



## Teacher Corrective Feedback on Learners' Pragmatic Failure: Types of Feedback in Online Pragmatics Instruction

**Sama Ghadiri** 

*Department of English Language Teaching, West Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran*  
ghadiri.mailbox@gmail.com

**Zia Tajeddin**  (Corresponding Author)

*Department of English Language Teaching, Tarbiat Modares University, Iran*  
tajeddinz@modares.ac.ir

**Minoo Alemi** 

*Department of English Language Teaching, West Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran*  
minooalemi2000@yahoo.com

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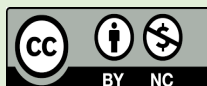
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### Abstract

**Objective:** Research on corrective feedback (CF) in L2 pragmatics instruction, especially in online teaching, is still in its infancy. To address this gap, this study sought to examine the types of CF provided by EFL teachers in online classes in response to the learners' pragmalinguistically and sociopragmatically inappropriate production of the binary speech acts of request and refusal.

**Methods:** Eighteen hours of online classroom interaction data were analyzed using conversation analysis and a taxonomy that classifies feedback into implicit and explicit input-providing and output-prompting CF.

**Results:** The findings of the study showed that explicit output prompts were largely applied by teachers as the most frequent type of CF. The teachers tended to use prompting questions and metapragmatic clues to help learners better understand request and refusal speech acts, rather than directly offering input or reformulation. In addition, because of the face-threatening nature of speech acts of refusal and request, the teachers applied explicit output prompts as corrective feedback to reinforce the accuracy of learners' production.

**Conclusions:** It can be concluded that the online mode of instruction can impact the explicitness of pragmatic CF. This research is of great value for teachers to employ both implicit and explicit types of CF to develop learners' competency in pragmatics in online instruction.

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## Introduction

Pragmatic competence is the ability to communicate correctly and is central to communication in a second language (Taguchi, 2019). The pragmatic essence of any utterance is to ensure the correct understanding of the discourse (Halenko & Wang, 2022; Ishihara, 2010). However, becoming pragmatically competent is a complicated process with more challenges than focusing on form (Alsuhaibani, 2020). According to numerous studies (e.g., Eslami & Derakhshan, 2020; Halenko & Wang, 2022; Glaser, 2018), there are discrepancies between learners' grammatical knowledge and pragmatic development, and language learning requires the understanding of social norms and cultural values. Thus, even learners with high linguistic proficiency make inappropriate utterances in communication because of poor pragmatic knowledge. García-Gómez (2020) stated that L2 learners' pragmatic errors are unacceptable and learners' communication may be hindered due to pragmatic failures, which prevent them from understanding the intended meaning of others. According to Taguchi (2018), teachers' routine corrective feedback during classroom instruction can promote the acquisition and appropriate use of speech acts in the language learning process. Therefore, learners need to receive corrective feedback to get familiar with a wide range of pragmatic factors to avoid errors and miscommunications.

Although many studies have provided evidence for the important role of CF in improving learners' linguistic competence (e.g., Chong, 2022; Van Ha & Murray, 2021; Zhang & Cheng, 2021; Zhao & Ellis, 2022), few studies have addressed types of CF in teaching pragmatics (e.g., Fukuya & Zhang Hill, 2006; Nguyen et al., 2017; Tajeddin & Shirkhani, 2017). Regarding instructional intervention for pragmatics in foreign language classrooms, giving different types of CF on the erroneous use of speech acts is unavoidable. Comparing the two categories of explicit and implicit corrective feedback, some studies found explicit feedback as the most frequent type of corrective feedback by teachers (e.g., Basturkmen & Fu, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2017; Schenck, 2022). On the other hand, some other studies documented teachers' tendency to use implicit corrective feedback in teaching language (e.g., Kamiya, 2016; Lee, 2013; Méndez & Cruz, 2012). However, there is a paucity of research on CF concerning the online instruction of speech acts of request and refusal. As traditional face-to-face instruction has been the predominant mode in language education for many years, limited attention has been given to investigating how corrective feedback can be effectively integrated into online instruction. Moreover, as requests and refusals involve complex social interactions that require nuanced understanding and cultural sensitivity, it becomes even more crucial to examine how teachers can provide corrective feedback in an online setting. The absence of physical cues and nonverbal communication can pose challenges for both learners and teachers when it comes to providing accurate feedback on speech acts related to requests and refusals. Furthermore, due to the rising interest in online language education after the COVID-19 pandemic, the nature of corrective feedback framed by online education needs more attention. Thus, there is a need for research on types of CF in pragmatic instruction in online classes, as it is rarely evidenced in the extant literature. Against this backdrop, the main aim of this study was to examine the types of CF provided by EFL teachers in online classes. By shedding light on this aspect, we aim to

contribute insights that will not only enhance our understanding of speech act instruction but also inform instructional practices in online settings where such research is currently lacking.

### **Pragmatic Corrective Feedback**

The use of linguistic knowledge and effective communication in all sociocultural contexts is closely related to one's pragmatic knowledge (Dai, 2023). To make students aware of the central role of the speech act in EFL learning, it is important to understand the pragmatic features of the speech act (Nicholas & Perkins, 2023). For proper language production and effective communication, using speech acts is assumed as an important goal of teaching pragmatics. Furthermore, teachers are primarily responsible for providing feedback to learners on pragmatics. CF in pragmatics supports learners in overcoming communicative problems instigated by inappropriate use of speech acts in social interactions (Gass et al., 2020; Plonsky & Zhuang, 2019; Taguchi, 2023). CF is one of the topics in teaching and learning practice that is rekindling a great deal of interest from researchers around the world (Chong, 2022; Lee et al., 2021; Luquin & Mayo, 2021; Valizadeh, 2022; Zhao & Ellis, 2022). As can be seen from the literature, extensive research has been done on CF in language learning (e.g., Patra et al., 2022; Shao et al., 2023; Shen & Chong, 2022) while it is still in its infancy in the field of pragmatics,

Corrective feedback can fluctuate at the level of explicitness and can be seen as a continuum of explicit and implicit. Ranta and Lyster (2007) identified six different types of CF based on teacher-learner interactions and then grouped them into two broad CF categories: reformulations and prompts. Both moves enable learners to reformulate non-target into target output. Based on this classification and knowledge gained from large-scale CF studies since 1997, other researchers have proposed a similar taxonomy of CF strategies, considering the distinction between reformulations and prompts, classified into six categories (Lyster et al., 2013; Sheen & Ellis, 2011). Lyster et al. (2013) proposed an alternative classification system for corrective feedback that contains a continuum of strategies moving from implicit to explicit corrective feedback. Sheen and Ellis (2011), on the other hand, classified each category of corrective feedback as either explicit or implicit based on its specific nature. In their categorization, implicit input-providing CF refers to conversational recasts that take the form of confirmation checks within the context of the conversation. This taxonomy also includes explicit input-providing corrective feedback, which is further categorized into didactic recasts, explicit correction with direct signal, and explicit correction with metalinguistic explanation. Additionally, Sheen and Ellis identified the use of implicit output-prompting corrective feedback, which encompasses repetition and clarification requests. This type of corrective feedback serves as a prompt for learners to self-correct their language production errors. Explicit output-prompting corrective feedback, on the other hand, includes metalinguistic clues, elicitation with prompting questions, and paralinguistic signals.

Lyster (1998) was one of the first authors who investigated types of CF as potential mediators of learner repair, suggesting that prompting (inviting students to correct themselves) is more likely and effective than reformulations (usually providing the correct form as recast) leading to fix errors. In addition, a study by Brown (2016) found that instructors with higher education and training might provide more prompts, which may result in higher self-repair by

learners (Plonsky, 2012). Rahimi and Zhang (2015) noted that experienced teachers utilized explicit CF on their students' utterances and also provided opportunities for their students to self-correct instead of relying solely on the teachers' correction. Furthermore, experienced teachers gave corrective feedback to draw attention to any ill-formed utterances and provide the students the chance to self-correct any mistakes (Ellis, 2009). In addition, teachers implemented explicit CF as they understood the significance of learning metalinguistic knowledge for students (Rahimi & Zhang, 2015). According to Coşkun (2010), explicit correction was identified more often than other kinds of corrective feedback.

Regarding CF in pragmatics, Bardovi-Harlig (2017) pointed out that the scarcity of CF in pragmatic instruction could be because of the number of utterances that can be appropriate in a given context. Bardovi-Harlig hypothesizes that giving feedback on pragmatics can be difficult since speakers select various language forms to express social implications precisely. Metapragmatic feedback, which Nguyen et al. (2017) characterize as expressions or inquiries regarding wrong or unsuitable utterances, is the most typical corrective feedback in pragmatic studies. Metapragmatic feedback is followed by recast, which was found in several studies (e.g., Koike & Pearson, 2005; Takimoto, 2006) showed high frequency in these studies. The application of recasts may vary, depending on the context. For example, Fukuya and Zhang Hill (2006) employed recasts, which included repeating the incorrect request with an increasing tone. Other studies (e.g., Nguyen et al. 2018) have defined recasts as a precise rewording of inaccurate utterances. Nevertheless, Pfanner's (2015) research uncovered that recast was the most common type of CF when compared to the others. Dilāns' (2016) results further emphasized the teachers' preference for implicit CF rather than explicit CF. Lee's (2013) research indicated further support for the inclination of teachers toward implicit CF. Lee reported teachers preferred to give implicit CF even though they stated they used explicit CF more in practice. Based on Tajeddin and Shirkhani's (2017) research, many teachers believe implicit CF should be the initial strategy, with explicit CF only being employed as a last resort. The results of Méndez and Cruz (2012) showed that the teachers participating in their study favored implicit CF strategies in comparison to explicit ones. Despite the progress made in the research on CF related to pragmatic instruction, the different forms of CF utilized in online classes still need to be examined.

As the preceding reviews show, there are still many unsolved questions regarding the varieties of CF applied by teachers in online pragmatic instruction. There has been limited research conducted regarding the frequency of each feedback type and whether one or all feedback types are given as a reaction to incorrect pragmatic production (Bardovi-Harlig & Yilmaz, 2021). Recently, Bardovi-Harlig and Yilmaz conducted a review of studies on the state of CF research in instructional pragmatics, which indicates it is still in its early stages of development. To narrow this gap, this research sought to investigate the various types of corrective feedback used in virtual instruction of the two types of speech acts, requests, and refusals. To this end, the following question was posed:

RQ. What are the types of EFL teacher corrective feedback in online pragmatic instruction of request and refusal?

## **Method**

The present study adopted a qualitative design. According to Riazi (2016) and Creswell (2012), researchers deal with texts, figures, and pictures in qualitative data analysis instead of describing the phenomenon under investigation by numbers and statistics. The results will be in the form of codes and patterns (Riazi, 2016). The research question was answered by referring to the important findings systematically and cautiously. The description of the results mainly starts with the major findings. Then, crucial participants' quotes are added where needed and are useful for a thorough understanding of the essence of ideas and their relation (De Casterlé et al., 2012). This study drew on deductive content analysis, as it was informed by a framework. Also, conversation analysis (CA) was used to analyze teacher-student interactions. According to Kimura et al. (2018), CA has become a prominent methodological approach to the study of classroom interaction, and this growing impetus is to study teaching and learning processes. CA is an empirically based study that provides in-depth and grounded analyses of culturally and contextually situated occurrences of participants' behavior (Markee, 2000).

## **Participants and Setting**

Three Iranian female teachers aged 30-40 participated in the present study. The number of teachers in this study was limited to three to make the qualitative study manageable and rich as the data of the study were gathered from moment-to-moment observation of classroom instruction to inspect pragmatic CF related to the speech acts of request and refusal. In addition, as the researchers employed conversation analysis to analyze different types of CF, three teachers were selected to make the analysis process more practical. They had been teaching advanced levels in private English institutes and university courses in TEFL for more than five years. The teachers who consented to participate in this study had passed courses in the field of pragmatics in their Ph.D. programs and, for a whole semester, they received training in pragmatics. In addition, the instructors who participated in this study had some published articles pertaining to scaffolding, which constituted a stimulus for them to participate in this study. Moreover, their doctoral dissertations were closely associated with the field of scaffolding, which served as a motive and ground for them to assume a part in this research. Therefore, purposive sampling, typical of many qualitative studies (Creswell, 2012), was employed to select experienced teachers with the ability for pragmatic instruction.

The learners attending these classes included 21 Iranian male and female intermediate-level English language learners aged between 25 to 35. The technique for the selection of these participants was convenience sampling from a private language institute. The learners were placed in new classes designed for online pragmatic instruction. The learners were studying general English at a private language institute and their main book for instruction was Top Notch 3 (CEFR B1 Level) which lasted for a semester, encompassing 16 sessions in total. Based on the placement test taken at the institute and the level of the main book they were studying; the learners were considered to be at the intermediate level. It is imperative to highlight the difference between the general English course instructors at the institution and those teaching the speech acts in this study. It is important to note that the emphasis of the institution's English classes primarily centered on the teaching of general English instead of on

the explicit instruction of pragmatic expertise. While the course book incorporated occasional attention to pragmatics, it did not represent the core emphasis or objective of the class. Consequently, the learners had not received comprehensive instruction on speech acts, meaning that they were not explicitly taught how to effectively implement speech acts to communicate and interact with others during the institution's English courses.

### **Data Sources**

The main data source for extracting different CF types in response to learners' speech act production was teacher-learner online interactions. Given that careful analysis of these online interactions was required, the teachers were informed that all their online interactions would be recorded for later scrutiny. When teaching speech acts, the teachers used different sources for their pragmatic instruction. Beebe et al.'s (1990) classification of refusal and Kulka et al.'s (1989) classification of request was focused on in these sessions. Moreover, Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of power, social distance, and size of imposition were taught to the learners. This familiarized them with the nuances of how the speech acts of request and refusal can be appropriately produced. To practice and learn the speech acts, the learners were given role-plays and were invited to complete DCTs and perform online tasks.

In the end, the corpus of teacher-learner and learner-learner interactions was used to extract the dominant types of CF in online classes. This pragmatic course was held in the Skyroom, which is an application suitable for online classrooms. Skyroom provides classes equipped with real-time voice and video conversations, whiteboard, screen sharing, presentation, recording, file transfer, and advanced chat. Throughout the observed sessions, the teachers used their webcams and shared files required for the lesson. In addition, the learners had the chance to turn on their webcams and write in the chat box. Another important feature of the application was that more than one learner could use their microphones at the same time to have conversations and role-plays. Since the objective of the present research was the extraction of pragmatic CF, only episodes related to the teacher's CF on learners' speech act production were inspected. The result of this study incorporated a corpus of interactions, comprising of 18 sessions with a duration of one hour each. Considering that every session encompassed a different teacher, the whole duration of the corpus amounted to 18 hours. Additionally, the number of hours taught by every teacher amounted to 6 hours. All the classes, taught by each teacher, were held twice a week for a duration of nine weeks. As such, 18 hours of recordings were saved which included all teacher-student and student-student interactions. Subsequently, all the discussions and recorded interactions were fully transcribed.

### **Data Analysis**

For a corpus of 18 hours of teacher-learner online interactions, qualitative content analysis was employed to extract the dominant CF types used by the teachers. The feedback types were also quantitatively calculated to report their frequencies. To conduct a directed content analysis of the corpus of online interactions in the present study, Sheen and Ellis' (2011) taxonomy of CF was used to match pragmatic CF types with existing ones in this taxonomy. This framework was chosen because it proposed different types of CF through conversation analysis (CA), which deeply analyzes the classroom interaction based on the transcription convention introduced by Jenks (2011) with an emic view of learners' learning and teachers' instruction

(Macbeth, 2014; Melander & Sahlström, 2009). To do so, the researchers applied the taxonomy to locate six different CF types, which are classified into two broad categories: input-providing and output-prompting CF. All the data from transcription were decoded and analyzed qualitatively using three steps of content analysis, namely, open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Riazi, 2016). To ensure the reliability of the content analysis, 20% of the data selected randomly were delivered to another coder to code the data. The second coder was a Ph.D. student of TEFL who was knowledgeable in pragmatic theories and instruction along with CF taxonomies. The codes were finalized with the agreement of the two coders. Cohen’s Kappa measurement was calculated, and inter-coder reliability was .84, which showed an acceptable agreement between the coders. For decoded items in which there were disagreements or differences between the first coder and the inter-coder, the disagreements were discussed and resolved through discussion to ensure the accuracy of the data and to account for any potential variations in the interpretation of the data.

**Results**

This study sought to explore the dominant pragmatic CFs in online instruction of the speech acts of request and refusal. Through the analysis of the observation data, the researchers found both explicit and implicit pragmatic CF in teacher-learner interactions, with a more noticeable use of explicit CF compared to implicit CF. In what follows, the types and frequencies of explicit and implicit CF are described.

**Explicit Pragmatic CF**

Among the most employed explicit CF, explicit prompts in the form of direct elicitation and metalinguistic clues were predominant. Table 1 presents the frequency of explicit types of prompts and reformulation by the three teachers.

**Table 1.** *Types and Frequencies of Explicit Pragmatic CF Based on Sheen and Ellis's (2011) Taxonomy*

Types of CF		Explicit	TA	TB	TC	Total
Input-providing (Reformulations)	Didactic Recasts	Reformulation of a student utterance in the absence of a communication problem	2	1	10	13
	Explicit correction	Reformulation of a student utterance plus a clear indication of an error	5	2	8	15
	Explicit correction with metalinguistic (metapragmatic here) explanation	In addition to signaling an error and providing the correct form, there is also a metalinguistic (metapragmatic here) comment	23	8	3	34
Output-prompting	Metalinguistic (metapragmatic here) clue	A brief metalinguistic (metapragmatic here) statement aimed at eliciting a self-correction from the student	14	33	46	93
	Elicitation	Directly elicits a self-correction from the student, often in the form of a wh-question	82	23	79	184
	Paralinguistic signal	An attempt to non-verbally elicit the correct format from the learner	0	0	0	0

*Note:* TA (Teacher A), TB (Teacher B), TC (Teacher C)

### Elicitation

As presented and outlined in Table 1, the results clearly show that the prompts in which the instructor explicitly elicits a self or peer correction from the learner — often in the form of a Wh-question — have the highest level of frequency ( $n = 184$ ). Excerpt 1 displays an interaction between Teacher A and her learner.

#### Excerpt 1: Elicitation

- 1 Teacher A: here(.) in this↑ example↓ (.) use(.) downto:ner ↑«to: ask you:r request.=
- 2 Student: = Daddy ↑ (.) Give me: money. I want to: pay my↑ cell phone bill. ↓  
(0.5)
- So:(0.4) How do you(.) DOWNTONE ↑ you:r request↑ «to be accepted↑?=  
3 Student: = (0.4) I↑ should use(.)some words↑ like(.) a little? ↑=  
4 Teacher A: = aha: ↑
- 5 Student: Is it (0.4) Daddy(.) would you↑ give me(.) just(.) a little(.) money? ↓ I↑  
want to: «pay my: cell phone bill.

As can be seen in excerpt 1, the learner does not use downtoners as a strategy to soften his request, so the teacher tries to prompt the learner by asking a Wh-question to elicit the correct answer. The main purpose of this interactive kind of CF (elicitation) was to increase self-repair and the teacher has the role to direct learners to fix the problems in their speech acts of request and refusal.

### Metapragmatic Clues

After elicitation, metapragmatic clues ( $n = 93$ ) were found to be the most frequent explicit CF. In this type of feedback, a brief metapragmatic statement is aimed at prompting a self or peer correction from the learners. Excerpt 2 shows an online interaction between Teacher B and the learner.

#### Excerpt 2: Metapragmatic clues

- 6 Teacher B: In this↑ refusal↑ fo:rm (.) the speaker(.) said (0.3)  
«I don't know if I↑ can help you or not. Tell me what strategy↑ the speaker [used=  
7 Student: = She] feels bad=  
8 Teacher B: = ok(.) when somebody says «Uhm (0.3) I am not↑ sure↓ it means↑ that  
the person is thinking↑ and she is not↑ sure now: ↑ tell [me again. =  
9 Student: = Hesitation]

In this excerpt, the teacher provides the learner with some metapragmatic information about the speech act of refusal and what is denoted by the phrase “Uhm... I don't know if I can help you or not...”. This demonstrates the teacher's attempts at providing the learners with the necessary knowledge and support to assist them in utilizing the request speech act.



### **Explicit Correction with a Metapragmatic Explanation**

The third most frequently used type of CF was explicit correction with metapragmatic explanation (n = 34). In this type of correction, the instructor signals an error and provides the correct form with a metapragmatic comment.

Excerpt 3: Explicit correction with a metapragmatic explanation

10 Teacher C: In this↑ roleplay (.) imagine (.) you↑ are↓ an em↑ployer« (.) and (.) you want to: ask↑ you:r ↓ boss↑(.) to: give you(.) more↑ expla↑nation »about the company's(.)↑ new project↓. How↑ would you(.) ask that. =

11 Student: = Can you↑ give me(.) more↑ explanation «about the new: project↓=

12 Teacher C: = No(.) Look (0.5) CAN YOU↑ is used when «the (.) power↑ sta↑tus is equal ↑o:r↑ sometimes(.) «high↑to low(.) and(0.4) here(.) the power↑ of the hea:rer↑(.) and spea:ker↑(.) is « low to high↑ so: »it is better↑ to say(.) would you mind↑ (.) if(.) I↑ « asked you(.) to: give(.) me(.) more↑ de↑tails(.) about(.)» the new project↓

In excerpt 3, Teacher C explains how knowing about the power relationship between the interlocutors can affect the level of intimacy and formality of the request made. To correct the sociopragmatic error of the learner, the teacher provides some metapragmatic explanations to foreground the error and demonstrate what the problem with the request was.

### **Reformulation with a Clear Indication of an Error**

The fourth frequent type of pragmatic CF in teacher-learner interactions was the reformulation of a student's utterance plus a clear indication of an error (n = 15). Excerpt 4 shows the interaction between Teacher B and the learner.

Excerpt 4: Reformulation with a clear indication of an error

13 Teacher B: In what↑ way:s(.) you can(.) ask your↑«classmate ↓ to: help you(.) with you↑r homework(.)↓ «First↑ check her avai↑lability(.) and then(.) »ask about your(.) request.[]

14 Student: Can]] I↑ ask you(.) to help me(.) right now↓

15 Teacher B: Are you↑ busy↑ right now? ↑ Can I↑ ask you(.) something? ↑

«Your re↑quest (0.3) which is «Can I↑ ask you: (.) to: help me(.) right now (.) ↓ » doesn't check the(.) a↑vailability of your↑ hea↑rer.

In this type of corrective feedback, instructors frequently relied on explicit manifestations of the errors and provided an appropriate reformulation of the learner's utterance to rectify the erroneous speech act creation. This illustrates the teacher's commitment to helping the learner understand their mistakes and making corrections by offering the correct sentence framework. It also confirms the teacher's intention to provide helpful, clear, and concise feedback to the student to ensure that they can understand, remember, and successfully implement the appropriate speech act.

### Reformulation of a Learner's Utterance in the Absence of a Communication Problem

Finally, the fifth and least frequent type of explicit pragmatic CF was the reformulation of a learner's utterance in the absence of a communication problem ( $n = 13$ ).

Excerpt 5: Reformulation of a learner's utterance in the absence of a communication problem

16 Teacher A: Do↑ the (.) following DCT.

DCT on slide:

Boss: please stay more and finish your project today.

Employee: .....

Boss: Ok, finish it tomorrow.”

17 Student: I↑ will finish it(.) to↑morrow=

18 Teacher A: =I (.) promise↑ (.) I will↑ (.) finish it to↑morrow.

In this type of CF, the reformulation is provided, while the error present in the learner's utterance is omitted. Unlike the previous type of CF, the communication problem is not indicated in this type (see excerpt 5).

It should be noted that, in explicit CF, no paralinguistic clue was used by teachers to correct learners' errors or to elicit the correct utterance. The frequency of explicit CF through non-verbal elicitation of the correct form from the learner in Lyster et al.'s (2013) taxonomy was zero.

### Implicit Pragmatic CF

Table 2 presents both the types and frequencies of implicit pragmatic CF, including implicit prompts and implicit reformulations, by the teachers in this study in their instruction of the speech acts of request and refusal.

**Table 2.** *Types and Frequencies of Implicit Pragmatic Corrective Feedback Based on Sheen and Ellis's (2011) Taxonomy*

Type of CF	Implicit		TA	TB	TC	Total
Input-providing	Conversational Recast	A reformulation of student utterances in an attempt to resolve a communication breakdown often takes the form of confirmation checks.	7	4	4	14
Output-prompting	Repetition	A verbatim repetition of a student utterance, often with adjusted intonation to highlight the error	8	3	5	16
	Clarification request	Following a student's utterance, phrases such as "pardon?" and "I don't understand" indirectly signals an error.	7	1	2	10

## **Repetition**

As Table 2 shows, implicit prompts, and reformulations had lower frequencies than explicit ones. Among the types of implicit pragmatic CF, prompts in the form of repetition of a learner's utterance (see excerpt 6), often with adjusted intonation to highlight the error, had the highest frequency (n = 16).

### Excerpt 6: Repetition

19 Teacher A: In the mo↑vie(.) that we: watched↑ (0.3) does the spea:↑ker « fo↑rce(.) or give su↑ggestions to the hea↑rer for her(.) request↓

20 Student: Force=

21 Teacher A: = Fo::rce↑↑(hhh)=

22 Student: = giving suggestion ↑?=

23 Teacher A: = aha:: ↑↑

In excerpt 6, Teacher A repeats the learner's error by adjusting intonation to help the error be clearer and more noticeable for learners to understand the errors. In addition, this type of CF does not interrupt the flow of the lesson or communication and promotes collaboration and engagement of the learners. The action of emphasizing the intonation can be accomplished quickly and without stopping the class or the flow of discussion. Furthermore, this kind of corrective feedback highlights the error to the learners, allowing them to recognize the mistake and preventing any misunderstanding.

## **Conversational Recasts**

The second frequent implicit feedback (n = 14) was implicit reformulation in the form of conversational recast, which has two different subcategories, namely confirmation checks (n = 13) and a reformulation of student utterances to resolve a communication breakdown (n = 1).

### Excerpt 7: Conversational Recasts

24 Teacher B: Indirectly(.) in this↑ roleplay (.)re↑fuses you:r friend's request(.)↑ to: stay on campus (.) » and help her(.) with her homework↓

25 Student: I don't↑ have time(.) to help you(.) sorry.

26 Teacher B: Did you JUST↑ say (.) I don't have time(.) to help you↑=

27 Student: = No (0.3) just a moment (0.6) My fa↑ther is(.) wai↑ting for me. He has called me(.) twice↑ (.) »and asked me(.) to hurry.=

28 Teacher B: = Aha::↑↑ Now↑ (.) you are right.

In excerpt 7, Teacher B uses a confirmation check as a double check to direct the learner's attention to their utterances to see if they are accurate and appropriate. Teacher B repeats the learner's production in the form of a confirmation check to ensure that the learner is aware of

the error. In this type of CF, teachers indirectly push the learners to become more aware of their productions and give them the chance to self-correct their errors.

### Clarification Request

The next type of implicit prompt was a clarification request, which is marked by the teachers' use of utterances such as "pardon?" or "I don't understand" (n = 10). Using clarification requests, like the previous CF, teachers provide the chance for learners to self-correct their errors. This is illustrated in excerpt 9.

Excerpt 8: Clarification request

34 Teacher C: Like this↑ video(.)↓ imagine(.) your↑ cousin (0.3) the same age as you(.) asks you(.) to lend him(.) your↑ laptop. How do you refuse↑ his request(.) by using a (.) pro↑mising strategy.↓

35 Student A: Could I↑ use your↑(.) laptop? ↑

36 Student B: I am sorry(.) I wish(.) you could.

37 Teacher C: (0.4) mmm(.) I don't↑ understand (.) « if you: are promising↑ or not↓

38 Student B: so(.)mmm(0.4)I will(.) lend you next↑ time that(.) you need it↓

39 Teacher C: [shaking her head in approval]

As can be seen in excerpt 8, a clarification request can serve as a way for CF to provide an opportunity for learners to elaborate, clarify, or further explain their point or position. This can help address any possible misunderstanding or miscommunication during the initial exchange and ensure that the teacher and learners are on the same page and understand the material being presented.

As a whole, Table 2 shows that implicit prompts have a higher frequency in comparison with implicit reformulation, which manifests teachers' preference to withhold the correct answer for self- or peer repair.

### Discussion

Being theoretically premised on Sheen and Ellis's (2011) taxonomy of corrective feedback, this qualitative research—analyzed an online corpus of pragmatic interactions, and showed that there are various types of CF utilized by language teachers in response to learners' sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic errors. The quantitative report of the CF types in the form of frequencies revealed that explicit correction was more ubiquitously employed by teachers in their online pragmatic CF, and implicit pragmatic CF was used less frequently. Among explicit CF, explicit prompts classified into elicitation of self-correction and providing metapragmatic clues were used far more frequently than the other types of CF. Elicitation is considered explicit CF by most CF researchers (e.g., Gorman & Ellis, 2019; Lyster et al., 2013; Sheen & Ellis, 2011). In this study, instructors used Wh-questions to draw the learners' attention straightaway to any pragmalinguistic/sociopragmatic error that occurred, which is in line with the notion put forth by Schmidt (1990) which suggests that alerting the learner by

calling their attention and intensifying awareness is useful for self-repair. According to some researchers (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, 2022; Edmondson et al., 2023; Sánchez-Hernández & Martínez-Flor, 2022), pragmatic awareness is the key factor leading to pragmatic production. Thus, the appropriate choice and use of CF lead to greater opportunities for learners' uptake and repair and develop learners' pragmatic competence regarding their awareness and production. Therefore, the teachers in this study prompted a cue or a question to push learners to do self- or peer repair.

The findings of the study showed that the teachers provided metapragmatic clues to help students self-correct because they provided them with guidance and direction on how to improve their use of speech acts. This might encourage self-awareness and allow them to develop their communication skills and speech act production. As metapragmatic clues can also promote reflective learning by helping students recognize and analyze their own language use and adapt accordingly, the teachers used the clues to ultimately improve their speech act production. The findings of this study concur with the study by Nguyen et al. (2017), who found metapragmatic cues as the most common feedback in their research. Moreover, another study that found metapragmatic feedback as the most frequent one was by Fukuya and Zhang Hill (2006). In line with the present study, other studies have emphasized the provision of explicit CF by teachers to enhance metalinguistic/metapragmatic knowledge for learners (Rahimi & Zhang, 2015). In addition, a study by Coşkun (2010) supported that explicit correction was a more frequent correction than the other types of corrective feedback in language learning. When comparing our results to those of older studies, it should be noted that teachers with higher education may provide prompts more frequently and place a greater demand for self-correction (Brown, 2016). This result ties well with the findings of the present study as the three experienced teachers applied prompts more frequently. Additionally, Lyster (1998) found that prompts (that direct learners to self-repair) were more likely and frequent than reformulations (that supply the correct forms) as they lead to the repair of the errors.

The findings of the present study revealed that all types of recasts (explicit and implicit) were not frequently used by the teachers. The teachers may not prioritize recasts in providing corrective feedback to learners because they may feel it is not the most effective way to correct learners' errors in online instruction. Recasts are not as straightforward to interpret and could lead to further confusion or misunderstanding. Instead, teachers may opt for more direct and noticeable strategies, such as providing metapragmatic explanation or elicitation, which can be more effective in directing learners' attention to specific errors in their speech act production and providing clear corrective feedback. In addition, the findings of the current study stand in contrast with several other studies. For instance, Fukuya and Zhang Hill (2006) looked into recast as one of the common forms of corrective feedback. The distinction between the results of the prior study and those obtained in the present study could be because of the online instruction approach adopted in the present research and the absence of face-to-face interaction between learners and instructors.

To be clear enough and avoid any misunderstanding in online classes, teachers used explicit CF with metapragmatic explanation to ensure that learners thoroughly understood the feedback. In this regard, there was no attempt to non-verbally elicit the correct form by the

teachers, which can be another evidence that teachers preferred to use the type of correction that generated minimum misunderstanding. It seems that learners can conceive verbal correction in online classes better than nonverbal feedback. Furthermore, according to Bardovi-Harlig (2017), providing feedback on pragmatics can be challenging because speakers choose different linguistic forms to make social meanings clear in the area of pragmatics. Therefore, teachers preferred to use explicit CF to make the other choices in the area of pragmatics less challenging.

Due to the limitations of the online mode of instruction and the lack of face-to-face interaction between the instructors and learners giving timely and effective feedback to learners may cause concerns for teachers in online instruction (Taylor, 2003). Moreover, delays in giving feedback would cause misunderstanding and frustration in this mode of instruction. Therefore, one major justification for the paucity of implicit CF and the predominance of explicit pragmatic CF can be attributed to the online nature of this study and the need for the teachers to explain more explicitly to make their corrections more easily understandable for the learners. This is one of the distinctive features and findings of the present study, which deserves more attention and further qualitative inquiries.

The results of this study support the observation that when the primary focus of the lesson is accuracy, teachers tend to prefer giving more explicit corrective feedback. However, when the objective of the lesson is fluency, implicit corrective feedback may be a more suitable option. These findings further confirm the previous research by Basturkmen and Fu (2021) that teachers use explicit corrective feedback more often to improve learners' accuracy, while implicit corrective feedback can be a more appropriate option for promoting fluency. Additionally, in this study, the teachers favored self-correction, as well as peer correction, by using explicit prompts, which are believed to be more efficient when provided at an appropriate time, such as when a learner is thoroughly conscious of the error but must work to internalize the correction (Schenck, 2022). In addition, by using *Wh*-questions, learners can be invited to monitor their progress in the attainment of the skills (Andrade & Du, 2005). and they can reflect on and evaluate the quality of their utterances and revise them accordingly (Andrade & Du, 2005). Concerning the experience of teachers and their education level, frequent provision of prompts and peer or self-correction elicitation were observed in previous studies (Brown, 2016; Ahangari and Amirzadeh, 2011). Accordingly, in this study, the high proportion of applying prompts by experienced teachers can be justified as a strategy for the teacher to withhold the correct answers until peer or self-repair happens. In addition, in the present study, the frequent use of explicit prompts, metapragmatic clues, and elicitation can be justified as an activation of learners' pragmatic awareness to rethink, retrieve, and reformulate their utterances. The learners who are prompted by metapragmatic clues and *Wh*-questions to retrieve more target-like forms are more likely to be aware of pragmatics so, they can improve their pragmatic production in the subsequent situations than learners merely receiving reformulation.

In this study, as the mode of instruction was online, the teachers showed less tendency to use implicit forms of prompts and reformulations in order to avoid any misunderstanding by the learners. According to Sheen and Ellis (2011), prompts are output-pushing and

reformulations are input-providing. According to Lyster (2002), some implicit CF such as recasts and implicit reformulation have two important limitations. First, it might cause ambiguity as the learners may not consider recasting a type of CF, but an alternative form of utterance. Second, they do not elicit the self/peer-repair, which accelerates long-term memory. That is why, in this study, in order to make the learners comprehend the contrast between L1 and L2 pragmatics, the instructors gave a metapragmatic insight or clarification to avoid any communication breakdown.

In this study, the instructors preferred employing metapragmatic CF to minimize errors due to L1 transfer since a critical aspect of the efficacy of the corrective feedback is the degree of similarity of a specific element to the learners' native tongue (Yang et al., 2017). According to McManus and Marsden (2019), L1 similarities may aid in the acquisition of L2 features, while L1 differences may hinder acquisition and require more explicit correction. Some studies have found that the most prominent cause of second language learners' pragmalinguistic errors is L1 transfer (e.g., Widanta et al., 2019; Yusuf, 2018). Moreover, Widanta et al. (2019) illustrated that learners with lower L2 competence are more easily influenced by L1 transfer because they rely on their L1 due to their less competence in L2 pragmatic knowledge. Therefore, in this study, the teachers favored the use of metapragmatic clues in order to decrease the errors because of L1 transfer.

To sum up, the findings indicate that teachers had a disinclination to apply implicit CF. Besides, the nature of the online class encouraged the teachers to be more explicit in their corrections to prevent any misunderstanding. In view of the probable short span of attention in the online mode of classes, implicit correction was chosen to be avoided or used less. As a study by Heift (2004) shows, feedback that explains the error and highlights it in the learner input (explicit feedback) can be more effective in online instruction.

## **Conclusion**

This study concluded that explicit correction was enacted more frequently than implicit correction. This can be due to the essence of pragmatic instruction and the mode of online teaching in this research. As this study was done in an online environment, the findings reveal that teachers apply explicit CF in the process of online instruction for more effective pragmatic correction and avoidance of any misunderstanding. In addition, because of the face-threatening nature of speech acts of refusal and request, the main concern of the teachers was accuracy to prevent any communication breakdown. Moreover, the teachers explicitly provided prompts such as Wh-question to withhold the correct forms to offer learners an opportunity to self or peer repair by generating their own modified response. Finally, the study showed that by providing metapragmatic clues, teachers tended to prevent the effect of L1-L2 pragmatic differences on L2 pragmatic production.

This study shed light on the employment of various types of CF, especially in online modes of teaching. First, the findings would offer an opportunity for teacher educators to devise and run some teacher education courses and workshops to heighten pre-service and in-service teachers' knowledge of CF to enable them to employ both implicit and explicit types of CF instead of repeatedly using explicit CF in online pragmatic instruction. The findings showed

the inclination of teachers to use far more explicit CF due to the nature of online instruction and the immediate repair of errors in learners' utterances. Accordingly, this study is of great value for teachers to employ both implicit and explicit types of CF to develop learners' competency in pragmatics in online instruction. In view of this, it is recommended that teachers' awareness of using implicit, as well as explicit, CF in online pragmatic instruction be embedded in teacher education courses.

This study had its limitations, which could be bridged in other studies. It was done during the COVID-19 pandemic, so online pragmatic instruction was the only mode of instruction under investigation. This study could be carried out also quantitatively by involving a larger number of EFL teachers and learner participants for the sake of generalization. Moreover, it is suggested that future research be conducted on teachers with different age ranges, teaching experiences, and gender. A better view of teachers' types of CF is gained if after observation, stimulated recall interviews could be employed to enrich data about teachers' pedagogical reasonings for applied types of CF. The current study's data were derived from experienced female EFL teachers who were proficient in teaching pragmatics; therefore, a similar study could be done to compare different types of CF used by expert and novice teachers in online instruction. Finally, rather than being restricted to online instruction due to the COVID-19 pandemic, future studies can investigate the differences between types of CF in online and face-to-face pragmatic instruction.

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## Appendix

Transcription Conventions (Jenks, 2011)

[ [ ] Simultaneous utterances – (beginning [ ] and (end))

[ ] Overlapping utterances – (beginning [ ] and (end))

= Contiguous utterances (or continuation of the same turn)

(0.4) Represent the tenths of a second between utterances

(.) Represents a micro-pause (1 tenth of a second or less)

: Elongation (more colons demonstrate longer stretches of sound)

. Fall in pitch at the end of an utterance

, Slight rise in pitch at the end of an utterance

- An abrupt stop in articulation

? Rising in pitch at utterance end (not necessarily a question)

CAPTIAL Loud/forte speech

\_\_ Underline letters/words indicate accentuation

↑ ↓ Marked upstep/downstep in intonation

° ° Surrounds talk that is quieter

Hhh Exhalations

.hhh Inhalations

he or ha Laugh particle

(hhh) Laughter within a word (can also represent audible aspirations)

> > Surrounds talk that is spoken faster

< < Surrounds talk that is spoken slower

(( )) Analyst notes

( ) Approximations of what is heard

\$ \$ Surrounds 'smile' voice

\*per syllable Unintelligible syllabl