

## **The Effect of Consciousness-raising Instruction on the Pragmatic Development of Apology and Request**

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### **Abstract**

A growing body of research in interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) has documented that some features of pragmatics lend themselves well to instruction. Due to the abundant teaching approaches, nevertheless, it is still controversial which are most conducive to learning. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the effectiveness of consciousness-raising video-driven prompts on the development of two-commonly used speech acts of apology and request for sixty (22 male and 38 female) upper-intermediate Persian learners of English (ranging in age from 17 to 26) who were randomly assigned to three groups of twenty (discussion, roleplay, and interactive translation). The three groups were exposed to 36 extracts including 18 requests and 18 apologies taken from different episodes of the *Flash Forward*, and *Stargate TV* series and the film *Annie Hall*. Results of the multiple choice discourse completion test (MDCT) indicated that learners' awareness of requests and apologies benefit from all three types of instruction, but the results of the Scheffe test illustrated that the discussion group outperformed the other two groups. The findings provide insight into interlanguage pedagogy and present suggestions for EFL/ESL teachers and materials developers.

*Keywords:* Interlanguage pragmatics; Consciousness-raising; Interactive translation

### *Introduction*

Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) has received a lot of attention from researchers and practitioners, and it is still a burgeoning area in second language acquisition. Kasper and Dahl (1991) define the discipline of ILP as the study of non-native speakers' acquisition, comprehension and production of pragmatics. Within ILP development, nevertheless, the pendulum has swung towards production-oriented studies (Rose, 2009) and

comprehension is “the least well-represented, with only a handful of studies done to date” (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p.118). Moreover, although it is widely accepted that instruction plays a crucial role in the acquisition of pragmatics (Lyster, 1993, 1994; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Kasper, 1997; Rose & Kasper, 2001; Jeon & Kaya, 2006; Taguchi, 2005, 2007; Kondo, 2008), the foreign language classroom may expose students to a limited environment in which to foster pragmatics learning. There is consensus among pragmatics practitioners and theoreticians that the opportunities for human interaction are rather restricted (Lyster, 1994; Kasper & Rose, 1999; Kasper, 2001), and the materials to which the students are exposed are decontextualized (Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan, & Reynolds, 1991), and they may not produce the sociolinguistic input that is essential in order for learning to take place. Alternatively, some researchers propound that textbook conversations are rather limited and unreliable sources of input to tap for pragmatics learning (Lörscher & Schulze, 1988; Bardovi-Harlig et al., 1991; Boxer & Pickering, 1995; Gilmore, 2004). As to these limitations, studies concerning the teachability of pragmatic competence in the language classroom have been attempting to find those techniques and methods that positively affect pragmatics learning (House, 1996; Rose & Kasper, 2001; Alcón, 2002; Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003; Martínez-Flor, Usó-Juan, & Fernández-Guerra, 2003; Alcón & Martínez-Flor, 2005; Birjandi & Derakhshan, 2014; Zangoei & Derakhshan, 2014).

The acquisition of pragmatic competence in an EFL context entails not only developing mastery over linguistic but also social, and cultural elements. The complex nature of second language (L2) pragmatic development presents learners of English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) and their classroom instructors with insurmountable challenges (Jernigan, 2012). Given that the challenges are significant, and that the opportunities for human interaction are rather restricted (Lyster, 1994; Kasper & Rose, 1999; Kasper, 2001), and that the materials to which the students are exposed are decontextualized (Bardovi-Harlig et al., 1991), greater understanding of the process of L2 pragmatic development is a worthwhile objective which can provide us with enough evidence to illuminate the place of pragmatic development in the overall process of second language acquisition (SLA). Therefore, the present study examined the effectiveness of consciousness-raising video-driven vignettes on the development of two speech acts of apology and request in a foreign language classroom.

#### *Review of the Related Literature*

### **ILP, Sociopragmatics and Pragmalinguistics Defined**

Being motivated by second language acquisition principles, Kasper and Rose (2002) propose the interdisciplinary nature of interlanguage pragmatics as belonging both to pragmatics and SLA:

*As the study of second language use, interlanguage pragmatics examines how nonnative speakers comprehend and produce action in a target language. As the study of second language learning, interlanguage pragmatics investigates how L2*

*learners develop the ability to understand and perform action in a target language.*  
(Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 5)

It is evident that Kasper and Rose (2002) emphasize two important aspects of interlanguage pragmatics research. Firstly, they highlight that ILP deals with not only production but also comprehension which comprise language learners' pragmatic competence. Secondly, Kasper and Rose highlight that interlanguage pragmatics emphasizes that interlanguage pragmatics is also concerned with the *development of pragmatic competence*.

Kasper and Roever (2005) remind us of the difficulties that learners face in order to acquire the pragmatics of a second language because "they have to learn not only how to do things with target language words but also how communicative actions and the "words" that implement them are both responsive to and shape situations, activities, and social relations" (p. 317). Leech (1983) makes a distinction between two domains of pragmatic competence, namely *sociopragmatic* and *pragmalinguistic* competence. Sociopragmatic competence refers to the level of directness, formality, and/or politeness in the interaction: the extent to which these are appropriate in the given context; it also entails the choice and use of speech acts: whether the speakers' choice of speech acts is appropriate in the given context (Ishihara, 2010, p. 295). Moreover, it encompasses "the social perceptions underlying participants' interpretation and performance of communicative action" (Rose & Kasper, 2001, p.2). Pragmalinguistic competence, on the other hand, deals with the specific dimensions of language such as the choice and use of vocabulary/phrases, grammatical structures, strategies for a speech act (i.e., the selection of formulas and the way they are used), choice and use of pragmatic tone (e.g., how sincere the speaker appears with verbal and non-verbal cues), choice and use of organization (rhetorical structure) of the written/spoken discourse (e.g., introduction, body, conclusion), choice and use of discourse markers and fillers, and choice and use of epistemic stance markers (i.e., words and phrases to show the speaker's stance, such as: I think, maybe, seem, suppose, tend to, and of course) (Ishihara, 2010, p. 293). The present study aimed at developing learners' sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic competence by focusing on issues such as power, social distance, and imposition as well as strategies and forms of requests and apologies.

### **Research on ILP in EFL/ESL Contexts**

As for teaching methods or class activities, teachers can utilize activities that can be categorized as inductive, deductive, implicit or explicit approaches to instruction (Kasper, 1997) or through an informed eclectic approach. Following DeCoo (1996), in our instructional approach we did not make a dichotomous division between 'explicit' and 'implicit,' nor did we draw on 'deductive' and 'inductive' instruction. Rather our approach to intervention was based on purposeful class activities, that is, informed eclecticism, in the form of discussion, peer work, small-group discussion, interactive translation, and role-plays.

As to the many types of teaching approaches, the present study drew on interactive translation, roleplay, and discussion as the three interventional approaches which are explicated as follows. House (2008) believes that translation would play an eminently

fruitful role in developing learners' communicative competence. She suggests that the use of translation in an EFL context could be expanded to a whole range of translation activities involving, for example, the explicit comparison of cultural phenomena in the source and target language communities, and the creative production of both source and target language texts. House (2008) recommends that with the use of a pragmatic-discourse perspective on translation, learners can be exposed to an oral native language dialog, which is analyzed and converted into a written text in the L2. Here is an example: learners listen to a dialog in their mother tongue and analyze it on the basis of a set of discourse analytic categories. They then listen to and analyze comparable foreign language dialogs and discuss differences and similarities of interactional norms in the two languages on the basis of these analyses. The learners then create roleplays in their mother tongue based on the dialogs, enact them and translate them covertly into the target language. Finally, they produce written reports on the roleplays in the target language.

House (2008) states that another interactive translation activity uses the method of interactive thinking aloud in which pairs of learners jointly translate texts and verbalize their thoughts on their decision and solution processes during the translation process. Such joint translation activity is more motivating than thinking aloud in isolation while translating. Interactive translation tasks are preferable to the traditional boring sentence-by-sentence discussion of learners' translations by the teacher. Instead, learners themselves might be asked to evaluate their own and others' translations.

Peer activities have played indispensable roles in overcoming the discourse-structural limitations of the Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) and the asymmetrical power relations between teacher and students that the IRF produces. Peer interactions such as role-plays (Ohta, as cited in Tateyama & Kasper, 2008, p.45) have been shown to offer productive environments for developing L2 pragmatic and interactional competence. In peer interaction, students assist each other to jointly work through an activity, achieving together what they would not be able to accomplish individually. In the light of being participant-oriented, peer interactions empower students to transform the role-play set by the teacher, take advantage of learning opportunities and create opportunities for themselves and each other (Mori, as cited in Tateyama & Kasper, 2008, p.45).

Kondo (2008) investigates the effect of awareness-raising instruction on the pragmatic development of Japanese EFL learners. Thirty-eight intermediate-low Japanese learners in two separate classes (18 in each) received instruction on refusal once a week for 12 weeks. In each class, students were divided into four groups for discussions, each group consisting of four to five students. The content of class discussions after analyzing their own speech act performance revealed that the instructional procedure raised awareness concerning various pragmatic aspects in the speech act of refusals. Kondo (2008) reports that "Pragmatic Transfer" was raised in the discussions along with the learners' choices of refusal strategies.

## **Consciousness-raising and Noticing Hypotheses: The Rationales behind This Study**

Two of the most instrumental cognitive processing approaches which shed light on SLA studies are Sharwood Smith's Consciousness-Raising and Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (Sharwood Smith, 1980, 1993; Schmidt, 1993, 2001). Sharwood Smith (1980) posits that the term consciousness-raising manifests a deliberate attention to be given to the formal properties of language which aims at enhancing the development of second language knowledge. Sharwood Smith (1993) contends that "CR implies that the learner's mental state is altered by the input; hence, all input is intake" (p. 176).

In a similar line of inquiry, Schmidt (1993, 2001) argues that the noticing hypothesis mainly deals with the initial phase of input processing and the attentional requirements for input to become intake. Schmidt (2001) postulates that any target L2 feature needs to be noticed by the learner for learning to occur: "while there is subliminal perception, there is no subliminal learning" (p. 26). Because more attention results in more learning, "attention must be directed to whatever evidence is relevant for a particular learning domain, i.e. that attention must be specifically focused and not just global" (Schmidt, 2001, p. 30). The noticing hypothesis was extended to pragmatics highlighting that "in order to acquire pragmatics, one must attend to both the linguistic form of utterances and the relevant social and contextual features with which they are associated" (Schmidt, 2001, p. 30).

Underpinned by these cognitive-psychological theories, Takimoto (2006) provides empirical evidence for the claim that pragmatic features can be taught explicitly or implicitly together with input enhancement activities. He evaluated the relative effectiveness of two types of input-based instruction, consciousness-raising instruction (the consciousness-raising task only) and consciousness-raising instruction with feedback (the consciousness-raising task + reactive explicit feedback) for teaching English polite requestive forms, involving 45 Japanese EFL learners. The results indicated that the two treatment groups outperformed the control group.

Kargar, Sadighi, and Ahmadi (2012) investigate the relative effectiveness of different types of pragmatic instruction on the production of apologetic utterances in an Iranian EFL context. The instructions included two collaborative translation tasks and two structured input tasks with and without explicit pragmatic instruction. The participants were 150 university low-intermediate EFL learners in four experimental groups and one control group in pre-tests, post-tests and two month follow-ups consisting of an oral pragmatic discourse completion task (OPDCT), mobile short message tasks and telephone conversation tasks. The results of the study showed that pragmatic instruction may enhance ILP. The researchers found that the participants receiving explicit pragmatic instruction outperformed the implicit and control groups, and the two collaborative translation task groups showed better retention of pragmatic knowledge.

## **Pragmatic Language Learning: Video-driven Prompts as an Influential Source of Input**

It seems axiomatic that the main source of input in classroom settings has been textbooks. However, teachers are becoming more cognizant that the acquisition of speech acts through textbooks or other instructional materials is unlikely, since they do not provide learners with the three necessary conditions to develop their pragmatic competence, namely (1) exposure to appropriate input, (2) opportunities for collaborative practice in a written and oral mode and/or (3) metapragmatic reflection (Kasper, 2001; Kasper & Roever, 2005). With regard to the first condition, several studies have documented that often textbooks do not present speech acts at all, and when they do, they may not represent language use (Boxer & Pickering, 1995). In fact, video input has long been regarded as an irreplaceable resource that facilitates the language learning process in the classroom setting since it provides learners with realistic models to imitate and enhance their audio-visual perceptions (Sherman, 2003). Canning-Wilson (2000) states that video brings a contextualized view of language to the classroom which in turn helps learners visualize words and meanings as well as norms and conventions for appropriate language use. Consequently, the implementation of video can be an alternative source for presenting pragmatic features in the classroom (Rose, 1994, 2009). Research lends support to the fact that authentic audiovisual input provides ample opportunities to present learners with different speech acts in various social and cultural contexts (Lörscher & Schulze, 1988; Stempleski & Tomalin, 1990; Boxer & Pickering, 1995; Fluitt Dupuy, 2001; Dufon, 2002; Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004; Alcón, 2005; Zangoei & Derakhshan, 2014).

Kasper (1997) argues that “one way to overcome the inherent limitations of a FL environment is through the use of television and film, which represent rich sources of data on language use and should be fully exploited in teacher education.” (P. 134). Garza (1996), for example, places a premium upon the effectiveness of videos stating that compared to textbook explanations and audio taped conversations, videos can provide a simulation of the real immersion experience with samples of the target language (TL) and culture. Smith (1993) argues that “consciousness-raising (CR) implies that the learner’s mental state is altered by the input; hence, all input is intake” (p. 176). Rose (1994) observes that videotaped discourse contains “rich recoverable contexts which can be exploited in consciousness-raising activities” (p. 58). Given that CR plays a crucial role in enhancing properties of language, Rose (1994) introduces video-prompts as an approach for promoting pragmatic consciousness-raising since they can provide the fundamental aspects of pragmatics which can be capitalized upon by teachers of both native and non-native speakers.

Taking into consideration the usefulness of video-prompts, Jernigan (2007, 2012) examined the effectiveness of output-focused, video-based instruction on the development of second language intercultural pragmatics among 34 (18 male and 16 female) adult ESL learners representing different first language backgrounds in an intensive English program setting. The treatment period lasted for five days during which the participants were exposed to a series of 12 video vignettes. The learners in the + Output group were asked to reconstruct the vignettes after viewing them and

having access to the transcripts for a limited period. They were sometimes asked to reconstruct the vignettes in writing, and at other times, orally. The – Output group participants were told to respond to several comprehension questions after viewing each video vignette and having access to the transcript. The results indicated that the instructional treatment had a significant effect on a written pragmatic acceptability judgment task (PAJT). Results on a written discourse completion task (DCT) were mixed; no significant effects were identified, but a relatively large effect size was calculated for the output group.

Moreover, Alcón (2005) investigates the efficacy of explicit versus implicit instruction on the ability to use request strategies. One hundred and thirty-two students were randomly assigned to three groups (explicit, implicit and control). The three groups were exposed to excerpts, including requests, extracted from different episodes of the TV series *Stargate*. However, while the explicit group received instruction by means of direct awareness-raising tasks and written metapragmatic feedback on the use of appropriate requests, the implicit group was provided with request strategies and a set of implicit awareness-raising tasks. Results of the study demonstrate that learners' awareness of requests benefit from both explicit and implicit instruction. However, in line with previous research, this study illustrates that, although an improvement in learners' appropriate use of requests took place after the instructional period, the explicit group showed an advantage over the implicit one.

Birjandi and Derakhshan (2014) investigated the relative effectiveness of consciousness-raising video-driven prompts on the comprehension of three speech acts of apology, request, and refusal for 78 (36 male and 42 female) upper-intermediate Persian learners of English who were randomly assigned to four groups (metapragmatic, form-search, roleplay, and control). The four groups were exposed to 45 video vignettes (15 for each speech act) extracted from different episodes of *Flash Forward*, *Stargate TV Series* and *Annie Hall* (Film) for nine 60-minute sessions of instruction twice a week. Results of the multiple choice discourse completion test (MDCT) indicated that learners' awareness of apologies, requests and refusals benefit from all three types of instruction, but the results of Tukey's Post hoc test (HSD) showed that the metapragmatic group outperformed the other treatment groups, and the form-search group did better than the role-play and control groups.

Given that the video medium as a teaching and learning tool has some distinct advantages over naturalistic observations and textbooks (Loneragan, 1984; Stempleski & Tomalin, 1990; Rose, 1994; Koike, 1995; Garza, 1996; Swaffar & Vlatten, 1997; Grant & Starks, 2001; Alcón, 2002; Martínez-Flor 2007; Derakhshan & Zangoei, 2014), and given that, to our knowledge, no research (except Jernigan, 2007, 2012), has empirically scrutinized the effectiveness of video prompts on the development of speech acts, it makes sense to bridge the gap by doing a study on the effectiveness of consciousness-raising video-driven prompts on the development of two frequently used speech acts, namely request and apology, in a foreign language classroom.

### *Research Questions*

In order to bridge the gap in the existing literature on ILP and to investigate the possible contributions of a different kind of input, video vignettes in the context of classroom-based instruction for the development of L2 pragmatic competence, this study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of consciousness-raising video-driven prompts on the development of two frequently used speech acts of apology and request. The study addressed two main questions:

1. What, if any, is the effect of consciousness-raising video-driven prompts on EFL learners' pragmatic development of apologies and requests?
2. As far as pragmatic development is concerned, is there a difference in students' performance across the three groups – discussion, role-play, and interactive translation – after having received instruction through consciousness-raising video-driven vignettes?

### *Methodology*

#### **Participants**

Sixty Persian learners of English (22 male and 38 female) ranging in age from 17 to 26 (average age 20.14) were selected from among 93 English language learners based on the Interchange Series Placement and Evaluation Package. 83% of them had studied English between two and three years, and the rest had studied between three and four years at an English language institute plus the number of years they had studied English at school. They had all learned English in the foreign language classroom with no experience of visiting an English speaking country. According to this Placement and Evaluation Package (Lesley, Hansen, & Zukowski, 2008), all the participants were upper-intermediate learners of English. They were then divided into three groups – discussion group, roleplay group, and interactive translation group. Each group consisted of 20 students. The discussion group had 8 male and 12 female students; the roleplay and interactive translation groups had 7 male and 13 female students each.

#### **Test Instruments**

A multiple-choice discourse completion task (MDCT) (adopted from Liu, 2007; Birjandi & Rezaei, 2010) encompassing two speech acts, namely 10 request items and 10 apology items, was drawn upon to assess the participants' present level of pragmatic proficiency. In addition, five MDCT fillers assessing compliments were also added to distract the participants from the main purpose of the study. After having been taught for six 90-minute sessions (See Procedure Section Below), participants in each group took the post test. The posttest consisted of the same MDCT but in a different order to minimize the practice test effect. Two sample items from Liu (2007), and Birjandi and Rezaei (2010) follow:

**Situation:** You are now in a bookstore. While you are looking for the books you want, you accidentally find a book that you have been looking for a long time. You are so excited that you rush out of the bookstore with the book without paying for it. When the shop assistant stops you, you realize that you forgot to pay for it. You apologize.



- a. Oh, I'm sorry! I was too happy! I like this book and have been looking for it for a long time.
- b. I'm very sorry that I forgot to pay for the book because I was so excited. I've been looking for it for a long time. I hope you can forgive my behavior.
- \*c. Oh, I'm so sorry. I was so excited about finding this book that I have been looking for ages that I just plain forgot to pay. I really am very sorry, how much do I owe you? (Liu, 2007, p. 415)

**Situation:** Suppose you are late for an important class and the teacher is very punctual and principled. How would you express your apology in this situation?

The Teacher: This is the third time you're late for this class. Next time I won't let you in. You .....

- \*a. I understand. I won't be late again.
- b. Sorry but the important thing is that I attend, right?
- c. Things happen in life, sorry. (Birjandi & Rezaei, 2010, p.53)

### **Scoring System and Reliability**

Since just one answer was regarded as the correct answer, correct responses and incorrect ones were assigned 1 and 0, respectively. To determine the reliability index of binary variables the Kuder–Richardson *Formula 20 (KR-20)* was employed which is a special case of Cronbach's Alpha. The internal consistency and reliability of the pragmatic rating rubric used in the present study to assess the responses of the participants on the DCT was obviously an important area of concern in reviewing the study results. The results of the calculations of the coefficient alpha for internal consistency indicated acceptable level for the DCT ( $\alpha = .823$ ). The reliability level calculated for these results were above the 0.7 threshold considered acceptable in social science research (Vogt, 2005).

### **Instructional Treatment Materials**

Thirty six video vignettes (18 requests and 18 apologies) were extracted from different episodes of the *Flash Forward*, and *Stargate TV* series and the film *Annie Hall*. Alcón (2005) takes advantage of the *Stargate TV* series by working on the identification and analysis of direct and indirect requests. Following Rose (1999), the film *Annie Hall* was selected because it could provide the students with the analysis of language forms and strategies of requests and apologies as well as good discussions of the appropriateness of forms in relation to the contexts. The number of video prompts for each speech act was 18 covering various situations such as work, school, home, hospital, prison, and store to name just a few. The excerpts encompass direct requests (*Annie, tell Dr. Flicker; Stop it, Annie*), conventionally indirect (*Annie, would you like a lift?*), and non-conventionally indirect requests (*I have a car; Annie's friend talking to him at the gym*). The vignettes also included different strategies of apologies such as an expression of apology (*I'm really sorry.*), acknowledgment of responsibility (*It was all my fault.*), an explanation or account (*I got stuck in the traffic.*), an offer of repair (*How can I make it up*

to you? Can I buy you lunch on Friday?), and a promise of non-recurrence (*I'll make sure to turn the volume down.*) (Cohen & Olshtain, 1981, pp. 119-125).

It is worth mentioning that regarding the variability of the extracts with respect to sociopragmatic elements such as power relation between the interlocutors (P), social distance (D), and the degree of imposition (I), ten extracts involved interaction between peers, colleagues, and spouses (approximately equal P at relatively low D), three extracts featured interaction between a boss and an employee (higher-to-lower P at relatively high D); four extracts featured interaction between an employee and a boss (lower-to-higher P at moderate D); two extracts were between a father and son (higher-to-lower P at relatively low D); two extracts involved interaction between patients and physicians (lower-to-higher P at high D); one extract featured interaction between a client and a counselor (lower to higher P at relatively low D); one extract involved interaction between an interrogator and a criminal (higher-to-lower P at a high D); two extracts involved interaction between nurses and physicians (lower-to-higher P at moderate D); one extract featured interaction between the president and audience (higher-to-lower P at a high D); two extracts involved interaction between customers and waiter/waitress (higher-to-lower P at high D); two extracts featured a teacher interacting with a student (higher-to-lower P at relatively moderate D); two extracts involved interaction between customers and clerks at the shopping center (higher-to-lower P at relatively high D), two extracts featured a prisoner interacting with a guard (lower-to-higher P at high D); one extract featured a son and father (lower-to-higher P at low D), and one extract featured a mom and daughter (higher-to-lower P at relatively low D). In terms of the degree of intensity or imposition (I), it varied depending on the situation. The vignettes last from 25 to 56 seconds.

### **Procedure**

The three groups were exposed to vignettes extracted from different episodes of the *Flash Forward*, and *Stargate TV* series and the film *Annie Hall*. The major objective of showing these vignettes was to make students aware of the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic aspects involved in making requests and apologies. Each group received six 90-minute sessions of instruction with the video prompts twice a week plus two sessions for the pretest and posttest. The treatment that each group received is described separately as follows:

### **Discussion Group**

The twenty students (8 male and 12 female) in this group were provided with opportunities to watch and analyze comparable target language dialogs and interactions and discuss the differences and similarities of interactional norms in Persian and English on the basis of these analyses. In each session, they worked on 6 video excerpts, 3 apologies and 3 requests for six 90-minute sessions of instruction twice a week. After watching the excerpt two or three times, students discussed different patterns and ways of making requests and apologies in different situations both formally and informally, and the scripts were given to them. They also discussed the role relationships between the interlocutors, the distance between them, and the degree of imposition. Different strategies for making requests and apologies were discussed from direct request

strategies to non-conventionally indirect request strategies and from simple apologies to a promise of non-occurrence. Moreover, from the pragmalinguistic vantage point, specific dimensions of language were discussed including the choice and use of vocabulary and phrases (e.g., *a big favor*), grammatical structures (e.g., I was wondering if.....), strategies for a speech act (i.e., the selection of formulas and the way they are used (e.g., giving a reason for request, apologizing for trouble), choice and use of pragmatic tone, and choice and use of discourse markers (e.g., by the way, well,.....).

### **The Role-Play Group**

The twenty students (7 male and 13 female) in this group watched 6 video excerpts, 3 apologies and 3 requests per session for six 90-minute sessions of instruction twice a week until they understood the conversations. They were also allowed to take notes as they were watching the episodes, and then played roles like the native models. Students were also provided with the scripts. They acted out different patterns and ways of making requests and apologies in different situations both formally and informally. They also worked on the role relationships between the interlocutors, the distance between them, and the degree of imposition. Like the discussion group, different strategies for making requests and apologizing were acted out from direct request strategies to non-conventionally indirect request strategies and from simple apologies to a promise of non-occurrence.

Taking into account the pragmalinguistic elements, like the discussion group, the researchers embarked on specific dimensions of language such as the choice and use of vocabulary and phrases, grammatical structures, strategies for a speech act, choice and use of pragmatic tone, and choice and use of discourse markers.

### **Interactive Translation Group**

Students (7 male and 13 female) in this group worked on six video excerpts, three apologies and three requests per session for six 90-minute sessions of instruction twice a week. This kind of interactive translation activity used the method of interactive *thinking aloud*. That is, pairs of learners cooperatively translated texts and verbalized their thoughts on their decision and solution processes during the translation process (House, 2008). Students were provided with the scripts so that they could rigorously engage in the interactive translation process. House (2008) believes that such joint translation activity is more motivating than thinking aloud in isolation while translating. They worked on different patterns and ways of making requests and apologies in different situations both formally and informally. They also negotiated the role relationships between the interlocutors, distance, and imposition. Like the other two groups, different strategies for making requests and apologizing were displayed to the students from direct request strategies to non-conventionally indirect request strategies and from simple apologies to a promise of non-occurrence to make them aware of different patterns of translation. Like the other two groups, the pragmalinguistic features of language were brought to the fore.

## Data Analysis

In order to determine if any pragmatic development occurred between the pre- and post-test, a t-test for repeated measure data was used. In order to measure inter-group differences and development ANOVA and the Scheffe test were used.

### Results

**Research Question 1: What, if any, is the effect of consciousness-raising video-driven prompts on EFL learners' pragmatic development of apology and request?**

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics on the scores obtained by the three groups in the pretest and post-test. The table shows, for instance, that the three groups were homogenous at the outset of the study. Moreover, as can be seen in this table, the total mean (14.38) of the three groups in the post-test was higher than that (10.08) of the three groups in the pre-test, showing that the instruction has had an effect on the participants' pragmatic development. The mean of the discussion group was 1.9 higher than that of the role-play group and 0.1 higher than that of the interactive translation group. Moreover, the mean of the interactive translation group was 1.8 higher than that of the role-play group.

**Table 1. Summary of descriptive statistics of the three groups at the beginning and end of the instructional period**

Group	Test	N	M	SD
Discussion	Pre-test	20	10.0	2.8635
	Post-test		15.05	1.9615
Role-play	Pre-test	20	10.15	2.1511
	Post-test		13.15	2.2643
Interactive Translation	Pre-test	20	10.1	2.1656
	Post-test		14.95	2.0609
Total	Pretest	60	10.08	2.3973
	Post-test		14.38	2.2737

In order to find out more about the exact amount of progress in each group and to measure whether the difference between pretest and posttest was significantly different at  $p < 0.05$ , the data were submitted to a t-test for repeated measure. As illustrated in Table 2, the results of the t-test for repeated measures data for the first group, that is, the discussion group, indicate that the level of significance (0.000) is much lower than the one specified for the study (0.05), and this reveals that the video-driven prompts have led to the development of interlanguage pragmatics. Another piece of evidence is the fact that  $t(39) = 21.63, p < 0.05$ . The findings are suggestive of the fact that pragmatics is amenable to instruction.

**Table 2 . T-test for repeated measure data for the discussion group: T-test results for group 1**

Pretest to posttest scores of G1 (Amount of Progress)	Paired Differences				
	Mean	SD	T	df	Sig.
Test Scores	1.102	3.2224	21.638	39	0.000

As Table 3 indicates, the output for the second t-test for repeated measure data shows that video-driven prompts in the role-play group accounted for the pragmatic development. This can be seen in the level of significance (0.000) which is below the specified level of .05, that is,  $t(39) = 26.14, p < 0.05$ . There is also another piece of evidence, i.e., the observed t-score which is higher than the critical value of t.

**Table 3. T-test for repeated measure data for the role-play group: T-test results for group 2**

Pretest to posttest scores of G2 (Amount of Progress)	Paired Differences				
	Mean	SD	T	df	Sig.
Test Scores	1.015	2.4552	26.146	39	0.000

The results of the third t-test for repeated measure data show that the instruction made a difference. This is verified through the magnitude of the level of significance (0.000) which does not exceed the level of significance (.05), that is,  $t(39) = 21.63, p < 0.05$ . The output also bears evidence that t-observed is larger than the t-critical, so we can conclude that video-driven prompts in the interactive translation group led to pragmatic development. On the basis of the results it can be concluded that regardless of the kind of treatment each group received, their interlanguage pragmatics developed over these six sessions of instruction.

**Table 4. T-test for repeated measure data for the interactive translation group: T-test results for group 3**

Pretest to posttest scores of G3 (Amount of Progress)	Paired Differences				
	Mean	SD	T	df	Sig.
Test Scores	1.025	2.8955	24.082	39	0.000

**Research Question 2: As far as pragmatic development is concerned, is there a difference in students' performance across the three groups- discussion, roleplay, and interactive translation-after having received instruction through consciousness-raising video-driven vignettes?**

The effect of the three kinds of interventional treatments on developing pragmatic competence in requests and apologies was measured by analyzing learners' awareness of requests and apologies in the post-test. Regarding the learners' performance on the post-test and seeking the answer to the second research question, we were interested in comparing the three groups simultaneously to see if there were any meaningful differences among them. Therefore, a one-way ANOVA statistical test was applied. As seen in Table 5, the amount of variability between groups (SS between groups= 54.700) is greater than the amount of variability within the groups (SS within groups= 30.550), which indicates that there is some difference in the groups. Moreover, the F ratio (with two degrees of freedom) is larger than the observed value of  $F$  (51.029), which means that significant group differences were observed with regard to performance of the three groups. The ANOVA table shows the fact that there is a meaningful difference, but it does not indicate where exactly the differences are. So, in order to pinpoint exactly where the differences lie we resorted to a post hoc Scheffe test.

**Table 5. ANOVA for learners' development of requests and apologies in the post-test**

	SS	df	MS	F	P
Between Groups	54.700	2	27.350	51.029	<b>0.000</b>
Within Groups	30.550	57	.536		
Total	85.250	59			

Table 6 shows that there is a meaningful difference between discussion group (G1), and roleplay group (G2) (level of sig, .000), but not between discussion group (G1) and interactive group (G3) which holds a level of significance of (.977). There is also a meaningful difference between the role-play group (G2) and the interactive translation group (G3) (level of sig, .000).

**Table 6. Multiple comparisons using Scheffe test**

(I) Groups	(J) Groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
G1	G2	2.05000*	.23151	<b>.000</b>	1.4681	2.6319
	G3	.05000	.23151	.977	-.5319	.6319
G2	G1	-2.05000*	.23151	<b>.000</b>	-2.6319	-1.4681
	G3	-2.00000*	.23151	<b>.000</b>	-2.5819	-1.4181
G3	G1	-.05000	.23151	.977	-.6319	.5319
	G2	2.00000*	.23151	<b>.000</b>	1.4181	2.5819

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.	
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### *Discussion*

This study revealed an improvement of pragmatic ability among EFL learners over a 4-week period in terms of making direct requests, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect requests, and also apologizing by using an expression of apology, acknowledgment of responsibility, an explanation or account, an offer of repair, and a promise of non-recurrence. The findings of our study confirm previous research showing that pragmatic features are amenable to instruction through awareness-raising activities (Olshtain & Cohen, 1990; Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Rose & Kasper, 2001; Alcón, 2005; Alcón & Martínez-Flor, 2005; Kasper & Roever, 2005; Rose, 2005; Jernigan, 2012; Birjandi & Derakhshan, 2014; Zangoei & Derakhshan, 2014).

Rose and Kasper (2001) call for a need to make a link between interlanguage pragmatic research and second language acquisition theories. Taking into consideration the learners' pragmatic gain, our data lend support to Schmidt's (1993) noticing hypothesis and Smith's (1980) consciousness-raising since instruction has played a crucial role in making learners aware of a number of extra-linguistic contextual factors, for instance, social status, distance, and imposition. The results are supportive of the fact that learning in a foreign language context does not necessarily disadvantage pragmatic development (Ohta, as cited in Taguchi, 2007, p. 328). As Taguchi (2007) puts it, pragmatic learning is dependent on the way learning is organized which fosters or hinders pragmatic development. Given that CR plays a crucial role in enhancing properties of language, Rose (1994) introduces video-prompts as an approach to promote pragmatic consciousness-raising since they can provide the fundamental aspects of pragmatics which can be capitalized upon by teachers of both native and non-native speakers.

It is noteworthy to mention that in our study the discussion group performed better than the other two groups, roleplay and interactive translation, lending support to Eslami-Rasekh's (2005) seminal paper on raising the pragmatic awareness of language learners. Because the discussion group had more opportunities to discuss different sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic features of the language, they gained more and outperformed the other two treatment groups. These findings reinforce Eslami-Rasekh's (2005) theorizing about consciousness-activities. She mentions that awareness raising activities are activities designed to develop recognition of how language forms are used appropriately in context. She recommends that teachers draw upon discussion techniques to impart information drawn from research on pragmatic issues to students.

Connected with the strands of research investigating the relative effectiveness of video-prompts on pragmatic development, Jernigan (2012), for instance, studied the effectiveness of an output-focused instructional treatment featuring video vignettes in an intensive English program setting. The results of her study support the previous research on the effectiveness of instruction on pragmatic development of learners' performance on the perception-oriented pragmatic acceptability judgment test. However, the results of the written DCT pinpointing learners' ability to express

acceptable pragmalinguistic forms were less clear. In line with Jernigan's perception-oriented acceptability test, the present research lends support to the previously conducted research on the amenability of pragmatic instruction. Although Jernigan (2012) focused on production of speech acts, our study took into account the comprehension of request and refusal, but both studies confirm the teachability of pragmatics.

The results of our study are also supported by Alcón's (2005) study of the effectiveness of video-instruction on the development of requests. While Alcón focuses on the commonly dichotomous intervention, that is, explicit and implicit, the present study takes advantage of informed eclecticism. However, the findings of both studies lend support to the fact that learners' pragmatic competence in requests developed.

In line with other research using dichotomous teaching approaches such as the ones undertaken by Rose and Ng (2001), Takahashi (2001) and Alcón's (2005), our study reveals that an improvement in requesting occurred in all groups but that the discussion group had an advantage over the role-play and interactive groups. Rose and Ng (2001), comparing the use of deductive and inductive approaches for the teaching of compliments to university learners in Hong Kong, found that both types of treatment were effective as far as pragmalinguistics is concerned, while only the deductive approach encompassing metapragmatic discussion indicated that learners' sociopragmatic proficiency was developed.

Alternatively, the results of the present study are consistent with that of Birjandi and Derakhshan's (2014) findings. They report that instruction played a crucial role in improving pragmatic comprehension and that the metapragmatic group outperformed form-search and role-play groups. The results could be attributed to the claim that explicit instruction is more effective than implicit. Aligned with Birjandi and Derakhshan's (2014) study, the present research found that the discussion group outperformed the role-play group and the interactive translation group in that it had more opportunities to discuss different sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic features.

In the light of these results, we can conclude that audio-visual materials provide authentic and contextualized input for EFL/ESL learners. They boost learners' interlanguage pragmatic abilities, and the research findings lend support to the fact that the present textbooks do not take into account the most current pedagogical theories (Jiang, 2006) and that pragmatics does not play a primary role in textbooks (Boxer & Pickering, 1995). Therefore, ESL/EFL teachers should consider the limitations of textbooks used in their classes, and they should take the initiative in compensating for these drawbacks. It is therefore suggested that EFL/ESL learners need to operate independently in English outside the classroom. One way of achieving this end is to immerse them in the contextualized language through consciousness-raising tasks.

The results of our study lend support to Kondo's (2008) study investigating the effect of awareness-raising instruction on the pragmatic development of Japanese EFL learners across four groups. The content of class discussions after analyzing their own speech act performance indicated that the intervention raised the participants' awareness in terms of different pragmatic aspects in the speech act of refusals. In contrast to Kondo's (2008)



study, focusing only on refusals and explicit instruction, the present study took advantage of three teaching approaches and two speech acts.

#### *Implications of the Findings for EFL/ESL Contexts*

This study has several implications for EFL/ESL contexts. First, the significant impact of consciousness-raising video-driven prompts on the development of apology and request skills indicates that pragmatics is amenable to teaching. When teaching different speech acts, teachers can highlight those parts in the movies so that it leads to more pragmatic awareness, comprehension, and production. Teachers can also bring to the fore those conventional expressions used in video-prompts and ask learners to compare the conventional expressions cross-linguistically with their L1s. This activity could raise learners' awareness of conventionality. Teachers need to know that scenes from movies, dramas, or plays often serve as a rich source of pragmatic input because they contain a variety of conversational exchanges in which the speaker's reply does not provide a straightforward answer to the question.

Providing learners with rich and contextually appropriate input has been considered to be a necessary condition to enhance learners' pragmatic ability when understanding and performing speech acts in the target language (Kasper, 2001; Kasper & Roever, 2005; Rose, 2005). Therefore, the context in which a language is learned seems to play an indispensable role in terms of both the quantity and quality of input to which learners are exposed (Wahburn, 2001).

Alternatively, Kasper (1996) argues that one of the causes of learner's non-target-like pragmatic performance is the incomplete or misleading input provided by pedagogical materials. Providing authentic, representative language to learners is a rudimentary responsibility of classroom instruction. In other words, the asymmetrical relationship between teachers and students creates a discourse environment of teacher-student talk, and teacher-fronted discourse which does not provide pragmatically appropriate models for speech acts. Regarding the necessity of contextualized input in EFL settings and alleviating some of the inherent restrictions of EFL contexts, this study has several implications for EFL/ESL contexts. The significant impact of consciousness-raising video-driven prompts on the development of apology, request, and refusal indicated that pragmatics is teachable. Due to the lack of adequate materials and training and a lack of emphasis on pragmatic issues in EFL courses, the pedagogical implication is that teachers need to make students recognize the importance of the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features which are replete throughout language learning. This can be accomplished by providing learners with extended opportunities to receive contextualized, pragmatically appropriate input. As an extracurricular activity, teachers can ask their students to analyze movies from a pragmatic vantage point. When teaching different speech acts, teachers can highlight those parts in the movies leading to more pragmatic awareness, comprehension, and production. Teachers can also bring to the fore those conventional expressions used in video-prompts and ask learners to compare the conventional expressions cross-linguistically with their L1s. This activity could raise learners' awareness of conventionality.

In terms of pedagogy and curriculum development, the results suggest that there is a strong need to improve learners' ILP abilities and that the inclusion of pragmatics materials especially video-driven clips in curricula and learning materials is beneficial. As an extracurricular activity, teachers can ask their students to analyze movies from a pragmatic vantage point. However, care should be taken to generalize our results to other instructed foreign language learning environments if the contexts are very different.

### *Conclusion*

Teaching pragmatics sounds complex and challenging, as pragmatic behavior changes to a large extent depending on the sociocultural contexts (Kondo, 2008). However, the present study documents that pragmatics actually can be taught, and through instruction learners become cognizant and aware of pragmatic similarities and differences between their native language and the target language. The present study has investigated the effect of consciousness-raising video-driven prompts on the development of apology and request. To begin with, the results indicate that all three groups developed their interlanguage pragmatics after six sessions of instruction. It is shown that pragmatics is teachable, and learners can develop their pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence. Since videos can simulate real life situations, authenticate real life situations and bring closer approximation of real life situations to the classroom environment, they raised awareness concerning various pragmatic aspects involved in the speech acts of apology and request. Therefore, they not only do add interest to the lessons but also increase motivation. Video-prompts provide learners with a more complete image of the interlocutors and the setting, as well as information about posture, gestures, clothing and proxemics, all of which lead to more pragmatic awareness.

Secondly, the paper sought to find out which group – discussion, role-play, or interactive translation – performed better. The results indicated that the discussion group outperformed the other two in providing more pragmatic knowledge about apologies and requests. One reason for that lies in the amount of negotiation and interaction in the classroom among learners.

In a nutshell, teaching pragmatics, on the one hand, especially in EFL contexts, is a daunting undertaking, as appropriate use of language is highly bound to cultural values, situations, interlocutors, etc. On the other hand, an awareness-raising approach using video-driven prompts can sensitize learners to various pragmatic patterns and cultural differences. Moreover, since the effect of different interventional treatments may yield different outcomes depending on learning styles, learning preferences, and learning contexts, the implementation of other approaches seems desirable.

The present study contributes to the existing literature on pragmatic development and pedagogy. However, the findings could have been enhanced if a written discourse completion test had been utilized along with the MCDT to let participants produce the speech acts of apology and request. Our analysis did not account for dichotomous teaching approaches to pragmatic development, nor did it take into account the production of speech acts. Further studies are needed to investigate the

abovementioned issues. Additionally, the present study did not include any control group since our focus was mainly on the “informed eclecticism” teaching approaches. Further research is needed to include a control group. Moreover, since the effect of different interventional treatments depends highly on learners’ individual attributes, such as motivation, age, and language proficiency level, as well as variables such as the kind of input, and length of stay, future studies can take into account these variables. It should also be born in mind that a delayed posttest would yield noteworthy results.

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