Effects of Task Repetition and EFL Proficiency on English Speech Act Production

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Abstract
Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) studies substantiate the teachability of some aspects of second language (L2) pragmatics. However, there are controversies over the most effective instructional methods. Therefore, following a comparison group design, the present study aims to investigate the relative efficacy of two conditions of output-production task repetition on high- and low-level English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' production of speech acts. The main effects of the instructional conditions, EFL proficiency level, and the potential interaction between them are examined. Two classes of English-major students take speech act lessons involving output-generation task repetition as follows: (1) the implicit task-repetition (ITR) group is provided with visually enhanced input plus a consciousness raising task before repeating the output-generation tasks, and (2) the explicit task-repetition (ETR) group is provided with input plus metapragmatic information before repeating the output-generation tasks. The learners' speech act production is assessed through a written discourse completion test (WDCT) across a pretest and a posttest. The results demonstrate significant gains for both groups from the pretest to the posttest. Moreover, the ETR group significantly outperforms the ITR group in the posttest. Furthermore, EFL proficiency level is found to have a significant effect on learners' speech act production, with high-level learners outperforming low-level learners. The results reveal no significant interaction between the effects of instructional condition and EFL proficiency level. Regarding pedagogical implications, the findings attest the efficacy of output-generation task repetition in L2 speech acts instruction, particularly when task repetition is coupled with explicit instruction.
Keywords: EFL proficiency, enhanced input, metapragmatic information, speech acts, task repetition
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