

Developing Pakistani ESL Learners' Pragmatic Competence: A Case Study of English Refusals

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Abstract

This study investigated the development of pragmatic competence of Pakistani ESL learners through classroom teaching. The quasi-experimental research design was employed. The sample was twenty-five undergraduate Pakistani ESL learners. The impact of teaching pragmatic competence and the retention effects of learning were investigated. The experimental process comprised the intervention of teaching American English Refusals to Pakistani ESL students. The Written Discourse Completion tests were used at three stages for evaluation and data collection. The mixed method was used for data analysis. The qualitative analysis of the responses was conducted by the performances of learners in four stimulus types of the refusals (invitations, suggestions, offers & requests) and four aspects of accuracies (correct expression, quality of information, strategies of choices & level of formality) in the pre-test, post-test and the delayed post-test (Hudson et al. 1992, 1995). The qualitative analysis helped to elaborate the further explanation of the quantitative data. The mean scores of the students in DCTs were the quantitative data. The comparison of post-test scores showed that the pragmatic competence of Pakistani English language learners could be developed through teaching. Furthermore, the study showed that Pakistani ESL students could retain their pragmatic competence in learning English refusals after two months of academic instruction in a classroom setting. The results and findings of the study supported rich implications for future researchers in interlanguage pragmatics, and further, it carried pedagogical implications related to ESL learning, teaching and course designing.

Keywords: Pragmatic Competence, Retention effect, American English Refusals, Discourse Completion Test

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Introduction

The pragmatic element of language has received much attention

in recent decades. It laid the foundation for interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) studies, defined as

"the branch of second-language research that explores how non-native speakers (NNS) interpret and carry out linguistic action in a target language, as well as how they acquire L2 pragmatic knowledge" (Kasper, 1992, p. 203). The learners could produce grammatically accurate statements but could have used language effectively according to the targeted language's social norms (Thomas, 1983; Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei, 1998). As a result of learners' violations of native rules, pragmatic errors might occur, in which they "fail to express or appreciate illocutionary force or politeness value" (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989, p.10).

The current study explored the development of pragmatic competence in Pakistani ESL learners using quasi-experimental research designs. The present study's foundation and typology were provided by the theory of pragmatics, theories of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), theories of language

learning and teaching, theory of intercultural communication and Second Language Acquisition (SLA). The research was conducted on twenty-five undergraduate Pakistani ESL students to examine the impact of teaching pragmatic competence on their learning achievements and the retention effects of pragmatic learning after two months. Pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test were used to analyze the impact of pragmatic instruction. The Written Discourse Completion Tests were used in all three tests (WDCT). The study employed mixed methods: a quantitative and qualitative approach for data collection and analysis.

Research Questions

The study was based on the following research questions:

1. How does teaching pragmatic competence to affect Pakistani ESL students learning American English *Refusals*?
2. Do Pakistani ESL learners retain the learning effect of

the American English

Refusals after instruction?

Literature Review

Pragmatic competence shows a learner's ability to properly use different linguistic forms in a given context (Juan. & Martínez-Flor, 2006). Therefore, pragmatic studies showed both speaker's intention and the context of language use (Yule, 1996). There were other dimensions of pragmatics, for example, speech acts, politeness, deixis and reference. All these dimensions were essential to discussion for developing the learner's pragmatic awareness for successful communication (ibid.). For example, speech act theory examined how different communicative acts are performed properly in any social setting. It also informed how to comprehend what was being said between the lines (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). In this respect, Kasper (1997) realized that: "pragmatic competence in L2 must be well developed in order to communicate successfully in a target language." It showed that pragmatic

competence was very important for FL and SL learners, especially ESP learners, who must achieve proper social and cultural knowledge of the discourse community with which they had to interact (Basturkmen, 2009).

Kasper (1994) expressed pragmatics as studying how humans produce and comprehend a certain linguistic activity in a particular environment. For example, Pragmatics elaborates why people, in some instances 'apologies' by saying "Excuse me" instead of "sorry" (Cohen, 1996). Similarly, McCarthy (2001) pointed out pragmatics as studying how communicative behaviours take on meaning in a certain situation. It's worth emphasizing that context played a significant role in pragmatics definition (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000; El-Okda, 2011). The word choices in the language context and participant relationships in socio-cultural backgrounds were all part of the context (Olshtain & Celce-Murcia, 2000). Crystal (1997) defined context in the light of pragmatics as

everything that has to do with the users' performance or context (Crystal cited in Kasper & Rose, 2001). He discussed pragmatics as the study of language from the perspective of its users (ibid.). On the other hand, it threw light on the users' choice of words while conveying certain behaviour, the barriers they face, and the effects of the acts on the listeners (ibid.).

Language competency is constructing grammatically proper words and structures using linguistic information (Chomsky, 1965). According to Hymes (1972), speakers are skilful not simply when they grasp the grammatical norms and know how to use them for communication; this notion was termed 'the ethnography of speaking' in his article. Hymes (1962) marked it as 'interesting' how a person uses their accent in everyday life. However, in Hymes' model, pragmatic competence was primarily covered under sociolinguistic competence; Bachman (1990) was the first to emphasize

pragmatic competence. According to Bachman (1990), language competency is divided into two categories: pragmatics and organizational competence. However, Pragmatic competence encompasses both illocutionary and sociolinguistic abilities; illocutionary capability is defined as learning how language is used in its various structures and forms, whereas sociolinguistic competence is concerned with how language is deciphered within a specific context. Organizational competence is made up of textual and grammatical competence. Grammatical competence, on the other hand, is concerned with phonology, morphology, syntax, and vocabulary. Rhetoric and coherence are associated with textual competency. Bachman's model of Language competence gave a reasonable extension of the notion of common-sense skill to include both sociolinguistic and illocutionary competence for even pragmatic knowledge. This is because

Bachman's illocutionary appropriateness links to Leech's socio-pragmatic segment and Leech's idea of sociolinguistic and pragmalinguistics talent. The majority of critics argued that context is the most important pragmatic concept.

Wannaruk's (2005, 2008) examined the phenomena of pragmatic transfer by Thai EFL learners learning American English refusals. He compared the elicited data from a similar data set of native English speakers and native Thai speakers in Thai. The findings revealed that pragmatic transfer exists in the choice and content of semantic formulae. Among the choice of semantic formulae, 'explanation' was the most frequently used strategy by native speakers of Thai and American English and Thai EFL learners.

Ruan (2007) conducted a study to examine the relationship and individual differences in pragmatic competence and learning strategy choices in pragmatic competence development. Two hundred and seventy-nine Chinese College English students completed the questionnaire,

and 14 students from this group attended a follow-up interview. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis showed that Chinese College English students' pragmatic competence was closely related to their English linguistic competence.

Lingli (2008) discovered the effects on the appropriateness of English refusals to Chinese students from the EFL explicit and implicit instruction. It was a quasi-experiment study in which fifty-eight participants were taken in two intact groups. The results showed that the learners learned how to refuse after instructions; further, the explicit group's improvement level was higher than the implicit group. The Chinese EFL students could also retain some aspects of pragmatic teachings after a certain period of the instructional course.

Ajabshir (2014) studied the impact of implicit and explicit feedback on student development by adopting a pre-test and after-test research design with three groups of students, i.e. experiment group who

had explicit instructions and an implicit group who had instructions by implicit method and a control group. Forty students were in each group after ten days of instructions on English Refusals. Discourse Completion Test performed the assessment, and the results of the Chi-square indicated that both experimental groups outperformed the control group.

Methodology

This study was about developing pragmatic competence among ESL Learners in Pakistan. So

the domain and scope of this study were about the pragmatic aspects of overall ESL teaching and learning in Pakistan. The study's target population comprised all ESL learners in Pakistani institutions.

Research Design

The present research study was about the progress of pragmatic competence among Pakistan's ESL learners. The mixed-method research approach was used.

The quasi-experimental research design was used to answer the research questions.

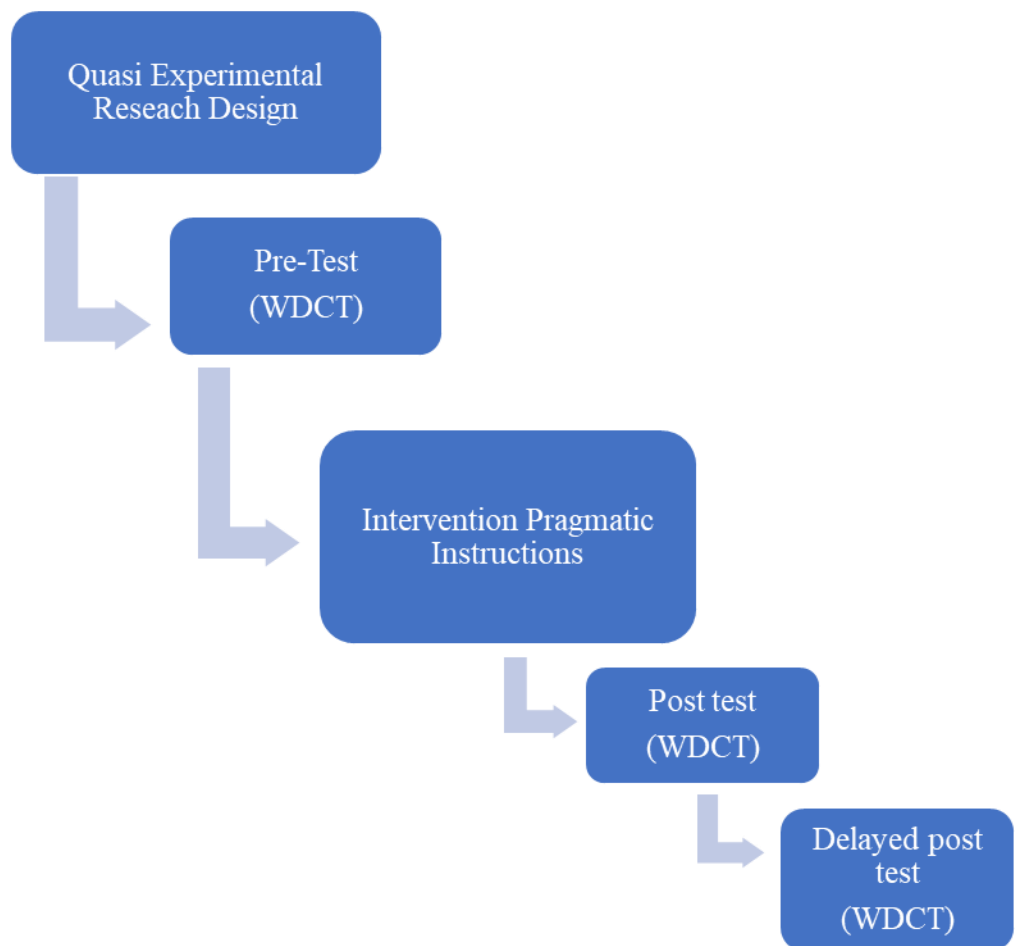


Figure 4.1: Quasi Experimental

Research Design	Retention of pragmatic learning output measured by delayed post-test scores
Independent Variable	
Pragmatic Instructions of Native English refusal patterns	
Dependent Variable	Participants of the Study
Pragmatic learning output measured by post-test scores	The researcher visited the various departments of English in different universities and post-

graduate colleges in Pakistan. He contacted the heads to get permission for the execution of his experiment study on their students. Most refused politely, thinking this study might disturb their routine classroom teaching and learning. It might put a psychological burden on both teachers and learners. However, the Read College, Shahdara, Lahore administration agreed to conduct this research on their students. The head of the English department believed that this experimental study might be a good opportunity for their students to learn and predict potential deficits in their teaching methods and learning processes. The study results could promote their English teaching and learning reforms. A class of 25 students were the participants in this study. That was in an intact group of undergraduates. In their current English language classes, the prime focus of the teachers and learners is on reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary. In terms of demographics, they were almost

identical. Before their college enrolment, they had studied the English language for eight to ten years on average during their schooling.

Process of Instructions

The researcher compiled and developed the course material to teach pragmatic competence to ESL learners in Pakistan to find out the learning output of the students and its retention. He employed explicit teaching methodology. The Speech Act of Refusal was chosen to teach. This study included four stimulus well-organized types of English refusals, refusing: invitations, suggestions, requests, and offers, as in the study of Lingi, D. (2008). Each stimulus type had three different kinds concerning the social status of the interlocutors, i.e. refusing persons of higher, equal, and lower social status.

Instructor and Facilitating Staff

The researcher recruited Mr Shahid Naeem as the course instructor, an experienced English

language instructor. He graduated from an American university and spent many years in the USA. He has been teaching English language courses for the last fifteen years. The researcher provided some training and consulted the course outlines, course material and instructional targets with the instructor two weeks before the experiment teaching for his preparations. The researcher himself accompanied Mr Shahid as teaching assistant and co-instructor. However, the researcher conducted all three assessment tests of Written DCTs

(Pre-test, post-test and Delayed post-test).

Instructional Procedure

The researcher devised an explicit technique for this study based on past research, particularly from Yoshimi (2001) and Lingli (2001). (2008). Takahashi's (2001) work used a combination of the form-search and the form-comparison conditions to design the explicit approach used in the current investigation. The following was the plan for teaching pragmatic competence.

Table 4.1 Instructional procedure

Step-1	Introduction to the topic
The instructor familiarized the learners about the concept of socio-pragmatic competence and its importance in the sensitive speech act of refusals.	
Step-2	Exposing the American English refusal patterns by active listening
The American English refusal patterns of each stimulus were exposed to the learners with the help of listening comprehension task. The learners actively watched and listen the video clip recording, including three hypothesized dialogues on each stimulus, of the American English speakers in speech situations of refusals.	
Random questioning to the learners without showing them the script of the dialogues	
Listening to the Video clip again (with script)	
Once more the random questioning to the learners	
Step-3	Explaining handouts with explicit instructions
The teacher provided two handouts to the learners. Firstly, he distributed the handout having the script of hypothesized dialogues in video clip. A second handout was presented to the participants having “Types of Instructional Targets: English Refusals to invitations/ suggestions/ offers/ requests” The instructor explicitly explained these handouts with the elaboration of expressions and functions of the American refusals on each stimulus in one session. Then the learners went through the two handouts and learnt preferences of refusal patterns of interlocutors according to the speech situation and relative social distance among them.	
Step-4	Thinking and understanding
The instructor specifically found the differences of the refusal patterns in the American English from that of learners' own native culture and she explicitly explained the differences of refusal strategies in all three situations according to relative social distances, and explained how it was different from their native socio-pragmatic norms.	
Step-5	Communicative practice session in role-play
The learners listen the dialogues again and they were assigned the roles in pairs to practice the dialogues for refusing (invitations/suggestions/offers/requests) naturally like the American English speakers.	
Step-6	Explicit corrective feedback on communicative pragmatic performance
The instructor provided the explicit feedback to the learners on their communicative pragmatic performances according to instructional targets.	

Teaching one speech act needed at least one class hour (50 mins.), and at most two class hours or sessions required (100 mins.). This research aimed to teach one speech act (Refusals). Still, four stimulus types (invitations, suggestions, offers & requests) with three relative levels of social status (high to low, equal to

equal and low to high), so there was comparatively prolonged teaching time, i.e. 120 minutes for each stimulus type. The total duration of the course was one month. The instruction classes were conducted from the last week of February 2021 to the last week of March 2021, every Monday from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm.

Table 4.2 Time allocation for the instruction

Time	Lessons
Week-1 (2 hours session)	Unit 1: Refusal to Invitations (American English)
Week-2 (2 hours session)	Unit 2: Refusal to Suggestions (American English)
Week-3 (2 hours session)	Unit 3: Refusal to Offers (American English)
Week-4 (2 hours session)	Unit 4: Refusal to Requests (American English)

Instructional Materials

Course Outline

Before the start of the course, the course outline was provided to the students. This outline consisted of the brief course description, course objectives, prerequisites to enrol, time distribution for each class, the brief procedure of the instructions, requirements from the learners during the course and assessment methods. The objective, pre-requisites, and requirements of this course were to:

- To develop pragmatic competence in the speech act of refusals;
- To assess the learning performance of Pakistani ESL learners through explicit teaching;
- To attend this course, the pre-requisites for the students were:
- A native resident of Pakistan; not ever visited or resided in

any English language-speaking country;

- Attend all class sessions and actively participate in all class activities for the required hours.
- In time, complete all tasks and assignments;

Assessment:

- Written Pre-Discourse Completion Test (2 days before commencement of classes) 26 February 2021
- Written Post-Discourse Completion Test (Next day to last class) 26 March 2021
- Written Delayed Post-Discourse Completion Test (Two months after the course) 24 May 2021

Lesson Plan

Four lesson plans were designed from Unit 1- to Unit-4, one Unit was supposed to be covered in one class session of 120 minutes.

Handouts

There were two handouts provided during each class session. Handout-I consisted of transcribing

dialogues played on the CD during the class session.

Handout-II consisted of the types of English refusals as used by the native American English speakers in their speech, like positive feeling (I'd love to), negative ability (but I can't), explanation (I have to be out of town for the weekend), no (Nah), gratitude (Thanks dude), future acceptance (may be next time), and regret (I'm honored but I am really too Busy).

Video Clips

The researcher prepared four types of Video clips. Each clip consisted of a video of role play acted by the Native American English speakers.

The video clips were played during class time, and at the end, it was shared with the participants.

Video Clip-1: Role-play activity of the Native American English speakers on Refusal to Invitations (Unit-1)

Video Clip-2: Role-play activity of the Native American English speakers on Refusal to Suggestions (Unit-2)

Video Clip-3: Role-play activity of the Native American English speakers on Refusal to Offers (Unit-3)

Video Clip-4: Role-play activity of the Native American English speakers on Refusal to Requests (Unit-4)

Assessment Procedure

The assessment of the students was done by using the Written DCTs (Discourse Completion Tests). This research adopted a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative data was gained by scoring the WDCTs, while the qualitative data was gathered by analyzing replies for proper expressions, quality of information, strategy choices, and formality level.

The researcher used Written Discourse completion tests (Pre-test, post-test, delayed post-test) as the instruments for evaluating the learners.

Data analysis procedure

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used in this research, and the data was collected and evaluated by the quantitative method. The combination

of qualitative and quantitative approaches could assist in obtaining a fuller understanding of the targeted phenomenon and improve the research's validity (Sandelowski, 2003).

The scores of the students in DCTs (Pre-test, post-test, delayed post-test) were the quantitative data. The scores obtained were analyzed using Statistic Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to answer the research questions.

To answer the first question, a paired samples t-test was used to get a general comparison analysis of pre-test and post-test overall mean scores. Furthermore, the comparative analysis based on the pre-test and post-test mean scores in four units (Unit 1: refusals to invitations, Unit 2: refusals to suggestions, Unit 3: refusals to offers, and Unit 4: refusals to requests), as well as the comparative analysis based on the pre-test and post-test scores concerning four aspects of appropriacy, namely correct expressions, quality of information,

and strategies. Next, the mean, standard deviation (SD), and t-value were calculated to obtain the significant value. It provided the effects of the instructional treatment on both groups.

To answer research question two, the general comparative analysis of post-test and delayed post-test overall mean scores was obtained by a paired samples t-test. Further, the comparative analysis based on the post-test and delayed post-test scores in four units (Unit 1: refusals to invitations, unit 2: refusals to suggestions, unit 3: refusals to offers and Unit 4: refusals to requests) and the comparative analysis based on the post-test and delayed post-test scores concerning four aspects of appropriacy, i.e. correct expressions, quality of information, strategies of choices and level of formality was calculated. Further, the mean, standard deviation (SD), and t-value were calculated to obtain the

significant value. It provided the retention effects of the instructional treatment on both groups after three months. The results were also displayed through tables, bar charts and line charts.

Results and Discussion

Regarding research question one, "What is the impact of teaching pragmatic competence on Pakistani ESL students learning the American English *Refusals*?" data analysis was performed on three grounds using quantitative and qualitative methods. The three grounds of the analysis were as under:

- 1) The overall comparison of scores in pre-test and post-test
- 2) The comparison of pre-test and post-test scores in four units separately (Unit 1: refusals to invitations, unit 2: refusals to suggestions, unit 3: refusals to offers and Unit 4: refusals to requests) based on the comparative analysis.
- 3) A comparison of pre-test and post-test scores for four aspects of appropriateness, correct expressions, quality of

information, strategies of group in the Pre-test and Post-test choices and level of formality.

General comparative analysis of pre-test and post-test overall scores

The total scores attained by participants of the Experimental

were used to evaluate the overall effects of teaching pragmatic competence on the academic performance of Pakistani ESL students learning American English Refusals.

Comparison of pre-test and post-test scores in experimental group

Participants in Experimental Group	Pre-WDCT Score obtained	Post-WDCT Score obtained	Difference in score post-test and pre- test
EG-1	22	45	+23
EG-2	19	47	+28
EG-3	26	51	+25
EG-4	15	40	+25
EG-5	17	36	+19
EG-6	21	40	+19
EG-7	20	39	+19
EG-8	25	42	+17
EG-9	17	36	+19
EG-10	21	45	+24
EG-11	18	36	+18
EG-12	21	44	+23
EG-13	19	39	+20
EG-14	19	39	+20
EG-15	25	46	+21
EG-16	21	51	+30
EG-17	28	49	+21
EG-18	15	39	+24
EG-19	23	41	+18
EG-20	13	45	+32
EG-21	18	46	+28
EG-22	18	42	+24
EG-23	18	48	+30
EG-24	19	43	+24
EG-25	22	46	+24
Mean scores	20	43	+23

As shown in the above table, all individuals improved their results in the post-test compared to the pre-

test. EG-3 and EG-16 revealed the greatest improvement. These learners raised their scores by +25 and +30

points, respectively, from 26 to 51 and 21 to 51. The lowest were EG-5, EG-9, and EG-11. For EG-5 and 9, the participant improved from 17 to

36, and for EG-11, from 18 to 36; therefore, their improvement was +19 for EG-5 and 9 and +18 for EG-11.

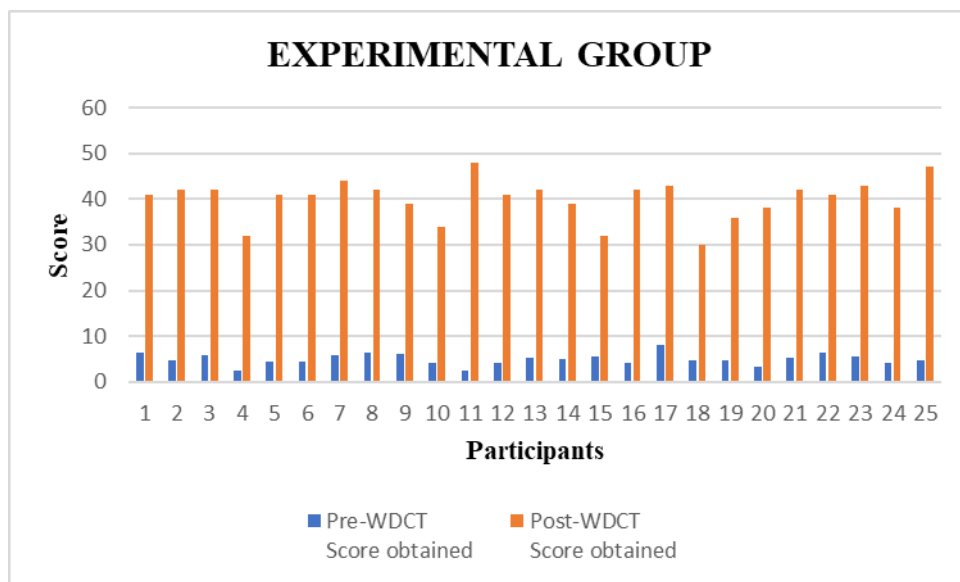


Figure 5.1: Bar chart comparison of pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental group

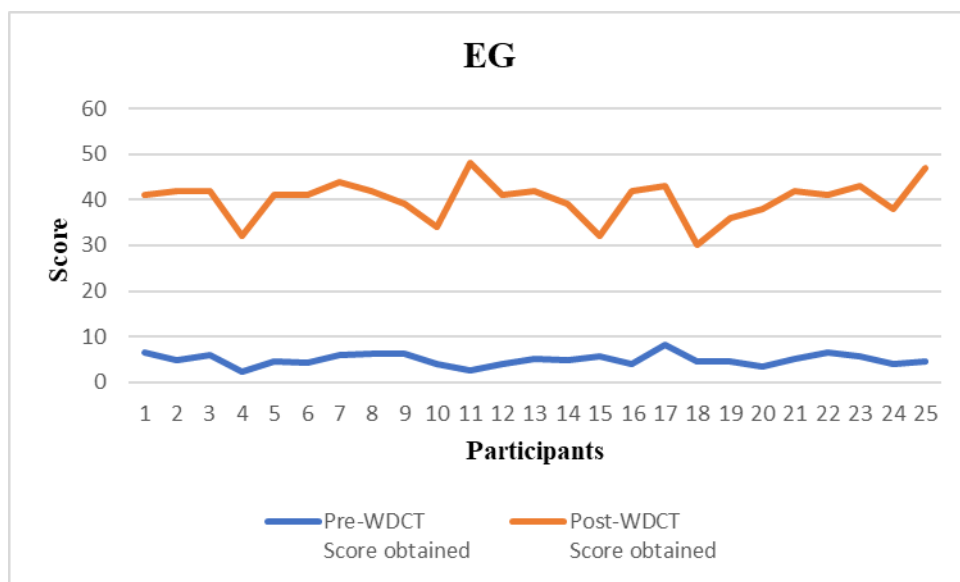


Figure 5.2: Line chart comparison of pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental group

The above bar and line charts compared the twenty-five students in the experimental group's Pre-WDCT and Post-WDCT outcomes against the study's research question-1. "How does teaching pragmatic competence affect Pakistani ESL students' learning the American English *Refusals*?" The X-axis represented the frequency of students in the experiment group, while the Y-axis

represented the grades earned. In a data distribution, it showed the frequency of the provided values. The highest rectangle, on the other hand, showed the most common values. The maximum score of 51 was given to EG-3 and EG-16 in post-WDCT, while the lowest score of 13 was given to EG-20 in pre-WDCT.

Table 5.2 Paired sample t-test

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 Pre-Test	20.285	25	3.6926	.5749
Post-Test	43.165	25	4.1043	.7853

Retention Effects of teaching pragmatic competence on the Achievements of Pakistani ESL Students

In response to research question two, "Do the Pakistani ESL learners retain the learning effect of the American English *Refusals* after instruction?" data analysis is performed on three grounds using quantitative and qualitative methods.

The three grounds of the analysis were as under:

- 1) The general comparative analysis of post-test and delayed post-test overall scores
- 2) The comparative analysis based on the post-test and delayed post-test scores in four units separately (Unit 1: refusals to invitations, Unit 2:

refusals to suggestions, Unit 3: refusals to offers and Unit 4: refusals to requests)

- 3) The comparative analysis is based on the post-test and delayed post-test scores with respect to four aspects of appropriacy, i.e. correct expressions, quality of information, strategies of choices and level of formality.

General comparative analysis of post-test and delayed post-test overall scores

To find out the general retention effects of teaching pragmatic competence on the achievements of the Pakistani ESL students' learning American English Refusals after three months of instruction, the overall scores of students in the Post-test and Delayed post-test were compared. The outcomes of the delayed post-test were compared to the pre-test results.

Table 5.3 Comparison of pre, post & delayed post-tests score in experimental group

Participants in Experimental Group	Pre-WDCT Score obtained	Post-WDCT Score obtained	Delayed Post-WDCT Score obtained	Difference in score Delayed-post	Difference in score Delayed-Pre
EG-1	22	45	36	-9	+14
EG-2	19	47	38	-9	+19
EG-3	26	51	44	-7	+18
EG-4	15	40	38	-2	+23
EG-5	17	36	42	-6	+25
EG-6	21	40	40	0	+19
EG-7	20	39	36	-3	+16
EG-8	25	42	30	-12	+5
EG-9	17	36	33	-3	+16
EG-10	21	45	40	-5	+19
EG-11	18	36	33	-3	+15
EG-12	21	44	33	-11	+12
EG-13	19	39	29	-10	+10
EG-14	19	39	32	-7	+13
EG-15	25	46	43	-3	+18
EG-16	21	51	45	-6	+24
EG-17	28	49	40	-9	+12
EG-18	15	39	34	-5	+19
EG-19	23	41	38	-3	+15
EG-20	13	45	43	-2	+30
EG-21	18	46	39	-7	+21
EG-22	18	42	34	-8	+16
EG-23	18	48	31	-17	+13
EG-24	19	43	36	-7	+17
EG-25	22	46	38	-8	+16
Mean scores	20	43	37	-6.4	17

As shown in the above table, all experimental group students increased their results in the delayed post-test compared to the pre-test. EG-5 showed the most improvement. This student increased his score from 17 to 42, a +25 increase. EG-8 had the lowest value. The participant increased his score from 25 to 30, resulting in a +5 improvement. The results showed that learning

American English refusals positively influenced learners' retention. However, most students needed help to retain their learning level properly, and their scores in the delayed post-test were lower than in the post-test. The drop in EG-23 was the most significant. This student's delayed post-test score was -17 points lower than his post-test result. There were, on the other hand, certain exceptions.

In the post and delayed post-tests, the difference.
EG-6 scores were identical, with a (0)

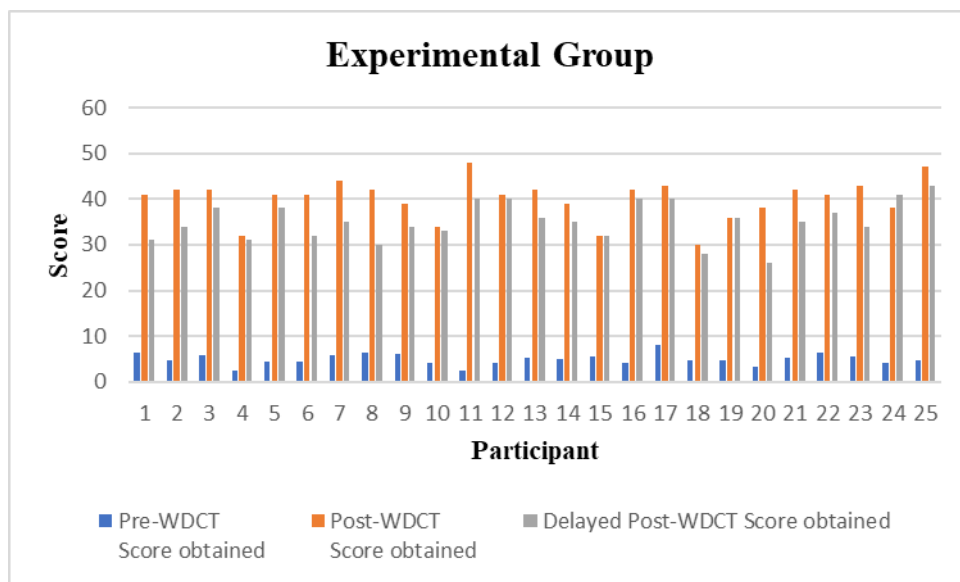


Figure 5.3: Bar chart comparison of pre, post & delayed post-test scores in the experimental group

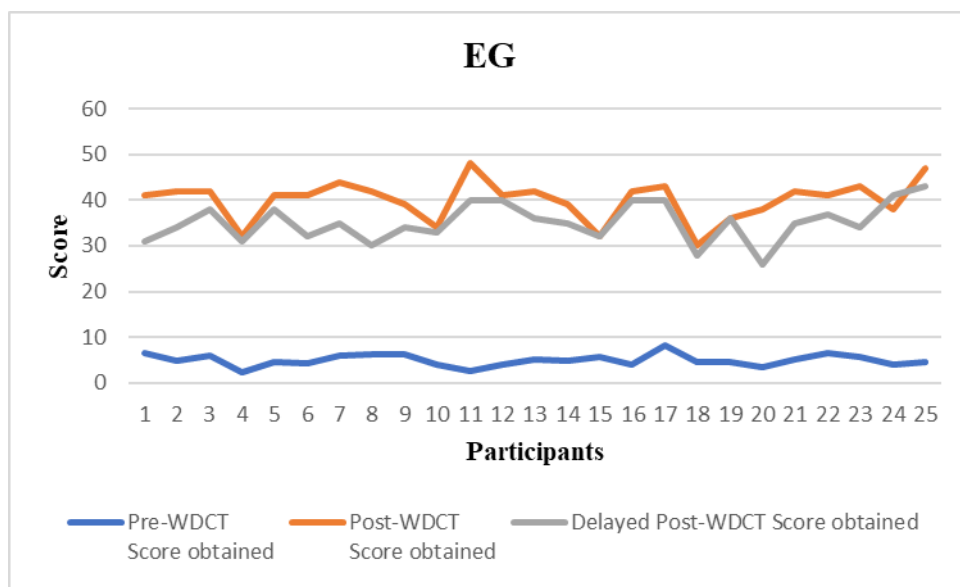


Figure 5.4: Line chart comparison of pre, post & delayed post-test scores in the experimental group

The above bar and line charts presented the results of the twenty-five students in the experimental group's Pre-WDCT, Post-WDCT, and Delayed-Post WDCT scores to this study's research question # 2, "Do Pakistani ESL learners retain the appropriate use of the American

English Refusals after instruction?"

The X-axis indicated the frequency of students, while the Y-axis reflected the grades earned. In a data distribution, it was about the frequency of the provided values. The highest rectangle, on the other hand, presented the main values.

Table 5.4: Paired sample t-test

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 Post-Test	43.165	25	4.7313	.7433
Delayed Post-Test	37.000	25	4.3501	.7518

Comparative analysis based on the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test scores in four units

Comparative analysis based on the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test scores in four units, i.e. Unit 1: refusal to the invitation, Unit 2:

refusal to suggestion, Unit 3: refusal to offer and Unit 4: refusal to request was made.

The following table expresses the score obtained by each participant in all four units of pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test.

Table 5.6: Comparison of pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test scores in four units

Participants	Pre Test				Post Test				Delayed Post			
	Unit1	Unit2	Unit3	Unit4	Unit1	Unit2	Unit3	Unit4	Unit1	Unit2	Unit3	Unit4
EG-1	4.7	6.4	5.9	5.4	10.7	11	10	14	10.7	7.7	8.2	9.4
EG-2	5.1	4.7	4.7	4.6	10.9	12.1	13.2	11.2	9.4	8.7	9.5	10
EG-3	6.0	5.9	6.8	6.7	11.6	13.2	12.2	13.1	10.2	9.5	10.8	10.5
EG-4	4.1	2.3	2.9	5.4	9.4	9.7	8.4	12.7	9.5	9.5	10.4	10
EG-5	3.5	4.4	4.3	4.2	7.9	8.0	10.7	9.2	12.2	8.4	9.9	11.2
EG-6	6.1	4.3	4.4	6.1	8.6	8.9	11.1	11.6	9.7	10	8.7	12
EG-7	4.2	5.9	4.7	5	11.2	8.2	10	9.9	7.5	8.2	9	9.4
EG-8	6.6	6.3	5.4	6.4	12.1	8.9	10.1	10.6	7.2	6.6	7.5	8.4
EG-9	4.6	6.1	3.4	3.1	10.6	7.1	9.1	10.4	9.9	8.9	6.2	9.2
EG-10	4.6	4.1	4.6	7.6	12.9	8.4	10.6	12.7	9.7	10	8.7	12
EG-11	1.5	2.5	2	1.4	10.2	7.7	9.2	8.5	7.2	6.2	8.9	9.4
EG-12	4.7	4.1	4.6	7.6	10.7	11	9.7	13	7.2	8.4	8.1	9.4
EG-13	4.2	5.2	4.7	4.6	8.5	7.7	11.2	11.2	6.9	6.1	7.9	8.6
EG-14	5.1	4.9	4.7	4.9	9	10.2	8.7	11.2	9.6	4.6	8.1	9.7
EG-15	5.2	5.6	5.7	6.9	12.2	10	10.9	12.5	9.9	12.2	10.5	10.2
EG-16	4.6	4.1	4.6	7.6	13.2	11.4	12.9	13.9	11.6	10.1	11.6	12.1
EG-17	9.1	8.1	7.4	5.4	11.2	13.5	11.8	12.5	8.4	9.7	8.4	12.7
EG-18	3.7	4.6	3.4	4.2	8.7	9.7	8.7	11.2	7.4	8.4	7.4	9.9
EG-19	6.6	4.6	7.2	4.1	11.7	9.7	9.2	10.4	9.4	8.9	9.5	10
EG-20	3.6	3.4	2.6	3.1	12.9	9.2	11.4	12.4	11.2	11.1	9.4	10.7
EG-21	4.2	5.2	4.7	4.1	13.2	9.7	11	12.3	12.2	8.7	8.7	9.3
EG-22	6.9	6.4	5.7	6.7	10.4	10.5	9.9	11	7.5	8.7	7.7	9.7
EG-23	3.9	5.6	4.6	3.7	11.2	13.5	11.7	11.5	9.9	8.9	6.2	8.2
EG-24	5.7	4.1	3.9	4.9	12	9.7	9.7	11.4	8	8.9	7.7	11.4
EG-25	6.1	4.6	5.3	4.9	10.9	12.1	11.4	12.2	9.5	9.7	8.7	10.5

In unit 4: refusal to request, all participants in the experimental group increased their scores, as seen in the above table. In the post-test, EG-4 and EG-10 showed the most improvement. These students

improved from 5.4 to 12.7 and 7.9 to 12.7, respectively, resulting in a +7.3 and +4.9 improvement. The findings showed that learning American English refusals positively influenced learners' retention. The overall mean value of the pre-test unit 4 was 5.1, the post-test unit 4 mean value was 11.6, and the delayed post-test mean value was 10.1. The findings showed that participants improved significantly in Unit 4: refusals to requests, while their learning performance in the other three units, namely Unit 1: refusals to invitations, Unit 2: refusals to suggestions, and Unit 3: refusals to offers, remained constant.

Comparative analysis based on the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test scores concerning four aspects of appropriacy

The comparative analysis based on the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test concerning four aspects of appropriacy, i.e. correct expression, quality of information, strategies of choices and level of formality, was made.

The following table depicts the score obtained by each participant in all four aspects of the appropriacy of pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test.

Table 5.7: Comparison of pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test scores in four aspects of appropriacy

Participants	Pre Test				Post Test				Delayed Post			
	CE	QI	SC	LF	CE	QI	SC	LF	CE	QI	SC	LF
EG-1	3.1	2.6	3.5	2.9	3.6	3.5	4.0	3.2	3.1	3.0	3.6	3.5
EG-2	1.8	1.6	2.4	2.2	3.1	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.1	3.4	3.4	3.5
EG-3	1.6	1.0	2.0	2.0	3.6	3.5	4.0	4.0	2.8	2.2	3.5	3.1
EG-4	1.7	1.6	2.4	1.8	3.5	3.0	3.5	3.3	3.0	2.8	3.3	2.8
EG-5	1.7	1.5	2.9	2.0	3.6	3.5	3.3	3.9	3.1	3.3	3.5	3.5
EG-6	2.8	2.7	2.0	2.4	3.3	3.1	3.5	3.7	3.4	3.3	3.6	3.7
EG-7	1.4	1.1	2.0	2.0	3.1	3.1	3.5	3.5	2.8	2.9	3.1	2.9
EG-8	1.5	1.5	2.4	1.9	2.4	2.0	3.2	2.9	2.4	2.2	3.1	2.8
EG-9	2.6	2.2	3.8	3.1	3.7	3.5	4.1	4.2	3.2	3.3	3.9	3.6
EG-10	2.0	2.0	2.2	2.5	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.6	3.7
EG-11	1.7	1.5	2.5	2.0	2.6	2.6	3.1	2.7	2.8	2.7	3.2	2.8
EG-12	2.0	2.0	2.2	2.5	3.4	3.3	3.7	3.7	3.0	2.8	3.1	2.8
EG-13	1.7	1.5	2.5	2.0	3.1	2.8	3.4	3.0	2.5	2.3	3.0	2.9
EG-14	1.9	1.9	2.4	2.0	2.1	2.6	3.3	2.7	2.7	2.3	3.5	3.2
EG-15	2.9	2.5	1.8	2.1	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.9
EG-16	2.0	2.0	2.2	2.5	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.5	4.0	3.9	4.0	4.2
EG-17	1.5	1.3	2.3	1.9	2.8	2.5	3.5	3.2	2.6	2.3	3.8	3.1
EG-18	1.5	1.0	2.0	2.2	3.1	2.7	3.5	2.8	3.1	2.7	3.5	2.8
EG-19	2.3	2.0	2.5	2.5	3.0	3.1	3.5	3.5	3.5	2.9	3.5	3.3
EG-20	1.0	1.4	2.0	1.5	3.5	3.4	3.6	3.9	4.0	3.6	3.5	3.6
EG-21	2.0	2.0	3.4	2.5	3.7	3.6	4.1	4.2	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.9
EG-22	2.4	2.2	2.0	2.4	3.4	3.5	3.8	3.7	3.1	2.7	3.1	3.3
EG-23	1.6	1.6	2.5	2.1	4.0	3.9	4.1	4.5	3.6	3.5	4.0	4.0
EG-24	1.9	1.9	2.4	2.0	3.6	3.5	4.0	4.0	3.5	2.9	3.5	3.3
EG-25	2.7	2.5	2.2	2.7	3.5	3.5	3.8	3.9	2.9	3.1	3.4	3.3
Mean	1.9	1.8	2.4	2.2	3.3	3.2	3.6	3.5	3.1	2.9	3.4	3.3

In the above table, the participants made good improvement in four aspects of appropriacy, i.e.,

correct expressions (CE), quality of information (QI), strategies of choices (SC) and level of formality (LF).

There was an improvement in the Pakistani ESL learners using the English refusals after the explicit instructions. The scores showed that the mean value of SC of the post-test was 3.6, the highest score among pre-test, post-test and delayed post. While overall highest improvement was shown in strategies of choices. In the pre-test, it was 2.4, the highest value among the four aspects, same as in the post-test, the SC:3.6 is a great value among all CE, QI and LF and in the delayed post-test, 3.4 was the highest score of SC. So, the comparative highest improvement level was found in the third aspect of appropriacy: strategy choices.

Conclusion

After instructions, the influence of teaching pragmatic competence on the achievements of Pakistani ESL students learning American English Refusals was favourable. The participants learnt how to refuse in American English by following explicit directions in the classroom. The post-test results and mean comparisons in descriptive

statistical analysis using SPSS showed that participants outperformed in learning pragmatic competence of English American refusals.

Participants improved significantly in Unit 4: refusals to requests compared to the other three units that remained unaltered, namely Unit 1: refusals to invitations, Unit 2: refusals to suggestions, and Unit 3: refusals to offers.

Regarding four areas of appropriacy, correct expression, quality of information, strategies of choice, and formality, Pakistani ESL learners using English refusals improved after receiving explicit training. The third aspect of appropriacy, i.e. strategies of choices, had the highest comparative improvement level in the participants. Pakistani ESL students could retain their understanding of English refusal patterns after two months of training. When pre-test and post-test scores are compared, there is an improvement in students' learning, but when post-test and delayed post-test scores are

compared, there is a reduction in their performance. This reduction might be deemed normal once sufficient time has elapsed with no further exposure.

The data report and the analysis showed a maximum decrease in the performances; subsequently, the lowest retention effect was in unit 3: refusals to offers by participants. The Pakistani ESL learners' learning level decreased students in all four units or stimulus types after three months of instruction. Likewise, they retained their learning of pragmatic competence in the English American refusals. Regarding the four aspects of appropriacy, the participants had the lowest retention in the fourth aspect (level of formality).

The pragmatic competence of Pakistani ESL learners could be developed through teaching, i.e. pragmatic competence was teachable to Pakistani ESL. They could also develop a meta-pragmatic ability, which allows individuals to examine various target scenarios and prevent pragmatic failures between their

mother tongue and the target language by identifying similarities and contrasts. The performance of the Pakistani ESL learners in the post-test and delayed post-test testified to the correspondence between the communication processes and language teaching.

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