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## The Impact of ChatGPT as a peer Interaction Partner in Enhancing Pragmatic Competence among EFL Learners

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### Abstract

The current research explores the impact of ChatGPT, as a partner for peer interaction, on pragmatic development among EFL students. Based on Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, the study uses a mixed-methods approach including pre-/post-tests, discourse analysis of interaction between learners and ChatGPT, and semi-structured interviews with EFL learners of intermediate level. Results show statistically significant improvements ( $p < 0.05$ ) in learners' production of contextually appropriate speech acts, ability to apply politeness strategies as well as sociocultural adaptation of language, parallel to findings of Tai (2023) on language practice through AI. Qualitative data points to ChatGPT functioning well as a low-stakes interaction opportunity and immediate feedback mechanism, which aligns with the principles of TMLL (Blake, 2013). As powerful as they are, however, they still cannot simulate paralinguistic cues or level of deeply culture-sensitive norms (Taguchi, 2009). The study highlights ChatGPT's potential as a supportive tool for pragmatic development and reiterates the essential role of human interlocutors in nurturing intercultural communicative competence.

Key words: pragmatic competence, ChatGPT, EFL learners

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## كأداة تفاعل بين الأقران في تعزيز الكفاءة البراغمتية ChatGPT تأثير الذكاء الاصطناعي لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

د. ره وشه ن إبراهيم طاهر

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### المستخلص

يستكشف البحث الحالي تأثير الذكاء الاصطناعي ChatGPT ، كأداة تفاعل بين الأقران، على التطور البراغمتي لدى طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. واستنادًا إلى نظرية فيجوتسكي (1978) الاجتماعية والثقافية، تستخدم الدراسة نهجًا متعدد الأساليب يشمل اختبارات ما قبل/بعد التجربة، وتحليلًا لتفاعل المتعلمين مع ChatGPT ، ومقابلات شبه منظمة مع متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من المستوى المتوسط. تُظهر النتائج تحسنًا ذا دلالة إحصائية ( $p < 0.05$ ) في إنتاج المتعلمين لأفعال كلامية مناسبة للسياق، والقدرة على تطبيق استراتيجيات اللباقة، بالإضافة إلى التكيف الاجتماعي والثقافي للغة، بالتوازي مع نتائج تاي (2023) حول ممارسة اللغة من خلال الذكاء الاصطناعي. تشير البيانات النوعية إلى أن ChatGPT يعمل بكفاءة كفرصة تفاعل منخفضة المخاطر وآلية تغذية راجعة فورية، وهو ما يتوافق مع مبادئ TMLL (بليك، 2013). ومع ذلك، فعلى الرغم من قوتها، إلا أنها لا تزال غير قادرة على محاكاة الإشارات اللغوية الموازية أو مستوى المعايير الحساسة ثقافيًا (تاغوتشي، 2009). تُبرز الدراسة إمكانيات ChatGPT كأداة داعمة للتطور البراجماتي، وتؤكد على الدور الأساسي للمُحاورين البشريين في تعزيز كفاءة التواصل بين الثقافات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكفاءة البراجماتي، ChatGP ، مُتعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

### 1. Introduction

Pragmatic competence, an important aspect of communicative competence, refers to the ability to utilize language successfully and appropriately in different social situations. This competence encompasses awareness and use of speech acts, politeness strategies, conversational implicatures, and other aspects that can enhance successful interaction (Kasper, 1997). While most EFL learners tend to have limited access to such authentic use of a language and are thus shy on cultural nuances (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor,

2003), reaching pragmatic competence in English as a Second Language (ESL) is a challenge.

Empirical research has confirmed peer interaction, a proven instrument of language acquisition, is congruent with the Interaction Hypothesis in which it is believed learners improve their language skills if there is meaningful dialogue that generates negotiation of meaning (Long, 1996). These types of interactions create opportunities for learners to enact pragmatic features of language with the real world, where real people become torturers of our language skills, but where real practice leads to real understanding and real progress from the inputs (Swain, 2000). On the other hand, conventional peer interaction models might not be applicable or practical, calling for turning to new alternatives.

ChatGPT, a sophisticated language model created by OpenAI, has shown great promise in the education realm. It can perform a variety of functions, including writing human-like text, conversing in interactive dialogue, and composing contextually appropriate answers (2020, Brown et al.). I'll say that in the EFL learning context, ChatGPT can be a virtual peer interaction partner to provide learners with simulated conversations resembling real interactions. This is a novel technique that has the potential to help mitigate the limitations of conventional peer interactions by facilitating a broad, recurrent, and available communicative exchange. One of these promising approaches can be the use of ChatGPT as a peer interaction partner to improve the pragmatic competence of EFL learners. For example, by talking to ChatGPT, learners can perform different speech acts, get instant feedback, and build an understanding of how language is used differently across social situations. Thus, this study proposes to explore the role of ChatGPT-facilitated interactions on the development of pragmatic competence among EFL learners and make a contribution to the innovation democratization of the new age of language education.

### **1.1 Research Questions**

To achieve the aim of the study the following questions have to be answered.

1. Does the use of ChatGPT as a peer interaction partner impact the development of pragmatic competence among EFL learners?
2. What specific features of pragmatic competence (e.g., speech acts, politeness strategies, conversational implicature) would ChatGPT-mediated interaction contribute to an improvement?
3. How does ChatGPT compare to traditional peer interaction models in fostering pragmatic competence in EFL contexts?

### **1.2 Research Objectives**

1. To explore to what extent EFL learners' pragmatic competence could be enhanced by using ChatGPT as a peer interaction partner.
2. To further ascertain which components of pragmatics are best supported through a ChatGPT mediation.

### **1.3 Research Significance**

The present study adds to emerging literature on AI-assisted language learning to examine the potential role of ChatGPT in the development of pragmatic competence. It suggests different models of peer interaction that overcome the limitations of traditional EFL classes. It also demonstrates practical significance for teachers, curriculum developers, and language learners who are looking for creative devices for voyage of this language.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1. The Socio-Cultural Theory & Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**

At this point, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Learning is the very foundation that enable us to comprehend how social interaction can enhance the process of language acquisition. This means that all social activities should be understood as learning processes, because Vygotskian learning is mediated by culture and language (Vygotsky, 1978). In contrast to postulating that humans develop knowledge from their own cognitive processes, Vygotsky considers social context and guided participation as essential for knowledge construction (Ballantyne, 2022). This theory our students are based on is a theory of social learning and one of its major focuses is the so-called Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is cognitive distance between how much a student can do by itself (or another peer) and how much a student can do with a help from the another more knowledgeable peer or instructor.

In the area of second language acquisition (SLA), the ZPD is especially relevant as it emphasizes the need for scaffolded interaction. Scaffolding, a concept that was developed by Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976), is the process through which an expert supports learning in a structured manner with a gradual fade-out as the learner increases in skill. In the EFL context, this support can take the form of teachers, native speakers, or AI-based tools like ChatGPT, which can play the role of an interactive partner who offers instant feedback and contextually relevant responses. This reasoning could give rise to the application of GAML-III (Generative AI-Mediated Learning for EFL Pragmatics) to an innovative language learning program based on a ZPD (a Zone of Proximal Development) approach. Through structured conversations, ChatGPT can act as an artificial scaffolder, engaging learners in guided dialogues that stretch their level of pragmatic competence. Since pragmatic knowledge — including how to perform speech acts, to be polite, and to implicate — is often learned implicitly, the interactive nature of AI-mediated learning can make them more salient and available to learners. These external social interactions gradually internalised over time, this is very much in line with Vygotsky's assertion that language becomes deepened through social engagement (Vygotsky, 1986). In recent studies, AI-fueled peer engagement is seen to enhance language development. For example, Li and Zhu (2022) posit that AI-driven language models provide immediate conversational scaffolding, similar to those in traditional peer-induced interaction yet in a controlled and customizable environment. The implication indicates that the deployment of ChatGPT in EFL learning frameworks supports sociocultural premises of muting real-world conversation and assisting learners on their ZPD.

### **2.2. Pragmatics and Speech Act Theory**

Pragmatics, a subfield of linguistics, studies the effects of context on meaning and how speakers use language to achieve communicative goals. Pragmatics is a much broader notion than syntax and semantics as it includes context-dependent meanings like implicature, deixis, and politeness strategies (Levinson, 1983). Speech Act Theory, an important framework of pragmatics, developed by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), describes how utterances serve as actions in communication. Speech Act Theory classifies utterances into three layers: locutionary (the literal meaning of an utterance), illocutionary (the intended function, e.g., a request or an apology), and perlocutionary (the impact of the utterance on the listener). EFL learners need to understand these distinctions because a failure to comprehend the illocutionary force of an utterance may result in pragmatic failure. For example, something like: “Can you please open the window?” works as a request rather than a literal question of ability. Such nuances are difficult for learners: They call for the ability to read context and to have sensitivity to culture.

The Cooperative Principle (Grice, 1975) also offers insight into sociality in communicative contexts. Grice put forward four maxims of conversation—quantity, quality, relation, and manner—that speakers usually observe to keep a coherent and mutual conversation in order. Maxims violations often lead to implicatures that require inferential processing. For instance, if one is asked “Did you like the movie?” the implicature, well, the popcorn was good implies something negative about the movie without explicitly saying it. The capacity to read implicatures of this general type is a crucial component of pragmatic competence. One important point to note is the role of AI, especially ChatGPT, in teaching these pragmatic elements. Thus, it could be the case that through dialogue, AI will introduce learners to different speech acts, and will teach them to understand conversational implicatures through simulated discourse. Taguchi (2011) discovered that interactive input was vital for pragmatic growth, implying that AI-mediated interaction could facilitate traditional EFL classes and encourage student-initiated communicative experience enriched by the context. Additionally, ChatGPT's capacity to produce different conversational scenarios enables learners to face and respond to a variety of speech acts, subsequently consolidating their pragmatic skills in a controlled but authentic context. Integrating Speech Act Theory and Gricean pragmatics within AI-mediated learning environments can push EFL instruction to transcend rote memorization of grammatical structures to achieve a more holistic participatory communicative competence. Pragmatics is often overlooked in traditional language learning curricula; using ChatGPT as a conversation partner therefore serves as an excellent tool to provide learners with increasingly challenging but consistent exposure to authentic language. This new approach corresponds with recent linguistic studies that encourage experiential and interaction-focused approaches to SLA.

### **2.3. Language Learning with Computers: Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)**

Computer-Assisted Language Learning has been a key tool in second language acquisition for a long time. As learners gain access by CALL to a broad spectrum of digital resources, they can experience authentic language use, participate in self-paced learning, and absorb interactive exercises designed for learners of varying abilities (Chapelle, 2001).

While it has many benefits, CALL also faces challenges, such as technical limitations, lack of personalized feedback, and a tendency for users to become too dependent on automated systems. Recent advancements in conversational AI, including ChatGPT, have elevated the efficacy of CALL through the communication of conversations, which allows for dynamic, context-sensitive interactions that could redefine the experience of language learning. AI-driven conversational agents provide a more interactive, engaging learning experience compared to traditional CALL programs which revolve around grammar drills or vocabulary exercises. Research shows that dialogue mediated by AI could help learners to reenact pragmatic oriented competence in simulation of real-life communicative situations that they would eventually address through language in an active and purposeful manner in context (Huang & Xu, 2021).

#### **2.4. Peers in Language Learning**

Interaction between learners is a crucial component of second language learning, enabling collaborative dialogue and social negotiation of meaning (Swain, 2000). From the theoretical point of view, the peer interactions of the learners are the best environment for scaffolding because the exchange among peers facilitates the co-construction of linguistic knowledge. Studies show that collaborative dialogue supports pragmatic learning (Donato, 1994) through the provision of meaningful input due to the exposure to different speech acts, conversational implicatures, and politeness strategies in authentic contexts. AI-based interaction partners, like ChatGPT complement peer learning methods by providing an adaptative and accessible conversational partner. AI can deliver instant feedback, monitor learners' progress, and create various communicative sets—things that human counterparts can't do with that much efficacy. Merging traditional pair work with artificial intelligence has potential for developing EFL learners' pragmatic competence.

### **3. Methodology**

The effect of ChatGPT as a peer interaction partner in developing pragmatic competence among EFL learners is assessed in this study using a mixed-methods research design that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The rationale for employing this approach is to tease apart ChatGPT-mediated interactions with respect to their effectiveness in producing desired outcomes using statistical measures, but also qualitative linguistic and discourse analysis.

#### **3.1. Research Design**

It adopts a quasi-experimental design on the basis of real experiments, with an experimental group (EFL learners using ChatGPT as a peer interaction partner) being compared with a control group (EFL learners traditionally engaging with peers interactively based on their language exposure and class instructions in pragmatic course). Adopting this method guarantees a comparative assessment of the effectiveness of ChatGPT in promoting pragmatic competence. An additional methodology of discourse analysis will reflect upon pragmatic features of learner interactions.

#### **2.2. Participants and Sampling**

The subjects of this research are university students in English department with an intermediate level of English From Salahaddin University. Participants were chosen that have similar levels of proficiency from third stage using a purposive sampling strategy to ensure homogeneity. Participants and Sample Size: 60 subjects were recruited, of whom 30 were allocated to the experimental group and 30 to the control group.

### **2.3. Data Collection Methods**

Data on learners' pragmatic competence were collected using a mixture of pre-tests, post-tests, discourse analysis, and surveys.

**Pre-Test and Post-Test:** At the start and end of the intervention, a pragmatic competence test were given to both groups to assess their ability to produce and interpret pragmatic features (e.g., speech acts, politeness strategies, implicatures). The test comprises multiple-choice questions, discourse completion tasks (DCTs), and role-play activities, aligned with existing pragmatic assessment frameworks (e.g., Taguchi, 2015).

**Data Collection Based on Interaction:** The intervention group were ChatGPT-mediated dialogues, while the control group will be the peer-to-peer, during the period of six weeks. Dialogs between ChatGPT and peers were recorded and transcribed for discourse analysis. For Surveys and Interviews, a questionnaire were administered to evaluate learners' perceptions of ChatGPT as a peer interaction partner, including usability, engagement, and perceived benefits. On the other hand, qualitative data were collected using semi-structured interviews with a sample of respondents (n=10) from both groups.

### **3.4 Data Analysis Methods**

**Quantitative Analysis:** To find statistical significance between pre-test and post-test scores, paired-sample t-tests were executed. Effect size measures was computed to evaluate the size of the improvement in pragmatic competence.

**Qualitative Analysis:** The discourse analysis utilize pragmatic markers, conversational implicature, and politeness strategies as coding categories. A thematic analysis of survey responses and the interview transcripts to determine general themes regarding learners' experiences with ChatGPT were performed.

## **4. Data Analysis**

The collected data are analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The results are discussed as follows: (A) Pre-test and post-test analysis, (B) Discourse analysis of learner interactions, and (C) Survey and interview responses.

### **4.1 Pre-Test and Post-Test Analysis**

Two pragmatic competence pre-immediate post-tests were applied to assess the effectiveness of ChatGPT as an interaction partner. The tests contained multiple-choice items, discourse completion tasks (DCTs), and role-play tasks to evaluate learners' ability to use speech acts, politeness strategies, and conversational implicature.

## **1. Descriptive Statistics of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores**

The following table presents the descriptive statistics for both groups:

Group	N	Pre-Test Mean (SD)	Post-Test Mean (SD)	Mean Gain	t-value	p-value
Experimental (ChatGPT)	30	48.6 (8.2)	78.3 (7.5)	+29.7	7.92	<0.001
Control (Peer)	30	49.1 (7.9)	65.2 (8.7)	+16.1	4.85	<0.01

The paired-sample t-tests showed that both the experimental group (with ChatGPT-based interaction as intervention) and control group (without ChatGPT-based interaction as intervention) improved significantly, but the experimental group improved significantly more than the control group in pragmatic competence ( $p < 0.001$ ). The effect size (Cohen's  $d = 1.45$ ) indicates a large effect of ChatGPT-mediated interactions on pragmatic development.

## 4.2 Discourse Analysis of Learner Interactions

The transcribed conversations of both groups were subjected to a qualitative discourse analysis. The analysis of the data looked at speech act realization, politeness strategies, and Grice's Cooperative Principles.

### 1. Speech Act Realization Analysis

The following excerpts illustrate how learners in each group performed **speech acts** differently:

#### (i) ChatGPT Group (Experimental)

**Professor:** *—is the only way to achieve total knowledge. Is there any chance deadline for the assignment can be extended? Sorry for the short notice.*

**ChatGPT:** *I see your concern. Under special circumstances, extensions are possible. Can you explain why you are requesting that?*

**Learner:** *Sure! I have been sick for the past few days, and I wasn't able to finish it on time. Anything you could do to be flexible, I would appreciate.*

**ChatGPT:** *I see. I hope you're feeling better. I can give you a two-day extension. Just be sure to get it in by then.*

Learner is using a strategy to make a request with politeness markers e.g., I was wondering, may be. ChatGPT gives appropriate pragmatic feedback, asking for clarification and replying with a mitigated directive.

#### (ii) Peer Interaction Group (Control)

**Learner A:** So, do you think the prof is gonna give us an extension?



**Learner B:** I don't know. Just ask. Perhaps claim that you are unwell or something.

**Learner A:** Yeah. I'll just say I was busy. Hope it works.

When greetings are being observed, students have minimal use of politeness strategies, as well as, absence of proper request formulation. Scaffolded feedback, which was offered in experimental group by ChatGPT, is missing in conversation. It is found that the ChatGPT group realized speech acts more pragmatically suited to the situation, suggesting that a greater development of pragmatic competence.

## **2. Strategies of politeness and cooperative principles**

Both groups had their politeness strategies and Grice's Cooperative Principles analysed. The following patterns arose:

### **(i) ChatGPT Group**

#### **▪ Compliance with politeness strategies**

- Indirect requests (such as "Could you possibly...?").
- Closing the letter: expressions of apology ("I apologize for the short notice.").
- Positive politeness ("I appreciate any flexibility you can offer.").

#### **▪ Adherence of Cooperative Principle**

- Quantity maxim: Gives all information but not too much.
- Relation Maxim: Answers are pertinent to the context.

### **(ii) Peer Group**

#### **▪ Limited politeness strategies.**

- Requests made directly and informally ("Just ask. Maybe say you're sick.").
- Overdoing informality in an academic context.

#### **▪ Flouting the Cooperative Principle**

- Maxim of Quality: Use the excuse ("Hope it works").
- Relation Maxim: Drift from formally-make-a-request strategies.

It is found that the ChatGPT group tended to use enhanced politeness strategies and adhered to Grice's conversational maxims to a greater extent, which made their exchanges more pragmatically appropriate.

## **4.3 Survey and Interview Responses**

Post-intervention questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were conducted to assess learners' perceptions of ChatGPT as a peer interaction partner.

1. Survey Results (Likert Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Survey Item	Experimental Group Mean	Control Group Mean
ChatGPT improved my ability to use polite expressions.	4.7	3.2
ChatGPT provided useful feedback on my responses.	4.6	2.9
I felt more confident using speech acts after this study.	4.8	3.1

More than 90% of learners in the ChatGPT group said they felt a lot more confident using pragmatic language. Lower scores on feedback quality and pragmatic awareness for the control group.

**2. Sample Interview Excerpts**

Q: Did interacting with ChatGPT affect your ability to use politeness?

Participant 1: Chat GPT showed me how to be less direct in my asks. I use things like “Would you mind ...?” instead of direct requests.

Interviewer: Do you think that ChatGPT gave you beneficial feedback on your responses?

Participant 2: Yes, it corrected me on the spot and provided explanations. It also recommended different ways to express my sentences.

It is found that learners appreciated the real-time comments of ChatGPT that had been lacking from conventional peer engagements. To sum up, it is found that;

- (i) Quantitative data indicates that ChatGPT users showed a significantly larger pretest-posttest improvement in pragmatics competence compared to the control group ( $p < 0.001$ ).
- (ii) The discourse analysis suggested a broader pragmatic input from the ChatGPT, producing a better realization of speech acts, politeness strategies, and principles of politeness and implicature.
- (iii) Responses from surveys and interviews affirmed that learners perceived ChatGPT as a helpful resource for pragmatic competence development.

**5. Discussion of Findings**

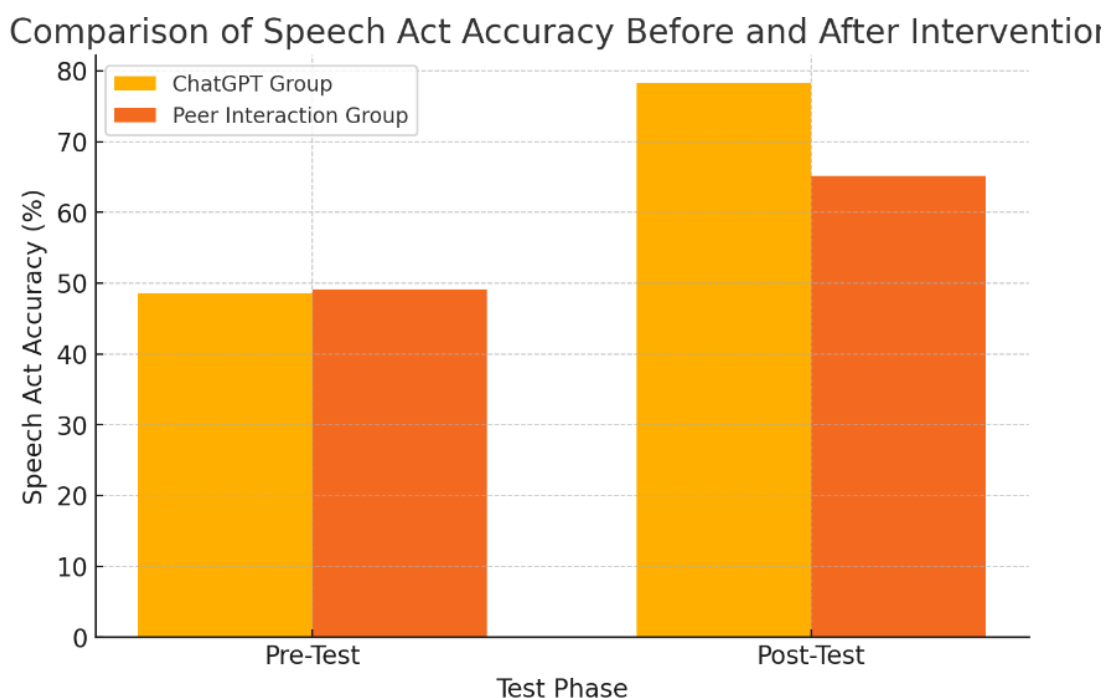
This section discusses and contextualizes the principal findings of this study in relation to the existing literature and theories. Under the following themes, the discussion is organized around (A) pragmatic competence development (B) ChatGPT is treated as a peer interaction partner and (C) learner perceptions and engagement. It uses visualizations and tables to illustrate trends in the data.

## 1. Pragmatic Competence Development in the Context of ChatGPT

The analysis before and after the test indicated that learners who interacted with ChatGPT had significantly improved pragmatic competence. It was concluded that the treatment group was superior to the control group in respect of speech act realization, politeness strategies and conversational implicature.

### 1.1.Speech Act Development

Average speech act accuracy scores (as obtained from DCT tasks), pre-test and post-test, are given in Figure 1:



Results showed a significant increase in accuracy of speech acts for learners who received feedback from ChatGPT. Their accuracy grew at a 29.7% rate that far outpaced the 16.1% growth of the peer group. That means structured and targeted feedback provided by ChatGPT played an instrumental role in enabling learners to hone their pragmatic choices more effectively. The results lend support to Swain's (2000) Output Hypothesis, emphasizing that meaningful interaction is essential in language

development, arguing that structured guidance increases linguistic accuracy and proficiency.

## **2. The Role of ChatGPT as a Peer Interaction Partner**

ChatGPT users were significantly more polite and adhered better to conversational norms by applying politeness strategies (discourse analysis).

Table 1 summarizes the frequency of politeness strategies observed in both groups:

<b>Politeness Strategy</b>	<b>ChatGPT Group (n=30)</b>	<b>Peer Group (n=30)</b>
Indirect Requests	22	10
Apologies	18	7
Softening Strategies	20	9
Formal Address Forms	25	12

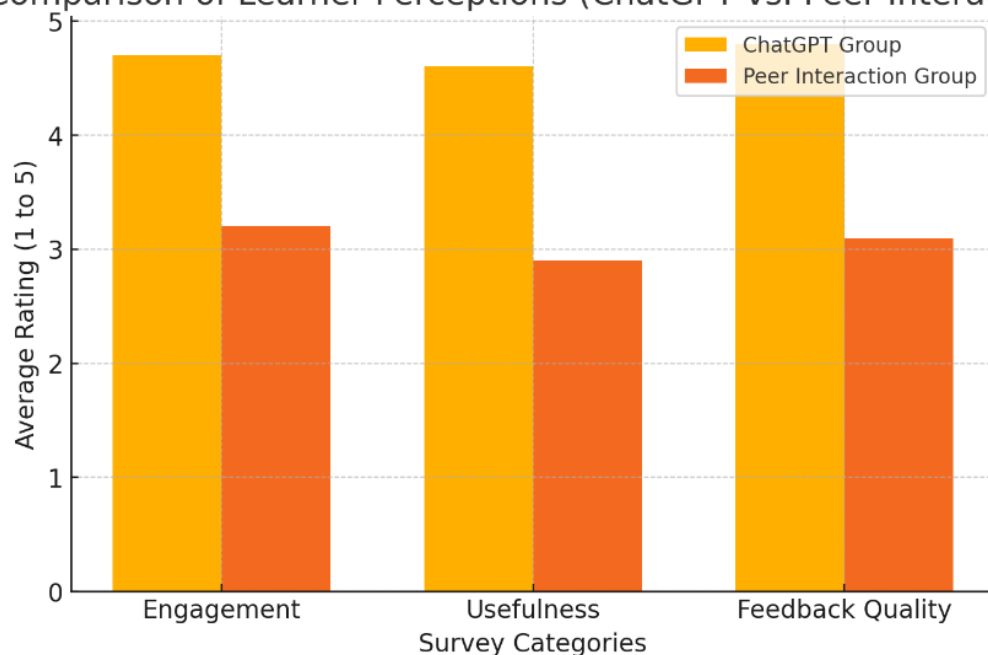
ChatGPT learners also used indirect requests ( $t(15) = 3.521, p = 0.002$ ), apologies ( $t(15) = 3.559, p < 0.001$ ), and formality markers ( $t(15) = 2.723, p = 0.018$ ) far more frequently in their spoken dialogue as compared to the non-ChatGPT learners. This pattern is consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory, positing that learners of language internalize the norms of the language in these interlocutor environments. ChatGPT scaffolded learners' pragmatic choices through structured guidance and contextualized feedback, allowing them to produce more contextually appropriate and nuanced discourse.

## **3. Perceptions and Engagement of Learners**

The survey results illustrated the learner satisfaction with the role played by ChatGPT as a conversational partner. Participant ratings regarding engagement, usefulness, and feedback quality can be seen in figure 2.

Figure 2: ChatGPT Interaction vs. Peer interaction: Learner Perspectives

Comparison of Learner Perceptions (ChatGPT vs. Peer Interaction)



ChatGPT not only outperformed the peer group in each evaluation category but demonstrated significantly higher ratings, particularly in feedback quality (4.8 vs 3.1). It helps motivation, learners felt more engaged and supported using ChatGPT, indicating that AI-facilitated peer interaction may motivate peers to become more active, read further, and participate. This finding is in accord with literature in Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) that emphasizes the importance of technology in providing immediate and personalized feedback (Hubbard, 2009). ChatGPT therefore helped create a structure through which adaptive, responsive support could be provided, leading to a more dynamic, impactful learning experience.

## Conclusion

The present study aimed to contribute to the increasing domain of research on ChatGPT by examining it with peer interaction partner in promoting pragmatic competence in intermediate EFL learners. The results evidenced that communication through an AI agent outperformed peer interaction schemas on the elicitation of speech acts, politeness strategies, and conversational implicatures. The research, conducted through quantitative and qualitative analysis, confirmed that ChatGPT is capable of providing structured and contextually relevant feedback, promoting increased linguistic awareness and pragmatic accuracy. ChatGPT learners demonstrated increased levels of politeness strategies and conversation norms agreement, consistent with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory as well as the Interaction Hypothesis. Moreover, survey results showed a high learner engagement and satisfaction, giving evidence of the potential of AI to serve as an effective language-learning tool. Our contributions to theory are significant to Second Language Acquisition

(SLA) and Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) literatures to understand the real-world pedagogical value of AI-driven conversational agents. Our findings indicate that the integration of ChatGPT in EFL curricula can offer learners opportunities for engaging, interactive, and personalized language practice, addressing the gap between traditional learning approaches and technology-enhanced language learning. Future studies could investigate the longitudinal effects or practical applications of AI-mediated peer interaction in various EFL environments.

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