Teaching English Pragmatics in an EFL Context: Effects of Obtrusive and Unobtrusive Focus on Form Instructions

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Abstract

With the aim of more emphasis on pragmatics and its inclusion in EFL classrooms, this study attempted to investigate the effectiveness of obtrusive and unobtrusive focus on form instructions on learners' pragmatic performance of criticizing in English. 54 Iranian learners, all at intermediate level, participated in this study, and they were divided into three groups: 19 participants receiving obtrusive instruction, 21 learners receiving unobtrusive instruction and 14 participants had no pragmatic instruction (control group). Techniques related to each method were operationalized in details and applied in the classrooms. The most basic techniques in obtrusive methods were consciousness raising activities, metalinguistic explanation, and explicit correction. In unobtrusive method, input enhancement activities, and recast were used. Discourse completion test and oral feedback were used as pretests and posttests in this study. After applying statistical analyses using ANOVA, it was found that learners' pragmatic knowledge of criticizing improved significantly in both kinds of instructions. Also, results of post hoc analyses indicated that learners in obtrusive focus on form instruction outperformed those in unobtrusive focus on form instruction significantly. These results were justified through noticing hypotheses, importance of metalinguistic explanations, effects of explicit correction, and output hypothesis. These findings may have great implications for language teachers, syllabus designers, and future researchers.

Keywords: English pragmatics, Focus on form, Obtrusive instruction, Unobtrusive instruction

Introduction

Pragmatic competence is one of the aspects of language teaching which has been considered, especially over the last two decades. Pragmatics can be investigated in terms of interactional acts and speech acts. Interactional acts refer to structure of discourse. They are concerned with how speakers manage the process of exchanging turns, how they open and close conversations, and how they sequence acts to make a coherent conversation. On the other hand, speech acts refer to language users' attempt to perform specific actions and interpersonal functions, such as compliments, apologies, and requests (Ellis, 2008).

According to Cohen (1996), performing speech acts involves not only sociolinguistic knowledge determining the actual linguistic realization of each speech act, but also sociocultural knowledge specifying when to perform a speech act and which one is appropriate in a specific situation.

In spite of the importance of proper use of speech acts in the domain of pragmatic competence, studies indicate that learners who do not receive instruction in pragmatics show significant differences from native speakers in the area of language use, in the production and comprehension of certain speech acts, in conversational functions and conversational management (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Kasper and Rose, 2002). In addition, studies by Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) showed that learners in naturalistic context and through mere exposure slowly acquired pragmatic knowledge, or were not successful in this regard.

The results of these studies highlight the necessity of pragmatic instruction especially in foreign language context with limited input and interaction opportunities (Rose, 2005, Jeon and Kaya, 2006; Kasper and Rose, 2002).

In the domain of teaching pragmatics, early studies were informed by pedagogical theory and sought to address whether second language pragmatic features are teachable (for example, Lyster, 1994). However, there has been a general shift from early studies to later studies such as those by Takimoto, 2006) that have drawn on SLA theory such as Schmidt's (1993) Noticing Hypothesis (Ellis, 2008)

Teachability of second language pragmatic features was investigated in a number of studies such as those by Jeon and Kaya, (2006), Kasper and Rose (2002) and Rose (2005). These researchers studied the effects of instructing second language pragmatics features such as how to request and apologize. The findings indicated that instruction was significantly effective in pragmatic development issues.

Now that there are high degrees of confidence in teachability of pragmatics, and effectiveness of instruction on the development of pragmatic competence, the next question raised is which kind of instruction is more effective in pragmatic domain.

The few studies that have addressed the relative effectiveness of different teaching approaches in pragmatics are concerned with implicit versus explicit instructional approaches (Ellis, 2008).

In a study, Kubota (1995) found superior effects for implicit instruction over explicit instruction. However, these initial differences vanished by the time a delayed post-test was conducted.

In another investigation, Takimoto (2006) suggested that since in some studies both explicit and implicit treatments were optimal in enabling the learners to develop clear explicit knowledge of the target features, no difference was found between the two treatments. Jeon and Kaya's (2006) meta-analysis found that both implicit and explicit instruction were effective with the mean effect sizes for explicit instruction larger than those for implicit instruction. However, they warned that the two types of instruction had been operationalized in different ways.

Considering all these and other similar studies on the effects of different methods of instruction on development of pragmatic knowledge, it is found that the results are inconclusive, and there are some mismatches among the findings of different studies. In a recent overview of empirical work on pragmatic instruction, Takahashi (2010) sketched them, and proposed the reasons why research on the effects of different instructional approaches has yielded ambivalent results. He proposed that positive and negative outcomes of instruction are affected by (a) the type of pragmatic features examined (e.g. all speech acts are not equally amenable to learning), (b) level of proficiency in the L2 (e.g. less proficient learners are better at 'chunked' linguistic indicators of speech acts), (c) types of assessment measures (self-

assessment, meta-pragmatic assessment vs. DCTs), and data analysis methods (e.g. ANOVA vs. nonparametric analyses) which sometimes yield contradictory results.

Further inconclusive results refer to the learning gains which are observed in immediate posttests but disappear by the time delayed posttests are administered (e.g. six months, or a year later) (Takahashi, 2010).

Therefore, in order to understand the relative effectiveness of different types of instructions, further research is certainly needed (Ellis, 2008; Jeon and Kaya, 2006).

The current study tries to deal with some of these problems. It attempts to take the methodological issues into consideration, more specifically, and aims at providing further evidence of how instructed L2 learners may be helped regarding their developing L2 pragmatic ability.

The present study set out to investigate the effects of different kinds of instructions on the development of pragmatic competence with focus on speech act of criticizing. The samples were Iranian students of English as a foreign language (EFL).Whereas some speech acts such as requests, compliments, apologies and complaints have been extensively studied (e.g. Fukuya and Zhang, 2002; Martinez-Flor&Fukuya, 2005; Takahashi, 2001; Takimoto, 2009), in the field of cross-cultural pragmatics, the speech act of criticizing has not been as widely studied. It has been indicated that such acts are particularly crucial to study since they are the source of so many cross-cultural miscommunications.

Also, since the study tried to operationalize teaching approaches for teaching pragmatics more than previous studies, we referred to a kind of instruction named as Focus on Form that is incidental learning of linguistic elements within a meaning-focused context (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, 2008; Long, 1991; Long & Robinson, 1998). Since the beneficial impacts of focus on form instructions on different aspects of second language learning have been documented in many studies, in this study, different instructional tasks and methods under the rubric of focus on form teaching was explained, operationalized, investigated, and compared. The kinds of focus on form instructions considered in this study are obtrusive and unobtrusive teachings. The first one is a kind of explicit and the second

one is implicit instruction. In the current study, these two were operationalized in details.

In addition to specific instructional methods and speech acts, what makes this study an improvement over the previous studies in dealing with the problem of validity of measurements discussed previously, is that the current study tries to increase validity of results by using oral feedback. Oral feedback as a qualitative instrument along with quantitative ones may add to validity of findings.

Traditionally, there have been different kinds of instructions for teaching different aspects of second language. These instructions were associated with specific syllabus designs. Long and Robinson (1998) stated that previously the first task in syllabus design was to analyze the target language to form a pedagogical grammar, termed as synthetic approach, in which the language was broken down into words, grammar rules, … and lead to focus on forms in which discrete items of grammar, lexis, functions, and notions were presented one at a time.

However, in practice, it was found that this kind of syllabus did not work as it was predicted. On the other hand, regarding studies related to only focus on meaning and comprehensible input as opposed to focus on forms techniques, Long and Robinson (1998) argued that mere exposure to language use and focus on meaning is not enough, and explicit instruction along with raising attention to specific forms is also required. In addition, the insufficiency of focus on meaning can be found in investigations related to fossilization. Despite high level of language knowledge, certain erroneous features could still be seen in some learners' interlanguage. These incorporated erroneous linguistic forms are fossilized forms, and they may hardly be rectified.

Due to disadvantages of focus on forms and focus on meaning approaches, Long and Robinson (1998, p. 21) call for "Focus on Form (FonF)" approach which keeps the strengths of synthetic syllabus and removes its limitations.

Focus on Form approach is motivated by Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1983, cited in Long & Robinson, 1998) according to which interaction between learners and adults, or more proficient speakers, as well as texts, especially the elaborated ones, plays a crucial role in language development.

Such a development may occur through negotiation of meaning between the two sides, which ends in modifications of the interactional structure of conversation (Long & Robinson, 1998). Focus on Form, in contrast to Focus on Forms, consists of "an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features- by the teacher and/or one or more learners - triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production" (Long & Robinson, 1998, p. 23).

According to Long (1991), two instructional methods, focus on forms and focus on form, are distinguished from each other. Focus on forms instruction refers to a kind of traditional instruction in which the target L2 forms are taught in isolation or out of context or without any communicative activity. However, focus on form (F on F) is defined as "overtly draw[ing] students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication" (Long, 1991, pp. 45-46). As is mentioned in Park (2004), this definition characterizes two main features specific to FonF. The first characteristic is that in this instruction, learners pay attention to linguistic forms while their primary focus is on meaning or communication. The second feature is that attention to form arises incidentally in response to a communicative need. Focus on form instruction can take different forms based on its degree of obtrusiveness. It refers to the degree to which the attention to form interrupts the flow of communication (Doughty and Williams, 1998).

Focus on forms tasks can be regarded as a continuum from obtrusive to unobtrusive. Unobtrusive end includes input flood and input enhancement techniques, while some of the examples on the obtrusive end are consciousness-raising tasks. Therefore, it can be concluded that obtrusive instruction in which rules are explained to learners, or learners are directed to find rules by attending to forms, is the same as explicit instruction. However, unobtrusive instruction in which there is no overt reference to rules or forms is regarded as implicit instruction (Norris & Ortega 2000). Doughty and Williams (1998, cited in Saeidi, 2007) presented a taxonomy of tasks and techniques. It is as a continuum based on degree of obtrusiveness of Focus on Form. In other words, this taxonomy shows how tasks and techniques can be ranged along a continuum reflecting the degree

to which the focus on form interrupts the flow of communication. These tasks and techniques from unobtrusive to obtrusive ones are input flood, task-essential language, input enhancement, negotiation, recast, output enhancement, interaction enhancement, dictogloss, CR tasks, input processing, and garden path.

In another classification, Ellis (2008) suggested three principal ways that researchers set about designing obtrusive focused tasks: Structured based production tasks (dictogloss and text reconstruction tasks), comprehension tasks (Interpretation task), and consciousness-raising tasks. As it is evident in these classifications, it is possible to combine different explicit and implicit instructions; however, what is important is integrating form, meaning, and use (Saeidi, 2007).

Recently, there have been growing interest in the effects of implicit and explicit teachings on L2 pragmatic development, but these studies vary in their methodological options. In some studies such as those by Liddicoat and Crozet (2001), and Takahashi (2001), explicit pragmatic instruction refers to a wide range of techniques, from meta-pragmatic explanation to different input conditions with or without meta-pragmatic information. On the other hand, in contrast to explicit pragmatic instruction, implicit pragmatic instruction has been less adequately conceptualized. It is a somewhat underdeveloped area, both conceptually and methodologically (Fukuya & Zhang, 2002). In some studies it is defined as mere exposure to pragmatic input (Takahashi, 2001) or the withholding of meta-pragmatic information (e.g. House, 1996). Very few studies have taken a step further to operationalize this type of instruction in terms of the focus on form paradigm.

In this study, to clearly operationalize the methods under the rubric of focus on form instruction, explicit meta-pragmatic explanations and explicit correction of pragmatic errors are regarded as obtrusive instruction or explicit teaching of pragmatics in general. On the other hand, input enhancement techniques and recasts for dealing with pragmatic errors are considered as unobtrusive instruction or implicit teaching of pragmatics.

The present study aims at addressing the needs for further investigations in teaching L2 pragmatics by answering the following research questions:

1. What are the effects of obtrusive focus on form instruction on learners' pragmatic performance of criticizing in English?
2. What are the effects of unobtrusive focus on form instruction on learners' pragmatic performance of criticizing in English?
3. Is there any significant difference between obtrusive and unobtrusive focus on form instructions on learners' pragmatic performance of criticizing in English?

Method

Participants

Participants in this study were 54 intermediate learners of English; studying in Hakim Sabzevari University in Iran. Their major was English literature. Their age ranged between 19 to 22, and their lengths of studying English ranged between 4 to 7 years. The participants were 21 males and 33 females. They had had no exposure to daily life English use. They were divided and assigned to obtrusive, unobtrusive, and control groups. The study was conducted in their literary criticism class. In this class, after reading lessons based on the syllabus, students read their own reactions to lessons and discussed them. Meanwhile other students criticized them and mentioned their idea about their classmates' lectures on the specified topic. Thus, students use the speech act of criticizing naturally in the classroom.

Instruments

DCT or Discourse Completion Test was used in this study both as a pretest and as a posttest. It was adopted from Nguyen (2005). The focus of this test is on speech act of criticizing, and it consists of four criticizing scenarios, constructed based on the peer-feedback data.

Procedures

Instruction for all three groups lasted for 15 weeks (one semester). It was a kind of one-hour instruction twice a week. In all three groups, DCT or Discourse Completion Test as a pretest was given to the learners. However, instructional treatments for these groups were different to some extent.

For the group with obtrusive focus on form instruction, the students criticized their classmates' lectures on the specified literary text such as "Animal Farm" and discussed them. Then, the teacher raised their attention to speech act of criticizing that they had used. They talked about experiences on criticism, they recognized different ways of criticizing as a kind of consciousness raising activity, and discussed the ways of criticizing. The teacher gave meta-pragmatic explanations in the ways of criticizing, and introduced softeners and mitigators in criticizing. The other activities in the last sessions were reflecting on and discussing the ways of producing criticisms by their classmates, and saying their feelings about them. In addition to all these practices, explicit teacher correction activities were one of basic parts of instruction in this group. The teacher explicitly corrected learners' pragmatic and grammatical errors while criticizing their classmates. Sometimes peer feedback was observed in this class.

For the group with unobtrusive focus on form instruction, the activities which were used included input enhancement activities. For example, some handouts of printed conversation containing different ways of criticizing by native speakers were given to the learners. Target structures were made bold. The learners read the conversations, thought about them, and answered reading comprehension questions at the end of the conversation. Like the obtrusive focus on form group, peer feedback was also used. Error correction in this group was in the form of recast. In this way, the teacher, repeated the problematic part with a rising intonation and then said the correct and appropriate utterance.

Control group followed the same literary criticism syllabus and schedule in which the students participated in peer feedback activities and gave critical comments on a peer's work. English was the language of instruction and communication in the classroom. The only difference was that while the two treatment groups respectively received explicit instruction of language for criticizing and exposure to enriched target pragmatic input via input enhancement and recast activities, the control group did not receive any equivalent instruction or exposure but only followed the normal schedule.

Data collection

Both elicited and natural data were employed in this study. A written discourse completion task (DCT) (Appendix B) focused on speech act of criticizing, and oral peer feedbacks on actual learners' presentations were used. For oral peer feedback, they were instructed to critique their peer's presentations and lectures on the the literary topics specified in their syllabus. All the data were recorded and transcribed. The DCT was also adapted from Nguyen with some minor modifications to make it suitable for an oral literary criticism classroom in Iran. The original version had been developed for Vietnamese learners. The modified version was tested in a pilot study with 30 learners similar to the participants of the main study. Oral peer feedback and DCT were used as pretests and immediate posttests for all three groups. The same tests were used as pretest and posttests. Due to some limitations such as lack of availability of the same learners because of long holidays at the end of semester, using a delayed posttest was impossible for the researcher.

By adapting a categorization scheme from Nguyen, Pham and Pham (2012) study which was devised and validated by Nguyen (2005), the data were coded. The basic divisions in the scheme were using head acts and modifiers. The subdivisions and corresponding strategies are included in appendix A. The different ways of criticizing, strategies, and modifiers used by learners in DCTs and oral peer feedbacks were identified and coded. Then, based on learners' knowledge of various expressions for conveying intentions, a score was given to each learner. Based on using both appropriate head act and appropriate modifier, a score between "0 to 5" was given to the learners. The participants' final score was calculated following a procedure adapted from Martinez-Flor and Fukuya (2005) in which we calculated the total number of criticisms a learner had made; then we assigned its score for pragmatic appropriateness, calculated the sum for all criticisms made, and finally divided this sum by the number of criticisms made.

Results

Initially, in order to determine if learners are at the same level of pragmatic knowledge, DCT and oral feedback were used as pretests. As it is shown in Tables 1 and 2, the results of descriptive statistics and ANOVA analysis indicate that in the pre-tests, there were no significant differences among the three groups. Therefore, the groups were homogeneous.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics on pretest scores (discourse completion task and oral feedback)

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
DCT	obtrusive	19	1.2171	.29710	.06816
	unobtrusive	21	1.3571	.65465	.14286
	control	14	1.1875	.59191	.15820
	Total	54	1.2639	.53236	.07245
OF	obtrusive	19	1.2895	.56065	.12862
	Unobtrusive	21	1.2619	.58350	.12733
	control	14	1.2857	.42582	.11380
	Total	54	1.2778	.52903	.07199

Table 2
ANOVA results for pretests

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
DCT	Between Groups	.306	2	.153	.530	.592
	Within Groups	14.715	51	.289		
	Total	15.021	53			
OF	Between Groups	.009	2	.004	.015	.985
	Within Groups	14.825	51	.291		
	Total	14.833	53			

To answer the first and second research questions, learners' scores in posttests (oral feedback and DCT) were compared with their scores in the pretests. Table 3 and 4 indicate the results of descriptive and ANOVA analysis for the three groups. The results showed that the obtrusive and unobtrusive groups improved significantly from pretest to posttest, and there

was no such a change for control group. Therefore, the first and second research questions are answered. The results show that both obtrusive and unobtrusive focus on form instructions are effective in learners' pragmatic performance of criticizing in English.

Table 3
Descriptive statistics on posttest scores (discourse completion task and oral feedback)

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
DCT	obtrusive	19	3.8816	.36911	.08468
	unobtrusive	21	3.1071	.38988	.08508
	control	14	1.0536	.45392	.12132
	Total	54	2.8472	1.18925	.16184
OF	obtrusive	19	4.2368	.56195	.12892
	unobtrusive	21	2.6667	.73030	.15936
	control	14	1.2143	.67123	.17939
	Total	54	2.8426	1.35223	.18402

Table 4
ANOVA results for posttests

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
DCT	Between Groups	66.787	2	33.394	208.428	.000
	Within Groups	8.171	51	.160		
	Total	74.958	53			
OF	Between Groups	74.704	2	37.352	85.778	.000
	Within Groups	22.208	51	.435		
	Total	96.912	53			

In order to answer the third research question, post hoc analyses were applied, and as can be seen in Table 5, the results indicated that obtrusive group was significantly better than unobtrusive group in their pragmatic performance of speech act of criticizing, and both of them were better than control group in both DCT and oral feedback.

Table 5
Post hoc analysis, LSD

Dependent Variable	(I) method	(J) method	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Posttest (DCT)	obtrusive	unobtrusive	.77444*	.12674	.000	.5200	1.0289
		control	2.82801*	.14098	.000	2.5450	3.1110
	unobtrusive	obtrusive	-.77444*	.12674	.000	-1.0289	-.5200
		control	2.05357*	.13811	.000	1.7763	2.3308
	control	obtrusive	-2.82801*	.14098	.000	-3.1110	-2.5450
		unobtrusive	-2.05357*	.13811	.000	-2.3308	-1.7763
Posttest (OF)	obtrusive	unobtrusive	1.57018*	.20894	.000	1.1507	1.9896
		control	3.02256*	.23243	.000	2.5559	3.4892
	unobtrusive	obtrusive	-1.57018*	.20894	.000	-1.9896	-1.1507
		control	1.45238*	.22768	.000	.9953	1.9095
	control	obtrusive	-3.02256*	.23243	.000	-3.4892	-2.5559
		unobtrusive	-1.45238*	.22768	.000	-1.9095	-.9953

Discussion

This study tried to investigate the effectiveness of obtrusive and unobtrusive focus on form instructions on learners' pragmatic performance of criticizing in English.

Based on observations and statistical analyses, learners' pragmatic knowledge of criticizing improved significantly in both kinds of instructions.

These results are consistent with the findings of Rose (2005), Nguyen, Pham and Pham (2012), and Norris and Ortega (2000). For example, in a similar study, Nguyen, Pham and Pham (2012) found that instruction was effective in teaching pragmatics. However, they selected terms "explicit" and "implicit" instructions in an essay writing class.

These positive impacts related to both methods can be justified by the fact that a kind of rich instruction was provided for the learners in both methods, and instruction can act as a kind of positive evidence and enhances learning. Also, according to Schmidt (1993), one of the most important parts of learning is noticing and awareness. In this study, both methods offer some degrees of awareness since, in obtrusive method, this awareness was provided through some awareness activities and metalinguistic explanations,

and in unobtrusive group it was offered through input enhancement techniques such as seeing bold sentences.

In addition, in both instructions, the learners were given some opportunities for producing utterances related to criticizing. For example, in both obtrusive and unobtrusive methods, learners criticized the specified literary text, and talked about their ideas; in other words, they did the literary criticism orally. According to Swain's (1985) output hypothesis, such production of target forms is beneficial since learners not only perceive the appropriate forms but also try to produce them,. In addition, they may learn more about their gaps and problems, or about their strong points. Also, this may help them become more fluent in producing these utterances.

However, regarding the third research question, it was found that learners in obtrusive focus on form instruction outperformed those in unobtrusive focus on form instruction significantly. This can refer to more depth of processing in obtrusive instruction (Takimoto, 2009). According to Takimoto (2009) and Gass (1988), in such an instruction, learners not only receive target forms but also work on them. They receive some metapragmatic explanations, and so more noticing of the target items. Moreover, this more noticing can lead to a further step of "understanding". According to Gass (1988), not all noticed input can be comprehended and integrated. In obtrusive instruction, through metalinguistic explanations, there is more awareness that can lead learners to more understanding as compared with those in unobtrusive group.

This superiority can also be justified by the kind of feedback used in this method since in obtrusive instruction, explicit correction is used, while in unobtrusive instruction, recast is applied. There are some studies that have indicated more positive impacts for explicit correction than recast (Ellis, 2008; Lyster, 1998).

On the one hand, explicit correction is more successful in attracting learners' attentions to target forms. On the other hand, recasts are repetitions without any corrections; in this case, they can be problematic since as Lyster (1998) observed repetitions by teacher may occur for both correct and problematic learner utterances. Sometimes teachers repeat a correct and

appropriate utterance by produced by learners to confirm their utterances. Thus, sometimes recasts may be mistaken.

Second language pragmatics is one of areas in second language learning that has been neglected for a long time. Recently, there have been great attempts to include it in second language learning syllabus; however, most of these attempts have been in ESL contexts rather than EFL contexts with a very limited exposure to target language pragmatic forms. Although recently in EFL context teachers have been trying to include this aspect, they cannot make it applicable. In this regard, this study may have great implications for second language teachers and syllabus designers. The present study indicated that pragmatics should be instructed to second language teachers, and instruction is very effective in this case. By resorting to the findings of this study, language teachers and syllabus designers are aware that based on their classroom conditions, they can use different methods from the most obtrusive ones to the least obtrusive ones. All specific techniques of these instructions are explained in details in this study. They would know that focus on form instruction can also be applicable for teaching second language pragmatics with a range of techniques applied. The present study indicated that for teaching pragmatics, it is not necessary to determine specific time or material,; it can be taught even through different kinds of classroom interaction such as this study, in which pragmatics was taught in a literary criticism classroom.

To conclude, this study investigated the effectiveness of obtrusive and unobtrusive focus on form instructions on learners' pragmatic performance of criticizing in English.

Based on observations and statistical analyses, learners' pragmatic knowledge of criticizing improved significantly in both kinds of instructions. Also, it was found that learners in obtrusive focus on form instruction outperformed those in unobtrusive focus on form instruction significantly. These results were justified through noticing hypotheses, importance of metalinguistic explanations, effects of explicit correction, and output hypothesis.

This study has some limitations. In the current work, the numbers of participants were limited. More participants can lead to more reliable results and more generalizable findings. Also, in this study only productive aspect

of pragmatic learning was investigated. Learning involves both receptive and productive sides. Further study is needed to investigate both receptive and productive learning of pragmatic knowledge through different methods. In addition, in the present study, because of some limitations and problems such as lack of availability of the same learners because of long holidays at the end of semester, researchers could not use a delayed posttest. The results of such a delayed test seem to be helpful in understanding the effects of different methods of teaching English pragmatics. Finally, in this investigation, only "criticism" was used as a kind of pragmatic speech act. Further researchers are required to study instructing and learning other kinds of speech acts.

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Appendix A

Realization strategies

1. Identification of problems I thought you had two conclusions.

I didn't see your conclusion.

2. Giving advice You might want to delete the comma.

Why don't you decide on just one conclusion?

Modifiers

1. External:

a. Compliment It was an interesting paper.

That was a great presentation.

b. Disarmer You had a few spelling mistakes here and there but I think that's because you're writing pretty quick, nothing too major.

c. Grounder I think is is better than are there because traffic is single

2. Internal:

a. Question Did you summarize the main idea?

Could this work?

b. Past tense I thought it would make more sense that way.

Maybe you could've explained it a little bit more.

c. Modal verbs (e.g. may, might [want to], could, would)

I'm not sure but maybe you could cut out the second section.

d. Modal adverbs maybe, perhaps, probably

Perhaps you might want to check that again.

e. Uncertainty phrases I wasn't sure that was the best phrase you could've used.

I don't know that I agree with the point you made.

f. Hedges (e.g. kind of, sort of, seem) This sentence was sort of unclear.

g. Understaters (e.g. a bit, a little [bit], quite, rather)

Your introduction seemed a little too long

Appendix B

Discourse Completion Task

1: What would you say to your friend if you thought his or her speech were not sequenced logically enough so ideas did not flow naturally?
You:

2: What would you say to your friend if you thought his or her oral presentation refers to only only one-sided arguments, and so it was hardly convincing to the readers?
You:

3: What would you say to your friend if you thought he or she sometimes wandered off the topic?
You:

4: What would you say to your friend if you thought his or her linking words were not always helpful and sometimes they even confused readers?
You:

5: What would you say to your friend if you thought he or she did not develop his or her arguments very well but repeated himself or herself at times?
You:

6: What would you say to your friend if you thought he or she did not make an appropriate choice of words so his or her tone was too informal at times?
You:

Bio data

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