to live more like, eeerr, more with nature

Student J: I think we have made a great difference already, because people...

Student P: We would have to come across consequences of our behaviour, not every person is aware of that

Teacher: So what's the actual message? The consequences of what behaviours?

Student J: What difference would it make if we got a message?

Student P: It doesn't make sense to write it if you know what will happen.

The researcher was able to observe the described situations during the actual recordings and immediately knew the students understood the tasks in a different way. However, apart from the class teacher's subtle hints, no comments or clarifications were made to retain the communicative nature of the communication task. The delayed posttest lesson proved successful as far as the amount of output abounding in the use of the targeted structures was concerned. This time the topic was climbing mountains and exploring the

unknown. First, the students listened to a description of a very dangerous and thrilling mountain climb. They listened to extracts only and they were asked to speculate how the situation could have developed or how they would have behaved in a similar situation. Next, they read a text about two explorers: Scott and Amundsen who competed to reach the South Pole. They were asked to discuss some questions about Scott's failure and talk about the possible changes to his plan. The last task was similar to a traditional dictogloss (Thornbury 2006: 80). The students worked in pairs and there was a text on the blackboard, not visible to students. One of them had to come to the blackboard, read the text, then report what he/she had read and the other one was to take notes. It was done in a form of a competition. Finally, they had two minutes to make up the final version of the story. The researcher took into account both the students' negotiations concerning the form and meaning on the tape and the final text.

British Culture

The British Culture lessons (see Appendix K) were the class the main aim of which was teaching particular content rather than the development of language skills. Nevertheless, thanks to the teacher's kindness and helpfulness, it was possible to incorporate some communication tasks that would encourage the use of the 3rd conditional and modal verbs in the past. The pretest British Culture lesson was devoted to Scotland, its history, heroes and traditions. The tasks prepared by the teacher turned out to be too controlled in their nature. The instructions stated clearly what structures the students were expected to use and so the result was that they created sentences and phrases concentrating on the grammar points rather than the actual message. The students worked in pairs or triads, and they soon got bored with the activities, most probably due to their repetitive nature. On the basis of this observation and also having compared this lesson with the others, it was decided to discard these samples of language as they did not represent the students' implicit use of the structures under study. The topic of the second classes (posttest) dealt with religion. First, the students answered some questions concerning the origins of Christianity which required them to speculate about the past and try to come up with some new ideas. Next, King Henry VIII and his conflict with the Roman Church were mentioned. The students discussed the reasons for his actions and the situation in the country at that time. The next

task was a role play based on a listening excerpt about Henry's wives. The girls were requested to discuss the wives' behaviour and think what they would have done at that particular moment in history, whereas the boys were to talk about the king's marital affairs and also try to speculate about their choices and decisions if they had been there then. All in all, the lesson proved quite successful and generated a sufficient amount of language containing the two targeted structures. The delayed posttest lesson was organised around the topic of the media. On the basis of the listening material taken from the *BBC Learning English* web page about how the Polish are perceived by the British and the British media, the students were to discuss some questions about Poland joining the EU, opening job markets in Britain and the relationship between the two nations. The second part of the lesson was devoted to Princess Diana and the role of the media in her life and death. Here a dictogloss task was employed (Wajnryb 1990). The students listened to the teacher reading a text at a normal speed. They were asked to listen and take notes. After they had listened twice, they were requested to reconstruct the story in pairs during two minutes. The two students who completed the task first and included all the details were the winners. The researcher took into account both the students' negotiations concerning the form and meaning on the tape and the final text. Below there is an extract from the last task presenting part of the story reconstructed by two students under time pressure:

(10) *Could Princess Diana have been murdered by the Secret Service? She died in Paris, in a high-speed car, trying to escape the paparazzi. Many people believe that she shouldn't have died such an ordinary death. French police concluded it was a tragic accident but Dodi's father couldn't have accepted the verdict. Had Princess Diana and Dodi not been haunted by the paparazzi, they wouldn't have slipped of the hotel. If they hadn't had sneaked from the hotel, they would have taken the usual driver. If the driver of the second car had been identified, the truth would see the daylight (Students P and M).*

4.7. Procedures used for quantitative and qualitative analysis

The data collected by means of the different instruments was subjected to both quantitative and qualitative analysis, following Dörnyei's belief that "a mixed methods approach can

offer additional benefits for the understanding of the phenomenon in question” (2007: 47). The researcher paid attention to obtaining precise results and valid findings of the quasi experiment. In order to attain this goal, she had to apply procedures of inferential statistics appropriate for this particular study. The forty-five participants were enough to reach a normal distribution (Mackey and Gass 2005: 261ff) and therefore it was decided to employ a parametric test to analyse the data statistically. Having acquainted herself with other research in the area (e.g. Lazaraton 2000; Norris and Ortega 2000), the researcher decided to employ the statistical test of analysis of variance (ANOVA) to assess the statistical significance of the differences between the groups on a particular test. This is because ANOVA was found to be the most frequently used statistical procedure, accounting for over 40% of all the 524 analyses (Lazaraton 2005). As the participants in the study completed multiple treatments and tests, it was decided to use repeated measures models for the consecutive test results. The probability coefficient (p) was calculated to measure statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) and included in the statistical reporting. Next, *LSD* post hoc tests were computed using the SPSS programme.

The significance level as such does not, however, provide sufficient information to determine the size or importance of the effect associated with the instructional treatment. It is the effect size which indicates the magnitude of one’s findings. N. Ellis, the editor of *Language Learning*, states that “the reporting of effect sizes is essential to good research. It enables readers to evaluate the stability of research across samples, operationalisations, designs and analyses. It allows evaluation of the practical relevance of the research outcomes. It provides the basis of power analyses and meta-analyses needed in future research” (2000: xii). Therefore, it is necessary for researchers to present effect sizes for primary outcomes (Wilkinson and TFSI 1999) to provide information about the magnitude of an observed phenomenon and to be able to compare the results reported with those in other studies (Dörnyei 2007: 212). Indeed, effect sizes allow greater comparability between research findings and enable conducting meta-studies (e.g. Norris and Ortega 2000). In this study, effect sizes were calculated by comparing the difference between the means of the various groups divided by their standard deviations. In this way Cohen’s d figures were arrived at and were included in all results. To interpret the results, Cohen’s recommendation (1977) was followed, i.e. effect sizes of 0.2 were deemed small, 0.5 as medium, and 0.8 as large. As Cohen (1977: 10) explains, “the larger this value, the greater the extent to which the phenomenon under study is manifested”.

As far as the *qualitative analysis* of the two questionnaires is concerned, the author decided to follow the procedures recommended by Brown (2001), Chapelle and Duff (2003) and Lazaraton (2003). Although the main purpose of the questionnaires was to glean information about the participants of the study and the questions included in the two surveys focused on obtaining concrete answers, the additional spaces provided for students to share their opinions were expected to bring rich and overlapping research data and provide additional research material. The answers to the questions of the restricted type were coded, analysed and reported using mean percentage scores. The data obtained from the students' opinions were coded and labeled to be later grouped into particular categories, which allowed for comparison between different respondents. The students' accounts were reread, connections between them were made and all the categories were listed to come under broader labels. The recurring themes were organized into specific groups and then analysed within each group in terms of their relationship with the research questions.

Conclusions

The present chapter has aimed at providing a detailed description of the study exploring the use of focused communication tasks in form-focused instruction. The author has presented the research questions, acquainted the reader with the participants of the study, their background and attitudes towards grammar and its learning/teaching processes. The project was described in terms of its duration, the grammar structures studied, the instructional treatment and the tools for data collection and analysis. The research design is an example of a quasi experimental study and one may also find in it some features of action research since it attempted to improve the actual teaching procedures for grammar lessons with advanced learners. The small number of participants resulting from the educational context, which may have weakened the reliability of the study, was compensated for by using several research instruments to produce data suitable for multidimensional analysis. The decision to include a control group also contributed, in the author's view, to the quality and strength of the study. The next chapter will discuss the actual results of the research project, taking into account both the explicit and implicit dimensions of the participants' knowledge of unreal past conditionals and modal verbs in the past. It will also seek to find relationships between the students' learning experiences, their attitudes towards grammar

and the results of actual tests obtained in both written and spoken measures. Moreover, the individual paths of development for four participants of the study will be presented and analysed with a view to finding reasons for their success or failure.

Chapter 5: Research findings

Introduction

The analysis of the data provided by means of different research tools, described in detail in the preceding chapter, allowed the researcher to obtain the results relevant to the research questions posed in 4.1. which will be presented in two groups, as two different structures were examined: one concerning the 3rd conditional, and the other dealing with modals in the past. In both sections, the data connected with explicit and implicit knowledge will be analysed. A separate part will be constituted by the presentation of the data obtained from the regular classes where the 3rd conditional and modals in the past were measured during meaning-oriented communication. Then, the relationships between the participants' views on grammar, their educational experiences and their opinions on the instructional treatments determined by means of two questionnaires and the actual results achieved on the different tests will be analysed. Finally, the researcher will present the findings connected with particular students' development throughout the study with a view to establishing whether any individual differences influenced the students' progress and performance during the tests. The details connected with the instructional treatment for the experimental groups were described in section 4.5. of the previous chapter and the specifications concerning the instruments and procedures of data collection and analysis were outlined in 4.6. The presentation of the findings will be accompanied by relevant information regarding the statistical significance of the results which was measured by

means of ANOVA tests and post hoc tests. The instruments of data analysis employed in the study were described in detail in 4.7.

5.1. Past unreal conditionals

In the study measuring the effect of employing focused communication tasks on the acquisition of past unreal conditionals, it was group 1 that received the instruction abundant in a number of focused communication tasks and hence will be labeled as the FCT group. Group 2, which had the benefit of explicit instruction with no time devoted to focused communication tasks, was subjected to plenty of contextualized practice activities such as text-manipulation and text-creation activities and therefore will be called the CPA group. The abbreviation for the control group will be CG for the purpose of the presentation of the data. To explore the effects of focused communication tasks employed in the instruction of the 3rd conditional, the statistical test of analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed, the requisite post hoc tests (LSD) were administered and effect sizes (Cohen's *d*) were estimated. The analysis of the results aimed at obtaining information both about the development of the students' explicit and implicit knowledge. Thus, first of all, the data collected by means of the written tests, designed to measure explicit knowledge, will be presented and discussed, and subsequently the data revealing changes in implicit knowledge tapped during oral performance will be scrutinized and, in this way, the effects of the instructional treatment will be investigated.

5.1.1. Explicit knowledge: written tests

As evidenced in Figures 6. and 7., and also in Table 14., which depict the mean percentage scores (*M*), standard deviations (*SD*), levels of statistical significance (*p*) and effect sizes (*d*), the instructional treatment turned out to have a similar effect on the students' explicit knowledge of past unreal conditionals in the two experimental groups. The controlled activities employed in the written tests were performed by all the three groups on the pretest and the results did not reveal any statistically significant differences between the participants of the study (Figure 6.). However, having been subjected to the instructional

treatment, the two experimental groups (FCT= 87.81%, CPA=84.69%) outperformed the control group (CG=74.58%) on the immediate posttest with the effect sizes deemed large ($d=0.97$, $d=0.79$) and also reached statistically significant gains over the control group on the delayed posttest (FCT=92.81%, CPA=92.84, CG=78.56%, $p<0.001$), which proves the durability of instruction and the carryover of gains as long as ten weeks. The two groups which had been subjected to two different types of intervention did not reveal any statistically significant differences between the scores they obtained on any test.

Looking at the groups and their results separately (Figure 7.), the increase of accuracy observed in the two instructed groups was significant on the immediate posttest and amounted to more than 13% in the FCT group (FCT=87.81, $F=16.22$; $p=0.001$) and more than 7% in the CPA group (CPA=84.69, $F=17.96$; $p=0.001$). What is particularly interesting, however, is the fact that the groups increased their average scores on the delayed posttest as well (FCT=92.81%, CPA=92.84%), compared with the posttest results. The group in which the pedagogical intervention included focused communication tasks did not achieve a statistically significant gain, but the delayed posttest score of the other group, instructed by means of text-manipulation and text-creation activities, was significantly higher in comparison with the immediate posttest result. The control group also revealed some improvement on the immediate posttest (CG=74.58%) in comparison with the pretest (CG=70.50%); nevertheless the differences became statistically significant as late as on the delayed posttest (CG=78.56%) compared with the pretest. The findings obtained from the written tests demonstrate that formal instruction does facilitate the development and proceduralisation of explicit knowledge; yet it appears that, for this type of knowledge, the differences in the instructional treatments did not matter significantly.

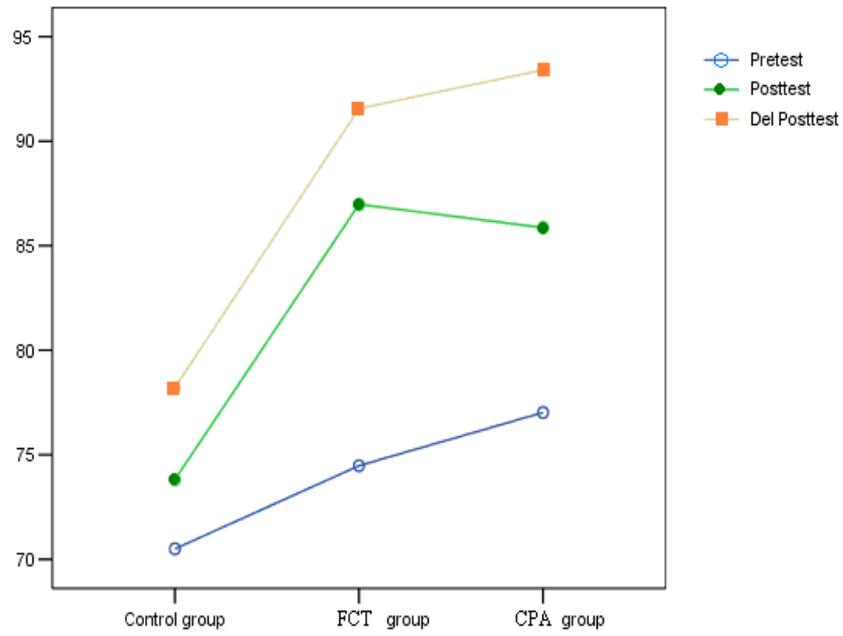


Figure 6. The mean percentage scores for the use of 3rd conditional on the written tests.

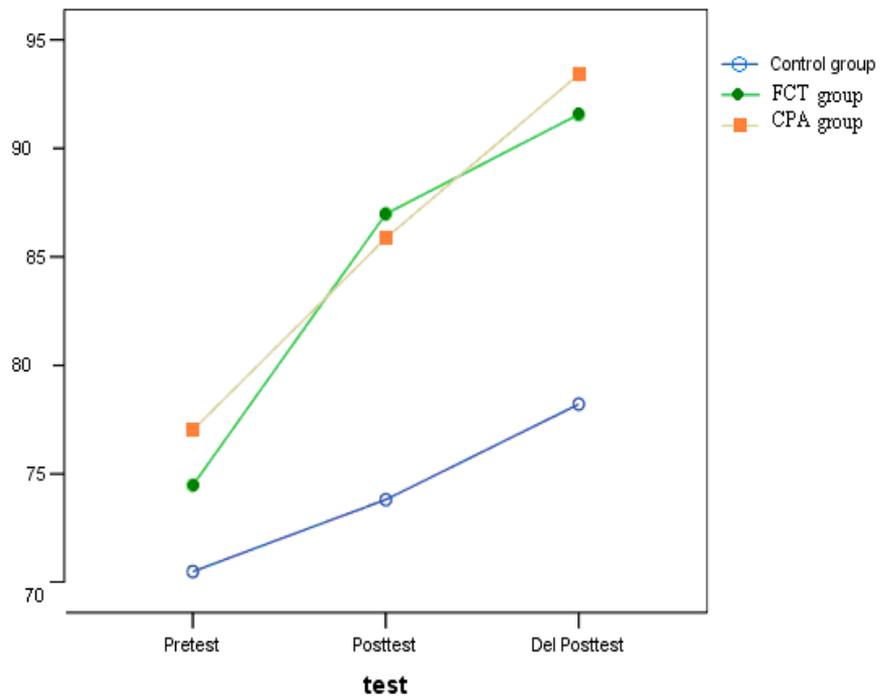


Figure 7. The mean percentage scores for the use of 3rd conditional for the three groups on the written tests.

Table 14. The effect of instructional treatment on the use of 3rd conditional on written tests.

Group	Pretest Mean	SD	Posttest Mean	SD	Delayed Posttest Mean	SD	Significance Repeated measures ANOVA a) Pre-Post b) Post-DelPost c) Pre-Del Post
Control	70.50	16.4	74.58	14.6	78.56	12.0	a) $F=1.67$ $p=0.21$ b) $F=5.77$ $p=0.02$ c) $F=5.37$ $p=0.03$
Experimental: Focused Communication Tasks (FCT)	74.48	15.9	87.81	11.5	92.81	6.8	a) $F=16.22$ $p=0.001$ b) $F=2.42$ $p=0.14$ c) $F=22.90$ $p=0.0005$
Experimental: Contextualized Practice Activities (CPA)	77.02	16.3	84.69	16	92.84	7.8	a) $F=17.96$ $p=0.001$ b) $F=4.99$ $p=0.04$ c) $F=20.99$ $p=0.0006$
Significance ANOVA Multiple comparisons (LSD)							
a) Control-FCT	$F=0.45$ $p=0.5$		$F=6.52$ $p=0.01$ $d=0.97$		$F=14.97$ $p<0.001$		
b) FCT-CPA	$F=0.15$ $p=0.69$		$F=0.04$ $p=0.84$		$F=0.22$ $p=0.64$		
c) Control-CPA	$F=1.27$ $p=0.26$		$F=5.70$ $p=0.02$ $d=0.79$		$F=20.56$ $p<0.001$		

While the general findings encourage grammar intervention and testify to its effects, which is in accordance with a number of previous studies (see Chapter 3), some details need further consideration and analysis. Although it is the group instructed by means of focused communication tasks that achieved the best results on the posttest, gaining more than 13% in comparison with the pretest, it is visible when looking at the delayed posttest

scores that the group subjected to text-manipulation and text-creation activities did in fact compensate for its poorer gain on the immediate posttest (7%), achieving the same score as the other experimental group. Another aspect worth noticing is the change in the standard deviation levels in the three groups. On the pretest, the standard deviation values were quite high, proving the existence of huge discrepancies in the performance of particular group members. Form-focused instruction appeared to have a diminishing effect on the degree of individual variation in both experimental groups, as SD values decreased remarkably by more than a half on the delayed posttest, whereas the SD level in the control group diminished by 25% only. The changes in the SD values could also be attributed to the overall process of language education at the college, which undoubtedly increased the students' knowledge, developed their language awareness and helped them improve their level of English, which is visible in the decrease in SD in the control group. Nevertheless, the SD levels of the two experimental groups seem to be indicative of the beneficial effect of form-focused instruction, because the high results of the tests and the low levels of standard deviation testify to the increase in the homogeneity among the participants of the study on the measures of explicit knowledge after both types of pedagogical intervention.

The general results concerning explicit knowledge revealed in the written tests may be divided into two groups: one depicting the participants' ability to deal with comprehension tasks, outlined in Figures 8 and 9 and Table 15, and the other reflecting the skills of performing production tasks (Figures 10 and 11 and Table 16). As far as the effects of instructional treatments on the ability of comprehending unreal past conditionals are concerned, no statistically significant differences could be observed between the two experimental groups. The effect size values which account for the distinction between the experimental groups and the control group reached 0.63 for the FCT group and 0.69 for the CPA group on the immediate posttest (FCT=81.1%, CPA=82.5%, CG=72.8%). The increase in the level of comprehension approached statistical significance ($F=3.75$; $p=0.06$) for the group instructed by means of text-manipulation and text-creation activities, whose members gained almost 11% on the immediate posttest (CPA=82.5%), compared with 2.5% for the group performing focused communication tasks (FCT=81.1%). Taking a closer look at the delayed posttest, however, one can observe that the two experimental groups scored almost identically (FCT=88.8%, CPA=88.0%), and the change from the pretest was statistically significant in both cases. Comparing the two experimental groups with the control group, one cannot escape noticing that it also improved from the pretest to

the posttests, reaching a significant gain on the delayed posttest. It is difficult to explain this phenomenon, since the students in the control group were not subjected to the treatment concerning the target structure; however the improvement might have been caused by such factors as self-study or out-of-class exposure which helped the learners develop their comprehension skills in general. The degree of variability (SD) in the control group remained much at the same level, which supports the assumption that it was individual students who might have improved their ability to comprehend the 3rd conditional and that the development of knowledge was not steady and applicable to all contexts. As far as standard deviations in the two experimental groups are concerned, it is definitely the group with focused communication tasks which became most homogenous when it comes to comprehending the 3rd conditional. This observation goes in accordance with Zobl (1995) who suggests that in classroom experiments that test for the benefits of metalinguistic information, groups receiving communicative input should be more homogeneous in their gain or post treatment scores whereas groups receiving metalinguistic input should display greater variability. Another explanation for such a situation might be the characteristics of explicit and implicit knowledge (see section 1.2.1. in Chapter One).

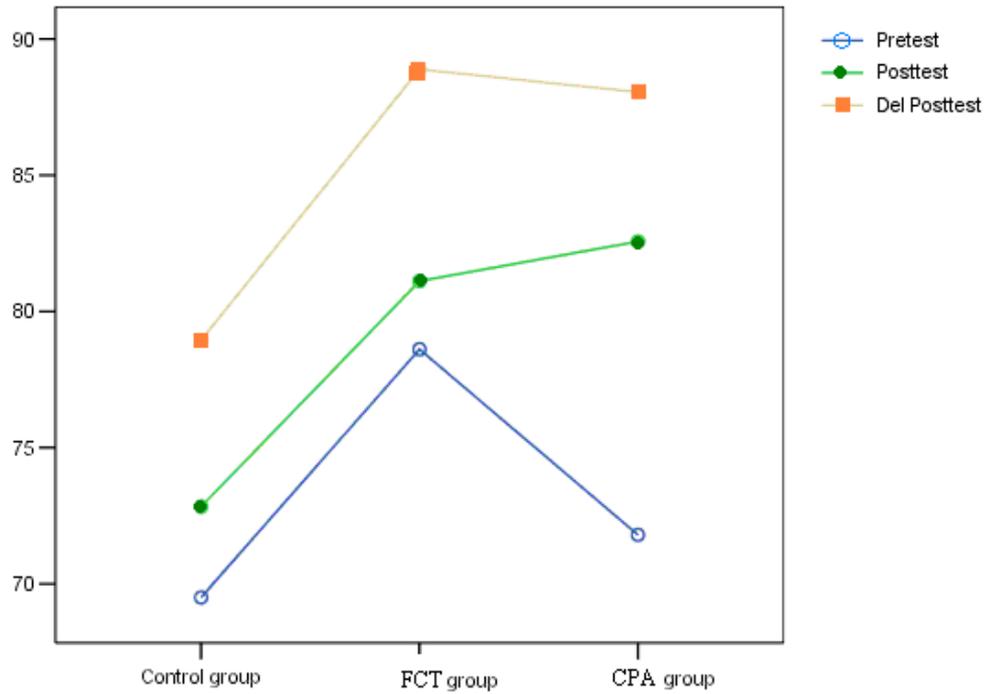


Figure 8. The mean percentage scores for the use of 3rd conditional on written tests: comprehension tasks.

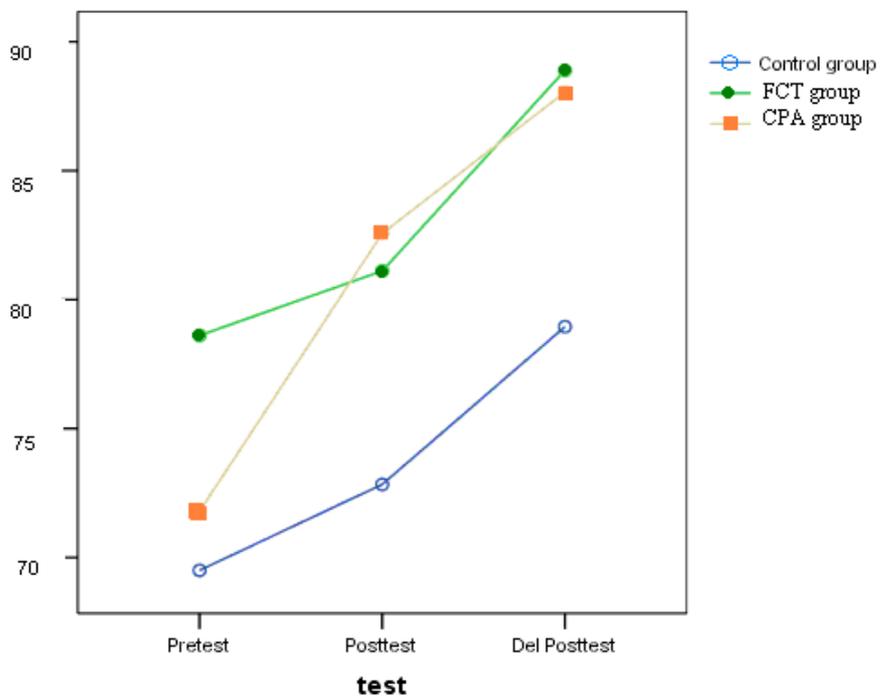


Figure 9. The mean percentage scores for the use of 3rd conditional for the three groups on the written tests: comprehension tasks.

Table 15. The effect of instructional treatment on the use of 3rd conditional on written tests: comprehension tasks.

Group	Pretest Mean	SD	Posttest Mean	SD	Delayed Posttest Mean	SD	Significance Repeated measures ANOVA a) Pre-Post b) Post-Del Post c) Pre-Del Post
Control	69.5	16.4	72.8	12.5	78.9	13.3	a) $F=1.01$ $p=0.32$ b) $F=5.36$ $p=0.03$ c) $F=5.08$ $p=0.03$
Experimental: Focused Communication Tasks (FCT)	78.6	15.2	81.1	14.3	88.8	9.2	a) $F=1.12$ $p=0.31$ b) $F=8.49$ $p=0.01$ c) $F=11.96$ $p=0.005$
Experimental: Contextualized Practice Activities (CPA)	71.7	20	82.5	16.5	88.0	15.6	a) $F=4.30$ $p=0.06$ b) $F=1.77$ $p=0.2$ c) $F=6.44$ $p=0.02$
Significance ANOVA Multiple comparisons (LSD)							
a) Control-FCT	$F=2.08$ $p=0.15$		$F=2.57$ $p=0.11$ $d=0.63$		$F=4.39$ $p=0.04$		
b) FCT-CPA	$F=0.97$ $p=0.33$		$F=0.07$ $p=0.8$		$F=0.03$ $p=0.87$		
c) Control-CPA	$F=0.14$ $p=0.71$		$F=3.75$ $p=0.06$ $d=0.69$		$F=3.75$ $p=0.05$		

In order to be able to get a complete picture of the participants' ability to comprehend past counterfactual conditionals, one must compare these results with the scores obtained on the production tasks aiming at measuring the students' explicit knowledge of the structure in question. The details concerning the effects of instruction on the ability to produce the aforementioned structure are illustrated in Figures 10. and 11. and presented numerically in Table 16. As can be seen from the graphical representation of the results in Figure 5. and the data included in Table 3., the three groups did not differ significantly on the pretest (CG=71.1%, FCT=72%, CPA=80.15%), and the instructional

treatment had a beneficial effect on the experimental subjects' ability to produce the structure, which is evidenced by the results obtained on the immediate posttest (CG=74.4%, FCT=90.5%, CPA=87.85%) and delayed posttest (CG=77.79%, FCT=93.17%, CPA=96.67%). The differences between the groups on the two posttests were significant for both experimental groups when compared with the results of the control group. The effect size values on the posttest were very high, as well, reaching $d=1.0$ for the FCT group and $d=0.75$ for the other experimental group. Similarly to comprehension tasks, also this time no statistically significant differences were observed between the two experimental groups. The comparison of the results obtained by the particular groups (Figure 11. and Table 16.) revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in the scores achieved by the control group, but as far as the two experimental groups are concerned, the effects of instructional treatment did cause significant changes. Not only did the two groups improve their ability to produce the 3rd conditional on the immediate posttest, but they also carried their gains over to the delayed posttest, which may indicate that the intervention produced durable effects.

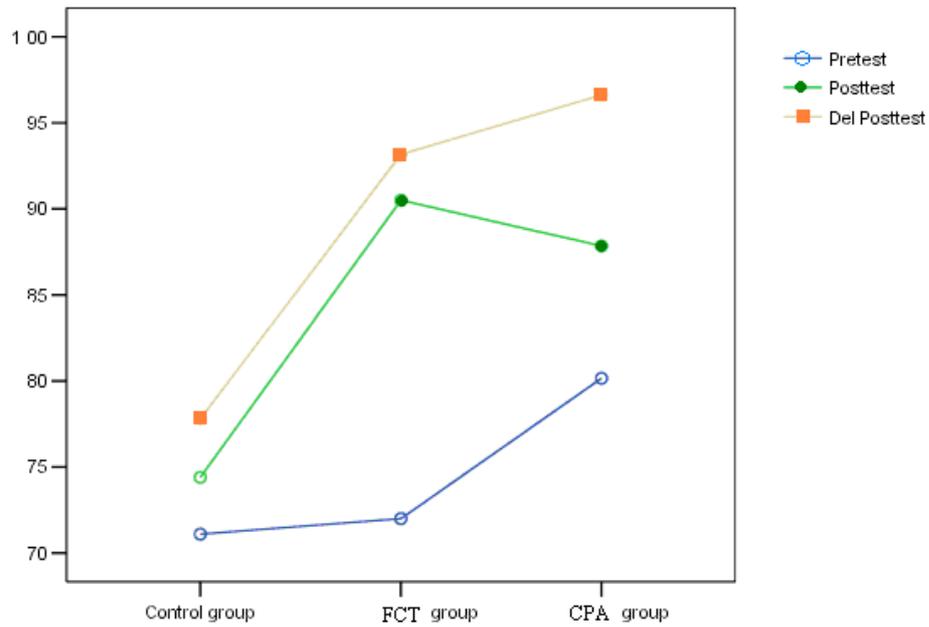


Figure 10. The mean percentage scores for the use of 3rd conditional on written tests: production tasks.

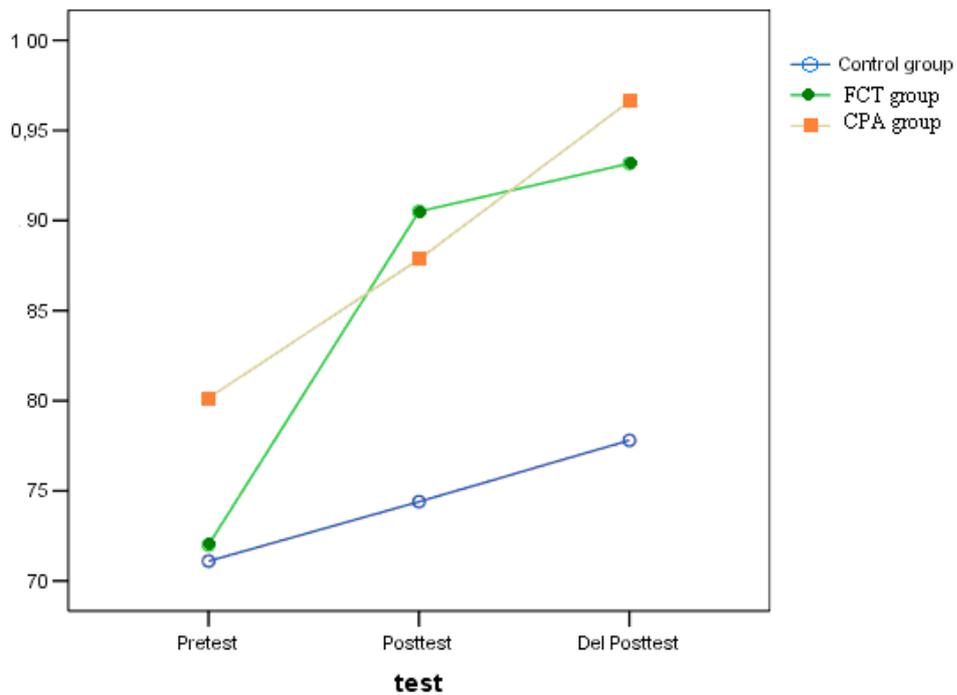


Figure 11. The mean percentage scores for the use of 3rd conditional for the three groups on the written tests: production tasks.

Table 16. The effect of instructional treatment on the use of 3rd conditional on written tests: production tasks.

Group	Pretest Mean	SD	Posttest Mean	SD	Delayed Posttest Mean	SD	Significance Repeated measures ANOVA a) Pre-Post b) Post-Del Post c) Pre-Del Post
Control	71.10	20.1	74.40	18.8	77.79	13.5	a) $F=0.90$ $p=0.35$ b) $F=1.89$ $p=0.18$ c) $F=2.77$ $p=0.11$
Experimental: Focused Communication Tasks (FCT)	72.00	19.1	90.50	11.3	93.17	7.1	a) $F=14.44$ $p=0.002$ b) $F=0.49$ $p=0.5$ c) $F=18.41$ $p=0.001$
Experimental: Contextualized Practice Activities (CPA)	80.15	17.9	87.85	16.4	96.67	4.7	a) $F=10.90$ $p=0.006$ b) $F=5.11$ $p=0.04$ c) $F=15.72$ $p=0.001$
Significance ANOVA Multiple comparisons (LSD) a) Control-FCT b) FCT-CPA c) Control-CPA			a) $F=0.02$ $p=0.89$ b) $F=1.14$ $p=0.29$ c) $F=1.75$ $p=0.19$	$F=7.37$ $p=0.01$ $d=1.0$ $F=0.16$ $p=0.69$ $F=5.34$ $p=0.02$ $d=0.75$			$F=18.53$ $p=0.0001$ $F=0.73$ $p=0.4$ $F=29.87$ $p<0.0001$

Although such findings may speak to the effectiveness of form-focused instruction, there are still some subtleties worth looking at. The two experimental groups achieved similar results on the delayed posttest, but the experimental group instructed with the help of focused communication tasks made a statistically significant gain of 18.5% already on the immediate posttest (FCT=90.5%; $F=14.44$; $p=0.002$) when compared with the pretest results (FCT=72%). On the other hand, the group subjected to the instructional treatment based on text-manipulation and text-creation activities achieved 96.67% on the delayed

posttest compared with the immediate posttest result of 87.85% ($F=5.11$; $p=0.04$) which were 7.7% higher than on the pretest. The tentative conclusion may be then that during the production component of the test measuring the learners' explicit knowledge, the treatment including focused communication tasks proved more beneficial when it comes to the immediate effects. Having received multiple opportunities for the production of the target feature, the students might have found it easier to apply it correctly in the production tasks.

When it comes to standard deviation values, all the three groups showed similar heterogeneity on the pretest, but apparently the instructional treatment also affected this area. Although the SD level in the control group dropped (Pre-ImPost –DelPost SD: 20.1-18.8-13.5), this decrease can hardly be compared to the impressive decrease in the two experimental groups (FCT Pre-ImPost –DelPost SD: 19.1-11.3-7.1; CPA Pre-ImPost –DelPost SD: 17.9-16.4-4.7). One can observe a relationship between the results obtained on the posttests and SD values for the two groups. SD decreased by 8% on the immediate posttest in the FCT group and in the CPA group it was on the delayed posttest that the SD level dropped the most (by more than 11%). It may indicate the existence of a relationship between the degree of individual variation and the performance on the tests. The students who made greater gains also turned out to be more homogeneous on their tests, which may testify to the influence of the instructional treatment on the process of proceduralisation of their knowledge.

5.1.2. Implicit knowledge

As was the case with explicit knowledge, the statistical tests of analysis of variance (ANOVA) were employed, appropriate post hoc tests (LSD) were administered and effect sizes (Cohen's d) were estimated to explore the effects of the two types of intervention on the subjects' ability to produce the form in focus in the tests aimed to verify the students' implicit knowledge. The instruments of data collection measuring implicit knowledge included individual elicited imitation task and focused communication task performed in pairs. It should also be pointed out here that the most spontaneous form of measuring implicit knowledge were the classes conducted by other teachers, but the outcomes of this measure will be described and analysed separately taking into consideration both past unreal conditionals and modal verbs in the past in section 5.3.

5.1.2.1. Elicited imitation test: individual recordings

As visible from the graphical representation in Figure 12. and the detailed description in Table 17., the pretest procedure revealed that the three groups participating in the research project did not differ from each other with reference to the ability to perform the elicited imitation test (CG=49.25%, FCT=54.79%, CPA=50.77%). As indicated by the scores obtained on the immediate posttest (CG=52.38%, FCT=83.13%, CPA=66.67%), the instructional treatment caused significant changes in the two experimental groups; yet it did not generate significant differences between them. In comparison with the control group, the results achieved by the group instructed by means of focused communication tasks was highly significant ($p=0.003$) and the effect size was large ($d=1.11$). The group which received instruction containing text-manipulation and text-creation activities approached a statistically significant difference when compared with the control group ($p=0.06$) and the effect size value was much above medium ($d=0.66$). A corresponding situation occurred on the delayed posttest, where the two groups differed from the control group considerably, with the FCT group reaching 81.82% and the CPA group 76.82%. The differences were statistically significant both in the case of FCT ($p=0.001$) and CPA ($p=0.02$) groups.

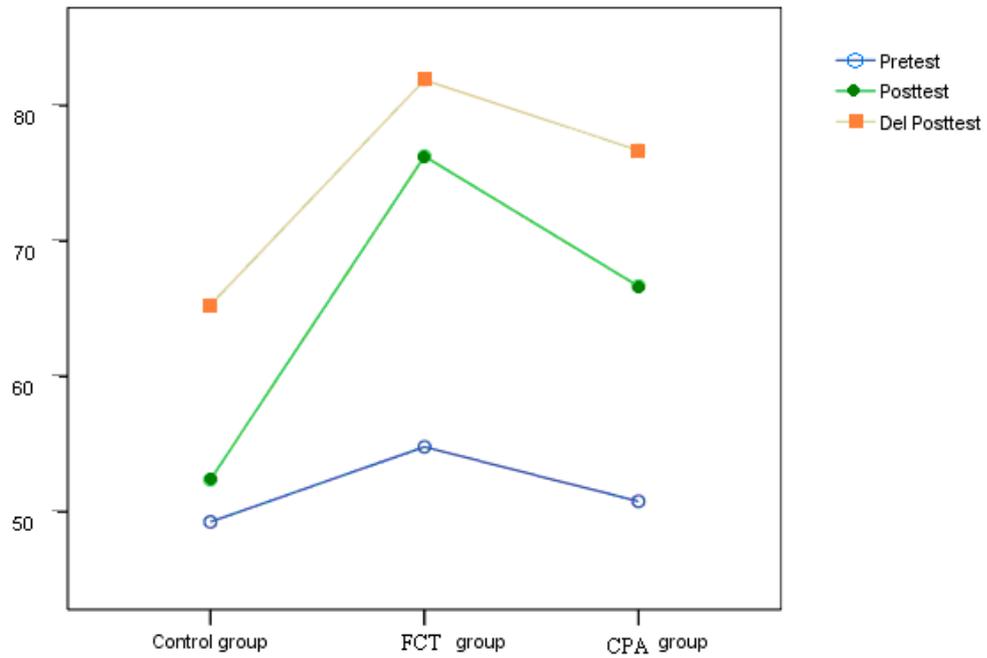


Figure 12. The mean percentage scores for the use of 3rd conditional on the elicited imitation test.

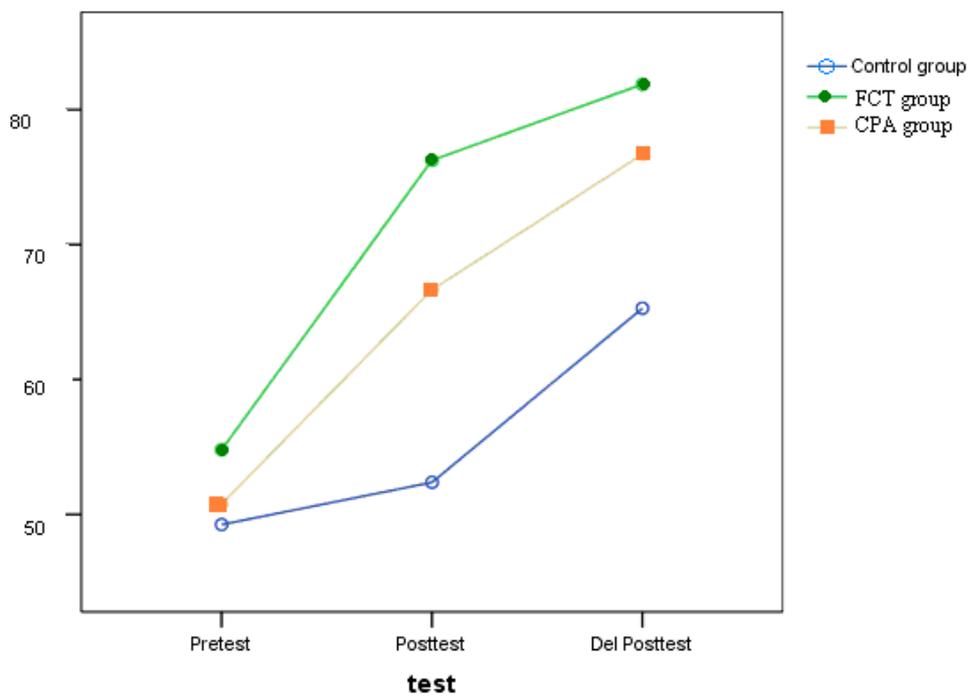


Figure 13. The mean percentage scores for the use of 3rd conditional for the three groups on the elicited imitation test.

Table 17. The effect of instructional treatment on the use of 3rd conditional on elicited imitation test.

Group	Pretest Mean	SD	Posttest Mean	SD	Delayed Posttest Mean	SD	Significance Repeated measures ANOVA a) Pre-Del Post b) Post-Del Post c) Pre-Del Post
Control	49.25	21.9	52.38	23.2	65.26	16.3	a) $F=0.94$ $p=0.34$ b) $F=12.09$ $p=0.002$ c) $F=18.91$ $p=0.0003$
Experimental: Focused Communication Tasks (FCT)	54.79	27.0	83.13	18.3	81.82	10.9	a) $F=14.89$ $p=0.002$ b) $F=1.46$ $p=0.25$ c) $F=15.16$ $p=0.002$
Experimental: Contextualized Practice Activities (CPA)	50.77	23.0	66.67	18.6	76.82	11.4	a) $F=5.57$ $p=0.03$ b) $F=3.66$ $p=0.08$ c) $F=25.35$ $p=0.0002$
Significance ANOVA Multiple comparisons (LSD)							
a) Control-FCT	a) $F=0.41$ $p=0.52$		$F=10.38$ $p=0.003$ $d=1.11$		$F=11.52$ $p=0.001$		
b) FCT-CPA	$F=0.18$ b) $p=0.67$		$F=1.36$ $p=0.25$		$F=0.90$ $p=0.35$		
c) Control-CPA	$F=0.03$ c) $p=0.85$		$F=3.79$ $p=0.06$ $d=0.66$		$F=5.57$ $p=0.02$		

The comparison of the results for the particular groups, illustrated in Figure 13., indicates a significant advantage for the instruction involving focused communication tasks. This group made the improvement of more than 28% from the pretest (54.79%) to the immediate posttest (83.13%), with the difference reaching high statistical significance ($F=14.89$; $p=0.002$), and the score was only marginally lower on the delayed posttest (81.82%). The growth in the other experimental group was 16% from the pretest (50.77%)

to the immediate posttest (66.67%) and another 10% on the delayed posttest (76.82%), with the effect that the difference between the pretest and the delayed posttest was a result that was highly statistically significant, at $F=25.35$; $p=0.0002$. The control group, the members of which did not receive any instruction in past unreal conditionals, made significant improvement but as late as on the delayed posttest. However, even in this case, as might be expected, the scores were much worse than in the two experimental groups.

When it comes to SD values, one can observe a relationship between the results achieved by the experimental groups and their level of variability. There was a comparable decrease in heterogeneity on every subsequent test in the two groups, with the caveat that they started at slightly different levels. The instructional treatment including focused communication tasks affected the students' level of heterogeneity to the greatest extent (a decrease of 9%), when compared with the decrease in SD in the CPA group (a decrease of 4.5%). A finding like this may be reflective of the nature of focused communication tasks which are designed with a view to developing learners' implicit knowledge. The students in the FCT group not only significantly improved their score on the immediate posttest, but they were also definitely more homogeneous in their answers, which seems to be closely related to the employed instructional option. The members of the group instructed by means of various text-manipulation and text-creation activities, which are certainly more controlled in their nature, manifested a much smaller drop of variation on the immediate posttest, which may be caused by the type of intervention to which they had been subjected. Contrary to the test measuring their explicit knowledge, which they had no problems with, the elicited imitation task seems to have caused them some difficulty, as the immediate posttest score was 66.67% and the answers were more varied than in the FCT group. The control group, having increased their level of variation on the posttest, finally reduced their SD on the delayed posttest, not to such a great extent as the two experimental groups, however. Although their elicited imitation test scores were higher on the subsequent tests, it may be connected with their self-study or the *practice effect*, because the delayed posttest was in fact the fifth test of this kind that they took (see section 4.4. in Chapter Four).

5.1.2.2. Focused communication task: pair session recordings

The analysis of the data obtained from pair recordings in which the students performed a focused communication task commenced with calculating the number of obligatory contexts for the use of the 3rd conditional for every student. The details connected with data collection and analysis were presented in section 4.6.3.3. in Chapter Four. As evidenced by the graphical illustration in Figure 12. and the data exhibited in Table 18., the three groups participating in the quasi experiment did not differ significantly in their ability to use the 3rd conditional on the pretest (CG=68.89%, FCT=67.05%, CPA=55%). The comparison of the scores obtained on the immediate posttest following the instructional treatment clearly indicates a significant advantage for grammar intervention (CG=37.04%, FCT=89.06%, CPA=78%). In comparison with the control group which in fact manifested a loss of over 30% ($F=13.70$; $p=0.001$), the two experimental groups made some improvement, and the difference between the two groups and the control group was statistically significant (CG-FCT $F=25.71$; $p<0.0001$; CG-CPA $F=9.26$; $p=0.004$). The effect size also reached very high values, but the reasons for it may be the poor result of the control group rather than the gains of the experimental students. It may also be of interest that the difference between the performance of the two experimental groups on the immediate posttest approached significance with $F=3.16$ and $p=0.08$. The FCT group scored 89.06%, whereas the result achieved by the CPA group was 78%. The delayed posttest results confirmed the variable effects of the treatment between the CPA and the FCT groups as the mean percentage scores differed significantly (FCT=84.78%, CPA=61.76%, $F=5.70$; $p=0.02$). It was also on the delayed posttest that no statistical difference between the control group and the group instructed by means of text-manipulation and text-creation activities ($F=0.08$; $p=0.77$) was observed. Such findings indicate a significant advantage for focused communication tasks in the FCT group whose score on the delayed posttest was significantly higher (84.78%) in comparison with that of the control group (CG=53.45%, $p=0.002$). Although both experimental groups did worse on the delayed posttest, one may conclude that the treatment that included a number of focused communication tasks was more beneficial to the development of implicit knowledge. To sum up, the FCT group outperformed not only the control but also the CPA group during the test comprising a communication task.

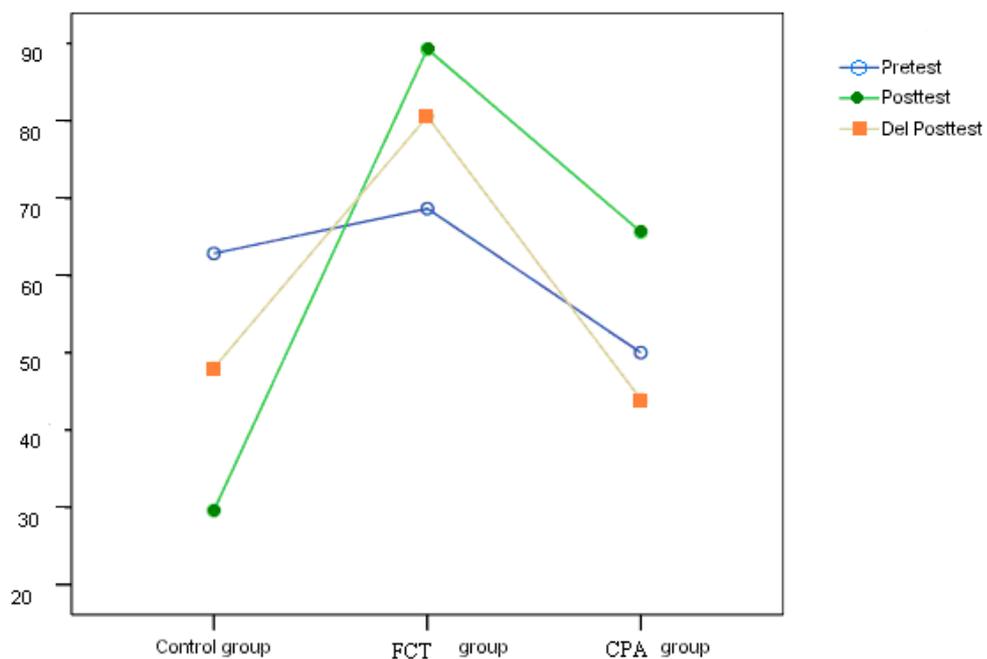


Figure 14. The mean percentage scores for the use of 3rd conditional on focused communication task.

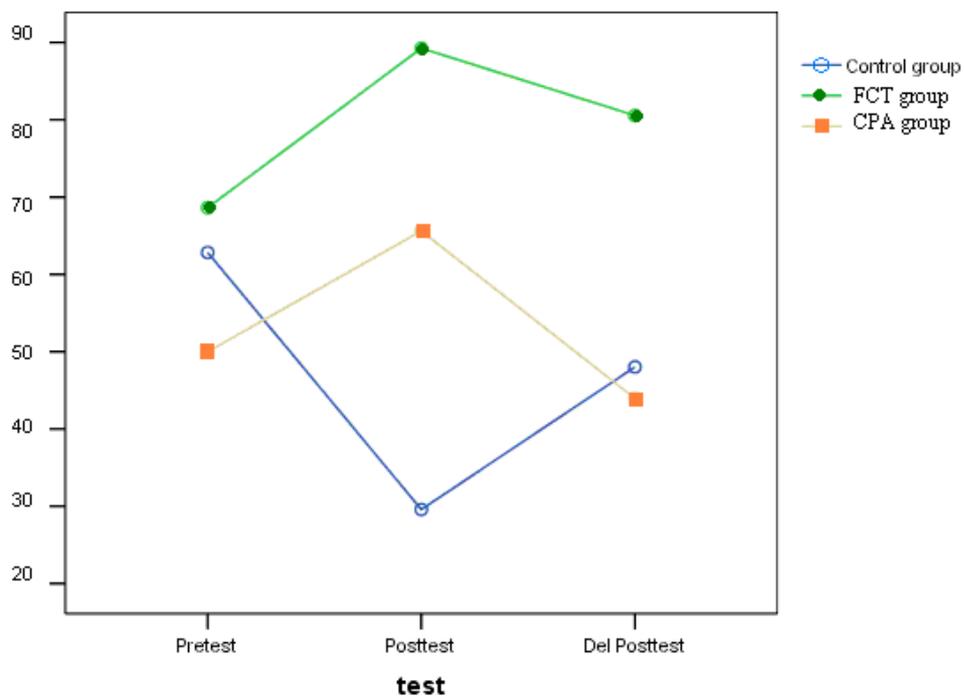


Figure 15. The mean percentage scores for the use of 3rd conditional for the three groups on the focused communication task.

Table 18. The effect of instructional treatment on the use of 3rd conditional on focused communication task.

Group	Pretest Mean	SD	Posttest Mean	SD	Delayed Posttest Mean	SD	Significance Repeated measures ANOVA a) Pre-Post b) Post-DelPost c) Pre-DelPost
Control	68.89	36.0	37.04	38.0	53.45	42.5	a) $F=13.70$ $p=0.001$ b) $F=3.38$ $p=0.08$ c) $F=1.68$ $p=0.21$
Experimental: Focused Communication Tasks (FCT)	67.05	31.7	89.06	9.5	84.78	30.6	a) $F=5.30$ $p=0.04$ b) $F=1.19$ $p=0.29$ c) $F=0.81$ $p=0.38$
Experimental: Contextualized Practice Activities (CPA)	55.00	47.6	78.00	40.5	61.76	41.5	a) $F=1.52$ $p=0.24$ b) $F=2.40$ $p=0.14$ c) $F=0.60$ $p=0.45$
Significance ANOVA Multiple comparisons (LSD)							
a) Control-FCT	a) $F=0.17$ $p=0.68$		$F=25.71$ $p<0.0001$ $d=2.15$		$F=5.24$ $p=0.002$		
b) FCT-CPA	b) $F=1.48$ $p=0.23$		$F=3.16$ $p=0.08$		$F=5.70$ $p=0.002$		
c) Control-CPA	c) $F=0.87$ $p=0.35$		$F=9.26$ $p=0.004$ $d=0.92$		$F=0.08$ $p=0.77$		

When it comes to the analysis of the progress made by the three groups individually (Figure 15 and Table 18), the picture is more complex than in the case of the previous tests. As far as the control group is concerned, the only statistically significant difference in the use of the 3rd conditional was observed on the immediate posttest, on which the students obtained 37.04%, a result that was lower by more than 30% when compared with the pretest (68.89%). The reasons for such a poor score may be their having noticed that they

were tested on something they had not been instructed in, but what seems more likely is the fact they became tired and bored with the tests and recordings. The potential contribution of the *fatigue effect* must be taken into account, as the students underwent repetitive, monotonous and time-consuming tests, which might have discouraged them from engagement in the task. On the delayed posttest, the control group was the only one to improve its results from the immediate posttest with the score of 53.45%, but still it failed to reach the pretest score. The comparison of the data from the two experimental groups indicates that the instructional treatment caused positive changes on the immediate posttest, particularly for the group instructed with the help of focused communication tasks, whose score, in comparison with the pretest, was 22% higher and the gain statistically significant ($F=5.30$; $p=0.04$). Taking into consideration the results obtained by the other experimental group (CPA), one could observe that it had the lowest score on the pretest in relation to the other groups (55%), then made a considerable improvement on the immediate posttest (78%), and, what is particularly worrying, experienced an almost 17% drop on the delayed posttest (61.76%). None of these changes reached statistical significance, and therefore drawing definitive conclusions might be premature.

Although the findings obtained from pair sessions tasks attest to the beneficial effect of grammar instruction, with the prevalence of the treatment containing focused communication tasks, it is necessary to point to some weaknesses which might have influenced the outcomes of the data. One issue might be the choice of the tasks designed to tap the implicit knowledge of the 3rd conditional in pairs. This test was the first kind of test performed in pairs. Although the students knew their partners and worked with them throughout the study, their results might, to a certain extent, have been affected by the interlocutor. Moreover, despite the researcher's efforts to design three similar tasks for the three tests, they might have generated different output, not only with regard to the content, but also the number of forms provided. All this needs to be taken into account during the analysis of the data coming from this particular measure. This might have been one of the reasons for the disparities in SD values and might also have affected the results of the tests, which were surprising at times. On no previous test were the SD values so diverse. In the control group the disparities did not diminish; quite contrary SD values rose on the subsequent tests. It may testify to the different levels of the students' knowledge, but also to the differences in the understanding of the task. When looking at the experimental group instructed by means of text-manipulation and text-creation activities, a similar situation may be observed, with the caveat that the result was slightly lower on the immediate

posttest. On a somewhat more optimistic note, the SD values in the second experimental group, in which focused communication tasks were employed, dropped remarkably from the pretest (31.7) to the immediate posttest, when SD was 9.5, unfortunately they rose on the delayed posttest (30.6) to approach the pretest value. This may be indicative of the similar level of knowledge among the students on the immediate posttest, but may also be connected with how they understood the task on the pre- and the delayed posttest. This aspect is particularly important to consider when it comes to the 3rd conditional often confused with the 2nd conditional, which could cause serious consequences. Although no effort was spared to make the tasks comparable, the differences in the difficulty and in the potential for generating samples of language cannot be excluded. These and other important issues concerning the students' explicit and implicit knowledge of past unreal conditionals will be revisited in the discussion which follows.

5.1.3. Discussion

In the course of the quasi experiment, the researcher's attention was directed mainly to the role of focused communication tasks in the acquisition of past unreal conditionals by advanced learners of English. The instructional treatment including focused communication tasks was compared with another type of form-focused instruction, which contained a number of contextualized practice activities, such as text-manipulation and text-creation activities. As indicated by the data accrued in the course of the study, form-focused instruction overall appears to have had a beneficial effect on the development of explicit and implicit knowledge.

As far as the explicit knowledge of past unreal conditionals is concerned, no advantages of one teaching option over the other were observed, as both of them produced significant improvements in the results obtained by the two experimental groups in comparison with the control group. The students' ability to deal with comprehension and production tasks tapping explicit knowledge was also measured, and, on the basis of the results of the tests, neither type of instruction can be viewed as privileged, as both experimental groups made similar gains and differed significantly from the control group. When it comes to standard deviation scores, which are reflective of the level of the students' variability, the role of the instructional treatment cannot be neglected.

Undoubtedly, form-focused instruction caused changes in the learners' explicit knowledge, which is particularly visible on tests measuring the production dimension of this knowledge. The members of the two experimental groups appear to have systematized their explicit knowledge of the two targeted grammatical forms as they produced them accurately in a consistent manner. As far as the behaviour of the members of the control group is concerned, although the students improved their results in the course of the study despite no formal instruction in the targeted features, it may be attributed to numerous reasons, such as the practice effect, exposure-only effect, or maturation, which may have contributed to changes in the results of the groups (Norris and Ortega 2000: 468). This demonstrates that even without the crutch of the instructional treatment, the members of the control group must have become sensitized to the structure after so many tests they had to take, which may in fact have encouraged them to study the 3rd conditional on their own. Besides, they must have encountered the feature under study in some meaningful communication contexts, either in or outside the educational environment.

When it comes to the implicit dimension of the learners' knowledge estimated on the basis of the two various tests, one may acknowledge that the two instructional options affected the students' performances in a different way. As the findings suggest, undeniably, it was the group instructed by means of focused communication tasks that made the greatest gain in terms of the ability to use past unreal conditionals in their oral performance. It allows a tentative conclusion that the free production component present during the instructional treatment of the third conditional was pertinent to developing the students' implicit knowledge of the target structure. When it comes to the level of individual variation, the impact of the instructional treatment was again considerable; yet it must be noted that during the focused communication task performed in pairs the levels of the students' heterogeneity were quite high and only slightly affected by the intervention. Such a situation could have resulted from the task itself. Despite the researcher's efforts to create as similar tasks as possible for the three tests, the students might have understood them differently and might have perceived them as easy or more complex, which could have led to greater variation in their language use than in the case of written tests measuring explicit knowledge. Another reason for high standard deviation scores might have been the context for the activity, i.e. a fairly informal conversation with a group mate. According to Preston (2000: 4ff), different linguistic constructions may be employed depending on such social context factors as interlocutor or level of formality. Moreover, past unreal conditionals

themselves are an intricate grammatical feature and are used in particular situations. The students who were concentrated on message conveyance might not have paid their attention to whether they were using the 2nd or the 3rd conditional, which might have resulted in higher SD values. It may also testify to the fact that their implicit knowledge regarding this structure was not fully automatized yet.

The performance of the control group on the tests measuring implicit knowledge should also be taken into account. While the members of the group increased their results on the elicited imitation test, they performed quite poorly on the focused communication task performed in pairs. When compared with the improvement on the measures of explicit knowledge, it appears that implicit knowledge is not as likely to be developed without any instruction and assistance. The Noticing Hypothesis, proposed by Schmidt (e.g. 1990) and the role of conscious attention seems to be very important for the facilitation of linguistic knowledge. Noticing is believed to be of vital importance for the initial registering of new linguistic representations (e.g. Ellis 1997a). If the control group was deprived of the instruction in past unreal conditionals, then its members might have had problems with the development of implicit knowledge, even though they managed to improve with regard to explicit knowledge of this targeted structure. The comparison of the results achieved by the control group and the high levels of variation they revealed on the tests allows us to conclude that there must have been students who studied past unreal conditionals via self-study, which altogether improved the scores of the group.

5.2. Modals in the past

In parallel to the first part of the study measuring the effects of different types of grammar instruction on the 3rd conditional, the second part was carried out with the purpose of exploring the effects of focused communication tasks on the acquisition of modal verbs in the past. This decision was made on the grounds that it is necessary to determine whether different grammar structures are equally susceptible to this kind of treatment. The study was exactly the same in design and procedures and the same students took part; however a change was introduced in terms of the instructional treatment to which each experimental group was subjected. Group 1, which had already been instructed using focused communication tasks for the 3rd conditional, was now subjected to a different type of

instruction with the use of contextualized practice activities, i.e. text-manipulation and text-creation activities. Group 2, which had served as the CPA group when investigating the effects of instruction on the 3rd conditional, was now subjected to the instructional treatment in modals in the past by means of focused communication tasks.

To explore the effects of focused communication tasks employed in the instruction of modal verbs in the past, the statistical test of analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed, post hoc tests (LSD) were administered and effect sizes (Cohen's *d*) were estimated. The analysis of the data aimed at obtaining information both about the students' explicit and implicit knowledge. Therefore the presentation of the results of the written tests, designed to measure explicit knowledge, will commence the section, and it will be followed by the analysis of the data obtained from the tests aimed to measure implicit knowledge determined on the basis of oral performance.

5.2.1. Explicit knowledge: written tests

As evidenced by the graphical representations in Figure 16. and the data presented in Table 19., the control group performed significantly worse on the pretest when compared with the two experimental groups which did not differ from each other (CG=59.49%, CPA=70.21%, FCT=70.67%). This must definitely be taken into account when determining the effects of the instruction and comparing them with the results of the control group. Having been subjected to the two types of instructional treatment, the FCT and the CPA groups improved their results (CPA= 76.56%, FCT=74.9%) and, as expected, differed significantly from the control group (CG=63.22%) on the immediate posttest. The effect size measured on the immediate posttest proved that the distinction between the control and the experimental groups was quite large ($d=0.82$, $d=0.76$). The durability of instruction was confirmed in the carryover of gains on the delayed posttest (CG=69.28%, CPA=83.02%, FCT=81.59%) administered eight weeks after the immediate posttest. When it comes to the differences between the two experimental groups, it turned out that the CPA group did slightly better than the FCT group both on the post- and delayed posttest; nevertheless statistically significant differences were observed neither on the immediate posttest ($F=0.08$; $p=0.78$) nor on the delayed posttest ($F=0.38$; $p=0.54$). Similarly to the results concerning the 3rd conditional (see 5.1.1.), the acquisition of modal verbs in the past was

undoubtedly facilitated by grammar instruction, and the two types of treatment proved to be equally effective.

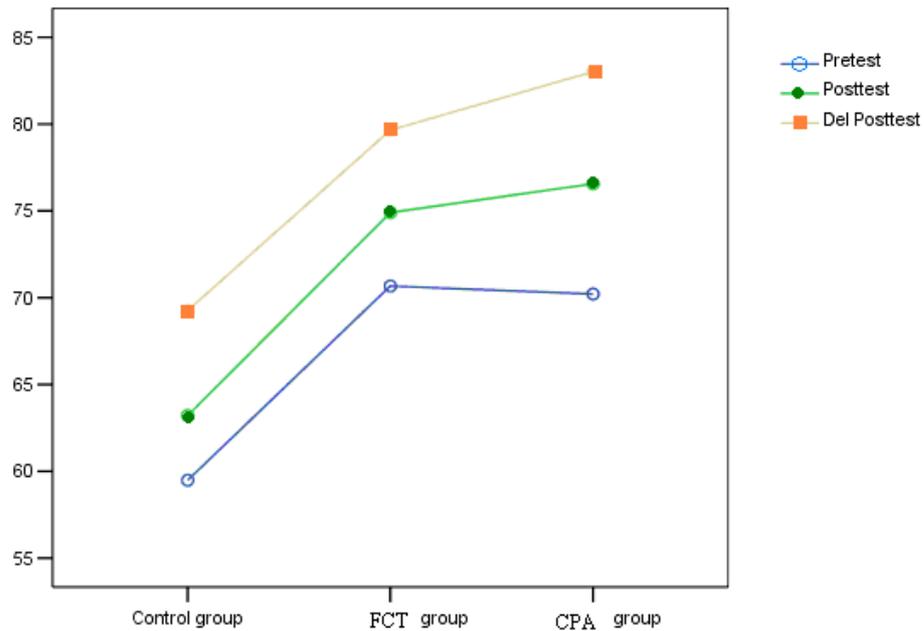


Figure 16. The mean percentage scores for the use of modals in the past on the written tests.

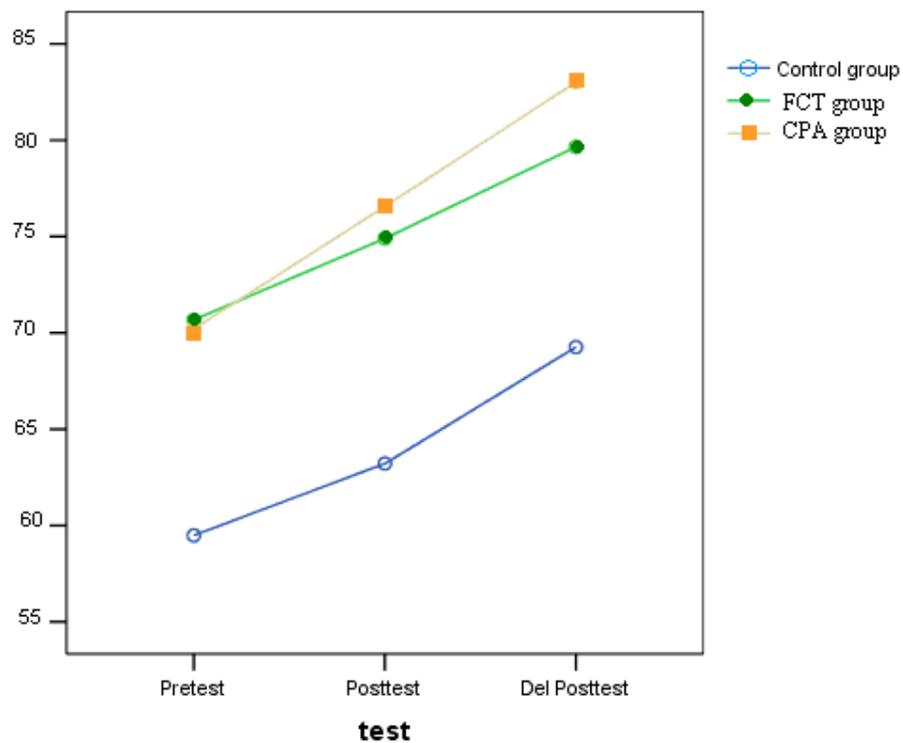


Figure 17. The mean percentage scores for the use of modals in the past for the three groups on the written tests.

Table 19. The effect of instructional treatment on the use of modals in the past on written tests.

Group	Pretest Mean	SD	Posttest Mean	SD	Delayed Posttest Mean	SD	Significance Repeated measures ANOVA a) Pre-Post b) Post-Del Post c) Pre-Del Post
Control	59.49	14.9	63.22	17.2	69.28	15.5	a) $F=1.64$ $p=0.21$ b) $F=5.52$ $p=0.02$ c) $F=13.15$ $p=0.001$
Experimental: Contextualized Practice Activities (CPA)	70.21	8.5	76.56	14.2	83.02	11.9	a) $F=4.74$ $p=0.05$ b) $F=11.38$ $p=0.006$ c) $F=32.23$ $p=0.0001$
Experimental: Focused Communication Tasks (FCT)	70.67	12.9	74.90	12.4	81.59	12.2	a) $F=1.31$ $p=0.27$ b) $F=1.96$ $p=0.18$ c) $F=14.94$ $p=0.002$
Significance ANOVA Multiple comparisons (LSD)							
a) Control-FCT	a) $F=6.03$ $p=0.01$		$F=4.77$ $p=0.03$ d=0.76		$F=4.57$ $p=0.04$		
b) FCT-CPA	b) $F=0.01$ $p=0.92$		$F=0.08$ $p=0.78$		$F=0.38$ $p=0.54$		
c) Control-CPA	c) $F=5.28$ $p=0.02$		$F=5.97$ $p=0.02$ d=0.82		$F=7.76$ $p=0.009$		

The details concerning the progress of the three groups on the consecutive tests are presented in Figure 17. and Table 19. Here, only the CPA group reached a statistically significant change on the immediate posttest (76.56%) when compared with its results on the pretest (70.21%, $F=4.74$; $p=0.05$). It also made a significant gain on the delayed posttest (83.02%), which may be indicative of the fact that the instructional treatment including text-manipulation and text-creation activities facilitated the development of explicit knowledge. When it comes to the experimental group instructed by means of focused communication tasks it also improved its results (PreM=70.67%, IPostM=74.90%,

DPostM=81.59%), but the gain became significant only on the delayed posttest in comparison with the pretest ($F=14.94$; $p=0.002$). Nevertheless, as already mentioned, at no time were the differences between the two experimental groups significant, which may justify the assumption that the two types of instruction did not generate results which were very distinct. When a closer look is taken at the control group, which was not instructed in the area of modal verbs, it becomes apparent that the students improved their scores on both the immediate posttest and the delayed posttest (PreM=59.49%, IPostM=63.22%, DPostM=69.28%), gaining about 10% overall, which generated a significant change on the delayed posttest in comparison to the previous tests. The improvement of the control group may be attributed to the increased awareness the participants developed throughout the study. It is difficult to account for the changes in the performance of the control group because, in comparison with the experimental groups, the delayed posttest score of the control group was similar to the results achieved by the FCT and the CPA groups on the pretest; therefore it is difficult to determine the actual reasons for change.

The aspect which is also worth mentioning is the distribution of standard deviation values. As may be seen in the numerical data presented in Table 19, the variability of the results in the three groups did not change much on the consecutive tests. The experimental group instructed by means of text-manipulation and text-creation activities appeared to be quite homogenous on the pretest; however its SD values grew higher on the subsequent tests. The most common justification for such a situation are the differences in the level of explicit knowledge among the students, or perhaps the students had some difficulty understanding the intricacies connected with particular modal verbs in the past. Whereas the variability is visible on the immediate posttest, it is much lower on the delayed posttest, which, when compared with higher results on the delayed posttest, may testify to some proceduralization of their knowledge. The FCT group retained its similar levels of SD on all the tests, at the same time improving the mean percentage scores, which may testify to similar levels of the development of their explicit knowledge on the consecutive tests, which may be indicative of the role of instruction in facilitating systematic use of the structures. As far as the control group is concerned, its heterogeneity was higher than in the case of the two experimental groups and did not differ much on the three tests, which may allow us to assume that instructional treatment is a facilitative factor in reducing individual variation among learners.

Similarly to the tests dealing with the acquisition of the 3rd conditional, the results of the written tests concerning the explicit knowledge of modal verbs in the past may be divided into two groups: one revealing the students' ability to comprehend the structure and the other, representing the ability to produce it. When it comes to the effects of the instructional treatments on the ability to comprehend modal verbs in the past, Figure 18. below shows the mean percentage scores obtained by each of the groups on the three consecutive measures testing the reception of the target form in terms of explicit knowledge. As transpires from this figure and the numerical information in Table 20., the members of the experimental groups differed significantly from the students in the control group on the pretest, but did not differ from each other (CG=57.17%, CPA=67.78%, FCT=69.74%). Having been subjected to grammatical intervention, the students in both experimental groups improved their mean percentage scores, both on the immediate (CG=64.21%, CPA=74.17%, FCT=75.83%) and delayed posttests (CG=65.09%, CPA=81.67%, FCT=79.58%), but, again, no statistically significant difference was reached between the two types of instruction. As expected, the increase levels were significant in comparison with the results of the control group and effect sizes on the immediate posttest were quite large ($d=0.64$ for CPA-CG; $d=0.73$ for FCT-CG). The scores obtained in the course of delayed posttest indicate that the two types of instructional treatment did suffice to produce durable effects which became impressively significant, as the distinctions between the control group and FCT ($F=11.65$; $p=0.001$) and CPA ($F=14.75$; $p=0.0005$) groups became more prominent.

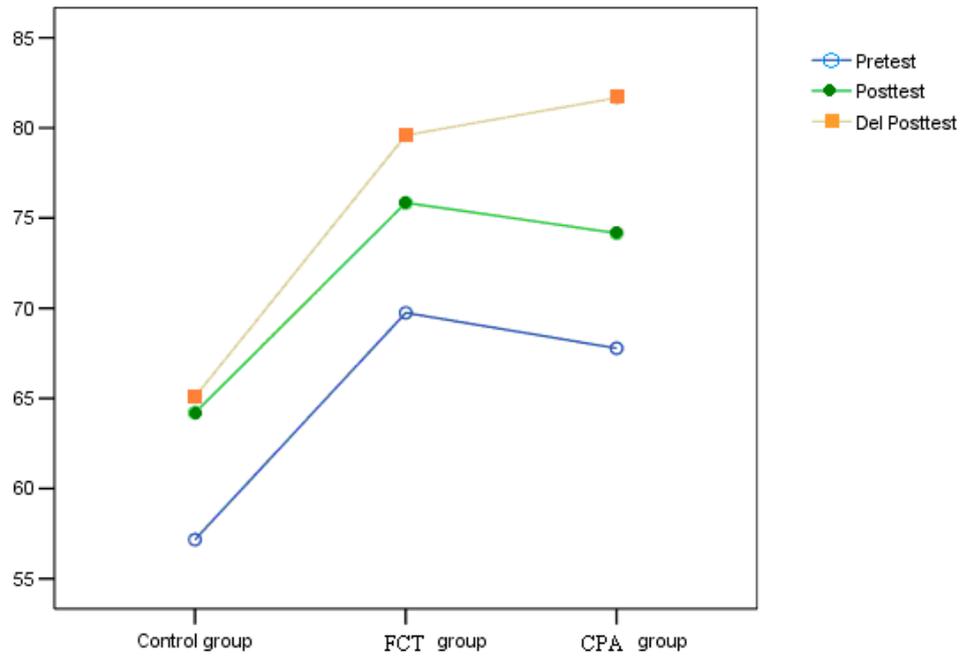


Figure 18. The mean percentage scores for modals in the past on the written tests: comprehension tasks.

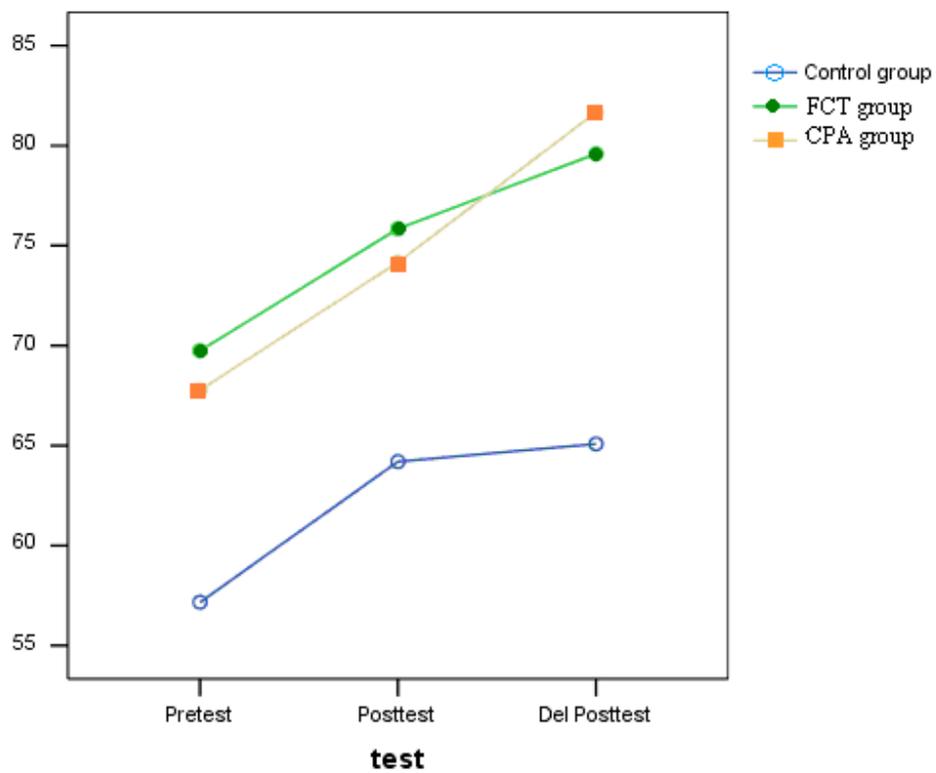


Figure 19. The mean percentage scores for the use of modals in the past for the three groups on the written tests: comprehension tasks.

Table 20. The effect of instructional treatment on the use of modals in the past on written tests: comprehension tasks.

Group	Pretest Mean	SD	Posttest Mean	SD	Delayed Posttest Mean	SD	Significance Repeated measures ANOVA a) Pre-Post b) Post-Del Post c) Pre-Del Post
Control	57.17	15.8	64.21	16.9	65.09	13.4	a) $F=3.68$ $p=0.07$ b) $F=0.05$ $p=0.83$ c) $F=3.85$ $p=0.06$
Experimental: Contextualized Practice Activities (CPA)	67.78	9.3	74.17	12.8	81.67	9.6	a) $F= 2.10$ $p=0.17$ b) $F=14.45$ $p=0.002$ c) $F=17.41$ $p=0.001$
Experimental: Focused Communication Tasks (FCT)	69.74	9.9	75.83	13.9	79.58	12.2	a) $F=4.15$ $p=0.06$ b) $F=1.19$ $p=0.29$ c) $F=13.20$ $p=0.003$
Significance ANOVA Multiple comparisons (LSD)							
a) Control-FCT	a) $F=7.82$ $p=0.008$		$F=4.80$ $p=0.03$ $d=0.73$		$F=11.65$ $p=0.001$		
b) FCT-CPA	b) $F=0.15$ $p=0.7$		$F=0.08$ $p=0.78$		$F=0.18$ $p= 0.67$		
c) Control-CPA	c) $F=5.26$ $p=0.02$		$F=3.33$ $p=0.07$ $d=0.64$		$F=14.75$ $p=0.0005$		

When analyzing the performance of the three groups on the consecutive tests, which is illustrated in Figure 19. and presented in Table 20., one can observe that the control group started with the lowest score and its progress, although visible especially on the immediate posttest, did not reach statistical significance on any measure. As far as the group instructed by means of contextualized practice activities is concerned, the students did not make a significant gain ($F=2.10$; $p=0.17$) on the immediate posttest (74.17%) when

compared with the pretest results (67.78%); however their ability to understand the form, meaning and use of modal verbs in the past improved significantly on the delayed posttest, when the CPA group achieved the best mean percentage score (81.67%) and surpassed the FCT group (79.58%). The students whose treatment included focused communication tasks approached a statistically significant gain on the immediate posttest ($F=4.15$; $p=0.06$), and carried it over on the delayed posttest ($F=13.20$; $p=0.003$) with the mean percentage score of 79.58.

The comparisons of the students' scores with their SD levels may also help explain the differences in the effects of instruction. While the standard deviation in the control group oscillated around 15% on the consecutive tests, the two experimental groups underwent some changes. Although the variation among students was quite low on the pretest (SD=9.3 for CPA, SD=9.9 for FCT), the heterogeneity of the scores grew on the immediate posttest in the two groups alike (SD for CPA=12.8, SD for FCT=13.9). Bearing in mind that the mean percentage scores obtained by the two experimental groups were higher than on the pretest (with the FCT group approaching statistical significance $p=0.06$), a conclusion may be drawn that either some students had problems with comprehending modal verbs in the past, or there were some issues which caused some difficulties. When it comes to the level of heterogeneity on the delayed posttest measuring comprehension ability concerning modal verbs in the past, SD in the FCT dropped by 1.5% and in the CPA group it approached the pretest level. When compared with the variation levels revealed by the students on the same test concerning past unreal conditionals, it seems that the numbers are comparable; therefore drawing far-fetched conclusions about one structure being more complex than the other is premature.

Apart from measuring the students' ability to comprehend the targeted structure, the written tests aimed at obtaining information about their ability to produce modal verbs in the past in terms of explicit knowledge, as well. The details concerning the effects of instruction on the ability to produce modals in the past are illustrated in Figures 20. and 21. and presented numerically in Table 21. As can be seen from the graphical representation of the results in Figure 20. and the numerical data in Table 21., the three groups did not differ significantly on the pretest (CG=60.92%, CPA=71.67%, FCT=71.23%), although one cannot escape noticing that the score obtained by the control group was much lower than of the two experimental groups. The comparison of the scores obtained on the immediate posttest (CG=62.63%, CPA=78%, FCT=74.33%) revealed that the two types of

intervention did not generate statistically significant differences between the CPA and FCT groups, since both of them made a similar gain with effect sizes approaching large ($d=0.72$ for CPA-CG; $d=0.61$ for FCT-CG). In comparison with the control group, however, it was the CPA group that benefitted more from the instruction, because the difference between CPA and CG was statistically significant ($F=4.88$; $p=0.03$) on the immediate posttest. When it comes to the analysis of the delayed posttest results (CG=71.79%, CPA=83.83%, FCT=81.64%), all the three groups made a gain compared to the immediate posttest and the control group diminished its gap in relation to the two experimental groups, which resulted in no significant differences between the three groups on the delayed posttest. It is, however, worth pointing out that it was the students instructed with the help of contextualized practice activities who made a gain on the delayed posttest approaching a significant difference ($F=3.24$; $p=0.08$) in comparison with the non-instructed group.

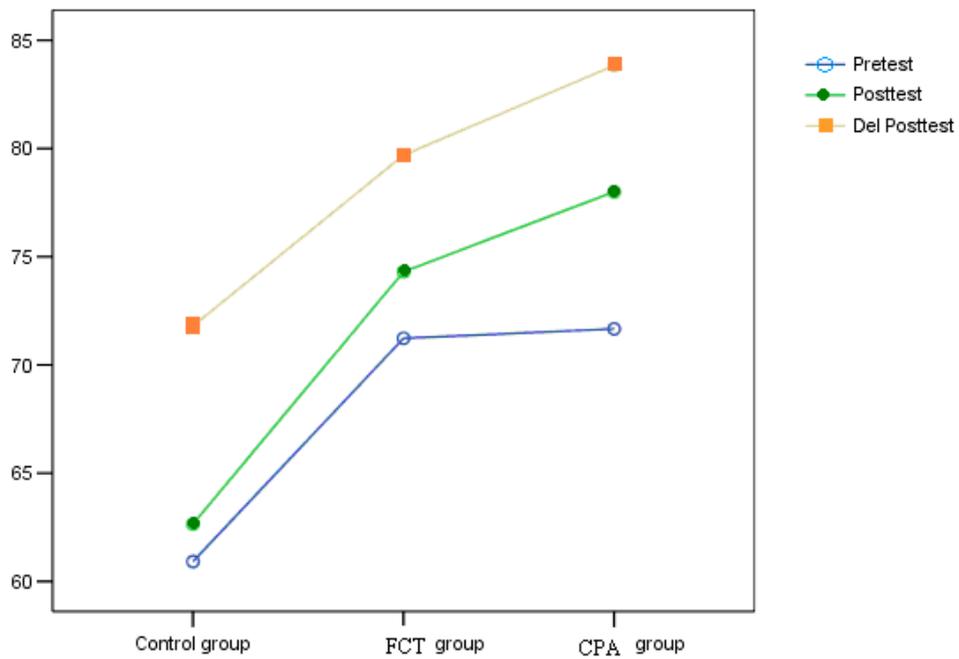


Figure 20. The mean percentage scores for modals in the past on the written tests: production tasks.

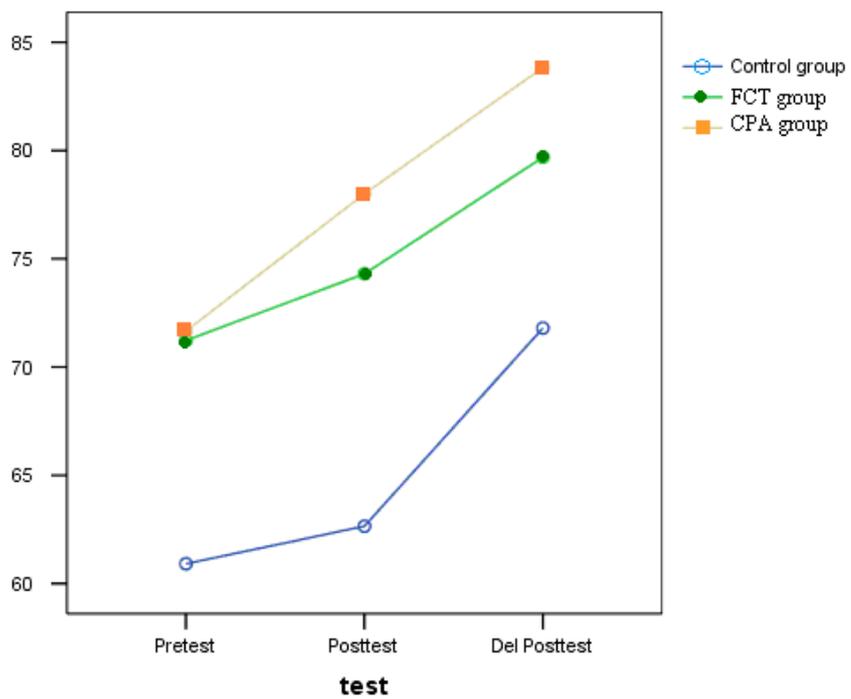


Figure 21. The mean percentage scores for the use of modals in the past for the three groups on the written tests: production tasks.

Table 21. The effect of instructional treatment on the use of modals in the past on written tests: production tasks.

Group	Pretest Mean	SD	Posttest Mean	SD	Delayed Posttest Mean	SD	Significance Repeated measures ANOVA a) Pre-Post b) Post-Del Post c) Pre-Del Post
Control	60.92	17.4	62.63	22.8	71.79	21.7	a) $F=0.20$ $p=0.66$ b) $F=10.77$ $p=0.003$ c) $F=9.46$ $p=0.006$
Experimental: Contextualized Practice Activities (CPA)	71.67	11.3	78.00	18.5	83.83	15.1	a) $F=2.37$ $p=0.15$ b) $F=3.91$ $p=0.07$ c) $F=14.85$ $p=0.002$
Experimental: Focused Communication Tasks (FCT)	71.23	18.0	74.33	12.8	81.64	15.4	a) $F=0.33$ $p=0.57$ b) $F=1.70$ $p=0.21$ c) $F=4.30$ $p=0.06$
Significance ANOVA Multiple comparisons (LSD)							
a) Control-FCT	a) $F= 3.20$ $p=0.08$		$F=2.92$ $p=0.09$ $d=0.61$		$F=1.45$ $p=0.23$		
b) FCT-CPA	b) $F=0.004$ $p=0.94$		$F=0.23$ $p=0.63$		$F=0.32$ $p=0.57$		
c) Control-CPA	c) $F=3.32$ $p=0.07$		$F=4.88$ $p=0.03$ $d=0.72$		$F=3.24$ $p=0.08$		

The analysis of the results obtained on the consecutive tests measuring explicit knowledge during producing modal verbs in the past, presented in Figure 21. and Table 21., revealed that none of the groups improved their score significantly on the immediate posttest in comparison with the pretest. As far as the control group is concerned (PreM=60.92%, IPostM=62.63%, DPostM=71.79%), it gained almost 2% on the immediate posttest, but when it comes to the delayed posttest, the students improved their score by

more than 9% in comparison with the immediate posttest, which made the change statistically significant ($F=10.77$; $p=0.003$). The FCT group whose instruction included focused communication tasks, approached a statistically significant improvement as late as on the delayed posttest ($F=4.30$; $p=0.06$), with a 3% gain on the immediate posttest (74.33%) and a 7% increase on the delayed posttest (81.64%) in comparison to the pretest score (71.23%). The changes in the level of the explicit knowledge of modals in the past investigated in the production tasks were in fact similar for the FCT and the control groups, which makes the findings of the study difficult to interpret. The students from the CPA group made the greatest, albeit not statistically significant, improvement on the immediate posttest (78%), and later on the delayed posttest the result was even higher (83.83%) and the gain became statistically significant ($F=14.85$; $p=0.002$) in comparison with the pretest (71.67%). It also approached significance in relation to the immediate posttest ($F=3.91$; $p=0.07$).

When it comes to standard deviation values, the changes observed are quite intricate. As far as the control and the CPA groups are concerned, their SD values increased on the immediate posttest but then decreased on the delayed posttest, with the caveat that the control group was generally more heterogeneous than the CPA group. The group instructed by means of focused communication tasks revealed quite a high SD value on the pretest ($SD=18$), but the level of variation decreased on the immediate posttest ($SD=12.8$) to slightly increase on the delayed posttest ($SD=15.4$) and become equal with that of the CPA group ($SD=15.1$). Such scores in the CPA group may indicate the delayed effects of the instructional treatment with regard to the variability of the students' interlanguage. On the one hand, the mean percentage score rose, which testifies to the effectiveness of the intervention; on the other, however, the variability among the students' increased as well, which means they provided a greater number of both correct and incorrect answers. It may also be connected with the particular characteristics of individual learners, who might have required more time to process the complex notion of modal verbs in the past. On the other hand, the level of heterogeneity in the FCT group implies that the group might have benefitted from focused communication tasks, because it not only scored higher on the immediate posttest, but the standard deviation result was also lower, which indicates that the students were more homogeneous in providing correct answers.

5.2.2. Implicit knowledge

The analysis of the results of the empirical investigations exploring the effect of focused communication tasks on the instructed acquisition of modal verbs in the past concentrated on measuring the two types of knowledge: explicit and implicit. The written tests aimed to determine the students' explicit knowledge of the structure whereas and in order to tap the learners' implicit knowledge, the researcher used two oral instruments: individual elicited imitation test and pair focused communication task. As was the case with the 3rd conditional, statistical analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed, post hoc tests (LSD) were administered and effect sizes (Cohen's *d*) were estimated to examine the effects of instructional treatment on the students' ability to produce the structure in question.

5.2.2.1. Elicited imitation test: individual recordings

As demonstrated in Figure 22 and Table 22, the pretest mean percentage scores in the three groups did not differ significantly on the elicited imitation task (CG=63.95%, CPA=74.17%, FCT=66.15%), which warrants the assumption that the differences that were revealed in the posttest procedure could be attributed to the instructional treatment administered to the experimental groups. The comparison of the results on the immediate posttest revealed that the instructional treatment contributed to significant changes between the two experimental groups. The CPA (89.79%) made a significant gain ($F=4.70$; $p=0.04$) in comparison to the FCT group (79.17%), which might speak to the superiority of this kind of instructional treatment over the other. Also, as expected, the group instructed by means of text-manipulation and text-creation activities (CPA=89.79%) differed considerably ($F=7.07$; $p=0.01$) from the control group (77.89%) on the immediate posttest, with the effect size being large and standing at $d=0.98$. By contrast, the group which had the benefit of focused communication tasks during the instructional treatment did not differ significantly from the control group on the immediate posttest ($F=0.09$; $p=0.76$), and the effect size reached by this group was small ($d=0.1$). It is indeed a very interesting situation as, in the case of the elicited imitation immediate posttest measuring the implicit knowledge of the 3rd conditional, there were no such differences between the two experimental groups, and it was the FCT group that scored higher than the CPA (see

5.1.2.1). It can be attributed to the fact that the CPA group, which was the FCT for the previous study, had benefitted from the 3rd conditional treatment which made the students more sensitive to errors, and improved their detection abilities resulting in raising their awareness in the course of the quasi-experiment. Apart from the influence of the previous grammatical intervention, the situation might also have been caused by the differences between the investigated grammatical features (see 4.2.). When it comes to the delayed posttest results (CG=78.68%, CPA=91.04%, FCT=86.59%), the distinction between the two experimental groups lost its significance ($p=0.08$) and this time both CPA and FCT groups differed significantly from the non-instructed group ($p<0.0001$, $p=0.01$ respectively).

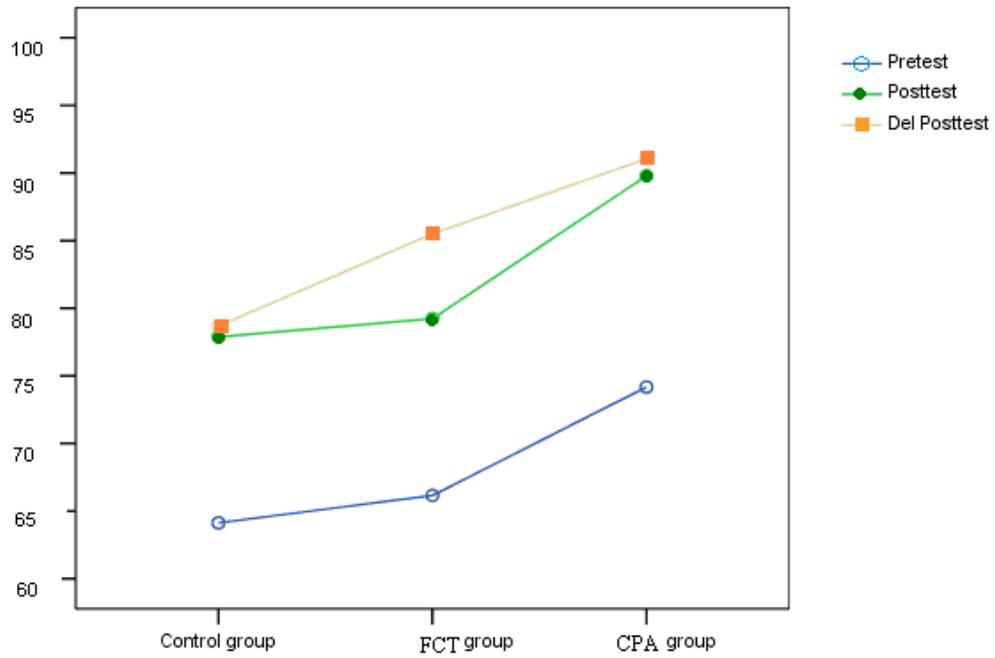


Figure 22. The mean percentage scores for modals in the past on the elicited imitation test.

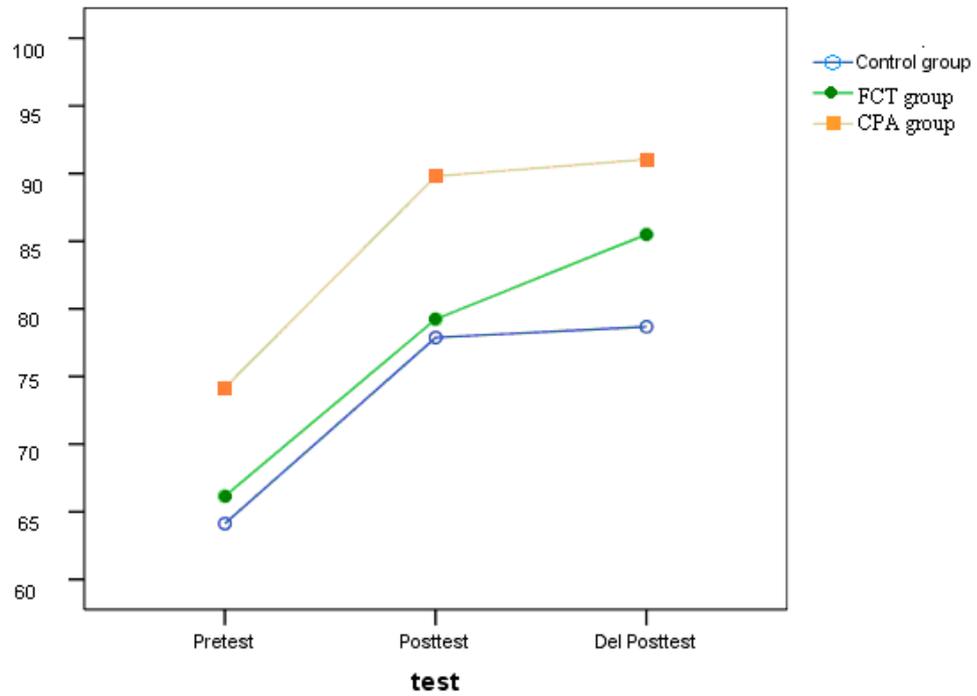


Figure 23. The mean percentage scores for the use of modals for the three groups on elicited imitation test.

Table 22. The effect of instructional treatment on the use of modals in the past on elicited imitation test.

Group	Pretest Mean	SD	Posttest Mean	SD	Delayed Posttest Mean	SD	Significance Repeated measures ANOVA a) Pre-Post b) Post-Del Post c) Pre-Del Post
Control	63.95	19.9	77.89	14.7	78.68	9.8	a) $F=15.51$ $p=0.0008$ b) $F=0.12$ $p=0.73$ c) $F=14.40$ $p=0.001$
Experimental: Contextualized Practice Activities (CPA)	74.17	17.46	89.79	7.4	91.04	4.1	a) $F=13.21$ $p=0.003$ b) $F=0.38$ $p=0.55$ c) $F=12.90$ $p=0.004$
Experimental: Focused Communication Tasks (FCT)	66.15	16.1	79.17	12.3	86.59	6.3	a) $F=16.92$ $p=0.001$ b) $F=3.87$ $p=0.07$ c) $F=25.71$ $p=0.0002$
Significance ANOVA Multiple comparisons (LSD)							
a) Control-FCT	a) $F=0.10$ $p=0.75$		$F=0.09$ $p=0.76$ d=0.10		$F=6.29$ $p=0.01$		
b) FCT-CPA	b) $F=1.23$ $p=0.27$		$F=4.70$ $p=0.04$		$F=3.32$ $p=0.08$		
c) Control-CPA	c) $F=2.30$ $p=0.13$		$F=7.07$ $p=0.01$ d=0.98		$F=20.81$ $p<0.0001$		

The observation of the progress of the particular groups on the consecutive tests may be assisted by the graphical representation in Figure 23 and numerical data in Table 22. Paradoxically, it was the control group which made the most impressive gain on the immediate posttest (77.89%) when compared with the pretest results (63.95%; $p=0.0008$). But, while analysing the data more thoroughly, it should be kept in mind that the students had the lowest score on the pretest out of all the three groups and their result on the immediate posttest was still lower than in the two experimental groups. The control group maintained their level on the delayed posttest (78.68%), which was still significantly below

the scores of the two other groups. When it comes to the group instructed by means of contextualized practice activities, the students made a significant gain ($F=13.21$; $p=0.003$) on the immediate posttest (89.79%) compared with the pretest score (74.17%), and their delayed posttest result did not differ much (91.04%), remaining much at the same level, which testifies to the carryover of implicit knowledge. Much more dynamic changes were encountered in the FCT group, whose gain on the immediate posttest (79.17%), although not as high as in the CPA group, reached statistical significance in comparison with the pretest score (66.15%) and, what is of particular importance, was not only carried over but also followed by another gain (approaching statistical significance with $p=0.07$) on the delayed posttest (86.59%). Eventually, it turned out that the FCT group made an impressive gain from the pretest (66.15%) to the delayed posttest (86.59%) with $F=25.71$ and $p=0.0002$, and it was the FCT group that improved most in terms of mean percentage scores in the course of this procedure, gaining more than 20% altogether.

Taking into consideration the standard deviation values, a persistent decrease in the heterogeneity in all the groups may be observed, with the highest drop by more than 13% in the CPA group, whereas the levels of variation in the two other groups were decreased by 10% from the pretest to the delayed posttest. On the basis of the mean percentage scores and the levels of the students' individual variation, it may be assumed that there was a considerable effect of grammar instruction, because the instructed students not only achieved high results on the test, but they were also quite systematic in their answers, which may indicate the development of their implicit knowledge. In comparison with the two experimental groups, the level of heterogeneity manifested by the control group was higher, which may indicate there were more students in this group who provided differential answers, which testifies to the variability of their interlanguage, or shows that some students studied the target structure on their own and provided very good answers, contrary to those who did not.

The conclusion that may be drawn on the basis of the analysis of the elicited imitation task results is that it was the instructional treatment with the use of focused communication tasks that proved more effective in the long run, although contextualized practice activities also generated statistically significant changes in the students' ability to perform the task aiming to measure their implicit knowledge.

5.2.2.2. Focused communication task: pair session recordings

The results obtained from the focused communication task are presented graphically in Figures 24. and 25. and numerically in Table 23. As can be seen from Figure 24. below, the participants of the study from the three groups did not differ significantly from each other in the course of the pretest (CG=74.67%, CPA=85.71%, FCT=64.84%), which is why it can be assumed that the differences revealed in the posttest procedure could be attributed to the effects of the instructional treatment. The comparison of the scores obtained on the immediate posttest (CG=67.82%, CPA=98.31%, FCT=86.20%) following the two types of intervention speaks to the value of grammar instruction. The two types of instructional treatment did not generate significantly different scores between the two experimental groups ($F=1.30$; $p=0.26$); however when it comes to the results obtained by the control group, one could observe considerable differences between the non instructed and instructed students. The group instructed by means of focused communication tasks (FCT=86.20%) achieved scores approaching statistical significance ($F=3.77$; $p=0.06$) in comparison with the control group (CG=67.82%) on the immediate posttest and the effect size was quite high at $d=0.62$. An impressive immediate posttest result was achieved by the group whose instruction included text-manipulation and text-creation activities (CPA=98.31%), as the students differed remarkably from the control group ($F=10.15$; $p=0.003$) and the effect size was very large at $d=1.21$. Such a high Cohen's d value may also have resulted from the control group's low score on the two posttests. The delayed posttest results (CG=64.08%, CPA=96.96%, FCT=87.5%), administered ten weeks after the treatment involving modal verbs in the past, confirmed the carryover of implicit knowledge, as the students not only maintained but also improved their results from the immediate posttest. Similarly to the immediate posttest, no difference was observed between the results obtained by the two experimental groups, but both of them differed significantly from the control group ($F=6.30$ and $p=0.01$ for the FCT; $F=12.14$ and $p=0.001$ for the CPA group).

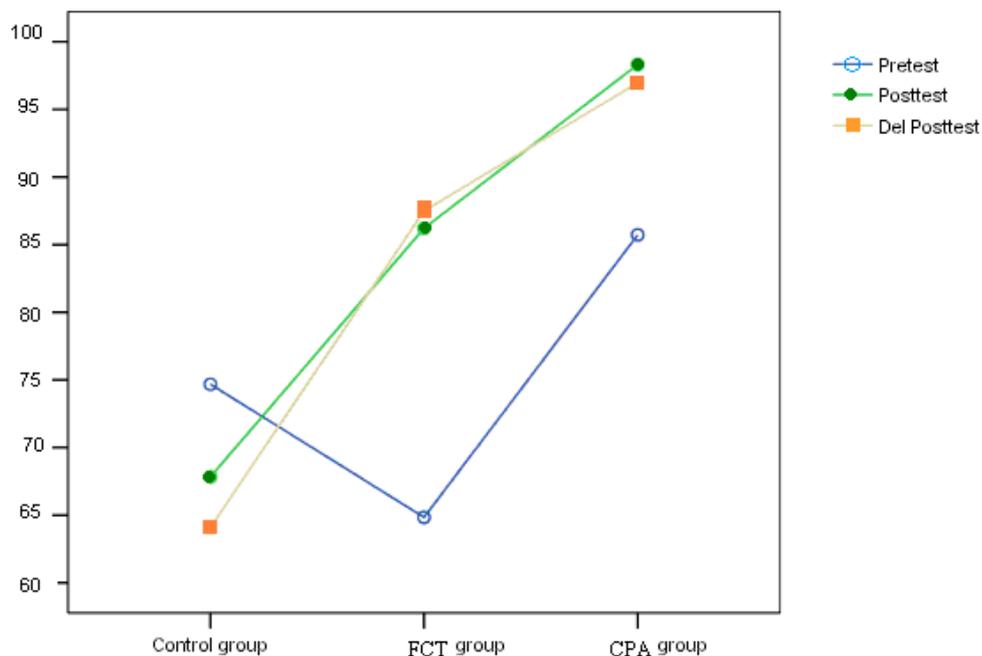


Figure 24. The mean percentage scores for modals in the past on the focused communication task.

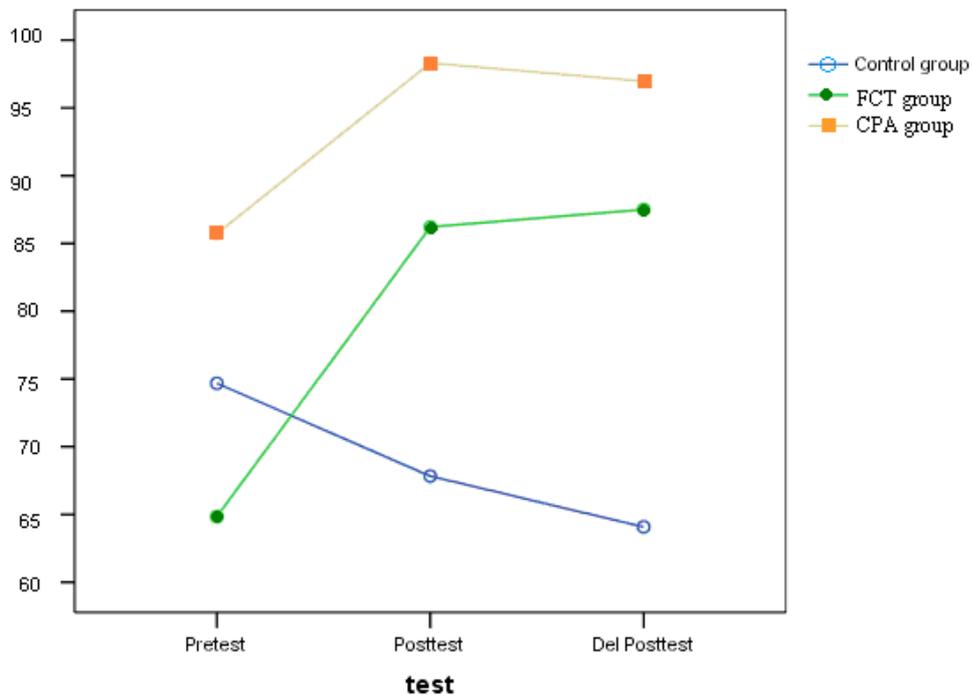


Figure 25. The mean percentage scores for the use of modals for the three groups on the focused communication task.

Table 23. The effect of instructional treatment on the use of modals in the past on focused communication task.

Group	Pretest Mean	SD	Posttest Mean	SD	Delayed Posttest Mean	SD	Significance Repeated measures ANOVA a) Pre-Post b) Post-DelPost c) Pre-Del Post
Control	74.67	27.8	67.82	37.5	64.08	32.7	a) $F=0.54$ $p=0.47$ b) $F=0.20$ $p=0.65$ c) $F=1.76$ $p=0.19$
Experimental: Contextualized Practice Activities (CPA)	85.71	25.0	98.31	3.4	96.96	4.6	a) $F=2.76$ $p=0.12$ b) $F=1.51$ $p=0.24$ c) $F=2.25$ $p=0.16$
Experimental: Focused Communication Tasks (FCT)	64.84	42.5	86.20	16.7	87.5	27.4	a) $F=4.23$ $p=0.06$ b) $F=0.02$ $p=0.89$ c) $F=4.91$ $p=0.04$
Significance ANOVA Multiple comparisons (LSD)							
a) Control-FCT	a) $F=0.74$ $p=0.39$		$F=3.77$ $p=0.06$ $d=0.62$		$F=6.30$ $p=0.01$		
b) FCT-CPA	b) $F=2.73$ $p=0.11$		$F=1.30$ $p=0.26$		$F=0.81$ $p=0.37$		
c) Control-CPA	c) $F=0.89$ $p=0.35$		$F=10.15$ $p=0.003$ $d=1.21$		$F=12.14$ $p=0.001$		

As illustrated by the graphical representation in Figure 25. and the data in Table 23., the results achieved by the three groups on the consecutive tests differed considerably. When it comes to the control group, the students did not make any gains in terms of their ability to use the targeted feature, but, conversely, their scores on the posttests (IPostM=67.82%, DPostM=64.08%) were in fact worse than on the pretest (74.67%). The CPA group, which was instructed by means of contextualized practice activities, did not improve significantly on any measure, but one cannot escape noticing that the result

obtained on the pretest was itself quite high (PreM=85.71%, IPostM=98.31%, DPostM=96.96%). The FCT group whose score on the pretest was the lowest of all (64.84%), made a significant gain on the immediate posttest (86.2%), and improved the score on the delayed posttest (87.5%). All of this demonstrates that, it was definitely the group instructed by means of focused communication tasks that made the greatest gain thanks to the instructional treatment, which may again attest to the usefulness of focused communication tasks for the development of implicit knowledge.

An aspect worth taking into account, which may help determine the reasons for the performance of three groups, are the standard deviation values. The group which was the most diversified one on the pretest was the FCT group (42.5%) and its SD levels decreased by 26% to reach 16.7% on the posttest, which may be attributed to the instructional treatment. It appears that grammar instruction not only fostered the learners' knowledge of the targeted structure, but it also contributed to systematizing their interlanguage. The two other groups had similar SD values on the pretest (SD for CG=27.8, SD for CPA=25) and, again, taking into account the results of the intervention, the heterogeneity was observed to drop impressively in the CPA group (SD=3.4%), whereas it actually increased in the non-instructed group (SD=37.5%). When it comes to the delayed posttest, it was the group instructed with the help of text-manipulation and text-creation activities that kept the level of SD closest to the posttest (SD=4.6%). The students in the control group became less varied than on the posttest (SD=32.7%), but they were still more so than on the pretest. An increase in standard deviation on the delayed posttest was observed in the FCT group (SD=27.4%), but it did not even approach the level of the pretest. In the light of such differences in SD values, one can conclude that both types of the instructional treatment definitely helped to reduce the variability within the two experimental groups in contrast to the group which had not been instructed area of modal verbs in the past. The differences in SD values in the two experimental groups may also be accounted for by looking at individual students, their characteristics, learning strategies and willingness to work with others. These important issues will be revisited while discussing the relationships between individual differences and the results of the tests.

5.2.3. Discussion

The picture that emerges from the analysis of the results obtained by the advanced learners of English with regard to their knowledge of modal verbs in the past is quite complex and seems more difficult to interpret than in the case of the 3rd conditional. One reason for that was the poor pretest performance of the control group, which did not make the analysis so straightforward. Nevertheless, as far as the explicit dimension of the knowledge of the targeted features is concerned, form-focused instruction undoubtedly brought positive changes. The two experimental groups differed in terms of a particular teaching option employed during the treatment; one of them was subjected to a number of focused communication tasks, and the other was taught by means of text-manipulation and text-creation activities. While the members of the two experimental groups achieved results significantly better than the control group, no significant difference was observed between the effects of the two teaching options when it comes to explicit knowledge measured by means of the written test, aiming at determining the students' ability to comprehend and produce modal verbs in the past. Another aspect which needs to be mentioned are the values of standard deviation. In comparison with past unreal conditionals, the SD levels were much higher for the two experimental groups, which may indicate that the grammar structure in question was more difficult and the students were not so homogenous with regard to their explicit knowledge. Such an assumption finds support in the students' mean percentage scores, which were also generally lower than in the case of past unreal conditionals. It is also in line with the subjects' responses in the questionnaire where they graded modal verbs as more difficult than conditionals. As far as the explicit knowledge of the control group is concerned, some improvement could be observed, particularly when it comes to comprehension ability, and there may have been a number of factors contributing to such a situation. In spite of the lack of any instruction in the area of modal verbs, the members of the control group might have studied the target features on their own, they may have encountered them incidentally while reading or listening, or simply obtained better results due to the practice effect of the test itself. Relatively high levels of SD when it comes to the written test also provide evidence for the heterogeneity among the non-instructed participants of the study.

When it comes to implicit knowledge, the three groups did not differ significantly on the two pretests (i.e. elicited imitation test and focused communication test), thanks to

which the differences revealed on the posttests could be attributed to the treatment. As expected, form-focused instruction did generate a statistically significant improvement in the case of the two experimental groups when compared with the non-instructed group. Although it turned out that the contextualized practice activities brought about more impressive gains than focused communication tasks, as the immediate posttest results indicated, which is quite contradictory to the results obtained on the same tests concerning the 3rd conditional, a closer look at the situation may in fact provide some contrary evidence. The CPA group was instructed by means of focused communication tasks in the case of the previous structure, which may help understand why they scored so well on the two tests measuring their implicit knowledge. One of the possible reasons could be their increased awareness due to the intervention implementing focused communication tasks which might have drawn their attention to errors. Although it is undeniable that the results of the CPA group were better on the immediate posttests measuring implicit knowledge when compared with the FCT group, it was in fact the FCT group that gained the most in the long run, as evidenced by the delayed posttest results, both in the case of the elicited imitation task and the focused communication task. No doubt, it was the FCT group that underwent dynamic changes throughout the study, which proves the effectiveness of the treatment comprising focused communication tasks. The issue which also needs to be taken into account while discussing the results of the tests are the characteristic features of the two structures in question which have been discussed in 4.2. Both in the opinion of grammarians, and also the actual participants of the study, modal verbs in the past cause much difficulty for language learners in terms of their form, meaning and function, particularly during spontaneous time-pressured performance. When it comes to the form of modal verbs in the past, the students often forgot *have*, saying, for example, *could done* instead of *could have done*. They also used incorrect forms of *mustn't have done*, or *need have done*. Many of them confused the meaning of, for example, *could have done* and used it to mean *could do*. The instances of the actual forms produced by the students were presented in Chapter 4 (see 4.6.3.). Apart from the two experimental groups, the performance of the control group on the tests measuring implicit knowledge needs to be discussed. Despite having received no instruction in modal verbs in the past, the students managed to achieve a significant increase on the immediate posttest elicited imitation task. What needs to be remembered is that it was their fifth test of this type, which must have affected their score positively. Such high levels of implicit knowledge are no longer visible

in the pair focused communication tasks, when the members of the control group achieved no statistically significant gains on the consecutive tests and revealed considerable levels of heterogeneity. All of this allows us to conclude that the implicit knowledge of the control group was accidental and unsystematized. It is also possible that certain students belonging to the control group studied the target structures by themselves, which may have affected the results.

5.3. Regular classes – observation of implicit knowledge

The regular classes which were observed with a view to analysing the students' language in terms of implicit knowledge of past counterfactual conditionals and modal verbs in the past were two practical English classes: listening/speaking and reading/speaking and one content class: British culture. The subjects were taught by three different academic teachers, the same in each group. The details concerning the organization of the classes which were observed and recorded were described in detail in 4.6.3.4. together with the procedures of data collection and analysis. Due to the necessity to exclude some parts of the material, which was explained in detail in 4.6.3.4, the analysis will only include the data which proved suitable to answer the research questions posed in 4.1. The 27 lessons were observed with a view to measuring the students' implicit knowledge of the two structures in question during various communication tasks, which aimed at obtaining information, solving problems, giving advice, sharing experiences or drawing conclusions. At no time were the participants of the study told or encouraged to produce language containing either the 3rd conditional or modal verbs in the past. To explore the effects of focused communication tasks employed during the instructional treatment of the two structures under study, the statistical test of analysis of variance ANOVA was administered, post hoc tests (LSD) were conducted and effect sizes (Cohen's *d*) were estimated.

5.3.1. Past unreal conditionals

As demonstrated in Figure 26. and Table 24., which represent the mean percentage scores for the use of past counterfactual conditionals by the students in the three groups during

regular classes, it was impossible to obtain enough data containing the 3rd conditional on the pretest (cf. 4.6.3.4.). Therefore, the analysis commences with discussing the results obtained after the students had been subjected to the different types of intervention. The comparison of the mean percentage scores from the lessons recorded as immediate posttests (CG=50%, FCT=87.74%, CPA=64.44%) revealed that, as far as past unreal conditionals are concerned, it was definitely the group instructed by means of focused communication tasks that reached the highest score and at the same time became significantly better than the CPA ($F=5.92$; $p=0.02$) and the control group ($F=16.04$; $p=0.0003$). There were no significant differences between the control and the CPA groups. The effect size, which measured the scope of difference between the FCT and the control group, estimated on the immediate posttest, was very large at $d=1.45$, and the effect size between the control and the CPA groups approached a medium level ($d=0.44$). It is also worth taking into account the mean percentage scores of the students' performance during the classes serving as delayed posttest (CG=60.05%, FCT=92.18%, CPA=72.66%), as they confirmed the relationships from the immediate posttest. In this case, the difference between the FCT and the control group became even more significant at $F=24.47$ and $p<0.0001$ and also the experimental students, who had been subjected to two types of the instructional treatment, differed considerably at $F=6.50$ and $p=0.01$. The score obtained by the CPA group in the course of the delayed posttest was sufficient to reach statistical significance when compared with the control group's ($F=4.34$; $p=0.04$), which may evidence that text-manipulation and text-creation activities also facilitated the development of the students' implicit knowledge of the target form.

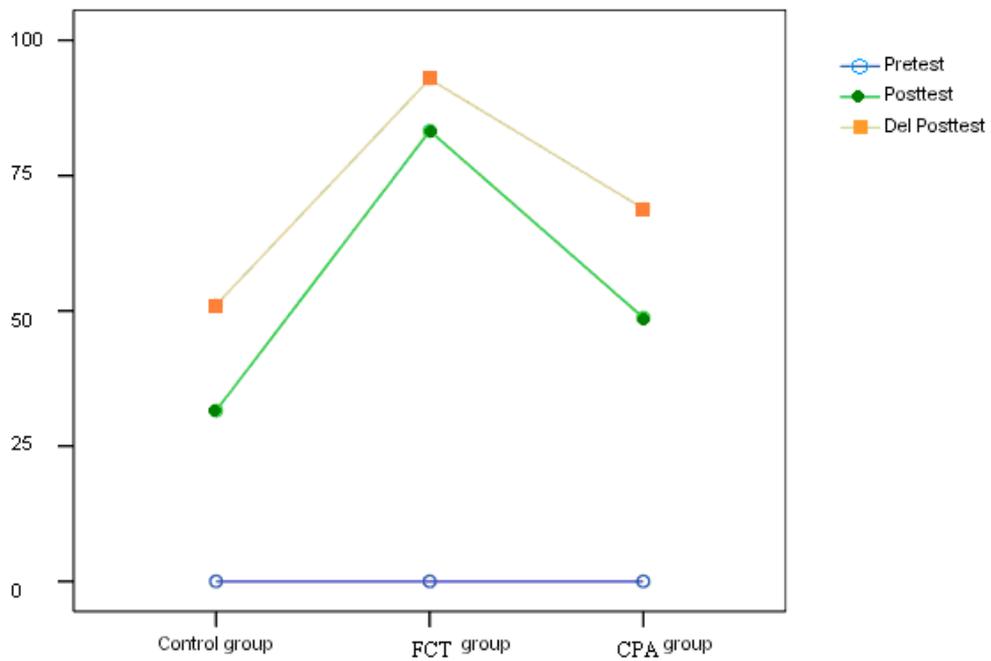


Figure 26. The mean percentage scores for the use of 3rd conditional during regular classes.

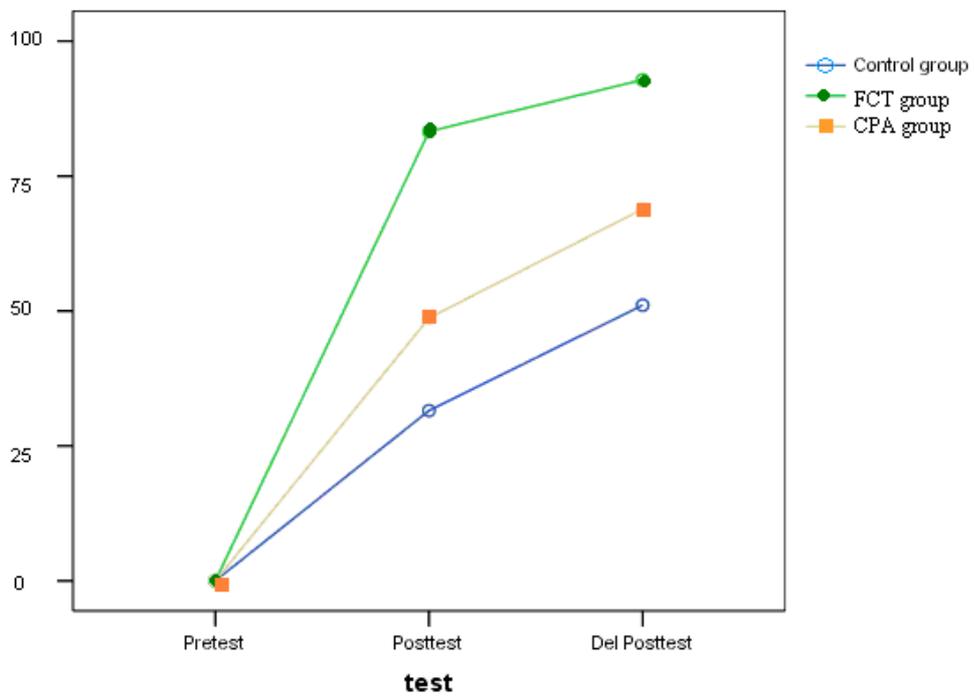


Figure 27. The mean percentage scores for the use of 3rd conditional for the three groups during regular classes.

Table 24. The effect of instructional treatment on the use of 3rd conditional during regular classes.

Group	Pretest Mean	SD	Posttest Mean	SD	Delayed Posttest Mean	SD	Significance Repeated measures ANOVA a) Pre-Post b) Post-Del Post c) Pre-Del Post
Control	0.00	0.0	50.00	38.8	60.05	29.6	a) $F=13.21$ $p=0.001$ b) $F=8.31$ $p=0.009$ c) $F=59.39$ $p<0.0001$
Experimental: Focused Communication Tasks (FCT)	0.00	0.0	87.74	29.7	92.18	9.3	a) $F=94.26$ $p<0.0001$ b) $F=1.27$ $p=0.28$ c) $F=1194$ $p<0.0001$
Experimental: Contextualized Practice Activities (CPA)	0.00	0.0	64.44	38.7	72.66	24.3	a) $F=20.58$ $p=0.0006$ b) $F=6.46$ $p=0.002$ c) $F=104.02$ $p<0.0001$
Significance ANOVA Multiple comparisons (LSD) a) Control-FCT b) FCT-CPA c) Control-CPA	Inadequate data		a) $F=16.04$ $p=0.0003$ $d=1.45$ b) $F=5.92$ $p=0.02$ c) $F=1.75$ $p=0.19$ $d=0.44$	$F=24.47$ $p<0.0001$ $F=6.50$ $p=0.01$ $F=4.34$ $p=0.04$			

Figure 27. and Table 24. present the performance of the particular groups during the consecutive regular classes recorded with a view to measuring their implicit knowledge of the target structure. As there were no ample data for the pretest, it was impossible to estimate the level of implicit knowledge during the classes in terms of the 3rd conditional before the instructional treatment. Hence, the statistical analysis of the significant changes between the tests was possible for measuring the differences in the students' performances between the post- and the delayed posttest, shown in Table 24. Nevertheless, when it comes

to the results of the two posttests, the members of the control group proved to make a significant gain from the immediate posttest (50%) to the delayed posttest (60.05%), improving their result by 10%. This demonstrates that even without the crutch of the instructional treatment, the members of the control group must have become sensitized to the structure after so many tests they had to take, which may in fact have encouraged them to study the 3rd conditional on their own. The group whose treatment included focused communication tasks scored 87.74% on the posttest and then not only carried over the gain but also improved it by 4.5% on the delayed posttest. As far as the CPA group is concerned, the students' results (64.44%) were insignificantly higher than the control group's on the immediate posttest, but the group improved by more than 8% on the delayed posttest, which sufficed to reach statistical significance ($F=6.46$; $p=0.002$). It needs to be mentioned, however, that at no time did the CPA group perform as well as the FCT group, which allows the researcher to acknowledge the facilitative role of focused communication tasks for to the development of implicit knowledge of unreal past conditionals. Not only was performance of the FCT group better on the immediate posttest, but the students also developed their ability further to achieve an even better result on the delayed posttest.

When it comes to standard deviation values measured on the two posttests, the least diversified group on the immediate posttest was definitely the one instructed with the help of focused communication tasks ($SD=29.7$). Taking into account their mean percentage score, which was also higher than in the case of the two other groups, a tentative conclusion can be drawn that the instructional treatment including focused communication tasks facilitated the development of the students' implicit knowledge, and also helped them systematize this knowledge. Both the CPA and the control group were observed to have their SD values on similar levels on the immediate posttest (>38), which would imply the contextualized practice activities did not affect the students' heterogeneity concerning the knowledge of the 3rd conditional. This assumption was partially confirmed when looking at the delayed posttest SD values, when the level of variation among students in the FCT group was 9.3, whereas the SD in the CPA group decreased only by 5% to reach 24.3, which is comparable to the level of variability of the control group ($SD=29.6$). Undoubtedly, the SD levels may also have resulted from the progress made by individual students. Knowing that the groups included both good and weak students, the discussion of the level of variation must take this into account as well; however this situation applies to

all the three groups, and therefore it does not provide explanation for the high levels of SD in the CPA and the control group.

5.3.2. Modals in the past

In the case of modal verbs in the past, the researcher succeeded in collecting appropriate data for the three sets of regular classes, serving as the pretest, immediate posttest and delayed posttest, thanks to suitable tasks and activities prepared by her teacher colleagues (see section 4.6.3.4. in Chapter Four). The results concerning the students' implicit knowledge of modal verbs in the past, obtained from the students' oral performance during the regular classes, are illustrated graphically in Figures 28. and 29. and presented numerically in Table 25. As demonstrated in Figure 28. and Table 25., the pretest mean percentage scores in the three groups did not differ significantly (CG=37.94%, CPA=40.15%, FCT=27.75%), which is why it may be assumed that the differences that were revealed on the posttest could be attributed to the type of treatment administered in the two experimental groups. As indicated by the scores obtained on the immediate posttest (CG=60.07%, CPA=85.8%, FCT=83.9%), the members of the FCT and the CPA groups benefitted from the intervention and the differences between them and the control group were statistically significant ($F=3.83; p=0.05$ and $F=4.26; p=0.04$, respectively). Moreover, the effect sizes indicating the strength of the changes also approached large levels, namely $d=0.63$ and $d=0.79$, respectively. The two types of treatment did not, however, generate statistically significant differences between the two experimental groups on the immediate posttest ($F=0.02; p=0.89$). Turning our attention to the results obtained on the delayed posttest (CG=68.95%, CPA=89.5%, FCT=79.09%), one may observe a very interesting situation: the CPA and the control groups made insignificant gains in comparison with the posttest, and the FCT group performed slightly worse than on the posttest, the drop being not significant, however. These changes resulted in the disappearance of significant differences between the two experimental groups and the control group members on the delayed posttest. As expected, the mean percentage scores of the FCT and the CPA groups did not differ significantly, either.

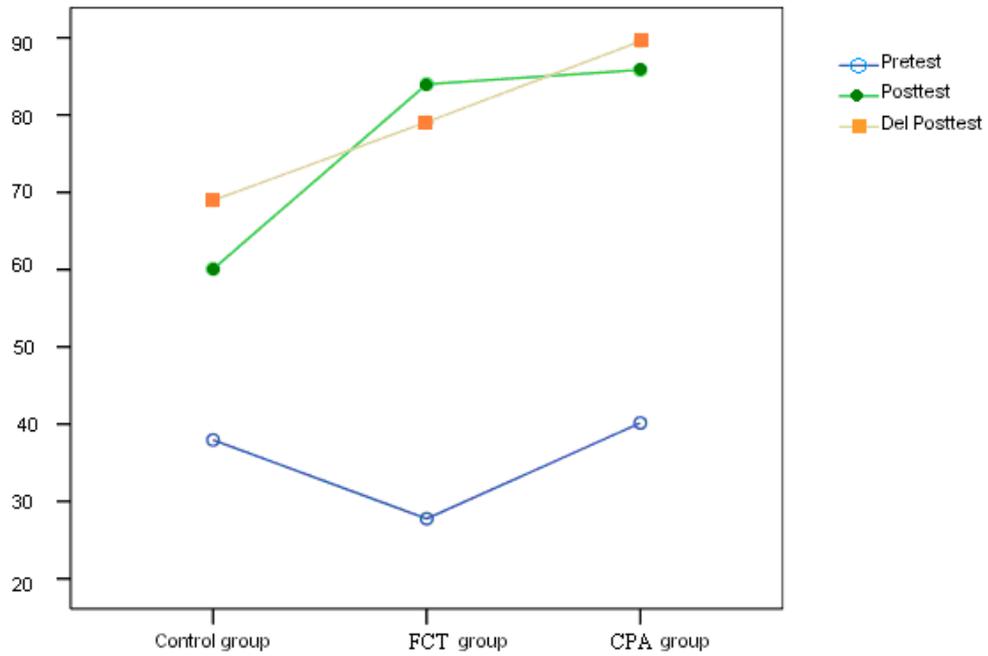


Figure 28. The mean percentage scores for the use of modals in the past during regular classes.

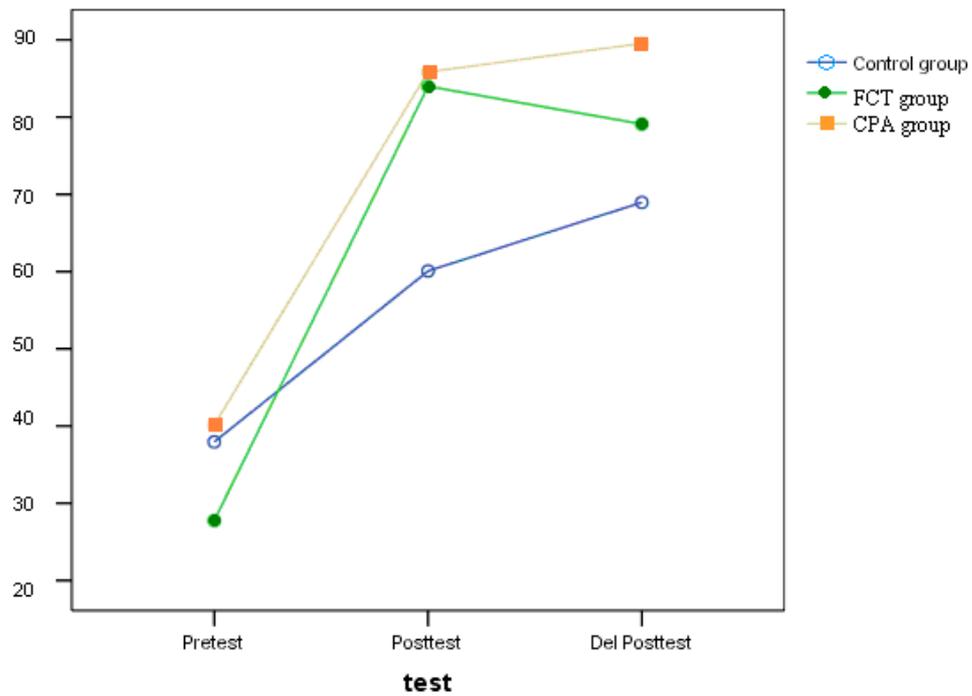


Figure 29. The mean percentage scores for the use of modals in the past for the three groups during regular classes.

Table 25. The effect of instructional treatment on the use of modals in the past during regular classes.

Group	Pretest Mean	SD	Posttest Mean	SD	Delayed Posttest Mean	SD	Significance Repeated measures ANOVA a) Pre-Post b) Post-Del Post c) Pre-Del Post
Control	37.94	44.7	60.07	38.3	68.95	34.3	a) $F=2.69$ $p=0.11$ b) $F=0.69$ $p=0.41$ c) $F=7.86$ $p=0.01$
Experimental: Contextualized Practice Activities (CPA)	40.15	45.07	85.8	22.9	89.5	8.36	a) $F=10.12$ $p=0.008$ b) $F=0.31$ $p=0.59$ c) $F=14.03$ $p=0.003$
Experimental: Focused Communication Tasks (FCT)	27.75	37.19	83.9	37.3	79.09	36.3	a) $F=21.77$ $p=0.0005$ b) $F=0.18$ $p=0.67$ c) $F=18.90$ $p=0.0009$
Significance ANOVA Multiple comparisons (LSD)							
a) Control-FCT	a) $F=0.45$ $p=0.50$		$F=3.83$ $p=0.05$ $d=0.63$		$F=0.88$ $p=0.35$		
b) FCT-CPA	b) $F=0.53$ $p=0.47$		$F=0.02$ $p=0.89$		$F=0.75$ $p=0.39$		
c) Control-CPA	c) $F=0.02$ $p=0.88$		$F=4.26$ $p=0.04$ $d=0.79$		$F=3.50$ $p=0.07$		

Figure 29. above presents the mean percentage scores of the three groups during the classes serving as pretest, immediate posttest and delayed posttest. As far as the control group is concerned, although the students improved their results from the pretest (37.94%), the gain was not sufficient to reach statistical significance on the immediate posttest (60.07%). The insignificant increase which could be observed on the delayed posttest (68.95%) generated a statistically significant difference ($F=7.86$; $p=0.01$) in comparison

with the pretest results. The CPA group instructed by means of text-manipulation and text-creation activities made a remarkable gain on the immediate posttest (85.8%), in fact doubling its score in relation to the pretest (40.15%), which obviously made the improvement statistically significant ($F=10.12$; $p=0.008$). Another, yet this time only 4%, gain was recorded on the delayed posttest (89.5%) and it confirmed the effectiveness and the durability of this type of instruction. The most impressive gain on the posttest, however, was observed in the group whose members were instructed with the help of focused communication tasks. Reaching significance of $F=21.77$; $p=0.0005$, the improvement between the pretest (FCT=27.75%) and the immediate posttest result (FCT=83.9%) was impressive. This result was not carried over in its entirety to the delayed posttest (FCT=79.09%), but the improvement was still significant at $F=18.90$; $p=0.0009$ when compared with the pretest. While scrutinizing Figure 29. and the data in Table 25., one may come to the conclusion that it was the CPA group that benefitted more from its instruction, as it scored higher. On closer inspection, however, it becomes transparent that in fact it was the FCT group that made the greatest improvement, which could definitely be attributed to the type of instruction they had received. It should be remembered the two experimental groups started off from two different levels: the FCT group performed lower by 10% than the CPA group on the pretest (CPA=40.15%, FCT=27.75%), but their immediate posttest results differed only by 1.9% (CPA=85.8%, FCT=83.9%), which does confirm the predominant effectiveness of focused communication tasks in improving students' spontaneous use of modal verbs in the past, which is indicative of developing their implicit knowledge.

In order to present a complete picture of the students' performance during the classes that were observed and recorded, the standard deviation levels in the three groups also need to be taken into account. The pretest procedure revealed that the levels of implicit knowledge the participants revealed during their regular classes varied, as SD oscillated around 40% in the three groups. Having been subjected to the instructional treatment, the CPA group reduced its heterogeneity systematically and accomplished the SD of 22.9% on the immediate posttest and 8.36% on the delayed posttest. The FCT group remained much on the same level in the course of the three measures (Pre SD=37.19%, IPost SD=37.3%, DPost SD=36.3%). As far as the control group is concerned, it turned out to be quite heterogeneous on the pretest (SD=44.7%) and then standard deviation dropped slightly both on the immediate (SD=38.3%) and the delayed posttest (SD=34.3%). It seems that the

instructional treatment comprising text-manipulation and text-creation activities helped reduce the variation among the learners better than focused communication tasks, which stands in contrast to the results obtained for the past unreal conditionals. Although the two experimental groups improved their mean percentage scores significantly, the variation was reduced in only one of them, i.e. the CPA group. In the FCT group, the impressive results do not seem to be related to the values of SD. It may indicate that some students made huge progress, while others did not, or, quite contrary, that the implicit knowledge concerning modal verbs in the past is not yet systematized, because it contains both correct, as well as incorrect or interlanguage forms. This important issue will be addressed in more detail in the discussion which follows below.

5.3.3. Discussion

The motivation behind the decision to observe the students' performance during regular classes, which included specially prepared tasks to generate both structures under study, was the intention to tap the students' actual use of the target language during semi natural language exchanges. As Ellis (1997b: 216) rightly points out, "it is extremely difficult to bring about a focus on a specific linguistic feature while at the same time maintaining true communicativeness. Once learners realize that the task is intended to provide such a focus, they are likely to stop treating it as an opportunity to communicate and switch into a 'learning' mode". It was believed that regular classes in which English was only a means for meaningful communication would enable the researcher to estimate the learners' levels of implicit knowledge and complement the data collected by means of the elicited imitation task and the focused communication task. Being aware of the possible threats connected with such data collection instruments (see 4.6.3.), the researcher decided to design, record and transcribe classes with a view to obtaining data which would assist and hopefully support the two other measures. On the basis of the analysis of the findings, it can be argued that form-focused instruction brought satisfactory results both in the case of past unreal conditionals and modals in the past, which is consistent with the data obtained from the other measures of implicit knowledge employed for the quasi experiment. Having been subjected to the instructional treatments, the two experimental groups differed significantly

from the control group, which may testify to the effectiveness of the two types of intervention.

The collected data, however, speak in particular to the effectiveness of focused communication tasks, as far as their role in developing implicit knowledge is concerned. Such a finding is reflective of the actual levels of improvement achieved by the students instructed by means of focused communication tasks during the classes serving as posttests and delayed posttests, which again is supported by the results obtained on the other measures of implicit knowledge. One of the possible reasons why the FCT group outperformed the CPA group is that the actual production of the target structures in semi natural situations helped learners to process them more deeply (Ellis and He 1999), which resulted in the development of implicit knowledge. Focused communication tasks may also have helped learners maximize their linguistic competence under real operating conditions (Ellis 1997b: 216). According to DeKeyser (1998), for learners to develop fluency in an L2 opportunities to create pragmatic meaning are necessary, and focused communication tasks do create such opportunities. By focusing on creating pragmatic meaning, students' intrinsic motivation is believed to be developed (Ellis 2005b), which may also explain their improved performance during the regular classes.

It must also be remembered that the focused communication tasks were performed under favourable conditions; students were provided with opportunities to talk in pairs, or small groups, in which they felt comfortable. In their contributions, they could make their own choices with regard to the amount of language, the structures used, and the actual information they wanted to share. They could negotiate the meanings and forms with other learners. In their study exploring the effects of focused communication tasks, Ellis and He (1999: 299) observed that "interaction that provides opportunities for learners to use and negotiate new vocabulary items in dialogically symmetrical discourse seems to create better conditions for incidental vocabulary acquisition than interaction in teacher controlled exchanges that restrict the kind of intermental activity claimed to foster learning". Although the study by Ellis and He (1999) concentrated on vocabulary acquisition, it is possible that a similar situation happens while acquiring language forms, which would again testify to the important role of focused communication tasks. Supposing that the two structures under study must have been introduced to the learners some time before, it may also be hypothesized that the role of the pedagogical intervention employed during the study was to increase the students' control of the forms which have already been internalized. This goes

in accordance with Ellis's (1997b: 216) opinion that "it is gaining control over the new language structures rather than teaching them that focused communication tasks are suitable for".

When it comes to the results obtained by the control group, it is worth pointing out that the students' implicit knowledge was subject to some improvement throughout the study, as seen in their performance during the observed classes. The increase in their implicit knowledge could have resulted from a number of factors. First of all, the students must have encountered the two investigated forms in other subjects during their study. Secondly, the gain might have been caused by the students' self-study and out-of-class exposure, both of which were mentioned in the background questionnaire. Although no tests were carried out to determine the students' level of motivation, its contributive role cannot be excluded, either. Another factor affecting at least partially the development of the students' implicit knowledge were the tests themselves. Erlam (2003a: 254) believes that by completing all language tests the control group must have received some "enriched input". This enrichment resulted in highlighting their awareness regarding the target form. It seems that students in the control group had become increasingly aware, through their exposure to the structure in testing sessions, of the possible uses of the structure.

The investigation of standard deviation across testing episodes testifies to the problems students have when it comes to the actual production of the targeted structures. Given the outcomes of the analysis of the students' performance during the regular classes, it must be noted that it depends not so much on the type of pedagogical intervention employed, but, rather, on individual group members. The group instructed by means of focused communication tasks for past unreal conditions reduced their variability considerably in comparison to the CPA and the control groups. However, when a closer look is taken at the heterogeneity levels while instructing the learners in modal verbs in the past, it appears that this time it was the CPA group that reached the most homogenous scores after the treatment. What must be remembered is that the CPA group for modal verbs in the past was the FCT group for past unreal conditionals, which makes it obvious that the group's inner characteristics must have affected the SD value. It is also possible that the group instructed by means of focused communication tasks for past unreal conditionals (which came before the instruction in modal verbs in the past) became more homogenous after this kind of pedagogical intervention. The students may have increased their awareness, which helped them reduce their level of variability also for the second

structure, even though the instruction lacked focused communication tasks. Taking all of these possibilities into account, still another conclusion that may be drawn is that, together with the effects of the two types of pedagogical intervention, it was also the performance of particular students that influenced the variability level. Some of them developed their level of implicit knowledge to a considerable extent; others, however, must have encountered some problems on their way to the mastery of the two targeted features. It seems, therefore, that the analysis of the individual differences between students may help understand not only the reasons for the levels of variation among the learners, but, most of all, it will help explain the potential causes for the success or failure of particular students. This is the aim of the next part of the study, in which an attempt was made to determine the relationships between learners' experiences, attitudes and opinions concerning grammar, and their actual results on the tests of explicit and implicit knowledge.

5.4. Relationships between the questionnaires' results and the tests' scores

The two questionnaires administered to the participants of the study aimed at obtaining insights into the students' educational background, their exposure to the target language, their opinions on grammar teaching and their prior experiences connected with learning English. The background questionnaire was carried out before the study began and the students answered the questions in the final questionnaire when the study was completed, as it was the time when they could reflect on the instructional treatments to which they had been subjected. The details concerning the design of the questionnaires, their administration and data collection procedures were presented in sections 4.6.1. and 4.6.2. The analysis of the students' responses helped the researcher interpret the findings relevant to the research questions posed in 4.1., but, most of all, it allowed her to answer the research question concerning the relationship between the students' attitudes towards learning grammar, their learning experiences and the effects of instruction that was conducted during the treatment and revealed in the tests. For the sake of clarity, the analysis will be divided into three subsections which correspond to the particular research areas: the students' attitudes towards grammar instruction, their learning history and their opinions about the instruction they had received during the study they participated in. For the purpose of this section, the two experimental groups will be labeled as 1 and 2, where group 1 was the FCT group for

past unreal conditionals and the CPA group for modal verbs in the past, and group 2 was instructed by means of contextualized practice activities for the 3rd conditional and focused communication tasks for modals in the past. The group which was not subjected to any type of instructional treatment will be called the control group (CG). On the basis of the analysis of the data it will be attempted to create a profile of each group, which will hopefully add to the analysis of the results of the tests. The analysis of the students' responses is presented below and the interpretation concerning the relationships between the results of the questionnaires and the tests' scores is included in the discussion section which follows.

5.4.1. Attitudes towards grammar instruction and the results of the tests

The participants' attitudes towards grammar instruction were established on the basis of nineteen statements. The task for the students was to decide whether they agreed with them, disagreed or had no opinion with respect to a particular issue. The results obtained were intended to help establish prior to launching the quasi-experiment the extent to which the knowledge of grammar played an important role in learning a foreign language for every respondent. In order to elicit more thorough responses, there was an additional space provided under each statement for the students to write their opinions, some of which will be presented here. The analysis of the responses will be divided into two parts: one dealing with the general opinions on grammar and its structures, and the other attempting to investigate the respondents' points of view on how grammar should be taught.

When asked about the importance of grammar as far as communication was concerned, 70% of the students from the control group, 83% from group 1 and 84% from group 2 fully agreed with the statement. At the same time, 75% of the control group respondents, only 58% of group 1 and 85% of group 2 found grammar complex and difficult. When asked about how often they used grammar structures, the students revealed various points of view. 75% of the students from the control group and 77% of the members of the second experimental group were convinced that the majority of grammar structures were absent from everyday language. It is worth emphasizing, however, that the first experimental group had a little bit different opinion, as 42% of those questioned claimed the structures were used on an everyday basis and 58% said they were not. When asked about the level of grammatical structures which need to be employed for satisfactory communication, the students were divided: 50% in the control group and more than 60% in

the two experimental groups opted for the necessity to use more advanced structures. One third of all those questioned claimed that basic grammar is sufficient to communicate effectively. The following examples are illustrative of the findings described above:

- (11) *Student 7:² depends for whom, for a student definitely not*
Student 8: the more structures, the more varied the conversation is, it allows for a better expression of one's opinion
Student 9: it depends on the level the person is at
Student 10: I think it depends on the circumstances of a conversation
Student 11: you cannot always express everything using simple structures

All the students in group 1 claimed that grammar structures were essential for the precise expression of meaning in a foreign language, in comparison with only 70% from the control group and 78% from group 2. The vast majority of the respondents (group 1: 100%, control group: 95% and group 2: 92%) admitted feeling more confident in using the target language with the knowledge of grammar rules. The students also believed that the fact that someone uses appropriate grammar structures may determine success in conveying information, as claimed by 90% of the participants from the control group, 75% from group 1 and 100% from group 2 agreed. The students' opinions were supported by the following comments:

- (12) *Student 1 especially at a higher language level...*
Student 2 knowing the structure we express ourselves accurately and the interlocutor is able to understand what we exactly mean
Student 3 some structures cannot be replaced by others as they can carry different meaning

The claim that fluency is more important than accuracy received no clear predominance in the control group, as the same number of students agreed, disagreed and had no opinion. The two experimental groups had two contradictory points of view: for 58% of the respondents in the first group it was accuracy that counted more, compared with 7% of the

² All the translations from Polish sources are mine, AB.

second group students, the majority of whom (61%) favoured fluency in contrast with the 16% of the group 1 students. In both experimental groups, about one third of those surveyed had no opinion. The students justified their choices with the following comments:

(13) *Student 4 ...at a higher level accuracy is very important, especially if we are to have a position of a teacher*

Student 5 fluency means accuracy to a certain extent

Student 6 fluency does not guarantee understanding, accuracy does

The responses to the second group of questions provided a substantial amount of data on the opinions and beliefs manifested by the respondents with regard to the process of grammar teaching. The analysis of the students' answers showed that about 30% of all of them agreed that learning grammar by means of written activities only was effective; however, the majority of them were determined to contradict this opinion, especially the 70% from the second experimental group. Forty-two participants of the study (93%) believed that it was necessary to practise new structures in tasks resembling real life situations, but 75% and 69% of the respondents from the experimental groups and 45% of the students from the control group suggested that in order to use a given structure spontaneously, one needed to practise it in a traditional way by, for example, choosing the right form, completing the sentences with a correct form, etc. The students were quite diversified in their opinions on the beneficial effects of replacing traditional activities with communication tasks. 75% of the learners belonging to the control group recognized the contribution of such tasks to success in grammar learning, and as far as the two experimental groups are concerned, 58% from group 1 and 46% from group 2 agreed that it was a good option. The choices were confirmed in the students' responses to a statement in which it was recommended to use grammar tasks where the message and not the form is most important. Half of the respondents did not find them very helpful, as evidenced by the negative opinions of 50% of the control group members, 58% of group 1 and 61% of group 2 learners. The subjects' conviction that mastering grammar structures without intensive practice necessitating the use of particular forms was impossible found its reflection in the responses of 75% of group 1 members, 84% of group 2 and, quite interestingly, 45% of the control group students, with the caveat that another 35% of them did not take any stance. Although the subjects seemed to hold traditional views on the

process of learning grammar, the majority of the experimental students (66% and 69%), and only 40% of the control group members rejected the idea of learning a particular structure by heart and practising it in multiple exercises only. Still, about one third of the respondents in all the three groups found this way of learning grammar helpful and beneficial. Those who did not opt for learning rules by heart supported their opinions with the following arguments:

- (14) *Student 3 One should also try to use the structure in real life, for example by creating sentences which may be useful for the future*
Student 2 one must use it in speech to master it
Student 12 one must be able to speak using the structure

The students were also asked to express their opinions about what it meant to know the form, meaning and use of a particular grammar feature (on the basis of passive voice). The outcomes of the analysis were quite puzzling for the researcher, as there was no consistency among the respondents with regard to what one needs to know. When asked about the form of the passive voice, 70% of the control group, 66% of group 1 and 46% of group 2 members agreed that one needs to be able to use the appropriate form of the verb *to be* and the perfect infinitive of the main verb. 20% of the students in control group, 16% of group 1 and 30% of group 2 students did not agree with it, and the rest of the respondents did not have any opinion on that matter. As far as the meaning of the passive voice is concerned, group 1 appeared to be most convinced that one needs to know that the subject is not the performer of the action described by the verb, as 83% agreed and 16% disagreed. When it comes to the control group, 55% of its members agreed, whereas the remaining students could be divided into two equal groups who disagreed or had no opinion. 61% of the respondents from the second experimental group agreed with the statement, but more than 30% were not able to decide and chose the 'no opinion' answer. The last statement concerning passive voice dealt with its use. 91% of the students from the first experimental group confirmed that one needs to know that passive voice is used when the performer of the activity is not known or not important. The control group members were less decisive, as 75% of them agreed, 5% disagreed and 20% had no opinion, but the most striking result was observed in the second experimental group, which was divided into three equal groups. The diversity of the responses may stem from the students' lack of metalanguage

concerning *form, meaning* and *use* at the beginning of their studies. Another reason may be the fact they did not know the terms in Polish. But the most likely source of such varied responses seems to lie in their not knowing what the form, meaning and use actually mean and stand for. Naturally, it might also have been the wrong formulation of the statements, although the participants of the pilot study did not point to any misunderstandings concerning these questions.

The distribution of the results presented above shows that, generally, the students were aware of the importance of grammar and the necessity to know advanced structures. On the one hand, they felt secure knowing which grammar rule to use in a particular context, but, on the other, some respondents believed that most structures were not commonly used and thus could be substituted with others. Although the respondents seemed to be aware of the benefits of practising the structures in tasks resembling real life situations and they neglected rote learning, they were attached to traditional grammar instruction using text-manipulation and text-creation activities. Such an assumption finds support in the subjects' responses as most of the students believed that this option worked best for them. As far as the knowledge of the three-dimensional framework in which grammatical structures are described is concerned, there was no consistency among the respondents, who appeared either not to know the notions of form, meaning and use, or not to understand the difference between them.

5.4.2. Learning experiences and the results of the tests

The responses to thirty-eight statements from the third part of the background questionnaire provided a substantial amount of data on the students' prior experiences with regard to grammar instruction in an educational background and during individual study. The respondents were asked to determine how often particular features and behaviours took place in their learning process (1 – regularly, always; 2 – often; 3 – rarely; 4 – hardly ever, never).

When asked about the amount of grammar instruction during their English classes, 80% of the students from the control group, 83% from group 1 and 69% from group 2 responded that it was always or often one of many elements of their lessons and it rarely prevailed, as evidenced by the opinion of 45% of the control group, 75% of group 1 and

61% of group 2 students, but for 60% of the learners in all the three groups the lessons concentrating on learning structures were often or even regularly boring. Taking into account the way grammar structures were taught, the vast majority of the participants (95% in the control group, 92% in group 1 and 85% in group 2) stated that it was the teacher who regularly presented the rule and provided examples, which may indicate a deductive way of teaching. Such an assumption is confirmed by the fact that more than 60% of all the students admitted that the teacher rarely or never encouraged them to infer the rule on the basis of provided examples or a text. A similar phenomenon may be noticed when analyzing various types of practice the participants of the study had been subjected to in their former education contexts. 95% of the respondents in the control group, 100% in group 1 and 83% in group 2 reported practicing grammar in written exercises always or regularly, whereas oral tasks were applied rarely and hardly ever in the opinion of more than 60% of the surveyed students. About one third admitted that they often practised grammar in oral tasks. Text-manipulation activities were a regular routine for 80% of the students in the control group, 91% in group 1 and 85% in group 2. More than half of all the respondents recalled translation exercises as a frequent or regular activity employed to practise grammar. The students also admitted that they performed communication tasks in which the message was most important and the grammar structure was only a tool. 75% of the control group and more than 90% of the students from the two experimental groups claimed that this instructional option was employed regularly or frequently during their grammar lessons.

When asked about the teaching aids, the respondents presented diverse opinions and no clear tendencies were observed in terms of using a course book as the only teaching aid; quite contrary, 70% of the students from the control group, and more than 50% of those in the two experimental groups remembered their teachers had brought extra materials into the class. As far as the testing procedures are concerned, more than 80% of the surveyed learners denied that it was necessary to submit the actual rules on the written tests and 70% admitted being tested regularly in written exercises where the rules had to be applied. When it comes to the oral measures of the students' grammatical knowledge, about 75% of the members of both experimental groups members claimed that such a testing option was employed rarely or never in their educational history. The students in the control group had different experiences as 45% of them said such tests were used regularly and 55% did not remember being tested in this way. According to 92% of the students in group 1, 75% in

the control group and 61% in group 2, the teacher never or very rarely checked their knowledge of grammar by asking them to recite the rules. 38% of group 2 members recalled this technique as often or regularly taking place in their classes. Perhaps, also for this reason, 31% of the students from group 2 reported learning the rules by heart regularly, in comparison with 10% from the control group and 25% from group 1. Looking at the feedback options, the vast majority of the respondents (95% from the control group, 92% from group 1 and 85% from group 2) were regularly corrected during grammar practice activities. Interestingly, more than half of the students in the three groups admitted being corrected during activities developing speaking skills regularly or often, as well. The remaining 40% stated that teacher corrections happened rarely during speaking activities.

On the basis of the results obtained from the eighteen statements, which are very much in line with the findings of the study conducted by Pawlak and Drożdżał-Szelest in 2007 among 81 BA and MA students of English philology, one may conclude that it was explicit grammar instruction with a prevalence of a deductive rather than inductive approach that prevailed during the English lessons attended by the participants prior to their university education. Although the students admitted that various teaching aids were used, most of them constituted controlled written practice aiming at ensuring error-free production of the target form.

The part concerning the participants' individual experiences connected with learning grammar structures included 18 statements. When asked about self-study, 75% of the students from the control group and group 2 and as many as 83% from group 1 admitted working on grammar regularly and often on their own. More than three quarters always or often practised grammar rules by doing a lot of activities and 45% of all the respondents regularly learned grammar by speaking English to their friends. Half of the control group members reported practicing grammar rules talking to native speakers on a regular basis, whereas about 70% of the students from the two experimental groups did it rarely or never. Revising and learning the rules by heart was a technique often employed by 50% of the learners from group 1, compared with 35% of those from the other two groups.

The next group of statements dealt with the students' perceptions of grammar abilities when it comes to written and spoken performance in the target language. As the findings suggest, undoubtedly, the participants of the study paid more attention to the accuracy of their written discourse. As many as 91% of the students from group 1, 80% from the control group and 79% from group 2 admitted analyzing their language in terms of

grammar before they wrote something. When it comes to oral performance, only 15% from the control group students, and about 50% from the two experimental groups attended to form before speaking. More than 80% of the respondents admitted employing communication strategies, such as, e.g. circumlocution and foreignizing, regularly or often, when they were at a loss for words or grammar structures. What is more, 50% of the students in group 1 reported always using a dictionary or other sources of reference to find the necessary grammatical information, compared with 20% and 15% in the two other groups, whose 40% of members rarely or never looked up such information.

The responses to the questions about the difficulties encountered by the students while writing or speaking English revealed more discrepancies between the three groups. As far as writing is concerned, 83% of the learners from group 1, 65% from the control group and only 38% from group 2 claimed to be able to use grammar structures without any problems regularly. 38% of the students from group 2, compared with only 16% from group 1 and 20% from the control group admitted experiencing difficulty in using the grammar structure in writing although they knew the rule. When it comes to the oral production of the target language, the situation was quite different as only 2 students said that it was always easy for them to include all the grammar structures in their speaking. As many as 84% of group 2 students, 50% of group 1 members and 35% of the respondents from the control group found it often or always difficult to speak English employing various grammar structures. It was also 60% of group 2 members that admitted that it was always or often problematic for them to produce accurate language even though they knew the rules. In group 1 and the control group, the opinions were varied, with most responses revealing that such situations occurred rarely or often.

When asked about their motivation behind learning grammar, 92% of the students in group 1 responded that they always or often felt more confident and secure knowing grammar rules while speaking and writing. The same opinion was expressed by more than 60% of those surveyed in the control group and group 2, with the caveat that as many as 76% of the learners in group 2 claimed that grammar always or often facilitated their confidence while writing. More than 90% of the respondents in all the groups stated that their using appropriate grammar always or often made the information easier for the interlocutor to comprehend, while inaccurate grammar use regularly hindered the understanding for 66% of group 1, 46% of group 2 and 35% of the control group students.

The picture that emerges from the analysis of the forty-five learners' responses concerning their individual ways of learning grammar is quite complex and difficult to interpret, but the tendency that may be observed on the whole is that the participants of the study, whose learning experiences included rather traditional teaching options connected with grammar instruction, also applied similar techniques in their self study. Most of the learners were preoccupied with the knowledge of rules, which they practised in written controlled exercises and used mainly in the written language. Using grammar structures in their language was often problematic, particularly in terms of oral performance. Undoubtedly, such a situation may have resulted from the fact that the students had been deprived of the opportunity to use the structures in free oral practice, such as that enabled by the application of focused communication tasks, in their educational context and had scant target language exposure outside of it.

5.4.3. Opinions on the instructional treatment and the results of tests

The analysis of the third part of the questionnaire provided information concerning the students' views on grammar instruction to which they had been subjected during the research project. The twenty-five respondents from the two experimental groups were asked to share their opinions on the instructional treatment connected with past unreal conditionals and modal verbs in the past. The control group students were exempted from taking part in this procedure as they were not subjected to any instructional treatment involving the forms in focus. It should also be recalled at this point that group 1 was taught the 3rd conditional with the help of focused communication tasks and group 2 by means of text-manipulation and text-creation activities. When it comes to modal verbs in the past, the instructional treatment was changed; group 1 was instructed using various contextualized practice activities, and the intervention in group 2 included a number of focused communication tasks. The subjects were provided with thirty-six statements: eighteen for every structure, and had to indicate their responses using a five-point Likert scale (*1 – definitely agree, 2 – rather agree, 3 – hard to decide, 4 – rather disagree, 5 – definitely disagree*). They were also provided with extra spaces for any comments and additional remarks. For the purpose of the present section and in order to demonstrate the relationships between the students' responses for the two structures, the opinions on the

intervention concerning past counterfactual conditionals will be presented parallel to the students' comments on the instruction of modal verbs in the past.

As far as the instructional treatment concerning the 3rd conditional is concerned, 75% of the respondents from group 1 and 62% from group 2 admitted they had definitely improved their knowledge in the area of past unreal conditionals. The remaining students rather agreed that the grammar intervention facilitated their understanding of the form in focus. When asked about modal verbs in the past, the instructed learners responded much in the same way, with the caveat that fewer respondents from group 1 definitely agreed (58%) and 42% rather agreed. The subjects were also asked about the specific teaching procedures, and when it comes to the text introducing the target structure, it appeared to be more helpful in terms of providing context for the use of 3rd conditional for group 1 than for group 2 (68% vs. 38% of those who definitely and rather agreed). The students were quite confused about whether the text helped them remember the form and the meaning as all their answers oscillated between *rather agree* and *hard to decide*. The text whose aim was to familiarize the learners with modal verbs in the past served group 2 better as 61% of those students and only 25% of group 1 members were convinced it was helpful in terms of provision of the context and also form and meaning. As might be expected, the participants of the study were more unanimous with regard to their perceptions of the role of the written exercises, as all of them agreed that they helped them remember the form and meaning of the 3rd conditional, and in the case of modal verbs in the past 83% of the students from group 1 and 92% from group 2 definitely or rather appreciated their value. The vast majority of the respondents acknowledged the facilitative role of the written activities in applying the two structures to real language, as 91% of group 1 members and 92% of group 2 admitted that they were helpful for the 3rd conditional, and in the case of modal verbs in the past, 85% of group 1 and 84% of group 2 respondents appreciated the role of the written activities.

When asked about communication tasks, the students expressed the same opinions for past unreal conditionals and modals in the past. 83% of group 1 and 62% of group 2 members agreed that they were definitely or rather helpful when it comes to incorporating the structures in their output, while the remaining students were unable to estimate their effect on the ability to produce the structure. The surveyed learners also claimed that focused communication tasks helped them remember the form and meaning, as 83% of the students in group 1 admitted so for both structures although focused communication tasks

were not used in the case of modal verbs in the past in this group. As far as group 2 is concerned, more learners seemed to acknowledge the facilitative role of communication tasks for modal verbs in the past (54% for the 3rd conditionals vs. 70% for modals in the past), which may have resulted from the actual application of such tasks in this group during the instruction targeting the structure.

The respondents were also asked to share the opinions on their perceptions of their knowledge and progress as a result of the instructional treatment. The obtained findings revealed that 100% of all the learners admitted they knew the form, meaning and use of the structures in question (*definitely or rather agree*). 100% of the students also claimed that they understood the meaning and the use of both structures. 67% of the students from group 1 observed that they used both the 3rd conditional and modal verbs in the past more often, and as far as group 2 is concerned, 40% of the students noticed the more frequent use of the 3rd conditional and as many as 76% claimed they used modals in the past more often. When asked about the level of satisfaction concerning the knowledge of the two structures, out of 25 respondents, 11 from group 1 and 10 from group 2 were satisfied, for 2 it was difficult to determine, and 2 of them were rather dissatisfied with the level of their knowledge. The questions concerning the general teaching process revealed that all the students were satisfied with the number of written activities employed in the instruction of both structures and when it comes to focused communication tasks, the findings were somewhat surprising as about 80% of all those surveyed claimed they were satisfied with the number thereof, both for the 3rd conditional and modal verbs in the past. All the students believed the classes were managed and organized well, they were engaged in the learning process and felt motivated to work (*definitely agree, rather agree*).

As can be seen from the foregoing discussion, the analysis of the obtained data revealed that the students' responses were very similar for both structures. It seems that the respondents did not notice much difference between the types of instruction to which they had been subjected and they hardly recognized any advantages resulting from applying focused communication tasks over contextualized practice activities or the other way round. Such findings might be indicative of the fact that a considerable amount of time had passed since the time of the instruction till the administration of the questionnaire and that was why the students did not remember the actual tasks. What could be of some importance here, however, were the researcher's questions asked during the lessons when focused communication tasks were administered. The students were requested to share their

opinions on whether they found the tasks helpful and enjoyable and many responded positively, pointing to the value of the opportunity to use the target structure more spontaneously. Some learners expressed their confusion connected with the fact that a grammar lesson should become a speaking lesson. Another reason why the participants did not notice the differences between the two types of instruction might have been their lack of methodological knowledge, which could have resulted from the fact that they were enrolled in year 1 teacher training programme which did not include grammar teaching. On the basis of all these observations, it would undoubtedly have been more beneficial to administer the questionnaire, or two separate questionnaires, immediately after the lessons or perhaps ask the students to write their opinions in some kind of diary. It might also have been more helpful to design more detailed questions for the students reminding them about concrete activities and tasks. Perhaps it would have aided them to recall the lessons and the exact teaching options which had been employed. Despite problems of this kind, the students' opinions on the instructional treatment they had been subjected to seem to be pertinent to the analysis of the results obtained on the tests. The two experimental groups expressed their satisfaction with the teaching procedures, and, albeit unconsciously, appeared to be more in favour of the intervention including focused communication tasks. Such an assumption finds support in the participants' responses to the questions dealing with their level of satisfaction concerning the knowledge of the structures, with the role of communication tasks in improving their language, and also the questions connected with the frequency of using the structures in everyday communication.

5.4.4. Discussion

On the basis of the findings presented in the sections above, describing the students' opinions and attitudes towards grammar, their learning experiences and their reflections connected with the instructional treatment to which they had been subjected during the research project, conclusions may be drawn with respect to each group. For the sake of clarity, each group will be described separately. On the basis of the learners' responses, first the profile of the group will be created and then the possible relationships between the characteristic features and the results of the tests will be highlighted.

The first experimental group, labeled group 1, which had been instructed by means of focused communication tasks (FCT) for past unreal conditionals and with the help of contextualized practice activities (CPA) for modal verbs in the past included 12 students. On the basis of the obtained results, one may observe that the students revealed greater awareness than the others in terms of the role of grammar in the target language. The group expressed their positive opinions about the role of accuracy, and indispensability of grammar structures for precise expressions of meaning, but it was also group 1 who opted strongly for the use of controlled grammar activities and intensive practice. Communication tasks resembling real-life situations were, in the opinion of the members of group 1, necessary for grammar practice, but at the same time they were not willing to use them instead of intensive controlled activities. When it comes to form, meaning and use of the particular grammar structures, the students from the first experimental group manifested most homogenous opinions.

As far as their educational history is concerned, most members of group one were taught using a deductive approach with a prevalence of written controlled exercises, although they also admitted performing communication tasks in which the message was most important and the grammar structure was only a medium to achieving a communicative goal. The students were regularly corrected during both types of grammar practice. The course book was the main teaching aid and the testing procedures mirrored the activities that were employed during the classes. Another aspect which might have affected the students' performance on the tests were their routines connected with the individual study of grammar. Out of the three groups, it were definitely the members of group 1 that claimed to work systematically on developing their grammar knowledge. They paid special attention to applying accurate language in writing and also speaking. They were most willing to use a dictionary or other reference materials, which resulted in their claim to have no major problems with employing various grammar structures in their spontaneous language use. All but one appreciated grammar knowledge in feeling more confident and secure while speaking and writing, and most believed that accurate language was important for successful communication.

Such findings, together with the analysis of the values of standard deviation and the results of the tests may shed a new light on the overall interpretation regarding the relationship between the learners' attitudes towards grammar instruction and their actual results on the measures of their knowledge. It seems warranted to claim that the students'

unequivocal opinions which recognized the contribution of grammar to their general linguistic competence, and also their conviction of the necessity to practise grammar rules systematically by themselves might have affected their actual results on the tests. Although the subjects appeared to hold traditional views on grammar and were quite preoccupied with the rules, their awareness in terms of the need to learn advanced structures and their willingness to search for information might have contributed to raising their motivation and fostering the overall process of learning. When it comes to the measures of explicit knowledge, the advantage of group 1 over group 2 was visible neither with regard to past unreal conditionals, nor modal verbs in the past. The two groups achieved similar scores on the tests, and their levels of variation (SD) decreased systematically in the two groups alike.

What is particularly important, however, are the students' results concerning their implicit knowledge. While their performance on the elicited imitation tasks does not show many discrepancies between the two experimental groups, the focused communication task measuring the implicit knowledge of past unreal conditionals shows clearly that the level of variability (SD) decreased dramatically in the first group (by 22%) from the pre- to the immediate posttest, which may have resulted from the pedagogical intervention, but also from the students' positive attitudes towards grammar learning which led to more reflective and conscious study of the two language features. The high mean percentage score (89.06%) and the level of variability standing at SD=9.5% seem to provide evidence for the students' serious and responsible approach to learning the target structure. Naturally, it also testifies to the effectiveness of the instructional option which fostered the automatization of the 3rd conditional. When it comes to the implicit knowledge of modal verbs in the past which were taught with the help of various text-manipulation and text-creation activities in the case of group 1, it must be noted that, as far as the elicited imitation task is concerned, it was group 2 that improved the most throughout the study. Nevertheless, the score reached by group 1 was very high (about 90 %) and their SD level was 7.4 on the immediate posttest and 4.1. on the delayed posttest, which indicates that most members of the group achieved very high results. Exactly the same pattern was repeated on the focused communication task measuring the implicit knowledge of modal verbs in the past. It must be noted that group 1 started with the highest score on the pretest (85.71%), then it improved the result and reached 98.31% on the immediate posttest with the SD level at 3.4. Again, it proves not only the effectiveness of the pedagogical intervention (in this case CPA activities), but also the inherent features of the group, e.g. the general awareness of

the role of accuracy and the advanced language features, commitment to individual self-study and the overall feeling of confidence at communicating in English. Finally, the analysis of the data coming from the regular classes made it clear that group 1 was the most homogeneous group, whose students probably possessed the greatest implicit knowledge of the two grammatical forms under study. Under the conditions of semi authentic interactions, they were able to use correct structures at a high level and the variation within the group was quite low with SD at about 9% on the delayed posttests.

The members of the second experimental group, labeled group 2, who had been instructed by means of text-manipulation and text-creation activities in the case of the 3rd conditional and whose instruction of modal verbs in the past involved the use of focused communication tasks, included 13 students. When it comes to their attitudes towards grammar instruction, they expressed the opinion that grammar was important for communication, but they were also most convinced of its complexity and difficulty when compared with the other groups. The great majority of the students stated that it was fluency that was more important than accuracy, and even more were determined to contradict the statement that written activities were sufficient for successful grammar learning, although they appreciated their role in producing spoken language. More than half did not believe that replacing traditional grammar exercises with communication tasks was a good option and as many as 84% found it impossible to learn grammar without intensive practice necessitating the use of a particular form. When asked about the three dimensions of grammatical knowledge, the students in group two appeared to be quite confused and they expressed contradictory opinions, which may indicate that their language awareness was only beginning to develop.

As far as their learning experience connected with grammar is concerned, most students admitted they had been taught using a deductive approach with a great number of written activities, but they also claimed to perform communication tasks during their grammar lessons. Their teachers' immediate correction aimed at ensuring error-free production of the language. When it comes to testing procedures, it was mostly written tests, but apart from that, almost half of the group recalled being asked to recite the rules, which they regularly learned by heart. In order to understand the students' process of learning grammar better, there is also a need to take into account their individual ways of dealing with this subsystem. Three quarters reported working on grammar systematically at home, mainly by doing various exercises. The majority paid attention to their language

forms mainly before writing, but they also admitted monitoring their speech. Communication strategies were the major solution to language problems the students encountered, which is supported by the fact that very few used a dictionary or other reference sources on a regular basis. It might also have been one of the reasons for their difficulties which they admitted to have while using the language spontaneously in real life situations. The findings suggest that, out of the three groups, it was group 2 members who had the most serious problems with using grammatical structures in their writing and speaking. The students were also quite confused about the importance of accuracy, as, on the one hand, they believed it made the information easier to comprehend, but on the other, most of them denied having problems with understanding erroneous utterances produced by others.

The analysis of the information presented above, together with the scores the students obtained on the tests measuring their explicit and implicit knowledge may help understand the relationship between the students' attitudes towards grammar instruction, their learning experiences and their actual results on the written and oral measures of their abilities concerning the target structures. It seems that the students were quite confused and frightened of the complex system of rules which they thought grammar was. Although they were convinced of the value of communication tasks resembling real life situations, at the same time they learned the rules by heart and the vast majority could not imagine learning grammar without controlled practice. Group 2 students admitted having serious problems applying all the rules in their language use; still the opinions they expressed evidence that they clung to their strategies and were reluctant to check the unknown in reference materials. Such findings may be reflective of the subjects' emphasis placed on grammar seen as a static area of knowledge. The students' conviction of the complexity and incomprehensibility of the grammar system, together with their fear of and reluctance towards using the rules in spontaneous communication might have been pertinent to the results they achieved during the tests and might have impaired their ability to function competently. Taking into account the opinions expressed by group 2 members, it appears that many of the learners were very confused and frightened, which may have resulted from previous learning experiences and poor learning strategies. Accustomed to controlled practice, they did as well as group 1 on the tests measuring their explicit knowledge, although their levels of variation seemed to be a bit higher, which testifies to more heterogeneity among the members of the group. When it comes to implicit knowledge,

measured by means of three research instruments, it turned out that their pretest level of implicit knowledge was quite low in comparison with the other experimental group and also the control group. The analysis of the pretest levels of variability in group 2 indicates that either the group was very heterogeneous, or the particular students' knowledge was far from being systematic and automatized.

All these disadvantages notwithstanding, the beneficial role of pedagogical intervention must be recognized when it comes to the improvement made by group 2. Undoubtedly, it affected the students' production ability in a very positive way, particularly when it comes to modal verbs in the past, taught by means of focused communication tasks. They helped the students not only improve their implicit knowledge, but also contributed to the reduction of individual variation within the group, or within the students themselves. Even if it took a longer period of time than in the case of group 1, the effects of the pedagogical treatment which included focused communication tasks were definitely positive, as the group made significant improvements in terms of implicit knowledge. In the opinion of the author, who taught group 2 the whole year throughout the study, there were many shy, even scared, students who seemed to have been hurt by the system, teachers or any other factors and unable to extricate themselves from their superstitions, bad habits and fears. Focused communication tasks, performed in relaxed conditions, seem to have contributed not only to the students' linguistic competence, but also to their sense of confidence, self-esteem and motivation. By providing the students with opportunities for real, meaningful communication in which they could use the structures under study, focused communication tasks gave them wings, as if, liberating them from the shells of rote learning and controlled practice, feelings of anxiety and low self-efficacy.

The third group participating in the research study was the control group. Throughout the whole process of conducting the quasi experiment all the twenty members of the control group were subjected to teacher intervention in the area of neither past unreal conditionals nor modal verbs in the past. The students took part in all the tests, which enabled the researcher not only to compare their results with the two other experimental groups' scores, but also to observe the performance of group 3 members on the consecutive tests of linguistic knowledge. As evidenced by the findings of the background questionnaire, the majority of the students did not consider grammar to be very important, claiming that it was not essential for successful communication as all the rules were not used everyday, but at the same time three quarters acknowledged its complexity and

difficulty, and the vast majority admitted feeling more confident knowing the rules. Most members of group 3 opted for employing communication tasks in grammar instruction and believed it was possible to learn grammar successfully without intensive controlled practice. When asked what it meant to know the form, meaning and use of a particular structure, most of them turned out to be quite informed, although in general these questions caused some problems.

As far as their educational history concerning grammar instruction is taken into account, the members of group three were taught using a deductive approach and they practised the new structures in controlled written activities, although they remembered performing communication tasks as well. Out of the three groups, it was group 3 in which the most students recalled using extra materials brought by the teacher during their grammar lessons. When asked about testing procedures, almost half of the learners admitted being regularly tested using oral measures, which was uncommon in the two experimental groups. Apart from the students' learning experience from school, it is also worth taking a closer look at their individual ways of practising grammar. The majority of the learners claimed to work individually on developing their knowledge of grammar, mostly by doing various exercises, but what may be of particular interest is the fact that talking to native speakers was a way of learning for half of the group, which was hardly mentioned by the two other groups. Most of the members of group 3 paid attention to the rules while writing, but only three out twenty claimed to monitor their speech. Hardly ever did they also look the information up in a dictionary or other reference materials, relying mainly on communication strategies. Most students denied having problems with using grammar structures in their written and spoken language. They did not express much concern about inaccurate language used by others, although the vast majority admitted that accurate utterances make it easier for the interlocutor to comprehend the message.

The analysis of the data coming from different sources accrued in the course of the quasi experiment may contribute to the understanding of certain behaviours manifested by group 3, which had been allocated the function of the control group. Although the students were deprived of any instructional treatment of the two target structures during the study, it is worth looking at the possible relationships regarding their attitudes towards grammar instruction, their previous learning experiences and their actual results on the measures of their knowledge. It appears that the control group differed considerably from the two experimental groups with regard to their attitudes towards grammar instruction. The

knowledge of grammar was not vital for them to achieve success in communication and they were ready to take the risk and to replace controlled grammar practice with communication tasks, which they found very helpful. Their educational history might have contributed to shaping their points of view as many members of group 3 were lucky enough to have attended English lessons which included a number of various tasks and techniques. In terms of practising grammar outside of the educational context, apart from doing written exercises, it was real communication that they participated in, and perhaps therefore they claimed not to have problems using grammar features in their output. The students did not seem to be afraid of grammar, and they were not concerned about accuracy much, concentrating on getting messages across, which, for them, was tantamount to achieving success. While examining the profile of group 3, one cannot escape thinking that the features and attitudes represented by its members may have affected the results obtained during the tests. It seems that most of the students were risk-takers, and they were confident of their knowledge and language abilities. Their anxiety was rather low, while self-esteem and self-efficacy high. They had no problems expressing themselves and did not pay too much attention to errors. Group 3 appeared to be the most carefree and easy-going, with positive attitudes and stable motivation. The students' mean percentage scores and the gains made, particularly in terms of their production ability on the oral measures, seem to testify to these characteristics. Taking into account the importance of all the external reasons for the students' gains (e.g. practice effect, out-of-class exposure, self-study), it seems that individual differences must also have contributed to the overall performance of the control group. When it comes to explicit knowledge, the control group made no real significant improvements throughout the study, either in the case of past unreal conditionals or modal verbs in the past. As far as the implicit knowledge of the two structures is concerned, it can be observed that some gains were achieved, although still much less significant than in the case of the two instructed groups. What is also worth mentioning are the high values of standard deviation, which testifies to the considerable differences among the group members, or the inconsistencies in their ability to produce the targeted structures correctly.

Having scrutinized the opinions presented by the three groups that participated in the study, one can clearly see that although they were very similar in many respects, there were also features which made it possible to distinguish some specific factors which could have contributed to the learners' overall performance on the tests. The next and natural step

is to go even further and try to explore the effectiveness of focused communication tasks in the case of individual students. To be more precise, it will be attempted to determine the relationship between individual differences and the results of the tests for four students: two of whom made great improvement, and two of whom seemed to have problems with the targeted language features. The patterns of their development over the course of the experiment and attempts to find the possible reasons for their language outcomes will be presented in the subsequent sections.

5.5. Tracing the development of individual students

In her article on grammar, Larsen–Freeman (2009b: 530) expresses the opinion that “teachers do not just teach grammar, of course; they teach grammar to particular students. Who the students are will affect grammar instruction”. Therefore, apart from creating the profiles of the three groups, the aim of the study was also to trace the development of particular students to see if the characteristics manifested by individuals matched the descriptions provided for each of the groups and try to estimate what might have affected their learning process of the two structures in question. According to deGraaff and Housen (2009: 738), “the way learners learn an L2 is likely to be influenced by a host of factors, including age and cognitive maturity, cognitive learning style, language learning aptitude, motivation, attitudes, personality and level of L2 proficiency at the time of instruction”. Although such a thorough and detailed analysis is not possible here due to lack of adequate data, the researcher decided to make an attempt and to identify relationships between the students’ learning experiences, their attitudes and opinions concerning the instructional treatment and the actual results of the tests which testified to their success or failure. In order to analyse the performance and compare the results of individual students on different tests, it was decided to choose four participants of the study who improved most and least in terms of the development of their explicit and implicit knowledge concerning past counterfactual conditionals and modal verbs in the past. While searching for the reasons for their success or failure, three criteria were taken into consideration: their background, their attitudes towards grammar and the type of instruction employed in their previous educational context.

5.5.1. The profile of most successful students

Having analysed the performance of the individual learners, the researcher decided to present two successful students from each of the two experimental groups with regard to their educational history, their attitudes towards grammar instruction and the results of the instructional treatment estimated on the basis of the different measures.

The first student (Student A) was a female member of group 1. She had graduated from High School No 8 in Poznań in 2006 with a very good grade in English. She passed the extended version of the high school leaving exam and at the beginning of her studies she had been learning English for thirteen years, mainly at school, but also at language courses, via tuition and during self study. She had been abroad three times for touristic reasons and her contact with English out of the educational context seemed to be quite rich: the respondent reported watching films, reading books and Internet pages in English, and, apart from that, she mentioned keeping in touch with English speaking friends and used English at work she did at weekends. The out-of-class exposure to the target language was important for the student as she also worked on her language skills with a course book individually and she wished she had more time to study English. As far as grammar is concerned, her favourite way of learning was reading reference materials from her favourite grammar book, doing exercises and discussing grammar problems in class. When asked about the easiest and most difficult areas of grammar, the learner mentioned conditionals, modal verbs and tenses as most intricate and among the least complex were question tags, gerund/infinitive constructions and indirect speech.

In the part of the questionnaire devoted to the student's attitudes towards grammar instruction, the respondent provided abundant justification for her opinions, which undoubtedly helped the researcher understand the motivation behind her choices. According to the respondent, "Grammar is necessary to create accurate sentences and to understand the speakers". It is a difficult language subsystem, as "there are many exceptions to the rules and one needs to learn them by heart". The student denied that every conversation might be satisfying using only basic structures, claiming that "it is using advanced grammar structures that brings satisfaction". Although knowing grammar rules made her more confident as "some structures cannot be replaced with others as they carry different meaning", she was convinced that she did not need all of them for everyday communication. Fluency was not more important than accuracy in the respondent's opinion as "fluency does not have to influence understanding, and accuracy does". The student

would opt for quite a traditional approach to grammar teaching, as, in her view, a well-prepared grammar lesson should first require the learners to find information about the grammar point on their own, which should then be followed by a whole class explanation and the discussion of the difficult points, and the final part ought to include practice in various tasks. When asked about communication tasks, where the message was more important than the rule, the student either expressed no opinion or claimed their role for learning grammar was negligible, saying that in order to use a given structure accurately in natural communication, one needed to practise it both via text-manipulation and text-creation activities and also via tasks resembling real life situations.

Another area of interest for the researcher were the respondent's experiences connected with grammar learning. Although grammar was often difficult, it was never boring for the student, probably due to the fact that the teacher regularly brought many additional teaching aids, employed both deductive and inductive approaches to grammar teaching, ensured both oral and written grammar practice, used different modes of interaction and did not make his or her pupils learn the rules by heart. Grammar practice usually meant the employment of text-manipulation activities; translations and communication tasks were used rarely. It seems that the teacher emphasized error-free production of the language, as explicit error correction was a frequent feedback option and as far as testing procedures are concerned, the knowledge of rules was evaluated on the basis of ~~written and oral tests~~ ^{written tests}. Apart from ~~initial~~ ^{initial} teaching, in the case of the present student, it was also self-study that played an important role in the process of learning a language. *Regularly* was the response chosen most often when the student evaluated her individual work on grammar. She was aware of the importance of systematic practice and appeared to work on her grammar in various ways, as the knowledge of grammar always made her more confident, both while speaking and writing. When she was in doubt, she employed communication strategies, but later she always checked for the precise word or rule in reference materials. The student admitted thinking about which structure to apply more often for writing (always) than for speaking (rarely), but she did not recall many problems with using the already known structures while speaking or writing.

The information obtained on the basis of the final questionnaire provided data on how the student perceived the grammar instruction of the two structures under study and what she thought of the testing procedures employed in the quasi-experiment. The respondent was very satisfied with her level of knowledge and the instructional treatment of the 3rd conditional, which included focused communication tasks. She felt that she had

made considerable improvement in terms of knowing the form, meaning and use of the structure in question and found the teaching procedures very helpful. She was not only very fond of the written exercises, saying that “a great amount of activities, theory and examples helped me remember and learn the structure”, but she also appreciated the oral communication tasks as being rather helpful at remembering and then using the 3rd conditional in real life. She admitted that the structure had appeared more often in her everyday communication since the instructional treatment during the classes. Her general impressions connected with classroom management, planning and the roles of the teacher were very positive and supported with personal comments. When the instructional treatment concerning modal verbs in the past is taken into account, the student taught by means of contextualized practice activities admitted that teacher intervention rather helped her improve her knowledge. Unfortunately, she was absent from the lesson introducing the structure, so she could not evaluate the text provided. The respondent acknowledged the usefulness of the written activities and, what is surprising, expressed a positive opinion about the focused communication tasks, which were not used in this group. The learner was satisfied with the level of her knowledge connected with modal verbs in the past, although she admitted having to revise her notes sometimes to clarify some doubts. She also said that she understood the meaning and use of modal verbs in the past quite well and observed a more frequent use of the structure in everyday life. When it comes to the overall conclusions connected with the teaching procedures applied, she was definitely satisfied.

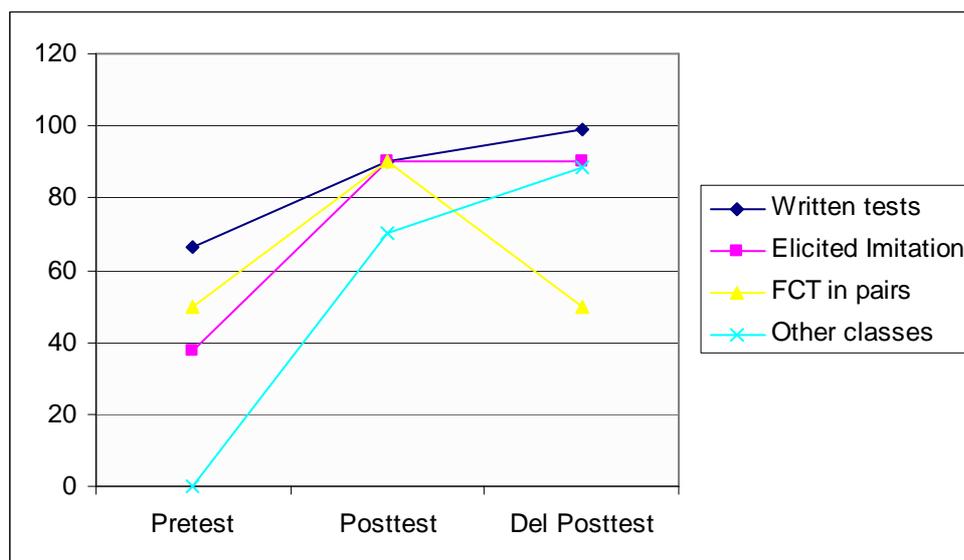


Figure 30. Results obtained by Student A on the tests measuring past unreal conditionals.

Table 26. Results obtained by Student A on the tests measuring past unreal conditionals.

	Pretest mean (%)	Posttest mean (%)	Del Posttest mean (%)
Written tests	66.25	90	98.75
Elicited Imitation	38	90	90
FCT in pairs	50	90	50
Other classes	0	70	88

The comparison of the data obtained from the two questionnaires and the four instruments measuring the student's explicit and implicit knowledge clearly indicates the existence of a relationship between the learner's characteristics, her personal experiences and the level of improvement she achieved throughout the instructional treatment. When it comes to the results obtained by the student on the tests measuring her progress with regard to the 3rd conditional (see Figure 30. and Table 26.), one may notice that the effects of instruction were impressive. She gained 23.75% from the pretest (66.25%) to the immediate posttest (90%) and another 8.75% on the delayed posttest measuring explicit knowledge in comparison to the immediate posttest. The findings obtained from the instruments tapping implicit knowledge showed that the learner improved her result by 52.5% (from 37.5% to 90%) on the elicited imitation immediate posttest and then maintained the level on the delayed posttest (90%). The focused communication tasks, performed in pairs, revealed that the student was able to generate more obligatory contexts on consecutive tests and the mean percentage score obtained on the immediate posttest (90%) was higher by 40% in comparison with the pretest (50%). As far as the data from the recordings of regular classes are concerned, the student did not use the 3rd conditional on the pretest, but her mean percentage score on the posttest was 70% and on the delayed posttest 88.46%, which undoubtedly attests to her success in terms of the ability to produce the targeted feature spontaneously.

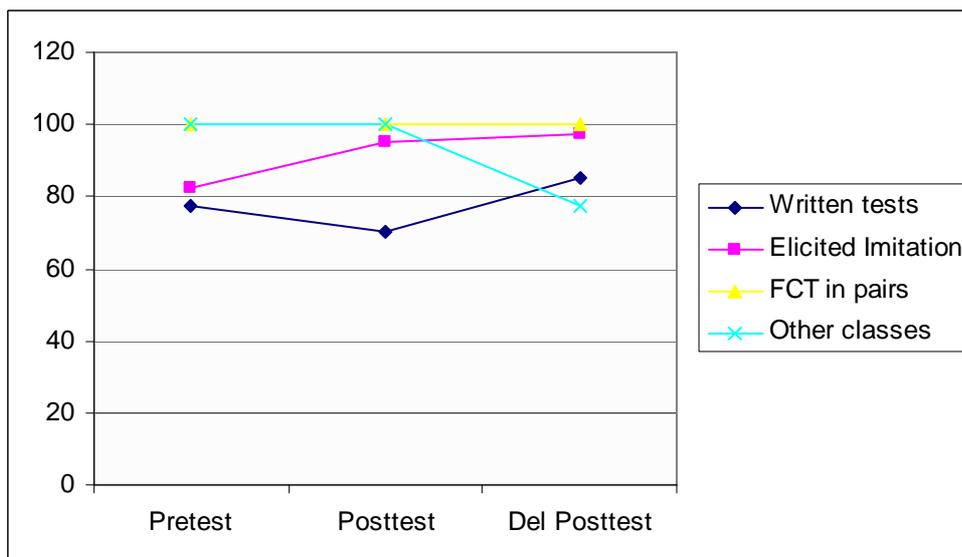


Figure 31. Results obtained by Student A on the tests measuring modal verbs in the past.

Table 27. Results obtained by Student A on the tests measuring modal verbs in the past.

	Pretest mean (%)	Posttest mean (%)	Del Posttest mean (%)
Written tests	77.50	70.00	85.00
Elicited Imitation	82.50	95.00	97.50
FCT in pairs	100.00	100.00	100.00
Other classes	100.00	100.00	77.27

Moving on to the analysis of the results obtained by the student on the measures of modal verbs in the past, which are presented in Figure 31. and Table 27. , a different pattern can be noticed. The level of explicit knowledge, estimated on the basis of the written tests, turned out to decrease from the 77.5% pretest result to the 70% immediate posttest; however there was a considerable increase of 15% on the delayed posttest, when the learner scored 85%. This justifies the assumption that the information the student had missed due to her absence was made up for later, probably via individual study, and she was able to reach a satisfactory level on the delayed posttest. It is worth emphasizing, however, that the gain made by the student was not as high as with the 3rd conditional, where the total increase reached 32.5%. When it comes to the elicited imitation task, the learner improved her result by 12.5% in comparison with the pretest, achieving the mean percentage score of 95% on the immediate and delayed posttests. During the focused communication task performed in pairs, the student managed to generate five obligatory contexts more on the immediate posttest than on the pretest (N=2) and in terms of accuracy the sentences were correct. The performance of the student during the regular classes revealed that she produced nine instances of modals in the past more during the two posttests than on the

pretest (N=2), but in terms of accuracy the delayed posttest score was 23% worse compared with 100% obtained on the posttest.

The second successful student (Student B) who is worth being looked at in the researcher's opinion is a female member of group 2. She had graduated from High School No. 1 in Inowrocław in 2006 with a good grade in English. She passed the extended version of the school leaving exam and at the beginning of her studies she had been learning English for ten years, at school and during private lessons. As the student had never been abroad, her out-of-class contact with English also seemed to be scarce: the respondent watched films and listened to music in the target language, and also browsed through Internet pages. She admitted trying to enlarge her exposure to English, by listening and working with the course-book individually. As far as grammar is concerned, her favourite way of learning included taking notes, translating, contrasting and comparing Polish and English grammars. She was also very fond of visual enhancement techniques, such as drawing arrows, figures, underlining, marking and colouring all the important aspects, as they made it easier for her to remember grammar. The student considered this way of learning effective; however she wished she used more grammar in everyday speech, not only the basic structures. Moving on to difficult grammar areas, the student considered relative clauses, modal verbs and phrasal verbs to be most difficult and the easiest in her opinion were passive, nouns and conditionals.

In the next part of the questionnaire, the respondent had the ability not only to express her opinion by choosing one option, but also to justify her choices with some arguments, which definitely helped understand the reasons for her decisions. According to the participant of the study, "grammar is the spine of the language, it is the structures used in the written and spoken language which allow us to communicate". She believed that, although complex, grammar was necessary for communication. She did not agree with the statement that every conversation may be satisfying using only basic structures, claiming that "the more structures, the more varied and colourful the conversation; it allows us to express our opinions, explain things better, and makes it easier for the interlocutor to understand the message". Although she admitted that grammar structures were essential for expressing oneself and made her more confident, she was convinced they were not used on an everyday basis. Fluency was more important for her than accuracy and she justified it with the following comment: "yes, especially in communication, but it does not mean you are allowed not to pay attention and to work hard on the accuracy of the language". As far

as learning grammar is concerned, the respondent considered a good grammar lesson to have the following characteristics: explaining the rule, providing examples, translating, providing context, demonstrating by means of drawings and doing exercises. In her view, controlled written activities were very beneficial; yet she also mentioned that “using grammar in practice is also important. One cannot limit themselves to written exercises only”. This sentence may also serve as a justification for the other choices made by the respondent. She was of the opinion that intensive practice aiming at mastering a particular structure was extremely valuable, but she also favoured tasks resembling real life situations, as they helped her use the given structure accurately in spontaneous communication.

Apart from the student’s attitudes towards grammar, the previous learning experience must also have contributed to how she perceived grammar instruction in terms of its advantages and drawbacks. Grammar lessons were often boring for the student, perhaps due to the fact that grammar was invariably the major component of English lessons and the teacher always used the course book material only. It was also always the teacher who presented the rule, which was followed by the practice stage. The student did not recall any inductive techniques applied during her grammar lessons, but she remembered her teacher always asking the pupils about grammar rules, which were often practiced in the written form and the errors were immediately corrected, which may indicate that the instructor favoured error-free production of the target language. Grammar practice regularly meant completing the sentences with correct forms, sometimes translations and rarely communication tasks. According to the respondent, no oral practice of grammar took place in her school and, as a consequence, also the testing procedures included only written forms in which the students were to apply the rule in sentences. When it comes to self-study, the findings of the questionnaire indicate that the student did not work as much individually as the previous one, which is supported by *often* being selected as the most frequent response. The respondent, who claimed not to be frightened by the abundance of grammar rules, studied grammar on her own at home regularly, but when asked about the specific techniques employed, she mentioned doing exercises and revising the rules as the only ways of learning. She never learnt grammar to feel more confident while writing or speaking and perhaps that was why she never practised it by speaking English to friends or native speakers. When in doubt, the learner always employed communication strategies, replacing the unfamiliar vocabulary and language forms with

other words or structures and it seemed that such a technique of dealing with problems suited her best, as she reported consulting reference materials rarely. On the other hand, however, she reckoned that using appropriate and precise grammar structures often helped her understand the message. The student mentioned that she frequently had problems with applying the rules she knew in written and spoken language. As a result, she often had to think which grammar structure to use before she wanted to write or speak English.

The final questionnaire, administered after the study had been completed, allowed the researcher to obtain information on the student's opinions about the grammar instruction in the two structures in question. Having observed the process of development of the student, it is impossible to ignore the remarkable changes in her opinions and performance. After a year of college education, the respondent had her favourite grammar reference book and admitted working on grammar more in terms of individual study. When asked whether the classroom instruction of the 3rd conditional helped her improve grammar, the learner definitely agreed, saying "the rules are clear, they were explained to me better than previously". Moreover, she was satisfied with her level of knowledge concerning the form, meaning and use of past unreal conditionals, claiming to be able to use them. When it comes to the teaching options, the respondent would not introduce any changes, but the findings suggest she was accustomed to written practice the most as she marked it as definitely beneficial for her and was satisfied with a number of written activities used in class. It was hard to decide for the student whether she had used the structure more often in real life communication since the treatment, but she definitely felt motivated to work on her grammar and the overall impressions connected with classroom management, planning and the teacher roles were very positive. Moving on to the instructional treatment involving modal verbs in the past, it may be observed that the student recognized the role of focused communication tasks employed during the classroom procedures. She acknowledged the helpfulness of the text introducing the context and she was convinced of the improvement she had made with respect to modal verbs, and attributed it not only to the written practice but also to the oral communication tasks, stating that both of them helped her remember the form and meaning of the target structure. She also appreciated the focused communication tasks as good practice for real-life situations, but it was hard for her to decide whether the written activities were of any help with using modals in the past in real life. When asked for ideas on how to improve the instruction, she said that modal verbs could "be practised in tasks, examples in order to use them in reality.

Perhaps we could use them in speech, communication much more so that the students develop speaking and use modal verbs by themselves spontaneously”. As far as the amount of written and oral practice during the lessons is concerned, the student was rather satisfied and when asked to self-evaluate, she stated she understood and knew the form, meaning and use of modals in the past. In contrast to the 3rd conditional, she was aware of using modal verbs in the past more often since the time of instruction. Finally, she expressed her positive opinions on the teaching procedures in a personal comment at the end of the final questionnaire, which may also indicate her satisfaction with the results of the pedagogic intervention.

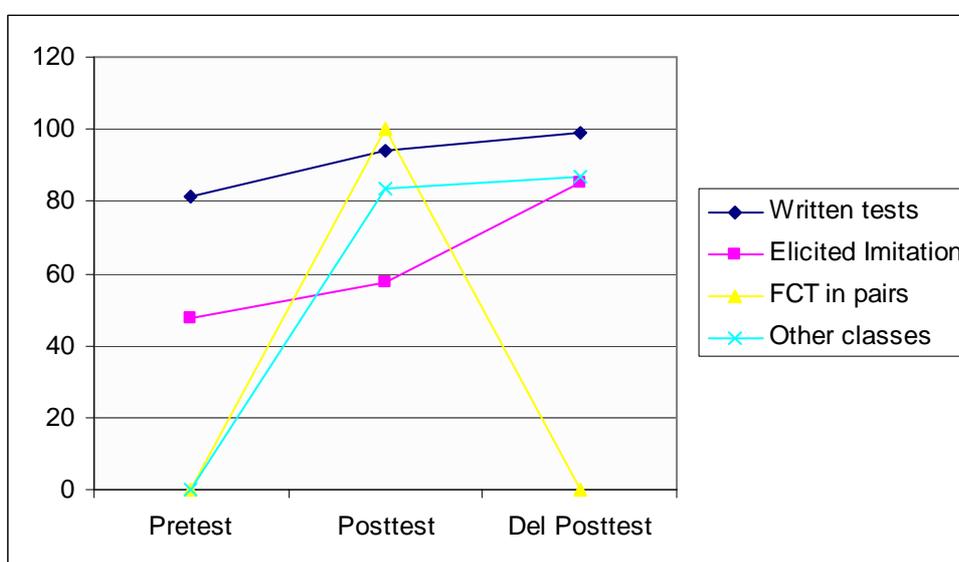


Figure 32. Results obtained by Student B on the tests measuring past unreal conditionals.

Table 28. Results obtained by Student B on the tests measuring past unreal conditionals

	Pretest mean (%)	Posttest mean (%)	Del Posttest mean (%)
Written tests	81.25	93.75	98.75
Elicited Imitation	47.50	57.50	85.00
FCT in pairs	0.00	100.00	0.00
Other classes	0.00	83.33	86.84

The first conclusion that may be drawn on the basis of the comparison of the data obtained from the two questionnaires and the four tests measuring the student’s knowledge is that she had undergone a marked change, not only with respect to her linguistic knowledge, but also in terms of the general attitudes towards the process of learning. Both of these resulted in the level of improvement she achieved during the instructional

treatment. It must be admitted that she was very well prepared in terms of explicit knowledge already at the outset of her college education, as was evidenced by the results of the written tests. When it comes to the 3rd conditional, the results obtained by the student are graphically presented in Figure 32. and the exact mean percentage scores are shown in Table 28. In the case of Student B, past unreal conditionals were taught by means of text-manipulation and text-creation activities and her pretest result regarding explicit knowledge was 81.25%, then she gained 12.5% on the immediate posttest, and another 5% on the delayed posttest with the mean percentage score of 98.75%. As far as the implicit knowledge of the structure in question is concerned, the results she obtained were not so high initially, as evidenced by the outcomes of the oral elicited imitation tests, when the student scored 47.5% on the pretest and 57.5% on the immediate posttest, but her delayed posttest gain was considerable because she achieved 85%. During the focused communication task, the pretest score was in fact 0%, as she generated two occasions of obligatory contexts and in both of them the wrong form was used. The posttest task was more successful, as the two sentences she came up with were correct with regard to the application of past unreal conditionals, but the delayed posttest score was poor again, because she was not able to produce many contexts for the use of the structure and the ones she used were wrong. Such a pattern might have resulted from the learner's previous experience in terms of oral practice, which, as mentioned above, had been scarce. On a more optimistic note, however, one could observe the student's improvement during the regular classes. Although the pretest lessons did not generate any past unreal conditionals, the data obtained from the observation of the posttest revealed the participant of the study did generate six instances of the 3rd conditional, 83% of which were correct. On the delayed posttest, nineteen sentences using the structure in question were produced, 86.8% of which were correct.

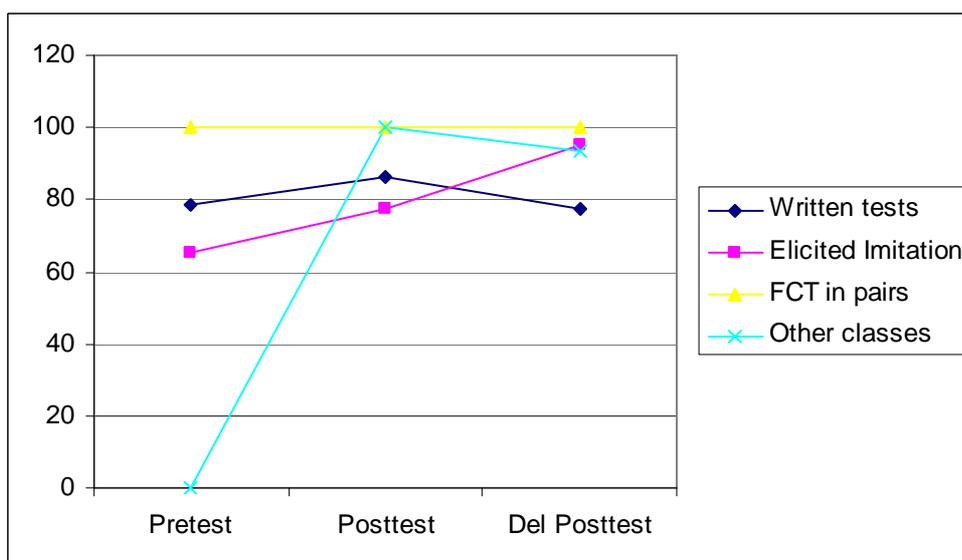


Figure 33. Results obtained by Student B on the tests measuring modal verbs in the past.

Table 29. Results obtained by Student B on the tests measuring modal verbs in the past.

	Pretest mean (%)	Posttest mean (%)	Del Posttest mean (%)
Written tests	78.75	86.25	77.50
Elicited Imitation	65.00	77.50	95.00
FCT in pairs	100.00	100.00	100.00
Other classes	0.00	100.00	93.48

Moving on to the analysis of the results obtained by the student on the tests measuring the knowledge of modal verbs in the past, one may observe even greater changes which are visible in Figure 33. and Table 29. Similarly to the 3rd conditional, the level of explicit knowledge, tapped on the written test, was quite high from the beginning, as the pretest mean percentage score was 78.75%, then she gained 7.5% on the immediate posttest to reach 86.25% and then her score deteriorated to 77.5% on the delayed posttest. As far as the measures of implicit knowledge are concerned, however, the pretest mean percentage score obtained on the elicited imitation test was 65%. After the instructional treatment, it reached 78% and got even higher on the delayed posttest to achieve 95%, which makes a total gain equal to 30%. Looking at the results of the focused communication tasks performed in pairs, it may be observed that the student managed to generate seven occasions for the use of modal verbs in the past on the pretest and their use was correct, then she used six obligatory contexts for modals in the past on the immediate posttest task, all of which were correct, and during the delayed posttest only one but correct sentence was produced. An impressive gain in terms of producing modal verbs in the past was recorded

during the regular classes. In comparison with the poor result on the pretest, where only one instance of the structure was observed and it was used incorrectly, the three utterances used on the immediate posttest were correct and the twenty-three obligatory contexts produced on the delayed posttest reached the accuracy mean percentage score of 93.47%. It may indicate that the instruction she received during grammar lessons had a beneficial effect on the learner's knowledge, particularly with regard to its implicit dimension. Undoubtedly, it was also thanks to the overall educational procedures at the college that the participant of the study changed her learning habits, appreciated oral practice and communication tasks, which helped her develop knowledge of modal verbs in the past, not only in terms of explicit but also implicit knowledge, as may be observed in the number of obligatory contexts she produced.

The comparison of the two successful students belonging to the two experimental groups who took part in the quasi experiment and were taught the two structures by means of different teaching options provides a basis for certain observations and conclusions. In terms of the length of the learning process, the amount of time spent on self-study, the exposure to the target language outside of educational context and also the general awareness of importance of grammar, it was the first student who appeared to be more autonomous and conscious of what the process of learning a foreign language involves. The second student did not have such rich contact with English outside school, did not spend so much time on self-study, but seemed to have an established set of personal techniques of learning grammar, indicating a prevalence of strategies matching the visual learning style. Both students had quite a similar attitude towards grammar instruction; they acknowledged its value in language production and comprehension, but at the same time they claimed that controlled written activities constituted successful and sufficient grammar practice, which may have resulted from their educational history. As far as the previous learning experience is concerned, in the case of the first student, a number of various approaches and methods were used, which definitely helped her develop her language skills and were more interesting and motivating, and according to the second student, grammar lessons were monotonous, teacher-centered and based mainly on controlled written practice and rote learning aiming at error-free production of the target language.

As evidenced by the two students' opinions provided in the final questionnaire, the differences in the two types of instructional treatment were not recognized. Both learners appreciated the teaching options employed during the treatment of the 3rd conditional and

modals in the past and were convinced of their improvement in terms of knowing the form, meaning and use. It may be observed, however, that the first student revealed greater consistency in her responses when commenting on past unreal conditionals and, when it comes to self-evaluation, it seems she was more satisfied with her level of knowledge with respect to this feature. When it comes to the second student, it may be seen that she appreciated focused communication tasks employed when teaching modal verbs in the past and she observed using this structure more often since the pedagogical intervention being part of the experiment. Moving on to the analysis of the two students' performances on the tests measuring their explicit and implicit knowledge, the progress which was achieved by both of them cannot be denied. In the case of the first student, who was fairly self-conscious and confident from the beginning, the need for instruction and its effectiveness could be observed while comparing the results of the tests focusing on the two structures, and as far as the other student is concerned, her considerable improvement was noticed not only in her results of the tests, but also, and maybe most importantly, in the development of her language awareness and her actual learning preferences.

5.5.2. The profile of weak students

Apart from analysing the characteristics of successful students (A and B), whose results are always a reward for the teacher, one also needs to take into account those who failed to achieve considerable improvement or whose performance deteriorated. The researcher must admit, however, that it was a strenuous task to select the students who could serve as examples of unsuccessful ones, as all those who took part in the quasi experiment, were, at least to some extent, successful as they completed their first year of studies. Usually it was the case that every student made some kind of improvement, be it in terms of their explicit or implicit knowledge, individual or pair work, written or oral tests. Therefore, it was decided to investigate two learners whose gains resulting from the instructional treatment were the lowest. They came from the two experimental groups and, similarly to their more successful colleagues, they will be described with regard to their educational history, their attitudes towards grammar instruction and the results of the instructional treatment determined on the basis of the different measures.

The first student (Student C) was a male member of group 1. He had graduated from High School No 1 in Szczecinek in 2007 with a good grade in English. He passed the extended version of the high school leaving exam with flying colours and claimed to have been learning English for “at least ten years” at school, at home via self study and also during a nine-month work abroad. His exposure to English out of the educational context seemed to be impressive: he spoke English both to native speakers and to friends, he watched films, listened to music and read books and magazines in English. He browsed through English web pages and played computer games. The student also worked on developing his language skills by working individually with the course-book. As far as grammar is concerned, he had his favourite way of learning this subsystem, which was writing and rewriting, learning the rules and their use. He stated that this way of learning was effective and he tried it to be regular and systematic. When asked about difficult grammar areas, he ranked none of them as *very difficult*, but conditionals, reported speech and phrasal verbs did cause him some problems. Question tags, articles and nouns were marked as the easiest.

When it comes to the attitudes towards grammar instruction, the respondent shared his personal comments for many statements, which definitely helped the researcher understand his choices and allowed for a more thorough analysis of his performance. In the opinion of the learner, grammar, which was not a difficult language subsystem, was necessary for communication, as “without it, it is hard to understand the interlocutor”. Any conversation in the target language could not be satisfying employing only basic structures as “by using only banal structures we cannot communicate everything and we do not develop our language”. The participant was convinced of the crucial role grammar played in precise communication and he felt that the knowledge of grammar made him more confident, which he supported with the following comment: “we are not afraid somebody will not understand because of the wrong application of the rules”. At the same time, however, he was unable to decide whether the fact that someone used appropriate grammar affected the understanding of the information and he denied that most grammar rules were used on an everyday basis. When asked about fluency and accuracy, he could not decide which was more important, saying that “different people have different ways to communicate. The best idea would be to speak both fluently and accurately”. Moving on to the process of grammar teaching, the student was of the opinion that a good lesson had the following stages: “discussion of the general rules concerning the structure to be followed by provision of examples and their analysis, and finally exercises”. When it came to

specific teaching options, such as text-manipulation, text-creation activities and communication tasks, the respondent did not express his opinion on what was effective. He said, however, that remembering the rule and doing multiple exercises could be insufficient to learn a given structure and he was fond of replacing traditional grammar activities with tasks resembling everyday situations.

Apart from the student's personal attitudes, it was also his educational history that could contribute to his overall process of learning grammar. Having analysed the learner's responses, one could conclude that his English lessons followed a strict plan and were often monotonous, although grammar did not prevail and was often only one of the lesson's components. The teachers did not confine themselves to the course book only and they often brought extra materials for the students, but it appeared that the deductive approach to grammar teaching was favoured as it was always the teacher to state the rule and he/she did not encourage the learners to draw conclusions on the basis of examples provided. The student did not learn the rules by heart and he was never asked to recite them in class. Grammar practice often included both written exercises and oral tasks to be performed in pairs and groups. Completing sentences with the correct form was a frequently employed means of controlled practice, whereas translation and communication tasks occurred rarely. The teacher appeared to be fond of error-free production of the language, as errors were corrected both during speaking tasks and activities practising grammar rules. The testing procedures never involved writing the actual rules, but, similarly to the practice stage, they aimed at applying the structure in a sentence always in a written form; in the student's opinion, the knowledge of grammar was never checked in oral tests.

When it comes to self-study, grammar, the rules of which did not horrify the respondent, did not seem to be treated with any special attention. The student claimed to study grammar individually, often by doing a number of activities, never by revising and remembering the rules. Talking to friends in English was another technique employed frequently by the respondent, who claimed not to think much which structure to use while speaking and if he knew the rule, using it was never a problem. On the other hand, the student was aware of his weaknesses as he mentioned that he often had difficulty employing all the grammar structures while speaking. In the case of a problem, he always employed communication strategies but he also admitted checking the unknown phrases or structures in a dictionary or a reference material. As far as writing is concerned, it made him monitor his language more, as he often thought about how to write something and did

not recall so many difficulties with applying grammar structures in his writing as in speaking. When asked about the reasons for learning grammar, the respondent said it made him more confident in the case of writing rather than speaking, as even if the interlocutor used inappropriate grammar while speaking, it did not cause any misunderstandings most of the time.

The final set of questions provided information on the student's opinions about the teaching procedures to which he had been subjected during the instructional treatment. The first opinion the respondent wrote was about the tests used; he claimed that they were mechanical and their form was monotonous. When asked about the oral measures, he said it was not so much grammar skills that he lacked, but ideas which he could use while speaking. He also added that he preferred writing tests as he had more time to think. When it comes to the actual teaching procedures concerning past unreal conditionals involving focused communication tasks, the student was convinced he had developed his knowledge of the structure. He did not remember the text introducing the context for using the 3rd conditional and was unable to assess its value. When asked about the written activities, he was rather satisfied, stating that they helped him remember the form and meaning, and also facilitated the actual use of the structure. The respondent did not express his opinion about focused communication tasks and their role, as he "did not remember clearly how many there were". Nevertheless, he was convinced that he understood and knew the form, meaning and use of the structure, and was satisfied with the level of his knowledge. Although he did not observe the more frequent use of the 3rd conditional, he was sure it was definitely more accurate. According to the student, the classroom procedures were rather clear, interesting and the aims of the lesson were rather straightforward, but it was difficult for him to determine whether he felt involved and motivated by the instructor. As far as the instruction in modal verbs in the past is concerned, the student did not think he had improved his abilities in the area much, as during his stay in the UK he had used it very often and he knew much already before the classes. Similarly to past unreal conditionals, he did not remember the text employed at the beginning of the instructional treatment. He was convinced, however, that the written exercises helped him remember the form and meaning. The student was definitely satisfied with the level of his knowledge concerning modal verbs in the past, claiming to understand and know their form, meaning and use. He reckoned that the amount of written practice was adequate and he also thought the same for the number of focused communication tasks which were in fact not included in the

treatment. Although it was difficult for him to decide whether he had been using modals in the past more often since the in-class instruction, he felt involved in the classroom procedures and stated he was motivated by the instructor more than in the case of the 3rd conditional.

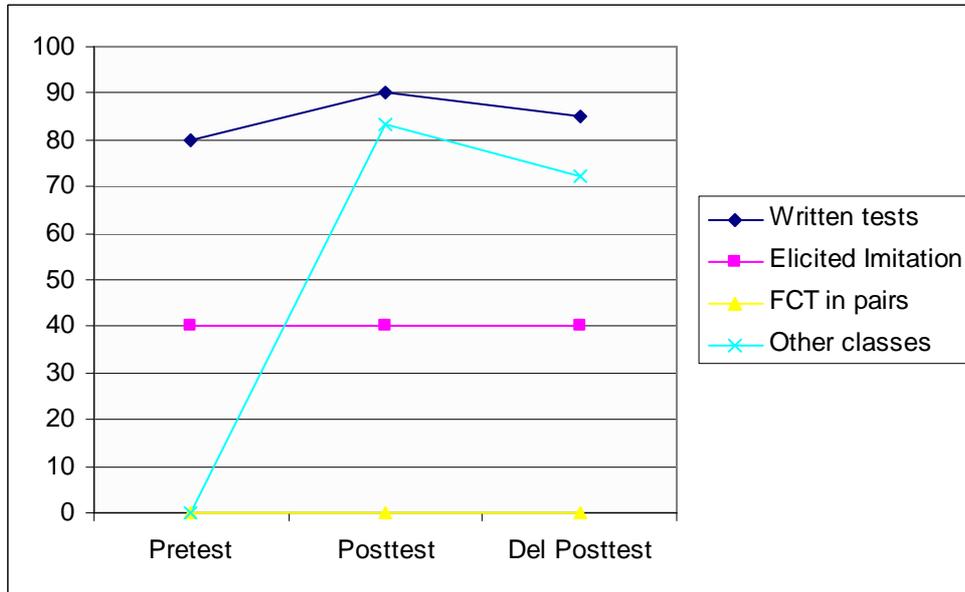


Figure 34. Results obtained by Student C on the tests measuring past unreal conditionals.

Table 30. Results obtained by Student C on the tests measuring past unreal conditionals.

	Pretest mean (%)	Posttest mean (%)	Del Posttest mean (%)
Written tests	80.00	90.00	85.00
Elicited Imitation	40.00	40.00	40.00
FCT in pairs	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other classes	0.00	83.33	72.22

The analysis of the student's responses and opinions presented in the two questionnaires and his actual results obtained on the four measures may help us understand the potential reasons for his poor improvement. As far as the 3rd conditional is concerned, taught to the group to which he belonged by means of focused communication tasks, his performance may be evaluated with respect to explicit and implicit knowledge. As transpires from Figure 29. and the numerical information in Table 17., the mean percentage scores obtained on the written measure indicate that the gain he achieved from the pretest to the immediate posttest was 10%, and it was lower by 5% on the delayed posttest when the

student scored 85%, which was the second lowest result in the group. Altogether, then, one may say that he improved his mean percentage score by 5% only. When it comes to implicit knowledge measured on the elicited imitation test, the pretest result was 40%, after the instructional treatment the learner scored 55%, and he improved his performance by more than 25% as late as on the delayed posttest. The focused communication task, performed in pairs, revealed that the student was able to create one wrong instance of the 3rd conditional on the pretest, during the posttest he generated five examples of the structure, four of which were correct, and on the delayed posttest three obligatory contexts were produced, with two of the uses being correct. Again, in comparison with other members of the group, it was a poor outcome in terms of accuracy. A similar situation occurred during the classes observed: he generated one wrong sentence on the pretest, then he created three sentences, two of which were correct and, finally, the delayed posttest lessons generated twenty-seven obligatory contexts, but the learner managed to achieve the mean percentage score of 72% only.

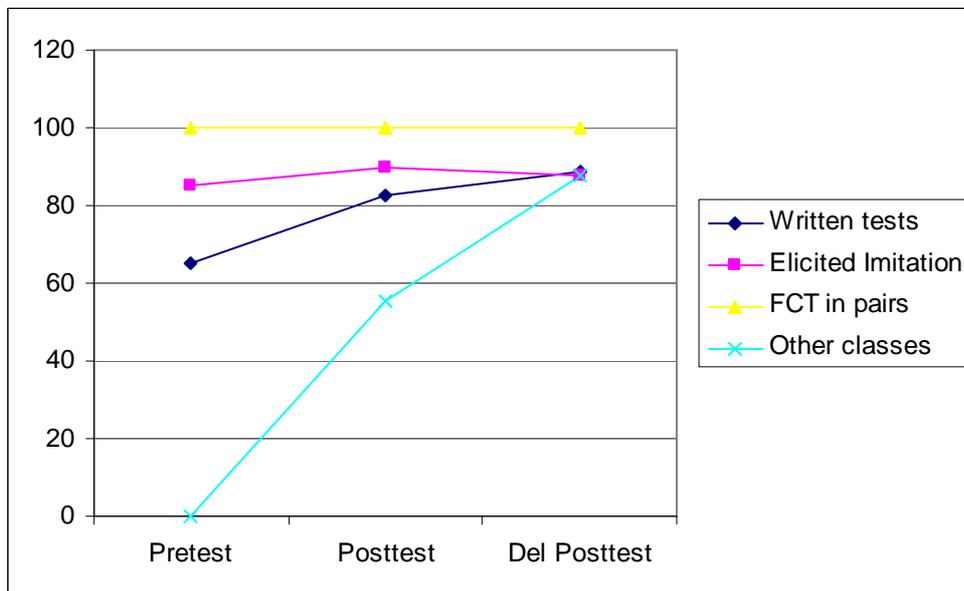


Figure 35. Results obtained by Student C on the tests measuring modal verbs in the past.

Table 31. Results obtained by Student C on the tests measuring modal verbs in the past.

	Pretest mean (%)	Posttest mean (%)	Del Posttest mean (%)

Written tests	65.00	82.50	88.75
Elicited Imitation	85.00	90.00	87.50
FCT in pairs	100.00	100.00	100.00
Other classes	0.00	55.56	87.50

The student took part in the instructional treatment in modal verbs in the past which included a number of text-manipulation and text-creation activities. The results of the tests, presented in Figure 35. and Table 31., revealed that the intervention turned out to improve his explicit knowledge considerably: the student achieved 65% on the pretest, 82.5% on the immediate posttest and then 88.75% on the delayed posttest. The implicit knowledge of the structure, measured by means of an oral elicited imitation task, turned out to be quite consistent on the three tests: 85% obtained by the student on the pretest was improved by 5% on the posttest and then the score decreased by 2.5% on the delayed posttest. When it comes the student's performance on the focused communication task, he managed to create three correct instances of modals in the past, and on the two consecutive tests there were nine correct sentences. The tasks performed during the classes enabled the learner to create one incorrect sentence on the pretest, then nine obligatory contexts were generated, but only five of them were correct and the delayed posttest procedure generated eight sentences, three of which were wrong. In comparison with the other members of the group, the number of obligatory contexts produced was rather low and the mean percentage score was not satisfactory either.

When it comes to drawing conclusions concerning the student's results connected with learning the two structures in question, one cannot escape noticing that there were tasks which evidenced certain progress. It turned out, for example, that the level of explicit knowledge, measured on the written tests, was quite high with respect to modal verbs in the past. When it comes to implicit knowledge, the learner achieved good results on the individual elicited imitation tests and pair focused communication tasks in terms of the mean percentage scores, but the scope of improvement was not that high at all. Moreover, during the observed classes, the student did not generate many obligatory contexts and his performance included a number of errors in the use of modals in the past. Among a great variety of possible causes of such a situation, some may be found in his responses to the two questionnaires. Naturally, the student's performance may have resulted from the character of the instruction, but it may also have had its origins in his educational history and it could also have been connected with the student's prior experience abroad. Moving

on to the analysis of the learner's improvement concerning past unreal conditionals, one cannot deny that his progress was not really satisfactory. Although the level of his explicit knowledge proved to be quite high on the pretest, it did not increase much, which resulted in the fact that the other members of the group did much better on the delayed posttest, improving their results significantly. The student's implicit knowledge was quite poor in comparison with other participants of the study and, despite the fact that instructional treatment included multiple focused communication tasks, it did not improve much. The data obtained by means of the two questionnaires indicate that it may have been because of the difficulty conditionals caused to the respondent, but also because of the attitude the student manifested towards grammar instruction. He appeared to be rather carefree and self-confident with regard to speaking and did not consider learning grammar essential for the development of his oral performance. Moreover, the opinions he expressed on the instructional treatment of the 3rd conditional revealed that he was not very involved in the lessons, did not feel much motivated to work and he did not seem to pay adequate attention to what actually happened during the classes. Perhaps it is a too far-fetched conclusion, but the student may have thought he did not need much help if he was able to communicate successfully in the UK, and therefore he considered grammar lessons more a necessity than an opportunity for self-development, which resulted in his poor gains on the posttests.

The second student (Student D) who definitely had problems with grammar and made little improvement in terms of her explicit and implicit knowledge of the two structures was a female member of group 2. She had graduated from High School No 1 in Swarzędz in 2005 with a good grade in English. She stated she had been learning English for ten years at school only, but in the meantime she had also spent three months working abroad. The only contact with English she had outside of the educational context was watching films, listening to music and reading books in the target language. When asked whether she tried to seek additional opportunities, she responded that she was not persistent and motivated enough to do anything more than what was assigned at the college. She did not possess one favourite grammar book, but she mentioned using *Oxford Repetytorium* and her way of learning included reading theory and examples followed by doing exercises, which she, however, did not consider effective, as evidenced by the comment: "I still have problems with grammar. I think I need a good teacher who will help me find a new method". The student found phrasal verbs, indirect speech and relative clauses the most

difficult grammar areas, and among the easiest in her opinion were question tags, prepositions, articles and also modal verbs.

When it comes to the attitudes towards grammar instruction manifested by the respondent, they were only sometimes supported with personal comments, which may also reveal some aspects of the student's personality. According to the learner, grammar was a difficult but necessary subsystem, which could be made easier when explained well. The respondent was aware of the importance of using more advanced grammar to feel satisfied while communicating. Interestingly, however, she did not consider grammar structures essential for expressing herself and she did not believe that the knowledge of grammar made people more confident as in the respondent's opinion "vocabulary is very important. Without it we won't understand anything even if grammar level is good". The student claimed that most grammar structures were not used on an everyday basis, and she considered fluency to be more important than accuracy; on the other hand, however, she agreed that the use of appropriate grammar may determine understanding of the message. While analysing the student's responses, it could be noticed that her opinions were very inconsistent, which may have resulted from her lack of knowledge in the area. She was unable to decide what it meant to know the form, meaning and use of the passive voice. Moreover, when asked about the specific teaching options, she opted for written exercises and rejected communication tasks, but then she said one needed to practice grammar in the tasks resembling real life situations.

To know the respondent better and to understand her ways of learning, it was also necessary to take into account her previous learning experience. As evidenced by the student's opinions, her English lessons did not deal with only with aspects of grammar; nevertheless grammar was always boring and difficult for the learner. The teacher worked with course book materials only and never prepared any additional activities. He or she seemed to favour the deductive style of teaching, as the rules were first explained by the instructor and later practised in various exercises, but the student also recalled that sometimes it was the learners who were asked to draw conclusions about the rule. Although the teacher never asked the students to recite rules, the respondent often learned them by heart. Grammar was practiced by means of written exercises, usually requiring learners to complete sentences with the correct form or translate them, and the errors were usually immediately corrected. According to the learner, oral tasks were never employed for grammar practice and as far as communication tasks are concerned, they occurred rarely.

Moving on to the testing procedures, either they were not used at all (the respondent marked *never* in the case of every statement), or the teacher employed some other techniques of assessing grammar. All in all, the English lessons, as described by the student, were probably not the most successful and interesting ones.

Having analysed the teaching procedures employed by the student's English teachers at school, it is worth drawing attention to the learner's individual learning techniques. She claimed she often learned grammar on her own at home, mainly by doing exercises, revising and remembering the rules, which would correspond to her ideas of learning by heart also at school. She did not practice grammar by speaking English to her friends or native speakers and she admitted she never thought much which structure to apply in her oral performance. However, the student stated that she always thought about being accurate while writing, and it was accurate writing that was the main aim of her grammar learning. When in doubt, she often employed communication strategies to help her communicate, and she also checked for the precise language in reference materials. The learner was aware of the problems she had with using grammar structures in her output – she admitted that she was always in doubt when writing or speaking, and even if she knew the rules, she often found it difficult to actually use them in the spontaneous language production. She appreciated it when her interlocutors used proper grammar as it helped her understand the message, contrary to the situations where grammar was wrongly used, as it often hindered the conveyance of the required information.

The last source of data concerning the student in question were her opinions on the instructional treatment to which she had been subjected, expressed in the final questionnaire. After a year of studying English, the respondent did not have a favourite grammar book she could use. The information concerning the teaching procedures she provided was very unclear and not supported with any personal comments. Most of the time she chose the *hard to decide* option, which was not a valuable source of data, as it did not shed light on what was effective or not for her. When asked about the teacher's pedagogic intervention concerning the 3rd conditional, the student reckoned that the lessons were rather helpful for improving her knowledge in the area. She was unable to decide about the importance of the text introducing the context, but she thought both the written exercises and the communication tasks were rather helpful at remembering the form and meaning and the actual using of the structure. The learner was dissatisfied with the level of her knowledge concerning past unreal conditionals to a certain extent, although she

claimed to understand and know the form, meaning and use of the structure. Unfortunately, she did not observe any changes in the number of conditionals produced since the time of the instruction. When asked about the general features of the lessons, she expressed positive opinions about the classroom management, planning and the teacher roles, and she felt rather involved and motivated to work by the instructor. As far as the teaching procedures connected with modal verbs in the past are concerned, it is worth remembering that they included focused communication tasks in this group. Although the student admitted she had made some improvement with respect to the targeted feature, she was rather dissatisfied with the level of her knowledge. She did not find the text very useful for introducing the context, but she appreciated both the written exercises and oral communication tasks, stating they helped her remember the form, meaning and use of the structure, which she claimed to understand and know at the time of the administration of the questionnaire. The student was unable to decide whether she had been using modal verbs in the past more often since the time of the treatment. Her final remarks concerning the classes, their management and planning were rather positive and she admitted she felt rather involved and motivated by the teacher. Her only additional comment dealt with the tests administered – she believed they were too difficult at times, as the required knowledge exceeded the information included in the reference materials.

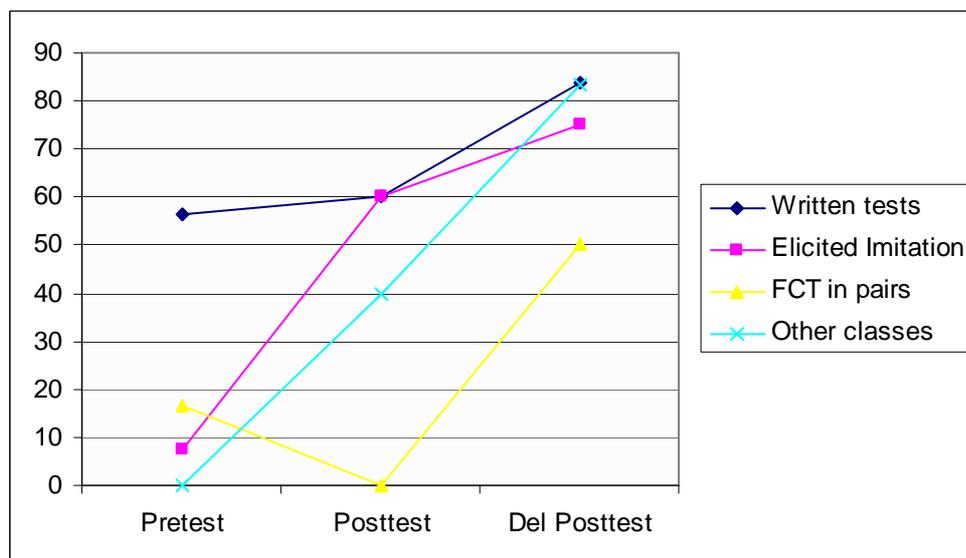


Figure 36. Results obtained by Student D on the tests measuring past unreal conditionals.

Table 32. Results obtained by Student D on the tests measuring past unreal conditionals

	Pretest mean (%)	Posttest mean (%)	Del Posttest mean (%)
Written tests	56.25	60.00	83.75
Elicited Imitation	7.50	60.00	75.00
FCT in pairs	16.67	0.00	50.00
Other classes	0.00	40.00	83.33

The comparison of the student's opinions presented in the two questionnaires and her actual results obtained on the four tests measuring both explicit and implicit knowledge may be useful in pinpointing the causes of her poor performance. Her mean percentage scores regarding past unreal conditionals are presented graphically in Figure 36. and numerically in Table 32. When it comes to the written tests measuring the explicit knowledge of the 3rd conditional, the results were quite low on the pretest (56.25%), only slightly higher on the immediate posttest (60%) and much better, although still poor in comparison with other members of the group, on the delayed posttest (83.75%). When it comes to the implicit knowledge estimated on the basis of the elicited imitation tests, the student achieved only 7.5% on the pretest, then made a considerable gain and achieved 60% on the posttest and 75% on the delayed posttest. The pretest focused communication task, performed in pairs, elicited three instances of past unreal conditionals, one of which was correct, then the immediate posttest task generated one incorrect use of the structure and as far as the delayed posttest is concerned, one correct sentence was created. All of this shows that the score was very poor both in terms of the number of examples and their accuracy. The last data collection instrument measuring implicit knowledge were the regular classes observed by the researcher. On the basis of the transcripts, it was estimated that the learner produced one incorrect sentence on the pretest, then, on the immediate posttest, she managed to contribute more to the information exchange as she generated five instances of the 3rd conditional, four of which were correct and, finally, during the delayed posttest she created twelve sentences, three of which were wrong. Undoubtedly, one may notice that the student had increased her mastery of past unreal conditionals to a certain extent; nevertheless in comparison with other group members her results were rather unsatisfactory.

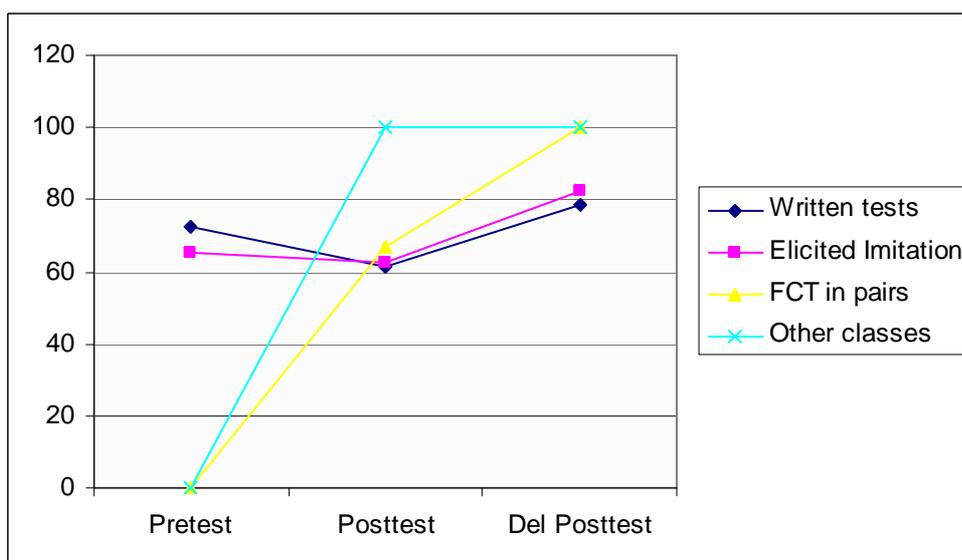


Figure 37. Results obtained by Student D on the tests measuring modal verbs in the past.

Table 33. Results obtained by Student D on the tests measuring modal verbs in the past.

	Pretest mean (%)	Posttest mean (%)	Del Posttest mean (%)
Written tests	72.50	61.25	78.75
Elicited Imitation	65.00	62.50	82.50
FCT in pairs	0.00	66.67	100.00
Other classes	0.00	100.00	100.00

Moving on to the effects of the instructional treatment targeting modal verbs in the past, which in the case of this subject, included focused communication tasks, the student's results are presented in Figure 37. and Table 33. As far as the level of explicit knowledge as measured in written tests is concerned, the learner started with the mean percentage score of 72.5%, the posttest result was even worse as she obtained 61.25%, and then she made a slight gain to reach 78.75%. Altogether then, the score was lower than in the case of the previously examined structure. Looking at the measures of implicit knowledge, one may notice that the student's performance on the elicited imitation task was much better than previously, as she scored 65% on the pretest, then 62.5% on the posttest and 82.5% on the delayed posttest. Such good performance on the last test could be attributed not only to the benefits of the instructional treatment, but it is also worth remembering that it was the sixth time the learner had participated in this type of a test, which may have had its *practice effect* on the overall performance. When it comes to the results obtained on the basis of focused communication tasks, the amount of language and its quality produced by the participant of the study was quite poor in comparison with the other members of the

experimental group. During the pretest, the student managed to create two examples of modal verbs in the past, both of which were wrong, then the posttest procedure generated three obligatory contexts, two of which were correct, and, finally, on the delayed posttest, the learner produced three sentences with the right use of modal verbs in the past. As far as the results obtained from the recordings of the regular classes are concerned, the student started with three incorrect instances of modals in the past, after the instructional treatment she managed to produce two correct sentences, and later, on the delayed posttest, as many as twelve examples of modal verbs in the past were created, all of which were used correctly.

As the data collected on the tests indicate, the student did make some gains particularly with regard to her implicit knowledge. It may be assumed that it could be at least partially attributed to the teacher's intervention concerning modal verbs in the past. Nevertheless, when it comes to drawing general conclusions connected with the student's levels of improvement throughout the study, it cannot be denied that her progress with regard to the two structures in question was not satisfactory. In terms of explicit knowledge no real changes were observed immediately after the two instructional treatments; in the case of modal verbs in the past, the mean percentage score was even lower than on the pretest. In both cases, however, the student managed to improve her results on the delayed posttests, which were administered 8-10 weeks after the instruction. Looking at the learner's level of implicit knowledge, one cannot escape noticing that the improvement was slightly better for modal verbs in the past, as, although the number of obligatory contexts was similar for the two structures, it seems that more accurate sentences were generated after the instruction which included focused communication tasks. The comparison of the scores obtained on the tests with the student's opinions and experiences described in the two questionnaires helps us understand why she had problems with learning grammar structures. Not only did she lack motivation, confidence and self-discipline, which definitely did not contribute to the level of autonomy, but she also seemed to be very teacher-dependent, expecting her instructor to solve all her problems. Her learning experiences were rather negative, but it appeared that she had also contributed to such a state of affairs by her rigid ways of learning, indecisiveness and lack of involvement. Definitely, while looking at her pretest results, one could conclude that she started off from a lower level, which could have affected her further development. One of the reasons, however, might also have been her personality traits which made her so reluctant to engage

in target language production, which resulted in less progress than in the case of the other members of the group.

5.5.3. Discussion

The importance of the relationship between students' individual characteristics and their actual learning outcomes must be recognized, as it may contribute to the general understanding of the factors which influence foreign language learning. In her articles reviewing form-focused instruction, Spada (1997, 2010) poses a question as to whether particular students benefit from form-focused instruction more than others. The studies she mentions, however, dealt with aptitude which was not measured in any formal way here, and age differences which do not apply to this thesis, either. On the basis of her observations, she concluded that "there has been little research on the interaction between individual and instructional variables and their combined effects on learning outcomes" (Spada 2010: 8). Dörnyei (2009b) mentions four individual differences which have received special attention in past second language research: motivation, language aptitude, learning styles, and learning strategies. He claims that "the role of learner characteristics can only be evaluated with regard to their interaction with specific environmental and temporal factors or conditions" (Dörnyei (2009b: 232). His claim is supported by the opinion expressed by N. Ellis and Larsen-Freeman (2006: 563), who argue that "to attribute causality to any one variable (or even a constellation of variables) without taking time and context into account is misguided."

On the basis of the discussion presented in the sections above, which included tracing the educational histories of the four students, interpreting their opinions displayed in the two questionnaires and investigating their progress made in the course of the quasi experiment, one could observe some features and behaviours which appeared to be of vital importance for achieving success in learning complex features of English grammar. The four students represented different backgrounds in terms of their former educational context, their out-of-class exposure to English and their contact with English-speaking individuals. Although these might have affected their motivation and attitudes to some extent, it appears that the previous experience was not the major and prevailing factor influencing their progress. If one compared the two students who achieved success and

improved their level of language impressively, they seemed to differ a lot. These differences notwithstanding, they managed to succeed thanks to their attitudes towards grammar learning, their systematic self-study work, their learning strategies and the awareness of their weaknesses which they wanted to overcome. On the other hand, when it comes to the students who achieved poor gains on the tests, one may observe that they did not differ a lot from the successful students in terms of their educational history. The possible reasons for their failure might have been their negative attitudes towards grammar instruction, lack of effective ways of individual learning and problems with systematic work due to lack of time management skills. Their poor scores might also have resulted from the fact that they were quite reluctant to learn new things, either because they were too convinced of their sufficient level of language (Student C), or the other way round, their fear and lack of confidence hindered their development (Student D).

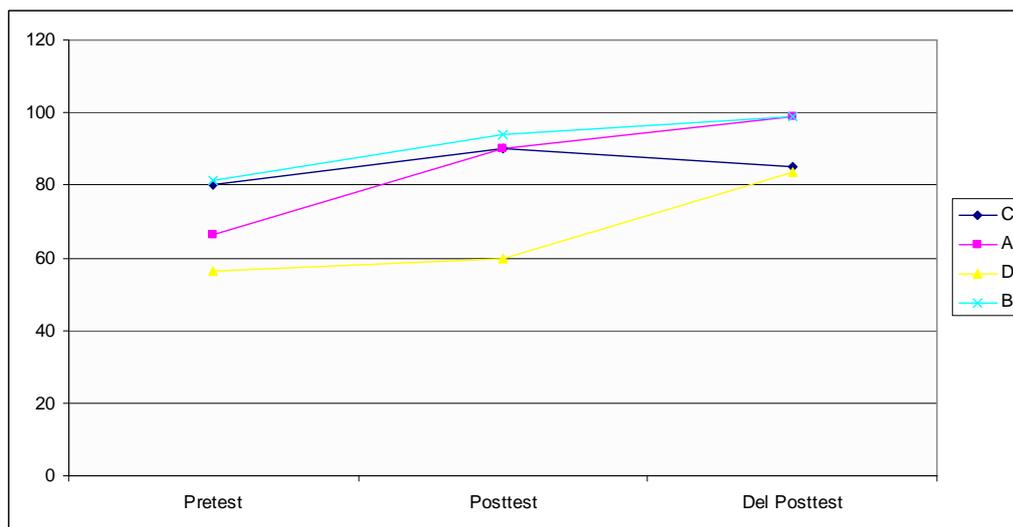


Figure 38. Students' results on the written tests measuring past unreal conditionals.

Table 34. Students results on the written tests measuring past unreal conditionals.

	Pretest mean (%)	Posttest mean (%)	Del Posttest mean (%)
Student A (good)	66.25	90	98.75
Student B (good)	81.25	93.75	98.75
Student C (weak)	80.00	90.00	85.00
Student D (weak)	56.25	60.00	83.75

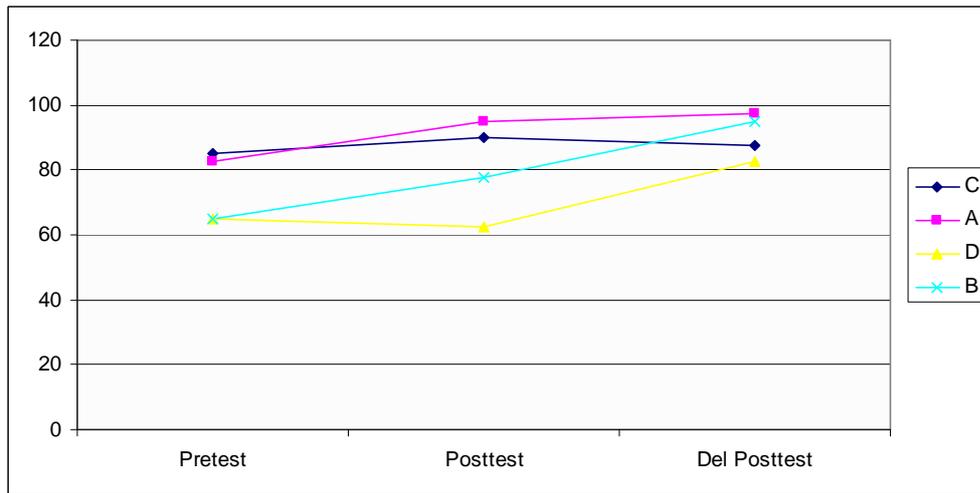


Figure 39. Students' results on elicited imitation test measuring modal verbs in the past.

Table 35. Students' results on elicited imitation test measuring modal verbs in the past.

	Pretest mean	Posttest mean	Del Posttest mean
Student A (good)	82.50	95.00	97.50
Student B (good)	65.00	77.50	95.00
Student C (weak)	85.00	90.00	87.50
Student D (weak)	65.00	62.50	82.50

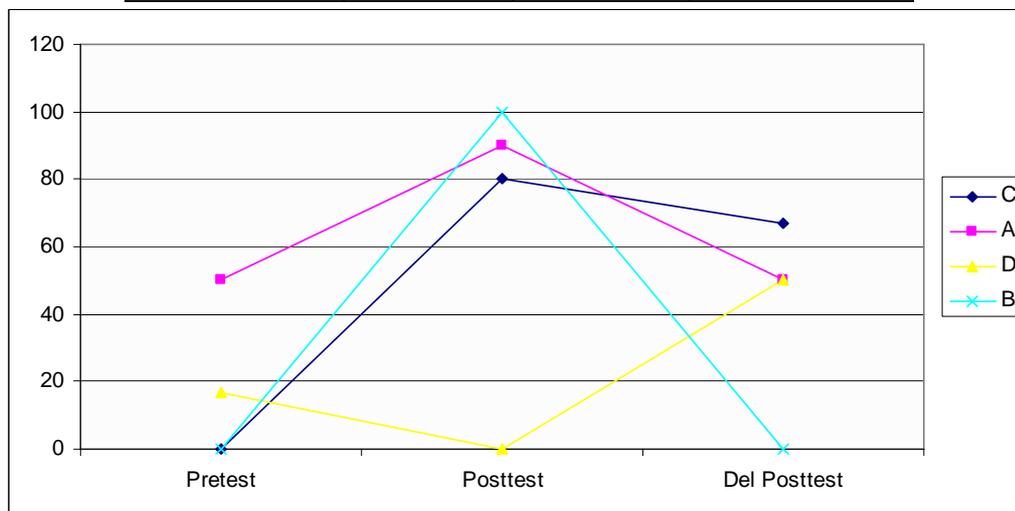


Figure 40. Students' results on focused communication task measuring past unreal conditionals.

Table 36. Students' results on focused communication task measuring past unreal conditionals.

	Pretest mean	Posttest mean	Del Posttest mean
Student A (good)	50	90	50
Student B (good)	0.00	100.00	0.00
Student C (weak)	0.00	0.00	0.00
Student D (weak)	16.67	0.00	50.00

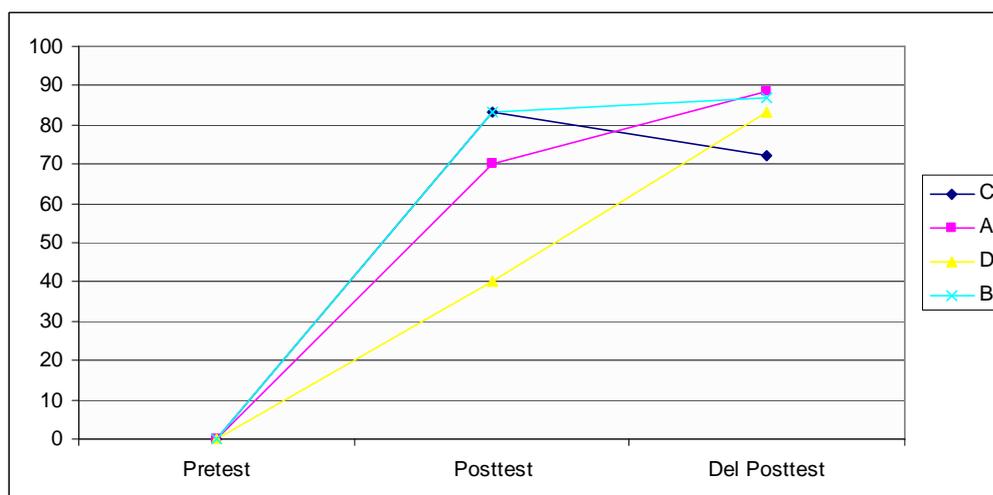


Figure 41. Students' results during regular classes measuring the 3rd conditional.

Table 37. Students' results during regular classes measuring the 3rd conditional.

	Pretest mean	Posttest mean	Del Posttest mean
Student A (good)	0.00	70	88
Student B (good)	0.00	83.33	86.84
Student C (weak)	0.00	83.33	72.22
Student D (weak)	0.00	40.00	83.33

Although the four students were subjected to the same types of instructional treatment, they expressed different views on its effectiveness and quality. Their opinions and self-assessment seemed to be compatible with the actual results they obtained during the tests measuring their knowledge of past unreal conditionals and modal verbs in the past. Figure 38. – Figure 41. above display the four learners' achievements on four different measures of their explicit and implicit knowledge whereas Tables 34. – 37. provide numerical data to enable the reader to compare the actual scores and analyse the learners' patterns of development. Students A and B were the successful ones, and students C and D were the weak ones. It may be observed that at the outset of the study their levels of knowledge were not the same (except for the 3rd conditional measured during regular classes), but as a result of instruction, the four learners manifested various levels of improvement, both on the immediate and on the delayed posttests. Sometimes (see Figure 38, 39, 41) the “successful” students had poorer results on the pretests, but thanks to the instructional treatment, and, undoubtedly, their own characteristic features, their final achievement was impressive. Their scores proved to be more visible on the immediate posttests and more durable, which could be observed on the delayed posttests.

As has been mentioned earlier, tracing the development of individual learners was definitely not the primary research aim. Therefore the conclusions are very tentative and a thorough analysis of the potential variables affecting their scores is impossible due to lack of data coming from adequate research instruments. Nevertheless, in the opinion of the author, it has been shown that apart from the unquestionably positive role of the pedagogical intervention employed, the students' individual characteristics also contributed to the final outcomes of the study. It has helped the author become aware of a whole array of issues which need to be taken into account when it comes to successful grammar teaching. Encouraged by Spada (2010: 9), who calls for research in the "interactions between learner differences, instructional type and SLA.", the author hopes to continue to explore the relationships between individual differences and FFI in the future.

5.6. General discussion

The research project reported in the present chapter has been inspired by the growing recognition of the importance of form-focused instruction in second and foreign language acquisition. The study concentrated on exploring the role of focused communication tasks in form-focused instruction with respect to two complex English structures: past unreal conditionals and modal verbs in the past. The analysis of the data collected by means of both written and spoken measures, aimed at estimating the development of the students' level of explicit and implicit knowledge.

The findings of the quasi-experiment imply that in terms of explicit knowledge, both focused communication tasks and contextualized practice activities were beneficial for the learners in the development of their interlanguage as far as the two structures in question were concerned. When it comes to the 3rd conditional, both groups made similar progress, which achieved statistical significance, and in the case of modal verbs in the past it appeared that the CPA group improved slightly more, with the differences in its scores becoming more statistically significant in comparison with gains of the FCT group. At no point, however, when it comes to measuring the students' explicit knowledge, did the results of the two instructional treatments differ from each other significantly. All of this shows that, irrespective of the nature of the pedagogical intervention, the students became

more aware of the targeted structure, and they monitored their output more effectively than the control group. The high results on the tests measuring explicit knowledge could also be attributed to the Polish educational context, in which learners are accustomed to having their grammar knowledge tested on written measures: both comprehension-based and production-oriented. When it comes to the two types of tasks included in the test of explicit knowledge, the conclusions concerning the students' ability to comprehend the target structures were very much in line with the general results of the written tests. The two types of instructional treatment did not generate statistically significant differences between the two experimental groups, but the FCT and the CPA students improved considerably enough to differ significantly from the control group. The production tasks comprising the second part of the written test and their results revealed that, again both types of treatment were beneficial, and although subtle differences were observed between the ability to produce past unreal conditionals and modal verbs in the past, they were in fact negligible.

The analysis of standard deviation values when it comes to explicit knowledge measured in the written tests revealed that the students manifested similar levels of heterogeneity for both structures, with the caveat that the instructional treatment in the two experimental groups helped decrease the level of variation and it was further reduced on the delayed posttests. In general, the fairly low levels of variability and the high results on the tests testify to a considerable increase in explicit knowledge in the two experimental groups. It is believed to have resulted first of all from the pedagogical intervention, but it is also important to be aware of other factors which might have affected the SD score, such as, for example students' self-study, other learners, regular classes at the college and contact with English beyond the educational context.

The general conclusion that may be drawn in terms of the effectiveness of form-focused instruction for the development of explicit knowledge is that, as evidenced by the findings, it facilitated the acquisition of the 3rd conditional and modal verbs in the past. The effects of the intervention were long-lasting and statistically significant. The comparison of the effects of the treatment involving focused communication tasks and instruction based on a number of contextualized practice activities revealed that no significant differences were observed to have been generated by the two types of treatment, both in the case of receptive and productive dimensions of explicit knowledge.

As stated above, the explicit knowledge of past unreal conditionals and modal verbs in the past, measured using a written procedure, proved to be facilitated by form-focused

instruction containing both focused communication tasks and contextualized practice activities. Being aware, however, that linguistic competence is mainly a matter of implicit knowledge (Ellis 2006a), the researcher's main aim was to investigate this dimension, which gave rise to the employment of data collection instruments attempting to tap this type of representation. When it comes to the oral elicited imitation task performed individually, a clear significant advantage of employing focused communication tasks was observed for both structures under study. This is because the groups instructed by means of such tasks made greater gains on the consecutive tests, which resulted in their more prominent progress throughout the study. Undeniably, contextualized practice activities also generated considerable changes which made the differences between the CPA and the control group significant; however there is no doubt that it was the FCT group that improved most in the course of the quasi-experiment. The beneficial effect of instruction may also be recognized when it comes to standard deviation values: both in the case of past unreal conditionals and modal verbs in the past, the SD levels decreased on the consecutive tests, particularly in the instructed groups. Taking into account the high scores on the test and the low levels of variation, it may be concluded that the learners' interlanguage became more systematic and consistent, as fewer errors were committed and the students were able to produce the two structures correctly in a task which is believed to require the use of implicit knowledge and reliance on automatic processing.

While the elicited imitation task measured the students' knowledge during individual performance, the focused communication task was designed to be performed in pairs. The students worked with the same partners throughout the study for the two targeted structures. They were at liberty to produce as much language as they wanted and they could negotiate meanings and forms with their partners. Similarly to the results estimated by means of the elicited imitation task, also this time the beneficial role of form-focused instruction cannot be denied. The differences between the non-instructed group and the two experimental groups reached statistical significance both in the case of the 3rd conditional and modals in the past. Although at first sight it appeared that there was no distinction between the particular types of grammar instruction, as no significant differences between the FCT and the CPA were observed, the comparison of the results achieved by particular groups on the consecutive tests brought more insights and enabled the researcher to present a more precise picture of the effects of the two instructional options. As evidenced by the data, it was the intervention containing focused communication tasks that generated the

greatest progress from the pretest to the posttests. The students instructed by means of this pedagogical option improved their ability to produce the 3rd conditional and modal verbs in the past during pair work tasks significantly and retained the gains on the delayed posttests, which testifies to the durability of the effects of instruction.

The standard deviation levels, which also need to be taken into account here, in general confirm the decrease in the level of variation among the students when it comes to their implicit knowledge of the structures. To be precise, however, it must be noted that the standard deviation values were very high in comparison with the previous measures, which might have been caused by the semi spontaneous, informal character of interaction. This is because pair work made the students feel more at ease and perhaps they did not concentrate on the quality of their language much. A similar situation was observed by Day and Shapson (1991, for the review of the research project see section 3.3.2.4. in Chapter Three) who explained it in the following words: “there was more variation among groups in the extent to which they used the conditional in speaking, when discussion was open-ended and product transitory” (1991: 75). The two types of instructional treatment helped reduce the variability in the two experimental groups and the values obtained on the immediate and delayed posttests were lower than in the control group, but still, in comparison with the other tests, the students were quite heterogeneous within their groups, which may also have resulted from the types of tasks employed. As stated earlier, the students may also have had problems with understanding the task, since, for example, they confused past and present and often used the 2nd conditional instead of the 3rd, which was also observed in the study by Day and Shapson (1991).

The last measure of implicit knowledge were the regular classes. The comparison of the scores obtained by the three groups on the various tasks performed during regular classes proved the effectiveness of grammar instruction one more time. The gains observed in both experimental groups differed significantly from the control group, but still, the collected data speak in favour of focused communication tasks as far as the development of implicit knowledge is concerned. Both in the case of the 3rd conditional and modal verbs in the past, focused communication tasks generated greater improvement in the participants’ ability to produce the two target structures during the two posttest lessons. It was particularly remarkable for past unreal conditionals, when the statistical significance and Cohen’s *d* values reached very high levels, but the results obtained for modals in the past

also confirmed the prevalence of focused communication tasks over text-manipulation and text-creation activities.

A very intricate situation was observed when comparing standard deviation values for the two structures under study. An explanation which appears most reasonable to the researcher is that in the case of SD, it was not the particular instructional option or structure that caused the changes, but the variability can be attributed to the students themselves. What is meant here is that no matter to which type of intervention the participants of the study were subjected, the experimental groups generally manifested lower SD levels in comparison with the control group, but one could observe that it was the first experimental group instructed by means of FCT for 3rd conditional and CPA for modals in the past that became more homogeneous with respect to the knowledge revealed in the tests. So, apart from the teacher's intervention, there must have been some individual characteristics of the members of this group that were responsible for reducing their heterogeneity levels. This assumption found support in the analysis of the subjects' responses included in the two questionnaires aimed at obtaining information about the students' attitudes, experiences and ways of learning grammar (see 5.4.4.). It revealed that the students in group 1 manifested positive attitudes towards learning grammar and mostly good learning experiences. They seemed to be motivated and many of them had their own favourite grammar learning strategies which they used regularly. What appears of great importance is the fact that they saw the need to learn advanced structures and thought they could be really useful in developing their confidence in the target language in their future. This awareness of the role of accuracy in advanced language use must have been pertinent to the students' level of individual variation.

The final conclusion concerning the explicit and implicit knowledge of the two structures in question is that the effectiveness of instructional treatment did not seem to depend on the structure taught. The students reached similar results on the two pretests and then their gains were also comparable on the consecutive tests, which confirmed the advantage of grammar instruction. These results are consistent with the findings of the studies conducted by de Graaff (1997) and Housen et al. (2005). Housen et al. (2005: 261) concluded that "structural complexity is less significant than hypothesized for the effects of explicit instruction". On the other hand, the possibility that the complexity of the targeted structure was one of the factors which could have affected the results of the tests cannot be denied (cf. Spada and Tomita 2010), which was proved by research conducted by

DeKeyser (1995) and Robinson (1996). It seems that the participants of the study, who were first-year English philology students, must have had at least some contact with the two targeted structures which could thus have been acquired at least to a certain extent before. Therefore, in accordance with Ellis's (1997b: 216) recommendation that focused communication tasks provide a means for encouraging learners to "maximize their linguistic competence under real operating conditions", it is believed that these tasks have turned out an effective technique for increasing control over past unreal conditionals and modal verbs in the past among advanced learners of English.

All in all, on the basis of the data obtained from the various instruments measuring both explicit and implicit knowledge, the effectiveness of focused communication tasks for the acquisition of the two advanced structures by advanced English learners is evident. It can be assumed that focused communication tasks lead to the development of not only the explicit knowledge but most of all of implicit knowledge. At no point were the results achieved by the groups instructed by means of focused communication tasks lower than in the case of the groups whose treatment included various text-manipulation and text-creation activities. It can therefore be hypothesized that focused communication tasks contributed significantly to greater automatization of the two forms. According to Robinson (2001b), tasks with grammar structures as implicit or explicit content, even cognitively demanding tasks, appear to be effective in promoting the awareness of a targeted grammar structure.

Apart from the purely linguistic impact of focused communication tasks on the acquisition of the two structures, the application of focused communication tasks seems to contribute greatly to the positive changes in individual features responsible for language development, such as, for example, motivation, self-esteem and self-efficacy of the learners. On the basis of the analysis of the students' responses concerning their attitudes towards grammar, their learning experiences and opinions on the instructional treatments, it becomes obvious that individual features can be pertinent to success or failure in language learning. In their investigation of instructed second language acquisition, Housen and Pierrard (2005: 9) mention "the learner factor" as one of the crucial aspects to be taken into account when it comes to the effectiveness of instruction for SLA. They support their opinion with a number of studies and conclude that "instruction will have very different effects, and hence be more or less effective, depending on the individual learner's age, cognitive maturity, cognitive style, motivation, personality, language learning aptitude and level of L2 proficiency at the time of instruction" (2005: 9). During the present study, the

nature of the focused communication tasks allowed the students to use the structures they wanted, and to produce as much language as they wished. Naturally, they could use only the structures they knew well or felt like applying, which could have reduced the occurrence of errors. Additionally, the students worked with their friends, under favourable conditions in which they felt safe and secure. The meaning-oriented aim of the task and the personalized topics facilitated the feelings of freedom and responsibility, making the students more engaged in the task. Undoubtedly, this may have also contributed to the growth of the learners' autonomy, as they were responsible for many aspects of task performance. Although the use of a particular language structure was necessary, or at least very helpful, to complete the task, the task material was not grammatical in nature, which made it also more interesting and involving (cf. Nassaji and Fotos 2004: 135). The feeling of achieving success when they managed to express the meanings they wanted fostered their self-confidence and made them more aware of the applicability of the structures in real communication. All of this testifies to the effectiveness and usefulness of focused communication tasks for the instructed acquisition of complex grammar structures by advanced learners of English.

Conclusion

The main aim of the present chapter has been to present the results of a study exploring the effectiveness of focused communication tasks on instructed acquisition of English past unreal conditionals and modal verbs in the past by advanced learners. The study was motivated by the observed huge discrepancy between the learners' mastery of abilities concerning particular language features as measured on grammar tests, and their actual language performance in real communication, e.g. during regular classes at the college. Thus, it appeared to be indispensable for the teacher to undertake some steps and find some ways to improve the situation. The quasi-experimental research project was designed in accordance with the recommendations presented in the literature (e.g. Norris and Ortega 2000; Mackey and Gass 2005; Dörnyei 2007; Gass and Mackey 2007a) and taking into account the realities and constraints inherent in the educational context. Being the regular grammar teacher in the two experimental groups, the researcher was able to conduct the study during naturally occurring grammar lessons in intact classes. The investigations

involved measures of the learners' ability to deploy the targeted structures in both planned and unplanned discourse, which allowed the researcher to measure the students' explicit and implicit knowledge, respectively. The inclusion of both immediate and delayed posttests and of the control group allowed the researcher to determine whether the benefits of the pedagogical intervention were sustained over time and to establish the effects of instruction in comparison with non-instructed learners.

On the basis of the investigation of the impact of focused communication tasks on the development of explicit and implicit knowledge of the two structures in question, it may be concluded that such instruction proved capable of yielding both short- and long-term results. The analysis of the data demonstrated that focused communication tasks were particularly effective for the development of the students' implicit knowledge, as was evidenced in the outcomes of the three measures employed. They developed the learners' awareness of the two forms and helped them increase control over them. Moreover, they seemed to have a profound influence on the learners' cognitive and affective characteristics by fostering their autonomy, self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-confidence and motivation. Therefore, it can be concluded that focused communication tasks are an effective instructional option when it comes to promoting acquisition of the complex grammar structures. It cannot be forgotten, however, that the pedagogical intervention including various text-manipulation and text-creation activities also brought positive results in comparison with the scores achieved by the control group; however the magnitude of beneficial effects seems to have been smaller. The differential effects observed in all the three groups may also have been influenced by the contribution of other factors, among which individual differences, analysed on the basis of the two questionnaires, seemed to have played an important role. Tracing the development of individual students, which was the last part of the study, made it possible to understand some possible causes of their successes or failures. It appeared that the students' attitudes to grammar, their learning experiences and their perceptions connected with the instructional treatment might have affected the process of the acquisition of the two targeted structures. Since the rationale behind the research project reported in this chapter is connected with the need to offer at least some implications concerning the ways in which the effectiveness of classroom form-focused instruction could be enhanced, such guidelines will be offered in the subsequent section, which is also the conclusion of the present dissertation.

Conclusions and implications

The research project reported in Chapter Five has been inspired by the growing recognition of the importance of form-focused instruction in second language acquisition and by the actual problems encountered by the author in her grammar teaching profession. The study concentrated on exploring the effectiveness of focused communication tasks on instructed acquisition of English past unreal conditionals and modal verbs in the past by advanced learners. The analysis of the data collected by means of both written and spoken measures, aimed at determining the students' level of explicit and implicit knowledge. The preliminary theoretical considerations included in Chapter One provided insight into the issues in grammar teaching and learning, concentrating on the role of grammar, the types of linguistic knowledge, and the theoretical perspectives on instructed second language acquisition. Chapter Two was dedicated to resolving the terminological confusion surrounding the notion of form-focused instruction, presenting its possible definitions and dimensions. Then the focus was shifted to discussing the different taxonomies of the instructional options that can be implemented in the language classroom. Various pedagogical choices were described with a particular attention being given to focused communication tasks. The main concern of Chapter Three was empirical research into the effects of different types of instructional options on the acquisition of grammar. In addition, Chapter Three provided an overview of the main findings and methodology of contemporary research in the area of form-focused instruction. The presentation and discussion of the theoretical, pedagogical and empirical arguments for the facilitative effects of form-focused instruction, with a particular attention given to focused communication tasks, served as an introduction to the two empirical chapters which provided an account and discussion of the findings of a quasi-experimental study.

On the basis of the study the aim of which was to explore the role of focused communication tasks in the acquisition of two complex structures among forty-five first-year university students, it was found that form-focused instruction facilitated the development of explicit and implicit knowledge of past unreal conditionals and modal verbs in the past. The pedagogical intervention including focused communication tasks had a beneficial effect on the development of the learners' knowledge, both explicit and implicit. When it comes to explicit knowledge, focused communication tasks affected positively the students' ability to comprehend and produce the two targeted structures. The difference between this instructional option and contextualized practice activities, operationalized as text-manipulation and text-creation activities, was, however, particularly distinct on the measures of implicit knowledge when the students instructed by means of focused communications tasks reached statistically significant gains on the consecutive tests and improved their ability to produce the two structures more than those who had the benefit of the different pedagogical intervention. The effects of the instructional treatment containing focused communication tasks also proved to be durable, which was not always the case with the other type of treatment. When it comes to the relationship between the effectiveness of instruction and the forms in focus, the findings did not reveal considerable differences between the 3rd conditional and modals in the past, although it could be observed that the gains were slightly higher for past unreal conditionals. It testifies to the complexity of both investigated structures with the caveat that modal verbs in the past were perceived as more difficult by the participants of the study, which is in accordance with the theoretical assumptions discussed in 4.2.2.

In order to explore the influence of other possible factors on the results of the study, two questionnaires were administered, which allowed the researcher to create profiles of the three groups depicting their characteristic features connected with their learning history and their attitudes towards grammar instruction. Having analysed the profiles of the three groups and the results of the tests together with the levels of standard deviations, it is warranted to claim that the subjects' preferences and experiences might have influenced the effects of instruction revealed in the tests. To understand the issue better, apart from investigating the three groups, four representative students were chosen with a view to analysing their developmental patterns and pinpointing possible reasons for their success or failure. The analysis of the four cases which involved investigating their backgrounds, attitudes, previous education experience and their ways of learning, proved that, having

been subjected to the same type of instructional treatment, the students reached various levels of improvement. The progress they managed to achieve could depend on some other variables than just the type of grammar instruction, and, undoubtedly, it was individual variation with respect to such factors as, for example, learning styles, motivation and autonomy, that contributed to their overall success or failure. Responsibility for one's decisions, positive attitudes towards learning the structures, general awareness of one's strong and weak points, and motivation to work hard using effective techniques appeared to play a vital role in achieving success in language learning.

According to Byrd (2005: 545), "the teaching of English grammar rests on a constantly changing foundation of theory and data about grammar, second language acquisition and classroom teachers' beliefs and practices about teaching grammar". The results of the study cannot surely constitute sufficient grounds for the formulation of generalizable conclusions and pedagogical recommendations; nevertheless, the findings make it possible to formulate some tentative educational implications which may provide at least some assistance to grammar teachers. As rightly noted by Pawlak (2006: 474), "grammar teaching is one of the areas where the interests of SLA researchers and practitioners are likely to converge and, thus, empirical investigations into the effectiveness of different instructional microoptions and macrooptions represent a rare opportunity of bringing the social worlds of the two communities closer together". For this reason, an attempt will be made to suggest some ideas connected with the implementation of focused communication tasks in form-focused instruction. The results of the research project clearly demonstrate that form-focused instruction proved to be effective in helping the learners gain control over the two targeted structures and contributed to awareness raising. In terms of explicit knowledge, no difference between the two instructional options was observed, but when it comes to implicit knowledge, the advantage of focused communication tasks over text-manipulation and text-creation activities was unequivocal. On the basis of the evidence provided in the study, one needs to agree with the recommendation proposed by Fotos (2005: 668), who argues that "(...) it is time to take the position that a combination of grammar instruction and the use of communicative activities provide an optimum situation for effective L2 learning". It seems legitimate to say that effective grammar instruction should ensure that learners are provided with ample opportunities for output in the course of meaning-oriented practice. In their article discussing the current developments in research on the teaching of grammar, Nassaji and Fotos (2004) observe that:

among the essential conditions for acquisition of grammatical forms are (1) learner noticing and continued awareness of target forms, (2) repeated meaning-focused exposure to input containing them, and (3) opportunities for output and practice. It is also recognized that, because the acquisition of grammar is affected by internal processing constraints, spontaneous and accurate production cannot be instantaneous but will naturally require time as learners move toward mastery.

This, undoubtedly, provides a pedagogical rationale for the application of meaning-oriented practice in which focused communication tasks must have their place. The importance of a meaning-focused module is also emphasized by Pawlak (2006: 477) in his very convincing argument that without opportunities for meaningful communication during form-focused instruction “students will become adept at completing a range of text-manipulation activities but will never reach the stage where they can employ what they have learnt accurately, confidently and consistently in everyday speech”. Being aware of the key importance and indispensability of meaning-oriented component, it is the teachers’ task to find such instructional options which could meet these requirements.

Focused communication tasks seem to be an instructional option that learners need. Difficult to construct for the teacher, they may pose a great deal of problems when it comes to design. Irrespective of these, they seem to create numerous advantages for learners. In the study reported in the present dissertation, focused communication tasks proved to be an efficient tool for learners at the advanced level for the development of explicit, and most of all, implicit knowledge which is vital for the growth of linguistic competence. They contributed to greater automatization of the two forms and raised the students’ awareness of the target grammar structures. Apart from that, focused communication tasks placed the learner in the centre of the learning process and they contributed to fostering learners’ autonomy, developing their motivation, raising self-esteem and self-efficacy. Thanks to the design, it was the learners that were expected to decide what and how they were going to say or write something. They could test their hypotheses about the language and thanks to the communicative goal, they could understand the real value and importance of the quality of their language as a means of communication. All these factors seem to be of vital importance, because, as Robinson and N. Ellis (2008: 490) believe that “language is learned from participatory experience of processing input and producing language during interaction in social contexts where individually desired non-linguistic outcomes are goals to be achieved by communicating intentions, concepts and meaning with others”.

Even though one is aware of all the assets connected with the implementation of focused communication tasks in the foreign language classroom, actual teaching practice

may create some problems. First of all, apart from the methodological issues already mentioned, there must be enough time to perform such tasks in the lesson. One of the specialists in form-focused instruction in the Polish context, Pawlak (2007a: 187), argues that “it is necessary to stop viewing grammar instruction in terms of single lessons and realize that the teaching of a particular feature must involve a sequence of classes”. When it comes to students at the university level, they have separate subjects dealing with separate skills. Bearing in mind how useful focused communication tasks were for the participants of the study, the idea that the author would like to suggest involves cooperation among teachers of various subjects. For the purpose of the research project it was believed beneficial to measure the students’ performance in regular classes; therefore, the teachers of regular classes were requested to prepare such communicative tasks which would require/expect the students to use the two targeted language forms. The cooperation between grammar teachers and teachers of other subjects could help find the necessary time for focused communication tasks, because communication happens there anyway and it could, perhaps, at least from time to time, be more focused to revise the grammatical structures which have already been introduced during grammar lessons. Another option connected with the implementation of focused communication tasks which stands to reason has already been suggested by Pawlak (2006, 2007a: 187). It seems that employing focused communication tasks during grammar review lessons could be most beneficial, as they “help learners develop implicit knowledge of the structures taught, thus becoming an important step in the instructional sequence”. This may involve opting for a more cyclical syllabus, which would allow for the regular revision and practice of the targeted language forms.

When it comes to following the recommendations connected with the implementation of focused communication tasks in regular foreign language teaching, it needs to be remembered that there are a number of other factors which must be taken into account while making educational decisions. According to N. Ellis (2009: 153), “language is its dynamic usage. It ever changes. For learners and linguists alike, its sum can only ever be estimated from limited samples of experience. Understanding the units and the processes of their estimation helps guide theory and application, learning and instruction”. Being aware of the dynamic changes in language, learners, teachers and the world, what we need is a constant update and improvement. This can only be achieved by well-grounded empirical research. Knowing today how important individual characteristics are in

determining the effects of form-focused instruction on second language acquisition, the author regrets not having employed more thorough and detailed instruments which could have measured the students' individual features. At the same time, the author hopes that at least some of the conclusions and recommendations stemming from the reported study will be of assistance to teachers and educators who aim to aid their students in attaining higher levels of accuracy and better control of linguistic forms.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Celem niniejszej ankiety jest uzyskanie informacji o studencie pierwszego roku KJO, a przede wszystkim jakie są Jego/Jej doświadczenia dotyczące uczenia się gramatyki. Ankieta jest anonimowa. Bardzo proszę o udzielenie szczerych odpowiedzi. Proszę nie cenzurować swoich wypowiedzi – wszystko, co Państwo napiszą jest dla mnie ważne i ma pomóc w jeszcze lepszym i bardziej efektywnym nauczaniu gramatyki. Dziękuję za Pana/Pani udział i poświęcony czas! ☺

Anna Broszkiewicz

Część pierwsza

1. **Data urodzenia** (dz/m/r)
2. **Imiona rodziców:**
3. **Płeć:** K/M (proszę zaznaczyć kółkiem właściwą odpowiedź)
4. **Ukończona szkoła średnia** (nazwa i miejscowość)
.....
5. **Rok ukończenia szkoły średniej**
6. **Ocena z języka angielskiego na koniec szkoły średniej**
.....
7. **Ilość procent/ocena z egzaminu maturalnego z języka angielskiego**
NOWA MATURA (procenty)
Podstawowy pisemnyprocent
Podstawowy ustnyprocent
Rozszerzony pisemnyprocent
Rozszerzony ustnyprocent
STARA MATURA (oceny)
Pisemny
Ustny
8. **Jak długo uczył/a się Pan/i języka angielskiego**
.....
9. **Czy uczył/a się Pan/i języka:** (proszę zaznaczyć kółkiem właściwą odpowiedź)
 - a) Tylko w szkole
 - b) W szkole i na kursach
 - c) W szkole i na lekcjach prywatnych (korepetycje)
 - d) W szkole i w domu samodzielnie
 - e) Za granicą – praca
 - f) Za granicą – kurs językowy
 - g) Za granicą – praca i kurs językowy
 - h) Tylko samodzielnie

i) Inne

10. Jak ocenia Pan/i swój poziom języka na dzień dzisiejszy?

- a) celujący
- b) bardzo dobry
- c) dobry
- d) dostateczny
- e) niedostateczny

11. Czy ma Pan/Pani swoją ulubioną książkę do gramatyki? Proszę podać tytuł/autora.

12. Jaki jest Pana/i ulubiony sposób uczenia się gramatyki?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

13. Czy Pana/i sposób uczenia się gramatyki jest efektywny? Czy chciał/aby Pan/i coś w nim zmienić?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

14. Czy wyjeżdżał/a Pan/i za granicę, gdzie używał/a Pan/i języka angielskiego?

a) TAK

Dokąd? Ile razy? W jakim celu?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

b) NIE

15. Czy ma Pan/i jakikolwiek kontakt z językiem angielskim poza uczelnią?

- a) w pracy, którą wykonuję oprócz studiowania
- b) z przyjaciółmi/znajomymi pochodzącymi z krajów anglojęzycznych
- c) z przyjaciółmi/ znajomymi mówiącymi po angielsku, ale nie pochodzącymi z krajów anglojęzycznych
- d) filmy, muzyka w języku angielskim
- e) książki, czasopisma w języku angielskim
- f) Internet: przeglądanie stron w języku angielskim
- g) inne (jakie?):
- h) nie mam kontaktu z językiem angielskim poza uczelnią

16. Czy stara się Pan/i rozwijać swój kontakt z językiem angielskim poza uczelnią?

a) TAK (w jaki sposób?)

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

b) NIE, kontakt, który mam na uczelni jest wystarczający

c) NIE, nie wiem, jak mam rozwijać ten kontakt

d) NIE, nie mam na to czasu

e) NIE

17. Czy pracuje Pan/i nad rozwijaniem swoich umiejętności językowych wykraczając poza narzucone na zajęciach wymagania?

- a) TAK, uczęszczam na kurs językowy
- b) TAK, mam dodatkowe lekcje (korepetycje)
- c) TAK, pracuję z podręcznikiem samodzielnie

- d) TAK,(inne)
- e) NIE, nie mam na to czasu
- f) NIE, materiał na zajęciach mi wystarcza
- g) NIE, nie wiem jak się do tego zabrać
- h) NIE, (inne)

18. Które z tych obszarów gramatyki języka angielskiego uważa Pan/Pani za najtrudniejsze?

Proszę ocenić zagadnienia w skali od 1-10, gdzie 1 oznacza *bardzo łatwe*, a 10 *bardzo trudne*

- 1.CZASY (Tenses)
- 2.STRONA BIERNA (Passive voice and the causative)
- 3.TRYBY WARUNKOWE (Conditionals)
- 4.CZASOWNIKI MODALNE (Modal verbs)
- 5.RZECZOWNIKI ODCZASOWNIKOWE I BEZOKOLICZNIKI (Gerund and infinitive)
- 6.MOWA ZALEŻNA (Indirect speech and reporting)
- 7.RZECZOWNIKI (Nouns)
- 8.RODZAJNIKI (Articles)
- 9.ZDANIA WZGLĘDNIE ZŁOŻONE (Relative clauses and non-finite clauses)
- 10.PRZYMIOTNIKI I RZYSŁÓWKI (Adjectives and adverbs)
- 11.PRZYIMKI (Prepositions and Prepositional phrases)
- 12.CZASOWNIKI ZŁOŻONE (Phrasal verbs)
- 13.PYTANIA ROZŁĄCZNE (Question tags)

19. Proszę podać, co dla Pani/Pana oznacza termin gramatyka

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

20. Jak według Pana/i powinien wyglądać proces nauczania konkretnej struktury gramatycznej? Co powinno dzieć się podczas zajęć, żeby dobrze przygotować ucznia do używania danej struktury? Jakie etapy lekcji zawarłby/aby Pan/i w takich zajęciach?

.....

.....

.....

.....

21. Co, wg Pana/i, musi wiedzieć osoba o czasie present perfect, żeby można było powiedzieć, że go zna?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Część druga

Poniższe zdania wyrażają różne opinie na temat gramatyki. Proszę zaznaczyć właściwe pole, jeśli zgadza się Pan/i z daną opinią, kolumnę TAK, jeżeli nie zgadza się Pan/i z daną opinią kolumnę NIE, w wypadku, gdy nie jest Pan/i pewna swojej opinii, proszę zaznaczyć pole NIE MAM OPINII. Ponieważ może mieć Pan/i ciekawe uzasadnienie swojej opinii, proszę o krótkie wyjaśnienie dlaczego tak Pan/i sądzi.

1. Gramatyka jest potrzebna do komunikacji.

TAK NIE NIE MAM OPINII

Dlaczego?

.....

.....

.....

2. Gramatyka jest trudnym podsystemem języka.

TAK NIE NIE MAM OPINII

Dlaczego?

.....

.....
.....
3. Każda rozmowa w języku obcym może być satysfakcjonująca używając tylko podstawowych struktur gramatycznych.

TAK NIE NIE MAM OPINII
Dlaczego?

.....
.....
4. Struktury gramatyczne są niezbędne w precyzyjnym wyrażaniu się, czyli komunikowaniu w języku obcym.

TAK NIE NIE MAM OPINII
Dlaczego?

.....
.....
5. Znajomość struktur gramatycznych dodaje pewności siebie w posługiwaniu się językiem obcym.

TAK NIE NIE MAM OPINII
Dlaczego?

.....
.....
6. Większość reguł gramatycznych jest używanych na co dzień.

TAK NIE NIE MAM OPINII
Dlaczego?

.....
.....
7. Jeśli ktoś mówi, że zna stronę bierną, to wie, że aby użyć tej struktury potrzebuje odpowiedniej formy czasownika być oraz III formy czasownika głównego.

TAK NIE NIE MAM OPINII
Dlaczego?

.....
.....
8. Jeśli ktoś mówi, że zna stronę bierną, to wie, że podmiot zdania nie jest wykonawcą czynności określonej przez orzeczenie.

TAK NIE NIE MAM OPINII
Dlaczego?

.....
.....
9. Jeśli ktoś mówi, że zna stronę bierną, to wie, że potrzebuje jej użyć mówiąc o czynnościach, w których wykonawca czynności jest nieznany lub nieistotny.

TAK NIE NIE MAM OPINII
Dlaczego?

.....
.....
10. Fakt, że ktoś używa poprawnych struktur gramatycznych, może zdeterminować, czy dana informacja zostanie właściwie zrozumiana czy nie.

TAK NIE NIE MAM OPINII
Dlaczego?

.....
.....
11. Płynność wypowiedzi jest ważniejsza niż poprawność wypowiedzi.

TAK NIE NIE MAM OPINII
Dlaczego?

.....
.....
12. Nauka gramatyki tylko poprzez ćwiczenia pisemne, takie jak uzupełnianie zdań właściwą formą lub tłumaczenie zdań, jest efektywna.

TAK NIE NIE MAM OPINII
Dlaczego?

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.....
.....
13. Ćwiczenia językowe, gdzie najważniejsze jest przekazanie informacji, a nie użycie konkretnej struktury, pomagają w uczeniu się gramatyki.

TAK NIE NIE MAM OPINII
Dlaczego?

.....
.....

.....
.....
14. Żeby nauczyć się danej struktury, trzeba tylko zapamiętać regułę, która jej dotyczy i wykonać wiele ćwiczeń, w których należy jej użyć.

TAK NIE NIE MAM OPINII
Dlaczego?

.....
.....

.....
.....
15. Opanowanie zasad gramatyki bez wielu intensywnych ćwiczeń wymuszających użycie danej struktury (np. wybór poprawnej formy, wpisywanie poprawnej formy, transformacje) nie jest możliwe.

TAK NIE NIE MAM OPINII
Dlaczego?

.....
.....

.....
.....
16. Warto zamienić tradycyjne ćwiczenia gramatyczne na zadania komunikacyjne, w których dana struktura jest tylko narzędziem do wykonania zadania, ponieważ to właśnie w komunikacji ma być używana gramatyka

TAK NIE NIE MAM OPINII
Dlaczego?

.....
.....

.....
.....
17. Zamiana tradycyjnych ćwiczeń gramatycznych (wybór poprawnej formy, wpisywanie poprawnej formy itp.) na zadania komunikacyjne, gdzie liczy się informacja, a gramatyka jest tylko narzędziem, nie jest dobrym pomysłem, ponieważ uczniowie nie mają wystarczająco dużo możliwości ćwiczeń przed przystąpieniem do prawdziwej komunikacji

TAK NIE NIE MAM OPINII
Dlaczego?

.....
.....

.....
.....
18. Aby poprawnie użyć danej struktury gramatycznej w naturalnej komunikacji, trzeba ćwiczyć ją w tradycyjny sposób (wybór poprawnej formy, wpisywanie poprawnej formy itp.)

TAK NIE NIE MAM OPINII
Dlaczego?

.....
.....

.....
.....
19. Aby poprawnie używać danej struktury gramatycznej w naturalnej komunikacji, należy ćwiczyć ją w zadaniach przypominających prawdziwe sytuacje życiowe.

TAK NIE NIE MAM OPINII
Dlaczego?

.....

Część trzecia

Poniższe sytuacje odnoszą się do lekcji języka angielskiego w szkole średniej. Proszę przeczytać je uważnie, a następnie zakreślić kółkiem **jedną** odpowiedź według następującego wzoru:

1 – jeśli dana sytuacja zdarza/ła się **REGULARNIE, ZAWSZE, BARDZO CZĘSTO**

2 - jeśli dana sytuacja zdarza/ła się **CZĘSTO**

3 - jeśli dana sytuacja zdarza/ła się **RZADKO**

4 - jeśli dana sytuacja zdarza/ła się **BARDZO RZADKO** lub **NIGDY**

Jeśli ma Pan/i uwagi do któregoś zdania, proszę napisać je poniżej

LEKCJE GRAMATYKI W SZKOLE (ŚREDNIEJ)

1. Moje lekcje gramatyki były nudne.

1 2 3 4

2. Gramatyka była trudna.

1 2 3 4

3. Gramatyka przeważała podczas moich lekcji języka angielskiego.

1 2 3 4

4. Gramatyka była jednym z wielu elementów lekcji.

1 2 3 4

5. Mój nauczyciel wykorzystywał tylko materiały z podręcznika.

1 2 3 4

6. Mój nauczyciel przynosił dodatkowe ćwiczenia na zajęcia z gramatyki.

1 2 3 4

7. Nauczyciel najpierw podawał regułę, potem ją ćwiczyliśmy w zadaniach.

1 2 3 4

8. Nauczyciel prosił uczniów, aby wywnioskowali, jaka jest reguła na podstawie przykładowych zdań/tekstu.

1 2 3 4

9. Uczyłem/am się reguł na pamięć.

1 2 3 4

10. Nauczyciel odpytywał uczniów z reguł gramatyki.

1 2 3 4

11. Nauczyciel poprawiał błędy gramatyczne podczas ćwiczeń rozwijających umiejętność mówienia.

1 2 3 4

12. Nauczyciel poprawiał błędy gramatyczne podczas ćwiczenia struktur gramatycznych.

1 2 3 4

13. Ćwiczyliśmy gramatykę w zadaniach pisemnych.

1 2 3 4

14. Ćwiczyliśmy gramatykę ustnie, w zadaniach, gdy pracowaliśmy w parach i w grupach.

1 2 3 4

15. Podczas testów gramatycznych należało podać regułę dotyczącą danego zagadnienia.

1 2 3 4

16. W testach gramatycznych należało wykorzystać daną regułę i zastosować ją w zdaniach.

1 2 3 4

17. Nauczyciel sprawdzał znajomość struktur gramatycznych poprzez testy ustne (zadania w parach, indywidualne wypowiedzi).

1 2 3 4

18. Podczas lekcji, ćwiczyliśmy struktury gramatyczne poprzez uzupełnianie zdań poprawnymi formami.

1 2 3 4

19. Podczas lekcji, ćwiczyliśmy struktury gramatyczne poprzez tłumaczenie zdań.

1 2 3 4

20. Podczas lekcji, ćwiczyliśmy struktury gramatyczne w zadaniach komunikacyjnych, gdzie najważniejsza była wiadomość, a struktura gramatyczna stanowiła tylko narzędzie do jej przekazania.

1 2 3 4

SAMODZIELNA PRACA NAD GRAMATYKĄ

21. Uczę się gramatyki samodzielnie w domu.

1 2 3 4

22. Uczę się gramatyki poprzez wykonywanie wielu ćwiczeń.
1 **2** **3** **4**
23. Uczę się gramatyki poprzez powtarzanie i zapamiętywanie reguł.
1 **2** **3** **4**
24. Uczę się gramatyki poprzez mówienie po angielsku z koleżankami/kolegami.
1 **2** **3** **4**
25. Uczę się gramatyki poprzez mówienie po angielsku z native speaker'ami.
1 **2** **3** **4**
26. Zanim coś powiem po angielsku, zastanawiam się, jakiej struktury gramatycznej użyć.
1 **2** **3** **4**
27. Zanim coś napiszę po angielsku, zastanawiam się, jakiej struktury gramatycznej użyć.
1 **2** **3** **4**
28. Jeżeli nie wiem jak coś precyzyjnie wyrazić po angielsku, używam innych słów i struktur gramatycznych, które akurat pamiętam.
1 **2** **3** **4**
29. Jeżeli nie wiem jak coś precyzyjnie wyrazić po angielsku, sprawdzam w słowniku/podręczniku/internecie dane słowo lub strukturę gramatyczną.
1 **2** **3** **4**
30. Bez problemu używam wszystkich struktur gramatycznych, które znam, kiedy piszę po angielsku.
1 **2** **3** **4**
31. Bez problemu używam wszystkich struktur gramatycznych, które znam, kiedy mówię po angielsku.
1 **2** **3** **4**
32. Mimo że znam regułę, trudno mi jej użyć, kiedy mówię po angielsku.
1 **2** **3** **4**
33. Mimo że znam regułę, trudno mi jej użyć, kiedy piszę po angielsku.
1 **2** **3** **4**
34. Uczę się gramatyki, bo dodaje mi pewności siebie, gdy mówię po angielsku.
1 **2** **3** **4**
35. Uczę się gramatyki, bo dodaje mi pewności siebie, gdy piszę po angielsku.
1 **2** **3** **4**
36. Użycie właściwych struktur gramatycznych przez rozmówcę ułatwia mi zrozumienie informacji.
1 **2** **3** **4**
37. Użycie niewłaściwych struktur gramatycznych przez rozmówcę powoduje, że nie rozumiem informacji.
1 **2** **3** **4**
38. Ilość reguł gramatycznych w języku angielskim mnie przeraża.
1 **2** **3** **4**
- UWAGI:** (również co do samej ankiety!!!)

Appendix B

Celem niniejszej ankiety jest uzyskanie informacji o studencie pierwszego roku KJO, a przede wszystkim jakie są Jego/Jej doświadczenia dotyczące uczenia się gramatyki. Ankieta jest anonimowa. Bardzo proszę o udzielenie szczerych odpowiedzi. Proszę nie cenzurować swoich wypowiedzi – wszystko, co Państwo napiszą jest dla mnie ważne i ma pomóc w jeszcze lepszym i bardziej efektywnym nauczaniu gramatyki.

Dziękuję za Pana/Pani udział i poświęcony czas! ☺

Część pierwsza

11. **Data urodzenia** (dz/m/r)

12. **Płeć:** K/M (proszę zaznaczyć kółkiem właściwą odpowiedź)

13. **Jak ocenia Pan/i swój poziom języka na dzień dzisiejszy?**

- a) celujący
- b) bardzo dobry
- c) dobry
- d) dostateczny
- e) niedostateczny

4. **Jak ocenia Pan/i swój poziom gramatyki na dzień dzisiejszy?**

- a) celujący
- b) bardzo dobry
- c) dobry
- d) dostateczny
- e) niedostateczny

5. **Czy obecnie ma Pan/Pani swoją ulubioną książkę do gramatyki? Proszę podać tytuł/autora.**

.....

Część druga: TESTY

1. TEST PISEMNY (EXPLICIT KNOWLEDGE):

Proszę wybrać stopień trudności dla danych typów zadań, które pojawiły się w testach podczas przeprowadzanego badania:

a) **osądzanie poprawności zdań i poprawianie błędów**

BARDZO TRUDNE TRUDNE ŚREDNIE ŁATWE BARDZO ŁATWE

b) **test wielokrotnego wyboru**

BARDZO TRUDNE TRUDNE ŚREDNIE ŁATWE BARDZO ŁATWE

c) **uzupełnianie luk odpowiednią formą**

BARDZO TRUDNE TRUDNE ŚREDNIE ŁATWE BARDZO ŁATWE

d) **transformacja – ze słowem, od którego należy zacząć zdanie**

BARDZO TRUDNE TRUDNE ŚREDNIE ŁATWE BARDZO ŁATWE

e) **transformacja – budowanie zdań na podstawie wcześniejszych informacji**

BARDZO TRUDNE TRUDNE ŚREDNIE ŁATWE BARDZO ŁATWE

f) **uzupełnianie historyjki**

BARDZO TRUDNE TRUDNE ŚREDNIE ŁATWE BARDZO ŁATWE

Czy ma Pan/i dodatkowy komentarz do testów, ich formy?

.....
.....
.....

2. TEST USTNY (IMPLICIT KNOWLEDGE)

a) **zadanie w parach**

BARDZO TRUDNE TRUDNE ŚREDNIE ŁATWE BARDZO ŁATWE

b) **nagrania indywidualne (zdania)**

BARDZO TRUDNE TRUDNE ŚREDNIE ŁATWE BARDZO ŁATWE

Czy ma Pan/i dodatkowy komentarz do testów, ich formy?

.....
.....
.....

3. Czy sądzi Pan/i, że powtórzenie testów na początku drugiego roku studiów, aby sprawdzić Państwa wiedzę, ma sens?

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

Dlaczego?.....

.....
.....
4. Czy sądzi Pan/i, że należałoby przeprowadzić:

a) testy pisemne

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

b) nagrania indywidualne i w parach

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

c) inne?

.....
.....
5. Czy testy motywowały Pana/Panią do zwiększonej pracy nad gramatyką?

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

Dlaczego?.....
.....

.....
.....
6. Czy uczył/ się Pan/i samodzielnie struktur badanych podczas testów?

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

Dlaczego?.....
.....

.....
.....
7. Czy testy pisemne odzwierciedlają wg Pana/i faktyczną wiedzę w zakresie danej struktury?

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

Dlaczego?.....
.....

.....
.....
8. Czy nagrania odzwierciedlają wg Pana/i faktyczną wiedzę w zakresie danej struktury?

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

Dlaczego?.....
.....

Część trzecia: INSTRUKCJA

III CONDITIONAL

Proszę przeczytać poniższe zdania i podkreślić tę opinię, z którą Pan/i zgadza się najbardziej. Ponieważ może mieć Pan/i ciekawe uzasadnienie swojej opinii, proszę o krótkie wyjaśnienie dlaczego tak Pan/i sądzi.

1. Czy sądzi Pan/i, że zajęcia gramatyki polepszyły Pana/i wiedzę z tej dziedziny?

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

.....
.....
2. Czy tekst o podróży do Australii pomógł Panu/i zrozumieć kontekst użycia struktury?

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

.....
.....
3. Czy tekst o podróży do Australii pomógł Panu/i zapamiętać formę i znaczenie struktury?

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

.....
.....
4. Czy ćwiczenia pisemne wykonywane podczas zajęć pomogły Panu/i zapamiętać formę i znaczenie struktury?

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

.....
.....
5. Czy ćwiczenia pisemne pomogły Panu/i używać tej struktury w sytuacjach rzeczywistych, w prawdziwym życiu?

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

.....
.....
6. Czy zadania komunikacyjne (w parach, w grupach) pomogły Panu/i użyć tej struktury w sytuacjach rzeczywistych?

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

.....
.....
7. Czy zadania komunikacyjne (w parach, w grupach) pomogły Panu/i zapamiętać formę i znaczenie struktury?

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

.....
.....
8. Czy sądzi Pan/i, że instrukcję można by usprawnić/polepszyć?

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

.....
.....
9. Jakie pomysły mogłyby posłużyć polepszeniu instrukcji? Jak należałoby uczyć III trybu warunkowego, aby było to efektywniejsze?

.....
.....
10. Czy jest Pan/i zadowolony ze swojego obecnego stanu wiedzy dotyczącego III trybu warunkowego?

- | | | | | |
|--|------------|-----------------|------------|------------------|
| ZDECYDOWANIE TAK | RACZEJ TAK | TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ | RACZEJ NIE | ZDECYDOWANIE NIE |
| | | | | |
| 11. Czy zna Pan/i formę, znaczenie i użycie struktury? | | | | |
| ZDECYDOWANIE TAK | RACZEJ TAK | TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ | RACZEJ NIE | ZDECYDOWANIE NIE |
| | | | | |
| 12. Czy ilość ćwiczeń pisemnych przeznaczonych na III tryb warunkowy była dla Pana/i satysfakcjonująca? | | | | |
| ZDECYDOWANIE TAK | RACZEJ TAK | TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ | RACZEJ NIE | ZDECYDOWANIE NIE |
| | | | | |
| 13. Czy ilość zadań komunikacyjnych przeznaczonych na III tryb warunkowy była dla Pana/i satysfakcjonująca? | | | | |
| ZDECYDOWANIE TAK | RACZEJ TAK | TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ | RACZEJ NIE | ZDECYDOWANIE NIE |
| | | | | |
| 14. Czy rozumie Pan/i znaczenie i zastosowanie III trybu warunkowego? | | | | |
| ZDECYDOWANIE TAK | RACZEJ TAK | TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ | RACZEJ NIE | ZDECYDOWANIE NIE |
| | | | | |
| 15. Czy zauważy Pan/i częstsze użycie wyżej wymienionej struktury w rzeczywistej, codziennej komunikacji? | | | | |
| ZDECYDOWANIE TAK | RACZEJ TAK | TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ | RACZEJ NIE | ZDECYDOWANIE NIE |
| | | | | |
| 16. Czy zajęcia prowadzone były w sposób przejrzysty, ciekawy z jasno określonymi celami? | | | | |
| ZDECYDOWANIE TAK | RACZEJ TAK | TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ | RACZEJ NIE | ZDECYDOWANIE NIE |
| | | | | |
| 17. Czy czuł/a się Pan/i zaangażowany/a w zajęcia? | | | | |
| ZDECYDOWANIE TAK | RACZEJ TAK | TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ | RACZEJ NIE | ZDECYDOWANIE NIE |
| | | | | |
| 18. Czy czuł/a się Pan/i motywowany do pracy przez nauczyciela prowadzącego? | | | | |
| ZDECYDOWANIE TAK | RACZEJ TAK | TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ | RACZEJ NIE | ZDECYDOWANIE NIE |
| | | | | |

MODALS IN THE PAST

Proszę przeczytać poniższe zdania i podkreślić tę opinię, z którą Pan/i zgadza się najbardziej. Ponieważ może mieć Pan/i ciekawe uzasadnienie swojej opinii, proszę o krótkie wyjaśnienie dlaczego tak Pan/i sądzi.

- | | | | | |
|---|------------|-----------------|------------|------------------|
| 1. Czy sądzi Pan/i, że zajęcia gramatyki polepszyły Pana/i wiedzę z tej dziedziny? | | | | |
| ZDECYDOWANIE TAK | RACZEJ TAK | TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ | RACZEJ NIE | ZDECYDOWANIE NIE |
| | | | | |
| 2. Czy teksty o różnicach kulturowych i o problemach w pracy kobiety w ciąży pomogły Panu/i zrozumieć kontekst użycia struktury? | | | | |
| ZDECYDOWANIE TAK | RACZEJ TAK | TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ | RACZEJ NIE | ZDECYDOWANIE NIE |
| | | | | |
| 3. Czy tekst o różnicach kulturowych i o problemach w pracy kobiety w ciąży pomogły Panu/i zapamiętać formę i znaczenie struktury? | | | | |
| ZDECYDOWANIE TAK | RACZEJ TAK | TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ | RACZEJ NIE | ZDECYDOWANIE NIE |
| | | | | |
| 4. Czy ćwiczenia pisemne wykonywane podczas zajęć pomogły Panu/i zapamiętać formę i znaczenie struktury? | | | | |
| ZDECYDOWANIE TAK | RACZEJ TAK | TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ | RACZEJ NIE | ZDECYDOWANIE NIE |
| | | | | |
| 5. Czy ćwiczenia pisemne pomogły Panu/i używać tej struktury w sytuacjach rzeczywistych, w prawdziwym życiu? | | | | |
| ZDECYDOWANIE TAK | RACZEJ TAK | TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ | RACZEJ NIE | ZDECYDOWANIE NIE |
| | | | | |
| 6. Czy zadania komunikacyjne (w parach, w grupach) pomogły Panu/i użyć tej struktury w sytuacjach rzeczywistych? | | | | |
| ZDECYDOWANIE TAK | RACZEJ TAK | TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ | RACZEJ NIE | ZDECYDOWANIE NIE |
| | | | | |
| 7. Czy zadania komunikacyjne (w parach, w grupach) pomogły Panu/i zapamiętać formę i znaczenie struktury? | | | | |
| ZDECYDOWANIE TAK | RACZEJ TAK | TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ | RACZEJ NIE | ZDECYDOWANIE NIE |
| | | | | |
| 8. Czy sądzi Pan/i, że instrukcję można by usprawnić/polepszyć? | | | | |

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

.....
.....
9. Jakie pomysły mogłyby posłużyć polepszeniu instrukcji? Jak należałoby uczyć czasowników modalnych, aby było to efektywniejsze?

.....
.....
10. Czy jest Pan/i zadowolony ze swojego obecnego stanu wiedzy dotyczącego czasowników modalnych (szczególnie ich użycia związanego z czynnościami w przeszłości)?

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

.....
.....
11. Czy zna Pan/i formę, znaczenie i użycie struktury?

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

.....
.....
12. Czy ilość ćwiczeń pisemnych przeznaczonych na czasowniki modalne była dla Pana/i satysfakcjonująca?

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

.....
.....
13. Czy ilość zadań komunikacyjnych przeznaczonych na czasowniki modalne była dla Pana/i satysfakcjonująca?

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

.....
.....
14. Czy rozumie Pan/i znaczenie i zastosowanie czasowników modalnych w przeszłości?

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

.....
.....
15. Czy zauważa Pan/i częstsze użycie wyżej wymienionej struktury w rzeczywistej, codziennej komunikacji?

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

.....
.....
16. Czy zajęcia prowadzone były w sposób przejrzysty, ciekawy z jasno określonymi celami?

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

.....
.....
17. Czy czuł/a się Pan/i zaangażowany/a w zajęcia?

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

.....
.....
18. Czy czuł/a się Pan/i motywowany do pracy przez nauczyciela prowadzącego?

ZDECYDOWANIE TAK RACZEJ TAK TRUDNO OKREŚLIĆ RACZEJ NIE ZDECYDOWANIE NIE

.....
.....
UWAGI DOTYCZĄCE TESTÓW, INSTRUKCJI, WYKŁADOWCY

.....
.....
.....

Appendix C

Tests intended to elicit planned use of past unreal conditionals

TEST 1 PRETEST

1. Proszę zdecydować, czy te zdania są poprawne (+), czy niepoprawne (-). Jeżeli sądzi Pan/i, że zdanie jest niepoprawne, proszę je poprawić. Jeżeli nie jest Pan/i pewien/na, proszę obok zdania postawić znak (0).

- a) If we had gone by car, we would have saved time.
- b) If I had been trying harder I would succeeded.
- c) If I stopped the car earlier, there wouldn't been an accident.
- d) If I hadn't been wearing a raincoat, I would have got wet.
- e) If I lived in the Stone Age, I would have been a hunter.
- f) If it hadn't been for the rain, we would have had a good harvest.
- g) Had it not been for the bad weather, the rescue team would have been able to save the climber.
- h) If he known the facts, he would has told them to the police.
- i) If he had been here yesterday, he would tell us the news.
- j) If he received the present, he would have thanked her.

2. Proszę wybrać 1 odpowiedź, która poprawnie uzupełni zdanie.

- a) If he.....under a tree, he the thunder last summer.
A) had not been standing, wouldn't have survive
B) had not stood, wouldn't have survived
C) had not been standing, would've survived
D) had not stood, would have survive
- b) If Johna huge sum of money, hehis last holidays in Vegas.
A) didn't inherit, wouldn't spend
B) hadn't inherited, wouldn't have spent
C) hadn't inherit, wouldn't have spent
D) didn't inherit, wouldn't have spent
- c) If heus a lift from the airport yesterday, we a taxi.
A) gave us, wouldn't have taken
B) hadn't given, wouldn't have had to take
C) had given, wouldn't have had to take
D) had given, wouldn't had had to take
- d) Karol Wojtyła not become Pope, Poland.....so much over the years.
A) If, would not change
B) If, wouldn't have changed
C) Had, would not have changed
D) Had, would not change
- e) If the policeme, I you in time.
A) had not stop, would have reached
B) hadn't stopped, wouldn't have reached
C) had not stopped, would have reached
D) hadn't stop, wouldn't have reached

3. Proszę uzupełnić zdanie poprawną formą III trybu warunkowego.

- a) If Lisa(get up) earlier, she(not be late) late for work.
- b) My parents(buy) the house if it (be cheaper)
- c) If they(drive) carefully, they..... (not crash) into the other car.
- d) Daniel..... (be)home at six yesterday if the bus.....(come) on time.
- e) We(arrive) at lunchtime if we(not take) the M25.
- f) If the weather(be) better, the plane..... (might not crash).
- g) If Andy (play) in the team, they(win) the match.
- h) Had we(know) of your arrival, we(be) at the airport.
- i) You(understand) the film if you(read) the book.
- j) The car(not break down) during the journey if you..... (check)it before.

4. Proszę przekształcić zdania, rozpoczynając od podanej frazy tak, aby znaczenie pozostało to samo.

- a) Mark had a party yesterday. He spent a lot of money on the food and drinks.
If Mark...
- b) One of Mark's friends, Tom, got drunk and broke a window in his flat.
If Tom...
- c) Melanie didn't remember to buy any stamps. She couldn't send important documents to her university.
If Melanie...
- d) John Smith did not win the election because of his stubborn and intolerant behaviour.
Had it not been for...
- e) Donald Tusk did not become President, but he became Prime Minister.
Had ...

5. Na podstawie podanych informacji, ułóż zdania wyrażające sytuacje nierzeczywiste.

- a) We didn't have any matches. We couldn't light a fire.
.....
- b) I didn't wait another minute. I didn't see you.
.....
- c) You left the door open. The cat got out.
.....
- d) He fell. He wasn't wearing mountain boots.
.....
- e) She didn't shout. People didn't realize she was there.
.....

6. Proszę przeczytać 5 zdań dotyczących historii Pana/i życia. Na podstawie tych zdań, proszę kontynuować historyjkę, dopisując 5 możliwych zdań.

- If I hadn't been born in Poland, I wouldn't have learned to speak Polish.
- If I hadn't learned to speak Polish, I wouldn't have gone to a Polish school.
- If I hadn't gone to a Polish school, I wouldn't have passed my matura exam in Poland.
- If I hadn't passed my matura exam, I.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

TEST 2 POSTTEST

1. Proszę zdecydować, czy te zdania są poprawne (+), czy niepoprawne(-). Jeżeli sądzi Pan/i, że zdanie jest niepoprawne, proszę je poprawić. Jeżeli nie jest Pan/i pewien/na, proszę obok zdania postawić znak (0).

- a) If we had gone by plane, we would have come earlier.
- b) If I had been trying harder I would managed to climb that mountain.
- c) If I phoned you earlier, there wouldn't been any problem.

- d) If I hadn't been wearing warm clothes, I would have caught a cold.
- e) If I lived in the Middle Ages, I would have been a knight.
- f) If it hadn't been for the draught, more animals would have survived.
- g) Had it not been for the fog, the ambulance would have been able to save those injured in the car crash.
.....
- h) If he known the truth, he would has told it to the headmaster.
- i) If he had come here yesterday, he would share with us the good news.
- j) If she received the flowers, she would have phoned him.

2. Proszę wybrać 1 odpowiedź, która poprawnie uzupełni zdanie.

- a) If he.....in bed at Christmas, he Santa Claus.
A) had not been lying, wouldn't have see
B) had not lay, wouldn't have seen
C) had not been lying, would've seen
D) had not lay, would have see
- b) If Johna huge sum of money, hehimself a red Ferrarri which is now in his garage.
A) didn't win, wouldn't buy
B) hadn't won, wouldn't have bought
C) hadn't won, would have bought
D) didn't win, wouldn't have bought
- c) If heus a lift from the party yesterday, we a bus.
A) gave us, wouldn't have taken
B) hadn't given, wouldn't have had to take
C) had given, wouldn't have had to take
D) had given, wouldn't had had to take
- d) Lech Wałęsa not become President, the world.....about Poland so much in the nineties.
A) If, would not find out
B) If, wouldn't have found out
C) Had, would not have found out
D) Had, would not find out
- e) If my boss.....me, I late for the dinner.
A) had not stop, wouldn't have been
B) hadn't stopped, would have been
C) had not stopped, would not have been
D) hadn't stop, would have been

4. Proszę przekształcić zdania, rozpoczynając od podanej frazy tak, aby znaczenie pozostało to samo.

- a) My English teacher at secondary school paid a lot of attention to good pronunciation. I learnt a lot from him.
If my English...
- b) My grammar teacher was ill before Christmas. We didn't have any lessons.
If my grammar...
- c) Mary forgot to take her mobile phone to work. We couldn't contact her.
If Mary...
- d) Donald Tusk won the election because of his good PR (public relations) skills.
Had it not been for...
- e) The criminal was not sentenced to death, but he was imprisoned for life instead.
Had ...

5. Na podstawie podanych informacji, ulóż zdania wyrażające sytuacje nierzeczywiste.

- a) We didn't have any money with us. We couldn't buy the tickets for a bus.
.....

b) I didn't listen carefully. I didn't hear the announcement.

c) You left the window open. The burglar got in.

d) The road was slippery. It was raining.

e) She didn't say a word. The murderers did not realize she was there.

6. Proszę przeczytać 5 zdań dotyczących historii życia Jana Pawła II. Na podstawie tych zdań, proszę kontynuować historyjkę, dopisując 5 możliwych zdań.

If he hadn't been born in Poland, he wouldn't have learned to speak Polish.

If he hadn't learned to speak Polish, he wouldn't have gone to a Polish school.

If he hadn't gone to a Polish school, he wouldn't have passed his matura exam just before the WWII.

If he hadn't passed his matura exam, he.....

TEST 3 DELAYED POSTTEST

1. Proszę zdecydować, czy te zdania są poprawne (+), czy niepoprawne(-). Jeżeli sądzi Pan/i, że zdanie jest niepoprawne, proszę je poprawić. Jeżeli nie jest Pan/i pewien/na, proszę obok zdania postawić znak (0).

a) If we had taken a taxi, we would have caught the plane.

b) If I had been trying harder I would passed the exam.

c) If I cancelled the meeting earlier, there wouldn't been any problem.

d) If I hadn't been wearing glasses, I would have slipped over.

e) If I lived in the Renaissance , I would have been a poet.

f) If it hadn't been for the fire, more trees would have been saved.

g) Had it not been for the wind, the helicopter would have been able to land safely.

h) If he known what time it was, he would has hurried up.

i) If he had been here yesterday, he would help me with grammar..

j) If she received the information, she would have known what to do

2. Proszę wybrać 1 odpowiedź, która poprawnie uzupełni zdanie.

a) If he.....to Mary while driving, he the fallen tree on the road.

A) had not been talking, wouldn't have see

B) had not talked, wouldn't have seen

C) had not been talking, would've seen

D) had not talked, would have see

b) If James.....a bank loan, hethe flat he moved into last week.

A) didn't get, wouldn't buy

B) hadn't got, wouldn't have bought

C) hadn't got, would have bought

D) didn't get, wouldn't have bought

c) If farmersthe road yesterday, we a train.

A) blocked, wouldn't have taken

B) hadn't blocked, wouldn't have had to take

C) had blocked, wouldn't have had to take

D) hadn't blocked, wouldn't had had to take

d) Adam Małysz not won so many ski jumping competitions, the world.....about Poland so much.

- A) If, would not find out
- B) If, wouldn't have found out
- C) Had, would not have found out
- D) Had, would not find out

e) If my friend.....me, I that stolen car..

- A) had not stop, wouldn't have bought
- B) hadn't stopped, would have bought
- C) had not stopped, would not have bought
- D) hadn't stop, would have bought

3. Proszę uzupełnić zdanie poprawną formą III trybu warunkowego.

1. If Bill Gates(not set up) his business, Microsoft.....(not become) a household name.
2. If John Lennon and Paul McCartney(not meet), the Beatles(never be formed).
3. If Oppenheimer(not discover)how to build an atomic bomb, Hiroshima and Nagasaki(not be destroyed).
4. If the printing press (not be invented), it(become possible) to spread literature in the whole world.
5. If the alarm (not go off), Mark(not notice) the fire last night.
6. If I(not pass) my matura exam last year, I(not be able) to start my studies.
7. Had I (know) you were coming, I(meet) you at the station.
8. She(forget) to pick the kids from school yesterday if James(not phone) her at three p.m.
9. Tom(buy) a new car if the bank(lend) him the money. Unfortunately Tom was refused the loan.
10. Now we're lost! If you(write down) Mary's directions, this(not happen).

4. Proszę przekształcić zdania, rozpoczynając od podanej frazy tak, aby znaczenie pozostało to samo.

- a) Mike didn't come to the disco. We didn't have a great time.
If Mike...
- b) I was able to fix the car because Henry lent me his tools.
If Henry...
- c) Mary forgot to take some money from the bank. We couldn't pay for the rent yesterday.
If Mary...
- d) Without your help, I would have given up years ago.
Had it not been for...
- e) I didn't buy cake for my guests but instead I baked one myself.
Had ...

5. Na podstawie podanych informacji, ułóż zdania wyrażające sytuacje nierzeczywiste.

- a) We didn't have any food with us. We couldn't feed the hungry children.
.....
- b) I didn't read carefully. I didn't notice the error.
.....
- c) You left the fridge open. The food went off..
.....
- d) The road was slippery. It was snowing.
.....
- e) She didn't complain. Her mother didn't notice she was unhappy. .
.....

6. Proszę przeczytać 5 zdań dotyczących historii Polski. Na podstawie tych zdań, proszę kontynuować historyjkę, dopisując 5 możliwych zdań.

If Lech, Czech and Rus hadn't met, they wouldn't have decided to organize a country.

If they hadn't organized a country, Mieszko I wouldn't have become the first king of Poland.

If Mieszko I hadn't become the first king, Poland wouldn't have been a monarchy.

If Poland hadn't been a monarchy, we wouldn't have had so many kings.

If Poland hadn't had so many kings, there wouldn't have been so many wars.

If there hadn't been so many wars,.....
.....
.....
.....

Appendix D

Tests intended to elicit planned use of modal verbs in the past

TEST 1 PRETEST

1. Proszę zdecydować, czy te zdania są poprawne (+), czy niepoprawne(-). Jeżeli sądzi Pan/i, że zdanie jest niepoprawne, proszę je poprawić. Jeżeli nie jest Pan/i pewien/na, proszę obok zdania postawić znak (0).

1. She may have missed the plane – I don't know why she hasn't come yet.
2. You mustn't have drunk the wine, because now you can't drive.
3. If we had taken the other road, we should have arrived earlier.
4. Ann could not see Peter yesterday because he is in New York.
5. He might have bought a new car, because he had enough money.
6. You ought to have told him that the paint on that seat was wet.
7. She needn't opened that letter, as it wasn't addressed to her.
8. You needn't have bought bread, what are we going to do with it now?
9. You mustn't walk the stairs yesterday, your heart is too weak.
10. Tom must have been at the concert – I saw his car in front of the hall.

2. Proszę wybrać 1 odpowiedź, która poprawnie uzupełni zdanie.

1. Doug the video we rented on his way to work. It was on the table, but now it's gone.

- a) must have returned
- b) must return
- c) must not have returned
- d) had to return

2. The computer isn't working. It during production.

- a) should have been damaged
- b) might have been damaged
- c) had to be damaged
- d) must be damaged

3. It Sam who called and didn't leave a message on the answering machine. He is afraid of answering machines, and so is his wife.

- a) could not have been
- b) may have been
- c) can have been
- d) must have been

4. She That could have been why her eyes were so red and swollen.

- a) has to be crying
- b) could be crying
- c) might have been crying

d) could have been crying

5. He a new car for the holidays. This one would do, I'm sure.

- a) did not need to buy
- b) did not need to have bought
- c) need not have bought
- d) need haven't bought

3. Proszę uzupełnić zdanie poprawną formą czasownika modalnego.

- 1.. If she was crying, shevery upset.
- 2. That paintingby Picasso. I'm sure it's a forgery.
- 3. The television isn't working. Itdamaged during the move.
- 4. Jenny's engagement ring looks pretty modest. It a fortune.
- 5. You failed in your final test. Youhave studied harder.
- 6. She's gone to the wrong door – she seen the sign.
- 7. I was so angry at him, I murdered him. Luckily Betty came.
- 8. Sheworked hard, but you wouldn't know it from her results.
- 9. His mother worried about him all night, but she, because he came back safe.
- 10. I can't find my diary anywhere, I suppose I left it at home.

4. Proszę przekształcić zdania, rozpoczynając od podanej frazy tak, aby znaczenie pozostało to samo.

- 1. My grandfather says he met Napoleon Bonaparte. It's absolutely impossible.
My grandfather....
- 2. Their boss bought every employee an additional desk, which seems to be unnecessary.
Their boss...
- 3. Mark did not apologise for his rude behaviour at the party. Jill still feels offended.
Mark...
- 4. I have been waiting for Tom for half an hour already. Perhaps he got stuck in a traffic jam.
Tom...
- 5. My daughter had enough money to take a taxi home but she didn't do it.
5. My daughter

5. Na podstawie podanych informacji, proszę ułożyć zdania wyrażające spekulacje co do przeszłości.

- 1. Sue was in Warsaw last week. I thought she would be there longer, but yesterday I saw her in the Old Market Square in Poznań.
.....
- 2. I forgot to lock the door yesterday. Fortunately when I came back I saw that nothing wrong had happened.
.....
- 3. The lights were on in Kate's house and her car was there but she didn't answer the door.
.....
- 4. You are the best student at English. On the list of exam results it says *failed* by your name. You don't believe it.
.....
- 5. My friend bought an expensive flat. Now he doesn't have enough money to redecorate it.
.....

6. Proszę przeczytać tę krótką historyjkę. Następnie, proszę spróbować wyjaśnić, co się wydarzyło i dlaczego tak się stało. 5 zdań.

Anna came back home very tired. Another lonely evening with her boyfriend being on a business trip. She almost fainted when she saw that the door was unlocked. She entered the flat and felt smoke. She rushed into the kitchen and quickly switched off the cooker. No matter who had been cooking, it was spoilt.

-What's going on here? -she thought. She took a kitchen knife to protect herself.

-Happy Valentine's Day! I just rushed to buy a bottle of wine for us.... Oh God!!! What happened?? What's wrong with you?

Anna was sitting and crying. She had almost killed her boyfriend with a kitchen knife. Since that day she has never celebrated St Valentine's Day again.

.....
.....
.....
.....

TEST 2 POSTTEST

1. Proszę zdecydować, czy te zdania są poprawne (+), czy niepoprawne(-). Jeżeli sądzi Pan/i, że zdanie jest niepoprawne, proszę je poprawić. Jeżeli nie jest Pan/i pewien/na, proszę obok zdania postawić znak (0).

1. She may have forgotten about the meeting – I don't know why she hasn't come yet.
2. You mustn't have lied to her, because now she won't believe you again.
3. If we had taken the plane, we should have arrived earlier.
4. Andrew could not meet John yesterday because he is away in business.
5. He might have driven Tom's truck, because he knows how to do it.
6. You ought to have phoned him that the meeting was cancelled.
7. She needn't watch that film, as it wasn't for children.
8. You needn't have brought your own food, what are we going to do with it now?
9. You mustn't open the window at night yesterday, that's why you have a cold now.
10. They must have been to Japan – they know a lot about the culture and people.

2. Proszę wybrać 1 odpowiedź, która poprawnie uzupełni zdanie.

1. Doreen the flowers on her way back home. She didn't have them when she was leaving from work.
a) must have bought
b) must buy
c) must not have bought
d) had to buy
2. The boy is crying. He by its father.
a) should have been smacked
b) might have been smacked
c) had to be smacked
d) must be smacked
3. It Betty who forgot to lock the front door. She is sometimes very absent-minded.
a) could not have been
b) may have been
c) can have been
d) must have been
4. She in the rain. That could have been why her hair was all wet.
a) has to be running
b) could be running
c) might have been running
d) could have been running
5. She her hair colour. Blond suited her very well.
a) did not need to change
b) did not need to have changed
c) need not have changed
d) needn't have to change

3. Proszę uzupełnić zdanie poprawną formą czasownika modalnego.

1. If she was smiling, shevery happy. (be)
2. That songby Madonna. I'm sure it's somebody else's lyrics. (write)
3. The computer isn't working. Itdamaged during the move.(be)
4. Jenny's new car looks pretty old. It much.(cost)
5. You didn't pass the last test. Youhave studied harder.
6. She's signed the wrong documents – she have read them.
7. I was so drunk, I kissed him. Luckily my husband was there.
8. Shetried hard to lose weight, but you wouldn't know it from her appearance.
9. She cooked more food for the guests, but she, because nobody came.
10. I can't find my car keys anywhere, I suppose I left them in the car.

4. Proszę przekształcić zdania, rozpoczynając od podanej frazy tak, aby znaczenie pozostało to samo.

1. My student says he met Prince Harry. It's absolutely impossible.
My student....
2. She bought her child an extra scarf, which seems to be unnecessary.
She...
3. Mark did not give Ann the money he had borrowed. Ann needs the money.
Mark...
4. I have been listening to the radio for half an hour. I haven't heard my favourite song yet.
The song...
5. My daughter had enough time to visit her grandma at hospital but she didn't do it.
My daughter

5. Na podstawie podanych informacji, proszę ułożyć zdania wyrażające spekulacje co do przeszłości.

1. Tom went to hospital because of horrible stomach aches. I thought it was something serious but yesterday I saw him drinking alcohol at the local pub.
.....
2. I did not finish the report yesterday. Luckily, my boss wasn't very angry and he gave me two more days to finish it.
3. It was too quiet in the children's room. They were not sleeping.
.....
4. You are on holiday. You've booked a room in a hotel, but your name does not appear in the list. You are very angry.
5. My friend bought an expensive car on credit. He couldn't sleep last night because he was afraid somebody would steal it.
.....

6. Proszę przeczytać tę krótką historyjkę. Następnie, proszę spróbować wyjaśnić, co się wydarzyło i dlaczego tak się stało. 5 zdań.

When John woke up it was 8 o'clock. He started work at 8 o'clock. He had already been late. He ran out of the house slamming the door behind him. John's boss was quite a patient man but this day he was furious. He told John off and asked him about the report he was supposed to hand in this day. Although John had finished the report earlier, he couldn't find it on his desk. When John had already printed out the new copy of the report, his boss approached his desk: "-Sorry John, I saw yesterday that the report was ready and I took it myself. I forgot about it later." "-Better late than never", thought John.

When John came back home, he couldn't find his key. Fortunately, the bathroom window was open. John jumped and managed somehow to climb in through the window. After 10 minutes, while John was sitting in his armchair, the door bell rang. It was the police. "-We had a phone that somebody was trying to break into this house" said the police officer. "Who are you?" "- My name is John Keats and I am the owner of this house. Nobody tried to break in. That was me. Everything is OK. Now if you could, please excuse me, I am very tired..."

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

TEST 3 DELAYED POSTTEST

1. Proszę zdecydować, czy te zdania są poprawne (+), czy niepoprawne (-). Jeżeli sądzi Pan/i, że zdanie jest niepoprawne, proszę je poprawić. Jeżeli nie jest Pan/i pewien/na, proszę obok zdania postawić znak (0).

1. She may have got stuck in a traffic jam – I don't know why she hasn't come yet.
2. You mustn't have spent all your money, because now you'll have to borrow it from somebody.
3. If we had taken the taxi, we should have arrived earlier.
4. Tom could not see Patty yesterday because she is on her holiday.
5. He might have flown the helicopter, because he's a licenced pilot.
6. You ought to have informed the students that the lesson was cancelled.
7. She needn't cheated during the exam, it wasn't acceptable.
8. You needn't have bought so many flowers, where shall we put them now?

9. You mustn't drink so much yesterday, that's why you have a hangover now.
10. They must have bought a new car – I saw one in front of their garage yesterday.

2. Proszę wybrać 1 odpowiedź, która poprawnie uzupełni zdanie.

1. Dorothy her hair colour yesterday. When I saw her on Sunday, her hair was still blond.
a) must have changed
b) must change
c) must not have changed
d) had to change
2. The girl is hungry. She her sandwich by some bullies.
a) should have been taken
b) might have been taken
c) had to be taken
d) must be taken
3. It Brian who broke the window. He was there yesterday, but he wasn't alone.
a) could not have been
b) may have been
c) can have been
d) must have been
4. She her flat herself. That could have been why her T-shirt was dirty with paint.
a) has to be painting
b) could be painting
c) might have been painting
d) could have been painting
5. She her car. The old one was still quite good and didn't cause any problems.
a) did not need to change
b) did not need to have changed
c) need not have changed
d) needn't have to change

3. Proszę uzupełnić zdanie poprawną formą czasownika modalnego.

1. David.....(win) the race if he had tried.
2. She (go) to the party with her friends but she didn't.
3. They haven't called yet. They(no receive) my last letter yet.
4. Oh God! Where is our car??? –Well, it (disappear)! Let's better call the police.
5. It turned out that I (pay) the insurance at once. I could have paid in two rates.
6. You(be) here when Helen told the boss not to be so lazy! It was great!
7. Peter wasn't here then, so he (damage) your vase.
8. Don't take a risk like that again! We (get lost) because of your irresponsibility!
9. There is only one explanation. You(leave) your keys on the bus.
10. The meat is a bit burnt. You(cook) it for so long.

4. Proszę przekształcić zdania, rozpoczynając od podanej frazy tak, aby znaczenie pozostało to samo.

1. My student says he has written the same test before. It's absolutely impossible, because I made this one yesterday.
My student....
2. Our worrying so much was a waste of time.
We.....
3. Mark did not call the ambulance when he hit the tree with his car. Mark has problems with his back now.
Mark...
4. It's possible that the last person to leave didn't lock the door.
The last person....
5. It would have been possible for Helen to take us in her car.
Helen

5. Na podstawie podanych informacji, proszę ułożyć zdania wyrażające spekulacje co do przeszłości.

1. Tom married Jane two months ago. I thought it was something serious but last week they got divorced.
.....
2. We didn't book the table but it didn't matter as there was hardly anyone in the restaurant anyway.
.....
3. Perhaps Jim took it; he was in the office all day yesterday.
.....
4. I'm very angry with you – you knew I was having problems with the car and you didn't bother to help me!
.....
5. Twenty years ago my neighbour offered me his apartment for \$30.000 but I didn't buy it although it was affordable for me.
.....

6. Proszę przeczytać tę krótką historyjkę. Następnie, proszę spróbować wyjaśnić, co się wydarzyło i dlaczego tak się stało. 5 zdań.

Martha couldn't sleep last night. Today was the day of her divorce. She was thinking about Mark. They met at the university, both studying law. After a few months she got pregnant and Natalie was born. They got married quickly and moved to Mark's parents. Martha was not on good terms with her mother-in-law. Mark worked long hours. Martha became depressed. When Natalie went to a kindergarten, Martha finally found a job. Her life changed and her career flourished. But her marriage just the opposite. Without saying a word, she took her daughter and moved out. She did not even give Mark a chance to explain, to talk. At times it was very difficult for her to manage on her own. Natalie could be difficult as well. Later Martha found out that Mark had been looking for her and wanted her back. But she never called him, which she now regretted. And today she would see him, was it the last time, she wondered? Somewhere deep in her heart she hoped not.

.....

Appendix E

Elicited imitation test intended to elicit spontaneous use of past unreal conditionals

Instructions: Once you hear a sentence, say whether you agree or disagree with its proposition. Then repeat the sentence so that it can be recorded.

TEST 1 PRETEST

- *1. If J. Kaczynski won the election more people would have emigrated from the country.
2. If A. Lepper had obtained more votes, he could have become Prime Minister
- *3. If people had known about the results of pollution, they would not invent a car.
- *4. Had the Titanic had not sunk, Leonardo di Caprio wouldn't have become famous.
- *5. If Dolly sheep not been cloned, genetic research would have stopped.
- *6. If Princess Diana didn't die, Prince Charles would not have married Camilla Parker-Bowles.
7. If the economic situation in Poland had been better, so many people would not have left the country.
8. If the USA had not interefered in foreign affairs, there wouldn't have been the attack on WTC.
- *9. If Pope John Paul II not spent so much money on visits, many people could have got something to eat.
- *10. If Poland had not had a Polish Pope, many people would not find out about our existence.
11. Even if Great Britain had not opened its job markets, Polish people would have worked there illegally, anyway.
- *12. If Poland didn't join the EU, the economic situation would not have changed for the better.
- *13. If the Catholic Church had not organised so many crusades, Christianity wouldn't reach so many places on Earth.
14. If Poland had not joined the EU, it would have made its biggest mistake in history.
- *15. If Jaroslaw Kaczyński didn't gone into alliance with Lepper and Giertych, he might have won the election again.

16. If people had not been so angry at the political situation in Poland, so many of them would not have gone to vote.
- *17. Hadn't it been for the attack on WTC, the war in Afghanistan wouldn't have started.
- *18. If the political system in Poland not change in 1989, there would never have been so many unemployed people.
- *19. If I had had less English at school I wouldn't decide to study at the college.
20. Had it not been for the change of political system in Poland, the Berlin wall wouldn't have collapsed.

TEST 2 IMMEDIATE POSTTEST

- *1. Had Donald Tusk go into an alliance with PiS, there would be no election in October.
2. If doctors hadn't gone on strike in July, there would have been no elections.
- *3. Been the school uniforms not introduced, pupils and students would accepted Roman Giertych.
- *4. If white people not invaded Native Americans, fewer Indians would have become alcoholics
- *5. If Adam Małysz had not win so many ski jumping competitions, he would not be awarded the Sportsman of the year 2007.
6. If I hadn't eaten so much at Christmas, I wouldn't have put on weight.
- *7. If students did not find out about the practical exam requirements, they wouldn't have start learning hard from the very beginning.
- *8. Had the Christmas be white, more people would go skiing.
9. Had the weather at Christmas been worse, there would have been more car accidents.
10. If the miners had obtained a pay rise, they wouldn't have gone on strike in December.
- *11. If Pope John Paul II didn't die, he has been satisfied with the results of election in Poland.
12. If Poland hadn't got involved in the war in Afghanistan, the Polish soldiers wouldn't have been accused of war crimes.
- *13. If the walls at the college were painted last year, so many students wouldn't had resigned from their studies.
- *14. If I bought more Christmas presents, I would also have received more.
- *15. Hadn't Poland got the right to organize Euro 2012, no national stadium would be designed.
16. If students hadn't found out about the vocabulary test (Misztal), they wouldn't have started to do the exercises.
- *17. If I be born in the Soviet Union, I wouldn't have emigrated.
18. If I hadn't decided to study at the college, I would have started working.
- *19. If Donald Tusk not become Prime Minister, he would resign from politics after the election.
- *20. If PiS won the election last October, Roman Giertych might become Minister of Education again.

TEST 3 DELAYED POST TEST

1. If I had started learning Misztal in October, I would have finished by now.
- *2. Been President Kennedy not assassinated, his wife would not married the richest man in the world.
- * 3. Hadn't I started my studies, I would not moved to Poznań.
- *4. If Małysz not won so many competitions, Polish people would have forgotten about him.
- *5. If the film Katyn received the Oscar Award in March, more people would already watch it.
6. If I hadn't passed the first semester, I would have quit my studies.
- *7. If Princess Diana didn't die, she would have move out from Buckingham.
- *8. Had Jarosław Kaczyński win the election, so many doctors wouldn't go on strike.
9. If the world hadn't been so polluted, more animal species would have survived.
10. If people hadn't emigrated from Poland, the unemployment rate wouldn't have decreased.
- *11. If the weather was different yesterday, I have gone for a walk.
12. If China had agreed to Tibet independence, fewer people would have died.
- *13. If the English prisoners did not go to Australia, more Aboriginals would had survived.
- *14. If I had more free time last weekend, I would have gone to the cinema.
15. Hadn't we imposed our culture on Aboriginals, they would not become alcoholics.
- *16. If the weather be better at Easter, there wouldn't have been so many car accidents.
17. If George W. Bush hadn't got involved in the war in Afghanistan, more people would have accepted his actions.

- *18. If Lech Walesa not receive the Nobel Peace Prize, he wouldn't become a Polish president.
- 19. If John Paul II hadn't died, so many Polish people would not have become interested in his books.
- *20. If I felt badly at the beginning of the academic year, I would resign from the college.

Appendix F

Elicited imitation test intended to elicit spontaneous use of modal verbs in the past

Instructions: Once you hear a sentence, say whether you agree or disagree with its proposition. Then repeat the sentence so that it can be recorded.

TEST 1 PRETEST

1. G. W. Bush shouldn't have started interfering in Iraqi affairs.
2. * J Kaczynski should never have talk about politics with A Lepper.
3. R Giertych couldn't have won the last election.
4. * Donald Tusk can have counterfeited the results of the election.
5. * LiD might obtained more votes, if more people had gone to vote.
6. * Jaroslaw Kaczynski must be disappointed when he found out that he lost the election.
7. A. Lepper should never have become Minister of Agriculture
8. * The situation with the lack of forms to vote could have be predict.
9. * The people who died in the mountains couldn't known how dangerous mountains are.
10. * The young man who shot so many people at Virginia Tech must go mad.
11. The authorities at Virginia Tech couldn't have prevented the mass murder.
12. * The politicians in Poland shouldn't offend each other during the last campaign.
13. * The Pope needn't visit Poland so many times.
14. * The government in Poland should changed months ago.
15. * The explosion in London underground in 2005 might be an accident.
16. I needn't have eaten so much at Chistmas.
17. * Poland shouldn't get the chance to organize Euro 2012 last year.
18. The president must have been very dissatisfied with the results of election.
19. * The tragic accidents in Polish mines could have prevented.
20. Tusk might have taken a PR course before the election campaign.

TEST 2 POSTTEST

1. China shouldn't have started interfering in Tibet affairs.
2. * Politicians should never have talk about politics with priests.
3. Jerzy Dudek couldn't have won the last ski jumping competitions
4. * Robert Kubica can have cheated during the last Formula 1 race.
5. * I might learned more, if I attended all the lessons.
6. * Robert Kubica must be disappointed when he found out that he didn't win the race.
7. George Bush should never have become the President of the USA.
8. * The situation with the Olympic Games in Beiing could have be predict.
9. * The people who died of cancer couldn't known how dangerous cancer is.
10. * The paparazzi must go mad when they followed Princess Diana in the Tunnel.
11. Princess Diana's driver couldn't have prevented the accident.
12. * The politicians in Poland shouldn't lie to their citizens during the last campaign.
13. * My grammar teacher needn't give us so many tests in the first semester.
14. * They should painted the college walls months ago.
15. * The explosion of World Trade Center in 2002 might be an accident.
16. I needn't have eaten so much at Easter.
17. * China should never get the chance to organize the Olympic Games.

18. The president must have been very dissatisfied with the results of election.
19. * The tragic accidents in China could have prevented.
20. Otylia Jędrzejczak might have taken a special therapy after her accident.

TEST 3 DELAYED POSTTEST

1. The Pope shouldn't have started interfering in the affairs between King Henry VIII and his wife.
2. * The USA should never have start trading with China.
3. Robert Kubica couldn't have driven his car well enough in the last Formula One competition.
4. * Henry VIII can have been addicted to sex.
5. * I might finished Misztal's book, if I started in October.
6. * Otylia Jędrzejczak must be disappointed when she found out that she lost the swimming race.
7. Donald Tusk should never have become the Prime Minister of Poland.
8. * The situation with the Amercian homosexual couple in Poland could have be predict.
9. * The people who died in motor cycle accidents couldn't known how dangerous speedy driving is.
10. * Doda must get furious when she found out about Majdan's affair.
11. Europe couldn't have prevented the incidents in China.
12. * Polish politicians shouldn't promise their citizens things impossible to happen during the last campaign.
13. * My grammar teacher needn't give us so much homework in the first semester.
14. * I should started learning for the exams at least a month ago.
15. * The death of Princess Diana might be an accident.
16. I needn't have eaten so much yesterday evening.
17. * Kulczyk should never get the permission to build Stary Browar.
18. My grammar teacher must have been very dissatisfied with my last test.
19. * The blackout in Szczecin could have prevented.
20. Doda might have taken a special course on how to behave in the media.

Appendix G

Focused communication tasks intended to elicit spontaneous use of past unreal conditionals

TEST 1 PRETEST

Proszę przez chwilę pomyśleć o trzech rzeczach, które zrobił/a Pan/i w swoim życiu, których Pan/i żałuje (*I regret*) i o trzech rzeczach, z których się Pan/i cieszy (*I am glad*).

Może je Pan/i zapisać na kartce.

Następnie proszę porozmawiać z partnerem na temat tego, co by się wydarzyło, gdyby te rzeczy/czynności nie miały miejsca. Zadaniem partnera jest skomentować, czy te rzeczy naprawdę były tak negatywne/pozytywne i co innego mogłoby się wydarzyć, gdyby te rzeczy/czynności nie miały miejsca. Mają Państwo czas ok. 4-5 min na tę rozmowę.

TEST 2 POSTTEST

Proszę pomyśleć o roku 2007.

Z pewnością przyniósł różne wydarzenia, które wywarły jakiś wpływ na Pana/Pani życie lub życie Pana/Pani przyjaciół/rodziny.

Mogą to być wydarzenia związane z kulturą, polityką, rodziną, znajomymi, przyjaciółmi, studiami, pracą, wykładowcami ☺. Może poznał/a Pan/i kogoś, kto zmienił cos w Pana/i życiu, pozwolił spojrzeć na życie i świat z innej strony? Proszę pomyśleć o kilku takich wydarzeniach, zastanowić się, czy spowodowały one jakieś zmiany w Pana/Pani życiu. Co by było, gdyby nie miały one miejsca? Zadaniem partnera jest skomentować, czy te rzeczy naprawdę były tak negatywne/pozytywne i co innego mogłoby się wydarzyć, gdyby te rzeczy/czynności nie miały miejsca.

Mają Państwo czas ok. 4-5 min na tę rozmowę.

TEST 3 DELAYED POSTTEST
THE HOLIDAYS I WILL NEVER FORGET

Zbliżają się wakacje. Wyjazdy, nowi ludzie...

Proszę pomyśleć o swoim dotychczasowym życiu. Czy pamięta Pan/i jakieś szczególne wakacje? Jakiś specjalny wyjazd? Może poznał/a Pan/i wyjątkowe osoby podczas tych wakacji? Proszę pomyśleć o tym przez chwilę, zastanowić się, czy spowodowały one jakieś zmiany w Pana/Pani życiu. Co nowego wprowadziły do Pana/i życia? Co by było, gdyby nie miały one miejsca? Zadaniem partnera jest skomentować, czy te rzeczy naprawdę były tak negatywne/pozytywne i co innego mogłoby się wydarzyć, gdyby te rzeczy/czynności nie miały miejsca.

Mają Państwo czas ok. 4-5 min na tę rozmowę.

Appendix H

Role cards for the focused communication tasks intended to elicit spontaneous use of modal verbs in the past

Instructions: Proszę zapoznać się z sytuacjami, które się Panu/i wydarzyły. Proszę opowiedzieć o tej sytuacji partnerowi/partnerce, której zadaniem jest pomóc Panu/i wyjaśnić, co się stało. Razem z partnerem/partnerką proszę spróbować wyjaśnić za pomocą przypuszczeń i spekulacji, co być może się wydarzyło/z pewnością się wydarzyło/ co nie mogło mieć miejsca według Pana/i.

TEST 1 PRETEST
STUDENT A

1. Last night when you were coming back home after a hard day at school a bus passed you in the street. You saw a face at the window which looked exactly like your uncle's. Your uncle died two years ago. It was the 31st of October. You are pretty scared now and don't know what to do.

2. Your friend always phones you on your birthday. Yesterday was your birthday. She didn't phone. You can't reach her on the phone today.

STUDENT B

1. You invited two friends to dinner at your house in the country. They've both got a good sense of direction and clear instructions from you. Their car is 15 years old. They are an hour late. You can't reach them on the phone.

2. Yesterday evening you had a meal in a restaurant and ordered a prawn cocktail, a chicken casserole and chocolate cake. You ate a lot. Later you were sick all the night. Your best friend who was there with you was fine.

TEST 2 POSTTEST
STUDENT A

1. Your grammar lesson was cancelled yesterday. You heard that the teacher was ill. In the evening you went to a pub with your friends and you can swear you saw your teaching having fun, dancing and enjoying herself. When you said 'Hello' she smiled at you, but didn't answer and behaved as if she didn't know you.

2. In the morning you took 100 PLN from an ATM. You went to the college, had something to drink at the bar and you also had some notes copied. When you come home in the evening the only money in the wallet is 10 PLN. You are shocked. You don't know what happened.

STUDENT B

1. You are the best student in the group. On the list of exam results it says "fail" by your name. You don't believe it.

2. Yesterday evening you wanted to visit your boyfriend/girlfriend. You wanted it to be a surprise. The lights were on in his/her house and the car was there but nobody answered the door. You tried to call him/her on the phone but it didn't help, either.

TEST 3 DELAYED POSTTEST

STUDENT A

1. Two months ago you broke up with your boyfriend/girlfriend. When you came home in the evening yesterday you saw him/her standing at your door. You didn't want to talk to him/her. You asked him/her politely to go away and leave in peace. You were thinking about it the whole evening. The first thing you saw in the morning was him/her standing and looking at your windows.

2. You work at school as an English teacher. One of the students had difficulty passing your tests and getting a positive grade. After a lot of thinking you refused to give him/her a positive grade. Today morning a police officer called you. You are to explain what happened at school. The student accused you of sexual abuse.

STUDENT B

1. Two years ago you went on a holiday abroad and had a short but intensive holiday romance. You came back home and soon forgot all about it. Now you are preparing to your wedding. Yesterday you got an email from your former lover informing you he/she was coming to Poland...

2. You work at a huge banking firm. One of the foreign clients asked you to give him a special discount when taking a loan. He brought you a bottle of good wine and wanted to give you some money. You refused to take the money (but kept the wine as the client insisted) but finally you weren't able to agree on the lower percentage of the loan. Today your boss talked to you. The client had accused you of bribery. You are in danger of losing the job...

Appendix I

sample tasks for Listening Speaking Classes

PRETEST

ELEMENTARY, MY DEAR WATSON (*adapted from Advanced communication games by Hadfield*)
SS are divided into pairs or groups of three. They are given a copy of the case-study and a set of clue cards. The clue cards should be placed face downwards in a pile on the table in order, with number 1 on the top and number 20 at the bottom. The ss should read the case-study, and then turn up the first clue card. They should make deductions about the identity of the murderer, or his/her probable actions, based on the evidence given on the clue card. Then they should turn up the next clue card and make further deductions. The object of the game is to find out who the murderer was.

POSTTEST - MYSTERIES

BIZARRE SITUATIONS

Instructions: SS listen to some bizarre situations, and are asked to discuss the possible explanations and solutions to the mysteries

1. A family with three children went sailing. They hired a boat which was found a couple days later. The boat was drifting, all the possessions were gone. What do you think happened to the family?
2. You've invited a friend to your house. The train was due to come at 3 p.m. You're waiting for your friend, but she is over forty minutes late. What do you think happened?
3. You bought a CD for your friend Ola with the music she likes. You asked another friend to give it to her as a present, but Ola did not even say thank you and she hasn't contacted you since. Why?
4. You have just come back from a three-day business trip. You've discovered that your cat is gone and the plants are dead. The door was locked and all the possessions are there. What do you think happened?

DILLEMAS: HOW COULD THIS SITUATION BE PREVENTED? (*adapted from Grammar Practice Activities by Ur*)

SS are divided into two groups. One group is "experts – advisors", the other one "people with problems, dilemmas". SS work in pairs, according to the "wheel technique". All students with problems start with the same problem and they describe it to their current partner. Then the partner gives some ideas on why these situations happened and what could have been done in order to prevent them. Ss are given about two minutes to discuss one situation. Then "the experts" go to another person. At the end of the activity ss who described problems may work in a group and find the people who had the best solutions. The ss who gave ideas may talk about the seriousness of the problems and choose the one, which in their opinion, was the most difficult.

1. You invited your future parents-in-law to a restaurant. It's the first meeting and you want it to be successful. All of you are sitting and enjoying the meal. Suddenly you realize that you forgot to take some money from the bank. You are not sure whether one may pay by a credit card, as well. You are becoming more and more nervous. Your guests seem to have noticed that something is wrong...
2. Someone close to you, of your age, has a fatal disease. The doctors say there is no hope. She asked you to help her end her life. You definitely disagreed. You haven't seen the person for some days, but you've been thinking about her for all this time. Now, you've decided to talk to her, but her phone doesn't answer. You go to see her but nobody opens the door. You expect the worst...
3. You tried using an illegal drug, for the first time, at a party a year ago – hated it – and haven't touched the stuff since. But someone who saw you at the party took some photos and has sent them to your boss, your parents and your girl/boyfriend. You are in real trouble. You are thinking back to that unfortunate party...
4. A friend, while driving you in his car, hit someone crossing the road and knocked them down. He said the person wasn't badly hurt, and drove away. Today morning your mother told you about her friend who had been hit by a car. The driver drove away. The woman is in hospital with her spinal cord injury. She may never walk again. Now you are thinking back to that ride.

5. You have put on a lot of weight, none of your clothes fit, and your doctor says you must diet. Although you know you have to do it, it's easier said than done. You are getting nervous, then you eat. If you eat, you are angry with yourself, and so on. You get tired quickly and you can't resist eating. A year ago, life seemed to be much easier...

6. Some time ago, you started a new job in a pharmaceutical company. You were only a student, but you quickly got to the first assistant position. It's well-paid and your employer is rich. Yesterday you witnessed a strange event. Your boss was talking to some men. They paid him a lot of money and he gave them a suitcase full of illegal medicines. Later your boss called you and said that he had a deal to offer. Your new job is to sell illegal medicines. You cannot back out from it, it's too late...

DELAYED POSTTEST: FILMS

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS (*Million Dollar Baby*)

1. Ladies: Can you imagine yourself fighting as a boxer? Have you ever thought of it?

Men: Can you imagine yourself being a female boxer trainer?

2. Frankie switched off the system supporting Maggie's breathing. She was aware of the situation.

- What, do you think, the reasons were?
- What were the consequences?
- Can you justify his decision?
- Did he have any right to do so?
- How, do you think, he felt?
- How did Maggie feel?

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS (*Fried Green Tomatoes*)

1. How could you describe Frank Bennet?

2. Frank Bennet disappeared. Only his car was found in the river. What could have happened to him?

3. Idgie was sure that Frank Bennet would never bother Ruth again. Why?

4. Why wasn't Frank Bennet's body found?

5. Can you anyhow justify the situation with Frank?

6. Do you think it was necessary to kill him?

7. If Frank hadn't died, what could have happened to Ruth and the baby?

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS (*Titanic*)

1. Imagine one of you is the captain of the ship. The captain who survived. You try to explain your decisions, your actions, you try to defend yourself...

2. The other person lost their family in the tragedy and now meets eye to eye with, perhaps, the person responsible for this. You clearly blame the captain for what had happened and accuse him of lack of any remorse.

3. Together try to speculate what might have happened if Titanic hadn't met an iceberg on its way...What would have happened to the people, to the world...

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS (*Dances with Wolves*)

1. Imagine yourself being Officer Dunbar, abandoned by your colleagues somewhere there in the western frontier. What would you have done?

2. Can we justify Dunbar's actions concerning leaving his post and joining the Indians?

3. The American soldiers treated him as a runaway. Was it fair? Why?

4. Did the Americans have the right to treat him as a prisoner? Why/why not?

5. Why did Americans treat Indians in such a hostile way? What was the reason?

6. If Americans had not treated Indian tribes the way they did, what might have been the result?

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS (*Elizabeth*)

Together with your partner write a counter version of the history, imagining that Elizabeth had a completely different character, many lovers (taking after her father King Henry 8th) and a very easy-going attitude towards her role as a Queen of England. What might have happened to England if that had been the truth?

Appendix J

sample tasks for Reading and Speaking Classes

POSTTEST – THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW

Instructions: Work in pairs or small groups. Imagine it is now the year 2100. The climatic situation in the world is unbearable (hurricanes, floods, snowstorms). The British Isles had been flooded, there is no ice in the Arctic, but there is permanent snow in Africa. Most of Italy is now a desert and there is a jungle in Central Europe. Many cities are built on the dump-sites. You are a member of a team which is discussing the ways to avert these changes. You blame your forefathers for the disasters and you are going to send a message to them in a time-capsule with a group of scientists back to 2000 in order to try to prevent the extinction of the human race. First, however, you need to consider the following points:

1. Looking back, was it possible to change certain ways of human behaviour?
2. What could have been done to avert the sequence of events?
3. What messages would you try to convey to your forefathers to warn them about the future? Prepare this message and present it to other students.

DELAYED POSTTEST – EXTREME SITUATIONS

Instructions: Students listen to one piece of the story and are asked to answer questions following it with their partner. Then they listen to the next excerpt and discuss it and so on.

I cut the rope (listening adapted from English File Upper Intermediate)

Joe and I got to know each other in 1984 in the French Alps. We decided to make a trip to Peru because we wanted to climb bigger and unclimbed mountains. We were experienced climbers, but we knew that if anything went wrong, nobody would be able to rescue us.

What would you have done?

Why do you think they decided to do it?

We succeeded in reaching the top of the highest mountain in Peru but we were suffering from frostbite and completely exhausted. Climbing down was so difficult that we were making slow progress. We were tied together with a rope, and Joe was ahead. When suddenly I felt a pull on the rope, I was terrified to discover that he had fallen and broken his leg. We were still at 6,000 meters, and I thought we would never both get down alive. On the other hand, it would take a few days to go down the mountain and get some help, which meant Joe's death....

What would you have done?

How do you think Simon felt?

How do you think Joe felt?

I knew I had to try to save Joe, so I started lowering him down the mountain on the rope. The weather condition got much worse, but we decided to keep going, as it was getting dark. We wanted to find somewhere safe to sleep. If it had been daylight, we'd have seen that there was a vertical cliff of ice directly in front of us. But in the darkness, we failed to notice it so that I accidentally lowered Joe over the cliff.

Suddenly, I had all of Joe's weight on the rope and it was pulling me towards the edge of the cliff, too. I only had two choices. If I cut the rope, Joe would die. If I didn't, I would die, too.

What would you have done?

What do you think Simon felt?

What do you think happened to Joe?

After I cut the rope, I felt shocked and exhausted. I spent the night in the snow hole, waiting for morning. The next day, when I looked over the cliff and the crack, I realized that it was a deep hole into which Joe had fallen to death. I made my way back to base camp, where I spent three days recovering. I was deeply asleep in my tent when suddenly I heard Joe's voice calling my name....

How would you have felt if you'd been Simon?

What do you think the voice was? Why?

Instructions: Read the text, report it to your partner, and together make up the final version.

Race to the South Pole

Amundsen reached the South Pole earlier and because of that he is better remembered.

Amundsen's preparation and planning was much better than Scott's. Had Scott planned things differently, it wouldn't have resulted in the death of three members of the expedition.

If Scott had taken food rich in calories and appropriate for the weather, they could have survived.

Scott had taken donkeys. But for their death, he and his people wouldn't have had to drag all the equipment and food themselves.

Another problem was Scott's behaviour. If it hadn't been for his arrogance and laziness, the people might have survived.

Had it not been for his diaries, the contemporary people would have nothing to remember Scott for.

All in all, there have been many criticisms to Scott's decisions, concerning especially the research he ought to have done and his English nationality.

Appendix K

sample tasks for Culture classes

POSTTEST LESSON – RELIGION

Think about the beginnings of Christianity. Together with your partner discuss the following assumptions which are not true (to my knowledge or belief). Would anything have been different if these events had happened?

- Juda did not betray Jesus
- Jesus was not crucified
- Jesus did not raise from the dead
- The Apostles did not spread the Gospel to people

What explanations could you give to the following claims? Why do people speculate about that?

- Jesus's body was stolen by His Apostles after His death.
- Mother Mary had more children.
- Jesus had a wife.
- Peter was very sorry when he denied knowing Jesus

Answer the questions, If you don't know the precise answers, try to speculate and give your own explanations:

1. Why did Henry 8th want to marry for the second time?
2. Why did Henry 8th decide to create the Church of England?
3. Why was the Pope so strict about Henry 8th second marriage?

DELAYED POSTTEST – MEDIA

Discuss the questions with your partner on the basis of the text which you have listened to (adapted from BBC)

Learning English):

1. What, do you think the reasons are for perceiving the Polish people in such a way?
2. If so many Poles had not gone to Britain, would these opinions be different?
3. Poland joined the EU in 2004. Had it not happened, what would have the relationships between Poland and Britain been like?
4. The Polish also have their opinions on the British. Where do these opinions come from? How were they generated?
5. Do you think Poland and Britain made any mistakes in the mutual treatment of the two nations? What? Why?
6. There was this “infamous” case of a Polish young man accused of rape. He was sentenced to many years of imprisonment. Do you think he would have been treated differently in Poland? Do you think the British media were also responsible for the way he was perceived by the British? Why?

A dictogloss task

Instructions: Listen to the text twice. While listening take notes.

Could Princess Diana have been murdered by the secret service?

She died in Paris, in a high speed car crash trying to escape the paparazzi. Many people can't believe that she should have died such an ordinary death. The French Police concluded it must have been a tragic accident. But Dodi's grieving father couldn't have accepted this verdict. Had Princess Diana and Dodi not been hounded by paparazzi, they wouldn't have left the hotel. If they hadn't had to slip out of the hotel, they would have taken their usual driver and the security vehicle. If the blood samples had been switched on, they would have shown Diana's driver, Henri Paul, was drunk. He shouldn't have driven the car. What is absolutely clear is that Henri Paul had been drinking heavily and he must have been drunk when he was driving that vehicle. Not only that he was taking an anti depressant which he should not have been. While taking that drug and the alcohol in combination would have impaired his ability to drive the motor vehicle. If the driver of a second car involved in the crash, had been identified, the truth could have seen the daylight. If it hadn't taken close to 2 hours to get Princess Diana to a hospital just 4 miles away, she might not have died. One may say, but for the media, everything would have been different. She could have continued her charity work and would have remained the People's Princess.

Appendix L

sample materials used for the instructional treatment of past unreal conditionals

Explore Australia

Read the text, answer the True/False questions and then complete the 15 gaps with one word only.

Australia is a small modern nation in a vast, ancient land. 1)..... an area the size of Europe, Australia is the world's largest 2)..... continent.

It's New Year's Eve. I am thinking about year 2007. How was it? Was it good for me?

Probably yes. The most fascinating (and expensive) enterprise was our trip to Australia.

But let's start from the very beginning...

Our friends, Ulla and Robert went to Australia two years ago. Both of them are researchers and they had been offered jobs at health institutes in Sydney. Probably **if they hadn't gone to the Aussie country, we would never have come up with the idea** of visiting the second part of the globe. **Had it not been for our Australia adventure, I wouldn't have flown an airplane** for 26 hours with short stops in Frankfurt and Singapore. **I wouldn't have bought** a traditional dress in Singapore, either.

It is also the oldest, flattest and – with the 3)..... of Antarctica – the driest place on earth. For about 65000 years the 4)..... was the preserve of around 600 groups of Aboriginal people. Theirs was the longest continuous occupation in 5)..... history.

But for our trip to the land of Aboriginal tribes, I would not have had the opportunity to see the indigenous population whose appearance, style of life and behaviour are the most extraordinary I have ever seen. Surely, without seeing their faces and their eyes, I would still think that what the white

people did with them was an act of mercy rather than an act of expansionary policy.

The 6)..... settled the east coast in 1788, and over the past two hundred years their colonial prison 7).....has been transformed into a nation of 20 million people.

If I hadn't had the courage to see the second part of the world, I wouldn't have met so many interesting people of various nations, different religions, but still friendly, open and unique. **If I hadn't met these people, I wouldn't have thought about** the importance of not only tolerance but also the idea of acceptance of varieties of behaviours and life styles.

If I hadn't travelled beyond the European Union, I wouldn't have had the chance to drink mango wine, with the most thrilling smell ever.

Australia is 8).....for the beauty and diversity of its natural 9)..... As well as the vast tracts of desert that one would expect in the earth's oldest, driest and flattest continent, it is a place of lush forests, wild rivers, ancient mountains, dramatic alpine, peaks, glacial lakes and a magnificent 10).....

If my husband hadn't encouraged me to go to Australia, I wouldn't have seen the Great Barrier Reef, I wouldn't have had the possibility to swim among fish, turtles and flatfish. And I wouldn't have seen a real shark just passing by, either!!!

During our stay we also spent some days on a desert island (Russel Island). **If I hadn't stayed there, it wouldn't have occurred to me that I was only a tiny element of the universe which seemed to be organised in a perfect way...**

Two sites, the stunning Great 11).....Reef and a massive monolith of Uluru – both 12)..... the most recognised natural features in the world – have

13).....greatly to the development of Australia as a major nature travel
14).....

Undoubtedly, if I hadn't driven 600 hundred kilometres from Alice Springs to Uluru,

I wouldn't have walked almost 10 km around the Holy Mountain of Aboriginals. I wouldn't have experienced the atmosphere of mystery, sacredness and peace at the same time.

Other places like the remote wilds of Tasmania and the vast expanse of the Kimberley, are valued
15)..... their lonely beauty and remarkably unspoiled condition.

These places I have yet to see, as I firmly believe I will come back to Australia one day ☺

Are the sentences true or false?

1. The whole European Union is smaller than Australia.
2. Ulla and Robert found their jobs having first come to Australia.
3. Aboriginal tribes were the most unusual ever seen by the writer.
4. According to the author, the white people helped Aboriginals survive in Australia.
5. You can drink mango wine in the European Union.
6. Australia is a land of diversities as far as its inhabitants are concerned.
7. The author saw a flat whale.
8. The author climbed Uluru and the way up and down was around 10 km.
9. The author has seen Tasmania.
10. The author used a car when travelling around Australia.

Complete the conditional sentences (type I, II and III)

1. Once upon a time the cat bit the mouse's tail off. "Give me back my tail," said the mouse. And the cat said, "Well, I (give) you back your tail if you fetched me some milk. But that's impossible to do for a little mouse like you."
2. The mouse, however, went to the cow. "The cat (give / only) me back my tail if I fetch her some milk."
3. And the cow said, "Well, I would give you milk if you (get) me some hay. But that's impossible to do for a little mouse like you."
4. The mouse, however, went to the farmer. "The cat will only give me back my tail if the cow (give) me some milk. And the cow (only / give) me milk if I get her some hay."
5. And the farmer said, "Well, I would give you hay if you (bring) me some meat. But that's impossible to do for a little mouse like you."
6. The mouse, however, went to the butcher. "The cat will only give me back my tail if the cow (give) me milk. And the cow will only give me milk if she (get) some hay. And the farmer (only / give) me hay if I get him some meat."
7. And the butcher said, "Well, I would give you meat if you (make) the baker bake me a bread. But that's impossible to do for a little mouse like you."
8. The mouse, however, went to the baker. "The cat (give / only) me back my tail if I fetch her some milk. And the cow (give / not) me milk if I don't get her

- hay. And the farmer will only give me hay if the butcher (have) some meat for him. And the butcher will not give me meat if you (bake / not) him a bread.”
9. And the baker said, “Well, I (give) you bread if you promise never to steal my corn or meal.”
10. The mouse promised not to steal, and so the baker gave the mouse bread, the mouse gave the butcher bread. The butcher gave the mouse meat, the mouse gave the farmer meat. The farmer gave the mouse hay, the mouse gave the cow hay. The cow gave the mouse milk, the mouse gave the cat milk. And the cat gave the mouse her tail back.
11. But imagine what would have happened otherwise:
12. If the mouse (promised / not) never to steal corn or meal, the baker (not/give) the mouse bread.
13. If the baker (not / give) the mouse bread, the butcher (refuse) to give her meat for the farmer.
14. If the butcher (refuse) her any meat, the farmer (not / be) willing to give the mouse hay.
15. If the farmer (not / be) willing to give the mouse hay, the mouse (not / receive) milk from the cow.
16. If the mouse (not / receive) milk from the cow, she (not / get) back her tail.

Complete the blanks with the correct tense (adapted from CPE Practice by Evans).

If we (know)..... that the tour (turn out) the way it did, we (never/go). In fact, I think, (rather/spend) the whole summer sitting in my chair than (have to) put up with so much inconvenience and discomfort. If anybody (ask) me anything about tours of any kind now, I think I (say) “Avoid them at all costs!”

If I(can change) the world, the first thing I (do) is to abolish weapons of all kinds. I (make sure) that food was distributed fairly to all parts of the world and, most important of all, I (stop) the emission of all pollutants until alternative sources of energy (be) perfected. My world (not/be) an easy place to live at first, but it (be) a much better one in the long run.

Put the verbs in brackets into the correct tense. (adapted from CPE Practice by Evans)

If only Sarah 1.*had finished* the university, she 2(not/be) in the situation she is in today. If she 3 (not/become) discouraged, and 4..... (go on) with her course, she 5(be) a qualified teacher now and she 6..... (not/have) to work in such a badly paid job. I remember telling her that if she 7..... (only stick) to her course, she 8..... (easily/overcome) her difficulties, but she refused to listen. Now she admits that she wishes she9 (not/give up) so easily and that she 10..... (listen) to me, but it’s a bit late for that. She’s planing to do a secretarial course now, which, I’m sure, will improve her prospects. But I’m afraid she’ll always regret 11.....(not/finish) the teaching course while she had the chance.

Complete the sentences with the right form:

1. They would be rather offended if I(not go) and visit them.
2. What would happen if I (press) the red button?
3. If somebody (walk) here with a gun, I (be) very frightened.

4. If he (speak)more clearly, people (understand) him.
5. If the book (be) cheaper, I (buy)it.
6. Ken missed the train. If he (come) earlier, he (not miss) it.
7. Annie didn't have her telephone on the walk. If she (have) she (phone) the police.
8. When the train (arrive) at the station, they (announce) it.

Transform the sentences

- I didn't take my money and so I couldn't get a taxi. If I.....
- I didn't know that George had to get up so quickly so I didn't wake him. If.....
- I was able to buy the car only because Jim lent me the money. If
- Mary wasn't injured in the crash because she was wearing a seat belt. If.....
- You didn't have any breakfast – that's why you are hungry now. If.....
- We don't go out very often because we can't afford it. If.....
- It's raining so we can't have lunch in the garden. If
- I have to work tomorrow evening, so I can't meet you. If.....
- Tom doesn't have a job and he is very depressed. If.....
- They didn't know about the storm before sailing. If.....

Finish the following sentences without changing the meaning of the sentences printed before them

- a) If you change your mind [unlikely], just call us. Should...
- b) Had you informed me earlier, I could have change my plans. If...
- c) If I were you, I'd cut down on smoking. Were....
- d) If she killed herself [unlikely], we would inherit this beautiful house. Were...
- e) If it wasn't for the good pay, I wouldn't stay in this job. But...
- f) You won't be punished provided you admit to your mistake. As long...
- g) Since he is an only child, his parents have spoiled him. If...
- h) If I don't run, I'll miss the bus. Unless....
- i) But for my mother, I wouldn't be alive now. If it...

Instructions: Each students completes 5 sentences. Then all sentences are mixed in a small sack, and ss need to guess who wrote a particular sentence by asking their friends questions, e.g. What would you have done if you had seen a UFO last night?

<p>If I had seen a UFO last night, I</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>If I fell in love with a Black person, I</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>If I were a rich man, I</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>If I had met my teacher in a pub yesterday,</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>If I were the opposite sex, I</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>If I had been born in the USA, I</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

<p>If I had done my homework yesterday,</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>If I marry, I</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>If I don't find any job in Poznan, I</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>If I can't go out tonight,</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>If I could speak Spanish, I</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>If I hadn't watched TV yesterday, I</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>If my mother gets ill,</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>If my parents had a baby now,</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>If the weather had been good last Saturday,</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>IF I had had enough money,</p> <p>.....</p> <p>during last holidays</p>	<p>If my best friend has a problem, I</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>If had written the last test better,</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

Appendix M

sample materials used for the instructional treatment of modal verbs in the past

A Difficult Situation

(adapted from http://esl.about.com/od/grammarlessons/a/difficult_sit.htm)

Janet was employed as a graphic designer at a very successful advertising company. She had worked there for two years, when she was offered a promotion to become head of the graphic solutions department. She was obviously very happy when she heard of her promotion. However, she was also rather concerned as she had also recently found out that she was pregnant. In the past, other women who had had children had found it difficult to continue working full time. "It's going to be different with. These women **might have been** too lazy to work hard. I am different" – she

thought. Later that day, she asked her husband what he thought she should do. He felt that she should first accept the promotion and then, a few months later, tell her employers about her pregnancy. In this way, her husband felt, she would not jeopardize her promotion. Janet wasn't so sure this was a good suggestion, as she felt that it might be dishonest of her to not let her employers know about the change in her condition. She telephoned her best friend, who had also had the same problem previously, and asked for her advice. Cheryl, her best friend, asked her if she felt that she would be able to continue working as hard after the birth of her child as she had been working up to that point in time. Janet assured her that this was the case and so her friend told her to trust her husband's judgment.

A few months later, Janet told her employers about her pregnancy. They were shocked: "**It must have been** a total surprise for you!" – they said. At first, they congratulated her on her pregnancy and wished her all the best. Over the next few weeks, she felt that her workload was slowly increasing to the point that she could not handle the amount of work required of her. "**I shouldn't have accepted** the promotion"– she thought. "**I could have stayed** at my old position". She scheduled an appointment with her boss, but it turned she **needn't have done** it as he came to talk to her in her office. He said that he felt for her, but that, because of a recent increase in sales accounts, he could do nothing about the increased workload. "We can't do anything about it now. **You could have told me** before" – he said. Disappointed, Janet went back to work and did her absolute best to keep up with the work. Unfortunately, the workload just continued to grow. Later that month, she received a call from the personnel department and was told to come speak to the personnel director. The personnel director told her that, due to her inability to keep up with the demands of her job, they were going to have to let her go. Janet couldn't believe what she was hearing. She asked him why, if a few months earlier they had promoted her for her excellence, they had now decided to let her go. It seemed ridiculous. He said that he was truly sorry, but that they had no other choice and asked her to gather her things and leave. Janet was thinking about her job, about her boss. "**He might have been angry** with me because I didn't tell him the truth from the very beginning..." Jane came back home and told her husband: "They fired me" – she said. "What? **They can't have!** You are five months pregnant! They **must have made** some mistake!" „But they did. **I shouldn't have listened to** you, **I shouldn't have accepted** the promotion!

In pairs, answer the following questions:

- a) What happened to Janet?
- b) Do you think Janet's boss made the right decision? Why? Why not?
- c) Do you think Janet should have behaved in a different way? Why? Why not?
- d) Do you think Janet's husband made any mistakes?
- e) Can you imagine the situation if Janet hadn't got pregnant?
- f) Can you imagine the situation if she hadn't got fired?

Instructions: Choose one option to complete the sentence (adapted from Advanced grammar in use by Hewings)

- 3.1 Youmad if you think I'm going to lend you any more money.
A should be B are supposed to be C must be D ought to be
- 3.2 Ihappy to see him, but I didn't have time.
A will have been B would be C will be D would have been
- 3.3 We..... Switzerland four times during the 1970s.
A used to visit B would visit C visited D will visit
- 3.4 'Why isn't Tim here yet?' 'It..... be because his mother is ill again.'
A may B can C might D could
- 3.5 If I hadn't come along at that moment, Jimthe one arrested instead of the real thief.
A might have been B may have been C can have been
D could have been
- 3.6 Jennyleave the hospital only six hours after the baby was born.

- A was able to B could C can D is able to
 3.7 The car broke down and we..... a taxi.
 A must have got B had got to get C had to get D must get
 3.8 Youwhisper. Nobody can hear us.
 A needn't B don't have to C mustn't D need to
 3.9 Although he didn't have a ticket, Kencome in.
 A could B can C might D was allowed to

Which one of the verbs given can complete all three sentences in each set? (adapted from Advanced grammar in use by Hewings)

1 *used to I will I would*

- a Most days my father get up first and make breakfast.
 b When I was training for the marathon, Irun over 100 kilometres a week.
 c We went back to Dublin to see the house where we..... live in the 1960s.

2 *should I ought to I must*

- a Studentsbe encouraged to type their assignments.
 b 'Whose car is that outside Bill's house?' 'It belong to Bill's sister. I heard that she's staying with him this weekend.'
 c Youhave some of this cake. It's brilliant!

3 *needn't I mustn't I don't have to*

- a I'll be quite late getting to London, but youchange your plans for me.
 b I'm afraid I owe quite a lot of money to the bank - but youworry about it.
 c Next time, read the small print in the document before you sign it. Youmake the same mistake again.

4 *must I need to I have to*

- a People with fair skinsbe particularly careful when they go out in the sun.
 b The Browns..... have won the lottery - they've bought another new car!
 c Wegive at least six months' notice if we want to leave the house.

5 *may I could I might*

- a Ray told me that someone had bought the old house next doorhe be right about that, I wondered.
 b The major changes to the timetablecause delay and confusion.
 c I asked in the bookshop about Will Dutton's latest book, but all they..... tell me was that it would be published before the end of the year.

6 *can I could I is (or was) able to*

- a Val had always wanted to go scuba diving anddo so last summer.
 b I hope Jimhelp you tomorrow.
 c She played the piano quite well even before she..... read music.

1. *Transform the sentences using a modal:*

- a) *Maybe there was life on Mars sometime in the past.*
 b) *I had the opportunity to go to the university after high school but I didn't take it.*
 c) *15 year old: Mummy, would you allow me to go on a camping holiday with my boyfriend?*
 d) *Do you mind opening the window?*
 e) *Yesterday evening I got the permission to leave work earlier.*
 f) *I'm certain he isn't responsible for the error – he looks too experienced.*
 g) *It's so annoying, you knew their phone number, but you didn't give it to me!*
 h) *It is necessary for me to get up earlier – I waste so much time in the mornings.*
 i) *You wouldn't do that! You can't be serious!*
 j) *When I was a little boy I used to cut off cats' tails, which I know was wrong (2 modals)*

Translate the sentences (adapted from Gramatyka angielska w zdaniach do tłumaczenia by Scheffler)

1. Czy wiesz gdzie jest Zenon? Może jest w ogrodzie.
2. Możliwe, że oni jeszcze grają w tenisa.
3. Gdybyśmy mieli lepszy sprzęt, moglibyśmy uratować niektórych członków załogi.
4. Gdybyśmy mieli lepszy sprzęt, może uratowalibyśmy niektórych członków załogi.
5. Nasze dziecko już wkrótce będzie umiało mówić.
6. Nie musisz przychodzić do biura ta wcześniej. Wystarczy mi, jeśli będziesz to u 9.
7. Słyszałeś co powiedział szef. Nie musisz przychodzić do biura przed dziewiątą.
8. W młodości potrafiłem przebiec 100 m w 6 sekund.
9. To niemożliwe, że on sam napisał ten esej.
10. Ona powinna już otrzymać mój list.

11. W nagrodę za dobre zachowanie dzieci mogły oglądać wczoraj TV do 10p.m.
12. Pójdziemy dziś wieczorem do kina?
13. Samochód nie chciał zapalić, więc musiałem jechać autobusem.
14. ☹ Niepotrzebnie sam nosiłeś te wory. Mogłeś poprosić o pomoc wujka Mietka.

Translate the sentences

1. Niepotrzebnie kupiłem cukier.
2. To musiał być tom. Widziałem jego samochód.
3. Robert nie mógł ukraść pieniędzy. Nie było go w banku.
4. Nie powinieneś otwierać tego listu!!!
5. Nie musieliśmy iść do szkoły, bo był dzień wiosny.
6. Musiałem iść wczoraj do dentysty, bo miałem okropny ból zęba.
7. Kiedy miałem 5 lat, nie wolno mi było oglądać filmów po dzienniku.
8. Gdzie jest Tom? Musi oglądać TV, bo słyszę film.
9. Dlaczego jej tu nie ma? Powinna teraz pracować.
10. Kto przysłał ci walentynkę? Nie wiem, ale to mógł być Peter.

Appendix N

sample focused communication tasks – past unreal conditionals

Task 1

Think about your teachers from your secondary school. What were they like? What did they do? What didn't they do? Do you think anything would be/have been different if you had had different teachers? What consequences would it cause?

Talk about it with your partner.

Task 2

Think about three famous people who are no longer alive. Think about how they contributed to the society, culture, world. Try to evaluate their deeds and think if anything would be different if they hadn't lived. Share your reflections with your group mates so that they can guess who you are talking about.

Task 3

SS watch a short fragment of a film "The Bucket List" first.

Imagine it's the last day of your life. You know it and you look back on your life. There are some situations which are on your mind. Many of them shouldn't have happened. You know it's too late to change it now. You decide to talk about them with your best friend. You discuss the reasons for the problems, the consequences and ask him to do something about each of them when you are gone.

1. you haven't spoken with your brother for fifty years, because you think he stole some of your money.
2. you didn't visit your father when he was dying, you didn't say goodbye to him. You always thought he loved your brother more.

3. you didn't tell your wife/husband how much you loved them and were sometimes very impolite and ungrateful. It seems today that but for your husband/wife you wouldn't have achieved all you have.
4. you never donated any money to charity, because you thought these people were to blame for their poverty and problems. Now you regret it.
5. you worked too much. You didn't have enough time for you children although they needed you so much.

Appendix O

sample focused communication tasks – modal verbs in the past

Task 1

SS work in pairs. They are to prepare short descriptions of the lives of two legendary/fiction heroes: Robin Hood and Superman. What could their life have been like? Taking into account their stories, they are asked to speculate about whether the following situations happened in their lives:

- a) kill a person
- b) fall in love
- c) use a bow
- d) be fit
- e) have friends/enemies
- f) go to work

Task 2

SS work in groups. They are given roles of *a teacher, a parent, a priest, a policeman*. The fifth student is given a role with a certain problem. The student does not know what to do now and why such a situation happened to him or her. He/She goes for advice to different people. Later, ss change their roles.

ROLE 1: a teacher

You are a teacher. You care about your students and you know them. You try to find solutions by looking at the causes. You are also aware of the limitations of the system.

ROLE 2 : a parent

You are a parent. You love your child, but you are yourself in trouble at work. You don't have much time for your child. You care much about the opinion of other people.

ROLE 3: a priest

You are very strict. You obey the rules and want others to obey them as well. For you everything is black or white. You expect respect but do not respect others much. It's easy for you to blame people for what they did.

ROLE 4: a policeman

You are not really satisfied with your work. A lot of stress and little money. A lot of bureaucracy. Everything needs to be proved, so you need to find the evidence. You often put people's testimonies in doubt.

PROBLEMS

1. You have found out that a boy at school is bullied. He is forced to do a number of silly things at school and bring money for the bullies. Yesterday you saw him crying in the toilet. He said he could not stand it any more... He was talking about a suicide. You are afraid yourself, but you can't leave it like that. You decide to ask for help.

2. You have just found out you are pregnant. You are shocked and don't know what to do. You feel horrible because the guy turned out to be a jerk. He lured you with nice words and then left on you own. You really believed what he said because all you wanted was love and care. Now he is gone, and it seems he has stolen all your savings. You decide to ask for help.

3. You've just been arrested for stealing. It was in fact your friend who stole the phone from a local politician's car and you decided to give it back. You were caught while opening the car door. But nobody believes you and the friend denies having anything to do with it. The situation is really hopeless. You don't know what to do. On the one hand you thought it was your friend, on the other you are pretty much afraid. The friend is quite influential and has some illegal connections. You decide to ask for help.

Task 3

Logical explanations

SS work in pairs. They are asked to explain the situations.

1. My grandfather told me he had met Napoleon Bonaparte.
2. The lights were on in Kate's house and her car was there but she didn't answer the door.
3. I left an urgent message with my wife's secretary to phone me as soon as she arrived at the office. She hasn't phoned me.
4. You are the best in the class at English. On the list of exam results it says *failed* by your name. You don't believe it.
5. Your mother always phones you on Sunday afternoon. Yesterday was Sunday. Your mother didn't phone.
6. Last night a car passed you in the street. You saw a face which looked exactly like your teacher's. Today you found out your teacher was gone.
7. You invited two friends to dinner at your house in the country. They've both got mobile phones and had visited you before. They're an hour late. You can't reach them on the phone.
8. Yesterday Jim sent the whole day phoning his ex-girlfriend on her mobile. She didn't answer his phone.
9. Your teacher gives you a long exercise to do. After two minutes, you say "Finished!". Your teacher says:
10. Yesterday evening you were invited to a restaurant by your boss. He ordered and he paid. You ate a lot. Later you were sick in the night. The boss was OK.

Streszczenie

Rola nauczania gramatyki w dydaktyce języków obcych stanowi źródło licznych kontrowersji i dyskusji. Współcześnie większość teoretyków i badaczy uznaje nauczanie formalnych aspektów za istotne w procesie przyswajania języka drugiego/obcego (ang. *second language acquisition*). Nadal wiele pytań pozostaje bez odpowiedzi i sporo kwestii czeka na rozstrzygnięcie, np. kiedy uczyć gramatyki, jak długo powinna trwać interwencja i czy powinna być ona intensywna. Ponadto toczony jest dyskurs na temat roli poprawy błędów, i, co wydaje się być niezmiernie istotne, wpływu czynników dotyczących różnic pomiędzy uczniami.

Pośród wielu aspektów zaprzatających uwagę współczesnych badaczy znajduje się pytanie o efektywne techniki nauczania struktur gramatycznych, które są w stanie wspomagać przyswajanie form językowych tak, aby uczniowie osiągnęli wysoki poziom poprawności gramatycznej w języku obcym. Kwestią już rozstrzygniętą wydaje się być fakt, że instrukcja gramatyczna musi umożliwić uczniom budowanie związków i relacji pomiędzy nauczaną formą a jej znaczeniem po to, aby nowe struktury mogły stać się częścią wiedzy implicytnej (proceduralnej). Mając na uwadze dobro ucznia, należy więc zdefiniować i dokonać analizy dostępnych technik nauczania gramatyki, a co za tym idzie przeprowadzić badania mające na celu ustalenie efektywności poszczególnych technik dla konkretnych grup uczniów.

Projekt badawczy przedstawiony w niniejszej rozprawie doktorskiej i jego geneza są silnie związane z doświadczeniami autorki jako ucznia i nauczyciela, a szczególnie z pytaniem, dlaczego uczniowie, którzy znają zasady gramatyczne, są świadomi wyjątków i nawet subtelnych różnic, oraz osiągają dobre wyniki na testach, wciąż popełniają błędy i unikają zaawansowanych struktur podczas naturalnej komunikacji, w zamian stosując

gotowe proste wyrażenia i „zlepki językowe”. Po zapoznaniu się z literaturą przedmiotu dotyczącą nauczania formalnych aspektów języka (*form-focused instruction*), okazało się, że sposobem na rozwiązanie tego problemu może być użycie takich zadań komunikacyjnych, w których zastosowanie konkretnej struktury gramatycznej byłoby naturalne i potrzebne (*focused communication tasks*). Na podstawie literatury omawiającej tego typu zadania, a także publikacji dotyczących przeprowadzania projektów badawczych w kontekście nauczania gramatyki, zostało zaprojektowane badanie mające na celu próbę określenia roli i efektywności zadań komunikacyjnych w nauczaniu trudnych struktur językowych na poziomie zaawansowanym przez polskich studentów filologii angielskiej.

Niniejsza praca doktorska składa się z pięciu rozdziałów, z których pierwsze trzy stanowią podbudowę teoretyczną w zakresie nauczania gramatyki, technik nauczania struktur gramatycznych i badań na temat efektywności stosowania tych technik. Dwa ostatnie rozdziały poświęcone są prezentacji i analizie wyników przeprowadzonego badania. Rozdział pierwszy ma za zadanie wprowadzić czytelnika w złożony obszar dotyczący nauczania formalnych aspektów języka. Koncentruje się na ukazaniu wielorakich definicji i znaczeń gramatyki. Przedstawia różne poglądy dotyczące natury i znajomości gramatyki. W tym rozdziale podjęto również próbę omówienia pojęcia wiedzy językowej, której częścią jest wiedza gramatyczna, w aspekcie wiedzy eksplicytnej i wiedzy implicytnej. Ponadto, w rozdziale pierwszym przedstawiono dwa konkurujące ze sobą podejścia dotyczące nauczania formalnych aspektów języka. Omówione zostały argumenty teoretyczne, empiryczne i dydaktyczne sprzeciwiające się lub, wręcz odwrotnie popierające nauczanie gramatyki. Jeżeli chodzi o podejścia tzw. nieinterwencyjne (ang. *non-interventionist approaches*), postulują one nauczanie języka obcego poprzez naśladowanie przyswajania języka w warunkach naturalnych. Z kolei podejścia tzw. interwencyjne (ang. *interventionist approaches*) sugerują istotną rolę nauczania formalnych aspektów języka w procesie przyswajania języka obcego.

Zasadniczym celem rozdziału drugiego jest omówienie współczesnych metod nauczania gramatyki, jak i konkretnych technik i procedur, które mogą być wykorzystane w procesie dydaktycznym. Zaprezentowane zostały różne podejścia związane z organizacją lekcji i rolą gramatyki w procesie nauczania. Omówiono taksonomie dotyczące możliwych do zastosowania technik. Druga część rozdziału poświęcona jest prezentacji konkretnych możliwości dydaktycznych, które wspomagają rozwój wiedzy eksplicytnej i implicytnej ucznia na etapie wprowadzania i ćwiczenia danej formy językowej. Uwaga czytelnika

zostaje również zwrócona na rolę, jaką może odegrać poprawianie błędów językowych w trakcie wykonywania zadań o charakterze komunikacyjnym. Osobne miejsce w rozdziale poświęcone jest definicjom i typom zadań komunikacyjnych, które zostały poddane analizie empirycznej w celu ustalenia ich roli i efektywności w nauczaniu skomplikowanych struktur gramatycznych.

W pierwszej części rozdziału trzeciego przedstawione zostały kierunki i nurty badawcze dotyczące nauczania formalnych aspektów języka na przestrzeni ostatnich kilkudziesięciu lat. Opisano również typy badań, realizujące dwa główne cele badawcze, jakimi są potwierdzenie teorii i hipotez (ang. *confirmatory research*) bądź też interpretację badanych zjawisk (ang. *interpretative research*). Zwrócono również uwagę na coraz częstsze próby przeprowadzania badań hybrydowych i ważną rolę badań w działaniu (ang. *action research*), a także na wartość syntezy badawczej (ang. *research synthesis*), która stawia sobie za cel porównanie i analizę wyników otrzymanych na podstawie różnych badań z danego zakresu. Kolejna część rozdziału trzeciego jest odbiciem lustrzanym części rozdziału drugiego poświęconej prezentacji technik dydaktycznych i koncentruje się na przedstawieniu badań empirycznych dotyczących roli różnych technik w procesie przyswajania struktur gramatycznych oraz dyskusji nad interpretacją wyników. Obszerną część rozdziału stanowi przegląd badań dotyczących zadań komunikacyjnych, co związane jest z ich istotną rolą w projekcie badawczym.

Rozdział czwarty koncentruje się na przedstawieniu metodologii przeprowadzonego badania. Omówiono w nim pytania badawcze a także scharakteryzowano dwie struktury gramatyczne, które poddane zostały interwencji. W rozdziale tym przeprowadzono również charakterystykę uczestników badania, ich doświadczeń dotyczących uczenia się form językowych, opinii na temat gramatyki a także stylów i strategii samodzielnego uczenia się. Istotna część rozdziału poświęcona została omówieniu narzędzi badawczych, które miały posłużyć do zbadania dwóch różnych typów wiedzy: wiedzy eksplicytnej i wiedzy implicytnej. Jako że badanie miało charakter quasi eksperymentalny, a otrzymane dane poddane zostały analizie ilościowej i jakościowej, ostatnia część rozdziału poświęcona została omówieniu narzędzi wykorzystanych do analizy i interpretacji wyników badania.

Głównym celem ostatniego, piątego, rozdziału pracy jest przedstawienie i omówienie wyników projektu badawczego przeprowadzonego pośród studentów pierwszego roku filologii angielskiej. Badanie miało na celu określenie roli zadań komunikacyjnych w przyswajaniu złożonych struktur gramatycznych, na podstawie

nierzeczywistych trybów warunkowych (ang. *past counterfactual conditionals*) i czasowników modalnych używanych do omawiania przeszłości (ang. *modal verbs in the past*), pod względem znajomości reguł (wiedza eksplicytna) a przede wszystkim umiejętności ich spontanicznego wykorzystania (wiedza implicytna). Wyniki badania dowodzą, że nauczanie formalnych aspektów języka jest efektywne i trwałe. Użycie zadań komunikacyjnych podczas interwencji gramatycznej przyniosło pozytywny efekt dla rozwoju obu typów wiedzy. Uzyskane wyniki wskazują jednak, iż w porównaniu z ćwiczeniami, w których studenci są poinformowani, jakiej struktury mają użyć (ang. *text-manipulation activities, text-creation activities*), zadania komunikacyjne odnoszą lepszy i długotrwały efekt dla rozwoju wiedzy implicytnej, co zostało udowodnione podczas dwóch testów, a przede wszystkim podczas regularnych zajęć, kiedy badano spontaniczne użycie dwóch, wymienionych wyżej, form gramatycznych. Na podstawie otrzymanych wyników nie można jednoznacznie stwierdzić, że efektywność interwencji uzależniona jest od specyficznych cech danej struktury. Mając świadomość możliwości wpływu innych czynników na wyniki badania, autorka dokonała analizy ilościowej i jakościowej uczestników badania, biorąc pod uwagę historię kontekstu edukacyjnego, opinie na temat gramatyki i nauczania struktur, a także ich indywidualne style i strategie uczenia się. Interpretacja uzyskanych wyników pozwala sądzić, że preferencje i doświadczenia uczniów mogły mieć dodatkowy wpływ na efekt interwencji gramatycznej. Aby lepiej zrozumieć tę kwestię, dokonano wyboru czterech studentów z zamiarem prześledzenia ich procesu dydaktycznego i określenia możliwych przyczyn uzyskanego sukcesu bądź porażki. Na podstawie dokładnej analizy stwierdzono, że osiągnęli oni różne wyniki na testach pomimo tego, że zostali poddani tej samej instrukcji gramatycznej, co wskazuje na wpływ cech indywidualnych, zarówno kognitywnych, jak i afektywnych.

Będąc świadomą wieloaspektowości procesu nauczania gramatyki, a także ograniczeń przedstawionego projektu badawczego, autorka zdaje sobie sprawę, że wyniki badania nie uprawniają jej do formułowania jednoznacznych wniosków dotyczących nauczania gramatyki, niemniej jednak podjęła próbę przedstawienia kilku propozycji, dzięki którym nauczanie formalnych aspektów języka może być bardziej efektywne. Jeżeli chodzi o kontekst akademicki, postuluje, aby wykorzystywać zadania komunikacyjne nie tylko podczas zajęć gramatycznych, ale również na innych zajęciach, np. podczas praktycznej nauki języka. Wymaga to współpracy pomiędzy prowadzącymi zajęcia, ale, jak wykazano w pracy, zadania komunikacyjne mogą wpłynąć pozytywnie na poprawność

językową i rozwój wiedzy implicytnej. W kontekście szkolnym, gdzie liczba godzin lekcyjnych przeznaczonych na język obcy jest ograniczona, zadania komunikacyjne mogą posłużyć jako narzędzie przy utrwalaniu materiału, a jednocześnie rozwoju sprawności mówienia. Na zakończenie Autorka zwraca uwagę na potrzebę dalszych badań w zakresie roli gramatyki w procesie akwizycji języka obcego. Wydaje się, że prowadzenie badań w konkretnym kontekście edukacyjnym może pozwolić na precyzyjne określenie warunków i technik potrzebnych dla rozwoju wiedzy językowej ucznia, a tym samym stworzyć realne propozycje dla nauczycieli języków obcych.