**Research Article**

# The Investigation of Interactional Patterns as Predictors of Pragmatic Competence using Structural Equation Modeling

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ABSTRACT

*Undoubtedly, pragmatic competence and teacher-learner interaction are crucially important in language teaching, learning, and communication. However, language users at any level experience difficulties in the implementation and understanding of interactional patterns while producing meaningful statements, transforming that meaning, and comprehending the exchange of it. Although pragmatic competence and teacher-learner interaction are both widely highlighted in the field, there are still numerous difficulties in linking theory to practice particularly in the English as a Foreign Language context (EFL). To address this gap, the current study intends to enliven and brighten the relationship between interactional patterns and pragmatic competence of EFL students in the Iranian context; despite previous quantitative approaches to understanding the relationship, for this goal, a model is proposed in Amos (Analysis of moment structures) akin to the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The research was conducted on 150 students (male and female) in Islamic Azad University Shiraz branch. The data for the research was gathered via two questionnaires on interactional patterns and speech acts of request and apology. The data analysis procedure benefited from IBM SPSS and Amos via the exploration of model-fit indices. The study's findings demonstrate an excellent fit between the model and the data, as indicated by the fit indices computed through Amos. Specifically, the default model showed a Chi-square value (CMIN/DF) of 0.991, signifying an excellent fit. Furthermore, the Goodness of fit index (GFI) reached 0.968, also reflecting an excellent fit. The Baseline Comparison revealed a comparative fit index (CFI) of 1 surpassing the threshold of 0.95 for an excellent fit.*

## Introduction

Pragmatic competence has been defined as a dynamic and evolving knowledge through which the learners acquire the capability of exchanging the intended meaning akin to contextual norms and clues. However, respecting the cognition-based processing nature of the phenomenon, it can be argued that pragmatic competence is not just restricted to

understanding the opponents' intentions, and it must be uniquely categorized based on the developmental trajectories, patterns of decay, and neural substrates (Taguchi, 2011).

Pragmatics is the study of language use in context based on the Gricean viewpoint (Grice, 1957). In Gricean belief, there is a distinction between the sentence's meaning or the conventional meaning of a sentence or expression, which is timeless and not restricted to a particular circumstance, and the utterer's meaning. Additionally, the linguistic meaning is just a clue exerted by the speaker resulting in the utterer's meaning, which is a contextual meaning used in specific circumstances. The Gricean view of pragmatics was a cornerstone for further analysis of the issue with respect to linguistic processing. However, the pervasiveness of Chomsky's competence/performance dichotomy (Chomsky, 1965) shifts pragmatics to the performance pole.

Austin's (1962) notion of illocutionary acts put the pragmatics forward in order to explain how actually and systematically language works (Austin, 1962). The notion of performative utterances in speech act theory is based on the fact that sentences describe a given reality and change the social reality they are representing. Categorizing the utterances into locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts paves the way for a better understanding of pragmatic competence as a performance-based phenomenon; While locutionary acts carry the propositional or linguistic meaning, illocutionary acts are the speaker's intention of performing the act, and perlocutionary acts are the result or expected response (Austin, 1962).

Pragmatic knowledge has been defined as dynamic and evolving knowledge through which language users grasp the capability of exchanging intended meaning according to the norm and situational clues (Kasper & Rose, 2002). While these critical issues in language learning have been investigated by numerous researchers, specific strategies that learners implement to develop and reshape their functional and communicative knowledge provide a basis for ongoing research. Consequently, understanding these procedures in language learning particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts would be of critical prominence; when language learners generally face difficulties in following and understanding the delicacy of functional meaning while practicing the language in an authentic setting (Taguchi, 2011).

Nowadays, the importance of having effective and precise communication is out of the negotiation; there is still a huge gap between what is researched, how much progress has been achieved, and what is taken into practice in the classroom between the teacher and the learners and the message which is due to be transformed. Although there have been numerous studies on the theoretical and practical role of classroom interactions, experts have not found a fixed framework to be generalized in all fields of examination, and their results have been altered for each classroom and each participant; furthermore, the effect of pragmatic knowledge on classroom interactions between teacher and students and also among students themselves, have not been studied comprehensively in an EFL context such as Iran (Birjandi & Rezaei, 2010). Consequently, the main focus of the current paper is to fill the aforementioned gap between theory and practice by investigating the predictive roles that interactional patterns may play in forming, developing, and enhancing pragmatic competence.

Eastern context of language teaching and learning, and in particular the Iranian context as an EFL field of language study, suffers from being outdated. Unfortunately, in some areas in Iran, learners are still trying to memorize grammatical rules and vocabulary and also doing mechanical drills in fossilized books. Pragmatic knowledge is not being taught at any level of education, even in universities. However, recently, there have been some knowledgeable researchers who paved the way to revolutionize the standards of language teaching and learning in the EFL contexts. Due to that fact, much of the available research has been done with Western learners in Western contexts, so the extent to which Eastern foreign language learners particularly Iranian EFL learners, may perform is to be explored. This interest has been motivated to a considerable extent by the fact that there is a robust link between learners' pragmatic competence and the way classroom interlocutors interact (Birjandi & Rezaei, 2010). To reach this zenith the current study tries to investigate the less-known aspects of teacher-learner interactional patterns by proposing a model to examine the predictive force of interactional patterns in the development of pragmatic competence. To this

end, Shiraz Islamic Azad University was chosen as the context for the investigation of the model.

In the realm of language teaching and learning, learners, even after attending language courses in institutions or studying English Language Teaching (ELT) in universities, face difficulties in producing, conveying, and comprehending meaning in the target language. Furthermore, teachers and instructors experience this obstacle in the way of teaching. Due to these facts, the need for a comprehensive model to elaborate on the prominent role of interactional patterns in improving teaching output as well as linking the theory to practice is felt even more particularly in EFL contexts like Iran (Taguchi, 2011).

The necessity of replenishment the gaps between theoretical and functional pragmatic knowledge in English language classrooms is undeniable. Affective connection is dependent upon the ability to interpret and transfer meaning beyond the literal meaning. Language learners need to comprehend the intricacy of social and cultural norms and signs without this understanding, the meaning would be misunderstood, and consequently, it results in disappointment; and finally, poses psychological barriers to learners so they would not rely on the target language (Kasper & Rose, 2002).

Despite accumulating understanding of pragmatic knowledge, the lack of significant research on its relationship with interactional patterns in language classes, particularly in eastern EFL contexts, is obvious. While some research investigated the effect of teacher-learner interactions on language learning, they mainly highlighted the general aspects of language development instead of scrutinizing the relationship between interactional patterns and pragmatic knowledge. This research gap reveals the need for a deeper comprehension of this relationship to assist language learners in developing their functional skills in language development (Walsh, 2006).

This study investigates the predictive force of interactional patterns respecting pragmatic knowledge among English language learners in an Iranian context to cover the aforementioned gap. Exerting Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), a novice model will be proposed to probe the

complicated relationship between specific interactional patterns such as learners' cohesiveness, teacher support, and task response as well as learners' competence in understanding and using speech acts like request and apology. This approach sets the basis for a comprehensive analysis of these factors. It provides promising insights into the critical role that these patterns have in developing pragmatic knowledge.

So, the current study, through a novice approach, struggles to investigate the teacher-learner interactional patterns such as learners' cohesiveness, the role of teacher-support, learners' involvement in class, learners' investigation, task orientation, cooperation among learners and between learners and the teacher, the role of Equity, and learners' attitude scale toward English as the types of behavioral interactional patterns, and the regression loads of these patterns on learners' pragmatic competence. This study has been organized to first investigate the theoretical foundations of pragmatic knowledge and interactional patterns based on the related scientific literature. In the next step, the method including the sample and data collection and analysis tools are provided. Then the result from the data analysis procedure through SEM is presented and evaluated. The significant relationships between interactional patterns and pragmatic knowledge are highlighted. Finally, the study provides a conclusion and suggests implementations for teaching the English language as well as insights for further research. So, this study is about to answer the following question:

RQ1: Is there any relationship between teacher-learner interactional patterns and their pragmatic competence?

RQ2: Do interactional patterns predict the development of pragmatic competence?

## Literature Review
### Theoretical Background

Hymes (1971) proposed a descriptive model for communicative competence to account for the knowledge through which the senders and receivers may convey the burden of meaning appropriately, fluently, and accurately respecting variations of sociocultural norms in a context. The cornerstones for the aforementioned model are grammatical competence focusing on the linguistic knowledge of forms, and

sociolinguistic competence, concerning the knowledge and skills necessary for comprehension and production of the literal meaning in line with the social and cultural norms of the shared context. This model has been proposed as an opponent to the dichotomous model of competence and performance proposed by Chomsky (1965), while it can play a fundamental role in highlighting the importance of social interaction and pragmatics. However, Sun (2014) examines a shift from representative models of communicative competence to interactional competence parallel to grading the predominance of strategic competence Undoubtedly, teacher-learner interaction plays a facilitating role in learning in a general view, while in learning foreign languages, this role can be more brilliant even than grammatical knowledge, as Young (2011) degrades the prominence of linguistic knowledge in the development of communicative competence by asserting that the command of language forms is not ample to be confident in having a successful communication. Moreover, Savile-Troike (1989) assumes that interaction is the main tool for interpreting the exchange of meaning between interlocutors, highlighting interaction's crucial role in conveying meaning. Kramsch (1989) also states: "Whether it is a face-to-face interaction between two or several speakers or the interaction between a reader and a written text, successful interaction presupposes the notion related to the shared knowledge of the world, the reference to a common external context of communication, and also the construction of a shared internal context or "sphere of inter-subjectivity" that is built through the collaborative efforts of the interactional partners. Kramsch's assumption of successful interaction shapes *"interactional competence*," which is explained as the stage for learning rather than the means for it (Gass & Selinker, 2008). In defining the concept of interaction, Hall (1995) defines this notion as being a goal-oriented, situation-sensitive activity that can be connected to the interlocutors' linguistic and interactional arsenal. Expanding Hall's framework, Young (2002, 2008, 2011) depicts special interaction resources, such as knowledge of register-specific linguistic forms, speech acts, topic management, turn-taking, and repair.

Van Dijk connects pragmatics with his own theory of context. He argues that pragmatics needs a foundation for the relations between language use and social norms. According to this theory, pragmatics is about the situational appropriateness of language use. At the same time, the theory of context deals with the ongoing relevance and changing properties of the communicative situation as represented by the participants. According to Tulving (1983), the context model contains a schema of culturally variable categories implemented by language users to interpret and represent the communicative situation. He, due to practical reasons, defines pragmatics as the study of appropriateness, the study of the rules that adapt the text and talk to the constraints of their social environment through variation in discursive conditions of setting, participants, action, intention, and knowledge. Birjandi and Rezaei (2010) conducted research to explore intercultural pragmatics by applying the Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Test to estimate the pragmatic knowledge of Iranian EFL learners concerning speech acts of request and apology. The study's findings revealed a significant connection between the knowledge of pragmatics and teacher-learner interaction.

Ozgur and Yurdugul (2016), in studying the role of interaction in distance education and learning, highlight the interactional patterns between learner and continent, learner and learner, and learner and teacher (Figure 1). Through Explanatory Factor Analysis, the findings suggest that the learner-instructor and learner-assessment patterns of interaction significantly affect their achievement.
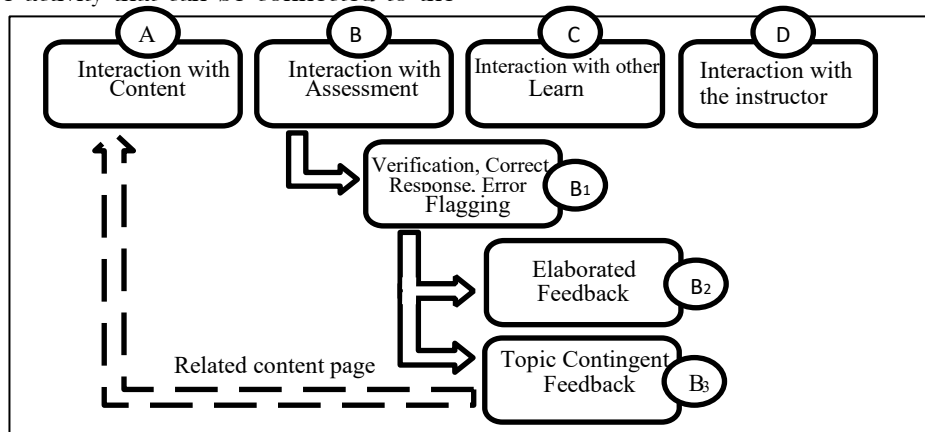


Figure 1. *Patterns of interaction (Ozgur & Yurdugul, 2016),*

Task orientation in technology-mediated settings provides a rich interactional domain in which language learners imply a variety of interactional resources in the way of task accomplishment. Balaman (2018) intends to explore the task engagement processes of second language learners who collaboratively engage in online tasks. Imposing a longitudinal conversational analysis treatment reveals that the learners rely on various context-specific interactional resources. In addition, the results explicate the emergence and diversification of interactional resources, thus evidencing task-induced development of L2 interactional competence.

Learners' cooperation or cooperative learning has been negotiated by plenty of researchers. For instance, Alcala et al. (2019) studied cooperative learning and motivation by respecting social interaction. Through an experimental design, it was found that motivation increased significantly in the two groups, while social interaction only increased in the Secondary Education group, and a significant difference between groups was also obtained in the post-test. Furthermore, the effect sizes were all over the value of 0.87. Qualitative data analysis revealed that the teacher highlighted the importance of cooperation in Physical Education to promote respect for others and joint thinking in Primary Education. However, the findings of the study highlight the importance of interaction and cooperation in the process of learning in accordance with the findings of the current study.

## Experimental Background
### Pragmatic competence
Due to the predominance of pragmatic competence, numerous studies have tried to illuminate this realm. Jung (2000), in his paper on pragmatics development, highlights that learners must perform speech acts; they must be aware of using various forms to convey different meanings. They also should be able to convey and interpret non-literal meanings, like body and face gestures. Moreover, they must know how to perform politeness functions. According to Leech (1983) and Thomas (1995), indirectness affects and enhances negotiability, reduces imposition, and increases the optionality level. Additionally, the ability to perform discourse functions, in other words, the ability to interpret and fill discourse slots recognize and produce discourse markers, and apply cultural knowledge are prominent aspects of pragmatics. These skills are linked to grammatical competence, instruction, input, biological, and individual factors.

The researchers Hall and Walsh (2002) emphasized the importance of sociocultural events in language development, particularly in teacher-learner interaction in language classrooms. They highlighted the teacher-led three-part sequence of Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) as a typical interaction pattern in Western schooling. However, later Wells (1993) observed variation in this pattern, noting that teachers often engage with students' responses by asking for elaboration or clarification, rather than simply evaluating them.

Jung (2002), investigated acquisitional Pragmatics. He highlighted that the highest concern in pragmatics is related to Cultural Knowledge. Moreover, emphasizes the necessity of a holistic approach to L2 pragmatic development with respect to the psychological and sociocultural issues in learning while discussing the predominance of learners' identities, attitudes, and strategies influencing their interactional patterns.

Both Walsh (2002) and Matsumoto (2010) believed that Teacher-learner interaction takes a crucial place in the process of second language acquisition and learning through promoting the processing capacity. Petek (2013) investigated the teachers' beliefs about classroom interaction via a case study on native and non-native English teachers. The study was based on probing three strategies through which the teachers negotiate meaning; However, the results revealed a contradiction between teachers' belief and their actual practices. Weizheng (2019) studied Teacher-Student Interaction concerning communication accommodation theory. He noticed that communication accommodation strategies are implemented in Teacher-student interaction. interpretation skills and techniques of discourse management like face maintenance, turn-taking, topic control, asking referential questions, conversational repair, and feedback were so common based on the discourse and the topic.

Hall (2009), in the investigation of the inter-dependency of teacher-learner interaction and

language learning, focused on the interdependency of interactional practices constituting teacher-student interaction and language learning. The fundamental trigger was that the substance of learners' language knowledge is inextricably tied to their overall involvement in the frequent interactional practices shaping their specific learning contexts. Providing an overview of initiation-response-feedback as the most common type of interactional pattern, it is asserted that the learners' development of communicative skills is restricted by the Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) if it is assumed as the only practice. However, the findings of the study revealed that the knowledge of target language learners grasp from the classroom is dependent upon the kinds of interactional practices that teachers produce and implement in their talk with students. As a result, teaching and learning work is done 'not propositionally OR "behaviorally" but praxiologically, as practical tasks and orientations' (Macbeth, 2000, p. 59).

## Interactional patterns

In accordance with the related literature, Teacher-learner interactional patterns contain numerous components. Students' cooperation is the first pattern under the scope of investigation. As a pattern of interaction, cooperative learning is defined as the learners' cooperation in gaining a common goal to maximize their own and others' opportunities in learning. (Abramczyk & Jurkowski, 2020). Students' cohesiveness is defined as the fruitful interpersonal relationship between learners through having a sense of belonging. Based on related literature, cohesion can be defined as one of the most important variables in the investigation of classroom interaction (Lott & Lott, 1965). According to Umar and Ko (2022), students' cohesiveness may have a direct positive effect on both student learning effectiveness and engagement. Teachers mainly provide the most important sources of social support for learners and play a protective role in student development (Cornelius-White, 2007; Ma et al., 2018; Quin et al., 2018; Roorda et al., 2011, 2017; Wang, 2009; Wang & Dishion, 2012; Yıldırım, 2012). Teacher support, as a sub-component of interactional

patterns, has been investigated through the model of social support proposed by Tardy (1985).

According to Astin (1984), learners' involvement is the physical and psychological energy learners invest in an academic experience. A highly involved student participates actively in student organizations and frequently interacts with teachers, peers, and other members of the faculty. Students' involvement, as another style of teacher-learner interactional patterns, was investigated by Berger and Milem with respect to Astin's involvement theory (Astin, 1984) and Tinto's interactionalist theory of individual student departure (Tinto, 1975, 1993). The results of the study indicate that issues related to students' persistence are proof of students' involvement, based on Astin's theory, which is in line with the current study's findings. Moreover, factors contributing to students' departure from the course suggested a lack of involvement, confirming the highlighted role of learners' involvement as a type of interactional pattern.

Learners' investigation in the classroom is rooted in the theory of inquiry-based learning proposed by Dewey (1910). In John Dewey's philosophy, the belief is that education starts with the learners' curiosity while the resulting inquiry-based act or sense holds the responsibility of learning while encouraging the subjects to reach an acceptable understanding of the concepts. The task orientation/ engagement sub-scale is adapted from the goal orientation theory proposed a couple of decades ago, originally by Elison in the 1970s. As Itzchakov and Latham (2018) claim, performance is particularly dependent on the quality of the interaction among individuals, especially concerning exchanging tasks, information, motivation, and emotional relations. The concept of Equity in education is taken from a wider scope of Equity in society which Walster first proposed in 1975. Generally, this issue may cover key factors like social segregation, racism, and gender or status discrimination (Castelli et al., 2012). While in a pragmatic view of educational Equity, it can be pursued in equal opportunities, treatments, and results for all (Tomlinson, 2001). The final component of interaction is the "attitude scale toward English." According to Topala (2014), Learners' attitudes toward academic learning can be

seen as a lifelong, social, and personal procedure respecting learning satisfaction and multi-level and complex understanding.

## Research Gap

The discussed literature has provided a robust theoretical and experimental basis for understanding the crucial role of teacher-learner interaction in language learning. However, there are still numerous gaps left in this field that need further research. Firstly, although the literature noticed the superiority of teacher-learner interaction over the learners' grammatical competence, there is not any particular model to facilitate language development. The literature generally focused on Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) without noticing various interactional patterns such as teacher support, learners' involvement, and task orientation. Secondly, the relationship between particular interactional patterns and the development of pragmatic competence has not been fully investigated. The related literature highlighted the importance of pragmatic competence in language development, however, the strategies through which teacher-learner interaction can enhance learners' pragmatic competence have yet to be thoroughly understood. Scrutinizing the relationship between interactional patterns and pragmatic competence can provide novice insights into complicated procedures in language learning. The majority of discussed studies exerted qualitative or correlational research design which can impose limitations on the possibility of defining the causal relationship that interactional patterns may have in developing pragmatic competence. Experimental studies that manipulate specific interactional variables and investigate their effects on pragmatic competence development improve the experimental foundations for understanding the role of teacher-learner interaction in language development. The absence of a reliable framework to link interactional patterns to pragmatic competence is the fundamental trigger for proposing a practical model to be exerted in the classroom. To this end, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) seems more promising.

## Novelty and Objectives of this study

As mentioned in the previous section, there are still some issues that can be focused on to enhance the understanding of the role of interactional patterns in pragmatic competence development. Previous studies on the relationship between Teacher-Learner interaction and pragmatic competence have roughly succeeded in suggesting a reliable solution to fulfill the aforementioned gaps.

Due to the nature of both variables under investigation, it seems a fairly new approach must be taken to illuminate the issue. As a result, the main goal of the current study is to suggest a multi-regression model through Amos instead of a correlational or qualitative approach; a regression model to estimate the predictive force of interactional patterns in pragmatic competence. Furthermore, unlike previous studies, teacher-learner interaction has been broken down into its components to estimate the exact value of each. So, the current study has benefited from structural equation modeling to clarify the predictive force of interactional patterns with respect to pragmatic competence.

## Methodology

The current study benefits from structural equation modeling through a quantitative design exerting Amos software.

## Design of the Study

The main purpose of this paper is to elaborate on the relationship between learners' interactional patterns and their pragmatic competence. Two research questions were proposed to explore this field to address the research gap. The first question addressed the aforementioned relation and the next investigates the predictive force of interactional patterns in developing pragmatic competence in learners. The study implemented a quantitative design to propose a model to investigate the predictive force of interactional patterns on pragmatic competence by using Structural Equation Modeling via Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) software. Akin to the theoretical and experimental background of both variables, interactional patterns in the model are transvalued through eight components, namely, learners' cohesiveness, teacher support, learners' involvement and investigation, task orientation, cooperation, equity, and attitude scale toward English. At the same time, pragmatic competence is scrutinized via speech acts of request and apology.

## Participants of the Study

The study was conducted at the Islamic Azad University of Shiraz on 150 ELT students aged from 18 to 39 including 46 males and 104 females.

The participants were of both genders, although the data was not analyzed based on this variable. **The subjects are male and female university students who study English and are selected through a convenient sampling method. In structural equation modeling, the standard is to provide at least ten subjects for each observed variable.** Their proficiency level was categorized into intermediate, upper-intermediate, and advanced levels which were determined through the Cambridge Proficiency Test (CPE) prior to the study.

## Data Collection Procedure

The data was collected by a questionnaire to investigate interactional patterns that are implemented by the participants of the study in the classroom. Learners' pragmatic competence was gauged through a Multiple-choice Discourse Completion covering both request and apology speech acts. The instruction for completing the questionnaires was provided to the participants in person while a short notification was placed in each questionnaire to improve the response rate. The instruments were emailed to the participants and collected after a week.

## Instruments

The data collection instrument implemented in the current study is a 64-Likert-scale questionnaire by Wubbles and Levy in 1991. The survey probes seven patterns via 64 Likert-scale questions. Factors are student cohesiveness, teacher support, involvement, investigation, task orientation, cooperation, Equity, and attitude scale for learning English. The content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by professors and experts in the pilot study; however, the reliability estimation for this instrument is 0.924 in the current study. The questionnaires are distributed to participants via WhatsApp and Email. It is estimated to take between 20 to 30 minutes to cover the questionnaires and to answer all parts. Then the data is loaded on Amos (Analysis of Moment Structures) for proposing a Model, and a correlational procedure will be employed to investigate the possible relationship among variables of the study. The model will be modified to reach the final state. Finally, the findings of the study will be reported as a model for possible relationships among variables to be used. Learners' pragmatic competence has been estimated through a multiple-choice discourse completion test (MDCT) proposed by Birjandi and Rezaei (2010), including twenty authentic tasks wherein the learners are obliged to choose the best way of performing requests and stating apologies. The instrument has been validated through piloting by five native speakers at Arizona University. Due to the nature of the discourse completion tests, the intra-rater reliability is estimated to be 0.921.

## Data Analysis Procedure

The gathered data was first managed and entered into SPSS; in the next step, it was loaded on the Amos application for the application of structural Equation Modeling (Figure 2). Amos is an application to investigate the relationship between observable and latent variables. The researcher first proposes a model based on theories and factual issues, then determines how to measure constructs, collects data, and then inputs the data into the SEM application. The application fits the data to the specified model and reaches the results, which include overall model fit statistics and parameter estimates. After setting the initial model, the possible relationship among pragmatics, affective factors, and linguistic knowledge was examined, and finally, the proposed model was modified to reach a conclusion.
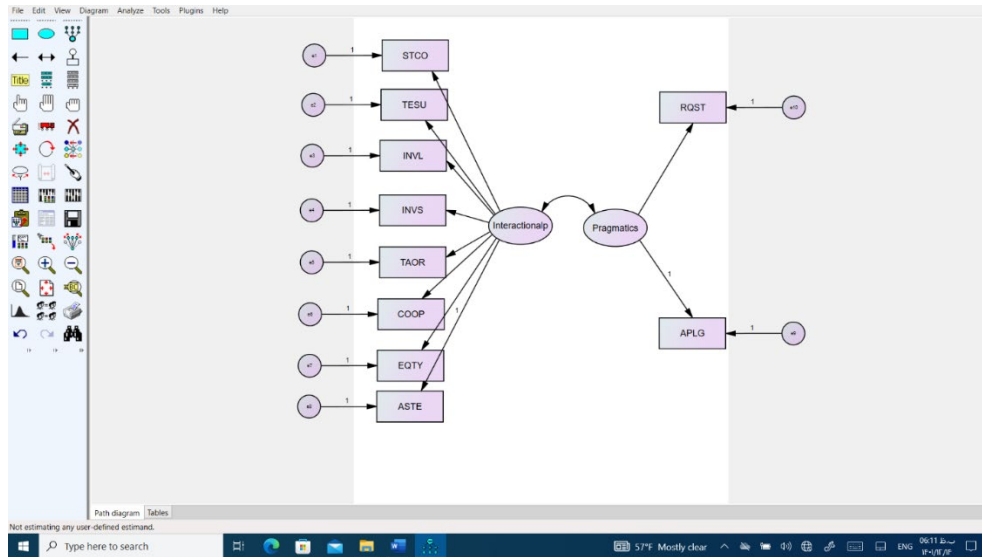
Figure 2. *Default Model for Interactional Patterns and Pragmatic Competence*

## Fit Indices

The proposed model of the study must be estimated through fit indices to investigate the extent to which the model is harmonious with the data. Technically speaking, model fit estimates the variance between observed and model-implied data via correlation and covariation matrices. The acceptability of the model is scrutinized via numerous indices. The first index is chi-square or CMIN, which is implemented for investigating the extent to which the observed variables and expected results are statistically significant, which means that the data and the proposed model appropriately fit in the analysis. However, it must be pointed out that in the case of significance CMIN, the model is considered unsatisfactory. The next index is the Goodness of Fit index which is used to estimate the minimum discrepancy function in case of a perfect fit based on the maximum likelihood conditions (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1984) which were discussed by Zabarankin and Uryasev in 2014. The GFI index is normally reported with RMR, which is the root-mean-square of the residuals (errors). It must be noticed that this index takes the value of less or equal to 1, in which the value of one shows a perfect fit. RMR or root-mean-square of residuals, as another index reported in the Goodness of the fit table, should be close to zero for the model to be perfectly fitted. The next index AGFI or Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index, states the degree of freedom (df) with respect to model testing that takes the value

of one in case of a perfect fit; however, unlike GFI, AGFI never stands on zero value.

Baseline Comparisons is the next section in the model fit part, in which the models automatically fit into the program for every analysis. The first index in this part is the Normed Fit Index, or NFI in short, which reports the continuum between the terribly fitted model and the perfectly fitted one. NFI takes a value of less than 1, where the values equal to or less than 0.9 can be improved substantially. As the next index in this part, RFI is the relative fit index, which is also a sub-component of the normal fit index where values close to one show a very good fit. Other indices of baseline comparison are IFI or incremental fit index with the same value as well as CFI or comparative fit index.

Parsimony-adjusted measures are referred to as the fit indices, which are adjusted for the majority of the aforementioned ones. The first index in this group is PRATIO which estimates the number of constraints in a model. The next, PNFI, or parsimony normed fixed index, shows the results of parsimony adjustment.

RMSEA, which stands for the root mean square error of approximation, indicates the difference between the observed covariance matrix per degree of freedom where the values higher than 0.1 are considered poor, the values between 0.08 and 0.1 stand on the borderline, values ranging from 0.05 to 0.08 are taken as acceptable values, and the values equal or less than 0.05 are excellent

according to MacCallum et al. (1996). For the analysis of the model fit, the model's chi-square, RMSEA, CFI, and SRMR must be reported (Rohlof & Kohli, 2023).

## Results

The main goal of the study was to estimate the regression value of interactional patterns respecting the pragmatic competence of university ELT students. To this end, a model was proposed akin to the theoretical background of interaction, including eight factors that were highlighted in the playground, namely, students' cohesiveness (STCO), teacher support (TESU), students' involvement (INVL), learners' investigation (INVS), task orientation (TAOR), cooperation (COOP), Equity (EQTY), and the attitude scale toward English (ASTE). Learners' pragmatic competence has been estimated by their knowledge of speech acts of requests (RQST) and apologies (APLG). The default model was not accepted by the software (Amos) due to the lack of enough constraints. Consequently, the model was fully accepted by the probability level of 0.475 after adjusting modification based on the suggested modification indices (Figure 3).
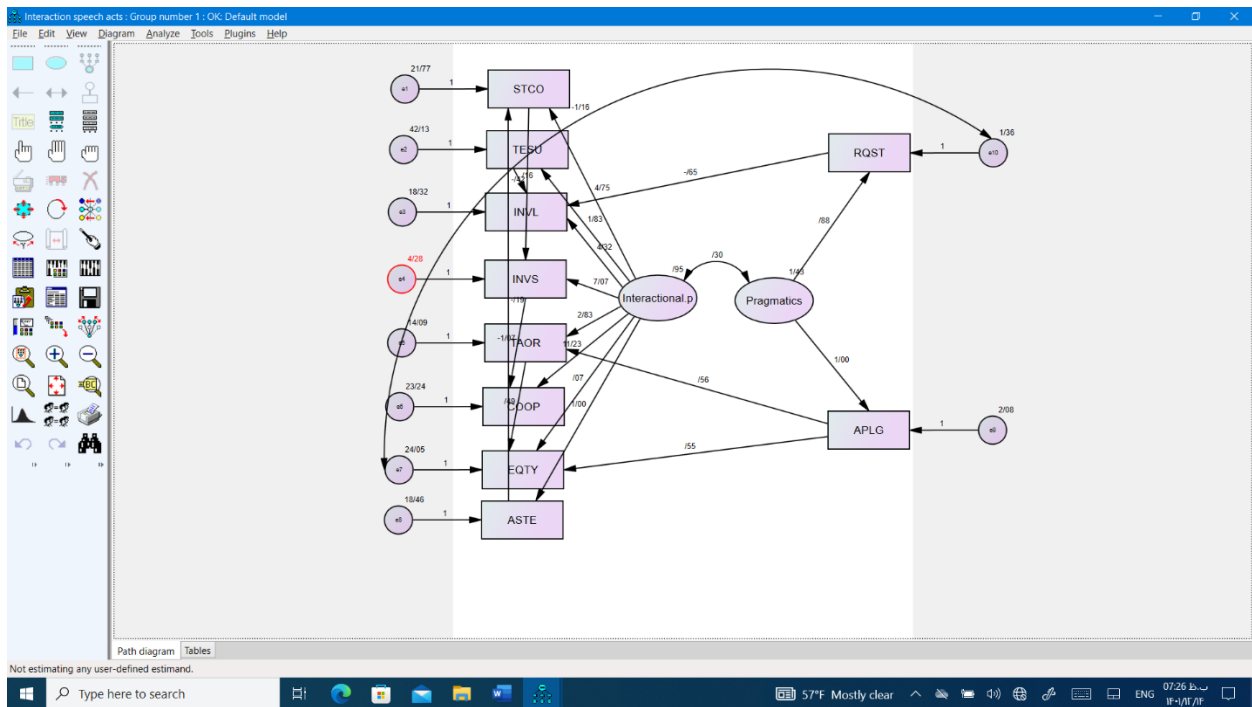


Figure 3. *Modified Model*

The regression weights show how strong and important the connections are between variables in the model. Each connection is assessed using its estimate, standard error (S.E.), critical ratio (C.R.), and p-value, which helps determine its statistical significance (see Table 1).

Table 1.
*Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)*

|  |  |  | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Label |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Equity (EQTY) | <--- | Interactional patterns | 1/499 | /620 | 2/417 | /016 | par_1 |
| Student Cohesiveness (STCO) | <--- | Interactional patterns | 2/065 | /793 | 2/605 | /009 | par_7 |
| Task Orientation (TAOR) | <--- | Interactional patterns | 1/656 | /612 | 2/705 | /007 | par_3 |
| Teacher Support (TESU) | <--- | Interactional patterns | 1/425 | /662 | 2/153 | /031 | par_6 |
| Task Orientation (TAOR) | <--- | EQTY | /279 | /058 | 4/819 | *** | par_8 |
| Task Orientation (TAOR) | <--- | STCO | /127 | /054 | 2/354 | /019 | par_12 |
| Attitude Scale Toward English (ASTE) | <--- | Interactional patterns | 1/000 |  |  |  |  |
| Cooperation (COOP) | <--- | Interactional patterns | 1/031 | /636 | 1/623 | /105 | par_2 |

|  |  |  | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Label |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Investigation (INVS) | <--- | Interactional patterns | 4/369 | 1/468 | 2/976 | /003 | par_4 |
| Involvement (INVL) | <--- | Interactional patterns | 2/760 | /952 | 2/899 | /004 | par_5 |
| Cooperation (COOP) | <--- | STCO | /674 | /078 | 8/632 | *** | par_9 |
| Involvement (INVL) | <--- | TESU | /139 | /059 | 2/343 | /019 | par_10 |
| Involvement (INVL) | <--- | STCO | /243 | /069 | 3/531 | *** | par_11 |
| Cooperation (COOP) | <--- | TAOR | /280 | /122 | 2/288 | /022 | par_13 |

The findings show that interactional patterns have a significant influence on several outcome variables, including:

- Equity (EQTY) (Estimate = 1.499, P = 0.016)
- Student cohesiveness (STCO) (Estimate = 2.065, P = 0.009)
- Task orientation (TAOR) (Estimate = 1.656, P = 0.007)
- Teacher support (TESU) (Estimate = 1.425, P = 0.031)

Task orientation (TAOR) is strongly affected by both equity (EQTY) (Estimate = 0.279, P < 0.001) and student cohesion (STCO) (Estimate = 0.127, P = 0.019), showing significant influences from these variables. The effect of interactional patterns on learners' investigation (INVS) (Estimate = 4.369, P = 0.003) and involvement (INVL) (Estimate = 2.760, P = 0.004) is also highly significant, suggesting that interactional patterns play a key role in these outcomes. Student cohesion (STCO) has a strong impact on both cooperation (COOP) (Estimate = 0.674, P < 0.001) and involvement (INVL) (Estimate = 0.243, P < 0.001), with both relationships being highly significant.

The path from interactional patterns to cooperation (Estimate = 1.031, P = 0.105) is not statistically significant, meaning that interactional patterns may not have a substantial or direct impact on this variable in the current model. Additionally, the path from interactional patterns to the attitude scale toward English (ASTE) is fixed at 1.000, which serves as a reference point for scaling within the model. This fixed estimate is primarily used for calibration and does not offer insights into statistical significance. Interactional patterns, however, are key predictors for various variables in the model, including EQTY, STCO, TAOR, TESU, INVS, and INVL, all of which have significant p-values (below 0.05).

Student cohesion has a notably strong influence on both cooperation and involvement, emphasizing its essential role in explaining variations in those outcomes. Task orientation, on the other hand, is shaped by both equity and learners' cohesion, demonstrating how these factors contribute to the development of task orientation. Although the link between interactional patterns and cooperation is currently non-significant, it may warrant further investigation in future model adjustments.

Variance, which measures the degree of variation or error in the variables, is evaluated based on the standard error (S.E.), critical ratio (C.R.), and p-value to determine if the variance is statistically significant (see Table 2).

Table 2.
*Variances: (Group number 1 - Default model)*

|  | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Label |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pragmatic Competence | 1/435 | /924 | 1/552 | /121 | par_14 |
| e2 | 29/261 | 3/473 | 8/426 | *** | par_15 |
| e8 | 35/983 | 4/387 | 8/202 | *** | par_16 |
| e4 | 12/976 | 1/642 | 7/901 | *** | par_17 |
| e7 | 42/399 | 4/987 | 8/503 | *** | par_18 |
| e1 | 17/971 | 2/114 | 8/500 | *** | par_19 |
| e3 | 30/429 | 3/563 | 8/541 | *** | par_20 |
| e5 | 6/095 | 3/943 | 1/546 | /122 | par_21 |
| e6 | 18/381 | 2/685 | 6/845 | *** | par_22 |

Most of the error variances (e1, e2, e3, e4, e6, e7, e8) are highly significant, with p-values below 0.001, indicating that the model accounts for a large portion of the variance in these observed variables. For instance:

- e2: Estimate = 29.261, C.R. = 8.426, and p-value = *** (highly significant).
- e7: Estimate = 42.399, C.R. = 8.503, and p-value = *** (highly significant).
- e3: Estimate = 30.429, C.R. = 8.541, and p-value = *** (highly significant).

The significance of these variances shows that these error terms are well-accounted for by the model, with strong statistical evidence for the relationships between the latent variables and their respective indicators.

However, pragmatic competence (Estimate = 1.435, C.R. = 1.552, P = 0.121) is not statistically significant, meaning that the variance linked to this variable is not notably different from zero in this model. Similarly, e5 (Estimate = 6.095, C.R. = 1.546, P = 0.122) is also non-significant, indicating that the model doesn't explain this error term well and may need further adjustments to better capture its variability.

The non-significant variance estimates for pragmatics and e5 suggest these variables do not contribute strongly to the model. In contrast, the significant variances (e1, e2, e3, e4, e6, e7, and e8) indicate that the model effectively captures considerable variability in most observed indicators, making these variables well-explained statistically.

The first research question investigated the possible relationship between learners' interactional patterns and their pragmatic competence. The acceptability of the model was confirmed based on the estimated Chi-square value of 24/771. Since the Chi-square value is not statistically significant, there is a relationship between interactional patterns and pragmatic competence as indicated in Table 4. After the modification of the proposed model, nine more constraints were added for acceptability. The first constraint is related to the relationship between learners' cohesiveness and their investigation force at -0.42. The next constraint is for the relationship between teacher support and learners' class involvement at the level of 0.16. Learners' investigation is also related to their cooperation at -

1.07. Moreover, Task orientation is also connected to equity at the value of 0.49. the attitude scale toward English is related to the learners' cohesiveness at -0.19. Respecting pragmatic competence, the speech acts of request are related to the learners' involvement at the level of -0.65; furthermore, apology speech acts are also related to task orientation and equity at the values of 0.55 and -1.16, respectively as indicated in Table 1. Moreover, the information related to the distinct sample moments and estimated parameters of the model were provided in table 3 in line with the degree of freedom (see Table 3).

Table 3.
*Notes for Model (Default model)*

| Computation of degrees of freedom (Default model) | |
|---|---|
| A number of distinct sample moments: | 55 |
| Number of distinct parameters to be estimated: | 30 |
| Degrees of freedom (55 - 30): | 25 |

The second research question regarding the predictive force of interactional patterns over learners' pragmatic competence was also answered through the attainment of model fit based on the model fit indices which were reported in the regression weights table (Table 1). Reports the notes for the default (modified) model including the distinct sample moments, distinct estimated parameters, and degree of freedom. The modified model was confirmed by the probability level of 0.475 after adjusting modification based on the suggested modification indices as indicated in Table 4.

Table 4.
*Result (Default model)*

| Minimum was achieved |
|---|
| Chi-square = 24/771 |
| Degrees of freedom = 25 |
| Probability level = /475 |

The Current study was performed to shed light on the predictive force interactional patterns may have on shaping, developing, and enhancing the pragmatic competence of language learners (Table 5). The proposed model was proven to excellently

fit the data by implantation of Structural Equation Modeling via Amos. Based on the paper's findings, the highest regression load is dedicated to learners' cooperation (11.227). Students' investigation (7.075) and cohesiveness (4.749) are the second and third place of the rank order. Task orientation, Equity, teacher support, and cooperation all have a regression load between 1 and 2. At the same time, the least value is related to the learners' cooperation. Students' cohesiveness was correlated to learners' involvement (0.24), cooperation (0.67), and task orientation (0.13). It must be noted that students' cohesiveness has a significant relationship with learners' cooperation and involvement. Finally, there is a significant relationship between Equity and task orientation.

Table 5.
*Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)*

|  |  |  | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Label |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ASTE | <--- | Interactional. patterns | 1/000 |  |  |  |  |
| STCO | <--- | Interactional. patterns | 4/749 | 1/860 | 2/553 | /011 |  |
| APLG | <--- | Pragmatics | 1/000 |  |  |  |  |
| STCO | <--- | ASTE | -/194 | /092 | -2/115 | /034 |  |
| TESU | <--- | Interactional. patterns | 1/833 | /886 | 2/070 | /038 |  |
| INVS | <--- | Interactional. patterns | 7/075 | 2/725 | 2/596 | /009 |  |
| TAOR | <--- | Interactional. patterns | 2/832 | 1/108 | 2/555 | /011 |  |
| RQST | <--- | Pragmatics | /882 | /471 | 1/873 | /061 |  |
| TAOR | <--- | APLG | /559 | /169 | 3/303 | *** |  |
| INVS | <--- | STCO | -/419 | /091 | -4/633 | *** |  |
| INVL | <--- | Interactional. patterns | 4/315 | 1/660 | 2/600 | /009 |  |
| COOP | <--- | Interactional. patterns | 11/227 | 4/451 | 2/522 | /012 |  |
| EQTY | <--- | Interactional. patterns | /071 | /536 | /132 | /895 |  |
| EQTY | <--- | APLG | /553 | /225 | 2/453 | /014 |  |
| EQTY | <--- | TAOR | /494 | /107 | 4/615 | *** |  |
| INVL | <--- | RQST | -/654 | /233 | -2/812 | /005 |  |
| COOP | <--- | INVS | -1/070 | /323 | -3/316 | *** |  |
| INVL | <--- | TESU | /156 | /056 | 2/810 | /005 |  |

## Model Fit Indices

The first concerned index is Chi-square or CMIN, which shows the possibility of statistically significant results with regard to the observed variables (Table 6). In other words, CMIN investigates if the sample is an acceptable fit for the analysis. It must be noted that if the Chi-square value is significant, the model can be assumed unsatisfactory. As a result, due to the fact that the value is not significant in the ongoing study, the model is accepted and fitted to the observed variables. Subsequent to modifying the proposed model, the results for model-fit indices are reported as follows.

Table 6.
*CMIN Result*

| Model | NPAR | CMIN | DF | P | CMIN/DF |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | 30 | 24/771 | 25 | /475 | /991 |
| Saturated model | 55 | /000 | 0 |  |  |
| Independence model | 10 | 427/078 | 45 | /000 | 9/491 |

In Table 6, NPAR is the number of parameters for each model, DF is the degree of freedom which estimates how many independent values can diverge without obstructing any constraints in the model, and P shows the probability of reaching a discrepancy as large as CMIN value if the proposed

model is correct. For CMIN/DF, the model is an acceptable fit if the value is equal to or less than 3 (Kline, 1998). The default model is an excellent fit since the value of CMIN/DF is 0.991.

The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) is indicated in Table. 7, is exerted to estimate the minimum discrepancy function needed to achieve a perfect fit based on maximum likelihood conditions (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1984). GFI takes the value of less than or equal to 1 in which the value of one indicates a perfect fit. The value for GFI in the study was 0.968, which reveals an excellent fit (Kline, 2005).

Table 7.
*RMR, GFI*

| Model | RMR | GFI | AGFI | PGFI |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | 1/011 | /968 | /930 | /440 |
| Saturated model | /000 | 1/000 | | |
| endence model | 9/518 | /573 | /478 | /469 |

In Table 7, RMR stands for the Root Mean Square Residuals. The smaller the RMR, the better. AGFI or Adjusted Goodness of Fit indicates the degree of freedom for testing the model. PGFI, or Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index, is a modification of GFI and estimates the degree of freedom for the model.

Baseline Comparison indices are shown in Table 8, referring to the models automatically fitted by Amos for every analysis.

Table 8.
*Baseline comparison*

| Model | NFI Delta1 | RFI rho1 | IFI Delta2 | TLI rho2 | CFI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | /942 | /896 | 1/001 | 1/001 | 1/000 |
| Saturated model | 1/000 | | 1/000 | | 1/000 |
| Independence model | /000 | /000 | /000 | /000 | /000 |

In Table 8, NFI stands for Normed Fit Index and consists of values scaling between the fitting independence model and perfectly fitting saturated model in which the values closer to one are showing excellent to perfect fit. RFI, or Relative Fit Index, is derived from NFI with the same values. Incremental Fit Index or IFI, Tucker-Lewis Coefficient or TLI, and Comparative Fit Index carry the same values as NFI. The value of interest

here in this table is CFI, in which values equal to or higher than 0.95 are considered an excellent fit, according to West et al. (2012).

Parsimony-adjusted measures (Table 9), refer to relative fit indices for the majority of aforementioned indices. PRATIO calculates the number of constraints in a model, PNFI expresses the results of parsimony adjustments to NFI, and PCFI reveals the result of parsimony adjustment to the Comparative Fit Index CFI.

Table 9.
*Parsimony-Adjusted measures*

| Model | PRATIO | PNFI | PCFI |
|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | /556 | /523 | /556 |
| Saturated model | /000 | /000 | /000 |
| Independence model | 1/000 | /000 | /000 |

## Discussion

The primary objective of this research was to examine the predictive capacity of interactional patterns and the pragmatic competence of EFL learners. As evidenced by the findings of the research, the baseline model has demonstrated exceptional appropriateness according to the model fit indices. In the proposed model, an additional nine constraints were incorporated for the purpose of acceptability. The initial constraint pertains to the correlation between learners' cohesiveness and their investigative efforts. The subsequent constraint addresses the connection between teacher support and learners' engagement in class. Learners' investigative efforts are also associated with their collaborative behaviors. Furthermore, task orientation exhibits a relationship with equity. The attitude scale toward English is linked to the cohesiveness among learners. With respect to pragmatic competence, the speech acts of request are associated with learners' engagement; additionally, speech acts of apology are correlated with task orientation and equity. The findings of this study are in agreement with William's (2006), who studied students' cohesiveness in Computer-Supported collaborative learning, claiming that both teamwork and individuals' cohesiveness mediate interaction and learning. Teacher support is claimed to be a component of teacher-learner interactional patterns; additionally, the results are in harmony

with Soler (2002), who asserts that collaborative dialogues in teacher-student interaction prove to support the claim that pragmatic competence may be the result of assisted performance.

The current study explored how interaction patterns and pragmatic skills among learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) can predict their learning outcomes. The study found that its default model fit exceptionally well, based on model fit indices. The results align with William's (2006) study on student cohesiveness in Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning, which emphasizes how teamwork and individual cohesiveness mediate interaction and learning. It also supports Soler's (2002) view that collaborative dialogues between teachers and students help develop pragmatic skills through guided practice.

A key finding of the study is that teacher support is crucial in shaping interactional patterns between teachers and learners. Research shows that supportive teaching strategies increase student engagement, creating a positive environment that encourages active participation. For example, Stroet et al. (2015) argue that when classrooms address students' needs for autonomy, competence, and connection, learning outcomes improve. Teacher support is also a vital factor in sustaining student engagement over time (Weyns et al., 2018). However, individual factors like peer relationships and learning styles can affect how students respond to this support.

Group cohesion, particularly in group work, was strongly linked to students' ability to conduct investigations. Cohesive groups tend to perform better and achieve better learning outcomes. Forrester and Tashchian (2006) found that task cohesion is closely related to team effectiveness and effort. Groups that focus on tasks are more likely to engage deeply in investigative processes, leading to improved performance. Although social cohesion has a less direct impact, it helps create a supportive environment that indirectly enhances learning outcomes. However, factors like individual learning preferences and group dynamics can influence the level of cohesion achieved in different learning settings.

The study emphasized that cooperative learning strategies greatly improve academic success and foster better interpersonal relationships among students. Research supports the idea that students in cooperative learning environments outperform those in individualistic settings, especially when they have time to develop teamwork skills (Hsiung, 2012). Cooperative learning promotes active engagement, with students taking on various roles, which leads to better retention and understanding of the material (Dansereau, 1988). Such environments are also more supportive, boosting motivation and promoting social interaction, particularly in diverse classrooms (Gillies, 2014). However, some critics point out that group-based grading in cooperative learning can feel unfair, highlighting a potential conflict between collaboration and individual accountability (Morgan, 2003).

The study also examined the link between task orientation and equity, suggesting that task complexity can encourage fair participation, especially in diverse groups. Goar and Sell (2005) discovered that well-structured tasks can reduce racial disparities in group settings, leading to more equal contributions from all group members. Task orientation is also linked to better academic performance, particularly in subjects like reading and math, as observed by Lundberg and Sterner (2006). While task orientation can create more equitable learning environments, the study acknowledges that individual and cultural differences may influence these outcomes.

Positive attitudes toward learning English play an important role in fostering group cohesion. Learners with a positive attitude towards English tend to be more motivated, contributing to a more collaborative and supportive learning environment. Studies with Mexican university students by Sandoval-Pineda (2011) revealed that positive attitudes were associated with better performance and stronger group cohesion. When learners share positive attitudes, it helps create a more cohesive group dynamic, improving the overall learning experience (Verma, 2005). On the other hand, negative attitudes can cause divisions within groups, which can harm both collaboration and language learning.

Teaching students how to make requests greatly enhances their communication skills, making them more active participants in language learning. Research shows that explicit instruction in making

requests helps learners engage more effectively in conversations. Jordà (2004) found that students who received direct instruction on how to make requests demonstrated better communication skills, while Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan (2006) emphasized that exposure to different types of request forms enhances students' awareness of communication strategies. Social and cultural factors, such as hierarchy, can also impact how learners use these strategies (Al-Gahtani & Alkahtani, 2012). Broader exposure to various types of request forms may be necessary to help students use these skills in different contexts.

In task-oriented conversations, such as interviews, apologies serve a practical role in maintaining communication flow rather than simply expressing regret. Bean and Johnstone (1994) noted that apologies in such conversations help sustain rapport and keep discussions on track. The study also highlights cultural differences in the use of apologies, suggesting that cultural values influence how apologies are understood in task-focused settings (Rojo, 2005).

In classroom settings, apologies help foster fairness by closing social gaps and promoting understanding between students and teachers. Cultural differences also play a role in how apologies are perceived and their impact on classroom interactions. For example, Byon (2005) noted that Korean students, influenced by their collectivist culture, show a heightened awareness of power dynamics, which affects how apologies are understood. In contrast, American students may view apologies more through the lens of individual expression. Apologies are also essential in moral development, teaching young learners how to resolve conflicts and follow social norms (Björk-Willén, 2018). However, misunderstandings around apologies can cause confusion, particularly in culturally diverse classrooms.

## Conclusion

This study offers valuable insights into the predictive relationship between interaction patterns and pragmatic competence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, deepening our understanding of how these elements impact language learning outcomes. The findings showed that cohesive group dynamics, strong teacher support, and task orientation play key roles in enhancing student engagement, persistence, and overall success. The results were consistent with earlier research highlighting the importance of collaborative learning and guided performance in promoting both teamwork and individual development. Moreover, pragmatic competence—evident in learners' ability to make requests and engage in collaborative dialogues—underscored the crucial role of interaction in shaping communication skills in a second language.

The study also emphasized that positive learner attitudes towards English, along with active participation in cooperative learning environments, foster a more cohesive and supportive atmosphere, which in turn leads to better academic performance. However, the study also recognized that individual and cultural differences can influence how students respond to these interactional patterns, pointing to the need for adaptable teaching approaches. While task orientation was linked to greater equity and academic success, balancing collaboration and individual accountability remains a challenge for educators. Overall, current study highlighted the importance of interactional patterns in EFL learning and calls for further investigation into how diverse classroom settings and cultural factors shape these dynamics.

This study significantly contributes to understanding how interactional patterns and pragmatic competence influence learning outcomes for EFL learners. The findings show that interaction dynamics—such as group cohesiveness, teacher support, and task orientation—play a critical role in driving student engagement, persistence, and overall academic performance. These results reinforce earlier studies, such as William's (2006) work on group cohesiveness in collaborative learning, which underscores the value of both teamwork and individual involvement in mediating effective interaction and learning. Additionally, the study confirms Soler's (2002) assertion that collaborative teacher-student dialogues help develop pragmatic competence, showing that structured and guided interactions help learners apply language in real-world contexts more effectively.

Teacher support emerges as particularly significant, with findings indicating that when teachers create a learning environment that meets students' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and connection, student involvement increases, and learning outcomes improve. This aligns with research suggesting that supportive teaching practices lead to sustained student engagement over time (Stroet et al., 2015; Weyns et al., 2018). The study also highlights the impact of positive attitudes toward English learning on group cohesion, showing that motivated students collaborate more effectively in supportive environments. Furthermore, the link between task orientation and equity suggests that well-structured tasks can reduce disparities in participation, fostering an inclusive learning environment where diverse students can contribute equally. Nonetheless, individual differences—such as learning styles and cultural influences—can affect these patterns, indicating the need for more tailored approaches to EFL instruction.

Moreover, the study underscores the importance of pragmatic competence, especially in areas like making requests and apologies, in shaping learners' ability to communicate effectively in English. Exposure to direct instruction on communication strategies, such as making requests, significantly improves learners' interactional skills, supporting Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan's (2006) findings that explicit instruction enhances communication awareness. However, social and hierarchical factors can also influence how learners apply these strategies, underscoring the need for more nuanced instruction that considers cultural differences. Apologies, for instance, are not only expressions of regret but also serve as tools to maintain task-focused conversations and facilitate smooth interpersonal communication, as Bean and Johnstone (1994) pointed out. These findings suggest that teaching pragmatic strategies should be an integral part of language instruction, particularly for helping students navigate social interactions in diverse settings.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that interactional patterns—such as teacher-learner dynamics, group cohesion, and task orientation—are essential to both academic success and the development of pragmatic competence in EFL learners. Positive learner attitudes, supported by cooperative learning environments, are key to fostering engagement and improving performance. These findings suggest that educational strategies should integrate collaborative learning with targeted instruction on communication skills. However, the diversity of learning styles and cultural backgrounds indicates that a one-size-fits-all approach is insufficient. Future research should explore how these interaction patterns operate across different cultural contexts and proficiency levels and how tailored teaching methods can address the varied needs of EFL learners. By gaining a deeper understanding of these dynamics, educators can create more inclusive and effective language learning environments that support both academic achievement and communication skills development.

## Implications of the Study

The findings of the study have significant implications for both EFL teaching and curriculum design. The strong predictive power of interaction patterns and pragmatic competence on learning outcomes suggests that educators should focus on creating cohesive and supportive learning environments. Teacher support, group cohesion, and task orientation were shown to boost student engagement and performance, suggesting that promoting collaboration and structured tasks should be central to EFL teaching strategies. The study also highlights the importance of fostering positive attitudes towards language learning and teaching effective communication strategies, such as making requests and apologies, to help students develop pragmatic competence. As a result, educators should incorporate activities that encourage student involvement and teamwork to enhance language acquisition overall.

## Limitations of the Study

Although this study provides valuable insights into how interaction patterns may be related to pragmatic competence in EFL learners, several limitations should be conceded. First, the research is based on particular classroom environments and interaction dynamics. These may hardly be generalized to all possible EFL contexts since institutional settings, class sizes, and teacher-to-

student ratios can significantly impact how interaction patterns manifest and affect learning outcomes. Moreover, the research does not take into consideration the level of teaching methodology or technological integration, which are becoming increasingly important in language instruction today. The results might therefore not capture all the complexities of EFL learning within more varied or technology-enhanced classrooms. Another limitation is that this study utilizes the self-report approach for measuring learner attitude and engagement; this might bring in some biases or inaccuracies. It has to be taken into consideration that self-reports reflect the perceptions, issues of social desirability, or even recall problems of the learners and therefore may distort the findings. While the present study does look at the immediate impact of interaction patterns on pragmatic competence, such as coming up with immediate gains regarding engagement and communication skills, the long-term impact remains open. Moreover, further research with longitudinal studies may indicate whether teacher support, group dynamics, and task orientation continue to develop positive effects as the learners' progress through their language acquisition journey.

## Suggestions for Further Research

Further research is needed to examine how cultural and individual factors affect the success of interaction patterns in diverse EFL contexts. While this study established the importance of teacher support and group dynamics in fostering cohesion and learning, future studies could explore how different cultural backgrounds shape students' responses to these interaction patterns, particularly in multicultural classrooms. Additionally, the impact of cooperative learning on individual accountability within group settings deserves further investigation, as this study suggests potential conflicts between collaboration and personal evaluation. Research on how pragmatic competence develops at different proficiency levels and in various educational settings, as well as how tailored teaching methods can improve learner engagement, would also provide a more nuanced understanding of these dynamics in language learning.

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