Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure in English Language Classrooms: Development of a Multi-Dimensional Model Based on EFL Teachers' and Learners' Perceptions

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Article type: **Research Article** **Received:** **10/09/2021** **Accepted:** **27/02/2022**	The present study aimed at investigating the perceptions of English language teachers and learners towards cross-cultural pragmatic failure in Iranian EFL contexts. To elicit the information for the construction of Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure Questionnaire, besides reviewing the related literature, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 12 university instructors in the field of applied linguistics. Employing an exploratory sequential mixed methods design, the researchers developed and validated the Questionnaire with 25 items on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree with 220 EFL teachers and learners. Principal component analysis extracted six factors: semantic inappropriacy, insufficient pragmatic instruction, social interaction deficiency, interlingual transfer, cross-cultural illiteracy, and grammatical inadequacy via SPSS Software. Confirmatory factor analysis confirmed this multi-dimensional model using structural equation modeling via LISREL software. The constructed questionnaire was then administered to the target population comprising 165 Iranian EFL instructors and students from different state universities and language institutes in Tehran, to investigate their perceptions towards cross-cultural pragmatic failure. The findings of the study indicated that EFL teachers perceived insufficient pragmatic instruction as the most substantial factor leading to cross-cultural pragmatic failure in EFL classrooms, followed by social interaction deficiency, cross-cultural illiteracy, semantic inappropriacy, grammatical inadequacy, and finally, interlingual transfer as the least important factor while EFL learners perceived semantic inappropriacy as the most and interlingual transfer as the least contributing factors to cross-cultural pragmatic failure. The study's implications for EFL teachers and learners, educators, and materials developers are discussed, and suggestions for further research are provided. ***Keywords:*** Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure, EFL Teachers' and Learners' Perceptions, Multi-dimensional Model, Pragmatics, Pragmatic Competence

Publisher: Imam Khomeini International University

1. Introduction

Pragmatic cultural awareness is one of the most significant areas in L2 acquisition. A high level of pragmatic awareness is important because it helps language learners to utilize the L2 appropriately according to the context in order to accomplish their pragmatic goals. Generally, the ability to communicate in EFL is one of the most important goals of the communicative approach. To communicate effectively, L2 learners should use language appropriately in various social settings. Therefore, there are several ways to improve such abilities of EFL learners. One of these ways is improving learners' pragmatic awareness or pragmatic competence. To get familiar with this concept, Thomas's definition (1983) can be used which refers to pragmatic competence as "one's ability to use language in an effective way to reach a particular goal and to understand it in its specified context" (p. 94). Thus, in order to communicate effectively, L2 learners need to develop their pragmatic awareness of the lack of pragmatic competence, according to Fernández Amaya (2008) "can result in pragmatic failure and communication breakdown" (p. 11). Based on the importance of pragmatic awareness, the present study is designed to measure EFL teachers' and learners' perceptions of cross-cultural pragmatic failure.

Particularly, there are two types of pragmatic failure, including sociopragmatic and pragmlinguistic. Thomas (1983) borrowed these terms from Leech (1983), who defined pragmalinguistics as the individual's linguistic knowledge of language use. Pragmalinguistics, according to Crystal (1988), is the study of language use from the perspective of its structural resources. It specifies the available linguistic structures to express an apology or request a favor. Conversely, sociopragmatics refers to how sociological knowledge affects interaction (Leech, 1983). It is the study of the social backgrounds of the participants in interaction and seeks the way in which features such as gender, power, age, and so forth influence individuals' selection of linguistic forms.

Developing pragmatic competence in the target language is considered as the entire attempt made for pragmatic awareness. Cohen (2010) defines the concept as the ability to negotiate what goes beyond the literal meaning in terms of the intended meaning and assumptions. In fact, its significance in communication has always been an important aspect of language classes. The importance of pragmatics instruction and the need for its development has always been highlighted by a number of scholars in the field of language teaching/learning. To them, teaching pragmatics in EFL classes is a difficult task and of course a matter of concern for most teachers and educators. (Eslami & Eslami-Rasekh, 2004; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Norouzian & Eslami, 2016; Sachtleben & Denny, 2012).

As Ishihara and Cohen (2010) maintained, the studies in this field have tried to explore how language instructors would provide pragmatics instruction and integrate it into teacher education. Furthermore, it is better to combine two domains of theoretical and practical knowledge i.e., changing pragmatics into instructional pragmatics. As Povolna (2012) stated, teacher trainees are willing to apply their theoretical knowledge in their own teaching assisting their learners to overcome pragmatic failure, which could be defined as "*the inability to understand what is meant by what is said*" (Thomas, 1983, p. 91). This might result in misunderstanding across cultures generally termed as 'cross-cultural pragmatic failure', which refers to failure to comprehend a speaker's intentions in intercultural communication. (Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei 1998; DeCapua & Wintergerst 2004; Kasper, 1998; Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985; Qin, 2003).

After Thomas (1983) proposed pragmatic failure theory, much scholarly attention has been paid to this phenomenon by a number of researchers in different countries especially in China. Research on pragmatic failure has generally focused on classification of pragmatic failure, factors leading to pragmatic failure, and explanation of strategies to prevent pragmatic failure in EFL educational contexts, which are elaborated on in the literature review section.

As claimed by Taguchi (2011a, 2011b), there has been a growing awareness of cross-cultural issues and the need to develop a good command of English as a means of appropriate communication across societies. Bardovi-Harlig (2013) states that teachers should provide their L2 learners with various tasks to stimulate their conversational skills and develop their pragmatic competence. Failure to achieve pragmatic competence will lead to socio-cultural misunderstandings causing conflicts between individuals and communities. The aim of this study is to provide a profile of pragmatic failure in language classrooms with a focus on Thomas's theory of pragmatic failure and its various aspects through investigating the Iranian EFL teachers' and learners' perceptions of cross-cultural pragmatic failure and the importance that should be given to this dilemma by authorities.

2. Literature Review

Pragmatic failure theory, initiated by Thomas, refers to the inability of hearers to realize the intention of non-native interlocutors' utterances in a specific communicative context or to understand the intended pragmatic force of the utterances causing misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication. In Thomas' research model (1983, p. 93), which stemmed from Leech's (1983) definition of pragmatics scope, two types of pragmatic failure could be identified: sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics. After Thomas (1983) proposed pragmatic failure theory, much scholarly attention

has been paid to this phenomenon by researchers who tried to make further contributions to the theory integrating it with English pedagogy. Based on Thomas's theory and his dichotomous classification of the issue, several Chinese scholars have conducted studies on pragmatic failure in search of ways to help language learners overcome pragmatic failure focusing on factors leading to pragmatic failure and explanation of strategies to eliminate pragmatic failure in EFL contexts.

He and Yan (1986) conducted a study on pragmatic failure and examined cross-cultural pragmatic differences in pragmalinguistic as well as sociopragmatic aspects. The findings of their study demonstrated that pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge are the major sources of pragmatic failure and thus should be taught in classroom settings. In a similar vein, Wang (1990) investigated the potential causes of pragmatic failure that the majority of Chinese students tend to generate. He maintained that pragmatic failure results from both cultural and linguistic communications.

Huang (1984) introduced the concept of 'pragmatic error' through the analysis of ten pragmatic errors claiming that mastering a language, besides its knowledge and skills, should stress different applications of verbal forms in different non-verbal settings. Hong (1991) pointed out that students of high-level linguistic competence tend to encounter pragmatic failure as those of low-level competence, which indicates that appropriate linguistic competence does not reflect pragmatic competence. In concluding remarks, he stated that pragmatic knowledge could be developed through direct instruction; otherwise, it will remain stable.

Pavlidou (2000) investigated telephone conversations in German and Greek, and in all three stages of the telephone conversation, namely 'opening, main topic, and closing,' distinct differences were shown to exist between the Greeks and the Germans in social and transactional calls. Considering two meetings between German and American students, House (2000) reports on examples of unsuccessful relationships. He claims that German speakers have a tendency to interact across different contexts in more explicit, more direct, and more content-oriented than Americans. Similarly, Günthner (2009) stated that German students in conversational exchanges with Chinese subjects appeared to cherish the view of having an appropriate argumentative exchange and tried to construct more antagonistic counter-position to their interlocutors.

Ying (2017) carried out a study at a University in Xi'an to explore the English majors' pragmatic failure in spoken English. Designing and administering a written test, he discovered many differences in request and corresponding response speech acts expressing acknowledgment between

Chinese and English native speakers. Ren and Liu (2019) made an analysis of the reasons behind communication misunderstandings and found evidence of pragmatic failure of phatic communion, form of address, politeness, utterance, and non-linguistic activities.

In Iran, English is being taught as a foreign language; therefore, there is a limited context that does not permit learners to have direct access to real-life English communication. As a result, most students, regardless of their linguistic knowledge, make serious errors in any communicative encounter. A number of scholars believe that pragmatics instruction is necessary in that "foreign language setting as a language class does not provide the learners with sufficient opportunity to experience the target language" (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Eslami, 2005, 2010; Kasper, 2001; Kasper & Rose, 2002). In a study carried out by Eslami and Elami-Rasekh (2004), explicit metapragmatic instruction was found to develop Iranian university students' pragmatic knowledge of speech acts.

In order to discover ways of overcoming pragmatic failure, the present study aimed to investigate the nature of cross-cultural pragmatic failure and develop a model based on Iranian EFL teachers' and learners' perceptions. The study was an attempt to explore the underlying structural dimensions of this cross-cultural model within the theoretical framework adopted from Thomas (1983) to tackle the problems associated with the issue under study. High level of pragmatic competence is essential as it aids EFL teachers and learners to overcome cross-cultural communication misunderstandings and achieve their pragmatic goals.

There has been a scarcity of definitive studies on the factors contributing to cross-cultural pragmatic failure despite a vast literature in the vicinity of the topic. Furthermore, inconsistent results in the previous studies and the lack of a multi-dimensional model based on the perceptions of both teachers and learners in Iranian EFL context were the main impetus to conduct this study. To achieve this purpose, three research questions were formulated:

1. What are the underlying structural dimensions of the cross-cultural pragmatic failure model?

2. Is the newly developed scale (i.e., CCPF Questionnaire) reliable and valid?

3. What are the perceptions of EFL teachers and learners towards cross-cultural pragmatic failure?

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The main participants of this study consisted of two groups of 220 and 165 respondents who were chosen non-randomly based on convenience sampling. The age of learner participants ranged from 20 to 34 years old. In fact, for developing and validating the questionnaire, 125 EFL learners and 95 EFL teachers ($n = 220$) and for administering the questionnaire in the main study phase, 100 EFL learners and 65 EFL teachers ($n = 165$) were recruited from different state universities in Tehran, Iran in the year 2020. Both female and male EFL learners were at advanced level of English language proficiency and the EFL teachers from both genders had at least 3 years of English language teaching experience. The reason behind selecting advanced L2 learners was that although a high level of L2 proficiency does not always result in a high level of pragmatic competence, limited proficiency is generally believed to restrict pragmatic knowledge development (Salisbury & Bardovi-Harlig, 2000; Taguchi, 2007).

3.2. Instruments

To collect the necessary data, two major instruments were used, including an online semi-structured interview (Appendix A) and a newly developed cross-cultural pragmatic failure questionnaire (Appendix B), which was constructed to probe Iranian EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of cross-cultural pragmatic failure.

In the qualitative phase of the study, the first step taken was to carefully review the pertinent literature on cross-cultural pragmatic failure and its different components. The content required for the construction of the questionnaire was specified and the ideas were extracted using the analysis of the relevant literature. After this initial step, to obtain additional technical information on pragmatic failure, semi-structured interviews were conducted online with 12 university professors (four males and eight females) with Ph.D. degrees in the field of applied linguistics. For this reason, 10 open-ended questions were formulated as the major interview questions, followed by a number of probing questions based on the interviewee's responses and piloted with two associate professors of applied linguistics experts in TEFL to ensure its content validity. After modifying the questions, the finalized version of the interview was used to obtain the qualitative data for the generation of questionnaire items. The interviewees who all agreed to participate in this phase of the study were chosen from three state universities in Tehran through purposive sampling. The interview sessions lasted between 20 to 25 minutes each.

To attain a comprehensive profile of cross-cultural pragmatic failure construct, the participants' responses to the questions were fully recorded and transcribed to make the primary data and facilitate the identification of the themes to be included in the questionnaire. Brown (2001, p. 6) defined questionnaires as "instruments in written form which present respondents with a set of statements or questions to be reacted to, either by writing their answers or choosing from among existing options". In this study, a 25-item questionnaire was designed by the researchers in order to investigate teachers' and learners' perceptions of cross-cultural pragmatic failure. The newly developed questionnaire consisted of close-ended Likert-type statements. The respondents replied each question by selecting one of the response options on a 5-point scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.

The Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure Questionnaire was employed to investigate the participant teachers' and learners' perceptions of pragmatic failure. It comprised two parts: Part 1 elicited the respondents' demographic information, including gender, English learning experience, and so forth. Part 2 consisted of 25 items that were intended to elicit the participants' perceptions of cross-cultural pragmatic failure, the activities often used in their EFL classes to reduce cross-cultural pragmatic failure and to enhance learners' pragmatic awareness, the importance of acquiring socio-cultural norms of the target language community, and the causes of cross-cultural pragmatic failure. Furthermore, the content validity of the questionnaire was checked by three experts in the field before being pilot-tested. The pilot study helped the researchers to identify the potential weaknesses of the newly constructed questionnaire and estimate its reliability. The results revealed a reliability index of 0.88, which is quite acceptable.

3.3. Procedure

3.3.1. CCPF Questionnaire Development

To collect the required data based on the objectives and main variable of the study, the researchers constructed a questionnaire to explore the perceptions of EFL teachers and learners towards cross-cultural pragmatic failure. Following the qualitative phase and carefully reviewing the related literature on pragmatic failure, sufficient data were gathered, and prominent themes were identified through content analysis of the interview responses for the development of questionnaire items. Attempts were made to design items that were clear, comprehensible, explicit, and free from ambiguity. Furthermore, to check the representativeness, accuracy, intelligibility, and appropriateness of the questionnaire items, a panel of experts from among the interviewees who expressed their agreement to aid

the researchers in this regard, including three associate and four assistant professors in the field of applied linguistics were asked to evaluate the items in the first draft of the questionnaire. In fact, they rated the items on a 4-point Likert-type scale from 1 (not important to be included) to 4 (extremely important to be included) in the target questionnaire. Thus, based on their opinions, 10 items were eliminated from the first draft of the Questionnaire, so the items were reduced from 35 to 25. The Likert five-option rating scale was chosen for this study, including Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA).

The newly-constructed questionnaire was piloted with 40 Iranian EFL learners and teachers quite similar to the participants of the main study regarding university major, nationality, linguistic background, and education level. The pilot testing enabled the researchers to check the existence of any errors or weaknesses within the instrument and enabled them to make the required modifications before administering the final version of the instrument. After the collection of data in the pilot study, Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was computed through SPSS V.24 to estimate the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The reliability coefficient for the Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure Questionnaire turned out to be 0.88, which is generally regarded as a high value and quite acceptable in this field.

3.3.2. CCPF Questionnaire Validation

In order to have acceptable face validity, the researchers used the book, *Questionnaires in Second Language Research, Construction, Administration, and Processing*, by Dörnyei (2003) to design a suitable layout, font type, and margin.

To estimate the content validity of the constructed questionnaire, five professionals in the field of *applied linguistics* were requested to review the draft and evaluate the accuracy and appropriateness of the items. To reassure the content validity, some changes and modifications were applied to the items to reassure the content validity of the questionnaire prior to the reliability estimation phase.

To establish the construct validity of the developed questionnaire, two types of factor analysis, i.e., exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis were performed. The total number of participants for the development and validation processes was 220 Iranian EFL teachers and learners. After the validation process, the finalized version of the questionnaire was administered to the target population consisting of 65 EFL teachers and 100 EFL students from different universities and language institutes in Tehran.

3.4. Design

To provide appropriate responses to the research questions of the study, an exploratory sequential mixed methods design was utilized (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In a mixed methods design procedure, both qualitative and quantitative methods are applied in the study. Using these methods in a combined format gave the researchers a better understanding of and information about the research problems as compared to a purely quantitative approach. According to Creswell (2014), in an exploratory sequential mixed method design, first the qualitative and next the quantitative data are collected to study the phenomenon.

This study, as already mentioned, was carried out to develop an instrument to assess Iranian EFL teachers' and learners' perceptions of cross-cultural pragmatic failure, explore the components of this construct, and develop a theoretical framework for further statistical analysis. The development of this questionnaire was done in two phases. The purpose of the first phase was to collect the necessary data as the source of information for item generation, and the second phase aimed to develop, pilot and validate the target instrument to be used as a means of gathering the required data from the study participants. In so doing, a small-scale interview was conducted with experts in the field of applied linguistics prior to questionnaire development, the results of which were utilized to create the survey tool.

3.5. Data Analysis

In the present study, the data collected from the Iranian EFL teachers and learners through the administration of the Questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively. Descriptive and inferential statistic s were utilized to examine the obtained data in more detail. First, the reliability of the questionnaire was determined by calculating Cronbach's alpha, which is a measure of internal consistency of the items in a test or questionnaire. Furthermore, the construct validity of the developed questionnaire was calculated through factor analysis. Two types of factor analysis (exploratory and confirmatory) were conducted in this phase of the study to explore the underlying factors of Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure Model enabling the researchers to answer the first research question.

Concerning the second and third research questions dealing with the perceptions of EFL teachers and learners towards cross-cultural pragmatic failure respectively, descriptive statistics including both frequencies and percentages of the responses and the inferential statistics containing one-sample t-test were used. Pallant (2013) believes that the one-sample t-test is a kind of parametric test which decides if the sample mean is statistically

different from a target population mean or average that is, point 3 'Neutral' in this study.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

In this study, the main types of validity investigated for the questionnaire validation were face, content, and construct validity as discussed thoroughly in the method section. To establish the construct validity of the Questionnaire, both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis were conducted. To verify that our data was suitable for factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) value and Bartlett's test were checked (Table 1). As seen in Table 1, KMO value turned out to be .83, which is beyond .60. In addition, Bartlett's test was significant ($p = .000$, $p < .05$). Therefore, factor analysis was appropriate.

Table 1

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.826
	Approx. Chi-Square	1158.584
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	*df*	300
	Sig.	.000

After making sure about the factorability of the data through KMO and the Bartlett's Test of sphericity, factor analysis was run. In order to run exploratory factor analysis, the most commonly adopted approach, which is Principal Component Analysis (PCA), was used.

Table 2

Principal Component Analysis on CCPF Questionnaire

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.274	25.095	25.095	6.274	25.095	25.095	2.513	10.051	10.051
2	1.952	7.808	32.902	1.952	7.808	32.902	2.383	9.530	19.582
3	1.464	5.856	38.758	1.464	5.856	38.758	2.161	8.642	28.224
4	1.381	5.523	44.281	1.381	5.523	44.281	2.038	8.152	36.376
5	1.301	5.203	49.484	1.301	5.203	49.484	1.907	7.628	44.004
6	1.093	4.371	53.855	1.093	4.371	53.855	1.828	7.311	51.314
7	1.055	4.221	58.076	1.055	4.221	58.075	1.691	6.762	58.076

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

A factor analysis through Varimax rotation was conducted to the underlying construct of the Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure Questionnaire consisting of 25 items. As it is evident from Table 2, the SPSS extracted seven factors, with Eigenvalue of more than 1, explaining 58.07% of

variance. Five-point Likert scales were used for each Item, ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.

The initial communalities displayed in Table 3 indicate the relation between the variable and all other variables before rotation. As shown in Table 3, all communalities are high (> .40) and, therefore, acceptable. Communality values for this questionnaire ranged from 0.40 to 0.70.

Table 3

Initial Communality Values in PCA in the CCPF Questionnaire

Items	Initial	Extraction
item1	1.000	.645
item2	1.000	.686
item3	1.000	.505
item4	1.000	.545
item5	1.000	.543
item6	1.000	.612
item7	1.000	.543
item8	1.000	.659
item9	1.000	.572
item10	1.000	.511
item11	1.000	.483
item12	1.000	.632
item13	1.000	.629
item14	1.000	.580
item15	1.000	.624
item16	1.000	.420
item17	1.000	.682
item18	1.000	.568
item19	1.000	.522
item20	1.000	.595
item21	1.000	.560
item22	1.000	.570
item23	1.000	.579
item24	1.000	.571
item25	1.000	.683

As Table 4 shows, seven factors are loaded after rotating the factors in PCA. After checking the factor loadings, items that did not load highly on the obtained factors were eliminated from the questionnaire. Items loading above .40 are acceptable. In this phase, 25 items were acceptably loaded on the seven factors and five items were deleted. According to the results shown in Table 4, the four items that have their highest loading from factor 1 are listed from highest loading (*item 13*) to lowest (*item 2*), in factor 2 five items (highest: *item 19*, lowest: *item 7*), in factor 3 four items (highest: *item 21*,

lowest: *item 22*), in factor 4 six items (highest: *item 5*, lowest: *item 6*), in factor 5 four items (highest: *item 17*, lowest: *item 9*), and finally, in factor 6 four items (highest: *item 12*, lowest: *item 3),

Table 4

Rotated Factor Matrix in PCA in the CCPF Questionnaire

| Items	Components					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Item13	.745					
Item20	.629					
Item1	.530					
Item2	.416					
Item19		.651				
Item10		.627				
Item25		.582				
Item14		.576				
Item7		.516				
Item21			.666			
Item18			.664			
Item24			.638			
Item22			.415			
Item5				.743		
Item11				.678		
Item15				.613		
Item6				.517		
Item17					.760	
Item23					.755	
Item4					.621	
Item9					.471	
Item12						.697
Item8						.660
Item16						.606
Item3						.556

As the Scree plot in Figure 1 indicates, there is quite a clear break between the first and second components. Furthermore, the Scree plot shows that there is another little break after the seventh component, so only seven components are retained.

After rotating loadings of each of the items on the seven components, it was found that the obtained factors and the items loaded on each factor were confirmed. Thus, Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure Questionnaire is considered as a valid and reliable instrument for data gathering purposes. The results of exploratory factory analysis, the main categorization of CCPF Questionnaire for the seven factors, and the related reliability indices are displayed in Table 5. Since the last two factors i.e., factors 6 and 7 overlapped, the researchers decided to mix them producing a single factor i.e., factor 6. In fact, 6 final factors were accepted. After reviewing all the

items related to each factor carefully and consulting with experts in applied linguistics, the factors were labeled appropriately. Table 5 contains the categorization of six factors with the pertinent acceptable reliability indices as follows:

Figure 1

Scree Plot for CCPF Questionnaire in PCA
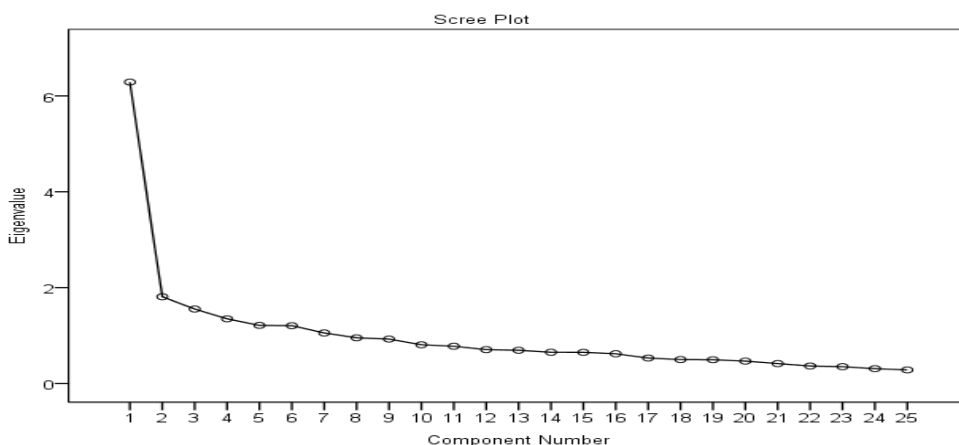
F1:Semantic inappropriacy (4 items: Items 13, 20, 1, 2; α=0.841); F2: Insufficient pragmatic instruction (5 items: Items 19, 20, 25, 14, 7; α = 0.753); F3: Social interaction deficiency (4 items: Items 21, 18, 24, 22; α = 0.710); F4: Interlingual transfer (4 items: Items 5, 11, 15, 6; α = 0.866); F5: Cross-cultural illiteracy (4 items: Items 17, 23, 4, 9; α = 0.871); and F6: Grammatical inadequacy (4 items: Items 12, 8, 16, 3; α = 0.804). Besides, the reliability of the final CCPF Questionnaire with 25 items reached 0.88, which lies within the acceptable range.

Table 5

*Six Factors of CCPF Questionnaire with Related Reliability Indices*

Factor	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
1. Semantic inappropriacy (Items 13, 20, 1, 2)	4	0.841
2. Insufficient pragmatic instruction (Items 19, 20, 25, 14, 7)	5	0.753
3. Social Interaction deficiency (Items 21, 18, 24, 22)	4	0.710
4. Interlingual transfer (Items 5, 11, 15, 6)	4	0.866
5. Cross-cultural illiteracy (Items 17, 23, 4, 9	4	0.871
6. Grammatical inadequacy (Items 12, 8, 16, 3)	4	0.804
Total Questionnaire	25	0.882

After obtaining the 6 main factors through exploratory factor analysis and finalizing the Questionnaire items, confirmatory factor analysis was run to confirm the main factors. In the present study, LISREL (linear structural

relations) software was used for performing structural equation modeling (SEM). To examine the factors underlying cross-cultural pragmatic failure, the data were analyzed using CFA- LISREL 8.0. Figure 2 displays the measurement model for the CCPF Questionnaire.

Figure 2

Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure Model with Standardized Estimates

Chi-Square=416.40, df=259, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.060
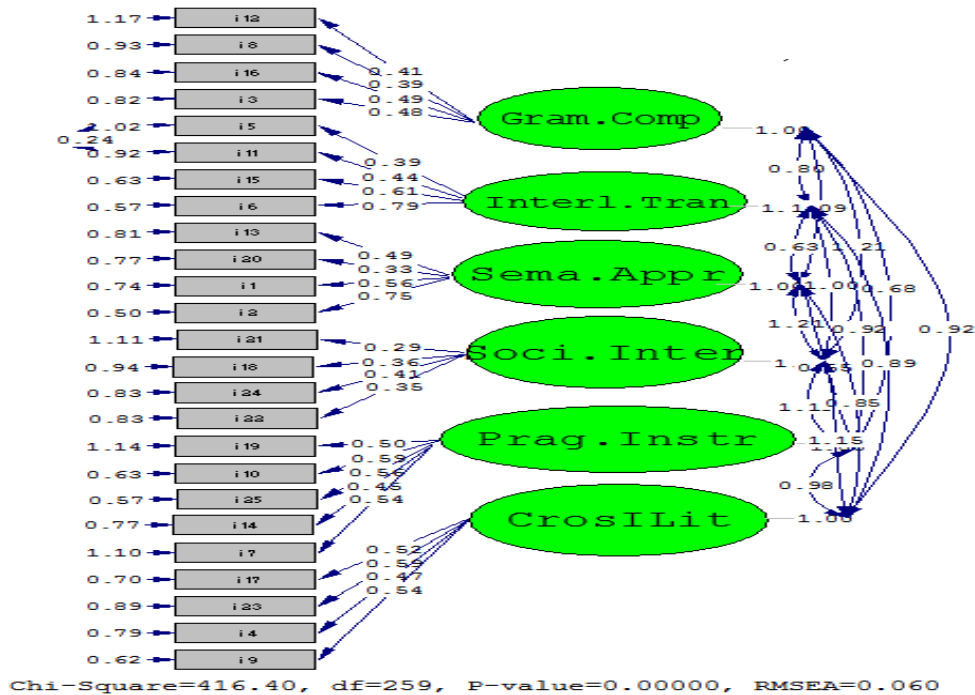
Inspecting the initial normed chi-square (CMIN/DF), PGFI, NFL, and RMEAS (Table 5) showed a rather fit structured model falling within the acceptable range of 1 and 3. The model is presented in Figure 2 with standardized estimates.

The soundness of the factor structure for Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure Model was examined using confirmatory factor analysis comprising the six factors. The model fit analysis summary is provided in Table 6. The CFA measurement model indicated an acceptable overall model fit: df = 1.61, PGFI = 0.67, NNFI = 0.93 and RMSEA = .060. Estimated results of the measurement model at the end of Figure 2 shows the appropriateness of the indices. In fact, the results of CFA were χ^2=416.40, df = 259, and p = 0.00 which indicate a significant value for chi-square. Because chi-square value is sensitive to and dependent on sample size and is usually significant for 220 samples and more, χ^2/df is employed as a solution which is 416.40/259 = 1.61

and is interpreted as an acceptable degree (see Table 6). Additionally, RMSEA turned out to be 0.060, which is less than 0.08. Besides, the other fit indices such as PGFI and NNFI were equal to 0.67, 0.91 and 0.93, respectively, which were all acceptable.

Table 6

Model Fit Analysis Summary

CMIN/DF ($1 \geq, \leq 3$)	PGFI ($\geq$ .60)	NNFI ($\geq$ .90)	RMSEA ($\leq$ .08)
1.61	.67	.93	.060

The overall results showed convergent validity for the CCPF construct. The degree of factor loadings, statistical significance, and the construct reliability test supported the convergent validity of cross-cultural pragmatic failure factors and their related items.

Table 7 represents the percentages and means for the teachers' responses to the CCPF Questionnaire. As can be seen, the mean score for all the items and related subscales is higher than 3, reflecting an almost high agreement of the teachers with the statements of the constructed Questionnaire. In fact, the highest mean score is for Item 24 ($M = 4.37$) within Social Interaction Deficiency Subscale, followed by Item 3 ($M = 4.12$) within Grammatical Inadequacy Subscale, and then Item 7 ($M = 4.11$) within Insufficient Pragmatic Instruction Subscale. However, the least agreed item was Item 5 ($M = 3.32$) followed by Item 16 ($M = 3.34$), and Item 8 ($M = 3.37$).

Besides, Table 7 indicates that the highest agreed upon subscale of pragmatic failure is for "Insufficient Pragmatic Instruction" ($M = 3.91$), followed by "Social Interaction Deficiency" ($M = 3.77$), "Cross-Cultural Illiteracy" ($M = 3.77$), "Semantic Inappropriacy" ($M = 3.70$), "Grammatical Inadequacy" ($M = 3.67$), and then "Interlingual Transfer" ($M = 3.55$).

According to the results shown in Table 7, one-sample t-test detected significant differences ($p = .000$, $p < .05$) for all six subscales of pragmatic failure and also the total pragmatic failure ($t = 11.17$, $p = .000$, $p < .05$) with the mean difference of .74 based on the teachers' reaction to pragmatic failure. That means the EFL teachers showed high agreement with the statements of CCPF Questionnaire.

Table 7

Frequencies and Percentages for Teachers' Perceptions of CCPF

Items & Components	SD				A	ean
	%					
SEMANTIC INAPPROPRIACY	$M = 3.70$, $t = 7.945$, $p = .000$					
Item 13	1.5	4.6	23.1	41.5	29.2	3.92
Item 20	1.5	9.2	23.1	49.2	16.9	3.71
Item 1	1.5	12.3	27.7	43.1	15.4	3.58
Item 2	4.6	10.8	27.7	36.9	20.0	3.57
INSUFFICIENT PRAGMATIC INSTRUCTION	$M = 3.91$, $t = 11.87$, $p = .000$					
Item 19	0.0	13.8	15.4	41.5	29.2	3.86
Item 10	1.5	6.2	15.4	47.7	29.2	3.97
Item 25	0.0	7.7	29.2	33.8	29.2	3.85
Item 14	3.1	7.7	23.1	40.0	26.2	3.78
Item 7	0.0	6.2	23.1	24.6	46.2	4.11
SOCIAL INTERACTION DEFICIENCY	$M = 3.77$, $t = 11.56$, $p = .000$					
Item 21	1.5	16.9	36.9	29.2	15.4	3.40
Item 18	1.5	10.8	24.6	43.1	20.0	3.69
Item 24	0.0	1.5	15.4	27.7	55.4	4.37
Item 22	3.1	4.6	32.3	46.2	13.8	3.63
INTERLINGUAL TRANSFER	$M = 3.55$, $t = 6.33$, $p = .000$					
Item 5	6.2	13.8	29.2	43.1	7.7	3.32
Item 11	1.5	18.5	27.7	43.1	9.2	3.40
Item 15	1.5	7.7	35.4	35.4	20.0	3.65
Item 6	1.5	4.6	24.6	47.7	21.5	3.83
CROSS-CULTURAL ILLITERACY	$M = 3.77$, $t = 8.73$, $p = .000$					
Item 17	0.0	6.2	23.1	41.5	29.2	3.94
Item 23	0.0	13.8	35.4	29.2	21.5	3.58
Item 4	3.1	7.7	27.7	46.2	15.4	3.63
Item 9	0.0	9.2	21.5	35.4	33.8	3.94
GRAMMATICAL INADEQUACY	$M = 3.67$, $t = 8.04$, $p = .000$					
Item 12	1.5	7.7	21.5	43.1	26.2	3.85
Item 8	1.5	16.9	38.5	29.2	13.8	3.37
Item 16	0.0	20.0	36.9	32.3	10.8	3.34
Item 3	0.0	7.7	16.9	30.8	44.6	4.12
TOTAL	$M = 3.74$, $t = 11.17$, $p = .000$					

Table 8 indicates that the mean score for almost all the items and related subscales is greater than 3, representing significant positive agreement of the learners with the statements of the CCPF Questionnaire. In fact, as evident from Table 8, the results showed that the highest agreed upon item was Item 22 ($M = 3.86$) within Social Interaction Deficiency Subscale, followed by Item 3 ($M = 3.80$) within Grammatical Inadequacy Subscale, and then Item 16 ($M = 3.78$) within Grammatical Inadequacy Subscale.

Conversely, the least agreed upon item was Item 23 ($M = 2.98$) within Cross-Cultural Illiteracy Subscale, followed by Item 6 ($M = 3.10$) within Interlingual Transfer Subscale, and then comes Item 5 ($M = 3.15$) within Interlingual Transfer Subscale.

Further, Table 8 shows that the highest agreed upon subscale of pragmatic failure is for "Semantic Inappropriacy" ($M = 3.61$), followed by "Social Interaction Deficiency" ($M = 3.60$), Grammatical Inadequacy ($M = 3.54$), Insufficient Pragmatic Instruction ($M = 3.42$), "Cross-Cultural Illiteracy" ($M = 3.36$), "Interlingual Transfer" ($M = 3.27$).

As manifested in Table 8, one-sample t-test revealed significant differences ($p = .000$, $p < .05$) for all six subscales of pragmatic failure and also the total pragmatic failure ($t = 9.78$, $p = .000$, $p < .05$) with the mean difference of .47 based on the learners' reaction to pragmatic failure. That means the EFL learners also showed high level of agreement with the items of CCPF Questionnaire.

The multi-dimensional model constructed based on a six-factor structure could be described in terms of the following components contributing to cross-cultural pragmatic failure:

- Semantic appropriacy refers to the study of linguistic meaning, or more specifically, the study of the relationship between linguistic expressions and their meanings.

- Pragmatic instruction can focus L2 learners' attention on the target speech act forms with the intention of raising their pragmatic awareness.

- Social interaction is an interchange between two or more people on which social structures and cultures are built.

- Interlingual transfer refers to transfer of linguistic knowledge from the mother tongue or any previously learned linguistic system to the target language.

- Cross-cultural literacy means being literate or knowledgeable about the major differences across various cultures, which assists the learner to function successfully in a communication process.

- Grammatical competence is defined as the mastery of the linguistic code including the ability to identify phonological, morphological, lexical, and syntactical features of a language and to use these features efficiently to understand, encode, and decode words, phrases, and sentences.

Table 8

Frequencies and Percentages for the Learners' Perceptions of CCPF

Items & Components	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean
SEMANTIC INAPPROPRIACY	*M* = 3.61, *t* = 9.45, *p* = .000					
Item 13	4	12	24	39	21	3.61
Item 20	3	10	37	38	12	3.46
Item 1	4	11	14	46	25	3.77
Item 2	1	16	23	40	20	3.62
INSUFFICIENT PRAGMATIC INSTRUCTION	M = 3.42, t = 6.72, p = .000					
Item 19	8	17	20	29	26	3.48
Item 10	3	12	35	36	14	3.46
Item 25	4	9	44	35	8	3.34
Item 14	2	10	31	38	19	3.62
Item 7	7	22	31	23	17	3.21
SOCIAL INTERACTION DEFICIENCY	M = 3.60, t = 9.21, p = .000					
Item 21	4	18	21	33	24	3.55
Item 18	7	12	43	26	12	3.24
Item 24	3	10	21	40	26	3.76
Item 22	3	8	18	42	29	3.86
INTERLINGUAL TRANSFER	M = 3.27, t = 3.75, p = .000					
Item 5	7	23	30	28	12	3.15
Item 11	4	18	18	40	20	3.54
Item 15	3	18	39	25	15	3.31
Item 6	6	26	32	24	12	3.10
CROSS-CULTURAL ILLITERACY	M = 3.36, t = 5.93, p = .000					
Item 17	4	9	26	41	20	3.64
Item 23	10	25	33	21	11	2.98
Item 4	4	17	39	27	13	3.28
Item 9	2	11	30	45	12	3.54
GRAMMATICAL INADEQUACY	M = 3.54, t = 8.26, p = .000					
Item 12	7	24	22	31	16	3.25
Item 8	3	22	26	34	15	3.36
Item 16	3	12	17	40	28	3.78
Item 3	2	12	18	40	28	3.80
TOTAL	M = 9.78					

4.2. Discussion

The current study was the first attempt at developing and validating the Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure Questionnaire by which to investigate the perceptions of Iranian EFL teachers and learners in this regard. To display the power of a six-factor questionnaire, an exploratory factor analysis was run with 220 EFL teachers and learners. The six extracted factors include semantic inappropriacy, insufficient pragmatic instruction, social interaction

deficiency, interlingual transfer, cross-cultural illiteracy, and grammatical inadequacy. Moreover, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test whether the obtained data fit the hypothesized model.

The findings of the present research revealed that EFL teachers perceived insufficient pragmatic instruction as the most substantial factor to cross-cultural pragmatic failure, followed by social interaction deficiency, cross-cultural illiteracy, semantic inappropriacy, grammatical inadequacy, and finally, interlingual transfer as the least important factor leading to cross-cultural pragmatic failure. Specifically, regarding the items, the absence of coherence and cohesion in spoken and written texts under the social interaction deficiency factor was expressed as the main reason of pragmatic failure. Then, it came to sole literal translation without considering the combination of words in a sentence, and then the fact that when instructors focus more on language forms than language functions as the other substantial causes of cross-cultural pragmatic failure.

Additionally, the results revealed that EFL learners perceived semantic inappropriacy as the most significant factor leading to cross-cultural pragmatic failure, followed by social interaction deficiency, grammatical inadequacy, insufficient pragmatic instruction, cross-cultural illiteracy, and interlingual transfer. In fact, it was found that, according to EFL learners, social anxiety in the vicinity of social interaction deficiency subscale was the most prominent issue that could cause pragmatic failure. The next main reason is sole literal translation without considering the combination of words in a sentence within the grammatical inadequacy subscale that may lead to cross-cultural pragmatic failure. Moreover, it was concluded that mispronouncing words in English during interaction, which was in the domain of grammatical inadequacy factor, could result in pragmatic failure

The study results correlate with Thomas's (1983) study, which indicates pragmalinguistic/ sociopragmatic knowledge as the major source of pragmatic failure for Chinese students. Thus, they came to the conclusion that cross-cultural pragmatic knowledge needs to be taught in classroom settings. Likewise, Wang's (1990) research supports our findings as he concluded that Chinese students tend to generate the most potential pragmatic failure in an EFL context. He maintained that pragmatic failure results from both cultural and linguistic communications, and the differences found between them in two cultures are the underlying cause of it.

Besides, the study outcomes are in line with that of Ying (2017). He discovered many differences in request speech act and its corresponding response strategies and expression of acknowledgement between Chinese learners and English native speakers. Finally, he came to the conclusion that classroom teaching should emphasize learner-centered interaction. He further

suggested that classroom hours are limited for the teachers. Thus, watching videos, films, listening to recordings, and reading plays and novels are all helpful ways to assist learners to perform specific speech acts, and finally to become communicatively competent in cross-culture communication since these sources comprise authentic conversations which are full of indirect speech acts yet difficult for Chinese learners to acquire.

The findings strongly support that of Bardovi-Harlig (2013), who suggests that EFL teachers need to design tasks and communicative activities that could develop L2 learners' pragmatic competence and manage the interrelationship between lexicon, grammar, and pragmatics. Moreover, the study results are also to a large extent in line with Hymes' (1972) claim, which states that in successful social interactions, rules of grammar are useless without rules of use. To him, even fairly advanced language learners often lack communicative competence and are not capable of correctly using the sociocultural norms of the L2, which vary across cultures. Finally, the results of the present study are not in conformity with Chomsky's linguistic view of competence (1965), which does not consider communicative competence as a requirement of successful communication; instead, the innate grammatical competence is regarded as the sole ability to use language communicatively without any concern for sociolinguistic competence.

5. Conclusion and Implications

The results of the present study shed light on the attainment of cross-cultural communication, the role cross-cultural pragmatic failure could play in a foreign language learning context from the perspectives of EFL teachers and learners. In fact, the findings of this study offer valuable information to Iranian English language instructors who need to get more familiar with the main issues pertinent to pragmatics and how the lack of pragmatic competence could lead to cross-cultural miscommunication. This study may give some clues to English language teachers on how to instruct their students to overcome their communication problems. Lack of pragmatic knowledge as perceived by teachers and learners will lead to cross-cultural misunderstandings and communication failure. The findings provide EFL teachers and teacher trainers with guidelines regarding students' problems associated with the acquisition of pragmatic competence. The results would also benefit materials developers and syllabus designers to focus more on cross-cultural pragmatic communication and the factors that cause pragmatic failure. They might be cautious that culture and its influence on pragmatic competence is not excluded from curriculum, but is coped with in an open-minded way. Besides, the outcomes of this study can introduce some pedagogical implications for the classroom contexts and offer practical clues for activities that will help teachers to recognize the causes of cross-cultural

pragmatic failure in the classroom setting. Therefore, the results give teachers utilitarian hints to reveal, reduce, and eliminate pragmatic failure and help L2 learners to enhance their pragmatic awareness.

As there are some factors that can singly or interactively influence the results of a certain study, presenting limitations can be beneficial for the future research studies. In fact, in the present study, it was not possible for the researchers to control the participants' gender, which can be included as a significant factor in similar pragmatic studies. Due to the differences that might be observed in the behavior of male and female students, such as the employment of cooperative strategies like care, concern, and sympathy in communication as stated by Coates (1996), different results could possibly be attained if gender factor is included in future studies. Furthermore, there are different estimations for the number of participants taking part in a validation study. Certainly, the more the number of participants, the more valid the results would be.

Acknowledgments

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. How do you perceive the importance of pragmatics in language teaching?
2. Why is knowledge of pragmatics important to language learners or users in our globalized world?
3. How do you define the concept of cross-cultural pragmatic failure?
4. Do you think pragmatic failure may lead to cultural misunderstandings between two communities with different linguistic backgrounds? How?
5. What do you think are the major causes of students' pragmatic failure especially in cross-cultural communication?
6. How should teachers' react to students' pragmatic failure in the language classroom and what strategies could be used to help EFL learners combat cros
7. s-cultural communication breakdown?

Appendix B: Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure Questionnaire (CCPFQ)

First Name: **Last Name:**   **Gender:** Male/ Female
Age: Less than 20/ 21-29/30-39/40-49/ 50-59/ above 60
Level of Education:
 BA □   BA Student □
 MA □   MA student □
 PhD □   PhD student □
Major: …………………..
Years of Work (Teaching) Experience: Less than 5 / 5-10 / above 10 years
Years of Stay in an English-Speaking Country…………………….

Direction:
   Below is a series of statements representing EFL learners' lack of pragmatic competence; please read each item carefully and record your first impression by indicating the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement.
Your contribution to this research project is greatly appreciated. We thank you in advance for your cooperation. It should be mentioned that all the information in the questionnaire will be kept confidential and used only for research purpose.

Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. The use of inadequate vocabulary during speaking results in communication misunderstanding.					
2. When non-native speakers do not express meaning appropriately, pragmatic failure occurs.					
3. Solely literal translation (word-for-word translation), without considering the combination of words in a sentence, will result in communication failure.					
4. Differences in the speaker conversational styles (formal/informal) may cause socio-cultural misunderstandings.					
5. Directness in oral and non-verbal communication (i.e., gestures) may lead to misinterpretation of utterances.					
6. The negative transfer of speech act strategies (e.g., greeting, apologize, request) from L1 to L2 leads to communication breakdown.					
7. When instructors focus more on language forms than language functions, tasks, and social norms, communication failure is likely to happen.					
8. Grammatical errors in speech and writing could result in communication breakdown.					
9. The ignorance of the social norms of the two communities (i.e., L1 and L2) leads to communication failure.					
10. Textbook materials which lack intercultural information might result in EFL users' misunderstanding.					
11. Silence, as an indirect communication strategy, causes EFL learners to commit pragmatic failure.					
12. EFL students with a lack of knowledge of word parts do not always maintain a high quality of written communication, especially with native speakers.					
13. Inability to produce meaningful utterances prevents EFL learners from communicating effectively.					

Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
14. Pragmatic failure occurs when the teacher is regarded solely as an information deliverer to students in the classroom rather than a learning facilitator.					
15. The negative transfer of L1 supra-segmental features (stress, pitch, intonation, tone) in L2 production leads to misunderstanding in intercultural communication.					
16. Mispronouncing words in English during interaction may cause pragmatic failure.					
17. Incorrect knowledge of L2 social conventions causes EFL learners' failure to communicate appropriately.					
18. Power and social distance between people with different linguistic backgrounds will result in communication misunderstanding.					
19. Lack of authentic input (such as film scripts, plays, newspapers, articles, and the Internet) results in EFL learners' communication breakdown.					
20. The lack of the knowledge of word combinations or lexical units prevents EFL learners from communicating effectively.					
21. The shortage of time will prevent EFL learners from having a successful communication.					
22. Social anxiety (e.g., nervousness in social situations) makes EFL learners face communication confusion.					
23. Different thinking patterns between L1 (Persian) and L2 (English) speakers will lead to communication failure.					
24. The absence of coherence and cohesion in spoken and written texts decreases communication effectiveness.					
25. In classes where explicit instruction of the differences between L1 and L2 social contexts is not emphasized, L2 language users are lead to communication breakdown.					