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Feedback on Feedback:
Perceptions of Saudi EFL Teachers and Learners on Pragmatics Instruction of Feedback
Exchange

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Abstract

Nurturing learners' pragmatic competence has become one of the core objectives in the EFL classroom, and several researchers have been concerned with the teachability of different pragmatic aspects (Kasper, 1997; Taguchi, 2015). Despite a growing number of intervention studies of L2/EFL pragmatics, the existing literature remains largely focused on speech acts, often neglecting teaching pragmatics at the discourse level. Thus, the purpose of this research is to design and implement instructional materials in teaching pragmatic features of feedback exchange. Teachers' and learners' perceptions are then examined regarding the designed materials and tasks to develop a conceptual framework for teaching pragmatics of feedback in the EFL context, reconceptualising the objective of EFL pragmatics instruction to reflect intercultural pragmatics (Kecskés, 2014). The classroom intervention included 31 students (one intact class) and 4 teachers for a period of two weeks (3 hours per week). Drawing on a qualitative case study design, data were collected from both teachers and students (Creswell, 2007, Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995; Simons, 2015; Yin, 2018). Teacher data were gathered using classroom observations and focus groups. Student data consisted of reflective logs and individual interviews. Additionally, the researcher documented observations and reflections through a research journal and fieldnotes throughout the research process. Thematic Analysis (TA) by Braun and Clarke (2006) was employed for data analysis as TA is an effective method used in qualitative studies to search, identify, analyse, and interpret recurring patterns and codes forming themes emerged within the data. The thematic analysis has revealed that teachers and students demonstrated positive perceptions illustrating themes of motivation, engagement, and pragmatic competence. Both teachers and learners highlighted the influence of contextual variables on the pragmatics of feedback, with situational factors such as age, gender, and power as main factors among teachers

and learners. Both also noted the influence of intentions and affect on the pragmatics of feedback. However, students indicated potential outcomes, including the development of interpersonal, intercultural, and translation-related competencies. The major implication for this study is the implementation of authentic materials and tasks into teaching EFL pragmatic features of feedback, expanding traditional curricula to include discourse-level pragmatics that is not explicitly taught in L2/EFL classroom. The discussion has also suggested that the study could contribute to sociopragmatic and socio-psychological perspectives of pragmatics research.

Keywords: Interlanguage pragmatics, intercultural pragmatics, second language pragmatics instruction, English as a foreign language, speech acts, politeness, face, discourse, feedback exchange, constructive feedback

Dedication

To my late father

Zain

Acknowledgments

From the very place that sparked the imagination behind J.K. Rowling's magical world—the city of Edinburgh—and from a university that has contributed to education and knowledge since 1583, the University of Edinburgh (*Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann*), I had the honour of pursuing my Ph.D. studies. My journey has been shaped by a world in flux—times of uncertainty, change, and challenge on both a global and personal scale. I am deeply grateful to the University of Edinburgh for offering me the opportunity to grow, and to my home country, Saudi Arabia represented by the University of Jeddah—for awarding me the scholarship that made this dream a reality.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study, the motivation behind it, its significance, and the research objectives and questions. It also includes an overview of the study's context, with a focus on Saudi English and culture. The chapter concludes with an outline of the thesis chapters, and a summary of this chapter.

1.1 Overview of the study

The primary focus of this study is to evaluate the value of teaching pragmatics in the EFL classroom, while its secondary focus is on feedback as the pragmatic tool through which the effectiveness of pragmatics instruction is explored. The instruction centres on written feedback in academic contexts, as it enables learners to reflect on language use, attend to politeness strategies, and respond thoughtfully. Written feedback provides a delayed but reflective space for developing pragmatic awareness, as it involves a time gap between giving and responding to feedback, in contrast to the immediate and interactive nature of oral feedback (Cunningham and Link, 2021). Moreover, written feedback lacks the non-verbal features of spoken interaction—such as eye contact, facial expressions, and tone of voice—which normally help manage face-threatening acts and facilitate real-time negotiation of meaning (Anca, 2021). Within educational settings, teacher–student interaction is fundamental, as teaching, learning, and assessment is inherently interrelated. Poorly delivered feedback can harm students' self-esteem and cause discouragement, whereas the use of politeness strategies enables teachers to soften criticism, express praise in ways that encourage improvement, and manage the inherent power asymmetry in teacher–student relationships (Robinson, Pope, and Holyoak, 2013; Ryan & Henderson, 2018; Holmes, 2023).

In the Saudi EFL context, feedback is often characterised by direct strategies that reflect hierarchical teacher–student relationships and a preference for explicitness (Grami, 2010; Alshahrani and Storch, 2014; Alkhatib, 2015; Al-Harbi, 2017; Al-Harbi & Troudi, 2020). However, these studies mainly examine how feedback evaluates students’ writing performance as an assessment tool, not how feedback functions as a communicative act that reflects politeness, face, or pragmatic awareness. For Saudi EFL learners, navigating English pragmatic norms can be particularly challenging in areas such as politeness and speech act appropriateness (Qari, 2017; Al-Qahtani, 2020), especially in intercultural contexts where hedging and softening language are expected (Cunningham & Link, 2021). This study, however, aims to introduce both Arabic and English pragmatics in feedback exchange to help EFL learners reflect on feedback practices in both languages and make informed, context-sensitive choices, rather than simply imitating “native” patterns.

Pragmatics, as defined by Crystal (1997), is the study of language in use—how speakers make linguistic choices, deal with constraints, and manage the effects of their utterances within communicative contexts. This definition aligns closely with Thomas’s (1983) concept of pragmatic competence, which refers to the ability to use language appropriately and effectively in social interactions. Pragmatic competence forms a central pillar of communicative competence, particularly in second and foreign language learning, where language use is deeply intertwined with social and cultural norms.

While a substantial body of research has examined interlanguage pragmatics—concerned with how second language (L2) learners develop pragmatic knowledge that bridges their first language (L1) and the target language (Taguchi, 2015; Basturkmen & Nguyen, 2017; Plonsky &

Zhuang, 2019)—there has been comparatively less emphasis on intercultural pragmatics. The latter focuses on how individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds interpret meaning, negotiate politeness, and respond to social cues in intercultural interactions (Kecskés, 2014). A socio-cognitive perspective within this field highlights the dual influence of cognitive processing and social knowledge in shaping pragmatic competence (Mey, 2004). It emphasises the interplay between cultural norms, communicative intentions, and individual cognition, offering a more nuanced understanding of how meaning is constructed and interpreted in intercultural settings (Haugh, 2008).

The present study positions itself within this intercultural framework, with a specific focus on feedback exchange as a site of pragmatics instruction. Feedback, both giving and responding, is an inherently pragmatic act. It involves negotiating politeness, managing interpersonal relationships, and mitigating face threats—all of which are shaped by cultural expectations and interactional norms. Despite its centrality to communication, feedback has been relatively underexplored in pragmatics research, particularly in L2/EFL and intercultural contexts.

Drawing on Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of Politeness and Goffman's (1967) concept of Face, this study views feedback as a face-sensitive act that can potentially threaten the recipient's face particularly when it involves criticism or correction, can threaten both positive and negative face. From the perspective of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, positive face refers to an individual's desire to be appreciated, respected, and seen as competent, while negative face relates to the desire for autonomy and freedom from imposition. When feedback involves criticism or disagreement, recipients may reject or resist it—not necessarily due to its

content, but because of how it is delivered. As such, interlocutors may employ various pragmatic strategies to soften the impact of critical feedback or disagreement.

While speech acts like requests, apologies, and complaints have received significant scholarly attention in relation to facework (e.g., Taguchi, 2015; Al-Theeby, 2018; Borer, 2018; Al-Suhaibani, 2020; Qari, 2021; Halenko, 2021; Al-Hammad, 2022), feedback exchange as a discourse unit remains pragmatically unexamined yet equally complex domain of interpersonal interaction. The dual face threat is particularly relevant in EFL contexts where learners may already feel vulnerable, and where cultural expectations regarding politeness and communication styles further shape how feedback is perceived and responded to. In light of this, the current study investigates how feedback can be taught and perceived in EFL classrooms in Saudi Arabia, a context where sociocultural variables could play a significant role in shaping feedback discourse. By integrating intercultural pragmatics, the study seeks to understand how both teachers and learners navigate feedback exchange—what they perceive as effective, how they interpret feedback-related speech acts, and how their cultural backgrounds inform their practices. In essence, this research aims to contribute to more culturally responsive and pragmatically informed language pedagogy.

1.2 Motivation of the study: My journey to intercultural pragmatics

The motivation for this study is deeply rooted in my academic background, professional experience, and personal interest in the intricate relationship between language, culture, power, and communication. I obtained my bachelor's degree in English Language from King Abdulaziz University (KAU) in 2014, which provided a foundation in linguistic theory and practice. My work

as a Teaching Assistant at Taif University further contributed to my understanding of language teaching in an academic context, particularly in relation to foreign language learners.

In 2015, I was awarded an internal scholarship to pursue a master's degree in Linguistics at KAU. During this period, I developed a keen interest in theoretical aspects of linguistics, particularly in the area of language and power, and how these factors shape thought, behaviour, and societal norms. My exposure to language and culture during my MA studies sparked a deeper curiosity about how language operates in intercultural contexts, especially in relation to pragmatic competence. This shift in focus marked the beginning of my interest in intercultural pragmatics, a field that has since become central to my academic and professional pursuits.

My MA thesis, Al-Shurafa & Al-Joofi, 2020, explored Saudi graffiti in Jeddah through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a pragmatic approach that foregrounds the relationship between language, power, and ideology, and examines how meaning is shaped by social context and institutional discourse. This research examined the communicative functions of graffiti and its relationship to sociocultural values, while also analysing the distinctive lexical and syntactic features that characterise graffiti language in Saudi context. This project not only deepened my understanding of language use within specific cultural contexts but also reinforced the importance of analysing discourse through a social and cultural lens. The application of CDA to graffiti provided valuable insights into how language operates as both a tool for communication and a reflection of societal structures, further igniting my interest in exploring the cultural nuances of language use.

Currently, as a Lecturer at the English Language Institute at the University of Jeddah, I am committed to integrating cultural aspects of language into my teaching practice. This role has

profoundly reshaped my pedagogical perspective, reinforcing that effective language teaching must go beyond linguistic accuracy to foster intercultural awareness, empathy, and sensitivity in communication. My ongoing experiences as both a language learner and teacher have provided me with a unique perspective on the challenges learners could face in intercultural communication, particularly in the context of feedback exchange. This interaction relies heavily on directive speech acts, which tend to be more critical in nature compared to other speech acts, making them especially complex in intercultural contexts.

Throughout my doctoral journey, feedback exchange was not merely the focus of my research—it was an intrinsic part of my daily academic life. Engaging in continuous cycles of receiving and responding to feedback from my supervisors transformed the research into a lived experience. Every comment, every suggestion sparked an internal dialogue: Should I accept this point? Is it appropriate to disagree? And if I do, how can I justify my stance while maintaining politeness? These internal dialogues highlight the nuanced and dynamic nature of feedback, extending beyond academic conventions into the realm of interpersonal and intercultural communication. This lived experience reinforces the importance of exploring how both EFL learners and teachers navigate these exchanges, especially in intercultural settings where every word carries weight.

1.3 Significance of the study

This section outlines the significance of the present study by situating it within broader national and educational developments. First, it considers the alignment of the research with Saudi Vision 2030, a strategic framework that emphasises educational reform and global engagement. Then, it highlights the importance of intercultural pragmatics instruction in English language

education, particularly in light of the growing demand for communicative competence in culturally diverse contexts. Together, these subsections frame the relevance and timeliness of the study within both national priorities and pedagogical needs.

1.3.1 Saudi vision 2030

Since the launch of the Saudi Vision 2030 in 2016, Saudi Arabia has intensified its focus on educational reform, human capital development, and global engagement. Vision 2030 aims to diversify the economy by investing in education, innovation, and international partnerships (Al-Mukhallafi, 2019). In this context, English proficiency has become more than an academic milestone—it is now a strategic asset for employability, international collaboration, and participation in global knowledge economies (Al-Shahrani, 2016).

As increasing numbers of Saudi students pursue education abroad and engage in cross-cultural professional environments, intercultural communication barriers—especially those related to pragmatic misunderstanding—have come to the forefront (Al-Shahrani, 2016; Al-Mukhallafi, 2019). Learners who are grammatically competent may still encounter communication breakdowns if they lack the pragmatic awareness to interpret or produce language in culturally appropriate ways (Al-Theeby, 2018). This reality reinforces the urgency of developing pragmatic competence among EFL learners in Saudi Arabia, in alignment with the goals of Vision 2030 to build a confident, globally connected workforce.

1.3.2 Intercultural pragmatics instruction

In addition to its national relevance, this study holds both theoretical and pedagogical significance. Theoretically, it contributes to the growing body of research in intercultural pragmatics and second language learning, particularly how learners negotiate meaning and manage

feedback exchange in real-time, context-specific interactions. Pedagogically, the study aligns with recent advancements in task-based language teaching (TBLT) (e.g., Kim et al., 2023), which underscore the role of tasks in developing pragmatic competence. By positioning feedback exchanges as a potential site for pragmatics instruction, this study aims to address what appears to be a practical need in Saudi EFL classrooms—one that may be underrepresented in mainstream curricula. It may support the broader goals of Vision 2030 by contributing to the development of a more culturally responsive and pragmatically informed model of English language education. Such a model could potentially equip Saudi learners with the tools to engage in global communication not only with linguistic proficiency but also with a degree of intercultural awareness.

Effective intercultural communication requires more than grammatical accuracy or a broad vocabulary—it depends on an awareness of the social norms, values, and cultural expectations that shape language use. For Saudi EFL learners, navigating English pragmatic norms can be particularly challenging in areas such as politeness and speech act appropriateness (Qari, 2017; Al-Qahtani, 2020). These challenges often stem not from linguistic deficiency but from cross-cultural differences. Contrary to Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory, that equates politeness with indirectness, polite requests, for example, can take diverse linguistic forms, often influenced by contextual variables such as cultural norms, power dynamics between interlocutors, age, and the degree of imposition involved (Shafran, 2019). Arabic speakers tend to rely on more direct forms such as imperatives, mitigated by semantic softeners like polite expressions and prayers (Elshazly, 2017; Qari, 2017; Ghazzoul, 2019). For example, saying “من فضلك، ناوليني الملح” (“Please, pass me the salt”) is common in Arabic, while English equivalents like “Would you mind passing the salt?” may sound overly formal or unnatural in Arabic contexts (Ghazzoul, 2019, p. 226). This preference

may be attributed to several factors: (1) Arabic discourse typically emphasises positive over negative politeness (Al-Musallam, 2022; Kerkam, 2015); (2) unlike British English, which emphasises politeness through syntactic complexity, Arabic relies more on directness softened by contextual and semantic cues (Archer et al., 2012; Qari, 2017); and (3) Arabic lacks exact equivalents for English modal verbs, leading EFL learners to overuse forms like “can” while avoiding “could” or “would” (Al-Qinai, 2008; Ghazzoul, 2019, p. 226)

From my personal and professional experience, I have observed that in many everyday interactions within Saudi society, there is generally less emphasis on avoiding imposition through indirectness or hedging-features that are central to negative politeness in English-speaking contexts. In Saudi culture, directness often serves as a marker of familiarity, solidarity, and interpersonal closeness rather than rudeness (Al-Jasir, 2020; Al-Theeby, 2018; Marn, 2018; Lanteigne, 2007). However, and quite interestingly, this cultural tolerance for directness does not extend uniformly across all communicative situations. In particular, when giving and responding to feedback, directness can be perceived as harsh, offensive, or even disrespectful (Benattabou, 2020). There is a widely supported claim that individuals often prefer to handle critical feedback in indirect, face-saving ways—frequently softened with praise or vague, mitigating language (Hardavella et al., 2017; Daniels, 2009; Nelson & Quick, 2013). These cultural nuances are essential for understanding the pragmatic choices of Saudi EFL learners—not as linguistic errors, but as culturally grounded strategies that may require adjustment in intercultural contexts. Such pragmatic mismatches highlight the need for an approach that goes beyond error identification.

Drawing on my observations at the University of Jeddah and Taif University, I have seen both students and instructors using direct speech acts in English without realising their potential

implications. This pattern reflects a lack of pragmatic awareness rather than intentional impoliteness. My own experience as a second-language user further illustrates this point: during my master's studies, I once told my supervisor, "I hope I made myself clear," sincerely intending to express clarity. Only later did I learn that the phrase can carry unintended undertones of irritation or passive-aggressiveness in English-speaking cultures. These experiences underscore the need for pragmatics instruction grounded in intercultural awareness.

While this study draws on insights from interlanguage pragmatics (ILP), it intentionally moves beyond the ILP tradition of comparing learner language to native-speaker norms. ILP has historically emphasised pragmatic "errors" and deviations from idealised native usage, often framing learner performance through a deficit lens (Taguchi, 2015; Kecskés, 2014; Mey, 2004). This study, by contrast, is situated within the broader field of intercultural pragmatics and informed by a socio-cognitive perspective. Therefore, it acknowledges that learners are not deficient communicators but capable language users negotiating meaning across cultural boundaries. In line with this view, the aim here is not to prescribe how learners *should* speak to mirror native norms, but to raise their pragmatic awareness—empowering them to make informed, context-sensitive language choices based on their goals, interlocutors, and communicative settings. It also recognises learners' linguistic and cultural identities while supporting their participation in diverse intercultural settings.

1.4 Research objectives

The purpose of the present study is twofold: 1) to examine Saudi EFL teachers' perceptions and observations towards EFL pragmatics instruction on feedback exchange; and 2) to examine

Saudi EFL learners' perceptions and observations towards EFL pragmatics instruction on feedback exchange.

1.5 Research questions

In light of the objectives of the study, two research questions were addressed as follows:

1. What are Saudi EFL teachers' perceptions and observations towards EFL pragmatics instruction on feedback exchange?
2. What are Saudi EFL learners' perceptions and observations towards EFL pragmatics instruction on feedback exchange?

1.6 Context of the study

This section situates the study within its cultural and linguistic context. It begins with an overview of key features of Saudi culture. This is followed by a socio-historical account of the presence and development of English in Saudi Arabia, with a focus on the evolving variety referred to as *Saudi English*. Together, these subsections provide essential background for understanding the participants' perspectives and the broader educational setting in which the study is situated.

1.6.1 Saudi culture

Most Saudis are ethnically Arab and the majority trace their lineage to indigenous tribes originating from the Arabian Peninsula. These tribes have historically held social and political authority, traditionally led by a leader known as "Al-Shiek," who is respected for his wisdom and has the power to mediate tribal disputes. While Saudis are Muslim and speak Arabic as their native language, they share a common cultural background with some regional variations. Within each tribe, families may have their own unique traditions while also embracing shared customs.

Attitudes and social norms in Saudi Arabia are shaped by traditional interpretations of Islam, which emphasise respect for authority, gender roles, and strong family ties. The society has

long been male-oriented, with distinct roles for men and women; however, recent shifts, particularly in the wake of Vision 2030, have led to a more inclusive approach, gradually altering traditional norms and fostering greater participation of women in various sectors. Many attitudes and traditions have been passed down through generations, rooted in Arab civilisation and Islamic teachings. One of the most significant cultural values in Saudi Arabia is hospitality, which is considered a powerful and enduring tradition. Saudi express generosity in various ways, but one of the most prominent is through food. Saudi writer and politician Ghazi Algozaibi once remarked that Arabs initially developed generosity as a form of social security against starvation while travelling in the desert (Al-Arraf, 2017). However, hospitality in this context also serves as a form of *positive face*, reflecting the desire to be seen as gracious, generous, and respectful within the social group.

In recent decades, Saudi society has undergone rapid transformation. A once largely nomadic population transitioned from poverty to prosperity, driven by factors such as the discovery of oil and access to international education through scholarships (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014). Despite increased global connectedness, misunderstandings about Saudi culture remain prevalent. These often arise from limited intercultural engagement and the tendency to interpret unfamiliar behaviours through one's own cultural lens. As a result, stereotypes are perpetuated, framing culturally embedded practices as unusual or even problematic. Marn (2018), for example, noted that his decision to live and work in the Arabian Gulf was seen by peers as an act of bravery—an indication of how the region is often misunderstood or misrepresented. Similarly, Lanteigne (2007), in her article “*A Different Culture or Just Plain Rude?*”, recounts the discomfort she felt navigating everyday interactions in the Middle East, where questions like “How old are you?” or “Why aren't you married?”—commonly used to establish rapport—might be deemed too

personal in other contexts. Her reflections draw attention to the importance of cultural awareness and challenge the assumption that unfamiliar norms are inherently rude. Instead, they underscore the need to approach cultural differences with openness and contextual understanding, rather than judgment.

1.6.2 English in Saudi Arabia

This section begins by providing a socio-historical overview of the presence and development of the English language in the country, followed by a discussion of the emerging variety known as Saudi English.

Socio-historical overview. Arabic is the official language of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the primary medium of instruction in public schools. It is used to teach all academic subjects except English, which has historically received limited attention from the Ministry of Education. Decades ago, English was perceived as an “outsider” and a potential “threat” to Saudi society (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014; Al-Johani, 2009). Many resisted the idea of learning a second language, fearing that English language would undermine Saudi culture, the Arabic language, and Islamic traditions (Al-Shahrani, 2016). This resistance to foreign languages dates back to the Ottoman empire, when Turkish was imposed as the medium of instruction in some schools in the Arabian Peninsula. At the time, it was regarded as “the language of the oppressor—the language of the invaders” (Al-Ghamdi & Al-Saadat, 2002 as cited in Mahboob & Elyas, 2014, p. 129). As a result, English was not introduced in public secondary schools until the 1950s, though it had been taught earlier in Saudi Business Schools and Scholarship Preparation Schools in the late 1930s (Al-Johani, 2009).

The discovery of oil marked a turning point for the status of English in Saudi Arabia. As the economy grew, English became increasingly necessary for business, technology, and global communication. The importance of oil in shaping English language policies in the Gulf led to the term “petro-linguistics” to describe the relationship between oil dynamics and the spread of English (Karmani, 2005). Recognising the need for English proficiency in a rapidly modernising society, the Saudi government made English a compulsory subject in education. In 2003, it was introduced into all primary schools (Elyas, 2008) and later became a medium of instruction in selected university programmes, such as Computer Science (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014). Since then, teaching English to young learners, who are more open to new experiences, has been seen as a way to foster cultural understanding and broaden perspectives (Elyas, 2008; Mahboob & Elyas, 2014). Moreover, incorporating English instruction at the university level prepares graduates for the workforce by equipping them with professional and linguistic skills essential for a globalised economy (Al-Mukhallafi, 2019).

English is widely integrated into higher education across Saudi Arabia, either as a dedicated field of study or as an elective subject. All university students, regardless of their major, are required to complete at least one foundational English course. Moreover, English has become the primary medium of instruction in numerous disciplines, particularly in fields such as science, medicine, engineering, and other technical areas. King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (established in 1975) and King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (a graduate-level research university founded in 2009) conduct all instruction in English. This trend is also evident in some newly established private universities such as the University of Business and Technology (established in 2012 and located in Jeddah), where English has been adopted as the language of instruction.

With the launch of Saudi Vision 2030, the government has continued to reform its English language policies in an effort to diversify the economy beyond oil and build a knowledge-based society comparable to those in developed nations (Al-Mukhallafi, 2019; Al-Shahrani, 2016). Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman has committed to economic diversification, increasing foreign investment, and expanding job opportunities for Saudi youth (Al-Shahrani, 2016). As a result, the demand for English learning and teaching has surged, facilitating greater engagement with the global community. The Saudi government recognises that effective cross-cultural communication is crucial for international cooperation, economic growth, and diplomacy (Al-Mukhallafi, 2019). Given the rapid technological and economic transformations occurring worldwide, exploring innovative methods for teaching English in Saudi Arabia remains a key priority.

Saudi English. The English curriculum in Saudi Arabia was historically designed to align with local cultural values, deliberately excluding references to other cultures, particularly Western customs such as dating, alcohol consumption, and mixed-gender interactions. Al-Seghayer (2005) reported that *Living English for the Arab World* was the primary textbook used in Saudi schools from the 1960s to the early 1980s. This textbook was designed for use across Arab countries and was widely implemented throughout the region. Later, in an effort to emphasise Saudi cultural identity, the Ministry of Education collaborated with Macmillan to produce a new textbook series called Saudi Arabian School English (Elyas, 2008).

Saudi social and cultural values have historically been prioritised in the development of English teaching materials (Directorate of Curriculum Report, 1995, as cited in Javid et al., 2012). Mahboob and Elyas (2014) noted that the English for Saudi Arabia textbook series featured units

focused on Islamic principles, such as the early spread of Islam, performing pilgrimage, and fasting during Ramadan. Other textbooks in the series provided detailed information on the Saudi context, covering topics like “Saudi Arabia Yesterday and Today,” “Arab Aid,” and “Saudi Currency Notes.” The textbooks also included regular textual references to Islam and Saudi culture, such as a full-page Arabic text stating, “I begin in the name of Allah, the Most Gracious and Merciful.” In addition to these textual elements, visual materials reinforced local beliefs and social practices, with textbooks primarily depicting men, while images of women were limited to three illustrations of veiled women in the first-year secondary textbook.

With the introduction of Saudi Vision 2030 and ongoing educational reforms, the English curriculum has evolved. It now includes exposure to Western cultural perspectives and diverse ways of thinking, such as critical thinking (Al-Mukhallafi, 2019). The curriculum has shifted toward a more comprehensive English as a Foreign Language (EFL) approach. For example, the University of Jeddah has implemented the *National Geographic* series as the core instructional material for first-year university courses across all departments. Building on these efforts, my study aims to contribute to ongoing curricular developments by introducing task-based approach and authentic materials that specifically target pragmatic features of feedback exchange.

1.7 Thesis outline

The thesis is organised into eight chapters, each exploring a key aspect of the study. The following provides an overview of the structure and content of each chapter:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces an overview of the study, outlining its motivation, research significance, objectives, and research questions. It also includes an overview of the study’s

context, with a focus on Saudi English and Saudi culture. The chapter concludes with a summary of the thesis structure.

Chapter 2: Literature review – Theoretical background

This chapter examines the theoretical foundations of pragmatics in second language acquisition, with particular attention to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. It begins by tracing the historical development of pragmatics and defining it as the study of language use in context. Key concepts and perspectives in intercultural pragmatics are then introduced to underscore the influence of culture on communicative practices. The discussion proceeds to pragmatic competence and its relevance in second language learning. Traditional theories in interlanguage pragmatics (ILP), including Speech Act Theory, Face, and Politeness Theory, are reviewed for their applicability in analysing interaction. The chapter also explores speech acts in feedback exchange, with an emphasis on how pragmatic features shape feedback practices in intercultural settings. It concludes by identifying a theoretical gap in the literature, which this study seeks to address.

Chapter 3: Literature review – Pedagogical and empirical background

This chapter is structured in two parts. The first part explores key instructional approaches in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, outlining teaching theories such as noticing and input enhancement, which have been extensively applied in Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP) research, as well as instructional methods including the use of authentic materials and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in EFL contexts. The second part explores the empirical foundations of pragmatics. It covers the emergence and growth of pragmatics instruction in EFL settings. The chapter also reviews intervention studies on speech acts in Saudi Arabia, curriculum development,

and perception studies on how EFL teachers and learners view the learning/teaching of pragmatics. Finally, it identifies pedagogical and empirical research gaps and areas for further exploration.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This chapter outlines the research philosophy and design of a two-week intervention study aimed at developing a framework for teaching the pragmatics of feedback in EFL at the tertiary level. It is guided by two research questions focusing on the perceptions of Saudi EFL teachers and learners towards pragmatics instruction in feedback exchange. The study uses a qualitative case study design, collecting data through classroom observations, focus groups (for teachers), reflective logs, and interviews (for students). The researcher also documents reflections through a research journal and fieldnotes. The chapter concludes with discussions on ensuring credibility and ethical considerations.

Chapter 5: Findings – Teachers’ perspectives

This chapter presents the findings from the teachers’ data, analysing their perceptions of pragmatics instruction based on a two-week intervention. The themes are derived from two data sets: focus group discussions and classroom observational sheets. The chapter is divided into three overarching themes (strands), starting with an overview of each theme. These themes encompass key aspects of teachers’ perceptions of pragmatics instruction. Each theme is explored in detail, drawing on insights from the focus group discussions and classroom observational sheets.

Chapter 6: Findings – Learners’ perspectives

This chapter presents the findings from the learners’ data, examining their experiences with pragmatics instruction following a two-week intervention. The themes are drawn from two data sets: individual interviews and reflective logs. The chapter is organised into four key themes (strands), beginning with an overview of each theme. These themes reflect learners’ perceptions, experiences, and reflections on the pragmatics instruction they received.

Chapter 7: Discussion

This chapter interprets the findings, connecting them to the theoretical and empirical literature. It discusses key themes emerging from teachers’ and learners’ perspectives, drawing broader implications for EFL teaching and intercultural pragmatics instruction.

Chapter 8: Conclusion and implications

The final chapter summarises the key findings, highlighting their pedagogical and theoretical contributions. It outlines a framework for teaching the pragmatics of feedback in EFL at the tertiary level and discusses the implications for curriculum design, teacher training, and future research. Additionally, the chapter acknowledges the study’s limitations and offers recommendations for further investigation.

1.8 Summary

This chapter has provided a comprehensive introduction to the study, beginning with the motivation behind the research and its significance in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching. It outlined the research objectives and questions that guide the investigation. Additionally, the chapter provided an overview of the study's context, with a particular focus on Saudi English and the cultural factors that shape language use in Saudi Arabia. The chapter concluded with a detailed outline of the thesis's structure and a summary of the key points introduced.

Chapter 2: Literature review

(Theoretical background)

2.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the theoretical foundations of pragmatics in second language learning, with a focus on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in order to construct a critical basis for my research study leading to defining research questions. It traces the evolution of pragmatics and introduces intercultural pragmatics (IP), examining key perspectives, concepts, and notions that shape the field. A central focus is placed on pragmatic competence—the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts. Then traditional theories, including Speech Act Theory and Politeness Theory were critically examined for their relevance. Finally, the chapter explores feedback as a pragmatic act, with an emphasis on how pragmatic features could shape feedback practices in intercultural settings. It concludes by identifying a theoretical gap in the literature, which this study seeks to address.

2.1 Key Stages in the history of pragmatics

From the classical studies of rhetoric, pragmatics has been developed into a contemporary discipline that perceives language as a social action based on context and interaction. The origins of pragmatic thought can be traced back to Aristotle's foundational work on rhetoric, which introduced the idea of language as purpose-driven and context-dependent (Nerlich & Clarke, 1996). His influence, along with later philosophical contributions, set the stage for modern discussions on meaning and use. While these early foundations are significant, the systematic study of pragmatics as a linguistic discipline began much later.

Nerlich & Clarke, (1996) have traced the historical development of pragmatics from 1780 to 1980. The evolution of linguistic pragmatics has been shaped by a long history of philosophical

and linguistic developments that have progressively emphasised the role of language in human action and social interaction. In the late 18th and 19th centuries, key thinkers such as Kant, Fichte, Locke, along with French grammarians, contributed to the modern understanding of language in use. The early 20th century saw the rise of philosophical linguistics, notably with Charles Morris's integration of pragmatics into semiotics and the establishment of the conceptualisation of language as a social act. The 1960s marked a critical turning point with the advent of speech act theory by philosophers such as J.L. Austin and John Searle, further solidifying pragmatics as a study of meaning in context. This was followed by the 1971 "pragmatic rebellion" led by George Lakoff against Chomskyan syntax, which ushered in a new era of pragmatic inquiry. By the 1980s, pragmatics had expanded to encompass a broader range of topics, including conversational implicature, deixis, and discourse analysis, focusing not only on language as action but also as interaction in various social settings.

2.2 What is pragmatics?

Defining pragmatics has been approached from two separate scholarly traditions. The first tradition emphasises specific aspects of the field, such as the study of the hidden meaning, the language users' perspectives, or the dynamic and multifaceted nature of language use. According to Yule (1998:127), pragmatics is "the study of the invisible meaning," while Verschueren (1999: 25) refers to it as "implicit meaning," both emphasising how language conveys hidden meaning that goes beyond the literal words. Crystal (1997: 301), on the other hand, approached pragmatics from the perspective of language users, defining it as "the study of language from the point of view of users," focusing on how individuals use language in social context. Mori (2009: 348) offers a broader definition, describing pragmatics as:

the study of language use, affected by dynamic intersections of various factors concerning users' agency, their perception of norms and constraints in a given community that apply to a given moment of interaction, and their understanding of their interlocutors' linguistic, social, or cultural backgrounds that may result in different types of expectations.

Mori's definition highlights how pragmatics involves dynamic intersections of multiple factors, such as users' agency, norms and constraints, interactional context, and interlocutors' backgrounds. This perspective resonates with the study's focus on understanding how meaning is co-constructed and negotiated in specific, context-dependent interactions.

The second tradition defines pragmatics in relation to other linguistic branches. Early pioneers of pragmatics, such as Charles Morris, H.P. Grice, John Searle, and Stephen Levinson, established core distinctions between pragmatics and syntax, morphology, semantics, and semiotics. In 1930s, Morris was known for defining semiotics and distinguishing between syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. He laid the groundwork for studying these domains as separate yet interconnected parts of linguistic theory (Nerlich & Clarke, 1996). Grice (1961) developed the concept of conversational implicature, differentiating between what is explicitly said (semantics) and what is implied or inferred (pragmatics), providing a bridge between meaning and context. Searle (1969) expanded on speech act theory and discussed how pragmatics (language use and context) differs from semantics (literal meaning), contributing significantly to the understanding of context in language. Simply put, pragmatics can be comprehensively defined as the study of how speakers convey meaning that goes beyond the literal interpretation of their words, often expressing one idea while implying or intending something different (e.g., indirect request or sarcasm), encompassing nuanced ways in communication such as context, tone, and other related social cues.

While these perspectives provide essential insights into pragmatics, this study adopts an intercultural pragmatics approach (Kecskés, 2014), resonating more with Mori's definition. Unlike traditional pragmatics, which often assumes shared norms within a single linguistic community, intercultural pragmatics focuses on how meaning is co-constructed in interactions involving diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This perspective is particularly relevant to understanding how Arabic learners of English navigate meaning-making in EFL contexts, where pragmatic competence is shaped by different sociocultural norms and expectations. Accordingly, the following two sections will discuss intercultural pragmatics, which is based on the socio-cognitive approach and serves as the theoretical background for this study.

2.3 Intercultural pragmatics

Having outlined the historical development of pragmatics and earlier definitions of the field, this section introduces intercultural pragmatics as the theoretical foundation of this study, defining intercultural pragmatics and its key perspectives and concepts. It emphasises the negotiation of meaning in multilingual and multicultural interactions and concludes by explaining how intercultural pragmatics informs this study.

Intercultural pragmatics (IP) is a branch of pragmatics that focuses on how people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds communicate when using a shared language, which is often not their native language (Kecskés, 2014; Mey, 2004). It embodies a “multilingual, intercultural, socio-cognitive, and discourse-segment (rather than just utterance) perspective” on interactions (Kecskés, 2014: 01). This field is pioneered by Kecskés (2004, 2014, 2022) as well as contributions made by scholars from all over the world for the past decade (e.g., Mey, 2004; Moeschler, 2004; Haugh, 2008; House, 2008; Spencer-Oatey & Wang, 2017; McConachy &

Spencer-Oatey, 2021; Halenko, 2021). The rise of this field was based on two arguments: the balance between communalities and diversity, whether non-native speakers (L2, or Lx users) adhere to what Kecskés (2014: 01) called “the rules of the game.” In other words, communication rules, norms, and expectations in intercultural encounters may not be shared, which make the conversation more fluid, requiring speakers to co-construct new rules or adapt these rules to ensure mutual understanding. Moreover, IP also emerged as a response to limitations in existing fields including interlanguage pragmatics, cross-cultural pragmatics, and L2 pragmatics, which did not consistently provide adequate answers to the increasing and evolving challenges posed by intercultural interactions (Haugh, 2008). Besides, globalisation has led to a great shift where multilingualism, rather than monolingualism, has become the norm (Mey, 2004).

While these earlier perspectives of pragmatics (e.g., cross-cultural pragmatics and interlanguage pragmatics) focused on comparing linguistic behaviours across cultures, intercultural pragmatics hypothesises that individuals develop a unified, adaptable pragmatic competence that applies across all languages they use (Kecskés, 2014, 2022). At the same time, it acknowledges that sociopragmatic norms shaped by one’s first language (L1) are deeply ingrained and resistant to change, often leading second language (L2) learners to interpret and produce meaning in the L2 through the lens of their L1 sociocultural framework. Cross-cultural pragmatics is a field that examines how language use (e.g., speech acts) varies across different cultural contexts, focusing on the comparative aspects of pragmatic competence and communication (Kasper and Schmidt, 1996). Interlanguage pragmatics examines how non-native speakers develop and utilise pragmatic competence in a second language including the comprehension and production of speech acts, as well as the sociolinguistic norms that govern language use in different cultural contexts (e.g., Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993; Kasper 1998).

In summary, intercultural pragmatics does not aim to establish a new framework for examining and understanding L2 pragmatic competence as distinct from L1 pragmatic competence as Kecskés (2014) argued. It shifts the focus from first language (L1) communication to intercultural interaction, proposing that individuals develop a flexible and evolving system of pragmatic competence (House, 2008). This competence is not fixed or fully formed, but rather adaptable, shaped by multilingual experiences and capable of accommodating the pragmatic demands of different languages. In this study, Arabic-speaking learners' pragmatic competence is viewed as a dynamic system that draws on their L1 sociopragmatic norms while adapting to the communicative expectations of English as a foreign language.

2.3.1 Intercultural pragmatics: Perspectives

Building on the idea of pragmatic competence as flexible and evolving, this section introduces three key perspectives that shape intercultural pragmatics: the socio-cognitive perspective, the discourse-segment perspective, and the etic and emic perspectives.

Socio-cognitive perspective. Socio-cognitive approach aims to bridge the cognitive and social perspectives in pragmatics: i.e., the “individualistic” intention-based cognitive-philosophical line and the “societal,” context-based socio-cultural-interactional line (McConachy & Spencer-Oatey, 2021; Kecskés and Zhang, 2009). It emphasises the dialectical relationship between a priori intention and emergent intention:

1. A priori intention refers to the speaker's original intention, which comes from their personal experiences, background knowledge, and individual perspective (their egocentrism or individual focus).
2. Emergent intention develops during the actual conversation, influenced by the immediate social situation and interaction with others (the need for cooperation in social settings).

The socio-cognitive perspective on pragmatic competence is supported by recent research highlighting the interplay between individual and social factors in language use. Zhang and Aubrey (2024) identify a range of individual differences—such as L2 proficiency, identity, intercultural competence, language mindsets, motivation, and willingness to communicate—that shape learners’ egocentric intentions, aligning with Kecskés’ notion of a priori intention rooted in individual experience. Simultaneously, learners’ interactions with diverse interlocutors foster the development of cooperative, socially responsive behaviour, reflecting the emergent intention shaped through real-time communication. Similarly, Taguchi’s (2019) emphasis on learners’ ability to evaluate situational variables, understand social norms, and express their identity or communication style reflects the interplay between cognitive processes (understanding and evaluating context) and social interaction (negotiating norms and identities). These findings resonate with the socio-cognitive view that pragmatic competence emerges from the interaction between a priori knowledge (individual’s internal resources) and emergent knowledge (developed through on-the-spot interactions).

Discourse-segment perspective. IP adopted a discourse-segment perspective, which involves analysing interactions as dynamic processes that unfold over time including key components such as contextualisation, turn-taking, interactional dynamics, and cohesion and coherence (Mey, 2004; Fetzer, 2022). It considers larger units of communication, such as conversations or exchanges, to gain a deeper understanding of intercultural interactions (Fetzer, 2022). This perspective emphasises the dynamic interplay between discourse and context, as highlighted by Fetzer (2022), who explored how discourse serves as context and context shapes discourse, further illustrating the complexity of meaning-making in intercultural pragmatics. It shifts the focus to how utterances function within larger communicative events.

Discourse offers an ideal context for exploring the socio-cognitive perspective, particularly in understanding how meaning is collaboratively constructed during interaction. Participants' culturally shaped knowledge is activated and negotiated as they engage in ongoing discourse (Spencer-Oatey and Wang, 2017). Throughout multiple turns in conversation, speakers draw on linguistic resources from the various languages they speak, working together to build mutual understanding (Mey 2004). In the process of these interactions, speakers' prior knowledge and cognitive resources are articulated and negotiated in a synergistic way (Fetzer, 2022). This dynamic exchange leads to the creation of “intercultures”— collaboratively constructed frames of reference grounded in shared knowledge and evolving behavioural norms (Spencer-Oatey and Wang, 2017).

Etic and emic perspectives. The conceptualisation and application of etic and emic perspectives vary across the literature, addressing the issue of universalism in communication: what aspects of context, language structure and language use are specific to particular cultural groups and what aspects are universal and apply to all (e.g., Haugh and Kadar, 2017). An emic perspective refers to the way cultural insiders or members perceive and interpret things, whereas an etic perspective represents the viewpoint of a cultural outsider, providing an external understanding (Pike, 1967; Haugh, 2006; Haugh and Kadar, 2017). In other words, emic research takes the perspective of an inside observer, from inside the culture, in contrast to etic research, an outside observer, from outside the culture (Rasmussen, Keatley, & Joscelyne, 2014; Mori, 2009; Taguchi, 2012).

In intercultural pragmatics, an emic perspective represents the understanding of pragmatic norms and communicative behaviours from the viewpoint of cultural insiders, emphasising how members of a particular culture perceive and enact politeness or directness, for example (Kecskés,

2014; Haugh, 2008, Haugh and Kadar, 2017). Conversely, an etic perspective reflects the viewpoint of cultural outsiders, such as researchers or educators, who analyse and compare pragmatic phenomena across cultures (Haugh, 2008). While some studies highlight the complementary nature of these two perspectives (e.g., Haugh and Kadar, 2017), Mori (2009) and Taguchi (2012) indicate the need to use an emic lens to gain participant-relevant perspectives and to better understand how individuals discursively construct and negotiate their conceptions of politeness in communication.

In summary, this study, informed by socio-cognitive, discourse-segment, and emic–etic perspectives, focuses on understanding how Saudi EFL teachers/learners make sense of and respond to feedback in their own cultural and educational contexts. Through prioritising the emic perspective, it seeks to illuminate the learners’ internal meaning-making processes and to portray feedback as a culturally embedded pragmatic discourse rather than a mere pedagogical tool.

2.3.2 Intercultural pragmatics: Key concepts

In intercultural pragmatics, context, common ground, and culture are deeply interconnected elements that shape the ways in which individuals interpret and negotiate meaning. Rather than existing in isolation, these concepts function synergistically to determine how messages are understood and how communicative intentions are conveyed. By synthesising these three factors, we can better understand the dynamics of communication, especially in intercultural settings like the EFL context.

Context. Context forms the foundational backdrop against which communication occurs. It has traditionally been analysed at the meso or interactional level in cross-cultural pragmatics and intercultural pragmatics, emphasising sociocultural variables that influence language use (Spencer-Oatey and Wang, 2017). According to the Gricean model, a context is perceived as a

combination of assumptions or beliefs when integrated with the logical form of an utterance, that results in a conclusion, such as a contextual implication, or simply an implicature (Grice, 1975). In other words, context is not something pre-existing, as commonly portrayed in many pragmatic theories, but rather outcome of a construction process (Moeschler, 2022). Recently, however, there has been an increasing focus on exploring the relationship between language use and context from a more discursive perspective. According to Fetzer (2022), context is a theoretical construct, where the assumption of a shared or common context can no longer be presumed. This definition highlights the complexity of context, which is evident both in the structured flow of discourse and in how speakers build and interpret shared understanding.

This shift in understanding embraces a perspective where language and context are seen as co-constitutive, rather than one being solely influenced by the other (Kecskés, 2016; Spencer-Oatey and Wang, 2017). For example, the dynamic nature of power and distance—key sociopragmatic variables referring respectively to the relative authority between interlocutors and the degree of social familiarity or formality—plays a crucial role in shaping communicative choices (Marmaridou, 2011; Yates, 2004). Interlocutors' perceptions of these variables are context-specific and can evolve dynamically throughout the course of an interaction as communication progresses (Spencer-Oatey & Wang, 2017). As shown in Abolfathiasl and Abdullah's (2015) findings, changes in the percentage of learners using different suggestion structures before and after the treatment were influenced by these situational factors. Moreover, Fetzer (2022) recognises that interlocutors typically interpret context in a localised manner, focusing on the immediate discourse context. He suggests that adopting a broader, bird's-eye perspective, as proposed by Penco (1999), transcends this interlocutor-centred view by differentiating between subjective context and individual context.

1. Subjective context: A cognitive or knowledge-based representation of the world, shaped by an individual's or a community's beliefs, knowledge, or worldview.
2. Individual context: A unique, personal representation of the world, based on an individual's specific beliefs and experiences, which may differ from the community's perspective.

While subjective context and individual context may overlap (in cases where an individual's worldview aligns with that of their community), they are not always the same. A key concern in both cross-cultural and intercultural pragmatics, however, is how individuals' internal cognitive context—such as their personal knowledge, experiences, and mental frameworks— influences their perceptions of sociocultural context and the linguistic choices they make during interactions (Moeschler, 2004).

Common ground. Common ground, in turn, extends the concept of context by emphasising the shared knowledge or assumptions between communicators. According to Clark (1994), common ground refers to the shared knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions that participants in a conversation rely on to facilitate understanding and coordination that influence how interlocutors interpret messages and respond to each other. Common ground is not merely a static repository of shared knowledge but is dynamically constructed and negotiated throughout interactions. Kecskés and Mey (2008) emphasise that the pursuit of mutual knowledge serves not only to manage referential information but also plays a vital role in social affiliation, highlighting the interconnectedness of informational and social functions of common ground.

Standard pragmatics was founded on the assumption that communication functions effectively when speakers and hearers operate within a framework of shared conventions, norms,

and mutual understandings (Spencer-Oatey and Wang, 2017; Kecskés, 2016). Intercultural pragmatics, however, is grounded in a view of communication where individuals from diverse backgrounds collaboratively negotiate meaning and co-construct common ground. This process involves bridging differences in communicative preferences, attitudes towards directness/indirectness, and culturally defined role relations (Moeschler, 2004; Haugh, 2008; House, 2008; Spencer-Oatey and Wang, 2017). Interlocutors take on the role of core creators of common ground within the interactional context, rather than merely seeking or activating existing common ground (Kecskés, 2016; Haugh, 2008). In intercultural communication, where sociocultural backgrounds differ, the creation and maintenance of common ground are crucial; without it, misunderstandings are more likely to occur (Shi & Li, 2019). The integration of socio-cognitive approaches in IP further sheds light on how egocentrism and cooperation coexist in communication, shaping the creation of common ground (Wang & Zhan, 2023). Consequently, the notions of context and culture have been re-conceptualised by framing them as dynamic and co-constructed elements of communication.

Culture. Culture shapes both context and common ground in communication. It provides the values, norms, and beliefs that guide how individuals understand and react to different situations. However, the traditional, static understanding of culture is increasingly being questioned in light of globalisation. As Alba-Juez (2022: 338) wonders, “Are we supposed to understand culture as a nation? An ethnicity? A language? A religion? A community of practice? Or even a profession or a gender?” This highlights the evolving nature of how we conceptualise culture.

In intercultural pragmatics, culture is perceived as fluid, as communication itself is considered as “intercultural” (Haugh, 2008). It has fuzzy boundaries as is viewed as neither

relatively static nor constantly changing, but as a combination of both (Kecskés, 2014; Alba-Juez, 2022). It possesses both a priori and emergent features, evolving both diachronically (over long periods, such as decades) and synchronically (emerging spontaneously in communication) (Mey, 2004).

Interculturality refers to the dynamic and negotiated nature of meaning-making between individuals from different cultural backgrounds (Kramersch, 1998; Byram, 1997; Holliday, 2011; Ortiz & Gutiérrez, 2020). A key aspect of interculturality is the creation of “interculture,” which refers to the emergent norms and practices developed through intercultural exchanges. Interculture is central to understanding how individuals from different backgrounds can create shared meanings (Chen & Gabrenya, 2021). Therefore, interculture is situationally emergent consisting of co-constructed phenomena rather than fixed, relying on relatively definable cultural norms as well as situationally evolving features created in the course of communication (Haugh, 2008; Mori, 2009, Ortiz & Gutiérrez, 2020). To illustrate, Kecskés (2016: 03) provided an example of a Brazilian and a Polish person communicating in English as a lingua franca (ELF), demonstrating how they co-constructed a temporary “interculture” that both could share.

Brazilian: And what do you do?

Polish: I work at the university as a cleaner.

Brazilian: As a janitor?

Polish: No, not yet. A janitor comes after the cleaner.

Brazilian: You want to be a janitor?

Polish: Of course.

Their interaction progresses smoothly as they negotiate the meaning of the Polish speaker’s job title, avoiding any misunderstandings. Both speakers use clear and semantically transparent

language to ensure mutual understanding. When clarification is sought for the term “cleaner,” the Polish speaker provides an explanation, drawing a distinction between “cleaner” and “janitor.” In this conversation, the interlocutors come from two different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Brazilian and Polish) and use English as a lingua franca (ELF) — this represents the prior knowledge each brings into the interaction. Through their exchange, they co-create an “interculture” that belongs to both of them, at least temporarily, emerging naturally in the course of the conversation. According to Liddicoat (2019), reflecting and sharing such intercultural experiences — as demonstrated in the example above — can facilitate pragmatic interpretation. Such interpretation may involve more than just “identifying” a specific speech act an individual can make, but also involving both conscious and unconscious judgments about whether the act was carried out in an in/appropriate way, including “a judgement of the individual as a social being” (McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016, p. 16).

In short, by synthesising these three concepts, we see that communication is a constantly shifting web of context, shared understanding, and cultural values. Context provides the “stage” for communication, common ground enables interlocutors to engage meaningfully, and culture influences the ways in which both are understood. In my research, this synthesis can help explain how teachers’ and learners’ perceptions of pragmatics are shaped by the interplay of these elements, particularly in the EFL context. It shows how pragmatics instruction must account for the complexities of context, the fluidity of common ground, and the variability of cultural norms to be effective in fostering intercultural competence. Table 2.1 presents a summary of the discussion in Section 2.3 on Intercultural Pragmatics

Table 2.1*Summary of 2.3 Intercultural Pragmatics*

Intercultural pragmatics	
A branch of pragmatics exploring communication between speakers from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It emphasises the negotiation of meaning, co-construction of communication rules, and dynamic adaptability in multilingual settings.	
Key perspectives	
Socio-cognitive perspective	Focuses on the interplay between individual cognition and social influences. Emphasises the tension between a priori (individual intention) and emergent (context-driven) intentions during communication.
Discourse-segment perspective	Views communication as a dynamic process, emphasising the co-construction of meaning through interaction and the evolving nature of discourse in intercultural contexts.
Etic perspective	Outsider perspective—analysing cross-cultural norms from an external viewpoint.
Emic perspective	Insider perspective—understanding communication norms within a cultural group.
Key concepts	
Context	Shapes communication through sociocultural variables; co-constructed, not pre-existing.
Common ground	Shared knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions; co-constructed by participants during communication.
Culture	fluid, evolving both diachronically (historically) and synchronically (emerging in communication); co-constructed during intercultural exchanges forming an “interculture” through negotiated meaning-making.

2.4 Pragmatic competence

Pragmatic competence is the ability to use language effectively in social interaction, which is a key component of a communicative competence (Thomas, 1983). As illustrated in Figure 2.1,

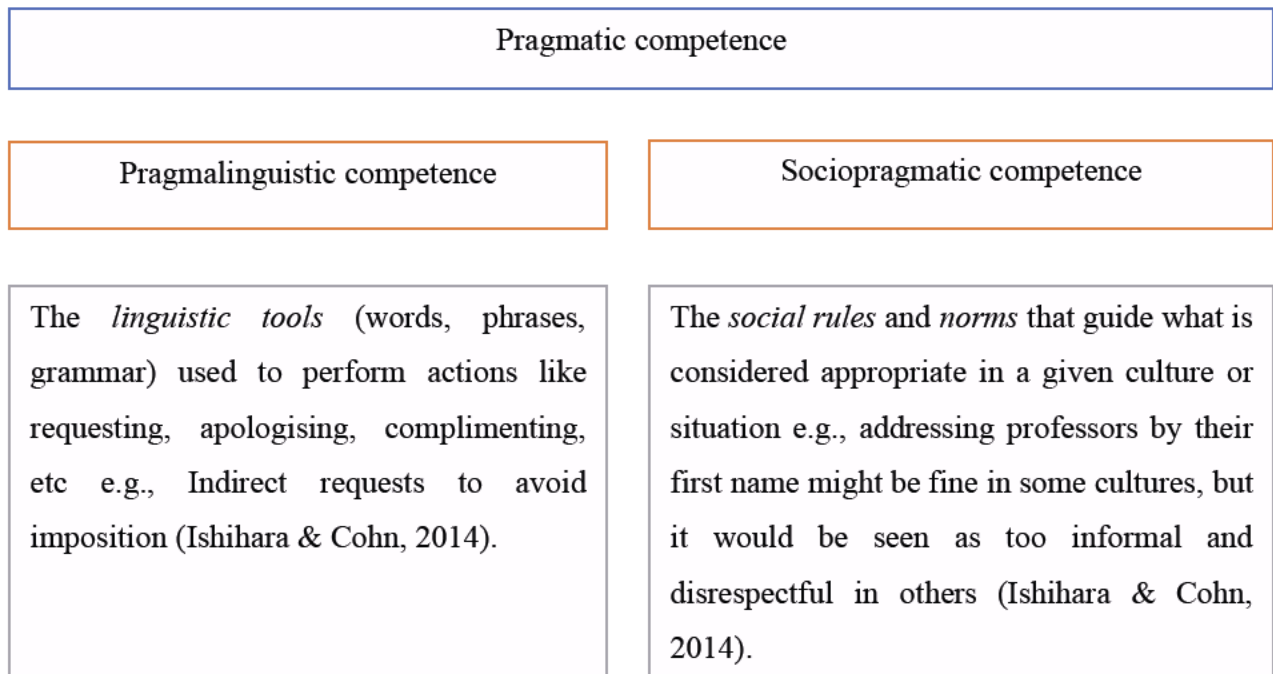
pragmatic competence focuses on the specific resources a language offers for communicating pragmatic meaning, both interpersonally and illocutionary, including two components: pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983, as cited in Marmaridou, 2011). Pragmalinguistics emphasises the linguistic devices that can be used to mitigate requests or to show warmth and friendliness or indirect request forms to avoid imposition (Yates, 2004). Sociopragmatics, on the other hand, associates pragmatic meaning with an evaluation of interlocutors' social distance, the social rules, and appropriate norms of their language community, discourse practices, and accepted behaviour (Leech, 1983, Thomas, 1983, as cited in Marmaridou, 2011). Examples of sociopragmatics involves the use of shared knowledge regarding the dynamics of relationships, the in/appropriate topics of conversation in various contexts, the extent to which hierarchical distinctions should be overtly indicated during interactions (Yates, 2004). To illustrate, Kecskés (2014: 421), citing Yorio (1980), provides the example of a shop assistant addressing a client with the question "What do you want?" rather than "What can I do for you?" While the former is grammatically and semantically correct, it may be interpreted as pragmatically inappropriate or even impolite. In contrast, the latter reflects the pragmatic norms of the speech community, thus embodying a more socially acceptable question.

Research on pragmatic competence has evolved through several major stages. Early work by scholars such as Leech (1983), Thomas (1983), and Bachman (1990) focused on defining pragmatic competence in a second language (L2), focusing on learners' ability to understand and use language appropriately in various social and cultural contexts. During this stage, models like those of Canale and Swain (1980) and Bachman (1990) conceptualised pragmatic competence as a fixed set of sociolinguistic and sociocultural rules, often anchored in native speakers' norms. Building on this conceptualisation, the field of interlanguage pragmatics, represented by

researchers such as Bachman (1990) and Kasper (2001), aimed at identifying deviations from native speakers' norms while emphasising the continually evolving nature of the learner's pragmatic competence, shaped and redefined through exposure to new sociocultural contexts.

Figure 2.1

Illustration Depicting the Two Components of Pragmatic Competence



As previously discussed in relation to intercultural pragmatics, recent scholarship has offered a dynamic perspective on pragmatic competence. Rather than viewing it as a static set of rules, intercultural pragmatics reconceptualises pragmatic competence as a flexible and evolving process shaped through real-time interactions. In other words, pragmatic competence may be seen as expandable, as it involves the merging of L1-based conceptual systems with newly acquired L2 strategies, sociocultural norms, and behaviours (Kecskés, 2014). For example, learners' willingness, motivation, and ability to adopt new sociocultural beliefs play a crucial role in the

development of intercultural pragmatic competence (Wang & Zhan, 2023). Even with social and cultural awareness, learners might resist fully adhering to target language norms (Ishihara & Cohn, 2014). Intercultural pragmatic competence, therefore, is reflected in how learners creatively and strategically use communicative resources, favouring clarity, creativity, and the co-construction of meaning to form an evolving “interculture.” Nonetheless, pragmatics research in the Saudi EFL context has largely concentrated on developing learners’ pragmatic competence through either interlanguage pragmatics or cross-cultural pragmatics approaches (as discussed in section 3.5 in Chapter 3), with limited attention to intercultural perspectives.

2.5 Traditional pragmatics theories

Having outlined intercultural pragmatics, its key concepts, and perspectives, as well as exploring pragmatic competence, this section focuses on influential pragmatic theories—Face, Politeness, and Speech Act—that have dominated L2 pragmatics research. It then discusses a possible shift in these traditional theories to embrace intercultural pragmatic competence.

2.5.1 Face and politeness

The concept of Face originated in Chinese culture but gained widespread attention in the West through the work of sociologist Erving Goffman, particularly in *On Face-Work* (1955) and *Interaction Ritual* (1967) (Haugh, 2007). Goffman introduced face as a central element of social interaction, defining it as the positive social value a person claims for themselves during an interaction. Face represents the image individuals construct of themselves based on how others interpret them in social contexts. People actively strive to maintain their face during interactions, as they are emotionally invested in it: the maintenance or enhancement of face leads to positive emotions, while its loss or harm causes emotional distress, often expressed through anger (Goffman, 1967).

Face has since become a foundational idea in studies of politeness, through the work of Brown and Levinson in their *Universal Theory of Politeness* (1987). They defined Face as “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself” (p. 61), arguing that Face is integral to politeness strategies. They distinguish between positive face and negative face, each of which aligns with different forms of politeness. Positive face refers to the desire to be liked, admired, or accepted by others. It relates to the need for social connection and approval, which is addressed through positive politeness strategies. These strategies aim to make the other person feel appreciated, often by emphasising shared values, group membership, or solidarity. On the other hand, negative face refers to an individual’s desire for autonomy and freedom from imposition. This aspect of face concerns the need to avoid being intruded upon or controlled. Negative politeness strategies are used to respect this autonomy, often by being indirect, showing deference, or making requests in a way that minimises imposition.

Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory extends beyond the core concepts of positive and negative politeness. One such concept is face-threatening acts (FTAs), which are speech acts that pose a risk to either the speaker’s or the listener’s face. An FTA can threaten a person’s positive or negative face, depending on the nature of the act. Threats to positive face occur when an act damages an individual’s need for approval, inclusion, or acceptance. Examples of such threats include criticism, disapproval, insults, interrupting or ignoring someone, and disagreeing or refusing a request. On the other hand, threats to negative face involve actions that infringe on a person’s autonomy, privacy, or impose demands on them. This can include making requests, giving orders, asking personal questions, making assumptions, or imposing on someone’s space or time.

Limitations of Brown and Levinson's. Despite its foundational status in the study of politeness, Brown and Levinson's theory has faced considerable criticism. Scholars have pointed out several limitations, including concerns about its universality and cultural bias, its rigid and static nature, its overemphasis on single utterances, and its strong association between indirectness and politeness.

Firstly, Brown and Levinson (1987) assert that their politeness strategies apply universally across different languages and cultures, extending beyond the Anglo-Saxon cultural framework. Researchers working with non-Western cultures have challenged the emphasis on “negative face” (the desire for autonomy and freedom from imposition), suggesting that it may not apply the same way outside of Western contexts. For example, Sari (2021) challenges this universality by demonstrating that keigo (honorific speech) in Japanese consists of three distinct forms—sonkeigo (respectful), kenjougo (humble), and teineigo (polite)—each of which is deployed based on situational context and speaker strategies. Similar cross-cultural and cross-linguistic variations in politeness have been documented, such as Chang's (2008) exploration of Australian and Chinese perceptions of (im)politeness in intercultural apologies, Yang's (2013) study on gendered politeness strategies in Chinese, Wójtowicz's (2021) investigation of African politeness in the act of greeting, and Al-Musallam's (2022) analysis of Arabic face and politeness.

Secondly, Brown and Levinson's (1987) was built on a rule-based system of predefined strategies, failing to account for the fluid and context-dependent ways in which politeness is negotiated and interpreted in real interactions. As Karafoti (2007: 123) observes, “the only flexible and dynamic part is that of the choice of the strategy and of the evaluation of the participants.” However, this limited flexibility restricts human creativity and social innovation (LoCastro, 2012)

and overlooks individual agency (Mori, 2009). Yang (2013) further argues that the model's rigidity extends beyond linguistic structures to social variables such as gender, treating them as fixed rather than fluid factors that actively shape communication. Likewise, Haugh (2007) critiques the framework for failing to capture the discursive and context-dependent nature of politeness, particularly in non-European languages, where politeness is dynamically constructed through interaction rather than predetermined strategies.

Thirdly, the overemphasis on the individual utterance as a unit of analysis is a recurring criticism, which can lead to a reductionist view of interpersonal communication. Critics argue that the theory tends to prioritise isolated speech acts, such as requests or apologies, without considering how politeness operates dynamically throughout extended interactions, casual conversations, or written discourse, all of which are influenced by factors such as power dynamics, social relationships, and contextual settings (Kitamura, 2000; Al-Khazaali, 2009; Al-Hindawi & Alkhazaali, 2016; Al-Arief, 2023). This limitation extends to the study of macro-pragmatic coherence, which concerns the appropriate use of politeness strategies in larger texts and longer conversational exchanges. Al-Khazaali (2009) argues that politeness research should extend beyond single utterances to examine how politeness functions across discourse as a whole, particularly in sustained interactions where power dynamics, relational shifts, and situational factors continuously shape language use. Eshreth (2018) further highlights that while Brown and Levinson's framework offers a systematic approach to politeness strategies, it may fall short in capturing the complexities present in literary texts, where characters navigate multi-layered social hierarchies and nuanced interactions beyond mere face-saving. Thus, to advance politeness research, future studies should move beyond single utterance analysis and incorporate discourse-

level pragmatics, which considers politeness as an ongoing negotiation embedded within social interactions rather than a collection of independent, strategic speech acts.

Lastly, the assumed correlation between politeness and indirectness has been questioned. Indirect speech acts are frequently regarded as inherently polite as also demonstrated in Leech's (1983) indirectness scale; however, this perception lacks sufficient empirical support. This issue is due to the Western-centric bias discussed above. Politeness, however, extends beyond the realms of directness or transparency, as it is significantly shaped by contextual variables such as social status, power, gender, and age, as well as broader cultural influences. Additionally, factors like the situational context, speaker intentions, and interlocutor expectations play a crucial role in determining what is perceived as polite or impolite in a given exchange (Kecskés, 2014). These variables may also be perceived differently across cultures, leading to variations in how politeness is understood and enacted. In certain cultural or social contexts, indirectness may not always be viewed as more polite, and transparency might not always be prioritised as a politeness strategy. For example, some studies (e.g., Kerkam, 2015) have highlighted that although indirectness is regarded as the politest form in English, particularly in the UK, it may be considered impolite in languages like Arabic. While Brown and Levinson's theory may be suitable for describing politeness in "elite" English contexts, it is ineffective for assessing other cultural contexts (Grainger and Mills, 2016), where (in)directness may carry different meanings and uses (Kerkam, 2015). For example, in Arabic direct invitations and offers are generally regarded as more polite than indirect ones (Archer et al., 2012). However, this does not hold for every culture or language; even in English, indirectness is not always the preferred strategy in every context. Thus, rather than treating politeness as a binary distinction between cultures—where what is polite in one

setting is necessarily impolite in another (as in Kerkam, 2015; Grainger and Mills, 2016; Meyer, 2014)—it is more accurate to view it as a dynamic and negotiable aspect of interaction.

The criticisms of Brown and Levinson's theory have spurred a re-evaluation of face and politeness in intercultural pragmatics. While Goffman's view of face as a socially constructed phenomenon remains foundational, contemporary research emphasises the relational, interactional, and dynamic aspects of face (Haugh, 2007; Locher, 2006; Kecskés, 2014; Van der Bom & Mills, 2015). Kecskés (2014) calls for a more balanced approach to pragmatics research, urging scholars to move beyond the idealised focus on cooperation and politeness. He advocates for integrating individual factors such as prior experience, egocentrism, and linguistic aggression while addressing key challenges in intercultural pragmatics, including intention, speaker meaning, cooperation versus egocentrism, and context-dependency. Mori (2009) and Haugh (2013) call for a nuanced approach to understanding face in pragmatics research by distinguishing between two complementary levels of analysis: the emic perspective, which focuses on the participant's viewpoint, and the etic perspective, which takes an external, theoretical approach. This rethinking of face and politeness has significantly influenced the development of my research questions. Through a critical examination of existing face and politeness theories, it became evident that politeness strategies are not universal but highly influenced by cultural, social, and situational factors.

However, in several EFL contexts, including the Saudi context, pragmatic competence is frequently framed in terms of learners' ability to produce polite forms in English. Intervention studies on speech acts such as requests and refusals often operationalise development through the use of mitigation strategies and face-saving devices, drawing on politeness-based taxonomies (e.g.,

direct vs. indirect). Although researchers in Saudi Arabia have established an understanding of the differences in politeness strategies between Arabic and English, as well as the cultural distinctions that underlie them (e.g., Qari, 2021; Al-Hammad, 2022; Al-Suhaibani, 2020; Qadha, Al-Wasy, & Mahdi, 2021; Al-Theeby, 2018), these studies have often relied on English politeness theories (e.g., Brown and Levinson's) without critical reflection on its limitations or on the emergent and negotiable nature of politeness norms across intercultural contexts, as discussed in Section 3.5. These empirical studies expected learners to reproduce predetermined forms rather than engage in meaning negotiation. Similarly, teachers' roles have often been overlooked, with limited attention paid to their perspectives and pedagogical agency in pragmatics instruction. In contrast, this study views EFL learners and teachers as active interpreters whose perceptions can inform and enrich pragmatics intervention. By exploring how participants perceive face and politeness in feedback exchanges, this research aims to highlight the role of participants' voices in shaping more context-sensitive and dialogically oriented approaches to pragmatics teaching.

2.5.2 Speech Act Theory

Austin proposed Speech Act Theory (SAT) in 1962 aimed at the functional aspects of language in human contact, which was later refined by his pupil Searle, who made interesting work in this field in 1969. According to Austin (1962) speakers tend to use language utterances not only to say things, but also to perform certain actions. He developed three-fold system to describe the different levels at which a speech act can function when someone says something. Using the classic example, "Can you pass the salt?" Table 2.2 below illustrates the progression from the literal words spoken (locution) to the intended action by the speaker (illocution), and finally to the listener's response or effect (perlocution) (Saeed, 2003, p. 231).

In 1969, Searle developed Austin's theory and introduced a distinction between literal meaning of a lexical expression or sentence meaning and utterance meaning. From Searle's view, there are only five illocutionary acts that speakers can achieve on propositions in an utterance, classified as: representatives or assertives (asserting, concluding), directives (requesting, questioning, commanding, suggesting), commissives (promising, threatening, offering), expressives (thanking, apologising, welcoming, and congratulating) and declarations (excommunicating, declaring). When speakers depict how things are in the real world, they reach the level of assertiveness; they can hit the commissive point when they commit to accomplishing something, but when they try to persuade listeners to do something, they switch to the level of directiveness; the expressive level when they express their thoughts, opinions, and attitudes about people, objects or facts and the declaratory level when they do things only by declaring that they do.

Table 2.2

Illustrations of Locution, Illocution, and Perlocution

Speech Act Level	Definition	Example
Locution	This refers to the formulation of the utterance itself — the words and phrases used in a sentence. It is the basic, literal aspect of speech: the pronunciation, syntax, and the meaning of the words.	If someone says, “Can you pass the salt?” the locution would be the actual words “Can you pass the salt?”

<p>Illocution</p>	<p>This refers to the intended function behind the utterance — what the speaker is trying to accomplish by saying the words. The illocutionary act is the speaker’s intention.</p>	<p>The illocutionary act in “Can you pass the salt?” is a request. The intention is for the listener to do something (pass the salt); Not to ask about the listener’s ability.</p>
<p>Perlocution</p>	<p>This refers to the effect or response that the utterance has on the listener. It involves the reaction of the listener to the speaker’s illocutionary intent.</p>	<p>After hearing “Can you pass the salt?” the perlocution might be the listener passing the salt or feeling obliged to do so, depending on how they interpret the request.</p>

The performance of speech acts can vary between explicit and implicit forms, depending on how the speaker conveys their intention. Björgvinsson (2011) argues that most illocutionary and perlocutionary acts are explicitly performed, where the force or intent of the utterance is clearly conveyed within the act itself. However, speech acts can also be executed implicitly, without overt linguistic markers. Saeed (2003) illustrates this distinction with two examples. First, he describes how implicit speech acts can be conveyed non-verbally: for instance, a player in a poker game may indicate withdrawal by pushing their cards away, an auction participant may place a bid by raising their hand, or a person may greet someone with a simple nod. Second, as illustrated in the table above, Saeed (2003: 231) explains that implicitness also occurs in language through indirect speech acts, such as when the utterance “Can you pass the salt?” is typically interpreted as a request rather than a literal inquiry about the listener’s ability.

Limitations of Speech Act Theory. Despite its contributions, SAT has faced considerable criticism regarding its classification of speech acts, its treatment of communication as isolated

utterances, and its neglect of contextual and interactional complexities. Various scholars have pointed out theoretical limitations that challenge the applicability and comprehensiveness of SAT in real-world discourse. For instance, Allwood (1977) argues that Austin's and Searle's focus on individual communicative acts fails to account for the sequential and interactive nature of communication. Instead of occurring in isolation, speech acts are typically embedded in larger discourse structures, necessitating a broader analytical approach. Similarly, Janson and Woo (1996) highlight the issue of categorisation, noting that utterances do not always map neatly onto a single speech act category. Masaki (2004) adds that SAT overlooks the dialogical nature of communication, while other scholars (e.g., Suchman, 1994; Voss, 1992) emphasise its failure to adequately address social experiences and contextual factors.

Moreover, Birner (2013) critiques SAT for its limited attention to the hearer's role in interpretation, arguing that understanding a speech act involves more than simply recognising the speaker's intention. Harris and McKinney (2021: 70) further challenge the distinction between locutionary and illocutionary acts, illustrating how utterances can be ambiguous in terms of their function. For example, the statement "You can't park your car there" could serve as a factual description, a directive, or even a sarcastic remark, depending on context. Another major challenge within SAT is its reliance on fixed felicity conditions, which fail to capture the fluidity of illocutionary acts (Salih & Othamn, 2024). In short, the distinctions among different types of speech acts are often ambiguous, making it difficult to apply the theory consistently across various communicative situations.

Moreover, a key limitation of Austin's (1962) categorisation lies in its inability to accommodate speech acts that may fall into multiple categories based on their illocutionary force.

Björgvinsson (2011:17) highlights this issue through several examples. For example, an imperative such as “Close the door” functions as a directive because it directly requests an action. However, the utterance “I order you to close the door” performs multiple functions simultaneously: first, it acts as a declaration, explicitly signalling the speaker’s intention to issue an order; second, it remains a directive, as it still commands an action; and third, it serves as an assertive, affirming that the statement constitutes an order. This demonstrates that the force of an utterance plays a crucial role in its categorisation as in Searle’s, challenging the rigid distinctions originally proposed in SAT. Consequently, speech acts should be examined within discourse contexts, considering their pragmatic functions rather than being confined to predetermined categories.

These limitations are particularly relevant to feedback exchanges in this study, which are dialogic in nature and influenced by power dynamics, face concerns, and pragmatic strategies. This study has benefited from Austin’s (1962) and Searle’s (1969) Speech Act Theory, along with critiques of their models, to better conceptualise the pragmatic features of feedback exchanges for instructional purposes. Firstly, it views feedback as a dialogic form of discourse, moving away from the teaching of isolated speech acts that has long dominated L2 and EFL pragmatics. For example, in the Saudi EFL context, intervention studies have often focused on the teaching of individual speech acts (e.g., Al-Hammad, 2022, on requests; Al-Suhaibani, 2020, on compliments). Secondly, the current study considers both feedback giver and feedback recipient unlike SAT’s limited attention to the hearer’s role in interpretation, arguing that understanding a speech act involves more than simply recognising the speaker’s intention. To build a comprehensive understanding of feedback practices in education, the following sections consider it from two perspectives. The first reviews studies on feedback as a pedagogical tool that supports

language learning, while the second examines it as a pragmatic act that conveys meaning and manages interpersonal relationships.

2.6 Feedback as a pedagogical tool

Research on written feedback (WF) has received substantial attention in applied linguistics, reflecting its recognized importance in supporting ESL/EFL learners' writing development. While a considerable body of research has focused on the types, effectiveness, forms, and communicative functions of teacher written feedback (TWF) from the perspective of teachers (e.g., Hyland and Hyland, 2001; Câmpean et al., 2024; Cheng, Zhang & Yan 2025), comparatively fewer studies have investigated how students perceive and respond to such feedback (e.g., Bjørndal, 2020). For instance, Cheng, Zhang, and Yan (2025) investigated how novice EFL writing teachers conceptualize and deliver written feedback in Chinese university contexts, while Câmpean et al. (2024) examined teachers' perceptions of the impact of positive feedback on students' motivation and engagement. Hyland and Hyland (2001) conducted a detailed analysis of written feedback provided by two ESL teachers over a complete proficiency course. They categorized feedback into praise, criticism, and suggestions, finding that praise was frequently used to soften criticisms and suggestions. In addition, intervention studies using experimental or quasi-experimental designs (e.g., Baker & Bricker, 2010) have examined the effects of feedback directness, including comparisons among different types of directness forms (e.g., direct versus indirect speech acts). Collectively, these studies provide empirical and theoretical insights into how the type, delivery, and perception of feedback can influence learners' comprehension, engagement, and writing development.

However, a systematic review by Yu and Yang (2021), which examined 64 studies published between 2010 and 2021, revealed that much of the existing work on WF remains methodologically and theoretically limited. Few studies, for instance, have employed robust theoretical frameworks—such as sociocultural theory—to explain how learners engage with and respond to feedback as a dynamic, socially mediated process. Their review also highlighted how learners' reactions to feedback vary across proficiency levels and sociocultural contexts, calling for more research that captures the complex, interactive nature of feedback practices.

In a similar note, within the Saudi EFL context most research has conceptualized feedback primarily as an evaluative or corrective mechanism for improving writing performance rather than as an interactive or communicative act (e.g., Grami, 2010; Alshahrani & Storch, 2014; Alkhatib, 2015; Al-Harbi, 2017; Al-Harbi & Troudi, 2020; Alqefari, 2023; Albogami, 2020). For example, Alshahrani and Storch (2014) examined teachers' beliefs and practices of written corrective feedback (WCF) alongside students' preferences, finding that teachers typically provided *indirect* WCF focused on writing mechanics, whereas students preferred *direct* feedback addressing grammatical accuracy. Similarly, Alkhatib (2015) explored Saudi writing teachers' beliefs and practices regarding WCF and found general consistency between teachers' stated beliefs and their practices in terms of feedback focus and amount. However, discrepancies emerged concerning the use of positive feedback, feedback source, and explicitness—differences influenced by contextual factors such as institutional setting, teaching experience, and learners' proficiency levels. Furthermore, students reported difficulty understanding teachers' written comments. More recently, Alqefari (2023) explored how Saudi EFL undergraduates reflect on their experiences with teacher written feedback and found that while learners valued explicit suggestions, they sometimes struggled to interpret feedback messages. Similarly, Albogami (2020) investigated EFL

teachers' and students' perceptions of effective written feedback at a Saudi university and reported that both groups viewed feedback as crucial for reinforcing learning, fostering confidence, and promoting classroom interaction. Participants particularly preferred *explicit, user-friendly, and progress-oriented* feedback, while both teachers and learners agreed that positive comments and teacher-provided feedback were most effective. Despite these valuable contributions, existing research has largely overlooked how feedback functions as a dialogic, face-sensitive, and pragmatically negotiated process—an area that the present study seeks to address. Together, these studies underscore the pedagogical importance of feedback in Saudi EFL writing instruction but reveal a narrow conceptualization of feedback as primarily evaluative. The pragmatic, dialogic, and face-sensitive dimensions of feedback remain largely unexplored, representing a critical gap that the present study aims to address.

2.7 Feedback as a pragmatic act

In this study, feedback discourse refers to written email exchanges between individuals in hierarchical positions, such as teachers and students in an EFL context, where the giver typically holds greater institutional authority than the recipient. It is conceptualised as a dialogic and face-sensitive process in which meaning is negotiated through written language rather than merely transmitted from teacher to learner. This view acknowledges that written feedback is not a neutral act of evaluation but a socially situated discourse shaped by power relations. Feedback instances that occur orally or among peers are excluded from the scope of the current study.

Building on Austin's and Searle's influential theories, this study extends their application to feedback discourse by incorporating research on feedback exchange. Specifically, it examines Searle's taxonomy of directive, assertive, and expressive speech acts and how they interact within feedback exchanges.

2.7.1 Directive speech acts

Directives involve an attempt by the speaker to influence the hearer's behaviour, ranging in intensity and directness. "Modest attempts" are softer and more polite forms of trying to get the hearer to act for example through invitations ("I will invite you to do something") or suggestions ("I suggest you do something"). "Fierce attempts" are stronger, more forceful ways to prompt action such as insisting ("I insist you do it") or demanding ("You must do it"). Verbs denoting such directives include ask, order, command, request, beg, plead, pray, entreat, and also invite, permit, and advise as well as some verbs classified under Austin's behabitives and excitives such as dare, defy, and challenge.

In feedback contexts, directives seek to encourage the feedback recipient do something (e.g., changes) as well as influencing their performance, particularly in educational or professional settings. The use of directives in feedback can affect not only how the message is understood by the recipient, but also how it is interpreted depending on cultural norms, power relations, and social expectations (Ryan & Henderson, 2018). In this study, directives in feedback context were limited to in/direct request, ask/wonder, suggest, or advise.

2.7.2 Assertive speech acts

Assertives are statements that convey information, opinions, descriptions, or facts about the object and can be evaluated on the dimension of truthfulness, including assessments of true and false. The purpose of assertive speech acts is to commit the speaker, to varying degrees, to the truth of the expressed proposition. In other words, most of Austin's expositives (e.g., explaining or clarifying something) and verdictives (e.g., judging or evaluating something) could fall under this category. Searle has demonstrated that Austin's expositives and verdictives both serve the

same basic function (the illocutionary point), but they differ in the specifics of how they are used (illocutionary force), potentially suggesting that many of them could be grouped together in the same category (Assertives). Verbs of this class could include state, claim, characterise, think, notice, assert, describe, call, diagnose, identify, and agree/disagree.

In feedback, assertives could inform the recipient about what was good or what needs improvement, while directives guide or instruct them on what changes they need to make. Like directives in feedback exchange, assertiveness can be highly sensitive to cultural norms, power, and social norms. In this study, assertives in feedback context could include verbs as think, notice, describe, state, identify, and agree/disagree.

2.7.3 Expressive speech acts

This illocutionary class serves to convey the psychological state reflected in the sincerity condition, in relation to the state of affairs described within the propositional content. Expressive verbs such as *thank*, *congratulate*, *apologise*, *condole*, *deplore*, and *welcome* illustrate this function. Unlike other speech acts that aim to align language with external reality, expressives do not attempt to match words to the world; rather, they assume the truth of the proposition being expressed.

In the context of feedback, expressives could play an important role, especially when the aim is to convey appreciation, encouragement, or other psychological states regarding a recipient's performance or vice versa. Expressive speech acts in feedback could convey giver's or recipient's emotional or attitudinal response to feedback to encourage and support, rather than making factual claims or suggestions as in assertives and directives. It has been suggested by Robinson, Pope, and Holyoak (2013), as well as Holmes (2023) that more positive messages should be included in

feedback exchange. Therefore, expressives in a feedback context could include verbs such as thank, appreciate, congratulate, like, admire, love, enjoy, recognise, and acknowledge.

2.7.4 Speech acts in giving feedback

I noticed you made the patient and relatives feel very comfortable while you explained the bronchoscopy test to them, and your explanation was very clear. It would have helped further if you had given them patient information leaflets, as at times they were looking a bit overwhelmed. However, you have set a time for meeting with them again, and this will give you the opportunity of answering any questions and giving the leaflets (Hardavella et al., 2017, p. 330).

The effectiveness of feedback delivery has been widely debated in the literature, particularly regarding how individuals perceive and respond to different feedback sequences. Feedback sequences (see Table 2.3) suggest that the order in which feedback is delivered can significantly influence both performance and emotional responses. Most studies on feedback sequences have been conducted in professional contexts (e.g., Choi, Johnson, Moon, & Oah, 2018), whereas research in ESL and EFL contexts has addressed different types of feedback such as written feedback, teacher-student feedback, peer feedback, as well as different delivery modes, including teacher written and oral feedback, collaborative peer feedback, and computer-mediated feedback (e.g., Hyland & Hyland, 2006). However, some ESL/EFL studies have analysed teachers' written feedback (e.g., Jakobson, 2022) or supervisors' written feedback (e.g., Gedamu & Gezahegn, 2021), identifying functions such as praise, criticism, mitigation, and compliments without explicitly referring to these as feedback sequences. This indicates a gap in the literature, as the focus has mainly been on speech acts, while the sequencing of feedback remains

underexplored in language learning contexts. Therefore, this section draws on insights from professional research, as they may provide a useful framework for examining how feedback order influences learner engagement, understanding, and affect in EFL settings.

Table 2.3

Definitions and Examples for Feedback Sequences

Feedback sequence	Definition
Positive-Positive (P-P)	Provides only positive feedback without any criticism.
<p>“I heard from the head of sales that you fixed up the presentation they used in their meeting with their new prospective client this week. I didn’t even know you did this. Thank you for offering your expertise to ensure we have the best possible chance of winning the business (Bennett, 2023, p. 1).”</p>	
Negative-Negative (N-N)	Consists of only critical feedback without positive reinforcement.
<p>“I just heard that our head of sales e-mailed you a question last week, to which you never responded. As you can imagine, this was frustrating for them and reflected poorly on you, me, and our team (Bennett, 2023, p.1).”</p>	
Negative-Positive (N-P)	Begins with constructive criticism and ends with positive reinforcement.
<p>“Sam, on that marketing report you completed for me—I noticed an error on page 6 with the statistics. The stats don’t match the text on that page. I’d appreciate your changing the text, so it coincides with the statistics. Once you change that small error, the report will really bring home the point our department is trying to make. Thanks for all your hard work (Hathaway, 1997, p. 48).”</p>	
Positive-Negative (P-N)	Starts with positive feedback, followed by constructive criticism.
<p>“The report, overall, looks pretty good. Could you please change the statistics on page 6? They don’t match the text (Hathaway, 1997, p.48).”</p>	

Traditional approaches, such as the sandwich method, structure feedback by placing constructive criticism between two positive comments to reduce defensiveness and enhance

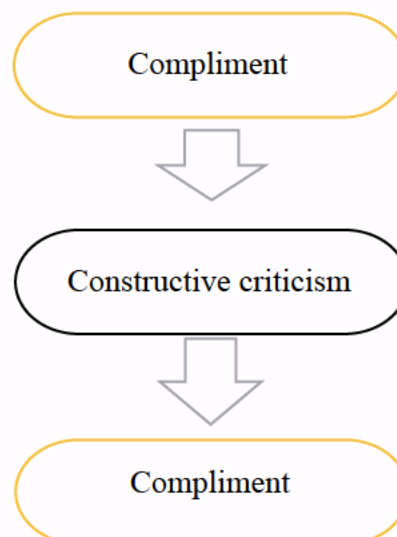
receptiveness as in Figure 2.2 (Daniels, 2009; Nelson & Quick, 2013; Von Bergen et al., 2014). One primary justification is the assumption that individuals are more likely to accept and process negative feedback when it is embedded within positive remarks. Additionally, the preference for this approach is influenced by cultural traditions that emphasise politeness, optimism, and constructive communication (Hardavella et al., 2017). Individuals may adopt the sandwich method as a means of mitigating discomfort, as delivering direct criticism can be perceived as confrontational or undesirable including the fear of offending.

Although this method could reduce the perceived harshness of feedback, it may also create ambiguity. Hyland and Hyland (2001) demonstrate that ESL teachers frequently employ praise and hedging strategies to soften criticism resulting in excessive mitigation which can impact students' misunderstanding of feedback. Scholars, therefore, suggest that such one-size-fits-all strategies may not be universally effective, as individuals' perceptions of feedback are shaped by their unique learning histories and cultural backgrounds (Hathaway, 1997; Daniel, 2009; Meyer, 2014). Feedback predictability is often influenced by how individuals have previously experienced praise and criticism. Some individuals may associate praise with negative outcomes due to past experiences in which attention preceded humiliation or discomfort (Choi, Johnson, Moon, & Oah, 2018). Associated with this is the "yes, but" rule, with the classic example being "Yes, you did a good job, but you know you still have a long way to go" (Daniel, 2009, p. 87). Using the word "but" in the middle of the sentence is often interpreted by the receiver of the message "ignore what I have just said, because the important point is coming up" (Von Bergen, Bressler & Campbell, 2014, p. 5). As a result, they may develop anticipatory anxiety, often referred to as the "waiting for the other shoe to drop" effect (Daniels, 2009, p. 96), which undermines the intended benefits of the sandwich method.

Given these limitations, alternative feedback sequences have been proposed, including Positive-Positive (P-P), Negative-Negative (N-N), Negative-Positive (N-P), and Positive-Negative (P-N) structures. Research indicates that mixed feedback sequences, such as Negative-Positive, may help mitigate the adverse emotional effects of negative feedback while ensuring clarity in performance evaluation (Dohrenwend, 2002; LeBaron & Jernick, 2000; Choi et al., 2018). Positive-Negative (P-N), on other hand, may cause the recipient to anticipate negative comments, making it hard for them to focus on the positive remarks, as their mind is already preoccupied with what might come next (Hathaway, 1997). In various feedback scenarios, negative comments are inherently face-threatening, as they can challenge an individual's self-esteem or social image. Specifically, such comments directly threaten the recipient's positive face—their desire to be accepted, appreciated, and valued by others. When negative feedback is not carefully framed, it can constitute a face-threatening act (FTA), leading to defensive reactions, emotional distress, and a distancing between interlocutors (Kim, Kim, & Kim, 2021). This observation underscores the importance of attending to face needs in feedback exchanges, particularly when the goal is to maintain rapport and promote constructive engagement.

Figure 2.2

Illustration of the Sandwich Feedback Protocol (Von Bergen et al., 2014)



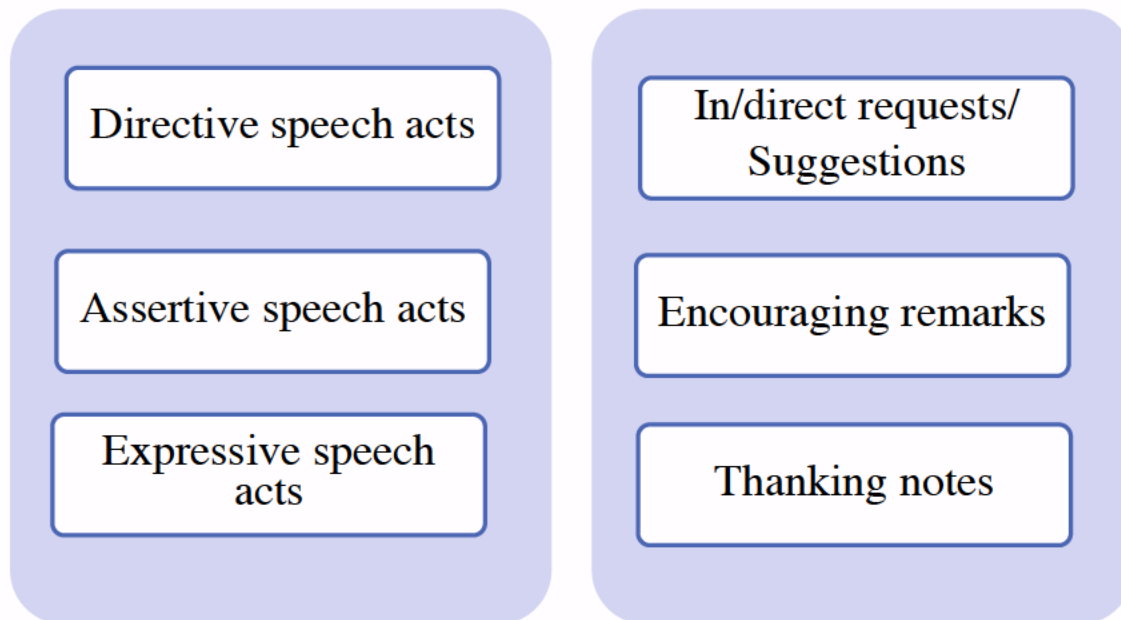
Mixing feedback as in P-N and N-P is generally considered a form of feedback sandwich as it combines both criticism and praise. The P-N feedback sequence, which involves presenting positive feedback before negative critique, is generally considered a positive politeness strategy. However, when the sequence is reversed, as in the N-P format (negative followed by positive), the initial critique may present a more direct face threat. The negative feedback, given upfront, could potentially trigger feelings of defensiveness, anxiety, or vulnerability (Dohrenwend, 2002; LeBaron & Jernick, 2000; Choi et al., 2018). While numerous studies have examined these sequences and their effects, the general consensus indicates no significant difference in performance outcomes. For instance, Parkes, Abercrombie, and McCarty (2013), Slowiak and Lakowske (2017), and Choi et al. (2018) reported no significant differences in performance outcomes across feedback sequences. However, Henley and DiGennaro Reed (2015) found that feedback was less effective when it began with a positive statement compared to when it started with a constructive comment followed by a positive one.

Although empirical evidence suggests that mixing feedback sequence may not significantly affect performance outcomes, findings regarding emotional and interpersonal effects reveal important nuances. Choi et al. (2018) demonstrated that the sequencing of feedback can significantly influence learners' affective reactions, such as perceived fairness, motivation, and comfort during feedback exchanges. Ryan & Henderson (2018); Robinson, Pope, & Holyoak, (2013); and Holmes (2023) show that emotion and feedback are interrelated, and that feedback can be conceptualised as a social construct. Within this view, how feedback is delivered and perceived matters as much as, if not more than, the content itself. Taken together, these results highlight the importance of how feedback is structured and delivered, suggesting that effectiveness is contingent not only on the content of feedback but also on the sequence and manner in which it is conveyed.

Hathaway’s (1997) example, in table 2.3 above, demonstrates the Negative-Positive (N-P) feedback sequence, in which the feedback begins with a constructive comment identifying a specific issue before concluding with a positive remark. The speaker initiates the feedback with a corrective observation (“I noticed an error on page 6 with the statistics. The stats don’t match the text on that page.”), which directs the recipient’s attention to the precise aspect requiring revision, thereby enhancing clarity and instructional value. The message then transitions to a positive statement (“Once you change that small error, the report will really bring home the point our department is trying to make. Thanks for all your hard work.”), which serves to acknowledge effort, reinforce appreciation, and restore interpersonal balance.

Figure 2.3

Illustration of the Speech Acts within Giving Constructive Feedback Used in This Study



A similar structure can be seen in Casemore’s (2019) “open-faced sandwich” model, which outlines four practical steps: identifying the concern, suggesting alternative solutions, offering a relevant compliment, and inviting the recipient’s input:

Stan, I don't think your training on the new website today went well. Employees didn't seem to be following along. I'm wondering if we should try this again but in a one-on-one session to allow you to gauge receptivity. Don't get me wrong, the content was great, but I think we need to really ensure everyone gets it. What do you think? (para. 6).

This example reflects a collaborative tone that blends constructive critique with encouragement and involvement, reducing defensiveness and promoting ownership of improvement. Both examples illustrate how N-P feedback integrates clarity, empathy, and engagement, principles mirrored in the writing formula developed for this study (see Appendix O).

To sum up, while both Positive-Negative (P-N) and N-P sequences have shown positive outcomes in supporting self-esteem, face threatening acts, and promoting social harmony—due to the inclusion of a positive element—the placement of the negative feedback at the beginning in N-P sequences tends to make recipients more receptive to both the critical and encouraging components of the message. In the N-P format, the recipient can attend more closely to the positive comment after receiving constructive feedback, without anticipating a subsequent negative remark as in the P-N or P-N-P formats (Hathaway, 1997; Henley and DiGennaro Reed, 2015). It provides a balanced structure between constructive and positive comments, as opposed to the traditional feedback sandwich (positive-negative-positive), which can dilute the impact of the constructive message (Daniels, 2009; Von Bergen, Bressler & Campbell, 2014; Bottini & Gillis, 2020). Feedback is generally less effective when beginning with a positive statement (i.e., feedback sandwich or positive-constructive) compared to starting with a constructive one (Hathaway, 1997; Daniels, 2009; Henley & DiGennaro Reed, 2015). Consequently, this study aims to explore how

EFL teachers and learners perceive such sequence as socially constructed forms of discourse, rather than focusing solely on experimental or performance-based outcomes. By examining teachers' and learners' interpretations, this study seeks to understand how feedback sequences are negotiated, valued, and experienced within classroom interaction, emphasising the role of context, emotion, and agency in shaping pragmatic competence. Figure 2.3 above illustrates the speech acts within giving constructive feedback developed for this study.

2.7.5 Speech acts in responding to feedback

Grounded in the dialogic nature of communication, this study acknowledges that how feedback is delivered plays a crucial role in shaping how it is received and acted upon. As demonstrated by Hyland and Hyland (2001), Lea and Street (1998), Ivanic et al. (2000), and Treglia (2008), the linguistic and pragmatic features of feedback, particularly its tone and form, can significantly influence students' emotional and cognitive engagement. For instance, directive comments such as "This is not clear, reword it" may be perceived as vague or even confrontational, whereas more dialogic alternatives like "I get a sense of what you want to say, yet the language could be made clearer" or "I'm confused at this point. Do you mean that...?" soften the impact and invite dialogue. Treglia (2008: 106) illustrated these examples to show that feedback operates not only as a transfer of information but also as a complex social act shaped by intention, interpretation, and interpersonal dynamics. Moreover, Bjørndal (2020) found that student teachers are highly sensitive to face-threatening aspects of feedback, employing strategies such as contradicting (e.g., questioning feedback validity), withdrawing (e.g., responding passively to criticism), and repairing face (e.g., accepting and discussing feedback), in addition to emphasising a self-reflective and progressive face (e.g., observing, reflecting on, or evaluating past practice while expressing a willingness to develop). Collectively, these studies highlight the importance of

attending to the pragmatic dimensions of feedback to enhance learner engagement and promote constructive dialogue.

Research has highlighted a growing shift in feedback practices—from emphasising the provider’s delivery skills to focusing on how recipients receive, interpret, and respond to feedback (Boud, 2015; Boud & Molloy, 2013; Parkes, Abercrombie, & McCarty, 2013). Yet, feedback exchanges are inherently complex social interactions. When there is a mismatch in understanding between the giver and receiver, the conversation can trigger defensive reactions, emotional discomfort, or dismissal of the feedback altogether (Watling, 2014; Sargeant et al., 2011; Mann et al., 2011). In addition, sociocultural factors—including threats to personal autonomy and self-worth, concerns about harming interpersonal relationships, doubts regarding the source’s reliability, or feedback that conflicts with the individual’s self-perception—can all influence both the delivery and uptake of feedback (Van de Ridder et al., 2015; Harrison et al., 2015).

To better understand how individuals engage with feedback, Hathaway (1997) proposed that feedback recipients may respond in different ways, such as accepting feedback when it is perceived as constructive, seeking clarification when the message lacks clarity, or expressing polite disagreement when the feedback is considered unfair. These responses can be mapped onto distinct speech act categories: expressives (e.g., accepting constructive feedback), directives (e.g., requesting clarification), and assertives (e.g., respectfully disagreeing with feedback perceived as unjust).

Accepting constructive feedback. Acceptance of constructive feedback involves strategic use of expressive speech acts, which extends beyond mere emotional expression, including how a message is interpreted. Gilbert (1999) suggests that “expressive speech acts are, at the very least,

the handmaiden of meaning. When genuine... they can clarify, amplify, and specify the intended message...” (p. 233). Expressive speech act such as thanking and appreciation are widely recognised in speech act theory (Searle, 1976) and are commonly used to demonstrate acceptance of feedback (Hathaway, 1997; Hardavella et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2021). Responding to feedback with expressions such as “Thank you I appreciate it” not only acknowledges the validity of the feedback but also promotes a collaborative tone, strengthening rapport and preserving social harmony (Hardavella et al., 2017). Conversely, visible signs of frustration may result in the feedback being perceived as a personal attack (Kim et al., 2021).

Thanking and appreciation speech acts can take various forms, either explicitly or implicitly. Bayat (2013) identified six distinct strategies for expressing thanks: thanking directly (41.3%) was the most frequently used, followed by other strategies that have the characteristics of linguistic expressions conveying thanking more implicitly, such as expressing gratitude (20.7%), and complimenting the interlocutor (14.7%). Similarly, Intachakra (2004), in a cross-cultural study of Thai and English, found that both British English speakers (76.0%) and Thai speakers (65.5%) preferred direct polite forms of thanks such as “thank you,” occasionally accompanied by brief elaborations. More emotional or indebted expressions were uncommon unless the favour was perceived as significant. In Arabic context, however, thanking strategies tend to blend directness with culturally embedded indirectness, shaped by gender, social norms, and religious values. While direct expressions such as “thank you” are commonly used, Arabic speakers often expand these with indirect strategies—such as stating the favour, offering blessings, or using honorific address terms—to convey deeper social meaning (Al-Khawaldeh and Zegarac, 2013; Morsi, 2010; Albalawi, 2018; Alsuheim & Alhojailan, 2025). Overall, while direct thanking is a shared norm, the degree of elaboration, use of indirect strategies, and sociocultural motivations varies. For EFL

learners, this highlights the need to understand thanking not only as formulaic politeness but also as a culturally embedded act that can ease the potentially face-threatening nature of receiving feedback in intercultural settings.

Requesting clarification. A clarification request seeks to resolve confusion or ambiguity in previously shared information, often to ensure mutual understanding. Clarification requests in conversation ensure and maintain mutual understanding and thus play a significant role in robust and efficient dialogue interaction (Purver, 2004; Rieser & Moore, 2005). They differ from making other types of requests fundamentally in intention and function within communication. For example, asking, “I am not sure I’m clear about what your perception of the problem is. Could you please give me some examples ...”) aims to resolve confusion, seeking further understanding without questioning the giver’s authority (Hathaway, 1997, p. 32). In contrast, making a general request such as the classic example discussed in 2.5.2 section, “Can you pass the salt?” demand a physical action. Moreover, clarification requests position feedback recipients as active participants in their learning, reducing confusion and supporting practices that encourage learner autonomy (Van de Ridder et al., 2015; Harrison et al., 2015). They could function as conversational repair strategies, as Purver (2004) points out, “by studying clarification, we are studying miscommunication” (p. 15), underlining the importance of clarification in identifying and resolving misunderstandings.

Extensive cross-cultural research has highlighted notable differences between native and non-native English speakers in their use of request strategies, particularly in terms of levels of directness. Scholars (e.g., Searle, 1969; Brown and Levinson, 1987; Blum-Kulka & House, 1989) have generally categorised request strategies into three types: direct (or impositive),

conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect. Direct strategies, typically realised through imperatives such as “Close the window,” are considered to exert the greatest imposition on the hearer. Conventionally indirect strategies, such as using modal verbs (e.g., “Could you open the window?”), reduce the force of the request while maintaining clarity. Non-conventionally indirect strategies, or hints (e.g., “It’s cold in here”), convey the request more implicitly and rely heavily on shared context. Previous studies (e.g., Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; Shafran, 2019; Elshazly, 2017; Qari, 2017; Ghazzoul, 2019; Al-Qinai, 2008; Al-Musallam, 2022; Kerkam, 2015; Archer et al., 2012; Qari, 2017) have shown that native English speakers predominantly employ conventionally indirect request forms, such as “Would you...?” or “Could you...?”, which are perceived as more polite and socially appropriate. In contrast, non-native speakers are more inclined to use direct or impositive strategies, reflecting a significant divergence in pragmatic conventions and cultural interpretations of politeness. Interestingly, the third category, non-conventionally indirect strategies, were rarely used by both groups. Overall, the differences could suggest that there are culture-specific preferences in the realisation of the speech act of request, potentially causing intercultural misunderstandings, particularly in interactions where indirectness is expected to signal politeness.

Disagreeing with feedback. Assertive speech acts provide students with the opportunity to respectfully disagree or offer an alternative perspective. While some communicative behaviours may transfer from a learner’s first language (L1) to a second language (L2), this transfer can be perceived as specifically problematic in disagreement (Spencer-Oatey, 2008). Disagreeing is inherently a sensitive act influenced by social norms and personal traits, making it more prone to misunderstandings when culturally incompatible strategies are used (Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan, 2010). For example, when individuals attempt to express disagreement, their message may be so

indirect that it fails to be recognised, or it may come across as rude or confrontational (Beebe & Takahashi, 1989; Spencer-Oatey, 2008). Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan (2010) echo Carnegie's (1936) insight that there is an art to disagreeing agreeably—expressing differing views while maintaining respect and keeping communication open—a skill they view as particularly challenging due to the social and interpersonal dimensions involved in disagreement.

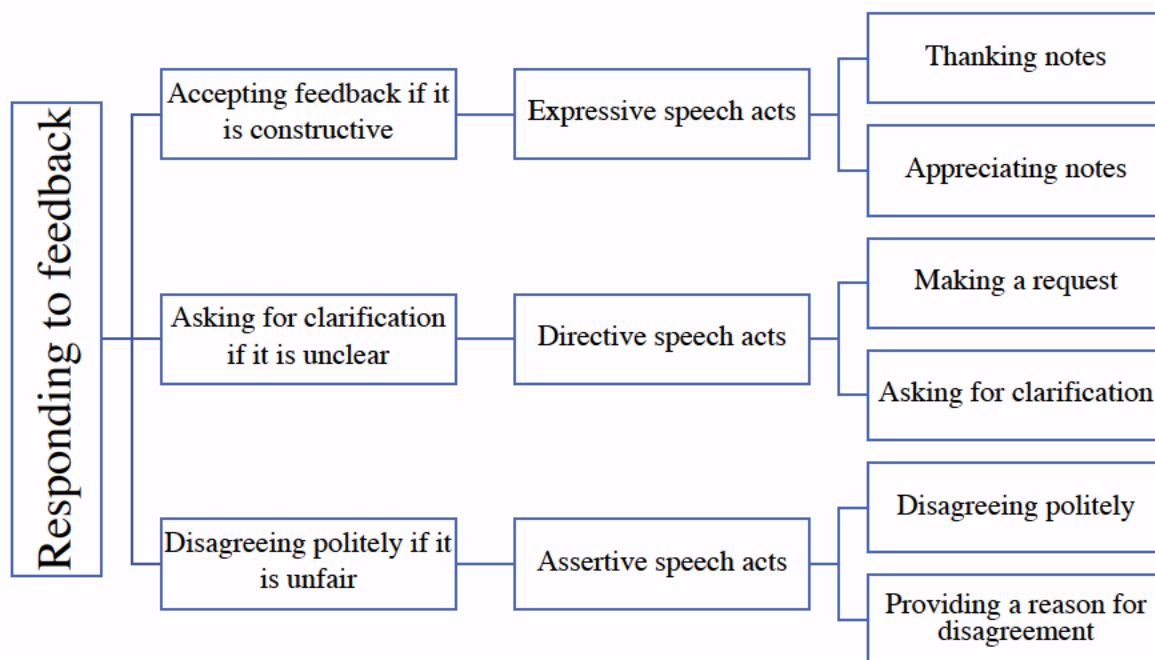
Disagreement can be expressed either explicitly—through direct negation of the previous speaker's statement—or in more indirect and mitigated forms. Upon reviewing the literature on disagreement (e.g., Stalpers, 1995; Locher, 2004; Jacobs, 2002, Aramasivam, 2007; Benyakoub, Alghazo, Altakhaineh, & Rabab'ah, 2022; Harb, 2021), no significant differences have been observed in terms of overall directness, as the preferred approach is generally to express disagreement indirectly. However, studies reveal variation in the specific linguistic and pragmatic strategies employed to mitigate disagreement and manage face concerns. For example, Stalpers (1995) identifies strategies such as hedging, repetition, questioning, and providing reasons for disagreement as common forms of indirect disagreement. Similarly, Locher (2004) notes that speakers often avoid direct moves such as correction or argumentation by maintaining a stance of neutrality through *indirect advocacy*. Jacobs (2002) further highlights that communicative act such as *questioning*, *summarising*, and *informing* are often strategically used to manage disputes while maintaining a neutral stance. In line with these findings, Aramasivam (2007) observed that speech acts such as *asking for clarification* and *counter-proposing* were used both to exercise power and to express disagreement indirectly through deference politeness. Solidarity politeness was also used to soften power dynamics, particularly through *giving reasons* that emphasised mutual benefits. For instance, one participant softened a disagreement by pointing to available support, stating, “because here you have all the support you see... and then the people will be there”

(Aramasivam, 2007, p. 105). Overall, the literature suggests that although indirectness is a shared preference in disagreement across cultures, the strategic variation in its realisation illustrates how speakers tailor their responses to maintain social harmony, navigate interpersonal relationships, and fulfil context-specific communicative goals.

In conclusion, the three categories of responses outlined by Hathaway (1997) offer a pragmatic framework that fosters constructive dialogue, supports learner agency, and helps maintain relational harmony in feedback exchanges. Given that academic work often requires personal effort, receiving feedback—especially critical feedback—can pose a threat to the recipient’s self-image (Van de Ridder et al., 2015; Harrison et al., 2015). This highlights the inherently social nature of feedback, where discourse, power relations, and emotional responses shape how messages are received and interpreted (Ryan & Henderson, 2018). Additionally, while cross-cultural pragmatics literature does not explicitly focus on speech acts in feedback-response contexts, it offers valuable insights into how these acts function in intercultural communication more broadly. For example, thanking is often realised more directly, as it is perceived as a low-risk act compared to face-threatening acts like requests or disagreements. This observation is particularly relevant in educational settings, where power imbalances and cultural sensitivities are at play. Explicit instruction in pragmatic strategies not only enhances learners’ linguistic competence but also fosters their sociopragmatic awareness (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014). For EFL learners, understanding these pragmatic variations is important not only for raising awareness but also for providing the freedom to choose how to express themselves more appropriately and effectively in intercultural contexts. Figure 2.4 below illustrates the speech acts in responding to feedback used in this study.

Figure 2.4

Illustration of the Speech Acts in Responding to Feedback Used in this Study



2.8 Research gap(s)

Feedback exchange was chosen as the focus of this study due its central role in communicative interaction. Despite its importance, it remains underexplored in EFL pragmatics. While existing studies in Saudi EFL contexts (e.g., Grami, 2010; Alshahrani & Storch, 2014; Alkhatib, 2015; Al-Harbi, 2017; Al-Harbi & Troudi, 2020) have examined feedback primarily as a tool for evaluating writing performance, they largely overlook its role as a pragmatic and communicative practice. Specifically, little is known about how EFL teachers and learners perceive and give/respond to feedback in ways that reflect their pragmatic competence, agency, and face concerns. It is assumed that professionals, like EFL teachers, inherently know how to give constructive feedback and learners, like EFL students, know how to recognise constructive

feedback and take it (Hyland and Hyland, 2001). However, feedback is an ‘art’ that is often taken for granted and left untaught. The need for a deeper understanding of feedback structure and exchange becomes even more profound in intercultural communication, where English is regarded as a global language, connecting individuals from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Research on feedback (e.g., Ryan & Henderson, 2018; Robinson, Pope, and Holyoak, 2013; Holmes, 2023), has shown that exchanging feedback is sensitive and critical, as it often carries social and emotional nuances. While feedback is intended to guide individuals to grow and support them to learn, it may sometimes be misinterpreted and have unintended effects, depending on the context and the individuals involved in the feedback exchange, which may result in face loss or communication breakdown (Hyland and Hyland, 2001).

Another significant reason is the hierarchical elements inherent in exchanging feedback. The act of exchanging feedback often reflects power dynamics, where the person giving feedback holds a position of authority, and the person receiving feedback may feel vulnerable (Hathaway, 1997; Meyer, 2014). This often affects how feedback is perceived, received, and taken. These dynamics become even more complex when cross-cultural differences, as varying expectations, norms, and communication styles, can affect how the feedback is received and responded to (Meyer, 2014). This may also add a layer of complexity to what may seem simple.

Finally, another significant reason relates to the dominance of Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory and speech act theory in shaping the understanding of pragmatic competence. Politeness-oriented interventions have typically focused on teaching indirectness as the more appropriate strategy, testing the effects of explicit instruction without considering how learners actually perceive such instruction. Similarly, as discussed in Chapter 3, prior research in Saudi EFL and other L2/EFL contexts has largely focused on teaching speech acts such as requests,

suggestions, and refusals, without considering how these acts shape discourse, particularly in feedback exchanges. Given these limitations, the present study addresses an underexplored area in feedback research by examining EFL teachers' and learners' perceptions of teaching and learning the pragmatic features of feedback exchange. Focusing on perceptions enables access to participants' subjective understandings and interpretations of feedback, which are crucial for uncovering how feedback is pragmatically negotiated and experienced in real interactions. By exploring these perceptions, the study foregrounds the dialogic, face-sensitive, and interculturally nuanced dimensions of feedback—areas that previous research has largely overlooked—and thereby contributes to advancing intercultural pragmatics research.

2.9 Summary

This chapter provided an in-depth exploration of the theoretical foundations of pragmatics in second language learning, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. The chapter began with a brief historical overview of pragmatics, highlighting its evolution from early linguistic theories to the contemporary understanding of language as a dynamic tool in social interactions.

A significant portion of the review centred on intercultural pragmatics, with an emphasis on the challenges faced by second language learners along with key perspective, concepts, and notions in intercultural communication. The chapter also highlighted pragmatic competence, which refers to the ability to use language appropriately in varying social contexts.

Theoretical frameworks were critically examined, including Speech Act Theory, which examines how speakers perform acts and Politeness Theory, which focuses on the social strategies individuals use to manage face and maintain politeness in conversation. The review also examined feedback as a pragmatic act and discusses feedback exchange and FTAs, particularly regarding how individuals perceive and respond to different feedback sequences. This chapter ends by drawing together the emergent strands from a broad review of literature that identifies a theoretical gap(s) in pragmatics and informs a deeper focus for my work i.e. the pragmatic features of feedback exchange. I shall now turn to pedagogical and empirical research in the field to explore a range of studies in the teaching and learning of pragmatics and pragmatic features are enacted in the EFL classroom.

Chapter 3: Literature review (Pedagogical and empirical background)

3.0 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on key instructional approaches in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. It outlines a range of pedagogical theories and approaches proposed to develop learners' pragmatic competence, including noticing, input enhancement, the use of authentic materials, Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT), and Formula-based Approach. These approaches provide a theoretical and practical foundation for understanding how pragmatic knowledge can be effectively introduced and reinforced in classroom settings.

The second part of the chapter reviews the empirical foundations of pragmatics instruction in EFL. It begins by tracing the evolution of pragmatics teaching in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. It then moves on to instructional intervention studies aimed at teaching pragmatics to EFL learners, comparing explicit instruction, which directly teaches pragmatic rules, and implicit instruction, which relies on exposure and practice. One subsection focuses on instructional intervention studies on speech acts in Saudi Arabia. The chapter continues with a review of curriculum-development studies, which explore how instructional content can be designed and implemented into EFL classroom. Another key area discussed is perception studies, which examine how both teachers and learners perceive the teaching and learning of pragmatics in EFL contexts. Finally, the chapter identifies several research gaps, highlighting areas that require further exploration.

Part 1: Pedagogical theories and approaches

3.1 Theoretical considerations on teaching pragmatics in EFL

In the 1990s, an influential cognitive psychological model emerged in the field of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP): Schmidt's (1993, 1995, 2001) Noticing Hypothesis, which emphasises the importance of conscious awareness in the acquisition of pragmatic competence. According to this view, learners must first notice relevant features in input for learning to take place. This study is grounded in such theoretical foundations and develops them further by incorporating a socio-cognitive perspective—one that acknowledges the interplay between individual cognitive processes and the social, cultural, and contextual factors that shape language use as discussed in the previous chapter, 2.3.1 Intercultural Pragmatics: Perspectives. From this viewpoint, pragmatic development is not only about internal noticing but also about how learners interpret, negotiate, and co-construct meaning in intercultural contexts. Thus, the study draws on the contextual nature of pragmatic competence, the cognitive mechanisms involved in its development, and the dynamic interplay of pragmatic norms in intercultural feedback interactions.

3.1.1 Noticing, awareness, attention in EFL

Over the years, pragmatic competence has gained increasing recognition as crucial component of communicative competence in the EFL classroom. Initially, several researchers such as Kasper (1997) questioned the teachability of various pragmatic aspects, prompting interest in whether and how these skills could be explicitly developed. Early perspectives have emphasised that language proficiency involves more than just grammatical accuracy. For example, Tseng (2002, pp. 11-12), asserted that “competence in language use is determined not only by the ability to use language with grammatical accuracy, but also to use language appropriate to particular contexts.” Similarly, Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) argued that learners with high

grammatical proficiency may still lack pragmatic competence, and Olshtain and Cohen (1991) affirmed that effective communication often centres more on appropriateness of expressions in context than on their grammatical accuracy. This shift in focus marked a growing awareness that mastery of linguistic form alone is insufficient. To become successful communicators, learners must also develop pragmatic and cultural awareness that allows them use language appropriately across diverse contexts. The emphasis has evolved further from acknowledging the importance of pragmatic competence to actively integrating it into teaching practice. For example, Wijayanti and Budi (2021), underscores this shift, identifying sociopragmatic competence as a “pivotal skill” for second language communication (p.1). They advocate for the integration of sociopragmatic knowledge and awareness into classroom tasks and activities, thus making pragmatics instruction not just a theoretical goal but a pedagogical priority.

Noticing. The role of consciousness in language learning has been a topic of considerable debate among scholars. While Seliger (1983) believed that learning a language occur at the unconscious level, Schmidt (1990) and Krashen (1985) stated that learning can take place consciously (as cited in Schmidt, 1990). Krashen (1985) made a distinction between two independent processes: “acquisition,” which is subconscious and conscious “learning.” Schmidt (1990), on the other hand, hypothesised that learners cannot learn some linguistic aspects of any target language until they notice them. He stated that when learners consciously notice in input, what is noticed becomes intake for learning, leading to further conscious processing. Schmidt believed that this feature can be achieved through three aspects of consciousness in relation to L2 language learning: awareness, intention, and knowledge, all of which are required for second language acquisition.

Though some linguists (e.g., Seliger 1983; Chomsky, 1986) promoted the concept that consciousness in L2 learning is less significant and less interesting than unconsciousness especially in teaching grammar, the Noticing Hypothesis has proved its validity in the development of L2 pragmatic competence in previous studies (e.g., Castillo, 2009, Ishihara and Cohen, 2014; Al Rashidi, 2017; El Shazely, 2017, Abolfathiasl & Abdullah, 2015). For example, in El Shazely, (2017) findings, the changes in the percentage of learners using different structures for making requests before and after the treatment were influenced by their awareness of situational factors such as power and social distance. Following the consciousness-raising activities, learners showed a preference for more indirect strategies and conventionalised forms. According to Schmidt (1990), “Noticing” is the mental process of an event and L2 learners need to “notice the gap” between their mother tongue and target language through making comparisons to avoid making mistakes. Schmidt (2001: 30) elaborated that “in order to acquire pragmatics, one must attend to both the linguistic forms of utterances and the relevant social and contextual features with which they are associated.”

Ishihara and Cohen (2014:101) noted that “attention and awareness can be viewed as inseparable, like two sides of the same coin,” which can lead to consciousness and thus controls action and learning. Jerrold (2009) stated that explicit pragmatics instruction can draw learners’ attention to features of the target language that emerge during class discussion and practice; therefore, pragmatic competence must not be understood as a system that activates itself as language proficiency grows. Building on this idea, Robinson (2011), in Cognition Hypothesis, has suggested that greater reasoning demand prompts learners to think about the spatial, casual, or interpersonal dimensions of a given scenario. These cognitive demands may increase learners’ sensitivity to contextual factors such as power and social distance, thereby supporting more

appropriate and nuanced language use. However, as Kasper and Schmidt (1996) emphasise, the learning of L2 pragmatics should not be viewed solely in terms of cognitive processing because it involves the socio-affective domain such as learners' motivation, acculturation, social identity, investment, and attitudes.

One key argument in this study is that classroom instruction can be purposefully structured to support learners in noticing pragmatic features through enhanced input and guided attention. As Skehan (2013) notes, instruction can focus on how to structure and distinguish input that can assist the process of “noticing” by two means: focusing attention and enhancing awareness of the linguistic aspects. Similarly, Schmidt (1990) confirmed that instruction intervention can play an important role in motivating learners to notice certain aspects by generating language expectations—the *mental predictions* or *assumptions* that learners form about how language is typically used—based on what they've learned, noticed, or experienced. Ellis (1997) also stated that instruction serves to attract attention to elements that do not fit expectations and may thus go unnoticed. As discussed in 3.5, in the Saudi EFL context, several studies have similarly adopted explicit pragmatics instruction to raise learners' awareness of speech acts (e.g., Qari, 2021; Al-Hammad, 2022; Al-Suhaibani, 2020), supporting the notion that targeted instruction can effectively facilitate learners' noticing and understanding of pragmatic features.

In summary, the development of pragmatic competence is a multifaceted process that extends beyond grammatical mastery to include the ability to interpret and use language appropriately within specific social and cultural contexts. Given the limited exposure to authentic language use in many EFL settings, particularly in non-English speaking countries, explicit classroom instruction plays a pivotal role in raising learners' awareness of pragmatic norms.

Drawing on the Noticing Hypothesis and socio-cognitive perspective in intercultural pragmatics, this study emphasises the importance of enhancing input, guiding attention, and fostering conceptual shifts that align with intercultural communication.

3.1.2 Input enhancement

Sharwood Smith (1993) developed the concept of input enhancement in the context of second language acquisition to align with Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis. He defined it as an instructional technique used to make pragmatic features more salient during input, helping learners notice and acquire them more effectively. He distinguishes two types of input enhancement:

1. **External enhancement** involves making certain input more noticeable through various forms, including textual modifications (e.g., bolding or underlining target structures) and oral emphasis (e.g., stress and intonation) to draw learners' attention to specific linguistic features.
2. **Internal input enhancement** occurs when learners are cognitively encouraged to notice specific features through explicit instruction or awareness-raising tasks.

Schmidt (2001) asserts that input enhancement is about bringing the target language (TL) features into the focal attention of second language (L2) learners, where specific language features are attended to, thus making them ready for internalisation from the input. Leow (2000) further defined input enhancement as any external manipulation of input designed to increase the salience of specific linguistic forms, thereby facilitating learners' noticing and acquisition. Ellis (2001), however, expanded on these definitions by highlighting that while input enhancement can direct learners' attention to specific forms, it does not always guarantee acquisition, as other cognitive

and contextual factors influence learning outcomes. He then emphasised the role of practice in second language learning, distinguishing between two types: (1) focused practice, which helps learners internalise specific linguistic forms, and (2) unfocused practice, which promotes fluency through communicative activities. Both types of practice contribute to pragmatic development by reinforcing the connection between form, meaning, and use in real-world interactions. In short, effective pragmatics instruction should incorporate both input enhancement and varied practice opportunities to foster meaningful and contextually appropriate language use. In the context of pragmatics instruction, input enhancement can be used to highlight pragmatic features such as politeness strategies, speech acts, and discourse markers, ultimately fostering learners' pragmatic awareness and competence.

Research has supported the effectiveness of input enhancement in promoting learner attention and acquisition, with studies by Sykes (2009; 2013), Li (2012), Fukuya & Zhang (2002), Nguyen, Pham, and Pham (2015) demonstrating how enhancing input can lead to greater pragmatic awareness and competence. Together, these studies underscore the value of input enhancement and other-related implicit techniques (e.g., recasts) as effective strategies for facilitating learners' awareness and acquisition of pragmatic features in EFL contexts, which are further discussed in section 3.4 Instructional Intervention Studies.

Despite the increasing number of quantitative studies in the Saudi EFL context advocating for the explicit teaching of pragmatic features (e.g., Qari, 2021; Al-Hammad, 2022; Al-Suhaibani, 2020), which reflects a growing recognition of the importance of raising learners' awareness of how language functions in context, such pragmatic aspects often go unnoticed in actual classroom practice due to the curriculum's prevailing emphasis on grammar and vocabulary (Al-Qahtani, 2020). This limited focus reduces opportunities for learners to *notice* and *attend to* pragmatic

features that shape authentic communication. Current Saudi EFL curricula still prioritise structural accuracy over communicative appropriateness, leaving a gap in *how* pragmatic competence is addressed (Al-Seghayer, 2024). Therefore, the present study aims to bridge this gap by qualitatively designing instructional materials that explicitly enhance learners' noticing of pragmatic features in feedback exchange, responding to limitations identified in previous research.

3.2 Pedagogical approaches on teaching pragmatics in EFL

This section explores pedagogical approaches for developing pragmatic competence in EFL contexts. It highlights the importance of exposing learners to the authentic use of language and considers the integration of pragmatics into task-based instructional framework, as well as the potential use of formula-based approaches in EFL contexts.

3.2.1 Authentic materials

The definition and scope of authentic materials (AM) in EFL contexts, merits a closer examination of their selection criteria highlighting the challenges associated with their integration in the classroom, and their potential role in the instruction of EFL pragmatics.

Definition and scope of authentic materials in EFL. There are various perspectives on the role of authenticity in the teaching and learning process, as reflected in the literature. Authenticity is often referred to under different terms, such as “text authenticity,” “authentic materials,” “authentic texts,” or “textually authentic materials” (Anam, Munir, & Anam, 2019). Traditionally, authentic materials were defined as texts created by and for native speakers of a language for genuine communicative purposes (Morrow, 1977; Little et al., 1989 as cited in Thai & Nguyen, 2022). However, this view has evolved alongside the reconceptualisation of English as a global language. From an English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) perspective, authenticity is no longer

tied to native-speaker norms but to the communicative purpose and context of use (McGrath, 2016; Tomlinson, 2023).

Authentic materials include both spoken and written discourse derived from everyday interactions, media sources, and various professional or social contexts (Gilmore, 2007). Such materials may encompass newspapers, magazines, advertisements, films, television programmes, and other media forms (Treve, 2023). Genhard (1996) grouped authentic materials into three main types: (1) authentic audio resources like radio broadcasts, cartoons, and songs; (2) authentic visual content such as street signs, magazine and newspaper images, and postcards; and (3) authentic written texts including sports articles, newspapers, restaurant menus, and train tickets. However, the landscape of authentic materials has significantly expanded with the emergence of digital technologies including platforms such as social media (e.g., Instagram), podcasts, YouTube, blogs (Herri & Gunawan, 2020; Qadha, Al-Wasy, & Mahdi, 2021), and AI-generated dialogues (Xin, 2024).

Authentic materials have been widely recognised for their role in enhancing learners' proficiency across the four core language skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening (e.g., Marzban & Davaji, 2015; Mousavi, 2011; Ghaderpanahi, 2012). A growing body of research has also examined teachers' attitudes toward the use of authentic resources in classroom instruction (e.g., Al-Musallam, 2009; Yang, 2021; Liao & Lee, 2020). Together, these studies highlight the effectiveness of incorporating authentic materials in ESL/EFL classrooms. Building on these findings, the next section reviews the selection criteria established for this study, grounded in prior research on the use of authentic materials in ESL/EFL contexts.

Selection criteria for authentic materials in EFL contexts. Authentic materials are not selected arbitrarily; they must meet specific criteria that ensure they effectively support language learning goals, including the development of communicative competence and pragmatic awareness. One of the key criteria of authentic materials is their real-world relevance, which helps bridge the gap between classroom instruction and actual language use. For instance, Yang (2021), in a study conducted in Taiwan, discovered that although teachers use authentic materials sporadically, they have positive attitudes towards them, believing they enhance language learning, engage students, provide real-world exposure, and develop cultural awareness. Similarly, in a study conducted in Kuwait, Al Darwish's study (2014), reported that 95% of teachers agreed that the use of authentic materials is enjoyable and relevant, providing support to engage students with the target language.

Recent findings by Asma and Fatma (2024), based on a study conducted in the Algerian context with EFL teachers, have identified three criteria—cultural, linguistic, and cognitive—when selecting authentic materials. The study revealed that cultural considerations were the most frequently cited criterion, accounting for 47.6% of the responses. This indicates a strong emphasis on aligning materials with learners' cultural contexts. Linguistic considerations followed at 9.5%, while cognitive considerations were acknowledged only in combination with other factors— 4.8% with linguistic and 4.8% with cultural considerations. The most frequently cited combination was linguistic and cultural considerations (23.8%), and 9.5% of teachers reported considering all three criteria—cultural, linguistic, and cognitive—when selecting authentic materials. These findings suggest that teachers are becoming increasingly aware of the multifaceted demands of material selection, balancing cultural relevance with language level and learners' cognitive readiness.

Another important criterion of authentic materials is multimodality—the integration of multiple modes such as text, visuals, and audio—which has been shown to enhance motivation, engagement, and comprehension. Yang (2021), Abrams (2014), and Ayu (2016) emphasised the importance of incorporating visual aids within authentic content to create motivating and engaging contexts for EFL students. Teachers in Yang’s selected video clips to engage their students, aiming to develop their students’ listening comprehension and writing skills as well as basic vocabulary acquisition. Similarly, Barón & Celaya’s findings (2022) suggested that teachers can use audio-visual materials in a natural and engaging way to support learners notice pragmatic features that are required at a specific context and situation “as a leisure activity” (p. 251). Moreover, Al-Smari (2020) found that using video-based authentic materials helped EFL learners develop pragmatic awareness and intercultural sensitivity, particularly when materials included varied social scenarios that reflected real-life interactions. This highlights the role of contextual richness presented in authentic visual materials in fostering learners’ pragmatic competence.

Furthermore, the use of humour-infused visual aids constituted a key criterion in the selection of authentic materials, reflecting research evidence on their effectiveness in motivating learners and promoting engagement with pragmatics. Research has explored the pedagogical value of visual aids and humour within authentic materials for EFL students. For instance, Ayu (2016) investigated the use of caricatures in teaching writing and found that they could enhance students’ writing skills, including content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. She also reported that caricatures helped students recall concepts and situations, although students sometimes focused more on the images than the subject matter itself. Similarly, Güven and Bekdaş (2018) examined the impact of caricatures on vocabulary retention in foreign language teaching, while Thakur and Al-Mahrooqi (2015) explored how pictorial inferences could orient ESL/EFL

students toward critical thinking. In the realm of pragmatics, Bell and Pomerantz (2019) highlighted that humour in L2 instruction could significantly contribute to feelings of happiness, fostering intrinsic motivation and a greater willingness to learn.

Familiarity is another critical dimension in the use of authentic materials. Research in educational psychology underscores the importance of building on learners' existing knowledge and experiences to introduce new content. Howe (1999) and Ormrod (1995) emphasised the importance of similarity and familiarity in the learning process, proposing that learners' prior and existing knowledge should serve as a runway start for introducing new concepts (as cited in Gay, 2018, p. 176). They argued that reducing unfamiliarity—referred to as “the strangers of new knowledge” and “the threat of the unfamiliar”—can enhance students' engagement and facilitate their understanding of learning tasks. Similarly, Ho's (2009) principle of interculturality suggests that first students begin by exploring their own selves and engaging in group discussions that focus on different practices within their own culture. Thus, the “invisible culturally-shaped knowledge” of learners can be made “visible” in the process of “culture learning” (p.69). This principle was empirically demonstrated in Robinson's (2001) map task, where the participants who were familiar with the campus map produced more fluent discourse. However, they were unfamiliar with the Tokyo Street map and unfamiliarity led the learners to produce more complex discourse. Language educators could, therefore, serve as “the principal mediator” between cultures, responsible for taking into account cultural expectations and understandings of L2 learners, while also introducing them to “the new cultural viewpoint” embodied within their L2 (Liddicoat & Crozet, 2000, p. 4). These findings underscore the need to incorporate familiar and authentic materials into language learning to support fluency development and encourage cognitive engagement.

Finally, another important criterion in selecting authentic materials was the inclusion of authentic stories in intercultural communication. Previous literature on teaching L2 pragmatics and intercultural communication has highlighted the value of reflection as both a pedagogical and evaluative tool, enabling learners and teachers to critically engage with their intercultural encounters (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014; Liddicoat, 2019; McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016). Ishihara and Cohen (2014) suggest that teachers' reflections on their own intercultural experiences can be transformed into story-based awareness-raising activities that help learners appreciate the importance of pragmatics in language use. Such reflective practices, as Liddicoat (2019) explains, promote an engagement with meaning as a nuanced, contextualised, and emergent process that involves producing, interpreting, and reflecting on language use. Similarly, McConachy and Liddicoat (2016) argue that guided reflection allows individuals to question their assumptions about social interaction and self-presentation, thereby fostering deeper intercultural awareness. This process supports learners in recognising the multifaceted nature of individual identities (Dooly & Vinagre, 2022) and functioning as "interpreters of meanings" through critical reflection on their experiences (Liddicoat, 2019). In this study, the selected materials were therefore designed to encourage learners to share and reflect on intercultural pragmatic experiences, promoting awareness not only of feedback exchange but also of the social and interpersonal judgements underlying them.

In summary, the selection of authentic materials in this study was informed by multiple interrelated criteria drawn from previous research. These included real-world relevance, cultural and linguistic appropriateness, cognitive suitability, multimodality, the use of humour and visual engagement, intercultural stories, and familiarity with learners' experiences. Considering these elements ensured that the selected materials would not only support learners' communicative and

pragmatic development but also enhance motivation and engagement. Accordingly, these principles guided the choice of the authentic materials incorporated into the intervention (see Appendix U for tasks 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5).

Challenges of incorporating authentic materials in EFL. While authentic materials offer significant benefits in ESL/EFL classrooms, they also present certain challenges. One major concern is their linguistic and cultural complexity, which can make comprehension and interpretation difficult for learners (Al-Musallam, 2009; Yang, 2021). Additionally, students may struggle due to a lack of relevant background knowledge and cultural familiarity, requiring teachers to provide extra support and scaffolding (Liu & Song, 2020). Another challenge is that authentic materials do not always correspond to learners' proficiency levels or align with specific learning objectives (Al-Musallam, 2009; Yang, 2021, Chen, 2020). As a result, teachers need to carefully select these materials to ensure they are both accessible and pedagogically effective for their students. Despite these challenges, research has shown that using authentic materials in ESL/EFL classrooms can be effective in developing learners' language proficiency and communicative competence (e.g., Al-Musallam, 2009; Yang, 2021; Liao & Lee, 2020, Liu & Song, 2020).

Authentic materials and EFL pragmatics instruction. Despite the recognised benefits of authentic materials in general language instruction, there is relatively limited research addressing the application of authentic materials specifically in pragmatics instruction. While much has been said about their role in developing linguistic skills (Gilmore, 2007; Berardo, 2006), fewer studies have explored how these materials contribute to learners' development of pragmatic competence, particularly in relation to sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge (Ishihara

& Cohen, 2014; Taguchi, 2015; Vásquez & Sharpless, 2009). In the Saudi EFL context, the use of authentic materials remains limited, as classroom instruction continues to rely largely on prescribed textbooks. Al-Seghayer (2024) examined the current state of pragmatic competence in Saudi EFL education, identifying key challenges, consequences, and strategies for overcoming existing barriers. He advocated the incorporation of authentic materials alongside textbooks to better prepare learners for intercultural communication. As discussed in Section 3.5, previous research has mainly concentrated on the effectiveness of instructed pragmatics, particularly in relation to methodological approaches (explicit versus implicit instruction) and the use of multimodal tools. For instance, Al-Smari (2020) explored the use of films, while Al-Qadha, Al-Wasy, and Mahdi (2021) investigated the use of WhatsApp in pragmatics instruction. Such studies have typically prioritised measuring effectiveness, often through materials originally designed for native speakers of English. This indicates that there is limited research on how authentic materials can be systematically used to develop pragmatic competence in Saudi EFL learners, particularly with materials adapted to their cultural and linguistic needs, beyond simply measuring effectiveness with native-speaker materials.

Accordingly, this study contributes to the literature by addressing the underexplored intersection of authentic materials and pragmatics instruction in EFL tertiary contexts. It offers empirical insights into how these materials—especially when selected with attention to cultural relevance, multimodality, and familiarity—can enhance the teaching and learning of pragmatic features. Given the aim of this research—exploring EFL teachers’ and learners’ perceptions of pragmatics instruction in feedback exchange—understanding these perceptions is crucial because it can reveal how authentic materials are experienced, interpreted, and applied in practice.

3.2.2 Task-based language teaching (TBLT)

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has been conceptualised in the literature as both an approach and a method that uses tasks as the primary vehicle for language instruction, aiming to enhance learners' communicative competence through the use of authentic language (Ellis, 2003; Van den Branden, 2016; Li, 2023; Kim et al., 2023). Gradually gaining acceptance among applied linguists and language practitioners, TBLT has become a prominent method in language teaching due to its focus on authentic tasks and learner-centred instruction (Ellis, 2003; Li, 2023; Kim et al., 2023), which can be opposed to more traditional, “teacher-dominated” approaches (Van den Branden, Bygate & Norris, 2009, p. 3). TBLT is often seen as a development of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), emphasising the integration of language skills like reading and writing through task completion instead of teaching grammar in isolation (Ellis, 2003; Van den Branden, 2016; Li, 2023).

In the context of TBLT, the term “task” is characterised as “a basic unit to describe the three angles of the basic educational triangle: educational goal, pedagogic activity, and assessment” (Van den Branden et al., 2009, p. 5), potentially incorporating both form-focused and meaning-focused activities (Breen, 1989, as cited in Ellis, 2003). Ellis et al., (2020) identified four key features that define a “task” in language learning (p. 10):

1. Focus on meaning: the main goal of the task is for learners to communicate meaningfully, rather than just practicing grammar and vocabulary alone;
2. Gap: there is kind of missing information, difference in opinions, or need to infer something, which encourages learners to communicate;

3. Use of linguistic and non-linguistic resources: learners rely mainly on their own language skills and prior knowledge to complete the task; and
4. Communicative outcome: the task has a clear goal that involves communication in a variety of contexts.

Furthermore, the focus of TBLT is on “interactivity, authenticity, and process,” following educational principles, providing teaching scaffolding, active learning, integration, and reflection (Li, 2023: p. 3). According to Li (2023) interactivity in TBLT can be achieved through collaborative tasks that require learners to negotiate meaning, exchange ideas, and respond to one and another’s contributions. Bachman & Palmer (1996) define authenticity as the extent to which a language task reflects real-world language use, while Guariento & Morley (2001) emphasise that authentic tasks simulate genuine communicative purposes rather than focusing solely on linguistic accuracy. The process-oriented nature of TBLT, as Ellis (2003) explains, lies in engaging learners in meaningful use of language as they plan, perform, and reflect on tasks, using various linguistic resources to construct meaning (Ellis, 2003).

An important pedagogical consideration in TBLT is how tasks can be integrated into a coherent cycle of instruction. According to Willis (1996, as cited in Ellis, 2003), a “task cycle” consists of three broad phases: (1) pre-task, where teacher introduces the topic and tasks to students along with the steps required to complete it; (2) task, where students use the language knowledge they have learned to complete the task to the best of their ability; and (3) language focus, which includes analysis (where students analyse and evaluate the execution of tasks by other groups) and practice (where students practice language difficulties under the guidance of the teacher). Tasks, however, could also be implemented in other forms such as individual or collaborative work

(pair or group work) to facilitate opportunities for exchanging knowledge and negotiating meaning within pair or group interaction, potentially resulting in language learning (Taguchi & Kim, 2016). Accordingly, in this study, the designed tasks encouraged learners to interact meaningfully through conscious-raising (CR), guided-discovery, and practice-and-reflect tasks. Learners engaged with authentic materials that mirrored real-world feedback exchanges and intercultural encounters, analysing feedback samples and comparing and contrasting pragmatic choices across in Arabic and English contexts. This research sets out to understand how the iterative process of performing, analysing, and reflecting on tasks enabled students to develop a deeper awareness of pragmatic variation and to apply this understanding in authentic communicative situations. Further details of the design are provided in Chapter 4: Methodology.

Expanding the scope of TBLT: From grammar to pragmatics. TBLT has gained recognition as a meaning-focused pedagogical approach within the broader shift away from traditional form-focused pedagogical approaches, such as grammar-translation or presentation–practice–production. Rather than positioning TBLT as a direct replacement for earlier methods, this study adopts it due to its capacity to integrate real-world communication, learner agency, and contextualised language use (Ellis, 2003; Van den Branden, 2016; Li, 2023; Van den Branden et al., 2009), features that align closely with the aims of intercultural pragmatics. Previous research has demonstrated that task-based instruction can enhance second language development through negotiation of meaning, focus on form, social interaction through consciousness-raising activities, and self-discovery tasks that promote both deductive and inductive learning (e.g., Kim, 2008; Long, 1985, 2015; Nunan, 2004, 2015, Pham, 2020). These affordances make TBLT a particularly effective pedagogical medium for embedding authentic materials and fostering learners’ pragmatic awareness.

The majority of previous studies have focused on the learning of lexico-grammatical features through task performance or on teachers' perceptions of using TBLT. However, researchers have recently advocated for expanding the scope of research on task performance and learning outcomes beyond grammar and vocabulary, an extension that includes pragmatic aspects of language use (González-Lloret, 2019; González-Lloret & Ortega, 2018; Taguchi & Kim, 2018; Kim et al., 2023). Kim et al., (2023), as well as Wei and Zhao (2024), have suggested that one effective way to foster long-term learning in pragmatics is through the design and implementation of tasks that integrate both learned pragmatics and new linguistic features within authentic, real-world contexts. By incorporating tasks that encourage students to recycle and build upon their prior knowledge, teachers can help learners consolidate their understanding of pragmatic skills and connect them with new linguistic features, thereby enhancing their overall language proficiency and pragmatic competence. Kim et al., (2023), for example, compared traditional textbook-based instruction with task-based instruction in teaching advice-giving strategies to Korean high school students. Their study involved the design of authentic blog-posting tasks that simulated online Q&A forums, encouraging learners to engage in meaningful communication. The results revealed that while both groups improved their pragmatic competence, the task-based group outperformed the traditionally taught group, particularly in mastering complex bi-clausal constructions in advice-giving. These findings underscore the potential of TBLT to enhance the learning of pragmatic features by creating interactive, real-world tasks that promote deeper engagement with the language.

Despite this growing body of research, no studies in the Saudi EFL context have yet adopted TBLT to teach pragmatics, leaving a gap in understanding how task-based instruction can foster pragmatic and intercultural awareness among Saudi learners. This study, therefore, extends

the scope of TBLT from grammar to pragmatics by designing a series of tasks that integrate authentic materials with guided-discovery and consciousness-raising activities. Through this approach, learners are encouraged to notice, interpret, and apply pragmatic features in authentic contexts, thus engaging in a process-oriented, interactive, and reflective learning experience (see Appendix U).

3.2.3 Formula-based approach

There are many terms in the literature that describe the concept of formulaicity, including but not limited to formulaic language, formulaic sequences, gambits, formulas, fixed expressions, frozen phrases, pragmatic routines, and stereotyped phrases (Wray, 2000; Nergis, 2021; Peters & Pauwels, 2015; Taylor, 2002). However, in this study, the term formulaic sequence (FS) is adopted following Wray (2000:09), who defines it as follows:

A sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other meaning elements, which is, or perhaps appears to be, prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar.

Formulaic sequences are highly routinised and could play a key role in contextually appropriate language use. They benefit both speaker's production and hearer's comprehension especially in discourse organisation (Wray, 2000). They contribute to communicative efficiency by saving effort in cognitive processing and achieving interactional functions (McGuire & Larson-Hall, 2017). To illustrate, Wray (2000), drawing on Pawley and Syder (1983:195), highlights how formulaic sequences contribute to natural and socially appropriate communication. They contrast the natural-sounding expression "I'm so glad you could bring Harry" with several grammatically

correct but pragmatically awkward alternatives, such as “That Harry could be brought by you makes me so glad” and “That you could bring Harry gladdens me so.” These unnatural constructions underscore how formulaic expressions contribute to fluent, idiomatic, and socially appropriate language use—features that L2 learners may fail to acquire without explicit instruction or sufficient exposure to conventionalised language patterns.

In the domain of directive speech acts, previous research (e.g., Taguchi, 2015) has often prioritised the use of explicit formulae—particularly modal verbs—over other grammatical structures, largely due to their saliency and frequency in everyday communication. However, such studies have often paid less attention to the pragmatic force and interpersonal considerations embedded in these acts, such as politeness, and face mitigation (Leech, 2014, Taguchi, 2015; Al-Hammad, 2022). In the context of written feedback, Hyland and Hyland’s (2001) findings showed that a substantial majority of teacher suggestions were formulated using a set of modal verbs—such as *need to*, *could*, *should*, and *would* and the verb *try*, which were used to soften the directive force of the comments. Suggestions that lacked these mitigating linguistic features were typically classified as criticism. However, this reliance on modal-based formulae may pose challenges for EFL learners, particularly those unfamiliar with the pragmatic functions of formulaic sequences in intercultural contexts.

Scope of formula-based approach. Research has increasingly focused on the effectiveness of instructional strategies in facilitating the acquisition and productive use of formulaic sequences (FS) in EFL contexts. The applications of formula-based approaches have largely focused on the linguistic dimensions of language use—particularly at the level of fixed expressions within sentence frames that support grammatical accuracy and fluency such as

vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, and writing. Boers, Dang, and Strong (2017), for example, critically examined conventional textbook exercises for teaching verb–noun collocations and compared them with alternative instructional formats. They conducted their own quasi-experimental study with EFL learners using three different types of fill-in-the-blank tasks: (1) choose the appropriate verb, (2) complete the verb by using a first-letter cue, and (3) choose the appropriate intact phrase. Their findings indicate that presenting learners with intact phrases leads to more effective acquisition of both meaning and collocational accuracy. Similarly, Peters and Pauwels (2015) found that explicit instruction in academic vocabulary led to significant gains in recognition, cued production, and spontaneous use among EFL learners. Notably, activities involving cued output produced higher learning outcomes than recognition alone, highlighting the importance of active, task-based engagement for effective FS acquisition.

Wu (2014), on the other hand, investigated the effects of task-based instruction on the development of FS development among college-level English learners. She emphasised that FS acquisition should be positioned as a central goal in language education, with instructors serving as essential models for demonstrating authentic languages in class. Wu further proposed that pedagogical practices should facilitate learners' internalisation of FS through frequent and meaningful task-based exposure, reducing over-reliance on the teacher. Collectively, these studies shed light on the importance of instructional strategies that present formulaic sequences through engaging, contextually rich learning experiences.

The focus on language in Nergis (2021) was on spoken academic English, specifically targeting L2 oral fluency through the explicit instruction and practice of formulaic sequences (FS). The study emphasised utterance fluency (measured via temporal fluency metrics like speed and

pruned speech rate) and compared the effectiveness of FS instruction versus single academic vocabulary instruction in improving learners' spoken fluency in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) contexts. Similarly, McGuire and Larson-Hall (2017) investigated the impact of explicit instruction in FS on the spoken fluency of ESL learners, involving two groups: a control group which engaged in speaking and listening practice through a task-based approach using authentic English input, and a treatment group which followed the same approach but with the added focus of noticing and using FS drawn from weekly topic-based transcripts. They concluded that teaching FS explicitly can lead to greater gains in both increased use of phrase and improved fluency.

Similarly, motivated by concerns over the low English proficiency of Saudi students in schools and universities, researchers in the Saudi EFL context have investigated ways to improve learners' language skills. For instance, Albelihi (2022) demonstrated that explicit instruction in lexical chunks significantly enhanced learners' speaking fluency, while Algarni (2019) examined academic English formulas in a Preparatory Year Program ELT textbook, identifying the most frequent 3-, 4-, and 5-word formulas and highlighting the limited inclusion of high-utility formulas from the Academic Formulas List. However, Al-Hammed (2022) implemented explicit FS instruction to teach the pragmatics of requests. Yet, despite the inclusion of formulaic sequences, the study assessed learners' performance based on target-language norms of appropriateness, offering limited insight into learners' sociocultural interpretations or their pragmatic decision-making.

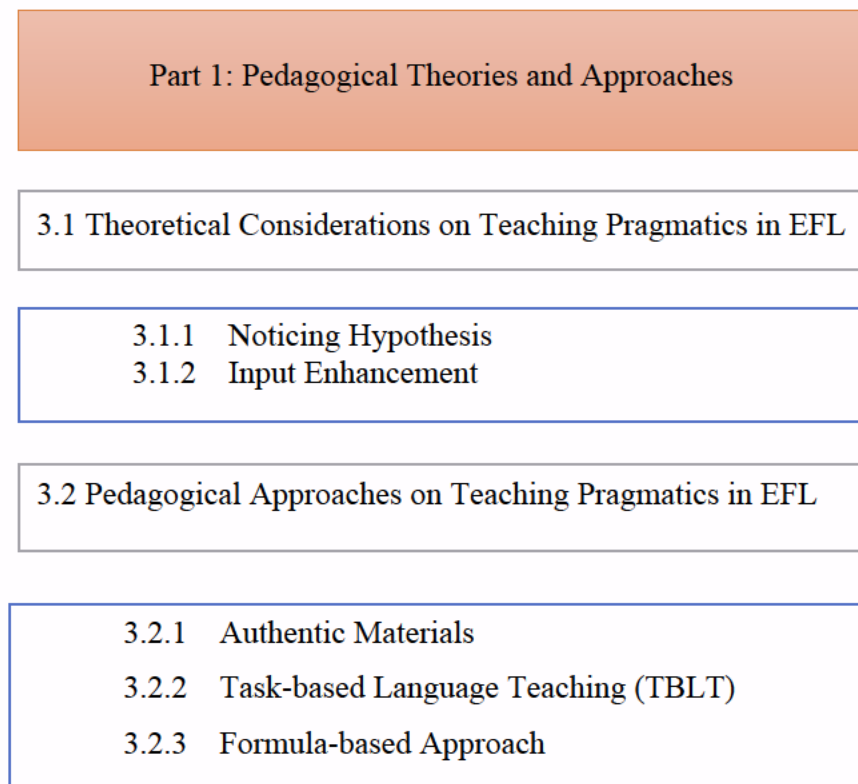
In summary, there is substantial evidence supporting the effectiveness of a formula-based approach to language instruction. Moreover, the observation that L2 learners often possess a limited repertoire of formulaic expressions and may lack the pragmatic awareness necessary to use

them appropriately indicates the need for further investigation into the role of FS in pragmatics instruction. Given that language arguably is, to some extent, formulaic in nature (Peters and Pauwels, 2015), extending the scope from purely linguistic to pragmatic dimensions could involve recognising that formulaic sequences also serve social functions. In spoken and written communication, learners must not only express themselves accurately but also manage interpersonal relationships, mitigate face threats, and align with discourse norms (Tseng, 2002; Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei, 1998). Integrating formulaic language instruction with pragmatics instruction could support learners to use FS appropriately and politely in different diverse social situations.

This study shifts the focus from evaluating learners' pragmatic performance solely against normative criteria to examining their sociocultural interpretations and pragmatic choices, particularly in how they perceive and apply formulaic sequences in context. In this study, formulaic sequences (FS) are introduced to learners not simply as items to be memorized, but as tools to raise awareness of how language is used in context. While FS can support accurate and socially appropriate expression, in intercultural pragmatic contexts they are presented with caution: learners are encouraged not to rely solely on recalling fixed expressions, but to use them as a resource while negotiating meaning (Kecskés, 2016). This approach emphasises learners' active engagement in interpreting social cues, adapting language to different interlocutors, and making pragmatic choices that reflect both accuracy and appropriateness in real communicative situations. This could include expressing considerations to learners' agency while maintaining face and politeness. Prior to determining the appropriate feedback structure, it is essential to assess the communicative context and the social dynamics involved (see section 2.6 Feedback as a Pragmatic Act). Figure 3.1 below provides an overview of part one: pedagogical theories and approaches.

Figure 3.1

Overview of Part one: Pedagogical Theories and Approaches



Part Two: Empirical background

3.3 A Brief note on the history of teaching pragmatics in EFL

The field of pragmatics research in teaching pragmatics in EFL has seen significant development, with studies focusing on various aspects of pragmatics teaching and learning. Four distinct research directions have emerged, mostly within interlanguage pragmatics development: observational studies, intervention studies, curriculum-development studies, and perception studies. Each of these areas offers valuable insights into different facets of pragmatics teaching and learning.

First, observational studies, which adopt a social perspective on language learning, have focused on documenting the incidental (unplanned) acquisition of pragmatics in the classroom (Basturkmen & Nguyen, 2017). Second, intervention studies, grounded in a cognitive perspective, have experimented to evaluate the effects of different pedagogical strategies and approaches on developing pragmatic competence (Kasper, 2010; Taguchi, 2015). Third, curriculum-development studies intended to enhance the pragmatic competence of adult EFL learners and in turn improve their overall communicative competence (e.g., Borer, 2018). Finally, perception studies have explored both teachers' and learners' perspectives of pragmatics instruction. While teacher-focused studies investigate how teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and perceptions shape their instructional practices, learner-focused studies examine how students conceptualise pragmatics learning, identifying gaps between instructional practices and learners' needs to inform more effective teaching approaches.

Together, these research directions provide a comprehensive understanding of how pragmatics is taught and learned in EFL contexts. While observational studies have provided valuable insights into the incidental acquisition of pragmatics, the following sections will focus on the remaining three areas—intervention studies, curriculum-development studies, and perception studies—as they serve as the background for this research.

3.4 Instructional intervention studies

The growing recognition of pragmatics has led to an increasing focus on pragmatics instruction, resulting in a substantial body of research. Taguchi and Youn's (2022) synthesis review identified a total of 77 empirical studies, published between 1989 and 2021, that examined the effects of instruction on the development of pragmatic knowledge. Prior to this, Taguchi's (2015) review reported nearly 60 instructional intervention studies in L2 pragmatics, spanning

from the 1990s up to 2013. Most of these studies employed quasi-experimental designs (Taguchi, 2015; Plonsky & Zhuang, 2019) and explored pragmatics instruction across various contextual and learner factors, instructional approaches, target features, and assessment measures. They compared a variety of instructional methods such as explicit and implicit instruction, input- and output-based instruction, skill acquisition and practice, metapragmatic discussion, and more recently, technology-enhanced instruction (Taguchi, 2015; Plonsky and Zhuang, 2019; Derakhshan & Shakki, 2022; Taguchi and Youn 2022; Halenko, 2021). The common focus of these studies is the acquisition of L2 pragmatic features, particularly speech acts such as requests, apologies, and refusals, which have received extensive research due to their frequent use in daily communication. Those studies have been driven by considerable challenges second language (L2) learners face in intercultural communication, given that learning pragmatics requires navigating the complex mappings between form, meaning, function, force, and context (Taguchi, 2015). These mappings are not only complex but also variable, as they do not adhere to fixed, one-to-one correspondences (Taguchi, 2015; Plonsky and Zhuang, 2019; Derakhshan & Shakki, 2022).

There is a well-established line of review papers on instructed pragmatics (Kasper & Rose 1999; Norris and Ortega, 2000; Jeon and Kaya, 2006; Taguchi, 2012, 2015; Badjadi, 2016; and Plonsky and Zhuang, 2019; Derakhshan & Shakki, 2022; Taguchi and Youn 2022), all of which consistently emphasise that instruction on speech acts has significantly contributed to support learners acquire and perform socially appropriate speech acts. Notably, Jeon & Kaya's (2006) meta-analysis identified 34 instructional studies, while Taguchi's (2015) review expanded this to 60 studies and Taguchi and Youn's (2022) review to 77 studies. These reviews provide compelling evidence that pragmatics is teachable and that learners who receive formal instruction—particularly through explicit methods such as direct explanations, metapragmatic discussions, and

structured practice—tend to develop higher levels of pragmatic competence than those who do not receive instruction. In short, the need for pragmatics instruction can be captured in two points: (a) it helps learners acquire challenging L2 pragmatic features more efficiently, which are hard to master through exposure alone, and (b) in foreign language contexts, it is vital due to the limited chances for exposure to the target language’s pragmatic norms and the lack of practice opportunities (Jeon & Kaya, 2006).

While there is a general trend supporting the effectiveness of L2 pragmatics instruction, significant variations exist across studies. Inconclusive findings highlight the complex nature of L2 pragmatics instruction and suggest that moderators, such as variables influencing the magnitude of effects, may impact instructional outcomes (Taguchi, 2012, 2015; Badjadi, 2016; Plonsky & Zhuang, 2019; Derakhshan & Shakki, 2022). Despite these variations, explicit instruction is often viewed as superior due to its clear, structured approach, which provides learners with direct explanations of pragmatic rules and norms. Consequently, this section will examine the roles of both explicit and implicit instruction in L2 pragmatics, considering their unique contributions to learners’ pragmatic development.

3.4.1 Explicit instruction

One widely recognised approach to teaching pragmatics is explicit instruction, which involves directly teaching learners the pragmatic rules and conventions of the target language. Explicit instruction is an intentional and structured method that equips learners with the necessary knowledge to understand and apply pragmatic norms effectively (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014; Taguchi, 2015). At the core of explicit instruction is a deductive learning process that emphasises monitoring, noticing, and extensive metapragmatic explanation (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014; Taguchi, 2015). Unlike implicit instruction, which encourages incidental learning, explicit instruction

follows a structured and teacher-driven approach, characterised by specificity and demonstrative teaching (Ellis, 2008; Taguchi, 2015).

Is explicit instruction effective? As mentioned earlier, Taguchi (2015), Plonsky and Zhuang (2019), and Taguchi and Youn's (2022) expanded upon Jeon and Kaya's work, offering a more refined estimate of the effectiveness of pragmatics instruction. Their analyses encompassed over 50 studies available up to 2013, 2016, 2021 respectively. Taguchi's (2015) findings indicate that explicit instruction was the predominant approach, with 25 studies incorporating direct metapragmatic explanations, while only two relied on implicit methods that withheld explanations. Other studies adopted a combination of different approaches, yet the greater efficacy of explicit instruction was particularly evident. Two treatment conditions emerged as key contributors to its success: direct metapragmatic information, which raises learners' awareness of target forms, and production practice, which facilitates the active use and internalisation of these forms.

While explicit and implicit instruction can both promote pragmatic development, research suggests that explicit instruction may lead to greater learning gains. For example, Nguyen, Pham, & Pham (2012) examined the relative effects of implicit and explicit instructional methods in teaching constructive criticism. The explicit group engaged in consciousness-raising activities, received metapragmatic explanations, participated in class discussions on sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic aspects, completed productive tasks and reflection activities, and received explicit correction of both form and meaning. In contrast, the implicit group was exposed to pragmalinguistic input enhancement and recasts, participated in communicative tasks, and completed the same reflection task as the explicit group. Although both groups showed significant improvement in their ability to deliver constructive criticism, the explicit group achieved superior outcomes. Moreover, Takimoto's (2008) study, which compared deductive and inductive explicit

input-based instruction in teaching learners how to use lexical/phrasal and syntactic down-graders to perform complex requests. All treatment groups significantly outperformed the control group, demonstrating that both forms of explicit instruction effectively enhanced learners' pragmatic competence. However, a decrease in listening performance at the follow-up stage was observed only in the deductive group, suggesting that while deductive instruction may produce immediate gains, inductive instruction may lead to more durable outcomes. These results highlight not only the overall effectiveness of explicit instruction but also the importance of instructional design and treatment in promoting durable pragmatic competence.

Explicit instruction demonstrates its greatest effectiveness in assessment tasks that demand a high degree of cognitive engagement, particularly in production-based activities and real-time language interactions (e.g., role-plays) (Taguchi, 2015; Plonsky & Zhuang, 2019). Research has shown that task complexity presents a cognitive challenge, making explicit instruction indispensable when learners must process language rapidly and accurately in spontaneous speech. However, this perspective has been questioned, as some studies suggest that explicit instruction may not always be appropriate for managing complex tasks, especially when learners engage in meaning-focused interactions that do not rely on explicit explanations.

Martínez-Flor and Fukuya (2005) and Fukuya and Martínez-Flor (2008) examined how online and offline tasks influence instructional effects. In their study, the explicit group received metapragmatics instruction, whereas the implicit group practiced through role-play with recasts. The results indicated that explicit instruction was more beneficial in the phone message task, where participants recorded a suggestion on an answering machine. However, both groups performed equally well in the e-mail task, which required learners to write a suggestion via e-mail. These

findings suggest that explicit instruction provides knowledge robust enough to help learners overcome processing demands in assessment tasks that require immediate response.

In contrast, other studies have demonstrated that implicit instruction, particularly in cognitively complex tasks, can effectively facilitate L2 pragmatic development by encouraging interaction and meaning negotiation. Gilabert and Barón (2013) investigated the effects of task complexity on L2 learners' use of requests and suggestions through three problem-solving tasks: an instruction-giving map task, a narrative reconstruction task, and a decision-making task. These tasks require learners to engage in interaction without direct metapragmatic explanations, implying an implicit instructional approach. They found that task complexity significantly influences how learners interact with the tasks, increasing interactional features like clarification and comprehension checks, especially in the narrative and map tasks. However, the decision-making task was not as sensitive to changes in task complexity, except for an increase in self-repairs.

In the decision-making task, learners had to choose from multiple possible solutions rather than working toward a single answer. Because of this, they did not rely heavily on clarification requests, comprehension checks, or confirmation requests, which were used in the study as measures. Instead, learners demonstrated different types of interaction, such as making suggestions or expressing agreement/disagreement. This indicates that the nature of the task itself dictated the kind of interaction that took place, rather than whether learners had been explicitly taught certain language features or acquired them implicitly through practice.

Together, these findings demonstrate that explicit instruction generally is more effective in enhancing both production and recognition knowledge of pragmatic features, particularly those requiring greater cognitive effort. However, the findings illustrate that implicit instruction can also

be valuable in handling task complexity especially in interactive meaning-focused tasks. Given that much of the research in this area has prioritised explicit instruction, it is essential to examine the potential of implicit methods, particularly in tasks that naturally facilitate pragmatic awareness. In the following section, I explore how implicit instruction can contribute to pragmatics learning, considering the conditions under which it proves most effective.

3.4.2 Implicit instruction

Implicit instruction focuses on learning through authentic exposure, interaction, and practice without explicitly teaching pragmatic rules (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014; Ellis, 2008; Taguchi, 2012). Building on Ortega's (2009:94) definition of incidental learning— "learning without intention, while doing something else"—Tateyama (2019) and Basturkmen & Nguyen (2017) have argued that L2 pragmatics learning in the classroom can also happen incidentally. This perspective, however, has received limited attention in the existing body of research. Rather than relying on direct explanations, this approach suggests that learners can develop pragmatic competence through unconscious cognitive processes, much like first language speakers (Ellis, 2008; Ishihara & Cohen, 2014; Taguchi, 2015). It often employs consciousness-raising tasks in which learners are guided to notice the target pragmatic feature through examples or dialogues, without receiving a direct or explicit explanation from the teacher or the instructional materials (Jeon and Kaya, 2006; Taguchi, 2015; Basturkmen & Nguyen, 2017).

Is implicit instruction effective? The debate over whether explicit or implicit instruction is more effective remains complex, with research as indicated previously, generally favouring explicit instruction. However, some scholars suggest that this perceived advantage may stem from the absence of a clear, comprehensive definition of implicit instruction—one that extends beyond

mere exposure to pragmatic input (Basturkmen & Nguyen, 2017)—or from the limited depth of activities used in studies on implicit instruction (Taguchi, 2015). Moreover, the predominance of explicit instruction in the literature is partly due to the limited and often superficial treatment of implicit instruction, which has not been explored with the same methodological rigor or depth. (Taguchi, 2015; Basturkmen & Nguyen, 2017; Plonsky & Zhuang, 2019). In their meta-analysis, Plonsky and Zhuang (2019) highlighted the effectiveness of explicit instruction in enhancing learners' pragmatic competence. However, due to small sample sizes and the large variability in results, as indicated by the 95% confidence intervals, definitive conclusions regarding the superiority of explicit or implicit instruction remain elusive. Furthermore, the dichotomous classification of instructional types has been questioned (e.g., Plonsky & Zhuang, 2019; Taguchi, 2015). For instance, explicit instruction often incorporates implicit activities, raising the question of whether it is the metapragmatic information or the implicit activities that are actually responsible for the observed effects. Additionally, Plonsky & Zhuang, (2019) further note that implicit instruction itself exists on a continuum of implicitness. For example, consciousness-raising tasks are more explicit than simple input exposure, yet both are typically categorised as “implicit” instruction. Given these nuances, the effectiveness of implicit instruction remains difficult to assess conclusively.

Furthermore, research has highlighted the differential effects of implicit instruction on pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence. Previous studies (e.g., Alcón-Soler, 2005; Martínez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005; Tateyama, 2007; Nguyen et al., 2012) suggest that implicit instruction is more effective in facilitating pragmalinguistic development, as learners can infer conventional expressions and linguistic forms through repeated exposure and interaction. However, sociopragmatic knowledge often requires more explicit guidance to ensure learners

internalise nuanced aspects of appropriateness in different communicative settings. Despite these differential effects, research has shown that implicit instruction can lead to significant pragmatic gains when it incorporates structured exposure, interaction, and guided noticing (Nguyen et al., 2012; Alcón-Soler, 2005; Taguchi, 2015). Input enhancement, recasts, classroom interaction, and consciousness-raising tasks—commonly associated with implicit instruction in the literature—have been found to facilitate pragmatic awareness and development (Taguchi, 2015; Basturkmen & Nguyen, 2017; Taguchi and Youn, 2022).

Input enhancement is a key implicit instructional technique that draws learners' attention to pragmatic forms without explicit explanation. Alcón-Soler (2005) demonstrated that textually enhanced input—where target features are highlighted—can facilitate learners' noticing of pragmatic structures such as request strategies. This method supports Schmidt's (1993, 2001) noticing hypothesis, which posits that attention to input is necessary for it to become intake. By increasing the salience of target forms in authentic contexts, input enhancement fosters implicit learning without the need for overt instruction.

Implicit instruction also includes corrective feedback techniques such as recasts, where instructors reformulate learners' errors without overt correction. Fukuya & Zhang (2002) investigated the role of recasts in teaching request-making strategies to English as a Foreign Language. Their study revealed that learners who received recasts during role-play activities significantly improved their request forms in post-tests. By providing immediate, contextually relevant reformulations, recasts helped learners develop awareness of pragmalinguistic conventions without disrupting communication.

Classroom interaction, particularly teacher talk, serves as an implicit instructional tool that influences learners' pragmatic development. While explicit instruction has been shown to be

effective in promoting appropriate pragmatic use, Tateyama (2007) observed that because the teacher's talk was predominantly direct, students tended to use direct request forms. This suggests that the nature of teacher input can significantly shape learners' pragmatic choices, even without explicit teaching. In her study, frequent exposure to direct request forms in classroom discourse was reflected in learners' pre-test performance, demonstrating that implicit instruction through classroom interaction can lead to noticeable pragmatic development. However, after an explicit instructional intervention, learners showed an increased use of indirect request strategies because the instruction deliberately employed explicit methods to guide learners toward using indirect request forms. These findings suggest that even without explicit instruction, exposure to certain pragmatic features in classroom interaction can enhance learners' ability to use them.

Consciousness-raising tasks blend elements of both implicit and explicit instruction by encouraging learners to compare and analyse pragmatic forms. Narita (2012) employed such tasks to teach Japanese hearsay evidential markers (e.g., *rashii* meaning 'I heard that'), demonstrating that structured noticing activities can facilitate awareness and learning. Learners engaged in comparative analysis between English and Japanese, which led to significant gains in their pragmatic awareness. These findings challenge the notion that explicit instruction is always necessary, highlighting the potential of implicit methods that integrate awareness-raising techniques.

Overall, the findings highlight that implicit instruction, when structured with interaction and noticing techniques, can effectively enhance learners' pragmalinguistic competence, while sociopragmatic competence often benefits from additional explicit guidance. This perspective accounts for why certain intervention studies have explored treatments that, despite being categorised as explicit instruction, inherently incorporate implicit elements that seem to enhance

their effectiveness such as structured practice and drills (Lyster, 1994), consciousness-raising activities and corrective feedback (Alcón-Soler, 2007; Koike & Pearson, 2005; Nguyen et al., 2012; Nguyen et al., 2018), and the interplay between explicit and inductive approaches (Martínez-Flor, 2008; Glaser, 2016; Qi & Lai, 2017; Takimoto, 2008; Fordyce, 2013). However, the precise mechanisms underlying this effectiveness remain inconclusive, as no definitive causal link has been established.

Therefore, the intervention in the current study benefited from both explicit and implicit instruction including consciousness-raising tasks (Ellis, 2003; Narita, 2012); (2) metapragmatic explanation (Taguchi, 2015); (3) class discussion on pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics (Nguyen et al., 2012); (4) self-discovery tasks (Takimoto, 2008; Ishihara & Cohn, 2014); (5) practice and reflection tasks (Nguyen et al., 2012; Ishihara & Cohn, 2014); and (6) Feedback (Olshtain & Cohen, 1991). The following table maps a variety of pedagogical principles drawing on research findings to specific tasks designed in the intervention. Table 3.1 below provides a summary of intervention studies on explicit and implicit instruction in L2/EFL pragmatics. The following section, however, narrows the focus to instructional intervention studies on speech acts in the Saudi EFL context.

Table 3.1*Intervention Studies on Explicit and Implicit Instruction in L2 Pragmatics*

Study	Type of Instruction	Treatment features	Target Feature	Measure outcome	Findings
Nguyen et al. (2012)	Explicit vs. Implicit	Metapragmatic explanations; conscious-raising tasks; feedback	Constructive criticism	Discourse completion task (DCT); Role-play; oral peer feedback	Both effective, but explicit led to superior outcomes
Martínez-Flor & Fukuya (2005)	Explicit vs. Implicit	Metapragmatic explanation; role plays with recasts	Suggestions	Phone message; E-mail	Explicit better in phone task; no difference in e-mail task
Fukuya & Martínez-Flor (2008)	Explicit vs. Implicit	Metapragmatic explanation; role plays with recasts	Suggestions	Phone message; E-mail	Similar to 2005 findings
Fordyce (2013)	Explicit vs. Implicit	Explicit deductive (metalinguistic/metapragmatic explanation) + Inductive (consciousness-raising tasks); Input flood	Epistemic stance	Three writing tasks (pre-test, post-test, delayed post-test) in two genres: photo description and opinion essay	Explicit instruction was more effective both immediately and after 5 months; both methods were similarly effective for forms not known pre-instruction
Taylor (2002)	Explicit	Cultural comparisons (e.g., U.S. vs. Latin American pragmatic norms); scripted dialogues	Spanish gambits	Discussion; role-play	Effective only in discussion

Study	Type of Instruction	Treatment features	Target Feature	Measure outcome	Findings
Alcón-Solar (2005)	Explicit vs. Implicit	Awareness- raising tasks; metapragmatic feedback; input enhancement;	Requests strategies	Metapragmatic awareness (MAQ) questionnaire; written role-plays	Both effective, but explicit outperformed implicit on role plays not on MAQ
Narita (2012)	Implicit	Consciousness-raising tasks	Japanese hearsay markers (e.g., rashii)	Knowledge tests; oral production	Significant interaction effect; comparative analysis increased pragmatic awareness
Fukuya & Zhang (2002)	Implicit	Recasts during role-plays	Requests strategies	DCT	Highly effective (increase in various request forms)
Gilabert & Barón (2013)	Implicit	Task complexity; interaction without metapragmatic explanation	Clarification requests; comprehension checks; confirmation requests	Map task; narrative task; decision-making task	Interaction increased with task complexity
Abolfathiasl & Abdullah (2015)	Explicit	Consciousness-raising tasks	Suggestions	DCT	Indirect suggestion increased

3.5 Instructional intervention studies on speech acts: Focus on Saudi context

Research has indicated that Saudi Arabian speakers face challenges in intercultural communication when speaking English, as evidenced by studies examining the speech acts of native Arabic speakers (e.g., Al-Theeby, 2018). One key factor contributing to these difficulties is the lack of pragmatic exposure in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, where cultural nuances and pragmatic rules of communication are often underemphasised. This lack of exposure can lead to communication breakdowns or pragmatic failure, where speakers unintentionally violate cultural or social expectations in communication, as seen in previous studies (e.g., Lanteigne, 2007; Marn, 2018). Such challenges are important to address, as they are often overlooked in discussions about intercultural competence. This may also explain the numerous empirical studies focused on analysing speech acts among Arabic speakers of English, as researchers attempt to better understand how these speakers navigate the complexities of intercultural communication, both linguistically and pragmatically.

Research in the Saudi context, similar to international settings, has primarily focused on two key areas: comparative studies and experimental investigations. Comparative studies (e.g., Al-Theeby, 2018; Al-Rashidi, 2017), often examine the differences between EFL learners in Saudi Arabia and ESL learners in English-speaking environments, while experimental instructed studies, frequently employing quasi-experimental designs, assess the impact of instructional interventions on pragmatic competence, including face, politeness, and speech acts. Instructional approaches explored within the Saudi context include consciousness-raising instruction and corpus-based instruction, explicit instruction, and communicative language teaching, and computer-enhanced instruction. Across both areas of research, the central focus remains on speech acts of requests, apologies, and refusals, particularly examining how learners produce and interpret these speech

acts in English. In this section, I will review the most recent instructional intervention studies within Saudi context.

One area of research has explored the impact of explicit instruction on request strategies. For example, Qari (2021) examined whether explicit instruction could enhance Saudi EFL learners' ability to recognise and appropriately use request forms. The study, conducted with 30 female foundation-year students at King Abdul Aziz University, employed a three-phase design consisting of a pre-test, instructional intervention, and post-test. Findings indicated that after receiving explicit instruction, participants significantly improved their ability to recognise, produce, and appropriately use request strategies. Similarly, Al-Hammad (2022) investigated the effects of explicit pragmatics instruction focusing on conversational implicatures, politeness strategies, direct and indirect requests, and formulaic expressions. Seventy female learners at a Saudi university participated in an experimental design, with one group receiving ten hours of instruction while the control group did not. Their English proficiency level aligned with B1 on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Data were collected using a Computer-Animated Production Task (CAPT) through production and recognition tasks. Results from pre-, post-, and delayed tests showed that explicit instruction significantly improved learners' pragmatic competence, with lasting effects observed after four weeks. These findings align with broader research (e.g., Taguchi, 2015; Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2018), which suggests that explicit metapragmatics instruction plays a critical role in fostering L2 pragmatic competence.

Beyond explicit instruction, Al-Suhaibani (2020) investigated the effect of consciousness-raising instruction and corpus-based instruction on EFL students' development of compliment responses in Saudi Arabia. She used a quasi-experimental design to study 136 EFL university

students divided into three groups: control, consciousness-raising, and corpus groups. Using a discourse completion test (DCT), she concluded that pragmatics instruction of compliment responses was effective through both consciousness-raising instruction and corpus-based instruction. However, significant differences were observed between the consciousness-raising group and the corpus group on one hand, and the control group on the other. She also concluded that consciousness-raising tasks assisted learners to notice pragmatic aspects and the differences in compliment responses between English and Arabic.

Another emerging instructional approach focuses on the role of technology in teaching requests. Qadha, Al-Wasy, & Mahdi (2021) explored the impact of social networking tools, specifically WhatsApp chat, in developing Arab EFL learners' ability to use direct and indirect requests. This study involved 40 EFL students enrolled in Level 5 (advanced) of an Applied Linguistics course at a university in Saudi Arabia. Their English proficiency corresponded to the B1 level on the CEFR. The findings indicated that learners who engaged in technology-mediated request instruction significantly outperformed those who received traditional classroom instruction. This suggests that digital platforms can provide additional opportunities for learners to actively engage in pragmatic language use, particularly in contexts where exposure to authentic English interactions is limited. However, Qadha et al., (2021) acknowledged that a limitation of their study was the absence of qualitative data, which could have provided deeper insights into students' perceptions and attitudes toward using social networking tools for learning English.

Finally, research has also examined how linguistic proficiency, and social factors influence learners' advice-giving strategies. Al-Jasir (2020) investigated the pragmatic performance of 212 Saudi EFL learners across different academic disciplines using a mixed methods approach: DCT,

role plays, and retrospective interviews. They found that linguistic competence played a crucial role in participants' pragmatic performance, particularly in the range of advice-giving strategies they employed and their ability to modify their language based on social context. However, the study also revealed evidence of pragmatic transfer across all groups, which was attributed to a lack of awareness of the target language community's speech norms. These results reinforce the need for targeted pedagogical interventions that explicitly address speech acts and sociopragmatic conventions.

Based on the above review, speech acts especially requests have been extensively examined as a key component of pragmatic competence in Saudi EFL contexts. Research consistently demonstrates that explicit instruction is an effective approach in improving learners' request strategies, while consciousness-raising, corpus-based approaches, and technology-mediated instruction offer promising alternatives. Furthermore, linguistic proficiency and sociocultural awareness significantly influence learners' ability to formulate speech acts appropriately, emphasising the importance of integrating both linguistic and pragmatic elements into EFL curricula.

3.6 Curriculum-development studies

Unlike the abundance of studies on experimental interventions in pragmatics instruction, research focusing on curriculum development remains scarce. In my review, I was able to identify only two studies—Borer (2018) and Kim et al. (2023)—that explicitly address pragmatic curriculum design in EFL contexts. Notably, no research from Saudi Arabia has examined curriculum development in this area, highlighting a significant gap in the literature. Borer (2018), for example, develops a structured curriculum aimed at enhancing adult EFL learners' ability to apologise in English, emphasising the need for direct instruction in sociopragmatic norms. In

contrast, Kim et al. compare traditional textbook-based instruction with task-based instruction for teaching advice-giving strategies to Korean high school students. While both studies contribute to the understanding of instructional pragmatics, they represent different approaches: Borer's work focuses on designing a comprehensive speaking skills course, whereas Kim et al. explore the role of authentic, task-based activities in developing pragmatic competence. The scarcity of such curriculum-focused studies highlights a gap in the literature, suggesting the need for further research on structured curricular approaches to teaching pragmatics in EFL settings. Table 3.2 below provides a summary of studies based on curriculum-development.

Table 3.2

Summary of Studies Based on Curriculum-Development

Study	Focus	Target speech act	Learner population	Key findings
Borer (2018)	Structured speaking skills course using research-based instructional techniques	Apologies	Adult EFL learners (intermediate to advanced)	Highlights the necessity of explicit instruction in sociopragmatic norms due to the lack of cultural immersion in EFL settings.
Kim et al. (2023)	Comparison of traditional textbook-based instruction vs. task-based blog-posting tasks	Advice-giving strategies	Korean high school EFL students	Task-based instruction led to immediate gains in complex advice-giving constructions, but long-term retention required further reinforcement.

3.6.1 Borer's (2018) curriculum design for teaching pragmatics

Borer (2018) developed a curriculum for teaching pragmatics within a semester-long ESL/EFL course. The curriculum included two instructional units designed to enhance learners' pragmatic competence through explicit instruction and contextualised language use. The course

followed a structured approach, with 50-minute lessons conducted three times per week over approximately three to four weeks.

The first unit introduced fundamental concepts of pragmatics, including definitions, contextual factors influencing discourse, politeness principles, and categories of speech acts. The second unit focused specifically on the speech act of apologising, addressing routines, conventions, and pragmatic appropriateness in various contexts. Both units emphasised the role of discourse and contextualised communication in developing learners' pragmatic awareness.

The curriculum design followed Grave's (2000) framework, incorporating six interrelated and interchangeable phases to guide the development of instructional content, materials, and teaching strategies. Notably, Borer's (2018) curriculum design was conceptual in nature and did not involve participant implementation. However, the structured approach to integrating pragmatics into language instruction highlights key considerations for pragmatics curriculum development in EFL contexts.

3.6.2 Kim et al. (2023) comparison of traditional textbook-based and task-based instruction

Kim et al. (2023) examined the effectiveness of task-based versus traditional textbook-based instruction in teaching advice-giving strategies to Korean EFL high school students. Their study involved 50 students who were assigned to either a traditional or task-based instructional condition. The traditional group was taught advice-giving strategies using a textbook, while the task-based group engaged in blog-posting tasks modelled after authentic online Q&A forums.

The researchers designed their instructional materials based on a needs analysis, which included discourse analysis of English-language blog posts and content analysis of Korean advice-

seeking forums. This analysis informed the development of three blog-post writing tasks that addressed common concerns among high school students, such as selecting a school club, career decision-making, and cell phone addiction. The task-based instruction incorporated eight advice-giving strategies, including opening moves, justification, expressing sympathy, sharing personal experiences, encouragement, closings with expressions of hope, and the use of softeners to mitigate face-threatening acts.

Both groups completed a pretest, instructional treatment, reflection survey, and immediate and delayed post-tests over three months. The results indicated that the task-based group outperformed the traditional group on the immediate post-test, particularly in producing complex advice-giving head acts (i.e., bi-clausal constructions). However, both groups showed significant gains in advice-giving knowledge, and these gains were sustained over eight weeks. These findings highlight the benefits of task-based instruction in developing pragmatic competence, particularly in fostering immediate gains in complex language use. The study also underscores the role of authentic, needs-based instructional design in enhancing L2 pragmatic development.

Building on this review, my research aims to implement TBLT in teaching the pragmatic features of feedback exchange, considering an intercultural perspective. Given that previous studies have largely focused on advice-giving and other speech acts, there remains a need to explore how task-based instruction can facilitate the development of feedback exchange as a critical pragmatic function. By incorporating an intercultural stance, this study seeks to address how learners navigate culturally influenced communication styles in providing and responding to feedback.

3.7 Perceptions studies

While research on instructional interventions and curriculum design has contributed to understanding effective approaches to teaching pragmatics, further exploration of learners' and teachers' perceptions was necessary. Understanding how learners perceive pragmatics teaching provided valuable perspectives on engagement, challenges, and the effectiveness of different instructional strategies. Likewise, teacher perceptions shed light on instructional feasibility, pedagogical challenges, and attitudes toward integrating pragmatics into the curriculum. This section reviews studies on teachers' and learners' perceptions of pragmatics instruction. Notably, some of the reviewed studies did not employ intervention-based approaches; instead, they focused on exploring participants' views, experiences, and attitudes toward pragmatics teaching and learning in general.

3.7.1 Teachers' perceptions of teaching pragmatics in EFL contexts

While it is obvious that teachers play a crucial role in fostering learners' pragmatic competence, research indicates inconsistencies in their knowledge, perceptions, and instructional practices regarding pragmatics. While many teachers acknowledge the importance of teaching speech acts and pragmatics, studies indicate that a considerable number lack the necessary knowledge to effectively integrate pragmatics into their classrooms. Ivanova (2017) found that most teachers in her study demonstrated an awareness of key considerations in teaching pragmatic competence. They could identify different speech acts and provide relevant examples. Nevertheless, around 43% were either unable to name any speech acts or offered incorrect responses, indicating notable gaps in their knowledge of pragmatics. This suggests that despite some awareness, significant knowledge gaps may limit teachers' ability to deliver effective pragmatics instruction, highlighting the need for targeted professional development and support in this area.

Research on perceptions of pragmatics teaching in Saudi Arabia has been limited, as most studies have focused on experimental interventions as discussed in section 3.5. This review identified only a few studies examining teachers' perceptions in high schools. Al-Qahtani (2020), for example, investigated Saudi EFL teachers' pragmatic competence and its implementation in public school classrooms, particularly exploring the extent to which Saudi EFL teachers integrate pragmatic competence into their classroom instruction. The study also aimed to identify the challenges teachers face during classroom implementation. To address these objectives, a mixed-methods design was adopted, incorporating data from a questionnaire administered to 160 Saudi EFL teachers, 20 unstructured classroom observations, and 10 semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed that, although teachers were generally aware of the importance of teaching pragmatic competence in the EFL context, its implementation remained limited and inconsistent. The most frequently observed strategies in their teaching were revising and rehearsing (40%) and providing feedback (22%), reflecting a focus on output-based instructional approaches. In contrast, the minimal attention given to researching (7%), reflecting (9%), receiving (11%), and reasoning (11%) indicates insufficient opportunities for learners to critically engage with and evaluate pragmatic features through input-based instructional approaches (e.g., CR). Regarding the challenges teachers face in teaching pragmatics, responses varied between difficulties stemming from personal experience and more general issues related to instructional approaches and institutional constraints, such as heavy teaching loads and a lack of authentic pragmatic materials. The findings highlight the importance of integrating pragmatics into teacher education and training programmes, as well as incorporating adequate linguistic and cultural resources into EFL teaching.

Shirkhani and Tajeddin (2017) and Martínez-Flor (2023) examined EFL teachers' beliefs and practices towards corrective feedback (CF) and pragmatics. Shirkhani and Tajeddin (2017)

investigated the perceptions of 300 Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions regarding pragmatic corrective feedback in the tertiary sector through a questionnaire, with 40 of them also observed in classroom settings. Similarly, Martínez-Flor (2023) conducted a mixed method study with 14 in-service EFL secondary school teachers in Spain, using a questionnaire followed by interviews. Findings from both studies revealed that the participating teachers acknowledged the importance of CF for the development of pragmatic perception and production, and for guiding appropriate classroom implementation. However, important differences also emerged. Martínez-Flor (2023) found that increasing teachers' awareness of pragmatic knowledge and the risk of pragmatic failure led to shifts in their beliefs about feedback practices. Specifically, her participants viewed themselves as the main agents of correction, favouring teacher-led feedback over peer or self-correction. In contrast, Shirkhani and Tajeddin (2017) identified a mismatch between teachers' stated beliefs and their actual classroom practices, especially in the provision of CF. This discrepancy pointed to a need for ongoing professional development to help teachers align their pedagogical beliefs with their classroom practices.

Recent research highlights the critical role of professional development (PD) in equipping EFL teachers with the necessary tools to effectively integrate pragmatics into their instruction (Glaser, 2023; Ishihara, Porcellato, & de Almeida Prado, 2023; Aboulghazi, Amiri, & El Karfa, 2024). Glaser (2023), for example, designed a one-day workshop grounded in Cohen et al.'s recommendations to enhance teachers' awareness, knowledge, and attitudes toward L2 pragmatics. Her findings revealed that while the PD module increased teacher consciousness, persistent challenges such as time limitations and insufficient instructional materials hindered practical implementation. Expanding this perspective, Aboulghazi et al. (2024) emphasised how contextual factors such as culture, identity, and the inadequacy of existing pedagogical resources further

complicate the teaching of pragmatics in EFL settings. Addressing these challenges requires PD programmes that go beyond content knowledge to include awareness of sociocultural influences.

Similarly, Ishihara et al. (2023) reinforced the significance of supporting L2 teachers in developing metapragmatic awareness through professional development, particularly in helping them shape and embrace their identities as multilingual individuals. Their study, which employed collaborative dialogue among participants, revealed that participant teachers initially faced challenges in negotiating their professional and linguistic identities. However, with structured guidance from the professional development programme, participants begin to recognise and embrace their hybrid identities as valuable assets that enrich their teaching. Consequently, Ishihara et al. (2023) advocate for structured, reflective PD that promote both metapragmatic awareness and identity development, enabling teachers to integrate these aspects effectively in their teaching practices.

Based on the above review, the issues of implementing pragmatics in EFL classroom are widely associated with raising EFL teachers' awareness of teaching pragmatics. Research has shown that even when teachers recognise the value of teaching pragmatics, classroom observations suggest a gap between their beliefs and actual teaching practices. This discrepancy may stem from limited training opportunities, as many teacher education programmes do not adequately address pragmatics instruction. While many teaching-oriented books on L2 pragmatics focus on instructional techniques and theoretical frameworks, they often neglect the nuanced impact of teachers' identity, beliefs, agency, and multilingualism in the instructional process (e.g., Ishihara & Cohen, 2014). In response to this gap, Martínez-Flor, Sánchez-Hernández, & Barón (2023) call for more research on teachers, learners, and pedagogies in L2 pragmatics to inform teacher training, instructional design, and materials development. In the Saudi context, where research on

EFL teachers' perceptions of pragmatics instruction at tertiary sector is overlooked, such studies are crucial for developing effective, culturally relevant EFL curricula.

3.7.2 Learners' perceptions of learning pragmatics in EFL contexts

Despite the growing body of literature in L2 pragmatics, studies that examine learners' perspectives on pragmatics instruction remain relatively scarce. In particular, the role of individual differences in pragmatics has received limited attention, and little is known about how these differences influence EFL pragmatics learning (Taguchi, Kostromitina, & Wheeler, 2022). While existing research has investigated various instructional approaches and their effects, further studies are needed to examine how learners perceive and respond to pragmatics instruction, especially concerning specific speech acts, cultural influences, and long-term learning outcomes. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate learners' perceptions towards pragmatics instruction to identify the most effective means of instruction.

A few studies have demonstrated that L2 learners showed a positive attitude towards pragmatics instruction provided (Chen, 2009; Liu, 2007; Kim, 2016; Elshazly, 2017). Liu (2007) investigated the impact of explicit pragmatics instruction on the acquisition of requests among Taiwanese learners, comparing three groups: a control group, a teacher-instructed (TI) group, and a computer-mediated communication (CMC) group. The findings suggest that both traditional teacher-led instruction (TI) and computer-mediated communication (CMC) positively impact learners' understanding of L2 pragmatics. Participants in both experimental groups perceived pragmatics instruction as practical and essential for their English learning. Moreover, most learners reported an increased ability to communicate effectively and a deeper understanding of L2 pragmatics after receiving instruction. These results align with broader research emphasising the benefits of explicit pragmatics teaching in enhancing learners' communicative competence.

Similarly, Chen (2009) explored learners' perspectives on L2 pragmatics instruction, particularly in relation to the speech act of complaints. The study incorporated instructional materials from a conversation book alongside metapragmatic explanations delivered through handouts. Self-reports from 40 participants indicated a positive reception toward the instruction, suggesting that learners found it beneficial for improving their pragmatic competence.

In a similar vein, Kim (2016) emphasises the role of explicit pragmatics instruction in enhancing learners' awareness and ability to use speech acts such as compliments, apologies, requests, and refusals. Over the course of a nine-week programme, students with intermediate and lower-proficiency levels engaged in activities that increased their intercultural pragmatic awareness and communication confidence. The participants generally noted improvements in their ability to navigate intercultural communication. However, Kim (2016) also points out that lower-proficiency learners encountered difficulties with the complexity and length of certain formulaic expressions, highlighting the necessity of adapting pragmatics instruction to different proficiency levels.

Building on these findings, Elshazly (2017) confirmed that explicit pragmatics instruction significantly improves Egyptian EFL learners' ability to produce request forms appropriately. By employing a mixed-methods approach, Elshazly demonstrates that learners not only made statistically significant gains in their pragmatic awareness but also developed more sophisticated request strategies. Moreover, the study reveals that learners' perceptions of the instruction were largely positive, with many acknowledging its role in overcoming affective barriers to language learning. However, a few learners faced some of the affective hurdles they were caught in, such as feelings of concern about accuracy, fear of public-performance, anxiety, alienation, lack of

comprehension and fear of skills erosion when using certain pragmatic forms as well as other issues related to identity. Collectively, these studies highlight the advantages of explicit pragmatics instruction in enhancing learners' communicative competence, while also emphasising the importance of proficiency-level differentiation in teaching. Although some participants in the reviewed studies expressed scepticism about the benefits of instruction, the overall findings suggest that pragmatics instruction is both essential and valuable for L2 learners to communicate more effectively. In the Saudi context, where learners' perceptions of pragmatics instruction remain largely unexplored, investigating their perspectives is crucial for designing instructional approaches that are both effective and culturally relevant. Consequently, this study builds on previous research by incorporating both EFL teachers' and learners' perspectives, in Saudi Arabia, within a teaching intervention, aiming to develop a comprehensive understanding of how pragmatics instruction is perceived and experienced in the context of feedback exchange.

3.8 Research gap(s)

Developing learners' pragmatic competence is now a key goal in EFL education, with numerous scholars exploring the extent to which various pragmatic features can be taught (Kasper, 1997; Taguchi, 2015). However, although intervention studies in L2 pragmatics are increasing, much of the existing research concentrates on the instruction of isolated speech acts rather than promoting a more comprehensive, discourse-level understanding of pragmatics. Existing studies have primarily investigated the instruction of specific speech acts such as requests, refusals, and compliments, yet they have largely overlooked how learners engage in extended discourse, or navigate pragmatic interactions beyond isolated utterances (e.g., managing feedback exchanges in intercultural communication). Additionally, research in interlanguage pragmatics has predominantly relied on politeness theory, speech act theory, and conversational implicature, with

limited exploration of intercultural pragmatics. Addressing this gap, the present study examines speech acts at the discourse level, focusing on the teaching of pragmatic features of feedback exchanges in EFL contexts.

Another research gap that has been identified is the lack of intervention studies providing sufficient information on instructional design and content, except for Kim et al. (2023). Most of these studies used quasi-experimental designs (Taguchi, 2015; Plonsky & Zhuang, 2019), examining the impact of instruction on EFL learners' production of speech acts relying on quantitative measures. Few studies have explicitly linked the TBLT approach with the instruction of pragmatic aspects (Kim et al., 2023), nor has a comprehensive framework been established to inform the design of further instructional materials for teaching pragmatic features in EFL contexts. These gaps highlight the importance of pedagogical task design to ensure that tasks effectively guide learners in processing and internalising pragmatic information. In this regard, task design principles established in TBLT can serve as valuable guidelines (as discussed in this chapter). To address these issues, the present study aims to demonstrate the process through which the instructional materials were designed and implemented, offering a potential framework for teaching pragmatic features of feedback exchange in intercultural communication.

A third research gap is the limited number of intervention studies incorporating qualitative data to explore learners' and teachers' perceptions of pragmatics instruction. Addressing this gap, the present study introduces pragmatics in the EFL classroom in Saudi Arabia by actively engaging both learners and teachers in a qualitative intervention that raises their awareness of intercultural communication in the context of feedback exchange. To assess how instructional interventions can enhance pragmatics learning in EFL contexts, this study foregrounds the voices of both learners

and teachers, examining their perceptions of pragmatics instruction and its role in feedback interactions.

3.9 Summary

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on key instructional approaches EFL. It outlines a range of pedagogical theories and approaches proposed to develop learners' pragmatic competence, including noticing, input enhancement, the use of authentic materials, Task-based Language Teaching, and Formula-based Approach. These approaches provide a theoretical and practical foundation for understanding how pragmatic knowledge can be effectively introduced and reinforced in classroom settings.

The second part has traced the evolution of pragmatics instruction within EFL contexts, underscoring the increasing recognition of pragmatic competence as integral to effective communication. It has examined instructional intervention studies, distinguishing between explicit and implicit pedagogical approaches, as well as highlighting interventional studies in the context of Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, the chapter has explored curriculum development initiatives aimed at systematically embedding pragmatics into language instruction, while also shedding light on the perceptions of both teachers and learners toward the teaching and learning of pragmatic features.

In closing, the chapter has identified significant research gaps that necessitate further inquiry to advance the field and refine instructional practices in EFL pragmatics education and research. Therefore, this study seeks to bridge these gaps by investigating how EFL teachers and learners perceive the teaching and learning of pragmatic features of feedback exchange, bringing teachers and learners together in action i.e., collaborative classroom contexts. By situating the investigation within educational settings, this research contributes to a broader understanding of pragmatics instruction, particularly within the scope of intercultural pragmatics.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.0 Introduction

This chapter positions the philosophical stance of this research and design used to investigate the processes and outcomes of a two-week intervention study, with the goal of developing a prototypical framework for teaching the pragmatics of feedback in an EFL context at tertiary sector. Two research questions define the study as follows:

RQ 1: What are Saudi EFL teachers' perceptions and observations towards EFL pragmatics instruction on feedback exchange? and

RQ 2: What are Saudi EFL learners' perceptions and observations towards EFL pragmatics instruction on feedback exchange?

The overall design drawing on qualitative case study principles and the instruments used for this study involve both teachers and students. In short, teacher data were gathered using classroom observations and focus groups and student data consist of reflective logs and individual interviews. Additionally, the researcher documents observations and reflections through a research journal and fieldnotes throughout the research process. The chapter concludes with measures to ensure credibility as well as ethical considerations.

4.1 Research philosophical stance

Each research project should establish a clear position that conveys the underlying assumptions and beliefs driving the research inquiry and direction. EFL pragmatics studies, like many other areas in applied linguistics, are usually shaped by different philosophical positions based on the researchers' ontological and epistemological stances, which influence how

knowledge is conceptualised, studied, and interpreted. Ontology refers to the researcher's assumptions about the nature of reality; for example, is the phenomenon being studied tangible and measurable, or is it constructed through social and cultural interactions? (Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006; Huang et al., 2023). Epistemology reflects the researcher's assumptions about the nature of knowledge, how knowledge can be acquired or constructed; for instance, is knowledge best gained through empirical observation or experimentation, or through subjective interpretation and social interaction?, which eventually informs the choice of the employed methodology (Mills et al., 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Huang et al., 2023). According to Creswell & Poth (2018), researchers must consider their philosophical stance when making methodological decisions, as their stance shapes the way data are collected, analysed, and interpreted. When conducting empirical research, such as case studies, Yin (2018) suggested that researchers should determine their philosophical position to help establish criteria for data collection and data analysis. In a similar note, other researchers, such as Tracy (2020), Creswell & Creswell (2018), Dörnyei (2007), and Yilmaz (2013) also noted that the choice between qualitative and quantitative methodology is directly related to the research philosophical stance, which addresses the nature and scope of knowledge, and the ways individuals conceptualise their perceptions of the world. Having clarity about the researcher's position acts as a guide for designing the qualitative case study proposed for this research, ensuring that the study remains focused on specific theoretical considerations.

4.1.1 Ontology

The ontological assumption about the nature of this study draws on a relativist stance, which rejects universal truths and acknowledging that reality is relative to individual, culture, or context in which it is situated (Mills et al., 2006; Huang et al., 2023; Sankey, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). Particularly, this study employed qualitative methods, emphasising the

interpretation of reality as a fluid and context-dependent phenomenon rather than a fixed or objective truth. Traditionally, the field of L2 pragmatics has leaned toward a realist or positivist perspective, where reality can be understood, studied, and represented accurately through scientific inquiry (Park, 2022; Asay, 2013; and Rowbottom, 2019), focusing on objective and quantifiable aspects of pragmatic competence. These studies focus mainly on quantifying learners' performance in speech acts, implicatures, and politeness strategies, employing methods such as discourse completion tasks (DCTs), role-plays, and multiple-choice tests, often drawing comparisons between native and non-native speakers (Mori, 2009; Taguchi, 2012; Taguchi, 2015; Altikriti, 2011; Emike, 2013; Mateczak, 2013; Kerkam, 2015; Grainger and Mills, 2016). However, in recent years, there has been a shift toward more post-structuralist and constructivist perspective. For example, intercultural pragmatics foreground the relativity of pragmatic competence, challenging the traditional realist, essentialist view of L2 pragmatics. According to this philosophy, pragmatic knowledge is not static or universally transferable; rather, it is shaped by the specific social context, the identities of the speakers, and the power relations within each interaction (Mori, 2009; Taguchi, 2012; Kecskés, 2014). This perspective views pragmatic meaning as relative, co-constructed, and continuously reshaped as learners engage in diverse communicative settings. Relativism aims towards an interpretive understanding of how subjects assign meaning, acknowledging that knowledge is co-constructed by both the viewer and the viewed (Huang et al., 2023; Mills et al., 2006). Annells (1996: 385) argued that in the relativism paradigm, ontology emphasises the social construction of reality and positions scholars to “perceive the nature of reality as a local and specific mental construction formed by a person and multiple mental constructions collectively exist regarding reality” (as cited in Huang et al., 2023). This philosophical stance allows for the exploration of multiple perspectives and the development of

theories that are grounded in the experiences of the participants (Mori, 2009; Taguchi, 2012; Huang et al., 2023; Mills et al., 2006).

Intercultural pragmatics recognises the existence of multiple pragmatic systems and the validity of diverse communication styles. Knowledge is not limited to dominant or native-speaker norms but encompasses a wide range of cultural and linguistic practices. “There is not one English language anymore, but there are many English languages . . . each of these Englishes is creating its own very special literature, which, because it doesn’t feel oppressed by the immensely influential literary tradition in English, is somehow freer” (Iyer, 1993: 53, as cited in Bolton, 2006). This pluralistic perspective could allow for an inclusive understanding of pragmatic competence that values diversity and respects the interplay of multiple identities in communication (Mori, 2009; Taguchi, 2012; Kecskés, 2014). As previously discussed in Chapter 2, this study aligns with Kecskés’s (2014) dynamic view of intercultural pragmatics, which highlights the interplay between learners’ L1 conceptual systems and their evolving L2 pragmatic competence. Hence, this theoretical stance informs the methodological design of the study, particularly in its emphasis on capturing participants’ meaning-making processes during interaction, rather than assessing deviations from native-speaker norms (Kecskés, 2014; cf. Canale & Swain, 1980; Bachman, 1990). This perspective recognises the importance of individuals’ L1 language system and their sociocultural context, both of which are essential for understanding people’s intentions, values, beliefs, and practices (Mori, 2009; Taguchi, 2012). To conclude, a relativist stance, particularly salient in the context of intercultural pragmatics, is maintained throughout the research process. Accordingly, this study aims to interpret meaning inductively, adopting a subjective ontological perspective through qualitative inquiry.

4.1.2 Epistemology

Given that this study perceives reality as multiple, viewing it as varied and subjective, the qualitative inquiry underpinning this research is epistemologically grounded in constructivist and interpretivist assumptions. According to William (2024), both constructivism and interpretivism highlight the significance of subjective understanding of human behaviour and the notion that reality is socially constructed. Constructivism, as advocated by Piaget, suggests that individuals actively construct knowledge and meaning through their experiences, rather than passively receiving information (Bada & Olusegun, 2015). Interpretivism, on the other hand, emphasises understanding the subjective meanings and experiences of individuals, which often involves an inductive approach, where researchers look for patterns or themes in the data that emerge from the participants' viewpoints, rather than applying predetermined theories or models (Parsons, 2010; William, 2024). Simply put, constructivism and interpretivism advocate for a dialogical research approach in which knowledge is collaboratively constructed with participants and meanings are continuously negotiated and reinterpreted, possibly reflecting the complexity of human communication unlike positivism, which seeks to eliminate contradictions and presents knowledge as stable and objective.

Building on the discussion of intercultural pragmatics, the adoption of constructivism and interpretivism provides a solid foundation for this research design. Intercultural pragmatics inherently involves understanding of how pragmatic norms are socially constructed and negotiated through interaction, making constructivism a fitting epistemological stance. Constructivism allows the study to explore how participants' perceptions of feedback exchange are likely influenced by their cultural and social norms, exploring the ways in which these norms may shape expectations and behaviours within feedback context. Simultaneously, interpretivism complements this focus

by digging deeper into understanding how participants, EFL teachers and learners, personally interpret and make sense of these exchanges based on their unique lived experiences (e.g., interviews and focus groups), alongside employing thematic analysis to explore and interpret their perceptions. Additionally, in qualitative case studies, especially with a constructivist and interpretivist epistemology, researchers take on an insider role as co-constructors of knowledge. Therefore, reflexivity plays a vital role in critically reflecting on researcher's influence, biases, and position throughout the research process (Yin, 2018; Tracy, 2020; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Dörnyei, 2007). In this study, reflexivity is incorporated through the use of a researcher's reflective journal and fieldnotes, allowing for continuous self-awareness and critical reflection during the research journey.

4.1.3 My dual role as a researcher and lecturer/interventionist

As mentioned earlier, researchers who adopt an insider role as co-constructors of knowledge, must engage in reflexivity, as interpretations of data are influenced by the researcher's positionality and the contextual interplay of discourses that frame the inquiry (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2018; Tracy, 2020; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Dörnyei, 2007). Reflexivity questions objectivity, fixed meanings, and the idea of a detached researcher, as well as providing researchers with the opportunity to consider how their positions have influenced the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Tracy, 2020). In other words, in qualitative inquiry, particularly in the context of pragmatics intervention, reflexivity enhances the transparency and credibility of the research process by recognising that the researcher is not a neutral observer, but an active participant in meaning-making (Yin, 2018; Tracy, 2020; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Dörnyei, 2007). This study embraces the notion that complete objectivity is unattainable in qualitative research as the process of data

collection and analysis is inevitably shaped by the researcher's background, theoretical lens, and engagement with participants (Tracy, 2020; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

As a researcher with a background in linguistics and an interest in intercultural pragmatics, my interpretations of teaching and learning pragmatic features of feedback are informed by prior knowledge and personal and professional experiences. Consequently, I combined my role as a lecturer of EFL at the English Language Institute with my role as a researcher/interventionist in this study. For my role as a researcher/interventionist, I draw on key research studies in the field to identify a gap in EFL instruction which then informs the theoretical and pedagogical principles used to guide the design and delivery of a two-week intervention on the pragmatic features of feedback. As a Saudi EFL lecturer at the English Language Institute, I am familiar with the sociocultural norms in our society. Therefore, employing a research journal and fieldnotes (Appendices K and L) could build up thick descriptions and enhance reflexivity, addressing researcher bias and subjectivity (Dörnyei, 2007; Yin 2018).

My approach was shaped by my experience of being a bilingual of Arabic as an (L1) and English (L2), as well as my six years of teaching English as an EFL. This dual perspective allows me to navigate the intersection between linguistic theoretical insights and practical classroom experiences. In examining pragmatics instruction, I draw not only from my academic background, but also from personal experiences in the challenges and nuances of learning and teaching in EFL context. For example, as a lecturer, I am familiar with the Institute's English programme, which places an emphasis on fixed discourse as well as implicit instruction of pragmatics. This familiarity added interest to the design of the instructional materials by challenging conventional norms of teaching EFL pragmatics within the institute. This lived experience informs my understanding of both learner and teacher perspectives, blending analytical frameworks with an empathetic and

intuitive grasp of the social and cultural factors that shape language in use. I designed the instructional materials and tasks relying on my background in linguistics, a literature review in L2/EFL pragmatics and research in feedback exchange (as described in Chapters 2 and 3),

Furthermore, my relationship with the study participants as an insider researcher could be described as formal. First, my colleagues, the participant teachers, are new to me due to their situation of pursuing higher education abroad, returning home during Covid Time when I was already abroad. My presence is therefore less likely to influence their responses. The same applies to participants from students. My position, not being that of a student-teacher role, and the fact that they are unaware I am a staff member, allows for more objectivity and honesty in their responses.

4.1.4 Pedagogical considerations

The ontological and epistemological foundations of this study, along with the researcher's reflexivity, directly inform its pedagogical considerations. Detailed in Chapter 2, intercultural pragmatics evaluate rigorously the norms and frameworks that govern how language use is studied and taught, challenging assumptions about universality, correctness, and appropriateness. Traditional models, such as those emphasising politeness or speech acts, often reflect dominant cultural and institutional norms, marginalising alternative perspectives (e.g., Altikriti, 2011; Emike, 2013; Matczak, 2013; Kerkam, 2015; Grainger and Mills, 2016). For instance, Speech Act Theory simplifies language by categorising utterances into fixed types (e.g., directives, assertives), assuming clear intentions and outcomes in conversations (Emike, 2013). However, discourse is more complex with possible overlapping intentions, power structures, and contextual shifts that fixed categories cannot fully capture (Matczak, 2013). Feedback exchange in hierarchical settings exemplifies this complexity, as power imbalances shape how feedback is delivered, interpreted,

and responded to (Ryan & Henderson, 2018). To illustrate, an employee may employ overly polite or indirect language to minimise potential risks whereas an employer might employ an assertive tone to establish authority, demonstrating how communication norms are shaped by both hierarchical and contextual influences (Hathaway, 1997; Meyer, 2014).

Whether pragmatics is regarded as “the study of the invisible meaning...” (Yule, 2010, p. 128); “the study of language from the point of view of users ... ” (Crystal, 1997, p. 301); or “the study of language use, affected by dynamic intersections of various factors concerning users’ agency ...” (Mori, 2009, p. 348), for EFL learners, especially those experiencing pragmatic applications as culturally nuanced as giving-and-responding to feedback, intercultural pragmatics approaches could help them understand that there is no fixed way for exchanging feedback. Instead, they can learn how to adjust their feedback exchange according to diverse situations. Given that feedback exchange could vary significantly based on social status, power, and identity (Ryan & Henderson, 2018), intercultural pragmatics, with its emphasis on socio-cognitive dimensions in communication and language use, could offer insights into why EFL learners may choose certain linguistic forms/structures over others in feedback context. This approach could allow EFL teachers to teach students not only language forms, structures, and functions, but also the possible underlying social connotations that exist in written discourse, moving away from “native speaker” norms and cross-cultural comparisons, focusing on teaching pragmatic strategies that could be adaptable across diverse feedback contexts.

Additionally, from a philosophical perspective, intercultural pragmatics could support students in recognising how their own and others’ backgrounds influence communication, possibly promoting multicultural or intercultural point view of EFL pragmatics. For example, the

reconceptualisation of the concept of politeness has been an ongoing interest in the field of pragmatics (e.g., Haugh, 2007; Locher, 2006; Van der Bom & Mills, 2015). Earlier theories of politeness such as Brown's and Levinson's (1987) proposed structuralist and native speaker's models of politeness have been challenged by intercultural pragmatics frameworks. Kecskés (2014), for example, brings into question ethnocentric bias and over-reliance on static, essentialist definitions of politeness and proposes reconceptualising politeness as an emergent, dynamic process shaped by context and individuals' relationships. Therefore, when designing the qualitative interventions, this study employed different strategies and ways of giving-and-responding to feedback across two sessions taking into account the notion of face and politeness in both Arabic and English including in/directness and im/politeness. Designing tasks, for example, involved creating activities that reflect feedback exchanges through various situations. Such tasks aim to develop learners' awareness of pragmatic norms, enhance their ability to adapt feedback language to different social and cultural settings, and promote variability and fluidity of meaning in feedback exchanges. For example, activities like sharing intercultural experiences or engaging in simulations can effectively support these goals.

Moreover, the perspectives of EFL teachers and learners of feedback exchange are essential in determining the effectiveness and relevance of pragmatics instruction in feedback contexts. Since knowledge is socially constructed and influenced by individuals' cultural and social contexts, pragmatics instruction cannot be universally applied without considering the diverse backgrounds of those involved in the learning process (Haugh, 2007; Locher, 2006; Van der Bom & Mills, 2015). Teachers may emphasise aspects of politeness or other pragmatic features based on their own experiences, which may not necessarily align with learners' expectations or agency (Mori, 2009; Taguchi, 2012). Social constructivism emphasises that learning is most effective

when learners are actively involved in the construction of their own knowledge (Parsons, 2010; William, 2024). Dictating specific instructions without considering participants' input risks oversimplifying the nuanced processes of pragmatic competence development and disregarding the learners' contextual contexts and communicative needs (Ferguson Hanreddy & Draxton, 2011). Moreover, some researchers (e.g., McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016; Liddicoat, 2019; Mori, 2009; Taguchi, 2012; Kecskés, 2014; Kerkam, 2015) advocate an approach that consider L2 users' feelings, thoughts, and reflections about their communicative experience in the L2, rather than judging their performance in terms of "nativeness," as seen in the prevalent etic approach in interlanguage pragmatics. Simply put, since pragmatics is fundamentally concerned with how speakers and listeners collaboratively construct and deconstruct meaning in interactions (Crystal, 1997; Kasper & Rose, 2001), it becomes essential to include participants' perspectives, as they are the active agents navigating and negotiating various sociocultural variables in communication.

4.2 Research design

4.2.1 Case study approach

The case study approach, as defined by prominent scholars (e.g., Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995; Simons, 2009/2015; Yin, 2018), generally emphasises the singularity of the phenomenon being studied, with the choice of methodology (e.g., qualitative, or quantitative) being related but distinct. For example, Yin (2018) emphasised the scope, process, and methodological characteristics of case study research, focusing on the empirical nature of the inquiry, and the critical role that context plays in understanding the case. Stake (1995), Merriam, (1988), and Creswell (2007) focused on the characteristic features that define a case (what is studied) rather than the method (how it is studied). According to Merriam (1988), a case study is characterised by being particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic, focusing on specific features of

the case and its context. She emphasises the use of inductive reasoning to analyse and synthesise data from multiple sources. Similarly, Stake (1995) views case studies not as the application of predefined research methods but as the selection of cases that can help explore and understand complex issues. Creswell's definition (2007) aligns with this perspective, describing case studies as a means of investigating issues through one or more cases within a defined or bounded system (e.g., environment, background, context) in which the case is situated. Merriam's description of the case, however, highlighted the capacity to provide a detailed account of the case under investigation. Her characterisation of case studies as "heuristic," relating to their ability to generate new insights and inspire further exploration, often leads to the development of new hypotheses or theories grounded in the findings from the case (Stake, 1995; Dörnyei, 2007; Polit & Beck, 2010; Yin, 2018). This is particularly significant in areas where current theories may not entirely explain observed phenomena, as seen in EFL pragmatics research including learning and teaching.

Simons (2009:03) has extended earlier definitions of case studies to include both the purpose and research focus:

Case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a 'real life' context. It is research-based, inclusive of different methods and is evidence-led.

Simons' definition highlighted the comprehensive nature of case studies, emphasising their ability to explore the complexity and uniqueness of phenomena within real-life contexts. It illustrates the importance of multiple perspectives, diverse methods, and evidence-based inquiry, ensuring a thorough and nuanced understanding. Case studies can draw on both qualitative and quantitative methods, selecting those that provide the most appropriate evidence for understanding

the case. Moreover, case studies have traditionally been associated with qualitative methodologies due to their emphasis on generating in-depth understanding of a specific topic, such as in theses, programme evaluations, intervention development, and theory-building (Simons, 2009; Baxter & Jack, 2008). Educational research, for example, has embraced case studies as a means to evaluate curriculum design and innovation (Merriam, 1988; Simons, 2009; Stake, 1995). Qualitative methods were, in particular, essential for examining factors such as participants' perspectives and the influence of socio-political contexts on the success and failures of curricula (Simons, 2009). In other words, qualitative case study helps researchers to capture the complexities of human behaviour and social interactions, providing rich, context-specific insights into why individuals hold certain beliefs or make specific decisions.

Furthermore, the case study approach originated in social sciences, where it was primarily used to explore complex human, social processes, cultural phenomena within real-world contexts (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995; Simons, 2009; Yin, 2018). However, over time, its utility has been recognised across other fields (e.g., education, healthcare) (Simons, 2009). It has also been applied to second language education and pragmatics to explore pragmatic development and instructional practices. Nonetheless, few studies (e.g., Kim, 2016) have employed a case study design that integrates a qualitative intervention while specifically focusing on L2 learners' perceptions of pragmatics instruction. Kim's study is a rare example, given the limited research that explores both the instructional aspects and learners' subjective experiences with pragmatics learning. Notably, no existing studies have incorporated teachers' perceptions as part of an intervention-based case study, highlighting a gap in the research that considers the instructional perspective alongside learner experiences. This methodological gap in the literature highlights the need for further studies using a qualitative case study based on an intervention to better understand

the impact of pragmatics instruction on L2 learners and to inform more effective teaching practices. Consequently, in my research, I have adopted a qualitative case study with a two-week intervention, which I personally designed and facilitated, to explore the case within its contextual complexity. The duration of the intervention was determined by the limited availability of teachers and their students. However, the approach enables an in-depth and nuanced scrutiny of the interplay between EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of shared learning experience.

4.2.2 A case study of two-week intervention

As discussed in the Literature Review Chapters, many studies in EFL/L2 pragmatics, particularly those focusing on instructional effectiveness, are often rooted in action research. Action research typically involves a cyclical process of planning, action, observation, and reflection, where researchers engaged with EFL learners to test their production of specific speech act such as El Shazly's (2017) on requests and Al-Suhaibani's (2020) on compliments. Such studies often aim to address specific teaching strategies or challenges through several iterative cycles (e.g., Taguchi, 2015). However, while action research seemed to be valuable in addressing immediate pedagogical issues, its focus on iterative processes and variable manipulation (e.g., cause-and-effect relationships) contrasts with the exploratory nature of the current study. Given that the teaching and learning of EFL pragmatics on feedback exchange may be complex or context-dependent to be adequately understood through inflexible, predefined quantitative measurements, a qualitative case study was considered more suitable for this study.

The two-week intervention was not structured to address a specific teaching issue through a cyclical process as seen in action research. Nor does it involve manipulating variables in controlled experiments to test the effectiveness of pragmatics instruction, compare instructional approaches such as explicit instruction vs. implicit instruction, or examine students' production of

speech acts. Instead, this research is exploratory in nature, to gain in-depth insights into participants' perceptions, attitudes, or experiences including the strategies and factors introduced during the instruction. Qualitative inquiry, as Morse (2006) suggests, can provide theoretical foundations for interventions including intervention research which is typically considered quantitative in nature. Accordingly, a two-week pedagogical intervention was first implemented and delivered by the researcher in one EFL classroom. The intervention aimed to teach pragmatic features of feedback exchange to EFL learners using specifically designed instructional tasks embedded in TBLT. It consisted of two sessions—each lasting three hours—conducted over two consecutive weeks. Eight instructional tasks were developed and distributed evenly across the sessions to scaffold learners' understanding of feedback exchange in English. Participants' perceptions, observations, and experiences are then examined.

The intervention was designed, implemented, and delivered by the researcher, who acted as the interventionist. In this role, the researcher was responsible for teaching the two sessions, facilitating task-based activities, and guiding classroom interactions to model and support the use of feedback strategies in English. This direct involvement also allowed the researcher to observe participants' engagement first-hand, enabling deeper understanding of both learner responses and instructional dynamics within the EFL classroom. While the researcher led the intervention, the participating EFL teachers attended as observers. Their role was to take notes, reflect on, and later discuss their perceptions, providing critical insights into the teaching of pragmatics from a practitioner's perspective. Learners' perceptions were also examined to understand how they experienced the pragmatics instruction on feedback exchange, including their reflections on the tasks, their perceived relevance of the content, and the ways in which their awareness of feedback strategies may have shifted as a result of the intervention. Both perspectives formed a key part of

the qualitative data, which helped in developing a more comprehensive prototypical conceptual framework for teaching pragmatic features of feedback exchange in EFL contexts.

Furthermore, the qualitative methodological approach required careful consideration of participant selection and data collection methods to ensure the research objectives and questions are addressed. Adopting a small number of participants within a single university made it particularly suitable for in-depth framing of the research as a case study. The case could serve as a window into wider social, cultural, or organisational context if it includes a rich, thick description, the voices of those involved, and sufficient details about time, place, and context to assist readers recognise similarities and differences to their own context (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005; Simons, 2015). Examining the perceptions of the participants—Arabic speaking learners of English and EFL teachers within one university, as an EFL context, could not only facilitate an in-depth exploration of their experiences with the pragmatics instruction, but also could position the case within its broader social, cultural, and institutional context. Since pragmatics is concerned with the way language is used to communicate rather than the way it is structured, the context is important to the interpretation of data (Castillo, 2009). In summary, the sampling strategy was first identified focusing on purposive sampling of participants who could provide meaningful insights into the teaching and learning of pragmatics of feedback in an EFL context. Data collection instruments were then selected and developed to help capture the nuanced experiences of both teachers and learners. A detailed account of the sampling strategy, participants, and the instruments used for data collection is presented in the following sections.

4.3 Sampling

A purposive sampling strategy is typical in qualitative case study research because it focuses on identifying individuals or groups who have specific characteristics or experiences that

align with the research objectives (Stake, 1995; Dörnyei, 2007; Tracy, 2020; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2018). Besides, practical considerations, such as time constraints, financial resources, and respondent availability, should be carefully considered when designing the sampling plan (Stake, 1995; Dörnyei, 2007; Yin, 2018). This sampling strategy has been widely used in various qualitative and quantitative studies, including those exploring learners' production of speech acts (e.g., El Shazly, 2017; Al-Suhaibani, 2020). The rigorous application of purposive sampling can enhance the credibility, transferability, and overall quality of qualitative research (Tracy, 2020; Simons, 2015; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study, the sample was chosen to include Arabic-speaking learners of English and four teachers to ensure that participants have direct relevance to the study's focus. The characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 4.1 (teachers) and in Table 4.2 (learners), reflecting the strategy used and outlining key contextual information of the participants.

Table 4.1

Demographic Characteristics from Teacher Participants

Characteristics	Details
No. of participants	4 Saudi EFL female teachers
Institution	Language Institute
Shared factors	Gender: females First language: Arabic Major: English Role: EFL teachers
Educational background	1 Language Instructor with an MA in Linguistics 3 Teaching Assistants with PhDs in Applied Linguistics and TESOL
Variations	Years of teaching experience; level of Education; age

Table 4.2*Demographic Characteristics from Learner Participants*

Characteristics	Details
No. of participants	31 Saudi EFL students (one intact class)
Institution	Language Institute
Year of study	Undergraduate students in their first year
Shared factors	Gender: Female Age: 18-20 years old First language: Arabic Major: Translation and Languages
English proficiency level	Intermediate (B1-B2)
Proficiency Evaluation Method	Placement test

The participant teachers for this study were four Saudi EFL female teachers who work for the Language Institute, at the same University, where this study is conducted. They shared some characteristics such as gender (females), first language (Arabic), major (English). One of them is a Language Instructor with an MA degree in Linguistics and the other three teachers are Teaching Assistants with PhDs in Applied Linguistics and TESOL. They varied in terms of years of teaching experience, level of education, and age. This variation generated useful data in relation to their perceptions of pragmatics and how their perspective varied based on different factors such as age or teaching experience or major; however, these factors were not considered in the data analysis. It is worth mentioning that the participating teachers are not experts in pragmatics, especially the teaching of pragmatics and discourse. However, their insights as EFL teachers at the Language

Institute combined with their knowledge and experience in teaching English as a foreign language to Arabic speakers of English, hold the potential to serve the objectives of this study.

The participant learners in this study were thirty-one Saudi EFL students in their first year at the Language Institute from the College of Translation and Languages at a public university in Saudi Arabia. The intervention was implemented with an intact class, whereby all participants were drawn from the same pre-existing classroom group rather than a cohort assembled specifically for research purposes. All students shared the same demographic features, such as their field of study (Translation and Languages), age (ranges between 18-20 years old), gender (females) and their first language (native speakers of Arabic). Their English linguistic competence was evaluated as intermediate, equivalent to B1-B2 (independent user) according to the Common European Framework for Reference (CEFR) based on a placement test administered, prior to the research as an admission requirement by the university for placement purposes. The sample from students seemed most appropriate for the present study as an intact class administratively defined in terms of language proficiency. The random assignment of participants was not logistically possible.

4.3.1 Rationale for sampling

Although qualitative research is often perceived as lacking generalisability, it might be suggested that one should not judge a book by its cover—the depth and contextual richness it offers may provide insights that could serve as a catalyst for other studies or be transferrable and applicable across various settings, depending on the context. The true strength of qualitative research lies not in broad generalisation, but in its capacity to provide detailed, context-sensitive insights that can inform theory and practice in different settings (Stake, 1995; Dörnyei, 2007; Polit & Beck, 2010; Yin, 2018;). Through providing rich descriptions and thorough analysis, qualitative

researchers could enhance the transferability of their findings, making it possible to extend insights to similar contexts with careful interpretation (Stake, 1995; Simons, 2015; Dörnyei, 2007; Polit & Beck, 2010; Yin, 2018; Tong & Tan, 2022; Younas et al., 2023).

For the present study, the selected sample is well stratified with respect to the student target population sharing many criteria with the target population (e.g., context of EFL learning and teaching, gender, culture, and 1st language: Arabic). They may have a variety of differences in terms of teaching/learning experience and beliefs than the larger population. Consequently, the selected sample's results are not to be generalised though individuals with similar characteristics and experiences could benefit from the study results and implications.

The participant teachers seemed appropriate for this study for four reasons: first, they represent one first language background, and they were similar in their sociocultural background. Second, they learned English as a second language with a bachelor's degree in English Language. Third, they teach English to EFL learners in their 1st year at the Language Institute, at the College of Languages and Translation. However, the differences in their specific major for MAs and PhDs or their University positions, Teaching Assistant or Language Instructor, were insignificant to the study. The role of teachers is to attend, observe, and reflect on the pragmatics instruction from their point of view as EFL teachers. They also provide valuable reflexivity regarding the instruction content and approach, offering an opportunity to critically reflect on the material and gain new perspectives that might not be immediately apparent pre-during-post the two-week intervention.

The participant students were also suitable for the study for similar reasons to teachers' sample: (1) they speak Arabic as L1; (2) they share the same sociocultural background; (3) they are Saudi and females; (4) they are learning English as a second language; (5) they are intermediate

students in their 1st year at the Language Institute, at the College of Languages and Translation. Their intermediate English language proficiency serve the goal of this study because their language proficiency is of a standard where they can read and write in English (e.g., writing an e-mail). They can participate and complete the tasks during the pragmatics instruction, which requires writing as well as reflecting on their learning experience of being an independent user learning about EFL pragmatic features of feedback exchange.

4.3.2 Recruiting participants: Teachers and students

Following the strict guidelines, ethics approval from the University of Edinburgh and the Language Institute where my study is conducted, an e-mail was sent out on my behalf by the fieldwork moderator to encourage teachers to take part in my study in December 2022. Teachers who were interested to participate, indicated their interests in a Google Form document attached to the e-mail, indicating their availability for the two-week intervention as well as their contact details. I e-mailed five teachers who originally expressed their interests to schedule a pre-intervention meeting to discuss the aim of my study and their roles. However, one of the five teachers withdrew from the study. In addition, in early January 2023, the fieldwork moderator helped me in recruiting a class of thirty-eight students, but only thirty-one students gave their consent to participate in the study. Thirty-one students were present in the first intervention and twenty-nine students attended the second intervention; two students were absent on sick leave. Table 4.3 below outlines the role of the field moderator in recruiting the participants of the study.

Table 4.3*Field Moderator's role in the Participant Recruitment*

Area of Support	Description
UJ administrative support	Acted as the University of Jeddah–assigned fieldwork moderator, ensuring that recruitment aligned with institutional procedures and ethical requirements.
Pilot study	
Pilot study briefing	Met with the researcher prior to the pilot study to receive an explanation of the study's aims, target participants, pilot intervention procedures, and data collection methods.
Participant Recruitment	Assisted in recruiting a teacher and four of her students to participate in the pilot study.
Main Study	
Main study briefing	Received an orientation on the two-week intervention, covering its pedagogical aims, participant involvement, session-by-session procedures, and the data collection instruments used in the main study.
Teacher recruitment	Sent an email with a Google Form to teachers to gather their availability and their email addresses, enabling direct communication with potential participants.
Class recruitment	Helped recruit an intact class of 38 students by providing students with an overview of the study's aims and procedures.

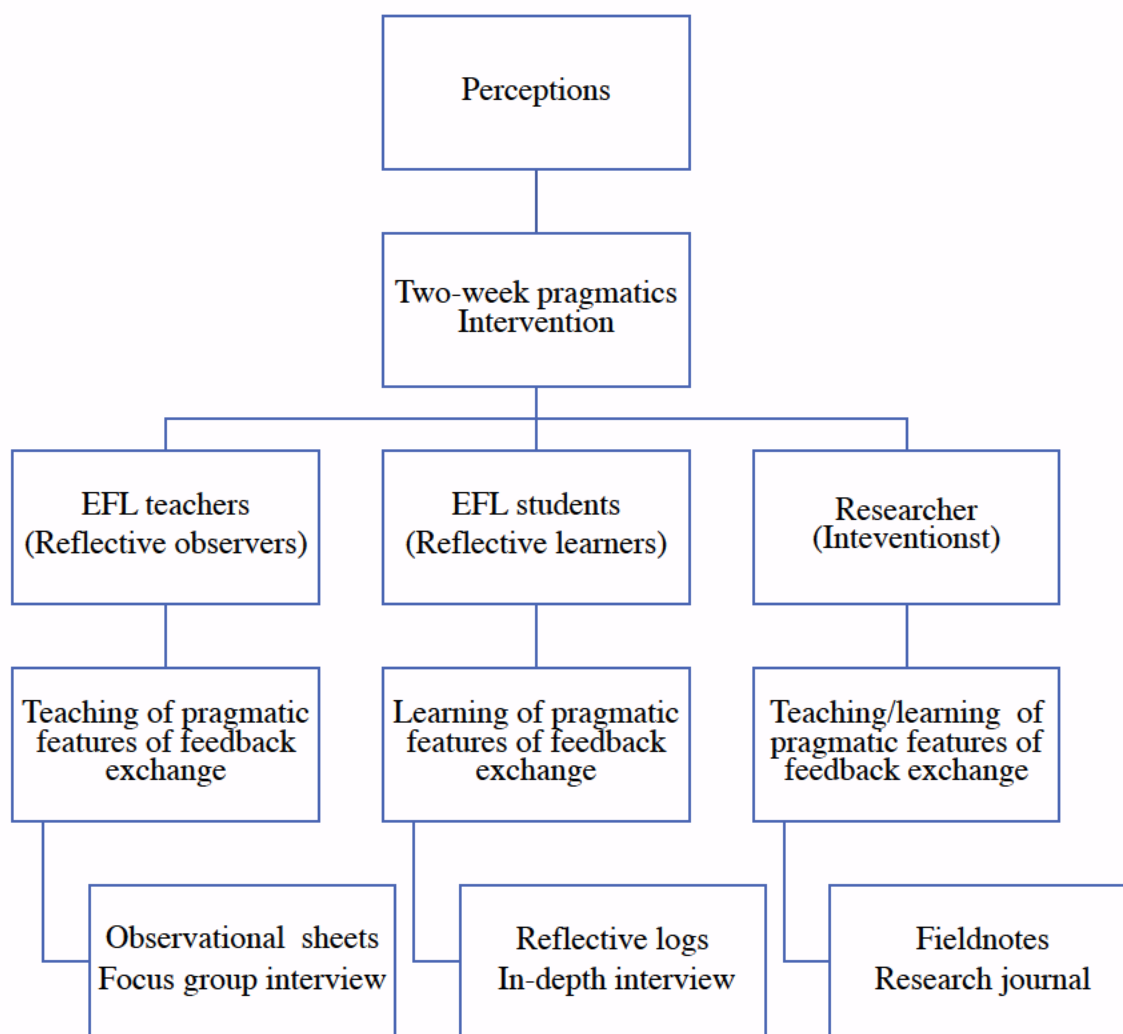
4.4 Data collection

This research takes a qualitative methodology using two data sets with the aim of collecting rich thick data to provide a fuller understanding of participants' perceptions and experiences. Multiple data sources may enhance the breadth and depth of the findings, potentially leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being investigated (Stake, 1995; Dörnyei, 2007; Simons, 2009; Yin, 2018). The first two data sets were gathered during the intervention:

Teachers observing and reflecting through classroom observational sheets during each intervention; and learners reflecting on their learning experience in a reflective log at the end of each intervention. The second data sets were gathered during the post-intervention: teachers participated in a focus group for a broader discussion; and learners took part in an individual interview, providing personal, in-depth perspectives.

Figure 4.1

Pragmatics Intervention Data Collection Framework



Additionally, the researcher maintained both research journal and fieldnotes to document observations and reflections throughout the research process. All these instruments were piloted along with the first two tasks on Zoom with a different volunteer teacher and other four students prior to the main data collection to ensure the questions are clear, generating discussion and relevant information, and to ensure that the questions were not leading. Figure 4.1 above illustrates the framework of data collection.

4.4.1 Pilot study: Instruments, procedure, and limitations

Overview. In December 2022, a study was conducted prior to the main intervention to examine the clarity, feasibility, and appropriateness of the research instruments. The pilot study was conducted online with four students who were samples of a single class and their teacher. This approach was feasible given practical constraints and allowed testing of the instruments in a context similar to that of the main study. In other words, the pilot did not aim to test the effectiveness of the tasks or generate substantial data as it was not possible to (1) evaluate the practicality of delivering the materials within the allocated time, and (2) ensure that all tasks were comprehensible and manageable for learners. These limitations are acknowledged and discussed later in this section.

The pilot session included one hour for teaching two tasks along with key concepts in pragmatics (e.g., social context) and an additional 30 minutes for the student reflection while the teacher had an observation sheet to record her observations and perceptions during the instruction. The instruction was delivered on 27 December 2022 and then followed by one hour for the student interview on 2nd January 2023 and another hour for the teacher interview on 3rd January 2023. Participants provided their availability, and meeting times were arranged accordingly. Drawing on the data collected from the pilot, I developed a critical reflection, which I subsequently

discussed with my supervisors to guide revisions to the research instruments. For instance, after reviewing the first observational sheet, I combined sections A and B, deleted *useful / not useful* and replaced it with “What do you think” and “In what ways,” to reduce potential response bias. Following the teacher’s feedback indicating redundancy among the items, Section C was revised by consolidating the three questions into a single item. Following students’ feedback, the revised reflection included illustrative examples of social factors (e.g., age and social distance) to support participants’ understanding and encourage more specific responses (see Appendix V for the observational sheet prior to the pilot study). The following sections describe and discuss the instruments, procedure, and limitation of the pilot study.

Instruments and procedure. A range of instruments was employed to facilitate instructional delivery and support data collection in ways that aligned with the study’s focus on participants’ perceptions of pragmatics instruction and feedback exchange. The instruction was carried out using PowerPoint presentation delivered via Zoom for introducing tasks 1 and 2. The use of slides ensured consistency of input, supported the standardisation of task instructions, and allowed the researcher to control the sequencing and scaffolding of pragmatic features, which is particularly important for studies exploring learners’ responses to explicit pragmatic input (Kim, 2016; Elshazly, 2017).

Reflective log/sheets were shared through Padlet to collect teacher/students’ written reflections. Reflecting through digital platforms such as Padlet has been shown to facilitate participation, reduce affective barriers, and provide accessible spaces for learner expression in online contexts (Rath, 2025; Singaram et al., 2022). Students could post reflections, ask questions, and researcher could see, listen, and respond to them as they happened. This helped understand whether the reflection prompts worked and gave insight into how students were processing the

tasks. The teacher also had the opportunity to document her observations and any related remarks or perceptions, which were later discussed with the researcher.

Semi-structured interviews were then scheduled and conducted separately with students and the teacher via Zoom. Interviewing both student and teacher groups enabled exploring both perspectives regarding the clarity and appropriateness of study tools. On 2nd January 2023, I conducted interviews with three students to learn more about their perceptions. The fourth student couldn't join due to weak signal. On the following day, 3rd January 2023, I interviewed the teacher and checked with her the clarity of the reflective log and interview questions. Both interviews focused on discussing the clarity of the tasks presented, the reflection prompts, and the proposed interview/focus group questions design for the main study. Each student interview had an approximate duration of 15-20 minutes, while the teacher's interview took 45 minutes.

Throughout the pilot session, I maintained researcher fieldnotes, documenting observations of student engagement, visible hesitation or confusion, and teacher responses to the instruction. Maintaining fieldnotes supports reflexive awareness and strengthens the trustworthiness of qualitative designs by documenting the researcher's positionality and decision-making (Olmos-Vega et al., 2023; Tracy, 2020). The iterative review of the instruments and procedures following the pilot aligns with recommendations that pilot studies serve as a testing phase to refine data collection tools prior to the main study (Pearson et al., 2020). This process contributed to the development of critical reflection that was later discussed with my supervisors.

Limitations. The decision to pilot only two tasks was primarily shaped by practical constraints with the education context. The teacher and students were experiencing heavy load during the period of data collection, and the institution allocated a limited time window for the

pilot. Given these constraints, piloting all tasks would have placed a burden on participants and risked compromising engagement with the materials. Tasks 1 and 2 were then selected as they represent the introductory stages of the intervention, allowing initial insights into learners' comprehension, task design, timing of the tasks, and the overall delivery process. As a result, the materials were not fully tested for sequencing, progression, or cumulative difficulty. This decision represents a potential limitation of the study, as not piloting all tasks may have limited early identification of task-specific challenges. However, ongoing reflection including teacher observations, and student feedback during the main intervention were used to monitor task implementation and address emerging issues.

Furthermore, the pilot relied on a small number of participants, which could limit the transferability of the findings (Simons, 2015). This limitation, however, did not significantly affect the research aim, as the study's primary focus was reflective, exploring participants' perceptions rather than assessing their production or performance. As mentioned above, the reflective prompts were revised following the pilot; however, the students' responses in the main study remained largely superficial. This outcome suggests that the issue was not solely a matter of wording but may reflect a broader lack of experience with reflective practice in their learning context. As a result, even with clearer explanations and modelling, the depth of reflection did not substantially increase. This has two implications. First, it indicates that reflective writing may require sustained training rather than a brief instructional explanation. Second, it highlights a contextual limitation: the reflective log captured general impressions rather than nuanced accounts of learning processes. Accordingly, the log was treated as a supplementary rather than a primary source of data, and greater analytical weight was placed on interviews, which generated richer responses.

4.4.2 Main study instruments employed in the intervention phase: Teachers' reflective observational sheets and learners' reflective logs

The classroom observational sheets and reflective logs are both reflective instruments used in this study. Both teachers and learners demonstrated their own perspectives and observations towards teaching/learning pragmatic features of feedback exchange in the EFL context, reflecting on the same set of questions in classroom observational sheets for teachers and reflective logs for learners.

The data on the sheet/log were expected to be an individual production, employing hard copies for teachers and soft copies for students, using the language with which the teachers/learners feel most comfortable with either Arabic or English. Since the objective was to gather participants' perceptions not their language proficiency, the participants were asked to write in their L1, Arabic. However, teachers chose to write their observations in English. The data generated from these instruments captured participants' immediate insights.

The purpose of incorporating classroom observational sheets and reflective logs is to obtain information from respondents about unobservable mental processes such as thoughts, feelings, and motives (e.g., Dörnyei, 2007). Moreover, reflections in qualitative case studies provides valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of the participants (Van Dieren & Clavero, 2022). They also encourage both linguistic awareness and pragmatic understanding (Borer, 2018). The teachers' observational sheets set out to capture their professional observations and reflections throughout the intervention process, while the learners' reflective logs provided personal insights and experiences from their perspective as learners during the same period.

Both data sources— teachers' sheets and learners' logs— focus on the same set of questions, providing reflections from their distinct viewpoints on the shared experience

(Appendices C and E). The design of these data instruments was semi-structured with respect to the instruction content, with consistent categories across the two data sets for the two-week intervention. These categories included authentic materials and tasks, knowledge of pragmalinguistics and knowledge of sociopragmatics. While the categories remained consistent, the specific questions within each category varied based on the instruction content. For example, the questions for the 1st reflective log/sheet are different from the second log/sheet because these questions are informed by the instruction content, allowing for nuanced; yet systematic reflection throughout the two-week intervention.

Procedure. Collecting the data sets— teachers’ sheets and learners’ logs— took place prior and during the two-week intervention. A meeting was arranged with the teachers on Zoom a week prior to the two-week intervention to introduce the research aim and questions, explain their role in the study, and provide a detailed explanation of the questions outlined in the two-week classroom-observational sheets. This meeting offered an opportunity for teachers to raise any inquiries or seek further clarification, ensuring that their input should be centred specifically on the instruction-related content, avoiding any external unrelated matters. However, they were also given a space at the end of each sheet with an open question to record any other related observations that may arise. As for the documentation of their responses, initially, teachers were asked to take note of their perceptions on a hard copy while observing during the intervention-time and later record them as a soft copy in Google forms by the end of each week intervention. However, they preferred to continue writing their input of the two-week intervention sheets on a hard copy as they found it easier and less time-consuming due to their university workload. They decided to hand the completed hand-written sheets to me on a bi-weekly basis.

Concerning students' reflective logs, the first 30-minute time of each intervention was dedicated to students, explaining the objectives of the pragmatics instruction, as well as discussing their role and the reflection questions. Students were also invited to a prior and post intervention forum to raise any inquiries or concerns about their role or any other-related matters. As opposed to teachers, who were observing and taking note, students were asked to record their reflections by the end of each week intervention, allowing 30 minutes to complete on Google form. The rationale for this approach is that teachers were encouraged to take notes while observing, allowing for real-time feedback, clarifications, and professional insights and observations that would be lost if teachers were disengaged during the intervention. Students, on the other hand, were given time to absorb the full content and participate during the instruction before providing their reflections so that they do not feel the pressure to participate and reflect immediately.

Furthermore, the observational sheets submitted by teachers were comprehensive, with all sections thoroughly completed, providing detailed observations, setting them as a strong and interesting foundation for the focus group discussion. In contrast to teachers' comprehensive sheets, the students' reflections were often less detailed, providing briefer responses to each section. This adds greater significance to the follow-up interviews, providing an opportunity to expand on the students' brief notes and gain deeper insights. This noted contrast of participants' reflection input could be attributed to teachers being knowledgeable professionals who are more likely to feel comfortable providing detailed observations. Their experience equips them to articulate their views and perceptions precisely, making their input thorough. Students, on the other hand, may lack the experience to elaborate on linguistic/pragmatic aspects as extensively, potentially resulting in briefer responses. Additionally, the roles of teachers and students in the study probably influenced the depth of their reflections. Teachers, as reflective observers, may

have seen the task as part of their professional responsibilities, prompting them to engage with greater detail and providing them with time to reflect while observing. In contrast, students were primarily active participants during the two-week intervention, taking part in the class discussions. Hence, note-taking may have seemed secondary to their involvement, contributing to the briefness of their responses. Other factors such as time and effort may also have played a role as students may have found the task of reflecting in detail by the end of each intervention exhausting, irrelevant or demanding too much effort.

4.4.3 Main study instruments employed post-intervention: Teachers' focus groups and learners' interviews

The focus group for teachers and individual interviews for students are both in-depth discussion methods employed post-intervention for this study bi-weekly. Participants were invited to take place in focus group/interviews to elaborate more on their own perspectives and observations towards teaching/learning pragmatic features of feedback exchange in the EFL context, reflecting on the instruction.

The purpose of incorporating the teacher focus group and student interviews post-intervention is to gather further in-depth data on their perceptions of the content of instruction and the pedagogical approach. Focus groups and interviews are increasingly being used in applied linguistics, particularly in qualitative case study research aiming to explore participants' identities, experiences, attitudes, and orientations toward various phenomena (Litosseliti, 2003; Talmy, 2010). Focus groups offer a more naturalistic setting where participants can influence one another, potentially creating an interactive atmosphere where shared beliefs and experiences may emerge (Litosseliti, 2003). Sharing teachers' experiences through focus group discussions contributed to creating a fuller picture of the types of observations and perceptions they have noted,

particularly regarding the sociopragmatic features of giving and responding to feedback. Moreover, one-on-one student interviews were designed to uncover their “life-world” and provide “a window” into their minds (Litosseliti, 2018, p. 157). Students could feel more comfortable and open, sharing their views and perceptions individually, giving them a locus to elaborate more on their reflections. By focusing on open-ended questions, both data sets were designed to facilitate detailed discussions and capture a range of views related to teaching/learning pragmatics of feedback exchange.

Focus groups for teachers. The questions for the 1st and 2nd focus groups were structured considering three different types of focus group questions: (1) main questions; (2) planned follow-up questions; and (3) spontaneous follow-up questions (Appendices G and H). However, focus group discussions were more like conversation among teachers, encouraging interaction among them, bringing out differing views, ideas, experiences while keeping the conversation flows. Therefore, follow-up questions (e.g., do you agree with what was just said?; or do you have a different opinion?) were mostly used with the focus groups whereas probing questions (e.g., could you provide an example to clarify what do you mean by that?) were mostly for the interviews as there were less pressure to keep the dynamic of the conversations going.

The type of questions asked in the first and second focus groups were similar to those asked to students in the 1st and 2nd interviews. For both focus groups, the questions were first centred around the content of each intervention and then gradually moved to the instruction approach employed in both interventions. The 1st focus group began with a brief introduction outlining the purpose of the focus group. Afterwards, each teacher introduced themselves, their major, and their job status. Following the introductions, participant teachers were asked a series of questions related to the 1st week intervention, starting with instruction content such as questions related to teaching

pragmatic features of feedback, negative and positive feedback, face and politeness, and situational factors. For example, questions like “In what ways did you benefit from the instruction in the pragmatics of giving and responding to feedback: negative and positive feedback?” And “Do you find any aspects of teaching pragmatics of feedback helpful if so, why? if not why? including teaching face and politeness, introducing situational factors (e.g., power, age, gender, social distance, social status), and presenting English formulaic expressions of giving and responding to feedback. The second set of questions focused on the teaching procedure, the use of task-based approach, authentic materials, and real-life situations. Teachers were invited to share any other thoughts or observations that were not covered during the discussion.

Similarly, the second focus group also started with a brief introduction on the aim of the focus group, setting the context for the discussion. The first set of questions was centred around the 2nd intervention content, starting from questions on pragmatic features of constructive feedback, and face and politeness in feedback exchange at discourse level, all the way through to the writing formulas for giving-responding to feedback. The second set of questions was also around the 2nd intervention teaching procedure including the use of the task-based approach, and authentic materials. The last question was indirect, aiming to explore a broader range of perspectives and interesting insights that may not emerge in response to direct questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Therefore, teachers were asked hypothetically, “if they were going to write an e-mail recommending teaching pragmatics of feedback to the programme director. What would they say about it?”

Figure 4.2*Teacher Focus Group Timeframe*

Week	Lecture	Focus group
1	Sunday 22 January 2023 9-12	Tuesday 24 January 2023 Time: 12-1 On Campus
2	Sunday 29 January 2023 9-12	Tuesday 31 January 2023 Time: 12-1 On Campus

As illustrated in Figure 4.2, the teacher focus groups were conducted during the same week as the intervention to capture immediate feedback and fresh reflections. The rationale for this close timeframe was essential to ensure that teachers' responses were based on their direct experience and memory of the intervention, minimising the loss of detail or influence of external factors. The two focus groups were scheduled in the pre-intervention meeting with teachers. Questions were sent to the teachers a day before each focus group by e-mail. A meeting room was also booked for the two focus groups, and a meeting table was arranged in a square formation, allowing the four teachers to face each other to facilitate active engagement. Copies of the eight tasks presented in the two-week intervention were printed out and placed on the meeting table to ensure access to the materials throughout the discussion, four tasks for each focus group. To ensure a friendly and comfortable atmosphere for all participant teachers, Arabic coffee and chocolates were also served.

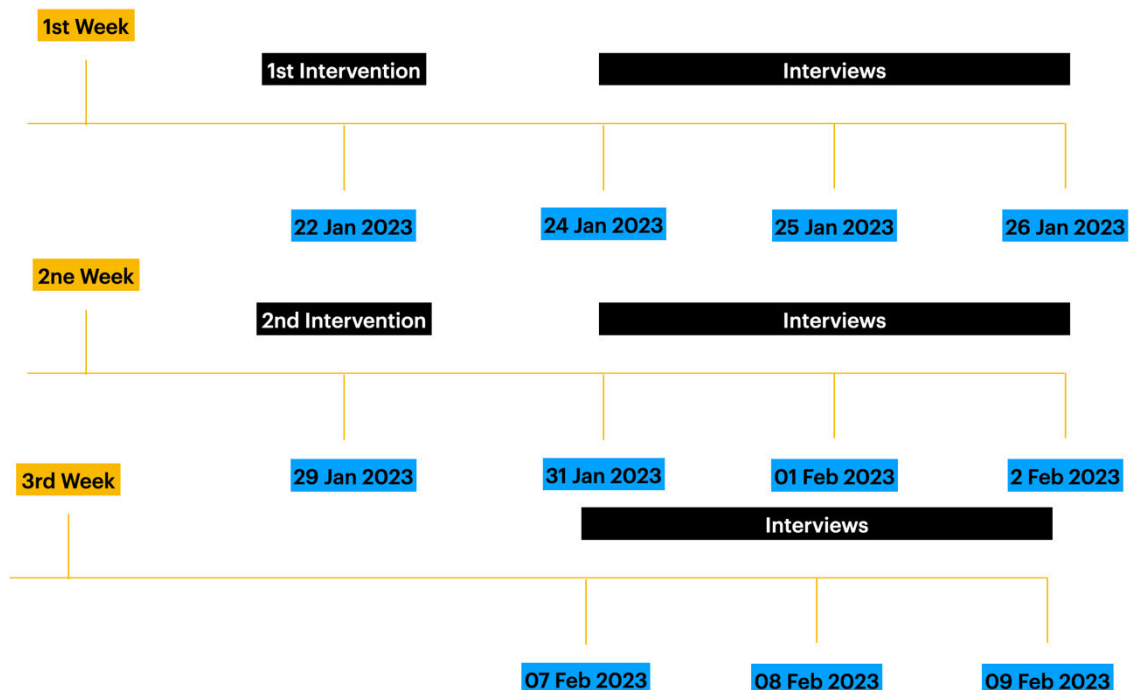
The two focus groups lasted between 40-45 minutes, giving the teachers the choice of language they feel comfortable with, ending up switching between Arabic and English. Each focus group session started with outlining the aim of the study and the focus group, ending with giving participants a space to share any further details as well as a Thank-You note on their time and

insights. The 1st focus group, however, ended with a reminder of the 2nd week intervention, the 2nd classroom observational sheet, and the 2nd focus group. Each focus group session was audio-recorded.

Individual interviews for students. Four different types of interview questions were considered: (1) main questions; (2) planned follow-up questions; (3) probes; and (4) spontaneous follow-up questions (Appendices I and J). As mentioned above, probing questions (e.g., Could you provide an example to clarify what do you mean by that?) were mostly used for the interviews as there were less pressure to keep the dynamic of the conversations going. Questions for the 1st interview and 2nd interview were similar to that of the focus groups for teachers; however, the focus shifted from teaching to learning.

Figure 4.3

Learner Interview Timeframe



As illustrated in Figure 4.3, the learner interviews took place within three weeks including the two-week intervention. A meeting room for the interview was assigned for the interviews with students using a one-to-one desk. Students from within the intact class were chosen randomly for the interviews. A “Lucky Roulette” digital tool was employed to ensure a fair and unbiased selection process. This randomisation was used strictly as a practical method to avoid researcher bias—that is, to eliminate the possibility of the researcher unintentionally choosing preferred or more vocal students. It is important to note that this random selection did not replace or override informed consent. Students who were selected through Lucky Roulette were fully informed about the purpose and procedures of the interview, and they retained the right to voluntarily participate or decline without any consequences. The entire process was explained transparently to the class to ensure that students understood that randomisation served only to promote fairness, while participation remained entirely voluntary.

Each student was given a number from 1-31 combined in the Roulette. Sixteen students were randomly selected in total for the two-week intervention: Seven for the 1st week intervention and another nine students for the 2nd week intervention, making sure to exclude those who took part in the first set of interviews. The rationale for this approach is to listen to as many students as possible and explore a sub-sample of the 31 students’ views in depth. It is important to note that selecting nine students randomly in the second week was a cautious approach, considering that some students might be absent as occurred in the 1st set of interviews. An online table was shared with the selected students on Google Drive to put their availability and schedule their interview meetings. Also, the questions for the interviews were translated into Arabic and shared with students prior to their interviews by e-mail.

In the first week, five out of seven students attended their assigned interviews: Four in-person, on campus, and one moved her interview online on Zoom in the evening due to her busy schedule while the other two students did not attend. In the second week, four out of nine students scheduled their interviews on campus during the 2nd week and the other three students were available in the third week; however, another two students were also no-show. As a result, the overall number of interviewees were twelve out of sixteen students. In addition, copies of each intervention task were also provided for students who were able to conduct their interviews in-person whereas slides were presented for the student who preferred her interview to be on Zoom. As for the teachers, the environment for the interviews was made as friendly as possible; therefore, Arabic coffee and chocolates were also served for the students.

The duration of the twelve interviews ranged between 25-60 minutes depending on students' ability to elaborate on their perceptions. It was observed during the interview fieldnotes that some students were able to elaborate due to their outgoing personality or prior knowledge while other students were reserved and somehow shy (Appendix R), resulting in a shorter interview. For example, S14 had the longest interview, 60 minutes, as she wished to elaborate on her perceptions substantiated with various examples. S24 was passionate about film criticism which she referred to several times during her interview and sustained her interest in elaborating in great detail, including her enthusiasm for sharing her tasks with her family. In comparison, S24 and S16 were very quiet and reluctant. One showed signs of shyness and nervousness, resulting in repetitive answers rather than providing examples or elaborations. Interestingly, the interview fieldnotes indicated how politeness, or probably personality traits, could act as a barrier sometimes to express opinions with elaborations and examples. However, the twelve interviews along with students' reflections provide rich data for this study because the more interviews I conducted, the

more I observed similar themes and ideas emerging among the participants; consequently, this rationale led me not to conduct any additional interviews.

4.5 The two-week intervention

The two-week intervention was designed to fit within the constraints of the participants' existing class schedule and teachers work-load, which was the starting point of the planning process. This consideration ensured that the study did not disrupt regular course activities and allowed all participants to attend and fully engage with the intervention. The schedule constraints guided the overall duration, number of sessions, and timing of the intervention.

Based on these practical considerations, the intervention was implemented over two weeks, comprising 3-hour sessions per week, which is an existing class time, comprising a total of six contact hours. This structure allowed sufficient time for the delivery of eight tasks, with four tasks implemented per week. The two-week duration and session length were also guided by empirical insights from L2/EFL pragmatics research, which shows that short, yet intensive instructional periods can effectively raise learners' awareness of pragmatic features while also fitting within existing institutional timetables. Although previous studies have used widely varying treatment lengths, decisions about the most effective duration have often been arbitrary and shaped more by contextual practicality than by empirical justification. Reviews such as Taguchi (2015), Takahashi (2010), and Jeon and Kaya (2006) highlight these inconsistencies. For instance, interventions have ranged from a single class session (Li, 2012) to extended programmes such as two hours per week over 15 weeks (Alcón-Soler, 2005). While Martínez-Flor (2006) emphasised that a semester-long treatment enhanced the effectiveness of both explicit and implicit instruction, Tateyama et al. (1997) found that Japanese-as-a-foreign-language learners could achieve significant gains in acquiring target-language routines even within a 50-minute explicit session. Despite these

variabilities, Jeon and Kaya's (2006) meta-analysis indicates that treatments exceeding five hours tend to produce greater learning gains than shorter interventions. In alignment with this evidence, the current study employs a two-week intervention comprising three hours of instruction per week (six hours in total), placing it within the range shown to support meaningful pragmatic development while remaining feasible for the instructional context. This duration, therefore, offers a balanced, research-informed, and contextually practical approach to pragmatics instruction.

Furthermore, the development of the intervention design followed a systematic sequence. Initially, a timeline of the two-week intervention was established (see figure 4.4 for the timeline) and then a lesson plan was drafted, taking into consideration the existing class timetable, session duration, and the overall aims of the two-week intervention (see table 4.4 for 1st week lesson plan and table 4.5 for 2nd week lesson plan). This plan provided the overarching framework, specifying the timing, topics, and pedagogical objectives for each session. Once the lesson plan had been established, the instructional tasks were designed to fit within this framework.

A total of eight instructional tasks were developed for the intervention. The tasks were designed to fit within the six-hour instructional period. Each task was allocated 30 minutes, following an initial 30-minute orientation and concluding with a 30-minute reflective log per week. This structure resulted in a total of eight tasks delivered across the two-week intervention, providing sufficient exposure and practice for learners to develop pragmatic awareness, including conscious-raising, guided discovery, practice, and reflect tasks, which will be explained in detail in the following section.

Figure 4.4

Timeline of the Two-week Intervention

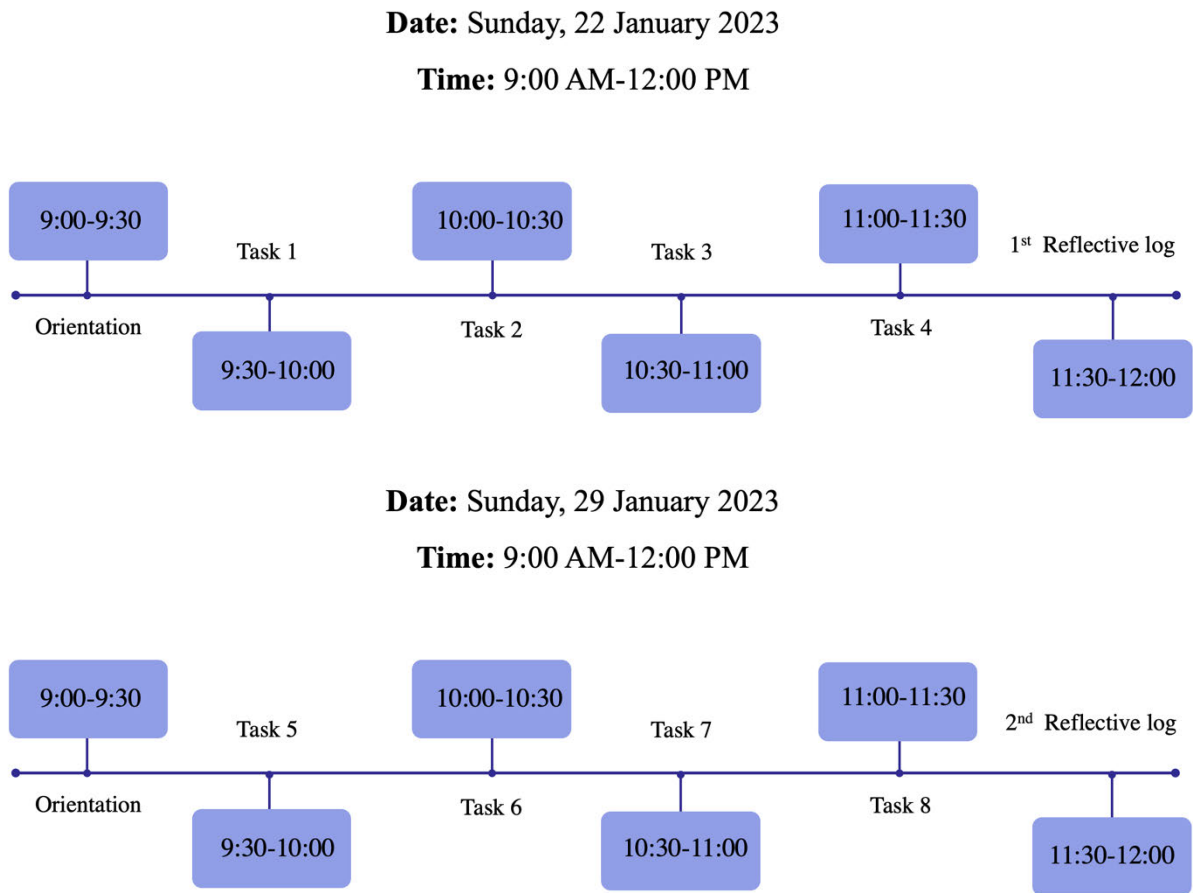


Table 4.4*1st Week Lesson Plan*

Time	Stage	Objective	Materials/Resources
09:00-09:30	Orientation	Introduce the session, outline aims, activate learners' prior knowledge about feedback and pragmatics.	PPT Slides
09:30-10:00	Task 1	Raise students' awareness through sharing intercultural stories of pragmatic failures; introduce directive speech acts in feedback.	Arabic perspective on face and politeness; authentic email exchanges on requests.
10:00-10:30	Task 2	Support learners in analysing negative feedback at the linguistic (pragmalinguistic) and social (sociopragmatic) levels to make it more constructive.	Video clip from a TV show; guided-discovery questions on negative feedback.
10:30-11:00	Task 3	Support learners in analysing positive feedback pragmalinguistically and sociopragmatically to make it more constructive.	Three authentic caricatures of positive feedback exchanges depicting face, politeness, and identity in Arabic.
11:00:11:30	Task 4	Apply learned pragmatic concepts in simulated scenarios and reflect on their performance.	Two caricatures
11:30:12:00	1 st reflective log	Encourage learners to critically reflect on their experience with the materials and tasks, evaluate their developing use of feedback expressions, and consider the social factors influencing feedback exchanges.	Reflective log on Google Forms
	1 st Assignment	Reinforce developing concepts and skills by engaging learners with authentic feedback practices and guiding them to reflect on their experiences.	Assignment brief; students' own collected feedback data.

Table 4.5*2nd Week Lesson Plan*

Time	Stage	Objective	Materials/Resources
09:00-09:30	Scaffolding Activity	Reinforce learners' recall of feedback expressions introduced in Week 1 and provide additional practice in giving and responding to feedback.	Hard copies of the activity; example email showing teacher feedback and three response types.
09:30-10:00	Task 5	Encourage learners to give constructive feedback using a humorous beginner artwork, promoting honesty and creativity.	A humorous beginner-level artwork (my Mona Lisa version); access to dictionaries and the internet.
10:00-10:30	Task 6	Support learners in analysing feedback structures and politeness strategies in the target language; help them distinguish between constructive, destructive, and poor feedback.	Three feedback scenarios in email formats
10:30-11:00	Task 7	Deepen learners' analysis of feedback structures using discourse analysis principles; develop understanding of social context and appropriateness in feedback.	Three written feedback scenarios from Task 6; discussion prompts.
11:00-11:30	Task 8	Encourage learners to apply constructive feedback principles in workplace scenarios; practice writing clear, polite, and contextually appropriate feedback.	Mind Meister Map; sentence stems for structuring feedback; examples of workplace scenarios; guidelines for email etiquette.
11:30-12:00	2 nd reflective log	Encourage learners to share and critically reflect on their perceptions of the materials and tasks, their use of the giving–responding feedback formulas, and the social factors influencing them.	Reflective log on Google Forms
	2 nd Assignment	Support learners in practicing responding to feedback in pairs and reflecting on their experience.	Sentence stems, writing formula for responding to feedback,

4.5.1 Intervention approach

The instructional approach adopted in this study was grounded mainly in explicit pragmatics instruction, reflecting empirical evidence (Martínez-Flor, 2008; Taguchi, 2015; Nguyen et al., 2012; Fordyce, 2013) shows that explicit instruction—including metapragmatic explanation, consciousness-raising, and guided discussion—supports deeper understanding of sociopragmatic norms and enhances learners' ability to recognise and produce complex pragmatic features. However, studies demonstrate that implicit instruction, particularly through noticing, inductive engagement, and interactive task performance, is effective for facilitating automatization of pragmalinguistic forms and enabling learners to attend to patterns embedded within discourse (Ellis, 2003; Takimoto, 2008; Koike & Pearson, 2005). Consequently, the tasks were designed not only to introduce pragmatic forms explicitly but also to create conditions for learners to implicitly discover, interpret, and practice the sociopragmatic meanings underlying feedback exchanges. This approach ensured that learners received explicit support when sociopragmatic interpretation was necessary while also benefiting from implicit learning opportunities when engaging in meaningful, interaction-based tasks.

4.5.2 Instructional design: Three-stage task design framework

The pragmatics instruction was implemented through a structured sequence of activities designed to integrate explicit explanation with opportunities for implicit learning. Each stage aimed at fostering learners' awareness, understanding, and practical application of pragmatic features in feedback exchanges.

Stage one: Consciousness-raising (CR)

As outlined in Chapter 3, the principles of noticing, input enhancement, and explicit instruction form the theoretical basis for Consciousness-Raising (CR) in L2 pragmatics. CR is grounded in the view that awareness is a necessary precursor to acquisition, a position widely supported in the literature (Ellis, 2003; Schmidt, 1993, 1995, 2001; Sharwood Smith, 1993). Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis, in particular, argues that learners must consciously register linguistic and pragmatic features in the input for these features to become intake. Input enhancement (Sharwood Smith, 1993) and explicit metapragmatic explanation work together to make such features salient and analysable for learners, especially in adult L2 learning where explicit processing is shown to be effective (Taguchi, 2015; Plonsky and Zhuang, 2019; Taguchi and Youn, 2022). In pragmatics, scholars emphasise that CR helps learners attend to the co-occurrence of contextual variables and linguistic choices (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Kasper & Rose, 1999). CR adopts an inductive approach that exposes learners to authentic examples and guides them to recognise how form–function relationships operate differently across L1 and L2 contexts. Through this guided noticing process, learners develop analytical tools for identifying, comparing, and analysing patterns of contextually appropriate language use (Kasper and Rose, 2001).

Guided by the theoretical perspectives reviewed above, I developed CR tasks that utilised authentic materials and TBLT principles to draw learners' attention to pragmatic aspects of feedback. Task 1 (Week 1) and Task 5 (Week 2) were implemented as CR tasks to activate learners' prior knowledge and support their noticing of essential pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features of politeness and face management (Ellis, 2003; Narita, 2012). This stage then progressed to metapragmatic explanation, consistent with Taguchi's (2015) review that

explicit commentary enhances learners' understanding of the social meanings encoded in linguistic forms. The structure of these CR tasks is outlined in the following sections.

Task 1. This task begins with a culturally grounded discussion of *face* in Arabic, drawing on familiar concepts such as saving/losing face in Saudi Arabia (Al-Musallam, 2022). Introducing the topic through learners' L1 concepts enables them to anchor new pragmatic constructs in their existing sociocultural context, which supports noticing and interpretive engagement (Gay, 2018). The task then moves into explaining how “face,” operate across languages—particularly how Arabic conceptualisations may differ from English (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014). Finally, a personal intercultural story of pragmatic failure involving an email misunderstanding. This narrative serves as an authentic example that helps learners identify how L1-based assumptions may lead to unintended face-threats in intercultural communication (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014; McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016; Kecskés, 2016). The task then incorporates a guided class discussion of sociopragmatic issues, aligned with Nguyen et al. (2012), who emphasise the value of critical discussion for making implicit pragmatic knowledge explicit. Through these reflective and interactive questions, learners engage in both pragmalinguistic noticing (e.g., forms, expressions, formulae) and sociopragmatic reasoning (e.g., power, distance, imposition). The 1st task thus sets the foundation for subsequent tasks including tasks 2, 3, and 4 by raising awareness of how face and politeness are culturally constructed and how such constructions may shape feedback exchange in intercultural communication.

Task 5. This task also emphasises learner noticing, hypothesis formation, and reflective analysis rather than accuracy-driven performance (Ellis, 2003). It encourages learners to explore how constructive feedback is given through examining a humorous, intentionally imperfect

artwork. The choice of humorous visual material aligns with research demonstrating that humour and simple visuals lower anxiety, increase engagement, and promote participation (Bell & Pomerantz, 2019; Ayu, 2016; Thakur & Al-Mahrooqi, 2015). Additionally, the task permits students to rely mainly on their own pre-existing styles of feedback prior to receiving explicit instruction on constructive feedback as in the N-P sequence. The task design is supported by Schmidt's (1993, 1995, 2001) Noticing Hypothesis and draws on Mori's (2009) concept of speaker's agency in intercultural pragmatics, which emphasises learners' active role in shaping, negotiating, and managing meaning rather than merely following predetermined "appropriate" forms.

Stage two: Discovery learning

Discovery learning, a sub-branch of inductive language-learning approaches, is based on the premise that emphasises learners' active role in constructing their own understanding leading to knowledge creation (Lefrançois, 1997). According to Richards and Schmidt (2002), discovery learning involves learners actively engaging in processes such as observing, making inferences, forming hypotheses, predicting outcomes, and communicating their ideas. It usually provided by the teacher, through carefully structured exposure to information and thoughtfully designed questions. This guidance can also come from materials like task sheets or step-by-step instructions, which are adjusted according to the learner's current understanding. Ellis (2002) argues that a discovery-oriented approach to developing explicit knowledge offers considerable advantages. He suggests that rules learners uncover themselves are likely to be more memorable than those provided directly by the teacher. In addition, engaging learners in examining authentic language

patterns and formulating hypotheses about underlying rules serves as valuable training for fostering self-directed and autonomous learning (Mori, 2009).

Building on the earlier discussion of intercultural pragmatics and its critique of universalist assumptions of language use (e.g., Altikriti, 2011; Emike, 2013; Matczak, 2013; Kerkam, 2015; Grainger & Mills, 2016), this stage implemented guided discovery tasks to support learners' inductive analysis of pragmatic features in their L1 context. Targeted language examples were also provided to illustrate how these features are realised pragmatically in communication. The design of the tasks for the guided discovery stage is presented in the following section.

Guided-discovery tasks. Task 2 utilised a *viral video clip* from a popular Arabic talk show, ("برنامج على السيف", "al-Sayf"), which was selected based on research highlighting the benefits of multimodality discussed in chapter 3 (e.g., Yang, 2021; Abrams, 2014; Ayu, 2016; Barón and Celaya, 2022; Al-Smari, 2020). Task 3 also incorporated visual and textual examples that illustrate pragmatic features in context (Ayu, 2016; Güven & Bekdaş, 2018; Thakur & Al-Mahrooqi, 2015; Bell & Pomerantz, 2019). These included:

- 1) A caricature published in *Al-Jazirah* Newspaper (2012, September 20) illustrating the notion of “fear of envy” (فوبيا الحسد) upon receiving positive comments.
- 2) A caricature illustrating Arabic social compliments and reactions drawn from Ishihara and Cohen's (2014) book.
- 3) A humorous conversation between the author, Marn, and an Arabic speaker, extracted from Marn's (2018) thesis.

Tasks 2 and 3 included guided questions and examples to enable learners discover the pragmatic features themselves. Tasks 2 and 3 concluded with a focus on language resources, where a table was provided comparing the inappropriate expressions used in the video with alternative, appropriate expressions in both Arabic and English. The expressions included in Task 3 were compiled by drawing on authentic discourse examples as well as published research on pragmatics and feedback (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014; Hathaway, 1997; Meyer, 2014).

Task 6 involved comparing and contrasting three types of feedback: Feedback A (poor), Feedback B (constructive), and Feedback C (destructive). This task was informed by research on feedback exchange, with a particular emphasis on the distinction between constructive and destructive feedback (Hathaway, 1997; Daniels, 2009; Choi et al. 2018), as opposed to conventional L2/EFL pragmatics practices, which typically focus on appropriateness of speech acts across cultures (e.g., Taylor, 2002). Task 7 followed Task 6 and continued to employ guided discovery questions to support in-depth discourse analysis. Analysing written discourse in context helps learners understand pragmatic and sociopragmatic features (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014), developing a deeper understanding of how language functions in real-life situations (Taguchi, 2015).

Stage three: Practice and reflect

The inclusion of practice aimed to enable learners to operationalise their emerging pragmatic knowledge in contextually meaningful situations, facilitating deeper internalisation. Research in pragmatics emphasises that explicit instruction alone is insufficient; learners must practice the target pragmatic features to develop pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Ellis, 2003, 2008; Taguchi, 2015; Plonsky and Zhuang, 2019). Ellis (2008)

notes that the relative effectiveness of deductive and inductive instruction emerges specifically when both approaches include opportunities for practice. In other words, it is the inclusion of practice activities—rather than the instructional mode alone—that plays a decisive role in supporting learners' development. For example, several studies have highlighted the value of simulated authentic scenarios in enabling learners to practise and develop their pragmatic competence. Such simulations have been shown to compensate for the limitations of traditional classroom instruction and textbook-based activities (e.g., Lyu, 2006; Taguchi, 2012, 2022; González-Lloret, 2024). The design of the tasks for the practice and reflect stage is presented in the following section.

Practice and reflect tasks. Moreover, reflection was integrated to promote metacognitive awareness, enabling learners to evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of their feedback and to understand how linguistic choices relate to social context. The reflective components of the tasks/assignments, which asked students to examine their experiences of giving, receiving, and responding to feedback, build on the literature advocating reflection as a means of fostering metapragmatic awareness and internalising pragmatic principles (McConachy and Liddicoat, 2016; Liddicoat, 2019; Dooly & Vinagre, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2012; Ishihara & Cohn, 2014).

In Task 4, two caricatures illustrating a writing workshop context, featuring a teacher and a group of students, were purposefully selected (Finkle, 2021). The original captions were then removed to provide learners with the opportunity to construct their own feedback exchanges, followed by a question prompting reflection. The first assignment required students to collect naturally occurring feedback interactions from their own lives, a design feature informed by Ishihara & Cohn (2014), who emphasise the value of learner-generated data for promoting

authentic engagement and enhancing sensitivity to contextual variables. In Task 8 and assignment 2, students were given the opportunity to create a situation they would like to evaluate at work from employer to employee. Examples included if a team player is not meeting deadlines, or someone is always late (Hathaway, 1997; Daniels, 2009; Choi et al. 2018). Finally, the two assignments concluded with teacher feedback on students' analyses and reformulations. This step is consistent with feedback practices in EFL pragmatics (e.g., Olshtain & Cohen, 1991; Câmpean et al., 2024; Cheng, Zhang & Yan 2025) that learners receive explicit, individualised feedback to refine their pragmatic interpretations and enhance their accuracy in future communicative situations.

4.5.3 Feedback exchange formulas

As outlined in Chapter 3, the feedback formulas are grounded in feedback research on the N-P sequence (e.g., Hathaway, 1997, Dohrenwend, 2002; LeBaron & Jernick, 2000; Choi et al., 2018). Responding to feedback framework is grounded in feedback research (Hathaway, 1997) and cross-cultural pragmatics literature on clarification requests (e.g., Van de Ridder et al., 2015; Harrison et al., 2015), accepting requests (Al-Khawaldeh and Zegarac, 2013; Morsi, 2010; Albalawi, 2018; Alsuhaimeh & Alhojailan, 2025), and disagreements (Locher, 2004; Alghazo, Altakhaineh, & Rabab'ah, 2022; Harb, 2021).

Giving feedback formula. Writing formula for giving feedback was introduced by building on what the students had already learned. The participant students had already been exposed to vocabulary and modal verbs related to speech acts such as requests and advice (e.g., *could, would, may, might*), as well as to complex sentence structures, particularly those formed with *think, agree/disagree, but, when* and *because*. The intervention therefore built on this prior

knowledge by combining these linguistic resources with additional grammatical structures to demonstrate that speech acts such as requesting, suggesting, and advising can be realised through multiple pragmatically appropriate forms.

The N-P formula for giving constructive feedback was structured in three stages:

1. Opening with general statements: The feedback giver begins with neutral, positive remarks to set a constructive tone without overpraising. For example: *“The project, overall, looks good.”*
2. Providing specific feedback while encouraging reflection: The feedback giver highlights areas for improvement using prompts that invite critical thinking, such as: *“I wonder ...,” “I noticed ...,” “How about ...,” “Have you thought about ...,”* or *“Could you please change ...?”*
3. Acknowledging efforts and offering encouragement: The feedback giver concludes by recognizing the recipient’s efforts, motivating them, and helping to maintain their self-esteem. Examples include: *“I really like how you conducted ...,” “Next time I would love to hear more about ... because ...,”* and *“Thanks for all your hard work!”*

This formula not only guides students in structuring their feedback but also helps them balance constructive criticism with politeness and encouragement, protecting the recipient’s face and promoting positive interaction as discussed in Chapter 2, 2.7.4 speech acts in giving feedback.

Responding to feedback formula. Firstly, the formula structure considered accepting feedback if it is constructive. The feedback recipient could simply start with thanking notes and ends with appreciation notes. For example, thanking notes could include phrases such as “Thank

you very much for your feedback” and end with appreciation notes such as “I truly appreciate your help!” “I appreciate the time you spent to provide me with feedback!” Writing these thank-you and appreciation notes could show appreciation for the feedback giver for providing constructive feedback, acknowledging their effort and thoughtfulness.

Secondly, the formula structure considered asking for clarification if the feedback is unclear. For instance, the feedback takers could start with thanking notes such as “Thank you very much for your feedback!” Then they could make a request or ask for clarification such as “Would you please clarify/explain ...,” or “Could you please elaborate more on” This could invite the feedback giver to reflect on their constructive feedback and provide more explanations. Finally, feedback taker should provide appreciation notes for the time taking by the feedback giver to reconsider their feedback, such as “I truly appreciate your help!” “I appreciate any help you can provide!” This could show respect and politeness of the feedback giver’s effort and time, acknowledging their hard work while asking for clarification.

Thirdly, the formula structure considered disagreeing politely if the feedback is unfair to foster respectful feedback exchange. Polite disagreement helps feedback takers express differing opinions without disrespecting others. For instance, they could start their response with thanking notes, “Thank you very much for your feedback!,” acknowledging the feedback giver’s input, even if it differs from the feedback recipient’s expectations. Next, they could state their disagreement respectfully such as “I wonder if it is a good idea to ...,” “I see your point, but I think ...,” or “I respect your point of view, but in my opinion, ...,” showing politeness and respect while stating a different point of view. Then they should provide the reason for their disagreement such as saying “The reason is ...,” or “This is because” Providing a reason for their disagreement could support their point of view and could invite for more constructive feedback exchange. Finally, they

can end their response with appreciation notes to allow the feedback giver to respond and remain open to their viewpoint “I truly appreciate to hear your thoughts on what I have shared!” or “I appreciate any help you can provide!”

4.5.4 Procedure of the two-week intervention

A brief description of each task and assignment used is outlined in Table 4.6. The order of the tasks mirrors the sequence of the teaching procedure presented in the two-week intervention. Although the intervention was implemented largely as planned, a small number of procedural elements were not carried out exactly as intended and required minor adjustments during implementation. For example, for the 1st week assignment, only one student attempted to do her assignment providing an e-mail exchange between her and her teacher, and the e-mail exchange was an apology! All students reported that they didn’t receive written feedback last semester, especially by e-mail; therefore, no feedback was given on this assignment.

The 2nd week was planned to open with a consciousness-raising task based on their assignment 1. For example, students were supposed to use what they have learned in Assignment 1 to explain how the exchanges would look like if they were in a business setting. However, another scaffolding activity was developed based on T4’s observations of the pragmatics instruction in the 1st week to ensure that students have the opportunity to practice more feedback expressions introduced in week 1. An example was also developed to include some feedback expressions used in the 1st week in feedback exchange by e-mail. The example included a teacher giving feedback as well as three ways of responding to feedback, demonstrated before starting Task 5. The rationale for pre-tasks-activity-and-example is to ensure that students recall the feedback expressions. Moreover, the procedure of 2nd assignment diverged from the original plan as students needed more time to structure their constructive feedback for Task 8. As a result,

Student A and B had a chance to work in pairs to give constructive feedback in Task 8 and redraft it as their 2nd assignment uploaded to Google drive for my feedback.

Table 4.6

Procedure of the two-week intervention

Task	Description
Week 1	
Stage one: Consciousness-raising (CR)	
1 E-mail (Sharing experiences)	Aim: Raise students’ awareness through sharing intercultural stories of pragmatic failures; introduce directive speech acts in feedback.
	Instructional step(s): consciousness-raising followed by metapragmatic explanation and class discussion of sociopragmatic aspects.
	Materials and resources: Arabic perspective on face and politeness; authentic email exchanges on requests.
	Procedure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I started first with Arabic perspective on face and politeness followed by a question, “Have you ever caused someone to lose face un/intentionally? Could you describe and explain what happened during the interaction?” • Then I shared my own story, which was a pragmatic failure between me and a former teacher in an E-mail exchange. • Students were provided with metapragmatic explanation followed by class discussion of socio-pragmatics aspects of discourse, guiding them to focus on both the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic components of discourse.
Stage 2: Guided-discovery	
2 TV show (Critical discussion)	Aim: Support learners in analysing negative feedback at the linguistic (pragmalinguistic) and social (sociopragmatic) levels to make it more constructive.
	Instruction step(s): Guided-discovery questions
	Materials and resources: Video clip from a TV show

	<p>Procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play the video and ask students to answer questions about what went wrong and how the exchange could be repaired. • Then present a table of negative expressions to avoid and model polite disagreement strategies (e.g., “I would appreciate it if you could explain...”).
<p>3 Caricatures (Critical discussion)</p>	<p>Aim: Support learners in analysing positive feedback pragmalinguistically and sociopragmatically to make it more constructive.</p>
	<p>Instruction step(s): Guided discovery questions</p>
	<p>Materials and resources: Three authentic caricatures of positive feedback exchanges depicting face, politeness, and identity in Arabic.</p>
	<p>Procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 1: Students describe each caricature and infer what is happening, considering written language, body language, facial expressions, identity, and relationships. • Part 2: Guide students to identify contextual factors through a series of reflective questions.
<p>Stage 3: Practice and reflect</p>	
<p>4 Caricatures (Simulation)</p>	<p>Aim: Apply learned pragmatic concepts in simulated scenarios and reflect on their performance.</p>
	<p>Instruction steps: Practice and reflect</p>
	<p>Materials and resources: Two caricatures</p>
	<p>Procedure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Practice: Students simulate the caricature scenarios by creating a short narrative in dialogue format, giving and responding to both positive and negative feedback constructively. 2. Reflect: Students reflect on their feedback exchanges.
<p>Assignment (Student research)</p>	<p>Aim: Reinforce developing concepts and skills by engaging learners with authentic feedback practices and guiding them to reflect on their experiences.</p>
	<p>Instruction steps: Practice and reflect</p>
	<p>Materials and resources: Students’ own collected feedback data.</p>

	<p>Procedure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Practice: Students complete the assigned task/activity. 2. Reflection: Students reflect on their feedback exchanges/ learning experience. 3. Feedback: Students receive feedback from the instructor
Week 2	
Scaffolding stage	
Pre-tasks-activity and-example	Aim: Reinforce learners' recall of feedback expressions introduced in the 1st Week
	Instructional step: Practice
	Materials and resources: Hard copies of the activity; example email showing teacher feedback and three response types.
	<p>Procedure:</p> <p>Students work in pairs: Student A gives feedback, and Student B responds. The activity includes direction, situation, and simulation components.</p> <p>The teacher demonstrates example email exchanges to guide the process.</p>
Stage one: Consciousness-raising (CR)	
5 Beginner's artwork (Critique)	Aim: Encourage learners to give constructive feedback through using a humorous beginner artwork, promoting honesty and creativity.
	Instruction steps: Consciousness-raising followed by metapragmatic explanation and class discussion of sociopragmatic aspects.
	Materials and resources: A humorous beginner-level artwork (my Mona Lisa version); access to dictionaries and the internet.
	<p>Procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students examine the artwork and begin by giving general positive comments (e.g., "What do you like the most?"). • Then they provide honest suggestions for improvement, using dictionaries or online sources to find art-related vocabulary.
Stage 2: Guided discovery	
6 E-mail (Compare and contrast)	Aim: Support learners in discovering how feedback structure and politeness operate by examining examples, allowing them to distinguish between constructive, destructive, and poor feedback.
	Instruction step(s): Guided questions
	Materials and resources: Three feedback scenarios in email formats

	<p>Procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students were asked to skim-read three different scenarios of feedback giving on an e-mail to identify which one shows constructive feedback, demotivating feedback, or poor feedback, underlining the language/structure/features of each one. • Students were also asked to respond to each feedback: constructive feedback, demotivating feedback, or poor feedback.
<p>7 E-mail (‘Discourse analysis’)</p>	<p>Aim: Deepen learners’ analysis of feedback structures using discourse analysis principles; develop understanding of social context and appropriateness in feedback.</p>
	<p>Instruction steps: Guided questions</p>
	<p>Materials and resources: Three written feedback scenarios from Task 6; discussion prompts.</p>
	<p>Procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students were asked to analyse the written constructive feedback, in task 6, in relation to its social context. • Writing feedback formulas were explicitly introduced, with examples illustrating their use in feedback exchanges.
<p>Stage 3: Practice and reflect</p>	
<p>8 E-mail (Simulation)</p>	<p>Aim: Encourage learners to apply constructive feedback principles in workplace scenarios; practice writing clear, polite, and contextually appropriate feedback.</p>
	<p>Instruction steps: Practice and reflect</p>
	<p>Materials and resources: Mind Meister Map; sentence stems for structuring feedback; examples of workplace scenarios; guidelines for email etiquette.</p>
	<p>Procedure: Students were asked to create a feedback situation in a social context and give constructive feedback in an e-mail.</p>
<p>Assignment</p>	<p>Aim: Support learners in practicing responding to feedback in pairs and reflecting on their experience.</p>
	<p>Instruction steps: Practice and reflect, feedback</p>
	<p>Materials and resources: Sentence stems, writing formula for responding to feedback</p>

	<p>Procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students were asked to respond to the feedback e-mail they created in task 8 in pairs choosing from three different ways of responding.• However, this assignment was adjusted to give students more time in writing and redrafting the simulation in task 8.
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4.6 Data analysis

Thematic Analysis (TA) by Braun and Clarke (2006) is proposed for data analysis as TA used in qualitative studies enables the researcher to search, identify, analyse, and interpret recurring patterns and codes forming themes emerged within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 78). Braun & Clarke (2006) suggested that TA is the foundational method based on “core skills” to build a comprehensive understanding of qualitative analysis. As a method not associated with a specific epistemology, its flexibility is a significant advantage, especially given the diversity of work in learning and teaching of EFL pragmatics research.

The thematic analysis procedures proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006) were used in coding and categorising all study datasets: Teachers’ observational sheets and focus groups as well as students’ reflective logs and interviews. The hard copies of teachers’ observational sheets were first typed into Microsoft Word document while students’ reflective logs were first downloaded from GoogleForm into a Microsoft Excel workbook, linked to their assigned codes, and then moved to Microsoft Word document. All recordings from interviews and focus groups were transcribed directly to Microsoft Word documents. All data coding was carried out manually in Microsoft Word, which facilitated the organisation and management of the data through highlighting key segments to identify recurring patterns and initial codes. In Microsoft Word, the

Comment feature was used to document initial codes and record notes about prominent/interesting features in several sections with the datasets.

While NVivo is used as qualitative data analysis software, it was not employed in this study due to specific methodological and practical considerations. The research involved a relatively small number of participants, which allowed for manual coding and thematic analysis without the need for software. Manual analysis enabled the researcher to engage deeply with the data, preserving context and subtle nuances that may have been overlooked by automated coding. However, managing data manually required careful organization, attention to detail, and systematic documentation. Challenges included ensuring consistency in coding across multiple observation sheets and avoiding oversight of emerging patterns. To address these challenges, detailed coding schemes were developed, and coding decisions were regularly reviewed and discussed with supervisors to maintain rigor and reliability. Examples of completed observation sheets and excerpts of coding are provided in Appendices X and Y to demonstrate the systematic approach undertaken. These examples illustrate how themes were derived from the raw data and how coding was applied consistently across data.

The thematic analysis in this study took an inductive approach, where extracts of data were highlighted and grouped according to their similarity, resulting in the emergence of themes. The analytical process therefore followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases outlined in Table 4.7. below.

Table 4.7*Overview of the Six Thematic Analysis Phases Employed in this Study*

Phase	Description of process
1. Familiarisation with the data	Listening to recordings, transcribing, reading, and re-reading of interview/focus group transcripts/reflective logs/sheets.
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features prominent among students' reflective logs/interviews; teachers' reflective sheets/focus groups in relation to the research questions and objectives (e.g., descriptive or semantic codes); combining relevant codes within students' dataset together; and combining relevant codes within teachers' dataset together.
3. Searching for themes	Shifting from codes into potential themes, capturing a bigger picture about the data in relation to the research question; and sorting codes using an initial table and a thematic map into sub-themes and then grouped them into themes.
4. Reviewing potential themes	Reviewing the developing themes in relation to the coded data and entire data set; synthesising themes and sub-themes into <i>overarching themes</i> , which were renamed as strands.
5. Defining and naming themes	Refining and naming each sub-theme, theme, and strand according to the perceived meaning; generating clear definition for sub-theme, theme, and strand.
6. Writing up	Selecting extracts to illustrate sub-themes/themes and the overall analysis of the strands; analysing these in relation to the research questions.

The first phase involves becoming familiar with data through listening to recordings, transcribing, reading, and re-reading of transcripts. Once familiarity with the data was achieved, codes were initially identified in relation to the research questions and objectives. Additionally, coding reflections/sheets and coding interviews/focus groups generated relevant codes, which were then organised into more relevant groupings. Initial codes from the two datasets for students and the two datasets for teachers were combined in a single Word document, with distinct lists for each group. This organisation assisted in identifying potential similarities and differences across data. For example, some codes related to students' emotions were found in both their reflections and interviews.

Phase three involved sorting the initial codes into potential themes. During this phase, an initial table and a thematic map were helpful to sort the codes into sub-themes and then grouped them into themes. Once a set of main themes and sub-themes have been established, a refining journey started in phase four, to achieve harmony and depth. The table was revisited to synthesise themes and sub-themes into overarching themes, which were renamed as *strands*, consequently, constructing a coherent framework of interconnected concepts. The fifth stage included refining and naming each sub-theme, theme, and strand according to the perceived meaning to ensure relevance and coherence. In the final stage, examples were located to better illustrate each sub-theme, enhancing credibility and richness of each theme, and ultimately, the overall analysis of the strands (Appendices M and N).

The analysis of the data was an iterative process, where there was a back-and-forth movement between strands, themes, sub-themes, codes, extracts, and dataset throughout all six phases (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process found significant verbatim statements from within the reflection and the interview data for students and classroom observational sheets and focus groups for

teachers, which were subsequently translated into English. Some linguistic features such as the use of metaphors, laughter, sarcasm, and tone were also considered, as they provide deeper insights into participants' intended meaning beyond the surface of literal words. It was important during the formation phase of strands, themes, and sub-themes that participants' perceptions were accurately reflected, therefore, there was a constant revisiting of the transcripts, reflections, and sheets, and initial codes to ensure credibility.

All thematic analysis phases, from coding through to the writing-up phase, were thoroughly reviewed and validated in collaboration with my supervisors. For example, codes derived from teachers' classroom observational sheets, along with their data, were shared with my supervisors for review. Tables containing various extracts, along with corresponding sub-themes, themes, and strands, were provided to ensure relevance and validity derived from both teachers' and students' data. This collaboration was essential as it helped confirm that the interpretations and findings accurately represented the experiences and perceptions observed within the data.

4.7 Ethical considerations

All ethical considerations were taken into account following the guidelines set by the University of Edinburgh and the collaborating university where data collection took place for both the pilot study and the main study data collection (Appendices A & B). The research design included measures to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of all participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement in the study. This consent process included providing participants with information about the nature of the research, its objectives, their roles, and their rights including the right to participate voluntarily and withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences, and the right to protect the anonymity of their participation by ensuring confidentiality and data protection.

Furthermore, the data collection methods were designed to minimise any potential identifications of the study participants. Participants were assured that their responses would be used solely for research purposes and would be stored securely following the data protection regulations in OneDrive. The data obtained from both teachers and students were anonymised to prevent any identification of their participation during both the data analysis and the reporting of the results (See Appendices S and T for the participant consent form and information sheet).

Participant selection involved the use of a “Lucky Roulette” method to avoid direct or perceived researcher bias. While this method ensured random selection, students were explicitly informed that selection did not imply obligation. All selected students were given the opportunity to decline participation without explanation or consequence. In addition, students were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any stage, including after selection or during the intervention, without consequences. Moreover, as the researcher also held a teaching role, particular attention was given to minimising any potential power imbalance between the teacher-researcher and student participants. Students were informed that participation would have no impact on their grades, assessment outcomes, or relationship with the teacher. For example, students who were selected for the interviews but did not respond or chose not to participate were not followed up or encouraged to reconsider. No reminders or personal contact were made after the initial invitation, in order to avoid any sense of pressure or obligation to participate.

4.8 Summary

This chapter has outlined the research philosophical stance, methodology, the teaching design and procedure of the two-week intervention detailing the pedagogical principles of the design process, the process of sampling, data collection instruments and gathering, and data analysis in detail. The study datasets were teachers' observational sheets and focus groups as well as students' reflective logs and interviews. The findings from the data analysis procedures are reported in great detail in the next two chapters: Chapter 5 focuses on teachers' data, while Chapter 6 addresses students' data.

Chapter 5: Analysis of Teacher Data

5.0 Introduction

This chapter reports teachers' perceptions of teaching pragmatics of feedback. It provides evidence about Saudi EFL teachers' perceptions and observations towards EFL pragmatics instruction on feedback exchange (RQ1).

5.1 Overview of the teachers' overarching strands

There are three main overarching strands identified within the teachers' data. Within each strand, there emerged themes and sub-themes (see Table 5.1). In the 1st strand - teachers' perceptions of authentic materials and tasks, three main themes emerged: student motivation, student engagement, and pragmatic competence. The 2nd strand focused on the influence of context on the pragmatics of feedback, leading to one theme: contextual variables. In the 3rd strand - the influence of intentions and affect on the pragmatics of feedback, two themes were identified: intentions in giving feedback and affect in receiving feedback.

The analysis of the classroom observational sheets offered initial insights into teachers' perceptions and experiences of the authentic materials and tasks employed in the two lectures whereas the focus groups provided a deeper level of teachers' perceptions and opinion of teaching EFL pragmatics of feedback. Given that the themes from both data sets are similar, I will first discuss the observational sheets data for each theme, followed by the corresponding focus group data. However, there are some themes that emerged in a single data set. For example, the theme of intentions in giving feedback emerged in the 2nd focus group. Therefore, the data extracts that I draw upon within this section come from either classroom observational sheets (OS), focus group (FG) data, or both, each explicitly stated as such. Moreover, researcher's fieldnotes are incorporated as a means of documenting essential contextual information relating to teachers'

observations of the two interventions. The abbreviation INT refers to the two stages of instructional interventions implemented during the study. Specifically, INT 1 refers to *Intervention 1*, which took place in Week 1, and INT 2 to *Intervention 2*, which occurred in Week 2.

Table 5.1

Overview of the Teachers' Overarching Strands

Strand 1: Teachers' perceptions of authentic materials and tasks	
Theme	Sub-theme
Student motivation	Reactions to new ways of learning
Student engagement	Enhancing understanding
	Enhancing analytical reasoning
Pragmatic competence	Developing sociopragmatic awareness
	Facilitating pragmalinguistic fluency
Strand 2: The influence of contextual variables on pragmatics of feedback	
Theme	Sub-theme
Contextual variables	Situational factors
	Cultural differences
Strand 3: The influence of intentions and affect on pragmatics of feedback	
Theme	Sub-theme
Intentions in giving feedback	Empathy
Affect in receiving feedback	Disappointment

5.2 Strand 1: Teachers' perceptions of the authentic materials and tasks

As discussed in Chapter 4, eight tasks and two assignments were designed to teach the pragmatics of feedback. A brief description of each task and assignment used is outlined in Table 4.6.

1. *Consciousness-raising tasks* focused on raising pragmatic awareness in terms of discourse structures and politeness strategies used for giving-responding to feedback;
2. *Discovery tasks* assisted learners in developing their problem-solving skills with regard to analysing feedback elements on the linguistic level (pragmalinguistic) and associated social relations (sociopragmatic).
3. *'Practice and reflect' tasks* provide students with opportunities to apply pragmatic concepts they have learned in simulated or real-life scenarios, followed by reflecting on their experiences.

Thematic analysis is carried out on the teachers' perceptions of each task & assignment in the classroom observational sheets in weeks 1 & 2. Teachers emphasised what aspects of each task/assignment were motivating and engaging as well as what presented challenges and difficulties or may have contributed to students' pragmatic competence. Through the analysis of the classroom observational sheets, it appears that teachers' opinions indicated considering several factors:

- 1) the characteristics of the task itself (e.g., "this task provides ...");
- 2) the level of student motivation and engagement during each task (e.g., "students were excited/genuinely engaged ...");
- 3) the students' responses to the task discussion questions in class (e.g., "most students managed to see ..., but failed to ...");

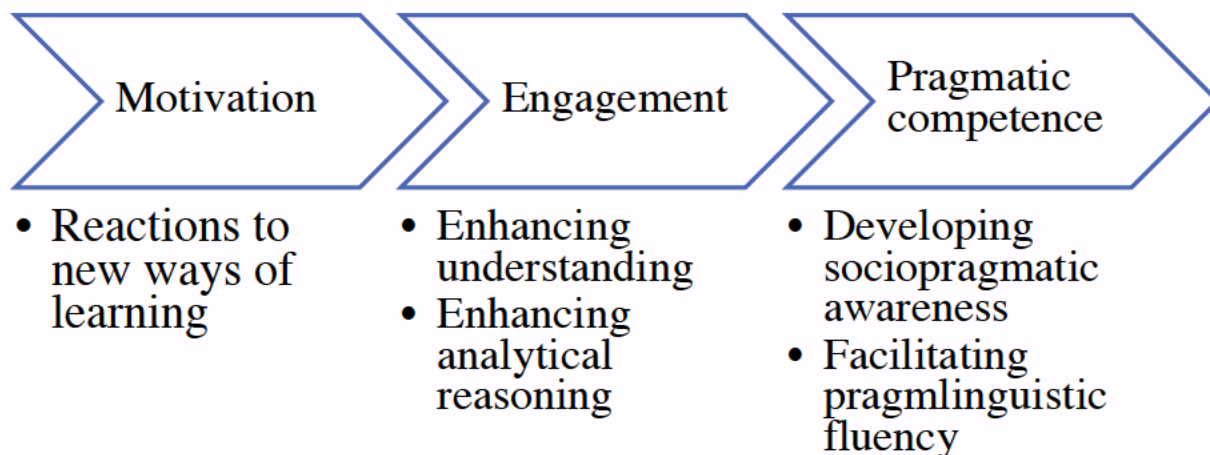
- 4) the clarity of the task instructions (e.g., “It would be better if the instruction highlighted ...”); or
- 5) their overall perceptions or observations (e.g., I think ...; I was inspired by...)

The analysis of the data gathered from teachers’ sheets and focus groups revealed that motivation, engagement, and pragmatic competence emerged as the three main themes for all teachers. However, teachers also highlighted some situations where they felt students were demotivated, disengaged, and pragmatically challenged. The analysis initially involved examining the emergence of these three main themes within each task. The aspects emphasised by teachers within each task are then closely analysed to interpret their perceptions. Therefore, when summarising and discussing each theme, consideration is given to the tasks where teachers believed motivation, engagement, or pragmatic competence emerged.

As illustrated in Figure 5.1., within the theme focusing on teacher perceptions of student motivation, one sub-theme emerged: reactions to new ways of learning. Regarding the theme of teacher perceptions of student engagement, two sub-themes emerged concerning student understanding and student reasoning. In the theme of teacher perceptions of pragmatic competence, two sub-themes were found: developing sociopragmatic awareness and facilitating pragmalinguistic fluency. Moreover, it must be emphasised that the challenges identified by teachers will be addressed within the context of student motivation, student engagement, and pragmatic competence.

Figure 5.1

Illustration of the 1st Strand Themes and Subthemes



5.2.1 Theme 1: Student motivation

The theme of student motivation highlighted teachers' reactions to authentic materials and tasks in terms of what they found to be interesting, amusing, or demotivating considering their observations of the instruction and the task's characteristics as well as the students' reactions in class.

One sub-theme that emerged under this theme was *reactions to new ways of learning*. This sub-theme captures how teachers perceived the students' motivational responses when exposed to unfamiliar, real-world materials and activities. The analysis of classroom observational sheets and focus group data suggested consensus among the four teachers that authenticity could potentially have a significant influence on student motivation towards the authentic materials and tasks employed within the instruction. For example, reflecting on Task 1 and Assignment 1, T3 illustrated that students were motivated to work on what she referred to as a "real example." She attributed students' excitement to the use of "a real example of misunderstanding" although she

felt that the students have not grasped yet the concepts of Face and Pragmatics in Task 1. She also expressed her own excitement towards the data collection on feedback exchanges on the first assignment, as in “It felt real!” “I loved that students”

T3 I liked the usage of authentic materials. I felt students were excited that they were working on a real example of misunderstanding. However, it wasn't clear for me if they understood the concepts of face/pragmatics when they were asked to share their experiences (T3, OS 1).

T3 It felt real! I loved that students are collecting the data themselves. I think this helps them understand and spot where and when pragmatics works. The other questions also help evaluate the situations more culturally and adjust them linguistically or resist to change them in case they're polite. (T3, OS 1).

In addition, teachers suggested that the use of multimodal resources featuring learner's cultural/social context, as in Task 2 (TV show), Task 3 (caricatures), and Task 5 (beginner's artwork) may also have played a role in shaping students' motivation.

T4 on Task 2: I enjoyed the part when you included a clip in Arabic showing impolite behaviour. Using language students can understand help generate good conversations with the students. “What would you say if you were ...” was an excellent generator of examples (T4, OS 1).

T1 on Task 5: A very interesting and engaging task, which asks students to provide feedback on a drawing [a beginner's artwork] especially when giving an example of how to give constructive feedback ... (T1, OS 2).

T3 on Task 5: I loved that the words “honest” and “helpful” were used in the question. I think it is important to teach that honesty is essential and that it should

always be constructive that language has the tools to keep us constructive/polite
(T3, OS 2)

In the extracts above, T4 “enjoyed” how the task was culturally relevant to the students’ context by introducing a clip of a TV show in Arabic. T1, T3, and T4 illustrated the motivational benefits of presenting a video clip “using a language students can understand” in Task 2, as well as asking students to provide constructive feedback on a beginner’s artwork in Task 5. “Using a language students can understand” appears to motivate students to engage in the task discussion questions in Task 2. T1 and T3 suggested that the artwork in Task 5 tended to motivate students to engage in providing feedback with a tendency towards considering both honesty and politeness in their feedback.

In contrast, T3 felt that the social context used in Task 6 “didn’t seem to motivate students.” The task’s social context was role-playing a reviewer of a literary journal, encouraging students to respond to three different types of feedback on a review of the novel *Of Mice and Men*.

T3 ... The social context used didn’t seem to motivate students... Most students managed to see and use what is polite, but failed to understand the context itself which affected their replies (responding to feedback) (T3, OS 2).

During my fieldnotes in the second week intervention, *I observed that students weren’t familiar with the story, Of Mice and Men, presented in Task 6 so in future I would choose a well-known tale, like childhood stories or Disney stories that the students would be more familiar with. I think that their familiarity with the story could have created more excitement with the task* (Fieldnotes, INT. 2, January 29, 2023, p. 6). These observations suggest that students may have experienced demotivation due to the perceived challenges posed by the task’s social context. Not

mirroring their cultural context or being unfamiliar with academic literary works in the target context could be factors behind their demotivation.

Furthermore, insights from the 1st and 2nd focus groups align with teachers' perceptions regarding students' motivation. Teachers, in the two focus groups, emphasised that the use of authentic materials and tasks featuring students' cultural context was "interesting" and help students to engage with the materials. For example, T2 and T3 pointed out that giving students an opportunity to evaluate social situations of giving and responding to feedback was possibly a strong trigger for their motivation as they commented:

T2 students' evaluating the situation is mostly effective when you give a real example, specially starting with an actual e-mail and then moving to an actual video, authentic video, so I think these two tasks [Tasks 1 and 2] help the most and encouraged the students to be fully engaged (FG 1); **T3** I like that you started with an actual instance of e-mails like a real e-mail where you made a mistake in terms of pragmatics. This was interesting because as a second language learner, myself, my first introduction to the concept of pragmatics in EFL was through e-mails ... (FG 1).

T4 highlighted her favourite aspects from the two-week intervention and provided insights into what she felt that have encouraged the students to understand feedback exchange with some cultural implications.

T4 I actually ... really enjoyed seeing different parts of your lesson I enjoyed that you showed the students examples from their own culture with their own language where they can get the gist of something being uncomfortable first and they understand how, you know, your feedback or your response can steer the

conversation in a certain way or another, that was a really good ... a really good introduction ... (FG 1) ... I mostly appreciated your compare and contrast activity where you had the three types of feedback because in our culture it's really hard for students to learn how to, you know, give feedback. They might say they do not like something, but they have a hard time expressing what exactly needs improvement in a polite way..." (FG 2).

In conclusion, according to the participant teachers, the presence of authenticity seemed to create an environment that encouraged students to engage with the instructional content. Teachers suggested that students' motivation may have been influenced by the use of multimodal resources, such as the TV show in Task 2 or caricatures in Task 3, depicting their own context. They also felt that students enjoyed the use of "actual" channels like e-mail exchanges, highlighting a pragmatic failure, which was perceived as "interesting" by all teachers. It was also noted that unfamiliarity with literary materials and student perceptions of the tasks being too challenging may lead to demotivation for some students. Moreover, the elements identified as motivating were also found to be engaging, as they facilitated students' understanding and analytical reasoning of feedback structure and exchange. This relationship between motivation and engagement will be explored further in the following section.

5.2.2 Theme 2: Student engagement

This theme emerged based on teachers' observations of how students engaged with the authentic materials and tasks. It is important to note that the type of engagement found in the teachers' responses seems to fall under cognitive engagement, which focuses on how students were engaged in understanding and reasoning some pragmatic aspects of feedback presented within the instruction content. These perceptions suggested that the students did not appear to passively

receive information on how to structure and exchange feedback, but rather actively processed and interacted with it.

Sub-theme: Enhancing understanding. All four teachers referred to the role of integrating feedback language within the learner's context as a contributing factor to promoting students' cognitive engagement in understanding feedback structure and exchange in EFL. They noticed that students may have found a deeper connection to the materials when they were exposed to giving and responding to feedback in authentic contexts, such as "e-mails" and "real-world scenarios." As previously noted, T1 and T3 illustrated how engaging students in what they described as "realistic situations" could facilitate their understanding.

T1 reflected on Task 1 as "it gives a realistic situation "e-mail exchanges," which stimulates students to understand an example of expressions that carry much pragmatic meaning, revealing how these expressions can't be translated or paraphrased in one's own words" (T1, OS 1). On task 2, T3 highlighted the role of discussion questions in engaging students to understand what is meant by pragmatics and face in feedback, emphasising that using learner's context could possibly be a factor that has paved the way for students to "evaluate what was happening in the conversation" (T3, OS1).

In the extracts above, the use of "a realistic situation" implies that students were likely interacting with authentic materials and everyday situations, potentially making the content more relevant and engaging to students. This could also imply that students' comprehension could be increased when EFL pragmatics is presented within contexts that resonate with their interests and experiences, potentially guiding language learners in how to use feedback pragmatically, thinking about feedback context, tone, and appropriateness.

Teachers have also emphasised that the authentic materials and tasks provided students with an opportunity to engage in reflections, potentially contributing to their understanding of feedback structure. T1's perceptions of Task 2 and Assignment 8, for example, revealed how they could "encourage students to reflect on ways of giving and responding to feedback," particularly how these exchanges are influenced by contextual variables like age.

T1 Task 2 encourages students to reflect on ways to of giving and responding to feedback, negative feedback, and this feedback could have been mediated by social factors such as age and educational background ... It was interesting to follow up this task by discussing the negative expressions and bringing out more effective ways on how to deliver feedback more appropriately (T1, OS 1).

T1 Task 8 is a very engaging task where learners are encouraged to use all language resources they were introduced to in the lesson and practice it in writing. It was very good here that students were reminded of the potential difference between oral and written language, so they consider this in their writing (T1, OS 2).

In the above extracts, T1 found it "interesting" and "engaging" to allow students to "reflect" on and think about the exchange of feedback as well as the contextual variables that could influence how it is given. This suggests that students were processing and trying to understand how feedback is structured and exchanged in EFL. By "bringing out more effective ways on how to deliver feedback more appropriately," T1 thought that this task seemed to support students demonstrate an engagement of problem-solving, thinking about the most effective strategies to communicate in feedback situations.

In a similar note, T4 observed that using authentic resources could contribute to students' engagement in understanding feedback situations.

T4 on Task 1: I appreciate the use of authentic materials by showing your e-mail conversation. It helps clarify the point and showing your pragmatic error helps students connect with you. The discussion was excellent because it allowed students deduce the meaning and provide scaffolding based on their background information (T4, OS 1).

The use of the phrases “clarify the point” and “deduce the meaning” illustrated, based on their observations, teachers perceived the students were involved in understanding the task content and the meaning of an unfamiliar expression by looking at the context in which it was used. T4 also emphasised, in the use of the phrase “students connect with you,” that by sharing the teacher’s pragmatic misunderstanding with the students, a more relatable and supportive learning environment could be built between teachers and students. It could be argued here that this openness could promote an emotional connection to motivate students to participate more actively and take risks in their language use, knowing that misunderstandings are natural part of L2 interaction.

Furthermore, all teachers noted that employing linguistic methods such as ‘discourse analysis’ could potentially engage students with the content, although it is worth noting that these methods might also present some challenges, particularly given possible varying levels of students’ proficiency in the same class.

T1 Students were more engaged in the previous e-mails presented in task 6 as were asked to do ‘discourse analysis’ for each and do comparisons between the language and feedback of the different e-mails. I found tasks 6&7 useful, enjoyable, and motivating as it helps students be fully engaged in real life situations and reflected on different types of provided feedback (T1, OS 2).

T2 I felt that connecting Task 7 to what students have already worked on is really good, analysing the text help students be more closed to the idea. However, I would avoid using technical terms at this stage such as ‘discourse analysis.’ (T2, OS 2)

T2, T3, and T4 appear to attribute the challenges students may have experienced to the use of some technical terms in Task 7 that might have “distracted” some students, preferring the use of the simpler term “tone” used in the task discussion questions over the technical term ‘discourse analysis.’ This observation indicated that students’ engagement might have been affected during their interaction with the task.

T4 The idea of ‘discourse analysis’ is a good idea. I wonder if the students were a bit confused of seeing ‘discourse analysis’ because it is an advanced use of language. Another option for them is to do the same task and answer the same questions, but without them knowing it is called ‘discourse analysis’ (T4, OS 2).

During my fieldnotes in the second intervention, *I observed that students weren’t familiar with the term ‘discourse analysis’ so I would go with the term “text analysis” as opposed to ‘discourse analysis.’ This decision was made in light of my observations that students are more adept at and at ease with ‘text analysis.’ I think using terminology with which they are already familiar would help them explore the task in a more productive way* (Fieldnotes, INT. 2, January 29, 2023, p. 6).

Data from the two focus groups showed that participant teachers think that the authentic materials used along with the discussion questions within the tasks appeared to enhance student understanding and comprehension of the pragmatics of feedback, which could relate to the extent to which students were cognitively engaged. For example, T1 emphasised again the importance of authentic contexts in teaching EFL pragmatics: “What I like is that you provided authentic context

when introducing those expressions/concepts, so I believe using authentic context is really helpful because it helps learners understand those concepts and the hidden meaning of pragmatics (FG 1).” She also pointed out that using explicit instruction along with the discussion questions and metapragmatic explanations help students think about how to use feedback expressions in social situations:

T1 For me, this is the first time I see explicit instruction of pragmatics... you brought this into attention...I believe it will make a difference ...you involved students into useful discussion about feedback expressions and their application in various contexts: like what do you think of these expressions used in these different contexts? and then if you were in this particular context, what would you say? so you get into making comparisons and so this is also really useful (FG 1).

In the second focus group, all teachers highlighted how the gradual transition of going from easier work as in Task 1 to more challenging tasks in the 2nd intervention could help students with diverse levels of L2 proficiency understand the concept of pragmatics and how to address feedback in L2. However, T1 mentioned that she would also do the opposite, starting with implicit instruction first then moving gradually to explicit instruction. In a similar note, T3 illustrated that in the second intervention, she would start with the task that showed the three different e-mails, Task 6 (compare and contrast), because it captures the main idea of pragmatics of feedback and gradually addresses the three types of feedback before moving into ‘discourse analysis’ of each one as in Task 7 (FG 2). These perceptions, which reflect a tendency towards implicit approaches in teaching L2 pragmatics, align with findings from previous studies showing that most language textbooks introduce L2 pragmatics implicitly (e.g., Javed and Umar, 2019). These data also

underline the importance of task sequencing for deepening student understanding and progression when designing interventions.

Sub-theme: Enhancing analytical reasoning. All teachers found the instruction to be “thought-provoking,” by considering the level of the students’ engagement with the tasks. They noted, for example, students’ ability to “recognise,” “re/think,” and “notice feedback differences in style,” as well as coming up with “hypotheses about politeness strategies” used by second language learners. These perceptions could suggest that students, as they developed an understanding of the pragmatics of feedback, are more likely to be more engaged in distinguishing a variety of feedback grammatical structures, politeness strategies, and situations. For example, in reflecting on Task 3, T3 emphasised how students were deeply involved in understanding Face and Politeness in feedback: “I loved the idea of the caricatures! I felt the students are genuinely engaged in explaining and hypothesising about the degree of politeness needed in giving/responding to feedback” (T3, OS 1). The teacher’s observations highlighted two key dimensions of engagement: cognitive and affective. Students appeared not only to be intellectually stimulated by the process of “explaining and hypothesising about the degree of politeness,” but emotionally invested “genuinely engaged” in understanding the nuances of feedback structure and exchange. This type of engagement could possibly involve critical thinking and reflection, as students are engaged in analysing different aspects of politeness, for example, and their potential impact on giving and responding to feedback.

In reflecting on Task 6, T1 and T4 observed the role of compare and contrast a variety of feedback types in engaging students to articulate their reason behind each feedback type/situation as well as explaining their choices.

T1 The task is really effective as it demonstrates three different scenarios which shows different types of feedback... It was good to ask students to elaborate on their choices and explain what led them to consider the feedback as effective, demotivating, or poor (T1, OS 2); **T4** identifying different types of feedback is a good way for students to recognise the difference in style. It also helps them see how not giving enough feedback isn't always a good idea (T4, OS 2).

Together, these reflections from T1 and T4 illustrated their perceptions of task effectiveness. Both teachers suggested that engaging students with the task's content through making comparison appeared to help students "see" and "identify" various types of feedback, as well as recognising "the difference in style." In a similar note, T2's reflection on the second assignment highlighted possible cognitive engagement in navigating various ways to respond to feedback. T2 demonstrated that by simulating the role of feedback recipients, students could approach feedback critically, including the strategies they could employ in *responding* to feedback, particularly in complex situations involving hierarchy.

T2 It is good to see that students are playing different roles (giving and responding), here they have a chance to think of how to respond, what types of responding strategies they need and why? especially when disagreeing with someone older in age or with a higher social status (T2, OS 2).

During the 2nd Focus group discussion, T4 highlighted how instruction on the pragmatics of feedback could promote criticality and flexibility among students, "I think it is really important to see that it is O.K. to question the content in front of you and not just take it as is," which could be valuable skills in the context of future employment for students, "... I think if they are going to a workplace, the workplace is changing, you need to state your opinion, you need to give

feedback, but how to do that in an appropriate way? in a constructive way? I think it is very useful for language learners.”

In a similar note, T1, T2 and T3 observed that placing students in diverse feedback scenarios helped them recognise how pragmatic awareness can facilitate both the delivery and reception of feedback. T1 noted that:

T1 Students could receive any types of feedback. Not all teachers will be thoughtful of how to give constructive feedback so by exposing students to these scenarios, they can be able to elicit feedback whether from the teacher or any other interactions ... so students would think how would they take it? How would they respond? Like they can address any issues or any task more appropriately (FG 2).

T2 added that by distinguishing between various feedback situations, students would become more confident in how to respond to feedback provided by their teacher. She suggested that simulating different feedback scenarios could enhance students' confidence in making decisions about how to respond, as well as improve their word choice in the L2.

In summary, teachers observed students' engagement with the authentic materials and tasks, including their observations of the instruction and the task characteristics as well as the students' reactions in class. They perceived that introducing authentic materials from the learners' context, using a wide variety of tasks, explicit and implicit instruction, metapragmatic explanation, and integrating feedback language in authentic contexts were contributing factors behind student engagement. Whilst challenges related to the use of linguistic terminology need to be addressed, teachers reported that exposure to authentic contexts - like e-mails and real-world scenarios, as well as employing techniques such as compare and contrast and linguistic methods like 'discourse analysis', could help students engage with the instruction content.

5.2.3 Theme 3: Pragmatic competence

Sub-theme: Developing sociopragmatic awareness. This sub-theme emerged as teachers emphasised the importance of considering social and cultural factors in teaching how to exchange feedback. All four teachers also appreciated the introduction of face and politeness in feedback exchange. For example, T3 and T4 illustrated the importance of raising students' awareness of potential cultural influences when giving feedback.

T4 I think it is especially beneficial for students in our culture who are not used to giving constructive feedback because they are only thinking about being “nice” and “saving face.” They might think that saying something that needs improvement is “mean” or “rude.” So, it is good for them to see that one can make comments about improvements without being rude (T4, OS 2).

T3 I think it is great! Pragmatics is mostly ignored in our teaching where the focus is on the formal linguistics. I think it is effective and the students seemed to like the idea. Giving and responding to feedback either threatens or saves face; training the students and preparing them with the linguistic (formal) and cultural aspects can boost their communication skills (T3, OS 1).

During the 1st and 2nd focus group discussions, teachers highlighted the complexities of culture and what they referred to as “complex phenomena of politeness and face,” as well as the importance of raising awareness and bringing these concepts to students' attention. For example, T1 illustrated that situational factors such as power as well as the cultural norms aren't easy to learn even by advanced language learners. She also demonstrated the role of giving “real-life situations” to facilitate learning those concepts within the pragmatics of feedback.

T1...actually I believe that these concepts, power and culture are not the easiest, clear to language learners so they're not quite, you know, clear for students ... even for those advanced learners ... by bringing these issues into their awareness, giving real life situations, bringing or raising that awareness so this would really help them understand how these different factors could impose an effect on their feedback (FG 1).

In contrast, T4 preferred introducing “complex phenomena” such as face and politeness in feedback “implicitly” without referring “explicitly” to pragmatic concepts taking into consideration some students’ language proficiency.

T4 If I were to teach it to my students, maybe, I would just skip the big words, you know, say we are going to see how to say something in L2 ... what’s a good way to answer an e-mail? Just in general but if I had more advanced students or maybe students were in the main major in language and literature or linguistics, I would probably go more in depth into the explanation of these concepts (FG 2).

In addition, teachers also demonstrated the importance of highlighting “social context” to support students understand the use of feedback formulaic language, as T2 commented:

T2 ... When you give them the chance to compare social contexts in Arabic, what might be pragmatically acceptable in this context, may not be acceptable in another context, so this is really like a clear picture for them as a learner to understand that social context is really important in learning English... what is the social meaning behind that a specific phrase? ... might be getting in a different way into culture? This is like the aspect of culture? (FG 1).

Furthermore, for T3, teaching sociopragmatic concepts of feedback is seen as a “skill,” while T2 thinks that is considered a “sub-skill.”

T3 maybe it is a skill in their student life, where they need to know how to give/respond to feedback. I look at it from this point of view... I think it's also having to do with confidence when you know how your words affect the other person you can be confident about word usage ... (FG1).

T3's perception suggests that teaching how to give and respond to feedback, taking into considerations its sociopragmatic elements, is a distinct skill, potentially requiring specific knowledge and understanding that can be considered an independent skill set. T2's perspective, on the other hand, suggested that T2 viewed the sociopragmatic elements as part of a broader skill set, rather than a distinct skill, as she said, "I would see it as part of teaching speaking and writing ..." (FG1).

In summary, all teachers appreciated the introduction of face and politeness in feedback exchange. They also emphasised the importance of considering social and cultural factors in teaching how to structure and exchange feedback. Despite perceiving pragmatic concepts such as face and politeness as "complex phenomena" to learn explicitly, the analysis of both the observational classroom sheets and focus groups discussion suggested that authentic materials and tasks employed in teaching the pragmatic of feedback could potentially raise sociopragmatic awareness among students.

Sub-theme: Facilitating pragmalinguistic fluency. This sub-theme, facilitating pragmalinguistic fluency, captured teachers' perceptions with regards to teaching formulaic sequence (FS) of giving and responding to feedback, as well as using the N-P (Negative-Positive) sequence for constructive feedback. All teachers generally perceived teaching FS positively, noting that such language can enhance students' communication skills across both written and spoken contexts.

T1 “I believe it is really important to always raise students’ awareness of formulaic expressions that could perform pragmatic purposes. This would help their spoken language become more pragmatically appropriate, and it would help them become more fluent and efficient in different L2 contexts.” (T1, OS 1)

T2 Teaching English formulaic expressions of giving and responding to feedback is essential and related to the writing task they are doing during the term. These linguistic skills would help students read other students’ work and be able to give and respond to feedback. This will also give them a chance to think of and reflect on their own expressions and different social factors (T2, OS 1).

T4 I think it is very helpful to teach students how they give and respond to feedback in an appropriate way, as it will help them become more aware of the situations dictate the language we use (T4, OS 1).

In the 1st focus group discussion, all teachers highlighted the importance of introducing feedback formulaic expressions to students so they can have these expressions as a reference whenever they need to give or respond to feedback.

T2 in the last or before the last slide, you put a table where students can use like feedback expressions, negative or positive feedback ... it will be easier for the students to follow those expressions because students need to take something home, like a summary of what the main idea is about, so that was really into the point, so they can see that these are the negative feedback and these are the positive feedback, like to give them a chance to relate to which one is acceptable to be used according to the context itself ... very formal? or less formal? (FG 1).

Also, teachers highlighted that the feedback formulaic expressions were “easy to learn” because it was presented to students of intermediate level. However, more scaffolded approaches may be needed for lower-level students.

T3 I think it is very easy, the idea of presenting a formulaic expression was easy for the students; **T1** to be honest, you were dealing with learners like in CEFR framework, they are intermediate students, and their level was really good. So, they could understand, but if you work with learners with less competence, this might sound a bit difficult.

In the context of teaching constructive feedback through the N-P feedback sequence, all teachers appreciated the use of feedback formula on guiding students how to write constructive feedback in their observational sheets. For example, T1 highlighted how students followed and practiced all steps in giving feedback in different tasks. T2 also demonstrated how using a writing formula could help students structure their paragraph, especially the part that stressed out giving constructive feedback.

T1 ...It encouraged learners to reflect on the notion of “constructive feedback” and get to realise how to use them more communicatively and pragmatically appropriate (T1, OS 2).

T2 It is a good way to help students structure their paragraph in giving feedback, especially showing how to highlight the areas that need to be improved in a constructive way (T2, OS 2).

In addition, T4 added that using a feedback writing formula could also guide students into giving feedback in their “future career.” She also highlighted that it seems to be “helpful” and “beneficial” in guiding students to give constructive feedback that culturally they would hesitate to do so due to politeness. However, T3 pointed out an issue that students had probably

encountered during the instruction. She stressed the importance of placing greater emphasis on the constructive elements of writing feedback, which she referred to as “actual criticism.”

T3 I think a number of students continued to think that constructive feedback is just polite sometimes positive (to a lesser degree). They missed the part where constructive feedback should include actual criticism. I would spend more time on differentiating/asking students to recognise different tones of feedback: personal, weird, fair, clear ...etc. (T3, OS 2).

In the 2nd focus group discussion, teachers highlighted some cultural challenges they think would influence the way students would give and respond to feedback. T3 elaborated more on how some cultural elements should be more emphasised. She thinks that “courtesy” can sometimes act as a barrier to giving constructive feedback because she observed that students may have prioritised politeness and the desire to avoid hurting others’ feelings over being completely honest.

T3 I found it to be challenging for students to writing constructive feedback because there are concepts students should differentiate first such as honesty as opposed to courtesy, politeness as opposed to courtesy... because courtesy in our society is politeness... even on their responses to Task 5 were positive “lovely drawing” ... etc. to save face so I think if we give more emphasis that you can be honest and give feedback that the recipient may not like but it is polite and constructive, you worked on this but I felt these need more emphasis...(FG2)

T1 also added that these challenges could be attributed to the reason that approaches to feedback are influenced by social mores, “I think it is because we approach feedback differently. We sugar-coat our language.” In a similar note, T3 suggested providing an example with serious consequences and how constructive feedback can prevent these consequences:

T3 to solve these issues so I think if we showed them an example with serious consequences such as removing a single block from a building could potentially lead to the collapse of the whole structure. So, I think they will give constructive feedback and they will not cover the issues with courtesy. This is one way to do it as opposed to showing a drawing and saying, “it is nice,” has no serious consequences (FG2).

It is worth mentioning here that in Task 5, feedback writing formula had not, at that stage, been introduced. That could explain why students were mixing politeness with constructive feedback. *In task 5, the Critiques method of the beginner’s artwork, I noticed that students used more polite strategies than giving constructive feedback. This could potentially support the idea that some students would resist the idea of being “negative” about someone’s work if they were not provided with formulaic guidance or they may have just relied on their own styles of giving feedback. When I introduced the N-P sequence in tasks 6, 7 and 8, most of the students were able to write constructive feedback* (Fieldnotes, INT 2, January 29, 2023, p. 7).

In addition, teachers elaborated more on their perceptions of the use of a writing formula in teaching how to give feedback. For example, T1, T2, and T4 mentioned that they would teach such formula to their class; however, T4 suggested adding symbols for the grammatical structures used, such as S+V+ing right next to sentence stems in the formula.

T1 For me, I would teach the same formula highlighting what is missing in someone’s work first when giving feedback and then moving to encouragement remarks. However, it depends on the context and the recipients ... I found it to be easy for students to follow the steps [in the simulation task] because you already highlighted this formula in previous tasks (FG2).

Interestingly, T3 offered differentiated points of view regarding the use of a writing formula for feedback exchange depending on the level of students i.e., following a controlled formula before encouraging students to structure their own paragraph. T1, on the other hand, thinks that even advanced language learners need a writing guide.

T3 for me the decision I would made depends on the level of the students. I would keep it controlled as in the formula or give them the freedom, but I will still highlight that there is specific language for feedback ... I would give the freedom if the class number was limited, let's say if I had a class of 25 students, if 17 of them were high achievers, I would give them freedom, but with low achievers, I would use an individualised sheets for writing (FG2).

T1 giving students a writing formula is not a bad idea even when I was teaching technical writing to computer science advanced students, they always ask about what they need to include in their essays, their e-mails, or feedback ...etc. (FG2).

In summary, all teachers appreciated the introduction of formulaic sequences for giving and responding to feedback, as well as the use of a writing formula for teaching feedback exchange. They perceived that initial learning of formulaic feedback language can enhance students' communication skills in various contexts, including both writing and speaking. However, cultural influences and language proficiency of some students need to be taken into account. Teachers demonstrated that the feedback writing formula could guide students in how to structure their paragraph and organise their ideas, especially aspects that emphasised giving constructive feedback.

5.2 Synthesis of strand 1: Teachers' perceptions of authentic materials and tasks

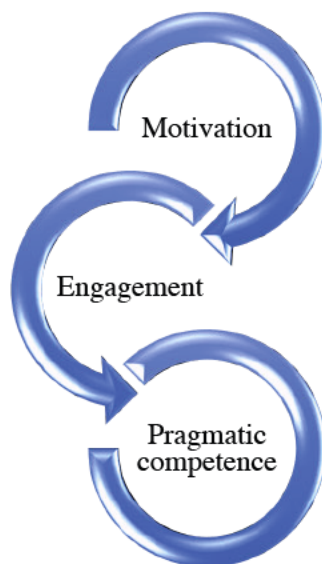
The three themes: student motivation, student engagement, and pragmatic competence build on each other, to create a cohesive narrative of teachers' perceptions of the authentic materials and tasks used in teaching the pragmatics of feedback. According to the participant teachers, the presence of authenticity seemed to create an environment that encouraged students to engage with the instructional content. They perceived that students' motivation has been influenced by the use of multimodal resources, depicting their cultural context.

It was also noted that what was found to be motivating was also engaging, facilitating students' understanding and analytical reasoning of feedback structure and exchange. As previously presented, challenges related to the use of linguistic terminology and some pragmatic concepts were identified yet teachers think that exposure to authentic contexts like e-mails and real-world scenarios as well as employing linguistic methods like 'discourse analysis' could help students engage with the instruction content.

In addition, all teachers valued the inclusion of pragmatic concepts such as face and politeness in feedback while acknowledging its complex nature within culture. They also highlighted the significance of taking into account situational factors and cultural norms when teaching how to give and respond to feedback. Planning tasks that make transparent an understanding of cultural influences and language proficiency may impact the way students would give and respond to feedback in English. The results also indicated that authentic materials and tasks could potentially raise both sociopragmatic awareness and pragmalinguistic fluency. Figure 5.2 below shows the relationship between student motivation, student engagement, and pragmatic competence.

Figure 5.2

The Relationship between Student Motivation, Student Engagement, and Pragmatic Competence



5.3 Strand 2: The influence of contextual variables on pragmatics of feedback

In this strand, the influence of contextual variables on the pragmatics of feedback, two themes emerged as teachers shed light on the influence of both situational factors and cultural differences on the way feedback is exchanged (see Figure 5.3).

5.3.1 Theme 1: Contextual variables

Sub-theme 1: Situational factors. The analysis of the classroom observational sheets demonstrated that teachers think that the situational factors such as age, gender, and power, can influence feedback giving and feedback receiving in their society. They also observed how the pragmatics instruction highlighted possible correlations between feedback exchange and situational factors in various social contexts. They also underlined the importance of considering these factors whenever they give or respond to feedback, suggesting that it was beneficial when

the instruction focused on a variety of situations where students could see how situational factors can alter or affect the feedback structure and exchange.

T1 In my point of view, I think many social factors could impose an effect on the choice of language in giving and responding to feedback. Examples are abundant here, and the different tasks presented highlighted how different factors could mediate the way we provide and take feedback (T1, OS 1).

T3 It makes a huge difference, especially in terms of age, social status, and power. I think to be able to understand the language well and to use it correctly/politely, we need to understand the cultural background of its users and those of talking to (T3, OS 1).

T4 Social factors make all the difference in the words I choose whether it is in written or spoken language. When someone is older, has more authority, or from a different gender, I am always very careful with my words to make sure the message is received as I intend to (T4, OS 1).

The extracts above illustrated how teachers perceived the role of situational factors in giving and responding to feedback in their society, indicating a potential influence in the L2 pragmatics. T4, for example, perceived age with “authority,” which implies that the approach to giving constructive feedback in their society varies depending on whether the person receiving is older or younger. This could be attributed to the fact that, in Saudi Arabian culture, young people are taught to respect and listen to older people as they have had more life experiences and should be treated with respect. Therefore, giving someone older constructive feedback could be perceived as impolite or disrespectful. Same for cross gender communication, sex segregation is a cultural practice in Saudi Arabia where men and women tend to communicate more formally, which in

turn, affects the way they would structure and exchange feedback with formality as a possible dominant variable.

In a similar note, T2 and T4 further illustrated how age and gender could influence the N-P sequence for giving feedback introduced in the 2nd intervention:

T2 I would use the same formula in my teaching, but it really depends on the situation, whom I am talking to ... etc. I can think of age and gender as potential factors that would change the way I give feedback (T2, OS 2).

T4 I strongly believe that gender has a great effect on giving constructive feedback, especially the negative parts. As a society, girls are taught not to upset others and care for their feelings. They might have a hard time trying to give negative feedback. Another factor is age, the younger they are, the harder it is for them to give negative feedback, especially when the other person might be older (T4, OS 2).

In the two focus groups, teachers elaborated more on the strong possible impact of situational factors on the exchange of feedback, with reference to age, gender, and power as the main factors that would alter feedback structure and influence its exchange. For example, T4 referenced the influence of students' age and gender on the way students would give and respond to feedback, appreciating the writing formula for feedback: "...at their age in this culture or their gender has its difficulties in giving constructive feedback so giving them examples and a formula to follow that is really helpful for students and really appreciate seeing that" (T4, FG2). This perception could be explained by the fact that students are perceived as being 'young' so their lack of experience could also impact their understanding of giving and responding to feedback. Regarding gender, females tend to prioritise connections and relationships in social settings, implying that giving constructive feedback in their social circles could possibly impact their

relationships, especially if they were perceived as negative (e.g., Tannen, 1990). This raises crucial societal issues which need to be taken into consideration in preparing L2 students for intercultural communication.

Sub-theme 2: Cultural differences. In the 1st and 2nd focus groups, teachers showed different perspectives on the notion of “culture” and its potential influence on teaching the pragmatics of feedback. They also demonstrated that what they say or do might be influenced by their culture. T1, for example, demonstrated that how students are influenced by the way they give and respond to feedback in their own culture: T1 “in Arabic culture, I think students don’t want to come across as negative by pointing out areas that need to be improved so they cover it up with courtesy, especially in another language if they don’t have enough vocabulary or structure to express their opinion...” (FG1). She also stressed the influence of culture again during the 2nd focus group discussion: “...we tend to be courteous ... it all goes back to our culture, the way we give feedback” (FG2).

T2 also demonstrated her awareness of the impact cultural differences could potentially have on feedback structure and exchange. She referenced a well-known expression used in L2 pragmatics literature, “What is said in one culture, means different in another culture... so that is acceptable because it works within L2 culture, but it may not be acceptable in another like in our society, so students start like having awareness of comparing two different cultures, and how it affects the use of the feedback language” (FG1).

T4 illustrated further why students would be reluctant to give constructive feedback, appreciating that students have a chance that would “open their mind to the possibility of giving constructive feedback.”

T4 In our culture it is really hard for the students to learn how to give feedback, they may say they do not like something, but they may have a hard time expressing what needs improvement in a polite way. They think if they say something they might be mean or rude but, in the end, if you want to help someone to improve, you need to give them some sort of feedback ... (FG2).

She also appreciated seeing how the instruction highlighted the issue of translating feedback literally without taking into consideration the hidden meaning of expressions or words in another language/culture.

T4... seeing each expression and each word and how something may be acceptable in one language and in one culture but may not be acceptable in another language or another culture and students might not know that, they might just translate literally from one language to another and think it's OK, so I think it is important in order for EFL students to be successful in language learning (FG2).

In contrast, T3 stated a different point of view regarding the potential influence of cultural differences and teaching L2 pragmatics of feedback. She conveyed her disagreement with her former teacher's perceptions of the role of culture in L2 pragmatics.

T3 ... my issue with pragmatics as a second language learner was with one of my former teachers, who gave us feedback on our e-mails' writing, saying "this is how e-mails are written in the UK," and "you don't have to start the e-mail with, "How are you." She said, "it is a cultural communication style." I didn't see it as a fact at that time to be honest. By experience, I realised that they have a variety of styles in the UK, so we also have a variety of styles, it is not homogenous ... (FG2).

T3's perceptions could shed light on the importance of recognising individuality within the context of culture. It also indicates a need for a more culturally sensitive teaching approach towards L2 pragmatics to ensure not only effective communication but also understanding of individual differences within a single culture. She also elaborated on how we can raise students' awareness of cultural differences while taking into account the importance of "evaluating the situation," suggesting that students' judgment should be based on a comprehensive understanding of the situation and not jump to conclusion based on "cultural differences."

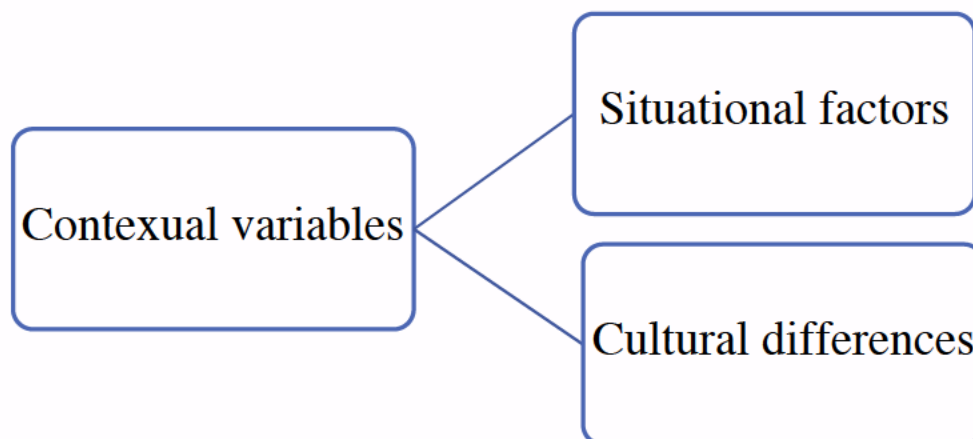
T3 ... so we should teach students that is ok Arabic culture is different; however, you can evaluate the situation ... so the student who felt that she may not give constructive feedback to the beginner's artwork [in Task 5] if the artist were present in class, is socially intelligent because she didn't want to embarrass her... she literally had no benefits or outcomes so she read the situation well... but the situation between teachers and students is different, you need to give and take constructive feedback (FG2).

5.3 Synthesis of strand 2: The influence of contextual variables on pragmatics of feedback

Teachers underscored the potential impact of both situational variables and cultural differences on feedback structure and exchange. They highlighted the importance of incorporating these factors into feedback practices, noting that pragmatics instruction was especially effective when it exposed students to a variety of contextual scenarios illustrating how feedback exchanges can differ. Moreover, teachers demonstrated varied conceptualisations of "culture" and its potential influence on feedback exchange, highlighting personal interpretations and cultural experiences. Hence, preparing students for intercultural communication in the language classroom is a necessary challenge to be taken into account when designing tasks.

Figure 5.3

Illustration of the 2nd Strand and its Themes



5.4 Strand 3: The influence of intentions and affect on pragmatics of feedback

Within this strand, two themes were identified: intentions in giving feedback and affect in receiving feedback. Within the theme of intentions in giving feedback, a single sub-theme, empathy, has emerged. In the theme of affect in receiving feedback, a single theme emerged, disappointment (see Figure 5.4).

The two themes explore possible illocutionary and perlocutionary acts in the domain of feedback within the field of pragmatics. Illocutionary acts include the speaker's intention and the contextual nuances shaping feedback, while perlocutionary acts discuss the impact of feedback on the recipient's emotions and behaviours, considering how the recipient's interprets feedback and what emotional and behavioural responses they may demonstrate.

5.4.1 Theme 1: Intentions in giving feedback

Speaker's intention in pragmatics is essential in understanding their behaviour (e.g., Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969; Haugh and Jaszczolt, 2012); consequently, intentions in giving

feedback tend to have a significant impact on the tone, content, and delivery of the feedback, influencing its value not only in terms of the recipient's personal/professional development, but also their emotional well-being.

The theme of intentions in giving feedback emerged as a factor that would influence feedback structure and exchange, with empathy as a single variable highlighted by teachers in their responses in the 2nd focus group discussion. However, only T4 illustrated how students would feel in the way they give constructive in the 2nd classroom observational sheet, T4 "... as a society, girls are taught not to upset others and care for their feelings. They might have a hard time trying to give negative feedback ...” (T4, OS 2). However, all the four teachers have demonstrated similar points of view in the 2nd focus group.

Sub-theme: Empathy. Data analysis indicated that empathy emerged as a sub-theme. According to Kim et al. (2021) empathy is “a cognitive ability based on the reasoning of others’ affective states” (p.1), emphasising the significance of taking into account the feelings of the feedback recipients as a determinant that would influence feedback decision-making and the overall structure and exchange of feedback. The analysis of the 2nd focus group data suggested that teachers would adopt an empathetic approach to giving constructive feedback considering the recipients’ feelings and perspective. They perceived that for their constructive feedback to be taken, it should be accompanied by assurance and comfort statements. They suggested that is important to include positive statements right from the beginning to comfort recipients that they are doing well, but they need to work further on specific requirements. For example, T1 demonstrated how she would approach constructive feedback in education, “We should assure students that “you are doing well, but you should work further on...etc.” They got sensitive when

I started directly with constructive feedback. They think that they've failed" (FG2). In a similar note, T3 added:

T3 We should comfort students that they are doing well before giving them constructive feedback ... Not grades-based but performance-based feedback... I am responsible about each word and point I put in my feedback ... everyone is responsible not only for the feedback content, but also the style, the way they deliver it (FG2).

In addition, T4 demonstrated that instruction on pragmatics of feedback could change the way students feel about constructive feedback and the way they look at "criticism."

T4 It opens their mind to saying you know it's OK to give some constructive feedback and that it's not negative and it doesn't hurt the person it doesn't mean you're not a nice person or that you are not supporting them. I think it opens their minds to that possibility even in their native language (FG2).

In summary, given the sensitivities of the cultural context of this study, all teachers demonstrated an awareness of the impact their feedback structure would have on their students' feelings. It seems that they intend to give feedback considering not only the feedback content, but also its delivery in terms of adding assurance and comfort statements. This could influence its value not only in terms of the recipient's personal/professional development, but also their emotional well-being.

5.4.2 Theme 2: Affect in receiving feedback

Teachers also demonstrated the affective effects feedback would have on the recipients as well as their corresponding responses to it. They demonstrated in the 2nd focus group that the receipt of feedback would likely evoke an emotional response from students, which would then

prompt students to respond or react in a certain way, with disappointment as a single sub-theme emerged in the 2nd focus group data.

Sub-theme: Disappointment. Disappointment, in this section, indicates an expression of feedback recipients' frustration or discouragement resulting from receiving feedback even if it is constructive, as opposed to students' data, where students reported a feeling of disappointment if the feedback is unfairly given or having their efforts ignored.

In the 2nd focus group, all teachers illustrated that students feel sensitive when they receive constructive feedback from them. However, they indicated that instruction on the pragmatics of feedback could help recipients take feedback without feeling sensitive or disappointed. They also appreciated that students experienced different types of feedback and how to respond to each one in L2, preparing them to deal with possible emotions they would experience when receiving feedback.

T2 I think this type of instruction make students accept feedback because students feel sensitive when receiving constructive feedback, how they look at, it is not negative, it is constructive ... feedback doesn't mean you are not doing well ... **T1** it is good that students were put in different social contexts so if they don't like it. They should ask for clarification instead of feeling bad (FG2).

In a similar note, T1 recalled a feedback situation when her student made a direct correlation between the length of the feedback given and receiving a good grade, "...despite receiving constructive feedback, a student of mine felt disappointed, asking me: "How can I get a good grade when you've given a lot of feedback?" (T1, FG2).

In short, the analysis of affect in receiving feedback, showed that teachers think that even constructive feedback can trigger emotional responses (such as feeling hurt or defensive). This

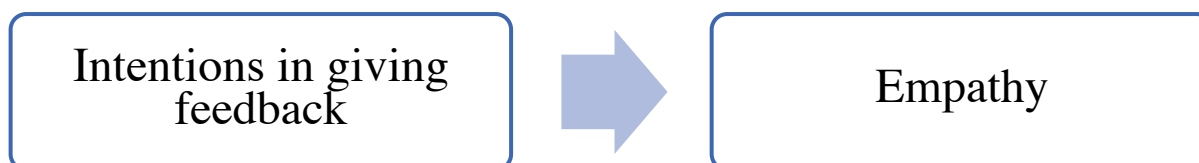
suggests that awareness raising about instruction in the pragmatics of feedback could help recipients manage their reactions—such as sensitivity or disappointment—and enable them to accept feedback more constructively or seek clarification when necessary.

5.4 Synthesis of strand 3: The influence of intentions and affect on pragmatics of feedback

Based on the analysis of the second focus group, it could be concluded that all teachers demonstrated an understanding of the influence constructive feedback can have on recipients' emotions, suggesting that providing constructive feedback should be approached with empathy to improve the way it is received and taken. Based on their observations that students would experience disappointment upon receiving feedback even if it is constructive, it appears that they would provide feedback, taking into account the feedback content, tone and delivery. This is because these factors (e.g., tone) are perceived to have an impact on the value of the feedback in terms of the recipient's emotional state and personal development. Additionally, they recommended that in order to save face and support students from feeling disappointed, it would be easier to give constructive feedback if it was preceded by affirmations. This affirms the need to raise student awareness of cultural differences and sensitivities with regards to feedback in order not only to promote intercultural communication but essentially to progress their own language learning.

Figure 5.4

Illustration of the 3rd Strand themes and Sub-themes





5.5 Key findings

In response to the first research question — *What are Saudi EFL teachers’ perceptions and observations towards pragmatics instruction on feedback exchange?* —key points emerged from the thematic analysis of teacher data. These are listed as follows and will be discussed later in chapter 7.

Table 5.2

Key Findings in Response to the 1st Research Question

Theme	Key findings
Strand 1: Teachers’ perceptions of authentic materials and tasks	
Student motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers observed that authentic materials and tasks influenced student motivation by aligning with learners’ interests, cultural context, and task characteristics. • Multimodal resources (e.g., TV shows, caricatures) and real-world inputs (e.g., teacher-student e-mail exchange) were perceived as interesting and relatable, enhancing student motivation. • However, teachers also observed that motivation was not universally sustained across all tasks. T3 demonstrated that Task 6, which incorporated literary and social content unfamiliar to students, resulted in a drop in motivation and, consequently, engagement.

<p>Student engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers observed that students were more engaged when feedback-related tasks incorporated authentic materials grounded in the learners’ contexts. Contributing factors to this engagement included the use of explicit and implicit instruction, metapragmatic explanations, and relevant task design. • However, the participant teachers tended to prefer implicit and incidental instruction over explicit instruction, particularly when it came to using pragmatic or linguistic terminology. • Teachers also recognised the value of analytical tasks in enhancing students’ understanding and encouraging critical thinking about their linguistic choices. • However, teachers acknowledged that these linguistic approaches could pose certain challenges, especially due to the potential variation in students’ language proficiency within the same classroom.
<p>Pragmatic competence</p>	<p>Value of sociopragmatic concepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers appreciated the inclusion of key concepts like face and politeness in feedback instruction. • However, they held diverse views on the role of sociopragmatic elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ T3 viewed teaching sociopragmatics alongside the feedback formula (N-P sequence) as a "skill." ○ T2 referred to it as a "sub-skill." <p>Use of formulaic language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All teachers appeared to support the N-P sequence as a useful starting structure, particularly for intermediate learners, to help organise feedback in both written and spoken forms. • However, they expressed varied views on how and when to apply such formulas. In the 2nd focus group, they have demonstrated diverse views on the application of the formula and its appropriateness at various levels.

Strand 2: The influence of contextual variables on pragmatics of feedback	
Contextual variables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All participating teachers highlighted the potential impact of situational variables—such as age, gender, and power—on the structure and delivery of feedback within their sociocultural context. • However, perspectives on culture varied; while teachers generally acknowledged its role in shaping feedback norms, their interpretations appeared to reflect personal experiences and culturally embedded understandings, rather than a unified view. • All teachers recognised a connection between face, politeness, and feedback, though some pointed out that excessive courtesy could potentially lead to ambiguity or miscommunication in feedback exchanges.
Strand 3: The influence of intentions and affect on pragmatics of feedback	
Intentions and affect in feedback exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All teachers recognised that even constructive feedback can cause learners emotional discomfort or defensiveness. • All teachers emphasised the importance of empathy in delivering feedback, highlighting the use of positive reinforcement and reassurance as strategies to reduce defensiveness and foster greater receptivity.

Chapter 6: Analysis of Learner Data

6.0 Introduction

This chapter reported students' perceptions of learning pragmatics of feedback. It provides answers to the 2nd research question: What are Saudi EFL learners' perceptions and observations towards EFL pragmatics instruction on feedback exchange?

6.1 Overview of the learners' overarching themes

There are four main strands identified within the students' data. The first three strands and their themes resonate with those strands identified from the teacher data (see Table 5.1) and are presented in Table 6.1 below. However, it must be noted that new sub-themes emerged which were different from those of the teachers with a 4th strand regarding possible outcomes on communication and life skills development leading to two themes classified as interpersonal skills and intercultural and translation skills.

Table 6.1

Overview of the Learners' Overarching Strands

Strand 1: Learners' perceptions of authentic materials and tasks	
Theme	Sub-theme
Student motivation	Reactions to new ways of learning
Student engagement	Noticing
	Connecting
	Reasoning
	Challenging
Pragmatic competence	Developing sociopragmatic awareness
	Facilitating pragmalinguistic fluency

Strand 2: The influence of contextual variables on pragmatics of feedback	
Theme	Sub-theme
Contextual variables	Situational factors
	Individual differences
Strand 3: The influence of intentions and affect on pragmatics of feedback	
Theme	Sub-theme
Intentions in giving feedback	Empathy
Affect in receiving feedback	Embarrassment
	Disappointment
	Resilience
	Self-composure
Strand 4: Outcomes: communication and life skills development	
Theme	Sub-theme
Interpersonal skills	Relationship-building
	Confidence-building
Intercultural and translation skills	Translations
	Cultures-bridging

Data from 60 reflections and 12 interviews were combined to construct identified themes as students elaborated more deeply during their perceptions in the interviews. The reflections were gathered from approximately 31 students across two-intervention weeks, with 31 students attending the first intervention and 29 attending the second one. Twelve out of the 31 students were then randomly chosen for the interviews to ensure the sample of students interviewed is

representative of the larger group of students. Therefore, there were no specific criteria or preferences guiding the selection process.

While reflections offered valuable yet brief insights into students' thoughts and experiences, interviews provided a deeper level of interesting elaborations. Therefore, reflective responses served as initial indicators of key concepts in students' perceptions, while the interview data provided in-depth explanations as well as contextual factors that further clarified students' perceptions and, consequently, added deeper elaboration of the identified sub-themes, themes, and overarching strands. The combination of data sets facilitated not only the identifications of themes, but also the explanations of underlying meaning embedded within students' reflections and interviews. The data extracts that I draw upon within this chapter come from both reflection (Ref.) and interview (Int.) data, each explicitly stated as such. Moreover, researcher's fieldnotes are incorporated as a means of documenting needed contextual information relating to students' experience throughout the two interventions. The abbreviation INT refers to the two stages of instructional interventions implemented during the study. Specifically, INT 1 refers to *Intervention 1*, which took place in Week 1, and INT 2 to *Intervention 2*, which occurred in Week 2.

6.2 Strand 1: Learners' perceptions of authentic materials and tasks

As illustrated previously in Table 4.6: A brief description of tasks and assignments (Chapter 4), the intervention was structured around eight tasks and two assignments that progressively built learners' pragmatic competence in giving and responding to feedback. Students were asked to express their perceptions of their prior learning experiences in a written reflection and interview in terms of their views on the authentic materials, tasks, and assignments. However, it emerged that the majority of students reported not receiving written feedback in semester 1. This ultimately led to students not being able to collect data on feedback as required by assignment 1

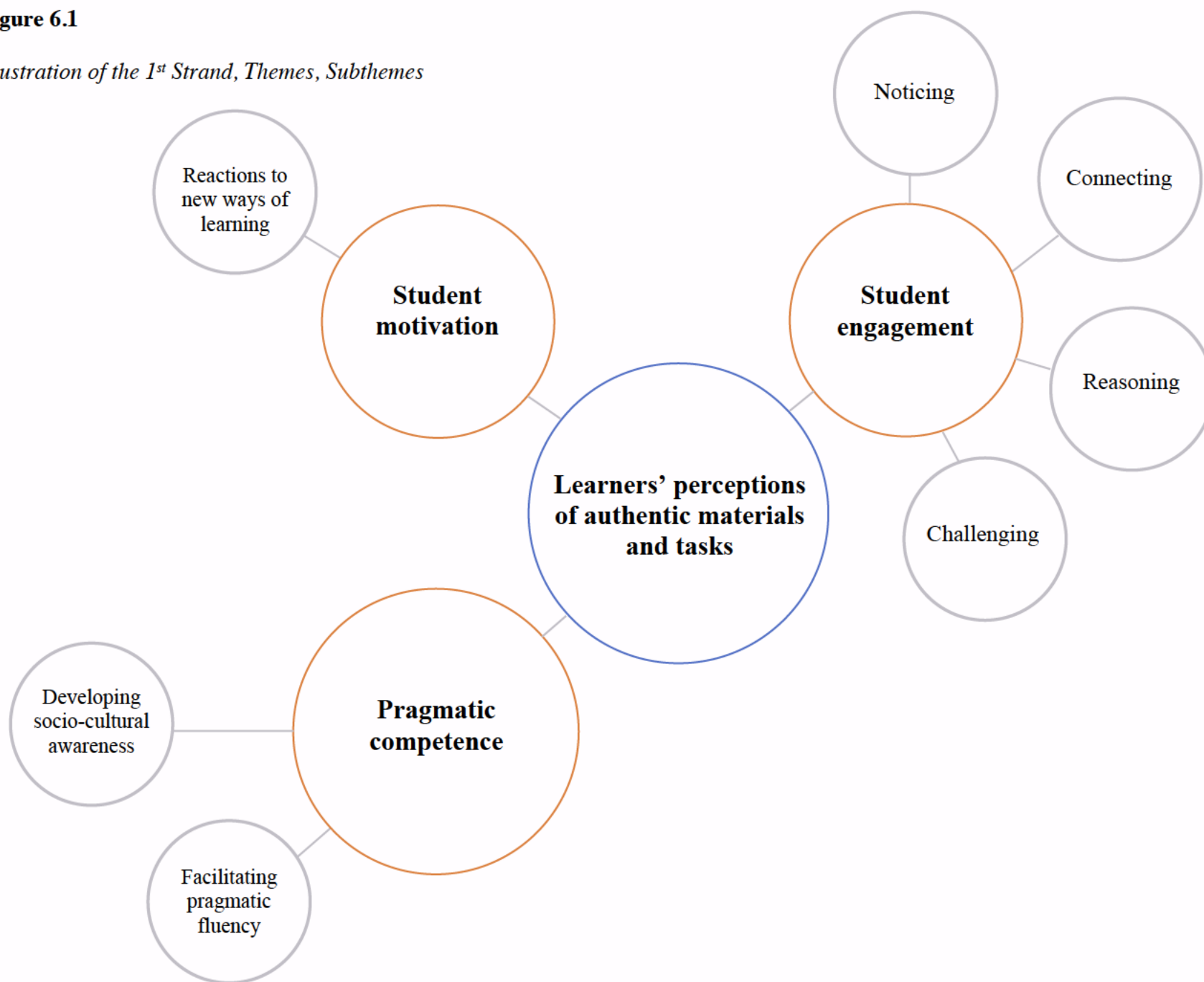
with only one student submitting the assignment for the first week. Week 2 assignment was therefore adjusted to give students more time in writing and redrafting the simulation in Task 8.

The analysis of the data gathered from students' reflections and interviews revealed that motivation, engagement, and pragmatic competence emerged as the three main themes for most of the students seen in their responses towards the authentic materials and tasks, yet there were some situations where students felt disengaged and pragmatically challenged. The analysis initially involves examining the emergence of these three main themes within each task. The aspects emphasised by students within each task are then closely analysed to provide an interpretation of their perceptions. Therefore, when summarising and discussing each theme, consideration is given to the tasks where student positioning concerning motivation, engagement, or pragmatic competence emerged.

Within the student motivation theme, there is one sub-theme: reactions to new ways of learning. Regarding the theme of student engagement, four sub-themes emerged concerning noticing, connecting, reasoning, and challenging. In the theme of pragmatic competence, two sub-themes were found: developing sociocultural awareness and facilitating pragmatic fluency. Figure 6.1. illustrates the 1st strand themes and sub-themes.

Figure 6.1

Illustration of the 1st Strand, Themes, Subthemes



6.2.1 Theme 1: Student motivation

The majority of students consistently expressed a sense of joy and fulfilment they experienced towards the authentic materials and tasks in their reflections and interviews. They described their experiences as “motivating,” “interesting,” and “enjoyable,” creating an element of excitement that motivated them to be involved. For example, in the extract below, S20 showed how authentic materials and tasks had encouraged her to reflect on and analyse pragmatic situations:

I feel this approach is very effective. Firstly, we, people, love enjoyable things, especially when we are learning. This type of instruction makes the learning experience even more enjoyable, motivating us to reflect on the situations we shared and analyse them (S20, Int.1, P. 6).

Here, the student highlighted the motivational aspects of the task-based approach in learning of L2 pragmatics of feedback she experienced as “enjoyable” and “effective.” She emphasised its role not only in promoting self-reflection about pragmatics situations, but also in “the enjoyment” she had in analysing linguistic and social elements of these pragmatic situations when exchanging feedback.

S1 further compared the excitement she had experienced with the task-based approach to what she referred to as “a traditional way.” She highlighted that the smooth transition from one task to another, as well as the interactivity employed in each task, is what makes her experience exciting.

the approach is good ... I had fun when I was given a variety of tasks that kept my mind consistently engaged compared to just writing my feedback in a traditional way, such as “this is a paper for you to write down your feedback” ... I was given steps, moving

gradually from one point to another ... I would feel bored if I had to listen to new information ... new topic ... and not interact with every and each task ...” (S1, Int. 2, P. 5).

She also draws on the explicit connection between “having fun” and “being engaged” when she said, “kept my mind consistently engaged.” The experience of the variety of tasks, gradual transitions between each one of them, and her interaction with each task appears to validate her reason to what she refers to as “fun,” “mind engaging” and not “feeling bored.”

In contrast to S1, S24 pointed out that the content of authentic materials and tasks was “intriguing.” The focus on pragmatics of constructive feedback encourages curiosity within her to explore the topic further and in other contexts:

I find this topic [pragmatics of constructive feedback] is very intriguing, frankly speaking. It is the first time I hear about it. I am curious to research this topic even more, particularly because of my interest in film criticism. I am keen on gaining knowledge of how to give constructive feedback in a broader sense. (S24, Ref.1)

Since I am interested in film criticism ... how our ideas are being presented... the way constructive criticism is structured and delivered ... it is very important to be courteous ... of course, there is always a way to be courteous...there is non-professional (amateur) critic who doesn't follow a specific style ... does it as a hobby, you know, and there is a professional critic who is well-aware of what being constructive is ... (S24, Int.1, P. 5).

The student expressed her genuine interest in exploring the topic further, especially due to her intrinsic motivation and passion for the field of film criticism. This is apparent on the comparison she made between “being amateur” “non-professional” and “being professional,” suggesting the importance of learning more about “feedback structure” and

feedback delivery” while using “courteous” language to demonstrate politeness and appreciation. Her intrinsic motivation in learning more about the topic seems to be a driving force that contributes to her enthusiasm during the lesson.

One sub-theme that emerged under the broader theme of student motivation was *reactions to new ways of learning*. This sub-theme captures students’ initial emotional and cognitive responses to instructional materials that differed from their prior learning experiences. Across reflection and interview data, students highlighted the use of multimodal resources employed in tasks 2 (TV show video), 3 and 4 (caricatures), and 5 (beginner’s artwork), noting the fun environment they have co-created. They have positive feelings towards the TV show in Task 2 because it references feedback exchange in their first language, implying that the concept of Face and the pragmatics of feedback were more accessible for them. S5, for example, perceived the choice of the video and the way it was presented as “excellent” and “interesting.” (Ref.1). S11 further explained what makes the TV show “interesting” and “easy to understand:”

the video you showed in the lecture was interesting ... we enjoyed it; we understood ... especially for students who are not as proficient in English would be easy for them to understand the video and grasp the concept presented; so I can say that I got exactly what it meant by pragmatic failure in the Arabic dialogue between the TV presenter and the guest ... for me the way they handled feedback tends to be offensive and chaotic... both of them didn’t handle the misunderstanding well, but the guest was smarter in his responses comparing to the TV presenter...” (S11, Int.1, P.4)

The extract above indicates that the TV show fosters interest, which may contribute to the student’s motivation. S11 embraced the use of video in learning about pragmatic failure when exchanging feedback. The presentation of the dialogue in an Arabic TV show appears to have been

the main reason for her motivation. She described the TV show as “interesting” and “easy to understand,” suggesting that it likely assists in delivering the pragmatic concepts that were initially introduced. This becomes apparent when considering her description of pragmatic failure, where she describes the interaction as “offensive” and “chaotic,” criticises the handling of the misunderstanding, and characterises the guest’s responses as “smarter.”

Reflecting on tasks 3 & 4 (caricatures), students embraced the use of cultural humour as a determining factor in shaping their perceptions on what they found to be “amusing,” “interesting,” and “funny.” For S16 and S20, Task 3 is the most “interesting” and “entertaining” task due to the humorous elements embedded within the caricatures, particularly the presentations of the various responses to feedback in their local culture context (Ref.1). S20 stated that the task’s most enjoyable aspects stemmed from its delivery of feedback in a comedic manner while highlighting “clever” and “socially acceptable ways” of addressing misunderstandings (Ref.1). In a similar note, S11 further illustrated how cultural humour has likely contributed to the creation of the fun environment she experienced.

Actually, it is very funny how we respond to positive feedback in our society ... I really like this presentation style ... especially the caricature that has the way we respond to positive feedback, “Oh you look more beautiful” [laughs] ...and responding “Say Masha’a Allah” [laughs] ... it is very funny and reflect our reality ... felt like informal and less intense for me ...” (S11, Int.1, P.4).

As shown above, with S11, Task 3 is described as an “informal” activity that can add an element of ease and comfort. This is seen in the way she described how they give/respond to positive feedback in their society. It looks like she found this task to be society-mirroring when she pointed it out as “reflects our reality.” It appears that the light-hearted depiction of feedback

in their culture with exaggerated features as in the caricatures have contributed to her positive feelings towards the task. Her laughter could also imply feelings of amusement and enjoyment, which suggests that Task 3 created a fun experience for her.

Three students, S2, S6, S14 noted the role of caricatures used in Task 4 (simulation) in motivating them to think “out of the box:”

“In task 4, I learned to think in another way or as they say out of the box. At first, it was a little difficult for me, but I partnered with my group, and we came up with a very good idea, and I found out that I have a talent in writing a caricature scenario, and this is very good.” (Ref. 1 S2); “Task 4 was wonderful; I love teamwork. I realised that each person has their own perspective, and with just two pictures, everyone expressed it in a unique way. It was beautiful and good.” (S6, Ref 1).

When we worked on the same caricature as a group... we looked at it differently ...different points of views ... each group’s scenario was different ... one group focused on two characters as giver and recipient while ignoring the third character in the picture ... other groups considered all three characters ... another considered the body language of the characters when they wrote their feedback interaction... etc. (S14, Int.1, P.8).

Students above expressed their positive feelings towards the use of caricatures in Task 4 in motivating them to learn in a “unique way.” Phrases like “out of the box,” “each person has their own perspective,” and “each group’s scenario was different” could suggest openness to creativity and acceptance of diverse viewpoints among students, implying their willingness to tackle new challenges and explore various methods, and approaches in their L2 learning journey. It could also

suggest the complex nature of approaching pragmatics through situations in real-world settings, where reactions and responses vary across individuals, even within the same cultural context.

Task 5 (beginner's artwork), on other hand, has been perceived by students as both "critical" and "entertaining," provoking both thoughts and laughter. Adjectives as "fun," "exciting," "entertaining," "beneficial," "critical," "helpful," and "inspiring," were found in the students' reflections. For example, S4, S12, S14 positively appreciated the use of a beginner's artwork in learning how to give constructive feedback as they highlighted it as "artistic." Given a beginner's artwork to critique seems to be what makes the task more "amusing," noting the fun in examining what the art was missing, such as hair volume and makeup style (Ref. 2). S14, on the other hand, enjoyed the criticality the art offered: "This task is beneficial because it gave me access to a variety of perspectives on the art, which could enhance not only our thinking and how to give feedback, but also gain some artistic knowledge." (Ref. 2)

In a similar note, S30 illustrated further what she liked the most about the beginner's artwork task:

the first thing I like was the art. It helps me to know how, as I said, I do not compliment, and I also do not offend, because it is possible that I do not like the artwork, but it is possible that this person actually did their best; so, I give feedback in a way that is honest, but not hurtful or full of compliments. I will not keep the person thinking they are doing great, living under the illusion of being great, "Oh God, your work is wonderful, you are an artist, and you do not need to do any improvements." Striking this type of balance in giving feedback may be a little difficult (S30, Int.2, P.3).

The extract above portrayed the student's perspective on Task 5 featuring a beginner's artwork, where feedback is referred to as "honest" and devoid of "mere compliments." The improvement the beginner's artwork needs and the student's aim of making the artist aware of that appears to be the main factors that motivate the student to have positive perceptions of this task. This is apparent in her description, "living under the illusion of being great," suggesting the awareness this task has possibly created within her, especially when she brought attention to the difficulty of giving constructive feedback without offending or demotivating the recipient with what she referred to as "honesty" or deceiving the recipient with "mere compliments."

In summary, the analysis emphasised the significance of motivation in encouraging students' readiness and enthusiasm to explore new ways of learning, viewing them as opportunities for personal and academic development. Having established the importance of motivation as a catalyst for student interest, the next section explores how this motivation manifested in learners' engagement with instructional content.

6.2.2 Theme 2: Student engagement

As indicated in the reflection and interview data, the majority of students perceived authentic materials and tasks as "engaging," apparently due to the interactive elements embedded within the tasks. The extent to which students were actively engaged could probably be demonstrated by their ability to notice some pragmatic elements and situations of feedback structures and exchanges. In addition, students made connections between what they noticed and prior knowledge or experiences they had, and ultimately, reason and distinguish these elements and situations through their observations and connections.

Sub-theme 1: Noticing. This sub-theme captures how students demonstrated engagement by attending to and identifying key pragmatic features within feedback interactions. It reflects their

developing understanding of the pragmatics of feedback, shaped by exposure to authentic materials and tasks. The majority of students emphasised how the discussion questions incorporated in Task 2 (TV show), and Task 7 ('Discourse Analysis') supported them in noticing and understanding pragmatic features in feedback structure. Reflecting on Task 2, S9 appeared to acknowledge the potential significance of contextual variables when exchanging feedback in L2. It is possible that she arrives at this realisation through the task's discussion questions, which appear to assist her in noticing.

Through the discussion, I learned how important to have good communication skills to sustain interaction as well as being attentive to factors such as confidence, gender, and tone of voice (S9-Ref 1).

Similarly, S13 observed how the discussion questions within the task support her noticing not only the pragmatic failure, but also how to repair it.

Introducing the topic in a video was a good choice and it draws my attention to the main point of the lesson. I had a chance to answer the discussion questions with my classmates which help me gradually understand what went wrong in their interaction and what expressions we need to fix (S13- Ref 1).

For S9 and S13, Task 2 discussion questions appear to function as "facilitators," guiding them in understanding the topic: S13 highlighted the role of the task questions in facilitating a "gradual understanding" of the concept of pragmatic failure and how to solve it. S9, on the other hand, noticed the essential communication skills needed to maintain good interaction, the importance of factors such as confidence, gender, and tone of voice in feedback exchange.

In contrast, S16 compared tasks 1 to 2, examining the differences in how misunderstandings were addressed and resolved.

... when I look at task 1, you had a misunderstanding [pragmatic failure] with your teacher and your teacher fixed it for you ... solved easily and ended friendly...but in task 2, I noticed that the misunderstanding didn't go well in the end. They took it personal one [the TV presenter] wanted to be respected because he is older and the guest didn't like that ... (S16, Int.1, P.4).

S16 has probably noticed how effective communication can mitigate misunderstandings smoothly in the first task, while in Task 2, she recognised how personal reactions can break down the communication. Such a comparison may have not only facilitated an understanding of what the two tasks teach, but also possibly stimulated self-awareness of interpersonal interactions within the student. This is apparent in her choice of expressions, such as “easily,” “friendly,” “took it personal,” and “the guest didn't like that.”

In contrast, S11 didn't grasp the concept of pragmatic failure presented in Task 1, which might have led to her disengagement from answering the questions correctly.

For me, my favourite is the caricature task [task 3]. In task 1, I couldn't understand the concept ... the idea was not clear yet, so I didn't know how to answer the questions of the task, but when we moved to the TV show in task 2, things [concepts introduced] started to become clearer and clearer (S11, Int.1, P.3).

Here S11 did not understand the concepts taught in task 1, focusing on face and pragmatic failures, which may hinder her participation in the discussion. However, this issue was apparently solved when she moved on to Task 2 (TV show), where she reported that concepts became “clearer” for her.

Other students experienced challenges when sharing their personal experiences of saving/losing face in Task 1. While their stories may have touched on face principles and societal

norms, they were not closely aligned with the concept of pragmatic failure. *For example, a student reported how her mother dislikes disagreement when it comes to her cooking, and another one mentioned how to save her own face when requesting—it felt like they got the gist of it, but they weren't fully there. However, it appears that their engagement increased notably in Task 2 as seen in their answers to discussion questions in class* (Fieldnotes, INT.1, January 22, 2023, P.3).

Furthermore, in Task 7, the majority of students stated how 'discourse analysis' assisted them in understanding and noticing what made Feedback B more constructive than Feedback A and C in terms of language and message tone: "I learned how feedback can be useful and what elements will help in its clarity, and how the tone of the message varies" (S17-Ref 2); "We dug deeper into how to write Feedback and its steps, and why Feedback B was better than A and C. It was more formal and courteous." (S24-Ref 2). S21 noticed how this type of analysis could support her personal "acceptance" and "responsiveness" to constructive feedback in real life.

I like it [Task 7] because I learned how to write an appropriate response to different types of feedback if I ever face something similar, how to accept feedback when it is constructive, how to state my opinion, save my face and not lose my public image. It means I will focus on the main points mentioned in the feedback formally, without letting myself become sensitive, turning the table, and taking it personally, which will affect the way I will eventually respond to the feedback (S21-Ref 2).

In her reflection, it is apparent that Task 7 assisted S21 in noticing what makes feedback constructive and how to respond to it. She recognised that "feedback acceptance" depends mainly on how constructive it is. She also made a connection between constructive feedback and stating an opinion, saving face, as well as her "public image," which possibly implies considering how feedback exchange may impact the perceptions of the giver's politeness and the recipient's image.

She also elaborated on emotional reactions to feedback when she mentioned “taking it personal,” “turning the table,” and “being sensitive,” implying her awareness of not getting defensive when responding to the feedback received, objectively taking the constructive value of it. It appears that Task 7 helps S21 see and understand pragmatic elements of considering face, politeness, as well as managing emotional reactions when giving and responding to constructive feedback.

Sub-theme 2: Connecting. This sub-theme highlights how students drew on their prior knowledge and personal experiences to make sense of the pragmatic features presented during instruction. Several students were able to relate these features to situations they had previously encountered or observed, demonstrating an emerging awareness of how pragmatics functions in real-world interactions. Interestingly, some also pointed out the bond that can be created between teachers and students who share their experiences of L2 learning. Again, this approach shifts away from what students would expect in formal lectures.

S1, S2, S4, and S12 could see the relevance and importance of sharing intercultural experiences of pragmatic failure in their learning of L2, which led to their engagement during their interaction with Task 1. They perceived it as “a good way” to learn from other experiences to avoid making “mistakes” in the future (Ref.1). S16 and S20 felt connected to Task 1 because it relates to their experience as a second language learner of English, as well as the experiences of the teacher when sharing her personal story of pragmatic failures in intercultural communication.

Task 1 is very enjoyable because we understood more when the teacher shared her experiences of making mistakes in L2 and how she solved the misunderstanding when learning a second language. It felt familiar and realistic (S16, Ref 1). Excellent! Sharing experiences between the teacher and student contributes to building communication skills between them (S20, Ref.1).

The examples given are very realistic. I felt like we were talking about our reality; something we can relate to and benefit from in our life so participating in the discussion was very good and engaging (S20, Int.1, P.6).

In the extracts above, S16 and S20 perceived Task 1 as “realistic,” “familiar,” “engaging,” “something we can relate to,” which appear to be the motivation behind their feelings of connection and relatedness when sharing experiences with each other and the teacher. S16 appreciated learning from the teacher’s experiences as a second language learner as an opportunity to “learn” and “understand.” S20, on the other hand, highlighted how sharing experiences of pragmatic failures can build student-teacher’s communication skills and make them feel more connected to each other. This connection that has likely been established in their experience could probably serve as a factor beyond their engagement with the task.

On a similar note, S28 emphasised that seeing the teacher’s and students’ “mistakes” made her feel more “open” about sharing hers, without feeling “shy” or “embarrassed” (Ref. 1). The sense of ease and openness she felt may have contributed to her being less self-conscious about her own pragmatic failure and willing to actively participate in the discussion.

S14 connected what she learned in Task 1 to a personal interaction she had with one of her teachers in an e-mail exchange. Drawing upon prior experiences appears to serve as an indicator for her engagement drawing on her connecting what she learned from Task 1 and her own experience of a previous e-mail exchange.

I didn’t expect that my teacher from another class would focus on the way I wrote my e-mail ... I didn’t know that teachers would consider the writing style ... I thought that they would just focus on the e-mail’s main point... the content. One of the teachers responded to an e-mail I sent, apologising for not attending her class due to the weather and a flood

warning... She first thanked me on the way I phrased my apology and then she addressed the apology itself... (S14, Int.1, P. 12)

Furthermore, the majority of students expressed sense-making by finding authentic materials and tasks being situated in local culture and the use of cultural humour embedded within tasks 2, 3, 4, and 5. As discussed earlier in the theme of motivation, the instruction focused on the learner's context, which motivated students to engage and connect with the topic presented. S22, for example, recognised the importance of explaining new concepts using daily life situations with humour as "the best way to introduce new information" (Ref.1). In line with S22, S24 further elaborated on the experience of learning new concepts within their own cultural context.

Well, I saw that the instruction was based on real life situations ... this is really good. When it is based on real situations in our society, the students will be more engaged ... feel related and included in the topic ... if you gave examples outside our culture, outside our society, or outside the scope of Arabs or Arabic culture, I will not get it, but when I looked at the situations/examples you presented, I feel like, "Yeah this is similar ... this is something could happen to us" ... It made the topic more interesting ... made me want to know more because I can easily relate to the topic ... (S24, Int. 1, P. 9)

In the extract above, S24 illustrated how important it was for her to have a reference to cultural situations in her society, thereby facilitating her understanding of the topic. She emphasised how cultural representations made her feel "included," and "related" to the topic, which possibly fostered a feeling of belonging within her, possibly connecting her to the concepts presented.

Sub-theme 3: Reasoning. This sub-theme covers students' perceived ability to reason and distinguish pragmatic elements and situations based on what they have already noticed and

connected. Analysis suggested that some students perceived the authentic materials and tasks as an opportunity for them to reflect and reason, distinguishing some pragmatic features of feedback in various situations and reasoning their appropriacy. This was demonstrated in their responses in the reflections and interviews, which reflect their level of engagement with the materials and the tasks presented. Expressions as “to discuss,” “to distinguish,” “to think,” “to critique,” “to choose,” and “re/formulate” were found in the students’ data. Reflecting on Task 4, S20 commented: “Great task! I learned how to articulate and write a cartoon dialogue about constructive feedback. It helps in formulating the idea in a humorous and creative manner. It made me think, critique, and consider the recipients’ feelings when receiving feedback.” (S20, Ref.1).

In reflecting on Task 6, S25, S26, S30, S31 stated that comparing and contrasting various types of feedback helped them distinguish constructive feedback and see differences in word choice (Ref. 2). S27, on the other hand commented on what the compare and contrast method in Task 6, has given her and how the beginner’s artwork, in Task 5, prompted a thoughtful discussion among the students she interacted with during the task:

... initially, I thought that Feedback A was constructive because it covered all the points, but when comparing it to feedback B and C, we started to notice the differences in style, word choice, and grammatical structures, we were able to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate ways of providing feedback. When re-reading feedback A, I realised, “Oh, it lacks important details and explanations... (S27, Int.2, P.7);

What I liked the most is the drawing because it reflects a bit of our reality. For instance, how I give constructive feedback to a friend or anyone who truly needs to work further on their drawings; how I can give feedback to help enhancing their work; how to be honest because the drawing looks bad and needs more work. In our group work, we were all sitting

and discussing, each member giving her unique perspective on the drawing. They all come with different viewpoints and styles, prompting us to comment on each other's opinion. For example, one member expressed, "I feel it is rude to say that." While another remarked, "I don't feel it is good feedback (S27, Int.2, P. 5).

In the extract above, S27 highlighted how tasks 5 and 6 served as an engaging platform, encouraging thoughtful reasoning within her. The comparison in Task 6 appears to be useful in terms of distinguishing various feedback structures: constructive vs. poor and demotivating. She initially thought that Feedback A was constructive, but once she underlined the language features of each one, she started to see the differences in feedback styles and structures. She also highlighted the discussion she had in her class group work when they were asked to give constructive feedback on a beginner's artwork in Task 5. It seems that the artwork prompted different views within her group regarding how to give constructive feedback, as each member had a different perspective and approach to the art, leading them to label each other's comments as either "rude" or "in/appropriate." This suggests that engaging with the task may have assisted her in possibly seeing, distinguishing, and reasoning about pragmatic features of feedback.

Sub-theme 4: Challenging. While many students demonstrated engagement through noticing, connecting, and reasoning, others experienced moments of challenge that led to temporary disengagement. These instances often occurred when tasks were perceived as cognitively demanding, linguistically complex, or misaligned with learner expectations. For example, S23 found Task 7 particularly difficult, noting that it was "long" and contained unfamiliar linguistic terms such as 'discourse analysis.' She mentioned that following the analytical steps was somehow accessible, but she couldn't grasp the technical concept of 'discourse analysis' and the method itself. She also mentioned that the length of the task made her

disengage as she preferred longer tasks to take place at the beginning of the lecture. She reported the same issue in tasks 6 and 8 (S23, Ref 2).

In addition to Task 7, other students also found Tasks 4 and 8 challenging. These tasks required learners to generate their own pragmatic situations for feedback scenarios, which differed from the more guided tasks they were accustomed to. For instance, S2 and S3 reported initial difficulties with Task 4 but found that once they had developed their ideas and created a scenario, completing the feedback writing became more manageable (Ref. 1). Similarly, S13 and S23 described Task 8 as demanding, particularly in generating a realistic scenario and composing feedback via e-mail. These students experienced a degree of disconnection during their early engagement with the tasks.

In my fieldnotes, I recorded that “*some students appeared confused at the beginning of tasks 4 and 8 and waited for me to provide a model before initiating group discussion*” (Fieldnotes, INT 1-2, January 22-29, 2023, pp.4-5). Some learners expected to be provided with ready-made pragmatic situations, as per conventional instructional norms. They expressed uncertainty about how to approach open-ended tasks without structured guidance, as they expected to be provided with explicit hints about the expected scenarios and content, rather than having to create a feedback exchange situation themselves. Despite this initial resistance, most students were eventually able to collaborate in small groups, using mind maps to brainstorm and draft their responses. By the time they reached the redrafting stage of Task 8, many reported greater ease with the tasks.

Overall, these findings suggest that while the creative nature of Tasks 4, 7, and 8 initially posed challenges for some learners, these moments of struggling or disengaging were often temporary and mediated through peer collaboration and discussion. Nonetheless, they highlight

how instructional design—particularly the use of technical terms or learner-generated input—can initially disrupt engagement, especially for learners unfamiliar with such approaches.

6.2.3 Theme 3: Pragmatic competence

Based on students' reflections and the data from the interviews, it seems that majority of students thought that authentic materials and tasks were valuable tools to improve their pragmatic competence. This perception was probably triggered by the integration of sociocultural elements in the tasks and the use of feedback formulaic language. Students recognised the value of engaging with the authentic materials and tasks as an opportunity to apply and improve their understanding of pragmatic principles in feedback context.

Sub-theme 1: Developing sociopragmatic awareness. Analysis revealed that some students regarded the authentic materials and tasks as a means to enhance their sociocultural understanding. S19 highlighted the significance of understanding the social and cultural influences on feedback: "I think those who consider social and cultural factors when writing constructive feedback are better communicators and are accepted by people" (Ref. 2). S24, on the other hand, emphasised that social and cultural factors influence on feedback vary; however, they may impact the way she expresses her thoughts (Ref.1).

The majority of students expressed their perceptions of feedback exchange using a variety of pragmatic expressions such as "respectful," "polite," "courtesy," "friendly," and "culturally appropriate," and "different perspectives," suggesting their awareness of sociocultural aspects of feedback. In S16's perspective, learning L2 politeness strategies play a significant role in feedback exchange as they can show "respect" and "courtesy" in intercultural communication.

Learning about L2 politeness strategies and constructive feedback has been a priceless experience for me. I haven't seen anybody talking about pragmatics and feedback. I

understand now how to convey respect and courtesy in my feedback in another language, especially if the recipient is not an Arabic speaker, the potential of misunderstanding is higher” (S16, Int.1, P.1).

Similarly, S30 noticed the advantages of pragmatic concepts that were introduced, raising awareness of their significance. Furthermore, S24, gained a new insight into the nuanced nature of giving positive feedback.

Analysing real-life examples of feedback and responses has drawn my attention to the benefits of pragmatic principles introduced. I can now identify a variety of grammatical structures and politeness strategies and employ them in my own writing (S30, Int.2, P. 4). My perception of giving feedback has changed. I can understand now how praise can also be seen as a form of exaggeration if not articulated wisely (S24, Ref.1).

In contrast, S1 described her initial confusion concerning the inclusion of contextual variables in the context of constructive feedback:

at the beginning when contextual variables were introduced, I didn't quite get their relevance... I didn't understand how and why they were connected to writing constructive feedback... I always write my feedback without considering the recipient's age ...etc. I would just say my opinion... but as we progressed to other tasks, I began to understand the rationale behind it (S1, Int.2, P.1).

In the extract above, S1 didn't understand why contextual variables were relevant to giving/responding to feedback at first. She was used to giving feedback without considering the recipient. However, as she progressed through other tasks and deepened her awareness, she began to understand the purpose of taking contextual variables into account when exchanging feedback.

This suggests a gradual understanding and recognition of the significance of sociocultural aspects in communication and feedback exchange that emerged during the pragmatics instruction.

Despite the importance of developing sociocultural awareness, S14 acknowledged that misunderstandings are inevitable and become more complex in intercultural communication.

Misunderstandings in daily life is a “necessary evil,” "شر لابد منه" and it becomes harder if it is in another language. However, the instruction would help in terms of enhancing my cultural awareness to minimise or deal with misunderstandings (S14, Ref 1).

Sub-theme 2: Facilitating pragmalinguistic fluency. Analysis revealed that some students regarded the authentic materials and tasks as a means to enhance their pragmalinguistic fluency. In regard to feedback formulaic language, the majority of students reported positively towards learning formulaic expressions of feedback. They noted that learning feedback expressions can build their communication skills in various contexts, including writing and speaking. Students used terms like “important,” “new,” “useful,” and “interesting” to describe how they felt about learning feedback formulaic language. From S9’s perspective, learning FS is an opportunity for self-expression. For S15 and S19, it is an opportunity for future communication: “Learning formulaic expressions are very important to learn how to communicate and exchange feedback. Without learning appropriate expressions, it would be hard to express myself in English.” (S9, Ref. 1). Similarly, S15 emphasised the long-term value of feedback-related expressions, noting that “learning formulaic expressions of feedback has many benefits to students, especially in future communications. Learning how to exchange feedback will also help recognise the importance of feedback and learn from it” (S15, Ref. 1). Echoing this, S19 highlighted both the communicative and personal value of such instruction:

“It is very important to learn formulaic expressions for giving/responding to feedback because English is a global language, and knowing how to take part in two-way communication is crucial. This concept is introduced for the first time in my studies, bringing new, useful terms to my personal knowledge” (S19, Ref. 1).

Furthermore, some students perceived feedback formulaic language as either “new,” and “useful,” or “new,” and “challenging,” indicating that some students perceived feedback expressions as fresh and helpful in their L2 learning process, while others described it as a challenge, possibly posing a difficulty at this stage of their L2 learning. This may relate to individual language proficiency, sentence patterns that the students have not yet acquired, or the influence of their first language structure, such as indirect suggestions to make changes in giving feedback starting with “WH Questions” or describing something positive starting with “How” as in “How nice!,” which were perceived as different and new.

It is new for me to make indirect suggestions to request changes in giving feedback, starting with a question word such as “How about making some changes ...etc.” I think this type of grammatical structure may not immediately come to mind for an Arabic speaker of English... (S14, Int.1, P. 4).

Very helpful, because there were some terms I didn't know, but I learned today. I tend to prefer friendlier terms that are not too direct and sharp, like “I think,” “I noticed,” and “maybe” (S16, Ref. 1).

S11, on the other hand, seems to prefer simple and few expressions to start with, “I think if these formulaic expressions are to be given to students at level 100-101 [intermediate], they should be simpler and fewer (S11, Ref. 1).

While they recognised the value of learning feedback expressions for enhancing their language skills, they also acknowledged the challenge of mastering them effectively. S14 also reported that complexity of sentence patterns (e.g., I wonder ...) was a new experience for her as they are used to relying mainly on mono-clausal sentence structures like modal verbs (e.g., would/could you?). Consequently, the introduction of new grammatical structures i.e., complex multi-clausal sentence structures, was perceived as both beneficial and challenging (S14, Int.1, P. 4).

Regarding the feedback writing formula—the N-P sequence—students generally expressed positive perceptions, recognising its usefulness in enhancing their L2 writing skills, particularly in organising ideas and structuring the writing process.

I benefited from the new phrases and the structure of writing constructive feedback, the sequence in giving feedback, how it is arranged in a paragraph, organised in a way that would help avoid any possible issues between me and the other. My approach used to be random, meaning I would write anything comes to my mind, flowed naturally, without even following the pragmatics of the e-mail, like writing the person's name ...etc. (S9, Int.2, P. 1).

In contrast, S13, S14, S21, and S30 demonstrated a preference for the feedback 'sandwich' technique, where constructive feedback is sandwiched between two positive comments. For them, it is important to ensure easy and friendly delivery of constructive feedback.

I liked the feedback writing formula, finding it to be a formal and appropriate way of giving feedback. However, it doesn't necessarily mean that I'll always follow it. Personally, I prefer not to start with highlighting what is missing in someone's work, as I feel that it may come across as negative. Instead, I would start with what I liked most about someone's

work to soften the impact of the e-mail on the recipient. Then, I'll proceed with constructive feedback, ended with other positive remarks. What I like most in the feedback writing formula is the sentence stems: in writing encouraging remarks, such as “when you consider those minor changes, ...” or “generally what you have accomplished ... etc.” (S21, Ref. 2)

Moreover, some students also reported challenges related to possible impact of contextual variables such as age, gender, social distance, and power, which will be discussed in detail in the 2nd strand, the influence of contextual variables on feedback exchange.

6.2 Synthesis of the 1st strand: Learners' perceptions of authentic materials and tasks

Most students perceived the integration of authentic materials and task-based approach as instrumental in enhancing both their motivation and engagement, while simultaneously supporting the development of pragmatic competence in the target language. The analysis underscored how motivation contributed to students' willingness and enthusiasm to explore alternative learning approaches, viewing them as opportunities for growth. Cultural relevance emerged as a central motivating factor, capturing students' interest and enriching their learning experience—not only by deepening their understanding of feedback, but also by equipping them to navigate potential misunderstandings during feedback exchanges.

The use of ‘discourse analysis’ and ‘compare-and-contrast’ techniques appeared to play a significant role in deepening students' engagement, encouraging them to think critically and reflectively about language use. Most students actively connected these insights to their own prior experiences, applying reasoning to interpret and differentiate between various pragmatic elements and situations—indicating a range of cognitive and emotional investment. However, some learners encountered challenges, particularly when interpreting written scenarios, generating context-

appropriate responses, or engaging with tasks that were linguistically demanding or disconnected from their academic or personal realities.

Moreover, the majority of students perceived the use of authentic materials and tasks as helpful in supporting the development of their pragmatic competence. This positive evaluation appeared to be linked to the integration of formulaic expressions frequently employed in feedback contexts, as well as the inclusion of sociocultural dimensions. While some participants encountered linguistic and cultural challenges in applying formulaic language—particularly in relation to contextual appropriateness and variability—the majority viewed the integration of linguistic forms with cultural awareness as an effective strategy for improving their overall communicative competence. This suggests that, despite certain difficulties, students recognised the value of understanding not only how language is structured but also how it functions across different social and cultural contexts.

6.3 Strand 2: The influence of contextual variables on the pragmatics of feedback

This strand explores how different contextual factors might influence the way feedback is structured and exchanged. It focuses on the relationship between these variables and the communication strategies used during feedback interactions. Within this strand, one main theme is identified—contextual variables—with two related sub-themes: situational factors and individual differences. The data reveal how contextual nuances shape the structure, delivery, and interpretation of feedback exchanges.

6.3.1 Theme 1: Contextual variables

As illustrated in Figure 6.2, the theme of contextual variables emerged as an external force that would influence feedback structure and exchange. It illustrates that despite the

introduction of specific feedback writing formula, various external factors have the potential to influence and change feedback writing styles. Situational factors and individual differences appear to be the primary variables highlighted by students in their reflections and interviews. These variables seem to dictate the way students approach feedback. While the N-P sequence may have provided a framework for composition structure in L2 pragmatics, the data suggest that it is not independent of the wider context in which writing takes place. In essence, this theme highlights the complex interplay between the prescribed feedback writing formula and the multitude of factors that would eventually influence the students' feedback writing styles.

Sub-theme 1: Situational factors. Analysis suggested that students have different perceptions of the impact of the way feedback is structured and exchanged regarding situational factors such as age, gender, social distance, and power. Twenty-five out of thirty-one students appeared to recognise the role of situational factors on their approach to feedback. However, two students, S9 and S30, demonstrated shifts in their perceptions from the first to the second week. Initially, S9 thought that situational factors have a substantial impact on the structure and exchange of feedback. However, by the second week, there appeared to be some hesitation in her perceptions particularly when giving a task requiring the formulation of written feedback. For S30, the correlation between the situational factors and feedback formulaic expressions seemed to be unclear for her during the 1st week. However, in the 2nd week, she indicated that she may have begun to understand the underlying rationale when she was engaged in writing feedback formula. The feedback writing formula, introduced in the second week, was provided to guide students on how to give feedback, starting with a general statement, highlighting what is missing in someone's work, and then stating what is good. Some students demonstrated a reluctance to follow the same structure as the formula when giving feedback to someone who is older, from the opposite gender,

or holds a higher position. For S14 and S30, gender appears to play a significant role in feedback structure and exchange as it seems that they prefer maintaining formality when interacting with males rather than females.

Gender plays a role in giving/responding to feedback. With females, I can give/respond to feedback with ease *أخذ وأعطي*, but with males, I will be more direct, to the point, and formal.” (S14, Int.1, P. 2).

I will use the introduced feedback writing formula, with the addition of friendly, informal notes at the beginning if the recipient is a female. In the case of a male recipient, I would employ the same writing formula, as it maintains a formal tone (S30, Int.2, P.4).

S20, on the other hand, holds a slightly different perspective regarding the role of gender on the pragmatics of feedback. It appears that she would apply the same feedback structure as in the N-P sequence with both males and females. However, she tends to put more emphasis on other variables such as the significance of age, authority, and social distance in her approach to giving and responding to feedback.

I consider age and social distance when choosing the type of feedback. Personally, it is easier to provide someone younger than me with constructive feedback, but it would be very challenging if it is directed to someone older than me (S20, Ref.1).

Since English is a gender-neutral language, I don't think about gender a lot, but I think it does affect what I say if it is informal ... if the feedback was formal using expressions like “Have you thought about reconsidering some ideas ...” would work for both men and women, and gender will not make a difference in this context ... When interacting with people of authority, such as my professor or a future manager, my responses will be

different. I will consider what to say and when not to speak, but in interactions with others, I will be more comfortable and don't think much (S20, Int.1, P. 2).

In a similar note, S21 highlighted the importance of age, authority, and gender on feedback exchange.

For me, I think social factors have an important impact on the way I exchange feedback. For age and authority, if the giver is my manager, I will not take it in a brief way using colloquial language, but I will respond formally and professionally. Same for gender, for me, it also affects the feedback exchange, responding to feedback giving from a female is different from a male (S21, Ref 2).

In contrast, S9 appears to downplay the significance of situational factors on feedback exchange as she "always articulates her words carefully when giving constructive feedback regardless of situational factors" (Ref. 2). In her interview, she felt that the introduced feedback writing formula is "gender-neutral" and she would use it with both males and females, criticising the notion of considering gender as a factor. Age, on the other hand, does appear to be a factor that would influence her feedback exchange, as she deems it challenging to provide someone older with constructive feedback.

If I give constructive feedback to both males and females, I will use the same writing style. I am truly disturbed by those who would provide constructive feedback to females and adopt a formal approach with males. I would adjust the feedback style if I were communicating with someone older out of respect ..." (S9, Int. 2, P.3).

When responding to feedback, students were given three choices: 1) accept it if it is constructive; 2) ask for clarification if it is unclear; and 3) disagree politely if it is unfair. S9, however, reported that it is challenging to disagree with someone older even if the feedback was

unfair. She indicated that it would be easier to disagree if the giver were of the same age or younger (S9, Int. 2, P.3).

In contrast, S2 criticised the majority's approach to feedback exchange, questioning why age should be a determining factor. She highlighted concerns that some older individuals might view their age as a "privilege," potentially leading to the dismissal or disregard of others' opinions (Ref. 1).

S19, on other hand, approached the influence of situational factors on feedback exchange from a different perspective. She associated the development of her language skills with her understanding of the role of situational factors.

The more I focus on situational factors, the more my proficiency in writing and speaking with individuals of all ages, authorities, and nationalities improves significantly and strongly. My understanding of appropriately using my words also gets better (Ref. 1).

Sub-theme 2: Individual differences. Eleven students highlighted the significance of individual differences, such as personality and communication styles, in shaping their feedback. They suggested that not only situational factors, but also individual traits can influence their approach to exchanging feedback. These findings indicate that even students who were sensitive to situational influences on feedback also tended to recognise the importance of individual differences. S20 and S11 emphasised how their communication styles in Arabic would affect their response to feedback in English. For example, S20 noted, "If I like the feedback, I may just say simple "Thank You" as we learned or I may add other expressions to show gratitude, this is my way" (S20, Int.1, P. 2). Similarly, S11 reflected on the differences between Arabic and English expressions of gratitude:

As a response, in Arabic, I might use phrases like “جزاك الله خيراً” (May God reward you with goodness) and “شكراً جزيلاً” (Thank you very much) so it is quite lengthy to express gratitude ... I was wondering if there are additional expressions that can be added when saying “thank you” in English (S11, Int.1, P. 1).

In the extracts above, the two students tend to employ Arabic communication strategies to show gratitude when responding to constructive feedback. Along with “Thank you!” and “I appreciate it,” religious expressions of gratitude such as “جزاك الله خيراً”, “wishing the giver God’s goodness for their kindness” are common practice in Arabic culture possibly due to their emphasis on politeness and respect, as well as invoking blessings or divine reward. It would be normal for Arabs to extend their gratitude to ensure assertion towards their interlocutors to avoid possible miscommunication as being inconsiderate of the recipient’s feelings; therefore, a phrase like “Thank you” might not be sufficient and need to be supplemented with another illocution (Al-Haidari, 2009; Almaro, 2013).

In addition, S24 brought up communication styles and their possible correlations with aspects such as one’s upbringing, culture, religion, and personality traits, suggesting the importance of projecting a positive image. She also proposed that introversion and extroversion, as personality traits, could potentially influence the way feedback is structured and exchanged: “... the communication style chosen doesn’t only reflect our culture, but also our upbringing ... and our religion ...so it is important for me to reflect a good image ...+being introverted or extroverted may affect how feedback is given or responded to ...” (S24, Int.1, P. 2).

S1, S30, S13, S16 and S27, on the other hand, highlighted the role of personality on the way they approach feedback. S16, for example, revealed how her shyness could affect the way she

responds to feedback. She touched on personality type as a shy person and how the mode of feedback, written or spoken, can limit the length of her response.

... I tend to focus on what I know, often using phrases like “thank you! I appreciate it!” Also, due to my shy personality, I think that I might not be able to extend my response if it is verbal, but if it is written, it is easier for me to further extend my response...” (S16, Int.1, P.7)

In contrast, S27 and S13 emphasised how considering the recipient’s personality or preference, such as those who are of a sensitive disposition or generally demonstrate sensitivity to criticism, could help tailor their feedback to best suit the recipient’s needs.

In giving feedback, it really depends on the person I am interacting with ... their personality ... I would consider the person’s preference, if they would like to start with highlighting what they have achieved first ...so they can feel relieved ... and then moving to constructive feedback because the majority prefer this approach ... For me, I don’t mind receiving constructive feedback first then encouraging remarks ... etc. I’ve started thinking this way from the instruction (S27, Int.2, P. 3).

... I would start with positive feedback first then addressing areas to improve, but I’m worried this approach may give the recipient high hopes at the beginning and once I started the constructive feedback they may feel shocked ... it really depends on the recipient... (S13, Int.2, P. 2).

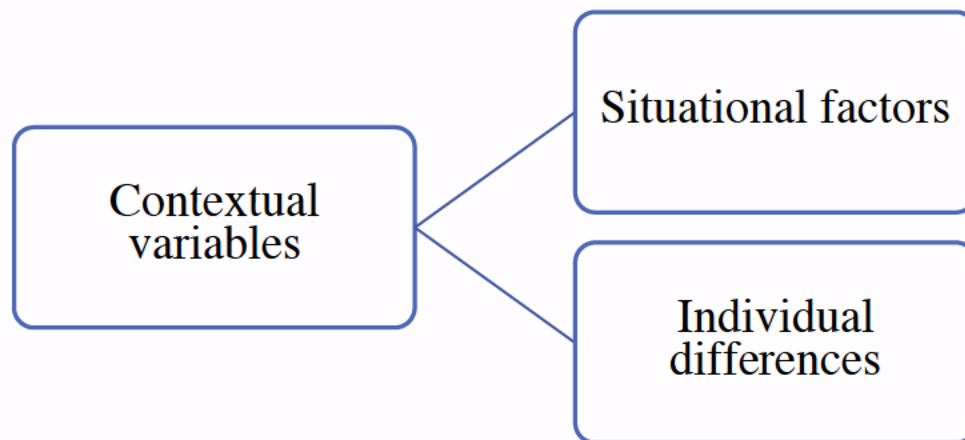
6.3 Synthesis of the 2nd strand: The influence of contextual variables on the pragmatics of feedback

The findings revealed a range of viewpoints among students regarding the influence of both individual differences and situational factors on their feedback structure and exchange. While

eleven out of the thirty-one students recognised the potential correlation between their communication styles and personality traits including giving and responding to feedback, twenty-five seem to attribute feedback structure and exchange to situational factors. Notably, age, gender, and power emerged as recurrent factors in students' perceptions on situational influences. Furthermore, six students had a tendency towards asserting their autonomy in their approach to feedback. These perceptions shed light on the subtle interconnection between contextual variables—individual differences and situational factors—in shaping feedback interaction in different contexts (e.g., education).

Figure 6.2

Illustration of the 2nd Strand Main Theme and Sub-Themes



6.4 Strand 3: The influence of intentions and affect on pragmatics of feedback

Within this strand, two core themes were identified:

- Intentions in giving feedback, with one sub-theme: *empathy*.
- Affect in receiving feedback, with four sub-themes: *embarrassment*, *disappointment*, *resilience*, and *self-composure*.

As reported in Chapter 5, the two themes explore possible illocutionary and perlocutionary acts in the domain of feedback within the field of pragmatics. Illocutionary acts include the speaker's intention and the contextual nuances shaping feedback while perlocutionary acts discuss the impact of feedback on the recipient's emotions and behaviours. They consider how recipients interpret feedback and what emotional and behavioural responses they may demonstrate.

6.4.1 Intentions in giving feedback

The theme of intentions in giving feedback emerged as a factor that would influence feedback structure and exchange, with empathy as a single variable highlighted by students in their reflections and interviews. In pragmatics, understanding a speaker's behaviour heavily relies on grasping their communicative intention (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969; Haugh & Jaszczolt, 2012). Accordingly, the intent behind delivering feedback plays a crucial role in shaping its tone, content, and manner of delivery, ultimately affecting both the developmental impact on the recipient and their emotional response.

Sub-theme: Empathy. This sub-theme echoes findings from the teachers' data (see Chapter 5), where empathy also emerged as a key factor in feedback exchange. The analysis revealed situations where students would provide feedback in a manner that shows consideration for the feelings of the recipients, perhaps indicating a reluctance to cause unnecessary discomfort. Fourteen students expressed a sensitive approach towards giving feedback, with the intention of 'putting themselves in the recipient's shoes' and simulate what it would be like. For example, saving the recipient's face and avoiding emotional harm when giving constructive feedback was emphasised by S14, S24, and S20.

... the instruction taught me how to give feedback without breaking the person in front of me. (S14, Int.1, P.1)

I really don't want to break the person (اكسر مجاديف الشخص) who is receiving feedback from me ... I will still look for a positive point to lighten up the mood. (S24, Int.1, P. 5)

It made me think about how the recipient would feel when receiving constructive feedback ... sentence stems such as "Have you thought ...?" or "I noticed" ... would help express my opinion in a safe and polite manner to soften the delivery of my feedback (S20, Ref. 1)

This could suggest that introducing politeness strategies and saving face principles, along with constructive feedback could promote contextually appropriate empathic feedback. It could be argued here that when feedback is given with empathy as the main intention, it could be approached with a genuine desire to understand the perspectives and emotions of the feedback recipients.

S27, on the other hand, further elaborated on her perception of constructive feedback, and what she referred to as both "honesty" and "politeness," emphasising the significance of considering the recipient's emotions while giving feedback.

"... being frank is often perceived as harsh and conveying honesty demands striking a delicate balance between being honest, polite, courteous, and realistic; so, I aim at choosing my words thoughtfully to ensure the recipient is emotionally comfortable ... highlighting what is good first and then highlighting what needs extra work" (S27, Int. 2, P. 3).

In the extract above, it is apparent that S27's feedback word choice and structure is influenced not only by situational factors (e.g., age), but also by the emotional response that the recipient would experience upon receiving feedback from her. It appears that providing constructive feedback that is "frank" could be interpreted as being "harsh." It could be argued here

that the way feedback is structured demonstrates the genuine intention of the feedback giver, probably as helpful and supportive, rather than being perceived as “harsh.” She seems to approach feedback with the intention of ensuring the recipient’s emotional comfort while simultaneously providing constructive feedback. She thinks that beginning feedback with “highlighting what is good first and then highlighting what needs extra work” would facilitate the delivery of feedback, suggesting that this type of structure could have a positive impact on both the academic progress and mental well-being of feedback recipients.

Similar to S27, S8 proposed a “softening” approach towards giving feedback while taking into account its emotional impact.

The structure in the writing formula for constructive feedback is ideal: starting by highlighting what is missing and then what is good; however, if I were to use it with someone sensitive, I would use softening technique at the start and the end to avoid the recipient getting nervous على اعصابه... I would also add positive notes in the end to tone down the affect of the feedback, like adding an emotional comfort “الطبطبة” (S8, Int.2, P. 1)

Here S8 demonstrated her awareness of considering the recipient’s feelings when giving feedback by using terms like “someone sensitive,” and “recipient getting nervous.” The use of phrases as “softening technique,” “to tone down the affect of the feedback,” and “adding an emotional comfort,” on the other hand, suggests her willingness to adapt the feedback writing formula, the N-P sequence, to meet the recipient’s emotional needs, especially in her statement about “adding positive notes in the end,” possibly promoting a sense of comfort and reassurance to the recipient during the feedback process.

In addition, S1 and S6 presented two opposite views of empathy in giving feedback. In S1's perspective, it is possible that giving constructive feedback to someone who is unwilling to accept it may lead to "unnecessary discomfort" (S1, Int. 2, P.4). S6, on the other hand, provided a solution to S1's perspective by demonstrating how instruction on the pragmatics of feedback could offer a resolution to the feedback "unnecessary discomfort" and improve its reception.

This type of instruction can make the person stronger, like accepting constructive feedback ... and learn how to give feedback without causing any emotional damage ... it is possible that there are people who do not accept others' opinions and become sensitive. It is also possible for them to break off their relationships... But it is normal to accept that all people have a different point of view. Not all people are the same, their feedback may differ and not necessarily constructive and appropriate (S6, Int.2, P.2)

In the extract above, S6 emphasised the value of learning how to give constructive feedback, highlighting its potential to promote acceptance, and prevent possible emotional harm. She also touched upon individual sensitivity to criticism and stressed the importance of embracing various points of views, implying that one's reaction to feedback may vary based on personal traits. Overall, S1's and S6's insights shed light on the nuanced nature of giving feedback and the need for empathy and flexibility during the process of feedback exchange.

6.4.2 Affect in receiving feedback

While the previous sub-theme, *Empathy*, emphasised students' sensitivity to others' emotions when giving feedback, this theme shifts the lens inward to examine their own emotional experiences as recipients. Fourteen students described how feedback affected them emotionally, revealing responses shaped by the tone, clarity, and perceived intent behind the messages they received. Importantly, the emotional impact of feedback—whether public or

private, peer-driven, or instructor-led—was not uniform but influenced by situational and relational dynamics. Most notably, feedback elicited two negative emotions: embarrassment and disappointment. *Embarrassment* refers to students' emotion of discomfort triggered by anxiety or nervousness in response to unexpected feedback, while *disappointment* is the expression of students' frustration or discouragement resulting from receiving unfairly given feedback or having their efforts ignored. The expressions of these two emotions were exclusively observed during the interviews.

In the face of such emotional reactions, it appears that thirteen students developed two specific skills, reported both in their reflections and interviews, to manage their feelings and regain a sense of stability, including resilience and self-composure. *Resilience* involves the students' ability to cope with the emotional impact of the feedback, recovering from any initial feelings of disappointment in order to use the feedback to grow. *Self-composure*, on the other hand, refers to students' ability to remain calm and composed and in control of their emotions and reactions to feedback. In short, feedback can elicit negative emotions such as embarrassment and disappointment, while also fostering emotional competencies like resilience and self-composure, both of which shape how students receive, respond to and ultimately use feedback.

Sub-theme 1: Embarrassment. Embarrassment is defined here as students' feelings of discomfort triggered by anxiety or nervousness in response to unexpected feedback. Two students in their interviews expressed a feeling of embarrassment when receiving or responding to feedback. This feeling could be attributed to the L2 anxiety they may have experienced, particularly if they are at a lower proficiency level in their L2, which is probably influencing their reaction in this situation. Another factor contributing to this feeling could be the type of feedback

provided, which may lead students to feel embarrassed, especially if they perceive it as highlighting their shortcomings.

Despite teaching students' various ways to respond to feedback, S16 stated that disagreeing with feedback could lead to feelings of embarrassment for her, as she is somewhat concerned that she may not be able to express herself clearly in English. She worries that if she were to voice disagreement to feedback, it may be interpreted as "impoliteness" due to her limited proficiency in English, potentially causing discomfort in the feedback process.

"If I disagree to feedback in English, it might come off as impolite due to my limited vocabulary. I will feel anxious about receiving more questions, which could be embarrassing if I couldn't understand" (S16, Int.1, P. 2).

S27 also expressed her concerns about the association drawn between learning and grades, which made her feel anxious about the possibility of losing marks when receiving constructive feedback.

... especially, for us as students, literally what we do in our academic lives has an impact on grades. This is how it works. We will become easily embarrassed and offended if a teacher points out there is something wrong with our work ... We worked hard on it, and it has grades. I may not accept anything said. I need the person who gives me constructive feedback on my work to criticise me in a way that makes me feel understood and draws my attention to it. Otherwise, I may feel sensitive and defend myself, "No, my work is perfect!" or I will get nervous and ruin it, and then everything will be ruined (S27, Int. 2, P.2).

In the extract above, S27 indicated that their academic performance directly impacts their grades. Therefore, any critique or mention of perceived inadequacy regarding her work could lead

to feelings of embarrassment. In this sense, even constructive feedback may be perceived not only as a threat to face, but also to their academic grades, potentially triggering feelings of embarrassment and worry. However, her statements, “we worked hard on it, and it has grades,” and “I may not accept anything said,” suggest that she would be less likely to become upset over a lower mark if feedback were given in a way that would give her more understanding, suggesting the importance of considering the pragmatics of feedback. Additionally, it seems that the feeling of embarrassment could influence her response to feedback. Her remarks, “I may feel sensitive,” “defend myself” and “I will get nervous and ruin it, and then everything will be ruined,” imply that her emotions may overcome her ability to respond calmly or rationally to feedback, potentially leading to defensive reactions, as she said, “No, my work is perfect!”

Sub-theme 2: Disappointment. Disappointment is the expression of students’ frustration or discouragement resulting from receiving what they perceive to be unfairly given feedback or having their efforts ignored. Although it seems that majority of students recognise the supportive nature of constructive feedback, three students experienced disappointment upon receiving it, leading to a change in their perceptions of constructive feedback and an appreciation of pragmatics of feedback in mitigating its effect. S30 illustrated that she would ask for a clarification if the feedback was unclear, but disagreeing politely with feedback if it was unfair would not change how she felt about it. Instead, she would try to use what she has learned to concentrate on what needs improvement in her work and try to ignore the negatives emotions that came with it, “not to be easily carried away by our emotions *ينجرفون بعواطفهم*” (S30, Int.2, P. 1).

S1, on the other hand, described when she felt disappointed by an unexpected comment in the feedback she received because her effort was not taken into account.

When I made a lot of effort in my drawings, I didn't like it when I was told why you chose this specific sad moment of the match to picture in your drawing? ...I felt bad ... I made a lot of effort and took me lots of time/materials to finish it ...” (S1, Int.2, P. 4).

She continued expressing her frustration, emphasising the importance of addressing the strong aspects of the recipient's work as well as considering her choice as an artist.

It affected me ... I wonder why they focus on the idea behind the art I created instead of looking at the strong points of the artwork itself ... I am confident but still affected me ... Words have an affect ...but I did not feel very negative ... they expected me to choose a different moment to picture in my drawing because they don't want me to focus on the single sad moment of that big happy occasion, but I had a purpose, I wanted to shed light on that particular moment that some may not recognise ... it was a thought-provoking moment for me ... however, they expected a happy moment instead...(S1, Int.2, P. 4-5).

In the extract above, S1's choice of phrases as “it affected me,” “I am confident but still affected me,” suggests the feelings of disappointment she had when she received feedback on her art. Terms as “they expected me to choose a different moment ...” vs. “but I had a purpose ... I wanted to ...” could probably suggest her desire of exercising her artistic agency and avoid conforming to conventional norms. Arguably, it could be that recognising the recipient's efforts by highlighting their strengths alongside what they need to work on further, could possibly have a positive impact on S1 as an artist, creating feelings of motivation rather than discouragement. Also, teaching students' various ways to respond to feedback may empower them to exercise their agency in both L1 and L2 and lessen the feeling of disappointment.

In contrast, S27 sheds light on the importance of accepting constructive feedback without giving up or feeling “disappointed,” suggesting that those feelings could influence how feedback

is received and taken. It is also possible that she is aware of maintaining emotional self-control upon initial feelings of discouragement and responding to feedback “wisely.”

When you join a workplace Insha’Allah ... you will face a variety of situations... and you need to accept constructive feedback from those in a higher position without feeling easily sensitive ... some may give up on the first feedback even if it is constructive and given in an appropriate way, ...so how can you accept it in the right way? turn it into reinforcement rather than allowing it to make you feel disappointed ... and responding wisely (S27, Int.2, P.1).

Sub-theme 3: Resilience. Resilience involves the students’ ability to cope with the emotional impact of the feedback, recovering from any initial feelings of disappointment and use the feedback to grow. According to the analysis, six students appear to express resilience and patience when receiving feedback. This suggests that the students may have developed a degree of understanding and tolerance in dealing with feedback situations, recognising that giving and responding to feedback can be a challenging task but that it is part of the effective learning cycle.

It helps me understand how to deal with tough situations in life without breaking right away ... and how to respond and not let it affect me too much (S14, Int.1, P.1).

When receiving negative feedback, I will not respond in the same level of negativity. I will be more decent, and I will not let it affect me (S16, Ref.1).

It will make me feel less sensitive ...not easily affected, especially if the feedback is demotivating ... it is possible that the feedback I would receive may not meet my expectations ...” (S30, Int.2, P. 1).

In the extracts above, it seems that S14, S16, and S30, prefer to maintain control over their own feelings or reactions when receiving feedback. This is perhaps influenced by the outcome of

the pragmatics instruction on various feedback scenarios. The use of phrases as “not let it affect me too much,” “I will not let it affect me,” and “not easily affected” could indicate that the three students have likely developed emotional coping techniques to manage their reactions to feedback. Demonstrating resilience not only supports their feedback response, but also likely contributes to their ability to adapt despite challenging circumstances.

S11 further elaborated that developing “patience” is important for managing feedback-receiving and that the giver of the feedback should take into consideration how L2 learners would perform academically.

As recipients of feedback, we should, in my opinion, be patient and understand that is normal. Nobody is perfect. Since I am still learning L2, it is possible that I will make mistakes, but I expect others to be understanding (S11, Int. 1. P.2).

Sub-theme 4: Self-composure. Self-composure, on the other hand, refers to students’ ability to remain calm and composed and in control of their emotions and reactions to feedback. It appears that offering guidance on how to respond to various scenarios encountered when receiving feedback is useful in assisting eleven students maintain self-composure, and perhaps avoid reacting defensively. For example, S9 and S14 highlighted how the instruction guided them to learn how to accept constructive feedback without getting “defensive.”

To be honest, I enjoyed the instruction. It can support me with sentence structure, constructive feedback writing ... also differentiating different types of feedback... considering social factors ... and avoid being defensive ... responding in an appropriate manner ... as in the compare and contrast task, we saw the differences between constructive feedback and another one that would encourage defensiveness (S9, Int. 2, P.4).

... the instruction opens my eyes to handling interactions smoothly ... being steady, not reacting strongly to criticism, as Task 2 (a TV show) illustrated, whether it is constructive or negative, getting defensive? or easily breaking down? ... (S14, Int.1, P.4).

In the extracts above, the two students illustrated their reactions as embodying steadiness and self-composure, indicating an ability to maintain balanced responses in any feedback situation, probably demonstrating a healthy, positive emotional detachment from feedback that would influence their response.

In a similar note, S11, S27, and S30 demonstrated self-control and composure in their reaction to receiving feedback. S11 chose not to openly express her dissatisfaction with the feedback received, particularly if she felt it was unfair: “In the face of unfair feedback, I choose to compose myself and try to say politely “thank you” and ask how we can work on it, but I will not explicitly express that I didn’t like it” (S11, Int.1, P.3).

S27 elaborated further into why it is important to exercise self-control over the feedback situation before responding, especially in a professional setting. The expression “putting emotions through a filter” holds considerable weight on highlighting the strength required to manage her feelings before acting upon them.

... responding to a friend or a relative differ from a workplace ... Whether it is professional or not matters... Can you control your emotions fully? ... putting emotions through a filter? ... how can I express myself? ... I mean managing your emotions ... For me, when I tried to respond professionally for Feedback C “the demotivating one” in [Task 6], I said, “I wish you were respectful when you gave feedback,” to have a good relationship with my employer, but if I were not in a professional setting, I would say more, “I wish you stated

your opinion nicely ...etc.” I would be more direct and franker... still maintaining a respectful outlook ... (S27, Int.2, P.7).

S30, on the other hand, illustrated how analysing feedback situations and structures could help in avoiding taking it personally and reacting emotionally.

When I analysed the situation as in the feedback ‘discourse analysis’ task, I can see and come up with an appropriate response ...asking for clarification? But if I didn’t read well and get the main message, I may take constructive feedback personal... so I need to arrive to the main point of the feedback ... is it constructive and professional? Or personal? Or an insult? So, the analysis will assist me in avoiding any potential confusion or becoming overly emotional and personalising the situation by allowing my emotions to take control (S30, Int. 2, P.4).

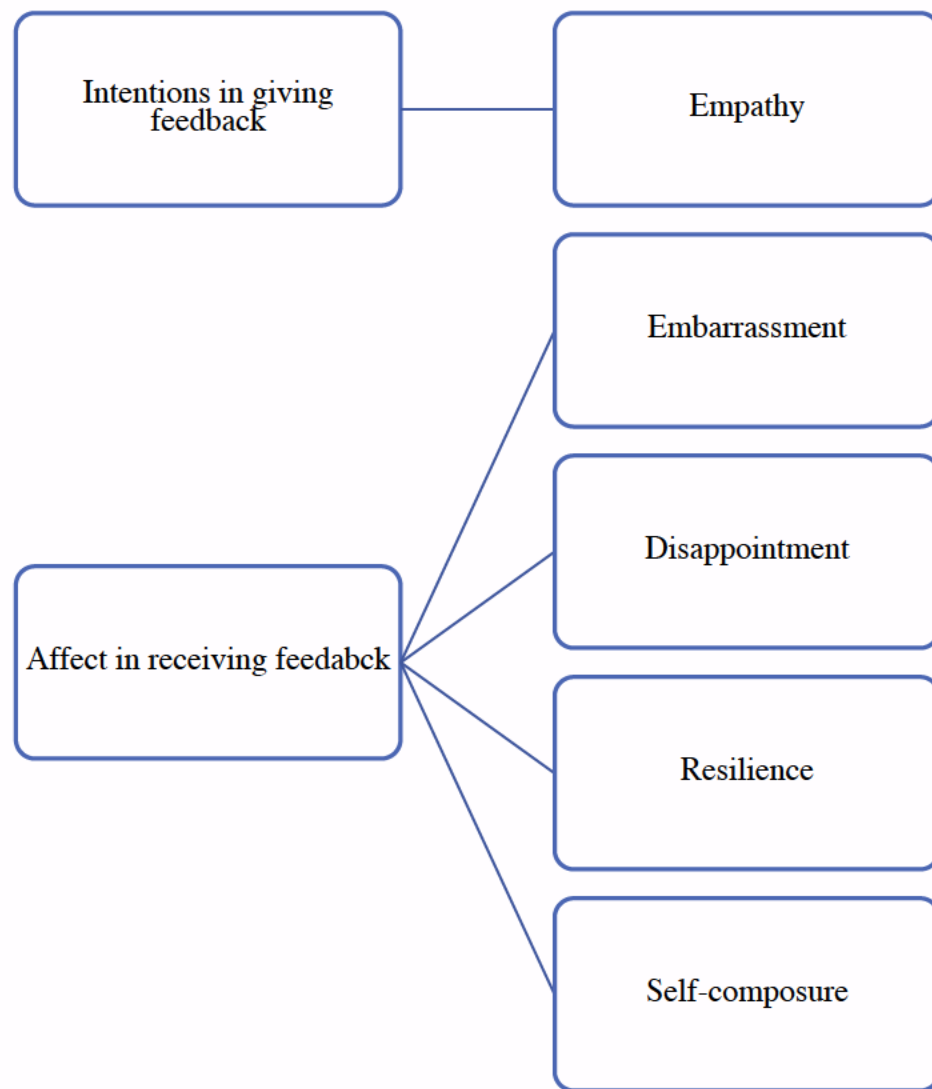
6.4 Synthesis of the 3rd strand: The influence of intentions and affect on pragmatics of feedback

The findings revealed that exchanging feedback entails far more than a transactional process of giving and receiving—learner emotions play a pivotal role in shaping the interaction (see Figure 6.3). Students who provided constructive feedback often demonstrated heightened sensitivity toward recipients’ emotional states, actively prioritising their well-being throughout the exchange. This intentional empathy was evident in their deliberate choice of words and concern for the emotional impact of their feedback. Such responses may be attributed to their experiences in EFL pragmatics instruction, which appear to cultivate a pragmatic awareness of interpersonal dynamics and face-saving strategies. Notably, feedback—regardless of its intent or framing—elicited two recurring negative emotions in recipients: embarrassment and disappointment. Without proper guidance, these emotions may lead to defensive behaviour,

undermining the purpose of feedback. Instruction on navigating varied feedback scenarios may therefore encourage learners’ resilience and emotional regulation, helping to mitigate the risk of face-threatening acts. Overall, the findings suggest that pragmatic competence not only enhances communicative clarity but also supports emotionally appropriate feedback practices.

Figure 6.3

Illustration of the 3rd Strand, Themes, and Sub-themes



6.5 Outcomes: Communication and life skills development

In the 4th strand, possible outcomes on communication and life skills development, two themes emerged: interpersonal skills and intercultural and translation skills. Within interpersonal skills, two sub-themes were identified, confidence-building and relationship-building. Within intercultural and translation skills, two sub-themes were identified, translations and cultures-bridging. The emergence of this strand and its themes stem from students' perceptions of L2 pragmatics, encompassing various aspects beyond just the pragmatics of feedback.

6.5.1 Theme 1: Interpersonal skills

Findings from the interview data suggested that teaching pragmatic features of feedback can contribute to the development of students' interpersonal competencies by boosting their L2 communicative confidence, facilitating constructive interactions, and helping to prevent miscommunication between feedback providers and recipients.

Sub-theme 1: Confidence-building. Five students highlighted situations where instruction could boost their confidence in L2 communication. This perception appeared to stem from their initial engagement with formulaic expressions and the implicit social and contextual meanings embedded in such interactions. For instance, S24 explained that developing awareness of these pragmatic features enhanced her ability to communicate politely and professionally: "It enhanced my self-confidence in expressing my thoughts in a polite and professional way, improving my professionalism in communication, and boosting my self-confidence, personal growth, and self-esteem" (S24, Int.1, P.7).

S20, on the other hand, expressed a sense of comfort, probably conveying a relaxed and confident tone when interacting with feedback whether written or spoken.

Certainly, I have come to understand more about L2. Perhaps it has made me understand more... in depth ...writing or speaking with comfort, not necessarily when I communicate with someone ... even on my own, if, for example, I read something, I will be able to make more appropriate choices in language since I have more knowledge of feedback (S20, Int.1, P.1).

Furthermore, S16 pointed out the importance of teaching pragmatics of feedback in order to boost students' confidence in expressing their opinion, building student-teacher relationships.

I mean, I feel it is essential that students understand how to respond to feedback, how to express their opinions without feeling reluctant, and how to respond considerably better. ... it helps students express their opinion better. That is, it is true that they have the ability to both receive and respond, building the relationship between students and their teachers, as an example... (S16, Int.1, P.2).

Interestingly, S1 and S14 demonstrated how to use their acquired skills in giving and responding to feedback to build their confidence in their own work: S1 wondered curiously, "How can I use feedback to build my confidence? ..." (S1. Int. 2, P. 2); while S14 stated that "... learning how to respond to feedback in a way that shows I am an understanding and confident person, the same image I want to present and preserve ..." (S14, Int.1, P.8).

Sub-theme 2: Relationship-building. The analysis of interview data indicated that the pragmatics instruction has the potential to facilitate the development of interpersonal rapport and mitigate communicative breakdowns. Such outcomes are largely attributable to the dialogic nature of feedback exchanges, which involve reciprocal roles of giver and recipient, as well as the integration of pragmatic constructs—such as politeness strategies and facework—within the instructional content. S16, for example, explained that learning feedback formulaic language and

feedback writing formulas, including vocabulary and various grammatical structures, gave her “a new space” for communicating smoothly as well as minimising misunderstandings in intercultural communication.

I learned a lot ...this means that it gave me a new space to learn new vocabulary and grammatical structures, and the situation where I could use it ... it was very useful ... learning formulaic language and writing formulas make the communication simple, for example, simplicity here is not the sense of ease, but in the sense of cognitive simplicity, not thinking too much of what to say... simple sentences can add simple touches to intercultural communication ... giving them deeper meanings, like the use of “Give me feedback” vs. “Would you like to give me feedback?” (S16, Int.1, P.2).

S30 emphasised the recipient’s face, initiating a respectful, smooth, and flexible exchange of feedback.

Considering the recipient’s face in giving constructive feedback will help them handle this type of feedback with respect, accepting it smoothly and flexibly. This way, there will not be misunderstandings, or problems and information will be communicated smoothly between the two interlocutors (S30, Int. 2, P. 2).

S8 demonstrated that transparency during feedback exchange could build a strong relationship: “... being well aware of how to express their points of view effectively will foster smooth interactions, especially in a work environment, strengthening relationships” (S8, Int.2, P. 1).

S27, on the other hand, emphasised the importance of considering constructive feedback as a skill for nurturing strong relationships, and creating a healthy and constructive environment,

especially in a professional setting. She stated that if feedback was not given constructively, it could lead to misunderstandings and negative perceptions of the giver.

... if I don't know how to deliver feedback in a constructive way, my relationships could be ruined. I mean, if every time, let's say a friend sees my feedback as criticism, she would say, "This is just criticising me," and she might think bad of me as well. If I know how to convey the idea to her ... I mean, oh, this could ruin a lot of relationships, and this is common among females, especially if they don't know how to give feedback appropriately, as it contains social intelligence... (27, Int. 2. P. 3)

She also highlighted the potential emergence of "toxic relationships" if feedback-giving-and-responding is not communicated constructively.

... exchanging opinions on each other might lead to toxic relationships, yes, but how can we deliver feedback constructively so that we learn from it and benefit from it in the future? It will be beneficial to have this skill once we start working (S27, Int. 2. P. 8).

Also, S24's discussion about the labour market is noteworthy as it highlights the significance of communicative skills in securing employment. This observation emphasises that obtaining a job is not solely dependent on mastering the English language, but also on acquiring the essential skills to "save face." i.e., pragmatics (S24, Int. 1. P. 6).

6.5.2 Theme 2: Intercultural and translation skills

The emergence of this theme and its sub-themes reflects students' broader perceptions of L2 pragmatics, extending beyond the immediate scope of feedback exchange. Notably, twelve students demonstrated awareness through examples that fell outside the intended instructional focus. These offered valuable insight into their perceptions of how they were developing pragmatic competence and their ability to transfer learning to wider communicative contexts. The analysis of

the interview data revealed outcomes implicating interculturality and translation. It indicated that providing instruction on L2 pragmatics could increase students' awareness and understanding in the field of translation. This could be attributed to the nuanced nature of pragmatics and the exploration of hidden meanings in communication. The analysis also suggested that some students found learning L2 pragmatics beneficial in promoting cultural understanding and connection, emphasising the importance of understanding the cultural and social nuances of the target language.

Sub-theme 1: Translation. Analysis indicated some unforeseen outcomes relating to the field of translation, both as a practice and as a major, by raising awareness among twelve students. For S9 and S16 it is “an eye opener” to the way they speak and write in Arabic as well as to their translation studies (S9, Int. 2, P.1; S16, Int.1, P.3). The students' intrinsic motivation for translating the nuances of pragmatics instruction, involved uncovering hidden meanings in communication, and emerged as a contributing factor. For example, S1 mentioned that she shared her experience of learning L2 pragmatics with other students who are interested in learning English and translation studies, pointing out the importance of learning how meaning varies based on context and other factors such as social and cultural factors (S1, Int. 2, P. 6). S11, referenced her experience in translating internationally by addressing the challenge of unfamiliarity with cultural norms and appropriateness, “Not all thoughts are suitable or appropriate to voice. I used to stick to what I know when translating internationally to be on the safe side ... (S11, Int.1, P.3).”

S14 described her encounter with the novel *Les Misérables* and what she has experienced as a result of potentially inadequate translation skills that probably failed to “to capture the essence of the original text.” Refencing her experience of reading a French novel translated into Arabic

may not only indicate an awareness of the importance of translation but also emphasises the significant roles that could be played by pragmatics instruction in the translation process.

... I found myself unable to finish reading a novel due to the translator's inability to capture the essence of the original text, including characters' emotions, the storytelling itself, and the portrayal of the characters' suffering ... (S14, Int.1, P.3).

In the extract above, S14, emphasised the need for translators to possess a deep understanding of both the source and target cultures. It suggests a rise in student awareness that effective translation of *Les Misérables* entails not only linguistic proficiency but also a grasp of the cultural context to convey the intended meaning, depicting the same emotional and social impact as the original text. She further elaborated on the significance of understanding social and cultural factors in the process of translating.

It is important, whether for language students of English or students who will be future translators to clarify that learning another language extends beyond memorising words, terms, and expressions. It requires an understanding of social and cultural influences, how the language is used in its society? and how students can learn how to use it effectively with native speakers (S14, Int. 1, P.1).

She specifically mentioned future translators, indicating a focus on preparing language learners for a career in translation. This implies a consideration of the unique challenges and requirements for translation work. She also emphasised the significance of equipping L2 language learners, particularly those who aim to become translators, with the understanding that language is influenced by social factors. This implies a focus on helping students understand the cultural and societal context in which language is used.

Moreover, S1 and S24 shed light on the importance of acquiring proficient translation skills to reflect a positive image of the translator, “It is good to learn how to give constructive feedback in English because I am used to give it in Arabic so learning another style is good to reflect a good image of myself ... If I translated it literally, it may not come across as I wanted it to be...” (S1, Int.2, P.5); “... this is very important, and we need to pay attention to it and learn it, especially at the professional level because when we become translators, if God wills, we should reflect a good image of our culture and our religion ...” (S24, Int.1, P.2).

Sub-theme 2: Cultures-bridging. Analysis of interview data indicated that learning L2 pragmatics for some students was beneficial in promoting cultural understanding and connectivity, raising awareness of the significance of learning the cultural and social nuances and the hidden meaning of the target language for better communication. Four students were able to put across their concerns about what they have experienced and what they need through the discussion of the influence of language and culture. They described images of their interpretations of L2 pragmatics learning in communication. This image appears to have a positive portrayal, yet it remains elusive in communication due to the subtleties of pragmatics in language learning. This may indicate a need for a more interculturally sensitive teaching approach to ensure effective communication and understanding.

Frankly, I have benefited a lot. I am now a translator, God’s willing. To understand the impact of translating terms with a true hidden meaning, I must possess knowledge of these meanings as well as the overall ambiance of the language, which reveals its hidden face. Therefore, I can convey it to another individual who can speak the language... I may encounter difficulty in learning a second language. It is not the same as my mother’s

tongue. I may come across challenging terms related to the second language society. Our society is different from other societies (S14, Int. 1. P. 1).

S14's extract is a response to the significance of learning L2 pragmatics. S14's use of the words "a true hidden meaning," "the overall ambiance of the language," and her description of it as "the hidden face of the language" suggests that she may hold a curious approach towards L2 pragmatics to uncover deeper layers of interpretation that could go beyond the literal words. The latter suggests that language hides deeper, less obvious layers of interpretation, intention, and cultural context that require exploration and analysis to uncover. This gives the impression that language has "a hidden face," which could be deeper in description than "the hidden meaning," that is usually referred to in pragmatics definitions. She refers to her society as "different from other societies," which illustrates her awareness of cultural differences and their possible impact on intercultural communication. These descriptions appear to be S14's perception of learning L2 pragmatics, possibly building bridges of connection and mutual understanding among individuals from various backgrounds.

She also highlighted cultural assumptions about the similarity of expressions and communication styles between Arabic and speakers of L2. She indicated a presumption that what is said in Arabic can easily be conveyed and understood by English speakers, demonstrating the role of cultural and linguistic transfer and the need for understanding social aspects of language (Int. 1, P. 4). This can be seen in her contrasting of academic language with everyday vernacular, suggesting that students may be more familiar with L2 formal language than informal ones. Her positioning implies that using language disconnected from social norms and everyday interactions can hinder students' ability to effectively participate in social situations (Int. 1, P.5).

Similarly, S11, S24, and S27 highlighted the complexities and nuances involved in translating figurative language and suggested exploring culturally appropriate alternatives in the target language, indicating the importance of instruction in understanding cultural differences as pragmatics varies across cultures.

There are cultural idioms in Arabic such as the endearing term “فلذة كيدي” if I try to translate it ... “part of my liver?” it sounds heavy; not endearing at all; not the same meaning. The same when a father calls his daughter “يا بابا” ... if I say it to someone outside our culture, how would they react? They may say what is that? “يا بابا”? ... it varies across cultures. Without instruction, how would I know? (S24, Int. 1, pp. 1;7); ... behind every word, there is a deep meaning, saying “it is not yourself, be your old self.” This is an encouragement in my culture. Maybe outside my culture would be offensive? (S27, Int. 2, p. 7)

In the extract above, S24 and S27 seem to understand the influence of the cultural context behind language expressions and the challenge they may face in conveying the same meaning on intercultural communication, connecting on a deeper level with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. This could indicate how teaching cultural nuances alongside language learning not only enriches communication but could foster mutual understanding and appreciating of different ways of life. The endearing terms mentioned by S24 cannot be explained solely without referring to the cultural context. The use of the endearing term “فلذة كيدي” “lit. piece of my liver,” is frequently used to affectionately refer to one’s children. This term which can be compared to the English expression, “the apple of my eye,” emphasises the deep bond between parents and their children, as children are seen as essential components of their parents’ lives. It is worth mentioning that the expression’s origins can be traced back to ancient times (e.g., Babylon’s), where it has been widely

believed across different cultures that the liver is the centre of the soul (Mellinkoff, 1979) in which emotions are rooted (Steinert, 2020). It could be argued here the role that L2 pragmatics could play in incorporating cultural elements into language education, thereby bridging potential cultural gaps in communication.

Furthermore, S27 illustrated how pragmatics instruction can serve as a means of addressing not only social factors and the relationship between the feedback giver and recipient, but also the cultural background of the recipient.

... as well as the cultural background of the individual who is receiving feedback from me. I should pay attention to it too as one of the factors. For instance, I like to give feedback a lot, but sometimes I feel like the recipients are angry despite my belief that I didn't say anything wrong, you know ... so I should pay attention to my feedback style. I should be aware of who is the person in front of me? Their culture? Our relationship? ... (S27, Int. 2. P. 2)

S27's extract suggests she is open and positive about other cultures, but she feels uncertain about how others might react if she gives feedback. Although experienced in giving feedback, she expresses concern about her ability of being pragmatically competent in intercultural communication and how well she can communicate across cultures—especially using the right tone and approach. She draws on her experience of the local culture, attempting to envision how it would be perceived in a global communication. It could be argued here that having an understanding of the local culture and its intercultural implications can facilitate communication and foster healthier relationships among individuals from diverse backgrounds. This approach

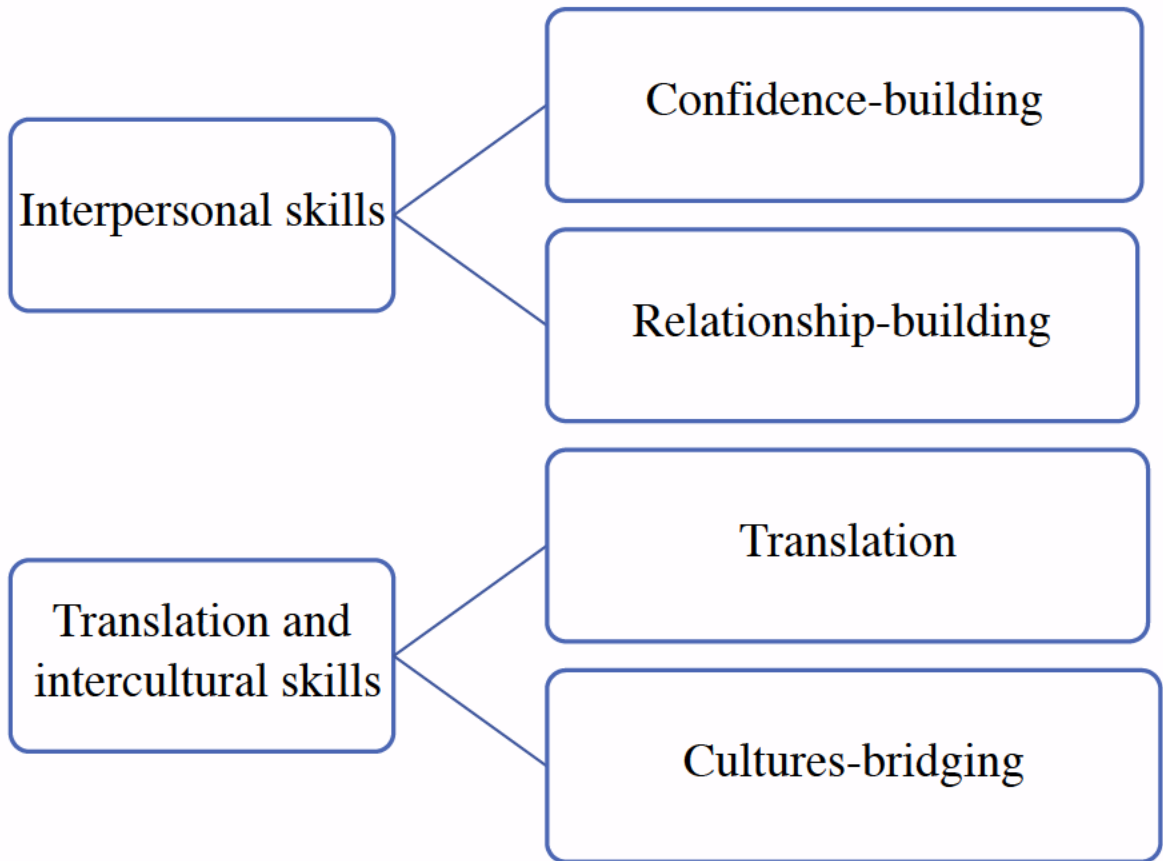
could help reduce the possibility of misunderstandings and misinterpretations arising by cultural differences.

6.5 Synthesis of the 4th strand: Outcomes: Communication and life skills development

The strand of potential outcomes on communication and life skills development emerged from students' perceptions of L2 pragmatics, covering other properties along with the pragmatics of feedback. The analysis of the twelve-interview data demonstrated that teaching pragmatics of feedback could enhance students' interpersonal skills by boosting their confidence in L2 communication, encouraging positive relationships, and minimising misunderstandings between those giving and responding to feedback. Students highlighted some situations in which the learning of pragmatic features could boost their confidence in feedback exchanges. They emphasised the importance of considering constructive feedback as a skill for nurturing strong relationships and creating a healthy and constructive environment, particularly in the workplace. Furthermore, the analysis of the interview data provided insights into the intersection of interculturality and translation. Findings suggest that explicit instruction in L2 pragmatics enhances learners' awareness and comprehension of translation as culturally embedded practice. This outcome appears to stem from the inherently nuanced nature of pragmatics, which promotes the interpretation of implicit or hidden meanings and context-dependent communicative cues. Moreover, the data indicate that several participants perceived the study of L2 pragmatics as instrumental in fostering intercultural understanding and relational engagement, emphasising the significance of sociocultural nuances in navigating the target language. Figure 6.4 illustrates the 4th strand themes and sub-themes.

Figure 6.4

Illustration of 4th Strand, Themes, and Sub-Themes



6.6 Key findings

In response to the second research question — *What are Saudi EFL learners’ perceptions and observations towards pragmatics instruction on feedback exchange?* —key points emerged from the thematic analysis of learner data. These are listed as follows and will be discussed in the following chapter.

Table 6.2

Key Findings in Response to the 2nd Research Question

Theme	Key findings
Strand 1: Learners’ perceptions of authentic materials and tasks	
Student motivation	<p>Role of motivation and cultural relevance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation emerged as a key facilitator of students’ willingness and enthusiasm to embrace new learning approaches in L2 pragmatics. • Cultural relevance was a significant motivational driver. Materials that resonated with students’ cultural backgrounds—especially those referencing Arabic—enhanced comprehension and engagement, particularly in understanding the concept of Face and pragmatic nuances in feedback. <p>Task-based approach and enjoyment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most students described the task-based approach as “enjoyable” and “effective.” They noted that it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encouraged self-reflection on pragmatic situations involving feedback. ○ Motivated them to analyse both linguistic and social elements of feedback exchanges. • However, some students expressed reservations or faced challenges, suggesting variability in task effectiveness. <p>Use of visual and multimodal resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most students highlighted the positive impact of multimodal resources used in Tasks 2 (TV show), 3 and 4 (caricatures), and 5 (beginner’s artwork). • The TV show in Task 2 was particularly well-received due to its use of Arabic, which made pragmatic concepts more accessible and relatable.

<p>Student engagement</p>	<p>Preference for explicit instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They generally expressed a preference for explicit over implicit instruction, as it seemed to offer clearer guidance and more accessible explanations of pragmatic norms. <p>Impact of analytical techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of ‘discourse analysis’ (Task 7) and the compare-and-contrast technique (Task 6) helped students in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Noticing pragmatic features of feedback. ○ Making meaningful connections between observed patterns and their own linguistic choices in feedback contexts. ○ Moving beyond noticing and connecting to a stage of reasoning about pragmatic choices, often linking their insights to personal experiences or group interactions. • Nevertheless, several students encountered challenges with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Understanding pragmatic failures. ○ Generating pragmatic scenarios. ○ Writing feedback in Tasks 1, 4, 7, and 8. • These challenges may have hindered full engagement with the task content.
<p>Pragmatic competence</p>	<p>Value of sociopragmatic concepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students increasingly recognised the importance of pragmatic norms in effective communication, using descriptors such as “respectful,” “courteous,” and “culturally appropriate.” • Some (e.g., S16, S24, S30) highlighted the relevance of politeness strategies in L2 use, particularly for maintaining clarity and harmony in intercultural contexts. • Others (e.g., S14) acknowledged that while cross-cultural misunderstandings may still occur, explicit instruction can play a role in mitigating their impact.

	<p>Use of feedback formulaic language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students identified feedback-related formulaic language as a novel component of their learning experience, acknowledging its practical value in enhancing clarity and tone. • However, some found mastering these expressions challenging, as they struggled with unfamiliar structures, particularly WH-question openings, and bi-clausal sentence forms. • Students expressed favourable views toward the N-P feedback sequence, recognising its effectiveness in helping them structure their ideas and articulate feedback clearly. • Nonetheless, some students showed a preference for the “feedback sandwich” approach and P-N sequence. • This suggests a dual perception: while some appreciated its clarity and utility, others struggled with its application at their current stage of L2 learning.
<p>Strand 2: The influence of contextual variables on pragmatics of feedback</p>	
<p>Contextual variables</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students expressed varying perceptions regarding the influence of situational factors (e.g., age, gender, power, social distance) on how they structure and exchange feedback. • While a small group (6 out of 31) emphasised their individual agency in choosing language freely, the majority (25 out of 31) felt that their feedback strategies were shaped or constrained by these situational variables. • Eleven out of thirty-one students demonstrated diverse perceptions of how individual differences, such as personality and communication style, affect their engagement in feedback process. • Notably, even students who were sensitive to situational variables also acknowledged the role of individual characteristics, indicating a multi-layered understanding of what influences pragmatic choices.
<p>Strand 3: The influence of intentions and affect on pragmatics of feedback</p>	
<p>Intentions in giving feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fourteen students explicitly emphasised giving feedback with emotional awareness, expressing a desire to “soften” the message, use polite formulations, or begin with positive comments to preserve face and create a more supportive tone.

<p>Affect in receiving feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fourteen Students described a range of emotional responses to feedback, with embarrassment and disappointment being the most commonly reported negative emotions. These reactions were closely linked to the tone, clarity, and perceived intent of the feedback, especially when it was unexpected, unclear, or perceived as unfair. • Despite these emotional challenges, thirteen students reported developing coping strategies such as resilience—the ability to recover and grow from feedback—and self-composure, or the capacity to regulate their emotional responses and remain calm.
<p>Strand 4: Outcomes: Communication and life skills development</p>	
<p>Interpersonal skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five students described instances where developing pragmatic awareness in feedback enhanced their confidence when communicating in the L2. • Eight students underscored the role of constructive feedback as a vital interpersonal skill, contributing to positive relationship-building and fostering a supportive atmosphere—especially in professional settings.
<p>Intercultural skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four students reflected on how engaging with L2 pragmatics enhanced their ability to navigate cultural differences and build connections across linguistic boundaries, underscoring the value of understanding subtle social and cultural norms embedded in the target language. • Twelve students reported a broadened awareness of how pragmatic competence intersects with translation practice, noting that the instruction offered new perspectives on meaning transfer, tone management, and audience sensitivity—insights they had not previously associated with their field of study.

Chapter 7: Discussion

7.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses and synthesises teachers' and learners' perceptions respectively, with the goal of developing an initial framework for teaching pragmatic features of feedback exchange in EFL contexts. In so doing, it reconceptualises the objective of L2 pragmatics instruction to reflect intercultural pragmatics, as discussed in Chapter 4 (Methodology), and based on theoretical principles drawn from research presented in Chapters 2 and 3. This chapter addresses the two research questions, and it interprets and contextualises the impact of key findings, comparing them with existing literature and theories.

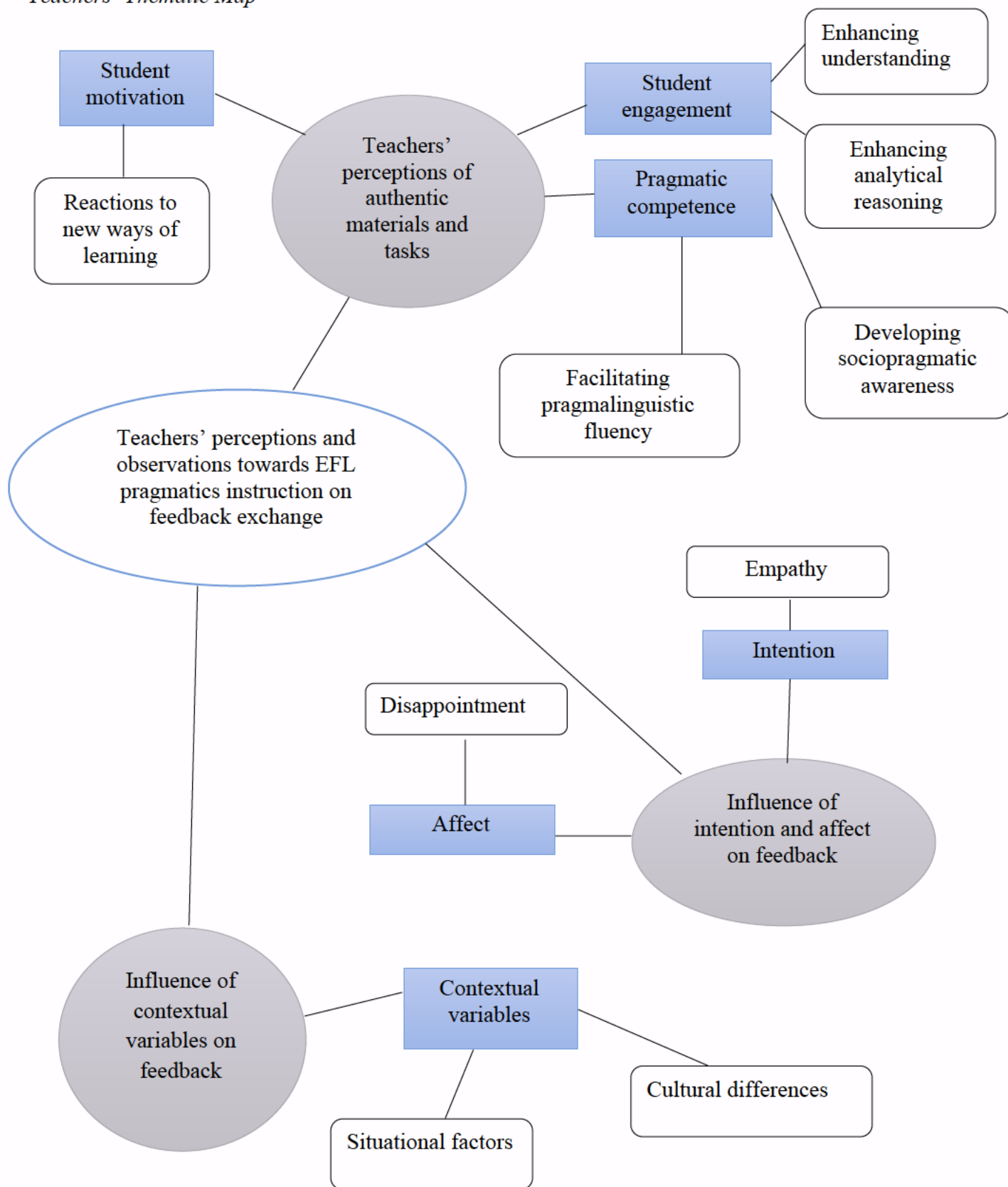
7.1 Discussion of teachers' key findings

The findings of the data regarding teacher perceptions are presented at the end of Chapter 5, Table 5.3. In this chapter, the discussion will focus on the findings visualised in figure 7.1. Teachers in the classroom observations and focus groups generally acknowledged the value of the EFL pragmatics instruction on feedback exchange, while also raising some concerns. The use of authentic materials and tasks was perceived as motivating, engaging, as well as enhancing students' pragmatic competence by all teachers. Several studies have examined teachers' perceptions of authentic materials and tasks generally in the EFL context (e.g., Yang, 2021) or in specific language comprehension skill such as Al-Musallam's (2009) on teaching reading. However, there is a lack of research specifically investigating how these views relate to the authentic materials and tasks for pragmatics instruction. Although teachers, in previous studies, held a positive view, believing that authentic materials and tasks can enhance language learning, engage students, provide real-world exposure, and develop cultural awareness in EFL context, it has been noted in these studies that teachers' use of these materials as well as the task-based

approach has been inconsistent or sporadic (e.g., Al-Musallam, 2009; Yang, 2021). This suggests that despite their favourable perceptions, the impact on student learning is limited as their engagement appears to be occasional rather than regular. The current study, however, addresses this gap in the literature by examining EFL teachers' perceptions of the pragmatics instruction specifically related to teaching pragmatic features of feedback in intercultural communication. It highlighted that, beyond linguistic benefits, teachers supported the use of these authentic materials and tasks along with the textbook – accordingly they agreed that this approach not only adds a sense of motivation to students' learning experience of EFL pragmatics, but also actively engages students and enhances their pragmatic competence of feedback exchange.

Figure 7.1

Teachers' Thematic Map



7.1.1 Strand 1: Teachers' perceptions of authentic materials and tasks

Theme 1: Student motivation

Teachers observed students' reactions to new ways of learning, especially their responses to authentic materials and multimodal resources used in the instruction. All four teachers noted that students responded positively to multimodal input, including a TV show in Task 2, caricatures in Tasks 3 and 4, and a beginner's artwork in Task 5. These materials appeared to spark students' interest and foster a sense of relevance, especially when the tasks reflected learners' cultural context. For instance, T2 and T3 emphasised that evaluating feedback-related scenarios through caricatures allowed students to connect with the task on a personal level, thereby stimulating motivation. The TV show was singled out by all teachers as particularly effective in illustrating a wide range of pragmatic behaviours related to feedback exchange. While previous research has recognised the role of multimodal resources in fostering motivation and engagement in general EFL instruction (e.g., Yang, 2021; Abrams, 2014; Barón & Celaya, 2022), these studies have not addressed their specific use in teaching pragmatics of feedback. Teachers in this study underscored how the careful selection of (inter-)culturally relevant content not only motivated learners but also encouraged meaningful engagement.

However, motivation was not consistently maintained throughout all tasks. T3 observed that Task 6, which included unfamiliar literary and sociocultural content for the students, resulted in a decrease in motivation and, consequently, engagement. This aligns with prior research advocating for the integration of learners' contexts into task design (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014; Gay, 2018; Borer, 2018). The instruction in this study, however, adopted a scaffolding strategy, starting with familiar contexts before introducing culturally diverse ones. This gradual shift was intended

to challenge students constructively, expanding their intercultural awareness while maintaining comfort and confidence.

Theme 2: Student engagement

The theme of student engagement reflects the extent to which learners actively processed and interacted with the content during the pragmatics instruction. Two sub-themes emerged: enhancing understanding and analytical reasoning.

Sub-theme 1: Enhancing understanding. What motivated students also appeared to actively engage them in the learning process, as observed by participant teachers. As previously noted in the theme of student motivation, teachers noted that learners responded positively to tasks that incorporated familiar cultural and contextual elements. These same motivating factors were reflected in students' cognitive engagement, as participant teachers observed heightened attention and participation during tasks that drew on relatable inputs such as caricatures, a beginner's artwork, and a TV show. These materials were seen as particularly effective in helping students grasp the pragmatic features, given that they offered more authentic and interactive input compared to the conventional textbook materials commonly used in the institution. Teachers also noted that reflective tasks—such as evaluating previous feedback exchanges (Assignment 1) or sharing intercultural stories as in teacher-student e-mail interactions (Task 1)—could help students make connections to their lived experiences. This facilitated a deeper understanding of both the linguistic forms and the social appropriateness of feedback. Such engagement is consistent with prior research emphasising that contextual relevance enhances pragmatic comprehension (e.g., El Shazly, 2017; Borer, 2018; Ishihara & Cohen, 2014; Liddicoat, 2019).

Another contributing reason highlighted by participant teachers that may have enhanced students' understanding during the instruction is the use of explicit and implicit instruction. They

indicated that using explicit instruction along with the discussion questions and metapragmatic explanations help students think about how to use feedback expressions in social situations taking into consideration politeness principles and saving-face strategies. Teachers noted that the explicit use of linguistic techniques, such as ‘discourse analysis’ (DA) in Task 7, was helpful in deepening students’ understanding of different types of feedback providing direct metapragmatic information and production practice. Nonetheless, they also acknowledged potential difficulties, particularly in classes where students exhibit a wide range of language proficiency levels, which may lessen the effectiveness of such instruction. Taguchi (2015) suggested that students who receive metapragmatic information about target features, or students who are instructed to identify pragmatic rules, could engage in a more profound level of processing. From this perspective, my findings demonstrate that applying self-discovery activities focussing on DA of constructive feedback (Task 7), analysing written constructive feedback in relation to its social context, supports student understanding of how language is used in real-life situations in terms of pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics.

However, participant teachers tended to prefer the use of implicit and incidental instruction over the explicit instruction, especially in the use of pragmatic/linguistic terminology. They perceived the use of linguistic terminology such as ‘discourse analysis’ as advanced terminology to teach explicitly for intermediate students. For example, T2, T3, and T4 appear to attribute the challenges students may have experienced to the use of some technical terms in Task 7 that might have “distracted” some students, preferring the use of the simpler term “tone” used in the task discussion questions over the technical term ‘discourse analysis.’ Teachers’ perceptions on Yang’s study have indicated the challenges advanced linguistic terminologies could pose to L2 beginners and pre-intermediate learners. Other studies (e.g., Javed and Umar, 2019; Basturkmen & Nguyen,

2017) explain this preference for implicit instruction as being influenced by the design of language curricula and textbooks that emphasise fluency and communication over metapragmatic explicitness. Nonetheless, such an approach may inadvertently limit students' engagement with key disciplinary terminology and be interpreted as a reduction in academic rigor. These realisations have significant impact on raising teacher awareness of the importance of task-design for progression underpinned by scaffolded learning. There is growing consensus in the literature that explicit instruction in pragmatics tends to be more effective than implicit instruction in enhancing both the production and recognition of pragmatic features—particularly those that require higher cognitive processing (Taguchi, 2015; Plonsky & Zhuang, 2019; Martínez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005; Fukuya & Martínez-Flor, 2008). The current study, however, reinforces the view that, while teachers' preference for implicit methods may be contextually justified, scaffolded explicit instruction plays a critical role in developing learners' metapragmatic awareness and competence. Rather than avoiding complex terminology altogether, the findings suggest the value of introducing such terms gradually, using more accessible language (e.g., tone, text analysis) in the early stages of instruction for intermediate students. Students can analyse the written constructive feedback in relation to its social context enabling them to understand how language is used in real-life situations so that when meeting the linguistic terminology, they are confident about the meaning of 'discourse analysis.'

Sub-theme 2: Enhancing analytical reasoning. In addition to understanding, teachers highlighted students' ability to reason about various feedback situations. Teachers noted that learners engaged in tasks that required them to compare and contrast different types of feedback (Task 6), reflect on politeness strategies, and simulate responses in interactions involving hierarchical relationships. These tasks prompted students to articulate their reasoning, consider

interpersonal dynamics, and make contextually appropriate linguistic choices. This suggests that those students, who have developed an understanding of the pragmatics of feedback, are likely to be more engaged in distinguishing a variety of feedback grammatical structures, politeness strategies, and situations – hence emphasising the fundamental role played by pragmatics during language learning and language using. They also indicated that with the role of simulation of feedback recipients, students could approach feedback critically, including the strategies they could employ in responding to feedback, particularly in complex situations involving hierarchy.

In this study, learners completed tasks that focused on giving and responding to feedback in different scenarios. These tasks helped them explore how context—such as power dynamics, gender, and social distance—can influence communication. Drawing on Robinson’s (2011) Cognition Hypothesis - suggesting that greater reasoning prompts learners to think about the spatial, casual, or interpersonal dimensions of a given scenario- and the findings of this study, it could be argued that learners were encouraged to make linguistic references to social factors and to discuss the rationale behind the pragmlinguistic forms employed in the situation. By comparing and contrasting different styles of feedback, they were also guided to think about the situation and the relationship between speakers, instead of relying solely on comparing cultural norms (e.g., pragmatic behaviours in the U.S. vs. Latin America) in previous studies (e.g., Taylor, 2002).

Theme 3: Pragmatic competence

The current results indicated that the authentic materials and tasks employed in teaching the pragmatic features of feedback could potentially raise both sociopragmatic awareness and pragmlinguistic fluency in feedback context. While teachers in this study acknowledged the value of pragmatics instruction and observed its positive impact on students’ awareness—particularly in navigating feedback-related interactions—this awareness alone is not sufficient to ensure sustained

or systematic integration of pragmatics in EFL teaching. The literature similarly emphasises that recognising the importance of pragmatics must be accompanied by deeper pedagogical engagement and professional preparation. Martínez-Flor (2023) found that although raising teachers' awareness of pragmatic knowledge and the risks of pragmatic failure influenced their beliefs, participants continued to favour teacher-led correction, limiting the scope for learner autonomy. Shirkhani and Tajeddin (2017) further highlighted a disconnect between teachers' stated beliefs about pragmatics and their actual classroom practices, suggesting that awareness does not always translate into pedagogical action. Recent research has therefore turned attention to the role of professional development (PD) in equipping EFL teachers with the tools, confidence, and resources to embed pragmatics into instruction more effectively (Glaser, 2023; Ishihara, Porcellato, & de Almeida Prado, 2023; Aboulghazi, Amiri, & El Karfa, 2024). In this study, teachers' reflections as observers suggest the potential of pragmatics instruction to shift learner awareness, yet they also underscore the need for institutional and curricular support to move beyond surface-level engagement and foster more consistent, practice-based integration of pragmatics.

Sub-theme 1: Developing sociopragmatics. All teachers appreciated the introduction of face and politeness in feedback exchange, considering social and cultural factors in teaching how to exchange feedback. For example, T3 and T4 illustrated the importance of raising students' awareness of potential cultural influences and politeness when exchanging feedback. Supporting research on feedback acknowledges the social nature of feedback exchange as suggested by Ryan & Henderson (2018), including factors such as power, discourse, identity, and emotion. Though the existing body of literature in L2/EFL pragmatics has paid significant attention to nurturing L2 learners' pragmatic competence of various speech acts (e.g., Borer, 2018), as well as raising EFL

teachers of the importance of pragmatic competence for L2/EFL learners (e.g., Asma and Fatma, 2024). However, there appears to be a gap in the literature regarding the possible correlations between face and politeness in general EFL discourse or in feedback-specific scenarios both theoretically and practically. The findings of the present study emphasise the significance of conceptualising feedback as a socially situated, dialogic process that involves both giving and responding. This perspective reinforces the necessity of cultivating EFL learners' sociopragmatic competence, particularly in terms of their ability to navigate interpersonal dimensions of feedback in reciprocal communicative settings.

Additionally, teachers demonstrated diverse views on the application of sociopragmatic concepts of feedback. T3 has suggested that teaching these concepts along with feedback writing formula, the N-P sequence, could be seen as a "skill," while T2 has indicated that is considered a "sub-skill." In line with this idea, Wijayanti & Budi (2021) has suggested that teaching sociopragmatic competence is identified as "a pivotal skill" for communication in L2; therefore, developing students' sociopragmatic knowledge and awareness can be integrated into teaching activities and tasks (p.1). It has also been noted that although participant teachers, in previous studies, have a significant awareness of sociopragmatic knowledge, their instruction in sociopragmatics was severely limited, indicating the possible absence of adequate instruction, awareness, and/or performance in sociopragmatics, contributing to the development issues in English as an EFL discourse at higher education (e.g., Asma and Fatma, 2024). The present study suggests that whether sociopragmatics is regarded as a skill or sub-skill, teachers need to emphasise the role sociopragmatic aspects could play in EFL discourse, especially in feedback structure and exchange when teaching pragmatics.

Sub-theme 2: Facilitating pragmalinguistic fluency. All participant teachers perceived learning formulaic expressions of feedback and the feedback writing formula, the N-P sequence, positively. They think that learning the formulaic language of feedback can enhance students' communication skills in both writing and speaking, having these expressions as a reference for EFL learners whenever they need to give or respond to feedback. While formulaic expressions are often introduced in L2 instruction to support learners' fluency and communicative competence (Boers et al., 2017; Peters and Pauwels, 2015; Nergis, 2021, McGuire & Larson-Hall, 2017), their pedagogical value must be carefully reconsidered within an intercultural pragmatics framework. Teachers in the current study viewed these expressions as "easy to learn," particularly for intermediate-level students. However, such views may risk conflating memorisation with pragmatic understanding, a concern highlighted by researchers in intercultural pragmatics (Mey, 2004; Moeschler, 2004; Haugh, 2008; House, 2008; Kecskés, 2014). In authentic intercultural interactions, successful communication depends not on recalling fixed phrases, but on the ability to adapt language appropriately to shifting social norms, relationships, and communicative intentions. However, existing literature on L2 pragmatics provides limited insight into EFL teachers' perceptions of formulaic language used in feedback—despite the centrality of feedback exchange in intercultural communication and the potential role of EFL pragmatics in supporting this process for both teachers and learners. As indicated by teachers' perceptions in this study, feedback-related formulaic language may play a supportive role in enhancing EFL learners' understanding during the initial stages of instruction—not only within feedback contexts, but also in broader intercultural communication. However, the use of such formulaic expressions without opportunities for critical engagement risks becoming overly prescriptive and static, potentially limiting learners' ability to adapt language use to varied cultural and situational contexts.

Regarding the feedback writing formula, all teachers appreciated the use of N-P sequence on guiding students how to write constructive feedback in their 2nd observational sheets. For example, T1 highlighted how students followed and practiced all steps in giving feedback in different tasks. Similarly, T2 noted that using a structured feedback-writing formula seemed to support students in organising their paragraphs, particularly in the section focused on providing constructive feedback. However, in the 2nd focus group, they have demonstrated diverse views on the application of the formula and its appropriateness at various levels. For example, T3 had two different points of view regarding the use of a writing formula for giving constructive feedback, either following a controlled formula for low-achievers or giving freedom to the students to structure their paragraph if they were of higher achievements. Given the fact that feedback formulaic language as in the N-P formula has not been addressed in pragmatics instruction, the present study seeks to address this gap by targeting both pragmalinguistic fluency and accuracy within the context of written feedback. To this end, the study introduces learners to common feedback formulaic expressions while also guiding them in organising their feedback structurally and responding appropriately. This includes making visible pedagogical strategies for accepting constructive feedback, disagreeing with unfair comments, or requesting clarification when feedback is ambiguous. It could be argued here that once EFL learners have a clear structure or foundation (e.g., feedback exchange formulas), they can then focus on expanding their knowledge and skills of feedback structure and exchange and indeed be introduced to the linguistic terminology which they have already experienced in use.

7.1.2 Strand 2: Teachers' perceptions of the influence of contextual variables on pragmatics of feedback

Theme 1: Contextual variables

This theme explores how contextual variables shape EFL teachers' pragmatic choices in giving and responding to feedback, as revealed through their observational sheets and focus group responses. Teachers emphasised that feedback practices are influenced by multiple situational factors, including age, gender, and power. Their accounts also pointed to the role of cultural differences, where local norms sometimes clashed with those of English-speaking cultures, affecting how feedback is framed and interpreted. These findings offer empirical support for contemporary theoretical perspectives in intercultural pragmatics that reconceptualise context not as a fixed backdrop, but as a dynamic and co-constructed phenomenon (Fetzer, 2022). As Kecskés (2016) and Spencer-Oatey and Wang (2017) argue, language and context are co-constitutive, meaning that each shapes and is shaped by the other in real-time interaction. In this light, the variability in teachers' feedback strategies reflects their active role in constructing contextually appropriate discourse, rather than merely applying static rules or norms.

Sub-theme 1: Situational factors. All teachers emphasised the possible influence of situational factors on the structure and exchange of feedback. They also stated that it is important to consider these factors whenever they give or respond to feedback, suggesting that it was beneficial when the instruction highlighted a variety of situations where students could see how situational factors could alter or affect the feedback structure and exchange. Findings in the literature emphasise the central role teachers play in developing learners' pragmatic competence, yet also reveal inconsistencies in teachers' knowledge, perceptions, and instructional practices regarding pragmatics. While many teachers recognise the importance of integrating pragmatics—

particularly the teaching of speech acts—into language instruction, research highlights a lack of systematic training and awareness such as Ivanova’s (2017) study. In contrast, EFL teachers in the current study, have demonstrated how contextual factors (e.g., age, gender, and power) could influence teaching/approaching feedback as a discourse-based structure. Notably, gender emerged as a particularly salient factor, shaped by sociocultural norms in Saudi Arabia, where gender segregation influences patterns of communication. As a result, feedback tends to be more formal, and teachers appear sensitive to how these sociocultural variables affect the structure and exchange of feedback. This suggests that while some gaps in pragmatic knowledge remain, context-specific awareness—particularly related to sociocultural norms—can shape and enhance how teachers conceptualise and deliver pragmatics instruction.

Sub-theme 2: Cultural differences. All participating teachers acknowledged the complexities of culture, including what they referred to as the “complex phenomena of politeness and face,” and emphasised the importance of raising students’ awareness of these concepts within pragmatics instruction. They also indicated that these concepts are difficult to teach due their complex nature. However, their perspectives on the notion of “culture” varied, highlighting its multifaceted and evolving nature. This variation aligns with Alba-Juez’s (2022) observation that culture can be understood in multiple, overlapping ways—such as nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, professional identity, or even gender—emphasising that culture is not a fixed or homogeneous entity, but rather a fluid, context-dependent construct.

A key finding from this study was T3’s observation that students often hesitated to give honest feedback due to an overemphasis on courtesy, reflecting a cultural tendency to avoid directness in order to maintain harmony. This finding suggests that students’ reluctance stems not

from a lack of ability but from a culturally rooted preference for maintaining social harmony through courtesy. In Saudi society, courtesy is closely associated with good manners and the avoidance of confrontation, which can lead learners to prioritise politeness over clarity. This aligns with Brown and Levinson's (1987) concepts of positive face. Benattabou's (2020) observation that Arabic speakers often view direct feedback as offensive further explains why learners might avoid more direct forms of criticism. In the context of giving feedback, protecting the recipient's positive face might involve softening criticism, showing empathy, or emphasising strengths before pointing out weaknesses, to preserve the relationship and avoid threatening the recipient's sense of competence or social value (Hyland and Hyland, 2001; Hathaway, 1997; Daniel, 2009; Meyer, 2014). This finding highlights the need for pedagogical approaches that explicitly address how cultural norms—such as the prioritisation of courtesy—shape learners' feedback practices. It suggests that pragmatics instruction should focus not only on the linguistic forms of feedback but also on the cultural values underpinning communicative choices, such as the protection of positive face.

Teachers acknowledged the correlation between face, politeness, and feedback. However, they further noted that 'courteous' communicative strategies, while intending to be supportive, may inadvertently lead to miscommunication during feedback exchanges. Specifically, when feedback providers prioritise relational sensitivity, they may withhold critical evaluations or convey them with less clarity, thereby covering over the intended message (Dohrenwend, 2002; LeBaron & Jernick, 2000; Choi et al., 2018). It can be argued that directness in feedback is not inherently impolite or rude, especially when it serves to convey the message clearly and considerately, with the recipient's benefit in mind. In the context of this study, directness refers to the clear articulation of one's opinion or critique without excessive mitigation, as exemplified in

the N-P feedback sequence. This distinction is particularly important to emphasise when teaching the pragmatic features of feedback exchanges in EFL/L2 contexts. Consistent with critique from Karafoti (2007), LoCastro (2012), Mori (2009), Yang (2013), Haugh (2007), this study argues that politeness is context-dependent, and subject to evaluation, rather being a fixed concept as suggested by traditional theories such as Politeness Theory by Brown and Levinson (1987). This study further suggests that while concepts like face and politeness may influence how feedback structured and exchanged, they should not be treated as static or universally applicable across cultural contexts in intercultural pragmatics instruction. Instead, students should be guided to critically assess feedback exchanges and adapt their responses based on the specific situational, relational, and cultural variables at play, rather than relying on rigid cultural assumptions or stereotypes.

Across the data, there appear some contradictions and dilemmas in teachers' perceptions of face and politeness as well as the notion of culture when exchanging feedback. Participant teachers appreciated introducing politeness and face to EFL learners in feedback, yet it is complex phenomena to teach and may overlap with giving constructive feedback. They seem to perceive face and politeness in feedback as another way to say "constructive" and that students can be polite and save face while being constructive. However, it is impractical to disregard the influence sociocultural differences could have in communication such as "courtesy" or "gender" in giving and responding to feedback in Saudi context. Therefore, in line with other research as suggested by Kecskés (2014) and Byram (2020), exposure to target language communication styles and perceptions can improve learners' awareness and understanding of the pragmatic practices within a range of cultural contexts not only of 'other' cultures but crucially also of their own. Since the focus of the current study is on pragmatic features of feedback exchange, courtesy may have a

direct negative impact not only on the clarity of feedback in communication, but also on the feedback recipient's performance. It would appear, therefore, that a more holistic pedagogical approach to understanding how learners, as sociocultural beings, relate to their pragmatic use of feedback is needed. This approach should encourage critical reflection on feedback cultures in both their first and second languages, enabling learners to develop their own informed perspectives on feedback exchange.

7.1.3 Strand 3: Teachers' perceptions of the influence of intentions and affect on feedback exchange

Based on the analysis of the second focus group, two interconnected themes—intention in giving feedback and affect in receiving feedback—highlighted the interpersonal nature of feedback practices. This explains the growing shift in feedback research from focusing primarily on the provider's delivery skills to examining how recipients interpret and emotionally respond to feedback (Boud, 2015; Boud & Molloy, 2013; Parkes et al., 2013). All participating teachers articulated a clear understanding of how even well-intentioned, constructive feedback could evoke emotional discomfort or defensiveness in learners. Drawing on their professional experience, they reported that students feel *disappointed* upon receiving feedback, suggesting approaching feedback with *empathy* to improve the way it is received and taken. In other words, they advocated an empathetic approach to feedback taken into consideration students' emotional reactions. This perspective aligns with broader feedback research, which underscores the importance of a supportive tone in delivering constructive feedback (Ryan & Henderson, 2018; Holmes, 2023). Importantly, the teachers' observations suggest that empathy is not ancillary but integral to pragmatic competence in feedback. In classroom practice, this was operationalised through strategies such as framing critical comments within affirmations or using softened expressions that

mitigate potential face threats. These strategies reinforce the idea that politeness norms in intercultural pragmatics are fluid and context-sensitive, shaped through ongoing negotiation within specific social and cultural interactions. This also indicates greater awareness be paid to task design.

All in all, while situational factors and cultural differences have traditionally been foregrounded as key variables in pragmatics instruction (e.g., Kecskés, 2014; Ishihara & Cohen, 2014; Bella, Sifianou, & Tzanne, 2015), this study highlights the need to expand this focus when addressing the pragmatics of feedback. Specifically, the findings suggest that teaching or delivering feedback should also account for variables uniquely tied to feedback exchanges—the feedback provider’s intention to convey empathy and the emotional responses of the recipient yet also to be mindful of intercultural norms. Attending to these variables may then enhance the effectiveness and relational sensitivity of feedback, particularly in intercultural and EFL contexts.

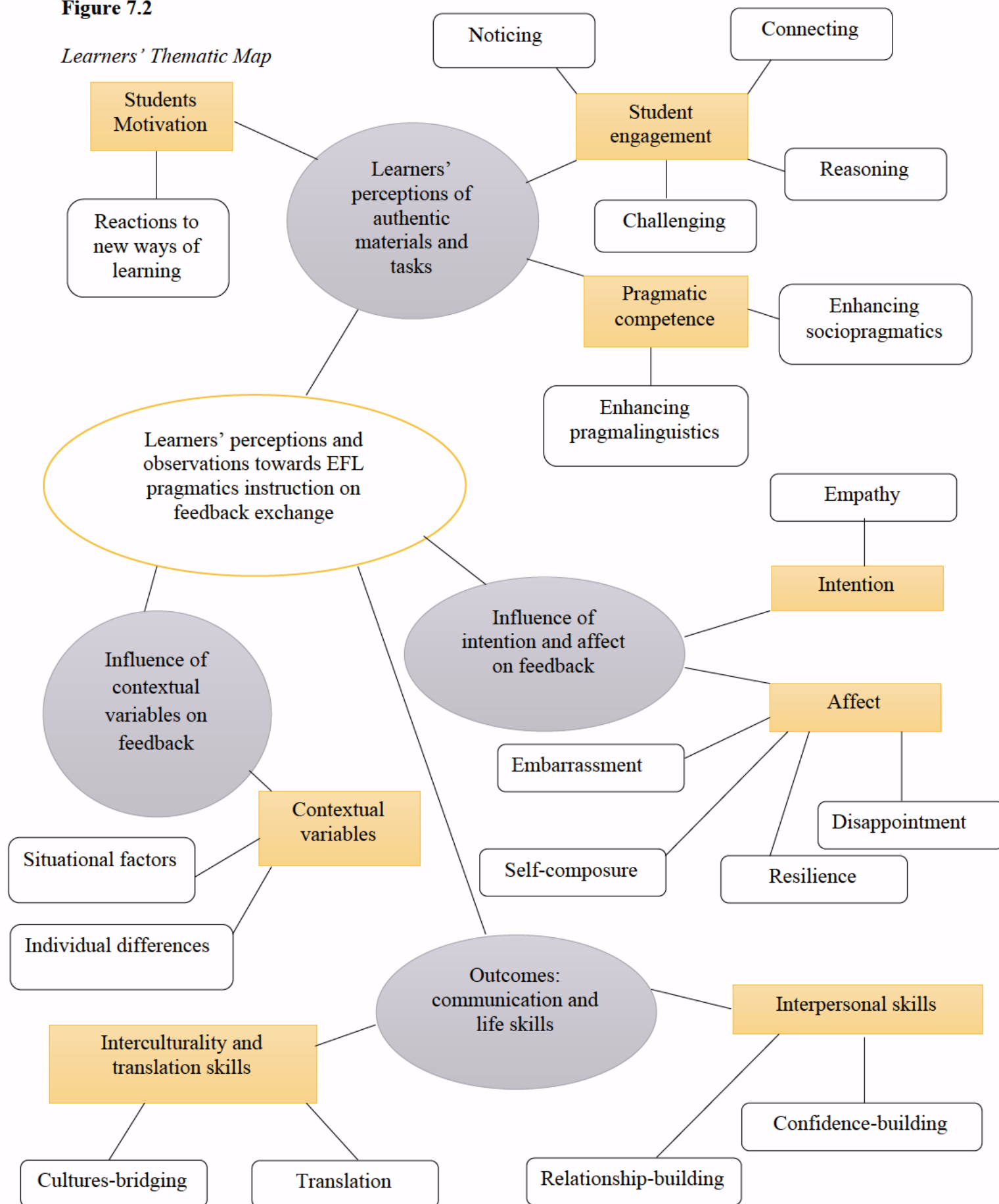
7.2 Discussion of learners’ findings

The findings of the data regarding learner perceptions are presented at the end of Chapter 6, Table 6.2. In this chapter, the discussion will focus on the findings visualised in figure 7.2. Learners in the reflections and interviews generally demonstrated overall positive perceptions of the instruction. The analysis of the data gathered from students revealed that motivation, engagement, and pragmatic competence emerged as the three main themes exemplified by their responses towards the authentic materials and tasks. This aligns with Kim’s study (2016) in that some learners found pragmatics instruction motivating, engaging, improving communication skills, and increasing pragmatic awareness of intercultural differences. Yet there were some situations in the current study where students felt disengaged and pragmatically challenged. They expressed their difficulties in responding to challenging work, due to the intricate and lengthy

nature of some of the feedback formulaic expressions and other related-linguistic challenges. Some students also reported challenges related to the possible impact of contextual variables and emotions.

Figure 7.2

Learners' Thematic Map



7.2.1 Strand 1: Learners' perceptions of authentic materials and tasks

Theme 1: Student motivation. Across the data, the majority of students described the pragmatics instruction as “motivating” and “enjoyable,” attributing their engagement to the use of authentic materials and TBLT. This aligns with Al-Musallam’s (2009) finding that learners value authenticity more than instructors. However, the current study extends this insight by highlighting not only students’ affective responses but also their metacognitive engagement—how they began to reflect on the communicative function of feedback in diverse contexts. This suggests that authenticity, when tied to real-world relevance and cultural resonance, may serve as more than a motivational hook; it can act as a scaffold for deeper pragmatic awareness. The fact that textbooks often overlook such nuanced aspects of interaction points to a significant gap in EFL pedagogy, especially regarding underexplored speech acts like feedback.

The findings also indicate that the use of multimodal resources, such as videos and caricatures played a significant role in fostering student motivation in learning. In particular, the TV show in Task 2—delivered in the students’ first language, Arabic—was especially well received, as it offered culturally and linguistically familiar references that helped students grasp abstract concepts like Face and politeness with greater ease. These results support earlier research by Barón and Celaya (2022) and Ayu (2016), who demonstrate that multimodal input can enhance learners’ noticing of pragmatic features, especially when these features are embedded in rich, context-specific environments. These findings also revealed that it is not authenticity alone but familiarity—that is, the degree to which content aligns with learners’ lived experiences and cultural backgrounds—that serves as a more immediate and affectively powerful motivator. Students responded positively not simply because materials were “real” but because they were recognisable, emotionally resonant, and grounded in everyday language that reflected their own

social realities. This supports Gay's (2018) argument that familiarity enhances learners' engagement by reducing cognitive distance and making abstract or foreign content more accessible. However, this raises a critical question: should the goal of L2 pragmatics instruction be to mirror learners' cultural frameworks, or to challenge and expand them? The current findings suggest a need for balance. While familiarity can be a valuable entry point—especially for increasing motivation—over-reliance on familiar content may limit opportunities to develop intercultural sensitivity and adaptive pragmatic competence.

Furthermore, the majority of students highlighted the motivational aspects of the task-based approach adopted in the instruction as “enjoyable” and “effective.” They agreed that the TBLT (a) promoted self-reflection about pragmatic situations of feedback exchange, and (b) motivated them to analyse linguistic and social elements of these pragmatic situations when exchanging feedback. These findings show a similarity to Borer's (2018) and Kim et al.'s (2023) supporting the merits of using TBLT. In extending this line of research, the current study suggests that TBLT can also provide learners with opportunities to reflect on feedback situations through a transcultural lens, allowing them to uncover pragmatic features of feedback structure and exchange as situated in both local and global communicative contexts. This transcultural reflection enabled students to draw on prior experiences, including their first language and cultural background, to make sense of unfamiliar L2 pragmatic norms, thus enriching their learning experience beyond the surface-level completion of tasks.

Theme 2: Student engagement

Student reflections and interviews suggest that the structured and interactive design of the tasks supported their engagement with pragmatic aspects of feedback. Guiding questions and varied input formats appeared to facilitate their noticing and reflection on key linguistic and

contextual features. In particular, the analytical approaches embedded in Task 6 (compare-and-contrast) and Task 7 ('discourse analysis') appeared to support students in progressing from identifying pragmatic elements to making meaningful connections between observed patterns and their own feedback practices. Some students also demonstrated the ability to reason about pragmatic choices, often relating these insights to personal or peer-based experiences, suggesting an evolving awareness of context-sensitive language use. This is in line with Schmid's noticing hypothesis (1990) that confirmed that explicit instruction can play an important role in motivating learners to notice certain aspects by generating language expectations. In a similar vein, Kim et al. (2023) and Wei & Zhao (2024) have suggested that teachers can enhance long-term learning by designing and implementing tasks that naturally incorporate both learned pragmatics and new linguistic features in authentic contexts, allowing students to recycle and build upon their prior knowledge. The current study further provides insight into how students connected what they noticed with reasoning and differentiation of pragmatic elements within feedback contexts through their observations. Examples from data extracts in the previous chapter provide nuanced understanding - S14 connected what she learned in Task 1 to a personal interaction she had with one of her teachers in an e-mail exchange, while S27 highlighted how the comparison in Task 6 appears to be useful in terms of distinguishing various feedback structures: constructive vs. poor and demotivating.

In addition to the role of task design, student reflections pointed to the value of combining both explicit and implicit instructional approaches, with a marked preference for the former. Some students contrasted the instruction they received during this study with their prior textbook experiences, which typically introduced pragmatic elements implicitly and with limited contextual depth. While the findings of the current study highlight the role of explicit and task-supported

instruction in fostering student engagement, previous research has predominantly linked such instructional approaches to the development of interlanguage pragmatics (e.g., Jerrold, 2009; Takimoto, 2012; Taguchi, 2015; Qari 2021; Kim et al., 2023; Wei & Zhao, 2024). For example, findings from Jerrold (2009) and Takimoto (2012) suggest that explicit instruction enhances learners' capacity to attend to and reflect on emerging pragmatic elements during classroom practice. In line with these insights, the results of the current study suggest that carefully scaffolded, task-supported instruction may offer a productive route to developing students' pragmatic awareness and fostering meaningful engagement.

Furthermore, some students referred to difficulties encountered during certain tasks, which appeared to limit their engagement. These included challenges in grasping pragmatic breakdowns, constructing relevant scenarios, and formulating appropriate feedback responses (as in Tasks 1, 4, 7, and 8). This resonates with literature reporting challenges related to incorporating authentic materials in EFL such as linguistic and cultural complexity, which can make comprehension and interpretation difficult for learners as suggested in Al-Musallam (2009) and Yang (2021); a lack of relevant background knowledge and cultural familiarity as suggested in Liu & Song (2020); challenges related to learners' proficiency levels as suggested in Al-Musallam (2009), Yang (2021), and Chen (2020), as well as other pragmatic-related challenges (e.g., Ishihara & Cohen, 2014) that also need to be addressed to create a better learning experience for students. Again, this indicates attention needed when designing tasks in order to accommodate differentiated learning.

Theme 3: Pragmatic competence

The students' awareness of feedback as a socioculturally embedded act — reflected in their use of terms such as “respectful,” “polite,” and “culturally appropriate” — highlights the value of integrating pragmatics instruction that is attuned to relational and cultural dimensions. Their

responses suggest that feedback was no longer perceived merely as a matter of language structure; instead, students' responses reflected an emerging awareness of its interpersonal and intercultural dimensions. Prior research on learners' perceptions of pragmatics instruction (Chen, 2009; Liu, 2007; Kim, 2016; Elshazly, 2017) consistently indicates that students place significant value on sociolinguistic dimensions of communication alongside fundamental linguistic competence. Across these contexts, learners acknowledge that *knowing how* to communicate appropriately within a given social setting is as crucial as *knowing what* to say. The integration of sociocultural components into the tasks of this study appears to have fostered such awareness, lending further support to the notion that pragmatics instruction serves as a bridge between linguistic competence and intercultural understanding.

Additionally, some students appeared to hold the view that pragmatics instruction—particularly when incorporating formulaic language—could support the development of their pragmalinguistic fluency. However, responses varied: while some learners found these expressions helpful and enriching for their L2 proficiency, others struggled with comprehension, suggesting that factors such as language proficiency and prior familiarity influenced their experience. In Chen's (2009) and Kim's (2016) studies, learners revealed that learning pragmatics was challenging as it consisted of unfamiliar expressions and sentence patterns, they had not learned yet. For example, they reported that learners had a hard time making exclamatory sentences starting with *how* and *what* and complex sentence patterns of requests (e.g., "I wonder if Subject Verb", "If you are not very busy, could you Verb?"), particularly for the learners who are of pre-intermediate level. These findings are echoed in the current study as students perceived indirect suggestions to make changes in giving feedback starting with "WH Questions" or describing something positive starting with "How" as in "How nice!" as different and new. However, Kim et

al. (2023) reported contrasting findings, noting that TBLT tasks supported learners' acquisition of biclausal grammatical structures. In Elshazly's (2017) study, some learners performed the speech act of request poorly with respect to their grammatical competence; however, in most cases the intensity of this deficiency did not impede communication. The linguistic challenges students reported, in the current study, may relate to either their language proficiency, sentence patterns that are unfamiliar, or the influence of their first language grammatical structure that also need to be considered for future research in the teaching of EFL pragmatic features of feedback or similar contexts.

The N-P sequence was appreciated by students for organising feedback structure; however, cultural expectations seem to influence some participants' preference (e.g., S13, S14, S21, S30) for alternative sequencing such as the feedback sandwich (Positive–Negative–Positive) or the P-N (Positive–Negative) format. These preferences may reflect communicative practices rooted in face-saving strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and are shaped by individuals' prior experiences, where the predictability of feedback structure—such as beginning with praise—can influence how it is received, as praise may evoke negative or positive associations depending on whether it was previously linked to discomfort or affirmation (Choi et al., 2018). Starting with positive remarks is often seen as a face-enhancing strategy that reduces the emotional impact of criticism, aligns with politeness norms, and affirms the learner's value before introducing areas for improvement (Bjørndal, 2020; Hyland & Hyland, 2001). The feedback sandwich, despite being critiqued in feedback literature for possibly diluting the impact of criticism (Daniels, 2009; Nelson & Quick, 2013), remains culturally resonant for learners accustomed to more indirect or affectively sensitive communication styles. The underlying rationale is that individuals are more likely to accept and reflect on critical feedback when it is framed within a supportive context. An important implication

of these findings is that when teaching constructive feedback to EFL learners through formulaic approaches, teachers should remain mindful of the diverse communicative norms and prior experiences students bring to the classroom. While it may not be feasible to tailor instruction to each individual in large classes, teachers can incorporate flexible and culturally responsive strategies, such as presenting multiple ways of delivering feedback and encouraging learner reflection or discussion about what feels appropriate or effective.

7.2.2 Strand 2: Learners' perceptions of the influence of contextual variables on feedback exchange

Theme 1: Contextual variables

Some students also reported challenges related to the possible impact of contextual variables on the way feedback is structured and exchanged. As discussed in the teachers' findings, these student perspectives further support theoretical frameworks in intercultural pragmatics that conceptualise context as fluid and co-constructed, rather than as a fixed setting (Fetzer, 2022; Kecskés, 2016; Mey, 2004; Moeschler, 2004; Haugh, 2008; House, 2008). The findings add further to our understanding of the importance of situational factors and individual differences, both of which were perceived to shape how feedback is given and received.

Sub-theme 1: Situational factors. The findings of this study reveal that although students were introduced to a structured feedback model—the N-P sequence—25 learners reported adapting or modifying this structure depending on situational variables such as age, gender, and power. Many participants expressed discomfort when applying the same feedback sequence to recipients who were older, held authority, or were of the opposite gender. This underscores the impact of cultural norms embedded in student prior experiences (Choi et al., 2018). However, learners did not perceive feedback as a fixed formula but as a context-dependent practice shaped

by social norms and interpersonal dynamics. Importantly, learners' reluctance to follow a uniform structure highlights their sensitivity to face-related concerns, especially in feedback that may be interpreted as directive or critical. Previous research in interlanguage pragmatics has predominantly emphasised face-related concerns, often promoting indirectness in English as a more polite and socially appropriate communication strategy (e.g., Purver, 2004; Rieser & Moore, 2005; El Shazly, 2017; Abolfathiasl & Abdullah, 2015). Their approach is largely informed by traditional theories such as Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory, which equates indirectness with politeness, especially in the context of face-threatening acts such as making requests or offering suggestions. However, while those studies and theories focus primarily on single speech acts, the current findings demonstrate that situational factors influence not only speech act formulation but also discourse-level structuring—including the sequencing of praise and critique, tone, and overall delivery. The implication of this finding, therefore, is that contextual sensitivity should be explicitly integrated into EFL pragmatics instruction on feedback context—not only through teaching formulas like the N-P sequence, but also by prompting learners to consider how variables such as power, social distance, and cultural expectations affect the appropriateness and interpretation of feedback.

Sub-theme 2: Individual differences. Eleven students emphasised the importance of individual differences, such as personality and communication styles, with some of them also noting that situational factors influenced how feedback was given and received. As described in detail in the previous chapter, S24 explained how communicative styles may be shaped by sociocultural dimensions such as upbringing, cultural affiliation, and religious beliefs, underlining the importance of maintaining a positive interpersonal image in intercultural exchanges. She further emphasised how individual personality traits—specifically introversion and extroversion—

might influence the structuring and reception of feedback in L2 contexts. Such perspectives resonate with existing literature on individual differences in pragmatic competence, including L2 proficiency, identity negotiation, intercultural competence, language learning mindsets, communicative willingness, motivational orientations, and cognitive capacities (Zhang & Aubrey, 2024). Complementary conceptualisations, as presented by Taguchi (2015), Kecskés (2014), and Mori (2009), highlight the role of learners' ability to interpret contextual boundaries, their awareness of social norms across diverse communicative settings, and individual's capacity to bring unique perspectives, styles, and personality to the way feedback is exchanged. Understanding and accepting these differences is crucial for effective communication, reducing misunderstanding, and ensuring that feedback messages are appropriately conveyed and received.

7.2.3 Strand 3: Learners' perceptions of the influence of intentions and affect on feedback exchange

Theme 1: Intentions in giving feedback

The findings from the students' data also revealed that exchanging feedback involves a range of feedback-related variables. Students who provided constructive feedback demonstrated sensitivity to the recipients' emotions, prioritising their emotional well-being throughout the process. Expressions of empathy were evident in how they described their approach to giving feedback, with an emphasis on the potential emotional impact of their words. This finding resonates with the work of Hyland and Hyland (2001) and Huang et al. (2023), who argue that feedback combining both negative and positive comments is more effective, as it considers both the affective state of the recipient and the content of the message. It further reinforces Zhang's (2020) argument that word choice is influenced and constrained by individual psychological factors, such as memory, perception, cognition, emotion, ability, personality, etc., at the micro

level, as well as various socio-psychological factors at the macro level. As previously discussed in the teachers' findings, this shift in focus from the provider's delivery to the recipient's interpretation and emotional engagement with feedback is echoed in the students' responses, aligning with the growing body of research that emphasises the importance of how feedback is received and acted upon by learners, rather than solely how it is delivered (Boud, 2015; Boud & Molloy, 2013; Parkes et al., 2013). Taken together, these findings suggest that students' experience of the instruction influences their perceptions of the way feedback is exchanged, possibly promoting an empathetic approach to the feedback exchange.

Theme 2: Affect in receiving feedback

The findings of this study highlight the affective complexities of feedback reception in EFL contexts, revealing that feedback—regardless of its intended constructiveness—can provoke strong emotional reactions. Across the data, embarrassment and disappointment were the two most commonly reported responses, with fourteen students articulating the emotional toll feedback had on them, even when it was framed positively. This echoes Holmes' (2023) study in feedback research, which found that nearly 90% of undergraduate learners reported feeling upset or demotivated after receiving feedback they interpreted as negative. This suggests that the emotional impact of feedback often overrides its intended instructional or supportive function. Goffman's (1967) concept of face offers a valuable lens through which to interpret these findings. Feedback, particularly in teacher-student interactions, can pose a threat to a learner's positive face—their desire to be seen as competent, respected, and capable—thus explaining the discomfort and defensiveness that may follow. The current findings suggest that feedback exchanges inherently involve face-work, and that students are aware of how feedback may either support or undermine their self-image.

Moreover, thirteen students indicated in their reflections and interviews that they believed it was important to respond to feedback—particularly that which they perceived as negative—with resilience and self-composure. This self-reported capacity for emotional regulation suggests an emerging metapragmatic awareness, wherein learners not only interpret the linguistic form of feedback but also reflect on their affective responses and interpersonal positioning. Bjørndal (2020) found that student teachers often engage in face-management strategies such as contradicting, withdrawing, or repairing face when navigating feedback. In contrast, the students in this study appeared to rely more heavily on emotional coping strategies such as self-composure and resilience when confronted with negative or face-threatening feedback. Although they did not explicitly challenge or withdraw from the feedback process, their emotional responses—such as disappointment and embarrassment—suggest a form of internal negotiation. This may be seen as loosely aligning with Bjørndal’s concept of “repairing face” and projecting a progressive self, especially when students expressed a willingness to reflect on their performance and improve. However, while Bjørndal’s work focuses on teacher trainees and their pedagogical reflections, the learners in this study are EFL students whose awareness developed not through teaching practice, but through targeted pragmatics instruction. Therefore, the findings in this study imply that instruction on the pragmatic features of feedback—especially those related to responding to various feedback scenarios—can support learners in managing their emotional reactions more constructively, thereby reducing defensive or dismissive responses. In this context, feedback functions not merely as a cognitive tool for improvement but as an inherently relational act, with the potential to affirm or challenge one’s social image.

7.2.4 Strand 4: Outcomes: Communication and life skills development

The emergence of this strand and its themes stem from students' perceptions of EFL pragmatics, encompassing a purpose beyond a focus only on the pragmatics of feedback. The strand related only to student data, providing a clear vision of what they need and who they want to become. From an intercultural pragmatic lens, these insights are valuable as they reveal context-sensitive understandings of language use.

Theme 1: Interpersonal skills

Across the interview data, five students highlighted situations in which learning pragmatics of feedback could boost their confidence in L2 communication while eight students further emphasised the importance of considering constructive feedback as a skill for nurturing strong relationships and creating a healthy and constructive environment. The emergence of interpersonal gains aligns with socio-cognitive views of language use, where learners' pragmatic competence is shaped not only by linguistic knowledge but also by their ability to manage social interaction (McConachy & Spencer-Oatey, 2021; Kecskés and Zhang, 2009). The students' enhanced self-assurance in giving or receiving feedback suggests an internalisation of both formulaic expressions and the sociocultural expectations embedded in them. This reflects their growing metapragmatic awareness — a socio-cognitive factor crucial in intercultural communication. EFL Learners in Kim's (2016) reported that pragmatics instruction provided them with a degree of confidence in intercultural communication as well as motivation to learn. Moreover, these outcomes are consistent with broader trends observed in other areas of pragmatics research. For instance, Javed and Umar (2019) highlighted the effectiveness of pragmatics instruction in improving business communication skills, particularly in the development of interpersonal and intercultural competence. However, in the present study, the outcomes may have been driven by the inherently

interactive nature of feedback, including both a giver and recipient, as well as the explicit instruction on pragmatic concepts (e.g., politeness and facework), indicating the value of integrating pragmatics into language instruction.

Theme 2: Interculturality and translation skills

The analysis of the interview data indicated that some students developed greater awareness of intercultural communication and the role of translation. This experience appeared to motivate some students, particularly those aspiring to become translators, as it aligned with their desire to build the competencies required for their future careers. This outcome may be linked to the complex nature of pragmatics and the attention given to implicit meanings in communication, extending beyond the surface features of feedback. While existing research in intercultural pragmatics (e.g., Moeschler, 2004; Haugh, 2008; House, 2008; Spencer-Oatey and Wang, 2017) often centres on interactional competence and sociocultural norms, the findings in this study suggest a more career-oriented engagement with pragmatics, where students link intercultural understanding to professional aspirations, such as translation. This resonates with insights from translation and pragmatics research. For instance, Abulhassan (2011) demonstrated that enhancing learners' pragmatic awareness can help bridge pragmatic gaps in the translation process, particularly when rendering culturally nuanced meanings. The implication of these findings is that explicit instruction in EFL pragmatics may not only foster greater awareness of cultural variation and language use but also deepen learners' understanding of translation as a pragmatically informed and context-sensitive practice. This underscores the need to integrate pragmatics instruction across disciplines, including translation studies, to support more effective and culturally appropriate communication.

7.3 Summary

This chapter discussed the implications of the findings on teachers' and students' perceptions and observations towards the pragmatics instruction on feedback exchange. Major findings were outlined, discussed, and compared with previous research findings in L2/EFL pragmatics and feedback research. Initially, this study aimed to explore the experiences and perspectives of two populations, teachers, and learners, independently, without the intention of direct comparison. The thematic analysis, however, uncovered an array of shared themes that were consistently present in both groups, as well as unique subthemes that highlighted nuances within each group's data.

Data from both groups demonstrated themes of motivation, engagement, and pragmatic competence in perceptions towards the authentic materials and tasks employed in the instruction, indicating they enhance language learning, engage students, provide real-world exposure, and develop cultural awareness. The divergence observed related to their differing preferences for instructional approaches in teaching pragmatics. While teachers favoured implicit and incidental instruction—often simplifying complex terminology like 'discourse analysis' to more accessible terms such as "tone" to avoid cognitive overload for intermediate learners, students expressed a clear preference for explicit instruction. This contrast highlights a potential misalignment between teachers' cautious strategies and learners' need for explicit metapragmatic knowledge, suggesting that balancing accessibility with clarity is essential to effectively develop pragmatic competence. Moreover, the differing perceptions regarding the application of sociopragmatics—as either a discrete skill or sub-skill within the language learning process—introduce complexity into how pragmatic competence is valued and integrated into curricula. Students, particularly those majoring in translation, may perceive sociopragmatic competence as highly instrumental to their studies,

given its direct relevance to conveying nuanced meanings across languages. This underscores the importance of aligning pedagogical approaches with learners' academic and professional goals.

Data also highlight the ambivalent attitudes toward formulaic language, seen as both “easy” and “challenging.” This duality touches on the ongoing debate about memorisation in language learning. On one hand, formulaic sequences can facilitate fluency and pragmatic appropriateness by providing ready-made chunks of language; on the other hand, overreliance on memorisation may impede deeper pragmatic processing and flexibility. This suggests that teaching formulaic language requires careful balancing to ensure it supports rather than constrains intercultural pragmatic development.

Furthermore, both teachers and learners illustrated the possible influence contextual variables could have on the pragmatics of feedback, with situational factors such as age, gender, and power as main factors among teachers and students. While teachers emphasised the influence of cultural differences on feedback structure and exchange, students noted individual differences as a variable on the way they would give and respond to feedback. These results demonstrate awareness of interpersonal dynamics beyond surface-level formulas, suggesting that participants view pragmatics not as rule-based, but as situationally contingent and relational, resonating with intercultural pragmatic perspectives. The implication is that teachers have therefore to move beyond formulaic teaching and explicitly address contextual adaptation in feedback. For example, recognising the tension between politeness norms and feedback clarity, as well as individual variation in feedback reception, teachers might implement differentiated pragmatic tasks. These could range from more structured formulaic expressions for learners needing confidence and clarity, to open-ended dialogue simulations for more advanced learners.

Both participant groups also noted the influence of intentions and affect on feedback exchange, however, distinctive subthemes emerged that illustrated unique contexts of each group. While both populations expressed empathy in giving feedback and disappointment in receiving feedback, students expressed more emotional reactions in receiving feedback, including embarrassment, resilience, and self-composure. In wrong face or out of face situations, individuals may feel ashamed and embarrassed due to the negative impact on their self-image and emotional attachment to the encounter. While Facework Theory generally referenced the negative emotions individuals may experience in social interactions when they lose face, the current study identified specific feelings in the context of feedback exchange and the role of pragmatics teaching to mitigate these feelings and enhance the receipt and taking of feedback while protecting their self-image.

Finally, a distinctive outcome that emerged from the data was students' recognition of the broader life and communication skills fostered through pragmatics instruction. In particular, learners highlighted gains in interpersonal and intercultural competence, as well as increased awareness of the nuanced, culturally embedded nature of meaning—especially relevant for those aspiring to work in translation. This underscores the transferability of pragmatic skills across academic, professional, and cross-cultural contexts, reinforcing the value of integrating pragmatics into wider curricula.

Overall, this study sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of the shared experiences between the two populations, teachers, and learners, while also highlighting some distinctive subthemes that differentiate them. Acknowledging overarching similarities is essential for designing interventions that address EFL pragmatics instruction. At the same time, recognising unique sub-themes allows for more tailored and contextually appropriate exchange of feedback.

The similarities and differences between teachers' and students' perceptions, as revealed in this study, form the empirical foundation for an initial conceptual framework for teaching the pragmatic features of feedback in EFL contexts. This framework, developed from the data, is tailored initially for the Saudi Arabian context and will be presented in the following chapter as a practical and pedagogically informed contribution to the field.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

8.0 Introduction

This final chapter draws conclusions based on a thorough analysis of the empirical data, and considering the implications of designing a programme for teaching pragmatic features of feedback in particular and teaching pragmatics and discourse in EFL context in general at Saudi Arabian University or a similar context. This leads to the preliminary iteration of a conceptual framework for teaching pragmatic features of feedback along with implications. Lastly, the chapter presents the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

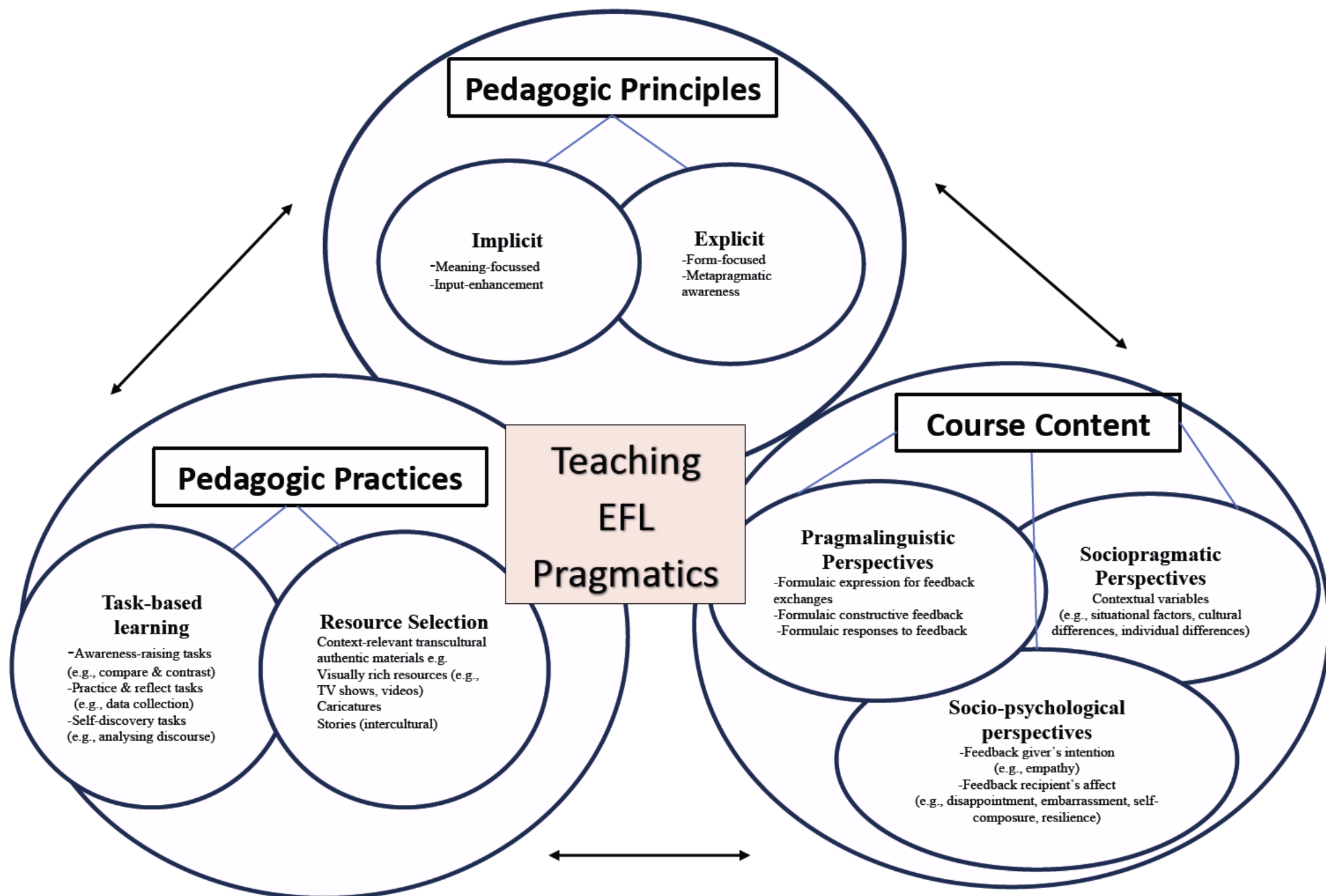
8.1 A Conceptual framework for teaching pragmatic features of feedback at Saudi Arabian tertiary education in EFL context

The findings are significant in opening the pathway for futures thinking in the field of pragmatics teaching and learning for intercultural communication. Drawing on empirical evidence to address the two research questions, both teachers and students provided their perceptions regarding the instruction on the pragmatic features of feedback, highlighting potential benefits, challenges, outcomes, issues, and variables. Teachers attended and observed two intervention specific lectures, submitted two classroom observational sheets, and took part in two focus groups while students reflected on the instruction through reflections and interviews. The integration of teachers' and students' perceptions of the pragmatics instruction along with the design and the implementation of using authentic materials rooted in specific pedagogical tasks on feedback has led to the development of a framework specific to one context and one university. Piloting further this framework will deepen understanding of enhancing student experiences and contextually sensitive language use across languages and cultures in similar educational contexts.

The design was also informed by previous literature discussed in chapters 2 and 3. These include:

- **Intercultural pragmatics**, as developed by Kecskés (2014), Mey (2004), Moeschler (2004), Haugh (2008), House (2008), and Spencer-Oatey & Wang (2017);
- **Pragmatic competence**, drawing on foundational work by Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983);
- **Traditional pragmatic theories**, informed by Speech Act Theory (Austin, 1969; Searle, 1970), Politeness Theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987), and Facework (Goffman, 1967);
- **Research in feedback exchange**, including Hathaway (1997), Hyland & Hyland (2001), Daniels (2009), Nelson & Quick (2013), Dohrenwend (2002), LeBaron & Jernick (2000), and Choi et al. (2018);
- **Teaching theories in EFL**, informed by the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990, 2001), input enhancement (Smith, 1993), and approaches to explicit and implicit instruction (Taguchi, 2015; Plonsky & Zhuang, 2019; Derakhshan & Shakki, 2022; Taguchi & Youn, 2022);
- **Authentic materials in EFL**, supported by studies like Al-Musallam (2009), Yang (2021), and Liao & Lee (2020);
- **Task-based approaches**, informed by Ellis (2003), Branden (2016), Li (2023), and Kim et al. (2023); and
- **Formula-based approaches**, drawing from the work of Wray (2000), Nergis (2021), Peters & Pauwels (2015), and Taylor (2002).

Figure 8.1 shows a prototypical framework including three key components: Course content, pedagogic principles, and pedagogic practices.



A Framework for Teacher Planning

The framework draws specifically on the successes of the two-week intervention, including the use of authentic materials, structured tasks, and guided practice, to provide a practical tool for lesson planning. Colleagues, such as EFL teachers at the University of Jeddah, can use this framework to design lessons that systematically support students' pragmatic development by selecting context-relevant, transcultural authentic materials, such as visually rich resources (e.g., TV show), caricatures, and intercultural stories. Teachers can also use formulaic language as a structured guide while taking contextual variables into account. For example, they can teach students common phrases for giving and responding to feedback explicitly (e.g., "I appreciate your comment," "Could you clarify this point?") and explain the function of each phrase in communication, as well as the contexts in which it is appropriate and why. In specific, they can teach students how to structure constructive feedback, introducing the N-P sequence as an example, as well as encouraging them to exercise their agency through choosing from various ways of responding to feedback. Teachers are also encouraged to highlight the relevant socio-psychological variables, such as the feedback giver's intention (e.g., empathy), the recipient's emotional responses (e.g., embarrassment, disappointment, self-composure), and their possible influence on feedback exchanges. For example, teachers could highlight how the tone of feedback—whether supportive, empathetic, or harsh—affects how individuals interpret and respond to it. Moreover, learners, in this study, reported valuing explicit instruction as a means of understanding pragmatic norms and feedback structures and practices. In response, teachers are encouraged to make pragmatic features explicit and open to discussion, rather than relying solely on implicit exposure.

In addition, learners' post-intervention knowledge can be applied in authentic classroom interactions when giving, receiving, or responding to feedback. This includes applying pragmatic awareness of tone, intention, and emotional impact when formulating feedback, interpreting others' comments, and managing face concerns during interaction. Learners' developing awareness of pragmatic features especially when interpreting teachers' feedback could support them in responding to feedback more pragmatically, for example by accepting it constructively, requesting clarification, or expressing disagreement. By explicitly raising learners' awareness of how feedback is pragmatically constructed and interpreted, the intervention helps reduce misinterpretations arising from differences in cultural expectations regarding directness, authority, and face. Importantly, the focus on tone, face, and politeness allows learners to reframe feedback as a communicative act rather than a personal evaluation, which can mitigate negative emotional reactions and defensiveness.

In short, the framework contributes to addressing the original issues highlighted in this study. Its primary contribution lies in foregrounding intercultural pragmatics, which subsequently strengthens teacher-learner feedback practices and minimizes potential intercultural pragmatic misunderstandings. Simply put, the framework bridges theory and practice, offering both teachers and students practical tools to enhance pragmatic competence in EFL contexts. The following section situates these contributions within theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical perspectives.

8.2 Contributions of the study

Building on the preceding discussion of the framework's role in bridging theory and practice, this section outlines the study's theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical contributions.

8.2.1 Theoretical contributions

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to intercultural pragmatics by conceptualising feedback as a dialogic, interactional process rather than a unidirectional act, foregrounding learners' perceptions, agency and face management in feedback exchanges. Drawing on intercultural pragmatic views of language and meaning, feedback is positioned as a socially situated practice in which meaning is co-constructed through interaction, shaped by power relations, face concerns, and participants' sociocultural expectations. This perspective extends existing work in L2 pragmatics, which has predominantly conceptualised feedback in terms of form, accuracy, or teacher control, by foregrounding the interpersonal and intercultural dimensions of feedback exchanges.

A key theoretical contribution of this study lies in highlighting the socio-psychological and emotional dimensions of feedback in EFL contexts. Although pragmatics instruction has largely emphasized situational conditions and cultural norms as central variables (e.g., Kecskés, 2014; Ishihara & Cohen, 2014; Bella, Sifianou, & Tzanne, 2015), this study argues for a more comprehensive approach to the pragmatics of feedback. The findings indicate that feedback-related practices should also incorporate attention to factors intrinsic to feedback exchanges, notably the feedback giver's empathetic intention and the recipient's emotional reactions, while

remaining attentive to intercultural expectations. Considering these variables can contribute to more effective, relationally sensitive feedback, particularly within EFL and intercultural communication settings.

Furthermore, the study contributes theoretically by addressing a limitation in the dominant frameworks used to conceptualise pragmatic competence. Previous research has relied heavily on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory and speech act theory, focusing on teaching indirectness or isolated speech acts such as requests, suggestions, and refusals. Such interventions often emphasise explicit instruction in a prescriptive manner, without sufficiently considering how learners perceive, interpret, and apply these strategies in real communicative contexts. In particular, prior studies have largely overlooked how these speech acts operate within the dynamics of feedback exchanges, where discourse is co-constructed and shaped by relational and intercultural factors.

8.2.2 Methodological contributions

Methodologically, this study contributes by adopting a qualitative intervention and case-study design that captures both EFL teachers and learners' perceptions of pragmatic instruction, investigating feedback practices in EFL settings. This study provides collaborative curriculum design involving both teaching and learning perspectives. First, drawing on Ferguson, Hanreddy, & Draxton (2011), co-designing learning tasks can shift traditional power dynamics and foster greater engagement, agency, and equity in feedback exchanges. Second, recognising the potential of teacher-student collaboration in perceptions of instruction may lead to a shared commitment to developing together explicit pedagogical approaches for meaningful learning.

As discussed in the Methodology Chapter, L2/EFL pragmatics research has been largely shaped by quantitative and quasi-experimental designs that assess the effects of instruction on learners' pragmatic performance. While such studies have generated valuable insights, they often leave learners' and teachers' perspectives underexplored. Responding to this gap, the present study adopts a qualitative inquiry to foreground participants' voices and examine how pragmatic instruction is perceived, interpreted, and experienced in context. By focusing on meaning-making rather than measurable gains, this approach offers a contextualised understanding of pragmatics instruction that complements existing outcome-oriented research.

8.2.3 Pedagogical contributions

Pedagogically, the study contributes by proposing a conceptual framework that integrates intercultural pragmatics into feedback practices, providing teachers and learners with practical tools to enhance pragmatic competence in EFL classrooms. This includes pedagogic principles, course content, and pedagogic practices, expanding EFL curricula to integrate pragmatic feedback instruction. Traditional focus on isolated speech acts should evolve toward *discourse-level instruction*, especially written feedback exchanges. Authentic materials and design-specific pedagogical tasks are central to teaching nuanced pragmatic features—going beyond scripted dialogues to real-world, culturally diverse interactions.

The study further integrates principles of task-based language teaching (TBLT) to design activities that promote meaningful engagement, facilitate the processing of pragmatic information, and encourage the internalisation of intercultural communication skills. Instructional materials could help learners express, receive, and negotiate feedback respectfully across diverse settings—going beyond the academic and focussing on the workplace and professional contexts. However,

implementing pragmatics instruction requires alignment with *curriculum policy*, *teacher professional learning*, and *research orientation*. The Framework for Teacher Planning may serve as a springboard as emphasis on raising student awareness and making transparent the demands of intercultural pragmatics fosters global communicative competence.

8.3 Limitations

The study employed multiple instruments for data collection to assure the nuanced validity and reliability of the findings. There were still some limitations that need to be recognised. Despite having thirty-one student participants, the study focused on a small sample of teacher participants, four, due to their workload. In all, the study required teachers to attend two lectures, observe and reflect on the instruction in two reflections, and take part in two focus groups. Replicating the study with a greater number of EFL teachers is needed to obtain more reliable and generalisable results. Moreover, the study was short and would have benefitted from data collected over a longer period of time. However, this may mean adopting a different approach that takes into account the workload of teachers and their availability.

Another potential limitation is the generally positive tone of the teacher data. While the participants offered valuable and thoughtful reflections, it is possible that the nature of the focus groups—and the researcher's role in the instructional process—may have been shaped by cultural sensitivities - determining how feedback was delivered. In some cases, the responses might be interpreted as a form of pragmatic feedback, reflecting professional courtesy or interpersonal sensitivity rather than critical detachment. This does not undermine the insights shared, but it suggests the value of future research involving a wider range of participants and contexts to ensure a broader diversity of perspectives.

8.4 Direction for further research

To conclude this thesis, I shall finish with six recommendations for further research.

- **Further piloting the Planning Framework**

The study was conducted with first-year EFL students and teachers at the College of Language and Translation. Replicating the study using the Planning Framework across other academic disciplines or institutions could lead to further iterations and enhance our understanding of how contextual factors influence perceptions of pragmatics instruction, thereby strengthening the generalisability and applicability of findings.

- **Expanding research to younger learners**

While the instructional design and content were tailored for adult intermediate to advanced EFL learners, introducing pragmatics—particularly in the context of feedback—to younger learners could offer significant benefits. Early exposure may foster greater pragmatic awareness and communicative competence over time, suggesting a valuable direction for curriculum adaptation and future pedagogical research.

- **Including male perspectives**

Due to cultural and logistical constraints, the study focused exclusively on female participants. Future research should explore male EFL teachers' and learners' perceptions of pragmatics instruction. Comparative analysis between male and female perspectives could uncover gender-based differences or commonalities in pragmatic awareness and instructional needs.

- **Exploring additional pragmatic features**

This study centred on the teaching and learning of pragmatic features related to feedback. However, pragmatics encompasses a wide range of discourse phenomena, including how

individuals manage conversational flow, express stance, negotiate meaning, and attend to face in extended interaction. Expanding this line of inquiry to explore learners' engagement with these wider discourse practices—such as meetings or academic discussions—could offer a more comprehensive understanding of pragmatics instruction in EFL contexts.

- **Integrating quantitative approaches**

As a qualitative inquiry, the study captured rich insights into participants' perceptions. Future research could complement this with a longitudinal study focusing on student progression in competence to appropriately use pragmatic features. A mixed-methods approach - particularly one that innovatively measures discourse-level speech act performance - would offer a more robust evaluation of instructional effectiveness and learner development.

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Appendix A: Ethics Approval Letter for the Pilot Study



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Ref: AALJ30082021

Alia ALJOOFI
Moray House School of Education and Sport

Date: 18th October 2021

Dear Alia,

Title: Implementation of Pragmatics in EFL Classroom: A Framework for Teaching Pragmatics in Saudi Arabia

The School of Education and Sport Ethics Sub-Committee has now considered your request for ethical approval for the studies detailed in the above application.

This is to confirm that the Sub-Committee is happy to approve your application and that the research meets the School Ethics Approval criterion for this particular project. A standard condition of this ethical approval is that should any amendment, or deviation from the original protocol outlined in your application need to be made to carry out or continue your research, please notify the Ethics Sub-Committee at MHSES-Ethics@ed.ac.uk

The Committee also needs to be notified if there are any unexpected results or events once the research is underway that raise questions about the safety of the research.

Should you receive any formal complaints relating to the study you should notify the MHSE Ethics Committee immediately by email to MHSES-Ethics@ed.ac.uk

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of:
Dr Fiona O'Hanlon
Director of Ethics

Appendix B: Ethics Approval Letter for The Main Data Collection

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
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Ref: AALJ20062022

Alia ALJOOFI
Moray House School of Education and Sport

Date: 01st September 2022

Dear Alia,

Title: Implementation of Pragmatics in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context

The School of Education and Sport Ethics Sub-Committee has now considered your request for ethical approval for the studies detailed in the above application.

This is to confirm that the Sub-Committee is happy to approve your application and that the research meets the School Ethics Approval criterion for this particular project. A standard condition of this ethical approval is that should any amendment, or deviation from the original protocol outlined in your application need to be made to carry out or continue your research, please notify the Ethics Sub-Committee at MHSES-Ethics@ed.ac.uk

The Committee also needs to be notified if there are any unexpected results or events once the research is underway that raise questions about the safety of the research.

Should you receive any formal complaints relating to the study you should notify the MHSE Ethics Committee immediately by email to MHSES-Ethics@ed.ac.uk

Yours sincerely,

A small rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Fiona O'Hanlon'.

On behalf of:
Dr Fiona O'Hanlon
Director of Ethics

Appendix C: Teachers' Classroom Observational Sheet for Week 1

<p>Week 1 :Classroom Observational Sheet</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Section A</p> <p>- What do you think of the following tasks? Why? (What you learned and how you felt about it)</p> <p>Task 1</p> <p>Task 2</p> <p>Task 3.....</p> <p>Task 4.....</p> <p>Assignment</p> <p>Any other thoughts or observations?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>Section B</p> <p>1. What do you think of teaching English formulaic expressions of giving and taking feedback presented in the lesson? Why?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>2. In what ways do social factors (e.g., age, gender, social status, power) make any difference to you in the choice of language in giving and taking feedback?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
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Appendix E: Students' Reflective Log for Week 1

Section A

- 1. What do you think of the following tasks? Why? **(What you learned and how you felt about it)**

Task 1.....

Task 2.....

Task 3.....

Task 4.....

Section B

- 1. What do you think of learning English formulaic expressions of giving and taking feedback presented in the lesson? Why? (They will be given the expressions on one place when they start reflecting.)

.....
.....

- 2. In what ways do social factors (e.g., age, gender, social distance, power) make any difference to you in the choice of language in giving and taking feedback?

.....
.....

Any other thoughts or observations?

.....
.....

Appendix F: Students' Reflective Log for Week 2

Section A

- 1. What do you think of the following tasks? Why? **(What you learned and how you felt about it).**

Task 1.....

Task 2.....

Task 3.....

Task 4.....

Assignment.....

.....

.....

Section B

- 1. What do you think of learning the constructive feedback formula presented in the lesson? Why?

.....

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.....

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- 2. To what extent do you think social factors (e.g., age, gender, power) affect the constructive feedback formula presented in the lesson? Why?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Any other thoughts or observations?

.....

.....

Appendix G: Teachers' 1st Focus Group Week 1

1. Please introduce yourself, your major, your experience, and your job status.

Teaching pragmatics of feedback (Feedback: negative & positive; face and politeness; social factors (age, gender, social status, power).

1- In what ways did you benefit from the instruction in the pragmatics of giving and taking feedback: negative and positive feedback?

2- Do you find any aspects of teaching pragmatics of feedback helpful if so, why? if not why?

- Teaching Face and Politeness

- Introducing social factors (e.g., power, age, gender, social distance, social status) and their association with the pragmatics of giving and taking feedback

- English formulaic expressions of giving and taking feedback.

3. How important do you think it is to develop students' understanding of the pragmatics of giving and taking feedback? why?

Teaching procedure

1. To what extent do you think the teaching procedure was helpful? Why? Why not? (I followed 6 steps: 1) raising awareness task followed by 2) metapragmatic explanation and 3) discussion 4) self-discovery tasks followed by 5) 'practice and reflect' 6) Feedback.

Teaching materials

1. What do you think about the Task-based approach and teaching L2 pragmatics? Why?

Task 1: Personal experiences

Task 2: Video: TV show

Tasks 3 & 4: Caricature

Assignment: Student research: Data collection

1. Do you find teaching materials authentic and present real-life situations? How important do you think it is to use authentic materials in the teaching of L2 pragmatics?

2. Any other thoughts you have?

Appendix H: Teachers' 2nd Focus Group Week 2

Teaching pragmatics of feedback

1. In what ways did you benefit from the instruction in giving and responding to feedback?
2. To what extent do you think teaching constructive feedback promotes criticality and allows flexibility?
3. To what extent do you think teaching students how to give and take constructive feedback could change their perception of “criticism”?
4. In what ways do you think instruction on constructive feedback can build constructive communication?
5. What do think of the pragmatics of writing constructive feedback in an e-mail? Would you do it differently? How? Formula?

Teaching procedure

1. In what ways do you think teaching procedure was helpful? Why and why not? (I followed 6 steps in each lesson: 1) raising awareness task followed by 2) metapragmatic explanation and 3) discussion 4) self-discovery tasks followed by 5) ‘practice and reflect’ 6) Feedback).

Teaching materials

1. What do you think Task-based approach used in the lesson? Why?
 - Task 1: Student research: Critique
 - Task 2: Compare and contrast
 - Task 3: ‘Discourse analysis’
 - Task 4: Simulation used for the writing activity and the assignment in week 2

Final question:

- If you are going to write an e-mail to recommending teaching pragmatics of feedback to the programme director? What would you say about it?

Any other thoughts or suggestions you have?

Appendix I: Interviews Week 1

Please introduce yourself, your major, and your experience of learning English

عرفني عن نفسك، تخصصك، كم سنة تعلمتي الإنجليزي (خبرتك في تعلم الإنجليزية)؟

Teaching pragmatics of feedback (Feedback: negative & positive; face and politeness; social factors).

تدريس البراجماتية (فن استخدام اللغة): الفيدباك: سواء سلبي او إيجابي او النقد البناء:

1. In what ways did you benefit from the instruction in giving and taking feedback?
إلى أي مدى استفدتي من المحاضرة خصوصا فيما يتعلق في تقديم والرد على الفيدباك؟
2. Do you find any aspects of learning pragmatics of feedback helpful if so, why? if not why?
 - Teaching face and politeness
 - Introducing social factors (e.g., power, age) and their association with pragmatics of giving and taking feedback
 - English formulaic expressions you still remember?

هل وجدتني أي من جوانب تعلم البراجماتية في إعطاء والرد على الفيدباك مهم او مفيد، صعب، ممتع؟ لماذا؟
أهمية تدريس حفظ ماء الوجه والتأدب والتهديب في اللغة الإنجليزية -
أهمية تدريس العوامل الاجتماعية (مثل العمر والسلطة والنوع "رجل او امره") وعلاقتها باساسيات البراجماتيه في الفيدباك
بعض المصطلحات التي تعلمتها: مفيدة؟ صعبة؟ هل هناك مصطلحات ممكن تستخدمها وممكن لا من ثقافتنا العربية؟ هل النوع "رجل او امره" يلعب دور في تحديد أسلوب الكلام المحدد؟ ممكن مثال؟
هل المديح والشكر في العربي طويل؟ ممكن مثال؟ ولماذا؟
هل لديك مثال على مصطلح ممكن يصعب ترجمته من العربية الى الانجليزية اثناء تقديمك او ردك على الفيدباك؟ النقد او المدح؟

3. How important do you think it is to develop students' understanding of the pragmatics of giving and taking feedback? why?
مامدى أهمية تدريس البراجماتية للطلاب وخاصة البراجماتية الخاصة بالفيدباك: إعطاء فيدباك والرد على الفيدباك؟ ومامدى تأثيره على حياتهم العلمية والعملية؟ الحياة الاجتماعية؟
4. Do you think they will help you improve your English communicative skills if so, why? if not why?
هل ممكن أن يطور تعلمك البراجماتيه قدرتك على التواصل باللغة الانجليزية محليا وعالميا؟ ولماذا؟
5. What do you think that pragmatics instruction of feedback may offer to you in order to communicate effectively?
مالذي ممكن أن يقدم لك تعلم البراجماتيه في إعطاء والرد على الملاحظات للتواصل بشكل فعال؟

Teaching procedure

1. To what extent do you think teaching procedure was helpful? Why? (I followed 6 steps in each lesson: 1) raising awareness task followed by 2) metapragmatic explanation and 3) discussion 4) self-discovery tasks followed by 5) 'practice and reflect' 6) Feedback).
ما رأيك بتسلسل خطوات الدرس في المحاضرة؟ لقد اتبعت 6 خطوات: الخطوة الأولى كانت من اجل زيادة الوعي بأهمية البراجماتيه، الخطوة الثانية كانت عن توضيح "من خلال المناقشات" أهمية العوامل الاجتماعية والسياق وتأثيرها على المعنى والاختلافات الثقافية بين العربي والانجليزي، والخطوة الرابعة مساعدة الطالبات على الوصول (اكتشاف) الحل عن طريق الأسئلة، الخطوة الخامسة تطبيق عملي، الخطوة الاخيرة، تعليق الأستاذ على أجوبة الطلاب.

Teaching materials

1. What do you think about methods used in the lesson? Why?

ما رأيك بأسلوب تدريس الأنشطة المقدمة في الدرس "أسلوب الأنشطة التفاعلية"؟ ولماذا؟ كيف ساعدتك على التعلم البراغمتية؟

Task 1: Personal experiences

Task 2: Video: TV show

Task 3 & 4: Caricatures

Assignment 1: Student research: Data collection

2. Do you find teaching materials authentic and present real-life situations? If so, how important do you think it is to use authentic materials in the teaching of pragmatics?

هل قدمت المحاضرة لك امثلة حقيقية تشابه الواقع والمواقف في المجتمع؟ اذا جوابك نعم؟ ما أهمية تقديم هذه النوعية من الأساليب الواقعية في تدريس البراجماتية؟

3. Any other thoughts you have?

Appendix J: Students' Interviews Week 2

Please introduce yourself, your major, and your experience of learning EFL.

عرفني عن نفسك وتخصصك وخبرتك في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية؟

Teaching pragmatics of feedback (Constructive feedback)

1. In what ways did you benefit from the instruction in giving and taking constructive feedback?

إلى أي مدى استفدت من محاضرة تعلم طريقة كتابة والرد على النقد البناء؟ ما هو الجانب المهم في الدرس؟ الصعب؟ الشيق؟ مهم؟ لماذا؟

2. To what extent do you think teaching pragmatics of constructive feedback promotes criticality and allows flexibility?

إلى مدى في اعتقادك الشخصي تدريس البرجماتية النقد البناء يعزز التفكير النقدي والمرونة في استقبال النقد؟

3. To what extent do you think teaching students how to give and take constructive feedback could change their perception of "criticism"?

إلى مدى في اعتقادك الشخصي تدريس البرجماتية النقد البناء ممكن أن يغير وجه نظرك في النقد؟ لماذا؟

4. In what ways do you think instruction on constructive feedback can build constructive communication?

إلى مدى في اعتقادك الشخصي تدريس البرجماتية النقد البناء ممكن أن ينشأ بيئة عمل بناءة وصحية؟ لماذا؟

5. What do you think of the pragmatics of writing constructive feedback in an e-mail? To what extent do you think the instruction give you a better understanding of structuring giving and taking feedback?

ما رأيك في براجماتية صيغة كتابة النقد البناء في البريد الإلكتروني؟ إلى أي مدى تعتقد أن المحاضرة منحتك فهماً أفضل لطريقة تقديم النقد البناء والرد عليها؟ هل لديك طريقة أخرى لكتابة النقد؟

Teaching procedure

1. In what ways do you think teaching procedure was helpful? Why and why not? (I followed 6 steps in each lesson: 1) raising awareness task followed by 2) metapragmatic explanation and 3) discussion 4) self-discovery tasks followed by 5) 'practice and reflect' 6) Feedback).

ما رأيك بتسلسل خطوات الدرس في المحاضرة؟ لقد اتبعت 6 خطوات: الخطوة الأولى كانت من أجل زيادة الوعي بأهمية البراغماتية، الخطوة الثانية كانت عن توضيح "من خلال المناقشات" أهمية العوامل الاجتماعية والسياق وتأثيرها على المعنى والاختلافات الثقافية بين العربي والإنجليزي، والخطوة الرابعة مساعدة الطالبات على الوصول (اكتشاف) الحل عن طريق الأسئلة، الخطوة الخامسة تطبيق عملي، الخطوة الأخيرة، تعليق الأستاذ على أجوبة الطلاب.

Teaching materials:

What do you think about Task-based approach used in the lesson? Why?

ما رأيك بأسلوب تدريس الأنشطة المقدمة في الدرس "أسلوب الأنشطة التفاعلية"؟ ولماذا؟ كيف ساعدتك على التعلم البراغماتية؟

- Task 1: Student research: Critique (نقد الرسمة)
- Task 2: Compare and contrast: Self-discovery task about the discourse structures and politeness strategies used for giving constructive feedback أنواع ٣ مقارنة بين فيديباك
- Task 3: 'Discourse analysis' in depth: students study the written discourse (e.g., e-mails) تحليل النص وفروقات بين ٣ أنواع فيديباك من حيث اللغة والمعنى والقواعد والوضوح سوء الفهم والرد عليها
- Task 4: Simulation used for the writing activity and the assignment تدريب الأخير يعطي الطالب الحرية في اختيار السياق الاجتماعي والأشخاص والعوامل الاجتماعي وطريقة كتابة النقد.

هل لديك ملاحظات او تعليقات أخرى؟

Final question:

- If you are going to write an e-mail to recommending learning pragmatics of feedback to your friends? What would you say about it?

إذا كنت ستكتب بريداً إلكترونياً للتوصية بتعلم وتعليم براغماتية النقد البناء لأصدقائك؟ ماذا ستقول عنها؟

Appendix K: Sample of my Reflective Journal

June 2022

In this entry, I will reflect on what I have learned through reading the literature and attending seminars in intercultural communication, at the University of Edinburgh, and how these resources have shaped my view and the direction of the intervention design. I will first outline the resources that had the most impact on my thinking patterns of pragmatics in intercultural communication to help readers see “the development of my thinking; my own reflection; my time management; and provide ideas for the future direction of my work” (Silverman, 2005: 252 as cited in Dörnyei, 2007). Due to a scarcity of pragmatics-related instructional materials, teachers and learners have limited access to pragmatics resources (Borer, 2018) as not many of empirical studies have provided sufficient research-informed instruction on pragmatics (Ishihara & Cohn, 2014). In order to learn more about pragmatics, teaching/learning pragmatics as well as the notion of culture, issues associated with cultures, and approaches towards culture, there were some useful seminars and references in the LIL hub that influenced the way I see culture in the EFL classroom (for example Dr. Ashley Simpson in conversation with Prof Zhu Hua on rethinking culture through translation and translanguaging; Prof Fred Dervin in conversation with Dr Ashley Simpson on rethinking the role of language beyond non-essentialism; intercultural communication pedagogy and the question of the other).

August- September 2022

I am on the process of designing the second and third stages on discourse. It is highly challenging to construct brand new curriculum, so I need more time to design this stage and cross-check the materials before the intervention takes place. Therefore, I decided to go top-down in

order to ensure that classroom practice reflect the theory. This approach can be possible by systematically designing the pragmatics-focused curriculum as well as outlining my own principles/beliefs of teaching and learning pragmatics first. Therefore, I designed a rubric to self-assess the pragmatics-focused curriculum and another one for the lesson plan design.

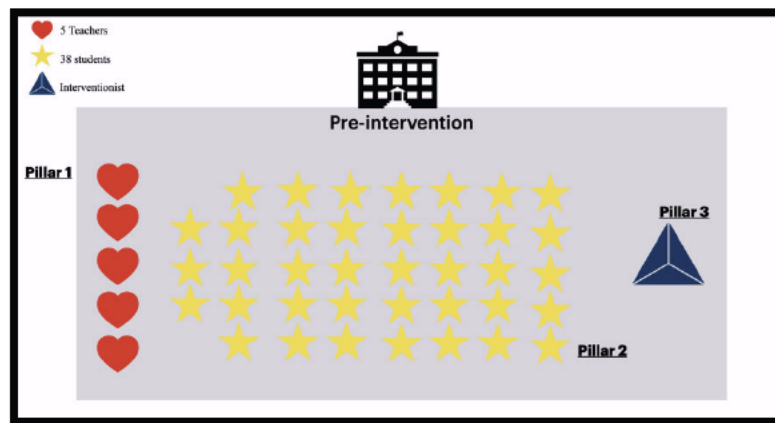
December 2022

I was giving more freedom to design brand new materials. Moving from materials adaptation to designing, brand new materials. Designing a theoretical framework for teaching pragmatics of feedback. Develop your own materials: If existing materials are insufficient, consider creating your own instructional materials specifically targeting pragmatics. You can design lesson plans, worksheets, role-play scenarios, or interactive activities that focus on different aspects of pragmatics, such as speech acts, politeness strategies, or intercultural communication. Be sure to base your materials on research and best practices in pragmatics instruction.

Appendix L: Extracts of my Fieldnotes of the Two-Intervention Week

Pre-Intervention Stage

I arrived on Sunday, 15 January 2023. I tried to schedule a pre-intervention meeting with the 5 teachers on Zoom: a meeting with 2 teachers on Tuesday evening, 17 January 2023, explaining their roles and agreeing on dates for the two lectures and the two focus groups, and another meeting, 18 January 2023, for the two teachers who couldn't join the first meeting, explaining to them their roles and checking the schedule with them. The fifth teacher who, eventually withdrew, didn't show up on the two meetings because she had an exam.



We discussed the importance of attending and taking notes during the lecture. I showed this image to stress that they are “the hearts of the intervention.” We also discussed what it is expected by the phrase: “What you have learned and what you felt about it.” in observational sheets. They asked about whether they are reflecting as learners or teachers. I explained that, according to the research question, it is supposed to be from the teaching perspective; however, if you learn something new from the instruction, please share it. However, in the observational sheet, I noticed that teachers didn't use the phrase “I learned” explicitly instead they used some phrases like “I was inspired by,” “For the first time I see,” or “I enjoyed...”

Intervention Stage: Pragmatics Instruction***Sunday, 22 January 2023***

Students arrived at 9 and teachers arrived at 9:30 as planned. I used the first 30 minutes to introduce the aim of the study as well as the students' role: attending two lectures, reflecting, and participating in an interview. I noticed that some students were more curious about specific elements of the lesson and kept asking what is the lesson specifically includes? Vocabulary? Grammar? Is it from the book? Are their marks? Or any kind of assessments? To break the ice with the students, I asked them about their hobbies/interests and why they majored in languages, which made them feel more comfortable and open during the lesson... . Students felt more excited when I shared with them the answer key to this question in task 1 (sharing experiences):

- What Arabic expressions are more likely to be transferred negatively in multicultural situations like this? How might that change across situations?

In the world cup, where is Messi? We broke his eye! Fans sing in Arabic, using a slang expression meaning to bring shame on a person. Messi and his Argentina team are being mocked after 2-1 loss to Saudi Arabia. *I don't personally support this phrase because it is a slang expression and Arabic speakers don't use it in their conversation +I am a Messi fan ☺

I think the reason behind their engagement is that football is very popular in Saudi Arabia and beating Argentina would be like a dream come true for all football fans. It is worth mentioning that the victory has been celebrated widely in Saudi Arabia and the next day after the match was a national holiday for all university staff and students.

Sunday, 29 January 2023

In the second lecture, I developed a practice test to practice the expressions they learned on 1st lecture. I started with an example in giving and taking feedback in an e-mail using some of the formulaic expressions. Then students worked on the practice test in pairs (one gives feedback, and one responds to feedback). I felt the students used the expressions correctly and to the right

situation and context. In task 1, the Critique method, I noticed that students used more polite strategies than giving constructive feedback. In my opinion, this may prove that students would resist the idea of being negative about someone's work if they are not giving a formula to follow.

Appendix M: Sample of Data Analysis (Teachers' Data)

Teachers' Views of Using Authentic Materials and Tasks in Teaching Pragmatics of Feedback

Themes	Sub-themes	Examples
Developing Intercultural awareness	Providing learner's local culture	T4 "...I enjoyed the part when you included a clip in Arabic ..." (T4, OS 1).
	Comparing L1 to L2	T2 "... comparing informal Arabic to formal English in the issue of linguistic transferring ..." (T2, OS 1).
	Different perspectives of "culture"	T1 "... it all goes back to our culture." (FG 2) T2 "What is said in one culture, means different in another culture." (FG1) T3 "...this is how e-mails are written in English culture?" (FG2)

Teachers' Views of Using Formulaic Language in Teaching Pragmatics of Feedback

Themes	Sub-themes	Examples
Pragmatics competence	Developing socioculturally appropriate utterances	T3 "... training the students and preparing them with the linguistic (formal) and cultural aspects can boost their communication skills." (T3, OS 1) T1 "... reflect on the notion of "constructive feedback" and get to realise how to use feedback expressions more communicatively and pragmatically appropriate." (T1, OS 2). T4 "I think it is very helpful to teach students how to give and respond to feedback in an appropriate way, as it will help them become more aware of the situations dictate the language we use." (T4, OS 1) T4 "I think it is very helpful for language learners who might need to use this for their future careers." (T4, OS 2)

	<p>Facilitating pragmatic fluency (writing and speaking skills)</p>	<p>T1 “I believe it is really important to always raise students’ awareness of formulaic expressions that could perform pragmatic purposes. This would help their spoken language become more pragmatically appropriate, and it would help them become more fluent and efficient in different L2 contexts.” (T1, OS 1)</p> <p>T2 “It is a good way to help students structure their paragraph in giving feedback, especially showing how to highlight the areas that need to be improved in a constructive way” (T2, OS 2)</p> <p>T2 “Teaching English formulaic expressions of giving and responding to feedback is essential and related to the writing task they are doing during this term. These linguistic skills would help students to read other students’ work and be able to give and respond to feedback.” (T2, OS 1)</p>
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Teachers’ Views of the Influence of Contextual Variables on the Pragmatics of Feedback

Themes	Sub-themes	Examples
Contextual variables	Stereotypes (age, gender, power)	<p>T2 “I would use the same formula in my teaching, but it really depends on the situation, whom I am talking to ... etc. I can think of age and gender as potential factors that would change the way I give feedback.” (T2, OS 2)</p> <p>T3 “It makes a huge difference, especially in terms of age, social status, and power. I think to be able to understand the language well and to use it correctly/politely, we need to understand the cultural background of its users and those of talking to.” (T3, OS 1)</p> <p>T4 “Social factors make all the difference in the words I choose whether it is in written or spoken language. When someone is older, has more authority, or from a different gender, I am always very careful with my words to make sure the message is received as I intend to.” (T4, OS 1)</p>

	<p>Culturally being polite</p>	<p>T4 "...beneficial for students in our culture who are not used to giving constructive feedback because they are only thinking about being "nice" and "saving face..." (T4, OS 2)</p> <p>T3 I think it is important to teach that honesty is essential and that it should always be constructive that language has the tools to keep us constructive/polite (T3, OS 2).</p>
	<p>Culturally not accepting criticism</p>	<p>T4 "I think Arab/Saudi culture doesn't like criticism so much, so that is why they were probably reluctant to give criticism." (T4, OS 2)</p>

Appendix N: Sample of Data Analysis (Students' Data)

Themes	Sub-themes	Example
Student motivation	Enjoyment	<p>“It was really fun to do that, and I benefited a lot in sharing our experiences.” (Ref.1 S1)</p> <p>“It was very useful for me. I enjoyed listening to everyone's opinions and understanding how the meaning changes from one culture to another. I very much enjoyed this task (Ref. 1 S2)</p> <p>“The first task was enjoyable, and I liked the idea of sharing personal experiences, and how to communicate if there is a misunderstanding.” (Ref.1 S5); “The choice of the video is excellent and what makes it even more interesting is the way it was presented.” (Ref.1 S5)</p> <p>“An enjoyable and humorous task that reflects our local culture. The information was delivered in a comedic manner and there were clever and socially acceptable ways of handling misunderstandings” (Ref.1 S20)</p>
	New approach	<p>“In task 4, I learned to think in another way or as they say outside the box. At first, it was a little difficult for me, but I partnered with my group, and we came up with a very good idea, and I found out that I have a talent in writing a scenario, and this is very good.” (Ref. 1 S2)</p> <p>“Task 4 was wonderful; I love teamwork. I realised that each person has their own perspective, and with just two pictures, everyone expressed it in a unique way. It was beautiful and good.” (Ref 1 S6)</p> <p>“Today’s lesson is a departure from the typical and regular routine.” (Ref. 1 S21)</p>

Themes	Sub-themes	Example
<p>Pragmatics competence</p>	<p>Developing sociocultural awareness</p>	<p>“I think those who consider social and cultural factors when writing constructive feedback (e.g., using a writing formula) are better communicators and are accepted by people.” (Ref.2 S19)</p> <p>“We learned that social and cultural factors, as well as reactions, are all vary and significantly influence how we articulate our thoughts and words. We also learned about different types of praise, that there can be exaggerated or moderate forms of communication.” (Ref.1 S24)</p>
	<p>Facilitating pragmatic fluency</p>	<p>“... we are students of foreign languages, and we will become translators, so it is important to improve our communication skills ... reading and analysing different situations and understanding how to give and take constructive feedback, especially as future translators responsible for translating what we read and write, improving our skills and gaining experience is crucial. How can we effectively spread knowledge without continuous improvement in our language skills as well as gaining experience?” (Int.2-S30, P. 6)</p> <p>“It is very important to learn formulaic expressions for giving/taking feedback because English is a global language and knowing how to take part in two-way communication is crucial. This concept is introduced for the first time in my studies, bringing new useful terms to my personal knowledge.” (Ref.1 S19)</p>

Appendix O: Writing Formula for Giving Constructive Feedback

Giving Constructive Feedback Formula

1. General statements

The project, overall, looks ...

Generally, what you have accomplished so far looks ...

I have noticed that ...

I would like to share with you regarding ...

It was brought to my attention a few things about ...

2. Highlighting areas to improve

I think there are some issues that you may reconsider regarding ...

I would like to add that some ...

I see your point, but ...

Instead, you can use ...

I like ... , but I could not understand ...

I wonder ...

I noticed ...

How about ...

Have you thought about ...

Could you please change ...

Would you please reconsider ...?

I would appreciate if you could ...

I would appreciate your considering some changes to

3. Closing: encouraging remarks

I really like how you conducted ...

Next time I would love to hear more about ... because ...

Once you consider those minor changes, the project will ...

I will leave this for you to decide ...

4. Thank you note

Thanks for all your hard work!

I am looking forward to hearing from you!

Appendix P: Writing Formula for Responding to Feedback**Formula for responding to feedback****Ask for clarification if the feedback is unclear****- Thanking notes**

Thank you very much for your feedback!

- Making a request/Asking for clarification

I would like to ask for clarification if it is possible.

Would you please clarify/explain ...

Could you please elaborate more ...

- Appreciation notes

I truly appreciate your help!

I appreciate any help you can provide!

I appreciate the time you spent to provide me with feedback!

I appreciate your time and effort!

Accept the feedback if it is constructive**- Thanking notes**

Thank you very much for your feedback!

- Appreciation notes

I truly appreciate your help!

I appreciate any help you can provide!

I appreciate the time you spent to provide me with feedback!

I appreciate your time and effort!

Disagree politely if the feedback is unfair**- Thanking notes**

Thank you very much for your feedback!

- Disagree politely

I wonder if it is a good idea to

I see your point, but I think

I respect your point of view, but in my opinion, ...

I am so sorry, but I disagree with you on

I am afraid I disagree.

- The reason for disagreement

The reason is ...

This is because ...

- Appreciation notes

I truly appreciate your help!

I appreciate any help you can provide!


I appreciate the time you spent to provide me with feedback!

I appreciate your time and effort!

Appendix Q: A Scaffolding Technique for Week 2

Situation: Someone was rude with the team.

Student A: Instead of saying you are rude, we can say ...



I noticed that

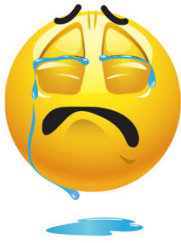
.....

Student B: Disagree politely

I wonder

.....

Situation: Someone could not present new ideas in their project.



Styles Pane

Student A: Instead of saying I don't like that idea! That will never work!, we can say

I think

.....

Student B: Ask for clarification

Would you please

.....

Appendix R: Samples of Interview Fieldnotes**Student ID: S14****Week 1****Pre-interview: General observations**

Very confident, serious, and intellectual student

Notes during interview

It sounds like a good reader! She is very honest and straightforward. I am impressed by the participant's eloquence, sophistication, and the rich range of vocabulary she used to describe her experience. She had the ability to elaborate with examples and stories, a little bit of confusion regarding the Face concept.

Post-interview: Final remarks

She is curious about the topic and wants to know more. She asked me several questions about myself, my major and of course, pragmatics ;)

Student ID: S16**Week 1****Pre-interview: General observations**

Very quiet and reluctant; maybe anxious or shy?

Notes during interview

Generally, she was positive; I felt that she was somehow trying to please me 😊; I believe it is politeness 😊 she also repeated some answers when I tried to ask for examples or elaborations. I asked her directly to point out what wasn't right for her learning experience or what was difficult to understand, but she was not very critical.

Post-interview: Final remarks

In my point of view, this interview proves to me how politeness, and probably shyness, can sometimes act as a barrier to participants when it comes to providing .more explanations of their opinion.

Appendix S: Participant Consent Form

Study Title: Implementation of Pragmatics in EFL Classroom: A Framework for Teaching Pragmatics in Saudi Arabia

Researcher’s name and contact details: Alia Zain Aljoofi
s2116366@ed.ac.uk

Participant ID: _____

Please tick box

- 1. I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet (Version 01 dated 01 11 2022) for the above study.

- 2. I have been given the opportunity to consider the information provided, ask questions and have had these questions answered to my satisfaction.

- 3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can ask to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

- 4. I understand that my anonymised data will be stored for a minimum of 5 years and may be used in future ethically approved research.

- 5. I agree to my interview being audio recorded.

- 6. I agree to take part in the above study.

- 7. I am aware that participating in this study at the current time may carry risks in relation to potential exposure to COVID-19 to COVID-19, and I understand

Name of person giving consent

Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent

Date

Signature

Appendix T: Participant Information Sheet (Teacher Version)

Language Education

Participant information sheet

Implementation of Pragmatics in EFL Classroom: A Framework for Teaching Pragmatics in Saudi Arabia

You are being invited to take part in research on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Pragmatics. Alia Aljoofi, a Ph.D. student at the University of Edinburgh, is leading this research. She combines her role as a lecturer of EFL at the English Language Institute with her role as a researcher/interventionist in this study. For her role as an interventionist, she will be teaching the students relying on her experience as a lecturer of EFL and MA graduate in Linguistics. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important you understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The current study aims to introduce pragmatics in the EFL classroom in Saudi Arabia through raising both learners' and teachers' awareness of intercultural communication. To examine how instruction intervention can improve pragmatics learning in the EFL context, it is essential to examine EFL learners' perceptions of pragmatics as well as explore EFL teachers' perceptions of pragmatics in EFL classrooms.

WHY HAVE I BEEN INVITED TO TAKE PART?

You are invited to participate in this study because you are a faculty member at the English Language Institute (ELI), University of Jeddah, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART?

No – it is entirely up to you. Your participation is anonymous and confidential. If you do decide to take part, you can withdraw at any time and without giving any reason.

Please note that your data may be used in the production of formal research outputs (e.g., journal articles, conference papers, theses and reports).

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I DECIDE TO TAKE PART?

If you do decide to take part, please keep this Information Sheet. You will be asked to sign/complete an Informed Consent Form to show that you understand your rights in relation to the research, and that you are happy to participate.

You will be asked to attend and observe 2 interventions (each intervention will last for three hours per week). I will be teaching the students relying on my experience as a lecturer of EFL and MA graduate in Linguistics. The intervention includes 30 Saudi EFL intermediate students (one intact class) in their first year at the English Language Institute, University of Jeddah. The students will receive pragmatics instruction using extracurricular materials focusing mainly on feedback exchange.

You will be asked a number of questions related to pragmatics (the study of how context contributes to meaning), and the aim is to examine your perception of pragmatics & teaching pragmatics based on the intervention. You are expected to reflect on the classroom intervention two weeks on semi-structured classroom reflections on teaching of pragmatics. The reflections may take up to 20 minutes or you may like to take notes during the classroom intervention to inform your reflective logs that we would ask you to submit by the end of each session per week. In Post-intervention focus group, you will be invited to participate in a focus group interview with 3 teachers for 40-60 minutes. The interview includes only open questions. The interview will take place at a time that is convenient to you. Ideally, we would like to audio record your responses and will require your consent for this, so the location should be in a fairly quiet area

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

There are no direct benefits, but by sharing your experiences with us, you will be helping Alia Aljoofi and the University to better understand how to implement EFL pragmatics in Saudi Arabia.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS OR DISADVANTAGES ASSOCIATED WITH TAKING PART?

There are no significant risks associated with participation. However, we have taken specific steps to minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19 during the study by adhering to the most up to date Saudi Government guidance. These routine measures include making every effort to ensure i) good ventilation; ii) by default, continued use of face coverings; iii) good hand and respiratory hygiene; and iv) suspension of research if the researcher(s) or participant(s) have COVID symptoms. Further, university facilities used for research are subject to an enhanced cleaning regime.

{If you are a participant who is deemed at higher risk, but exceptionally the research is justified as there is either a clinical need or the benefits outweigh the risks, then researchers will have taken additional steps (TBC)}

However, even with these control measures, there remains some risk of exposure from participating in this study.

WHAT IF I AM UNWELL?

If you feel unwell, experience COVID-19 related symptoms or have been in contact with a COVID-19 positive individual in the past 14 days, then please contact the researcher, Alia Aljoofi, s2116366@ed.ac.uk and we will postpone the session till you feel healthy and well.

WILL MY TAKING PART BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

All the information we collect during the course of the research will be kept confidential and there are strict laws which safeguard your privacy at every stage.

HOW WILL WE USE INFORMATION ABOUT YOU?

We will need to use information from you for this research project.

This information will include your age, level of education, major, and position, and your e-mail.

We will keep all information about you safe and secure.

Your data will be referred to by a unique participant number rather than by name because your participation will be anonymised and confidential. If you consent to being audio recorded, all recordings will be destroyed once they have been transcribed. Since you are a faculty member of the English Language Institute (ELI) at the University of Jeddah, ELI will probably be aware of who is taking part in the study. Your information will be mixed only with the data of the current research. Your data will be viewed by the researcher and could possibly be viewed by Prof. Richard Andrews and Prof. Do Coyle, Dr. Kenneth Fordyce, my Ph.D. supervisors.

All electronic data will be stored on a password-protected computer file and all paper records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. Your consent information will be kept separately from your responses in order to minimise risk of identification.

Once we have finished the study, we will keep some of the data so we can check the results. We will write our reports in a way that no-one can work out that you took part in the study.

What are your choices about how your information is used?

- You can stop being part of the study at any time, without giving a reason, but we will keep information about you that we already have.
- We need to manage your records in specific ways for the research to be reliable. This means that we won't be able to let you see or change the data we hold about you.

Where can you find out more about how your information is used?

- You can find out more about how we use your information at <https://www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/privacy-notice-research>
- By sending an e-mail to Alia Aljoofi, s2116366@ed.ac.uk

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WITH THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY?

The results of this study may be summarised in published articles, reports and presentations. You will not be identifiable from any published results. Quotes or key findings will always be made anonymous in any formal outputs unless we have your prior and explicit written permission to attribute them to you by name. With your consent, your anonymised information may also be kept for future research.

WHO IS ORGANISING AND FUNDING THE RESEARCH?

This study has been organised by Alia Aljoofi, a Ph.D. student at the University of Edinburgh.

WHO HAS REVIEWED THE STUDY?

The study proposal has been reviewed by the Moray House School of Education and Sport Ethics Committee.

WHO CAN I CONTACT?

If you have any further questions about the study, please contact the lead researcher, Alia Aljoofi, s2116366@ed.ac.uk.

If you would like to discuss this study with someone independent of the study please contact Annie Yang,

If you wish to make a complaint about the study, please contact:

Dr Fiona O'Hanlon, Director of Ethics, Moray House School of Education at MHSES-Ethics@ed.ac.uk

Appendix U: Authentic Materials and Tasks

Task 1: Sharing experiences



Skim read the emails and try to identify a problem (Pragmatic problem):

https://padlet.com/dr_alia545/tc7lwaahsex1ddj2



Discussion Questions

- ❖ Why do you think I ended my email with the expression “I hope I made myself clear”? What cultural/linguistic factors underlie that pragmatic misunderstanding?
- ❖ If you were in the story and noticed that something might be inappropriate in what you wrote, how could you find out what it might have been?
- ❖ What Arabic expressions are more likely to be transferred negatively in multicultural situations like this? How might that change across situations?
- ❖ Based on your experiences, what does being polite and rude entail in the context of Arabic and English?
- ❖ Have you ever caused someone to lose face un/intentionally? Can you explain what happened?

Task 2: TV Show



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZGu_SJzOG0

Discussion Questions

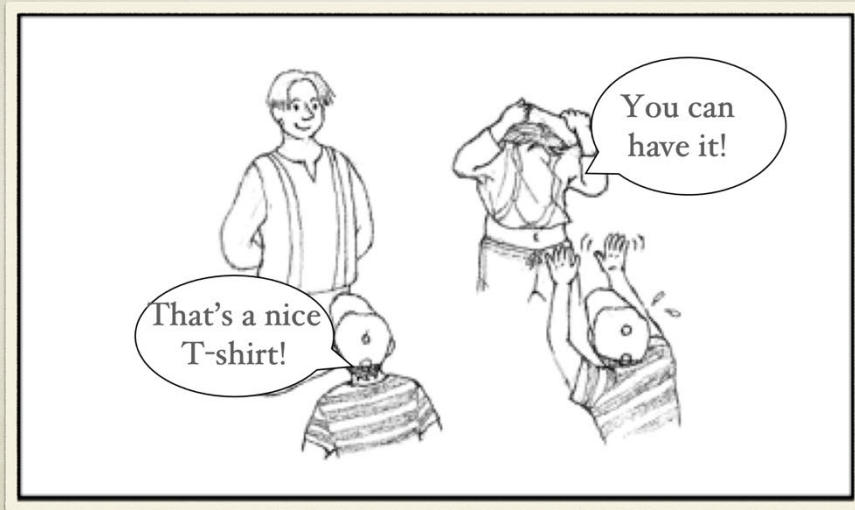
- 1- What is the context of the exchange?
- 2- Does the exchange sound funny or serious?
- 3- What made the exchange look funny or serious?
- 4- What is the relationship between the TV presenter, Talib, and the guest, Tony? Formal or informal? close or distant?
- 5- Does Talib have a lower, equal, or higher social status than that of Tony?
- 6- Are Talib and Tony in the same age group? Do they share the same experiences?

Discussion Questions

Cont.

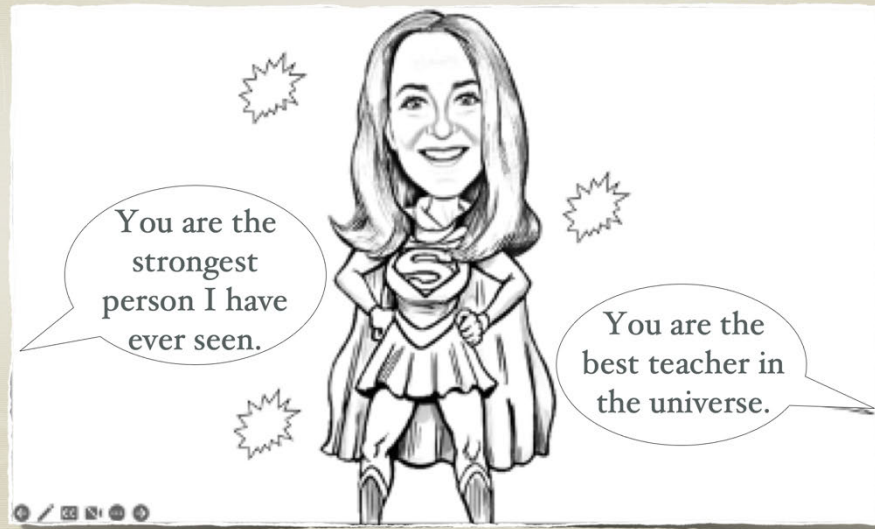
- 7- What did Talib say? What do you think of what he said?
- 8- If you were Talib, what would you say instead?
- 9- What did Tony say? What do you think of what he said?
- 10- If you were Tony, what would you say instead?
- 11- Why do you think Tony did not accept negative feedback provided by Talib?

Task 3: Caricatures



Task 3: Caricatures

Cont.



Task 3: Caricatures

Cont.



Task 3: Discussion Questions

Cont.

Part 1

Student A: Describe Picture **A** and explain what you think is happening between the two men.

Student B: Describe Picture **B** and explain why the teacher turns into a superwoman.

Student C: Describe Picture **C** and explain why the woman in the blue dress doesn't like the compliment.

Note: Pay attention to what they say, their body language, and their facial expressions and imagine who they are, where they are from, and what their relationship may be.

Task 3: Discussion Questions

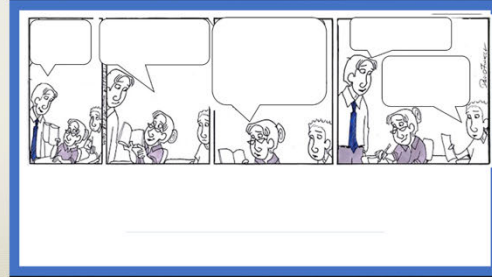
Cont.

Part 2

- ❖ Would those exchanges differ if the participants were of different gender, power, or age?
- ❖ What would you say if you were in the same situation either in Arabic or English?
- ❖ What would the exchange look like if you were in a different context? Formal or informal situations (e.g., at work)?

Task 4: Caricatures (Simulation)

Compose your own narrative in a conversation-like format in the following caricatures to give and take positive feedback and negative feedback in a **constructive way**:



1st Assignment: Student research

Part 1:

- Write down any positive or negative feedback your either received or given last semester.
- Identify the context in which this negative/positive feedback were given and received in terms of social factors such age, gender, power, social distance.
- Fill out the following table and then decide how to in/appropriate the interaction was and if needed any repair strategies?
- Then translate the interaction into English. How would the interaction look like if it was in a global setting?

Part 2: Reflect on what it was like to give, receive, and respond to feedback

Interaction	Positive or negative?	Context	Social Distance/ power	Relative status (Age, gender, social status)	Repair strategies?
1					
2					

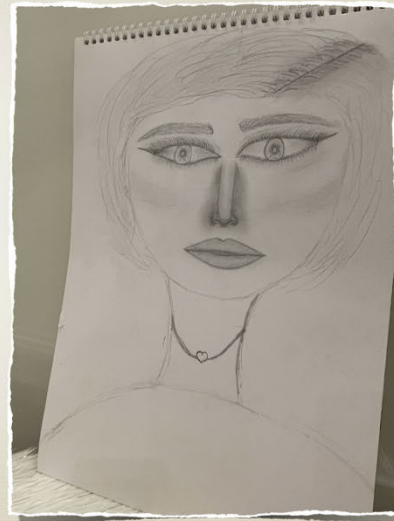
Task 5: Student research “Critique Method”

Social context: Art Workshop

Situation:

You were asked to examine your friend’s art and give some suggestions on how to enhance her drawing?

In other words, could you give honest feedback and helpful suggestions to make the art look better?



Task 6: Compare & Contrast



Social context: Literary journal

Situation: Imagine you are Sara who works as an editor for a journal. You received the following feedbacks from your supervisor:

- **Read** the following emails on the evaluation of a project at work.
- They both provide feedback to the same situation/person.
- Skim-read all scenarios to identify which one shows **constructive feedback, demotivating feedback, or poor feedback.**

https://padlet.com/dr_alia545/fcyk3bc3lnhg7301

Task 7: Discourse Analysis



Use what you have learned in **Task 6** to explain why feedback B is more constructive than feedback A and C.

- * How does the tone of the message differ?
- * What makes feedback B look and sound more appropriate?

Task 8: E-mail (Simulation)

1. Think of a situation you would like to evaluate at work from employer to employee (e.g., a team player is not meeting deadlines; someone is always late.)
2. Visualize your ideas on **Mind Meister Map**.
3. To structure your email (you can use sentence stems as a sort of help):
 - Start with a general statement;
 - Highlight some areas to improve and what to expect from the recipient;
 - Give an example if needed;
 - End with some positive comments (encouraging remarks);
 - Thank you note on their efforts.



Task 8: Simulation

cont.

4. Use appropriate language.
5. Don't write a novel- be clear, direct, and brief.
6. Don't make it personal.
7. Don't be weird!
8. Be honest, polite, and fair.



Task 8: Simulation

cont.

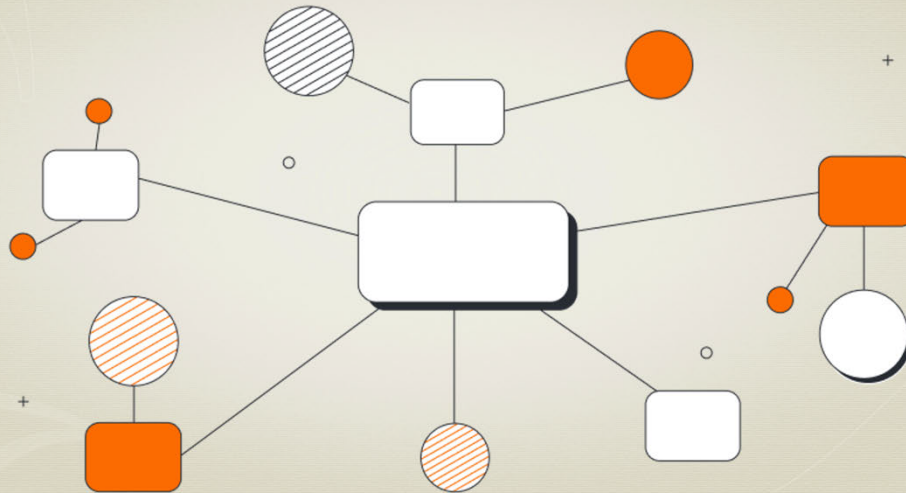
Follow email structures (e.g., greeting, body, and closing).

10. Don't include others in the email- supposed to be one-one feedback.
11. Keep in mind that written feedback (e.g., in an email) is not in a face-to-face communication channel so the potential of misunderstanding is higher.



Task 8: Simulation

cont.



2nd Assignment : Responding to constructive feedback

Part 1: Use what you have written in **Task 8** and send it to one of your classmates by email. Then your classmate will respond to the feedback you send. In this assignment, students will exchange their constructive feedback by email and will respond to each other.

To respond to constructive feedback, start off with a thank you note on your classmate's effort and time taking to provide you with feedback, accept the feedback if it is valid, ask for clarification if the feedback given is unclear, or disagree politely if the feedback is unfair. You can refer to sentence stems on how to respond to feedback.

Part 2: Reflect on what it was like to give and take constructive feedback.

Appendix V: The Observational Sheet Prior to the Pilot Study

<p align="center">Week 1 :Classroom Observational Sheet</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Introduction: In this lesson, I focus on how to give and take feedback, focusing mainly on negative and positive feedback.</p> <p>Section A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are pragmatic aspects you find useful in the following tasks? Why? - How were those aspects presented in the task? <p>Task 1</p> <p>Task 2</p> <p>Task 3</p> <p>Task 4</p> <p>Assignment</p> <p>Any other thoughts or observations?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>Section B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are pragmatic aspects you find NOT useful in the following tasks? Why? <p>Task 1</p> <p>Task 2</p> <p>Task 3</p> <p>Task 4</p> <p>Assignment</p> <p>Any other thoughts or observations?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Section C</p> <p>What are your perceptions of teaching how to give and respond to feedback in EFL context?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What are your perceptions of teaching how to give and respond to negative feedback in EFL context? 2) What are your perceptions of teaching how to give and respond to positive feedback in EFL context? <p>Any other thoughts or observations?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
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Appendix W: Interview Transcription

S14

1st Interview

Week 1

علياء: عر في عن نفسك، تخصصك، كم سنة تعلمتي الإنجليزي (خبرتك في تعلم الإنجليزية)؟

طالبة: اسمي (...). عمري ٢٠ سنة انا مستجدة في كلية اللغات والترجمة .. تخصص ترجمة .. تقريبا اللغة الانجليزية تعلمناها من خامس ابتدائي ولكن اللي لاحظتوا اني تطورت وبديت اتعلمها احسن من ثاني متوسط الى الان يعني تقريبا سبعة سنين

علياء: ماشاء الله اش حاجة تخصصي؟

طالبة: تخصص ترجمة

تدريس البراجماتية (فن استخدام اللغة): الفيديوك: سواء سلبي او إيجابي او النقد البناء

إلى أي مدى استفدت من المحاضرة خصوصا فيما يتعلق في تقديم الرد على الفيديوك؟

طالبة: صراحة استفدت كثير خصوصا بعدين انا حصور مترجمة ان شاء الله فحياتر ترجمة المصطلحات في المعنى الخفي حقا فلانم اكون اعرف المعاني هذه والجو العام الخاص باللغة يعني الوجه الخفي للغة هذه عشان اقدر اوصلها للشخص الاخر اللي مايقدر يتكلم اللغة.

هل وجدت أي جانب من جوانب البراجماتية تعلم الفيديوك من المحاضرة ممتع مهم صعب مفيد؟ لماذا؟

طالبة: ممتع مهم ويمكن اواجه صعوبة لانها قاعدة اتعلم لغة ثانية ماهي نفس لغتي الام ممكن اواجه مصطلحات تكون صعبة علي متعلقة ببيئة اللغة الثانية لان مجتمعهم مختلف عن مجتمعنا.

كيف تعلم الفيديوك لك التي كطالبة؟

تقديدي ان كيف ممكن تجيني مواقف صعبة في الحياة كيف اتعامل معاها ومو على اي شيء انكسر على طول. وان الصورة اللي انا حطيتها للشخص تنمحي من اول موقف. اول حاجز او اول مشكلة واجهتني .. علمتني كيف اتصرف وماكسر الشخص اللي اماسي.

علياء: أهمية تدريس العوامل الاجتماعية (مثل العمر والسلطة والنوع "رجل او امرة") وعلاقتها باساليب البراجماتية في

الفيديوك؟ مفاهيم الوجه ونظرية التأنيب؟

طالبة: مهم سواءا كان طلاب للغة انجليزية او خصوصا لطلاب اللغة الانجليزية اللي بصيرون مترجمين في المستقبل. بتوضح لهم انو مو بس لغة، مصطلح، عبارات نقال فيه وراها عوامل اجتماعية، كيف يستخدم لغتهم في بيئتهم في المجتمع حقهم كيف ويرضو تساعد الطلاب المتلقي كيف يستعملوها وهم يتحدثون، ومساعدتهم في التحدث مع متحدثين اللغة الاصلية.

كيف كنتي قبل تتعرفي على هذه المصطلحات؟

كنت اتوقع ان اللي نقوله بالعربي ممكن يطبق بالانجليزية ويقال لهم جمل احنا نقولها ممكن نقال لهم

ممكن تخيليني اركز كيف اقول كلامي للشخص اللي لغته الانجليزية هي الاصلية.

ما وجهة نظرك بالعمر والسلطة والنوع والتحدث في كتابة الفيديوك؟

طبعاً مهم خصوصا عندنا هنا العمر يعد مهم اني اعرف الشخص هذا اش خلفيته الاجتماعية او عمره مثلاً تؤثر على طريقة كلامنا اللي يتكلمون بنفس العمر والجنس عندما تتساوى الاعمار السلطة والنوع الكلام يكون مختلف تماماً الطالبات مثلاً طريقة كلامهم مختلفة عن كلام طالبة مع الاساتذة/الذكافة بالجامعة او مع شخص غريب او صديقة المصطلحات اللي نقولها وطريقة كلامنا مع بعض والعبارات حتكون مختلفة عن وحدة علاقتي معاها رسميه ومالي قرابة بيانا، وكذلك القرابة والعمر مثل الكلام مع والدين يكون مختلف عن طريقة كلامي مع الاخوة الاصغر مني.

S14 1st Interview Week 1

الجنس والنوع يدخل في الموضوع خصوصاً عندما هنا مع الاثنى ممكن اخذ واعطي ولكن مع الرجل حتكون مباشرة ورسمية اكثر يعني مراح يكون فيه اخذ وعطى.

بالنسبة للمصطلحات الانجليزية؟ تحضرك مصطلحات تطبقها في الكلاس؟

طالبة: المصطلحات مثل How about/Have you thought about ممكن هنا مايجي على بال العرب متعلمي للغة الانجليزية، جميع يتعلمو اللغة يواجهون صعوبة في طريقة كلامهم اللي لغتهم الام الانجليزية. يعني الطلاب في البداية طريقة كلامهم تنبيه كلام الكتب اللي قاعين يتعلموها مو العامية اللي مفهومة لاشخاص اللي لغتهم الام الانجليزية. يعني طريقة الاسئلة لاحظت من خلال دراستي هنا ماف تعلمتها بدي الطريقة مائدرسه كنا خصوصاً طريقة الطلب مؤنبة غير موجودة .. انا ممكن استخدم سوال عشان اطلب تغييرات معينة عادة متعدين على "Could you/would you give me?" يعني اللي هي "الغة الكتيب" هذي هي اللي تعلمناها. يعني لمن نشرف المتحدثين الاصليين باللغة في العالبي يستخدم انواع مختلفة كلامهم له كذا لون وكذا شكلاً عكس المعلم المبتدئ كلامهم نوعاً ما "ترتيب رتيب" ومايقدر يوصل اللي بيغوي للتلقي اللي لغته الانجليزية الام وهذه ممكن تأثر على طريقة نظرهم له وطريقة نظره للاثياء ممكن مايفهمها.

عندك تعليق اخر بشأن المصطلحات؟

في مصطلحات عربية يصعب ترجمتها للانجليزية .. لانها غير موجودة في القواميس الانجليزية ولا تستخدم الكلمات يعني زي مثلاً درجات الحب في العربي عندهم في الانجليزي كلمة love or very much في العربي درجات على حسب شعورك بالحب العشق واليهام ويختلف عن كلمة احبك بس الحب العادي السطحي وحتها بيكون كيف يزداد شعوره بالحب

الشكر بالانجليزي ممكن اقول شكراً جزيلاً او ازود جداً جداً ..! عشان اجر عن امتنتي ازود جداً جداً مثل thank you or VERY VERY VERY MUCH.

بالعربي احنا نضيف ادعية بجانب الشكر ويكون طويل مثل شكراً جزيلاً لك الله بسمك الله يعطيك ويرزقك لان المدح عندما يعتبر طويل لاجر عن امتنتي...!

هل لديك امثلة اخرى لتدبر بالعربي ممكن يفهم غلط بالانجليزي؟ الفينديك عموماً

الجملة اللي في اليمين حكك اتسنى اكون وضحت كلامي ممكن استخدمها بالغلط لانها دارجة وما اكون فاصدة الاسامة...! استنقت منها لمن عرضتها في الدرس وملكنت اعرف ابو ممكن يكون مها مضى عدواني.

عنايه: مامدى أهمية تدريس الترجمة للطلاب وخاصة الترجمة الفموية؟ إعطاء فيديك الوارد على

الفينديك؟ وما مدى تأثيره على حياتهم العلمية والعملية؟ الحياة الاجتماعية؟

طالبة: احس مره مهم لنا كطلاب لاننا قاعين نتعلم اللغة الانجليزية لاني ما يتفق تدرس الطلاب "الغة الكتيب" هذه ويعين كيف يتعاملون مع اهل اللغة حتكون مكسره ولا حيتقرون بقرون الجوا الاجتماعي اللي هم فيه... يعني ممكن يستخدم جملة صحيحة لغوياً تعلمها من الكتاب ولكن لا تناسب الوضع الاجتماعي اللي هم فيه او اللي قلها فيه. اثنوفا مره مهمه لانو الطلاب بدعين بيخرجوا لارض الواقع وكأمر منفصل.

احصيا مهمه انو الطلاب يتعلمونها لانو بيغرفوا المعاني اللي ماوراء الكلام. مو بس شكلاً

S14 1st Interview Week 1

لغة الكتب حسبهم لهم مشاكل بعدين اذا استخدموها مراح يقرو ويظفوا افكارهم خصوصاً لو كانوا مترجمين حيان تعليمهم على ترجمتهم لا العربي استفاد منه ولا الانجليزي.

هل صلتقي صعوبة في الترجمة بسبب توصيل المعنى؟

ليس انا فقط ولكن ايضا ككثيرة بعض المترجمين العرب الشريت رواية اليوساء قبل كم سنة وماعاد كملتها لانو مترجمها ما قاعد يوصل المعنى الاحساس وروايه ووصف حياتهم اليانسة فالترجم جمل مكسره ولا تربط ببعض فقرات فقرات فطالاسم ولاي قاعه مايفسد المترجم ولاي قارة ادخل في جو القصة ولاي عارفة ايش قاعد يصير في الكتاب مالو اي فائدة ماستقت ملو اي شيء. خصوصاً يرضو لترجمه القورية، اللي بترجم من كذا شخص ممكن بترجمها اللي بترجم بطريقة الخاطئة ممكن الترجمة حقه اما ان تكون جارة ما تستعمل مثلاً عندما كملت عندي زي كلمة upset انتشرت في مباريات كلس العالم خصوصاً بين الراحقين والسعوديه معانها "نتيجة صامه" ولكن فهمها بانو العالم زعلان انو السعوديه فازت.. (وقرات الخبر من تويتر) .. هذا الناس العرب "المشجعين" ظنوا انها هجوم عليهم ويعدا هجوم اخر دفاع عن النفس على السوشال ميديا لكن معانها في هذا السياق مختلف وطريقة الاستخدام هنا مختلفا ومعانها خصوصاً في مصطلحات كره القدم. معانها "نتيجة غير متوقه" هل معانها ز علانين ولا صامه؟

It was one of the biggest upset in World Cup history: Saudi Arabia beat Argentina 2:1 at Fifa world cup Qatar.

عنايه: هل ممكن ان بطور تعلمك الترجمة كترتك على التواصل باللغة الانجليزية معديا وعالميا؟ وماذا؟

طالبة: يعني ممكن لو تعلمت لغة الكتب تعاملت مع شخص ناقص اصلي باللغة حتكون سوء فهم مؤكدا مراح تفهم التواي حتى لو كانت نيكه هنية ويصعب وضعت في دراسة في الخارج من حيث التلقم مع هذو لا الناس والمجتمع.

راح بخلفي سلسة يعني كلامي مراح يكون خارج الواقع وغير مستعمل حارفاً كيف ارد فهم المقصود من الكلام ولماذا تقال بعض الكلمات؟ وكيف ارد؟ وطبيعة المجتمع واستخدام اللغة.

ومحلياً "فحت عيني" على طريقة التعامل مع الناس تكون سلس مو اي نقد سواء كان بناء او جارح تبدأ تهجم زي الفينديو المعروض او تتصنص او تنكسر خصوصاً لو كنت شخص بالغ تبغي تبين للناس صورة محببه تبغي تحافظ عليها كيف تحافظ عليها، وانت مافتقر تتعامل مع هذا الكلام الخفي وهذه المشاعر. يعني اجتماعياً تخطينا الكياف اجتماعياً. ونقدراً الوضع الاجتماعي اللي احنا فيه.

عنايه: ما مدى ممكن ان يقدم لك تعلم الترجمة في إعطاءه الوارد على الملاحظات للتواصل بشكل فعال؟

طالبة: بخلفي "ثابتة وسلسلة" مثلاً يعني لو احد انتقد نقد جارح لانو مو كل الناس اللي يتقلفني نقداً بناء فخطبي تعامل معانها بطريقة تبين اني شخص واعى وواثق نفس الصورة اللي ابغى اقدمها لهم الصورة اللي ابغى اقدمها وماانكسر ع اي كلمة واقترون ثابته خلال هذه المواقف وايضا وتبين مثل الفينديو لو انت الضيف تبين للناس انك ع حق وان عندك علم وانت اللي جالس تبغي تقم هو المهم مو بس صورتك انا تأملت تبدا الهجوم وتنسى العلم اللي انت جاي تبغي تقمعه.

عنايه: ما رايك بتسلسل خطوات الدرس في المحاضرة؟ لقد تبعت منه خطوات: الخطوة الأولى كانت من اجل زيادة الوعي بأهمية الترجمة، الخطوة الثانية كانت عن توضيح "من خلال المناقشات" أهمية العوامل الاجتماعية والسياق وتأثيرها على المعنى والاختلافات الثقافية بين العربي والانجليزي، والخطوة الرابعة مساعدة الطلاب على الوصول (اكتشاف) الحل عن طريق الأسئلة، الخطوة الخامسة تطبيق على، الخطوة الاخيرة، تطبيق الأسئلة على اجوبة الطلاب

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طالبة: حساسهم بعينين .. بيت في الكاركتير (التعريف العملي) كانت نفس الصورة كنا بنظير نفس الصورة بيت وجهت النظر المختلفة يعني طريقة فرأينا الكلام اللي قاعد ينقل من شخص لشخص (من طالب لطالب) كانت مختلفة مثلاً لغة الجسد قرأها بشكل مختلف يعني 1- فيه ناس شافوهم زعلانين وبينهم حوار فيها دفاع عن فكره 2- فيه ناس شافوه نصح متقبل والطلب اللي جاها ع طول 3- وفيه ناس ما انتبهوا وهشروا الشخصية الثانية في الصورة وما انتبهوا في التعبير وجهها انها غير مرتاحة في ناس هشروها واعطوا هاي جملة عشان تنتهي المحادثة وكروا على الشخصيات الرئيسية. ولكن الشخصيات الجانبية تأثر ع طريقة قرأنا الكلام ونقدر نحالنه بطريقة صحيحة.

طيب ليه هذا الاختلاف كان موجود في فرايمهم للكاريكتير؟

.. ممكن بيغوا يطلو ويرتحوا من المحاضرة

ممكن بعض الناس ما تواجهون هذه المواقف في حياتهم وما يشوفونها او يمكن يجنبوها في الحياة اذا جات او يظعون او ينفصل في هذه الفترة عن الواقع البين يخلصون ويتبدا حياتهم مره ثانية، وتختلف حسب خبراتهم وتطليلهم للغة الجسد .. وله علاقة ترعا ما بالتفكير الاداعي او النقاد؟ مو كل الناس عدهم نفس المستوى في التفكير وتطالع في الشكل وموكل الناس تقدر تقرأ الوضع اللي هي فيه اجتماعيا وكيف تقرأ تعبير الاخر الناس اللي حولها ، فيه ناس ممكن تزمي الكلمة مثلاً وتمشي عادي ما تقدر تقرأ الجو اللي هي فيه وما تحاورل تجبر خواطر الناس اللي حولها وتحاولل لمن تمي حالة او فكره انبا متأثر على الجو بشكل سلمي. لمن تطرح الفكرة الاطراف الثانية في حالة عدم موافقتهم معاها مايجسون بالهجوم او ميمشين.

عندم فكره التحويلية؟

تعلم الناس اللي معاينهم كذا اجتماعي.. وتقرب لهم الفكره وكيف يقرؤن اللي حولهم والوضع اللي هم فيه. عشان ينصرفون بطريقة سليمة.

لو كان فيه وقت مستطع؟ بيكون اريح؟

الطريقة مناسبة لانها تكسر الجو الممل شرطي وبعدها نخلقا في الشرح من خلال المناقشات الى حتى اللي "مشرح" يرجع يركز مره ثانية مع اختلاف الخطوات فالخطوات هذه تجبر الطالب على التركيز والتفاعل في المشقة ..

الوقت كان مفقود لانو بعض الطالبات تعيروا.

ممتازة الخطوات في وقت بسيط تعلمنا اشياء كثير وتفاعلت معنا ومويت جو في القاعة ..!

ما رأيك بأسلوب تدريس الأنشطة المقدمه في الدرس "أسلوب الأنشطة التفاعلية"؟ ولماذا؟ كيف ساعدتك على التعلم

البراعصية؟

طالبة: انا لثوف ممتاز ويناسبني من احسن طرق التدريس اللي مرت علي، اللي فيه احتواء للطلاب والتفاعل والاخذ والعطي، المعلم ويكون عارف انا الطالب فاهم ولا لا اول باول...مشاركة الاراء المختلفة... وتخليهم مطلعين ومقتنين، نرتقي بطريقة النقد وميلكونوا هجوميين. ونرتقي بأسلوبه واللي هو نقد. واسلوب المشاحنات غير فعال.

تفتح عيونهم على يعني مثلاً (أقول لك عشان ما اخرج عن السياق) بس تعرفيا تخليهم انا يعني اذ تخليهم مطلعين او ما شقتي هي فتحة عيونهم على ان مثلاً هذا الأسلوب ما ينفع يستخدم مثلاً في الإعلام الخاص فينا وليش جالسين يستعملون هذا الأسلوب؟ ممكن لأنه ممكن يحصلون على مشاهدات زيادة وهذا عادة اسلوب البرامج والاغلب عشان المشاهدات وغيرها، كيف نحن نرتقي بطريقة النقد حقاً وما تكون هجوميين لأن أه انا كنا مرتقين انا بنقدا وأسلوبنا الشخص الآخر برضه كان مرتقي بنقده وأسلوبه و هو نقده، التفاعل بيننا جيكون بناء، حوصل للمعلومات برضه العلم اللي انا نفعي نوصل للناس عن طريق أه هذا الأسلوب لكن مثلاً أسلوب المشاحنات والشجار هذا أسلوب بس شرح هذا ما راح يوصل للناس الفكرة أو العلم نحن ما كنا مثلاً (قصدها شرح هذا

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الترع من الحوار بمثال من الفيديو والشرك الطلاب في الحوار سهل لهم مهمة الفهم والادراك مقارنة فقط سرد معلومات عند التقاء البناء أو الهجوم) يمكن مثلاً في المقابلة هذه هذا هو شاعر (طيب) أو مثلاً افترضنا واحد عنده علم دائماً زي ما نشوف يكون في ذكورة .. منري وشو.. أه مطلعين وعندهم علم لكن وقت الأسئلة أو وقت الندوات أو المناظرات هذا تكسر شخصيتهم قدام الناس حتى لو كان معها حق، حيثكر نظرتة أو صورته هذه اللي هو كان بينها قدام الناس من خلال طريقة رده على الانتقادات، وعن طريقة أسلوبه في الرد، بعض الناس ثابتن تخليك تلقياً تشوف إبه حتى لو مثلاً كان ناقصهم شيء مثلاً في عظيم أو شيء، ممكن تخليك وثاق في أرائهم لأنه ما يكسرون بسرعة بينون صورة وثقة وإبه أهم شيء أساسي عندهم الشيء اللي يبقوهم مو شخصيتهم، في ناس ممكن يتحسس على طول وكل اللي بناء يهدم بكلمة كلمتين وبيندا يتفاعل بطريقة تكسر صورته قدام الناس ويحسون العلم العظيم وأنه على حق وحيركون عليه هو شخصياً.

ما شاء الله عليك طيب بالنسبة للمناقشات عندك أي تعليق عليها مثلاً تلكه 1 لما شارك تجارينا وتلكه 2 الفيديو وتلكه 3

الكاريكتير الراجب تطبق عليه

الصراحة كانت حلوة بطريقة جديدة يعني في الشرح أو في التفاعل يعني ما أظني شقتها قبل، يعني ما تستعمل كثير خصوصاً وقت الشرح وكذا

طيب تمام إيش أفضل واحد؟

أفضل اثنين حق المناقشات اللي بينا إيه أفضل واحد المناقشات ومقطع الفيديو في فتح يعني نظرتي على اشياء هي موجودة عنندا بس إبه خيلتي أركز على طريقة جوهم هذي كيف تعامل مستقبلاً لو مثلاً صر لي شيء زي كذا إني أحاول أوي نفسي وأكون سلمة وثابته في وجه الانتقادات، وكيف تعامل في هذه المواقف.

طيب بالنسبة لجمع البيانات اللي طلبت منكم في الراجب هل تحسب مفيد؟ في تفكر في الراجب اللي هو انا بكه تروحي تشوفي

فيديك ومسلك من أي أحد خلال هذا الفصل الدراسي وشوفي تعلمني عليه بحدين تحاولي تحللي بالطريقة اللي انا حلقنا فيها الوقت اللي هي العوامل وكيف إنه أرسلت منه ولا لا هل ربيتي عليه ولا ما رديتي وروا كان في مشكلة في الفيديوك في كيف ممكن يتحلل استراتيجية التحليل؟

الراجب خصوصاً ممكن الطلاب يسمعون اللي أخروه في المحاضرة يفهمون ويتفاعلون وكل شيء لكن مع الوقت ممكن ينسون اللي أخروها الراجب هذا ممكن "زي النقطه لهم (نقطه انطلاقه أو ادراك) تخليهم يطلون المواقف اللي صارت لهم وكيف مثلاً ممكن يحسبون من اجاباتهم في مواقف مستقبلية... وكيف يتعلمون مع هذه المواقف اللي لو صارت لهم مره ثانية خليهم يبتكرون، ممكن صار له مواقف التزم اللي فلت مثلاً من قبل تكثرو وما عجيبهم الرد، هذه المواقف حتخليهم يبتكرون ويحللون المواقف بشكل أصح من الطريقة اللي مثلاً في ذلك الوقت كيف حلقه يطلعون رد مناسب له ويشوفون الخلل اللي سووه في طريقة ردهم.

هل تفكر في شيء فيديك سلمي أو إيجابي؟ مثلاً؟

سلمي لا إيجابي ما توقعت أحد يركز على طريقة كتابتي للإيميلات للكاتره، يعني اكتبوا بطريقة معينة، وحده من الكاتره ردت عليا، و ما توقعتها يعني ركزت في الطريقة هذي يعني في الغالب يعني كنت احسب انهم يتركون الأسلوب وأخذون المفهوم (المعنى المقصود) اللي أنا أقصده، يعني لكن هي ركزت على أسلوب في الكتابة

هو وش قلت دادامنا عادي ممكن تقربنيها أنت؟ بصوتك؟

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

S14	1st Interview	Week 1
<p>تذكرني القضاة، انظر على عدم حضور المحاضرة الخميس ٥ جمادى الثاني، بسبب احتمالات وانذارات نزول امطار من متوسطة إلى غزيرة اليوم أو الليلة، فالتريق الذي أسكته مزجم جداً في العادة وفي حال حدث تعليق أو نزول مطر لافتر الله سوف أعاق في الزحام لوقت متأخر من اليوم وأرجو منك المعارة والسوحة.</p> <p>طيبالله.....</p> <p>شعبة.....</p> <p>وشرراً على وقتك.</p> <p>رد الدكتور: وعليك السلام ورحمة الله وبركاته</p> <p>أولاً أشكر لك مساهمك الراجعة لإيصال الاعتراض بلغني المحاضرة القادمة لأعده في الإردس.</p> <p>...الكثرة ردعا كان غير عن باقي الكثرة، بعض الكثرة زي ما قلت مايتبينون للأسلوب ويأخذون المقصود من الكلام (المضمون)، وأنا ما أكتبه عشان يركزون على الأسلوب (بعض طريقتي في الكتابة) وردت وقلت وعليك السلام ورحمة الله وبركته</p> <p>أولاً أشكر لك مساهمك الراجعة لإيصال الاعتراض بلغني المحاضرة القادمة لأعده في الإردس</p> <p>ما شاء الله تبارك الله جميل شكراً لك على مشاركتك الإيجابي معي.</p> <p>هل قدمت المحاضرة كك أمثلة حقيقية تشبه الواقع والمواقف في المجتمع؟ أذا جازيك نعم؟ ما أهمية تقديم هذه النوعية من الأساليب الواقعية في تدريس البرمجة؟</p> <p>يعني Authentic طيب أغير سؤال هو: عن نوعية الأمثلة التي أتا جازلت إني أقدمها لكم أمثلة حقيقية واقعية بالإنجليزي سموها تكون واقعية ومواقف من المجتمع نفسه</p> <p>غير مفصلة عفا ممكن تجينا</p> <p>فانتي حسيني فعلا المحاضرة قدمت لك أمثلة حقيقية بل كانت المهام مبنية على مواقف حقيقية في المجتمع من وجهة نظرك أنت، كمشية؟</p> <p>أبوه تمام طيب.</p> <p>يش رأيك في التقديم هذا النوع؟</p> <p>إيه لأنه ممكن انه تكون نحن شاهدنا مررت عليها نشوفها مثلا خصوصاً المقطع الفيديو نشوفه في الإعلام كثير هذا أسلوب المقابلات ما يتغير في الغالب دائماً نشوفه اللي هي ريات الفعل ذاتي على المدح نشوفها في الواقع ونعرف يعني كيف الناس ممكن ترد علينا أي يعني غير مفصول عن الواقع غير عن تقديم ملأ رد معلومه علمية خليا نقول مني على مثلا دراسة أو شيء وتوقع منك إنك نشوفه في حوارك الوميء، أنت ما راح تعرف كيف تتعامل؟ يعني مفصول عن الواقع، أنت ما تشوفه ما تعرف كيف الناس، هل يقولون هذه الكلمات أو يتصرفون بهذه الطريقة كذا حيكون حيكون الطلاب أو المتلقي ما راح يرتبط مع الموضوع اللي أنت كاستاذ جالس تقدمه ما راح يفهم رسالتك اللي أنت جالس تقدمها</p> <p>فيمتلك يعني أعطي أكثر نظرة تحليلية للمواقف التي تعيش فيها دايم</p> <p>غير مفصلة يعني</p> <p>حسني فه هذه النوعية من الأساليب الواقعية مهمة في تدريس البرمجة؟</p> <p>يعني هي أساسا البرمجة زي ما قلتي المعنى الخفي للكلام من بين اللغة أو الجملة التي تقال، الطريقة التي تقال به الجملة فتحن نتاح واقعية خصوصاً في التدريس هذا النوع من العلوم لأنه بدون الواقعية العلم هذا ما راح يكون له فائدة، الطلاب ما راح</p>		<p>يواصلوا توصيل هذه المعلومات أو بغيرها بشكل كبير أو مؤثر عليه إما ما كانت واقعية ويجيشها في حيولة حيكون كلام مفصل عن الواقع وتصوير زي باقي مثلا العلوم البحثية تصير علم بعنى فقط قراءة أو يقرأها ويترسها ويختبرها ويصير خلاص بعد الاختبار وسأها ما يقدر يستعملها في الواقع.</p> <p>ما شاء الله تبارك الله</p> <p>هل عندك أي ملاحظات؟</p> <p>هو آخر شيء يعني تعليق حياة تقري في الأسئلة ما تستمعت؟</p> <p>علم جديد وقدم لها أول مرة يعني أعرفه كعلم أشرفها بطريقة كويسة يعني أول مرة أعرف يعني أنه الناس تتعلم هذا العلم في الغالب تتعلم مثلا كيف قول لك من أهائبة بس مو بطريقة علمية تتعلم، وكيف نشوف المجتمع حوالينا يعني بطريقة خلية ما تتعلم كتراسة، ندرس المجتمع هذا أو التحليل تتعلم بطريقة، مثلا هذا الموقف نقول سألني أه طريقة ردنا لهذا الموقف حثكر على طريقة ردنا للمواقف اللتالية، يعني لو تكررت جتصرف مثلا كيف ترد عليها بهذه الطريقة وليس بطريقة علمية</p> <p>يعني مثلا أقرب إلى عادة أو تعليمات من الأهل أكثر من أنها مهارة لازم تتكسبها وتتعود عليها؟</p> <p>يعني ممكن هذه العادة أو الفطرة اللي أنت مدني عليها على حسب البيئة التي أنت فيها، بينك ما تتعامل مع هذا النقد بطريقة مثلا كويسة مهيين يتحسسون، إبت ما جتصرف تتعامل معاه بعينين عندما تكبر إذا جاك هذا النقد، مثلا يتجنبون النقد ما يتقون أبداً، هنا أنت ما راح تعرف تتعامل معاه فطرياً، فهنا هذا اللي بسبب اختلاف هذا اللي بسبب اختلاف في طريقة رد فعل الناس لمن تجهم هذه المواقف، لانو مو كل الناس يكونون بنفس السلامة أو بنفس الثبات في الرد، تختلف ردات فعلهم، لكن ممكن لو تعلموا كعلم بالطريقة الواقعية وأخذها من حياتهم ممكن يحسبون هذه العادات ويتكسبون عادات أحسن منها من خلال الرد، مثلا في شخص يتحس فطرياً يعني من البيئة حثته تتعلم مثلا هذا العلم بواقعية، أي يصير يحاول يحسن من نفسه، يثبت نفسه يصير مثلا لو جاء هذا النقد يصير معاه مثلا ما يتحس ويتحس أقل، وما يركز على الهجوم اللي جاي له بشكل شخصيا يركز على إبه كيف ورد عليه بطريقة عقلانية مثلا يعني يركز على اللغة التي جالس يقولها وكيف برد عليه معلوماته (المعلومات عندو) هو من شخص يعني كان عندة قدرة على التقبل ومرور .. ويفصل بينه وبين نفسه والشخص اللي يقوله يا خصوصاً بيكون في العمل</p> <p>طيب شكراً لك على استمعت بالمقالة</p>

Appendix X: Example of a Completed Observation Sheet-Week 1

Week 1 : Classroom Observational Sheet

Name [REDACTED] Teacher 1

Section A

- What do you think of the following tasks? Why? (What you learned and how you felt about it)

Task 1. This task gives a realistic situation "Email exchanges" which stimulates students to understand an example of expressions that carry much pragmatic meaning, revealing how these expressions can't be translated or paraphrased in one's own words.

The task led to the discussion of what does being "polite" and "rude" entail in different Arabic and English contexts. Interestingly, students got engaged in this discussion and they brought examples from their daily life and started reflecting on "polite" and "rude" expressions employed within these situations.

Task 2. This task shows a video of a live TV show, which encourages students to reflect on ways of giving and receiving negative feedback and how this feedback could have been mediated by social factors such as age, educational background, etc.

It was really interesting to follow up this task by discussing the negative expressions and bringing out more effective ways on how to deliver feedback more appropriately.

Task 3. This task presents caricatures to show how to give positive feedback, followed up with a really effective discussion on how social factors could affect the use of and provision of feedback.

Task 4

This practice and reflect task offers a caricature that students were asked to construct a narrative for. It was really useful to provide sentence stems that students can utilize in constructing their narratives. Students seemed very engaged and came up with interesting scenarios. I found it really useful here to move from very focused tasks to one that is relatively relevant to students' own perceptions of what constitutes effective feedback.

Assignment

It was interesting to ask learners to do some reflections on feedback that they were previously engaged in, either giving and/or receiving. Also, I found it useful to ask them to relate to the context in which they were given. I believe it's a good practice that would help them understand any potential social factors that could influence the use of feedback.

Section B



- What do you think of teaching English formulaic expressions of giving and taking feedback presented in the lesson? Why?

I believe it's really important to always raise students' awareness of formulaic expressions that could perform pragmatic purposes. This would help their spoken language become more pragmatically appropriate, and it would help them become more fluent and efficient in different L2 contexts.

- In what ways do social factors (e.g., age, gender, social status, power) make any difference to you in the choice of language in giving and taking feedback?

In my point of view, I think many social factors could impose an effect on the choice of language in giving and taking feedback. Examples are abundant here, and the different tasks presented highlighted how different factors could mediate the way we provide and take feedback.

Any other thoughts or observations?

I got inspired by the way you followed to explain pragmatic language to students. Using authentic resources seems very useful as they help provide authentic contexts (e.g. email exchanges, a real TV show, etc). The use of authentic contexts was even supported by explicit teaching to further help learners become familiar with appropriate ways on giving feedback.

Appendix Y: Examples of Coding

Coding Teachers' sheets data

Teachers' views of using authentic materials and tasks in teaching pragmatics of feedback	
Codes	Explanations
Enhancing student motivation and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing real pragmatic failure creates genuine connection. • Motivating students to work on real language of feedback. • Encouraging students to reflect on ways of giving and taking feedback. • Motivating students finding appropriate politeness strategies in giving/taking feedback. • Motivating students creating their own scenario of feedback. • Motivating and engaging in real life situations
Enhancing comprehension and criticality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit instruction and metapragmatic explanation to enhance understanding of pragmatics of feedback. • Compare and contrast different forms of feedback can create a balanced and context-sensitive approach to pragmatics of feedback. • The TV show enhanced comprehension of the pragmatics of feedback/capture the idea of pragmatic and face in its full concept. • Criticality in giving/taking feedback: "Thought-provoking task...made students think ..." ... discuss..." • Reflecting on previous feedback/ Reflecting on social factors in giving/taking feedback. • Learning pragmatics of giving and taking feedback is an opportunity to exchange ideas.
Developing socio-cultural awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing learner's cultural context • Recognizing the influence of the social factors that students learned in giving/taking feedback (Social factors e.g., age & gender, social distance) e.g., age and power when making disagreement. • Recognizing the importance of giving honest feedback • Considering face in giving feedback • Featuring In/formality in Arabic/English
Difficulties and challenges	<p style="text-align: center;">Difficulties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner relevance <p>Language level: Suitable to intermediate to advanced, difficult for beginners. Maybe difficult for intermediate students with variations in level</p> <p>Technical terms:</p>

	<p>e.g., Discourse analysis</p> <p>Learner’s social context: Students couldn’t identify with the “social context” used in task 6</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Challenges</p> <p>Students couldn’t understand the concept of face/pragmatics in task 1</p> <p>Politeness strategies being mixed with constructive feedback</p>
Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice the expressions in exercises to ensure they can use them correctly before moving to the extension task. • “How to give negative feedback” in English needed more explanation of the cultural elements. • Providing context when introducing formulaic expressions • I think it’ll be better if the assignment 2 highlighted/emphasized the social role the students should play in responding to constructive feedback. • For lower grades, I would start with reading to identify social factors and then moved to the tasks
Teachers’ views of using formulaic language in teaching pragmatics of feedback	
<p>Gaining socio-culturally appropriate utterances</p> <p>Facilitating pragmatic fluency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching Formulaic language increase fluency in speaking and writing • Gaining linguistic skills/ Communication skills • Acquiring essential skills for future career (pragmatics of feedback & writing an email) • Awareness of “language in use” situations • Featuring pragmatics of written and spoken feedback • Providing examples of how to provide positive feedback, such as “<u>I like ..</u>” and “<u>what a nice way</u>” • Providing <u>sentence stems</u> that students can utilize in constructing their narratives. • Giving students <u>a writing formula</u> to help them structure their paragraph is <u>helpful</u>.
Teachers’ views of the influence of contextual variables on the pragmatics of feedback	
<p>Age and gender impacting giving constructive feedback (age-related stereotypes and biases)</p> <p>Culturally being polite vs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing the influence of social factors on the choice of language on giving/taking feedback (Gender & age stereotypes) • Age and gender change the way constructive feedback is given/taken Age= authority/Age=respect • “Beneficial for students in our culture <u>who are not used to giving constructive feedback because they are only thinking about being “nice” and “saving face”</u>”

<p>Culturally not accepting criticism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible cultural influence for mixing politeness with constructive feedback. • Culture and social factors as complex phenomena to teach.
<p>The influence of intentions and Affect (givers and takers) on the pragmatics of feedback</p>	
<p>Speakers' intention and affect</p> <p>Word choice reflects intention.</p> <p>Word choice affects reception</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing the power of words/social factors and the influence on feedback receipt • Level of Politeness can influence how the constructive feedback is received.

Coding Student Interview

Initial codes	Notes about contradictions/recurring patterns/nuance/tensions
Key skills for social life & future careers	
<p>Communication skills</p> <p>Interpersonal skills Cognitive skills Linguistic skills & Translation skills</p> <p>Constructive feedback can create constructive environment.</p> <p>Healthy interaction led to healthy relationships.</p> <p>“Smart” structure in writing feedback can minimize misunderstanding.</p> <p>Feedback NOT accepted even if it is constructive (personality types and individual differences)</p> <p>Changing wording based on personality vs. following structured formula of feedback.</p> <p>Adopting L2 politeness strategies in writing (word choice; structure) can build confidence.</p> <p>Maintaining likable image & protecting one’s image.</p> <p>Cultural understanding (awareness) of hidden meaning</p> <p>Literal translation and pragmatic meaning</p> <p>Difficulty of studying abroad and adapting to different cultures.</p> <p>Cultural bridging gaps</p>	<p>Instruction on the pragmatics of feedback raised awareness of the skills needed for future translators e.g., good translation vs. bad translation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) linguistic/cultural transfer 2) hidden meaning awareness; idiomatic expressions 3) international/local culture <p>Students highlighted how instruction on the pragmatics of feedback offered critical social situations and possible solutions (problem solving: analyzing an issue and identifying a solution)</p> <p>e.g., various structures/word choices e.g., various ways of responding to feedback</p>

The influence of contextual variables on pragmatics of feedback	
<p>Age impacting responding to negative feedback (age-related stereotypes and biases)</p> <p>Gender impacting giving constructive feedback (reinforcing gender stereotypes vs. overcoming gender stereotypes)</p> <p>Employer-employee/Teachers-students imbalance power</p>	<p>Age & gender factors were repeated by many students. However, age as a factor was more powerful.</p> <p>Challenging stereotypes in terms of age and gender were also prominent.</p>
Pragmatics of feedback and emotions management building	
<p>Words make a difference (Words change how feedback is received “felt”) vs. Wording don’t change the reality of criticism.</p> <p>Negative feedback can be supportive if it is constructive.</p> <p>Positive feedback can be meaningless/dishonest.</p> <p>Positive feedback can be encouraging and caring (lifting spirits= “kind words are charity!”)</p> <p>Being patient and resilient while receiving feedback (*Before reluctance to receive criticism; feedback taken personal initially)</p> <p>Greater self-control and avoiding conflicts if the feedback is unfair</p> <p>Staying strong if the feedback is demotivating</p> <p>Considering others’ emotions while giving feedback</p>	<p>Students’ emotions were very vivid, especially when they refer to negative feedback as criticism.</p> <p>Skill emotions management was frequent reason for explaining the benefits of learning pragmatics of feedback.</p> <p>e.g., compare & contrast task (constructive, poor, destructive feedback). provokes emotional responses, especially when showing how feedback can be demotivating.</p> <p>e.g., by showing how violating pragmatics of feedback can lead to misunderstanding in the context of the video task, students come to recognize the importance of not only adopting linguistically, correct and pragmatically appropriate expressions, but also considering their emotional states.</p> <p>e.g., learning three various pragmatically acceptable ways of responding to feedback, including disagreeing politely if the feedback is unfair, contributed to increasing the importance of emotional control.</p>

<p>Managing anger when misunderstanding occurs</p>	
<p>Various ways of responding to feedback may not change how feedback is received (felt)</p>	