The Relationship between Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners' Frequency of Language Learning Strategies Use and Their Pragmatic and Grammatical Awareness

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Abstract—In this study, attempts were made to investigate the use of language learning strategies in four areas of communicative competence among Iranian intermediate learners and also the extent of their pragmatic and grammatical awareness. The relationship between the participants' frequency of grammatical strategies use and their pragmatic and grammatical awareness was also explored. In so doing, after conducting the Oxford placement test on a group of students in Islamic Azad University, Najafabad Branch, 63 homogeneous intermediate students were selected. The required data were collected through administrating Language Learning Strategies for Communicative Competence questionnaire to determine the use of language learning strategies by the participants and Pragmatic and Grammaticality Judgment Task questionnaire to determine their pragmatic and grammatical awareness. The findings revealed that the participants used grammatical strategies more frequently and sociolinguistic strategies less frequently than other types of strategies. Furthermore, the descriptive statistics demonstrated that the participants had more grammatical awareness and perceived the grammatical errors more seriously in comparison to pragmatic ones. Finally, correlational analysis displayed there was no correlation between the participants' frequency of grammatical strategies use and their pragmatic awareness. These findings demonstrate the participants' weakness in employing sociolinguistic strategies and their lack of pragmatic awareness.

Index Terms—pragmatic awareness, grammatical awareness, language learning strategies

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of communication has always been important for every language learner and every language teacher. But, it should not be considered as a simple concept. Successful communication is closely dependent on knowledge in both areas of grammar and pragmatics (Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei, 1998; Levinson, 1983). Developing language learners' competence in a way that they can use the language correctly and appropriately in different social contexts is one of teachers' challenges in EFL learning contexts where learners have little contact with the target language and native speakers in real life situations. Based on Chomsky's (1965) viewpoint, language competence is the underlying knowledge of linguistic features. Chamsky's viewpoint was argued by some researchers such as Hymes (1972). Hymes claimed that Chomsky had overlooked the sociolinguistic factors in his model. Hence, Hymes proposed "communicative competence" as the ability to use language appropriately in different social contexts in addition to having knowledge of constructing grammatical sentences. Consequently, a good communication entails pragmatic competence (appropriateness of utterances concerning situations, speakers, and content) as well as linguistic competence (grammatical competence) (Levinson, 1983).

Afterwards, in Schmidt's (1993) Noticing Hypothesis, grammatical awareness (i.e., awareness of correct grammatical features) and pragmatic awareness (i.e., awareness of appropriate language use in various social contexts) were introduced. It was found that many advanced L2 learners do not know how to communicate appropriately due to the lack of knowledge of pragmatics (Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei, 1998). It is particularly clear in EFL contexts in which exposure to native speakers is limited. Thus, the previous findings reveal that high levels of grammatical competence do not necessarily lead to high levels of pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harig & Hartford, 1991). Therefore, such a situation does not guarantee a successful communication. The outcome of some other studies reveals that successful language learners are aware of their learning strategies (Cohen, 1995) and know how to improve their communication through the correct use of various learning strategies, such as organizing and planning learning (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; O'mally & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990). In addition, some researchers (e.g., Schunk, 1999; Zimmerman, 2008) concluded that learners who are equipped with strategic knowledge of language learning acquire a language more easily. So, those learners who develop, personalize, and use a repertoire of learning strategies can gain language proficiency in

a more facilitated manner. Oxford (1990) defined language learning strategies as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (p.8).

Canale and Swain (1980), Canale (1983), Oxford(1990) provided some models of language learning strategies. The modified version from the above language learning strategies consists of these four parts:

Grammatical competence strategies: This is the modified version of Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) memory strategies. Here the learners try to find the ways to make them more capable in storing information and retrieving them whenever they are required.

Sociolinguistic competence strategies: This category is the modified version of Oxford's (1990) SILL social strategies, in which the learners are willing to gain the ways to develop their communication.

Discourse competence strategies: This group of strategies is the modified version of Oxford's (1990) SILL cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Here the learners try to increase their ability to combine various grammatical forms and meanings in a comprehensible way.

Strategic competence strategies: This category is the modified version of Oxford's (1990) SILL compensation strategies. Through these strategies the learners try to overcome the communication breakdown and limitations that they encounter when they have conversation with native speakers.

As it was described, possessing communicative competence is necessary for successful language learners and possessing communicative competence itself needs obtaining essential elements such as grammatical and pragmatic awareness (Levinson, 1983). Moreover, successful language learners are aware of their learning strategies and know how to use a wide range of language learning strategies to develop their communication (Cohen, 1995). In the present study, attempts were made to examine the relationship between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' frequency of language learning strategies use and their pragmatic and grammatical awareness.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many EFL teachers have observed the situation of language learners encountering communication breakdowns despite having an acceptable amount of grammatical knowledge. They have come to realize that just gaining grammatical competence does not lead to effective communication; i.e., they should be equipped with pragmatic competence as well. However, despite the efforts of EFL teachers in Iran, the learners may not gain a reasonable amount of communicative competence in order to have successful communication. The reason may lie in the fact that the learners' pragmatic competence is not developed sufficiently, because they are not provided with sufficient pragmatically appropriate input through their traditional textbooks and classrooms. On the contrary, they are rich in terms of grammar and grammatical competence, because they are exposed to a rich amount of input in grammar instructions. Thus, they have higher tendency to develop higher grammatical awareness. This is a touchable matter for everyone who deals with English language learning, especially L2 teachers. It can be observed that some students who receive "A" as a score for their paper and pencil exams considering grammatical points are not able to use the obtained grammatical rules in an appropriate way when they encounter native speakers. Therefore, EFL learners may generate sentences which are grammatical, but they may violate the usual social norms of the target language (Bardovi-Harling & Dornyei, 1998).

Considering the main goal of language learning, which is successful communication, the type of language learning strategies are important too. Since language learning strategies are related to learners' awareness of grammar and pragmatics, conducting a research regarding all of these elements can be worthwhile. The present study was primarily set out to investigate the relationship between Iranian learners' frequency of language learning strategies use in four dimensions of communicative competence (grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence) and their pragmatic and grammatical awareness. Furthermore, it was tried to determine the most and the least frequently used learning strategies by EFL learners. In other words, it has been intended to determine among four categories of communicative competence which one is the most and the least frequently used one. Besides, this study was designed to specify whether Iranian EFL students have more pragmatic awareness or more grammatical awareness. And finally, it sought to explore whether students perceive pragmatic errors as more severe or grammatical ones. So, the following four research questions were set up for investigation:

1) What are the most and least frequently used learning strategies as reported by Iranian intermediate EFL learners?

2) Do Iranian intermediate EFL learners have more pragmatic awareness or more grammatical awareness?

3) What type of errors do students perceive as more severe, pragmatic errors or grammatical errors?

4) Is there any relationship between Iranian intermediate EFL students' frequency of grammatical competence strategies use and their pragmatic awareness?

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

In order to investigate the relationship between Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' frequency of language learning strategies use and their pragmatic and grammatical awareness, a sample of 100 EFL learners contributed to the

implementation of the study. They were selected out of 8 classes of BA and MA of Islamic Azad University, Najafabad Branch. To select a homogenous group of EFL students at intermediate level of proficiency, the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was used as a Proficiency test in advance and 63% of them met the acceptable standard which was established by the OPT rating system. Consequently, the sample of the present study consisted of 63 Iranian intermediate learners consisting of 29 male and 34 female students.

B. Instruments

The present study was conducted utilizing three types of instruments. The first instrument was Oxford Placement Test (Allan, 2004) used to select a homogeneous group of participants at intermediate level. It contained 60 multiple-choice items of vocabulary, structures and cloze test and four alternatives that should be completed in 50 minutes.

The second instrument used was Lee's (2010) Language Learning Strategies for Communicative Competence (LLSCC) which is a 40-item questionnaire categorized in four parts. The four parts include Grammatical Competence Strategies, Sociolinguistic Competence Strategies, Discourse Competence Strategies, and Strategic Competence Strategies and each part consists of 10 items. The instrument is a modified version of Oxford's (1990) SILL and Canale and Swain's (1980) four-component model of communication competence and it is on a 5-point Likert Scale; (5) I always do this, (4) I usually do this, (3) I sometimes do this, (2) I seldom do this, and (1) I never do this. The questionnaire revealed a high level of reliability (r=0.97). The score for each part gained through adding up each participant's answer in that part and gaining overall average; a higher score indicates the respondent's higher tendency in using that kind of strategy and the lower score shows a lower tendency in using the strategy. Three levels for frequency of strategies use were considered for this questionnaire as follows: 1.0 to 2.4 = low 1.5 to 3.4 = medium 3.5 to 5 = high

The third instrument used was Bradovi-Harlig and Dornyeis' (1998) Pragmatic and Grammaticality Judgment Task (PGJT). The task has 20 items, consisting of eight pragmatically appropriate but not grammatically correct sentences, eight grammatically correct but not pragmatically appropriate sentences, and four both grammatically and pragmatically appropriate sentences. Each item was designed in the following format:

John is in the school coffee shop, trying to study, but there are some students talking very loudly.
*John: Be quiet! I'm trying to study.
Was the last part appropriate/ correct? Yes: No:
If there was a problem, how bad do you think it was?

Not bad at all	1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6	Very bad

The participants were supposed to decide on the correctness and appropriateness of each item through choosing "Yes" or "No". If the respondent answered the question correctly, he or she received one point and for the incorrect answer no point was allocated. The scores in this part show the error recognition and also grammatical and pragmatic awareness of each participant. The participants' awareness in each part (pragmatic and grammatical awareness) was analyzed based on their mean scores in that part (8 items for pragmatic awareness and 8 items for grammatical awareness), while a higher score represents higher awareness and a lower score represents lower awareness.

C. Procedure

The first phase of the study started with choosing a homogenous group of intermediate EFL learners. So, the OPT was administered to 100 EFL students of Islamic Azad University, Najafabad Branch who were selected from among BA and MA students. It took about 50 minutes for students to complete the test. 63 intermediate students were sampled and the other steps were followed by these participants. Then, the questionnaires were administered to the participants.

Regarding the first questionnaire which was the language learning strategies for communicative competence (LLSCC), the researcher introduced the main purpose and maintained that for each item they should select one of the alternatives on a 5-point Likert scale. Then, the PGJT was administered. The researchers informed the participants that they should decide on the appropriateness and correctness of each item through selecting "Yes" or "No" box. Furthermore, they were supposed to check on the severity rating varying from1 to 6. The participants were informed formerly that the collected data from their questionnaires would be kept secret, so that more reliable information is obtained.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

The statistical analyses were conducted using the SPSS software program. To answer the first research question which was finding the most and the least frequently used strategies by Iranian intermediate EFL learners, descriptive statistics including frequency, means, and standard deviation were reported. The data were obtained from students' responses on the LLSCC questionnaire. In each category the total number of each respondent's answers was calculated and its average was computed. Regarding the second research question with the main objective of making decision on learner pragmatic or grammatical awareness, the participants' responses on the "Yes" " No " part of the PGJT were gathered. To decide on pragmatic and grammatical severity which was the aim of the third research question, the mean scores of the participants' responses on severity rating part of the PGJT were calculated (eight items for pragmatic and

eight items for grammatical severity). To answer the fourth research question of the study which was finding the relationship between frequency of using grammatical strategies and pragmatic awareness, a correlational method of data analysis was used. The Pearson correlation was run on the obtained data from the LLSCC and the PGJT to find the mentioned relationship.

V. RESULTS

A. Research Question 1

For first research question, descriptive statistics of frequency, mean, and standard deviation were calculated on the scores collected thorough the LLSCC questionnaire. Based on Oxford (1990) classification, participants' frequency of language learning strategies use is divided into three levels; the mean scores between 1.0 to 2.4 are considered as "low" frequency strategy use, and the mean scores between 2.5 to 3.4 are defined as "medium" frequency strategy use, and finally the scores between 3.5 and 5.0 are considered as "high" frequency strategy use. Table 1 represents the data related to the mean, standard deviation, and the recognized level on each item's frequency of learning strategies use of LLSCC questionnaire.

As it is clear in Table 1, among the 40 items of the questionnaire, 14 items were found as "high" frequency use, 26 items were found as "medium" frequency use, and none of them was found as "low" frequency use. Regarding four categories of language learning strategies, they can be ranked from grammatical to sociolinguistic competence strategies, since among 10 items of each category, grammatical competence strategies has 6 items with "high" frequency of strategy use and 4 items with "medium" level of frequency strategy use.

To put the other categories of language learning strategies in order, strategic, discourse, and sociolinguistic competence strategies have 4, 3, and 1 item with "high" frequency use and 6, 7, and 9 items with "medium" frequency use, respectively. It is a clear point that most items with "high" level of frequency were found in grammatical competence strategies (6 items), and just 1 item in sociolinguistic competence strategies was categorized in" high" frequent use category. So, it is obvious that the highest mean score is related to grammatical competence strategies and the lowest mean score is related to sociolinguistic competence strategies.

Table 2 represents descriptive statistics on four categories of communicative competence strategies. The participants' average score in each group of learning strategies was calculated through adding up every subject's responses in all 10 items of each category and the overall average of these 10 items represented the tendency of the respondents in using the category of strategies, while the higher average represented that the respondent tended to use the strategies of that category more frequently, whereas a lower average score revealed an opposite result. The following table shows the ranked overall average scores for all categories of Learning Strategies.

As it was predicted, among the four strategy categories, grammatical competence strategies were identified as the most frequently used learning strategies (M=3.52, SD=.47) whereas sociolinguistic learning strategies were reported as the least frequently used ones (M=3.33, SD=.58). Furthermore, strategic competence strategies (M=3.51, SD=.60) and discourse competence strategies (M=3.37, SD=.54) were categorized into second and third group of strategies, considering frequency of their uses.

Table 3 represents the mean and standard deviation of language learning strategies use. It can be inferred that Iranian Intermediate EFL learners use Language Learning Strategies under the "medium" level of frequency (M=3.43).

TABLE 1.
FREQUENCY OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES USE

Language Learning Strategies	Mean	Std. Deviation	Levels of strategies use
GRAM1	3.75	0.983	High
GRAM2	3.59	1.131	High
GRAM3	3.1	0.995	Medium
GRAM4	3.19	1.33	Medium
GRAM5	3.54	1.105	High
GRAM6	3.33	1.218	Medium
GRAM7	3.89	1.166	High
GRAM8	3.81	1.09	High
GRAM9	3.49	1.134	Medium
GRAM10	3.52	0.931	High
SOCIO11	3.29	1.211	Medium
SOCIO12	3.05	1.263	Medium
SOCIO13	3.44	1.147	Medium
SOCIO14	3.46	1.148	Medium
SOCIO15	3.49	1.176	Medium
SOCIO16	3.19	0.877	Medium
SOCIO17	3.65	1.019	High
SOCIO18	3.43	1.214	Medium
SOCIO19	2.92	1.097	Medium
SOCIO20	3.38	1.128	Medium
DISC21	3.44	1.377	Medium
DISC22	3.14	1.12	Medium
DISC23	3.37	1.248	Medium
DISC24	3.25	1.344	Medium
DISC25	3.75	1.15	High
DISC26	3.21	0.901	Medium
DISC27	2.98	1.129	Medium
DISC28	3.84	1.194	High
DISC29	3.59	0.891	High
DISC30	3.21	1.05	Medium
STR31	3.3	1.087	Medium
STR32	3.84	1.096	High
STR33	3.48	1.268	Medium
STR34	3.49	1.134	Medium
STR35	3.37	1.299	Medium
STR36	3.92	1.005	High
STR37	3.63	1.14	High
STR38	3.54	1.242	High
STR39	3.13	1.1	Medium
STR40	3.48	1.06	Medium

GRAM = grammatical competence strategies; SOCIO = sociolinguist competence strategies;
DISC = discourse competence strategies; STR = strategic competence strategies

TABLE 2.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF FREQUENCY OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES USE

Categories	Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking
GRAMA	3.521	0.474	1
STRA	3.518	0.609	2
DISCA	3.378	0.546	3
SOCIOA	3.330	0.589	4

GRAM = averaged scores for grammatical competence strategies; SOCIO = averaged scores for sociolinguist competence strategies;
DISC = averaged scores for discourse competence strategies; STR = averaged scores for strategic competence strategies

TABLE 3.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS' OVERALL USE OF LEARNING STRATEGIES

Mean	Std. Deviation
3.436	0.400

B. Research Question 2

Table 4 demonstrates the result of data analysis of students' responses on pragmatic and grammatical error recognition regarding the PGJT.

TABLE 4.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS' ERROR RECOGNITION

	Mean	Std. Deviation
PER	0.689	0.290
GER	0.764	0.207
CORR	0.377	0.323

PER: pragmatic error recognition; GER: grammatical error recognition; CORR: correct item recognition

The results indicate that the overall average score for correct responses of grammatical items is .76 (SD=.20), and the score average for pragmatic items is .68 (SD=.29). So, Iranian Intermediate EFL learners showed more recognition in grammatical errors (M=.76) than pragmatic errors (M=.68). In other words, Iranian Intermediate EFL learners have more grammatical awareness than pragmatic awareness. Table 5 represents descriptive statistics regarding each grammatical item.

TABLE 5.
GRAMMATICAL ITEMS

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking
2	0.860	0.353	1
7	0.830	0.383	2
15	0.790	0.408	3
3	0.780	0.419	4
19	0.780	0.419	5
12	0.750	0.439	6
9	0.730	0.447	7
16	0.600	0.493	8

The items were ranked based on their means from the highest to the lowest one. The mean of each item refers to its average score of correct responses. Among 8 items in grammatical part, most of the correct responses (86%) belonged to item 2 (nonuse of auxiliary), and least of the correct responses (60%) belonged to item 16 (countable and uncountable nouns). Generally, most of the items (5items) show higher mean than the overall mean of this category (M=.76). Table 6 displays the same information, but for 8 pragmatic items.

TABLE 6.
PRAGMATIC ITEMS

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking
20	0.840	0.368	1
13	0.810	0.396	2
10	0.760	0.429	3
5	0.650	0.481	4
14	0.630	0.485	5
1	0.600	0.493	6
8	0.600	0.493	7
17	0.600	0.493	8

The top ranked item in this category has the mean of .84 and the last item (ranked 8) revealed the mean of .60. But generally, most of the items (5 items) have lower mean than the overall mean in this category. In other words, among 8 grammatical items, mean of grammatical error recognition of 7 items is over .70, whereas just mean of 3 pragmatic items is over .70. Consequently, more awareness was found in grammatical items among Iranian intermediate EFL learners. So the null hypotheses indicating Iranian intermediate EFL learners have more grammatical awareness than pragmatic awareness is confirmed.

Table 7 presents the mean and standard deviation of 4 correct items. Their overall average score is .37 and their mean ranged from .27 to .54.

TABLE 7.
CORRECT ITEMS

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking
18	0.540	0.502	1
4	0.320	0.469	2
11	0.320	0.469	3
6	0.270	0.447	4

C. Research Question 3

To figure out what type of error is considered as more sever one, the students' responses on a rating scale part of PGJT questionnaire were gathered. The severity rating differs from 1 to 6, while "1" indicates a minor mistake and "6" a serious mistake. Severity of errors in each part (8 pragmatic and 8 grammatical items) was recognized through mean score of that part. Three levels were considered to decide on the error seriousness of errors. An average score between 1 and 1.9 indicates a "mild" level of seriousness, the mean between 2 and 4 indicates a "middle" level of seriousness, and the one between 5 and 6 implies a "severe" level of seriousness (for recognized errors). The obvious point is that the highest mean in each part shows that the respondents found the error as more serious one. Table 8 shows the mean and standard deviation of each part regarding its severity.

TABLE 8.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS' SEVERITY RATINGS

	Mean	Std. Deviation
PSR	2.296	1.358
GSR	3.151	1.102

PSR = pragmatic severity rating; GSR = grammatical severity rating

Through the obtained outcome in above table, it can be concluded that Iranian intermediate EFL learners found the grammatical errors as more serious ones, since the mean score in severity rating part of grammatical items (M=3.15, SD=1.10) is higher than pragmatic items (M=2.29, SD=1.35). Detailed information regarding mean and standard deviation of severity rating in each grammatical item is displayed Table 9 They presented in ranked order from high to low level of severity.

TABLE 9.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF GRAMMATICAL SEVERITY RATINGS BY ITEM

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking
2	3.840	2.018	1
15	3.330	2.125	2
7	3.320	2.085	3
9	3.210	2.329	4
3	3.130	2.203	5
12	3.080	2.18	6
19	2.940	2.117	7
16	2.370	2.267	8

The outcome of descriptive statistics from Table 9 revealed that no items in grammatical severity rating fell into "mild" and "sever" level of seriousness and participants perceived all grammatical errors on "middle" level of seriousness, since their mean ranged from 2.37 to 3.48. The noticeable point is that the top ranked item in grammatical severity rating was item 2 which perceived the highest awareness in error recognition part. The error in this item was related to grammatical point in using auxiliaries. The last ranked item in this group (item 16) with the average severity rating of 2.37, was considered the last item in grammatical awareness. The data on pragmatic severity ratings are displayed in Table 10.

TABLE 10.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF PRAGMATIC SEVERITY RATINGS BY ITEM

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking
20	3.020	2.052	1
13	2.760	1.94	2
10	2.730	2.119	3
5	2.220	1.946	4
14	2.210	2.171	5
1	1.920	1.937	6
8	1.780	1.827	7
17	1.730	1.833	8

With a short glance to Table 10, it can be concluded that among 8 items in pragmatic severity rating 6 of them were under the "middle" level of severity with the mean ranged from 1.92 to 3.02, and 2 items were under the level of "mild" seriousness with the mean of 1.37 and 1.78. It is worth mentioning that the highest mean in pragmatic severity ratings belongs to the item with highest pragmatic awareness (item 20) and the lowest one is the item with lowest awareness (item 17).

D. Research Question 4

In last research question, an attempt has been made to investigate the relationship between grammatical competence strategies and pragmatic awareness. In so doing, the obtained data from the LLSCC questionnaire and Pragmatic and the PGJT questionnaire were utilized. To this end, first descriptive statistics consisting mean and standard deviation was conducted on each variable separately. Table 11 demonstrates descriptive statistics on pragmatic awareness. In this table, mean of pragmatic error recognition refers to the average of participant's correct answers in error recognition part (Yes/No part) and mean of pragmatic severity rating refers to average of rating scale part with 6 levels of severity.

TABLE 11.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF PRAGMATIC AWARENESS RATINGS

Category of awareness	Mean	Std. Deviation
PER	0.69	0.290
PSR	2.30	1.358

PER = pragmatic error recognition; PSR = pragmatic severity rating

Table 12 reveals information on descriptive analysis regarding grammatical competence strategies. Here the mean of 3.52 shows the average score of 10 grammatical competence strategies on a 5-Point Likert scale questionnaire.

TABLE 12.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCE STRATEGIES

Category	Mean	Std. Deviation
GRAMS	3.52	0.474

GRAMS = grammatical competence strategies

The correlation procedure was conducted on the mentioned variables to seek whether there is a relationship between them or not. Table 13 demonstrates the results of correlational procedure between participants' frequency of grammatical competence strategy use and their pragmatic awareness.

TABLE 13
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN PRAGMATIC AWARENESS AND PRAGMATIC SEVERITY
RATINGS AND GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCE STRATEGIES

		GRAMS	PER	PSR
GRAMS	Pearson Correlation	1	0.08	0.036
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.534	0.781
	N	63	63	63
PER	Pearson Correlation	0.08	1	.800[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.534		0
	N	63	63	63
PSR	Pearson Correlation	0.036	.800[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.781	0	
	N	63	63	63

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); PER = pragmatic error recognition; PSR = pragmatic severity rating;
GRAMS = grammatical competence strategies

Regarding the correlation between pragmatic error recognition and frequency of grammatical competence strategy use, the output reveals that there is no correlation between them among intermediate EFL students, Since the significance level is .53 which is more than .05 (P value> .05). Furthermore, the same outcome was obtained regarding the relationship between pragmatic severity and grammatical competence strategy use, since the significance is .78 that is more than .05 (P value> .05). Thus, the correlational outcome shows that increasing in using grammatical competence strategies does not lead to increasing pragmatic awareness at intermediate level. So the null hypotheses indicating there is no relationship between Iranian intermediate EFL students' frequency of use of grammatical competence strategies and their pragmatic awareness is confirmed.

VI. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

To sum up, the following outcomes have been obtained in this study: First, the results of descriptive statistics indicated that Iranian intermediate EFL learners use language learning strategies under the "medium" level of frequency (M=3.43). Moreover, the participants more frequently use grammatical competence strategies to increase their communicative competence (M= 3.52), in comparison to other four categories of communicative competence strategies. The language learning strategies were ranked from grammatical competence strategies (M= 3.52) as the most frequently used strategies to sociolinguistic competence strategies (M= 3.33) as the least frequently used strategies. Second, the analyses of the gathered data from the PGJT revealed that Iranian intermediate EFL learners are more grammatically awareness. In other words, they showed higher recognition in grammatical errors (M= .76) than pragmatic ones (M= .68). Third, the results showed that Iranian intermediate EFL learners perceived grammatical errors as more serious ones in contrast to pragmatic errors. This outcome was established from students' responses to severity rating part of PGJT questionnaire, since the average of grammatical severity rating (M= 3.15) is higher than the average score of pragmatic severity rating of errors (M= 2.29). Finally, from correlational data analyses procedure, it has been explored that there is no correlation between the frequency of grammatical strategies use and pragmatic awareness, since the significance level is .53 which is more than .05 (P value> 0.05). Furthermore, the same outcome was found concerning the relationship between pragmatic severity and frequency of grammatical strategies use with level of significance of .78 which is higher than the acceptable level of significance (.05). Hence the findings proved that through higher use of grammatical competence strategies, intermediate EFL learners cannot reach to a higher level of awareness in pragmatic knowledge.

VII. DISCUSSION

As for Research Question One, the findings of the present study revealed that Iranian intermediate EFL learners use the grammatical learning strategies more frequently and the sociolinguistic learning strategies less frequently than other types of strategies. Moreover, it was shown that the learners use language learning strategies on "medium" level of frequency. So, it can be concluded that while Iranian intermediate EFL learners use language strategies under the "medium" level of frequency, they mainly focus on the ways to sort out and retrieve information better through using grammatical competence strategies, such as word formation, sentence formation, linguistics, semantics, and using structured reviewing. But, they showed lower tendency to use sociolinguistic competence strategies with emphasis on

producing socially appropriate sentences. One of the possible reasons for these findings could be the learning environment. Language needs are recognized in the learning environment. The current study was performed in Iran where English has been considered as a foreign language. English is not recognized as a means of communication with other people within the country and, so, the learners do not find any necessity to use sociolinguistic competence strategies for producing socially appropriate sentences or improving their communication. Hence, it is obvious that they tend to use these strategies less frequently. Moreover, since educational system in Iran is more grammar oriented, the learners tend to use and focus on grammatical competence strategies more frequently. These findings are in agreement with some findings of the previous researches. In their studies, Phillip (1991), Goh and Kwah (1997), and Griffiths (2003) put emphasis on the impact of learning environment on learners' choices of learning strategies. They state that ESL learners, unlike their EFL counterparts, tended to use sociolinguistic competence strategies more frequently to make their English more comprehensible for the people around them. The other outcome of the study showed that Iranian intermediate EFL learners use all communicative competence strategies under the "medium" level with overall average of 3.43. This outcome is in line with some previous findings (e.g., Park, 1997; Oh, 1992; Warton, 2000; Lan & Oxford, 2003), indicating that EFL learners tend to use language learning strategies at "medium" level in their foreign language setting.

Analyses of data from the PGJT revealed that the participants had more knowledge in the area of grammar than pragmatics. Through a detailed survey on participants' responses on grammatical items, it was found that the participants had better recognition on "nonuse of auxiliaries" and they displayed lower recognition on "countable and uncountable nouns". These findings are consistent with some previous studies. Based on BardoviHarlig and Dornyei (1998) findings, EFL students recognized grammatical errors better than pragmatic ones. But the research findings on ESL learners showed the opposite results. ESL learners in opposition to their EFL counterparts recognized pragmatic errors better than grammatical ones. These findings can be interpreted through some explanation. Since in Iran the main focus of educational system and textbooks is on grammar, The EFL classes are found as more grammatical oriented ones and Iranian learners are exposed to higher amount of grammar inputs rather than pragmatic ones, so they gain more grammatical knowledge and grammatical competence. Some previous studies show a high consistency with these explanations. The findings revealed that EFL learners tend to face communication breakdowns in part because in their traditional classrooms and textbooks they are provided with rich grammatical input not pragmatically appropriate one (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Rose, 1997; Niezgoda & Rover, 2001). Therefore, they showed higher grammatical awareness than pragmatic awareness.

The results of descriptive statistics also showed that Iranian EFL students use grammatical strategies as the most frequently used strategies and sociolinguistic strategies as the least frequency strategies. Canale and Swain's (1980) definitions concerning pragmatic and grammatical competence, grammatical competence refers to "the knowledge of linguistic code features such as phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantic" which improve through grammatical competence strategies, whereas pragmatic competence which is represented as sociolinguistic competence refers to " the knowledge of contextually appropriate language use" that mainly improve through sociolinguistic competence strategies which help learners to improve their communications. (p. 31). Consequently, Iranian intermediate EFL learners can gain higher grammatical awareness than pragmatic awareness because they use grammatical competence strategies more frequently than sociolinguistic strategies.

Through the same descriptive statistics procedure, it was tried to search on the participants' point of view on the level of seriousness of the recognized errors (pragmatic or grammatical). The obtained data on severity rating part of this questionnaire showed that the respondents perceived all errors under the medium level of seriousness, but they found the grammatical errors as more serious, since the average score in severity rating of grammatical item is higher than pragmatic ones. These findings are in line with Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei's findings (1998). They found that not only EFL learners recognize grammatical errors better than pragmatic ones, but also they perceive the grammatical errors as more serious ones in comparison to pragmatic ones, while their ESL counterparts perceive pragmatic errors as more serious. The obtained results in this part can be due to the participants' higher knowledge on grammatical aspect of language than pragmatic ones. In other words, since Iranian intermediate EFL learners have higher grammatical awareness than pragmatic one, they perceive grammatical errors as more serious errors in comparison to pragmatic errors.

To investigate the relationship between grammatical competence strategies and pragmatic awareness, the correlational procedure was run on the obtained data from the LLSCC and the PGJT. To this end, two correlation coefficients were estimated, one between 10 items of grammatical competence strategies and grammatical error recognition (Yes/No part of the PGJT) and the other between the mentioned strategies and pragmatic severity rating. The output presented that there is no correlation between the mentioned variables because the significances were higher than acceptable level of significance (.05). The findings were somehow predictable. As it was mentioned earlier, grammatical competence strategies are those which help the learners to improve their knowledge on linguistic code features, such as phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantic. Therefore, grammatical competence strategies cannot provide the learners with the knowledge of appropriate L2 use of and the higher use of grammatical strategies will not necessary result in higher pragmatic awareness among the participants.

VIII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The present study mainly focused on communicative competence strategies, as well as grammatical and pragmatic awareness as influential elements in the processes of L2 teaching and learning. Therefore, the results of the current study are useful for the EFL learners, teachers, course designers and all those who are concerned with English as the second or especially foreign language. Being aware of the EFL learners' weak and strong points in their language learning, guide the learners to find their problems regarding successful communication and improve their communication by finding their weakness and removing them. The teachers can benefit from this study, too. Because, they can direct their teaching in a way to help the learners overcome their communication problems. Beside, emphasizing on grammatical aspects of language, they should encourage the learners to pay more attention on how to use the language appropriately in different situations. They can provide learners with more sociolinguistic strategies in order to increase their pragmatic knowledge. Finally, the course designer can better recognize the problematic gaps in EFL textbooks and fill these gaps through focusing on pragmatic aspects in addition to grammatical ones by exposing the learners to more authentic materials.

Doing research in all areas needs a lot of effort and in-depth analyses and imposes a series of limitations to the study. The present study like other ones has its own limitations which some of them influence the findings and the generalizability of the research. The study was carried out in one university in Esfahan, involving 63 intermediate EFL students. Comparing the sample with a large number of intermediate EFL learners in Iran, the sample may be regarded proportionally small. Moreover, some findings are obtained from learners' reports of their learning strategies which may be affected by learning situation. It is obvious that in different learning environments, learners can obtain various amount of knowledge of communicative strategies. And finally, since the research was done in a specific region of Iran, the same outcome may not be obtained in other contexts.

There are significant insights for further researches and there are still some questions that require some studies in future. In this section some directions are suggested. First, those who are interested can replicate the study to check whether the same results will be obtained or not. Second, this research was performed at Islamic Azad University, Najafabad Branch, further research needs to be carried out on other universities as well as other language schools. Third, those who are interested can consider other levels of language learning in relation to communicative competence strategies and pragmatic and grammatical awareness. Forth, the obtained data from this study were gathered through LLSCC and PGJT questionnaires. Further researches can be delivered by some other data collection tools, as well.

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