

Investigating the Performance of Kurdish Learners of EFL in the Area of Illocutionary Speech Acts

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Abstract

The paper is an attempt to investigate the performance of Kurdish learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) in the area of illocutionary speech acts. It has been repeatedly experienced that Kurdish learners have difficulty in carrying out speech acts that look natural English. Most of their speech acts seem to be mere translation of speech acts in their native language. The paper argues for the idea that these learners face serious difficulty in performing this type of speech acts, both at the recognition and production levels. It also argues that the difficulty in this area can be due to certain factors among which are lack of linguistic knowledge of the FL and its culture, interference of the native language (NL) with the FL, and lack of pragmatic competence.

To determine the type of difficulty and diagnose its sources, a test has been administered to a sample of students. A number of conclusions have been drawn in the light of the results of the test.

المخلص

يهدف هذا البحث الى دراسة اداء الطلبة الاكراد متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية لغة اجنبية في مجال الافعال الكلامية حيث اظهرت التجارب باستمرار بان الطلبة الاكراد يواجهون الصعوبة في القيام بالافعال الكلامية تبدو طبيعية. فمعظم افعالهم الكلامية هي مجرد ترجمة لهذه الافعال من لغتهم الام. ويفترض البحث بان الطلبة الاكراد يواجهون صعوبة كبيرة في القيام بهذا النوع من الافعال على مستوى الادراك والانتاج. ويفترض البحث ايضا بان الصعوبة في هذا المجال يمكن ان تعزى الى عوامل عدة منها الافتقار الى المعرفة العلمية باللغة الاجنبية وثقافتها، التداخل بين اللغة الاجنبية واللغة الام والافتقار الى الكفاة البراجماتيكية. ولغرض تحديد نوع الصعوبة وتشخيص مصدرها تم اختبار عينة من الطلبة. وتم التوصل الى عدد من الاستنتاجات في ضوء نتائج الاختبار.

1-Introduction

There has been an increasing number of books and monographs on speech acts, yet there still exists little scientific studies about the performance of our students in this area of language specially in Kurdistan. Thus, there is an obvious to investigate such topic especially when we know that this topic has not been investigated in the universities of Kurdistan according to the best knowledge of the researcher.

The aim of this paper is to assess the ability of Kurdish learners of EEL to perform illocutionary speech acts to find out the types and sources of difficulty these learners face in this area of language. No doubt, the findings of such study can be useful for those concerned with FLT such as FL teachers and textbook writers.

The study is based on the hypothesis that Kurdish learners of EFL face serious difficulty in performing illocutionary speech acts both on recognition and production levels. It is also hypothesized that this difficulty is due to certain factors such as, lack of linguistic knowledge of the FL and its culture, lack of pragmatic competence, and influence of the NL.

To fulfil the aim of the study , and verify the hypotheses derived from it, two types of procedures have been followed. At the theoretical level, some relevant literature has been reviewed to bring the reader into a closer understanding of this type of speech acts. At the practical level a test has been prepared by the researcher to find out the types and sources of difficulty that Kurdish learners face in this area.

The statistical analysis of the test results has shown the truth of the hypotheses adopted in this study. The study ends up with a number of recommendations based on the findings of the study.

2-On Defining Illocutionary Speech Acts

David Crystal (2003:226) defines illocutionary act as a term used in the theory of speech acts to refer to an act which is performed by the speaker by virtue of the utterance having made. Some examples of illocutionary acts are promising, commanding, requesting, baptizing, arrestingetc..

The illocutionary act is performed via the communication force of an utterance (Yule:1996:48). We might utter a sentence like:

1-I've just made some coffee.

to make a statement, an offer, an explanation or for some other communication purpose. This is also generally known as the illocutionary force of the utterance.

Illocutionary act is a technical term introduced by John L. Austin (1962) in his investigations of what he calls 'performative' and 'constative utterances'. According to Austin's original exposition in 'How to Do Things With Words' (1962), an illocutionary act is an act (1) for the performance of which one must make it clear to some other person that the act is performed (Austin speaks of the 'securing of uptake'), and (2) the performance of which involves the production of what Austin calls 'conventional consequences' as, e.g., rights, commitments, or obligations. For example, in order to successfully perform a promise one must make clear to her/ his audience that the promise occurs, and undertake an obligation to do the promised thing: hence promising is an illocutionary act in the present sense. However, for certain reasons, among them insufficient knowledge of Austin's original exposition, the term 'illocutionary act' is nowadays understood in a number of other ways.

Many define the term with reference to examples, saying such things as that any speech act like stating, asking, commanding, promising, and so on is an illocutionary act; they then often fail to give any sense of the expression 'illocutionary act' capable of

making clear what being an illocutionary act essentially consists in.

It is also often emphasized that Austin introduced the illocutionary act by means of a contrast with other kinds of acts: the illocutionary act, a locutionary act and a perlocutionary act.

3-Locutionary Vs Illocutionary Vs Perlocutionary acts

Austin (1962) dubs "illocutionary" those sorts of speech acts that can (but need not) be performed by means of the performative formula. The illocutionary act is but one level of the total speech act that one performs in uttering a sentence. Consider that in general when one acts intentionally, one has a set of nested intentions. For instance, having arrived home without your keys, one might move your finger in a certain way with the intention not just of moving your finger in that way but with the further intentions of pushing a certain button, ringing the doorbell, arousing your spouse,..., and ultimately getting into your house. The single bodily movement involved in moving your finger comprises a multiplicity of actions, each corresponding to a different one of the nested intentions. Similarly, speech acts are not just acts of producing certain sounds.

Austin (1979) identifies three distinct levels of action beyond the act of utterance itself. He distinguishes the act of saying something, what one does in saying it, and what one does by saying it, and dubs these the locutionary, the illocutionary, and the perlocutionary act, respectively. Suppose, for example, that a bartender utters the words, "The bar will be closed in five minutes," reportable with direct quotation. He is thereby performing the locutionary act of saying that the bar (i.e., the one he is tending) will be closed in five minutes (from the time of utterance), where what is said is reported by indirect quotation (notice that what the bartender is saying, the content of his locutionary act, is not fully determined by the words he is

using, for they do not specify the bar in question or the time of the utterance). In saying this, the bartender is performing the illocutionary act of informing the patrons of the bar's imminent closing and perhaps also the act of urging them to order a last drink. Whereas the upshot of these illocutionary acts is understanding on the part of the audience, perlocutionary acts are performed with the intention of producing a further effect. The bartender intends to be performing the perlocutionary acts of causing the patrons to believe that the bar is about to close and of getting them to order one last drink. He is performing all these speech acts, at all three levels, just by uttering certain words.

We need the locutionary acts to characterize such common situations as these: where the speaker says one thing, but something else instead, where the speaker means what he says and indirectly means something else as well, and where the speaker says something but doesn't mean anything at all. Moreover, the same sentence can be used to perform illocutionary acts of various types or with various contents. Just as in shaking hands we can, depending on the circumstances, do several different things (introduce ourselves, greet each other, seal a deal, congratulate, or bid farewell). So we can use a sentence with a given locutionary content in a variety of ways. For example, we could utter 'I will call a lawyer' to make a promise or a warning, or just a prediction. Austin (1962:92-3) defines a locutionary act as the act of using words, "as belonging to a certain vocabulary...and as conforming to a certain grammar,...with a certain more or less definite sense and reference" (1962, pp. 92-3). And what is said, according to Grice (1989:87), is "closely related to the conventional meaning of the...sentence...uttered" and must correspond to "the elements of [the sentence], their order, and their syntactic character". Although what is said is limited by this syntactic correlation constraint, (because of ambiguity and indexicality) it is not identical to what the sentence means. If the sentence is

ambiguous, one of its conventional (linguistic) meanings is usually operative in a given utterance (double entendre is a special case). On a given occasion, linguistic meaning does not determine what, on a given occasion, indexicals like 'she' and 'this' are used to refer to. If someone says "She wants this book," he is saying that a certain woman wants a certain book, even though the words do not specify which woman and which book. So, along with linguistic information, the speaker's semantic (disambiguating and referential) intentions are often needed to determine what is said.

We need the distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts because utterances are generally more than just acts of communication. They have two levels of success; a request (for example) succeeds if your audience recognizes your desire that they do a certain thing, but as a perlocutionary act it succeeds only if they actually do it. You can express your desire without getting compliance, but your one utterance is the performance of an act of both types.

4- Taxonomy of Illocutionary Speech Acts

Pretheoretically, we think of an act of communication, linguistic or otherwise, as an act of expressing oneself. This rather vague idea can be made more precise if we get more specific information about what is being expressed. Take the case of an apology. If you say, 'I'm sorry I didn't call back' and intend this as an apology, you are expressing regret for something, in this case for not returning a phone call. An apology is merely the act of (verbally) expressing regret for, and thereby acknowledging, something one did that might have harmed or at least bothered the hearer. An apology is communicative because it is intended to be taken as expressing a certain attitude; in this case regret. It succeeds as such if it is so taken. In general, an act of communication succeeds if it is taken as intended. That is, it must be understood or, in Austin's words, 'produce uptake'. With an

apology, this is a matter of the addressee recognizing the speaker's intention to be expressing regret for some deed or omission. Using a special device such as the performative 'I apologize' may of course facilitate understanding (understanding is correlative with communicating), but in general this is unnecessary. Communicative success is achieved if the speaker chooses his words in such a way that the hearer will, under the circumstances of utterance, recognize his communicative intention. So, for example, if you spill some beer on someone and say 'Oops' in the right way, your utterance will be taken as an apology for what you did.

In saying something one generally intends more than just to communicate getting oneself understood is intended to produce some effect on the listener. However, our speech act vocabulary can obscure this fact. When one apologizes, for example, one may intend not merely to express regret but also to seek forgiveness. Seeking forgiveness is, strictly speaking, distinct from apologizing, even though one utterance is the performance of an act of both types. As an apology, the utterance succeeds if it is taken as expressing regret for the deed in question; as an act of seeking forgiveness, it succeeds if forgiveness is thereby obtained. Speech acts, being perlocutionary as well as illocutionary, generally have some ulterior purpose, but they are distinguished primarily by their illocutionary type, such as asserting, requesting, promising and apologizing, which in turn are distinguished by the type of attitude expressed. The perlocutionary act is a matter of trying to get the hearer to form some correlative attitude and in some cases to act in a certain way. For example, a statement expresses a belief and normally has the further purpose of getting the addressee form the same belief. A request expresses a desire for the addressee to do a certain thing and normally aims for the addressee to intend to and, indeed, actually do that thing. A promise expresses the speaker's firm intention to do something, together with the belief that by his utterance he is obligated to do

it, and normally aims further for the addressee to expect, and to feel entitled to expect, the speaker to do it.

Statements, requests, promises and apologies are examples of the four major categories of communicative illocutionary acts: constatives, directives, commissives and acknowledgments. This is the nomenclature used by Bach and Harnish (1962:70), who develop a detailed taxonomy in which each type of illocutionary act is individuated by the type of attitude expressed (in some cases there are constraints on the content as well). There is no generally accepted terminology here, and Bach and Harnish borrow the terms 'constative' and 'commissive' from Austin and 'directive' from Searle. They adopt the term 'acknowledgment', over Austin's 'behabitive' and Searle's 'expressive', for apologies, greetings, congratulations etc., which express an attitude regarding the hearer that is occasioned by some event that is thereby being acknowledged, often in satisfaction of a social expectation. Here are assorted examples of each type:

Constatives: affirming, alleging, announcing, answering, attributing, claiming, classifying, concurring, confirming, conjecturing, denying, disagreeing, disclosing, disputing, identifying, informing, insisting, predicting, ranking, reporting, stating, stipulating

Directives: advising, admonishing, asking, begging, dismissing, excusing, forbidding, instructing, ordering, permitting, requesting, requiring, suggesting, urging, warning

Commissives: agreeing, guaranteeing, inviting, offering, promising, swearing, volunteering

Acknowledgments: apologizing, condoling, congratulating, greeting, thanking, accepting (acknowledging an acknowledgment)

Bach and Harnish (1979) spell out the correlation between the type of illocutionary act and the type of expressed attitude. In many cases, such as answering, disputing, excusing and agreeing, as well as all types of acknowledgment, the act and the attitude it expresses presuppose a specific conversational or other social circumstance.

As for the types of acts that are distinguished by the type of attitude expressed, there is no need to invoke the notion of convention to explain how it can succeed. The act can succeed if the hearer recognizes the attitude being expressed, such as a belief in the case of a statement and a desire in the case of a request. Any further effect it has on the hearer, such as being believed or being complied with, or just being taken as sincere, is not essential to its being a statement or a request. Thus an utterance can succeed as an act of communication even if the speaker does not possess the attitude he is expressing: communication is one thing, sincerity another. Communicating is as it were just putting an attitude on the table; sincerity is actually possessing the attitude one is expressing. Correlatively, the hearer can understand the utterance without regarding it as sincere, e.g., take it as an apology, as expressing regret for something, without believing that the speaker regrets having done the deed in question. Getting one's audience to believe that one actually possesses the attitude one is expressing is not an illocutionary but a perlocutionary act.

5- Content, Form and Function of the Illocutionary Act

Often the content of the illocutionary act is information maintained, transferred, received or sent. Information concerning events is processed within narrative illocutionary acts. Information concerning objects is processed by descriptive illocutionary acts while the information concerning the relationships between objects and events is presented within explicatory illocutionary acts. On the other hand, the intention and structure of these acts may differ. All types of informational illocutionary acts have a shared

characteristic; they do not require any action on the part of the receiver. However, reaction to the content and subsequent action by the receiver is the intention of directive illocutionary acts, since they transfer to the addressee a command, a request, or a proposal for carrying out some activity. The receiver is denoted by a phatic illocutionary act – by an address.

The basic form of informational illocutionary acts has three components: the nominator, the predicator, and the situational complement. Directive illocutionary acts (direct commands expressed grammatically, i. e., by the imperative), have only the predicative component extended by the addressee (by a phatic illocutionary act). Cogitative illocutionary acts (are very closely connected with the activity of human beings) have two components. In the first one, the nominator is expressed grammatically by a human substantive/pronoun; in the second, the predicate involves a verb + a conjunction + the main illocutionary act, which may remain unexpressed: 'I know that he must obey/ I know that'.

The function of the informational illocutionary act is to provide information while the function of the cogitative illocutionary act is to introduce new illocutionary acts and express one's attitude toward them. On the other hand, the function of the directive illocutionary act is to require the action/reaction of the addressee.

6-Procedures

6-1- Pilot Administration of the Test

It is a common practice that tests and measures should be field tested before they are finally administrated (Klein,1974:129). After constructing the test, a pilot test has been administrated to:

- 1-Determining the time sufficient for answering the questions.

2-Diagnose the weak item.

3-Ensure the reliability of the test.

To achieve these purposes, 30 students have been chosen randomly from both colleges (College of Education/ Kalar and College of Languages) to constitute subjects for the pilot administration.

6-2- Population and Sample

The population of the study includes the students of English departments at Sulaimani University. Two colleges were selected from this university; College of Education/ Kalar and College of Languages, while other colleges, i.e., College of Arts/ Khanaqin and College of Basic Education were neglected for the following reasons:

1-As for the College of Basic Education, it was neglected because of the special condition the college was suffering from at the time of writing this research: The students were on strike.

2-As for the College of Arts/ Khanaqin, they have only first year students and this may make the sample of the study inhomogeneous when compared with the selected colleges which have students of third and fourth years.

100 students (third and fourth) were selected randomly, 40% from College of Education / Kalar and 60% from College of Languages out of 179 students (139 students at the College of Languages and 40 students at the College of Education/ Kalar).

6-3- Description of the Test

To perform the aim of this study, a test has been prepared to assess the students' performance in the area of speech acts. Four speech acts have been selected to represent the content of the test: disagreeing, warning, offering and apologizing. These speech acts have been selected according to their frequency in everyday life.

As appendix (1) shows, the test consists of three parts. The first part measures the students' performance in the area of illocutionary speech acts at the recognition level. It consists of four multiple choice items which measure the students' recognition of four selected speech acts: disagreeing, warning, offering and apologizing respectively. The aim of this part is to assess the students' comprehension level of these speech acts.

The second part consists of four items which measure the students' performance of the four skills mentioned above at the production level. Each item of the second part recognizes the student's ability to respond to a certain situation by performing the suitable speech act. The aim of this part is to assess the learners' ability to perform these speech acts and the influence of their first language and its culture on their performance.

The third part consists of four brief conversations to be translated from Kurdish into English. The purpose of this part is to find out the influence of students mother tongue (Kurdish) on their performance in these four speech acts. It also aims at shedding lights on the student's familiarity with the culture and speech strategies of the foreign language.

6-3-1- Test Validity

Validity is the most important quality to consider when selecting or constructing an evaluation instrument. It refers to the extent to which evaluation results serve the particular uses for which they are intended. (Gronlund, 1965: 77)

Ingram (1977:18) on the other hand argues that a valid instrument is that which measures accurately what it is supposed to measure. Validity of the test is perhaps one of the most complex concepts in test construction. It refers to the degree of success with which a technique or any other instrument is measuring what it claims to measure. (Verma & Beard, 1981:87).

Validity is ensured 'If the test measures what it is intended to measure and nothing else. If a test does this it is said to be

valid'. (Heaton, 1983:22, Ebel, 1972:73, Al-Hamash and Youis, 1980:200).

Two types of validity are considered important, content and face validity (Mehrans & Lehmann, 1973: 135, Harris, 1969: 21). Therefore, both types have been considered for the purpose of the study.

6-3-1-1- Content Validity

Content validity is regarded as one of the most important aspects of validity for the achievement tests. It is the extent to which the test adequately covers the syllabus area to be tested. To have content validity, a test must reflect both the content and the balance of the teaching which leads up to it. (Deale, 1975:30, Anastasi, 1982:131, 1976: 134-135, Mehrans and Lehmann 1973: 290)

Content validity should demonstrate that the test measures a representative sample of the behaviour or content domain which aims to measure. Thus content validity in contrast with other validations, is usually based on human judgement. One can also consult experts and use the homogeneity of these judgements as a criterion. (van Els et al , 1984:318).

Carroll and Hall (1985:115) believe that 'the main focus must be non-statistical, that is, their content must rest on verbally – expressed specifications skills and tasks'. Therefore, the first step towards preparing a valid test is to specify the skills to be tested and to prepare a table of specifications. Al-Hamash, et al (1982:82) point out that a table of specification is used as a guide for test construction.

6-3-1-2- Face Validity

Face validity refers, not to what the test actually measures, but to what it appears superficially to measure. Face validity pertains to whether the test 'looks valid' to the examinees who take it, the administrative personnel who decide on its use, and

other technically untrained observers. (Anastasi, 1976:139: Harris, 1969: 21).

It is worth mentioning that it is not enough to ensure that the test really what it is supposed to test, but it is also necessary to ensure face validity. In the words of Harris, face validity is ‘the way the test looks, to the examinees, test administrators educators, and the like’. (Harris, 1969:7, van Els et al, 1984: 320)

Face validity refers to whether the test looks like it is measuring what it is supposed to measure. (Celce-Muria, 1979: 339). To check face and content validity, the test has been exposed to a jury* of experts in the field of English language. Each member has been requested to point out his/her remarks and suggestions about the suitability of the test items to achieve the objectives of this study. The members of Jury have agreed that the test items are suitable to the objectives stated and to the level of the students.

The jury members are:

1-Prof. Dr. Abdul-Latif Alwan Aljumaili University of Duhok 2-Asst Prf. Dr. Fatima
Rashed University of Sallahadeen

3-Asst. Prof. Dr. Ayad Hameed Mahmoud University of Diyala 4-Dr. Saleem Khalaf
Mudayar University of Al-Mustantheriaya

5-Dr.Mahdi Falah Khashan University of Al-Mustantheriaya 6-Dr.
Abdulrahman Ahmed University of Mosul

6-4-Statistical Means

Percentages of errors of each item have been used as a statistical mean to (1) measure the test results find out the distribution of errors and (2) figure out factors behind the most common types of errors. (Runyon, 1978:28).

6-5- Analysis of the Results

As for the first part, the statistical analysis has shown that 40% of the testees have failed to perform well in recognizing the intended speech acts, i.e., disagreeing, due to their lack of the linguistic knowledge of the target language and its culture.

14% of the students have failed to do so because they have depended on a literal interpretation of the test. They have not tried to infer the implicit speech act behind the utterance. This can be due to their ignorance of speech strategies used by the native speakers of English to perform implicit speech act. It can also be due to the gap between English and Kurdish cultures.

On the other hand, 26% of the students' errors have been found to be due to the students' inability to draw the optimal inference. Many students chose the option that represents the misleading inference (option b). As for warning item, 20% of the students have failed to recognize the correct item. 11% of these students have failed to recognize it because, as in the previous item, they have depended on a literal interpretation of the utterance. They have not tried to infer the implicit speech act behind the utterance.

This again can be due to their ignorance of speech strategies used by the native speakers of English to perform implicit speech act. It can also be due to the gap between both cultures (i.e. Kurdish and English).

On the other hand, 9% of the students' errors have been found to be due to the students' inability to draw the optimal inference.

As for offering item 66% of the students have failed to recognize the correct item, 39% of them have failed to recognize the correct option because they depended on a literal interpretation of the utterance by choosing the wrong option (option a). This can be due to their ignorance of speech strategies used by the native speakers of English to perform implicit speech act or due to the gap between English and Kurdish cultures.

On the other hand, 27% of the students' errors have been found to be due to the students' inability to draw the optimal inference.

32% of the testees have failed to recognize the correct option in apologizing item. 19% of the students' errors can be due to the literal interpretation of the text without trying to infer the implicit meaning, while 13% of the students' errors can be due to the students' inability to draw the optimal inference.

In sum, and as it has been shown in the statistical analysis, many students have failed to choose the correct option in offering item comparing with other items of the recognition part. This can be due to the gap between both languages' cultures.

Below is a table that shows the percentages of the students' errors at the recognition level.

Table (1) Percentages of Students' Errors at the Recognition Level
(Part 1)

Type of speech act	Type of errors		Total
	Literal interpretation of the text without trying to infer the implicit meaning	Drawing a wrong inference	
Disagreeing	14%	26%	40%
Warning	11%	9%	20%
Offering	39%	27%	66%
Apologizing	19%	13%	32%

As for the second part, the statistical analysis has shown that 18% of the testees have failed to perform well in producing the speech acts of disagreeing due to the testees' failure to use the appropriate linguistic means or due to their lack of the linguistics knowledge of the foreign language and its culture. Consider the examples below:

- 1-I think you are better to life in your country.
- 2-Sorry, life in Europe is not easy. There are many employees.

It is clear that the student who has given the first answer has not made it clear that he is disagreeing about the nature of life in Europe. Instead of using a suitable linguistic means (using a negative sentence that implies his agreeing) he has used a declarative sentence which expresses his suggestion where to live in the speaker's country rather than making a statement about the nature of life in Europe which is difficult due to the increasing number of unemployees. In addition, he committed a linguistic mistake by choosing the word (employees) rather than its opposite (unemployees).

As for the second example, it's clear that the student has not used the suitable linguistic means. He has begun his sentence with the word (sorry) which gives the impression that he is apologizing rather than disagreeing about the nature of life in Europe. In addition, he has committed a mistake in vocabulary selection. He has used the word (employees) rather than (unemployees). A fact which has changed what he wants to convey into the opposite.

Regarding the second item (warning), 87% of the testees have failed to perform well in producing the speech act of warning which is actually the largest proportion of mistakes done by the testees. 38% of the students failed to produce the correct speech act due to the learners' failure to use the appropriate linguistic means and 49% of them have failed due to their lack of linguistic knowledge of the foreign languages. Consider the examples below:

- 1-You should cut down smoking because it leads you to cancer.
- 2-Don't smoke because it causes cancer.

Regarding the first example, it is clear that the testee has made a mistake in producing the correct form of warning. Instead of warning, he has used (should) which implies obligation in a direct way to warn the listener not to smoke. This is due to the misusing of the linguistic knowledge. And there is also a misusing of a vocabulary. Instead of using (give up) he has used (cut down). While in the second example, the testee has used an imperative sentence to warn the listener not to smoke. This is actually due to the lack of knowledge about the target language or due to the gap between both languages. In the third item (offering), 82% of the testees have failed to perform well in producing the speech act of offering. 46% of the testees have failed to produce the correct speech act due to the learners' failure to use the appropriate linguistic means and 36% of them failed due to their lack of linguistic knowledge of the foreign language. Consider the examples below:

- 1-If he asks me I will help him.
- 2-Come on, get in my car.

It is clear from the first example that there is a misuse of the linguistic means. Instead of using one of the structures used to convey the meaning of offering, the testee has used (if) which conveys the meaning of conditional clause. In the second example, the native language interferes with the target language. This example indicates the lack of the knowledge about the culture of the target language because the testee has not used a polite way for offering but he is more direct than necessary.

In the last item (apologizing), we find that 70% of the testees have failed to perform well in producing the speech act of apologizing. 21% of the mistakes are due to the misuse of the linguistic means while 49% of the testees have failed to produce the correct type of speech act due to the lack of knowledge about foreign language culture. Consider the examples below:

- 1-I am sorry, my account have finished.
- 2-Sorry, I don't have cents.

In the first example, it is clear that the testee has made a linguistic mistake. Instead of using singular (has) he used plural (have). This is due to the lack of linguistic knowledge. While in the second example the testee has used the word (cent) which is actually an indication of the result of native language influence.

Below is a table that shows the percentages of the students' errors at the production level.

Table (2) Percentages of Students' Errors at the Production Level
(Part 2)

Type of speech act	Type of errors		Total
	Failure to use appropriate linguistic means/ lack of linguistic knowledge of FL	Lack of LF culture	
Disagreeing	18%	38%	56%
Warning	38%	49%	87%
Offering	46%	36%	82%
Apologizing	21%	49%	70%

Regarding the third part of the test (translation), the statistical analysis has shown that 61% of the testees have failed to translate into correct speech act. 28% of the testees have failed to perform well in translating the speech act of disagreeing due to the learner's failure to use the appropriate linguistic means and 33% of testees have failed to perform well as a result of the lack of the FL culture. Consider the examples below:

- 1-Don't you think they are show children nervous.
- 2-Western films are wonderful.

In the first example, there is a misuse of vocabulary (nervous) which is due to the lack of linguistic knowledge of

Foreign language. In addition there is a mistake in the form of the verb phrase (are show). While in the second example the testee has used (western films) as a result of the lack of foreign language culture instead of the word (cowboy films)

In the second item (warning), 34% of the testees have failed to translate the speech act. 24% of them have failed due to their lack of linguistic knowledge and 10% of them due to the lack of the foreign language culture. Consider the examples below:

- 1-You will be regret.
- 2- May be you don't introduce me.

In the first example, the testee has made a grammatical mistake. Instead of using (regret) as a verb, he has used it as an adjective without using the suffix (ly), or it may be due to his insertion of the auxiliary (be) into the sentence between (will) and (regret).

While in the second example, the testee has made an error in choosing the suitable vocabulary item. He has used the verb (introduce) instead of a verb like (know). It can be argued that the testee has tried to say something like (May be you don't know me) but his misuse of the verb (introduce) has made his sentence unacceptable.

In the third item (offering) few testees have failed to translate the speech act, only 7% of the testees have failed to give a successful translation due to the misuse of a linguistic means while none of the students have made mistakes due to the lack of the foreign language culture.

In the last item (apologizing) 44% of the testees have not been successful in translating into correct speech act. Only 7% of them have failed to translate due to the misuse of the linguistic means while 37% of them have failed to translate the speech act due to the lack of the foreign language culture. Consider the examples below:

- 1-It was not in my hands.
- 2-I am do my homework next time.

In the first example, the testee has made a mistake due to the lack of the foreign language culture because native speakers say (out of my control), not (in my hands). In the second example, the testee has made a linguistic mistake in verb form 'I am do'.

Below is a table that shows the percentages of the students' errors at the translation level.

Table (3) Percentages of Students' Errors at the Translation Level
(Part 3)

Type of speech act	Type of errors		Total
	Learner's failure to use the appropriate linguistic means/ Lack of linguistic knowledge of FL	Lack of FL culture	
Disagreeing	28%	33%	61%
Warning	24%	10%	34%
Offering	7%	0%	7%
Apologizing	7%	37%	44%

7-Conclusions

Within its limits and procedures, the findings of the study lead to the following conclusions:

1-Kurdish learners of EFL face considerable difficulty in the area of illocutionary speech acts. This difficulty can be due to certain factors such as:

a-Lack of pragmatic competence

Many students have failed to recognize the intended speech act because they tend to depend on a literal or superficial

interpretation of the text. They don't try to interpret the text pragmatically, i.e., they don't try to infer the intended speech act which is , in many cases, implicit.

b-Lack of linguistic knowledge

Many students have failed to recognize the intended speech act because they don't have the linguistic knowledge that enables them to interpret the text appropriately.

c-Lack of knowledge of the FL culture, a fact which disables students to comprehend the intended speech act.

3-Difficulty on the production level can be due to certain factors such as:

a-Lack of linguistic and pragmatic knowledge. Many students have failed to perform the intended speech act simply because they have failed to choose the linguistic means suitable for the speech act they try to perform.

b-Lack of knowledge of the FL culture. It has been found that many students have used unnatural English when they perform speech acts, a fact which indicates that they lack English culture.

4-Difficulty at translation level can be due to certain factors such as:

a-Interference of the mother language with the FL. This has been very clear in the students' translations which, in many cases, seemed unnatural, a fact which indicates that the students' performance is influenced by their mother tongue, i.e., Kurdish.

b-Lack of knowledge of the FL culture. Again this is clear in students' failure to choose the linguistic means, and the vocabulary items suitable for the FL culture.

c-Lack of linguistic knowledge. Many students have failed to choose the suitable linguistic means and correct language structures.

8-Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are put forwards:

1-Teachers of EFL are advised to pay more attention to developing the pragmatic competence of their students.

2-To achieve the above aims, EFL teachers are advised to provide students with authentic materials that require them to use language purposefully and communicatively.

3-Teachers of English are advised to develop the students' understanding of the foreign culture by using classroom activities that reflect the culture of the foreign language.

4-Exposing students to some native piece of language to enable them to realize the linguistic and extra-linguistic means used in performing the speech acts under study.

Appendix 1

Part I

Write the number of the sentence and the letter of the correct answer:

1-A- I think Tom will sell his house at €3000.

B-Do you think he is an idiot?

In the above dialogue speaker B:

a-asks whether or not B believes that A is really is an idiot.

b- B wants to tell A that Tom is a bankrupt, and he will accept this price.

c- B disagrees with A about the idea that Tom will accept this price.

2-The utterance 'Don't come a step nearer' said by someone quarreling with another person implies that the speaker:

a- asks the listener to leave.

b- warns the listener.

c- wants to tell listener that he doesn't like someone standing near to him.

3-At a restaurant:

A: Do you like chicken?

B: Yes, please.

In this dialogue speaker A:

a- asks a question to know whether or not B likes chicken.

b- requests B to order chicken for him /her.

c- offers to order chicken for B.

4-A: The telephone rings.

B: I'm in the bathroom.

In this dialogue speaker B :

a-apologizes for being unable to answer the telephone since he/she is in the bathroom.

b-wants to give a piece of information to A about his/her location.

c-wants to tell A that he/she will answer the telephone.

Part II

Do as required:

1-Your friend believes that life in Europe is easy. Disagree with him by referring to the increasing number of employees.

2-Your friend is a heavy smoker. Warn him against smoking by referring to the diseases it can cause.

3-Your friend is late. Offer to give him/her a lift to his/her college.

4-Your friend asks you to lend him/her your mobile telephone to call someone. Apologize to him.

Part III

Translate the following dialogues into English:

١- لة طفطوطوية كدا لة نيوان دوو كقس:

- ا- فيلمة كانى كاوبوى خوئن.
 ب- بة لآم لآوبروايآدا نيت كة توندو تيزى ئيشانى منالان دةدات .
 ٢- لة كاتى شتر كردندا :
 ا- ئيشيمان دةبيتوة!
 ب- ديارة تو من نانسيت!
 ٣- تيشتر بوون بة لآى ضاخانية كدا :
 ا- هةست بة تينوئيتى دةككيت ؟
 ب- نةخير سوئاس .
 ٤- لة تولدا:
 ا- خوئندكار : بة دةستى خوئ نآبوو كاتيكى تر ئةركة كانى مآلآة ووم بة جى دةهينم.
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