An interlanguage pragmatic study of expressions of gratitude by Iranian EFL learners – A pilot study
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Abstract

Interlanguage pragmatics research has contributed a great deal to our understanding of L2 pragmatic use but not so much to our understanding of L2 pragmatic development (Nguyen, 2005) due to the fact that the great majority of studies focuses on “L2 use rather than development” (Kasper, 1996:145). The shortage of developmental pragmatic research, as opposed to pragmatic performance, makes it an area of inquiry in SLA research (Rose, 2000). This pilot study examines the speech act of expressing gratitude among Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Data were collected from 2 groups of Iranian EFL learners, i.e. at intermediate and advanced levels of language proficiency, using a written Discourse Completion Task (DCT). L1 and L2 baseline data were also collected from a group of Iranian native speakers of Farsi and a group of American native speakers of English. The purpose of the present study is two-fold, i.e. to investigate the strategies Iranian EFL learners use when expressing gratitude and to compare these strategies with those used by native speakers of Farsi and native speakers of English. The data were also analyzed in terms of whether EFL learners’ L2 pragmatic competence is towards or away from the target language as the level of proficiency increases. It is hoped that this study will add to the body of research on developmental pragmatics.

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