Pragmatic Capabilities and Challenges: A Mixed Method Study of Gender-Based Differences in Varied Pragmatic Tasks Performances

Roohollah Maleki[1], Ali Malmir[2]*, Rajab Esfandiari[3]

[1]Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English Language, Imam Khomeini International University, Ghazvin, Iran

[2]*Assistant Professor, Department of English Language, Imam Khomeini International University, Ghazvin, Iran

[3]Associate Professor, Department of English Language, Imam Khomeini International University, Ghazvin, Iran

ABSTRACT

The present study concerned with investigating advanced L2 learners' pragmatic knowledge and the challenges of teaching and learning it. To do so, a convergent mixed-methods study was conducted. In the quantitative phase, Quick Oxford Placement Test (QOPT), Pragmatic listening comprehension test (PLCT), Multiple-choice discourse completion interlanguage pragmatic (MDCPT), and Open-ended oral discourse completion role-plays (Open-ended oral DCRPs) were given to 196 advanced L2 learners. The results yielded that the pragmatic knowledge of advanced learners is not satisfactory. They are more skilled at receptive, non-interactive productive, and then pragmalinguistic tasks than sociolinguistic ones. In other words, they are good at intrapersonal perception of pragmatic knowledge but weak at interpersonal and pragmatic social interaction. Furthermore, the gender factor was found to be insignificant. Additionally, the results of the qualitative study done using a semi-structured interview with 10 experienced Iranian EFL teachers revealed five main challenges for teaching and learning pragmatics i.e., inappropriate pedagogical material, improper pragmatic assessment, pragmatically incompetent teachers, unsuitable instructional context, and insufficient time and effort. Finally, both quantitative and qualitative results confirmed and completed each other. In light of the findings, the study provides some pedagogical implications for material developers, language teachers, language institute managers.

Keywords: Advanced L2 learner; Challenge; Pragmatics; Pragmatic competence; Pragmatic task type

INTRODUCTION

Learning L2 pragmatics is an overwhelming task. In fact, the difficulties relate to the complex nature of the process of L2 pragmatics acquisition. To master pragmatic knowledge, L2 learners must progress on linguistic competence as well as sociocultural alertness, gaining an effective understanding of the way language acts in social and cultural situations (Kasper & Roever, 2005). However, unfortunately, a large number of L2 teachers focus on teaching linguistic elements such as vocabulary, grammar, idiom, etc. They assume that by learning vocabulary and grammar, their students can acquire the language. So, they neglect the pragmalinguistic (linguistic formula) and sociocultural dimensions (power, social distance level, and imposition) of the language. Teaching these two dimensions is more severe in an EFL context with poor linguistic and pragmatic settings.

*Corresponding Author's Email:
malmir@hum.ikiu.ac.ir

Furthermore, as Barron (2003) theorized, it cannot be easy for L2 learners to master what is suitable pragmatically in various cultural and sub-cultural situations; teaching interventions will, in many cases, depend on their specific task needs (Taguchi & Roever, 2017, p. 269). Sykes (2016) argued that advanced learners have greatly established linguistic knowledge, nonetheless, they might not know how to use and organize this linguistic knowledge for achieving pragmatic purposes. University students, for instance, might take advantage of being trained in how to write complex emails about subtle topics, such as going back on a promise made to a professor. Learners in the workplace can benefit from an explicit perception of interactional norms in L2 culture (Riddiford & Holmes, 2015), and how to engage in small talk interactions, which can remain a problem even for advanced second language speakers (Cui, 2012).

Attaining pragmatic competence may be a time-consuming process. Even after several years in a target language environment, certain pragmatic features remain non-native-like (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986). According to experts, it may take up to fifteen years to attain nativelike pragmatic knowledge that is indistinguishable from that of the native speakers in the given speech community (Cohen & Weaver, 2006).

Very little research exists on teaching pragmatics for advanced learners" (Cui, 2012; Derakhshan et al., 2021, Riddiford & Holmes, 2015; Sykes, 2016, Taguchi & Roever, 2017). However, not many rigorous studies have been conducted to inspect advanced L2 learners' real pragmatic capabilities across different pragmatic tasks and the challenges they confront to learn pragmatics. Furthermore, few studies (Caprario, 2020; LoCastro, 2012; Sharif et al., 2017) have focused on challenges of L2 learners in learning pragmatics.

Moreover, a trawl through literature shows that gender effect on learning and teaching L2 pragmatics have yielded contradictory results. In fact, some of these studies have discovered positive gender effect (Ahmadi Safa & Mahmoodi, 2012; Farashaiyan & Tan, 2012; Mohammad-Bagheri, 2015; Tehrani et al., 2012; Zangoei et al., 2014) and some others have found negative effect (Malmir & Derakhshan, 2020; Kamble & Banik, 2018) on L2 pragmatics. Thus, doing this research will shed more light on the L2 pragmatics and its relation to gender.

Regarding the scarcity of empirical work in the realm of ILP competence with a particular focus on the role of pragmatics task type and gender in pragmatic knowledge of L2 learners, the present study aims to make further contributions to the field by delving into the relative effectiveness of pragmatics task type and gender on pragmatic knowledge of Iranian advanced EFL learners. In fact, in this study, the advanced L2 learners' pragmatic capabilities are measured in terms of different levels of functioning, from the easiest to the most difficult ones, i.e., receptive, non-interactive productive, and interactive productive (pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics). To shed light on the learners' pragmatic knowledge in terms of various levels of pragmatic performance and the challenges they encounter to master pragmatic ability in the Iranian EFL context, the present study attempts to address the following research questions:

RQ1. What is the status of advanced L2 learners' pragmatic knowledge across different pragmatic task types (i.e., receptive, non-interactive productive, productive, and interactive productive)?

RQ2. Do advanced L2 learners perform differently on different pragmatic task types (i.e., receptive, non-interactive productive, productive, and interactive productive)?

RQ3. Do male and female advanced L2 learners perform differently on different pragmatic task types?

RQ4. What are the challenges still left for advanced L2 learners to develop L2 pragmatic knowledge?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
Pragmatics Task Types

Taguchi and Roever (2017) categorized tasks in L2 pragmatics based on the kind of data that is elicited: reception/production lines as receptive judgment, noninteractive production, and

interactive production. The following sub-sections will discuss each type of data with some typical research instruments:

Receptive Data (Metapragmatic Judgments)

Metapragmatic judgment items or 'accept knowledge judgments' or 'appropriateness judgments' are pragmatic instruments that collect perceptions about a pragmatic feature, especially the perceptions of the way a stimulus utterance is appropriate. In addition, it elicits imposition, power, and social distance perceptions, or their comprehension of implied meaning. In fact, metapragmatic judgment items help researchers to make inferences about attention to pragmatic norms, their impressions of pragmatic meanings, as well as their pragmatic intuitions (Taguchi & Roever, 2017).

Non-interactive Productive Production Data (Discourse Completion Tasks)

According to Tateyama and Kasper (2008), discourse completion tasks are production surveys. They are the most classic and frequently applied data collection productive instruments in pragmatics (Taguchi & Kim, 2014). Basically, DCTs are written tasks in which the respondents write their ideas in a situation that is described in the prompt.

Application of DCTs is often in the tradition of speech acts and politeness research. They are aimed to elicit individual speech acts, and the dependent variable is typically the politeness level of the participant's response, demonstrated via choices of pragmalinguistic expressions and strategies. Prompts are required to explain the relationship between the imaginary interlocutor and the respondent regarding power, social distance, and imposition.

Interactive Production Data Role-Play (RP)

RPs are often viewed as a good instrument between natural data and standardized collection methods having *closed* or *open* types. Closed RPs are like oral DCTs (FélixBrasdefer, 2010), and according to Li and Taguchi (2014), they just allow a single oral answer to a scenario. In contrast, open RPs, provoke an interaction between the participant and a trained researcher, or between two participants. Role-play cards are usually used in role-plays to explain the situation and the relationship between interlocutors. Like a DCT prompt, the role-play cards might determine who speaks first. Typically, the two interlocutors cannot see each other's cards. The role-play can be designed so that the interlocutors dispute each other, solve a problem, and so on.

Elicited conversation: The application of elicited conversation is rare in L2 pragmatics research, although it is promising. To attain data through elicited conversation, the researcher usually puts dyads or groups of participants together and prepares general instructions for them on what to do. For instance, the researcher may want them to get to know each other, solve a task together, or discuss a topic such as the role of English in the world. While the conversations are arranged in advance (the interlocutors are brought together by the researcher, and they might be given a topic discussion or a task to do), the elicited conversation method differs from the role-play method since the interlocutors are not required to imagine themselves in a fictitious situation (Taguchi & Roever, 2017).

Natural interaction: Taguchi and Roever (2017) stated that natural data is often viewed as the 'gold standard' of L2 pragmatics data since it indicates how speakers talk in the real world and then most straightforwardly provides conclusions to be drawn about pragmatic abilities. In other words, natural data is actually non-elicited data, over which the researcher has no influence or control. To determine whether data is natural or not, the researcher may ask: 'If I were not involved, would the data look the same?' (p. 126). If the answer is 'yes', we are confronting truly natural data; still, this is not as direct as it might look.

Related Studies

Ahmadi Safa and Mahmoodi (2012) intended to find out if any relationship could be detected between EFL lexico-grammatical and interlanguage pragmatic competencies, and whether the gender variable was an effective moderator of this relationship or not. To do so, a

standardized lexico-grammatical proficiency test was given to a group of one hundred and ten male/female senior university students. The researchers made and validated MDCT consisting of four speech acts: disagreement, scolding, request and complaint at four different stages of formality and familiarity. After analyzing the results, there was found a positive correlation between the lexico-grammatical and pragmatic competences. Besides, they concluded that this positive correlation was more considerable among the female learners than their male counterparts.

As a secondary purpose in their study, Farashaiyan and Tan (2012) examined the relationship between gender and language proficiency as well as pragmatic knowledge. In other words, they investigated if there is any substantial variation in the males' and females' performance concerning their pragmatic knowledge and language proficiency. They employed a pragmatic competence test to measure the subjects' pragmatic knowledge. Finally, it was concluded that the female participants surpassed their male counterparts in the pragmatic and proficiency tests.

Malmir and Derakhshan (2020) explored L2 pragmatic comprehension strategies employed by 40 (20 females, 20 males) Iranian EFL learners. They intended to find out if there would be any differences between their interlanguage pragmatic comprehension strategies applied by male and female ones. They utilized three data collection instruments of a validated pragmatic test (Tajeddin & Ahmadi Safa, 2010), concurrent verbal think-aloud protocols, as well as retrospective verbal think-aloud protocols.

After analyzing the data, they found three types of pragmatic comprehension strategies. Socio-pragmatic strategies were the first group that consisted of, formality, politeness, indirectness, and distance/power influences. The second one was lexico-pragmatic strategies. The third one was the cognitive strategies that encompassed both top-down and bottom-up processing strategies. Additionally, they found that the gender effect was not of paramount importance in the use of pragmatic comprehension strategies.

Kamble and Banik (2018) conducted a study to assess and compare male and female adults' pragmatic language skills with Spastic Cerebral Palsy. A sample of 20 adult learners with Spastic CP chosen from the special schools and vocational training centers were recruited. The participants were within the age range of 18 to 25 years old, with a minimum language age of three years and above. They utilized the Revised Pragmatic protocol tool developed by Prutting and Kirchner (1987). The pragmatic protocol comprises 30 pragmatic aspects of language assessing three aspects: verbal, paralinguistic, and non-verbal aspects. Finally, they came to the conclusion that the gender effect was not significant, however, the three aspects differed significantly.

Mohammad-Bagheri (2015) examined the status of pragmatics among Iranian EFL learners. It was analyzed in terms of the degree of pragmatic knowledge EFL leaners believed to have and the degree of pragmatic knowledge they believed to receive from teachers, peers, textbooks, and exams. Also, it was pursued to realize whether or not there is a significant difference between male and female EFL learners in terms of pragmatic awareness. Analyzing the results indicated that Iranian EFL learners were mindful of the role of pragmatics and believed that their teachers are highly aware of pragmatics; nonetheless, they believed that their teachers did not teach them enough pragmatic knowledge. Besides, they came to the conclusion that the gender effect had a significant role in pragmatic awareness.

Zangoei et al. (2014) investigated the influences of contextual factors such as exposure to instruction and gender on pragmatic perception of the illocutionary act of apology of Iranian EFL learners. To do so, sixty-four upper-intermediate EFL learners (i.e., 34 males and 30 females) were recruited and voluntarily participated in their study. They equally assigned the participants to an experimental group and a control group and were given 14 sessions of instruction accompanied within the experimental class with consciousness-raising activities using listening prompts. Finally, the results approved the influence of listening-based teaching of apology speech act juxta-

posed with consciousness-raising activities on the EFL learners' pragmatic awareness. Moreover, the context-external factor of gender revealed a significant effect on the way females and males perceived the communicative act of apology in the experimental group.

Sharif et al. (2017) addressed factors and challenges that are involved in teaching and learning pragmatics in the Iranian EFL classroom context and to find out suggestions to overcome those barriers. To do so, the investigators reviewed the existing literature in four categories of teaching materials and resources, EFL classroom settings, teacher education, and pragmatics assessment. There are other individual learner factors that may have a negative effect on the teaching and learning of L2 pragmatic norms. Finally, they concluded that equipping oneself to be knowledgeable about pragmatic competence is as important as developing one's IT and technology skills. Both are indispensable tools for the world of today, irrespective of one's regional or geographical location (LoCastro, 2012, p. 308). Accordingly, EFL learners are required to get familiar with different aspects of pragmatic competence, as acquiring pragmatic knowledge can assist learners in different ways. For instance, regarding the EFL setting, it was found that classroom environments are mostly teacher-centered, structured to cover the syllabus with little time available during lessons to facilitate the practice of the language. In terms of ELT textbooks, it was approved that textbooks are principally based on the author's intuition and thus are often inadequate and simplistic, and they are sometimes incorrect for presenting L2 pragmatic norms (LoCastro, 2012).

In addition, Caprario (2020) conducted a qualitative classroom study to inspect the development of pragmatic competence in academic discussions using content analysis of learner reflective writing. His research aimed to learn about the most important challenges that learners confronted during the learning process, the reasons for those challenges, and the most effective strategies that the learners used to overcome those challenges. Furthermore, the study explored other important themes in reflective writing in relation to the students' experiences in developing their pragmatic competence through discussions. The researcher recruited five advanced English for Academic Purposes (EAP) students who were studying over the course of a semester at a Sino-US institution in China.

Also, Caprario (2020) found that self-reflection enabled the students to know the different reasons for the challenges they confronted and to develop appropriate pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic strategies to solve their problems. Moreover, self-reflection allowed the teacher to make suggestions appropriate to learners' specific needs. Furthermore, related to the challenges, causes, and strategies that students employed, some important themes emerged through content analysis such as the effect of students' emotional lives on pragmatic learning and performance, and the effectiveness of authentic communication to develop pragmatic competence for academic discussions.

METHOD
Participants
A hundred and ninety-six young male and female learners of advanced gender at different language institutes in Tehran were selected via convenience sampling (Dörnyei, 2007) to participate in this study. These advanced-level students were chosen from among 230 students after administering the OPT test. Moreover, the researcher asked 10 advanced L2 learners as well as another 10 Iranian experienced L2 instructors from both genders who were teaching English to intermediate and higher gender learners at different language institutes in Tehran to participate in a semi-structured interview.

Instruments
In this study, five instruments were used to elicit descriptive information about the current status of pragmatic knowledge of Iranian advanced L2 learners. These instruments were Quick Oxford Placement Test (QOPT), Pragmatic listening comprehension test (PLCT), Multiple-choice discourse completion interlanguage pragmatic (MDCPT), Open-ended oral discourse completion role-plays (Open-ended oral DCRPs), and Semi-structured interview.

L2 pragmatics research methods can be open based on the data collection method via elicitation, observation or experiment (Golato & Golato, 2013). In fact, Taguchi and Roever (2017) classified research methods into three main categories based on Golato and Golato's (2013) idea as follows: 1) Receptive data such as metapragmatic judgments and comprehensions that elicit the examinees' perceptions about a pragmatic feature, or measure L2 English learners' comprehension of conversational implicature; 2) Non-interactive productive production data like discourse completion tasks that are written tasks and the examinees write their answers in a situation which is laid out in the DCT prompt; and 3) Interactive production data such as role-plays, elicited conversations, and natural interactions) that the data is produced as the result of interaction between the examiner and examinee. Therefore, to compare the pragmatic results in different pragmatic task types, one instrument was selected from each of the three main research methods in pragmatic (three instruments). The five instruments that were used in this study are discussed below.

QOPT

The QOPT Version 1.1 has 60 items and measures a student's general language knowledge. This test can place the learners into the appropriate level or class for a language course. The students in this study were advanced ones, thus the students who scored between 48 and 60 were selected. Its reliability index was reported to be 0.91 by Oxford University Press Web Site (2001) as well as its content validity.

PLCT

PLCT (Garcia, 2004) was used for the purpose of assessing pragmatic comprehension accuracy in English. It includes six lengthy real conversations elicited from natural interactions in the real world. The items measure learners' accuracy to comprehend the pragmalinguistic features as well as sociopragmatic ones, for speech, acts implicatures. It contains 24 questions to check comprehension. There are 6 audio-recorded native conversations. An acceptable

reliknowledge value (r = .83) (Garcia, 2004) was achieved in his study.

MDCPT

MDCPT (Tajeddin & Malmir, 2015) has an acceptable Cronbach's reliknowledge of 0.90. It comprises 35 items. In each item, there is a situation that follows three choices. One of these choices is the most appropriate choice regarding all the pragmalinguistic, lexico-grammatical as well as sociopragmatic aspects of the contextual situations. It was not possible for these researchers to make an MDCPT test covering all speech acts considering the scope of their study. Actually, using a larger number of speech acts could make the test long and discouraging to answer. Thus, they decided to include the five main frequently used speech acts i.e., requests (n = 7), apologies (n = 9), refusals (n = 8), complaints (n = 7), and compliments/compliments (n = 4).

Open-Ended Oral Discourse Completion Role-Plays (Open-Ended Oral DCRPs)

In this study, the open RPs were used so as to provoke an interaction between the participant and a trained researcher, or between two participants (FélixBrasdefer, 2010; Li & Taguchi, 2014). Role-play cards are utilized in role-plays to explain the situation and the relationship between interlocutors and might determine who speaks first. Typically, the two interlocutors cannot see each other's cards. The role-play is designed so that the interlocutors dispute each other, solve a problem, and so on.

In this study, six scenarios were used. In each scenario, the situation is explained, and then a question follows about what the respondent would say in that situation. First, participants complete the scenarios separately in the form of DCTs through class time. Then, they are asked to do the same scenarios of open role-plays. They work in pairs on role-plays, and each role play is video recorded with the permission of the participants and transcribed at another time. The pairs, before the recording, are given some minutes to plan the way they would make their conversation.

Before administering these scenarios, three experts in applied linguistics are asked to read

the scenarios carefully and express their opinions and judgements about the content validity of the scenarios considering pragmatic factors like social distance level, power, and imposition.

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

The qualitative phase aimed at inspecting and explaining the results obtained on statistical tests and gathering in-depth and firsthand detailed accounts of perceptions, actions, and roles of the participants through the semi-structured interview (see Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In fact, by using semi-structured interviews, the researcher wanted to interview 10 advanced learners as well as 10 L2 instructors to determine the challenges advanced L2 learners face in developing L2 pragmatic competence across different pragmatics tasks. The content validity of the interview was verified via the review of the items by two specialists who evaluated the questions regarding comprehensibility, clarity, and relevance. Interview protocols were piloted on two participants, who were selected purposefully from among those who seem more extroverted in expressing one's own ideas. Thus, the order of the questions was reviewed slightly and further probing questions were made.

Design

The researcher used a mixed-methods approach, which is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and mixing or integrating both quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study (Harrison, Reilly, & Creswell, 2020). The rationale for mixing both types of data was that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods were sufficient by themselves to capture the trends and details of pragmatic ability. We used both quantitative and qualitative methods in combination to complement each other and provide a more complete picture of the research problem (Greene et al., 1989, Johnson & Turner, 2003; Tashakori & Teddlie, 1998). In fact, the present study was the concurrent type of mixed method approach as the current researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently and then compares the two databases to determine if there

were convergences, differences, or some combinations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In the quantitative phase, the researchers aimed to find out the status of learners' pragmatic knowledge across different task types, and simultaneously in the qualitative phase, the challenges in teaching and learning pragmatics to advanced L2 learners were sought. The emphasis was on both quantitative and qualitative phases equally, and finally, the mixing of these two phases occurred in the interpretation or discussion section of the study.

Data Collection Procedure

In the quantitative phase of the study, to answer the first, second, and third research questions of the study, first, OPT was administered to about 230 learners to select advanced EFL learners. Those 196 students who scored 48 to 60 were chosen to take part in the first study. Then, each student was given a consent form to be filled out expressing his permission for research participation. Afterwards, they were asked to respond to the pragmatic listening comprehension test (PLCT) in one session, multiple-choice discourse completion interlanguage pragmatic test in another session, and open-ended oral DCRPs in another session. Then, the results were entered into SPSS (Version 24) to be analyzed.

In the qualitative phase of the study, to respond to the fourth research question, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 10 advanced learners and 10 experienced Iranian EFL instructors. During the interview, the researcher asked the learners and instructors about the challenges still left for advanced L2 learners in developing L2 pragmatic knowledge. The results of the interview were recorded, and then for running a thematic analysis, they were transcribed, coded, and the main category or themes emerge using qualitative MAXQDA software to answer the related research question.

RESULTS
Quantitative Results

As it's observable in Table 1, 230 advanced students took OPT. The minimum and maximum scores were 42 and 59 respectively. The mean was 51.90 with a standard deviation of

3.77 and a standard error of .25. As we needed advanced participants, those 196 students who scored 48 or higher were chosen as the main sample of the study. The mean score for this sample was 52.97 with a standard deviation of 2.92 and a standard error of .21.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for OPT Scores before and after Sample Selection

Test	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	SE
OPT before selection	230	42	59	51.90	3.77	.25
OPT after selection	196	48	59	52.97	2.92	.21

As evident from Table 2, the mean of pragmatics knowledge for the receptive task (M = 6.00, SD = 1.33) is the highest, followed by non-interactive productive (M = 5.83, SD = 1.15), Pragmalinguistics (M = 5.59, SD = 1.22), and then sociopragmatics as the lowest one.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for Pragmatics Knowledge in Different Task Types by Gender

Pragmatics Task Type	Gender	Mean	SD	N
Receptive	Male	5.86	1.27	92
	Female	6.12	1.38	104
	Total	6.00	1.33	196
Non-interactive productive	Male	5.77	1.14	92
	Female	5.89	1.17	104
	Total	5.83	1.15	196
Pragmalinguistics	Male	5.49	1.22	92
	Female	5.68	1.21	104
	Total	5.59	1.22	196
Sociopragmatics	Male	5.00	1.26	92
	Female	5.16	1.15	104
	Total	5.09	1.20	196

Additionally, as demonstrated in Table 2 and Figure 1, receptive tasks received the highest mean, and sociopragmatics ones gained the lowest mean. In addition, Table 2 and Figure 1 indicate that the mean for female students was greater than the male ones regarding all four task types.
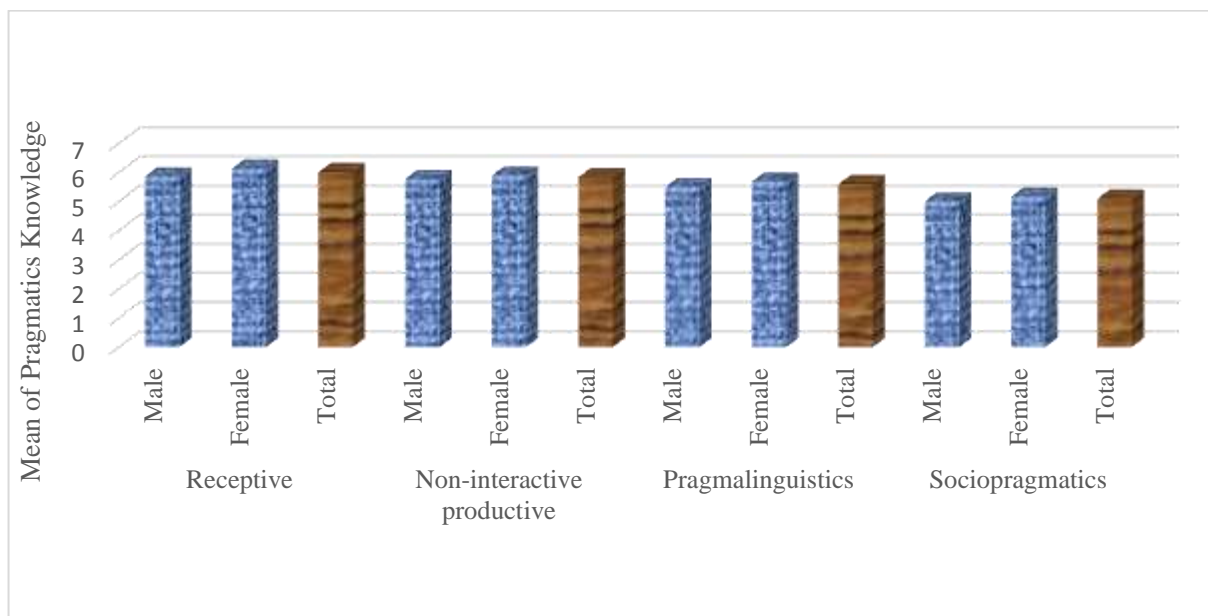

Figure 1
Bar Graph for Pragmatics Knowledge in Different Types by Gender

According to the results represented in Table 3, one sample t-test was significant for three pragmatics task types i.e., receptive ($t_{(195)} = 10.55$, $p < .05$), non-interactive productive ($t_{(195)} = 10.16$, $p < .05$), and pragmalinguistics ($t_{(195)} = 6.87$, $p < .05$) in which their means are greater than 5 as the assigned benchmark; however, it was not significant for sociopragmatics ($t_{(195)} = 1.01$, $p > .05$). That means the advanced EFL learners have learned receptive, non-interactive productive, and pragmalinguistics types of pragmatics in an acceptable level, however, this is not the case for sociopragmatics.

Table 3
One Sample T-test for Pragmatics Knowledge on Different Task Types

	Test Value = 5					
	t	**df**	**p**	**MD**	**95% CI**	
					Lower	Upper
Receptive	10.55	195	.000	1.00	.818	1.193
Non-interactive productive	10.16	195	.000	.83	.673	.998
Pragmalinguistics	6.87	195	.000	.60	.426	.769
Sociopragmatics	1.01	195	.315	.09	-.083	.256

The results indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of covariance for conducting ANOVA was not violated (*Box's M* = 12.21, $p > .05$). In addition, the results of Levene's test revealed that the assumption of homogeneity of variance is met as the significance value was greater than .05 for all four pragmatics task types, i.e., receptive, non-interactive productive, and interactive productive (pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics).

As manifested in Table 6, the partial eta square index is .54, which shows that 54 percent of the variance in the pragmatics knowledge scores is due to pragmatics task type; this is quite a large effect size (.54 > .138). The obtained results for Wilks' Lambda ($F_{(3, 192)} = 75.37$, $p < .05$) indicated that there is a significant difference in pragmatics knowledge scores gained on the four pragmatics task types.

Table 6
Multivariate Tests for The Groups

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	p	η_p^2
Factor	Pillai's Trace	.541	75.37	3	192	.000	.54
	Wilks' Lambda	.459	75.37	3	192	.000	.54
	Hotelling's Trace	1.178	75.37	3	192	.000	.54
	Roy's Largest Root	1.178	75.37	3	192	.000	.54
Factor * Level	Pillai's Trace	.006	.41	3	192	.746	.01
	Wilks' Lambda	.994	.41	3	192	.746	.01
	Hotelling's Trace	.006	.41	3	192	.746	.01
	Roy's Largest Root	.006	.41	3	192	.746	.01

Tests of between-subjects effects (Table 7) detected no statistically significant effect for gender ($F_{(1, 194)} = 1.44$, $p > .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .007$) on pragmatics task type.

Table 7
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	η_p^2
Intercept	24719.95	1	24719.94	5452.80	.000	.966
Gender	6.54	1	6.54	1.44	.231	.007
Error	879.49	194	4.53			

As listed in Table 8, the difference between all possible pairs of pragmatics task types regarding pragmatics knowledge is significant ($p < .05$).

Table 8
Pairwise Comparisons for Different Pragmatics Task Types

(I) Factor1	(J) Factor1	MD (I-J)	SE	p
Receptive	Non-interactive productive	.165*	.068	.015
Receptive	Pragmalinguistics	.406*	.067	.000
Receptive	Sociopragmatics	.916*	.074	.000
Non-interactive productive	Pragmalinguistics	.241*	.080	.003
Non-interactive productive	Sociopragmatics	.751*	.057	.000
Pragmalinguistics	Sociopragmatics	.510*	.081	.000

Qualitative Results

The semi-structured interview was conducted with 10 advanced L2 learners and 10 Iranian experienced L2 instructors from both genders. A thematic analysis was carried out, and the qualitative MAXQDA Software was used to analyze the data.

After analyzing the interview data, from 18 verbatim Transcripts, 215 significant statements were adopted. Table 9 represents examples of significant statements with their formulated meanings. Each statement was read carefully in order to draw the underlined meaningful concepts behind it. For instance, as seen in Table 9, in the statement uttered by one of the student interviewees as: The exercises in our books are mechanical and based on special taught grammars and words, they aren't natural like language that English native speakers use that we see in the films or read in the novels and newspapers the meaning Textbooks are not useful enough for learning pragmatics was emanated.

Table 9
Selected Examples of Significant Statements Formulated Meanings

Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning
1. The exercises in our books are mechanical and based on special taught grammars and words, they aren't natural like language that English native speakers use that we see in the films or read in the novels and newspapers.	Textbooks are not useful enough for learning pragmatics.
2) Teachers usually don't give us feedback and don't explain our weaknesses and strengths based on the tests. The tests are often multiple-choice, matching, fill in the blanks and do not measure our ability to use the language meaningfully and appropriately in real situations.	English exams do not assess pragmatic knowledge and provide effective feedback.
3) As an English teacher, I don't know everything about native English speakers' norms and standards, when to use some expressions, to whom, how and why to use them. That's because of the fact that we live in a foreign country and don't see and talk with the natives.	English teachers are socio- ragmatically and pragma-linguistically competent.
4) The institutes' managers and supervisors force us to use the introduced textbooks and cover and teach the assigned lessons fast. Therefore, as there isn't enough time to teach and explain the details, so we have to skip the pragmatic norms and appropriate use of linguistic elements like grammars, speech acts, words, expressions, etc.	Iranian institutional contexts do not resemble the real world of English native speakers.
5) I'm a dentist assistant; my work time is 8 to 16 O'clock; when I arrive home, I am tired and feel sleepy; so, I have to rest for at least 2 hours, make dinner, and do the dishes. I really hardly find enough free time to study English and do my homework.	Most students do not invest enough time and effort to study English.

For the purpose of the final themes to emerge, the researchers examined the formulated meanings pondering over them. They wanted to arrive at larger categories signifying the main reading problems. For example, as set forth in Table 10, from the formulated meaning Text-books are not useful enough for learning pragmatics the theme Inappropriate Pedagogical Material emerged; and from the meaning English exams do not assess pragmatic knowledge and provide effective feedback, the category Improper Pragmatic Assessment was drawn.

Table 10
Example of Five Theme Clusters with their Associated Formulated Meanings

Formulated Meaning	Theme cluster
Textbooks are not useful enough for learning pragmatics.	Inappropriate Pedagogical Material
English exams do not assess pragmatic knowledge and provide effective feedback.	Improper Pragmatic Assessment
English teachers are socio-pragmatically and pragma-linguistically competent.	Pragmatically Incompetent Teachers
Iranian institutional contexts do not resemble the real world of English native speakers.	Unsuitable Instructional Context
Most students do not invest enough time and effort to study English.	Insufficient Time and Effort

At last, after arranging the formulated meanings into clusters, five themes emerged from the qualitative data analysis related to major challenges still left for advanced L2 learners to develop L2 pragmatic ability, i.e., Inappropriate Pedagogical Material, Improper Pragmatic Assessment, Pragmatically Incompetent Teachers, Unsuitable Instructional Context, and Insufficient Time and Effort. Each theme of the challenge is elaborated below together with some direct quotations from the interviewee participants.

A. Inappropriate Pedagogical Material
Instructional materials in the EFL context, usually serve as an important source for teaching L2 pragmatic norms and meaning because learners often interact with the textbooks, and their teachers utilize the textbooks as a guide to teach the language. The teacher and learner participants expressed that the textbooks mainly lack authenticity similar to the real use of language by the native speakers. Moreover, the exercises and tasks provided in the textbooks for practice purposes are restricted in the coverage and scope of communication scenarios they provide. Actually, they provide artificial and superficial practice for realizations of various speech acts. The interviewees also stated that EFL learners and teachers focus on their textbooks as the main source of pragmatic knowledge, and consequently, the English used in the classroom is often in the form of materials-dependent, and the textbooks are generally poor in pragmatic and meaningful features.

As an example, one of the student participants said:

The exercises in our books are mechanical and based on special taught grammars and words, they aren't natural like language that English native speakers use that we see in the films or read in the novels and newspapers. S2

In addition, one of the teachers said that:

I think that authentic materials like, novels, magazines, stories advertisements, plays, movies, newspapers serials, radios, etc. are superior to the international textbooks because the contents of textbooks don't teach the real and appropriate use of language in the real situation. T4

B. Improper Pragmatic Assessment
The exams are usually discrete emphasizing a grammatical point, vocabulary, idioms, pronunciation, reading, and writing with no focus on the pragmatic and appropriate use of language in real situations. In the speaking part of the exams, the situation is to some extent better

since the emphasis is more on fluency and communicative ability, but they are still artificial, short, and with no effective instant feedback. Providing pragmatic tests is not an easy task entailing profession, time, and motivation to be made. When the EFL teachers are not commonly aware of the importance of pragmatics and appropriate use of language, and how to teach and assess it, and there is limited time available for assessment, pragmatic competence will not be achieved.

Likewise, the EFL learners will not provide effective feedback to their students based on their performance in the exams. Also, success in the exam is assigned more credit in the EFL classroom than successful communication with English native speakers. To illustrate the point, one of the student participants reflected that:

> *As you know, the teachers usually don't give us feedback after taking the tests and they don't explain our weaknesses and strengths based on the tests. The tests are often multiple-choice, matching, fill in the blanks and do not measure our ability to use the language meaningfully and appropriately in real situations. S4*

Besides, one of the teachers stated that:

> *As teachers, we are just given one session for the final exam, and there are many students in each class, therefore the exams have to be short, low contextualized, and imperfect. Also, there is not enough time to give each learner diagnostic feedback about the situationally-appropriate utterances, that is what can be said, to whom, where, when, and how. These absolutely need time. T5*

C. Pragmatically Incompetent Teachers

Teachers confront some problems to teach pragmatics in EFL classrooms. In fact, the teachers might not have adequate knowledge of socio-pragmatics and pragma-linguistics and teaching it; hence, they need to be aware of target social norms and the way to teach and assess them.

Also, EFL teachers' unwillingness to teach pragmatics relates to the fact that pragmatic issues are rarely brought to EFL teachers' attention in teacher education and professional development curriculum. Moreover, another reason is that EFL teachers rarely have access to pragmatics research outcomes. Most of them overestimate their pragmatic knowledge and the way to teach it, therefore, they rely on their intuition and do not study new research in this area. As an illustration, one teacher interviewee said:

> *As an English teacher, I don't know everything about native English speakers' norms and standards, when to use some expressions, to whom, how and why to use them. That's because of the fact that we live in a foreign country and don't see and talk with the natives. We just learn some in the textbooks, movies, news, novels, social media, etc. T9.*

Additionally, a student respondent mentioned:

> *My teacher focuses on the textbook contents and just teaches them. When I ask her some points that are not mentioned in the book, she says: It isn't related to our lesson, and I understand that she is not ready to respond to it, so I have to search about it myself. S3*

D. Unsuitable Instructional Context

For almost all L2 learners, pragmatic competence development has to occur in instructional environments such as classrooms, language laboratories, etc. But instructional settings are restricted in many ways. For example, classroom settings around the world are generally teacher-centered, designed to fulfill the syllabus with insufficient time during lessons where learners are engaged in comprehension and production of pragmatic meaning. The opportunities to use the target language in real-life situations that approach real-world conversation are limited. However, native speakers acquire the social rules of speaking through socializing in society, at home, at school, etc. Nevertheless, for EFL learners, learning rules of pragmatic appropriateness are tremendously challenging since there are almost no opportunities for interaction with native speakers, exposure to English outside the classroom is limited and micro-level grammatical accuracy receives more attention than macro-level pragmatic appropriateness. For instance, one of the students noted that:

Iranian teachers are not like English native speakers in many ways and mostly are not able to use the language in an appropriate way. They usually teach words, idioms, and grammatical rules; however, we will forget them soon. S5.

Also, one of the teacher participants expressed that:

The institutes' managers and supervisors force us to use the introduced textbooks and cover and teach the assigned lessons fast. Therefore, as there isn't enough time to teach and explain the details, so we have to skip the pragmatic norms and appropriate use of linguistic elements like grammars, speech acts, words, expressions, etc. T1

E. Insufficient Time and Effort

Another challenge that advanced L2 learners face regarding L2 pragmatics learning relates to time and effort to teach and learn pragmatics. In fact, the learners do not devote enough time and energy to learn L2 pragmatics; they do not practice enough and do not do the assigned homework fully. The reason is that most advanced students are either students studying at high school, college, or university, or working during the day for a living. Therefore, they cannot find enough time to study, practice, and do homework.

To clarify, a teacher uttered:

My students often do not practice the conversations outside the class, they don't usually listen to the CDs, and don't spend enough time to study their textbooks and other related materials like stories, books, websites, etc. T8

And, another student participant said:

I'm a dentist assistant; my work time is 8 to 16 O'clock; when I arrive home, after work, I am tired and feel sleepy; therefore, I have to rest for at least 2 hours. After that, I have to make dinner, do the dishes, do the laundry and iron my clothes. I go to English class two sessions a week, too. I really hardly find enough free time to study English and do my homework. S10

DISCUSSION

For the purpose of exploring advanced L2 learners' knowledge and challenges for teaching and learning it, concerning the first and second research questions, it was found that advanced EFL learners have a better status in receptive, non-interactive productive, and pragmalinguistics types of pragmatics than the sociopragmatic aspect of language, though, on the whole, they are not successful in pragmatic knowledge at all. This means advanced EFL learners are good at comprehending the perception and implied meaning of power, social distance, or imposition within themselves individually with no relationship with others, still, once interacting with others interpersonally, they fail to communicate effectively. Accordingly, metapragmatic judgment tasks as well as discourse completion tasks are not suitable means for judgement since they do not allow to make conclusions about learners' level of pragmatic knowledge.

This finding is compatible with those of Mohammad-Bagheri's (2015), who showed that Iranian EFL learners do not receive enough pragmatic knowledge from their teachers, and textbooks and exams did not cover enough pragmatic information. Moreover, he disclosed that their teachers mostly employ error correction methods to teach pragmatics, and the students stated that their classmates did not care enough about pragmatics. Also, the results of the present study are in line with the current belief that it may take up to fifteen years to attain nativelike pragmatic knowledge that is indistinguishable from that of the native speakers in the given speech community (Cohen & Weaver, 2006).

Regarding the third research question, it is inferred from the results that the gender effect was not important as they performed almost the same on all four different types of tasks. This outcome correlates with Malmir and Derakhshan's (2020) finding that male and female EFL learners do not differ in the use of pragmatic comprehension strategies. Likewise, Kamble and Banik (2018) approved that the male and female adults' pragmatic language skills with Spastic Cerebral Palsy do not differ.

However, this result contradicts Ahmadi Safa and Mahmoodi's (2012) research that revealed not only a positive interaction between learners' lexico-grammatical and pragmatic competences, but also a stronger

mutual connotation between female learners' competencies. In the same vein, Farashaiyan and Tan's (2012) findings do not support ours in that they disclosed that the female participants performed better in pragmatic and proficiency tests than their male counterparts. Similarly, the result of this study is also incongruous with the outcomes of Mohammad-Bagheri's (2015) study that female EFL learners have a significantly higher degree of pragmatic awareness than their male counterparts and with Zangoei et al.'s (2014) finding those female learners are superior to the males regarding perceived the communicative act of apology. Moreover, Tehrani et al. (2012) study corroborates the gender related result of this study in that the statement of remorse was the strategy most frequently used by the male and female respondents across the sample, and the female participants used this strategy more frequently than the male participants.

Besides, regarding the third research question, five main challenges for teaching and learning pragmatics emerged: inappropriate pedagogical material, improper pragmatic assessment, pragmatically incompetent teachers, unsuitable instructional context, and insufficient time and effort. Cohen and Ishihara's (2012) belief corroborates the results of the qualitative study in that NNTs might be unaware of the TL norms, though they have their own intuitions, and may have an idiosyncratic, anecdotal, or otherwise restricted and/or incorrect understanding of the actual pragmatic norms. Additionally, even if the used textbooks cover these areas of pragmatics, their coverage might not reflect the current normative behavior.

This result is consistent with the previous research carried out by Sharif et al. (2017) that disclosed L2 learners' pragmatics challenges as unsuitable EFL classroom setting, poor pragmatic ELT textbooks, unknowledgeable teachers, and corrective feedback assessment of pragmatic knowledge.

In general, both quantitative and qualitative results were compatible and completed each other. In the quantitative study, it was disclosed that advanced L2 learners are not capable enough to communicate pragmatically.

Similarly, within the qualitative study, the L2 advanced Iranian teachers and students expressed that they are not satisfied with the current institute and classroom setting, teaching methodology, textbook, and assessment regarding pragmatics and appropriate use of language in a real situation with the native speakers. In fact, these qualitative findings supported the weakness of the learners regarding pragmatics and found the main reasons and problems that caused this fault.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The main conclusion of this study was that Iranian advanced EFL students have not learned the appropriate use of English adequately though they are strong enough in the linguistic aspect of English. Another conclusion of this study was that, regarding four main types of pragmatics tasks, they are cleverer to perform receptive and non-interactive productive tasks than pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics ones. In other words, it was concluded that they are good at intrapersonal perception of pragmatic knowledge though weak at interpersonal and pragmatic social interactive communication, Besides, we came to the conclusion that both male and female Iranian advanced EFL learners are almost at the same level of pragmatic knowledge though the females are a bit more competent.

Also, the teachers prioritize teaching vocabulary, grammar, and idioms so that in an authentic situation they will not be able to use them appropriately. Another reason for this weakness is the commercial textbooks that are full of linguistic elements of language and tasks ignoring the way to use the language in real situations and contact with native English speakers. These textbooks are abundant with artificial situations and language and replete with mechanical exercises.

On the part of students, they do not allocate sufficient time to study, practice, do homework, and contact native speakers via social networks and software. Acquiring a language in an EFL context requires endeavor and energy to be fully competent to interact with native speakers in real situations (Kasper & Roever, 2005). Therefore, the students are suggested to consume more time and budget to

learn the language. For instance, they can buy and read English native novels, short stories, magazines, films, games etc.

Furthermore, as exams have a test effect, their exams, do not assess the pragmatic and appropriate use of language. They are mostly written testing difficult words, grammar, idioms, and reading comprehension to be in accordance with an advanced level. When they get a good mark in the final exam, they assume that they have been successful and mastered English. That's why they are not motivated enough to continue learning the language.

One strong positive aspect of this study was that since there was no intervention, the researchers were able to recruit more number of participants, though, there were four instruments and therefore it was not easy to have them answer them carefully. In fact, the investigators were the teachers, so they had good relationships as well as reminding them frequently of the fact that they can receive feedback from their performances on these varied pragmatic tests that are fairly different from the ones they have taken up to now.

The results of this study can be beneficial to material developers, language teachers, and language institute owners. In fact, by being aware of the outcomes of this study, material developers can incorporate more authentic content and activities so that the learners can be more engaged with the real language use and in interaction with others. Similarly, language teachers should focus on the pragmatic and social aspects of language by working on the tasks and activities such as role-plays. By using these tasks, the learners will face more opportunities to interact with others resulting in strengthening appropriate and social aspects of the language. Likewise, Institute owners can accept new teaching methods and provide necessary facilities like TV, internet, social media, real objects, photos, etc., to be used in the classroom.

The present study implies several directions for enthusiastic investigators to increase the depth and breadth of the probe within the domain of L2 pragmatics, the challenges, and the proposed solutions. Thus, follow-up research may include cross-cultural differences, cognitive styles, strategies, and idiosyncratic differences in the realm of interlanguage pragmatics. It seems also insightful to trace the development of pragmatic performance with respect to other intrinsic factors such as motivation, attitude, and self-esteem.

References

Barron, A. (2003). *Acquisition in interlanguage pragmatics: Learning how to do things with words in a study abroad context*. John Benjamins.

Billmyer, K., & Varghese, M. (2000). Investigating instrument-based pragmatic variability: Effects of enhancing discourse completion tests. *Applied Linguistics, 21*(4), 517-552. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/21.4.517

Blum-Kulka, S., & Olshtain, E. (1984). Request and apologies: A cross-cultural study of speech act realization patterns. *Applied Linguistics, 5*(3), 196-203. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/5.3.196

Caprario, M. (2020). Developing pragmatic competence in English academic discussions: An EAP classroom investigation. *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics, 16*(1), 123-152. https://doi.org/10.1515/lpp-2020-0006

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

Cohen, A. D. (2019). Considerations in assessing pragmatic appropriateness in spoken language. *Language Teaching, 39.* 1-20. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444819000156

Cohen, A. D., & Ishihara, N. (2012). Pragmatics. In B. Tomlinson & H. Masuhara (Eds.), *Applied linguistics applied: Connecting practice to theory through materials development* (pp. 113-126). Continuum.

Cohen, A. D., & Weaver, S. J. (2006). *Styles-and strategies-based instruction: A teachers' guide*. Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition. https://stylesandstrategiesi.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/cohen-weaver.pdf

Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions.* Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (Facilitator). (2005, May). *Mixed methods.* Workshop hosted by the Veterans Affairs Ann Arbor Health Care System, Center for Practice Management and Outcomes research, Ann Arbor, MI.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE.

Cui, X. (2012). *Problematic Chinese-Australian social interactions at work* [Doctoral dissertation, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, The University of Melbourne]. http://hdl.handle.net/11343/37635

Derakhshan, A., Malmir, A., & Greenier, V. (2021). Interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies (IPLS) as predictors of L2 speech act knowledge: A case of Iranian EFL learners. *The Journal of Asia TEFL, 18*(1). http://dx.doi.org/10.18823/asiatefl.2021.18.1.14.235

Farashaiyan, A., & Tan, K. H. (2012). On the relationship between pragmatic knowledge and language proficiency among Iranian male and female undergraduate EFL learners. 3L: Language, Linguistics and Literature. *The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies, 18*, 33-46.

Félix-Brasdefer, C. (2010). Data collection methods in speech act performance: DCTs, role plays, and verbal reports. In A. Martínez-Flor, & E. Usó Juan (Ed.), *Speech act performance: Theoretical, empirical, and methodological issues* (pp. 41-56). John Benjamins.

Garcia, P. (2004). Pragmatic comprehension of high- and low-level language learners. *TESL-EJ, 8*(2), 1-12. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1068107.pdf

Harrison, R. L., Reilly, T. M., & Creswell, J. W. (2020). Methodological rigor in mixed methods: An application in management studies. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 14*(4), 473-495. https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689819900585

Kamble, S. S., & Banik, A. (2018). Comparison of various aspects of pragmatic language skills in male and female adults with spastic cerebral palsy. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, 8*(11), 95-101. http://dx.doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.8.11.2018.p8314

Kasper, G., & Roever, C. (2005). Pragmatics in second language learning. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 317-334). Lawrence Erlbaum.

Li, S., & Taguchi, N. (2014). The effects of practice modality on pragmatic development in L2 Chinese. *Modern Language Journal, 98*(3). https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2014.12123.x

Malmir, A., & Derakhshan, A. (2020). The socio-pragmatic, lexico-grammatical, and cognitive strategies in L2 pragmatic comprehension: The case of Iranian male vs. female EFL learners. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research, 8*(1), 1-23. https://doi.org/10.30466/ijltr.2020.120805

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

Mohammad-Bagheri, M. (2015). The status of pragmatics among Iranian EFL learners. *English Language Teaching, 8*(4), 67-79. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v8n4p67

Riddiford, N., & Holmes, J. (2015). Assisting the development of sociopragmatic skills: Negotiating refusals at work. *System, 48*, 129-140. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2014.09.010

Ahmadi Safa, M, & Mahmoodi, M. H. (2012). The interface between linguistic and pragmatic competence: The case of disagreement, scolding, requests, and complaints. *Journal of English Language, 10*(3), 1-26.

Sharif, M., Yarmohammadi, L., Sadighi, F., & Sadegh Bagheri, M. (2017). Teaching pragmatics in the EFL classroom: challenges, lacunas, and suggestions. *Advanced Education, 8*, 49-53. https://doi.org/10.20535/2410-8286.108300

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage.

Sykes, J. (2016). Technologies for teaching and learning intercultural competence and interlanguage pragmatics. In S. Sauro, & C. A. Chapelle (Eds.), *Handbook of technology and second language teaching and learning* (pp. 118-133). Wiley.

Taguchi, N., & Kim, Y. (2014). Collaborative dialogue in learning pragmatics: Pragmatic-related episodes as an opportunity for learning request-making. *Applied Linguistics, 37*(3), 416-437. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amu039

Taguchi, N., & Roever, C. (2017). *Second language pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.

Tajeddin, Z., & Malmir, A. (2015). The construct of interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies: Investigating preferences of high vs. low pragmatic performers. *The Journal of Teaching Language Skills (JTLS), 6*(4), 153-180. https://doi.org/10.22099/jtls.2015.3016

Tateyama, Y., & Kasper, G. (2008). Talking with a classroom guest: Opportunities for learning Japanese pragmatics. In E. S. Alcón, & A. Martínez-Flor (Eds.), *Investigating pragmatics in foreign language learning, teaching and testing* (pp. 45-71). Multilingual Matters.

Tehrani, M. D., Rezaei, O., Dezhara, S., & Kafrani, R. S. (2012). Apology strategies of Iranian undergraduate students. *English Language Teaching*, *5*(2), 93-109. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n2p93

Tran, V. T. T. (2013). *Second language interactional competence: Solicitation effects on suggestions* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia]. http://hdl.handle.net/11343/42024

Zangoei, A., Nourmohammadi, E., & Derakhshan, A. (2014). A gender-based study of Iranian EFL learners' pragmatic awareness: The role of receptive skill-based teaching. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature, 3*(6). https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.3n.6p.53

Biodata

Ali Malmir is an Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics at Imam Khomeini International University (IKIU), Qazvin, Iran. He has received his Ph.D. and MA degrees from Allameh Tabataba'i University. His research interests include Discourse Analysis (DA), Interlanguage Pragmatics, and teaching and learning L2 Vocabulary. He has published many papers and books about the aforementioned research topics.

Rajab Esfandiari is an associate professor of applied linguistics at Imam Khomeini International University in Qazvin, Iran. His areas of interest include teaching and researching L2 writing, construction of rating scales, and EAP teaching and testing. He is widely published in national and international journals, including Assessing Writing, Journal of English for Academic Purposes, JALT Journal, Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics, etc.

Roohollah Maleki was born in Nahavand, Iran in 1980. He is a Ph.D. student at Imam Khomeini International University, Qazvin, Iran. He teaches in the English Center at Shahid Sattari Aeronautical University of Technology and Science, Tehran, Iran. His research interests are second and third language acquisition, contrastive analysis, discourse analysis, testing and material development. He has published several articles, books, and has translated one.