RAEL Revista Electrónica de Lingüística Aplicada

RAEL: Revista Electrónica de Lingüística Aplicada
Vol./Núm.: 24/1
Enero-diciembre 2025
Páginas: 22-40
Artículo recibido: 24/07/2024
Artículo aceptado: 09/10/2025
Artículo publicado: 31/12/2025
Url: https://rael.aesla.org.es/index.php/RAEL/article/view/644
DOI: https://doi.org/10.58859/rael.v24i1.644

The role of peer feedback to foster L2 pragmatics in telecollaboration projects: a case study

La función del feedback entre pares para fomentar la pragmática de la L2 en proyectos telecolaborativos: un estudio de caso

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Telecollaboration offers countless benefits to foster language learners' pragmatic competence and provides an excellent setting for learners to receive corrective feedback from their virtual partners. Nevertheless, not enough attention is being paid to the crucial role of peer feedback in telecollaboration. This study focuses on the analysis of the interactions between a Spanish-speaking student and an expert speaker of English conducted in a telecollaboration project. The participants carried out six different role-plays in synchronous videoconference Zoom sessions, the aim of which was to elicit the Spanish student's use of apologies in English. The qualitative analysis of the feedback was triangulated with the quantitative analysis stemming from a pre- and post-test, and the content analysis of the strategies used to apologise by the Spanish speaker. The results reveal that the expert speaker of English provided his Spanish partner with feedback in terms of linguistic accuracy and pragmatic appropriateness.

Keywords: *foreign language pragmatic competence; corrective feedback; peer feedback; telecollaboration; synchronous computer-mediated communication*

La telecolaboración aporta importantes beneficios al desarrollo de la competencia pragmática y ofrece un contexto idóneo para que los estudiantes reciban feedback correctivo de compañeros virtuales. No obstante, el papel del feedback en estos entornos ha recibido poca atención. Este estudio analiza las interacciones entre un estudiante español y un hablante experto de inglés en un proyecto telecolaborativo. Los participantes realizaron seis juegos de rol en sesiones síncronas por Zoom, diseñadas para fomentar el uso de las disculpas en inglés por parte del estudiante español. El análisis cualitativo del feedback se trianguló con datos cuantitativos obtenidos mediante un pre-test y un post-test, así como con el análisis de contenido de las estrategias de disculpa empleadas por el estudiante. Los resultados muestran que el hablante inglés proporcionó feedback sobre corrección lingüística y adecuación pragmática.

Palabras clave: *competencia pragmática de la lengua extranjera; feedback correctivo; feedback de los compañeros; telecolaboración; comunicación síncrona mediada por ordenador*

Citar como: Di Sarno-García, S., Gimeno-Sanz, A.M., & Martínez-Flor, A. (2025). The role of peer feedback to foster L2 pragmatics in telecollaboration projects: a case study. *RAEL: Revista Electrónica de Lingüística Aplicada, 24*, 22-40. https://doi.org/10.58859/rael.v24i1.644

1. INTRODUCCIÓN

Despite being still scarce, the number of studies aimed at exploring the development of second language (L2) pragmatics in digitally-mediated contexts has notably increased in the past twenty years (González-Lloret, 2022). According to González-Lloret, "what defines a technology-mediated context is the space that is created for an authentic and significant communication with its own interactional norms and practices" (2022: 175). In particular, this paper focuses on the digital environment created in a telecollaboration project, as these scenarios have proven to be an excellent venue for the development of L2 pragmatic competence, including speech acts. L2 pragmatics has formally been defined as the field that "examines how learners of another language communicate and interact with others given the context of the interaction; the relation between participants; physical setting; their linguistic, social, cultural, and historical background; and their ideologies and identities" (González-Lloret, 2019: 2). If compared to face-to-face communication, telecollaboration indeed provides a different context for interaction and a different physical setting, which is likely to have an impact on the way communication takes place (Di Sarno-García, 2025). The benefits of telecollaboration for the development of L2 pragmatic competence include, but are not limited to:

1) Receiving quality peer feedback (Belz & Kinginger, 2003).
2) Exposure to L2 authentic discourse (Belz, 2007).
3) Opportunities to interact with target language (TL) speakers (Sykes, 2018; González-Lloret, 2019).
4) Opportunities to put into practice pragmatic behaviours and patterns (Sykes, 2017).

Despite this, little to no research has been carried out regarding the crucial role of peer corrective feedback in telecollaboration. This is puzzling considering that feedback, together with input and opportunities for output, is one of the main conditions for the acquisition of speech acts (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010, 2020). According to Sawin (2022), language learners are not usually provided with feedback in terms of pragmatics as instructors tend to show a preference for accuracy rather than appropriateness, not to mention the fact that some students may lack the necessary skills to provide peer feedback. For this reason, this paper intends to cover the existing gap in the literature. In order to do so, a case study extracted from a larger telecollaboration project will be presented. In particular, the feedback provided by an expert speaker[1] of English to his Spanish counterpart in terms of apology performance, which is the speech act under study, will be analysed. Therefore, the aim of the study is to explore the affordances of peer feedback in telecollaboration projects. The research questions posed were:

1) What type of feedback will the English-speaking student provide?
2) Will the Spanish-speaking student's use of apologies improve after the interaction with the expert speaker of English?

Section 2 of this paper reviews the main theoretical concepts underpinning the study, while Section 3 focuses on the methodology. Sections 4 and 5 explore and discuss the results of the study. Finally, section 6 presents concluding remarks, as well as a number of pedagogical implications arising from the study and its limitations.

[1] The term "expert speaker" refers to a high proficiency level speaker although his/her L1 is not English. This term has been previously used by Ishihara and Cohen (2022: 245).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. *Apologies*

Speech acts differ from mere statements in that through the former, speakers can perform actions by means of words, while the latter are usually descriptive. Apologies are the speech act under study in this paper. This particular speech act was selected because, according to Leech (2014), apologies are characteristic of politeness in English-speaking societies. Notwithstanding, authors such as Sawin (2022: 216) claim that "speech acts like [...] asking forgiveness rarely appear" in traditional teaching materials.

Apologies are a post-event speech act (Bergman & Kasper, 1991), which means they occur after an offence has been committed or a social norm has been violated. In this sense, they are used to restore harmony (Martínez-Flor, 2016) and can be defined as a "compensatory action" (Bergman & Kasper, 1991: 141) or a convivial speech act (Leech, 1983). Following Goffman's (1967) definition of face as one's public self-image, apologies are a face-threatening act (FTA) for the speaker, but a face-saving act (FSA) for the hearer (Di Sarno-García, forthcoming). According to Deutschmann (2003) a prototypical apology event includes four main elements, namely, 1) the offender, 2) the offended, 3) the offence, and 4) the remedy (i.e., the apology itself). However, sarcasm and polite formulas might not follow the prototypical apology.

The authors of this study used the following taxonomy, which is collated from the ones published by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), Leech (2014), and Martínez-Flor (2016), and has been used in two previous studies (Di Sarno-García, 2024; forthcoming 2026).

Table 1: ***Apology taxonomy (Di Sarno-García, 2024: 34)***

Strategy	**Type**	**Example**
Illocutionary force indicating device (IFID)/head act	Expression of Speaker's regret	(Be) sorry I regret
	Asking Hearer's pardon or forgiveness	Excuse me Pardon me Forgive me
	Using a performative utterance	I apologise I beg your pardon
Expression of responsibility	Explicit self-blame	It was my fault
	Denial of fault	It wasn't my fault
Explanation of why the fault occurred		I can't attend your party because I have to study
Offer of repair		I'll pay for the reparation
Promise of forbearance		It won't happen again
Apology intensification	Concern for the Hearer	I know it is important for you
	Intensifier/modifier	Adverbials: *very, terribly, really, so, etc.* Repetitions: *I'm really, really sorry*

According to the above-mentioned authors, a prototypical apology follows five steps:

1) An illocutionary force indicating device (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984) or head act (Leech, 2014), which can be performed by i) expressing regret, ii) asking the hearer's pardon or forgiveness, or iii) using a performative utterance.
2) An expression of responsibility, which can either include acknowledging the fault committed (i.e., explicit self-blame) or a denial of the fault occurred.
3) Explanation of why the fault occurred.
4) An offer of repair, which consists of a remedy or an amendment to the fault committed.
5) A promise of forbearance, that is, ensuring not to repeat the fault again in the future.

Steps 2 to 5 are known as satellite speech events (Leech, 2014). Furthermore, apologies can be intensified either by showing concern for the hearer or by using intensifiers or modifiers.

2.2. *Corrective feedback in L2 pragmatics*

As mentioned in the Introduction, there are three main conditions for the acquisition of speech acts: (1) appropriate input, (2) opportunities for output, and (3) provision of feedback (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010, 2020). This paper shall focus on the third one, which is also known as corrective feedback (CF) and which "refers to the data learners receive with information about what is not allowed in the [target language]" (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010: 14). CF gives learners the chance to reflect on the discourse they produce (i.e., output) and make the necessary adjustments. Furthermore, it can be provided either explicitly or implicitly (Nassaji & Kartchava, 2021). In this study, the kind of feedback analysed is explicit peer feedback. It is categorised as explicit because it included both metalinguistic information and explicit correction. In support of this, Nassaji and Kartchava (2021) report that the interest in researching peer feedback has increased thanks to its positive effects on students' language acquisition.

According to Bardovi-Harlig and Yilmaz (2021), Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis as well as Long's (1991) and Long and Robinson's (1998) focus-on-form proposal underpin research in CF. The former argues that interaction favours L2 acquisition as the language learner has the opportunity to focus on the TL forms, while the latter claims that focusing on the formal elements of the language is beneficial for their L2 acquisition. Nevertheless, they also highlight the difficulties one can encounter when providing feedback in terms of pragmatic appropriateness, as there is no compendium of 'rules' to be followed, and most of the times the appropriateness depends on the context of interaction, which can be unpredictable.

Research concerning the role of CF in L2 pragmatics is limited (Yousefi & Nassaji, 2021). In particular, scarce attention has been devoted to CF regarding the use of apologies, since none of the studies analysed by Bardovi-Harlig and Yilmaz (2021), Taguchi (2015), and Yousefi and Nassaji (2021) addressed this speech act. Furthermore, according to Bardovi-Harlig and Yilmaz (2021), none of the studies analysed seemed to provide feedback during an interaction, unlike the present study. Notwithstanding, studies such as Parlak and Ziegler (2017) and Rassaei (2017) suggest that synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC) feedback can be as efficient as face-to-face feedback in terms of phonological development and L2 development, although none of them focused on L2 pragmatic development.

2.3. *Peer feedback in telecollaboration*

Telecollaboration—also known as Virtual Exchange (VE) (O'Dowd, 2018; Helm, 2018), teletandem (Leone & Telles, 2016), and Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)

(Rubin, 2016)—is today a widely extended practice across the globe. In fact, it is seen as a way to boost internationalisation at home and receive feedback and advice on the cultural misunderstandings that may arise during interaction, as it precisely facilitates intercultural interactions (O'Dowd, 2023) in ways that were not possible before (Byram, 2021).

Nevertheless, the area of research in computer-mediated feedback is underexplored (Yousefi & Nassaji, 2021). In line with this, Heift et al. (2021) claim that since the emergence of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), research has mostly centred on learner-computer interaction rather than computer-mediated learner-learner interaction, while the critical analysis carried out by Cerezo (2021) involved the comparison of face-to-face feedback and written SCMC, thus not taking into account oral SCMC interaction with TL speakers, where negotiation of meaning is likely to occur. The author himself suggests that future research should explore the affordances of oral and video SCMC feedback. Furthermore, the systematic review carried out by Gao et al. (2024) revealed that in none of the studies was peer feedback delivered orally, although in some it was synchronous (e.g., Ho, 2020). On the other hand, Iwashita and Dao (2021) consider peer feedback and L1 feedback as two different things without considering that, in contexts such as telecollaboration, L1 speakers can also be peers. In line with this, Ribeiro et al. (2019) conclude that both text SCMC CF and face-to-face CF provided by *natives*[2] was beneficial for L2 development.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. *Setting and participants*

The participants[3] in this study were part of a larger project that involved eight students from Aerospace Engineering at the Universitat Politècnica de València, in Spain, and eight students from the University of Bath, in the UK. They were matched based on their answers to a pairing questionnaire that both groups completed. Besides, all of them completed a consent form prior to the start of the project. This is a case study of the interactions of one of the Spanish students with his keypal in England.

The student from Spain was a 3rd-year student in Aerospace Engineering, while the other was a 1st year Business student. The former was enrolled in an optional B2 English subject according to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) and his L1 was peninsular Spanish. The latter was enrolled in a B1 Spanish course but despite his L1 being Hungarian he had been living in England for several months as he was studying his university degree there and was an expert speaker of English. These students were chosen for reasons similar to those provided by González-Lloret (2008), that is, length of the interactions and engagement, which are said to be optimal conditions for pragmatic development.

3.2. *Instruments*

To carry out the project several instruments and materials were used. To begin with, students completed two questionnaires in the form of a pre and a post-test. They were made up of three

[2] The term native is highlighted in italics as the authors distance themselves from the ideal native speaker perspective and prefer to use the term L1 speaker instead.

[3] The terms *participants*, *students*, and *learners* are used interchangeably.

questions aimed at gathering demographic information and 10 multiple-choice questions to measure the students' knowledge about apologies before and after the telecollaborative project. The survey was composed of eight questions such as the following:

(1) You were expected to submit a report for your boss, but you did not have enough time, so you do not submit it on time. How would you apologise?

a) I apologise
b) Excuse me
c) Pardon me

Each question presented a familiar scenario for the participants (e.g., the role of student, friend, etc.), who had to choose only one answer. All the answers were grammatically correct, but only one was pragmatically adequate. This was agreed with an L1 speaker of English to ensure inter-rater reliability. To this end, the L1 speaker reviewed all the items in the questionnaire and agreed upon the most pragmatically adequate option of the three provided. Additionally, students had to complete another questionnaire before the treatment in order to elucidate their interests (i.e., the pairing questionnaire). Thus, participants were paired with somebody with similar interests. All the questionnaires were administered through Google Forms.

After this, a PowerPoint presentation about the use of apologies was delivered to the Spanish students. It contained a definition of pragmatics, some examples of misunderstandings, an adaptation of Leech's (2014) taxonomy of apologies and three audiovisual examples of adequate and inadequate apologies. Besides, students were given a handout with the main strategies to apologise so they could revise them later. Afterwards, participants read and summarised the article *How to Make the Perfect Apology*, which is based on Lewicki et al. (2016).

Students interacted during six weeks through synchronous Zoom video-conference sessions that lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. The instructors in both universities and the researcher agreed to use Zoom for the video-conferences because it is a free programme that has become commonly used in the past years, especially after and during the COVID-19 pandemic which led to online-only communication. It allows users to create rooms they can join through a link, and, most importantly, users can record the video sessions, which is crucial to analyse their discourse. Learners from the partner institution (the University of Bath) were required to provide their Spanish counterparts with feedback in terms of apology performance immediately after the main task –i.e., a role-playing performance– although they were not provided with any written material or rubric to provide assistance.

3.2.1. *The task*

During the synchronous Zoom sessions students had to perform two different role-plays, one in English and the other in Spanish. In both role-plays they performed an apology and another speech act such as promises, refusals and congratulations because, based on Taguchi (2007), this helps students to not focus exclusively on the speech act under study. There were four informal situations and two formal ones. Table 1 below, which is based on a previous study by Di Sarno-García (2023) summarises the situations included in the role-plays to be performed in English.

Table 2: ***Distribution and description of the situations used in the role-plays (Di Sarno-García, 2023: 103)***

Situation	Degree of formality	Social status	Social distance	Severity of offense	Participants' role
1	Informal	Equal	Family	High	The speaker apologises to his/her elder brother for denting his car
2	Formal	Hearer-dominant	Acquaintance	High	A university student apologises to the professor for being late
3	Informal	Equal	Friend	Low	The speaker apologises to a friend for not attending his/her birthday party
4	Formal	Hearer-dominant	Acquaintance	High	A university student apologises to his/her tutor for not attending a conference
5	Informal	Equal	Friend	Low	The speaker apologises to a friend for not attending his/her wedding
6	Informal	Equal	Friend	Low	The speaker apologises for not attending a friend's baby shower

All learners in the project (both Spanish-speaking and English-speaking learners) were required to provide their telecollaboration partners with CF regarding their performance of apologies as they were considered expert speakers of their L1. Thus, they were acquainted with the social and cultural norms involved in the act of apologising in their L1 country. Nevertheless, only the dyad under study in this paper accomplished this task after carrying out the six role-plays. Possible reasons for this are provided in the conclusion section.

Authors such as Sykes and González-Lloret (2020) criticise the use of role-plays to collect data because of their lack of authenticity. Nevertheless, apologies are performed after an offence has been committed, something that might be unusual in a telecollaborative environment. As a matter of fact, Oskoz and Gimeno-Sanz (2020) found that students showed reluctance to criticise or hurt their partners' feelings because it could create an intimidating environment. What is more, Canto Gutiérrez's (2020) analysis of spontaneous speech in synchronous computer-mediated communication revealed that the participants of her study made use of different speech acts, but apologies were not one of them. Taking the results of these studies into account, the authors predicted that apologies were not likely to occur spontaneously in the telecollaboration project. In addition to this, role-plays enable scholars to analyse speech act strategies during the interaction, as pointed out by Félix-Brasdefer (2010: 47), who claims that "With role plays one can also control for a series of contextual parameters: the situation, the degree of social distance and social power between the interlocutors, the weight of impositions, gender and age of the participants, learning environment (FL vs SL), and proficiency level". For all these reasons, role-plays were deemed to be the most suitable means of data collection for the telecollaboration project.

3.3. *Data gathering and analysis procedure*

The data was gathered from three different sources: a pre and post-test, as well as the transcriptions of the synchronous Zoom sessions. The descriptive statistics of the pre and post-tests were calculated, while a quantitative content analysis of the strategies used to apologise in

role-playing performance was carried out. In other words, qualitative data (i.e., the strategies used to apologise) were turned into numerical data to calculate the frequency of each strategy. To do this, the taxonomy based on Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), Leech (2014), and Martínez-Flor (2016), which was previously employed by Di Sarno-García (2023: 104), was used. The apologies produced by the Spanish-speaking student were also analysed qualitatively, following criteria related to appropriateness, mitigation level, internal and external modification devices, and contextual alignment with the severity of the offence. These qualitative criteria allowed for a nuanced interpretation of how the student selected, adapted, and executed apology strategies beyond their mere frequency of use.

Within the oral conversations from Zoom, only the role-plays in English, the feedback and the discussion of cultural topics were transcribed. To do so, a digital tool created by the Universitat Politècnica de València was used, MediaUpv (www.media.upv.es). Figures 1 and 2 illustrate how the tool works.

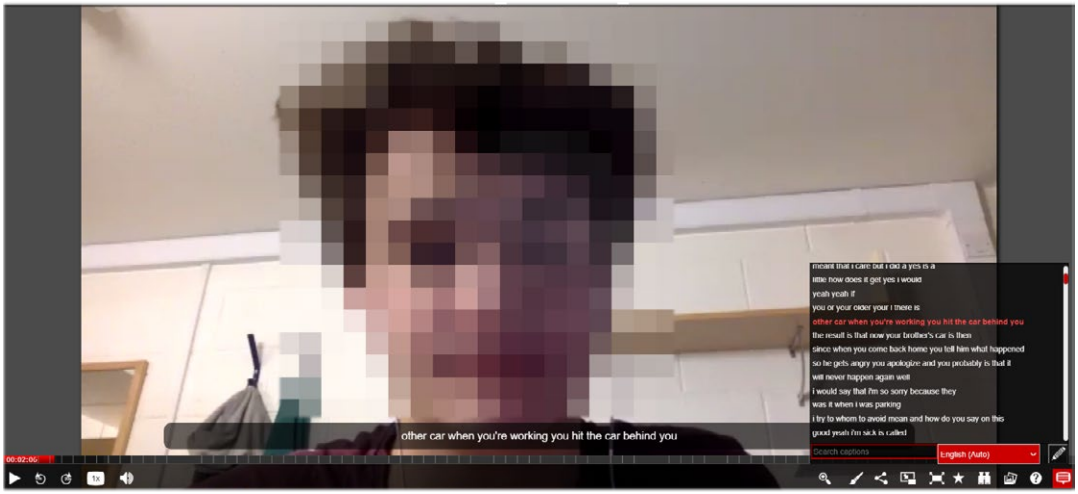

Figure 1: ***Subtitles in MediaUPV.***

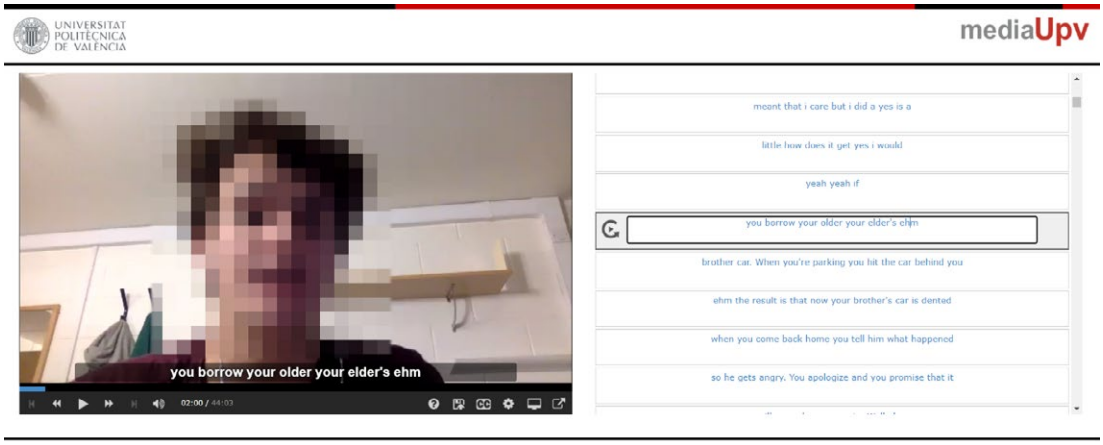

Figure 2: ***Transcriptions in MediaUPV.***

As can be observed from Figures 1 and 2, this online tool allows you to insert subtitles for the videos uploaded onto the server. The user can modify the automatically generated subtitles (Figure 1) in small fragments/segments (Figure 2) while listening to them.

The feedback provided by the English-speaking student was also analysed through quantitative content frequency analysis and qualitative analysis. It was classified into three main categories: (1) positive feedback, (2) CF, and (3) discussing the level of formality. CF was further subcategorised into implicit and explicit CF. Both positive and CF were also subcategorised in terms of grammar or pragmatics. It is important to note that, due to this, sometimes the same comment was categorised as both CF and grammar, or CF and pragmatics. The types of CF included in the second category were based on Martínez-Flor (2023), while categories one and two were created by the researchers based on the qualitative observation of the data gathered. Therefore, a taxonomy of peer feedback was collated (see Table 4 in the Results section).

4. RESULTS

4.1. *Results related to RQ1: What type of feedback will the English-speaking student provide?*

The findings of the quantitative content analysis revealed that 59 instances of feedback were identified. Among these, 21 were instances of positive feedback, 31 illustrated corrective feedback, and 7 discussed the level of formality of the role-play scenario. Table 3 below presents

Table 3: ***Results of peer feedback***

Type of feedback	**Subcategory**		**Example**	**n**	**%**
Positive			I think you used a really good expression	21	35.6
Corrective	Implicit	Recasts (providing input)		0	0
		Repetitions (providing output)	Uhm first things the first few things like for example you don't say uhm I think you said something like I'm so sorry I I actually forgot but yeah you said something about arriving in time or-	1	1.7
		Clarification requests (providing output)	Oh ok ok then good but it's also be on time you know that as well?	1	1.7
	Explicit	Explicit correction (providing input)	Yeah so that that's not correct so you have to say be on time	2	3.4
		Metalinguistic comments (prompting output)	Yeah the participle which means that you have to say another time I could have had time or I would have had time yeah	11	18.6
		Elicitation (prompting output)		0	0
	Use of language	Grammar	Yeah uhm arrive on time yeah or actually you can say arrive in time and arrive on time 'cause if you arrive in time that may means that you arrive before the class starts if you arrive on time that means that the you arrive just when the class starts so just like one minute before and if in time that may be like ten minutes before you know that's the difference basically.	10	17
		Pragmatics	I know but like I accepted but basically I accepted it because you offered the compromise you know	6	10
Discussing the level of formality			Yeah uhm yeah so in English yeah uhm you'd say like accept accept my apologies uhm also like in more formal situations	7	12
TOTAL				59	100

the taxonomy used, as well as the numerical and percentage data and examples taken from the transcriptions of the synchronous Zoom sessions.

After analysing the interaction between the two students, it was observed that they often discussed the degree of formality of the situation as they addressed this issue in all the sessions. This could mean that they were aware of the fact that different levels of formality require different strategies to apologise. In line with this, they also mentioned the different strategies that the Spanish learner used or could have used. Example (2) illustrates this:

(2) Yeah uhm yeah so in English yeah uhm you'd say like accept accept [*sic.*] my apologies uhm also like in more formal situations uhm or I don't know what else you can say uhm yeah well but for example as you just said like uhm so you if you if you talk to you brother and say I'm sorry and say I eh

Furthermore, the English-speaking student provided the Spanish-speaking student with feedback on grammar, such as in session 2 where he explained the difference between arriving "on time" and "in time", or in session 3 where he corrected the Spanish-speaking student for saying "sorry about not attend" instead of "sorry about not attending" and where they talked about verb tenses. In addition to this, the English-speaking student also acknowledged his partner's appropriate performance in the role-playing tasks, which is considered as positive feedback. Nevertheless, recasts and elicitation were not used by the English-speaking student to provide feedback to his partner. This could be due to the English-speaking student's lack of pedagogical training in terms of pragmatics and feedback.

4.2. *Results related to RQ2: Will the Spanish-speaking student's use of apologies improve after the interaction with the expert speaker of English?*

The qualitative results regarding RQ2 are supported by the fact that the Spanish-speaking student was also the one who employed the most strategies to apologise compared to his classmates during the online role-playing sessions, totalling up to 47 different strategies, as shown in Figure 3.

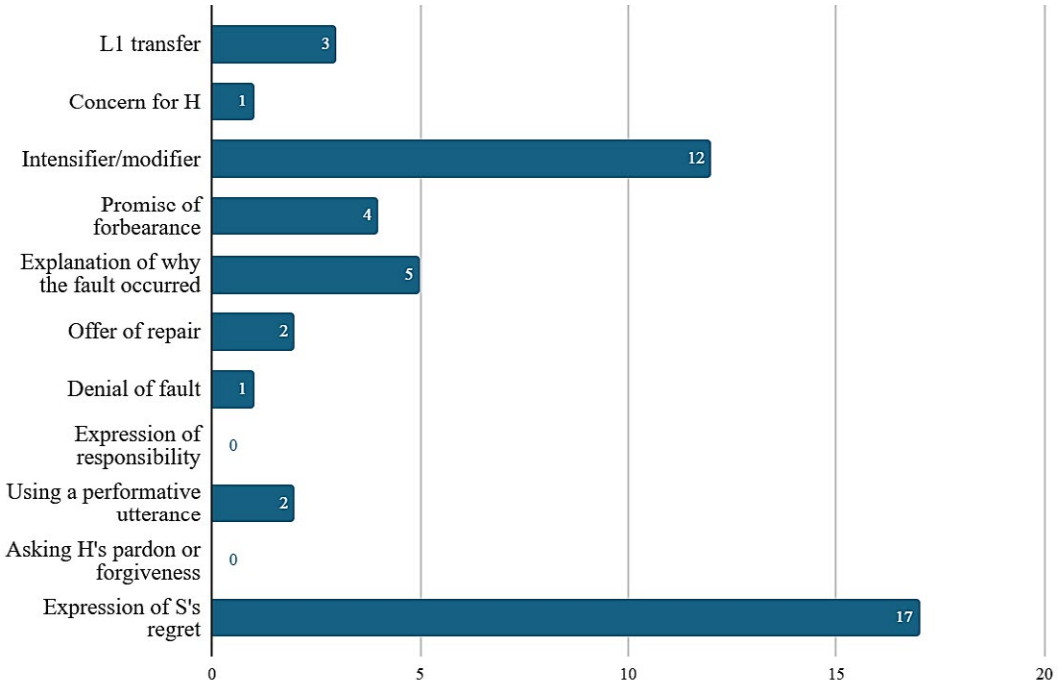

Figure 3: ***Strategies used to apologise by the Spanish speaker.***

A closer look into the frequency of the strategies used by the Spanish-speaking student to apologise is depicted in Table 4.

Table 4: ***Frequency of the strategies used to apologise by the Spanish-speaking student***

Strategy	**Type**	**n**	**%**	**Example**
IFID/head act	Expression of Speaker's regret	17	36.17	I'm so sorry
	Asking Hearer's pardon or forgiveness	0	0	
	Using a performative utterance	2	4.26	I beg your pardon
Expression of responsibility	Explicit self-blame	0	0	
	Denial of fault	1	2.13	Well, it's not my fault
Explanation of why the fault occurred		5	4.26	I had some problems with the bus
Offer of repair		2	10.64	When I finish my work at the end of the day I think I will go to your house to congratulate your wife
Promise of forbearance	Repentance	4	8.51	I promise that this will not happen again
Apology intensification	Concern for the Hearer	1	25.53	I understand that you are a bit angry
	Intensifier/modifier	12	2.13	*I'm* ***terribly*** *sorry*
L1 transfer		3	6.38	I hope that you understand
Total N of strategies		47	100	

In addition, both students got together throughout all the scheduled sessions, performing all six role-plays. For all of the above and because the English-speaking student provided his Spanish-speaking counterpart with feedback in all six sessions, it is argued that their execution of the tasks included in the telecollaboration project was productive and led to the Spanish-speaking student obtaining remarkably good results, having obtained the highest mark with honours.

The qualitative analysis suggests that, to a certain extent, the Spanish-speaking student incorporated different strategies to apologise thanks to the feedback received by his counterpart. This can be seen in example 3 (SS stands for Spanish-speaking Student, ES stands for English-speaking Student):

(3) Session 2:

SS: (overlapping) *I think mmh the the teacher have have given us some some instructions like and I think that I regret was an expression that it was more formal than I'm sorry or…*

ES: *Oh okay.*

SS: *So I think that this situation was more formal than the the last week –*

ES: *yeah*

SS: *So I I use I regret instead of I'm sorry or something similar.*

As can be observed in example 3, the Spanish-speaking learner was also incorporating the explicit instruction received in class by the teacher, which highlights the importance of providing learners with instruction in terms of pragmatics.

Another example of the Spanish-speaking student incorporating adequate strategies after discussing the level of formality in the previous sessions can be found in examples 4 and 5, respectively:-

(4) Session 3:
SS: *Yes I have said sorry because it is like it is your friend*
ES: *Yeah yeah*
SS: *As it is your friend it is something informal*

(5) Session 4:
SS: *I think it is a formal situation so I used I beg your pardon because it is a very formal way of -*

As reported in Table 3, the students discussed the level of formality 7 times. Thus, it is suggested that these discussions enhanced the Spanish-speaking student's understanding of the pragmatic implications of the different strategies he could use to apologise depending on the context. Accordingly, he thus adopted different pragmalinguistic forms to apologise depending on the sociopragmatic factors involved in the role-play scenario they were performing.

5. DISCUSSION

The results of the present study partially align with those previously obtained by Sotillo (2009), as she found that in tutor-student CMC exchanges, 61% of the feedback received was CF, including metalinguistic explanations, clarifications, and explicit corrections. In this study, CF accounts for 52.4%, although comparisons should be made with caution as the taxonomy used for the categorization differs. On the other hand, Cerezo (2021) conducted a critical synthesis on the effects of written SCMC and face-to-face interaction on L2 development. Regarding peer interaction, his findings revealed disagreement when comparing development of written SCMC over face-to-face feedback. Nevertheless, Cerezo's study did not focus specifically on pragmatic acquisition, nor on synchronous oral feedback in telecollaboration. Therefore, it is hard to draw a parallel with the results obtained in the present study.

As Kartchava (2021: 599) reflects, "the act of correction itself implies that some level of input processing on the part of the receiver of feedback needs to occur". This input processing is what may have taken place in the Spanish-speaking student's mind from one session to the other, as the transcriptions reveal that, to a certain degree, he incorporated different strategies thanks to the feedback provided by his English-speaking counterpart as well as to the explicit instruction received in class. It is not possible to statistically determine causality between the post-test results of the Spanish-speaking student and the type of feedback received by his English-speaking counterpart. Notwithstanding, the above reported excerpts reveal the Spanish learner's use of a variety of strategies to apologise based on the interaction in the previous sessions.

The fact that this pair of students was the only one in the telecollaboration project that provided and received peer feedback demonstrates that the other participants may have needed further guidance and instruction on how to provide feedback. This aligns with the findings reported by Noroozi et al. (2024), who claimed that the online peer feedback of some learners might need more instructional scaffolding. In line with this, Zhang et al. (2024: 17) identified four main aspects of peer reviewing quality that teachers can scaffold, namely, "rating accuracy, the volume of feedback, the initial impact of comments, and the ultimate impact of comments". The pedagogical implications of this are discussed in the concluding section of this paper.

It is suggested that factors such as motivation and getting along with his partner could have had a strong positive influence on the Spanish-speaking student's willingness to learn and accomplish all the tasks involved in the project. In addition, he showed interest in maintaining a relationship with his English-speaking partner after the end of the project in the final survey. This could be a symptom of the development of his intercultural communicative competence (ICC), as maintaining relationships is one of the characteristics of the intercultural speaker (Byram, 1997, 2021). The relationship between ICC and pragmatic competence is currently being explored by Di Sarno-García (2026). It is interesting to note that the Spanish learner inquired whether his participation in the international telecollaboration project with the University of Bath would be certified in order for him to include this in his curriculum vitae. This seems to indicate that he was aware of the fact that, as a future engineer, he would probably be required to demonstrate effective intercultural skills in his professional career (Seiz Ortiz etal., 2015), as well as pragmatic abilities and the capacity to communicate efficiently in English, which is a crucial skill in today's world (Fareh et al., 2023; Karpava, 2025).This could be the reason why he was highly motivated during the project, which subsequently led to his active engagement and pragmatic intake.

6. CONCLUSION

This study sought to explore the role of peer feedback in telecollaborative encounters to foster L2 pragmatic competence, which was operationalised through the speech act of apologies. To this end, both the type of feedback provided by the English-speaking student to his Spanish-speaking partner, as well as the apologies produced by the latter, were categorised and analysed. The results revealed that most of the instances (i.e., N = 31, 52,54 %) of feedback were CF, and in particular, most of them were examples of explicit CF. It was found that not only did the English-speaking learner provide feedback in terms of pragmatics, but also in terms of grammatical accuracy. Furthermore, both participants discussed the level of formality of all the apology scenarios, thus demonstrating their pragmatic awareness of the implications that each apology strategy could have in a specific context. In addition, the qualitative findings suggest that the Spanish-speaking student incorporated certain strategies thanks to both the explicit instruction received prior to the telecollaboration project, and the feedback received by his English-speaking counterpart.

Despite the positive findings obtained, the study has certain limitations. The first one is that with the data gathered it is not possible to statistically demonstrate a causality between the development of the Spanish-speaking student's pragmatic competence and the type of feedback received. Future studies could explore this line of research to gain a better understanding of the relationship between pragmatic development and peer feedback. The second limitation is the scarce amount of data collected. Since this is a case study, generalisations cannot be made. However, this study has shed some light on the crucial role of peer feedback in telecollaboration, which is currently under-researched. A further shortcoming of the present study is that, as suggested by Holden and Sykes (2013), providing adequate pragmatic feedback

in an L2 classroom is challenging because exploring the consequences of being pragmatically inappropriate is not the same as experiencing them in authentic situations. That being said, although the role-plays the learners performed were open in nature (i.e., the outcome was not predetermined) and reflected scenarios familiar to university students, they still retained a certain degree of artificiality. Therefore, consequences were not perceived as they would be in *real* life. Nevertheless, it can be claimed that this telecollaboration project offered a personalised learning experience, which is particularly "important for the delivery of L2 pragmatic feedback" (Holden & Sykes, 2013: 160), as learners could interact in pairs and receive personalised feedback from their partners.

As suggested by Di Sarno-García (forthcoming 2026), language learners participating in telecollaborative exchanges should be trained for their role as *feedback providers* because, as indicated by Kartchava (2021), research in peer feedback training is still very limited. If not trained, students might feel that correcting their telecollaborative partners could sound rude and negatively affect the relationship with their counterparts. It is believed that the other students participating in the telecollaboration project did not provide their counterparts with feedback because they found it *face-threatening*. Like the pre-telecollaboration training course implemented by Tsubota et al. (2023), similar training courses could be used to scaffold learners' abilities to provide their peers with useful feedback, which is of paramount importance for L2 pragmatic development to occur (González-Lloret, 2022).

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