METAPRAGMATICS INSTRUCTIONS IN LEVERAGING ENGLISH PROFICIENCY ON APOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

This study endeavors to investigate the effects of metapragmatic instructions: role play and elicited conversation negotiated feedback (RP+NF, EC+NF) embedded in Task-Supported Language Instruction (TSLI) on the students' apology strategy. We used a laboratory-based research design encompassing 75 fifth-semester students of economics major taking English business for international communication at the higher educational level. Those students were randomly assigned into one control group and two experimental groups. We utilized a mixed-design repeated measure analysis of variance (RM-ANOVA) to gauge the student's apology proficiency explicated in a two-test design, i.e., apology judgment test (AJT) and apology oral test (AOT) in three test sessions (pre-, post-, and delayed test). The finding reveals that there is a significant difference among groups in which both experimental groups outperformed the control group in the post and delayed tests. Also, a significant increase is explicated in both experimental groups from pre to post-test, but not in the control group. While RP+NF provides the most robust of all and stimulates long-term effects with big effect sizes on both test designs, EC+NF fails to provide a long-term effect in AOT.
Keywords: *Metapragmatic Instructions, Corrective Feedback, Apology Strategy, Role Play, Elicited Conversation*

INTRODUCTION

Apologies have been ubiquitous and appear in a wide range of day-to-day people interactions, (international) business conversations, social media, or the company websites in responding, e.g., complaints from customers (Page, 2014). Apology forms constitute a pragmatic politeness strategy used in the conversational interaction (Salgado, 2011) as a response to venting or violating the interlocutor's

feeling (Austin, 1962) in which a speaker-interlocutor face-to-face interaction is likely face-saving, i.e., saving his own face by protecting the other face (Trosborg, 1987).

Seen from the English as Special purpose (ESP) perspective, however, very few studies do rigorously report the efficacy of metapragmatics instructions to equip business students with one of the pragmatics features: apology strategy, especially the students who use English as international business communication. It is natural that every business field makes mistakes (core and non-core public violations) that require a public apology, i.e., customers (individual or group), business colleagues, employers, or employees. The core violations followed by the failure to make the appropriate apology can severely damage the business's reputation and relationship with the stakeholders (Schweitzer, Brooks, & Galinsky, 2015). This makes a strong inquiry to equip the business students to appropriately employ apology strategies using the pragmalinguistic domain (i.e., cross/inter-language features) and sociopragmatic consideration embracing the *who* (e.g., leader – staff, shop owner - customer), *what* (keeping the words we say and the actions we take), *where* (written in media or orally facing the public), *when* (as quick as possible), *how* (formal or non-formal language).

A call for incorporating metapragmatic instructions, i.e., task-based instruction and corrective feedback supervision, to equip the students' pragmatic proficiency has been echoed by scholars (Kim & Taguchi, 2016; Taguchi & Kim, 2019). A considerable body of empirical findings has provided robust evidence of those interventions to the student's linguistic features proficiency, i.e., grammar (Fadilah, Widiati, Anugerahwati, 2021; Fadilah, 2018a; Plonsky & Kim, 2016). A meta-analysis carried out by Plonsky and Kim (2016) reveals that the majority of task-based research incorporating corrective feedback has mostly relied on grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation while incorporating pragmatics as the target foci is under-researched.

To our best knowledge, no previous study did rigorously report the efficacy of metapragmatics instructions in a task-based language incorporating corrective feedback on the student's apology proficiency from an ESP perspective. Additionally, less consensus arises in terms of task activities best applied as an intervention to leverage the students' apology proficiency. Taguchi and Kim (2017) proposed interactive production tasks, i.e., *role play and elicited conversation*, as promising activities for EFL classroom interaction. While the former has been criticized for the lack of validity and authenticity, the latter is still scant to be brought up as a potential activity for metapragmatic instructions.

The extant studies on apology strategy forms are dominated by the corpus data. Hatfield and Hahn (2011) investigated Korean apology strategies tied to Brown and Levinson's (1987) constructs. The finding reveals that Korean apology embraces a wide

range of forms, i.e., lexical, honorific choices, power, social distance, and ranking pertaining to the contextual backgrounds: age, occupational status, intimacy, and severity ranking. However, the model itself is insufficient and fails to unravel the socio-pragmatics domain for Korean due to the expectations for behavior in a relationship.

Murphy (2019) reported how Native speakers utilized various instances of proper apology and improper apology (verbal formula mismatch) expressions. The finding reveals two folds: 1) some participants succeed in identifying proper apology forms, i.e., pragmalinguistic, but some of them seem to conflate those forms that blur the constructs of apology uses in the situational context, 2) this leads to the apology-use mismatches perceived by the participants. There is confusion and less consensus in regard to the apology constructs and formula mismatches between apology, i.e., *I am sorry*, and non-apology, *I am sorry you are such an arsehole* construct related to the contextual uses, i.e., sociopragmatics. Additionally, Al-Rawafi, Sudana, Lukmana, and Syihabuddin (2021) investigated the apology strategies utilized by Indonesian students learning English and Arabic as foreign languages. Their finding reveals that the expression of regret and promise for forbearance as the prominent apology strategies exerted in both languages and used by the students who stay in an Indonesian boarding school. Furthermore, the students performed less pragmalinguistic transfer in English than in Arabic, encompassing two dominant foci: negative micro-transfer (i.e., the lack of interlanguage actions between L1 and L2) and macro-negative transfer (i.e., mismatch transfer from L1 to L2s).

This study endeavors to provide an insightful view of metapragmatics-rising awareness of apology strategy forms by incorporating metapragmatic instruction, i.e., task-based language instruction (TSLI) tied to socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978). This study also aims to contribute to rigorous supervision of negotiated feedback supervision imposed in the interactive production tasks: Role play and elicited conversation. The supervision is anchored in Vygotsky's Zone Proximal Development (ZPD) by treating the students' background knowledge differently, i.e., low and high-level proficiency (Fadilah et al., 2021). As such, we endeavor to answer the questions: 1) is there any different effect of metapragmatics instructions: role play and elicited conversation negotiated feedback in the task supported language instruction on the business students' apology forms proficiency? 2) To what extent do those metapragmatics instructions provide a long-term effect on the business students' apology forms proficiency?

LITERATURE REVIEW
Pragmatics of personal-public apology

Pragmatics covers two main competencies as target foci: pragmaliguistics and sociopragmatics. While the former denotes the knowledge to employ linguistics repertoires knowledge for communicative acts, the latter signifies contextual knowledge embracing socio-cultural norms associated with situational contexts underpinning (Leech, 2014). In other words, pragmatics requires a wide range of knowledge in linguistics (i.e., grammar, vocabulary) and non-linguistics (i.g., register, socio-cultural norms, the system of belief) in socially situated language use and function. Sociopragmatics, on the other hand, requires a wide range of complex, dynamic, contextual pragmatic behaviors by not only employing linguistic competence to perform communicative acts but also fitting the context incorporating assessment and adjustment of the utterances performed (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Kim & Taguchi, 2016; Thomas, 1983).

Thomas (1983) coined pragmatic of apology failures embracing pragmalinguistic failure, i.e., the interlanguage transfer inappropriately used by the speakers using L1 when transferred to the native speakers of L2 and sociopragmatics failure that is "caused by differences in the linguistic encoding of pragmatic force, socio - pragmatic failure stems from cross-culturally different perceptions of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behavior (p. 99)".

An apology occurs when social norms have been violated, whether the offense is real or potential (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983, p. 20). A public apology, on the other hand, differs from a private (individual) apology by distancing the apology uses from prescriptive apology forms (Ancarno, 2015). From a social-psychological perspective, a public apology requires a wide range of considerations pertaining to corporate or organizational reputation (Pages, 2014).

Indeed, public apology involves a complex phenomenon encompassing a wide range of asking forgiveness, acknowledging the transgression, and making it promptly that are prompted by candor, guilt, fear, and affection (Kellerman, 2006). A public apology requires more than the linguistic features mentioned above. It requires careful planning and rehearsal, especially the transgression belonging to the core violations that cause significant damage to the corporate reputation. As Schweitzer *et al.* (2015) argue that it is strongly necessary to equip anyone involved in a business field for "apology reversals" to improve a healthy relationship with the stakeholders.

Socio-cultural aspects underpinning apology.

Brown and Levinson (1987, p.74) pinpointed the variety of pragmatic apology behaviors that could be seen from to what extent the relationship of a speaker and his/her interlocutors in regard to **PDR** that stands for "relative power," i.e., *Power* (a symmetric relation), "social distance," i.e., *distance* (a symmetric relation), and

"absolute ranking," i.e., *ranking* (impositions in particular culture). In other words, the preference of a speaker's utterance is bound to the identity between speaker and interlocutor, the formal or casual relation, and the degree of cultural values upheld in a certain community.

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) set up a framework - Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) for apology strategy, which is based on the assumption of interwoven influence variables: "intra-cultural, situational variability, cross-cultural variability, and individual variability" (p.197). Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed "Head Acts and Supportive moves" strategies in which the former refers to the Illocutionary Indicating Device (IFID), while the latter denotes the external intensification that is attached to the head acts (see also Leech, 2014). IFID formula exhibits the intensification of a speaker's feeling to emphasize the act of apologizing, e.g., *I am sorry* (the expression to regret), *forgive me* (offer an apology, and *pardon me* (ask for forgiveness). On the other hand, supportive move strategies encompass a wide range of external request modifications. Leech (2014, p. 175) argues that the label of the supportive move " is appropriate when the head act is preceded or followed by a separate "move" or speech act with its own illocutionary force. But this is a relative distinction". For example, the expression *sorry to bother you. Can I come up for the moment?*" constitutes more elaborative and independent apologies that belong to the supportive move strategy.

Apology strategy and its dilemma

Trosborg (1987, p.150-152) simply divided the apology strategy into *direct forms*, i.e., excuse, sorry and *indirect forms*, i.e., taking on responsibility, i.e., *I am sorry for losing your pen, I will buy a new one for you*, mitigating the degree of offense, i.e., *I am really sorry for my carelessness, but it is not the end of the world right?*, the promise of forbearance, i.e., *I promise it will not happen anymore,* and giving the explanation, i.e., *sorry I am late, but my car broke down* signaling apology. Additionally, the expressions for denial of responsibility, blaming someone else, and attacking the complainer are other common expressions of apology exerted by the speaker who is conceived violated the speech act.

Psychologically, the predisposition to acknowledge the mistake and ask for an apology for it exerts uncomfortable feelings and the risk of power or facing losses to the other party. It is natural that some people who are wrongdoing or perceived to transgress a certain norm try to avoid dwelling on admitting the transgression. Apologies are essential to fix the transgressed social relationship to uphold that we

value the relationship. In turn, we try to ameliorate the damaged situation by expressing our forgiveness (Schweitzer *et al.,* 2015).

Molinsky (2016) asserts that it is also important to distinguish the empty, exaggerated, incomplete, and denied apology forms.

- Empty apology (e.g., *I am sorry, I said I am sorry*) form explicates the expression of asking for an apology with the absence of even a modicum of real feeling behind it by literally saying sorry but no meaning in it.
- Exaggerated apology (*e.g., I'm so sorry! I feel so bad. I am so sorry*) denotes the excessive use of apologies by emphasizing our own feeling rather than the recipient's feelings. Asking for an apology many times for your lateness at the meeting ultimately put emphasis on yourself rather than the other participants of the meeting you have harmed for waiting for your presence.
- An incomplete apology (*e.g., I am sorry that your feel that way*) denotes missing some key components of the apology strategy, asking responsibility for your role in a situation or event, expressing regret; asking forgiveness; and promising it won't happen again (or that you'll at least try to prevent it in the future). Even if we make appropriate and effective use of words in expressing an apology, it doesn't hit the mark.
- Denial apology *(e.g., this simply was not my fault)* happens when your ego is the best of you to refuse apology or blame others for the offense you have made. Our emotional states, e.g., humble and control of anger, play the role.

Metapragmatic Task Instructions: Role Play and Elicited Conversation

Task Supported Language Instruction (TSLI) is grounded in the fact that was providing flexible and dynamic task-based activities attuned to the students' contexts underpinning by providing a wide range of metapragmatic activities, i.e., mini-lessons, role play, and elicited conversation. Lantolf and Poehner (2015) assert that the SCT framework takes a path of emphasizing human mental functioning through the interactions of 'participation in cultural, linguistic, and historical forms setting' (p.207). ZPD denotes a process of maturation to internalize the language functions that are not acquired yet (Vygotsky, 1978). Given the fact of the complexity of teaching pragmatics, classroom instruction becomes a pivotal core to be taken into consideration. As the manifestation of communicative language teaching (CLT), task-based language teaching (TBLT), deemed as a strong-manifested CLT, has flourished as a contemporary research finding and controversial debate among second/foreign language scholars. Less consensus emerges in terms of how to carry out the task either implicitly or explicitly (Fadilah *et al.*, 2021).

A wide range of task activities is reported as mediation in leveraging the students' pragmatics features. Tied to Brown and Levinson's (1987) power, distance, and ranking (PDR), Kim and Taguchi (2016) incorporate task-based instructions (i.e., simple versus complex) and politeness strategies (high-low PDR) on Korean students. Likewise, Alcon-Soler (2019) employed task based supported language teaching (TSLT) to investigate the effectiveness of simple and complex task activities, i.e., making emails on the students' request proficiency. The finding reveals that TSLT is effective in leveraging the students' knowledge of request forms.

Role play (RP) is defined as "simulations of communicative encounters, usually (but not necessarily) conducted in dyads on the basis of role descriptions or instructions" (Kasper, 2008, p.288). Role play can be carried out as a closed system, i.e., 'replying a single response to a prompt,' and an open system, i.e., eliciting interaction between a speaker and interlocutors (see Taguchi & Roever, 2017 for the review). A less consensus on role play arises in regard to the constructs of validity and authenticity (Bataller, 2013; Ewald, 2012).

The validity is questionable to situate the role players in a situation they never had in their real life, e.g., acting roles as police officers or customs officers (Youn, 2015). They question the notion of construct validity to measure pragmatic proficiency appropriately. Role play is deemed as less natural for the scripts prepared as prompts before playing the roles assigned to the role players. It is necessary to scrutinize the interactants to play as naturally as possible (Taguchi & Roever, 2017).

In terms of authenticity, Bataller (2013) reports that the data derived from role plays were nearly doubled as natural data. This finding contrasts with Ewald's (2012) study in which the data from natural data was more detailed and longer than that of role-play data. The participants provided more monitoring and repair of their speech production than those of role plays which were shorter and less helpful.

Taguchi and Roever (2017), however, argue that it does not necessarily situate role play and natural interaction as the opposite poles, rather seeing and utilizing them based on the situational contexts, i.e., the level of students' proficiency, the purpose of the research. Both tasks provide a potent intervention to leverage the students' pragmatic proficiency.

On the other hand, elicited conversation (EC) is scantly applied, albeit with its potential benefit. Taguchi et al. (2017) assert that the difference between RP and EC is the latter does not require to "imagine themselves in a fictitious situation acting" during a task activity. The EC-task activities could be carried out by assigning the students in pairs to discuss and solve the problem for the tasks assigned. At the end of their discussion, the teacher could invite them to perform their result ahead of the classroom.

RESEARCH METHOD

We utilized true experimental design as the research focus in this study. The participants encompassed seventy-five students of economics (accounting and management majors) taking English for International communication purposes in higher institutions of western Indonesia (range aged between 20 and 23 years). They had English subjects during three semesters to equip them with foreign language skills and competence, e.g., English business negotiation, English for the interview, English for business across culture, and Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) preparation. We took their TOEFL score (between 500 and 550) as the baseline for taking participants in this study.

We randomly assigned those participants into two experimental groups, i.e., RP+NF (n=25) and EC+NF (n=25), and a control group (n=25). All participants agreed to participate in the subsequent tests (pre-, post-, and delayed tests) and classroom task activities. While the experimental groups were supervised by task activities and feedback, the control group took a classroom activity using the textbook provided.

Procedure

The procedure of this study lasted seven weeks and encompassed some subsequent activities: Pre-test (Week 1), metapragmatic explanation (Week 2), metapragmatic instructions: TSLI (control group, RP+NF, EC+NF) focusing on Brown and Levinson's (1987) low-high PDR (Week 3 and 4, respectively), post-test (Week 4), and delayed-test (Week 7).

In the AJT, the students were required to make a written response to the apology strategy forms based on the different situational contexts provided ((10 different scenarios). One credit was given if the student provided an appropriate pragmalinguistic response, and one credit was awarded by providing an appropriate sociopragmatic response to each scenario provided. Additionally, one credit was given for providing an appropriate judgment or reasons for the situational contexts provided. In the AOT, the students were asked to make oral-response to a wide range of situational contexts. The scores were given if they provided an appropriate pragmalinguistic response (1 point), sociopragmatic response (1 point), and grammar-vocabulary correct (1 point). First, the students were asked to read each scenario provided (ten different scenarios). Second, the students were asked to make a response for each scenario (visually displayed on the computers) and recorded their voices (responses) through a microphone provided on each computer.

Pre-test (Week 1: all groups)

The three groups took two types of pre-test: the Apology Judgment test (AJT) and Oral Apology Test (AOT) displayed in a computer system. First, the students were asked to make a written-typed response for each scenario provided in AJT. Second, the students displayed tens of different scenarios that required oral response for each (AOT).

Metapragmatic explanation: Week 2 (RP+NF and EC+NF groups)

The two experimental groups were shown a mini-lesson explicating the metapragmatic explanation of the use of pragmalinguistics strategy tied to Olshtain and Cohen's (1983) IFIDs: expression of regret, e.g., *I am (really) sorry*, the offer of apology, e.g., *I apology,* or request for forgiveness, *e.g., please forgive me.* One credit was given if the student provided appropriate pragmaliguistics (grammatical features) followed the IFIDs, i.e., *I am really sorry **for making you feel** inconvenient, or I am really sorry **that we made** you feel inconvenient.* Likewise, one credit was awarded when responding to an appropriate response of sociopragmatics, i.e., based on a wide range of situational contexts exerted in the low-high PDR. Sociopragmatic requires more than just IFIDs strategies rather, a wide range of sincere apology expressions to fit the contexts underpinning: explanation of the situation, *i.e., we had an internal miscommunication*, acknowledgment of responsibility, i.e., *You were right, it was our mistake*, the offer of repair, *i.e., we will change the product*, and promise for forbearance, *i.e., it will not happen again.*

The sociopragmatic strategy forms were based on the situational contexts considering the relationships of the speaker-hearer pertaining to positions, i.e., roles, status (officemate – officemate, staff – manager); properties, i.e., ages (younger – older); relations, i.e., dominance, authority (junior–senior); functions, i.e., boss, the waiter (waiter – customer, restaurant supervisor – waitress).

Metapragmatic instructions: RP+NF, EC+NF (Week 3 and 4, respectively)

Figure 2 illustrates a role-play activity in the high PDR, i.e., between boss and employee. The students were provided with a set of the card containing a situation in which both students (Merry and Ary) acted as the boss and employee. Merry did not attend an important meeting with the boss and colleagues due to one of her family members getting sick and hospitalized. She forgot to inform the boss of the absence. The following day she came to her boss's room asking for an apology.

Figure 1 role play and elicited conversation situations and feedback provided

Role Play situation

Merry: Good morning Mr Ary, May I come in?
Ary: hiii Merry ..come in..have a seat
Merry: Okay ..
Merry: **Oh ya..Thank you..hehehe**

Ary : well..what's up Merry?
Merry: mmmmm...about the meeting yesterday..mmm…**I am really sorry for not come the meeting yesterday**

Merry : Ohh ya…**I am really sorry for not coming because my mother is hospitalized.**
Merry: my mother **was** hospitalized

Ary : Okay…but you did not inform us for not coming right?

Merry : yes …sorry for that Mr Ary

Merry: **I am really sorry for not informing you. I promise you not happen again**

Merry: **I promise you that it will not happen again**

Feedback Move 1: providing hints--→ *"bilang apa ketika dipersilahan bosmu duduk?"* what would you say to response your boss letting you sit down?

Unsuccessful
Feedback Move 2: (rising intonation)
For not coming ……give your reason!
My mother was….simple past?

Unsuccessful Feedback Move 3: providing another hint (rising intonation)
I am really sorry for …?
What will you say to promise for forbearance?

Unsuccessful Feedback Move 4: providing another hint (rising intonation)
I promise you it will……

Elicited Conversation situation

TSLI+High PDR
"Ani is a shop assistant in one of big shopping market. One of customer complaint about the goods he has ordered for not matching the specification he needs. The customer asks for your responsibility for that"

Ani replied "I regret it"
Q: does Ani give an appropriate expression to her customer?

TSLI+Low PDR

Hendra borrows a company report from his colleagues Joko. Hendra inadvertently spilled coffee onto the paper that makes Joko feels upset.
Hendra said" Sorry bro, some one has put the drink near me"
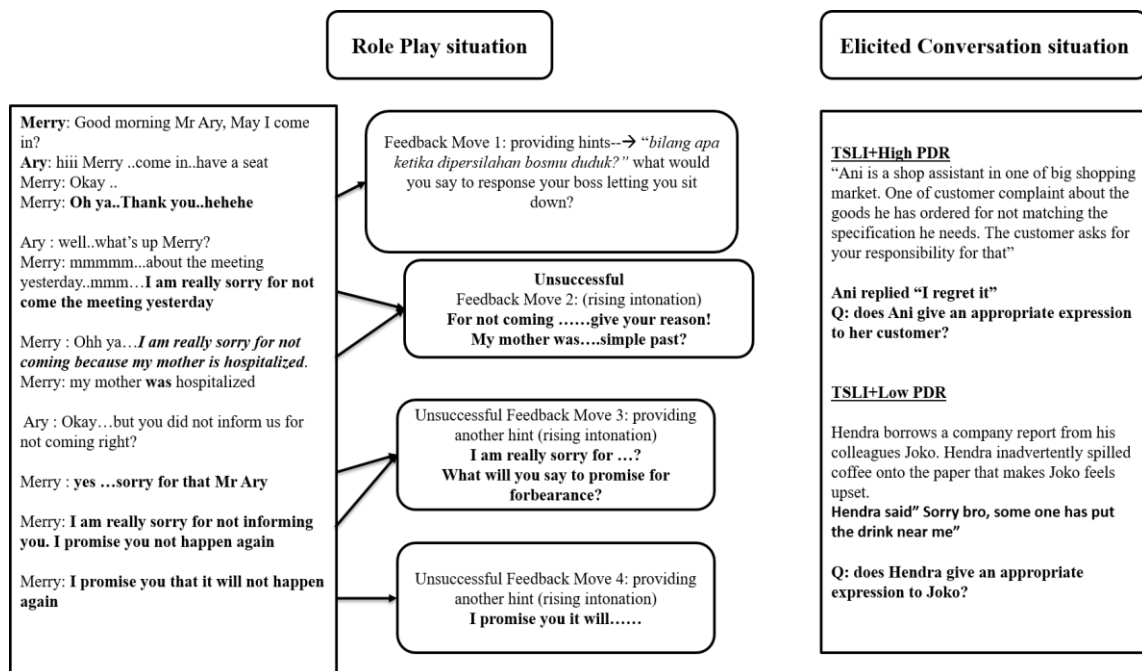
Q: does Hendra give an appropriate expression to Joko?

Figure 1 shows the flexible metapragmatic moves of RP+NF in the high PDR (an unequal power, higher-lower ranking) provided conveniently with subsequent hints as explicated in a role-play activity. From the excerpt, the student (Merry) failed to express an appropriate response to her boss please to let her sit down. The third writer provided feedback on switching from Indonesian to English for convenience. When the student made an inappropriate responses tied to PDR, as explicated in moves 2 to 4, the writer provided some hints and feedback as the correction. This subsequent feedback was provided until the student provided appropriate responses to the apology strategy forms. In contrast, the student who made an appropriate response provided by the feedback in move 1 continued their dialogue. This treatment was deemed to attune to the student's level of proficiency by imposing the subsequent hints for the students who still had difficulties in making an appropriate response and the student who had been proficient by providing the hint in a single move. In comparison, the TSLI activities in the low PDR situated the students in a more casual, close-rapport relationship, and equal ranking to be played as role, e.g., staff to staff.

On the other hand, the EC+NF group was provided with various situational cases that illustrated the appropriateness of the apology strategy forms based on the high and low PDR. The students (in pairs) were asked to discuss the situations and apology strategy forms exerted in the cards provided to them. Then, the pairs were invited to report the discussion by providing comments on the apology forms

explicated. The third researcher provided negotiated feedback to the deviant of utterances responded.

> Hana : *seharusnya* (it supposed) not only I regret, sir
> Researcher: Okay… can you clarify your comment? The expression *I regret* is not appropriate?
> Hana: Yes sir..*seharusnya pemilik toko nya bilang* (it supposed that the shop owener said…) *I regret for it?*
> Researcher: I regret it. What does IT mean? Rani can you help Hana?
> Rani: I regret to make you upset
> Researcher: do you mean I regret making you inconvenience for the service?
> Rani : Yes… *Betul* (that's right), sir…
> Researcher: anything else?
> Hana: oh ya sir…*ini kan antara pemilik dan pelanggan ya sir* (is it between the shop owner and customer, right)?
> Researcher: Yes, it is
> Hana: I think ..*tidak hanya minta maaf...tapi harus memperbaiki kesalahan dan berjanji tidak akan mengulangi lagi* (not only saying sorry..but she must repair the mistake and promise that it will not happen again)
> Researcher: Okay…excellent..how do you say in English?
> Hana: I think ….I promise it for not happen again.
> Researcher: do you mean *I promise that it will not happen again?* What about the repair? Memperbaiki
> Hana: Ya harus di ganti barangnya (the goods should be replaced) sir….

The script explicates dynamic feedback negotiated between the researcher and the students responding to the apology strategy forms expressed by the high PDR (shop owner-customer). The flexible feedback moves exerted enable the researcher to attune the students' existing knowledge to be leveraged into their potential knowledge. The students with higher knowledge were treated differently from those with lower knowledge, explicated by the length of NF supervision provided (Fadilah et al., 2021).

Post-test: all groups (Week 4)

All groups were asked to take a post-test. We counterbalanced the versions of the test formats (i.e., Version A, B, and C) by reversing the numbers of the tests to avoid a possible test effect. While version A was given in the pre-test, version B was provided by reversing the number of test scenarios.

Delayed-test: all groups (Week 7)

The students across the groups were asked to take delayed test three weeks after the post-test. The rationale for using the delayed test is aimed at seeing the long-term effect of the treatments provided (Fadilah *et al*., 2021).

Analysis

To answer the research Questions (RQs) proposed, we employed a statistical package (i.e., SPSS 26). We utilized a mixed design (between-within) repeated measure analysis of variance (RM-ANOVA) to examine the effects of independent variables on the repeated-dependent measures. Likewise, s*tatistical assumption*, e.g., *sphericity*, was set up prior to further analysis. Those assumptions are similar to one-way ANOVA: *level of significance,* normal distribution, and homogeneity, i.e., equal variances (Larson-Hall, 2010).

The internal reliability of AJT for the pre-, post-, and delayed tests indicated 0.90, 0.92, and 0.85, respectively. In other words, all test items in the three tests are reliable, i.e., >0.6. In AOT, the internal reliability indicated 0.90, 0.95, and 0.89, respectively, a total score. The consensus of SLA scholars made an agreement that the internal validity >0.6 is accepted (see, e.g., Larson-Hall, 2010). In addition to the internal reliability, we provided inter-rater reliability and consistency to ensure the scores' level of agreement. Two independent-experienced English-pragmatics lecturers voluntarily assessed the participants' answers of 25% of AOT. The two raters were selected based on their expertise and teaching experiences (i.e., > ten years) in ELT. The level result of inter-rater reliability of AJT and AOT was sufficient using *Cohen's Kappa*. In AJT, the third researcher's score and the two raters exhibited $K = 0.94$ (94%) and $K = 0.95$ (95%), respectively. While in AOT, the raters provided a wide range of scores, $K = 0.95$ (95%) and $K = 0.93$ (93%), respectively. In other words, the tests were valid, reliable, and feasible to be carried out.

RESULTS

The equality of means (i.e., homogeneity) across the groups in the pre-test is not violated. The Brown-Forsythe indicates that the AJT and AOT depict F (2, 68.71) = 0.84, *p-value*=0.92 and F (2, 71.41) = 0.26, *p-value*=0.97, respectively. In other words, the three groups have score homogeneity in the pre-test, i.e., equal variances of mean scores. In PJT, while the variance indicates that the assumption of *Mauchly's Test of Sphericity* is violated $\chi^2(2)= 7.49$, *p-value*=.02<.05, a correction is set up using Greenhouse-Geisser for the *Tests F(1.81, 130.89) = 810.4, p=0.00,* $\eta_p^2 = 0.6$ and *Test x Group,* F(3.63, 130.89)= 47.97, *p=0.00,* $\eta_p^2 = 0.6$. On the other hand, the variance in AOT is not violated, indicated by *Mauchly's Test of Sphericity* violated $\chi^2 (2)=.51$, *p-value*=.077>.05. Hence, the correction is not necessarily carried out.

Effect of TSLI supervised by immediate versus delayed negotiated feedback.

Table 1 depicts the descriptive statistics for AJT and AOT across the three groups and tests. There is an increase in the means from pre-test to post-tests but not in the control group. The test of RM-ANOVAs detects the significant difference of the

tests on the treatment and control groups for AJT with F (2.72) = 32.08, $p=0.00$, $\eta_p^2=0.4$ and for POT F (2.72) = 28.27, $p=0.00$, $\eta_p^2=0.4$. In other words, there are significantly different among the groups with high effect sizes.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics among groups

		Pre-test			**Post-test**			**Delayed-test**		
		N	**M**	**SD**	*N*	**M**	**SD**	*N*	**M**	**SD**
AJT	EC+NF	25	21.36	3.29	25	31.68	3.50	25	29.28	3.24
	RP+NF	25	21.08	4.32	25	29.16	4.78	25	27.76	3.78
	Control	25	20.92	3.85	25	21.76	3.31	25	18.40	3.94
ART	EC+NF	25	13.36	2.64	25	23.40	2.30	25	22.45	2.40
	RP+NF	25	13.28	2.40	25	21.28	2.05	25	18.44	2.38
	Control	25	13.20	2.43	25	14.36	3.98	25	13.04	4.06

Post-Hoc test comparison is carried out, having detected the difference between the groups. We compared the effect sizes explicated between-group. In AJT, both treatment groups outperformed the control group with a range of effect size Cohen's d =2.9, 95% CI [2.12– 3.7] and d =1.5, 95% CI [0.92– 2.19] explicated in EC+NF and RP+NF, respectively. Likewise, in AOT, the effect size d =2.7, 95% CI [2.0– 3.55] on EC+NF, and d =2.9, 95% CI [1.5– 2.8] on RP+NF. Interestingly, a significant difference is found between TSLI+INF and TSLI+DNF, in which the former outperforms the latter with d=0.8, 95% CI [0.32 - 1.41]. In a similar vein, a significant difference is also explicated on AOT with a large effect size with d=0.9, 95% CI [0.38 - 1.55].

A significant increase is also found in the individual tests (i.e., within the group) on AJT with Wilk's Lambda F (2, 71) = 188.80, $p = 0.00$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.8$ and on AOT with F (2, 71)=311.60, $p = 0.00$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.9$. Additionally, the multivariate tests also detect a significant difference in the *Tests x Groups* interaction with Wilk's Lambda F (4, 142) = 40.30, $p=0.00$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.5$ and F (4, 142) = 38.91, $p=0.00$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.5$ on AJT and AOT, respectively.

Long term effect of the treatments

Both treatments group provide large effect sizes from pre to post-tests. In AJT, the effect sizes exhibit d=3.0, 95% CI [2.2– 3.8] and d=1.7, 95% CI [1.1– 2.4] on RP+NF and TSLI+INF, respectively. Likewise, in AOT, the large effect sizes are found from the pre- to post-test on both treatment groups with consecutive effect sizes d=4.0, 95% CI [3.0– 4.0] and d=0.7, 95% CI [0.2– 1.3]. In other words, there is a significant increase in the development of pragmatic proficiency provided by the treatments in the form of feedback and task-supported language instruction in which immediate negotiated feedback outperforms delayed negotiated feedback. However, we do not find a significant increase in the control group from pre to post-test in both tests.

Another primary focus of this study is to gauge the potential of two treatments: EC+NF and RP+NF, in leveraging the students' pragmatics, i.e., politeness strategy proficiency. In AJT, both treatment groups indicate no significant difference from the post-test to the delayed test, indicated with *d*=0.4, 95% CI [-0.9– 0.14] and *d*=0.3, 95% CI [-0.8– 0.23]. The small effect sizes explicated in both experimental groups indicate that the treatments provide a long-term effect on the students' pragmatic proficiency.

In AOT, only EC+NF provides a long-term effect explicated in *d*=0.4, 95% CI [-0.96– 0.16]. By contrast, on RP+NF, there is a significant difference from the post- to delayed test with *d*=1.2, 95% CI [0.6– 1.8]. In other words, providing role play with negotiated feedback does not provide a long-term effect on the development of students' pragmatic proficiency. On the other hand, there is no significant development found in the control group across the tests. Hence, the treatments provide a more robust effect on pragmatic development compared to the control group.

DISCUSSION

This study aims at seeking the efficacy of metapragmatics instructions manifested in the two types of task activities: Role play and elicited conversation supervised with negotiated feedback. Two types, i.e., high and low PDR of task-supported language instruction, are supplemented to enable the students' proficiency in both pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics contexts. Such supervision is carried out to the higher education students of economics taking international business communication in which English constitutes a necessary additional (international) language for international business-communication purposes. As such, a strong necessity to equip the students with a wide range of pragmatics-politeness strategies, as in the form of an apology strategy, is strongly needed in addition to proficiency in their linguistic features, i.e., grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

We discarded the comparison between western and eastern characteristics (e.g., direct-indirect, explicit-implicit) attributed to the apology strategy forms. The task

activities explicated in the role play (RP) and elicited conversation (EC) is developed to equip the students with proper pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatic uses of apology forms for their international business-communication purposes. Those activities are taken as solid bases for correction to the language deviances uttered by the students. Also, the imposition of talks (language outputs) exerted in both activities provides metapragmatics clues in evaluating the proper politeness and impoliteness strategy in the form of an apology strategy (Izadi, 2015).

Indeed, the proficiency of, e.g., grammatical features for Indonesian students still needs improving (Fadilah et al., 2021; Fadilah, 2018b). The finding in the pre-test reveals that most students were still confused about using the grammatical construction between the expression *I am sorry for* followed by the present participle verb (Ving) or noun phrase and simple past verb (V2) following such an expression as the past activity (offense) they made. This is caused by the interlanguage transfer in which no such verbal forms are in the Indonesian language (Al-Rawafi *et al.*, 2021). This study supports *Al-Rawafi et al.'s.,* (2021) finding that the use of *maaf* (sorry) is successfully employed by the participants embracing a wide range of supportive move strategies: taking on responsibility, an explanation or account, a promise of forbearance, and an offer of repair. This study also confirms Wouk's (2006) finding that the apology strategy expressed by Indonesian solely and invariably refers to the request for forgiveness by ignoring the other forms of apology strategies. The wide range of uses of apology strategy forms may be relied on face-saving in the context of enhancing reputation and building social rapport as explicated in the public domain.

This study provides vivid evidence of the effectiveness of metapragmatics prompts (see, e.g., Roever & Al-Gahtani, 2015; Taguchi & Kim, 2017; Thomas, 1983) manifested the subsequent activities: mini lessons prior to the task performances (i.e., role play, elicited conversation), situated-contextual meaning making task activities (i.e., high-low power, distance, ranking), proactive-reactive dynamic feedback supervisions (i.e., negotiated feedback anchored in the SCT), and rising awareness activities (i.e., written and oral judgment tests). Those metapragmatics prompts are attuned to the student's individual differences (e.g., background knowledge, ZPD) as a strategy to leverage the students' current level of knowledge by providing extensive and collaborative interaction with an expert, i.e., teacher (Fadilah et al., 2021). Also, the activities subdivided into high and low PDR exemplified in the TSLI activities increase the students' awareness by incorporating their existing knowledge (metacognition) and the tasks to be accomplished (Ellis, Skehan, Li, Shintani, Lambert, 2020; Taguchi & Kim, 2019).

As seen in the finding, this study provides robust evidence of how such metapragmatics instructions are potent in leveraging the students' proficiency of pragmalingistics knowledge, that is, the knowledge of linguistic forms in performing a communicative function, *e.g., I am sorry for making this inconvenience, I am sorry that I made this inconvenience* and sociopragmatics knowledge – knowledge of contextual features, norms of interactions, and social conventions based on the situational contexts (Leech, 2014; Thomas, 1983).

The finding partially supports Murphy's (2019) claim to provide a variety of situations in which the students are able to exploit the appropriateness of apology strategy to fit such a wide range of situations, i.e., activities covering Brown and Levinson's PDR. Likewise, the finding is also in line with Hatfield and Hahn's (2011) finding pertaining to different apology-form choices to attune the speaker-interlocutor's social distance, power relationship, and severity ranking. The use of L1 as a negative language transfer does not necessarily impede the language uses in L2. Rather, some students use their L1 first, which is then translated into L2 to express their responses to the situations they should encounter using appropriate apology forms (Al-Rawafi et al., 2021).

Unlike the previous studies (Al-Rawafi et al., 2021; Hatifield & Hahn, 2011; Murphy, 2019) above mentioned, This study emphasizes the quality of interaction between the teacher and students under their ZPD. We provide vivid evidence that both treatment groups outperformed the control group. While the EC+NF group outperforms RP+NF in both post-test, i.e., AJT and AOT, with effect sizes counted *as d*=0.8 and *d*=0.9, respectively.

The finding also provides a variety of apology strategy forms expressed by the students in the experimental groups when provided by a wide range of contextual situations pertaining to Brown and Levinson's (1987) PDR. In the AJT, most students in the experimental groups provide an appropriate judgment to the apology-use mismatches explicated in the situational texts. For instance, the apology expression *I am sorry to hear* is an apology-use mismatch (Murphy, 2019); when exposed to a situation of bumping a chair into a waiter in a restaurant, you do not realize that there is a waiter standing behind you. Similarly, an apology form I'm sorry your behavior has been appalling" and blaming or burdening the interlocutor, "Sorry you've been made to the burden of your missing book," as a verbal mismatch use of apology for the former and predisposition to blur the apology form for omitting the agent who made an offense 'losing a book he borrowed' for the latter. This finding is also in line with Goffman's (1971) claim for a good half-apology strategy in which the wrong-doer partially acknowledges his/her offense and a bad half-apology strategy by blurring the

offense and causing the offense to the apology recipient. Additionally, it is in line with Murphy's (2019) claims that this strategy belongs to the no-apology strategy in which the wrong-doer tends to face-saving for the offenses he/she made.

Of all, the participants provide a wide range of apology strategy form rationales when responding to the varied situational contexts explicated across the tests. Analyzing the reasons exposed by the participants, we find some interesting notes to be taken into further consideration pertaining to the apology forms expressed in Indonesian students' context. First, acknowledging the offences, expressing an explicit apology form, i.e., I am sorry, and promising forbearance is an apology strategy implied in the student's response. Second, in the formal situational contexts, i.e., business domain, the expression use of recipient responsibility for the offense is strongly necessary. In the context of "customer's complains for the bad goods in the online shop," unpunctuality for a meeting scheduled requires not only simply Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) expression but also a sincere apology and promising to repair the problems and promising for forbearance (Molinsky, 2016; Schweitzer *et al.,* 2015). The varied forms of apology strategies are mostly found in the experimental groups, notably in the TSLI+INF group in the AOT.

A true apology requires a strong commitment to change personal behavior and commit to improvement for the transgression. The apology not only maintains the reputation of the corporate but also makes good routine behavior as a powerful catalyst for personal growth (Kellerman, 2006). Some participants make a consensus that an effective public apology should reassure corporate that the violation is acknowledged and understood and that it is not likely to be repeated. For instance, when answering a manager's public apology for corporate transgressions, such an apology does not merely try to ameliorate the violations made for seeking restitution of relationship or reputation, but the modesty to be responsible on behalf of corporate violations. Different from an individual apology strategy, a public apology emerges for two reasons: mending the relationship and the transgressor's reputation.

CONCLUSION

No single theory does cope with the complexity of pragmatics teaching. Our inclusion of TSLI and negotiated feedback manifested in the immediate and delayed feedback supervision does not necessarily contest both approaches as opposite poles but rather as a continuum. Such a division is merely aimed at coping with the diversity and complexity of the student's individual differences (IDs) in terms of their prior knowledge, emotional states, cultural background, and the like. We confess that there are some limitations of this study to be further considered. First, this study employs a

true-experimental design by focusing on the learners' intermediate level, as seen in their TOEIC scores. Further studies may utilize classroom-based experimental design (i.e., quasi-experiment) to portray the real condition of the classroom activities with a varied level of the student's knowledge. Second, this study focuses on the apology strategy forms. Further study may be beneficial to explore TSLI and negotiated feedback to the other forms of pragmatics, i.e., request and implicature. Third, this study is confined to the students at a higher educational level in which their experience and interactional maturity have been well developed. Further study may attest to senior or junior high school students aimed to raise their awareness of the merit of pragmatic proficiency together with their other linguistics features, i.e., grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

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