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The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2

ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online

مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

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8. Appendix

Instructions:

Please imagine that you are in the following situations and assume that you will say something in each situation. Read the situation fully and carefully, then write down what you think you would say in English in the spaces provided.

1- You and one of your English teachers meet in a book shop. He/she is considering buying an expensive book about English grammar. However, you have seen the same book in another book shop at a lower price. <u>What would you say as a suggestion to your teacher?</u>

2- You see one of your new classmates working in the library very late in the evening. She/he is doing some research on the internet to prepare for a conference and looks very tired. <u>What would you say as a suggestion to this classmate?</u>

3- You are at a supermarket with your neighbor. He/she is about to buy some potato chips which are on sale. You notice that the expiration date is September 2015, but it is now June 2016. <u>What would you say as a suggestion to him/her?</u>

4- You arrive home and learn that your son is planning to drive to another city to visit some relatives this evening. You know that your son's car breaks down frequently. <u>What would you say as a suggestion to him?</u>

5- You and your boss are at a restaurant. You are both looking at the menu and deciding what to order. Your boss wants to order roast chicken. You have ordered roast chicken in this restaurant before and, in your opinion, it was not very good; <u>what would you say as a suggestion to him/her?</u>

6- Your student would like you to help him with an electronic file. After he copies the file from his USB flash drive to your laptop, he directly unplugs the USB without following the safe removal procedure. This can damage the USB flash drive and the laptop. <u>What would you suggest to him?</u>

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The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2

ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online

مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

graduate students had access to more linguistic resources than under-graduate students, it does not necessarily mean that they were able to successfully use these resources, or produce target language pragmatic patterns. This implies that neither level of proficiency receives enough input in the EFL cultural context.

On the pedagogical level, Sudanese learners of English in order to be linguistically and pragmatically competent and to fulfill politeness functions should acquire cultural knowledge, be fully aware of the specific speech act strategies and linguistic features in the context of the target language, and be fully aware of the politeness strategies used in the target language in different social context.

The information provided by this study about the production of speech act of suggestion would not only benefit the Sudanese EFL students but also syllabus designers since they make the learners cognizant of how native speakers realize and perform this speech act. The findings of this study also provide the English learners with socio-pragmatic information norms.

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The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2

ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online

مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

determine the choice of certain speech act strategies. It is found that Sudanese learners of English, in spite of the long period of time they spend in practicing English language skills of writing, reading, listening and speaking are yet not capable of appropriately performing aforementioned speech acts in English. The results of other studies investigated the performance of Sudanese learners of English, namely Mahjoob (2005 & 2008) and Umar (2006) confirm the findings of this study.

Failure to use the language properly in communication is largely attributed to the Sudanese learners' lack of knowledge about the native speakers' culture and norms, the mother tongue transfer when using English, and the learners limited linguistic proficiency. Different cultures view politeness from different perspectives and employ different strategies to show it. In Sudanese culture, for example, offering help or making suggestion to a close friend who is in trouble is viewed as an expression of friendliness and using directive strategies in such situations is considered as a positive culture value and indicates the intimacy and close relations rather than rudeness or impoliteness. Of course, it is not true, as Umar (2004) asserts, that adopt the English cultural norms of politeness as standard for all other cultures, but it is very important to bear in mind that when using English as a means of interaction, the English politeness strategies should be employed.

The data analysis has demonstrated that Sudanese students' linguistic competency is limited. This appears clearly in their inappropriate sentence structures, their grammatical mistakes and even spelling mistakes. It is also noticed that most of the students adopt only a few types of suggestion strategies. They sometimes use semantically similar utterances, but the utterances do not sound English like, lexically. Pragmatically, they seem to resort to convention of their mother language when performing the given speech act, therefore, their performance will be inappropriate if used in the target language. This implies insufficient L2 language input and lack of instruction.

With regard to the qualitative results concerning the relationship between language proficiency and pragmatic competence, it is realized that the relationship between language proficiency and pragmatic competence is not linear but rather complex. While

The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2

ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online

مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

suggestion may be viewed as an expression of friendliness and interest specifically when they suggest a friend who is in trouble or when they're offering help. This assumption allows them to use direct strategies such as Imperatives in saying "Come and stay with me". In fact in Sudanese culture directness in such situations is considered as a positive culture value and it indicates that the interlocutors are on quite intimate and close relations. In English, on the contrary, it may view as privacy and speakers try to be more indirect and not to threaten the hearer's face.

As findings show pragmatic transfer could be seen in the choice of semantic formula and lexical items. For instance, Sudanese EFL students employed "offering" formula or "compliment/ praying" formula in making suggestion in saying "I will bring this book with lower price for you" as a response to the first situation of suggestion or in saying "You look so tired. God help you/ you are working hard may Allah help you" as responses to the second situation of suggestion (see Appendix).As for lexical items, the effect of mother tongue interference can be noticed clearly in Sudanese EFL students' overusing the obligation modal "must" since Arabic equivalent modals as "yajebu", "yalzemu" and "labudda" used to express the obligation but without indicating the source of imposition, where as in English the obligation carried through "must" reflects an imposition by the speaker. Regarding the formality and politeness conveyed by modals, English provides such scales through "will/would", "can/could" and "may/might" while their Arabic equivalents as "?mkana", "qadra" (or their different spoken derivations as "mumkin") do not reflect politeness embodied in English. This might leads to pragmatic transfer and Sudanese students' overusing the modal "can" and neglecting the use of "could".

7. Theoretical and Pedagogical Implications

This study has some important theoretical and pedagogical implications. Theoretically, this study reveals that Sudanese EFL students do not always follow the same strategies and linguistic formulae of English native speakers when performing the speech acts of order and promise. They fall back on their cultural back ground when they utilize the strategies of ordering and promising. This implies that it is not always the norms of the target language that

The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2

ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online

مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

but they are still different than English native speakers in many ways. They have employed, for instance, more indirect strategies in making suggestion than undergraduate students but less frequently than native speakers. Like native speakers, they have adopted modals could and might which have not been by under-graduate students in making suggestions but not as high frequency as native speakers.

Regarding the factor of gender, male and female students are similar in choosing the type of employed strategies and formulae, but the frequency of employing is different between them. In making suggestions, female students are more direct than male students and have preferred Negative-structure among direct strategies, while Imperative structure is preferred by male students. The let's structure which is considered more polite than bare imperative has been used more frequently by female students. Male students other wised have used more modal verbs than female students.

Social status and social distance, as other factors investigated in this study have been proved to be crucial in the choice of suggestion strategies among Sudanese EFL students. They preferred to be more indirect when interacting with higher status addressees and more direct in their interaction with equal and lower statuses.

Since making suggestion is a directive speech act and considered face threatening act, the results demonstrate that Sudanese graduate and under graduate EFL students try to minimize the hearer's face threat by using the mitigation devices when they making suggestions. Under-graduate students used "Titles", "Attention-getters", "Apologizing" and even "offering help" in order to open the conversations and avoid jumping into suggesting. They tried also to redress the face threatening-act of suggestion by using other strategy such as justifying the reason of using imperative and negative imperative structures. Moreover, they have used "Hedging" strategy (I think…/please) as a mitigation device. Graduate EFL students also used the same types of the mitigation devices for suggestion speech act as under-graduate students but with the more frequency level.

It is found that the differences in cultures and norms affect the realization of different speech acts including suggestion. In many cultures, including Sudanese culture, the notion of making

The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2

ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online

مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

Table 7 displays the distribution of these devices between suggestion situations.

Table 7 Mitigation devices

Types	Strategies	Situations						Total	
		One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	F	%
Opener	Using titles	13	4	3	9	3	1	33	9.91
	Attention getters	9	2	4	0	3	0	18	5.41
	Apologizing	2	0	2	0	2	1	7	2.10
	Offering help	0	7	0	0	0	0	7	2.10
Justification explanation	Imperatives	1	1	5	1	2	1	11	3.30
	Negative-imperatives	2	2	9	1	2	8	24	7.21
	Can/ could	0	0	2	2	0	0	4	1.20
	Should/must	0	1	3	1	0	0	5	1.50
Hedges	I think	1	2	2	4	7	0	16	4.80
	Politeness device	5	6	2	8	0	7	28	8.41

As Table 7 indicates, Sudanese EFL students preferred using titles strategy as an opener strategy and employed this strategy more frequently in situation One in which the suggestion giver has lower status. Moreover, the frequency of justification for negative imperatives (24) is higher than other justifications or reasons given for imperatives (11) and modals (Can/could 4, should/must 5). As for hedges, politeness device has been found more frequently (28) than the expression of 'I think' (16).

6. Findings and Discussion

The findings reveal that there are both similarities and differences in the strategies English native speakers and Sudanese graduate and under-graduate EFL students have utilized to perform speech act of suggestion. The results show that in making suggestions, Sudanese graduate and under-graduate EFL students have adopted more direct strategies than English native speakers, while the conventionally indirect strategies can be seen more frequently by the later group.

It is found that although Sudanese graduate EFL students, the high level of proficiency participants, are more native like in their performance compared to Sudanese under-graduate EFL students,

The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2

ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online

مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

Referring to Table 6, Graduate students adopted less direct strategies than under graduate students. Unlike under graduate students, graduate student used Performatives rather than Imperative and Negative structures. Among conventionalized strategies, they used Wh-questions and Conditionals more frequently than under graduate students, while modal and semi-modals have been used less frequently.

As for Indirect strategies, graduate students by employing more Impersonal formula were more indirect in making suggestions. Graduate students were similar to under graduate students in frequency of using Making assertion and Hint structures.

5.5 Mitigation devices used by Sudanese students in making suggestions

It has been mentioned by Brown and Levinson (1987) that certain kind of acts intrinsically threaten face want of the addressee or of the speaker. Speech act of suggestion is considered a negative face threaten act and as such should be softened and mitigated in order to minimize the threat to the hearer' face. In addition to main suggestion strategies employed by respondents, they used some mitigation devices in producing suggestions. These mitigation devices categorized into three types: opener, justification/explanation and hedges. Opener strategy is used to start the conversation.

'Titles' include Sir, teacher, friend and son, or hypothetical names as Ahmed, Mohamed were used to open the conversation. Attention getters such as saying Hi, hello, hey and excuse me, or apologizing as saying "sorry my teacher…/sorry my friend…" were also used as conversation opener. The respondents also used 'offering help' strategy as in "Can I help you?" to open the conversation.

Besides giving suggestion, the respondents used justification/ reasons or explanation to support their suggestions. This strategy employed before or after suggestion directive strategies as Imperatives, Negative-imperatives, and conventionalized indirect strategies as Modals. The third type of mitigation devices used is "hedges" as in saying "**I think** it would be better to…/ **I think** you can …" or using politeness device "please" before imperative strategies.

The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2

ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online

مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

seen that both groups are similar in using Wh-question and Conditional structures. Indirect strategies, however, adopted more by male students. Among indirect strategies, making assertion structure is the most frequently used structure by both males 18.35% and females 13.14%.

B) Proficiency Level

In order to find out that whether proficiency level affects the choice of strategy and formula type in giving suggestion, Sudanese graduate students' performance was analyzed and compared to the performance of Sudanese under-graduate students. The result is shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Distribution of suggestion formulae across proficiency level

Comparison Suggestion	Under graduates		Graduates	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Performatives	21	6.31	26	17.93
Imperatives	42	12.61	11	7.59
Negative-imperatives	59	17.72	10	6.90
Let's	8	2.40	1	0.69
Modals & semi-modals	100	30.2	41	28.28
You can	27	8.11	17	11.72
You could	0	0	1	0.69
You may	1	0.30	0	0
You should	28	8.41	16	11.03
You need	1	0.30	1	0.69
You must	24	7.21	2	1.38
You have to	17	5.11	2	1.38
You'd better	2	0.60	2	1.38
Wh-questions	5	1.50	7	4.83
How about	0	0	4	2.76
Why don't you	5	1.50	0	0
Why not	0	0	3	2.06
Yes-no questions	3	0.90	2	1.38
Conditional	6	1.80	3	2.06
Impersonal	16	4.80	16	11.03
Hints	1	0.30	1	0.69
Others	72	21.62	27	18.62
Making assertion	52	15.62	22	15.17
Can I/ Can we	14	4.20	2	1.38
Would you mind	6	1.80	0	0
Would you like	0	0	3	2.06
Total	333	100	145	100

The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2

ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online

مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

Table 5 Distribution of suggestion formulae across gender

Comparison Suggestion	Males		Females	
	F	%	F	%
Performatives	12	7.59	9	5.14
Imperatives	23	14.56	19	10.86
Negative-imperatives	15	9.49	45	25.71
Let's	1	0.63	7	4
Modals & semi-modals	53	33.54	47	26.86
You can	13	8.23	14	8
You may	0	0	1	0.57
You should	11	6.96	17	9.71
You need	0	0	1	0.57
You must	10	6.32	14	8
You have to	17	10.76	0	0
You'd better	2	1.27	0	0
Wh-questions	3	1.90	2	1.14
How about	0	0	0	0
Why don't you	3	1.90	2	1.14
Why not	0	0	0	0
Yes-no questions	0	0	2	1.14
Conditional	3	1.90	3	1.71
Impersonal	7	4.43	9	5.14
Hints	1	0.63	0	0
Others	40	25.32	32	18.29
Making assertion	29	18.35	23	13.14
Can I/Can we	8	5.06	6	3.43
Would you mind	3	1.90	3	1.71
Total	158	100	175	100

Table 5 indicates that Sudanese female students were more direct than male students in making their suggestions. Imperative is the most frequently used structure by male students, while its negative structure is the most frequently used structure by female students. It is worth noting that female students in spite of their high frequency using of direct structures, adopted let's structure which considered less threatening face and more polite among directive strategies. This structure however rarely used by male students.

There is also a significant difference in using modal structure between male and female students. As Table 5 indicates, male students employed more modal structures than females. It can be

The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2
ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online
مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

formulae 20 times (32.26%). In other hand, the 'you should' and 'you must' can be seen more frequently in situation 2 in which the speaker and the hearer are unfamiliar. Native speakers of English, in contrast, rarely adopted modals for making suggestions in this pair. The frequency of using Wh-question and Conditional structures, however, was higher for native speakers.

Third category

Suggestion maker is in higher status than suggestion receiver in situations Four and Six. They are familiar (family members) in situation 4 and unfamiliar (teacher and student) in situation 6 (see Appendix). As Table 4 displays, for native speakers, the most frequent formulae were conventionalized strategies. Imperatives from direct strategies can be seen with high frequency, where as indirect strategies have never been used by native speakers in this category. It is assumed that speakers with higher status tend to be more direct when they address people of lower status. Based on Table 3, Sudanese students, similarly, used the high frequency of directive and conventionalized strategies. Among conventionalized strategies, modal structure is the only structure has been used in this category. It is interesting that Sudanese students unlike English native speakers employed indirect strategies for making suggestion in these two situations.

5.4 The effect of individual variables on the choice of strategy

It has been claimed that individual variables such as gender, age and level of proficiency affect the choice of formula and strategy of making suggestions. The effect of the variables of gender and level of proficiency has been investigated in this study.

A) Gender

To investigate the effect of gender on the choice of strategy type in making suggestion the performance of both male and female Sudanese under-graduate students were analyzed respectively and the result is displays in the table below:

The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2

ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online

مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

situations, as Tables 3 and 4 explain, Sudanese EFL students adopted more direct strategies comparing to their counterparts. Although these structures have been used less frequently in these first category than other two categories, but comparing to native speakers they still have been overused.

Table 3 indicates that the total use of modal and semi-modals structures by Sudanese students in lower-to-higher category are fewer than other two suggestion categories. It is observed that obligation modals must, have to, and should have been used less frequent while, probability modal can have been used more frequently in these two situations.Unlike native speakers, Sudanese students didn't use conditional structure in these two situations; and Wh-question structure used rarely by both groups. ENSs employed Impersonal formula more frequently than Sudanese students specifically in situation 5. Sudanese students and native speakers used Making assertion formula with the similar level of frequency. They significantly used this indirect strategy for making suggestions in situation One and Five.

Second category

Suggestion maker and suggestion receiver are in equal status in Situations Two and Three. They are unfamiliar (classmates) in situation 2 but familiar (neighbors) in situation 3 (see Appendix). According to Table 4.5, Sudanese students adopted different strategies for making suggestion in this category. Among direct strategies, Imperatives and Negative-imperatives, and among modals should and must were the most frequently used formulae by Sudanese students. It is observed that Making assertion formula which used less frequently in previous category (lower-to-higher) was among high frequently used formula in this category. It is worth noting that, Sudanese students used Conditional strategy only in this category.

Regarding the social distance factor, all the above formulae have been distributed differently in each situation of this pair. For instance, the more frequently adopted structures in situation 3 (in which the speaker and the hearer are familiar to each other) are Imperatives which counted for 13 times (20.97%) and Negative-imperative

The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2

ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online

مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

Table 4Distribution of Suggestion formulae used by ENS across social distance and power

Situations / Strategies	Category one Lower-to-higher				Category two Equal-to-equal				Category three Higher-to-lower			
	One Familiar		Five Unfamiliar		Two Unfamiliar		Three Familiar		Four Familiar		Six Unfamiliar	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Performatives	0	0	2	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Imperatives	0	0	0	0	4	20	1	5	8	40	6	30
Negative-imperatives	2	10	0	0	1	5	5	25	1	5	1	5
Let's	2	10	0	0	0	0	3	15	0	0	0	0
Modals & semi-modals	**5**	**25**	**3**	**15**	**3**	**15**	**0**	**0**	**5**	**25**	**6**	**30**
You can	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	2	10	0	0
You could	2	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	15	2	10
You might	1	5	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	15
You should	1	5	1	5	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
You need	0	0	0	0	2	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
You'd better	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
Wh-questions	0	0	2	10	4	20	2	10	2	10	0	0
Conditional	1	5	3	15	1	5	5	25	0	0	2	10
Yes-no questions	2	10	1	5	1	5	2	10	5	25	2	10
Impersonal	1	5	5	20	1	5	1	5	0	0	0	0
Hints	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Others	**7**	**35**	**3**	**15**	**5**	**25**	**1**	**5**	**0**	**0**	**3**	**15**
Making assertion	7	35	3	15	1	5	1	5	0	0	0	0
Would you like	0	0	0	0	3	15	0	0	0	0	0	0
Question-tag	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	3	15

First category

In Situation One and Situation Five suggestion maker has lower status than suggestion receivers. They know each other in situation one (student and teacher), whereas unfamiliar in situation five (employee and boss) (see Appendix). Responding to these two

The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2
ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online
مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

Table 3 Distribution of Suggestion strategies used by SEFLS across social distance and power

Situations / Strategies	Category One Lower-to-higher				Category Two Equal-to-equal				Category Three Higher-to-lower			
	Situation 1 Familiar		Situation 5 Unfamiliar		Situation 2 Unfamiliar		Situation 3 Familiar		Situation 4 Familiar		Situation 6 Unfamiliar	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Performatives	4	7.84	4	8.51	6	8.22	5	8.06	0	0	2	4.44
Imperatives	1	1.96	4	8.51	9	12.33	13	20.97	9	16.36	4	8.89
Negative-imperatives	5	9.80	3	6.38	4	5.48	20	32.26	14	25.45	13	28.89
Let's	3	5.88	4	8.51	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.22
Modals & semi-modals	**14**	**27.46**	**14**	**29.79**	**29**	**39.73**	**12**	**19.35**	**17**	**30.91**	**16**	**35.56**
You can	9	17.64	6	12.77	2	2.74	2	3.23	6	10.91	2	4.44
You may	0	0	1	0	1	1.37	0	0	0	0	0	0
You should	3	5.88	4	8.51	10	13.70	6	9.68	3	5.45	2	4.44
You need	0	0	0	0	1	1.37	0	0	0	0	0	0
You must	0	0	1	2.13	10	13.70	3	4.84	4	7.27	6	13.33
You have to	2	3.92	1	2.13	4	5.48	1	1.62	4	7.27	6	13.33
You'd better	0	0	1	2.13	1	1.37	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wh-questions	0	0	1	2.13	2	2.74	0	0	0	0	2	4.44
Conditional	0	0	0	0	5	6.85	1	1.62	0	0	0	0
Yes-no questions	1	1.96	0	0	2	2.74	0	0	0	0	0	0
Impersonal	4	7.84	2	4.26	3	4.11	0	0	6	10.91	1	0.30
Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.82	0	0
Others	**19**	**37.25**	**15**	**4.50**	**13**	**17.80**	**11**	**17.74**	**8**	**14.55**	**6**	**13.33**
Making assertion	16	31.38	11	3.30	6	8.22	9	14.52	4	7.27	6	13.33
Can I/can we	2	3.92	2	4.26	6	8.22	1	1.62	3	5.45	0	0
Would you mind	1	1.96	2	4.26	1	1.37	1	1.62	1	1.82	0	0
Total	51	100	47	100	73	100	62	100	55	100	45	100

The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2
ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online
مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

As for Impersonal and Hint structures, indirect strategies, Sudanese students used these structures approximately with the same level of frequency as English native speakers did. Making assertion formulae include sentences which have the form of declaratives but have been claimed that not to have the force of declaratives or the Performatives. By using this structure, the speaker intends a suggestion rather than assertion. This structure, thus, is considered indirect strategy as Impersonal and Hint structures in this study. Surprisingly, Sudanese students were similar to English native speakers in employing Making assertion structure for making their suggestions. However, the structures Can I/ Can we, Would you mind were only used by Sudanese Students.

As Table 2 displays, English native speakers employed Yes-no questions more frequently (8.33%) than Sudanese students (0.90%). This structure is exemplified as:

Did you know you can get the same book, but at a better price, at the bookstore across the street?

Beside this interrogative structure, another linguistic form employed by ENSs, but less frequently than the former, to perform suggestion. This form contains a declarative sentence plus a question tag, for example, 'it's rather late isn't it?' or 'You know pulling out your flash drive without ejecting it can ruin it, right?' Sudanese students did not use the last strategy in making suggestions.

5.3 The effect of social variables on the choice of strategy

The effect of the social distance and power on the choice of strategy and formula for making suggestion were investigated in this study. To this end, three categories of situations were designed. Lower-to-higher suggestion strategies tested in the first category which contains situations One and Five, equal-to-equal suggestion strategies tested in the second category including situations Two and Three, and higher-to-lower suggestion strategies tested in the last category which are situations Four and Six. The results for this domain are shown in Table 3 and Table 4 below. The frequency and percentage of occurrence have been displayed in the tables.

The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2

ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online

مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

As demonstrated in Table 2, Sudanese under graduate EFL students used Performative structures more frequently (6.31%) than ENSs (1.62%). It is clear from the table that both groups SEFLS and ENSs made frequent use of Imperative structure in making suggestions. Compared with ENSs, employing Let's formula by SEFLSs was fewer. One possible explanation could be Sudanese students' different realization of using this structure. Although Let's is typically used to proposed a joint action taken by both the speaker and the hearer, but it can also be used in making suggestions when the action is done by the hearer (Jiang 2006). The use of Let's formula instead of bare imperative makes the suggestion less authoritative and more collaborative.

Modals and semi-modals are the most frequently used formulae by both groups among other formulae. SEFLSs, however, used more and different type of modals compared with their English counterparts. According to Table 4.4, you should and you can are the most frequently used structures by Sudanese EFL undergraduate students, while ENSs preferred using you could and you might among modals' formulae in making suggestions. The obligation modal structures you must and you have to were the second couple which used frequently by SEFLSs. The overuse of obligation modals should, must and have to, and probability modal can on the one hand and less use of the probability modal might and no use of could on the other shows that Sudanese students might not realize factors such as speaker's authority or politeness in their conversations or they might used only the most familiar linguistic forms to them and avoided less familiar ones.

In the case of Wh-questions, there is a significant difference between the two groups. Sudanese students used the structure of Wh-questions less frequently than English native speakers. This finding indicates that Sudanese student did not acquire the formulaic use of these questions for making suggestions.

The Conditional structure is among categories that have been used fewer by both groups; however, English native speakers employed it more frequently (9.17%) than Sudanese students (1.80%). Conditionals are often considered an indirect (conventionally indirect) way of making suggestions, showing the politeness of the speaker.

The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2

ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online

مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

5.2 Comparison of suggestion formulae used by Sudanese under graduate EFL students and English native speakers

According to Jiang's coding scheme which originally generated by Martinez-Flor (2005), the linguistic structures or semantic formulae were grouped into ten categories based on their grammatical features. They are: Performatives, Imperatives, Negative-imperatives, Let's, Modals and semi-modals, Wh-guestions, Conditional, Yes-no questions, Impersonal and Hints.

The data analysis has given other types of structures which could not be included in Martinez-Flor's coding scheme. These types of structures classified as Others. The so called "Others" category contains structures such as: making assertions, can I/ can we, would you mind, would you like, and tag question.

Table 2 Comparison of suggestion formulae used by Sudanese under graduate EFL students and English native speakers

Comparison / Suggestion	Sudanese EFL students Frequency	%	English native speakers Frequency	%
Performatives	21	6.31	2	1.67
Imperatives	42	12.61	17	14.17
Negative-imperatives	59	17.72	10	8.33
Let's	8	2.40	5	4.17
Modals & semi-modals	100	30.3	22	18.33
You can	27	8.11	3	2.5
You could	0	0	7	5.83
You may	1	0.30	0	0
You should	28	8.41	3	2.5
You need	1	0.30	2	1.67
You'd better	2	0.60	2	1.67
You might	0	0	5	4.17
You must	24	7.21	0	0
You have to	17	5.11	0	0
Wh-questions	5	1.50	11	9.17
How about	0	0	2	1.67
Why don't you	5	1.50	7	5.83
Why not	0	0	0	0
What about	0	0	2	1.66
Conditional	6	1.80	12	10
I wouldn't	0	0	6	5
If I were you	6	1.80	6	5
Yes-no questions	3	0.90	13	10.83
Impersonal	16	4.80	8	6.67
Hints	1	0.30	1	0.83
Others	72	21.62	19	15.83
Making assertion	52	15.62	13	10.83
Can I/can we	14	4.20	0	0
Would you mind	6	1.80	0	0
Would you like	0	0	3	2.5
Tag question	0	0	3	2.5
Total	333	100	120	100

The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2

ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online

مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

5. Results and Discussion

The data collected from the DCT are classified and analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The frequency of formulae and strategies of speech act of suggestion which employed by both English native speakers and Sudanese EFL learners are calculated and compared. This domain includes: 1) Comparison of suggestion strategies used by Sudanese under graduate EFL students and English native speakers, 2) Comparison of suggestion formulae used by Sudanese under graduate EFL students and English native speakers, 3) Investigating the effect of social variables, 4) Investigating the effect of individual variables, and 5) Investigating the mitigation devices used by Sudanese under graduate EFL students.

5.1 Comparison of suggestion strategies used by Sudanese under-graduate EFL students and English native speakers

Three suggestion strategies were identified in this study: direct, conventionalized indirect and indirect strategies. The frequency and percentage of using each strategy by Sudanese under graduate EFL students and English native speakers are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Suggestion strategies used by Sudanese under graduate EFL students and English native speakers

Comparison / Suggestion	Sudanese EFL students		English native speakers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Direct	130	39.03	34	28.33
Conventionally indirect	134	40.24	64	53.33
indirect	69	20.72	22	18.33

According to Table 1, conventionalized form strategies were the most frequent strategies used by both groups. English native speakers, however, preferred this structure more (53.33%) than Sudanese under -graduate EFL students (40.24%). Direct strategies were used by native speakers less frequently than conventionalized forms and more frequently than indirect strategies. Sudanese under -graduate EFL students, however, employed directive strategies as high frequency as conventionalized forms. They were similar to native speakers in using indirect strategies.

The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2

ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online

مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

hundred and forty six participants consist of twenty English native speakers as a reference group, ninety four under-graduates (fourth year students) majoring in English as the second group, and thirty two graduate students majoring in English as the third group (i.e. the high proficiency level group) have been chosen according to certain criteria (i.e. native language, level of study and educational background) to be the subjects of this study. Under-graduate students include seventy forth year EFL students of faculty of Arts at Omdurman Islamic University (35 males and 35 females), twenty four Sudanese fourth year EFL students of faculty of art at International University of Africa (10 males and 14 females). The third group of participants includes 18 graduate students from Sudan University for science and technology and 14 graduate students from Omdurman Islamic University. The age of under-graduate students ranged from 18 to 24 years old, but most of them were 20-24 years old. As for graduate students, their age ranged from 22-42 years old.

4.2 Data Collection

The modified version of Discourse Complement Test (DCT) which originally designed by Blum-Kulka (1982) was used to elicit data in the present study. The test consists of two parts: personal information and 6 situations. For the personal information, the subjects were required to give information such as age, gender, level of education, and length of period of studying English and the rate of their English fluency. They were asked to mention whether they had English courses outside of the classroom or whether they had ever been in an English community before. They were requested also to specify the main focus of their study among the skills of grammar, translation, conversation, reading and writing.

The situations include 6 suggestions. The factors of social distance, social power (higher, lower and equal status), and level of education were taken into consideration. The interlocutors involved in the situations of the DCT are friends, colleagues, neighbors, family members, relatives, roommates, strangers, professor and student, teacher and students, and boss and employee. In each situation a short description of the relation between participants was given. The participants were required to respond to each situation and write what they would say in their daily communication in English.

Chinese Learner (SWECCL) and the online Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE). Results of this study showed that Chinese learners used more modal verbs, explicit performatives and conditional structures than English native speakers. In terms of suggestion strategies, The Chinese learners used more conventionalized indirect strategies than native speakers of English.

Pishghadam and Sharafadini (2011) carried out a contrastive study between English and Persian realization of speech act of suggestion. The Discourse Completion Test consisted of six situations adopted for collecting the data in this study. 150 Iranian university students participated in this study. The results revealed the variation in almost most of the suggestion types. The factor of gender proved to be a significant in production of suggestion strategies. The researcher discussed some pedagogical implications in the context of second language learning.

➢ The above mentioned studies investigated the speech acts of suggestion in different languages including Persian, Chinese and Arabic. These studies are significant in many ways. First they presented a classification of strategies and semantic structures that employed by different non-native (NNS) speakers when use these speech acts. Second, the differences and similarities between native and non-native speakers were shown. Third, the effect of some factors on the performance of NNSs was discussed in these studies. Finally these studies are significant because of their important findings about pragmatic transfer and the effect of NNSs' cultural norms in their performance. In the present study a similar level of rigor was applied. One of the limitations of these studies, however, is that almost none of these studies have investigated the politeness strategies or modifications that are used to mitigate the imposing or directness of the speaker utterance. Moreover, analyzing the data in most of these studies is based on the strategy types with examining only the effect of a few individual variables such as gender on the choice of strategy types.

4. Methodology of the Study

4.1 Subjects

This study has been conducted to investigate Sudanese EFL students' performance of certain speech acts. To obtain this, one

The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2

ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online

مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

the hearer can realize speaker's intention of the suggestion. In this group, variety of linguistic realizations are employed such as the use of specific formula, expressions of possibility, suggestion performed by verbs "should" and "need", the use of the conditional, and interrogative forms by specific formula. They are illustrated as follows:

- Why don't you try another website?

- You could possibly buy this book at lower price from another bookshop.

- If I were you, I wouldn't buy this chocolate.

- You need to trust on your teacher.

Indirect suggestions are the third type of strategies that refer to those expressions in which the speaker's intention is not clearly stated. In fact this group of suggestion strategies does not show any conventionalized form, i.e. the illocutionary force does not appear in the sentence. In making indirect suggestion different impersonal forms are involved, for instance:

- I've heard that the course is really difficult (Martize-Flor 2005).

3. Empirical Studies on Suggestions:

Jiang (2006) conducted a study entitled "Suggestions: What should ESL students Know?" aimed at investigating how suggestions are performed into two authentic setting, professor-student interaction during office hours and student-student group interaction, in order to compare the results with the treatment of suggestions in six popular ESL textbooks. The data for this study collected through office hours and study groups of the TOEFL 2000 Spoken and Written Academic Language Corpus (T2K-SWAL corpus). The results showed that: 1) "Let's" structure was the most frequently used structure for suggestions; 2) the use of modals "have to" and "need to" for suggestions was more common than "should"; 3) the formulaic use of "Wh-questions such as What about …?/how about…? was not frequent at all; 4) conditionals, performative verbs and pseudo clef sentences were more common in office hours than in study groups.

Another corpus-based study by Gu (2014) investigated Chinese EFL learners' performance of the suggestion speech act.. The data collecting were based on the Spoken and Written English Corpus of

The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2

ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online

مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

'commisives', 'behabitives' and 'expositives'. Later on John Searle, Austin's pupil at Oxford suggested the alternative classifications of speech acts during the 1970s. Focusing on the illocutionary acts, Searle defines five classes of speech acts including assertive, directives, commessives, expressives, and declarations. According to Searle, suggestion belong to the directive speech act category in which the speaker's objective is to get the hearer to do some future action that will be to his/her benefit[6].

In order to successfully perform directive speech acts, both speaker and hearer are to be taken into account. In fact, it is the necessary interaction between speaker and hearer that differentiates directives from other categories. Although in making a suggestion the speaker intends the hearer to do something that will be to his/her benefit, but according to Brown and Levinson (1987) this speech act is regarded as face-threatening act since the speaker invades the personal space of the hearer by performing an act that concerns what the hearer should do.   Martinez-Flor proposes that the speaker, therefore, might try to soften the force of this speech act through the use of appropriate strategies in order to minimize, as far as possible, the chance of the hearer being offended (e.g., using different downgraders as perhaps, probably, maybe, I think, etc)[7].

Martinez-Flor defines three main types of suggestion linguistic realization strategies[8]: direct, conventionalized and indirect forms. **Direct forms** are the first type of strategies in which the speaker clearly states what he/she means. This type is performed by performative verb, a noun of suggestion or "illocutionary force indicating device", imperative, and negative imperative (Martinez-Flor 2005 p. 18), as illustrated below:

- I suggest you to change your mind. (Performative verb)

- My suggestion to you is to travel to another country. (Noun of suggestion)

- Try to do your best. (Imperative)

- Don't buy these potato crisps! (Negative imperative)

The second type of suggestion strategies are **conventionalized forms**. Although, conventionalized forms are not as direct as the first type, but the illocutionary force indicator appears in the utterance and

The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2

ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online

مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

the hearer to do something[3]. More specifically this study provides an analysis from a pragmalinguistics and sociolinguistics perspective of suggestions in English Language as they are used by Sudanese EFL students (SEFLS). The current study has cultural implications such as awareness of speech act suggestions strategies used in one culture (English) compared to another culture (Arabic). Furthermore, this study attempts to provide explanation for pragmatic errors that Sudanese EFL students may perform.

1.1 Questions Addressed by the Study

1. In what ways do Sudanese EFL students differ from English native speakers in the realization of speech act of suggestions?

2. To what extent does the frequency of use of direct and indirect strategies differ in Arabic and English languages**?**

3. To what extent does the proficiency level of the learners affect the appropriateness of Sudanese EFL learners' performance?

4. To what extent do factors such as the gender, status and social distance of the interlocutors affect the strategies chosen by Sudanese EFL learners for suggestions?

5. How are the politeness strategies used by Sudanese EFL learners reflected in making suggestions?

6. To what extent does pragmatic transfer exist in Sudanese EFL students' choice of strategies and semantic formulas for suggestions?

2. Background of the Study

Speech act have been claimed to operate by universal pragmatic principles (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969)[4]. Making a statement maybe the pragmatic use of language, but there are all sorts of other thing we can do with words. For instance we can make requests, give orders, make promises, and give suggestions and offers. Austin (1962) asserted that all utterances in a language are themselves acts[5], based on this assumption, he defined a set of verbs such as assert, state, warn, comment, order, remark, apologize and request which called them performative verbs. Austin then classified performative verbs into five categories: 'verdictive', 'exercitives',

The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2

ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online

مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

1. Introduction

Making a suggestion is an important act in people's daily life. This act is regarded as a common word in everyday usage of language for serving different functions. People receive suggestions from their friends, family members, and doctors; they also receive suggestions in academic setting such as a class in which students ask for teachers' hints. To cooperate with one another and to express a friendly attitude, people offer suggestions. In general, all speech acts are considered the social parameters of communication that reflect basic human needs and uses for language in specific situations[1].

Different culture, however, have different values and norms that influence the way people interact with each other. The same speech act's performance in one community's culture may not be considered appropriate in another's. These differences can be related to different culture's view of the value of contextual factors such as participants' social status and social distance as well as the perception of other factors like imposition, obligation and right.

Although, elements such as fluency and accuracy are important for effective performance, but pragmatic competency also plays a critical role in the tactful and felicitous use of a language in different setting[2]. That is, Linguistic competence alone is not enough for language learners to attain communicative competence.

More specifically, Sudanese EFL learners are expected to face more difficulties in their communication through speech acts due to great cultural differences between Arabic and English. On the evidence of the researcher own experiences in learning English language in Sudan, Sudanese EFL learners do not receive sufficient amount of pragmatic input from their English text books. Beside this, interference of their L1 and individual differences are believed to be other factors that affect their pragmatic competency. Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate speech acts across different cultures to discover how cultural differences affect foreign language learners' pragmatic competency. Along this line, comes this study as an investigation into differences between Sudanese English learners and native speakers' use of speech acts.

The present study focuses on directive speech acts. Directives are defined by Levinson as acts in which the speaker attempts to get

The Islamic University College Journal
No. 60
Part: 2

ISSN 1997-6208 Print
ISSN 2664 - 4355 Online

مجلة الكلية الإسلامية الجامعة
العدد : ٦٠
الجزء : ٢

Abstract:-

This study investigates Sudanese EFL students' realization and performance of the speech act of *suggestion* through comparing the strategies and linguistic structures used by Sudanese EFL students and native speakers of English. It considers the effect of a number of factors, such as interlocutors' social status and social distance, gender and proficiency level on the choice of strategies. The data are collected through the Discourse Complement Test (DCT) which consists of 6 hypothetical situations. Ninety four under-graduates EFL students as the first group, thirty two graduate students as the second group (i.e. the advanced learner group), and twenty English native speakers as the reference group have been chosen to be the subjects of this study.

The data analysis reveals significant differences between the performance of Sudanese EFL students and English native speakers. It is found that in giving *suggestions*, Sudanese graduate and under-graduate EFL students have adopted more direct strategies than English native speakers, while the conventionally indirect strategies have been preferred by the later group.

Key Words: Speech act , Suggestion , Sudanese EFL students**.**

الملخص:

هذه الدراسة تبحث مدى معرفة وكيفية أداء دارسوا اللغة الإنجليزية السودانيّون في أساليب التخاطب (الاقتراح)، وذلك من خلال مقارنة الاستراتيجيات والأبنية اللغوية التي يستخدمها الدارسوان السودانيون بما يستخدمها المتحدثون الأصليون باللغة الإنجليزية. اهتمت الدراسة بالعديد من العوامل المؤثرة في اختيارهم الاستراتيجيات المناسبة في أداء أساليب التخاطب ، مثل العوامل الاجتماعية، والجنس، وإجادة اللغة. اتبع البحث المنهج التجريبي والتحليلي، وتم جمع المعلومات من خلال اختبار تكملة المحادثة الذي يتكوّن من ٦ مواقفاً. وتكونت عينة الدراسة من ٩٤ طالباً وطالبة في مرحلة البكالوريوس كمجموعة أولى، والمجموعة الثانية ضمت ٣٢ طالباً وطالبة للغة الإنجليزية في مرحلة الماجستير. وأمّا المجموعة المرجع ، فاشتملت على ٢٠ من الناطقين الأصليين باللغة الإنجليزية.

وقد كشفت نتائج الدراسة أنّ هناك اختلاف كبير في أداء الدارسين السودانيين والناطقين الأصليين، إذ اتّضح أنّ الاستراتيجيات المباشرة، في تقديم الاقتراحات، كانت أكثر تكراراً لدى السودانيين في كلتا المرحلتين البكالوريوس والماجستير، بينما الناطقون الأصليون باللغة الإنجليزية رجحوا استخدام الاستراتيجيات غير المباشرة التقليدية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: فعل الكلام، اقتراح، طلاب اللغة الانجليزية، طلاب اللغة الانجليزية في السودان.

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Suggestion Strategies as Employed by Sudanese EFL Students

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استراتيجيات التخاطب كما يستخدمها طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية السودانيون

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