

The Impact of Integrating Pragmatics Instruction in Grammar Teaching on EFL learners' Use of Tenses

اثر ادراج التداولية في تدريس النحو على استعمال متعلمي الانجليزية
كلغة اجنبية لازمنة الافعال

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Abstract

Grammar has always held a central role in EFL classrooms, but the fact of being introduced as decontextualized system of rules, disregarding the social aspects of the grammatical structures, led EFL learners to fall in the trap of misunderstanding in their attempts to use the grammatical patterns accurately and correctly. The current researcher work aims at scrutinizing the effect of pragmatics instruction, as a technique of language teaching, on EFL learners' grammar use and precisely the English tenses. To conduct the current research, an experimental method was carried out along five (05) weeks with a control group and an experimental group that were selected from the population of first year students from the Department of English at the University of M'sila. The experimental group received explicit pragmatics instruction by means of integrating meta-pragmatic information into the principles and uses of tenses, whereas the control group was not exposed to the planned instructional treatment. The obtained results have revealed that pragmatics instruction does have a positive impact over students' grammatical achievement, as it raises students' awareness of the importance of the pragmatic dimension in grammar learning. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate pragmatic insights in grammar courses in order to ensure both learners' acquisition and production of context-appropriate language.

Keywords: Grammar learning; pragmatics instruction, grammatical achievement; English tenses.

الملخص

للنحو اهمية بالغة في اقسام تعلم اللغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية. غير ان تقديم مختلف القواعد النحوية بعيدا عن سياقها ادى بالطلبة الى الوقوع في مطب التوظيف الخاطئ للقواعد بدقة وبشكل صحيح. في هذه الورقة البحثية نهدف الى استقصاء اثر ادراج التداولية في تدريس النحو على استعمال متعلمي الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية لا زمنا الافعال. قمنا بإجراء عمل تجريبي لمدة خمس اسابيع مع عينة من طلبة السنة الاولى من قسم الانجليزية من جامعة المسيلة اين تم تقسيمهم الى فوج تجريبي و فوج شاهد. تلقى الفوج التجريبي حصص تعليمية للنحو باستعمال التداولية وتلقى الفوج الشاهد حصص عادية للنحو. وقد كشفت النتائج ان ادراج التداولية له اثر ايجابي على اداء الطلبة في استعمال ازمنا الافعال. وعليه نشيد بفاعلية هذه الطريقة ونوصي بإدراجها من طرف اساتذة النحو في اقسام متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية.

Introduction

The communicative approach to language teaching and learning perceives grammar as a system of forms and meanings (Azar, 2007). In this regard, communicative competence sets enabling learners to use correct and accurate language in a socially appropriate contexts as an end of the language teaching program. To realize this end, both the structural and semantic aspects of grammar should be implemented in grammar teaching. Azar (2007) affirms that learners who receive grammar instruction tend to be more efficient language users than those who are not exposed to direct grammatical information, and they are according to Zhang (2009) on the verge of fossilizing than those who do receive instruction. Long and Richards (1987), as cited in Widodo (2006), argue that grammar plays a significant role in developing the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, communication will collapse when speakers' grammatical choices are not associated with the contextual factors. In the meantime, Ellis (2006) insists that "the grammar taught should be one that emphasises not just form but also the meanings and uses of different grammatical structures" (p.102). In other words, grammatical forms must be introduced as meaning containers which are governed by contextual constraints. In so doing, students' attitudes and beliefs toward language learning are likely to shift from the mechanical-based learning to the meaning-based learning. In support of this view, Larsen-Freeman (1999) affirms that "grammatical structures not only

have a morpho-syntactic form, they are also used to express meaning (semantics) in context appropriate use (pragmatics)” (p.252). In this regard, Swan (2007), supports this view by declaring that grammar can be split into ‘pragmatics and semantics’ (p.3).

Consistent with this view, Thomas (1983) believes that the knowledge of the linguistic code is not sufficient for a successful communication and, therefore, she stresses the social and the pragmatic facets of communicative competence. As far as the concept of pragmatics is concerned, Crystal (1997) defines it as “the study of language from the point of view of users, especially the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication” (cited in Kasper & Rose, 2001, p.103). That is, pragmatics is the study of communicative event in socio-cultural context. Leech (1983) goes further by distinguishing two distinct components: ‘pragma-linguistics’ and ‘socio-pragmatics’ (pp.10-11). According to him, pragma-linguistics is “the study of the linguistic end of pragmatics” (Leech, 1983, p. 11) which deals with grammar and refers to particular resources a speaker has to convey in particular communicative events. Socio-pragmatics, on the other hand, is “the sociological interface of pragmatics” (Leech, 1983, p. 10). It is, thus, related to social subtleties, conventions, and norms under which speakers interpret and perform their communicative acts.

Another pragmatics’ variety is launched to be invested in second language research field, which is inter-language pragmatics (ILP). Two major definitions have been proposed. The first is the one set by Kasper (1992, p.1) who considers it as: “the branch of second language research which studies how non-native speakers (NNSs) understand and carry out linguistic actions in a target language (L2) and how they acquire L2 pragmatic knowledge”. In this viewpoint, inter-language pragmatics is intended to investigate how NNSs comprehend and produce language actions in the target language, and the ways second language learners foster their ability to understand and perform linguistic actions in the target language. The second definition is the one offered by Larsen-Freeman (2001) who believes that (ILP) is a system of meaningful structures and patterns that are governed by particular pragmatic constraints. i.e., grammatical structures are intertwined with meanings and context, and are inseparable from each other.

Besides the interest devoted by researchers to ILP research, and their appeal for the necessity of raising the teachers' and the learners' awareness of pragmatic dimension in the language teaching/learning process, yet most EFL teachers introduce grammatical structures as purely mechanical segments to be learned for their own sake. In other words, the concept of grammatical structures as meaningful language units has been challenged and the grammatical forms are no more treated as meaning containers (Richards and Renandya, 2002, as cited in Mart, 2013). By virtue of that, EFL learners find themselves unable to relate the grammatical structure with its meaning. Genuinely, it is worth noting that most of EFL learners are unconscious of the social uses of grammar which led to the misuse of the linguistic choices in the act of communication.

The current research paper is sought to be, hopefully, a contribution to the body of research accomplished on the interrelationship existing between grammar and inter-language pragmatics (ILP). Furthermore, it is worthy to note that the impact of pragmatics instruction on students' use of the TL tenses accurately and appropriately has not been investigated before, therefore this research work sets the issue of testing the effect of pragmatics instruction on promoting EFL students grammatical performance as its ultimate purpose.

The present conduct seeks, in fact, to find an answer to the following question: What is the impact of pragmatics instruction on students' grammar performance? Out of this research question, the following hypothesis is formulated: Integrating pragmatics instruction in grammar teaching is likely to foster the students' grammar achievement.

1. Literature review

Interlanguage pragmatics researchers assert convincingly that pragmatics instruction is an especially advantageous technique for promoting L2 learners' pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic knowledge (Aufa, 2011; Moody, 2014; Krulatz and Trondelag, 2014; Azizifara et al., 2015; Chalak and Abbasi, 2015; Shokhouri and Rezaei, 2015).

However, pragmatics is relatively ignored in the language teaching program. For this reason, EFL learners are unable to use the language according to the contextual factors in the act of communication (Lucas, 2007). Hence, designing instructional pragmatic materials would help in avoiding the non-target like productions (Bardovi-Harlig, 2005). In fact, authentic and appropriate language input would

assist teachers in introducing language functions, forms, and uses altogether (Chalak and Abbasi, 2015). For language learners and instructors alike, grammatical structures are meaning governed, and proficiency will not be realized if language is divided into sub-parts. Indeed, the whole is more important than the sum of its parts (Koffka, 1935).

The effects of pragmatics instruction on the oral production of conventional pragmatic expression were the concern of a research study by Bardovi-Harlig (2012). In terms of methods, 36 university level students in six intact intensive English classes served as the sample of her study. After the pre-test, the participants received the instruction in terms of using guided meta-pragmatic noticing activities. Following the instructional phase, the candidates received the post-test. The results revealed that the instructional groups demonstrated remarkable gains on learning the conventional expressions. Ideally, Bardovi-Harlig (2012) argued that learning conventional expressions can be enhanced by instruction; notwithstanding, instruction can be influenced by the transparency of the expression in focus and learners' linguistic background. Likewise, with the aim to examine the learnability of compliments and compliments responses through pragmatics instruction, Tajeddine and Ghammari (2011) administered a meta-pragmatic assessment questionnaire to 40 Farsi-speaking female students. The results supported the positive influence of pragmatics instructing in enhancing the participants' use of the target language compliment and compliment responses.

In their seminal work, Gharibeh, Mirzae, and Notash (2016) attempted to investigate the extent to which instructed L2 learners, with regard to refusal-related speech acts, can develop their pragmatics competence. To achieve this aim, a total of 104 EFL learners were divided into an experimental group and a control group. While the former received direct instruction, explanatory hand outs, role play, and a meta-pragmatic explanation concerning the use of refusals, the former did not receive any of the aforementioned. The study findings confirmed that instruction influences significantly learners' awareness of the L2 pragmatic norms.

Similarly, Sarab, Reza, and Sima (2016) conducted a study to explore the impact of instruction on Persian EFL learners' maturation of the speech act of request. After demonstrating a parallel performance in the pre-test, the experimental group outperformed considerably the control group in the post test at both levels of

awareness and production of the request act of speech. Thus, an input-rich pragmatics instruction will assist learners' in indicating and realizing pragmatic features of the target language.

In the same vein, Kim (2017) investigated the effects of pragmatics instruction at the level of learners' pragmatic awareness and production. A set of pragmatic awareness questionnaire and discourse completion tasks were administered to a total of 106 Korean university students whom were dissected into experimental and control groups. Unlike those of the control group, participants of the experimental group received an overt instruction with regard to the socio pragmatic and pragma linguistic regularities of compliment responses. The results indicated that explicit pragmatics instruction assisted in improving the learners' awareness as well as production of the act of speech in question. Alternatively, Nguyen et al (2015) used input enhancements and recasts as instructional techniques to teach the pragmatics norms of the L2. Undertaking a study on a teacher training institution in Vietnam, two classes were divided into experimental group (N= 19) and control group (N=22). After the treatment sessions which involved communicative tasks with visually enhanced input and giving recasts when the pragmatic and grammatical errors arise, the instructional group signally outperformed the control group in the post-test phase.

In a recent study, Hernández et. al. (2018) constructed a study to investigate whether an interventional treatment of pragmatics can enhance students' request performance during short term study abroad setting. In a single group design, the experimenters used Discourse Completion Task (DCT) to examine the pragmatics performance of their fifteen undergraduate students. The results of the post-test indicated clearly that the students showed a remarkable improvement compared to their pre-test performance, and that they used contextually appropriate request head acts, external modifiers, and request perspective.

In the realm of grammar teaching, Ben Adel and Benmadani (2019) conducted a study on triangulation grounds in which it was sought to inspect the overall condition of grammar teaching by examining, through questionnaires, whether or not EFL second year university students were conscious of the pragmatics aspect in grammar learning, and, through semi-structured interviews, whether or not grammar teachers incorporated pragmatics insights into their lectures. In this respect, grammar tests were devised to investigate the extent to which

integrating pragmatics instruction draws learners' awareness to the social aspect of grammar. The study findings revealed that the learners were not aware of the importance of the pragmatics aspect in grammar learning due to teachers' negligence of implementing pragmatics constituents in grammar lessons. Again, the results showed that the students who received pragmatics instructions, the treatment group, showed higher levels of awareness of the pragmatic dimension in grammatical patterns than those of the control group.

In this regard, it is noteworthy that in EFL classes grammar is introduced to EFL students as decontextualized system of rules, disregarding the social aspects of the grammatical structures. As a result, EFL learners fall in the trap of misunderstanding in their attempts to use tenses accurately and correctly. In addition, although, researchers in interlanguage pragmatics placed a heavy emphasis on investigating the impact of pragmatics instruction on the grammar of politeness, such as, requests, compliments, apology, and other aspects, yet no analytical attention has been given to the grammar of tenses. Hence, the present empirical study takes an active stance to offer new proposals of testing the effects which the proposed method would bring upon enhancing first-year English students' use of tenses.

The present study is intended to contribute to the existing body of research in the Algerian inter-language pragmatics. More specifically, it will be significant to EFL teachers who seek to enhance their grammar teaching experience with the implementation of pragmatics instruction. As for EFL learners, this study will provide valuable insights of how best to use the learned grammatical forms in a socially appropriate manner. Significantly, this study will prompt second language researchers to further probe the interplay of pragmatics and the mechanical aspect of language.

2. Methodology

3.1. The Experimental Method

The experimental design was adopted because it is thought to be the most appropriate approach for checking the effect of the applied interventional program on learners' grammatical performance. While the independent variable is the inclusion of pragmatics in grammar teaching, the dependent variable is learners' use of tenses.

3.1.1. The Participants

The informants used in the present conduct are first-year students at the department of letters and English language at M'sila University during the academic year 2018-2019. Twenty six (26) first-year

students were randomly selected to serve as an experimental group. In the meantime, using the same sampling technique, another intact group of twenty six (26) first-year students was used as a control group. The participants' age ranges between twenty one (21) and thirty seven (37) with a notable majority of female students (39 females and 13 males). In this regard, contextual variables such as, gender, age, and the mixed-abilities variables are not considered in this study because it is believed that they do not influence data gathering procedures and the variables in focus.

3.1.2. Data Collection Instruments

In the present empirical work, the pre and post tests were used to collect the primary data. i.e., both of the experimental and the control group were pre-tested to diagnose their existing knowledge about pragmatics. After introducing pragmatics to the treatment group candidates, they received the post-test to measure the extent to which pragmatics instruction could influence their grammar production.

3.1.3. Design and Procedure

In this empirical work, the instructional period lasted five (5) weeks. Along this period of time, the students had one session per week. Candidates of the experimental group received extensive pragmatics instruction. In other words, the instructor made them aware of pragmatics, notably of how the extra-linguistic factors influence producing and interpreting grammatical formulas. Moreover, the instructor applied the meta-pragmatic analysis technique by means of discussing explicitly the similarities and the differences between students' L1 and the L2.

Contrariwise, members of the control group did not engage in the same pragmatic input. i.e., they had their regular class time: ninety (90) minutes. In these ninety (90) minutes, students studied the grammatical rules of tenses traditionally. i.e., they focused on their morphological structures and the situations where they can be employed syntactically speaking.

3.1.3.1 Scoring

It is worth considering that both the pre-test and the post-test were corrected congruently. The ideal answer involves providing both the pragma-linguistic and the socio-pragmatic answers, which receive one point (1/1) per a statement. On the one hand, the pragma-linguistic answer is through conjugating the verb correctly and accurately. On the other hand, the socio-pragmatic answer is evaluated based upon the testees' social justifications for selecting to conjugate a verb in a

tense over another. Hence, conjugating a verb correctly receives 0.5/1, and providing the appropriate justification receives another 0.5/1. Overall, the tests contain 20 statements, rendering the full mark twenty points (20/20). However, the absence of any of the aforementioned elements results in marks loss.

3.1.3.2 Pre-test

To collect data concerning students' existing pragmatic competence in the use of tenses, both groups received a pre-test. This preliminary assignment was administered to two intact groups of twenty six (26) students each. In order to determine their overall test achievement, we relied on quantitative data analysis.

a) Description of the Pre-test

The pre-test is composed of twenty (20) sentences which reflect authentic situations. As for the test's instruction, the test involves only one task with one question in which the students were asked to conjugate the given verbs correctly and provide contextually appropriate justifications behind their use of specific tense rather than another. This question was purposefully selected to give rooms for the respondents to think thoroughly about a variety of tenses.

At the level of structure, the nature of vocabulary items is simple so as to meet the participants' linguistic background. Moreover, the participants were aware that the test was not an official examination in order to leave no room for the psychological factors which might affect their overall performance. Furthermore, the time allotted to the test was ninety (90) minutes.

b) Results of the Pre-test

Table 01: EG and CG Pre-test Overall Achievement

Group Statistics			Mea n	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Test Grammar	The ofGroup	Control 6	7.6250	2.85679	.56026
	The Group	Experimental 6	8.0385	2.66898	.52343

Table 02: EG and CG Pre-test T-test Analysis

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Test of Grammar	Equal variances assumed	.080	.778	.539	50	.592	.41346	.76673	1.95348	1.1266
	Equal variances not assumed			.539	49.771	.592	.41346	.76673	1.95366	1.1264

From the tables one (01) and two (02) shown above, it can be noted that the experimental group (N=26) achieved a mean of \bar{X} =8.038 with a standard deviation of SD=2.668, while the mean score of the control group (N=26) is \bar{X} =7.625 with a standard deviation of SD=2.856. Hence, the SEM of the control group is SEM=0.562, while the SEM of the experimental group is SEM=0.523. Regarding Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, there is no statistical difference between the two groups in the t-test analysis since the Sig. value (0,778) is greater than 0,05 value; this value is looked up in the t-test for Equality of Means, and is found to be 0,592 in the Sig. (2-tailed).

As for the t-test analysis, this difference is recorded as t=0.413. So, we can be 95% confident that the difference between the means of the experimental group and the control group falls between the upper bound (1.126) and the lower bound (1.953), which is computed to be = 0.827(≈ 0.413). Therefore, it can be concluded that both of the experimental and the control groups achieved almost the same performance scores in the pre-test as the difference is recorded to be

$t=0.413$. That is, the average performance of the control group ($\bar{X}=7.625$, $SD=2.856$) was not different from that of the experimental group ($\bar{X} = 8.038$, $SD = 2.668$).

c. Analysis of Students' Pre-test Productions

Referring to students' productions in the pre-test, almost all respondents in both groups (CG and EG) were unable to provide the appropriate justifications for the conjugated tenses. A large number of respondents' answers were accurate and correct; however, they did not provide compelling justifications. In other words, they provided superficial justifications. For example, they justified selecting the present tense by an action at the moment of speaking. Also, they made use of connectives, such as, "and", "before" in producing certain tenses. Almost all of them placed a heavy emphasis on terms, such as "already", "while", and others to make the past tenses of the perfect tenses, and they relied on adverbs of times such as "tonight or tomorrow" for the future tenses.

3.1.3.3. The Instructor's Proposed Teaching Method during the Training Period

The pre-test was assigned to the experimental and the control groups to be followed then by five (05) sessions of instructions. During the instructional period, the teacher announces the title of the lesson, such as "the present perfect tense". At this stage, the instructor asks her students to provide the morphological form of the tense in question with any examples if possible. After that, the teacher introduces the grammatical form with simple examples, accompanied with the basic uses of the tense. After having the grammatical form with its basic uses in mind, the teachers provides the candidates with explicit pragmatics instruction involving advanced situations for the tense to be used appropriately.

Moreover, participants of the experimental group were exposed to meta-pragmatic analysis and input-flooding for a total number of five (05) weeks (90 minutes per week). For this experimental class, the instructor relied upon comparing and contrasting the pragmatic regularities of participants' mother tongue, Arabic (L1), and the target language, English (L2). In that, the candidates were equipped with a great number of examples which direct their attention to the L2 pragmatic norms. Significantly, the examples used during the lectures were taken from different sources, mainly grammar-reference books (Thomson and Martinet, 1986; Hewings, 2013), and real examples were taken from authentic situations in form of short passages and

dialogues. The following short dialogue is an illustration of the aforementioned phases: “Katy: Marie just *bought* a brand new car; Alexander: Sofie *has* one; Katy: Alexander, you *must stop* talking about Sofie as if you *were* still meeting. You *broke* up three years ago”. In this example, Katy got angry with Alexander for his continued attachment to Sofie. She concludes that Alexander still has feelings for Sofie because he has reported her ownership of a brand new car with using the simple present tense. In such situations, the instructor highlights the contextual features and the clues of the situation for the students to be more aware of how the use of the present simple tense can leave psychological effects on the addressee.

In addition, class discussions are the main patterns of interaction during the lectures (teacher-students, students-teacher, and student-students interaction). Significantly, the participants attempt to reflect and contemplate in the pragmatic aspects of a certain form. Afterwards, they are asked to conjugate the verb correctly with providing reasonable pragmatic justifications and how they made use of the contextual factors in producing certain tense. In fact, the teacher often builds on her students' responses and discusses their standpoints and suggestions regarding the uses of a certain tense before informing them with the genuine use of the tense, its function, and its pragmatic aspect. For example, in the following sentences “I *have not seen* Tom this afternoon” and “I *did not see* Tom this afternoon” (Thomson and Martinet, 1986), students' are provided first with the contextual indexes. Then, the instructor draws her participants' attention to the time factors in using the present perfect tense and the simple past since they imply that an action occurred or did not occur at some undefined period of time.

In the treatment phase, this method of grammar teaching has been applied to teaching other tenses as well: present simple tense, past simple tense, present perfect tense, past perfect tense, and future tense. Thus, the written activities assigned in the instructional period urge the participants to take both the form and its uses into account. Any answer without justification was rejected. By contrast, candidates in the control group did not receive this planned instructional procedures, and they dealt with the same tenses (present simple tense, present continuous, past simple tense, present perfect tense, past perfect tense, and Future tense).

3.1.3.4. Post-test

The post test was another assignment which was submitted to both groups after the treatment phase so as to measure their achievement. In addition, a t-test analysis was carried out in order to measure their overall performance. It is worth mentioning that any change in students' grammar achievement will be due to the conducted treatment procedures.

a) The Description of the Post-test

The post-test is similar to the pre-test in terms of density, format, and level of difficulty in order to ensure the reliability of the comparison between them. Similarly to the pre-test, it is sought also in the post-test to measure students' grammar and pragmatic competences after the realization of the instructional sessions. Further, the time allotted to answer the test was also one hour and a half (1h: 30mn / 90 minutes).

b) Results of the Post-test

Table 03: EG and CG Post-test Overall Achievement

Group Statistics					
		Post-test	Mea n	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Test of Grammar	The Control Group	Control	6.85 6 58	2.67037	.52370
	The Experimental Group	Experimental	10.3 6 558	3.10256	.60846

As the table three (03) revealed, participants of the experimental group (N=26) outweighed noticeably those of the control group (N26) after showing an equivalent level of the pragmatic view in the pre-test. In other words, the mean score of the experimental group is $\bar{X}=10.355$ with a standard deviation of $SD=3.102$. Meanwhile, the mean score of the control group is $\bar{X}=6.855$ with a standard deviation of $SD=2.670$. Additionally, the Standard Error of Mean (SEM) in the experimental group is found to be $SEM=0.608$. Whereas, the SEM of the control group is recorded as $SEM=0.523$.

Table 04: EG and CG Post-test T-test Analysis

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
Test of Grammar	Equal variances assumed	.768	.385	4.360	50	.000	3.50000	.80280	5.11247	1.88753
	Equal variances not assumed			4.360	48.916	.000	3.50000	.80280	5.11336	1.88664

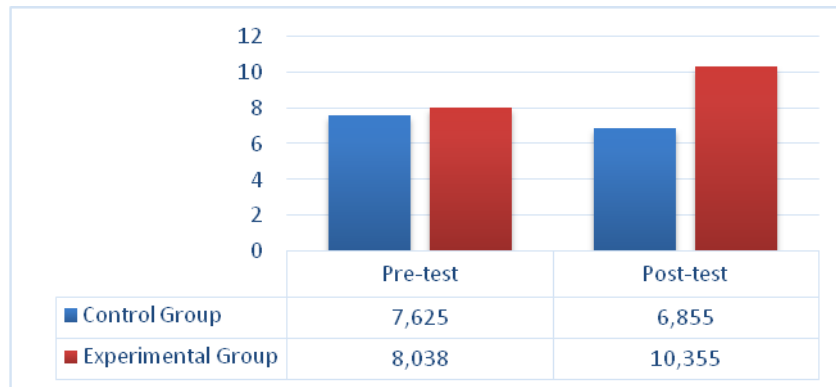
Despite of the remarkable difference between the means of the groups, it was necessary to carry out a t-test analysis so as to affirm the obtained results, thereby arriving at sustainable and more valid conclusions.

As illustrated by the table four (04), in the T-test for Equality of Means, the Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.000. This value in fact is less than 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a statistical difference between the mean scores of the two groups in the post-test. In the t-test analysis, the difference between the experimental group ($\bar{X} = 10.355$, $SD = 3.10$) and the control group ($\bar{X} = 6.855$, $SD = 2.670$) was proved to be $t=3.500$. So that, we can be 95% confident that the difference between the upper bound (1.887) and the lower bound (5.112) represents the interval difference between the mean scores of the CG and the EG, which is 3.226 (≈ 3.500). Thus, it is inferred that there is a statistical significance participants' performance since the experimental group outweighed the control group.

Table 05: Comparison of the CG and EG Pre-test and Post-test Means

Groups	Control Group	Experimenta l Group	Mean Difference
Pre-test	7.625	8.038	0.413
Post-test	6.855	10.355	3.500

Figure 01. Comparison of the CG and EG Pre-test and Post-test Means



c) Analysis of Students' Post-test Productions

Referring to students' productions in the post-test, participants of the experimental group displayed a different performance from those of the control group. To start with, a large number of participants in the experimental group exploited the contextual indexes in producing certain tenses. For instance, in their own views, they held that the choice of asking a question using the future continuous tense refers to asking for plans or making invitations. In addition, a large number of participants tried to account for the feelings of the speakers (or the doers of actions). To illustrate, selecting the present continuous tense in particular situations was justified by the fact that the doer of the action was complaining.

By contrast, informants in the control group showed a weak performance. In that, they conjugated almost all verbs, yet only limited or no justifications were provided. Moreover, respondents in the CG placed a heavy emphasis on the nature of the verbs, neglecting the contextual elements. For instance, almost all the justifications that accompanied conjugating the auxiliary "to be" and "to have" were as a linking verb and as expressing possession. In the same respect, they relied exclusively on adverbs of time, be it past, present, or future, and on the adverbial expressions, such as "already" and "yet" to help in indicating the tense.

3. Discussion & Analysis

The purpose of the current empirical work is to scrutinize the impact of integrating pragmatics instruction in grammar teaching on

students' use of tenses. In the pre-test, candidates of both the experimental group and the control group were tested to measure the extent to which they integrate the pragmatic element in their grammar choice. As for the mean scores of both groups, it can be noticed that there was a slight or no statistical difference between them (CG $\bar{x}=7.625 \neq$ EG $\bar{x}=8.038$ a difference of 0.413). Concerning their productions in the pre-test, the obtained results revealed that the participants in both groups failed remarkably to provide justifications for the grammar tenses they used. Almost all of them placed a heavy emphasis on the grammatical accuracy, neglecting the contextual appropriateness, and only few of them conjugated the verbs with providing compelling justifications. Therefore, it can be inferred that the respondents (EG and CG) in the pre-test have shown equivalent levels with reference to the pragmatic view in producing tenses. This can be explained by the fact that instruction in pragmatics by grammar teachers was insufficient for the students to relate the contextual factors confining language use. This result might indicate that the used language samples are inauthentic or unrepresentative of the target culture, and/or the time allotted for students to analyse the pragmatic uses of tenses is not enough. Thus, it can be assumed that the students seem to receive insufficient constructive feedback with reference to pragmatics from their teachers on their produced linguistic structures.

After the instructional period, the informants were post-tested with the aim of assessing their grammar performance after pragmatics instruction. It can be concluded that participants in the experimental group outperformed remarkably those of the control group (EG $\bar{x}=10.355 \neq$ CG $\bar{x}=6.855$ a difference of $t=3.500$). The majority of participants in the experimental group provided reasonable justifications for the tense choices they used. Meanwhile, those of the control group ($\bar{x}=6.855$) were unable to provide contextual justifications for the used grammatical formulas; they were oriented to providing the correct linguistic formulas, forgetting to supply proper justifications.

Based on the previous analytical focus, participants' performance after the treatment phase showed more reliance upon the contextual indexes in using tenses. They succeeded at providing contextually appropriate justifications for the tenses they produced. It is worth mentioning that this remarkable outperformance is due to the undertaken treatment sessions, which promoted their awareness toward the pragmatic regularities of the target language.

Correspondingly, Bardovi-Harlig (2017) confirms that “pragmatic awareness contributes to pragmatic gains” (p.334). Owing to the explicit and the extensive pragmatics instruction, participants of the experimental group have properly and effectively made use of the extra-linguistic clues in producing pragmatically pertinent and linguistically correct tenses. Meanwhile, those of the control group maintained the same views with regard to pragmatics in the pre-test and the post-test which affirm the shortage of pragmatics instruction in grammar teachers’ methods; these results strongly indicate that pragmatics instruction has more advantageous effects than the simple exposure method.

Hence, the findings of the present research are in line with the existing literature which carry the superiority of the instructional teaching of the pragmatic features (Bardovi-Harlig, 2017; Martinez-Flor and Fukuya 2005; Soler and Pitarch 2010; Ifantidou, 2013; Kim, 2017). Moreover, the present study results are in line as well with Bardovi-Harlig (2012), and Gharibeh, Mirzaee, and Notash, (2016), along with Shazly (2017) who substantially support, in their empirical undertakings, the magnitude of instruction in promoting learners’ awareness and directing the their attention toward the pragmatic norms of the L2. Additionally, Shmidt (1993) maintains that the simple exposure method is insufficient to enhance competency in pragmatics. That is to say, inadequate language samples and inauthentic language materials will restrict developing the pragmatic competence in the light of grammar teaching. However, when students are exposed to pragmatics instruction with a concentrated and authentic language input, their grammar and pragmatic abilities will be remarkably promoted.

Indeed, the obtained findings are at the core of the present study to provide answers to the raised research questions as well as to confirm the speculated hypothesis that says that integrating pragmatics instruction in grammar teaching is likely to foster the students' grammar achievement.

5. Limitations

As with most of research studies, there are some limitations that need to be revealed. Firstly, the sample size is limited to only 52 students (26 for control group and 26 for experimental group). Consequently, the findings cannot be generalized to EFL population. Therefore, this study might be replicated with a larger sample.

Secondly, the findings of this study are bound by time constraints which frustrated conducting research for longer duration and extending the scope of the study (tenses) to other grammar patterns.

6. General Conclusion

This study endeavoured to investigate the effect of integrating pragmatics in grammar lessons. In order to conduct this study, a pre and post tests were employed to measure the degree of improvement occurring after the treatment period in which meta-pragmatic discussions and directing students' noticing to the language pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic aspects were focused.

Findings of the study indicated a significant difference in the performance of the students of the experimental group in comparison with the control group. They proved that teaching grammar through pragmatics has a positive effect on students' use of tenses confirming by that the hypothesis that integrating pragmatics in grammar lessons is likely to foster students' use of tenses. According to Bardovi-Harlig (2017), the precursor of pragmatic competence is pragmatic awareness, which instruction can dramatically inculcate.

Based upon the results of the study, the participants of the experimental group made an improvement in their post-tests. Most importantly, the results of the present research work support the instructional tendency of integrating pragmatics in grammar teaching which has been consistently and systematically confirmed to be greatly beneficial (Soler, 2005; Kasper, 2001; Jianda, 2006; Tadjeddine and Ghammari, 2011; Kim and Tagushi, 2015). Consistent with this perspective, Bardovi-Harlig (2000) argues convincingly that language of instruction can be more advantageous than length of stay in an L2 community (as cited in Bouras, 2006).

Finally, it can be said that second language learners need to possess not only the grammatical and lexical knowledge of a language, but also knowledge of social and contextual factors underlying that language, which constitute one of the components of the communicative competence that is the pragmatic competence. Therefore, learning grammar, building vocabulary and practising pronunciation must be equipped with the adequate pragmatic knowledge of the target language so as they are learned effectively.

6.1. Pedagogical Recommendations

In the light of the obtained results and the theoretical background of this study, it can be said that it is necessary to stimulate learners to engage in meta-pragmatic analysis. By determining the similarities

and differences between learners' L1 and L2 pragmatic features, the likelihood of falling into pragmatic failure in TL will be dipped. In this sense, the learners' noticing could effectively direct learners' attention toward the socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic features. In addition, EFL teachers ought to highlight the fact that socio-pragmatic factors shape the linguistic choices through the use of awareness raising activities and the instructional materials. Moreover, teachers should present grammar formulas as meaning containers rather than purely mechanical structures. In other words, grammatical forms ought to be introduced as context governed structures reflecting L2 cultural bounds and realities.

As the results point to the positive impact of integrating pragmatics in grammar lessons, teachers need to implement varying instructional pragmatic techniques, so that students will be able to associate form and meaning, namely with the use of authentic language samples, followed by meta-pragmatic feedback. In so doing, learners will be well-equipped with both the pragma-linguistic and the socio-pragmatic abilities.

6.2. Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

The discussion of the study findings and the identified limitations establish the ground for future researches. Firstly, it is worthwhile to consider the effects of pragmatics instruction on other grammar patterns. Secondly, a related issue would be also investigating the effects of varying instructional approaches on students' grammar performance since the present study is restricted to only one instructional approach: Explicit instruction. Lastly, bearing in mind the significance of pragmatics instruction in language teaching, still pragmatics is relatively neglected by language teachers (Bardovi-harlig and Taylor, 2003). It is high time, then, to re-acknowledge its real status in EFL landscape. Thus, a detailed and extensive research is necessary to examine ESL/EFL teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs toward integrating pragmatics instruction in language classes. Therefore, workshops, conferences and seminars should be organised in order to raise students' as well as teachers' awareness about the importance of the pragmatic dimension in grammar lesson since the overall aim behind foreign language learning is accomplishing successful communication.

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