

# How Iranian Instructors Teach L2 Pragmatics in Their Classroom Practices? A Mixed-Methods Approach

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## Abstract

This study examined the teaching approaches and techniques that Iranian instructors utilize for teaching L2 pragmatics in their classroom practices. 238 Iranian instructors participated in this study. The data for this study were accumulated through questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. In terms of the instructional approaches, both the quantitative and qualitative results showed that instructors make use of inductive and implicit approaches more than other two approaches, deductive and explicit, to teach L2 pragmatics. With regard to the pragmatic consciousness-raising techniques, the results revealed that instructors mostly make use of conversation topics and also situations to raise learners' awareness of the speech act under study. In addition to this technique, instructors make use of field experience to give input to learners. Regarding the pragmatic communicative practice techniques, the quantitative and qualitative results showed that instructors mostly make use of role-play and pair-work techniques to engage learners to practice speech acts. Moreover, the results of the questionnaire and interview with regard to pragmatic corrective feedback techniques showed that instructors almost give feedback implicitly by reformulating learners' mistakes and repeating their errors. On the contrary, instructors give less metalinguistic information and explain the inappropriate expressions to learners. In terms of culture teaching techniques, the results illustrated that instructors share their knowledge of what they hear or read about other cultures with their learners. The results of this study have some implications for language instructors.

**Keywords:** approach, classroom practice, Iranian instructors, L2 pragmatics, technique

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the Problem

English is estimated to be spoken by close to two billion people worldwide (up to a third of the world's population) and most commonly between people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, that is, as a lingua franca. The growing worldwide use of English has emerged within the context of globalization. In addition, language users, irrespective of their educational and socio-economic status, have the tendency to learn English. This linguistic behavior of the interlocutors has made the English language a prestigious language of the world (Muthusamy, 2014). More recently, in EFL contexts, people are required to utilize the English language for their communicative needs to do the business, read scientific articles, and use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) worldwide and so on. They also learn English and make use of it to interact with speakers of English from different cultures. As such, the English language plays a highly important role in intercultural interactions as a communication tool which calls into attention the issue of proper and appropriate intercultural understanding of speech or more importantly, meaning in interaction between speakers (Al-Zubeiry, 2013; Rashidi & Ramezani, 2013).

Contrary to monolithic notions of English, English as a lingua Franca is fluid, situated, negotiated, and hybrid, and as such requires knowledge of pragmatics, the use of language in its varied social contexts. Pragmatic competence, which is the ability to convey and interpret meaning appropriately in a social situation, has become an object of inquiry in a wide range of disciplines including linguistics, applied linguistics, anthropology, sociology, psychology, communication research, and cross-cultural studies (Taguchi, 2009). pragmatic competence is defined by Koike (1989) as "the speaker's knowledge and use of rules of appropriateness and

politeness which dictate the way the speaker will understand and formulate speech acts in a context” (p. 279). In other words, pragmatic competence is defined as the knowledge of communicative action or speech acts, how to perform it, and the ability to utilize the language in proper ways according to the context or contextual factors (Kasper, 1997).

### *1.2 Statement of the Problem*

Due to the globalization, people need to communicate with each other more than before, especially among non-native speakers as the majority of English language users in a globalized world. However, there often exist some difficulties among non-native speakers in intercultural communication who share different cultural and linguistic orientations. The reason is that each speaker has different interpretations of each other’s speech and they may understand the other’s statement based on their own cultural expectations, values and conventions. The wide variations of cultural conventions of interlocutors can easily result in misunderstanding and even a total communication breakdown (Al-Zubeiry, 2013).

Another important point worth mentioning is that the immersion of learners in a particular context affects their opportunities to have contact with the target language. In second language contexts, learners are exposed to the target language outside the classroom and they have more chances to utilize it for their real-life goals. In contrast, in foreign language settings, learners often have limited opportunities for input and interaction outside of the classroom and also low chances to be engaged in communicative situations. In these contexts, language is learned almost only in the classroom. Thus, the mere source of L2 knowledge is through regular instruction to raise learners’ consciousness of pragmatic features (Nguyen, Pham, & Pham, 2012).

It follows that pragmatics is highly relevant in English language teaching in EFL classroom contexts. However, as pragmatic behaviors and norms differ extensively based on different social and cultural contexts, teaching L2 pragmatics is a highly demanding and challenging task in EFL contexts (Eslami-Rasekh & Eslami-Rasekh, 2008). A survey on the literature of interlanguage pragmatics shows that three functions or conditions should be met by pragmatics instruction in EFL classrooms; (a) to expose learners to appropriate target language input and raise their pragmatic awareness about the aspect instructed; (b) to ordain authentic opportunities to practice pragmatic knowledge; (c) to give feedback to learners during pragmatic production (Rueda, 2006). In other words, three essential conditions of the provision of sufficient and contextually appropriate input, opportunities for practice (output) and corrective feedback (metapragmatic reflection) have been considered essential for L2 pragmatic teaching and learning. Therefore, this study tries to examine how Iranian EFL instructors provide these conditions to teach pragmatics in their classroom practices.

### *1.3 Related Literature*

A number of studies (Barekat & Mehri, 2013; Dastjerdi & Rezvani, 2014; Khodareza & Lotfi, 2013; Salemi, Rabiee & Ketabi, 2015) have investigated the effects of pragmatic instruction on learners’ performance. Most of these studies focused on either the possibility of teaching certain pragmatic features or the effectiveness of specific teaching methods on certain speech acts having interventional nature. Therefore, there has been a paucity of research to see whether how EFL instructors practice the features of interlanguage pragmatics in their EFL classroom practices, especially in the context of Iran. In fact, what has not so far been addressed in the research literature is that how interlanguage pragmatic instruction is practiced in EFL settings. In an attempt to fill this gap, the present study has tried to address the issue of the practicality of L2 pragmatic instruction in Iranian EFL context at private EFL institutes and to see whether how Iranian EFL instructors expose EFL learners to input, provide opportunities for pragmatic practice (output) and provide feedback for learners. In this research, pragmatic instruction is conceptualized as four concepts of input, output, feedback and culture. This means that how these four concepts are practiced in the classroom instructions by instructors. Therefore, this study employed two theoretical models. Cognitive processing theory (Schmidt’s noticing hypothesis, 2001) and Language socialization (Duff, 2009) provide a theoretical framework for the analysis of the pragmatic instruction in Iranian EFL context in this study. The concept of how is related to the instructional approaches and techniques instructors utilize to teach interlanguage pragmatic knowledge through one or a mixture of implicit, explicit, inductive and deductive approaches and awareness-raising, communicative practice, corrective feedback and culture teaching techniques. Bearing in mind the above objective, the following question is posed to guide the study.

### *1.4 Research Objective and Research Question*

Taking into account the issues mentioned above, this study tries to investigate the instructional approaches and techniques that Iranian instructors utilize for the practice of interlanguage pragmatics at EFL private institutes. With this objective, the following question is posed to guide the study.

What are the instructional approaches and techniques that Iranian instructors utilize for practicing interlanguage pragmatics in their classroom practices?

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Research Design

This study employed a mixed methods design which is defined as an amalgamation of quantitative and qualitative methods within a single research study (Dörnyei, 2007). In other words, it is a procedure of collecting both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study (Creswell, 2008). The quantitative aspect of the study was investigated through instructors' methodology questionnaire that was administered to instructors to gather the required data. The qualitative part of the study, on the other hand, expands and elaborates on the quantitative results. With regard to the best way of expanding and exploring the quantitative results, Creswell (2008) claims that the best way to identify the additional or complementary information is asking the participants directly. This was conducted through an interview with a number of instructors in order to elaborate more on the questionnaire data in terms of the approaches and techniques they use in teaching interlanguage pragmatics.

### 2.2 Participants

#### 2.2.1 Sample Size

The target population in the present study includes Iranian EFL instructors of private EFL institutes. The data required for the study were accumulated from some private language institutes in Shiraz, a city located in the south west of Iran. It is worth mentioning that according to an expert of the Ministry of Education, the estimated population size of private language institute's instructors in all four districts of Shiraz city was about 600 instructors. The expert calculated all private language institutes of Shiraz city to be 60 institutes as a whole and the number of instructors teaching at the institutes is about 600 since each institute has approximately about 7 to 10 instructors. A sample is a portion of the population. In other words, the sample is the group of participants whom the researcher examines in an investigation and the population is the group of people whom the study is about (Dörnyei, 2007).

For the quantitative part of the study, the number of the sample size for the present study was set at 238 instructors as it is claimed for survey studies, the number of participants should be more than 100. More specifically, the estimation is based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table of determining sample size from a given population. If a population size is 600, so the sample size should be 234 with 95% confidence and 5% margin of error as the standard criteria to determine the sample size. For the qualitative part, however, semi-structured interviews were conducted with twenty instructors who filled out the questionnaires. As it is claimed by Dörnyei (2007), the sample size can be between 6 to 10 participants for interview. In addition, as Creswell (2008) suggests, a researcher should accumulate as much data as possible to reach the point that he/she considers the adequacy of the gathered data which no new data are not attained. As such, the researcher attempted to gather as much data as feasible to reach the saturation point, i.e, when no new data is observed.

#### 2.2.2 Sampling Procedure

By adopting appropriate sampling procedures to select a smaller number of people to be investigated, we can save a considerable amount of time, cost, and effort and can still come up with accurate results. To select the required sample for the quantitative part of the study, the researcher first followed a cluster random sampling, which is a form of probability sampling and after that, the second sampling procedure was simple random sampling.

### 2.3 Instruments

The questionnaire and semi-structured interview were used as the data collection methods to meet the objective of the study. The questionnaire consists of 31 items. Out of 31 items of the questionnaire, 4 items are pertinent to the instructional pragmatic approaches, 10 items to the pragmatic consciousness-raising techniques, 7 items to the pragmatic communicative practice techniques, 5 items to the pragmatic corrective feedback techniques and 5 items to the culture teaching techniques. The respondents were asked to rate their degree of practicing the interlanguage pragmatics approaches and techniques on a 5-point Likert scale from "always" to "never" (1= never; 2= rarely; 3= moderately; 4= often; 5= always). As for the present study, the purpose of the interview is to ask instructors to give more detailed and specific information on their practices of interlanguage pragmatics approaches and techniques in their language classrooms.

Since the questionnaire was developed by the researchers, the validity of the questionnaire was subjected to experts' judgments for the content validity, redundancy and clarity. The experts were 5 university lecturers who

had expertise in the area of pragmatics. To determine the construct validity of the questionnaire, that is, to determine and specify the underlying factors under the questionnaire's responses, an exploratory factor analysis was run based on the collected data. As a result of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), a five factor structure that revealed 49.94% of instructors' methodology total variance was obtained. As mentioned before, these factors were the instructional pragmatic approaches, pragmatic consciousness-raising techniques, pragmatic communicative practice techniques, pragmatic corrective feedback techniques and culture teaching techniques.

Then, to do the reliability analysis, the questionnaire was administered to a group of fifty instructors randomly selected from among the population of the study. They were then excluded from the actual study. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach alpha through Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. The questionnaire used in the present study yielded high reliability value of 0.88. For the purpose of the present study, the technique that was used to enhance the validity of the interview data was peer debriefing. Through this technique, the researcher provided the raw data of the interviews as well as her own interpretation to a colleague. The colleague reviewed the interpretations and provided some views and comments for the researcher. It should be mentioned that the colleague was a doctoral researcher who had experience in analyzing the interview data voluntarily assisted the researcher. For the reliability of the interview, the reliability was determined through inter-rater agreement. The inter-rater reliability for the coding of the interview data gained 90% agreement.

#### *2.4 Data Collection Procedure*

The data required for the present study were collected from July to September during one semester of the institutions' academic year 2015 in Iran. The actual data collection procedure for the study commenced after conducting the pilot study and ensuring of the suitability of the research design, methodology and the instruments. It is worth mentioning that prior to questionnaire collection, permission was obtained from the head of the language institutes as well as the class instructors. The questionnaires were administered to instructors during their regular class session. They were given as much time as needed to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed to thirty language institutes (19 females and 11 males language institutes) randomly. The random procedure of the questionnaire distribution is that 30 language institutes were chosen on a random basis for the collection of questionnaires among all language institutes.

Having collected instructors' questionnaires, during the last sessions of the classes, the researcher asked 20 instructors to take part in an interview. It should be mentioned that all the interviewees voluntarily participated in an interview. During the interview, the instructors were asked to expand and elaborate on the questionnaire responses. Interviews were conducted as a technique to make the questionnaire results more credible and hence get a better picture of the phenomenon under consideration. One-to-one interviews were conducted with twenty instructors who had already filled out the questionnaires.

All interviews were carried out in Persian language in order to prevent any misunderstanding by the instructors as the pragmatics area might be something new and specific for them. Then, all the interviews were translated to the English language for the analysis. Each interview took approximately 30-60 minutes. The interviews were carried out in quiet rooms in the language institutes. Before each interview session, the researcher briefly explained the purpose of the interview, the estimated amount of time the interview takes, as well as the use of a tape-recorder. The researcher also asked the participants the permission to have the interview audiotaped. All interviews were tape-recorded as an accurate reference. The purpose of recording the interview was to give the researcher the opportunity to focus on the interviews and actively listen to the interviewees. For the purpose of confidentiality, the interviewees were asked to choose a pseudonym to refer to in the report. Moreover, the respondents were assured that their responses would be kept confidential. At the end of each interview, the respondents were asked to provide any further comments or information that could shed light on the issue discussed.

#### *2.5 Data Analysis*

The questionnaire data were subjected to descriptive statistics through the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21 software. The mean and standard deviation of each item of the factors was calculated. With regard to interviews, a thematic analysis was conducted based on the analytical procedures in Braun and Clarke (2006) model. In so doing, all the interviews were transcribed and the transcripts were read and re-read many times to identify the required data. Then, in the next phase, the data identified was then put into meaningful groups or codes. In phase three, the codes were analyzed and combined to form categories. Phase four involved reviewing and refining the categories identified to develop a satisfactory thematic map to use for the study. In the next phase, the categories were defined and further refined to ensure each identified category is able to

capture and analyze the data. The final phase enabled a detailed analysis to be worked out including examples from the data itself. This way facilitated the process of linking the analysis to the research question.

### 3. Results

To answer the research question of the, a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with instructors were conducted. The questionnaire data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and the interview data were analyzed by means of thematic analysis. The first part describes the quantitative findings of the questionnaire and then the interview results as the qualitative data complements the results of the questionnaire.

#### 3.1 Quantitative Results of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire data were analyzed by means of SPSS in order to gain the descriptive statistics. The following table illustrates the results of item analysis based on the factor analysis in descending order given to 238 instructors. Five factors were identified and are described one by one below.

Table 1. Instructors' degree of the practice of instructional pragmatic approaches

Items	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
<b>4. Making use of inductive approach</b>	15.7	22.6	44.3	10.4	7	3.2	1.165
<b>2. Teaching language functions implicitly</b>	19.1	22.6	39.1	10.9	8.3	3.1	1.281
<b>3. Teaching language functions explicitly</b>	47	27.4	7.4	9.6	8.7	2.16	1.309
<b>1. Using deductive approach</b>	33	40.4	7	13.9	5.7	2.09	1.199

1: Never; 2: Rarely; 3: Moderately; 4: Often; 5: Always.

In terms of the instructional approaches, as Table 1 shows, instructors mostly use inductive approach (item 4) with the mean of 3.2 to teach interlanguage pragmatics. It means that they make use of examples first and then they teach the rules. Next to inductive approach, item 2 shows that they teach language functions implicitly. In comparison, they do not use deductive and explicit approaches so much.

Table 2. Instructors' degree of the practice of Interlanguage pragmatic awareness-raising techniques

Items	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
<b>10. Using topics and situations</b>	5.2	16.5	18.7	23.9	35.7	3.68	1.25
<b>12. Using field experience</b>	17.4	29.6	17.4	18.7	17	2.88	1.36
<b>11. Being a model of socially and culturally correct responses and behavior for my learners</b>	16.5	39.6	9.1	20	14.8	2.77	1.34
<b>13. Reading scenario and identify correct responses and behavior from learners</b>	14.8	36.5	18.7	18.3	11.7	2.76	1.25
<b>14. Using translation &amp; let students use their L1</b>	10	37.4	30	18.3	4.3	2.7	1.02
<b>7. Using form-focused instruction</b>	22.6	32.6	13.9	17.8	13	2.66	1.35
<b>6. Using typographical enhancement techniques</b>	20	34.3	16.1	21.3	8.3	2.25	1.25
<b>5. Giving explicit metapragmatic explanation</b>	22.6	31.3	22.2	17.8	6.1	2.2	1.19
<b>8. Employing videos or films</b>	64.5	27.4	5.4	2.7	0	1.7	1.12
<b>9. Using the culture puzzle, language games and classroom guest from foreign cultures</b>	66.7	25.2	5.4	2.7	0	1.5	1.20

Based on the results of factor analysis, ten items in the questionnaire, items 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 represent the awareness-raising techniques. The Table 2 starts with the items that show instructors' most practiced items and moves towards those that display the least practiced items. Starting from the top of the table, one can see that item 10 (Using topics and situations) has the highest mean (3.68) among other items, which means that instructors mostly use conversation topics and also situations to raise learners' awareness of the

speech acts. This technique implicitly directs learners' attention to the topic under discussion. In addition to this technique, instructors make use of field experience to give input to learners. It means that they either talk about their own experiences or ask learners to talk about their experiences in performing the speech acts. This item is the second item that received the highest mean of 2.88. In contrast, item 9 (Using the culture puzzle, language games and classroom guest from foreign cultures) and item 8 (Using videos) received the least means of 1.5 and 1.7 respectively. In fact, instructors do not use culture puzzle, language games and also films to expose learners to pragmatic input.

Table 3. Instructors' degree of the practice of Interlanguage pragmatics communicative practice techniques

Items	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
<b>17. Using role-plays to practice the language functions</b>	13.9	27	19.6	25.2	14.3	2.99	1.28
<b>15. Using conversation model</b>	20.9	23.5	13	23.5	19.1	2.97	1.44
<b>18. Creating situations for pair-work or group-work</b>	21.3	25.7	7.8	30.4	14.8	2.92	1.41
<b>19. Using dialog completion from the book</b>	30.4	20	10.9	17.8	20.9	2.79	1.54
<b>20. Discussing socially and culturally appropriate language and behavior</b>	32.2	27	6.1	21.3	13.5	2.57	1.46
<b>21. Asking learners to do email exchanges</b>	60.8	23.8	7.8	7.6	0	1.55	1.25
<b>16. Using computer programs</b>	66.8	17.8	7.8	7.6	0	1.34	1.48

Seven items in the questionnaire, items 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 deal with the communicative practice techniques for the production or practice of pragmatic output. As Table 3 shows, item 17 (Using role-plays to practice the language functions) has the highest mean of 2.99 among other items. In comparison, item 16 (using computer programs) and item 21 (asking learners to do email exchanges) have the least means of 1.34 and 1.55 respectively. It shows that instructors mostly make use of role-play and pair-work to practice the speech acts as opposed to doing email exchanges and using computer programs as two effective written production techniques that learners can employ to enhance their pragmatic competence.

Table 4. Instructors' degree of the practice of Interlanguage pragmatics corrective feedback techniques

Items	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
<b>22. Reformulating learners' mistakes</b>	16.1	45.7	22.2	14.3	1.7	2.4	0.978
<b>23. Repeating learner's mistake</b>	34.8	30	20.4	14.8	0	2.15	1.061
<b>24. Eliciting a correct form from learners</b>	35.7	32.2	17.8	14.3	0	2.11	1.05
<b>25. Proving learners with the feedback&amp; correct form</b>	35.2	39.6	12.2	10.4	2.6	2.06	1.062
<b>26. Providing metalinguistic information</b>	33	43.9	11.7	11.3	0	2.01	0.951

Five items in the questionnaire, items 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26 are pertinent to the corrective feedback techniques. As the Table 4 shows, item 22 (reformulating learners' mistakes) has the highest mean of 2.4 among other items. As Table 4 shows, instructors almost give the feedback implicitly by reformulating learners' mistakes. On the contrary, item 26 (providing metalinguistic information) received the least mean of 2.01. In other words, instructors give less metalinguistic information and discuss about the inappropriate expression. As a whole, the results are illustrative of this fact that instructors do not explicitly give feedback to learners by providing the metalinguistic information or discussing about the inappropriate expression or form but they use implicit techniques by reformulating learners' mistakes or repeating their errors.

Table 5. Instructors' degree of the practice of culture teaching techniques

Items	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
<b>27. Sharing cultural information</b>	46.1	37.4	12.2	3.5	0.9	2.76	0.863
<b>28. Asking learners' cultural information</b>	45.2	43	7.4	3.9	0.4	2.71	0.801
<b>29. Asking learners to do cultural research</b>	50.9	35.2	8.3	5.2	0.4	2.69	0.864
<b>30. Showing movies of other cultures</b>	54.3	31.7	8.7	4.3	0.9	1.66	0.876
<b>31. Putting pictures of other cultures</b>	57.8	30.9	4.3	5.7	1.3	1.6	0.907

The last factor identified by the factor analysis is culture teaching techniques. As can be seen in Table 5, item 27 (Sharing cultural information) has the highest mean among other items. It is illustrative that instructors share their knowledge of what they hear or read about other cultures with their learners. Item 31 (putting pictures of other cultures), in contrast, received the lowest mean of 1.3 which shows that instructors never make use of this technique to teach culture.

### 3.2 Qualitative Results of Interviews

The research question of this study was approached quantitatively earlier. The qualitative results of the interviews aim to shed more light into the quantitative findings, resulting in a better understanding of the issue. Therefore, instructors' perceptions of their instructional approaches and techniques they use for teaching interlanguage pragmatics were elicited through semi-structured interviews with twenty of them who had already filled out the questionnaires. Having analyzed the data generated from the interviews, the researcher came up with a number of categories that are also described below.

#### 3.2.1 Instructional Approaches

The first question asked was which approaches the instructors use in teaching the speech acts. Six categories were identified: inductive, implicit, explicit, deductive, no particular approach and inductive-deductive approaches. The emerged categories are explained one by one.

As mentioned earlier in the quantitative results of the instructors' pragmatic teaching methodology, instructors mostly make use of inductive approach to teach the speech acts. The qualitative analysis of the interviews shed more light into this issue. Comparing to other approaches, more respondents (7) support the argument that they use examples like examples of conversation models to teach speech acts or language functions in their classes. 6 instructors asserted that they use implicit teaching to integrate pragmatics in their classroom instruction. 2 out of 20 asserted that they use an explicit approach towards pragmatics instruction. One instructor just referred to using deductive approach in teaching language functions. Two instructors did not mention any particular approach in teaching pragmatics. They claimed that they do not focus on any special approach. They teach in a way that learners can understand the materials better by putting them in real-life situations. The two instructors believed that learners should be engaged in the real-life situations to be directed towards the issue under study.

Moreover, 2 instructors mentioned that they use both inductive and deductive approaches to teach speech acts. They supported their argument that the type of language function they teach (simple function and more complex ones) plays a crucial role in their approach to teach speech acts. As a whole, most of the instructors (65%) use inductive and implicit approaches to teach interlanguage pragmatics. In contrary, explicit and deductive approaches are used by a negligible number of instructors. This finding acknowledges the findings of the questionnaire in terms of the factor of the instructional approaches in teaching interlanguage pragmatics. The instructors were also asked in the interview what techniques they use in order to teach pragmatic features. The techniques were classified into three categories of awareness-raising, communicative practice and corrective feedback techniques. Moreover, the techniques of culture teaching were also mentioned.

#### 3.2.2 Awareness-raising Techniques

The respondents were asked what techniques they use to attract learners' attention to the input or raise their awareness of pragmatics features. In this regard, some categories were emerged including using topics and situations (topics and situation-based technique), field experience, teacher's modeling, reading scenario and identifying correct responses or behaviors from learners (Situation-based Proper Language Elicitation), using function-focused, and translation techniques.

As mentioned earlier in the quantitative analysis, the instructors mostly make use of topics and situations to give

input to learners. The qualitative analysis of the interviews shed more light into this issue. Six of the respondents (6 out of 20) stated that they use topics and situations to attract learners' attention to the language function under study. In addition to using the topics and situations, five interviewees expressed their opinion that they talk about their personal experiences or ask learners personal experiences in using the speech acts. This was labeled as field experience as a category emerged from the interview data.

Based on the instructors' statements, another category the researcher arrived at was that the instructors model the conversation or dialog activities with another learner and show them how to perform the speech acts. So, this category was labeled as teacher's modeling. Four instructors mentioned that they use this technique to increase learners' awareness of appropriate input or language to be used by them. Eliciting the correct language and behavior from learners is another category that two respondents refer to. They expressed the importance of this technique in making learners aware of paying more attention to the role of situation and context. Moreover, it helps learners to be good observers by watching how people interact in different situations and how they use the language. One instructor just mentioned that when she faces with the speech act which has other functions, she also talks about other functions of the speech act. Among the interviewees, one respondent just stated that she makes use of the translation technique to compare the speech acts in L1 and L2 to increase learners' understanding of language functions in the target language.

### 3.2.3 Communicative Practice Techniques

The respondents were also asked what techniques they use to practice the speech acts. In this regard, seven categories of role-play practice (n=6), pair-work (n=4), conversation model practice (n=3), dialog completion (n=3), social-cultural appropriate language discussion (n=3) and dialogue writing (n=1) were emerged from the data. As pointed out earlier in the quantitative results of the questionnaire, instructors use role-play technique more than other techniques to make learners produce the speech acts. The qualitative findings of the interviews support the quantitative findings as role-play is the most practiced technique by the interviewees. Six instructors stated that they make use of this technique to involve learners to practice speech acts.

Doing pair work or group work is one important category that some of the interviewees refer to. Four of the instructors expressed that they make use of pair work and sometimes group work activities to engage learners to share their ideas and information and practice language functions. Another technique that the three instructors described to be used by them to practice speech acts is dialogue practice including the conversation models of the textbooks. Using dialogue completion is another technique which some of the interviewees mentioned. Three respondents declared that they make use of this technique to develop learners' writing skill as well as to engage them to perform the language functions. Another technique that 3 of the interviewees referred to is discussing socially and culturally appropriate language and behavior. They declared that they make use of this technique to elicit learners' output. One of the instructors just mentioned that she ask learners to write dialogs for her to elicit learners' output.

### 3.2.4 Corrective Feedback Techniques

Interviewees were also required to express what technique/s they use to give feedback to learners to correct their pragmatic mistakes. In this regard, five categories emerged from the interview data. About six instructors reported that they make use of reformulation or rewording technique to give feedback to learners. Five of them stated that they use repetition technique. It means that they repeat the errors made by learners. Four instructors referred to using the elicitation technique. They argued that in the case of errors, they try to extract the correct form or rewording of the errors from learners. Three instructors expressed that they provide the correct form to learners when they make a pragmatic mistake. They were of the opinion that learners should be provided with the correct form of the inappropriate or inaccurate form so that they do not repeat it again. Two of them claimed that they provide metalinguistic information to learners. It means that they provide some comments with regard to learners' utterances which is categorized as provision of metalinguistic feedback

### 3.2.5 Culture Teaching Techniques

In addition to the techniques instructors use to teach interlanguage pragmatics particularly language functions, they were also asked about the techniques they use to teach cultural issues. In this regard, 5 categories emerged. The most mentioned category is the instructors' cultural information which they share with their learners. Eight interviewees declared that they share what they know or hear with learners to teach culture. The second category which was emerged from the interview data is regarding sharing cultural information by learners. About six respondents claimed that they use this technique to raise learners' awareness of cultural issues. Three respondents expressed that they ask learners to do research about culture. One instructor mentioned that she employs video or clips of films to expose learners to culture. The last participant declared that she makes use of

magazines to show cultural issues including etiquette, taboo and etc.

#### 4. Discussion

The objective of this study was to investigate how Iranian instructors teach interlanguage pragmatic features. In other words, it examined the instructional approaches and techniques the instructors use to teach interlanguage pragmatics. The results showed that the pragmatic features are taught mostly inductively and implicitly in Iranian EFL institutes. Contrary to this result, the findings of others (Alcon, 2005; Takahashi, 2009) support the explicit and deductive approaches which are more influential for pragmatic development than implicit and inductive teaching. One possibility is applying the explicit and deductive approach for L2 pragmatics instruction by instructors at private EFL institutes. There are some justifications in this regard.

One justification is that in order to help learners notice the target forms (pragmalinguistics) and the pertinent contextual factors (sociopragmatics), the input and metapragmatic information should be made salient to learners. This can be done through the input-based activities and teacher's explicit explanation of pragmatic rules using the explicit-deductive approach (Takimoto, 2008). Another justification claimed by Nguyen et al. (2012) is that deducing and discussing the pragmatic rules from the input or provided materials cater for an opportunity for processing the input at a deeper level by learners than attracting their attention implicitly to the input without any explanation or discussion of the rules. Thus, the explicit teaching results in more awareness of the pragmatic rules. He also added that implicit instruction may only result in inducing the attention to pragmalinguistic forms while the explicit teaching may also deduce the understanding of sociopragmatic rules which govern these forms. Based on Schmidt's (2001) noticing hypothesis, noticing occurs at the surface level, but understanding happens at a deeper level resulting in the rule learning. Therefore, based on the results of the study, we can claim that pragmatic instruction may just deal with the surface level of noticing of pragmalinguistic forms at Iranian educational system.

According to Takimoto (2008), learners should be exposed to the consciousness-raising activities to become aware of the similarities and differentials between their first language and the target language. With regard to the consciousness-raising techniques, the findings demonstrated that the instructors mostly make use of topics and situations to raise learners' awareness of speech acts. Such finding can be justified by this fact that since the speech acts are mostly presented in the topics of conversation models or included in the conversations of the textbooks, so instructors make use of topics and situations to attract learners' attention to the language functions. Another justification can be on the one hand, most of instructors unconsciously and implicitly follow the textbooks' contents, i.e. they do not have enough explicit knowledge of pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics features. One of the reasons is that there does not exist any information regarding the pragmatic features in the teacher's guide. On the other hand, language functions are presented in the topic, conversation model or as a list of phrases besides the conversation. Therefore, instructors can mostly make use of topics and situations to teach language functions. Next to using topics and situations, the second technique instructors reported to use more than other techniques is using personal or field experience. This finding is consistent with that of Tchoutezo (2010) who found out that instructors utilize personal experience to teach L2 pragmatics to learners in an ESL context.

On the other hand, the least used awareness-raising techniques by instructors were using the culture puzzle, language games and classroom guest from foreign cultures and employing videos or films. Contrary to this finding, Hufstedler (2010) found that instructors use videos to integrate pragmatics instruction in ESL classes. It is claimed that video is a source that exposes learners to authentic language samples and caters for the contextualized speech acts. Therefore, words and meanings are visualized for learners in this way and they can understand the importance of setting in showing the norms of appropriate language use (Martinez-Flor & Uso-Juan, 2010). In fact, Rose (2007, p. 283) acknowledged the utilization of scenes from movies as opportunities for learners to observe the use of pragmatics, since "in foreign language contexts, exposure to film is generally more useful than ever witnessing or participating in native speaker interaction". Moreover, video-driven prompts are proposed as useful sources to sensitize learners to the pragmatic features and assist them make their own interlanguage pragmatics. More importantly, it can also be a fruitful technique to raise learners' pragmatic consciousnesses with regard to the sociopragmatic factors affecting the use of pragmalinguistics forms appropriately (Derakhshan & Zangoei, 2014).

Giving explicit meta-pragmatic information is the third least practiced pragmatic awareness-raising technique reported by both quantitative and qualitative findings. This technique is important as it caters for the detailed information about the participants, their social status, social distance/closeness, and imposition. By exposing learners to this information, instructors can show the significance of contextual variables in employing a variety

of linguistic forms or pragmatic strategies. Moreover, the provision of meta-pragmatic information by teachers as the consciousness-raising technique can develop learners' awareness of pragmatic features in both L1 and L2 (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005; Salemi et al., 2012). According to Eslami-Rasekh (2005), pragmatic consciousness-raising activities are insufficient for learners' pragmatic development because they need to use the target language appropriately in their interactions with other community members. The instructors should also cater for the opportunities for communicative practice activities.

With regard to the third factor, i.e., pragmatic communicative practice techniques, the findings showed that instructors employ the role-play technique more than other techniques to provide an opportunity for learners to produce and practice the language functions in the classroom. This finding can be justified in terms of the fact that the role-play activities are included in the textbooks as a part allocated to producing and practicing the language functions for learners. In this regard, Trosborg (1995) pointed out that learners should be engaged in role-play interactions to raise their linguistic output. Therefore, she acknowledged the use of role-play in EFL classroom practices as a fruitful way to develop learners' communicative competence focusing on both of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic perspectives. In fact, Trosborg (1995, p. 473) states: "when engaging learners in role-playing, they are offered the opportunities of experimenting, of repairing their own utterances when negotiating the outcome of the conversation, and they engage in communication practice which is very helpful in promoting procedural knowledge."

Next to the role-play, the second most frequently practiced technique is using conversation model. It means that instructors make use of the conversation models to engage learners in practicing the speech acts. The interpretation is that since the speech acts are presented in the conversation models, therefore they are practiced as a conversation or dialogue practice. The third most frequently practiced technique is creating situations for pair-work or group-work after role-play and conversation. One reason is the fact that while speaking in pairs and groups, learners have the opportunity to exchange ideas, express their ideas and therefore learn from each other. Another reason is that it makes silent and shy learners speak in front of the class. Such finding is consistent with that of Riazi (2007) who found out that pair-work activities are preferred for practicing the speaking skill. The reasons that instructors mentioned with regard to pair-work and group-work techniques share with those found by Polley (2007) who declared that using pair-work and group-work activities provides learners with more opportunities to speak in the class. They also found out that with regard to pair-work and group-work activities, learners can learn new information from each other including vocabulary, word meaning, grammar, structure and they can increase their speaking, listening, and pronunciation skills. In this regard, Riazi (2007) claimed that pair or group working has many benefits as learners are participants who actively request for confirmation and clarification, take risks and make use of a variety of ways to express their own thoughts, that is, they can practice the output.

Contrary to the role-play, conversation practice and pair-working, using computer-mediated communication or computer programs was the least practiced technique among other techniques. This finding is in contrast with that of Hufstедler (2010) who found that instructors use computer programs to involve learners in real-life situations to produce and practice the language functions in ESL contexts. The lack of instructors' use of computer programs in Iranian language institutes can be justified by the fact that EFL institutes do not provide instructors and also learners with computers or computer programs which is the result of the lack of institutes' facilities. It can be discussed that if learners can have access to computer programs and make use of them, they can control their learning process and learn at their own speed. This individual learning may enhance learners' motivation. In addition, learners' achievement can be facilitated by one to one interaction between a learner and the computer. So, learners can have a lot of language productions with other individuals from other cultures without the fear of making errors because they can only see their mistakes. Therefore, it can contribute to a low affective filter situation or environment which makes the language learning more facilitative. More importantly, computer-mediated communication or cyberspace can create an environment for learners to be provided with more opportunities to produce the speech acts with other community members (Sabzalipor, 2013).

Next to the computer programs, the second least practiced communicative practice technique is using email exchanges as a technique for producing the speech acts by learners. It is claimed that collaborative email exchanges are among the electronic communication practices commonly used in language productions. This kind of technique can increase learners' motivation in producing the language and also improve learners' writing skills. They further emphasized that email exchanges cater for an authentic context for producing and learning the language functions by providing the opportunities for EFL learners to communicate with different individuals of higher, equal and lower status. It can also develop intercultural communication skills (Cifuentes & Shih, 2010).

A key condition or factor in the development of EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge is the provision of feedback. As a matter of fact, learners can become aware of their own output and the errors they make. Therefore, it is claimed that the incorporation of explicit feedback in the EFL classroom practices by instructors in the form of either teacher feedback or peer feedback is essential as the provision of the input. In addition to awareness-raising and communicative practice techniques, interviewees were also asked to express their degree of practice with regard to the pragmatic corrective feedback techniques. Among the techniques, reformulating learners' mistakes is the most practiced technique among other ones. It means that instructors make use of the reformulation or recast technique more than other techniques to give pragmatic feedback to learners. Such finding is in line with Lyster and Ranta (1997) who found that the recast was the most frequently used feedback technique but the least efficient one among the feedback techniques in their study. Recast, as a technique for giving negative feedback involves "the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance, minus the error" (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p. 46). It is considered as the implicit focus on form technique. In contrast, the technique item which is practiced the least is using metalinguistic feedback. It means that most of the instructors do not use this technique to give pragmatic feedback to learners. Therefore, as the results show, the instructors make use of implicit feedback techniques more than explicit ones (using recasts and repetition techniques as implicit techniques compared to giving metalinguistic information and provision of correct form as explicit techniques). It is claimed that the connection of the pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics during the metalinguistic discussions of features of the targeted speech act is reinforced by the metalinguistic feedback (Barekat & Mehri, 2013; Muthusamy & Farashaiyan, 2016).

With regard to the culture teaching, the findings showed that the instructors mostly share their cultural information with learners to teach cultural issues (instructor's sharing of cultural information). On the other hand, they never put pictures of other cultures as a technique to teach culture which is the least practiced technique among others. This finding is in contrast with Atay Kurt, Camlibel, Ersin, Kaslioglu's (2009) study who found out that teachers utilize movies of foreign cultures in their classrooms to practice the culture.

## 5. Conclusion

The present study was an attempt to investigate the issue of the practicality of interlanguage pragmatics teaching in language classrooms at private EFL institutes in Iran. More specifically, it sought the instructional approaches and techniques that instructors utilize for the instruction of interlanguage pragmatics were determined. The results showed that instructors make use of inductive and implicit approaches more than other approaches to teach interlanguage pragmatics. In addition, they mostly make use of conversation topics and also situations to give input, utilize role-play and pair-work techniques to engage learners to practice speech acts, make use of more implicit techniques such as reformulating learners' mistakes or repeating their errors to give feedback and share their knowledge of what they hear or read about other cultures with their learners to teach cultural issues.

This study has a number of limitations. The first limitation is the selection of Iranian EFL instructors. The participants were from one province in Iran. So, they may not represent all Iranian EFL instructors. Another limitation is the fact that although all participants were considered Iranian EFL instructors, they were not homogeneous in age and educational background which may have influenced the results of the current study. This study investigated the teaching methodology of interlanguage pragmatics practices at private EFL institutes. Future research can investigate the practicality of interlanguage pragmatics instruction at other settings such as university or so on. In addition, other studies can consider the demographic information of instructors as a variable and compare the results.

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