

The Interactive Effects of Pragmatic-Eliciting Tasks and Pragmatic Instruction

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Abstract: *The effects of data-gathering methods on pragmatic data have been well documented, yet an inquiry into the interactive effects of assessment tasks with pragmatic instruction has received scant attention. This study investigated the interaction between two assessment tasks (e-mail and phone) and two types of pragmatic instruction (explicit and implicit). Forty-nine Spanish learners of English engaged in these two tasks as pre- and posttests. The explicit group received 12 hours of metapragmatic information on head acts and hedges in suggestions while the implicit group was the recipient of recast and input enhancement activities. The results showed that postinstructional improvement of the explicit condition was significantly more than that of the implicit condition in the phone task, although improvements of these two conditions were on par in the e-mail task. This task-induced variability might have been caused by an interaction between the feature of the two types of knowledge (i.e., monitoring capability) and an access to the knowledge bases (i.e., the role of attention to appropriateness and accuracy) in the two tasks.*

Key words: *pragmatics, speech acts, instruction, telephone, e-mail*

Language: *ESL/EFL*

A number of scholars in interlanguage pragmatics (the study of language learners' and native speakers' acquisition and use of linguistic performance, such as speech act and discourse patterns) have examined the effects of data collection methods on second language (L2) learners' natural performance, namely, task-induced variability (Kasper & Dahl, 1991; Kasper, 2000). Others have investigated the effects of instruction on learning L2 pragmatics (see Kasper & Roever, 2005; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Rose, 2005; Rose & Kasper, 2001, for detailed reviews). However, whether these two families of effects statistically interact with each other remains unexplored. The present study addresses this issue. Specifically, the study ascertains the ways the effects of two assessment tasks (e-mail and phone) statistically interact with the effects of two types (explicit and implicit) of pragmatic instruction that foreign language learners received on their use of pragmatically appropriate and linguistically accurate suggestions. The thesis of this article is that the effects

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of pragmatic instruction vary depending on the way in which they are assessed.

Theoretical Background

Task-Induced Variability in Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP)

Different from psycholinguistically oriented investigations in the areas of morphology and syntax (see the Discussion section), examinations of task-induced variability in ILP have been oriented toward sociolinguistics. The effects of various pragmatic-eliciting methods on learners' pragmatic production have been investigated in three lines of inquiry. Because of the widespread use of discourse completion tests (DCTs, tests consisting of scripted dialogues) as an elicitation instrument in ILP, they have prevailed in the research on task effect.

Linguistic variation produced by different forms of DCTs is the first line of research. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) compared typical DCTs in which the participants responded to a scenario with DCTs that supplied a conversational turn immediately after the scenario, whereas Billmyer and Varghese (2000) compared typical DCTs with content-enriched DCTs.¹ These two studies suggested that, for both native and nonnative speakers of English, different types of DCTs had little influence on the distribution of semantic formulas in refusal or linguistic strategies in request, but that they did affect the mean length of responses. In the former study, the DCTs with conversational turns had longer mean length of responses than the typical DCTs. In the latter study, the mean length of utterance for the content-enriched DCTs was much longer than that for the typical DCTs on both the native and nonnative speaker data.

A second strand of research has explored how different types of rejoinders in DCTs elicit different written responses from speakers. Rose (1992) examined whether native speakers of English react differently when the hearers' responses are included and excluded in the DCT. Later, Johnston, Kasper, and Ross (1998) incorporated three types of rejoinders (posi-

tive, negative, absent) into their research design. Findings showed that, for native speakers of English, rejoinders affected external modifications (Johnston, Kasper, & Ross, 1998), but did not affect request strategies (Johnston, Kasper, & Ross, 1998; Rose, 1992). Specifically, they were likely to employ supportive moves (e.g., grounders to give reasons or justifications, sweeteners to flatter the requestee) when their requests were denied.

The third strand of research, which is well represented in task effect, has examined, at least in part, the validity of written DCTs by comparing and contrasting their data with those of other methods. The major findings can be categorized into five themes: (1) length and complexity of utterances, (2) semantic formulae in refusals (Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz, 1990), such as statement of regret (*I feel terrible*) and promise of future acceptance (*I'll do it next time*), (3) the types of linguistic strategies in requests, (4) the directness of linguistic strategies in requests, and (5) compliments and compliment responses. First, written DCT responses were shorter than telephone conversation and role-play responses among ESL and EFL learners as well as native speakers of English (Beebe & Cummings, 1996; Bodman & Eisenstein, 1988; Houck & Gass, 1996; Sasaki, 1998; Turnbull, 2001). Second, although Beebe and Cummings (1996) found many more similarities than differences in frequencies and types of semantic formulae between written DCT and telephone conversation data obtained from native speakers of English, semantic formulae in refusals seem to vary across tasks for language learners (Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1992; Sasaki, 1998). Third, while the types of linguistic strategies in requests (*Could you . . . ?*, *I would like to . . .*) seem resistant to task variability (Rintell & Mitchell, 1989; Sasaki, 1998), the number of appropriate strategies seems to vary across tasks for learners (Safont, 2005). Fourth, Japanese learners of English tended to appeal to the different directness of linguistic strategies

in requests between DCTs and multiple-choice questionnaires (Rose, 1994; Rose & Ono, 1995). Finally, task effects were evident when native speakers execute compliments and compliment responses (Golato, 2003; Yuan, 2001, 2002).

Despite these three lines of research on task effects, investigations into the ways these task effects interact with instructional effects have received scant attention.

Interactive Effects of Assessment Task (a Method Employed to Collect Sociolinguistic Data) with Instructional Task (an Activity to Teach a Language) in ILP

The instructional effects on learning pragmatics have been well reported. A great deal of empirical studies have looked into the effects of explicit instruction on various pragmatic features, such as various speech acts, conversational implicature, and discourse strategies (Bacelar Da Silva, 2003; Liddicoat & Crozet, 2001; Safont & Alcón, 2001; Salazar, 2003; and others). These studies strongly suggest that the provision of metalinguistic information works for adult learners, regardless of whether beginning, intermediate, or advanced, in both second and foreign language settings. Another group of studies has compared explicit and implicit instruction within the framework of Focus on Forms (House, 1996; Takahashi, 2001, 2005; Tateyama, 2001; and others). Some of these studies have demonstrated that provision of metalinguistic information had some advantage over “implicit” instruction (e.g., form-comparison and form-search instruction, no provision of metalinguistic information or simple exposure to examples). Yet another group of studies has explored Focus on Form (Alcón, 2005; Fukuya & Clark, 2001; Fukuya & Zhang, 2002; Martínez-Flor, 2006; Martínez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005; Takimoto, 2006; and others). Some of these studies have demonstrated the significant effects of Focus on Form techniques on L2 pragmatic learning.

The current literature of instructed interlanguage pragmatics identifies approximately 40 interventional studies. More than half of these employed a single assessment task to investigate its instructional effects, with DCTs and role-plays as the preferred data-collection methodology. Even though other studies have taken advantage of dual or multiple elicitation instruments, task-generated variability has not been a focus of their investigations (see King & Silver, 1993; Koike & Pearson, 2005; Rose & Ng, 2001; Safont & Alcón, 2001; Wishnoff, 2000). The only two exceptions are Taylor (2002) and Alcón (2005). The former investigated the ways in which a combination of instructional tasks (e.g., positive input, working through gambit categories in a list, role-plays) influences learners’ subsequent production of Spanish gambits in two types of spontaneous tasks (discussion vs. role-enactment). The results suggested that the quantity and variety of gambits significantly increased for the discussion group, but not for the role-enactment group. In the latter study, direct awareness-raising tasks with written metapragmatic feedback had a significant advantage over input enhancement with implicit awareness-raising tasks in a production measure (DCTs), although no significant difference was found between these two instructional tasks in awareness assessment (identification of request strategies). Hence, these two studies have suggested that assessment effects interact with instructional effects.

Research Question and Operationalization of Interaction

Traditionally, researchers have examined task effect when native speakers and language learners use the target language without any instructional intervention. However, with an increasing body of research on instructed ILP in the last two decades, inquiry into task-induced variability after instructional intervention has become essential, because it is critical to understand how data-collection methodol-

ogy exerts an influence on scholars' knowledge of pragmatic instruction. In order to ascertain the ways two types of tasks interact with two types of instruction, we posed the following research question: Do different types of instruction (explicit and implicit) affect learners' use of pragmatically appropriate and linguistically accurate suggestions differently depending on the tasks they perform (i.e., e-mail responses vs. phone messages)?

This study operationalized the interaction of instruction with assessment tasks as follows: The effect of the main variable, instruction, is moderated by the assessment tasks. This study identified instruction as the independent variable, assessment tasks as a moderator independent variable, and pragmatic appropriateness and linguistic accuracy as the dependent variable.

Methods

Participants

Forty-nine native Spanish speakers (43 male and 6 female) who had learned English as a foreign language in Spain participated in the study (age range, 19–25). Their major was either Technical Engineering in Computer Systems or Computer Science Engineering. Their English classes were English for specific purpose courses, aiming at preparing learners for the real-world demands of computer science in an English-speaking environment. Two intact classes, both of which included the students pursuing these two degrees, were randomly assigned to two groups: explicit ($n = 24$) and implicit ($n = 25$).²

According to a questionnaire to look into learners' demographic and linguistic backgrounds (see Appendix A), these two groups were similar in mean age (explicit = 21.46 vs. implicit = 21.16) and mother tongue (Spanish or Catalan), but the implicit group (5.88 years) had more years of studying English than the explicit group (4.81 years). Five learners of the explicit group and one learner of the implicit group had visited an English-speaking country, although none of them had stayed there

longer than two weeks. Also, four learners of the explicit group and three learners of the implicit group had used English to communicate with other people, mainly through the Internet. Additionally, approximately 80% of each of the two groups did not have any exposure to English outside the language classroom by watching TV, listening to the radio, or reading a magazine or newspaper.

All students are considered to have an intermediate level of English proficiency, according to a placement test. This test was created and conducted by Department of English Studies, Universitat Jaume I, to find out the participants' level of English proficiency. The test consisted 50 items covering verb tenses, prepositions, personal pronouns, and vocabulary, etc. The explicit group had a mean score of 36.27 out of 50 points while the implicit group had a mean score of 37.33.

Pragmatic-Eliciting Task

Following the recommendation that researchers should carefully create their data collection methods according to what is already known in the field (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999), we created two production tasks (e-mail and phone). These two elicitation instruments may be considered DCTs in the sense that a written scenario is given to participants as a prompt. In effect, DCTs have been a target of criticism. Their responses are imaginary; the respondents are required to articulate what they believe they would say in a particular situation. As a consequence, data collected through this method do not reflect natural data (Golato, 2003; Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1992; Kasper & Dahl, 1991). Nonetheless, the phone and e-mail tasks are distinct from typical written DCTs in the manner by which participants react to the prompts. Whereas the written DCTs are pen-and-paper format, the phone task is oral and the e-mail task involves typing on the computer. More importantly, unlike written DCTs which limit space, the phone and e-mail tasks enable learners to employ more than

one single utterance to express their suggestions if necessary, an indispensable facet of data collection to capture the dynamics and complexity of linguistic interactions. Above all, the phone and e-mail tasks were psychologically real; the participants actually engaged in the tasks to express their intentions.

Both e-mail and phone tasks were distributed as a pretest two weeks before and as a posttest one week after the instruction.³ The 16 items on the four tests were distinct among one another to avoid a practice effect. As Appendix B shows, four items across the four tests comprised a set (e.g., Situation 3 of the e-mail pretest, e-mail posttest, phone pretest, and phone posttest), although the comparability of these items was not objectively validated. These four sets of comparable items carried identical interlocutors (a professor, the director of the computer science department, a friend, and a brother) to maintain the same gender and age of the characters as well as sociopragmatic variables (academic status, familiarity) involved in the situations.

For the e-mail task, the participants, who were situated in a computer lab, were requested to read the situations and send e-mails to the four e-mail addresses provided. Regarding the phone task, the participants were instructed to read the situations and call four people. In each situation, an answering machine was activated and they heard a message saying that the person was not home. Consequently, they had to leave a message (i.e., make a suggestion) on the answering machine. When the participants took these two types of tests, the instructor never referred to the target forms. In other words, the participants were free in the way they made a suggestion to an interlocutor of equal or higher academic status.

Target Instructional Forms

Instructional foci were twelve head acts (the minimal units to realize a speech act) to perform suggestions and seven downgraders (the peripheral elements to soften their impact, such as *perhaps*). The theo-

retical bases for selecting these target forms were: (1) universal pragmatic strategies for speech acts (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996), (2) politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987), (3) previous ILP research on suggestions (Hinkel, 1994, 1997; Matsumura, 2001, 2003), (4) maxim of congruence (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1996), and (5) the results of a pilot study (native speakers' oral and written production data).

The target forms (the seven downgraders appear in italics) were classified into two categories according to the sociopragmatic factor of status (Brown & Levinson, 1987):⁴

Category 1 (Equal academic status between a speaker and an interlocutor)

1. Why don't you . . . ?
2. Have you tried . . . ?
3. You can *just* . . .
4. You might want to . . .
5. *Perhaps* you should . . .
6. *I think* you need . . .

Category 2 (Higher academic status of an interlocutor than that of a speaker)

1. I would *probably* suggest that . . .
2. *Personally*, I would recommend that . . .
3. *Maybe* you could . . .
4. It would be helpful if you . . .
5. *I think* it might be better to . . .
6. *I'm not sure, but I think* a good idea would be . . .

Numerous researchers have tackled suggestions in both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies (see Alcón, 2001; Altman, 1990; Banerjee & Carrell, 1988; Boatman, 1987; Hu & Grove, 1991; Rintell, 1979; Wierzbicka, 1991). However, with the exception of Hinkel (1997), task effect was not their focus.

Instructional Treatment

In the six 2-hour sessions during a 16-week semester, two classes received two types of instruction, respectively. The second author of this article, a native speaker of Spanish, taught the two groups.

Explicit Group

The study adopted a sequential methodology (a sequence from awareness-raising tasks to production tasks) for the explicit group (n = 24). The instructor used seven videotaped situations that involved native speaker interactions on various computer-related themes, together with scripts of the interactions. First, the instructor directed learners' attention to sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic aspects of suggestions using listening and reading tasks in conjunction with the videotape. Then, the participants received explicit instruction on suggestions with a table showing the target forms. The instructor explained the ways the head acts and downgraders are used. As a review exercise, the students took a multiple-choice test on these target forms. The instructional emphases were on both pragmatically appropriate use and grammatically correct forms of these suggestions. Finally, they took part in role-plays to practice the explicit knowledge they received via instruction (see Appendix C).

Implicit Group

The treatment for the implicit condition (n = 25) consisted of a parallel method with an alliance of two implicit techniques: (1) input enhancement through video presentation (Fukuya & Clark, 2001) and (2) recasts during role-play activities. We used them in parallel throughout the instructional sessions.

In the input enhancement activities, the implicit group watched the same videotaped situations as the explicit group. However, unlike the video version of the explicit group, the version prepared for the implicit group included captions in boldface on the screen when American native speakers of English in the videotape made suggestions. These captions accentuated both the target forms (a pragmalinguistic aspect) and the social factors involved in each situation (a sociopragmatic aspect). The latter appeared before each situation, providing information about the relationships of the two participants and the location (e.g., "This situation

involves two participants who are *friends* who are at a computer lab"). After watching the videotape, the students took part in a listening activity about the videotaped situations. Then, students received the scripts of the videotaped situations and engaged in a reading comprehension activity. In the written version for the implicit group, the target forms appeared in bold type, in contrast to the plain text-type scripts for the explicit group.

The implicit group also received recasting during the role-play activities (Appendix C). Fukuya and Zhang (2002) developed a framework for pragmalinguistic recasts. Considering pragmatic appropriateness and linguistic accuracy, it identifies four possible types of pragmalinguistic recasts (Appendix D). The instructor consistently employed a focused recast, as shown below:

Learner: "You must buy a PC"

Teacher: "You must **↗** You said **↗** I think it might be better to buy a PC. OK. **↗**"

First, the teacher repeated only the pragmalinguistic part (*You must*) of an inappropriate suggestion, not the whole utterance, with a rising tone. Then, the teacher added *You said* also with a rising tone. With this focused recast, the teacher intended to indicate to learners an implicit contrast between inappropriate and appropriate pragmalinguistic forms of suggestions. After stating this expression, the teacher employed an appropriate target form selected from Category 2 (*I think it might be better to . . .*). Finally, the teacher added *OK* with a rising tone. It is believed that the contrast of *You said* and *OK*, both of which may send implicit messages to learners, would seem to achieve this purpose (Fukuya & Zhang, 2002).

The teacher prepared a sheet for recasting. Then, by marking each target form employed for recasting on this sheet, she equalized the frequencies of the twelve target forms so that the students could be exposed to all of them by the end of the treatment.

Assessment Focus

This study focused on pragmatic appropriateness and linguistic accuracy. This implies that both conditions—appropriateness and accuracy—must be met. We operationalized the pragmatic appropriateness via associations between the target forms and their appropriate situations depending on the two levels of academic status, as mentioned in Target Instructional Forms. Linguistic accuracy was defined as error-free.

This focus is significant because pragmatic appropriateness and linguistic accuracy represents pragmatic and grammatical competences, the concepts critical to language learning. Pragmatic competence is considered theoretically and empirically distinctive from grammatical competence (Bachman & Palmer, 1982; Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell, 1995; Verhoeven & Vermeer, 1992; and others).

Data Classification

A total of 1,296 responses constituted our production data (81 participants x 2 times x 2 tests x 4 situations). To classify the data, we created taxonomies for both head acts (see Appendix E) and downgraders on the basis of previous research on suggestions. The first author classified 130 e-mail responses (10.03% of all e-mail data) and 130 phone responses (10.03% of all phone data); the second author of this article categorized all the data. The interrater reliability of the 130 e-mail responses between the two researchers regarding the head acts and downgraders was $r = .977$ and $r = 1$, respectively. The interrater reliability of the 130 (10.03% of all data) phone responses regarding the head acts and downgraders was $r = 1$ and $r = 1$, respectively. The two researchers discussed the inconsistencies until they reached agreement. The example of an inconsistency is that one researcher categorized a head act (*It would be a good idea to . . .*) into “Impersonal” while the other researcher considered it as a hint.

Data Scoring

We assigned scores to the head acts and downgraders that appeared in the twelve target forms. Only when participants employed the target head acts in appropriate contexts (equal or higher status) were they awarded points for grammatical accuracy. The scoring system for grammatical accuracy was as follows:

- One and a half points if both a target form and its connecting part were correct (e.g., *You can just send your Curriculum Vitae*). A connecting part means a syntactic connection between a head act and its following part. In this example (*You can just send your Curriculum Vitae*), “You can” is a head act, “just” is a downgrader, and “send” is the connecting part. “Send” is grammatically correct while “sending” is not.
- One point if a target form was correct, but its connecting part was incorrect (e.g., *You can just sending your CV*).
- No point for an ungrammatical target form.
- No point for a nontarget form (be it grammatically correct or incorrect).

Thus, the perfect score for an individual in each test (e.g., the e-mail posttest) was 6 points (1.5 point x 4 items).

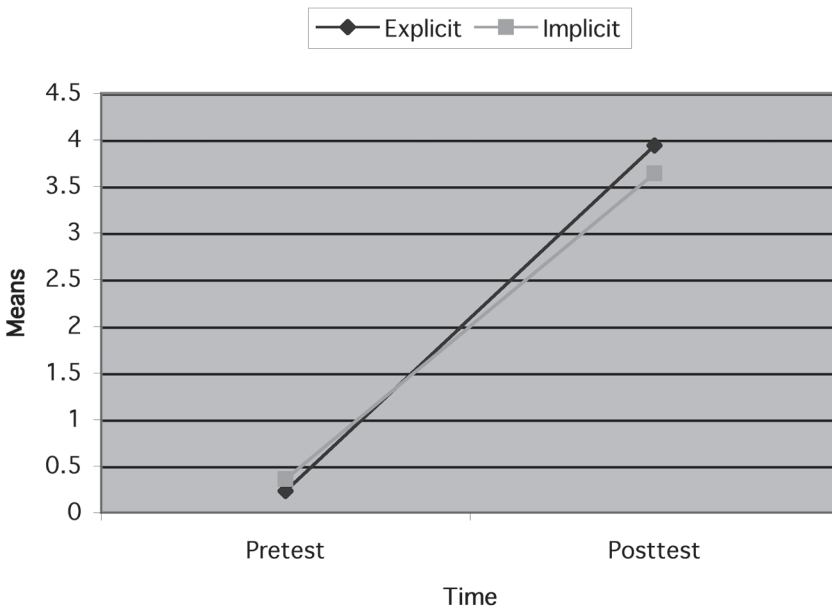
Results

Table 1 displays the means and standard deviations of the two groups for the appropriateness and accuracy in the two tasks. This table demonstrates that the improvement of the explicit group from the pretest to the posttest in the e-mail was 3.71 and that the improvement of the implicit group was 3.28. Figure 1 illustrates this change. Table 1 also indicates that the improvement of the explicit group in the phone was 2.77 and the improvement of the implicit group was 1.60, as shown in Figure 2.

In order to examine whether these improvements were significantly different from each other, we analyzed the data by using two-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) involving the two levels of instruction (explicit, implicit) and the

TABLE 1**Means and Standard Deviations of the Two Groups for Appropriateness and Accuracy on the Two Tasks**

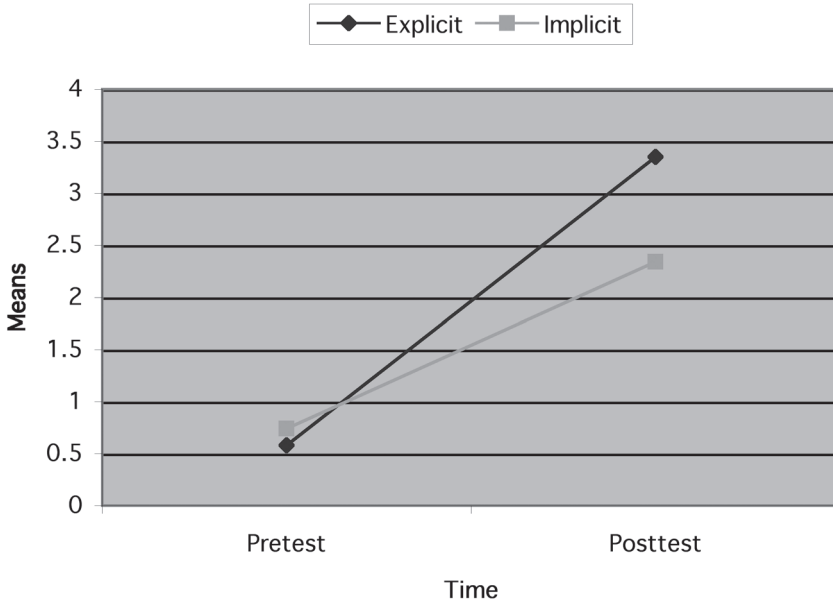
Task	Group	n	Pretest		Posttest		Mean Difference
			M	SD	M	SD	
E-mail	Explicit	24	0.23	0.53	3.94	1.66	3.71
	Implicit	25	0.36	0.78	3.64	1.82	3.28
Phone	Explicit	24	0.58	0.88	3.35	1.56	2.77
	Implicit	25	0.74	0.74	2.34	1.37	1.60

FIGURE 1**A Plot of the Means of the Two Groups for Pragmatic Appropriateness and Linguistic Accuracy on the E-mail Task**

two levels of time factor (pretest, posttest). Time factor means the time when the participants took the pre- and posttests. Analyses are multivariate when two or more dependent measures are involved (i.e., the e-mail and phone tasks in this study). An α level of 0.05 was set for this analysis.

The MANOVA results (see Table 2) indicated that a main effect of Group [$\Lambda = 0.97$, $F(2, 93) = 1.59$, $p = .21$] was not

significant, but Time [$\Lambda = 0.30$, $F(2, 93) = 106.38$, $p < .01$] was significant. The interaction between Group and Time [$\Lambda = 0.94$, $F(2, 93) = 3.01$, $p = .054$] was not significant, although it approaches the significance level. These results mean that, when the e-mail and phone scores are considered a set, the two groups significantly improved on the posttest from the pretest.

FIGURE 2**A Plot of the Means of the Two Groups for Pragmatic Appropriateness and Linguistic Accuracy on the Phone Task****TABLE 2****The Results of Two-Way (2 x 2) Multivariate Tests for Appropriateness and Accuracy**

Source	Λ	F	df	p	η^2
Group	0.97	1.59	2, 93	.21	0.03
Time	0.30*	106.38	2, 93	<.01	0.70
Group x Time	0.94	3.01	2, 93	.05	0.06

Note: * $p < .05$. The exact p value of Group x Time was .054.

As a follow-up analysis, we conducted multiple univariate ANOVA for both the e-mail and phone tasks. Analyses are univariate when one dependent variable is involved. "It is possible to have one or more significant univariate tests on an effect without the multivariate effect being significant" (George & Mallery, 2003, p. 305). The purpose of these univariate analyses were to examine the Group x Time x Task interaction in detail.

The ANOVA results show that an interaction between Group and Time in the e-mail task, $F(1, 94) = .64, p = .43$, was not significant, but that the interaction in the phone task, $F(1, 94) = 5.98, p < .02$, was significant. This means that improvement on the posttest from the pretest is moderated by Task. That is, improvements in the explicit vs. implicit groups were on par in the e-mail task, although improvement of the explicit group in the phone task was

significantly more than that of the implicit group.

Discussion

Axioms in This Discussion

An instructional process in the classroom can be compartmentalized into four cyclic stages: (1) teaching processes, (2) learning processes, (3) learned knowledge (competence), and (4) evaluation of the knowledge (performance). In terms of the present context, as Schmidt (1994) notes, three sets (explicit/implicit teaching processes, explicit/implicit learning processes, and explicit/implicit knowledge) are related but distinct concepts. Although (1) and (4) above were the direct concerns of the present study, the nature of (2) and (3) remains unknown. That is, it was unexplored whether all the participants in the implicit group who received the implicit pedagogy obtained implicit knowledge after implicitly processing the linguistic information. Despite this uncertainty, we formulated two axioms for the sake of the present discussion: the explicit group obtained explicit knowledge; and the implicit group gained implicit knowledge.

Explicit and implicit knowledge are the two types of representational systems on a continuum (Carr & Curran, 1994), and L2 learners are likely to draw differentially on these types of knowledge to perform various tasks (Bialystok, 1982). The explicit knowledge is declarative, comprised of facts about L2 (Ellis, 2004; Eichenbaum, 1997). The development of L2 learners' explicit knowledge can occur on two planes (i.e., breadth and depth). As learners accumulate more declarative facts, knowledge increases in breadth; as knowledge advances in terms of depth, learners make it more precise and can consistently apply it to different contexts (Ellis, 2004). While explicit knowledge is rule-based, implicit knowledge is exemplar-based. The instance-based view holds that people store individual instances and use them (Jacoby & Brooks, 1984).⁵ The implicit group in the present study has presumably accumulated and stored

the chunks of information (i.e., the target forms). Also covered in learners' knowledge was relationships of such chunks with their meanings, the situations, a function (i.e., suggestion), and a sociolinguistic variable (i.e., academic status) (Fukuya & Zhang, 2002; Martínez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005). Whenever learners encountered a stimulus, they presumably coded and stored it as a "raw" instance; with continued exposure to exemplars, they were likely to build up a distributed memorial store containing such instances (Manza & Reber, 1997).

With these constructs of the explicit and implicit knowledge as well as the two axioms, what follows will discuss the potential causes of the variability within a competence-performance rather than an instruction-performance framework. The reason is that task-induced variability is part of competence, which manifests itself through performance. Here competence is viewed as L2 learners' "capability"—the actual ability to use knowledge (Tarone, 1983, 1988, 1990).

The Potential Causes of the Task-Induced Variability

The results of the present investigation indicated that improvement in the explicit condition in the phone task was significantly more than that of the implicit condition, although improvements in the explicit vs. implicit conditions were on par in the e-mail task. Stated differently within the competence-performance paradigm, the rule-based knowledge affected learners' phone performance significantly more than the exemplar-based knowledge. The rule-based and exemplar-based knowledge, nevertheless, equally affected learners' e-mail performance. Thus, an interactive effect existed.

In the e-mail task, two groups of learners efficiently gained access to their rule-based or exemplar-based knowledge base. They were able to allocate adequate attention to retrieving and monitoring the appropriate and accurate target forms. Indeed, to judge well-formedness of utterances, users of explicit knowledge utilized their inter-

language rules, whereas users of exemplar-based knowledge had a direct access to ready-made chunks (Skehan, 1998). Even so, a glance at the mean differences between the pretests and posttests indicates that the rule-based knowledge demonstrated a slight advantage over the exemplar-based one, as the improvements of the explicit vs. implicit conditions were 3.71 vs. 3.28. This disparity may derive from the monitoring capability of these two knowledge bases.

Rule-based knowledge serves as a monitor of information to be understood or produced as well as a formulator of messages (Ellis, 2005; Hulstijn, 2002). Consequently, this knowledge caters to accuracy and complexity, albeit a heavy processing burden during ongoing language use (Skehan, 1998). On the other hand, an advantage of the exemplar-based knowledge is processing speed. Units longer than one word ease cognitive processing during language use because they do not require any internal attention or decomposition (Skehan, 1998). These abstract and instantiated forms of representation have a predisposition to promote the different aspects of performance.

In the phone task, the unequal power became more transparent in retrieving and monitoring, as indicated in its statistical significance. The range of the improvements of the explicit vs. implicit instruction augmented to 2.77 vs. 1.60. As was the case in the e-mail task, learners with the rule-based knowledge exhibited their robust capability of retrieval and monitoring in the phone task. Hulstijn (2002) and Ellis (2004) concur that only when sufficient time is available is monitoring possible. In fact, time *per se* (i.e., presence and absence of time pressure) was not a necessary condition for successful self-correction but that attention to the linguistic forms required time for it (Hulstijn & Hulstijn, 1984). If so, then the phone task allowed learners with the rule-based knowledge to allocate adequate attention to retrieval and monitoring. If another task, like a face-to-face oral interaction, were employed in this study, the effect of the rule-based knowl-

edge might have been weakening, because its monitoring capability was affected by inadequate attention. In comparison, learners with the exemplar-based knowledge were slightly less successful in retrieving and monitoring the appropriate and accurate forms in the phone task than by the e-mail task. This may insinuate that the phone task did not allow learners with the exemplar-based knowledge to allocate as much attention to retrieval and monitoring as the e-mail task did.

What L2 learners needed in order to retrieve and monitor the appropriate and accurate target forms during the planning and monitoring stages of writing and speaking may be adequate attention. The current literature supports the pivotal role of attention. Salaberry and Lopez-Ortega (1998) reviewed the seven psycholinguistic factors that may expound task-induced variability in the areas of morphology and syntax. Three factors among them constitute (1) attention to form (Tarone, 1983), (2) planning time (Crookes, 1989; Ellis, 1987), and (3) the emotional investment of L2 learner (Eisenstein & Starbuck, 1989), with their common denominator of attention to form.⁶ These studies have shown that attention to linguistic forms and availability of on-line planning resulted in enhancing accuracy (Ellis, 1987; Hulstijn & Hulstijn, 1984; Yuan & Ellis, 2003). Another example is Eisenstein and Starbuck (1989), which investigated the effect of L2 learners' emotional investment by contrasting an interesting topic with a not interesting one, with the result that the task associated with the not interesting topic recorded a higher accuracy of grammatical form. The learners' emotional investment, as Salaberry and Lopez-Ortega (1998) noted, may be the outcome of different degree of attention according to Tomlin and Villa's (1994) model (i.e., alertness, orientation, and detection).⁷ Indeed these findings have substantiated the effect on accuracy alone. Nonetheless, attention, particularly during on-line planning, might also attribute to

the variation in appropriateness and accuracy found in the present study.

Even though the e-mail and phone tasks share the common processes of language production, they demand the different degree of attention. According to Levelt's (1989) model, writers and speakers in the present study conceptualized a suggestion, retrieved appropriate target forms from the long-term memory, performed a grammatical encoding, assigned a phonological coding, executed a phonetic plan with a neuromuscular coordination, and monitored the appropriateness and accuracy of their own production. This series of operations seems incremental (Kempen & Hoenkamp, 1987). All components work in parallel, but on different pieces of the utterance under construction. Despite these common processes, the phone task can be considered more time-pressured and thus more attention-demanding than the e-mail task. Spoken tasks generally allow less time to be allocated to on-line planning and attention to linguistic forms than written tasks (Skehan, 1998). Speakers in the phone task presumably faced a trade-off of the competing demands on attention.⁸ Humans must prioritize where to allocate their attention, owing to their limited information-processing capacity (McLaughlin & Heredia, 1996; Shiffrin & Schneider, 1977). The e-mail task, in contrast, was executed individually with no time constraints, and equally important, learners whose major was computer science had automated their typing skills on the computer. A case in point is Safont (2005), which showed the effect of modality on use of appropriate head acts and hedges. She found that Spanish-speaking learners of English utilized appropriate request strategies in the oral role-play less than in the DCT after they received explicit instruction on these strategies.⁹

In sum, the task-induced variability¹⁰ was presumably caused by a complex interaction between the feature of the two types of knowledge (i.e., a monitoring capability) and an access to the knowledge bases (i.e., a role of attention to appropriateness and accuracy)

in the two tasks. These speculations, nevertheless, need empirical validation, as the direct causes of the variability were beyond the investigative scope of this study.

Conclusion

By investigating the ways in which two families of effects interact, this study explored a neglected area in instructed interlanguage pragmatics. It should be noted here that this study might be limited by the fact that the test items differed across the e-mail and phone tasks. Nonetheless, this concern seems negligible for the following reason. Although this study employed comparable test items to avoid a practice effect, a possible methodological alternative would be to use the same test items across the two tasks to ascertain task effects. Suppose that these items are not comparable, that is, one posttest was designed to be easier for the participants to obtain higher scores over the other posttest (i.e., e-mail over phone or vice versa). Then, both explicit and implicit instruction would be equally likely to have had a substantial advantage in one posttest over the other posttest. However, the actual results of this study revealed otherwise, a fairly solid indication that the two kinds of instruction were subject to reasonably large task variation.

This study has claimed that instructional effects appear to vary substantially depending on the demands required in the assessment tasks (i.e., the context that the tasks create). A finding in Norris and Ortega's (2000) meta-analysis confirms this claim. Because of this interaction between assessment and instruction, generalizations about the efficacy of pragmatic instruction alone seem to lose momentum if the impact of assessment task in relation to such instruction is disregarded. The effect of task should not be underestimated. We thus hope that this study has raised researchers' awareness about assessment tasks: instructional effects seem to be merely a blend of instructional impact and assessment-generated variability. Undoubtedly, further research is called for to investigate the relationships between these two families of tasks.

Pedagogical Implication

The present study carries a pedagogical implication for language practitioners. It concerns a choice of assessment tasks in relation to pragmatics instruction. We would like to remind language teachers that you might not see a desired learning outcome if you evaluate learners' pragmatic performance by means of a single assessment task. Consider this example. If you have taught a pragmatic language feature via a Focus on Form technique, and the learning outcome has not been as good as you expected when you evaluated learners' pragmatic performance in an oral mode. This unsatisfactory learning outcome may not be due to the inadequate pedagogy; rather, it may be related to your choice of an assessment task. If you had assessed their learning performance in a written mode, you could have obtained a better learning outcome than you did in an oral mode. We thus recommend that teachers, particularly those who are interested in incorporating pragmatics into their current syllabi, employ multiple assessment tasks (e.g., recognition and production, written and oral modes) to evaluate learners' L2 pragmatic competence.¹¹ Otherwise, use of a single assessment task may result in the inappropriateness of interpretations that teachers make on the basis of test scores, the issue of construct validity.

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Notes

1. The typical DCTs contained situational prompts without hearer responses. On the other hand, in the content-enriched DCTs, the prompts were enhanced by including the gender and name of the interlocutor, the role relationship, a description of the place the interaction happened and the time of day, social distance, social dominance, the length of the acquaintanceship, and so forth.
2. Exactly speaking, these students were divided into three classes: explicit, implicit and control groups (see Martínez-Flor, 2006; Martínez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005). However, we did not describe the control group here because it was irrelevant to this article.
3. For the reliability of the tests, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the e-mail posttest ($\alpha = .72$) and for the phone posttest ($\alpha = .50$). We believe that the use of a small number of test items primarily affected these reliability estimates. Another possibility is that the phone posttest had a "bad" item. However, this was not the case. Item-total statistics indicated that, even though item 2 was the worst among the four items, the alpha for the test would not have improved much (an increase from $\alpha = .50$ to $.53$) even after elimination of this item. A complementary explanation could be that the items in the phone posttest measure different constructs. Although there is such possibility, the causes of this low reliability require empirical validation, like a MultiFacets analysis to investigate item bias. This investigation goes beyond the scope of this article.
4. One may argue that some of these target forms could be used with both equal and higher status interlocutors. Indeed, pragmatics is dynamic in the sense that language use depends on interlocutors' intentions and beliefs as well as the context of an interaction. Unlike the two categories in this study, a particular pragmalinguistics is, in reality, not in

- one-to-one relation to a combination of sociolinguistic factors, such as social power, social distance, and the degree of imposition. However, for the sake of pedagogy, the present study simply limited the scope of its investigation by creating these two categories, which have been supported by the listed literature.
5. In artificial grammar learning, some scholars have drawn a line between the instance-based view (e.g., Vokey & Brooks, 1992) and the fragmentary one (e.g., Servan-Schreiber & Anderson, 1990). While these two views share similar learning processes, the former position emphasizes the holistic properties of stimuli and the latter stresses the role of smaller units (Manza & Reber, 1997). We nevertheless did not make this distinction in the present discussion.
 6. Other four factors are (1) the nature of language task (Gass, 1980), (2) the discursive nature of L2 text (Tarone, 1985), (3) communicative pressure (Tarone & Parrish, 1988), and (4) communicative control (Salaberry & Lopez-Ortega, 1998). The communicative pressure implies a presence of an interlocutor who needs information from the speaker to accomplish some task (Tarone & Parrish, 1988). The communicative control means that learners tend to avoid certain linguistic forms because these forms are beyond their control, with the consequence of increased accuracy. For instance, a narration task allows learners to have more communicative control than a fill-in-the-blanks task (Salaberry & Lopez-Ortega, 1998).
 7. According to Tomlin and Villa (1994), “alertness represents an overall, general readiness to deal with incoming stimuli or data” (p. 190). Orientation is the process that directs attentional resources to some type of sensory information at the exclusion of others while detection is the process that selects a specific bit of information, that is, “the cognitive registration of sensory stimuli” (p. 192).
 8. Nevertheless, an information-processing account predicts that this difference in learners’ access to rule-based vs. exemplar-based knowledge between the two tasks will diminish after learners’ practice in the phone task.
 9. Exactly speaking, Safont attributed to the different effects of planning time derived from modality.
 10. Besides task, research has shown that situational contexts, such as discourse topic (Zuengler, 1993) and interlocutor (Takahashi, 1989), have some effect on language variability. These two factors were controlled for across the two tasks: a topic (computer) and interlocutor (absence of authentic receivers of e-mails and phone calls).
 11. Written and oral modes are the examples of multiple assessment tasks. We have no intention of overgeneralizing the findings of this study about the e-mail and phone to the level of written and oral modes.

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APPENDIX A

Participants' Demographic and Linguistic Backgrounds

	Explicit Group (n = 24)	Implicit Group (n = 25)
Mean age	21.46	21.16
Gender		
Male	23	20
Female	1	5
Mother tongue		
Spanish	15	16
Catalan	9	9
Mean years studying English	4.81	5.88
English-speaking country visited		
Yes	5	1
No	19	24
Contact with people by using English		
Yes	4	3
No	20	22
Exposure to English outside the classroom		
Yes	5	5
No	19	20
Mean score of a grammar test	36.27	37.33

APPENDIX B

Tests

The E-mail Pretest

Situation 1: Your professor is thinking of doing an outdoor activity at the end of the course, and she asks the class for ideas. Can you think of any activity you would like your professor to do? Send your professor an email with a good suggestion.

To: aflor@fil.uji.es

Situation 2: Your friend is thinking of buying a new computer. She does not know whether to buy a PC or a Macintosh. Send her an email suggesting that she buy the computer that in your opinion is better for her.

To: ibeltran@emp.uji.es

Situation 3: The Director of the Computer Science Department is interested in knowing students' opinion about the subject of Electronics. He would like to know how you think the teaching of this subject could be improved for next year. Send the director an email suggesting a good idea about how this particular subject could be taught more effectively to computer science students.

To: madrid@fil.uji.es

Situation 4: Your brother has a friend (younger than you) who wants to study computer science, just like you. He would like to know which subjects to take the first year and something about their content. Send him an email and suggest that he take a particular subject that you found very interesting last year.

To: lasuperbestia@yahoo.es

The E-mail Posttest

Situation 1: Your professor is interested in knowing students' opinions about activities that they would like to have implemented in the syllabus for next course. Can you think of any activity you would like your professor to include in this subject next course? Send your professor an email with a good suggestion.

To: aflor@fil.uji.es

Situation 2: Your friend is thinking of looking for a job this summer. She does not know whether to send the CV to different companies or go personally to each one. Send her an email suggesting the best option.

To: ibeltran@emp.uji.es

Situation 3: In organizing a workshop on the creation of websites for students of non-computer science degrees to be offered the next academic year, the Director of the Computer Science Department is interested in students' ideas about it. In particular, he would like to know your opinion about the materials that could be employed. Send the director an email suggesting a good book on designing websites that could be employed during this workshop.

To: madrid@fil.uji.es

Situation 4: Your brother has a friend (younger than you) who wants to buy a new color printer. Since he knows that you are studying a Computer Science degree and you understand about computers and printers, he would like to know which printers are best in terms of both quality and price. Send him an email and suggest that he buy a particular printer that you find cheap and of good quality.

To: lasuperbestia@yahoo.es

The Phone Pretest

Situation 1: You are helping Professor Marzal in the organization of the "International Conference on Internet and Language." Today, you were talking to him about arranging a formal dinner with the main "guests" (important people invited to give a talk during the conference) on Friday night. When you arrive home, it occurs to you that there are several possible restaurants where this special dinner could be organized. Call your professor and suggest a good restaurant for this formal dinner.

Telephone number: 964-729867

Situation 2: One of your best friends is interested in doing an "internship" (the practical training you do in a company when you are studying) at a particular computer company (IBM). He signed for this company at the end of last semester to make sure that he could have this choice, but now he has received a letter from the University informing him that he cannot do his internship at this company because there are not enough posts for all students. You call your friend and suggest that he go to talk to the professor.

Telephone number: 964-729624

Situation 3: You have received a grant (“a sum of money given by an organization for a particular purpose”) to work on one of the new projects from the Computer Science Department. In the first meeting with the Director of this project, she explains to you that she would like to organize a talk for all Computer Science students about the purpose and relevance of the project. She asks you to prepare a poster announcing the talk for next Friday afternoon. When you arrive home, it occurs to you that most students from other courses have oral exams on that day. You call the professor and suggest that she change the day of the talk.

Telephone number: 964-729605

Situation 4: One of your new classmates in this course has told you that she is thinking about changing to another degree (from Technical Engineering in Computer Systems to Computer Science Engineering) that she thinks will be more interesting. You think about what this classmate has told you, and when you arrive home, you realize that Technical Engineering in Computer Systems has some more benefits. Call this classmate and suggest a good reason for not changing from Technical Engineering in Computer Systems to Computer Science Engineering.

Telephone number: 964-728542

The Phone Posttest

Situation 1: One of the professors you know from the Business Administration Department asks you to help him to organize a summer course on the use of PowerPoint. As part of the course, he would like to invite a professor from your Computer Science Department for a practical presentation of this program. When you arrive home, the names of some professors from your department who could participate in this course suddenly occur to you. Call the professor in charge of the course and suggest a good professor for this PowerPoint presentation.

Telephone number: 964-729867

Situation 2: One of your best friends is interested in applying for an Erasmus scholarship for next year, but he is not sure about which University to go. On your way home, you meet another classmate who spent last semester at the University of Holland. He tells you that he enjoyed his stay at this University because the technical courses were very good and all the professors were very supportive. Based on what you have heard from this classmate, you call your friend and suggest that he go to this University.

Telephone number: 964-729624

Situation 3: You have started working on a project with a newly arrived professor in the department. One day, she tells you that she would like to buy several specialized books related to the content of the project. At that moment you can't remember any specialized bookshop on computer science material, but when you arrive home, it occurs to you that there is one bookshop where one finds a section of computer books. You call the professor and suggest that she go to this particular bookshop.

Telephone number: 964-729605

Situation 4: One of your new classmates in this course is having a problem deciding which subject to take next year—Industrial Computers or Multimedia—because both of them are offered at the same time. She thinks that Industrial Computers would be better, but she is not sure. You are thinking about what your classmate has told you and you find out that

Multimedia has some more benefits. Call this classmate and suggest a good reason that makes the subject of Multimedia a better option.
Telephone number: 964-728542

Source: Martínez-Flor, 2004, pp. 367–370.

APPENDIX C

Role-Plays

One student assumed a role A (he/she suggested that the other student should talk to the professor) and the other student did a role B (the one who wanted to change a practice group and asked for advice).

Role A. You meet one of your new classmates at the bus stop. You are talking about the new subject of <i>Networks I</i> . Your classmate tells you that she can't go to the class on Tuesdays and she would like to change to the practice group on Wednesday. Suggest that she talk to the professor to change the practice group.

Role B. You are with one of your new classmates at the bus stop. You are talking about the subject of <i>Networks I</i> . You tell this classmate that you can't go to the class on Tuesdays and that you would like to change to the practice group on Wednesday. Your classmate tells you to do something.
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Source: Martínez-Flor, 2004, p. 429.

APPENDIX D

A Framework of Pragmalinguistic Recasts

1. Type I: A correct pragmatic usage + a correct linguistic form
→ Ignore it (no recast).
2. Type II: A correct pragmatic usage + an incorrect linguistic form
→ Recast the linguistic form.
3. Type III: An incorrect pragmatic usage + a correct linguistic form
→ Recast it by using one of the target suggestion conventions.
4. Type IV: An incorrect pragmatic usage + an incorrect linguistic form
→ Recast it by using one of the target suggestion conventions.

Source: Fukuya & Zhang, 2002.

APPENDIX E

A Taxonomy of Linguistic Realization Strategies for Suggestion

Type	Strategy	Example
DIRECT	Performative verb	I suggest that you . . . I advise you to . . . I recommend that you . . .
	Noun of suggestion	My suggestion would be . . .
	Imperative	Try using . . .
	Negative imperative	Don't try to . . .
CONVENTIONALIZED FORMS	Specific formulae (interrogative forms)	Why don't you . . .? How about . . .? What about . . .? Have you thought about . . .?
	Possibility/probability	You can . . . You could . . . You may . . . You might . . .
	Should	You should . . .
	Need	You need to . . .
	Conditional	If I were you, I would . . .
INDIRECT	Impersonal	One thing (that you can do) would be . . . Here's one possibility: . . . There are a number of options that you . . . It would be helpful if you . . . It might be better to . . . A good idea would be . . . It would be nice if . . .
	Hints	I've heard that . . .

Source: Martinez-Flor, 2004.

Note: Based on Alcón & Safont (2001), Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford (1996), Edmonson & House (1981), Hinkel (1994, 1997), House & Kasper (1981), Kasper & Schmidt (1996), Koike (1994, 1996), and Wardhaugh (1985).