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Using a Pragmatic Approach to Develop the English Learners'

Pragmatic Communicative Strategies

**The Case of First Year Master Students at the Department of Letters
and the English Language, University of Constantine 1**

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Requirements for the Degree of LMD Doctorate in Applied Linguistics/Studies of Applied
Languages*

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Dedication

To my parents, Zighoud and Zohra. I love you my angels.

To my wonderful husband. I am very proud to be your wife.

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Abstract

The present thesis aims at contributing to research works which stress the need and the importance of incorporating pragmatics in a more substantial way into English language teaching. It studies the case of Master students at the Department of letters and the English Language, University of Constantine 1. It focuses on the pragmatic communicative strategies learners may deploy to avoid the inhibition of communication and miscommunication. It also emphasizes that efficient English language teaching must integrate pragmatic factors and issues in order to obtain satisfactory results not only in the classrooms but, more importantly, when learners use the English language in real and authentic contexts. The hypothesis stated that an approach to teaching English which takes into consideration all of the linguistic, pragmatic and functional aspects of language would enhance the pragmatic and communicative strategies of the learners. To test this hypothesis, the study makes use of two research instruments, a questionnaire administered to a sample of teachers and a Written Discourse Completion Task administered to a sample of students. The questionnaire aims at investigating the current teaching approaches and practices in the classroom. The Discourse Completion Task is used to elicit the different strategies Master students use in different communicative situations. A theoretical framework for a more pragmatic approach and a syllabus based on a pragmatic view of language use are suggested. These are significantly different from the usual approaches in that they rely substantially on a more up to date conception of language use in different social and cultural contexts.

List of Abbreviations

ANSs: American Native Speakers

AT: At Home

BNSs: British Native Speakers

CSs: Communication Strategies

DCT: Discourse Completion Task

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as Second Language

FTA: Face Threatening Act

H: Hearer

ILP: Interlanguage Pragmatics

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

NNSs: Non-native Speakers

NSs: Native Speakers

SA: Studying Abroad

S: Speaker

SAS: Speech Act Set

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

WDCT: Written Discourse Completion Task

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General Introduction

Background for the Study

English as an international language is taught in non-English speaking countries according to different approaches, each of which relies on specific principles and has specific premises and aims. At the present time, there is little or no agreement as to the appropriate approach to be followed in teaching English.

From a historical perspective, the early approaches relied on the belief that learners are like receptacles to be filled with knowledge about the linguistic system of the language they learn. This inclined both linguists and teachers to believe that the core area of the curriculum that learners are to be presented with should be limited to grammar. Pedagogically, these approaches relied heavily on rule memorization drills, grammar, and vocabulary and targeted linguistic accuracy. Failure to enable learners to communicate using the foreign language gave way to the emergence of the communicative approach.

Foreign language teaching accordingly took a new direction and set itself new targets. From this new standpoint, more emphasis was laid on the communicative dimension of language and foreign language teaching was viewed as a process of analyzing the communicative needs of learners. As a result, the main aim was to help learners develop their communicative competence. Hence, context, in a way, became of much importance to language teaching.

This particular direction which capitalized on the communicative competence was also criticized since it neither suited all English language teaching needs nor served all English teaching situations. The failure of the previously mentioned approaches to bring about a good

command of English gave rise to emergence of another different approach known as the pragmatic approach to teaching.

Unlike other approaches, this new approach focuses on developing and facilitating the acquisition of pragmatic competence which goes beyond the situational progression of the communicative approach. It focuses on the use of relevant strategies in coping with certain language situations relying on the pragmatic view that sees language as an interaction or interpersonal activity deeply rooted in society.

Statement of the Problem

Teaching English at the University of Constantine 1 heavily relies on curricula which revolve around the traditional approaches. The design of these curricula has been created to promote language proficiency of learners via developing their grammatical competence. The common belief dominant at the University of Constantine 1 is that English language proficiency can be mainly gained by mastering English formal rules. However, English language learners show great failure in coping with particular communication problems and in reflecting their English language mastery. That is, in order to encode a given message in a given communicative process, most learners apply their pure linguistic knowledge but pay little or no attention to pragmatic knowledge and other important pragmatic communicative skills and strategies that the pragmatic approach emphasizes. The implementation of this approach, in fact, imposes a complete reorientation of the foreign language curriculum. It is completely different from the structure-based approach to language teaching in that it relies on enhancement of learners' communicative skills and focuses on the pragmatic aspect of communication of which learners have to be fully aware in order to be pragmatically and communicatively competent.

Aims of the Study

It is the purpose of this study to explore the approaches at present in use in teaching English at the University of Constantine 1, and to look at the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches. It tries to shed light on different communicative breakdowns into which English learners commonly run and to tease out the reasons underpinning their communication failure. It also attempts to explore how these learners may attain expressing themselves in English in satisfactory and representational manner. The thesis, therefore, attempts to figure out what is needed for successful communication and for effective fulfilment of communication. One other overriding aim of this thesis is to emphasize the significance of pragmatics for developing English learners' pragmatic and communicative performance.

Research Questions

This study aims at answering the following questions:

- Does a good command of English vocabulary and syntax necessarily lead to a good mastery of English language?
- Are grammatical and pragmatic competencies mutually exclusive?
- What is the real contribution to language teaching and learning that can be brought by a pragmatic approach?

Hypothesis

In the light of the aforementioned research questions, the hypothesis on which the present study is grounded runs as follows:

An approach to teaching English which takes into consideration all of the linguistic, pragmatic and functional aspects of language would enhance the pragmatic and communicative strategies of the learners.

Methodology

The data for this study are gathered from a random sample of first year Master's students at the University of Constantine 1 and from their teachers. This study is quantitative in nature. For validity and reliability, the study makes use of two research instruments, a questionnaire to teachers and a Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT) by which students are tested. In this way, the concentration is not on just one source of information, and the topic is approached more objectively. The questionnaire is developed to learn more about the teaching approaches which are used in English classrooms at the University of Constantine1, and the different teaching practices employed to teach English as a foreign language. The Discourse Completion Task is proposed in a way that enables the researcher to elicit different strategies Master students use in different communicative situations.

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis falls into seven chapters. The first three chapters are devoted to a literature review and to setting a theoretical framework which outlines the dimensions of the study. The last four chapters are of a practical nature.

Chapter one presents a historical overview of the different opinions and orientations to second/foreign tuition. It also examines issues around English language teaching and provides a critical overview of issues related to learning and teaching second/foreign languages.

Chapter two deals with the learning strategies as one paramount variable for assuring second language learning facilitation and its ultimate success. Moreover, the chapter examines

the communication gaps between second language learners and describes the communication failures that they may face. Then, it presents the communication strategies as one solution for approaching those problems. In addition, it tackles the significance of communication strategies and the important roles they play in developing the communicative performance of second/foreign language learners.

Chapter three covers the area of pragmatics as a more up to date branch of linguistics, and attempts to reveal its role in foreign language teaching. It stresses the importance of incorporating pragmatics to foreign language teaching as a new influential way to this particular field, and emphasizes the merits of its integration into language learning classrooms.

Chapter four is a description and discussion of the quantitative methodology followed in this thesis. It gives information regarding the research instruments employed for data collection as well as the procedures to be followed in the analysis of the data.

Chapter five is an attempt to analyze the teachers' responses to the questionnaire. The main aim is to shed light on the teachers' views on pragmatics, their teaching practices and preferences.

Chapter six is devoted to discuss the data generated by the learners' Discourse Completion Task. It seeks to cast light on the distinct communicative breakdowns EFL learners may encounter and the different pragmatic communicative strategies they employ in their communicative performance.

The study concludes with outlining some possible teaching practices and activities that can help in developing the learners' pragmatic communicative strategies and accelerate their overall communicative performance.

Chapter One

History of Second/Foreign Language Teaching Methodology

Introduction

The debate of whether second/foreign language should be treated as an academic discipline has persisted throughout the history of language teaching. In an attempt to clarify the different views and different orientations within the second language (L2) teaching, this chapter gives a succinct account of the history of second/foreign language teaching from the earliest records to the present day with emphasis on the fundamental concepts underpinning how language teaching is conceptualised and practiced. It also examines issues related to English language teaching and provides a critical overview of issues related to learning and teaching second/foreign languages. In essence, this is attempted through a discussion of the various methods and approaches which provided different pathways to language learning and teaching. It is also attempted, in this chapter, to lay down an objective description, analysis and comparison of different methodological language teaching.

1.1. A Brief Historical Overview on Second/Foreign Language Teaching

During the past decades, teaching methods and approaches have known several turning points; some of those methods have fallen out of favour; equally, many have been widely adopted and have had the greatest impact. Each of these methods and approaches had specific directions and denoted basic positions on the battlefield of second/foreign language teaching methodology. The most noticeable thing with the emergence of each new method or approach was the re-evaluation and restatement of the bases and objectives of second/foreign language teaching courses.

1.1.1. Grammar-Translation Method

Starting from the beginning of the 19th century, the Grammar-Translation Method was the predominant instructional tendency in language teaching in most educational contexts. It focused on developing and enhancing the learners' knowledge of formal grammar and vocabulary. The emphasis laid on these two elements emanated from the belief that a mastery of grammar would result in language mastery. Language according to such a conception was perceived as a codified linguistic structure. Grammar was thus considered to be the basis of instruction in schools. Records indicate that the grammar translation method was the most widely known language teaching methodology in the early days where accuracy concerns were often paramount (Schmidt, 2000).

Again, it should be noted that Grammar-Translation Method gave priority to memorization of grammatical rules and lexical items of the target language in order to understand and manipulate the morphology and syntax of the second/foreign language (Candlin and Mercer, 2001). There was focus on sentence as the basic unit of language teaching and learning. Moreover, language practice using isolated sentences to exemplify the rules or structures was widely used in the process of learning. It was as an attempt to make language learning easier (Howatt, 1984). Translation had an important role to play, i.e. each lesson would typically include a great deal of time during which learners were obliged to translate both into and from the target language. Richards and Rodgers noted:

Grammar Translation is a way of studying a language that approaches the language first through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by application of this knowledge to the task of translating sentences and texts into and out of the target language (2001: 5).

The exclusive focus was on grammar; the units were sentence and text and there were translation exercises into the first language and back again. The first language (L1) involvement in L2 learning was regarded as a prerequisite to achieve better learning of the foreign language. Thus, “the mother tongue of the students was an essential explanatory mode in the learning of Latin vocabulary.” (Reynolds, 1996:71). Similarly, Stern said that “The first language is maintained as the reference system in the acquisition of the second language.” (1983: 455).

Teaching English as a foreign language or a second language, which dates back to the 20th century, also witnessed Grammar-Translation Method practices in many English foreign language settings (Cook, 2001). These English foreign language (EFL)situations were highly characterized by an education system with a strong focus on grammar-based instruction. The tests in Grammar-Translation Method often emphasized the same required English components: reading comprehension, knowledge of grammar rules, vocabulary, and translation skills (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011). Thus, one may say that English learners were exposed to English language merely via grammar rules, the development of vocabulary and translation skills rather than the development of communicative ability. As a result, the communicative gains were minimal in grammar and translation-based teaching tendency.

Grammar-Translation Method had a very controlled educational system with a major focus on reading and writing the literal materials. Yet, the speaking skill of the target language received little attention (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Learners were rarely called upon to speak; they were either listening or taking notes. The only chance for oral practice was when they were asked to utter the translated sentences loudly, and little attention was paid to pronunciation. Learners were expected to memorize long and sometimes endless lists

of vocabulary through bilingual word lists as this was considered to be a prerequisite for second/foreign language learning (Schmidt, 2000).

From a purely linguistic point of view, all language elements were of equal consideration, something which Grammar-Translation Method failed to realize and implement. The principles followed by the Grammar-Translation Method were too rigid and pedantic, the fact which created disillusionment and frustration for learners who accepted the target language passively with great lack of the learnt language communicative opportunities. Accordingly, the development of communicative strategies in second/foreign language was negatively influenced (Chang, 2011). In fact, to codify the foreign language into frozen rules of morphology and syntax, and to basically rely on rote learning and memorization was something that led learners to lack self-confidence and to fear target grammar rules learning and even hate the target language itself (Chang, 2011).

Howatt claimed that Grammar-Translation Method is characterized by “stress on accuracy, obsession with ‘completeness’, and neglect of spoken language,” (1984:133-134). When this fact, especially the extensive use of L1 of Grammar-Translation Method, meets the increasingly global need for the English communicative skills, in such a global society, second/foreign language learners will be put into an active problem-solving situation. As a result, Grammar-Translation Method did not become widely accepted and many continual movements were categorically against it.

1.1.2. Direct Method

The limited practicality of the Grammar-Translation Method for daily life communication created dissatisfaction by the end of the 19th century among language teachers, especially in Europe. Hence, many called for changes in foreign language teaching

methodology and many reform methods were introduced. The Direct Method arrived on the scene as one of the reform methods. It supported the idea of teaching grammar inductively so that learners could discover the rules by themselves (Schmidt, 2000). The Direct Method was firstly adopted by Berlitz (1878) in his commercial schools and led to the term 'Berlitz' method which was used synonymously with the Direct Method. This method did not allow either translation or the extensive use of L1. It gave a great deal of attention to L2 by teaching it in meaningful contexts; that is, vocabulary was presented in communicative contexts. Additionally, grammar was not only presented inductively but, also, practiced in communicative contexts (Schmitt, 2000). Therefore, the Direct Method was considered as an attempt to place the learners in a more natural language learning situation.

Unlike the Grammar Translation Method, the Direct Method was based on the belief that foreign language could be taught without translation or the use of the learner's native language. Accordingly, the attention was turned to direct and spontaneous use of foreign language in classrooms. Actually, several new features characterized the Direct Method as a foreign language teaching method. One of these features was the emphasis on teaching oral skills at the expense of every traditional aim of language teaching. Correct pronunciation was also considered as an important feature of the Direct Method. As the emphasis was laid on the target language as a medium of instruction and the development of phonetics as a discipline, the features of pronunciation became of prime importance (Mukalel, 2007). Moreover, there was a tendency to teach the everyday language rather than the literary one. In the Direct Method, concrete vocabulary was taught through demonstration, objects and pictures (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

In sum, the features of the Direct Method can be summarized along the following lines as put by Berlitz:

- Never translate: Demonstrate.
- Never explain: Act.
- Never make a speech: Ask questions.
- Never imitate mistakes: Correct.
- Never speak with single words: Use sentences.
- Never speak too much: Make students speak much.
- Never use the book: Use your lesson plan.
- Never jump around: Follow your plan.
- Never go too fast: Keep the pace of the student.
- Never speak too slowly: Speak normally.
- Never speak too quickly: Speak naturally.
- Never speak too loudly: speak naturally.
- Never be impatient: Take it easy.

(As cited in Titone 1968: 100-101)

This particular reformative direction, the Direct Method, in language teaching gained great credibility and acceptance in private language schools where the use of native-speaking teachers was a requirement. Such a requirement was considered as a drawback by many reformers and linguists, like Sweet, who found it difficult to meet such requirement in practice (quoted in Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Another reason for being criticized is the main focus on the exclusive use of the target language in the classroom. Critics pointed out that the reasonable use of L1 was beneficial especially when teachers failed to make the students understand the meaning of a particular word (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). According to Verghese (1989), however, the limitation of this method arose from its neglect of language skills like writing and reading because of overemphasis on oral work. Because of these shortcomings, Audiolingualism, or what is known as the Audiolingual Method, emerged.

1.1.3. Audiolingual Method

The Audio-lingual method, or what was called Situational Language Teaching in some English-speaking countries, burst onto the scene by the end of the 1950's. It was considered as a more 'scientific' method. It was based basically on principles of behaviourism in psychology, and it advocated the importance of habit formation in the process of language teaching and learning. The prevailing belief, proposed by the Audiolingual Method, was that "good language habit, and exposure to the language itself, would eventually lead to an increased vocabulary." Coady (1993: 4) In other words, it was a methodological direction premised on the belief that successful language learning entails the correct accumulation of linguistic habits. The American audiolingual method focused primarily on oral skills with the correct teacher's input (stimulus) followed by positive reinforcement of the teacher modelling utterances using drills and repetition. The learners on their part were expected to produce correct output (responses) since errors were not tolerated. At the time of the inception and prevalence of this method and before, errors were considered evils to eradicate and, above all, they were frowned upon because they were deemed sure signs of tuition failure (Knight, 2001).

In the late 1960's, Audiolingualism began to fall into disfavour and was called into question for many reasons. Rivers (1964), Carroll (1965) and others argued against the inadequacy of the whole audiolingual paradigm; they saw that drilling and repetition were not sufficient for bringing about full competency in language learning. For them, the language learning process could not be subjected to merely a simple mechanism of stimulus, response and reinforcement. They believed that general learning, as riding a bicycle or driving a car, had to be distinguished from language learning.

It is noteworthy that there are many similarities between Audiolingualism and the so-called Situational Language Teaching: both of them mainly depend on drills and practice for an accurate target language learning (structures and sentences). Bloomfield noted that in order to master a language, one needs to “practice everything until it becomes a second nature.” (1942: 16) He also emphasized the fact that “Language learning is overlearning: Anything else is of no use.” (12) Chomsky, on his own part, rejected the way the behaviourist method described language and put forth that “Language is not a habit structure. Ordinary linguistic behavior characteristically involves innovation, formation of new sentences and patterns in accordance with rules of great abstractness and intricacy (1966: 153).

Accordingly, learning a language is not only about imitation and repetition; it is also about creativity and mental ability. Other critics to Audiolingual Method pointed out that learners in audiolingual classes have less opportunity to experience the spontaneity of natural language (Robinson, 2000). Similarly, Chomsky (1966) argued that learners are responsible for their own learning and have to use their own cognition in their learning process instead of being just responsive to stimuli in environment. In fact, this new emphasis on human cognition resulted in what is called the Cognitive Approach which was the foundation of many other innovative methods (Cele-Murcia, 1991).

1.1.4. Silent Way

The Silent Way was a method of language teaching which was devised by Gattegno (1976). One of the principles of this method was the focus on accuracy of production of both the sounds and structures of the target language from the very initial stage of instruction (Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin, 1996). According to this particular method, language learning is a process that should be studied as the one babies and young children follow to

learn a language. Gattegno believed that in the learning process, one mobilizes his/her inner resources, as perception, cognition and imagination. During the learning process, Gattegno said, one integrates anything 'new' and uses it for further learning (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). The teacher, on his/her own part, has to encourage students to produce as much language as possible. Thus, the students take responsibility for their own learning to discover or create rather than to remember and repeat what is to be learned. Accordingly, the autonomous use of the target language is a very basic aim of the Silent Way (Grube, 2007). More importantly, the silence of the teacher is regarded as a necessity for the learning process as it offers the opportunity for learners to analyse the input, and the learning room for learners to talk and explore the language.

Silent Way materials consisted mainly of a set of coloured rods, colour-coded pronunciation and vocabulary wall charts, all of which were used to illustrate the relationships between sound and meaning in the target language. Again, learners had to learn independently of the teacher. Yet, some learners would need more teacher's input than what was provided by this method (Norland and Prutte-Said, 2006).

1.1.5. Desuggestopedia

Desuggestopedia is also known as Suggestopedia. It is a teaching method developed by the Bulgarian psychotherapist Lozanov (1978). The basic premise of this method was the centrality of music and musical rhythm to learning to make learners feel comfortable in the class and to avoid any possible psychological barriers that could weaken the learning process (Wheeler, 2013). The aim of Suggestopedia was rapid learning. Therefore, emphasis was placed on creating a relaxed learning atmosphere to make students feel as free and as comfortable as possible. Moreover, home works were limited and errors were tolerated and

corrected gently. According to Lazanov (1978), the reserved capacity of a human mind can be better used when the limitations to learning are ‘desuggested’ . He believed that through positive ‘suggestive’ state, students could learn better and faster. Suggestopedia as a method gave importance to other factors such as the decoration and arrangement of the classroom and the authoritative behaviour of the teacher (ibid.).

The area of language that was more emphasized in this method was vocabulary. Students were encouraged to memorize a large number of target language words. In addition, reading and writing skills were emphasized allowing the use of native language translation to clarify the meaning (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

Suggestopedia was, in fact, subject to severe criticism. Scovel, for example, wrote “If we have learnt anything at all in the seventies, it is that the art of language teaching will benefit very little from the pseudo-science of suggestopedia.” (1979: 265, as cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Danesi (2003), however, argued that this method does not obtain satisfactory results with all learners in all situations. He believed that the principles of Suggestopedia and its pedagogical proposals are not applicable to all students, anywhere and at any time as claimed by its supporters (ibid.).

1.1.6. Community Language Learning

Community Language Learning was a method developed by Curran (1976) for teaching second and foreign languages (Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin, 1996). It was based on the theory of psychological counselling where learners were considered as clients and teachers as counsellors who would focus on the learners’ needs and problems (Baker and Jones, 1998). One of the most interesting aspects of this method was the focus on enhancing communal achievement through creating groups or communities where the personal links

between the teacher and his/her students were of paramount importance (Cherrington, 2013). Within such communities, students were encouraged to build up trust with their teacher and other members, in the classroom, to enhance language learning (Mei Kao and O'Neill, 1998). During the learning process, the teacher had to emphasize the comprehension skills and then the production skills. It is worth mentioning that Community Language Learning Method was based on L1 oral translation and the learners' own communicative needs from the initial stage of the learning process (La Forge, 1979 as cited in Consadle, 1996). Another striking principle of this method was that it considered language as a social process and viewed communication as more than an emitter-message-receiver process. According to La Forge, one of Currans' disciples:

... Communication is more than the simple transmission of a message from the emitter to the receiver. The speaker is, at the same time, both the subject and the object of his own message. [...] Communication not only supposes the unidirectional transfer of information to another person, but the relationship itself between speakers... Communication supposes an exchange that would be incomplete without the reaction of the receiver of the message... (1983:3)

All the aforementioned principles of Community Language Learning, however, were unlikely to be applicable in all situations. According to Brown (1980), these principles seem best suited to advanced learners than the beginners. Norland and Pruety-Said (2006), however, said that Community Language Learning requires bilingual teachers who are specifically trained in this method and in counselling techniques. It also requires small homogenous classes, the fact which does not exist all the time (ibid.).

1.1.7. Physical Response

Physical response is a language teaching method which was proposed by Asher (1977), a professor of psychology, who emphasised learning through physical action (Hall, 2011). Based on Physical Response premise, learners learn and perform best when they become physically involved in learning the target language (Larson and Keiper, 2011). Another positive factor for facilitating learning and achieving best performance was to reduce learner stress and “create a positive mood in the learner” (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:73). Asher (1977) believed that the process of target language learning is parallel to that of child’s first language acquisition. Similar to young children, target language learners listened to the received input, which consisted primarily of commands, and responded to it physically (Salim, 2001). Actually, this idea is clearly expressed in the following lines:

A reasonable hypothesis is that the brain and the nervous system are biologically programmed to acquire language, either the first or the second in a particular sequence and in a particular sequence and in a particular mode. The sequence is LISTENING before speaking and the mode is to synchronise language with the individual’s body.
(Asher, 1977:4)

According to Asher (1977), the emergence of speech can take place when the language is already acquired. Therefore, the emphasis, in Physical Response, was placed on understanding and developing the comprehension skills before developing the productive skills. Vocabulary and grammatical structures were also emphasized over other language areas (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). What was important in this method was that learners did not have to talk unless they felt ready to speak. Actually, they had the primary roles of listener and performer. Teachers, however, played the role of director of all students’ behaviour (Salim, 2001).

Physical Response as a method of language teaching received some popularity. However, critics of this method doubted whether it could offer a sustainable model of learning beyond beginner level (Hall, 2011). Other critics questioned the Physical Response syllabus as it did not fit the real-world learner needs. Another important critic was based on the Asher's belief that physical response had to be combined with other methods and techniques, the fact which opened the doubt to the effectiveness of using Physical Response solely (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

1.1.8. Communicative Language Teaching

As the field of second language pedagogy developed, there have been various reactions and counter-reactions in the field of language teaching methodology. The period from the 1970s through the 1980s offered a radical departure from grammar, as the main focus of language learning and teaching, moving towards another direction of thought which was based on viewing language as social practice (Richards, 2006). Teaching traditions as Grammar-Translation Method and Audiolingualism were questioned by many applied linguists who emphasized the need to focus on communicative proficiency rather than on mere mastery of structures in the field of language teaching. Pentcheva and Shopov, for instance, argued that communicative competence is the emphasized need for language teaching, that is, "the ability to use the target language effectively and appropriately, as opposed to linguistic competence. Thus, language functions are emphasized over language forms" (1999:45). This particular focus on communicative competence is considered as the main goal of the communicative approach or what is also called Communicative Language Teaching. More precisely, it stresses learning how to use the linguistic system effectively and appropriately. In a Communicative Language Teaching class, grammar is taught based on the needs of learners in real life communication and according to the functions being taught (Richards, 2006). In

the same line of thought, Larsen-Freeman wrote that learners “need knowledge of the linguistic forms, meanings, and functions.” (2000:128). Similarly, Nunan suggested that “we need to distinguish between knowing various grammatical rules and being able to use the rules effectively and appropriately when communicating.” (1989:12) In other words, the difference between ‘knowing that’ and ‘knowing how’ has to be recognized by both teachers and learners for a more successful and meaningful communicative and educational results. This particular paradigm shift from “form” to “meaning” and from “teaching grammar” to “teaching meaning or communication” has had far-reaching consequences in different dimensions (Cook, 2003).

In a communicative approach, appropriateness is as important as accuracy. It advocates the involvement of language learners in communication activities related to real-life contexts, that is, settings beyond the classroom which necessitate communication as a way to develop their communicative competence in second/foreign language (Skehan and Wesche, 2002).

A great deal has been said and written about Communicative Language Teaching since its inception in the 1970’. Brown, for example, defined it in terms of four underlying principles:

- Focus in a classroom should be on all of the components of communicative competence of which grammatical or linguistic competence is just part.
- Classroom activities should be designed to engage students in the pragmatic, authentic, and functional use of language for meaningful purposes.

- Both fluency and accuracy should be considered equally important in a second language learning classroom. And they are complementary.
- Students have to use their target language, productively and respectively, in unrehearsed contexts under proper guidance, but not under the control of a teacher (1994:245).

These characteristics can summarize the core of Communicative Language Teaching which emphasizes the enhancement of communicative competence next to linguistic competence which is regarded as just one facet of the broader meaning of the concept of competence. It is a facet that should be based on meaning as an important factor for meaningful language use.

Nunan was also with the idea of putting communication at the centre of language teaching and learning. He emphasized that grammar and meaning should be treated as of equal importance, saying that:

These days it is generally accepted that language is more than a set of grammatical rules, with attendant sets of vocabulary, to be memorized. It is a dynamic resource for creating meaning. Learning is no longer seen simply as a process of habit formation. Learners and the cognitive process they engage in as they learn are seen as fundamentally important to the learning process. Additionally, in recent year, learning as a social process is increasingly emphasized... (2004:6-7).

The adoption of the communication-oriented framework has evolved over time to bring about two quite distinct orientations of the same communicative thought: a “weak version” and a “strong version” (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:155). Howatt claimed that the main difference between the weak and the strong version is that the former could be explained

as “learning to use English”, while the latter version proposes the idea of “using English to learn it” (1984: 279).

According to the weak version of the communicative approach, learners should be offered with opportunities to attain communicative competence and accordingly meaningful communication. In contrast, the strong version of the communicative teaching approach tends to focus on the idea that language is acquired through communicative tasks which provide learners with opportunities to acquire the foreign language while using it (Saraswathi, 2004). To put it in simple terms, the weak version tendency is to treat learning the target language as the means for communicating with that language which is considered as an end. However, it is just the other way around for the strong version. That is, learning the target language is the result of the various and continuous attempts in order to communicate.

Despite the rapid adoption, the wide application and the large scale success in many different contexts of the communicative movement, there were, however, many problems with it since it was met with a great deal of criticism. Critics believe that the extensive reliance on the functional aspects of language rather than the formal structures may lead to stereotypical lists of expressions and wordings to be said in specific times and particular places, under specific circumstances (Cook, 2003). This, in turn, would jeopardise the basic tenets of language; the idea of creation. That is to say, learners potentially would have no choice but to adhere to those ‘phrase-book-like’ lists of speech, and as a logical inevitable result, their oral proficiency will be limited to merely mundane information and situations. Swan claimed that “the classroom is not the outside world, and learning language is not like using language [...] and it is a serious problem to condemn types of discourse typically found in the classroom because they do not share all the communicative features of other kinds of language use” (Cited in Swan, 1985: 82).

According to Stern, Communicative Language Teaching is not a suitable theoretical framework for teaching second or foreign languages. He (1992:14) thought that in using

[T]he communicative approach, the reliance on a single overriding concept, 'communication', is a disadvantage which prevents communicative language teaching from being entirely satisfactory as a theoretical framework. In order to account for all varieties and aspects of language teaching we either stretch the concept of communication so much that it loses any distinctive meaning, or we accept its limitations and then find ourselves in the predicament of the 'method' solution: an excessive emphasis on a single concept.

Hughes (1983) believed that the priority given to fluency over accuracy in Communicative Language Teaching classes leads to a more fluent but less accurate learners. Brown (1994), however, argued that the teacher's tolerance with students' errors in Communicative Language Teaching classes provides room for more fossilized errors which may never be corrected.

It is quite notable that the learners' feelings, needs and freedom of speech would be under constraint, i.e., they would be implicitly forced not to need something which is out of the communicative 'constitution'. But this does not, at all, imply that every teacher has to modify the syllabus to meet with the needs and interests of each particular learner. Social relationships are wide and different, and such kind of diversity entails language use creativity on the part of the interlocutors who are looking for social interaction and pursuing to maintain their relationships.

Actually, various developed versions of the same communicative thought came on the scene and took different labels such as Content-Based Teaching and Task-Based Instruction

and some others like Proficiency-Based Instruction which are considered as ‘spin-off’ approaches of communicative language teaching (Rodgers, 2001).

1.1.9. Content Based-Instruction

Content-Based Instruction or what is sometimes called Content-Centred Education or simply Content-Centred, is one of those teaching approaches that communicative approach produced. It “integrates the learning of some specific subject-matter content with the learning of a second language” (Brown, 1994:220). In other words, Content-Based Instruction focuses on subject-matter, and not on language, as being the source for language learning. The aim of Content-Based Instruction is to make a subject-matter comprehensible, clear and explicit for learners (Krashen, 1991). For facilitating subject-matter content, teachers tend occasionally to use some helpful techniques such as facial expressions, gestures and body language. Most of the time, however, teachers make use of ‘graphic organizers’ such as tables, graphs and maps (Krashen, 1985). Hence, learners’ needs and interests are the essence focus of Content-Based Education courses during which teachers try their best to make everything clear for their learners.

One important principle of Content-Based Instruction is that learners have to be tested on content and not on language, i.e. on meaning and not on form. Krashen (1982) suggested that attainment of second language acquisition can be achieved “when the focus of instruction is on meaning rather than on form; when the input is at or just above the proficiency of the learner; and when there is sufficient opportunity to engage in meaningful use of that language in a relatively anxiety-free environment” (Cited in Crandall, 1994, Why Use Content-Centered Instruction, para.1). In such a way, learners in content-based class are neither in

need for rote memorizing of grammatical rules nor for long vocabulary lists as they traditionally did. All that matters is focusing on meaningful content.

Another important principle that characterizes Content-Based Instruction is that cooperative learning where “communication is generally considered to be the primary purpose of language.” (Weeks, 1979:1) As an attempt to promote learners’ language proficiency, Content-Based Instruction classes extensively relied on team work and small group work as effective language teaching techniques for providing learners with challenges and chances to interact and share experience and ideas.

Although Content-Based Instruction had many advocates, some, however, criticised the approach. Kinsella (1997), for example, criticized Content-Based Instruction for being too teacher driven. She pointed out that in Content-Based Instruction classes, teachers adjust teaching materials to make them accessible to their students the fact which produces less independent learners. Kinsella put it clearly in saying:

These modifications of instructional delivery place the bulk of the responsibility on the teacher, and while facilitating short term comprehension, they do not necessarily contribute to the ESL students’ ability to confidently and competently embark on independent learning endeavors (1997: 50-51).

Kinsella goes on to say that applying Content-Based Instruction without the integration of academic skills instruction shows failure in creating autonomous and self-directed learners.

1.1.10. Task-Based-Instruction

Task-Based-Instruction represented an approach to language learning that stood on the opposite end of form-based language learning. It was based on tasks related to real-world contexts and communicative and group work activities (Blake, 2013). The core of Task-Based Instruction syllabus was the extensive use of communicative tasks which was based on contemporary theories of language learning and acquisition which stressed the importance of language use for the sake of language development. As Norries et al. claimed:

The best way to learn and teach a language is through social interaction. [...they] allow students to work toward a clear goal, share information and opinions, negotiate meaning, get the interlocutor's help in comprehending input, and receive feedback on their production. In the process, learners not only use their interlanguage, but also modify it, which in turn promotes acquisition (1998: 31).

In other words, the core of the language learning process was not learning grammar and mastery of grammatical rules, but it was rather using those tasks which were of a 'communicative nature' that can really shape the use of grammar meaningfully.

Actually, many scholars criticised Task-Based Instruction and arguing that if no focus is encouraged while performing a task, learners will develop a very low level of language proficiency (Nunan, 2004; Willis and Willis, 2001). In the same line of thought, Seedhouse (1999) pointed out that students often focus principally on task completion, and that as a result, they sometimes produce only the most minimal display of linguistic output necessary to complete the task.

It can be concluded that despite the fundamental differences among the aforementioned methods and approaches to language teaching, certain features in common are to be

recognized. One of these common features is their belief to be the best one. The second common characteristic to be recognised is the set of prescriptions that teachers have to follow necessarily. It is, also, worth mentioning that despite the theoretical considerations, each of the different methods and approaches has contributed with new elements and has attempted to deal with particular issues of language learning.

1.2. Communicative Competence

The term ‘communicative competence’ was first introduced by Hymes (1972) as a sociolinguistic concept in reaction to the concept of ‘linguistic competence’ which was proposed by Chomsky (1965). Unlike Chomsky who posited that knowledge of grammar alone is sufficient, Hymes argued that knowing the grammar of a language is irrelevant if the speaker is ignorant of the rules of use (Widdowson, 1989). According to Hymes (1972), communicative competence cannot be regarded only as an inherent grammatical competence. Rather, it also includes the ability to use grammatical competence in a variety of communicative situations, thus bringing the sociolinguistic perspective into Chomsky’s linguistic view of competence. From this perspective, Hymes (1972) described a competent language user as the one who knows when, where and how to use language appropriately rather than merely knowing how to produce accurate grammatical structures. According to Hymes, a competent language user is the one who adheres to the following aspects while communicating. s/he has to consider:

- Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible;
- Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available;

-Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated; and

-Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually performed, and what its doing entails. (1972:281)

All these factors come into play in everyday communicative situations, and the one who adheres to all four aspects is surely competent. That is to say, the language people produce has to cover not only the grammatical dimension of that language but its social perspective as well. Following this line of thought, the situationally-appropriate forms of speech are the most salient component of the general interest in all communicative settings, and the above mentioned components, namely the rules of language use are to be the core of successful communicative acts. He considered that the use of language requires both grammatical accuracy and communicative appropriateness. Concerning this issue, Hymes wrote:

...there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar will be useless. Just as rules of syntax can control aspects of phonology, and just as rules of semantics perhaps control aspects of syntax, so rules of speech acts enter as a controlling factor for linguistic form as a whole (1971: 278).

In other words, Hymes considered that the social life people go through and live in entails a specific communicative ability that encompasses grammatical competence and sociolinguistic competence; both work together to help the whole communicative process succeed by determining whether an utterance is appropriate or not within a specific situation. In the same line of Austin's thought, Hymes believed in the idea of doing things with

language, i.e., considering language as an activity individuals do in a myriad of contexts where speech acts take place.

Hymes ideas about ‘communicative competence’ were later developed by Canal and Swain (1980) who introduced a theoretical framework of ‘communicative competence’ which consists of three fields of knowledge and skills: grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competence. In a later version of this model, Canale (1983) transferred some elements from sociolinguistic competence into the fourth component which he named discourse competence. These four areas of communicative competence are briefly outlined below:

1.2.1. Grammatical Competence

This particular competence refers to the knowledge of the target linguistic code and its mastery per se; that is, the mastery of L2 vocabulary and grammatical rules which effectively help L2 learners to develop their language proficiency. Grammarians such as Sweet and Brown, on their own part, considered both of correctness and accurateness the very kernel of any language mastery be it L1 or L2. They believed that the real competent language learner is the one who makes no errors at the phonological, lexicogrammatical and sentence formation level.

1.2.2. Discourse Competence

This type of competence refers to the knowledge of how to combine spoken or written texts in a unified way, respecting of course the governing rules of cohesion and coherence in a given text or conversation in L2. That is, discourse competence entails the knowledge of cohesive relationships within and between sentences such as the appropriate use of conjunctions and other cohesive ties. In addition to these lately mentioned contextual

connections, the ability of designing a given discourse in a way that helps the addressee make sense of the relationships holding together the individual text constituents is also another defining hallmark of discourse competence (Widdowson, 2007).

1.2.3. Sociolinguistic Competence

By sociolinguistic competence is meant the mastery of language in its social context, i.e. it refers to the ability of complying with the socio-cultural rules while performing language. Canale (1983) emphasized the role of social appropriateness as being one of the primary conditions of communicative competence. The following examples may elucidate the point:

- 4-a- Shut up!
- 4-b- Listen to me.
- 4-c- May I have your attention, please?
- 5-a- What a bad rubbish.
- 5-b -I disagree with you.
- 5-c - Your view is unacceptable.
- 6-a- Name? (With a rising intonation.)
- 6-b- What's your name?
- 6-c- May I have your name? (Lè, 2005)

These examples can unambiguously illustrate the need to various ways of explaining the same idea, message or meaning, and also stress the importance of stylistic appropriateness that accords to specific sociolinguistic contexts. For example, it is going to be ridiculous or even bizarre to hear a boy asks his father to be silent using the statement 4-a (Shut up!), or a mother who is ill to tell her four -months old baby the statement 4-c (May I have your attention, please?).

1.2.4. Strategic Competence

This particular constituent of communicative competence refers to the ability of smoothly handling the communicative problems which may crop up in interaction. It is closely associated with the mastery of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies by which L2 learners can compensate for their insufficient proficiency in communicating effectively. In some cases, L2 learners find some difficulties to link their intention and the messages which they want to transmit with the linguistic forms they use to express their intention and social messages. This may lead them to social embarrassment and may also influence their learning process.

For a useful and meaningful communication, one needs specific language use strategies by which he/she can identify the situation in which he/she participates, and more importantly the linguistic choice needed in this particular situation. This, in turn, results in achieving the communicative goals beyond the social interaction. Yule (2006:169) provided an illustrative example of a Dutch L1 speaker who created a communication strategy in referring to “enn hoefijzer” by only saying “things that horses wear under their feet, the iron thing”, since he lacks the English word of ‘horseshoes’. This may show the expected communicative flexibility that L2 learners are supposed to have or at least to try to accomplish.

These four cluster headings show only one resemblance to Chomsky’s notion of competence which can be categorized as an equivalent to the ‘grammatical competence’ proposed by Canale (1983). Yet, the other last three dimensions are missing in the Chomskyan competence description which does not provide a useful basis (Kamiya, 2011).

A similar view to this issue is propounded by the ethnographer Saville-Troike (1996) who is fundamentally in line with Hymes' communicative competence assumption. Yet, Saville-Troike considered communicative competence from another perspective that is related to second and foreign language contexts. She defined it in terms of three components which are linguistic, interactional and cultural knowledge. Here again, the objectives of L2 instruction and the target language proficiency were redefined. Following the Chomskyan theory of competence, Saville- Troike (1996) also mentioned the importance of linguistic rules, and on the other hand drew attention to the importance of integrating linguistic features that may carry a lot about social information in describing language. This particular way of language analysis, however, is a helpful step to foreign learners who may face problems to decode social messages and referential meanings.

The second considered part of communicative competence is the interactional knowledge, or rather the interactional skills that characterize the conversations and speech that native speakers may perform among each other. A competent language user always tries to adjust the way he speaks, writes or interacts according to the context in which he/she is. The communicative purpose(s) and the relationship between the participants always drive the social interaction to a particular direction in which the successful communicator may prove his communicative competence and social relevance to a specific social group, and achieve accordingly an effective communication. This fact can be applied in L2 classrooms which can be considered as natural social settings in which learners may carry out interactional tasks of language use that help them bolster their L2 interactional skills.

The cultural property of language, Saville-Troike (1996) claimed, is the third source of knowledge in communicative competence, which can determine the communication success or failure. This kind of knowledge can be related to the 'Know-How' language and the social

rules and attitudes towards specific language behaviours that are closely associated with the culture of that language. Unlike native speakers of English, for example, learners of this language find it difficult to treat the social structure of the English speech community and its social and cultural values, mainly because of their reliance on mere isolated linguistic structures and forms. For English learners, it is a challenging task to identify ways of speaking that are appropriate for men and women, for children and adults, and for the educated and uneducated persons. Additionally, English learners cannot readily identify appropriate strategies to approach the different social situations which are culturally-based. It is worthy to mention that the above considered constituents of communicative competence are all related to Hymes' notion of performing linguistic acts in what is called communicative events (Kamiya, 2011). These three basic components of communicative competence can really help the L2 learning process and result in successful non-native communicators.

1.3. Learning beyond the Traditional Four Skills

It has been made patent in the foregoing discussion that Communicative Language Teaching methodologies heavily emphasized the role communicative skills play in the teaching/learning process. They also surmised that producing an appropriate communicative act is unquestionably tightly linked to the communicative ability of the learner. Moreover, it is worthy to point out that this particular orientation in learning articulates clearly that there is a close relationship between teaching meaning and ultimate success in second language learning.

During the course of communication, many challenges emerge mainly because of the heavy reliance on isolated linguistic structures. In fact, this particular focus is more likely to influence negatively the whole communicative process. This latter, in fact, needs a great deal

of flexibility that takes it out of stereotyped and fixed situations, and language behaviours. After all, no matter how well-documented people's routine encounters are, and no matter how much endeavour is invested to internalise the rules on offer, learners are apt to fall into clumsy situation if they have not got the hang of a constellation of communication strategies. Under this rubric, we will look at the fact that procuring robust communicative skills cannot be solely catered for by teaching the four language skills, no matter how sweeping it is.

First of all, communicative abilities cannot be legitimately equated with the sum of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills possessed by an individual. This kind of categorization was erroneously widely believed and applied in traditional approaches whose traces are still discernible in most, if not all, of the current Algerian universities' classrooms input. Much attention was unduly paid to reading and writing skills through memorization and automatization of grammar drills and rules. The oral proficiency was, as a novelty, then supported by the audiolingual teaching direction as an alternative teaching objective. This mere focus, however, was not a remedial solution for achieving effective engagement in a meaningful, genuine language use, a fact which spawned dissatisfaction among second/foreign language teachers and communicative language teaching proponents. The successive critics, especially those bent upon the pivotal importance of bringing variety into teaching, brought about an eclectic approach which is based on fusing the four skills together in foreign language teaching. That approach knew a wide acceptance among German teachers who considered it as the most effective language methodology at that time. Carroll wrote about this issue, saying that:

A teacher emphasizing audiolingual skills cannot too long avoid presenting the written language, and the teacher emphasizing reading and writing is unlikely these days, to withhold the teaching of the spoken aspect of the language (Cited in Haas, 1970: 61).

In other words, Carroll assumed that teachers cannot present the four skills separately, and should show, instead, the interconnections between them while teaching.

Another alternative that captured scholarly attention for quite a while was the potential fertility of introducing the four skills in an early phase of teaching a second/foreign language. It is still believed in many contexts to be the most useful way to achieve good results in teaching. Again, this might be highly welcomed by most of Algerian teachers who seem to really subscribe to the same contention, ‘the usefulness of imported, creative ideas’.

It is heavily emphasized throughout the previous discussion that second/foreign language learning exceeds the limits of memorizing grammatical rules and vocabulary items, to cover the other interconnected parts of language such as social values and cultural conventions, and not to forget discourse principles as being ground rules for more precise and coherent language use. In other words, the effective learning of second/foreign language should be no longer restricted to grammatical competence in the Chomskyan sense, and second language teachers have to try hard to develop their learners’ social interactional ability and make use of activities that involve situations designed specifically to allow for well-rounded development and progress in all areas of language learning. Communication-oriented learning activities which embrace the objective of developing real-life language skills within a contextualized and meaningful environment ought to constitute the kernel, the pivot of any curricular endeavour. Deploying such activities is not an arbitrary decision; it is firmly established on principles of second/foreign language learning endorsed by research into this particular field, in addition to learning psychology. It is in fact a specific teaching direction which is highly seen from an interactional view to second/foreign language learning; a view which indicates that even the four-skills approach is not sufficient for generating a competent

language user, and the language data to which foreign learners are supposed to be exposed should be presented in a meaningful context(s) that resemble(s) real-life ones.

Needless to say, communication acts people perform in daily life are uncountable in a way that they cannot be gathered under a given umbrella term or even enumerated in a long list. This is what second/foreign language teachers have to realise in order to include within their objectives an ultimate aim of language teaching which is developing their learners' autonomy in language use. That is to say, learners need specific genre of aptitude which would empower them to use the language they need in the manner they want.

It seems to stand to reason that teachers are not the only party to blame, learners have the propensity for being passive and only look on; they, generally, make no attempt to neither motivate their strategies for learning and communicating nor activate the primary four skills. This by no means implies that learners have no abilities; the problem is that they do not seize these abilities, partly owing to not being motivated and partly for not being conscious that they actually have such abilities.

For being objective, second/foreign learners are in need most of the time for guiders and mentors who really know how to guide from distance in cooperation with their learners; to show them how to discover underlying abilities and how to use them usefully, effectively and productively, far from the admired traditional way of overcorrection and overevaluation.

Discussing issues in such manner is not a way of denying the importance of the four skills integration and its role in rendering learning purposeful. However, integrating those receptive and productive skills has not to be put in isolation; that is, they should be incorporated in a way that shows the various interconnections amongst the four skills and in a

way that comes closer to real- life situations which extends the content of the four skills, introduces new techniques of dealing and understanding different areas of language, and also facilitates retention of the whole language intake. Following this principle, teachers ought to fully contextualize both of content and use of the four skills, and of activities which are designed to promote those skills. It is the way to make in-classroom realities much more akin to out-of classroom ones, and to avoid the futile isolation in which language skills are generally learnt. Sanchez spelled this out:

Language skills cannot be learnt in isolation. While the classification of the four skills has some value if we look at language activity from the outside, the definition of language implied by this division ignores the function of language altogether; the four categories described things which happen, but only as external, unmotivated activities. Thus, we require a different specification of objectives if we want to enable learners to develop their capacities in the way they are described by the language acquisition theory (2000:25).

Integrating the four skills in this way entails another helpful factor which is to be identified as opposite to the linguistic skills direction. This different factor which can really control and guide those skills in a native like manner is known to be as the communicative skills that motivate those four skills and put them in a successful format.

Communicative skills are not as sophisticated as some learners would reckon; they can be simple abilities people use in everyday life to accomplish their routine communicative goals like, for example, asking for clarification and adjusting language to make each other understood. In a given conversation, speech, or written discourse, the interlocutors are not only speaking, listening, writing or reading, but they are also simultaneously coding and

decoding messages, ideas and thoughts, something which requires specific skills other than the four traditional ones.

What can really pervert the learning process is the gulf generally made between the linguistic skills and the communicative context in which they should be embedded. Traditionally, the teaching process took place without any communicative purpose. This stemmed partly from believing that the prime objective is to strengthen and solidify the grammatical ability and enable learners to get a depth and width of vocabulary. The locus of focus was on mere linguistic abilities while the communicative skills were put at the fringe of academic priorities, it was thought to be an inevitable result of the successful accumulation of the linguistic skills. Widdowson was completely at odds with these views. In his own words, he penned:

The acquisition of linguistic skills does not seem to guarantee the consequent acquisition of communicative abilities in a language. On the contrary, it would seem to be the case that an overemphasis on drills and exercises for the production and reception of sentences tends to inhibit the development of communicative abilities. [...]The abilities include the skills: one cannot acquire the former without acquiring the latter. The question is: how can the skills be taught, not as self-sufficient achievement but as an aspect of communicative competence? (1978:67)

One of the infamous drawbacks of teaching the four skills exclusively is that the overcorrection and the successive evaluations provokes a sort of anxiety for learners which leads in many cases to a noticeable purported slippage of learning. Furthermore, it kills any opportunity or room for learners to be creative and develop communicative skills. The traditional categorization of the four skills, likewise, ignores the functional role of language

altogether since it shows mere unconnected and external activities that lead to a superficial vision of language, out of its contextualized framework. Brumfit portrayed this idea in the following quotation:

The traditional emphasis on the four skills has frequently reduced “writing” to a concern with handwriting and transfer of spoken to written form with little attention to discourse structure, and listening to a concern with minimal pairs or comprehension of isolated sentences. This alternative proposal also corresponds to common-sense assessments of what we do with language, in that each of the four activities listed is observably different from the others, and requires response to different conventions.(1984:70)

Following Brumfit’s thought, good communication is more than a matter of hypothetical rules and abstract sentences disconnected from their real life and language world.

Learners are not invariably to blame nor are the teachers because there is a third responsible party in the learning process, namely the whole educational system including the syllabus and the source books used. These instructional elements sometimes work against the communicative purpose and focus on how to make learners talk and write like old books; a fact which clearly exists in many instructional settings all over the world. Algerian universities, for example, are just one case where the English language four skills are not adequately provisioned.

For ensuring views on this issue, we tend to point the fact that Algerian universities show an appreciable fall in providing a communication-oriented direction to English language as a foreign language. There is lack of English sources, let alone effective English books for communication, and materials that can foster productive learning atmospheres. This fact

makes things worse in a situation where the teacher cannot do except follow the textbooks' instructions and the learner cannot do except respect the will of the two, in the best cases.

Unfortunately, problem solving and critical thinking have little room in the Algerian educational system. To be objective, however, some counted research papers in the Algerian universities libraries stress the importance of improving the English communicative ability and clearly articulate the idea that if English learners have no effective communicative ability, nothing else they do will matter much. However, those research papers are still waiting for decision makers especially for those who will take it upon themselves to make their abstract ideas more pragmatic and realistic as a step to promote English learning in Algeria.

In a nutshell, one can infer that effective English learning focuses on the four skills including not only traditional and unmotivated activities, but also effective communication that is based on awareness of social, cultural, environmental and even ethical factors. It also includes a plethora of other issues associated with language performance in a societal context.

A collaboration of all these elements seems to hold promise of achieving more equitable outcomes for improving the English communicative proficiency for English learners, either in Algerian universities or other different educational settings. This kind of collaboration can potentially really narrow the widening gap between English native performance and non-native one. It is hoped that this will, in turn, lead to enhance learners' retention of both comprehensive and productive abilities and result in better competent graduate learners. Then, it is reasonable to think again about the currently used system of Foreign Language Teaching that is based on the lately mentioned ideas. It is high time to put the record straight.

Conclusion

The previous sketchy and highly selective overview of methods and approaches demonstrates how many challenges and problems second/foreign teaching methodology faces. As a matter of fact, the process of language learning and the practice of language teaching cannot be restricted to a fixed methodology or to an eternal and unchangeable pedagogy. Furthermore, the aforementioned discussion was not to say neither explicitly nor implicitly that the mentioned language teaching methodologies are fruitless endeavours or of useless results. Yet, the researcher emphasizes the fact that no second/foreign language teaching method/approach is inherently superior to another and no method/approach can be the best one; instead, there are methods/approaches more appropriate than others in particular context(s).

Chapter Two

Importance of Communication Strategies in Language Teaching and Learning

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to deal, first, with language learning strategies as one paramount variable to ensure facilitation and success in second/foreign language learning. It provides the various vital roles of language learning strategies in the process of second/foreign language learning, and the importance of their use in effective learning. The chapter also deals with the significance of communication strategies and the important role they play in developing the communicative performance of second/foreign language learners.

2.1. Language Learning Strategies

In order to be active and independent, language learners need some techniques that help them to compensate for breakdowns in communication and to enhance communicative effectiveness. These ways of dealing with communication, or with language problems in general, are known as strategies which can be simple or sophisticated. Concerning this matter, Davis and Pearse claimed that “overcoming weaknesses usually means adopting strategies used by successful learners, which requires a lot of efforts from both teachers and learners.” (2000: 196)

Benjamin Franklin once wrote, “Tell me, and I may forget. Teach me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I will learn.” (Cited in Weltman, 2007: 6) Applied to the field of language teaching and learning, this quote might be interpreted to mean that success in learning a second or a foreign language is profoundly affected by the way individual learners

approach language learning. Waiting for direct answers from the teacher as the only source of knowledge for learners is not a very useful way to learn. Even with genuine teachers and best methods, learners are the only ones who can do the learning and perform it. This is exactly what Nyikos and Oxford meant when saying that “learning begins with the learner.” (1993: 11)

Research on learning strategies, in fact, has highlighted the teaching-learning process as it has provided important insights into the improvement of the efficiency of language learning and teaching. Since it became an area of research in second language acquisition, the term language learning strategies has been defined by many researchers in different and varied ways.

2.2. Definition of Learning Strategies

Although there is little agreement on the definition of learning strategies, one can categorize the definitions of learning strategies into two schools of thought. The first type of definitions revolves around the elements and features that characterise language strategies themselves. One example is the definition proposed by Wenden et al. who perceived learning strategies as “techniques, tactics, potentially conscious plans, consciously employed operations, learning skills, basic skills, functional skills, cognitive abilities, language processing strategies and problem-solving procedures.” (1987: 7) For the same reason, the view held by Ellis falls within the first category of definitions. Ellis viewed them as “a mental process, and both observable and unobservable behaviours.” (1994: 529)

The second category of definitions, however, centres on the different purposes for which learners intend to use these strategies. Oxford and Crookall perceived learning strategies as “steps taken by the learner to facilitate the acquisition, storage, retrieval, or use

of information.” (1989: 404) This definition is further expanded to include “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations.” (Oxford, 1990: 8)

In the same line of thought, many other scholars like Rubin (1987) and Richards and Platt (1992), surmised that language learning strategies are steps taken by the learner and have learning facilitation. That is, they affect the way learners learn, process and organize new knowledge.

These definitions or beliefs show that the emphasis in second/foreign language teaching and learning is put on learners and learning rather than teachers and teaching. This particular interest resulted in a prominent shift in language pedagogy, a shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred classroom leaning. That is to say, in contrast to traditional pedagogy, leaners have been regarded as one important concept and element in the language classroom.

The above-mentioned definitions also reflect the importance of language learning strategies in language leaning. Actually, the importance of language- learning strategies goes with the old Chinese saying “Teaching a man how to fish is better than giving him a fish.” The role of strategies, in fact, is to help developing learners’ motivation and autonomy, so that they develop the ability of self-directed learning and gain their self-confidence. Hence, learners who think strategically can learn better and have a higher sense of self-efficiency in leaning. After all, the most known role of learning strategies is to enhance the learners’ abilities of language.

Faerch and Casper’s definition of learning strategies, as a case in point, (1983) underscored the role of improving linguistic and sociolinguistic aptitude of the target

language. While Oxford (1990) and Lessard-Clouston (1997) stated that language- learning strategies contribute to the enhancement of communicative competence of language learners, learners generally face new input and difficult tasks. This reason pushes them to look for the quickest and easiest way to overcome their prolific learning problems. This is, in fact, what makes adopting language- learning strategies inescapable and inevitable in language learning and teaching.

Needless to say that using language- learning strategies affects the learners' language achievements. However, it is not reasonable to claim that less efficient language learners do not use language-learning strategies as good learners do since other factors may have a role to play in the language learning success. That is, language- learning strategies are one of the significant factors which differentiate successful from less successful learners (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

It is also important to mention that less efficient learners may employ the same language learning strategies of those highly successful learners, but only weakly, or they fail to use them appropriately. They cannot develop their strategies to meet the requirements of more challenging language tasks and to assist their language performance. They also cannot make the strategies they possess go hand in hand with the divergent needs of the different contexts where they find themselves. Thus, the problem does not lie in the use of strategies as such. Rather, it resides in the authentic and active use of them (Stern, 1992).

At this point of discussion, it is important to stress the contribution of other variables to language learning success, and language competence enhancement such as personality and learning style (Oxford, 1990). Motivation, low levels of academic anxiety or rather facilitating anxiety, and many other factors also play a role. They work together with language- learning strategies to attain a better effectiveness and efficiency in learning. This

means that language- learning strategies are somewhat related to social and psychological factors.

Cohen (2002) suggested that strategies may differ in nature. In this position, one may have the interest to know the nature of different language-learning strategies. On account of this, the researcher opts for presenting this matter as follows:

2.3. Taxonomy of Language -Learning Strategies

O'Malley et al. (1985), Oxford (1990), Stern (1992), Ellis (1994), and many others, tried to classify language-learning strategies. Despite the conflicting opinions brought by different classifications, they reflect welter-overlapping points. Most of them reflect more or less the same categories without any radical changes. Accordingly, the researcher adopts Oxford's classification system as a useful base for understanding the nature of different language- learning strategies. Actually, this particular classification is viewed as a comprehensive, detailed and systematic model in dealing with strategies either individually or grouped (Ellis, 1994). It also relates to each of the four skills of language (Al-Kattan, 2003).

Oxford (1990) put language learning strategies under two main classes- direct and indirect. She intended to show that despite the differences and conflicting findings found by different researchers, there is a general agreement about the overall nature of language learning strategies. This is, in fact, the key distinction brought by Oxford's taxonomy system. It is worth noting that both strategy classes, direct and indirect, are interconnected and complement each other. Although they can function individually, they work best when they are used in combination. Accordingly, both of these strategies should be called upon in learning in order to achieve better results.

In what follows are the two main classes proposed by Oxford (1990).

2.3.1. Direct Language -Learning Strategies

As the name suggests, direct learning strategies are those strategies used directly in approaching a new language or input. They help learners to come to grips with the target language in order to understand and/or produce it more effectively. They incorporate the following sets:

2.3.1.1. Memory Strategies

Memory strategies, which are also known as mnemonics, are the strategies learners use for storing information in memory. They offer various ways of how to work with new information more effectively. Thornbury defined mnemonics as “[...] tricks to help retrieve items or rules that are stored in memory and that are not yet automatically retrievable.” (2002:25). Sometimes, learners, and people in general, associate the words or the phrases they hear with visual pictures, sounds and sometimes motions and touches to retrieve the information they need for communication. According to Oxford (1990), memory strategies can be divided into four categories or strategies: creating mental linkage, applying images and sounds, reviewing well, and employing action. All these strategies help in memorizing new words and rules.

2.3.1.2. Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies refer to cognition that is used by learners to complete a certain task. They are very practical in the way learners make use of the language. According to Ellis, cognitive strategies are perceived as “[...] those that are involved in the analysis, synthesis, or transformation of learning materials.” (1997:77) In fact, learners use these strategies for the manipulation or transformation of the target language by repeating, analysing or by summarizing. According to Oxford (1990), cognitive strategies typically fall into four sets.

These are practicing, receiving and sending messages, analysing and reasoning, and creating structure for input and output.

2.3.1.3. Compensation Strategies

Learners use compensation strategies to cope with the insufficient knowledge they have. Compensation strategies help learners to communicate in the target language for either comprehension or production, despite the knowledge gaps learners' linguistic repertoire suffers from (Oxford, 1990). Cohen, however, mentioned these strategies under the term of cover language use strategies and described them as "strategies that learners use to create the impression that they have control over material when they do not." (2002:6)

This kind of strategies makes up for the learner deficiency in the knowledge of the meaning of new words and expressions by guessing intelligently. They, also, compensate for the incomplete grammatical mastery of language learners. They are generally used to help learners overcome their limitations in speaking and writing, and to come up with solutions especially when facing difficulties in examinations. Oxford (1990) distinguished two groups of compensation strategies: those related to comprehension, i.e. to language skills of listening and reading under the term of guessing intelligently in listening and reading, and those related to production, i.e., to language skills of speaking and writing under the term of overcoming limitations in speaking and writing.

2.3.2. Indirect Language-Learning Strategies

These strategies provide an indirect engagement for language learning enhancement, and therefore are called indirect strategies. They are immensely useful for language learning, especially when deployed in tandem with direct strategies. Actually, these strategies serve different functions, such as to plan and organize time of learning, to evaluate learners'

progress and others. Oxford used the example of theatre setting to demonstrate the functions of indirect strategies, as follows:

The second major strategy class- indirect strategies for general management of learning- can be linked to the Director of the play. The director serves a host of functions, like focusing, organizing, guiding, checking, correcting, coaching, encouraging, and cheering the Performer, as well as ensuring that the Performer works cooperatively with other actors in the play. The Director is an internal guide and support to the Performer (1990: 15).

As Oxford (1990) suggested, indirect strategies are divided into three sets, which are as follows:

2.3.2.1. Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies are related to learners' control of their learning or rather their own cognition. Cohen defined metacognitive strategies as those which "[...] deal with pre-assessment and pre-planning, on-line planning and evaluation, and post-evaluation of language learning activities and of language use events." (2002:68). Another definition of metacognitive strategies is offered by Ellis, who described them as "[...] those involved in planning, monitoring, and evaluating learning."(1997:77). Altogether, this category of strategies refers to learners' planning, organizing, and evaluating of their learning. The role metacognitive strategies play in controlling and regulating learners' language learning results in enhancing learning effectiveness and efficiency. According to Oxford (1990), centring the learner's learning, arraying and planning the learner's learning, and evaluating the learner's learning are the three sets of metacognitive strategies.

2.3.2.2. Affective Strategies

This kind of strategies refers to factors such as emotions, attitudes, motivation and values which have a significant influence on learning. Cohen described affective strategies as those which “[...] serve to regulate emotions, motivation, and attitudes (e.g., strategies for reduction of anxiety and for self-encouragement).”(2002:8). As for Ellis and Sinclair (1989), however, effective strategies are included into metacognitive strategies. Ellis (1997) connected them later on with social ones.

Oxford (1990) emphasised the important role of teachers in creating a positive emotional atmosphere in the classroom, and presented three ways to achieve it, namely lowering the learners’ anxiety, encouraging learners and taking their emotional temperature.

2.3.2.3. Social Strategies

Social strategies are of great importance for learning a language because of the social nature of language. People generally interact with each other and have social relationships between and among themselves. For this reason, they cannot do without this type of strategies. Both of Ellis (1997) and Cohen (2002) presented social strategies in their lists of language learning strategies. Ellis defined social strategies together with affective ones as those “[...] ways in which learners choose to interact with other speakers.” (1997:77) Similarly, Cohen described social strategies as “the actions which learners choose to take in order to interact with other learners and with native speakers.” (2002:3)

According to Oxford (1990), social strategies help learners through asking questions, cooperating with others and empathizing with others. Asking questions generally gives the intention of interest and involvement in any social situation. It helps learners to understand and actively interact in the target language. Cooperation, as one type of social strategies, is

also so important in learning. It helps to increase the learner's self-esteem and confidence, and to enhance their language achievement. This does not mean that competition is harmful for learning, but it brings in some cases some kind of anxiety and fear of failure. Empathy also helps in achieving a smooth communication in that it makes participants socially close to each other. It helps them to be aware of the others' feelings, thoughts, and attitudes and understand them.

2.4. Studies on Language Learning Strategies

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, considerable attention was paid to language learning strategy research. Accordingly, the number of research studies regarding language learning strategies was in rise. According to Wenden and Rubin, the primary concern of most language learning strategies' research had been on "identifying what good language learners report they do to learn a second or foreign language." (1987:19), i.e., what makes some individuals more successful than others when it comes to mastering a given target language. In Rubin's (1975), pioneering study, she focused on identifying strategies that were used by successful learners to make them available for less successful ones so that they could learn more effectively. Based on her findings, she concluded (1975) that 'the good language learner' is a willing and accurate guesser, has a strong persevering drive to communicate, is often uninhibited and willing to make mistakes in order to learn or communicate, focuses on form by looking at patterns, takes advantages of all practice opportunities, monitors his/her own speech as well as that of others, and pays attention to meaning. Therefore, Rubin (1975) suggested that language teachers can help less successful learners to promote their language proficiency by paying more attention to productive language strategies.

After the findings of Rubin (1975), many studies have been conducted regarding the strategies employed by good language learners. O'Malley et al. (1985), for instance, found

that even though students at all levels reported extensive use of a variety of strategies, higher level students reported a greater use of metacognitive strategies. Porte (1988), however, found in his study that under-achieving learners used similar strategies to those used by successful language learners. What made a difference was that the less-proficient learners lacked the sophistication and ability to choose promptly the right strategies for a particular learning task. Gan et al. (2004) found that proficient and less proficient EFL learners differed in six areas: the way they conceptualized learning English, their perceptions of the college English course, what strategies they used to learn and practice the language, self-management, how motivated they were, and their view of English proficiency tests.

Other than the ‘good language learner’ studies, some other studies were concerned with examining variables influencing strategy choice and use. For example, Politzer (1983) pointed out the significant relationship between language learning strategy choice and sex. Politzer studied the learning strategies of 90 university students in the United States, and found that female students used social strategies significantly more than male students. In the same line of thought, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) investigated 1200 university students and showed that female students used four out of five strategies more than male students did. Similarly, Ehrman and Oxford (1989) examined 78 university students and found that female students used four out of ten strategies more than male students did. All these studies concluded that female students, in general, employ a wider range of language learning strategies than male students.

Another interesting factor that affects learners’ language learning strategy choice is motivation which was the focal point of study by Oxford and Nyikos (1989). They reported that “the degree of expressed motivation to learn the language was the most powerful influence on strategy choice [...]. The more motivated students used learning strategies of all

these kinds more often than did the less motivated students.” (1989: 294) In this particular study, Oxford and Nyikos specify neither the type of motivation that affects language learning strategy choice more significantly nor the way motivation affects language learning strategy choice. In Peng’s (2001) study, however, significant differences were found between strategy use and each motivation aspect, namely motivation intensity, extrinsic/ intrinsic motivation and requirement motivation. For instance, requirement motivation, which is related to those situations in which the learner is forced to learn the language, was found to be significantly negatively correlated with strategy use as well as EFL learners’ achievement. In other words, unmotivated learners, who felt the pressure to learn English, used strategies much less frequently and performed more poorly than those who were not motivated.

A different type of studies was concerned with strategy training. Wenden’s (1986) study, for example, focused on training the learners to self-assess their oral performance. Wenden concluded that students who attended the training, “[...] enjoyed the activities and felt a sense of achievement when they perceived progress had been made.” (1986:163). Another study which focused on language learning strategy training was conducted by O’Malley (1987). In this study, there were seventy-five subjects of mixed nationalities. They were divided into three groups: two treatment groups and one control group. The first treatment group directly received training in metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies. The second treatment group was trained in only the same cognitive strategies, i. e., grouping and imagery as the first treatment group. The control group received no strategy training, but the subjects were asked to learn the words according to their own normal ways. The interesting finding was that learners, especially the Asian learners in the treatment groups, had difficulty to implement the vocabulary strategies as they maintained the traditional ways of learning vocabulary and neglected to use the strategies taught.

The two other studies about learning strategy training were conducted by Dadour and Robbins (1996) in Egypt and Japan. The purpose of both studies was to investigate the effectiveness of strategy instruction on developing the EFL university students' speaking ability. The duration of training was three months. The subjects, from both Egyptian and Japanese universities, were introduced to the concept 'learning strategy' and its use. The teachers reduced their role and encouraged the subjects to be responsible for selecting and using the strategies employed independently. The subjects had an opportunity to practise the strategies taught, and they were asked to evaluate the efficiency of strategies employed. The second study was to discover the feasibility of language strategy instruction in Japan. Both studies revealed positive results. They showed that most subjects understood the reasons for using learning strategies, and realised the usefulness of strategic planning.

It is worth mentioning that research on language learning strategies claimed that these strategies can be considered as helpful factors which positively influence the language learning process. That is, the use of those various different strategies pave the way towards greater language proficiency, learner autonomy, and self- regulation (Hsiao and Oxford, 2002).

2.5. Definition of Communication Strategies

While there is no complete agreement on the definition of CSs, there is a general agreement that the key function of CSs is to cope with communication difficulties or breakdowns. A literature review on communication strategy revealed that the definition of communicative strategy has been marked by a division between those who adopted an interactional approach of CSs which focused on strategy use from the social interactional perspective, and those who looked at CSs from a psycholinguistic perspective which focused

on the psychological dimension of what is going on in the speaker's mind when he/she uses a given communicative strategy (Faerch and Kasper, 1983).

On the basis of the interactional perspective, Tarone defined CSs as “a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared.”(1980: 419) According to Tarone (ibid.), negotiation of meaning is a joint attempt between the interlocutors who are responsible for their communication success which can be achieved by using CSs. According to Tarone (1980), Canale (1983), and other researchers who supported the interactional view, CSs are viewed not only as problem-solving devices to compensate for communication breakdowns, but also as devices with pragmatic discourse functions for negotiation of meaning, message enhancement, and communication effectiveness (Nakatani and Goh, 2007).

On the basis of the psycholinguistic perspective of CSs, Faerch and Kasper (1983) defined CSs in terms of the individual's response to a problem rather than as a joint response by two people. In Faerch and Kasper's words, CSs are “potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal.”(1983:36) Within this view, Faerch and Kasper emphasized both problematicity and consciousness as two main primary defining hallmarks of CSs.

In fact, most researchers of the psycholinguistic orientation have narrowed the description of CSs to only lexical-compensatory strategies. As for Poulisse et al., for example, CSs are those “which are adopted by language users in the creation of alternative means of expression when linguistic shortcomings make it possible for them to communicate their intended meanings in the preferred manner.” (1990:192-193) Therefore, the psycholinguistic view of CSs has been associated mainly with strategies for overcoming limitations in lexical knowledge.

2. 6. Taxonomy of Communication Strategies

In fact, there is no consensus among researchers over a specific or fixed taxonomy of CSs. There were various taxonomies as the one of Tarone (1977), Faerch and Kasper (1983), and Dornyei (1995) which show many similarities. Bialystok expressed this basic idea when she remarked that:

[...] the variety of taxonomies proposed in the literature differ primarily in terminology and overall categorizing principle rather than in the substance of the specific strategies. If we ignore, then, differences in the structure of taxonomies by abolishing the various overall categories, then a core group of specific strategies that appear consistently across the taxonomies clearly emerges[.....]Differences in the definitions and illustrations for these core strategies across the various studies are trivial. (1990:61)

She specifically pointed out that Tarone's typology best captures a core group of CSs appearing consistently across the other taxonomies (ibid.).

Tarone (1977) was the first to provide a definition along with a typology of CSs. In fact, her typology has been considered as one of the most influential since then (Dornyei and Scott, 1997). The following figure, as adapted from Tarone, summarizes it:

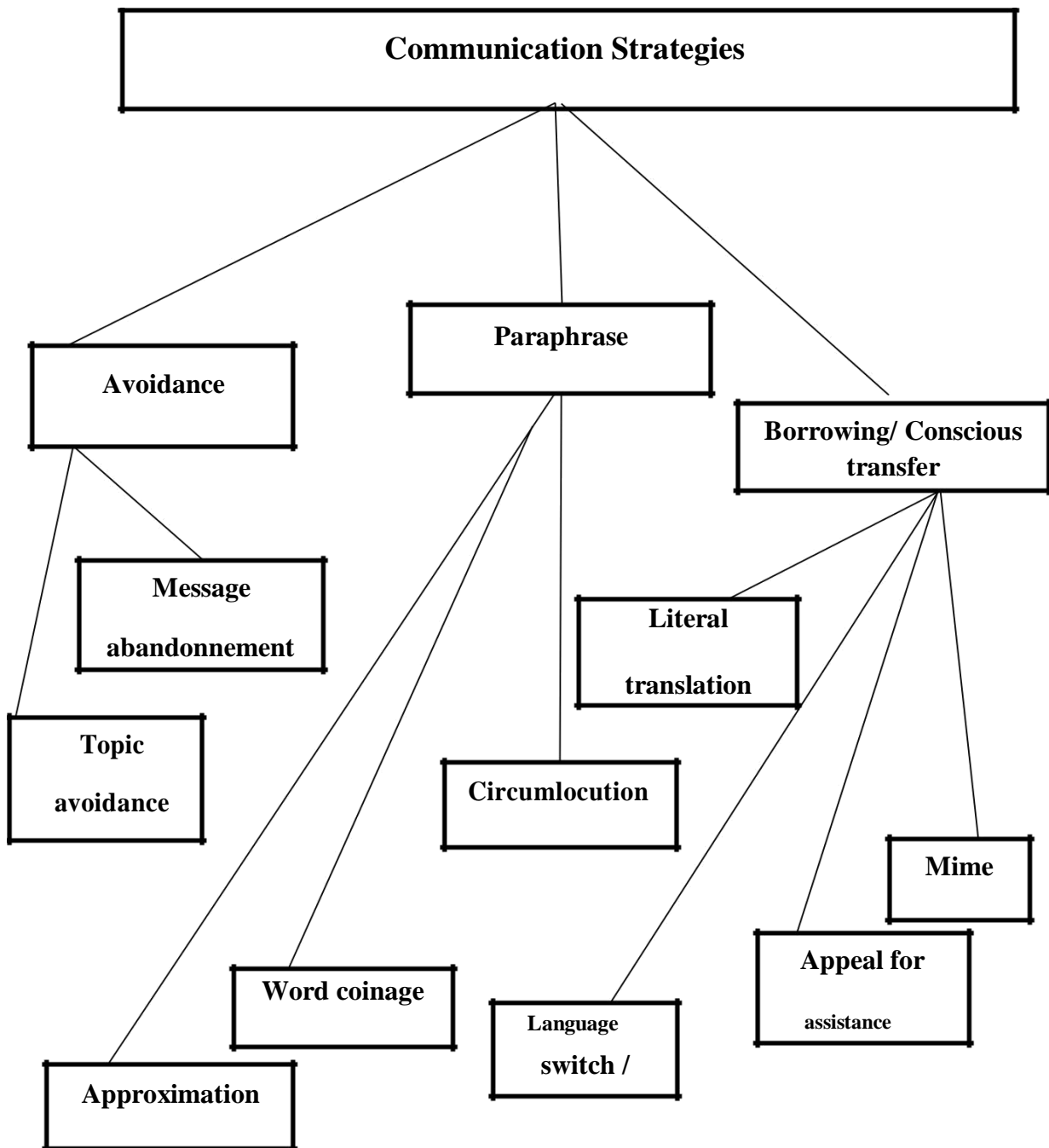


Figure 2.1: Tarone's Taxonomy of Communication Strategies (1980: 62- 63)

With paraphrase, the learner uses these strategies to compensate for an L2 word that is not known by three subcategories: approximation, word coinage and circumlocution. According to Tarone, approximation occurs when the learner uses “a single target language

vocabulary item or structure, which the learner knows is not correct, but which shares enough semantic features in common with the desired item to satisfy the speaker.” Examples are high coverage words such ‘worm’ for ‘silkworm’ and ‘pip’ for ‘waterpipe’, and low coverage words such as ‘labor’ for ‘work’ (1980:429). Word coinage is employed when “the learner makes up a new word in order to communicate a desired concept.”(ibid.) For example, there is ‘air ball’ for ‘balloon’ and ‘person worm’ for ‘caterpillar’. For circumlocution, “the learner describes the characteristics or elements of the object or an action instead of using the appropriate target language structure.” For example, “in describing a water pipe, a subject said: ‘she is uh, Persian, and we use in Turkey a lot of.’” (ibid.) Borrowing involves literal translation and language switch. For literal translation, the learner translates word for word from the native language. For instance, when a Mandarin speaker translates “They toast one another” into his/her first language as “He invites him to drink.”(ibid.) As for language switch, the learner uses the native language term without bothering to translate. For instance, the use of Turkish ‘balon’ for English ‘balloon’, or Turkish ‘tirtil’ for English ‘caterpillar’. In appeal for assistance, the learner asks for the correct term or structure. For instance, when a speaker says ‘What is this?’, ‘What called?’ (ibid.) As for mime strategy, it occurs when the learner uses nonverbal strategies in place of a meaning structure. For example, ‘clapping one’s hands to illustrate applause’. In avoidance strategies, the learner avoids the communication by using topic avoidance or message abandonment. Topic avoidance occurs “when the learner simply does not know” the necessary vocabulary to refer to an object (ibid.). For example, to refer to ‘braces’ as ‘wears a ...pairs of enormous trousers’. Message abandonment, however, occurs “when the learner begins to talk about a concept but is unable to continue due the lack of meaning structure, and stops in mid-utterance.” (ibid.) For example, to say ‘a shirt with...eh...umm...I don’t know’ as an attempt to mention the word ‘tie’.

A different taxonomy was developed by Dornyei (1995) who collected a list and descriptions of the most common and important CSs from previous taxonomies, namely Tarone (1977), Faerch and Kasper (1983), and Bialystok (1990). Dornyei's taxonomy is illustrated as follows:

Avoidance Strategies

- 1- Message abandonment: Leaving a message unfinished because of language difficulties.
- 2- Topic avoidance: Avoiding topic areas or concepts that pose language difficulties.

Compensatory Strategies

- 3- Circumlocution: Describing or exemplifying the target object of action (e.g., the thing you open bottles with for corkscrew).
- 4- Approximation: Using an alternative term which expresses the meaning of the target lexical item as closely as possible (e.g., ship for sailboat).
- 5- Use of all-purpose words: Extending a general, empty lexical item to contexts where specific words are lacking (e.g., the overuse of thing, stuff, what-do-you call-it).
- 6- Word coinage: creating a nonexisting L2 word based on a supposed rule (e.g., vegetarianist for vegetarian).
- 7- Prefabricated patterns: Using memorized stock phrases, usually for "survival" purposes (e.g., Where is the...., or Comment allez vous? Where the morphological components are not known to the learner).
- 8- Nonlinguistic signals: Mime, gesture, facial expression, or sound imitation.
- 9- Literal translation: Translating literally a lexical item, idiom, compound word, or a structure from L1 to L2.

- 10- Foreignizing: Using a L1 word by adjusting it to phonology (i.e., with a L2 pronunciation) and/or morphology (e.g., adding to it a L2 suffix).
- 11- Code switching: Using a L1 word while speaking in L2.
- 12- Appeal for help: Asking for aid from the interlocutor either directly (e.g., what do you call...?) or indirectly (e.g., rising intonation, pause, eye contact, puzzled expression).
- 13- Stalling or time-gaining strategies: Using fillers or hesitation devices to fill pauses and to gain time to think (e.g., well, now, let's see, uh, as a matter of fact). (Cited in Brown, 2000:128)

From the above taxonomies, it is obvious that there are a group of similarities between Dornyei's and Tarone's taxonomies of CSs. They both present seven types in common, which include message abandonment, topic avoidance, circumlocution, approximation word coinage, literal translation and appealing for help. However, it should be noted that Dornyei's taxonomy (1995) provided the inclusion of stalling or time-gaining strategies to the existing taxonomies in the field. These strategies are not employed to compensate for vocabulary deficiency, but rather to help learners to gain more time to think and maintain their conversations with their interlocutors.

2.7. Importance of Communication Strategies in Second/ Foreign Language Learning

In the course of communication, language learners with imperfect competence always face communication problems. Yet, using language strategically can help learners get over the hurdles they run into when communicating. That is, despite the existence of communicative deficiency, CSs enable learners to communicate successfully. According to many researchers, as Bialystok (1983) and Brown (1987), CSs are communicative tools which have a good probability of ensuring the enhancement of a smooth communication.

CSs being consciously used devices help the speaker to be aware of the specific nature of the encountered communication problem. This enables the speaker to approach it intelligently and finally to achieve his/her communicative goal(s). This act can be categorized under strategic language behaviour. For example, if a learner does not know the exact word or expression in the target language, and wants to use it in the conversation, he/she may simply use descriptions as a way of creating the same meaning of that word or expression. So the listener can understand or guess, at least. For instance, a 'table for doing the ironing' can be a useful description for the term 'ironing board'. The same thing for what is called 'shoe rack' that may be simply, but suitably, described as 'the place where you keep shoes'. The learner may also use other ways of communicating and sharing understanding within the same context, and may resort to mime or revert to other techniques. In case s/he cannot access the requisite linguistic structure or achieve the required sociolinguistic rule that is not shared between those second/foreign language learners and the speakers of target language, the learner uses CSs to steer the conversation away from problematical imminent spots. s/he uses language strategically and intelligently and keeps the communication channel open.

According to those researchers who believed that CSs are compensatory in nature, such as Poulisse et al. (1990) and Kasper and Kallerman (1997), they are considered as communicative devices that help learners to overcome their communication problems pertaining to their deficiencies in grammar and/or vocabulary. Actually, CSs are of prime importance in communication be it written or spoken. They enable learners to be genuinely strategic while attempting to speak a second/foreign language, and allow them to interact cleverly despite their knowledge limitations.

The question, in fact, is not about the presumed importance of CSs for assuring a successful communication. It is, however, about their significance in language learning. That

is, in spite of the importance of CSs, some researchers do not deem them as learning strategies, or even include them under one set of learning strategies.

Brown (1980), for instance, drew a clear distinction between language learning strategies and CSs, on the grounds that “communication is the output modality and learning is the input modality.” (87) He supported his view by claiming that topic avoidance or message abandonment, which are included under the rubric of CSs, do not result in learning. This is, for him, a relatively legitimate reason for not considering them as learning strategies per se.

Wenden and Rubin (1987) classified them as less directly related to language learning on the grounds that CSs have the role of communicating and negotiating meaning in conversations, and not the role of learning.

Ellis (1986) is another scholar in full favour of the claim that CSs are intended only for language use and should not be regarded as learning strategies. He added later that the effective use of CSs may hinge upon the already labour-intensive act of learning. Ellis (1986) believed that compensation for lexical problems in communication or for linguistic knowledge, in general, might lead second/foreign language learners to forget or, even more damagingly, trivialize the ultimate need for learning at all.

Others, on the other hand, included CSs within the lists of language learning strategies. Tarone (1980), for example, purported that CSs can have a big role to play in expanding the language of learners. The fact that they use language in their interaction, disregarding their grammatical or lexical limitations, gives them the opportunity to experience this particular language, or rather put them under its exposure. This opportunity creates, in turn, chances to learn new words, rules or both together.

Oxford (1990) was also amongst the scholars who entertained the idea that CSs can conceivably be a learning asset rather than a learning hurdle. She classified them under direct learning strategies, as compensatory strategies narrowly speaking, which help second/foreign language learners to compensate skilfully for the lack they have in speaking and writing. In addition, Mariani (2010) embraced a similar point of view in regarding CSs as indirect learning strategies that help learners to widen their knowledge through communicating effectively. That is, even indirectly, CSs help to realize a successful language production, to enlarge the learners' input and improve their learning.

In the following lines, Mariani summarized the different important roles that CSs play in language learning:

First, CSs help learners to remain in conversation, and so provide them with more input, more opportunities for checking and validating their hypotheses, and therefore more chances to develop their interlanguage systems;

Second, CSs may lead to more successful performance: this case can have a positive impact on learning since the content of successful performance gets stored more easily in memory;

Third, by allowing learners to remain in conversation, CSs help them, on the other side, to get some useful feedback on their own performance, and on the receptive side, to exercise some kind of control over their intake, for example, by enabling them to prompt their interlocutor to modify his or her utterances. In other words, strategic competence promotes learners' self-monitoring function or executive control;

Forth, CSs train learners in the flexibility they need to cope with the unexpected and the unpredictable. At the same time, they help learners to get used to non-exact communication, which is perhaps the real nature of all communication. In this way, they help to bridge the gap

between the classroom and the outside reality, between formal and informal learning;

Fifth, since CSs encourage risk-taking and individual initiative, they can also give learners the feeling that they can in some way increase their control over language use, play an active role, make choices and become more responsible for what they say and how they say it – and this is certainly a step towards linguistic and cognitive autonomy;

Finally, CSs can also serve as learning strategies (and at least partially overlap with the latter), since it is often difficult to draw the line between a situation when a learner uses a strategy to solve a particular communication problem and a situation when she/he uses the same strategy as a learning aid. Taxonomies of learning strategies usually include several examples of what we have called “communication strategies”, particularly asking for help and cooperation (often considered as “socio- affective strategies”, as well as “compensation strategies” like approximation, circumlocution, mime, gesture, topic avoidance, and others. (2010: 43- 44)

As Tarone proposed, “the relationship of learning strategies to communication strategies is somewhat problematic.” (1981:290) Since the main factor which enables somebody to consider a given strategy as learning strategy is that the basic desire is not to communicate, but rather as a learning promotion too. However, it is not always all too easy to locate the real intention of the speaker/learner behind his/her use of a given strategy. For example, if a second/foreign language learner wants to use a specific word in a conversation that he/she cannot really capture at that moment for a given reason, and asks some of the present participants to tell him/her the word. In this case, one cannot, by any means, determine the speaker’s intention. Does s/he use the strategy of asking to keep the communication open and assure its success, or does s/he launch the inquiry for the very sake of learning a new word and for developing his/her vocabulary?

The answer may be the first, to keep the communication open and assure its success, or the second, to learn a new word and develop his/her vocabulary, and may be both. In other words, the learner may have a dual motivation to both learn and communicate. Actually, it is impossible to determine what motivates the learner. It is also virtually impossible to capture the nature of the strategy used simply because the learner may easily learn while communicating. S/he may learn when the main motivation is to communicate.

Accordingly, CSs can be also be considered as leaning strategies, or can be regarded as one type of learning strategies. CSs can add new lexical items, linguistic structures and even social behaviours and sociocultural rules to the learner's competence. Accordingly, they enable the learner to experience new things and learn them. This is what Al-Kattan (2003) and Lessard-Clouston (1997) claimed too.

2.8. Empirical Studies on Communication Strategies

In the 1980s, a large number of empirical studies were conducted in the field of CSs. Some of the concerns of these studies were related to possible factors that might affect the use of CSs, and the 'teachability' of CSs.

2.8.1. Factors Affecting the Choice of Communication Strategies

In fact, the choice of communication strategy is of utmost importance. For this reason, several studies have been conducted to look at potential factors affecting the selection of CSs, such as learners' target language proficiency, gender differences, learners' personality, context of communication, and others.

2.8.1.1. Target Language Proficiency and Communication Strategies Selection

Target language proficiency is one of the researched variables that affect CSs. It has been suggested that the learners' choice of CSs and their level of target language proficiency may be related (Tarone, 1977; Corder, 1983). In 1985, Paribakht studied the nature of the relationship between learners' proficiency level in the target language and their choices of CSs. The learners were divided into three groups; two groups of Persian ESL learners at intermediate and advanced levels of target language development, and a group of native speakers as the comparison group. The participants were asked to express twenty single lexical items of concrete and abstract concepts to native speakers. The results showed that there was no significant difference between intermediate and advanced learners in the choice and frequency of CSs. In addition, mime was employed less frequently by the learners.

The effect of learners' target proficiency on CSs use was also the concern of Chen's study (1990). According to their English proficiency, the subjects were divided into two groups. All of them were required to perform a concept-identification task in an interview with a native speaker. The results indicated that while high proficient learners employed significantly greater CSs, and linguistic-based CSs in particular (e.g., approximation, circumlocution), the knowledge-based CSs (e.g., exemplification, comparison) were used more frequently by low proficient learners.

In a more recent study, Wannaruk (2003) argued that learners of different proficiency levels used different communication strategies. The subjects were divided into high, middle and low groups according to their oral proficiency levels. The results indicated that learners with low level of oral proficiency used more avoidance strategies, paralinguistic CSs, and L1 - based CSs while those with high and middle levels of oral proficiency employed more L2- based CSs.

2.8. 1. 2. Gender Differences and Communication Strategies Selection

Gender as one of the important variables involved in the communication strategy research was the focus of many studies which indicated that the CSs used by learners of different genders vary in both type and frequency.

In 1997, Kocoglu studied the relationship between the hearers' gender and the use of CSs by the speaker. In this study, Kocoglu attempted to discover the similarities between male and female Turkish EFL learners in the use of CSs. In the investigation, he paired ten Turkish learners with ten English native speakers to form English conversations, based on the usage of communication strategies. The conclusion of this study was that "All Turkish EFL students used more communicative strategies with female rather than male native speakers of English because the former were more cooperative and more encouraging in conversation than the latter." (1997:11)

Similar to Kocoglu's study, Hou's study (1998) investigated the relationship between gender and the use of CSs. The results revealed that female EFL learners tended to use more appeal for assistance strategies than the male EFL learners in both interaction and narrative tasks.

A different study was conducted by Margolis (2001). Margolis' findings showed that "female students had a tendency to guess incorrectly more than males, which may mean that they have a tendency to guess more than males." (2001:171) In fact, female and male learners were found in many other studies as significantly different in the use of CSs. The reason that may lie behind this is that females hold more positive attitudes and stronger motivation towards language learning, and tend to achieve better marks (Catalan, 2003; Wang 2008).

2.8.1.3. Learners' Personality and Communication Strategies Selection

Research on CSs has proved that the selection of CSs varies from one learner to another depending on their personality. As Corder explained,

There is some evidence that there is a personality factor involved [in the manipulation of communicative strategies]. Different learners will typically resort to their favourite strategies, some are determined risk takers, others value social factors of interaction above the communication of ideas; just how hard one tries will vary with personality. (1983:19)

That is, the learner's personality plays a salient role in communication. This is, in fact, similar to what was proposed in Tarone' study (1977) in which she noticed that there were differences in learners' methods of telling a story. Accordingly, she suggested that learner's personality characteristics may be closely related to CSs preferences (ibid.).

Another study conducted by Lin and Li (2009) indicated that English learners of different personality traits were significantly different in using some CSs. The extroverted learners used more cooperative strategies and imitation strategies; in contrast, the introverted ones employed more reduction strategies. Lin and Li (2009) explained these differences by stressing the fact that the extroverted learners were more sociable and eager to communicate. The introverted learners, however, were too shy and conservative to ask for help. They employed some reduction strategies, simplification strategies or avoidance instead of using some expressions about which they were not sure (ibid.).

2.8.1.4. Context of Communication and Communication Strategies Selection

According to Ellis (1985), the context in which learners receive language determines the types of CSs to be used. For instance, "learners may use fewer CSs in a classroom

environment than in a natural environment particularly if the pedagogic focus is on correct L2 use, rather than on fluent communication” (Ellis, 1985: 186). Thus, the employment of CSs is strongly related to the situation of use. This similar idea was, actually, proposed by Bialystok and Frohlich’s study (1980) in which they concluded that the communication strategy choice was highly contextual.

In a more recent study, Lafford (2004) examined the effect of the context of learning on the use of CSs by comparing two groups of learners: at home (AT) group and studying abroad (SA) group. The results indicated that SA group used consistently fewer CSs and tended to care less to form than the AT group. Moreover, the reliance on CSs use was significantly reduced over time by both groups.

2.8.2. Communication Strategies Instruction

Dornyei (1995) carried out a strategy training course for 109 Hungarian learners of English and assessed the effects of the treatment using a pre-test and post-test. Three CSs, which were topic avoidance and replacement, circumlocution, and fillers and hesitation devices, were taught for six weeks. The learners were divided into a treatment group and two types of control group. The subjects in the first group received no treatment but followed their regular EFL curriculum; subjects in the second group were given conversational training without any specific strategic focus. The findings showed that the subjects in the treatment group made a significant improvement in both quality and quantity of circumlocutions and the frequency of fillers and circumlocutions. Furthermore, it was noticed that the learners had positive attitudes towards the strategy training. It is worth mentioning that Dornyei’s study (1995) provides some evidence that strategic competence may be teachable and strategy training may improve both qualitative and quantitative use of taught CSs. The study also provides insights into the value of CSs training, particularly in awareness-raising of CSs use.

Wang's study (2002) focused on the teaching of three CSs to 109 Chinese undergraduate students of English in classrooms. The research findings showed that some CSs were used more frequently than before after the one-term strategy instruction. In addition, it was noticed that CSs contributed to the development of oral fluency to some extent. Besides, 75 per cent of the students took favourable attitudes toward communication strategy training.

In 2004, Wen investigated the effects of CSs training on six Chinese learners of English at university level. Three specific CSs, namely: approximation, circumlocution and word coinage were examined. The results suggested some potential benefits in the direct teaching of some categories of CSs. The researcher concluded that it was possible to help learners develop both the quantity and quality of some CSs use and to avoid communication breakdowns through this training.

More recently, Nakatani (2005) examined the effects of awareness-raising training on oral communication strategy use of 62 Japanese learners of English at a private school in Japan. There were two groups of learners: the strategy training group and the control group. The strategy training group received metacognitive training for 12 weeks and was taught CSs such as asking for clarification, checking for comprehension and paraphrasing. The control group received only the normal communicative course, with no explicit focus on oral CSs. The findings revealed that participants in the strategy training group improved their oral proficiency test scores while improvements in the control group were not significant. The researcher concluded that the participants' success was partly due to an increase of general awareness of oral CSs and of the use of specific oral CSs.

Additionally, Le (2006) conducted a study to examine the effects of teaching CSs to Vietnamese learners of English. The two groups which participated in this study were taught

four CSs, which were approximation, circumlocution, all-purpose words, and fillers. The results showed that both groups were able to use CSs they had been taught. She (Le) concluded that fostering CSs in language learners might help improve their strategic competence and might enhance their fluency in language use.

The findings from the reviewed studies reported the possibility and advantages of teaching CSs to develop learners' strategic competence and oral skills. That is, CSs training have positive effects on helping students to overcome communication barriers, enhancing their efficiency of their spoken communication ability.

Conclusion

As a conclusion to this chapter, one can say that struggling for second/foreign language learning success necessitates the use of language learning strategies and CSs as specific and effective strategies. The introduction of these strategies into classes would potentially help second/foreign learners to handle the process of second/foreign language leaning. It would empower them to cater for the multifaceted demands language usage is fraught with and, therefore, to be more efficient and effective in learning. Each strategy has its values and significance for language learning. That is why, it is immensely important for second/foreign learners to be conscious of the rewards each one holds. It is also vital to bring real-life situations, which require a good deal of strategy use, to class. Responding positively to learning opportunities and exploiting learning environments need the use of language learning and communication strategies. This, in turn, requires the knowledge of some other important aspects such as communication principles and pragmatic conventions. It is the role of the upcoming chapter to shed light on these matters and a diversity of other related ones.

Chapter Three

Pragmatics in Language Teaching

Introduction

The present chapter attempts to shed light on some definitions of pragmatics and some other pragmatic issues that are tightly linked to second/foreign language learning and teaching. It provides an overview on research on pragmatics in learning and teaching English as a Second Language and English as a Foreign Language (English Second language/English Foreign Language). The chapter also deals with interlanguage pragmatics, intercultural pragmatics and sociopragmatics as three quintessential pragmatic concepts. This point is followed by an overview of speech act theory and politeness theory as two cornerstones of pragmatic research. The chapter concludes with a detailed account of pragmatic failure which is regarded as one of the basic factors that can impede successful communication, and pragmatic competence which is of prime importance for such communication.

3.1. Pragmatics: Definition and Scope

As meaning is not inherited in words, second/foreign language learners are no longer concerned with only what literal words may convey. That is to say, the focus should be put not only on what words may convey, but also on other different shades of meaning, such as “speaker meaning” and “contextual meaning” (Yule,1996:3), or what Thomas called “meaning in use”, and “meaning in context” (1995:1). This is, in effect, what pragmatics is concerned with (Leech, 1983).

Pragmatics is considered as a subfield of linguistics developed in the late 1970s and has been defined in various ways and from different perspectives. Levinson, as one of the prominent pioneers of the pragmatics’ domain, has defined pragmatics as “the study of

language usage.”(1983: 5) In fact, such a definition of pragmatics is too limited in scope and does not account for context-dependent aspects of verbal communication. Levinson further observed pragmatics to involve “those principles that account for why a certain set of sentences are anomalous or not possible utterances.” (1983: 5) Obviously, this view accounts for pragmatics as a concept of grammar. In other words, Levinson’s conception of pragmatics is said to reveal the aspect of language use that has grammatical connotation, thereby neglecting aspects of the relationships between language, the user and context. Levinson proposed another definition of pragmatics when he described it as “the study of the ability of language users to pair sentences with the contexts in which they would be appropriate.”(1983:24) In fact, this definition draws attention to the notion of appropriateness of meaning in context which is central to pragmatics.

According to Crystal (1985), however, the emphasis was on the social interactional domain of pragmatics. He defined it as “the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication.”(1985: 240) Crystal’s definition clearly accommodates the social context of discourse, and focuses on the user and the intended meaning within a social context. Pragmatics, therefore, can be seen as the study of the relationship between language context, its users, and the resulting grammatical forms.

The aforementioned definition proposed by Crystal (1985) has been explained in detail by LoCastro, who provided the following distinguishing features of pragmatics:

Meaning is created in interaction with speakers and hearers. Context includes both linguistic (co-text) and non-linguistic aspects. Choices made by the users of language are an important concern. Constraints

in using language in social action are significant. The effects of choices on coparticipants are analysed. (2003: 29)

Actually, these characteristics clearly show all the aspects that are involved in pragmatics. Moreover, apart from language users and context, interaction also plays a very important role when dealing with pragmatics since the process of communication does not only focus on the speakers' intentions, but also on the effects those intentions have on the hearers.

As for Barton, pragmatics is considered as "the meaning that consists of interpretation within context."(1990:6). This definition clearly shows that meaning is regarded as another significant element that is related to pragmatic analysis. This strengthens Leech's view of pragmatics as "the study of meaning in relation to situations."(1983:6) In accordance with this view, Thomas considered pragmatics as "meaning in interaction."(1995:22) In the same line of thought, LoCastro (2003) advocated that pragmatics is related to meaning in interaction instead of analysis of forms that only deal with levels of sentence meaning.

Based on Thomas's and LoCastro's definitions, it can be said that pragmatics depends on the interaction among the users of the language as language in communication involves not only speaker's performance, but also hearer's perception and interpretation of speaker's utterance.

In an attempt to capture the scope of pragmatics, Yule provided a more comprehensible definition of pragmatics. He described it as "the study of the relationship between linguistic forms and the users of those forms."(1996:4) Yule mentioned that pragmatics examines the intentional human action and the linguistic choices speakers make in accordance with who they are talking to, when, where, and under what circumstances.

Pragmatics, then, is the study which analyses language use in context. It is more about the communicative intent or the speaker's meaning rather than the utterance meaning.

As shown above, all definitions have been proposed in different manners and various ways, but still hold the same specific essence of pragmatics, namely the study of language use and its appropriateness. For English native speakers, this appropriateness is regarded as something more natural than it is for foreign language learners who have to practice it and reflect on their language choices.

3.2. Features of Pragmatics

As has been mentioned above, pragmatics is characterized by the following key elements: language user, context, meaning and social interaction. Each of these features plays a crucial role in the pragmatic analysis of speech.

3.2.1. Language User

The notion of 'the user of language' was originally derived from Morris's (1938) trichotomy of syntax, semantics and pragmatics. In the words of Carnap, "[W]e distinguish three fields of investigation. [...] If in an investigation explicit reference is made to the speaker, or, to put it in more general terms, to the user of a language, then we assign it to the field of pragmatics." (1942:9) Accordingly, pragmatics as a study focuses on the language performance of humans (Mey, 2001).

Practicing pragmatic abilities in a classroom requires student-centred interaction (Belz, 2002). In other words, second/foreign language learners are not only required to acquire a new set of grammatical, lexical, and phonological forms of the target language, but also need to participate in the social and cultural life of that language (Pavlenko and Lantolf, 2000). The language used inside the second/foreign language classroom may be different from that

which is used in real-life situations. For this reason, second/foreign language learners are required to experience authentic language in order to be active language users in negotiating meaning.

3.2.2. Context

According to Mey, context is “the quintessential pragmatic concept” (2001:14). It is often identified as one of the key elements needed to interpret the appropriate meaning of words (Yule, 1996). In general terms, context can be said to be the information on circumstances of a communicative event that helps participants to fully understand it. In Werth’s words, “The context of a piece of language [...] is its surrounding environment. But this can include as little as the articulatory movements immediately before and after it, or as much as the whole universe, with its past and future.” (1999:78-79) Context, in this definition, is used in its broadest sense since everything around a particular word can potentially affect its meaning.

It should be noted that context is not static. Rather, it is dynamic because it constantly changes and develops within the continuous interaction between people. To a great extent, context is created by communicators through a dynamic process of communication, and keeps changing and expanding within that process as the communicators’ mutual knowledge expands. Just as Mey put it: “Context is a dynamic, not static concept: it is to be understood as the continually changing surroundings, in the widest sense, that enable the participants in the communication process to interact, and in which the linguistic expressions of their interaction become intelligible.” (2001:39) Words may often have a range of meanings. Yet, when the speaker uses a particular word, s/he has in mind a specific meaning of that given word in the context surrounding it (Seleskovitch, 1976). Thus, context can provide language users with

true pragmatic meanings, and can effectively help communicators to understand language as it is used, or rather, as it meant (Mey, 2001).

3.2.3. Meaning

In general terms, meaning is the product which may develop out of the combinations of different language elements. However, meaning in pragmatics is related to the understanding of utterances within a given context a speaker or a language user has (Leech, 1983). Accordingly, one can argue that communication is successful not when the hearer recognizes the linguistic meaning of the utterance, but when s/he infers the speaker's meaning from it within a given context.

According to Thomas:

[...] meaning is not something which is not inherent in the words alone, nor is it produced by the speaker alone, nor by the hearer alone. Making meaning is a dynamic process, involving the negotiation of meaning between the speaker and hearer, the context of utterance (physical, social and linguistic) and the meaning potential of an utterance. (1995:22)

Actually, it is the meaning of the words uttered that provides the primary input. However, what the words mean does not determine what the speaker means. Thus, it is important for language users to distinguish the meaning of linguistic expression- a word, a phrase, or sentence- from what a person means in using it. In other words, language users have to distinguish between what is said which is tightly constrained by linguistic meaning, and what is implicated or meant which is closely related to pragmatic meaning (Grice, 1975).

3.2.4. Social Interaction

In general terms, social interactions are those activities that take place in many different settings. In the words of Francis and Hester, “Social interaction involves any situation in which a person produces an action addressed or directed towards another and/or which invites or makes possible a response from another.”(2004: 3-4) In other words, any social interaction can be considered as a communicative exchange between two or more persons who utilize language to both act and react within the situation in which they are. These specific interactions are generally said to be intrinsically socially structured. That is to say, the actions of participants are ‘tied’ together in intelligible and appropriate ways.

What makes these activities ‘social’ is that they are done with or in relation to others. That is to say, they occur between individuals (Francis and Hester, 2004). Accordingly, social interaction can be defined as a product of individuals and the choices they make, in communication, by using a given language which is considered social in nature (Vygotsky, 1978). This language is affected by the social factors, norms and conventions that shape the individuals’ behaviours and communicative interactions (Francis and Hester, 2004).

Pragmatically speaking, social interactions can refer to either spoken communication involving at least two people or all kinds of written and mixed forms of communication (Kasper and Rose, 2002). Accordingly, it can be said that a socially competent language user is aware of different kinds of social interactions that can take place in real-life situations, and who is able to utilize language appropriately and effectively within each kind (Weirzbicka, 2010).

3.3. Pragmatics in Teaching and Learning English as a Second Language/Foreign Language

Research on pragmatics in teaching and learning ESL/EFL has focused on different pragmatic issues that have a relation with the learners' pragmatic awareness, the effectiveness of instruction in pragmatics, and other different concerns. In the following, the researcher will present an overview of past studies of pragmatics in teaching and learning ESL/EFL that had different important results and conclusions.

3.3.1. Studies on Learners' Pragmatic Awareness

According to Alcon-Soler and Safont-Jorda, pragmatic awareness is defined as a "conscious, reflective, explicit knowledge about pragmatics", that is, "knowledge of those rules and conventions underlying appropriate language use in particular communication situations and on the part of the members of a specific speech community." (2008:193). In fact, it plays a crucial role in second/foreign language acquisition (Schmidt, 1990; Takahashi, 2001).

One of the studies that examine second/foreign learners' pragmatic awareness is Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei's (1998) one. The latter showed ESL/EFL learners' different perceptions of pragmatic and grammatical errors, depending on their learning environment. Participants were asked to watch a video comprising 20 scenarios, some of which contained either grammatical or pragmatic errors. Participants were then required to evaluate the severity of the perceived linguistic/pragmatic problems for each error. The results showed that the ESL learners were able to recognize a considerably higher number of pragmatic errors than grammatical ones, whereas the EFL learners were more aware of grammatical violations than of pragmatic ones. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concluded that there was a difference in perceptions across the two leaning environments: ESL learners

considered the pragmatic infelicities to be more serious, whereas EFL learners perceived the grammatical errors to be more salient.

Unlike the previous study, Niezgodá and Rover's study (2001) revealed that EFL learners had more pragmatic awareness than the ESL learners. Their study showed that EFL learners recognized a higher number of pragmatic infelicities than the ESL learners. Moreover, Niezgodá and Rover's data showed that the EFL learners perceived pragmatic infelicities to be more serious than the ESL learners.

In a more recent study, Bardovi-Harlig and Griffin (2005) examined the effectiveness of a pragmatic awareness activity in an ESL classroom. In this study, the ESL learners were asked to recognize pragmatic inappropriateness in interactions between two students in 20 video-taped scenarios, and to correct improprieties. The results revealed that the learners were able to identify pragmatic inappropriateness and supplied new utterances to solve the problems. Furthermore, it was found that high-intermediate or low-advanced ESL learners had a certain degree of pragmatic awareness about the L2 even without specific instruction. Based on the findings of this study, Bardovi-Harlig and Griffin (2005) suggested that classroom activities could provide necessary information and choices to raise L2 learners' pragmatic awareness which could help them become proficient users of the target language.

3.3.2. Studies on Instruction in Pragmatics

Empirical evidence showed that instruction in pragmatics has a positive effect on the development of pragmatic competence. It is argued that second/foreign language learners who do not receive instruction in pragmatics differ significantly from native speakers in their pragmatic production and comprehension in the target language. This fact, in turn, suggests that instruction in pragmatics could facilitate second/foreign language acquisition (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001). In the same line of thought, Rose argued that "[...] pedagogical intervention

has at least an important facilitative role, which is especially good news for learners in foreign language contexts.”(2005:13)

Actually, many studies have been conducted to investigate the effectiveness of implicit and explicit pragmatic pedagogical intervention. The distinction between explicit and implicit teaching has been addressed by Doughty (2003). According to her, explicit teaching involves directing learners’ attention towards the target forms with the aim of discussing those forms. In contrast, implicit teaching aims to attract the learners’ attention while avoiding any type of metalinguistic explanation and minimizing the interruption of the communicative situation.

In relation to the effect of these two different pedagogical approaches, some studies suggested that learners who received explicit instruction outperformed learners who received implicit instruction. In their study, House and Kasper (1981), designed two versions of the same communicative course; explicit and implicit one, which were taught to German university learners of EFL. Unlike the implicit version, the explicit one provided learners with metapragmatic information about the target structures. The results indicated that learners in the explicit group were more pragmatically fluent. Similar findings were proposed in House’s study (1996) in which explicit instruction proved to be more useful than implicit instruction.

Explicit and implicit instruction have also been investigated in Alcon-Soler’s study (2005) to identify the extent to which these two instructional paradigms influenced learners’ knowledge and ability to use request strategies as a communicative tool. The participants of this study were randomly assigned to three groups, explicit group with direct consciousness-raising task activities, implicit group with implicit consciousness-raising task activities, and a control group. The results revealed that in contrast to the control group, learners in the explicit and implicit groups appeared to have mastered symbolic representations of requesting. They were aware of the appropriate selection of linguistic forms according to social and contextual

factors. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher suggested that explicit instruction was more beneficial for learners' production of requests than implicit instruction. The researcher concluded that instruction in second/foreign language learning had a positive effect on the whole learning process, particularly on the development of learners' pragmatic competence in request speech acts. In the same line of thought, Martinez-Flor and Alcon-Soler (2007) examined the effectiveness of explicit and implicit instruction in developing EFL learners' pragmatic awareness of suggestions. The study employed a rating assessment test which included a pre-test and a post-test to rate the effects of instruction on students' awareness of suggestions. The results revealed that both explicit and implicit instruction proved to be effective in developing learners' pragmatic awareness of appropriate suggestions in particular situations. The researchers, in this study, concluded that both explicit and implicit instructional approaches were of prime importance in developing of language learners' pragmatic awareness in the EFL classroom.

The aforementioned studies and other similar ones, as the one conducted by Savignon and Wang (2003) and Rose and Kwai-fun (2001), highlighted the importance of instruction in pragmatics in the ESL/EFL learning environment. They suggested that appropriate and adequate instruction in pragmatics could help ESL/EFL learners to possess sufficient pragmatic knowledge and become pragmatically competent in communication. Otherwise, pragmatic failure may arise, which may lead to communicative failure.

3.3.3. Studies on Pragmatic Failure and Speech Acts

Pragmatic failure is a problematic issue since it tends to cause misunderstanding between native speakers and second/foreign language learners. The communicative difficulties encountered by ESL/EFL learners in interacting with English native speakers are generally due to pragmatic failure. Pragmatic failure may often result in more serious

communicative misunderstandings than grammatical errors, since pragmatic errors may be considered offensive by native speakers instead of simply being regarded as language errors (Thomas, 1983).

Some studies provided insights into understanding the most important errors that may cause pragmatic failures. For instance, Zheng and Huang (2010) investigated pragmatic failures that Chinese English students tended to commit in cross-cultural communication. The results of this study revealed that cultural differences between China and English-speaking countries were considered as barriers to cross-cultural communication success. Zheng and Huang (2010) concluded that differences in social conventions, thinking patterns, social habits and customs are all sources of pragmatic failure which inevitably lead to cross-cultural misunderstanding.

Previous studies on pragmatic failure, such as Beeb and Takahashi's study (1989), Hong's study (1997) and others, revealed that pragmatic failures might lead to serious misunderstandings resulting in communicative breakdowns since deviations from the expected or appropriate communicative practices in a community "[...] will immediately be regarded as 'strange' or - depending on the degree of 'error' - inexplicable, stupid, crazy, and so on." (Riley, 2006:314)

In addition to pragmatic failure studies, some others attempted to investigate speech act performance of second/foreign language learners because of the central role speech acts play in pragmatic competence. One of these studies was conducted by Mir (1992) who focused on the speech act of apology. The aim of this study was to locate the significant cross-cultural differences in the selection of apology strategies between Spanish speakers learning English as a foreign language and American native speakers of English. The participants were tested in 8 different situations, and each of these situations included a

different offensive action. The results of this study revealed that native speakers of English used a greater variety of strategies than the Spanish learners when apologizing. The researcher suggested that these differences were due to differences in the Spanish and English speech communities, i.e., in their rules of speaking. Furthermore, significant differences were found in the use of explicit apologies and offers of repair by the native group. Native English speakers used more apologies and offers of repair than native Spanish speakers in all contexts. This might suggest, the researcher argued, that the Spanish learners were not aware of when these strategies should be used in the target language, and therefore, they simply transferred their native language apology patterns to the target context.

Different studies were conducted to examine other speech acts such as refusals. For instance, the study conducted by Takahashi (2001) who attempted to locate the relationship between the input enhancement and the development of English request strategies in EFL learning. The participants of this study were divided into four groups, each of these groups was taught in different input conditions. The results showed that explicit teaching led to greater use of the target forms than the form comparison, form search and meaning focused conditions. Meanwhile, learners in the form comparison condition provided more target request forms than those in the form search and meaning focused conditions. Furthermore, learners' confidence in formulating request expressions was influenced by the levels of input enhancement. The findings highlighted that under the condition of a relatively high degree of input enhancement with explicit pragmatic information, the target pragmatic competence was effectively improved. Accordingly, the researcher concluded that acquiring sufficient pragmatic knowledge had an influential role in improving learners' pragmatic competence.

In her study, Golato (2002) focused on the preference organization of compliment sequences in German language through a conversation analytic methodology. The results of

this study indicated that Germans used a greater variety of acceptance responses than Americans did. They also did not use appreciation tokens to acknowledge compliments. Yet, they sometimes gave an assessment of a compliment, something that was not reported for Americans. These differences, in fact, may cause communication difficulties in cross-cultural encounters (ibid.).

Keshavarz, Eslami and Ghahraman (2008) who attempted in their study to investigate refusals as performed by Iranian native speakers of Persian and Iranian EFL learners in Tehran as opposed to those performed by American English speakers in Washington, DC. Significant differences were found in terms of the directness level of the refusals used by both Iranian native speakers of Persian and Iranian learners of English, and those applied by English speakers. Unlike the level of directness of refusals used by American English speakers, the one applied by Iranian native speakers of Persian was remarkably high. As suggested by the researchers, that was due to the influence of learners' L1 –Persian.

Similar findings were proposed in previous studies, such as Scarcella's study (1983), Takahashi and Beebe's study (1987) on L2 speech acts, which showed that even advanced proficient language learners' speech acts contained non-native pragmatic features arising from pragmatic transfer.

3.3.4. Studies on Pragmatic Competence

Pragmatic competence, as an essential aspect of second/foreign language learners' communicative competence, has received considerable attention in language pragmatics research in recent years. For instance, one of the main concerns of Schauer's study (2006) was to examine the development of ESL learners' pragmatic competence during their stay in the target language environment. The findings of this study showed that the learners' pragmatic competence development was influenced by the temporal effects of exposure to the

target language. With reference to these findings, the researcher concluded that living in the target language environment with exposure to authentic input would better help pragmatic competence develop in ESL learners. This study, in fact, confirmed what Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) proposed in their study: the longer the learner interacts with native speakers or is immersed in a target speech community, the more pragmatically aware the learner becomes.

Another study was conducted by Ruan (2007) to investigate the relationship between Chinese College English learners' pragmatic and linguistic competence. The other aim of this study was to examine the individual differences in pragmatic competence and learning strategy choices in pragmatic competence development. The findings of this study revealed that Chinese College English learners' pragmatic competence was closely related to their English linguistic competence. It was noticed that there were no significant differences in English pragmatic competence of the participants. Yet, it was observed that the female students were better language users than the male students. Additionally, the findings indicated that both students with high and low English pragmatic competence showed no significant difference in the use of learning strategies for pragmatic knowledge learning. In this study, the researcher suggested that in order to develop the pragmatic competence of the target language, the target language learners are in need for appropriate understanding of the utterances' meaning in different contexts (ibid.).

Other previous studies, however, focused on the factors that might affect the learners' pragmatic competence. For example, Koike (1996) conducted a study to evaluate the pragmatic competence of EFL and ESL learners from Hungary. The data analysis of this study showed that advanced learners were undoubtedly more pragmatically competent than intermediate learners. Accordingly, the researcher concluded that one of the main influential

factors on learners' pragmatic competence is their level of proficiency. In some other studies, such as the study conducted by Garcia (2004) and by Taguchi (2011), the proficiency positive effect on pragmatic competence was also proved.

In other different studies which were conducted by Koike (1997) and Tanaka (1997), the importance of pragmatic competence, and its significant role in developing the learners' communicative competence and assuring successful communication were emphasized.

3.4. Interlanguage Pragmatics

The term interlanguage was coined by Selinker (1972) to refer to the learner's developing linguistic system in the target language. As emphasized by Ellis (1985), interlanguage does not belong to either L1 or L2 system. That is to say, it is an independent language knowledge system.

The notion of interlanguage has also been the concern of some linguists such as Kasper (1992), one of the pioneers of pragmatics in language learning, who extended the scope of interlanguage to cover the pragmatic aspect of the learner's linguistic system. According to Kasper, interlanguage pragmatics is "the branch of second-language research which studies how non-native speakers understand and carry out linguistic action in a target language, and how they acquire L2 pragmatic knowledge." (1992:203)

Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP), as the term suggests, originated from two different disciplines, namely second language acquisition and pragmatics. Kasper and Blum-Kulka defined it as "the study of non-native speakers' use and acquisition of linguistic action patterns in a second language."(1993:3)

In their definition of ILP, Kasper and Rose attempted to illustrate the interdisciplinary or 'hybrid' nature of ILP as follows:

As the study of second language use, interlanguage pragmatics examines how non-native speakers comprehend and produce action in a target language. As the study of second language learning, interlanguage pragmatics investigates how L2 learners develop the ability to understand and perform action in a target language (2002:5).

Accordingly, it is possible to realize that the main focus of ILP is language production and comprehension, as two related parts of language learners' pragmatic competence in the target language.

The notion of ILP has been defined by different researchers. For instance, ILP, as put forward by Kasper and Dahl, is a “non-native comprehension and production of speech acts, and how their L2-related speech act knowledge is acquired.” (1991:216) Another definition was provided by Ellis who regarded ILP as “the performance and acquisition of speech acts by L2 learners.”(1994:159). According to Kasper, however, ILP is “the study of non-native speakers' use and acquisition of L2 pragmatic knowledge.” (1998:184). As for Kasper and Schmidt, ILP is “the study of the development and use of strategies for linguistic action by non-native speakers.” (1996:150)

Based on the aforementioned definitions, ILP can be defined as that language system of producing and comprehending speech acts which non-native learners have to develop at different stages of their language learning process.

3.5. Intercultural Pragmatics

In today's globalized world, communication across cultural boundaries requires not only an understanding of the speaker's intention in a given context, but also an understanding of how culture influences the different types of interactions (Barron, 2003). Cross-cultural pragmatics reveals language users' values, beliefs, cultural assumptions and communicative

strategies in using the language (LoCastro, 2003). It holds the point of view that “individuals from two societies or communities carry out their interactions (whether spoken or written) according to their own rules or norms, often resulting in a clash in expectations and, ultimately, misperceptions about the other group.” (Boxer, 2002:151) According to Mey (2006), however, cross-cultural pragmatics is concerned with the production of language across cultural contexts and the influence of culture on how utterances are produced and interpreted.

From the basic experiences and life knowledge people have, they create a cultural schema which helps them make sense of the world (Yule, 1996). According to Kachru, culture refers to:

The pattern of meanings embodied in symbolic forms, including actions, utterances and meaningful objects of various kinds, by virtue of which individuals communicate with one another and share their experiences, conceptions and beliefs’ (quoted in Thompson, 1990, p. 132). Culture is not static; it evolves as people conduct their daily lives. Nevertheless, culture also denotes a body of shared knowledge, that is, what people ‘must know in order to act as they do, make the things they make, and interpret their experience in the distinctive way they do’ (Quinn & Holland, 1987, p. 4). ‘Act’ in this sense includes verbal acts – whether in the spoken or in the written mode. The shared knowledge in verbal behaviour refers to the familiar conventions followed in using language, which makes it easier for us to ‘interpret’ (5) or ‘make sense’ of one another’s utterances and actions (1999:77).

Following Kachru’s definition of culture, it can be said that the common background knowledge the interlocutors share enables them to correctly and appropriately encode and decode the meaning of the spoken and written acts. In case this particular shared

knowledge is absent in a given communication, neither speakers/writers nor hearers/readers can successfully cooperate. In other words, without having the ability to have access to that specific knowledge and without being familiar with the specific norms and conventions of a particular language, the language user cannot succeed in conveying the intended meaning and the expectation to successfully convey the intended meaning is not expected. Subsequently, the other communicative partner would be unable to understand the meaning as it is intended. In some cases, however, the speaker/writer produces an appropriate act which is still misunderstood or misinterpreted. In this case, it can be inferred that the other interlocutor's familiarity with the norms of the used language is not sufficient. Consequently, his/her pragmatic comprehension is not effectively developed. Concerning this specific point, Wierzbicka, provided an example which illustrates how difficult it is for a native speaker of English to correctly decode the following utterance:

At a meeting of a Polish organization in Australia a distinguished Australian guest is introduced. Let us call her Mrs. Vanessa Smith. One of the Polish hosts greets the visitor cordially and offers her a seat of honour with these words:

Mrs. Vanessa! Please! Sit! Sit!

The word Mrs. is used here as a substitute for the Polish word *pani*, which (unlike Mrs.) can very well be combined with first names. What is more interesting about the phrasing of the offer is the use of the short imperative *Sit!*, which makes the utterance sound like a command, and in fact like a command addressed to a dog (2003:27).

According to Wierzbicka (2003), Polish native speakers have a tendency to use imperatives in contexts where English native speakers would use more indirect forms. The above example discussed by Wierzbicka illustrates a common pragmatic phenomenon by which language users may involve their native-language based elements in the way they use their target language. Actually, this is how second/foreign language norms are

generally violated. Not surprisingly, then, interlocutors who are non -native speakers of Polish witnessing that meeting or incident may not be familiar with Polish pragmatic norms, and therefore interpret the utterance in a way that was not intended.

As learners of a particular second/foreign language are always native speakers of another language, they may be easily influenced by their L1 in the way they understand and perform the target language to achieve their communicative purposes. Those language users, therefore, may use some of their native norms, rules and strategies and employ them directly in a translated form in the target language, without considering the pragmatic and cultural differences between the two languages, and the cross-cultural breakdowns that then may take place.

The interlocutor's familiarity with the pragmatic norms and cultural conventions of a given language is very important for successful communication. Being socialized into a particular culture provides the language user with the sufficient knowledge of the rules and expectations in different communicative interactions, from an early age. According to Thomas (1983), 'speaking English well' does not necessarily mean to follow the cultural rules in all situations. For instance, if a speaker wants to react in an impolite or inappropriate manner towards his/her interlocutor, the speaker becomes in need for knowing what actually constitutes appropriate behaviour in order to violate it. Thus, rather than knowing what is polite, it is essential to know how to be polite or impolite. For this reason, culture is always said to affect the way interlocutors communicate. As culture is specific to each particular language, it is believed that conversations involving culturally different speakers are more likely to go wrong than those involving people who share the same cultural background. Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz explained this as follows:

Many of the meanings and understandings, at the level of ongoing process interpretation of speaker's intent, depend upon culturally

specific conventions, so that much of the meaning in any encounter is indirect and implicit. The ability to expose enough of the implicit meaning to make for a satisfactory encounter between strangers or culturally different speakers requires communicative flexibility (1982: 14).

Inhibition of communication between people who have different cultural background can be traced to the different perceptions and understandings they have of the appropriateness of linguistic behaviours. Thomas (1983) pointed out that any culture proposes a particular way of thinking, specific social norms and values (social variation), and pragmatic principles that may be radically different from another culture. Facing those differences, in effect, proposes serious challenges for target language users as far as linguistic choices are concerned. Additionally, failing to overcome those problems inevitably suggests pragmatic failure. Such particular failure in Thomas' view (1983) may easily lead to negative value judgment of learners as being rude, evasive, or inconsiderate.

In essence, culture in pragmatic competence is to be regarded as a decisive factor in both encoding and decoding utterances. Hence, it can be claimed that the cultural aspect of language has a key role to play in interpreting meaning. Accordingly, this inevitably suggests that cultural awareness (cultural context of discourse) is of prime importance in achieving successful communication.

Based on Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's thought (1998), culture (be it target or source) is regarded as one of the most important and influencing factors on the pragmatic competence of the target language. Any language, including English, has its culture-specific words that act as conducive factors to social interactions among people belonging to that culture. That is to say, those native cultural or key words-based features function as keys for understanding meaning in different situations. This, in turn, suggests an important

conducive element to the understanding of the whole cultural universe represented by a given language (Wierzbicka, 2010). Cultural knowledge, then, is to be regarded as one determining factor of pragmatic appropriateness of a language. Consequently, cultural awareness is to be considered as an efficient tool that prevents communicative breakdowns which often take place because of the cultural differences between languages.

3.6. Sociopragmatics

Sociopragmatics refers to appropriateness of meaning in accordance with social norms. It is defined by Leech as “the sociological interface of pragmatics” (1983:10), involving the ability to produce and perceive language, in its social and cultural context, in pragmatically appropriate ways.

According to Culpeper, sociopragmatics is very much about “any aspect of social context that is specific to the pragmatics meanings of particular language use.” (2011:1). It involves the speakers’ and the hearers’ beliefs based on relevant social and cultural values and social actions, which are regarded to be of prime importance.

What is interesting about sociopragmatics is that it emphasizes the appropriate use of linguistic resources in context, or more specifically the proper social behaviour. It concerns itself with revealing how language users have to vary their available linguistic resources and speech strategies according to different situational or social variables involved in different social interactions. Accordingly, second/foreign language learners must be made aware of the consequences of making pragmatic choices (Rose and Kasper, 2001).

In order to be sociopragmatically competent, second/foreign language learners have to be equipped with certain social language skills such as the ability to perform appropriate functions according to different social variables such as the degree of imposition, social

dominance and distance between participants of conversation, and participants' rights and obligations in communication (Harlow, 1990). This particular competence, sociopragmatic competence, comprises more than linguistic and lexical knowledge. It implies the speaker's ability to negotiate different social situations involving distinct social variables in pragmatically appropriate ways, including his/her ability to perceive and produce language that is 'sensitive' to the context (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983). Accordingly, it can be argued that in order to select socio-pragmatically appropriate ways of expressing meaning, second/foreign language learners are in need to analyse the social dimensions of interaction and the features of social context. These contextual features enable the target language learners to accurately interpret and appropriately express social meaning in interaction, and thereby to achieve social goals in different contexts.

3.7. Speech Act Theory

Speech act theory which has received the widest interest of all issues in the general theory of language use (Levison, 1983), is also considered as one of the influential notions and key areas in the study of pragmatics. The foundation(s) of speech act theory was/were first proposed by the British philosopher Austin (1962) who was regarded as the father of pragmatics (Mott, 2003). According to Austin (1962), communication is not just a matter of saying; it is also a matter of doing. He postulated that language people use does not only communicate information, but also performs actions. Consequently, the utterances people generally utter do not only communicate information, but are equivalent to actions. These utterances are called speech acts.

In his seminal book 'How to Do Things with Words' (1962), Austin distinguished three components of speech acts and identified three dimensions of acts related to the utterance, namely the locutionary act, the illocutionary act, and the perlocutionary act.

The locutionary act corresponds to the physical uttering of a statement or the literal meaning or the propositional meaning of the utterance. That is, the actual utterance expressed by the speaker or what the utterance is about. For instance, in saying “I am thirsty”, the speaker performs the locutionary act of saying something that reflects his/her state of experiencing thirst (Austin, 1962: 78).

It is worth mentioning that a locutionary act has a direct correlation with linguistic competence as well as an interrelation with grammatical features of the language. Thus, it can be said that this act embodies the linguistic aspect of speech performance which is associated with the syntactic and semantic aspects of the utterance.

The illocutionary act or force, however, refers to that act that goes beyond the mere production of the utterance. That is to say, it is the function of the utterance that the speaker has in mind and the actual communicative purpose which is intended or achieved by the utterance. Accordingly, it can be concluded that this act is concerned with the contextual function of the communicative act. This same notion fundamentally parallels the goals of pragmatic competence in its consideration of the extralinguistic factors which are of prime importance.

The illocutionary act, in fact, is closely related to the notion which entails that a certain force or function has to be conveyed through the utterance. For example, the above utterance “I am thirsty” can encompass the illocutionary force of a request for something to drink, or rather an indirect request. This idea corresponds to the notion, which is proposed by Grice (1975), of the implied meaning as opposed to the explicit meaning of an utterance, or what is called conversational implicature. As a matter of fact, the hearer’s ability to understand such indirect speech acts is the “mutually shared factual background

information of the speaker and the hearer, together with an ability on the part of the hearer to make inferences.” (Searle, 1975:61)

The final component of a speech act, the perlocutionary act, can be defined as the intended effect or impact which can be achieved by the speaker’s utterance on the other communicative partner. In this specific instance, when saying “I am thirsty”, the speaker wants the act of giving him something to drink to be performed. The hearer, accordingly, may perform or realize the speaker’s desire.

It is worth mentioning that the speaker’s attempt to convey his/her intended meaning may not be successfully performed or effectively communicated to the hearer. The success of the utterance, however, can be noticed via the hearer’s reaction to that utterance, either in the form of a verbal or non-verbal response (Marquez Reiter and Placencia, 2005).

Austin then proposed five classes of illocutionary acts.

Expositives: which are used to explain or clarify reasons, arguments and communications. Verbs belonging to this category include verbs like to inform, to assume, to illustrate.

Exercitives: which express the exercising of powers and rights. Verbs belonging to this category include to order, to nominate.

Commissives: which express commitments or undertakings. Examples of these include verbs like to promise, to commit, to undertake, to swear.

Verdictives: which express verdicts or evaluations given by judges. Examples of these include verbs such as to convict, to judge, to rule.

Behabitives: which have to do with social behaviour or reaction to it. Verbs belonging to this category include to apologise, to thank, to refuse. (1962: 163)

Influenced by Austin’s work, Searle (1975, cited in Atamna, 2008:94) proposed his own classification based on the illocutionary force of the speaker’s speech acts.

Representatives: Which are assertions about the world that a speaker makes, “*Today is Sunday.*”, for example’

Directives: Which are attempts by which a speaker tries to put her/his interlocutor under certain conditions, to act in a certain way, to give a command or a request, for example’

Commissives: Which are obligations that a speaker commits himself/herself to act in a certain way in the future, to make a promise or an offer, for example.

Expressives: Which are expressions of a speaker’s psychological state, to respond to a complement, for example.

Declarations: Which are formal statements by which a speaker declares some change in certain states of affairs, a sentence pronounced by a judge, for example.

Actually, Searle’s classification system is clearly oriented towards the pragmatic intentions of speakers. It is primarily concerned with the illocutionary force of the speaker’s speech acts. That is, it is the purpose of the act from the speaker’s perspective. Building on the above categorization system, it can be argued that language users’ communicative intention in social interactions can be better understood.

Searle’s contribution to speech act theory was clearly noticed. Searle (1975), in fact, not only regrouped the speech act but also showed that speech acts can be performed either directly or indirectly. According to Searle, an indirect speech act is one that is performed “by means of another” (1975:60). By means of an indirect speech act, a speaker may communicate his/her real intentions and real meanings and messages. The example that Searle proposed to clarify this point is when saying to a friend “Let’s go to the movies tonight” and the friend says “I have to study for an exam” (1975:61). In this case, the surface form, or the locutionary act, of the friend’s utterance seems to have no relation to the proposal. In fact, it contains no explicit or direct rejection. Yet, the friend could by means of that same utterance communicate his/her intended message (or pragmatic intention) and perform the speech act of

refusing the proposal. Searle claimed that the hearer's ability to understand such indirect speech acts is the "mutually shared factual background information of the speaker and the hearer, together with an ability on the part of the hearer to make inferences." (1975:61) That is to say, speakers and hearers of a particular language need to have access to some kind of shared knowledge to correctly encode and decode the meaning of spoken or written acts. Therefore, interlocutors' familiarity with the pragmatic norms of a particular language and culture is highly important for successful communication. As indicated by Kasper and Schmidt (1996), these two pragmatic strategies, direct and indirect speech acts, are claimed to be universally available as they are related to politeness theory. The latter will be addressed in the following section.

3.8. Politeness Theory

Like speech act theory, politeness theory is generally regarded to be one of the cornerstones of pragmatics research. The notion of politeness and what constitutes a polite utterance was the concern of many researchers during the late 1970s (Kasper, 1990). One of the famous scholars who were very much interested in politeness as a pragmatic phenomenon was Lakoff (1973). She described politeness as the avoidance of offence. Lakoff believed that politeness could be conveyed by following two principle rules in interaction(s): be clear and be polite (1977:86). With regard to the first element's definition of clarity, it was based on Grice's (1975) maxims regarding conversational cooperation. Concerning the second rule, it was further illustrated by the following principles, namely Formality (Don't impose/remain aloof), Hesitancy (Allow the addressee his options), and Equality or camaraderie (Act as though you and the addressee were equal/make him feel good) (Lakoff, 1977:88).

According to Lackoff (1977), by using these three main factors, one can dictate whether an utterance is polite or not. She stressed that these three factors are contextually

rooted. That is to say, knowledge of contextual conditions is of prime importance in selecting the appropriate rules of politeness in any interaction. Lackoff believed that familiarity between the interlocutors, the status differences between them and the culture in which the utterance is made serve as important contextual components and guidelines that help both speakers and hearers to interact appropriately (ibid.). In the same line of thought, Brown and Levinson (1987) stressed the importance of the relative power between the interlocutors and the status differences between them. In their investigation of linguistic politeness, Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed a third contextual factor which is the degree of imposition involved in the utterance directed at the hearer.

Based on Goffman's (1955) sociological notion of face, Brown and Levinson (1987) regarded politeness as a strategy used in conversational settings to respect another speaker's face. Brown and Levinson defined the concept of face as "the public self-image that every member [of a society] wants to claim for himself." (1987:61). The researchers also indicated that face comes in two variations which they claim to be universal: positive and negative. While positive face refers to the hearer's desire to be appreciated or approved of, negative face "represents the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction, i.e., freedom of action and freedom from imposition." (1987: 61) Interlocutors attend to each other's negative face by being indirect, apologetic or by giving deference. In order to maintain their face and that of others, individuals are expected to guard their face against any potential threats and to be constantly aware of the intentions of each other.

Coupled with Brown and Levinson's idea (1987) that some acts are inherently threatening to face, each communicative participant must practice specific politeness strategies according to the current situational setting to reflect politeness principles. Through such strategies, both the intended messages and the wilful politeness objective are realized.

Brown and Levinson (1987) suggested these strategies to be as bald on-record, positive politeness and negative politeness and off-Recorder.

The first one refers to the strategy by which speakers invest less or no effort to avoid the impact of Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs). This strategy is generally used by those close and intimate people.-Positive politeness, however, refers to that strategy by which speakers can minimize the FTA. Speakers usually tend to use this kind of strategy to minimize the psychological distance between them by showing interest in the other person's needs to be respected and being friendly. The third strategy, negative politeness, is that strategy by which the speaker adheres to the social distance principles in order to minimize the imposition that the hearer may face, and soften the intrusion that may be practiced into his/her space. The final strategy, off-recorder, refers to the strategy by which the speaker may avoid all kinds of imposition.

In order to perform an appropriate speech act, speakers have to consider some crucial sociological factors that determine the level of politeness in a given social interaction. These factors are social distance, relative power, and the ranking of imposition between the interlocutors. In Brown and Levinson's view (1987), socially close speakers use different politeness strategies in their conversations from those used by socially distant speakers. Additionally, the relative power one interlocutor has over the other also influences the speaker's linguistic choice, i.e., the speaker's strategy in dealing with the other communicative partner. The third factor, as Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed, is related to culture which determines the degree of imposition involved in a communicative act since each culture has its own different norms and values of politeness.

With respect to these influential contextual factors, the speaker must choose specific linguistic forms that reflect particular politeness strategies relative to the variables that are involved in a specific context.

Although it can be challenging, awareness of different politeness conventions of the target language is essential since the core of any interaction is the appropriate use of speech acts. For this reason, it is essential for language users to be equipped with both the knowledge of the target language conventions and the ability to use this knowledge appropriately.

3.9. Pragmatic Failure

Pragmatic failure, as Thomas defined it, is “[...] the inability to understand what is meant by what is said.” (1983:93) It occurs when a hearer fails to understand the exact proposition that the speaker intended to communicate with a contextualized utterance, or when he fails to capture the intended pragmatic force of an utterance. Similarly, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain believed that pragmatic failure takes place “[...] whenever two speakers fail to understand each other’s intention.”(1986:166). Seen from this perspective, pragmatic failure is an important source of intercultural communication breakdown.

Many other scholars based their research on Thomas’ analysis of pragmatic failure and supplemented the definition of pragmatic failure. He (2006), for example, argued that “pragmatic failure does not refer to the general wording and phrasing errors that appear in language use, but rather refers to the failure to reach the expected result because of speaking improperly, expressing ideas in unidiomatic way.” (26) Qian, however, stated that:

When the speaker uses sentences with correct symbol relations in verbal communication, but speaks ill-timed, improperly or not habitually, he tends to unconsciously violate interpersonal norms, social conventions, or run counter to the sense of worth in the culture of target language by neglecting the time and space of

communication, the identity and status of speakers and the occasion of communication, which leads to the barrier of the communication and results in the interruption of the communication and failure to achieve a satisfactory desired communicative aim. Failure of this kind is called pragmatic failure. (1997:195) (cited in Jingwei, 2003: 76)

Based on the aforementioned definitions, pragmatic failure can be understood as that misunderstanding which arises as a consequence of the speaker's selection of inappropriate communicative strategies or speaker's use of different and unexpected socio-cultural principles.

Learners who experience pragmatic failure may often be regarded as rude or impolite by native speakers (Thomas, 1983). While in some situations pragmatic failure may have relatively unimportant repercussions and lead to hilarious misunderstandings, in others it has more serious consequences and may result in misunderstandings leading to amazement, frustration, dissatisfaction and communication breakdown since deviations from the expected or appropriate communicative practices in a community "[...] will immediately be regarded as 'strange' or-depending on degree of error- inexplicable, stupid, crazy, and so on."(Riley, 2006:314)

According to Thomas (1983), pragmatic failure falls into two major types: pragmatic failure and sociopragmatic failure. Thomas (1983) explained that pragmatic failure occurs when a target language speaker tends to encode a particular pragmatic force linguistically different from that illocutionary force generally performed by native speakers of that target language, or when source language strategies influence the target speech production due to the inappropriate transfer process.

Sociopragmatic failure, however, results from differences in cross-cultural perceptions and pragmatic ground rules that govern linguistic behaviours, or rather that govern the use of linguistic utterances as used by native speakers. In McNamara and Roever’s view (2006), if a language user is not equipped with the necessary sociopragmatic conventions, s/he may be misunderstood or even perceived by native speakers as offensive or too outspoken. Furthermore, if s/he fails to achieve a good command of pragmalinguistic competence, s/he can simply be excluded from the conversation (ibid.).

3.10. Pragmatic Competence

Although researchers did not use the term pragmatic competence explicitly, they did recognize the efficiency of pragmatic competence as an essential part of communicative competence, and also the significance of language use in context. The term pragmatic competence was first explicitly mentioned by Bachman in 1990. He divided language competence into two discrete components; organizational competence and pragmatic competence.

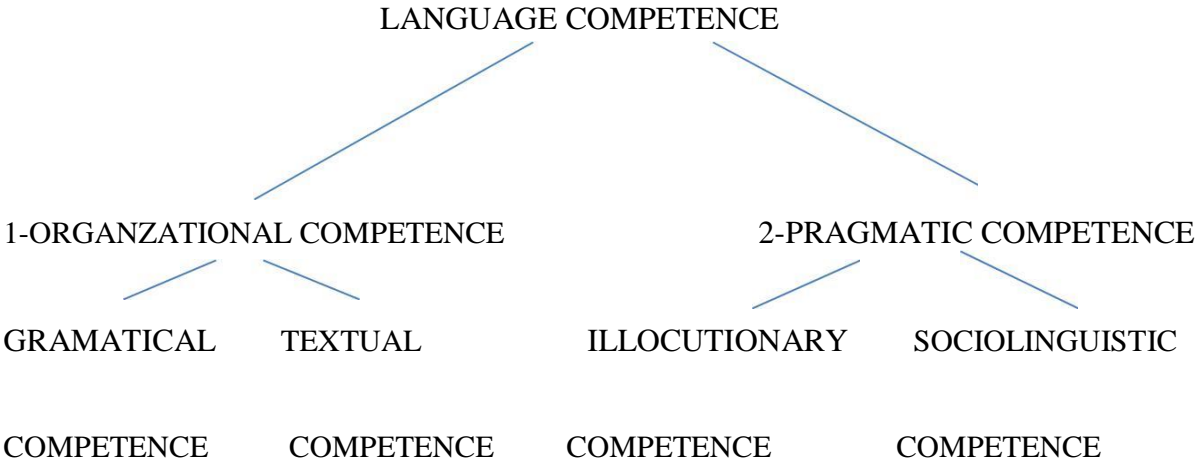


Figure 3.1: Bachman’s Language Competence (adapted from Bachman 1990: 87)

According to Bachman, organizational competence refers to “the knowledge of linguistic units and the rules of joining them together.” (1990:87). It is broken down into two types of abilities: Grammatical competence which refers to the knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, phonology and syntax, and textual competence which consists of the knowledge required to join utterances together to form a unified whole.

Bachman’s pragmatic competence consists of illocutionary competence (the knowledge of speech acts and language functions) and sociolinguistic competence (the ability to use language appropriately in different sociocultural contexts.) That is to say, pragmatic competence in Bachman’s model refers to the ability to use language for different purposes and functions and to comprehend the illocutionary force in different contexts of communication.

Similar to Bachman’s definition, Celce-Murcia and Olshtain described pragmatic competence as “a set of internalized rules of how to use language in socioculturally appropriate ways, taking into account the participants in a communicative interaction and features of the context within which the interaction takes place.” (2000:20)

Seen from this perspective, pragmatic competence requires the knowledge of linguistic rules and the ability to use those rules appropriately. This is, in fact, what has been already proposed in Bialystok’s definition of pragmatic competence:

Pragmatic competence entails a variety of abilities concerned with the use and interpretation of language in contexts. It includes speakers’ ability to use language for different purposes — to request, to instruct, to effect change. It includes listeners’ ability to get past the language and understand the speaker’s real intentions, especially when these intentions are not directly conveyed in the forms — indirect requests, irony and sarcasm are some examples. It includes commands

of the rules by which utterances are strung together to create discourse
(1993: 43).

All in all, pragmatic competence can be defined as the ability which involves knowledge beyond the level of grammar and that helps achieving successful communication. It can be recognized as one of the critical components that help language learners become communicatively competent. Accordingly, it can be proposed that without pragmatic competence, it is difficult to participate in ordinary social life.

Conclusion

This chapter shows that efficient second/foreign language teaching and learning must include pragmatic factors and issues that affect interaction in order to obtain satisfactory results not only in the classroom, but more importantly when learners use the target language in real and authentic contexts. The researcher made reference to the need to focus on pragmatic competence in English learning and teaching. This, in turn, will propose an efficient solution to cross-cultural misunderstandings that language learners usually come across.

Chapter Four

Research Methodology

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological procedures followed in this research. It restates the research objectives and suggests the suitable methodology to achieve those objectives. It offers a discussion of the research design and methodology. This chapter introduces other methodological issues in the study such as the collection and analysis of the data. Finally, it presents the limitations of the study.

4.1. Restatement of the Research Objectives

According to Saunders et al., research objectives are “clear, specific statements that identify what the researcher wishes to accomplish as a result of doing the research.” (2007:10). They went on to explain that from a methodological point of view, “objectives are more generally acceptable to the research community as evidence of the research’s clear sense of purpose and direction.”(2007:32) In the light of this, this research work was designed around the following objectives:

- 1- To investigate the different teaching approaches that are currently used at the University of Constantine 1 and look at the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches,
- 2- To explore the different communicative breakdowns English learners commonly encounter, and identify the reasons underpinning their communication failures,
- 3- To explore the real meaning of a successful communication and what it needs to be so,
- 4- To explore the importance of pragmatics for developing the English learners’ pragmatic and communicative performance.

To this end, the researcher selected the instruments and population that could help to realize the purposes of this study and answer the questions stated in the general introduction.

4.2. Participants

Four different groups of participants provided the data for the purposes of this study. One group consisted of English teachers at the University of Constantine 1, and the other of Algerian EFL students at the same university.

The first group consisted of twenty-six Algerian EFL teachers who all hold postgraduate degrees. They had been teaching English for different periods of time (between five to thirty-one years) and were experienced in a variety of EFL settings. All teachers who completed the questionnaire have, at least, a Master (Magistère) degree. They achieved their degrees either in the United Kingdom or Algeria.

The second group of participants consisted of Algerian first year Master's degree students who answered the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) on a voluntary basis. They numbered a total of one hundred and thirty students. However, ten of the questionnaires were discounted which brought the number of participants down to one hundred and twenty.

The researcher assumed that at this level of education, students had adapted to study at university and acquired enough English language proficiency to participate in the research.

Two groups of native speakers, American native speakers (ANSs) and British native speakers (BNSs) participated and their responses were used as a baseline for the research.

The ANSs' group and the BNSs' one comprised ten participants each. They came to Algeria for work; thus, they were expected to have reached an adequate level of education. All of them were employees of private companies with various academic backgrounds and professional experiences with ages ranging between thirty-four and sixty-three years old. Communication with them was made through email.

Two native English teachers were also used as informants. They provided data on the subject of the study and gave some suggestions for the improvement of the questionnaire.

4.3. Research Design

Once the general problem area had been established, it was necessary to plan how the actual research would be conducted in order to achieve a successful outcome. Accordingly, the researcher had to conduct the research in a systematic scientific manner. A serious thought had to be given to the way the research was to be designed.

A research design is the end result of decisions made by the researcher concerning how to obtain answers to the questions raised and how the study will be conducted (Burns and Grove, 1999). It is closely associated with the structural framework of the study and concerns the planning of the implementation of the study in order to reach the goals set out (De Vos, 1998).

The purpose of the research design is to establish a framework to assist the researcher in providing answers to the already stated research questions or hypotheses in as valid, objective and accurate manner as possible (Kerlinger, 1986). According to Mouton (1996), the research design provides the guidelines and instructions to be followed when addressing the research problem. Accordingly, the function of research design is to maximise control over factors that could interfere with the validity of the findings (Mouton, 1996). The selection of a research design depends on the nature and the amount of the information the researcher intends to gather. In order to achieve the research objectives of the present study, the researcher conducted quantitative research that generated quantifiable data. Quantitative research provides quantifiable data and objective measurements of observable and measurable phenomena by using statistical tests (Couchman and Dawson, 1995).

Quantitative research lends itself to investigating phenomena that require precise measurement and quantification often involving a rigorous and controlled design (Polit and Beck, 2004). It needs to be fairly structured to enhance objectivity. Using a quantitative approach enables the researcher to test his or her hypothesis through more reliable, accurate and objective statistically analysed data (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1992).

The features of this research study are in accordance with the quantitative research paradigm. Its focus was concise and narrow. The researcher utilised a structured questionnaire, which enabled her to quantify the responses and to conduct statistical analysis. The researcher maintained objectivity through structured data collection.

To explore the research objectives, a Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT) was also employed as a basis for the development of the data collection instrument.

4.4. Research Instruments

With regard to the methods used for data collection, this study was primarily based on a questionnaire and a WDCT. An explanation for each instrument is provided below.

4.4.1. Questionnaire

Questionnaires are the most widely used and useful instruments to collect quantitative data (Wilson and McLean, 1994). A questionnaire is one of the quantitative data collection instruments that can obtain a broad perspective from the research subjects (Denscombe, 2007). Questionnaires are defined as “any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react, either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers.” (Brown, 2001: 16).

Questionnaires are instruments that are used to convert data information given directly by a person. They are said to be useful as a method to measure what a person knows and

thinks (Tuckman, 1994). Questionnaires offer considerable advantages in administration, allowing access to large numbers of people simultaneously (Basit, 2010).

The high popularity and main attraction of the use of questionnaires is probably due to the argument that "...by administering a questionnaire to a group of people, one can collect a huge amount of information in less than an hour, and the personal investment required will be a fraction of what would have been needed for, say, interviewing the same number of people." (Dornyei, 2003:9). In addition, questionnaires are considered quicker, less expensive and requiring less skill than the interview method (Sekaron, 1992). They are easy to arrange and provide standardized answers because all respondents are exposed to the same questions (Dornyei, 2003).

Questionnaires are one of the most common methods of data collection. They are highly respected by researchers and are extremely useful as a method to reach a lot of people (MC Neille et al., 2005). Moreover, questionnaires provide accurate data for the researcher (Denscombe, 2007). There is no chance of influence or subjective bias by the researcher as the interviewer effect is eliminated (Bryman, 2004). According to Robson (2002), they provide a relatively simple and straightforward approach to the study of attitude, values, beliefs and motives and allow anonymity, which may encourage more truthful responses, especially if dealing with sensitive topics.

Using questionnaires for data collection is regarded as an easy way to obtain standardised data, thus enabling responses that can be easily coded (Sekaran, 1992).

Nevertheless, all methods of research have limitations associated with them and a questionnaire is no exception (Robson, 2002). One of the problems with questionnaires is the ambiguities that can arise both for the respondents while filling out the questionnaire and the researcher during the analysis of the data. Another potential problem with such a kind of research methods is that participants may read the suggested questions differently from

others, and therefore reply based on their own interpretation of the questions. Awareness of the potential disadvantages of using questionnaires led the researcher to:

- 1- Keep the wording of the questionnaire as simple and straightforward as possible to be easily understood by respondents.
- 2- Speak to the participants during the administration of the questionnaires in case the respondents had any questions about the questionnaire.
- 3- Include some open-ended questions for respondents to freely express their ideas without the constraints of fixed options. In this way, the questionnaire may be able to “provide a far greater ‘richness’ than fully quantitative data.” (Dornyei, 2003:47).

The administration of the questionnaire was conducted in such a manner as to reduce the effect of the limitations and biases outlined above. Bearing the advantages and disadvantages in mind, the questionnaire was still deemed the most suitable method to employ for the current research. Using a questionnaire as a research instrument allowed the research to be conducted in the systematic scientific manner required to answer the research objectives.

4.4.1.1. Content of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire designed for this study consists of closed and open-ended questions. With open questions, the research leaves it to the respondents as to how they word their answers. In other words, open questions let respondents decide the wording of the answer, the length of the answer and the kind of matters raised in the answer. The information gathered from open questions is more likely to reflect the richness and complexity of the views held by the respondents. At the same time, respondents are given space to express themselves in their own words (Denscombe, 2007). Open-ended questions, however, are more difficult to organize into categories to enable ease of analysis. A closed question limits the responses that may be given and usually asks the respondents to make choices among a set of alternatives

given by the researcher. However, closed questions help the respondent make quick decisions and ease completion. They also help the researcher to code the data easily when it comes to analysis of the data (Sekaran, 1992; Mc Neil et al, 2005).

The questionnaire was designed by the researcher while considering the issues to be investigated in the research study so that the data obtained from the questionnaire provide the necessary information to answer the research questions. It is worth mentioning that the items included in the questionnaire were asked according to the main points of the current research; that is, the items were derived from the literature review.

In order to convey the aims of the research and to encourage respondents to reply, a considerable amount of effort was made to incorporate several essential elements of a well-developed questionnaire: layout, clarity of wording, simplicity of design, clear instructions and assurance of confidentiality and anonymity.

The questionnaire designed for this study consists of four different sections. Each section includes several questions.

The first section consists of eight items related to the teachers' academic backgrounds and their personal experiences with communication breakdowns and misunderstandings with native speakers. Mackey and Gass (2005) point out that collecting such bio-data is an integral part of one's database, as it allows the reader to determine the extent to which the results of the study are generalizable to the broader context.

The second section includes nine questions. Each question is developed for different reasons. Each of these reasons will be clearly stated in the analysis of each question in Chapter Five.

As for the third section of the questionnaire, it consists of eight questions. The aim behind using each question is also mentioned in Chapter Five. The whole focus of this part, however, is to determine the importance of pragmatics in Algerian EFL classrooms and to see

to what extent Algerian teachers of English believe in the pragmatic approach to English teaching.

The last section consists of two questions. The aim of the first question is to know in which way traditional and other various approaches to language learning and teaching affect the pragmatic development of English learners. The second question, however, is provided for teachers to express their opinions and give their comments about the questionnaire, the subject or other related matters.

It is worth mentioning that each of these questions, whether in section 'One', 'Two', 'Three' or 'Four' suggests an answer to the research questions or at least helps, in a way or another, in providing an insight to some related issues to the thesis as a whole.

4.4.1.2. Pilot Administration of the Questionnaire

The administration of a pilot questionnaire is an essential stage of questionnaire-based research and should never be left out of the research process (Murphy, 1997). The researcher of the current study conducted the pilot study to see whether the instrument was in appropriate length, the items were understandable and the wording was appropriate. According to Murphy (1997), the correct piloting of a questionnaire will enable the researcher to detect and correct any defects, omissions or confusion to be found in the draft questionnaire and so help ensure the successful collection of data. After implementing the pilot study, no reason was found to amend the questionnaire items.

In the present study, a pilot questionnaire was administered to university English teachers who suggested some changes concerning the length and the ordering of the questionnaire. Their comments were carefully taken into consideration. It was found that with the exception of two minor issues concerning the length and ordering of the questionnaire, there were no changes needed. This helped identify redundant items in the questionnaire and

yielded assistance in enhancing the degree that the questions could provide the desired data. Upon completion of the first draft of the questionnaire, the researcher made some minor alterations of wording based on a discussion with the research supervisor in such a way that they would provide the necessary data to the research questions of the study.

It is worth mentioning that the comments made by the two native speaker teachers were approximately the same as those made by the research supervisor. Their suggestions were in line with the suggestions made by the research supervisor. After being corrected, the survey questionnaires were administered to the sample group.

4.4.1.3. Administration of the Questionnaire

Having made all necessary rewritings on the questionnaire, it was personally administered to 26 teachers working at the University of Constantine 1. Personal delivery of the questionnaires was found to be of considerable advantage and the questionnaire could be completed and collected in a relatively short period of time. The researcher was present to answer any query the respondents had regarding completion of the questionnaire.

4.4.1.4. Analysis Procedure

The researcher needed to interpret and analyse the collected data in a logical and suitable way in order to obtain objective and reliable conclusion(s). The raw quantitative data collected from the questionnaires in this study were analysed quantitatively, which was more straightforward than qualitative analysis to address research issues (Dornyei, 2007).

Due to the quantitative nature of the current research, it was decided to use the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyse the data obtained from the questionnaire. However, before any data could be entered into the SPSS programme, it was first necessary to examine the individual questionnaires in order to assess their suitability for

inclusion in the research. These data were transferred into numbers by the process of coding and applied to the SPSS Version 17 for analysis.

Quantitative results were analysed in percentages after being calculated. In addition, all the calculated data were presented in tables and graphs (figures) for better visualization.

A descriptive design was applied in presenting the results. Descriptive statistics is a good way to present quantitative descriptions in a manageable form and helps to simplify large amounts of data in a sensible way (Patton, 2000).

A descriptive design was selected because of its high degree of representativeness and the ease in which a researcher could obtain the participants' opinions (Polit and Beck, 2004:50). In the present study, feedback collected from the different questions was summed up to provide answers to the research questions. The researcher obtained and described the views of the respondents with regard to the issues related to the teaching approaches in general, and the pragmatic ones in particular, the benefits of this approach, and the problems that teachers experience while they are engaged in such pragmatic-based teaching.

In this study, the data collection conditions were standardised to enhance data quality.

The researcher followed the following steps:

- 1- Each question and response was numerically coded.
- 2- The responses were categorized by an individual teacher and numerically coded.
- 3- All the numerically coded data was entered into an Excel spreadsheet for ease of input.
- 4- When the input of data was completed, it was downloaded directly into SPSS.
- 5- Frequency, mean, standard error, standard deviation, minimum, maximum and sum were all calculated.

Through the use of SPSS as an analytical tool, the current research produced some interesting findings as presented in Chapters Five and Six.

4.4.2. Pragmatic Test

For the purpose of the current research, a WDCT is chosen as another strategy for data collection. It is considered an effective method to collect evidence of learners' pragmatic ability (Brown, 2001). According to Kasper and Dahl, WDCTs "are written questionnaires including a number of brief situational descriptions followed by a short dialogue with an empty slot for the speech act under study. Subjects are asked to fill in a response that they think fits into the given context." (1991:221)

WDCTs do not require participants to interact conversationally but to write responses which they would use in certain situations. Such responses can indirectly reveal a participant's accumulated experience within a given situation (Woodfield, 2008). Thus, WDCTs represent highly constrained instruments of data collection.

According to Eslami-Rasekh, it is said that the use of such pragmatic tests provides language teachers as well as researchers with "language that is less complex and less variable than natural data, but is similar enough to authentic language." (2005:202)

Actually, DCT proves to bring some outstanding advantages over other methods especially in terms of learners' pragmatic knowledge. As indicated by Kasper and Rose,

When carefully designed, DCTs provide useful information about speakers' pragma-linguistic knowledge of the strategies and linguistic forms by which communicative acts can be implemented and about their socio-pragmatic knowledge of the context factors under which particular strategic and linguistic choices operate (2002:96).

Accordingly, it can be assumed that DCT provides information about the kinds of strategies that participants employ to produce speech acts. With the help of such a pragmatic

test, the researcher may determine what the participants in this study consider to be the socially and culturally appropriate responses in a given context (Ellis, 1994).

In spite of the advantages mentioned above, DCTs have been criticized for not being effective in eliciting representative data of actual speech acts in cross-cultural settings (Hinkle, 1997). Pragmatic test lacks extended negotiation which is found in natural data and participants use narrower range of semantics formulas (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1993). That is to say, participants do not use language, in this test, the same way they use it in real-world communication. Moreover, none of the nonverbal cues in WDCTs is available, such as hesitation, tone of voice, facial expression, gesture (McNamara and Roever, 2006). In other words, DCT cannot record some kinds of information such as prosodic and nonverbal features of oral interaction and actual discourse.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned disadvantages, the WDCT was considered to be the most suitable method in designing the current research.

4.4.2.1. Content of the Written Discourse Completion Test

The use of WDCT in this study aimed to collect data about the students' pragmatic knowledge, levels of pragmatic competence and their pragmatic communication strategies in using English.

The test includes a total of twenty-eight question items and requires the students to answer in writing. It is divided into four sections. The WDCT consists of a background information section, comprising items on the students' English pragmatic level, English proficiency level and their communicative ability with native speakers. The second section comprises eight situations; each situation is followed by a blank space in which the participants are asked to provide an appropriate speech act in accordance with the situation.

Through the DCT, the subjects are asked to consider the situations as real-life conditions. Each situation is designed to elicit a different speech act. The main ideas of all eight situations are as follows:

1. Offering help for a pregnant woman.
2. Apologizing for making a mistake.
3. Refusing a friend's invitation for lunch.
4. Responding to compliment.
5. Greeting someone.
6. Thanking someone for a gift.
7. Giving advice to someone.
8. Requesting an extension to finish an assignment.

The students are asked to perform different speech acts in a pragmatically appropriate manner. No options of possible responses are provided for the participants from which to choose.

The concept of pragmatic competence encompasses a variety of features. Therefore, whether or not the learner can produce specific speech acts is not sufficient for a reliable judgement of one's interlanguage pragmatics ability. Accordingly, the researcher tends to add other related pragmatic questions that can reflect the pragmatic performance and mirror the students' ability to both use and interpret language appropriately in different communicative situations.

The third part seeks to evaluate the EFL learners' pragmatic comprehension of different implicatures. It consisted of eight brief situational descriptions where different dialogues are presented for the informants to determine what is implicated in each dialogue.

These situations are adapted from Bouton's test of implicature (1994). This section is presented in the form of a multiple choice DCT. Instead of thinking about and formulating an appropriate answer, in Multiple Choice DCT, respondents are expected to choose from different alternatives.

As pragmatics is not only about speech acts and implicatures, students' pragmatic knowledge should also be tested in terms of other dimensions such as social behaviour and cultural norms of the target language. For this reason, the researcher added a fourth part to the pragmatic test.

The fourth section deals with British etiquette and social behaviour. The participants are given eight different questions and are provided with five optional choices for each. They are required to choose the one they think is correct.

4.4.2.2. Pilot Administration of the Written Discourse Completion Test

Before implementing the final version of WDCT, it was examined by three English University teachers holding a PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) degree who lived in English speaking countries for at least one month for each year. The WDCT was also tested with some British and American English language university students who were contacted via Facebook.

The reason behind conducting a pilot administration was to ensure the content and validity of the instrument and to see whether it was in appropriate length, the items were understandable and the wording was appropriate. Another important reason behind this prior administration was to focus on the authenticity of the situations used, i. e., whether those situations were likely to occur in the daily life of an ordinary native speaker.

After considering the suggestions of teachers and the comments of native speaker students, some modifications were made such as adding some more items under some sub-headings or omitting some irrelevant or repeated items.

It is worth mentioning that with the help of both groups (teachers and students), the researcher could identify the unclear items and reformulate them as it was necessary to make sure that the respondents would not have any difficulty in responding to the WDCT. Some comments helped the researcher to add some situations to cover different speech acts and modify some situations to make them sound more natural and culturally more valid. The pilot study also helped the researcher ensure the reliability of the test. Interestingly, the suggestions made by both teachers and students were approximately the same as the ones made by the research supervisor.

4.4.2.3. Administration of the Written Discourse Completion Test

The WDCT was administered to two different groups. The first group consisted of 120 EFL students at the University of Constantine 1. The second group included twenty native speakers of English. The administration process of the first group took place in an empty theatre during a pragmatic lecture period. A suitable lecture period was agreed with the lecturer where the WDCT was administered to the students and collected by the researcher, upon completion, during that lecture. This process took about an hour and was conducted before the end of the lecture. Owing to the absence of some of the students on the arranged date, the researcher secured permission to administer the WDCT to these participants on another day. The teacher in charge of that lecture permitted the researcher to administer her questionnaire and take the time she needed. This was necessary to seek students' cooperation. The personal delivery of the WDCT was necessary in order to seek students' cooperation and

to make sure that the respondents did not have any difficulty in responding to the questionnaire.

As for the second group, the administration process was sent via email to ten Americans and ten British English speakers. The answers of these NSs were used as a standard against which the students' responses would be evaluated.

4.4.2.4. Analysis Procedure

The researcher was fully aware of the importance of enabling the informants to be at ease so as to obtain a high rate of participation.

Prior to the distribution of the WDCT, the students were informed that they would not be graded for their answers, and so they should answer the questions by themselves. Participants were also given enough time and instructions about the WDCT and a briefing on how to respond to the WDCT questions.

Students' answers in part A are calculated only by means of percentage. This quantitative analysis was not difficult because the answers were graded on a Likert- scale for item 1 and 2 and a Yes/No answering system for item 3. For this last item, the researcher asked the participants to state the reason behind their answers. The researcher categorized those reasons and calculated the frequency.

As for part B, the participants' responses for each situation were grouped together into five categories depending on whether they were 'very likely', 'likely', 'possibly', 'not likely' and 'very unlikely'. This step was done by the help of the research supervisor and two other native speakers.

The second step was to gather all responses into a tabular format and to ask four other native speakers to rate them on the basis of their occurrence likelihood and then to give their own classification to the responses using the same Likert- scale used by the researcher.

By means of the SPSS, open-ended items in the questionnaire were analysed by listing all raw data (all the individual responses) under each item and then grouping similar responses, identifying common themes, counting frequencies and calculating mean, standard deviation minimum, maximum and sum.

The procedure process for the third and fourth parts (C and D) was easier than the second one (Part B). The students' responses for each situation were statistically coded and evaluated as being true or false.

4.5. Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The present research does not pretend to be exhaustive. As with any study, this research was naturally constrained by a variety of factors.

Although the employed WDCT was a reliable instrument in this study, the data collected using this instrument could never be completely natural since it was elicited outside of context. While every precaution was taken to make sure that the DCT used in this study was as natural as possible, the authenticity of the responses could never fully be verified. It was noticed that some participants left portions of the study blank, perhaps due to oversight, inability or unwillingness to answer some questions.

The other limitation of the present study relates to teacher data sources included in the study. Compared with a large number of university English teachers in Constantine, the sample may be regarded as small. Involving more teacher data sources in the study could have

added new dimensions to the study. However, this study involved an adequate sample of Algerian EFL students which can be considered as representative of the whole population.

Despite the limitations mentioned above, this study contributes to the relevant literature in several ways. For instance, it provides a thorough and critical overview of the EFL teachers who participated in the study, their background and training, their pedagogical practices, their priorities, the problems they face in the classroom and their reactions to pragmatic-based approach to English teaching.

One of the key contributions of the study is that it offers useful and detailed insights into current classroom practices and the professional development of teachers. It also touches on a range of factors that shape, help and hinder teachers' achieving the targeted educational and pedagogical goals.

In order to enhance the credibility and objectivity of the evaluation, the involvement of an external evaluator in the study was a requirement. Therefore, it was intended to involve some native speakers in the study in order to evaluate the students' answers and the thesis as a whole.

Conclusion

An explanation of the overall methodology adopted in the current study is presented in this chapter to facilitate the interpretation of the results and subsequent conclusions to be treated in Chapters Five and Six, which respectively concern the teachers' views and attitudes towards teaching pragmatics and learners' pragmatic competence, or rather learners' pragmatic communicative strategies through language use.

For many different reasons mentioned in the previous discussion, a questionnaire and WDCT are chosen to be the most suitable instruments for gathering information.

Chapter Five

Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire

Introduction

Now that the research methodology and the analysis procedures are highlighted, this chapter puts forth a full analysis and discussion of the data generated by one of the research instruments used in the present thesis which is the questionnaire survey. This questionnaire is used as a useful research instrument to investigate the teaching approaches which are used in English classrooms at the University of Constantine 1. It also investigates teachers' beliefs about developing the students' pragmatic communicative strategies, their teaching practices and their views about the importance of the pragmatic approach in facilitating the overall English learning process. The procedure followed consists of the analysis of twenty-seven questions along with some correlations of the findings generated by different question items where necessary. The chapter ends with a conclusion in the form of a summary.

5.1. Question Items One to Five

The first five question items of the questionnaire are concerned with demographic and employment information of the surveyed teachers. The twenty-six teachers who responded to the questionnaire are all full-time teachers at the University of Constantine 1. All the teachers are university awards; they all hold a 'Magistère degree' or a 'PhD degree'. Some of them are professors. The twenty-six teachers surveyed are not novice teachers; their teaching experience ranges from six to thirty-eight years. Although they have not all practiced English language teaching for the same period of time, they have experienced teaching different

modules, which makes them quite qualified. As the following figure shows, most of them taught pragmatics which has become in recent years a requisite module in the Algerian language curriculum.

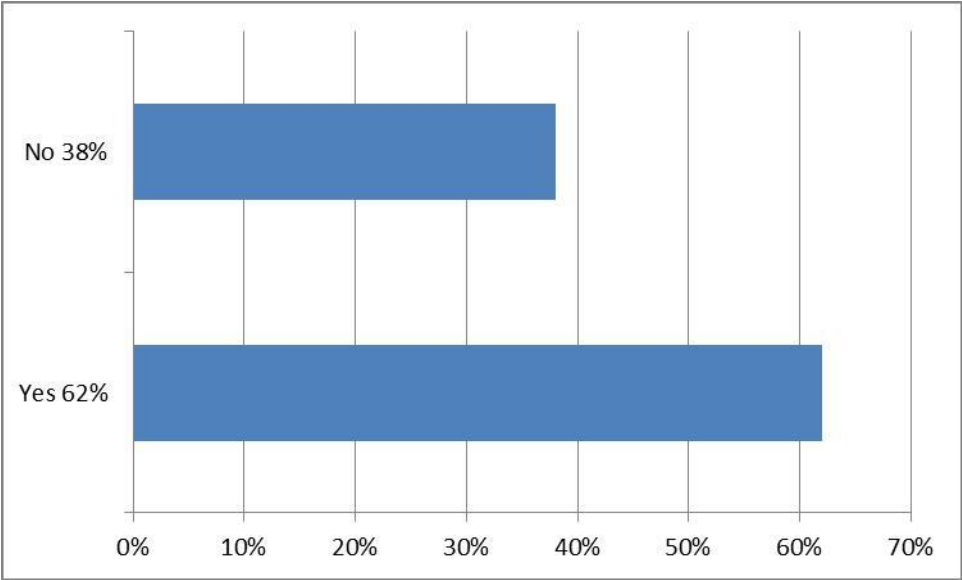


Figure 5.1: Demographic and Employment Information

5.1.1. Question Item Six

Have you ever been to an English-speaking country? If yes, please specify the period of your stay there.

This question is designed to identify the teachers’ real-life experiences in English societies and to locate their length of stay in case they lived/stayed there. The following figure gives details about their responses:

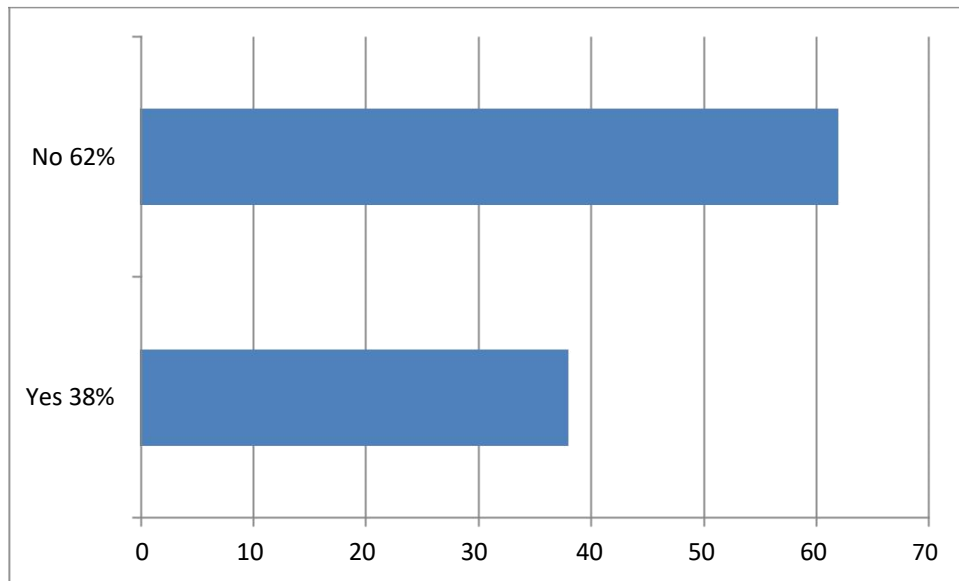


Figure 5.2: Teachers' Stay in English Speaking Countries

As displayed in the above figure, 38% of teachers had the opportunity to either stay or live in the United Kingdom (UK) or the United States (US). The length of stay varies between one month and three months. Only 12% of the teachers could stay for longer period: three years.

The real-life exposure to English authentic input is considered an important and efficient factor that may heavily influence the pragmatic awareness of the language user. To date, most studies have shown the target language environment has a positive influence on the appropriate use of sociopragmatics, or rather, the proper social behaviour in the target language where the language user should be aware of the consequences of his/her pragmatic choices (Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei, 1998).

Many studies have used length of stay in a target speech community as an indicator of second/foreign pragmatic acquisition (Han, 2005). They suggested that the amount of time NN speakers live in the target environment positively correlates with their pragmatic awareness of the target language.

Studying/living abroad has traditionally been assumed by professionals, foreign language instructors and even students to be the best environment in which to acquire a foreign language and understand its cultural and pragmatic unspoken rules. They believed that truly pragmatic competence in a language requires living in the country where that language is spoken (Yager, 1998).

Length of residence as a real and efficient experience can, in fact, help non-native speakers broaden their cultural horizons and become pragmatically competent with more linguistic gains and discourse abilities than those non-native speakers who acquired the target language in the classroom.

According to Brecht, Davidson and Ginsberg (1995), classroom drills cannot substitute for real-life communicative experience with native speakers in natural settings. One can assume then that the length of residence in the target community helps to achieve native - like knowledge of the pragmatics of English. In other words, the longer stays abroad yield greater English pragmatics attainments.

Target language environment provides interaction in the target culture, thereby helping acquire more target-like pragmatic norms. Accordingly, one can assume that the surveyed teachers who had the opportunity to either live or stay in the UK or the US are quite knowledgeable about the English pragmatic norms and have developed perception of English culture that enables them to interact successfully and efficiently with the English native speakers.

5.1.2. Question Item Seven

Have you ever been involved in communicative breakdowns and misunderstandings with native speakers? If yes, what was/were the reason(s) for those breakdowns?

Question item seven is developed to know the communicative breakdowns teachers experienced with English native speakers and the reasons behind those communicative misunderstandings.

The aim of this question is to describe the nature of the breakdowns in understanding the pragmatic meaning and to see whether the teachers' language proficiency as advanced language users was sufficient to successfully communicate with English social insiders.

The following figure illustrates the statistical data related to this specific question:

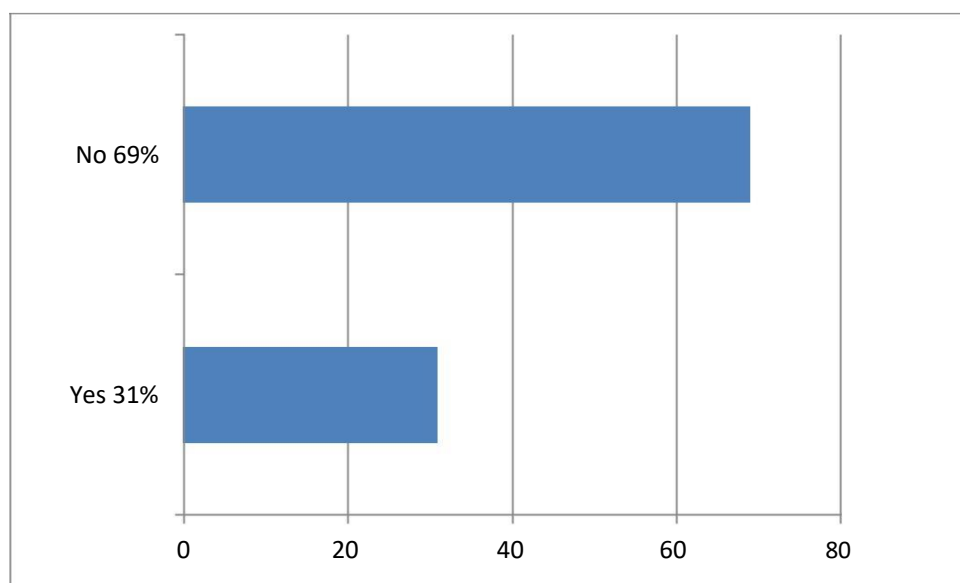


Figure 5.3: Teachers' Communicative Breakdowns with English Native Speakers

As suggested in the above figure, 31 % of the teachers have experienced communicative breakdowns with native speakers. The others (69%), however, said 'No'.

The findings showed that the teachers surveyed had communicative breakdowns for the same reason, namely differences in social and cultural interaction patterns. The participants had no experience with the English culturally determined behaviours; the fact that led to communicative failure.

Actually, previous experience with culturally determined behaviours reduces the influence of culture in cross-cultural interaction. In other words, this specific experience allows individuals to overrule the perceptions of their own schemata and allows individuals to identify the relevant cultural characteristics and as a result know how to adapt to them; i.e., to choose alternative forms of behaviour that fit the target cultural norms. This, in turn, leads to a reduction of misunderstandings, thus avoiding that biased view of reality influences the interaction. This idea is emphasized by some researchers, such as Osland and Bird (2000), who highlighted the importance of different cultural awareness training programs as they provide individuals with skills such as flexibility and openness towards new situations. Such pragmatic communicative abilities and skills can help to overcome individuals' cultural differences. Therefore, one can safely assume that a pragmatic approach to foreign language teaching which emphasizes those cross-cultural differences and that focuses on the notion of appropriateness of language in its social context may help to minimize instances of pragmatic failure and cultural clashes which a foreign language learner may experience in cross-cultural communication. Such approach which takes into consideration the politeness principle and the implementation of different politeness strategies can effectively help learners to perform better in the language.

5.1.3. Question Item Eight

Did your personal experience as a learner and/or user of English in those English speaking countries help you be more competent and enhance your social interactional skills?

This question is a follow-up to question items six and seven. It aims to shed light on the relationship between staying abroad and language proficiency, that is, the influence of authentic exposure to target language on the overall communicative performance of a non-native language user.

Responses to this question item revealed that among teachers who travelled to the UK or the US, 100% said ‘Yes’. Accordingly, they indirectly confirmed the positive correlation between residence abroad and pragmatic competence and general language proficiency. Interestingly, this goes in line with Kinginger’s point of view (2009) by which he suggested that residence abroad is essential in the development of communicative competence and often learners believe that the only way to comprehensively learn a language is through spending time abroad.

Accessing to target language input would benefit the development of communicative and pragmatic competencies of language users during their stay abroad. According to Roever (2012), for example, even short stays in the target country seem to influence the production of situational routines and the overall pragmatic development.

Interestingly, the same thought was previously confirmed by Carroll (1967) who found that even a short duration abroad (touring or during the summer) had a positive effect on foreign language proficiency with more linguistic gains and developed socio-cultural skills.

5.1.4. Question Item Nine

Has your personal experience with English native speakers been a tangible asset to you as a teacher?

This question is related to question item eight. In this specific question, the researcher tried to emphasize the importance of interacting with native speakers to English teachers and to show how they benefited from that contact in their teaching career.

As the following figure reveals, the ‘Yes’ response was the response of all teachers (100%) who travelled to the UK or the US.

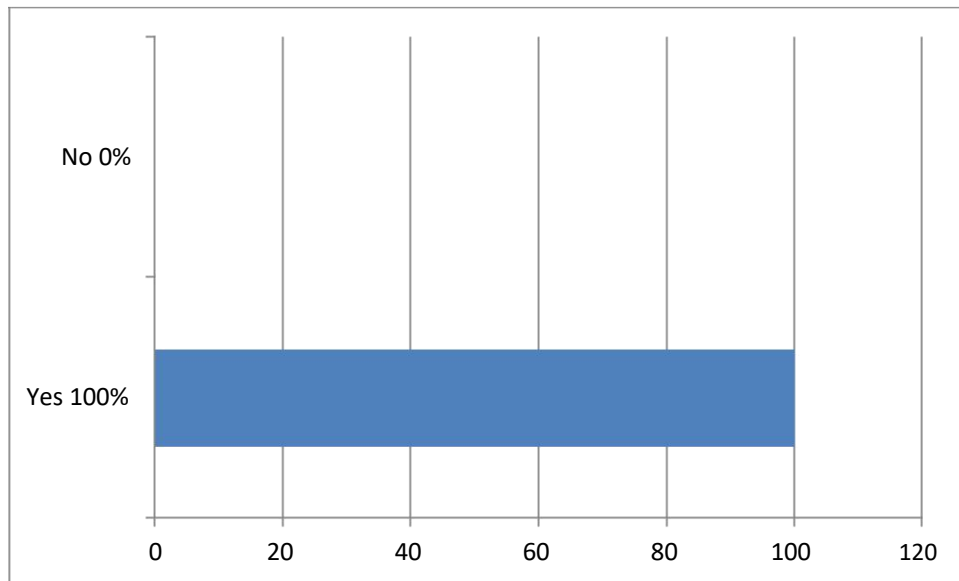


Figure 5.4: Effect of Teachers' Experience with English Natives on Teaching Performance

69% of teachers were not concerned with answering this question as they have never been in the UK or the US. The others (31%), however, chose 'Yes' as an answer. As for the benefits of staying abroad, the teachers who answered 'Yes' gave different ones. The following are some examples:

-“It has raised my awareness of cultural differences.”

-“The fact that one talks to native speakers enables one to gain self-confidence, a necessary element in the teaching job.”

-“It enhances the teacher’s mastery of the language and gives him more skills to be a good communicator in the class.”

It is safe now to say that staying abroad, even for a short time, is of prime importance to language users, especially for teachers who are responsible for developing their students’ language proficiency. Those teachers can serve as an intercultural facilitator and give students the space they need to express what they are experiencing and not just lecture them about

what they are going through. Teachers who believe in the effectiveness of modern approaches to language teaching, such as communicative and pragmatic approaches, can easily play that role and know how to speak effectively to students, especially with those who think that they know all about intercultural relations and differences because the world is suddenly ‘globalized’, but have had no real practice of living on their own in another culture.

An overall readiness for cross-cultural contact does not only depend on linguistic proficiency and theoretical rules, it also depends on one’s acculturation and intercultural sensitivity. Accordingly, the pairing of language proficiency with the development of intercultural and pragmatic competencies has the potential for increasing intercultural and pragmatic sensitivity, and avoiding the emergence of ‘fluent language users’ who speak, but commit endless cultural and pragmatic faux pas, offending their hosts in perfect syntax.

5.1.5. Question Item Ten

What kind of competencies, do you think, successful communication most frequently hinges upon?

- a. Pragmatic competence*
- b. Communicative competence*
- c. Grammatical competence*
- d. All*
- e. Others, (please specify!)*

This question intends to elicit the teachers’ opinions about which competence(s) is/are needed most for successful communication. The following figure summarizes the teachers’ responses to this specific question:

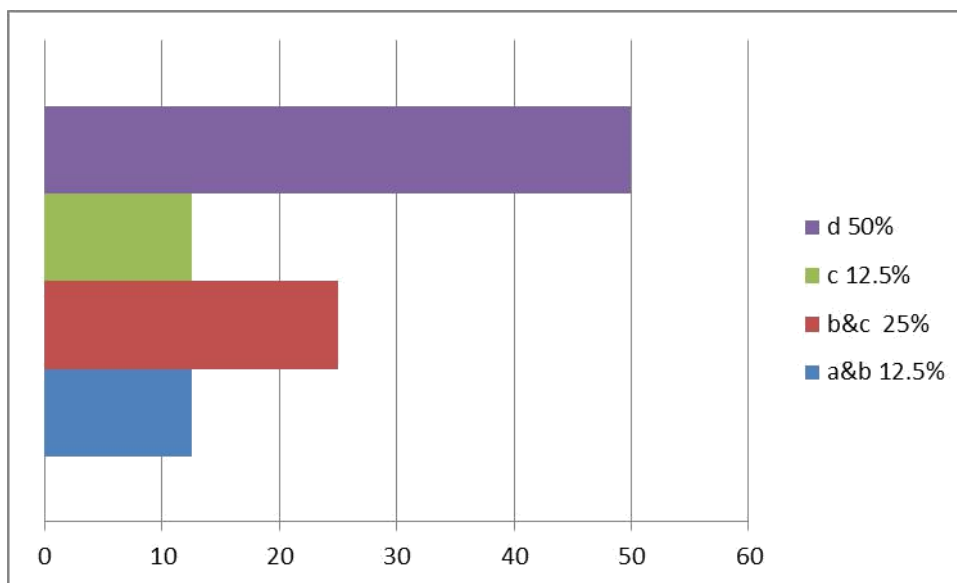


Figure 5.5: Most Needed Competency for Successful Communication

Teachers indicated different beliefs about the most required competence(s) that should be present for creating an effective communicative interaction. On the one hand, within the sub-class of teachers who travelled to an English country speaking, all of them 100% selected answer 'd'; that is all competencies are most frequently used for performing and creating successful communication. On the other hand, within the sub-class of teachers who did not travel to an English-speaking country, 50% of them chose the same answer as those who travelled to the UK or the US. The others, however, gave different answers. 12.5% of them chose both pragmatic and communicative competencies, 25% of them chose communicative and grammatical competencies and 12.5% of them selected communicative competence. Accordingly, one is inclined to believe that the teachers who travelled to an English speaking country are aware of the importance of each kind of competencies for communication which a language user has to develop. They included pragmatic competence within their responses as they believe it is a much more specific concept contrary to communicative competence which has a broader scope. Pragmatic competence, however, is not only this capacity; it also encompasses the appropriateness of what is said by the speaker according to the context. It is

the “ability to use language appropriately according to the communicative situation.” (Garcia, 2004:1) According to Celce-Murcia and Olshtain:

Human communication fulfills many different goals at the personal and social levels. We communicate information, ideas, beliefs, emotions, and attitudes to one another in our daily interactions, and we construct and maintain our positions within various social contexts by employing appropriate language forms and performing speech activities to ensure solidarity, harmony, and cooperation – or to express disagreement or displeasure, when called for. The acquisition of communication skills in one’s first language is a lifelong process, but the basic skills are acquired quite early in life. When learning another language, we have to add to, change, and readjust our native language strategies to fit the new language and culture (2000:3).

Pragmatic competence is an important component of language for successful communication in that it encompasses knowledge and ability to use and interpret utterances appropriately (Kasper, 1997). Without it, communication would easily breakdown and more communication misunderstandings would occur when two or more languages and cultures meet. That is how one can explain that grammatically competent non-native speakers of a foreign language cannot understand native speakers of that language when interacting. Therefore, it is important for non-native speakers to understand that successful communication needs more than linguistic competence. They must be aware of the way a foreign language is used in each context and the socio-cultural norms for communication that govern that use.

Although many teachers are worried about developing grammatical/linguistic competence in the students, being grammatically/ linguistically competent is not enough to guarantee success in communication. Communication success involves much more than grammatical knowledge. Actually, there are several factors that can make speakers successful

or not in the communicative situation in which they are involved, pragmatic knowledge is one of them.

5.1.6. Question Item Eleven

What are the communicative difficulties into which your learners generally run?

- a. Lexical deficiency*
- b. Syntactical deficiency*
- c. Lack in the appropriate use of language*
- d. All of them*

Question number eleven enquires into the English learners' communicative problems and their causes.

Among the teachers' responses to this specific question, 72% believed their students to have lexical and syntactical difficulties when communicating. They also believed that their students' communicative difficulties are the result of the students' lack of understanding the appropriate use of language, i.e., pragmatic knowledge deficiency.

All in all, 100% of the teachers opted for answer 'c' in their answers. That is, a significant number of teachers' choice of the item 'lack in appropriate use of language' as a major difficulty is remarkable. One possible reason for this lack in appropriate use of language could be the learners' lack of prior experiences in authentic interactions in English due to the very nature of EFL contexts and mostly grammar-based language teaching in such contexts. Although they reach a certain level of language proficiency, they usually lack experience in using English language outside the classroom. Therefore, they may have difficulty orienting themselves in English to such authentic interactions framed by institutional constraints.

The following figure gives statistical details:

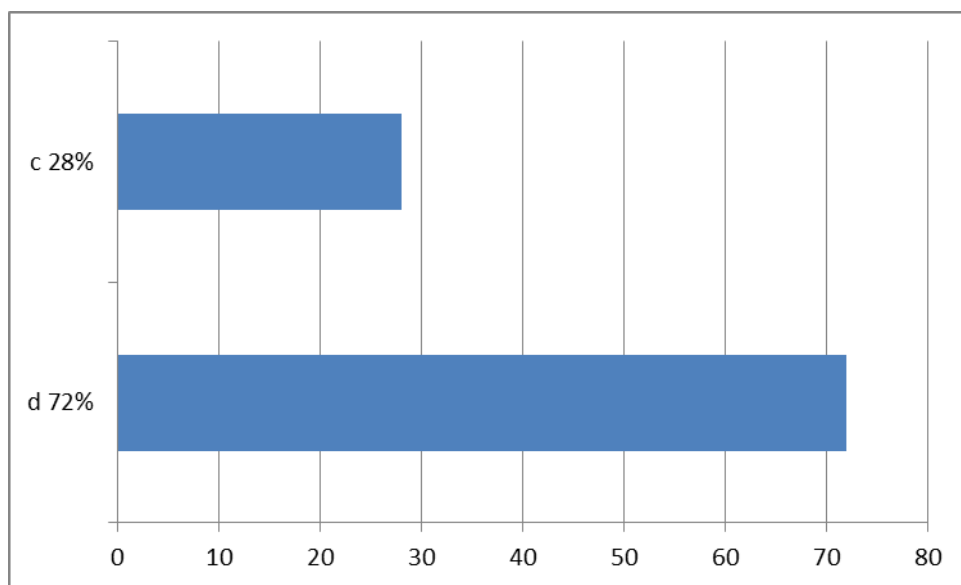


Figure 5.6: Learners' Communicative Problems in using English

5.1.7. Question Item Twelve

Do your grammatically competent learners show the same prowess at the pragmatic end of the linguistic spectrum?

The aim behind such a question is to see how teachers evaluate the pragmatic development of their grammatically competent students. In other words, the question is designed to figure out the relationship between the grammatical development and the pragmatic performance of English learners.

Details of the teachers' responses to this question item are displayed in the following figure:

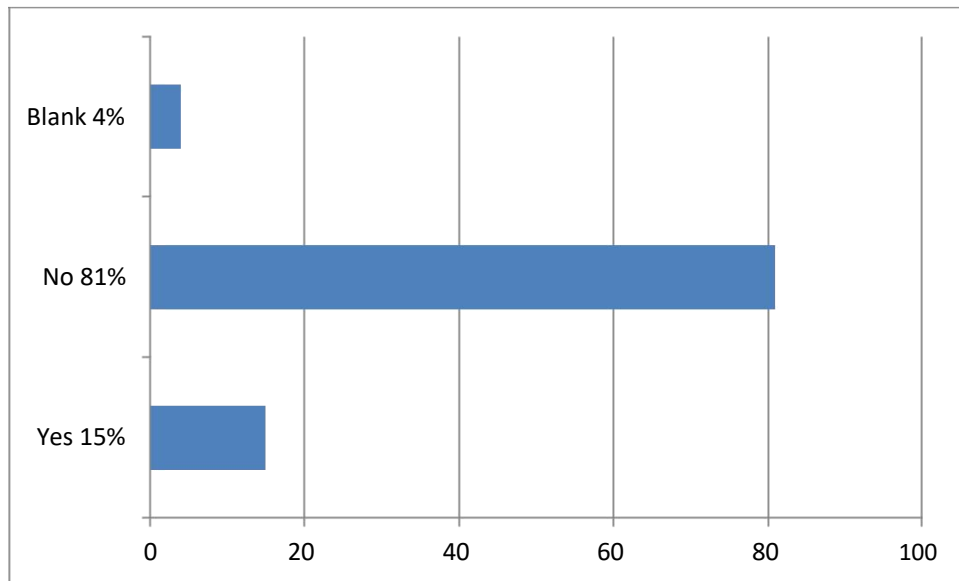


Figure 5.7: Relationship between Grammatical Development and Pragmatic Performance

As the above table shows, only 15% of teachers confirmed that their grammatically competent learners show the same prowess at the pragmatic end of the linguistic spectrum. One of the teachers (4%), however, chose neither 'Yes' nor 'No'. Interestingly, the teacher suggested another answer: 'Don't know'.

It is found that the teachers' responses to question eleven, about the communicative difficulties learners' generally face, correspond to their responses in this question (question 12) about the evaluation of pragmatic competence of linguistically proficient students.

Lack of pragmatic knowledge is most evident among EFL learners while communicating with people from other cultures. EFL teachers mostly concentrate on the grammar and vocabulary, and do not pay sufficient attention to the pragmatic or socio-cultural dimensions of the target language. Therefore, EFL learners may violate social norms of the target language because they lack pragmatic competence (Thomas, 1983; Leech, 1983; Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei, 1998). According to Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1991), the development of grammatical competence in second/foreign language usually takes place

without the development of the necessary pragmatic competence. This absence of pragmatic competence is one of the major causes of communicative breakdowns that may take place when proficient learners are engaged in different communicative interactions with native speakers.

Even with excellent knowledge of the second/foreign language grammar and lexicon, learners may still fail to convey pragmatically appropriate expression (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984; Koike, 1989). In the same line of thought, Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei (1998) and Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985), reported that grammatical competence does not necessarily reflect the same level of pragmatic competence. 81% of the surveyed teachers were actually aware of this fact as they have experienced it in reality with many of their students who showed an insufficient pragmatic knowledge which is reflected in their endless and unforgivable pragmatic errors.

5.1.8. Question Item Thirteen

Do you prefer a particular approach to be followed in teaching English as a foreign language?

The aim of this question is to investigate the teachers' attitudes towards different teaching approaches. It focuses on the teachers' preferences, at the University of Constantine 1, in teaching English as a foreign language. In the following figure, teachers' responses are displayed.

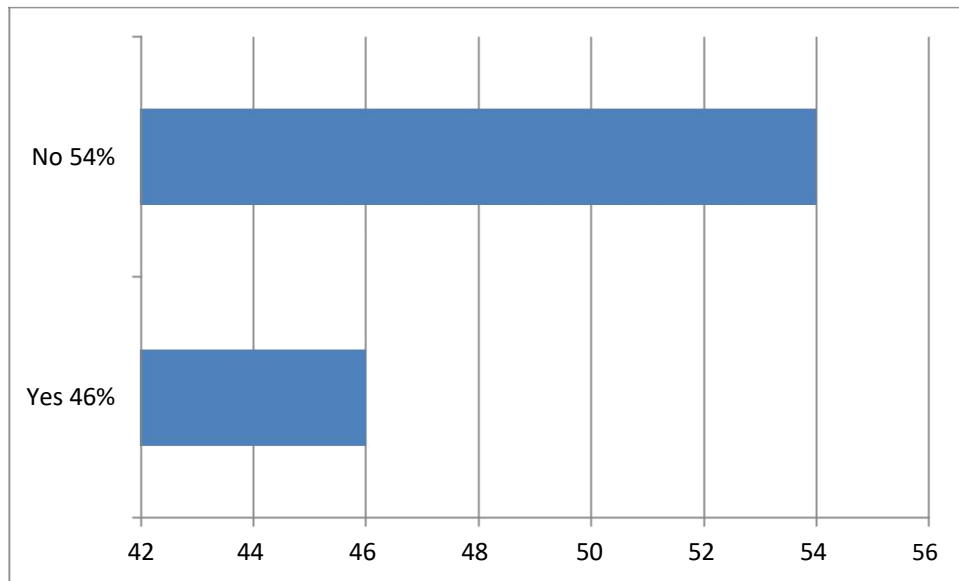


Figure 5.8: Teachers' Attitudes towards Different Teaching Approaches

The results revealed that 54% of teachers preferred no particular approach in English language teaching. The rest 46%, however, showed differences in foreign language teaching preferences. Within this sub-class of teachers, 50% of them held favourable attitudes towards communicative language teaching as “it seems to meet the objectives of teaching English as a FL because it does not focus only on the form, but also the use of language in different social contexts.” 50% of teachers, however, mentioned other different approaches such as the structural approach and the cognitive approach without giving any explanation to their preferences. Additionally, another teacher stated ‘the teacher approach’ as his/her way of teaching. The teacher justified his/her choice by the following: “The teacher approach, a broad of eclecticism which is second to none! Every academic year we deal with different students with different needs. Insofar I know, there is no standard approach to follow.”

Teachers' preferences are of prime importance for understanding their beliefs and practices as they reflect how teachers shape their students' learning environment and influence students' motivation and achievement. Interestingly, the statistical results further

showed that many teachers are still influenced by the traditional approaches to foreign language teaching, which means, in turn, that they believe in the effectiveness of such approaches in improving the students' language proficiency and overall communicative performance.

5.1.9. Question Item Fourteen

Do you have any experience with a pragmatic approach to teaching English?

This question seeks to find out whether or not teachers had an experience with a pragmatic approach to English teaching. The aim behind asking this question is to see whether the pragmatic approach had been practically employed in the English classrooms at the University of Constantine 1.

The following figure shows the statistical details:

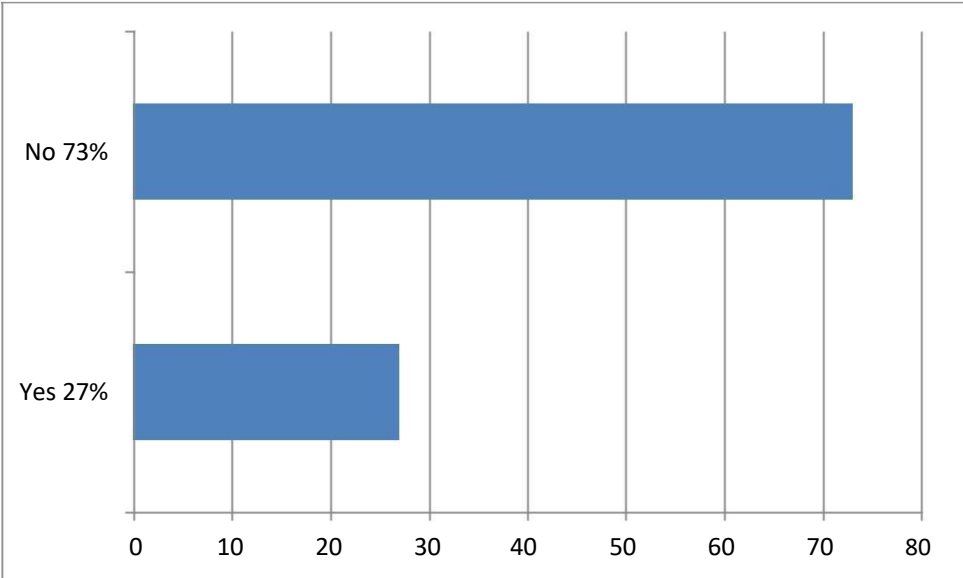


Figure 5.9: Teachers' Experience with the Pragmatic Approach to Teaching English

In response to this question, 73% of the teachers said that they had no experience with a pragmatic approach to teaching English. The others (27%), however, put a 'Yes' answer as they had already employed such an approach in their teaching career. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the pragmatic approach is not preferred and used by English teachers at the University of Constantine 1.

Teachers' answers for this question suggested their tendency to teacher-centred approaches which are least practical and more theoretical and memorizing, where learners are not assigned any active role in their learning process. They are treated as empty containers teachers filled with bits of information about the English language rules. This can explain the unsatisfactory pragmatic and communicative performance of most students. It can be also suggested as evidence to what has been concluded in the analysis of the previous question.

5.1.10. Question Item Fifteen

Were you comfortable with using the pragmatic approach in the classroom?

This question is a follow up to the previous one and looks for teachers' attitudes towards using a pragmatic approach in EFL teaching. It targets teachers who selected answer 'a' in answering question item 14, which required them to say whether they had any experience with the pragmatic approach to teaching English. It is an indirect question which inquires about the teachers' attitudes towards the pragmatic-based approach to English teaching.

Teaching, in fact, is not all about the teacher's competence; it is also about the teacher's attitudes and feelings. According to Hargreaves:

Good teaching is charged with positive emotion. It is not just a matter of knowing one's subject, being efficient, having correct

competencies, or learning all the right techniques. Good teachers are not just well oiled machines. They are emotional, passionate beings who connect with their students and fill their work and classes with pleasure, creativity, challenge and joy (1994:835).

Undoubtedly, good teaching includes the ability to transfer knowledge to students in an effective way. This, in fact, cannot be created without the teacher's feeling comfortable with the teaching approach used.

With regard to teachers at the Department of English, at the University of Constantine 1, who had an experience with using the pragmatic approach, figure 5.10 shows that only two teachers expressed their discomfort with using this approach in teaching English. The others, however, answered with 'Yes'; that is, they had no difficulty with using such an approach in their teaching.

In statistical terms, 71% of teachers said they were comfortable and a small minority (29%) were uncomfortable as the following figure shows.

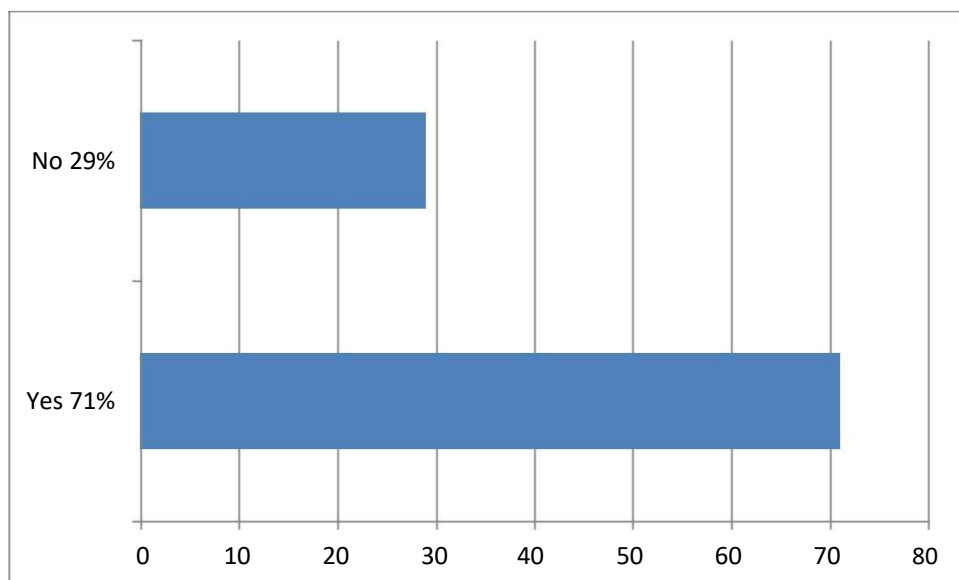


Figure 5.10: Teachers' Attitudes towards Using the Pragmatic Approach in EFL Teaching

5.1.11. Question Item Sixteen

Were your learners comfortable when you used the pragmatic approach?

This question is a follow-up to the previous one (question item 15). As teachers were asked about their attitudes towards pragmatic approach in teaching, they were also asked about their students' attitudes towards the same approach.

The main reason for asking this question is the belief that the quality of learning in foreign language classrooms does not depend solely on the teachers' competence and attitudes. Students' motivation also plays a vital role that should be not neglected. Such motivation, in fact, needs a safe and supportive environment, i.e., anxiety-free environment.

Students feel motivated and stimulated to learn and actively collaborate with the teachers when they feel comfortable with the way they are taught. The students' emotional and behavioural engagement in the learning process is positively correlated with the interest factor which is, in turn, influenced by certain environment factors such as teacher behaviour (Mazer, 2012). Thus, question item fifteen is not only about students' attitudes toward the pragmatic approach; it is also about their interest in learning the pragmatic elements of the English language.

In statistical terms, most teachers (57%) believed that their students were comfortable with using the pragmatic approach in learning. The rest (43%), however, said that their students were not and had a negative attitude towards learning pragmatics. In the following figure, the statistical results are displayed.

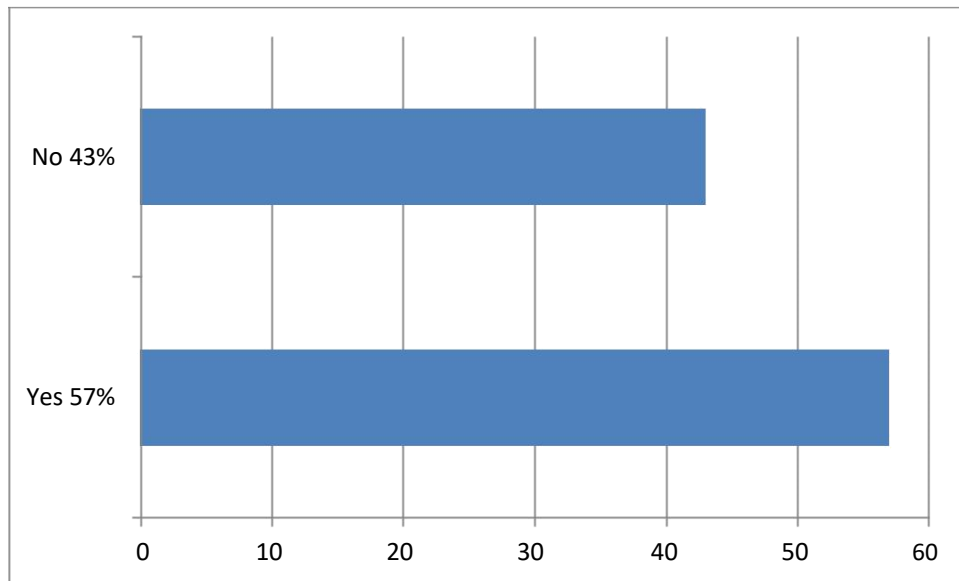


Figure 5.11: Students' Attitudes towards using the Pragmatic Approach in Teaching

Interestingly, the results further showed that the teachers were knowledgeable about their learners' attitudes towards pragmatics.

5.1.12. Question Item Seventeen

Was the use of a pragmatic approach of any help in enhancing your learners' pragmatic communicative strategies?

This question is intended to get the teachers' opinions about the importance of using a pragmatic approach in enhancing their learners' pragmatic communicative strategies.

In answering this question, only two teachers (29%) who experienced pragmatic approach in English teaching answered negatively. The majority of teachers (71%), however, confirmed the important role a pragmatic approach plays in enhancing the pragmatic communicative strategies of English learners.

It is worth mentioning that their answers were not based on theoretical beliefs. Yet, their practical experiences with such an approach in dealing with English teaching were the main source for their confirmation. In the following figure, the statistical results are displayed.

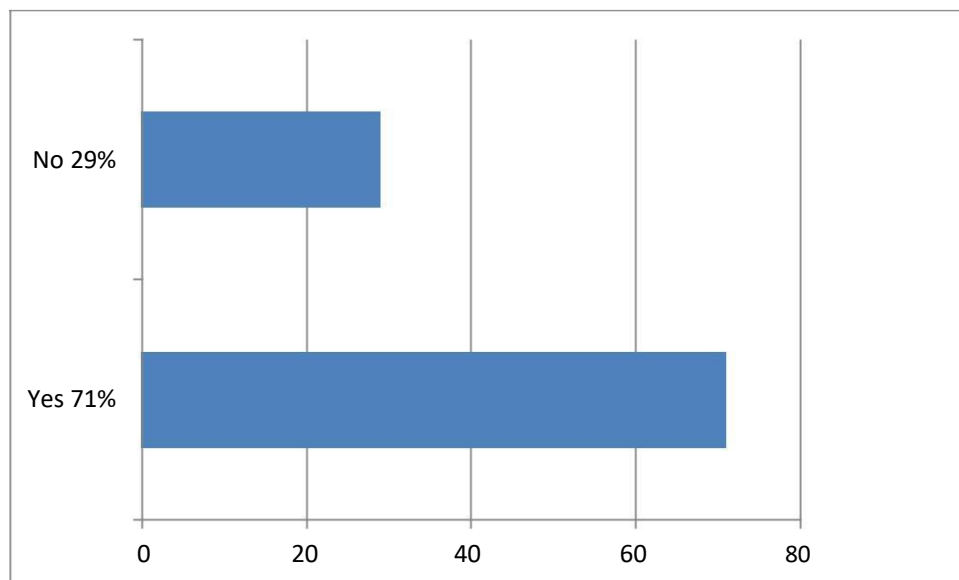


Figure 5.12: Importance of the Pragmatic Approach in enhancing Pragmatic Communicative Strategies

The teachers' positive responses to this question item suggested that the implementation of a pragmatic oriented approach to English teaching can have a positive influence on the development of pragmatic communicative strategies. This can be said to be one of the main real contributions to language teaching and learning that can be brought by a pragmatic approach. This, in turn, came as a confirmation to the hypothesis on which the present research is based.

5.1.13. Question Item Eighteen

Does the use of a pragmatic approach facilitate the overall English learning process?

This question enquires into the teachers' opinions about the efficiency of such an approach in the whole English learning process.

Of a total number of the respondents, 23% believed that the use of a pragmatic approach has a positive impact on the overall English learning process. The other teachers (77%), however, said that they do not believe in the efficiency of such an approach in the English learning process.

In the following figure, the statistical results are displayed:

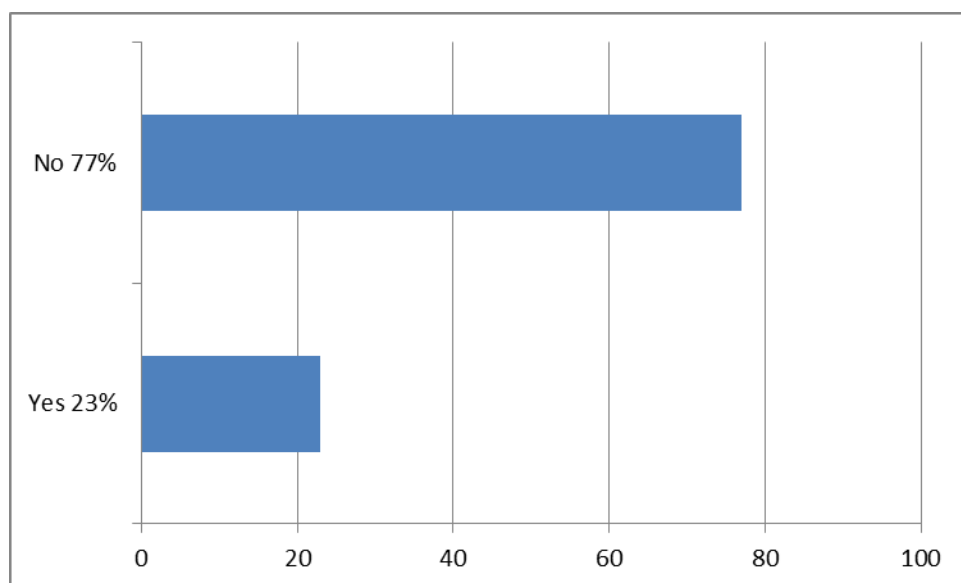


Figure 5.13: Efficiency of the Pragmatic Approach in Learning

It is worth mentioning that this question is designed for all teachers; both those who experienced using a pragmatic approach in English learning and those who did not. For those teachers who answered negatively, they were statistically and analytically found to belong to the second category of teachers who had no experience with using such an approach. Thus, one may conclude that their belief is based on theoretical grounds and not on a practical experience.

As to the second category of teachers who had positive attitudes towards the efficiency of the pragmatic approach to the overall English learning, results showed that most of them had already experienced such an approach in their teaching. Accordingly, one can safely say that their answers were based on their real teaching experience and authentic practice.

5.1.14. Question Item Nineteen

On what kind of knowledge do you focus when you teach?

The intention behind this question is to find out on which sort of knowledge teachers focus when they teach English.

To determine the teachers' beliefs about effective English language teaching, a list of four items was presented as follows:

- a- Linguistic knowledge (e.g. grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation),
- b- Cultural knowledge,
- c- Communicative skills, and
- d- Knowledge on how to use and interpret English appropriately.

The following figure summarizes the statistical findings of teachers' responses to this question:

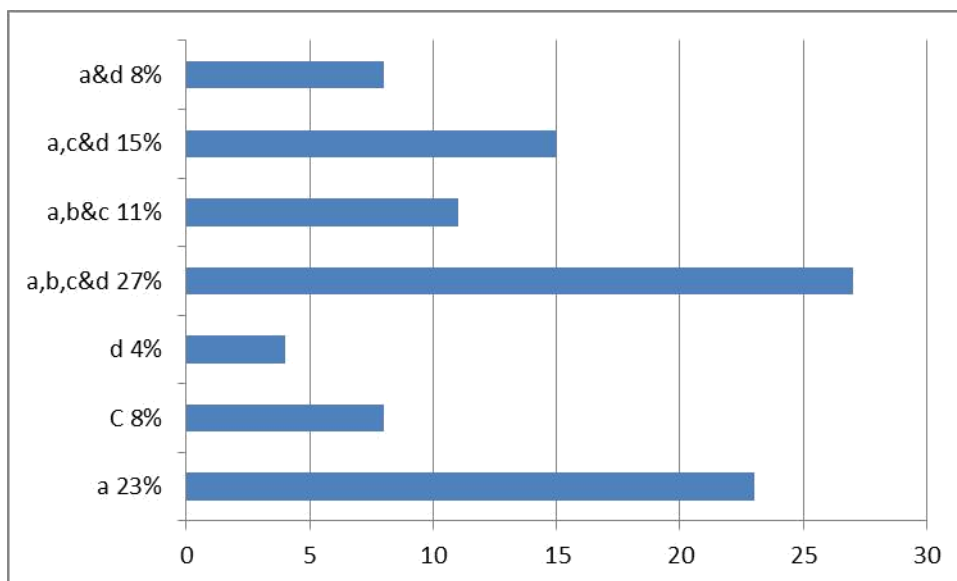


Figure 5.14: Teachers' Beliefs about Effective English Language Teaching

As the above figure reveals, teachers showed different preferences about the kind of knowledge they focus on when teaching. 27% of them selected all the four items (linguistic knowledge), cultural knowledge, communicative skills, and knowledge on how to use and interpret English appropriately. Some others (11%) chose answers 'a, b and c'. Some other teachers (23%) preferred answer 'a' (linguistic knowledge). Some of them (15%), however, selected answers 'a, c and d' (linguistic knowledge, communicative skills and knowledge on how to use and interpret English appropriately). Two other teachers (8%) focused on the communicative skills only and one teacher (4%) said that s/he only focuses on 'a and c'. Answers 'a' and 'd' as a set were chosen by only two teachers and the answer 'd' by itself which is related to pragmatic competence was selected by only one teacher.

All in all, one can conclude that the teachers' perceptions of effective teaching and learning processes differed significantly. Accordingly, they emphasized different types of knowledge which they considered of prime importance for achieving satisfactory results in the learning process. One of the teachers wrote, as a comment, "It depends on the objective

behind each lecture, but all of these aspects of teaching and learning a target language are important.”

Another possible reason for the differences in belief may lie in the nature of the module(s) they teach at university. Teaching grammar, for example, does not need cultural knowledge or communicative skills. It only needs linguistic knowledge.

5.1.15. Question Item Twenty

How important is pragmatic awareness in determining speech/language appropriateness?

- a. very important*
- b. Important*
- c. Not important*

The aim of asking this question is to elicit the teachers’ opinions about the importance of pragmatic awareness in determining speech/language appropriateness.

Interestingly, all teachers confirmed the positive correlation between pragmatic awareness and the appropriate use of language. Their answers varied from important (42%) to very important (58%).

The following figure summarizes the statistical findings of the teachers’ responses to this question:

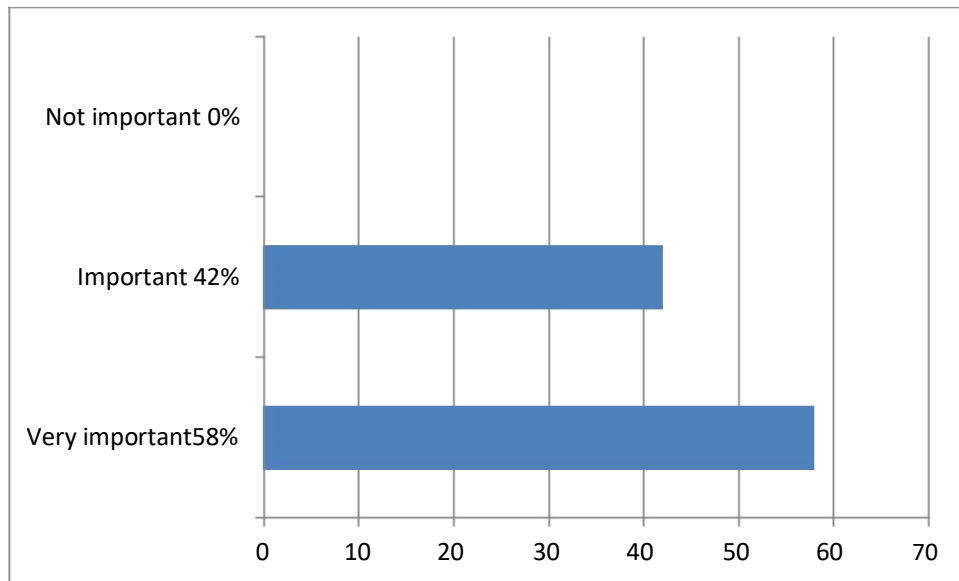


Figure 5.15: Importance of Pragmatic Awareness in Acquiring Language Appropriateness

The emphasis they put on pragmatic awareness reflected their awareness of the importance of pragmatic awareness as one of the fundamental component of communication competency and second/foreign language proficiency.

The positive correlation between the learners' pragmatic competence/awareness and their language proficiency is best expressed by Kasper who stated the following: "In order to communicate successfully in a target language, pragmatic competence in a second/foreign language [...] must be reasonably well developed." (1997:106)

Grammatically perfect sentences do not necessarily represent appropriate performance of a language. Without considering the context and adaptation to pragmatic norms in each language, those sentences may still be considered inappropriate or offensive despite the fact that no grammatical errors are made. Therefore, pragmatic competence is essential in order to communicate successfully in a target environment. A lack of pragmatic understanding often results in cross-cultural misunderstanding and may affect interpersonal relationships (Chang, 2011; Olshtain and Blum-Kulka, 1985) or result in even more serious consequences for communication (Cruz, 2013).

The teachers' responses to this question merely showed that they thought well of pragmatic knowledge, but did not systematically teach it as shown by their answers to question item nineteen (19). In answering this question item which asks on which kind of knowledge they focus when they teach, many teachers (46%) did not include 'knowledge on how to use and interpret English appropriately'.

Accordingly, one can conclude that some teachers' teaching beliefs are radically different from their teaching practices. Evidence for such a conclusion can be traced in the teachers' answers to question ten which revealed that some teachers think that pragmatic competence is not needed for successful communication.

It consequently appears that pragmatic awareness should be given enough attention by further advocacy for curriculum in EFL contexts.

5.1.16. Question Item Twenty One

Do you stress the need and importance of incorporating pragmatics to foreign language teaching?

This question is designed to elicit the teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of pragmatics.

The responses voiced by the teachers showed that they were aware of the importance of teaching pragmatics along with the English language. All of them (100%) were in favour of teaching pragmatics along with the English language.

In fact, pragmatics earns its significance from enabling language learners to be appropriate in their use and interpretation of language. Studying the field of pragmatics engages the learner in studying different types of discourse and participating in speech events of varying complexity and length (Taguchi, 2011; Rose and Kasper, 2001). It consequently

appears that pragmatic awareness should be given enough attention by further advocacy to be incorporated in English language curricula in EFL contexts. Once more, the results of data that were gained in this question and the previous one confirmed the hypothesis on which the present research is based.

5.1.17. Question Item Twenty Two

What kind of competence do you think is necessary to improve the learners' pragmatic communicative strategies?

The aim behind asking this question is to elicit the teachers' opinions about which competence is necessary for enhancing pragmatic communicative strategies. The competencies which were most mentioned by the participating teachers were both pragmatic and communicative. One teacher (4%), however, thought that linguistic competence is the most required one for improving the learners' pragmatic communicative strategies. Some teachers (15%) preferred not to answer.

The following figure gives the statistical details:

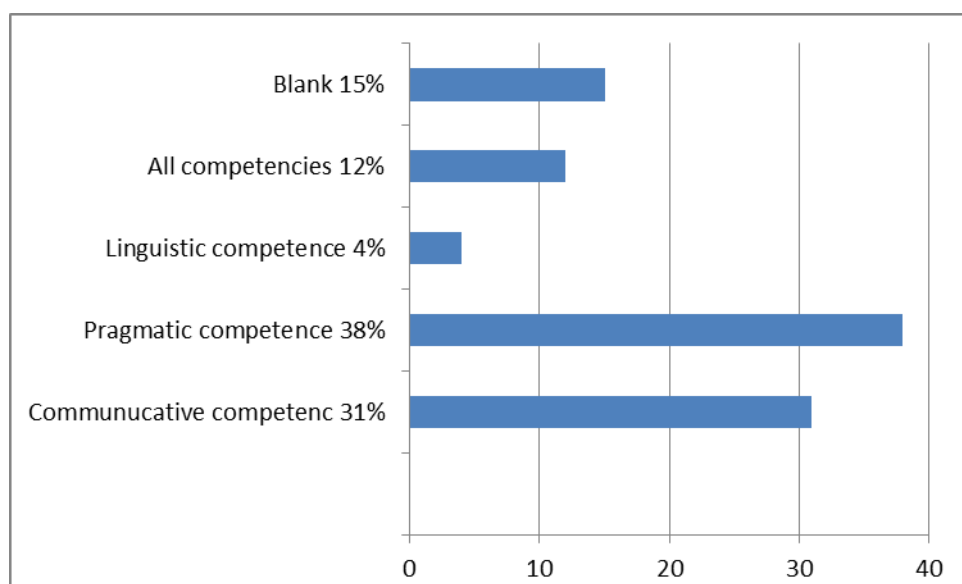


Figure 5.16: Necessary Competence for Enhancing Pragmatic Communicative Strategies

The responses voiced by some of the teachers showed that they were aware of the recent movements in the field of foreign language learning and teaching. As to those who mentioned linguistic competence, one can assume that they still believe in the effectiveness of the traditional approaches in developing the pragmatic communicative skills of foreign language learners.

5.1.18. Question Item Twenty Three

Do you resort to consciousness-raising activities on all speech acts realizations?

This question is a follow-up question to the previous one and inquires about one of the teaching practices in the classroom that is associated with pragmatic competence, narrowly speaking, with the pragmatic approach activities.

The answers provided by the teachers served as a basis to check whether there was a link between their beliefs about the teaching of pragmatics and their everyday teaching practices.

With regard to the teachers' responses, 19% of the teachers said that they employ consciousness-raising activities on all speech acts realization. One of those teachers wrote: "This is simply to try to create in them [...] the desire to learn a language with all its components, one of which is the pragmatic value- but in vain!!"

The majority of teachers (81%) confirmed that they do not use such activities when teaching. One of these teachers added the following further comment: "Priority to linguistic knowledge." In the same line of thought, some other teachers who answered 'No' justified their answer by saying that time and the students' levels do not help. They believed

that such activities cannot be used unless students have achieved other competencies, mainly the grammatical one. In the following figure, the statistical results are displayed:

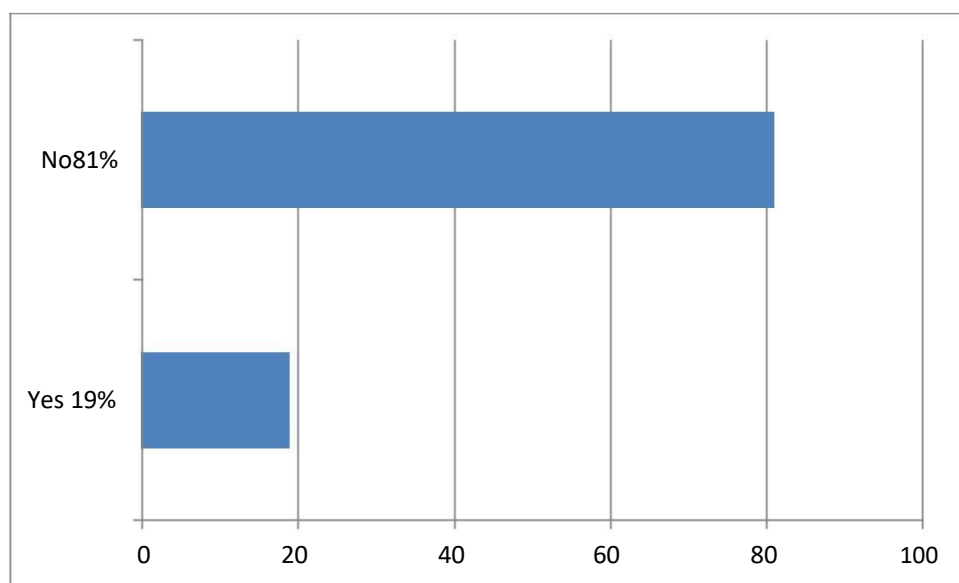


Figure 5.17: Teachers' Resorting to Consciousness-Raising Activities on All Speech Acts

Taking into consideration the teachers' responses to this question, one can notice that these responses do not correspond to their responses to the previous question which is about the teachers' theoretical beliefs about pragmatic competence and its importance for EFL learners. Accordingly, it is safe to say that their practices in lecture rooms tend to be more traditional than modern and pragmatic competence oriented.

It is worth mentioning that other studies came to the same conclusion. For example, Sato and Kleinsasser, (1999) found that EFL teachers mainly employed traditional practices in class. Similarly, Penner (1995) concluded that EFL teachers found it difficult to change the classical traditional approach to language teaching and implement a more modern approach. They favoured traditional ways of teaching (Gorsuch, 2000). In the same line of thought, Gamal and Debra (2001) came to conclude that EFL teachers showed unwillingness to use communicative activities.

5.1.19. Question Item Twenty Four

What kind of activities do you use or allot more time-space to in your class?

- a. Reading professional literature, such as books, journals, evidence-based papers and thesis papers;*
- b. Engaging in formal and informal discussions with your learners on a constellation of issues;*
- c. Role-plays;*
- d. Using video-types, watching English TV (programmes and movies) and listening to radio programmes;*
- e. Using the Internet; chatting with English native-speakers and playing language games.*
- f. Others (specify, please.)'*

The aim behind putting such question is to find out the teachers' different practices in classrooms and on which activities they focus when teaching.

This question lists six items, some of which are said to be learner-centred activities and some others that are common teacher-centred activities. The sixth option, however, is given as a space where the teachers could name other classroom activities they focus on when teaching.

Findings from this question reflected the interaction of beliefs with teaching practices, i.e., to see the extent of correspondence between responses in questions 21 and 24. Notably, none of the teachers added or mentioned other activities.

The following table gives statistical details about the frequency of responses:

Answer	Frequency
a	5
b	12
c	10
d	23
e	2
f	0

Table 5.1: Teachers' Different Classroom Practices

Findings indicated that the activities most of the teachers reported they use regularly are: 'd' 'Using video-types, watching English TV (programmes and movies) and listening to radio programmes.' and 'b' 'Engaging in formal and informal discussions with your learners on a constellation of issues.'

These two most frequently used activities refer to two different teaching styles, namely the teacher-centred teaching style and the learner-centred teaching style. However, learner-centred instruction is more suitable for the more autonomous, and more self-directed learners who do not only participate in what, how and when to learn, but also construct their own learning experience.

Responses to other activities demonstrated differences of choices and dependency of uses among teachers. Role play, which is associated with learner-centred instruction, came in the third position with (31%) followed by reading professional literature (15%) which is related to teacher-centred instruction.

Using the internet in classroom was the most often classified in the last position. 8% of teachers do not use it for teaching. Such activity is associated with learner-centred instruction

that helps in developing general communicative ability through real contact with native speakers. Yet, most teachers were not interested in selecting such an activity.

It is possible that the teachers are aware of using the internet and chatting with native speakers as an important communicative activity, but it is not being practiced by most of the teachers because of physical circumstances, such as crowded classrooms. It may be that the idea of chatting and playing language games at a university is also inconsistent with their understanding of language teaching.

Unfortunately, none of the teachers added or mentioned other activities; they only stuck to the proposed options.

Taking into consideration the teachers' responses to this question, it can be concluded that many of the participating teachers had a tendency to use teacher-centred instruction. They were more influenced by this specific teaching style in which students become passive learners or rather just recipients of teachers' knowledge and wisdom. Indeed, this is how students' educational growth can be prevented (Duckworth, 2009).

5.1.20. Question Item Twenty Five

What opportunities for developing English pragmatic communicative strategies are offered in your language classrooms?

- a. Teaching contextual-dependent strategies (that address different issues and situations) of successful communication;*
- b. Teaching recurrent speech situations along with how they can be managed;*

- c. *Teaching conventional routines and focusing more on newly created utterances/Teaching conventionalized pragmatic strategies in English speech community (formal and informal);*
- d. *Teaching and discussing all potential as well as actual communicative problems and providing effective strategies for treating them;*
- e. *Teaching speech acts appropriate realizations;*
- f. *Integrating different pragmatic elements in each lesson in a coherent way'*

This specific question seeks the teachers' opinions on how pragmatic communicative strategies can be developed and to elicit the teachers' perceptions about the sort of activities they believe are beneficial for pragmatic communicative strategies' enhancement.

The teachers' responses are summarized in the following table:

Teacher's Number	Teachers' answers
1	c
2	a b d f
3	d
4	a
5	b
6	a b c d
7	a d e f
8	b
9	a c e
10	b c d
11	a
12	f
13	b d f
14	a b d f
15	b c d f
16	f
17	c f
18	f
19	b d f
20	a c d f
21	f
22	c

23	a c d f
24	b
25	b c d
26	c f

Table 5.2: How to Develop Pragmatic Communicative Strategies

As suggested in the above table, teachers selected different opinions in different ways. It is worth mentioning that all the listed activities are meant to familiarize learners with English pragmatics and to develop their English pragmatic ability for being more fluent and proficient in using the English language.

Despite the fact that they are all of prime importance for enhancing the pragmatic communicative strategies of learners, the use of one or two activities is not sufficient for enhancing the pragmatic communicative strategies of learners. This is not to claim that choosing only one or two teaching practices is not appropriate, but it is not sufficient.

As suggested in the above table, two teachers (8%) selected two answers, namely ‘c and f’. Many others (46%), however, preferred to choose only one answer of the five proposed choices.

As language is not only about specific typical communicative interactions, teaching recurrent speech situations along with how they can be managed, for example, cannot satisfactorily enrich the learners’ pragmatic knowledge about the different pragmatic communicative strategies.

The scope of pragmatic ability is wide- ranging and includes the use of both linguistic and non-linguistic abilities for the purposes of communication (Perkins, 2007). Accordingly, the EFL learners need different opportunities, classroom activities and learning practices

which are addressed to different communicative situations in order to enrich their pragmatic communicative strategies.

As to the last option (g: Others, specify please.), it is worth mentioning that none of the teachers suggested other activities. They preferred to choose from the proposed items.

These teaching practices revealed that some teachers resort to traditional ways of teaching in which students have considerably fewer opportunities to enhance pragmatic communicative strategies.

5.1.21. Question Item Twenty Six

What effects, if any, do traditional and other various approaches to language learning and teaching have on pragmatic development?

The aim behind asking this question is to elicit the potential effects different teaching approaches may have on the pragmatic competence of EFL learners. The results indicated different teachers' beliefs about the impact of traditional and other teaching approaches on the pragmatic development. On the one hand, 31% of teachers believed that those approaches have no effects on the pragmatic development. On the other hand, 61% of teachers said that traditional approaches have a negative influence on the pragmatic development. Yet, they believed that some other fashionable approaches, such as the communicative language teaching approach, positively affect the target language pragmatic competence of learners. The rest of teachers (8%), however, acknowledged that they have no idea what to answer.

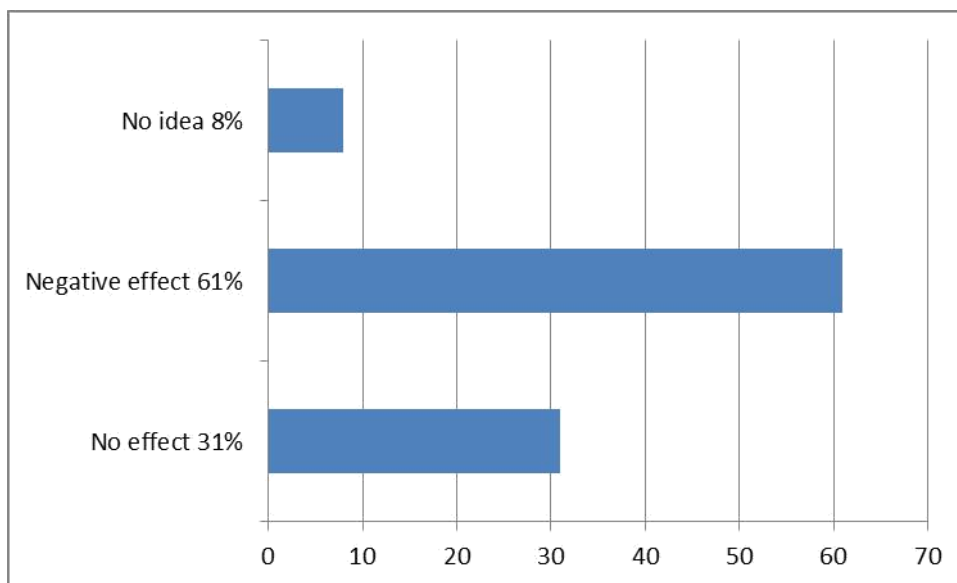


Figure 5.18: Impact of the Teaching Approaches on the Pragmatic Development

5.1. 22. Question Item Twenty Seven

This question provides teachers with a chance to impart their suggestions and additional comments with regard to the questionnaire’s content or the investigated subject itself.

Interestingly, all teachers who were interested in answering this question item emphasized the importance of pragmatics in the English learning and teaching processes. Some of them, however, further described the current situation in Algerian universities that hinder the effective teaching and learning processes. The following are some of those comments:

-“Pragmatic competence should be taken into account.”

-“For sure, anyone who wants to communicate effectively in English should be aware of pragmatic meaning. The problem is that the majority of students come with a wrong idea about English and the key aspects required for the mastery of English. What makes things

worse and hinders any attempt to focus on pragmatic competence is the educational atmosphere itself. To talk about developing their communicative abilities becomes a kind of fiction when they are unable to produce a correct English sentence.”

- “Our learners have changed from library-goers to bench-warmers lazing around in the university campus!! Your work, in concert with other work, has the merits that after all people are not indifferent to what’s going on in our [so called] colleges. Is this enough?

This sounds to be some sort of a pragmatic question necessitating a pragmatic person to give it a pragmatic answer.”

Conclusion

Findings of this chapter demonstrated that the participating Algerian teachers heavily emphasize the importance of pragmatic awareness for effective language learning. Most significantly, these teachers have positive attitudes towards the pragmatic approach and believe in its importance for enhancing the pragmatic communicative strategies of English FL learners. This fact came as a significant evidence for the hypothesis on which the present research is based.

It is worth mentioning that those teachers emphasize the importance of developing the learners’ pragmatic competence for being ‘real’ competent language users. In the following chapter, the pragmatic competence of one hundred-twenty English foreign language students will be tested.

Chapter Six

Analysis of the Learners' Test

Introduction

The present chapter reports on the findings gathered from the Written Discourse Completion Task that has been answered by one hundred and twenty first-year Master students of English.

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, data were evaluated and interpreted on the basis of both statistical and descriptive analyses. The use of such analyses is meant to support the aims of the present research which, as stated earlier, attempts to investigate the pragmatic communicative strategies that Algerian learners employ in their language performance, the different reasons for their communicative failure, and more importantly, to show the significance of pragmatics for developing the English learners' linguistic behaviour.

6.1. Data Analysis

As stated earlier, the data that were collected from the participants of this study were analysed to determine specific objectives. In the following, a description and discussion of the quantitative methodology followed in this study are presented. It is worth mentioning that the emphasis in the analysis of the participants' performance was laid on the pragmatic errors rather than the grammatical mistakes. Therefore, the participant's answers were reported without any modification or correction.

6.1.1. Section One: Personal Information

One hundred and twenty students participated in the pragmatic test (WDCT). They were all first-year Master students of English at the University of Constantine 1. Most of them (60%) evaluated their English pragmatic level as being good. The same evaluation has been given by 72% students for their overall English proficiency level.

Figures 6.1 and 6.2 below give further details.

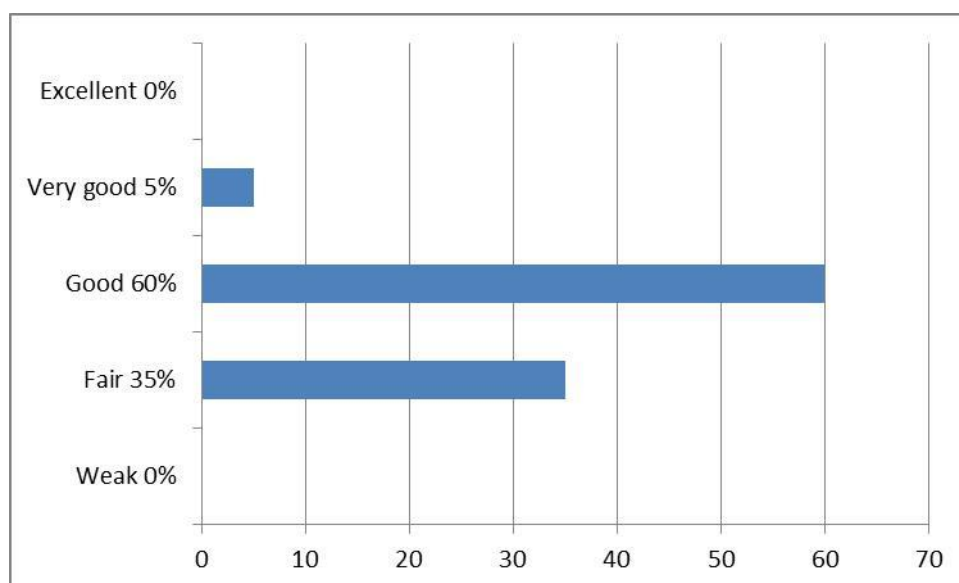


Figure 6.1: Students' Estimation of their English Pragmatic Level

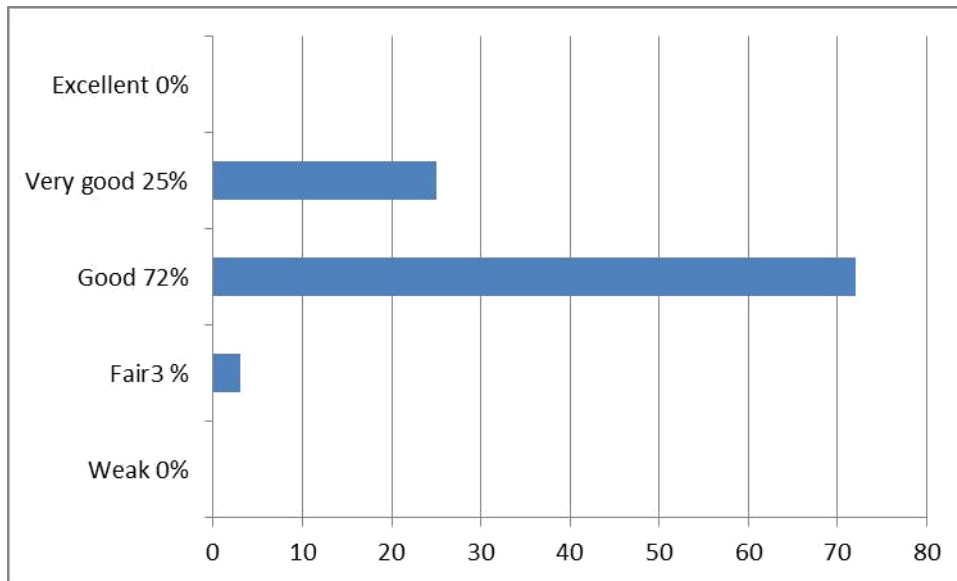


Figure 6.2: Students' Estimation of their Overall English Proficiency Level

Interestingly, none of the participants evaluated his/her pragmatic level or language proficiency level as being weak. Yet, some participants mentioned in their WDCTs that item one is the same as item two and they gave the same response for both questions (1 and 2). Two other respondents made the same comment to the researcher during the data collection process.

As for the question whether they are able to communicate effectively with English native speakers or not, 75% answered 'Yes' and 25% answered with 'No'.

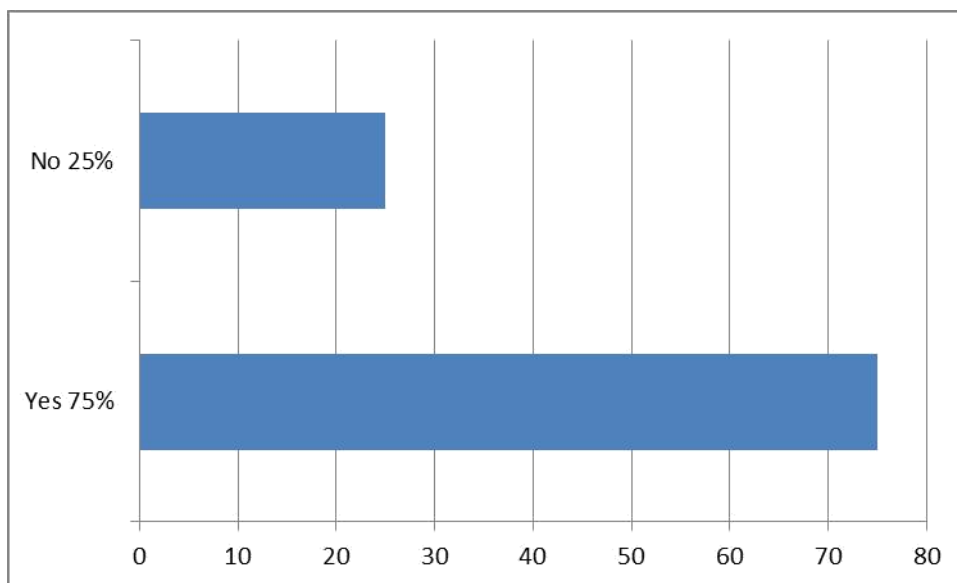


Figure 6.3: Students' Belief about their Effective Communication Ability with English Natives

In addition to the Algerian participants, twenty native speakers also completed the WDCT, ten Americans and ten British. As mentioned above, their responses serve as a standard against which the Algerian participants' responses are evaluated.

The information collected in this section was correlated with the learners' responses in the other sections of the test in order to come up with some conclusions.

6.1.2. Section Two: Speech Acts

Being socialized into a particular culture enables the speaker to be prepared for appropriate responses in different social contexts and to behave according to specific social rules that are associated with a given language. Every time the language user does not observe the norms of the target language culture, he/she runs the risk of appearing uncooperative, arrogant or offensive (Byram and Morgan, 1994).

To get insights into the participants' behaviour, this part of test put the participants in eight situations and required them to say how they would react in each.

6.1.2.1. Situation One

In this situation, the participants were asked to offer some help to a pregnant woman with her bags at the supermarket. The participants' answers were, as the following figure shows, classified on a five-item Likert Scale ranging from 'Very likely' (5) to 'Very unlikely' (1), passing through 'Likely' (4), 'Possibly' (3), and ending up with 'Not likely' (2).

To see how the respondents performed, figure 6.4 below gives the details of their responses:

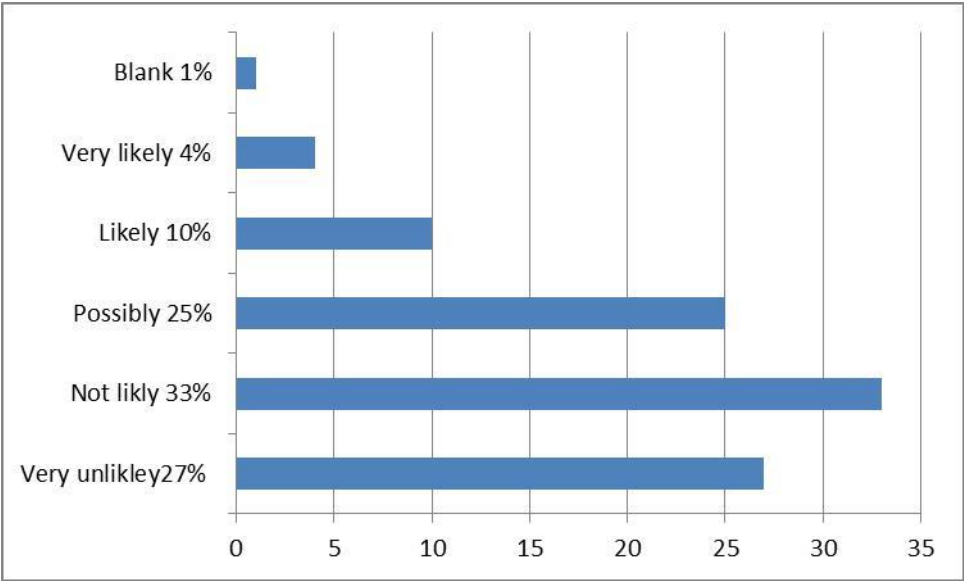


Figure 6.4: Students' Performance of the Speech Act of Offering

As shown in the above figure, 4% of the answers were rated 'Very likely', 10% of them were rated 'Likely', 25% were rated 'Possibly', 33% were rated 'Not likely' and 27% were rated 'Very unlikely'.

The mean was 1.43 with a standard deviation of 0.9.

With regard to the native speakers' responses, they answered using the following formulas:

- Excuse me, can I help you?
- Would you like me to help you?
- Please let me help you.
- Don't you like me to carry your bags? Are you ok?
- May I help you with your parcels?
- Can I give you a hand?
- Hey, could I help you carry your bags?
- Can I help you?
- Excuse me mom, would you like some help with those bags?
- That looks like a lot of work. Please, allow me to help you with those bags.
- It looks like you are having some difficulty. Would you like some help?

Brown and Levinson considered offers to be speech acts "that predicate some positive future act of S toward H, and in so doing put some pressure on H to accept or reject them." (1987:66). An offer can threaten the negative face of the hearer as he/she feels constrained to accept it. This infringement of the offerer is expressed by using certain negative politeness strategies to mitigate this instruction. In this respect, an offer not only intrudes into the addressee's privacy, it also imposes an obligation on the receiver's negative face (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

In such a context, many people do not feel comfortable about help with their purchases from strangers. Thus, the speakers have to use a great deal of conventional indirectness to avoid imposition. As suggested in the native speakers' (NSs) answers, this conventional indirectness takes different forms such as 'Excuse me', 'would you', 'may I..?', etc. Yet, the

utterance number '1' ('Excuse me, can I help you?') is highly respectful since it includes the formulaic entreaty which indicates that 'S' is apologising or begging for forgiveness for impinging on hearer (H) to do the FTA together with the modal 'can' or 'possible' (Ismail, 1998) . Such mixture aims to minimize the distance between speaker (S) and H and expresses respect for H's autonomy at the same time.

Unlike non-native speaker (NNS) participants, all NS participants, except one, used interrogative instructions to encode their offer. Their answers present the belief that the use of indirect offers enables the addressees to accept them at ease, and reduce the FTA (Woo, 1995). The only answer which was provided in the form of imperative was the following, 'Please, let me help you'. In this answer, the speaker chose the most polite form of imperative, 'let me', which conveyed S's seeking H's permission to do the act, and is softened with the politeness marker, 'please'. When one of the NNS participants tried to use the same strategy, s/he provided the following: "Oh lady, I beg you to give these bags for me."

As the level of directness is ruled by social and cultural differences, many NNS participants provided different politeness strategies. They preferred to use direct offers through the use of the imperative form, which does not give the hearer the chance to say 'no'. The speech act of offering in the Arabic culture is related to common generosity and hospitality (Emery, 2000). For this reason, offers in the Arabic language, especially in some dialects, are generally performed by the use of imperative forms rather than interrogative forms. In other words, Arabic speakers consider direct offers as more polite than indirect ones. For example, the utterance 'Give me those to carry them for you.' is more polite than the utterance 'Would you like me to carry those for you?' because the latter suggests that the hearer would do the speaker a favour by accepting the offer.

In some cases, the speaker insisted on his/her offer by repeating the offer twice such as ‘Can I help you? Do you need any help?’ Such repetitions and redundancy are presented in many other NNSs’ answers such as ‘Hi Miss. Do you need any help? If you need it, please tell me. I’ll help you with pleasure.’ This strategy is permitted and even welcomed in the Arabic language as it can show the good intention to satisfy H’s positive face wants. Yet, this strategy cannot be used in the English language.

However, some of the Algerian participants who took part in this study were not aware that when a given culture allows for more special directness in a particular situation than the other, a similar direct strategy may lose its effectiveness when it is transferred to a different culture simply because it is not appropriate for the occasion.

6.1.2.2. Situation Two

The speech act of apology was applied to further examine students’ pragmatic competence in communication as well as the practice of pragmatic communication strategies. It is a speech act that “is intended to provide support for the hearer who was actually or potentially malaffected by a violation” (Olshtain, 1989: 156). It can be a face-saving act for the hearer and a face-threatening act for the speaker (Bataineh and Bataineh, 2006).

Fraser stated that in order for an apology to be viewed as convincing, the offender has to use a combination of two or more of the following strategies:

- (1) announcing that apology is achieved by clauses such as I (hereby) apologize...;
- (2) stating the offender's obligation to apology with words like I must apologize;
- (3) offering to apologize to show the sincerity of the act with sentences like Do you want me to apologize?;
- (4) requesting the acceptance of the given apology with clauses like Please accept my apology;
- (5) expressing regret for the offense through the use of intensifiers like very, so, and extremely;
- (6) requesting forgiveness for

the offense; (7) acknowledging responsibility for the wrong act; (8) promising not to repeat the action; and (9) showing readiness for compensation (1981: 263).

Despite Brown and Attardo's (2000) stressing the need for most of these nine components to take place in order for an act to be considered an effective apology, this is not always the case since the word 'sorry' could suffice as an apology if a person is apologising to a close friend. In such a case, the wrongdoer has only used the first component of the above list without combining it with another component of the same list.

In the following situation, however, the addressee is not a close friend, but a student is socially less powerful than the teacher and who discovered that his/her teacher mistook his/her mark with another student:

'You are the English teacher who mistook one student's examination paper for another due to the similarity in their names and failed him. You have recognized that you had made a mistake, and the student has known what had happened and came to meet you in your office to ask you about the situation. What would you say to this student?'

Although a single apology strategy can be used in an apology situation where the hearer is of a lower class than the speaker, most NSs apologies consisted of a combination of apology strategies. In an utterance like 'I wish to apologize for the mistake I made. It wasn't my intention to get the names mixed up. I will make sure the correct result is given to the correct student.' the speaker used the following strategies to perform the apology, namely an explicit expression of apology, expressing lack of intent and offer repair.

Another example is 'I'm so sorry. I made a mistake and thought you were the other student due to you both having similar names. I will do my best to correct it immediately.' In

this example, the native speaker used the following strategies: an explicit expression of apology, intensifiers of the apology, an explanation or account strategy and offer of repair.

The analysis revealed that the NSs who participated in this study had no problem with explicit apology disregarding their higher status as being university lecturers. The following are some of their answers:

- As you may be aware I have a confession to make. I made an error which affected you and I'm deeply sorry for that.
- I'm so sorry about the confusion. I will have a look at your paper again and give you your mark.
- I'm terribly sorry for this mistake. I will make sure to fix this and get you the grade you deserve.
- I apologize for the mistake I made. I will do everything within my power to rectify the problem.

As the above examples show, however, the use of intensifiers is commonly used to show their regret for the mistake they made.

As for the Algerian participants, however, most of them provided answers without the explicit expression of apology. They employed this strategy less frequently than the NS participants. The following are some examples:

- Well, I'd like to say that it was just a mistake, but don't worry, I will correct it.
- Actually, I've confused; that's why the mistake happened. I will fix the matter.
- Well, it was a simple fault but I promise you everything will be corrected and settled.
So don't worry.
- Please don't worry; I have recognized the mistake and I will take this into consideration.

- Oh, I don't know how this happened, but I had many papers to correct and may be this was the reason. Don't worry, please.
- I know that there has been a mistake, but this was a kind of confusion in terms of names.

In the above examples, the Algerian learners of English did not use the explicit expression of apology in the apology situation. As an alternative, they resorted to the explanation or account strategy and/or offering repair strategy.

These examples show that Algerian EFL learners might be aware of the notion of face and their status as university lecturers, as well as the anticipated lower social role of their students. Therefore, apologizing to students could be a serious threat to Algerian lecturers' positive face. So, they tended to avoid the explicit expression of apology strategy in the apology situation.

With regard to the use of 'intensifiers', only few Algerian students used them. One possible reason is that, in Algerian culture, a person with a higher social position tends to use an explicit expression of apology without an 'upgrade', such as 'very' or 'so', when talking to a person with a lower social position. In addition, they have a specific social tendency not to use 'intensifiers'.

The other reason would be that the Algerian participants forgot to use the intensifiers or lacked the English pragmatic ability to use them in their English utterances.

Interestingly, this finding goes in line with Brown and Levinson's (1987) generalization in which they argued that, in some specific cultures, higher status people consider giving apologies as a face threatening act to their own face more seriously than status equals and those in a lower position. Therefore, they tend to apologize less.

In some answers, NNS participants intended to deliver feelings of regret to the interlocutor, but they could not choose the appropriate pragmatic expressions or rather the appropriate pragmatic communication strategies due to the lack of pragmatic competence. As an alternative, they tended to repeat the expression of regret as ‘Sorry, I’m sorry.’

One other instance was shown in one of the students’ answers. It was as follows: ‘Thank you for coming to see me my student. I’m sorry for what happened.’ In fact, thanking is not an apology strategy. Yet, in the aforementioned example, that student used it along with an explicit expression of apology in order to sound more apologetic. This may be explained by the fact that the speaker who is a highest social status than the hearer preferred to please this later by using a thanking strategy, instead of showing an explicit regret.

The speaker used this form of apology as an avoidance tactic, and believed that this specific strategy could preserve his/her positive face as a university teacher. More importantly, the use of this form of apology rated ‘Very unlikely’ by the NSs. In this sense, the participant tried to use the thanking strategy as a softness expression which can be interpreted as an attempt to sound polite. From a native speaker’s point of view, this attempt resulted in a complete pragmatic communicative failure.

According to Coulmas (1981), expressions of thanks express the speaker’s indebtedness as a recipient of a benefit, while expressions of apologies express the speaker’s indebtedness to the hearer for having performed a harmful action to the hearer. Then, one may safely argue that the two speech acts are completely different. Yet, the speaker, in the above case, attempted to express his/her mixed feelings of gratitude and indebtedness to the hearer other than taking responsibility for an offensive act. Such strategy looked a bizarre strategy of apologizing for English NSs. They believed that it might result in a complete communication misunderstanding.

When NNSs answers were analysed and classified by the native speakers on the basis of their occurrence likelihood, the rating yielded the following results as shown in the following figure.

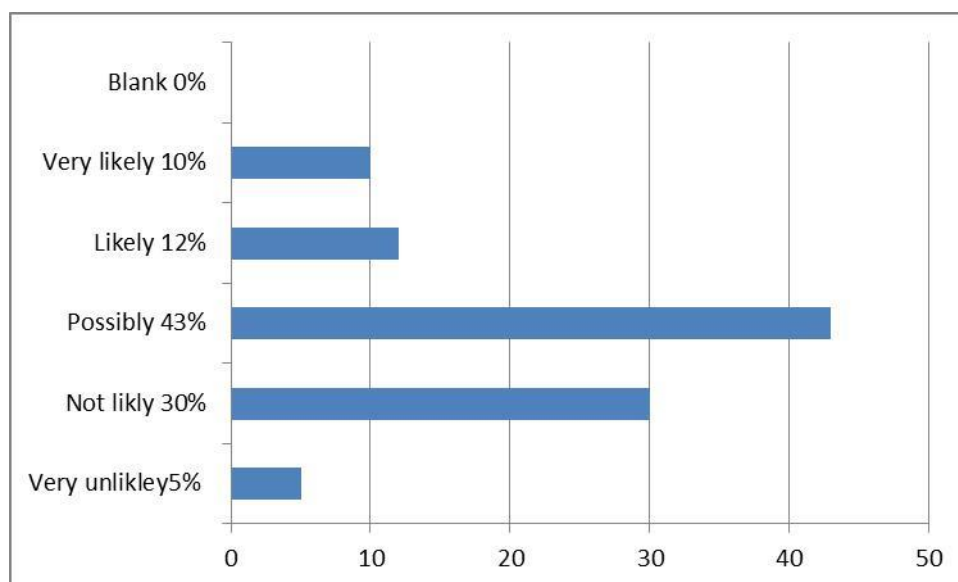


Figure 6.5: Students' Performance of the Speech Act of Apology

Among the participants' answers, in this situation, 12% were rated 'Likely', 43% 'possibly', 30% 'not likely', 5% 'very unlikely'.

The general mean was 0.65 with a standard deviation of 5.

6.1.2.3. Situation Three

Among the speech acts, refusals are particularly challenging for NNSs due to their inherently face-threatening nature (Sadler and Eroz, 2001). The performance of refusals, as all other speech acts, depends on the cultural context and the social norms of that given culture. Such a speech act is quite revealing with regard to the cultural and pragmatic elements it embodies which are the main concerns of this thesis. The negotiation of such a speech act generally involves some degree of indirectness which, in turn, depends on specific pragmatic and cultural norms of the language used.

The appropriate use of such strategies in performing refusals reflects, to some extent, the pragmatic awareness of the importance of pragmatic and communication strategies in creating an effective communication especially with the native speaker of the target language.

To continue the investigation of the participants' behaviour and their specific use of different pragmatic communication strategies, this situation required the participants to say how they would turn down a friend's invitation for lunch because they do not like this friend's mother.

Before dealing with the NNS participants' answers, a look at how native speakers answered in this situation may help to evaluate the NNS participants' responses. Some of the native speakers' answers are as follows:

- It is really kind of you to invite me, but I have already organized something else.
- I'm so sorry but I don't think I'm able to come.
- Thank you for the invitation but I can't make it to lunch. Something else came up and I'm busy.
- I appreciate your invitation but I'm sorry. Why don't you join me Saturday for lunch at x?
- Thank you so much but unfortunately I made other plans. Perhaps you could come to me one day next week.
- I'd like/wish to come but I don't think I will do.
- Thank you so much, but I'm afraid I couldn't.

With regard to the NNSs' answers, the data revealed the following results: about 33% of the participants' answers were rated 'Possibly', 33% 'Not likely' and 9% 'Very unlikely'.

The mean was 0.6 with a standard deviation of 11.

Some of their answers are the following:

- I prefer to go out for lunch
- Oh, I'm very busy. Another time, ok?
- I can't go with you because I have many things to do.
- Sorry, but no.
- Oh, no way.
- I'm sorry but I can't come because I've homework to finish.
- Sorry, I won't come.
- I cannot come because I'm so busy.
- Excuse me, but I can't come because of my work.
- May be another day.
- Sorry my friend, I can't accept your invitation.
- Please I can't I can't stand being invited. Please, I will invite you.
- I think I can't.
- No, thanks.
- No, thank you.
- Well, I've a diet.
- Listen friend, I'm a bit busy I can't come this time next time you are going to come to my house.
- Let me see.
- I'm sorry. Please forgive me my mother is ill I couldn't go.

The following figure gives more statistical details about how NNSs answers were classified or rated:

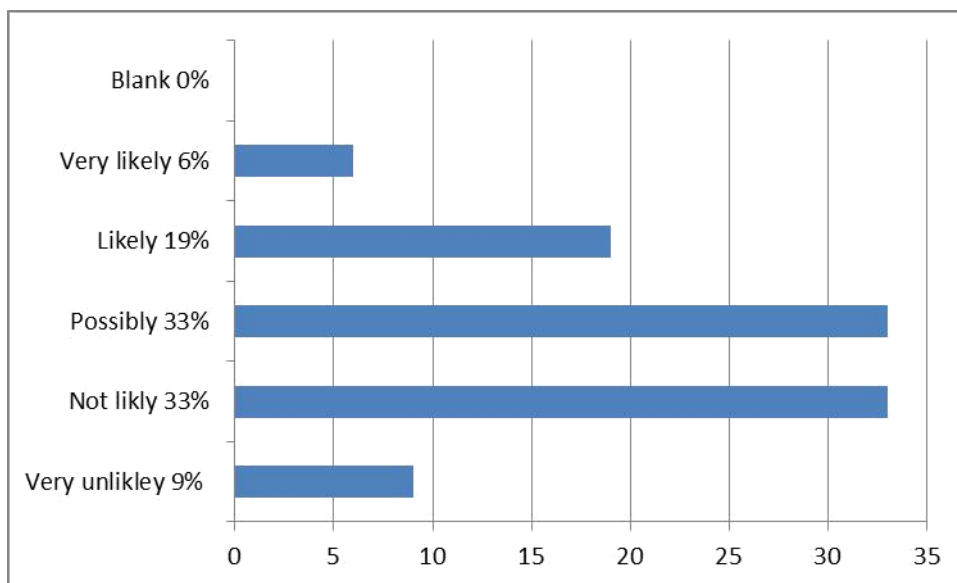


Figure 6.6: Students' Performance of the Speech Act of Refusal

Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (1987) stated that the level of directness conveyed in communication is related to the losing and maintaining of one's public image (Korac-Kakabadse et al., 2001). The decision to use an indirect form of communication is considered a conscious attempt where a language user employs specific pragmatic communicative strategy or strategies in order to avoid face-threatening act (ibid.).

When refusing a friend's invitation to his/her home, all the NS participants preferred to state their excuses, reasons and explanations along with an explicit expression of apology (or regret) that was meant to save their interlocutor's face. They preferred to avoid a direct mode of communicating which may involve confrontations which can facilitate using face. This means that the subjects were quite aware of those formulaic structures that weaken their directness in refusals.

As for the answers of Algerian EFL participants, it was found that this strategy was lower than that of NSs which may suggest a deficiency in English pragmatic behaviour.

Many other NS's answers included the gratitude/appreciation strategy as 'thank you, it was really kind of you to invite me, I appreciate your invitation.' Other politeness strategies were also used, such as the postponement strategy (e.g. "May be another time."), offering alternative strategy (e.g. 'Why don't you join me Saturday for lunch at X?') and setting condition for future acceptance strategy or just a promise of future acceptance. In addition to these strategies, NS participants resorted to another different strategy, namely the use of statement of wish like 'I'd like to' or 'I'd wish to'. Each time they used one or two of the aforementioned strategies, they combined it/them with an explicit expression of apology; that is, an expression of excuse and regret, as a useful politeness strategy that may soften their refusals.

Some of these strategies were, in fact, also employed by the NNS participants, but they used them less frequently than NSs. Yet, some of these strategies were totally absent.

The basic formulaic sequences used by students to give refusals were listed as 'sorry', 'I'm sorry', 'I'd like to but...' Some other students preferred not to give any explanation for their refusal and just say 'I can't go with you.' or just say 'I can't'. Some others, however, just provided their reasons or excuses for declining the invitation without expressing their regret or vocalizing an apology (e.g.: 'Actually, I've some family reasons.', 'I can't go with you because I have some work to finish.'). This last mentioned strategy did not appear in the English NSs' baseline data, in this context, by its own since it is considered as an impolite behaviour.

It can be possible to infer that Algerian students of English, who participated in this study, tended to fall back on Algerian pragmatic knowledge in realizing the speech act of refusal which can be interpreted as a sign of pragmatic transfer.

In many cultures, the way of saying 'no' is considered more important than the answer itself. A direct 'no', in fact, may cause a breakdown in the relationship between interlocutors. For this reason, it is avoided in most communicative courses disregarding the intimacy or closeness between the speaker and the hearer.

Another strategy which presented evidence of students' pragmatic unawareness is the direct 'no' without considering the pragmatic and communicative negative consequences of that 'no'. The following are some examples of the students' answers with a direct 'no'.

- Oh, no I can't.
- No, I can't.
- No way.
- No, thanks.
- No, thank you.
- No, I won't come. Sorry.

In this last answer, the student might believe that using 'sorry' with his/her 'no' could soften his/her refusal especially that the hearer is a friend especially that in the Algerian society, there is a kind of closeness and intimacy that cannot be influenced by just a word of 'no'. In such case, the students tended to rely on their Algerian sociopragmatic routines in their refusal responses to the friend. Such answers that include direct 'no' strategy appeared to be impolite in declining offers in English contexts. English participants, whether British or American, totally avoid such blunt strategies and try to provide other alternatives to show their respect to the other communicative partner.

The non-existence of this strategy in the English baseline data and its presence in the NNSs data sets provides evidence of negative pragmatic transfer. This fact suggests a likely

influence of Algerian language on the non-native speakers' refusal performance in this context.

According to Tanck (2004), non-native speakers may feel that it is less necessary for them to offer alternatives due to the familiarity found in this situation, while native speakers may believe that these components are culturally and socially important in communication. For this reason, there is a need for language learners to understand cross-cultural similarities and differences in learning a language in order to achieve their communicative goals (Oxford, 1996).

6.1.2.4. Situation Four

In this situation, which involves interlocutors with unequal status, the respondents were required to react to a mothers' compliment. Following is the situation given:

Your mother comes to visit you in your new apartment. She looks at a clock hanging on the wall and says, 'I love your clock. It looks great in your living room.' How would you respond to your mothers' compliment?

This particular scenario was designed to elicit the students' pragmatic awareness through their use of pragmatic communication strategies in the realization of a compliment's response, which is subjected to cross-cultural variation.

According to Olshtain and Cohen (1991), the function of compliments, as a speech act, is to establish and increase solidarity bounds between the interlocutors they are typically performed to please and satisfy the hearer, compliment's receiver. Thus, the addressee or the complimentee should know how to react to this good intuition of his/her communicative partner.

The speech act of compliment is a complex speech act that reflects socio-cultural values and politeness differences of the speaker (Cheng, 2011). Accordingly, compliments' responses are closely related to the socio-cultural norms and values of a given culture (Baek, 1998). Accordingly, accepting a compliment in English is different from accepting it in Arabic.

In response to the aforementioned compliment, the NNS participants showed an unsatisfactory performance with a general mean of 0.65 and a standard deviation of 5.

To have a deep insight into the participants' responses, the following figure may help in showing the 'poor' performance of the students in the realization of compliment's response:

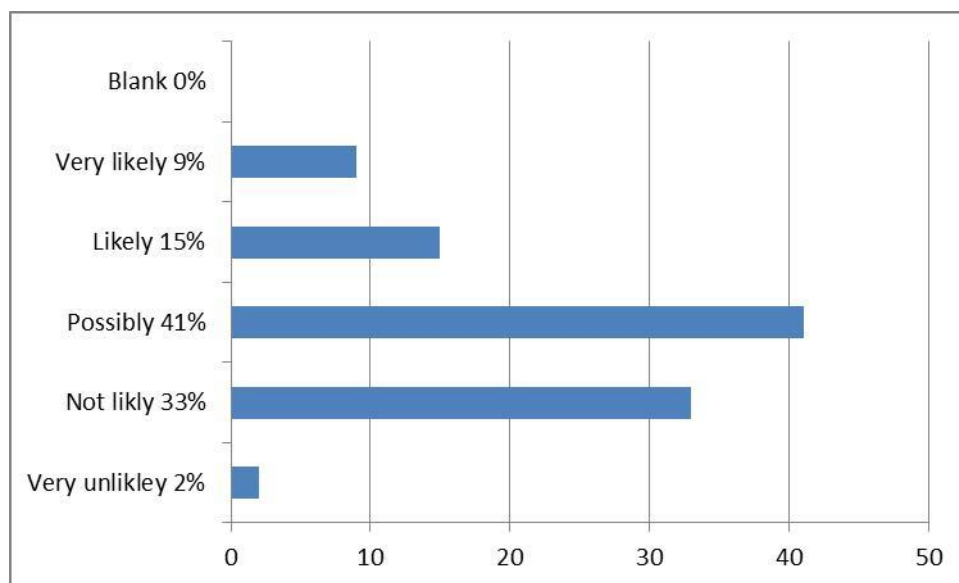


Figure 6.7: Students' Responses to a Compliment

Findings revealed that about 2% of the participants answers were rated 'Very unlikely', 9% 'Very likely', 15% 'Likely', 41% 'Possibly' and 33% 'Not likely'.

Compared to NNSs' responses in this situation, it was found that the NSs answers were very simple and concise. American participants, for example, tended to avoid complex

responses and used, instead, a single illocution of thanking such as ‘thanks’, ‘thank you very much’, or ‘thank you’, ‘I like too’, ‘I’m glad you like it’, ‘thanks, I appreciate that.’

These similar appreciation tokens were also used by the British participants to show their gratitude to the complimenter such as agreement responses and comment acceptance expressions. The following are some examples:

- Thanks, I really like it too.
- Thank you mum.
- I’m very happy to hear that.
- I’m glad you like it.

They also used other formula such as:

- Thank you. I chose it very carefully.
- Thanks mum, it is from.....
- Thank you, I thought you’d like it.
- Thanks mum. Yes, it does look good there.

These particular formulas of responding are usually used by both American and British NSs. It can be said that they are routine formulaic expressions which are English culture- specific pragmatic features.

With regard to the NNSs’ answers to this same situation, agreement responses and appreciation expressions were also used but differently. The Algerian students who took part in this study tended to use other complex formulas which seemed to be the same of those Algerian formulaic expressions that are used in the same context. The following examples may illustrate such a use:

- Oh mom, thank you. I really thank you for appraisal.

- I was sure that you will like it in that place. I thought a lot where to place it, but thanks God you like it.
- Do you really think so?
- Thanks. Do you really like it?
- Really mom! Do you really like it? I was afraid about your opinion since you have a hard taste. I also like it there.
- I like it there too that's why I put it there.
- Thank you so much for your compliment, it is so nice to hear that from you.
- Thank you mom. I think you make it easy for me concerning your birthday next week.
- I'm quite satisfied with hearing this from you.
- Thank you momy. It is a gift from Mark when he knew that am pregnant.
- Thanks mum, I went the previous Monday for shopping. I saw it. I like it so much too.

One likely explanation of these answers may lie in the fact that the students transferred their native strategies of compliment responses into English as an attempt to show more politeness. This particular influence of the participants' culture can be associated with an inappropriate use of socio-pragmatic norms that leads to negative pragmatic transfer which may cause, in turn, a serious communicative breakdown. Such pragmatic transfer, in fact, can reflect the insufficient pragmatic competence of the students and their limited knowledge of English pragmatic and cultural peculiarities.

Other answers which provided evidence of pragmatic transfer were suggested by the following data:

- Oh mom, it is just a clock, no exaggeration please.
- But it is normal, stop exaggerating please, I don't believe you.
- I know you said this just to please me because you love me.

- Actually, it is a gift of one of my friends, but I swear to take it. I wish I can give you more.
- Oh, thanks. I bought it when I was in my honey moon but you can take it lovely mom.
- Ok, I'll give it to you then.
- I'll be very happy if you take it.
- Thank you so much, sweetie, I'll buy you a similar one next time. I promise.

All these answers are considered a mere translation of the Algerian semantic formulas that are used in such a situation. It can be also argued that the participants' responses seem to reflect what is culturally preferable in the Algerian society.

The first two answers, for example, may result in undesirable consequences, such as confusion and embarrassment. They may have negative connotations and create misunderstanding on the part of the NSs. The other left answers may also seem bizarre for the English native speakers since offering the complimented item to the person who complimented it is not related to the English socio-cultural behaviour.

In Algerian culture, it is believed that such behaviour is a way of showing politeness and generosity. Algerian people usually interpret this kind of compliments as requests. In some cases, it is not sufficient to offer the complimented item, but also to insist on giving it to the speaker and swear that he/she must take it. The existence of such culture-bound peculiarities can lead to communication breakdown if not recognized by the interlocutors.

6.1.2.5. Situation Five

The speech act of greeting is "a much simpler kind of speech act." (Searle, 1969:64) It is a common speech act which can be easier to learn compared to some other speech acts. Yet, the rituals of approaching and departure seem infused with etiquette and customs of each culture. In case the speech act of greeting is not appropriately performed, one might end up in

trouble or embarrassed. What seems entirely natural in one culture can be a strange behaviour in another.

By greeting, the speaker indicates his/her attitude toward the addressee, or starts a conversation with him/her. It is said to be one of the principle means of expressing politeness. Compared to many other speech acts, greetings may be easier to remember and perform in a second/foreign language. However, there is often a marked difference in their performance by native and non-native speakers (Ebsworth et al., 1996).

Actually, it is found in the present study that many students failed to perform an appropriate greeting to Carla to whom they were introduced to by a friend. They showed little awareness of the pragmatic aspects that greeting holds as a speech act. Pragmatic failure was clearly indicated in their responses which were heavily influenced by the Algerian cultural behaviour in such a context. According to Thomas (1983), one source of pragmatic failure is the inappropriate transfer of speech act strategies from one language to another. In fact, such pragmatic failure may result in complete communication breakdown.

To have a deep insight into the Algerian participants' responses, some of their answers are given as follows;

-Nice to meet you, what a pleasure to meet you. I really mean it.

-Hello Carla, my name is Linda, nice to meet you Carla.

-How are you, are you ok! I hope you are so.

-Nice to meet you Carla, I wish you are doing good.

-What a pleasure to meet you. You seem so friendly.

- What are you doing?

-How are you? Are you fine? Am Kristine, nice to meet you Carla.

-Hi Carla, I feel as if I saw you once but I don't know where. Do you remember me? Can you remind me if you know?

-Hi Carla, I wish we can be friends.

Notable here is the fact that the students had an inclination to the use of Algerian semantic formula of greeting. In Algerian culture, it is believed that the more someone's greetings are long and complex and redundant, the more he/she looks polite. Students' answers can be interpreted as an attempt to be polite, which from a native speaker's point of view, resulted in a complete failure. According to Robinson (1992), such kind of transfer, that students performed, is a clear indication of the low proficiency of English and the unawareness of the difference in the realization of the speech acts that are culture-bound pragmatic features.

With regard to the NSs' answers, the following are some:

-It's so nice to meet you, Carla! I have heard a lot about you.

-Hi. Pleased to meet you Carla.

-Nice to meet you.

-It's a pleasure to meet you Carla.

-Hi Carla. How are you?

-Lovely to meet you.

-Pleasure to meet you.

These responses conform to the norms of British and American cultures where simple and informal greetings may be sufficient and polite enough in such occasion. According to Laver (1981), routines of greeting are strategies used by speakers in the attempt to control social relationships with members of their speech community.

All in all, it can be said that the formulas used by the Algerian participants in this particular situation suggested an evidence of their limited socio-cultural knowledge that govern language use in daily social situations.

All in all, the students' performance in this situation was rather fair with the general mean 0.6 and standard deviation 4. 25.

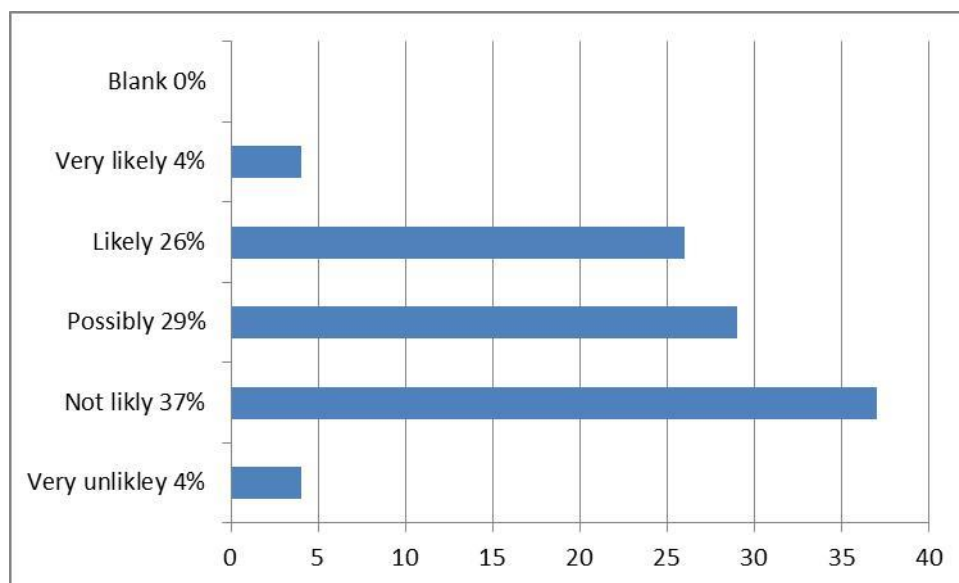


Figure 6.8: Students' Performance of the Speech Act of Greeting

As it can be seen, only 4% of the participants' responses were rated 'Very likely'.

6.1.2.6. Situation Six

It is your birthday and you are having a few people over for dinner. A friend brings you a present. You unwrap it and find a blue sweater. What would you say to this friend?

In this specific prompt, the focus is to investigate the non-native speakers' ability to produce appropriate gratitude expressions and the different pragmatic communicative strategies they use in expressing thanking.

Leech (1983) (as cited in Hassan 2004: 84) described thanking as having a "social goal, which is to create a friendly and polite atmosphere."

According to Eisenstein and Bodman, if "[...] it is performed successfully, it brings feelings of solidarity and warmth" (1986:167) while failure to express it may have negative social consequences (ibid.).

In response to this specific situation, native speakers showed some kind of consistency in their expressing of gratitude which was based on a mutually-shared knowledge. The most common expression among the British participants in this situation was a simple explicit thanks strategy. Some of the participants combined this strategy with an expression of appreciation of the gift or the addressee himself/herself. Some of their responses are the following:

- Thank you. (Explicit thanks)
- Thank you (say the friend's name) for the sweater.
- Thank you, it's lovely (explicit thanks plus expressing appreciation of the object).
- Thanks, that's really nice (explicit thanks plus expressing appreciation of the object). Some of

the British participants expressed their gratitude using other formulas, as follows:

- Aww, thank you so much.
- It's awesome. Thanks so much.

- Thank you! This looks really nice and cosy. I love it.

With regard to the American participants, some of their responses are given as follows:

- Thanks.

- What a nice sweater, thank you.

- This looks great! Thank you.

The majority of American participants settled for explicit thanks only. Unlike the NS participants, the vast majority of students who took part in this study preferred to express their gratitude through intensified explicit thanks. They combined their explicit thanks with other strategies such as expression of appreciation of the gift and of the addressee. Some others, however, resorted to other combination of strategies that included another different strategy, namely expressing emotions, as the following examples show:

- Oh my God, I can't believe this, it is so nice. Thank you a bunch.

- Wow, it is exactly what I want; I don't know how to thank you. You're a very kind person, indeed.

- Oh, thank you so much. I love it and I love you too because you're so friendly.

- Oh Gosh, you're a great friend, millions of thanks.

Such examples show an inclusion of the Algerian style of thanking which is believed to be meaningful and more effective if it is phrased with long, complex and intensified expressions of gratitude in order to express greater politeness.

Unlike the majority of the NS participants who disfavoured combination of strategies, in this situation, many of the NNS participants settled for such combination in order to show greater politeness. Accordingly, it can be assumed that Algerian culture, in which

exaggeration to emphasise gratitude is required, seemed to be a source of influence that led to a negative pragmatic transfer.

Responding in such a manner, as the following two examples show, is actually considered as a potential source of negative pragmatic transfer. It suggests, in turn, an indication of an insufficient pragmatic knowledge to express gratitude successfully in English.

-Thank you, thank you very much.

-Oh, you shouldn't have to, thanks. Thanks a lot.

What is worth mentioning is the fact that double explicit thanks were totally avoided by the NSs. This strategy, however, was used by many Algerian learners.

The following figure illustrates this state of affairs:

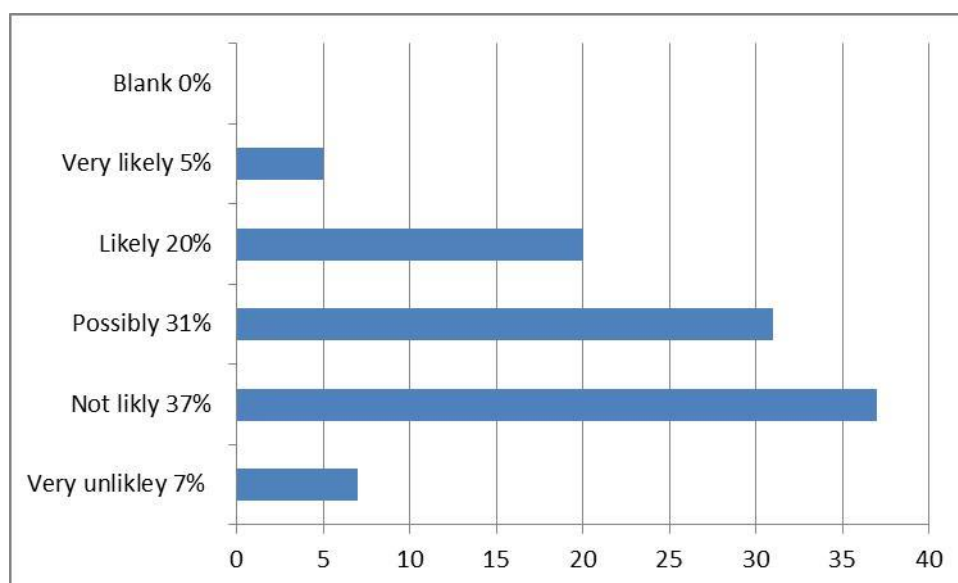


Figure 6.9: Students' Performance of the Speech Act of Thanking

Among the participants' responses in this situation, only 5% were rated 'Very likely', 20% 'Likely', 31% 'Possibly', 37% 'Not likely', 7% 'Very unlikely'. The general mean was 0.6 with a standard deviation of 16.31.

6.1.2.7. Situation Seven

This time the respondent is required to give an advice to his/her colleagues who always make fun of another person.

The speech act of advice-giving is a complex act that can be perceived as intrusive. Brown and Levinson asserted that giving advice is defined as an “intrinsically face-threatening act.” (1987:67). Thus, advice givers may use specific discourse strategies to reduce this threat and make their advice acceptable to the recipient. However, advice offers are culture specific, in terms of both their level of directness and their structure. In other words, the choice of one strategy rather than another is socio-culturally bound. In this particular situation, the participants’ interlocutors are colleagues who have an equal power status. Therefore, the severity in the situation is low.

When the NNSs’ responses generated in this situation were analysed and classified by the native speakers on the basis on their occurrence likelihood, the rating yielded the following results shown in the figure below:

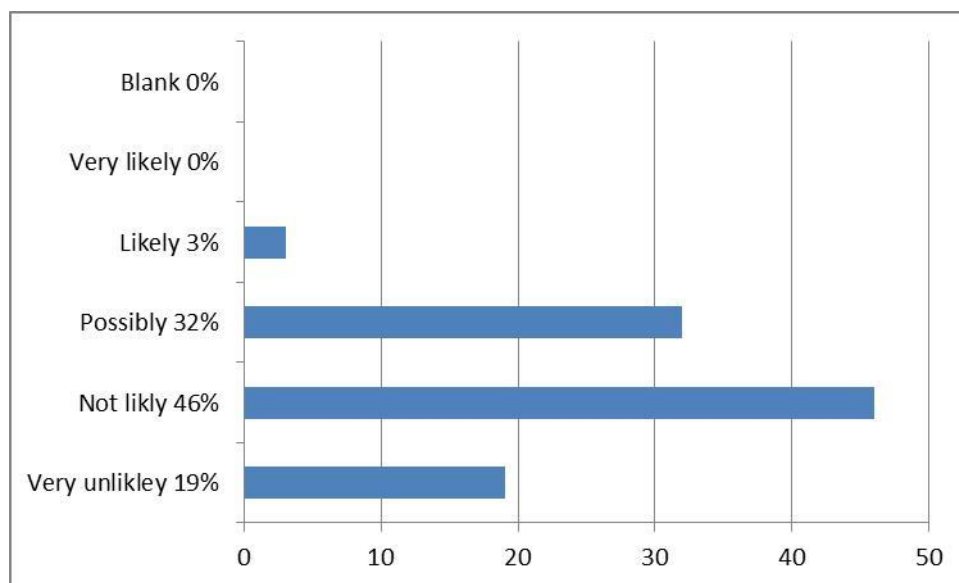


Figure 6.10: Students’ Performance of the Speech Act of Advising

As shown in the above table, the respondents' performance was rather poor. Only 3% of the responses were rated 'Likely', 32% 'Possibly', 46% 'Not likely', and 19% 'Very unlikely'.

The general mean was 0.3 with a standard deviation of 2.92.

The data indicated that the vast majority of the learners who took part in this study resorted to direct advice acts. As shown in the aforementioned examples, the students showed a clear inclusion of imperatives. In those examples, they might consider the direct advice as an appropriate option to be employed in such a situation, which would not be considered to be appropriate in the English culture.

Some other students tended to shape their responses in the form of criticism, value judgement expressions, and even giving order rather than advice, as the following examples show:

- You should stop speaking about him.
- Be careful, this is forbidden so stop it.
- It is a rude and disrespectful behaviour, so stop it please.
- Don't be such evil people.

Such responses showed a low level of courtesy. Unlike native speakers who expressed their annoyance implicitly, most of the Algerian participants expressed their annoyance about the event and the colleagues themselves in an explicit manner.

One potential explanation for this tendency is that EFL students viewed giving advice as a matter of friendliness, rapport- building, concern, sincere interest and solidarity, while English native speakers perceived it as an FTA; that is, as an invasion of their privacy.

This particular finding is inconsistent with the claim made by EL-Sayed (1990) and others, who found that giving advice was perceived as an expression of friendliness and greatly conveyed benevolence and support in the Arabic culture.

In other examples, it is noted that learners relied on their religious perceptions of conversational appropriateness and politeness in offering their advice in English. The following responses are some examples:

-For God's sake, stop talking about him.

-Don't you know that making fun of someone is making fun of God's creation?

-Be careful, this is forbidden.

Unlike the NNs participants, most of British and American participants preferred to avoid direct advice giving and used, instead, indirect advice acts which refer to those hints in which the speaker's intentions are not made explicit (Brown and Levinson, 1987). In general, English NSs showed a tendency for indirect offering advice and hedging. The examples below are advice given by both British and American NSs:

-Why don't you stop this?

-Would you like to be spoken to or treated like you treat them. It's cruel and immature to behave like this, how would you feel if it was you?

-You guys are wrong for that. They are good people. Put yourself in their shoes.

-Why are you always making fun of so and so? It is not fair.

-Guys, I really think this is inappropriate behaviour.

-That is not appropriate. I would appreciate you're not talking like that around me.

According to the point of view of NSs who participated in this study, there is a one-to-one correlation between indirectness and politeness. Such thought goes in line with the one that Leech suggested; that is, “indirect illocutions tend to be more polite (a) because they increase the degree of optionality and (b) because the more indirect an illocution is, the more diminished and tentative its force tends to be.” (1983:108)

The differences found in offering an advice between English native speakers and Algerian EFL students would refer to the fact that Algerian participants relied on their native pragmatic knowledge of performing an appropriate advice and negatively transferred it to English. This would also refer to the fact that Algerian students faced lack of access to appropriate English pragmatic communicative strategies. This specific transfer of the socio-pragmatic norms of the native language into the target language indicates an unawareness of the English socio-pragmatic norms that govern the speech acts’ performance.

6.1.2.8. Situation Eight

In the last situation, the participants were asked to make a request to their professor in order to have an extension to finish the assignment they were asked to do.

Requests, like all other speech acts, occur in both English and Arabic, but their realization is not always the same. Requests have been viewed as a face-threatening speech act (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Since requests have the potential to be intrusive and demanding, there is a need for the requester to minimize the imposition involved in the request through the use of specific pragmatic and communicative strategies which differ from one situation to another and from one culture to another.

In response to the aforementioned situation, British participants proposed different answers. Some of those answers are the following:

- Sir, I've tried my best to get the assignment finished for today, but sadly haven't completed it. Could you please give me a 24 hour extension in order to finish it?
- I haven't been able to finish the assignment. Is it possible to have an extension please?
- Would it be possible to extend the deadline?

With regard to the American answers, however, the following are some examples:

- Excuse me sir, but I wasn't able to finish it. May I have an extension?
- My schedule was overloaded. Is it possible for me to get a little extension? I don't want to have a bad grade.
- Professor, I have been unable to complete my assignment yet. Would I please be able to have an extension to complete it?

It is worth mentioning, as the above examples show, that both British and American participants tended to mitigate their requests by using different devices or rather strategies. The NS participants were clearly aware of the fact that indirectness is certainly not the only dimension that affects politeness. The presence or absence of various internal and external modifications also plays a role in this respect, a fact that Blum- Kulka et al. (1989) emphasized.

In order to modulate the request in such a particular situation, where the imposition is really high, native speakers employed different internal and external modifications. One typical type of modification was achieved through the use of an apology (E.g. 'I'm sorry', 'I apologise', 'Excuse me'). Using the apology strategy as a mitigation device would help soften the interaction and preserve both communicative parties' face.

A number of other devices were also used to modulate the request as the use of '-ing-form' along with the use of apology strategy ('Excuse me, but I was wondering if I can have an extension.'). The use of past tense models to show their politeness ('could', 'would',...),

the use of a formal address term ('Professor', 'Sir') followed by an explanation of being unable to finish the assignment at time, to justify the requested act. This specific strategy of providing reasons and excuses is considered as a supportive move in order to intensify the force of the illocutionary act. In the same line of thought, Faerch and Kasper pointed out that such strategy is an effective mitigating one because it can open up "an emphatic attitude on the part of the interlocutor in giving his or her insight into the actor's underlying motive." (1989:239)

In addition to what has been mentioned, the NS participants resorted to other different pragmatic communication strategies as the use of 'hesitators' (e.g. Ier, erm, er- I wonder if you'd er.....), 'interpersonal markers' (e.g. I want to) and 'appreciation tokens and gratitude' (e.g. I'm grateful if you...). Other strategies were also employed as the use of 'politeness markers' (e.g. 'Please') and 'consultative device' (e.g. 'Would you mind allowing me to have an extension?').

The use of these different categories of supportive moves and pragmatic communicative strategies show a clear socio-pragmatic awareness which is so important in creating a smooth and successful communication.

In response to the same situation, however, the NNS participants showed a heavy reliance on the syntactic downgraders that were embedded in formulaic structures like (can, could, would you, etc.). This finding implied that learners might lack variation and complexity in their linguistic realization of the speech act of request, which can be considered as an evidence of an insufficient English pragmatic knowledge.

Another typical device which was extensively used by the EFL learners was grounders (giving reasons and explanations) accompanied with a reference to the rank of the hearer (Professor, Sir). This extensive use of grounders may be explained as a way to achieve a

smooth interaction with an expectation that giving reason(s) would have an impact on the addressee to be more cooperative and understanding to the situation.

In the following, some of the NNSs' responses are listed:

- I beg you sir to have an extra time.
- I know I have no right to ask, but could you please give me an extra time, and I promise you to finish it on time this time.
- Please sir, help me. I need an extra time to finish it. Please do, please.
- Sir, I didn't finish the assignment yet. What I can do?

Statistically speaking, the analysis of the data yielded the following results displayed in the figure below:

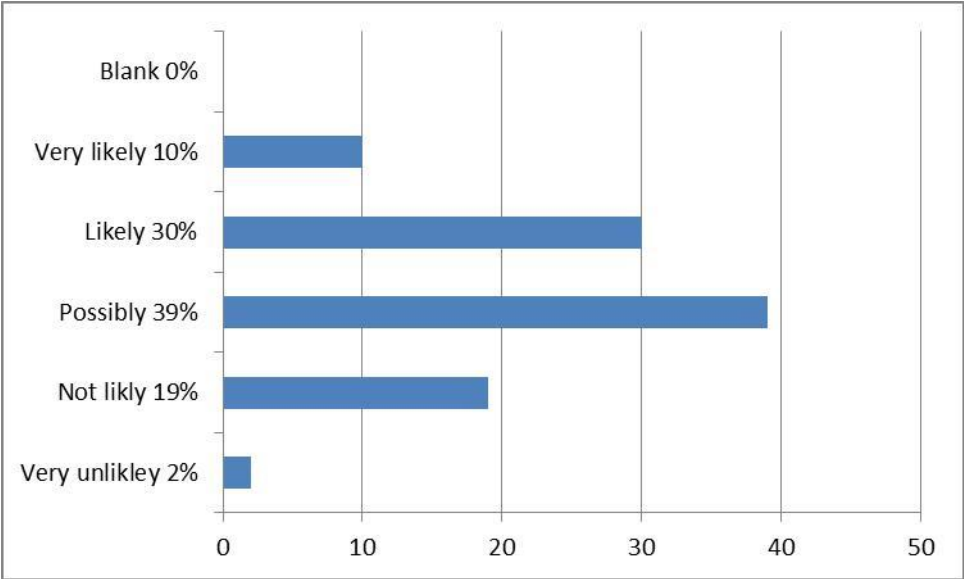


Figure 6.11: Students' Performance of the Speech Act of Requesting

Findings showed that 10% of the responses were rated 'Very likely', 30% 'Likely', 39% 'Possibly', 19% 'Not likely' and 2% 'Very unlikely'.

The mean was 0.8 with a general standard deviation of 5.44.

All in all, the results of this section of the pragmatic test showed that tasks involving pragmatic production were challenging for most of the students.

6.1.3. Section Three: Implicatures

A successful and effective communication requires not only linguistic competence, but also pragmatic competence which includes the ability to understand and produce meaning in various communicative contexts. According to Lee (2002), native speakers of English usually use different pragmatic communicative strategies in order to play with words to achieve various communicative effects. Therefore, it is important for EFL students to be equipped with such strategies in order to be able to understand what a native speaker intends to convey.

In this particular part of the pragmatic test, the researcher investigated the Algerian EFL learners' ability to recognize the non-literal utterance and to appropriately understand the meaning that is not explicitly stated in different communicative situations.

Each dialogue segment consists of a brief situation description and a conversational exchange. Test-takers were asked to select the one of four choices that most accurately conveys what the relevant interlocutor means. In other words, they had to recognize the speaker's intended meaning conveyed in his/her literal utterance and then make an inference about the speaker's intention appropriately.

6.1.3.1. Situation One

Felicity is talking to her co-worker Brian during a coffee break.

Felicity: "So, life must be good for you. I hear you got a nice raise."

Brian: "This coffee is awfully thin. You'd think they'd at least give us decent coffee."

What does Brian probably mean?

a- He does not want to talk about how much money he makes.

b- He likes his coffee strong.

c- He is planning to complain about the coffee.

d- He doesn't care very much about money.

First of all, it is important to mention that the maxim that is violated in this example is the maxim of relevance as the speaker is not answering the question relevantly.

The lack of clarity in this example led NNSs to infer the intended meaning incorrectly since they were not aware of the pragmatic perspectives that could potentially exist in such example where there was no phonological evidence. This can be explained by the fact that the Algerian EFL students have not been supported with sufficient knowledge about English pragmatics including English conversational implicatures and have not been taught and trained for how to make an inference based on contextual knowledge. According to Bouton (1994), explicit teaching of conversational implicatures could help promote the ability to understand implicatures. Accordingly, Algerian EFL learners have to be equipped with the necessary pragmatic communicative strategies to manage communicative contexts where conversational implicatures may exist.

As the following figure indicates the majority of students misinterpreted the implicature in this situation. 11% of the students chose answer 'b', 70% of them chose answer 'c' and 15% of them preferred answer 'd'. The rest of the students (4%), however, were right

in their answer as they chose answer 'a', namely "He does not want to talk about how much money he makes."

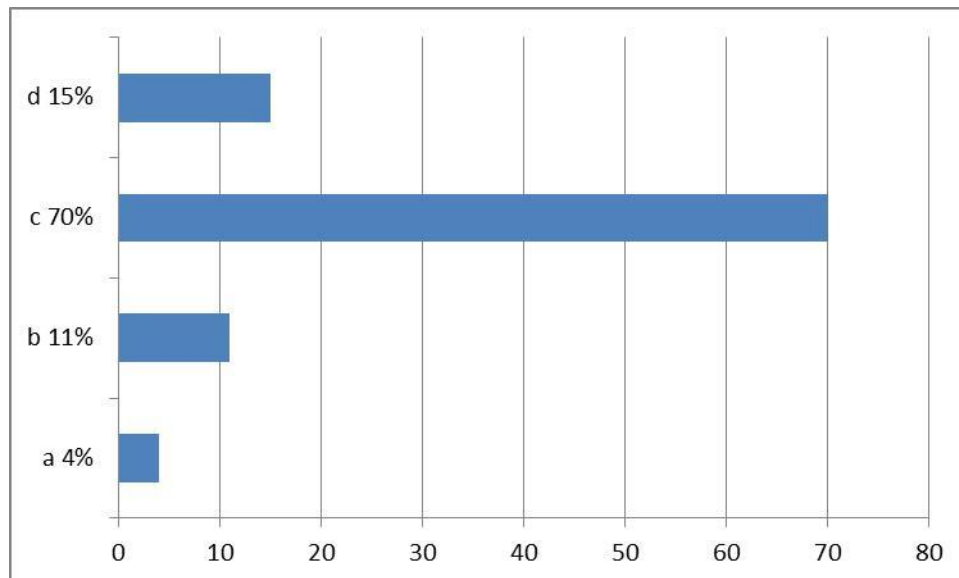


Figure 6.12: Students' Awareness of the Implicature of Brian's Utterance

Without sufficient exposure to authentic English and interaction with English-native speakers, EFL learners would be unable to comprehend implied meanings of speakers. In face- to- face communication, this may cause breakdown and learners thus may stop negotiate meanings.

6.1.3.2. Situation Two

Carrie is a cashier in a grocery store. After work, she's talking to her friend Simon.

Carrie: "I guess I'm getting old and ugly."

Simon: "What makes you say that?"

Carrie: "The men are beginning to count their change."

What does Carrie probably mean?

- a- She has given wrong change a number of times, so people count their change now.
- b- Male customers aren't admiring her anymore like they used to.
- c- The store might lose business if she doesn't look good.
- d- It gets harder to give correct change as you get older.

The correct answer in this situation is answer 'b'; "Male customers aren't admiring her anymore like they used to" which has been chosen only by 21%. The following figure gives in details the distribution of the students' responses in this situation:

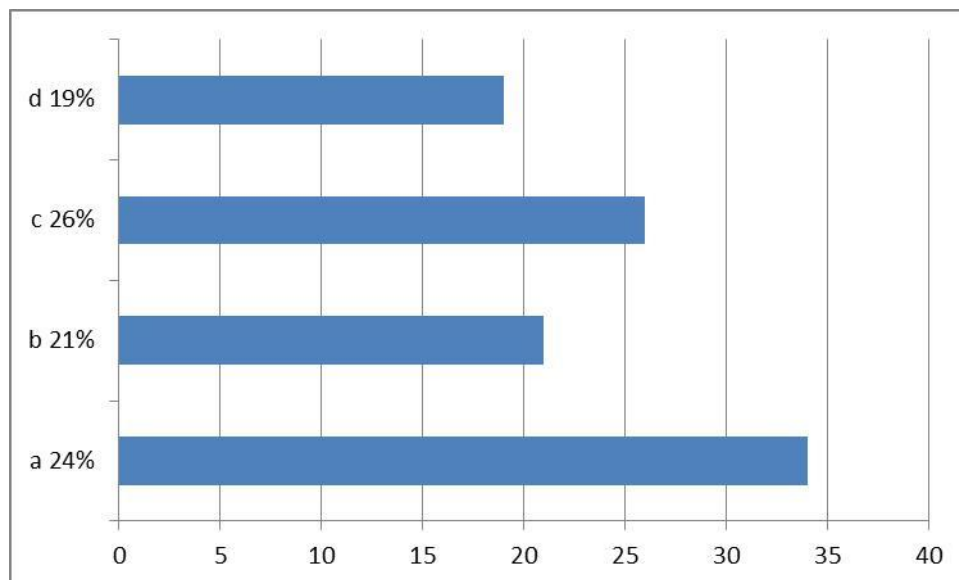


Figure 6.13: Students' Awareness of the Implicature of Carrie's Utterance

The implicature which is included in this situation also belongs to those which violate the maxim of relevance. The results showed that 79% of the students misinterpreted Carrie's intention as they focused on the literally expressed meaning rather than the conversationally implied one.

6.1.3.3. Situation Three

Max and Julie are jogging together.

Max: “Can we slow down a bit? I’m all out of breath.”

Julie: “I’m sure glad I don’t smoke.”

What does Julie probably mean?

- a- She doesn’t want to slow down.
- b- She doesn’t like the way Max’s breath smells.
- c- She thinks Max is out of breath because he is a smoker.
- d- She’s happy she stopped smoking.

The correct answer in this situation is answer ‘c’ which has been successfully identified by only 20% of the students. 80% of the students’ answers, however, did not correspond to the expected answer. In the following figure , more details are given:

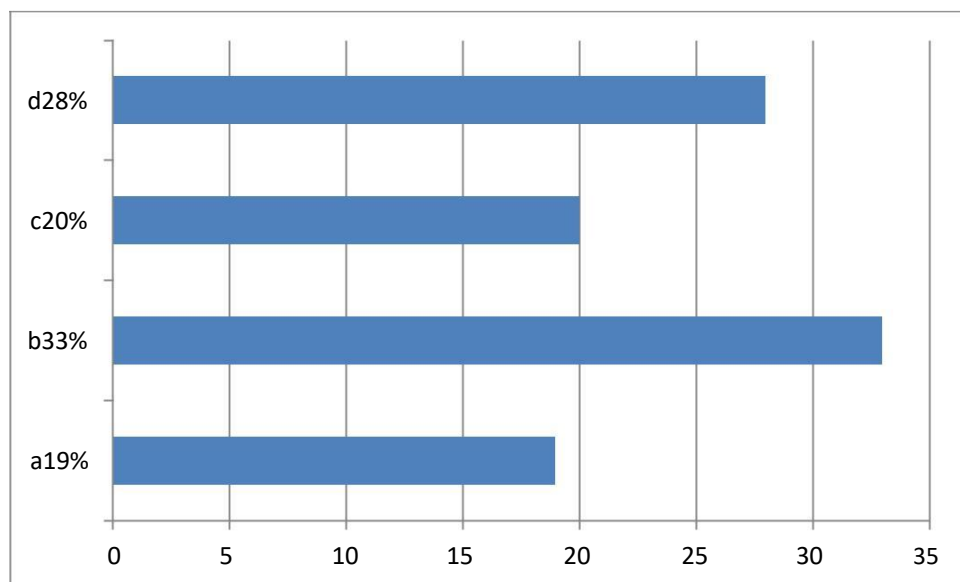


Figure 6.14: Students’ Awareness of the Implicature of Julie’s Utterance

As has been suggested in the above figure, many students chose ‘d’ as an interpretation of Julie’s utterance. Julie, in fact, generated an implicature through a deliberate

or accidental violation to the maxim of relevance. She preferred to send an indirect advice or may be an indirect criticism to Max by choosing a literal irrelevant answer to his question. This non- literal message could not be understood by many participants as they heavily relied on what has been said rather than on what has been meant.

6.1.3.4. Situation Four

Hilda is looking for a new job. She's having lunch with her friend John.

John: "So, how's the job search coming along?"

Hilda: "This curry is really good, don't you think?"

What does Hilda probably mean?

- a- She's very close to finding a job.
- b- She's no longer looking for a job.
- c- She just found a job.
- d- Her job search isn't going very well.

Figure 6.15 below gives details of the participants' answers in this situation:

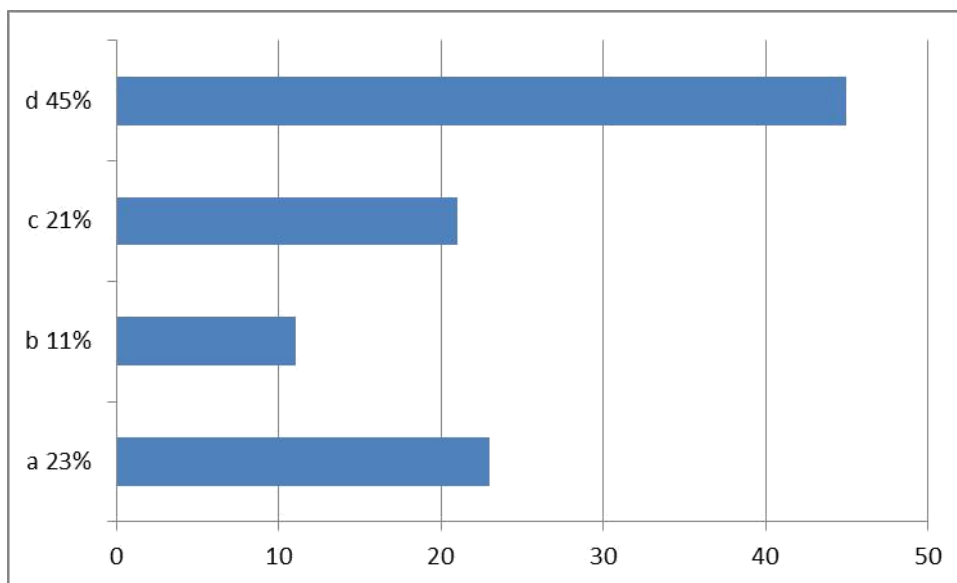


Figure 6.15: Students' Awareness of the Implicature of Hilda's Utterance

The results indicated that only 45% of the students were able to successfully interpret the implicature which was involved in this situation while the majority of the participants (55%) failed to find the appropriate answer, i.e., answer 'd'. Some of them (23%) chose answer 'a'. Some others (11%), however, chose answer 'b' and 21% of them chose answer 'c'.

This type of manner-based implicature can be also considered as a relevance-based implicature as the speaker did not answer the question relevantly.

According to Boersma (1994), conversational implicatures have different types and some types may be particularly difficult or easy for EFL students to understand. Based on the poor performance of students in interpreting the implicature involved in this situation and other previous similar ones, it can be safely assumed that the students who took part in this study had difficulty with the type of relevance-based implicature.

A likely reason behind the students' inability to identify the speaker's intended meaning is that they were not aware of the fact that the inferential process of meaning is based

on the assumption that a speaker in a conversation is being cooperative (Jung, 2002). That is to say, in case one of the communication partners does not hold this idea while communicating, s/he will never correctly and appropriately interpret the intention of the other communicative interlocutors and thus will never communicate successfully.

6.1.3.5. Situation Five

Toby and Ally are trying a new buffet restaurant in town. Toby is eating something but Ally can't decide what to have next.

Ally: "How do you like what you're having?"

Toby: "Well, let's just say it's colourful."

What does Toby probably mean?

- a- He thinks it is important for food to look appetizing.
- b- He thinks food should not contain artificial.
- c- He wants Ally to try something colourful.
- d- He does not like his food much.

As the figure below reveals, the participants interpreted the involved meaning differently. The participants who successfully interpreted Toby's utterance and chose answer 'd' were only 29%. The other students (71%), however, chose answer 'a', 'b', or 'c'.

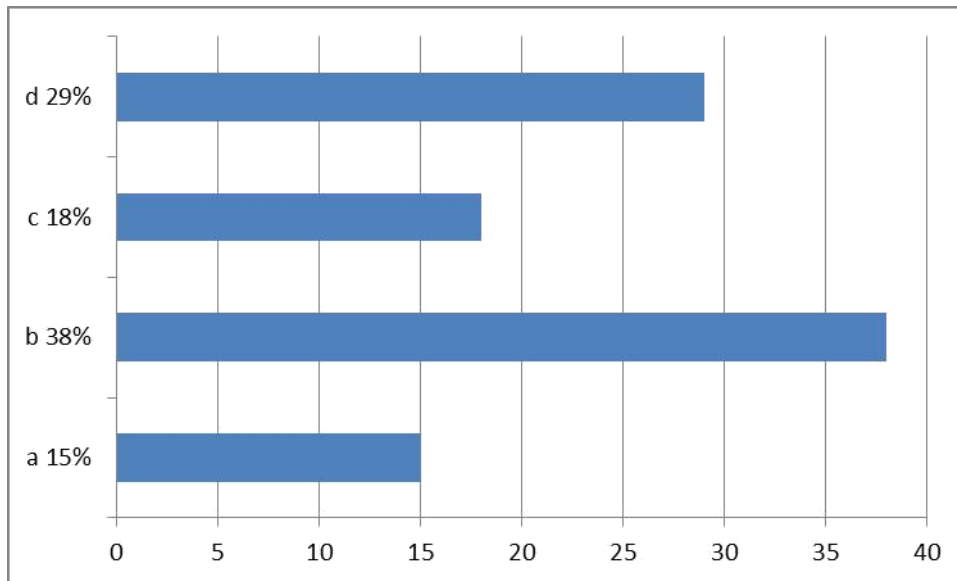


Figure 6.16: Students' Awareness of the Implicature of Toby's Utterance

As suggested in the above figure, about 71% of the students showed no implicature comprehension. It seems that they relied on their linguistic competence rather than pragmatic competence in the inferential process. That is to say, they just literally decoded Toby's utterance without observing the quality's maxim which has been violated to generate the suggested implicature.

6.1.3.6. Situation Six

Jose and Tanya are professors at a college. They are talking about a student, Derek.

Jose: "How did you like Derek's essay?"

Tanya: "I thought it was well-typed."

What does Tanya probably mean?

a- She did not like Derek's essay.

b -She likes if students hand in their work type-written

c- She thought the topic Derek had chosen was interesting.

d- She doesn't really remember Derek's essay.

The correct answer in this situation is answer 'a'. This type of implicature involved in this situation belongs to those implicatures which violate the maxim of manner; Tanya did not answer clearly whether she liked the essay or not, but she implied by her answer that Derek's essay was nothing more than well-typed.

Findings showed that there was a pragmatic failure in interpreting Tanya's intention by many students. The following figure gives details on how the students differently interpreted Tanya's implicature:

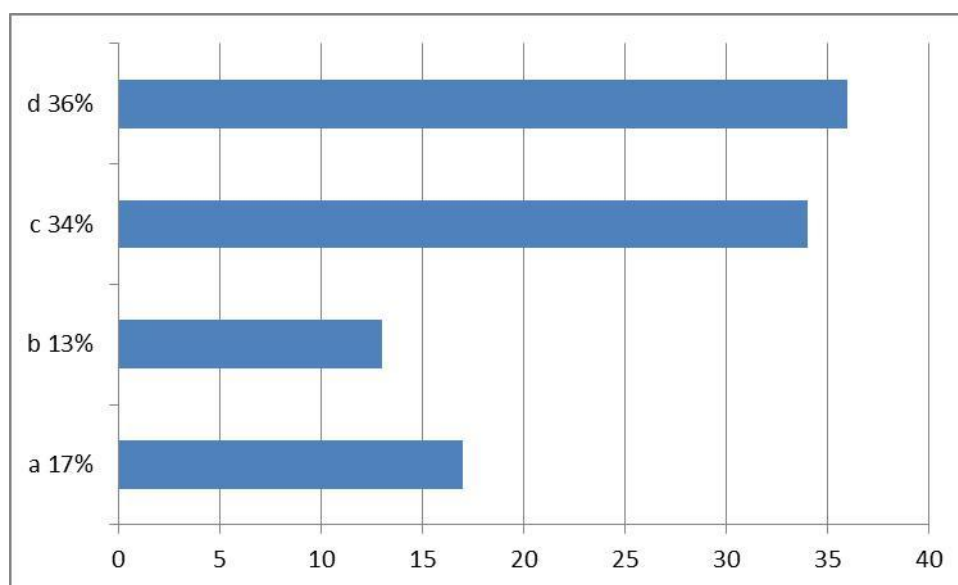


Figure 6.17: Students' Awareness of the Implicature of Tanya's Utterance

As shown in the figure above, only 17% of the students could answer the question correctly. The other participants, however, suggested answer 'b', 'c', or 'd' to be the right interpretation. All in all, 83% of them lacked the ability to use pragmatic communicative strategies in interpreting the implicature involved in this situation which is considered as a conversational strategy NSs may use in their daily life conversations.

6.1.3.7. Situation Seven

Mike is trying to find an apartment in New York City. He just looked at a place and is telling his friend Jane about it.

Jane: “Is the rent high?”

Mike: “Is the Pope Catholic?”

What does Mike probably mean?

- a- He doesn't want to talk about the rent.
- b- The rent is high.
- c- The apartment is owned by the church
- d- The rent isn't very high.

As the following figure reveals, only 19% of the students could successfully interpret the unsaid meaning of Mike's utterance.

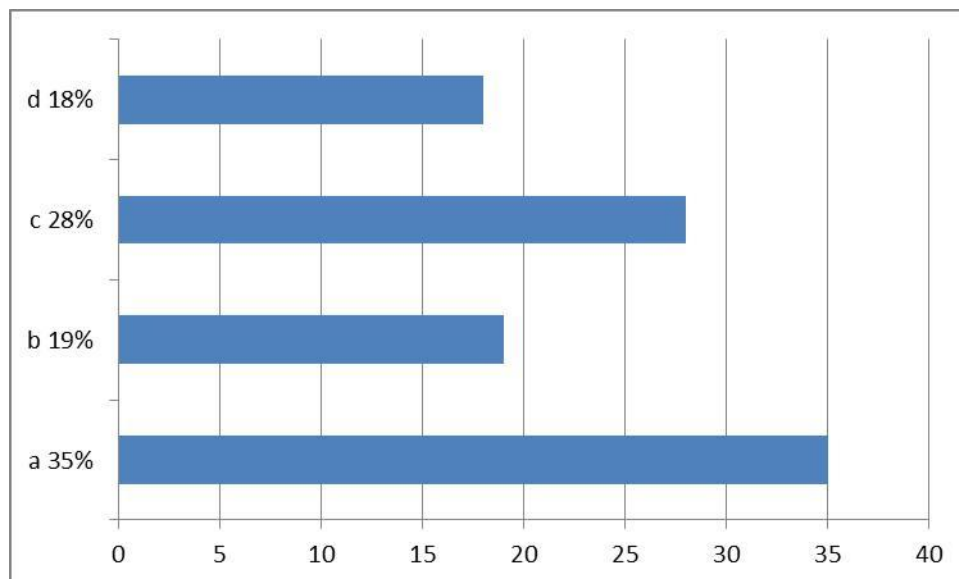


Figure 6.18: Students' Awareness of the Implicature of Mike's Utterance

In this situation, Mike's utterance "Is the Pop Catholic?" implies the "Yes, of course" answer; that is, answer 'b'. A seemingly unrelated response is applied in order to indicate that the question has been asked to which the answer is very obvious, the idea that has not been understood by many students who participated in this study. They literally translated the meaning without considering the English specific socio-cultural and pragmatic dimensions of the target language.

The interpretation of such kind of implicature does not need linguistic knowledge only. It also relies on shared cultural assumptions which may heavily influence the students' performance in interpreting implicatures. This type of implicature has proved to be problematic and to cause difficulties to the learners participants as their English pragmatic and cultural knowledge was inadequate and insufficient to correctly interpret the indirectly conveyed meaning in this situation.

Actually, pragmatic competence is a crucial element to predict one's language proficiency. Therefore, if students' English proficiency is to be adequate, their understanding and conveyance of implicature must correspond.

The inferential process of some implicatures, especially those which are culturally-bound, requires specific pragmatic and communicative strategies to be employed. Such kind of strategies is likely to make an accurate inference and help to derive correct interpretation of the conversational implicatures.

In the same line of thought, Lee (2000) emphasized the importance of the role pragmatic and communicative strategies play in the interpretation process of the conversational implicatures, and how they can help NNS learners in creating smooth and efficient communication.

6.1.3.8. Situation Eight

Brenda and Sally have lunch every Tuesday. As they meet on this particular day, Brenda stops, twirls like a fashion model, and the following dialogue occurs:

Brenda: "I just got a new dress. How do you like it?"

Sally: "Well, there certainly are a lot of woman wearing it this year."

What does Sally probably mean?

- a- We can't tell from what she says.
- b- She thinks Brenda has good taste in clothes because she's right in style.
- c- She likes the dress, but too many women are wearing it.
- d- She doesn't like it.

In this situation, the majority of the participants found difficulty in comprehending the implicature involved accurately. Only 18% of the students could successfully infer the real opinion of Sally. 82% of the respondents, however, failed to select the expected answer with the implied interpretation that she does not like the dress and that Brenda has bad taste in clothes.

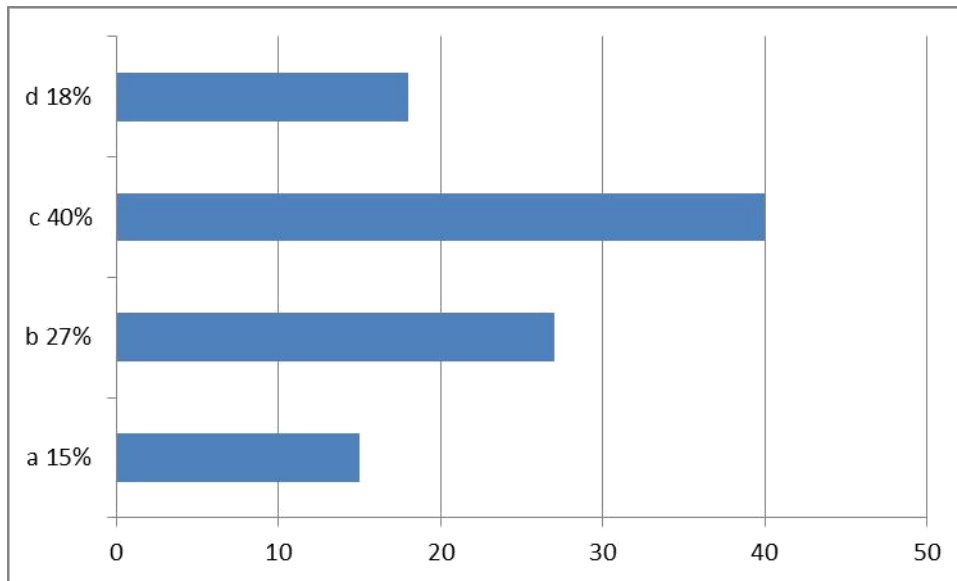


Figure 6.19: Students' Awareness of the Implicature of Sally's Utterance

The findings showed that the most preferred answer for the students was answer 'c' (40%). The others who misinterpreted the implicature chose either answer 'a' or answer 'b'.

Sally's response was too wordy, but still didn't express that she liked the dress. She might resort to such conversational implicature strategy to suggest a 'polite untruth' which was to be the most appropriate response in such occasions. According to Wierzbicka (2003), there may be different cultural responses to the sanctity of frankness. Many English speakers, for example, would feel compromised if they breached the maxim of quality with a direct lie. For this reason, Sally preferred not to directly criticise Brenda and to include, instead, many information in her response. That is, she employed a more roundabout, indirect way of saying the truth in order to avoid social embarrassment as a useful pragmatic and communicative strategy to protect her face and that of her communicative partner. Apparently, reaching such cultural thinking and catching such a specific pragmatic discourse analysis to Sally's utterance was a bit challenging for many participants. The length and amount of information in Sally's response created some kind of difficulty and confusion for many students to guess the right intention.

Based on the above findings and analysis, it can be said that the Algerian EFL learners have difficulty in interpreting the non-literal meaning. Their performance in inferring the different English proposed implicatures in this section was unsatisfactory and relatively poor.

6.1.4. Section Four: Social and Cultural Behaviour

According to Samovar and Potter, communication is “a principle of regulation that governs conduct and procedure.” (1991:232) In other words, communication rules, either verbal or non-verbal, act as system of expected behaviour patterns that organize interaction between individuals. These rules, in fact, are both culturally and contextually bound. Some scholars claimed that Leech’s politeness principle cannot govern the communicative acts of all cultures. Therefore, EFL learners are expected to be aware of the fact that communication rules are culturally diverse in order to achieve effective and efficient communication.

The last part of the pragmatic test was intended to focus on Algerian EFL learners’ awareness and performance of the verbal and non-verbal rules that may be completely different from their native rules. Each situation in this part consists of a particular English culturally-bound behaviour that is related in a way or another to the politeness phenomenon. Test takers were asked to select only one appropriate act or behaviour from the four choices given in each situation.

6.1.4.1. Situation One

If you are sitting in a bus in England and the one who is sitting next to you tells you ‘Cold, isn’t it?’, but you do not really notice the cold much. What would be the appropriate response you can give?

a- Agree.

b- Disagree.

c- Keep silent.

d- Change/ switch the subject cleverly.

When this question was proposed to the British NSs who participated in this test, the only answer that was chosen was the answer 'a' (Agree). One of the British participants justified his answer by saying "The British weather rule says: 'Agree with' means you are polite and 'disagree even politely' means you are rude." He further pointed out that "Weather in Britain can't be discussed; you either agree or disagree. There is no other choice?"

According to Fox, "You must always agree with 'factual' statements about the weather (these are almost invariably phrased as questions but, as we have already established, this is because they require a social response, not a rational answer, even when they are quite obviously wrong." (2005:9). She further pointed out that British people obsession with talking about the weather is "a matter of easing your way into a conversation with another person, and the weather-talks are a means for the British of getting passed their natural reserve and actually talk to people." (2005:26). For this reason, British people cannot disagree with each other about the weather.

Most of the NNS participants, however, preferred answer 'b' (disagree). For the sake of clarity, the following figure gives more statistical details about their answers:

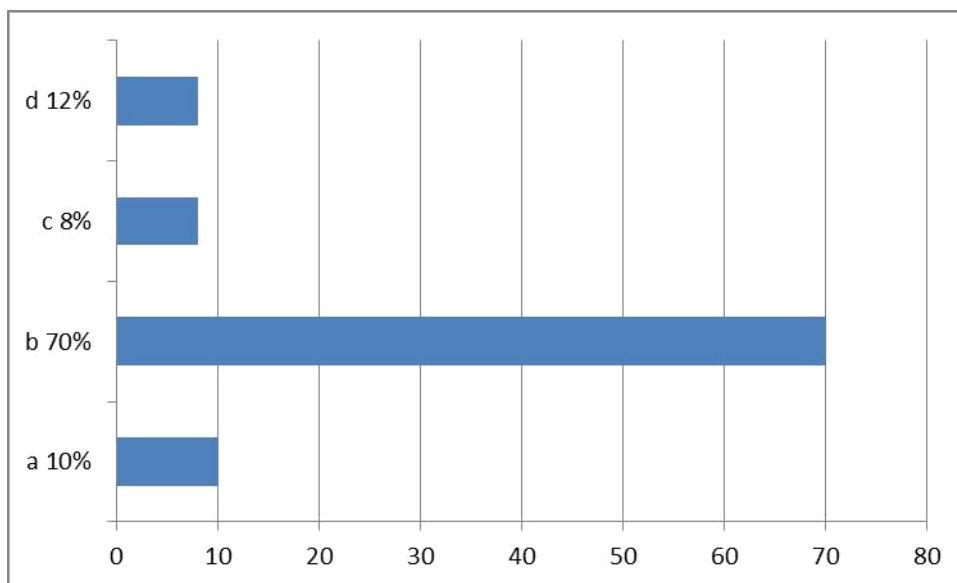


Figure 6.20: Students' Responses to Someone Talking about the Weather

As the above figure indicates, only 10% of the students could select the most appropriate response to this specific culturally-bound situation. The other students, however, chose either answer 'b' (70%), 'c' (8%) or answer 'd' (12%). All in all, 90% of the students failed to choose the right answer. Such a failure, according to NSs, would be socially interpreted as a very rude behaviour. According to Fox, it is "a serious breach of etiquette." (2005:13)

In case one responds to "Ooh, isn't it cold?" with "No, actually, it's quite mild.", "I don't think so.", or "No, it's not.", the listener will be offended and feel embarrassed and the communicative atmosphere becomes rather tense and awkward (ibid.).

NN speakers' responses, however, indicated a lack of sociocultural awareness of this specific agreement rule which is considered as an important rule of the English weather-speak that should be respected and thus creates a smooth communication without any misunderstandings. Such kind of agreement rule acts as a pragmatic communicative strategy that helps the speaker to avoid the inhibition of communication and reflects to what extent

this speaker is aware of the specific social cues and social insider values of the English language.

As has been mentioned above, the findings showed that 70% of the NNS participants preferred answer 'b' (disagree). A likely reason for this specific choice might be referred to negative pragmatic transfer. In other words, students might rely on their native way of responding to perform their reaction in English.

In Algerian culture, it is not prohibited to socially disagree with someone about the weather and in many cases the speakers do not even think in which form they should perform their disagreement. In England, however, it is not the case. According to Fox, "The agreement rule and its exceptions provide hints about the importance of politeness and avoidance of conflicts (as well as approval of conflict in specific social contexts) and precedence of etiquette over logic." (2005:11)

The cultural differences and personal belief or experience, therefore, could be possible factors that lead to misunderstanding between people with different backgrounds. Accordingly, EFL learners need some knowledge about English culture and pragmatic skills to understand some social cues and cultural values to arrive at the appropriate socio-pragmatic behaviour.

Another reason that might lead most of the students to select answer 'b' (disagree) is the belief that the British culture is one of the individualist cultures which hold the view that the self is independent and people are free to express their thoughts, values, preferences and beliefs whatever they are.

Emphasis on expression is one of the integral aspects of individualism (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan and Tipton, 1985). People in individualist cultural contexts argue that individualism "holds that each person has a unique core of feelings and intuition that should be unfolded or be expressed if individualism is to be realized." (1985:334). The students

might be influenced by this idea and thought that weather-speak is not an exception. Yet, for British people, it is an unquestioned exception since the agreement rule for them is culturally and socially required and cannot be discussed or justified.

6.1.4.2. Situation Two

When meeting Prince Charles for a prolonged conversation, what do you use when first addressed and afterwards?

a- 'Your Majesty' is used when first addressed and 'Sir' is used afterwards.

b- 'Your Majesty' is used for the whole conversation.

c- 'Your Majesty', then 'Prince'.

d- 'Prince' for the whole prolonged conversation.

This specific situation is another example which reveals the importance of socio-cultural awareness and appropriate use of pragmatic communicative strategies to deal with culturally-bound interactions.

Actually, a specific use of Royal protocol is indispensable during all the Royal events. Even if many of British people will never meet one of the British Royal family's members, it is interesting to know some facts regarding the way they should be treated.

One important rule is associated with the appropriate way they should be addressed with. When meeting Prince Charles, the speaker should substitute 'Your Majesty' for 'You'. In prolonged conversation, however, the rule differs. That is to say, 'Your Majesty' is used when first addressed and 'Sir' is used afterwards, i.e., answer 'a,' which has been chosen by

2% of the students. The following figure shows more statistical details of the students' responses:

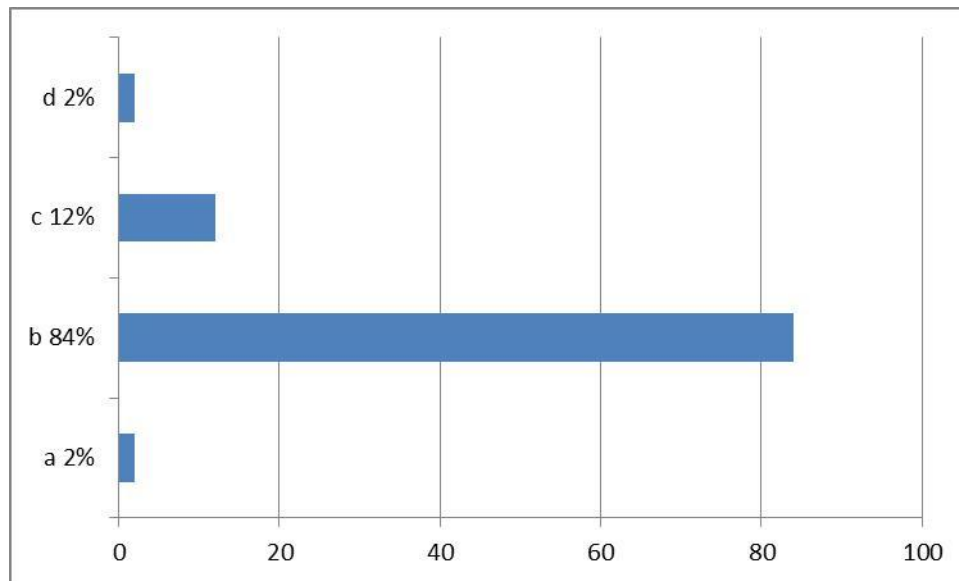


Figure 6.21: Students' Responses to a British Royal Conversational Protocol

Many people hesitate in the proper use of British Royal protocol and they are sometimes confused. This fact was clearly reflected through the performance of many students who chose answer 'b', 'c' or 'd'.

The British Royal protocol is complicated, but it is less complex than it seems to be. All what is needed is a sufficient awareness of such British Royal form addresses that are fundamentally associated with cultural etiquette and specific politeness norms and strategies.

6.1.4.3. Situation Three

You are in a restaurant with your friend and you want a waiter to come to your table. What would you do or say?

- a. *Raise your hand*
- b. *Snap your fingers*

c. *Call him “Waiter, come please!”*

d. *Approach him and say ‘excuse me, would you please come?’*

This situation includes a very specific rule of English etiquette that is associated with the notion of politeness phenomenon.

To be polite is sometimes quite difficult, but it is important in the learning of foreign languages. Good manners and socio-culturally appropriate behaviours can help overcome communicative problems especially with native speakers. In this situation, for example, the appropriate communicative behaviour which is expected from a pragmatic competent EFL student is the answer ‘a’ (Raise your hand).

Such socio-cultural rules are hidden rules of English behaviour which are required for avoiding miscommunication and social embarrassment. In the following figure, the researcher gives the different percentages of the respondents’ answers in this situation:

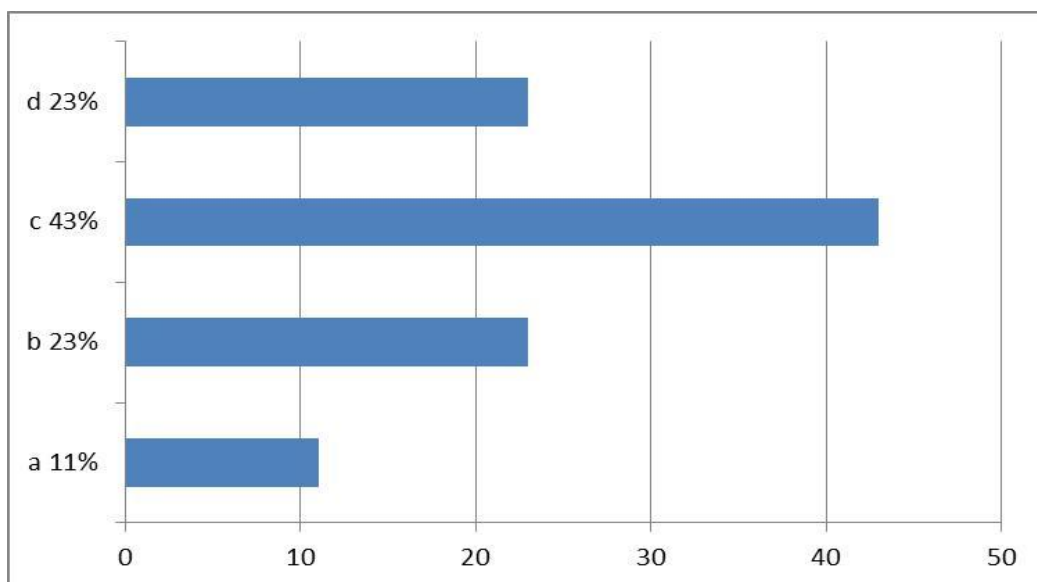


Figure 6.2.2: Students’ Ways of Calling an English Waiter

As shown in the above figure , only 11% of the students could successfully select the appropriate communicative behaviour. The others, however, preferred answer 'b' (23%), 'c' (43%), or 'd' (23%).

Those who chose answer 'b' or 'c' might be influenced by their native Algerian way of dealing with such situations. Accordingly, a socio-pragmatic failure occurred. Asking a waiter to come in the Algerian restaurants is often performed by either snapping the fingers or ordering the waiter to come without even using the word 'please', especially in ordinary restaurants.

In Algerian society, these ways of behaving are very common and do not hold any kind of disrespect to the waiter. In other words, they are just natural social behaviours that are rooted in Algerian culture and have nothing to do with the notions of superiority and inferiority or even rudeness.

As for those who chose answer 'c', they might believe that approaching the waiter themselves and using the expression 'Excuse me' along with a sentence like 'would you please come' was the most appropriate and polite performance that could be employed without being misunderstood or feel embarrassed.

As cultures view politeness differently, British people believe that raising hand to call a waiter is quite a polite behaviour to draw the waiter's attention.

6.1.4.4. Situation Four

If you get on the bus or a train and you want to sit down next to someone, what would you say?

- a. *May I have a sit, please!*

- b. *Is it possible? (Pointing to the seat.)*
- c. *Would you mind if I sit down next to you?*
- d. *Say nothing*

The appropriate answer that is expected in this situation is answer ‘d’. Most of the students (87%), however, failed to select this answer. The following figure shows the students’ different preferences in selecting the options given:

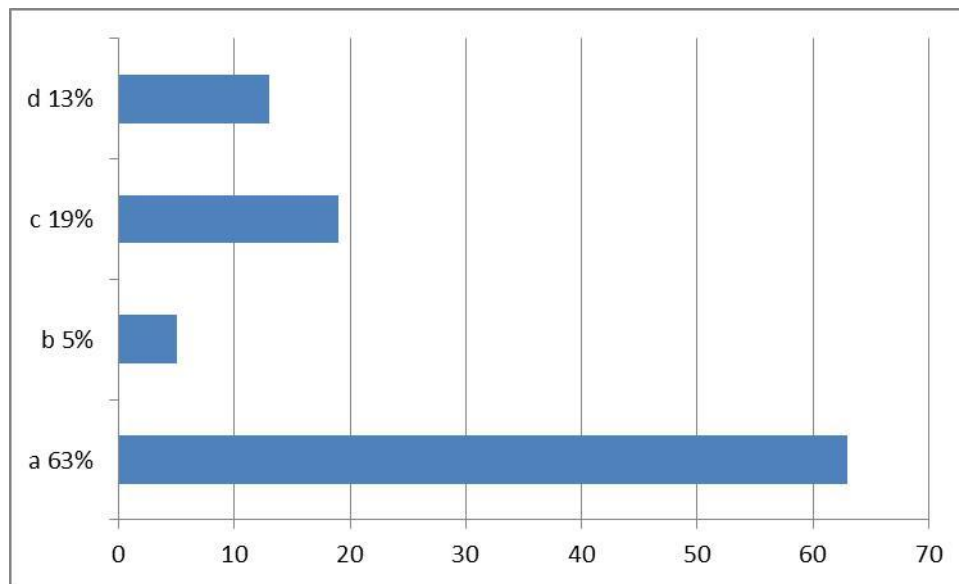


Figure 6.23: Students’ Ways of Asking Permission to Sit down Next to someone on a Bus or a Train

The findings provided in this situation indicated a poor performance. Only 13% of the students could successfully identify the appropriate answer or rather the most appropriate communicative etiquette. The other students, however, chose answer ‘a’, ‘b’, or ‘c’.

Communicative etiquette behaviours as socially and culturally determined norms, which regulate human behaviour in communication within a speech community, can be addressed as pragmatic communicative strategies that reflect the pragmatic competence of the language

speaker. Such pragmatic communicative strategies are socially and culturally conditioned communicative behavioural patterns. They assure cooperative and smooth communicative interactions. For better communicative performance, EFL learners should be equipped with such strategies.

In the above fourth situation, the students could not identify the appropriate answer as they had insufficient knowledge about these strategies and the important role of their use in communication. They might be influenced by their native Algerian behaving in such situations. In the Algerian buses or trains, people generally ask permission to sit next to someone especially when this latter is of different gender. Some people ask permission because they expect that this place is already occupied by someone else. When Algerians get a bus or train, they often occupy more than one place; one for themselves and the other(s) for their friend(s), family or acquaintances. In such cases, it is usually unacceptable to complain especially if the two communicative parties are not of the same gender. Therefore, it can be assumed that the participants who answered wrongly were heavily influenced by this native thinking and thus made a negative pragmatic transfer which might cause, in turn, pragmatic communicative failure.

6.1.4.5. Situation Five

When you get out of a taxi, what would you say?

- a. Thank you*
- b. God bless you*
- c. Cheers*
- d. Say nothing*

When a British person gets out of a taxi, s/he usually says ‘thank you’ to the taxi driver (answer ‘a’). This is usually the most expected and appropriate verbal communicative behaviour a native British social insider can perform.

The findings showed that the NNS participants who answered this way were 77%. The following figure gives more details about the way they answered in this situation:

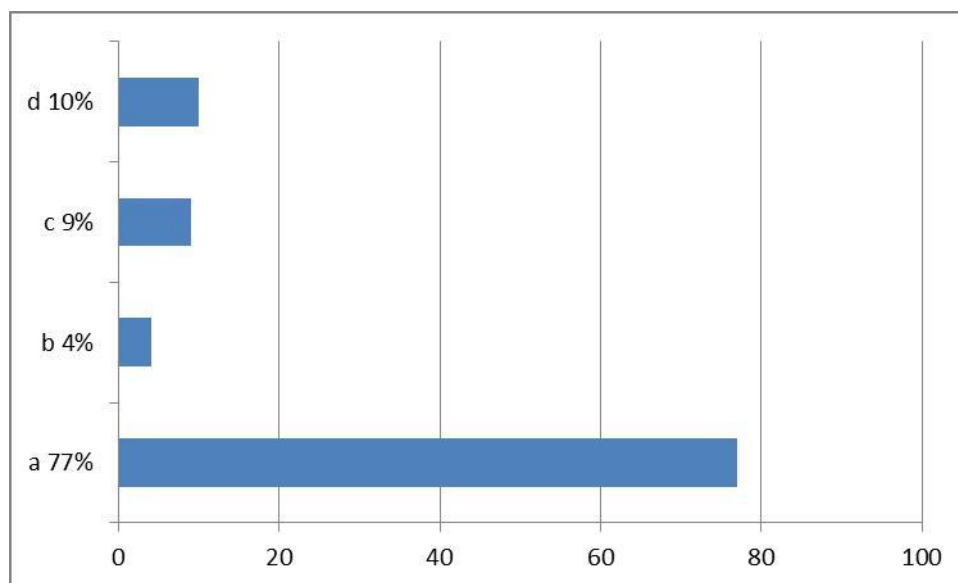


Figure 6.24: Students’ Ways of Thanking a Taxi Driver

As suggested in the above figure, some students chose answer ‘b’ (‘God bless you’). This preference might be influenced by the belief that there are sufficient similarities between the Algerian and British cultures in dealing with such communicative interactions. ‘God bless you’ is an equivalent answer to the Algerian expressions 'بارك الله فيك' and 'ربي بيسترك' which are commonly used by Algerian people in such situations. According to Guirdham, “Assumptions are taken for-granted, unquestioned beliefs which can affect our communicative behaviour” (2005:148) Relying on such assumptions can be regarded as an indication of the insufficient socio-pragmatic knowledge which affects the linguistic choices NN speakers use in different communicative situations.

6.1.4.6. Situation Six

If someone bumps into you and says sorry, what would you say?

- a- Sorry*
- b- That's ok*
- c- Never mind*
- d- No problem*

In such a situation, British people tend to say sorry (answer 'a') which was an unexpected answer for the overwhelming majority of NN participants. The following figure gives more details on the participants' performance in this situation:

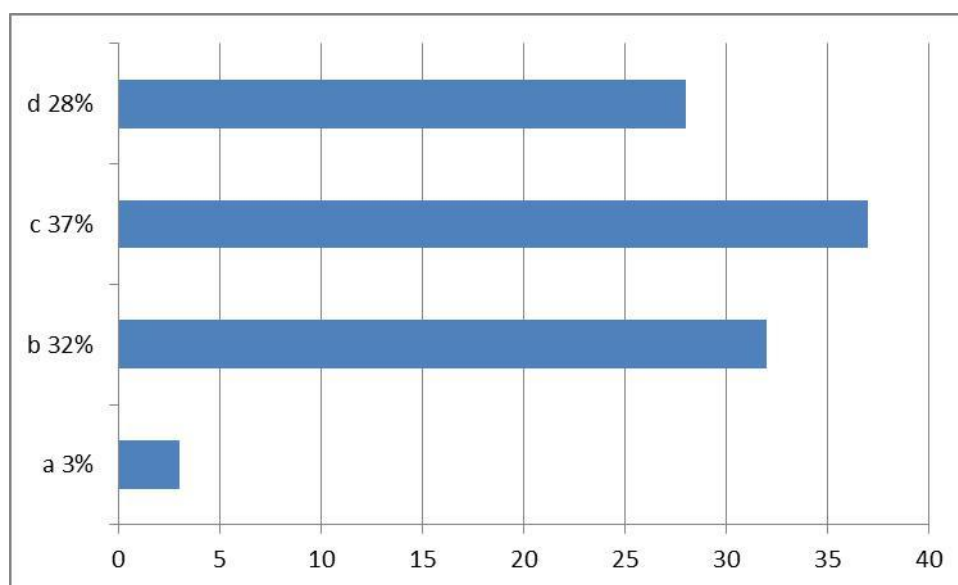


Figure 6.25: Students' Responses When Someone Bumps into them and Apologizes

The findings showed that the majority of the participants (97%) could not identify the appropriate answer. Most of them preferred answer 'b', 'c', or 'd' which can be seen as equivalent responses to specific Algerian expression, namely 'معليش', 'pas de problem.' and 'c'est pas grave.' These two last French expressions are naturally used in the Algerian society and are considered as part of its linguistic communicative behaviour. Thus, it can be assumed the students' behaviours in this situation were clearly influenced by their native socio-cultural communicative behavioural patterns.

6.1.4.7. Situation Seven

You are sitting in a restaurant and seeing someone near you putting his elbows on the table.

What would you think?

- a. It is a normal/good manner*
- b. It is an impolite manner*
- c. He is a snob person*
- d. He is an intellectual person*

The focus in this situation is on the non-verbal communicative behaviours which are unsaid and unwritten rules of behaviour. These rules are considered as an essential part of any culture. They should be respected by the language users in order to show politeness and adherence to their own ethnic group beliefs and values.

The British obsession, so to speak, with avoiding communicative conflicts makes them aware of the importance of appropriate use of those hidden British rules for creating a successful communication. Sitting in a restaurant, in Britain, has specific unwritten and wordless rules that should not be violated. One of these non-verbal rules is that the person should not put his/her elbows on the table, as it is considered an impolite action (answer b). Otherwise, s/he would be considered an impolite person.

The overwhelming majority (97%) of the students who participated in this study were not aware of this specific British cultural behaviour. The following figure gives clear statistical details about their performance in this specific situation:

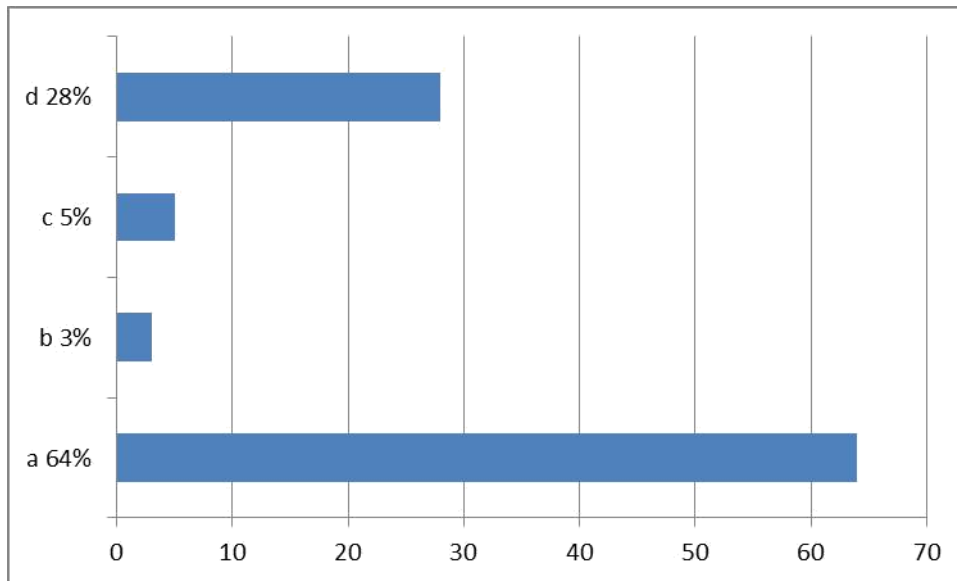


Figure 6.26: Students' Estimation of Bad Table Manners

As the above table shows, only 3% of the NN participants could successfully identify the right answer. Most of them, however, selected the answer 'a' (64%), answer 'd' (28%) and the rest chose answer 'c' (5%). Their selections might be influenced by an ethnocentrism notion which Guidhan described it as "a biased set of assumptions in favour of one's own ethnic group." (2005:149)

In Algerian restaurants, a person can freely put his/her elbows on the table without being afraid of being misunderstood or looking rude. Some others even believe that this particular behaviour reflects how much the person is an intellectual or of a high class. The lack of socio-cultural knowledge of non-verbal language can easily lead the learners to assume similarities between their native language behaviours and those of the target language's behaviours. When assuming similarities between the two languages, learners adopt an ethnocentric view towards people from the other culture. They think of their own cultural norms, beliefs and customs as appropriate and may even look down on other cultures (Guidhan, 2005).

6.1.4.8. Situation Eight

You get on a bus or train and find a spare double seat, are you :

- a. Going to sit next to the window?
- b. Going to sit in the aisle?
- c. Not going to sit at all?
- d. Going to choose a single seat?

When someone gets on a bus or train in Britain and finds a spare double seat, s/he has to sit next to the window (answer 'a'). This is one of the non-verbal rules of communicative behaviours that English native people know and adhere to. Such culturally-determined behaviour, in fact, was not known to most of the NNS participants as they were not familiar with such unspoken rules.

In the following figure, more statistical details are given:

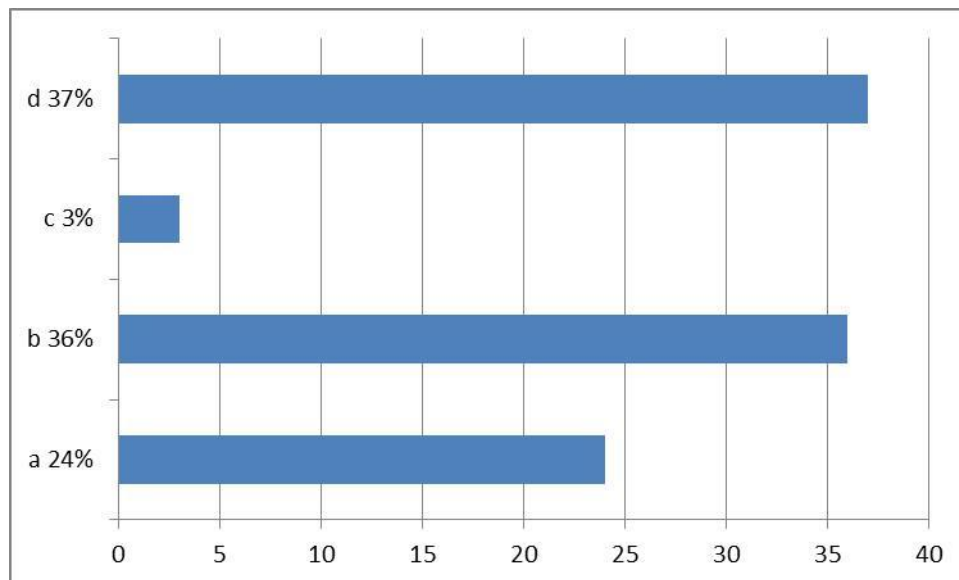


Figure 6.27: Students' Ways of Choosing a Proper Seat on a Bus or a Train

The findings indicated that only 24% of the students chose the right answer. The others (76%), however, failed to locate the appropriate British cultural behaviour in such a situation. This confirms their unawareness of the English socio-cultural norms that govern English daily-life situations. Their insufficient cultural experience prevented them from identifying the appropriate cultural behaviour in that specific context.

In the Algerian society, when getting on a bus or train, most people sit haphazardly since there are no specific rules to be respected or adhered to. In some cases, when they find a spare double seat, they choose to sit next to the window to breathe fresh air or sightsee. Some others choose to sit in the aisle to be able to choose who can sit next to them, and some of them even sit in the middle. Contrary to British culture, what governs such situation in the Algerian society is not etiquette and politeness rules, but it is the individual's preferences and decisions.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the present chapter, the researcher emphasises the important role pragmatic competence plays in communication.

Foreign language learners who have considerable grammatical competence or lexical knowledge of the target language, but have a lack of pragmatic knowledge of that language may encounter serious communicative problems. Such communicative problems or breakdowns come into play when those learners rely on their native pragmatic knowledge of appropriate speech acts and negatively transfer it to the target language. Such specific failure is said to be more serious than grammatical or lexical deficiency because it may be understood as rudeness or unfriendliness that may affect the speakers' relationships.

All in all, learners' pragmatic competence is a crucial element to predict the learners overall language proficiency. Therefore, if the students' English language proficiency is to be adequate, their pragmatic competence must correspond.

When the Algerian participants were asked to evaluate their English pragmatic level and their overall English proficiency level, most of them gave positive evaluations to both levels. Yet, their performance in the pragmatic test revealed a poor pragmatic performance which, in turn, reflected insufficient English language proficiency. Thus, one can safely conclude that those students cannot create efficient communicative interactions with native speakers as they have not got the fundamental building blocks of successful communication which involves being able to deliver a message clearly and to understand other people's messages appropriately.

Chapter Seven

A Pragmatically-based Approach to Develop the English Learners' Pragmatic Communicative Strategies

Introduction

The findings of the study obtained through statistical analysis in the previous two chapters indicated that both the understanding of non-literal meanings and the production of appropriate language use are of prime importance for being an effective competent language user. In order to achieve such efficiency in using a language, one needs specific pragmatic and communicative strategies that enable him/her to create effective and successful communicative interactions.

It is the goal of the present chapter to suggest some teaching activities and techniques that can be used to developing the pragmatic communicative strategies of an EFL learner.

7.1. Theoretical Framework

For many years, the learning of a second/foreign language was equated with linguistic and grammatical accuracy. However, there has been a shift from this specific theoretical framework towards a more communicative perspective (Martinez-Flor, 2004). Accordingly, the development of pragmatic competence became necessary in teaching and learning second/foreign language.

It is necessary to understand and create language that is appropriate to the situation in which one is communicating. Failure to do so may cause misunderstanding on either the part of the listener or the speaker. Worse yet is the possibility of a total communicative breakdown

and the stereotypical labelling of second/foreign language users as people who are insensitive and rude (Thomas, 1983). Thus, rehearsing pragmatic skills alongside other linguistic aspects should be one of the objectives of language teaching in formal education.

Practicing pragmatic skills in a classroom requires student-centred interaction. Teaching materials should provide a relatively wide range of exercises designed to enhance the sociopragmatic knowledge of students.

Compared to real-life interactions outside the classroom, it has been clearly noticed that traditional structure-based foreign language classrooms have been considered poor input environments for developing pragmatic ability in the target language. Foreign language instruction in such classrooms focuses mainly on grammar and ignores the pragmatic development of language learners. This fact results in significant differences between foreign language learners and native speakers in the area of language use. In response to the failure of the 'form' approaches in developing learners' communicative ability in real-life situations, attention shifted from this specific theoretical framework towards another different perspective, namely the knowledge and skills needed to use grammar and other aspects of language appropriately for different communicative purposes. In many second and foreign language teaching contexts, curricular materials developed in recent years either include strong pragmatic components or even adopt a pragmatic approach as their new and effective orientation to teaching.

Studies have found that when pragmatics is not offered, opportunities for developing pragmatic competence are quite limited (Kasper, 2000). Regarding this particular point, Kasper has clearly mentioned that:

In a foreign language situation [...], students lack the need and opportunity of genuine communication in the target language;

therefore, it is nearly impossible for students to develop pragmatic ability [...] the ability to interpret utterances in context, especially when what a speaker says is not the same as what the speaker means; to carry out communicative action effectively and interact successfully in different environments and with different participants (2000:1).

In this case, it is argued that without pragmatic instruction, differences in pragmatics are likely to show up in the English of learners regardless of their linguistic proficiency. As it has been previously discussed, language proficiency is not solely based on grammatical competence. Thus, the proficient language learner in grammar cannot be assumed to be equally proficient in the appropriate pragmatic usage of the language. English learners and especially foreign ones may not have the opportunity to observe some, if not all, targeted pragmatic features without being effectively involved in learning such kinds of target language aspects. Consequently, it is assumed that foreign language learners cannot be expected to develop their pragmatic competence on their own without a focus on pragmatic instruction (Kasper, 2000). This, in turn, makes the role of pragmatics even more important and necessary in foreign language classrooms.

Needless to say, Algerian classrooms of English have difficulties in providing authentic pragmatic input of the English language. This fact impedes learners' pragmatic development in the classrooms. Actually, Algerian classrooms for English provide little or no opportunity for learners to interact with native speakers or to experience real-life situations, compared with second language learners in second language environments. Even teachers find it difficult to maximize a full range of human interactions in such traditional EFL classrooms. Regarding this point, Cook (2001) stated that in foreign-language classrooms, the target language tends to be viewed as an object of study instead of a means of socialization and communication. It is, indeed, the case in many Algerian classrooms where English is regarded as a medium of instruction and not as a medium of interaction.

The ability to communicate effectively in many different situations and contexts involves the ability to control a wide range of language functions such as requesting, refusing, promising and apologizing. Unfortunately, most foreign language learners face difficulties in dealing with such language functions. They often lack the knowledge of what counts as cooperative and polite. The act of refusing, for example, is one of the most challenging communicative acts for foreign language learners since “the inability to say ‘no’ clearly and politely [...] has led many non-native speakers to offend their interlocutors.”(Beebe and Takahashi, 1987:133)

Most of Algerian learners of English encounter problems in using this language successfully in the real world and in achieving their communicative goals. According to Laraba:

A great majority of Algerian students learning English as a foreign language are fairly poor manipulators of English both orally and its written form. Of course, there are some brilliant exceptions among under graduate and younger teachers (1988:79).

Algerian teachers have become familiar with some expressions that are generally used by their students like “What?!”, instead of “I beg your pardon!”, or even “pardon!”, “repeat!” instead of “would you repeat, please!” or “ please, repeat!”

Committing such kinds of pragmatic deviations may easily result in various consequences which are often interpreted at a social level rather than an outcome of the language learning process. In other words, the native speakers’ inability to understand the real intention of the foreign language speakers who perform such pragmatic errors, which are heavily associated with the notion of politeness, may give the unfortunate impression that those speakers are intentionally offensive rather than pragmatically incompetent. Such

incompetency, which is due mainly to the teacher-centred learning system and the insufficient exposure to the authentic language input and language interactions, can lead to a total communicative breakdown. Instead of being considered an uneducated person, the foreign language user, then, may appear uncaring, abrupt or brusque in social interactions. Yet, in all cases, a good communication may effortlessly be hindered. As a case in point, most of Algerian learners of English do not know the various degrees of politeness that are proper to the communicative interaction in which they are involved. In other words, they cannot adjust the level of directness and indirectness in the different communicative interactions through which they may go.

Knowing such kinds of pragmatic strategies in dealing with different communicative situations, like directness or indirectness, can really intensify or soften communicative acts. Using pragmatic strategies in social interactions is a facilitative tool that compensates for deficiencies in communication. Their function, therefore, is to promote and empower communication. For this additional reason, pragmatic knowledge is of great help to foreign language learners as it deals with the effectiveness and social cohesiveness of communicative actions. This particular competence, also, includes the knowledge of the effective pragmatic strategies that enable learners to communicate successfully. These reasons, indeed, impose huge demands on pragmatics involvement in language teaching and learning.

At this level of discussion, it can be said that the relationship between pragmatics and language learning and teaching is clear and should be emphasized. In accordance with this view, Bouton stated that:

Pragmatics and language learning are inherently bound together. Pragmatics provides language teachers and learners with a research based understanding of the language forms and functions that are appropriate to the many contexts in which a language is used-an

understanding that is crucial to a proficient speaker's communicative competence (cited in Guerra, 2003: 10).

Accordingly, pragmatics-based teaching is a must and developing pragmatic competence of a language is a necessity.

In developing a pragmatically-oriented approach, learners would have more opportunities to interpret language input. This specific approach aims at developing a gradual awareness of the mismatch between the foreign-language-learner communicative performance and that of proficient users of the language. The implementation of this approach, in fact, imposes a complete reorientation of the foreign language curriculum. It is completely different from the structure-based approaches to language teaching in that it relies on the enhancement of the learners' communicative skills and focuses on the pragmatic aspect of communication. One of the core principles of this teaching approach is to develop learner' language awareness of how the target language is typically used in communication. It focuses on the efficient engagement in communicative activities to gain familiarity and control over the appropriate pragmatic forms and strategies for different social circumstances. Such activities may facilitate access to data representing authentic discourse and meaningful interaction in the target language. This, in turn, helps in fostering the analytical thinking skills of learners. Such activities may facilitate access to data representing authentic discourse and meaningful interaction in the target language. This, in turn, helps in fostering the analytical thinking skills of learners.

Development of pragmatic communicative strategies can be systematically produced through planned classroom activities that are pragmatically oriented. Such pedagogical intervention would be quite promising with regard to its positive effects on the whole communicative performance of EFL students.

This view has been backed up by authors such as Kasper and Schmidt (1996) who pointed out the necessity of pragmatic instruction that is based on authentic and research-informed materials. They believed in the efficiency of such a pragmatic pedagogical intervention as a very helpful tool to provide second/foreign learners with contextualized, pragmatically appropriate input from the early stages of acquisition. As Kasper noted:

the great potential of L2 teaching for developing learners' pragmatic ability lies in its capacity to alert and orient learners to pragmatic features encountered outside the classroom, encourage them to try new pragmatic strategies, reflect on their observations and their own language use and obtain feedback (2001:56).

In the same line of thought, Cook (2001) argued that foreign language instructional settings are considered as teacher-fronted. In such settings, the target language tends to be treated as an object of study instead of as a means of socialization and a communication tool. Thus, the role of pragmatically-based pedagogical intervention becomes even more important in foreign language classrooms where opportunities for the full range of human interactions are limited, and learners have more difficulties in acquiring appropriate language use patterns.

In the following section, specific activities are presented as an aid in order to develop the pragmatic communicative strategies of EFL learners.

7.2. Pragmatically-Based Activities

The activities that are pragmatically-based should be designed in a way that focuses on the pragmatic rules for language use and more importantly on how to implement those rules in real-life situations.

Learners are in need to transform the learned knowledge into competence. Therefore, adequate opportunities to put the learned knowledge into use are of prime importance

(Kasper, 1997). As previously mentioned, foreign language learners cannot be expected to develop their pragmatic competence on their own. This puts the pressure on the teachers who should plan lessons and draw learners' attention to pragmatic elements through practice. For foreign language teaching to be efficient, it has to be practiced. This performance requires a real experience and an efficient application of linguistic knowledge through particular activities that address the learning of the targeted pragmatic aspects of language.

To interact successfully in a myriad of contexts and with many different speakers, learners need to develop a repertoire of practical situation-dependent communicative choices. To this end, the following activities are proposed.

7.2.1. Motivational Activities

The use of specific motivational activities, which are meant to add an element of enjoyment in the classroom, can often cause pragmatic learning to take place. For example, the teacher can use songs, films, TV and videos. Such activities may easily stimulate reality within the classroom situation and enable to broaden the context of language learning outside its walls.

In fact, using videos, films and TV channels can be a suitable practice that presents authentic audio-visual input. The aim of these motivational activities is to expose learners to the pragmatic aspects of language, such as the appropriate strategies used for refusing in the target language, and to provide them with the analytical tools they need to arrive at their own generalizations concerning contextually appropriate language use.

In a series of studies conducted by Rose (1993, 1994, 1997, 2001), the researcher pointed out that "[...] in foreign language contexts, exposure to film is generally the closest that language learners will ever get to witnessing or participating in native speaker

interaction.” (1997:283) Accordingly, using excerpts from a film or contextualized video-typed situations can be considered a good and effective starting point for developing pragmatic communicative strategies which makes learners’ performance more natural and their conversational practice more appropriate.

Even though the use of films is a useful way to make lessons more entertaining and motivating, the use of films is not always easy. According to Stoller (1988), the use of films and videotapes requires attention and the teacher must play an important part in an effective film lesson in order for the film to be more than just time filler. It is also important to remember that films are a substitute neither for the teacher nor for the instruction but can be real classroom aids when used properly. In addition, it is the teacher’s responsibility to promote active viewing and the film should also promote active participation from the beginning of the lesson in order for the students to be more than just passive listeners or watchers.

Stoller (1988) further pointed out that the systematic use of films is significantly important for enhancing the language production and comprehension of students. Moreover, careful selection of the films and previewing them is important for the teacher to be familiar with the material s/he is teaching and to make sure that the type of film chosen complements one’s overall instructional and curricular objectives.

One other important consideration is that the teacher has to be sure that the students understand the instructional objectives of a film lesson and should mention that the film is not just an entertaining way to pass time, but that it has certain pedagogical goals. Additionally, the stories of films should be interesting to keep the students motivated (Allan, 1985).

All in all, the films' stories should be both interesting and pedagogically rich, which can be a challenging combination.

In the following first activities (One and Two), the teacher would make use of films as a teaching instrument in order to develop specific pragmatic skills.

7.2.1.1. Activity One in Film Use

The first step involves having foreign language learners watch an episode of the serial 'Friends' such as 'Pulling a Monica'. Afterwards, the teacher asks the students to focus on a specific segment containing two different speech acts, namely compliment and apology, and to write down in which way Monica's mother performs these two speech acts.

The aim behind this step is to highlight specific words, sentences and structures that an English native speaker may use to perform a compliment or an apology in a particular social context. This, in turn, will help students learn specific pragmatic communicative strategies that may be used within a similar context.

Next, the students will be asked to analyse the speech acts performed in relation to the three social variables namely power, social distance and degree of imposition. The purpose of such a step is to make learners aware of the important role that social and contextual factors play in real-life situations, and how these same factors influence the linguistic and the pragmatic choices, more specifically the pragmatic communicative strategies used in a given communicative conversation.

Then, the students will be asked to focus on non-verbal pragmatic communicative strategies; i.e., to describe and imitate Monica's mother's body language, facial expressions,

and tone of voice. All these non-linguistic features are of prime importance in making the EFL learners' performance become more natural and native-like.

This step can help students make appropriate connection(s) between their verbal and non-verbal performances as an attempt to reach a native-like performance. Unfortunately, some students perform appropriate speech, but with inappropriate non-verbal features. Thus, it can be suggested that the aforementioned step would raise students' awareness of the importance of specific pragmatic features and help them to use these features appropriately.

7.2.1.2. Activity Two in Film Use

This activity aims to raise students' awareness of refusals, as they are one of the most face-threatening acts. This activity includes different steps which are as follows:

Step 1

Students watch selected specific sequences from the serial 'Stargate' which the teacher has already chosen carefully. The transcripts are provided to identify the beginning and end of refusal sequences as in the following example:

FRASIER: General. Sorry to disturb you... I was wondering if I could have a word.

LANDRY: Of course, Doctor. Come in.

FRASIER: Thank you. Sir... I would like to make a request on behalf of all of the teams stranded in this reality. Please... postpone this mission until we can find a way to get home.

LANDRY: I can't do that. We need our teams out there gathering Intel on the Ori threat... instead of sitting on their hands here waiting for normal Gate operations to resume... and that won't be possible until this problem is dealt with.

FRASIER: While I can empathize sir... believe me. I think you need to take a look at the bigger picture... this goes beyond this world... beyond this galaxy... this universe... hundreds of billions of lives are at stake. Their survival could hinge on

not just our return... but the return of every SG- 1 stranded on this base. Sir... back in my universe Earth is facing a global pandemic, one that your planet has already faced and beaten... you have the cure that could save my world, all I have to do is get it to them.

LANDRY: I can also empathize but at the risk of sounding callous... my priorities are with this world.

FRASIER: How can you prioritize the lives of one group over those of another? What makes my Earth any less important than your own?

LANDRY: We have the top minds from 18 different universes trying to get you home... now hopefully they can come up with a solution before this mission is completed but if they can't...then I'm sorry Doctor.

Step 2

Students are asked to identify the different turns of refusal's realization and to specify whether they were performed directly or indirectly with giving possible explanations to the direct/indirect strategy used each time. The explanations, of course, have to be related to the social contextual factors involved in each specific social interaction.

Step 3

As an attempt to reinforce the learners' understanding of the appropriate use of direct and indirect strategies, the teacher may provide students with other examples of direct and indirect ways of refusing and the adjuncts that precede or follow a refusal in response to a request. The following are some examples:

-Example 1

JACKSON: What are they doing?

TEAL'C: Preparing me for my death.

JACKSON: Oh.

TEAL'C: I would like to ask one final favour.

JACKSON: What is it?

TEAL'C: I would like to volunteer my lifeless body, and that of my symbiote, for your scientists to study. Perhaps you can better learn ways to battle the Goa'uld and the Jaffa.

JACKSON: Well, don't worry, Teal'c, there's not going to be any body to donate. Jack and Carter should be back any minute with the troops.

TEAL'C: Daniel Jackson. You must not allow Colonel O'Neill to deny the retribution the Byrsa deserve.

JACKSON: You know I have to admit, Teal'c, for once I agree with Jack. I mean, I respect your wishes, but I don't believe that you deserve to die.

-Example 2

MAYBOURNE: May I come in?

O'NEILL: No. I'm in no way obligated to put up with your crap any more.

MAYBOURNE: I think you're gonna want to hear what I have to offer you.

O'NEILL: Offer?

MAYBOURNE: May I sit down?

O'NEILL: No. You won't be here that long. What's this about?

The teacher, then, may ask the students to identify the different ways of saying 'No' in each example and justify the way it has been said. This discussion involves the teacher as well, who acts as the facilitator of the learning process.

The teacher should draw the students' attention to the interlocutors' relationship, in each example, which is a key element in the pragmatic analysis of interlocutors' discourse. Students, then, will understand that the appropriate choice of each linguistic form will depend on the contextual situation and the relationship between the participants.

Step 4

The students are asked to watch the aforementioned film sequences again with more understanding of the implicit meanings and pragmatic messages that are just communicated without being said.

Step 5

Special emphasis is put on making learners understand the importance of employing different downgraders (e.g.: ‘perhaps’, ‘probably’, ‘may be’, ‘just’, ‘I think’, etc.) in order to soften the face-threatening nature of refusals.

Together with such an explicit explanation of the available range of linguistic formulae that learners can employ when making a refusal, a multiple-choice activity could be prepared so that they can practice these forms in different contextual situations.

Additionally, the teacher may employ the following awareness activity which also aims to develop the learners’ pragmatic communicative strategies that may be used to refuse a given request:

Read the following communicative situations in which someone is making a request and a rejection for a response to each situation.

Tick (☐) whether the rejection is appropriate or inappropriate to each particular situation and explain your answer.

Some situations from this test were adapted from the study conducted by Nguyen (2006).

1. You are a student at a University. You are about to go home in your car. Another student, whom you have never met before approaches you and asks you for a lift home saying that you both live in the same area of the city. *You refuse by saying:*

- I'm sorry, but I am not going straight home. There are quite a few things I need to do before heading home! Perhaps another day.

Appropriate Inappropriate

Reason:

2. You are a graduate student conducting research at University and teaching a course on History. You have scheduled a test on the first day of the following month, and one of your students, whom you have never met before, asks if s/he can take the test one day earlier so that s/he can go on holiday with his/her family, as they have bought tickets on the day of the test. *You refuse by saying:*

- Sorry, it's not possible, as all students must sit the exam on the scheduled date. I can't make exceptions for you as then I would have to do so for everyone.

Appropriate Inappropriate

Reason:

3. You are a student in a Business studies class at the university. One of your lecturers asks you to pick him/her up every day from his/her home, saying that his/her house is near yours. You refuse by saying:

- No, I can't. I always have things to attend to before classes.

Appropriate Inappropriate

Reason:

4. You are a student going to the bank to withdraw some money to pay for a ski trip organised by the university. Once in the bank, you meet your younger brother/sister who is also there to withdraw some money to pay for an excursion organised by the High School. S/he is always short of money and this time, again, s/he asks you to pay for the excursion. You refuse by saying:

- I can't lend you any money right now. Next week's your birthday, just ask mum for it.

Appropriate Inappropriate

Reason:

5. You are a student at University. A classmate, who is a close friend of yours, has been sick and has not been able to attend classes. S/he asks if s/he can borrow your class notes. *You refuse by saying:*

- I don't want to. It goes against my convictions!

Appropriate Inappropriate

Reason:

6. You are a student who enters a bakery to buy the only cherry oat muffin left in the shop. You are about to pay for the muffin when a businessman/woman behind you suddenly explains how s/he came to the bakery on purpose to buy the delicious muffins baked there for his pregnant friend and asks you to buy another pastry. *You refuse by saying:*

- I understand you, but I also came here on purpose to buy this delicious muffin. Why don't you try the bakery opposite here?

Appropriate Inappropriate

Reason:

7. You are a research student at University who teaches a course in a Tourism degree. One of your students has made an appointment to see you for a consultation at a time you do not have office hours. However, s/he calls and says s/he cannot come on that date and asks for an alternative date for the consultation. You are pretty busy writing your PhD dissertation.

You refuse by saying:

- No way. Appointments are meant to be kept unless there is a serious matter intervening! So I don't want to change our appointment.

Appropriate Inappropriate

Reason:

8. You are a research assistant to a Professor, with whom you have a good academic relationship. At the end of the office hours, you are going to leave. The Professor asks if you can stay with him/her and help him/her with some papers. *You refuse by saying:*

- I am sorry, but I have an urgent appointment that I simply must attend. I can definitely help tomorrow.

Appropriate Inappropriate

Reason:.....

9. You are a business student who enters a bookshop looking for a book. In the bookshop you are stopped by another student doing the same degree as you, who asks you to fill out a 30-minute questionnaire as part of a work project. However, you do not have the time to spend 30 minutes filling in the questionnaire out. *You refuse by saying:*

- *In your dreams! I'm a busy person.*

Appropriate Inappropriate

Reason:

Step 6

The teacher provides students with the following table which includes different refusal strategies in different communicative contexts. This could be an evaluation checklist that may help learners to perform better.

Stimulus Types	Refuser Status	Refusals Strategies	Typical Expressions	Situation
Refusals to Invitations	L-H	1. Positive feeling 2. Negative ability 3. Explanation	I'd love to (positive feeling), but I can't (negative feeling), I have to work (explanation).	Refusing a teacher's /a boss's invitation to a party
	E-E	1. No 2. Gratitude, Future acceptance 3. Explanation	No (No), thanks (gratitude), maybe next time (future acceptance), I need to get back and work on my project (explanation).	Refusing a friend's invitation to see a movie
	H-L	1. Gratitude 2. Regret 3. Explanation	Oh, thanks for the invitation (gratitude), Sorry (regret), but I'm not prepared enough to address the group (explanation).	Refusing a junior student's or an employee's invitation to speak for a lecture
Refusals to Suggestions	L-H	1. Negative ability, Pause filler 2. Explanation 3. Alternative	Well, Hmm...(pause filler), I would rather not (negative ability). I had planned to take another course next semester (explanation). I'll take the stats after that (alternative).	Refusing an advisor's suggestion to study another course
	E-E	1. Pause filler 2. Positive feeling 3. Explanation	Hum...(pause filler). That would be nice if I had time (positive feeling). I'm tired of working on it (explanation).	Refusing a friend's suggestions about a research topic or to try a new design
	H-L	1. Negative ability 2. Explanation 3. Alternative	Well, no (negative ability). Actually it's very important that we review it anyway (explanation). I'll change the design next time (alternative).	Refusing a student's suggestion to skip the details
Refusals to Offers	L-H	1. Ppositive feeling (Negative ability), 2. Gratitude 3. Explanation	It sounds like a great opportunity (positive feeling), but I'm going to have to pass on it (negative ability). No, Thanks (gratitude). I have a number of other things I want to focus on (explanation).	Refusing a dean's offer or a boss's offer
	E-E	1. No 2. Gratitude 3. Explanation	No (No). Thank you you're very kind (gratitude). I don't have far to go and I will be okay (explanation).	Refusing a friend's offer for a ride/a piece of cake
	H-L	1. Give a comfort 2. Letting the interlocutor off the hook.	Don't worry (give a comfort). I know it was an accident (letting the interlocutor off the hook).	Refusing a cleaning lady's paying for broken vase
Refusals to Requests	L-H	1. Explanation 2. Alternative 3. Regret	I have that doctor's appointment (explanation). Can't Carrie (sister) do that for you? (alternative). I'm sorry Mom (regret).	Refusing a mother's request
	E-E	1. Regret 2. Expanation 3. Alternative	I'm sorry (regret), but I need to be glued to this computer until tomorrow morning (explanation). Perhaps someone else does not have such a tight deadline (alternative).	Refusing a friend's request to use a computer
	H-L	1. Positive feeling 2. Regret 3. Explanation	I'd really like to help you out(positive feeling) but, sorry, I'm afraid (regret), I'm really strapped for time right now and can't really afford to (explanation).	Refusing a junior member's request to interview

Table 7.1: Instructional Targets

L-H= a lower refuser to a higher interlocutor. E-E= an equal refuser to an equal interlocutor.

H-L= a higher refuser to a lower interlocutor. (Adapted from Wannaruk, 2008)

Step 7

-Follow-up questions about the film

1. Have you ever said 'Yes' to someone when you really wanted to say 'No'? If so, why?
2. Have you ever had to say *no* to something? If yes, where?
3. Can you think of phrases (expressions) to turn someone down (say no)?
4. Do you agree with the saying, "if you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all?"
Why?
5. To whom do you find it hard to say 'No'?
6. What is the strategy that you should not follow when you refuse? Give examples.

Step 8

Read the following two dialogs. Dialog 1 is happening between two close friends: one friend is busy studying for her final exam. The other one wants to go shopping. Dialog 2 is occurring between two speakers in the same situation as Dialog 1, but they are classmates, and acquaintances.

Dialog 1	Dialog 2
<p>Sarah: Hey Mellissa. Do you want to go shopping with me?</p> <p>Mellissa: I am afraid I can't go. I need to study for my final exam. It's in two days.</p> <p>Sarah: Oh! I didn't know that. I really wanted you to go with me. Maybe you need a break?</p> <p>Mellissa: Oh! I just had a break three hours ago. If you had asked me earlier, I could have been able to. We can go when I am done with my finals.</p> <p>Sarah: Great! I will wait for you then. I can go after your finals.</p> <p>Mellissaa: Good. Thanks.</p> <p>Sarah: Sure! Study hard.</p>	<p>Sarah: Hello Mellissa. Would you like to go shopping with me?</p> <p>Mellissa: That sounds lots of fun, but I am afraid I can't go. I need to study for my final exam. It's in two days. I am really sorry that I can't make it.</p> <p>Sarah: Oh! I didn't know that. I really wanted you to go with me. Maybe you need a break?</p> <p>Mellissa: Unfortunately, I just had a break three hours ago. If you had asked me earlier, I would have perhaps gone with you. But, I promise to go with you after my final. How does that sound?</p> <p>Sarah: Great! I will wait for you then. I can go after your finals.</p> <p>Mellissa: Good. Thank you</p> <p>Huda: Sure! Study hard.</p>

-Follow-up Questions

Spot the differences between the two dialogs.

1. Why do you think there is a difference between the two dialogs in the made refusals?
2. How does the requester negotiate the request, and how does the other person negotiate her refusal?
3. Do the requests and refusals in these dialogs sound polite?
4. Can you list the steps that the person making the refusal has maintained to decline the request in dialogs 1 and 2?

7.2.1.3. Activity Three

The instrumental tool in this activity is a video. Video is identified as an effective technological device in teaching language use since it provides students with visual information, or rather non-linguistic aspects that cannot be noticed in written discourse. According to William and Lutes,

A major advantage is that video materials can focus on information that cannot be readily presented in a traditional classroom because of constraints such as size, location, costs, etc. In the ESL classroom, this can be something as simple as access to native speaker language in a natural context (2006:4).

Video-prompts are useful to expose learners to the pragmatic aspects of the target language to not only address pragmatic comprehension, but also to compensate for the inadequacy of textbooks, limited contact hours and classroom conversations.

Video material is distinguished from the other traditional types of teaching materials because it has the potential to present a picture and sound as a whole (Cohen, 1998). Besides, it lets students experience a situation in its context as well as the interaction among the interlocutors and the environment. Video is a rich source of authentic language, particularly for foreign language teaching and learning since the background of the learner does not provide an ample language input as not every learner is able to study abroad and be in direct contact with native speakers of English.

-Objectives

In this activity, students are expected to learn how to use correct and appropriate forms of requests in different communicative contexts.

The students have to first listen carefully to the conversations and to write down the scripts of dialogues. The following is what students hear:

<p>Conversation 1.A</p> <p>Neat roommate: Do you think you could possibly clean after yourself? The room is too dirty?</p> <p>Messy roommate: Oh! I am really sorry about the mess. I am aware of the terrible mess I have made here. But, I am afraid I don't have time to clean it now because I have a deadline in two hours.</p> <p>Neat roommate: I see</p> <p>Messy roommate: Is it okay if I clean it when I am done with my paper?</p> <p>Neat roommate: Sure. All the best with your assignment</p> <p>Messy roommate: Thanks!</p>	<p>Conversation 1.B</p> <p>Neat roommate: Could you clean up after yourself please? The room is too dirty.</p> <p>Messy roommate: Clean? Who do you think you are?</p> <p>Neat roommate: I am the neat organized roommate who tolerates a sloppy person like you.</p> <p>Messy roommate: Oh! You are so full of yourself.</p>
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When learners finish writing the scripts of the dialogues, the teacher plays the video-type again and checks whether the scripts are correct. The teacher, then, discusses with his/her students the differences and similarities between the two conversations, and pick out the frequent linguistic forms of requests used in the phone calls. The teacher may also ask his/her students to give a different way to refuse cleaning the room.

The students may also listen to the following conversation and be asked to answer some post-watching questions (to answer some questions after watching the conversation). The dialogue is as follows:

Teacher: I really have to go to class now [the boys are not moving. They look at her, but they don't understand]

Teacher: Isn't there anyone who understands me? I am a teacher and I am very late. I have six hours to teach and I just need a bottle of water.

John: Oh! That is our teacher.

Adam: Oh! Teacher no class today! Ha ha

Teacher: Students did you understand what I said?

All of them: No.

Teacher: Is it okay for you if I go first?

John and William: No problem. [One student is rude.]

Adam: Why? Teacher, I am late. Hungry! No problem you are late.

Teacher: Sure, it is. We need to be on time to class.

All: okay! It doesn't matter!

Teacher: Don't you want to pass!!

All: Oh! No problem! [Carelessly]. Oh! Teacher, what do you need? We want to help.

Teacher: My books are really heavy and I am a bit tired today.

All: So, how can we help you?

Teacher: I mean, I would like to ask you to help me with my books please? Could you possibly help carry thirty reading books to the class?

John: Ok, each of us will carry ten. William, you carry ten books. Adam, I am asking you to carry ten more as well. Can we help you with anything else, Ms. Lara?

Teacher: Okay, can you ask for a bottle of water for me and show me how to use polite English.

John: Hey! Give me water! [John snaps.]

Adam: Yes, we want water for our teacher!

William: Make it fast! She is late.

Teacher: Oh, no! All of you guys! Do you remember the polite words to request? How about using these words to request water from the café man?

John: Let me think, you mean like *please, thank you*?

Teacher: What else?

John: *Can, could, may, would, possibly?*

William: Ok, Bob, could I please have a bottle of water for my teacher? Thank you very much.

William: Could you possibly make it fast because she is late?

Bob: Yes, you may. You're welcome.

(All the boys offer to pay, but the teacher apologizes and says that she needs to pay.)

-The questions that should be answered are:

1. Was the teacher polite or impolite when he asked his friends to help him carry the books?

Explain your answer.

2. Do you think snapping at the café man was a good attitude? How does your culture consider it?

3. How did the students make their impolite requests sound polite? Give two examples.

-The teacher may give students the dialogue in written form and ask them to:

1- Practice the conversation with their partners.

2. Underline all forms of request used in the conversation.

3. Classify the forms of requests into polite and impolite and explain your reasoning for such a classification.

4. Rank the forms from least polite to more polite and explain the reasoning for your order.

Step 2

The teacher will provide the students with the following hand-outs, which help the students to acquire different pragmatic communicative strategies that can be used to perform distinct appropriate requests:

Modification Devices			
Type	Sub-type		Examples
Internal Modification	Openers		"Do you think you could open the window?" "Would you mind opening the window?"
	Softeners	Understatement	"Could you open the window for a moment?"
		Downtoner	"Could you possibly open the window?"
		Hedge	"Could you kindly open the window?"
	Intensifiers		"You really must open the window." "I'm sure you wouldn't mind opening the window."
	Fillers	Hesitators	"I er, erm, er- I wonder if you could open the window."
		Cajolers	"You know, you see, I mean", could you open the window?

		Appealers	"Ok? Right? Yeah"
		Attention getters	"Excuse me; Hello.. look.. Tom? Ms. Man's father..."
External Modifiers		Examples	
	Perpetrators	"May I ask you a favor? Could you open the window?"	
	Grounders	"It seems it is quite hot here. Could you open the window?"	
	Disarmers	"I hate bothering you but could you open the window"	
	Expanders	"Would you mind opening the window?.. Once again, could you open the window?"	
	Promise of reward	"Could you open the window? If you open it, I promise to bring you to the cinema."	
	Please	"would you mind opening the window, please?"	

7.2 Requests External and Internal Modification Devices Taxonomy (from Alcon and
Martinez-Flor: 2005)

Group	Examples
Sentences targeting hearers' ability to perform the task	<p>"Can/could you reach the salt?"</p> <p>"Can/could you pass the salt?"</p> <p>"Could you be a little bit quiet?"</p> <p>"Are you able to carry this heavy bag to the kitchen?"</p> <p>"Have you got change for a dollar?"</p>
Sentences targeting speakers' wish or want that the hearer will do	<p>"I would like you to come now."</p> <p>"I want you to type this for me, Jon."</p> <p>"I would/should appreciate it if you would/could extend my leave."</p> <p>"I'd rather you didn't invite her to the party."</p> <p>"I'd be very much obliged if you would release me earlier from work today."</p> <p>"I hope you'll turn in the paper on time."</p> <p>"I wish you wouldn't tell the boss I left early yesterday."</p>
Sentences targeting hearers' doing the act	<p>"Will you stop biting your nails?"</p> <p>"Would you kindly get off my hair?"</p> <p>"Won't you stop biting your nails?"</p> <p>"Aren't you going to eat lunch yet?"</p>
Sentences targeting hearers' desire or willingness to do the act	<p>"Would you be willing to give me a ride home?"</p> <p>"Do you want to type the article?"</p> <p>"Would you mind chopping up the vegetables for the salad?"</p> <p>"Would be convenient for you to throw the party next Friday?"</p>

	"Would it be too much (trouble) for you to edit my paper?"
Sentences targeting reasons for doing the act	"You ought to be more polite to your mother." "It might help if you just tell her you don't like it." "It would be better for you (for us) if you drove home now than in the dark."
Sentences embedding another one of the above elements inside; additionally, utterances embedding an explicit directive illocutionary verb inside one of these contexts	"Would you mind awfully if I asked you if you could lend me your car for a week?" "Would it be too much if I suggested that you could possibly edit my poem?" "I hope you won't mind if I ask you if you could cancel the class today." "I would appreciate it if you could give me a second chance to do the presentation."

Table 7.3: Utterances Used for Indirect Requesting (from Searl, 1979)

Direct	Examples
Obligations	"You must/have to lend me your car."
Performatives Direct	"I would like to ask you to lend me your car."
Imperatives	"Lend me your car (please)?"
Conventionally Indirect (hear-based)	Examples
Ability	"Can/could you lend me your car?"
Willingness	"Would you lend me your bike?"
Permission	"May I borrow your bike?"
Suggestory formulae	"How about going with me to the movies?"
Conventionally Indirect (speaker-based)	
Wishes	"I would like to borrow your bike."
Desires/ needs	"I want/need to borrow bike."
Indirect Hints	"I have to study for the exam."

Table 7.4: Strategies of Requests (from Trosborg, 1995)

<p>Opening the Interaction:</p> <p>Introducing yourself</p> <p>"I am Aseela Al Balushi, a student in your speaking class." "My name is Aseela Al Balushi, and I am a lawyer at the ----- company."</p> <p>Requesting the Listener's Time</p> <p>"I just need a few minutes of your time." "This will just take a few minutes."</p> <p>"I won't take up too much time." "I know you are very busy, so I will try to be brief."</p> <p>"May I have a word with you?"</p> <p>Introducing the Topic.</p> <p>"I need to talk to you about" "What I would like to talk to you about"</p> <p>"The reason I asked to meet with you is to discuss" "I would like to discuss"</p> <p>"I would like your support for"</p>
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<p>Making the Request and Obtaining the Response</p> <p>"I would like to request"</p> <p>"I request that you"</p> <p>"With your permission, I would like to"</p> <p>"Would it be possible for me to"</p> <p>Closing the Interaction</p> <p>"Thank you for your help"</p> <p>"Thank you for meeting with me today"</p> <p>"I appreciate your willingness to help"</p>
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Table 7.5: Request Module Procedures (Kayfetz and Michaelae, 1992, 30-31)

Suitable ways of requesting, which are arranged according to the level of politeness. Table 7.6 lists them from least to most polite.

Rude:

* "Give me a dollar."

"Hey, I need some change."

"Hey, I am out of change."

** "You don't have a quarter, do you?"

"Have you got a quarter, by any chance?"

"Can I borrow a quarter?"

*** "You couldn't lend me a dollar, could you?"

"Do you think you could lend me a dollar?"

"I wonder if you could lend me a dollar?"

**** "Would you mind lending me a dollar?"

"If you could lend me five dollars, I would be very grateful."

***** "Could you possibly lend me your typewriter?"

"Do you think you could possibly lend me your typewriter?"

"I wonder if you could possibly lend me your typewriter."

***** "I hope you don't mind my asking, but I wonder if it might be at all possible for you to lend me your car."

Table 7.6: Request Strategies in Order of the Level of Politeness (from Jones, 1983)

-Remark

The aforementioned activities, Two and Three, could be applied to different speech acts and with the same objectives; that is, focusing on the appropriate use of different pragmatic communicative strategies of speech acts in different social contexts.

7.2.1.4. Activity Four

In order to focus on the speech act of request and reinforces its appropriate performance, the teacher may use another different activity, namely to present a situation and a request associated with it. If students consider the request appropriate, there is no change.

However, if they consider that the request is not suitable for that context, they will have to suggest a better option. Such activity aims to further enhance pragmatic awareness.

Situation 1: Two female co-workers in a travel agency. One needs some documents that the other has at hand. You say:

Request: Fiona, pass me the documents, will you?

Situation 2: A young lady phones your office but the call is for a male colleague who is not in at the moment. You say:

Request: I wondered if you could call back in half an hour.

Situation 3: In a popular restaurant, an old man sits down in a reserved table; the head waiter addresses him and says:

Request: I want you to move to that other table.

Situation 4: A young woman in a hotel needs to make a note of a number. She addresses a young receptionist and says:

Request: Pen and paper, please!

Of course, the discussion of such examples bring about awareness of both different pragmatic communicative strategies that can be used in performing the speech act of request and the contextual and social factors that may affect this performance.

The teacher may include other different speech acts in the same activity. However, focusing on one specific speech act each time will be more beneficial.

7.2.1.5. Activity Five

In this activity, the teacher uses special types of videos, namely sitcoms. It focuses on points that embody features of irony and mocking. The aim of such activity is not only to develop understanding of lexical meanings, but primarily pragmatic meanings of the utterances.

The implementation of sitcoms is an effective tool in teaching and stimulating learners to develop their social skills and become more competent language users. Sitcoms are a valuable source of natural English. They include different hidden meanings such as irony and mocking (Chen, 1998). In order to locate and infer these unsaid meanings, students must understand characters' facial expressions, gestures and changes in pitch and tone of their voices.

After watching the whole episode, the teacher is supposed to distribute the scripts of the extracts containing irony and mocking, and then play the scenes again.

-Activity Instructions

Watch the episode and note down situations containing irony or mocking. Discuss your ideas with the partner. Verify your opinion with the script and second watching of selected scenes.

Scene One

FRAN FINDS BERNARD.

BERNARD: Lovely to see you. *Mwah, mwah.*

FRAN: Bernard, are you OK?

BERNARD: Never better, I've discovered television.

Scene 2

EVAN: Hello, how may I help you?

MANNY: She's a friend

EVAN: Hey terrific, a friend of Manny's. How may I help you?

FRAN: I'm just browsing.

EVAN: Well we have a really comfortable area just over there especially for that.

FRAN: (*FRAN STANDS UP*) I wanna browse here.

SOMEBODY MOVES FRAN'S CHAIR.

EVAN: (*EVAN TAKES HER CIGARETTE AND PUTS IT OUT IN HIS HAND*) Sorry!

Scene 3

BERNARD: I'm fine (*PICKS A MUSHROOM FROM HIS HAIR AND EATS IT*) Go on get out, go to him, go to your fancy man, I don't need you anymore. **MANNY:** Look Bernard, it doesn't have to be like this if you would just apologise. **BERNARD:** What, you mean you'd come back and work in the shop, everything would be normal?

MANNY: Yes.

BERNARD: You'd cook and clean and surprise me every now and again with those profiteroles you make if I took you to the pictures at Christmas?

MANNY: Yes.

BERNARD: And all I have to do to get that back is say sorry?

MANNY: That's exactly what I'm saying.

BERNARD: I thought so...Get out!

Scene 4

EVAN: Now, I've been thinking about clothes and what they say about us. Now the good thing about working here of course is that we get to wear our own clothes, I mean we're not robots are we?

MANNY: No (*IN A ROBOTIC VOICE*) hello can I help you, hello can I help you, hello can I help you...

EVAN: Manny, we love your style ok, the shirts the sandals, he, he, it's funky. But imagine we're all on a football team ok and the guy on the wings he's wearing a crazy shirt. Nobody knows what team he's on, can I pass to him? I don't know. And look his sandal has come off on the muddy ground. DAMN IT we've lost five nil.

MANNY: Oh.

EVAN: So tomorrow plain pastels if you please, and if you'd be so good a pair of shoes.

Scene 5

BERNARD: Haven't you got other friends to annoy? Why don't you go and persecute them?

MANNY: Yeah, yeah, society lady. How come you went to Cornwall on your own?

BERNARD: Yeah, how come?

FRAN: I've...got...friends.

BERNARD: Well go to them.

FRAN: I will.

MANNY: Yeah, don't let us stop you.

FRAN: I won't.

BERNARD: Well go on then.

MANNY: Too de loo.

Fran leaves, Bernard and Manny make mocking faces and are about to start chatting.

MANNY: Oh er listen, don't forget to dry your sheets. Well I'll be off then, since it's all over between us. I'll write.

BERNARD: I won't read it.

MANNY: Well I'll call.

BERNARD: I'll hang up.

MANNY: Well, I'll come and see you.

BERNARD: I'll be dead by then.

MANNY: Listen, it doesn't have to be like this, if you would just say those two words.

***BERNARD STRETCHES OUT HIS ARMS FOR A HUG, SO DOES MANNY,
BERNARD
APPROACHES MANNY AND TAKES HOLD OF HIS HANDS HITTING
HIM ON THE
HEAD***

BERNARD: Get Out!

Scene 6

NEXT MORNING AT GOLIATH BOOKS, EVAN ARRIVES WHILE MANNY IS STILL IN HIS SLEEPING BAG.

EVAN: Morning Manny.

MANNY: Morning Evan just popped in to do my yoga. I do it every morning, in my yoga bag, just running through a few positions. This is the worm, worm saluting the sun, anaconda.

EVAN: Manny I'm a reasonable guy. I like to be straight with people I expect them to be the same. If you tell me the truth I won't get mad. So tell me, did you sleep here last night?

MANNY: Yes I did (*they both laugh*)

EVAN: I'm really angry now!!

The teacher may also use sitcoms to develop the learners' both comprehension and production of different speech acts' functions through the use of carefully selected episodes. In the following table, one can see the sitcoms which are used for each speech act, season and episode, in the sessions:

Sitcoms Session 1	Greetings	The Big Bang Theory The Infestation Hypothesis Season 5 Episode 2
	Leave-takings	Friends The One with the Chicken Pox Season 2 Episode 23
Session 2	Requests	Seinfeld The Serenity Now Season 9 Episode 3
	Refusals	The Big Bang Theory The Griffin Equivalency Season 2 Episode 4
Session 3	Compliments	-The Big Bang Theory The Cooper-Nowitzki Theorem Season 2 Episode 6 -Friends The One Where Joey Speaks French Season 10 Episode 13
	Thanks	-Two and a Half Men Sleep Tight, Puddin' Pop Season 3 Episode 7 -Two and a Half Men Ow, ow, Don't Stop
Session 4	Complaints	The Big Bang Theory The Big Bran Hypothesis Season 1 Episode 2
	Apologies	Friends The One with Unagi (a.k.a. The One with the Mixed Taped) Season 6 Episode 17

Table 7.7: Different Sitcoms for Different Speech Acts

In each session, the teacher discusses with his/her students the different pragmatic communicative strategies that can be used to perform a specific speech act in specific context taking into account the contextual and social factors that are involved in each social interaction.

7.2.1.6. Activity Six

Using authentic second/foreign language texts in classrooms can provide students with examples of native speakers using the language appropriately and contextually within the target culture (Shrum and Glisan, 2010). According to Melvin and Stout:

Fully exploited, authentic texts give students direct access to the culture and help them use the new language authentically themselves, to communicate meaning in meaningful situations rather than for demonstrating knowledge of a grammar point or a lexical item (1990:44).

Songs are one of these authentic resources that help EFL learners to enhance their social skills as they are highly expressive. Their richness in culture and themes, their idiomatic and poetic expressions, their therapeutic functions and so on make them an impeccable tool for language teaching, particularly for enhancing social skills and pragmatic communicative strategies of language learners. They can be implemented in a relaxed and enjoyable way by using songs in EFL classrooms. Bolitho et. al. stated that “Acquisition of automatic language skills depends on rich, meaningful, repeated exposure to comprehensible input without awareness.”(2003:253). Learners may listen to a given song and then be asked to deduce the meaning of unknown words and phrases by using the context, reading between lines and recognizing the degree of formality.

Songs are a good source for imitation. They subconsciously reinforce intonation and stress patterns (Harmer, 2006). Songs are strong motivational tools that have the potential to “bridge the gap between the pleasurable experience of listening [...] and the communicative use of language.” (Murphey, 1995:6). The difficulties that learners may encounter in understanding the songs or even singing them with the same rhythm would enable them to notice the gap between their actual performance in the target language and the proficiency of

the native singers. “This noticing can give salience to a feature, so that it becomes more noticeable in future input, and thereby contributes to the learner’s psychological readiness to acquire that feature.” (Bolitho et.al. 2003:252)

Songs represent valuable teaching material. However, not every song is appropriate for teaching purposes. The songs should be carefully chosen. They should be both interesting and relevant to the teaching objectives.

7.2.1.7. Activity Seven

Another important motivational instructional tool is social stories. Social stories were originally created by Carol Gray (1991) to improve the social skills of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Social stories are an important resource of authentic language that can help learners to expand their pragmatic language awareness and develop their pragmatic competence. Meibauer (2012) who examined the impact of stories on general intuitions of pragmatics concluded that stories had a significant role in improving learners’ intuitions of pragmatics. Also rich contexts were found to increase learners’ perceptions of pragmatic norms and support the learners with adequate facilities to improve their conversational skills and gain pragmatic competence.

In short stories, characters reflect what people really perform in daily lives. They both mirror and enlighten human lives (Sage, 1987). According to Ariogul (2001), the inclusion of such instructional tool in EFL curriculum offers different educational benefits. One of these benefits is that it helps students to go beyond the surface meaning and dive into underlying meanings. This, in turn, may effectively serve in developing the conversational skills, more specifically the pragmatic communicative strategies of learners as they will be familiar with the different language functional styles and functional uses of speech acts. Short social

stories, in fact, help learners cope with certain social situations that they find difficult and help them cope with making choices in different social situations.

Authentic literature naturally lends itself to a genuine demonstration and embedding of culture within the language classroom. This allows students a glimpse into the ideas, values, and ways of thinking and behaving of a target culture as they become familiar with common idioms, metaphors, use of sarcasm, etc.(Reagan, 2005). Using authentic target stories in the language classroom can provide students with examples of native speakers using the language appropriately and contextually within the target culture (Shrum and Glisan, 2010). Such kinds of short stories allow students to participate within the target community of native speakers as they observe and interact with a story that uses authentic word choice and common lexical bundles demonstrating how native speakers speak (Biber, 2006).

7.2.1.8. Activity Eight

Teachers can make learners aware of foreign language pragmatic communicative strategies and their importance for creating a smooth and successful communication without sufficing with offering the usual lectures or texts on them.

A situation can be given with multiple expressions which may be seen appropriate or inappropriate in different contexts. A discussion can be generated on the provided responses in each situation. The following are some examples which illustrate the idea of this activity:

1. Sally is going to travel to Spain. She asks her roommate, Jane, how she should plan her trip. Imagine you were Jane. How would you advise her to plan her trip?

A: Have you permitted your parents?

B: It might be a good idea to buy a round-trip plane ticket.

C: If you have not done a hotel reservation, you should do it now.

D: What a silly question! Go buy a round-trip plane ticket.

2. Your neighbour always makes noise. You have already complained about it to him/her, but s/he did not listen to you. You want to talk to him/her again. What would you tell him/her?

A: Shut up, please.

B: I think you'd better go to a psychologist.

C: You are making noise again. It's disturbing me.

D: You make call the police.

Short situations, such as the ones above, are given with options so that the students can discuss why only one answer is correct and not the others. Such tasks can guarantee discussions and bring about awareness of social and cultural norms. More specifically, these tasks help to create awareness about the appropriate use of pragmatic communicative strategies in different contexts, thus making the students ready for the real-life interactions which are generally of this nature. Some of other examples are the following:

3. Jenny, an office worker, intends to take part in her friend's wedding ceremony during office hour. She wants to ask her boss to allow her to leave her work earlier. Imagine you were Jenny. What would you tell your boss?

A: Do we have too much work today?

B: Would you mind letting me to go sooner today?

C: I want to take part in the ceremony.

D: I was wondering if I could take part in my friend's wedding ceremony.

4. You come back home from work and you are really tired. Your teenage daughter is watching TV with high volume. You want to rest. What would you tell your daughter?

A: Would you turn TV down.

B: Turn down the TV a bit, please.

C: Turn the TV down!

D: I was wondering if I asked you to turn the TV down.

5. Lisa is out and she realizes that she does not have her purse with her. She is worried, so she calls her roommate, Mary, at home. Imagine you were Lisa. What would you tell your roommate?

A: Bring me some money.

B: Mary, could you look for my purse?

C: How much money do you have?

D: Please look for my purse because I need it.

6. Larry has a very important meeting tomorrow but he can't sleep because his new neighbour's stereo is too high. Imagine you were Larry. What would you tell your neighbour?

A: Your stereo is too high. Turn your stereo down.

B: Would you mind turning down your stereo a bit?

C: Excuse me, I can't sleep. Could you please to turn it down?

D: Is there a party at your house?

7. Alex is going to travel to Italy. He asks his friend about Italy. Imagine you are Alex's friend. What would you tell Alex?

A: It's a good idea to buy a round-trip plane ticket.

B: You should see Venice and you shouldn't miss to travel along the canals by gondolas.

C: It does not concern me. You yourself should search in the Internet.

D: It's a good idea to go to see Venice and trip along the canals by boats.

8. You are in the restaurant. Since you do not earn as much as your friends, you have to order a salad. But the bill is divided equally. What would you tell your friends?

A: Hey guys, I don't have much cash with me right now.

B: How often do you come to this restaurant?

C: Whether you like it or not, I only pay for what I ordered.

D: Let me pay my own salad if you don't get sad.

9. Your friend is going to have a Baby boy. She asks if you have an idea for the name of the baby. What would you tell her?

A: Which names do you like more?

B: You should name your baby "Ben".

C: I have an idea. How about "Ben"?

D: Let me think about it more.

10. Linda is going to try on a very beautiful dress at the clothing store. Imagine you were Linda. What would you tell the sales assistant?

A: Can I try it on?

B: I would like to buy it but first I want to wear the dress.

C: It's a beautiful dress. Isn't it?

D: Is it ok if I try on it?

11. You think your parents do not treat you fairly compared with the way they treat your brother/sister. It is very unbearable. You are very displeased. What would you tell them?

A: Am I a child?

B: I don't think you are being fair to me.

C: You are not good enough for me.

D: You treat my brother better than I.

12. Victor, the owner of a coffee shop, is going to hire a good guitarist to play at his coffee shop. He decides to fire Rebecca because she is a terrible guitarist. Imagine you were Victor. What would you tell Rebecca?

A: Can I request you not play here?

B: I want to tell you that you are not good enough for my coffee shop.

C: You'd better look for another job.

D: Can I ask you where you have learned the guitar?

13. Jason is going to the cinema with his mother, but she is talking on the phone. He doesn't want to miss the film. His mother, on the other hand, cannot finish her conversation right away. Imagine you were Jason's mother. What would you tell him?

A: Jason, dear, why don't you wait a moment in the car?

B: It's a good idea to be more patience.

C: Let's watch the TV, instead.

D: I was wondering if you'd mind waiting a moment.

14. Jessica is cooking turkey for Thanksgiving. Her elder brother doesn't help her. On the contrary, he is annoying her. Imagine you were Jessica. What would you tell your brother?

A: I'm sorry to say it, but why don't you get yourself lost?

B: Don't you want to rest?

C: Please get out of my way and don't touch the turkey.

D: If I were you, I would stop bothering.

15. Betty is planning to have a baby, but her mother thinks it's too soon. She decides to convince her daughter not to have a baby now. Imagine you were Betty's mother. What would you tell your daughter?

A: Control your feelings about having a baby otherwise you will be in trouble.

B: It is the most foolish idea.

C: Do you earn enough money?

D: It would be a good idea to think about it more.

Through the use of such activities, the learner can notice the importance of pragmatic communicative strategies for politeness such as the use of hedges, euphemism and all kinds of softeners that soften the language used and help in developing a smooth communicative interaction.

7.2.1.9. Activity Nine

The teacher may choose one specific speech act and discusses the possible strategies that the speaker may employ when performing it. For instance, there is a specific speech act set (SAS) for apologizing, which is the following:

Apologizing

- a- Expressing the apology
- b- Taking responsibility
- c- Explaining the situation
- d- Offering repair or compensation
- e- Promising it won't happen again

Besides the linguistic moves and the semantic formulas that are included within such SAS, it also includes strategic options or rather specific pragmatic communicative choices

that enable the language user to accomplish a given function and achieve his/her communicative goal.

The teacher can then prepare apology scripts that illustrate each of the five SAS steps for apologizing, as follows:

1. Expressing the apology: “Listen, I’ve got some bad news. I’m really sorry, but I got into an accident with your bike, and the frame is broken.”

2. Taking responsibility: “It was totally my fault. I should have been more careful.”

3. Explaining the situation: “You see, it was raining, and the road was slippery. I lost control of the bike and I crashed.”

4. Offering repair or compensation: “Of course, I’ll pay to have it replaced.”

5. Promising it won’t happen again: “It’ll never happen again.”

Exposing students to such speech samples and alternate options for apologizing helps them notice different pragmatic communicative strategies of performing the action of apologizing.

The teacher can also discuss possible variations and implications of those options. Such an activity helps in raising awareness of pragmatic options and targets pragmatic knowledge at a receptive level. At the productive level, however, the teacher may ask his/her students to create their own apologies based on specific prompts provided by their teacher (e.g., ‘You bumped into an elderly person on the train’ or ‘You spilled coffee on a work computer and have to explain it to your boss.’). Afterwards, they have to discuss their apology

performances in relation to specific pragmatic dimensions, such as social status and social distance between the interlocutors.

The specific steps described above can be adapted and used in relation to different speech acts, as well.

7.2.1.10. Activity Ten

Implicatures, which are one important aspect of pragmatics, are used by language users as specific pragmatic communicative strategies to convey their message indirectly.

Paradis assumed that more than half of what people say is not literally what they really mean because “[...] most of the time, we mean more than what we say, or something different than we actually say, or even the opposite of what we say.” (1998:1). Unfortunately, most EFL learners tend to overlook contextual details and interpret utterance literally rather than infer their implied meaning (Rose and Kasper, 2001). Therefore, the interpretation of implicatures might be a potential barrier to cross-cultural communication.

According to Rintell and Mitchel (1989), understanding such contextual implications is of prime importance for achieving pragmatic competence. Therefore, it becomes vitally important for language learners to become familiar with the pragmatics of their target language in order to avoid miscommunication (Levinson, 1983).

Within the process of English language teaching and learning, the teacher may present different scenarios that include different types of implicatures such as irony, indirect criticism, Pop implicatures and others, as in the following examples:

- Irony

1-Bill and Peter have been working together for many years. Now Bill and one of his best friends, who also works at the same company, are talking about what happened at work yesterday after he left the office.

Bill's friend: Bill, I'm sorry to say this but I heard Peter telling our boss that you were late for work last Tuesday.

Bill: Peter knows how to be a good friend.

Which of the following best says what Bill means?

- a. Peter is not acting the way a friend should.
- b. Peter and Bill's boss are becoming really good friends.
- c. Peter is a good friend, so Bill can trust him.
- d. Nothing should be allowed to interfere with Bill and Peter's friendship.

2-Two days ago Tom was invited to a dinner party at Mary's house. After the meal, Tom realised that they were playing his favourite song in the living room. He went in and saw Sue playing the piano and Mary singing along. Some days later Tom was talking to a friend who couldn't come to the party.

Tom's friend: What did Mary sing?

Tom: Mary? I'm not sure, but Sue was playing "My Wild Irish Rose."

Which of the following says what Tom meant by this remark?

- a. He was only interested in Sue and did not listen to Mary.
- b. Mary sang very badly.
- c. Mary and Sue were not doing the same song.
- d. The song that Mary sang was “My Wild Irish Rose.”

- Indirect criticism

1- Three close friends have to hand in a paper this week. Yesterday Chris wrote the first part of the paper and sent it to Laura and Mike.

Laura: Have you finished reading what Chris wrote yet?

Mike: Yeah, I read it last night.

Laura: What did you think of it?

Mike: I thought it was well-typed.

How did Mike like Chris’s paper?

- a. He liked it; he thought it was good. ___
- b. He thought it was important that the paper was well typed. ___
- c. He really hadn’t read it well enough to know. ___
- d. He didn’t like it. ___

2- Two women are at a fashionable party. They are wearing beautiful long dresses and expensive dress shoes.

Chloe: Wow, Jane. I love your shoes! They’re wonderful. What do you think of mine?

Jane: They look comfortable.

What does Jane think of Chloe’s shoes?

- a. She likes them because they are comfortable. ___
- b. She doesn't care about their appearance. What is important to her is that they are comfortable. ___
- c. She doesn't like them. ___
- d. She is amazed by how comfortable they look. ___

- Pop question

1-Two roommates are talking about their plans for the summer.

Frank: My mother wants me to stay home for a while, so I can be there when our relatives come to visit us at the beach.

Joan: Do you have a lot of relatives?

Frank: Is the sky blue?

How can you best interpret Frank's question?

- a- Frank has a lot of relatives.
- b- Frank thinks her relatives are all blue.
- c- Frank is new to the area and is trying to find out what the summers are like.
- d- Frank trying to change the subject; she doesn't want to talk about her relatives.

2- Mike is trying to find an apartment in New York City. He just looked at a place and is telling his friend Jane about it.

Jane: Is the rent high?

Mike: Is the Pope Catholic?

What does Mike probably mean?

a- He doesn't want to talk about the rent.

b- The rent is high.

c- The apartment is owned by the church

d- The rent isn't very high.

A satisfactory exposure to such classroom practices would help learners to raise their awareness of different ways of conveying their meaning indirectly; that is, their receptive social skills which, in turn, enhance their productive pragmatic and communicative output.

The teacher may also focus in his/her lesson on another different pragmatic issue, namely the relationship between implicatures and cooperative principle which underlying everyday conversations in English.

Silence, for example, is a good example of generating an implicature through a violation of the quantity maxim. In English speaking cultures, silence may communicate very negative meanings. It may communicate rudeness and a kind of being uncooperative. A discussion of some of the possible negative implicatures can help students understand the importance of adhering to the Gricean maxims, which can be considered as important pragmatic communicative strategies to create a successful communication.

7.2.1.11. Activity Eleven

Students can be involved in role play activities where they can be engaged in different social roles and speech events. Accordingly, they can practice and gain familiarity with paralinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of different speech acts of the English language.

Using role plays provides students with opportunities to practice and develop a wide range of pragmatic abilities and gain familiarity and control over the target forms and form-function mapping. Although there may be some question about the authenticity of role-play format, Kasper and Rose (2002) suggested that role-play can be used because “inauthentic” does not necessarily mean “invalid”.

- *Instruction for oral role plays:* decide who will be person ‘A’ and who will be person ‘B’ before going any further. Then, for example:

1- Person A calls person B on the phone

B: Answer phone.

A: Greet and identify yourself.

B: Greet.

A: Ask if you can use Person B’s Spanish book.

B: Say yes.

A and B: End call.

2-Person B waits tables in a fancy, five-star restaurant. Person A is the customer.

B: Greet and ask for A's order.

A: Order café.

B: Respond.

3- Person A goes to a party with Person B. Person 'A' runs into an old friend named

Maria. Person A introduces Maria to Person B.

A: Greet Maria. Then introduce her to Person B.

B: Respond appropriately.

Such a role play activity, in fact, is of prime importance for enabling students to practice their pragmatic input, especially their pragmatic communicative strategies in different contextual situations and thus enhancing their whole communicative and pragmatic performance. If teachers notice a lack of contextual information becoming a hindrance, they could either supply extra information in the role-play setup or encourage students to imagine the background.

Another solution is to use pictures to illustrate who the interlocutors are. Visual images stimulate the learners' schema and make the interaction more interesting. By augmenting role plays in such ways, teachers could add an element of spontaneity to the conversations, increase awareness and encourage discussion about how past interactions, relationships, and first impressions affect how we strategize and say things to people.

7.2.1.12. Activity Twelve

The teacher may explicitly teach his/her students some specific pragmatic communicative strategies to help them look more natural in their speech and to avoid unintentional rudeness. One of these pragmatic communicative strategies is fillers, such as ‘uh-huh’ or ‘hum’ that speakers use to signal that they are participating in the conversation (Yule, 1996). Such fillers show that the listener is actively and cooperatively helping to develop the speakers' topic.

According to Cutting (2002), fillers are used to avoid silence as they have an interactional, social and cohesive role in spoken communication. They also can be a way of buying time to think of an appropriate reply.

Silence, when speaking English, may carry surprisingly negative messages. For this reason, EFL students have to be equipped with and develop specific pragmatic communicative strategies, such as time gaining strategies for avoiding it.

The following activities, as created by Brock and Nagasaka, were designed to rehearse the pragmatic knowledge of learners as a way to develop their pragmatic strategies for communicating successfully.

7.2.1.13. Activity Thirteen

This activity has been developed by using a politeness continuum. The first step the teacher has to do is to know the different ways students may make their requests of both their classmates and teacher. The teacher may, then, propose the politeness continuum as the following one:

Indirect: *I forgot my pencil. /My pencil's broken.*

Direct: *Lend me a pencil.*

Polite: *Could I borrow a pencil, please? /Would you mind lending me a pencil?*

Familiar: *It'd be terrific if I could borrow your pencil.*

After the teacher has explained and illustrated the politeness continuum, students make requests of each other using an activity sheet similar to this:

1. Polite: Ask a classmate to lend you his/her ruler. Measure this paper and write the width along with the classmate's name here.

2. Familiar: Ask a classmate to lend you 10 dollars. Write his/her name here.

3. Indirect: Ask a classmate to lend you his or her pencil. Write his or her name here _____.

4. Polite: Ask a classmate to sign his/her name. (2005:21)

During the final discussion, the teacher has to make sure that the students have really captured the objective of this activity, and understood the pragmatic necessity in making requests.

7.2.1.14. Activity Fourteen

This activity is proposed to reinforce students' knowledge of how pragmatics and communicative situations are intrinsically related. In this activity, the students are exposed to

a continuum of choices where they can notice the different openings and distinct requesting strategies.

Example Openings

Indirect: It's time to get started.

Direct: Sit down now.

Polite: Would you sit down, please?

Familiar: Boys and girls, it would be helpful if you could take a seat.

Example Requests

Indirect: It's cold in here. /I'm freezing.

Direct: Close/Shut the window.

Polite: Could you close the window, please? / Would you mind closing the window?

Familiar: Be a dear and close the window. /Would you close the window for us? (2005:23)

Such an activity may intensify the students' pragmatic awareness in using the language. It may also strengthen the idea of how language and pragmatic strategies are highly affected by the relationship interlocutors have with each other while communicating.

Conclusion

What should be emphasized, at the end, is that there is no best way for teaching pragmatics. What matters, however, is that students have to learn the difference in not only language per se, but also sociocultural norms and values underlying language use. This fact

places a profound emphasis on the necessity of imparting knowledge about and raising awareness of pragmatic aspects and strategies which are of great help in developing the overall language competence. What foreign language learners are in need of, then, is to process language pragmatically to achieve more competency in their language learning. This serious need, in turn, emphasizes the idea that foreign language instruction should be purposefully built on pragmatic knowledge and pragmatic understanding of language.

General Conclusion

This study was designed to address the importance of pragmatic competence for English foreign language learners' communicative needs. It was originally motivated by an interest in developing the pragmatic communicative strategies of Algerian learners of English, at the Department of English, the University of Constantine 1, through the use of specific teaching practices and activities which are pragmatically-based. The aim of such activities is to make the learners aware of a variety of linguistic resources and devices that are used in combination with specific contextual factors. This specific knowledge progressively enables learners to make appropriate decisions when coding and decoding linguistic resources as they interact in the foreign language.

The importance of understanding the field of pragmatics is not only for linguistic accuracy or improving language proficiency; it is for facilitating harmonious interpersonal relationships. As has been heavily emphasized in this study, pragmatic failure may have more serious consequences than grammatical errors, since native speakers are less tolerant of the inappropriate use of pragmatic features. They tend to treat pragmatic errors as offensive rather than as simple demonstrations of lack of knowledge.

Studies have indicated that the students who have high grammatical proficiency do not necessarily have high pragmatic knowledge as well. Mastering grammatical knowledge can assist students to succeed in learning. Yet, lack of pragmatic knowledge may cause those students to be unsuccessful in their communication which, in turn, may result in breakdown in interpersonal relationships between the speakers and listeners. One can safely say, then, that pragmatic failure may deprive learners of the opportunity to interact with native speakers successfully. This, in turn, may adversely affect the development of learners' interactional and

communicative abilities. Therefore, pragmatic competence should not be viewed as a mechanism that is activated automatically as linguistic competence increases.

Accordingly, developing pragmatic skills through the use of pragmatically-based instructional materials and techniques should be the goal of language teaching along with the other linguistic aspects of the foreign language.

Such pedagogical pragmatic practices emphasize the significance of sensitivity to pragmatic features of the foreign language and the social and cultural definitions of each communicative situation. This particular emphasis raises the students' awareness of the pragmatic similarities and differences between their native language and target language. It also improves their awareness of the native speakers' expected appropriate production and comprehension of the foreign language.

The goal of traditional language teaching approaches was to emphasize learners' mastery of the grammatical features of a language. However, the pragmatic aspects of the target language have been frequently overlooked. The effects of this emphasis could be observed when language learners were unable to communicate successfully in the target language as they had insufficient understanding of the pragmatic and cultural knowledge of the target language. This suggested that modifications to language curricula are needed in order to use language communicatively. In other words, the centrality of grammar in language teaching and learning was questioned, and new approaches to language teaching were called upon as it was concluded that language ability involves much more than grammatical competence.

The shift from language usage rule to language use rule was the result of the advent of pragmatics as a specific area of study within linguistics which favoured a focus on

interactional and contextual factors of the target language. It emphasized heavily the ability to understand and produce appropriate language in diverse communicative contexts.

The pragmatic approach, that the present thesis advocates, takes into consideration the politeness principle and the implementation of different pragmatic communicative strategies which enable learners to perform better in the target language. Such an approach may also help minimize instances of pragmatic failure which a foreign language learner may experience in intercultural communication. It focuses on the indispensable role pragmatic teaching plays in EFL pedagogy, thus contributing to learners' progress in developing their pragmatic and communicative competence.

Built on the pragmatic-based approach, English language teaching focuses will focus not only on teaching the language itself (grammar, vocabulary, semantics, etc.), but also attaches equal importance to the pragmatic and cultural aspects of language mastery, including both increasing the students' cultural knowledge and developing their pragmatic competence.

Such an approach helps learners become familiar with the range of pragmatic devices and practices in the target language. It expands their perceptions of the foreign language and their analytical thinking of that language. Thus, the imbalance between grammatical and pragmatic development may be ameliorated.

The findings of this study reveal that learners need to be assisted in developing their pragmatic competence in English in order to help them avoid difficulties they may encounter in their future interactions with speakers of English. More specifically, they need to develop their pragmatic communicative strategies which emphasize the functions of language to achieve communicative goals and which serve to stress the notion of appropriateness of language in its social context.

The activities which are proposed in ‘Chapter Seven’ might help them get engaged in real-life situations and practice different pragmatic communicative strategies under different contextual determinants.

It should be emphasized that if instructors want their learners to progress to higher levels of language proficiency, attention to linguistic as well as pragmatic forms and cues is necessary throughout the teaching and learning processes.

Students of English at the University of Constantine 1 are exposed to a rather restricted set of pragmatic functions, and they provide only very brief replies to ready-made questions in textbooks related to either grammar or vocabulary. This classroom reality diminishes the role of English as a communicative tool and causes ‘pragmatically detached’ ways of using the language. However, it is possible to overcome this problematic situation by analysing varied choices and adopting a pedagogical framework which best fits the current Algerian context of education. By integrating such pedagogical strategies within the English course offered by the Department of English at the University of Constantine 1, it is hoped that the learners can develop their pragmatic competence along with other areas of English knowledge.

All in all, teachers are required to be the first to break away from the old pedagogical routines, offering learners authentic input that will enable them to make informed choices when experiencing real-life interactions with native speakers. Furthermore, learners should be taught to recognize the situations and circumstances in which different kinds of language are appropriate, and should be given enough practice in using the proper linguistic forms according to those contexts.

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Appendix One

Teachers' Questionnaire

You are kindly invited to participate in a research study that aims to investigate the pragmatic communicative strategies of Algerian students learning English as a foreign language. All information that is collected for study will back up this research, contribute to its fruitful materialisation and will be treated absolutely confidentially. Please, feel free to share your opinions and beliefs and report frankly about your real underlying orientations and attitudes when answering the following questions. It will be of immense help if you answer all the questions.

Part A: Personal Details

1. Name of the university/institution you are working for:
2. How many years have you been working as a university teacher?
3. Employment status:
 - a. Full- time teacher
 - b. Part-time teacher
 - c. Others, (please specify)

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4. What degree do you hold?
 - a- BA (Licence)
 - b- MA (Master/Magistère)
 - c- PhD (Doctorate)
 - d- Others, please specify
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5. Was Pragmatics one of the modules that you have taught before?

6. Have you ever been to an English-speaking country? If yes, please specify the period of your stay there.

a- Yes Period:

b- No

7. Have you ever been involved in communicative breakdowns and misunderstandings with native speakers?

a- Yes

b- No

If yes, what was/were the reason(s) for those breakdowns?

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8. Did your personal experience as a learner and/or user of English in those English-speaking countries help you be more competent and enhance your social interactional skills?

a- Yes

b- No

9. Has your personal experience with English native speakers been a tangible asset to you as a teacher?

a- Yes

b- No

If yes, please elucidate.

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Part B: Teaching Experience

10. What kind of competences, do you think, successful communication most frequently hinges upon?

- a. Pragmatic competence
 - b. Communicative competence
 - c. Grammatical competence
 - d. All
 - e. Others, (please specify!)
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11. What are the communicative difficulties into which your learners generally run?

- a. Lexical difficulties
 - b. Syntactical difficulties
 - c. Lack in the appropriate use of language
 - d. All of them
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12. Do your grammatically competent learners show the same prowess at the pragmatic end of the linguistic spectrum?

a- Yes

b- No

13. Do you prefer a particular approach to be followed in teaching English as a foreign language?

a- Yes

b- No

If yes, please specify the approach and explain why.

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14. Do you have any experience with a pragmatic approach to teaching English?

a- Yes

b- No

15. Were you comfortable when using the pragmatic approach in the classroom?

a- Yes

b- No

16. Were your learners comfortable when using the pragmatic approach?

a- Yes

b- No

17. Was the use of a pragmatic approach of any help in enhancing your learners' pragmatic communicative strategies? Please explain your choice.

a- Yes

b- No

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18. Does the use of a pragmatic approach facilitate the overall English learning process? Please explain your choice.

a- Yes

b- No

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Part C: Views about Teaching and Learning

19. On what kind of knowledge do you focus when you teach?

- a. Linguistic knowledge (e.g. grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation)
- b. Cultural knowledge
- c. Communicative skills
- d. Knowledge on how to use English appropriately

20. How important is pragmatic awareness in determining speech/language appropriateness?

- a. very important
- b. Important
- c. Not important

21. Do you stress the need and importance of incorporating pragmatics to foreign language teaching?

- a- Yes b- No

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22. What kind of competence do you think is necessary to improve the learners' pragmatic communicative strategies?

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23. Do you resort to consciousness-raising activities on all speech acts realization?

a- Yes

b- No

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24. What kind of activities do you use or allot more time-space to in your class?

- a. Reading professional literature, such as books, journals, evidence-based papers and thesis papers;
- b. Engaging in formal and informal discussions with your learners on a constellation of issues;
- c. Role-plays;
- d. Using video-types, watching English TV (programmes and movies) and listening to radio programmes;
- e. Using the Internet, chatting with English native-speakers.
- f. Others (specify please.)

25. What opportunities for developing English pragmatic communicative strategies are offered in your language classrooms?

- a. Teaching contextual-dependent strategies (that address different issues and situations) of successful communication;
- b. Teaching recurrent speech situations along with how they can be managed;
- c. Teaching conventional routines and focusing more on newly created utterances/Teaching conventionalized pragmatic strategies in English speech community (formal and informal);
- d. Teaching and discussing all potential as well as actual communicative problems and providing effective strategies for treating them;
- e. Teaching speech acts appropriate realizations;
- f. Integrating different pragmatic elements in each lesson in a coherent way.

Part D: Teachers' Views about the Approach in Use

26. What effects, if any, do traditional and other various approaches to language learning and teaching have on pragmatic development?

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27. The space provided below is devoted to any additional comments.

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Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Appendix Two

Written Discourse Completion Task

As part of a research project on pragmatics, *Pragmatic Communicative Strategies used by Learners of English*, you are kindly requested to complete this questionnaire. It should be noted that your answers will be kept strictly confidential.

Part A: For each item please tick the right box.

1. How can you describe your pragmatic level as a learner of English?

- a- Excellent
- b- Very good
- c- Good
- d- Fair
- e- Weak

2. Please evaluate your own level of English proficiency.

- a- Excellent
- b- Very good
- c- Good
- d- Fair
- e- Weak

3. Are you able to communicate effectively with English native speakers? Why?

a. Yes

b. No

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Part B: Communicative Situations

Please, read the following communicative situations carefully. Imagine yourself in each of the following situations and write down what you would most likely say.

1. You are entering the supermarket. You see a pregnant woman going out struggling with her bags. You want to offer some help. What would you say?

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2. You are an English teacher who mistook one student's examination paper for another due to the similarity in their names and failed him. You recognized that you had made a mistake, and the student knew what had happened and came to meet you in your office to ask you about the situation. What would you say to this student?

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3. One of your friends invites you for lunch, but you do not want to go because you cannot stand her mother. What would you say to your friend?

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4. Your mother comes to visit you in your new apartment. She looks at a clock hanging on the wall and says, "I love your clock. It looks great in your living room." How would you respond to your mothers' compliment?

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5. You are introduced to Carla by a friend of yours. You and Carla are shaking hands. What would you tell her at that moment?

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6. It is your birthday and you are having a few people over for dinner. A friend brings you a present. You unwrap it and find a blue sweater. What would you say to this friend?

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7. Your colleagues are always making fun of someone (who works with you). What would you tell them?

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8. You are supposed to hand in an assignment to your professor today. You have not been able to finish it. You would like to ask for an extension. What would you say?

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Part C: Implicatures

Please tick or circle the appropriate alternative.

1. Felicity is talking to her co-worker Brian during a coffee break.

Felicity: "So, life must be good for you. I hear you got a nice raise."

Brian: "This coffee is awfully thin. You'd think they'd at least give us decent coffee."

What does Brian probably mean?

- a. He does not want to talk about how much money he makes.
- b. He likes his coffee strong.
- c. He is planning to complain about the coffee.
- d. He doesn't care very much about money.

2. Carrie is a cashier in a grocery store. After work, she's talking to her friend Simon.

Carrie: "I guess I'm getting old and ugly."

Simon: "What makes you say that?"

Carrie: "The men are beginning to count their change."

What does Carrie probably mean?

- a. She has given wrong change a number of times, so people count their change now.
- b. Male customers aren't admiring her anymore like they used to.
- c. The store might lose business if she doesn't look good.
- d. It gets harder to give correct change as you get older.

3. Max and Julie are jogging together.

Max: "Can we slow down a bit? I'm all out of breath."

Julie: "I'm sure glad I don't smoke."

What does Julie probably mean?

- a. She doesn't want to slow down.
- b. She doesn't like the way Max's breath smells.
- c. She thinks Max is out of breath because he is a smoker.
- d. She's happy she stopped smoking.

4. Hilda is looking for a new job. She's having lunch with her friend

John. John: "So how's the job search coming along?"

Hilda: "This curry is really good, don't you think?"

What does Hilda probably mean?

- a. She's very close to finding a job.
- b. She's no longer looking for a job.
- c. She just found a job.
- d. Her job search isn't going very well.

5. Toby and Ally are trying a new buffet restaurant in town. Toby is eating something but Ally can't decide what to have next.

Ally: "How do you like what you're having?"

Toby: "Well, let's just say it's colourful."

What does Toby probably mean?

- a. He thinks it is important for food to look appetizing.
- b. He thinks food should not contain artificial.
- c. He wants Ally to try something colourful.
- d. He does not like his food much.

6. Jose and Tanya are professors at a college. They are talking about a student, Derek.

Jose: "How did you like Derek's essay?"

Tanya: "I thought it was well-typed."

What does Tanya probably mean?

- a. She did not like Derek's essay.
- b. She likes if students hand in their work type-written
- c. She thought the topic Derek had chosen was interesting.
- d. She did not really remember Derek's essay.

7. Mike is trying to find an apartment in New York City. He just looked at a place and is telling his friend Jane about it.

Jane: "Is the rent high?"

Mike: "Is the Pope Catholic?"

What does Mike probably mean?

- a. He doesn't want to talk about the rent.
- b. The rent is high.
- c. The apartment is owned by the church
- d. The rent isn't very high.

8. Brenda and Sally have lunch every Tuesday. As they meet on this particular day, Brenda stops, twirls like a fashion model, and the following dialogue occurs:

Brenda: "I just got a new dress. How do you like it?"

Sally: "Well, there certainly are a lot of woman wearing it this year."

What does Sally probably mean?

- a. We can't tell from what she says.
- b. She thinks Brenda has good taste in clothes because she's right in style.
- c. She likes the dress, but too many women are wearing it.

- d. She doesn't like it.

Part E: British Cultural Ways of Communication

-The following are hypothetical situations that take place in Britain; please respond ticking the appropriate box.

1. If you are sitting in a bus in England and the one who is sitting next to you tells you "Cold, isn't it?", but you do not really notice the cold much. What would be the appropriate response you can give?

- a. Agree.
- b. Disagree.
- c. Keep silent.
- d. Change/ switch the subject cleverly.

2. When meeting Prince Charles for prolonged conversation, what do you use when first addressed and afterwards?

- a. "Your Majesty" is used when first addressed and "Sir" is used afterwards.
- b. "Your Majesty" is used for the whole conversation.
- c. "Your Majesty", then "Prince".
- d. "Prince" for the whole prolonged conversation.

3. You are in a restaurant with your friend and you want a waiter to come to your table.

What would you do or say?

- a. Raise your hand
- b. Snap your fingers
- c. Call him "Waiter, come please!"

d. Approach him and say “excuse me, would you please come?”

4. If you get on the bus or a train and you want to sit down next to someone, what would you say?

- a. May I have a sit, please!
- b. Is it possible? (Pointing to the seat.)
- c. Would you mind if I sit down next to you?
- d. Say nothing

5. When you get out of a taxi, what would you say?

- a. Thank you
- b. God bless you
- c. Cheers
- d. Say nothing

6. If someone bumps into you and says sorry, what would you say?

- a. Sorry
- b. That's ok
- c. Never mind
- d. No problem

7. You are sitting in a restaurant and see someone near to you putting his elbows on the table. What would you think?

- a. It is a normal/good manner
- b. It is an impolite manner
- c. He is a snob person

d. He is an intellectual person

8. You get on a bus or train and find a spare double seat, are you:

a. Going to sit next to the window?

b. Going to sit in the aisle?

c. Not going to sit at all?

d. Going to choose a single seat?

Thank you very much for your contributions

Résumé

L'objectif de ce travail est de contribuer aux recherches qui mettent en exergue le besoin et l'importance d'incorporer davantage l'aspect pragmatique dans l'enseignement de la langue anglaise. Le travail étudie le cas des étudiants du département d'anglais à l'université de Constantine 1. Il met en relief les stratégies pragmatiques que les étudiants pourraient suivre pour surmonter les problèmes de communication comme les interférences linguistiques. La recherche insiste sur la nécessité d'inclure les éléments pragmatiques pour obtenir de meilleurs résultats pas seulement à l'intérieur des classes, mais plus important, lorsque les étudiants utilisent l'anglais dans des contextes réels. L'hypothèse émise est qu'une approche à l'enseignement de l'anglais qui prend en considération tous les niveaux de la langue à savoir les niveaux linguistique, pragmatique et fonctionnel, est à même d'améliorer les stratégies des apprenants en matière de communication. Pour vérifier cette hypothèse, deux outils de recherche sont utilisés : Un questionnaire administré à un échantillon d'enseignants pour révéler leurs approches et pratiques d'enseignement et un test administré à un échantillon d'étudiants de master pour connaître les stratégies adoptées dans diverses situations communicatives. L'étude suggère à la fin un cadre théorique et un programme d'enseignement basés sur une approche plus pragmatique. Ce cadre et programme sont d'une différence significative des autres approches dans le sens qu'ils sont basés substantiellement sur une conception plus à jour qui est l'utilisation de la langue anglaise essentiellement dans un contexte socio-culturel.

ملخص

يهدف هذا العمل الى المساهمة في البحوث التي تركز على الحاجة إلى إدماج الجانب البراغماتي والتداولي بصفة محسوسة في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية و أهمية ذلك لمتعلميها. ويدرس البحث حالة طلبة قسم الآداب واللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة قسنطينة 1. ويركز على الاستراتيجيات التداولية و التواصلية التي يمكن للطلاب استعمالها لتجنب سوء التواصل باللغة الإنجليزية. ويسعى إلى تبيان مدى أهمية الجانب التداولي في تعليم اللغة الانجليزية في قسم اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة قسنطينة 1, كما يهدف الى تعزيز فكرة أن التعليم الفعال للغة الإنجليزية يكون بإدماج العناصر التداولية لهذ اللغة , وذلك لتحقيق نتائج مرضية ليس فقط على المستوى التعليمي , بل و لتمكين الطلبة من ممارسة النشاط اللغوي وفق ما تقتضيه الوضعيات والمواقف التواصلية في الحياة العملية. وتتمثل فرضية البحث في أن أي اقتراب إلى تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية يأخذ بعين الاعتبار كل مستويات اللغة من مستو نحوي و تداولي ووظيفي سيكون من شأنه تحسين الاستراتيجيات التداولية و البراغماتية لهؤلاء الطلبة. وللتحقق من هذه الفرضية استعملت أداتان للبحث وهما استبيان أجابت عنه عينة من الأساتذة , لمعرفة اقتراباتهم في التدريس و ممارساتهم التعليمية في القسم , واختبار لعينة من طلبة الماستر لاستنباط ما لهم من استراتيجيات تداولية وبراغماتية في سياقات تواصلية شتى. ومن هذا المنطلق , فقد عمدت الباحثة من خلال هذه الدراسة الى وضع قالب نظري بوسعه تقديم اقتراب وبرنامج أكثر براغماتية في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية يرتكز مضمونه على الجانب التداولي للغة. يكمن اختلاف هذا الاقتراب التداولي في كونه يعتمد على مفهوم أكثر تحديثاً وهو استعمال اللغة في مختلف السياقات الاجتماعية و الثقافية أساساً.