A master's thesis for the course of MA General Linguistics

with the title

An investigation into EFL advanced learners' production of apology speech act through the use of explicit/implicit mode of training at Tien Giang University

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ABSTRACT

The major goal of the current study is to examine whether there were any significant variations at advanced L2 learners' production of apology strategies when they were instructed with explicit and implicit training methods. Besides, the study aims at exploring which teaching method would generate more benefits for the learners at Tien Giang University. A total of 30 potential participants were randomly assigned into an either implicit training group or an explicit teaching group. Pragmatic features concerning apology strategies were taught through specific lesson plans designed for explicit or implicit purposes. The explicit group underwent four different stages in each lesson including presentation, explanation, practice, and feedback. The implicit traning group was also instructed with the same phases and received exposure to similar authentic input, but they experienced enhancement of input through extra activities outside the classroom. Tests relevant to written discourse completion tasks were dilivered to the partcipants before and after the training period with a pre-test, post-test, and delayed-test. The results indicated that both training groups showed significant differences and improvements at their production of the speech act after the treatment. However, the explicit training method generated more benefits to learners than the implicit training approach.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EG	Explicit group
IG	Implicit group
TGU	Tien Giang University
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
L1	First language
L2	Second language
ILP	Interlanguage pragmatics
SLA	Second language acquisition
APOL	Expression of apology
REPR	Offer of repair
FORB	Promise of forbearance
RESP	Acknowledge of responsibility
INT	Intention
SELF	Self-deficient
EXPL	An explanation or account
CON	Concern
DRESP	Denying responsibility

Chapter. INTRODUCTION

1. Statement of the problems

Since 1986, there has been a dramastic increase in the importance of English language use in Vietnam, as there has been an influx of foreign investors arriving in the country with the hope of setting up their business due to Vietnam's investment attraction policy (Trinh, 2005). Therefore, in academic settings, more attention has been paid to the teaching and learning of the English language across the country. Specifically, seminars and workshops related to teaching approaches, contents of curriculum, professional development and so forth have been held at national universities as well as provincial departments of education and training to facilitate language teaching practices (Le, 2008). Additionally, communicative skills have been largely applied into foreign language classes (Ton, 2007). Students are taught four macro-skills listening, speaking, reading and writing with equal emphasis. Language training has shifted from traditional translation method to communicative approaches that emphasize understanding and appropriate use of language in communicative contexts since the listener's failure to interpret the speaker's intentions may cause detrimental misunderstanding and thus lead to conversation stalemate (Thomas, 1983).

Cross-cultural studies on pragmatics in recent years have shown that, in inter-cultural communication, learners not only need to know the form to obtain linguistic accuracy but also need to interiorize sociolinguistic rules to use the linguistic forms more appropriately. Research into the pragmatics of second language learners has also found that even advanced foreign language learners frequently encounter major obstacles in interpreting real intentions coming from speakers, as well as producing successfully pragmatic appropriateness in various communicative situations (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1989). Furthermore, according to Nesselhauf (2003), L2 learners tend to experience major difficulties in using idiomatic phrases as well as formulaic expressions. We can see that there are a large number of

formulaic expressions embedded in speech acts such as apologies or compliments and compliment responses, which may cause L2 learners to sound unnaturally to native speakers (Ellis, 2003). Consequently, these potential problems indicate that L2 learners need instruction in such aspects of the language.

Additionally, L2 learners' pragmatic competence may be affected by negative pragmatic transfer, as they tend to rely on their native language to translate speech acts such as apologies, compliments, or refusals into a second language (Nguyen 2012; Nguyen 2010; Takahashi 1996). For instance, Vietnamese and native speakers perform similar apologetic strategies. Vietnamese learners, however, seem to avoid "the acknowledgment of responsibility in higher-lower status" (Nguyen, 2012). As a result, one of the challenges in language instruction is teaching the appropriate use of pragmatics to L2 learners.

Recent studies have focused on explicit and implicit training with regard to grammatical development and vocabulary acquisition (Reber & Allen 1978; Morgan-Short et al 2012; Nazari 2013; Andrew 2007) but little attention has been paid to EFL learners' acquisition of pragmatic competence. Moreover, although research on speech acts has been conducted, they are mainly examined in English-speaking countries or in the Chinese language. The focus of studies into speech acts in language teaching practices in relation to Vietnamese context has not adequately been investigated. In addition, a number of prior studies have shown the role of pragmatic training in increasing learners' pragmatic skills (Shark 2019; Liao 2015; Salehi 2013; Yoshimi 2001; Takahashi 2001). However, the opportunities for EFL learners to be more aware of pragmatic rightness and improve pragmatic fluency in language classroom settings are limited. Especially, in Vietnamese language teaching settings, learners have few opportunities to enhance their pragmatic knowledge. A study into the stated matters is necessary because the results can shed light on

the role of pragmatic teaching in intensifying learners' pragmatic appropriateness from such a specific teaching context.

With consideration to all aforementioned factors, the current study aims at contributing to the current body of literature on pragmatic classroom training by examining whether learners' pragmatic knowledge may or may not be enhanced by two types of instructional approaches. More specifically, it focuses on the pragmatic teaching relevant to a specific speech act of apology. The reason why apologizing is chosen to be investigated in this study is that the speech act plays an important role of showing politeness in communication since it softens the threats to face and aims to maintain social harmony (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and therefore it is necessary for successful cross-cultural communication.

2. Research questions

One of the major objectives of this research is to investigate whether there are remarkable differences at the advanced EFL students' pragmatic production at Tien Giang University through the use of explicit and implicit training methods. It also examines EFL students' appropriate production of apology in English through analyzing their responses in relation to particular contexts to determine which instructional method is more effective for students to master the speech act. In order to recognize EFL learners' pragmatic appropriate use and compare the two instructional teaching approaches, two research questions are developed:

1. Is there any significant variation at advanced L2 learners' production of apology speech act when they are instructed with the explicit and implicit training method?

2. If there is a variation, which teaching method is more effective for students to use pragmatic aspects of apologizing in English appropriately?

In line with the two research questions, the null hypothesis is that there are no significant differences between explicit and implicit training when students are taught the speech act of apology in English. Conversely, it is hypotheised that the explicit teaching group as well as the implicit teaching group will show significant improvement in producing appropriate use of apology in the post-test WDCT over the pre-test one. Furthermore, it is also assumed that if pragmatic instructon is explicitly taught to learners in the EG, they will have more advantage of understanding the use of apology in English and perform better the IG. Finally, the implicit teaching group will have a disadvantage in their comprehension of the usage of the apology speech act in the post-test over the explicit teaching group

3. Research organization

The struscture of the present research is organized as follows. Chapter 2 starts with theoretical backgrounds of the study including definitions of pragmatics, pragmatic competence, interlanguage pragmatics and pragmatic transfer. Next, teaching of pragmatics is discussed. Subsequently, distinctions between explicit/implicit learning and training are clearly made. Finally, a fully-formed overview of related studies is stated. Chapter 3 presents research methodology, which includes participants, WDCTs, teaching instruments, instruction procedure and data collection. Chapter 4 states the results of the study based on the data of WDCTs analyzed by the Statistical Package for the Social Science. The statistical information of the collected data is illustrated in terms of tables and charts. Chapter 5 includes discussion of the results based on the facts from the figures presented in chapter 4. Additionally, it addresses two research questions and provides a comparison regarding previous studies cited in literature reviews. The focus of chapter 5 is the conclusion which provides a concise summary of the entire project. At the end of the chapter, limitations of the study, pedagogical implications and recommendations for further research are introduced.

Chapter 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Defining key terms

2.1.1. Pragmatics

Pragmatics according to Levinson (1983) is the study of language use in association with the specific context of its use, which is fundamental to understand a language. He proposes that the field of pragmatics not only studies linguistic features but focuses on the performance of the expressions governed by different social contexts as well. Therefore, in order to determine or interpret a speaker's real meanings, an involved hearer must refer to the relevant contexts in which the conversations are taking place. Likewise, Shively (2010) states that "socio-cultural context" in analyzing the close relationship between language use and language interpretation claiming that pragmatics is "the knowledge and skills needed to use and interpret the meanings, assumptions, and actions expressed by language in its socio-cultural context" (p. 106). In the same line with Shively, Crystal (1997) also asserts that particular contexts and social conventions govern and affect interlocutors' language choice and usage.

2.1.2. Pragmatic competence

Before focusing on the importance of pragmatic competence, it is necessary to make clear what it means by competence in the first place. Competence is defined by Cyrstal (1997:74) as "a term used in linguistic theory, and especially in generative grammar, to refer to speakers' knowledge of their language, the system of rules which they have mastered so that they are able to produce and understand an indefinite number of sentences, and to recognize grammatical mistakes and ambiguities". Thefore, competence is relevant to a language user's ability in forming and understanding sentences in his/her language. It also refers to a speaker's knowledge of sentecnes that he/she has never heard or are not included in his/her familiar language. Hymes (1972), Canal and Swain (1980) agree that pragmatic

competence is an important feature of communicative competence emphasizing the knowledge of a language and the ability to use that language effectively in social communication. Barron (2003:10) provides an another viewpoint of pragmatic competence as "the knowledge of the linguistic resources available in a given language for realizing particular illocutions, knowledge of the sequential aspects of speech acts, and finally, knowledge of the appropriate contextual use of the particular language's linguistic resources". Thomas (1983: 92) considers pragmatic competence as "the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand a language in context". Likewise, Taguchi (2009: 3) depicts pragmatic competence as "the ability to use language appropriately in a social context". Hence, pragmatic competence on the one hand, is a speaker's linguistic resources of a given language to produce and perform particular utterances. On the other hand, it is relevant to knowledge of contextual elements influencing language usage.

Studies on the acquisition of pragmatic competence in first language have indicated that children discern "pragmatic competence" at a very young age (Clark, 2003). Parents who help their children acquire pragmatic competence by reminding them to use expressions such as 'thank you' or 'please' in daily conversation. Morevoer, schools contribute to children's acquisition of pragmatic competence by teaching them to be polite when they perform various speech acts (Cenoz, 2007). However, the acquisition of pragmatic competence in a foreign language setting regularly deals with very limited contact or interaction with native speakers, which makes foreign language learners' pragmatic competence different from that of native speakers. Cenoz (2007) suggests three differences listed as follows:

1. Foreign language learners are familiar with their first language and culture. Therefore, it tends to be unnatural for them to adapt "sociocultural rules" in another language.

2. Circumstances for developing pragmatic competence are often demonstrated indirectly through teaching materials such as conversations in English textbooks, which makes it difficult for language learners to realize "linguistic actions" in context appropriately.

3. Communication with native speakers in natural circumstances is very restricted and in some situations foreign language learners do not have any opportunity for interaction at all.

These features can be observed in different foreign language contexts where learners who are studying foreign language more or less demonstrate significant differences from native speakers in terms of language use in producing and performing certain speech acts including apologizing, requesting, or declining an offer, and so on. Therefore, linguists and educators who have worked with foreign language learners have agreed that there is a need to develop their pragmatic competence through instruction, as without pragmatic training or development, learners' pragmatic competence may not be achieved regardless of their level of language proficiency. Morevoer, a learner who has high grammatical proficiency may not show equivalence with pragmatic knowledge (Bardovi-Harlig 1997; Kasper & Rose 1999).

2.1.3. Interlanguage pragmatics

A large body of previous work in second language acquisition took much notice to how foreign learners acquired "grammatical knowledge" but paid less attention to "interlanguage pragmatics". Research that focuses on pragmatic aspects of interlanguage has recently obtained its prominent place in the field.

Kasper (1997) states that interlanguage pragmatics examines how L2 pragmatic knowledge is used and acquired by non-native speakers. Put differently, it refers to non-native speakers' understanding and performance of "communicative actions" or speech acts and the ways those speech acts are acquired. Bardovi-Harlig (2010) also asserts that

"pragmatic acquisition" in interlanguage pragmatics encircles both language structure and language use. For example, an L2 learner knows how to perform various speech acts properly when he/she observes forms, understands and subsequently uses them, such as apologizing a professor for cheating in a written exam, refusing a relative's invitation to a weeding party, or complaining about bad services in a restaurant.

Recent studies within the domain of second langage acquisition have highlighted interest in speech acts, which is a key target of interlanguage pragmatic studies. Particularly, more notice has been put to pragmatic competence, pragmatic understanding, cross-culture pragmatic production or the impact of different instructional approaches on learners' performance regarding one or several strategies of speech acts at different levels of proficiency (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1985; Yoshimi 2001). Remarkable findings from those studies have revealed the effect of culture and foreign lanuage use. For instance, due to differences between western and eastern viewpoints of politeness strategies and cultual norms, such speech acts as complaints, requests, greetings, or apologies may pose challenges and difficultiies for Vietnamese and Chinese learners of English. Allan (1986) argues that in cross-cultural communication, when speakers communicate with each other, their utterances have "illocutionary speech acts". However, it may have different interpretatons when speakers make an attempt to translate an utterance embedded in a specific "illocutionary act" into another language. For example, native speakers of Vietnamese requently greet "Where are you going?" or "What are you doing?" instead of saying "How are you?" when they meet. This kind of greeting may be strange in English contexts because such utterances may be understood as an inquiry for information rather than a greeting, which may confuse native speakers.

Gass and Neu (1996) point out that various cultures possess different rules and forms in performing speech acts. It is, therefore, important to know sets of formulas relevant to

speech acts in cross-cultural communication. Kondo (2008) also argues that when cutural

differences are understood, the process of pragmatic learning can be facilitated because

culture is considered as a basic foundation for linguistic behaviors displayed through social

situations. Hence, in order to understand cultural differences between the mother tongue and

the target language, foreign language learners need not only to be equipped with knowledge

of speech act as part of language acquisition but also to be provided sets of formulas of

speech acts to gain successful communication (Bardovi-Harlig 1999; Canale & Swain 1980).

2.1.4. Pragmatic transfer

Studies in ILP have indicated two important concerns regarding second and foreign

language acquisition. Firstly, in addition to linguistic transfer of L1 rules, foreign language

learners tend to transfer "sociolinguistic norms" of their mother tongues to L2. Olshtain and

Cohen (1989) suggest that pragmatic transfer in this case occurs when L2 learners employ

elements of native language such as "socio-linguistic conventions" in the process of L2

performance. This phenomenon as an explanatory notion in research according to Thomas

(1983) depends on two major perspectives. The former is that an L2 learner's understanding

and production of particular speech acts is greatly influenced by his/her native pragmatic

knowledge. The latter is relevant to "socio-pragmatic norms" which comes from

interlocutors' lack of social and cultural knowledge, such as to whom the utterances aim at or

what should be said in various social situations. Secondly, even highly advanced language

learners often commit pragmatic errors because they are unsuccessul in interpreting the

intended meaning due to lack of knowledge of pragmatic rules governed in the target

language to express the necessary act. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1989) state that even

advanced language learners are faced with problems when making requests and performing

apologies appropriately, whereas Eisenstein and Bodman (1986) show cases that learners of

English fail to express gratitude in L2. These findings indicate that knowledge of pragmatics does not necessarily develop along the side of grammatical competence.

Kasper (1992) makes a clear distinction between positive pragmatic transferability and negative pragmatic transferability. The first concept enhances the process of pragmatic acquisition since linguistic and cultural conventions are shared between the first and the target language. The second notion, on the other hand, causes "communication failure" when certain norms or strategies in the first language are largely different from those of the second language. Consequently, a native speaker's intention may be wrongfully interpreted by an L2 learner, as there are mismatches of speech act strategies transferred from L1 to L2.

2.2. Teaching of pragmatics

Studies on pragmatic teaching have converging conclusions that pragmatic training is necessary (Rose 2005; Kondo 2008; Olshtain & Cohen 1989). In their study in 1989, Olshtain & Cohen investigated the impact of pragmatic training of the speech act of apology on a group of 18 Hebrew learners of English. After the pre-instruction questionnaire survey, those L2 learners attended three classroom training interventions of which each lasted 20 minutes. For the first lesson, they were instructed with the most common apologetic expressions including "excuse me" and "I'm sorry". The subsequent lesson aimed at raising their awareness of different social factors as well as the usage of intensifier devices. The final session was designed to provide contextual information which required them to choose strategies appropriately. The results indicated that the speech act teaching was significant since the L2 learners in the study reached an approximate rate of "native-like behavior" in producing the speech act in terms of strategy choice, use of intensifier tools, and situational awareness. Similarly, other studies showed that teaching speech act has a positive impact on L2 learners' pragmatic competence (Yoshimi 2001; Taguchi 2011).

Learners' pragmatic competence, which is considered as their ability to use a language under "particular context", is primarily concerned with appropriate language use, "depending on sufficient linguistic and pragmatic knowledge, as well as on overall strategic capacities to implement the knowledge in communicative interaction" (Taguchi 2006, p. 514). Boxer and Pickering (1993:45) claim that "appropriate speech behavior will rely heavily on those societies' own rules". Corespondently, in EFL setting, instructors provide learners with information about specific context from the target language, for instances social rules are suggested to be treated as a core task in the process of teaching.

In order to instruct learners in relevant social rules embedded in the speech acts of the target language, employing authentic materials in the classroom setting such as videos or audios extracted from films or real conversations in language corpus is encouraged by Larsen-Freeman (2000). Besides using authentic materials, learners are also provided with diverse opportunities to practice the speect acts of the target language in real life situations to obtain communicative competence (Liao, 2015). Some other researchers, however, claim that in order to develop pragmatic accuracy, instruction was not a demand. Kasper (1997) argues that if L2 learners gain sufficient linguistic knowledge, they will be able to produce speech acts accurately without instruction. He asserts that adult L2 learners can perform some aspects of pragmatics naturally because this pragmatic knowledge tends to be universal and may be transferred from the learners' mother tongue to the target language successfully. Kasper & Rose (2001) also indicate that positive pragmatic transferability may promote L2 learners' understanding and interpretation of pragmatic features and therefore there is no need for such instruction.

It is worth mentioning that there are major issues in teaching pragmatics. One of them is negative pragmatic transferability. In her study, Nguyen (2012) revealed evidences for pragmatic transfer. She found that Vietnamese learners frequently made an apology by

literally translating from L1 to L2. Another problem of teaching pragmatics in L2 classrooms may come from the nature of classroom setting. During instructional sessions, learners show more concerns about "grammatical and lexical features" of the language than aspects of pragmatics. That seems to be because knowledge of pragmatics is not considered in most of the examinations (Liao, 2015). As a result, learners appear to notice less various features of pragmatics. Alcón (2005) claims that in order to attract L2 learners' attention to pragmatics, instructors should make an attempt to integrate knowledge of grammar and pragmatics into the lesson plan.

2.3. The speech act of apology

2.3.1. Definitions of apologies

Holmes (1990) defines apologies as "primarily social acts, carrying effective meaning" and they "are politeness strategies" (p.35). In the same vein, Brown and Levinson (1987) state that the act of apoloziging plays a significant role in a "social interaction" beause it aims at establishing a good rapport among people in society. According to them, apologizing is regarded as a primary part of communication existing in all cultures to preserve harmonious relationships between interlocutors. Goffman (1967) equates apologies with compliments because both of them are fundamentally employed by interlocutors to maintain and support "the addressee's face" or even "the apologizer's face" in some specific circumstances. While the act of complimenting pays attention to the "positive face" of the addressee, making apologies is more associated with "face threatening acts" that have jeopardized the hearer's face in one way or another and thus can be considered as "negative politeness strategies" (Brown & Levinson 1987).

2.3.2. Common strategies of apology

Goffman's (1971) introduces one of the most important viewpoints of the classification of apology. He basically makes distinction between two "types of

compensations: ritual and substantive" (Goffman,1983a, p. 2). From this distinctive category, Fraser (1981) suggests two motivations relevant to "substantive and ritualistic apologies". For the former, an apologizer shows an interest in remedying damage or offenses caused by his/her offensive actions, whereas the latter refers to the habit related to particular routines or when an apologizer does not take responsibility for causing any offenses. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1985) also propose another classification of apologetic strategies by providing five strategies including "an illocutionary force indicating device (IFID), an expression of responsibility, an explanation for the cause of transgression, an offer of repair, and a promise for forbearance". With regard to IFID categorization, they provide five performative verbs "regret, excuse, be sorry, forgive, pardon" beside "apologize". Their views oppose that of Fraser (1981) who claims that only when an expression comprises the verb "apologize", can it be categorized as a performative. Under Blum Kulka and Olshtain's viewpoint (1985) the act of apologizing can be performed by employing only an IFID, combining an IFID and another strategy or combining various strategies. They also assert that it is not necessary to include a performative verb. In addition, although noticing the important role of using intensifiers, Blum Kulka and Olshtain do not regard them as an actual strategy, but an additional device when being combined with other strategies. Holmes (1990) also provides another category of apology strategies based on previous frameworks (Fraser 1981; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1985), focusing on four major categories stated as follows:

Table 1. Strategies of apology (Holmes, 1989)

Strategies of apology
1. Explicitly expressing an apology
o Offering apology (e.g. "I apologize)
o Expressing regret (e.g. "I'm afraid", "I'm sorry")

o   Requesting forgiveness (e.g. "excuse me", "forgive me")

2. Proving explanation (e.g. I'm sorry because or I'm sorry I thought you meant tonight"

3. Acknowledging blame

o   Accepting responsibility (e.g. it was my fault)

o   Offering repair (e.g. I'll replace another one for you")

o   Showing self-deficient expression (e.g. "I was confused", "I didn't hear clearly")

o   Recognizing the addressee is deserved an apology (e.g. "you deserve an apology")

o   Expressing lack of intention (e.g. "I didn't mean to")

4. Promising forbearance (e.g. I promise. It won't happen again")

2.4. Implicit/explicit learning and pragmatic training approach

According to DeKeyser (2007) implicit/explicit learning in SLA are distinctly different in terms of process in which knowledge is acquired. On the one hand, implicit learning is materialized through "a subconscious process" of learning. Put differently, it refers to the language knowledge of which learners are intuitively cognizant and obtainable through "automatic process" (Ellis, 2004). On the other hand, explicit learning is developed through "a consciously controlled process" of learning by which learners employ "metalinguistic ability" to internalize and explain the target language (Ellis, 2004). In other words, learners are aware of various linguistic aspects such as rules or functions to master the knowledge embedded in the target structures (Norris & Ortega, 2001). Another major difference between the two learning types is also recognized by Krashen (1982), who claims that implicit learning taking place unconsciously though daily routines, is similar to L1 language acquisition, whereas explicit learning occurring consciously through learners' deliberate attempt to acquire knowledge is almost identical to L2 learning.

Explicit and implicit training method based on the intrinsic nature of each specific knowledge of learning can be distinguished by the way linguistic rules are presented to learners (Godfroid, 2016). That is, for the implicit teaching approach, learners are introduced a wide range of admissible exemples of the intended structures in a natural focused activity in order that they are capable of recognizing rule patterns by themselves. Conversely, learners involved in the explicit approach are provided the target rules or trained to search for them through vivid explanations (Norris & Ortega, 2001).

Additionally, Rosenshine (1987:34) regards explicit instruction as "a systematic method of teaching with emphasis on proceeding in small steps, checking for student understanding, and achieving active and successful participation by all students". In other words, learners' linguistic skills can be acquired and developed through a process of a systematic and effective approaches in which learning conditions are divided into small meaningful stages to make certain that learners can learn the skills in each stage successfully. Explicit instruction is also characterized by a series of assistances with explicit instructional procedures through which students are instructed with a clear objective of learning, unambiguous explanations, and supported practice with feedback until they master the skills (Rosenshine, 1987; Brophy & Good, 1986). In line with Rosenshine (1987), Yoshimi (2001) also places emphasis on pragmatic explicit teaching which revolves around small progressive sessions with clear statements of lesson objectives, material elaboration with different examples and direct guidance from stage to stage. In his study (2001), Yoshimi claims that learners' pragmatic skills and procedural knowledge might be facilitated by explicit pragmatic training through classroom activities.

The explicit teaching method is heavily based on direct instruction to raise learners' awareness of the target language, whereas the implicit teaching approach contains no clear reference to the intended rules (Schmidt, 1993), but pays attention to learning tasks which

encourages learners to discover the language rules by themselves (Cambourne, 1999). Meada (2011) also stated that implicit training focuses on "form-meaning-function" to lead learners to "unconscious attention to the target language". In addition, Dole's (2000) indicated that in implicit training, a teacher plays a role as a facilitator who provides "meaningful input" and suggests ways for leaners to discuss the target language rather than a linguistic expert who clearly explains different linguistic aspects when learners demand them.

In terms of "input exposure", implicit learning tends to be obscured in some classroom conditions as learners do not have the opportunity to be exposed to language input sufficiently which is similar to real-life settings (Dekeyser, 2005). Although in comparing the two teaching strategies, learners in the implicit training condition are provided with the same input materials used for the explicit instruction, Schidmidt (1993) argues that there are some linguistic rules that are not noticeable for learners to recognize and therefore, they have little chance to notice them without instruction. In order to compensate for this loss, enhancement of input, namely, "input flood" is employed as an implicit technique to increase learners' opportunity of "input exposure" without resorting to any type of explicit instruction (Rashtchi & Yousefi, 2016). In that way, learners are provided with more examples of the target language, and as such, the target structures become more salient for them to form the rules implicitly (Hernández, 2018).

Knowledge acquisition through implicit learning is taking place in a natural process in which learners are not informed of what is being trained (Ellis, 1994). Therefore, learners instructed with the pragmatic implicit teaching approach are engaged in intensive questions, conversational discussion, skill practice and indirect feedback to discover pragmatic aspects of the target language by themselves without supporting clear explanations from instructors. In order to facilitate implicit learning, Takahashi (2011: 174) proposed implicit training method according to three components: "form-comparison condition, form-search condition,

and meaning-focused condition". In terms of providing feedback, Koike and Pearson (2005) suggested that explicit teaching provides learners with feedback concerning direct comments to strengthen their correct answers and draw their attention to incorrect responses, whereas for the implicit teaching condition, feedback is delivered in indirect forms via short statements or less direct force of responses.

2.5. A review of relevant studies on the contribution of explicit/implicit training to the acquisition of speech acts

A number of prior published studies have addressed the role of explicit vs. implicit pragmatic training on the EFL learners' usage of speech acts with varying levels of language proficiency and periods of training. For instance, Shark conducted a study (2019) on the effect of two teaching conditions on 40 advanced EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge of the apology speech act by letting them be exposed to different materials such as pictures, exercises, short video clips and film excerpts. The results from multiple choice DCTs revealed that both groups displayed significant differences after 6 training sessions during 2 weeks. Furthermore, the group instructed explicitly gained better results in the post-test as well as the postponed test. Salehi's study (2013) also aimed to explore the impact of pragmatic instructional methods on the development of pragmatic competence relevant to the "speech acts of apology and request". Forty participants taking general English courses were divided into two teaching groups and given the same video input accompanied with dialogues. The outcomes from the WDCTs after the treatment period indicated that both groups obtained advantage from the two teaching types. However, the IG showed slight outperformance compared to the EG.

Derakhshan and Arabmofrad (2018) investigated the effects of pragmatic training on 4 groups ("metapragmatic, form-search, interactive translation, and control teaching approaches") of 69 intermediate students' understanding of the 3 types of speech acts:

"apology, request, and refusal" by means of authentic "video-enhanced input" taken from American sitcoms such as "Friends" and "Annie Hall". It was suggested from the results of the multiple choice DCTs after 4 weeks of instructional sessions that learners' pragmatic competence was improved by explicit treatment. Moreover, they observed that the group under "metalinguistic teaching condition" performed better than the other experimental groups. Liao (2015) conducted an investigation into the effect of training on 55 advanced language learners' appropriate use of the apologetic speech act in Chinese. The findings after 8 weeks of intervention demonstrated that learners' pragmatic knowledge might be acquired irrespective of whether the type of pragmatic training was used. Furthermore, pragmatic competence could be developed regardless of studying in classroom settings or living with Chinese speaking groups.

Khatib and Hosseni (2015) addressed the contribution of explicit and implicit training on 80 intermediate learners' production of the "speech act of apology and requests" through plays and dialogs. After a duration of five-week training with 20-25 minute lessons, the outcomes obtained from the participants' WDCTs revealed that literary mode of instruction (plays) was not more effective than non-literary technique (dialogs). However, learners who were instructed with the explicit manner through means of instruction such as plays or dialogs gained better performance than those who were taught implicitly. They subsequently concluded that the explicit teaching method brought more benefits to EFL learners than the implicit training mode irrespective of modes of instruction.

In their study in 2012, Nguyen, Pham, and Pham also examined 69 L2 learners' pragmatic competence concerning "implicit/explicit form-focused training". On the one hand, the group was involved in explicit teaching received "consciousness-raising activities", detailed explanation and clear correction of rules and meanings. On the other hand, the implicit group was provided with enhancement of input and recast activities. WDCTs, role-

play activities and oral peer feedback tasks were used in both the pre-test and post-test to evaluate the participants' performance. In order to assess their long-term retention, a delayed-test consisting of similar production tasks was also distributed to the participants. The test results found that for all modes of assessment the explicit training group performed remarkably better than their counterparts.

Koile and Pearson (2005) studied the contribution of pragmatic teaching to English learners of Spanish by means of "explicit or implicit pre-instruction", and "explicit or implicit feedback". The findings from the pre-test, post-test, and delayed-test demonstrated that explicit pre-training and explicit feedback during the intervention helped learners gain better results when performing "speech act of suggestions" in Spanish than the experimental group and the control group in multiple-choice tests. In addition, the group that was involved in implicit training and received implicit feedback did remarkably better in "the open-ended dialogues", which indicated that the use of recasts had a positive impact on their pragmatic performance. The analysis of the post-test showed that regardless of explicit/implicit training, the groups which experienced instruction and feedback during the treatment were more likely to employ more options to make suggestions. Nevertheless, the delayed-test found that such performances did not remain for long-term retention. In addition, Duan (2008) examined the impact of the two instructional strategies on 63 first-year English major students' appropriate use of the "speech act of refusal". The results from WDCTs after 4 weeks of pragmatic instruction indicated that the learners who received explicit teaching during the experimental condition significantly increased their "pragmatic appropriateness" in producing 4 types of refusal speech acts, whereas the implicit group gave more inappropriate responses in making various formal refusals in their post-test. In line with Duan, Ebadi and Pourzandi (2015) also compared explicit vs. implicit teaching approaches on the development of "56 intermediate L2 learners' speech acts of compliments and compliment responses". The results of the

WDCT post-test after an intervention of a three-week period found that the IG did not significantly differ from the EG in the post-test results and both groups improved their appropriate use of the speech acts, whereas the control group showed poor performance as they did not receive any type of training.

To summarize, both types of instructional strategies by and large affected learners' pragmatic development positively. However, it seems that with the same input materials used during the teaching period, explicit training tends to generate more benefits for learners to gain better results in the post-test than implicit training. The primary aim of the current study is to compare EFL learners' pragmatic production of the apology speech act through two types of pragmatic teaching approaches in a one-week training period. Moreover, it intends to identify which instructional type is more beneficial for learners to gain better pragmatic skills.

Chapter 3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Participants

The participants of the current study were composed of 30 advanced EFL Vietnamese students of English at Tien Giang University randomly administered to an EG and an IG. The genders of participants were considered to make it more or less equal, all within the age ranges of 18 and 21, without a prior study background abroad. All of them study different majors including Business Administration, Accounting, Business Law, Marketing, Vietnamese Literature and Civil Engineering, and have studied English through formal classes for approximately 6 years before passing the entrance exam to TGU. They all received a placement test of English at the beginning of the semester. Based on their high test scores, they were distributed to advanced English courses. The English textbook "Solutions - Advanced Student's Book" by Oxford University Press has been used as the primary material for advanced courses at Tien Giang University. Every week of the semester, they take two advanced English classes, each of which lasts 100 minutes. All of the participants also reported that they had not studied English at language centers in the evening or contacted with native speakers of English before taking part in the study.

Table 2: The participants' gender and age

Groups	Male participants	Female participants	Age
IG	7	8	18-21
EG	7	8	18-21

3.2. WDCTs (pre-test, post-test and delayed test)

All of the three versions of the test were constructed according to a form of a written discourse completion task (see appendices A, B, and C) which were distributed to the participants before and after the intervention to assess their pragmatic knowledge of making an apology in English. Particularly, the participants took the pre-test three days

before the training session. The post-test was immediately followed right after the end of the intervention. One week after the treatment, the learners were required to take the delayed test. They were all allocated 45 minutes to complete each test.

Each of the tests consisted of 8 items associated with popular English speaking contexts which involved the participants in making an appropriate apology for a certain situation described in the tasks regarding four strategies of apology in Holmes' taxonomy (1990). All of social contexts focused on interaction between classmates, students and professors, neighbors, and family members, which are likely to happen regularly in the participants' daily life. The items were written and modified based on prior studies on pragmatic evaluation of similar speech acts (Liao 2015; Taguchi 2011). However, in order to prevent participants from memorizing task responses, contexts and situations were differently designed across each item of three test versions, but similar patterns of social interactions, level of vocabulary and grammatical difficulty still remained the same to ensure consistency.

In the first part of each test, the participants were required to provide some personal information such as full name, major, gender and age. The second part provided test-takers with step-by-step instructions. Specifically, they were asked to read each social situation carefully to decide appropriate responses by writing down their answers on a given space. The last part was composed of 8 different tasks that required learners to make appropriate apology based on the detailed description of each certain situation. The learners played a role as an apologizer in order that they could respond in a more realistic way ("You make an apology to your mother, or "You make an apology to your professor"). The following illustration was taken from the pre-test version.

Situation 1: You have known your friend for many years and have a good relationship with him. Both of you are currently studying at the same university. A month ago, a friend of yours bought an expensive new motorbike. He loves it a lot because he has dreamed of having one

for ages. You also like the motorbike, so you borrowed it for a try. Unfortunately, you had an accident and the motorbike got some terrible scratches on it. When he saw the motorbike, he was very angry and didn't want to see any scratches.

You make an apology to your friend by saying: …………………………………………………

3.3. Teaching materials and procedures

Nine picture prompts with detailed description of certain situations (see appendix D for detailed picture prompts) corresponding to four apologetic strategies (Holmes, 1990) were carefully designed to match the main goal of each lesson. In the first lesson, each group was instructed with pattern (A) "an explicit expression of apology". The strategy (B) "an explanation or account was introduced in the second lesson while pattern (C) "an acknowledgment of responsibility" and pattern (D) "a promise for forbearance" were extended in the third and fourth lessons respectively (see appendix G for detailed lesson plans).

It is noted that according to Holmes (1990) although a specific type of strategy may occur in an appropriate situation, an apologizer may combine various strategies (e.g. A + B or A + C) to increase the degree of politeness, show sincerity and acknowledge the level of offense in real-life contexts. Particularly, "slight offense" takes place in situations acting as bumping into a stranger in a bus or forgetting to buy a friend a book as promised. An action, such as keeping a friend waiting for long at the bus stop in cold weather, is considered "medium offense", while hurting someone or making serious damage is determined as "heavy offense".

Picture prompts designed are largely based on not only four different types of apology strategy but also taxonomy of "offense and extent of politeness" (Holmes, 1990) to examine whether after a treatment period there were any differences in the learners' production of apology strategy when they were involved in explicit/implicit training. Particularly, whether

their performance of the speech act would be better and which instructional mode was more

gainful for them to produce the speech act more appropriately in a certain situation.

Table 3: A timeline for EG and IG intervention period of instruction

Timelines	Strategies of apology	Social contexts for picture prompts
Monday	Strategy A: "An explicit expression of apology"	- Mistaking somebody for a friend in a store - Dropping a classmate's pencil on the floor - Stepping on a professor's bag in a lift.
Tuesday	Strategy B: "An explanation or account"	- Keeping a potential customer waiting for long at the train station due to misunderstanding of time - Forgetting to pick up a close friend at the train station due to traffic jam
Wednesday	Strategy C: "An acknowledgment of responsibility"	- Forgetting to turn off electrical devices - Breaking a friend's laptop when he needs it for exam
Thursday	Strategy D: "A promise of forebearance"	- Making serious noise with musical instrument when neighbors are sleeping - Dropping litter around the university campus and being caught by a strict janitor

Each lesson related to the explicit training of the pragmatic issue was organized

progressively in consonance with Yoshimi's (2001) four pragmatic teaching stages. The first

two sessions were aimed at assisting learners' awareness of the pragmatic features of the

target language through direct explanation of various aspects of the speech act before learners proceeded to perform it and received feedback from their production. The lesson starts with a brief review of the previous lesson and a subsequent overview of the lesson objective. The explanation stage is followed by introducing dialogues (see Appendix F for detailed dialogues) embedded in apologetic strategies instructed in the lesson. Learners read strategies in the dialogues then speak out the strategies they have found for the instructor to write on the blackboard. The instructor subsequently offers vivid explanations concerning linguistic aspects of a particular apologetic strategy, such as "when to use, how to use, with whom it is for" to facilitate learners' ability to make comparisons between certain strategies used between English and Vietnamese. It should be emphasized that explanation stage is the most important for the explicit training as it provides learners with clear instructions through explicitly presenting linguistic forms, rules, and functions, whereas the implicit training heavily focuses on preparation and practice stages as they offer learners opportunities to recognize and get familiar with the target language through repeated "input exposure". Following this, learners are divided into small groups or pairs to act out their role-playing performances in front of the class. Eventually, the teacher gives directly detailed feedback based on evaluating the learners' role-playing performance and lesson understanding checking questions.

Simultaneously, the IG experiences the same type of input materials and gets involved in stages of explicit training. However, according to Seger (1994) implicit learning takes place through an incidental manner without being aware of what is being learned. As a result, in the presentation stage (Yoshimi, 2001), learners are not introduced to the goal of each lesson to ensure that they are not foretold of what is being taught. In the explanation phase, "focus on form" methods with visual enhancement are employed. According to Long and

Robinson (1998) , "focus on form" is considered to be an analytic method in which learners acquire the target language by analyzing linguistic forms and patterns through talks and tasks by themselves rather than through the teacher's direct supports. Therefore, such communication-enhanced activities as pair-works, group-works or classroom discussion are employed throughout this stage in order that learners can subconsciously acquire important patterns and forms in the target language. Moreover, learners are provided dialogues embedded apology strategies with enhancement of color in the target texts. Schmidt (1993) indicates that this approach does not teach learners the intended topic directly, but draws their attention to it naturally without operating consciously. Learners afterwards involve themselves in preparation and practice stages, but the instructor plays a role as a facilitator, who enables them to work together in the way that best suits them, rather than a linguistic expert. For correcting learners' mistakes and responses, Koike and Pearson's (2005) implicit feedback is utilized. Specifically, learners are provided short statements such as "Yes" or "Indeed" when their strategy use is correct. For mistaken interpretation of the speech act, approach of "pragma-linguistic recasts" by Fukuya and Hill (2006) is applied. When learners use an apology strategy with incorrect forms of grammar, for example "I'm sorry to make you wait for long" the instructor attempts to correct only the form by saying "I'm sorry for making you wait for long". Another type of recast is concerned with "pragmatic appropriateness". For instance, in a situation involving a professor and a student whereby the student says "I want to say sorry for what I did", the apology appears to be "grammatically appropriate", but "pragmatically inappropriate". The instructor, should therefore provide a recast as "I'd like to say sorry for what I did". Furthermore, raising voice technique ("You said?") or less direct force of responses ("What was that? or "Mm–I didn't understand") can be applied in occurrences in which learners' target conventions need to be clarified or self-corrected (Fukuya & Hill 2006; Koike & Pearson 2005)

In addition, one more session that is included after systematic corrections is enhancement of input (Schmidt, 1993). It is because implicit learning takes place slowly and requires a considerable amount of input from the environment to be enhanced (Munoz, 2006a). Furthermore, as earlier mentioned, not all linguistic rules are salient for learners to recognize without receiving instructions or explanations (Schmidt, 1993). Thus, the primary purpose of this extra activity is to provide more input exposure for the IG who receives limited linguistic input in the experimental condition without being supported with necessary instruction. As such, the two learning conditions are by and large balanced and reliable for determining which teaching method is more fruitful for learners to improve their pragmatic competence (see Appendix E).

The EG received approxiamtely 80 minutes of pragmatic teaching on apologies during 4 days, while the IG was taught the same amount of time without such explicit instruction. The pragmatic training focuses on the appropriate production of apologetic strategies in daily life situations in which participants will presumably come across in daily communication. Each 20-minute lesson is instructed from Monday to Thursday. During 4 days of instruction, learners did not receive out-of-school English exposure, except for enhancement of input activity assigned to the IG (see appendix E for "input enhancement" activity).

Table 4: General procedures of instruction for the two training groups

Phases	EG	IG
Presentation phase	a) Teacher introduces the lesson with a clear statement of purpose, followed by a brief review of previous pragmatic skill. b) Learners are subsequently provided with picture prompts with detailed	c) Learners receive no objectives of each lesson. b) Similar to EG

	description concerning the embodied apology speech act.	
Explanation phase	a) Learners read dialogues embedded apology strategies then tell the teacher what strategies used in the dialogues. b) Teachers write the strategies learners have found in the dialogues on the blackboard then explicitly explains appropriate strategy of apology to learners such as forms, uses, and meaning. c) Learners listen to the teacher's explanation and take notes if necessary.	a) Learners read dialogues embedded apology strategies then discuss with their friends to find the strategies by themselves. b) Teacher does not explain how the strategies are used. c) Learners work in groups to find out the rules, forms, meanings.
Preparation phase	a) Learners are asked to read the dialogue again. b) They are subsequently divided into pairs or groups. c) They are asked to create new dialogues on the basis of the similar social contexts shown in new picture prompts d) Teacher acts as an expert who offers direct explanation during this stage if students face any difficulties.	a) Learners are asked to read the dialogue then work in pairs/groups to act out it through role-play activity b) Learners work in pairs/groups again to create new dialogues based on similar social situations shown in new picture prompts c) Teacher plays a role as a facilitator who suggests ways to encourage students to discover the strategy by themselves without using explicit explanations or instructions.
Practice phase	a) Students practice the target language through role-play activity from a new given picture prompt.	a) Similar to EG b) Similar to EG

	b) Some pairs or groups of students are chosen to perform their role-play exercises again.	
Feedback phase	a) Appropriate feedback in terms of language production and strategies are provided to learners. b) Inappropriateness of the speech act use is stressed and then corrected. c) Teacher uses questions to check learners' understanding of the lesson.	a) Feedback is delivered via short statements such as "yes" only when learners' strategy is correct. b) Using recasts for pragmatic appropriateness c) Teacher asks learners to work in group to discuss what they have learned from the lesson.
Enhancement of input	a) Learners receive no input enhancement	a) Learners receive one more picture prompt for outside classroom activity after each lesson.

3.4. Data collection procedures

The data collection was carried out in the second semester in July after the approval from the dean of the faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities. Students at TGU were asked to volunteer for this research during weeks they finished their formal study. Teachers of English in the faculty helped to recruit the participants through the university's bulletin board. After the recruitment for volunteers was over, students were contacted to make a short meeting to inform them about treatment schedule and the pre-test. Three participants were excluded from this study, as they had to visist their relatives when the intervention took place. Three other volunteers were called for to ensure that each training group had a balanced number of participants. Under the observation of the teacher who was responsible for training sessions, the participants took the pre-test on the same day due to time limitation.

3.5. Data analysis

The data input of the study was mainly grounded in the expectation that participants' responses would closely match with what a native speaker would say in a similar real life situation. All 30 participants took the pre-test WDCTs on computers in a language laboratory instead of writing on papers. When they completed the test, the instructor would collect and send their results to two native speakers for rating. After the treatment, the post-test and delay-test WDCTs were carried out and scored with the same procedures. The learners' production of the apology speech act was assessed on their overall appropriate use from a native speaker's point of view in terms of apology strategies, politeness, sincerity and formality. Each scorer received three sheets of paper for grading, one for each version of test. For each test, the maximum score was 80 (8 social situations x maximum 5 points x scorer). Each scorer was carefully instructed to grade the participants as if he/she was the person who was taking the test. They also received detailed grading scheme to make sure that the grading process took place efficiently and consistently. In the case that there was large disparity between them, a third scorer was invited to mark the question.

Criteria for scoring participant's written tasks are adapted from Liao and Taguchi's assessment of WDCTs (Liao, 2015; Taguchi, 2011, see table 5). Since the study intended to investigate the participants' appropriate production of apology strategies, such errors as spellings or grammars were not included in the scoring grid. Appropriate performance of each given social context was scored by applying an "analytic Likert 0-5 scale". The native raters' score results were afterwards correlated to guarantee that there was no significant difference between their mean scores of rating. The scores collected from WDCTs were the main source for data analysis using SPSS to answer the two research questions, they were therefore compared by using independent samples t-test, one-way ANOVA for identifying mean differences between the two teaching groups.

Table 5: Rating guideline (adapted from Liao, 2015; Taguchi, 2011)

Excellent expressions *(5 points)*	Learners' perfectly appropriate production and performance of the speech act with regard to "native-like" perspective of apology strategies in terms of politeness, sincerity and formality.
Good expressions *(4 points)*	Learners' production and performance of the speech act was almost accurately and appropriately. The use of strategy and the integration of relevant elements for a successful apology such as politeness, sincerity and formality were very good, but was a little far from native-like viewpoint.
Fair expressions *(3 points)*	Learners' production and performance of the strategy was somewhat appropriate, but did not employ an edequade apology strategy, for instance, lack of combination of different strategies or the expressions were too short to cover necessary information needed. Consequently, the apology strategy was insufficient to repair the violation described in the certain situation.
Poor expressions *(2 points)*	Learners' production and performance of the strategy was inappropriate or incorrect, which made the expressions sound very strange or "nonnative-like". Learners also failed to make the apology sound sincere and polite. Consequently, the apology strategy was highly insufficient to repair the violation described in the certain situation.

Very poor expressions *(1 point)*	Learners' production and performance of the strategy was very inappropriate. The strategy sounds unacceptable from a native speaker's perspective.
Blank response *(0 point)*	The test-taker did not provide a response to a particular question.

Chapter 4. RESULTS

The main objective of analyzing the pre-test WDCTs was to diagnose and examine whether participants could perform apology strategies in English appropriately before the training intervention took place. Moreover, it is aimed at investigating whether both groups were at the same level of pragmatic comprehension and production. Last but not least, it helped to adjust and design the lesson plans that corresponded with learners' understanding and knowledge of the speech act of apology.

In order to analyze the data, the participants' responses in two groups collected from the pre-test WDC questionnaires were classified corresponding to Holmes' taxonomy of apology strategies (1990). There were four macro strategies in which the offenders deployed to make apologies and eight sub-strategies provided to operate clear delimitation of particular strategy. Specifically, the frequent use of apology strategies participants employed in 8 different situations will be investigated. However, there were instances where participants' strategies were showing concerns (CON) "Are you alright?", "Are you Ok?" and denying responsibility (DRESP) "It was not my mistake" could not be classified according to Holmes's category (1989). Therefore, such cases were added to the existing 8 sub-strategies to make it a total of 10 sub-categories. In addition, the scores obtained from the two groups were compared by using independent samples t-test to identify the mean scores of the pre-test WDCTs. Finally, the frequent use of intensifier tools and combination of strategies were also interpreted and analyzed.

Before the training process, both IG and EG took the pre-test WDCTs including 8 social situations of which situations 1 and 6 were heavy offences, instances in 5 and 7 were slight offences and the rests were medium offences. Participants could employ a single strategy or combine different strategies as long as they performed the speech act

appropriately with regard to "native-like" perspective of apology strategies concerning

politeness, sincerity and formality.

4.1. The outcomes of the pre-test WDCTs

Table 6. The frequently combined strategies of apology speech act by situations (pre-test)

Apology strategies		WCDT items (%)							
		Item 1	Item 6	Item 5	Item 7	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 8
APOL+REPR	IG	67	47	0	0	0	6.7	6.7	20
	EG	60	53	0	0	0	13	0	27
APOL+FORB	IG	6.7	6.7	0	6.7	67	6.7	47	13
	EG	13	0	0	13	73	13	60	13
APOL+ RESP	IG	6.0	20	6.7	6.7	67	6.7	27	20
	EG	0	20	6.7	13	0	0	20	6.7
APOL+EXPL	IG	0	6.7	33	6.7	0	53	6.7	13
	EG	0	0	27	0	0	47	0	27
APOL+CON	IG	0	0	6.7	0	0	0	0	0
	EG	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0
APOL+INT	IG	0	0	6.7	0	0	0	0	13
	EG	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0
APOL+SELF	IG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6.7
	EG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
INT+REPR	IG	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0
	EG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RESP+RERP	IG	0	6.7	0	0	0	0	0	0
	EG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EXPL+DRESP	IG	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	0
	EG	0	0	0	0	0	6.7	0	0
APOL	IG	6.7	13	47	86	13	13	13	20
	EG	6.7	20	53	73	20	13	13	13
CON	IG	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0
	EG	0	0	6.7	0	0	0	0	0
APOL+RESP+FORB	IG	6.7	0	0	0	20	0	6.7	0
	EG	6.7	0	0	0	13	0	6.7	0
APOL+EXPL+REPR	IG	0	0	0	0	0	6.7	0	0
	EG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
APOL+RESP+REPR	IG	6.7	6.7	0	0	0	0	0	0
	EG	13	6.7	0	0	0	0	0	0

According to the data from table 6, there was not much variation of frequently

combined strategies of apology from the IG and EG across situations. To begin with,

participants in the two groups tended to combine APOL with another strategy in various

situations. Particularly, for both groups the highest rate of combined strategies was

APOL+FORB found in item 2 with 67% for the IG and 73% for the EG. The second most

frequently combined strategy was APOL+REPR that occurred in item 1 with 67% for the IG

and 60% for the EG. There were two occurrences in which APOL + CON and APOL + SELF

employed by the participants in situations 5 and 8 with 6.7% for IG each, whereas it was 6.7% and 13% for IG respectively. Especially, for the item 3, there were 13% of participants in the IG tried to explain the situation and did not accept their responsibility. This similar trend was also found for the EG with 6.7%. In addition, participants in both groups combined three strategies simultaneously, however, this combination had low frequencies. Sharing the similar trend, there were only 6.7% participants in each group deployed APOL+RESP+FORB (item 1, item 4). However, 20% participants in the IG used the same strategy for item 2, while it was 13% for the EG. Besides, the combination of APOL+RESP+REPR was found in items 1 and 6 with 6.7% for the IG each and 13%, and 6.7% for the EG. The combination of APOL+EXPL+REPR was also used only once by the IG for item 3. When making apologies, participants also used a single strategy. For instance, participants in both groups did not explicitly express an apology, but showed concerns in situation 5 (13% for the IG and 6.7% for the EG). It was noted that employing only one strategy APOL was also found in all items with relatively high frequencies from the two groups. However, there was no remarkable difference in the choice of APOL as a single strategy between the two groups.

An example of participants' responses for the situation 1 in which an apology was made to a close friend for damaging his favorite motorbike.

A participant's response from the EG: *I apologize for making your motorbike scratched. I will get your motorbike polished and repainted.*
A participant's response from the IG: *I'm sorry. I'm really sad about it. I'll pay for the damage.*

Table 7. The frequent use of intensifiers by situations (pre-test)

WDCT items	Intensifiers	
	Intensifying adverbials	Emotional exclamations

		So	Terribly	Really	Very	Oh! Oh! No	Oh! My god/ dear/ bad	Oops/Woops
Item 1	IG	13	13	0	0	0	0	0
	EG	6.7	6.7	0	0	0	0	0
Item 6	IG	13	6.7	0	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7
	EG	20	0	6.7	0	13	0	0
Item 5	IG	13	6.7	0	6.7	0	0	0
	EG	6.7	0	0	0	0	6.7	6.7
Item 7	IG	13	0	6.7	0	0	0	0
	EG	0	0	0	0	6.7	0	0
Item 2	IG	6.7	0	0	0	0	0	0
	EG	13	0	0	6.7	0	0	0
Item 3	IG	13	0	0	0	6.7	0	0
	EG	0	0	6.7	0	0	0	0
Item 4	IG	13	6.7	0	0	0	0	0
	EG	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
Item 8	IG	0	0	0	0	6.7	0	0
	EG	6.7	0	0	0	0	13	0
Total	IG	**85**	**27**	**6.7**	**13**	**20**	**6.7**	**6.7**
	EG	**73**	**6.7**	**13**	**6.7**	**20**	**20**	**6.7**

From the above data we can see that the two categories of intensifiers classified according to the participants' responses were "intensifying adverbials and emotional expressions". Two groups showed a similar tendency in the frequencies of intensifying device, which was relatively low across situations. Also, there was no much difference in their selection of intensifying devices. Furthermore, there was a higher rate of adverbial intensifiers used as compared to emotional expressions found in both groups. Specifically, out of 240 responses given to the 8 situations, the intensifier "so" was the most frequently used by the participants (a total of 85% for the IG and 75% for the EG), whereas the expressions such as "oops" or "woops" accounted for the lowest rate of frequency with only 6.7% found in each teaching group.

A sample for responses of participants for the situation 4 in which an apologizer forgot to collect the blankets presented as below:

> The EG: *I'm terribly mom. The game was so much fun. I'll do the right now.*
> The IG: *I'm so sorry. This will never happen again, mummy!*

More deep analysis and interpretation into the participants' responses revealed that the most apology pattern structures that the participants in the two groups employed was expressing a regret "I'm sorry for" or "I'm sorry" which was instituted for approximately 70% of all situations, whereas making an apology "I apologize" or requesting forgiveness "please, forgive me" were rarely used (only 13% across situations). Furthermore, when offering a repair, they tended to use the structure I'll + a particular action, for example, "I'll repair your motorbike", "I'll clean it for you right away", or "I'll go to the library now" instead of saying formulaic expressions such as "what can I do to make it up to you?" or "I will make it right". Those pattern structures were not found in any situations responded by the two groups of participants. Additionally, there were a number of instances where participants used short responses with only one strategy for situations concerning heavy or medium offences. For instance, "My bad. I thought only the time changed" in situation 5, "Sorry! What an awful rashness" in situation 6, or "Sorry for being late in situation 3".

Issues concerning pragmatic transfer were also found in different situations. First, Vietnamese participants tended not to use titles such as Mrs./Miss./Sir. when making apologies to a teacher, a professor, or a stranger. They preferred to say "Im sorry, teacher" or "I'm sorry, professor", which was similar to the way they address a hearer's title when making requests or apologies in the Vietnamese language. Another issue was when they attempted to translate Vietnamese structures into English. For illustrations, some participants provided responses such as "I really want to send you some money to compensate", "I'll make an apology to you for this and I will take responsibility for compensation" or "Accept my sincere and undeserved for inconvenient". Moreover, for some cases such as damaging a close friend's new favorite motorbike, interrupting the teacher's lesson, forgetting an

important group's meeting, or dropping a professor's bag on the floor, the participants

expressed a regret by saying "Sorry for making your motorbike damaged", "Sorry to bother

you", "Sorry everyone I was wrong about the day". It appeared that their apologies were not

highly sincere without a subject "I'm" in those occurrences. There were also instances where

participants deployed incorrect strategies. Particularly, when making an apology to a

professor in situation 7, instead of saying "I'm sorry again", a respondent used "excuse me

again". Similarly, in situation 8, when requesting forgiveness, a participant indicated

"sympathize my mistake" rather than "Please, forgive me". Moreover, in situations 5, 7 and

8, participants tended to acknowledge responsibility by saying "My mistake" instead of using

"It was my fault".

4.2. The outcomes of post-test WDCTs

Table 8. The frequently combined strategies of apology speech act by situations (post-test)

Apology strategies		WCDT items (%)							
		Item 1	Item 6	Item 5	Item 7	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 8
APOL+REPR	IG	47	47	0	6.7	0	0	20	27
	EG	20	33	0	20	0	0	6.7	13
APOL+FORB	IG	13	6.7	0	13	80	13	20	6.7
	EG	0	0	0	6.7	87	6.7	20	13
APOL+ RESP	IG	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	13	6.7	13	13
	EG	0	6.7	13	13	6.7	13	27	6.7
APOL+EXPL	IG	0	6.7	13	6.7	0	60	6.7	40
	EG	0	0	13	0	0	80	0	53
APOL+CON	IG	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	0
	EG	0	0	27	0	0	0	0	0
APOL+INT	IG	0	0	6.7	6.7	0	0	0	0
	EG	0	0	13	27	0	0	0	0
APOL+SELF	IG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	EG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
INT+REPR	IG	0	6.7	0	0	0	0	0	0
	EG	6.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RESP+RERP	IG	0	6.7	0	0	0	0	0	0
	EG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EXPL + DRESP	IG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	EG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
APOL	IG	0	0	53	53	13	6.7	20	13
	EG	0	6.7	40	33	6.7	6.7	0	0
CON	IG	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0
	EG	0	0	6.7	0	0	0	0	0
APOL+RESP+FORB	IG	13	0	0	0	13	0	13	0

	EG	20	0	0	0	27	0	40	0
APOL+EXPL+REPR	IG	6.7	0	0	0	0	6.7	0	0
	EG	20	13	0	0	0	6.7	0	0
APOL+REPR+RESP	IG	13	20	0	6.7	0	0	6.7	0
	EG	33	40	0	13	0	0	13	0

According to the outcomes from the data after the training process, for situations related to high offences, there were more participants in the EG who combined three apologetic strategies than those of the IG. Particularly, the semantic formula of APOL+REPR+RESP opted by the participants in the EG for situations 1, 6 and 4 was 33%, 40%, and 13% respectively, whereas participants in the IG who employed this combination was only 13%, 20%, and 6.7% respectively. Similarly, the choice of APOL+RESP+FORB as a strategy for items 1, 2 and 4 (20%, 27% and 40% respectively) was nearly double the IG with only 13% each. Furthermore, the significant difference from the two groups also displayed in the combination of APOL+EXPL+REPR for items 1 and 6 (20% and 13% for the EG respectively; 6.7% and 0% for the IG respectively).

In addition, there was remarkable variation in the choice of APOL+REPR in items 1, 6, 7, 4 and 8 between the groups. Namely, it was 47%, 47%, 6.7%, 20%, and 27% for the IG respectively, whereas the proportion for the EG was 20%, 33%, 30%, 6.7%, and 13% respectively. Nevertheless, for other two combined apology strategies, there was not much difference found between the two groups.

It was evident from the above table that participants in the IG preferred to use a single strategy more than the EG did. Specifically, for situations 5, 7, 2, 4, and 8 the percentage for the IG was 53%, 53%, 13%, 20% and 13% respectively, whereas it was 40%, 33%, 6.7%, 0%, and 0% respectively for the EG. In general, as compared to the pre-test, the participants from the two teaching groups showed significant variation in the choice of three combined strategies, the use of a single strategy, APOL, and the combination of APOL+REPR.

The participants' extracts for the situation 3 in which an apologizer did not show up to meet his classmates as planned because he had to take his mother to the relative's house.

> The EG: *I am sorry for not coming to practice the play. My mom asked me to take her to my Uncle's house. That's why I cannot come to practice the play.*
> The IG: *It was my fault because I did not come on time. There was an urgent task and I had to help mom for that.*

Table 9. The frequent use of intensifiers by situations (post-test)

WDCT items		Intensifiers						
		Intensifying adverbials				Emotional exclamations		
		So	Terribly	Really	Very	Oh! Oh! No	Oh! My god/ dear/ bad	Ops/Woops
Item 1	IG	13	6.7	6.7	0	0	0	0
	EG	20	6.7	13	0	0	0	0
Item 6	IG	13	13	6.7	6.7	6.7	13	0
	EG	27	13	6.7	0	13	0	0
Item 5	IG	13	0	6.7	0	13	0	6.7
	EG	6.7	0	13	0	6.7	6.7	0
Item 7	IG	13	0	6.7	0	0	0	0
	EG	6.7	0	0	0	6.7	0	0
Item 2	IG	6.7	6.7	0	0	0	0	0
	EG	6.7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Item 3	IG	13	6.7	6.7	0	0	0	0
	EG	20	0	6.7	0	0	0	0
Item 4	IG	13	0	0	6.7	0	0	0
	EG	13	0	13	0	0	0	0
Item 8	IG	6.7	6.7	6.7	0	6.7	0	0
	EG	6.7	6.7	6.7	0	0	6.7	0
Total	**IG**	**91**	**40**	**40**	**13**	**27**	**13**	**6.7**
	EG	**107**	**26**	**58**	**0**	**20**	**13**	**0**

The use of adverbial intensifiers showed a slight increase between the two groups after the teaching process, but there was no such rise found in the case of emotional exclamations. The intensifying adverb "so" still remained the highest frequency of use with

91% for the IG and 107% for the EG across situations. Such other adverbs such as "terribly, really, very" were also used increasingly by participants from the two groups. Specifically, there was approximate double of participants in the IG employed "terribly" for their responses (40%) as compared to that of the EG (26%). However, this trend was completely opposite to the case of "really", which was 40% for the IG and 58% for the IG. In general, there was not much variation in the use of emotional exclamations. However, the participants were slightly different from employing intensifying adverbials.

An example for the use of emotional exclamations from the two teaching groups, extracted from situation 5 in which the apologizer step on a stranger's shoes.

> The EG: *Oh my dear! I'm so sorry about that.*
> The IG: *Oops! Are you Ok? I'm so sorry for stepping on your shoe.*

In the deep analysis into the use of participants' responses, it can be seen that after the intervention period, the two groups showed preferences for employing more diverse apology formulas introduced in each lesson. For example, in the pre-test many participants started their apology by saying "I'm sorry for" to whomever they addressed. However, in the post-test, participants from the two groups used more diverse structures such as "I apologize for", "I would like to say sorry for" or "I felt terrible when". Furthermore, in order to make amends, participants in the IG and EG before the teaching period tended to combine "I'm sorry for" with "I'll repair" but after one-week training of apologetic strategies, they employed more structures to express their apology including "what can I do to make it up to you?" or "I attempted to repair the damage". Likewise, the two training groups frequently responded "I made a mistake" when accepting responsibility in the pre-test WDCTs. They, however, knew more diverse ways to express their intentions after the training session by using "I was wrong in what I did" or "I accepted responsibility for my actions"

Moreover, there was an improvement in their language accuracy. In the pre-test, two instances where participants used the structures strangely "I'm sorry for let you wait for long" and "this is my terrible fault", but in the post-test, there were no such structures found.

In terms of negative pragmatic transfer after the treatment, there were still three situations participants in the IG transferred the ways of offering a repair in Vietnamese into English. Examples to illustrate was that "Sorry about your memory stick, I will recover it by my budget, "I hope you can sympathize my mistake", "Sorry, and maybe do something to compensate for this mistake". There was also one case of negative transferability identified in the EG "I will pay for you because I made this mistake. Give me your bank account number now, I'll send you the compensation".

An important point that should be noted was the usage of address terms after an expression of apology, namely an expression of regret. In the pre-test data, participants preferred to express "I'm sorry, teacher"; "I'm really sorry for that, teacher"; or "I'm sorry, professor". In the post-test data, this habitual aspect was kept by most of the participants However, when addressing a stranger in situation 5, some participants employed "Sir" or "Madam" in their responses.

4.3. The outcomes of the delayed-test WDCTs

Table 10. The frequently combined strategies of apology speech act by situations (delayed-test)

Apology strategies		WCDT items (%)							
		Item 1	Item 6	Item 5	Item 7	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 8
APOL+REPR	IG	33	27	0	6.7	0	6.7	0	0
	EG	20	20	0	13	0	6.7	0	0
APOL+FORB	IG	0	0	0	6.7	67	20	40	6.7
	EG	0	0	0	6.7	53	13	13	6.7
APOL+ RESP	IG	13	6.7	0	6.7	13	6.7	6.7	13
	EG	6.7	13	0	13	6.7	20	13	6.7
APOL+EXPL	IG	0	0	13	6.7	0	47	6.7	53
	EG	0	0	20	0	0	53	0	60
APOL+CON	IG	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	0
	EG	0	0	6.7	0	0	0	0	0
APOL+INT	IG	0	0	6.7	6.7	0	0	0	13

	EG	0	0	13	13	0	0	0	0
APOL+SELF	IG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6.7
	EG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6.7
RESP+RERP	IG	6.7	6.7	0	0	0	0	0	0
	EG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EXPL	IG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	EG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6.7
APOL	IG	13	0	47	67	13	13	13	0
	EG	6.7	0	53	53	20	6.7	6.7	0
REPR	IG	0	6.7	0	0	0	0	0	6.7
	EG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CON	IG	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0
	EG	0	0	6.7	0	0	0	0	0
AOPL+RESP+FORB	IG	0	0	0	0	6.7	0	6.7	0
	EG	6.7	0	0	0	20	6.7	0	6.7
APOL+EXPL+REPR	IG	13	13	0	0	0	6.7	0	0
	EG	20	13	0	0	0	0	0	0
APOL+REPR+RESP	IG	20	40	0	0	0	0	6.7	0
	EG	40	53	0	0	0	0	0	0

Like the post-test, the results from the delayed-test showed variations at instances in which the participants combined three apologies together. To begin with, the EG employed a greater use of semantic formulas APOL+REPR+RESP in situations 1 (40%), and 6 (53%) than the IG did (20% and 40% respectively). Similarly, the participants in the EG used the semantic formula APOL+EXPL+REPR in item 1 (20%), and item 3 (6.7%), whereas, the percentage for the IG was 13% and 0% respectively. However, the combination was not different from the two groups for item 6, which was 6.7% each. There was only for item 4 that the IG (6.7%) employed AOPL+RESP+FORB as an apology strategy had higher proportion compared to the EG (0%). For this combined trend from other items, the EG showed a higher percentage for items 1, 2, 3, and 8 with 6.7%, 20%, 6.7% and 6.7% respectively than the IG with 0%, 6,7%, 0% and 0% respectively.

An analysis into the combination of two semantic formulas made by the participants also revealed that the highest combined strategies were still APOL+FORB with 67% for the IG and 53% for the IG from item 2, whereas the second highest rate of frequency came from APOL + REPR with 33% for the IG, 20% for the EG from item 1. This showed similar

patterns with the pre-test and the post-test. The selection of two apology strategies did not display much different between the two treatment groups, except for the case of APOL+FORB. Particularly, from items 2, 3, and 4 the IG demonstrated much higher proportion with 67%, 20%, 40% respectively, for the EG, the percentage was 53%, 13%, and 13% respectively. Finally, the outcomes from the table also showed that the two teaching groups did not display much difference when they employed only one apology strategy for their responses. This tendency was different from the results of the post-test, but was similar to that of the pre-test.

The participants' responses for situation 6 were demonstrated as follows:

> The EG: *I am really sorry because my dog hurt your puppy. It was all my fault. I'll take your puppy to the vet now. Do not worry about it.*
> The IG: *I know how upset you are. Please shout at me if you want. I'll do everything you want to make up this wrongdoing.*

Table 11. The frequent use of intensifiers by situations (delayed-test)

WDCT items		Intensifiers						
		Intensifying adverbials				Emotional exclamations		
		So	Terribly	Really	Very	Oh! Oh! No	Oh! My god/ dear/ bad	Oops/Woops
Item 1	IG	20	13	13	0	0	0	0
	EG	13	6.7	13	0	0	0	0
Item 6	IG	13	13	20	6.7	0	6.7	0
	EG	13	13	13	0	13	13	0
Item 5	IG	6.7	6.7	0	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7
	EG	6.7	0	0	0	13	13	0
Item 7	IG	13	0	6.7	0	0	0	0
	EG	6.7	0	20	0	6.7	0	0
Item 2	IG	6.7	6.7	0	0	0	0	0
	EG	6.7	6.7	0	0	0	0	0
Item 3	IG	13	0	13	0	0	0	0
	EG	20	0	20	0	0	0	0

Item 4	IG	13	0	6.7	0	0	0	0
	EG	20	0	0	13	0	0	0
Item 8	IG	13	0	0	0	6.7	0	0
	EG	13	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**IG**	**98**	**46**	**52**	**13**	**20**	**13**	**6.7**
	EG	**99**	**35**	**66**	**13**	**26**	**20**	**0**

The frequent use of intensifiers across situations in table 10 displayed that the two training groups increased the choice of intensifying devices slightly across situations and such as rise was a similar trend found in the post-test. The main supportive intensification "so" was also used by most of the participants with approximately 98% for the IG and 99% for the EG, which was not different from the tendency found from two previous WDCT versions. In addition, the use of emotional exclamations did not change much from the post-test to the delayed-test. Overall, between the two groups, there was no significant differences in the use of intensifying devices in the delayed-test.

The use of adverbial devices from the participants according to social situation 2 was presented as follows:

> The EG: *I'm really sorry, teacher. I'm wrong. This will never happen again.*
> The IG: *I'm really sorry for that. I shouldn't have done that.*

Analyzing the responses from participants in the delayed-test revealed interesting results. First, participants in the two groups used a greater variety of apology formulas taught during the training process. There were situations where participants used structures that the instructor provided in four progressive lessons or interactive dialogues. Some formulaic expressions that native speakers used when making apologies such as "I didn't mean to do so", "please, accept my apology" or "I shouldn't have done that". Those fixed formulas were found in responses of the post-test and the delayed-test instead of in the pre-test.

Pragmatic transfer only remained in instances where the subjects attempted to repair the damages. For those cases, habitual translation from the mother's tongue (L1) to the target language (L2) were taking place. For social situations concerning high levels of offences such as items 1 and 6, negative language transfer could not be eliminated completely. Two examples were found from all participants' responses to illustrate for this aspect "I am so sorry. I should be careful. I will compensate you for my careless worthily" and "I know you will feel sad when your camera disappeared. If we can't find it, I'll compensate money for you and you can buy a new one". Moreover, when Vietnamese learners of English in the two groups knew diverse formulaic structures, they knew how to combine them to make an apology more appropriately and sincerely, which enabled them to less translate their own words from Vietnamese to English. For instance, a participant in the EG who used different strategies for item 1 in the pre-, post-, and delayed-test when he was provided apologetic structures was presented as below:

Pre-test: *I wanted to say sorry for my mistake. I know my mistake was horrible. I hope you can forgive my mistake and we can have a cup of tea together.*

Post-test: *I'm so sorry for that. I wasn't careful enough. It's all my fault. What can I do to make it up to you?*

Delayed-test: *I'm terribly sorry. It was my fault. I feel embarrassed and ashamed of what I did. Please, accept my apology.*

4.4. An analysis of mean values from WDCTs

4.4.1. The results of mean values from the EG and IG before the training session

Table 12: The mean scores of WDCTs before training period

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Scores	IG	120	2.21	.593	.066
	EG	120	2.23	.599	.073

In order to make sure the homogeneity of the participants' pragmatic knowledge concerning the apology speech act before the training process, an independent samples t-test was first conducted to make a comparison of the mean scores between the EG and the IG. The obtained data indicated that there was no statistically significant variation (t (238) = .256, p= 0.105) between EG (M=2.33; SD=.599) and implicit group (M=2.21; SD=.593). This result indicated that the pragmatic level of proficiency of the two training groups prior to the intervention was not different.

Besides independent samples t-test, another statistical measure, one-way ANOVA, was also used in the study to investigate the differences in the mean scores from groups and to focus on each part of WDCTs. As mentioned earlier, the EG was instructed with explicit training of the speech act of apology, whereas the IG was trained with implicit teaching mode. The WDCT was distributed to each group of learners at pre-test, post-test and delayed-test. The complete data was collected from 30 participants' responses. When taking a look at the results gained in the pre-test (Table 13), we will recognize that there was no significant difference between the two groups before the training (p = 0.105). However, the significant variations in the mean values between the EG and the IG from the post-test and the delayed-test after the teaching process could be found (p = 0.003 and p = 0.001 respectively). In addition, we can see that there was a growth in the mean values of the two groups at the post-test and the delayed-test indicating that the EG (M = 2.62; M = 2.56 respectively) had higher scores than the IG (M = 2.35; M = 2.3 respectively)

4.4.2. A comparison of mean scores from WDCTs before/after the training session

Table 13: A comparison between two teaching groups before/after the training session

Time Point	EG	IG	Mean Diffirence	P Value
	Mean	Mean		
	n=120	n=120	(95% CI)	
Pre_Test	2.33	2.21	0.12	0.105

| Post_Test | 2.62 | 2.35 | 0.27 | 0.003 |
| Delayed_Test | 2.56 | 2.3 | 0.26 | 0.001 |

As can be seen from Figure 1, the mean values of WDCTs between the EG and the IG in the pre-test, post-test and delayed-test were clearly displayed. This proves that after the training session, both groups had improvement in their production of the apology speech act and the explicit training helped Vietnamese learners of English gain better results at their performance. Moreover, figure 2 vividly demonstrated the estimated marginal mean values of the two groups. Specifically, their mean scores increased in the post-test and the EG did better in their pragmatic responses. Although the outcome of the WDCTs slightly decreased in the delayed-test, it still showed a higher result as compared to that of the pre-test.
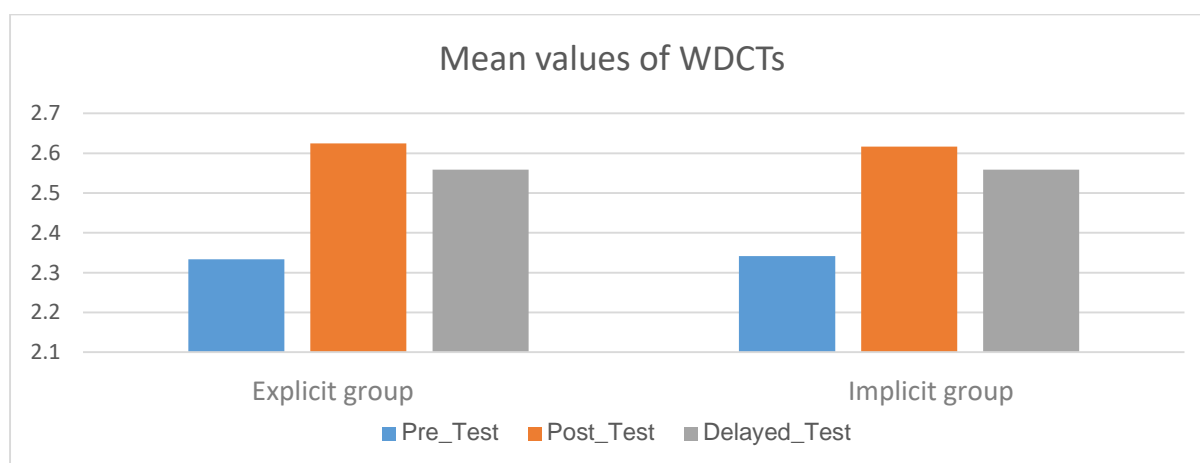
Figure 1. Mean values of WDCTs

Figure 2. Estimated marginal means from WDCTs

Estimated marginal means from WDCTs

Chapter 5. DISCUSSION

The present study made an attempt to examine two research questions: (1) Is there any significant variation at advanced L2 learners' production of the apology speech act when they are instructed with explicit and implicit training methods? (2) If there is a variation, which teaching method is more effective for students to use pragmatic aspects of apologizing in English appropriately? From analyzing the learners' combination of apology strategies, performance of intensifying tools, and mean scores from WDCTs in the previous chapter, it can be seen that there was remarkable variation at the learners' production of the speech act after the instructional process. This proposes that both implicit and explicit teaching have contributed to the learners' development of pragmatic competence. After one-week of implicit/explicit teaching, the students in the two groups employed more diverse apologetic formulas to perform the speech act. They also used supportive intensifications more frequently when expressing apologies. Moreover, the results that shows statistical significance related to learner's appropriate use of apologizing in the target language reinforces the mentioned hypothesis in chapter 1 that explicit training assists learners at improving their pragmatic performance.

During the training intervention, although the implicit teaching group received enhancement of input by means of picture prompts and colored texts to increase exposure to the target language and facilitate their notice of the apologetic formulas. It can be revealed from the findings that learners did notice salient features of the target apology strategies and employed them in the post-test and the delayed-test. However, the implicit teaching approach seems not be adequate for those learners to observe salient features of the speech act and surpass the explicit training condition. This finding was complied with Takahashi's study in 2011, who investigated the impact of "input enhancement" in promoting EFL learners' pragmatic development under explicit and implicit teaching techniques.

The findings of the current research also show that learners of the two teaching conditions demonstrate negative pragmatic transfer of apology strategies when attempting to respond to social situations of the tests. For example, Vietnamese learners are in favor of using specific titles to address a person such as "teacher, professor, aunt, or uncle" when making apologies instead of referring to "Sir, Madam, or Miss" in formal situations. Due to this fact, most of the learners in the pre-test did not use such titles when bumping into a stranger. They simply responded "I'm sorry. Are you ok?" or "Sorry for that. Are you alright?". However, when the use of titles was included in dialogues and stressed in each lesson concerning the target culture, there was an increase in the use of the titles such as "Sir or Madam" when they encountered similar situations in the post-test and the delayed-test. This finding was only found from responses from the EG which was instructed explicitly.

Moreover, negative transfer was found in highly offensive instances where learners needed to offer necessary repairs for the damage. From extensive analysis into the learners' responses in the pre-test we can see that because of linguistic constraints, namely, lack of knowledge of formulaic expressions that native speakers frequently employ for such situations, they tended to translate Vietnamse saying of offering repairs to make up for their lack of linguistic competence. This phenomenon supports Nesselhauf's viewpoints (2003) that idiomatic phrases and formulaic expressions embedded in speech acts may cause L2 learners to face major difficulties. Through explicit teaching, L2 learners were provided with the formulaic phrases, which was likely to help them employ more idiomatic phrases to perform the speech act appropriately according to a native-like perspective in the post-test and delayed-test.

It was also found from the study that although the use of supportive intensifications rose after the training period, participants from the two groups did not employ them regularly. The use of adverbial intensifier "so" was found in most responses, whereas other adverbial

tools were not frequently chosen. In the same vein, learners tended to overuse the strategy of expressing regret "I'm sorry" or for almost all situations. It seems that this trend of their choice is a consequence of remembrance of formulaic expressions rather than an outcome of pragmatic competence (Dendenne, 2017). Furthermore, it is more likely that overuse of some formulaic expressions is due to the learners' lack of experience and input in performing the speech act to respond to different social situations in the target language. The fact is that learners in the study reported that they spent most of the time learning English at school and from textbooks. They did not have any chance to communicate with native speakers in real life situations or watch TV programs such as movies or sitcoms in English.

Rueda (2006) states that in pragmatic instruction a teacher should provide learners with linguistic tools that enable them to recognize and understand linguistic action in a "contextually appropriate manner". In a classroom setting, such as in Vietnam, EFL learners frequently do not have opportunity to contacts with native speakers of English. Therefore, in order to compensate for lack of adequate input and authentic interaction in English, pragmatic training and the role of the teacher become important in pragmatic teaching. Previous literature has argued that EFL learners can learn grammatical features successfully, but grammatical competence does not guarantee for pragmatic ability (Rueda, 2006).

The statistical information presented in the finding suggests that learners who was instructed with explicit and implicit training performed the speech act better at the post-test and the delayed-test. This indicates that both types of teaching technique bring about benefits for learners to produce more "linguistically precise" and "pragmatically appropriate". Nevertheless, explicit training contributes to the learners' appropriate production of the target language better. Those findings are in line with previous studies that have reported the benefits of pragmatic teaching regarding L2 pragmatic development (Shark 2019; Derakhshan & Arabmofrad 2018; Duan 2008; Kondo 2001; Takahashi 2001). On the one

hand, the current research further support prior works on the positive effects of explicit training which focused on discussion of rules, introduction of formulaic expressions as primary techniques to furnish learners with "meta-pragmatic information" (Taguchi 2011; Yoshimi, 2001). The study, agrees upon the aforementioned studies, which concludes that learners' ability to express more appropriate speech act can be improved with explicit teaching method. On the other hand, the outcomes disagree with other researchers' works such as Salehi (2013), Ebadi and Pourzandi (2015) who explored that there were no significant differences at the learners' production of the speech act under two training conditions and in some cases implicit groups showed better performance in comparison to their counterparts.

In relation to the learner's appropriate production of the speech act under two types of instructional method, the study revealed that students who received explicit training gained better results compared to those in the implicit training group and the difference between the two groups was statistically significant. Results from the WDCTs of the post-test as well as the delayed-test support the fact that both implicit and explicit teaching facilitate learners' development of pragmatic knowledge. However, the explicit method appears to be more beneficial than the implicit one in the process of L2 pragmatic acquisition. The findings show that learners in the EG made better progress in the appropriate use of apologetic strategies. Nevertheless, we should not pay less attention to the fact that implicit training is also useful in developing EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge.

The findings, with regard to the first research question, indicate that learners' scores for performance on the speech act was significantly different after the training period. When instructed with explicit method, the learners performed better than those in the other group. The fact that learners who took part in explicit mode of training performed better shows that when learners are introduced necessary pragmatic tools and given more chance to practice the

target language, they become more consciously aware of the appropriate forms in that language (Schmidt, 1993).

      With respect to the second research question, it seems that explicit teaching has positive impact on the learners' appropriate use of apology strategy. Kondo (2001) argued that major benefits of the explicit teaching mode is that it promotes learners' notice and raise their awareness of "pragmatic knowledge", and hence helps in converting "input into intake". From the findings presented in the previous chapter, it can be seen that explicit training helps to improve the learners' abilities to choose appropriate strategies for certain social instances. In addition, they know how to combine diverse strategies and intensifying devices to make an apology more appropriately. The present research also found that in order to obtain pragmatic fluency, more pragmatic tools and linguistic input should be furnished to learners.

Chapter 6. CONCLUSION

6.1. Conclusion

The present study confirmed the findings of other studies on the contribution of explicit/implicit training technique to EFL learners' pragmatic production and competence. Moreover, the explicit teaching approach generated more benefits for the learners to produce the speech act appropriately based on the comparison concerning mean values from three versions of WDCTs. The main benefit of explicit training is that it may facilitate "noticing", raise learners' awareness of English pragmatic knowledge, and thus helps learners perform the speech act better. The study also showed that teaching pragmatic enhanced learners' abilities to choose formulaic expressions and strategies for certain social circumstances better.

Like other studies on EFL learners' pragmatic production, the current study has indicated that "pragmatic competence" that is considered as an important component of "communicative competence" may not be acquired fully without proper instruction. Furthermore, most of the EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge showed improvement when they were formally instructed with pragmatic aspects. Therefore, I have argued in this project that EFL learners at TGU should be provided with classroom training of pragmatic knowledge to facilitate their development of pragmatic competence.

6.1. Limitations

Although receiving encouragements, instructions as well as helps from my experienced supervisors as well as support from teachers at the Department of English at TGU, this paper faces some limitations. Firstly, it is about the limited number of potential participants. In order to get reliable results, it is necessary to recruit a large number of participants studying different majors. The research, however, merely involved 30 participants of two training conditions, which means that each group only consisted of 15

learners. Secondly, the training intervention that took place in a short time may not facilitate learners in the implicit training group for acquiring the linguistic input. Moreover, the lesson plans and materials used for the current study were designed and delivered to the learners by the researcher. Although necessary materials such as dialogues or picture prompts are revised and examined by native speakers, they are still imaginative situations, which may be different from real life situations. In addition, the use of WDCTs before and after the training to collect the data focused on only learners' responses might also be a limitation of the study.

6.2. Pedagogical implications

First of all, the outcomes of the study support and advocate inclusion of pragmatic teaching in the language learning settings since learners may not acquire appropriate usage of the target language on their own. In addition, the role of pragmatic training proves more important in foreign language classrooms where learners have few opportunities for contact with native speakers. In some cases, pedagogical treatment is a primary source by which EFL learners are exposed to the target language. Learning English is more burdensome in an EFL learning setting in comparison to studying English in a second language environment since EFL learners cannot access "authentic input" of the target language as ESL learners do. Hence, inclusion of pragmatic training and the role of language teachers become essential to EFL learners' acquisition of the target language. A language teacher's responsibility is to design his/her lesson plans which not only focus on grammatical knowledge but also ensure pragmatic knowledge by furnishing learners with linguistic rules and forms found in the target culture. More importantly, language instructors should introduce EFL learners with pragmatic features explicitly so that they have the opportunity to "notice" certain pragmatic rules to build up their existing knowledge of pragmatics.

Additionally, we know that pragmatics is considered as heavily "context-dependent". Providing learners with necessary contexts as well as strategies may enable them to

comprehend and produce speech acts appropriately. The target culture and possible pragmatic transfer needs to be taken into consideration into language lessons in order for learners to realize the target language. Moreover, providing EFL learners with authentic input such as conversations in language corpus, dialogues from movies is also essential since it helps them gain more experience and offer them more opportunity to observe native speakers' production of speech acts.

As mentioned in the discussion part, both teaching methods generate benefits for learners in performing the speech act. Giving high opinion for a certain teaching approach may take away learners' opportunity to acquire the L2 language. Instructors, therefore, should be flexible in combining outstanding components and characteristics of both explicit and implicit teaching technique to make pragmatic lessons become more beneficial for EFL learners. Moreover, the present study supports previous findings that some advanced learners were unable to select apology strategies appropriately and therefore, assuming that they can learn pragmatic rules on their own may take away their chance to develop pragmatic competence. Also, the results from the study also showed that for learners at high levels of proficiency, instruction of pragmatics can be an effective approach for developing pragmatic competence within a relatively short period of time.

Last but not least, the study contributes to the literature relevant to benefits of pragmatic training on the development of pragmatic competence in ESL/EFL classes. Language teachers, therefore, should take this fact into consideration to incorporate issues of pragmatic features in lesson plans. Similarly, it is also for pedagogical scholars and syllabus planners to pay more attention to knowledge of pragmatic aspects in their syllabus design and curriculum.

6.3. Directions for Future Research

First of all, the data analysis was heavily based on learners' responses of WDCTs embedded in different social situations. The format of WDCTs is designed for a "one-side response", and thus various patterns of interaction may not be adequately examined. Studying speech act concerning more than one response from certain social circumstances can generate additional information about how interlocutors negotiate meaning with each other. Moreover, further research may employ some other different methods to collect data such as classroom observation or role-play activities. In addition, the study only examined the speech act of apology and it mainly focused on learners' ability to produce the speech act appropriately regarding different social contexts. Further studies need to be carried out to investigate different speech acts to gain further insights into language teaching and learning. Finally, additional studies involving the teaching of pragmatics to learners at various levels of language proficiency can be conducted. These studies may help language instructors know about learners at various levels and figure out what pragmatic training mode will be more beneficial for them.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A
WDCT DESIGNED FOR PRE-TEST

Please, provide some brief information about yourself

Name _____

Gender _____

Major _____

Age _____

o Read each social situation carefully

o Think of how to make an appropriate apology for the following situations

o Write down your responses on the given space for each situational description

Situation 1: You have known your friend for many years and have a good relationship with him. Both of you are currently studying at the same university. A month ago, a friend of yours bought an expensive new motorbike. He loves it a lot because he has dreamed of having one for ages. You also like the motorbike, so you borrowed it for a try. Unfortunately, you had an accident and the motorbike got some terrible scratches on it. When he saw the motorbike, he was very angry and didn't want to see any scratches.

You make an apology to your friend by saying: …………………………………………….

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Situation 2: You are in the English class and your teacher is delivering a new lesson of passive voice. At that time, you do not notice what the teacher is saying, but chatting with a classmate close to you. Your chat makes such loud noise and disturbs other classmates attending to the lesson. Your teacher thinks it really bothers the class, so she stops you and asks you not to repeat it. You realize your fault, so you stand up to talk to her about your bad behavior.

You make an apology to your teacher by saying:…………………………………………

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Situation 3: You promise to your new friend to meet her at the cinema at 6 p.m. for a new movie of Marvel. She likes seeing this new released movie a lot. But you do not show up until 6.30 p.m. because of the heavy traffic. Both of you then hurry to go inside the cinema, it is 25 minutes late and your friend cannot understand some parts of the movie because of the missing information at the beginning. This makes her feel disappointed and really needs to know the reason why you come too late.

You make an apology to your friend by saying: ...………………………………………….

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Situation 4: Before going out for some groceries, your mother asks you to collect the blankets hanging outside the house because it is going to rain, but you tell her you will do it a bit later because you are playing online games. When bringing in the groceries, she makes a

phone call to keep reminding you about the blankets. After the rain, she goes home and discovers all the blankets got wet while you are still playing the games. She calls you to go downstairs to see the wet stuff. At that time, you know that you made a big mistake.

You make an apology to your mother by saying: ...……………………………………………

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Situation 5: It is your habit to take the bus to school. In the morning, the bus is always crowded with many people. When you are stepping out of the bus, you accidentally bump into a stranger, which makes that person slightly startled.

You make an apology to him/her by saying: ...……………………………………………

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.**Situation 6:** You are in the living room with an acquaintance having small talks about the beautiful new clothes she is wearing. Suddenly, you receive a phone call and arise from the sofa to answer it. At the moment, you accidentally dirty her shirt with some coffee stains. You know that she has told you she will wear it for a new job interview the following day because it makes her look more confident.

You make an apology to your acquaintance by saying: ...……………………………….……

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Situation 7: You are in your professor's office to discuss the research project with him. When you move your chair to sit down, you accidentally drop his bag on the floor. Your professor is not bothered much. He gives you a friendly smile, but you still feel embarrassed about it.

You make an apology to your professor by saying:

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.**Situation 8:** You are a university student and will have a class presentation with your group next week. The group leader sends a text to the group chat on Facebook to arrange a meeting at the library for the rehearsal. Everyone agrees that the group will meet at 10 a.m. next Thursday, but a day after, a member gets busy on the planned day, so the group leader changes the meeting day from 10 a.m. Thursday to 9 a.m. Tuesday and texts to the group. You see the text message but you think the group changes the time but not the day. When the group meets on Tuesday, they message you. At that time, you look at the message again and recognize you are wrong about the day of the meeting.

You make an apology to your group by saying: ...………………………….……………

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APPENDIX B
WDCT DESIGNED FOR POST-TEST

Please, provide some brief information about yourself

Name _____

Gender _____

Major _____

Age _____

o Read each social situation carefully

o Think of how to make an appropriate apology for the following situations

o Write down your responses on the given space for each situational description

Situation 1: You are a last-year student at university. Next week, you will submit your term paper to your professor. Therefore, you borrow your classmate's memory stick (USB) to save some documents for printing later. She is happy to give you her USB which contents a lot of electronic books related to the topic she needs to read more for her oral exam. You put the USB in the pocket of your jeans, but forget to take it out when doing the laundry. As a result, the USB gets wet and you cannot open it from your laptop. You meet and tell your friend what has happened. She is extremely upset because there are many important notes and electronic books she needs for the upcoming exams.

You make an apology to your friend by saying: ..…………………………….……………

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Situation 2: You and your classmate are discussing how to make a foster more attractive for tomorrow's presentation in front of the class. Your friend disagrees with all the ideas you suggest. He even changes the content of the part you are responsible for presenting without informing you, which makes you feel angry a lot. You shout at him with bad words considered inappropriate for students according to the school's principles. Unfortunately, your teacher enters the class, and hears what you have just said, which makes him feel unpleased.

You make an apology to your teacher by saying: ..………………………….………........

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Situation 3: Yesterday, you promised your classmates to practice the play you are going to perform together. When your classmates were at school waiting for you, your mother asked you to take her to a relative's house. You explained to your mother about the meeting with your classmate, but she still wanted you to take her there. This is the last chance for you to practice because the performance will be taking in a couple of days, and both of you do not have much time for that. However, you could not back up your mother's order. Because of this, you came to the meeting point very late, which makes your classmates feel annoyed.

You make an apology to your classmate by saying: ..………………………..….……………

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Situation 4: Before going to the garden to pick up some fruit, your mother asks you to help her turn off the water tap in the bathroom. You promise to do it a bit later because you are talking on the phone with a friend. When she goes out of the house, she keeps reminding you about the water tap. You say you will do it right away. When finishing the work, she discovers that the bathroom is flooded with water. She is very angry about that when showing you how flooded the bathroom is. She tells you she never wants to see this happen again.

You make an apology to your mother by saying: ...……………………………….……………

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Situation 5: You are a university student and your class in on the 10th floor. You have to use a lift every day to get to it. When entering the lift, you accidentally step on a stranger's shoes. This is not serious but makes that person feel a bit annoyed.

You make an apology to him/her by saying: ...……………………………….…………….

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Situation 6: Two days ago, you were at an acquaintance's house for a dinner meal. After the meal, you suggested helping her do the washing up. When putting some plates on the kitchen cabinet, you accidentally dropped the plate that she really likes on the floor. You know how much she likes this plate because during the meal time, she told you the story about the plate that she bought from the trip to Istanbul, but now it was broken and she was so sad about it.

You make an apology to her by saying: ...………………………….……...…………...

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Situation 7: This semester, you move to a new building in another university campus to study some new subjects. On the first day of the new semester, you have to go to school early to find the room on the fifth floor. When seeing the room number, you open the door and enter it, but the room is filled with many professors having a meeting. Everyone is so surprised to see you there. At that time, you are too embarrassed to know that you go into a wrong room.

You make an apology to professors in the room by saying: ..…………………….……………

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Situation 8: Your classmates are going to celebrate a party at the weekend and you are responsible for some interesting CDs. Everyone agrees to meet at John's house because his house is near the town. However, a day after, a member in a group sends you a message to tell you that the party will be celebrated at Johnny's house which is very far from the town. At the time you are too sleepy and do not see the message clearly. When your friends are at John's house waiting for the CDs for long, they call you. At that time, you check the message again and know that you miss the information.

You make an apology to your friends by saying: ..……………………………….……………

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APPENDIX C

WDCT DESIGNED FOR DELAYED-TEST

Please, provide some brief information about yourself

Name _____

Gender _____

Major _____

Age _____

o Read each social situation carefully

o Think of how to make an appropriate apology for the following situations

o Write down your responses on the given space for each situational description

Situation 1: You have been friend with Tan for many years. Last week, you went on holidays in Thailand with your classmates, so you borrowed his new expensive digital camera to take interesting photos there. Unfortunately, when you went out of the hotel room, somebody stole the camera. When Tan knew that he was very upset because he has stored a lot of photos he likes in the camera.

You make an apology to your friend by saying: ...……………………………..……….……

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Situation 2: You were in the classroom attending your classmates' presentation of climate change. At the moment, your mobile phone rang with very loud noise. You immediately cancelled the call but it rang again then, which interrupted the presentation. Your teacher was

not pleased about it because the classroom's rule is that students must make their mobile phones vibrate when being in the classroom.

You make an apology to your teacher by saying: ...………………….…….…………………………..

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.**Situation 3:** You write an email to your friend to make an appointment with her at a local coffee shop at 7 p.m. to discuss plans for upcoming holidays. When you are biking to the place, you discover that you forget to bring your laptop. You immediately call her to tell her about your being late, but she does not answer the phone. So, when you come to the coffee shop, it is 30 minutes late and she is really unpleased about it.

You make an apology to her by saying: ...………………………………….……………

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Situation 4: Before going to the countryside to visit some relatives, your mother asked you to go to the power company to pay for the electrical bills. She has been too busy for ages and has not done that yet. You promised to do it when you finished studying at school. However, you forgot her words and came to your friend's apartment to stay there when she was not at home. When she came back home two days later, she realized that the power was cut and you were not at home. She was very angry, so she phoned you to ask what happened.

You make an apology to your mother by saying: ..……………………….……………

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Situation 5: You are a university student. Today you will go to the library to study with some friends. You are a bit late because it has been raining for long. When it stops raining, you try to rush to the place. When entering the library door, you bump into a stranger, which makes that person slightly startled.

You make an apology to him/her by saying: ..……………………….………….

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Situation 6: You took your lovely dog to an acquaintance's house for a chat at the weekend. When she and you were strolling around the garden and chatting with each other, your dog chased and bit her small dog, which made him got injured on the tail. She was scared to see what was happening.

You make an apology to your an acquaintance by saying: ...……………………...…………….…

……………………………………………………………………………………………..

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Situation 7: You are writing a thesis this semester and ask your supervisor for some reference books. He is happy to lend you some. When reading one of the books, you accidentally spill some coffee on it, which makes some pages of the book turn brown and look dirty. When you take the book the professor's office, you see a frown on his face.

You make an apology to your professor by saying: ...………………………….……………

………………………………………………………………………………………………..

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Situation 8: Your group is going to make a presentation about history of churches in the town. Every member agrees that the group will meet at the oldest church at 9 A.M. the next day. However, in the evening, the group leader sends you a message telling that the old church is being renovated and visitors are not allowed to see things inside. Instead, the group will meet at the largest church of the town and everybody must be on time. You see the massage, but at the time, you are having a chat with your brother and forget to read it afterwards. The next morning, the group messages you because they do not see you at the meeting point as planned. When you are on the way to the old church, you see the message and know that you miss the information.

You make an apology to your friends by saying: ...………………………….………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………..

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Appendix D. Picture prompts for implicit/explicit teaching

Picture prompt 1

You are buying some snacks in a supermarket. At that time, you are seeing a person looking at items on the shelf nearby. You are approaching to tough her shoulder because you think she is your friend, but when she turns back you know that you mistake her for a friend. How can you make an appropriate apology to that person in this situation?

Picture prompt 2

You are sitting in the classroom with some classmates at break time. When you are moving your chair to make way for a classmate, you accidentally drop your friend's pencil on the floor and its tip is broken. How can you make an appropriate apology to your classmate in this situation?

Picture prompt 3

You are in a crowded lift at school in early morning. You step on a professor's backpack, but you do not recognize until he picks it up when walking out of the lift. How can you make an appropriate apology to him in this situation?

Picture prompt 4

You have an appointment with a customer to pick up her at the central bus station because this is the first time she has visited your company. You come late for more than 30 minutes because you misunderstand the time schedule. She says 9:15 a.m. but you think 9:50 a.m. How can you make an appropriate apology to your customer in this situation?

9:15 a.m.

9:50 a.m.

Picture prompt 5

You have an appointment with a friend to pick up him at the central bus station but you come late for more than 30 minutes because of the terrible traffic. You bring your mobile phone with you but you cannot call him because it runs out of battery. How can you make an appropriate apology to your friend in this situation?

Picture prompt 6

You mother asks you to turn off all electrical devices in your own room before the family departs for a three-day holiday. You promise to do it immediately. When the family gets home, you mother discovers that you forget to turn the air-conditioner off, which makes her feel absolutely angry. How can you make an appropriate apology to your mother in this situation?

Picture prompt 7

You borrow your close friend a laptop because your laptop's battery is going to run out. He is happy to lend it to you. While working with the laptop, you accidentally drop it on the floor. Its screen is broken and you try to push the "Start" button but it does not work. You friend really needs the laptop because there are many important notes for the upcoming exams stored in it. How can you make an appropriate apology to your friend in this situation?

Picture prompt 8

You friend and you are having a birthday party in your apartment. You are playing some music with loud speakers, dancing and making terrible noise when your neighbors are sleeping. They are very angry, so they come to your apartment and make complaints. How can you make an appropriate apology to them in this situation?

Picture prompt 9

You are drinking some coffee and resting on the bench in the university campus. When finishing your coffee, you throw away the paper cup. Unfortunately, your littering is caught by a janitor. He is not pleased about it. Moreover, your university is very strict about littering around campus. How can you make an appropriate apology in this situation?

Appendix E. Picture prompts for enhancement of input

Picture prompt 1

You are walking along the crowded street talking on your mobile phone and not paying attention to anything happening around. You almost bump into a stranger walking toward you. How can you make an appropriate apology to that person in this situation?

Picture prompt 2

You finish your assignment and make a printed version to hand it in at your lecturer's office. You know that your friend is going meet the lecturer, so you ask him to drop it there for you. After that you take a holiday abroad for a few days. Unfortunately, your friend forgets about your papers when being there. Today, you have an appointment with your lecturer to tell him why you do not hand in your assignment on time. How can you make an appropriate apology in this situation?

Picture prompt 3

You parents are visiting some countries abroad for over a week and they ask you to water the vegetables in the garden regularly because it is in summer and they need a lot of water. When being in abroad, they often send you some messages to remind you about it, you always promise to do it right away, but after that you completely forget. When returning home, they discover that many kinds of vegetables turn yellow, which makes them irritated. How can you make an appropriate apology to your parents in this situation?

Picture prompt 4

You share an apartment with some other students. This morning, you get up late and rush to class, so you forget to lock the front door. When you come home, your roommates tell you about it. This is the second time you have left the door open, which is dangerous because someone can go inside and steal things. They do not want to see this happen again. Otherwise, you have to move out. How can you make an appropriate apology to your roommates in this situation?

APPENIX F. DIALOGUES

Dialogue 1
Storyline: Mark is buying some snacks in a store when he sees a woman choosing some items on the shelf nearby. He approaches and touches her shoulder. The woman turns around and looks at him with a bit startled in her face. At that time, Mark knows he mistakes her for a friend.
The woman: Sorry! but do we know from each other?
John: Oh! I'm terribly sorry. Please, forgive me. I didn't mean to do so. I mistook you for a friend. I'm very sorry for making you startled.
The woman: That's all right! But you've got to be more careful next time!

Dialogue 2
Storyline: Two students are chatting in the classroom at break time.
Student 1: Wanna play a game of tennis this Saturday?
Student 2: That sounds great. What's the time?
Student 1: How about 4 p.m. at the sport center?
Student 2: Sure, I can make it.
Student 3: Hey! Can you move the chair?
Student 1: Of course, Oops! So sorry. Your pencil's tip is broken. I'll buy you a new one for you tomorrow.
Student 2: It's not a big deal. Never mind.

Dialogue 3
Storyline: You have an appointment with a customer to pick up her at the central bus station because this is the first time she has visited your town. You come late for more than 30 minutes because you misunderstand the time schedule. She says 9:15 a.m. but you think 9:50 a.m.
You: Glad to meet you here. (Take your mobile phone out of the pocket and discover there were three missing calls from her)
You: Oh, you've called me many times, Sorry for that, I didn't hear the phone ring when driving. What was that?
Customer: I told me you to pick me up at 9:15 you didn't show up, so I called you many time. I have been waiting here for more than 30 minutes.
You: Oh my dear! I'm really sorry that I didn't come to pick up you on time. I might misunderstand the time schedule. I thought you meant 9.50. I didn't check the time again to make it clear. I feel embarrassed and ashamed of what I did. Please accept my apology.
Customer: Okay! Forget about it.
You: Let me help with your bags and drive you to the hotel right away.

Dialogue 4
Storyline: Your mother comes home with a friend and she discovers that the living room is such a mess although she asks you to clean it. When her friend leaves, she shows you how dirty the room is.
Mother: Jack, look! Haven't I told you to clean it? Why didn't you do that?
Jack: I'm so sorry, mom. I know it was my fault. I should have done that when you asked me. I'll clean it right away.
Mother: I hope you won't repeat this.
Jack: Sure, mom. I promise.

Mother: You'll also clean the garden and your own room, too.
Jack: That's fine, mom.

Dialogue 5
Storyline: You accidentally drop Nick's laptop on the floor, then you meet him and tell what happened.
Nick: Oh my gosh! What happened with my laptop? Did you drop it?
You: I apologize, Nick. I accidentally dropped it on the floor and its screen broke.
Nick: You know I've stored lots of notes for the exams. How can I get them now?
You: It's too careless of me, Nick. I'll do everything you want to make up this wrongdoing. I'll take it to the laptop shop nearby to have it checked right now. I'll cover all the cost for a new one if yours doesn't work well after it's fixed.
Nick: You know what I need now is my notes and a laptop to work on with my assignments.
You: I know Nick. It was all my fault. I'll try my best to set it straight for you.

Dialogue 6
Storyline: Your friend and you are having a party, loud noise from your apartment makes two neighbors feel annoyed so they come to your place to complain. Your neighbors are knocking on the door, you come to the door, open it to check.
Neighbors: Can I talk to you for a while?
You: Oh! Hi! What's up?
Neighbor: Are you having a party now?
You: Yeah, today is my birthday and I'm having a few close friends over.
Neighbor: Oh! Happy birthday, but the music is too loud. We have to work early tomorrow.
You: Oh! So sorry for that. I don't realize I'm making so much noise at the moment. I promise this won't happen again.
Neighbors: Great thanks for that.
You: Let me apologize again for the noise.

Appendix G. Teaching lesson plans

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Lesson 1

Teaching lesson plan for the EG

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Topic: Strategy A: "An explicit expression of apology"

Objectives: By the end of the lesson, learners will be able to:

- notice language forms related to apologies
- recognize and employ intensifiers to apologies
- perform the strategies in similar social situations more appropriately

Phases	*Activities*	*Interaction*	*Time*
Presentation phase	- clearly state the objectives of the lesson: today, we are going to learn an apologetic strategy called "an explicit expression of apology". This strategy is important to know because it is the most common used strategy in English to restore harmony among people. - present learners with picture prompts 1, 2 (appendix D) for eliciting relevant social situations	Teacher - learners	4 min

Explanation phase	- introduce dialogue 1, 2 with described situations (appendix E)
	- ask them to underline the strategies used in each dialogue
	- ask some learners to read out loud the strategies then write them on the blackboard
	+ **Oh! I'm so/really/terribly sorry, please forgive me. I didn't mean to do so. I mistook you for a friend.**
	    Express regret + request forgiveness + explanation
	+ **Oops! I'm sorry**. I'll buy you a new one tomorrow.
	    Express regret + offer repair
	- explain the strategies clearly (when to use, how to use, to whom, and stress the intensifiers)
		Teacher - learners	9 mins

Practice phase	- ask them to work in pairs to create their own dialogue with picture prompt 3 (appendix D)	Learners - learners	5 mins

	- ask two pairs to act out their own dialogue		
Feedback phase	- explicitly correct mistakes - ask questions to check learners' understanding of the lesson + Can you name some apologetic strategies we have learned today? + Why do we need to use "Oh!; Oops; really; so; terribly; or please"?	Teacher - learners	2 mins

Lesson 1

Teaching lesson plan for the IG

Topic: Strategy A: "An explicit expression of apology"

Objectives: By the end of the lesson, learners will be able to

- notice language forms related to apologies

- recognize and employ intensifiers to apologies

- perform the strategies in similar social situations more appropriately

Phases	*Activities*	*Interaction*	*Time*
Presentation phase	- the objectives of the lesson are not stated to the learners - present learners with picture prompts 1, 2 for eliciting relevant social situations		3 mins
Explanation phase	- introduce dialogue 1, 2 - ask them to read the dialogues then discuss with their friends to recognize the strategies by themselves - go around to provide helps by using less direct force of responses and "pragma-linguistic recasts"	Learners – learners Teacher - learners	7 mins
Practice phase	- require learners to read the dialogues again - require them to work in pairs/groups to create their own dialogue then act out the given situation from picture prompt 3	Learners - learners	8 mins

Feedback phase	- provide feedbacks with less direct force of responses and pragma-linguistic recasts - ask learners to work in pair to discuss what they have just learned about the lesson	Teacher – learners Learners - learners	2 mins
Enhanceme nt of input	- provide one more picture prompt (picture prompt 1, appendix E) related to the strategy taught in the lesson for learners to practice as an outside classroom activity - ask them to work in groups to create their own dialogue, then practice it through role-play activity.	Learners - learners	

Lesson plan 2

Teaching lesson plan for the EG

Topic: Strategy B: "An explanation or account"

Objectives: By the end of the lesson, learners will be able to

- notice language forms related to apologies

- recognize and employ intensifiers to apologies

- perform the strategies in similar social situations more appropriately

Phases	*Activities*	*Interaction*	*Time*
Presentation phase	- review the previous lesson - clearly state the objectives of the lesson: today we are going to learn an apologetic strategy called "an explanation or account". In this strategy an apologizer tries to explain the situation that causes the problems to obtain sympathy from the hearer or to reduce the speaker's responsibility - present learners with picture prompt 4 (appendix D) for eliciting relevant social situations	Teacher- learners	3 min

Explanation phase	- present learners with dialogue 3 (appendix E) - ask them to underline the strategies used in each situation - ask some learners to read out loud the strategies then write them on the blackboard **+ Oh! I'm really sorry** that I didn't come on time. **I misunderstood the time schedule. I thought you mean 9.50**. I didn't check the time again to make it clear. **I feel embarrassed and ashamed of what I did**. **Please, accept my apology**. *Express regret + explanation + self-criticism + formal sincerity* - explain the strategies clearly (when to use, how to use, to whom, and stress the intensifiers)	Teacher - learners	10 mins
Practice phase	- ask them to work in pairs to create their own dialogue from picture prompt 5 (appendix D) - ask two groups to act out their own dialogues.	Learners – learners	5 mins
Feedback phase	- explicitly correct mistakes - ask questions to check learners' understanding of the lesson + What is the apologetic strategy we have learned today? + Why do we need to use "Oh!; really; so; or please"? + Can you give some examples of combination between direct and indirect apologetic strategies?	Teacher - learners	2 min

Lesson plan 2

Teaching lesson plan for the IG

Topic: Topic: Strategy B: "an explanation or account"

Objectives: by the end of the lesson, learners are able to

- notice language forms related to apologies

- recognize and employ intensifiers to apologies
- perform the strategies in similar social situations more appropriately

Phases	*Activities*	*Interaction*	*Time*
Presentation phase	- ask two groups to act out the role-playing activity related to enhancement of input in the previous week - present learners with picture prompt 4 for eliciting relevant social situations	Learners - learners	3 mins
Explanation phase	- present learners with dialogue 3 - ask them to read the dialogue then discuss with their friends to find out the strategies by themselves - go around to provide helps by using less direct force of responses and pragma-linguistic recasts	Learners - learners Teacher - learners	6 mins
Practice phase	- require learners to read the dialogue again - ask them to work in pairs/groups to create their own dialogue from the given picture prompt 5 then act out the situation	Learners - learners	8 mins
Feedback phase	- provide feedbacks with less direct force of responses and pragma-linguistic recasts - ask learners to work in group again to discuss what they have just learned about the lesson	Teacher – learners Learners - learners	3 mins
Enhancement of input	- give learners one more picture prompt related to the strategy taught in the lesson for further practice (picture prompt 2, appendix E) - ask them to work in group to create their own dialogues, then practice through role-play activity.	Learners - learners	

Lesson plan 3

Teaching lesson plan for the EG

Topic: Strategy C: "An acknowledgment of responsibility"

Objectives: By the end of the lesson, learners will be able to:

- notice language forms related to apologies
- recognize and employ intensifiers to apologies
- perform the strategies in similar social situations more appropriately

Phases	Activities	Interaction	Time
Presentation phase	- review the previous lesson - clearly state the objectives of the lesson: today, we are going to learn an apologetic strategy called "an explanation or account". In this strategy an apologizer tries to acknowledge his/her responsibility to restore trust and rebuild relationships. - present learners with picture prompt 6 (appendix D) for eliciting relevant social situations	Teacher-learners	3 min
Explanation phase	- present learners with dialogue 4 (appendix F) - ask them to underline the strategies used in each situation - ask some learners to read out loud the strategies then write them on the blackboard + **I'm sorry, mum. I know it was my fault. I shouldn't have done that. I'll clean the room right away.** *Express regret + acknowledge responsibility + offer repair* - explain the strategies clearly (when to use, how to use, to whom, stress the intensifiers, interjections, and titles) - provide learners with structures related to acknowledging responsibility and offering repair "What can I do to make it right for you? I'll buy a new one for you; Is there anything I can do to make this up to you? I'll do everything you want to make	Teacher – learners	9 mins

	up this wrongdoing; I'll do everything you want to make up this wrongdoing" "I know it was completely my fault; I did it wrong; I can see that my action/comment/words hurt you/your feelings/caused the damages.		
Practice phase	- require learners to read the dialogue again - ask them to work in pairs/groups to create their own dialogue with picture prompt 7 (appendix D) then act out the situation in front of the class	Learners – learners	6 mins
Feedback phase	- explicitly correct mistakes - ask questions to check learners' understanding of the lesson + What is the apologetic strategy we have learned today? + What we can say to acknowledge responsibility/offer repair?	Teacher - learners	2 mins

Lesson plan 3

Teaching lesson plan for the IG

Topic: Strategy C: "An acknowledgment of responsibility"

Objectives: By the end of the lesson, learners are able to

- notice language forms related to apologies

- recognize and employ intensifiers to apologies

- perform the strategies in similar social situations more appropriately

Phases	*Activities*	*Interaction*	*Time*
Presentation phase	- the objectives of the lesson are not stated to the learners - ask two groups to act out the role-playing activity related to enhancement of input in the previous week	Learners-learners	4 mins

	- present learner with pictures prompt 6 for eliciting relevant social situations		
Explanation phase	- present learners with dialogue 4 - ask them to read the dialogues then discuss with their friends to find out the strategies by themselves - go around to provide helps by using less direct force of responses and pragma-linguistic recasts	Learners – learners	7 mins
Practice phase	- require learners to read the dialogues again then ask some groups act out the dialogues. - ask them to work in groups to create their own dialogue with the situation described in picture prompt 7, then practice it through role-play activity	Learners – learners	7 mins
Feedback phase	- provide feedbacks with less direct force of responses and "pragma-linguistic recasts" - ask learners to work in group again to discuss what they have just learned about the lesson	Teacher - learners	2 mins
Enhancement of input	- provide one more picture prompt related to the strategy taught in the lesson to learners for further practice - ask them to work in group to create their own dialogue, then practice it through role-play activity.	Learners - learners	

Lesson plan 4

Teaching lesson plan for the EG

Topic: Strategy D: "A promise of forbearance"

Objectives: By the end of the lesson, learners are able to

- notice language forms related to apologies

- recognize and employ intensifiers to apologies

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-   perform the strategies in similar social situations more appropriately

Phases	*Activities*	*Interaction*	*Time*
Presentation phase	- review the previous lesson - clearly state the objectives of the lesson: today, we are going to learn an apologetic strategy called "a promise of forbearance". In this strategy, an apologizer tries to placate the hearer for what he/she has just caused. - present learners with picture prompts 8 (appendix D) for eliciting relevant social situations	Teacher-learners	3 min
Explanation phase	- present learners with dialogue 6 (appendix F) - ask them to underline the strategies used in the situation - ask some learners to read the strategies then write them on the blackboard + **Oh! I'm so sorry**. I **shouldn't have made** such loud noise. **I promise this won't happen again.** *Express regret + acknowledge responsibility + a promise for forbearance*	Teacher – learners	8 mins
Practice phase	- require learners to read the dialogue again - ask them to work in pairs/groups to act out the given situation from picture prompt 9 (appendix D) in front of the class	Learners – learners	7 mins
Feedback phase	- explicitly correct mistakes - ask questions to check learners' understanding of the lesson + What is the apologetic strategy we have learned today? + When we want to make a promise for forbearance, which tense do we use?	Teacher - learners	2 mins

	+ What are the differences and similarities between English and Vietnamese apology strategies in these situation?		

Lesson plan 4

Teaching lesson plan for the IG

Topic: Strategy D: "A promise of forbearance"

Objectives: By the end of the lesson, learners are able to

- notice language forms related to apologies

- recognize and employ intensifiers to apologies

- perform the strategies in similar social situations more appropriately

Phases	*Activities*	*Interaction*	*Time*
Presentation phase	- the objectives of the lesson are not stated to the learners - ask two groups to act out the role-playing activity related to enhancement of input previous week - present learners with picture prompt 8 (appendix D) for eliciting relevant social situations	Learners-learners	4 mins
Explanation phase	- present learners with dialogue 6 (appendix F) - ask them to read the dialogue then discuss with their friends to find out the strategies by themselves - go around to provide helps by using less direct force of responses and pragma-linguistic recasts	Teacher - learners Learners – learners	6 mins
Practice phase	- require learners to read the dialogue again - ask some groups to act out the dialogue - ask them to work in pairs to create their own dialogue with the given situation described in picture prompt 9	Learners – learners	8 mins
Feedback phase	- provide feedbacks with less direct force of responses and pragma-linguistic recasts - ask learners to work in group again to discuss what they have just learned about the lesson	Learners - learners	2 mins

Enhancement of input	- give learners one more picture prompt (picture prompt 4, appendix E) related to each situation taught in the lesson for further practice - ask them to work in group to create their own dialogues, then practice through role-play activities.	Learners - learners	