Effect of Movies on L2 Learners' Pragmatic Competence: A Case of Request and Apology

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Abstract – The presentation of rich and contextually appropriate input has been regarded as a necessary condition for developing L2 learners’ pragmatic ability in an L2. The aim of this study was to seek whether or not employing movies can scaffold pragmatics teaching that affects the pattern of using different request and apology strategies by L2 learners. To do so, 37 upper-intermediate students, aged 21 to 25, at an English institute in Isfahan, Iran, were selected based on their level of proficiency measured by the Quick Oxford Placement Test (QOPT) and assigned into 2 groups. A version of a discourse completion test (DCT) was used as the pretest prior to launching the instruction to check the request and apology strategies used by the participants. The data collected from the DCTs indicated that the pattern of using different request and apology strategies changed significantly after watching the movies; however, the control group participants who had not benefited from any effective visual aids in pragmatics teaching followed the same pattern prior and after the study course. The results also indicated that the differences in using each type of request strategy before and after watching the movies were not conspicuous with regard to the female participants; however, the male participants’ preferences in using the request strategies changed considerably from the pretest to the posttest. Regarding apology strategies, the differences in using each type of apology strategy before and after watching the movies were obvious with respect to both the male and female participants, indicating a remarkable shift in their initial preferences to use different apology strategies after watching the movies.

Keywords: Movies and L2 learning, L2 pragmatics instruction, speech acts, request, apology

1. INTRODUCTION

The context in which a language is learned is essential in terms of both the quantity and quality of the kind of input to which learners are exposed (Barron, 2005). Learners immersed in the second language community have more opportunities to come into contact with the target language, so exposure to it can facilitate their pragmatic ability. In contrast, learners in FL context are in a disadvantageous position because they depend exclusively on the input that arises in the classroom (Kasper, 2005). According to LoCastro (2003), learners are exposed to three types of input in this particular setting, namely those of the teacher, the materials, and other learners. Focusing specifically on how materials can be used to develop
learners’ pragmatic competence, it has been claimed that most textbooks and other written manuals are based on native-speakers’ intuitions rather than on empirical studies of pragmatic norms (Boxer, 2003; LoCastro, 2003). Moreover, research on the analysis of this type of written materials has demonstrated an inaccurate and decontextualized presentation of the different pragmatic aspects examined, as well as a lack of natural conversational models representing the real use of language. Therefore, the use of video, movies and TV has been considered an alternative way of bringing authentic pragmatic input into the foreign language context. Video input has long been used as a valuable resource that enhances the language learning process in the classroom, as it provides learners with realistic models to imitate for role-play, as well as enabling them to strengthen their audio/visual linguistic perceptions in a simultaneous fashion.

How and when information introduced in textbooks can best be supplemented to assure adequate modeling of the social context and set up pragmatic skills remain unanswered questions, especially at elementary and intermediate stages of language learning (Jeon & Kaya, 2006). The present study sought answers to these questions by analyzing the pragmatic tools available to third-year learners of English, who learnt pragmatics with the support of movie.

This study addressed four related research questions in order to identify how L2 learners in two groups expressed and understood the speech acts of request and apology before and after they were exposed to the movies’ concrete social context and rich character relationships:

1. Does employing movies in teaching pragmatics affect Iranian EFL learners’ pattern of using different request strategies?
2. Does employing movies in teaching pragmatics affect Iranian EFL learners’ pattern of using different apology strategies?
3. Does gender play a significant role in L2 learners’ development of pragmatic competence for the speech act of request?
4. Does gender play a significant role in L2 learners’ development of pragmatic competence for the speech act of apology?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Pragmatic Competence

The majority of frameworks of communicative competence define pragmatic competence as “the study of speaker and hearer meaning created in their joint actions that include both linguistic and nonlinguistic signals in the context of socioculturally organized activities” (LoCastro, 2003, p. 15). According to Crystal (1997), pragmatics is a subcategory of linguistics that has been defined as “the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication” (Crystal, 1997, p. 301). This term was at the outset located within philosophy of language (Chomsky: 1965), but has evolved from this domain to be associated
to sociolinguistics and other subdisciplines. Most recently, this term is widely applied in the field of second and foreign language acquisition and teaching, especially in reference to pragmatic competence as one of the abilities subsumed by the pervasive notion of communicative competence. The notion of pragmatic competence was at the outset defined by Chomsky (1965) as the “knowledge of conditions and manner of appropriate use (of the language), in conformity with various purposes” (p. 224).

2.2. Speech Acts

Speech acts can be defined as the primary element of communication and they are a subcategory of linguistic competence. According to Schauer (2006), speech acts involve all the acts we perform through speaking, all the things we do when we speak and the interpretation and negotiation of speech acts are dependent on the discourse or context. There is a sequence of analytic links between the concept of speech acts, what the speaker means, what the sentence uttered means, what the speaker intends, what the hearer understands, and what the rules governing the linguistic elements are (Searle, 1969; cited in Schiffrin, 1994). Searle (1969) made the speech act theory to gain more salience and have distinguished between what is actually said (locution), what is intended by what is said (illocution) and what is done by what is said (perlocution). According to Brown and Levinson (1987) the locutionary aspect involves with 'the utterance of a sentence with determinate sense and reference, whereas the illocutionary aspect involves "the naming of a statement, offer, promise in uttering a sentence, by virtue of the conventional force associated with it", whereas the perlocutionary aspect deals with 'the bringing about of effects on the audience by means of uttering the sentence, such effects being special to the circumstances of utterance" (p. 74). As research in this area suggests, the illocutionary force has been focus of attention of researchers who are interested in speech acts. Searle (1969) categorization of speech acts with illocutionary aspect includes representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations.

2.3. Speech Act of Apology

The individual resorts to the act of apologizing in cases that he has violated social norms. When an action or utterance has resulted in the fact that one or more persons construe themselves as offenders, the culpable person(s) needs to apologize. What we have here, therefore, are two parties: an apologizer and an apologizee. However, only if the party who gave rise to the offense regards himself or herself as an apologizer, we do get the act of apologizing. According to Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985), the act of apologizing entails an action or an utterance which is intended to “set things right” (p.235). Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985) defines the act of apologizing as a “compensatory action for an offense committed by the speaker which has affected the hearer (p. 44). Apologies are subsumed under expressive speech acts in which speakers make an effort to show their state or attitude. They add that in order for an apology to have an effect, it should reflect true feelings (Olshtain, 1983).
Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985), investigated 63 college subjects (12 native English speakers, 12 native Hebrew subjects, 12 Russian subjects and 13 English speakers learning Hebrew at Teacher’s College in Jerusalem) to compare their apology usage. According to the findings, English speakers’ data differed from native Hebrew data and they employed transfer. Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985) carried out a study on requests and apologies with native speakers of Hebrew and learners of Hebrew. They found that the learners of Hebrew approached native speaker norms when they had the same rules in their native languages and deviated from native speakers when they had language-specific rules. They also found that nonnatives’ length of stay in the target language community affected their choice of the formulas. He used the categorization of Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985) such as:

1. An expression of apology (Ilocutionary Force Indicating Device IFID)
   a. An expression of regret (e.g., I’m sorry)
   b. An offer of apology (e.g., I apologize)
   c. A request for forgiveness (e.g., excuse me, forgive me)
2. An offer of repair/redress (REPR; e.g., I’ll pay for your damage)
3. An explanation of an account (EXPL; e.g., I missed the bus)
4. Acknowledging responsibility for the offense (RESP; e.g., It’s my fault)
5. A promise of forbearance (FORB; e.g., I’ll never forget it again)

LoCastro (2003) carried out a study on the use of apologies and thanking with 129 EFL learners at Anadolu University, 50 Native American and British speakers and 44 native Turkish speakers. His findings suggested that EFL learners exhibited transfer in the use of apologies from their L1 in some situations (e.g. the situation in which a driver dents the side of someone else’s car or the situation in which a classmate does not return a book on time). He found that Turkish EFL learners transferred some sociocultural norms of Turkish into English in above mentioned situations like blaming the driver or a friend instead of apologizing. He adds that transfer of the rules of L1 can cause misunderstandings and failure in communication.

2.4. Speech Act of Requests
The research in the field of requests has gained more advocates in the study of speech acts. Based on Searle's (1969) classification of illocutionary acts (i.e., representatives, directives, expressives, commissives, and declarations), researchers categorize requests under the second category, that of directives, which involves "an attempt to get hearer to do an act which speaker wants hearer to do, and which it is not obvious that hearer will do in the normal course of events or of hearer's own accord" (p. 66). According to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, requests are face-threatening acts (FTAs) because a speaker is imposing her or his will on the hearer (p. 65). Brown and Levinson (1987) offered that when faced with the challenge of committing a FTA, the individual must choose between doing the FTA in the most direct and efficient manner or making an effort to alleviate the by-product of the FTA on the hearer's face. The tactic an individual decides to use owes to the weightiness or seriousness of FTA.
According to Blum-Kulka and Kasper (1989), there are three degrees of directness in requests, depending on the degree to which the illocution is evident from locution: direct requests, conventionally indirect requests, and nonconventionally indirect requests. With regard to direct requests, grammatical, lexical, or semantic tools are underlying factors that express the illocutionary force of the utterance (e.g., *Leave me alone*). In Conventionally indirect statements the illocution force is asserted by fixed linguistic convention established in the speech community (e.g., *How about cleaning up*?). In nonconventionally indirect requests, the addressee must compute the illocution from the interaction of the locution with its context (e.g., *The game is boring*).

The following categorization outlines the request strategies that are organized in terms of decreasing degree of directness. Blum-Kulka and Kasper (1989) summarized a combination of level of directness and strategy types in CCSARP project as follows:

1. Direct level
   a. Mood derivable: Utterances in which the grammatical mood of the verb signals illocutionary force (e.g., *Leave me alone*).
   b. Performatives: Utterances in which the illocutionary force is explicitly named (e.g., *I tell you to leave me alone*).
   c. Hedged performatives: Utterances in which naming of the illocutionary force is modified by hedging expressions (e.g., *I would like to ask you to leave me alone*).
   d. Obligation statements: Utterances which state the obligation of the hearer to carry out the act (e.g., *Sir, you'll have to move your car*).
   e. Want statements: Utterances which state the speaker's desire that the hearer carries out the act (e.g., *I want you to move your car*).

b. Conventionally indirect level
   a. Suggestory formulae: Utterances which contain a suggestion to do something (e.g., *How about cleaning up*?).
   b. Query-preparatory: Utterances containing reference to preparatory conditions (e.g. ability, willingness) as conventionalized in any specific language (e.g., *Would you mind moving your car*?).

c. Nonconventionally indirect level
   a. Strong hints: Utterances containing partial reference to object or element needed for the implementation of the act (e.g., *The game is boring*).
   b. Mild hints: Utterances that make no reference to the request proper (or any of its elements) but are interpretable as requests by context (e.g., *We've been playing this game for over an hour now!*).

### 2.5. Teaching Pragmatics with Movies

Being very popular in L2 classrooms, movies are very ideal material for practicing an extensive range of language skills and cultural analysis (Fernandez-Guerra, 2008; Kahnke & Stehle, 2011; Rose, 2001; Sundquist, 2010). To be more specific, movies possess great
prospect for promoting independent discovery-oriented and intercultural learning, a huge rate of interactivity, and learning about socially relevant topics (Lay, 2009). Moreover, containing real-life facts about popular cultural matters information and portraying personages the learners are able to empathize with, movies are exciting and inspiring, and thus hence motivating (Lay, 2009; Tognozzi, 2010; Washburn, 2001). Furthermore, as Lay (2009) observes, movies present patterns for suprasegmental data including intonation, turn-taking, and body language; such environmental clues can assist second language learners foster their awareness of interactive situations via dynamic exposure to activities that involve them in-depth, critical analysis. Nevertheless, it should be avoided to construe “texts as sociological documents” for whole groups (Goldstein, 2010, p. 563) because such an inference would hide intercultural variation and integrat distinct attitudes.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Participants and Materials

Thirty-seven learners from two L2 intact classes participated in this study in an English language institute in Esfahan, Iran. The participants attending a movie discussion course agreed to participate in the study (i.e., responding to the DCTs, receiving the materials, and taking the tests). They were 18 females and 19 males aged 21 to 25. The 37 participants took the Quick Oxford Placement Test (QOPT). Two students were excluded after the administration. Finally, 35 homogeneous participants, regarding their level of L2 proficiency and their knowledge of the movie to be taught in the course, were assigned into the control and experimental groups. The participants were assigned to the control and experimental groups by random sampling. Availability sampling was used to select the two groups, though. The classes were met for 90 min two days a week during seven weeks. They were all upper-intermediate students studying English for 3 years.

*TopNotch* and *TouchStone* with their ancillary materials were used for instruction. This is because of the fact that these two books and their ancillary materials provide a rich context of social variability available for EL learners who lack sources of authentic materials. The participants also watched the English movies *Before Sunset* throughout the term and during regular instruction. The series of the movies are about a boy who met a girl on his way to Vienna. After that, long conversations forge a surprising connection between them and the story continues. This movie is full of conversations in varied social roles and it offers multiple iterations of different speech acts and relational work. The themes in the textbook were also complemented by the movie, although it was not a part of the textbook. The researcher was also the instructor of the course.

The tests used in this study were as follows: a QOPT and two discourse completion tests (see Appendixes A and B) used as the pretest and the posttest.

3.2. Procedure

The study started with the administration of the QOPT. Then, those who had scored above and below upper-intermediate were excluded from the study. Subsequently, the participants
were assigned into control and experimental groups using random sampling. In order to answer the research questions, the participants’ responses on the two modified DCTs were analyzed. A pretest was administered before launching the study and the posttest during week 7. The prompts asked the participants to write short dialogs that mirrored interactions available for analysis and reflection in the movie. To keep coding practical, the participants were asked to answer the prompts in only one or two sentences.

Written DCTs are often used to collect L2 pragmatics data (Takahashi, 2001) because they are convenient and focused. In spite of their lack of interactivity, they may also offer a more naturalistic reflection of what students can do than spontaneous skits because it may be difficult to recreate realistic scenarios with appropriate pragmatic variation among peers (Chang, 2010). After each prompt, the participants were asked to reflect on their responses in English to offer insights into their thinking about linguistic choices they had made.

Every Saturday and Wednesday for 7 weeks, the participants spent 30-40 min watching and 30-40 min analyzing segments of the movie. The control group studied pragmatics to the minimal extent present in the textbooks and completed activities to practice vocabulary and check comprehension of the movie. In contrast, the treatment group completed exercises exploring the relationship between language and its social implementation.

Following proposals by Davies (2004), Cohen (2005), and Spencer-Oatey (2002), the in-class analytic tasks—which the participants completed individually, in pairs, or in small groups—drew the participants' attention to (a) context-specific vocabulary, including the concept of register, (b) pragmalinguistic features of language (e.g., pronouns, verb forms), and (c) sociopragmatic issues (e.g., gender, social distance). The participants also wrote skits by transposing interactions modeled by the movie or the other materials to different contexts (e.g., with their friends, their landlord). The specific task that guided the discovery of pragmatic features asked the participants to analyze both speech acts of request and apology. In doing so, participants created a skit or dialog making a request or apology based on the prompt, examined how they realized these speech acts, and compared their own realizations with those of the characters. The analysis focused on different request and apology strategies used by the participants before and after watching the movie.

As Blum-Kulka and Kasper (1989) mentioned, there are three kinds of request strategies and five types of apology strategies:

\textit{Request strategies:}

1. Direct level
   
   a. Mood derivable: Utterances in which the grammatical mood of the verb signals illocutionary force (e.g., \textit{Leave me alone}).
   
   b. Performatives: Utterances in which the illocutionary force is explicitly named (e.g., \textit{I tell you to leave me alone}).
   
   c. Hedged performatives: Utterances in which naming of the illocutionary force is modified by hedging expressions (e.g., \textit{I would like to ask you to leave me alone}).
d. Obligation statements: Utterances which state the obligation of the hearer to carry out the act (e.g., *Sir, you'll have to move your car*).

e. Want statements: Utterances which state the speaker's desire that the hearer carries out the act (e.g., *I want you to move your car*).

b. Conventionally indirect level

a. Suggestory formulae: Utterances which contain a suggestion to do something (e.g., *How about cleaning up?*).

b. Query-preparatory: Utterances containing reference to preparatory conditions (e.g. ability, willingness) as conventionalized in any specific language (e.g., *Would you mind moving your car?*).

c. Nonconventionally indirect level

a. Strong hints: Utterances containing partial reference to object or element needed for the implementation of the act (e.g., *The game is boring*).

b. Mild hints: Utterances that make no reference to the request proper (or any of its elements) but are interpretable as requests by context (e.g., *We've been playing this game for over an hour now!*).

**Apology strategies:**

1. An expression of apology (Ilocutionary Force Indicating Device IFID)
   a. An expression of regret (e.g., *I’m sorry*)
   b. An offer of apology (e.g., *I apologize*)
   c. A request for forgiveness (e.g., *excuse me, forgive me*)

2. An offer of repair/redress (REPR; e.g., *I’ll pay for your damage*)

3. An explanation of an account (EXPL; e.g., *I missed the bus*)

4. Acknowledging responsibility for the offense (RESP; e.g., *It’s my fault*)

5. A promise of forbearance (FORB; e.g., *I’ll never forget it again*)

### 4. RESULTS

The present study was an attempt to investigate, in the first place, whether or not employing movies can scaffold pragmatic teaching affecting the pattern of using different request and apology strategies by the participants. In other words, it was intended to compare the variations in the pattern of using different request and apology strategies before and after watching the movie in the experimental and control groups. The findings of this study suggest that the pattern of using different request and apology strategies changed significantly after watching the movie; however, the control group participants who benefited from no effective visual aids in pragmatics teaching followed the same pattern prior and after the study course. Regarding the speech act of request, Figure 4.1 illustrates the broadly similar patterns of using different request strategies on the pre and posttests by the control group.
participants compared to those of the experimental group witnessed the probable effect of watching the movie on changing the participants’ tendency to use different request strategies.

As displayed in Table 1, the same can be observed for apology. It can be easily inferred that the differences between the strategies’ patterns used by the control group participants on the pretest and posttest seems not to be substantial. However, the experimental group participants had a considerably different preference for using apology strategies before and after the study course vis-à-vis their counterparts in the control groups. The changes in the percentage of using different strategies from the pretest to the posttest in the experimental group is more conspicuous with respect to the hybrids of the main strategies viz. IFID+REPR and IFID+EXPL.

Table 1: Cross-Tabulation Results for Apology Strategies Used in the Pre and Posttests by the Two Study Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Apology strategies</th>
<th>Total Valid Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IFID</td>
<td>REPR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest Count</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest Count</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Count</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest Count</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest Count</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Count</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest Count</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest Count</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Count</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With respect to the first and second research questions, the results of this study are in line with Lay (2009) who claims about the importance of using movies in the class. According to Lay (2009), movies have great potential for fostering independent discovery-oriented and intercultural learning, a high level of interactivity, and learning about socially relevant topics. They are also interesting, and thus hence motivating because they can offer real-life information about current cultural issues and depict characters the students can identify with (Lay, 2009; Tognozzi, 2010; Washburn, 2001). Furthermore, as Lay (2009) observes, movies model suprasegmental information, such as intonation, turn-taking, and body language: Such contextual cues can help L2 learners develop their awareness of communicative events if they are given tasks that actively engage them in in-depth, critical analysis. Lay (2009) focuses mostly on cultural analysis: Movies can be used just as effectively for analyzing speakers' language, specifically pragmatic aspects of language,
because movies can provide the type of discourse-length, richly contextualized exchanges that Felix-Brasdefer (2007) and Kasper (2006) find essential for meaningful pragmatics instruction. In other words, movies may be an ideal medium for teaching students about pragmatic strategies, both for learning and as a springboard for language use (Cohen, 2005; Tatsuki & Nishizawa, 2005).

The study also investigated the role of gender in L2 learners’ development of pragmatic competence for the speech acts of request and apology. For speech act of request, as observed in Table 2, the strategies used more frequently by the male participants before watching the movie were DR and CIR, respectively; however, after watching the movie, they tended to use CIR more than the other two types. DR and NIR were similarly used by the male participants at the end of the study course. Considering the aforesaid results, one can easily conclude that employing the movie changed the male participants’ preferences in using request strategies:

Table 2: Cross-Tabulation Results for Request Strategies Used by the Male and Female Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Request Strategies</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>CIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>59.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within ER</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of this study may support the results of previous studies carried out in the field of gender and speech acts of request. During the last decades, cross-cultural and linguistic studies have paid considerable attention to the speech act of requesting (e.g., Cameron, 1995). However, as Lorenzo-Dus and Bou-Franch (2003) claim, there are not so many studies regarding gender differences, even though, historically, there has been diversity of approach within language and gender study (Sunderland & Litosseliti, 2002). On the contrary, we can also notice, as LoCastro (2003) says, that gender differences have been analyzed from different perspectives for the last four decades, paying attention to, for instance, the use of different linguistic aspects, styles (e.g., Trudgill, 1972), directness (e.g.,
In the outset of the research, the males tended to use EXPL, IFID and REPR more, respectively. However, on the posttest, the pattern changed mostly to IFID+EXPL and IFID+REPR. And, the same happened for the females in their using patterns of apology strategies before and after watching the movie. Thus, regardless of gender, all the participants changed their pattern of apology strategies. One of the main reasons might be the cultural and linguistic homogeneity of the respondents of this study.

**Table 3: Chi-Square Results for Apology Strategies Used on the Pre and Posttests by the Male and Female Learners**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>17.856&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
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<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
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<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
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<td></td>
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Although the effect of gender on apologies has been investigated by many researchers (Aijmer, 1995; Bataineh & Bataineh, 2005; Blum-Kulka and Kasper, 1989; Pejman Fard, 2004; Tajvidi, 2000) there is still little consensus among the scholars in this regard. Holmes (1989) and Tannen (1994) found wide gender differences in the apologetic behavior of native speakers of English in New Zealand and the United States, respectively. Working on a corpus of apologies collected through written ethnographic observation, Holmes (1989) reported that women apologized and were apologized to significantly more than men.
5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The advent of communicative approaches marked a beginning in the teaching process and classroom practices utilized by the language teachers. Researchers, theorists, and practitioners have drawn inspiration to go with the new trends. However, there have been some pitfalls as to why and how to exploit the procedures, adapt the needs and interests of the learners to theoretical underpinnings, and adjust teachers’ capabilities to the expectations defined by the pioneers in the field of communicative language teaching. One of the challenging areas of this field which has caused some troubles is pragmatics. It remains a thought-provoking issue for the teachers, who have difficulty to interpret and teach the corresponding content, and a perplexing subject for the language learners, who seem not to be proficient at pragmatics development even at the advanced levels.

On the other hand, ELT practitioners recognized the fundamental role of pragmatics in either foreign or second classroom teacher and noticed by the students. In their best attempts to internalize the pragmatic content of the textbooks, students only gained a partial mastery over the points mentioned in the syllabus; they failed, however, to actively use that pragmatic command in real-life situations. To compensate for the failure, the experts employed innovative methods to present the materials in a more fascinating format. For many students, alas, nothing changed to alleviate the problem with pragmatics; they were still reluctant in using the pragmatic content or, if they used, the communication was flawed and inappropriate. Frustrated by the challenge at hand, the language experts set out to first enumerate the underlying reasons, break the target achievement into pieces and units, and then define some solutions to the pragmatic development trial. In doing so, some factors ranging from sociocultural to affective to educational considerations were accounted for as being influential in pragmatic development. Since then, scholars started doing research on the feature of and impacts on the smallest pragmatic units, the so-called speech acts.

Surprisingly, the correspondence between using movies and development of speech acts has attracted little, if any, attention. Therefore, the researcher, on the grounds of the existing gap, sought to investigate the relationship between these two notions; that is, the effect of using movies on the development of pragmatic competence regarding speech acts of request and apology. As such, the first step was to include some supplementary materials within students’ course book.

The main goal of this study was to bring movie to the light as a pedagogical tool in the classrooms and to support the idea of injecting them in teaching syllabus. In addition, this research was an attempt to provide teachers with a threshold for using movies to help their students with their needs regarding their development in pragmatic competence. As long as time constraint in classrooms, especially classes that are supposed to make learners pragmatically competent, limits the chance of a deep comprehension for learners, a complementary pedagogical tool would be compensatory.

Accordingly, this study was mainly an attempt to see if movie facilitate the understanding speech acts of request and apology. To put it another way, this study checked to see whether or not movie could play a role enhancing learners’ pragmatic competence. To this aim and for a better understanding of the effects of movie on the viewer and its functions, the comprehension of speech acts were targeted. In doing so, participants’ answers on two
modified DCTs were analyzed. The findings of the analyses and SPSS calculations revealed that the pattern of using different request and apology strategies changed significantly after watching the movie; however, the learners of the control group, who benefited from no effective visual aids in pragmatics teaching, followed the same pattern prior and after the study course.

REFERENCES


knowledge in second language learning, testing and teaching (pp. 1-26). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.


APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Discourse Completion Task 1 (DCT)

Name:                      Group:                       

1) You are trying to study in your room and you hear loud music coming from another student's room down the hall. You don't know the student, but you decide to ask them to turn the music down. What would you say?

2) Your term paper is due, but you haven't finished it yet. You want to ask the professor for an extension. What would you say?

3) A student in the library is making too much noise and disturbing other students. The librarian decides to ask the student to quiet down. What will the librarian say?

4) You have borrowed your class fellow’s book and any child at your home tore some of its pages. What would you say when you return the book?

5) You have been supposed to meet your class fellow at the university library but you get there an hour later. What would you say, when you apologize with your class fellow?

6) You were to submit an assignment to the teacher but due to ill health, you have not been able to even attend the class. What would you say to your professor the next session you attend the class?

7) You were to discuss some of your problems with your teacher but due to a traffic jam, you came 45 min late. What would you say to your supervisor as you see him/her?

8) You promised with your friend to go for outing, but at the nick of time you got an urgent piece of work at home and couldn’t go with him/her. How would you apologize with your friend?
Appendix B
Discourse Completion Task 2 (DCT)

Name:…………………………  Group:…………………………

1) You need a ride home from school. You notice someone who lives down the street from you is also at school, but you haven't spoken to this person before. You think they might have a car. What would you say?

2) A professor wants a student to present a paper in class a week earlier than scheduled. What would the professor say?

3) You missed class and need to borrow a friend’s notes. What would you say?

4) You promised to reach at your friend’s house at his/her marriage two days before the ceremony. But you couldn’t get leave from university. What would you say to your friend when you meet him/her at the marriage ceremony?

5) You were getting late from the class and hurriedly ran towards the class. While going upstairs you dashed with one university officers. How would you react?

6) You were given a form to fill in and return for getting library card but you lost the form. What would you say to the librarian when you meet him/her?

7) You have promised your younger sister/brother to take her/him to the park on Sunday but on Sunday evening some of your friends came to meet you and you couldn’t go with him/her. You have forgotten to do so. What would you say to her/him?

8) On the way back to home from university, you were to bring ‘Gool Gappas’ for your younger brother/sister. But due to strike you got late and couldn’t bring Gool Gappas. What would you say to your brother/sister on reaching home?