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## The Effect of Deductive and Inductive Interventions on Developing Iranian EFL Learners' Pragmatic Competence: An Investigation of the Speech Act of Request

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### ABSTRACT

To contribute to this line of research, the present study aimed at investigating the effect of deductive and inductive instruction on the development of the speech acts of requests by Iranian EFL learners. In so doing, 51 Iranian EFL English-major students were randomly assigned to either the deductive group (DG) group (n = 24) or the inductive group (IG) group (n = 27). (IG). Both groups were provided with video clips of short conversations including the speech acts of request. The experimental treatment for the DG followed explicitness and deduction accompanied by a variety of drills, whereas the instruction for the IG involved input enhancement techniques. Both deductive and inductive methods of instruction adopted in the present study were operationalized according to the principles underlying the paradigms of Focus on Forms (FonFS) and Focus on Forms (FonF). Speech act development of the two groups was measured through a 10-item Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT) at the pre-treatment and post-treatment phases of the study. The results obtained from administered WDCT revealed that both deductive and inductive instruction had a significant effect on the learners' development of requests. Further analysis of the findings revealed that inductive instruction was more effective than deductive instruction. The findings offer theoretical and pedagogical implications.

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## 1. Introduction

The study of pragmatic competence, rooted in the seminal work of Hymes (1972), has undergone significant evolution since its inception as a response to Chomsky's (1965) notion of linguistic competence. Pragmatic competence, as a multifaceted construct, encompasses the nuanced interplay between linguistic knowledge and the ability to navigate social interactions effectively (Taguchi & Li, 2020; Van Dyke & Acton, 2022). Various definitions have emerged over the years, each shedding light on different facets of this complex phenomenon (Alsuhaibani, 2022; Xue, 2021). Leech (1983) characterizes it as the capacity of speakers and writers to not only accomplish communicative tasks but also to establish interpersonal rapport with their audience. Crystal (1991) frames it as the competence underpinning language use in social contexts, highlighting its role in facilitating effective communication. LoCastro (2003) extends this perspective, defining pragmatic competence as the study of meaning construction through linguistic and non-linguistic signals within socioculturally organized activities.

These definitions collectively underscore the notion that effective communication in a social context necessitates more than just a command of grammatical rules; it requires an understanding of conversational norms, social conventions, and the ability to apply them adeptly (Schauer, 2022; Taguchi, 2015). Communication, after all, is a reciprocal process where the speaker must ensure their message's comprehension, while the hearer must indicate their reception and understanding (Schmidt & Richards, 1980). Within this intricate framework of communication, speech acts play a pivotal role. Speech acts, encompassing various actions performed through language use, include requests, orders, apologies, and suggestions (Hymes, 1972). Successfully employing speech acts requires speakers to consider their appropriateness and degree of politeness within a given cultural context (Koike, 1989; McConachy, 2019). Consequently, the context and participants' behaviors in a given situation become paramount in determining the efficacy of speech acts. Among these speech acts, requests stand out as a particularly intricate and potentially face-threatening communicative act (House & Kádár, 2023).

Requests, a ubiquitous aspect of daily communication, involve politely or formally soliciting something from others. While they can strengthen social bonds, they are also susceptible to cross-cultural variations, adding complexity to their interpretation and execution (Abdul Sattar & Farnia, 2014). The act of requesting entails influencing others to act in a certain way (Blum-Kulka, 1991), often requiring requesters to mitigate potential impositions and consider the delicate balance of politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Adjacent to, yet distinct from pragmatics, lies the field of Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP), which resides at the intersection of Second Language Acquisition Research. Despite the term's focus on "interlanguage," ILP primarily addresses pragmatics, specifically linguistic action patterns, within the context of second language interactions (Marcet & Sasamoto, 2023). It centers on the comprehension and production of speech acts and politeness strategies (Eslami et al., 2022; Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993).

The importance of speaker-hearer behavior and the precise usage of speech acts in communication prompt a critical question: is pragmatic instruction, particularly concerning speech acts, more effectively acquired in a classroom environment or through naturalistic means? Empirical studies have yielded valuable insights into this query, consistently demonstrating the positive impact of classroom instruction on speech act development (Kasper, 2001; Kasper and Rose, 2002; Taguchi et al., 2022; Takahashi, 2001). Furthermore, pragmatic instruction can be categorized as explicit or implicit. Explicit instruction entails direct explanation and discussion of the rules, whereas implicit instruction seeks to engage learners' attention without explicit metalinguistic discussion (Chen et al., 2022; Derakhshan et al., 2023; Qi & Lai, 2017). Among these, explicit instruction, especially through inductive and deductive methods, has demonstrated its efficacy in promoting pragmatic development and raising learners' awareness (Kasper & Rose, 2002; Alcon-Soler, 2005; Takahashi, 2001; Farrokhi & Atashian, 2012). Inductive learning involves constructing rules from specific examples, while deductive learning starts with presenting principles and deducing rules from them (McLaughlin, 1987a; Cross, 1991).

Despite extensive research on the effects of deductive and inductive approaches on interlanguage pragmatics, a consensus on their relative effectiveness remains elusive (Chen & Xia, 2023; Kasper & Roever, 2005). To contribute to this ongoing discourse, this study investigates the impact of deductive and inductive instruction on the development of request speech acts among Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Additionally, the study explores potential differences in the outcomes of these two instructional methods, offering insights into their respective pedagogical merits and implications for language education in diverse contexts.

## **2. The Review of Literature**

Recent developments in the field of second language (L2) instruction have underscored the need to address the diverse and individualized nature of language acquisition (Fathi et al., 2023b; Zhang et al., 2023). Language learning is no longer viewed as a uniform process, but rather as one influenced by an array of individual differences (Derakhshan et al., 2022; Fathi et al., 2023a). These individual differences, encompassing cognitive, affective, and sociocultural factors, have taken center stage in modern language education (Derakhshan & Fathi, 2023; Fathi & Hejazi, 2023). Educators and researchers now recognize the imperative of tailoring pedagogical approaches to accommodate these distinctions, enhancing the overall effectiveness of language instruction. Against this backdrop, this study delves into the impact of deductive and inductive interventions on the development of pragmatic competence in Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, specifically focusing on the speech act of request.

This research's *raison d'être* is firmly rooted in the evolving landscape of L2 instruction, characterized by a growing emphasis on recognizing and accommodating individual differences among learners. Contemporary teaching methods have moved beyond the traditional one-size-fits-all approach, acknowledging the intricate

interplay of cognitive, affective, and sociocultural factors that shape language acquisition (Zhang et al., 2022). This paradigm shift reflects a broader commitment to optimizing the learning experience by aligning instructional methods with the unique characteristics and preferences of learners. Within this context, our study seeks to investigate how deductive and inductive instruction, two distinct pedagogical approaches, differentially impact the pragmatic competence of Iranian EFL learners in making requests. Through this exploration, our research contributes to the burgeoning body of literature on L2 pragmatics instruction while considering the potential influence of individual differences on learning outcomes.

Our inquiry aligns with the contemporary educational agenda, which places great importance on customizing instruction to meet the specific needs and abilities of individual learners. As we delve into the specifics of deductive and inductive instruction, our aim is to offer insights into how these methods can be effectively employed in diverse learning contexts while accounting for the intricate interplay of individual differences that shape the language acquisition process. By doing so, our investigation adds to the ongoing discourse on innovative L2 teaching methods, bridging the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical applications. It also advances our comprehension of pragmatic competence development in second language learners, with a particular emphasis on the domain of making requests.

Previous research in the field of pragmatics instruction has provided valuable insights into the effects of various instructional methods on language learners' pragmatic development. For instance, Ghavamnia, Eslami-Rasekh, and Dastjerdi (2014) explored the impact of input-enhanced instruction on Iranian EFL learners' production of pragmatically appropriate and grammatically accurate suggestions. They found that different forms of input enhancement significantly improved learners' performance compared to a control group.

In a similar vein, Derakhshan and Arabmofrad (2018) conducted a study to investigate the impact of video-enhanced instruction on the pragmatic comprehension of speech acts, including apologies, requests, and refusals, among Iranian intermediate EFL learners. They administered the Oxford Quick Placement test to 69 Iranian intermediate EFL learners, who were randomly assigned to four groups: metapragmatic, form-search, interactive translation, and a control group. The treatment involved exposure to 20 video vignettes for each speech act, drawn from various TV shows and movies. Results from a multiple-choice discourse completion test revealed that all three experimental groups demonstrated improvements from pre- to post-test. The metapragmatic group outperformed the other treatment groups, followed by the form-search group, interactive translation group, and the control group.

Bagherkazemi (2013) explored the immediate and delayed effects of explicit video-driven metapragmatic awareness-raising on Iranian EFL learners' production of English apologies, requests, and refusals. The study included 54 intermediate EFL learners divided into an experimental group undergoing metapragmatic awareness-raising and a control group. Each speech act was taught over three sessions, involving video input presentations, teacher-fronted presentations, video transcript-based

speech act recognition and reasoning tasks, and multiple-choice discourse completion and reasoning tasks. Data was collected through a twenty-four-item Written Discourse Completion Test as a pre-test, immediate post-test, and delayed post-test. The results showed no significant improvement from the immediate to delayed post-test, but overall, the experimental groups improved more than the control group.

Alcon Soler (2005) examined the efficacy of explicit versus implicit instruction on learners' knowledge and ability to use request strategies. This study involved 132 students randomly assigned to three groups: explicit, implicit, and a control group. The treatment materials were derived from episodes of the TV series *Stargate*. The explicit group received direct awareness-raising tasks and written metapragmatic feedback on the use of appropriate requests, while the implicit group experienced instruction on typographical tools of request strategies and implicit awareness-raising tasks. Both experimental groups exhibited advantages over the control group, with the explicit group showing greater improvement. Duan and Wannaruk (2010) compared the effects of explicit and implicit instruction in the use of English refusals. Their study involved sixty-two participants from two intact groups, with 32 in an explicit instruction group and 29 in an implicit instruction group. The instructor aimed to teach refusals in response to invitations, suggestions, offers, and requests. A Written Discourse Completion Test (DCT) served as both the pre- and post-test for quantitative data, while qualitative data was collected through answer classifications. The results illustrated that explicit teaching of refusals was more effective than implicit teaching.

In another study, Taguchi (2015) conducted a comprehensive review of literature related to the role of instruction and effective methods in pragmatics instruction. By analyzing fifty-eight instructional interventions through electronic bibliographical searches, Taguchi reached several generalizations. Notably, instruction was deemed crucial for pragmatics development, with explicit teaching being favored over implicit methods. Implicit teaching could yield benefits when it involves noticing and processing, and active learner engagement was considered vital for better results. Also, House (1996) investigated the effect of explicit and implicit modes of instruction on the same course of speech acts and conversational routines with German upper-intermediate university students. The explicit instruction group received teacher-centered explicit information about socio-pragmatic conditions, while the implicit group did not undergo explicit instruction. Findings revealed the effectiveness of the explicit instruction group, followed by the implicit instruction group.

Similarly, Takahashi (2001) examined the impact of different input enhancement conditions in teaching request strategies explicitly. Four groups of students received varying degrees of input enhancement, ranging from explicit instruction to meaning-focused instruction. The results demonstrated the efficacy of explicit instruction over the other three groups. Rose and Ng (2001) aimed to investigate the efficacy of deductive and inductive approaches in teaching compliments and responses to compliments. Two experimental groups and one control group, comprising a total of

44 undergraduate students, were involved. The inductive group did not receive explicit information about the target structures, while the deductive group did. The deductive group exhibited higher proficiency in using compliments.

In another study, Takimoto (2008) used 60 adult native speakers of Japanese to assess the effects of deductive and inductive teaching approaches on the acquisition of pragmatic competence in learners of English as a foreign language. The treatment groups experienced different forms of instruction, and the results of post-tests and follow-up tests indicated that all three treatment groups outperformed the control group, although the deductive instruction group showed a reduction in positive effects between the post-test and follow-up test. Qi and Lai (2017) examined the effects of deductive and inductive instruction on the development of pragmatic competence in the teaching of Chinese as a second language. Results from an open-ended discourse completion task revealed that inductive instruction was statistically more effective than deductive instruction. In a novel approach, Glaser (2013) merged explicit instruction with an inductive mode in teaching pragmatics in ESL. The study emphasized the integration of explicit teaching with the inductive mode, highlighting its potential efficacy over the dichotomous use of these methods. Furthermore, Glaser (2016) conducted a quasi-experimental study to contrast the inductive and deductive approaches in teaching pragmatics. The study involved 49 advanced EFL students and focused on the instruction of refusals. Results suggested that the inductive group experienced higher improvement compared to the deductive group.

These studies collectively contribute to the evolving understanding of how different instructional methods impact the development of pragmatic competence in EFL learners, particularly in the Iranian context. They underscore the importance of tailoring instruction to the specific needs and characteristics of learners and offer valuable insights into effective pedagogical strategies for enhancing pragmatic language skills.

The research questions arising here are:

1. Does deductive instruction have any significant effect on the Iranian EFL learners' development of the speech act of request?
2. Does inductive instruction have any significant effect on the Iranian EFL learners' development of the speech act of request?
3. Is inductive instruction more effective than explicit deductive instruction in Iranian EFL learners' development of the speech act of request?

### **3. Methodology**

In pursuit of the objectives of this study, a sample comprising 51 intermediate-level Iranian undergraduate students majoring in English was assembled. These participants were drawn from two intact classes enrolled at an Islamic Azad University in Iran. The allocation of students to the deductive group (DG) and inductive group (IG) was accomplished through random assignment, resulting in 24 students in the DG and 27 students in the IG. The age range of the participants encompassed 20 to 26 years, with an average age of 22.3 years. The student

population included both male and female individuals, reflecting a diverse representation.

Prior to the commencement of the instructional intervention, an Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was administered to all participants. The primary aim of this assessment was to ensure the homogeneity of the students in terms of their overall language proficiency. The results of an independent samples T-test, conducted to compare the mean OPT scores between the two groups, indicated no statistically significant difference in the mean scores of OPT. This lack of significant difference affirmed that, at the outset of the study, both the deductive and inductive groups exhibited comparable levels of general language proficiency, reinforcing the equivalence of the two groups as a foundational premise for the subsequent instruction and evaluation.

Two distinct instruments were employed in the current study: the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) and a Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT).

The primary objective of the OPT (Oxford Placement Test, 2004) was to establish and ensure the homogeneity of students in both the deductive and inductive instructional groups. Comprising a comprehensive set of 200 items, the OPT assesses various dimensions of language proficiency, encompassing listening, grammar, vocabulary, and reading skills. Designed by Allan in 2004, this test is versatile, adaptable to varying numbers of English learners, and adept at efficiently, reliably, and accurately placing students into proficiency-based groups, spanning from elementary to advanced levels. Importantly, the OPT aligns with established proficiency levels grounded in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), the Cambridge ESOL Examinations, and other internationally recognized language assessments (Allan, 2004). The test's reliability, evaluated through Cronbach's alpha coefficient in the present study, was determined to be 0.86, indicating a high level of internal consistency and reliability.

### **3.1 Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT)**

To assess the participants' development of pragmatic competence, specifically in the context of the "request" speech act, a 10-item Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT) was administered. This WDCT included eight situational prompts related to the experiences of university students, meticulously designed to encompass a range of variations in "power," "distance," and "imposition," as articulated by Brown and Levinson (1987). Participants provided responses to these prompts, which were subsequently assessed using Taguchi's (2006) 6-point Likert scale. This assessment considered not only grammaticality but also the appropriateness within the situational and discursive context.

Ensuring the consistency and reliability of the WDCT ratings, two independent and trained raters were engaged to evaluate the responses. Internal consistency, as quantified by Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, was determined to be 0.82, indicating strong internal reliability. Additionally, Cohen's Kappa inter-rater reliability index yielded a substantial value of 0.79, attesting to the robustness of the inter-rater agreement in the rating process.

### 3.2 Procedure

The experimental phase of this study unfolded over a span of 10 weeks, during which English-major undergraduate students, previously evaluated for language proficiency through the Oxford Placement Test (OPT), were randomly allocated into two groups: the Deductive Group (DG) and the Inductive Group (IG).

Before commencing the instructional intervention, a pre-test involving the Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT) was administered. This pre-test served as a baseline assessment, gauging participants' initial comprehension and utilization of the request speech act before any formal instruction. It is important to emphasize that the deductive and inductive methods employed in this study were both implemented in alignment with the principles of FonFS (Focus on FormS) and FonF (Focus on Form) paradigms, as established by Long (1996, 1998) and Doughty and Williams (1998). Consequently, both approaches incorporated elements of explicit instruction.

In the Deductive Group (DG), the experimental treatment followed a FonFS paradigm. Each instructional session commenced with DG learners viewing video clips featuring natural conversations containing instances of the request speech act. These video clips were succeeded by explicit awareness-raising activities and discussions, which encompassed both pragmalinguistic facets (pertaining to linguistic forms used in making requests) and sociopragmatic elements (concerning appropriateness in relation to the participants' roles in the video). Furthermore, DG participants engaged in various production tasks and role-plays to reinforce their understanding. Importantly, DG learners viewed video situations without any accompanying text on the screen and received transcripts of the situations devoid of bold-faced or highlighted words.

Conversely, in the Inductive Group (IG), a FonF paradigm was embraced, with input enhancement techniques serving as the foundational approach. IG participants were presented with identical video clips. However, in this case, captions were provided within the videos, focusing on the sociopragmatic dimensions of the situations. These captions substituted the metapragmatic discussions featured in the DG treatment. Additionally, IG learners received transcripts in which words employed for making requests were rendered in bold-faced type. This utilization of bold-facing as an input enhancement technique aimed to subtly direct learners' attention to forms, functions, and appropriate usage without any explicit grammatical explanations or metapragmatic information. Finally, in the concluding session, the WDCT, serving as a post-test, was readministered to both DG and IG students to gauge the impact of the instructional interventions on their pragmatic competence.

### 4. Results

The purpose of the first and second research questions was to investigate whether deductive instruction and inductive instruction have any significant effect on the Iranian EFL learners' development of the speech act of request. In so doing, analyses of paired samples t-test were run to compare the WDCT scores of the students in both groups in pre-test and post-test.

First the change in the WDCT scores from pre-test to post-test for both groups was investigated. As it can be seen from the results (Table 1), the change in the WDCT mean scores of the Deductive group was statistically significant ( $t = -3.84, p < 0.05$ ). Similarly, the change in the WDCT mean scores of the Inductive group was statistically significant ( $t = -5.82, p < 0.05$ ). The descriptive statistics revealed that the WDCT mean score of the Deductive group was 10.36 in the pre-test and this value increased to 11.46 on the post-test. In addition, concerning the inductive group, the WDCT pre-test mean score was raised from 10.42 to 11.81 on the post-test.

**Table 1.** Paired Samples t-Test for WDCT Results in Each Group

Groups	Pre-test		Post-test	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Control	10.36	1.17	11.46	1.29
Experimental	10.42	1.01	11.81	1.47

These results of statistical data analysis revealed that both deductive instruction and inductive instruction had statistically significant effects on the Iranian EFL learners' development of the speech act of request.

Then in order to answer the third research question, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was carried out to investigate which method of instruction (i.e. deductive or inductive) has been more effective in fostering Iranian EFL learners' development of the speech act of request. According to Hatch and Lazaron (1991), 'ANCOVA makes it possible to control for some variable - perhaps a pre-test score - so that the measurement of dependent variable is adjusted taking into account these initial differences among the subjects.' In other words, the different scores of the pre-test were considered as the covariate. Therefore, an ANCOVA was run to the data to analyze this difference in the post-test scores between the control and the experimental groups. The results of ANCOVA are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** ANCOVA Results for WDCT Scores

Source	Type III sum of squares	Df	Mean square	<i>F</i>
Corrected model	8335.426	2	3792.818	142.178
Intercept	17.361	1	18.275	.703
Pre- WDCT	5600.154	1	6675.32	294.201
Group	357.428	1	279.537	15.213
Error	761.790	40	25.630	
Total	176,236.000	43		
Corrected total	8472.431	42		

As it can be seen from the Table, both the pre-test scores and the inductive instruction had effect on post-test results. The pre-test results were taken under control by covariance analysis and it was revealed that the inductive instruction had a statistically significant effect on the post-test results ( $F = 15.213, p < 0.05$ ). Because the learners in the inductive group improved their performance on WDCT significantly more than the learners in the deductive group, the findings indicated that inductive instruction was more effective than deductive instruction.

## 5. Discussion

In this study, we embarked on an investigation into the profound impact of deductive and inductive methods of instruction on the cultivation of pragmatic competence among Iranian EFL students, with a specific lens trained on the intricate domain of making requests within speech acts. The outcomes of our research paint a complex picture, both corroborating and diverging from the existing body of knowledge in this field.

Our initial research questions centered around the effects of deductive and inductive instruction on Iranian EFL students' pragmatic competence when employing request speech acts. The ensuing results reveal a compelling narrative - one in which both deductive and inductive methods, both encompassing explicit pedagogical approaches, have demonstrated their utility in fostering the development of pragmatic competence among Iranian EFL students. These outcomes, in essence, reiterate the age-old axiom that effective instruction plays a pivotal role in nurturing language development, a sentiment previously championed by Norris and Ortega (2000).

Yet, as the findings of our study unfurl, they unveil intriguing nuances that warrant further examination. Notably, our results only partially align with those of Ghavamnia, Eslami-Rasekh, and Dastjerdi (2014), whose research concluded that input-enhanced instruction outperformed implicit methods. In our investigation, we observed a divergence from the conclusions drawn by Rezvani, Eslami-Rasekh, and Dastjerdi (2014), who found no statistically significant disparity between explicit and implicit methods concerning their impact on learners' pragmatic development.

Intriguingly, our study echoes the consistent trend identified in several analogous research endeavors (Derakhshan and Arabmofrad, 2018; Bagherkazemi, 2013; Alco'n Soler, 2005; Duan and Wannaruk, 2010; Taguchi, 2015; House, 1996; Takahashi, 2001). These studies collectively underscore the remarkable efficacy of explicit instruction in the realm of pragmatics, particularly in the context of various speech acts. To delve deeper into the multifaceted tapestry of our findings, it is imperative to consider the pedagogical landscape. The nuanced differences we observed could potentially be attributed to various factors, such as the age range of students within the Iranian EFL context, the specific teaching methods employed by instructors, and the potential influence of the Hawthorne effect. Each of these variables may have played a role in shaping the unique outcomes of our study.

The third research question in our study was designed to explore the disparity between inductive and deductive approaches in teaching request speech acts. The

results we obtained shed light on this intriguing aspect of our research, demonstrating that inductive teaching surpassed the deductive approach in terms of effectiveness. These findings are notably consistent with the body of prior research conducted by Glaser (2016), Glaser (2013), Qi and Lai (2017), and Takimoto (2008). Collectively, these studies discovered that explicit inductive instruction, when applied to various types of speech acts, consistently yielded superior outcomes compared to explicit deductive methods.

However, it is essential to acknowledge the intriguing contrast our study presents when juxtaposed with the findings of Rose and Ng (2001). In their research, Rose and Ng conducted an extensive investigation into the comparative merits of inductive and deductive teaching methodologies within the domain of pragmatics, specifically focusing on speech acts. Their conclusion was counterintuitive to our own, as they asserted that the deductive method held the potential to nurture learners' pragmatics knowledge more effectively than the inductive approach.

To shed light on these divergent findings and offer insights into the nuanced dynamics at play, we must consider several influential factors that could contribute to the superior efficacy of the inductive method over its deductive counterpart. Firstly, as suggested by Glaser (2013), the inductive approach demonstrates its strength in addressing complex and dynamic problems. By actively engaging learners in a problem-solving process, this methodology encourages a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the subject matter. Moreover, the provision of pertinent examples in inductive teaching, as highlighted by Cross (1991), can greatly simplify tasks and create an optimal learning environment. These examples serve as practical illustrations that guide learners toward grasping the subtleties of speech acts.

Furthermore, inductive teaching inherently possesses an engaging quality that captivates learners' attention and involvement. Learners are not passive recipients but active participants in the learning process, fostering a sense of ownership and autonomy over their learning journey. Conversely, deductive teaching often assumes a more didactic and passive stance, potentially leading to less engagement and enthusiasm among learners. Beyond the pedagogical realm, the context within the Iranian EFL landscape, such as the age range of students and the instructional methods employed by educators, may exert significant influence on the observed outcomes. Variations in learner characteristics and teaching techniques can introduce complexities and nuances that impact the relative effectiveness of instructional methods. Lastly, the Hawthorne effect, a psychological phenomenon where individuals modify their behavior due to awareness of being observed, may have played a role in our study. Learners' awareness of being part of an educational experiment could potentially influence their responses and performance, adding an additional layer of complexity to the results.

In conclusion, this research contributes to our understanding of the effectiveness of different instructional methods on the development of pragmatic competence in Iranian EFL students. While the study aligns with previous research in demonstrating the benefits of explicit instruction, particularly inductive methods, it also highlights the importance of considering various contextual factors that may influence

instructional outcomes. Further research is warranted to explore these factors in greater detail and to continue refining pedagogical approaches in the teaching of pragmatics to EFL learners.

## **6. Conclusion**

The present study was an attempt to investigate the effectiveness of deductive instruction and inductive instruction in Iranian EFL learners' acquisition of the speech act of request. The findings revealed that both methods of instruction were effective. However, there was a statistically significant difference between these two instructional conditions, with the inductive instruction having a greater impact on learners' pragmatic development of requests. This finding supports constructivist theories (Zahorik, 1995), underscoring input enhancement and recasts as two consciousness-raising techniques in learning pragmatics. From the theoretical point of view, the present study adds to the research on interlanguage pragmatic instruction, and, more specifically, adds to the body of research exploring the effectiveness of deductive and inductive instructions in EFL pragmatic instruction. As far as practical implications for language education are concerned, EFL practitioners might come up with better learning outcomes if they employ the inductive method in interlanguage pragmatics instruction. Instead of embarking on very explicit, deductive methodologies, EFL teachers could provide students with more problem-solving tasks to help them internalize pragmatic resources deeply. Interlanguage pragmatic development might be demanding for EFL students for three reasons (Liu, 2007): (a) minimal exposure to authentic L2 input; (b) limited opportunities for real-life language use; and (c) inadequate treatment of L2 pragmatic features in the curriculum. Even the students who are linguistically competent may not be necessarily competent in processing pragmatics. As Bardovi-Harlig (2001) rightly points out:

Even grammatically advanced learners show differences from target-like pragmatic norms. That is to say, a learner of high grammatical proficiency will not necessarily possess concomitant pragmatic competence ... Advanced NNSs are neither uniformly successful, nor uniformly unsuccessful, pragmatically; however, they are more likely to be less successful as a group than NSs on the same task where contextualized reaction data are available (as in the case of authentic conversations and institutional talk) (p. 14).

The findings of this study carry significant implications for various stakeholders involved in EFL education. Educators, curriculum developers, policymakers, and researchers can all derive valuable insights from the research, particularly concerning language instruction and the development of pragmatic competence in EFL learners. One key implication revolves around pedagogical considerations. Educators and language instructors should take into account the effectiveness of different teaching methods when designing instruction for EFL students, especially in the context of developing pragmatic competence. The study underscores the potential benefits of both explicit and inductive teaching approaches, particularly in teaching speech acts like making requests. As such, educators should aim for a balanced approach,

incorporating both deductive and inductive methods into their curriculum to cater to the diverse needs and preferences of learners.

Additionally, teacher training programs should emphasize effective instructional methods for teaching pragmatics. Teachers need to be equipped with the skills and knowledge to choose the most appropriate strategies based on learners' profiles and the specific learning context.

Curriculum developers can also draw upon the study's findings. They can use this research to inform the development of EFL curricula with a stronger emphasis on pragmatic competence. This might entail integrating explicit and inductive instruction methods into language courses, promoting a well-rounded approach to language development. Moreover, the development of instructional materials should prioritize the incorporation of real-life scenarios and authentic speech acts to enhance learners' understanding and practical application of pragmatic principles.

From a policy perspective, there is an opportunity to establish standardized guidelines or recommendations for teaching pragmatics in EFL programs. Such guidelines can highlight the benefits of both deductive and inductive approaches while allowing teachers the flexibility to adapt their methods to the specific contexts they encounter.

This study also has implications for future research. It invites further investigation into the nuanced dynamics of language instruction and pragmatics development. Future studies can delve deeper into the specific contexts, learner profiles, and teaching techniques that yield optimal results for different aspects of pragmatics. Longitudinal studies could provide insights into the retention and long-lasting effects of deductive and inductive teaching methods on pragmatic competence, helping determine the most sustainable and effective approaches over time.

Culturally, this research carries implications for cross-cultural communication. Given its focus on Iranian EFL learners, understanding how different teaching methods impact pragmatic competence can facilitate more effective intercultural interactions and communication.

Lastly, the study emphasizes the importance of individualizing instruction to accommodate various learning styles, preferences, and aptitudes. By considering these multifaceted implications, stakeholders can make informed decisions about language teaching practices, curriculum development, and policies aimed at enhancing language learning experiences and pragmatic proficiency in EFL contexts.

The limitations of this study warrant careful consideration, as they shed light on potential areas for improvement and avenues for future research. One of the primary limitations pertains to the exclusive reliance on a single outcome measure, the Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT), to assess the comparative impacts of deductive and inductive instruction methods. The utilization of WDCT, which requires learners to provide written responses in contrived scenarios, implies a degree of artificiality in the data collection process. While the test allows for controlled evaluation, it may not fully capture the nuances of naturalistic and authentic language use in real-life situations. Future research would benefit from incorporating a broader range of data elicitation techniques, such as role-playing scenarios, authentic

dialogues, or observational studies, to enhance the ecological validity of the findings. These additional methodologies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of learners' pragmatic competence in practical contexts.

Another notable limitation concerns the homogeneity of the sample, which primarily consisted of Iranian intermediate EFL learners. While this demographic served as a relevant starting point for investigating the research questions, it is imperative to acknowledge the potential limitations associated with generalizing the findings to a broader population. To address this limitation, future studies should endeavor to include a more diverse participant pool, encompassing learners with varying proficiency levels, cultural backgrounds, and native languages. Such diversity would enable researchers to assess whether the observed effects of deductive and inductive instruction methods remain consistent across different learner profiles, thus enhancing the external validity and applicability of the findings.

Furthermore, this study focused specifically on the speech act of making requests within the realm of pragmatic competence. While this narrow focus was intentional to maintain research clarity and scope, it also presents a limitation in terms of generalizability. Pragmatic competence encompasses a wide array of speech acts, cultural norms, and contextual factors, and the effects of deductive and inductive methods may vary depending on the specific speech act under consideration. Future research should explore how these instructional methods impact other aspects of pragmatic competence, such as offering compliments, expressing disagreement, or engaging in indirect speech acts. A more comprehensive investigation into various speech acts would provide a richer understanding of the nuanced relationships between instructional methods and pragmatic development.

Lastly, it is essential to recognize that the effectiveness of deductive and inductive instruction methods may be influenced by various contextual factors, including the instructional strategies employed by educators and the unique characteristics of the learning environment. This study did not delve deeply into these contextual factors, leaving room for further exploration. Future research should consider conducting qualitative investigations or employing mixed-method approaches to gain insights into how instructional strategies and contextual variables interact with deductive and inductive methods to shape pragmatic competence development.

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## تأثیر آموزش مستقیم و غیرمستقیم بر رشد توانش کاربردشناختی زبان آموزان ایرانی: بررسی کارگفت «درخواست»

### چکیده

حجم وسیعی از تحقیقات عملی از سال ۱۹۹۰، اثرات اصلی و تفاضلی رویکردهای مختلف در تدریس کاربردشناسی در زبان دوم را بررسی کرده‌اند. در همین راستا، هدف مطالعه حاضر بررسی تأثیرات تدریس مستقیم (قیاسی) و غیرمستقیم (استقرایی) بر یادگیری کارگفت «درخواست» توسط زبان آموزان ایرانی است. به همین منظور، ۵۱ دانشجوی زبان انگلیسی در ایران به صورت تصادفی در گروه‌های مستقیم (تعداد=۲۴) و غیرمستقیم (تعداد=۲۷) قرار داده شدند. ویدیوها و نماهنگ‌های تصویری کوتاه در مورد کارگفت «درخواست» در اختیار هر دو گروه قرار گرفت. آموزش عملی برای گروه غیرمستقیم شامل آموزش آشکار و مهارت قیاس به همراه تمارین گوناگون بوده، در حالی که دوره آموزشی گروه غیرمستقیم متشکل از تکنیک‌های بهبود داده بود. هر دو روش مستقیم و غیر-مستقیم که در پژوهش حاضر مورد استفاده قرار گرفتند، بر اساس اصول بنیادی رویکردهای آموزش فرم محور و آموزش معنا محور بکار گرفته شدند. یادگیری کارگفت‌ها در هر دو گروه از طریق یک آزمون کتبی تکاملی گفتمان در مراحل پیش و پس آموزش سنجیده شد. نتایج حاصل از آزمون کتبی تکاملی گفتمان نشانگر این بود که هم آموزش مستقیم و هم غیرمستقیم تأثیر چشمگیری بر یادگیری کارگفت درخواست توسط دانشجویان دارد. تحلیل‌های متعاقب یافته‌ها بیانگر تأثیرگذاری بیشتر آموزش غیرمستقیم نسبت به آموزش مستقیم بود. یافته‌های تحقیق مورد نظر کاربردهای نظری و عملی را در پی دارد.

**واژه‌های کلیدی:** کاربردشناسی بین‌زبانی، آموزش مستقیم، آموزش غیرمستقیم، کارگفت درخواست، زبان آموزان ایرانی