The Effect of Peer Scaffolding on Developing L2 Pragmatic Knowledge: A Sociocultural Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Building upon the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky, the aim of this study was to explore the immediate and delayed effects of peer scaffolding on EFL learners' comprehension and production of requests and apologies. The participants were 86 Iranian EFL learners who, drawing on their scores in the Pragmatic Listening Test (PLT) and Oral Discourse Completion Test (ODCT), were homogenized in terms of their L2 pragmatic proficiency. Subsequently, they were randomly assigned to the control and scaffolding groups. Both groups received metapragmatic instruction on requests and apologies; however, the scaffolding group engaged in collaborative problem-solving tasks during which they needed to read the situations with pragmatically problematic items and jointly work out their appropriate alternatives to them. The results of pretest-posttest-delayed posttest comparison revealed the outperformance of the scaffolding group compared with the control group in both measures of comprehension and production of requests and apologies. The pragmatic gains were also found to be maintained over a period of a month. The findings have implications in language teaching and pedagogy and suggest that pragmatic knowledge is likely to emerge from assisted performance.

Keywords: *Peer Scaffolding, Sociocultural Theory, L2 Pragmatics, Request Speech Act, Apology Speech Act*

1. Introduction

One of the assumptions underlying L2 pragmatic development is that L2 pragmatic acquisition is largely analogous to general models of L2 acquisition accepted by many experts in the field of applied linguistics and SLA research (Gass, 1988). This assumption implies that different approaches to L2 learning contribute to our understanding of L2 pragmatic development. Kasper (2001) classified these into cognitive and social ones. While the cognitive approaches focus on the role of intrapersonall factors, social approaches put emphasis on interpersonal factors and view the language learning as a social practice. Within the social approaches lies the sociocultural theory (SCT).

According to SCT, language development is basically a social process. It is the interaction of the individual with parents, peers and society that gives rise to cognitive development. Thus, there is a reciprocal interaction between the individual and the environment and the individual cannot be regarded as separable from the social setting in which s/he functions. Knowledge, based on this view, is not owned solely by the learner, but is also a property of social settings and the interface between the person and the social context (Foster & Ohta, 2005). In Vygotskian terms, individual mind functions by lower-level and higher-level tools and it is the higher level tools (e.g., categorization, literacy), the most important one being language, on which SCT has been grounded. These tools act as a buffer between the learner and the social setting and mediate the relationship between the learner and the social world (Lantolf, 2000).

Fundamental to SCT is the notion of *scaffolding* which is defined as the assistance provided to less knowledgeable learners on the part of more knowledgeable peers (Hawkins, 2015). Scaffolding assists the learner to move forward in the *zone of*

proximal development (ZPD) ZPD, according to Vygotsky (1978) refers to the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under the adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers**.** As stated by Lantolf and Poehner (2014), it is through the inter-psychological mechanisms of scaffolding that learners are in the position of internalizing the knowledge they co-constructed through a collaborative activity. Hence, social interactions and scaffolding are paramount in cognitive development and key notions upon which SCT rests.

So far, a number of studies have explored how engaging in peer scaffolding tasks might be conducive to development of different aspects of L2 (Ahangari, Hejazi, & Razmjou, 2014; Edstrom, 2015; Karimi & Jalilivand, 2014; Memari Hanjani & Li, 2014; Zarei & Keshavarz, 2011). The effect of peer scaffolding on development of L2 pragmatic knowledge, however, has been rarely attempted (e.g., Dufon, 2008; van Compernolle & Kinginger, 2013). Moreover, most of the interventional studies conducted so far on L2 pragmatics explored the pragmatic gains in short term and there is a perceived need for the studies that explore whether the pragmatic gains can be retained over the long run.

The current study fills the gap in the literature by examining how SCT and particularly the notion of scaffolding may be applied to L2 pragmatics. In the context of classroom, one can assume how engaging in peer collaborative tasks leads to L2 development. It makes sense to ask whether scaffolding grounded within peer collaborative tasks might also push pragmatic development forward. The current study is a novel attempt to bring together three aspects of SCT, scaffolding and L2 pragmatic competence and examines the effectiveness of peer scaffolding on comprehension and production of request and apology speech acts. The following research questions were specifically addressed:

1. Does peer scaffolding make any significant improvement in the comprehension of requests and apologies among Iranian EFL learners?

2. Does peer scaffolding make any significant improvement in the production of requests and apologies among Iranian EFL learners?

3. Does peer scaffolding yield different immediate and delayed effects on Iranian EFL learners' development of speech acts of requests and apologies?

2. Literature Review

Research in the realm of SCT dates back to the last few decades following the work of Lantolf and his fellow researchers (Lantolf, 1994; Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995).When applied to SLA, this type of research reveals richness of learner language and how expert-novice interaction and novice-novice interaction allow learners to incorporate their own cultural and social identities into tasks in a way to accelerate L2 acquisition. In research on L2 acquisition with a sociocultural perspective, the aim is to give a better picture of how language is acquired through social construction of shared understandings (Brooks & Donato, 1995).

So far, SCT has triggered a number of studies which investigated how expert-novice and novice-novice interactions introduced variations in learners' development of different L2 aspects (e.g., Baradaran & Sarfarazi, 2011; Benghomrani, 2011; Edstrom, 2015; Fernández & Blum, 2013; Ghorbani & Nezamoshari'e, 2012; Karimi & Jalilivand, 2014; Memari Hanjani & Li, 2014; Zarei & Keshavarz, 2011). These studies provided ample evidence on the benefits that accrue when peers of equal or unequal knowledge levels interact and contingent scaffolding is said to occur.

Among others, nonetheless, the realm of L2 pragmatics does not have a robust literature in the research carried out within the sociocultural framework. Ohta (1995) investigated the acquisition of polite request forms by two Japanese learners of different proficiency levels collaborating with each other. She argued that the learners' use of the target language during the pair work was extremely different from that in teacher-fronted class and scaffolding provided a positive climate for both learners to progress in their ZPDs. They used language for a variety of purposes including hypothesis-testing about language, humor, role paly, negotiations on here-and-now, lexical experimentation, discourse management, and task regulation. Unlike similar studies in which learners tended to pick up each other's errors, Ohta's study revealed evidence on peer correction.

Dufon (2008) also explored how the interactions between participants taking different social roles such as teachers, students, and classroom guests can provide

EFL learners with opportunities to develop their L2 pragmatic competence. The interactions of the teacher, students, and classroom guest were video-recorded and analyzed in terms of the request strategies. The researcher argued that in EFL contexts where learners have very limited opportunities to achieve the target language pragmatic norms, scaffolding grounded within the collaborative interactions of participants of different social roles is an essential component of L2 pragmatic development.

Van Compernolle (2010) explored the incidental microgenetic development during an oral proficiency interview between an intermediate-level university learner of French and his teacher. Van Compernolle traced the learner's gradual development in the use of an idiomatic structure which was initially misunderstood. Having got the mediation on the part of the teacher, the learner was able to respond to the teacher. Later, the construct was internalized so that he could use it in his spontaneous speech without hesitation. This study provided evidence that learning and development are collaborative activities situated in social action achieved between people in interaction.

In a further study, van Compernolle and Kinginger (2013) presented the data collected from a case study of an intermediate learner whose metapragmatic knowledge was assessed and promoted in the ZPD. Although the data was part of a larger formal assessment, it contained features revealing the meditational function of dialogic interaction. They illustrated how the metapragmatic knowledge of social distance and power hierarchies as illustrated by the second-person pronouns *tu* and *vous* was emerged as the case attempted to choose between these pronouns in cooperation with the tutor.

Tajeddin and Tayebipour (2015) also explored the relationship between the individual's ZPD and the ZPD of the group as a whole in the production of the request and apology speech acts. They found that scaffolding had positive effects so long as it is provided within one's ZPD and only in this case the assistance might be internalized. The argued that scaffolding had learner-specific effects, that is, each learner needed a specific amount of scaffolding to grow in his/her ZPD despite being in the same group ZPD.

Finally, Kim and Taguchi (2016) investigated the effect of task-based instruction on development of request speech act in the individual- and collaborative-work groups. Having received a request scenario, the groups needed to construct a dialogue, including the request speech act, based on the scenario. While the collaborative group worked in groups, the individual group accomplished the task on their own. The results of pretest-posttest-delayed posttest comparison revealed the strong effect of task-based instruction on development of request as found in the better performance of the experimental groups compared with that of non-instructional control group. Moreover, positive effects of collaborative work were found for the acquisition of requests; however, the effect was observed at the immediate posttest and faded away following a month (in the delayed posttest).

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants of this study were initially 93 Iranian English-major BA students (39 men and 47 women who registered in "Speaking and Listening Skills" classes in Payame Noor University of Bonab, East Azarbaijan, Iran. Some participants failed to attend some of the treatment sessions (n = 3) or failed to take the posttest or delayed posttest (n = 4). Therefore, these participants were excluded from the final analysis and the data gathered from 86 (N = 86) participants were analyzed. Their age range was between 18 and 32 with the average age being 23.5 (M = 23.5; SD = 12.4). Prior to the treatment, all patricians were homogenized in terms of their general English and L2 pragmatic knowledge.

3.2. Instrumentation

3.2.1. Tests

Three instruments were employed in this study: (a) QPT which was administered to measure the participants' general L2 knowledge, (b) PLT, and (c) ODCT. The latter ones employed as the pretest, posttest and delayed posttest measured the participants' L2 pragmatic proficiency prior to and following the treatment.

QPT is a standardized measurement developed by Oxford University Press and University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. It included 30 multiple-choice items, ten items for each of the vocabulary, grammar and cloze parts. The test took about 45 minutes to complete.

The internal consistency of the test was also acceptable as indicated by a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .79.

The second instrument was the PLT which was compiled by drawing upon Liu (2007) and Birjandi and Rezaei (2010). It included ten items, five items for each of the request and apology speech acts. The listening prompts used for the PLT were in the form of tape-recorded dialogues to which the participants were required to listen and then check the correct answer from among the three choices. Furthermore, the internal consistency reliability of the pragmatic listening pretest was estimated using Cronbach's alpha, yielding 0.81 which represents a roughly acceptable value (See appendix A for sample PLT items).

An additional instrument was the ODCT which was adapted from the previous studies (Liu, 2006; Taguchi, 2011). Like PLT, it included ten items, five items for each of the request and apology speech acts. To complete the test, the teacher read descriptions of each situation and the participants provided their responses to each situation while their voices were recorded. The final scores of ODCTs were the mean scores of the researchers and an external rater. The correlations between two ratings were found to be acceptable as revealed by Pearson Product-moment Correlation yielding .82 for the pretest, .87 for the posttest, and .89 for the delayed posttest (See appendix B for sample ODCT items).

All of the situations were adapted from previous studies in the PLT and ODCT and were the ones with the real-life nature and higher frequency of occurrence like educational affairs and campus life. Furthermore, the items varied in terms of sociopragmatic elements of power, social distance and degree of imposition (Brown & Levinson, 1987).These variables is said to affect the interlocutors' speech act performance (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989).

3.2.2. Treatment Materials

Three types of materials were used in the current study: (a) worksheet, (b) video excerpts, and (c) Mp3 Recorder. A detailed description of each on is presented.

The worksheet consisted of some scenarios for the request and apology speech acts. The scenarios were adapted from among the ones used in several earlier studies including Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) and Bardovi-Harlig and Griffin (2005). They differed in terms of the sociopragmatic elements of power, social

distance and degree of imposition. The treatment largely centered on sociopragmatic appropriateness. To this end, while all the items in the worksheet were pragmalinguistically correct, some of them included sociopragmatic deviations. According to Kasper and Rose (2002), pragmalinguistics involves resources for conveying communicative acts, such as forms or strategies used to intensify or soften communicative acts. Sociopragmatics, on the other hand, refers to the social perceptions underlying the performance of these forms and strategies in a particular sociocultural context.

As a further instrument, this study employed video excerpts. While the scaffolding group was engaged in the collaborative problem-solving activities, the control group watched short video clips containing the target speech acts. This was done in order to ensure that the treatment results were not affected by the scaffoldinge group's more amount of exposure to L2. The video vignettes included six apology and six request situations extracted from *Annie Hall* and *Flash Forward* films.

Finally, the researchers used Mp3 recorders to record the participants' performance on ODCTs for the rater's scoring.

3.3. Target Structures

The rationale behind choosing pragmatic features of requests and apologies in this study was that among a number of speech acts, they are observed recurrently in daily interactions of any speaker. They are face-threatening and thus demand a full understanding of their interpretation and production in order to avoid miscommunication. Besides, the results obtained in previous studies (Eslami-Rasekh & Mardani, 2010; Rahimi Domakani, Hashemian & Mansoori, 2013) showed that Iranian EFL learners had problems in identifying and producing appropriate requests and apologies in different situations.

3.4. Procedure

Two intact classes of the intermediate level constituted the participants of this study. Class 1 was randomly assigned to the experimental (scaffolding) group and Class 2 to the control group. All participants were given a pretest including a pragmatic listening test for comprehension and ODCT for production of requests and apologies. Both the control and scaffolding groups received explicit metapragmatic instruction on

requests and apologies. Scaffolding group engaged in collaborative tasks as well.

Following the metapragmatic instruction, the participants in the scaffolding group were paired with their preferred partners. Each pair received a worksheet including the situations with sociopragmatically problematic items. While all the items were pragmalinguistically correct (i.e., correct forms or resources were employed for realization of speech acts), they included some sociopragmatic deviations (i.e., the interlocutors did not adhere to the social conventions underlying the performance of speech acts). The pairs needed to draw upon their shared resources and make judgments on appropriate or inappropriate use of speech acts. In cases with a sociopragmatic deviation, they needed to underline the unacceptable part and provide the appropriate form in order to role play the modified form in front of the class.

Three sessions were allocated to each of the speech acts. In each session, the focus was on a combination of different social variables. In one session, the participants worked on the social variables of equal power, high/low distance, and low degree of imposition. They practiced requesting and apologizing their classmates and friends. The next session, the emphasis was on unequal power, high distance, and high/low degree of imposition; hence, the pairs requested and apologized their teachers. During the third (review) session, the focus was chiefly on a combination of these variables. One week following the treatment, the posttest and a month later the delayed posttest were administered to gauge the effect of peer scaffolding on comprehension and production of speech acts.

Here is an account of the procedure implemented over a six-session period. P stands for power (the relative dominance of the interlocutors in relation to each other); D stands for distance (familiarity between the interlocutors); R stands for degree of imposition (the burden placed on the hearer by the speaker's request); = stands for equal; # stands for unequal; − stands for low, and + stands for high.

Session 1: Explicit metapragmatic instruction on requests including direct and indirect strategies, politeness techniques, listener-oriented and speaker-oriented forms, and sociopragmatic factors affecting the realization of requests; Warm-up phase with the teacher modeling instances of requests and eliciting the learners' examples of request speech act in situations of (= p, ± D, − R); Working in pairs on worksheet including request situations of (= p, ± D, − R)

Session 2: Reviewing the previous session; Working in pairs on worksheet including request situations of (# P,+ D,+ R)

Session 3: Reviewing the previous sessions; Working on combinations of social variables

Session 4: Explicit metapragmatic instruction on apologies including direct and indirect strategies, apology schemes and intensifiers; downgraders, and social and contextual factors affecting apology forms; Warm-up phase; Working in pairs on worksheet including apology situations of (+ P ,− D, ± R)

Session 5: Reviewing the previous session; Working in pairs on worksheet including apology situations of (# P,+ D,+ R)

Session 6: Reviewing the previous sessions; Working on combinations of social variables

4. Results

RQ 1. *Does peer scaffolding make any significant improvement in the comprehension of requests and apologies among Iranian EFL learners?*

To address the first research question, the performance of scaffolding group on pragmatic listening pretest was compared with their performance in the pragmatic listening posttest. Table 1 reveals an increase in mean scores from 5.13 to 6.43.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Scaffolding Group

	Listening, pretest	ODCT, pretest	Listening, posttest	ODCT posttest	Listening, delay posttest	ODCT, delay posttest
N	46	46	46	46	46	46
M	5.13	5.60	6.43	6.36		
Md	5.00	4.00	7.00	6.00	7.00	6.00
Mode	5.00	3.00	7.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
SD	1.98	2.00	1.70	1.65	1.59	1.58
Variance	3.95	4.01	2.91	2.72	2.54	2.52

To investigate the significance of the difference between the mean scores in comprehension pretest and posttest, paired samples t-test was run. Table 2 shows the results of paired samples t-test.

Table 2: Paired Samples T-test of Pragmatic Listening Pretest and Posttest of Scaffolding Group

	Paired Differences							
				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				Sig. (2-tailed)
	M	SD	SEM	Lower	Upper	t	df	
Pair 1 scaffolding, listening pretest-posttest	1.09	1.95	.34	.34	.013	-2.18	45	.015

The results of the paired samples *t*-test run on pragmatic listening pretest and posttest scores of the scaffolding group revealed a significant difference between two sets of scores ($t = 4.01$, $p = .015$).

RQ 2. *Does peer scaffolding make any significant improvement in the production of requests and apologies among Iranian EFL learners?*

To address the second research question, the performance of scaffolding group on ODCT in pretest was compared with their performance in the posttest of ODCT. Descriptive statistics shows an increase from 5.60 to 6.36.

Table 3: Paired Samples T-test for ODCT Pretest and Posttest of Scaffolding Group

		Paired Differences							Sig. (2-tailed)
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		M	SD	SEM	Lower	Upper	t	df	
Pair 1	scaffolding, ODCT pretest-posttest	-.51	1.38	.30	-1.12	.095	-2.31	45	.011

As shown in Table 3, there is a significant difference between the mean scores of scaffolding group in ODCT pretest and posttest ($t = 2.31$; $p = .011$). It can be concluded that peer scaffolding had a positive effect on production of requests and apologies among Iranian EFL learners.

ANOVA test of within subject effects was also run to show the overall development of the scaffolding group from pretest to posttest in measures of comprehension and production of speech acts (Table 4).

Table 4: *ANOVA Test of Within Subject Effects Comparing the Improvement from Pretest to Posttest of Scaffolding Group*

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
factor1	Sphericity Assumed	342.95	2	171.47	49.97	.000	.64
	Greenhouse-Geisser	342.95	1.81	188.55	49.97	.000	.64
	Huynh-Feldt	342.95	1.83	186.46	49.97	.000	.64
	Lower-bound	342.95	1.00	342.95	49.97	.000	.64
Error(factor 1)	Sphericity Assumed	1063.71	310	3.43			
	Greenhouse-Geisser	1063.71	281.91	3.77			
	Huynh-Feldt	1063.71	285.08	3.73			
	Lower-bound	1063.71	155.00	6.86			

The results of ANOVA showed that a significant difference exists between the pretest and posttest scores of the scaffolding group in measures of comprehension and production of requests and apologies ($F = 49.97$, $p < 0.05$). The magnitude of the difference was also estimated and the effect size was found to be moderate (Eta squared =. 64)

RQ 3. *Does peer scaffolding yield different immediate and delayed effects on Iranian EFL learners' development of speech acts of requests and apologies?*

For the third question, the posttest scores of scaffolding group were compared with their delayed posttest scores. Descriptive statistics (Table 1) show an increase in pragmatic listening posttest (M = 6.43) to delayed posttest (M = 6.63). With regard to ODCT scores, we have the opposite trend, i.e., the scores decreased from posttest (M = 6.36) to delayed posttest (M = 5.69). An ANOVA test of between subjects effect was run to explore whether a significant difference exists between the posttest and delayed posttest scores (Table 5).

Table 5: Paired Samples T-test for the Posttest and Delayed Posttest Differences of the Scaffolding Group

		Paired Differences							Sig. (2-tailed)
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		M	*SD*	*SEM*	Lower	Upper	*t*	*df*	
Pair 1	pretest-posttest experimental	1.08	1.08	.89	-1.28	.1.9	-5.87	87	.005

Regarding the difference between the posttest and delayed posttest scores, the results of the paired samples *t*-test (Table 5) found no significant difference between two sets of scores ($t = 5.87$, $p < .005$). This shows that the effect of interaction on comprehension and production of speech acts was durable over the period of a month.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Drawing on the SCT of Vygotsky and the notion of scaffolding, the aim of the current study was to explore the effect of peer scaffolding on comprehension and production of speech acts of requests and apologies. The findings revealed that the scaffolding group outperformed their control counterparts in both measures of comprehension and production of speech acts. Their improvement from pretest to posttest was also found to be durable over the period of a month. The findings are consistent with Vygotskian stance regarding the influential role of scaffolding in L2 development. Although the original notion of scaffolding presupposes a relationship between the expert and novice, it was later extended by some EFL educators and specialists (Swain, 2000; van Lier, 1996) to refer to equal peers' dialogic interaction as well. These researchers began to argue that in addition to teachers, peers at more or less the same knowledgeable levels can also play the role of mediators in achieving higher mental functioning.

The outperformance of scaffolding group corroborates the findings of a number of studies which have documented the positive role of scaffolding in constructing
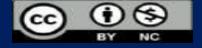
L2 pragmatic knowledge (Dufon, 2008; Khatib & Ahmadi Safa, 2011; Kim & Taguchi, 2016; van Compernolle &Kinginger, 2013). According to Khatib and Ahmadi Safa (2011), scaffolding of the more knowledgeable peers is likely to be more effective for the lower intermediate subjects' pragmatic development than the teacher-fronted instruction and feedback. They argued that L2 pragmatic knowledge can be achieved through group work in which a more knowledgeable peer or tutor progressively helps the less knowledgeable ones, though if all learners happen to be more or less at same pragmatic knowledge level, they can still effectively help each other for their L2 pragmatic development through group work.

It is conceivable that "collective scaffolding", as termed by Donato (1994), characterized the interactions of scaffolding group in this study. Given the similar proficiency level of the participants, evidence can be obtained that the students were "at the same time individually novices and collectively experts" (Donato, 1994, p.46). That is, there was no identifiable expert, but rather, the members of each pair acknowledged each other's contributions, pooled their individual resources and scaffolded the collaborative problem solving task. According to Donato (1994), opportunities for collective scaffolding can be obtained through the learners' engagement in interactional tasks. Through a collaborative meaning-focused task, learners are provided with opportunities to verbalize their problems. This verbalization assists them to pull their knowledge in a joint attempt to successfully resolve the problem at hand and in so doing deepen their linguistic knowledge and co-construct the new knowledge.

The better performance of the scaffolding group compared with the control group may be attributable to the "affordances" (van Lier, 2000) provided to the scaffolding group which were not available for the control group. During treatment sessions, the scaffolding group had the opportunities for collaborative interaction and moving forward in their ZPDs which were not offered to the control group. Although the control group had exposure to pragmatic video vignettes, the mere exposure fell short of assisting them to arrive at parallel pragmatic gains. According to Schmidt (1993), exposure to material proves insufficient in acquisition of pragmatic and discoursal knowledge.

The learners need to assimilate the new knowledge by learning and making use of communicative strategies.

As for the third research question, it is evident from the comparison of the posttest and delayed posttest scores that the scaffolding group retained their gains over the long run. The long-term retention of the solutions agreed upon through collaborative tasks may be attributed to the learners' metalinguistic talk and reflections on the forms discussed in interactions. In other words, scaffolding grounded in peer interactions led to deeper levels of processing the pragmatic features with the negotiated solutions being maintained over the long time. According to Johnston, James, Lye, and McDonald (2000), cooperative learning involves deeper level of involvement load which assists the students to apply the knowledge in other contexts and naturally increases knowledge retention.

This study sheds light on operationalizing the tenets of SCT in EFL classes and suggests that a combination of cognitive and social aspects of learning and development is the best alternative at hand.. The results revealed that pragmatic knowledge is likely to emerge from peer scaffolding; that is, mediation comes not only from the teacher but also from the peers. As stated by van Lier (1996), students can learn by the act of teaching the other students. Peer scaffolding, thus, seems to be a possible alternative for teacher scaffolding especially in large size classes with a limited exposure to L2 where teachers do not have opportunities to interact with the individual students.

Furthermore, co-construction of L2 knowledge is mainly based on the establishment of inter-subjectivity which is the state of shared focus and intention to progress in the ZPD (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Given the knowledge asymmetry between the teacher and students, achieving inter-subjectivity might be cumbersome; however, peer collaboration serves as a tool for students to arrive at inter-subjectivity and shared understanding through dialogic interaction.

Hopefully, the findings of this study sensitize the teachers and educators to the unheeded area of EFL pragmatics and the fundamental role that peer's collaborative dialogue might have in assisting learners toward a better L2 pragmatic performance. Replicating this study with a vast majority of speech acts, larger population,

employing more rigorous measures and over the long period of time remains for future research.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Sample PLT Items

Please listen to each of the following situations. There are three responses following each situation. Please read the responses to each situation and decide which one is the BEST in each situation. Please put your answers on the ANSWER SHEET by blackening the corresponding letters.

Situation 1

Suppose you want to have an appointment with the teacher this week for asking some questions about your term project. How do you ask him for an appointment?

a. Excuse me; are you available this week for me to ask a few questions about my term project?

b. Would you like to keep your appointment with me?

c. Do you mind if I arrange an appointment with you for this week?

Situation 2

A student is late for the class and is running to the classroom when he accidentally bumps into another student whom he does not know. The books he is carrying fall on the ground. He says:

a. Oops, sorry, my fault. I'm in such a hurry. Here let me help pick these up for you.

b. I will be late if I'm not in a hurry. I'll pay attention to this when I turn corner next time.

c. Oh, sorry. I'm going to be late for my class, and if I'm late, I won't be allowed to enter the classroom

Appendix B: Sample ODCT Items

Pretend you are in the following situations in which you interact with someone. What do you say in each situation?

1. You are now discussing your assignment with your teacher. Your teacher speaks very fast. You do not follow what he is saying, so you want to ask your teacher to say it again.

You:

2. You forget a meeting with a friend. You call him to apologize. This is really the second time you've forgotten such a meeting. Your friend asks over the telephone:

You:|