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**INVESTIGATING EFL LEARNERS'
PRAGMATIC FAILURE: CASE OF
MASTER'S ONE STUDENTS AT TLEMEN
UNIVERSITY**

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ABSTRACT

Pragmatic competence is considered a momentous part of communicative competence. Yet, pragmatic competence neglected by foreign language learners and marginalized in foreign language teaching. As a result, learners can hardly avoid pragmatic failure since they lack the sufficient awareness to use language appropriately in different contexts, namely speech acts. The purpose of this study was to investigate pragmatic failure of learners of English as a foreign language by exploring at which level they fail more, i.e., the sociopragmatic level or pragmalinguistic level, searching for the causes behind this failure and examining their performance of speech acts. To do so, a case study that included 40 Master's one students from the department of English at the University of Tlemcen, was conducted. This study relied on two research instruments for data collection namely a questionnaire and a discourse completion test. The gathered data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The findings revealed that Algerian EFL learners are not familiarized with the target's language sociocultural norms and the ways natives vary language use according to the context. They are also pragmatically incompetent to perform speech acts appropriately in English in the different social situations. As a result, the EFL learners fail more at the sociopragmatic level than the pragmalinguistic one. The main causes behind this type of failure are the size of imposition, taboos, cross-culturally different assessments of relative power or social distance and value judgements. The learner's unawareness of performing speech acts appropriately in the different contexts leads to pragmatic failure.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my loving family and supportive friends.

To the most precious people in my life my parents for their unconditional love and support.

I can never thank you enough for handling my mood swings, for the life lessons you taught me and for believing in me.

To my only brother for making me feel that I will always have someone standing by my side even though sometimes you are standing by my side just to annoy me.

To my two sisters who make the best friends in the world. Despite the differences in our personalities you still understand me. Despite our silly fights you still make me laugh until I cry in the middle of the night.

To my precious grandmother, uncle, aunts and cousins especially the little family princesses.

To my best and true friends for being supportive, honest, crazy and present whenever I need you. So lucky to have you.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CIR (H.O)	Conventionally Indirect Requests (Hearer-Oriented)
CIR (S.O)	Conventionally Indirect Request (Speaker-Oriented)
DCT	Discourse Completion Test
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FL	Foreign Language
IFID	The Illocutionary Force Indicating Device
L1	Mother Tongue
L2	Second Language
TL	Target Language
UIR	Unconventionally (Non-conventionally) Indirect Requests

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Communication across different societies, countries and nations has become the new norm. Every country, nation or society might have its own language, culture and way of communication. In this regard, according to Hymes' notion, for foreign language learners acquiring the linguistic competence only in the target language is not enough to communicate effectively and to participate in cross-cultural communication; communicative competence as a whole is required with all its components: linguistic, discourse, sociolinguistic and strategic competence. Competent language users need mastery of both the form and the function of a language, and most importantly to have the ability to use language appropriately in different social contexts, i.e., pragmatic competence. This latter is a key element of communicative competence since it is related to the individual's achievement of appropriateness and effectiveness in his choice of language, namely speech acts, in a specific context. There are two types of pragmatic competence: sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic. Not having command of these competences will lead to pragmatic failure especially for foreign language learners.

In this respect, since English in Algeria is considered as a foreign language, Algerian learners of English are considered as EFL learners. Hence, pragmatic competence is a must for them. The fact that one can produce grammatically correct sentences does not guarantee that he owns pragmatic competence. This is seen in the case of EFL learners at the university of Tlemcen where the pragmatic dimension is neglected which has led them to fail to use language, namely speech acts, in an appropriate way in specific contexts and eventually facing pragmatic failure in the foreign language. Therefore, this work is a try to investigate EFL learner's pragmatic failure in different contexts through the study of speech acts production. In other words, this research could help in overcoming pragmatic failure especially for foreign languages learners because of its purposes. First, it attempts to show the momentousness of pragmatic competence and speech acts in foreign language learning. Furthermore, it aims at examining the causes leading to pragmatic failure. Accordingly, it tries to explain how to overcome this failure for EFL learners in Algerian universities by exploring the different strategies for performing speech acts and providing some possible solutions.

Therefore, the present research work is conducted according to the following research questions:

1. Where does EFL learners' pragmatic failure manifests itself more, the pragmalinguistic level or the sociopragmatic level?

2. What are the main causes behind the sociopragmatic failure?
3. Does EFL learners' unawareness of performing speech acts lead to pragmatic failure?

In relation to the above-stated questions the researcher puts forward the following hypotheses:

1. EFL learners' failure situations appear at the sociopragmatic level.
2. The main causes behind the sociopragmatic failure are lack of communication with native speakers, size of imposition, taboos, cross-culturally different assessments of relative power or social distance and value judgements
3. The unawareness of performing speech acts leads EFL learners to pragmatic failure.

In order to conduct this research and meet the goals that were set in advance, the researcher designed a research methodology. An exploratory case study will be used with master one English students at the University of AbouBekrBelkaid (Tlemcen). In this case study both qualitative and quantitative data will be gathered using different research instruments: a questionnaire and a DCT for students. Both qualitative and quantitative methods will be employed for data analysis.

This research is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is about the literature review of pragmatic failure and all the theoretical data related to it. It aims at showing the different strategies to perform speech acts of: apology, request, thanking and compliment response and the reasons behind EFL learners' pragmatic failure.

The second chapter is for data analysis. This chapter looks for the answers to the research questions by confirming or infirming the hypotheses to finally reach the research results.

Chapter One

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will state the theoretical background related to pragmatic failure. First we will deal with the broad concept of pragmatics with its main definitions and then intercultural pragmatics. Additionally, while defining communicative competence and its different models we will concentrate on the pragmatic competence and its components. Moreover, we will tackle pragmatic failure by providing its definition and types. Finally, we will deal with speech acts of apology, request, thanking and compliment response and their strategies and how they are performed by natives.

1.2 Pragmatics

Before defining pragmatics and intercultural pragmatics few words about its history are in order.

1.2.1 Historical review and definitions

Compared with the other branches of linguistics, pragmatics has only recently come on to the linguistic map. It has become an independent field of research in the 1970's and gained the attention of several scholars since then. It was said that the interest in this branch of linguistics appeared initially as a reaction to Chomsky's (1965) notions of competence and performance. Chomsky (1965:4) explains that "We thus make a fundamental distinction between competence (the speaker-hearer's knowledge of the language) and performance (the actual use of language in concrete situations)"; and it is clear that he gave more importance to competence than performance.

The term 'Pragmatics' was coined for the first time in 1938 by the philosopher Charles Morris as a subdivision of 'semiotics'. Morris developed a science of signs that came to be called semiotics which refers to the study of signs and symbol systems. According to him, semiotics was divided into three main provinces: syntax (the study of the formal relation of signs to one another), semantics (the study of the relations of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable: their designate), and pragmatics (the study of the relation of signs to their interpreters) (Morris, 1938; Levinson, 1983). In Morris's (1938: 6) words, pragmatics is "the relations of signs to interpreters". In other words, pragmatics is the connection between signs of language (linguistic forms) and the users' uttering and interpretation of these signs.

Later on, it was the seminal works and efforts of language philosophers and scholars such as Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and Grice (1975) which have greatly contributed in the development and the establishment of pragmatics as a linguistic discipline with its own rules and field of research. Austin's (1962) remarkable book *How to Do Things with Words* along with his Speech Act Theory, Searle also with the

Speech Act Theory and Grice through his Cooperative Principle had a huge impact in the evolution of pragmatics.

In 1983 there were other scholars trying to define, establish some principles and formulate theories and key concepts in pragmatics who are: Levinson, Leech and Thomas. Levinson provided a set of possible definitions among them was “Pragmatics is the study of those relations between language and context that are grammaticalized or encoded in the structure of a language” (1983: 9). In this definition Levinson could only cover some aspects of pragmatics and was unable to cover other aspects like implicatures.

Another definition was given by him (1983:24) where he describes pragmatic as: “the study of the ability of language users to pair sentences with the contexts in which they would be appropriate”. However, for him, none of his definitions fulfilled the needs in this field of research. He even suggested that pragmatics seems to be a challenging and hard notion to define in a complete and clear way. Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983) were among the first linguists who suggested dividing pragmatics into two components: pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. In 1983, Leech wrote his book *Principle of Pragmatics* that helped in elaborating the theatrical system and principles of pragmatics. He defines pragmatics as “the study of meaning in relation to speech situations”. On the other hand, Thomas (1995: 22) defines pragmatics as “the study of meaning in interaction”. Pragmatics, then, depends on the interaction among the users of language.

Yule (1996) suggested a definition of pragmatics that covers four areas which pragmatics is concerned with. According to him those areas are: speaker meaning, contextual meaning, how more gets communicated than is said and the expression of relative distance. He (1996:4) views pragmatics as “the study of the relationship between linguistic forms and the users of those forms”. Yule (1996:3) writes that “pragmatics is a study of contextual meaning which involves the interpretation of what people mean in a particular context and how the context influences what is said”.

Crystal (1997) views pragmatics 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 effect their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication" (1997:301). For him, pragmatics is about the ability of sparkers to link and make compatible language and context by overcoming the difficulties they face during social communication and how the linguistic choices influence the hearers' understanding.

Rose and Casper (2001:2) say that pragmatics is “the study of communicative action in its sociocultural context”. This is what pragmatics emphasizes on; context plays a momentous role in understanding the message of conversation.

1.2.2 Intercultural pragmatics

Since English is used by a huge number of people from different cultures, it has become as a means of global communication. As a result, knowing and possessing the rules and the skills that intercultural pragmatics presents became a necessity, because for an EFL learner the aim should not just to be able to produce grammatically correct utterances but to also reflect the learner’s cultural background while speaking in English. Intercultural pragmatics is a cornerstone in the process of English learning since the learners’ objective is to have the ability to communicate with people from different countries and cultural backgrounds but with taking into account their own cultural background. Intercultural pragmatics, or as often referred to as cross-cultural pragmatics, appeared to bridge the gap between intercultural problems during communication and pragmatics. It is defined as:

Intercultural (or cross-cultural) pragmatics is the contrastive or comparative study of communicative norms; its aim is to reach a better understanding of the cultural values that underpin them, to detect new (i.e. previously undetected) cultural values, and/ or to find supporting key words. In the absence of a contrastive or comparative focus, this approach may be referred to as cultural pragmatics

(Peeters, 2004:73)

Peeters here tries to explain that intercultural pragmatics is about distinguishing the differences between the cultural norms and values, specially the norms that were not detected before, between the different interlocutors in order to detect them and know them to make intercultural communication easier, i.e., to make the differences between cultures understood and known by people from different cultural backgrounds.

According to Kecskes (2004) intercultural pragmatics is about how different interlocutors, who do not share the same L1 and have different cultural backgrounds, communicate using a linguafranca which is the appropriate linguistic forms and behavior in a specific context while having a social conversation. In other words, it is concerned with “how politeness is realised in different cultures” (Ogiermann, 2009:16). Kecskes (2014) claims that intercultural pragmatics investigates speech acts realisation in different cultures, cultural breakdowns, and pragmatic failure.

Each language has its own cultural and social norms and conventions which condition what, where and when something can be said and to whom. Therefore, for foreign language learners knowing and learning intercultural pragmatics is an essential matter in order to avoid cultural communication breakdown by violating the hearers' social and cultural values and norms, when the hearers misunderstand the speakers' choice of a specific linguistic form based on their cultural background and consider it as inappropriate, which will lead eventually to a pragmatic failure in intercultural communication.

1.3 Communicative competence

What is communicative competence and why is it so important to talk about?

1.3.1 Definition

By the 1970's and early 1980's linguists shifted to studying language as a communication system rather than studying it as an isolated system because of Hymes' new view of language. Language was no more about grammatical rules solely but there were other variables to be taken into consideration when it comes to language. Linguists here started to recognize the flaws within Chomsky's linguistic competence and to question its adequacy and validity which paved the way to the emergence of an extensive, more elaborated and broader notion which is communicative competence. The anthropological linguist Dell Hymes (1967, 1972) is the main constructor of the foundations of the theory of communicative competence. Hymes (1972:277) describes communicative competence as follows:

We have... then to account for the fact that a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others. This competence, moreover, is integral with attitudes, values, and motivations concerning language, its features and uses, and integral with competence for, and attitudes toward, the interrelation of language with the other code of communicative conduct.

Hymes' communicative competence includes two types of competences which are linguistic competence and sociolinguistic competence. Even though at the beginning some linguists considered it as an expansion to Chomsky's linguistic competence, later on linguistic competence has become no other than part of communicative competence only. Based on Hymes' communicative competence, in

order for foreign language learners to be competent language users it is essential to have command not only of the linguistic competence (the tacit knowledge of language represented in phonology, morphology and syntax (grammar)) but also a command of the sociolinguistic competence (the ability to use language in an appropriate and suitable way in the different social contexts by knowing the socio-cultural rules of language). In this regard, Hymes (1972:45) states that “there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless”.

1.3.2 Components of communicative competence:

Communicative competence went through a long process of evolution. There were several models by different applied linguists representing the communicative competence through the years which helped significantly in the extension and the development of the notion “communicative competence”. As it was mentioned before, Hymes’ theory of communicative competence includes two components the linguistic competence and the sociolinguistic competence.

Based on Hymes’ work, Canale and Swain (1980) proposed another model of communicative competence. They kept Hymes’ linguistic competence and sociolinguistic competence; however, they relabeled “linguistic competence” as “grammatical competence”. Additionally, they added a third component called “strategic competence” which refers to the ability to use compensatory communication strategies to handle communication difficulties and breakdowns. A few years later, Canale (1983) updated this model by adding a fourth component which is “discourse competence”. Discourse competence is the ability of achieving coherence and cohesion in spoken or written texts by the appropriate selection, combining and arrangement of grammatical forms and the right understanding of meanings.

Another model and contribution of the theory of communicative competence was later on done by Bachman (1990) which is the model of Communicative Language Ability. This model was based on the theoretical frameworks of Hymes (1972) and Canale and Swain (1980). According to Bachman, language competence is divided into two main components which are organizational competence and pragmatic competence. On the one hand, organizational competence consists of grammatical competence, which is the same as in Canale and Swain’s model, and textual competence which is the same as Canale’s discourse competence. On the other hand, pragmatic competence includes illocutionary competence, that is referred to as “functional competence” in the modified version of this model by Bachman and Palmer (1996), which Bachman refers to as “the knowledge of the pragmatic conventions for performing acceptable language functions” (1990: 90), and sociolinguistic competence as “knowledge of the sociolinguistic conventions for performing language functions appropriately in a given context” (1990: 90). This

division of pragmatic competence is similar to the one made by Leech's (1983:10) and Thomas' (1983:99) subdivision of pragmatics into pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics.

The last one is the model presented by Celce-Murcia et al in 1995. In this model of Celce-Murcia et al communicative competence includes five elements: actional competence, discourse competence, linguistic competence, sociocultural competence and strategic competence. They introduced the new concept “actional competence” to refer to pragmatic competence. Actional competence is the ability to comprehend and produce all significant speech acts and speech act sets. In this model the authors made two changes concerning the terminology that was used in the Canale and Swain's (1980) model. Sociolinguistic competence was replaced by sociocultural competence which refers to the cultural background knowledge needed to interpret and use a language effectively. They reused linguistic competence instead of grammatical competence to include morphology and syntax along with grammar.

1.4 Pragmatic competence

Since there was a shift from language as an abstract isolated system to language as a communication system; language learners' aim became not only to have linguistic competence and knowledge of the rules but also to include the socio-cultural aspects where interaction takes place. As a result, pragmatic competence became the main interest across different languages and subject of investigation for many researchers from different countries especially in the EFL context. Due to the complexity of the term, various perspectives and definitions exist concerning pragmatic competence.

1.4.1 Pragmatic competence in the different models of communicative competence

Pragmatic competence is a momentous component of a learner's communicative competence (Kasper, 1997), and this was explained in SafontJordà (2005:66) statement when saying: “it is one of the main components of the global construct of communicative competence”. However, in the models stated above there are distinct interpretations concerning the position of pragmatic competence in relation to communicative competence. The main idea that the models revolve around is that communicative competence does not rely only on grammatical awareness only; it rather demands awareness and development of the different competencies including pragmatics.

Pragmatic competence in Hymes' (1972) theory, Canale and Swain's (1980) model and even Canale's (1983) updated model was embedded within the sociolinguistic competence. Pragmatic competence appeared ostensibly, for the first time, in the models of communicative competence in Bachman's (1990) model of

Communicative Language Ability where it was a component of communicative competence standing by its own and divided into elements (as seen in the above-discussed model of Bachman (1990)). In Celce-Murcia's et al' (1995) model pragmatic competence is identified as actional competence.

1.4.2 Definition of pragmatic competence

Because of the broadness and the intricacy of the notion of pragmatic competence, various views and perspectives were presented as it was mentioned in the preceding models by the different scholars. The term pragmatic competence was introduced by the sociolinguist Jenny Thomas (1983), and her definition is one of the most cited definitions of the notion where she said that pragmatic competence is: “the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context” (Thomas, 1983:92). Barron (2003:10) proposed another definition:

Pragmatic competence is the knowledge of the linguistic resources available in a given language for realizing particular illocutions, knowledge of the sequential aspects of speech acts and, finally knowledge of the appropriate contextual use of the particular languages' linguistic resources

However, the different definitions go in the same direction and have a common idea that is if EFL learners want to become competent language users and nearly native-like speakers they have to possess the ability and the knowledge to use language effectively and to convey meanings appropriately in the different social environments and contexts. In this sense, Prince (1988, 1997) explains that there are specific linguistic forms associated with specific functions according to the rules of use. That is to say, the same pragmatic function could be expressed by different forms from one language to another. These rules build the pragmatic competence of the FL learner; so competent language users must have command of these rules.

1.4.3 Components of pragmatic competence

Developing one's pragmatic competence requires knowing and attaining two aspects of it. Thomas (1983) and Leech (1983) subdivided pragmatic competence into two competencies which are pragmalinguistic competence and sociopragmatic competence.

A. Pragmalinguistic competence

Leech (1983: 11) explains that, “pragmalinguistics is the more linguistic end of pragmatics where we consider the particular resources which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions”. Rose and Kasper (2001) argue that the

used linguistic resources include pragmatic strategies such as mapping of form, meaning, force and context, directness and indirectness, routine and a variety of linguistic forms which can intensify or soften communicative acts. To put it another way, pragmalinguistic competence is about conveying communicative acts, relational and interpersonal meanings and performing pragmatic functions (Thomas, 1983). Moreover, it refers to the speaker's linguistic knowledge of language use and his/her ability to produce and understand communicative acts and speech intentions in a specific context by possessing knowledge on the target language, i.e., knowing the expressions and the linguistic forms used by the native speakers to express those communicative acts and speech intentions appropriately.

So, pragmalinguistics is concerned with the intersection of linguistic forms with pragmatics and the conveyance of meanings while using the appropriate linguistic forms, therefore it is called the grammatical side of pragmatics. According to Thomas (1983), pragmalinguistics has to do with "highly conventionalized usage of the language to convey communicative intentions". As a whole, pragmatic competence refers to the speaker's ability to use appropriate language to convey the intended meaning of utterances or speech acts.

B. Sociopragmatic competence

Sociopragmatic competence is a momentous component of pragmatic competence. Sociopragmatic competence is defined by Leech (1983:10) as "the sociological interface of pragmatics", i.e., it is the social facet of communication. Harlow (1990: 1) explains it as the "ability to vary speech act strategies according to the situational variables in the act of communication".

Sociopragmatics relates to how the social situation conditions language use, that is to say the use of linguistic forms depends on the social context. It covers the appropriate use of language while taking into account the cultural and social norms, which influence the type of linguistic forms and how they are performed, guiding such use in a particular speech community, as Kasper & Rose (2001: 2) say while defining sociopragmatics "the social perceptions underlying participants' interpretation and performance of communicative action".

According to Thomas (1983) sociopragmatic competence is the norms of behaviour for realising a given speech act in a given context, taking into consideration: the culture involved, the age and gender of the interlocutors, their social class and occupations, their roles and status in the interaction, i.e., the interlocutors should know what to say, to whom and when. She also explains that sociopragmatics includes the learners' knowledge of language and their system of beliefs. This type of competence

is about the one's ability to adjust the strategies of speech according to the social context and conditions (Harlow, 1990).

To sum up, sociopragmatic competence is the speaker's ability to evaluate the social and cultural appropriateness of specific speech acts and linguistic patterns in a particular speech community while considering social distance, social status, rights, social imposition, obligations, social conventions, taboos and perception of relative power. To put it another way, the speaker's sociological knowledge influences his/her interaction (Leech, 1983).

Bardovi-Harlig (1999: 686) states that "pragmalinguistic competence [is] the linguistic competence that allows speakers to carry out the speech acts that their sociopragmatic competence tells them are desirable". However, making a clear distinction and drawing a border line between pragmalinguistic competence and sociopragmatic competence is a matter of hot debate since the relationship between sociopragmatic competence and pragmalinguistic competence is intricate and intermingled (Chang, 2011).

1.5 Pragmatic failure

Why do language learners fail at using the target language properly in the appropriate context?

1.5.1 Definition

Scollon and Scollon (1983) state that findings have displayed that a considerable number of language learners while communicating with native speakers feel certain that their word choice is right and appropriate; nonetheless, native speakers misunderstand their intended meaning. In the same vein, Murray (2009:1) explains that: "The consequences of misinterpretation or the inappropriate use of language can range from unfortunate to catastrophic". Although, language learners may already have attained an advanced level of grammatical competence, they might still face communication breakdowns when there are inappropriate uses of language in context. This kind of communication breakdowns is called pragmatic failure.

Thomas defines pragmatic failure as "the inability to understand what is meant by what is said" (1983: 91). She states that when the speaker's utterance is perceived by the hearer more different than what the speaker intended, misunderstand the intended meaning, pragmatic failure appears. Such problems are due to the flagrant lack of explicit instruction about pragmatics and the communicative load of language.

1.5.2 Types of pragmatic failure

Thomas (1983) distinguishes two types of pragmatic failure: pragmalinguistic failure and sociopragmatic failure.

A. Pragmalinguistic failure

Thomas (1983:99) explains that “Pragmalinguistic failure, which occurs when the pragmatic force mapped by S onto a given utterance is systematically different from the force most frequently assigned to it by native speakers of the target language, or when speech act strategies are inappropriately transferred from L1 to L2”. According to her, pragmalinguistic failure is mainly a linguistic problem which occurs because of the differences in the linguistic encoding of pragmatic force and the mistaken beliefs about pragmatic force of utterance. In this kind of failure, learners fail to get their meaning across because the communicative conventions behind the utterances used are different. As Thomas (1983) points out, pragmalinguistic failure can be easily overcome since it is basically a question of highly conventionalized usage which can be taught quite straightforwardly as part of the grammar.

Thomas (1983) suggests that there are two main reasons behind pragmalinguistic failure. On one hand, there is the “teaching-induced errors” which was explained by Kasper (1984). This latter has identified some of the “teaching-induced errors” which are ascribed to teaching materials (e. g. inappropriate use of modals), to classroom discourse (e. g. complete-sentence responses, inappropriate propositional explicitness, etc.) or to teaching direct translation words/expressions taken from the mother tongue. Kasper (1984) states that pragmalinguistic failure occurs when learners respond to what speakers say rather than to what they mean. He presented an example of pragmalinguistic failure that was a result of teaching-induced errors: a second language learner (L) is taking leave from her native English speaker landlady (E) with whom she stayed for two years.

E: I've got some sandwiches ready for you here. I hope it'll be enough.

L: Yes, of course it will be enough

In this example E does not really mean if the sandwiches are enough. Therefore, L's response seems to be impolite to E; it should be something like “thank you, how sweet” or “thank you, how thoughtful”. L has no intention to offend E but, being pragmatically incompetent in English, she responds literally to E's utterance.

Second, pragmalinguistic transfer which is about the inappropriate transfer of speech act strategies from one language to another, or the transferring from the mother tongue to the target language of utterances which are semantically/syntactically equivalent, but which, because of different 'interpretive bias', tend to convey a different pragmatic force in the target language (Thomas, 1983). In other words, EFL

learners apply the “mother tongue” thinking mode when using the target language where they unconsciously use the linguistic habits that they have grown up with even though the characteristics of linguistic structure, habits and behavioral customs of the target language differ considerably from that of the learners L1. Examples by Thomas (1983:101-102) include the use of “of course” by Russian speakers of English:

E: Is it a good restaurant? (Native speaker of English)

L: Of course. (Russian speaker of English)

In this example “of course” is acceptable in Russian and it means “yes, it is” but for the English “of course”, which means “how stupid” or “what a stupid question” in this context, so “of course” in this context seems impolite or insulting for the native speaker because it implies that the speaker is ignorant or stupid, and only an idiot would ask such a question.

A common example of a pragmalinguistic failure, caused by the inappropriate transfer of speech act strategies from the speaker's native language to the foreign language is the transfer of syntactically equivalent structure of “Can you ...?” which is likely interpreted by native speakers as a request to do “something” directly rather than a question about one's ability to do “something” (Nelson, et al. 2005).

Another example of pragmalinguistic failure is the use of “never mind” as a compliment response; “never mind” is used as a response to apology. The non native speaker should have said something like “you’re welcome”.

B. Sociopragmatic failure

Thomas (1983: 99) defines sociopragmatic failure as “the social conditions placed on language in use”. To put it another way, sociopragmatic failure refers to the breakdown of the social conditions placed on language in use which takes place when speakers fail to choose what to say because of the unawareness of cross cultural distinctions or use inappropriate communicative acts. In this respect, Thomas (1983) explains that sociopragmatic failure stems from cross-culturally different perceptions of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behaviour. This type of failure has to do with not knowing “what to say” and “to whom to say it”. Sociopragmatic failure is about the misinterpretations that lead to violations of the social conditions placed on language use; its central focus in communicative competence is context. This type of pragmatic failure is more difficult to correct and overcome by the students since this involves making changes in their own beliefs and value system (Amaya, 2008: 13).

Thomas (1983) provides four main reasons leading to sociopragmatic failure. EFL learners’ lack of cultural competency related to the target language is mainly due to absence of exposition to real input from native speakers which lead them to

miscalculate and have different assessment towards size of imposition, taboos, cross-culturally different assessments of relative power or social distance and value judgments from natives' assessment towards these socio-cultural elements.

- Size of imposition: is basically about the notion of “free” and “non-free” goods (Goffman, 1967). What a person considers a free good may be considered as a non-free good by the hearer. Thomas (1983) discusses relatedly the example of cigarettes which are “nearly free” in Russia; thus, one would not use a particularly elaborate politeness strategy to request one, even of a total stranger. However, if a Russian used the same expression, i.e., similar request strategy, to request a cigarette in Britain where cigarettes are considered quite expensive may be misinterpreted and seen as impolite. The concept of “free” and “non-free” can go further to cover, beyond materials, information like: income, politics, religion, marital status, etc. Thomas (1983) explains that British bourgeois(e) considers it intrusive to inquire directly about such information while in some other countries it is considered as “freely available”.
- Taboos: An EFL learner may discuss a topic that is socially appropriate according to the learner’s cultural background but the same topic is considered ‘taboo’ to a native speaker. Montgomery and Tinsley-Kim (2001: 75) gave an example in this respect. Sara is a native English speaker that has just arrived in Korea. Laura, a Korean, is helping Sara unpack her clothes

Laura: But your clothes are so tiny. You are too thin! How much do you weigh?

Sara: Uh, well ... I'm not sure.

Laura: Not sure! You're about 52 or 54 kilos, aren't you?

Sara: Uhm well....

Laura: My scale is right in the bathroom there. Let's weigh you now.

Sara: Uhm thank you, really, that's OK.

In the western culture it is a taboo to ask a question about age, weight, and so on, however, it is acceptable to ask about such things in Korea (Eun-Sook, 2006). So such situations can cause sociopragmatic failure.

- Cross-culturally different assessments of relative power or social distance: which is about the miscalculation of relative power or social distance between the interlocutors, for example talking to a teacher or a boss differs from talking to a classmate or a friend and talking to a native speaker differs from talking to a person with whom we share the same mother tongue. For example, teachers in some cultures have more power over students than in others (Thomas, 1983). Social distance and power can cause serious sociopragmatic failure.
- Value judgements: Thomas (1983: 106) says concerning value judgements: “Without doubt, the most difficult type of pragmatic failure in the language

teacher has to deal with occurs when pragmatic principles, such as politeness, conflict with other, deeply held values, such as truthfulness or sincerity”. An example of sociopragmatic failure caused by misjudgement of “value judgement” is presented by Montgomery and Tinsley-Kim (2001:76) and includes the use of “No thank you” by an American native speaker woman (B) in a conversation with a Korean man (A):

A: It's Friday night. Nice music, isn't it? ... Why don't you dance with me?

B: No, thank you. I don't like this music.

A: (After 10 minutes, another piece of music is on. . .) It is very romantic. Would you like to dance with me?

B: Uhm, I don't feel like dancing right now

A: (After few minutes later) How about a drink? You will feel better. Go ahead! Have some drink. And then, let's dance.

B: Umm..... Please, leave me alone!

The use of “No, thank you” by the American woman means that she does not want to dance with him at all so that he has no expectations. However, the Korean man interpreted it in a “Korean way” where men usually show their interest until they get a positive reaction from women believing that this is the right and polite way to deal with all the ladies even from different cultures.

However, as Hudson et al (1992) explains that there is no absolute distinction between sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic failure because sociopragmatic concerns are realized pragmalinguistically. In other words, an inappropriate use of language can be considered as pragma-linguistic failure from one angle as it can be considered a socio-pragmatic failure from another angle. In the same vein, Thomas (1983: 109) says: “They form a continuum and there is certainly a grey area in the middle where it is not possible to separate the two with any degree of certainty”.

1.6 Speech acts

What are speech acts and why are they important in language learning?

1.6.1 Definition

The term speech act or speech act theory was first introduced by Austin (1962), and was further developed by his student Searle (1969). Speech act is in the very core of pragmatics; it is regarded as “one of the most fruitful notions of contemporary linguistic theorizing” (Wunderlich, 1980:291). In his influential work “How to do things with words”, Austin (1962) shows that in the same way that people make mental and physical acts they can also make acts by the use of language. So, pragmatically, when an action is performed through language; it can be included under the speech act labels for example: requesting, apologizing and greeting. Speech act

theory explains how words sometimes do actions rather than only deliver meaning. In this context, Yule (1996) explains that speech acts are actions which are performed via utterances. To achieve the success of a speech act, Austin (1965) and Searle (1965, 1975) suggested a set of conditions which include the necessity of an utterance to have a specific form and context, which must be achieved for making the utterance meet its intended purpose.

1.6.2 Levels of speech acts

J. L. Austin (1962) recognizes 3 levels of utterances. He asserts that “Speech acts consists of locutionary acts which have a meaning, illocutionary acts which have a certain force in saying something, and perlocutionary acts which achieve certain effects by saying something.” (Austin, 1962:120).

- A locutionary act according to Ibid is ‘the performance of an act in saying something’ (ibid: 94), i.e., the act of making a meaningful utterance which the listener can understand or interpret within a context. In locutionary acts, the focus is on the literal meaning of words (Yule, 1996) e.g.: I am so sorry.
- An illocutionary act is ‘the performance of an act of saying something’ (ibid). It is considered the cornerstone of speech act to the extent that some scholars see the illocutionary act and the speech act as the same thing. The illocutionary act refers to the communicative force and the intended meaning of an utterance. The illocutionary force of the previous example is: apologizing
- The perlocutionary act is ‘the performance of an act by saying something’ (ibid.). The actual effect, intended or not, of an utterance on the listener. Speakers create utterances with a function intending it to have an effect on the hearer, i.e., if the hearer accepted the apology, in the above mentioned example, the perlocutionary act is attained and the intended meaning is received.

1.6.3 Classification of speech acts

Speech acts can be classified into five categories as Searle in Levinson (1983: 240) states that the classifications are representatives (assertive), directives, commissives, expressive, and declarations and they are all considered as types of the illocutionary act.

- Assertives (representatives): utterances that tell how things are represented in the world. They express a belief. However, they can be true as they can be false.
- Directives: utterances that attempt to get the addressee to do something. They express the speaker’s wants from the hearer. They can be obeyed as they can

disobey. Directives include: ordering, requesting, commanding, suggesting, inviting, advising, begging, pleading, praying, etc.

- Commisives: utterances that make the speakers commit themselves to certain actions. They incorporate: promising, threatening, swearing to do something, vowing, planning, refusing, pledging, agreeing, etc.
- Expressives: utterances that reveal the speaker's inner feelings and attitudes about a situation. They express the one's psychological state. Expressives include: thanking, complaining, apologising, and congratulating, etc.
- Declarations: utterances that change the state of an official affair. They incorporate: naming a ship, resigning, sentencing, dismissing, declaring war, performing a marriage, etc.

1.6.4 Apology speech act

An apology is defined as 'a speech act which is intended to provide support for the hearer who was actually or potentially malaffected by a violation' (Olshtain, 1989: 156). For Searle (1969: 4), a person who apologises for doing something expresses regret for having done that thing. In social communication apologizing holds a significant status for saving the speaker's face. In Searle's (1979) classification, the speech act of apologizing falls under expressive where the speaker expresses his/her feelings of regret.

A. Strategies of apologizing

In order for an apology to be successful, there should be some strategies to be followed by the apologizer. The speech act of apology might be universal; however its strategies might differ cross-culturally. Blum-Kulka & Olshtain explain that 'the cross-linguistic comparative analysis of the distribution of realization patterns, relative to the same social constraints, reveals rich cross-cultural variability' (1984: 210). A great number of strategies were identified by different scholars. Fraser (1981:263), for example, stated nine different strategies going from the most direct to the least direct (indirect). However, later on, Cohen & Olshtain (1983:22-23) reduced them to only five. The five main strategies can be summarized as follows:

- The illocutionary force indicating device (IFID): also known as expression of apology refers to utterances that explicitly convey the meaning of apology and regret including performative verbs usually. It is a direct strategy. For example: I'm sorry, excuse me, I apologize, my apologies...

- An explanation or account of the situation: where the apologizer explains the reason behind the committed offense. It is an indirect strategy. For example: “I was sick yesterday that’s why I couldn’t come”...
- An acknowledgement of responsibility: when the speaker admits and takes responsibility causing or committing the fault. It is also a kind of indirect apology strategies. For instance, like saying: that’s my fault, it’s my mistake, I didn’t mean it, you are right, my bad...
- An offer of repair: situations where the apologizer offers to repair and fix the damage caused by him/her. This strategy is considered as indirect strategy. For example, you broke your friend’s watch and you say: “I’ll buy another one”, “I’ll pay for the damage”...
- A promise of forbearance: when the speaker promises not to let the damage or fault happen again. It is another type of indirect strategies. Such as, when you say: “I promise I won’t do it again”. “It won’t happen again.”

In addition to the strategies mentioned above, some apologies in English may include the use of some intensifying devices such as: ‘very’, ‘terribly’, ‘awfully’ (Márquez Reiter, 2000).

B. Apologies of native speakers of English

Numerous researches and studies were conducted in this respect by different scholars and linguists (Cohen and Olshtain, 1981; Holmes, 1990; Márquez-Reiter, 2000; Intachakra, 2001). Most of the findings that came out from these studies revealed that native speakers of English tend to use the different strategies but with different frequency. For example, IFID is the most frequently occurring strategy used by native English speakers; acknowledgement of responsibility is the second most frequently used apology strategy and explanation or account of the situation ranks third. Use of the remaining two strategies varies depending on the situation, context and the social relation. Márquez-Reiter (2000) suggests that the fact that the native English speakers place a greater importance on saving face is the reason behind these ranking and differences. She also explained that native English speakers tend to use intensifiers in their apologies such as: so, very, really, awfully.

1.6.5 Request speech act

According to Searle (1969: 66) requests are “an attempt to get hearer to do an act which speaker wants hearer to do, and which it is not obvious that hearer will do in the normal course of events or of hearer's own accord”. The requested act might be for non-verbal goods and services, such as: objects, actions and some kind of services, as

it can be for verbal goods and services like requesting information. Requests fall under directives according to Searle's division. The speech act of request is the most investigated speech act among all the other speech acts in pragmatic studies; because of its importance that lies in the fact that it has a notorious aspect which makes it difficult to be learned by foreign language learners. It is known by its notorious aspect because a request is a face-threatening act (Brown and Levinson, 1987) as the speaker threatens the hearers face by imposing his/her freedom of action.

Some conditions are suggested by Searle (1979: 44) in order to have a successful speech act of requesting:

1. Preparatory condition: the hearer is able to do the act.
2. Sincerity condition: the speaker wants the hearer to perform the act.
3. Propositional content condition: the speaker predicates a future act of the hearer.
4. Essential condition: the request counts as an attempt by the speaker to get the hearer to do the act.

A. Strategies of requesting

Several scholars have given their own types and strategies that could be summarized in the four types proposed by Trosborg (1995:192):

-Direct requests:

When the speaker tends to have the upper hand in the conversation or expects obedience from the hearer. In this case, the request can sound more demanding and authoritative to the hearer. This type is mainly used in obligations and necessities using performatives and imperatives, for example: close the door, you will have to close the door, I want you to close the door, I am asking you to close the door, I would like you to close the door.

- Indirect requests:

- Unconventionally (Non-conventionally) Indirect Requests: in this type there is a difference between what the requester said and what is actually implied in the utterance. It is not explicitly stated. The hearer may or may not infer the meaning if he/she is not paying attention to the situation. It is applied by using hints mainly in order to soften the imposition. For instance when saying: It is cold in here, the speaker wants to tell the hearer inexplicitly to close the window.
- Conventionally Indirect Requests (Hearer-Oriented): This type of indirect requests can be used with the strategy of questioning hearer's ability and

willingness and the strategy of suggestion, such as: could/can/would you close the door, how about closing the door. The speaker asks if the hearer is willing to close the door; and the hearer has the choice to accept or deny.

- **Conventionally Indirect Request (Speaker-Oriented):** the speaker shows his/her desires to make the hearer do the desired act. The speaker's intent may be expressed as a wish politely as it may be expressed bluntly. This type of indirect request is applied with the strategy of statements of speaker's wishes and desires. Speaker-Oriented request are often seen as a request of permission which implies the hearer has a kind of control over the speaker. It often occurs in a formal setting between people who have a distant relationship. For example: could/can I close the door. They are considered as more polite than hearer-oriented requests since they imply avoidance of control and imposition on the hearer.

B. Requests of native speakers of English

English requests were the subject of several studies (Clark and Schunk, 1980; Leech, 1983; Wierzbicka, 1985; Brown and Levinson, 1987). According to the results of these researches conventionally indirect requests are the most used by English native speakers since they consider keeping one's distance as the way of being polite. The hearer-oriented condition requests rank first and speaker-oriented requests come second. Unconventionally indirect requests rank third, which is used in cases of extreme imposition. Direct requests are the least used by native speakers of English since they can be perceived as impolite. The selection of the most appropriate strategy depends on the situation and the social variables (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 74-76): the social distance between the speaker and addressee; the relative power of the speaker and addressee; and the ranking of the imposition.

1.6.6 Thanking speech act

Expressions of gratitude such as thanking are used to restore the balance in social relations and keep harmony between speakers and hearers. As Bodman & Eisenstein (1988: 1) explains that in order to maintain social relations, speech act of thanking is an essential pragmatic function. Thanking is defined as utterances that are produced by the speaker as a reaction to a previous action performed by the hearer which the speaker considers that has been beneficial to him/her in Searle's typology (1976:65). In Leech's classification (1983), the illocutionary aim of thanking is to show appreciation and create a friendly and polite atmosphere. The speech act of thanking is an expressive speech act used for expressing appreciation and gratefulness (Searle, 1969)

between intimates, friends, strangers, superiors, and subordinates (Eisestein & Bodman, 1986). So, it is used and present in all kinds of relations.

A. Strategies of Thanking

The strategies of thanking also differ cross-culturally. They are the ways words and expressions of gratitude are selected. There are eight strategies of thanking proposed by Aijmer (1996) that range from the most direct to the indirect and on the basis of their emotionality, which are:

- Thanking somebody explicitly: it is a direct strategy used in informal contexts where the speaker uses incomplete expressions or just words of gratitude like: thank you, thanks.
- Expressing gratitude: it is a direct strategy; such as saying: I'm grateful.
- Expressing appreciation (admiration) of the addressee: it is an indirect strategy used when the speaker feels grateful and appreciate what the hearer has done for him/her; for instance: that's kind of you, that's nice of you...
- Expressing appreciation (admiration) of the act: it is an indirect strategy where the speaker appreciates the act itself and expresses his/her gratefulness toward the act. For example: nice job, I appreciate it
- Acknowledging a debt of gratitude: it is a direct and non-emotional strategy used in situations where the speaker expresses his/her gratitude as response for feeling indebted to the hearer. It is also found in writing like in the acknowledgments in academic theses and books. For example: I owe a debt of gratitude to...
- Stressing one's gratitude: it is a strategy where the performative verb of thanking is used along with the speaker's gratitude like in saying: 'I would like to thank you'.
- Expressing emotion: it is used to express emotionality and surprise, like saying: oh, thanks.
- Self-denigration (commenting on one's own role by suppressing one's own importance): It is a non-emotional indirect strategy and it is always combined with other strategies. I'm so careless, thank you for saving the situation.

B. Strategies of compliment Responses

Salameh (2001) gives the following compliment response strategies on the basis of classification of compliment response strategies of Pomerantz (1978), Holmes (1988), and Nelson et al (1996):

- Acceptance: it is a direct acceptance response strategy. For example: I'm happy you like it, it's my job, you are welcome....
- Deflection: in this type the respondent neither accepts nor rejects the compliment. For example: "My brother fixed it", "Really! Did you like it?"
- Rejection: in this strategy the respondent rejects the compliment. For example: "I didn't do anything".
- No Answer: the respondent chooses not to answer the compliment. He/she may show facial expressions, such as: smile, or nod. But he/she can also keep silence.

C. Thanking and compliment responses of native speakers of English

According to Scollon and Scollon (1995) the speech act of thanking performed using the same strategies in every language, but the choice of these strategies differ cross-culturally. Unlike the speech act of apologizing and requesting which were the theme of many researches, studies on the speech act of thanking and thanking response were only few (Salameh, 2001; Intachakra, 2004; Cheng, 2005). The results of these studies show that the most used strategy is by English native speakers is the most direct one which is thanking somebody explicitly. Expressing appreciation comes second and expressing gratitude comes third. The remaining strategies vary according to the situation, even the use of the first three strategies changes according to the formality of the situations. Acknowledging a debt of gratitude is the least strategy to be used by natives. When speaking about response strategies, Salameh's (2001) study revealed that the most common used response strategy by English native speakers is acceptance, Deflection ranks second and the third is rejection.

1.7 Conclusion

Chapter one sheds light on the review of literature that has a relation to pragmatics and pragmatic failure. We discussed in this chapter the historical review of pragmatics and how it became an independent field of research because of its importance to language learning. Then, we tackled the communicative competence and how pragmatic competence is present in its models. Furthermore, we dived into the issue of pragmatic failure by mentioning its types and causes. We finally ended with a discussion about the speech acts of apology, request, thanking, and compliment response by citing the strategies that should be followed to produce them appropriately in the different contexts.

Chapter Two

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will first explain the methodology that was followed for data collection, analysis and interpretation throughout this research. It started with providing information about the participants. Then, it was followed by the description of the research instruments. In addition, there was an explanation of the process of data analysis and interpretation. Finally, this chapter will end by suggesting recommendations in a try to fix the main issue of this research.

2.2 Participants

The original sample selected to participate in the current study was 46 Master's one students majoring in English as a foreign language (EFL) from the University of Tlemcen, Algeria since at this level they have not yet study pragmatics as a separate module. Nevertheless, six students were taken out from this study as they did not complete all the questions of the questionnaire and the DCT. As a result, the final sample included 40 participants. The sample was selected from Master 1 because normally at this stage they may have developed to a certain extent a pragmatic competence and a minimum knowledge about the target language's culture. The participants answered a questionnaire and a DCT in order to investigate the pragmatic issues, i.e., pragmatic failure.

2.3 Research instruments

Since this research is about investigating EFL learners' pragmatic failure the most suitable instruments are a questionnaire and a DCT in order to collect the necessary data to answer the research questions.

2.3.1 Students' Questionnaire

This questionnaire in this study is addressed to master one English students from the University of Tlemcen. The participants of this questionnaire are 40 students who were selected spontaneously to explore their pragmatic failures. The questionnaire contains 8 questions of both types "Close-ended questions" and "open-ended questions" that begin with the participants' background information. The first question is about the duration of studying English. The second is about the frequency of using English in their daily life. The third question is about whether they communicate with natives or not. This question included a sub-question about the means of communication between them and the natives. The fourth question is about whether they have ever faced a misunderstanding during communication; this question included a sub-question about the types of misunderstandings with natives. The fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth

questions are about the performance of the different speech acts, apologizing, thanking, compliment response and requesting respectively, in order to know the most frequent strategies of these speech acts used in no specific contexts.

2.3.2. The discourse completion test

The second research instrument is a DCT which is defined by Varghese and Billmyer (1996: 39) as: “a questionnaire containing a set of very briefly described situations designed to elicit a particular speech act. Subjects read each situation and respond to a prompt in writing”. It is one of the most commonly used research instruments in pragmatic studies (Kasper, 2008). It was given to the same 40 participants who answered the questionnaire. The respondents have the same scenarios to be answered in English in a written form. This DCT contains sociocultural situations in formal settings where the participants should write what they would say in such contexts. There are 15 situations which attempt to elicit data about the performance of four different speech acts in order to investigate pragmatic failure. It is divided into three sections. The first section is about the apology speech act. The second section is about the speech act of request and the third one is about the speech act of thanking and compliment response. All the DCT situations are in a formal setting but they differ in terms of the relative power, the social distance, the degree of familiarity and the social position. These differences are to explore whether the EFL learners vary their strategies according to these terms or not and by that knowing the types of the pragmatic failure, the causes behind these failures and how does the unawareness of performing speech acts lead to pragmatic failure.

2.4 Data analysis

In order to answer the research questions the researcher adopted a mixed methods approach to analyze the results of the research instruments, i.e., the questionnaire and the DCT. The mixed methods approach includes both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. It helps giving a broader understanding to the issue and a better interpretation to the results. It also helps giving reliable conclusions

A. Students' Questionnaire

There were 46 participants. Out of the initial 46, 6 were excluded as they did not answer all the questions of the questionnaire and the DCT. Hence, the final and total number of the respondents of the questionnaire and the DCT were 40 M1 students from the Department of English at the University of Tlemcen.

Question One: How long have you been studying English?

Table 2.1: Students’ years of studying English

Years	Number	Percentage
9	5	12.5%
10	2	5%
11	16	40%
12	11	27.5%
13	6	15%

This question was asked to know for how many years students have been studying English. As it is shown in the table above (40%) of the students have been studying English for 11 years, while (27.5%) for 12 years and (15%) for 13 years. The least percentages are (12.5%) have been studying English for 9 years and (5%) for 10 years.

Question two: How often do you use English in your daily life?

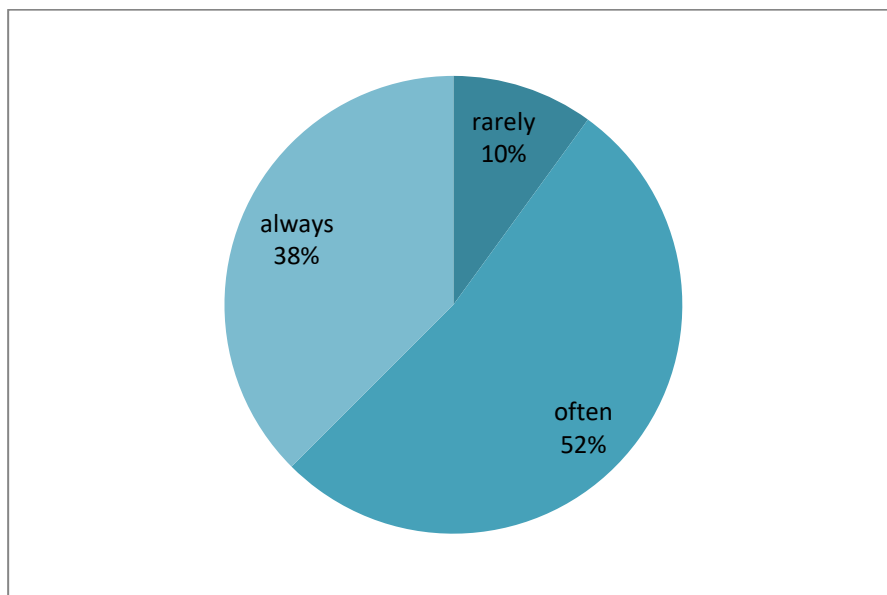


Figure 2.1: Students’ daily use of English

This question is meant to reveal the daily frequency of using English in daily life. Among the participants more than the half (21 participant) often use English in their daily life, 15 participant use it always while only 4 use it rarely.

Question Three: Do you communicate with any English native speakers?

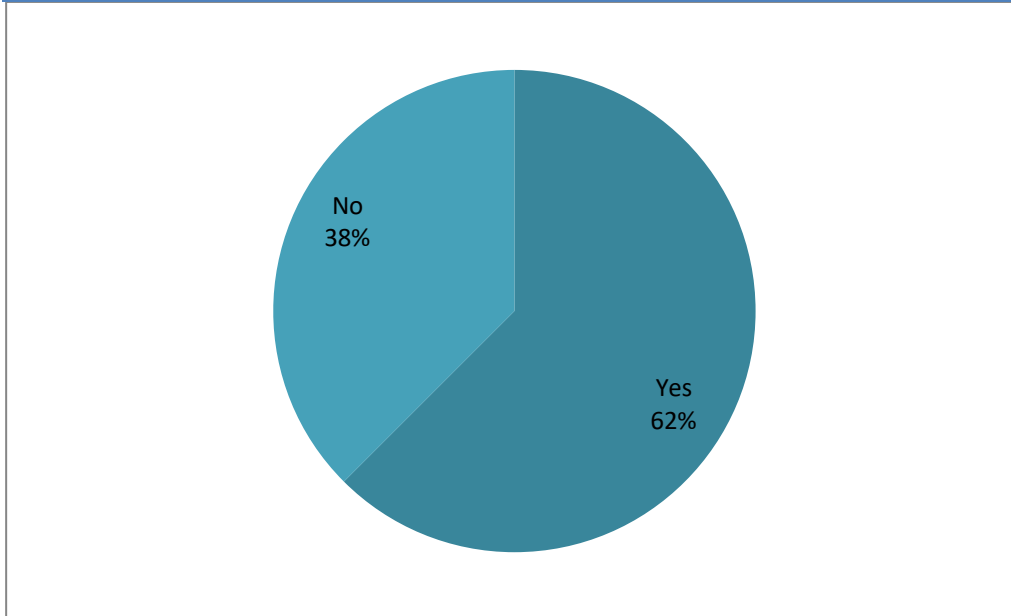


Figure 2.2: Communication with English native speakers.

In this question the aim was to know if students as EFL learners have any contact with the speakers of the target language. The results came as follow: 25 students communicate with English native speakers whereas 15 students do not have any sort of communication with them.

A sub-question was asked within this question to know the means of communication with natives which is: If yes (you do communicate with native speakers), please specify how?

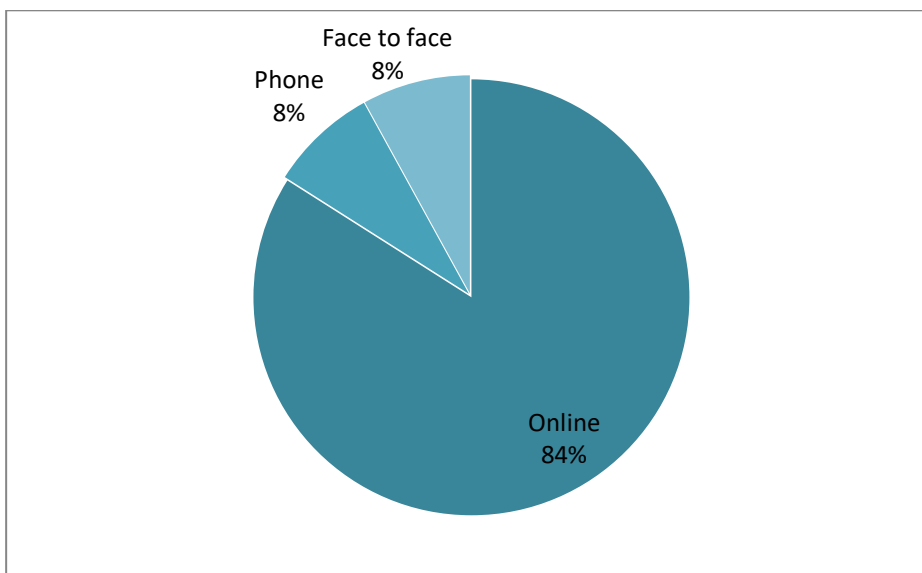


Figure 2.3: Means of communication with natives

As the figure shows the majority of learners (21) communicate with native speakers online. However, few (2) communicate with natives using phone and 2 face to face.

Question Four: Have you ever faced any kind of misunderstanding while communicating with them?

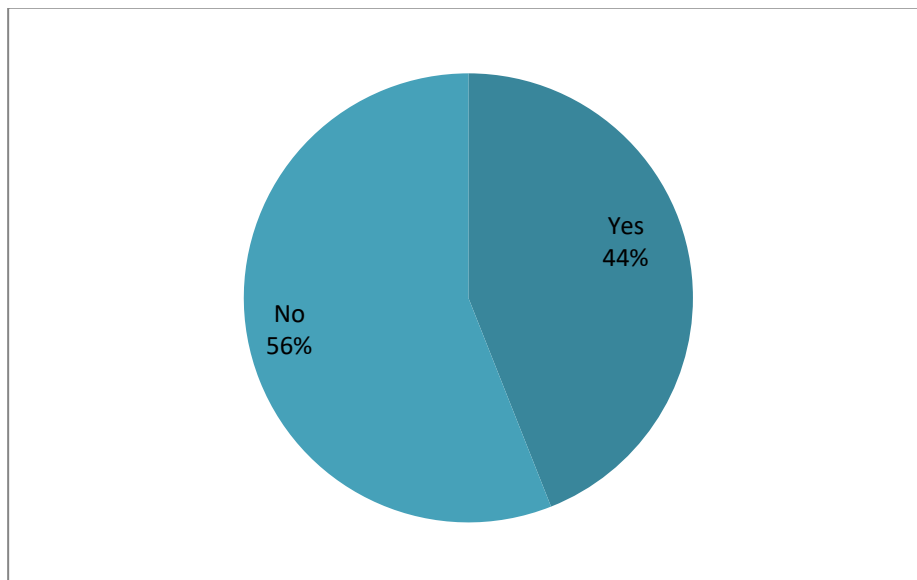


Figure2.4: Facing misunderstanding while communicating with natives

This question was directed to the students who communicate with natives which are 25 to find out whether they have faced any kind of misunderstanding with them while communicating. The results revealed that 14 student have never faced a misunderstanding with native, while; 11 have already faced a misunderstanding during their communication.

A sub question was added below the fourth question to investigate what kind of misunderstanding these learners have faced. The question is: If yes (you have ever faced a misunderstanding), please explain (what kind of misunderstanding and why?)

Table2.2: Causes of misunderstandings EFL learners have faced with natives.

Type of misunderstandings	Number	Percentages
Socio-cultural differences	5	46%
Colloquial expressions and idioms	3	27%
Accent and fast speech	2	18%
Natives' prejudices toward Islam and the veil	1	9%

This question was asked to the 11 learners who admitted that they lived situation where they confronted misunderstandings with natives to unveil what kind of misunderstandings. The findings show that almost half of the number of respondents answered that the main cause behind the misconceptions is the socio-cultural differences. Colloquial expressions and idioms rank second as a reason leading to misunderstandings (3 participants). The third reason is Accent and fast speech (2 participants). All the three previous causes can be considered as part of the culture, the society and the norms of the target language. However, there was one student explaining that the cause behind the misconception that she faced is native’s prejudices toward Islam and the veil which is a religious cause.

Question five: If you have ever found yourself in a situation where you had to apologize to someone in English, write what you said?

Table 2.3: The most common apology strategies used by EFL learners

Strategy	Number	Percentage
IFID	35	88%
An explanation or account of the situation	0	0
An acknowledgement of responsibility	5	12%
An offer of repair	0	0
A promise of forbearance	0	0

The aim of this question is to investigate the most common apology strategies used by EFL learners in no specific situation. The majority (35) of EFL learners chooses to use the IFID strategy saying: I’m so sorry, I apologise, excuse me... with some of them using some intensifiers like: terribly, truly deeply....On the other hand, only few (5) choose to use the strategy of acknowledgement of responsibility by saying: my bad, it’s my fault... Nevertheless, no one choose to use the three remaining strategies in their apologies in no specific contexts.

Question Six: If you have ever found yourself in a situation where you had to thank someone in English, write what you said.

Table 2.4: The most common thanking strategies used by EFL learners

Strategy	Number	Percentage
Thanking somebody explicitly	32	80%
Expressing gratitude	1	2.5%
Expressing appreciation (admiration) of the addressee	2	5%
Expressing appreciation (admiration) of the act	4	10%
Acknowledging a debt of gratitude	0	0
Stressing one's gratitude	0	0
Expressing emotion	1	2.5%
Self-denigration	0	0

The aim of this question is to investigate the most common thanking strategies used by EFL learners in no specific situation. The most of the EFL learners (32) choose to thank the person explicitly saying: thank you, thanks, thank you so much. Some (4) choose to express appreciation (admiration) of the act by saying: I (really) appreciate it. Few (2) choose to express appreciation (admiration) of the addressee by saying: that's kind of you. One chooses to thank by expressing gratitude (I'm grateful) and one chooses to thank by expressing emotion (OH! Thank you). There was some use of intensifiers such as: a lot, so much, really... However, no one choose to use the three remaining strategies in their thanking in no specific contexts.

Question Seven: If you have ever found yourself in a situation where you had to respond to a thanking (compliment) in English, write what you said

Table 2.5: The most common compliment responses strategies used by EFL learners

Strategy	Number	Percentage
Acceptance	31	78%
Deflection	0	0
Rejection	9	22%
No Answer	0	0

The aim of this question is to investigate the most common compliment responses strategies used by EFL learners in no specific situation. The majority (31) opts for

accepting the compliment saying: you're welcome, my pleasure, any time...Nevertheless; some (9) opt for rejecting the compliment using: don't mention it, it's no big deal... No one opt for deflection and no answer.

Question Eight: If you have ever found yourself in a situation where you had to request something from someone in English, write what you said

Table 2.5: The most common request strategies used by EFL learners

Strategy	Number	Percentage
Direct requests	4	10%
UIR	0	0
CIR (H.O)	26	65%
CIR (S.O)	10	25%

The aim of this question is to investigate the most common request strategies used by EFL learners in no specific situation. Most (26) of the learners choose the CIR (H.O) strategy using: can/could/would you... Whereas, some of them (10) opt for CIR (S.O) saying: can/may I...Only few (4) chose the direct request strategy using: I need your help, do it for me...Since, there is no specific context no one opt for UIR.

B. The discourse completion test

The DCT consists of three sections, first section for apologies, second for requests and third for thanking and compliment responses. Each section contains five situations. These situations were used to investigate how the EFL learners perform speech acts. Forty participants answered this DCT.

The total may exceed 100% or 40 because there were situations were 2 or more strategies (same or different) were used together within the same situation.

Section One: Apology speech act

Situation one: You are a university professor that promised to return a student's homework that you have not corrected yet. The student comes to you asking for it. What would you say?

Table 2.6: The most used apology strategies in situation one.

Strategy	Number	Percentage
IFID	21	52%
An explanation or account of the situation	23	58%

An acknowledgement of responsibility	0	0
An offer of repair	17	42%
A promise of forbearance	0	0
Others	2	5%

Table 2.7: The most used combination of apology strategies in situation one.

Combination of strategies	Number	Percentage
IFID+ an offer of repair	4	10%
IFID+ explanation or account of the situation	8	32%
Explanation or account of the situation+ an offer of repair	5	12.5%
IFID+ explanation or account of the situation+ an offer of repair	4	10%

The first situation is between a university professor and a student where the teacher has to apologise. As it shown in the table EFL learners (23) choose to use an explanation or account of the situation more than any other strategy by explaining: “I had a lot of work”, “I was so busy”, “I had corrections” and even “I forgot about it”. This strategy was sometimes used alone and sometimes with other strategies. The IFID strategy comes second (21) by saying mainly: I’m sorry, so sorry and sorry. In some situations it was used alone (4) and others (12) it was not even used. There were few intensifiers used. An offer of repair ranks third (17) saying: “I’ll give it back tomorrow”, “I’ll bring it soon”... Sometimes it was used alone and sometimes in combination with other strategies.

Acknowledgement of responsibility and a promise of forbearance are not used in this situation by EFL learners. For the category of others (2) there is no apology;

they just said:”here it is your mark” and “I’m in a hurry”. Nearly half of participants (21) use a combination of strategies in such situation. IFID+ explanation or account of the situation was the most used combination (8) by saying for example: “I’m sorry I completely forget about it”. Explanation or account of the situation+ an offer of repair is the second most used combination (5) were respondents say: “I was busy, I’ll bring it next time”. IFID+ An offer of repair is used by 4 participants for example saying: “sorry, I’ll correct it as soon as possible”. Four respondents combined 3 strategies: IFID+ explanation or account of the situation+ an offer of repair; the respondents for example say: “Sorry! I had things to do; I’ll bring it as soon as possible”.

Situation two: You are a student who borrowed a book from a teacher and promised to return it in a week. Two weeks pass and you forgot to return it until your teacher asked for it. What would you say?

Table 2.8: The most used apology strategies in situation two.

Strategy	Number	Percentage
IFID	30	75%
An explanation or account of the situation	19	47.5%
An acknowledgement of responsibility	3	7.5%
An offer of repair	14	35%
A promise of forbearance	0	0
Others	0	0

Table 2.9: The most used combination of apology strategies in situation two.

Combination of strategies	Number	Percentage
IFID+ an offer of repair	5	12.5%
IFID+ explanation or account of the situation	7	17.5%

Explanation or account of the situation+ an offer of repair	3	7.5%
IFID+ explanation or account of the situation+ an offer of repair	5	12.5%
IFID+ acknowledgement of responsibility	2	5%

The second situation is between a university professor and a student where the student has to apologise. As explained in table most EFL learners (30) choose to use IFIDs more than any other strategy in their apologies with the use of some intensifiers (terribly, deeply, so) like: I'm deeply sorry and my apologies. Few of the participants used this strategy alone and few others used it two times within the same situation, like: I'm so sorry please forgive me. An explanation or account of the situation comes second (19) saying for example: I didn't finish the reading yet or I forget it. Few use this strategy alone with no IFID (I'll give it back as soon as possible).

An offer of repair ranks third (14) when saying: I'll bring it tomorrow or I'll give it back as soon as possible. In the fourth place (3), comes acknowledgement of responsibility when they say: I take full responsibility or I take the blame. A promise of forbearance is not used in this situation or other responses out of the strategies. Almost half of participants (22) use a combination of strategies in such situation. The most used combination is IFID+ explanation or account of the situation (7) for example in saying: I'm sorry! I haven't finished the reading. IFID+ an offer of repair was also used (5). Another five used IFID+ explanation or account of the situation+ an offer of repair (e.g.: I'm so sorry, I completely forget it; I'll bring it tomorrow). Only two used IFID+ acknowledgement of responsibility.

Situation three: You are in a line to get a coffee from the coffee machine in your university and without paying attention you step on a lady's foot and you realize that she is a teacher at your department. What would say?

Table 2.10: The most used apology strategies in situation three.

Strategy	Number	Percentage
IFID	44	110%
An explanation or account	15	37.5%

of the situation		
An acknowledgement of responsibility	3	7.5%
An offer of repair	0	0
A promise of forbearance	0	0
Others	0	0

Table 2.11: The most used combination of apology strategies in situation three.

Combination of strategies	Number	Percentage
IFID+ acknowledgement of responsibility	3	7.5%
IFID+ explanation or account of the situation	15	37.5%

In this situation the student has to apologise from the female professor. All of the participants (40) choose the IFID strategy and four of them used it twice (I apologize, please excuse me). An explanation or account of the situation is second most used strategy (15) mainly saying: I didn't pay attention. Only few used an acknowledgement of responsibility (3) by saying: my bad. The two remaining strategies are not used in this situation. The combination of strategies was used by 18 students. IFID+ explanation or account of the situation is used by 15 students and the other three combined IFID and acknowledgement of responsibility.

Situation four: You had an appointment with your thesis' supervisor but you did not attend it. You meet him/her the next day. What would you say?

Table 2.12: The most used apology strategies in situation four

Strategy	Number	Percentage
IFID	32	80%
An explanation or account of the situation	28	70%

An acknowledgement of responsibility	2	5%
An offer of repair	0	0
A promise of forbearance	0	0
Others	3	7.5%

Table 2.13: The most used combination of apology strategies in situation four

Combination of strategies	Number	Percentage
IFID+ explanation or account of the situation	22	55%
IFID+ explanation or account of the situation+ acknowledgement of responsibility	1	2.5%

This situation is between a teacher and a student where the student has to apologise. The majority of the students (32) prefer using IFIDs sometimes alone and other times combined with other strategies and sometimes (2) two IFIDs are used (e.g.: sorry, I apologise). An explanation or account of the situation is second favourite strategy which was used by 28 respondents (e.g.: I had some family issues). It is used 4 times alone with no IFID (I was ill.). An acknowledgement of responsibility is used by two students, in one situation used alone, saying: my bad and I take responsibility. The remaining two strategies are not used in this situation. However, three responses that have no relation with any strategy are given: to let him know before the absence, “I was coming to you”, “thank you for your patience”. The combination of strategies was used by more than half of the participants (23). IFID+ explanation or account of the situation is used by 22 students (e.g.: I’m sorry, I had something urgent to do). Only one used a combination of IFID+ explanation or account of the situation+ acknowledgement of responsibility.

Situation five: You are a university student, and you are half an hour late for the lecture. You enter the class and your professor starts looking at you, what would say?

Table 2.14: The most used apology strategies in situation five.

Strategy	Number	Percentage
IFID	30	75%
An explanation or account of the situation	8	20%
An acknowledgement of responsibility	0	0
An offer of repair	0	0
A promise of forbearance	3	7.5%
Others	6	15%

Table 2.15: The most used combination of apology strategies in situation five.

Combination of strategies	Number	Percentage
IFID+ explanation or account of the situation	4	10%
IFID+ A promise of forbearance	3	7.5%

This situation is between a teacher and a student where the student has to apologise. The majority of respondents (30) prefer the use of IFIDs and mainly alone in such situation. Some (8) used an explanation or account of the situation mainly saying because of the traffic. In some responses it was used alone followed by a question like in: the traffic, may I come in? A promise of forbearance is used in 3 responses by saying: this is not happening again. Acknowledgement of responsibility and offer of repair weren't used in the current situation. Six other responses that belong to no strategy are given. Three choose to say nothing, two choose not to even enter and one says: "coming late better than never coming". There are two combinations of strategies: IFID+ explanation or account of the situation was used by 4 and IFID+ A promise of forbearance was used by 3.

As a result, the most used apology strategies by EFL learners are respectively as follows: IFID, explanation or account of the situation, offer of repair, acknowledgement of responsibility and the least used is promise of forbearance.

Section two: Request speech act

Situation six: You have forgotten your wallet at home, and you want to land some money from you classmate to buy some copies of the exercises that you will work on in the next lecture. What would say?

Table 2.16: The most used request strategies in situation six.

Strategy	Number	Percentage
Direct requests	4	10%
UIR	0	0
CIR (H.O)	32	80%
CIR (S.O)	4	10%

This situation is between two classmates where one of them is asking to borrow some money. Most of the respondents (32) prefer using CIR (H.O) such as: can/could you lend me some money. Few others (4) choose to use direct requests saying: buy me a copy, lend me some money. The same number (4) chooses the CIR (S.O) saying for example: can I borrow some money. No one opt for UIR in this situation.

Situation seven: You are in your professor’s office you notice a book that is relevant to your research on his/her desk, and you want to borrow it. What would you say?

Table 2.17: The most used request strategies in situation seven.

Strategy	Number	Percentage
Direct requests	10	25%
UIR	0	0
CIR (H.O)	14	35%
CIR (S.O)	16	40%

In this situation a student wants to ask a supervisor to borrow his/her book. Less than half of the participants (16) prefer using CIR (S.O) strategy saying: can/could/may I borrow this book. Some (14) choose to use CIR (H.O) by saying: can/could you lend me the book. Direct requests were used by saying: I really need this book, I would like/ love if you lend me this book. UIR is not used in this situation.

Situation eight: You were absent for a day from university. You ask a classmate (not a close friend) to give you his/her notes. What would you say?

Table 2.18: The most used request strategies in situation eight.

Strategy	Number	Percentage
Direct requests	16	40%
UIR	0	0
CIR (H.O)	6	15%
CIR (S.O)	16	40%

This situation is between two classmates where one of them asks the other for his/her notes. Direct requests were often used (16) by saying: lend me your notes, I would like to take a look on your notes... CIR (S.O) is used by the same number (16) where they say: can I have your notes, can I have a look on your notes. Some participants (6) use CIR (H.O) like: can/could/would you give me you notes. UIR is not used in the current situation.

Situation nine: You are the head of the department of English. Something went wrong with your computer. One of the students is good with computers and you want his/her help. What would you say?

Table 2.19: The most used request strategies in situation nine

Strategy	Number	Percentage
Direct requests	21	52.5%
UIR	0	0
CIR (H.O)	17	42.5%
CIR (S.O)	2	5%

This situation is about the head of the department asking for the help of a student. More than half of the students (21) choose direct requests saying: help me with my computer, I would like you to come check my computer... CIR (H.O) comes next as second choice by saying: can/could you help me. CIR (S.O) was the least used (2) by saying: can I ask for your help. The UIR strategy is not used.

Situation ten: You need a letter of recommendation for a scholarship application and you want to ask your professor to write you one. What would you say?

Table 2.20: The most used request strategies in situation ten.

Strategy	Number	Percentage
Direct requests	21	52.5%
UIR	0	0
CIR (H.O)	19	47.5%
CIR (S.O)	0	0

In this situation the student is asking his/her teacher to write him/her a letter of recommendation. More than half of the participants (21) opt for direct requests by saying: write me a letter of recommendation, I need you to write me a letter of recommendation...The rest (19) opt for CIR (H.O) using: can/could you write me a letter of recommendation.

Findings have revealed that the most used request strategy is CIR (H.O). Direct requests come second as most used. CIR (S.O) ranks third. UIR ranks fourth as it was not used at all.

Section three: Thanking and compliment response speech act

Situation eleven: You were sick and could not finish your homework and asked for an extension and your teacher accepted. What would you say?

Table 2.21: The most used thanking strategies in situation eleven.

Strategy	Number	Percentage
Thanking somebody explicitly	31	77.5%
Expressing gratitude	3	7.5%
Expressing appreciation (admiration) of the addressee	0	0
Expressing appreciation (admiration) of the act	6	15%
Acknowledging a debt of gratitude	0	0
Stressing one's gratitude	0	0
Expressing emotion	0	0
Self-denigration	0	0

In this situation the student is thanking his/her teacher. The majority (31) choose the strategy of thanking somebody explicitly by saying mainly: thank you and thank you so much. Some (6) use the strategy of expressing appreciation (admiration) of the act, like saying: I really appreciate it. Only few (3) choose expressing gratitude by saying for example: I'm really grateful. The rest of the strategies are not used in this situation.

Situation twelve: You won the first place at a very important competition between the different departments of the university. The head of the department complimented you and thanked you. What would you say?

Table 2.22: The most used compliment response strategies in situation twelve.

Strategy	Number	Percentage
Acceptance	39	97.5%
Deflection	0	0
Rejection	0	0
No Answer	1	2.5%

In this situation the student is responding to the compliment and the thanking of the head of the department. Everyone except of one (39) opts for accepting the compliment by saying: you're welcome, my pleasure, I'm honored... Only one chooses not to answer and give only a smile. The other two strategies are not employed.

Situation thirteen: You are a teacher who helped a student to improve his/her grades and he/she thanked you about it. What would you say?

Table 2.23: The most used compliment response strategies in situation thirteen.

Strategy	Number	Percentage
Acceptance	17	42.5%
Deflection	4	10%
Rejection	19	47.5
No Answer	0	0

In this situation the teacher is responding to the thanking of the student. Almost half of the respondents (19) choose to reject the thanking by saying: you don't need to thank me, it's nothing... Some others (17) choose to accept the thanking by saying: you're welcome and this is my pleasure. Only few (4) choose deflection as a strategy to respond to the thanking by saying for example: you did it yourself. The strategy of no answer is not used in this situation.

Situation fourteen: While you were getting out from your class; your documents were blown by the wind. Your teacher approaches and helps you. What would you say?

Table 2.24: The most used thanking strategies in situation fourteen.

Strategy	Number	Percentage
Thanking somebody explicitly	30	75%
Expressing gratitude	1	2.5%
Expressing appreciation (admiration) of the addressee	4	10%
Expressing appreciation (admiration) of the act	2	5%
Acknowledging a debt of gratitude	0	0
Stressing one's gratitude	0	0
Expressing emotion	2	5%
Self-denigration	0	0
Others	1	2.5%

In this situation the student is thanking the teacher. The majority opt for the explicit thanking by saying: thanks a lot, thank you very much. Few (4) of them choose to express appreciation (admiration) of the addressee saying: that's nice/ kind of you. Two choose to express appreciation (admiration) of the act saying: I appreciate it. Another two choose to express emotion as a thanking saying: Oh! Thank you. There was one who chose not to use any of these strategies and to give just a nod. The remaining strategies are not used.

Situation fifteen: You are a teacher and your students thanked you for answering a question during the lecture. What would you say?

Table 2.25: The most used compliment response strategies in situation fifteen.

Strategy	Number	Percentage
Acceptance	16	40%
Deflection	2	5%
Rejection	20	50%
No Answer	2	5%

In this situation the teacher is responding to the student's thanking. Half of the participants (20) prefer to reject the thanking saying: not at all, don't mention it and no problem. Some (16) prefer to accept the thanking by saying: you're welcome, my duty and it's my job. Few (2) choose deflection by saying: don't hesitate to ask me anytime. Two others choose not to answer and to just smile or nod.

According to the results EFL learners prefer the use of the strategy of thanking somebody explicitly more than any other of thanking strategies. Expressing appreciation (admiration) of the act is the second most preferable strategy. Expressing appreciation (admiration) of the addressee comes third. Expressing gratitude ranks fourth. Expressing emotion comes fifth. The remaining strategies are not used at all.

The findings show that acceptance is the most used compliment response strategy by EFL learners. Rejection is second most used strategy. Deflection is in the third place. "No Answer" strategy is the least used compliment response strategy by EFL learners.

2.5 Interpretation of the results

A. Interpretation of the questionnaires' results

All of the participants have been studying English for more than 9 years which normally means having enough knowledge about the language and the language use since English has been part of their lives for a long time. 90% of the participants said that they often or always use English in their daily lives which means being exposed to it or practicing it almost all the time. 62% of the students are exposed to real native input when they say that they are communicating with English native speakers. In the other side, as EFL learners 38% of them do not have any kind of communication with natives and as a result have no real native input. In this respect, Mouhadjer (2010: 98) says: "Because online discussions offer an equal opportunity for learners with different cultural background and personalities, they help increase participation and use of language and hence, improve learners' communication strategies"; and most of our participants who are communicating with natives they do it online which will normally help them improve their communication and pragmatic skills. Since more than half of the participants who are in contact with natives say that they have never faced any kind of misunderstanding with natives, it means that they possess high level of communicative competence, mainly pragmatic competence.

For those who said that they have been in situations where they faced misunderstandings with natives, the main reasons behind these misconceptions are socio-cultural factors as Spencer-Oatey (2000) explains that each culture has its own conventions and social norms as to what appropriate behaviour is in certain contexts. EFL learners' most common apology strategies in no specific situations are similar to

the choices of natives that was shown in the first chapter (Apologies of native speakers of English) in the different studies of (Cohen and Olshtain, 1981; Holmes, 1990; Márquez-Reiter, 2000; Intachakra, 2001); IFIDs are the most preferable, acknowledgement of responsibility are second most preferable but explanation or account of the situation was not used by EFL learners in this question where there is no specific context; whereas, it is the third most used strategy by natives. The remaining strategies are not used by EFL learners but the natives used them according to the situations.

However, no one added “according/depending on the situation/context or person” since there is no specific situation or context which can lead them to pragmatic failure. Speaking about the most common thanking strategies in no specific contexts EFL learners have the same strategies preferences as native, who their strategies preferences are shown in the studies of (Salameh, 2001; Intachakra, 2004; Cheng, 2005) in the first chapter. They both use the direct strategy which is “thanking somebody explicitly” more than any other strategy.

Expressing appreciation (admiration) ranks second for both of the groups. Expressing gratitude comes in the third place for both. The rest of the strategies are not used by EFL learners except for the strategy of expressing emotion that is rarely used but their use by natives varies according to the situations. Again, no one added “according/depending on the situation/context or person” since there is no specific situation or context. The most common compliment responses strategies used by EFL learners in no specific contexts differ from those used by native, that were shown in the first chapter in Salameh’s (2001) study, except for the strategy of acceptance that is most used by both of them. Deflection ranks second for natives; whereas, for EFL learners it is not used.

Rejection is in the third place for natives but for EFL learners it is in the second place. Such differences might lead to EFL learners’ pragmatic failure along with the fact that no respondent mentioned “according/depending on the situation/context or person” since there is no specific situation or context. Finally, the most common request strategies used by EFL learners differ with the one’s used by natives in to strategies, the natives’ results are shown in the first chapter in the studies of (Clark and Schunk, 1980; Leech, 1983; Wierzbicka, 1985; Brown and Levinson, 1987). CIR (H.O) is the most used strategy by both. CIR (S.O) is the second most used by both groups. However, direct requests ranks third for EFL learners but fourth by natives since it is considered impolite which indicates that EFL learners are more direct than natives. UIR strategy comes third for natives and ranks last for EFL learners. As the previous ones, no one added “according/depending on the situation/context or person” since there is no specific situation or context. The difference in the use of strategies especially the direct strategy might lead to serious pragmatic failure.

Some differences are noticed between the EFL learners and natives which indicates the pragmatic incompetency of EFL learners though most of them practice English on daily basis and many of them say that they communicate with natives and have never faced any kind of misunderstandings while communicating with them; however, their choices of speech act strategies show the opposite of this. Their online communication with natives has not really improved their pragmatic competence and their choices can lead them to pragmatic failure.

B. Interpretation of the DCT

Section one: apology speech act

In the first situation the most used strategies by EFL learners are explanations of the situation and IFIDs where the participants apologize and explain the reasons behind the delay. However, natives in such situations where they hold a high social position they tend not to apologize explicitly since they feel afraid of appearing unimpressive if they admit making a fault. Nearly half of the EFL learners even used combinations of strategies which is opposite to Holmes' (1995) assumption that the more social distance is and sever offense is the more complex and polite the apology is which is not the case here because the teacher is apologizing for a simple delay. This is a difference between natives and EFL learners because of the cross-culturally different assessments of relative power and social distance (Thomas, 1983) which means EFL learners in this situation had a sociopragmatic failure.

Even two answers were as follows: "here it is your homework" and "I'm in a hurry". In the first answer the participant has a problem understanding the situation sine it said that the student met the teacher before the correction. In the second response the respondent is a little impolite saying just that with no explanation about the real problem of the student. In the two answers there is sociopragmatic failure since the respondant did not know how to respond exactly in such situation as was explained by Thomas (1983) that this type of failure has to do with not knowing "what to say" and "to whom to say it" (chapter one). Few used "I beg your pardon" which is not suitable for this situation and it led them to a pragmalinguistic failure.

In the second situation which is about a student apologizing from a teacher for not returning the book the most used strategy is IFID than explanation of the situation followed by offer of repair and the least used is acknowledgment of responsibility. The number of participants who used combinations of strategies is mainly similar to the first situation though the apologizer here is the student who has a lower social position and the situation is considered more offensive; this is opposite to what Holmes (1995) have explained that the more social distance is and sever offense is the more complex and polite the apology. In two opposite situations mainly the same frequency of using

complex and polite strategies is a sociopragmatic failure because of the misinterpretation of the size of imposition, since because the book is a “non-free” good (explained in chapter one) of the teacher that should be returned to him, and the relative power and social distance though Thomas (1983) pointed out that teachers in some cultures have more power over students than in others (as was said in the first chapter).

In one of the responses there was a kind of insult to the teacher where the student answered by saying: “I forget to give you your value book”. The first failure here is pragmalinguistic where the student made a linguistic error when he/she used value as an adjective instead of valuable because of teaching-induced errors. The other failure is sociopragmatic because the respondent here used value as an insult and by that it gives the meaning of a taboo.

The third situation is about a student apologizing for stepping on a teacher’s foot which is according to Guan et al. (2009) an “invasion of personal territory” since it is kind of physical harm and by that westerners (natives) take it seriously. All EFL learners apologized using IFIDs sometimes combined with explanation of the situation and few combined it with acknowledgment of responsibility. Only 18 out of the 40 respondents used combined strategies though it is a severe offense, in the western culture, which means that even though the offense is serious and the apologizer has a low social position less complex apology strategies are used regarding the first two situations. Some IFIDs were even used alone such as: I’m sorry and I apology with no other strategy or explanation. In an answer acknowledgment of responsibility was used alone (my bad). This leads to the conclusion that EFL learners faced a sociopragmatic failure because of the misinterpretation of relative power and social distance.

In the fourth situation the student is apologizing for missing an appointment with the thesis’ supervisor. The most frequent strategies by EFL learners are IFIDs and Explanation of the situation. Only two used acknowledgment of responsibility. Three participants gave other responses. Combination of strategies is used by more than half of the learner. Again, though it is a serious offense committed by the student who has lower social position towards the supervisor who holds a high social position the answers were not really complex even in the combinations of strategies sometimes IFIDs were even used alone.

Again this is the opposite of Holmes’ (1995) idea which means that almost half of the EFL learners faced a sociopragmatic failure. In the three answers that were out of strategies such as “letting him know before” the respondent did not really understand the situation that it already happened and you should provide an apology and by that he/she gave an answer that has no relation to the actual situation which led him/her to a sociopragmatic failure. The same for the other answer “I was coming to you”. However, in the answer “thank you for your patience”, where the respondent

used “thank you” instead of apologizing, there is pragmalinguistic failure caused by pragmalinguistic transfer that was explained by Thomas (1983: 99) “...when speech act strategies are inappropriately transferred from L1 to L2” and that learners in this type of failure tend to convey a different pragmatic force in the target language.

In the fifth situation the student is apologizing to the professor for being late on the lecture. The most used strategy is the IFID and then some used explanation of the situation. Some provided answers out of the strategies and only few used a promise of forbearance. Since the situation is not a serious offense there were not many combinations of strategies. So this matches the natives’ choices. However, for the answers that are out of the strategies: three said that they will enter and say nothing and one said: “coming late better than never coming” which does not really suit the situation which led him/her to sociopragmatic failure since he/she did not exactly answer the situation and apologize.

Section two: request speech act

The sixth situation is about a student who is asking to borrow some money from a classmate. The most used strategy by EFL learners is CIR (H.O) followed by direct requests and CIR (S.O). UIR is not used at all. Although the social position is equal, EFL learners used the Indirect strategies more than the direct ones to request. In the CIR (H.O) there is mainly two models used (can/could) which leads to Biesenbach-Lucas’ (2007) assumption that non-native speakers generally overuse a particular semantic construction (e.g. could you or can you) which indicates that they lack the ability to use other linguistic constructs to formulate different types of requests.

It can be concluded that this lack of ability is caused by teaching-induced errors which can lead them to pragmalinguistic failure. The word “borrow” was often used instead of “lend” in requests such as: “can you borrow me” which is incorrect, because the student borrows and the teacher lends, the correct form is: “can you lend me”. This is a pragmalinguistic failure caused by teaching-induced errors as it can be caused by pragmalinguistic transfer if EFL learners applied the “mother tongue” thinking mode when using the target language (as was explained in the first chapter); because in Arabic the source verb is the same for “lend” (أعارة) and “borrow” (استعار).

The seventh situation is about a student who is asking to borrow the professor’s book. The most used strategy is CIR (S.O), CIR (H.O) is second most used and direct requests come third. UIR are not used. Although the student holds a lower social position than the professor CIR (S.O), which is considered to be more polite than CIR (H.O) and direct requests, is not even used by half of the students.

Direct requests are used in this situation, where the student holds a lower social position than the professor, more than in the previous one, where the social position

and distance is the equal. This is against the explanations of Ervin-Tripp (1976) and Brown and Levinson (1978) that imperatives are scarcely ever used to command or request in formal spoken English. This leads to the conclusion that many EFL learners faced a sociopragmatic failure in this situation because of the miscalculation of the relative power or social distance.

In these direct requests participants even faced sociopragmatic failure caused by the misinterpretation of the size of imposition since the book is a “non-free” good (Goffman, 1967) that belongs to the professor so the respondents should not have asked to borrow the book using a direct strategy request like: “lend me this book”. Again, the word “borrow” was often used instead of “lend” in the requests. In the CIR (H.O) there is mainly two models used (can/could) which leads to Biesenbach-Lucas’ (2007) assumption that non-native speakers generally overuse a particular semantic construction (e.g. could you or can you) which indicates that they lack the ability to use other linguistic constructs to formulate different types of requests. But even the use of “can” in such situation is kind of impolite “could”, “would” and “may” would have been better, so this is a pragmalinguistic failure because of teaching-induced errors.

The eighth situation is about a student asking his/her classmate, who is not a close friend, to give him/her yesterday’s lectures notes. Participants in this situations used direct requests and CIR (S.O) equally in the first place. CIR (H.O) came second where only few used it. Though the classmate is not a close, which means there is a social distance, EFL learners used many direct requests which is not the case with natives, as Clark and Schunk (1980: 111) : "When people [native speakers of English] make requests, they tend to make them indirectly. They generally avoid imperatives in preference for indirect requests". This led the EFL learners to a sociopragmatic failure because of the miscalculation of the social distance.

There is even a sociopragmatic failure caused by the misinterpretation of the size of imposition because the notes of the other student, who is not a close friend, are a “non-free” good (Goffman, 1967) that cannot be asked as directly as: “give me your notes”. In the CIR (H.O) there is mainly two models used (can/could) which leads to Biesenbach-Lucas’ (2007) assumption that non-native speakers generally overuse a particular semantic construction (e.g. could you or can you) which indicates that they lack the ability to use other linguistic constructs to formulate different types of requests.

The ninth situation is about the head of the department who is asking for the help of a student to fix his/her computer. Direct requests are the most frequent in this situation. CIR (H.O) is the second more frequent strategy and CIR (S.O) is the third since only two used it. UIR is not used. The head of the department has a higher social position so more than half of the participants used direct requests like: “come see

what's wrong with my computer" which are not common for natives even if the speaker holds higher social position because it is kind of a formal setting and context as it is pointed out by Wierzbicka (1985), Clark and Schunk (1980) that English native speakers disprefer the use of imperatives and prefer the use of CIR.

Direct requests can lead them to sociopragmatic failures. In the CIR (H.O) there is mainly two models used (can/could) which leads to Biesenbach-Lucas' (2007) assumption that non-native speakers generally overuse a particular semantic construction (e.g. could you or can you) which indicates that they lack the ability to use other linguistic constructs to formulate different types of requests.

The tenth situation is about a student asking the professor to write him/her a letter of recommendation. Confusingly, the most used strategy in this situation is the direct requests whereas CIR (S.O) is not used at all. CIR (H.O) is the second most used and UIR is not used. In the CIR (H.O) there is mainly two models used (can/could) which leads to Biesenbach-Lucas' (2007) assumption that non-native speakers generally overuse a particular semantic construction (e.g. could you or can you) which indicates that they lack the ability to use other linguistic constructs to formulate different types of requests. However, even the use of "can" in such situation is kind of impolite "could" "would" and "may" would have been better, so this is a pragmalinguistic failure because of teaching-induced errors.

Even though the student has a lower social position than the professor more than half of the participants used direct requests such as: "write me a recommendation letter" and "I need you to write me recommendation letter". Searle (1975: 64) states that "ordinary conversational requirements of politeness normally make it awkward to issue flat imperative sentences or explicit performatives, and we therefore seek to find indirect means to our illocutionary ends." Based on this quotation it can be concluded that EFL learners in this situation used impolite direct requests which means that they failed sociopragmatically because of the misinterpretation of relative power or social distance. The absence of the use of CIR (S.O) which is considered more polite than the other strategies is also a serious pragmatic failure.

Section three: Thanking and compliment response speech act

The eleventh situation is about a student thanking his/her teacher for accepting to extend the time. The most used strategy is the explicit thanking, followed by expressing appreciation of the act (only some) and then few used expressing gratitude (Ajimer, 1996). The majority used the strategy of thanking explicitly; however, there was mainly only the use of "thank you" or thank you so much" which again leads to the idea that non-native speakers generally overuse a particular semantic construction which indicates that they lack the ability to use other linguistic constructs (Biesenbach-

Lucas, 2007), i.e., pragmalinguistic incompetency. The use of “Thanks” by the student who holds a lower social position than the teacher is both sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic failure since it is basically informal; this made some of the EFL learners fail sociopragmatically because of the miscalculation of the relative power or social distance and pragmalinguistically because of the pragmalinguistic transfer and the teaching-induced errors.

Building on the statement of Aijmer (1996: 38): “refer to the felicity conditions or rules for thanking. The person who has received a favour feels grateful and expresses appreciation either of the benefactor (C) or of the act itself (D)”, it is preferable to use appreciation of the act or addressee when thanking in order to achieve better felicity conditions, i.e., the conditions that must followed and the criteria that must be satisfied so a speech act can achieve its purpose. However, in this situation only few respondents used appreciation of the act and no one used appreciation of the addressee and this led EFL learners to face pragmalinguistic failure caused by pragmalinguistic transfer since there is an inappropriate transfer of speech act strategies.

The twelfth situation is about a student who is responding to the compliment of the head of the department. All of the respondents except of one used the strategy of acceptance. The remaining one chose not to answer. The responses are simply: “my pleasure”, “you’re welcome”. According to Cheng (2005) contextual variables, social status, and familiarity conditions the difference in length of speech and use of strategies; so in such situation of high formality the speech act strategy could have been a little longer and more complex by using different linguistic constructions. So, many of the EFL learners failed pragmalinguistically and sociopragmatically.

The thirteenth situation is about a teacher who is responding to a thanking from a student. The most frequent strategy in this situation is rejection, followed by acceptance than deflection. The “no answer” strategy is not used. Lebbal (2018: 255): “being polite means being less rejecting” which is not the case in this situation, where the most used strategy is rejection, such as: “you don’t need to thank me” and “I didn’t do anything”. In this situation EFL learners faced a sociopragmatic failure because of the misinterpretation of value judgements since in the western world such strategy damages the complimenter’s face (Brown and Levinson, 1987) and it is considered rude as Pomerantz (1978) describes it; however, Algerians use it as a sign of humble. Cheng (2009) suggested adding a thanking after rejection to maintain a friendly social relationship.

The fourteenth situation is about a student thanking the teacher for helping him/her collect the blown papers. The explicit thanking is the most used, followed by expressing appreciation of the addressee. Expressing appreciation of the act and

expressing emotion come third since they are equally used. Expressing gratitude and other responses out of the strategies rank fourth equally. The remaining strategies are not used. Again, the use of explicit thanking included simply: “thank you a lot” and “thank you very much” imply that non-natives they lack the ability to use other linguistic constructs (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007), i.e., low pragmalinguistic competence.

Expressing appreciation of the addressee and of the act were only used by six respondents which does not go with the idea of Ajimer (1996: 38): “refer to the felicity conditions or rules for thanking. The person who has received a favour feels grateful and expresses appreciation either of the benefactor (C) or of the act itself (D)”, it is preferable to use appreciation of the act or addressee when thanking in order to achieve better felicity conditions, this led EFL learners to face pragmalinguistic failure caused by pragmalinguistic transfer since there is an inappropriate transfer of speech act strategies.

The fifteenth situation is about a teacher responding to a student’s compliment. Rejection is the most used strategy followed by acceptance. Deflection and no answer are used equally (2). Building on Lebbal (2018: 255): “being polite means being less rejecting” and as Pomerantz, (1978) describes the act of rejection as “rude” leads to the conclusion that half of the EFL learners failed sociopragmatically because of the misinterpretation of value judgements since in the western world such strategy damages the complimenter’s face. Cheng (2009) suggested adding a thanking after rejection to maintain a friendly social relationship.

2.6 Interpretation of the overall results in relation to the research questions

The results of the study and a discussion of their implications on the three research questions and corresponding hypothesis will be presented in this section.

A. Interpretation of the overall results in relation to the first research question

Pragmatic competence is a cornerstone element of communicative competence that is divided into two parts: pragmalinguistic competence and sociopragmatic competence as was explained in the first chapter. Therefore, Gumperz (1982) and Wolfson (1983) suggest that language learners should acquire the rules (grammar) of language as well as the rules of use in order to attain a native-like competence. The lack of proficiency in one of them will lead to a communication breakdown. On the basis of this assumption, we will try to answer the first research question: Where does EFL learners’ pragmatic failure appear more, the pragmalinguistic level or the sociopragmatic level?

Foreign language learners learn language in isolation from the socio-cultural conditions as Chen (1996: 14) points out: “What a foreign language learner often lacks is pragmatic competence, which does not necessarily develop with the acquisition of grammatical competence”. That is to say, EFL learners learn the linguistic rules apart from their sociocultural associations. Building on this, since pragmalinguistics is the linguistic end of pragmatic, as Thomas (1983: 91) says: “can be taught quite straightforwardly as 'part of the grammar’”, and sociopragmatics is the sociocultural end of pragmatics, then the EFL learners’ pragmatic failure appears more at the sociopragmatic level. This was seen in the data analysis and interpretation of the DCT. Most of the respondents’, which are M1 EFL learners in the University of Tlemcen, failure situations appeared at the sociopragmatic level.

It was seen also in the responses of the participants on the questionnaire where they said that the main reason behind their misunderstandings with natives is the socio-cultural differences and even the ones that said they have never faced misunderstandings with natives is basically false since the majority of the DCT answers contained pragmatic failures. Pragmalinguistic failures were also made by the respondents and appeared in their responses; however, sociopragmatic failures were the most frequent.

B. Interpretation of the overall results in relation to the second research question

Sociopragmatic failure is: “... much more difficult to deal with, since it involves the student's system of beliefs as much as his/her knowledge of the language” (Thomas, 1983: 91). As it is explained in the first chapter, sociopragmatic failure refers to the communication breakdown because of the misinterpretation of the social conditions placed on language use. In the same vein, Thomas (1983: 99): “sociopragmatic failure stems from cross-culturally different perceptions of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behaviour”. On the basis of this statement, we will try to answer the second research question: What are the main causes behind the sociopragmatic failure?

There are four causes that are stated by Thomas (1983) which go under the umbrella of the absence of real input from native speakers. These reasons are stated and elaborated in the first chapter. Firstly, size of imposition which has to do with Goffman’s (1967) notion of “free” and “non-free” goods. It was the main reason of sociopragmatic failure in some situations (2, 7, and 8). Secondly, taboos which is to discuss a topic that is socially inappropriate in the target language. Normally, since all the situations are in formal settings taboos should not have been a cause to sociopragmatic failure but confusingly they have been a cause in one situation (2).

Additionally, cross-culturally different assessments of relative power or social distance that refer to the miscalculation of the relative power or social distance from the speaker towards the hearer. It was the main cause of sociopragmatic failure in many situations (2, 3, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12). Finally, value judgements which is “Without doubt, the most difficult type of pragmatic failure the language teacher has to deal with occurs when pragmatic principles, such as politeness, conflict with other, deeply held values, such as truthfulness or sincerity” (Thomas, 1983: 106). It appeared in two situations (13 and 15).

So, all the causes introduced by Thomas (1983) appeared in the answers of the respondents on the questionnaire and the DCT. As it was commented on above in the interpretation of the questionnaire, the respondents in the questionnaire did not mention that the performance of the different speech acts depends and varies according to the situation, the context or the person and they generally kept using the same strategies, mainly the same linguistic forms, as the ones they used in answering the questions about the most common strategies of the different speech acts in no specific contexts.

C. Interpretation of the overall results in relation to the third research question

“A speech act is one of the instructional units to have students do discourse analysis as a part of the language learning process.” (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain 2000: 224). Speech acts are a momentous part of pragmatics; they are in the very core of pragmatics. Being aware of how to perform them appropriately is a big deal for successful communication in FL as Cook (1989: 35) describes this awareness saying that it is : “an ability which is essential for the creation and reception of coherent discourse and thus for successful communication”. From this point we will try to answer the third research question: Does EFL learners’ unawareness of performing speech acts lead to pragmatic failure?

On the basis of the quotations mentioned above and in the explanations in the first chapter, it can be deduced that speech acts are of highly importance in pragmatics and communication and having the ability to perform them correctly in the different contexts will form a high level of pragmatic competence and by that successful communication with no breakdowns or misunderstandings. Each speech act has its own ways and strategies to be performed; knowing which way or strategy suits each a specific context is a crucial task.

Failing at choosing the appropriate strategy for each situation and context will sometimes lead to serious communication breakdowns and misunderstandings as Murray (2009:1) explains that: “The consequences of misinterpretation or the

inappropriate use of language can range from unfortunate to catastrophic”. That is to say, when the speaker does not know the appropriate strategy or even the appropriate speech act to be used in each situation, he/she will lead the hearer to misunderstand him/her and in some situations to even consider him/her impolite. This is clearly seen in the data analysis and interpretation of the questionnaire and the DCT.

When the respondents, EFL learners, did not know which strategy is more appropriate for each situation or sometimes did not even know the appropriate linguistic forms to be used they faced pragmatic failures including the two types: sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic failures. Therefore, the unawareness of performing speech acts leads to pragmatic failure. Relatedly, Schiffrin (1994: 57) says that “Speech acts are central to linguistic communication: knowing which speech act to perform is a crucial part of how speakers use language to communicate; likewise, knowledge how to identify that act is critical to hearer understanding.”

2.7 Recommendations to overcome pragmatic failure

The findings obtained from the two research instruments used in this research unveiled a significant issue that EFL learners are having which must be dealt with. This issue namely is the pragmatic failure with its both types. Martinez - Flor and Usó - Juan (2010: 9) explain that there are theoretical conditions for the learning of speech acts and thereby for developing pragmatic competence. They say: “Learners' overall ability to communicate successfully in a given TL is influenced by three main conditions, namely appropriate input, opportunities for output and provision of feedback. The importance of these conditions is also applied to learners' development of their pragmatic competence and, consequently, to the learning of different speech acts”.

First, appropriate input which is defined by Martinez - Flor and Usó - Juan (2010: 10) as: "the language samples learners are exposed to". As it was discussed in the first chapter and the interpretation the absence of real appropriate input, which also means not being exposed to the target language, is the basic cause of pragmatic failure. That is why appropriate input is the main condition to overcome pragmatic failure and develop pragmatic competence.

Second, opportunities for output are the second condition to enhance pragmatic competence. Martinez - Flor and Usó - Juan (2010) explains that output provides learners with opportunities to practice language as well as encourage them to participate actively.

Finally, provision of feedback is the third condition. According to Martinez - Flor and Usó - Juan (2010: 14) that: “corrective feedback plays an important role in developing learners' pragmatic ability in the classroom and it should be provided on

both meaning and form”. Put differently, pragmatics should be taught in classes from the begging of FL learning under the supervision of pragmatics teachers so they can provide the essential corrective feedback.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter explained the methodology adopted for the data analysis and interpretation in this study. It begins with giving information about the participants and then a description of the research instruments, which are the questionnaire and the DCT. In addition, this chapter provided a description of data collection procedures, and then data analysis of the results of the questionnaire and the DCT. This chapter provided also a discussion of the results obtained from the research instruments. The results approved the hypotheses of the research which are: 1) the pragmatic failures appeared at the sociopragmatic failure, 2) the main causes behind the sociopragmatic failure are size of imposition, taboos, cross-culturally different assessments of relative power or social distance and value judgements, 3) the unawareness of performing speech acts leads to pragmatic failure. It ended with recommendations that may help in avoiding pragmatic failure.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Because of the globalization that the world is witnessing, learning a foreign language became a necessity for everybody. Learning a foreign language is not just about learning grammar and vocabulary solely it should include learning the culture of this language as well. By saying culture it is not just about the history, food, arts and music; it is much more than that. Foreign language learners should learn the different ways of speaking, the different ways of communicative styles and the sociocultural values and beliefs so that they can build a critical cultural awareness that enables them to avoid cross-cultural communication breakdown. Such process help the learners understand the cultural differences between their mother culture and the target culture.

In the majority of the recent EFL studies the importance of pragmatic competence is highlighted and it is considered an indispensable competence for foreign language learners. However, foreign language learners still show more proficiency in the linguistic and grammatical side than the pragmatic one. Consequently, they are often incapable of interpreting the natives' intentions or they cannot use language appropriately especially the appropriate production of speech acts in the different contexts when they are the speakers.

To that end, the current study was divided into two chapters. The first one tackled the theoretical background related to pragmatic competence, pragmatic failure and speech acts. The second chapter, dealt with the methodology adopted in this research including research instruments description, data analysis, data interpretation and some recommendations to help the EFL learners avoid pragmatic failure.

By designing and conducting an exploratory case study, and after the analysis and the interpretation of the collected data from the various sources and the two research instruments, the questionnaire and the DCT for master one English students at the University of AbouBekrBelkaid (Tlemcen), the three hypotheses put forward were confirmed. The findings revealed that master one English students fail more at the sociopragmatic level than the pragmalinguistic one, i.e., they made more errors related to sociocultural misjudgments than errors related to the rules of language and grammar (the first hypothesis was confirmed).

The main causes leading to the EFL learners' sociopragmatic failure were are lack of communication with native speakers, size of imposition, taboos, cross-culturally different assessments of relative power or social distance and value judgements since they did not build any critical cultural awareness that enables them

to avoid cross-cultural communication breakdown(the second hypothesis was confirmed). The research results also showed that the unawareness of performing speech acts can lead EFL learners to pragmatic failure because most of them did not know which speech act strategy was appropriate for each situation and context (the third hypothesis was confirmed).

This research supports the mastery of pragmatic competence and speech acts production. Our arguments for such endorsement is related to the fact that being pragmalinguistically and sociopragmatically competent including the knowledge and awareness of producing speech acts appropriately as the contexts vary will possibly enable the EFL learners to acquire the needed knowledge to use appropriate language to convey the intended meaning of utterances or speech acts (pragmalinguistics) and to adjust the strategies of speech and the different linguistic forms according to the social context and conditions (sociopragmatics). As a result, possessing a high level of pragmatic competence, namely the two types: pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence, and having a good mastery over speech act production will lead to a successful communication with no failures and breakdowns.

It is important to mention that this study suffered from limitations. From the theoretical point of view, having data of different perspectives makes it difficult to choose the suitable for your study. The nature of the topic which is mainly related to sociocultural beliefs and judgments of the learners and their differences from natives led to some problems. Tackling four different speech acts was a serious issue since it is a master dissertation we had to precise and concise all the data related to the different speech acts and their strategies and sometimes we even neglected some details.

From a practical point of view, the sample was so small because of the lack of collaboration of the students. When the research instruments were sent online there were only few responses and these responses were not even on both questionnaires, and while waiting for the responses so much time was lost. When we decided to give the research instruments to the students face to face at the university we were limited by the small number of students. The use of the DCT as a research instrument has its shortcomings since it includes imaginary situations the participant may not fully understand them and by that giving unrelated answers. The analysis of the data was also a hard task, because we had to categorize the answers into strategies and sometimes it was really hard to understand the answers clearly.

The classification of errors into pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic failure was a difficult thing to do since as it was explained in the literature review an inappropriate utterance can be seen as a pragmalinguistic failure from one angle and a sociopragmatic failure from another angle. From a psychological point of view, sometimes there was the lack of creativity, other times there was the lack of experience to deal with a whole research since it is our first time as actual researchers.

Based on the results of this research some other studies can follow up. Further in-depth research can be very helpful for understanding the phenomenon and fix the problem. Each type of pragmatic failure can be investigated alone and each type of speech acts and their strategies can be discussed alone in order to increase the foreign language learners' awareness and knowledge on pragmatic competence, pragmatic failure and speech acts appropriate production. There are many related issues to this issue that can be investigated.

As a conclusion, the one can say that pragmatic failure is a real problem for EFL learners because of the lack of real input and the lack of knowledge about the target's language culture. However, it can be avoided if there is more focus on pragmatic studies and efforts to build knowledge about the English culture.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Questionnaire

Dear participants,

I will extremely appreciate if you could spend some of your precious time to answer the following questions. The obtained data will be kept confidential and used only for academic purposes.

1-How long have you been studying English?

.....

2-How often do you use English in your daily life?

Rarely Often Always

3- Do you communicate with any English native speakers?

Yes No

If yes, please specify how? (Online, phone, face to face)

.....

4-Have you ever faced any kind of misunderstanding while communicating with them?

Please answer this question if you do communicate with them (if your answer in question 3 was "yes")

Yes No

If yes, please explain (what kind of misunderstanding and why?)

.....
.....
.....

5-If you have ever found yourself in a situation where you had to apologize to someone in English, write what you said. (Your most common expression)

.....

6- If you have ever found yourself in a situation where you had to thank someone in English, write what you said. (Your most common expression)

.....

7- If you have ever found yourself in a situation where you had to respond to a thanking in English, write what you said. (Your most common expression)

.....

8- If you have ever found yourself in a situation where you had to request something from someone in English, write what you said. (Your most common expression)

.....

Appendix B

Discourse Completion Test

Dear participants,

Please read and imagine the situations described below and try to answer them as honestly and spontaneously as possible. Write what you might say if you were in these situations.

Section one: Apologizing

1-You are a university professor who promised to return a student's homework that you have not corrected yet. The student comes to you asking for it. What would you say?

.....
.....

2-You are a student who borrowed a book from a teacher and promised to return it in a week. Two weeks pass and you forgot to return it until your teacher asked for it. What would you say?

.....
.....

3- You are in a line to get a coffee from the coffee machine in your university and without paying attention you step on a lady's foot and you realize that she is a teacher at your department. What would say?

.....
.....

4-You had an appointment with your thesis' supervisor but you did not attend it. You meet him/her the next day. What would you say?

.....
.....

5 -You are a university student, and you are half an hour late for the lecture. You enter the classroom and your professor starts looking at you, what would say?

.....
.....

Section two: Requesting

6-You have forgotten your wallet at home, and you want to land some money from you classmate to buy some copies of the exercises that you will work on in the next lecture. What would say?

.....
.....
7-While you are in your professor's office you notice a book that is relevant to your research on his/her desk, and you want to borrow it. What would you say?

.....
.....
8- You were absent for a day from university. You ask a classmate (not a close friend) to give you his/her notes. What would you say?

.....
.....
9-You are the head of the department of English. Something went wrong with your computer. One of the students is good with computers and you want his/her help. What would you say?

.....
.....
10-You need a letter of recommendation for a scholarship application and you want to ask you professor to write you one. What would you say?

.....
.....
Section three: Thanking/Compliment response

11-You were sick and could not finish your homework and you asked for an extension and your teacher accepted. What would you say?

.....
.....
12-You won the first place at a very important competition between the different departments of the university. The head of the department complimented you and thanked you. What would you say?

.....
.....
13-You are a teacher who helped a student to improve his/her grades and he/she thanked you for it. What would you say?

.....
.....
14-While you were getting out from your class; your documents were blown by the wind. Your teacher approaches and helps you. What would you say?

.....
.....

15-You are a teacher and your student thanked you for answering a question during the lecture. What would you say?

.....
.....

ملخص: يهدف هذا البحث لدراسة مشكلة الفشل التداولي لدارسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة تلمسان من خلال دراسة مختلف الأساليب و الإستراتيجيات المستعملة في أداء أفعال الكلام باللغة الانجليزية المتمثلة في: الإعتذار، الطلب، الشكر و الرد على الشكر. بعد مقارنة النتائج المتحصل عليها من خلال الاستبيان و اختبار اتمام الخطاب الذين تم الاجابة عليهم من قبل طلاب ماستر 1 مع الأساليب المستعملة من قبل الناطقين الاصليين للغة، كشفت النتائج أن دارسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يواجهون بالفعل فشلا تداوليا أثناء أدائهم لمختلف أفعال الكلام في مختلف السياقات خاصة على المستوى السوسيو راغماتي . هذا النوع من الفشل التداولي يحدث عادة بسبب قلة التفاعل مع الناطقين الاصليين للغة و بسبب غياب الوعي التداولي و معرفة القيم الإجتماعية و الثقافية التي تحكم قواعد استعمال اللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الفشل التداولي، دارسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، أفعال الكلام، السوسيو راغماتي، الاستبيان، اختبار اتمام الخطاب.

Résumé: L'objectif de cette recherche est d'étudier le problème de l'échec pragmatique des apprenants de l'anglais à l'Université de Tlemcen en analysant les différentes stratégies utilisées pour la réalisation des actes de la parole de : apologie, demande, remerciement et réponse de compliment en Anglais. D'après la comparaison entre les résultats obtenus par le questionnaire et le DCT destinés aux étudiants de 1ère année master et les stratégies utilisées par les locuteurs natifs d'Anglais ; les résultats ont montré que les apprenants de l'anglais ont échoué pragmatiquement surtout au niveau sociopragmatique. Ce type d'échec pragmatique arrive généralement à cause du manque d'interaction avec les natifs et l'absence de compétence pragmatique et la connaissance des normes socioculturelles qui contrôlent l'usage de la langue anglaise.

Mots clés: l'échec pragmatique, apprenants de l'anglais, actes de la parole, sociopragmatique, questionnaire, DCT.

Summary: The aim of this research is to investigate the issue of EFL learners' pragmatic failure at the University of Tlemcen by studying the different strategies used in performing the speech acts of: apology, request, thanking and compliment response in English. After comparing the results obtained from the questionnaire and the DCT, that were answered by Master's one students, to the strategies used by English native speakers; the findings revealed that EFL learners do face pragmatic failure while performing the different speech acts in the different contexts especially at the sociopragmatic level. This type of pragmatic failure happens generally because of the lack of interaction with natives and the absence of the pragmatic awareness and the knowledge about the socio-cultural norms governing the language use in English.

Key words: pragmatic failure, EFL learners, speech acts, sociopragmatic, questionnaire, DCT.