THE SPEECH ACT OF COMPLAINT AS REALIZED BY IRAQI ARABIC SPEAKERS

Hussain Hameed Mayouf (M.A.)
University of Babylon

١ Introduction

We recurrently get annoyed, discontented or unhappy about other people or situations. Thus, uncomfortable situations often trigger expressions of complaints. The way we express our reactions to the annoying events, express our feelings of dissatisfactions toward others, make certain word choices and behave depending on particular factors. Social status, gender, relationship between the interlocutors, and the complexity of situations are the social variables that influence the speech strategies of speakers. This study focuses on how Iraqi Arabic speakers complain. Given the context of expressing disapproval to a teacher, someone of higher status, will native speakers of Iraqi Arabic produce a complaint speech act set in both role-plays and discourse completion task employed to gather data? And if they do so, what are the components of this set emerging from both of the measures? Do the speech act sets of complaint emerging from the two measures differ? If so, how? This study, based on two data collection stages, aims to determine what English complaint strategies are preferred by Iraqi university EFL (IEFL) learners. The first stage is engaging the participants in a role play. The second stage is answering a discourse completion task(DTC).

٢ Speech Act Theory

The speech act theory is attributed to the British Philosopher J.L Austin (١٩٦٢) who shows that many utterances, termed performatives, are equivalent to actions not only communicate information. In other words, through the use of these utterances, people do things or have others do things for them; they *apologize*, *promise*, *request*, *refuse*, *complain*, etc. Utterances that may be used to realize the above functions are known as speech acts. In the same book, Austin (١٩٦٢) elicits five speech act groups including: "verdicatives" (giving a verdict), "expositives" (fitting utterances into the course of an argument or conversation), "exercitires" (exercising power, rights or influence), "behabitatives, (demonstrating attitudes or social behavior), and "commissives" (promising or otherwise undertaking).Searle (١٩٦٩) asserts that speech acts are performed in real situations of language use. In this way, the underlined assumption in speech act theory is that the minimal unit of human communication is the performance of certain kinds of acts or functions. According to their functions, and based on the above, Searle (١٩٧٩) proposes five categories of speech acts including "directives", "calmatives"," representatives", "declaratives" and "expressives". Complaint is categorized as "expressives". It is the case where the speaker expresses disappointment, joy, like, dislike, etc. "Expressives" represent the speaker's psychological state, attitudes, and feelings. The typical acts that come under this category are complaint, apology, and gratitude. Complaining occurs when a speaker reacts with displeasure or annoyance to an action that has affected the speaker unfavorably (Olshtain & Weinbach, ١٩٨٧). We can say that complaint is an expression of a psychological state of being unhappy or dissatisfied about something

which requires special kind of speech act and different kind of face keeping strategies. Brown and Levinson (١٩٨٧) categorized complaint as one of the face-threatening acts that have strong potential for disturbing the state of personal relationship.Traditionally, 'complaint' was taught as a component of forensic rhetoric (Conley, ١٩٩٤). Until the advent of pragmatics, however, the topic was little studied as an object in its own right, other than from a purely descriptive or, more recently, structural/functional perspective (Halliday and Matthieson, ٢٠٠٤; Leech and Svartvik, ١٩٩٤;Martinet, ١٩٧٩). Since then, it has attracted closer attention from linguists, emerging most recently as a fertile ground for cross-cultural comparison: between speakers of different languages or genders (Olshtain and Weinbach, ١٩٨٧, ١٩٩٣) or in terms of its occurrence in different situations or discourse types (Boxer, ١٩٩٣;Kohl, ٢٠٠٦). Complaint has increasingly become seen as a signifier of cultural difference and one of the most complex features of negotiation, even between West European cultures which might be thought to share broadly similar traditions. As such, it is assumed to be governed by convention, both national and contextual, rather than by universal pragmatic principles (Spencer Oatey, ٢٠٠٣; ٢٠٠٥). Insofar as pragmatics was derived from the study of live interaction, it is perhaps not surprising that, notwithstanding recent interest in e-mail correspondence (Kohl, ٢٠٠٦), complaint should have been analyzed primarily from a face to face perspective. Following Brown and Levinson (١٩٧٨) and Leech (١٩٨٣), Olshtain and Weinbach (١٩٩٣: ١٠٨) define complaint as "a speech act where the speaker (S) expresses displeasure or annoyance – censure – as a reaction to a past or on-going action, the consequences of which are perceived by S as affecting her unfavourably. This complaint is usually addressed to the hearer (H) whom the S holds, at least partially, responsible for the offensive action".By implication, this definition excludes what, following D'Amico-Reisner (١٩٨٥), we refer to in this paper as 'indirect complaint', that is instances where the complainant is expressing his/her feelings to someone other than the person seen to be responsible for the source of the problem. Indirect complaint sheds light on 'how complaining functions as a social strategy' (Boxer, ١٩٩٣: ١٠٧). It serves as a window on the potential causes of cross-cultural misunderstanding and places them in a wider social, cultural and political context.

٢,١ The Speech Act of Complaint

The act of complaining takes place in home and institutional settings in many forms every day. However, it is an under-represented speech act compared with the wealth of studies on other speech acts such as requesting, apologising, refusing and responding to compliments. The recent studies on complaint making have concentrated on the discussion about the nature of the act, identification of its communicative features and interlanguage or cross-cultural comparison among adult speakers or second language learners at different proficiency levels.Trosborg (١٩٩٥:٣١١) defines complaint as an illocutionary act in which the speaker (complainer) expresses his or her disapproval or other negative feeling Complaint is an expression of a psychological state of being dissatisfied or unhappy about something. The speech act of complaint occurs when a speaker reacts with displeasure or annoyance to an action that has affected him/her in an unfavorable manner.

Olshtain and Weinback (١٩٩٣: ١٠٨) list the necessary pre-conditions for the speech act of complaint as follows:

(١) Hearer (H) performs a socially unacceptable act (SUA) that is contrary to a social code of behavioral norms shared by S and H.

(٢) S perceives the SUA as having unfavorable consequences of herself, and/or for the general public.

(٣) The verbal expression of S relates post facto directly or indirectly to the SUA, thus having the illocutionary force of censure.

(٤) S perceives the SUA as: (a) freeing S (at least partially) from the implicit understanding of a social cooperative relationship with H; S therefore chooses to express her frustration or annoyance? and (b) giving S the legitimate right to ask for repair in order to undo the SUA, either for her benefit or for the public benefit. It is the latter perception that leads to instrumental complaint aimed at changing things that do not meet with our standards or expectations. The main goal of such instrumental complaint is to ensure that H performs some action of repair as a result of the complaint.

In other words, the speaker expects a favorable event to occur (an appointment, the return of a debt, the fulfillment of a promise, etc), or an unfavorable event to be prevented from occurring, (a damage, an insult etc), the action results, therefore, in the violation of speaker's expectations by either having enabled or failed to prevent the offensive event. The speaker sees an action as having unfavorable consequences for him/her-self. The action is therefore the offensive act. The speaker holds the hearer responsible for the action. The speaker chooses to express his/her dissatisfaction and frustration verbally.

٢٬١٬٢ Functions of Complaints

In the light of the preconditions mentioned above, the functions of complaints can be listed as follows:

a- To express displeasure, disapproval, annoyance, blame, censure, threats, or reprimand as a reaction to a perceived offense/ violation of social rules (Olshtain & Weinbach,١٩٩٣),

B- To hold the hearer accountable for the offensive action and possibly suggest/request a repair(Olshtain & Weinbach, ١٩٩٣),

C- To confront a problem with an intention to improve the situation (Brown & Levinson, ١٩٧٨).

D- To share a specific negative evaluation, obtain agreement, and establish a common bond between the speaker and addressee ("trouble sharing", "troubles talk"). For example:

"I really think his grading is unfair. I worked so hard for this exam." "Same here. He wouldn't be satisfied even if we copied the whole book." (Boxer, ١٩٩٣).

E- To allow ourselves to vent/let off steam (Boxer, ١٩٩٣),

F- To open and sustain conversations (Boxer, ١٩٩٣).

Brown and Levinson (١٩٧٨) categorized complaints as face-

threatening acts (FTA) which have strong potential for disturbing the state of personal relationships. It is generally agreed that the speech act of complaint is face-threatening to the hearer. When the speaker makes direct complaints, he/she is more likely to threat the hearer's face, or say hurt his/her feelings and hence impair the relationship between them.

According to Sauer, (٢٠٠٠), speakers may tend to use a variety of linguistic forms and nonverbal signals in order to save the hearer's face and remain polite even when performing the inherently face-threatening speech act of complaint. Of course, this requires a higher, level of pragmatic competence.

٢،١،٣ Strategy of Complaining

The following strategy set is elicited by Olshtain and Weinbach (١٩٩٣:) for the act of complaining:

١- The mitigated strategy: The speaker may decide to avoid the act. In doing so, he can get praised for being polite, or give the impression that he cares for the hearer. He will be at ease because he has not shown his feelings of displeasure or annoyance.

٢- The indirect strategy: The speaker may also opt to perform the act. He might do this in off-records, in which the speaker gives the hint of inconvenience resulting from the SUA. This can gain the speaker certain payoffs. However, if H happens to pick the hint, H might show some reaction in the form of an apology or an offer of repair, which could lead S to calm down. S may also carry out the FTA in-record, which moves him to the next stage of the strategy set.

At this stage, S might prefer to carry out the FTA with or without redress. If this is done without using redress, the SUA is stated explicitly either in the form of request or a statement. S expresses his frustration without any mitigation, and he risks to have conflict with H, who might react to S with an open attack.

On the other hand, if redress is employed, there appear two options: positive politeness and negative politeness. In the case of positive politeness, S would prefer to mention both the SUA and H, but this would be done with some expression of mutual concern and understanding creating mitigation. In such a case, S would express his frustration but at the same time he would express personal interest or understanding concerning H. Therefore, the relationship between S and H would not be damaged badly.

In the case of negative politeness, the complaint is expressed using mitigated expressions in the form of request for repair, or a statement relating to the SUA but not directly to H.

٣ Some Empirical Studies on Complaint

Speech act of complaint has not been widely studied as it is the case with other speech acts of request, apology, promise and refusal. However, the studies conducted into this area would serve to provide a good framework for this investigation.

Olshtain and Weinbach(١٩٨٧: ٢٠٢) conducted one of the most widely quoted studies in this area. They investigate the speech act of complaint as produced by native and nonnative speakers of Hebrew and develop Five categories that are based

~~on severity of the complaint for a specific scenario in which one colleague had~~ waited for another colleague who arrived late to an appointment.

The five categories are:
(١) below the level of reproach, "No harm done, let's meet some other time."
(٢) disapproval, "It's a shame that we have to work faster now."
(٣) direct complaint, "You are always late and now we have less time to do this job."
(٤) accusation and warning, "Next time don't expect me to sit here waiting for you."
(٥) threat, "If we don't finish the job today, I'll have to discuss it with the boss."

Murphy and Neu (١٩٩٦: ٢٠٠) identify four semantic formulas:
(١) an explanation of purpose
(٢) a complaint
(٣) a justification
(٤) a candidate solution : request

Moon (٢٠٠١) concludes that nonnative speaker subjects do not always make complaints following the appropriate ways of NS's complaints. They tend to make complaints in a more explicit way, whereas native subjects use more implicit ways of complaints.

Tanck (٢٠٠٢) comes out with that while native and nonnative speakers often produce almost identical speech act set components for complaints and refusals, the quality of the components produced by nonnative speakers differ markedly from those made by the native speakers sample. It is also found that the nonnative speakers' responses, though generally linguistically correct, lack the pragmatic elements that allow these face-threatening acts of complaint and refusal to be well received by the hearer.

From the above literature review which covers both theoretical and empirical studies, one may conclude the following:

First, speech acts are performed in real situations of language use. They are used not only to inform, but also to have things done.

Second, complaint is a speech act that occurs when a speaker reacts with dissatisfaction or annoyance to an action that has unfavorably affected him/her.

Third, complaint is a face-threatening act and native speakers of English tend to realize it through the use of more indirect strategies.

Fourth, nonnative speakers of English may not be quite familiar with the native speakers conventions of complaining and as such their complaints may sound rather "impolite" and this may lead to communication breakdown.

٤ Classification of complaints

Rinnert and Nogami (٢٠٠٦) develop a taxonomy of complaints to analyze the data. This taxonomy consists of three main components of complaints, viz., the main component, the level of directness and the number of softeners used in the interaction.

These components are presented as follows:
١. Main component
a. Initiator (greetings, address terms, and other opening formulas)
b. Complaints(expressions of negative evaluation, including justification)
c. Request (direct/indirect attempts to get the hearer to remedy the situation)
٢. Level of directness
a. Indirect (no explicit mention of offense, implied offense only)

b. Somewhat direct (mention of offense, but no mention of the hearer's responsibility)

c. Very direct (explicit mention of offense and hearer's responsibility for it)

٣. Amount of mitigation (counting the softening expressions, e.g. "a little, sort of, you know, would/ could, I think/ I wonder")

Kumagai (٢٠٠٤) discusses how the repetition of utterances within such conversations could function as a conversational strategy to:

١) Express emotions (complainer expresses negative feelings and disapproval, and complainee expresses regret and disagreement);

٢) Deal with the complaint situation effectively as a complainer or a complainee (complainer: intensification of reproach, maintaining stance by adding utterances, sarcasm using complainee's words; complainee: repeating apologies, stalling or diverting the complaint);

٣) Provide rhetoric for argument (complainer: holding the floor by speaking fluently and adding utterances, controlling the topic of the complaint; complainee: reorienting the conversation to a solution, closing the conversation); and

(٤) Manipulate the conversational development.

In particular she focused on uses of repetition, both exact repetition as well as modified repetition or paraphrase, of utterances made earlier in the same conversation. Kumagai concludes that repetition is a major means for creating speaker involvement and not merely a matter of redundancy.

٥ Encoding of Complaints:

Murphy and Neu (١٩٩٦) identifies the strategies used by Americans, and encoded them into categories accordingly:

١) Explanation of Purpose / Warning for the Forthcoming Complaint:

I just came by to see if I could talk about my paper.

Uh, I got my paper back here and after looking through it…..

Listen, John, there is something I want to talk to you about. You remember our agreement, don't you?

Well, look, I might as well start right out.

٢) Complaint

I think maybe the grade was a little too low. I was kind of upset with my grade. I know that a lot of the problems are mine but there are certain areas that I wasn't totally in agreement with what you said.

٣) Justification

I put a lot of time and effort in this….

٤) Candidate solution: request:

I would appreciate it if you would reconsider my grade.

In the same study, Murphy and Neu (١٩٩٦) investigated the speech act of complaining produced by Korean non-native speakers of English and found that they expressed criticism and offered solution in the form of demand as well as the other strategies identified for American native speakers of English. Some of the utterances made by Korean speakers of English are as follows:

١) Explanation of purpose:

I have something to talk to you about my paper.

٢) Complaint

I little bit disappointed in my grade.

~~٣) Criticism~~

But you just only look at your point of view and you didn't recognize the my point.

٤) Justification

I spent a lot of times to do research on this paper.

٥) Candidate solution: request

I honestly ask you to reconsider my paper.

٦) Candidate solution: demand

Your grading is not fair and so you must be changed.

٦ Trosborg's Complaint Strategies

The eight complaint strategies classified by Trosborg (١٩٩٤) are: Hints, Annoyance, Ill Consequences, Indirect Accusation, Direct Accusation, Modified Blame (Behavior), and Explicit Blame (Person). Whereas Rinnert and Nogami (٢٠٠٦) proposed the classification of complaint into three aspects of complaint: Main Component (Initiator, Complaint, Request), Level of Directness (Indirect, Somewhat Direct, Very Direct), and Amount of Mitigating.

١- No Explicit Reproach: -Hints

٢- Expression of Disapproval: -Annoyance

-ill consequences

٣- Accusation: -Indirect

-Direct

٤- Blaming: -Modified Blame

-Explicit Blame (Behavior)

-Explicit Blame (Person)

٦,١ Hints

When a complainer uses a hint, he does not mention the complainable in a proposition. It is caused by avoidance of a conflict with the complainee. The complainer implies that he knows about the offence, but holds the complainee indirectly responsible. The complainer does not state the complainable; therefore, the complainee does not know whether an offence is referred to or not, for example:

(١) Final Score:Complainer: Maam, I wonder why I got a C in your course. Can you tell me the reason why? (Trosborg, ١٩٩٤ in Dyah and Sukyadi, ٢٠١١; ٧٠) In the above example, the complainee implies that he knows about the complainable: there was a mistake with his final score. The complainer does not explicitly state his complaint and he does not directly hold the complainee's responsibility for the problem. The complainer just proposes the question about the reason why he got a C.

Here, the complainer is a student while the complainee is his lecturer. They are neither relatives nor close friends, so they have a distance. Besides, a student has a lower power than a lecturer does. Whereas when he pursues the complaint, the complainer considers the social background of the complainee who is older and more experienced than he is. Because of all the above reason, the complainer use a hinting strategy in terms of politeness complaint and avoidance of breaking their relationship. As a mitigating device, the complainer used " Maam…" to initiate the complainee and asked, "Can you tell me the reason why?" for a request of repair. Another example:

(٢) Complainer: "I need sleep, hope you understand."(Trosborg, ١٩٩٤ in Dyah and Sukyadi, ٢٠١١; ٧٠)

In this example, the complainer implies that (s)he knows about the complainable:

there was a noisy situation here. The complainer does not explicitly state his/her complaint and she does not directly hold the complainee's responsibility for the problem. The complainer just proposes the statement about what she needs and just says, "Hope you understand" as the end of her statement.

٦,٢ Annoyances

When a complainer expresses his/her annoyance by saying "It's very annoying to hear a lot of noise every night." The complainer explicitly states his/her complaint but he does not directly hold the complainee's responsibility for the problem. The complainer just state the annoying situation and proposes the request about making a better condition. The complainer does not directly mention the person as a complainee to avoid the guilty party.In this case, the use of annoyances is understandable, considering the social status of complainer. As a mitigating device, the complainer states a request for repair: "Can you make it better?" that supports the previous statement. The complainer does not mention directly the complainee, but she only states the annoying situation and then makes a request to complainee to repair the condition.

٦,٣ Ill Consequences

The same as annoyances, the complainer uses ill consequences, (s)he expresses his/her annoyance by stating the situation that is considered to be bad for him or her. The complainer implies that (s)he holds the complainee responsibility but avoid mentioning the complainee as the guilty person. The difference is that the complainer states the utterances also to express the ill consequences resulting from the offence for which the complainee is held implicitly responsible, for example:

(٣) Broken Camera:

Complainer: Hellow, why I can't use my camera again? What have you done with my camera? Okay, right now, I will not lend it for you. Here, the complainer expresses his ill consequence by saying, " why I can't use my camera again?" The complainer explicitly states his complaint, but he does not directly hold the complainee's responsibility for the problem. The complainer merely states the annoying situation by asking the question about the camera. The complainer asks why he cannot use the camera again as the ill consequences. However, the complainer does not mention the complainee directly to avoid the guilty party.

٦,٤ Indirect Accusation

Accusations are divided into two ways: indirect Accusation and direct accusation and both of them try to establish the agent of a complainable. By an indirect accusation, the complainer asks the hearer questions about the situation or asserts that he or she was in some way connected with the offence. However, Trosborg (١٩٩٤: ٣١٧ and ٣٤٥) argues that the use of questioning or a piece of information is less face threatening, for instance:

(٤) Final score:

Complainer: Excuse me Sir, I just want to ask you about my score? Why I got C while on the final test an A? In [٤], the complainer expresses an indirect accusation by saying: "I just want to ask you about my score? Why I got C while on the final test an A?" Why I got C while on the final test an A? The complainer explicitly expresses his complaint by asking the about the grade. The complainer does not state the person as the agent, but he refers to the situation; therefore, this is called indirect

~~accusation. Here, also, the complainer is a student while the complainee is his~~ lecturer. They are neither relatives nor close friends, so they have a distance. Moreover, a student has a lower power than a lecturer does. Whereas when he pursues the complaint, the complainer considers the social background of the complainee who is older and more experienced than he is. Consequently, the complainer uses an indirect accusation strategy in terms of complaint politeness and avoidance of breaking their relationship.

٦،٥ Direct Accusation

   Accusations , whether direct or indirect, try to establish the agent a complainable. By a direct accusation, the complainer directly accuses the complainee of having committed the offence, for example:

(٥) Broken Camera:

   Complainer: What did you do with my camera? You have to explain about this to mother and ask her to buy the new one to change this.

(٦) Noisy Night:

   Complainer: Would you shut up?

(٧) Final Score:

   Complainer: Excuse me Sir … may I interrupt your time? It's just for a few seconds. I just want to ask you about my final grade, Sir.. I've got A on my report but why did I get C at the end. Give me some explanation, Sir.. So I know my faults and make a change here. In these examples, the complainer directly state to the agents of the complainable and make the complainees the guilty party by explaining the situation. In (٥), the complainer directly asks the hearer to shut his voice. By this direct statement, the hearer would become the guilty party and he is supposed to repair the situation. As for (٧), the complainer states the directness by explaining the situation and asks the hearer for further information about the score.   In this part, it is shown that there are various ways for the complainers to state direct accusations, however, the point that should be underlined is that the agent of complainables should be stated directly to make the hearer the guilty party.

٦،٦ Modified Blame

   In using a modified blame, a complainer expresses a modified disapproval of an action for which the accused is responsible, or the complainer states a preference for an alternative approach not taken by the accused. It presupposes that the accused is guilty of the offence, although this is not expressed explicitly. For instance:

(٨) Noisy Night: Gosh, it's so noisy… I am very sleepy I need to go to bed. Can you at least be quite a little bit?

In this utterance the complainer cannot sleep well because of the noise, so she expressed the complaint by saying "Gosh, it's so noisy …" and she explained that she should go to bed by "I am very sleepy and I need to go to bed." Then followed by a modified blame by proposing "Can you at least be quiet a little bit?"

٦،٧ Explicit Blame (Behavior) By using an Explicit Blame (behavior), a complainer clearly states the action that the complainee has to take responsibility of. For instance:Noisy Night:Complainer: I understand that you have something to do that makes you have to come home very late. But, since this is really late night, and people are going to bed already, I think it's better for you not to make any distracting noise while you are coming home. I think this is good for you since people here are so uncomfortable with your behavior recently. So, could you please be careful next time? The unique characteristic of an explicit blame (behavior) is the explanation

that the action is bad. It is sometimes considered to be softer than a modified blame. It is a kind of advice to the complainee. In this utterance, the complainer cannot sleep well because of the noise, so she stated the complaint by advising " I understand that you might have something to do that makes you have to come home very late. Here the complainer explains that making any disturbing noise at night is annoying; the complainee should not make any disturbing noise when she comes home at night. Moreover the complainer stated the question in the last by asking "So, could you please be careful next time?" as a request for repair.

٦٫٨ Explicit Blame (Person) By an Explicit Blame (Person), a complainer explicitly states the blaming to the person. The use of this strategy is vivid in the following example:

Broken Camera:Complainer: Hey you, ugly-looking son of a bitch!!! This camera won't be fixed by just saying you are sorry and then you watch TV. Go and fixed it!

In this utterance, the complainer uttered directly to the complainer. This characteristic of this strategy requires that the accused person is considered to be a non-responsible social member. In this example the complainer, stated " Hey you, ugly-looking son of a bitch!" to initiate the complainee and it is definitely as a sarcastic utterance. Then, he continued saying "This camera won't be fixed by just saying you are sorry and then you watch TV. Go and fixed it!" as the complaining set.

٧ Measuring Speech Acts:

Several ways have been used to test the formal aspects of language competence. Nonetheless, it is something problematic to test the functional aspects of language competence. Kasper & Dahl (١٩٩١) states the procedures that have been developed and used to assess these functional aspects of a language. Some of these ways are rating, multiple choice, interview tasks, discourse completion, closed role plays, open role plays and observation of authentic discourse. Among these methods, discourse completion tasks could be the most frequently used method. Sasaki (١٩٩٨) asserts that they include a situation where a certain kind of speech act is expected, respondents are asked to provide what they think would be appropriate in the given situation, and they can be either open ended or be accompanied by a reply. A discourse completion task accompanied by a reply can be exemplified by a task in (١):(١) You are handed back a paper by your professor. However, you are startled by your grade and feel that you have been marked down for disagreeing with the professor's point of view rather than on any flaws in your content and analysis. You are particularly upset since you have spent weeks researching this paper and feel the professor has ignored your effort through simple bias. You decide you must speak to him/her about this. So, after class, you go to the professor during office hours and say:

You: --

Professor: I will think about it.

(Murhpy & Neu, ١٩٩٦)

For an open-ended discourse completion task, (٢) can be an example:

(٢) You are handed back a paper by your professor. However, you are startled by your grade and feel that you have been marked down for disagreeing with the professor's point of view rather than on any flaws in your content and analysis. You are particularly upset since you have spent weeks researching this paper and feel the

~~professor has ignored your effort through simple bias. You decide you must speak to~~ him/her about this. So, after class, you go to the professor during office hours and say:

You: --

(Murhpy & Neu, ١٩٩٦)

٨ Effectiveness and Shortcommings of DCT

A discourse completion task is effective when:

(١) quickly gathering a large amount of data;

(٢) creating an initial classification of semantic formulas and strategies that will occur in natural speech;

(٣) studying the stereotypical, perceived requirements for a socially appropriate response;

(٤) gaining insight into social and psychological factors that are likely to affect speech and performance; and

(٥) ascertaining the canonical shape of refusal, apologies, partings, etc., in the minds of the speakers of that language (Kasper & Dahl, ١٩٩١; ٣٧).

Beebe and Cummings (in Kasper & Dahl, ١٩٩١) also point out the shortcomings of discourse completion tasks:

They do not adequately represent:

(١) the actual wording used in real interaction;

(٢) the range of formulas ad strategies used (some, like avoidance, tend to be left out);

(٣) the length of response or the number of turns it takes to fulfill the function;

(٤) the depth of emotion that in turn qualitatively affects the tone, content, and form of linguistic performance;

(٥) the number of repetitions and elaborations that occur; or

(٦) the actual rate of occurrence of a speech ace ?e.g.; whether or not someone would naturalistically refuse at all in a given situation (Kasper & Dahl, ١٩٩١: ٣٨).

These shortcomings have led many researchers to consider collecting data in authentic discourse. Although collecting authentic data is not impossible, it is particularly difficult. According to Kasper (٢٠٠٠), one difficulty in collecting naturally occurring data lies in gaining access to the research site. Because getting permission from institutions could be difficult. Recording the data is another problem since it may endanger the natural data. Another difficulty arises from the fact that the researcher's presence may alter the normal course of interaction. It could also take too long to get hold of the desired data.

The difficulties listed above have caused the researchers to find alternative ways of gathering data, which would be as close as possible to authentic utterances, and role-plays seemed to offer this opportunity. Heaton (١٩٩٠: ١١٧) claims that some language skills cannot be assessed by formal methods. He declares that since language is a communicative activity, oral skills can best be measured by observing [people] use language amongst themselves to achieve certain goals? In role-plays, the respondents are asked to take a particular role which requires the performance of a particular speech act. Sasaki (١٩٩٨) asserts that role-play simulates more authentic situations. The respondents can be free to control the conversation if given an opportunity to interact with the interlocutor freely. This is called open role play? However, if the respondents are restricted in their freedom to interact with the interlocutor, this kind of role-play is called closed role play?

The shortcomings of role-plays need to be borne in mind, too. Weir (١٩٩٠) warns us that the respondents can feel nervous about acting out the situation, which affects their performance. Data transcription for analysis is also time consuming. Besides, Cohen (١٩٩٦) points out the danger that interviewer may make leading suggestions in their effort to elicit verbal report.

Sasaki (١٩٩٨) compared the production tasks (discourse completion tasks) and role-plays. She examined response length, range and content of the expressions and native speaker evaluations of these responses to the speech acts of requests and refusals of NNSs. She reported that the role-play elicited longer responses, and larger number and greater variety of strategies than production tasks. She attributed these differences to the interactive nature of role-plays. The respondents often switched strategies for the same situations across different methods. She also pointed out that the correlation between the appropriateness scores of the two methods was not high enough to support the claim that they measured exactly the same trait. She concluded that production tasks cannot be substituted for role-plays.

The present study adopts the procedure followed by Sasaki (١٩٩٨), who argued that the respondents in such a study need to be from similar backgrounds in terms of mother tongue, age, previous education, and cultural background. She asserted that otherwise the results of such a study could be biased. She also emphasized the importance of the role identification of the respondents. She argued that the previous studies assigned the respondents with roles with which the respondents were not familiar, which would affect the reliability of the results. Another thing to bear in mind, according to Sasaki, is to use the same participants in collecting data. Otherwise, the data collected from different participants would not be comparable, which would pose questions for the validity and reliability of these methods as evaluation measures.

٨ Research Questions:

The study raises the following research questions:

١- Given the context of expressing disapproval to a teacher, someone of higher status, will native speakers of Arabic produce a complaint speech act set in both role-plays and discourse completion task employed to gather data?

٢- If they do so, what are the components of this set emerging from both of the measures?

٣- Do the speech act sets of complaint emerging from the two measures differ? If so, how?

٩ Hypotheses:

To answer the research questions, the study hypothesizes the following:

١- Given the context of expressing disapproval to a teacher, someone of higher status, native speakers of Arabic language produce a complaint speech act set in both role-plays and discourse completion task employed to gather data.

٢- The semantic components of this set will be similar to each other in the two different measures.

٣- However, the respondents are expected to produce longer utterances (as measured by number of words or by number of moves) in role-plays than in discourse completion task.

١٠ Participants:The participants were twenty-two Iraqi Arabic university students (١٠ females and ١٢ males, ages between ١٨-٢٢) participated in the study. They are

~~students at the Department of English, College of Education for Humanities,~~ Babylon University, which is an English medium department. They all came from similar high schools, where they had traditional learning experiences.

١١ Instruments:

The same context used for the role-play and discourse completion task (see appendix ١).The situation was designed to facilitate the participants' identification with the role they were supposed to play. The students were able to imagine such a situation prior to the role-play because they had actually experienced such a situation in their earlier school lives. The respondents were used to talking to their teachers about the feedback or marks that they got from their teachers. Thus, they had no difficulty in identifying with their own roles and the interlocutor's role.

١٢ Procedures:

The role-play was carried out first. This was to discourage students from practicing for the role-play. The students were taken at a time to the teacher's office for the role-play activity. Each student read the situation before entering the office. They were also told that the conversation was to be recorded, and they said that they did not mind this as long as the other teachers did not listen to it. The researcher made it clear that it was only for the researcher's use. Two weeks after the participants completed the role-play, they were given the discourse completion task, which they answered in class. It was ensured that the students did not look at each other or speak to each other while completing the task. They were given enough time and space to write their answers.

١٣ Data Analysis:The data gathered were analyzed in terms of response length and semantic components. For the comparison to be fair, the parts, which were irrelevant to the speech act of complaint, were excluded.

١٤ Results and Discussion:

١٤،١ Response Length:

Table ١ presents the mean response length of ٢٢ participants' written and oral responses. While the oral responses have been found to be longer than the written responses in general, two respondents gave longer answers in discourse completion task.

Table (١) The mean response length of ٢٢ participants

Example number	Type of response	
	Word-number in Oral responses	Word-number in Written responses
١	١٠	٨
٢	٥	٥
٣	٩	٨
٤	٨	٨
٥	٥	٧
٦	١٧	١٢
٧	١٧	١٣
٨	١٠	٩
٩	٤	٦
١٠	١٠	٨
١١	٧	١٠
Mean	٩،٢٧٢	٨،٥٤٥

The oral responses were longer, a fact which was partly due to the interactive nature of the role-play task. The responses of the interlocutor encouraged the respondents to say more, or repeat what they said earlier. Also, in order to get the interlocutor's attention, the respondents used the word " أستاذ " much more often than they did so in the discourse completion task. Thus, we could argue that the role-play task elicited more authentic data. The table suggests that there is a momentous

discrepancy in the response lengths between the two data elicitation techniques.

Diagram 1 Shows the length difference between Role plays and DCT
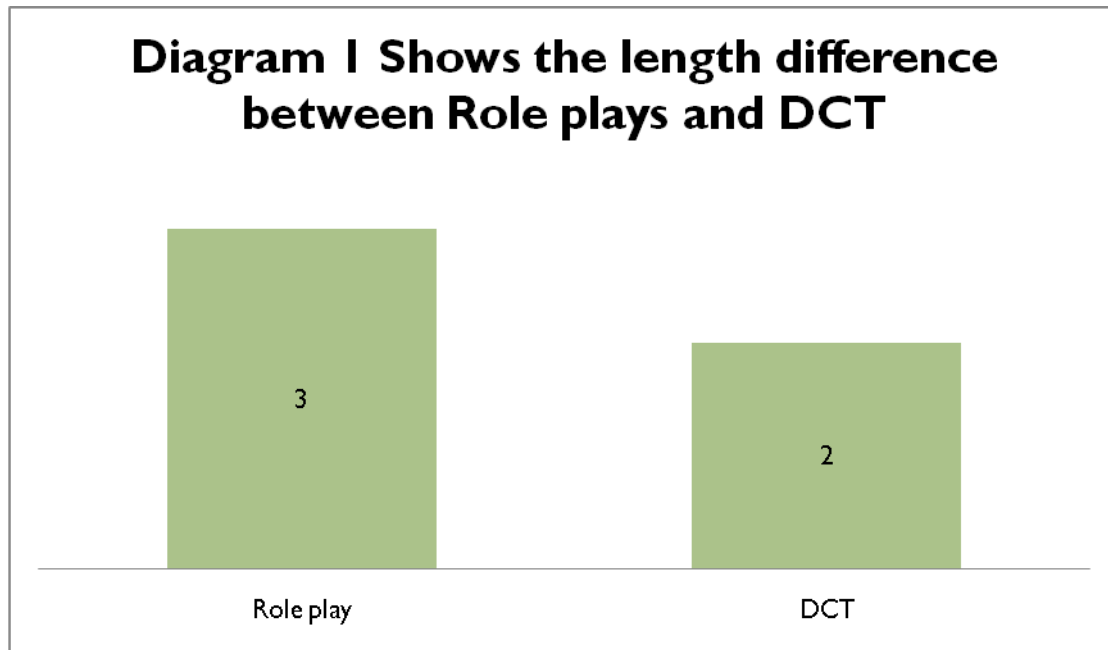
Role play	DCT
3	2

١٤,٢ Semantic Formulas:

The complaint speech act set produced by Iraqi Arabic native speakers in the role-play and the discourse completion task revealed a lot of similarities as well as some interesting results. The summary of these results can be seen in Table ٢.
Table ٢ shows the semantic formulas used in the Role-play task:

Item	Semantic formulae					
	EXPL.	COMPL.	Criticism	JUSTI. (reason)	a candidate solution :	
					Request	Demand
١	√	√				
٢	√	√				√
٣	√	√				
٤	√	√				
٥	√	√				
٦	√	√	√			
٧	√	√				
٨	√	√		√		
٩	√	√			√	
١٠	√	√				
١١	√	√				

Diagram 2 : Show the sematic formulas employed by Iraqi Arabic speakers in the Role play

Table ٣ shows the semantic formulas used in the DCT:

Item	Semantic formulae					
	EXPL.	COMPL.	Criticism	JUSTI. (reason)	a candidate solution :	
					Request	Demand
١	√	√		√		
٢	√	√		√		√
٣	√	√		√		
٤	√	√		√		
٥	√	√		√		
٦	√	√	√	√		
٧	√	√	√	√	√	
٨	√	√	√	√		√
٩	√	√		√		
١٠	√	√		√		
١١	√	√		√		

Diagram 3 : Show the sematic formulas employed by Iraqi Arabic speakers in the DCT
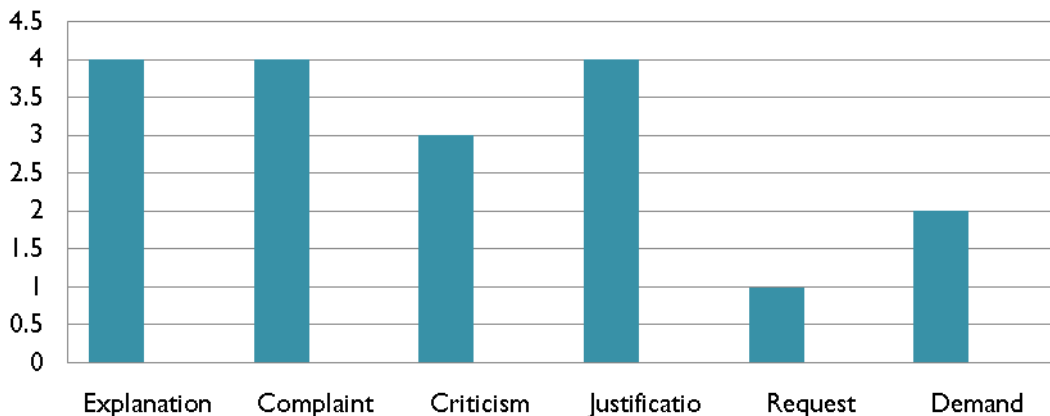
An explanation of purpose was provided by all the respondents in the role-play before they stated the complaint. However, three of the respondents did not state the reason for their presence. In both of the data collection methods, the respondents seemed to utter similar sentences. Some examples of this component are:

(١)

Role-Play: (١١).يوجد فرق في تفكيرنا, حسب المصادر الموجودة, هذا ليس من حقك

DCT: (٨) !أنا لأستحق هذه الدرجة الواطئة التي اعطيتها لي

(٢)

Role-Play: (١٢) !!أنت قبل ان تعطي الواجب باسبوع انا كنت قد بدأت به وأكملته

DCT : (٧) انا قد بدأت بتحضير الواجب قبل إسبوع؟

(٣) Role-Play:N/A   DCT : N/A

A complaint was produced by all of the respondents in both of the data collection instruments. This component seemed to occur after the respondents explained their purpose. Some of the utterances made by the subjects are:

(٤)

Role-Play: (١٢) .أستاذ انت لم تعطني الدرجة التي استحق على الواجب,وإنني لا أستطيع الانتظار

DCT: (١١).استاذ أنا أعتقد ان الدرجة التي اعطيتني اياها اقل من استحقاقي

(٥)

Role-Play: (٦) هلو, الذي انتظرته اخذته بدرجتك القليلة؟

DCT : (٥) انت لم تعطني درجة عالية؟

The respondents seemed to avoid criticism in role-plays, where only one subject employed criticism. However, in the discourse completion task, six respondents opted for criticism. Seven people employed both complaint and criticism at the same time in the discourse completion task. It is also interesting to note that the student who employed criticism in the role-play task did not do so in the discourse completion task. However, he employed both criticism and complaint in the role-play. Examples of criticism produced by these subjects are:

(٦)

Role-Play: ان الذي فعلته ليس من حقك ! (Criticism)

استاذ؛ اعتقد ان الدرجة التي اعطيتني اياها بالورقة لم تكن كافية ؟(١٧) (Complaint)

يا استاذ اعتقد انه ليس من الانصاف اعطائي درجة واطئة كهذه,فهي ليست كافية.(١٣) : DCT

Response: أتعتقد ان الدرجة التي اعطيتك اياها لم تكن كافية!؟

(٧)

Role-Play: (٧) هل انني لااستحق الدرجة التي اعطيتني اياها؟ (Complaint)

DCT: (٦) الاتعتقد انني لااستحق هذه الدرجة؟ (criticism)

Response: الاستاذ: يوجد فرق في تفكيرنا!! حسب المنهج الموجود هذا ليس من حقك!!!

Justification was given by all the respondents in the discourse completion task whereas only one person opted out to give justification in the role-play. The justification was given to explain the reasons why the respondents was complaining or criticizing. The data gathered suggests when complaining to or criticizing someone of a higher status such as a professor, one is supposed to give his reasons for doing so. Some examples of types of justifications given are:

(٨)

Role-Play : (١١)قبل ان تعطي الواجب باسبوع انا كنت قد بدأت به واكملته !!

DCT : (٩) لقد اكملت هذا الواجب قبل اسبوع من الموعد المقرر.

Respondense : الاستاذ: اذن انت بدأت بتحضير الواجب قبل اسبوع ؟

(٩)

Role-Play: الطالب : هل الاخطاء قليلة؟

DCT: الاستاذ: انا احضر موضوع الانشاء وانجزه جيدا.

The respondents employed candidate solution: request in both role-play (٩) and the discourse completion task (٧). Interestingly, some respondents made a demand as a solution (٨) in the discourse completion task. This number was ٢ in the role-play. This suggests that Iraqi Arabic speakers can be more polite and avoid face threatening act of criticism in face-to-face communication. It is also interesting to note that ٤ of the respondents employed both demand and request together in the discourse completion task, which might suggest that they did not want to lose face, but at the same time they wanted to be quite forceful when they are not in face-to-face communication context with the addressee. Some of the examples where the respondents made a request are:

(١٠)

Role-Play: الطالب: لنعيد ترتيبنا للامور.

DCT : N/A

(١١)

Role-Play : الطالب: اذا انت وانا من جديد سندقق معا, ساكون فرحانا...

DCT : لطفا, اريد ان انظر واقيم ذلك اكثر من مرة.

Discussion:

In order to compare discourse completion tasks and role-plays as data gathering methods in pragmatics, in this study we analyzed Iraqi Arabic speakers' realization of the face threatening speech act of complaint. The two methods revealed that while in both the discourse completion task and the role-play respondents realized the speech act of complaint, some respondents (almost ٥٥٪) opted for criticism together with a complaint at times in the discourse completion task. Furthermore, some of the subjects provided different kinds of solutions in different data gathering methods, which shows that data gathering method also influences this component of the speech act set of complaint.

Despite the variations mentioned above, the two methods revealed similar results

regarding other components of the speech act set.

These findings suggest that the type of the data gathering method seriously affects the realization of speech acts by Iraqi Arabic speakers. Therefore, even though discourse completion tasks are more practical, it could be argued that in order to have more reliable data in pragmatic research, we need to employ various data gathering methods.

REFERENCES

Al-Amar, M.(٢٠٠٠). The Linguistic Strategies and Realizations of Request Behavior in Spoken English and Arabic among Saudi Female English Majors at Riyadh College of Arts: M.A. Thesis. Riyadh: King Saud University.

Austin, J. L. (١٩٦٢). How to Do Things with Words. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Beebe, L., Takahashi, T. and Uliss- Weltz, R. (١٩٩٠). "Pragmatic Transfer in ESL Refusal". In R.C. Scacella, E.S Anderson, and S.D Krashen (Eds.), Developing Communicative Competence in a Second Language (PP. ٥٥-٩٤). New York: Newbury House Publisher.

Bergman, M. and Kasper, G., (١٩٩٣). "Perception and Performance in Native and Nonnative Apology'". In Interlanguage Pragmatics, G. Kasper and S. Blum-Kulka, (PP. ٨٢ – ١٠٧). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Boxer, D. (١٩٩٣). Complaints as positive strategies: what the learner needs to know. TESOL Quarterly, ٢٧(٢), ٢٧٧-٢٩٩.

Brown, P. & Levinson, S. C. (١٩٧٨). Politeness: Some Universals in Language Use. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cohen, A. (١٩٩٦). Investigating the production of speech act sets, In S. M. Gass & J. Neu (Eds.), Speech acts across cultures: Challenges to communication in second language (pp. ٢١-٤١). Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyer.

Dyah Ayu and Didi Sukyadi (٢٠١١) Complaining in EFL Learners: Differences of Realizations between Men and Women.

Eisentien, M. & Bodman, J. (١٩٨٦). "I Very Much Appreciate": Expression of Gratitude by Native and Nonnative Speakers of American English. Applied Linguistics, ١٦٧-١٨٥

Gass, S. and Selinker, L. (٢٠٠١) Second Language Acquisition: An Introduction Course. Mahwah N,J:Lawrence Erlbaun, Inc.

Hudson, T. (٢٠٠١). "Indicators for Pragmatic Instruction": In K.R. Rose and G. Kasper (Eds.), Pragmatics in Language Teaching (PP. ٢٨٣-٣٠٠). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Heaton, J.B. (١٩٩٠). Classroom Testing. London: Longman

Hymes, D. (١٩٧٢). On Communicative Competence, in H.B. Pride and J. Holmes (eds.). Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd.

Kasper, G. (٢٠٠٠). Data collection in pragmatics research. In H. Spencer-Oatey (ed.), Culturally speaking: Managing rapport through talk across cultures.(pp. ٣١٦- ٣٤١) London and New York: Continuum.

Kasper, G. & Dahl, M. (١٩٩١). Research Methods in Interlangauge Pragmatics, Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center: University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Manes, J. (١٩٨٣) "Complaints: A Mirror of Cultural Values". In N. Wolfson & E. Judd (Eds.), Sociolinguistics and Language Acquisition. (PP. ٩٦-١٠٢) Cambridge: Newbury House.

Moon, K. (٢٠٠١) Speech Act Study: Differences Between Native And Nonnative Speakers' Complaint Strategies. The American University.

Morrow, L. (١٩٩٦) Sociolinguistics and Second Language Learning Unpublished MA Thesis: University of Wales.

~~Murphy, B & Neu, J (١٩٩٦) "My Grade is too Low: The Speech Act of Complaining" In S.M.~~
Gass and J. Neu (Eds.) Speech Acts Across Cultures: Challenges to Communication in a Second Language (PP. ١٩١-٢١٦) Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Novick, (٢٠٠٠) Politeness and Rationality. Amsterdam: J. Benjamin Publishing Company.

Nelson, G. L., Bakary, W. E. & Batal, M. A. (١٩٩٦) Egyptian and American compliments: focus on second language learners. In S. M. Gass & J. Neu (Eds.), Speech Acts Across Cultures: Challenges to Communication in a Second Language.(pp. ١٠٩-١٢٨) Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Olshtain, E. and Weinbach, L. (١٩٨٧). "Complaints: A Study of Speech Act Behavior Among Native and Nonnative Speakers of Hebrew". In J. Verschueren and Bertucelli- Papi(Eds.), The Pragmatic Perspective (PP. ١٩٥-٢٠٨) Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Olshtain, E. & Weinbach, L. (١٩٩٣). Interlanguage features of the speech act of complaining. In G. Kasper & S. Blum-Kulka (Eds.), Interlanguage Pragmatics. (pp. ١٠٨-١٢٢)New York, Oxford : Oxford University Press.

Paulston, C. B. (١٩٩٢) Linguistic and Communicative Competence: Topics in ESL, Bristol: Longdunn Press.

Sasaki, M. (١٩٩٨). Investigating EFL students' production of speech acts: a comparison of production tasks and role plays. Journal of Pragmatics (٣٠), ٤٥٧-٤٨٤.

Sauer, M. (٢٠٠١). Complaints: A Cross-cultural study of pragmatic strategies and linguistic forms. Paper presented at AAAL Conference, Vancouver, Canada.

Scollon, R. and Scollon, S. (٢٠٠١) Instructional Communication: A Discourse Approach. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd.

Searle, J. R. (١٩٧٩). Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Riter, R. (٢٠٠٠). Linguistic Politeness in Britain and Uruguay: A Contrastive Study of Requests and Apologies. Amsterdam : John Benjamins Publishing Co.

Tanck, S. (٢٠٠٢). "Speech Act Sets of Refusal and Complaint: A comparison of Native and Non-Native English Speakers' Production". Studies in Second Language Acquisition.

Umar, A. (٢٠٠٤). 'Request strategies as Used by Advances Arab Learners of English" Um Al-Qura Journal of social Sciences. Umm Al-Qura: Umm Al-Qura University Press.

Weir, C.J. (١٩٩٠).Communicative Language Testing. New York: Prentice Hall.

Weizman, E. (١٩٩٣) "Interlanguage Requestive Hints". In G. Kasper, and S. Blum Kulka (Eds.), Interlanguage Pragmatics, (PP. ١٢٣ – ١٣٧), New York: Oxford University Press.

Wolfson, N., (١٩٨٣). "Compliments in Gross Cultural Perspective". TESOL Quarterly; ١٥, (PP. ١١٧ – ١٢٤).

APPENDIX١
Role Play Situation Instructions

أستاذكم اعاد اليكم واجب الانشاء والان انتم تنظرون   الى درجاتكم وتتساءلون بسخرية: أها , وتعتقدون بان

الدرجات التي حصلتم عليها ليست بقدر حقكم, فانتم تعتقدون بانكم اصبحتم جيدين في كتابة الانشاء وقواعده, وانت تنظر الى هذا الواجب تتساءل بان الذي عملته من تحضير كثير والذي سهرت عليه هل يجب ان يكون في هذا الحال, وتعطون القرار لاستاذكم بخصوص هذا الموضوع,,, وفي ساعة الاستراحه تذهبون الى استاذكم وتسالونه عن وجهة نظره:

http://www.cpra.com.cn/ycoe/Html/Article/٧٠.html

APPENDIX ٢

Discourse Completion Test (DCT)

Directions: Please write your response in the blank area. Do not spend a lot of time thinking about what answer you think you should provide; instead, please respond as naturally as possible.

Situation One:

Knowing that your room will be vacant over the weekend as you are visiting your family who lives in another city, your friend requests to stay in your room over the weekend to prepare for his / her final exams.

You permit him / her to stay. However, when you come back you find that your friend has behaved carelessly and messed up the room.

Situation Two :

You need to buy a ticket to travel to a nearby city to visit your family over the weekend. You go to the ticket office at the bus station and you have to wait in a long line to get a ticket. The tickets are almost sold out. You have been waiting there for more than an hour. While you are standing in line, someone about your age, tries to cut in line in front of you.

Situation Three :

You are applying for a position with a highly reputed company. The interview committee wants to have a recommendation letter from your previous employer. Your boss agrees to send this letter directly to the company. A month later you discover that the committee has not received this letter. You go to your boss's office to find out what has happened.

Thank you for your efforts and time,,,,,