

How Do Iranian Teachers Rate Efl Learners' Interlanguage Pragmatic Competence?

Minoo Alemi & Zohreh Eslami Rasekh & Atefeh Rezanejad
Sharif University of Technology/ Tehran, Iran

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ABSTRACT

Several researchers have investigated the issue of Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) from many different perspectives. Still, an under researched area remains to be the rater's variation in the assessment of pragmatic competence. Consequently, coming up with criteria employed by raters who are in charge to evaluate pragmatic performances of EFL learners is crucial. This study mainly aimed at investigating the patterns and variations in ratings of non-native English speaking raters in relation to the two speech acts of compliment and compliment response. Fifty four Iranian EFL MA holding teachers were asked to rate twenty eight scenarios on the whole (collected through WDCT from undergraduate EFL learners) for the two speech acts of compliment and compliment response based on a Likert scale ranging from "highly inappropriate" to "most appropriate". The result of the study showed that the main criteria for the teachers included: "politeness (52.68%)", "sociopragmatic appropriateness (35.68%)", "interlocutors' characteristics & relationship (33.47%)", "linguistic appropriacy (23.69%)", "variety & range (20.07%)", "complexity (19.32%)", and "sincerity (15.34%)". As the results depict, politeness and sociopragmatic appropriateness were the two major criteria provided by the teachers. Moreover what needs to be pointed out is that in many cases the teachers rated the WDCTs only by assigning a number on the Likert scale without providing any criterion and interestingly there were times when teachers stated that they just feel the EFL learners' production is/isn't appropriate, but couldn't exactly specify why. This reinforces the need for training on pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics issues among raters who are to evaluate pragmatic performance.