An Investigation of Social Practice of Iranian Upper-Intermediate EFL Learners in Free-Discussion Discourse: A Context-Based Analysis

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The present study attempted to investigate the effect of teaching social practices of free discussion on the improvement of Iranian upper intermediate students' social discourse. To this end, 40 students out of 64 at Shahid Beheshti high school in Langroud, Iran, were ed based on their scores of Quick Placement Test. The participants were 15-16 years old and were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. A socio-pragmatic test, as the pretest, was administered to all participants. Next, the experimental group received a ten-week training program via social practice of free discussion based on Hymes's (1964) speaking model. The data were analyzed using the SPSS software, and the results were scrutinized through descriptive statistics, independent-samples t-test, and the Levene's test. The results showed a significant difference between two groups' scores which highlighted the significant effect of teaching social practices of free discussion on the experimental group's social discourse compared to that of the control group. Therefore, it is helpful to teach social practices of free discussion as scaffolding tools to raise the students' awareness of the importance of social discourse, communicative competence, and socio-pragmatic competence in the process of their second language learning.

Keywords : Social Practice, Free-Discussion Discourse