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**The Role of Pragmatic Awareness in Developing EFL Learners’  
Realization of the Speech Act of Suggesting**

**The Case of Third Year Students at mohamed khider Biskra University**

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## Dedication

Praise to Allah, the Almighty, who enabled me to finish this dissertation  
successfully.

To my dear family for their love and kindness

To my mother, my most precious person, the one who made all this possible, and my life  
aspiration

To my dear father, who stood by my side in every minute physically and morally

To my only brother

To all the extended family and friends

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To all those wonderful people who have stood by my side in  
my very hard moments and never stopped supporting me.

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## **Abstract**

The present study seeks first and foremost to investigate the role of pragmatic awareness in the realization of speech act of apologizing. Nowadays, pragmatic competence has been recognized as an essential constituent of communicative competence. However, there is a total scarcity of pragmatic aspects and their teaching seems to be marginalized compared to other aspects of the target language. Consequently, learners find difficulties in using the language appropriately in different contexts by performing different speech acts. Our study examines students' productions and perceptions of speech of apologizing. Throughout this study, we tackle the problem of students' pragmatic unawareness and linguistic means used to realize the speech act of apologizing. The lack of pragmatic awareness affects seriously their performance. The aim of this study is to raise students' pragmatic awareness to help them overcome communication problems when realizing speech acts. Therefore, we hypothesize that that if the students are pragmatically aware they will be able to produce the speech act of apologizing appropriately. In attempting to raise the students' pragmatic awareness, we have designed a DCT (Discourse Completion task) that was addressed to the students. The results from the DCT have confirmed our research hypothesis. These results reveal that the majority of the students can make difference between different interlocutors and adapt their apologies accordingly. This awareness of pragmatic use could enable them to perform apologizing appropriately.

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## **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

**DCT** (Discourse Completion Task)

**EFL**: English as a foreign language

**FL**: Foreign language

**LMD**: License, Master, Doctorate

**N**: Number

**Q**: Question

**TL**: Target language

**ELT**: English language teaching

**L1**: First language

**L2**: Second language

## **Introduction**

With the advent of pragmatics as a specific area of study, the focus is no longer on teaching isolated structures that are often of little help to learners. Research has made it evident that what makes second or foreign language learners' competent is not the only mastery of the linguistic rules but also the ability to use language for different communicative purposes. Therefore, in order to be communicatively competent foreign language, learners need not only to know the grammar and text organization of the target language but also its pragmatic aspects. Since the concept of communication competence was introduced by Dell (1972), pragmatic competence was recognized as a teaching goal. According to Widdowson (1989), the shift from language usage rule to language use rule was the result of the advent of pragmatics as specific area of study within linguistics that favoured a focus on interactional and contextual factors of the target language. Today, teaching English to foreign language learners entails developing their pragmatic competence in order to help them use the language effectively through making them familiar with the appropriate pragmatic rules that govern the appropriate combination of utterances and communication functions. Here, pragmatic competence can be defined as: 'knowledge of communicative action and how to carry it out, and the ability to use language appropriately according to context (Kasper 1997)

As far as the Algerian context is concerned, English is more a foreign language more than a second language. Consequently, English is not frequently used in daily life outside the classroom. In spite of this handicap, there is a growing interest given to this language for both domestic and foreign interaction. Given the afore mentioned facts, pragmatic competence should be an important asset to any person and developing pragmatic ability should be the goal of language teaching alongside the other aspects of the target language. The need for pragmatic input has become essentially relevant for university students since at this level students are sufficiently equipped with linguistic competence that could help them acquire pragmatic rules of the target language.

## **Significance of study**

In order to make learners communicatively competent there should be a special focus on developing their pragmatic competence. Findings from different research have come to the conclusion that learners' pragmatic competence is incomplete despite having a high level of grammatical competence. Consequently, it has been argued that the teaching of pragmatics is necessary to help learners become communicatively competent in the target language.

This is particularly important in the foreign language context where learners' exposure to the target language is limited compared to second language context. In foreign language settings lack chances to face situations where genuine communication is involved. Therefore, there is a need for further research that pay attention to developing FL learners' pragmatic competence. The introduction of pragmatics as a new branch of linguistics has favoured a focus on interactional and contextual factors of the target language.

The need of developing EFL learners' pragmatic competence has been demonstrated by many studies conducted in the field of cross-cultural pragmatics. This indicates that pragmatic aspects differ from one culture to another and creates miscommunication and real difficulties in cross cultural encounters.

In our study, we would like to highlight the importance of developing learners' pragmatic awareness in order to be able to use the TL appropriately and be able to express different speech acts in different situations. One of the challenges faced by learners is the lack of opportunities for acquiring pragmatic awareness. In fact, this is due to the marginalization of pragmatic knowledge. Roughly speaking, this study has the following significance:

- To show the importance of raising learners' pragmatic awareness.
- To stress the need of teaching pragmatic features of the TL.
- Our study aims at encouraging teachers to focus on developing their learners' pragmatic competence.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In spite of the rapid emergence of new teaching methods, which aim at preparing learners for real contextual communication ,foreign language classes are still conducted under the lexico-grammatical approaches .Indeed , it has been confirmed by many studies ,that there is a gap between foreign classes and the target language culture. Therefore ,the greater the distance between cultures is, the greater is the difference in the realization of pragmatic rules governing interpersonal interaction. In the Algerian context, cultural norms of the TL are alien to the students .This can be illustrated by learners whose language proficiency is high but are incapable of using the language appropriately. This, of course reflects the considerable distance between Algeria and the target language community.

In fact, learning a language requires more than the mere understanding and acquisition of the rules of grammar. Learners are supposed to use the target language beyond the

classroom walls for a variety of purposes and in different situations .As a matter of fact, each context requires its particular language forms. Pragmatic competence is context-based use of language (Christiansen, 2003:1). Consequently, if language learners want to function in a society where the target language is used developing their pragmatic competence is of great importance.

Despite its importance, pragmatic competence did not receive considerable attention in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Algeria. Pragmatic competence is essential in learning a foreign language because it contributes to the development of learners' communicative competence. Therefore, equipping Algerian students with pragmatic competence is important to help them communicate appropriately .To reach this goal, there should be a focus on pragmatic knowledge. Our study, therefore, attempts to highlight the importance of raising students' pragmatic awareness.

### **Aims of the study**

The underlying idea behind our study is to show that unawareness of pragmatic knowledge may prevent learners to reach a good command of the TL. Therefore, our study sets out to tackle three main issues. First, we want to examine the situation of teaching pragmatics in the division of English in order to make practical suggestions in order to highlight its importance. Second, we will try to show pragmatic awareness is necessary to enable EFL learners reach a good command of the English language. Moreover, we believe that the only mastery of the linguistic aspects of the TL is insufficient for learners to be able to use that language in different contexts and for the realization of different speech acts. This will lead us to shed light on the best ways to raise students' pragmatic awareness while performing different speech acts. Finally, our aims to investigate the most appropriate ways to develop FL learners' pragmatic competence are to help them perform different speech acts properly. In a nutshell, our study aims to:

- Demonstrate the necessity of developing learners' pragmatic knowledge.
- Give an account of how pragmatic knowledge can help in raising learners' pragmatic awareness.
- Direct both teachers and students towards a focus in improving learners' pragmatic competence.

### **Research questions**

The main purpose of teaching English in Algeria is to cultivate Algerian learners' communicative competence. Therefore, it has become important to develop learners'

pragmatic ability to enable them to function appropriately and smoothly in the TL. Nowadays, the concept of communicative competence is the focal point in most language teaching approaches. Whether the communicative language teaching or the competency based approach or other approaches, all consider the notion of communication and communicative competence as an essential teaching goal. However, developing learners' communicative competence requires raising their pragmatic awareness. In fact, this aspect did not receive the necessary attention by practitioners and educationalist. Our present study aims at answering the following questions:

1. Why is it important to develop learners' pragmatic competence?
2. Does raising learners' pragmatic awareness help them in the realization of the different speech acts?
3. Is the actual teaching context in favour of developing learners' pragmatic awareness?

### **Hypothesis**

The assumption adopted all along the present study is that pragmatic competence is an essential component of communicative competence. Therefore, we hypothesize that if we focus more on developing pragmatic competence FL learners' realization of speech of apology will improve.

### **Research methodology**

The choice of the research method depends largely on the nature of the issue under investigation. Therefore, to show the assumptions made in this dissertation are built on solid ground and to accomplish the research aims, we adopted an interpretative qualitative method. We would rely much on the feedback provided by our informants. A discourse completion task was distributed to the students.

### **Limitations of the study**

Our study is expected to have certain constraints and limitations. This type of study requires practical and experimental investigation of the present curricula. Many serious and scientific researchers were available since the coming into attention of pragmatics since the 1970's. Despite this fact, local research is limited in this particular field. This has somehow limited the depth of our study.

Furthermore, the lack of experts and references for conducting was an obstacle for the present study. Researches in the area of pragmatics recommend that various source of data should be used when conducting a study such as intuition discourse completion task, recording of natural conversation, field investigation. However, due to true constraints, material limitations, and the current study employed only questionnaires, curricula analysis and class observations.

# **Chapter One**

## **Pragmatics and Pragmatic Awareness**

## **Chapter One: Pragmatics and Pragmatic Awareness**

### **Introduction**

Throughout the present chapter we will deal with some of the theoretical background on which research into pragmatics has been based. Therefore, we will deal with the concept of pragmatics, its main definition and its scope of study. Moreover, we will define pragmatics and distinguish it different from other branches of linguistics such as semantics and syntax. In this Chapter, we will also concentrate on the speech act theory and see its impact on producing and comprehending speech acts. Moreover, in defining communicative competence, we will highlight its main components through a number of models. We will focus mainly on the pragmatic component as an essential element of communicative competence..

### **1.1. Origins and historical background of pragmatics**

Pragmatics is a new branch of linguistics that came as a reaction to the previous abstract and formalist study of language. As a new branch this specific area of research has aroused the interest of many scholars. In fact, the term was first coined by the philosopher Charles Morris in 1938. Morris developed a science of signs that came to be called semiotics. Semiotics is divided into syntax, semantics and pragmatics. The science of signs or semiotics consists of signs, the objects to which they are applicable, and sign users or interpreters. Syntax involves the study of the formal relationships between linguistic forms and the identification of well-formed sentences. Semantics deals mainly with the meaning of lexical items. The last component in pragmatics and which takes into account the users of the language and the content of language use. Morris (1938) considers pragmatics as being the relationship between sign and sign users. Not far from this, Yule (1996,p.4) views pragmatics as dealing with the relationship between linguistic forms and the human beings who use these forms.

Pragmatics as a new branch of linguistics came to be regarded as a discipline in its own right only in the 1990's. Seminal works by Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and Grice (1975) contributed in what is now a science of important relevance. Early linguists such as Saussure (1959) or Chomsky (1965) concentrated only on isolated linguistic forms and structures. In fact, both the notions of Saussure of *langue* and *parole* or Chomsky's competence and performance accounted only for an ideal grammatical knowledge that is shared by the native speakers of a given language. They did not take into account the real use of language in a particular context. In other words, they neglected the notion of communication.

In his turn, Levinson (1983) explained that pragmatics is a reaction to Chomsky's use language as an abstract construct. Leech (1983) encouraged the shift of direction within linguistics away from competence towards performance. With the appearance of this new paradigm the focus shifted away from meaning in the abstract to meaning in use.

## **1.2. Defining pragmatics**

According to Trosborg (1994) the term pragmatic can be traced back in the Greek language and refers to activity, deeds, and affairs. In linguistics this new paradigm called pragmatics came as a reaction to the Saussurian structuralist paradigm and the Chomskyan generative transformational grammar. Today pragmatics is an important subfield of linguistics which studies the ways in which context contributes to meaning. The study of pragmatics explores the ability of language users to match utterances with contexts in which they are appropriate; in Stalnaker's words, pragmatics is "the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed" (1972, p. 383). Pragmatics, in Yule's words (1996, p.3) explores the following four areas of study:

- What people mean by their utterances and what the words or phrases in those utterances might mean by themselves.

- How speakers organize what they want to say in accordance with whom they are talking to, where, when, and under what circumstances.
- How listeners can make inferences about what is said in order to arrive at an interpretation of the speaker's intended meaning.
- How does distance and closeness determine the choice of the amount of the said and the unsaid?

In fact, the concept of pragmatics has been conceptualized by many scholars. However, most of the attempts to define it reflect more or less the same conception without radical changes. For Levinson (1983) pragmatics basically comprises the study of language usage. In Wolfson's (1989) words pragmatics involves not only linguistic and grammatical knowledge but also the ability to comprehend and produce socially appropriate language functions in discourse. In the same line, Yule (2008, p.4) defines pragmatics as "the study of the relationship between linguistic forms and the users of these forms". Another more precise definition was proposed by Stalkner (1972, p.383) and runs as follows: "pragmatics is the study of linguistic acts and the context in which they are performed". Not far from this, Kasper, who also uses a broad term, "linguistic action," (p. 3). A simpler definition of pragmatics, one intended for second language learners, is proposed by The Center of Advanced Research in Language Acquisition at the University of Minnesota: [Pragmatics] is the way we convey meaning through communication. This meaning includes verbal and non-verbal elements and varies depending on the context, the relationship between people taking, and many other social factors. (2006)

### **1.3. Form and Meaning**

No one can deny that, communication is a complex process because the knowledge of forms meanings and functions is not enough to achieve interlocutors' intentions. So in the course of any communication, interlocutors usually use the form of language in order to

communicate and send messages to perform specific meaning. In order to understand who said what to whom, we need to know what we call the context. For instance, interlocutors in any conversation are tended to choose certain forms to perform specific functions of the language that carried out appropriately with the context. Nodoushn. (1995, p.17) stated that, this knowledge should be also applicable to the negotiation of meaning. And interaction between hearer and speaker or writer and reader makes meanings more clear and easy to interpret.

#### **1.4. Context**

Sociolinguistics explores new areas of interrelationship between language and society and plays a vital role in maintaining the social context of language. Sociolinguistics is the field that studies the relation between language and society, between the users of language and the social structures in which the users of language live. It is a field of study that assumes that human society is made up of many related patterns and behaviors, some of which are linguistic. The study of language is no longer an abstract study of grammatical rules, but in modern age language is more important in the social context. In semiotics, linguistics, sociology and anthropology, context refers to those objects or entities which surround a focal event, in these disciplines typically a communicative event, of some kind. Context is "a frame that surrounds the event and provides resources for its appropriate interpretation." It is thus a relativistic concept, only definable with respect to some focal event, not independently.

In linguistics verbal context refers to the text or speech surrounding an expression (word, sentence, or speech act. Verbal context influences the way an expression is understood; hence the norm of not citing people out of context. Since much contemporary linguistics takes texts, discourses, or conversations as the object of analysis, the modern study of verbal context takes place in terms of the analysis of discourse structures and their mutual

relationships, for instance the coherence relation between sentences. Traditionally, in sociolinguistics Social contexts were defined in terms of objective social variables, such as those of class, gender, age or race. More recently, social contexts tend to be defined in terms of the social identity being construed and displayed in text and talk by language users and influenced by space.

The influence of context parameters on language use or discourse is usually studied in terms of language variation, style or register. The basic assumption here is that language users adapt the properties of their language use (such as intonation, lexical choice, syntax, and other aspects of formulation) to the current communicative situation. In this sense, language use or discourse may be called more or less 'appropriate' in a given context. It is the language or derivative terms surrounding set paragraph, novel or article.

### **1.5. Pragmatics and discourse analysis**

Pragmatics, like discourse analysis, goes beyond structural study of the phrase and focuses on higher units -speech acts and conversation turns: What is more, it focuses on its object of study through consideration of the context and its construction, through recognition of speaker intention, and through the establishment of implicit elements which the hearer has to access. A group of theories and theorists sought to go beyond the limits of the sentence, and to engage with the meaning of discourse, that is non-arbitrary sequences of utterances.

It is clear that discourse analysis has objectives that lie very close to, if not shared by those of pragmatics. This is because discourse is more than a sequence of sentences in operation. In other words, both pragmatics and discourse analysis deal with utterances in context. But while discourse analysts explain the interpretation of the elements in question without going outside language, pragmatics resorts to other aspects of human activity (beliefs, feelings, knowledge, intentions...). Only in this way can one explain how utterances are interpreted and how successful interpretation of utterances is managed. It is only with the aid

of considerations of a pragmatic nature that we can go beyond the question "What does this utterance mean?" and ask "Why was this utterance produced?"

### **1.6. Interests of pragmatics**

Pragmatics as defined earlier pays attention to language use in communication and the speaker's intentions when saying utterances in particular contexts. Thus concepts such as users, context interaction, real language or communication may be applied to pragmatics. Nevertheless, one other possibility to define it is to provide a list of the phenomena for which a pragmatic theory must account. Here, a lack of agreement appears in the way that no two published accounts list the same categories of pragmatics with the same importance.

Among the concepts that have been present over the course of the entire history of pragmatics as a general area within linguistics we have speech act theory, deixis, presupposition, conversational implicature, and relevance theory. Still, we have to mention that alongside those traditional subject areas, there have been others that have come to the fore more recently, like politeness theory, or are complete new comers, like multimodality, or the confluence between different channels and communicative codes. Based on the work undertaken by Levinson (1983, p.11), one of the central extensional definitions of pragmatics might run as follows: 'pragmatics is the study of deixis (at least on part), implicature, presupposition, speech act theory and aspects of discourse structure'. Of these areas we are going to focus more particularly on the theory of speech act.

### **1.7. Goals of pragmatics**

Recently, pragmatics has become a very important branch of applied linguistics, as the inadequacies of the previous purely formalist and abstract approaches to the study of language became more evident. This specific area of research has aroused the interest of a number of scholars over the last decades. What is original about pragmatics and which is not found in

other neighboring branches is not one thing in particular, but rather than the same of traits and interest: emphasis on the speakers, the links between text and context, the will to explain meaning beyond the level of the sentence.

A closer look at the other branches of linguistics will reveal that syntax refers to the study of the formal relationships between linguistic forms and the identification of well formed sentence. Semantics is mainly concerned with lexical items. However, neither syntax nor semantics take into consideration the users. Therefore, Yule (1996) states that ‘pragmatics deal with the relationship between linguistic forms and the users of those forms’. In fact, it was not until the 1970’s that the research field of pragmatics, or the study of language in use, came to be regarded as a discipline in its right.

Moreover, we may mention two important characteristics that differentiate pragmatics from any other linguistic discipline, such as syntax or semantics. First, particular attention is devoted to users. Second, great emphasis is given to context in which these users interact. According to Stalkner (1972, p.383) pragmatics was defined as “the study of linguistic acts and the context in which they are performed”. The importance of context was also stressed by Wunderlich (1980, p.304), as he stated that “pragmatics deal with the interpretation of sentences (or utterances) in richer context”. Levinson (1983, p.24) regards pragmatics as” the study of the ability of language users to pair sentences with the contexts in which they would be appropriate’. In Leech’s (1983) words, pragmatics could be defined as the study of the use and meaning of utterances to their situation.

From the above definitions, we may consider a number of rather different delimitation of the field. The most promising according to Levinson (1983) are the definition that equate pragmatics with ‘meaning minus semantics’, or with a theory of language understanding that

takes context into account, in order to complements the contribution that semantics makes to meaning.

Up to this point, we have dealt with pragmatics as a general discipline by providing different definitions of this term and outlining its main characteristics. Nevertheless, this area of language study is not a unitary field; rather, it includes different theoretical and methodological approaches which depend on certain aspects of human communication.

### **1.8. Communicative competence**

Dell Hymes is considered as the main constructor of the foundations of the theory of communicative competence. And as a reaction to Chomsky, Dell Hymes (1972) defined communicative competence as, the knowledge of both rules of grammar and rules of language of use in a given context. In 1980 Canal and Swain had a different point of view, they excluded the ability for use from their study of communicative competence; instead they included the ability for use in what they called communicated performance. And according to David Crystal (1992) communicative competence is “A person’s unconscious knowledge of the rules governing the appropriate use of language in social situation”.

After the 70’s and 80’s studies on communicative competence were still developing, and the emergence of Bachman’s (1990) played a big role in giving it’s construct a wider view. Other contributors such as Spolsky (1989), Taylor (1988), Us-Juan and Martinez (2006) were helpful in giving communicative competence a clear definition that goes along with the evolution in language use by time.

### **1.9. Components of Communicative Competence**

As stated earlier, Hymes focuses on the point that for language to be used in communication, the speaker must possess both capacity to construct grammatically correct sentences and also the competence to produce socially appropriate utterances.

Communication then, depends on communicative competence and communicative competence can be seen inclusive of many components, these components should be mastered or at least acknowledged by the speaker-hearer for better understanding in communicative contexts. Several linguists and sociolinguists categorized communicative competence components into: linguistic component; discursive component; socio-cultural component; and strategic component.

- **The linguistic component:** It is the mastery of language code itself (syntactic morphological, semantic, and morphological) rules. Shohamy (1996, p.143) defined it as “linguistic component includes knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, semantics and phonology”
- **The discursive component:** It is a knowledge and understanding of different types of discourse (formal/informal speech) and of their organization as a function of the situation of communication within which they are produced. Moreover, it is the mastery of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a competent social situation. For Shohamy (1996, p.143) “discursive component is related to mastery of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres”. Schechter (1996, p. 144) relates her definition to cohesion and coherence in written or spoken text, “discourse knowledge is viewed as cohesion and coherence”.
- **The socio-cultural component:** It is the knowledge of the social rules and norms of interaction between individuals, including knowledge of cultural history and of the relations between social objects. It is also the ability to use and respond to language appropriately given the setting and topic and the relation between people communicating. Shohamy (1996, p.143) defines it “knowledge of socio-cultural rules of use”.

- **The strategic component:** it is concerned with the strategies of communication and how to use them. For Van EK (1995), it is the ability to use compensatory to resolve communicative problems and deficiencies (break-downs in communication).

### 1.10. Pragmatic competence

The notion “Competence” is the focus of current inquiry across disciplines such as: linguistics, sociology and psychology. As a result, Many scholars agreed to define the term competence in general as “the knowledge and ability that underlie language use” (Hymes 1972, p.20). Moreover, Erton (2007) describes competence as the type of knowledge which the learners acquire, develop, learn, use and forget” (Erton 2007).in particular, this concept was originated by Noam Chomsky, the father of linguistics, who raised the competence performance distinction. According to Chomsky, competence is shared knowledge users possess that enables them to generate, produce then comprehend a wide range of structures and utterances governed by linguistic rules. Levinson (1983, p.24) describe pragmatic as: “ the study of the ability of language users to pair sentences with the contexts in which they would be appropriate”. Rose and Kasper (2003, p. 2) define pragmatics as:

“...the study of communicative action and its socio-cultural context, Communicative action includes not only using speech acts (such as: Apologizing, complaining, complimenting, and requesting), but also engaging in different types of discourse and participating in speech events of varying length and complexity”.

It is worth mentioning that pragmatics is interested in investigating specific topics including: deixis, implicature, relevance and politeness theories, presupposition, and speech acts...

In general, the aim of language learning is not any more linked to linguistic competence such as lexical items phonology, morphology, and syntax rules but proceed to incorporate the social cultural dimension within which language embedded and where interaction takes place.

### 1.11. Defining pragmatic competence

Different notions and perspectives exist for the notion of pragmatic competence.

A notion that has proven to be one of the most influential theoretical developments in language teaching. However, most of these attempts to explain pragmatic competence reflect more or less the same conceptions without radical changes. According to Wolfson (1989) pragmatic competence involves not only linguistic or grammatical knowledge but also the ability to comprehend and produce socially appropriate language functions in discourse. For Levinson (1983) pragmatics basically comprises the study of language usage. According to Lightbown and Spada (1999), pragmatic competence refers to the ability to use language forms in a wide range of environments, factoring in the relationships between the speakers involved and social and cultural context of the situation

Not far from this, Leech defines pragmatic competence as the speakers' knowledge and the rules of appropriateness and politeness which dictate the way the speakers will understand and formulate speech acts. Speech acts are the key areas of linguistic pragmatics. Specific speech acts include apology, complaint, compliment, refusal request, and suggestion. Moreover, research findings revealed that even advanced learners in second or foreign language may still be unable to produce language that is socially and culturally appropriate. Therefore, we do agree with Kasper and Rose (2001) who define pragmatics as the study of communicative action in its socio-cultural context.

One good working definition of pragmatic competence is given by Barron (2003,p.10) and runs as follows:" pragmatic competence is understood as knowledge of the linguistic resource 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". Thomas (1983,p.92) views pragmatic

competence as a speaker's ability to use language effectively in order to achieve specific purpose and to understand language in context.

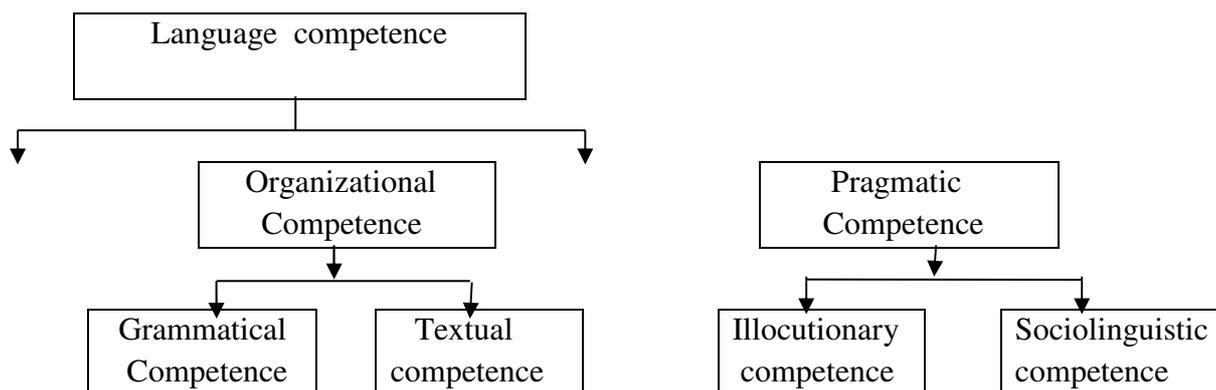
Given the afore mentioned definitions, we can say that pragmatic competence refers to the ability to understand, comprehend, construct, and appropriate for the social and cultural circumstances in which communication occurs. Moreover, it is worth mentioning here that in general, the aim of language learning is not any more linked to linguistic competence such as lexical items phonology, morphology, and syntax rules but proceed to incorporate the social cultural dimensions within which language embedded and where interaction takes place.

### **1.12. The pragmatic component in the models of communicative competence**

Achieving pragmatic competence in order to be communicatively competent has always been regarded as one of the main components of communicative competence it is for the reason that different scholars have attempted to define the specific components that make up the constructs of communicative competence. Among the different constituents, the pragmatic component is essential in the EFL context, it is very important to teach sentences not only in grammatical terms, but also in appropriateness to the situation where the utterance takes place.

The first model was proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) and later developed by Canale (1983) according to these authors; communicative competence is made up of four main competences grammatically sociolinguistic, strategic and discourse competence. Levinson, Bachman (1990) was the first researcher to explicitly divide language knowledge into organizational and pragmatic competence. Organizational competence implies the control of the formal structure of language in order to produce and organize grammatically correct sentences, understand their propositional content, and order them to form texts. Pragmatic competence on the other hand is concerned with two significant aspects of communicative language use: the relationships between signs and referents of

communication. This notion of pragmatic competence, as Bachman (1999) puts it; is subdivided into two subcomponents, namely those of illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence. The former refers to the knowledge of the pragmatic conventions for performing acceptable language functions, while the latter is concerned with the knowledge of the sociolinguistic competence.



**Figure 1 Bachman's communicative model (Martinez, 2006:36)**

Another model was proposed by Celce-Murcia Dornyei and Thurrel (1995). They tried to integrate discourse competence, linguistic competence, socio-cultural competence, actional competence and strategic competence. In their model pragmatic competence is referred to as actional competence because it involves the understanding of the speaker's communicative intent by performing and interpreting speech acts. In Celce-Murcia et al (1995) model all the constituents are interrelated.

In his turn, Alcon (2000) developed a model that is composed of three competences, namely, those of discourse, linguistic and strategic competences. Discourse competence includes the linguistic, textual and pragmatic constituents. Linguistic competence refers not only to the grammatical knowledge but all the aspects of linguistic system. The textual and pragmatic constituents are necessary to the construction and interpretation of the discourse.

All the models mentioned above attempted to explain the construct of communicative competence. Moreover, they were very influential in the field of foreign language teaching.

They all highlight the importance of achieving pragmatic competence in order to become communicatively competent.

### **1.13. Pragmatic Failure**

Thomas (1983,p.92) uses the term ‘pragmatic failure’ to refer to the incapability to know what is meant by what is said. It is the kind of failure that leads to the cross-cultural communication breakdown. So, it is essential to discover the causes of pragmatic failure and find ways to avoid the awkward situation by the unwise choice of linguistic forms, or, to avoid, for example, being unintentionally offensive.

Basically, there are two types of pragmatic failure: pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic. Both of them are terms Thomas (1983) picks up from Leech's (1983,p. 127) treatment of the scope of pragmatics in which the latter distinguishes between pragma-linguistics and socio-pragmatics. Pragma-linguistics, according to Leech (ibid: 128), refers to our linguistic knowledge of language use. For Crystal (1998), pragma-linguistics refers to the study of language use from the standpoint of a language's structural resources. Socio-pragmatics, on the other hand, is related to how our sociological knowledge influences our interaction (Leech, 1983,p. 130). For Crystal (1998), it is the study of the social backgrounds of the participants in an interaction and how some factors (like sex, age, power...etc.) affect people's choice of linguistic patterns or forms. Pragma-linguistic failure is principally a linguistic problem, caused by differences in the linguistic encoding of pragmatic force; while socio-pragmatic failure stems from cross-culturally different perceptions of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behaviour (Thomas, 1983,p.101). These two types of failure reflect two different types of pragmatic decision-making. Nonetheless, it is vital to mention that they cannot always be distinguished as they are

closely linked and overlapping. An inappropriate utterance may be considered as pragma-linguistic failure from one angle and socio-pragmatic failure from another.

### 1.13.1. Socio-pragmatic failure

Socio-pragmatic failure is a term used to signify the failure of the social conditions placed on language in use. Put differently, it happens when miscalculations are made about factors like social distance and obligations ...etc. Socio-pragmatic decisions are, therefore, social in the first place rather than linguistic (Thomas, 1983,p.104). Therefore, it is likely that a foreign speaker will assess size of imposition, social distance...etc, differently from a native speaker. Reynolds (1995,p.5) said that he was once in Poland traveling on a train for two hours with a Polish stranger when they had the following chat:

Reynolds: I wonder how many trees there are in Poland.

[Pause] The Polish: I cannot imagine who would want to know that!

The Polish citizen in this example fails to interpret Reynolds' utterance as a gambit to initiate an idle conversation the purpose of which is only to pass the time of day. In addition to not understanding the intended message, the Polish passenger in fact made his interlocutor feel rebuked for having (supposedly) asked an impossible question or even a foolish one!

Sometimes nonnative speakers' judgment of relative power would result in a socio-pragmatic failure. Thomas (1983, p.105) also presents "taboos" as an example of socio-pragmatic failure. The following conversation shows an example of a taboo where Sara, a native English speaker has just arrived in Korea, her host country.

Laura, a Korean, is helping Sara unpack her clothes (Montgomery and Tinsley-Kim, 2001, p.75):

Laura: What nice things you have!

Sara: Thank you. It took me a long time to pack!

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. ....

According to Eun-Sook (2006, p.7), Koreans ask friends or acquaintances questions about age, weight, religion, height...etc. in ordinary conversation, and Laura asks Sara about her weight. However, in the western culture it is a taboo to ask a question about age, weight, and so on. Like this, taboo can cause socio-pragmatic failure. Thomas (1983,p.106) believes that “pragmatic principles, such as politeness, conflict with other deeply held values such as truthfulness or sincerity” and can lead to a socio-pragmatic failure.

### **1.13.2 Pragma-linguistic failure**

Pragma- linguistic failure occurs when the pragmatic force planned by a speaker against a certain utterance is thoroughly different from the force most frequently assigned to it by native speakers of the target language, or when speech act strategies are improperly transferred from the speaker's native language to the target language (Reynolds, 1995: 6). In other words, it takes place when a nonnative speaker does an appropriate speech act in the target language but in an inappropriate way. It may arise from

two identifiable sources: 'teaching-induced errors' and 'pragma-linguistic transfer' (i.e. inappropriate transfer of speech acts from the speakers' native language to the target language) (Lihui and Jianbin, 2010,p.47). Some teaching techniques may, in fact, increase the possibility of pragma-linguistic failure. Kasper (1984,p.3), in a comprehensive survey, has identified some of what she calls 'teaching-induced errors' which are attributed to teaching materials, or to classroom discourse (Leech, 1983,p. 67-8).

According to Kasper (1984: 3), pragma-linguistic failure happens because learners respond to what speakers say rather than to what they mean. The following example presented by Kasper (ibid) shows a pragma-linguistic failure caused by 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 mean whether the sandwiches are enough to L or not. She merely tries to express gratitude to L at her termination. Therefore, L's response seems to be impolite to E; it should be something like "thank you, how sweet" or "thank you, how thoughtful" and so on. L has no intention to offend E but, being pragmatically incompetent in English, she responds literally to E's utterance (ibid).

**Conclusion**

Throughout this chapter we tried to show the shift away from previous traditional methodologies, whose main focus was the acquisition of grammar rules, to new and more communicative perspective. With the advent of the communicative language teaching, communication has become the main objective in language learning. This approach to language teaching and learning adopts the development of learners' communicative competence as its main pedagogical goal.

As a result, of these change, pragmatics was introduced as a specific area of study in linguistics which deals with the contextual factors that influence interaction. In this respect, and in addition to linguistic competence offered pragmatic competence as an essential component of communicative competence. Since then, developing pragmatic competence has been given a special importance.

# **Chapter two**

## **The Speech Act of Apologizing**

## Chapter Two: The speech Act of Apologizing

### Introduction

The primary concern of this chapter is to present an over view of the different linguistic realizations of the speech act of apologizing. We will first deal with the definition of this particular speech act. We will also outline its main characteristics and differentiate it from other types of speech acts, such as apologizing, complaining, greeting etc. Then, we will review the different studies conducted on suggesting by examining these studies from both the cross-cultural and inter-language pragmatics fields employing such study in foreign language teaching (FLT) could provide learners with a range of particular forms that can be used in different situations concerning the speech act of suggesting. Moreover, in view to implement this study in the foreign language classroom, the present chapter aims to expand the pragmatic features examined in the field of cross-cultural and inter-language pragmatics.

### 2.1. Speech Acts

Saussure (1959, p. 16) defined language as “a system of signs that express ideas”, in which to be known as semiology. In semiology, the sign is the unit of language, which consists of two inseparable parts, namely the signifier – what the speaker writes or utters– and the signified – the concept which is conveyed with the help of speech. Although this theory is the basis of modern linguistics, Saussure’s definition does not cover up all aspects of language. Thus, language is not only used to symbolize concepts in isolation, but also to convey different actions that speakers perform or require them to be performed by others (Austin, 1975). According to John Austin (1975) and John Searle (1969) are the forerunners of speech act theory, which encompasses the way people request, apologize, promise, , and perform other linguistic acts.

### 2.1.1 Definition of Speech Acts

The conception of speech acts was first defined by Austin (1975) in the first edition of his book “How to do things with words” published in 1962. He did not use the term speech act, but or “performative utterance,” or “performative sentence” which indicated that “the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action” (p. 6). The term itself was first used by Searle (1969) who claimed that “talking is performing acts according to rules” (p. 22), and that “speech acts [...] are the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication” (p.16).

However, Bach and Harnish (1979) believed that there is more to a speech act than this. In their sight, speech acts are a combination between utterances, locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. Thus, the speech act schema, or SAS, is as follows, where “*e*” is an expression, “*S*” the speaker, and “*H*” the hearer: “In uttering “*e*” [utterance act], “*S*” says something to “*H*” [locutionary act]; in saying something to “*H*”, “*S*” does something [illocutionary act]; and by doing something, “*S*” affects “*H*” [perlocutionary act]” (Bach & Harnish, 1979, p. 3). What is also important in this schema is that for the perlocutionary act to be successful, the hearer has to identify at least one of the other components of the speech act. This is what can cause misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication, as learners of a second language may not be able to recognize these act if they do not have pragmatic competence. Furthermore, every speech act has communicated at least one or even more illocutionary acts (Allan, 1998).

More recent studies proposed many definitions of speech acts that are more conversational (Geis, 1995; Wee, 2004) or socially and culturally oriented (Capone, 2005; Cutting, 2001; Mey, 1993). Geis (1995), for example, proposed what he called a “dynamic speech act theory” (p. 9), which needs to be an incorporated part of conversation theory. As opposed to looking at speech acts as the uttering of single expressions or sentences, it might determine them as multiturn interactions that perform apologies, requests, invitations and

other such actions.

By focusing on communication, Wee (2004) argued that the definition needs to include other ways of communication, as well, not only linguistic ones. He suggested that a theory of communicative acts might be more useful and exhaustive than one of speech acts. If we were to apply this idea to Bach and Harnish's (1979) speech act schema, one can easily alternate the utterance act with a behavior act, which would preserve the effect of all the other acts. Thus, the schema of a communicative act would be as follows, where "*b*" is behavior: In performing "*b*" [behavior act], "*S*" says something to "*H*" [locutionary act]; in saying something to "*H*", "*S*" does something [illocutionary act]; and by doing something, "*S*" affects "*H*" [perlocutionary act]. However, not all researchers have the same opinion with this inclusion of non-verbal forms of communication, which express the same action, but cannot be named speech acts (Geis, 1995).

The relationship between behavior, social context and language was taken even further by Capone (2005). He drew on Mey's (1993) claim that speech acts need to be both socially oriented and situationally. Such a connection would be more suitably termed a "pragmeme," which "is a situated speech act in which the rules of language and of society synergize in determining meaning, intended as a socially recognized object, sensitive to social expectations about the situation in which the utterance to be interpreted is embedded" (Capone, 2005, p. 1357). This analysis leads to a more integrated theory of speech acts in the larger frame of communication theory. One could go even more and claim that features of the behavior of both the speaker and the hearer during speech act production, as well as supra-segmental features of the utterance need to be taken into consideration in building the meaning that the speech act intends.

The conclusion is that speech act theory is still a disputed field, and there is no one common accepted definition of what a speech act is. This variation of definitions also leads

to a multitude of taxonomies.

## 2.2 Types of Speech Acts

According to Allan (1998) there are two main ways of classifying speech acts. The first one what he calls a lexical classification, which distinguishes among speech acts according to the illocutionary verbs they utter , The second classifies them according to the act they express, such as apologizing, promising , requesting , and so on. However, Austin (1975, p. 151).) First classified speech acts into five categories:

- 1- “verdictives,” which signify acts that give a verdict,
- 2- “exercitives,” which convey power on the hearer,
- 3- “commissives,” which commit the speaker to doing something,
- 4- “behabitives,” which state different social behaviors such as congratulating, apologizing, and the like,
- 5- “explositives,” which are conversation or argument related, such as “I assume” or “I concede”

Consequently, over the years, several researchers have attempted to devise taxonomy of speech acts that would be commonly accepted. Communicative approaches to speech act theory mostly classify speech acts according to what they communicate to the hearer. Thus, Searle (1976) suggested five types of speech acts, namely: representatives/assertives, directive, Commissives, expressives and declarations. Following this classification, Leech (1983) classified speech acts by the verbs that express them, as he supposed that it was impossible to create a taxonomy of illocutionary acts. Thus, speech act verbs can be separated into the subsequent categories: commissive verbs, assertive verbs, directive verbs, rogative verbs, and expressing verbs.

Bach and Harnish (1979), classified speech acts in terms of the illocutionary act entailed into four main types. The first three have many subcategories, while the last one has some

specific verbs attached: constatives (predictives ,assertives, retrodictives, descriptives, confirmatives, ascriptives, informatives, concessives, retractives, assentives, dissentives, responsives, suggestive, disputatives, supportives), directives (requirements ,requestives, questions, permissives, advisories, prohibitives), commissives (offers ,promises), and acknowledgements (apologize, congratulate ,condole, thank, greet, accept, reject).

Another classification approach of speech acts is from the viewpoint of Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness, more precisely according to the way the function that the speech act express threatens face, as well as according to the relationship that the act has with the speaker or the hearer (Staab, 1983). Thus, Staab differentiated between four categories of face threatening acts:

- (a) Threats to a speaker's negative face: expressing thanks, excuses, or the making of an unwilling promise or offer,
- (b) threats to a speaker's positive face: apologies, self-contradicting, or confessions,
- (c) threats to a hearer's negative face: orders, requests, suggestions, and warnings,
- and (d) threats to a hearer's positive face: criticism, insults, contradictions, and complaints (p. 27).

Based on many of the taxonomies that presented above, Cohen (1996) devised his classification of 14 speech acts grouped into 5 main categories. The first one is representatives, and contains the speech acts claims, assertions and reports; the second is represented by directives: commands, suggestions and requests,; the next one groups under expressives the acts of apology, thanks and complaint,. Commissives represent the fourth groups which contain threats, promises, and offers; finally, declarations and decrees are grouped under declaratives.

### **2.2.1 Types of Illocutionary Acts**

Illocutionary act is the force of the utterance or locutionary act. It is the intended meaning what the speaker means by saying an utterance. The speaker's intentions are conveyed by an illocutionary force. So, the illocutionary force can be considered as the core of the speech acts. The use of some expressions to realize specific speech act like apology, request may be perceived differently in different situations. Societies differ in their use of "social distribution of expressions" (Labov. W) pragma-linguistics. Cohen puts forward, "it has become increasingly clear that the teaching of second language words and phrases isolated from their socio-cultural context may lead to the production of linguistic curiosities which do not achieve their communicative purposes." (P.383) Speech act behavior development must be a focus for language learners since they are repeatedly faced with the need to utilize speech acts such as, complaints, apologies, requests, and refusals. All these speech acts can be realized by means of strategies. Thus, the objective of language teachers is to teach these strategies into its socio-cultural dimensions to learners so that they can realize any speech acts appropriately. Speech acts have been classified according to five categories (Searle):

#### **2.2.1.1 Representatives**

Yule (1996) says that the representative utterances state what the speaker thinks to be the case or not. Therefore, they convey assertions, claims, reports, statements, descriptions as in the following example (p.53): Speaker: it is wonderful day!

#### **2.2.1.2 Directives**

Hurford et.al. (2007) claim that "A directive act is any illocutionary act which essentially involves the speaker trying to get the hearer to behave in some required way". Therefore, the performance of directive speech acts entails the addressee to do what the

speaker wants like ordering, requesting, commanding and suggesting. These are some illustrations of directives. (p.294) Example can be: Could you pass the salt?

### **2.2.13. Expressives**

Pratt (1977) believes that expressive speech acts have to deal with the psychological states of speakers. Hence, they report persons' emotions and attitudes, such as pleasures, pains, likes and dislikes. (p. 81) Like in the following example: Speaker: "I'm sorry to miss your birthday"

### **2.2.1.4. Commissives**

Hurford et.al. (2007) point out that "A commissive act is any illocutionary act which essentially involves the speaker committing himself to behave in some required way". Consequently, this category of speech acts is related to future actions such as promises, threats, and pledges. (p.294) Speaker: I promise you to be in the meeting

### **2.2.1.5. Declaratives**

Yule (1996) points that declarative speech acts serve to change a given situation or reality in the world via utterances. Similarly, Pratt (1977) says that declarative speech acts are: "illocutionary acts that bring about the state of affairs they refer to." (p.81) Priest: I now pronounce declare husband and wife.

Austin (1962) and (1969) described speech acts theoretically. However, empirical studies made by Cohen, Olshtain et al gave more sight in the area. These empirical studies have focused on the perception and production of speech acts by learners of a second or foreign language (in most cases, English as a second or foreign language; ESL and EFL) at varying stages of language proficiency and in different social interactions. As conclusion,

they aimed at establishing “cross-language” and “language specific norms” of speech act behavior.

### Speech acts

Representatives/ assertives: speech acts that state the speaker’s conviction.

Directives: speech acts that used to make the hearer do something.

Commissives: speech acts that compel the speaker with future deeds.

Expressive: speech acts that state the speaker psychological attitude.

Declaratives: speech acts that result immediate changes in particular state

**Figure 01: The five types of speech act that presented by Austin Adapted from (Huang 2008 p, 106-108)**

### 2.3 The Speech Act Theory

Recently, many researchers attempted to understand what is meant by the term speech act theory? Many of them stated that it is so difficult to do so unless one distinguished between the three main terms such as 'speech situation', 'speech event', and 'speech acts'. Hymes (1972) had provided a useful distinction between the three terms. He argued that within a community one can find many situations associated with speech, such as meeting, lectures,( ...). These situations, however, are not in themselves governed by consistent rules throughout. Consequently, a simple relabeling of them in terms of speech will not do much. It is, therefore, more useful to restrict the term "speech event" to activities that are directly governed by rules or norms for the use of speech. Examples of conversations occurring in such activities as private conversations, class lectures, etc. belong in this category. In short, "Speech acts" are the minimal terms of the set "speech situation, speech event, and speech act.

The functional unit in any communication is called speech act. It serves as the minimal unit of analysis. Speech acts are conditioned by rules of perceptions and interpretations. Speech acts such as reporting, promising, requesting, suggesting and apologizing, are belonging to this category.

According to Searle's classification (1969) of speech acts only one single speech act is existed in any conversation. A number of researchers had criticized that idea of Searle and claimed that conversations are multifunctional. Labov and Fanshel (1977, p.29) said that, "most utterances can be seen as performing several speech acts simultaneously." Conversations are not a series of utterances, but rather a mixture of utterances and actions "combined together by a set of understandings and reactions.

#### **2.4 The act of apologizing**

Apology studies have been concerned by many EFL researchers. They analyzed it as a speech act in the context of EFL or ESL with the focus on EFL speakers' production and perception of apology. Various studies have focused on apology from a linguistic aspect describing how a native speaker uses this speech act.

An apology is used to restore a broken behavioral norm. The person apologizes when someone feels offended by his/her speech. Apology aims at strengthen personal and interpersonal relationships. According to Olshtain (1983) when an action or utterance result in the fact that one or more persons perceive themselves as offended, the culpable party(s) needs to apologize. Apologizing is seen as a polite speech act used to restore social relations following an offence. Searle (1976) further emphasizes that both parties must recognize the offense and the need for repair. "*GUSZTA DEMETER, 2011*

"Holmes (1995) asserts apology as a speech act directed to the addressee's face needs and proposed to resolve an offence for which the speaker takes responsibility to restore balance between speaker and addressee.

Leech (1983, p. 104) cited in Trosborg (1995, p. 373) defined the act of apologizing is a convivial speech act, the goal of which coincides with the social goal of maintaining harmony between speaker and hearer.

In addition, Marquez-reiter (2004) declares an apology as a compensatory action for an offense committed by the speaker which has affected the hearer.

An apology serves compensatory action to an offence which the guilty person admits guilt to what he has done and asks for the speaker's forgiveness

#### **2.4.1. Consideration when apologizing**

Several factors should be considered, when making an apologizing Depending on these three main factors, the speaker should try to soften or mitigate this particular speech act by using or adopting certain specific politeness strategies in order to minimize, as far as possible, the chances of the hearer's being offended. The act of apologizing is called for when there is a social norms violation. "When an action or an utterance (or the lack of either) results in one or more persons perceiving as deserving an apology, the culpable person(s) is (are) expected to apologize" (Cohen, p.386) Cohen added that according to Searle, a person who apologizes for doing something expresses regret at having done. So, the apology takes place when the sincerity condition is respected- meaning that "the speaker believes that some act A has been performed prior to the time of speaking and that this precondition has resulted in an infraction which affected another person who is now deserving an apology". (Cohen, p.386)

Therefore, the apologizer should assume that she or he is responsible for the offense and intends to make amends. The act of apology is separated into performative verb, i.e. verbs which name the speech act or illocutionary force of the sentence like "I apologize" or "I'm sorry" and semantic formulas such as an explanation and justification for the offense.

E.g., “the bus was late and I could not possibly get here on time” or an offer of repair. E.g., “I will do it tomorrow.” Together, performative verbs and semantic formulas could result in acceptable apology realizations.

## **2.5 Research on Apology**

As a type of speech act, the apology has also been the object of numerous studies that attempted to find out how this particular speech act is performed and how speakers in a language community use it in various social contexts. Review of previous research studies on the apology speech act in the present study are presented into three groups: cross-cultural, single language and inter-language studies according to their different approaches to investigating the apology speech act.

### **2.5.1 Cross-cultural studies of apology**

In cross-cultural study group, researchers have compared speech acts from both native and non-native language's views. In the speech act of apology, various studies (Garcia, 1989; House, 1988; Trosborg, 1987) have been carried out by comparing natives' apology performances with those of non-natives (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989).

Garcia (1989) compared apologies performed by non-native speakers of English from Venezuela with those of native speakers of English in open-ended role-plays. She found that the Venezuelans used more positive politeness strategies by saying something nice so as to express their friendliness or good feelings, whereas the native speakers applied more negative styles such as self-effacing. Besides, House (1988) examined apology realization of German students learning English by using a Discourse Completion Task (DCT). Her study revealed that the German-speaking learners of English transferred their German communicative styles into English by using less routine apology expressions such as ‘sorry’. Trosborg (1987) conducted a study among Danish learners of English related to apology realization by way of role-play technique. He did not find any clear case of negative L1

pragma-linguistic transfer from Danish learners of English.

Olshtain's (1989) study compared how Hebrew, Australian English, Canadian French, and German apologized from a cross-cultural perspective using a DCT. The data analysis was focused on social factors (e.g., distance and power) and contextual factors (e.g., severity of violation). The findings from the study revealed that the speakers of the four languages, Hebrew, French, English, and German used similar Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) such as "I'm sorry" and preferred the expression of responsibility. The study came to the conclusion that at the global level of analysis, "different languages will realize apologies in similar ways" (Olshtain, 1989, p.171). Unlike other cross-cultural studies on apology which used DCTs, Frescura (1993) used a role play to compare apologies between native Italian and native English speaking groups. She coded role plays data into two types of semantic formulas: hearer- supportive formulas and self- supportive formulas. Hearer- supportive formulas were used when the speaker who apologizes chose to support the face of the complainer by admitting his or her own guilt, by recognizing the hearer's right, or by offering compensation. Meanwhile, the self-supportive formulas were used when the speaker chose to save his or her own face by denying guilt, by appealing to the hearer's leniency, or by providing an explanation for the offense. The findings revealed that native speakers of Italian preferred the self-supportive formulas while native speakers of English preferred the hearer-supportive ones. Native English speaking learners of Italian did not indicate any preference while Italians in Canada favored some native Italian formulas.

Another apology study compared Japanese language with American English. Sugimoto (1997) compared American and Japanese students' styles of apology. Her data were collected from 200 Americans and 181 Japanese college students which involved responding to a questionnaire in an average of 15-20 minutes during regularly scheduled

classes. The questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions on situations warranting an apology. The result of her study indicated that more Japanese students stressed the importance of atonement. The four most used strategies are statement of remorse, accounts, description of damage, and reparation. Japanese students used these strategies more than Americans, except in the case of accounts. There were also cultural differences in the use of apologies. Japanese students used more magnified and elaborate types of remorse statements. They tend to repeat words whereas Americans used intensifiers. Unlike Americans, Japanese students described the negative side of the situation.

Hussein and Hammouri (1998) studied apology strategies used by Americans and Jordanian speakers of English. They found that Jordanians use more strategies to apologize than Americans. The strategies that both Americans and Jordanians use are the expression of apology, the offer of repair, the acknowledgement of responsibility, and the promise of forbearance, only Jordanians use strategies like praising Allah (God) for what happened, attacking the victim, minimizing the degree of offense and interjection. Another difference between the two groups is that Jordanian speakers tend to use less direct and more elaborate strategies. The researchers have attributed these differences to the influence of culture, patterns of thought and religious orientation.

These four apology studies support a consensus that when apologizing speakers of different languages realize apologies in very similar ways. The studies also showed that the use of different apology strategies can be influenced by culture, beliefs and religious orientation.

### **2.5.2 Single Language Studies of Apology**

In early single language study, Fraser (1981) investigated general apology strategies of Americans using different methods, such as his personal experiences, observation, role-play and verbal reports. He found that American speakers use formulaic apology patterns with

account of explanation or excuse.

Vollmer and Olshtain (1989) investigated apology strategies of German focusing on the relationship between their realization patterns of apology and social/situational parameters such as social status, social distance and severity of offence. They used a DCT with seven apology situations to elicit data. The results revealed that the participants used expressions of apology and responsibility in all situations in rather high percentages and the use of apologies was significantly affected by the situational parameters.

Holmes (1989)'s study focused on the strategies. She studied a range of strategies used by New Zealanders with consideration of various social factors as well as the distributional patterns for women and men. She, for instance, found that, in 183 remedial exchanges in the corpus with the total number of 295 occurrences of apology strategies and based on gender, both women and men largely use the same strategies, women tended to use apologies more than men, women apologized to other women more than to men, and men apologized to women more than to men.

Similar to Holmes's study, Obeng (1999) studied Akan apologies in different sociolinguistic variables, including power and solidarity. The result revealed that Akan speakers apologized using an explicit apology before they did an implicit apology. In Akan language certain particles or grammatical features represented politeness like other Asian languages such as Korean or Japanese.

Unlike previous apology studies, which were mainly focused on English, Demeter (2006) researched Romanian apology focusing on the types of categories that Romanian speakers use to apologize in situations that require interaction among friends and how these categories combine to form apology strategies. A survey containing ten situations taken from the TV show "Friends" was used as a research instrument. The participants were 158 English major students studying at a university in Romania. Some findings of the study are consistent

with the findings of previous studies on different languages, such as Akan, English, and German, while other aspects of apologizing in Romania are different from some languages, such as German, Lombok, and New Zealand English.

### 2.5.3 Inter-language Studies on Apology

In inter-language studies of apologies, researchers have focused on learners' production of the target language as a second or foreign language. Focusing on native language influence on the learning of target language, Cohen and Olshtain (1981) explore how Hebrew speaking learners of English as a second language did things with their inter-language of English, and discovered that the non-native use of apology semantic formula was generally fewer than that of the native speakers. By this, the study displayed the transfer of Hebrew features into realization of apology making.

Bergman and Kasper (1993) examined apology realization by Thai learners of English by means of 20 DCT situations. The result demonstrated negative transfer of an L1- based preference for given semantic formulas of apology. The statistical analysis also showed that 50% of the differences in the use of apology strategies could be attributed to pragmatic transfer. Among these transfer features the Thai learners mapped into English. For example, the Thai English inter-language users differed least from the English native speakers in their suppliance of 'Upgrading and the canonical' strategies Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) and taking on 'Responsibility' strategy. Most differences occurred in the context-dependent strategies.

Kondo (1997) conducted a study on the acquisition of apologies in English by 45 Japanese study abroad students in the United States. Apology production data were collected by means of a DCT (pretest-posttest design) and were coded using semantic formulas in five broad categories. Kondo reported that in making apologies, the Japanese preferred to use an expression of apology (e.g. "sorry") or show concern for the hearer (e.g. "Are you OK?")

frequently, whereas the Americans preferred to use explanations most often. After 1 year of study abroad in the United States, the Japanese students adjusted their use of semantic formulas to be more similar to those of the Americans by using, for example, more explanations in their apologies. Kondo attributed this change to the fact that the students had acquired sufficient linguistic ability to be able to use that particular strategy, but had not acquired the socio-pragmatic ability to know where and when it was appropriate to use the semantic formula in English.

Research into inter-language apologies has shown that although learners have full access to the same apology strategies as native speakers, their apologies still diverge from the native speakers' norm as negative transfer appeared in most studies. The divergence has been produced due to these causes: adherence to different principles of politeness, preference for different strategy-orientations, and quantitative differences in strategy using and in overall verbal production. There might be another reason for learners' deviation: a conscious choice not to comply with the target norm in order to preserve one's own cultural identity.

## **2.6 The realization of speech act of apologizing**

The speech act of requesting is realized by three ways. The speaker can opt for a direct, indirect or the formal (use of modals). This section concerns the linguistic means used to realize the speech act of requesting taking account the participants' role in the society. Cohen added that according to Searle, a person who apologizes for doing something expresses regret at having done. So, the apology takes place when the sincerity condition is respected—meaning that “the speaker believes that some act A has been performed prior to the time of speaking and that this precondition has resulted in an infraction which affected another person who is now deserving an apology” (Cohen, p.386).

### **2.6.1 The direct Approach**

In the direct approach, the speaker directly states the intended meaning. To realize a direct apology, the speaker uses the correct grammatical, lexical or semantic items. As in the example below:

E.g., I am deeply sorry for my hurt words. Or sorry friend.

The direct apology is usually used when the speaker and the hearer have the same social status, for example between friends; sometimes with colleagues.

### **2.6.2 The Use of Modals**

The speaker opts for the formal way of addressing by using the modal verbs (could, Would...) which show respect in apologizing devices. So instead of saying “I am sorry”, the speaker will say “could you please accept my deeply apology”. This type is usually used in formal situations like between a student and a teacher, speaker and hearer respectively. So the pattern is “Could + subject + predicate.

## **2.7 The Teach-ability of Speech Acts**

In this section, will try to see if we can teach speech acts behavior. And if yes, how can it be taught? The answer to this question is yes. Speech acts behavior can be taught since it is everyday language use. “The fact that speech acts reflect, for the most part, routinized language behavior helps learning in the sense that much of what is said is predictable” (Cohen, p.408). Why predictable because most of the time an adjective is used in a compliment like nice or good. Olshatian and Cohen (1990) conducted a study with advanced EFL learners in Israel to see if the explicit teaching of speech act behavior can improve or help EFL learners to use linguistic means appropriately. Native speakers of American English provided baseline data for comparative purposes. They were taught twenty minutes lessons aimed at filling in the gaps. The study was done on apology. So, information about the strategies within the apology speech act set and about modifications

of apologies through the use of intensification and emotional were taught. Researchers did a pretest first, and then after teaching them the behavior, they did another test, posttest, to determine what was learned. The results suggested that the types of intensification and downgrading, different speech act strategy realizations and situational or feature consideration can be taught. They also discovered that after training students, they opted for shorter utterances to make an apology instead overcompensate form, using too many words

As in this example, a student responded to a situation of forgetting to meet a friend with “did you wait for me? You must forgive me. I could not come because of problems and I tried to warn you by phone but...” (Cited in Cohen, p.40)

After training, the utterance became short: “oh, I’m sorry. It dropped out of my mind.” The researchers also discovered the rise in the use of intensifiers like “deeply sorry” which were initially absent. Many other studies have been done in the field about complimenting and responses (Billmyer, 1990) and refusals (King and Silver, 1993). They used a pretest and posttest and all the findings showed that students can acquire speech acts when explicitly taught to them. However, some of the studies have shown their limits. This concern with the tools used in the research. For example, in the research about speech act of refusal, researcher has used a written discourse questionnaire in addition to spoken refusal to elicit. They discovered that results from the questionnaire indicated that instruction had had little effect, and the telephone interview indicated no effect. Although, teaching strategies of speech acts and linguistic means used in its socio-cultural dimension is probably the only way for EFL learners to develop their sociolinguistic ability.

Dunham (1992) described a series of ten techniques for teaching complimenting behavior after doing an informal study of forty Southeast Asian high school students, employing the complimenting outlined by Wolfson. The techniques are: reviewing how

it is done in the native culture, reviewing how it is done in the United States, vocabulary phrase lists, student practice, role playing in pairs, teacher role play with students in front of the class, projects in which learners must compliment natives, students' oral reports to the class following their field experiences with native speakers, connecting techniques to lengthen conversation, and paired interaction with complimenting and connecting techniques. (Cited in Cohen, p.411)

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, we have proposed a detailed study and analysis of the speech act of apologizing that has been drawn up on the basis of speech act, which is defined as saying by performing meaning because when we speak we also act with these words. The present chapter is divided into four main sections within which we dealt firstly with a definition of this speech act, and then we dealt with the previous research conducted concerning the speech act of apologizing in both the cross-cultural and inter-language fields. What is significant in our study is the third section which provided taxonomy of the different linguistic realization strategies used to perform such speech act. Finally we dealt in the fourth section with different studies concerning the ability to teach speech acts' behaviours in EFL classrooms. Employing this study in EFL context would be of benefit to develop learners' pragmatic abilities and to foster learners' ability to make apologies.

# **Chapter Three**

## **Field Work**

## **Chapter Three: Field Work: Analysis and Interpretation of the Discourse**

### **Completion Task**

#### **Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to analyze the results obtained through the discourse completion task. Our goal is to show the effective role of pragmatic awareness in enhancing the realization of the speech act of apology. Our aim from conducting this study is to test the validity of our hypothesis. Since the learners are the main variable of this study. Their views and opinions are very significant to test the stated hypothesis and the most appropriate and useful tool to investigate that is through addressing a questionnaire to learners. For that, we have opted to work on third year LMD students of the English division at Biskra University.

#### **3.1. Students' Questionnaires**

##### **3.1.1. Aims of the questionnaire**

The students' questionnaire is mainly designed to find out whether the sociolinguistics competence is important to help them to develop their speech act apology. Second, it also attempts to investigate the actual state of learning in term of using sociolinguistic competence.

##### **3.1.2. Design of the questionnaire**

This questionnaire is addressed to Third Year English students at the division of English at Biskra University for the academic year 2018-2019. The participants of this discourse completion task are 50 students from two groups. The sample was chosen randomly to explore the efficiency of pragmatic awareness in developing students' realization of the speech act of apology. It consists of 08 of questions which are arranged in a logical way .They involve the type of questions "Closed questions" and "open-ended questions"., picking up the most appropriate answer from a series of options, and or open questions demand the students

to give their personal opinions about the subject or to explain their choices . The questionnaire is divided into two sections:

### **Section One: Background information**

This section is about student background information. It contains three items outlined as follows: students' gender; students' age, their choice to study the English language, the length of their study, the assessment of their present level at English ,their opinions about speaking English, and their knowledge about pragmatic competence.

### **Section Two: Discourse Completion Task**

This section consists of six (06) items which seeks information about pragmatic competence on the speech act as an important factor in this research .And more specifically, the effective role of in enhancing students' speech act apology.

#### **3.1.3. Analysis of the results**

The procedure of analyzing data from the questionnaire is as follows:

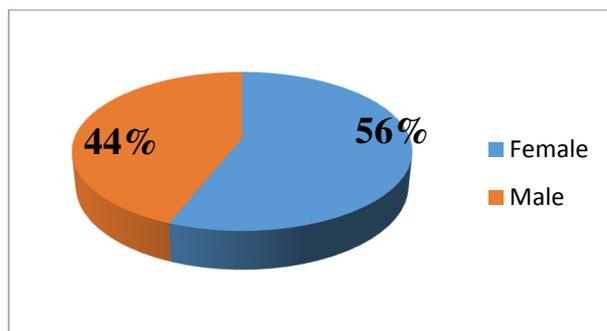
- Statement of the questionnaires as they appear.
- The results of the questions are presented in the form of tables.

### **Section One: Background information**

#### **1. Students' gender**

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	22	44%
Female	28	56%
Total	50	100%

**Table 01:** Students' gender



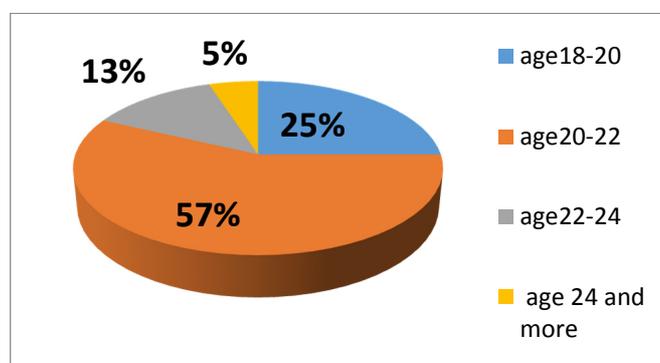
**Figure 01:** Students' gender

The results displayed in the table above show that the majority of students are girls (56%) who study English as a foreign Language in the third year LMD, and only (44%) that represent boys from the rest. Also as shown in the table.

## 2. Students' age

Age	Number	Percentage
18-20	10	25%
20-22	23	57%
22-24	5	13%
24 and more	2	5%
Total	40	100%

**Table 2:** Students' age



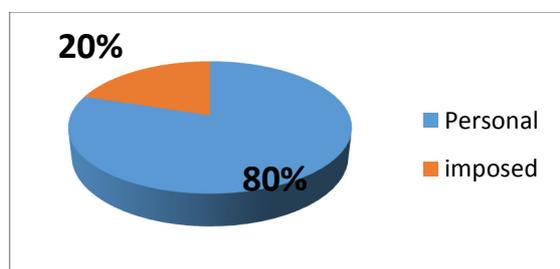
**Figure 2:** Students' age

As it is shown in the tables students' age are varying from 18 to 24 and more years old. It shows that the majority (57%) is 22 years old. The second part (25%) represents the students at the age 20 .the third one (13%) shows the learners who might repeat one or two years, they are 24 years old. Finally (5%) represents the aged students who may be repeat more than twice, changed their field of study or they get their Baccalaureate later on or they study English as additional diploma (24 and more).

3. Your choice of study English was:

Options	Number	Percentage
Personal	40	80%
Imposed	10	20%
Total	50	100%

**Table 03:** Students' Choices for studying English

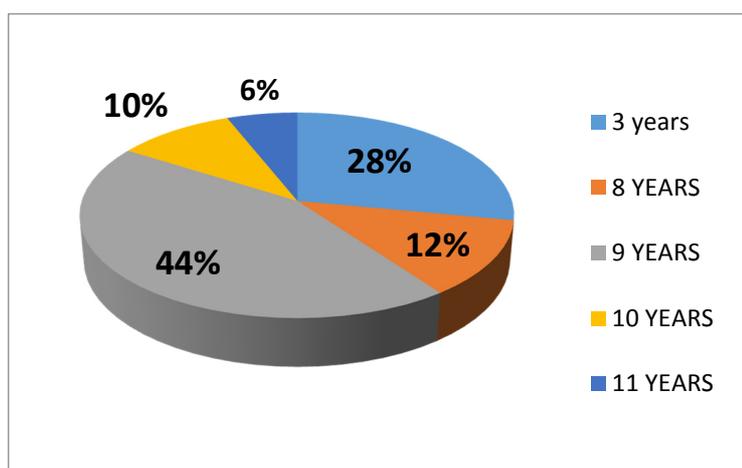


**Figure 03:** Students' Choices for studying English

From the above table, we can see clearly the choice to study the English language was personal choice of the vast majority of students (40) out of (50) making up (80%). This means that they found the good conditions and techniques for learning effectively. However, the rest of the sample which consists of (10) students- making up (20%)-opted for 'imposed '.We suggest that their baccalaureate level did not give them the opportunity to study the specialty they wanted to follow.

## 4. How long have you been studying English?

Options	Number	Percentage
3 years	14	28%
8 years	6	12%
9 years	22	44%
10 years	5	10%
11 years	3	06%
Total	50	100%

**Table 4:** Years of studying English**Figure 04:** Years of studying English

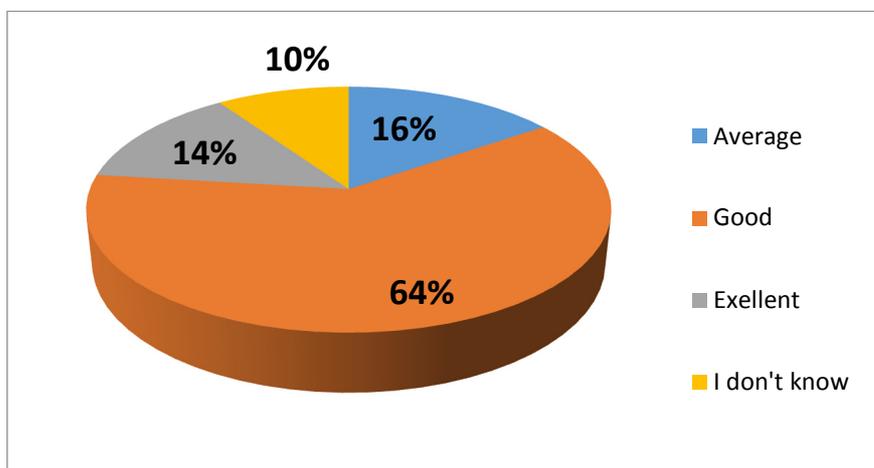
These results represent the years of studying English language. A quick look at this table reveals that the majority (44%) of the students studies English as a second language first and then as a foreign Language this means that they are successful in their studies, so they have to master the English Language perfectly. However some students (28%) have studied English

for three years as a foreign Language .Hence, only 03students (6%) who study English for eleven years the latter's indicates that they have repeated two years in their studies.

5. How would you assess your present level at English?

Options	Number	Percentage
Average	8	16%
Good	32	64%
Excellent	7	14%
I don't know	5	10%
Total	50	100%

**Table 05:** The Students' consideration of their level in English



**Figure 05:** The Students' consideration of their level in English

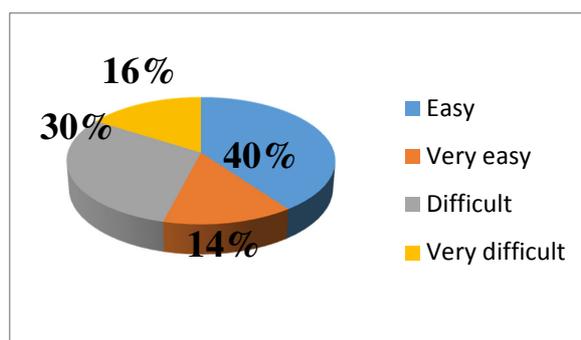
We can notice from the table above that the highest percentage of students (64%) claim that their level in English is good. Others (26%) show that they are average in English. Some

of them (14%) say that they are excellent in English. The least percentage (10%) of students shows that they do not know their level at all.

6. How do you find speaking English?

Options	Numbers	Percentage
Easy	20	40%
Very easy	7	14%
Difficult	15	30%
Very difficult	8	16%
Total	50	100%

**Table 06:** students' attitude towards speaking

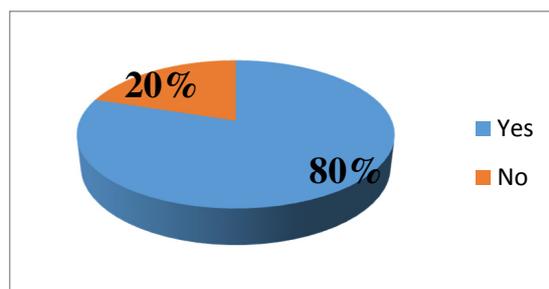


**Figure 06:** Students' attitude towards speaking

These results represent the evaluation of the level of students in English .half of students (30%) found speaking in English as difficult .The second part(14%) they found that it is so easy to talk, but others (20%) they found it very difficult .the last part(16%) few students speak the English fluently because they found it very easy .

## 7. Have you ever heard about pragmatic competence?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	40	40%
No	10	60%
Total	50	100%

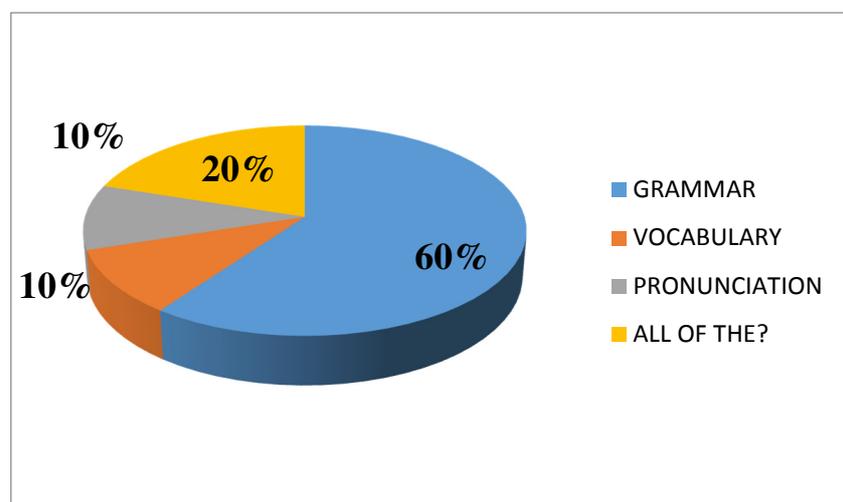
**Table 07:** Students opinion about pragmatic competence**Figure 07:** Students opinion about pragmatic competence

As can be seen from the table above, (40%) of the students claim that they know what is meant by pragmatic competence i.e. they know it from a theoretical aspect because they heard about it in the module of pragmatics .However, about (60%) from the rest of the respondents believe that they do not know what is meant by pragmatic competence.

8. What did your Teacher at previous school levels focus on?

Options	Numbers	Percentage
Grammar	30	60%
Vocabulary	5	10%
Pronunciation	5	10%
All of them	10	20%
Total	50	100%

**Table 08:** Students' background knowledge of language



**Figure 08:** Students' background knowledge of language

Table 07 shows that the majority of the students' previous knowledge they received during their study of English were focused mostly on the grammatical aspect of the target language. The second majority responded that the focus was on grammar and vocabulary. This means that they were taught through the structuralist methods which overemphasize the acquisition of grammar rules together with a list of vocabulary without paying any attention to real language use.

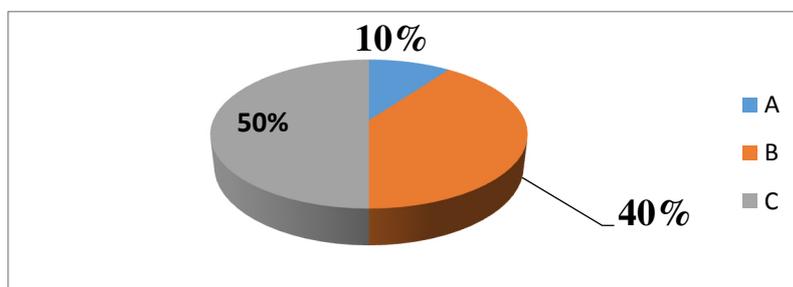
**Section two: Discourse Completion Task****Situation 01:**

Imagine that you are a university student, your teacher asked you to submit your essay and you haven't finished yet.

- A. You just tell your teacher the truth
- B. You apologize and clarify why you did that.
- C. You show your deep sorry and ask for another chance

Option	Number	Percentage
A	5	10%
B	20	40%
C	25	50%
Total	50	100%

**Table 09:** Participants 'Responses Distribution in Situation 1



**Figure 09:** Participants 'Responses Distribution in Situation 1

It can be seen from the table above that (50%) from the EFL students show their deep sorry and ask for another chance i.e. they know how to be polite and apologize, However, about (40%) of the respondents believe that they have to apologize and clarify why you did that while (10%) of students claim that they only tell the truth.

### **Situation 02:**

Imagine that you had argued with your classmate in the classroom about a topic to present, and you hurt him with your words.

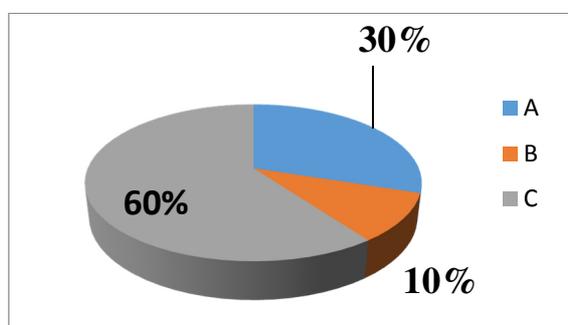
A. You say that you are mistaking for saying such words to him

B. You keep silent and neglect him

C. You repara your misbehavior by asking forgiveness politely

Option	Number	Percentage
A	15	30%
B	5	10%
C	30	60%
Total	50	100%

**Table 10:** Participants 'Responses Distribution in Situation 2



**Figure 10 :** Participants 'Responses Distribution in Situation 2

The results obtained from the above question show that (60%) of students state that they repair their misbehavior by asking forgiveness politely to their classmates and. On the other hand, (30%) students say that they are mistaking for saying such words to him but only 10% who keep silent and neglect.

**Situation 03:**

You are travelling on a bus; you bumped into another passenger, his bag felt down

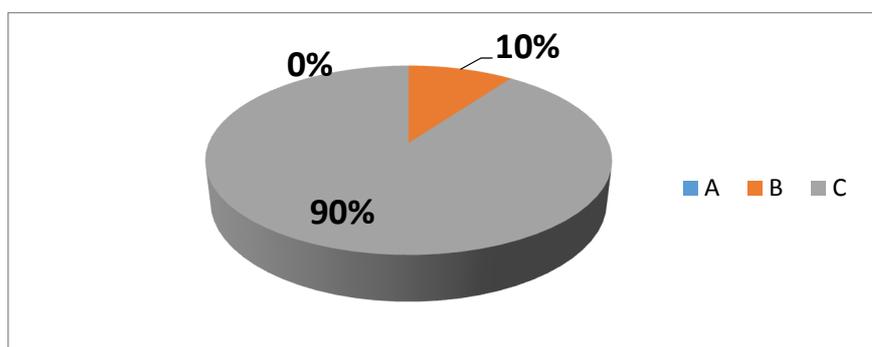
A. I ignore him

B. You say sorry and pass

C. You pick up his bag and tell him you are sorry for the unintended misbehavior

Option	Number	Percentage
A	0	0%
B	5	10%
C	45	90%
Total	50	100%

**Table11:** Participants 'Responses Distribution in Situation 3



**Figure 11:** Participants 'Responses Distribution in Situation 3

The majority of the questioned students (90%) said that they pick up his bag and tell him you are sorry for the unintended misbehavior '. This indicates that most students knowing

their mistakes and apologizes for the negative behavior. (10%) of the students, see that they only apologize and pass; but no one said that they neglect the situation.

**Situation 04:**

You forgot to meet a friend, you call him to apologize. This was the second time you have forgotten such a meeting

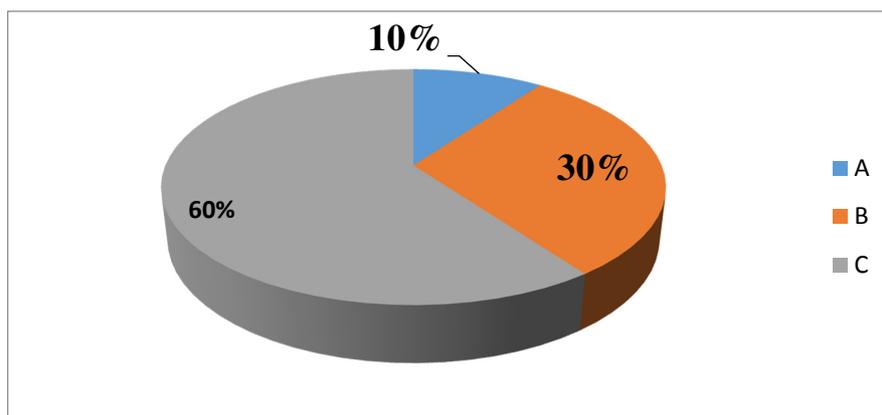
A. You ignore what you have done, and fix another meeting

B. You say the truth and tell him you forgot

C. You say you are deeply sorry and you won't do it again

Option	Number	Percentage
A	5	10%
B	15	30%
C	30	60%
Total	50	100%

**Table12:** Participants 'Responses Distribution in Situation 4



**Figure12:** Participants 'Responses Distribution in Situation 4

It can be seen from the table above that (60%) of students argue that they say they are deeply sorry and you won't do it again, but the (30%) opted they have to say the truth and tell

him you forgot. But only 10% who claim that they ignore what you have done, and fix another meeting.

**Situation 05:**

You borrowed your classmate's book, which you promised to return after one week, but forget to bring it

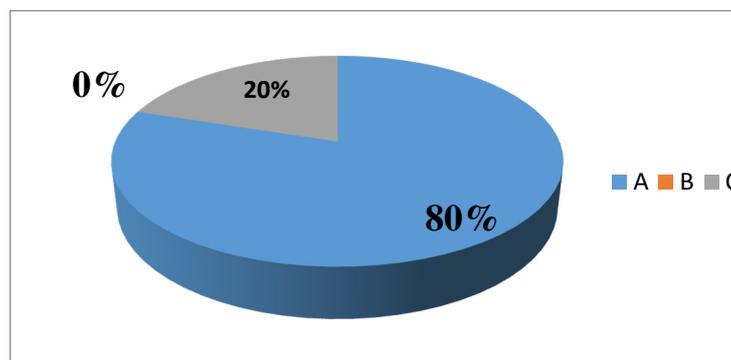
A. You say sorry and tell her why you forgot

B. Give her the book without saying anything

C. Send the book with someone to avoid the embarrassment

Option	Number	Percentage
A	40	80%
B	0	0%
C	10	20%
Total	40	100%

**Table13:** Participants 'Responses Distribution in Situation 5



**Figure13:** Participants 'Responses Distribution in Situation 5

The results as shown in the table above reveal that (80%) of the respondents claim that they say sorry and tell her why you forgot. However, (20%) opted for students, who claim that send the book with someone to avoid the embarrassment. But no one said that they give her the book without saying anything .

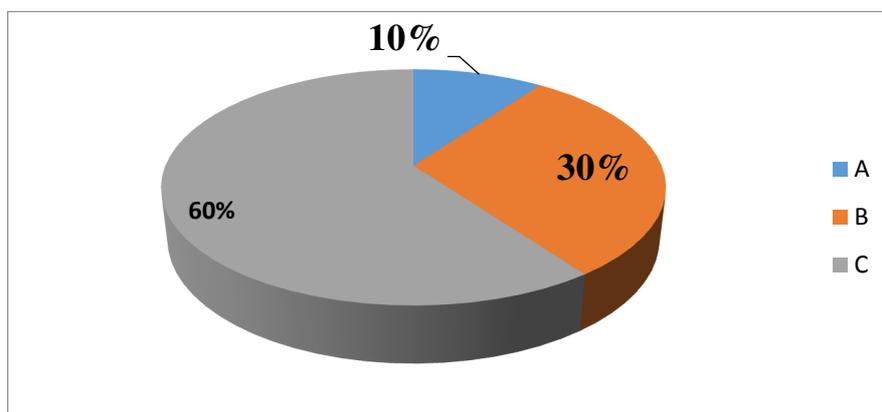
**Situation 06:**

1. In the room nearby, someone is preparing for an exam and you were playing music with loud voice. He asks you to turn the music down. What would you say?

- A. You ignore what he said and keep music on.
- B. You say sorry and tell her that you didn't see him
- C. You say you are deeply sorry and you won't do it again.

Option	Number	Percentage
A	5	10%
B	15	30%
C	30	60%
Total	50	100%

**Table14:** Participants 'Responses Distribution in Situation 6



**Figure14:** Participants 'Responses Distribution in Situation 6

It can be seen from the table above that (60%) of students argue that they say they are deeply sorry and you won't do it again, but the (30%) opted they You say sorry and tell her that you didn't see him. But only 10% who claim that they ignore what You ignore what he said and keep music on.

#### **3.1.4. Discussion of the results**

In their responses to the situations, students recognized the right forms to apologize to the interlocutors. In the situations (1 and 6) .Moreover , all the results shown in the tables above in order to test our hypothesis and knowing if pragmatic awareness can be an effective factor in the realization of speech act apologizing, from the table (1) The results displayed in the table above show that the majority are females (56%) so they are dominant over males (44%), this may be because of the fact that females are more interested in studying a foreign languages and they are so serious in their learning process. Also from the table (2) shows that most of the students (80%) answered that their personal choice was to study the English language, because they like it, but only a few number (20%) who said that it is not their choice it is imposed .In addition, the results represent the years of studying English language.

We notice that the majority (44%) of the students studies English as first as a foreign Language this means that they are successful in their studies, so they have to master the English language perfectly. However some students (28%) have studied English for two years as a foreign Language .A small proportion about 03students (6%) report having studied English for eleven years. This indicates that they have repeated two years in their studies. It is also important to note that from the findings of the analysis (50%) from the EFL students show their deep sorry and ask for another chance i.e. they know how to be polite and apologize, However; about (40%) of the respondents believe that they have to apologize and clarify why they did that while (10%) of students claim that they only tell the truth.

Then the majority (60%) of the students affirm that they repair their misbehavior by asking forgiveness politely to their classmates and. On the other hand, (30%) students say that they are mistaking for saying such words to him but only 10% who keep silent and neglect. In addition to that, the majority of the questioned students (90%) said that they pick up their bags and tell them that they are sorry for the unintended misbehavior '. This indicates that most students knowing their mistakes and apologize for the negative behavior. (10%) of the students, see that they only apologize and pass; but no one said that they neglect the situation.

Moreover; (60%) of students argue that they say they are deeply sorry and you won't do it again, but the (30%) opted they have to say the truth and tell him you forgot. But only 10% who claim that they ignore what you have done, and fix another meeting. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of students (80%) claim that they say sorry and tell her why you forgot. However, (20%) opted for students, who claim that send the book with someone to avoid the embarrassment. But no one said that they give her the book without saying anything. At the last situation from what table represented, we can see that most students (60%) say they are deeply sorry and they will not do it again, and (30%) claim that they say sorry and tell her that they didn't see him, and (10%) opted for ignoring him and keep music on. As a conclusion we notice that the majority of FL Students' affirm that sociolinguistic competence can be useful factor in the realization of the speech act of apologizing and facilitate learning process .The analysis of the students' responses and their results lead to understand that students have the pragmatic awareness to realize the speech act of apologizing.

## **Conclusion**

The results from the analysis of students' discourse completion task support our research hypothesis which postulates that promoting pragmatic awareness can have a positive impact on FL learners' realization of the speech act of apologizing. In addition to that, if our learners acquire pragmatic competence, their realization of the speech act of apologizing will improve. Accordingly, we have seen that the majority of the students said that they were aware of making apologies in different context with different interlocutors. Therefore, our students have developed pragmatic competence which in turn affects their realization of speech act of apologizing.

### General conclusion

Pragmatic competence is the knowledge of the linguistic resources available in a given language for the realization of illocutions. Hence, pragmatic competence is being able to adapt language to the context by performing appropriate speech acts. Being pragmatically aware means taking into consideration the socio-cultural norms of the TL. We all know that the realization of speech acts varies from one culture to another. Therefore, foreign language learners need to be aware of the rules that govern language use which influence their choice from one situation to another. Moreover, language and culture are intimately related which implies that communication will be very difficult without the knowledge of the socio-cultural rules related to that language. In the foreign language contexts learners have a very few opportunities to interact with native speakers consequently they lack pragmatic awareness. They are learning English in a society which is different from the English society. For that reason, scholars proposed hypotheses which can help learners to develop their overall language ability.

Dell Hymes was among the first scholars who introduced the concept of communicative competence which refers to the knowledge of language and language use appropriately. Later, the concept was redefined and developed by other scholars such as Canale and Swain and Bachman among many others.. They redefined it and divided it into other components, namely grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic components. They also added the pragmatic component which has become essential in the successful realization of the speech acts. Such is the case of the act apologizing in which we should take account the level of directness, the use of formal and informal depending on the person and the situation..

In addition, the results of our study revealed that the majority of our students are aware of linguistic means used to realize apologies. However, we can notice an overuse of the formal or more polite apologize in every situation, for example the use of formal or more polite in

apologizing with a friend which is not necessary. Besides, most of them are not aware that the use of intensifiers or more polite strategies (sorry ..., deeply sorry ..., very sorry ...) with friends is unnecessary. Therefore, we conclude that students may be experiencing sociolinguistic or pragmatic transfer i.e. students may be thinking in the culture of their language. However, the analysis showed that such problems can be reduced progressively or disappear completely. Learners also showed a considerable awareness about the impact sociolinguistic competence on improving their realization of speech act apologizing.

### **Recommendations**

In our present study, we suggest that in order to develop students' realization of speech act of apologizing, it is quite important to focus on acquiring pragmatic awareness. Therefore, we would like to put forward the following recommendations as how to improve our students' use of the speech act of apologizing.

1. Teachers of the grammar module should give more explanations of modals verbs regarding socio-cultural aspects, for example, stressing on the use of "sorry, forgive me ..." as more polite forms used to realize a given speech act. And give examples in all situations mentioning if the hearer is superior or inferior as well the speaker's status.

For example:

The use "Sorry": teacher can introduce how "Sorry" is used in which context and with what kinds of persons (social rank) then ask them to perform like in the following illustration:

Speaker: inferior

Hearer: superior

Situation: teacher says: you are the speaker; ask the hearer to apologize for misbehavior or whatever; and after he will play the role of the speaker (superior) and so on.

We should teach the culture of the target language use i.e., the way different speech acts

are realized according to socio-cultural norms, for example, how one should behave when apologizing to someone in English society, how one should compliment and respond to it.

2. The inclusion of a new module which covers the instruction of different speech acts, Apologizing, complimenting, and ordering..., in relation of socio-cultural norms of the target language. In EFL context, the instruction is the only and possible way to develop our students' language ability since they have no opportunities to interact with native speakers. Therefore, this new module will be only composed of different speech acts: Apologizing, complimenting and responding to compliment, apologizing for misbehaving, deeply apologizing etc.

3. Students will be taught what linguistic means are used and how they should be used appropriately in the course of the lessons. The practical part can take place in oral expression course or another module which must be closely linked to it. It can be introduced in the first two years of the University (first and year and second year) i.e. during the year of internalization of language knowledge. During these two years, how come we have grammar (words are combination), phonetics (pronunciation), and culture (history about the language) but no such a thing which covers different speech acts and how they are used appropriately.

Accordingly, results reveal that the vast majority of our students are aware of linguistic means used to realize apologize, but at the level of directness (level of imposition) and perceptions, there are many ambiguities. Therefore, this new module can be considered as a supplement in which:

1. Teachers should take into consideration the effectiveness of teaching communicative competence, because it reinforces student's language achievement.

2. Foreign language teachers need to vary classroom activities using different tools that engage and motivate their students to interact between each other.

3. Motivating and prompting students to speak are of important roles that all teachers should

play; in order to, help students to overcome their speaking difficulties and ameliorate their communicative competence.

4. Syllabus designers should integrate Communicative competence in order to provoke their students to practice the language.
5. EFL students, in order to develop their sociolinguistic competence, should get involved in online discussions; because it will give them self-confidence to communicate in English.
6. Teachers need to use listening as a scaffold to enrich students' vocabulary of the speech act of apologizing , and help them to get used with native speaker's pronunciation.
7. Teachers should encourage students to record themselves and watch videos of native speakers and miming what they are saying concerning the speech act of apologizing .
8. Students are advised to develop pragmatic competence as much as they can, because it will help them to learn chunks of the language which they use while speaking, and when they interact with native speakers.

In the end, students should listen to native speakers' apologizing as much as they can in order to correct their performance, pronunciation, gain new vocabulary, and develop their pragmatic competence.

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# **Appendix**

## **The Students' Questionnaire**

# Mohammed Kheider University of Biskra

## Branch of English

### Students' Discourse Completion Task

I would be very grateful if you take time to share your experience to complete this discourse completion task. Your answers will be kept anonymous and it will be a great help in completing our study. You will be given number of situations in which you will have to select one choice.

Your contribution is very important for our study.

#### General Information

##### 1. Gender

Male  Female

##### Students' age

.....

##### 2. Your choice of study English was:

Personal  Imposed

##### 3. How long have you been studying English?

.....

##### 4. How would you assess your present level at English?

- a. Average
- b. Good
- c. Excellent
- d. I don't know

**.5.How do you find speaking English?**

- a. Easy
- b. Very easy
- c. Difficult
- d. Very difficult

**6. Have you ever heard about pragmatic competence?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**7. Did your Teacher at previous school levels focus on?**

- a. Grammar
- b. Vocabulary
- c. Pronunciation
- d. All of them

**Discourse Completion Task**

**Instruction:** In the following situations, please select the answer you think the most appropriate:

**Situation 01:**

Imagine that you are a university student, your teacher asked you to submit your essay and you haven't finished yet.

- You just tell your teacher the truth
- You apologize and clarify why you did that
- You show your deep sorry and ask for another chance

**Situation 02:**

Imagine that you had argued with your classmate in the classroom about a topic to present, and you hurt him with your words.

You say that you are mistaking for saying such words to him

You keep silent and neglect him

You repair your misbehavior by asking forgiveness politely

**Situation 03:**

You are travelling on a bus, you bumped into another passenger, his bag fell down

You ignore him

You say sorry and pass

You pick up his bag and tell him you are sorry for the unintended misbehavior

**Situation 04:**

You forgot to meet a friend, you call him to apologize. This was the second time you have forgotten such a meeting

You ignore what you have done, and fix another meeting

You say the truth and tell him you forgot

You say you are deeply sorry and you won't do it again

**Situation 05:**

You borrowed your classmate's book, which you promised to return after one week, but forget to bring it

- You say sorry and tell her why you forgot
- Give her the book without saying anything
- Send the book with someone to avoid the embarrassment

**Situation 06:**

1. In the room nearby, someone is preparing for an exam and you were listening to music with loud sound. He asks you to turn the music down. What would you say?

- You ignore what he said and keep music on.
- You say sorry and tell her that you didn't see him
- You say you are deeply sorry and you won't do it again.

## ملخص:

تسعى هذه الدراسة لمعالجة دور الوعي التداولي في تحقيق أسلوب الاعتذار. ففي الوقت الحاضر تم الاعتراف بالكفاءة التداولية بوصفها مكونا أساسيا للكفاءة التواصلية, غير ان هناك ندره تامة في الجوانب العملية لتعليم مما جعلها مهمشة مقارنة بالجوانب الأخرى للغة المستهدفة. حيث يجد المتعلمون صعوبات في استخدام اللغة بشكل مناسب في سياق مختلف وباستعمال ألفاظ مختلفة.

كما تسعى هذه الدراسة لفحص ومعالجة انجازات الطلاب وتصوراتهم في اساليب الاعتذار. بما فيه معالجة عدم الوعي التداولي للطلاب والوسائل اللغوية المستخدمة لتحقيق خطاب الاعتذار. كما يؤثر الافتقار إلى الوعي التداولي بشكل خطيرا على أدائها. والهدف من هذه الدراسة زيادة وعي الطلاب التداولي لمساعدتهم على التغلب على مشاكل الاتصال وتبادل الاراء.

وبالتالي نحن نفترض إذا كان الطلاب على دراية عملية تامة بالوعي التداولي فسيكونون قادرين على اداء خطاب الاعتذار المناسب. وفي محاولة لرفع الوعي التداولي لطلاب قمنا بتصميم DCT و نقصد بها مهمة إنجاز الخطاب والتي تم توجيهها إلى الطلاب. حيث اكدت النتائج التي أسفرت عنها DCT فرضيه البحث لدينا. وكشفت النتائج ان اغلبية الطلاب يمكنهم ان يصنعوا فرقا بين مختلف المحاورين وان يكيّفوا اعتذاراتهم وفقا لذلك. حيث ان الوعي التداولي يمكنهم من أداء الاعتذار بالشكل المناسب.