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A Qualitative Investigation of Pragmatic Development in Foreign and Target Context[1]

Una Investigación Cualitativa de Desarrollo Pragmático en el Contexto Extranjero y Objetivo

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Abstract

The effects of learning environment on language development in general and pragmatic competence have received increasing attention in the last few decades. The existing studies examined the effects of ESL and EFL settings on pragmatic development from a variety of standpoints. Taking these studies as the basis, this comparative case study aimed to investigate the effects of target context and foreign context on the pragmatic development of two groups of learners, one learning a foreign language (English) and the other learning a second language (Turkish). What differentiates this study from the previous ones is that it compares the cases of learning foreign and second languages (by two different student groups) in the same country (Turkey) The participants, selected on purposeful sampling, were one group of Turkish learners of English in an EFL department in Turkey and the other group was learners from different nationalities learning Turkish in Turkey. The data were collected through participants' self-reports, interviews and in-class observations by the researcher. The content analysis mainly revealed that the foreign context did not offer learners adequate chances for exposure to and practice in the target language, which negatively influenced their pragmatic development. However, the target context provided ample chances of natural and authentic communication in which learners of Turkish could develop their pragmatic knowledge and production. Based on these results, some pedagogical and practical suggestions are provided.

*Key words***:** pragmatic competence; foreign language context; second language context

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Resumen

Los efectos del ambiente de aprendizaje sobre el desarrollo del idioma en general y la competencia pragmática en particular han recibido una atención creciente en las últimas décadas. Los existentes estudios examinan los efectos de los escenarios de inglés como segunda lengua y de inglés como lengua extranjera sobre el desarrollo pragmático desde una variedad de posturas. Al tomar estos estudios como la base principal, este estudio de caso tiene como propósito investigar los efectos del contexto objetivo y contexto extranjero sobre el desarrollo pragmático de dos grupos de aprendices, uno que aprende una lengua extranjera (inglés) y el otro que aprende una segunda lengua (turco). Los participantes, seleccionados en muestreo intencional, fueron un grupo de aprendices turcos de inglés en un departamento de inglés como lengua extranjera y el otro fue un grupo de aprendices de diferentes nacionalidades que aprendían turco en Turquía. Los datos se recolectaron a través de autoinformes de los participantes, entrevistas y observaciones de clase realizadas por el investigador. El análisis de contenido principalmente reveló que el contexto extranjero no ofrecía a los aprendices las oportunidades adecuadas para la exposición y la práctica en la lengua meta, el cual influenció negativamente su desarrollo pragmático. No obstante, el contexto objetivo proporcionó amplias posibilidades para una comunicación natural y auténtica en el que los aprendices de turco pudieron desarrollar su conocimiento pragmático y su producción. Basado en estos resultados, se proporcionan algunas sugerencias pedagógicas y prácticas.

Palabras clave: competencia pragmática, contexto de lengua extranjera, contexto de segunda lengua.

Resumo

Os efeitos do ambiente de aprendizagem sobre o desenvolvimento do idioma em geral e a competência pragmática em particular, têm recebido uma atenção crescente nas últimas décadas. Os estudos existentes examinam os efeitos dos cenários de inglês como segunda língua, e de inglês como língua estrangeira, sobre o desenvolvimento pragmático desde uma variedade de posturas. Ao tomar estes estudos como a base principal, este estudo de caso tem como propósito pesquisar os efeitos do contexto objetivo e contexto estrangeiro sobre o desenvolvimento pragmático de dois grupos de aprendizes, um que aprende uma língua estrangeira (inglês) e o outro que aprende uma segunda língua (turco). Os participantes, selecionados em amostragem intencional, foi um grupo de aprendizes turcos de inglês em um departamento de inglês como língua estrangeira, e o outro foi um grupo de aprendizes de diferentes nacionalidades que aprendiam turco na Turquia. Os dados se coletaram através de auto-relatórios dos participantes, entrevistas e observações de aula realizadas pelo pesquisador. A análise de conteúdo principalmente revelou que o contexto estrangeiro não oferecia aos aprendizes as oportunidades adequadas para a exposição e a prática na língua meta, o qual influiu negativamente no seu desenvolvimento pragmático. Porém, o contexto objetivo proporcionou

amplas possibilidades para uma comunicação natural e autêntica no que os aprendizes de turco puderam desenvolver o seu conhecimento pragmático e a sua produção. Baseado nestes resultados proporcionam-se algumas sugestões pedagógicas e práticas.

Palavras chave: competência pragmática, contexto de língua estrangeira, contexto de segunda língua.

Introduction

As the lingua-franca of the modern world, English holds a great place in people's educational agendas as a language to be learned with increasing attention. There are a great number of people at different ages who try to learn English in diverse contexts over the world. While some people can learn the language in its immediate context, some try to conduct their language education outside the authentic setting in which English is used as the native language. These learning environments have necessitated the introduction of two main terms which refer to the context of language learning: ESL and EFL. ESL, English as a Second Language, can be briefly defined as learning the language in its natural and authentic context; in other words, it refers to learning English in places where it is the native language. On the other hand, EFL, English as a Foreign Language, denotes the case in which the language is learned in a country where it is not the native language.

As in almost all the countries in the world, the demand to learn English is very high in Turkey, which is a foreign language setting for this language. On the other hand, with the increase in the number of international students who want to receive higher education in Turkey, the country has become a second language learning setting for a large number of learners. The interest of international students to study in Turkey necessitated the establishment of state organizations to offer quality language education. With the help and efforts of such institutions as Yunus Emre Institute and TÖMER (Turkish Teaching Center), many people who are interested in learning Turkish try to learn the language in different parts of the world (at Yunus Emre Institute) and in Turkey (at TÖMER).

Setting out from the assumptions of foreign context (learning English in Turkey) and target context (learning Turkish in Turkey) outlined above, the present research aimed to investigate the effects of learning context on learners' pragmatic development. The main purpose in this study is to compare not the two languages (English and Turkish) but two different learning contexts in terms of their effects on learners' pragmatic competence and pragmatic development, the natures of which will be briefly presented below.

Pragmatic Competence

The globalization of the world has required its inhabitants to communicate with others living in different parts of the world for such

various purposes as trade, education and tourism and so on. In this ever-growing global interconnectedness, it has become almost a necessity to be able to use a second or sometimes a third or fourth language in order to establish and maintain healthy and effective interaction for mutual relations. The foundation and preservation of sound relations with different people over the world should be, therefore, grounded on the ability to follow some crucial aspects in language use which can be defined as *communicative competence*.

Noting that the ability to use a language cannot only be only restricted to the knowledge of its linguistic aspects, Hymes (1972) proposed the notion of communicative competence which refers to the ability to use the language beyond sentence level. This assumption takes the personal, social and cultural dynamics into account in communication. Sharing the concept of communicative competence, **Saville-Troike (1989, 1996)** underlined that language competence involves linguistic, interactional and cultural knowledge for the establishment of sound communication. Canale and Swain (1980), based on Hymes' (1972) introduction of communicative competence, proposed four types of communicative competence; *grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence.*

Regarding the multi-dimensional nature of communicative competence, Bachman (1990) stressed pragmatic competence as a separate component of communicative competence. Pragmatic competence can be broadly described as the ability to use the language appropriately paying attention to individual, social and contextual dynamics. In their definitions of pragmatics, Crystal (1985) and Yule (1996) point at the individual and social aspects which affect the interactions between people and refer on the one hand, to the successful combination of linguistic forms and on the other hand, language users as the core elements for robust interaction. Sharing a similar perspective, Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003) define pragmatic competence as the ability of "language users to match utterances with contexts in which they are appropriate" (p. 37). Calling attention to the dynamic nature of languages, Kasper and Röver (2005) view pragmatic competence as being able to practice the language as a source of action and interaction. In the definition of pragmatic competence, Murray (2010) highlights the interdependent relationship between form, language users and context in every-day communication among people. Valuing the indispensable components of interaction, i.e. the interlocutors, their relations to each other, the context and purpose of interaction, pragmatic competence can be defined as the capability to use the language knowing not only what to say, but how to, when to

and to whom to say it. Taking the above definitions into consideration, one can conclude that pragmatic competence, which is the ability to use the language appropriately and to interpret messages successfully in the light of contextual clues, is of critical significance for human interaction which should be based on the strong relationships between linguistic, social and interpersonal aspects. In other words, it requires language users to follow abstract social, cultural and contextual norms if the aim is to have an effective and appropriate interaction.

Since pragmatic competence holds such a significant place in human interaction, it has attracted great attention, especially in the last few decades, as an area of investigation in linguistic studies. As this study focused on the effects of learning environment on learners' pragmatic development, the following part presents the studies conducted on the impacts of learning environment on this issue. Two groups of studies are presented: One displays the direct focus on the relationship between the learning setting and pragmatic development and the other investigates the effect of length of residence in the target community on learners' pragmatic development.

The Effects of Context on Pragmatic Development

The effects of contextual differences between foreign and target language learning environments have aroused interest of researchers as regards the possible effects of learning environment on language learning process and pragmatic development in particular. Researchers explained that there are distinctive characteristics between both contexts. They maintained that these differences are influential not only on learning but also on the way teaching practices are designed and conducted in line with available materials and opportunities (Huebner, 1995; Longcope, 2009). Taking the interrelatedness of context and pragmatic competence, Cummings (2005) maintains that "no definition of pragmatics would be complete in the absence of some mention of context" (p.4).

The effects of learning context on pragmatic competence have been a focus of investigation in the field of language teaching especially for the last few decades (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Matsumura, 2001; Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985; Schauer, 2006; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987). One of the early studies on this issue was conducted by Takahashi and Beebe (1987) with a perspective to examine the effects of L1 pragmatic transfer on L2 refusal forms. The researchers found that there were differences in ESL and EFL participants in terms of their negative transfers. The EFL participants were observed to go

through a process of negative transferring in refusals compared to their counterparts in the ESL context. A seminal study which was enlightening for future studies on the effects of learning context on pragmatic development belongs to Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998). Focusing on grammatical and pragmatic awareness of ESL and EFL learners, the researchers worked with a group of 173 ESL learners in the USA and a group of 370 EFL learners in Hungary. The data were collected through twenty video-typed scenarios. The participants were asked to evaluate the appropriateness of these scenarios in terms of grammar and pragmatics. The results showed that there were differences in the evaluations of two groups. The ESL participants regarded pragmatic errors as more serious compared to their EFL friends. For the EFL group, on the other hand, the grammatical infelicities in the scenarios seemed to be more significant than the pragmatic errors. Matsumura (2001) focused on the comparison of the advice giving produced by Japanese learners of English studying in Canada and Japan and observed that those in the study abroad group chose more appropriate forms of advice compared to the other home-staying group. In a replication study of Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998), Schauer (2006) added interviews to the original instrument. The researcher worked with German learners of English in England and Germany on their identification of grammatical and pragmatic infelicities. The results of this study supported those of the original one. The ESL learners were better at identifying pragmatic infelicities while EFL participants focused more on the linguistic problems in the given scenarios.

Not all the studies centering on a comparison of study-abroad and stay-home learners share similar results. Literature also holds some studies the results of which did not point at the superiority of study abroad experience (Niezgoda & Röver, 2001; Taguchi, 2008). In a replication of Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998), Niezgoda and Röver (2001) concluded that the stay-home group in the EFL context were better at identifying both grammatical and pragmatic errors than their ESL counterparts. Besides, the EFL participants considered both error types as more serious compared to the considerations of the ESL group. A few years later, Taguchi (2008) aimed to examine the differences between Japanese EFL and ESL learners in terms of their comprehension of indirect refusals and indirect opinions. The results revealed that both groups reached good levels of comprehension speed, which was still better in the ESL group. Regarding comprehension accuracy in indirect refusals, however, the EFL group performed better than the ESL participants. The different results in these two studies not supporting the superiority of ESL over EFL context may be attributed to the observation that there can be different dynamics behind the

pragmatic success of language learners such as the content of education they receive.

The studies focusing on the effects of target environment on language development are not only limited to those making direct comparisons of ESL and EFL contexts. Another group of studies which indirectly examine the impact of learning environment on pragmatic competence are those focusing on the connection between the length of residence and pragmatic development (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Iwasaki, 2008; Ren, 2013; Schauer, 2006; Taguchi, 2014). Conducting a study on the effect of the length of residence in the target community and the development of directness and politeness productions, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986) emphasized the contributions of the target environment on the native-like productions by the participants. A recently-conducted longitudinal study also pointed at the positive effects of staying in the target environment on pragmatic development. Ren (2013) inspected the cognitive developments of 20 Chinese learners of English studying abroad for an academic year in terms of their productions of status-equal and status-unequal refusals. The results revealed that the participants had increasing attention towards the socio-pragmatic aspects in their productions with the help of their interactional experiences in the target environment. Holding a somewhat different perspective, Reynolds-Case (2013) focused on pragmatic development in staying abroad experiences with less than a six-week period. The results showed that even short stays in the target environment made contributions to learners' understanding and production of appropriate forms in their interactions.

Relevant literature also holds studies posing counter-arguments against the above-mentioned studies. This group of studies, though not many in number, show that staying in the target environment is not of contributory nature in learners' pragmatic development (DuFon & Churchill, 2006; Han, 2005; Matsumura, 2003). The argument in these studies is that spending time in the target culture cannot be the only factor affecting pragmatic improvement. There are other influential factors in the development of learners. The results of a dissertation conducted by Han (2005) is one of the studies providing counter evidence to the direct relation between staying abroad and pragmatic development as the participants, the Korean learners of English in America, could not produce a native-like language. While pointing at the benefits of study abroad experience on pragmatic abilities, Hassall (2013) stressed some possible drawbacks with study-abroad learners and noted that their personal or social characteristics may negatively affect them in interacting with native speakers in the target environment.

Existing literature also reflects the increasing interest towards Turkish as a foreign language. There are studies, though not adequate in number (Yılmaz, 2016), examining different aspects of teaching Turkish. Some studies underlined the need for developing separate and comprehensive programs and curricula and well-designed materials for teaching Turkish as a foreign language (Chmielowska & Dikici, 2013; Tosun, 2005; Yıldız, 2013; Yılmaz, 2016) while some others focused on the competencies that teachers of Turkish should have (Karababa & Çalışkan, 2013). Views of prospective language teachers on teaching and learning Turkish also received attention (Yaylı, 2015). However, literature does not hold adequate number of studies on the issue of pragmatics or pragmatic competence in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. Just few studies mentioned the need to integrate the transmission of cultural and pragmatic features of Turkish (Chmielowska & Dikici, 2013; Kaya & Oran, 2015) through texts (Bölükbaş & Keskin, 2014).

In conclusion, the existing studies on the effects of learning context on pragmatic development have focused on the pragmatic development of learners of English conducting their language studies in foreign and target contexts. These studies have been grounded on the ESL and EFL distinction and followed quantitative designs to measure the change in the level of pragmatic development of the participants in these two contexts which are geographically different places. The present research, holding a different perspective in investigating the effects of learning context on pragmatic development, is purposed to examine the effects of a context which is geographically the same but contextually different in terms of language education. In this study, the same place exhibits the characteristics of foreign and second language learning environments for the two different participant groups. Aiming to give voice to language learners' experiences in this setting with regard to pragmatic development in the target language, the study centers not on a comparison of the two languages but on the effects of the geographically-the-same but contextually-different language environment on learners' pragmatic development.

Methodology

This study was based on comparative case study methodology with an aim to gain in-depth understanding the issue under investigation from the perspectives of the participants who directly experienced the cases. As suggested by Yin (1984) and Creswell (1998), this design enables the researcher to examine the issue within its real-life context.

With comparative case study design, the researcher could investigate "what resides beneath" (Haverkamp, Morrow & Ponterotto, 2005, p.124)

Setting

In this comparative case study, the same context (a state university in Turkey) served the characteristics of a target language learning context for foreign learners of Turkish while a foreign language learning context for Turkish learners of English.

Regarding the foreign learners of Turkish, the context can be said to have offered many opportunities to be exposed to the language in its authentic setting besides ample chances of practicing the language with its native speakers. In such a context, the process of language learning becomes easier for learners in that they can hear the language and practice it in many different contexts, which is a great chance for their pragmatic development.

The other group, Turkish learners of English, on the other hand, were learning the target language in a foreign language learning context in which they could be exposed to the appropriate forms of the target language and practice it mostly in the classroom environment. When they were out of the learning environment, it was not as easy for these learners to be exposed to appropriate language usages as their target-context counterparts could in the target language learning context. Therefore, the foreign context can be said to lack available chances of exposure to and practice in the target language, which was a potential drawback for their pragmatic development.

The Participants

Purposeful sampling was followed for participant selection (Patton, 1987). There were two groups of participants in this study. One group was composed of 10 Turkish students learning English in the EFL context. They were preparatory class students in English Language Teaching Department. Their ages were between 18 and 22 and they had experiences of learning English up to 10 years. They were learning English in Turkey and none of them had stay-abroad experience. This group was thought to be representative of the learners learning the target language in a context where they did not have much chance of exposure to the language outside the classroom.

The other group consisted of 10 students from different countries (one from Russia, one from Georgia, one from Mongolia, one from Iran, three from Kazakhstan, one from Afghanistan, one from Kyrgyzstan and one from Tajikistan). With scholarship provided by the Turkish government under the organization called YTB (Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities), they came to Turkey in order to conduct their undergraduate or graduate studies at different departments. Some of those participants had tried to learn Turkish in their countries through television but could not develop their language proficiency beyond A2 level. They had to reach C1 level in Turkish in order to continue their academic studies in Turkey with the scholarship. Therefore, they were receiving 960-hour Turkish language education for a thirty-two-week period. This group was thought to reflect the characteristics of learners who conduct their language studies in a natural and authentic setting.

This study was conducted with both groups after they had received target language education for a whole year; 28 weeks for the Turkish learners of English and 32 weeks for the foreign learners of Turkish based on their curriculum. In this period, they had the chance to observe the learning environment with its advantages and disadvantages.

Data Collection Instruments and Procedure

In order to reach stronger conclusions, data triangulation was followed through three instruments. The first data set was obtained from the written self-reports of the two groups (one foreign-language-learner group and one second-language-learner group) reflecting their experiences in language learning in general and their pragmatic development in particular. The participants were provided guiding questions according to which they were expected to reflect their experiences of pragmatic development in the learning environment. The questions were formed by the researcher in light of the relevant literature and two field experts (one on teaching English as a foreign language and the other on teaching Turkish as a foreign language) were consulted for the understandability and clearness of the guide. The questions for both groups were the same but the questions were in English for the foreign-context group and in Turkish for the target-context group. Below are the questions guiding the participants in their self-reports:

- What are the effects of learning context in your pragmatic development in the target language?

- What are the effects of the language education in your pragmatic development?
- How would it be different if you had learned the target language in a different context? (target context for the foreign-context participants and foreign context for the target-context participants)

Each participant was asked to write three self-reports (one in a month); thirty for one group and thirty for the other, sixty in total. They were asked to submit their reports at the end of the educational year.

The second way of collecting data was through observations. The observation notes were taken according to such pre-determined points as the amount of exposure to pragmatic aspects of the target language in the educational setting and students' chances for practicing pragmatic side of the target language through in-class interactional patterns and activities. The researcher attended eight classes (four English classes and four Turkish classes, eight in total) once in a month in order to have a general idea of the pragmatic development of learners over a process.

The third instrument was semi-structured interviews. The researcher prepared a guide for the interviews which included similar questions as those in the guide for the participants' self-reports. Each interview, lasting 15-20 minutes, was conducted with all the participants in both groups so that the researcher could have the chance to reach detailed understandings of the participants regarding the effects of learning context on their pragmatic development. Besides the pre-set questions, the researcher also had the advantage to ask different questions according to the flow of the interview since semi-structured interview was followed. The participants were provided with the flexibility to answer the questions either in English or in Turkish. The Turkish learners of English generally tried to speak in English but when they could not exactly convey the idea they wanted, they switched to their native language. As to the foreign learners of Turkish, they tried to speak Turkish during the interviews. When their language ability was not sufficient to express their purpose in Turkish, those who could speak English switched to English; those who could not tried to rephrase what they wanted to say by using their body language to a large extent.

Data Analysis

Before conducting the analysis procedure, the researcher followed participant approval in order to ensure trustworthiness of the findings. Each participant was asked to revise the transcripts and an early analysis was conducted by the researcher regarding their reflections.

The data were analyzed through content analysis in a three-step process. First, an individual analysis was followed in which individual answers of each participant was analyzed. In the second step, an in-group analysis was conducted in which the answers of each participant in the same group were compared to each other with an aim to make an in-group comparison of participants. As a result of this process, recurring codes were obtained, which are reflected in the Results section with participant quotations to increase the trustworthiness of the findings. In the third step, a cross-group analysis was carried out in order to compare the data obtained from the two participant groups following their language studies in different learning contexts.

The data obtained through the semi-structured interviews and observation notes were also analyzed in the same system (individual analysis, in-group analysis and cross-group analysis). The same system was followed in the analysis of these three data sources, revealing similar points of discussion. Following the same analysis system and reaching similar conclusions is thought to ensure trustworthiness of the data analysis process.

In order to obtain interrater reliability, a field expert was also asked to analyze the same data sets through the system followed by the researcher. The Internal Rate of Return was 83.5% for exact, 12.5 for similar and 4% for different codings and this again strengthened the trustworthiness of the analysis process.

Results

The data obtained from Turkish learners of English and learners of Turkish from different nationalities revealed different perspectives on the effects of learning environment on language development especially on pragmatic development. The content analysis of the data can be presented in two main themes: foreign context and target context. In order to provide a clearer picture of the effects of learning environment on pragmatic development, the results are presented in compact tables designed to reflect the ideas from participant quotations from their self-reports and interviews as well as researcher's notes taken during class observations. As there are three sources of data, to eliminate confusion for readers, the quotations from each source can be presented with some symbols. Regarding self-reports, for example, P1-SR2 means participant 1/self-report 2. For observations, O3 stands for the third observation. For interviews, I-P4 refers to the interview conducted with the fourth participant.

For an orderly presentation, this section first displays the results obtained from the students in the foreign context and then those from the students in the target context. Table 1 shows the views of Turkish learners of English in their self-reports and in the interviews and the views of the researcher through observation notes on the issue under discussion in addition to introducing the *foreign context* theme and underlying categories and codes.

Table 1. Foreign context

Theme 1: The effects of foreign context on pragmatic development	
Category 1: Educational effects	Focusing on linguistic knowledge
	Neglecting communicative and pragmatic aspects
	Lack of exposure to L2 pragmatic forms
Category 2: Social effects	Lack of interaction with native speakers
	Limited communicative chances in L2
Category 3: Psychological effects	Low self-confidence
	Low self-esteem
	Being shy

As can be seen from Table 1, the data reflected different dimensions regarding the effects of learning environment on general language development and particular pragmatic development of Turkish learners of English. Since the available data included many similar statements, only those exemplifying the common views of the participants are provided. The commonly shared point among participant statements was the focus on the linguistic aspects of the target language in foreign language education while mostly neglecting instruction and practice on its communicative side. This was the core problem for learners in the process of understanding and developing their pragmatic knowledge and skills. During the interview, a participant pointed at the rule-governed education system and the lack of interactive opportunities as the major reasons beyond their inadequate levels of pragmatic development:

> "The education I have received is a rule-governed one. Though I am an English language student and, well ... a prospective English teacher, I cannot say that I have enough knowledge of pragmatics in the target language… In addition, I cannot use the language

> outside the classroom. So, the education system and lack of chances to practice… this creates a big problem for my pragmatic development." (I-P3)

Another participant held a similar perspective and highlighted the existing language education styles and the reality of not having enough chances of being exposed to and practicing the target language among the reasons for their low levels of pragmatic proficiency in general. In addition to these points, the participant also referred to the indirect psychological effects of learning the target language in a foreign context explaining that low levels of language proficiency, especially lack of pragmatic knowledge and competence negatively impacts their mood. This low achievement, in turn, decreases their motivation and self-confidence. The below quotation from the participant's self-report, which can be considered an example combining the educational, social and psychological effects of foreign context, can be enlightening in order to understand the perceptions and experiences of a majority of foreign language learners:

> "I have been learning English for almost six years. I know almost all the grammatical rules, at least, I think so, but where can I use them, only in grammar exams? When I think whether I know the language or not, I realize that I know its grammar but what about its speaking dimension? When I think of this, I really become demotivated. I comprehend that I know rules which don't help me to talk. I thought I would be able to speak in English with people when I started foreign language education at university. But, I can't because there are just a few instructors to teach in English and when I go out of the class, there is no one to talk with in English. This is terrible for a language learner. And even worse for a prospective language teacher... I don't feel confident in my language abilities. But, actually I should because I have spent six years on this." (P5-SR2)

The same participant expressed her wish to receive language education in its natural setting instead of a foreign context. She stated that if she had spent six years in a second language setting, she could have developed her speaking skills including the pragmatics of the target language as well as its grammar:

> "I wish I could have studied English in America or England. Then, I could have really learned how to use the language properly. As I noted in my reflections, I know many grammar rules but I don't know how to use the language appropriately in spoken form. The context affects everything." (I-P5)

In order to improve her knowledge of how to use the target language appropriately, another participant also stated her desire to study abroad and expressed that her current learning environment is mostly suitable for linguistic but not pragmatic development. The main reason she provided for this was the lack of chances of communicating in the target language, which is actually necessary for practical language use. The wish to have a study-abroad experience was common for more than half of the participants who thought that if they had studied abroad, they could have been more exposed to the pragmatic usage of the target language in its authentic setting and; therefore, could have been much more competent in using the language effectively. Since the classroom is mostly the only context for them to be exposed to and to practice the target language, they feel themselves limited in learning and exercising the language in terms of pragmatics. During the interview, a participant who, like most of his friends, aimed to apply to a student exchange program said that it would be much more different and efficient if he could learn the target language abroad. Making an abstract comparison of the foreign context and target context in mind, the participant reflected his opinions with the following words:

> "Well… of course, it would be very different. Learners in Turkey… they… well, actually, we don't have much chance to…practice the language with native speakers. Actually, they can't mostly speak in English outside the class. But, in the target context… this is not the case. They have to speak English wherever they go. To me, ımm, a language can be learned best in an environment where it is spoken. Think of Turkish immigrants to Germany, I also have relatives there, they didn't know a single word but now they are better than, ımm, the students who are taking education in German in Turkey. The immigrants don't have perfect grammar knowledge but they are good at speaking. That is the difference." (I-P8)

The below excerpt from one of the self-reports of a participant can be considered as a summary of all the three categories as to the general views of the participants regarding pragmatic development in foreign context. Touching upon the educational, social and psychological effects of learning the target language in foreign context on pragmatic development, the participant reflected the below perception:

> "The way English is taught in Turkey has been usually criticized because of its heavy focus on linguistic aspects of the target language while neglecting its pragmatic and communicative side. In addition, most of our professors are non-native speakers of

> English; this means the main way to be exposed to target usage is through movies or soap operas. The lack of exposure to pragmatic forms combined with lack of practice is the greatest challenge in pragmatic development. Since we cannot learn and practice the target language appropriately, we end up with pragmatic mistakes. This decreases our motivation and confidence in speaking the target language. The education system, lack of exposure and practice and low levels of confidence and motivation all become a vicious cycle negatively impacting our pragmatic development." (P3-SR3)

The notes I took during my observations also pointed at similar matters. I noted that most of the participants were competent in forming grammatically correct sentences in writing and speaking activities when they were asked to produce the language. However, they were having hesitations when they were expected to produce the language. For example, in an activity in which Participant 2 and Participant 7 were required to form a professor-student dialogue, I observed that participant 7 was experiencing difficulty in the manner he needed to talk with a professor. He had the things to say in mind but he hesitated to say them with pragmatic appropriateness. When I asked him the reason for his hesitation, the participant explained that he had not been much exposed to a context of professor-student talk in the target language; whenever he had a question to ask, he preferred to ask it during breaks and used his native language, Turkish.

Another attention-grabbing point during my observations was that most of the participants, as a majority of their classmates did, refrained from communicating in the target language and if they had to, they preferred to use short expressions. For example, Participants 1, 3, 6 and 9 did not look at the teacher directly in the eye in order not to have voluntary contact with her/him. When I asked the reason behind this behavior, the participants responded that they were afraid of talking in the class because they did not have enough confidence to speak in the target language. They stated that even if they know grammar very well, they could not produce pragmatically appropriate sentences because they did not know much about target language pragmatics. The result was that they could understand what the teacher was saying and they were even forming answers in their minds but they were shy to talk since they did not have much chance of practice. This situation has again become almost a vicious cycle for them: not talking-feeling shy-not talking-having low self-confidence and not talking again.

The observation notes also pointed at another topic which is worth presenting. Since learners in the foreign context were not exposed to appropriate target usages, they obviously had some doubts about which words or phrases would be proper to use in particular situations. For example, in an activity, the students were expected to produce direct and indirect apology forms. I observed that while all the students were able to form direct apologies; most of them did not come up with appropriate forms of indirect apologies. Participant four in O2 (second observation), for instance, experienced some problems while making a comparison of two apology productions. While producing the direct apology form, he could immediately produce the direct apology form in the target language saying *I am sorry… (to disturb you, for breaking the glass, etc.);* but experienced difficulty in producing indirect apology form. I noted that he still used direct apology forms expressing his apology indirectly. When the instructor helped him suggesting he could say something like *how careless of me*, he seemed to realize that this form could also be an indirect way of apologizing. When the class was over, I asked the participant four why he experienced difficulty in the activity; he explained that he had not seen this form before so he did not have adequate background knowledge on indirect apology as a speech act in mind.

Another example in the observation notes was as follows. In a dialogue activity, Participant 5 produced an utterance which reflected his almost Turkish way of thinking. Instead of saying "God speed", the participant said "May God make your road open" (which can be considered as a direct way of translating this statement from Turkish to English). Almost all the students in the class besides the teacher seemed to understand what he meant, but the teacher had to interrupt and provide the correct version. Then, I observed that most of the students were taking notes of this phrase even if it is a simple daily expression. When we were talking with the participants, they expressed that as they were not learning the target language in its authentic setting, they could not be exposed to such easy expressions, which can be considered as a source to block their pragmatic awareness and knowledge.

Pragmatic Analysis of the Data from the Foreign-Context Participants

In learning a target language, it is important to develop an awareness of the pragmatic aspects of the language besides its linguistic, phonological or syntactic characteristics. It can be inferred from the data obtained through their comments that the participants in the foreign

context were not provided with much chance of being exposed to the target language forms in terms of the communicative and pragmatic aspects of the language. Instead, they were provided with the type of language education favoring the linguistic side of the target language. In such a language education style, because of the rule-based content, design and presentation of language input, learners could not develop an awareness of the pragmatic rules or the usages of the target language. As they could not hear or see examples of appropriate language uses in their surroundings, the participants reported to experience difficulties in expressing their ideas in appropriate forms.

When the findings from the participants are analyzed, the almost negative effects of the lack of exposure and practice on the pragmatic knowledge and development of the participants can become more obvious. For example, taking the case of Participant 5 reported in the observation notes into account, one can observe that the participant centered his output in the target language on the way he thought in his native language. As he has not been exposed to the pragmatically appropriate usage of this particular expression, he relied on the direct translation of the expression, which would not possibly be understood by a native speaker. The lack of exposure to and practice in the target language resulted in pragmatically ill-productions by the foreign-context participants.

As the data collected also from the students from different nationalities learning Turkish in Turkey revealed, the representation of the experiences in pragmatic development of the group in second language learning in the target context displays a very different dimension as regards the general language development, especially pragmatic development in the target context. As in the presentation of the data obtained from the foreign context group, the comments of the target group are also represented with some abbreviations. For example, a statement included in the third self-report of the seventh participant is referred to as P7-SR3. Or, the interview conducted with the fifth participant is I-P5. The categories of the target context data are the same as those in the foreign context data with different codes. Table 2 shows the results obtained from the target context group.

Table 2. Target context

Theme 2: The effects of target context on pragmatic development	
Category 1: Educational effects	Focusing on both linguistic knowledge and pragmatic knowledge
	Providing many examples of appropriate communication
	Ample exposure to L2 pragmatic forms
Category 2: Social effects	Many chances for interaction with native speakers
	Exposure to target culture
	Exposure to different situations
Category 3: Psychological effects	High self-confidence
	High self-esteem
	Overcoming previous concerns

Unlike those learners in the foreign context, the ones learning Turkish in the target context, i.e. Turkey shared their positive and motivating experiences related to their language development. The common point in the remarks of this group was that learning the target language in the target context contributed a lot to their pragmatic knowledge and enabled them to develop their pragmatic competence. Since they could have many chances of exposure to the target usages in different contexts, they could improve their pragmatic knowledge. A participant commented that wherever they go, they need to use Turkish, either willingly or unwillingly. They are exposed to the target culture besides its language and this is the actual source of pragmatics development for them. The below statement from one of the self-reports from the participant from Iran can be illustrating about the contributions of the target context on the pragmatic development of learners:

> "I think we are lucky because we are learning Turkish in Turkey. Wherever we go, whatever we do, whomever we speak with, we need to use Turkish. Of course, this is sometimes challenging. But without this chance, I think we would not be able to develop our language competence to this extent." (P4-SR2)

The same participant expressed her appreciation of the chances for exposure to pragmatic norms of the target language also during the interview. Being aware of the contributions of exposure to authentic

language in terms of pragmatic development, she was happy to hear the target language in different natural settings from different native speakers. Through these exposures, she could learn different pragmatic dimensions of the target language, which naturally positively affected the way she produced the language and increased her level of pragmatic development:

> "Here, we are surrounded by native speakers and I believe this is a great opportunity for us to develop our language skills. This chance is especially important to realize how language is used in different places and with different people. By listening to native speakers in different contexts, I have started to use the language much more appropriately compared to my previous language level." (I-P4)

As displayed in Table 2, the opportunity to be exposed to the target language and to be able to use it with different people from diverse social, cultural and educational backgrounds was the main advantage for most of the participants to develop their pragmatic competence in the target context. A participant stated that she can communicate with people from different parts of the society and this not only develops her language skills, especially speaking, but also expands her world knowledge and view. She can observe the target culture in its natural context and interact with its speakers in authentic situations. She maintained that the cultural elements in her country (Mongolia) and those in Turkey resemble; however, there are still differences to be observed in the natural setting to be able to make comparisons even between two close cultures. The participant also declared that this case has positive implications in the way she perceives herself as a language learner who can also develop her understanding of the world through interaction with diverse cultures and life styles. As she increased her world knowledge and cultural knowledge of the target language, she could follow the pragmatic dynamics of the target language. With the available chances of exposure and interaction, she stated that she feels herself more confident while establishing interaction with the native speakers of the language because she knew better how to interact with them appropriately following cultural and pragmatic norms. She expressed her opinions and experiences as the following:

> "..ımm.. I.. I really like learning Turkish here, in Turkey because, you know… when I go to the market I hear and speak Turkish, when I go to the cinema, it is again the same. This is ımm.. great. Besides the language, I can also.. observe people. I can see what they are traditionally (this word was stated in English because the

> interviewee did not remember the Turkish word) doing, what they are saying in certain cases. Well.. I believe language and culture are integrated. In this context, we can develop full language knowledge and abilities as confident learners… with linguistic and pragmatic capabilities. So, we are lucky" (I-P7)

Experiencing the target language and culture in its natural environment was viewed as a great advantage by the participants in the process of pragmatic development. A participant expressed that she had some concerns related to how she could learn the target language in a different country before coming to Turkey. However, her positive experiences helped her overcome, even erase, her concerns. In her self-report, she stated that the more time she spent in the target culture (in Turkey), the more she learned how to use the language properly and enjoyed learning Turkish and added that it would not be the same if she learned Turkish in her country, Russia, because she could not have been exposed to the way native speakers use the target language:

> "Before I came here, I had some doubts. I was afraid of not learning Turkish. But all disappeared in time. Now, I am really happy to be here in Turkey to learn Turkish because I can see how the natives use Turkish in different places like in the canteen, in the shopping mall or in the dormitory. If I had been in Russia, I could not have learned this much Turkish in such a short time. I am happy and I feel confident." (P8-SR3)

The affective impact of the learning context in pragmatic development was the point of appreciation of a participant. While expressing his gratitude of the chances of exposure to and practice in the target language in its authentic setting, a participant pointed at the gradual increase in his confidence in using the language appropriately with its pragmatic aspects. He maintained that directly observing how the natives were using the language in different places at different times and with different people enhanced his pragmatic awareness and knowledge of the target language. This, in turn, increased his confidence and efficacy since he was able to use the language like a native speaker. Referring pragmatic rules as abstract rules to follow for appropriate language use, the participant noted in a self-report:

> "At first, I observed that when natives talk with different people, they use the language differently or they change their words, manners or intonation in different communicative contexts. Then, I realized that, as we do in our native language, we need to follow some abstract rules of using the language appropriately when interacting with different people in different places. This

awareness and knowledge I gained in time increased my self-confidence and my belief in my capabilities to use the target language appropriately." (P10-SR3)

The classroom observations of this group also showed parallel results with the statements of the participants. During the observations, I noted that, unlike the English learning group, the students in the target group were much more willing to talk with their professors and the students were following chances for further interaction. Most of them displayed observably increasing confidence in themselves as language users. For example, during my first observation, the shyness of Participant 3 in interacting with classmates and instructor grabbed my attention. She seemed to avoid having eye contact especially with the instructor and talked with him only when she was asked to. When I asked her the reason for this, she explained that she had things in mind but had concerns about saying something wrong to the instructor or conveying some meaning she did not actually mean. However, during my following observations, especially in the final observation, I noticed notable positive changes in her willingness to communicate with classmates and instructors. She uttered that being frequently exposed to the target language produced by its native speakers in and out of the educational setting provided her with the indisputable opportunity to understand the pragmatic dynamics of the target language. Therefore, her pragmatic awareness and knowledge developed her confidence in using the target language appropriately with its native speakers in a dramatic way.

I also observed that the attention of the participants was attracted in the lessons as native-speaker-instructors informed them of both linguistic and pragmatic features of the target language. I noted that the target-context participants were more willing to participate in classes compared to their foreign-context counterparts because they were learning the multidimensional aspects of the language and having linguistic and pragmatic practice during classes. For example, Participant 5 was really eager and motivated to participate in different activities and she explained that learning different things about the target language motivated her and increased her enthusiasm to participate in classes.

One outstanding case can be provided as an example of the supporting nature of the target context on learners' pragmatic development. During the first observation, in a context of funeral, Participant 8 said a phrase in her native language to mean "I am sorry for your loss" and nobody except the students sharing similar pragmatic

backgrounds with her understood what she meant. The problem was that her statement meant something different in Turkish and was not appropriate to be used in a context of funeral. When the teacher raised her eye-brow, she tried to explain what she actually meant and added this is the way they are using it. The, the teacher offered the pragmatically proper way of expressing it. In the third observation, I reported a case showing the positive effects of the target context on the pragmatic development. The same student raised her hand and asked for the floor. She stated that when she was coming to the school, she heard two women talking about the death of a man and one of them used the appropriate version the teacher taught them.

Pragmatic Analysis of the Data from the Target-Context Participants

The comments of the participants and the observation notes revealed that the target context provided this group with a good amount of pragmatic input which helped them develop their pragmatic knowledge and awareness. For example, considering the case of Participant 8, it can be concluded that as she was exposed to the way the target language should be used appropriately through the input offered by the native speakers (her language teacher and the women talking on the bus), she developed the sense of realization that the way she was using her native language was not the same the target language should be used. Based on this cross-language comparison, she was observed to benefit from the input, which was available not only in the classroom but also out of the classroom, in the sense to develop her pragmatic awareness and competence, which naturally increased her pragmatic knowledge and positively affected her self-confidence as a language learner who wanted to share her language-related experience on a daily occasion.

Discussion

The data obtained from a group of participants learning the target language in the target community pointed at the positive effects of the target context on developing language knowledge especially pragmatic competence besides expanding their cultural knowledge of the target society. Those participants in this language learning environment were observed, as they themselves also expressed, to be much more knowledgeable, confident and willing to initiate interactions in the target language. On the other hand, the data obtained from the foreign

context group revealed that the lack of necessary exposure to the use of the target language in different contexts by different people and limited chances of interaction with different native speakers in various settings created challenges for language learners in the process of developing their pragmatic skills. These challenges, inevitably and unfortunately, had negative impacts on the pragmatic development and practices of learners since they were educationally, socially and psychologically influenced in a negative manner by the disillusioning lack of opportunities in a foreign context.

The results of the present study were generally in line with those of the previous ones as they generally pointed at the limited chances of interaction and exposure in the foreign contexts (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Lee, 2016). Besides lacking chances of exposure and interaction, the major problematic aspect of the foreign context is that it cannot equip learners with the cultural and pragmatic norms of the target language which are indispensable for healthy communication. Classroom is generally the only context in which learners can learn things about the pragmatic aspects of the target language; however, this context offers limited pragmatic information to learners since the only way to be exposed to the target pragmatic norms would be through language teaching materials, that is, textbooks utilized in foreign contexts. The available textbooks do not and cannot always meet the demand for pragmatic information as they do not fully represent the cultural and pragmatic aspects of the target language. In their examination of EFL textbooks in terms of their pragmatic content, Meihami and Khanlarzadeh (2015) and Limberg (2016) maintain that though available textbooks offer some presentation of basic speech acts, they are not sufficient to display all pragmatic forms which are essential in different communicative situations. Therefore, instructors who utilize these materials in their courses and who do not have comprehensive knowledge of the target culture would offer merely a partial presentation of the target norms.

Another key point of criticism towards the foreign language learning contexts in the present study was reported to be the focus on linguistic education. The foreign language contexts, as also maintained by the majority of the participants, center on instructing the linguistic aspects of the target language while ignoring its pragmatic side leaving learners without the capability to improve their pragmatic knowledge and awareness as also underlined in Charkova and Halliday' (2011) study. It is, of course, necessary to have some basic level of linguistic competence on which learners can build their pragmatic capabilities. However, while grammar teaching and practice takes much of

instruction time in foreign language learning contexts (Lee, 2016), pragmatic skills remain as a somewhat dark area. In addition, foreign language instruction does not generally involve pragmatic feedback for learners (Taguchi, 2015). In other words, as learners mostly receive linguistic instruction, they naturally receive linguistic feedback but limited pragmatic feedback; therefore, they do not know the weak areas needing extra attention. This situation, therefore, becomes the source of the problem because learners in these settings do not have much chance of learning and practicing the language outside the classroom (Lee, 2016; Neddar, 2012) and they are not provided much pragmatic knowledge and feedback. If learners are not equipped with the knowledge and helped to develop their interactive skills, they cannot be expected to produce the language efficiently, which would raise their affective filters and become a source of potential stress for learners. Regarding this point, Economidou-Kogetsidis (2008), Derwing and Munro (2013) and Samaranayake (2016) suggest that speaking skills through communicative activities should receive more attention since some learners do not have access to interactive chances outside the classroom. If classroom is the main setting in which interaction in the target language can take place, then language teachers should offer a communicative environment for their learners to have access to interaction in order to compensate for the lack of adequate exposure to the pragmatic norms of the target language.

The participant comments and classroom observations in this study revealed that the group learning the target language in its natural context seemed to be at the advantaged side. The results from the target context, unlike those from the foreign context, generally gathered around the contributions of the target setting in providing learners with ample chances of exposure and practice in the target language, which echoed the result from some previous research (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Charkova & Halliday, 2011; Schauer, 2006). These chances of exposure enabled learners to observe the language in its authentic and natural context and then to practice it with its native speakers. Reaching a similar conclusion as a result of the comparison of foreign and target settings in learning English, Roever (2012) expresses that target settings offer learners free routines. Sharing a related perspective, Ortega (2009) suggests that these available chances can push learners beyond their present proficiency. Taguchi (2015) also appreciates the contributions of learning the target language in the target environment explaining that the more learners can observe the target culture and language in its natural setting, the more appropriate pragmatic behaviors they can develop. To elaborate on this point, it can be stated that target settings

are full of accessible input in various contexts for learners which can be naturally internalized without much effort compared to the foreign context in which learners need to spend conscious effort in order to obtain this knowledge. Learners in target contexts need to establish and maintain communication with the native speakers in order to understand them and to be understood by them. Therefore, though it may sometimes become a source of stress for learners, a learning environment of this type can act as a force to push the learners beyond their limits and help them develop their socialization in the target culture. At this point in the discussion, it would be beneficial to refer to Swain's (1985, 1995) Output Hypothesis. She proposes that language production is as important as language input in the development of language. Taking this notion into consideration, it can be stated the target context group could experience the advantage of a combination of input and output in and out of the classroom setting.

There are some limitations to this study. Data triangulation was followed to strengthen the validity and trustworthiness of the qualitative data. However, the comparison of foreign context and target context in terms of pragmatic development was only based on qualitative data. Future studies can adopt mixed methods research design to investigate the pragmatic knowledge and performances so that, besides qualitative comparison, they can also statistically compare the effects of learning context on pragmatic knowledge. Another limitation was related with the number of participants. Future studies can be carried out with more participants. Longitudinal studies can also be conducted to evaluate the amount of the effects of exposure to and practice in the target language on learners' pragmatic development.

Conclusion

Making a comparison between learning foreign and second languages in the same environment, this qualitative study revealed the contributions of the target context on pragmatic development of learners while pointing at the insufficient opportunities for exposure to the cultural and pragmatic norms, and limited chances for practicing the language in diverse situations with the native speakers of the target language in the foreign context. This lack of exposure and practice was reported by the participants in the foreign context as the major obstacle to their pragmatic development.

Given the essential nature of integrating pragmatic competence into language education, it can be beneficial to present some suggestions that can be followed especially in foreign language learning contexts:

- If the aim in language education is to train learners as competent language users with developed pragmatic abilities, it is essential to offer them the knowledge and circumstances to practice the language. As classrooms are mostly the only environments in which language can be practiced in foreign contexts, then instructors as well as curriculum and material designers should take their share out of the process.
- Teachers should, first of all, search for "optimal instructional practice and resources for pragmatic development" (Taguchi, 2011, p. 289). They should expand their linguistic and pragmatic knowledge of the target language (Bardovi-Harlig, 1992; Ishiara, 2010) especially through the available web-sources (Zhu, 2012) as they offer ample information, materials and activities.
- Curriculum and material designers should further integrate pragmatic knowledge and its practice in their designs. Taking the speaking content of language materials into account, Boxer and Pickering (1995) suggest that "only through materials that reflect how we really speak, rather than how we think we speak, will language learners receive an accurate account of the rules of speaking in a second or foreign language" (p. 56). Via appropriate materials and in and out-class activities, learners can be familiarized with the unfamiliar.
- The materials should not just include item-format presentations of target pragmatic features. Instead, there should be an all-inclusive design in which learners can have access to various social, cultural and pragmatic norms of world countries in addition to the ones belonging to the target language. This can contribute not only to learners' pragmatic development in the target language but to their world citizenship identity as well.
- Language instructors or authorities can organize formal/informal meetings in which language learners can socialize themselves with the target culture by observing its socio-cultural norms and having chances of practicing the language with its native speakers.
- If possible and affordable, the possibilities of studying in the target context should be expanded beyond the current exchange programs in order to offer learners the chance to 'live the language with its people in its natural context'.
- Since it would not be possible for all foreign language learners to have study abroad experiences, tele-conferencing sessions

can be organized for suitable courses in order to provide an international educational interaction. Through this practice, learners of the foreign language can be exposed to the target language produced by it native speakers, can have chances of interaction with native-speaker instructors and students. In this way, foreign language learners can develop their knowledge and use of the target language appropriately in different contexts and with different people. This may be very great step for learners to develop their pragmatic competence.

- The faculty training prospective language teachers should also do their best to equip their students with the strategies update their knowledge and teaching skills in a professional manner.
- Though there can be some suggestions for different parties, it should also be kept in mind that the whole responsibility is not on the shoulders of language teachers and material or curriculum designers. As agents to hold almost half the responsibility of learning, language learners should also be willing to find and conscious of following extra chances for developing their language knowledge and skills beyond the walls of the classroom. If learners do not display enthusiasm for improving their language abilities, then the learning environment can be neither beneficial nor futile. Only spending time in the target environment is not the guarantee of language success. Learners should make use of the advantage to different levels (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Kinginger & Blatter, 2008).

Each learning context has its own peculiarities which cannot be easily changed. If certain situations cannot be changed, then the existing conditions can be ameliorated. In order to offer learners a better and more productive context for language learning, teachers, material designers and curriculum developers can shoulder the responsibility. They need to adjust the available resources, technology and tools to meet the principle criteria of a fruitful learning atmosphere.

It should also be kept in mind that it is not solely the environment which provides benefits and contributions; instead, it is actually the learner who finds the ways to utilize available chances. Therefore, learners need to be informed about the ways to seek opportunities for developing their pragmatic competence and they should be motivated in the sense that they can manage the process of finding solutions to their problems.

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