

# Using Inductive Consciousness Raising Tasks to Teach Grammar at the College

*Veni Roza*

STAIN Sjech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi

Veniroz\_501@yahoo.com

## Abstract

Teaching grammar at colleges in Indonesia has run quite long. The approach to grammar instruction that is common seen is teacher-centered or the teacher-led one. Teachers talk much to present the knowledge or to explain the material while learners receive the information. Such way of teaching grammar is tiring for teachers and boring for learners. They have to spend most of lesson time presenting and explaining grammatical knowledge, at the expense of little time for learners to use English. Using inductive consciousness-raising task is a good problem solving to relieve teachers from the burden of talking, enhance learners talk, create motivating learning environment and improve explicit knowledge retention. Because the tasks require learners to be actively engaged in the meaning-making process by interacting with their partners most of the time to work out the grammatical rule and the teacher just interferes when help is needed. This paper will talk about the use of inductive consciousness-raising tasks in teaching grammar on two topics with expectation to promote learners' grammatical knowledge.

**Key word:** Inductive Consciousness-Raising Tasks, Teaching Grammar

## I. Introduction

How to teach grammar at the college? The answers are varied in accordance with the various existing approaches to second language teaching. However, those approaches can be categorized under two: inductive approach and deductive one.

Then the question can be simplified into whether grammar should be taught deductively or inductively? Do learners get benefit from inductive approach in which various language forms are practiced but in which the learners are left to discover or induce rules and generalizations on their own? Or would they be better off being given rule/ generalization by the teacher or textbook and then allowed to practice various instances of language to practice various instances of language to which the rule applies? These two approaches are often contrasted with each other when questions about grammar teaching arise.

In most contexts, an inductive approach is more appropriate because:

- a. It is more in keeping with natural language acquisition, where rules are absorbed subconsciously with little or no conscious focus.
- b. It conforms more easily to the concept of interlanguage development in which learners progress, on variable timetable, through stages of rule acquisition.
- c. It allows students to get a communicative feel for some aspect of language before possibly being overwhelmed by grammatical explanations.
- d. It builds more intrinsic motivation by allowing students to discover rules rather than being told them.

In the inductive approach, there is noticing. Noticing is the process of students becoming aware of something in particular, it can be used to teach a grammar concept when students are given examples and they come to understand the rule by understanding the rule by noticing what those examples in common.

However, based on writer's observation in the field, the approach to grammar instruction that is common seen in English classroom is teacher-centered where the teacher plays the role of knowledge provider and learners' role is limited to receivers. Such way of teaching grammar is not only tiring for teacher since she has to spend most of lesson time talking, presenting,

explaining, and correcting grammar exercises but learners also find it boring to attend long-lasting lesson in silence. Even, this approach limits opportunities for learners to use English.

## II. Content

### 2.1 Consciousness-Raising Task

Two recent related trends in language teaching are focus on form and consciousness-raising task. Focus on form refers to the practice of explicitly drawing students' attention to linguistic features within the context meaning-focused activities. In other words, communication comes first and a focus on form comes second. The advantage of this reorientation is that the learner's attention is drawn precisely to a linguistic feature as necessitated by a communicative demand. Learners are therefore more likely to see the relationship between language form and communicative function.

Consciousness-raising task is a type of focus-on-form approach to grammar teaching. According to Larsen-Freeman (2001) those exercises not require students to produce the target structures. Instead, students are made aware of the grammatical item through discovery-oriented tasks. Consciousness-raising task are designed to get learners to notice particular grammatical feature or principle. However, learners are not required to use or practice the target item. For example:

*Study the following examples and work out the rule for the correct order of direct and indirect object in English:*

- a. We took a gift for the teacher
- b. We took the teacher a gift
- c. He recited a poem for his girlfriend
- d. He recited his girlfriend a poem

Based on this example learners are made aware how the correct order of English direct and indirect object. Moreover, Doughty and Williams (1998) distinguish between techniques in which the grammar point is relatively implicit and those in which the point is relatively explicit. Ur (1996) places techniques on continuum from those that focus on accuracy to those that focus on fluency. Input enhancement, input refers to the language that is made available to the learner. Input enhancement is a technique for getting students to notice the grammar item that the teacher wants to introduce. With this technique, teachers draw students' attention to items that are meant to be noticed by flagging them in some way such as highlighting, underlining, or coloring. Such awareness-raising techniques are at the accuracy-fluency continuum.

*For example* For third person singular possession determiner: *Once upon a time there was a king. He had a beautiful young daughter. For her birthday, the king gave her golden ball that she played with every day. The king and his daughter lived near a dark forest...*(Doughty and Williams, 1998)

According to Ellis (1992) consciousness-raising focuses more on the awareness of grammatical features rather than mastery of production. These are the predominant features included in consciousness-raising to grammatical instruction:

- a. Specific grammar rules and features are isolated
- b. Learners are given data to find the main feature and explicit features.
- c. Learners must bring intellectual efforts to find the main features
- d. Lack of understanding prompts clarifying in the form of data and explanation
- e. Learners might be expected to formulate rules that describe the target features.

Ellis points out the consciousness raising tasks are only directed at explicit knowledge, with no expectation that learners will use in communicative output a particular feature that has been brought to their attention through formal instruction. He contrasts consciousness-raising with practice and concludes that the main difference between the two is a conscious-raising task does not involve the learner in repeated production.

A consciousness raising task is defined by Ellis (1997) as a pedagogic activity where the learners are provided with language data in some forms and required to perform some operation

on it with it, the purpose of which to arrive at an explicit understanding how of some linguistic properties of the target language. According to Ellis (2003), consciousness raising task should consist of: 1. Data containing exemplars of the targeted features and instructions requiring the learners to operate data in some way. Data option can include authentic versus contrived, oral versus written and gap vs. non-gap, while operation type can include identification that is underlining the target structure in the data, judgment that is responding to the correctness or appropriateness of the data, and sorting or classifying the data by sorting it into defined categories.

It is important to remember that once the consciousness raising task has been applied to students, teachers are not expected to demand students' mastery or accurate production of the target structures immediately upon instruction. Unlike other form-focused activities that encourage immediate language production, consciousness raising task deemphasizes learner production, and is not intended to lead to correct use of the targeted feature in spontaneous language use directly following task performance. In conclusion consciousness raising task is a means to an end or a facilitator to acquisition.

## 2.2. Deductive versus Inductive Approach in Consciousness-Raising Task

A deductive approach is an approach to language teaching in which learners are taught rules and given specific information about a language, (Richard, 1992). Dealing with the teaching grammar, the deductive approach can also be called rule-driven learning because in such an approach a grammar rule is explicitly presented to students and followed by practice applying the rule. PPP model is a atypical example of this approach (Richard, 1992). The deductive approach starts with the presentation and explanation of the rules and then is followed by the examples of the sentences using the rules. In other words, in deductive approach the teacher directly explains the rules. The explanation is completed with discrete sentences, and it is followed with samples of sentences by learners to confirm their understanding.

On the other hand, an inductive approach comes from inductive reasoning in which a reasoning progression proceeds from particulars to generalities (Widodo, 2006). In inductive language teaching learners are not taught grammatical rules or other types of rules directly but are left to discover or induce rules from their experience of using the language (Richard, 1992). The inductive approach starts with examples from which a rule is inferred. If the teachers apply inductive approach, they do not give the rules directly to the learners, they just give a list of sentences and from the sentences they ask the learners to discover the rule by analyzing the provided sentences in a discourse level. It is just like acquiring the first language but because it is practiced everyday and continuously with many exposure then the grammatical rules are required naturally.

The benefits of deductive approach for teaching English grammar are: 1. It is straight forward therefore it is time-saving, 2. It respects the learners' intelligence and maturity, 3. It confirms many learners' expectation about classroom learning especially for those who have analytical learning style, 4. It allows the teacher to deal with language points as they come up rather than having to anticipate them and prepare them in advance. Meanwhile the benefits of inductive approach are:

1. It will make the rules more meaningful and memorable,
2. The mental effort that is done by the students will ensure their cognitive depth
3. Students are more actively involved during the teaching and learning process compared to applying deductive approach.
4. It may satisfy the desire of the students who has good ability in pattern recognizing and problem solving
5. It prepares the learners to be an active or self assisted learner.

Besides those benefits, both deductive and inductive approaches also have weaknesses. The weaknesses of deductive approach for teaching English grammar are: 1. This approach may be difficult for some learners, especially for young learners since they do not have enough metalanguage or they cannot understand the *Abstract* concept, 2. Teachers' explanation that

dominates the teaching learning process may decrease the learners interaction, therefore the learners may become passive learners, 3. Teachers' explanation is seldom remembered by the learners, compared to other forms of demonstration. 4. While weaknesses of inductive approach are: 1) It may take a longer time until the learners could discover the rule compared to teaching using deductive approach; 2) the time and energy spent in working out the rules may mislead the learners that their main objective of studying the language is mastering the rules not meaning; 3) learners may hypothesize the wrong rule or their understanding may be too broad or narrow from what is expected; 4) it may make the learners who accustom with deductive approach become frustrated since they expect to be given rules directly.

In conclusion, there are two very distinct approaches are inductive and deductive. Both can offer certain advantages but the biggest difference is the role of teacher. In the a deductive classroom, the teacher conducts lesson by introducing and explaining concepts to students then expecting them to complete tasks to practice the concepts ; this approach is very teacher-centered. Conversely, inductive instruction is much more student-centered and makes use of strategy noticing. The teacher presents students with many examples showing how the concept is used. The intent is for students to notice by the way of the examples how the concept works.

In regard to the strengths and weaknesses of both approaches, the writer proposes the inductive or discovery one to be applied by college students.

### 2.3. Inductive Approach in Consciousness-Raising Task

According to Ellis, in inductive consciousness-raising activities the learner is provided with data and asked to construct an explicit rule to describe the grammatical feature with the data illustrate, whereas in the case of deduction, the learner is supplied with a rule which is then used to carry out some task. If consciousness-raising tasks are conducted inductively, they are quite similar to theories of discovery learning. According to Hammer, discovery techniques are those were students are given examples of language and told to find out how they work to discover the grammar rules rather than be told them. So the procedure as follow:

- Step 1. Setting the scene (learners listen to, or read a text in order to grasp basic meaning)
- Step 2. Comprehension questions (learners answer comprehension questions following the listening or reading texts)
- Step 3. Noticing (learners notice the form, and match the form to the meaning)
- Step 4. Making hypothesis (learners generate their own hypotheses)
- Step 5. Checking hypothesis (learners test their hypothesis with other examples)
- Step 6. Confirming the hypothesis (learners confirm their hypothesis with the help of the teacher)

There are two examples of application of inductive consciousness-raising in this paper; Consciousness-raising task to NOTICE 'would' and "English Article".

#### Step 1. Setting the scene

Work in pairs discuss the following texts (learners read a text in order to grasp basic meaning)

##### Consciousness-raising task based on a written text

###### Auto pilot

The flight ran several times a week taking holiday-makers to various resorts in the Mediterranean. On each flight, to reassure the passengers all was well, the captain would put the jet on to auto-pilot and he and all the crew would come aft into the cabin to greet the passengers.

Unfortunately on this particular flight the security door between the cabin and the flight deck jammed and left the captain and the crew stuck in the cabin. From that moment, in spite of efforts to open the door, the fate of the passengers and crew was sealed.

Step 2. Comprehension questions (learners answer comprehension questions following reading texts)

1. List all the phrases to do with aircraft and flying. What word occurs in nearly all these phrases? Why
2. What does would mean in the second sentence?
3. What about *ran* in the first sentence? Would *used to run* give the same meaning? What about jammed and left in the second paragraph? Could *used to* be used here?
4. Cover your original text. Read the written version of the text below. How has it been changed from the original?

Step 3. Noticing (learners notice the form, and match the form to the meaning)

Auto pilot

The flight ran several times a week taking holiday-makers to various resorts in the Mediterranean. On each flight, to reassure the passengers all was well, the captain used to put the jet on to auto-pilot and he and all the crew used to come aft into the cabin to greet the passengers.

Unfortunately on this particular flight the security door between the cabin and the flight deck jammed and left the captain and the crew stuck in the cabin. From that moment, in spite of efforts to open the door, the fate of the passengers and crew was sealed.

Step 4. Making hypothesis (learners generate their own hypotheses)

Step 5. Checking hypothesis (learners test their hypothesis with other examples)

Step 6. Confirming the hypothesis (learners confirm their hypothesis with the help of the teacher)

Here is second example of an inductive consciousness-raising activity for inducing *Article* in English:

Step 1. Setting the scene (learners read a text in order to grasp basic meaning)

Work in pairs, answer the following question

Directions: in exercise A and exercise C below, write an article in each blank (a, an, the). If more than one article could be appropriate, write both. If no article is needed, write X. Then discuss the examples in exercise B

Exercise B

- |                                     |     |                               |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| 1. He has (X) pneumonia.            | BUT | 2. . She has a cold.          |
| 3. He went to the grocery store.    | BUT | 4. She went to bed.           |
| 4. He participated in the contest.  | BUT | 5. She won (X) first prize.   |
| 6. He hiked to (X) church.          | BUT | 7. She hiked to a/the church. |
| 8. They are going on a /the journey | BUT | 9. She is going to work.      |

Exercise C

- |                                     |                                    |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 10. We're going to ...movie.        | 11. We're going to ...movies       |
| 12. She packed ...suitcase.         | 13. She packed ...luggage.         |
| 14. He took a bus to ...library     | 15. He took a bus...home           |
| 16. The wallet contained....dollar. | 17. The wallet contained....money. |

Step 2. Comprehension questions (learners answer comprehension questions following reading texts)

- (1) In.....United States, we make health ... end in itself. (2) We have forgotten that ... health is really ....means to enable ... person to do his work and do it well. (3) A lot of people ... and this include many ... patients as well as many physicians- pay little attention to ... health but much attention to those who imagine they are ill. (4) Our great concern with health is shown by ... medical columns in ... newspaper, ... health articles in ... popular magazines, and ...popularity of ...television programs

and all those books on ... medicine. (5) we talk about health all ...time. (6) Yet, for ...most part....only result is more people with ...imaginary illness.(7) ...healthy man should not be wasting time talking about health. (8) he should be using ...health for ...work...work he does and the work that good health makes possible.

Step 3. Noticing (learners notice the form, and match the form to the meaning)

Step 4. Making hypothesis (learners generate their own hypotheses)

Step 5. Checking hypothesis (learners test their hypothesis with other examples)

Step 6. Confirming the hypothesis (learners confirm their hypothesis with the help of the teacher)

### III. Conclusion

Teacher should not merely teach their learners to be able to remember grammatical rules of English, but more importantly they also have to guide the learners to understand those rules and make them able to use those rules communicatively. Using inductive consciousness-raising tasks in teaching grammar rules is one of the possible solutions to the problems discussed above, because it does not only relieve teachers from burden of speaking, create motivating learning environment, improve explicit knowledge retention, but it is also expected to enhance language use by learners.

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