



## Comprehension of conversational implicature in an Iranian EFL context: A validation study

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### Abstract

Pragmatic competence is considered one of the principal elements of second/foreign language learners' communicative language ability. However, in comparison to other components of communicative language competence, learners' pragmatic competence is far less researched. Of many components of this ability, ample research studies have been centered upon developing instruments in the field of interlanguage pragmatics that are mostly informed by the speech act framework. However, the assessment of conversational implicature, as other component of pragmatic ability, is under researched. In order to address this gap, the aim was to construct and validate a conversational implicature test. According to Grice's (1975) conversational maxims and Goffman's (1967) face management insights, a hypothesized model for conversational implicature was offered and examined. The procedures for validating the instrument included gathering information relating to content and construct validity of the test. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) through structural equation modeling (SEM) and differential group study were employed in support for the empirical evidence of construct validity. The developed test with 34-multiple-choice-item was distributed among 385 EFL university students who were at different proficiency levels. The results showed that the hypothesized model was fitted properly to the indexes based on CFA analysis. Furthermore, students with different English proficiency differed significantly in their comprehension of implicatures.

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**Keywords:** Communicative language ability; conversational implicature; EFL students; pragmatic competence; validation

## 1. Introduction

The development of the notion of communicative competence in the language testing and evaluation field has had a great impact on theories of second language (L2) learning in the past decades. This concept not only refers to individuals' underlying knowledge of grammatical and structural forms of language (Chomsky, 1965), but also to their capacity in using this insight in real conversations (Hymes, 1972). This move from mastery of mechanical aspects of language to the mastery of functionally or

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pragmatically appropriate language use, greatly influenced the development of theories and models of communicative proficiency in the field of language learning and assessment (e.g. Bachman, 1990; Bachman and Palmer, 1996, 2010; Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980; Celce-Murcia et al., 1995).

Within various frameworks of communicative language ability, pragmatic capacity is a core ability that learners of a new language require to acquire. Pragmatic capacity is mainly about how meaning is created and understood in a specific context (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). In fact, it is the study of actions performed intentionally by individuals for some purposes, and it encompasses individuals' beliefs, opinions, intentions, and actions (Thomas, 1995). That is, it is not the words, speakers, or even hearers that are responsible for creating or conveying meanings, per se; rather meaning is constantly negotiated, in a dynamic interaction, between speakers, hearers, and the context of interaction. In pragmatics, the focus is on meaning, particularly, on the functional aspect of language whereby language use is described as a form of social behavior that people exhibit through their utterances.

Due to the significance of pragmatic knowledge in the flourishing of interactive language ability of language learners, many research studies have been centered upon speech acts comprehension and production (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007; Byon, 2004; Cohen & Shively, 2007; Felix-Brasdefer, 2007; Matsumura, 2001, 2003; Rose, 2000; Trosborg, 1995). Equally important in the realm of pragmatics is the investigation of implicit meaning or implicature. Despite this importance, a few researchers have examined L2 comprehension of conversational implicatures (Bouton, 1988, 1994a, 1994b, 1999; Holtgraves, 1998, 1999; Keenan, 1978; Roever, 2006, 2010; Tagouchi 2002, 2005, 2007).

Implicature as a notion refers the functional aspect of language; it identifies how individuals comprehend meanings that are not stated in an explicit way in their speech (Archer et al., 2012; Levinson, 1983; Verschueren, 1999). In fact, implicature is produced as a result of interlocutors' interpretations and it conveys meanings beyond the surface structure of the utterances (Archer et al., 2012). Identifying the gap between surface and deep meaning, when comprehending implied meanings, creates a major difficulty for learners of a second or foreign language. This is due to the fact that factors such as cultural background, L2 exposure, implicature type, and general L2 proficiency influence learners' comprehension (Bouton, 1988, 1994a, 1994b, 1999; Holtgraves, 1998, 1999; Keenan, 1978; Roever, 2006, 2010; Tagouchi 2002, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2013).

Studies on implicature comprehension (Bouton, 1988, 1994a, 1994b, 1999; Holtgraves, 1998, 1999; Keenan, 1978; Roever, 2006, 2010; Tagouchi 2002, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2013) have largely contributed to the field of second language learning. However their approach to the notion of conversational implicature has not been adequate and comprehensive enough, particularly, with regard to matters such as the type of the instruments used, the construct, and its subtypes. Moreover, it has been argued that face management is one of the major factors responsible for violating the maxim of relevance. Nevertheless, as far as the available literature shows, no empirical research study has systematically set out to develop and validate an original instrument that tests conversational implicature taking into account the insights from relevance maxim and face management theory. Accordingly, the present study set out to eliminate this gap through the construction and validation of an authentic measurement that test the degree to which EFL learners in Iran have developed pragmatic inferential skills in comprehending conversational implicature used in every day spoken English.

## 2. Review of literature

### 2.1. Empirical research on conversational implicature

Learners' conversational implicatures comprehension has been explored by relatively small number of research studies (Bouton, 1988, 1994a, 1994b, 1999; Holtgraves, 1998, 1999; Keenan, 1978; Roever, 2006, 2010; Tagouchi 2002, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2013). The findings of these studies show that cultural background, L2 exposure, implicature type, and general L2 proficiency are the major factors affecting L2 learners' implicatures comprehension. Implicatures may cause problems in cross cultural interactions leading to a salient dilemma, particularly, for English learners. They, unlike English speakers, may not be able to draw the same meanings from implicatures. This has prompted researchers to investigate how people from different cultures derive the meanings of implicatures.

Keenan (1978) found that people's use and interpretation of conversational implicature was different across cultures. Working on Grice's (1975) conversational maxims, Keenan questioned the validity of Grice's assumptions with respect to the maxim of quantity. People from Madagascar and native speakers of English were compared with respect to their provision of information. Despite the fact that Malagasy had access to the information, they provided less information than it was required. Keenan (1978) concluded that the importance of new information and fear of committing oneself to a particular claim were two main reasons for flouting the maxim of being informative.

Investigating the influence of culture on English learners' ability in deriving the meaning of implicatures, Bouton (1988) constructed a multiple-choice test measuring learners' knowledge of two main types of conversational implicatures, namely, idiosyncratic and formulaic implicatures. Idiosyncratic implicatures were general conversational implicatures, whereas formulaic implicatures included a range of subtypes with typical formal characteristics. Bouton (1988) distributed the test among native English speakers and English learners from German, Spanish, Taiwanese, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean backgrounds. The results of the study showed that English learners' culture caused significant differences in both native English speakers and English learners' performance, especially, when their language proficiency was controlled.

Through several longitudinal studies, Bouton (1992, 1994) investigated the role of L2 exposure in implicatures comprehension. He found that learners' interpretation approximated that of native English speakers who were in the target country for four years. Moreover, the items that proved to be difficult for English learners, when they took the test earlier in 1986, were no longer difficult in 1991. Only those types of implicatures that pointed to a specific aspect of American culture remained troublesome. Bouton (1992, 1994) claimed that even when no formal and explicit instruction of implicatures was offered, learners, like native speakers of English, were able to arrive at a correct interpretation provided that they lived in the target country.

Taguchi (2002, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2013) also documented the important role of L2 proficiency and L2 exposure in meaning interpretation. In her studies, participants took a listening test via computer. The items tested learners' comprehension of "*indirect refusals, conventional indirect opinions, and nonconventional indirect opinions*". Participants were at different proficiency levels. Learners' comprehension was rated based on accuracy and speed. Accuracy was measured based on learners' scores. Speed of comprehension was a matter of the time that learners comprehended implicatures. The outcome revealed that only accuracy was under influence of learners' proficiency.

It seemed that individuals' competence in interpreting implicatures correlated with L2 proficiency. However, interpreting formulaic indirect criticism was, to some degree, dependent upon L2 exposure. Learners of English, who have had over a year of exposure in the target country, performed better on

formulaic indirect criticism. Nevertheless, this was not the case about idiosyncratic and formulaic topic change types of implicatures.

Roever (2010) also asserted that as well as L2 proficiency, L2 exposure played a role in the comprehension of implicatures, particularly, formulaic types of implicatures. Research studies on learners, who have been in the target country for over a year, indicated that they have had a significantly better performance on formulaic implicatures in comparison with other learners. In line with Taguchi (2002, 2005), Roever (2010) argued that exposure only affected formulaic indirect criticism not idiosyncratic and formulaic topic change implicatures.

Studies have shown that learners find it difficult to derive the meaning of some types of implicature. Interpretation of relevance-based implicatures proved to be difficult. That is because these implicatures were idiosyncratic in nature and they arose in the interplay of the utterance and the context of the conversation. More conventional implicatures like indirect refusals were interpreted easily, on the other hand, understanding implicatures such as indirect opinions that were less conventional was difficult (Taguchi, 2008, 2009). The effortless understanding of indirect refusals was related to the linguistic conventions encoded in these types of implicatures that enabled participants to derive their meanings easily.

Instruction, when focused primarily on formulaic implicatures, is shown to be beneficial for English learners in order to develop and enhance their abilities in interpreting implicatures. Bouton (1999) found that it was easier to teach formulaic implicatures to learners. When instructed, learners could easily learn formulaic implicatures because of the structural, semantic, and pragmatic features of these types of implicatures. In contrast to formulaic implicatures, general conversational implicatures or what Bouton (1999) named idiosyncratic implicatures were shown to be easier for them to learn but difficult to be taught because their interpretations were linked to the context of the conversation.

## 2.2. Politeness and face work

Conversational implicatures occur in everyday conversations; their important characteristic is indirectness. There are a number of reasons that prompt a speaker to convey his/her meaning indirectly, one of which is face management (Holtgraves, 1998). The notion of face denotes an image a person presents in his/her social interactions with others (Goffman, 1956). The way people comprehend the indirectness in their interactions is affected by face management. In other words, the extent to which individuals' utterances might incorporate a negative or face threatening act persuades a speaker to use implicatures. In this case, interlocutors employ indirectness as an approach for protecting their own face.

Politeness or protecting other's face in communication is viewed as the main reason for employing indirectness in conversations. Brown and Levinson (1978) introduced the concept of politeness in a pragmatic way in which politeness was seen to be used in conditions where specific goals were needed to be obtained by people (Thomas, 1995). In their theory, the concept of face was primary. This notion was related to cooperative principles (CPs) and conversational maxims. In fact, their theory was much inspired by the work of Erving Goffman (1956, 1967), who introduced the notion "*face*" in his writing:

“...the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during particular contact. Face is an image of self-delineated in terms of approved social attributes\_ albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself” (Goffman, 1967, p. 38).

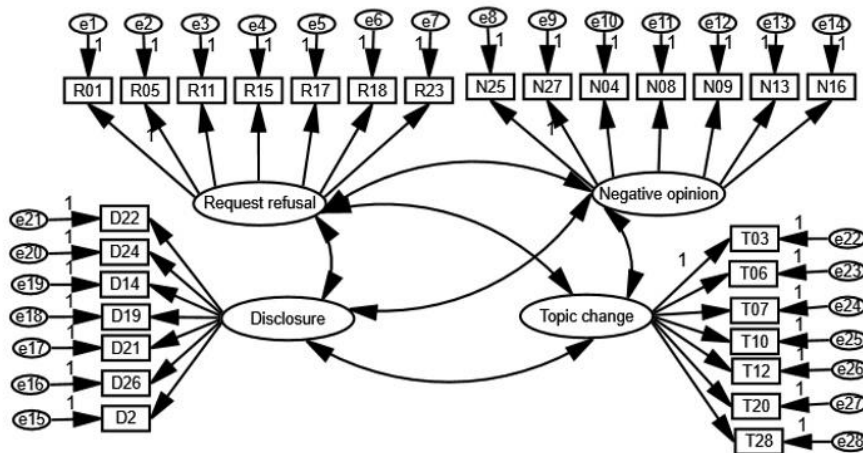
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According to Goffman (1967), the reason motivating people to use indirect language instead of a direct one is a desire to protect the face of others, or that of themselves. Face is the image people present in their social relations with others, or it is what people feel and think about themselves (Thomas, 1995). Social interactions can help enhance or, conversely, damage one's self-image.

### 2.3. Research hypotheses

The aim of this study was to expand the scope of second/foreign language pragmatic research by developing an instrument that would assess EFL learners' comprehension of conversational implicature. Furthermore, the intention was to validate the instrument. In this study, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) would be used to validate the test. Based on literature review, the hypothesized model of conversational implicatures was formulated, comprising four latent variables (i.e. indirect refusals, negative opinions, disclosures, and topic changes). All factors were measured by seven observed variables or items each. Each of these observed variables was related to certain factors, which were all intercorrelated (Fig. 1). We hypothesized that a model with four factors would emerge as a result of confirmatory factor analysis, which would reflect the structure of the construct of conversational implicatures.

In addition, further evidence for validity of the test was gathered from differential group study. Learners' comprehension of different types of implicatures was compared with respect to their English proficiency levels. Therefore, the second hypothesis was that more proficient students would obtain higher score than less proficient ones. More proficient students would gain higher mean scores in comparison to the less proficient ones. Moreover, the difference would be significant, which would provide more evidence for the construct validity.



**Figure1.** The structural four-factor model of conversational implicatures

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Participants

The participants were 385 undergraduate and postgraduate university students (164 males and 221 females) majoring in different fields of study: *Linguistics, Translation, English Literature, and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)*. Their age ranged from 18 to 35 years ( $M = 21.5$ ). They were recruited through convenient sampling from different universities in Ilam province, in Iran: 29.2 % were attending Ilam University, 34.5 % were from Payame Nour University, and 36.2 % were from Islamic Azad University. In addition, the participants were selected from two different proficiency levels. The criterion for assigning students to different proficiency levels was based on their academic levels. Students holding Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree were grouped into low-proficiency group ( $n = 189$ ) and those holding Master of Arts degree (MA) were grouped as high-proficiency students ( $n = 196$ ). Participants' only experience with English was from the undergraduate and postgraduate courses they were enrolled in.

#### 3.2. Instrument(s)

##### 3.2.1. Theoretical development of the measure

Developing the instrument began by defining the construct. Following Holtgraves (1998, 1999), the construct of conversational implicature was defined and subdivided into four categories: Indirect refusals, Negative opinions, Disclosures, and Topic changes. Conversational implicature according to Holtgraves (1998) was related to the way through which people understood the implied meanings of utterances. His explanations were based on the theory of conversational implicatures (Grice, 1975) as well as politeness theory and face (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1967).

Holtgraves' (1998) assumption is that hearers are always involved in an inference process as soon as they notice that the speakers have provided responses violating the conversational maxim of relevance. Through face management this violation is interpreted. According to Holtgraves (1998) four types of implicature are generated as a result: *indirect refusals* that are indirect replies in refuse to perform any action; *negative opinions* are replies to avoid giving negative opinions directly; *disclosures* are types of implicatures used to avoid disclosing embarrassing information; finally, *topic changes* are indirect replies that totally change the topic. Using the concept of face, people can interpret such meanings as indirectly conveying negative information.

##### 3.2.2. Construction of the measure

Based on the theoretical definition of the construct and its components, a total of 34 items were generated: 28 experimental, and 6 control items. The experimental items contained a situation description and a short conversation with a question and reply. Following the dialogue, a question was asked on the meaning of the reply that appeared to violate the maxim of relation. The items were written by the researcher; care was taken to write dialogues that would closely resemble real-life conversations. To this end, linguistic features that characterized real-life conversations were also included in the dialogues such as *well, you know, oh, etc.*

The control items measured comprehension of literal meanings. These items were included in the measure so that participants would not pay attention to the fact that comprehension of implicatures is being tested. These items were not analyzed in the study. A listening test instead of reading was employed to measure implicatures comprehension, because it would increase the authenticity of the test, which is a crucial aspect of any tests (Bachman and Palmer, 1996). Most previous L2 research used a reading test to test implicatures comprehension; however, conversations are usually heard, not read in

real-life situations. The respondents were required to listen to the dialogues spoken by native speakers and provide answers on the meaning of the implicature on a piece of paper.

In providing evidence for content validity, a group of four experts in the Department of English Language and Literature reviewed the item pool. As a result of their review, some modifications were made. Then, the items were pre-tested by 93 undergraduate and postgraduate students with identical characteristics to the main population. The open-ended responses of the students in the first pilot study were used for constructing the test with multiple-choice questions.

Again, the multiple-choice test was pre-tested by 86 undergraduate and postgraduate students. Responses were analyzed using appropriate item analyses techniques such as item facility, item discrimination, reliability coefficient, and standard error of measurement. After these analyses, items with poor indices were modified. Finally, the final form of the measure was generated.

### 3.3. Data collection procedures

Data were gathered from undergraduates and postgraduates, who were at two levels of low and high proficiency. The test was given using computers in language laboratory. Using the computers, the participants put on headphones and then read instructions about completing the test in their mother language, Persian. After listening to the dialogues spoken by native speakers, participants were required to read each question that was written in the test booklet and provide the most appropriate response.

### 3.4. Data analysis

In the first stage, using *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 21*, the obtained data were analyzed. Then confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was subsequently operated in order to investigate the construct validity of the data. To test the hypothesized model, structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis, using Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) 23.0 software was run. To estimate model parameters, maximum likelihood method was utilized. The first of each set of regression paths associated with the factors was set to 1.0 and the items (observed variables) were constrained on particular factors to load.

Following suggestions of a number of researchers (Bentler, 1990; Bollen, 1989; Hoyle, 1995; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Joreskog & Sorbom, 1999; Sergars & Grovar, 1993), the following statistics were employed to evaluate the model: chi-square test of model fit ( $\chi^2$ ), Goodness-of-fit index (GFI), Comparative-Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Residual (RMR), and Root Mean Square Residual (RMSEA). Compared to other model fit indices, the value of  $\chi^2$  statistic is less emphasized because of its sensitivity to sample size. Generally, the recommended values of GFI, CFI and TLI statistics are from zero to 1.00, and values near 1.00 show a good fit for the model (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Values less than .08 and .06 for RMSEA and RMR are considered as good model fit indices, respectively.

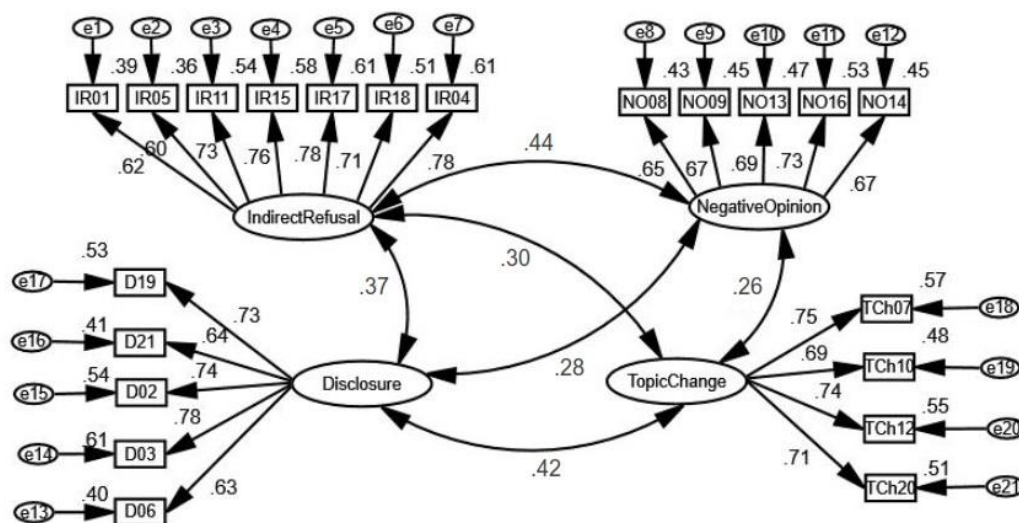
Different researchers have suggested the following sample size guidelines for factor analyses. A sample of 100 people is viewed as a poor sample; a sample of 200 people is viewed as a fair sample; a sample of 300 people is viewed as a good sample; a sample of 500 people is viewed as a very good sample; and a sample of 1000 people or more is viewed as an excellent sample (Bentler, 1990; Bollen, 1989; Hoyle, 1995; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Joreskog & Sorbom, 1999). Therefore, confirmatory factor analysis included 385 participants, who were considered a good sample size for factor analysis in this study. To estimate the internal consistency of the measure, Cronbach's alpha was run. To reach an independent index for the appropriate level of reliability, a number of studies were consulted. Following Kline (2000) and DeVellis (2012), an appropriate level of reliability of the measure was set at  $\alpha \geq .70$ .

#### 4. Results and Discussion

The internal consistency of the whole measure was 0.82 and for the four components of conversational implicatures in the test, namely, *Indirect refusals*, *Negative opinions*, *Disclosures*, and *Topic changes*, it was 0.76, 0.79, 0.78, and 0.77, respectively. These results showed that the measure yielded a high estimate of reliability. SEM analysis with the AMOS 23 was performed based on data from 385 undergraduate and postgraduate students. The multivariate normality and linearity were tested and no outliers were observed. There were no missing data. Maximum likelihood parameter was then estimated. The results of the CFA on the 28 items of the model showed that in general some items had very low factor loadings. Therefore, the model was not fitted as it was desired, so these items were deleted in order to improve the model fit. Then, another CFA was conducted. As indicated by confirmatory factor analysis a model with four factors was fitted appropriately ( $\chi^2 = 148.321$ ,  $df = 97$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $GFI = 0.94$ ,  $TLI = 0.94$ ,  $CFI = 0.95$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.03$ ,  $RMR = 0.01$ ).

In addition to fit indices, parameter estimates were also examined. The loading of the observed variables on each factor was above 0.60. As shown in Fig. 2, the factor loading demonstrated a highly desirable correlation. Based on the good model fit and estimated factor pattern loadings, the construct of conversational implicatures measured by the developed test of conversational implicature in this study, provided good factorial validity evidence. Each item had a desirable loading on its corresponding factor. In addition, the four factors were not highly correlated with each other indicating that each was a distinct factor underlying the construct of conversational implicatures (i.e. correlations below .50). Therefore, the result of confirmatory factor analysis supported the hypothesis that the test of conversational implicature tapped into four types of implicatures as the theory specified.

**Figure2.** The measurement model of conversational implicatures in standardized estimates



The results of CFA are promising as the development of the listening test of conversational implicature is a step toward exploring inferential skills of EFL students. The original measure developed in this study also adds to the current research on conversational implicatures because, to our knowledge, no validated listening test of conversational implicature has been developed so far. A further support for construct validity of the measure was a difference in the performance of respondents with different levels of proficiency. The hypothesis was that more proficient students would considerably score higher than less proficient students would. As can be seen in Table 1, High-proficiency students scored better with an overall mean of 75.44 ( $SD = 13.02$ ) than all Low-proficiency student who had an overall mean of



28.41( $SD = 10.01$ ). Moreover, high-proficiency students scored highest in all four subtypes of conversational implicatures. These results also supported the construct validity of the test.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics for comprehension scores of high- and low-proficiency group

		K	M	SD	Min.	Max.
	Indirect refusal	7	98.30	17.56	79	134
H ( $n = 196$ )	Negative opinion	5	81.18	19.32	54	111
	Disclosure	5	75.64	15.06	42	88
	Topic change	4	42.64	12.31	48	88
	Total	21	75.44	13.02	50	61
L ( $n = 189$ )	Indirect refusal	7	37.26	9.81	20	83
	Negative opinion	5	29.5	8.14	16	80
	Disclosure	5	24.6	7.58	17	69
	Topic change	4	21.1	7.03	17	80
	Total	21	28.41	10.01	25	75

Note. H: high-proficiency learners. L: low-proficiency learners. K: number of items. M: mean. SD: standard deviation. Min: minimum. Max: maximum.

For showing that the groups' different performance was statistically significant, a Mann-Whitney U test was used. As shown in Table 2, the mean differences in the implicatures comprehension of students with different English proficiency were significant ( $U = 789, p = 0.015$ ).

**Table 2.** Statistical test of significance

	Total Score
Mann-Whitney U	789.000
Wilcoxon W	4705.000
Z	-9.569
Sig	.015

It can be argued that one factor influencing the comprehension of implicatures is English proficiency. In line with previous research studies (Roever, 2006, 2010; Taguchi, 2002, 2005, 200, 2008), the fact that students with different proficiency levels performed differently on the test is an evidence of the role that proficiency plays in implicature comprehension. Roever (2006, 2010) found that the knowledge of implicature increased as learners' L2 proficiency increased. Roever (2006, 2010) pointed out that learners only comprehended implicatures when differences between the surface and the deep meaning was recognized.

This interpretation can easily be drawn by more proficient learners because less proficient learners' ability is limited to the comprehension of linguistic features of the utterances. However, more proficient learners are able to recognize that the utterance contains an implied meaning that violates a conversational maxim. That is, students with high levels of proficiency have access to the linguistic and

nonlinguistic resources which help them understand the literal and nonliteral meaning of implicatures. When comprehending the meaning of implicatures, learners need to recognize that the utterance contains meaning different from the literal meaning. As soon as they notice that, recognizing the difference between the utterance and its intended meaning will become easy for them (Roever, 2006).

## 5. Conclusions

This study was a preliminary attempt to investigate whether students of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) have sufficient pragmatic competence to comprehend implicatures used in everyday English conversations. To this end, a measure of this ability was developed and its validity was systematically established. The measure of conversational implicatures developed in the study was based on the proposed model of Holtgraves (1998). It measured four subtypes of conversational implicatures that were generated as a result of the violation of the relevance maxim. Two approaches to construct validity were undertaken that provided strong confirmation for the reliability and validity of the developed measure. In addition, it was found that learners with different levels of English proficiency differed significantly in their comprehension of implicatures. In general, more proficient learners outperformed less proficient ones in the comprehension of four subtypes of implicatures.

In the present study, it was assumed that concerns for one another's face were a motivator for using indirect language. However, as well as face management other factors such as social distance and formality impact comprehension. In other words, it is assumed that people also violate the maxim of relation when they make a humorous, sarcastic, or even insulting language use (Holtgraves, 1998, 1999). Therefore, more research has to explore possible role of these variables in comprehending implied meaning.

In writing the items of the measure, the description of the situations and the dialogues were written according to the theoretical definition of the construct provided in literature reviews. In order to generate more authentic items, namely, dialogues that are closer to real-life conversations, it would be necessary to obtain sample of implicatures that occur naturally in every day English conversations. Hence, the corpora of naturally occurring conversations may be used as a basis for writing the items. Furthermore, the findings of this study may not be conclusive enough to give an extensive account of the comprehension of EFL learners in other provinces, because the sample was from universities in a single province of Iran, namely, Ilam. Thus, care should be taken before any generalizations can be made about the results of the present study to all EFL learners in other provinces of Iran.

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## Appendix A.

(Transcripts of conversational implicature listening test)

Item specification

Categories	Item numbers
Indirect refusals(7 items)	1, 4, 5, 11, 15, 17, 18
Negative opinion (5 items)	8, 9, 13, 14, 16
Disclosures (5 items)	2, 3, 6, 19, 21
Topic changes (4 items)	7, 10, 12, 20

Test items

1. **Situation:** Lucie is bored at home. She has two movie tickets, so she decides to ask her brother, Miguel, to go with her to the cinema.

**Lucie:** Say Miguel, do you wanna go to the cinema with me?

**Miguel:** Well, I'm going to the soccer match with a friend of mine.... I wish I could be at two places at once.

**What does Miguel probably mean?**

1. He'll change his plans at once.
2. He regrets he can't go to the party.
3. He'll attend both the movie and the match.
4. He refuses to go with her.

2. **Situation:** Bill and Fiona are classmates. Fiona has heard that Bill has got into a fight with his roommate.

**Fiona:** Oh, by the way, is it true you got into a fight with John?

**Bill:** Well... I guess, we just don't get along well.

**What does Bill probably mean?**

1. He is going to get a new roommate.
2. He and Fiona don't usually get along.
3. Bill and John used to be good friends.
4. Bill admits that he has got into a fight with John.

3. **Situation:** Laura plays tennis for her high school team. She has lost five straight games. Her father has heard that Laura isn't doing well. He wants to know if it is true.

**Father:** So Laura, how are you doing in your matches?

**Laura:** Oh, I think...em... I gotta keep practicing.

**What does Laura probably mean?**

1. She hasn't been doing much practices.
2. She wants to play tennis for her high school.
3. It's true that she hasn't been playing well.
4. She wants to learn to play tennis.

4. **Situation:** David and Laura are classmates. David asks Laura whether he can borrow her book for a while.

**David:** Um... you think you could lend me your book?

**Laura:** Ah ... well..., I'm studying it right now.

**What does Laura probably mean?**

1. She can't lend him her book.
2. She lends him the book when she's finished.
3. She can only lend him the book for a while.
4. She isn't sure if she can lend him.

5. **Situation:** There is an outdoor concert and Bob invites Stephanie, her classmate, to go with him.

**Bob:** Stephanie, wanna come with me to the musical show tonight?

**Stephanie:** Oh, I'm not done with my history paper yet.

**What does Stephanie probably mean?**

1. She can't attend the musical show.
2. She needs to work on her paper.
3. She can only go for a short while.
4. She goes after doing her paper.

6. **Situation:** Rod is a high school student and he has a part time job. When the exams are over he gets very low grades on his courses. His classmate, Anna, asks him about his grades.

**Anna:** How are your grades this semester?

**Rod:** I'm thinking about quitting my job,...em... it's really stressful.

**What does Rod probably mean?**

1. The job was harder than what he expected.
2. He doesn't like stressful jobs.
3. He works long hours.
4. He's not doing well because of his work.

7. **Situation:** Sara has recently broken up with Jack, her boyfriend. One day she goes to the mall with her friend, Paula. Paula tells Sara that Jack has just got married.

**Paula:** Oh, Sara, did you know Jack got married last week?

**Sara:** Oh, those are really nice shoes, aren't they?

**What does Sara probably mean?**

1. She prefers to go shopping in a store.
2. Sara thinks the shoes are really nice.
3. Paula and Sara usually go to the mall together.
4. She doesn't want to talk about Jack.

8. **Situation:** Elena wants to start working out at a gym. Her friend, Debbie, introduces a health club to her. Two weeks later, they see each other and talk about the health club.

**Debbie:** What do you think of the exercise equipment at the health club?

**Elena:** Well, I think it's hard to find a good quality gym in this town.

**What does Elena probably mean?**

1. She needs her friend's help for finding a good gym.
2. She doesn't like the gym.
3. She feels regretful for not having found the gym before.
4. She can only find a gym in town.

9. **Situation:** Ellen goes downtown and buys a new and an expensive dress. When she returns home she wears it and asks her husband what he thinks of it.

**Ellen:** So Mark, how do you like this dress?

**Mark:** well, may be it's just me, but I think it's hard to make a good purchase.

**What does Mark probably mean?**

1. He doesn't like the dress.
2. It's no use trying to make good purchase.
3. He doesn't mind the cost of the dress.
4. Ellen's choice is the best.

10. **Situation:** Sara is a college student. She has a roommate, Bill. It is Bill's turn to clean up the room but, instead, he goes to play football with his friends. When he returns Sara says:

**Sara:** You're being unfair. It's your turn to clean up the room.

**Bill:** Our team won by three goals to one.

**What does Bill probably mean?**

1. He changes the topic because he didn't do his duty.
2. He doesn't like to clean up.
3. His team always win the game.
4. He's too busy to clean up.

11. **Situation:** Jennifer has to type some papers for class but her typewriter is not working. She calls Fred, her classmate, for help.

**Jennifer:** Hi Fred, do you have time to come to my place, 'cause my typewriter isn't working?

**Fred:** My parent are arriving from out of town, so I'm going to pick them up at the airport now.

**What does Fred probably mean?**

1. He can't go to her place.
2. His parents may come at any time.
3. She should find a repair shop.
4. She should ask someone else for help.

12. **Situation:** Diana has just found out that she failed many of her courses. When she comes back from school, her mother asks her about the exams.

**Mother:** So Diana, how are you doing with your exams?

**Diana:** What's for lunch?

**What does Diana probably mean?**

1. She doesn't want to tell her mother about her grades.
2. She is hungry right now.
3. She doesn't hear her mother's question.
4. Diana prefers to eat at home.

13. **Situation:** Angela is talking to David, her friend, about Mark, their classmate, and his new painting. Angela asks David whether he likes it.

**Angela:** That's an interesting painting. What do you think of it?

**David:** If you ask me, I think no one wants to work hard these days.

**What does David probably mean?**

1. He is really interested in Mark's painting.
2. Painting is better than hard work.
3. Mark's artwork is displ displayed in art museum.
4. He thinks Mark's painting isn't good at all.

14. **Situation:** Jim and David are close friends. Jim has bought a new and expensive car. He shows his car to David and asks him:

**Jim:** What's up? Boy, how's the new car?

**David:** Oh..., I think it's difficult to make a good purchase these days.

**What does David probably mean?**

1. The car prices are becoming higher.
2. He should try to get his money back.
3. The car costs more than what it's worth.
4. The car is not expensive.

15. **Situation:** Bob wants to invite Stephanie, his classmates, to a Mexican restaurant. He asks Stephanie whether she likes to join him tonight.

**Bob:** Hey Stephanie, there's a great Mexican restaurant. Wanna try some spicy dishes?

**Stephanie:** Oh, ah ... I'm planning to stay home.

**What does Stephanie probably mean?**

1. She refuses his invitation.
2. She has already eaten.
3. She'd rather go at another time.
4. She doesn't want to try spicy dishes.

16. **Situation:** Ali has started a photography course. He has taken a few photos. He asks his friend, Emily, about his photos.

**Ali:** So Emily, ah...what do you think of my photos?

**Emily:** Oh, well, I think photography needs times and practice.

**What does Emily probably mean?**

1. She recommends Ali to take a photography course.
2. She doesn't like the photos.
3. He won't be able to take good photos.
4. She wants Ali to practice more.

17. **Situation:** Richard works in an office and is very busy. He has to proof-read a long report before quitting time. He asks his colleague, Paul, whether he can help him.

**Richard:** Hi Paul, can you proof-read this report for me?

**Paul:** Uh, the thing is that a stack of files is waiting for me on my desk.

**What does Paul probably mean?**

1. He can't help his colleague.
2. He has done a lot of proofreading recently.
3. He's waiting to receive more reports.
4. He's willing to proof read reports himself.

18. **Situation:** There is a new cafeteria and Maria invites her friends for a drink. She calls Mary, her cousin, too.

**Maria:** Hey Mary, free tonight? I'm meeting a few friends at the new cafeteria on Main Street.

**Mary:** Oh..., I'm working late tonight.

**What does Mary probably mean?**

1. She can't certainly go to the cafeteria.
2. Maria shouldn't ask Mary to meet them at the café.
3. Mary has to work late tonight.
4. It'll be hard to get to the café on time.

19. **Situation:** Elsa took a TOFEL test but she failed the exam. Elsa's friend, Erica, has heard about it. They see each other the other day and talk.

**Erica:** Did you just fail the exam, Elsa?

**Elsa:** well, um,... I need to study harder but I can't concentrate.

**What does Elsa probably mean?**

1. It is true that she failed the exam.
2. The exam was very hard.
3. She needs more concentration.
4. Erica is mistaken.

20. **Situation:** Shelly and Peter are having a drink at the bar. Shelly talks about the party she had last week and the food she cooked.

**Shelly:** Well Peter, how did you like the food?

**Peter:** This is a great song, I love Latin music.



**What does Peter probably mean?**

1. He didn't like the food.
2. She's a good cook.
3. He enjoyed it very much.
4. Peter usually listens to Latin music.

21. **Situation:** John has not been able to get a job since graduation. One day he applies for a job and when he comes home, his wife asks him:

**Mary:** So John, tell me, did you get the job you applied for?

**John:** Actually, well, the job market is really bad these days.

**What does John probably mean?**

1. He didn't get the job.
  2. John has been looking for a job for a long time.
  3. John hasn't tried to find a job yet.
  4. John hoped to change jobs.
3. Filler items

1. **Situation:** It's Monday morning and Mr. Lee is in the travel agency. He is going to Melbourne on Business and wants to book a flight.

**Mr. Lee:** I'd like to book a flight to Melbourne, please. I believe there's a flight next Saturday.

**Clerk:** Just a minute, sir... I'll check.... sorry, that's fully booked.

**What does the clerk probably mean?**

1. Mr. Lee could not have a ticket for the Saturday flight.
2. The clerk helped him book a ticket on next Saturday
3. Mr. Lee could have a ticket for Saturday flight.
4. Mr. Lee booked a ticket for Saturday flight on time

2. **Situation:** Sally went to the National Theater to hear a concert. There, he saw Mat in the bar during the interval. Sally asked Mat about the concert.

**Sally:** How did you like the concert this evening, Mat?

**Mat:** Oh, I liked it very much.

**What does Mat probably mean?**

1. Mat doesn't like the concert.
2. Mat likes the concert.
3. Mat likes to go to bar and have a drink.
4. Mat like to attend concerts.

3. **Situation:** Mr. Kay went to the cafe near his house. He decided to have coffee. He called the waitress and made an order.

**Mr. Kay:** Excuse me. Can I have a coffee, please?

**Waitress:** Of course. I'll bring it in a moment.

**What does the waitress probably mean?**

1. There's no coffee.
2. The waitress is going to bring the menu.
3. Soon, the waitress is going to bring Mr. Kay's order.
4. Mr. Kay should wait until the coffee is prepared.

4. **Situation:** Mr. Thompson has been in china for two weeks. He's on business to arrange an exhibition for his company. On his leaving he wanted to change some Chinese currency back into US dollars.

**Mr. Thompson:** I'd like to change my money back to US dollars.

**Clerk:** US dollars? Sure, no problem.

**What does the clerk probably mean?**

1. There is a problem with Chinese currency.
2. The clerk is going to exchange the money.
3. The clerk needs more time to check the money
4. The clerk does not want to exchange the money.

5. **Situation:** Mrs. Robert went shopping for souvenirs in Paris. She went to a department store where she asked the shop assistant about some candle holders. They were six hundred dollars.

**Mrs. Robert:** Could you give me some discount on that price, please?

**Shop assistant:** I'm afraid, madam. Our prices are fixed.

**What does the shop assistant probably mean?**

1. He refuses to give her a discount.
2. He does not have money.
3. He would like to give her money.
4. He does not know the price.

6. **Situation:** Mina and Julie are friends. They are having a free day, and they're deciding what to do with their spare time.

**Mina:** how about going to the Regal to see that new film " Superman"?

**Julie:** Ah,...I've seen it, I'm afraid.

**What does Julie probably mean?**

1. Julie does not want to watch the movies
2. Julie does not like such a movie
3. Julie is afraid watch the movie
4. Julie is willing to watch the movie once again

## İranlı bir EFL bağlamında karşılıklı konuşmanın anlaşılması: bir doğrulama çalışması

### Öz

Pragmatik yeterlilik, ikinci / yabancı dil öğrencilerinin iletişimsel dil yeteneğinin önemli bileşenlerinden biridir. Bununla birlikte, iletişimsel dil yeterliliğinin diğer bileşenleriyle karşılaştırıldığında, öğrencilerin pragmatik yetkinliği çok daha az araştırılmaktadır. Pragmatik yeterliliğin pek çok yönünden, geniş bir araştırma gövdesi, konuşma eylemi çerçevesi tarafından bilgilendirilen içgüdüsel pragmatik araçların geliştirilmesine odaklanmıştır. Bununla birlikte, pragmatik bilginin diğer yönlerinin değerlendirilmesi, yani, konuşmaya ait imkânsızlık hala geride kalmaktadır. Bu boşluğu çözmeye yönelik bir girişim olarak, bu çalışma, bir konuşmanın örtüşmesinin testini geliştirmeyi ve doğrulamayı amaçlamıştır. Goffman'ın (1967) yüz yönetimiyle ilgili içgörülerine eşleştirilmiş Grice'in (1975) konuşma mantığına dayanan hipotezden oluşan bir konuşma güdüsü modeli önerilmiş ve test edilmiştir. Doğrulama süreci, içeriği destekleyen kanıtların toplanmasını ve testin geçerliliğini yapılandırmayı içermiştir. Yapı geçerliliği için ampirik kanıtlar, yapısal eşitlik modelleme (SEM) ve diferansiyel grup çalışması kullanılarak doğrulayıcı faktör analizi (CFA) ile toplanmıştır. Farklı düzeylerde olan 385 EFL üniversite öğrencisine 34 çoktan seçmeli-madde testi uygulanmıştır. CFA'nın sonucu, hipotez model için iyi bir model-uyum gösterdi. Ayrıca, farklı İngilizce yeterliliğine sahip öğrenciler, anlamlarını anlamada önemli ölçüde farklıydı. Son olarak, sınırlamalar ve gelecekteki araştırma yönleri tartışılmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İletişimsel dil yeteneği; konuşmasal örtüşme; EFL öğrencileri; pragmatik yetkinlik; validasyon

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