

Evaluation of Grammar Consciousness Raising Tasks in *English for Iraq for the 3rd Intermediate Class*

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Abstract

English for Iraq (3rd Intermediate) is supposed to be "essentially student-centred, aiming to promote learning through meaningful individual and interactive tasks with conscious use of grammar" (Oneil. This research aims to check this assumption by evaluating how the given tasks promote learning grammar through grammar consciousness-raising tasks. The researcher follows a descriptive analytical approach by listing and classifying the grammatical content of the Student's Book followed by an analysis of the rubric-wordings of the tasks given in both the student's book and the activity book. The results of the analysis indicate that the grammar content is listed in the Teacher's Book in order to inform both the teachers and the Supreme Examination Board of that content. The same content is listed in the Book Map of the Student's Book according to their order of appearance in the units so that the students become previously aware of that knowledge. Thus, the first principle of raising grammar consciousness is achieved. Secondly, there is no direct explicit reference to grammar in the Student's Book, thus, the second principle to let the students induce the function and be familiar with the rule has been achieved. Thirdly, none of the exercises in the Activity Book has directly made any reference to the use of the grammatical points. Those tasks are to a large extent coincide with the key criteria for designing language tasks; the primary focus is on meaning and there is some kind of information gap where learners can convey information, express their opinions and they can also rely on their own knowledge to complete the activity. Finally, the outcomes are previously defined and the language is used to achieve those outcomes. The researcher concluded that *English for Iraq, 3rd Intermediate* promotes learning English grammar through conscious raising tasks.

Keywords: Teaching grammar, Conscious raising tasks, English for Iraq, Curriculum design, Evaluation.

تقييم مهام رفع الوعي النحوي في كتاب اللغة الإنكليزية للعراق للصف الثالث المتوسط

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المخلص

من المفترض أن تكون المادة الدراسية ومنهجية عرضها في كتاب اللغة الإنكليزية للعراق (للفف الثالث المتوسط) متمركزة حول الطالب بشكل أساسي وتهدف إلى تعزيز التعلم من خلال مهام فردية تفاعلية ذات معنى يصاحبها استخدام واعى للقواعد. يهدف هذا البحث إلى التحقق من هذا الافتراض من

خلال تقييم كيف تُعزّز المهام المُعطاة لتعلم قواعد اللغة الانكليزية رفع الوعي النحوي للطلاب. اتبع الباحث نهجاً تحليلياً وصفيّاً من خلال سرد وتصنيف المحتوى النحوي لكتاب الطالب متبوعاً بتحليل صياغة نمط المهام المُعطاة في كل من كتاب الطالب وكتاب النشاط. أظهرت نتائج التحليل إلى أن محتوى القواعد مُدرج في دليل المدرس لإبلاغ كل من المدرسين واللجنة العليا للامتحانات بهذا المحتوى. تم إدراج نفس المحتوى في فهرس كتاب الطالب وفقاً لترتيب ظهورها في الوحدات حتى يصبح الطالب على دراية مسبقة بهذه المعرفة، وبالتالي، تم تحقيق المبدأ الأول لرفع الوعي النحوي. ثانياً، لا توجد إشارة صريحة مباشرة إلى القواعد في كتاب الطالب، وبالتالي، تم تحقيق المبدأ الثاني بالسماح للطلاب باستنتاج الوظيفة والتعرف على القاعدة. ثالثاً، لم يشر أي من التمارين في كتاب النشاط بشكل مباشر إلى استخدام الموضوعات النحوية وبذلك تتوافق هذه المهام إلى حد كبير مع المعايير الرئيسية لتصميم مهام اللغة حيث ينصب التركيز الأساسي على المعنى وهناك نوع من الفجوة (الحاجة إلى نقل المعلومات أو التعبير عن رأي أو استنتاج المعنى) التي تدع الطالب يعتمد على موارده الخاصة لإكمال النشاط. أخيراً، كانت هناك نواتج تعلم محددة بوضوح بخلاف استخدام اللغة وهو أن اللغة تعمل كوسيلة لتحقيق تلك النواتج وليس كغاية في ذاتها). خلّص الباحث إلى أن كتاب اللغة الإنكليزية للعراق للصف الثالث المتوسط يُعزّز تعلم قواعد اللغة الإنكليزية من خلال مهام رفع الوعي النحوي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تدريس القواعد، مهام رفع الوعي، اللغة الإنكليزية للعراق، تصميم المناهج، التقييم

Section One

Introduction

1.1 The Statement of the Problem

By reviewing the evaluation studies and researches on the English language series '*English for Iraq*', the researcher noticed that none of those studies took into consideration if the grammar is introduced through consciousness raising tasks. Those studies are as follows:

- 1- Yasseen (2019: 230) called for amendments in the lesson period, the font size, the writing activities and the teaching method.
- 2- Fayadh (2017: 99) concluded that "the textbook gives the student a delightful learning experiences, the explanations and examples are clear, the skills are suitable, the new words are at the students' level, it helps students appreciate English as an international language to communicate with others, the content has a reasonably graded sequence, the grammar structures are understandable, and the writing exercises are adequate with clear instructions."
- 3- Krebt (2018:58) concluded that "the teachers are satisfied with the following features of the textbook, namely, general appearance, design and illustrations, accompanying materials, social and cultural context, teaching method, practice and testing, and language content"
- 4- Obaid et al. (2019: 98) summed up the conclusions by saying that "this series of textbooks integrates culture in the materials, leading them to look like

tourist's guide books, with little space for learners to touch the foreign cultures particularly the targeted culture".

5- Abdul-Majeed and Naji (2022: 436) identified the problems referring to the class environment, parents participation, technology and textbooks availability.

However, only Kadhim (2019: 171) pinpointed that "English for Iraq employs a task-based approach to teach grammar. This textbook provides opportunities to involve students in meaningful interactive tasks that enable them to use the target grammatical item while their focus is on meaning", albeit the researcher did not shed light on grammar consciousness raising tasks.

On the other hand, O'Neill, et.al (2023: 17-25) explain in the Teacher's Book for the third intermediate class the teaching techniques and the procedures for teaching listening, speaking, vocabulary, reading and writing, but they do not explain how each point of grammar should be taught when that point appears in the lesson.

Thus, this research is an attempt to fill this gap and to add a new investigation procedure to fulfil the aim.

1.2 The Aim

The aim of this research is to evaluate the grammar consciousness raising tasks in *English for Iraq, 3rd Intermediate 2023*.

1.3 The Limits

The current research is limited to *English for Iraq, 3rd Intermediate, 2023, Garnet Publishing Ltd: UK*.

1.4 The Significance

The researcher thinks that the findings of this research would introduce a clear account on how the editors of '*English for Iraq*' took into account the techniques of presenting grammar consciousness raising tasks in both the student's book and the activity book.

1.5 The Procedures

The researcher carried out this research through the following procedures.

1- Defining and identifying the outcomes of grammar consciousness-raising tasks by reviewing related literature and previous studies.

2- Analysing *English for Iraq, 3rd Intermediate* textbook 2023 to identify the grammatical points.

3- Classifying the rubrics used in presenting the tasks in the student's book and the activity book.

4- Reviewing the Teacher's Book to check how those tasks are supposed to be taught.

5- Drawing conclusions in the light of the criteria of grammar consciousness raising tasks.

Section Two

The Theoretical Background

2.1 Defining Grammar Consciousness Raising Tasks

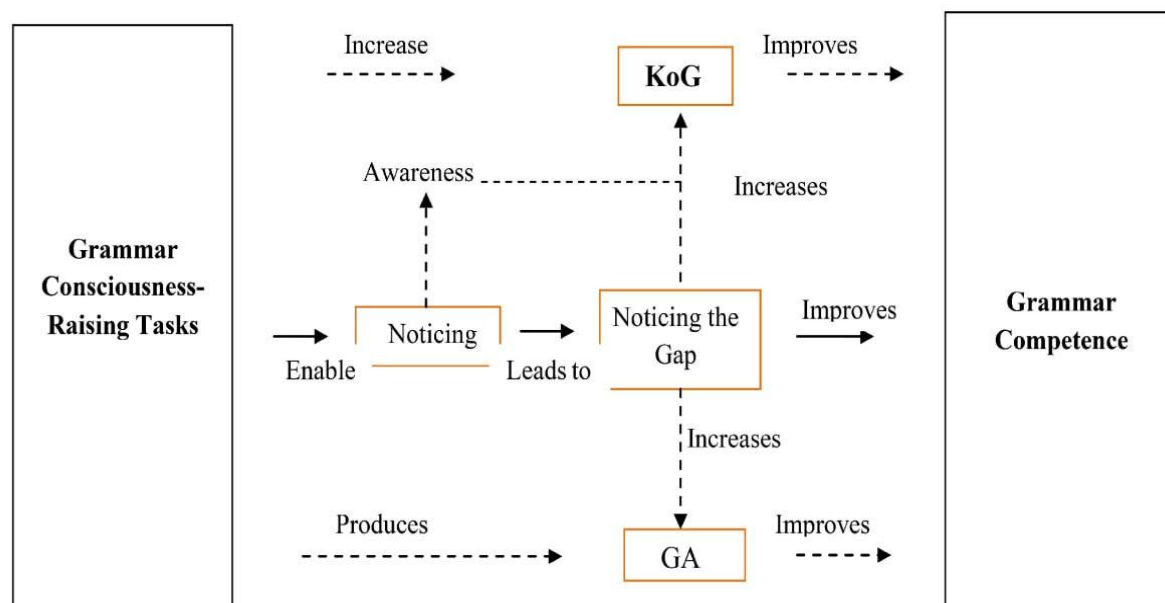
"Raising consciousness is an approach that aims to help students to be aware of the determined features; its main idea is to make students notice something that they might not notice on their own, which will help them develop analytical skills" (Roza, 2014: 3). Conscious Raising Tasks are those tasks that are "designed to assist learners to notice and understand grammar features by developing explicit knowledge of the features through concept forming in orientation" (Ellis, 2002: 162). To put this definition into practice, samples of language data are provided first to help learners notice how grammar rules work in situation. This sort of understanding or undertaking is a process of consciousness-raising.

In order to inductively develop students' knowledge of the rule, Herron and Tomasello (1992) stated that the course must involve students in a meaningful situation constructed to let them notice the target point. Schmidt (1993: 217) suggested that, for the noticing hypothesis to work effectively, "the target forms should be presented in the input so that they are more likely to be noticed by the students." In consciousness raising tasks for teaching grammar, Moradkhan and Sohrabian (2009: 58) explained that, "the students are presented with language data which challenge them to re-think and restructure their existing mental grammar." Ellis (2002: 168) previously asserted this idea by saying that this way can develop declarative (knowledge about something) rather than procedural (the ability to do things) knowledge of grammar. The declarative knowledge helps the students to identify how the grammar structure works in communication. (Pasternak and Baily, 2004: 157)

It is worth noting that raising conscious "does not necessarily require an immediate correct production of the grammar since the beginning, but it serves as a preparation phase where students become aware of the targeted structure and its communicative functions" (Idek, et.al, 2013: 114). This idea coincides with, as the researcher concludes, the interpretation that is given by Hudson's

(2016) diagram which shows how those tasks induce grammar competence as in the figure below:

Pedagogically speaking, Ellis (2002) specified the principles to follow for



implementing consciousness raising tasks in the following order; "present one grammar point at a time, exemplify the use of that point, ask the learners to describe the rule by themselves, and focus more on the meaning of the grammar structure than on the form or its rule". However, the implementing procedures need to be clearly illustrated. Therefore, the researcher adopts Widodo's (2006) steps that he developed to achieve consciousness raising and to help students become aware of grammar use, namely; "developing the students' knowledge of the rule, inducing the function of the rule, familiarizing the students with the rule and using the rule through exercises".

2.2 The Positive Outcomes of Using Grammar Consciousness Raising Tasks

Abay (2021: 55) concluded that this approach had a positive effect on the writing performance of EFL learners. Moreover , those tasks, characterized by guided discovery of rules, may involve greater depth of processing which makes learners more autonomous by developing their analytical ability and encourages critical thinking."

Fatemipour et al. (2015: 9) concluded that "learning grammar through raising consciousness is more effective than traditional approaches and that grammar consciousness raising is fruitful for the teachers. By applying this technique, the

teacher is not the source of knowledge anymore and he does not spend much time on grammar explanations".

Section Three

Procedures

3.1 The Grammar Content of *English for Iraq, 3rd Intermediate*

O'Neill, et.al (2023: 9-13) listed alphabetically the grammatical content of *English for Iraq (3rd Intermediate)* in the teacher's book as follows:

No.	Items	Details
1	Adjectives	- after <i>be</i> , -before nouns, possessive, comparative, superlative
2	Adjective clauses	- defining
3	Adverbs	- of frequency, of manner
4	Adverbial clauses	- of reason, of time (<i>when</i> + past + past), (<i>when</i> + past cont. + past)
5	Adverbial phrases	- of location, of time, of place, of direction, of means
6	Conditionals	- First conditional
7	Conjunctions and linking words	- and, as well as, but, or, so, because, then, now, first, next, after that, finally
8	Determiners	- (<i>a, an, the</i>), no article, (<i>some, any, a few, a little, a lot of, too many, too much</i>)
9	Gerunds (-ing nouns)	- after verbs, after <i>How about</i>
10	Imperatives	- affirmatives in instructions, negative, in requests, with <i>always</i> , with <i>never</i>
11	Infinitives	- after <i>want, would like</i>
12	Modals/ auxiliaries/ verbs	- <i>be, do, have, have to, can, should, must, may/might</i>
13	Nouns	- singular countable, regular and irregular plural countable, uncountable
14	Passive coice	- Present simple, Past simple, with modal <i>can</i>
15	Possessives	- apostrophe s
16	Prepositions	- location, time, direction/place, at the end of questions
17	Pronouns	- personal (subject/object), possessive, demonstrative, reflexive
18	Punctuation	- Apostrophe, Capital letters, Comma, Exclamation mark, Full stop, Question mark

19	Questions	- Yes/No type, Wh-type
20	Sentences	- Simple, Compound, Complex
21	Tenses	- Present simple/continuous/perfect, Past simple/continuous/habitual, Future (with will), continuous
22	Verb patterns	- Imperatives, want + noun/pronoun + to + inf.

The aim behind introducing this list in the *Teacher's Book* is to inform both the teachers and the Supreme Examination Board in the Ministry of Education of the grammatical content of the textbook. The same content is listed in the book map of the *Student's Book* according to their order of appearance in units so that the students become aware of that knowledge as the first principle of grammar consciousness raising.

3.2 Rubric-wording Analysis

From the *Student's Book* (O'Neill, et.al. 2023: 18-29), the researcher chose (Unit 2) as a sample for the purpose of rubric-wording analysis as shown in the table below to check if there is any explicit reference to grammar.

Lesson and Title	Grammar	Rubrics
1 A Perfect Holiday	Verbs of like and dislike + gerund	A- Read the advertisement. - Name all the activities in the photographs. - Which of the activities would you like to do? Tell your partner why. B- Read the advertisement again. Which statements are true? C- Listen to Reema talking about her perfect holiday. Tick the activities she enjoys. D- Think about your likes and dislikes. Discuss your perfect holiday with your partner.
2 Spare Time	Language of suggestions and preferences	A- Listen. Where do the boys decide to go? B- What would you like to do at the weekend? Discuss with your partner.
3 My Favourite Kind of Book	Past simple for narrative (including passive)	A- Match each book with a type in the box.
4	Present	A- Some students are interviewing Lucy. Match the

Work or Play?	simple and past simple	questions and the answers. B- Practise saying the interview with your partner. C- Write three more questions to ask Lucy. D- Listen to the interview. Do the students ask any of your questions?
5 Two Conversations	- Past simple - Adjectives - Use of ellipsis in sentences	A- Listen to the conversations. Then practise in pairs. B- Ask and answer with your partner about a film you have seen recently.
6 A TV Comedy	Compound and complex sentences	A- What kind of TV show do you think the article is about? B- Read the article. Match sentences with photographs.
7 Invitations	Language of inviting	A- Read the emails and the advertisements and answer your teacher's questions about the two events. B- Study the dialogue below about the school graduation party. Role-play a similar dialogue about the circus.
8 Fact File	-----	-----
9 Round up	-----	-----
10 Story Time	-----	-----

It can be noticed that no direct explicit reference to grammar appears in the Student's Book. Thus, the second principle of grammar consciousness raising tasks; namely, to let the students induce the function and be familiar with the rule is achieved.

3.3 Tasks Analysis

In order to check how the grammar is dealt with through exercises, the researcher analysed the tasks of Unit Two in the *Activity Book* (O'Neill, et.al. 2023: 22-39). The following table shows how the tasks are introduced.

Lesson and Title	Grammar	Tasks
1 A Perfect Holiday	Verbs of like and dislike + gerund	1- Listen to Reema talk about her perfect holiday. Choose the correct words. 2- Decide which verbs go with those words; write out the phrases.

		3- Choose five phrases, and write complete sentences. 4- Complete the table with the verbs in the box. 5- Use the verbs in Exercise 4 to write your personal opinion on three holiday activities.
2 Spare Time	Language of suggestions and preferences	1- Complete the sentences with the correct form (to go, go, going). 2- Complete the conversation between Rasha and Sana with the words in the box. 3- Ask and answer. - Student A: Make suggestions for the weekend. - Student B: You don't like any of the suggestions. Think of a good reply for each one. 4- Now change roles.
3 My Favourite Kind of Book	Past simple for narrative (including passive)	1- Complete the article with the verbs in the box. 2- Find the words in the word-search to describe each type of book in your Student's Book. 3- Talk about your favourite book. Tell your partner why you like it. 4- Answer the questions about your favourite book.
4 Work or Play?	Present simple and past simple	1- Put the words in the correct order to make questions. 2- Listen and check. 3- Correct the information that is wrong about Lucy. 4- Find and correct the eight spelling mistakes.
5 Two Conversations	- Past simple - Adjectives - Use of ellipsis in sentences	1- Make notes about a book or a film you read or watched recently. 2- Match the questions that have the same meaning. 3- Cover the second column in Exercise 2. Can you remember the questions? 4- Now cover the first column. Can you remember the questions? 5- Write questions to complete the conversation below. Use the past simple. 6- Write three questions about a film you saw recently. Write your answers.
6 A TV Comedy	Compound and complex sentences	1- Answer the questions. Write short answers. 2- Read the Lucy's article and match the beginning and ending of each sentence. 3- Complete the sentences about Lucy's TV show with the present simple form of the verbs in the box. 4- Write the story from Exercise 2 in the past simple.
7 Invitations	Language of inviting	1- Look at the advertisement. Complete the table about the events. 2- Complete with words in the box.

		3- Think of an event you would like to go to. Complete the table below with information about the event. 4- Write an email inviting a friend to visit the event in Exercise 3. Use the emails in your Student's Book to help you.
8 Fact File	-----	-----
9 Round up	-----	-----
10 Story Time	-----	-----

None of the above exercises directly makes any reference to the use of the grammatical points. Those tasks coincide to a large extent with what Ellis and Shintani (2013:135) consider as the key criteria for designing language tasks;

- The focus is on how to convey meaning.
- There is an information gap as there is a need to convey information or to express an opinion.
- Students have their own resources that they use to complete the activity.
- There is a clearly defined outcome and the language is the means for achieving the outcome.

These criteria discriminate language tasks from situational grammar exercises.

Furthermore, the tasks given in both the student' book and the activity book involve **listing, ordering and sorting, comparing, problem-solving, sharing personal experiences, and creative**, thus they prove that *English for Iraq, 3rd Intermediate* is a task-based course.

To further check how those tasks raise grammar consciousness learning, the researcher compared them to the characteristics stated in the theoretical background of this research and it is found out that they all begin with raising grammar learning conscious and ends with developing grammar competence.

3.4 Grammar and Function Reference

It is worth saying that there is an appendix entitled 'Grammar and Function Reference' in the *Student's Book* to explain in detail the form(s) and use(s) of each grammatical point. As an example from Unit One, 'it has' and 'it doesn't have' are explained as follows. (O'Neill et.al, 2023: 111-17)

Form

It has a lift.	It doesn't have an information desk.
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It has lots of plants.	It doesn't have any escalators.
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Use

We use *it has* and *it doesn't have* to talk about possessions or things that are present in a place or area.

When the sentence is affirmative, we use *It has* + *a/an* + singular noun.

It has a car park.

It has an information desk.

In the plural, we use *It has* + plural noun. If we know the exact number, we can say the number. If we don't know the exact number, we can use *lots of*.

It has one hundred parking places.

It has lots of parking places.

When the sentence is negative, we use *It doesn't have* + *a/an* + singular noun.

We use *It doesn't have any* with plural nouns.

It doesn't have a supermarket.

It doesn't have any computer shops.

This appendix helps students have clear understanding of the language grammar and functions presented in the course and thus reinforce their grammar competence away from practising the language learning experiences.

Section Four

Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions

4.1 Conclusions

The researcher concluded that the language tasks of *English for Iraq* for the third intermediate class coincide with the key criteria for designing language tasks that focus on meaning, gap filling, grammar consciousness raising and student-centred which aim to promote learning through meaningful individual and interactive tasks with conscious use of grammar. The findings of this research validate what O'Neill, et al. (2023: 15) stated that "students can acquire a great deal of language without having it formally taught. When they use English naturally in the classroom, they will acquire it."

4.2 Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this research, the researcher recommends that the teachers of English should follow the techniques of teaching grammar

through conscious raising tasks and the students should be aware from the beginning of the grammatical knowledge, they induce the function and to be familiar with the rule, they use the rule through exercises that let learners use the language they need for genuine communication, while still considering the general form of language (grammar and context, etc.).

On the other hand, teacher training courses should take into account introducing samples of those kinds of tasks as given in the textbook when editing training hand-outs which develop language by doing or to adopt *Garnet Education Training Manual*.

4.3 Suggestions

The researcher suggests that further investigation researches are to be carried out to evaluate *English for Iraq* textbooks in order to find out how those textbooks satisfy the demands of the communicative language teaching.

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