

Teaching English Speech Acts In Sudanese EFL Context: A Focus On Apology, Request, Refusal And Complaint Forms

Muawia Mohammad Alhasan Gaily

College Of Arts & Sciences – Taif University – Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia

Mawiahasan917@gmail.com

Abstract: EFL teachers in Sudanese context still focus on teaching linguistic competence rather than pragmatic or communicative competence, as a result a lot of Sudanese EFL learners usually encounter serious difficulties whenever engage in like –real communicative setting because of their lack of adequate pragmatic input. In this respect it has been claimed by several previous studies e.g. Baradovi-Harlig (1999) -Kasper (1997) that incorporating knowledge of the target language speech acts into EFL curricula and classrooms can be very beneficial for students to develop their pragmatic competence. Accordingly, the initial step towards promoting and cultivating a sense of pragmatic competence among Sudanese EFL learners is to offer satisfactory pragmatic input in order to help them understand socially appropriate communication and to become better communicators. Based on the above mentioned view point, the present study intends to investigate how programmed pedagogical sessions could lead to promoting the participants performance of the four target speech acts apology, request, complaint and refusal. A group of 20 male Sudanese EFL learners studying at different five Sudanese universities participated in this study. Data were collected via Two kinds of tools: Discourse Completion Test and Multiple Choice Pragmatic Comprehension Test which they were used both as a pre-test and post. The results obtained revealed noticeable development in the participants performance of the target four speech acts in the post test.

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Introduction:

The past few years witnessed proliferation in the studies of L2 Interlanguage pragmatics(ILP).The emphasis has been shifted from teaching grammar to developing L2 pragmatic competence. According to Baradovi- Harlig (1996) successful communication in the L2 requires not only mastery of syntax, morphology, phonology and lexis, but also the ability to use appropriate expressions in appropriate context. Accordingly, the effective use of language involve in the first place the learners ability of utilizing the linguistic knowledge in the process of interpreting and expressing different language functions. In this respect also, Hymes (1972) as reported in Ray, (2011) emphasized the importance of language as a system of communication in which knowledge of language use is as important as grammatical knowledge. Therefore, L2 learners always need more than linguistic knowledge and skills in order to be better language users.

Consequently, a substantial and growing body of second language research highlights the importance of pragmatics knowledge in the L2 communication, For instance, Kasper,(2001) emphasized the role of interlanguage pragmatics knowledge in facilitating the process of L2 communication,moreover the author suggests integrating the L2 pragmatics knowledge in

L2 curricula and syllabuses in order to provide the learners with sufficient and adequate pragmatic input.

In the same way, Holtgraves, (2007) argues that the ability to recognize the speech acts that others perform with implicit speech acts is considered to be an organic part of pragmatic competence. The ability to recognize the L2 speech acts and detect or working out the intended meaning of an utterance according to context where this utterance is performed from one hand and the ability to use language for different purposes (such as greeting, requesting, informing) from the other hand constitutes the ultimate goal for any teaching program on pragmatics.

Based on the above mentioned viewpoints, the present study will attempt to explore the role of pedagogical treatment in equipping the Sudanese college EFL learners with sufficient pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge that are needed to generate and comprehend the four target speech acts of apology, request, refusal and complaint.

Theoretical Framework:

Importance Of Teaching L2 Pragmatics:

There seems to exist in the domain of L2 teaching a shared belief that among several competences that learners must develop, the pragmatic one remains the most significant. Its paramount importance in facilitating communication is

undeniable. Accordingly, immense amount of research asserted that learners must be provided for opportunities to develop their pragmatic and communicative competence. For instance, Bachman (1990) emphasizes the role of pragmatics knowledge in effective communication he says:

"In order to successful in communication, it is essential for the second language learners to know not just grammar and organization, but also pragmatic aspects of the target language" p.23.

Moreover, significance of pragmatic dimension in the EFL class stems from the fact that though learners have a good knowledge and command of grammar and lexis, they always encounter serious difficulties when engage in real-like communicative activities since they lack necessary ability to use the appropriate expression in the appropriate context. According to Bachman (1990) pragmatic failure or incompetence always result in unsuccessful communication events which lead in the end to misunderstanding and miscommunication and can even leave the native speaker interlocutor with the perception that the L2 speaker is either ignorant or impolite.

Similarly, Thomas (1983) indicates several serious consequences of pragmatic failure, he further maintained that pragmatic incompetence or failure is usually more serious even than grammatical errors, since native speakers tend to treat pragmatic errors as offensive rather than being as just a mere reflection of their lack of pragmatic knowledge.

In the same way, Balum Kuka, (1989) refers to pragmatic failure as inability of speakers to understand each other intention while communicate, further more they identify two major aspects of pragmatic failure: pragmalinguistic failure and sociopragmatic failure. Pragmalinguistic failure usually takes place when the pragmatic force of linguistic structure is usually different from that normally assigned to it by a native speaker, while from the other hand the later "sociopragmatic failure" stems from the different intercultural perceptions of what constitute appropriate linguistic behavior. Accordingly, different serious problems that usually block communication or even hinders opportunities of mutual understanding between L2 speaker and Non-native Speakers(NNSs) interlocutor can be directly related to learners' undeveloped pragmatic competence. Therefore, pragmatics education is viewed here as the only way out for handling such L2 communication problems.

In most cases, significance of pragmatic teaching in the EFL classroom includes its role in easing and facilitating the process of learners assimilation and integration in the L2 speech community. and attaining pragmatic proficiency that

lead in the end to familiarize the learners with cultural diverse and further enhance their ability to habituate themselves to L2 speech community.

Speech Acts Theory And Its Pedagogical implications

Historically, speech acts theory evolved from theories of illocutionary acts originally introduced by Austin (1962) and further developed by Searle (1969-1975). Austin tried to further explain how meaning and actions are overlapped and related very much to language. The major concern of the theory as first introduced by Austin (1962) was basically built around what people do with language and functions of language, consequently Austin further explained that communication is a matter of doing, he proposed that in saying something one is doing something also. Furthermore, Austin identified three major dimensions of acts related to utterance: locutionary Act which corresponds to the propositional meaning of an utterance, Illocutionary Act which refers to the force that speaker gives to locutionary act Utterance may intended to give more than its locutionary act e.g request and Perlocutionary act which is mainly performed to achieve or create some kinds of effects on the hearer.

Consequently, immense amount of research have totally been devoted to examine the possibilities of applying major findings of the speech acts theory in EFL teaching In other words, most of these studies investigated how to utilize speech acts theory in cultivating ESL and EFL learners pragmatic competence. For instance, Throssell & Zaho,(2011) state that:

" It is argued that speech act theory should be incorporated in foreign language teaching and language teachers need to not only cultivate students linguistic competence, but also to develop pragmatic competence " P.11.

In the same respect, findings of several research for instance (Olshtain and Cohen (1990) – Ellis (1992)) have provided support for the claim that teaching of speech acts to foreign or second language learners has an observable effect on their pragmatic competence and it usually plays a facilitative role in easing the communicative process to a very large degree.

More evidences regarding the impact of speech acts instructions on developing L2 learners communication proficiency are also provided by Olshtain and Cohen (1991) who conducted a pretest to a group of learners in order to examine their apologized behavior, then later provided instructions on how to make apology in a native –like manner to the same group of learners. The results of the post test showed a great progress in learners performance since

utterances that produced by them were more consistent with native behavior.

Very similar studies that targeting at utilizing speech acts theory major findings in enhancing learners pragmatic competence include Eslami-Rasekh(2004), Guerra & Flor (2005),) which all focus on examining the effectiveness of explicit instructions on influencing learners pragmatic competence positively in addition to explore the most appropriate methods of introducing different types of speech acts to learners.

Likewise, (Guerra and Martinez- Flor 2005) indicate that teaching speech acts can be very beneficial and effective for students to develop their pragmatic competence of the target language. Moreover, the results of the study carried out by Guerra and Martinez- Flor(2005 indicated the great necessity of analyzing different kinds of techniques that can work more effectively in the EFL setting in order to design more appropriate kind of classroom activities.

In conclusion, most of the previous studies stressed importance of teaching speech acts and put much emphasis on training students on better communication ways. The principal findings of these studies also revealed positive impacts of classroom instructions on raising the level of pragmatic competence and communicative competence among EFL learners.

Previous Studies On Speech Acts:

Generally speaking, most of studies conducted on the broad area of speech acts as indicated by Morkus(2009) fall into four main categories. The first category (Intra-lingual) includes those studies that investigate the speech act within mono language. The second group of studies according to Morkus(2009) is called (Cross-cultural) which concerns with examining the realization of speech acts between two different languages or cultures. The third group of studies investigates the effectiveness of different kinds of tool of data collection in speech acts research while the fourth group of speech acts concentrates on how learners acquire L2 speech acts and how they can develop their performance and realization of the L2 speech acts compared to that of their native language.

From the other hand, Kasper & Rose (2001) indicated that all past studies carried out to examine effectiveness of pedagogical treatment on developing L2 pragmatic competence and speech acts seek out to answer three major questions:

- Is the targeted pragmatic feature teachable at all ?
- Is instruction in the targeted feature more effective than no instruction?
- Are different teaching differentially effective?

After all, the most fundamental question that received great attention and occupied higher prominence in recent research over all of the above three questions listed by Kasper&Rose(2001) is the question that addresses the matter of pragmatics and speech acts teachability.

In this connection, one of the most widely quoted studies that mainly set up to explore possibilities of teaching L2 speech acts is Silva, (2003) which focuses mainly on utilizing different explicit instruction techniques in teaching the speech act of refusal to fourteen-low intermediate learners for various L1 (Japanese-Chinese-Serbian and Portuguese). The study incorporated metapragmatic awareness into task-based methodological principles in its instructional treatment in order to teach the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic components of the speech act of refusals. Silva,(2003) found that the instructional treatment played a facilitative role in enhancing the L2 pragmatic ability of performing speech act of refusal.

Likewise, Mirzaei& Esmaeili (2013) investigated the impact of explicit instruction on developing awareness and production of speech acts of request, apology and complaint among a group of Iranians EFL learners. The findings of this study indicate feasibility of instructional sessions and further ensured its role in appropriate language use.

Another study deals with the issue of speech acts teaching is conducted by Guxiao-Le (2011) which targets at identifying whether explicit and implicit instruction of request strategies is beneficial in helping Chinese EFL learners gain pragmatic knowledge and achieve pragmatic appropriateness in online communication. findings of the study revealed remarkable improvement in the participants performance of the intended speech act, accordingly the author supported importance of incorporating consciousness-raising activities in the classroom instruction of pragmatics. Furthermore, Guxiao-Le(2011) stressed necessity of providing learners with more practice opportunities in order to gain familiarity and control over the target speech act forms.

With regard to Sudanese EFL context, there is almost no discussion to the role of pedagogical intervention in promoting pragmatic competence. To the researcher knowledge, most of studies conducted by Sudanese researchers in this regard concentrate mainly on investigation of some strategies used by Sudanese learners to realize the L2 speech acts. For example, Tag Eldien, (2008) investigates the English and Arabic speech act of requesting used by Sudanese university students. The study mainly aimed at identifying preferences made by the subjects in the students choice of request strategies. The study conducted by Tag Eldien,(2008) found that the

majority of Sudanese university students use three different types of universal strategies of speech acts. The study also demonstrated the impacts of the social factors on the choices of strategies used by the Sudanese EFL learners.

Another study in the area of cross-cultural pragmatics is conducted by Sudanese researcher Osman (2006) which is mainly concerned with investigating how the speech acts of refusals and complaints are produced by advanced Sudanese learners of English and native speakers of English living in Sudan. The results of this study indicate that both non native and native speakers displayed a cross-cultural variation strategies of use of the speech acts of refusal and complaints.

Umar, (2006) explored how the pragmatic competence of advanced Sudanese learners of English differ significantly from that of the native speakers when performing the speech acts of complaint. Discourse completion test(DCT) was used as a basic tool of data collection to generate data for the study and the subjects which are both native and non natives were requested to respond to three prompts denoting the target speech of complaint. The final results of this study demonstrated that the quality of components produced by Sudanese learners of English differ significantly from those made by the native speakers.

Another study that concentrate on investigating one of the most important pragmatic features of Sudanese EFL learners " Politeness" is the one that conducted by Almahi, (2007). This study aimed at assessing pragmatic competence of the Sudanese learners at graduated level to see if they can use politeness strategies more appropriately. The researcher in this study assumes that the subjects being investigated are not pragmatically competent in English therefore, they transfer their Arabic speech community to English.

In addition, the study also found that Sudanese non native speakers of English are pragmatically incompetent. According to Almahi (2007), the main reason behind pragmatic incompetence of Sudanese learners is the possibility that most of those learners usually tend to transfer the rules of their L1 to L2.

To summarize, most of previous studies carried out by Sudanese researchers in particular, are basically directed towards examining and reexamining some pragmatic features of Sudanese EFL learners such as politeness, request, apology and refusal whereas the issue of the role of instructional treatment in raising Sudanese learners' awareness of the L2 pragmatics and speech acts is still remained neglected. Consequently, this rare investigations into the influence of instruction on Sudanese EFL learners

pragmatic competence development reveals an important area of research to be undertaken.

Research Questions:

The present study attempts to find out answers for the following questions:

- Do college level Sudanese learners have pragmatic knowledge of the four English speech acts of apology, request, complaint and refusal ?
- Does any relation exist between planned pedagogical treatment and improvement of the participants' pragmatic production of the speech acts of apology, request, refusal and complaint?
- Does planned pedagogical treatment contribute to improvement of the participants' pragmatic comprehension of the speech acts of apology, request, refusal and complaint?

Materials & Method:

Participants:

A group of 20 Sudanese university students (ages between 18-22) participated in this study. They are currently studying at five different Sudanese universities (University of Khartoum, Al ziem Al Azhari University, Omdurman Ahlyia University, Omdurman Islamic university and University of Bahri). They all share the basic characteristics of age and L1. Their level of L2 proficiency is not significantly different. They have been studying English language as a compulsory subject for more than six years. All students also have a very limited or no exposure to English in their daily life and they had never visited any English speaking country before. They all agreed to participate in this study as members of intact class on voluntarily basis. This group of participants was also asked to carry out two kinds of test before they had received instructional program on English pragmatics: written discourse completion test and Multiple –choice pragmatic comprehension test.

Data Collection

This study involves two types of data: production data and comprehension data. In the case of production data a validated written discourse completion test (hereafter, WDCT) was used to collect data regarding participants' pragmatic production of the four target speech acts while the multiple choices pragmatic comprehension test (MCPCT) was also used as instrument in order to evaluate participants' pragmatic comprehension and perception of the target speech acts. These two version of the WDCT and the MCPCT were administrated to the participants both pre-test and post-test under the same conditions. In order to design the (WDCT) the researcher read several studies similar to the present one, so the final version

of the WDCT was entirely based on the previous studies. This version of the WDCT) was also administered both as a pre-test and post-test. At first it was given as a pre-test to measure the subjects' pragmalinguistic and socio pragmatic knowledge concerning the four speech acts being under focus of the instructional programme: apology, complaint, request and refusal then later, it was administered as post-test to evaluate the impacts of pedagogical treatment on improving the participants' pragmatic production of both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features of the target speech acts. The test comprises ten questions which represent hypothesized situations, all of these situations are adapted from the previous studies. The respondents were asked to put themselves into these situations and assume in each situation they would say something. All situations in the WDCT as previously stated are adapted from the previous studies similar to the present one. They are all adapted and modified in a way that they fit the Sudanese context.

Whereas written production data were collected via the (WDCT), the comprehension data in turn were collected using multiple-choices pragmatic comprehension test (MCPCT). This test involves a detailed description of a contextualized situation followed by multiple choices of responses and the participants had to read these responses carefully before they were asked to choose the most appropriate one that fit the intended situation. In this study the (MCPCT) was carefully constructed on the basis of similar previous studies. The aim of using such type of data collection is mainly to evaluate participants' perception of pragmatic errors or appropriateness of speech act. It mainly serves to measure recognition and interpretation of utterances. The (MCPCT) comprises eight situations supplied with multiple responses and it administered also as pre-test and post-test.

Instructional Treatment:

The program was basically planned and scheduled before it was given to the participants by the researcher mainly for the purpose to be an instructional syllabus to raise pragmatic awareness

among the participants. The researcher chose four speech acts: apology, request, refusal and suggestion as focus for this teaching programme. These four speech acts have been selected as major components for teaching programme on the basis of the participants' needs and interests. This programme was totally based on materials found in traditional textbooks to fit the procedures and principles of teaching the L2 speech acts. In particular, The research made use of different resources that aim at developing students' oral communicative ability that are expected enable them in the end to choose ways of saying things which are appropriate to different situations and people.

Following explicit approach of pragmatics teaching and the methodology of the three Ps as suggested by McCarthy (1998), all lessons in the program encompass three major phases: presentation – practice and production whereas the initial phase that precedes the presentation phase is usually an introductory phase which involves warming up activities. In the presentation phase the instructor presents the learners with various hypothetical situations to help them to get the feeling of the speech act. At this stage also the native speaker's model is introduced to the learners through different extracts from authentic materials through audio visuals. In the second stage of phase of the lesson "Practice" learners are usually provided with opportunities to reinforce both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge of the intended speech act that they have already acquired. During this stage also Learners are asked to respond to similar situations via completing both written and oral discourse completion test and further explain and clarify both socio- pragmatic and pragmalinguistic information of the given tasks. At the final stage of the lesson " Production phase " learners are asked to analyze their own speech act performance then they were asked to produce less-controlled and free speaking activities based their previously learnt knowledge of the speech acts.

The two following tables summarizes the major teaching components of the program and the main stages of lesson procedures respectively.

Table (1): Instructional Programme Components

Targeted Speech Act	Objectives
Refusal	- To teach different strategies of speech act of (Refusal) in the TL. - To teach linguistic forms that is related to the speech act of refusal
Complaint	- To teach different strategies of performing speech act of complaint - To teach linguistic forms that is related to the act of speech of complaint.
Apology	- To increase learners exposure to giving and responding to apology in naturalistic setting. - To teach linguistic forms appropriate to perform speech act of apology
Request	- Introduce linguistic forms and strategies used for realizing the speech act of request.

Table (2): Summary Of The Main Lesson Procedures

Lesson Stage	Procedures
Pre-presentation	Warming up
Presentation	Explicit –metapragmatic Instruction. Teacher-Fronted discussion of Various meanings conveyed by an utterance. Presenting socio-cultural contexts, linguistic knowledge, semantic and syntactic formula and strategies that are needed to realize the intended speech act. Teaching Resources: authentic language materials, videos, textbooks,
Practice	- Identifying Strategic and linguistic Forms of the intended speech act. - respond to similar situations via completing both written and oral discourse completion questionnaire and performing role plays - Clarifying both pragmalinguistic& sociopragmatic knowledge of the target speech act.
Production	less-controlled and free speaking activities

Data Analysis:

The participants scores both on the pre-test and post-test were entered into SPSS program. A record of the participants scores on the pre-test was kept then two types of data analysis statistical procedures: descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were conducted using SPSS software. A paired T-test using on SPSS was also used in order to ensure any significant difference between participants responses to the WDCT and MCPCT situations in the pre-test and post-test. The same group of participants were asked to respond to the same situations in the WDCT and the MCPCT after a period of one month where they received instruction on the four types of the target speech acts.

Results:

The present study employed one group pre-test /post – test design. This method is a type of experimental research where one group of subjects is non randomly assigned as an experimental group, treatment a validated or standardized test for collecting data interval data and an inferential statistical measurement (T-test). This type of research design is suitable to this study since it measures the effectiveness of introducing new teaching techniques. In order to assess participants pragmatic knowledge and judge their mastery of both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge and skills necessary for production of the four target speech prior to receive any kind of planned instruction, WDCT test comprises 8 scenarios to which the participants could express carried out in order to evaluate participants' pragmatic comprehension was conducted.

1- Results Of The Written Discourse Completion Test: Production Data

The following two tables and graphs represent participants' performance of the four intended speech in the WDCT.

Table(3)Descriptive Statistics For Scores Gained by Participant In The (WDCT)

Speech act	Mean		Max.		Min.		St. Deviation		Variance	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
apology	7.7500	11.7000	12.00	18.00	1.00	5.00	2.98901	3.31424	8.934	10.984
refusal	7.7250	13.1250	13.00	23.00	0.00	5.00	.95798	.97729	18.355	19.102
complaint	8.8500	12.0250	15.00	19.00	3.00	3.00	3.38767	3.97517	11.476	15.802
request	8.6750	12.2250	17.00	20.00	.00	3.00	4.13036	4.84354	17.060	23.460

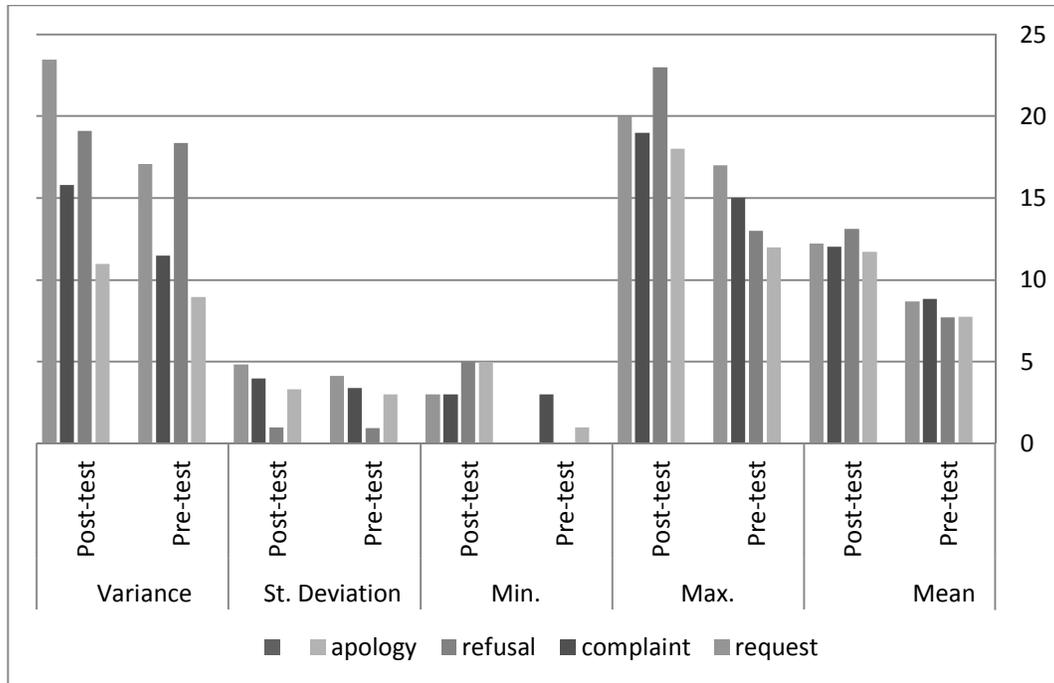


Figure (1): Graphical Representation Of The Participants' Responses To The WDCT situations.

As revealed by the above table and graph the post-test mean scores of the participants' responses to the WDCT situations indicates a significant statistical difference. The participants mean score for all target speech acts in the post test indicates an obvious increase in the subjects pragmatic knowledge of the four speech act. Consequently, programmed instruction proved to be effective in equipping learners with linguistic and pragmatic knowledge that enabled them at last to become more aware of the four speech acts. As shown also by the above table and graph, participants failed to gain much success in generating linguistically proper and pragmatically appropriate utterances in their attempt to respond to the WDCT eight situations, rather they showed tendency towards transferring some Sudanese Arabic semantic formula and strategies to realize the target speech act.

As for the speech act of apology, the means of the correct responses, states that the participants showed a change towards this speech act after receiving several instructional sessions. It has been observed from the pre-test that performance of participants was low while the post –test data from the other hand confirmed improvement in the participants pragmatic knowledge of strategies needed in producing English apologies. Besides, the above table and graphic representation showed aslo significant statistical difference between participants scores in the pre-test and post –test regarding speech act of refusal. The mean scores obtained here in the post –test (13.1250) is higher than that of the pre- test(7.7250) and this indicates that the performance of the group of subjects on the speech act of refusal was developed to a large degree.

With regard to the issue of pragmatic production of the speech act of complaint, analysis of obtained data also demonstrated that the participants did much better in the post-test. The mean scores of the subjects in the post-test (12.0250) is higher than that of the pre-test (8.8500). In addition, post-test mean scores in case of participants' responses to request situations point towards feasibility of instructional treatment.

To sum up, data of the pre-test confirmed deficiency of participants pragmatic competence while attempting to generate the four target speech acts. Although most of utterances produced by the participants in the pre-test were well-grammatical, they were pragmatically inappropriate and incorrect. This observation lead the researcher to support Baradovi-Harlig(1999) claim that high level of grammatical or linguistic competence may not guarantee successful accomplishment of pragmatic production. This finding also affirm the fact that pragmatic competence is an autonomous and distinct component from the linguistic or grammatical competence, accordingly mastering linguistic and grammatical features of an utterance doesn't necessarily imply mastering the ability of using that utterance according to social or cultural context in which it produced.

Table (2) Paired Sample t-test of subjects Responses to the WCT Situations

Situations: (1+2) Request		Situations: (3+4) Refusal			Situations: (5+6) Complaint			Situations: (7+8) Apology		
t-	df-	Sig. (2-tailed)	t-	df-	Sig. (2-tailed)	t-	df-	Sig. (2-tailed)	t-	df-
-3.039	19	.007	-4.078	19	.001	-5.631	19	.000	3.736-	19

As illustrated in the above table, the p-value or the table significance is less than α ($p < 0.05$). This indicative to the fact that instruction received by the participants before conducting the post-test made a significant difference in developing learners pragmatic production of the target speech act form.

2- Results Of The Multiple-Choice Pragmatic Comprehension Test (MCPCT):

The second research question sought to determine whether there was an impact of instruction or pedagogical intervention on the development of the participants pragmatic comprehension of the four target speech acts. In order to check the effects of instructional treatment on the four target speech acts pragmatic comprehension a post –test was administrated. After data were collected via the MCPCT, statistical analysis was applied to perform data analysis. The following table and graph represent descriptive statistics of scores gained by participants in the MCPCT.

Table (3) Descriptive Statistics For Scores Gained by Participant In The (MCPCT)

Speech act	Mean		Max.		Min.		St. Deviation		Variance	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
apology	13.3975	18.8000	25.00	25.00	.00	12.50	6.77997	6.00745	45.968	36.089
refusal	11.2375	17.1975	25.00	25.00	.00	6.25	7.16739	6.97947	51.372	48.713
complaint	11.0225	18.4625	19.00	25.00	.00	6.25	6.08316	6.84714	37.005	46.883
request	9.3500	18.6750	18.75	62.00	.00	6.00	5.89904	12.44173	34.799	154.797

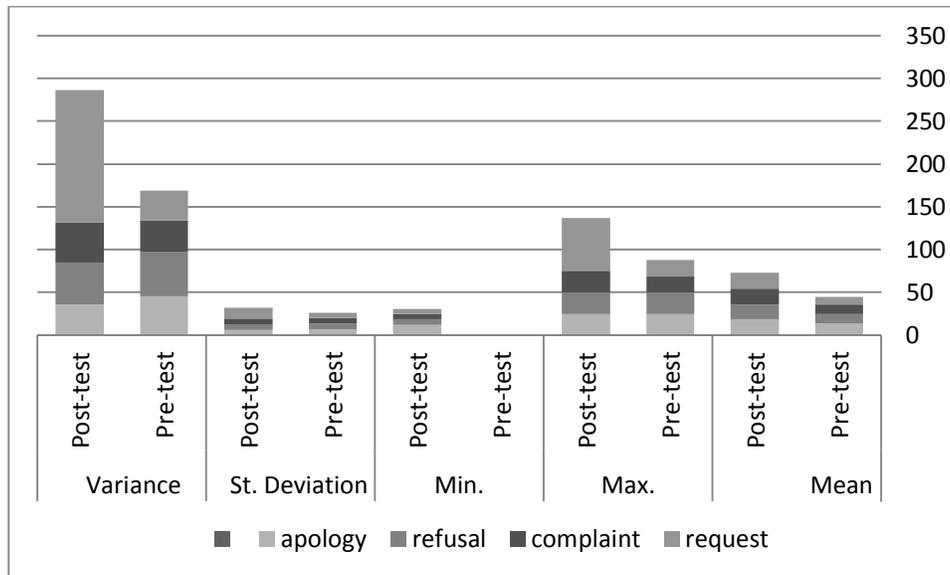


Figure (2): Graphical Representation Of The Participants' Responses To The MCPCT situations.

The above displayed data indicates great efficacy of instruction on raising learners pragmatic comprehension of the four speech acts. Four instance, the post-test mean scores of the participants' responses to apology situations in the MCPCT (18.8000) demonstrates notable speed development regarding recognition and comprehension of the speech act of apology. Besides, we may state that the participants did much better while responding to the refusal speech act in the post-test. The mean scores in the post-test (17.1975) is higher than that of the pre-test(11.2375).

As for the speech act of (complaint), obtained data also demonstrate an obvious increase of subjects linguistic and pragmatic comprehension of this speech act in the post test. In the same way, the mean of scores gained by the participants in the post-test in case of the two speech acts of complaint and request are higher than that of the pre-test (11.0225) - (18.6750). Thus, we can also state also that there is a notable difference regarding pragmatic comprehension of these two speech acts.

Paired Sample T-test:

The following table represents a paired sample t-test of the subjects mean scores in the pre-test and the post-test of the MCPCT.

Table (7) Paired Sample t-test of the subjects Responses to The MCPCT situations

Situations: (1+2) Request			Situations: (3+4) Refusal			Situations: (5+6) Complaint			Situations: (7+8) Apology		
t-	df-	Sig. (2-tailed)	t-	df-	Sig. (2-tailed)	t-	df-	Sig. (2-tailed)	t-	df-	Sig. (2-tailed)
-3.039	19	.007	-4.078	19	.001	-5.631	19	.000	3.736-	19	.001

According to the results displayed above, the difference between the pre-test and the post-test is significant except in the case of situations (1, 2) which measure the participants responses to the speech act of " request". The p-value (.007) is greater than α ($p < 0.05$). This indicative to the fact that instructional program made no significant difference regarding comprehension of the speech act of request.

As for situations (3,4), the p-value (.001) is smaller than α ($p < 0.05$) which means that the difference between T1 and T2 is significant. That is to say the null hypothesis is rejected and the pedagogical treatment does a clear difference in promoting pragmatic comprehension of the speech act of refusal. As shown in table also the obtaining t-test for situations (5,6,7,8) respectively reports statistically significant difference in the participants comprehension and perception of the speech act of complaint and apology. The learners showed a remarkable success in carrying out the MCPCT tasks after receiving the instructional program. This means that the instructional sessions appear to have a positive impact and work out more efficiently in raising the level of pragmatic comprehension among the participants.

Discussion:

The Pre-test:

Taking into consideration the previous studies major findings which all supported the effects of pedagogical treatment on developing L2 learners pragmatic competence the researcher identified three main areas of research to be discussed in relation to the analysis of the pre-test data:

- 1)- pragmatic Competence Deficiency Vs. Linguistic competence Proficiency
- 2) - Pragmatic transfer
- 3)- Pragmatic Comprehension.

Pragmatic Competence Deficiency Vs. Linguistic competence Proficiency:

The pre-test results showed that all of the participant demonstrated lack of required pragmatic knowledge to realize the four target speech acts. In this regard, it has been observed that the learners paid much attention to grammatical correctness and complexity of syntactic formula in their attempt to respond to a particular illocutionary. The majority of these learners reported that they were only concerned on how to get the idea conveyed by all means. In doing so, they gave special attention to the appropriate and correct linguistic form of the target speech act. Consequently, although most of expressions produced in the pre-test were well-grammatical, they were pragmatically inappropriate and incorrect. This observation lead the researcher to support Baradovi-Harlig,(1999) claim that high level of grammatical or linguistic competence may not guarantee successful accomplishment of pragmatic production. This finding also affirm the fact that pragmatic competence is an autonomous and distinct component from linguistic or grammatical competence, accordingly mastering linguistic and grammatical features of an utterance doesn't necessarily imply mastering ability of using that utterance according to social or cultural context in which it was produced. Accordingly, this finding could support the claim that raised by previous studies (e.g. Baradovi-Harlig (1996). Kasper (1997). Bouton (1994) regarding necessity of instruction in pragmatics and revealed its utmost importance in helping EFL learners acquire various aspects of target pragmatics and discourse.

Pragmatic Transfer:

What was found also in the pre-test of the DCT and the MCPCT support Kasper (1997) insights concerning pragmatic transfer. According to Kasper (1997), all Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP) studies

using L1 and L2 baseline data including studies of requests, suggestions, invitations, refusals, apology, complaints and expressions of gratitude find some transfer affects. Based on pragmalinguistic – sociopragmatic dichotomy identified by Kasper (1992) as an adequate general framework for the study of pragmatic transfer in interlanguage pragmatics, we can distinguish two broad main types of the participants pragmatic transfer manifestations to be occurred at both levels of socio-pragmatics and pragmalinguistic knowledge: facilitative or positive pragmatic transfer and negative pragmatic transfer.

In case of the present study influence of both positive and negative pragmatic transfer of some Sudanese Arabic upon participants L2 pragmatic production was detected. This influence has much occurred particularly in the pre-test of the WDCT and the MCPCT, that is before the participants had been exposed to any kind of pedagogical intervention. Of course, various consequences were brought about as a result of this influence. First, it has been observed that the majority of the participants had relied much on excessive use of one form or function to realize an intended speech act. Secondly, it has been found also that learners had underused some features and forms of a particular speech act in their attempt to come up with appropriate and correct linguistic and pragmatic forms from.

To sum up, the results of the pre-test are in conformity with major findings of Kasper(1997) which reported that adult learners always rely on L1 based pragmatic knowledge while processing different pragmatic features of the L2.

Pragmatic Comprehension:

Analysis of the pre-test results also demonstrated that participants failed or made no much success in their attempt to comprehend the meaning of the four target speech acts pragmatically. In other words, the majority of the participants didn't manage to understand illocutionary force of utterances and interpret speakers intentions, attitudes and feelings in each scenario provided in the MCPCT. Moreover, the participants were not be able to utilize their linguistic knowledge in order to form hypotheses concerning speakers feels and intentions alternatively. Besides, it has been observed that all of the participants relied only on their previous linguistic information such as syntax and lexis rather than contextual information in order to interpret meaning of utterances in the pre-test. This remarkable over reliance on linguistic information to interpret and comprehend pragmatic meaning is considered to be the main reason behind the participants failure in pragmatic comprehension task. Moreover, this finding which affirm pragmatic comprehension uniqueness is in line with Baradovi –

Harlig((etal) (1991) who found differences between L2 learners ability to comprehend pragmatic meaning and their linguistic comprehension. These results can also be interpreted in the light of major insights provided by other authors such as Garcia(2004) who found that processing linguistic meaning differs completely from processing pragmatic meaning. While the learners have to only investigate the surface level of language such as phonology, lexis and syntax in order to interpret the linguistic meaning, they need in turn not only to process linguistic knowledge but also contextual knowledge in order to get the pragmatic meaning of an utterance.

The Post-test:

Generally speaking, the post –test results of both the DCT and the RAT confirmed previous research findings regarding feasibility of pragmatics teaching. The obtained results are in conformity with many similar previous studies e.g. Kasper,(1997), Bouton (1994), Cohen (1990) which all stressed the necessity and importance of pragmatics teaching. In the light of the results obtained also one can see how instructional program was successful in equipping learners with required pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge to produce linguistically accurate and pragmatically appropriate forms of the targeted four speech acts of request, apology, refusal and complaint.

In this respect, all results obtained in the post test regarding central issue of this study; efficacy of pragmatic instruction in Sudanese EFL context, will be discussed in the light of the major questions that identified by Kasper & Rose (Forth mentioning) as basic areas of investigation that occupy higher prominence in recent research. Although Kasper & Rose (2002) identified more than five basic questions on the effects of instruction, only two of these questions that are expected to be central to instructed EFL, will be considered as starting points for discussion of the post-test results. These two questions are:

- Is the targeted pragmatic feature teachable at all ?
- Is instruction in the targeted features more effective than no instruction ?

With respect to these two questions, findings of the present study are in line with many previous studies that confirmed pragmatic teachability. The four targeted speech acts selected to be the main focus of the instructional program "apology, refusal, complaint and request " were all irresistible to classroom instruction. After four weeks of instruction it had become clearly evident that all of the participants involved in this study acquired some pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic information that

later had been utilized and processed in the post-test to generate the targeted speech acts. To put it more simply, a very strong evidence for teachability and feasibility of the targeted speech acts can be confirmed through comparing the pre-test results which indicate participants failure to generate the speech acts of apology, refusal, complaint and request to that results obtained from the post-test which illustrated how the participants produced better responses to these targeted speech acts after they had been received explicit instruction over four weeks.

Conclusion:

With regard to the case of Sudanese EFL context, it is safe to claim that instruction is more likely to produce a notable improvement in the learners' pragmatic competence in spite of the fact that the majority of Sudanese learners have very limited opportunities for direct communication with English native speakers outside classrooms.

Although findings from this study have been found to be consistent with findings of other several related studies conducted in ESL context regarding feasibility of L2 speech acts instruction, it is worth mentioning that all results of the present study should be interpreted within foreign language context where planned pedagogical sessions can only be seen as the only way out to remedy the lack of direct communication in the target language. Therefore, ignorance of pragmatics teaching in Sudanese classes where English is studying primarily as a foreign language would be more catastrophic and tragic particularly in the absence of the target language culture and environment outside language classroom.

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