The Effects of Social Interaction on Pragmatic Performance

ENG 664: Sociolinguistics

[Redacted]

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*Note that although an abstract is missing here (part of APA formatting), an abstract is not always required for a course paper (check with your professor's preference for each individual class).

Introduction

When immigrants arrive in the United States, they often do not have a network of people that can help them assimilate to American culture. Although some may choose to move here because they want to or because they know people in the community, many have left their home country in search of safety or a better life. It is thus difficult to start the process of assimilation into American culture. Whether these immigrants know basic English vocabulary or not, when they come to the United States, they often struggle to adjust to American culture and to find a sense of belonging in the new community which in turn can hinder English learning or development (Benseman, 2014). Immigrants are often too overwhelmed with the vast differences in culture and difficulty of communication that they struggle to either find opportunities or the confidence to venture out and practice their English among native English speakers. Although there are available programs to help immigrants learn basic vocabulary and grammar skills, interactional competence, especially pragmalinguistic knowledge, is rarely a significant focus. Yet this is an important but difficult skill to grasp. Since learning a language requires practice in meaningful communication, the lack of opportunities or willingness to practice their English among native speakers can negatively affect their language learning (Brown, 2014).

Several studies have explored pragmatic development in a native English speaking environment (Bataller, 2010; Flores, 2011; Taguchi, 2016), but these have been within study abroad contexts rather than adult immigrants and do not give detailed research on the frequency of social interaction as it relates to pragmatic ability. The purpose of this paper is to investigate to what extent the immigrant population's frequency and context of interaction with native English speakers help them acquire pragmalinguistic skills. If, as Benseman (2014) suggests, immigrants do not often interact with native English speakers, but rather stay isolated in their own community, this lack of social interaction could thus hinder the development of

pragmalinguistic skills if a correlation between social interaction and pragmatic development is found.

Review of the Literature

Pragmatics in the Classroom

Past research on refugee and immigrant populations has studied the effects of task-based learning in understanding pragmatics (Calvert, 2015), art-based learning (Nelson, 2015), and social inclusion by having people from the community come into the ESL classrooms or by providing immigrants and refugees one on one tutors (Barkhuizen, 2017). A majority of research of ELLs' development of pragmatic skills focuses on classroom techniques for effective pragmatic growth, but less is known on how social interaction among native speakers of English plays a role in building ELLs' pragmatic skills. Considering this focus of classroom strategies (which are fulfilling an important role as pragmatics can often be overlooked in the classroom), there seems to be a more recent gap comparing how authentic English social interaction initiated by immigrants themselves compares with classroom instruction in terms of effectiveness in developing pragmatic knowledge. In a study conducted by Abrams (2013), for example, he mentions that pragmatic mistakes are more disruptive in conversations than lexical, phonological, or grammatical errors. He discusses how the classroom has a disadvantage to repair pragmatic breakdowns because of the tendency for inauthentic patterns of communication with no genuine interpersonal exchange. This lack of opportunity to negotiate and construct meaning in classroom settings, he argues, could be solved with introducing computer communication mediums as a way for students to have more authentic social interaction (Abrams, 2013). But in the context of immigrants in the US, who may not even have access to computer learning resources, they could have access to even greater authentic interaction right outside of their front door. There is thus a need to further research how community interaction

can allow immigrants to better develop the difficult yet important pragmalinguistic skills necessary for daily living.

Need for Authentic Interaction

Haugh and Chang (2015) conducted a study that examines how both classroom instruction and authentic social interaction play a role in politeness across different cultures. They point out that misunderstanding across cultures has negative effects on the formation of relationships and therefore confirm that pragmatic competence is an important skill to acquire. By using conversational analysis of speakers from three different cultures- Taiwanese, Mandarin, and Australian English, they studied teasing banter to understand how person-in-relationships in interactions determines appropriate pragmatic strategies. They theorize that explicit instruction of pragmatic skills in a classroom can be helpful, but it needs to be paired with authentic interaction in order to apply and better understand knowledge (Haugh, 2015).

Previous studies have confirmed the importance of social inclusion to help immigrants feel valued and included in their new communities. By interacting with a community, immigrants can be empowered and learn how to advocate for themselves (Barkhuizen, 2017; Bobrow, 2010; Nawyn, 2012). Pragmatic knowledge also plays a role in self-advocacy. In fact, Grech and Chen's (2010) study even suggests that without pragmatic knowledge, people will avoid situations that involve social interaction with native speakers of an unfamiliar language. This research aims to explore the inverse approach in how social interaction can influence pragmatic knowledge, but Grech and Chen's (2010) findings will be important to consider through the process of the current study.

Speech Acts to Measure Pragmatic Competence

According to Flores (2011), context plays a significant role in the development of pragmatic competence as well. As Flores explains, speech acts, an important element in pragmatics, are "linguistic actions that carry our communicative purposes" (Flores, 2011).

Authentic social interactions therefore need to be in environments where communicative purposes need to be accomplished. Flores (2011) specifically studies apologies because it is considered a more complex speech act to acquire, and requests, a speech act needed for self advocacy that immigrants desire (Bensemen, 2014). Strategies of apologies mentioned by Flores include the illocutionary force indicating device (IFID), responsibility, explanations, offer of repair, promise of forbearance and expressing concern. The goal of his study is to acknowledge the universal pragmatic principle that both of these speech acts exist with similar principles in many cultures, and that cross-cultural variation can thus make pragmatics difficult to learn as the natural tendency is to transfer knowledge from the L1 (Flores, 2011). This study examines Mexican college students' ability to recognize requests and apologies to see if development occurred, but it does not represent an adult immigrant population. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), a monumental study in the design of pragmatic studies, also acknowledges that pragmatic techniques, although existent in all cultures, are approached differently depending on the cultural and environmental context. Their study considered pragmatic techniques from eight languages, including Russian, Hebrew, Canadian English, and Canadian French to determine how different requests and apologies were approached. They found that over arching apology strategies and themes seemed to be universal. Although there was some cross cultural variation, their study pointed to over-all universality of apology speech acts (within the scope of their study). Their study also found that language learners' requests tended to be longer than native speakers (1984). While Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) looks at a wide variety of languages, and is used as a basis for many pragmatic studies, its purpose was to look at universality of speech acts in different languages rather than how second language learners perform comparatively to native speakers or how social interaction is related.

Social Interaction and Pragmatics

There are several studies that have investigated the effects of social interaction as it relates to pragmatics, but they are largely centered in a study abroad contexts. As such, these studies are conducted over a short time span of 3-4 months and focus on groups of students with only one language background from the same university studying abroad at the university level (Bataller, 2010; Flores, 2011; Taguchi, 2016). Thus, their economic status and L1 literacy does not represent that of most recent immigrants in ESL contexts, which could cause different outcomes than the study of immigrants from a variety of language backgrounds with varying levels of literacy in their L1.

Immigrants also have a different purpose for speaking their L2 because they are planning on becoming permanent citizens unlike students on their L2 sojourn for just a semester. This would mean a consideration of purpose and motivation needs to be included to understand how and why immigrants acquire pragmatic skills. Wyner (2014), which examines the differences between ESL and EFL pragmatic competence, found that ESL students are typically more successful. The initial reaction of many researchers is to look at exposure of ESLs to authentic interaction as well as length of stay in an ESL environment. According to Wyner (2014), however, the development of pragmatics is not associated with length of stay, rather, it is linked with motivation. When second language learners are determined to live in a context for a longer length of time, they are likely more motivated to learn the language because they will need to use it to survive for a much longer period of time than an international student would. Wyner (2014) also found that the motivation to form relationships with native speakers of a language played a huge role in pragmatic development. If learners wanted to formulate relationships with native speakers, they are more likely to initiate and participate in interaction, and they are more likely to pay attention to pragmatic strategies that native speakers use (Wyner, 2014). Haugh and Chang (2015) also claimed in their research that motivation and agency (or willingness to initiate social

interaction) are important elements to acquiring pragmatic skills. Thus, since motivation is different for ESL learners with long term residence plans, such as immigrants, it is important to conduct research among immigrants rather than relying on only international student populations to generalize findings to other types of learners.

Another limitation of some of the previous studies addressing pragmatic development is that they do not focus on types and frequency of social interaction, so there is great possibility of study abroad students remaining with their friends who speak the same native language rather than interacting with the native-language-speakers in their environment. This would affect how well social interaction improved student's pragmalinguistic knowledge (Bataller, 2010; Taguchi, 2016). There has also been a case study conducted of an L1 Chinese learner of English focusing on pragmalinguistic knowledge who has had no social interaction with native English speakers. Although Tian (2014) suggests that because his pragmalinguistic knowledge was under developed and therefore social interaction was needed to improve, the case study did not expand further to actually see if social interaction for that student made a difference. The present study will specifically focus on how social interaction in various conversational contexts with native English speakers may affect immigrants' request and refusal pragmatic skills.

DCT Methodology

Implementation of a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) modeled after Blum-Kulka (1984) is a very common method among pragmatic studies to measure pragmatic ability (Bataller, 2010; Blum-Kulka, 1984; Taguchi 2016). This form of measure allows for a more controlled testing environment, but also provides context to create scenarios that allow study of specific pragmatic skills. This is one of the most commonly used methods for collecting pragmatic data in addition to role plays (Flores, 2011). In the current study, the use of DCTs will also allow for the use of a scoring system to understand how social interaction and pragmatic development are related. DCTs, when authentic examples are used for scenarios, are also

considered an effective method in assessment because they allow for the ability to modify situational contexts and power differences by offering a description of the scene (Sagdic, 2018). Since this study aims to provide scenarios with various power distance and situational contexts, Sagdic's (2018) findings support this methodological choice which will be discussed in more detail below.

Research Questions

In order to explore how social interaction with native English speakers coincides with the development of pragmatic skills, I ask the following question:

To what extent does the amount and type of oral social interaction relate to pragmatic skills of making requests and expressing apologies?

This study hypothesizes a positive relationship between type and frequency of social interaction immigrants have and their pragmatic ability to make requests and express apologies. In other words, greater amount of social interaction with English will likely lead to ELL's pragmatic performance becoming more expert-like in both the areas of making requests and expressing apologies.

Methodology

Participants

This study collected data from second language English speakers (N =7) who have recently immigrated to the United States (in the last three years) and have settled in Michigan. These participants have intermediate through advanced proficiency levels, according to their class placement at the literacy center, so they had the potential to apply their English language knowledge to pragmatically diverse contexts and were able to more easily understand the lexicon on the survey than a beginner level student would. I chose to connect with participants through a Literacy Center because students there come from a variety of language and educational backgrounds and are often highly self-motivated to improve their English skills since having

registered for an adult English class. Participants came from two different classes at the center- an intermediate and an advanced class (although I am not distinguishing results from the two groups because my study is concerned with the type and amount of social interaction rather than class room proficiency level). The data also includes one participant who was studying at a university in Michigan with the intention of living and working in the United States upon completion. This convenience sample consisted of a mixture of male and female adults (ages 23-71 with a mean of 46.42 years) from a few different linguistic backgrounds, including Spanish (*N=5*), Turkish (*N=1*), and Chinese (*N=1*). These participants were selected for the study because they are all planning to remain and resettle in the United States permanently or for an extended period of time. This is an important set of criteria because projected length of residency could affect pragmatic development (Wyner, 2014).

A baseline group of native English adult speakers (*N=11*) also participated in the study as a comparison group to determine if immigrants' pragmatic skills become more native like with more social interaction (a mix of males and females ages 20-75). These adults are all from Michigan and have been residents of Michigan for at least 10 years to control for pragmatic consistency that may differ across state or region. They represent a variety of educational backgrounds (high school only, some college, or a bachelor degree) in order to get a more representative sample of Michigan residents.

Materials: DCT

Materials consisted of a two part survey that non-native participants completed in order to determine types and frequency of social interaction as well as a written DCT that has been adapted from Blum-Kulka and Olshtein's (1984) study. I selected a written discourse completion task (DCT) approach to easily track and record responses and focused on discourse pragmatic strategies rather than non verbal cues (Blum-Kulka, 1984; Ferris, 2011). The DCT contains six scenarios—three were meant to produce apologies and three to produce requests from a range of

different goals, like getting someone to open a door for them or apologizing for bumping into someone (See Appendix 1). Each scenario gives the reader a description of their goal and their relationship with the person they will respond to. It also gives the first few lines in a conversation that they need to finish to complete the task, following the design of Blum-Kulka (1984). I modified Blum-Kulka's (1984) scenarios to make them more relevant to an immigrant adult population. Since his DCT was designed for students, the scenarios addressed contexts like dorm living and working with professors. While testing pragmatic ability is my primary focus, it was important to use authentic scenarios to appropriately asses the skills participants needed in their everyday life (Sagdic, 2018). My modifications included having an apartment roommate (instead of a dorm), and working with one's boss (instead of a professor) (See Appendix A for current study's scenarios and Appendix C for Blum-Kulka (1984) original scenarios).

The native speakers were given an identical DCT to the non-native speakers (without the survey) to directly compare responses. To do so, a customized scoring rubric was developed based on the native speaker responses and frequency of elements which were based from Blum-Kulka's (1984) evaluation measures of requests and apologies (refer to Appendix B). Each scenario was scored from a separate scoring key based on native speakers' responses, which I was then able to use for analyzing NNS's pragmatic strategies. Before using it for a final analysis, the coding scheme was refined after testing it on some of the L2 data in order to produce more accurate and effective scoring.

Materials: Survey

Along with the DCT, a survey was used to measure the types and frequency of social interaction participants had speaking English with native English speakers. Each type of interaction was marked as a category, and on the length of time that the individual participated in that interaction item per week:(0: No interaction, 1 minute-1 hour, 1-3 hours medium, 3-6 hours,

and 7+ hours high interaction). Each ELL participant was assigned a rank number relative to frequency of interaction among the other participants.

Data Collection

Before administering the DCT to nonnative speakers, it was trialed with a sample of native speakers. In this way, usability of the instrument was tested as well as confirmation of the coding strategy. The two part survey was then conducted at a literacy center in South West Michigan. This was in part for convenience for the participants and to ensure both verbal and written instructions were provided to help participants to clearly understand the task. I administered the test across two different days following class meeting time. It took participants approximately thirty minutes to complete both parts of the survey, but there was no time limit in order to reduce the affective factor of stress and allow them sufficient time to reflect on their interaction with English speakers on a weekly basis.

Each participant was given a release form, explaining the purpose of the study, the procedures, and how their information would remain anonymous through the course of the findings including assurance that their name would not be needed on their survey. Once they were provided with all the details concerning the purpose and process of the study and had given consent to participate, they were all provided a copy of the survey and directions were spoken out loud to ensure understanding of the task. The researcher also asked for any questions to ensure that each participant understood what they needed to do. The survey was taken individually in a quiet space so that participants were answering from their own knowledge and were able to focus. Although acting as the administrator, I answered general questions about the process or to clarify lexical terms and I did not help students interpret any of the scenarios on the DCT.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, I designed a coding scheme to assign scores to each DCT response. The requests' code was based on elements from Blum-Kulka's (1984) and Bataller's (2010) coding scheme. Blum-Kulka and Olshtian (1984)'s coding scheme was used for assessing apologies. Considering the three elements of an apology according to Blum- Kulka (1984), including Direct Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) (sorry, excuse, apologize, etc), responsibility (self-blame, self-deficiency or self denial), and other (offer of repair, intensifiers, etc), non-native speakers received points for inclusion of each of these categories that followed the same patterns as the native speaker responses from my baseline data. There were a total of 6 points possible for each Apology scenario (See Figure 1). Requests followed a seven point coding system, counting direct (I want you to, I need you to) and indirect (Could you, are you willing to) strategies as well as use of orientation (I, you, we, or passive) and adjuncts (tags, grounders, cost minimizer. etc.). This coding system and the instrument were tested by having five fellow graduate students of applied linguistics take the survey (both the social interaction survey and the DCT). They shared feedback concerning the understandability and practicality of the test, which was then revised based on their feedback. For example, one suggested to add more lines for each scenario so that students could write as much as they felt needed, which led

Figure 1 Scoring Requests and Apologies

ovide more writing space. Another suggested a few word changes ın order to make the language more understandable which were implemented into the final instrument.

To demonstrate how the scoring worked, consider participant seven's response to scenario one, "Do you mind clean up some of your dishes?" The participant received a score of five. In this particular scenario, two points were allotted for the indirect strategy of willingness, two points for a hearer oriented request, and one point for using *some* as a down grader (See Appendix B for detailed scoring code). Each participant's responses were coded in this manner to

calculate a total request score (the aggregate of each of the three request items) and a total apology score.

	Request		Apologies
Direct	0	IFID	0-3
Indirect	0-3*	Responsibility	0-1
Orientation	0-2	Others	0-1
Adjuncts	0-2	Intensification	0-1
Total	7	Total	6
Final Possible Score	19	Final Possible Score	16

Figure 1 Scoring Requests and Apologies

To maintain inter-rater reliability, two additional raters were enlisted to code 42% of the data. One was trained to code apologies and the other to code requests. The inter-rater reliability score for requests was 100%. For apologies, there was an inter-rater reliability score of 89%. We then discussed the one miss-matched item until we both agreed on a final score.

By measuring what types and how much the participants interacted with native English speakers, if strategies are more similar to native English speakers among those with high levels of interaction, it suggests that those with more social interaction in authentic contexts were able to use more native-like pragmatic techniques than those who were not very interactive with a native English population. These results would then assist in answering the research question of this study.

Results

Data collected was measured according to the customized coding scheme created for each scenario and compared with each participant's social interaction rank to reveal if there may be a

relationship between the two variables of social interaction and pragmatic ability. After collecting and coding the responses of each DCT scenario of each of the seven participants, it was found that the average score for requests among the participants was 12.18 with a standard deviation of 2.75 and a range of 9- 17 and the average score for apologies was 14.57 with a standard deviation of 2.43 and a range of 10 to 17. Considering that there is a possible higher point value for requests, this could suggest that requests are a more complicated speech act to develop native-like use than apologies. Participant number seven scored the highest in both requests and apologies (with a total score of 17 for both) and was also ranked first with the most social interaction. The lowest scorer for both categories was participant number four who scored a 9 for requests and a 10 for apologies. That participant was classified as medium social interaction. The breakdown of scores and rank for each participant are presented in more detail in Table 1.

Table 1 Speech Act Scores by Social Interaction Rank

NSS	Social Interaction and Rank	Request Score	Apology Score
7	High/1	17	17
1	High/2	14	13
2	Medium/3	11	16
4	Medium/4	9	10
6	Medium/5	15	16
5	Low/6	15	16
3	Low/7	12	14

One of the social interaction categories that was common among all participants was using English in social gatherings. All participants listed at least one hour per week, with participants one, four, five, and six self-reporting as 1-3 hours and participant seven as 7+ hours.

Time spent using English in religious gatherings, appointments, and restaurants were rated low or none by all participants- labeled from 0-1 hours. Over all, participant seven had the most social interaction using English and participant three had the least social interaction. Refer to Figure 2 to review the participants' self report of social interaction and rank. Note that darker shading of cells marks the higher amounts of social interaction.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Shopping	1 min-1 hour	1-3 hours	1 min to 1 hour	1 min- 1 hour	-	1 min- 1 hour	1 min-1 hour
School or lit center	3-6 hours	1-3 hours	1 min to 1 hour	3-6 hours	1- 3 hours	7+ hours	7+
Work (coworkers)	1-3 hours	1 hour	0	0 hours	0	0	7+
Work (customers)	1-3 hours	1-3 hours	0	0 hours	0	0	7+
Social gatherings	1-3 hours	1 hour	1 min to 1 hour	1-3 hours	1-3 hours	1-3 hours	7+
Religious gatherings	0	1 hour	0	0	1 hour	0 hours	1 min- 1 hour
Resturaunts	1 min-1 hour	1 hour	1 min to 1 hour	1-3 hours	-	1 min- 1 hour	1 min-1 hour
Appointments	1 min- 1 hour	1 hour	1 min to 1 hour	1 min-1 hour	-	1 min- 1 hour	1 min- 1 hour
Interaction classification	high (2)	medium (3)	low (7)	medium (4)	low (6)	medium (5)	high (1)
Request Score	14	11	12	9	15	15	17
Apology Score	13	16	14	10	16	15	17
Total Score	27	27	26	19	31	30	34

Figure 2 Frequency of Social Interaction

Discussion

Overall, data trends suggest that there could be a positive correlation between amount of social interaction and pragmatic scores. As mentioned above, the top scorer in both speech acts also had the most social interaction with native speakers. There is, however, not enough data present in this sample in order to make any strong conclusions because there is only a loose pattern evident in the sample. Below are discussions on results from the specific elements measured in this study.

Apologies

One trend found in the data was that various elements of requests or apologies are used differently depending on the situation. For instance, native speakers used the intensification

method of expressing concern only in the sixth scenario when physical harm was possible. The IFID type used was consistently *sorry* for each of the apology scenarios with the exception of scenario five, the restaurant scenario. This suggests native speaker's awareness that in formal contexts and customer-employee relationships, the word *apology* may be more appropriate than the word *sorry*. It was also found that in scenario five, the element of responsibility was not used among non-native speakers in scenario four and six where it was commonly used in native speakers responses. This could also suggest that in a more formal context without a close relationship with the listener, when a quick fix is readily available, it is pragmatically unnecessary to include a responsibility element. On the other hand, tag expressions (*oh my goodness, yikes, oops*) were used by native speakers in all of the scenarios as well as intensifiers (really, so) showing that these elements seem to be necessary in apologies across the board.

In contrast to the native speakers, it appears that non-native speakers all used the IFID *sorry* for each scenario, even in the restaurant scenario where *apologize* was commonly used as well. Although this did not affect their score, it is interesting to see that sorry is used consistently no matter the context, where there was more variation with the native speakers. This may be due to memorized speech acts offered in English classes as *sorry* is the most common IFID type used. In contrast to scenario 4 and 6 (See Appendix A), Offer of repair seems to have been just as frequent among non-native speakers as native speakers for the fifth scenario. This element particular to the customer- employee relationship was understood by all but one of the non-native participants (participant number 4, who scored the lowest in this scenario with 3 points). Intensifier expressions were not used as frequently with the non-native speakers, with only participant 7 using them in all three apology scenarios and participants 1, 3, and 6 using them in two of the three. This may suggest that intensifier expressions are one of the more complex elements to learn because they may not be taught as explicitly in English classes. Words like *so, super*, and *really* may not be taught with formulaic apology expressions and may not be taught in

"standard English" classes although those words are used frequently in conversational speech among native speakers.

Requests

Concerning requests, native speakers used indirect strategies for all of the scenarios (with the exception of two of them in scenario one who used a direct strategy). In contrast, it appears that several of the non-native speakers (participants 2-5) used direct strategies for the first scenario, suggesting that the request type is the least native-like of the three scenarios and the hardest to master among non-native speakers. This would make sense considering many participants may have roommates who are also non-native speakers of English. This may then be a question I will need to review in future studies as if non-native speakers do not have or want native-English roommates, then this would not be an authentic scenario for them. This difference in score among native speakers and non-native speakers may also infer that the scenario of a roommate may be too uncommon with the possibility that in some cases, a more direct response will be used for a spouse or family member than someone else. If family are the only roommate interactions participants have had, it may therefore not accurately portray pragmatic use developed through their experiences with English social interaction. In attempt to modify Blum-Kulka's (1984) scenarios, this was modified from dorm-mate to roommate, but it appears the context may not be relative enough to use with this population.

Over all, request scores seemed to have been lower than apology scores. This could suggest that people have a harder time asking for help out of not wanting to be an inconvenience or not wanting to lose pride, and this may therefore not be as common of a speech act to be exposed to. It could also be due to the nature of requests and the possibility that these features are used more inconsistently than apologies. There is not enough data to look into that possibility, but is an important item to consider. Avoidance theory may also partially explain it as some of the indirect strategies are more complex, like using address terms when native-

speakers may want to just get to the point of the request, and explanations for the request require a lengthier response. From the responses of non-native participants, it appears that orientation in the first scenario, an important element in requests (through the use of hearer- *you*, speaker- *I* or impersonal), caused the most struggle. In addition to greater use of direct strategies, participants 3, 4, and 5 use an impersonal orientation where native speakers used hearer orientation. For example, participant 4 wrote, "Cleand the table please". In this way, the writer used a simple interrogative rather than an indirect strategy of either ability or willingness as well as impersonal orientation which made it a lower score of one. All three who used impersonal orientation and direct strategies only scored one point. This raises the question of whether or not getting 0 marks for both of those elements doubly marks off the act of an imperative. This test item, then, may not produce as accurate of a score considering the context of family discussed above as well as the low trend in scoring.

Social Interaction and Speech Act Scores

Although there appears to be a loose correlation between social interaction and the speech act scores, it is not a definite pattern (refer to Figure 2). The top scorer for social interaction has significantly more social interaction with English speakers, self-rating as 7+ hours per week in four of the eight categories. She is also the top scorer for both requests and apologies and is therefore in line with the hypothesis. On the other hand, participant 3 had very little social interaction as one of the lower scorers in each social interaction category (including zero in both work categories) scored close to the average score of both requests (12) and apologies (14) rather than being the bottom scorer like my hypothesis would predict. The lowest scorer in both apologies and requests was participant 4, who was ranked fourth in social interaction use. This participant, however, does not use English in the work place. It seems the majority of the top scorers marked use of English at work (participant 1, 2, and 7) while the two lowest scorers (participant 3 and 4) do not work. This suggests that the work place may be more

influential in pragmatic development. Social gatherings may also be one of the more influential factors related to pragmatic development as the top four scorers all reported having 1-3 hours of interaction with English speakers at social gatherings. The loose relationship is to be expected considering the small sample size, so it is possible that when conducting a full study with a larger pool of people, the positive correlation between social interaction and pragmatic skill may become more defined.

Confidence Level and Speech Act Scores

Although not a main focus of this research, one piece of data I collected was a self-assessment of confidence level each participant had of speaking to native English speakers. There were three questions pertaining to confidence: overall confidence of conversing in English, confidence in making requests and forming apologies. It is worth noting that this data seemed to be a better predictor of speech acts scores with in my sample. In Figure 3 below, the shaded areas represent self-rated scores of four and five at the confidence of performing the labeled task. The top three scorers in both speech acts rated themselves as very confident in two of the three English speaking tasks. In contrast, the lower scoring participants self-rated as a three or lower in two or more of the categories. This could signify that the participants are highly aware of their own ability to perform these tasks. It could also mean that due to their confidence or lack of confidence, affective schemata could be affected, causing them to perform lower than their actual ability. More research of this could be done on a wider scale in order to better understand if there is a true relationship between confidence level and pragmatic ability as these data trends show there may be some relationship.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Confidence Eng. speakers	3	2	3	2	4	2	5
Confidence requests	3	2	3	2	4	4	5
Confidence apologies	4	3	3	5	3	4	4
Request Score	14	11	12	9	15	15	17
Apology Score	13	16	14	10	16	15	17
Total Score	27	27	26	19	31	30	34

Figure 3 Confidence Levels and Speech Act Scores

Limitations and Areas of Future Research

This pilot study was intended to provide evidence of a potential trend between social interaction and pragmatic development in order to determine the value of pursing it on a larger scale. Since the data exhibited loose patterns, it would be beneficial to pursue more research with a larger sample in order to confirm trends. One limitation of this study is that this was a convenience sample and therefore does not allow for as reliable results because all participants in my study were from the same literacy center which may limit English educational background if they all take classes at the same place. In the future, studies will need to expand to multiple sources so that participants can be measured beyond those who are motivated enough to sign up for and attend community English classes to improve their English. In the future, it would also be good to revisit scenario one of the DCT as the noticeably lower scores for that scenario, as discussed above, may account to the situation of a roommate being too vague and that many second language English speakers may not have native English speakers as roommates and are therefore not exposed enough to that type of social interaction.

Another limitation of this study was formatting. Although DCTs are a common method for studying pragmatic skills (e.g., Bataller, 2010; Blum-Kulka, 1984; Taguchi 2016), it is not considered as authentic as a role play in the literature (Sagdic, 2018; Tian, 2014). Even though scoring is more efficient with a DCT, which was a deciding factor in this test design, developing a study to compare native speakers and non native speakers using responses in role play

situations may allow for a more accurate representation of immediate verbal responses that would have to occur in a real life situation rather than having the time to develop a well written response. In combat to this, I had both the native speakers and non native speakers respond in the same format to at least keep consistency with mode of response from both groups. A third limitation to this study is the single-point design. In order to fully understand the development of pragmatic ability, it would be ideal to conduct a longitudinal study where the DCT would be conducted upon arrival, at the six month mark, and then the 1 or 1.5 year mark to see how social interaction over an extended period of time effects pragmatic development. Current research uses a single-point or over the course of a semester technique examining students (Bataller, 2010; Blum-Kulka, 1984; Taguchi 2016; Tian, 2014), but more research studies need to be designed for longer periods of time with an adult population. As my research shows, language learners are not just of student age, but include older adults as well. Participants in my study were as old as seventy-one and enrolled in English courses to improve their skills. With the high populations of working and retired adults seeking English development, this calls for more research in order to understand effective methods of teaching older age groups.

This study calls for further research studying the role of social interaction as it relates to pragmatic development, which could be extended to examine specifically the areas of social interaction in social gatherings and in the work place to see if those contexts in particular may be more effective in pragmatic development. The data in this study seems to suggest a potential trend for the influence of the work place setting on pragmatics as well as social settings, so this would be a good opportunity to explore. Also considering the correlation between pragmatic score and confidence level, further research could be conducted to see how confidence level may predict pragmatic ability.

Conclusion

Although there is a loose correlation between the frequency of social interaction and pragmatic development, more research will need to be conducted to confirm that. This pilot study, however, did confirm the methods used in this study as an efficient and effective way to measure and code pragmatic ability based on performance of local native speakers on the DCT. With the exception of the first scenario, which may need to be changed for a more authentic native English speaker interaction, I would recommend using this same methodology in larger studies in the future. An implication to teaching that this study brings up is the importance of encouraging students to interact with their community. Classroom practice is not enough. By taking students to social gatherings and assisting them to find people and community groups to connect to, teachers could help build students' confidence at interacting with native speakers and thus giving them better opportunities to develop their pragmatic skills. It is also important to ask students about their own confidence level as it appears they may be aware of their own ability to perform various speech acts. Assessing student's confidence in various tasks may aid teachers in deciding role play practice they could lead in order to help students practice and then bring into an authentic context when they interact with English speakers in real life. Overall, the results of this study show the need for further research in order to understand how various types of social interaction with native English speakers will be beneficial for developing their pragmatic ability.

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Appendix A
Conversation Completion (Part 1)

Read the scenario and fill in the blank with what you would say in that situation.

1. You are living in an apartment with a room-mate, and you want them to clean up the mess they left in the kitchen before your friends come over.

You: Steve and Elee are coming over for dinner tonight, and I will have to start cooking soon.
You (Finish your phrase):
_____

Your roommate: Okay, I will work on it right away.

2. You are looking for a job and walk into a coffee shop. You want to apply to work there.

Employee: Hi, welcome to our cafe. How can I help you?

You: _____

Employee: Sure, let me grab an application from the back.

3. You just finished shopping and have your hands full of shopping bags. You can't get the door open as you leave the store, but you see a stranger with a free hand nearby.

You: _____

Stranger: Sure, no problem.

4. You borrowed a book from your boss, which you promised to return that day, but you forgot to bring it with you.

Your boss: Hey, I hope you brought the book I lent you today.

You:_____

Your boss: Okay, but please remember it tomorrow.

5. You are working at a casual restaurant as a waitor/server and are serving a family their drinks. The woman tells you that she asked for a coke, but she got a water instead.

Woman: Excuse me, this is water. I ordered a coke.

You: _____

Woman: Okay, thank you.

6. You are shopping at a store and accidentally bump shoulders with an employee, and he falls into a shelf.

You: _____

Employee: Oh, it's okay, don't worry about it.

Survey of Social Interaction in English (Part 2)

PART A

Biological Sex (MALE FEMALE) Age:_____

What is your first language?_____

In addition to your first language and English, what other languages do you speak proficiently?

_____

Have you had any schooling in English? If so, please explain. _____

_____

How much schooling (in any language) have you finished? *Please circle the best answer.*

None	Two year associates
Elementary/primary	Four year bachelors
High school/ secondary	Masters or PHD

Compared to other second language learners of English, do you think you speak more, the same or less time talking with native speakers in English?_____

PART B

Answer the following on a scale of 1 to 5. Circle one for the least confident, and five for the most confident.

I feel confident talking with native English speakers	1	2	3	4	5
I feel confident in making requests or asking favors in English	1	2	3	4	5
I feel confident in making apologies (I'm sorry) in English	1	2	3	4	5

Every week, how much do you talk with native English speakers in the following places? *Circle the amount that fits the best.*

-Example:	0 hours	1 minute to 1 hour	1-3 hours	3-6 hours	7+ hours
- Shopping or errands:	0 hours	1 minute to 1 hour	1-3 hours	3-6 hours	7+ hours
-Schooling or literacy center:	0 hours	1 minute to 1 hour	1-3 hours	3-6 hours	7+ hours
-Work with coworkers:	0 hours	1 minute to 1 hour	1-3 hours	3-6 hours	7+ hours
- Work with customers:	0 hours	1 minute to 1 hour	1-3 hours	3-6 hours	7+ hours
-Friends or social gatherings	0 hours	1 minute to 1 hour	1-3 hours	3-6 hours	7+ hours
-Religious gatherings	0 hours	1 minute to 1 hour	1-3 hours	3-6 hours	7+ hours
-Restaurants	0 hours	1 minute to 1 hour	1-3 hours	3-6 hours	7+ hour
-Appointments	0 hours	1 minute to 1 hour	1-3 hours	3-6 hours	7+ hours

-Other:_____ 0 hours 1 minute to 1 hour 1-3 hours 3-6 hours 7+ hours

Appendix B
Code for Scoring

Table 2 Coding Scheme for Requests for Each Scenario

		Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Direct Strategies				
	mood Der	0	0	0
	ellipsis	0	0	0
	hedge performative	0	0	0
	obligation statement	0	0	0
	want statment	0	0	0
	need statement	0	0	0
	simple interrogative	0	0	0
Indirect				
	ability	2pts	1 pt	2 pts
	willingness	2 pts	1 pt	2 pts
	permission	1 pt	2 pts	1 pt
	possiblity	1 pt	1 pt	1 pt
	suggestory	1 pt	3 pts	1 pt
	hint	1 pt	1 pt	1 pt
Orientation				
	hearer	2 pt	1 pt	2 pts
	speaker	0	2 pts	0
	both	0	0	0
	impersonal	0	0	0
Adjuncts				
	grounder (explain)	0	1 pt	0
	cost Minimizer	0	0	0
	tag (Im sorry, please)	1 pt	0	1 pt
	address term	0	1 pt	1 pt
	up/down grader	1 pt	0	0

Table 3 Coding Scheme for Apologies for Each Scenario

		Scenario 4	Scenario 5	Scenario 6
Direct IFID				
	sorry	3	3	3
	excuse	1	1	1
	apologize	1	3	1
	forgive	1	1	1
	regret	1	1	1
	pardon	1	1	1
	none	0	0	0
Responsibility				
	self deficiency	1	0	1
	self blame	1	0	1
	denial of fault	0	0	0
	none	0	0	0
Others				
	explanation	1	0	0
	offer of repair	1	2	1
	promise of forbearance	0	0	0
Intensification				
	intensify expression	1	1	1
	express concern	0	0	1
	multiple IFID	0	0	0
	tag expression	1	1	1

**Adapted from scenarios and dialect pattern of Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984)*

Appendix C

Original Scenarios From Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984)

Request Situations

S1 A student asks his room-mate to clean up the kitchen which the other left in a mess.

S3 A girl tries to get rid of a boy pestering her on the street.

S5 A student asks another student to lend her some lecture notes.

S7 A student asks people living on the same street for a ride home.

S9 Applicant calls for information on a job advertised in a paper.

Sll A policeman asks a driver to move her car.

S13 A student asks a teacher for an extension for finishing a seminar paper.

SI5 A university teacher asks a student to give his lecture a week earlier than scheduled.

Apology Situations

S2 A university professor promised to return the student's term paper that day but didn't finish reading it.

S4 A student borrowed her professor's book, which she promised to return that day, but forgot to bring it.

S6 A staff manager has kept a student waiting for half an hour for a job interview because he was called to an unexpected meeting.

S8 The waiter in an expensive restaurant brings fried chicken instead of baeufa la maison to a surprised customer.

S10 A notoriously unpunctual student is late again for a meeting with a friend with whom she is working on a joint paper.

S12 A driver in a parking lot backs into the hearer's car.

SI4 The speaker offended a fellow worker during a discussion at work. After the meeting, the fellow worker mentions this fact.

SI6 The speaker has placed a shopping bag on the luggage rack of a crowded bus. When the bus brakes, the bag falls down and hits another passenger.