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Research Paper

Instructed Second Language English Pragmatics in the Iranian Context

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Abstract

The present study aimed to review the instruction of the L2 speech acts in English pragmatics in the Iranian context during the last two decades from 2000 to 2020. To this end, upon the completion of the study search, the retrieved articles were selected and analyzed based on the research domain. The results of our synthesis from 54 studies carried out on the instruction of the speech act not only reveal that pragmatics is amenable to instruction but also unfold that the most frequently instructed speech act is the speech act of request which has been conducted in 29 studies, while the least instructed speech act is invitation, used in only one study. Moreover, analyzing the data collection methods documented that Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Test (MDCT) is the most predominant method utilized in 36 papers during the last decades in English pragmatic instruction. With respect to the treatment types, it is illuminated that the most recurrent treatment type is explicit, implicit vs. control, followed by explicit vs. implicit, although other treatment

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types have been embarked on. As a final point, it is worth noting that 53 of the conducted studies utilized the quantitative method in their data analyses, whereas only one study implemented the qualitative method. The paper concludes with some avenues for further research.

***Keywords**:* Pragmatics, Instruction, Speech Acts, Systematic Review

The American philosopher Charles W. Morris (1901-79) introduced pragmatics as one of the three constituents of semiotics, dating back to the early 19th century. Distinctly, Morris (1938) conceptualized pragmatics as "the study of the relation of signs to interpreters" (p. 6). Since its commencement, pragmatics has announced its place as the most fertile ground for research. It has its theoretical underpinnings in language philosophy and came to existence as a result of speculations put forth by philosophers such as Austin (1962), Grice (1975), and Searle (1976). Subsequent definitions of linguistic pragmatics incline to embark upon some other terminologies and are often more circumstantial.

> Pragmatics is the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction, and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication. (Crystal, 1985, p. 240)

Crystal (1985) pinpointed that actual language use plays a salient role in pragmatics research, and the process of coding and decoding by the utterances is accentuated. Another definition proposed by Mey (2001) mentioned that "Pragmatics studies the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society" (p. 6). In a similar line of inquiry, Mey (2001) situated pragmatics within the context of language use.

Corroborating the importance of pragmatics, Taguchi (2019) reiterated that learning sociocultural conventions and norms of language is a vital part of becoming a competent speaker in the second language (L2). She stressed that learning another language does not involve merely learning grammar and vocabulary of that language, and there is a need to acquire the pragmatic knowledge in order to have e better communication. Pragmatic competence, which is a prerequisite for meaningful discourses, has been developed over time, and it is considered as an interminable multi-layered and multi-dimensional concept in which numerous skills and knowledge such as linguistic and sociocultural knowledge, interactional abilities, and agency are involved (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell, 1995; Uso´-Juan & Martı´nez-Flor, 2008).

Leech (1983) accentuated that pragmatic competence entails two specific domains, including sociopragmatics (the contextual features of pragmatics) and pragmalinguistics (the linguistics structure of pragmatics), which can be considered as two subcategories of pragmatics. Elaborated by Brown and Levinson (1987), sociopragmatics is pertinent to the social consequences of what you do, when, and to whom, and it focuses on the social distance, power, and communicative action. On the other hand, pragmalinguistics is perceived as the ability to utilize the conventions of forms and means (Thomas, 1983).

Considering pragmatics as a pivotal component of language, researchers started to investigate its constituents in different contexts, (Birjandi & Derakhshan, 2014; Cohen, 2008; Derakhshan, 2014; Derakhshan & Arabmofrad, 2018; Derakhshan & Eslami Rasekh, 2015; Derakhshan, Malmir, & Greenier, in press; Jeon & Kaya, 2006; Kasper & Rose, 1999, 2002; Malmir & Dearkhshan, 2020, in press; Sonnenburg-Winkler, Eslami, & Derakhshan, in press). One of the most popular aspects of pragmatic

research is devoted to instruction. Since second language learning is a process in which we learn a language other than the first language, and it is different from bilingualism and multilingualism because it should happen after the first language has been learned, it has been at the heart of research during the last decades (Gass, 2013). Pica (1983) highlighted that instructed second language learning affects not only production but also the performance of the learners.

Ellis (2005) believed that successful Instructed Language Learning (ILL) needs extra second language input to provide opportunities for producing output. Noticing the individual differences and increasing the learners' proficiency through instruction and input are also other vital factors. Nassaji (2016) believes that one of the subcategories of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is instructed second language acquisition (ISLA) that focuses on the scientific process of gathering knowledge about L2 learning. Considering the goal of L2 instruction, which is to improve communicative competence and enhance the ability of the learners to use L2 for communicative purposes, ISLA and instructed second language learning (ISLL) are of high importance. ISLA and ISLL are concerned with not only language meanings, but also language forms, and directly or indirectly, they are involved in language teaching (Loewen & Sato, 2017). ISLL is not achieved unless awareness and noticing happen while teaching. The results obtained from a variety of studies accentuate that awareness is a prerequisite of learning (Schmidt, 1993, 2001), and noticing the input which makes it intake is considered to be a vital element and corroborates the advantage of instruction. It is undeniable that instruction has become much more popular as compared to the past and the most compelling reason for holding this view is that instruction is an effective deterrent to misunderstanding the pragmatic features (Rose, 2005; Taguchi, 2011).

The same process is for second language learning, so enhancing input and instruction in pragmatics may help better comprehension and production. Pragmatics has got its prominence in fledgling scientific research during the last decades as a branch of linguistics in teaching (Birjandi & Derakhsham, 2014; Cohen, 2020; Culpeper, Mackey, & Taguchi, 2018; Derakhshan, 2015; Derakhshan & Eslami, 2015, 2020; Derakhshan, Shakki, & Sarani, in press; Jeon & Kaya, 2006; Taguchi & Kim, 2018). It is also concerned with the usage of language in the society (Arabmofrad, Derakhshan, & Atefinejad, 2019; Malmir & Derakhshan, 2020), but the profusion of studies in pragmatics reveals that there are some aspects such as speech acts, conversational implicatures, routines, humor, prosody, etc. which are the cornerstones in this field, among which speech acts are the most predominant aspects of research, that is why the speech acts are only utilized in this review (Cohen, 2017; Derakhshan, 2019a, 2019b; Derakhshan & Arabmofrad, 2018; Derakhshan & Shakki, 2020a; Eslami & Mardani, 2010).

In a nutshell, teaching pragmatics and particularly the speech acts are justified on the ground that language learners may encounter difficulties to produce and comprehend language due to cross-cultural mismatches regarding the linguistic and social appropriacy of target language norms, and negative pragmatic transfer from their L1 to L2, to just name a few. More importantly, among those studies which have investigated the English pragmatic instruction (Derakhshan & Eslami, 2015, 2020; Derakhshan & Shakki, 2020a; Jeon & Kaya, 2006; Kasper & Rose, 1999, 2002; Martı´nez-Flor & Alcón-Soler, 2005; Rose & Kasper, 2001; Takahashi, 2010a, 2010b; Taguchi, 2011, 2015, 2019), none of them thoroughly synthesized the empirical studies in the Iranian context to find the general patterns in English pragmatic instruction.

The main impetus for conducting this systematic review paper is to put into practice what Kasper and Rose (2002) brought to the limelight in their seminal work. Reviewing the influence of the communicative competence models on pragmatic studies, they contemplate on three pivotal questions that make the cornerstones of the present paper. One of the questions was to find out whether the targeted pragmatic feature is teachable at all; the other one was whether instruction in the targeted feature is more effective than non-instruction, and the last one was whether various teaching methods and approaches are distinctively effective. They concluded that the features are teachable, instruction makes a difference, and literature still needs more empirical studies to be done to ascertain which teaching methods and approaches are differentially conducive to learning. Taking these questions into account, after passing two decades of research on English pragmatic instruction, the present paper aimed to recapitulate the findings of the studies in the EFL context of Iran to unravel the trends.

Review of the Literature

Pragmatics is one of the significant branches of philosophy and linguistics, dealing with the nature of language use and addressing how individuals comprehend and produce communicative acts. It has contributed to the literature in the realm of language learning and teaching over this century. it gradually attempts to establish its own specific status in the world academic arena as well. Despite different definitions for pragmatics in addition to slur and thick terms, it is commonly considered as the branch of linguistics and semiotics research that investigates the factors in which setting and situation contribute to the meaning, and it examines language from its users' point of view to attain their communicative intentions regarding their constraints and capabilities. It is, therefore, hypothesized that conducting a

systematic review in English pragmatic instruction holds a great promise to bring real consequences for the teachers and to be able to raise researchers' ideas for future studies.

Conceptualization of Pragmatics

Communicative Competence. The construct of communicative competence has been accentuated by different scholars. Inspired by Hymes's (1971, 1972) postulations criticizing Chomsky's (1957) linguistic competence, Canale and Swain (1980) proposed the most influential model of communicative competence, which includes discoursal knowledge, strategic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and grammatical competence. Bachman (1990) was the first person who directly subsumed the pragmatic component under the category of 'pragmatic competence'. He elaborated on the differences between pragmatic competence and organizational competence. Moreover, Bachman (1990) conceptualized two more constitutes of communicative language ability, psychomotor, and strategic skills. Strategic skill allows learners to draw on the items included within language competence. On the other side, psychomotor skill deals with the productive or receptive mode in which competence is conducted through a special type of channel.

Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) posited a thorough, communicative competence model compromising actional, linguistic, strategic, sociocultural, and discoursal competence. The discoursal competence works as a core and entails to choose and order the utterances to make a written or spoken text. Linguistics competence involves the basic items of communicating, like phonological system, lexical resources, morphological inflection, and also sentence patterns. Sociocultural competence encompasses the expression of appropriate messages by the users in cultural and social contexts. Actional

competence deals with the understanding of the intention behind performing the speech acts.

Last but not least, these four components are controlled by the last one, strategic competence, which entails the knowledge of communication strategies and how to use them (Uso´-Juan & Martı´nez-Flor, 2008). This framework subsumes pragmatic competence under the rubric of actional competence, consisting of knowledge of speech act sets and language functions, and the productive and receptive skills within discourse competence; they also pinpoint the interplay among these components together with the linguistic, sociocultural, and strategic competencies.

Speech Acts. Teaching pragmatics has gained significant attention during the last decades. By the same token, Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP), motivated by SLA theories and pragmatics, is concerned with how second language learners acquire how to do things with words over time in their own country lies. It deals with how learners (adult or children) learn to find out and produce communicative actions in a second language, and as an interdisciplinary field, it has been studied from various methodological, theoretical, and analytical perspectives. Since the incorporation of language functions in the notional-functional syllabus in the 1970s (Wilkins, 1972), speech acts have attracted considerable attention in SLA in general and ILP in particular. A myriad of studies has scrutinized speech acts and the effect of various interventional treatments on the production and *fewer* on the comprehension of different speech acts within the domain of second language acquisition. Levinson (1983) pinpointed this issue "of all the issues in the general theory of language usage, *speech act theory* has probably aroused the widest interest" (p. 226). Speech acts have attained considerable attention in SLA in general and request, apology, refusal, suggestion, invitation, and compliment in particular.

Review of the Studies in English Pragmatic Instruction

ISLA happens as a result of teaching a second language, and L2 instruction generally occurs in the classroom although it may include some self-studies such as using the target language in everyday life. Guiding and facilitating the process of learning by teachers and materials can be defined as L2 instruction. There have been some arguments among theorists whether instruction may help learners to understand explicit rules about the L2, and some practitioners believe that instruction may have little impact on people's ability to use the target language for communicative aims. Not crucially, the rate of L2 acquisition can be increased by assisting learners to achieve high proficiency in the target language, and it shows that instruction is valuable.

Based on early studies in the 1980s and 1990s, there is a consensus that pragmatics is teachable, and instructed groups often outperformed the non-instructed groups (Kasper & Rose, 1999). Motivated by Schmidt's (1993) noticing hypothesis, the comparison between implicit and explicit teaching method has been accentuated, and the role of consciousness and attention reveals that explicit explanation is more beneficial than an implicit condition which enhances learning through input exposure and consciousness-raising. According to Taguchi's (2015) state-of-the-art paper on the teachability of English pragmatic instruction, "effective teaching is closely related to the depth of processing" (Taguchi, 2019, p.7) and instruction is indeed a prerequisite for each and every field of study.

Over the last 30 years, second language pragmatics has been considered in a large body of research, and major growth in (quasi-) experiments on L2 pragmatics instruction (Taguchi, 2015) has been observed. A series of review papers (Jeon & Kaya, 2006; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Norris & Ortega, 2000; Taguchi, 2011, 2015) has been published regarding the pragmatics instruction across various treatments, learner factors, outcome measures, and target

features by which researchers agreed that instruction is more effective than just exposure to input. Besides the benefits, there are influential variations, inconclusive findings, and the presence of moderators affecting the process of instruction, which need to be investigated. After Kasper's plenary talk in 1997 at the TESOL Convention, inspiring the investigation into the effectiveness of instruction, a couple of studies have been done on instructed pragmatics (Jeon & Kaya, 2006; Kasper & Rose, 1999; Rose, 2005; Takahashi, 2010b; Taguchi, 2011, 2015, 2019).

Norris and Ortega (2000) employed 49 samples published between 1980 and 1998 to work on focus on form and focus on forms studies. They found that the focused L2 instruction and explicit groups are more effective than the other counterpart. It was a meta-analysis that was done on the effectiveness of L2 instruction. Alternatively, the first meta-analysis on L2 pragmatics instruction was conducted about fourteen years ago by Jeon and Kaya (2006), using 13 studies published before 2003. The findings illustrated that direct instruction provides a significant difference over no instruction counterpart. Furthermore, the results on the relationship between different instructional methods, length of instruction, and outcome measures, and the effectiveness of L2 pragmatics instruction were not convincing. Inconclusive findings and a limited number of studies that were analyzed are the drawbacks of this meta-analysis.

By the same token, Takahashi (2010b) reviewed 49 studies on pragmatic intervention, and the superiority of explicit over implicit was highlighted. However, evidence indicated that implicit teaching may have its own benefits, and some aspects of that may be equally effective. Takahashi also suggested that higher proficiency levels and motivation are the prerequisites in promoting pragmatic teachability. Another review article carried out by Taguchi (2015) on the development of instructed pragmatics over the past

three decades used 58 instructional intervention studies. She claimed that explicit teaching is typically more effective than the implicit one, though implicit teaching can be conducive if it involves activities on noticing and processing. Her findings are not eloquent enough since it just considers the explicit vs. implicit studies so that further investigation was proposed to assess to take into account variations and stability in the findings.

Similarly, Badjadi (2016) utilized 24 studies to find the differentiated effects of second language pragmatics instructional tasks related to production and comprehension outcome measures. The findings revealed that, in conformity with instructional tasks, production and comprehension mean effect sizes change from small to large. Alternatively, Plonsky and Zhuang (2019) utilized a total of 50 studies to answer the following questions: a. What is the overall effectiveness of L2 pragmatics instruction? b. What is the relationship between the effectiveness of pragmatics instruction and the following types of moderating variables: treatment and target features, contextual and learner factors, research and reporting practices, and outcome measures?

Their findings support the previous reviews and meta-analyses in which the importance of explicit was accentuated over the implicit one. They found that pragmatics instruction provided opportunities for practice, was more effective than instruction without opportunities for practice, and longer instruction is better than the other one in general. They also stated that free outcome measures such as role-plays relinquished larger effects than more controlled outcome measures like multiple-choice questions. As they mentioned, their study lacked different research designs and analyses, which they proposed to be done one day by future studies.

Regarding the effects of instruction and corrective feedback on L2 pragmatics, Yousefi and Nassaji (2019) worked on 39 published studies from

2006 to 2016. Their results indicated that computer-assisted instruction generated larger effects in comparison with face-to-face instruction. The above-mentioned reviews and meta-analyses have covered various factors in teaching pragmatics and whether it is effective or not. Due to the limited number of studies they have selected, ignoring an Iranian context, and the scant attention devoted to a thorough systematic review in this field, the present study is going to shed light on the effectiveness of Iranian instruction in L2 pragmatics. It also aims to reveal the most frequently used speech acts, data collection methods, treatment types, and research designs in the last two decades in pragmatic instruction studies in Iran.

Research Questions

Given the conceptual fit between pragmatics and instruction, this study seeks to scrutinize the state of instruction through the lens of pragmatics. This review tries to answer the following research questions:

1. Is teaching pragmatics (speech acts) effective?
2. What are the frequent speech acts used for English pragmatic instruction in the Iranian EFL context?
3. What are the most frequent data collection methods utilized in English pragmatic instruction in the Iranian EFL context?
4. What are the most common and frequent treatment types for the instruction of English pragmatics in Iran?
5. Which research designs are at the center of attention and frequent while conducting a study in English pragmatic instruction?

To address the research questions, specific terms such as “pragmatics”, instruction, speech acts, and Iran were used. Different databases, including Google Scholar, Magiran, CIVILICA, LLBA, ERIC, and ProQuest were

utilized to find related studies from various journals, book chapters, and conferences from 2000 to 2020.

Method

This review article included any study reporting data that can be synthesized to address any or all of the research questions, encompassing the following criteria. The first criterion pertains to the teaching pragmatics in an Iranian context. The second benchmark deals with teaching at least one of the speech acts in its procedure. Thirdly, the study had to be empirical, whether in English or Persian, and had to be available in a written scholarly format through a journal, conference proceeding, and an academic book chapter. Based on these inclusion criteria, the studies which focused on implicature, routines, prosody, etc. were excluded from this study. Besides, papers that had no intervention and instruction were also removed from the corpus.

Data

Analyzing the Iranian English pragmatics instruction studies during the last two decades, 54 studies that have met the criteria were used in the present review. Within these 54 studies, there were some papers whose focus was on more than one speech act, so these combinations of speech acts were also included in the present review. These appear in Table 1.

Table 1.

The Number of the Speech Acts in a Paper

Study	Request	Apology	Refusal	Suggestion	Complaint	Compliment	Thanking	Invitation
Derakhshan & Shakki (2020a)			✓	✓				
Fakher & Panahifar (2020)	✓		✓					
Derakhshan & Arabmofrad (2018)		✓	✓					
Fakher, Jafarigohar, Vahdany, & Soleimani, (2016)		✓	✓					
Derakhshan & Eslami (2015)		✓	✓					
Birjandi & Derakhshan (2014)		✓	✓	✓				
Nemati & Arabmofrad (2014)		✓	✓					
Tajeddin & Bagherkazemi (2014)		✓	✓					
Mirzaei & Esmaili (2013)		✓	✓		✓			
Kia & Salehi (2013)						✓	✓	
Gholamnia & Aghaeib (2012)		✓						✓

Study	Request	Apology	Refusal	Suggestion	Complaint	Compliment	Thanking	Invitation
Tajeddin, Kehsvarz, & Zand Moghadam, (2012)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Birjandi & Pezeshki (2012)	✓	✓						
Salehi (2011)	✓	✓						
Khatib & Ahmadi Safa, (2011)	✓	✓				✓		
Eslami & Eslami (2008)	✓	✓						
Eslami, Eslami, & Fatahi (2004)	✓	✓						

Request Studies

Table 2. outlines request studies.

Table 2.

Request Studies

Study	Design	Participants	Treatment type	Outcome measure(s)	Results
Fakher & Panahifar (2020)	Pre-post/ control	119 (19-32)	Peers' collaborative dialogue (PCD) group and teacher's scaffolding (TS) group	WDCT	The superiority of the peers' collaborative dialogue (PCD) group over the teacher's scaffolding (TS) group. Asymmetrical pairs were also found to outperform their symmetrical counterparts.
Derakhshan & Arabmofrad (2018)	Pre-post/ control	69 (17-27)	Metapragmatic, form-search, interactive	MDCT	Metapragmatic outperformed the other groups.

Study	**Design**	**Participants**	**Treatment type**	**Outcome measure(s)**	**Results**
			translation vs. control		
Anani Sarab & Alikhani (2016b)	Pre-post/ control	62 (20-34)	Explicit vs. control	MDCT & WDCT	Parallel performance in groups.
Sadeqi & Ghaemi (2016)	Pre-post	45 (19-28)	Explicit vs. control	MDCT & WDCT	The explicit group performed significantly better than the implicit group.
Fakher, Jafarigohar, Vahdany & Soleimani (2016)	Pre-post	125 (18-32)	Interaction vs. control	ODCT	The interaction group performed significantly better than the control group.
Derakhshan & Eslami (2015)	Pre-post	60 (17-26)	Discussion, roleplay & interactive translation	MDCT	Discussion outperformed the other groups.
Eslami, Mizaei & Dini (2015)	Pre-post	74 (early and late 20s, late 30s)	Explicit vs. implicit	MDCT	The explicit group performed implicit.
Rajabi, Azizifar & Gowhary (2015a)	Pre-post/ control	73 (17-20)	Explicit vs. control	MDCT	Explicit outperformed control.
Birjandi & Derakhshan (2014)	Pre-post/ control	78 (16-26)	Video-prompts vs. control.	MDCT	Metapragmatic group outperformed the other treatment groups. Form-search group was better than role-play and control groups.
Nemati & Arabmofrad (2014)	Pre-post/ control	90 (18-20)	Individual input-based, collaborative input-based, individual out-put-based & collaborative output-based	MDCT & WDCT	Collaborative groups outperformed individual counterparts.

Study	**Design**	**Participants**	**Treatment type**	**Outcome measure(s)**	**Results**
Rezvani, Eslami & Dastjerdi (2014)	Pre-post	60 (18-25)	Explicit vs. implicit	MDCT	Explicit and implicit groups were both significant.
Masouleh, Arjmandi & Vahdany (2014)	Pre-post	60 (Above 18)	Explicit vs. control	DCT	Explicit outperformed control.
Ahmadi & Ghafar Samar (2014)	Pre-post	60 (21-26)	Dictogloss vs. consciousness raising	Writing Production Test	Dictogloss was more effective.
Tajeddin & Bagherkazemi (2014)	Pre-post	54 (19-31)	Individual and collaborative output	WDCT	Both significant, collaborative had greater efficacy.
Tajeddin & Hosseinpur (2014a)	Pre-post	140 (19-28)	Deductive, inductive, and L1-based consciousness-raising instructional tasks	WDCT	Deductive was netter than L1 and inductive.
Tajeddin & Hosseinpur (2014b)	Qual	140 (19-28)	Instructional group	WDCT	Effective
Mirzaei & Esmaeili (2013)	Pre-post	270 (18-25)	Explicit vs. control	MDCT & WDCT	Explicit outperformed control, and level of proficiency does not have any special effect in instruction.
Barkat & Mehri (2013)	Pre-post/ control	45 (16-20)	Consciousness-raising (C-R) and consciousness-raising with feedback (C-R F)	WDCT	C-R F group was better than C-R group.
Gholamnia & Aghaeib (2012)	Pre-post	30 (14-19)	Explicit vs. implicit	WDCT	Explicit outperformed implicit.

Study	**Design**	**Participants**	**Treatment type**	**Outcome measure(s)**	**Results**
Khodareza & Lotfi (2012)	Pre-post	60 (NA)	Interpretation & use	MDCT	Higher progress in the interpretation but no significant change in the use of the speech acts.
Tajeddin, Keshavarz & Zand-Moghadam (2012)	Pre-post/ control	75 (18-46)	Pragmatic focus in all phases of a task, scaffolding in task completion & control	MDCT	The development of pragmatic self-assessment and metapragmatic awareness and can be better for pragmatic focus and feedback.
Birjandi & Pezeshki (2012)	Pre-post/ control	64 (18-24)	Self assessment vs. conventional method	WDCT	Self assessment group outperformed the control group.
Salehi (2011)	Pre-post/ control	40 (NA)	Explicit vs. Implicit	DCT	Instruction works, but the explicit group was not necessarily superior to the implicit group.
Khatib & Ahmadi Safa (2011)	Pre-post/ control	85 (Freshmen)	Explicit vs. Implicit	MDCT & WDCT	Expert peers' ZPD-wise explicit and implicit Performed better than others.
Ahmadi, Ghafar Samar & Yazdanimoghadam (2011)	Pre-post	147 (21-26)	Dictogloss vs. consciousness raising	WDCT	Both groups were effective.
Malaz, Rabiee & Ketabi (2011)	Pre-post	30 (NA)	Form-comparison condition & form-search condition	DCT	Form-comparison condition was better than form-search condition.
Dastjerdi & Rezvani (2010)	Pre-post/ control	90 (19-27)	Explicit vs. implicit	MDCT	Explicit outperformed implicit.

Study	Design	Participants	Treatment type	Outcome measure(s)	Results
Eslami & Eslami (2008)	Pre-post	52 (23-30)	Pragmatic focus vs. control	MDCT	Experimental group's performances on the posttests of both 'awareness' and 'production' tests were significantly high.
Eslami, Eslami & Fatahi (2004)	Pre-post/ control	66 (23-25)	Explicit vs. control	MDCT	Students' speech act comprehension was significant.

NA: Not Applicable

Among 54 studies, 29 employed the speech act of request in their analyses. As can be seen in Table 2, all of the studies are in line with the first research question that the instruction of speech acts provides effective results for the learners. The number of the participants was at least 30 in Gholamnia and Aghaeib (2012), and Malaz, Rabiee, and Ketabi (2011), and at most 147 in Ahmadi, Ghafar Samar, and Yazdanimoghadam (2011). Analyzing the request studies, it was found that about 15 studies used pretest and posttest design, 13 studies implemented pretest, posttest, and control design, and one study (Tajeddin & Hosseinpur, 2014b) conducted a qualitative design in their analyses. Furthermore, Table 2 illustrates that six studies have had explicit vs. implicit treatment types, while nine papers have focused on explicit vs. control. Taking the data collection method into account, MDCT was used mostly in 11 studies, Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT) in eight studies, both (MDCT& WDCT) in five studies, and the rest five papers had other data gathering methodology such as Discourse Completion Test (DCT), and Oral Discourse Completion Test (ODCT).

Apology Studies

Table 3. summarizes apology studies.

Table 3

Apology Studies

Study	Design	Participants	Treatment type	Outcome measure(s)	Results
Derakhshan & Shakki (2020a)	Pre-post/ control	49 (18-33)	Explicit vs. implicit	MDCT	Explicit outperformed implicit.
Fakher & Panahifar (2020)	Pre-post/ control	119 (19-32)	Peers' collaborative dialogue (PCD) group and teacher's scaffolding (TS) group	WDCT	The superiority of the peers' collaborative dialogue (PCD) group over the teacher's scaffolding (TS) group. Asymmetrical pairs were also found to outperform their symmetrical counterparts.
Bagherkazemi (2018)	Pre-post	51 (19-28)	Collaborative vs. control	WDCT	Collaborative outperformed control.
Derakhshan & Arabmofrad (2018)	Pre-post/ control	69 (17-27)	Metapragmatic, form-search, interactive translation vs. control	MDCT	Metapragmatic outperformed the other groups.
Anani Sarab & Alikhani (2016a)	Pre-post	62 (20-34)	Sequential method vs. control	MDCT & WDCT	Sequential method outperformed control.
Fakher, Jafarigohar, Vahdany & Soleimani (2016)	Pre-post	125 (18-32)	Interaction vs. control	ODCT	The interaction group performed better than the control group.

Study	**Design**	**Participants**	**Treatment type**	**Outcome measure(s)**	**Results**
Rajabi, Azizifar & Gowhary (2015b)	Pre-post/ control	73 (17-20)	Explicit vs. control	MDCT	Explicit outperformed control.
Derakhshan & Eslami (2015)	Pre-post	60 (17-26)	Discussion, roleplay & interactive translation	MDCT	Discussion outperformed the other groups.
Birjandi & Derakhshan (2014)	Pre-post/ control	78 (16-26)	Video-prompts vs. control.	MDCT	Metapragmatic group was better than others.
Simin, Eslami, Eslami & Ketabi (2014)	Pre-post	60 (20-27)	Explicit vs. Implicit	WDCT	E-communication group (using emails) outperformed the other group.
Nemati & Arabmofrad (2014)	Pre-post/ control	90 (18-20)	Individual input and output-based, collaborative input and output-based	MDCT & WDCT	Collaborative groups outperformed individual counterparts.
Tajeddin & Bagherkazemi (2014)	Pre-post	54 (19-31)	Individual and collaborative output	WDCT	Both significant, collaborative had greater efficacy.
Zangoei, Nourmohammadi, & Derakhshan (2014a)	Pre-post	64 (17-27)	Video prompts group vs. control	MDCT	Listening prompts group outperformed control group.
Zangoei, Nourmohammadi, & Derakhshan (2014b)	Pre-post	64 (17-27)	Listening prompts group vs. control	MDCT	Listening prompts group outperformed control group.
Farrokhi & Atashin (2013)	Pre-post/ control	60 (19-25)	Explicit vs. implicit	MDCT	Explicit outperformed implicit.
Khodareza & Lotfi (2013)	Pre-post	60 (NA)	Explicit (use) vs. Explicit (interpretation)	MDCT	Advanced learners showed

Study	**Design**	**Participants**	**Treatment type**	**Outcome measure(s)**	**Results**
					progress in both use and interpretation.
Mirzaei & Esmaeili (2013)	Pre-post	270 (18-25)	Explicit vs. control	MDCT & WDCT	Explicit outperformed control, and level of proficiency does not have any special effect in instruction.
Bagheri & Hamrang (2013)	Pre-post	60 (Above 18)	Explicit (use) vs. Explicit (interpretation)	DCT	Progress in both use and interpretation group.
Kargar, Sadighi & Ahmadi (2012)	Pre-post/ control	150 (20-27)	Explicit vs. implicit (collaborative translation vs. structured input)	DCT	Collaborative translation had better performance than the other group.
Birjandi & Pezeshki (2012)	Pre-post/ control	64 (18-24)	Self assessment vs. conventional method	WDCT	Self assessment group outperformed the control group.
Tajeddin, Keshavarz & Zand-Moghadam (2012)	Pre-post/ control	75 (18-46)	Pragmatic focus in all phases of a task, scaffolding in task completion & control	MDCT	The development of pragmatic self-assessment and metapragmatic awareness and can be better for pragmatic focus and feedback.
Khatib & Ahmadi Safa (2011)	Pre-post/ control	85 (Freshmen)	Explicit vs. Implicit	MDCT & WDCT	Expert peers' ZPD-wise explicit and implicit scaffolding were significant.
Salehi (2011)	Pre-post/ control	40 (NA)	Explicit vs. Implicit	DCT	Effective but explicit was not better than implicit.
Eslami & Mardani (2010)	Pre-post	60 (21-24)	Explicit vs. Implicit	Diagnostic Assessment	Explicit outperformed implicit.

Study	**Design**	**Participants**	**Treatment type**	**Outcome measure(s)**	**Results**
Eslami & Eslami (2008)	Pre-post	52 (23-30)	Pragmatic focus vs. control	MDCT	Experimental group's performances on the posttests of both 'awareness' and 'production' tests were significantly high.
Eslami, Eslami & Fatahi (2004)	Pre-post/ control	66 (23-25)	Explicit vs. control	MDCT	Significant comprehension on the part of the speech acts.

NA: Not Applicable

Of 26 studies focusing on the speech act of apology, Salehi (2011) had the fewest number of participants (40), and Mirzaei and Esmaili (2013) used the highest number of people (270) in their analyses. Answering the first question, the results illustrate that instruction is much more beneficial than non-instrucution. Furthermore, 13 studies used pretest, posttest, and control design, whereas the rest 13 papers applied just pretest and posttest to investigate this speech act. Regarding the treatment, seven studies conducted an explicit vs. implicit teaching methodology, whereas 10 studies performed an explicit vs. control. The rest were nine papers which have drawn on other treatments. Table 3 delineates that the data collection methodology in implementing the speech act of apology for MDCT, WDCT, both MDCT and WDCT, and others were 12, five, four, and five studies, respectively.

Refusal Studies

Table 4. summarizes refusal studies.

Table 4.

Refusal Studies

Study	Design	Participants	Treatment type	Outcome measure(s)	Results
Derakhshan & Shakki (2020a)	Pre-post/ control	49 (18-33)	Explicit vs. implicit	MDCT	Explicit outperformed implicit.
Derakhshan & Arabmofrad (2018)	Pre-post/ control	69 (17-27)	Metapragmatic, form-search, interactive translation vs. control	MDCT	Metapragmatic outperformed the other groups.
Gharibeh, Mirzaee & Yaghoubi-Notash (2016)	Pre-post/ control	104 (19-22)	Explicit vs. control	MDCT	Explicit outperformed control.
Birjandi & Derakhshan (2014)	Pre-post/ control	78 (16-26)	Video-prompts vs. control.	MDCT	Metapragmatic group ouwas better than other groups.
Tajeddin & Bagherkazemi (2014)	Pre-post	54 (19-31)	Individual and collaborative output	WDCT	Both significant, collaborative had greater efficacy.
Khodareza & Lotfi (2012)	Pre-post	60 (NA)	Interpretation & use	MDCT	Higher progress in the interpretation but no significant change in the use of the speech acts.
Tajeddin, Keshavarz & Zand-Moghadam (2012)	Pre-post/ control	75 (18-46)	Pragmatic focus in all phases of a task, scaffolding in task completion & control	MDCT	Metapragmatic awareness and pragmatic self-assessment have some influences on pragmatic focus and

Study	Design	Participants	Treatment type	Outcome measure(s)	Results
					feedback.
Birjandi & Pezeshki (2012)	Pre-post/ control	64 (18-24)	Self assessment vs. conventional method	WDCT	Self assessment group outperformed the control group.
Farrokhi & Atashain (2012)	Pre-post/ control	60 (19-25)	Explicit vs. implicit	MDCT	Explicit outperformed implicit.
Farahian, Rezaee & Gholami (2012)	Pre-post/ control	64 (19-25)	Explicit vs. control	WDCT	Explicit outperformed control.
Alavi & Dini (2008)	Pre-post/ control	54 (20-27)	Explicit, implicit vs. control	MDCT	Explicit outperformed implicit.

NA: Not Applicable

Analyzing the speech act of refusal, it was found that Derakhshan and Shakki (2020a) had the fewest number of participants (*n*=49), whereas Gharibeh, Mirzaee, and Yaghoubi Notash's (2016) study had the highest number of participants (*n*=104). The results demonstrate that instruction improves pragmatic learning, and refusal is better learnt through interventions and interactions. It was interesting that out of 11 studies conducted on refusal, nine studies performed pretest, posttest, and control design, while two papers applied pretest and posttest design. A thorough review of the refusal studies revealed that three studies utilized explicit vs. implicit treatments, three studies had explicit vs. control, and five studies employed other types of treatment. For data gathering procedure, eight papers exerted MDCT, and three studies implemented WDCT. Table 4 provides a comprehensive list of the papers.

Suggestion Studies

A summary of suggestion studies appear in Table 5.

Table 5.

Suggestion Studies

Study	Design	Participants	Treatment type	Outcome measure(s)	Results
Chalak & Abbasi (2015)	Pre-post	60 (NA)	Explicit, implicit & combination	MDCT	Combination group outperformed E & I.
Ghavamnia, Eslami Rasekh & Datjerdi (2014)	Pre-post/ control	110 (19-23)	Metapragmatic explanation, form-comparison, typographically enhanced input, input flooding & meaning-focused	MDCT	the form-comparison and the metapragmatic explanation groups performed better.
Tajeddin, Keshavarz & Zand-Moghadam (2012)	Pre-post/ control	75 (18-46)	Pragmatic focus in all phases of a task, scaffolding in task completion & control	MDCT	Having better pragmatic focus and feedback by metapragmatic awareness and pragmatic self-assessment.
Salemi, Rabiee, & Ketabi (2012)	Pre-post/ control	100 (17-25)	Explicit instruction and explicit feedbacks, explicit instruction and implicit feedbacks, implicit-explicit, implicit-implicit instruction and feedbacks.	OPT	Explicit outperformed the rest.

NA: Not Applicable

Drawing on the speech act of suggestion, as shown in Table 5, Chalak and Abbasi (2015) carried out a study with the minimum number of participants (60), and Ghavamnia, Eslami Rasekh, and Dastjerdi (2014) used the maximum number of people (110). Considering the effectiveness of instruction in teaching pragmatics, the results of the studies dealing with English speech act of suggestion reveal that instruction is significantly more profitable for learners than the non-instruction condition. Out of 54 studies, four papers concentrated on suggestion in which three studies were based on the pretest, posttest, and control design, and just one used pretest and posttest design for the analyses. It is worth mentioning that no study utilized explicit vs. control treatment, and there were two explicit vs. implicit, and two other types of treatments. WDCT was not among the data collection methods in conducting the speech act of suggestion, and there were three studies which employed MDCT, and one other data gathering method.

Complaint Studies

A summary of complaint studies appear in Table 6.

Table 6.

Complaint Studies

Study	Design	Participants	Treatment type	Outcome measure(s)	Results
Mirzaei & Esmaeili (2013)	Pre-post	270 (18-25)	Explicit vs. control	MDCT & WDCT	Explicit outperformed control, and level of proficiency does not have any special effect in instruction.
Birjandi & Pezeshki (2012)	Pre-post/ control	64 (18-24)	Self assessment vs. conventiona l method	WDCT	Self assessment group outperformed the control group.
Khatib & Ahmadi Safa (2011)	Pre-post/ control	85 (Freshmen)	Explicit vs. Implicit	MDCT & WDCT	Expert peers' ZPD-wise explicit and implicit performed better

Study	Design	Participants	Treatment type	Outcome measure(s)	Results
Eslami, Eslami & Fatahi (2004)	Pre-post/ control	66 (23-25)	Explicit vs. control	MDCT	Significant comprehension.

As can be seen in Table 6, four studies out of 54 were based on the speech act of complaint within which Birjandi and Pezeshki (2012) employed 64 participants as the fewest number, and Mirzaei and Esmaili (2013) utilized the most ones (270) for their data analyses. In line with the findings of the effect of instruction on speech acts, the findings of complaint speech act also reveal that it is also effectively amenable to insruction. Scrutinizing the complaint speech act, three studies implemented pretest, posttest, and control design, whereas the only study by Mirzaei and Esmaili (2013) which used the pretest and posttest analysis. Considering the treatment, it was illustrated that one study used explicit vs. implicit, two studies had explicit vs. control, and the remaining one applied other types. One study drew on MDCT, one on WDCT, and the rest two papers implemented both MDCT and WDCT to collect data.

Compliment Studies

Compliment studies are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7.
Compliment Studies

Study	Design	Participants	Treatment type	Outcome measure(s)	Results
Hassaskhah & Ebrahimi (2015)	Pre-post	32 (16-35)	Explicit teacher explanation and implicit foreign film watching	WDCT	Both significant

Study	Design	Participants	Treatment type	Outcome measure(s)	Results
Kia & Salehi (2013)	Pre-post	46 (24-33)	Explicit vs. implicit	MDCT & WDCT	Explicit outperformed implicit.
Sadeghi & Foutooh (2012)	Pre-post/ control	30 (25-30)	Explicit vs. control	MDCT	Explicit outperformed control.
Tajeddin, Keshavarz & Zand-Moghadam (2012)	Pre-post/ control	75 (18-46)	Pragmatic focus in all phases of a task, scaffolding in task completion & control	MDCT	Better metapragmatic awareness and pragmatic self-assessment, better pragmatic focus and feedback.

Results from the subgroup analyses indicate that out of 54, four studies were conducted on the instruction of the speech act of compliment. Sadeghi and Foutooh's (2012) study had the fewest number of participants (n= 30), while Tajeddin et al.'s (2012) study had the highest number of participants (n=75). As the results of the studies indicate that, both explicit interventions and implicit teaching methods are considered as effective ways of teaching pragmatics, hence the importance of instruction. Half of the papers used pretest, posttest, and control, while the other two studies conducted pretest and posttest design only. Taking into account the treatment, two papers implemented explicit vs. implicit, one explicit vs. control, and one used other types of instruction. Examining the data collection methods, it was shown that MDCT was used in two papers, WDCT in one, and both in one remaining study.

Thanking Studies

Thanking studies are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8.
Thanking Studies

Study	Design	Participants	Treatment type	Outcome measure(s)	Results
Ghaedrahmat, Alavi Nia, & Biria (2016)	Pre-post/ control	30 (20-29)	Explicit vs. control	MDCT	Explicit outperformed control.
Kia & Salehi (2013)	Pre-post	46 (24-33)	Explicit vs. implicit	MDCT & WDCT	Explicit outperformed implicit.

As it detailed in Table 8, there were only two papers among 54 studies which used the speech act of thanking. Both studies done on the speech act of thanking elucidate not only the importance of instruction in teaching pragmatics but also the supremacy of the explicit instruction over the non-instruction. One of them adopted pretest, posttest, and control and also explicit vs. control treatment type, while the other utilized pretest and posttest by implementing explicit vs. implicit teaching. MDCT and both MDCT and WDCT were the data collection procedures for each of the studies.

Invitation Studies

Invitation studies appear in Table 9.

Table 9.
Invitation Studies

Study	Design	Participants	Treatment type	Outcome measure(s)	Results
Gholamnia & Aghaeib (2012)	Pre-post	30 (14-19)	Explicit vs. implicit	WDCT	Explicit outperformed implicit.

Gholamnia and Aghaeib (2012) is the only study in which the speech act of invitation was taught. They also found that instruction boosts learning of

speech act of invitation, and the explicit group which received the instruction show significantly better upshots than the non-instrcution group. The results of their studies accentuate what Kasper and Rose (2002) pointed to as the usefulness of instruction. They used a pretest and posttest design and WDCT for conducting their research. They utilized explicit vs. implicit treatment on 30 participants to analyze the speech act of invitation.

Discussion

Frequent Speech Acts in the Iranian Context Studies

Figure 1. below shows the number of speech acts conducted on the teachability of speech acts in pragmatics studies in the Iranian context during the last two decades. Overall, it can be seen that out of 54 studies conducted on English pragmatics instruction in the Iranian EFL context, 29 studies were devoted to request, and it is the most prevailing speech act in the Iranian context. Twenty-six studies were conducted using apology as the second frequent speech act, followed by the speech act of refusal, which is used in 11 studies in Iran. Subsequently, the speech acts of suggestion, complaint, and compliment were taught in four studies. Finally, thanking by two and invitation by one are the least frequent speech acts used in the Iranian context English pragmatic instruction.

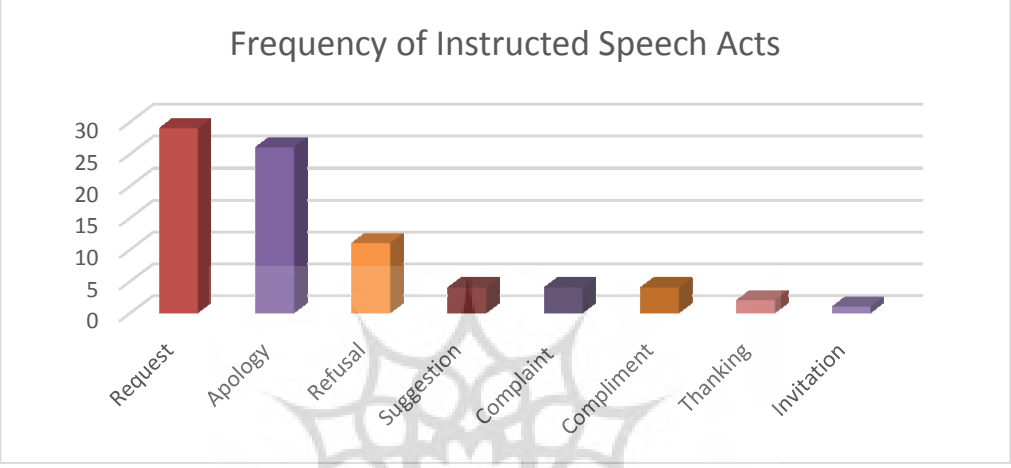

Figure 1. Frequency of the Speech acts in Iranian English Pragmatic Instruction

Frequent Data Collection Methods in Iranian Studies

There are various types of data collection methods in pragmatics, such as DCT, MDCT, and WDCT. The pie chart gives information about the data collection procedures in studies conducted in English pragmatic instruction in Iran. As can be seen, there has been a notable increase in MDCT by 36 studies, closely followed by WDCT by 19, and compared with 13 studies utilized both MDCT and WDCT for gathering the data. There are also 11 more studies such as Eslami and Mardani (2010), and Salemi et al. (2012) in which other data collection methods (DCT, & diagnostic assessment) were used.

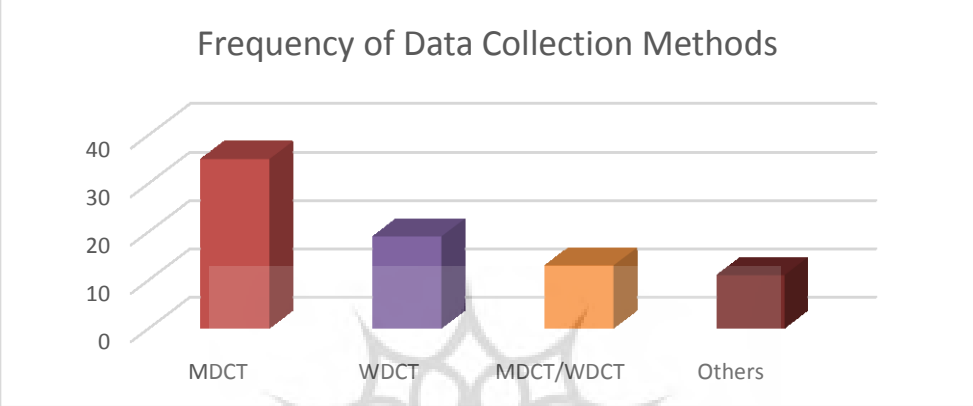

Figure 2. Frequnecy of Data Collection Methods

Treatment Types in Using Speech acts

Studies in English pragmatic instruction used different treatment types while teaching pragmatics to non-native learners. Scrutinizing the published papers until 2020 shows that 25 studies used explicit vs. implicit and control group, whereas the 24 studies utilized only explicit vs. control types. Among the 30 remaining studies, a variety of treatments was used, and they had their own special interventions based on the nature of their studies (Ahmadi & Ghafar Samar, 2014 (Dictogloss vs. consciousness-raising); Derakhshan & Arabmofrad, 2018 (form-search, interactive translation vs. control); Tajeddin & Bagherkazemi, 2014 (Dictogloss vs. consciousness-raising); Derakhshan & Eslami, 2015 (discussion, roleplay & interactive translation) etc.).

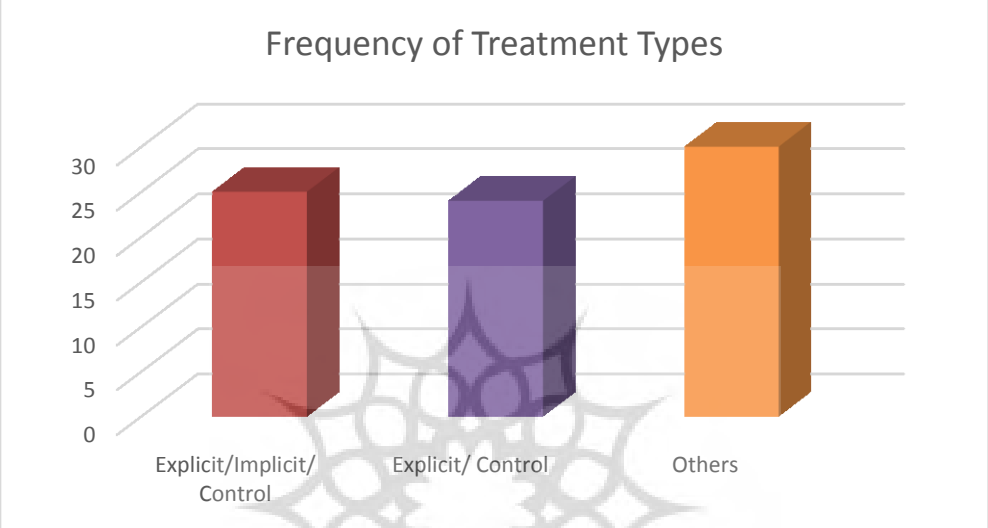

Figure 3. Frequency of Treatment Types

Research Designs in Using Speech acts

Of 54 studies investigated English pragmatic instruction in the Iranian context, 42 studies used pretest, posttest vs. control as a trendy design to elicit their results. Moreover, 36 studies utilized pretest vs. posttest design, and surprisingly, just one study, by Tajeddin and Hosseinpur (2014), selected coding to illustrate the findings. The proportion of the qualitative studies suffers a severe decline during the last decades in Iranian studies focusing on instructed pragmatics.

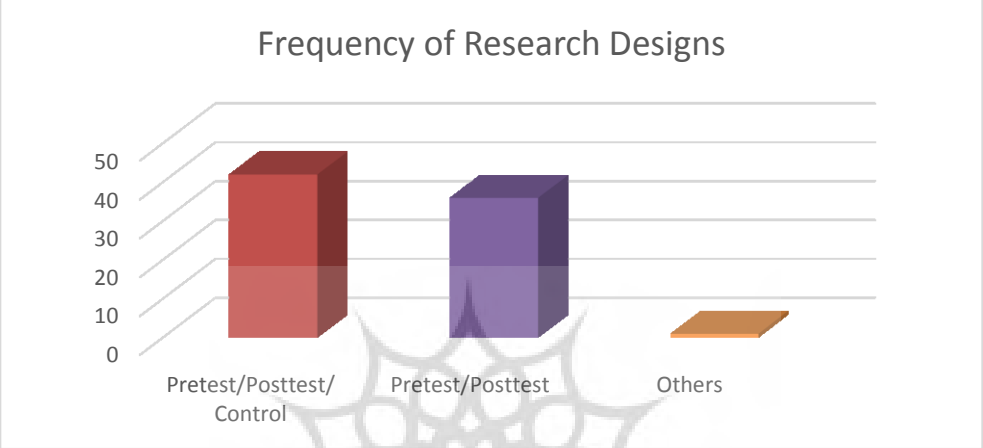

Figure 4. Frequency of Research Designs

To answer the first research question, all 54 studies carried out on the speech acts in an Iranian context accentuate the superiority of the instruction over non-instruction, and it is in line with what Kasper and Rose (2002) postulate about the effectiveness and productiveness of teaching pragmatics. Similar to Taguchi (2015) and Plonsky and Zhuang (2019), the results of the current paper confirm that teaching speech acts brings about significant outcomes for the learners, and they receive better opportunities through instruction. Considering the second research question, aiming to identify the most frequent speech acts used in English pragmatic instruction in the Iranian EFL context, it should be mentioned that request is the most predominant speech act utilized in 29 studies out of 54 papers. The remaining speech acts used are as follows: apology in 26 studies, refusal in 11, suggestion in four, complaint in four, compliment in four, thanking in two, and invitation in only one paper. Considering the third research question, the most prevailing data collection method in English pragmatic instruction is MDCT in 36 studies. The second highest data gathering way is WDCT implemented in 19 studies,

compared with both MDCT and WDCT in 13 studies, and other adopted methods such as ODCT, and diagnostic assessment, which were found in the remaining 11 studies. Analyzing the treatments in these 54 papers to answer the four research question reveals that the variety of the interventions is almost significant. Explicit vs. implicit by 25 studies, explicit vs. control in 24 papers, and the rest 30 have different treatment types such as self-assessment vs. conventional method, individual vs. collaborative output, and discussion, role play, and interactive translation. Concerning the last research question, aiming to find out the most frequent research design in English pragmatic instruction, it is quite obvious that quantitative studies prevail the qualitative ones. Among 53 papers in which the quantitative method was used, 42 studies applied pretest, posttest, and control design, and the remaining 36 papers implemented pretest and posttest design in their analyses. The only study in which a qualitative method is used is Tajeddin and Hosseinpur (2014b).

Directions for Future Research

The present paper systematically synthesized 54 papers in English pragmatics instruction in the Iranian EFL context over the last two decades (2000-2020), and has elucidated the patterns and trends they followed to propose the future directions and upcoming research in pragmatics.

Different Cultural Backgrounds and Age Variations. As it was revealed in the analyses, despite the fact that the context is the same and just one country is at the center of attention (Iran), the cultural background of the participants has not been taken into account and mentioned in the conducted studies. They may have various cultural backgrounds such as Azari, Lori, Sistani, Gilaki which can be considered as a focal feature for the participants of the future studies. Almost all of the studies carried out in English pragmatic instruction in Iran used adults in their research ranged from 14 to 46 (Anani

Sarab & Alikhani, 2016a, 2016b; Bagherkazemi, 2018; Derakhshan & Shakki, 2020a; Fakher & Panahifar, 2020), and there is scant attention to the diversity of ages especially children which can be a variable for the new research.

Investigating Teaching Speech acts among Students of other Fields of Study. Kesckes (2014) has postulated, a standard pragmatic communication needs some commonalities, shared knowledge, same beliefs and conventions between the hearer and the speaker to make a core common ground. In cases such as intercultural communications, this common core is missing, and co-constructing it requires new studies and ideas so as to avoid miscommunication. Teaching English pragmatics to the students whose major is English (teaching, literature, or translation) seems to be easier than teaching to those students who are studying in other fields of study (enginnering, art, music, etc.) because English related majors have more exposure to features of speech acts, so teachers also need to make learners of non-English related majors cognizant of sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic features of speech acts. Analyzing 54 studies in the Iranian context showed that only one of them (Salehi, 2011) has concentrated on the students of other fields of study in their general English class. One of the unexplored gaps in reviewing the literature of the Iranian studies in English pragmatic instruction is to take into account the non-English major students as the participants of the study. Future studies can embark on teaching different speech acts to other fields of studies to check whether it is helpful or not.

Using other Research Designs and Technology in Conducting a Study. Due to the paucity of studies using qualitative design (Tajeddin & Hosseinpur, 2014b), future research can focus on qualitative rather than quantitative (pretest, posttest, & control) to broaden the scope of English pragmatic instruction. Utilizing technology-based instruction and assessment is also proposed for the upcoming studies in pragmatics. The lacuna in

research in the area of technology and pragmatics is puzzling since pragmatic competence is one of the important constituents of communicative competence and that most of the technologies nowadays exist in the service of communication (Taguchi & Sykes, 2013).

Instructed Second Language Pragmatics from the Ecological Validity Perspective. As it was reviewed by Derakhshan and Shakki (2020b), ecological validity, which is the ability to generalize study findings to the real-world context, is another essential factor to be taken into account in the upcoming studies to have more useful results and apply them to everyday life. Paying more attention to the components of the environment and the context of the study help determine what is meant by ecological validity. No study in the corpus of the current study, concerned the concept of ecological validity, and no wonder, there was no evidence in rgard to the applicability of their findings. Given the ecological validity, the real world situation should be implemented in our classes, and the instruction might be adapted to the current conditions to make an inextricable relation with culture and educational system. The more the teachers try to control a study, the less ecological validity they may have, because they are changing the situation in which the experiment occurs, and make distances from the natural settings, so providing opportunities for the students' engagement can increase the ecological validity of the study (Thorne, 2013).

Conclusion

The last two decades have faced a rapid expansion of English pragmatic instruction in the world, and Iran is not an exception. Besides grammar and vocabulary, which need to be instructed, pragmatic competence is found to be improved through teaching. This study has reviewed the papers on the L2 pragmatic instruction that were published from 2000 to 2020, the time of

writing this study, over the last two decades and has illustrated the major patterns and trends they have followed within this period. Reiterating the three insightful questions raised by Kasper and Rose (2002) about two decades ago, the results of the present synthesis corroborate that pragmatic features are indeed teachable, and comparing different interventional methods, explicit instruction has proved to be more effective. Not only does ISLL ameliorate the process of pragmatic acquisition, but also it sensitizes learners' metapragmatic knowledge. Based on the present review, there are some speech acts that have received no attention such as congratulations, condolences, threats, and challenges, so the researchers may use these untouched areas of English pragmatic instruction for their future studies. The teachers would also be able to utilize the most effective treatment types, which led to better performance and production.

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