

**Faculty of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages**

**Department of English Language Literature**

An Abstract of

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (TEFL)

**A Comparative Study of the Effects of Real and Virtual Worlds on the Development of Inter-language Pragmatics among Iranian EFL Learners**

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Despite the fact that virtual learning seems to have considerable potential for enhancing language learners’ abilities in various language skills and components, it has received less attention regarding improving pragmatic competence in Iranian classroom. The present study was an attempt to investigate the impact of virtual and real classroom instruction of speech acts on the pragmatic awareness of Iranian EFL learners. To do so, a thorough review of the related literature was done and a quasi-experimental study was designed, in which the participants were (57 EFL female) language learners at the intermediate level who were chosen through a homogeneity test. The participants were divided into the experimental groups of virtual and real classroom learning. The participants went through the procedure of pretest, intervention, and posttest and the data for the present study were collected by means of three tests: a PET test, a pre- test and a post-test of speech acts. Both measures of independent and paired-samples t-test were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that instruction of speech acts through both virtual and real classroom techniques is conducive to the promotion of pragmatic awareness among the EFL learners in the Iranian context; meanwhile, real classroom instruction of speech acts is more fruitful in this regard can better increase the pragmatic awareness of Iranian EFL learners. The findings could be employed by English teachers, EFL learners, and material developers in the field of ELT in the Iranian context to pave the way for the improvement of ELT status in the EFL classes.

**Keywords**: Iranian EFL Learners, Pragmatic Awareness, Real Classroom Instruction, Speech Acts, Virtual Learning