

## **Interlanguage Pragmatic Learning Strategies (IPLS) as Predictors of L2 Social Identity: A Case of Iranian Upper-Intermediate and advanced EFL Learners**

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### **Abstract**

Interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies (IPLS) as particularly tailored language learning strategies for acquiring L2 pragmatic knowledge have been recently paid paramount attention in the pragmatics literature. These strategies are, therefore, related to some other social variables which are central to pragmatic development such as L2 social identity. Because of the importance of the IPLS and the rarity of research about the relationship between IPLS and with L2 social identity as a highly pragmatic-oriented variable, the current study tried to investigate the contribution of various forms of IPLS to L2 social identity among a randomly selected sample of 125 upper-intermediate to advanced EFL learners at a state university in Iran. During the two-phased data collection procedure, first, the participants filled out Locastro's (2001) L2 social identity questionnaire, and then Malmir and Tajeddin's (2015) IPLS inventory in two subsequent sessions. Data analysis using multiple regression revealed that all types of IPLS were significant contributors to L2 social identity except for the memory IPLS. Among the other five types of IPLS, social IPLS was a significant and strong contributor to L2 social identity. Affective and compensatory IPLS were significant moderate contributors to L2 social identity; however, metacognitive and cognitive interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies were weak albeit significant predictors of Iranian EFL learners' social identity in English as an L2. The results of this study imply that L2 teachers can enhance social identity among the learners by fostering the knowledge of various forms of IPLS.

**Keywords:** L2 social identity, interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies (IPLS), investment, pragmatic competence

## 1. Introduction

Second or foreign language (L2) social identity has been defined as the learner's conception of himself or herself in the target language and how it shapes the attitudes, feelings, and social tendencies of the learner in partial or complete assimilation to the target language social norms and values. According to Wodak (2012), L2 social identity is the indispensable result of the effort to learn a target language and it will exert an undeniable influence over the learner's character, social inclinations, and future judgements and attitudes toward the L2 culture and community. This central and inevitable social identity construction in the target language has been emphasised by many scholars who have studied language and identity over the past half-century (e.g., Block, 2007, 2014; Clark, 2013; Duff, 2002; Darvin & Norton, 2015; Norton, 1997, 2000, 2010; Norton & De Costa, 2018; Van Leeuwen, 2009; Wardhaugh, 2002).

After reviewing the existing literature on the role of L2 social identity in SLA, De Costa (2016) has concluded that L2 social identity is rather a more positive concept rather than a frightening hegemonic one. He has argued that L2 social identity can broaden the learner's engagement with the target language and deepen his or her knowledge about L1 society, its particularities, strength, and weaknesses. In the same vein, Darvin and Norton (2015) pointed out that L2 social identity is an advantage rather than a disadvantage that motivates the language learner to better acquire the target language and to nurture his or her mother tongue and L1 social identity. Ellis (2008) has also asserted that L2 social identity is a contributing factor to the successful L2 acquisition by motivating the learner to involve in the acquisition of the target language and to invest more in this regard. After presenting a walk-through of the studies conducted on the role of L2 social identity in L2 acquisition in general and language skills and sub-skills

in particular, Ellis (2008) has expressed his approval of the enhancement of L2 social identity during the second or foreign language learning experience.

Because of nature, L2 social identity is exquisitely interwoven into communicative competence and how to carry out social interactions in L2 with native speakers (De Costa, 2016). Duff (2012) maintained that there is a bilateral relationship between L2 social identity and communicative competence and these two capabilities cannot be dissected. Due to the pivotal position of pragmatic competence as the working engine of communicative competence, some experts have stated that L2 social identity strongly correlates with pragmatic competence (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, 2013; Barron, 2003; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Taguchi, 2019). Kasper and Rose, (2002), for instance, held that L2 social identity is the most pragmatically-loaded concept in sociolinguistics and SLA and has argued for the necessity of further research into the relationship between the two capabilities.

On the other hand, Cohen (2005) claimed that developing pragmatic competence is the result of employing the specific learning strategies for acquiring pragmatic knowledge which he calls pragmatic language learning strategies. According to Cohen (2010), these are specifically tailored strategies for the initial learning of pragmatic knowledge, solidification of the partially learned knowledge, and using the acquired knowledge in real-world situations that are integral to inter-language development. Tajeddin and Malmir (2015) have highlighted the importance of such strategies and have called them into language pragmatic learning strategies (IPLS), asking for more research on the relationship between IPLS and L2 social identity and pragmatically-oriented construct.

Although, many empirical and correlational studies have been carried out on Iranian EFL learners' pragmatic production and comprehension of L2

speech acts and implicatures (e.g., Derakhshan & Eslami, 2015, 2020; Derakhshan & Shakki, 2020; Malmir, 2020; Mohammad Hosseinpour & Bagheri Nevisi, 2018), the relationship between personality variables such as age and gender (Tajeddin & Malmir, 2014), L2 proficiency (Derakhshan, 2019), motivation (Tajeddin & Zand-Moghadam, 2012), willingness to communicate (Mohammad Hosseinpour & Bagheri Nevisi, 2017), general language learning strategies (e.g., Malmir & Derakhshan, 2020a), intelligence (Sarani & Malmir, 2020), conversation context (Malmir & Taji, in press), and L2 identity processing styles (e.g., Malmir & Derakhshan, 2020b) on one hand and L2 pragmatic knowledge of speech acts and implicatures on the other hand, no earlier study has sought to scrutinise the contribution of various types of IPLS to L2 social identity that has many commonalities with pragmatic competence. Because of the importance of investigating this tentative relationship between pragmatic learning strategies and L2 social identity and due to the scarcity of research in this regard, the present investigation was launched to fill this gap by scrutinising the relationship between EFL learners' use of IPLS and their L2 social identity.

## 2. Literature Review

### *2.1. Interlanguage Pragmatic Learning Strategies (IPLS)*

Pragmatic learning strategies as mentioned by Cohen (2005, 2010) or interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies (IPLS) as labeled by Tajeddin and Malmir (2015) are those moment-by-moment language learning tactics that are particularly tailored for acquiring L2 pragmatic knowledge. Cohen (2010) asserted that these strategies are directly responsible for the internalisation of the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge in L2 learners' past language learning experience and are other engines for the current and future

mastery of pragmatic knowledge in its various forms. Cohen (2005) has distinguished pragmatic learning strategies from pragmatic performance strategies (PPS), defining the latter as those strategies and techniques which are used during the conversations and help L2 learners to perceive, understand, and produce their intended target speech acts based on the dynamism of the context of the interaction. According to Cohen (2005, 2010), these pragmatic performance strategies, generally known as the pragmatic strategies, include choices regarding the propitious use of the vocabulary and grammatical structures, pragmalinguistic forms, sociopragmatic norms, politeness considerations, the social distance, power relations, and the imposition load of various pragmatic packages.

Cohen is the leading researcher who has investigated the pragmatic learning strategies in a series of investigations and papers (Cohen, 2005, 2007; 2008a, 2008b, 2010; Cohen & Ishihara, 2005; Cohen & Sykes, 2013; Sykes & Cohen, 2009). For the first time, Cohen (2005) developed a classification of pragmatic learning strategies and pragmatic performance strategies based on some studies done in the Japanese and Spanish L2 settings. Cohen's (2005) categorisation of pragmatic learning strategies mainly targeted the speech acts. Later on, Cohen's (2010) expanded his first classification by amalgamating pragmatic learning and pragmatic performance strategies into a rather coherent model including three subcategories: a) strategies responsible for the initial learning of the L2 speech acts, b) strategies for the solidification of the speech act knowledge that has been previously and partially learned, and c) metacognitive pragmatic learning strategies that evaluate, plan, and monitor the choice of pragmatic strategies. Cohen's (2010) classification further mentions some other micro strategies for these three groups of broad categories. Cohen (2010) maintained that the effective utilisation of these speech-act pragmatic

learning strategies relies on some important variables encompassing individual differences, the type and difficulty of the pragmatic task, and the sociocultural context for the pragmatic encounter. According to Cohen (2010), individual differences (IDs) such as age, gender both as a biological and a social variable, intelligence, and aptitude, learning styles, and the matrix of various personality factors exert paramount influences over learning and implementing the pragmatic learning strategies. Moreover, L1-L2 congruency, sociocultural similarities, and differences between the two languages, general language proficiency, and motivation are also decisive in the use of pragmatic learning strategies (Cohen & Shively, 2007; Li, 2013).

Cohen (2010) and Cohen and sky 2013 have argued for a stronger mutual relationship between the use of pragmatic learning strategies and L2 learners' pragmatic performance and the use of pragmatic performance strategies as well. Cohen and Sykes (2013), therefore, have argued for the integration of the IPLS and PPS for the development of pragmatic competence and the improvement of pragmatic encounters during L2 instruction and real-world use of the L2. Félix-Brasdefer and Cohen (2012) reported the direct impacts of teaching various forms of the IPLS to L2 Japanese and Spanish learners on their speech-act pragmatic performance in real-world situations and online encounters. Some other studies have reported positive impacts for teaching these two group of pragmatic strategies to L2 learners through online and off-line computer programmes (e.g., Cohen & Ishihara, 2005; Ishihara, 2008; Sykes & Cohen, 2009; Youn & Bi, 2019), claiming that these strategies are unique and distinguishable from the general language learning strategies. Due to less exposure to the target L2 and the limited experience of most of the L2 learners in the target L2 community, it is less likely for L2 learners to adequately get a good command over the pragmatic learning strategies without explicit instruction. Therefore,

researchers advocated explicit instructional interventions to complement the implicit learning of these strategies that are the product of the language learning experience.

Tajeddin and Malmir (2015) has used the term 'interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies'(IPLS) for those specific language learning strategies responsible for receiving, managing, and using pragmatic knowledge again by focusing on L2 learners' speech act competence. Based on the results of an exploratory mixed methods design, they elicited L2 learners' IPLS and divided the extracted strategies into six types of memory, cognitive, metacognitive, compensatory, social, and affective strategies. Memory IPLS are responsible for restoring pragmatic knowledge in the short-term and long-term memories such as taking notes and underlining the speech acts upon initial encounter and other rehearsal strategies. Cognitive IPLS including strategies such as noticing, focusing, and attending trigger the learning of pragmatic learning while the third group, i.e. the metacognitive strategies are responsible for evaluating, organising, and planning future pragmatic development. Social IPLS aid acquiring L2 pragmatic knowledge through interaction with native or competent non-native speakers such as seeking peer feedback and developing sociocultural knowledge. Compensatory IPLS help the learners recompense for the pragmatic failures and lack of knowledge during learning or interacting such as asking the other interlocutor, teacher, or peer for help. Finally, and affective strategies will assist the learners to manage their emotions and motivate themselves during pragmatic learning and pragmatic performance. Tajeddin and Malmir (2015) reported that there were strong correlations between the use of these pragmatic learning strategies and the pragmatic knowledge of Iranian EFL learners regarding five common English speech acts of requests, apologies, refusals, complaints, and compliments and compliment responses. Derakhshan et al. (in

press) also reported that interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies (IPLS) significantly contributed to L2 speech-act knowledge.

## ***2.2. L2 Social Identity***

New developments in anthropology and sociolinguistics in the middle and late twentieth century encouraged applied linguists to adopt more realistic and social-oriented views towards language acquisition and to argue for the authentic study of SLA in its natural sociocultural context (Block, 2003, 2014; McKay, 2005; Piller, 2002). Pennycook (1990) has very pertinently expressed that applied linguistics should take the challenge to “rethink language acquisition in its social, cultural, and political contexts, taking into account gender, race, and other relations of power as well as the notion of the subject as multiple and formed within different discourses” (p. 26). Some studies revealed that learners’ failure to use the L2 communicatively usually cannot be accounted for by personality factors and motivational tendencies (McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton & De Costa, 2018; Peirce, 1995). These studies argued that some social factors such as power relations and social distance between speakers affect L2 learners’ opportunities to use and practice the target language. These studies gave birth to “social identity construct” as the various ways in which people understand themselves with others, and how they view their past and their future which directly influences their L2 communication and acquisition (Peirce, 1995).

Norton (1997) defined social identity as “the relationship between the individual and the larger social world, as mediated through institutions such as families, schools, workplaces, social services, and law courts” (p. 420). Norton claimed that social identity is a heterogeneous construct with a dynamic nature that changes over time. Norton introduced the term social identity to refer to “how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that



relationship is constructed across time and space, and how that person understands possibilities for the future” (Norton, 2000, p.5). Norton (2010) has also distinguished social identity from the two concepts of ‘cultural identity’ and ‘ethnic identity’ holding that cultural identity is the relationship between individuals and members of a community who share the same history, the same language, and the same socio-cultural norms. Ethnic identity, on the other hand, is viewed as the relationship between the individual and members of his race. Ochs (1993) has considered the social identity construct “a cover term for a range of social personae, including social statuses, roles, positions, relationships, and institutional and other relevant community identities one may attempt to claim or assign in the course of social life” (p. 288).

In contemporary theory on language learning and teaching, the social identity of the language learner addresses how language learners understand their relationship to the social world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the learner understands possibilities for the future (Norton, 2010). Norton’s social identity theory focused on the relationships between power, identity, and language learning. The identity of the language learner is theorized as multiple, a site of struggle, and subject to change. For this reason, every time language learners interact in the second language, whether in the oral or written mode, they are engaged in identity construction and negotiation (Block, 2007; Darwin & Norton, 2015; Duff, 2002; McNamaram 1997; Norton, 2013).

Emigration to another country can definitely influence an individual’s social identity. The immigrants may try to recreate a new social identity for themselves because social adjustments may not suffice to help them become active and accepted members of the L2 community (Jackson, 2008). Adapting a new L2 social identity is not a one-dimensional and straightforward process;

rather it is a complex, multifaceted and dynamic process that redefines the L2 learner's self in interaction with a plethora of other factors like race, social class, gender, sexuality, nationality, religious affiliation, political tendencies, educational status and so forth (Block, 2006).

Ellis (2008) has posed three major questions which social identity theory is supposed to answer: (1) under what conditions do language learners speak? (2) how can we encourage learners to become more communicatively competent? and (3) how can we facilitate interaction between language learners and target-language speakers? Then, he discusses three integral propositions that should be dealt with in the quest to find the answers to the abovementioned questions:

1. Social identity is multiple, contradictory, and dynamic. That is, each person possesses a number of different identities, some of which may be in a position. Identities are modified, abandoned, or added to at any time depending on circumstances.
2. L2 learners need to invest in a social identity that will create appropriate opportunities for them to learn the L2. They need to be prepared to struggle to establish such an identity.
3. L2 learners need to develop an awareness of the right to speak. This requires that they understand how the rules of speaking are socially and historically constructed to support the interests of a dominant group within society. In other words, identity construction has to be understood in relation to larger social processes. (p. 237)

Norton (2000) introduced two important concepts in his L2 social identity studies: 'ownership of L2' and "investment in a social identity". The first concept refers to the sense of possession of a special language that a person has acquired or is currently learning. An ownership sense plays a very important role in

determining the social identity of language learners (both L1 & L2). The degree of L2 ownership leads to enhanced L2 social identity and facilitates language learning. The investment means efforts and actual devotedness to learn a language and communication encounters that promote social identity in a second or foreign language.

A considerable number of studies have been conducted to explore the relationship between social identity and language acquisition (Block, 2006, 2007; Duff, 2002, 2012; He, 2004; McCarthy & Moje, 2002; McKay & Wong, 1996; Morita, 2004; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2006; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Pillar & Takahashi, 2006; Ricento, 2005). Most of these studies have reported a close connection between language learning (L1 or L2) and social identity “through conversational associations of linguistic forms with social acts and stances” (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 299).

After reviewing some important studies emphasizing the mutual relationships between social identity and L2 learning, Ellis (2008, p.338) has found three main problems with L2 social identity theory. First, the role of identity in L2 success has been exaggerated and overemphasized at the expense of the role of other important contextual factors. Second, language identity theory is more relevant in ESL contexts or EFL learners' long residence cases in the L2 community, but it doesn't support EFL contexts. Third, it only focuses on how learning opportunities are created and fails to explain how more learning opportunities result in more successful L2 acquisition.

In comparison with the range of studies focusing on the relationship between social identity and L1 and L2 learning, less research has discussed the relationship between social identity and L2 interlanguage pragmatic development. As far as the role of social identity in interlanguage pragmatics is concerned, Erving Goffman's notion of 'face' is remembered (Kasper & Rose,

2002) that distinguished self as 'character' from self as 'performer'. The face is a very important aspect of pragmatic and speech act performance. It was defined as the positive social value an individual supposes for himself or herself as perceived by other speakers in interactions.

Siegal (1996) scrutinized the pragmatic misunderstandings between Anglo-European learners acquiring Japanese in Japan in a series of studies. The researcher concluded that pragmatic failures and misunderstandings were not usually attributed to the lack of an inadequately developed linguistic competence; rather they could be related to discrepancies between the two cultures' expectations of appropriate sociopragmatic norms. Siegal reported how perceptions of various social identities could influence sociopragmatic expectations in different languages. In her study series (1994, 1995, 1996), Siegal analyzed a western learner named Mary in her office visit conversations with her Japanese academic adviser professor. Her studies indicated that roles of age and gender in L2 learners' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic strategies can be comprehended based on Norton's subjectivity theory. According to Siegal (1996), the best solution to Mary's conflicting pragmatic demands is her social self-identity which gives Mary the needed sociolinguistic and pragmatic choices. Another interesting case is Arina's (a 25 years old Hungarian girl living in Japan) formal public lecture in a Japanese classroom. Through her sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic choices, Arina successfully converged with the dominant Japanese social identity to meet standards of polite demeanor in indifferent social interactions with Japanese native speakers.

Iino (1996) investigated some embarrassing experiences by American exchange students learning Japanese in a homestay program. Different social identities regarding politeness and courtesy caused the learners to feel embarrassed and even frustrated with their own social and self-perceptions. But

soon after learners recreated a social identity akin to those of the Japanese, they had more successful communication and a better view of their sociopragmatic and linguistic abilities. Norton's (2000) study revealed that L2 learners who were living in Canada could develop their discursal competence with native speakers by successfully redefining and recreating a new L2 social identity.

Two important concepts were added to the social identity studies in the 1990s. The concept of "situated co-construction" of social identity which was proposed by Jacoby and Ochs (1995) provided the researcher with a clearer picture of the role of social identity and pragmatic development claiming that social identity is dynamically co-constructed by the joint relationship of co-participants in discourse practices in a specific sociocultural situation. The concept supported the situation-based nature of social identity recreation in the course of authentic conversations. Gumperz (1996) added that the notion of "contextualization conventions" to the research on the bilateral connection between social identity and L2 pragmatic acquisition and further pointed out the peculiar role of contextualized reconstruction of social identity based on the sociopragmatic conventions of the L2 community. Kasper and Rose (2002) reviewed some of the salient studies regarding the mutual relationship between social identity and L2 pragmatic development and concluded that "learners' development of pragmatic and, indeed, interactional competence interrelates with their own and their co-participants' situated identity constructions" (p. 301). They have emphasized that research in this regard is still in its primitive stage and further studies are needed.

The pioneering researchers in the domain of interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies have strongly claimed that these IPLS are dependent on many learner and external variables. One of the important socially-oriented learner variables is the social L2 identity which both shapes pragmatic competence and

is shaped by pragmatic competence among the L2 learners. As argued by Kasper and Rose (2002), L2 social identity is one of the most influential propellers of pragmatic knowledge internalisation among L2 learners, for it indicates L2 learners' interest in the target foreign or second language and hence triggers more investment to answer their interest and curiosity. Such acclaimed interconnectedness between pragmatic competence and L2 social identity can also be interesting in terms of the specifically tailored language learning strategies for the improvement of pragmatic knowledge. Specifically, the current study seeks to explore the following questions:

1. How well do the interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies (IPLS) contribute to Iranian EFL learners' L2 social identity? How much variance in L2 social identity scores can be explained by scores on the IPLS inventory?
2. Which types of interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies (IPLS) are significantly better predictors of Iranian EFL learners' L2 social identity?

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Participants

A total of 125 intermediate to advanced EFL learners (including 86 females and 39 males) took part in the present investigation who were selected from an initial sample of 148 learners studying either English language teaching or translation at Imam Khomeini International University (IKIU) of Qazvin. These learners whose scores on the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP) were at or above 48 out of 100 and therefore could be considered upper-intermediate and advanced EFL learners were accepted into the current study. The participants' age ranged from 18 to 25 ( $M=20.60$ ,

$SD=2.68$ ). The selected participants were seniors ( $n=42$ ), juniors ( $n=38$ ), sophomores ( $n=27$ ), and freshmen ( $n=18$ ), and their language learning experience including attendance at language institutes and the university ranged from 4 to 8 years ( $M=6.2$ ,  $SD=1.7$ ). It should be noted the participants were from various sociocultural backgrounds.

### ***3.2. Instruments***

This study employed three major data collocation instruments as follows: The Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP) as a homogeneity test, an L2 social identity questionnaire, and the interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies (IPLS) inventory.

#### ***3.2.1. The Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency***

The Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP) (2016 version) was employed to select a rather homogeneous group of learners with regard to the language proficiency at upper intermediate to advanced levels who have spent adequate years to learning English and therefore have developed L2 social identity and also to exclude learners with intermediate, low intermediate and elementary proficiency level. This test had 100 multiple-choice items 40 grammar, 40 vocabulary, and 20 reading comprehension (four passages) items. Many empirical studies (e.g., Rastegar & Homayoon, 2013; Taylor, 2013). and many testing and assessment scholars (see e.g., Hille & Cho, 2020; Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010) have argued about the high reliability and validity of this test including the publisher itself. The reliability of the MTELP was .85 in the present study.

### ***3.2.2. L2 Social Identity Questionnaire***

The original questionnaire was adapted from LoCastro (2001). However, since her study was conducted in the Japanese EFL context, some trivial modifications were made in the questionnaire to adjust it for the Iranian EFL context. The questionnaire had two parts. The first part, consisting of 20 items asked the participants to specify how important or unimportant English was for them to do some activities. Participants should indicate whether it was Unimportant, A Little Important, Important, or Very Important. In the second part, consisting of 29 items, participants were presented with some statements about the English language. They were required to say, on a 5-point Likert scale, whether they agreed or disagreed with those statements (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Undecided, Agree, Strongly Agree). This way the whole questionnaire was made up of 49 items. Having piloted and validated this questionnaire, it was administered to all 125 Iranian EFL learners.

### ***3.2.3. Interlanguage Pragmatic Learning Strategies Inventory***

This inventory was developed through an exploratory mixed-methods design by Tajeddin and Malmir (2015). First, semi-structured oral interviews were conducted with 80 upper-intermediate to advanced EFL learners who were high pragmatic achievers based on the performances on a multiple-choice discourse completion test. The participants were asked 15 major questions about the use of the strategies for learning speech acts and other forms of pragmatic knowledge. These oral interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and codified based on the principles mentioned for qualitative inquiries and content analysis. Several themes, i.e. groups of pragmatic learning strategies emerged out of the data. The researchers used the results of the qualitative interviews,



Cohen's (2005, 2010) classification for pragmatic performance strategies (PPS), and the general language learning strategies (LLS) classification suggested by Oxford (1990) to provide their own classification of the emerging into language pragmatic learning strategies (IPLS). The researchers then employed a componential factorial analysis to extract the main variables. The results of the thematic and componential factorial analysis revealed six groups of interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies: memory, cognitive, metacognitive, social, compensatory, and affective IPLS.

The authors then developed a 6-point Likert-scale inventory including 58 items based on the general themes and the micro themes based on the results of these qualitative interviews: memory (8 items), cognitive (19 items), metacognitive (8 items), social (8 items), compensatory (8 items), and affective (6 items) inter-language pragmatic learning strategies (IPLS). The students were required to choose among Strongly Disagree (0), Disagree (1), Slightly Disagree (2), Agree (3), Slightly Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5). During the oral interviews, learners mentioned that they do not use some types of strategies, accordingly, a strong disagreement was given a zero score in the developed inventory to show that learners didn't use a specific IPLS. Then, the inventory was used in a larger quantitative phase proving its reliability and validity. The Cronbach's on fire reliability index in the main study turned out to be .82. See appendix A for this inventory. Malmir (2015) also reported Cronbach alpha reliability indices of .83, .80, .79, .78, .82, .80, and .79. for the 7 sections of the inventory, respectively. This inventory needed about 40 minutes to be completed by the students.

### ***3.3. Data Collection Procedure***

The data collection procedure was completed in three phases. First, the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP) was administered to 148 EFL learners at the university level and those 125 learners who scored at or above 48 (out of 100) and could be considered as upper-intermediate to advanced learners concerning the language proficiency were accepted into this study. Second, the modified and validated version of LoCastro's (2001) L2 social identity questionnaire was filled out by the participants. Finally, Tajeddin and Malmir's (2015) interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies (IPLS) inventory was given to the participants. Of course, the administration of the MTELP was done in one session and the L2 identity questionnaire and the IPLS inventory were filled out a week later in a separate session.

### ***3.4. Data Analysis***

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed for analysing the gathered data through the administered questionnaire and inventory. Descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation, Cronbach's alpha reliability indices, skewness, kurtosis, and normality figures and plots were produced through the application of the SPSS program (version 25). Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilkes normality tests and Levene's homogeneity test were used to check the normality of the distributions of the scores obtained by the participants. After checking its prerequisite assumptions, the multiple regression was utilised to examine the contribution of six types of interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies to learners' L2 social identity.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Quantitative Results

Descriptive statistics for the performances of the study participants on the L2 identity questionnaire (LIQ) and the IPLS inventory and its subsections are given in Table 1.

**Table 1**

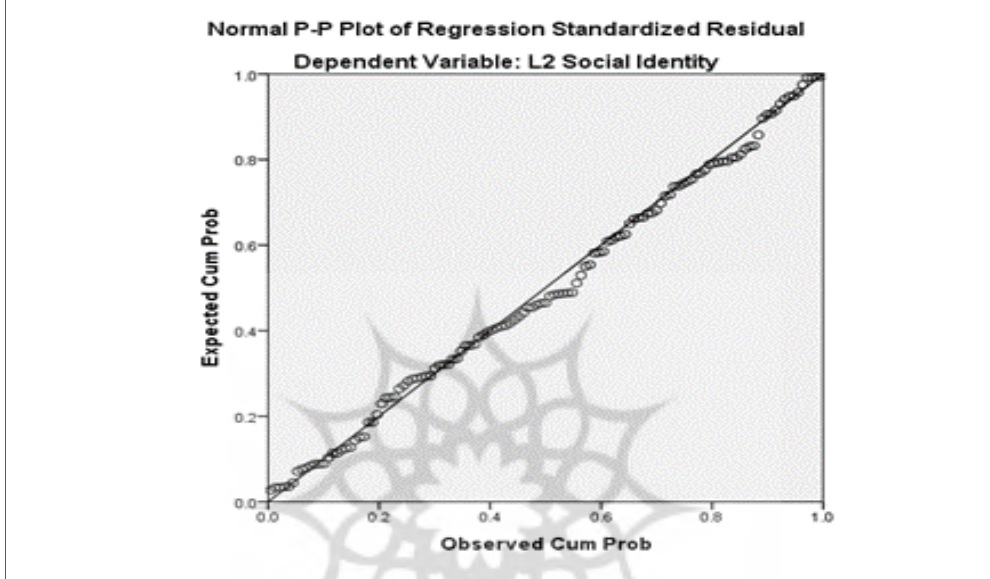
*Descriptive Statistics of Learners' Scores on LIQ and IPLS Inventory*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
L2 Identity	125	125	175	147.14	10.232
Total IPLS	125	154	223	179.24	12.923
Memory IPLS	125	16	32	24.91	3.424
Cognitive IPLS	125	46	75	61.18	6.155
Metacognitive IPLS	125	18	35	26.74	3.304
Social IPLS	125	17	34	26.86	3.634
Compensatory IPLS	125	12	31	21.65	3.785
Affective IPLS	125	12	23	17.90	2.522

Participants obtained a mean score of 147.14 with an SD of 12.92 on the L2 identity questionnaire. The mean scores on different sections of the IPLS inventory varied partly due to the unequal numbers of items in each section of this inventory.

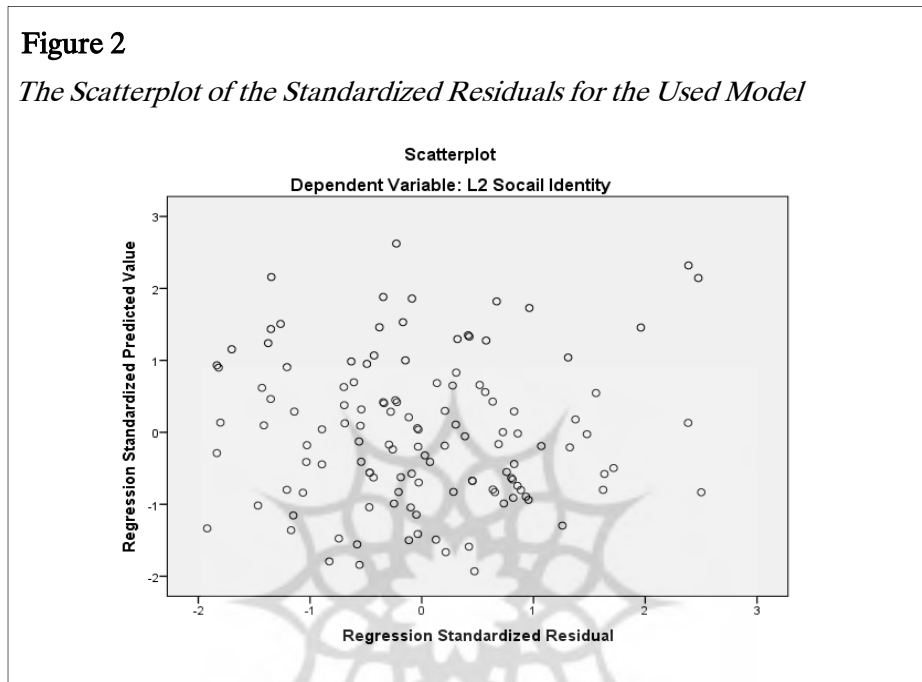
**Figure 1**

*The Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual for the Model*



Before answering the two research questions, the general requirements of the parametric tests including normality of the distributions for the two main tests and the sections of the IPLS inventory including the absence of outliers, acceptable skewness and kurtosis ratios, and homogeneity of variances were established using the normal probability plots, Normal Q-Q Plots, and Kolmogorov-Smirnov ( $n > 50$ ) tests ( $p > .05$ ).

Additionally, the skewness and kurtosis ratios were within the acceptable range of -1.96 and +1.96. Therefore, no critical violations were witnessed. Figure 1 indicates no deviation from normality. The scatterplot of standardized residuals in Figure 2 displays the distribution of the residuals of the data, further demonstrating no clear or systematic pattern that confirms the normality assumption.

**Figure 2***The Scatterplot of the Standardized Residuals for the Used Model*

Furthermore, Figure 2 showed no cases with a standardized residual of more or less than  $\pm 3.3$  which based on Field (2018) is suggestive of the absence of outliers. Moreover, the Mahalanobis distance was also examined to detect the existence of any outliers the results of which are presented in Table 2. According to Field (2018), the critical value for the Mahalanobis value is 22.46 an independent variable with 6 levels (six types of IPLS). Since the maximum Mahalanobis value in the constructed model was 17.86, the existence of outliers was rejected.

**Table 2***Residuals Statistics for the Regression Model*

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Mahal. Distance	.511	17.869	5.952	3.346	125
Cook's Distance	.000	.121	.009	.016	125

Besides, according to Field (2018), score cases with Cook's Distance values higher than 1 pose a problem; however, in this study this distance is .121, confirming the soundness of the application of multiple regression. Due to the moderate correlations between variables that range from .54 to .61, the assumption of singularity was also kept. Finally, the obtained Tolerance values for the six independent variables were between .755 and .982 that all are greater than .10; and the calculated VIF values varied from 1.018 to 1.324 that all fell below 10 established as the criterion value (as mentioned by Field, 2018), designating that multicollinearity was met.

The first research question attempted to examine whether the six types of IPLS were significant predictors of L2 social identity among Iranian EFL learners or not. Before the application of the regression analysis, its distinctive assumptions such as multicollinearity, linearity, homoscedasticity, the independence of residuals, the linear relation between each pair of variables, and homoscedasticity were checked (based on Field, 2018) and no critical deviations were seen. Accordingly, the six types of IPLS (memory, cognitive, metacognitive, social, compensatory, and affective) as the independent variables and learners' scores on the L2 social identity questionnaire as the dependent variable were fed into a multiple regression analysis utilising the Enter method. The correlations between L2 identity scores and each type of IPLS obtained from the multiple regression can be seen in Table 3:

**Table 3**

*Correlations between Different MIs and L2 Pragmatic Scores*

<i>IPLS</i>		<i>Memory</i>	<i>Cognitive</i>	<i>Metacognitive</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Compensatory</i>	<i>Affective</i>
LIQ	<b>r</b>	.168	.309**	.445**	.514**	.481**	.420**
	<b>p</b>	.062	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	<b>n</b>	125	125	125	125	125	125

As presented in the table, there were significant correlations between social ( $r=.514$ ,  $p<.05$ ), compensatory ( $r=.481$ ,  $p<.05$ ), metacognitive ( $r=.445$ ,  $p<.05$ ), affective ( $r=.4205$ ,  $p<.05$ ), cognitive ( $r=.309$ ,  $p<.05$ ) interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies and L2 social identity; however, no significant correlation was observed between learners' memory IPLS and their L2 social identity ( $r=.168$ ,  $p=.062>.05$ ). The model summary for the multiple regression (using the Enter method) are displayed in Table 4:

**Table 4***Model Summary for the Relationship between IPLS and L2 Social Identity*

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.713	.509	.484	7.350

The built model revealed an  $R$  value of 0.713 and an  $R^2$  of 0.484, clearly indicating that the model could justify for about 48.4 percent of the variation in L2 learners' scores on the L2 social identity questionnaire. The use of the ANOVA test confirmed that the produced model could significantly predict L2 learners' social identity are scores based on their scores on various sections of the IPLS [ $F(6, 118)=20.389$ ,  $p=0.000$ ].

**Table 5***ANOVA Test for the Contributions Six Types of IPLS to L2 Identity*

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Regression	6608.362	6	1101.394	20.389	.000
Residual	6374.326	118	54.020		
Total	12982.688	124			

To have an exact estimation of the contributions of various forms of interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies to EFL learners' L2 social identity standardized beta coefficients were obtained as presented in Table 6.

**Table 6**

*Coefficients for the Contribution of Six Types of IPLS to L2 Identity*

<i>Predictor Variable</i>	$\beta$	$t$	$p$
Memory IPLS	.113	1.732	.086
Cognitive IPLS	.161	2.388	.019
Metacognitive IPLS	.176	2.433	.016
Social IPLS	.325	4.655	.000
Compensatory IPLS	.202	2.721	.008
Affective IPLS	.233	3.228	.002

As shown in the table, the IPLS were all significant predictors of L2 social identity ( $p < .05$ ) except for the memory-related strategies ( $\beta = .113$ ,  $t = 1.732$ ,  $p = .086 > .05$ ). Among the other five types of IPLS, social IPLS was a significant strong predictor ( $\beta = .325$ ,  $t = 4.655$ ,  $p < .05$ ) of L2 social identity. Affective ( $\beta = .233$ ,  $t = 3.228$ ,  $p = .002 < .05$ ) and compensatory ( $\beta = .202$ ,  $t = 2.721$ ,  $p = .008 < .05$ ) IPLS were significant moderate contributors to L2 social identity; however, metacognitive ( $\beta = .176$ ,  $t = 2.433$ ,  $p = .016 > .05$ ) and cognitive ( $\beta = .116$ ,  $t = 2.388$ ,  $p = .019 < .05$ ) interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies were weak albeit significant predictors of Iranian EFL learners' social identity in English as an L2.

## 5. Discussion

This study revealed some important findings. First, regarding the contribution of the six types of IPLS to L2 learners' social identity, social strategies were the strongest significant but predictor. Second, affective and



compensatory IPLS were moderate predictors of the L2 social identity. Third, cognitive and metacognitive IPLS turned out to be significant but weak predictors; however, memory IPLS did not significantly contribute to L2 social identity among Iranian EFL learners.

Social IPLS due to their nature can contribute to investment in the target language that brings about more affiliation and interest in the target language among the learners. As Kayi-Aydar (2019) argued more social and psychological investment in the target language enhances L2 social identity among the language learners. The use of social IPLS can encourage learners to better develop pragmatic knowledge concerning common speech acts (Li, 2013) and also invest more in the L2 social identity which exerts a direct influence on their L2 learning in general and acquiring higher social identities, in particular (Norton, 2007).

As far as the contribution of compensatory and affective IPLS is concerned, it can be argued that these two types of interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies by nature ask for more techniques to recompense the shortcomings during the conversations by L2 learners including asking other learners, asking native speakers, and searching any available source of information that can help during conversation failures. Accordingly, compensatory strategies hinge on the learner's character to show more willingness and empathy towards the target language, what we call it L2 identity in the existing literature. Affective strategies also demand higher motivation, higher empathy, and better attitudes toward the learner himself and to all the target language at hand. Affective strategies, therefore, contribute to the development of the L2 learner's identity in the target language by giving a boost to his morale and emotions. All these peculiar characteristics have been mentioned by the existing literature (e.g., Norton & Toohey, 2011; Tremmel &

De Costa, 2011) to help L2 learners' self-reliance, self-acceptance, and self-esteem in learning and using an L2 that directly and indirectly enhances the learners L2 social identity.

The weaker contributions and of metacognitive and cognitive interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies to L2 social identity in comparison with social, affective, and compensatory strategies can be accounted for by the less direct role that the metacognitive and cognitive IPLS play in the construction of L2 social identity. In fact, metacognitive and cognitive strategies are involved in any kind of learning, second language learning being no exception; however, their influence on such a complex sociocultural variable called L2 social identity cannot be directly justified and the current study can only argue that these two types of IPLS might have indirectly influenced the development of L2 social identity; nonetheless, this tentative claim could not be substantiated by other studies in the existing literature. In the same vein, memory IPLS by their definition have less social load both in L1 and L2 (Ellis, 2008) though they are responsible for matching the information in the working memory in the short term memory and then restoring them in the long term memory. However, based on the definitions provided by Cohen (2010) and Tajeddin and Malmir (2015), memory strategies have more psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic features and are not directly conducive to social identity construction no matter it is in the first or the target language.

The role of social IPLS in the development of L2 social identity is supported by the general positive role assumed for general learning strategies in the construction of L2 social identity (Norton, 1997, 2000; Ricento, 2005; Block, 2006; Pillar & Takahashi, 2006). These studies have reported a close relationship between the use of social interaction and other socially-oriented activities to L2 acquisition and social identity notions such as 'language

ownership' and 'investment' (Norton, 2000). Siegal's studies (1994, 1995, 1996) showed the integral impact of using social interaction strategies to L2 social identity and pragmatic development of western learners of Japanese. She concluded that learners' sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic strategies can be better understood according to Norton's (2010) subjectivity theory.

Iino (1996) found that developing a social identity akin to those of Japanese native speakers could solve many of the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic failures of western learners of Japanese which is achieved through the mastery of particular strategies for knowing pragmatic knowledge. Such claims have also been asserted by Norton (2000) regarding the mutual relationship between success in L2 pragmatic acquisition and the degree of L2 social identity recreation. Social identity developed during second or foreign language learning has been claimed to exert a significant influence on more native-like development of ILP competence (Jacoby & Ochs, 1995; LoCastro, 2001; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Norton, 2013).

It can be argued that enhanced L2 social identity develops a sense of ownership towards the L2 and encourages more social investment in learning and using it which indirectly promotes pragmatic knowledge and vice versa. The effective role of interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies in L2 social identity development and the quality and quantity of this social self-conceptualisation is powerfully supported by well-defined and established theories and models such as Norton' (2000) *subjectivity theory*, Jacoby and Ochs' (1995) *situated co-construction of social identity*, and *contextualization conventions perspective* by Gumperz (1996). It should be pointed out that developing an L2 social identity is a natural consequence of active engagement with another language and such social identity usually doesn't act as a threat against the learner's previously established L1 social identity.

Norton's (2000) subjectivity theory supports the findings of this study, suggesting that the L2 learners' social identity provides the learner with his needed sociolinguistic and pragmatic choices and results in the use of more specific learning strategies for internalizing pragmatic knowledge. Jacoby and Ochs' (1995) concept of situated co-construction of social identity also confirms the observed results of the current study argues that there is a bilateral and mutually constructive relationship between social identity and strategies for developing pragmatic competence. From this vantage point, L2 social identity is dynamically co-constructed by the closely joint relationship of co-participants and all involved interactants in different discourse practices and specific socio-cultural settings that supports the acquisition of more pragmatic learning strategies (Norton & De Costa, 2018). The concept of contextualization conventions offered by Gumperz (1996) also reinforces the crucial part of L2 social identity in ILP development maintaining that sociopragmatic convention of L2 community shape the contextualized recreation of social identity and vice versa. It seems that such a broad view towards social identity theory and putting it into the larger sociocultural theory may extend our knowledge about developmental and internal mechanisms of L2 interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies (Norton & Early, 2011).

Although the relationship between interlanguage pragmatic learning strategies and L2 social identity has not been previously investigated through empirical studies; however, the contribution of IPLS to other types of L2 knowledge such as pragmatic competence has been examined in very few studies. For instance, the findings of the current study are also in line with Derakhshan et al. (in press) who investigated the relationship between IPLS and L2 learners' speech act knowledge, reporting that all the six types of IPLS were significant predictors of EFL learners' pragmatic competence; nonetheless, the social and

cognitive IPLS were moderate contributors. The other four types of IPLS, however, were weak predictors of L2 speech-act pragmatic knowledge.

## 6. Conclusions and Implications

The present correlational investigation came to some important conclusions. The first conclusion suggested that social pragmatic learning strategies can predict learners' L2 social identity tendencies stronger than other types of IPLS. Affective and compensatory IPLS were moderate while cognitive and metacognitive IPLS were weak contributors to L2 social identity; nonetheless, memory IPLS could not significantly contribute to L2 social identity among Iranian EFL learners. The findings of the current study have some pedagogical implications for EFL teachers, EFL learners, and SLA researchers in the field of L2 identity. Language teachers, for example, can help L2 learners develop a sense of ownership towards the target language which motivates more use of IPLS and enhance the learners' L2 development and vice versa. While many theories have treated L2 social identity as a complex, dynamic, co-constructed notion, the current study considered it as a static variable and scrutinized its role in the use of IPLS. Therefore, further research can be carried out to gain insightful information into the role of L2 social identity in the development of various components of L2 and its relationship with the use of the IPLS. Moreover, longitudinal studies can be carried out to illuminate the developmental patterns and learning tendencies that have resulted in strong, effective L2 social identity. As Ellis (2008) has asserted, L2 social identity is more relevant when the learner has a rather long residence in the L2 community; thus, robust and innovative comparative studies could be planned to reconsider this issue through better and more comprehensive instruments.

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## Appendix A

### Interlanguage Pragmatic Learning Strategies (IPLS) Inventory

#### Part I–Memory IPLS

1. I highlight or underline instances of different speech acts and their special words and grammar in conversation books.
2. I take notes about the form, meaning, or the use of different speech acts.
3. I think of relationships between already acquired knowledge about English speech acts and new pragmatic information about them.
4. I remember English speech acts by making a mental picture of a situation/ conversation in which they are used.
5. I review the identified speech acts and the sentences, conversations, and extra information previously written for different situations.
6. I use different forms of a special speech act and write them in two to four line short conversations to remember them more easily.
7. I use special flashcards for remembering speech acts and their different linguistic forms.
8. I memorize English speech act patterns by their vocal repetition.

#### Part II–Cognitive IPLS

1. I notice how native or non-native English speakers use different speech acts.
2. I notice how the age and gender of speakers affect their speech act performance and I try to learn these age and gender-related aspects.
3. I notice the fixed conversational patterns, routines, and collocations that are regularly used by native English speakers to express different speech acts.
4. I notice native speakers' nonverbal behaviour (e. g. facial expressions, body posture, and gestures) in the use of speech acts in English conversations through movies and TV programs or pictures in the textbooks.
5. I pay attention to how power relations, job positions, and social ranks of speakers affect the use of English speech acts.
6. I pay attention to the formality of words (slang, colloquial, informal, formal words) and grammatical structures in the use of English speech act based on the sociocultural and

contextual factors.

7. I notice the tone of native speakers' voices when they are using speech acts.
8. I notice and learn the linguistic and social politeness devices used by native speakers of English in the use of different speech acts.
9. I try to understand speakers' intentions and implied meanings through the words and grammatical structures used for expressing different speech acts and the contextual factors in the situation while listening to or studying English conversations.
10. I learn English speech acts by myself through implicit and peripheral learning using textbooks and instructional materials.
11. I notice and then try to learn important speech acts that are needed for different situations.
12. I practice the use of different speech acts alone or with my classmates through co-constructed conversations or role-plays.
13. I try to use different needed speech acts in conversations with those who know English.
14. I notice and acquire the turn-taking patterns for different speech acts in English interactions.
15. I visit the websites with instructional materials on English speech acts.
16. I ask native speakers and competent friends or classmates to give information about speech acts.
17. I notice and write out the sociocultural similarities and differences between Persian and English speech acts.
18. I practice the conversational gambits for the related speech acts with other learners.
19. I learn English speech acts through direct instruction from the teachers.

### **Part III–Metacognitive IPLS**

1. I notice mistakes in the proper use of English speech acts.
2. I look for opportunities to learn, practice, and use English speech acts as much as possible.
3. I notice the knowledge gaps regarding pragmatic features and speech acts.
4. I find out how to be a better learner in the acquisition and use of English speech acts and pragmatic aspects.
5. I organize the learning of English speech acts.

6. I assess and evaluate my progress in learning different speech acts and their related pragmatic knowledge.
7. I try to predict kinds of speech acts or their functions that are needed and I review pragmatic knowledge in those regards before participation in English conversations.
8. I audio/videotape my English conversations to observe my strengths and weaknesses regarding the used speech acts.

#### **Part IV-Social IPLS**

1. I follow the politeness aspects of speech acts while using them in conversations with native or non-native speakers of English.
2. I pay attention to the gender and social class of interlocutors and try to use the most appropriate forms of the involved speech acts.
3. I use English speech acts appropriately by involvement in situations such as face-to-face conversations, telephone conversations, chat rooms, social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and so on.
4. I take part in free discussion sessions with more competent learners and try to use knowledge of speech acts.
5. I learn the sociocultural aspect of English speech acts.
6. I practice the use of speech acts with other learners.
7. I ask pragmatically competent speakers of English for feedback on the appropriateness of used speech acts in my L2 interactions.
8. I respect the different cultural perceptions of accepted behaviour in the use of speech acts in English conversations.

#### **Part V-Compensation IPLS**

1. I ask for help or find another way to use speech acts properly or to express my intended meaning if I fail to do so in conversations with native or non-native speakers of English.
2. I explain in simple language when I don't know to express my intentions through the speech acts.
3. I translate from Persian in the case I don't know how to use and a needed English speech act.
4. I refer to instructional and conversational books, dictionaries, language softwares,

websites written in either Persian or English or native speakers when I don't understand speech acts and their appropriate and polite use in English.

5. I refer to the teacher when I don't understand speech acts and their appropriate and polite use in English.
6. I refer to the other interlocutor in the conversation when I don't understand speech acts and their appropriate and polite use in English.
7. I refer to the native speakers when I don't understand speech acts and their appropriate and polite use in English.
8. I avoid talking when I cannot use the needed speech act properly.
9. I prefer to change my intended meaning when I cannot express it through the appropriate speech act.

#### **Part VI-Affective IPLS**

1. I feel capable to learn English pragmatic features and speech acts.
2. I feel still motivated to learn English or to engage in conversations despite pragmatic and speech act failures.
3. I try to be calm in the case of pragmatic mistakes, failures, or misunderstandings.
4. I encourage myself to use the needed speech acts in English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.
5. I notice my embarrassment when I misuse or misunderstand pragmatic features and speech acts.
6. I enjoy and reward myself or treat for successful conversations in English involving the appropriate use of speech acts.