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Research Paper

**Fostering EFL Learners' Pragmatics Awareness,  
Incidental Pragmalinguistic Learning, and  
Speaking Ability Through Video-Based Pragmatic  
Tests**

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**Abstract**

Raising English language teachers and learners' awareness of pragmatics and pragmalinguistics has been of much concern to applied linguists since a couple of years ago. However, the number of studies on the impact of video-based pragmatic tests on EFL learners' pragmatics awareness, incidental pragmalinguistic learning, and speaking ability is scanty. The present study investigated the effect of video-based pragmatic tests on EFL learners' pragmatic awareness and pragmalinguistic learning, and speaking ability. Participants of this study were 38 male and female language learners who were selected through convenience sampling. The participants were randomly divided into two control and experimental groups. In the experimental group, video-based pragmatic tests were used along with the usual instructional materials; while in the control group the material was taught in the conventional method, without using video-based pragmatic tests. A pretest/posttest control-experimental research design was used. A placement test, two Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Tests, and two speaking

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ability tests were used to assess the participants' pragmatic awareness, incidental pragmalinguistic learning, and speaking ability before and after the treatment. Independent samples-t-test and Mann-Whitney U test were used for analyzing the data. The results of the study indicated a high level of pragmatic awareness and pragmalinguistic learning improvement in the experimental group. Further, the findings revealed that video-based pragmatic tests affected the learners' speaking proficiency. The findings have theoretical and pedagogical implications for applied linguists, English language teachers, and learners.

**Keywords:** Pragmatics, Pragmatic Awareness, Pragmalinguistic Learning, Video-Based Pragmatic Tests, Speaking Ability

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## 1. Introduction

English language teachers and learners' pragmatic competence and awareness of pragmatics have become an important issue and a research area in second language education. Several researchers worked on the teachability of different aspects of pragmatic competence in EFL classes (Aufa, 2016; Bardovi-Harlig, 2013, 2016a, 2016b; Martínez-Flor, 2008). Until recently, pragmatics competence was theoretically viewed as communicative competence among other components and a pre-requisite for the good command of English. In the literature, it can be seen that teaching pragmatics can positively contribute to the acquisitional gains in different ways (Povolná, 2014; Savvidou & Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2019, Tajeddin & Khodaparast, 2020). The common finding of the relates studies is that there is an urgent need for appropriate pragmatic instruction in different contexts for EFL learners. However, the recent cognition about pragmatics has led to an interest in including pragmatics in language teaching/training in a practical manner rather than only theory (Sachtleben & Denny, 2012). Most learners do not even know the cultural norms beyond the language. To study the

improvement of these norms in language learners, a lot of research has been done to determine such complex elements.

Studies have shown that different types of pragmatics instruction can be useful (Kuepper & Feryok, 2019; Taguchi, 2015, 2019). Similarly, a number of scholars (O'Keeffe et al., 2011; Rose, 2005; Vasquez & Sharpless, 2009) have emphasized the vital role of instructing pragmatics for language learners in the EFL/ESL contexts because pragmatics is one of the main features in teaching and learning a foreign language and thus, it helps them to understand the context better. According to Yates (2004), learners' information about the norms of pragmatics and pragmalinguistics in any language shows the need for getting familiar with pragmatics. According to Leech (1983), pragmalinguistics has to do with the particular resources that a given language provides for conveying pragmatic illocutions. In other words, pragmalinguistics refers to the resources available such as pragmatic strategies, routines, and linguistic forms to convey an illocutionary meaning. Pragmalinguistic failure takes place as the pragmatically intended meaning by one speaker or interlocutor is different in its foundation of perception from that the native speaker of L2. It also occurs when some conversation techniques are insufficiently conveyed from someone's L1 into L2. It can be considered from both sides of the conversation (Thomas, 1983). In other words, pragmalinguistic failure occurs when learners fail to use particular linguistic resources to formulate a specific type of speech act. According to Searle (1969, p.16) "speech acts [...] are the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication". Consequently, over the years, several researchers have attempted to devise a taxonomy of speech acts that would be commonly accepted (Allan, 1998; Bach & Harnish, 1979; Leech, 1983).

Various parts of language can be assessed by a multitude of tests or questionnaires. As pragmatics comes into mind various ways for its

assessment are offered (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014). One type of tests useful for assessing pragmatics is Discourse Completion Task (DCT). Although DCTs are fast data-collecting instruments and useful for classifying semantic formulas and ideas to be used in a natural context, they are not good indicators of authentic interaction, not serviceable regarding the authenticity of real-life conversations by not considering repetitions or elaborations, and finally not being considerate regarding the amount of possible speech acts taking place in an authentic context (Beebe & Cummings, 1996). According to Hinkel (1997), a DCT by itself cannot be a consummate source for evaluating students' pragmatic-related factors. Furthermore, Nurani (2009) contended that such tests lack an authentic setting as well as authentic responses and interlocutors. According to Eslami-Rasekh (2005, p.202) "the data collected through a discourse completion task does not exactly reflect the richness and complexity of natural data". Accordingly, a combination of DCTs ought to be used with another forms of tests, as Roever (2001,2006) and Tada (2005) did this by amalgamating DCTs and web-based/computer-based frameworks, respectfully (Cited in Brown, 2008). Moradkhan and Jalayer (2010) emphasized the use of real audiovisual and video-enhanced materials in teaching and the development of pragmatics. Subsequently, with the impediments and difficulties associated with DCTs testing pragmatics and pragmalinguistics of language, the ultimate goal of this study is to seek the effectiveness of Video-based Pragmatic Tasks (VPTs) on EFL learners' pragmatic awareness.

## **2. Literature Review**

With regard to the impact of explicit and implicit methods of instructing pragmatics, Rose (2005) concluded that the efficacy of explicit instructions is significantly higher than the gradual implicit teaching method. Similarly, Cohen (2008) believed that teachers' interests and intentions in choosing the

suitable strategy and instruction, either explicit or implicit, can be great criteria to assist language learners in learning pragmatic knowledge. Pragmatic awareness is one of the inevitable aspects of communicative competence, which sets off hard tasks for learners in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts due to the limited sources of the target language in contexts.

The main purpose of raising language learners' pragmatic awareness is to develop their pragmatic ability in the target language. It is somehow to be able to negotiate what is beyond the literal meaning addressing the intended meaning, and assumptions (Cohen, 2010). The importance of pragmatic awareness in communication has always been a crucial aspect of language classes. Until recently, it was theoretically seen as communicative competence among other components, and a pre-requisite for a good command of English. According to Bardovi-Harlig (1996), pragmatic awareness must be emphasized more than before and used in the classroom since it has complex nature unlike other segments of the language grammar. In other words, learners' information about the norms of pragmatics and pragma-linguistic in any language shows the need for getting familiar with pragmatics (Yates, 2004).

The way students can learn pragmatic knowledge pass through various methods in different situations, shows the importance of learning pragmatic structures in the EFL/ESL contexts; a factor that may receive the same attention as pragmatic awareness and pragmatic competence. Thus, a fundamental review of the programs designed to train is inevitable. The relevant research evaluating the involvement of pragmatics in teacher education programs often focuses on theory rather than holding practical purposes (Eslami- Rasekh, 2005; Ishihara, 2010; Vásquez & Sharpless, 2009).

There is a plethora of studies on the explicit teaching of pragmatics. For instance, Rosales and Barragan Quintero (2015) focused on raising EFL learners' pragmatic awareness by scrutinizing the request speech act. Similarly, Ba (2016) has stated that explicit pragmatic instruction fosters learners' pragmatic competence. Also, Garita and Elizondo (2016) utilized videos for building the connotative meaning of words and phrases by teaching pragmatics using videos and a qualitative design throughout their study.

As Ishihara and Cohen (2014) noted, relevant research would examine how language teachers are prepared to deliver pragmatics instruction and how we integrate pragmatics into teacher education. Furthermore, it should combine theoretical knowledge with practical, (i.e., transform pragmatics into instructional or guided pragmatics). According to the results of Povolnas' study (2012), teachers strive to share all theoretical information in order to increase pragmatic awareness among language learners as much as possible, since improving students' speaking ability leads to improvement in final communicative competence. Pragmalinguistics as Leech (1983) believes, refers to the of the interlocutors' use of divergent forms-functions based on their linguistic desires. Holmes (2013) uses terms social factors and 'social dimensions' to refer to critical elements determining one's linguistic choices sociolinguistically. Pragmalinguistic failure refers to non-native speakers' misinterpretation of a specifically-intended pragmatic force within a specific linguistic token (Thomas, 1983). Generally, she defined pragmatic failure as "the inability to understand what is meant by what is said" (Thomas, 1983, p. 91). Hence, it is worthwhile to be able to enrich ESL/EFL students with pragmatically-related concepts by comparing L1 and L2, in order to avoid the aforementioned failures in the real context.

Shokouhi and Rezaei (2015) have stated that teachers should improve the learners' understanding of the frames of the interaction and rules of politeness within the target culture. They also believe that it is the teachers' responsibility of providing learners with the necessary tools of appropriate pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic decisions in the target language.

Tajeddin and Khodaparst (2020) investigated the extent of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' metapragmatic awareness and their instruction of pragmatic features. To achieve this goal, a 30-item questionnaire was adapted and administered to 300 EFL teachers and analyzed in terms of the four components of the questionnaire, including Language teachers, Language learners, Colleagues and institutes, and Coursebooks and exams. Moreover, 30 teachers' classes were observed based on a 20-item observation checklist developed by the researchers and analyzed qualitatively. They reported that the teachers' awareness of pragmatics was relatively high only in one of the components of pragmatic awareness, namely language teachers. However, observation results indicated that they did not consistently teach pragmatic features in their classes.

With regard to the impacts of tests on language learners' achievement, Popham (2001) uses the term "item-teaching" to refer to teachers' adapted instructions toward the main items or those of clone items, and the term "curriculum-teaching" to refer to teachers' adapted instructions "toward a specific body of content knowledge or a specific set of cognitive skills represented by a given test" (p. 16). The initial term is corresponding to what each researcher has as a primary concern in regards to educating to a test, yet the subsequent term is a broader thought the sets showing guidelines towards an entirety, by knowing which learners would be able to get everything needed for replying a test.

According to Popham (2001), curriculum teaching is fruitful as it serves students in high-stake tests and upgrades their proficiency with regard to the knowledge being tested within an exam. It should be emphasized that teaching items and manipulating cloned items is a different concept from the practice of standardized regular / taught tests and diagnostic tests. In summary, when comparing the high stakes test with the teacher's test, the greater the difference, the more you can avoid post-test instruction, or item instruction, and ensure that the teacher provides reliable curriculum instruction.

Similarly, Wiggins (2011) asserts tests should be a central learning experience. He puts emphasis on students' performance in whatever they are competent or qualified. In this regard he defines authentic assessment as a vice versa procedure compared to a conventionalized teach, then test manner contending "a reversal of the current practice of test design" (P. 83). According to Eslami-Rasekh (2005), the use of DCTs may be useful in the early stages of learning. She emphasized that the use of DCTs is suitable for the early stages of learning the communication functions of a language. It provides us with a language that is more complex and less variable than natural data, but it is quite similar to a real language. However, as students improve their pragmatic abilities and become more and more proficient, the DCTs appear to lack the proper context and credibility to be considered proper input.

Providing authentic material for a better understanding of L2 context has always been crucial in ESL/EFL teaching. A number of pragmatically-related studies (e.g., Garita & Elizondo, 2016; Moradkhan & Jalayer, 2010) have tried to provide videos as such and to expose learners to this sort of material. A large number of studies (e.g., Alcón-Soler, 2015; Bardovi-Harlig, 2016a; Culpeper, Mackey, & Taguchi, 2018; Derakhshan & Arabmofrad, 2018;



Derakhshan & Eslami, 2020; Köylü, 2018; Martínez-Flor, 2008; Plonsky & Zhuang, 2019; Taguchi & Yamaguchi, 2019; Tajeddin & Khodaparast, 2020), have been done on pragmatic awareness, yet none of them focused mainly on video-based materials, as influential tools that can enrich students with authentic contexts. Furthermore, few studies have considered the washback effect related to tests of this inquiry (Mirzaei et al., 2014; Tajeddin & Dabbagh, 2015). Therefore, this study investigates the impact of video-based pragmatic tests on pre-intermediate EFL learners' pragmatic awareness, incidental pragmalinguistic learning, and speaking ability. To be more specific, the following research questions were raised:

1. Do video-based pragmatic tests have a significant effect on pre-intermediate EFL learners' pragmatic awareness?
2. Do video-based pragmatic tests have a significant effect on pre-intermediate EFL learners' incidental pragmalinguistic learning?
3. Do video-based pragmatic tests have any significant effect on pre-intermediate EFL learners' speaking ability?

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Participants**

Participants of this study were 38 pre-intermediate Iranian EFL learners, consisting of 19 males and 19 females, who were selected through convenience sampling. They were all selected from *Daneshgah* high school in Zahedan, Iran. To control the effect of the students' L1 only Persian speakers were selected and Baluch speakers were not included in the study. The participants' age ranged from 14 to 17. They were divided into two groups namely, experimental and control, and their proficiency level was estimated to be pre-intermediate, based on their scores on the placement test.

### **3.2 Instrumentation**

To accomplish the objectives of the study, different testing instruments were administered in the present research. Each is explained as follows:

#### **3.2.1 Language proficiency test**

The Preliminary English Test (2020), an English proficiency test, designed by Cambridge English Language Assessment, was used to ensure the homogeneity of language learners. In this test, the reading section had three parts in the forms of multiple-choice items, matching, and cloze test. The writing section consisted of one part: reading a short story and answering the related questions. The listening section included one part: participants listened to a recorded text and answer some related questions. The speaking section had two parts and each participant took it together with another candidate. This skill was assessed through two test forms namely an oral interview, and a monologue. There was one examiner) who talked and listened to participants and recorded their speech. The homogeneity of all participants was measured by different types of test formats because research suggests that utilizing diverse types of test formats to assess L2 learners' proficiency knowledge is more fruitful than a single test format since it gives the assessor a more comprehensive image of the L2 learners' knowledge. The reliability of the test was checked using inter-rater reliability approach, and the reliability index was 0.86, which seemed to be acceptable.

#### **3.2.2 MDCT (multiple choice pragmatic Discourse Completion Tests)**

This test was used for investigating the pragmatic awareness of the students. The test was developed by by Çetinavci and Öztürk (2017). The test consisted of 33 items in which fillers, pope questions, indirect criticism, topic change, indirect advice, (verbal) irony, indirect refusals, disclosure, indirect requests, etc., had been implemented for making a thorough pragmatic

awareness. The reliability of the test was estimated through Cronbach's alpha. The estimated alpha was .88, which seemed to be acceptable.

### 3.2.3 An MDCT for investigating pragmalinguistic learning

This test was developed by (Birjandi & Rezaei 2010) to test the participants' incidental pragmalinguistic awareness. The test consisted of 20 situations for which the students had to choose the best option according to request and apology speech acts. The reliability of the test was estimated to be .81.

### 3.2.4 Speaking ability tests 1 and 2

The speaking ability tests consisted of two parts. In part A, the test takers were asked to narrate a memory from childhood, and in the second part, the test takers were asked to explain how they apologize, invite someone to a meeting, accept or decline an invitation, and congratulate someone for his/her achievements. The participants' speaking ability was assessed using a teacher's rubric questionnaire developed by Başak, (2019) (Appendix B). The content validity of the test was assessed by two experts, and the reliability was estimated using an inter-rater reliability approach. The reliability indices for speaking ability tests 1 and 2 were reported to be 0.82 and 0.86, respectively.

## 3.3 Data Collection Procedure

This study was undertaken in different steps. First, the placement test, and two MDCTs were administered to both control and experimental groups. After checking the homogeneity of the learners' proficiency level, the researcher felt sure that there was not an initial difference between the two groups in terms of their pragmatics awareness, Incidental Pragmalinguistic learning (I.P.L), and speaking ability. In the experimental group, speech acts were taught, and related video-based pragmatic tests were practiced in the classroom (Appendix A). While in the control group no video-based

pragmatic tests were used. The set of videos extracted from various sources like the *Four-corners series* by Richards and Bohlke (2012), the *Top-Notch series* by Saslow and Ascher (2006), and the *Interchange series* by Richards, Hull, and Proctor (2005). Each series of videos focused on a specific speech act. A standardized teacher's rubric was used as a pre/post questionnaire in the experimental group to measure the learners' speaking ability. A picture description pre-/post activity was implemented in this regard. The questionnaire consisted of 6 parts investigating grammar accuracy and range, vocabulary, content, fluency, pronunciation, and the students' overall grade by the teacher, respectively. Since this study has employed a mixed method, a sample of 15 learners was taken randomly from the experimental group to take part in the interview to check any improvement in the learners' speaking ability due to the washback effect of the video-based pragmatic tests.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

First, the scores were submitted to one sample KS test, to check whether the scores were normally distributed or not. As the data for research questions 1, and 2 were normally distributed, independent samples -t-test was used to compare the two groups' mean scores on pragmatics awareness and incidental pragmalinguistics learning. However, for the last research questions, because the data were not parametric, the Mann-Whitney U test was employed for comparing the speaking ability of the two independent groups.

## **4. Results**

Results for three research questions are presented in the following sections.

### ***Research question 1***

Research question 1 investigated the impact of video-based pragmatic tests on pre-intermediate EFL learners' pragmatic awareness. Results for this question including descriptive statistics (mean, and standard deviation for

pre-test and post-test) and inferential statistics (t-tests) are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1

*Mean and SD of the Groups' Scores on the Pragmatic Awareness Pretest and Posttest*

	Group	N	Mean	SD
Pretest pragmatics awareness	Control	19	12.44	5.48
	Experimental	19	11.88	4.29
Posttest pragmatics awareness	Control	19	12.55	5.74
	Experimental	19	17.53	4.26

As seen in Table 1, the control group and experimental group obtained mean scores of 12.44 (SD=5.48) and 11.48 (SD=4.29), respectively. However, on the posttest, the mean scores of the control group (M=12.55, SD=5.74) and the experimental group's mean score (M=17.53, SD=4.26) were not the same. To further analyze the data, independent samples-t-tests were employed. Results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

*T-tests for Comparing the Groups' Scores on Pragmatics Awareness Pretest and Posttest*

	Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pretest	1.336	.255	.353	36	.726
Posttest	2.350	.134	-3.054	36	.004

As shown in Table 2, the variances of the two groups' scores on the pragmatics awareness pretest were equal ( $F=1.33$ ,  $p=0.25$ ) and the difference between groups' mean scores  $t$  was not statistically significant ( $t_{(36)}=0.35$ ,  $p=0.72 > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the researchers were convinced there was no initial difference between the groups at the onset of the study. However, results reveal that the groups' variances on the posttest are equal ( $F=2.35$ ,  $p=0.13 > 0.05$ ), and the difference between the groups' mean scores is

statistically significant ( $t_{(36)} = -3.05$ ,  $p = 0.004 < 0.05$ ), favoring the experimental group. Therefore, it could be strongly argued that video-based pragmatic tests affected language learners' pragmatics awareness.

### **Research question 2**

The second research question investigated the impact of video-based pragmatic tests on pre-intermediate EFL learners' incidental pragmalinguistic learning. The groups' scores on the pretest and posttest are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3

*Mean and SD of the Groups' Scores on Incidental Pragmalinguistic Learning (IPL) Pretest and Posttest*

	group	N	Mean	SD
IPL pretest	control	19	9.03	3.46
	experimental	19	8.6	3.03
IPL posttest	control	19	9.6	3.5
	experimental	19	12.850	3.7

As seen in Table 3, the control group obtained a mean score of 9.03 (SD=3.46), while the experimental group's mean score was 8.6 (SD=3.03). It can also be seen, that the experimental group (M=12.85, SD=3.7) outperformed the control group (M=9.8, SD=3.5). The data were further submitted to independent samples-t-tests. Results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

*T-tests for IPL Pretest and Posttest*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
IPL pretest	.434	.514	.411	36	.684
IPL posttest	.829	.369	-2.711	36	.010

As seen in Table 4, the variances of the two groups on the IPL pretest (F=0.41, p=0.51) and IPL posttest (F=0.82, p=0.36) are equal; therefore, the

researchers were sure that the equality of the variances was assumed. Results also show that the difference between the two groups' scores on the IPL pretest was not statistically significant ( $t_{(36)}=0.41$ ,  $p=063>0.05$ ), indicating that the two groups were homogeneous in terms of IPL at the onset of the study. Furthermore, results reveal that the difference between the two groups mean scores on the IPL post-test is statistically significant ( $t_{(36)}=-2.71$ ,  $p=01<0.05$ ), indicating that the treatment was effective and video-based pragmatic tests significantly affected the language learners' IPL.

### **Research question 3**

The third research question addressed the effect of video-based pragmatic tests on pre-intermediate EFL learners' speaking ability. As the scores were not normally distributed and the assumption of parametric data was violated, a non-parametric equivalent (Mann Whitney U) was employed. Results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

*Mann-Whitney U Test for Comparing the Groups' Scores on the Speaking Pretest and Posttest*

	pretest	posttest
Mann-Whitney U	133.500	75.0
Wilcoxon W	304.500	246.00
Z	-1.508	-3.44
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.132	.001
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.176 <sup>b</sup>	.002 <sup>b</sup>

As shown in Table 5, there was no significant difference in the speaking ability of the control and experimental group ( $z = -1.50$ ,  $p>.05$ ) before the treatment. However, the difference between the groups on the speaking ability posttest was statistically significant ( $z=-3.44$ ,  $p=0.002<0.05$ ), suggesting that video-based pragmatic tests significantly affected the language learners' speaking ability.

## 5. Discussion

This study investigated the effect of video-based pragmatic tests on pre-intermediate language learners' pragmatics awareness, incidental pragmatics learning, and speaking ability. Results of the study verified that the language learners in the experimental group had better performance in the posttests. Therefore, the stated null hypotheses were all rejected and it could be strongly argued that video-based pragmatic tests positively affected the language learners' pragmatics awareness, IPL, and speaking ability.

The findings of the study are consistent with Moradkhan and Jalayer (2010) who found that video-taped materials compared to audio-taped materials were of more value. The prominence of video-based pragmatic materials, for the sake of their native-like and authentic milieu and setting, has been the key to students' better performance with regard to improving their pragmatic competence. Being at the heart of pragmatic competence, pragmatic awareness was improved vastly throughout the process of implementing VPTs in an experimental classroom setting, more than that of the control group- having no access to such materials. The findings are also compatible with those of Eslami-Rasekh (2005) and Reddy (2011) in that awareness-raising activities are of profit when considering teaching pragmatics, even via using VPT, and the learners did sensitize to miscellaneous pragmatically related factors which improved their use of linguistic forms in real contexts. Moreover, the findings are congruent with Rosales and Barragan Quintero (2015) who came to the conclusion that in schools where foreign languages are included within the school curriculum, the opportunities for communication in a real-life simulated context which develops the whole institutionalization of linguistic structures utilized in L2 community should be taken seriously. More modern forms of testing along



with teaching pragmatics are what have sought better performance in learners of the experimental group.

Furthermore, the results indicated that VPTs have significant effects on the students' IPL. In other words, the students' awareness of IPL was increased by a colossal amount. Karatepe (2001) found that the trainees were successful in recognizing appropriate forms in multiple-choice questions. However, if they were asked to make their own forms, they tended to improvise. So, Choosing the appropriate forms in MDCTs will be easy for the learners. However, the findings of this study revealed the learners' improvement in the appropriate use of forms-functions (i.e., pragmalinguistical aspect).

In line with the results of the study by Like Fukuya and Zhang (2002), findings revealed that the learners' pragmalinguistic awareness significantly increased. The findings are also in agreement with Garita and Elizondo's (2016) finding which proved that connotative meanings of words are best understood by utilizing videos. The data are projecting a convergence between using VPTs and students' increase in pragmalinguistic competence/learning. Conversely, the findings of this study do not agree with that of Takahashi (2015) who found that listening proficiency and the grammatical knowledge of the learners hinder pragmalinguistic learning.

Moreover, the findings of the study proved that VPTs do have a major impact on the speaking ability of the students. The findings confirm the claims made by Erton (2007) inserting that "dialogue ability or discourse competence handles the capability in organizing the sentences hooked on unified construction and cohesive structures" (p.64). The findings put an emphasis on what Siegel (2016) demands at the end of his article when elaborating on some important activities to be implemented for the sake of improving speaking ability along with consideration of pragmatics aspects.

The same findings can be found in Norbekova (2020), who proved that classroom-based speaking tests do have a positive washback effect. He concluded that learners do enjoy the pair-work or group work activities, in which they can have the support of their fellow classmates. However, the finding of this study is not in harmony with Razavipour, et al. (2020) who, during a speaking course for IELTS preparation, found that the impact IELTS test preparation courses on the learners' speaking is negative and the student's involvement has decreased. One justification for the impact of video-based pragmatic tests on the students' speaking ability is the relevance of test tasks to the pragmatics construct. In other words, the test is authentic and the authenticity of language tests is a predictor of the construct validity. The tests which have construct validity positively contribute to the language learners' achievement (Alibakhshi et al., 2010).

## **6. Conclusion and Implications**

The findings of the study revealed that using video-based pragmatic tests in the classroom caused the experimental group to acquire a high level of pragmatic awareness and to improve their pragmlinguistic learning. Furthermore, the data showed that using video-based pragmatic tests resulted in a favorable washback on learners' speaking proficiency. Data also demonstrated a positive impact on the experimental group's speaking abilities, which was corroborated objectively.

Eventually, it is of value to pay close attention to the facilitative roles of technology that day by day are making mammoth impacts on every aspect of human life, two of which are language teaching and language testing. Such video-based tests are proposed to be utilized in various academic curricula, as they simulate a natural communicative and/or authentic milieu to both teachers/testers and students. As previously emphasized, such tests can be of an amalgamation of traditional and modern ways of assessment, bringing a

new era into language testing, curriculum design, and teaching. Taking these new achievements into account, language learning, language teaching, and language testing can be enormously optimized. Natural native-like language use is the first and foremost priority of classes in which pragmatics is of consideration, and due to a lack of native L2 speakers in different countries, studies such as this led to solutions that can open new doors to language studies. Furthermore, this study can be fruitful for teachers who intensively seek newer ways of institutionalizing L2 pragmatics in their classrooms both when teaching and testing, other than the commonly designed MDCTs, WDCTs, ODCTs, and other pragmatically based ways of testing, since pragmatic awareness, pragmlinguistic learning and washback effect of speaking ability were vastly developed in a natural and contextualized medium.

One must not make the mistake of taking VPTs as only criterion-referenced tests, for they have the capability of being used in norm-referenced tests as well, nonetheless the main emphasis being on authenticity, as such tests have an amalgamation of traditional and modern ways of assessment. In addition, the scope selected here practices pragmatics teaching and testing, and despite the fact that teaching and evaluation of FL/L2 pragmatics is of paramount importance, there is still a long path ahead. It may be interesting for researchers and practitioners who pursue pragmatics instruction to continue to discover creative ways to prevent cross-cultural pragmatic failure.

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## Appendix A

### Sample of Video-based pragmatic tests

**The learners watch a video (adopted from Cutting Edge Series) in which the speech act of request is practiced. Then, they answer the following questions.**

**Situation 1:** Tom and his best friend are in an elevator and are coming back from shopping. Tom's hands are full with different plastic bags. How can he ask his best friend to open the door?

- a) How can I open the door now? (making a sad face)
- b) My hands are full (pointing to the door with his head)
- c) Can the door be opened now? (shows a thinking mimic)

**Situation 2:** Someone is giving free tickets of a soccer match to people on a bus. How can Caroline take an extra ticket for Tom?

- a) Can I have an extra ticket please?
- b) Tickets? I want one more.
- c) Tickets are all we want now!



## **Appendix B**

### **Teachers' Rubric for Speaking Exam**

#### **Vocabulary**

5 Appropriate level and variety of vocabulary to deal with topic, avoiding repetition. Able to paraphrase effectively if necessary.

4 Level and variety of vocabulary satisfactory, but experiences some difficulty in word choice and usage, occasional repetition. Some ability to paraphrase when necessary.

3 Vocabulary used is basic but sufficient to express ideas, some repetition. Little evidence of extended range. Limited ability to paraphrase and some difficulty experienced.

2 Vocabulary use tends to be inaccurate, with inappropriate or irrelevant use, making communication awkward, though shows some attempts.

1 Almost all of the vocabulary is inaccurate, inappropriate or irrelevant, making communication difficult or with no attempt at all.

#### **Content**

5 Communicates effectively, responds well to the topic. Explains well, gives effective examples.

4 Most of the speech responds to topic. However, some supporting details are weak. 175

3 Responds in a basic way to the topic but lacks relevant supporting details.

2 States the topic by giving his idea without any supporting details.

1 Unable to respond to the topic or makes almost no attempt.

#### **Fluency**

5 Almost no hesitation other than native-like search for ideas. The speech is very natural.

4 Most of the speech is without hesitation, which does not disturb the natural flow.

3 Some hesitation with some short pauses, but does not disturb the flow for the listener.

2 Speech is halting with some long pauses. Frequent hesitation, needs prompting but shows attempt.

1 Speech is disconnected and difficult to follow.

#### **Pronunciation**

5 Almost all individual sounds are well articulated, with effective and natural use of stress

and intonation. Easy to understand and follow.

4 Most individual sounds well-articulated, occasional difficulties do not disrupt comprehension.

3 Some individual sounds are not clearly articulated but not in a way that disrupt comprehension.

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2 Many individual sounds poorly articulated and pronunciation puts strain on listeners and causes misunderstanding.

1 Impossible to understand at all.

Overall

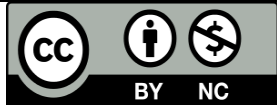
5 Superior

4 Good

3 Average/Satisfactory/Acceptable (at the level)

2 Weak

1 Very Poor



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