

The Effect of Consciousness-raising Tasks on the Turkish EFL Learners' Use of Complaint Strategies

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Abstract

The present study sought to investigate the effect of consciousness-raising tasks on the Iranian Turkish EFL learners' use of complaint strategies. To this end, a total of 40 Turkish EFL learners of low-intermediate level participated in the study. Following Takimoto (2009), complaint strategies were taught to the experimental group through consciousness raising tasks in four phases. The control group was exposed to the same authentic input as the experimental group, but they did not receive any consciousness raising tasks. The participants were requested to answer a WDCI consisting of 15 complaint situations as pretest and post-test. The data were analyzed and coded based on Trosborg's (1995) classification of complaint strategies. The results revealed that the differences between the experimental and control groups with respect to employing some complaint strategies including indirect accusation, requesting/ ordering, expression of annoyance or disapproval, total accusation, and total blame were statistically significant at the end of the treatment phase. However, the two groups did not differ statistically in employing strategies of hint, consequences, annoyance, direct accusation, explicit blame (behavior), explicit blame (person), modified blame, expressing disappointment, warning, threatening, criticizing/ rebuking/ reproving/ admonishing, and letting off hook. The finding confirms the facilitative impact of pragmatic instruction.

Keywords: Speech act, Complaint strategy, Consciousness-raising Tasks, Turkish EFL learners

1. Introduction

Since the appearance of the functional approaches to language teaching in the mid-1970s as a reaction to Chomsky's (1965) view of language, meaning in use rather than the abstract view of language has been paid more attention. The study of interlanguage pragmatics appeared as the area of applied linguistics that studies topics such as management of conversation and the coding of social and illocutionary meaning that are directly connected to functional language teaching (Hurley, 1992). Most of the research in this realm has been the comparison of English native speakers' performance with that of non-native speakers with different first languages with regard to various speech acts (Murphy & Neu, 1996; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993; Zhang, 2001). This approach develops a major expansion of cross-cultural differences in pragmatics, and it has been proven that these are profitable for recognition of pragmatic failure (Thomas, 1983).

According to Leech (1983), in order to realize the language essence, it is essential to understand pragmatics. Research in this area has shown that foreign language learners have serious problems in achieving the level of pragmatic competence in spite of being competent in grammatical proficiency (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Tanck, 2002).

Bardovi-Harlig (1996) points out that without teaching pragmatics even learners at the higher levels of grammatical proficiency have difficulty in pragmatic competence. The author, with the observation of language learners, confirmed that it is necessary to teach pragmatics. The researchers in the last decade have focused on the distinguished advantage of instruction on different aspects of pragmatics (Eslami-Rasekh & Eslami-Rasekh, 2008; Sadeghi & Foutooh, 2012).

Schmidt (1990) proposed that the consciousness way of learning is of high importance. By his Noticing Hypothesis, Schmidt (1990) posited that consciousness is important in language learning, and claimed because pragmatic functions and related contextual variables are not apparent to the learners, simple exposure to the target language is not adequate, and pragmatic consciousness raising (PCR) approach can help learners learn pragmatic functions and relevant linguistic factors. Moreover, Rose (1994) suggested that pragmatic consciousness raising (PCR) is an important approach in teaching pragmatics. In this study, following Ellis (2003), the consciousness-raising tasks are defined as tasks in which data contain exemplars of the target feature that learners need to operate on it in order to perceive some features of target language.

Communicative competence has an essential role in interpersonal and intercultural communication. People without sufficient competence confront pragmatic failure (Thomas, 1983) or communicative breakdown (Jia, 2007). Kasper (1997) points out that a learner with high level of proficiency in syntax or linguistic forms might still confront pragmatic competence failure. So, in order to achieve pragmatic competence automatically,

instruction in this area is necessary. It seems that EFL learner's communicative needs and also the second language pragmatics has been neglected in foreign language context, especially in the educational system of Iran as EFL context (Eslami-Rasekh & Mardani, 2010). In the context of foreign language learning, the chances for gaining access to input and interaction out of the classroom context are highly restricted and formal teaching acts as the chief foundation of L2 knowledge and so this adds to the importance of pragmatic instruction (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005; Rose, 2005).

One of the important aspects of pragmatic competence is the theory of speech acts. Studies conducted in the realm of speech acts in EFL context have indicated that just classroom input and teaching material are not beneficial in pragmatic development (Alcón & Safont, 2001; Nikula, 2002; Usó-Juan, 2007). Because native speakers of English employ many different types of speech acts, it is necessary for EFL learners to understand them.

Following Trosborg (1995), speech act is defined as expressive illocutionary act through which the speaker (the complainer) accuses the hearer (the complaine) for the affairs stated in the proposition (the complainable) by stating his/her disapproval, negative feelings, etc. Moreover, there are three important features for complaining speech act that makes it necessary to research in this area (as cited in Chen, Chen, & Chang, 2012). First, based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, because complaints cause offence, these acts are face-threatening acts. Second, complaints are addressed in varying degrees of severity, and complainer should consider three factors in this face-threatening act: social distance, social power, and degree of imposition (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Finally, no pre-determined factor exists for the speech act of complaint (Edmondson, 1981; Laforest, 2002). This is why speakers need to learn some complaint strategies and also how to understand and employ those strategies for the situations where one is operating. Because shortcomings in this field may cause speakers to confront failure in the act of communication, it is necessary for foreign language learners to have enough competence in performing complaints.

Pragmatic instruction in the L2 classroom is very challenging (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996), but it is necessary that pragmatics be taught especially in the EFL context where learners do not have enough opportunities to have exposure to the target language (Kasper, 2001a, 2001b; Kasper & Rose, 2002).

As such, the present study, in particular, examined the effect of consciousness-raising tasks on the Turkish EFL learners' use of complaint strategies. The present study adopts the consciousness raising approach in teaching complaint speech act. Moreover, the theoretical framework utilized in the current study is Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (1990, 1995, 2001, & 2010) the framework commonly used in Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP) studies (Taguchi, 2011). Furthermore, this study is built on the speech act theory of Austin (1962).

2. Literature Review

2.1 *Studies on the Effects of Instruction on Learners' Production of Different Speech Acts*

Bacelar da Silva (2003) examined the impact of explicit instruction on L2 pragmatic development, and the most proper ways to equip L2 learners with pragmatic information. The participants were 14 low-intermediate learners at one of the ELS programs at University of Hawai'i. A pre-test/post-test design with treatment and control groups was employed in the study. In its instructional treatment, it combined metapragmatic awareness with task-based methodological principles to instruct the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic components of the refusal speech act. In order to compare the effect of the learning in the treatment group and the control group, role-play and a qualitative discourse analytic approach were employed. The findings indicated that the instructional approach improved the L2 pragmatic ability in producing the speech act in focus. Also the results confirmed that L2 pedagogy which provide students with metapragmatic information improves learners' L2 pragmatics.

Gu (2011) carried out a study to identify the effect of explicit and implicit instruction of request strategies on Chinese EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge and achievement of pragmatic appropriateness in on-line communication. The participants were students of software engineering at the audio-visual-oral English classes. For the treatment, the participants were randomly placed into two experimental groups, an implicit group (IG) and an explicit group (EG). A pre- and post-test design was used to measure the pragmatic competence of participants in request knowledge and production. For data collection, a written discourse completion task (WDCT) and an oral role-play was employed. This study confirmed that proper instruction is a facilitative tool in acquiring pragmatic competence. This research also showed that in comparison with implicit instruction, explicit instruction in pragmatics is more effective in the request realization. The study also demonstrated that learners should be supplied with more practical opportunities to get pragmatic familiarity and fluency.

In 2012, Farrokhi and Atashian investigated the effect of explicit and implicit instruction on the Iranian EFL learners' pragmatic performance. The speech act of refusal was investigated in this quasi-experimental study. Sixty upper-intermediate EFL learners, 30 females and 30 males, participated in this study as explicit, implicit, and control groups. A pre-test and a post-test with discourse completion tests were employed to evaluate all subjects' pragmatic performance of L2 refusals. Conversations from 'Spectrum' English books were taught to all

groups. The findings revealed that explicit group was better than implicit group in developing Iranian EFL learners' pragmatic performance.

In another study, Kargar and Ahmadi (2012) set out a study to examine the relative effectiveness of various types of pragmatic teaching on the production of apologetic utterances. The treatment consisted of two collaborative translation tasks along with two structured input tasks with and without explicit pragmatic instruction. The subjects of the study consisted of 150 low-intermediate EFL learners in four experimental groups and one control group. To gather the data, open-ended discourse completion tasks (OPDCT), mobile short message tasks (MSMT) and telephone conversation tasks (TCT) were employed. The findings of the study demonstrated that pragmatic instruction may have an effect on interlanguage pragmatics (ILP). It also affirmed the effectiveness of the translation tasks in developing pragmatic knowledge. It was found that CTT was profitable since it makes prominent the features of both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects and raises the learners' attention.

Likewise, Abdollahizadeh, Arjmandi, and Vahdany (2014) identified the effect of formal instruction of request speech act on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' use of speech act. The study also examined request strategies concerned with explicit teaching of its behavior. A total number of 60 EFL learners in an English language institute took part in this study. To evaluate the effects of instruction on the pragmatic awareness of the students, discourse completion test was used as a pretest and posttest. The study revealed that explicit instruction has a vital role in an Iranian EFL setting in pragmatic competence.

In another study, Hassaskhah and Ebrahimi (2015) compared the effect of two different instructional approaches (explicit teacher explanation and implicit film watching) on the process of (meta)pragmatic learning. The participants of the study were a total of 32 elementary level students from an English language institute. The learners were divided into two groups ($N = 16$) each of which was provided with a specific type of instruction (teacher explanation and film). The data was collected by means of a written discourse completion test. The results showed that instruction of both types developed EFL elementary learners' awareness of compliments. Also, the results of the study showed that performance of both groups was equal with regard to raising EFL learners' (meta)pragmatic development.

Rajabia, Azizifara, and Gowhary (2015) set out a study to determine the effect of instruction on pragmatic performance of Iranian EFL learners and their probable interaction with the proficiency of the participants. To this end, a pre-test post-test design with experimental and control group was used. For data collection, a discourse completion test was employed. Four EFL classes participated in this study two of which were at intermediate level and two of which were at advanced level. Each of the intermediate and advanced classes was assigned as control and experimental groups. The finding indicated that explicit instruction is facilitative in L2 learners' pragmatic competence and L2 proficiency has an impact on appropriateness of speech acts production in general.

2.2 Studies on the Effect of Consciousness-raising on Speech Act Comprehension and Production

To examine the effect of explicit metapragmatic instruction on advanced Iranian EFL students' comprehension of speech act, Eslami-Rasekh, Eslami-Rasekh, and Fatahi (2004) investigated the speech acts of requesting, apologizing, and complaining. Sixty-six Iranian EFL undergraduate students and a group of American students as the baseline participated in the study. Teacher-fronted discussions, cooperative grouping, role plays, and other pragmatically oriented tasks were employed in the above-mentioned speech acts. A pretest, posttest control group design was used. It was found that explicit metapragmatic instruction was beneficial in IL pragmatic development to a significant degree. This instruction presented input enhancement in the L2 class, raised L2 learners' awareness in terms of the input features, and engaged students in productive activities and language use. The study revealed that explicit instruction has an important role in EFL settings.

Takimoto (2009) identified the effects of three kinds of input-based approaches, namely, deductive instruction, inductive instruction with problem-solving tasks, and inductive instruction with structured input tasks on the development of pragmatic competence. The subjects of the study were 60 Japanese EFL learners. Performance of the treatment group was compared with that of a control group on the pretests, posttests, and follow-up tests. The results indicated that the performance of three treatment groups was considerably better than the control group. Also it was mentioned in this study that explicit input-based instruction was facilitative both deductively and inductively in comprehension and production of learners in English polite requests.

Soler and Pitarch (2010) identified the effects of instruction on learners' attention and awareness in the refusal performance. The sample of the study involved 92 students, all of whom were studying Translation at the university. To identify the information before and after receiving instruction, retrospective verbal reports were employed. The results showed that pragmatic instruction was beneficial to learners' attention and awareness of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects in the production of refusal speech act. In addition, it was revealed that instruction made an improvement in the pragmatic realm.

In another major study, Takimoto (2012) carried out a study to examine the impacts of two types of

consciousness-raising instruction (problem-solving tasks with metapragmatic discussion and problem-solving tasks without metapragmatic discussion) on recognition and production of learners about English request downgraders. The participants of the study were 45 monolingual Japanese speakers learning English as a foreign language and their English proficiency level was at the intermediate level. The two experimental groups took the problem-solving tasks with metapragmatic discussion (PTW) and problem-solving tasks without metapragmatic discussion (PTO). The results confirmed that the problem-solving tasks involving processing of English request downgraders through pragmalinguistic - sociopragmatic connections had an effect on the recognition and production of English request downgraders. In addition, it was concluded that metapragmatic discussion makes the participants be familiar with metapragmatic information concerning the target pragmatic features, and the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic conventions of English request downgraders.

Birjandi and Derakhshan (2013) investigated the relative effect of consciousness-raising video-driven prompts on the speech act comprehension regarding three speech acts of apology, request, and refusal. The subjects were 78 (36 male and 42 female) upper-intermediate Persian EFL learners who were randomly divided to four groups (metapragmatic, form-search, role play, and control). All groups received 45 video vignettes. Results indicated that all three types of instruction were useful in increasing the participants' awareness of apologies, requests and refusals. Also, it was found that the metapragmatic group outperformed the other two in terms of pragmatic knowledge. Moreover, it was indicated that form-search group outperformed the role-play one.

Barekat and Mehri (2013) intended to examine the effectiveness of two types of instructions (consciousness-raising activities and Consciousness-raising activities with feedback) on the pragmatic competence of Iranian EFL learners in requestive downgrades. The participants of this study were 45 homogenous male students at intermediate level. They were assigned to control group, C-R treatment group, and C-R F treatment group. A pre-test, post-test design and WDCT were implemented to explore the effects of the instruction on the learners' speech act comprehension. The results indicated that the instruction was beneficial, and performance of both experimental groups was better than that of the control group. However, the participants in the C-R with the feedback group outperformed the C-R group.

Zamani Roodsari, Taghvaei, and Azadsarv (2014) sought to investigate the effect of task-based and input-based language teaching on Iranian EFL learners' pragmatic ability. The participants of the study were 81 pre-intermediate students. They were assigned into two homogenous groups, one of which received task-based approach in learning English requests and the other one took the advantage of input-based approach in the same speech act. To collect data, Multiple Choice Discourse Completion Test (MCDCT) of request speech act was administered for both pre- and post-tests. The results revealed a significant difference in learning English requests of both groups of learners. In other words, the group in task-based approach outperformed input-based one in learning of the English requests.

Tajeddin and Hosseinpour (2014) examined the effects of deductive, inductive, and L1-based consciousness-raising instructional tasks on EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge of request speech act. One-hundred and forty undergraduate Iranian university EFL learners in six intact classes participated in this study. The participants were 67 male and 73 female English languages at upper-intermediate level. After instructional sessions, the data were gathered by discourse completion tests (DCTs) in the first, third, fifth, and seventh weeks. The results showed that, in this period of time, the participants stopped employing direct request strategies and used indirect strategies more frequently in situations consisting of high-status interlocutors and high imposition requests. Moreover, with the passage of time, the learners focused more on pragmatic appropriateness instead of grammatical correctness. It was found that C-R instructional tasks suggest a beneficial means of teaching pragmatics.

More recently, Derakhshan and Eslami (2015) made an attempt to investigate the effectiveness of consciousness raising video-driven prompts on the development of two speech acts of apology and request. Sixty upper-intermediate Persian learners of English, consisting of 22 male and 38 female learners, took part in the study. They were randomly assigned to three equal groups (discussion, role play, and interactive translation). The three groups received 36 extracts involving 18 requests and 18 apologies adopted from various episodes of the Flash Forward, and Stargate TV series and the film Annie Hall. The results of revealed that all three types of instruction were improved the participants' awareness of the speech acts under investigation, but the results showed that the performance of discussion group was better than the other two groups.

Based on the above-mentioned literature, the present study aimed at examining whether Iranian Turkish EFL learners' pragmatic competence can be improved by consciousness-raising instruction. More specifically, the purpose of the study was to investigate the effect of consciousness-raising tasks on the Turkish EFL learners' use of complaint strategies. To this end, the following research question was proposed to be answered:

- Do consciousness-raising tasks have any significant effect on the Turkish EFL learners' use of complaint strategies?

3. Methodology

The design of the study was a pre-test post-test control group design. More specifically, the study was quasi-experimental, since it did not include randomization as in a truly experimental method (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

3.1 Participants

The participants of the study consisted of 40 lower-intermediate EFL learners (13 males and 27 females) studying in an English language institute in Orumieh city, Iran. The participants' mean age was 20. All the learners' first language was Turkish and their second language was Persian. Also, none of the participants of this study experienced living in a foreign country. The lower-intermediate level was selected because some parts of the book content at this level were assigned to different types of speech acts such as request, suggestion, compliment, and complaint. Thus, the learners were aware of different kinds of speech acts in general. In order to confirm the general language proficiency of the participants and ensure they are homogeneous, the learners took an OPT (Oxford Placement Test, 2001). All the participants scored 30-39 (lower-intermediate level interval) in OPT except eight learners who were excluded from the treatment group.

3.2 Instruments and Materials

Several instruments and materials were used in this study to collect the data:

3.2.1 Oxford Placement Test (OPT)

To make sure that all the participants were at the same level of language proficiency, Oxford Placement Test (2001; OPT) was employed in this study. The test consists of two parts including 60 multiple choice items. The total time of the test was 30 minutes.

3.2.2 Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT)

The WDCT includes 15 items of complaint situations which was taken from Bikmen and Marti (2013) and Wijayanto, Laila, Prasetyarini and Susiati (2013). It was given to the participants to assess their complaint speech act performance. The participants were provided with short description of 15 complaint situations in English and were expected to write what they would state in those situations in practice.

3.2.3 Authentic Conversations

In order to practice and perform the complaint speech act in various situations, the study employed authentic materials, namely listening prompts (LPs) which contained 20 tape-recorded conversations extracted from *Interchange Series* (Richards, Hull, & Proctor, 2005), *English Result* (McDonald & Hancock, 2008), *American Headway* (Soars, Soars, Falla, & Cassette, 2002), *Top Notch* (Saslow & Ascher, 2006), *English File* (Latham-Koenig & Oxenden, 1999), and *Touchstone* (McCarthy, McCarten, & Sandiford, 2008).

3.2.4 Complaint Strategies

The current study concentrated on various strategies in making complaints in different situations. These pragmatic features were based on the modified version of Trosborg's (1995) taxonomies of complaint strategies taken from Wijayanto, Laila, Prasetyarini, and Susiati (2013).

3.2.5 The Structured Form for Listening Prompts

To engage learners of the experimental group in consciousness-raising (C-R) activities, a modified version of Kasper's (1997) structured form, taken from Eslami-Rasekh (2005) was utilized in the study. The participants were asked to identify the categories in each conversation and mark the specifications for each complaint speech act situation.

3.3 Treatment

A well-known classification in complaint strategies based on Trosborg (1995) and 20 authentic conversations including complaint speech act were chosen to be taught through consciousness-raising activities to the experimental groups, while in the control group, the participants were instructed as usual, through listening and doing some vocabulary exercises on transcribed conversation text without any pragmatically oriented tasks or consciousness-raising activity.

In the first session, complaint strategies, structured forms and scripted conversations in printed form were given to the participants of the experimental groups. However, it was explained that each session just one strategy and two conversations would be taught in the class.

The structured form was given to the learners to determine the social distance of speaker (S) related to hearer (H) (as being higher ($S > H$), equal ($S = H$), or lower ($S < H$)), and power distance (as speaker has a higher rank or social position (+P) or a lower rank or social position (-P)) and level of directness (1- Indirect: no explicit mention of offence, implied offence only; 2- somewhat direct: mention of offence, but no mention of the hearer's responsibility; 3- direct: explicit mention of offence and hearers' responsibility).

In order to teach pragmatics, instruction needs to make learners notice consciously about the relationship between forms and meanings of target structures and the knowledge of the strategies for perceiving speech intentions, forms of language employed to express these intentions, and social conditions conducting language

use (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983). Thus, following Takimoto (2009), the consciousness raising tasks in the experimental group were performed in four stages:

Step one (the pragmalinguistic-focused activity): The learners were requested to listen and read two conversations and underline complaint speech act in two conversations. Also, they were requested to compare complaint speech acts in two conversations and find the differences between them.

Step two (the sociopragmatic-focused activity): In this activity the teacher made the learners aware of the relationship between the interlocutors by engaging them in the structured form.

Step three (pragmalinguistic-sociopragmatic connection activity): The teacher requested the learners to mark the level of directness of complaints in each conversation based on the structured form and evaluated which strategy was used in the conversation.

Step four (meta-pragmatic discussion): In this phase, the learners and teacher discussed the characteristics of complaint strategies and determined different types of complaint strategies.

4. Results

4.1 Pre-Test WDCT (Descriptive Statistics and Chi-Square Test)

Descriptive statistics were computed for the first administration of WDCT first. Table 1 presents the result:

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the first administration of WDCT

		Control	Experimental
Hint	Percentage	2.54%	3.10%
	Frequency	5.00	12
Consequences	Percentage	1.02%	2.07%
	Frequency	2.00	8.00
Annoyance	Percentage	13.70%	10.36%
	Frequency	27.00	40.00
Indirect accusation	Percentage	4.56%	4.92%
	Frequency	9.00	19.00
Direct accusation	Percentage	11.16%	12.43%
	Frequency	22.00	48.00
Explicit blame (behavior)	Percentage	2.03%	3.62%
	Frequency	4.00	14.00
Explicit blame (person)	Percentage	6.59%	8.54%
	Frequency	13.00	33.00
Modified blame	Percentage	3.04%	3.36%
	Frequency	6.00	13.00
Asking for responsibility	Percentage	.50%	0%
	Frequency	1.00	.00
Warning	Percentage	2.03%	4.92%
	Frequency	4.00	19.00
Expressing disappointment	Percentage	0%	0%
	Frequency	.00	.00
Threatening	Percentage	9.13%	9.32%
	Frequency	18.00	36.00
Criticizing/ rebuking/ reproving/ admonishing	Percentage	8.62%	7.51%
	Frequency	17.00	29.00
Requesting/ ordering	Percentage	35.02%	27.72%
	Frequency	69.00	107.00
Letting off hook (forgiving and accepting the offence)	Percentage	0%	2.07%
	Frequency	.00	8.00
Total expression of annoyance or disapproval	Percentage	14.72%	12.43%
	Frequency	29.00	48.00
Total accusation	Percentage	15.72%	17.35%
	Frequency	31.00	76.00
Total blame	Percentage	11.66%	15.52%
	Frequency	23.00	60.00
Total WDCT (pretest)	Percentage	100%	100%
	Frequency	197.00	386.00

To compare the frequency counts and percentages of using complaint strategies by control and experimental groups, their responses for WDCT were coded and analyzed running descriptive statistics. The most frequent complaint strategies preferred by control and experimental groups were identified. Relatively a similar tendency

was found between the two groups in their preference for using complaint strategies. In general, *requests/ordering* had the highest frequency for the two groups and made up about 35% of complaining behavior for the control group and 27.7% for the experimental group in the first administration of WDCT. In other words, *request/ordering* was the most commonly used strategy by the control and experimental groups. In contrast, *expressing disappointment* (0%), *asking for responsibility* (.50 to 0%), and *forgiving and accepting the offence* (0 to 2.07%) had the lowest frequency.

Hints occurred less often but somewhat similarly for the two groups ($f_{\text{control}} = 5, p_{\text{control}} = 2.54\%$; $f_{\text{experimental}} = 12, p_{\text{experimental}} = 3.10\%$). *Consequence* occurred at a low frequency for the two groups ($f_{\text{control}} = 2, p_{\text{control}} = 1.02\%$; $f_{\text{experimental}} = 8, p_{\text{experimental}} = 2.07\%$). *Annoyance* occurred with relatively high frequency for the two groups and made up about 13% of complaining strategy for the control group and 10% for the experimental group ($f_{\text{control}} = 27, p_{\text{control}} = 13.70\%$; $f_{\text{experimental}} = 40, p_{\text{experimental}} = 10.36\%$). *Accusation* including *direct* and *indirect accusation* strategies occurred with relatively high frequency for the two groups and made up about 15% of complaining strategy for the control group and 17% for the experimental group ($f_{\text{control}} = 31, p_{\text{control}} = 15.72\%$; $f_{\text{experimental}} = 67, p_{\text{experimental}} = 17.35\%$). *Blame* comprising *explicit blame* (behavior), *explicit blame* (person), and *modified blame* occurred with relatively higher frequency for the experimental group compared to the control group. Total blame made up about 11% of complaining strategy for the control group and 15% for the experimental group ($f_{\text{control}} = 23, p_{\text{control}} = 11.66\%$; $f_{\text{experimental}} = 60, p_{\text{experimental}} = 15.52\%$). *Asking for responsibility* occurred at the lowest frequency for the two groups ($f_{\text{control}} = 1, p_{\text{control}} = .50\%$; $f_{\text{experimental}} = 0, p_{\text{experimental}} = 0\%$). *Warning* occurred at a relatively low frequency for the two groups and made up simply about 2% of complaining behavior for the control group and 4% for the experimental group ($f_{\text{control}} = 4, p_{\text{control}} = 2.03\%$; $f_{\text{experimental}} = 19, p_{\text{experimental}} = 4.92\%$). *Expressing disappointment* was not reported for the two groups ($f_{\text{control}} = 0, p_{\text{control}} = 0\%$; $f_{\text{experimental}} = 0, p_{\text{experimental}} = 0\%$). *Threatening* had similar rate of occurrences for the two groups and made up about 9% of complaining behavior for both groups ($f_{\text{control}} = 18, p_{\text{control}} = 9.13\%$; $f_{\text{experimental}} = 36, p_{\text{experimental}} = 9.32\%$). *Criticizing/ rebuking/ reprovng/ admonishing* had a similar rate of occurrences for the two groups and made up about 8% of complaining behavior for both groups ($f_{\text{control}} = 17, p_{\text{control}} = 8.62\%$; $f_{\text{experimental}} = 29, p_{\text{experimental}} = 7.51\%$). *Expression of annoyance or disapproval* had somewhat higher frequency for the control group compared to experimental group and made up simply about 14% of complaining behavior for the control group and 12% for the experimental group ($f_{\text{control}} = 29, p_{\text{control}} = 14.72\%$; $f_{\text{experimental}} = 48, p_{\text{experimental}} = 12.43\%$). In general, the frequency of complaint strategies in the first administration of WDCT was to some extent the same for the two groups before providing instruction on consciousness-raising tasks for the experimental group. To see if the differences between the two groups in terms of employing complaint strategies were statistically significant at the beginning of the study, Chi-square test was run.

Table 2. Chi-square tests for different components of complaint strategies for the control and experimental groups (First administration)

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Hint * groups	.494	2	.751
Consequences * groups	.950	1	.330
Annoyance * groups	6.427	6	.377
Indirect * groups	.765	2	.682
Direct * groups	1.595	5	.902
Explicit blame (behavior) * groups	2.235	2	.327
Explicit blame (person) * groups	2.999	3	.392
Modified blame * groups	.566	2	.753
Asking for responsibility * groups	2.130	1	.144
Warning * groups	2.734	3	.435
Threatening * groups	1.402	4	.844
Criticizing rebuking/ reprovng/ admonishing * groups	5.950	4	.203
Requesting ordering * groups	9.375	5	.095
Letting off hook (forgiving and accepting the offence) * groups	4.085	2	.130
Expression of annoyance or disapproval * groups	4.564	6	.601
Accusation * groups	2.822	5	.727
Blame * groups	5.435	6	.489
<i>Total WDCT * group</i>	10.761	12	.549

The two-sided asymptotic significance of the Chi-square statistics for different components of complaint strategies employed by lower-intermediate EFL learners in control and experimental groups were higher than (.05), so it could be concluded that the differences between the groups with respect to employing complaint strategies were not statistically significant at the beginning of the study ($p > .05$). In other words, the participants of the control and experimental groups were homogeneous with respect to their use of complaint

strategies before introducing the treatment to the experimental group on consciousness-raising tasks.

4.2 Post-Test WDCT (Descriptive Statistics and Chi-Square Test)

Descriptive statistics were also computed for the second administration of WDCT. Table 3 presents the results: administration:

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for the second administration of WDCT

		Control	Experimental
Hint	Percentage	1.93%	6.73%
	Frequency	4.00	31.00
Consequences	Percentage	2.41%	3.04 %
	Frequency	5.00	14.00
Annoyance	Percentage	14.00%	19.78%
	Frequency	29.00	91.00
Indirect Accusation	Percentage	5.31 %	15%
	Frequency	11.00	69.00
Direct Accusation	Percentage	9.17 %	9.13%
	Frequency	19.00	42.00
Explicit blame (behavior)	Percentage	3.38%	5%
	Frequency	7.00	23.00
Explicit blame (person)	Percentage	6.76%	4.13%
	Frequency	14.00	19.00
Modified blame	Percentage	3.86%	7.82%
	Frequency	8.00	36.00
Asking for responsibility	Percentage	0%	0 %
	Frequency	.00	.00
Warning	Percentage	2.41%	2.39 %
	Frequency	5.00	11.00
Expressing disappointment	Percentage	.48 %	0%
	Frequency	1.00	.00
Threatening	Percentage	7.72%	6.08%
	Frequency	16.00	28.00
Criticizing / rebuking/reproving/ admonishing	Percentage	7.24%	5%
	Frequency	15.00	23.00
Requesting/ ordering	Percentage	34.29%	13.04 %
	Frequency	71.00	60.00
Letting off hook forgiving and accepting the offence	Percentage	.96%	2.82 %
	Frequency	2.00	13.00
Total expression of annoyance or disapproval	Percentage	16.41%	22.82 %
	Frequency	34.00	105.00
Total accusation	Percentage	18.84%	24.13 %
	Frequency	30.00	111.00
Total blame	Percentage	14.00%	16.95 %
	Frequency	29.00	78.00
Total WDCT (posttest)	Percentage	100%	100%
	Frequency	207.00	460

When it comes to the second administration of the WCDT at the end of the study, the most and the least frequent complaint strategies employed by the control and experimental groups were identified and compared. This time, there were some differences between the two groups in terms of the frequency of employing and preference for complaint strategies. In general, *requests/ ordering* ($f_{\text{control}} = 71, p_{\text{control}} = 34.29\%$), *accusation* ($f_{\text{control}} = 30, p_{\text{control}} = 18.84\%$), *expression of annoyance or disapproval* ($f_{\text{control}} = 34, p_{\text{control}} = 16.41\%$), *annoyance* ($f_{\text{control}} = 29, p_{\text{control}} = 14\%$), and *blame* ($f_{\text{control}} = 29, p_{\text{control}} = 14\%$) had the highest frequency for the control group, respectively. These complaint strategies made up about 14 to 34% of complaining behavior for the control group. In contrast, *asking for responsibility* ($f_{\text{control}} = 0, p_{\text{control}} = 0\%$) was not reported. Additionally, strategies such as *expressing disappointment* ($f_{\text{control}} = 1, p_{\text{control}} = .48\%$), *letting off hook (forgiving and accepting the offence)* ($f_{\text{control}} = 2, p_{\text{control}} = .96\%$), *hint* ($f_{\text{control}} = 4, p_{\text{control}} = 1.93\%$) had the lowest reported frequency counts. Moreover, the frequency counts for strategies like *consequences* ($f_{\text{control}} = 5, p_{\text{control}} = 2.41\%$) and *warning* ($f_{\text{control}} = 5, p_{\text{control}} = 2.41\%$) were the same. Other complaint strategies including *explicit blame (behavior)* ($f_{\text{control}} = 7, p_{\text{control}} = 3.38\%$), and *modified blame (behavior)* ($f_{\text{control}} = 8, p_{\text{control}} = 3.86\%$) had very low frequencies. However, for the experimental group, *accusation* ($f_{\text{experimental}} = 111, p_{\text{experimental}} = 24.13\%$),

expression of annoyance or disapproval ($f_{\text{experimental}} = 105, p_{\text{experimental}} = 22.82\%$), *annoyance* ($f_{\text{experimental}} = 91, p_{\text{experimental}} = 19.78\%$), *blame* ($f_{\text{experimental}} = 78, p_{\text{experimental}} = 16.95\%$), and *requesting/ ordering* ($f_{\text{experimental}} = 60, p_{\text{experimental}} = 13.04\%$) had the highest frequencies for the experimental group, respectively. These complaint strategies made up about 13 to 24% of complaining behavior for the experimental group. In contrast, *asking for responsibility* ($f_{\text{experimental}} = 0, p_{\text{experimental}} = 0\%$) and *expressing disappointment* ($f_{\text{experimental}} = 0, p_{\text{experimental}} = 0\%$) were not employed by the experimental group. Moreover, strategies like *letting off hook (forgiving and accepting the offence)* ($f_{\text{experimental}} = 13, p_{\text{experimental}} = 2.82\%$), and *explicit blame (person)* ($f_{\text{experimental}} = 19, p_{\text{experimental}} = 4.13\%$) had very low rate of occurrences for the experimental group. Furthermore, complaint strategies including *criticizing/ rebuking/ reproofing/ admonishing* ($f_{\text{experimental}} = 23, p_{\text{experimental}} = 5\%$) and *explicit blame (behavior)* ($f_{\text{experimental}} = 23, p_{\text{experimental}} = 5\%$) were found to have similar rate of frequency counts. Finally, *consequences* ($f_{\text{experimental}} = 14, p_{\text{experimental}} = 3.04\%$) occurred with low frequency for the experimental group in the second administration of WDCT. *Hints* occurred with lower frequency for the control group compared to the experimental group ($f_{\text{control}} = 4, p_{\text{control}} = 1.93\%; f_{\text{experimental}} = 31, p_{\text{experimental}} = 6.73\%$). *Consequence* occurred at a low and somehow similar frequency for the two groups ($f_{\text{control}} = 5, p_{\text{control}} = 2.41\%; f_{\text{experimental}} = 14, p_{\text{experimental}} = 3.04\%$). *Annoyance* occurred with higher frequency for the experimental group compared to the control group and made up about 14% of complaining strategy for the control group and 19% for the experimental group ($f_{\text{control}} = 29, p_{\text{control}} = 14\%; f_{\text{experimental}} = 91, p_{\text{experimental}} = 19.78\%$). *Accusation* including *direct* and *indirect* *accusation* strategies occurred with relatively high frequency for the two groups and made up about 18% of complaining strategy for the control group and 24% for the experimental group ($f_{\text{control}} = 30, p_{\text{control}} = 18.84\%; f_{\text{experimental}} = 111, p_{\text{experimental}} = 24.13\%$). *Blame* comprising of *explicit blame (behavior)*, *explicit blame (person)*, and *modified blame* occurred with relatively higher frequency for the experimental group compared to the control group. Total blame made up about 14% of complaining strategy for the control group and 17% for the experimental group ($f_{\text{control}} = 29, p_{\text{control}} = 14\%; f_{\text{experimental}} = 78, p_{\text{experimental}} = 16.95\%$). *Asking for responsibility* was not employed by the two groups in the second administration of the WDCT ($f_{\text{control}} = 0, p_{\text{control}} = 0\%; f_{\text{experimental}} = 0, p_{\text{experimental}} = 0\%$). *Warning* occurred at a relatively low frequency for the two groups at the end of the study and made up simply about 2% of complaining behavior for the two groups ($f_{\text{control}} = 5, p_{\text{control}} = 2.41\%; f_{\text{experimental}} = 11, p_{\text{experimental}} = 2.39\%$). *Expressing disappointment* had a very low frequency for the control group and was not reported for the experimental group ($f_{\text{control}} = 1, p_{\text{control}} = .48\%; f_{\text{experimental}} = 0, p_{\text{experimental}} = 0\%$). *Threatening* had similar rate of occurrences for the two groups and made up about 7% of complaining behavior for the both groups in the second administration of the WDCT that were lower than the frequency counts reported for the *threatening* strategy at the first administration ($f_{\text{control}} = 16, p_{\text{control}} = 7.72\%; f_{\text{experimental}} = 28, p_{\text{experimental}} = 6.08\%$). The frequency of *criticizing/ rebuking/ reproofing/ admonishing* for the control group was higher than that for the experimental group and made up about 7% of complaining behavior for the control group and 5% of the experimental group ($f_{\text{control}} = 15, p_{\text{control}} = 7.24\%; f_{\text{experimental}} = 23, p_{\text{experimental}} = 5\%$). The frequency of *expression of annoyance or disapproval* for the experimental group was higher than that for the control group and made up about 16% of complaining behavior for the control group and 22% for the experimental group ($f_{\text{control}} = 34, p_{\text{control}} = 16.42\%; f_{\text{experimental}} = 105, p_{\text{experimental}} = 22.82\%$).

In general, in the second administration of WDCT, the frequency of complaint strategies for the experimental group was higher than that for the control group after providing instruction on consciousness-raising tasks for the experimental group. In order to examine if the differences between the two groups in terms of employing complaint strategies were statistically significant after the treatment, Chi-square tests were run.

Table 4. Chi-square tests for different components of complaint strategies for the control and experimental groups (Second administration)

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Hint * groups	5.784	5	.328
Consequences * groups	1.176	3	.759
Annoyance * groups	8.088	5	.151
Indirect accusation* groups	24.939	4	.000
Direct accusation * groups	2.773	5	.735
Explicit blame (behavior) * groups	1.495	3	.683
Explicit blame (person) * groups	4.944	4	.239
Modified blame * groups	4.281	4	.369
Expressing disappointment * groups	2.130	1	.144
Warning * groups	.038	2	.981
Threatening * groups	6.549	5	.256
Criticizing /rebuking/ reproofing/admonishing * groups	4.998	4	.288
Requesting/ ordering * groups	27.439	8	.001
Letting off hook (forgiving and accepting the offence) * groups	4.141	3	.247
Expression of annoyance or disapproval * groups	15.523	7	.030
Accusation * groups	15.954	7	.026
Blame * groups	14.887	7	.037
Total WDCT * group	7.686	13	.863

The two-sided asymptotic significance of Chi-square statistics for some components of complaint strategies including *indirect accusation, requesting/ ordering, expression of annoyance or disapproval, total accusation, and total blame* were lower than alpha level (.05). It could be concluded that the differences between the experimental and control groups with respect to employing these five complaint strategies were statistically significant at the end of the study ($p \leq .05$). In other words, the participants of the experimental group outperformed the control group in terms of the above-mentioned strategies after receiving instruction and treatment on consciousness-raising tasks for the experimental group. However, the two groups did not differ statistically in employing other components of complaint strategies including *hint, consequences, annoyance, direct accusation, explicit blame (behavior), explicit blame (person), modified blame, expressing disappointment, warning, threatening, criticizing/ rebuking/ reproofing/ admonishing, and letting off hook (forgiving and accepting the offence)*. Furthermore, there were not statistically significant differences between the two groups with respect to the total WDCT after the treatment ($p \geq .05$). Consequently, consciousness-raising tasks have a statistically significant effect on Iranian Turkish EFL learners' use of *some* of the complaint strategies.

Figure.1 shows the use of complaint strategies by the control and experimental groups at the end of the study:

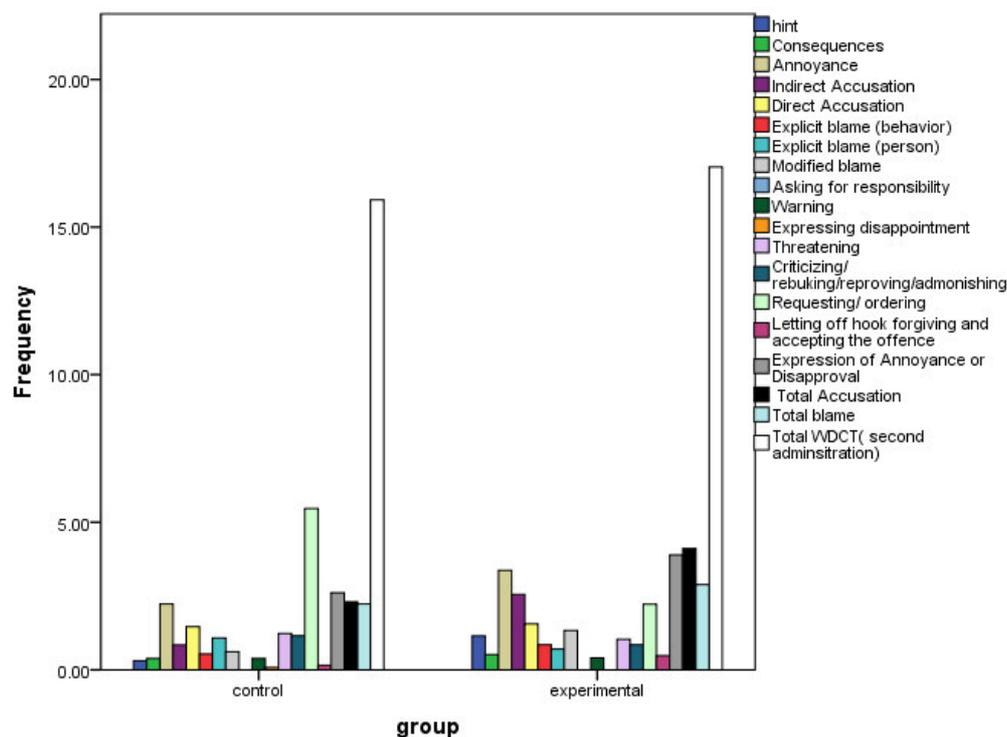


Figure 1. Use of Complaint Strategies by the Control and Experimental Groups after the Treatment

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study intended to determine the effect of consciousness-raising tasks on the Iranian Turkish EFL learners' use of complaint strategies. The treatment included instruction of a classification of complaint strategies (Trosborg, 1995) including 15 types of strategies which were taught along with 20 authentic audio-taped conversations. The results showed that although the two groups did not differ statistically in employing some components of complaint strategies including *hint*, *consequences*, *annoyance*, *direct accusation*, *explicit blame (behavior)*, *explicit blame (person)*, *modified blame*, *expressing disappointment*, *warning*, *threatening*, *criticizing/ rebuking/ reproving/ admonishing*, and *letting off hook (forgiving and accepting the offence)*, but the differences between the experimental and control groups with respect to employing some other components of complaint strategies including *indirect accusation*, *requesting/ ordering*, *expression of annoyance or disapproval*, *total accusation*, and *total blame* were statistically significant at the end of the treatment phase ($p \leq .05$). The results of the present study were almost consistent with those of the previous ones. Like previous studies on the effects of instruction on EFL/ESL learners' pragmatic awareness — in the case of speech acts (Fahim & Ghobadi, 2009; Karimnia & Afghari, 2011; Malaz, Rabiee & Ketabi, 2011, & Sadeghi & Foutooh, 2012), the present study also affirmed the positive impact of consciousness-raising instruction of complaint speech act on EFL learners' pragmatic development.

As mentioned earlier, the analysis of the participants' responses in the pre- and post-test (WDCT) using the two-sided asymptotic significance of Chi-square statistics revealed that the differences between the experimental and control groups with respect to employing some complaint strategies including *indirect accusation*, *requesting/ ordering*, *expression of annoyance or disapproval*, *total accusation*, and *total blame* were statistically significant at the end of the study ($p \leq .05$). This finding supports the Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (1990) based on which consciousness is considered to be essential in language learning. Schmidt claimed because learners are not able to access pragmatic functions and relevant contextual factors, mere exposure to the target language is not sufficient, and pragmatic consciousness raising (PCR) approach can help learners learn pragmatic functions and relevant linguistic factors. Also the result is in line with the fact that pragmatic competence, as one important aspect of communicative competence, can be improved with the instruction. "There is thus a strong indication that instructional (pedagogical) intervention may be facilitative to, or even necessary for, the acquisition of L2 pragmatic ability" (Rose & Kasper, 2001, p. 8).

In the context of foreign language learning, the chances for gaining access to input and interaction out of the classroom context are highly restricted and formal teaching acts as the chief foundation of L2 knowledge and so this adds to the importance of pragmatic instruction (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005; Rose, 2005). That is why "even grammatically advanced EFL learners may use language inappropriately and suffer from pragmatic failures"

(Mirzaee & Esmaeili, 2013, p.3). Therefore, as Bardovi-Harlig (1996) pointed out, pragmatic teaching is helpful and needed.

The result of the present study is in the same line with the previous studies on the facilitative effects of instruction of pragmatic knowledge on second and foreign language learning in general (Jianda, 2007; Kasper, 1997; Rose & Kasper, 2001; Silva, 2010), and the positive effect of consciousness-raising tasks on the development of learners' pragmatic ability with regard to different speech acts in particular (Abolfathiasl & Abdullah, 2015; Barekat & Mehri, 2013; Birjandi & Derakhshan, 2013; Derakhshan & Eslami, 2015; Eslami-Rasekh, Eslami-Rasekh & Fatahi, 2004; Soler & Pitarch, 2010; Tajeddin & Hosseinpur, 2014; Takimoto, 2009; Takimoto, 2012; Zamani Roodsari, Taghvaei & Azadsarv, 2014). Although there has been significant progress during the past few decades in developing EFL learners' pragmatic ability by consciousness-raising instruction in various speech acts (Dastjerdi & Rezvani, 2010; Fahim & Ghobadi, 2009; Farahian, Rezaee & Gholami, 2012; Jianda, 2007; Kasper, 1997; Sadeghi, 2012; Silva, 2003), based on the review of literature, no study except Eslami-Rasekh, Eslami-Rasekh, and Fatahi (2004) has been conducted on pragmatic instruction in the speech act of complaint. Furthermore, in this study, it was perceived that pragmatic ability of EFL learners can be improved by the use of consciousness-raising tasks via audio-taped materials.

Indeed, a detailed analysis of frequencies of the use of complaint strategies by the experimental group in the post-test showed that although learners' total use of the strategies in post-test except some strategies were not relatively meaningful, but their use of the indirect complaint strategies including (*indirect accusation, requesting/ ordering, expression of annoyance or disapproval, total accusation, and total blame*) increased and to some extent their use of the direct strategies of complaint including (*hint, consequences, annoyance, direct accusation, explicit blame (behavior), explicit blame (person), modified blame, expressing disappointment, warning, threatening, criticizing/ rebuking/ reproofing/admonishing, and letting off hook (forgiving and accepting the offence)*) decreased. It is implied from these results that learners' level of indirectness increased after instruction. This is in line with Gu (2011) that found participants in the explicit group made a greater progress in the appropriate level of formality, directness, and politeness.

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