Interlanguage Pragmatic Development: Comparative Impacts of Cognitive and Interpersonal Tasks

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A B S T R A C T

Research into instructed pragmatics mainly comparing implicit and explicit instruction has gained salience in language teaching research in the last two decades. The present study was designed to investigate the effect of cognitive and interpersonal task-based instruction on EFL Learners' production of two speech acts of apology and request. To this end, 125 intermediate EFL learners were conveniently sampled, and randomly assigned to four experimental groups (EG) and one control group (CG). The four experimental groups received task-based instruction on the two speech acts of apology and request (three 30-minute sessions on each), though instruction varied in terms of general tasks types (cognitive or interpersonal) and their specific variants (cognitive: predicting (EG1; N=25) and inducing (EG2; N=25); interpersonal: co-operating (EG3; N=25) and role-play (EG4; N=25)). The control group (N=25) did not receive any speech act-specific treatment. The participants' speech act production was measured through a 16-item written discourse completion test (WDCT) as both the pretest and the posttest. The findings showed the significant effect of both cognitive and interpersonal tasks, but also the greater effectiveness of the latter for speech act production. The study has implications for pragmatic task design and classroom practice. More specifically, it shows the potential of task-based instruction and interaction for EFL learners' pragmatic development.

Keywords: cognitive task; instructed pragmatics; interlanguage pragmatics; interpersonal task; speech act

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A R T I C L E   H I S T O R Y

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Introduction

As an aspect of communicative competence, pragmatic competence gained momentum in post-2000 second language acquisition (SLA) research (Taguchi, 2015). Kasper and Roever (2005) defined second language (L2) pragmatic competence as the ability to produce and comprehend pragmalinguistically and sociopragmatically appropriate speech acts in the L2. Due to their cross-culturally variant realization, speech acts, particularly requests and apologies, have been the most frequent targets of interlanguage pragmatics (henceforth ILP) research (Alemi & Khanlarzadeh, 2016; Kasper, 2001; Malmir & Derakhshan, 2020). Researchers have treated the knowledge of speech acts as an indicator of L2 learners' pragmatic knowledge, and investigated factors and influences involved in their production and, less frequently, comprehension (see Taguchi, 2011 for a review). While the teachability of L2 pragmatic features and instructed pragmatics' benefits over mere exposure are well evidenced (Kasper & Rose, 2001), the quandary over the best instructional approach is to a large extent unresolved. This can be in part attributed to the premium the tradition of instructed pragmatics research has placed on Schmidt's (1993) noticing hypothesis, and the implicit/explicit instruction dichotomy the hypothesis gave rise to. Although explicit pragmatics instruction has been generally found to be more effective than implicit instruction, such an effect has been shown to be mediated by the nature of assessment tasks and their cognitive and performance demands, as well as the targeted pragmatic features (Taguchi, 2015). Accordingly, expanding the theoretical foundation of ILP to involve aspects of instruction other than implicitness or inductive/deductive explicitness, including input, output, tasks, and practice, among others, would work to the development of an all-embracing model of factors influencing ILP development.

It is not long since researchers have resorted to alternative theories and instructional approaches to unearth the nature of language learners' ILP development. Input processing (e.g., Takimoto, 2007) skill acquisition and the declarative/procedural model of SLA (e.g., Li, 2012), comprehensible output hypothesis (e.g., Tajeddin & Bagherkazemi, 2014), sociocultural theory and dynamic assessment (e.g., Tajeddin & Tayebipour, 2012), and task-based instruction (e.g., Tajeddinet al., 2012) are but a few theoretical perspectives applied in instructed pragmatics research.

Against this backdrop, the present study involved the comparison of cognitive and interpersonal tasks for learners' production of the two speech acts of apology and request. The distinction rests on Nunan's (1999, 2004) five-way classification of language learning tasks: cognitive, interpersonal, linguistic, affective, and creative. The two task types (i.e., cognitive and interpersonal) were selected, as the two most popular and distinct in terms of task-specific features, in order to find out whether the nature of tasks offered would lead to differential impacts of EFL learners' ILP development. They share their focus on meaning and contextualized language use, but differ in terms of whether their completion is contingent upon collaboration or employment of higher-order thinking skills. It needs to be admitted that the distinction is slippery as interpersonal tasks can be cognitive in nature as is the case with interpersonal cognitive problem-solving tasks in psychology (Erwin et al., 2010). The study involved the comparison of two cognitive task types (i.e., inducing and predicting) and two interpersonal task types (role-play and cooperating) with each other and with a control condition in terms of their impacts on EFL learners' speech act (i.e., apology and request) production.

Literature Review

ILP has been defined as "the study of nonnative speaker's use and acquisition of linguistic action patterns in a second language" (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993, p. 3) in both pragmalinguistic and

sociopragmatic terms (Kasper & Roever, 2005; Taguchi, 2019; 2020). A myriad of studies have addressed the issue of the most effective approach for instructing speech act production and comprehension. They have purportedly substantiated the benefits of explicit over implicit instruction, and operationalized it as the presentation of speech act strategy sets and their explication with reference to the contingencies of specific interaction events; however, there is some research evidence as to the greater effectiveness of implicit instruction, or no difference between implicit and explicit instruction (see Jeon & Kaya, 2006; Taguchi, 2011, 2015; Takahashi, 2010 for a review).

Interactional contingencies involved in speech act performance include the power and distance of interlocutors and the imposition involved in the situation, known as social context variables (SCVs) (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Apologies and requests, as the two targeted speech acts in the present study, have been widely addressed in instructed pragmatics research owing to the conspicuous cross-cultural variation in their realization strategies (e.g., Achiba, 2003; AlcÓn, 2005; Al Masaeed, 2017; Bagherkazemi, 2018, 2020; Eslami-Rasekh & Mardani, 2010; Fukuya & Zhang, 2002; Halenko & Jones, 2011; Ogiermann & Bella, 2020; Olshtain & Cohen, 1990; Salazar, 2003; Takimoto, 2007; Tateyama, 2007). These studies have mainly drawn on Olshtain and Cohen's (1983; cited in Ellis, 2008) apology strategy set and Trosborg's (1995; cited in Schauer, 2009) request strategy set in their task design.

Instructional tasks, if any, implemented in instructed pragmatics studies are so wide-ranging that it is difficult to assign them with existing task taxonomies. Those featuring in explicit instruction studies span "dialogue/conversationanalysis, discussions, role-plays, video viewing, narrative reconstruction, translation exercises, and self-reflection" (Takahashi, 2010, p. 399), distinguished only in terms of whether or not they involve the explicit explanation of pragmalinguistic rules and sociopragmatic norms associated with the targeted feature. On the other hand, implicit instruction ranges from speech act-contained input presentation, enhanced or otherwise, with or without subsequent individual or collaborative practice opportunities, to simply such awareness-raising tasks as L1-L2 speech act performance comparisons, with no metapragmatic explanation provided (Taguchi, 2015; Tajeddin & Alemi, 2020). Counterevidence to the generally greater effectiveness of explicit over implicit instruction (e.g., Tateyama, 2007), or evidence as to the interaction between explicit and implicit instruction with tasks (production- or recognition-type) used to assess speech act performance (see Taguchi's (2015) meta-analysis) can thus be partially attributed to the variable nature of instructional tasks implemented in instructed pragmatics research.

Studies of the viability of task-based instruction for ILP development have mainly drawn on a few task types in their designs, and tested their effects in combination with other instructional measures such as input enhancement (e.g., Takahashi, 2001). Task-based instructed pragmatics features in Tajeddin et al.'s (2012) study. They compared a pre-task post-task pragmatic focus group, a scaffolded while-task pragmatic focus group, and a control group in terms of their speech act production, metapragmatic awareness, and pragmatic self-assessment. The study's focus was not as much on task types as the pragmatic focus phase in the course of their completion. It employed "listing, ordering, comparing, information-gap, reasoning-gap, opinion-gap, cognitive, interpersonal, role-play, and discussions" (Tajeddin et al., 2012, p. 146). The results showed no between-group differences regarding speech act production as measured through a 24-item WDCT test, but the greater improvement of the two pragmatic focus groups in metapragmatic awareness and pragmatic self-assessment. This study, too, involved both cognitive and interpersonal tasks, though no clear definition of these and other task types has been provided. Moreover, cognitive and interpersonal tasks have been mentioned alongside specific task types such as *ordering* and *opinion-gap*, which are subsumed under them in Nunan's (1999, 2004) task taxonomy.

In a similar vein, Takimoto (2012) implemented task-based pragmatics instruction, aiming to test the effect of identical task and task-type repetition on EFL learners' production and comprehension of request modifiers. He found both to be effective, but also the advanced benefits of the former. He attributed this finding to identical tasks' facilitation of deeper perceptual processing of relevant pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features of the targeted speech act. The task was of the "problem solving" type, involving individual pragmalinguistic, sociopragmatic, and pragmalinguistic-sociopragmatic analyses of input, followed by paired metapragmatic discussions. This task is very much the same as the learning-together cooperating task operationalized in this study, though all its phases were carried out in pairs in the latter. Sydorenko (2015) provides a further example of a cooperating pragmatic task, i.e., peer-peer role-play, very much the same as the role-play task operationalized in the present study. The study involved the comparison of this task type with a computer-delivered structured input task (CDSI), targeting the learning of requests in an ESL context. The results showed the greater benefits of the latter for achieving pragmatic appropriacy. Role-play also features in Li's (2012) study of explicit instruction, input enhancement, and "input+output" instruction. He found implicit instruction to be more effective than explicit instruction, though since role-play was included in all the three treatment conditions, its exclusive effect on the learners' production of request's external modifiers is not discussed.

Given this background, the present study addressed the viability of different variants of cognitive and interpersonal tasks, based on Nunan's (1999, 2004) taxonomy (see Table 1). More specifically, it aimed at comparing the impacts of predicting and inducing (as two cognitive task types) and cooperating and role-play (as two interpersonal task types) on EFL learners' speech act production. Cognitive and interpersonal task types were selected and compared owing to the emphasis placed upon their distinction in the existing literature (see Skehan, 2003 for a review). Moreover, instructed pragmatics research is visibly skewed towards cognitive tasks used to operationalize the long-hailed implicit and explicit instructional approaches, somewhat leaving interpersonal tasks out of the equation (see Taguchi, 2015; Takahashi, 2010). This is while pragmatic competence is, to a large extent, contingent upon an understanding of SCVs implicating in interaction, which peer collaboration in interpersonal tasks might promote. The few studies involving interpersonal tasks have not aimed at investigating the effectiveness of such tasks against merely cognitive tasks; rather, they have used such tasks in combination with cognitive tasks and input manipulation techniques as constituents of a unified instructional approach (e.g., Bagherkazemi, 2020; Sydorenko, 2015; Takimoto, 2012).

Table 1
Cognitive and Interpersonal Tasks (Nunan, 2004)

General task type	Specific task type	Description
Cognitive	Classifying	Putting things that are similar together in groups Example: Study a list of names and classify them into male and female
	Predicting	Predicting what is to come in the learning process
	Inducing	Looking for patterns and regularities
	Taking Notes	Writing down the important information in a text in your own words
	Concept Mapping	Showing the main ideas in a text in the form of a map
	Inferencing	Using what you know to learn something new
	Discriminating	Distinguishing between the main idea and supporting information
	Diagramming	Using information from a text to label a diagram
Interpersonal	Cooperating	Sharing ideas and learning with other students
	Role-play	Pretending to be somebody else and using the language for the situation you are in

The distinction between cognitive and interpersonal tasks is one of focus, though the two are not in complementary distribution. Cognitive tasks are aimed at employing learners' attentional resources and mental processes to induce IL restructurings, while interpersonal tasks have been valued for their potential to induce meaning negotiation and engage learners in meaning co-construction and the creation of an inter-subjective space, as posited in psycholinguistic and sociocultural approaches to interaction (Skehan, 2003). The study addressed the following questions:

1. Does cognitive task-based instruction have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' speech act production?

   1.1.   Do predicting tasks have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' speech act production?

   1.2.   Do inducing tasks have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' speech act production?

2.   Does interpersonal task-based instruction have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' speech act production?

   2.1.   Do cooperating tasks have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' speech act production?

   2.2.   Do role-play tasks have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' speech act production?

3.   Is there any significant difference between the effects of cognitive and interpersonal task-based instruction on Iranian EFL learners' speech act production?

Method

Participants

For the purpose of this study, 125 intermediate Iranian male EFL learners studying at Safir Language Institute in Tehran, from 20 to 30 years of age, were selected through a convenience sampling procedure as five intact classes. They were randomly assigned to four experimental groups and one control group. The four experimental groups (EG1, EG2, EG3, and EG4) received task-based instruction on the two speech acts of apology and request, though instruction varied in terms of general tasks types (cognitive or interpersonal) and their specific variants (cognitive: predicting (EG1; N=25) and inducing (EG2; N=25); interpersonal: co-operating (EG3; N=25) and role-play (EG4; N=25)). The control group (N=25) did not receive any speech-act specific treatment. The experimental groups were taught by two different teachers (one male (for EG1, EG2, and EG3) and one female (for EG4)), who were debriefed on the implementation of the treatments.

Instruments

The study involved two instruments: (a) the Oxford Placement Test (OPT), and (b) a 16-item WDCT.

OPT. Based on the results of the paper-and-pen version of OPT, learners at the pre-intermediate proficiency level (i.e., those scoring between 30 and 39) were included in the study. OPT is a widely used placement test developed by Cambridge ESOL Examinations Syndicate and Oxford

University Press. It comprises 60 receptive-response reading comprehension, vocabulary, and grammar items, and its results can be reported along Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) levels from *beginner* to *very advanced* (see Geranpayeh, 2003). In the present study, the participants scored between 30 and 47, with a mean of 38. The test took 40 minutes to complete, and a Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of .91 showed the reliability of the scores.

WDCT. The participants' pretest and posttest speech act performance was assessed through a WDCT test comprising eight apology and eight request items (see Appendix). WDCTs were sampled from among those validated by Tajeddin and Bagherkazemi (2014) in a 24-item WDCT on apology, request and refusal. They reflected situations which the participants, mostly university students, would likely encounter in their everyday life. They also represented various combinations of power, distance, and severity as the three SCVs (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Following Liu (2007), Tajeddin and Bagherkazemi (2014) developed and validated the WDCTs through six successive steps: (a) interview-based exemplar generation; (b) coding each situation for SCVs; (c) Situation selection and prompt development; (d) scrambling the selected items; (e) expert and native-speaker review; and (f) piloting. The time limit for taking the WDCT test was 30 minutes.

A six-point rating scale developed by Taguchi (2006) was used to rate the learners' WDCT performance. The scale targets EFL learners' "appropriate use of linguistic expressions, proper level of directness, proper level of politeness, grammatical competence, discourse competence, and the socio-pragmatic aspects of their performance, and then assigns a score to their performance" (Taguchi, 2006, p. 519). Twenty-five (out of 125) of the participants' pretest WDCT performance tokens (on the 16-item WDCT) were rated by a native speaker (a 40-year-old engineer from England) and the researcher, and a correlation coefficient of .85 showed the inter-rater reliability. The native speaker was debriefed on the study's purpose and the rating scale prior to rating the 25 response tokens. Ten WDCTs (five on apology and five on request) were also rated conjointly by him and the rater-researcher, and agreements reached on ratings based on discussions of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features of the produced speech acts. All the 125 WDCT response sheets were rated by one of the researchers.

Procedure

A pretest-posttest control group design was employed in the study. The participants were conveniently sampled, and OPT and the WDCT test were given to all the five groups. The control group did not receive any speech-act specific treatment, while each experimental group was offered three sessions for the speech act of apology and three sessions for the speech act of request (each session lasting for 30 minutes). One week after the treatments, the WDCT was given again as the posttest, and the data were analyzed.

Input to all the four experimental groups was in the form of video excerpts containing the speech acts of request and apology. Fifteen excerpts containing apology strategies and fifteen containing request strategies were selected from different episodes of the Lost series, and their length ranged from twenty seconds to one minute. The selection of Lost was based on an initial inquiry about the participants' favorite English series. More than 70 percent of the participants stated they had watched the series, and were familiar with the characters and the themes. Five such video extracts were presented at the beginning of each of the treatment sessions. The request and apology strategies contained in the videos were sampled in a way to represent various apology and request strategies and be congruent with the Iranian cultural and religious norms. Two of the four experimental groups were offered cognitive task-based instruction, and two others were offered interpersonal task-based instruction on the two speech acts of apology and request. Treatment on each speech act was provided three times a week. Of the two groups who received cognitive task-

based instruction, one (EG1) was presented with predicting tasks, and the other (EG2) with inducing tasks. Of the two groups who received interpersonal task-based instruction, one (EG3) received co-operating tasks, and the other (EG4) role-play tasks. Moreover, to avoid treatment effect as a threat to the study's internal validity, the speech-act specific treatments were presented in a counter-balanced manner, where EG1 and EG3 received instruction on apology and then on request, while EG2 and EG4 received instruction on request and then on apology. Treatment to all the four experimental groups for each speech act involved untimed focused tasks, defined in Table 2.

Task design involved the specification of task features as sketched in Table 3, and was based on Ellis (2003). To ensure their procedural distinctiveness from interpersonal tasks in the present study, cognitive tasks were carried out individually, rather than collaboratively. In addition, following Long (1989), all the three interpersonal tasks were set to be convergent in order to ensure the occurrence of more meaning negotiation.

Table 2
Task Variants Offered to EG1, EG2, EG3, and EG4

Major task type	Specific task type	Sub-tasks	Session number	Description
Cognitive	Inducing	Fill-in-the-blanks	First	Learners were presented with three conversations (which were actually the transcripts of the three video excerpts presented at the beginning of the session), and required to fill in the blanks with the provided SCV-variable request statements.
		Matching	Second	Learners were asked to work out the three SCVs for three provided request strategies.
		Completion	Third	Learners were asked to complete three dialogues with their own requests (based on the strategies that they watched in the video extracts).
	Predicting	Judgment	First	Learners were presented with three conversations (based on the strategies contained in the video extracts), and required to predict whether the speaker could convince the listener (with respect to the perlocutions of the performed speech act).
		Decision making	Second	Learners were presented with three conversations (based on the strategies contained in the video extracts), and required to select the speech act strategy, from among those provided, which would possibly have the intended effect.
		Predicting	Third	Learners were presented with three conversations (based on the strategies contained in the video extracts), and asked to guess the reaction of the listener and explain their answers based on SCVs.
Interpersonal	Role play	-	First, Second, Third	Learners were provided with two situations (based on the strategies contained in the video extracts), and asked to write an six to eight-turn conversation containing the speech act at issue, and then orally perform them.
	Co-operating	Information gap	First	Learners were paired and provided with three incomplete conversations (based on the strategies contained in the video extracts), where each held part of each conversation (made up of one speakers' turns). They then conjointly reconstructed the conversation.
		Problem solving	Second	Learners were paired and presented with three conversations (based on the strategies contained in the video extracts). They had to decide whether the speech act strategy used was appropriate or not with reference to SCVs, and if not, to write the correct form of it.
		Learning-together	Third	Learners were paired and provided with three conversations (based on the strategies contained in the video extracts). They were required to locate the request strategies in the conversations, and explain their use based on the SCVs.

The three tasks within each of the inducing, predicting, and cooperating categories were ordered considering their cognitive complexity with reference to Ellis (2003). All tasks were followed by teacher-student metapragmatic discussions regarding the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features of the speech act statements at issue, in the post-task phase. Finally, following Ellis' (2003) three-way classification of tasks into (a) structure-based production, (b) comprehension, and (c) consciousness raising, all tasks involved comprehension, and some production of the targeted speech acts; however, they can all be said to be characterized by a consciousness-raising function in terms of both speech act strategies and their associated SCVs-

Table 3
Specific Task Conditions

Tasks	Task conditions				
	monologic (M) or dialogic (D)	convergent (C) or divergent (D)	outcome: open (O) or closed (C); oral (Or.), written (Wr.), or selective-response (S)	Pre-task planning	Post-task metapragmatic discussion
fill-in-the-blanks	M	-	C; S	-	+
matching	M	-	C; S	-	+
dialogue completion	M	-	O; Wr.	-	+
judgment	M	-	O; S	-	+
decision making	M	-	O; S	-	+
predicting	M	-	O; Wr.	-	+
role-play	D	C	O; Wr.; Or.	+	+
Information gap	D	C	C; S	-	+
problem solving	D	C	O; Or.	-	+
Learning together	D	C	C; Or.	-	+

To exemplify, one of the request dialogues from Lost presented to the learners was as follows:

Kid asking a distant acquaintance to take him hunting

- Walt: Mr. Locke! Are you going back out to hunt?

- Locke: For a bit.

- Walt: Can I go with you? I mean, I want to know how to do what you do.

- Michael: Walt…

- Walt: I was just talking to Mr. Locke about…

- Michael: I know what you were doing. Not gonna happen, man. Get back to bed.

    (Lost)

Examples of two cognitive and two interpersonal tasks developed on the basis of this dialogue are presented here. For the *inducing/completion* task, the underlined part of the dialogue was left out; learners were provided with a description of the situation, and required to produce the request speech act with reference to the SCVs. As for the *predicting/judgment* task, learners were presented with the complete dialogue, and asked to work out the perlocutionary effect of the underlined speech act. On the other hand, the *co-operating/learning-together* task involved learners in locating the request strategies and discussing their use with reference to SCVs in pairs. Finally, *co-operating/role-play* involved the presentation of the situation description, followed by learners' paired production of the dialogue. A whole-class metapragmatic discussion followed each of the just-mentioned tasks, nesting L1-L2 speech act strategies' comparisons with an eye to SCVs.

Results

This study aimed at exploring the possible effects of cognitive and interactional task-based instructions on EFL learners' speech act performance. First, independent effects of each of the task types (cognitive: predicting and inducing; interpersonal: role-play and cooperating) were tested against the control condition. Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of each of the five groups' pretest and posttest WDCT scores, as well as cognitive and interpersonal groups together. As shown in the table, among the five groups, the greatest gains were evidenced for the two interpersonal groups. To test independent treatment effects, an ANCOVA test was conducted. Prior to running ANCOVA, three assumptions were checked: (a) distributional normality, with ratios of skewness and kurtosis in all cases falling within the range of $\pm$ 1.96 (see Table 4); (b) homogeneity of variances [Levene's statistic: .59, p>.06]; and (c) homogeneity of regression slopes, with the pretest-by-group interaction effect being insignificant, [$F_{pretest-group}$=2.69, p>.05]

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics of Pretest and Posttest WDCT Scores

Test Time	Group	N	Mean	SD	Skewness /$SD_{skewness}$ ratio	Kurtosis /$SD_{kurtosis}$ ratio
Pretest	Predicting	25	37.68	5.46	.11	-1.30
	Inducing	25	39.32	5.50	-.37	-.90
	Cognitive (total)	*50*	*38.50*	*5.49*	*-.15*	*-1.55*
	Cooperating	25	39.44	5.90	-.42	-.53
	Role-play	25	40.24	5.85	.64	-.76
	Interpersonal (total)	*50*	*39.84*	*5.83*	*.13*	*-.86*
	Control	25	38.40	5.53	-.60	-1.13
Posttest	Predicting	25	42.72	6.02	-.05	-1.01
	Inducing	25	42.92	5.39	.01	-.70
	Cognitive (total)	*50*	*42.82*	*5.65*	*-.05*	*-1.23*
	Cooperating	25	48.68	5.25	-.09	-.36
	Role-play	25	46.56	5.61	.08	-1.17
	Interpersonal (total)	*50*	*47.62*	*5.48*	*-.10*	*-1.12*
	Control	25	40.80	6.05	.27	-.90

One-way ANCOVA results showed significant between-group posttest WDCT scores' differences, with pretest WDCT scores used as covariates [F (1, 119) = 52.13, p < .05, partial eta squared = .64]. Table 5 shows the pairwise comparisons across the five groups, conducted to locate the difference between each possible pair. Comparisons revealed:

1. no significant difference between the "inducing group" and the "control group" [mean difference=1.18; p > .05];

2. the significantly superior performance of the "predicting group" over the "control group" [mean difference=2.64; p < .05];

3. the significantly superior performance of the "role-play group" over the "control group" [mean difference=3.10; p < .05]; and

4. the significantly superior performance of the "cooperating group" over the "control group" [mean difference=6.87; p < .05].

Accordingly, among all the four EGs, only the inducing group failed to outperform the control group. Of the other three EGs, the cooperating group made the greatest gain over the control group, followed by the role-play group and the predicting group, respectively.

As far as the comparative effects of cognitive and interpersonal tasks are concerned, a further one-way ANCOVA was conducted on the cumulative WDCT scores of the participants in the two cognitive and the two interpersonal groups (see Table 2 for descriptive statistics). Three assumptions behind one-way ANCOVA were checked: (a) distributional normality, with ratios of skewness and kurtosis in both cases falling within the range of $\pm$ 1.96 (see Table 2); (b) homogeneity of variances [Levene's statistic: .63, p>.05]; and (c) homogeneity of regression slopes, with the pretest-by-group interaction effect being insignificant [$F_{pretest-group}$=2.71, p>.05]. After adjusting for the WDCT scores on the pretest, ANCOVA detected a significant difference between the two 50-member groups' posttest WDCT scores [F (1, 97) = 65.16, p < .05, partial eta squared = .40], with the interpersonal group outperforming the cognitive group. Pairwise EGs' comparisons, as shown in Table 5, indicated:

1. no significant difference between the "role-play group" and the "inducing group" [mean difference=1.32; p > .05];

2. the significantly superior performance of both the "cooperating group" and the "role-play group" over the "predicting group" [mean difference$_1$=4.20; mean difference$_2$: 1.32, p < .05];

3. the significantly superior performance of both the "cooperating group" and the "role-play group" over the "inducing group" [mean difference$_1$=5.69; mean difference$_2$: 2.82, p < .05];

4. the significantly superior performance of the "predicting group" over the "inducing group" [mean difference=1.49; p < .05]; and

5. the significantly superior performance of the "cooperating group" over the "role-play group" [mean difference=3.77; p < .05].

To sum up, of the two cognitive groups, the predicting group, and of the two interpersonal groups, the cooperating group outperformed the other. This is while the predicting and role-play groups showed comparable performance. Apart from that, the interpersonal groups outperformed the cognitive groups.

Table 5
Pairwise Comparisons among Types of Task-Based Instructions Regarding Total Speech Act Performance in the Five Groups

GROUP		Mean Difference	SE	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control	Predicting	-2.67*	.52	.00	-4.15	-1.20
	Inducing	-1.18	.51	.22	-2.64	.27
	Cooperating	-6.87*	.51	.00	-8.33	-5.42
	Role-play	-3.10*	.51	.00	-5.47	-2.53
Predicting	Inducing	1.49*	.51	.04	.02	2.97
	Cooperating	-4.20*	.51	.00	-5.67	-2.73
	Role-play	-1.32	.52	.12	-2.81	.16
Inducing	Cooperating	-5.69*	.51	.00	-7.15	-4.24
	Role-play	-2.82*	.51	.00	-4.29	-1.35
Cooperating	Role-play	3.77	.52	.00	1.12	4.60

Discussion

The present study aimed at probing the effectiveness of cognitive and interpersonal task-based instruction on EFL learners' production of the two speech acts of apology and request. Both cognitive and interpersonal tasks significantly affected the participants' WDCT scores, but the latter was found to be more effective. Of the two interpersonal groups, the co-operating group outdid the role-play group. In the two cognitive groups, the predicting group outperformed the inducing group.

That three of the four instructional approaches (predicting, co-operating, and role-play) proved to boost the participants' speech act production provides partial evidence for the teachability of L2 pragmatic features, as one of the main concerns of ILP research (Kasper & Rose, 2001). Failure of the "inducing" group to outperform the control group can be rationalized with reference to the nature of the tasks offered. Inducing tasks in the present study might have placed a great cognitive load on the participants in this group. Expecting EFL learners to induce pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of speech act performance based on a few speech act video vignettes could be too much in the absence of any prior pragmatics instruction, relevant input in the environment, and pragmatics-geared materials. On the other hand, interpersonal tasks offered the additional advantage of cooperative work and peer assistance, and predicting tasks involved use of subsequent relevant input for hypothesis testing. The positive or negative evidence provided in subsequent input might have left its effect on learners' speech act production ability.

The better performance of the participants in the two interpersonal groups compared with the two cognitive groups can be explained with reference to the emphasis placed on the acquisitional significance of learner-learner interaction and collaborative dialoguing (Swain & Lapkin, 2001). Based on the "Comprehensible Output Hypothesis" (Swain, 1985), three functions can be ascribed to learner output: noticing one's knowledge gap(s), reflecting over one's language use, and testing hypotheses about how language works. Owing to interaction and production opportunities offered in interpersonal tasks, learners might have been led to notice important aspects of speech act performance through the meta-talk they probably engaged in; but, this has to be shown in further research. In her qualitative investigation of individual and learner-learner collaborative languaging while completing WDCTs, Bagherkazemi (2020) found that learners in the collaborative languaging group engaged in more pragmatics related-episodes (PREs), which led learners to notice SCV-related aspects of the production of the targeted speech acts. In this regard, Tajeddin, et al. (2012, p. 160) stated that "tasks provide opportunities for language learners to struggle for meaning negotiation, interaction, and language use." The observed better performance of the interpersonal groups can also be justified in terms of the potential of genuine communication situations to promote teacher and peer scaffolding opportunities and positive interdependence, as the sociocultural tenets of SLA (Ellis, 2008). Adams (2013) showed that using the jigsaw technique, learners developed good attitudes towards each other as well as the task. The less significant improvement of the participants in the two cognitive groups compared with the two interpersonal groups, can be attributed to the fact that cognitive tasks needed more mental processing, and it might have been difficult for learners to notice the gaps in their knowledge by themselves given that they had received limited pragmatics instruction, if any, and had been presented with instructional materials in which pragmatics did not occupy a significant position.

Between the two interpersonal groups, the co-operating group outdid the role-play group. This can be justified with reference to the fact that learners in the role-play group had to focus on both performance and accuracy, with the former occupying part of their attentional resources. This is despite the planning time that the role-play group was granted. The contribution of pre-task planning to accuracy is not well-evidenced (Skehan, 2003). On the other hand, learners in the co-

operating group were given time to negotiate the various aspects of the social context variables, without worrying to meet up the standards of performing the speech act at issue; this might have led them to notice the gap in their knowledge and ask each other for help. Another explanation would be the variety of tasks that were offered in the co-operating group. This last explanation is, however, at odds with Takimoto's (2012) finding as to the attentional benefits of identical task repetition for ILP development.

Between the two cognitive groups, the predicting group outperformed the inducing group. In the predicting group, learners' improvement can be said to be due to the greater benefits of metapragmatic discussions to this group. The expectations they developed following the predicting tasks might have had a stronger consciousness raising function regarding the SCVs, compared with inducing. A similar observation was made by Takahashi (2001) who found that the participants in the form-comparison condition noticed the target request forms better than those in the form-search condition that resembled the inducing tasks in this study. In addition, the results showed that various kinds of tasks might need learners to process the input in different ways. According to Ellis (2003), tasks with a high cognitive demand generate pushed output. Nevertheless, when it comes to pragmatics, interaction as well as metapragmatic discussions following the demands put on learners' cognitive processing capacity in different tasks can be said to have advantaged them.

Conclusion

To contribute to ILP and instructed pragmatics research, the present study compared cognitive (predicting and inducing) and interpersonal (role-play and cooperating) task-based instruction in a control-group design for EFL learners' speech act production. The results showed the greater effectiveness of interpersonal tasks compared with cognitive tasks. The findings corroborate not only research findings as to the teachability of pragmatics (see Taguchi, 2011, 2015, for a review), but also the significance of "interaction" in language learning.

Considering the fact that interpersonal groups outperformed the cognitive groups in their production of the two speech acts, it can be concluded that the pragmatics-oriented tasks which demand learner-learner interaction or learner-teacher interaction might be more effective by virtue of their induced meaning negotiation and sharing episodes, in comparison with tasks which demand greater mental processing.

Of the two interpersonal conditions, the co-operating condition was more effective than the role-play condition. The former involved a greater amount of time for sharing information and meta-talk over the related pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of speech act performance, while the latter involved much less planning time. This shows the significance of planning time for task performance and learners' joint output production attempts. Another conclusion is that in the absence of pragmatics-oriented materials and other pragmatics-related aspects of language teaching syllabi in EFL settings, learners would benefit more from interpersonal pragmatic tasks than is the case with merely cognitive ones, which would probably suit grammar and other computationally demanding aspects of language. Pragmatic performance is an important aspect of both linguistic and social investment in interaction, and socially oriented tasks (interpersonal ones) would be more effective for their learning.

This study carries several implications for ILP development and instruction from both theoretical and practical angles. Theoretically, the study suggests a dissociation from the noticing hypothesis which has long served as the major force behind instructional pragmatics (as evident in the prominence of implicit and explicit instructional approaches), and the consideration of alternative

theoretical positions. These could be those theories that underscore the potential of interaction, sharing and social investment in learning. Long's (1996) "Interaction Hypothesis," "Sociocultural Theory" and Swain's (1985) "Output Hypothesis" could all be viewed as apt theoretical foundations for designing pragmatics teaching syllabi. Based on the results of the study, theories of the sort could better inform ILP development than merely cognitive ones in EFL contexts where pragmatic features have long been viewed as a subsidiary aspect of language teaching and learning. More specifically, interactive and convergent tasks can be said to have the potential to aid learners in their ILP development endeavors. Such tasks are likely to play a consciousness-raising function, and engage learners in meta-pragmatic talk and reflection episodes, in relation to the three SCVs of speech act performance. This, however, should be shown in further research.

Practically, the present study's findings could have implications for instructional programs targeting L2 pragmatic features, both in terms of syllabus design and materials development. Inclusion of L2 pragmatics features as an important mastery goal seems to be worth doing, as the present study extends the existing evidence for the teachability of such features. Moreover, tasks in which learners share their ideas regarding the viability of L2 pragmatic performance in various situations, following input, could be potentially more effective than individual and merely cognitive tasks. These said, learners' speech act production in this study was only measured through a 16-item WDCT. Further research involving the triangulation of WDCT data with other types of DCT or with analysis of learners' produced speech acts in the course of their real interaction with native speakers would work to the consolidation, or otherwise, of the findings of the study.

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Appendix

Written Discourse Completion Test (response space intentionally omitted to save space)

Participant background:

First Nam e: Family Name:

Gender: Male   Female

Years of English learning experience:

Residence in an English-speaking Country: No   Yes   (for……years)

Native Language (NL):

Dear Participant: Below you will find a number of situations in which you are supposed to make either an apology or a request. Please imagine that you are in these situations, and then write down what you would typically say in each.

1. You are a teacher of adult English learners at a language school. You realize one of your current students, who is older than you has a movie you would really like to watch. How would you ask him to bring you the DVD?
2. Your new teacher, who is somewhat flexible, has taught you some new grammatical point, but you haven't quite understood it. You want to ask her to elaborate more on the point. What would you say?
3. You are out shopping. Your sick father calls from home and asks you to buy him some tablets on your way back. When you get home, you realize you have forgotten to get him the tablets and the drugstore is now closed. What would you say to apologize?
4. You go to the university library to study for your final exam. In the library, the mobile phone of another student whom you don't know repeatedly vibrates. You decide to ask him to turn the vibration mode off. What would you say?
5. Your professor whom you have known for a couple of weeks asks you to bring him one of your books which he has been looking for since last year. You forget to get him the book for two sessions. At the end of the second session, he asks you about it. How would you apologize?
6. You are a teacher of adult English learners. You had given your new students a mid-term exam and promised to announce the results in one week. Having failed to check the papers due to lack of time, the next week you go to the class and find the students eagerly waiting for the results. How would you apologize?
7. You have been absent for two sessions in the literature class, and an exam is due in two weeks. One of your intimate classmates, who is very fussy with her stuff, has taken notes in the class. How would you ask her for the notes?

8. You are having lunch with your close friend in the college cafeteria. While getting yourself some coke, you spill a few drops on his clothes. How would you apologize?

9. You are a teacher of adult English learners at a language school. Toward the end of the course, one of your students who is older than you comes to you, and complains that you haven't been paying enough attention to her. You feel she is right. How would you apologize?

10. You need money twice the amount of your monthly pocket money this month, since you and your classmates have arranged a one-day trip. How would you ask your father for that extra money?

11. You are revising for your final exam, but your parents are watching their favorite series on TV with the volume so high that you cannot concentrate. How would you ask them to turn it down?

12. Your older sister, who has been married for a while, invites you and your parents over for dinner, but you cannot make it since you have to study hard for an upcoming exam. How would you apologize?

13. One of your intimate classmates whom you have known for 2 years asks you for your notes two days before an important exam. You yourself want to review your notes and refuse her request, though she has always helped you with her notes. After the exam, you realize she has taken offence. How would you apologize?

14. One of your professors is walking on the campus, but you fail to recognize him. Once he is past you, you realize it was your professor. You run to him to apologize for failing to greet. What would you say?

15. You are watching a football game. Your brother, who is about the same age as you comes and stands just in front of you blocking your view. You want to ask him not to block your view. What would you say?

16. You have bought a T-shirt, but once you take it home, you realize it doesn't really suit you. You go back to the shop assistant to see if he will change it with another shirt. What would you say?