

Exploring the Effects of Intention-oriented Input-based Instruction in Second Language Pragmatics: A Case of English Request Hedges

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The present study investigates the effects of two types of intention-oriented input-based approaches —intentional learning-induced instruction (INT+) and incidental learning-induced instruction (INT-) on learners' recognition and production of English request hedges. The results demonstrated that the INT+ and INT- groups performed significantly better than the control group on an acceptability judgment test (an unplanned written judgment test). There were no statistically significant differences between the two experimental groups on the acceptability judgment test, which suggested that the incidental input-based learning took place and had some effects on recognizing English request hedges. In other words, it showed that incidental learning became possible in recognizing English hedges when learners were able to attend to and became aware of both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic resources of English request hedges. However, a comparison of those learners in the two treatment groups in a discourse completion test (an unplanned written-production test) indicated an advantage for the INT+ group and implied that the intentional input-based learning involving processing of English polite requests through pragmalinguistic-sociopragmatic connection contributed more to producing English requests hedges.

Keywords: intentional, incidental, input-based, hedge, pragmatics

INTRODUCTION

Since Schmidt's (1993) argument that three senses of consciousness (attention, awareness, and intention) are both useful and necessary in second language (L2) learning, a number of experimental studies have been generated and the recent studies in L2 pragmatics within the consciousness-oriented instruction framework have given empirical support that some form of consciousness-raising instruction helps learners notice target pragmatic features (e.g., Alcón, 2005, 2012; Koike & Pearson, 2005; Martinez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005). Beyond the studies mentioned above, there are a number of other studies that prove the effectiveness of consciousness-raising instruction on L2 pragmatics (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993; Wildner-Basset, 1984). These findings imply that without a pragmatic emphasis in L2 or foreign language lessons, learners would not attend to and become aware of the target pragmatic features. However, these studies have mainly focused on consciousness as attention and awareness, not on consciousness as intention. Therefore, a key issue here is the extent to which it is possible to provide learners with incidental learning opportunities for developing their pragmatic competence and the level of intention learners should develop to improve their pragmatic competence.

Intention-Oriented Input-Based Instruction

Schmidt (1993) proposed that consciousness as awareness, consciousness as attention, and consciousness as intention play key roles in language learning. According to him, awareness and attention are closely linked. That is, what we are aware of is what we attend to, and if attention is required for learning, then awareness is as well. The attention and awareness oriented instruction is closely associated with input-based explicit/implicit instruction. Among the interventional studies in pragmatics teaching, some have showed that pragmatic features can be taught either explicitly or implicitly together with some sort of input enhancement activities (e.g., Fukuya & Clark, 1999;

Rose & Ng, 2001; Takahashi, 2001, 2005; Tateyama, 2001; Tateyama, Kasper, Mui, Tay, & Thananart, 1997). Ellis (2008) proposed that it is the manipulation of input rather than output that is more likely to result in the integration of intake into learners' implicit/declarative knowledge. A review of these limited available attention and awareness oriented input-based L2 pragmatics studies indicates that they were largely motivated by the theories and frameworks built for consciousness as attention and awareness in language learning and they left consciousness as intention out of consideration. Thus, the present study is more motivated by the intention-oriented theory and framework and interested in looking into how intention oriented input-based instruction affects learners' pragmatic competence.

The intention-oriented instruction is closely related to intentional/incidental instruction. Schmidt (2010) explained that incidental learning refers to the fact that learners can learn things without having any particular intention to learn them and the difference between intentional and incidental learning is the lack of any intention to learn, not the lack of awareness and attention. According to Hulstijn (2011), intentional learning refers to deliberate attempt to commit new words or expressions to memory, such as preparing for a test in school or learning new words or expressions by heart, whereas incidental learning to the acquisition of words or expressions without intention to commit the elements to memory, such as "picking up" unknown words or expressions from listening to someone or from reading a text. Ellis (2008) argued that intentional learning involves a deliberate attempt to learn, which may or may not involve awareness, while incidental learning is the learning without intention, which may involve *ad hoc* attention to some other features of the L2. In consideration of the definitions provided by Ellis (2008), Hulstijn (2011), and Schmidt (2010), they can be integrated into a single definition and the present study adopts the following definition:

Intentional learning is the goal directed learning with a deliberate attempt to learn the target features, while incidental learning is the

learning without a deliberate attempt to learn the target features and with attention focused on other features.

Ellis (2008) reported that only a few studies had looked into the intentional and incidental learning of L2 grammar, although a number of studies had investigated the intentional and incidental learning of L2 vocabulary.

Hulstijn (1989) conducted two experiments first with adult intermediate learners of Dutch as an L2 on complicated Dutch word-order structures and second with high school students on complicated word-order structures of an artificial language. Instructional treatments were administered implicitly (no explanation about the word-order structures) and incidentally (no pre-warning about the posttests). Participants were divided into three treatment groups such as the Form Group (form-focused), Meaning Group (meaning-focused), and Form & Meaning Group. The results indicated that Form Group performed better than the other two groups on a sentence copying task and a task that required cued recall task of the learning task sentences. Hulstijn suggested that the task directing learners' attention to the target structures is sufficient for implicit and incidental learning.

Robinson (2005) looked into the effectiveness of incidental natural learning Samoan as a foreign language. Participants were Japanese undergraduate students who were experienced L2 learners taking English-medium course work in the English department and were absolute beginners to learn Samoan. The first phase involved learning new vocabularies and participants were asked to memorize the meanings of 27 new Samoan words: 1 article, 15 nouns, and 11 verbs. After successfully completing the word list memorization test, participants viewed Samoan sentences of three types (450 presentations in all, with 150 token of each type). Participants were asked to try as hard as they could to understand the meaning of each sentence and no grammar explanation was given. Furthermore, participants were asked to respond to yes/no comprehension questions and feedback regarding the correctness or incorrectness of the response on screen. The results showed the clear evidence of incidental

learning of the three types of structures on old grammatical items in a grammaticality judgment test and only one type of structure (the locative type) on new grammatical items.

In view of the two studies by Hulstijin (1989) and Robinson (2005), incidental learning of L2 grammar seems to be possible only when learners are exposed to the target structures and then learners' attention is directed at both meaning and form of the target structure. While there is some evidence of incidental L2 grammar learning, the possibility of incidental learning in L2 pragmatics is still underresearched and needed to be looked into further. The present study is interested in knowing whether incidental learning can be extended to learning L2 pragmatics or learning English request hedges (e.g., *I wonder if ~*; *I would appreciate it if ~*; *Would it be possible to ~*).

Intention-Oriented Input-Based Studies of L2 Pragmatics

There is some consensus in the literature that the classroom is not an ideal place to learn L2 pragmatics incidentally because of the lack of a range of representations of communication situations and the lack of information about pragmatic norms of the L2 in textbooks (Kasper, 2001). So far there have been only a few studies that have explicitly linked classroom resources to the effects of incidental/intentional learning on L2 pragmatic competence.

Ohta (2001) examined how two adult learners of Japanese as a foreign language developed the ability to use listener responses in Japanese, in particular expressions of acknowledgement and alignment. She paid particular attention to the follow-up turn of the sequence. The study drew on longitudinal data over one academic year from Japanese classroom interaction observing how the two learners picked up pragmatic features and their interaction styles developed over one academic year. The analysis indicated the variability of the developmental pace of the two learners, but suggested that the two learners followed similar developmental paths moving from expressions of acknowledgement to alignment. The results also showed

that natural incidental learning through the interaction activities of the classroom setting is possible.

Taguchi (2012) also investigated how classroom discourse affected the development of pragmatic comprehension and production of learners of Japanese as a foreign language in an immersion setting. Quantitative data on learners' pragmatic development were analyzed along with qualitative data on learners' sociocultural experiences gathered from interviews, classroom observations, journals, and field notes. Quantitative and qualitative data disclosed opportunities for learners' pragmatic practice, learners' stance in accessing practice opportunities, and contextual specific factors which facilitated or constrained its access. She pointed out that a number of jokes, expressions of sarcasm, and indirect communication assumed shared context and background knowledge between teachers and learners, and that these opportunities contributed to learners' development of pragmatic comprehension.

Perhaps the studies by Ohta (2001) and Taguchi (2012) are the only existing studies which explicitly relate classroom resources to incidental learning of L2 pragmatics through classroom interactions. They showed that incidental output-based learning is possible, and that classroom interaction is conducive to incidental learning of L2 pragmatic features. Their output-based studies in incidental learning are very noteworthy and the present study goes further and investigates whether incidental input-based learning is possible in developing L2 pragmatic competence.

Among all attention and awareness oriented input-based L2 pragmatic studies, the studies by Takahashi (2001, 2005) are the only studies that explicitly associate classroom instruction with intention-oriented input-based L2 pragmatics learning outcomes. Takahashi (2001) examined the effectiveness of four types of input enhancement conditions for Japanese learners acquiring polite request strategies: explicit instruction, form-comparison, form-search, and meaning-focused conditions with Japanese university students. These four conditions differed from each other in terms of the degree of intention with the explicit condition indicating the

highest degree of intention and the meaning-focused condition the lowest. Participants were not informed that they had to take posttests after the treatment and after four weeks (90 minutes per week), the results of discourse completion tests and self-reports showed that the explicit group learned all of the request strategies more successfully than the other three groups.

In spite of the general trend in support of overt ways of instruction with teacher fronted explicit explanation, Takahashi (2001) discovered some of the participants in the explicit teaching condition used non-target pragmalinguistic forms in the discourse completion tests. This is because non-target English request forms they learned about in their high school classes were still operative in their restructuring process. In addition, some participants in the explicit teaching condition group were inclined to use *I wonder if you could VP* predominantly across all situations, regardless of degree of imposition. Takahashi (2001) reported that the degree of attainment and lasting effect of L2 pragmatic proficiency under the explicit teaching condition is doubtful, and pointed out several learners under the form-comparison and form-search conditions used target structures successfully. As a follow-up, Takahashi (2005) conducted an in-depth qualitative analysis of the form-comparison condition and the form-search condition in teaching request strategies. After four weeks (90 minutes per week), the results of discourse completion tests and self-reports demonstrated that the form-comparison group learned all request strategies more successfully than the form-search group. However, some learners in the form-comparison group were still unable to show their pragmatic performance evenly across situations. A similar performance was pointed out in the explicit teaching condition in Takahashi's (2001) study, which demonstrated no clear evidence of developing sociopragmatic competence, and attested to the necessity of developing not only pragmalinguistic but also sociopragmatic competence. This leads to the debate as to what sort of input-based approach, with or without intention, is the appropriate way of allowing learners to access and integrate sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge more quickly and efficiently.

The Present Study

The present study explores the effects of intentional and incidental input-based learning on recognizing and producing English polite requests.

To date, only a small number of studies have compared the effects of intentional learning with incidental learning on recognizing and producing L2 pragmatic features. For this reason, there is no conclusive evidence in the literature as to whether incidental learning is possible or effective in L2 pragmatics learning. The following research question is examined in the present study:

What are the relative effects of intentional and incidental input-based learning on recognizing and producing English polite requests?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Forty-five university students in three intact classes (three sophomore listening comprehension classes) at a university in Japan took part in the present study. The participants were non-English majors, studying in the College of Science and Engineering, and didn't know that English hedges were the target features of the study. The participants' English proficiency level was assessed to be at the intermediate level, as defined by a TOEIC score of 500-700. The three intact classes were randomly assigned to two treatment groups and one control group. The two experimental groups received the following instructional treatments: intentional learning-induced instruction (INT +) ($n=15$: female=0, male=15) and incidental learning-induced instruction (INT -) ($n=15$: female=1, male=14). The control group consisted of 15 participants ($n=15$: female=3, male=12). The participants' first language was Japanese, and their average age was 20 years.

All participants studied English for eight years at schools in Japan and the results of a pre-test indicated that they had not learned any target pragmatic features.

Target Structure

Takahashi (1996) concluded that Japanese EFL learners lack the L2 pragmalinguistic knowledge that an English request can be mitigated by embedding one clause within another clause because she found that Japanese EFL learners are inclined to use the monoclausal English request forms (e.g., *Would/Could you VP?*) when biclausal request forms (e.g., *Would it be possible to VP?*) were more appropriate. In addition, Hill (1997) found that even though the proficiency of Japanese EFL learners increased, they continued to underuse clausal hedges, lexical hedges, and syntactic hedges (past tense and progressive form). Hedges belong to the subcategory of mitigation which is a strategy for softening or reducing the strength of a speech act whose effects are “unwelcome to the hearer” by trying to make the act more palatable (Fraser, 1980).

Hill explained that the underuse of those hedges attributed to L1 interference, because those structures are not available in the Japanese language. Thus, this study focuses on teaching lexical/clausal hedges and syntactic hedges in English requestive forms.

Lexical/clausal modal hedges soften the difficulty that the speaker experiences when asking the hearer to perform a request by modifying the Head Act lexically or clausally, whereas syntactic hedges modify the Head Act syntactically by mitigating the level of difficulty that the speaker experiences when asking the hearer to perform a request through syntactic choices.¹ Takahashi (1996) explained that there are three types of clausal modal hedges: “(a) mitigated-preparatory questions (the speaker asks a question concerning preparatory conditions or a permission question by

¹ See Salmani Nodoushan and Allami (2011) for a brief discussion of the structure of requestive speech acts and hedging strategies in requests.

embedding it within another clause), (b) mitigated-preparatory statements (the speaker states a preparatory condition by embedding it within another clause), and (c) mitigated-want statements (the speaker states his or her want or wish that the hearer will perform the action in hypothetical situations)” (p. 220). A list of hedges used in the present study is shown below.

TABLE 1
List of Hedges Used in the Present Study

Syntactic hedges	Examples
Progressive form	I <i>am wondering</i> if you could lend me a book.
Past tense	I <i>was wondering</i> if you could come.
Lexical and clausal hedges	Examples
Modal adverbs	Could you <i>possibly</i> come here?
Mitigated-preparatory questions	<i>Would it be possible to</i> come here?.
Mitigated-preparatory statements	<i>I wonder if</i> you could come here.
Mitigated-want statements	<i>I would appreciate it if</i> you could come here.

In the dialogues and situations included in the instructional and testing materials, three variables were carefully controlled: (a) Power (the status of the speaker with respect to the hearer), (b) Distance between characters (the relationship between the speaker and the hearer), and (c) Imposition level of the requests (the difficulty that the speaker experiences when asking the hearer to perform the request). These three variables were selected because in cross-cultural pragmatics, they are viewed as the three independent and culturally sensitive variables that subsume all other variables and play an important role in speech act behavior (Brown & Levinson, 1987).²

Instructional Treatments

Each teaching session for the two experimental groups and the control group lasted for 20 minutes, and the instructor gave all directions in Japanese

² See Salmani Nodoushan (2012) for a more recent view of politeness and the variable that affect interpretational communication is presented in

during each teaching session. Teaching sessions were carried out by the same instructor once a week for four weeks in three intact classes at a university in Japan. The instructor was also the researcher.³ No extra activities and explicit metapragmatic explanations containing the target pragmatic features were provided during teaching sessions. Care was taken to ensure that both groups spent equal amounts of time (20 minutes) on activities and both received equal amounts of exposure to the target pragmatic features.

In line with the definition mentioned in previous section, the participants in the INT + group were told that they would learn English request hedges through engaging in different tasks and they would be tested on them, whereas the participants in the INT – group were told that they would familiarize themselves with English everyday conversation through engaging in different tasks and they were not told that they would learn English request hedges and they would be tested on them.

Intentional learning-induced instruction (INT +)

The experimental treatment for the Intention + is composed of three tasks as follows:

*Task 1: Pragmalinguistics-focused activities (5minutes).*⁴The participants read each situation and dialogue in their handouts and then listened to them. The target pragmatic features were highlighted and boldfaced. The participants were asked to copy the underlined requests in two dialogues and

³ In behavioral research, researcher expectancy can be a problem when the researcher teaches and select experimental groups. The researcher followed the instructional guidelines rigidly controlled for the effect with the double-blind technique after the data were collected in order to minimize any researcher expectancy effect during the treatments.

⁴ The term “pragmalinguistics” refers to the knowledge of the strategies for realizing speech intentions and the linguistic items used to express these intentions (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983).

compare the underlined request forms in the two dialogues. Then, they were required to find the differences between the two requests.

*Task 2: Sociopragmatics-focused activities (10minutes).*⁵ The participants were instructed to rate the closeness between the two characters and the difficulty level of the request in the two dialogues.

Task 3: Pragmalinguistics-sociopragmatics connection activity 1 (5 minutes). The participants were asked to rate the level of politeness of the requests in two dialogues and write a list of ways of making the requests more polite.

Incidental Learning-Induced Instruction (INT—)

The experimental treatment for the INT— consists of two tasks as follows:

Task 1: Reading and processing for meaning activities (10 minutes)

The participants read the same situation and dialogue for general understanding in their handouts as the ones included in the handouts for the Intention +, and then listened to them. The target pragmatic features were neither highlighted nor boldfaced.

Task 2: Sociopragmatics-focused activities (10 minutes)

The participants were instructed to rate the closeness between the two characters and the difficulty level of the requests in the two dialogues.

Control Group

Lessons for the control group were designed to help participants learn new English words and phrases. The participants in the control group watched a short English video for 10 minutes and were taught about words and phrases used in the video by the instructor. The participants were not exposed to any

⁵ The term “sociopragmatics” refers to the knowledge of the social conditions governing language (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983).

target pragmatic features through the video and were not taught about any target pragmatic features during the lessons.

Testing Instruments and Procedures

The present study adopts a pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test to assess the effectiveness of the instructional treatments. The pre-test was administered a week prior to the first instructional treatment, the post-test a week after the treatments, and the delayed post-test was conducted four weeks after the treatments in order to find out the long-term effects of the treatments. Each test consisted of a discourse completion test (an unplanned written-production test) and an acceptability judgment test (an unplanned written-judgment test). The DCT is used because Kasper (2000) argued that the DCT is an effective way of data collection when the purpose of the study is to inform about learners' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge of the target pragmatic expressions they study in class, although the DCT doesn't produce naturally occurring conversational data. The test items do not overlap with the treatment materials.

The study was targeted at situations with a high level of Imposition combined with Power and Distance. This is because English request hedges are inclined to be used in situations with a high level of Imposition (Hill, 1997; Hudson, Detmer, & Brown, 1995; Takahashi, 2001).

The situations with high levels of Imposition were modified from the ones validated by Hill (1997), Hudson, Detmer, and Brown (1995) and Takahashi (2001). Three versions of the discourse completion test and the acceptability judgment test were developed and employed in order to minimize the test learning effect.⁶

⁶ If the study begins with the pre-test, the test with the same items can influence performance on the post-test and follow-up tests. In order to minimize the influence, three versions of the instruments were developed.

Discourse Completion Test (DCT)

The discourse completion test is an unplanned written-production test which required the participants to read short descriptions of each situation in English and write what they would say in each situation in English in 20 minutes. The appropriateness of the request forms was evaluated on the 1 to 5 point Likert scale. A request that reflected the most appropriate use of request hedges was given five points. For example, in a High Imposition item, 1 point was given to *Please ~*, 2 points to *Can you ~?*, 3 points to *Could you ~?*, 4 points to *Is it possible for you to ~?*, 5 points to *I was just wondering if it would be possible for you to ~*. The more appropriate the syntactic and lexical hedges the participants used in their requests, the higher the scores they obtained. As there were 10 High Imposition items on the test, the maximum score was 50 points.

Acceptability Judgment Test (AJT)

The acceptability judgment test is an unplanned written-judgment test which required the participants to read written descriptions of each situation in English and then evaluate three isolated requests on an 11 point scale one at a time in 10 minutes.⁷ The participants who evaluated the three requests in accordance with the acceptability judgment of native English speakers were awarded five points.⁸ The participants who did not assess all three requests in

⁷ The acceptability judgment test used an 11 point Likert scale. According to Hatch and Lazarson (1991), a broader range in scale encourages more precision in respondents' judgments.

⁸ Ten native speakers provided three isolated requests in each situation. Ten native speakers of English were required to read written English descriptions of 20 situations. They were asked to write what they would say in each situation and they were then presented with a series of isolated requests and instructed to score the first request on an 11 point scale and then to score subsequent responses proportionally higher or lower in accordance with the degree of perceived acceptability. The native speakers' data was relatively uniform and consistent (SD = .82 ~ 1.08, range = 2.00 ~ 4.00).

line with native English speakers were awarded no points. As there were 10 High Imposition items on the test, the maximum score was 50 points.

RESULTS

With regard to internal consistency, average Cronbach alpha reliability estimates for the discourse completion test and acceptability judgment test were estimated. They were .841 for the discourse completion test and .837 for the acceptability judgment test respectively, showing a fairly high internal consistency for the two tests.

Content validity was examined instead of criterion and construct validity due to the small number of cases. In order to ensure content validity, situations of the two tests were carefully planned and matched to a theoretical framework based on imposition, power and distance variables.

The normality assumption was checked through SPSS, which did not indicate a violation of the normality assumption. Although the present study used ANOVA analysis, due to the fact that the number of participants was not large enough, the results of ANOVA analysis were used to just imply causality of the significant differences. The following section summarizes the results for the discourse completion test and the acceptability judgment test. The overall alpha level was set at .05.

Results from the Discourse Completion Test

Results of a two-way ANOVA with repeated-measures showed a significant main effect for Instruction (the INT+, INT-, and control), $F(2, 42)=18.46, p<.05, \eta^2=.976$, a significant main effect for Time (the pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test), $F(2, 42)=3.19, p<.05, \eta^2=.071$. However, no significant interaction effect between Instruction and Time was found, $F(4, 42)=3.49, p<.05, \eta^2=.142$. The post-hoc Scheffé tests for the main effect

This data was used as the baseline data for the DCT and AJT.

of treatment indicate the following contrasts: (a) the intentional learning-induced instruction (INT+) group performed significantly better than the incidental learning-induced instruction (INT-) group and the control group; (b) there were no statistically significant differences between the incidental learning-induced instruction (INT-) group and the control group.

Results of the one-way ANOVA analysis in Figure 1 and Table 2 indicate that, although there were no statistically significant differences between the three groups on the pre-test scores $F(2, 42)=1.54, p>.05, \eta^2=.068$, the two treatment groups showed gains from the pre-test to the post-test, and the intentional learning-induced instruction (INT+) group further gains from the post-test to the delayed post-test test, whereas the incidental learning-induced instruction (INT-) group dropped from the post-test to the delayed post-test.

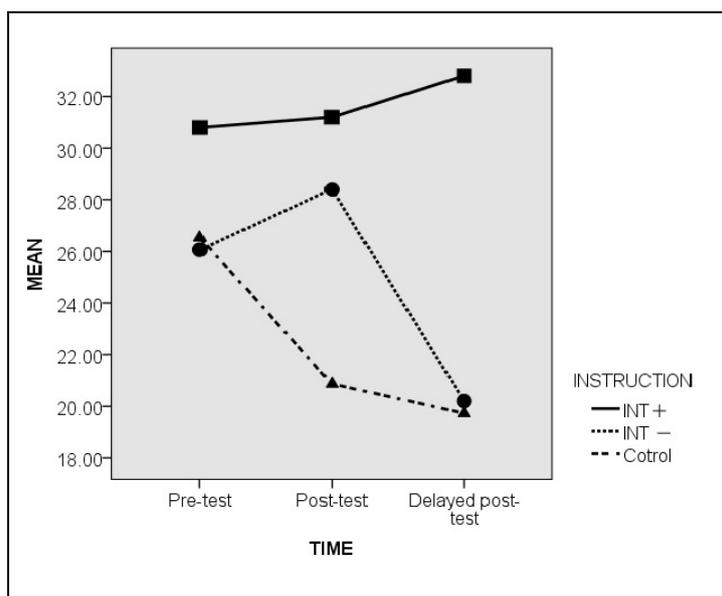


FIGURE 1
Interaction Plot for DCT

Note: INT+: Intentional learning-induced instruction; INT-: Incidental learning-induced instruction.

TABLE 2
Descriptive Statistics for DCT

	Treatment	Score	Mean	SD
Pre-test	INT+	50	30.80	10.80
	INT-	50	26.07	7.45
	Control	50	26.53	5.18
Post-test	INT+	50	31.20	12.27
	INT-	50	28.40	5.88
	Control	50	20.87	1.19
Delayed post-test	INT+	50	32.80	7.99
	INT-	50	20.20	0.86
	Control	50	19.73	1.33

Note: INT+: Intentional learning-induced instruction; INT-: Incidental learning-induced instruction.

TABLE 3
Request Forms Used in the Pre-Test

Request forms	Pre-test (%)		
	INT+	INT-	Control
Mood derivables	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Mood derivables with <i>please</i>	11(7)	0(0)	9(6)
Want statements	7(5)	8(6)	3(2)
Preparatory questions	125(86)	118(90)	117(84)
Suggestion questions	0(0)	2(2)	0(0)
Permission questions	3(2)	2(2)	11(8)
Total	146(100)	130(100)	140(100)

Note: INT+: Intentional learning-induced instruction; INT-: Incidental learning-induced instruction.

Table 3 indicates that the great majority of the participants tended to favor mono-clausal preparatory questions (e.g., *Could/Would you VP?*), mood derivables with *please* (e.g., *Please VP*), want statements (e.g., *I would like/want you to VP*), and permission questions (e.g., *May/Can I VP?*) in

situations with a high level of Speaker Difficulty. This might be because the participants were taught that the mono-clausal preparatory questions and mood derivables should be used as the appropriate request forms under a high level of Speaker Difficulty situation by their high school teachers. On the contrary, in the post-test and delayed post-test in Table 4, the participants in the INT + group predominantly employed the mitigated-preparatory statements (e.g., *I wonder if you could VP.*) rather than the mitigated-preparatory questions (e.g., *Would it be possible for you to VP?*) and the mitigated-want statements (e.g., *I would appreciate it if you could VP.*). This might be linked to the influence exerted by the participants' pragmatic knowledge of Japanese and its cultural tradition on their production of English request. Japanese language has an indirect strategy of communication and indirectness in request and is viewed more polite and courteous because it is generally believed that indirect expressions in Japanese requests soften the imposition force. Among the three bi-clausal mitigated request forms, probably the participants might have figured out that the mitigated-preparatory statements were more indirect and softened the imposition force of request more than the mitigated-preparatory questions and the mitigated-want statements. Brown and Levinson (1987) suggested that one universal pragmatic principle involves the assertion which indirect speech acts are more polite than the direct forms. Furthermore, the most frequently mentioned motivation for the use of hedges in spoken discourse is politeness and hedges are mainly used to mitigate the illocutionary force of an utterance for negative politeness. In other words, the participants' motivation for use of hedges in the post-test and delayed post-test is the desire to save the hearer's as well as the speaker's face and they might have assumed that their use of the mitigated-preparatory statement would be best suited to save both faces. Those who could not provide the target request forms continued to rely on the use of the mono-clausal preparatory questions in situations with a high level of Speaker Difficulty owing to the strong impact of what they learned at their high schools as shown in Table 5.

TABLE 4
Frequency of Target Request Forms Used
in the Post-Test and the Delayed Post-Test

Request forms	Post-test (%)			Delayed post-test (%)		
	INT+	INT-	Control	INT+	INT-	Control
Progressive form	19(50)	4(80)	0(0)	19(49)	3(100)	0(0)
Past tense	19(50)	1(20)	0(0)	20(51)	0(0)	0(0)
Total	38(100)	5(100)	0(0)	39(100)	3(100)	0(0)
Modal adverb	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Mitigated-preparatory questions	2(7)	0(0)	0(0)	3(9)	0(0)	0(0)
Mitigated-preparatory statements	27(93)	4(80)	0(0)	29(88)	3(75)	1(100)
Mitigated-want statements	0(0)	1(20)	0(0)	1(3)	1(25)	0(0)
Total	29(100)	5(100)	0(0)	33(100)	4(100)	1(100)

Note: INT+: Intentional learning-induced instruction; INT-: Incidental learning-induced instruction.

Results from Acceptability Judgment Test (AJT)

The results of a two-way repeated-measures ANOVA for the acceptability judgment test revealed a significant main effect for Instruction, (the INT+, INT-, and control), $F(2, 42)=6.78$, $p<.05$, $\text{Eta}^2=.244$, a significant main effect for Time (the pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test), $F(2, 42)=21.56$, $p<.05$, $\text{Eta}^2=.339$, and a significant interaction effect between Instruction and Time, $F(4, 42)=7.12$, $p<.05$, $\text{Eta}^2=.253$. The post-hoc Scheffé tests for the main effect of treatment show the following contrasts: (a) the intentional learning-induced instruction (INT+) and the incidental learning-induced instruction (INT-) groups performed significantly better than the control group on the post-test and follow-up test; (b) there were no statistically significant differences between the intentional learning-induced instruction (INT+) and the incidental learning-induced instruction (INT-) groups on

the posttest and the delayed posttest.

TABLE 5
Frequency of non-target request forms used
in the post-test and delayed post-test

Request forms	Post-test (%)			Delayed post-test (%)		
	INT+	INT-	Control	INT+	INT-	Control
Mood derivables	0(0)	0(0)	1(1)	0(0)	4(3)	0(0)
Mood derivables with <i>please</i>	10(14)	13(10)	0(0)	13(11)	20(14)	18(13)
Want statements	2(3)	3(2)	0(0)	0(0)	6(4)	9(6)
Preparatory questions	58(83)	118(87)	77(88)	99(87)	107(74)	106(75)
Suggestion questions	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	3(2)	0(0)
Permission questions	0(0)	2(1)	10(11)	2(2)	5(3)	8(6)
Total	70(100)	136(100)	88(100)	114(100)	145(100)	141(100)

Note: INT+ : Intentional learning-induced instruction; INT- : Incidental learning-induced instruction.

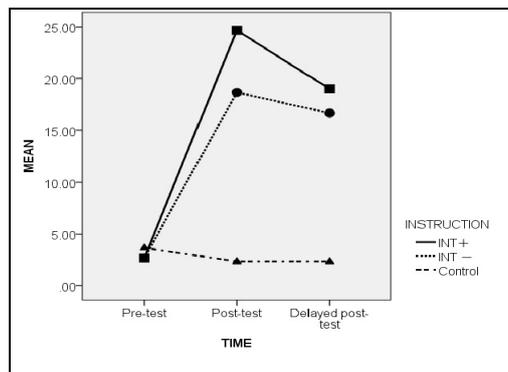


FIGURE 2
Interaction Plot for AJT

Note: INT+ : Intentional learning-induced instruction; INT- : Incidental learning-induced instruction.

TABLE 6
Descriptive Statistics for AJT

	Treatment	Score	Mean	<i>SD</i>
Pre-test	INT+	50	2.67	7.76
	INT-	50	2.67	3.72
	Control	50	3.67	3.99
Post-test	INT+	50	24.67	18.27
	INT-	50	18.67	15.06
	Control	50	2.33	3.72
Delayed post-test	INT+	50	19.00	16.71
	INT-	50	16.67	21.10
	Control	50	2.33	3.72

Note: INT+: Intentional learning-induced instruction; INT-: Incidental learning-induced instruction.

The results displayed in Figure 2 and Table 6 indicate that although there were no statistically significant differences between the three groups in a one-way ANOVA analysis of the pre-test scores, $F(2, 42)=.17, p>.05, \eta^2=.008$, the two treatment groups made significant gains from the pre-test to the post-test, $F(1, 28)=44.92, p<.05, \eta^2=.616$, and the positive effects for the two treatments between the post-test and the delayed post-test were maintained, $F(1, 28)=2.29, p>.05, \eta^2=.076$, as evidenced by results from a two-way ANOVA with repeated-measures.

DISCUSSION

The research question in the present study is concerned with the ditto. The results demonstrate that the two treatment groups performed significantly

better than the control group as measured by the acceptability judgment test. However, the results also indicate that the INT+ group exhibited more statistically significant improvement than the INT−group in the discourse completion test while no difference was evident in the acceptability judgment test.

As no information regarding the psycholinguistic processing involved in either the two types of treatments or the testing instruments are available, any explanations to the research question must be speculative and explanatory in nature. During the INT+ and INT− treatments, the participants in both treatment groups seem to have noticed the target pragmatic features for themselves either intentionally or incidentally by paying attention to and becoming aware of not only the relationship between the forms and meanings of the target features, but also the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic features of English request hedges, which is consistent with Hyland's (1998) argument that learners need to identify hedging items and appreciate the circumstances under which they can be used appropriately for purpose of being able to use hedges appropriately. For the INT+ treatment, the participants engaged in the three types of activities such as the pragmalinguistic-focused activities, sociopragmatic-focused activities, and the pragmalinguistics-sociopragmatics connection activities. Craik (2002) claimed that the quality of a memory trace relies on the level or depth of perceptual and mental processing where meanings and forms are connected. Meaning, in this case, encompasses both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic meaning. In other words, when the participants focused more on the pragmalinguistic-sociopragmatic connections of the target features, they are intended to increase their consciousness of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic meaning. The pragmalinguistics-sociopragmatics connection activities in the INT+ treatment were designed to require the participants to access and integrate their pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge of English request hedges. Thus, it is likely that the pragmalinguistics-sociopragmatics connection activities heighten greater consciousness of processing pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic meaning, resulting in improved

pragmatic competence.

On the other hand, the participants in the INT–group engaged in the two types of activity such as the reading and processing for meaning activities and the sociopragmatics-focused activities. In spite of the fact that they didn't work on the pragmalinguistic-focused and pragmalinguistics-sociopragmatics connection activities, the participants in the INT–group performed as well as the INT+group in the acceptability judgment test, which means that the sociopragmatic-focused activities in the INT–treatment drew the participants' attention to the sociopragmatic features of the target pragmatic expressions directly and then they might have transferred their interests and attention to the pragmalinguistic features, which might have resulted in connecting the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features. Ellis (2008) suggested that incidental learning becomes possible if learners are able to attend to and become aware of both meanings and forms. Accordingly, in view of the results of the acceptability judgment test, the incidental learning within the INT–treatment appears to have taken place. Furthermore, the treatments in the two treatment groups were repeated in view of Sharwood Smith's (1993) suggestion that initial enhancement will become more effective through repeated exposure which guided the participants to have more opportunities to analyze discrete features and derive rules, internalizing the features in their systems.

The question now arises as to why the INT–group didn't perform as well as the INT+group in the discourse completion test, while no difference was observed in the acceptability judgment test. First, this is likely due to the different types of activities. The participants in the INT+group engaged in the pragmalinguistic-focused and pragmalinguistics-sociopragmatics connection activities, while their counterparts in the INT–group didn't. Naturally, the pragmalinguistic-focused and pragmalinguistics-sociopragmatics connection activities in the INT+treatment directed the participants' further attention to and let them become more aware of the specific relevant linguistic forms, functional meanings, and the relevant contextual features. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the participants in the INT+ attended to the

pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic resources of English request hedges more intensively than their counterparts in the INT – group, thereby developing explicit knowledge that was more firmly embedded and thus more easily and rapidly accessed in the discourse completion test.

Second, the present study speculates that the disadvantage of the INT – treatment might be related to how deeply entrenched the participants' explicit knowledge is. The participants in the INT – group were able to cope with the acceptability judgment test, an unplanned written-judgment test, because the test required only judgment and the relatively lower demands than a production test. However, the INT – group was not able to deal with the discourse completion test, an unplanned written-production to the same extent as the INT + group because their working memories were weighted down with the higher demands of the test, which made them difficult to access their more weakly established explicit knowledge. Ellis (2008) suggested that the terms explicit/implicit label the type of knowledge learners have according to whether it is conscious or intuitive, whereas the terms declarative/procedural concern the degree of control the learners have over their explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge. Ellis (2008) explained that the procedural explicit knowledge refers to the conscious knowledge or explicit knowledge of L2 items that can be accessed relatively easily and rapidly, and which can be used for production, while the declarative explicit knowledge means the conscious knowledge or explicit knowledge of L2 items that can only be accessed slowly. Therefore, it can be claimed that explicit knowledge formed through the INT + treatment is procedural, while explicit knowledge established through the INT – treatment is declarative.

The results of the present study are different from the ones of Takahashi (2001, 2005) in the respect that the present study found some evidence of incidental learning. The most apparent causal factor for this distinction might be attributable to the focus of activities the participants in the incidental learning groups engaged in. Both studies examined instructional approaches for Japanese learners acquiring English polite request strategies from the intention-oriented input-based perspective. However, the instructional

approach in Takahashi's studies focused more on pragmalinguistics, whereas the incidental learning in the present study put more focus on sociopragmatics. Takahashi (2001, 2005) reported no clear evidence of developing sociopragmatic competence among some participants and attested to the essentiality of developing not only pragmalinguistic but also sociopragmatic competence. Rose (2005) commented that sociopragmatics is frequently an area of difficulty for language learners. Thus, it could be hypothesized that the sociopragmatic-focused activities rather than the pragmalinguistic-focused activities might have helped the participants grasp difficult sociopragmatic features and then directed their attentions to pragmalinguistic features, which possibly led to the established fact of incidental learning in the present study.

CONCLUSION

The present study has investigated the relative effects of two types of intention-oriented input-based approaches on recognizing and producing English request hedges. The results demonstrate that the intentional learning involving processing of English request downgraders through pragmalinguistic-sociopragmatic connections has an impact on the recognition and production of English request hedges. In addition, the results also show that incidental learning becomes possible in the unplanned written-judgment test only if learners are able to attend to and become aware of both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic resources of English request hedges.

One pedagogical implication for teachers, then, is that teachers should be aware that effective intentional learning occurs and incidental learning can take place when the tasks provide learners with opportunities for processing both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features of the target structures. Furthermore, it is advisable for the intentional and incidental learning tasks to be repeated so that the connections between pragmalinguistic-sociopragmatic factors of target features can be significantly reinforced. Such tasks may prove

of great value in improving learners' L2 pragmatic competence.

One major limitation of the present study should be taken into consideration in future research. It involves the selection of testing instruments. The present study adopted the discourse completion test which is a non-interactive instrument and doesn't produce natural conversational data. The discourse completion test is limited as a testing instrument for evaluating the participants' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge for English request hedges and the data from the discourse completion test in the present study led us to discover only what the participants noticed. A natural interactive testing instrument would have helped us figure out what the participants can do.

Despite the shortcoming, the present study contributes to our understanding of the effectiveness of the intention-oriented input-based approaches in two important ways. First, the intentional input-based learning is effective in promoting gains for learning English request hedges because they are accompanied by the processing of the target feature through pragmalinguistic-sociopragmatic connections. Second, incidental learning can take place in input-based activities as long as learners are frequently promoted to attend to and become aware of both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic resources of English request hedges. However, more research should be needed to confirm the outcome of the present study, especially the effects of incidental learning in L2 pragmatics. Issues in the effectiveness of incidental learning in L2 pragmatics have generated more questions than answers in terms of optimal instructional approaches for pragmatic development. Nevertheless, going through the unique challenges and opportunities to find out the real nature of effectiveness of incidental learning in L2 pragmatics will definitely be rewarding and certainly serve to expand future scholarship not only in the area of interlanguage pragmatics but also in the wider field of applied linguistics.

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