

The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria  
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research  
Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra  
Faculty of Letters and Languages  
Department of Foreign Languages  
Branch of English



**The Role of Sociolinguistic Competence in the Realization of the  
Speech Act of Apologizing by Foreign Language Learners  
The case of Third Year Students at Biskra University**

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages in Partial  
Fulfillment for the Requirements of the Master Degree in Applied Linguistics

**Candidate**

Miss Bouchaib Kawther

**Supervisor**

Dr. SEGUENI Lamri

**Board of Examiners**

**Mr. BECHAR Maamar**

**Mr. EL HAMEL Lamjed**

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## DEDICATION

*In the name of « ALLAH » the Most Gracious the Most Merciful and the most  
compassionate.*

*I dedicate this work to that soul who taught me lot of lessons in life, taught me how to be  
patient, generous, kind*

*To the memory of my Grand Mother*

*I dedicate this humble work to woman who gave me birth, the one who took care of me  
when i was sick, the one who was here for me in my hardest moments, my beloved Mother*

*To the man who supported me, watched over me, encouraged me, the man of my life  
my beloved Father*

*To my whole family, to my brother, to my sweet sisters*

*I also dedicate this modest work to all my teachers whom formed me and showed me the  
path of knowledge*

*Without forgetting also my companions in this adventure, the ones whom shared with me  
this road mixed between shadows and lights*

*And at last not least, my friends, my beloved ones, the ones whom encouraged me in back  
stages, the ones whom I am only dust without them; I dedicate to you this work*

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like first to thank ALLAH for giving me strength and capacity to complete this work.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr. SEGUENI Lamri for his unaccountable guidance, support, help and patience.

I would like to express my warm thanks to Mr. BECHAR Maamar and Mr. EL HAMEL Lamjed who accepted to examine my research work.

I sincerely wish to thank all the teachers and the third year LMD students of the Department of English for their help and seriousness in completing the questionnaire.

I would like to extend my deep appreciation to all the staff members of the library of Biskra University, without their help, this study would have been impossible.

I would also like to thank all my colleagues for the nice times that we spent together helping each other.

My deep appreciations go also to all who helped me in one way or another to realize this work.

## **Abstract**

This dissertation investigates sociolinguistic competence in relation with the performance of the realization of speech act apologizing. We mean by sociolinguistic competence, the one's ability to select the appropriate linguistic means regarding all the socio-cultural aspects like taking account the interlocutor's status, gender role, and age... when realizing a given speech act, especially the speech act of apologizing . It examines students' productions and perceptions of speech of apologizing of third year English students at the University Mohamed Kheider, Biskra. Throughout this study, we tackled the problem of students' ignorance of strategies and linguistic means used to realize speech act of apologizing regarding socio-cultural dimensions. The lack of this knowledge affects seriously their performance. The aim of this research work is to raise students' awareness of sociolinguistic knowledge and to see to what extent this consciousness contributes to the improvement of their productions. Accordingly, we believe that if the students are conscious (know) of sociolinguistic knowledge, they will be able to produce speech act of apologizing appropriately. In attempting to raise the students' awareness of sociolinguistic knowledge, we have directed a questionnaire to the students. The results from the questionnaire have confirmed the research hypothesis. These results reveal that the majority of the students can make difference between different interlocutors and adapt their apologize accordingly. This awareness of the socio-cultural knowledge enables them to perform apologizing appropriately.

## **List of Abbreviations**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**SLA:** Second Language Acquisition

**LMD:** License Master Doctorate

**M, K, U:** Mohammed Kheider University

**CC :** Communicative Competence

**FL:** Foreign Language

**L1:** First Language

**L2:** Second Language

**Q:** Question

**%:** Percentage

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# **General Introduction**

## **General Introduction**

English is an international language that plays a significant role in the globalization area. The aims of teaching and learning this language at schools and universities is to bring up learners to better understanding and better communication of the language. A learner learning English in an environment in which the majority of the people speak that language for example, a French citizen learning English in the UK or the USA is regarded as a second language learner. Someone learning English in an environment where English is not spoken by the majority of people is considered as a foreign language learner. Therefore, we have two contexts one which is ESL and the other which is EFL. In our study, we are more interested in the development of sociolinguistic competence of EFL learners, the ones who have fewer opportunities to speak with native speakers when learning the language. Moreover we believe that sociolinguistic competence can have a great impact on EFL students' performance of speech act of apologizing.

Furthermore one of the basic cognitive linguistics principles is the principle of interrelationship between language and society is sociolinguistics which mainly deals with the different issues of language within a society. Apologizing is one of the main speech acts that we are all expose to during our daily lives.

### **Background of the study**

As a field of study that involves the interaction of both language and society, sociolinguistics has contributed to help foreign language teaching achieve a greater understanding of the nature of language, as well as its manifestations, along with the understanding of the nature of society. Many people are learning the English language as a Lingua Franca. The purpose of learning English differs from one learner to another. A learner who learns English in an environment in which the majority of the people speak that language is regarded as a second language learner for example, a Chinese citizen learning English in

the UK or the USA. Whereas, learning English in an environment where English is not spoken by the majority of people is considered as a foreign language learner. Therefore, we have two different contexts in which English is used ESL and EFL.

The relationship between what we think and what we utter is a complex one. The operations included in the process of the interpretation of language production are equally important for pragmatics and cognitive linguistics, and are thus the subject of research of both of these linguistic disciplines.

A human being, on the basis of acquired linguistic and general knowledge, can understand and/or produce lingual utterances. One of the basis cognitive linguistics principles is the principle of interrelationship between language and society is sociolinguistics which mainly deals with different issues of language within a society.

Apologizing is one of the main speech acts that we are all expose to during our daily lives. Apologies are those in which the speaker's purpose is to get the hearer to commit him/herself to some future course of action. Put more simply, directives are attempts to make the world match the words.

### **Objective of the study**

The aim of this study is to show the role of sociolinguistic competence into language used in a given context, and of course our students will better perform the speech act of apology if they know the social pattern under which the language is used. What is more is to prevent EFL learners from being regarded as rude or being misunderstood when communicating with native speakers by helping them to progress and develop their sociolinguistic knowledge. In addition, the present study is aimed to make our students sociolinguistically competent, and this will make them more aware about how to deal with

language in daily use in the speech community, specifically the appropriate realization of the speech act of apologizing.

### **Significance of the study**

Evidently, there is a perceptible literature gap in successful communication research. Since most previous studies have focused on how to develop certain kind of skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) which is not the case of our study. The possession of the sociolinguistic competence by our EFL students is very crucial for the establishment of successful communication with native speakers. Because if our students are not completely aware of certain conventions or social patterns used when exchanging ideas or executing a specific speech act like suggesting, they are likely to appear impolite or even cause breakdown in communication.

The actual study will hopefully be beneficial for professionals who are working with foreign companies or will be working in English-speaking countries. In case that, they know all the linguistic aspects and expressions used in relation to socio-cultural norms, surely they will properly perform any speech act of apology in different situations with different interlocutors and reduce face threatening act.

### **Statement of the problem**

We have noticed that many EFL learners fail to realize different speech acts particularly the speech act of apologizing in a given situations or context. In the present study, we attempted to show the role of sociolinguistics competence (knowledge) in the realization of speech act of apology students, in society where English is considered as a foreign language cannot perform the speech acts because of the lack of sociolinguistic competence.



## **Research Questions**

This dissertation attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Does sociolinguistic competence have a positive effect on EFL learners' performance of speech act of apology?
2. How can sociolinguistic competence contribute in improving learners' speech act of apology?
3. Is the speech act of apology in The Algerian context similar to the English context?

## **Research Hypothesis**

The present research is based only on one (1) hypothesis that we will try to confirm through our dissertation. We hypothesize if EFL learners are aware of the socio-culture knowledge, they will be able to perform apologize appropriately and successfully.

## **Research Methodology**

We intended to conduct this research using the descriptive method as we believe it is the most appropriate method to confirm to formerly stated hypothesis. Moreover, we plan to get information from any material relevant to our field of interest which is a new and fresh area in our department as far as we are concerned. Concerning data collection tools, we plan to direct a discourse completion task (DTC) to see EFLs' productions and perceptions about speech act of apology.

## **Structure of the study**

This research work is divided into three chapters. The two chapters are devoted for the theoretical part, whereas the third chapter is about the field work. This latter will analyze the students' performance of speech act of apologizing through the discourse completion task administered to them.

### **Population and Sampling**

The population of this study will cover third year students at Biskra University. Among this population we will randomly select a group of 40 students that we believe are homogenous in their level and representative of whole population

# **Chapter One**

# **Sociolinguistic**

# **Competence**

## **Introduction**

Languages are sources out from the historical background of each country. The stresses and the tenses of each language actually differ from each other primarily because of the fact that different nationalities around the world have different perceptions with regards life and living. It could be observed that such linguistic assessments had been based upon their realization of how life's elements should be perceived. Taking the sound of the nature and the environment in use through language had been the main feature of such languages as they are profoundly used around the world. Having a bilingual education opens an individual to understanding how other nations actually understand nature and how much they give importance to the elements making it up. Likely, the process is more complex than actually expected. With one's ability of identifying one language from the other, he is also able to identify one culture from another as he tries to evaluate the different elements of language that each culture recognizes through speech.

Through this, the person having a bilingual capability shall have a better mirror of the world through spoken tongue. It depends on one's view of cultural connection in the world that the possibility of learning another language lays. Likely, the idea is to help a person understand different cultures through the existence of different languages. Most often than not, one's disposition about the said idea of cultural connection actually increases or decreases the capability of one to accept learning other languages from other nationalities, moreover, such disposition would give them either a better or dimmer chance of accepting other nationalities as part of the one whole wide world community of humans trying to cope up with the changes of the world. Value conflict usually occurs when a person's ideas of something or someone does not connect with that of the others. Likely, in terms of language, such situation occurs when one does not understand a language based on the perception of

others. If one foreigner does not understand the way English should be understood, comprehension of the conversation becomes impossible.

### **1.1The birth of sociolinguistic competence**

According to many researchers sociolinguistics is a sub-branch of linguistics, it begins to appear as the offspring of the learning process of transition from the so-called structuralism to conceptualism, since the early sixties. A review of the history showed that the theoretical development has undergone in progression towards its contemporary state.

According to Nodoushan (1995, p.16) 'sociolinguistics contrasts with the linguistic theory, sociolinguistic theory emphasizes the appropriateness of verbal message in context. This theory posits beyond the grammar a level of rule-governed verbal behavior that relates linguistic and social constraints'. However, assume a more radical view in this regard. They argue that the constraints upon what we say and the way in which we say it are of a social origin. Moreover they even go on to admit that "speakers do not have a direct acquaintance with language any more than they do with society. What they actually experience is the linguistic manifestation of relationships" (Doughty, et al 1972: 83).

The objective of sociolinguistics is to go beyond the mere structural analysis of grammatical systems. Sociolinguists, concentrated on the language use by human groups, social strata, geographical regions, etc. They began to engage themselves with the socially-patterned variation in linguistic behavior and the identification of those factors that affect and predict such variations. At the same path Nodoushan (1995:17) argued that 'turned out to be considerate of variable rules for the description of those linguistic forms that were socially loaded'. From that we can notice this caused linguists to question the validity of Chomsky's linguistic competence and any other descriptive method that ruled out any concern for variation and diversity in language.

#### **1.1.1Definition of Sociolinguistics**

Sociolinguistics is a very wide field, and it can be used to describe many different ways of studying language. According to Trudgill (2003) Sociolinguistics is a term used to describe all parts of the investigation of the relationship between language and society apart from those which are purely social scientific inside their objectives, such as ethnomethodology. Sociolinguistic research is thus work which can be intended to accomplish a better comprehension of the nature of human terminology by studying language in its social context and/or to accomplish a better understanding of the type of the relationship and discussion between language and society Sociolinguistics contains anthropological linguistics, dialectology, discourse examination, ethnography of speaking, geolinguistics, terminology contact studies, , the social psychology of language as well as the sociology of language.

In other word, it is the study of the relationship between language and society; it mainly focuses on the use of the language by an individual speaker within groups of speakers in its social context.

### **1.1.2 Sociolinguistic Competence**

Sociolinguistics is the study of the appropriateness of language in different contexts. In other term, sociolinguistics is the study of how “situational factors such as setting of a speech event and the cultural context effect on the choice of what should be said.” Brown (2000, p. 220). Sociolinguistic competence is one of several components that include grammatical competence, strategic competence and discourse competence. Grammatical competence and discourse competence are defined as the linguistic system of the language, whereas sociolinguistic and strategic competences are used to describe the functional aspects of communication.

Sociolinguistic competence is separated into two pragmatic categories, which are the functional aspect of language and the sociolinguistic aspect. The first aspect is functional aspect or “illocutionary” competence that deals with sending and receiving intended messages

Brown, (2000). Sociolinguistic competence encompasses such aspects as formality, politeness, metaphor, register, and culturally related aspects of language. Brown (2000). In addition, the nonverbal communication.

Nonverbal communication deals with how you say it rather than on not what you say. But, through body language like physical distance, gestures, eye contact, and other nonverbal messages. Cultural aspects are connected to nonverbal communication to the point that according to E. Hall (1998. p. 54) “the barriers to culture learning are more nonverbal than verbal.” There are six categories of nonverbal communication: kinesics or body language, eye contact, proxemics or physical proximity, artifacts or clothing and ornamentation, kinesthetic or touching and olfactory dimension or sensory nonverbal messages. For example, English language is more verbal than Japanese. It means that utterers of English express their views through words rather than using gestures. Japanese emphasis on a nonverbal implied message. Speakers of Japanese infer meaning from the context of statements, such as the way it is said, by whom, to whom and where Bennett (1998). Nonverbal behavior includes intonation and pitch of words. A change in pitch can imply a range of emotions from anger to friendliness.

Through nonverbal implies one can indicate social status, level of education, home region. Another aspect is turn taking in conversations. It is common for the European American patterns to stare directly in the eye to taking turns. In contrast to this pattern, Asian cultures require averted eyes to indicate a turn in a conversation (Holmes, 2013). A study by Eibl-Eibesfeldt’s (cited in L.Knapp, J. Hall, G. Horgan, 2014, p. 52), on studies of verbal and nonverbal human communication, lead to conclude that rules related to greetings, getting the attention or persuading a partner are essential of both verbal and nonverbal human behavior. He also noticed that cultural factors play great role in making these strategies different from culture to culture.

### **1.2.1 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. (1995:17) 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.

### **1.2.2 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.

### **1.3 Pragmatics**

Pragmatics as a field of inquiry was initiated in the 1930s by Morris, Carnap, and Peirce; they produced three main fields that are: (1) syntax which addresses the formal relations of signs to one another; (2) Semantics which concerns the relation of signs to what they denote, and (3) Pragmatics which focuses on the relation of signs to their users and interpreters (as quoted in Horn & Ward, 2005, p. 1).

Pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning that the speaker means when communicating with other interlocutors, and how the context influences the linguistic choices made by the speaker. Yule (1996) defined pragmatics "as being concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or

reader). This type of study necessarily involves the interpretation of what people mean in a particular context and how the context influences what is said" (p. 3).

Koc and Bamleer (1977) stated that a sentence uttered by a speaker can carry more than one meaning which differs according to different situations. Meaning is of three types:

1-The conceptual meaning: the meaning that the sentence or utterance has in isolation;

2-The contextual meaning: the meaning that a sentence or utterance takes in particular context;

3-The pragmatic meaning: the meaning that the sentence or utterance takes on only due to the interaction between the speaker and listener (as qtd in Yan & Zhuang, 2010, p. 2).

When people are engaged in an interaction, there are certain limits that govern their choices of the language they use depending on many assumptions, such as how close or distant the listener is? And what is his social status? The context also influences the choice of words; it makes people decide what style (formal or informal) is appropriate to the conversation while it is occurring. In addition, Pragmatic seeks to explore how listener can make inferences about what is said in order to arrive at the interpretation of the speakers intended meaning, and how the context helps him in doing so (Yule, 1996).

Pragmatics deals also with presuppositions. It represents the shared background assumptions that are taken for granted when people communicate; People who know each other well can build up quite accurate impressions of what assumptions are shared between them (Griffiths, 2006). Presuppositions extremely contribute to both speakers and listeners to achieve successful communicative purposes.

Pragmatics is not interested only with the verbal features of the language (morphology, syntax, semantics and phonology), but also with the non-verbal ones (gestures,

conjunctions and facial expressions and how they contribute to the listeners' interpretations of the speakers' intentions. Wharton (2009) stated that "the aim of pragmatic theory is to explain how utterances with all their linguistic and non-linguistic properties are understood" (p. 4). He also described verbal communication as a mental process in which people use their cognition, intelligence, inferential activities to recognize intentions.

#### **1.4. Pragmatic Failure**

Thomas (1983: 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: pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic. Both of them are terms Thomas (1983) picks up from Leech's (1983: 127) treatment of the scope of pragmatics in which the latter distinguishes between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. Pragmalinguistics, according to Leech (ibid: 128), refers to our linguistic knowledge of language use. For Crystal (1998), pragmalinguistics refers to the study of language use from the standpoint of a language's structural resources. Sociopragmatics, on the other hand, is related to how our sociological knowledge influences our interaction (Leech, 1983: 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. Pragmalinguistic failure is principally a linguistic problem, caused by differences in the linguistic encoding of pragmatic force; while sociopragmatic failure stems from cross-culturally different perceptions of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behaviour (Thomas, 1983: 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 pragmalinguistic failure from one angle and sociopragmatic failure from another.

#### **1.4.1 Sociopragmatic failure**

Sociopragmatic 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. Sociopragmatic decisions are, therefore, social in the first place rather than linguistic (Thomas, 1983: 104). Therefore, it is likely that a foreign speaker will assess size of imposition, social distance...etc. differently from a native speaker. Reynolds (1995: 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 sociopragmatic failure. Thomas (1983:105) also presents "taboos" as an example of sociopragmatic 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, 2001:75):

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 (2006:7), 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 sociopragmatic failure. Thomas (1983: 106) believes that “pragmatic principles, such as politeness, conflict with other deeply held values such as truthfulness or sincerity” and can lead to a sociopragmatic failure.

#### **1.4.2 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 'pragmalinguistic transfer' (i. e. inappropriate transfer of speech acts from the speakers' native language to the target language) (Lihui and Jianbin, 2010:47). Some teaching techniques may, in fact, increase the possibility of pragmalinguistic failure. Kasper (1984: 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: 67-8).

According to Kasper (1984: 3), pragmalinguistic failure happens because learners respond to what speakers say rather than to what they mean. The following example presented by Kasper (ibid) shows a pragmalinguistic 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).

### **1.5 Communicative competence**

Dell Hymes 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 still developing, and the emerge 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.

### **1.5.1 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 categorised communicative competence components into: linguistic component; discursive component; socio-cultural component; and strategic component.

a-Linguistic component: It is the mastery of language code itself (syntactic morphological, semantic, and morphological) rules. Shohamy (1996, p.143) defined it “linguistic component

includes knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, semantics and phonology”

b- 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”.

c-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”.

d- 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).

### **1.5.2 Models of communicative competence**

Communicative competence is a term which defines by many researchers and scholars. Moreover the term of communicative competence has also an important influence in the field of SLA, since it has been the basis for the teaching approach known as communicative language teaching. It is for this reason that different scholars are attempted to define specific components that make up the construct of communicative competence. In that sense, the most



representative models analyzing the components integrated in the framework of communicative competence belongs to the field of SLA.

### **1.5.2.1 Hymes' Work**

The origins of the notion of communicative competence attributed to Hymes.

On communicative competence (1971, page reference to experts in Pride and Holmes, 1972, p. 269, 293) developed from a paper presented at the Research Planning conference on Language Development among Disadvantaged Children held at Yeshiva University, June 1978. Hymes points to the relevance of the linguistic theory to the language development of children, and he selects, from among the linguistic theories available to him, that presented by Chomsky (1965). In his theory, Hymes explains that the child who is actively involved in the speech community with an unconscious interpretation, will be able to master an infinite ability of producing and interpreting any grammatical sentence of language with a finite experience in few years within contexts in which socio-cultural factors play a fundamental and constitutive role (Riley, 1996). Hymes focuses in his foundation on the construction of the theory of communicative competence; his attention was on the first language acquisition. After that, as Riley (1996) claimed, Hymes' notion of communicative competence goes away from further Chomskyan paradigm, and was adopted by some applied linguists who used the term to refer to knowledge of rules of use. They agreed on Hymes' idea that rules of grammar would be useless without rules of use and applied his theory of communicative competence on second language teaching, and second language acquisition using methodologies falling within the communicative approach of language teaching in which the focus is on communicative purposes rather than the linguistic rules. We can say that Hymes' work on the

presentation of the theory of “communicative competence” played a role in further studies that relied on his concept to come up with effective approaches and broader definitions of terms related to teaching a second or a foreign language.

### **1.5.2.2 Canal and Swain’s Model (1980)**

The first theoretical model to address a broader concept of the components of language was that of Canal and Swain (1980). Spolsky (1989, cited in Shohamy, 1996) notes that the development of communicative competence theory had an indirect effect on theories of second language learning, and offered a theoretical basis for teaching language for communication since it is related more to Hymes’ notion of communicative competence that was concerned to some extent to second language teaching. Their argument is that linguistic competence should be seen as a vital part of communicative competence. The model contains four competencies underneath the title of communicative competence: grammatical competence i.e. knowledge of language code; sociolinguistic competence i.e. knowledge of socio-cultural rules of use in a particular context; discourse competence i.e. knowledge of achieving coherence and cohesion in a spoken or written text. Pragmatic competence is essentially included in this model under sociolinguistic competence. Canal and Swain (1980, p. 30) described it as “socio-cultural rules of use”. They added strategic competence i.e. the ability to avoid and correct mistakes in communication. They claim that a valid measure of language ability needs to include these four components. However, this model has been criticised by Shohamy (1996) on the grounds that it is not known how the different components cooperate between each other. From the other hand, and despite the criticisms, she indicates that this framework put foundations to teaching and learning a second language, she stated “it is not important to emphasize that the acceptance of Canal and Swain framework

was not necessarily an indication of the strength of the model, but rather an indication of the state of the art in language teaching and learning at the time” (Shohamy, 1996, p .144)

### **1.5.2.3 Savignon’s model**

Savignon (1983) also put forward a model of communicative competence represented as an inverted pyramid; as can be seen in figure (2). According to Savignon, communicative competence is similar to the previous model of Canal and Swain (1980). It also includes four types of competencies such as grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic and strategic competence. The new about Savignon’s model is the concept of interaction among the four competencies. According to her, communicative competence is greater than the rest of the components, especially grammatical one. In fact, she argues that a measure of both sociolinguistic and strategic competencies without any knowledge of grammatical competence can contribute to increase someone’s communicative competence.(i.e. without the use of language, a person can communicate through gestures or facial expressions). As she stated Communicative Competence Grammatical Competence Discourse Competence Strategic Competence Sociolinguistic Competence (2001, p. 17) “an increase in one component interacts with other components to produce a corresponding increase in overall communicative competence”

### **1.5.2.4 Bachman’s Model (1990)**

The most important development in constructing the theory of communicative competence was the emergence of “Communicative Language Ability Model” of Bachman (1990), who claims that, unlike Canal and Swain’s framework, this model focus on the point

that language components interact with each other, along with the context in which language use occurs. Bachman agrees Hymes' idea that communicative competence is not limited to linguistic competence (Shohamy, 1996). This model contains three components, namely language competence, strategic competence, and physiological mechanisms. Bachman (1990) explains that language competence comprises two additional components: organizational and pragmatic competence. On one hand, organizational competence consists of grammatical competence (knowledge of vocabulary, graphology, semantics, morphology, phonology and syntax), and textual competence (discourse competence) which means cohesion and coherence. On the other hand, pragmatic competence involves illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence. The former referring to knowledge of speech acts and language functions and Communicative Competence Grammatical Competence Sociolinguistic competence Strategic Competence Discourse Competence

The latter referring to knowledge of how to use language functions appropriately in a given context. Separately from language competence, this model also contains strategic competence and psychological mechanisms. The former refers to the mental capacity to implement language competence appropriately in the situation in which the communication takes place, whereas the latter refers to the neurological processes that are involved in language use. However, this model has been praised by many scholars such as Skehan (1990), who clarifies that there is coordination between components. However, Spolsky (1989, cited in shohamy, 1996, p. 149) criticises it by "being too complex and difficult to apply"

## **1.6 Intercultural Communication**

We all need to learn how to communicate all over again, just like when we were children in accordance with the society we belong to or the place we visit we learn and acquire language and behavior as well. Intercultural communication is defined as situated

communication between individuals or groups of different linguistic and cultural origins. This requires learning language as well as learning behavioral norms for good communication. However, this will be a bit different since we are adults learning how to communicate in someone else's culture, not our own.

Intercultural means that this communicative relationship is between people of different cultures, where culture is the structured manifestation of human behavior in social life within specific national and local contexts, e.g. political, linguistic, economic, institutional, and professional.

Intercultural communication the verbal and nonverbal interaction between people from different cultural backgrounds. Basically, 'inter' is a prefix that means 'between' and cultural means... Well, from a culture, so intercultural communication is the communication between cultures. Sometimes, this is used to describe a single person trying to interact in a foreign environment but more often, it is a two-way street, where people from both cultures are trying to improve their communication.

Now, if you want to learn about intercultural communication, it's important to understand what this is. But it's also important to understand what isn't. Intercultural communication is targeted at allowing for positive and productive interaction. You are not joining this culture, you are not becoming a member of another society, and you are not abandoning your own culture. That would be assimilation and that's not what we are after.

Intercultural communication is also not simply a language proficiency. Yes, communication requires the ability to understand language, but just think about how much of you communication with even your own friends is nonverbal: our body language our attitudes, the rituals from hand-shaking to the stink eye. Some researchers estimate that up to

93% of all human communication is nonverbal, although according to recent studies, it's actually closer to 60%.

Still, that means that more than half of communication is never spoken. So, intercultural communication is going to take a lot more than just learning a language and the acquisition of skills and human attributes likely to enhance intercultural communication is viewed exclusively as a component of language programs, i.e. as an accompaniment to the practical acquisition of language itself.

## **Conclusion**

Both language teaching and language learning processes were mainly based on the teaching and learning of grammar. And all the programs and syllabus were designed accordingly. Teachers nowadays are focusing not only on the grammar rules lessons, but also on teaching the social role of language which we call communication. According to Kramsch (1998) ' language users have not only learned to interpret signs and to act upon them; they have also learned to expect certain behaviors from others as well.' So that interlocutors have to possess certain skills to avoid breakdowns during conversations.

The most efficient communicator in foreign languages is not always the person who is best at manipulating its structures. It is often the person who is most skilled at processing the complete situation involving himself and his hearers, taking account of what knowledge is already shared between them, and selecting items which will communicate his message effectively. In that sense, all languages have specific items and behaviours expected from its speakers, in particular situations with people from different areas and have different ranks. They are required to apologize when doing a fault, or when missing promise ..... And say goodbye as a way of closing encounters. And if these expected behaviours are not done, it can be viewed as social disrespect, or inappropriate actions . As a solution, many people proposed

the teaching of the culture of the target language. According to them if our students are aware of cultural differences, they may avoid sociolinguistic transfer.

**Chapter Two**  
**The Speech of**  
**Apologizing**



## **Introduction**

This chapter will primarily deal with an over view of linguistic realization concerning the speech act of apologizing. We will first provide a definition of this specific speech act, outlining its main characteristics and differentiating it from other type of speech acts, such as apologizing. Second, we will review the different studies conducted on apologizing by examining these studies from both the cross-cultural and interlanguage 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 apologizing. Moreover with a view to implementing this study in the foreign language classroom, the present chapter aims to expand the pragmatic features examined in the field of cross-cultural and interlanguage 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 Definitions 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 a 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 expresses 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):

#### **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!

#### **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?

### **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”

### **Commissives**

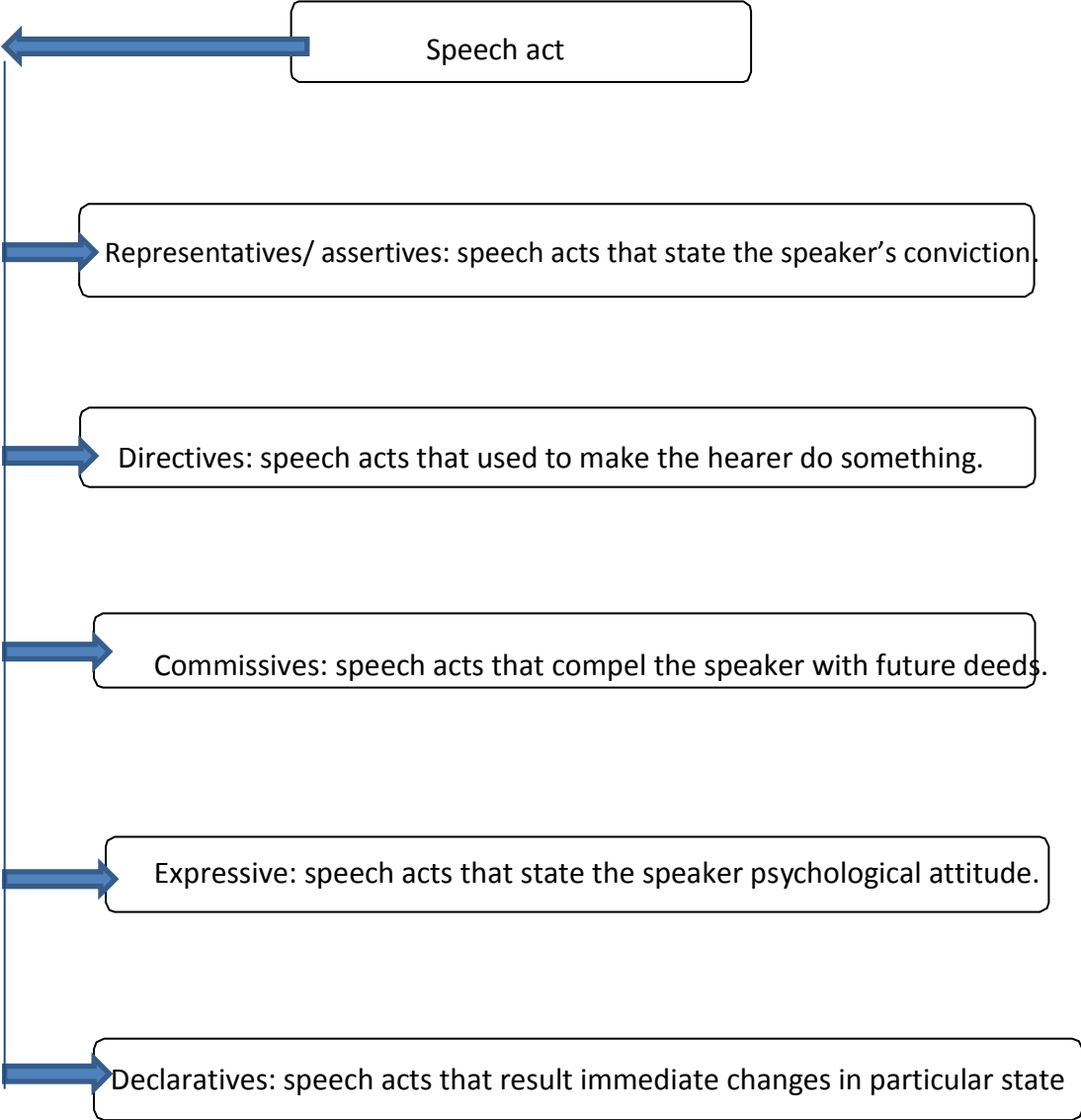
Hurford et.al. (2007) point out that “A commissive act is any illocutionary act which essentially involves the speaker committing himself to behave in some required way”. Consequently, this category of speech acts is related to future actions such as promises, threats, and pledges. (p.294) Speaker: I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

### **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.





**Figure01: The five types of speech act that presented by Austin Adapted  
from (Huang 106-108)**

### **2.3 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 (1977:29) 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 speech act of apology**

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 speakers use 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 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 interlanguage 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 pragmalinguistic 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: 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 Interlanguage Studies on Apology**

In interlanguage 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 interlanguage 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 interlanguage 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 sociopragmatic ability to know where and when it was appropriate to use the semantic formula in English.

Research into interlanguage 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 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 apologize, 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 apologize 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 apologize .” 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 Teachability 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 suggesting that has been drawn up on the basis of speech act which is defined as "When an action or an utterance (or the lack of either) results in one or more persons perceiving themselves as deserving an apology, the culpable person(s) is (are) expected to apologize" (Cohen, p.386) We have also highlighted a particular speech act which we are more interested to, the speech act of. Speech act of apology and (other speech acts, requesting) have been separated for more clarification in empirical studies i.e. the way native speakers realize apologize. These apologizes are realized in various ways using direct apologize, modal verbs and indirect speech. All can be used to make apologize, but of which to use depends on whom one will be talking to. In another words, the way one should realize request taking account the socio-cultural dimensions i.e. how one should make a request regarding interlocutor's status. Since request is an act of imposition, not with everyone request is realized in the same way

# **Chapter Three**

## **Field Work**

## **Introduction**

This chapter is designed to analyze the results obtained through the effective role of sociolinguistic competence enhancing the speech act apology . Our aim from conducting this study is to test the validity of our hypothesis. Since the learners are the main subjects 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 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 sociolinguistic competence is important to help them to develop their speech act of apology. Second, it also attempts to investigate the actual state of learning in terms of using sociolinguistic competence.

#### **3.1.2. Structure of the questionnaire**

This questionnaire is addressed to Third Year English students at the department of English at Biskra University for the academic year 2017-2018. The participants in this questionnaire are 50 students from two groups. Thus they are chosen randomly to explore the efficiency of sociolinguistic competence in developing students' speech act of apology. It also 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 eight items, the students' gender; students' age ,their choice to study the English language, how long they have been studying English , how would they assess their present level at English ,how do they find speaking English, if they heard about sociolinguistic competence ,and what did their Teacher at previous school levels focus on.

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

This section consists six (06) items which seeks information about sociolinguistics 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.

#### **iii. 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

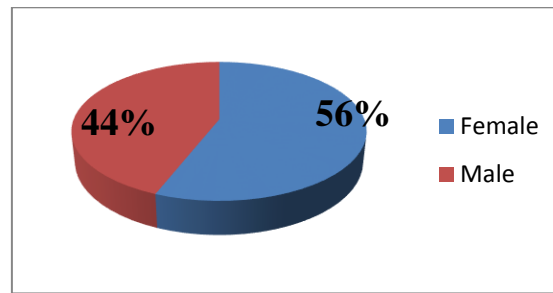


Figure 02: Students' gender

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



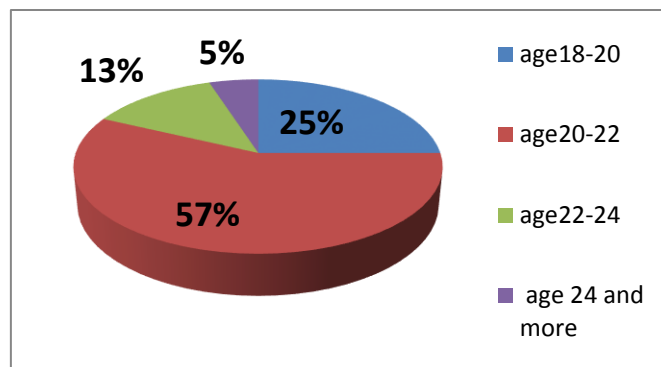


Figure 3: Students' age

As shown in the table 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

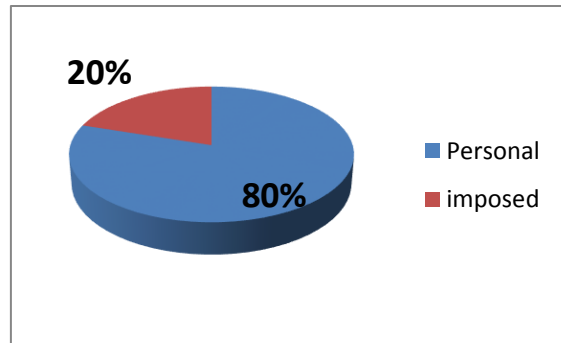


Figure 04: Students' Choices for studying English

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 sociolinguistic competence 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

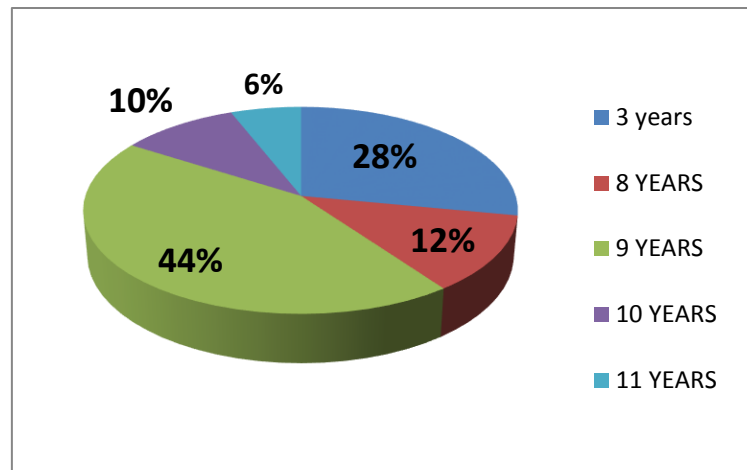


Figure 05: Years of studying English

These results represent the years of studying English language. A quick glance at this table will reveal 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%
Exellent	7	14%
I don't know	5	10%
Total	50	100%

Table 05: The Students' self-assessment

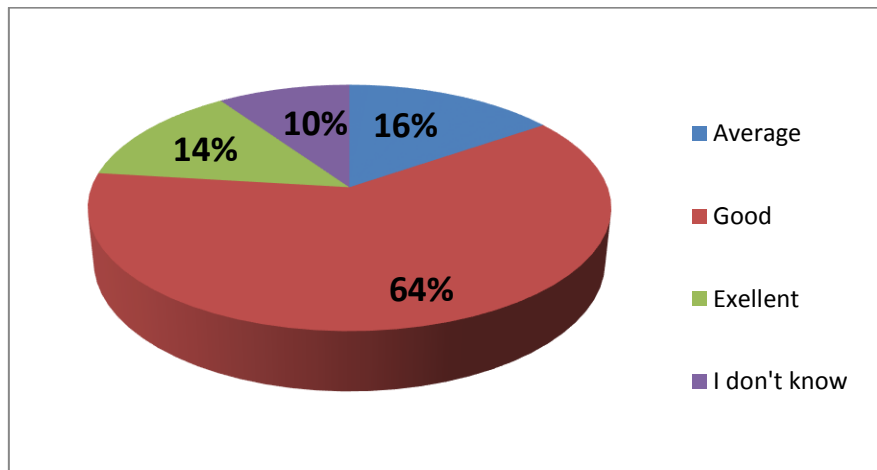


Figure 06: The Students' self-assessment

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

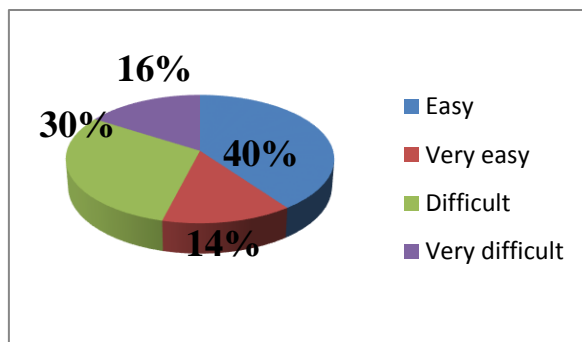


Figure 07: students' attitude towards speaking

These results represent the evaluation of the level of students in English .half of students (30%) found speaking in English is 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 sociolinguistic competence?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	40	80%
No	10	20%
Total	50	100%

Table 07: Students opinion about sociolinguistic competence

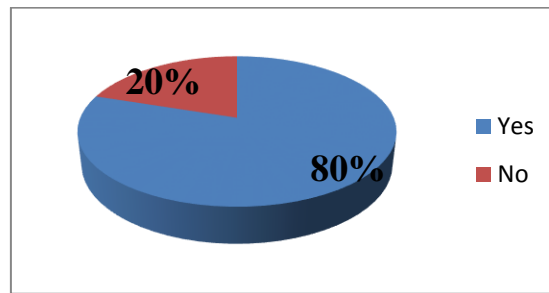


Figure 08: Students opinion about sociolinguistic competence

It can be seen from the table above that (80%) from the EFL students know what is meant by classroom management i.e. they know some classroom techniques and how they build a well-managed classroom, However; about (20%) from the rest of the respondents believe that they do not know classroom management or its characteristics.

8. 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%
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Table 08: Students' background knowledge of language

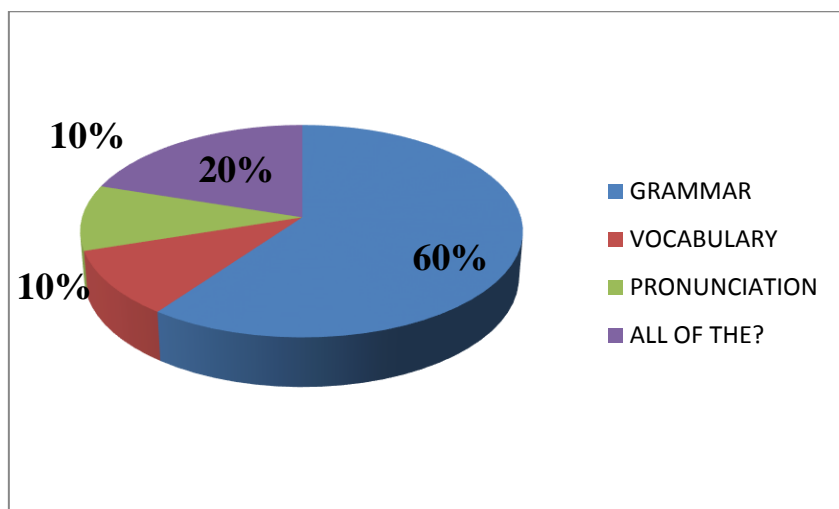


Figure 09: Students' background knowledge of language

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 grammar translation method which overemphasizes the acquisition of grammar rules together with a list of vocabulary without paying any attention to 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

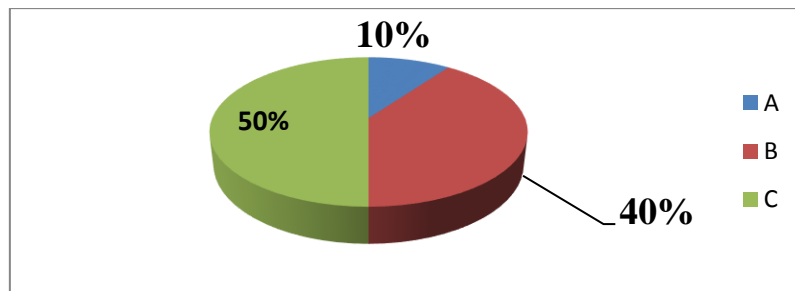


Figure 10: Participants ‘Responses Distribution in Situation 1

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

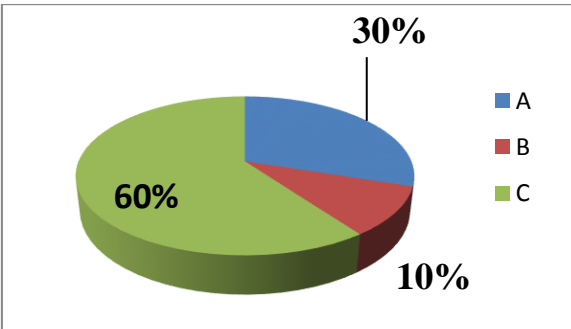


Figure 11 : Participants ‘Responses Distribution in Situation 2

The results obtained from the above question show that (60%) of students state that they repara your 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. Ignore him

B. You say sorry and passe

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

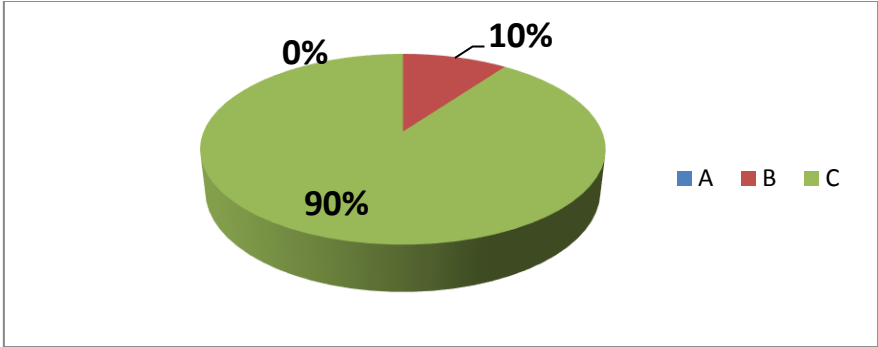


Figure 12: Participants ‘Responses Distribution in Situation 3

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

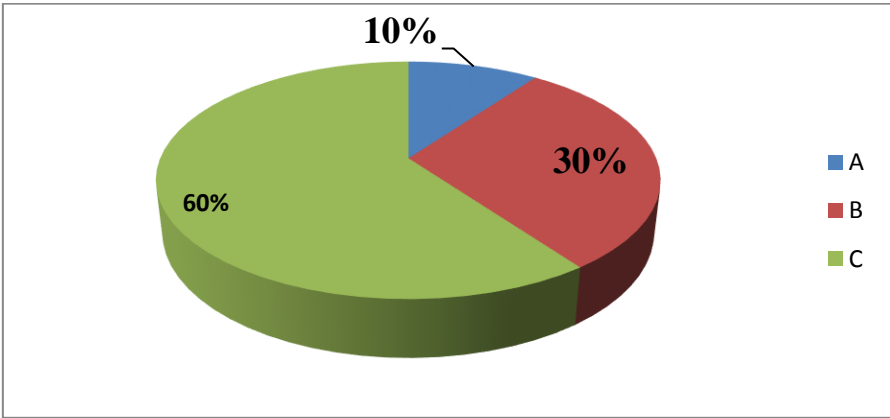


Figure13: Participants 'Responses Distribution in Situation 4

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

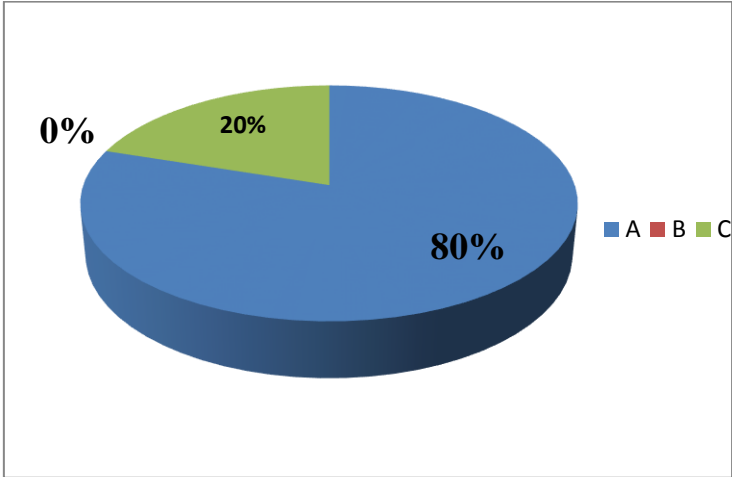


Figure14: Participants ‘Responses Distribution in Situation 5

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

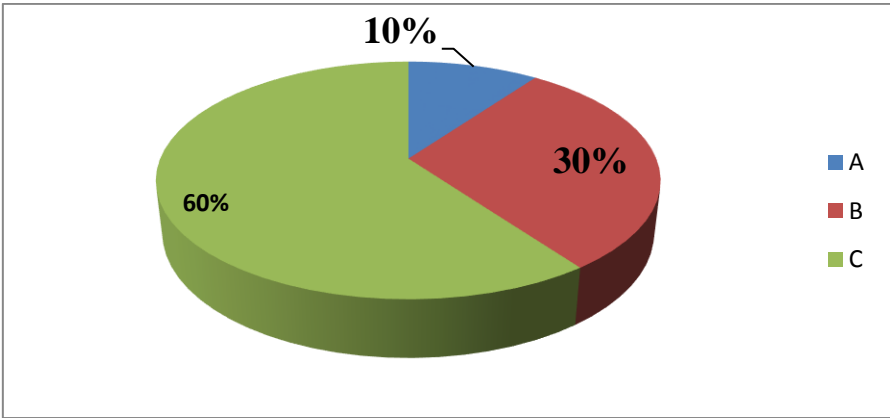


Figure15: Participants 'Responses Distribution in Situation 6

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.

**iv. 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 sociolinguistic competence 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 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 two 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. 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 you did that while (10%) of students claim that they only tell the truth.

Then the majority of the students affirm that (60%) they repara your 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 .Also 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.

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 sociolinguistic competence to realize the speech act of apologizing.

## **Conclusion**

Results from the analysis of students' questionnaire support our research hypothesis which postulates that promoting sociolinguistic competence can have a positive impact on FL learners' in the realization of speech act apologizing.

In addition if our learners acquire sociolinguistic 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 apologize in different context with different interlocutors. Therefore, our students have developed the socio-linguistic competence which in turn affects their realization of speech act of apologizing.



## **General conclusion**

Sociolinguistic competence is the knowledge of socio-cultural norms of a given language. Hence, sociolinguistic competence of English is the socio-cultural norms which influence their language use. Society and culture are related to language. Language understanding will be very difficult without the knowledge of the socio-cultural rules related to that language. EFL learners have few opportunities to interact with native speakers which in turn will affect the development of their sociolinguistic competence. 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.

Among them, Dell Hymes who first coined the concept of “communicative competence”; 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... etc. They redefined it and added other components: grammatical, sociolinguistic/pragmatic, discourse and strategic components. A successful realization of the speech act of apologizing should take account the level of directness, the use of formal and informal depending on the person.

In addition the results of our study showed that the majority of our students are aware of linguistic means used to realize apologize. 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 uses of formal or more polite apologize (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 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 apologizing, it is quite important to focus on acquiring sociolinguistic competence. Therefore, we would like to put forward the following recommendations as how to improve our students' use of the speech act of apologizing.

- Teachers of 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 apologize to someone in English society, how one should complement and respond to it.

- 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 compliment, apologizing for misbehaving, deeply apologizing ...etc.

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 courses i.e. that oral expression and this new module must closely be linked. 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 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.

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.

At the end students should listen to native speakers' suggesting as much as they can in order to correct their performance, pronunciation, gain new vocabulary, and develop their sociolinguistic 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

##### 2. Students' age

.....

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

Personal  Imposed

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

.....

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

a. Average

b. Good

c. Excellent

d. I don't know

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

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

**7. Have you ever heard about sociolinguistic competence?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**8. 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

- 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 playing music with loud voice . 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.

**Thanks for your  
cooperation**

تتناول هذه الدراسة دور الكفاءة اللغوية الاجتماعية فيما يتعلق بأداء الخطاب الاعتدالي لدى متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية في قسم الانجليزية بجامعة محمد خيضر-بسكرة. في بداية بحثنا اعتمدنا على الفرضية انه كيف للكفاءة اللغوية الاجتماعية ان تحسن من الخطاب الاعتدالي, لهذا يجب على الأستاذ القيام بدوره الحقيقي من اجل أن يتفاعل الطالب في القسم , وآخر فرضية انه إدارة الجامعات , الأساتذة و جميع الطلبة مدركون لأهمية الكبيرة التي تلعبها للكفاءة اللغوية الاجتماعية في تطوير الخطاب الاعتدالي, لاتحدوا في تشجيعهم على تطويرها .وللتأكد من صحة الفرضية قمنا بالبحث على مجموعة طلاب السنة الثالثة (ل,م, د) قسم الانجليزية بجامعة بسكرة .و الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو معرفة مدى أهمية للكفاءة اللغوية الاجتماعية ان تطوير الخطاب الاعتدالي للطلاب أثناء حصصه. إن عملنا هذا ينقسم إلى قسمين, القسم الأول .والقسم الثاني يحتوي مهارة الخطاب الاعتدالي ويتضمن مفهوم الكفاءة اللغوية الاجتماعية والعناصر المهمة التي تتضمنها مفهومه والصعوبات التي يواجهها الطالب أثناء تعلمه .أما الجزء الأخير فيحتوي على الجهة التطبيقية للبحث ويتضمن التحليل المفصل لاستبيان الذي قمنا بتوزيعه على طلبة السنة الثالثة في قسم اللغة الانجليزية .وقد تحصلنا من خلال بحثنا هذا على ان المعرفة الثقافية الاجتماعية ذات دور فعال وكبير في مساعدة الطلبة في اداء الفعل الخطابى الاعتدالي بشكل مناسب و صحيح , كل هذا يؤكد صحة فرضيتنا