Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research
Volume 4, Issue 7, 2017, pp. 344-360
Available online at www.jallr.com
ISSN: 2376-760X

The Effect of Pragmatic Instruction on the Syntactic Complexity of Iranian EFL Learners' Suggestions and Requests

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Abstract
A general question that is at the heart of much research in applied linguistics and second language acquisition is what makes a second or foreign language user, or even a native speaker, a more or less proficient language user? Many researchers and language practitioners believe that the constructs of second language performance and second language proficiency are multi-componential in nature, and that their principal dimensions can be adequately, and comprehensively, captured by the notions of complexity, accuracy and fluency (Skehan, 1998; Ellis, 2003, 2008; Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). Hence, this study sets out to examine the effect of pragmatic instruction operationalized through how the input is enhanced, on the syntactic complexity of the suggestions and requests a group of intermediate Iranian EFL learners make on a phone and email task, comparing their performance through pre- and post-tests. After conducting the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test, the findings indicated that input-based instruction of English suggestions and requests has a positive effect on the syntactic complexity of the speech acts produced by the participants on the post-tests in comparison to the pre-tests. The results are discussed with implications for classroom practices and future research.
Keywords: EFL context; input-based instruction; pragmatic instruction; requests; suggestions; syntactic complexity

INTRODUCTION

The word pragmatics was a newcomer on the scene when it was introduced into linguistics in the 1980s but had been used before that to refer to one of the branches of inquiry in the philosopher Charles Morris's (1938) threefold division of semiotics (the theory of signs) into syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Syntax described the combination of signs, semantics the relationship between signs and their meaning, while pragmatics referred to the relationship between signs and their interpreters. According to Liu (2007), Charles Morris introduced the first modern definition of pragmatics, and since then many other specialists have continued to define and broaden this branch of linguistics. More recently, Kasper (1993) defined the term as "the study of people's comprehension and production of linguistic action in context" (p. 3). In this

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definition context and production as two relevant elements of pragmatics are introduced that are fundamentals of any speech act in a language.

It was not until the late 1980s that the research field of pragmatics, or the study of language in use, came to be regarded as a discipline in its own right. This was based on the work of a series of philosophers of language such as Austin (1962), Searle (1969), and Grice (1975). Prior to that, researchers such as Saussure (1959) and Chomsky (1965) had only paid attention to isolated linguistic forms and structures. Both Saussure's concepts of langue and parole from the paradigm of structuralism and Chomsky's generative-transformational grammar based on the notions of competence and performance only took into consideration an ideal grammatical knowledge by native speakers of a given language. However, neither of the two paradigms took into account the real use of language in a particular context. In other words, they did not regard the notion of communication.

In relation to communicative competence in second language classrooms, sociolinguistic and pragmatic issues are important in developing pedagogy. In the past, the pedagogical emphasis was on the teaching of grammatical accuracy to the exclusion of pragmatic aspects. The result was learners' and teachers' disappointment and frustration because, in spite of the learners' relative proficiency in grammar, they still lacked the ability to express themselves appropriately. The pragmatic failure in second language learning generated much interest in the field of interlanguage pragmatics. As thus, one of the main concerns in the field of second language acquisition has become the acquisition of learners' pragmatic competence in order to be communicatively efficient in a second or a foreign language setting.

Studies examining the pragmatic competence of adult foreign and second language learners have shown convincingly that the pragmatics of learners and native speakers are different to a great extent. Research has also revealed that grammatical development does not guarantee a parallel development in pragmatics. Even learners who show high levels of grammatical competence may show a wide range of pragmatic competence when compared with native speakers in conversations (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990, 1991, 1993; Omar, 1991, 1992) and elicited conditions (e.g., Faerch & Kasper, 1989; House & Kasper, 1987; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987; Takenoya, 1995). In other words, even advanced language learners often show differences between their grammatical and their pragmatic knowledge or, more specifically, "between the lexico-grammatical micro-level and the macro-level of communicative intent and sociocultural context" (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, &Thurrell, 1995, p. 13) of their communicative competence, with pragmatic competence falling behind grammatical knowledge (Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985).

The difference between learners' and native speakers' pragmatic competence may be associated to two key factors related to input: the availability of input and the prominence of relevant linguistic features in the input from the view point of the learner. The first factor, the availability of input, has been discussed by Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1996) for institutional (academic advising session) talk and by Kasper

(1997) for classroom talk. These authors argue that status-appropriate input is often limited or absent from the status-unequal encounters that characterize talk in advising sessions and classrooms, which suggests that learners do not develop a sufficient level of L2 pragmatic competence because the target language they face in the L2 classroom simply does not contain a sufficient range and emphasis of relevant exemplars. Studies of the impact of instruction (House, 1996; Wildner-Bassett, 1984) and suggestions for greater authenticity in pedagogical materials for classroom language learners also take into consideration the issue of availability of input that is making input available to learners (Bardovi-Harlig et al., 1996; Holmes & Brown, 1987; Scotton & Bernsten, 1988; Williams, 1988.)

Kasper cites three conditions for the acquisition of pragmatic knowledge: "There must be pertinent input, the input has to be noticed, and learners need ample opportunity to develop a high level of control" (p. 148). Schmidt (1993) also argues that attention to "linguistic forms, functional meanings, and the relevant contextual features" is necessary for pragmatic learning to occur (p. 35); he further argues that linguistic forms can serve as intake for language acquisition only if learners notice them, where "noticing is understood to be registering the simple occurrence of some event" (p. 26). Noticing is hypothesized to be the first level of awareness, which is independent of a second level, "understanding in which a learner recognizes a general principle, rule, or pattern" (p. 26). Put another way, the noticing hypothesis states that "what learners notice in input is what becomes intake for learning" (Schmidt, 1995, p. 20).

Interlanguage pragmatics has seen a steady development in the past two decades. Since researchers have mainly dedicated their investigations toward examining L2 learners' pragmatic comprehension and production, the instruction of interlanguage pragmatics has had a brief history and is quite new. Researchers' awareness of instructional intervention, however, has been gradually and steadily raised in the last 10 years. Obviously, a conceptual and methodological key issue of these empirical studies has been the effect of explicit and implicit instruction on pragmatic learning. The vast majority of such pragmatists have investigated explicit instruction. Interlanguage pragmatists conducted two dozen empirical studies between 1981 and 2001 (Kasper, 2001a, 2001b). They examined the teachability of different aspects of pragmatics, such as various speech acts, conversational implicature, hedges, gambits, discourse strategies, and interactional markers. The learning contexts and the target languages for investigation included: ESL in the U.S; EFL in Japan, Germany, Israel, and Hong Kong; Japanese as a FL in the U.S; German and Spanish as a FL in the U.S; French as a FL in Australia; French immersion in Canada. Without a doubt, a major assumption underlying these two dozen empirical studies in the last two decades has been the issue of explicit/implicit teaching. Most pragmatists (Billmyer, 1990; Bouton, 1994a; Fukuya, 1998; Kondo, 2001; Kubota, 1995; Liddicoat& Crozet, 2001; LoCastro, 1997; Lyster, 1994; Morrow, 1995; Olshtain & Cohen, 1990; Rose & Ng, 2001; Wilder-Bassett, 1994; Wishnoff, 1999; Yoshimi, 2001) have examined the effects of explicit instruction. The provision of metalinguistic information, as these studies have demonstrated, works for adult learners, regardless of whether they are beginning, intermediate, or advanced in

either second or foreign language settings. Other researchers (House, 1996; House & Kasper, 1981; Pearson, 1998; Takahashi, 2001; Tateyama, 2001; Tateyama et al., 1997) have compared explicit with implicit instruction. Although explicit instruction has demonstrated some advantage over implicit instruction, only Takahashi (2001) among these studies has shown statistically significant effects for the explicit instruction on pragmatic learning over implicit instruction.

Operationally, explicit instruction has enjoyed a firmly established status through a wide range of classroom activities that provide metapragmatic information to learners or raise their consciousness of metapragmatic rules. For instance, explanation of rules and discussion about rules (Kubota, 1995; Olshtain & Cohen, 1990) are the most common type of operationalization among the explicit conditions. Quite a few other activities are metapragmatic judgment tasks (Morrow, 1995), introduction and analysis of prescribed speech-act formulae (Kondo, 2001; Morrow, 1995), narrative reconstruction (Liddicoat & Crozet, 2001), rule-discovery (Rose & Ng, 2001), and consciousness-raising tasks (Fukuya, 1998).

In contrast, implicit instruction of pragmatic features seems to be a somewhat underdeveloped area, both conceptually and methodologically. Among six studies including an implicit condition, House (1996) and House and Kasper (1981) operationalized implicit instruction by omitting the metalinguistic information, that is, the metalinguistic information the comparable explicit condition received. Alternatively, other pragmatists have conceptualized the implicit instruction as additional, simple exposure to pragmatic examples while an explicit group received the metalinguistic information in addition to such examples. Learners in the studies conducted by Pearson (1998), Tateyama (2001), and Tateyama et al. (1997) merely watched video clips; the meaning-focused group in Takahashi (2001) simply read role-play transcripts among native speakers to answer the comprehension questions.

Overall, research that has been conducted on the instruction of pragmatic information in the second or foreign language classroom has indicated positive effects of such efforts. Research on interlanguage pragmatics has revealed that providing learners with explicit metapragmatic instruction results in more effective learning outcomes than providing them with implicit target input (e.g., House, 1996; Tateyama et al., 1997; Rose & Ng, 2001; Takahashi, 2001; Tateyama, 2001).

This study, too has examined the effect of pragmatic instruction, however, with two contrasting features which make this study unique and one of a kind. At first, the authors of this study have operationalized pragmatic instruction based on four types of enhanced input consisting of: a) metapragmatic explanation, b) form-comparison, c) meaning-focused, and d) input-enhancement. Second, this study examined the effect of input-based instruction of suggestions and requests on the syntactic complexity of the speech acts produced on the pre-tests in comparison to the post-tests in order to see whether the participants who received instruction had significant improvement or not in comparison to the control group. As thus, the present study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. Does input-based instruction – metapragamtic explanation, form-comparison, meaning-focused, and input-enhancement – affect EFL learners' production of syntactically complex suggestions and requests?

2. Does input-based instruction of the speech acts under investigation have the same effect on the MLC (mean length of clause), MLS (mean length of sentence), and C/T (clause per T-unit) of the suggestions and requests produced by the participants on the pre-tests and post-tests?

METHOD

Participants

The EFL learners who took part in this study were all female undergraduate students majoring in English Translation at a university in Isfahan, Iran. Five different intact classes were selected for inclusion in this study. The courses the participants in the intact classes were enrolled in included: 'paragraph development' (N=21), 'oral translation' (N=21), 'reading comprehension' (N=28), 'oral reproduction' (N=25) – which received input-based instruction and 'second language research methods' (N=15) – which did not receive any instruction. Instruction of the pragmatic target forms in the treatment groups were enhanced through metpragmatic explanation (N=21), form-comparison (N=21), meaning-focused (N=28), and input-enhancement (N=25) respectively. The control group (N=15) did not receive any type of input-based instruction on the pragmatic target forms.

Even though research in the area of ILP has indicated that being grammatically proficient does not make one pragmatically competent, the literature has not ruled out the facilitative role of linguistic competence in the acquisition of pragmatic competence. Olshtain and Cohen (1989) report that "it often happens that non-native speakers are aware of the sociolinguistic need to apologize, yet because their linguistic competence is limited, they use erroneous language forms and produce SAs that sound deviant or even create communication failure" (p. 62). After observing that lower-level learners of Spanish had difficulty identifying the illocutionary force of suggestions and particular difficulty with negative interrogative suggestions, Koike (1996: 275) concludes that it is important to have knowledge of the target language speech acts at both the grammatical / lexical level and the pragmatic level of use. Furthermore, Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei (1998) and Hadley (1993) suggest that pragmatics is best taught and acquired when more advanced L2 learners are involved.

Hence, by taking into consideration Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei's (1998) and Hadley's (1993) suggestion, with the help of an English proficiency test, the intermediate EFL learners were selected to take part in this study. The students in the intact classes were asked to complete Test 500 D from the book *Nelson English Language Test* by W.S. Fowler and Norman Coe in order to identify their English proficiency. The book contains 40 tests organized in ten levels from elementary to advanced levels. As claimed by the test developers, all the items on the tests have been carefully pre-tested. The 400 level is

equivalent in difficulty to the Cambridge First Certificate. The 500 level tests could be used to test the proficiency of the students. Each level contains four tests which are equivalent in difficulty. Each test contains 50 items and in every case the students have to choose the correct answer from four choices. According to the authors of this book, these tests can be used for placement, diagnosis, or evaluation of students' progress. As mentioned above, each test contains 50 questions consisting of: a) 24 items testing the comprehension of the participants through a cloze test, b) 18 items testing the participants' vocabulary knowledge, c) 4 items testing the participants' knowledge of English expressions, and d) 4 items testing the participants' knowledge of homophones. According to the authors of the book, each test is out of 50 marks and those participants who obtain a score higher than 30 are classified as advanced learners of English. The participants who were selected to take part in this study were categorized as intermediate learners of English because their scores on the Nelson test ranged from 25 to 29 with a mean score of 26.8. Those who scored higher than 30 were not included in the study. As such, they were expected to have more or less a given consistency in the English grammar and also vocabulary knowledge sufficient at least to understand and perform basic communicative activities.

Data Collection

In order to identify the development of the participants' production of pragmatically appropriate and grammatically accurate suggestions and requests, two types of production tasks in the form of Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) were administered as pre-tests and post-tests. Essentially, a DCT functions to create a scenario to which a participant or informant must respond. Typically, there is an initial statement outlining the context within which a dialogue occurs. Next, the first line of the dialogue is presented, and the participant is then given an opportunity to respond in the way that she believes most appropriate. Boxer (2002) notes that "DCTs may take one of two forms: open-ended questionnaires simply ask for the subject to supply the relevant speech act in response to the stimulus (the first line); closed questionnaires elicit a speech act from the subject, but then follow the blank line with a reply from the first speaker, so that the response must take into account not only the initial statement, but also the reply to follow" (p. 15). Recognizing the limitations of DCT tasks is important (Beebe & Cummings, 1996; Kasper & Roever, 2005). Among the most common criticisms of the written DCT are that the written format may not accurately reflect oral (spoken) language production, and that the task is rather artificial, reflecting what a learner believes she would say, rather than demonstrating what she actually says in conversation. Also, Watts (2003) has reported that written DCTs are particularly susceptible to manipulation by informants, resulting in responses that they would never use in actual discourse. On the other hand, Chaudron (2003) suggested that DCTs may not allow learners to sufficiently express their pragmatic competence, particularly in the sense that learners are bound to some extent by the situations presented in the DCT. In order to address such concerns, the design of the written and oral DCTs utilized for the present study included a variety of academically oriented contexts and every effort was made to encourage the participants to provide realistic responses.

The pre-tests contained 8 situations and the post-tests contained 8 situations as well. The participants were asked to provide their responses either orally by leaving a message on an answering machine or through sending an e-mail. On the phone task, the participants were asked to read four situations in which they had to make a) a suggestion to a friend at university, b) a suggestion to a professor at university, c) a request to a friend at university, and d) a request to a professor at university and for each situation, they had to dial the phone number provided by the researcher and leave a message on the friend/professor's answering machine making a request or suggestion depending on the situation. The same thing had to be done on the e-mail task, with the difference that this time they had to send an e-mail to a friend or a professor, either making a suggestion or a request again based on the situations on the DCT. The post-test was exactly the same as the pre-test except for the situations. The phone number and the e-mail address were provided by the researcher which was the professor of the participants as well.

In order to see whether pragmatic instruction could influence the production of more syntactically complex suggestions and requests by the EFL learners taking part in this study, the participants' responses (N=1840 responses) on the pre-tests and post-tests were analyzed and compared using the L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer developed by Lu Xiaofei (2010), a Computational Linguist at the Pennsylvania State University. The L2 syntactic complexity analyzer was designed to automate syntactic complexity analysis of written English language samples produced by learners of English using fourteen different measures proposed in the second language development literature. The analyzer takes a written English language sample in plain text format as input and generates 14 indices of syntactic complexity of the sample. These indices include: Mean length of clause (MLC), Mean length of sentence (MLS), Mean length of T-unit (MLT), Clauses per sentence (C/S), Clauses per T-unit (C/T), Complex T-units per T-unit (CT/T), Dependent clauses per clause (DC/C), Dependent clauses per T-unit (DC/T), Coordinate phrases per clause (CP/C), Coordinate phrases per T-unit (CP/T), T-units per sentence (T/S), Complex nominals per clause (CN/C), Complex nominals per T-unit (CN/T), Verb phrases per T-unit (VP/T). The participants' responses on the phone and e-mail tasks were separately typed into the software. Although all the indices were generated for each response, only the MLC, MLS, and C/T were of concern in this investigation. The mean scores of the MLC, MLS, and C/T from the participants' responses on the pre-tests and post-tests were compared in order to see whether the participants in the treatment groups had a significant improvement in the production of syntactically complex suggestions and requests.

Treatment

Five intact classes were selected for the purpose of this study. The instructor of all the five classes was the first coauthor. The students in the treatment groups received some form of input-based instruction on the pragmatic features under investigation while the students in the control group were only instructed on the course material. The courses the participants were enrolled in differed from one group to the other. However, all the

participants in the experimental groups engaged in the same tasks and activities when it came to the treatment. The only difference among the four experimental groups was in the way the L2 pragmatic input was enhanced and delivered to them.

The pragmatic features under investigation were instructed using a total number of 12 video clips which the researcher downloaded from YouTube. 6 of the video clips were on requests and 6 others were on suggestions. The video clips included situations in which a native speaker of English either made a suggestion or a request to a friend or a professor. The criterion for the selection of the video clips was that the suggestions and requests made were part of the target forms under investigation in this study. Video is considered a very useful tool that can provide very valuable information on target language pragmatics for L2 learners (Rose, 1994b; Koike, 1995; Garza, 1996). Swaffar and Vlatten (1997) indicate that authentic foreign language videos can show learners different L2 registers and cultural contexts. In addition, they provide visual cues as well as auditory material helpful for better comprehension and learning of the content presented. According to Rose (1994b), videotaped discourse, whether it is natural or scripted, contains "rich recoverable contexts which can be exploited in consciousness-raising activities" (p. 58). In this study, with the help of visual dialogues, four types of input-based instruction were applied in order to raise the learners' consciousness of pragmatic elements and facilitate their learning.

The participants in this study were all enrolled in a 16 session course that lasted 16 weeks. Each session lasted 90 minutes in which the last 30 minutes was devoted to research purposes. On the first session, the participants in all five groups were asked to complete the Nelson test. On the second session, the GJT was administered. After having completed the GJT, the participants were handed the pre-tests and asked to complete the phone and e-mail tasks prior to the third session. The actual treatment for the four experimental groups was implemented starting from the 3rd session onto the 14th session for a total number of 12 interventional sessions. The pragmatic features related to the speech act of suggesting were instructed on the first six sessions (sessions: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8) and the ones related to the speech act of requesting were instructed on the last six sessions (sessions: 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14). The participants did not receive any instruction on the 15th and 16th sessions. On the 16th session, they were asked to complete the GJT once more. The questions on the GJT related to the suggestions and requests were kept consistent however the researcher changed the items that were included on the test as distractors to ensure reliability. Two weeks after the end of the course, the participants were asked to complete the post-tests by reading the situations on the post-tests and making a suggestion or request based on the situations and either leaving it on the answering machine or sending it by e-mail.

The four experimental groups first watched a video clip. Then, depending on the type of input-based instruction they received, they took part in a series of activities. Below the general trend each experimental group went through is described.

In the first experimental group (N=21), input was enhanced through metapragmatic explanation. The learners first watched a video clip and then the students were asked to

answer a set of awareness-raising questions based on the video clip they had watched. Then, the transcript of the video clip was handed to the participants and each student read over the transcript with a partner. Finally, they received explicit instruction on the target forms and metapragmatic information about the appropriate use of the target forms.

In the second group (N=21) input was enhanced through form-comparison. In this group the participants first received the transcript of the video clip with this difference that the places where the native speaker had made a suggestion or a request (depending on the video clip) were omitted. Then, the participants were asked to fill in the blanks with an appropriate speech act (suggestion or request). After filling in the blanks with an appropriate form of the speech act, the instructor played the video clip for the class. Then they received the complete transcript of the video clip and each participant was asked to compare her suggestion or request (depending on the video clip) with the one on the transcript. They were also asked to write down the differences and similarities they spotted between their own responses as non-native speakers of English and the responses of the interlocutors on the video clips as native speakers of English.

In the third group (N=28) input was enhanced through meaning-focused instruction. The participants in this group first watched a video clip. Then, they were given the transcript of the video clip they had watched followed by a number of comprehension questions. They were asked to read the transcript and answer the comprehension questions. No explanation or clue was given to the participants in order to direct their attention to the speech acts. They did not in any way become suspicious of the activity because they were enrolled in a reading course and the instructor had told them at the beginning of the course that alongside working on the their course book additional texts would be brought to class for extra practice.

In the fourth group (N=25) the target forms were typographically enhanced through providing the subtitles of the video clips in bold. After having watched the video clip, the participants in this group received the transcript of the video clip with the target forms highlighted as well. They were asked to read over the transcript with a partner with the aim of being able to give a summary to the class. Then, the instructor would ask a number of the students to provide oral summaries for the class depending on the amount of time the class had.

The control group (N=15) just watched the video clips as an extra activity with the goal of becoming more familiar with the accent of native speakers of English.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data, the messages the participants had left on the answering machine were transcribed and the e-mails they had sent were downloaded from the internet. A total number of 1260 (110 students × 2 times × 8 situations) responses formed the production data. Each response was separately entered into the L2

syntactic complexity analyzer available on the internet. The MLT, MLC, and C/T indices were of concern in this study. As mentioned in the previous section, the pre-tests (phone and e-mail tasks) contained 8 situations and the post-tests (phone and e-mail tasks) contained 8 situations as well. Each situation on the pre-test was compared with its parallel situation on the post-test and a paired-sample T-test was run for each situation regarding MLT, MLC, and C/T.

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine whether input-based instruction had a positive impact on the syntactic complexity of the suggestions and requests the participants produced on the post-tests in comparison to the pre-tests. The syntactic complexity of the participants' responses on the pre-tests and post-tests were analyzed using the L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer developed by Lu Xiaofei (2010), a Computational Linguist at the Pennsylvania State University. The L2 syntactic complexity analyzer was designed to automate syntactic complexity analysis of written English language samples produced by learners of English using fourteen different measures proposed in the second language development literature. The analyzer takes a written English language sample in plain text format as input and generates 14 indices of syntactic complexity of the sample. These indices include: Mean length of clause (MLC), Mean length of sentence (MLS), Mean length of T-unit (MLT), Clauses per sentence (C/S), Clauses per T-unit (C/T), Complex T-units per T-unit (CT/T), Dependent clauses per clause (DC/C), Dependent clauses per T-unit (DC/T), Coordinate phrases per clause (CP/C), Coordinate phrases per T-unit (CP/T), T-units per sentence (T/S), Complex nominals per clause (CN/C), Complex nominals per T-unit (CN/T), Verb phrases per T-unit (VP/T). The participants' responses on the phone and e-mail tasks were separately typed into the software. Following Norris and Ortega's (2009) call for critical understanding on the multidimensionality of complexity measures, three complexity measures which according to Youn (2014), tap distinct sources of syntactic complexification were computed for the participants' responses: The MLT, MLC, and C/T. The mean scores of the MLT, MLC, and C/T from the participants' responses on the pre-tests and post-tests were compared in order to see whether the participants had a significant improvement. In order to compare the MLT, MLC, and C/T of the participants' responses on the 8 situations on the phone and e-mail pre-test with the 8 situations on the phone and e-mail post-tests, first the normality was examined in order to find out whether the data obtained from the different tasks employed were normal. Since the distribution of the scores from the tasks differed significantly from a normal distribution, Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test, a non-parametric statistical tool was used for the analysis of the data.

Table 1. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Results for C/T

Situation	Group	N	Pre test		Post test		Statistics	Sig.
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Form-comparison	21	0.89	0.44	1.25	0.41	-2.132	.033*
	Metapragmatic	21	0.90	0.36	1.41	0.41	-3.184	.001**
	Meaning-focused	28	0.83	0.21	1.14	0.28	-3.407	.001**
	Input-enhancement	25	0.83	0.21	1.02	0.21	-2.877	.004**
2	Form-comparison	21	1.58	0.65	1.90	1.06	-.888	.375
	Metapragmatic	21	1.36	0.57	1.58	0.65	-1.116	.264
	Meaning-focused	28	1.36	0.57	1.37	0.44	-.238	.812
	Input-enhancement	25	1.36	0.57	1.43	0.48	-1.338	.181
3	Form-comparison	21	0.92	0.33	1.79	0.82	-3.539	.000**
	Metapragmatic	21	0.92	0.33	1.40	0.46	-2.965	.003**
	Meaning-focused	28	0.92	0.33	1.26	0.41	-3.303	.001**
	Input-enhancement	25	0.92	0.33	1.14	0.33	-3.205	.001**
4	Input-enhancement	25	1.35	.59	1.58	0.85	-1.186	.236
	Meaning-focused	28	1.14	0.51	1.58	0.85	-1.757	.079
	Form-comparison	21	1.14	0.51	1.45	0.61	-3.568	.000**
	Metapragmatic	21	1.14	0.51	1.36	0.49	-3.399	.001**
5	Form-comparison	21	1.48	.034	1.86	.95	-1.545	.122
	Meaning-focused	28	1.46	0.42	1.86	0.95	-1.720	.086
	Metapragmatic	21	1.46	0.42	1.73	0.39	-3.129	.002**
	Input-enhancement	25	1.46	0.42	1.56	0.48	-1.964	.050
6	Form-comparison	21	1.09	.40	1.59	.54	-3.164	.002**
	Metapragmatic	21	0.98	0.29	1.60	0.55	-3.302	.001**
	Meaning-focused	28	0.98	0.29	1.30	0.33	-3.472	.001**
	Input-enhancement	25	0.98	0.29	1.12	0.30	-2.961	.003**
7	Form-comparison	21	1.39	0.90	1.62	0.60	-2.735	.006**
	Metapragmatic	21	1.18	0.39	1.76	0.56	-3.656	.000**
	Meaning-focused	28	1.18	0.39	1.52	0.39	-3.783	.000**
	Input-enhancement	25	1.18	0.39	1.31	0.37	-2.704	.007**
8	Form-comparison	21	1.19	0.51	1.90	0.58	-3.698	.000**
	Metapragmatic	21	0.92	0.35	1.98	0.60	-4.025	.000**
	Meaning-focused	28	0.92	0.35	1.27	0.38	-3.872	.000**
	Input-enhancement	25	0.92	0.35	1.10	0.30	-2.985	.003**

*. Significant at the 0.05 level.

**. Significant at the 0.01 level.

In table 1, significant differences at the 0.01 level were shown with two stars (**) and significant differences at the 0.05 level were shown with one star (*). According to the results of the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test, the participants in the form-comparison group performed significantly better on situations 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8 on the post-test in comparison to the pre-test. Concerning the metapragmatic explanation group a

significant difference existed among the post-test in comparison to the pre-test regarding situations 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. As for the input-enhancement group, there was a significant difference regarding situations 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8 from the pre-test to the post-test. The meaning-focused group performed significantly better on situations 1, 3, 6, 7, and 8.

Table 2. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Results for MLC

Situation	Group	N	Pre test		Post test		Statistics	Sig.
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Form-comparison	21	8.65	1.59	10.24	1.90	-4.027	.000**
	Meaning-focused	28	9.70	4.75	10.98	5.28	-.521	.602
	Metapragmatic	21	7.31	0.89	8.43	1.28	-3.836	.000**
	Input-enhancement	25	7.48	0.89	7.82	0.85	-4.037	.000**
2	Form-comparison	21	8.20	1.31	9.19	1.32	-3.966	.000**
	Meaning-focused	28	6.18	2.21	7.97	3.46	-2.316	.021*
	Metapragmatic	21	5.54	0.96	5.90	0.97	-2.955	.003**
	Input-enhancement	25	5.98	0.80	6.14	0.77	-3.111	.002**
3	Form-comparison	21	8.25	1.91	9.35	1.76	-3.954	.000**
	Meaning-focused	28	7.29	2.01	10.26	4.14	-1.979	.048*
	Metapragmatic	21	6.52	0.98	7.06	0.90	-3.846	.000**
	Input-enhancement	25	6.73	0.87	6.93	0.90	-3.394	.001**
4	Form-comparison	21	7.29	1.24	8.43	1.24	-4.029	.000**
	Meaning-focused	28	7.66	2.51	8.81	3.44	-1.532	.125
	Metapragmatic	21	6.99	0.83	7.49	0.78	-3.936	.000**
	Input-enhancement	25	6.96	0.73	7.12	0.64	-2.985	.003**
5	Form-comparison	21	7.56	1.03	8.49	1.03	-4.018	.000**
	Meaning-focused	28	8.30	3.50	9.25	4.24	-1.738	.082
	Metapragmatic	21	7.01	0.65	7.37	0.66	-3.614	.000**
	Input-enhancement	25	7.04	0.65	7.21	0.62	-3.250	.001**
6	Form-comparison	21	8.54	1.22	9.90	1.49	-3.923	.000**
	Meaning-focused	28	10.95	4.64	12.12	6.42	-.842	.400
	Metapragmatic	21	7.47	0.97	7.78	1.05	-3.231	.001**
	Input-enhancement	25	7.18	0.54	7.40	0.56	-3.825	.000**
7	Form-comparison	21	8.22	1.13	9.33	1.73	-3.585	.000**
	Meaning-focused	28	10.14	4.65	11.02	4.88	-2.124	.034*
	Input-enhancement	25	7.45	0.87	7.65	0.85	-2.113	.035*
	Metapragmatic	21	7.67	0.62	7.86	0.62	-3.433	.001**
8	Form-comparison	21	8.32	1.39	9.40	1.43	-4.033	.000**
	Meaning-focused	28	9.66	3.26	9.79	2.86	-1.938	.053
	Metapragmatic	21	7.75	0.73	8.14	0.76	-3.952	.000**
	Input-enhancement	25	7.72	0.69	7.89	0.72	-2.913	.004**

*. Significant at the 0.05 level.

**. Significant at the 0.01 level.

According to the results presented in table 2, the participants' responses in the metapragmatic explanation, form-comparison, and input-enhancement groups were better in terms of MLC in all eight situations. The participants in the meaning-focused group performed significantly better in their production of syntactically complex suggestions (MLC) in situations 2, 3, and 7.

Table 3. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Results for MLT

Situation	Group	N	Pre test		Post test		Statistics	Sig.
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Form-comparison	21	8.51	1.47	9.36	1.69	-1.855	.064
	Metapragmatic	21	8.38	1.48	9.02	2.27	-.609	.543
	Meaning-focused	28	7.86	1.12	8.12	1.13	-1.934	.053
	Input-enhancement	25	7.86	1.12	7.93	1.13	-1.461	.144
2	Form-comparison	21	9.95	2.65	11.88	5.63	-1.286	.198
	Meaning-focused	28	10.29	2.78	11.88	5.63	-.747	.455
	Metapragmatic	21	8.48	0.96	9.17	0.92	-3.550	.000**
	Input enhancement	25	8.48	0.96	8.61	.87	-1.697	.090
3	Form-comparison	21	8.30	2.13	10.04	3.10	-1.758	.079
	Meaning-focused	28	8.27	2.33	9.59	3.99	-1.269	.204
	Metapragmatic	21	7.85	1.06	8.29	0.97	-3.003	.003**
	Input-enhancement	25	7.85	1.06	7.98	1.01	-1.289	.198
4	Form-comparison	21	9.55	2.81	10.99	3.35	-1.350	.177
	Meaning-focused	28	10.13	3.49	10.39	4.04	-.035	.972
	Metapragmatic	21	8.35	1.30	8.67	1.24	-2.710	.007**
	Input-enhancement	25	8.35	1.30	8.30	1.25	-.837	.403
5	Input-enhancement	25	12.31	4.92	15.28	5.26	-1.828	.068
	Meaning-focused	28	10.07	1.61	12.31	4.92	-1.718	.086
	Metapragmatic	21	8.81	1.20	9.21	1.20	-2.917	.004**
	Form-comparison	21	8.81	1.20	8.95	1.12	-2.620	.009**
6	Meaning-focused	28	10.40	3.33	11.89	4.64	-1.635	.102
	Metapragmatic	21	8.91	1.00	9.81	1.07	-4.024	.000**
	Form-comparison	21	8.32	0.98	8.69	1.04	-3.544	.000**
	Input enhancement	25	8.32	0.98	8.42	0.99	-2.301	.021*
7	Meaning-focused	28	11.26	3.78	11.88	6.61	-2.572	.010*
	Metapragmatic	21	10.15	3.76	11.26	3.78	-4.011	.000**
	Form-comparison	21	7.84	0.78	8.14	0.80	-3.705	.000**
	Input-enhancement	25	7.84	0.78	7.95	0.82	-2.483	.013*
8	Input-enhancement	25	9.21	2.25	9.57	2.48	-1.519	.129
	Meaning-focused	28	9.67	2.27	10.00	2.04	-1.145	.252
	Form-comparison	21	8.24	1.16	8.42	1.21	-2.494	.013*
	Metapragmatic	21	8.19	1.15	8.39	1.17	-3.373	.001**

*. Significant at the 0.05 level.

**. Significant at the 0.01 level.

Considering the other complexity measure, MLT, the participants in the metapragmatic explanation group significantly improved in all of the situations except situation 1. The participants in the form-comparison group improved in regards to situations 5, 6, 7, and 8. As for the participants in the input-enhancement group, they only improved in situations 6 and 7. The complexity measure of the meaning-focused group was significantly better only in situation 7.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether pragmatic input-based instruction affected the syntactic complexity of the EFL learners' pragmatic production elicited from the phone and e-mail tasks used in this study. The findings revealed that pragmatic instruction could have a positive effect on the production of syntactically complex speech acts. In regards to the C/T (Clauses per T-unit), the MLC (Mean Length of Clause), and the MLT (Mean Length of T-unit), the four treatment groups produced more syntactically complex suggestions and requests on the e-mail post-test in comparison to the pre-test. The C/T shows complexity via subordination. In this study, EFL learners produced more clauses per T-unit, after pragmatic input-based instruction possibly due to more bi-clausal or conditional mitigations used to convey the various pragmatic meaning. Hence, it could be speculated based on these findings that the production of more syntactically complex suggestions and requests could result from pragmatic instruction.

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