



The Effects of Planned Instruction on Iranian L2 Learners' Interlanguage Pragmatic Development

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Abstract

The most compelling evidence that instruction in L2 pragmatics is necessary comes from learners whose language proficiency is advanced but their communicative acts frequently contain pragmatic errors. The current study evaluated the impact of explicit instruction on EFL learner's awareness and production of three speech acts of request, apology, and complaint. It also probed whether learners' language proficiency plays any role in incorporating pragmatic instruction into the L2 classroom. The instruction lasted for about 12 weeks. Achievement in L2 pragmatics was assessed based on a pretest-posttest plan using Multiple-Choice Discourse Comprehension Test (MDCT) and Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT). The significant gains made by the experimental groups receiving instruction support the claim recently made by instructional pragmatics that explicit instruction does facilitate the development of pragmatically appropriate use of language. Yet, learners' level of language proficiency had no significant role in the incorporation of the instruction. Further theoretical issues are also discussed.

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1. Introduction

Pragmatic competence, which is the ability to convey and interpret meaning appropriately in a social situation, has become an object of inquiry in a wide range of disciplines including linguistics, applied linguistics, anthropology, sociology, psychology, communication research, and cross-cultural studies (Taguchi, 2009). Learners' developments of pragmatics and factors that potentially influence pragmatic learning have been highlighted in educational contexts. One of those factors is the role of instruction on learners' awareness and production of speech acts which has generated a lot of interest in the field of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) (Alcón & Pitarch, 2010). In fact, the rationale for the need of instruction in pragmatics is provided by Schmidt's (1993) argument that simple exposure to the target language is not enough for developing pragmatic competence. He believes that pragmatic functions and relevant contextual factors are often not salient to learners and thus not likely to be noticed even after prolonged exposure. Moreover, research addressing realization strategies of speech acts used by foreign language (FL) learners (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990; Bouton, 1996; Boxer & Pickering, 1995; Kasper 1997; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985) has highlighted the necessity of instruction in pragmatics based on the evidence that a high grammatical competence is not always indicative of a successful pragmatic performance in the target language (TL).

As a result, arguments have been put forward for the inclusion of pragmatic instruction in second and foreign language classrooms. There have been some cross-sectional studies (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Omar, 1992; Takahashi, 1996) and many longitudinal studies (Alcón, 2005; Alcón & Pitarch, 2010; Bouton, 1994; Cohen, 1997; Cohen & Sykes, 2010; Eslami-Rasekh, 2005; Martínez-Flor, 2007; Rose, 2002; Schmidt, 1983; Usó-Juan,

2007; Vellenga, 2008) which investigated the effects of instruction on pragmatic development over a period of time. They regarded instructional intervention necessary and facilitative for the acquisition of second language (L2) pragmatic ability.

Despite this growing body of research on the effect of instruction, foreign language teachers still hesitate to teach pragmatics in their classrooms. There are many reasons for this reluctance in pragmatics teaching, and one of them can be attributed to the lack of some valid methods for testing interlanguage pragmatics knowledge. Increased attention has over the years been given to the assessment of L2 pragmatic behavior (Garcia, 2004; Hudson et al., 1992, 1995; Liu, 2006; Roever, 2005; Yamashita, 1996). Nevertheless, a perusal of the literature indicates that comprehensive approaches to the assessment of pragmatic abilities in a variety of second languages are lacking. In fact, the highly contextualized nature of pragmatics and consequently the construction of authentic assessment task and practicality make great demands on the assessment of pragmatics (McNamara & Roever, 2006). However, as the content and forms of language teaching are significantly influenced by the content and forms of language testing, the assessment of pragmatics must also be emphasized in language teaching (Rose & Kasper, 2001).

Coming back to the purpose of pedagogical intervention in pragmatics, Alcón and Martínez-Flor (2008) state that although the literature of interlanguage pragmatics supports the facilitative effect of instruction for L2 pragmatic development, the results are tentative until a larger number of studies on the instructional effects of particular target forms have been conducted in FL classrooms. The present study set out to contribute to the existing ILP literature by investigating the effects of instruction on the acquisition of pragmatic competence in classroom settings, and specifically in the English as a Foreign

Language (EFL) classroom. Moreover, it examines whether the probable beneficial effects of instruction on the development of pragmatic competence are linked in any ways to L2 learners' levels of general language proficiency.

2. Theoretical Framework

Pragmatic competence is a central component in Bachman's (1990, 2000) and Bachman and Palmers (1996, 2010) model of communicative language competence. It is regarded as one of the two main components of language competence parallel to organizational competence. Therefore, in order to communicate appropriately in a target language, pragmatic competence in the second or foreign language must be reasonably well-developed (Eslami-Resekh & Eslami-Resekh, 2008). As a domain within second language studies, pragmatics is usually referred to as interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) drawing on an analogy with interlanguage grammar, interlanguage phonology, and the interlanguage lexicon (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993; Kasper & Rose, 2002). ILP focuses on describing and explaining learners' use, perception, and acquisition of L2 pragmatic ability both in L2 and FL contexts (Alco'n & Martinez-Flor, 2008). ILP encompasses a developing literature which addresses the acquisition of pragmatic competence in a second/foreign language (Rose, 2009).

Chang (2010) argues that the important aspects of pragmatic competence are understanding and production of speech acts and their appropriateness in a given situation. In order to communicate effectively and successfully in their second or foreign language, learners should be able to comprehend what is being said and also produce utterances that are regarded as contextually appropriate by their target audience (Kasper & Rose, 2002; Schauer, 2009). Aksoyalp (2009) believes that one way to minimize pragmatic failure is to arrange learning opportunities which are

conducive to the development of pragmatic competence. Bardovi-Harlig (2001) states that many aspects of L2 pragmatics are not acquired without the benefit of instruction, or in the best case, they are learned more slowly. This makes instruction at least facilitative if not necessary. Furthermore, several studies (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Bouton, 1996; Boxer & Pickering, 1995; Kasper, 1997) have shown that learners of high grammatical proficiency will not necessarily possess comparable pragmatic competence. Even grammatically advanced learners may use language inappropriately and suffer from pragmatic failures (Eslami, Eslami, & Fatahi, 2004; Kasper, 1990).

These ideas constitute a rationale for pedagogical intervention, with the goals of first, making learners aware of their previous knowledge and taking advantage of it by using their existing pragmatic foundations in appropriate sociopragmatic contexts, and second, helping learners to attend to both the linguistic forms of utterances and the relevant social and contextual features with which they are associated (Schmidt, 2001). Therefore, much research has been conducted in the field on the teachability of pragmatics.

Kasper and Rose (2001) distinguish between observational and interventionist studies of pragmatic ability within L2 classrooms. Observational studies focus on classroom processes, with a view to learning outcomes or even without a view to learning outcomes. Here, the observed classrooms are authentic and pragmatics may or may not be a planned learning objective. Interventionist studies, on the other hand, examine the effect of a particular instructional treatment on students' acquisition of the target pragmatic feature. These kinds of studies have received growing attention in ILP research. Silva (2003) investigated the effect of instruction on learners' production of refusal. He revealed that explicit approach has positive effects on learners' L2 pragmatic ability since it raises

their awareness of L2 sociopragmatics and provides them with explicit inductive instruction on the L2 pragmalinguistic features. In the same line, Kondo (2008) tried to explore whether learners' use of refusal strategies changes after explicit instruction and what pragmatic aspects the learners become more aware of through explicit instruction. It was further highlighted that the instructional procedure raised learners' awareness concerning various pragmatic aspects involved in the speech act of refusal and learners' choice of refusal strategies changed and became more similar to the American pattern.

Alco'n and Pitarch (2010) studied the effects of pragmatic instruction on learners' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic awareness in the production of the speech act of refusal. They claimed that pedagogical interventions cause a difference in the learners' pragmatic proficiency, increase the amount of their pragmatic information attended to during the planning and execution of refusal, develop learners' pragmatic awareness about speech acts, and provide opportunities for speech act performance. Recent research on interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) has also revealed that providing learners with explicit metapragmatic instruction yields more effective learning outcomes than providing them with implicit target input (Alco'n, 2005; Koike & Pearson, 2005; Martinez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005; Rose and Ng, 2001; Takahashi, 2001; Tateyama, 2001).

However, teaching pragmatics is a highly complex and challenging task, as pragmatic behavior varies to a large extent depending on social and cultural contexts (Eslami-Resekh & Eslami-Resekh, 2008). Therefore, the focus should shift to the discovery of an effective way of teaching pragmatic competence. A survey on the literature of interlanguage pragmatics indicates that pragmatic instruction in the FL classroom needs to fulfill three functions: (a) exposing learners to appropriate TL input, (b) raising learners' pragmatic and metapragmatic awareness about the instructed

aspect, and (c) arranging authentic opportunities to practice pragmatic knowledge (Rueda, 2006). This paper explores the effects of explicit metapragmatic instructional activities, including description, explanation, teacher-fronted discussion, small-group discussions, role plays, pragmatically focused tasks, and introspective feedback, to see if they fulfill the functions mentioned. In addition, the learner's proficiency level came under consideration to see if it has any significant interaction with the incorporation of the instruction into the language education process.

3. Methodology

3. 1. Participants

The participants of this study were 210 Iranian undergraduate university students (NNSs) majoring in English and 60 native speakers of English (NSs). The NNSs were female (64%) and male (36%) EFL students selected from three Iranian state universities with the age range of 18-25. They had studied English between 6 to 7 years at high school, mainly through highly controlled formal education in Iran. As EFL students at university, they are provided with more learning opportunities to comprehend L2 input and produce more communicative L2 output. The NSs were selected from American English-speaking students studying at some American universities. 90 NNSs and 60 NSs participated in different phases of discourse-completion test (DCT) construction and scoring-scale development. The others took part in the main phase of the study serving as the major participants in the experimental and control groups.

3. 2. Materials and Instruments

This study designed and used a set of instructional L2 pragmatics materials explaining the realization and interpretation patterns, rules, strategies, and tokens of the three speech acts under study based on an intensive review of the related literature and

receiving (Iranian and American) expert judgments. They were specifically developed drawing on Bardovi-Harlig's (1996) tentative speech acts framework, started with presenting descriptions of the notions of speech acts, levels of directness, and types and factors of variability and followed by explaining each speech act in a speech act set format. Each speech act set included the major sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic patterns and strategies of interpreting and realizing one particular speech act at the explicit, conventional, and implicit or indirect levels (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984), considering both internal and external modifications specified under the effects of various situational, social, or cultural factors of variability. Additionally, three types of tests were used in this study. First, a real paper-based TOEFL was administered for determining the participants' general proficiency levels before using the pragmatics tests as pretests. Then, two pragmatics production and comprehension tests (developed for the purpose of this study) were used as pretests and posttests. The test-construction and data-collection procedures will be explained below.

3. 3. Procedures

The procedure in the current study comprised three phases of constructing and validating the production and comprehension tests, devising a scoring system for evaluating the production DCT tests, and implementing the explicit metapragmatic instruction. A DCT test was first developed to assess the participants' pragmatic productive ability. The production test was open-ended and made of 26 items, each describing a situation that simulated those of students' family, social, and academic lives to ensure the naturalness of data. The scenarios embodied various combinations of the sociopragmatic variables, such as social power and social distance, that are practically implicated in different contexts in which students need to make requests, apologies, and

complaints. The participants were supposed to read the written description of each situation and write their responses in the space provided after each scenario. Then, building on the responses provided by both the NSs and NNSs to the DCT scenarios, a multiple-choice pragmatics comprehension test was developed to measure the effectiveness of metapragmatic instruction on the pragmatic awareness of EFL learners. The most frequent responses given by the NSs were used as the accurate as well as appropriate option for the pragmatic awareness test and the other alternatives for each item were selected from among the sociopragmatically inappropriate or pragmalinguistically inaccurate responses given by NNSs to each item in the pragmatics production test. The inappropriateness or inaccuracy of the distracters was checked by two native-speaker and two Iranian academics. In addition, the test was administered to 20 students in the US to make sure the correct option and the distracters were functioning as intended. The sociopragmatically appropriate and pragmalinguistically accurate response in this test received one point in scoring.

In the second phase, the data collected through the DCT production test were evaluated and scored. To this end, the speech act required for each situation was first subdivided into its pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic components, following Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983). Then, scoring the produced pragmatic data was achieved through the use of a two-fold scoring scale specifically drawing on (a) the metapragmatic information on the speech act patterns, rules, and strategies under study empirically established in the literature and (b) the 30 NSs' utterances made as responses to the same situations. The four differentially frequent strategies used by NSs and the sociopragmatic elements of each strategy were extracted using the relations, notions, and concepts defined by the literature. Accordingly, (a) the most frequently used strategy or formula was assigned a total credit of 2 points, (b) the second most frequently

used strategy or formula received a credit of 1.5 points, (c) the third most frequently used strategy was assigned 1 point, and (d) the least frequently used strategy received a 0.5 point. This gradation was based on the frequency of the occurrence of one strategy or sociopragmatic formula in a given situation by individuals living in a speech community. As to the pragmalinguistic accuracy of the responses, a binary (i.e., either accurate or inaccurate) subsystem was used for scoring the pragmalinguistic accuracy of the responses which received an additional credit of 1 point. Finally, the sum of the two scores was obtained and intended as the ultimate score for each item.

And the last phase was the instruction implementation in which the explicit metapragmatic instruction and the designed materials in speech act patterns, rules, and strategies were given to both low and high proficiency learners in the experimental groups. The focus of the study was limited to three speech acts of request, apology, and complaint. The rationale behind their selection was the frequency of their occurrence in daily communication and the fact that these speech acts are well explored in the cross-cultural or interlanguage pragmatics literature. The control groups received only the input-based and skill-oriented instructions and materials that are currently practiced in EFL education in Iran. The production test and the comprehension test were administered to the four groups as pretest to account for their prior pragmatic knowledge. The explicit metapragmatic instruction took about 30 minutes of each 2 hour class period and lasted for 12 sessions. The explicit metapragmatic instructional activities included descriptions, explanations, teacher-fronted discussions, small-group discussions, role plays, pragmatically focused tasks, and introspective feedback.

More specifically, the metapragmatic instruction for the experimental groups began

with a teacher-fronted discussion of the various pragmalinguistic forms through which a communicative act is realized in different contexts emphasizing the role that contextual (sociopragmatic) variables play in language users' preference for a certain appropriate form. The students were then divided into different groups to discuss the realization patterns of the speech acts of interest in first language (L1) and L2 based on the scenarios introduced to them. Several groups of students also volunteered to role play the intended speech acts for the whole class. After each role play, a metapragmatic evaluation or assessment of the task was given by the groups themselves, by the class, and by the instructor. The students' sociopragmatic or pragmalinguistic deviations while communicating in simulated L2 contexts were taken as starting-points to provide the class with related metapragmatic information. Instructional materials were given out to the students. Moreover, a discourse completion task was introduced and the groups were required to negotiate the appropriate speech act for the situation in question and then to compare their output with that of other groups. Finally, they were provided with L2 dialogues based on movie episodes and were asked to assess and analyze the performed communicative acts. Finally, all the groups were posttested using the same pragmatic comprehension and production tests.

4. Results

The study employed a pretest-posttest-control-group design. Descriptive statistics were first computed to explore the data. Then, a repeated-measures MANOVA and follow-up Scheffe-test results were carried out to compare the group means. The preliminary descriptive statistics of the scores of the various groups at different levels on various tests at multiple points in time, i.e., comprehension pretest (compre) and posttest (compost) vs. production pretest (prodpre) and posttest (prodpost), are shown in Table 1. An inspection of the means indicates certain

differences between the posttests of the control and experimental groups of both language proficiency levels.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Comprehension and Production Pretests and Posttests

Test	Time	level	Group	N	Mean	SD	SE	Min	Max
Pragmatic Comprehension	Posttest	L	Con	30	27.00	5.62	1.02	15.00	39.00
		L	Exp	30	30.10	8.99	1.64	18.00	48.00
		H	Con	30	30.70	6.89	1.25	18.00	45.00
		H	Exp	30	30.00	6.40	1.16	15.00	42.00
Pragmatic Comprehension	Posttest	L	Con	30	28.30	3.99	.72	21.00	36.00
		L	Exp	30	50.90	5.59	1.02	42.00	60.00
		H	Con	30	31.50	6.90	1.26	21.00	48.00
		H	Exp	30	52.00	8.67	1.58	36.00	69.00
Pragmatic Production	Pretest	L	Con	30	31.10	7.14	1.30	16.00	44.00
		L	Exp	30	30.78	9.99	1.82	12.00	51.00
		H	Con	30	36.51	7.31	1.33	23.00	53.00
		H	Exp	30	32.96	9.64	1.75	13.00	51.00
Pragmatic Production	Posttest	L	Con	30	31.36	7.13	1.30	20.00	49.00
		L	Exp	30	46.73	11.46	2.08	24.00	70.00
		H	Con	30	37.76	7.78	1.41	24.00	55.00
		H	Exp	30	51.48	9.01	1.65	35.00	68.00

In addition, a repeated-measures MANOVA was run to compare the mean performances of the groups involved in the study, detect the significant differences among the groups, and determine the effects of independent variables on dependent variables or interactions among them. The independent variables for this MANOVA were (a) instruction group (with or without explicit metapragmatic instruction) and (b) L2 learners' level of language proficiency (L and H). The dependent variables were (a) speech act comprehension ability (repeated measures, i.e., pretest and posttest) and (b) speech act production ability (repeated measures, i.e., pretest and posttest). In this MANOVA, the experimental variables are arranged in a $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2$ factorial design, that is, level (L vs. H) \times group (control vs. experimental) \times test (comprehension vs. production) \times time (pretest vs. posttest).

The repeated-measures MANOVA comparisons of the instructional groups shown in Table 2 indicate that there were statistically significant

differences among the (control vs. experimental) groups on their scores across the pretest and posttest times ($F = 595.97$, $p = 0.000$). In other words, the experimental groups outperformed the control groups on the posttests after receiving the explicit metapragmatic instruction. Moreover, significant effects were not found for any $Level \times Group \times Time$ interaction ($F = 1.60$, $p = 0.20$). This absence of any interaction supports the idea that there is no relationship between the subjects' levels of language proficiency and the meaningful group differences under the effects of the metapragmatic instruction. Simply put, the learners' level of language proficiency was not an influential factor affecting their over-time pragmatic improvement caused by the instructional activities and materials.

Table 2*Summary of the Results of Repeated-measures MANOVA of the Groups and Levels*

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig
Group × Time	10170.60	1	10170.60	595.97	.000
Level × Group	218.03	1	218.03	1.60	.208
Level × Time	33.87	1	33.87	1.98	.162
Level × Test	220.73	1	220.73	3.18	.077
Level × Group × Time	20.21	1	20.21	1.18	.280
Level × Group × Test	1.94	1	1.94	.03	.868
Level × Test × Time	15.23	1	15.23	.59	.443
Level × Group × Test × Time	.53	1	.53	.00	.975

One of the (hidden) factors that was investigated and analyzed in this research design was test, which included pragmatics comprehension and production tests. These were used to measure the subjects' comprehension ability as well as their production ability of speech acts, respectively, designed as the multiple dependent variables of the study. There was no statistically significant *Level × Group × Test* interaction ($F = 0.03$, $p = 0.868$) specifying that the pragmatic instruction resulted in equally significant improvement in the students' pragmatic comprehension and production abilities.

The complementary results of the Scheffe test are displayed in Table 3. The results indicate that the experimental groups' performances on

the posttests of both comprehension and production tests were significantly higher than the group's pretests as well as the control groups' pretest and posttest performances on the same tests separately. More precisely, in the absence of the explicit metapragmatic instruction, the performances of the low level groups and the high level groups on the speech act comprehension and production tests were both more or less the same. However, things dramatically changed for the experimental groups of both low and high levels on their posttests in the light of the instruction. That is, the explicit metapragmatic instruction in speech act patterns, rules, and strategies did result in significant pragmatic gains for both levels nearly to the same extent.

Table 3*The Results of the Scheffe Test*

Comparison	Obs. Difference	Crit. Difference	Sig.
L-Exp-Compost vs. L-Con-Compost	22.6	10.22	*
L-Exp-Compost vs. L-Exp-Compre	20.8	10.22	*
H-Exp-Compost vs. H-Con-Compost	20.5	10.22	*
H-Exp-Compost vs. H-Exp-Compre	22	10.22	*
L-Exp-Prodpost vs. L-Con-Prodpost	15.37	10.22	*
L-Exp-Prodpost vs. L-Exp-Prodpre	15.95	10.22	*
H-Exp-Prodpost vs. H-Con-Prodpost	13.75	10.22	*
H-Exp-Prodpost vs. H-Exp-Prodpre	18.52	10.22	*

(*) denotes significant differences at .05 level.

5. Discussion

The results of this study supported the claim that explicit metapragmatic instruction

facilitates interlanguage pragmatic development. Most specifically, Iranian EFL students' speech act comprehension as well as production abilities improved significantly due

to the effect of the explicit metapragmatic instruction in speech act patterns, rules, and strategies. Thus, awareness or consciousness-raising can be influential in acquiring pragmatic competence. Further, the findings sufficiently warranted the conclusion that the learners' level of language proficiency had no significant role in the incorporation of the instruction into the language education process. In other words, the variable of Level was not a determinant factor; therefore, L2 learners' level of language proficiency had no significant interaction with the variables under study. It has provided support for Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis, which claims that learners' noticing of the target features is a requirement for further second language development. He asserts that noticing is an essential prerequisite to a learner's ability to convert input to intake. Instruction can cause noticing and create awareness on the part of learners (Brown, 2007).

The findings run counter to the belief that different aspect of L2 pragmatics, both pragmlinguistic and sociopragmatic, develop sufficiently without instruction. The fact is that adult learners get a considerable amount of L2 language pragmatic development for free. The reason is that some pragmatic knowledge is universal, some transferable from the learners' L1. However, learners do not always use what they know, and pedagogical interventions can make them aware of what they already know and encourage them to use their universal or transferable L1 pragmatic knowledge in L2 contexts (Kasper, Rose, 2001). Bialystok (1993) underscores the significant role that existing pragmatics knowledge plays in L2 learning and believes that language instruction purposefully builds on this knowledge (Kasper, Rose, 2001).

The result casts light on the role of collaborative output production in teaching and learning of interlanguage pragmatics. By role-playing and participating in collaborative learning tasks, L2 learners take advantage of a

multitude of opportunities to notice gaps in their knowledge and receive related explicit metapragmatic information. The explicit teaching of pragmatics and the assistance a learner receives through collaboration or interaction with more skillful L2 users would lead to the development of pragmatic competence. In fact, a teacher can serve as a scaffold upon which learners can construct new knowledge. Although this study did not deal with the sequence of acquiring speech act patterns and strategies, it showed that explicit metapragmatic instruction in these patterns and strategies made very significant contributions to the learners' speech act comprehension and production processes.

This study joins the abundant literature on the facilitative effects of instruction on second and foreign language learning in general (Aksoyalp, 2009; Alco'n, 2005; Doughty, 2003; Kasper, 2001; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Martinez-Flor et al., 2003; Olshtain & Cohen, 1990), and the benefits of instruction on the development of learners' pragmatic competence in the speech acts of request (Alco'n, 2005; Dastjerdi & Rezvani 2010, Tateyama, 2008), apology (Alco'n & Pitarch, 2010; Silvia, 2003), and complaint (Martínez-Flor & Alco'n, 2007; Martínez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005), in particular. In addition, the finding emphasizes the effectiveness of the two different instructional conditions, explicit and implicit, and contributes to the previous research (Bardovi-Harlig & Griffin, 2005; Teteyama, 2001; Tateyama, 2008; Yoshimi, 2001).

To sum up, the findings of the current study underscored the fact that significant improvement or interlanguage pragmatic development can be obtained in L2 learners' speech act comprehension and production abilities as a result of the beneficial effects of explicit metapragmatic instruction. Several pedagogical implications may be drawn from the results of the present study. First, it has been shown that incorporating specific

instructional activities into the classrooms will foster L2 learners' pragmatic ability. Thus, a focus on pragmatics should be included as part of the language teaching syllabus. Second, in the light of the findings, language teachers, especially in foreign language teaching (FLT) environments, could reconsider their thoughts, attitudes, and viewpoints on the effects of explicit, or any other form of, instruction on L2 learners' interlanguage development. In particular, this implication applies to L2 pragmatics, which according to many researchers is a vital area of language in FLT settings. Accordingly, explicit metapragmatic instruction can be implemented in different forms in the L2 classroom, such as providing L2 learners with rich comprehensible input, engaging them in interactive activities or productive language use, offering metapragmatic comments or information on the input features, and raising students' consciousness or awareness towards pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of pragmatic competence thereby helping them make significant gains in pragmatic ability in FL classrooms. Third, some pedagogical models have been suggested by this study that aim to provide learners with the theoretical conditions for language learning, mainly adequate input, opportunities for output and feedback. Last but not least, this study may cast light on language testing in various respects. It is suggested that some form of well-designed instruments for the assessment of pragmatic abilities sometimes seems necessary besides other well-known language proficiency tests. Not only could pragmatics tests have complementary functions but they can also be used alone for various purposes.

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