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**ASSESSING EFL STUDENTS PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN
ORAL CLASSES .THE CASE STUDY OF 2nd YEAR.UNIVERSITY
OF SAIDA**

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Didactics.

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this submission is my work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material that has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'F. Z. Chabli', written on a light gray rectangular background.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to:

My only and true love, to the man whose eyes used to light up when he sees me attaining my dreams, to the man that I'll be forever honored to have his name next to mine, to that smile I'll always love, to that face I miss to see, to those hands I used to hold, to you my beloved father Boubakar..

My sunshine, the one who always pushes me forward, the one who loves me without conditions, my beloved mother, I love you Mamiti..

My backbone, my friends, my partners in crime, my dear sisters and brother Kheira, Asma & Kader..

My sweeties Mlouka, Assil, Yahia and my one & only Meriem..

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Abstract

Effective communication requires an awareness about the cultural norms and the pragmatic nuances of the foreign language. Pragmatic competence facilitates social interactions and helps interlocutors to use the language appropriately. In EFL educational settings, it has been quite challenging to teach the English language pragmatics aspects notably in oral comprehension and expression (OCE) sessions due to students' different proficiency levels, as well as the complexity of including pragmatics into syllabus design. However, relevant assessment strategies would help instructors to evaluate and enhance their learners' pragmatic competence, eventually enabling them to become successful communicators in the target language use. The present dissertation examines the effectiveness of pragmatic competence on EFL learners' communicative skills in oral classes. In order to attain this objective, a mixed method approach encompassing both quantitative and qualitative research instruments was utilized. A semi-structured questionnaire was delivered to 71 second year LMD students at the department of English – university of Saida –, a semi-structured interview as well was conducted with 5 OCE teachers at the same department, two discourse completion tasks targeting the speech act of apologizing and requesting were addressed to 2nd year EFL students at the university of Saida. The research findings revealed that second year EFL learners lack both the familiarity with the concept of pragmatics and the adequate pragmatic competence in the target language. Additionally, teachers still lack the appropriate incorporation of pragmatics features into their oral sessions. This study affirms the significant necessity of assessment, as it encourages future researchers to investigate more about its impact on the amelioration of EFL students' pragmatic competence and to explore advanced techniques to reach this objective.

Key words: Pragmatics, EFL, pragmatic competence, assessment, communicative skills, oral classes.

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List of Abbreviations

CC Communicative Competence

CCP Cross-Cultural Pragmatics

CI Conventionally Indirect

CPC Cooperative Principle

DCT Discourse Completion Task

EFL English as a Foreign Language

FL Foreign Language

FTAs Face-Threatening Acts

ICP Inter-Cultural Pragmatics

ILP Inter-Language Pragmatics

NCI Non-Conventionally Indirect

OCE Oral Comprehension Expression

PC Pragmatic Competence

PV Performative Verb

SA Speech Act

SAT Speech Act Theory

TBLT Task Based Language Teaching

TL Target Language

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General Introduction

General Introduction:

Language is a means of interaction and connection between human beings, which enables them to convey and receive direct or indirect messages within various communicative contexts. As English has become the lingua franca in different domains, learning how to use it effectively is of a paramount importance.

Pragmatics is considered as a key component in a successful cross-cultural communication. It examines the relationship between the chosen language and the context in which it is utilized. Additionally, effective communication requires both the linguistic and the pragmatic English language competencies, through which language speakers are able to provide accurate utterances and perform them appropriately regarding factors like distance, social status and the degree of imposition between interlocutors.

Recent studies have placed a remarkable emphasis on pragmatic competence within EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts. This is due to its profound impact on students' communicative competence. As well as for the inadequate and insufficient integration of pragmatics features into the teaching and learning process.

In the realm of EFL settings, mastering pragmatic competence paves the way for EFL learners to recognize what to say, in which way and to whom. As it empowers them to engage in conversations, express themselves appropriately in a variety of situations, and combine both the theoretical knowledge and practical application of the target language. However, the lack of familiarity with pragmatics may create a barrier between speakers and listeners, leading to pragmatic failure where communication breaks down.

This research study delves into the significance of pragmatic competence with regard to EFL learners' communicative skills. Besides, the study aims to address the crucial role of assessment in boosting students' pragmatic abilities and fostering their communicative competence. This work provides as well some perspectives for educators to sufficiently integrate pragmatics into their lectures. Therefore, this study focuses on the following main points:

- The investigation of the influence of learners' pragmatic competence on their communicative efficacy in oral expression classrooms.

General Introduction

- The examination of the effects of integrating pragmatics into OCE classes.
- The exploration of some assessment strategies to boost learners' pragmatic competence.

The research questions to be addressed are as follows:

- Do 2nd year EFL students have appropriate pragmatic competence?
- Do EFL teachers sufficiently boost their learners' awareness about the foreign language cultural and pragmatic features?
- What strategies can be used to enhance EFL students' pragmatic competence?

Accordingly, the hypotheses are:

- EFL learners do not have an adequate pragmatic competence.
- Teachers do not appropriately integrate pragmatics and its features into their lectures due to syllabus objectives and limitations.
- Teachers may assess their learners' pragmatic competence in order to devise suitable tasks that focus on the communicative functions of the target language.

The researcher employs a mixed method approach, including three research instruments, in order to gather relevant data from second year LMD students at the department of English – university of Saida –. These instruments encompass a semi-structured questionnaire with 2nd year EFL students, a semi-structured interview with OCE teachers, and two (2) discourse completion tasks (apologizing and requesting).

The present dissertation is divided into three chapters. Chapter one is a theoretical background which includes concepts related to pragmatics and assessment. Chapter two is devoted to in-depth description of research tools and participants. As it would cover the analysis of the data collected from the research study informants, and a general interpretation of results.

Chapter three is dedicated to some insightful recommendations and suggestions for both teachers and students, aiming to help them in improving the educational outcomes in general and the pragmatic competence in particular.

Chapter One:

Review of Literature

1.1 Introduction:

Pragmatics as a sub-field of linguistics relates to how culture and context shape individuals' language performance and interpretation in socio-interactional situations, ensuring effective communication. In this chapter, the researcher delves into a theoretical background about significant concepts and previous studies that relate to the subject in hand "pragmatics" into three parts:

The first part deals with defining pragmatics and its main related fields such as speech acts, implicature, and context, providing them with illustrative examples to reinforce these concepts and enhance understanding. The second part emphasizes on exploring the integration of pragmatics into the EFL context. Discussing the concept of pragmatic competence, communicative competence along with interlanguage, cross-cultural, and intercultural pragmatics, aiming to point out to the importance of these aspects in the enhancement of learners' cross-cultural communication. The third part focuses on presenting an overview about assessment and its crucial role within teaching and learning foreign languages. In addition, equipping them with relevant methods teachers may employ to evaluate their students' pragmatic competence. Then, exhibiting the politeness theories within the framework of pragmatics.

1.2. Defining Pragmatics:

Pragmatics is a sub-field of linguistics that is referred to the study of language usage in context. It studies how language speakers utilize words and phrases based on the situations and contexts in which they are employed (Richard and Schmidt, 2002 in Hidayat, 2016). Thus, pragmatics relates to the study of how people utilize language to communicate in a given context.

Pragmatics is not concerned only with sentence construction (words and structure); it examines the relationship between the utterances used and the situation in which they are communicated. In this regard, Yan states that "*pragmatics involves the interpretation of meaning in context, taking into account factors such as the speaker's intention, the listener's expectations, and the social and cultural norms of the communication situation*" (2016 as cited in Dey, 2023:509).

Cruse (2006 in Odebunmi, 2019) describes it as the aspects of meaning that rely on the context in which they are used. In this regard, Stalker (1989) defines pragmatics as "*a system of rules which defines the relationship of meaning to the contexts in which it occurs,*

that is, it matches functions with particular language choices in particular contexts” (as cited in Laughlin et al., 2015: 2).

Hymes (in Djail, 2012) argues that pragmatics considers what a speaker intends and what a listener comprehends in a conversation, which is conditioned by why, how, and under what circumstances the language is performed. In the same vein, Leech and Short (1981:290) wrote

“Pragmatics is the investigation into the aspect of meaning which is derived not from the formal properties of words and construction but from the way in which utterances are used and how they relate to the context in which they are uttered.”

Leech and Short (1981:290 in Odebunmi, 2019:2)

In his analysis, Soeparno (2002) in Unismuh (2021) defines pragmatics as a linguistic sub-discipline that examines the application of language within social interaction, considering the situation, the goal behind communicating and the status of the participants. According to Crystal, pragmatics is:

“The study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication.”

Crystal (1997: 301) in Mukhroji, et.al. (2019: 42)

In his perception, González-Lloret (2013) in Insyirah (2021) relates pragmatics to the science of how meaning may be inferred either verbally or non-verbally by a speaker, decoded and understood by a hearer. Likewise, Nodoushan expresses that: *“pragmatics learns about the meaning of speech by paying attention to the context in which the utterances are made”* (2015: 247, *ibid*).

1.3. Fields of Pragmatics:

In the realm of pragmatics, various factors that reinforce its core definition should be considered. These encompass *implicature, speech acts, presupposition, context, relevance, deixis, definiteness and indefiniteness*.

1.3.1. Speech Acts:

The study of speech acts (SA) delves into the analysis of how language is used to perform several communicative actions in different situational and social interactions. Birner (2013 as cited in Hidayat, 2016) states that saying something means doing something.

Nordquist (2020) refers SA to what a speaker intends when employing utterances, and what is the impact these utterances have on a listener.

Speech act theory (SAT) came as a rejection to the “logical positivism” which held that language primary purpose is to describe true or false statements (speech acts, n.d). Due to the modern thinking back then in 1950s, philosophers (Austin 1952; Searle 1969) whose emphasis was on meaning, use, and action claim that language usage main objective is to perform SA or actions (as cited in Hidayat, 2016).

According to Searle (1969), SA are utterances with a performative function, i.e. they perform the described action so that, to convey various communicative goals through speaking. It is worth to mention that Austin introduces the concept of performative utterances as: *"the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action"* (p6), stating that language is not merely a description of statements (constative view). However, it is the actual performance of actions either explicitly (utterances containing performative verb (PV), e.g. “I promise to never hurt you again”), or implicitly (it does not contain any (PV) yet, it has an implied inference, e.g. “You better bring your umbrella”, which is an implied warning about climate change (1962 in Omar, 2015).

Moreover, Jassim (2023) declares that SAT examines how language not only conveys information but also performs actions and even influences others to act. It confirms that words have the power to shape the world and bring about changes in people’s thoughts, actions and behaviors. For instance, when someone says “it’s cold in here, isn’t it?” from a literal view it seems that he is describing the weather of the room. However, from a paradigmatic view he may be requesting the addressee indirectly to close the window. Hence, Kemmerling (2002) claims *"Part of the joy of doing speech act theory, from my strictly first-person point of view, is becoming more and more remindful of how many surprisingly different things we do when we talk to each other."* (as cited in Nordquist, 2020)

1.3.1.1. Classifications of Speech Acts:

Speech acts have been classified according to Searle (1979) based on the nature of the very function they perform. These five classifications are assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declaration. (As cited in Hidayat, 2016).

- i. Assertive: It is the speaker’s description about the truth of a proposition, based on observation and opinion. It can include statements of fact, assertions and conclusions, e.g.,

when someone says: “The sky is blue”, the speaker is representing an assertion about the sky, i.e. he has a point of view that the sky is blue.

- ii. Directive: It is the speaker’s effect on the addressee to do something, like requesting, questioning, commanding, ordering, and suggesting, e.g. When someone asks his friend “would you close the door, please?”. Here, the speaker’s utterances affect the hearer’s actions to go and close the door.
- iii. Commissive: showing commitment through utterances on the part of the speaker to do something in the future. It includes promising, threatening, offering, refusing, e.g. someone says, “I’ll be back in a few minutes”, he is expressing a commitment to the listener to come back.
- iv. Expressive: where a speaker is expressing his psychological state (emotions, thoughts... etc.), it may be thanking, apologizing, welcoming, and congratulating, e.g. someone says, “Feel free to move, my house is yours”, he is welcoming his guest by saying so.
- v. Declaration: altering circumstances and institutional conditions, such as declaring the start or finish of a special occasion, e.g. when saying, “I pronounce you husband and wife”.

1.3.1.2. Facets of Speech Acts:

In his book “How to Do Things with Words”, Austin (1962) mentioned three types of SA, which are:

- i. Locutionary act: It is the production of meaningful utterances, which are comprehensible through the interpretation of each utterance’s literal meaning. According to Cutting (2002), a locutionary act is what is said (seen in Nordquist, 2019), e.g. “open the book”.
- ii. Illocutionary act: It is the production of a sentence with the intention to perform a function, e.g. (A) says: “*this box is heavy!*”, it may be observed as a request, i.e., (A) is expecting (B) to help him to lift up the box.
- iii. Perlocutionary act: It is the production of utterances with an effect on the interlocutor. The Speaker’s words affect the listener’s thoughts and actions (intentionally or unintentionally), e.g. (A) says to (B), “*The box is heavy*” while lifting it up is an effect on the hearer to recognize the box’s weight.

Table 1.1: Austin’s three distinctions of speech acts (Adapted from Thomas, 2013: 66).

Locution	the actual words uttered
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Illocution	the force or intention behind the words
Perlocution	the effect of the illocution on the hearer

Utterance, thus, is a crucial component in SAT. It has the force to change a conversation direction. Intentions and meanings are conveyed through it. It has a propositional meaning, which is the literal interpretation of each word, and an illocutionary force that exhibits the purpose behind using given words (Thomas, 2013). For instance, when (A) says, “This book is worth reading!” From a literal meaning, he is praising the book, yet, from an illocutionary meaning, he may be recommending the book for the interlocutor to buy it and read it.

1.3.1.3. Types of Speech Acts:

- i. Apologizing: it falls under expressive speech acts that express the speaker’s attitude and emotion in a given situation. Apologies are retrospective and self-demeaning; they can be distinguished from other convivial acts by their remedial function. They are used to pay off debts, compensate victims for harm, and heal grievances (Apostolovska and Neshkovska, n.d). Making an apology is emotionally heavy and a complex act to perform, therefore, Cohen and Olshtain (1981: 119-125, *ibid*) set five apologizing strategies:
 - a) An expression of an apology: using degree words or modifiers to intensify the speaker’s apology, e.g., “*I’m very sorry*”, “*I really apologize*”.
 - b) Acknowledgement of responsibility: it is the speaker’s recognition of the infraction by acceptance “*It’s my fault*”, or by an expression of self-deficiency “*I was confused, you’re right*”, or by an expression of lack of intent “*I didn’t mean it*”.
 - c) An explanation or account: it is the indirect strategy to express the speaker’s apology through intentionally explaining the reason behind such an offense.
 - d) An offer of repair: the apologizer attempts to make a bid to perform an action of compensation for his/her wrongdoing. e.g., (A) broke (B)’s laptop, thus, he says, “*I will buy you a new one*”.
 - e) A promise of non-recurrence: the apologizer commitment to not acting this way anymore, which is less frequent than the other strategies. E.g., “*I wouldn’t do it again, promise*”.
- ii. Requesting: it falls under directive SA, belonging to illocutionary acts. According to Searle’s definition (1979), requests are: “*attempts by the speaker to get the*

hearer to do something. They may be very modest attempts as when I invite you to do it, or they may be very fierce attempts as when I insist that you do it" (p.13). Hence, request acts are performed with the intention to engage the hearer in a future action that aligns with the speaker's objective (as cited in Safont, 2008).

According to different researchers (as cited in Hammani, 2019), there are three main categories of request that are divided into ten sub- strategies mentioned in "table 2.1":

- a) Direct: the use of explicit utterances that serves the speaker's intention, often used in a situation of authority. There are five direct requesting strategies: elliptical phrases/imperative (mood derivable), explicit performative, hedged performative, obligation statements, and want statements.
- b) Conventionally indirect (CI): the use of modal verbs and suggestive phrases that indicate more tactful and polite request forms. CI strategies (suggestory formulae and query preparatory) imply less explicit and indirect request acts seeking to show respect and to save the other's face. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) define CI strategies as: "*strategies that realize the act by reference to contextual preconditions necessary for its performance, as conventionalized in a given language*" (p.47).
- c) Non-conventionally indirect (NCI)/ Hints: the use of subtle hints instead of directly stating the request, which help the requester to avoid the full responsibility of his intentions on the one hand and to save the positive face on the other one. However, NCI strategies lack the pragmatic clarity and have various pragmatic interpretations. There are two types: strong hints and mild hints.
 - iii. Complaining: it falls under expressive as well as directive SA, in which the speaker expresses his approval or disapproval about the complainees actions, aiming for a remedial act to repay the damage caused (Searle, 1976, Trosborg, 1995).

According to Laforest's definition, complaints are: "*an expression of dissatisfaction addressed by an individual A to an individual B concerning behaviors that A feels on the part of B is unsatisfactory*" (2002:1596, as cited in Ghaznavi, 2017). There are two kinds of complaints:

- a) Direct complaints, in which the addressee is blamed about his fault and he is expected to admit and change the unsatisfactory act (Clyne, 1994). It is considered as face-

threatening strategy since the complaine is directly held responsible for the perceived offence.

- b) Indirect complaints, in which the addressee is not held responsible neither asked for a repair. It is totally a non-face-threatening strategy used to provide emotional release. They are: “*a long or repeated expression of discontent not necessarily intended to change or improve the unsatisfactory situation*” (Clyne, 1994).

It is worth to mention that speech acts strategies especially apologies and requests depend highly on context, social power, social distance and degree of imposition. Individuals’ choices get affected by those socio-pragmatic conditions and move from formal to informal relying heavily on them.

Table2.1: Request realization strategies (adapted from Gadj&Lebouz, 2022)

Categories	Strategies	Examples
1. Direct	1. Mood Derivable 2. Explicit Performative 3. Hedged Performative 4. Obligation Statements 5. Want Statements	1. Clean up that mess. 2. I am asking you to clean up the mess. 3. I would like to ask you to lend me the pen. 4. You’ll have to move that car. 5. I really wish you’d stop bothering me.
2. Conventionally indirect	1. Suggestory Formulae 2. Query Preparatory	1. How about cleaning up? 2. Could you possibly lend me your book?
3. Non-conventionally indirect	1. Strong Hints 2. Mild Hints	1. You have left the kitchen in a right mess. 2. It’s getting dark, I need to leave.

1.3.2. Implicature:

Implicature or conversational implicature as a part of pragmatics is observed as a shift from what is said to what is conversationally meant. Grice’s theory aims to prove that people tend to utilize implicatures when moving from expressed meaning to implied meaning (Thomas, 2013).

In Grice’s perception, there are assumptions that control conversations, resulting effective and rational communication between participants, under the name of (CP) ‘cooperative principle’. In this respect, he claims that interlocutors cooperate with each other

to clarify and simplify their communicative goals, and get rid of misunderstandings (1975 in Fareh et al., 2023).

Grice (1989) expresses that human communication is a “*cooperative effort*” where participants are aware of the purpose behind the conversation (Kasap and Dağdemir, 2021). Accordingly, for a meaningful interaction he states: “*Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged*” (1968 as cited in Nguyen, 2017:31).

It is important to state that this (CP) includes four fundamental maxims that represent a guide in how to communicate (Thomas, 2013), which are:

Maxim of quantity: speakers’ contribution has to be adequately informative, nor less neither more than required in the current conversational exchange.

Maxim of quality: its emphasis is on truthfulness. Speakers do not say what they believe it is false or things that lack evidence.

Maxim of relevance: speakers have to be relevant in what they say.

Maxim of manner: speakers have to be perspicuous, orderly, and avoid both ambiguity and verbosity.

1.3.3. Context:

Pragmatics is “*the study of language in relation to context*” (Hart, 1981). Thereby, context is perceived as the foundation of pragmatics. It is a crucial component in conveying and interpreting meaning. Accordingly, Fetzer portrays context as “*the anchor of any pragmatic theory*”(2004: 3).

Context as defined by Widdowson (1989) refers to: “*those aspects of the circumstance of actual language use which are taken as relevant to meaning*” (in Pranowo, 2020:2). In alternative terms, context is the systematic arrangement of the linguistic codes of language with their schematic constructions, through which the pragmatic meaning is comprehended between interlocutors (ibid). In the same line of thoughts, Sperber and Wilson in their ‘relevance theory’ view context as:

“*a set of assumptions derived from the communicator’s cognitive environment, including not only the co-text of an utterance but also the contextual factors*

such as the immediate physical environment, the participants' background knowledge like all the known facts, assumptions, beliefs, and cognitive abilities".

Sperber and Wilson (1986) in Pranowo (2020: 3)

Researchers (Dijk, 2009, Hu, X, 2014 seen in Pranowo, 2020) divided context into two types, 'static' and 'dynamic'. This latter refers to those suppositions drawn from interlocutors cognitive environment which encompasses contextual factors such as; the immediate physical environment, the participants shared background knowledge, experiences, assumptions, and beliefs (Sperber and Wilson, 1986, *ibid*). The former refers to the pre-existing conditions (social, cultural...) in which context precedes the action.

Worth to note, utterance and context bound should be coherent to avoid ambiguity, and to have an accurate interpretation of the participants' intended meaning. As written by Poznan: *"Context is a constitutive concept of pragmatics, because without context pragmatics simply could not exist."* (2004: 45 in Jiangli, 2021).

1.4. Pragmatic Competence:

Pragmatic competence (PC) is the practical side of pragmatics. It refers to the speaker's capability of using a set of information structures efficiently in a given manner (Purpura, 2004 in Laughlin et al., 2015).

Thomas (1983) describes pragmatic competence as *"the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context"* (in Sciberras, 2016:10). In the same line of thoughts, Edwards and Csizér (2001) in Husain (2016) state that it is mainly referred to the capacity of skillfully communicating in a situation by maintaining and adhering to its social, cultural, and discourse norms.

Being pragmatically competent requires awareness about pragmatics and sociopragmatics. The former relates to linguistic resources used in specific contexts to transmit communicative goals and interpersonal meanings (Leech, 1983 in Popovici, 2020). The latter relates to social conditions that participants respect and pursue to interpret and perform their conversational acts, regarding *"the taboos, mutual rights, obligations, and conventional courses of action that apply in a given speech community"* (Roever, 2006, *ibid*).

It is noteworthy, then, to define interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) which refers to speakers' ability to develop their understanding and performance of acts in the target language (Kusevska et al., 2015). It examines: *"how non-native speakers comprehend and produce*

actions and how L2 learners develop the ability to understand and perform actions in a target language” (Kasper and Rose, 2003, *ibid*).

1.4.1. Communicative Competence:

Hymes (1972) rejected Chomsky’s ultimate emphasis on grammar, in which he approximately ignored sociocultural significance back then in the 1960s. He states that: *“the goal of a broad theory of competence can be said to show the ways in which the systematically possible, the feasible, and the appropriate are linked to produce and interpret actually occurring cultural behavior”* (Tarvin, 2015:3).

Additionally, grammar correctness does not guarantee successful communication, since *“there are rules of use without which rules of grammar would be useless”* (Hymes, 1979:15 in Ansel and Bouakacha, 2022). Therefore, Hymes introduced the model of communicative competence (CC) as an alignment between grammar rules and their sociolinguistic codes, aiming to use L2 effectively in different social contexts.

It is important to mention, sufficient foreign language pragmatic competence contributes to promoting language users’ ability to convey and interpret meaning in real-life situations (linguistically and socio-culturally). Moreover, Communicative competence would fall into misunderstanding and ineffective interacting without pragmatics rules in use.

1.4.2. Cross-cultural and Intercultural Pragmatics:

Cross-cultural pragmatics (CCP) and intercultural pragmatics (ICP) – sociopragmatic approaches – are used interchangeably, yet, they are disparate fields. CCP addresses *“how speakers’ use of language is influenced by their underlying values, beliefs, cultural assumptions, and communication strategies”* (LoCastro, 2003 seen in Vu, 2017:45).

According to McConachy and Spencer-Oatey, (2021:1), ICP as a recent discipline focusing precisely on pragmatic issues, *“aims to account for the ways individuals from different cultural backgrounds: use, interpret and evaluate language use”*. Interaction in ICP is dynamic where cooperation and negotiation permanently take place, in the sake of mutual understanding between participants from different cultures (Taguchi, 2017).

1.5 Pragmatics and Foreign Language Teaching:

Cross-cultural studies confirm that incorporating pragmatics into teaching EFL (English as a foreign language) curricula is fundamental. Many researchers (among them, Belz,

2007; Cohen, 2008; O’Keeffe, Clancy and Adolphs, 2011; Rose, 2005; Vasquez and Sharpless, 2009) agreed on the possibility and importance of teaching pragmatics within EFL contexts. The competency of forming correct grammatical sentences is not enough to communicate effectively. Pragmatic competence encompasses the appropriate linguistic realization of utterances, and an attention to the social and cultural properties of the situations discussed. In this respect, Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan and Reynolds (1991) underline its value in EFL teaching saying that: *“teaching pragmatics empowers students to experience and experiment with the language at a deeper level, and thereby to participate in the purpose of language – communication – rather than just words”* (as cited in Shirkhani, 2020:152).

In his viewpoint, Bardovi-Harlig (1996) states that non-native speakers encounter difficulties in expressing themselves in the foreign language even with a high level of linguistic competence (cited in Dorcheh and Baharlooie, 2015). Thus, he examines that the target language (TL) pragmatics aid learners to know what to say, how, to whom, and when (2013). Furthermore, an EFL learner cannot be observed as a competent TL speaker, without being able to interact sufficiently with other participants, producing adequate speech acts in different occasions, and participating in complex speech events (Kasper, 1997, *ibid*).

1.5.1. Assessment and Pragmatic Competence:

Assessment is a pedagogical and systematic process of collecting and analyzing data concluded from a variety of activities and sources in order to understand more students’ knowledge and application of the acquired information. It is used *“for learning”* (Tontus, 2020).

It has been proved that assessment has a vital impact on the instructional process especially in teaching-learning foreign languages. Therefore, Ishihara and Cohen (2014) summarize its importance in the following points:

- Assessment highlights for learners the benefit and value of understanding and producing proper language items within different contexts.
- In-class assessment advocates students to learn about the TL pragmatics.
- Assessment enables teachers to measure their students’ control in critical areas of the TL performance (e.g. greeting, job application... etc.).
- Assessment opens the window for teachers to testify whether what they have explicitly taught their learners is appropriately learnt.

- Assessment influences learners' reaction towards their studies, through being attentive to their teachers' feedback (Tontus, 2020).

1.5.1.1. Instruments of Assessing Pragmatic Competence:

Assessment establishes how and to what extent non-native speakers succeed or fail in communication acts based on native speakers' conversational pragmatic standards (Crystal, 1997 in GesuatoandCastello, 2020). Thus, various instruments are widely accepted and used by instructors in testing learners' pragmatic competence such as: discourse completion tasks (DCTs), role-plays, interviews, multiple-choice questionnaire (MCQ), and corpus data (Kusevska et al., 2015).

i. Discourse completion task (DCT):

DCTs are the most frequently used instrument in explicitly assessing learners' pragmatic competence in cross-cultural fields. According to scholars, they are "*composed of a set of scripted passages or dialogues that represent different situations/scenarios*" (Hammani, 2019), in which participants are required to fulfil situational speech acts mainly requests, apologies, and complaints. In the construction of requests researchers refer to Blum-Kulka andOlshtain (1984), Economidou-KogetsidisandWoodfield (2012), Olshtain and Cohen (1990), for apologies they refer to Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), Ogiermann (2009), and Trosborg (1995), and for complaints realization they refer to Trosborg (1995) (cited in (Kusevska et al., 2015).

DCTs exhibit an understanding of strategies for realizing speech acts rather than authentic communication. However, they "*elicit something akin to real-world speech act performance and because they are still somewhat practical despite the need for rating at least they can be administered to large numbers of test takers at the same time*" (McNamara, 2006 in Mitkovska, 2015:154).

ii. Role-plays:

A role-play as pictured in Revel's perception (1979) in Ansel and Bouakacha (2020:10) is: "*An individual's spontaneous behavior reaching to others in a hypothetical situation*". Context in role-plays is described precisely, which makes the participants' performance closely similar to real-life speech situations. Although interlocutors are aware of

the scene, they still have moments of surprise, speech strategies changes, reactions (expressions and responses) adjustment aligned with conversation norms. (Mitkovska, 2015).

Role-plays are criticized for being challenging in terms of difficulty in managing data collection, variation in students' language proficiency and performance, and being a time-consuming activity (Mitkovska, 2015).

Worth to note, in assessment and instruction, situational contexts in which conversation occurs, should be mindfully described regarding these characteristics: *“institutional/cultural settings, role (s) of (co) participants, relationship between interlocutors, and potential preceding discourse”* (Laughlin et al., 2015: 15).

1.5.2. Politeness and Pragmatics:

The concept of politeness is intertwined with Grice's CP (1995), in which language users tend to cooperate and be informative and relevant in their conversation. Thus, it plays an important role in pragmatic competence by maintaining social interactions and preventing threats between interlocutors.

Politeness as a notion refers to those aspects of social norms and conducts. It regards behaving politely towards others, through being tactful, generous, modest, and sympathetic (Yule, 1996 in Shawket andIbraheem, 2022). In this regard, Moliner claims that politeness is *“the set of rules maintained in social dealings by which people demonstrate consideration and respect for each other”* (1979 in Faisal, 2017:3).

1.5.2.1. Brown and Levinson Model:

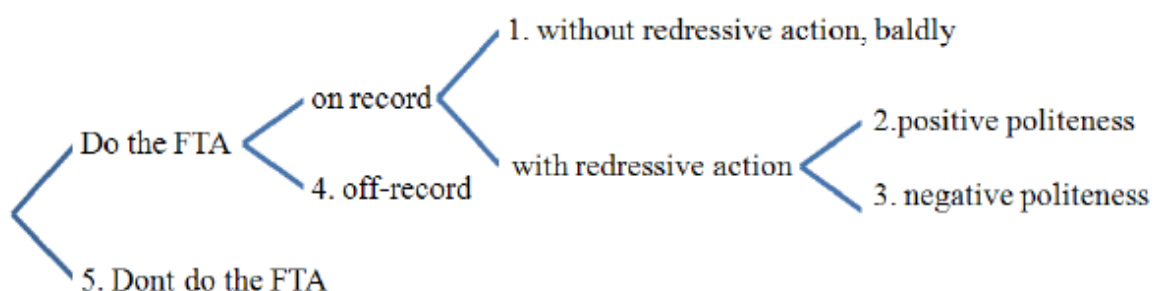
Brown and Levinson model (1987) is concerned with the concept of 'face', which was firstly introduced by Goffman (1995) in relation to politeness. Thus, 'face' represents: *“the positive social value a person effectively claims for [him/herself]”* (Goffman, 1967:5). This model is concerned with pragmatic courtesy that encompasses both face-threatening acts (FTAs) and face saving acts (Gomes, 2019). With the aim of being approved by others, Brown and Levinson base their work on two elements that affect participants' linguistic choices (O'Keeffe et al., 2011):

- Positive Face: it refers to the want of being approved, accepted and included.
- Negative Face: it refers to a person's tendency to be autonomous, independent in action, and free from imposition.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), FTAs may threaten the hearer's or the speaker's face (positively or negatively). Consequently, four strategies are organized systematically by researchers to eliminate threats between interlocutors, which are:

- Positive politeness: it involves showing solidarity with the hearer, which is less face threatening since the speaker approves some of the hearer's wants. For instance, How about making dinner for us?
- Negative politeness: it creates distance with the hearer, through the execution of the hearer's freedom and imposition to do the act, e.g. Can you make the dinner?
- Bald on record: it demonstrates the speaker's willingness to perform/express the action without thinking about saving the hearer's positive face. E.g. *Help!* In this example. Here, the speaker's only concern is to get the hearer help him/her.
- Off record: it relates to conveying meaning with negotiation. Through expressing FTAs indirectly, the speaker avoids holding responsibility of his/her actions (the speaker may use one of Grice's maxims). For instance, "I feel hungry". In this example, the speaker does not ask the hearer to make the dinner; however, he is expressing hints that may influence the hearer's action.

Figure 1.1: Brown and Levinson's (1987) Strategies for Performing FTAs (adopted from Aliakbari and Moalemi, 2015)



1.5.2.2. Watts Model:

In Watt's perception, politeness theory is relevant to linguistic utterances aspects, pointing out to what is polite and what is impolite (Hasegawa, 2009). He further states that *"Politeness is dynamic, interactional, and negotiated--it cannot be imposed from outside by the researcher/scholar. The polite or impolite aspect of an utterance is determined by the actors in context."* Watts (2003 in Howard, 2015:62).

Worth to mention, the notion of politeness encompasses two distinctions: face-order politeness ‘Politeness 1’ and second-order politeness ‘Politeness 2’ (Eelen 2001; Watts 2003, 2005; Watts, Ide, and Ehlich 1992 in Faisal, 2017).

- Politeness1: it explains how the participants’ linguistic perceptions about politeness shape their own viewpoints and interpretations. When referring to polite language, individuals often mention expressions they perceive as considerate or tactful in daily basis interaction, such as ‘thank you’ or ‘excuse me’ (Eelen 2001; Ide, *ibid*).
- Politeness2: it explores the universal rules that direct speakers’ interactions. As it explains why and how to be polite within the society, and helps interlocutors to understand the difference between polite and impolite behavior in communication (*ibid*).

1.6 Previous Studies on Pragmatic Competence:

- In her study that investigates “*The role of pragmatics in foreign language learning and teaching*”, Kehal (2017) states that the instruction of pragmatics is often neglected in Algerian classrooms. She further notes, Algerian EFL students have a good level in grammar and vocabulary, yet they lack the adequate exposure to the cultural and social nuances of the foreign language. As a result, they fail to appropriately express their intended meanings and infer those of others.

She has mentioned that effective communication relies on students’ awareness of the language various functions such as requesting, apologizing... etc, which is missing part in EFL learners’ pragmatic competence. Kehal says that instructors have been accustomed with their students’ expressions like “*What?!*” instead of “*I beg your pardon*” or “*Pardon!*”; “*repeat!*” instead of “*Would you repeat, please!*”. However, carrying out such kind of pragmatic deviations would affect even their social interactions where “*the foreign language user, then, may appear uncaring, abrupt or brusque*” (Kehal, 2017:38). This latter confirms that Algerian EFL learners in such cases are not knowledgeable about both the different politeness degrees and levels of directness and indirectness used in communicative interactions.

As a result of her study, Kehal (2017) emphasizes on the significant importance of involving pragmatics into language instructional process. In addition to “*the necessity of imparting knowledge about and raising awareness of pragmatic aspects and strategies which are of great help in developing the overall language competence*” (p.41).

- Eshreth (2014) demonstrates in his research that Palestinians and Americans employed various strategies when accepting and declining invitations. The study indicated that Americans exhibited a more concise selection of symbols in their strategies for acceptance and refusal. Moreover, the results showed that Brown & Levinson model (1978) was not applicable in Palestinian community as it was developed based on Western norms where the aforementioned authors established a set of principles that would be applicable in other societies as well. Therefore, he suggests that it is important for Palestinian English students and American Arab students to learn the cultural diversities in the politeness strategy. They should understand that American English learners utilize conventional indirect structures to realize the speech act of invitations, whereas Palestinian Arabic speakers try to do so directly (as cited in Touati and Horr, 2023).

1.7. Conclusion:

To conclude, the theoretical points and the previous studies mentioned in this chapter indicate how pragmatic competence affects speakers' communicative choices that eventually stresses the importance of integrating pragmatics in teaching and learning foreign languages. In addition, linguistic competence only is not enough to communicate appropriately, precisely in cross-cultural contexts. Therefore, assessment serves as a crucial aspect, which benefits teachers in terms of syllabus design and materials adaptation, and promoting EFL learners' pragmatic competence through raising their awareness towards the foreign language cultural and social norms.

Chapter Two:

Research Methodology and Data Interpretation

2.1 Introduction:

This chapter represents the practical part of the research conducted. It deals with analyzing the different data gathered from the targeted population of 2nd year LMD students of English and Oral Comprehension and Expression (OCE) teachers at the Department of English- University of Saida. The researcher based his research methodology on three different research tools, which are Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs), teacher interview and a questionnaire.

The main emphasis of this work is investigating EFL students' pragmatic competence along with OCE teachers' techniques to assess it.

2.2. Analysis of the Student Questionnaire:

The first instrument used in data collection is a questionnaire (see appendix A), which has been addressed to second year LMD students at the department of English – University of Saida –. The researcher's objectives behind using this questionnaire are to recognize learners' dependency level on classroom input, and their benefit from OCE sessions. This research tool aims also to examine the teaching activities utilized in relation to the pragmatic norms, and students' reactions (performances) towards them. Additionally, it tries to check learners' familiarity with pragmatics and its impact on language use, and their willingness to study it in future settings.

2.2.1 Procedure:

Seventy-one (71) second year LMD students at the department of English – University of Saida - participated as information contributors through answering a semi-structured questionnaire divided into three sections (see appendix A). Important to state that the researcher asks the participants firstly about what is “pragmatic competence” and none of them had the answer. Thus, a clear and simple definition of the concept in hand was provided. Besides, all informants' inquiries had been respectfully and successfully fulfilled.

2.2.2 Results:**2.2.2.1 Section one:**

In this section, the majority of participants (63 students) mentioned that studying English is a personal choice. However, very few of them (7 students) perceived it as an imposed obligation. Their self-reported proficiency level vary

mostly between intermediate (36 students), and advanced (32 students) while only (3) learners regarded themselves as proficient.

In relation to question three, results exhibited a remarkable proximity. A rate of 48% (33 students) demonstrated that respondents are autonomous learners. Yet, 51% (35 students) showed that they are dependent and rely mostly on their teacher and classroom input in the learning process.

Concerning question four that deals with the positive impact of OCE sessions on students, their responses are mentioned in the following table:

Table 2.1: Students Perceptions of the Benefit of OCE sessions on the Teaching Learning Process

Total	Extremely	Quite a bit	Little	Very little
71 (100%)	42 (59%)	19 (27%)	7 (10%)	3 (4%)

As revealed in the table above, most of students with a preference rate of 59% (42 students) expressed that they do extremely benefit from their oral classes; additionally 19 learners stated that OCE sessions have a moderately positive impact on them. A small rate of 10% (7 students) reported that these sessions have a less beneficial effect, and only three students (4%) exposed that they derive minimal advantages from studying oral expression.

2.2.2.2 Section Two:

As long as this section is concerned, the data collected from question one, which deals with engaging students in conversational speech acts are displayed in the following table:

Table 2.2: Frequency of Teachers' Speech Acts Incorporation into their Teaching Process

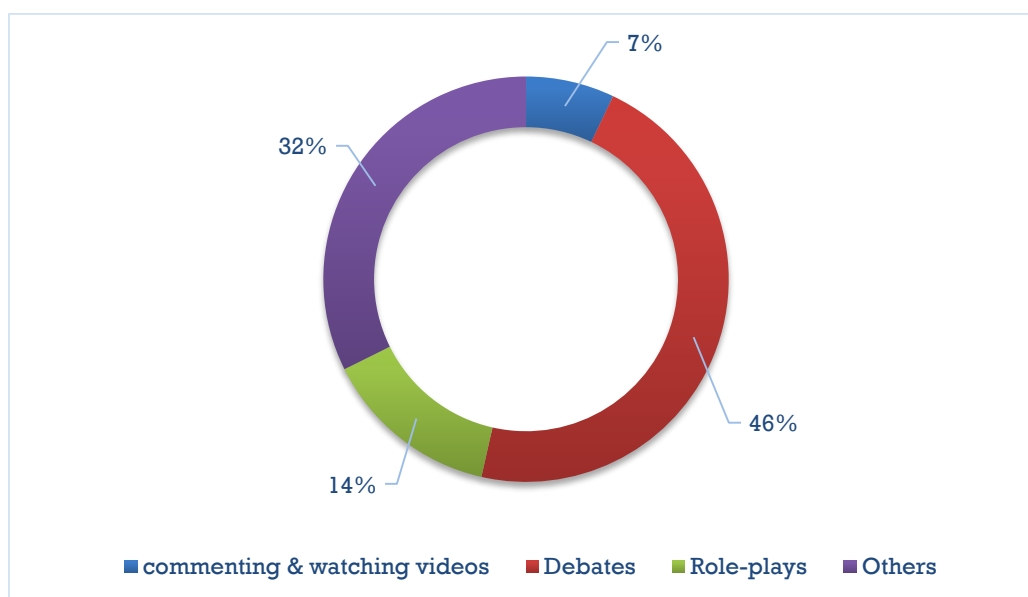
Total	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely
69 (100%)	11 (16%)	21 (30%)	33 (47%)	4 (6%)

According to the results shown in the table above, a percentage of 47% (33 students) unveiled that teachers do occasionally integrate conversational acts into their classroom activities. Twenty-one students (30%) indicated that their educators frequently engage them in real-life speech acts such as apologizing and requesting.

Likewise, a small proportion of participants accounting for 16% (11 students) pointed to the permanent practice of these tasks in target language settings while only four learners (6%) reported that they rarely encounter such activities in their oral expression classes.

Furthermore, question two aimed to recognize what kind of activities OCE teachers base their syllabus courses on. In this respect, results gathered are summarized in the below graph:

Graph 2.1: Students' Conversational Classroom Activities



As mentioned in the graph above, 32 students (46%) demonstrated that the activity that has received the most attention is debates. A percentage of 14% (10 students) showed that role-plays are the main in-class task that teachers ask them to perform, and only five respondents (7%) reported that their teachers bring videos to watch and then they are required to comment on them. A rate of 32% (23 students) revealed different responses: 13 learners answered that classroom activities vary mostly between debates and role-plays whereas other 3 students (4%) stated that their teacher engages them in all the suggested activities. A small amount of participants representing 10% (7 students) indicated that they usually play games, work on what if scenarios and present topics in their oral sessions.

Regarding question three, results revealed that a very high percentage of informants accounting for 97% (69 students) reported that oral sessions ameliorate

their communicative skills. Yet, two students (3%) stated that OCE classes do not improve their communicative performances at all.

Table 2.3: Students' Evaluation of OCE Sessions Impact on their Communicative Skills

Total	Yes	No
71 (100%)	69 (97%)	2 (3%)

Question 4 aimed to investigate the areas of benefit oral expression sessions stress. Therefore, the results are shown in the following table:

Worth to mention that the abbreviations mentioned in the table below stands for:

- Vocab: vocabulary repertoire
- F.C.K: foreign culture knowledge
- S.S: social skills

Table 2.4: Students' Classification of Most Valuable Aspects in OCE Sessions.

Total	Vocab.	F.C.K	S.S	All of them	Multiple choices
71(100%)	28 (39%)	4 (6%)	23 (32%)	3 (4%)	13 (18%)

As shown in the table above, a preference percentage of 39% (28 students) pointed to vocabulary repertoire as the most improved aspect of foreign language. However, 32% (23 students) demonstrated that OCE sessions' activities boost their social skills. Additionally, four students (6%) stated that in-class tasks help them understand and get familiar with the foreign culture while only three learners indicated that these tasks strengthen all the three areas mentioned. Additionally, 13 learners (18%) reported multiple answers.

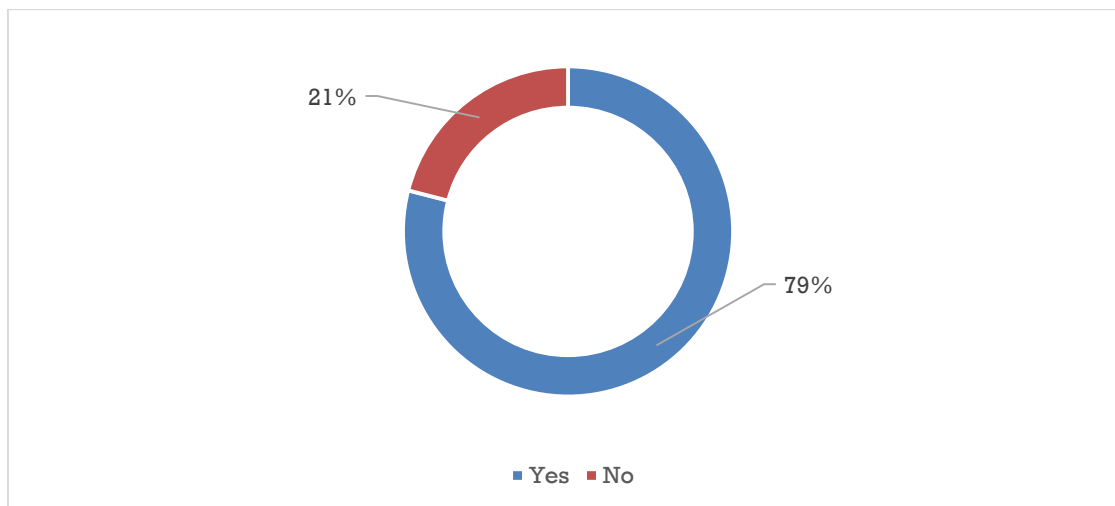
2.2.2.3 Section Three:

Question 1 in this section seeks to check if OCE teachers explicitly introduce pragmatics to their learners and in which way. The results concluded showed that the majority of participants (58%) mentioned that they have never been introduced to pragmatics while 42% of them (28 students) stated that their teachers informed them about pragmatics indeed. Worth to mention that 14 out of 28 students explained how teachers presented pragmatics to them in different terms as follow:

- *“The teacher said that pragmatics is using the hidden meaning of words and expressions”.*
- *“As the way we use language and its vocabulary”.*
- *“By playing games that improve vocabulary in general”.*
- 7 students stated, *“Through the linguistic sessions”*
- *“See things as they really are”.*
- *“Role-plays activities”.*
- *“Pragmatics mainly is all about meaning”.*
- *“... I know it in an academic meaning of ‘practical use’”.*

As far as question 5 is concerned, the results obtained highlighted that a low percentage of participants accounting for 21% (14 students) rejected the idea of integrating pragmatics into the instructional process stating that, *“it makes it harder for students to understand”*. On the other hand, 79% (52 students) agreed on the importance of pragmatics integration particularly in OCE sessions.

Graph 2.2: Students’ Perceptions about Implementing Pragmatics in the Instructional Process



Worth to note that an average proportion of 38% (out of 79%) referred such importance to a variety of reasons quoted as follow:

- *“To enhance the students capacities in gathering and understanding new/strong vocabulary”.*

- *"To benefit more"*.
- *"In order to master the language"*.
- *"So that they can reach your vocabulary and social skills"*.
- *"Improve students levels"*.
- *"To build strong vocabulary"*.
- *"Help them develop effective communication skills and understand social norms, and navigate different contexts"*.
- *"It is important to know how to use a language i.e. casual manner or formal way"*.

2.3 Analysis of Teacher Interview:

The second research tool employed in gathering information is an interview (see appendix B) targeting the population of OCE teachers at the department of English –University of Saida-. The researcher focused on exploring teachers' methodologies used in teaching precisely oral expression courses. Likewise, she puts emphasis on discovering the way OCE instructors design their syllabus, checking whether they assess their learners' pragmatic competence or not, and examining the types of activities they implement within their lectures. The final purpose behind interviewing teachers is collecting some insightful recommendations to enhance oral classes outcomes.

2.3.1 Procedure:

A semi-structured interview was conducted with each teacher individually and in person. With the teachers' consent, the interview was audio-recorded. Participants had some inquiries that needed further explanation, and the researcher added some few questions in relation to the points under discussion.

2.3.2 Results:

2.3.2.1 Question 2:

Teachers' periods of teaching oral expression vary between one (1) and seventeen (17) years. However, OCE is not the only module they had taught.

2.3.2.2 Question 3:

Question 3 is asked with the purpose of detecting the challenges oral educators usually encounter. One participant noted that the teaching experience varies depending on the learners' proficiency levels. However, four educators viewed teaching oral sessions as challenging, confusing and difficult because of different causes such as:

- The effect of the marks and instructors' evaluation on learners' motivation, academic achievements and attitudes.
- The lack of some crucial competencies (linguistic, cultural and cognitive) on the learners' part.
- Students' passivity mostly in oral classes, which advocates the teacher to direct and motivate them.
- Insufficient amount of oral sessions within their timetable (they meet their students only twice a week).
- Its nature with being a very demanding and tiring mission (psychologically).

2.3.2.3 Question 4:

As far as this question is concerned, the researcher focused on the syllabus design criteria. Participants highlighted the significance of planning syllabus lectures that align with learners' interests, expectations, levels, needs and daily-life matters. Additionally, one (1) teacher emphasized on bringing activities that boost students' critical thinking, when two (2) other ones reported that they refer to the literature in designing OCE syllabus.

2.3.2.4 Question 5:

This question aims at investigating the explicit exposure towards the TL pragmatics features in oral sessions. Three (3) teachers indicated that they do not explicitly include pragmatics into their sessions due to:

- The difficulty of integrating pragmatics when the teacher himself lacks knowledge and training in this specialization.
- The ineffectiveness of doing so.
- Psychological barriers (students' lack of motivation, laziness and the over-reliance on AI generators).

The two remaining teachers responded positively to this question. One of them stated that he does frequently include pragmatics in his class depending on his learners' level, through role-plays and TBLT (task-based language teaching) activities. Whereas the other one confirmed exhibiting pragmatics aspects to her students on daily basis, largely by practicing tasks such as job interview.

2.3.2.5 Question 6:

According to the obtained data, two (2) teachers mentioned that only very small proportion of students of (2%) showed interest toward learning conversational acts (working on tones and appropriate language use), saying that they are not familiar with the cultural norms of the English language. However, other two (2) teachers indicated that EFL learners enjoy exercising conversational acts, it just depends on the way and method the educator implements to trigger students' interests.

2.3.2.6 Question 7:

As for question "7", the informants were required to rate their learners' pragmatic competence. As shown in table 3.5, three (3) teachers stated that learners' PC is below the average. Only one teacher evaluated it as average and the last one rated it as satisfying.

Table 2.5: Learners' Pragmatic Competence Ratings

Total	Low	Average	Satisfying	High
5 (100%)	3 (60%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	0

2.3.2.7 Question 8:

Results revealed that a percentage of (40%) (two (2) participants exhibited students' tendency towards games as a preferable task i.e. learning while playing games, which helps them in improving their self-confidence and engaging more in in-class activities. Then, a diversity in responses was provided with the emphasis on debates, watching and commenting on videos and hobbies as activities that students mostly get involved in. Worth to mention that all teachers highlighted the

importance of adopting relevant and engaging teaching methods and approaches since it is all about how to teach the language.

2.3.2.8 Question 9:

The data gathered showed that two (2) teachers refused assessing their learners' PC since students themselves would neglect it (they do not read, she said). Where the second teacher stated that as long as he is not specialized in pragmatics, he is not competent enough to assess it.

Yet, the other three teachers agreed on the assessment of PC and they have mentioned some reliable ways to do so:

- ✓ Observation.
- ✓ Realistic use of language, ideas, vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar accuracy.
- ✓ Collective and reflective correction of conversational activities.

2.3.2.9 Question 10:

Participants' responses demonstrated the significant role of integrating the target language pragmatics in the whole curriculum. This is in particular in oral expression module since students do not only receive information; they also share their thoughts and perceptions. In addition, it shows the need to incorporate with the foreign cultural and social norms in order to avoid ambiguity and misunderstandings in communication. Therefore, its absence is certainly considered as a failure.

2.3.2.10 Question 11:

The last question gave the informants the opportunity to suggest some recommendations to OCE teachers. They highlighted the following points:

- ✓ Gaining learners' trust and creating a peaceful atmosphere, in which students participate more and influence their mates to go for it.
- ✓ Applying a variety of methods that align with learners' interests on daily basis (be up-to-date).
- ✓ Investing more efforts on conversational acts, podcasts (a gossip fashion that students enjoy practicing).
- ✓ Selecting relevant classroom activities.

- ✓ One recommendation was given to learners, “ *do not rely on your teacher, read more*”.
- ✓ A teacher said, “*we can do miracles if we can prepare for our learners a calm atmosphere, and establish positive relationship between teacher and students*”.

2.4 Analysis of the DCT of Apologizing:

The last instrument employed in this work is a discourse completion task (DCT) of apologizing. Worth to mention that DCTs are a world widely main structured tool that researchers utilize in assessing participants’ pragmatic skills, through expressing one or multiple speech acts within a conversational context.

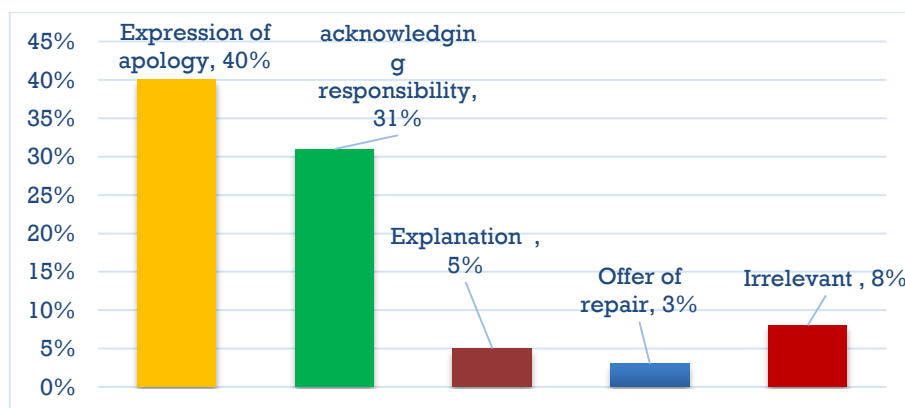
2.4.1 Procedure:

In order to assess EFL students’ pragmatic competence, a sample of 74-second year EFL learners at the Department of English –University of Saida-participated as data providers. The researcher distributed a DCT in a questionnaire format to three various groups (A), (B) and (C). The DCT covers the speech act of apologizing (see appendix C). It consists of nine different situations in which informants were asked to answer them as if they are part of these situations in real life conditions. It is worth to note that the researcher informed the participants beforehand that they could ask for further explanation whenever needed, and they did.

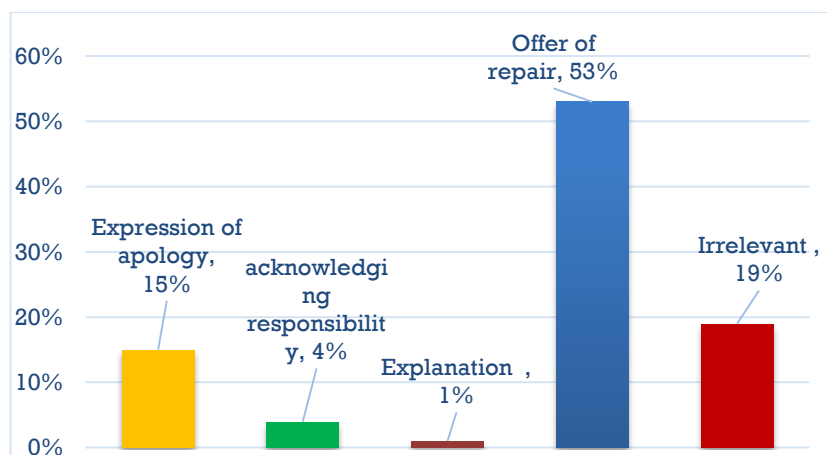
2.4.2. Results:

The responses obtained from the DCT of apologizing had been analyzed based on the different strategies used in the realization of the speech act of apologizing (mentioned in chapter1). The researcher adopted Cohen &Olshtain (1981) standards in assessing the informants’pragmatic competence.

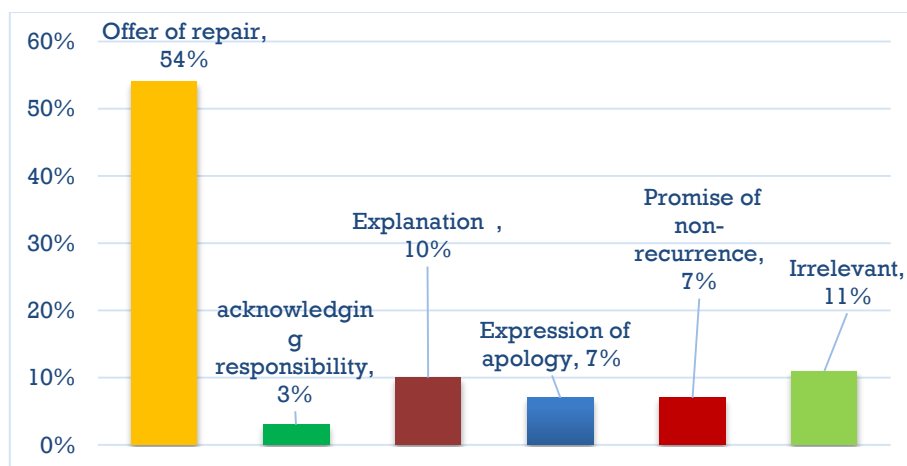
According to the results acquired, theparticipants used the five apologizing strategies, yet with a different preference rate. As long as situation one is concerned, students used all the previously mentioned strategies except for the promise of non-recurrence. The most preferred ones are expression of apology (40%) and acknowledging responsibility (31%). Explanation or account (5%) and offer of repair (3%) come with a less percentage of use. However, (8%) of them provided irrelevant answers.

Diagram 2.1: Apologizing Strategies Used in Situation 1

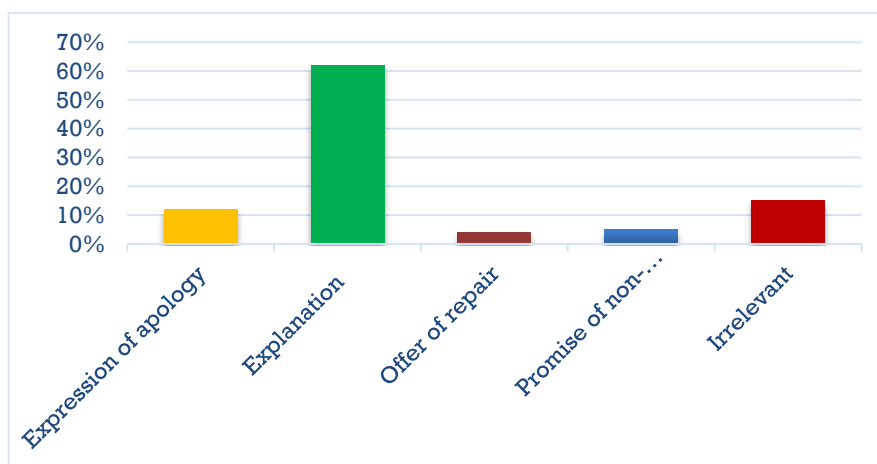
As for the second situation, the respondents utilized two strategies with different preference percentage, which are offer of repair (53%) and expression of apology (15%). A small proportion of (4%) opted for acknowledging responsibility and only (1%) chose explanation or account. Yet, (19%) of the informants wrote irrelevant answers.

Diagram 2.2: Apologizing Strategies Used in Situation 2

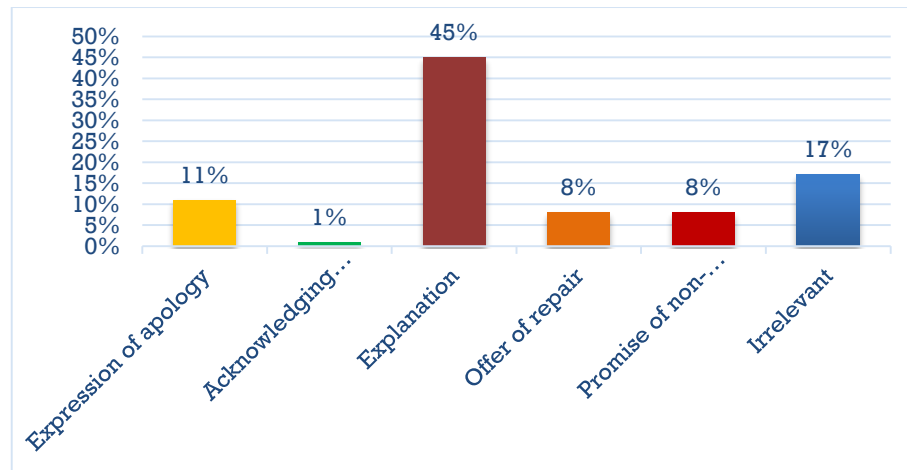
In a different context provided in situation three, the informants used all the five strategies with various degrees of preference. Offer of repair with a rate of (54%) and explanation or account (10%) are the most chosen strategies. With a percentage of (7%) expression of apology and promise of non-recurrence took place, and only (3%) of learners used acknowledging responsibility. However, (11%) of them provided irrelevant data.

Diagram 2.3: Apologizing Strategies Used in Situation 3

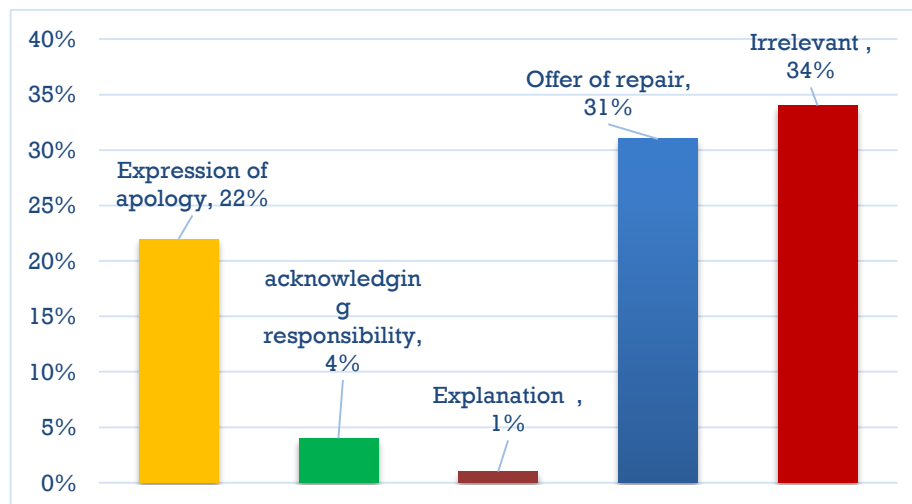
As far as situation 4 is concerned, the participants select explanation or account with a preference proportion of (62%), then expression of apology (12%), promise of non-recurrence (5%), and finally offer of repair (4%). A fair percentage of (15%) gave irrelevant responses.

Diagram 2.4: Apologizing Strategies Used in Situation 4

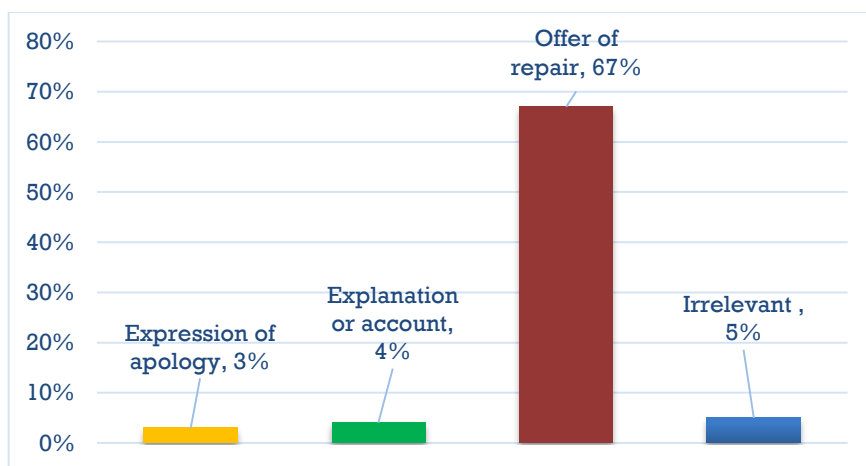
In situation 5, the most opted for strategy is explanation or account with a preference degree of 45%, followed by expression of apology (11%) while the less opted for strategy is acknowledging responsibility (1%). Students had chosen offer of repair and promise of non-recurrence with the same rate of (8%). Yet, (17%) of them failed to present relevant responses.

Diagram 2.5: Apologizing Strategies Used in Situation 5

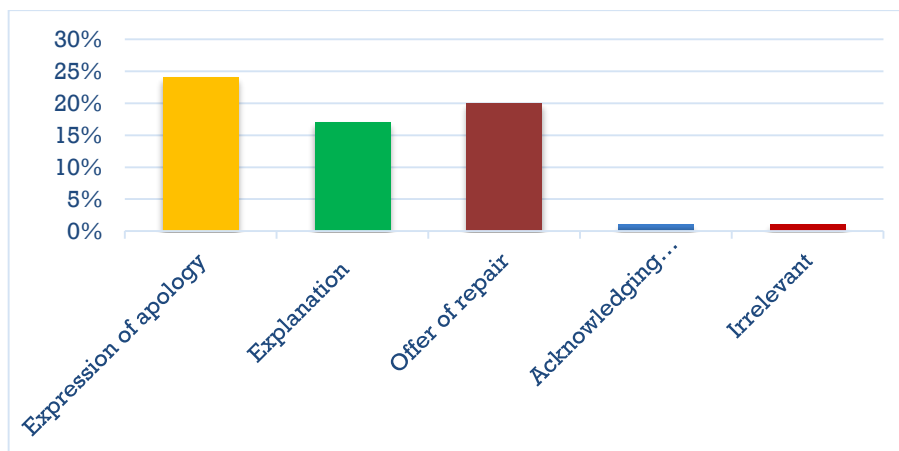
As for situation 6, four strategies had been chosen with a diversity in preference proportions. (31%) of respondents use offer of repair, then, expression of apology (22%), acknowledging responsibility (4%), and after explanation or account (1%). A percentage of (34%) of them fail to offer relevant data.

Diagram 2.6: Apologizing Strategies Used in Situation 6

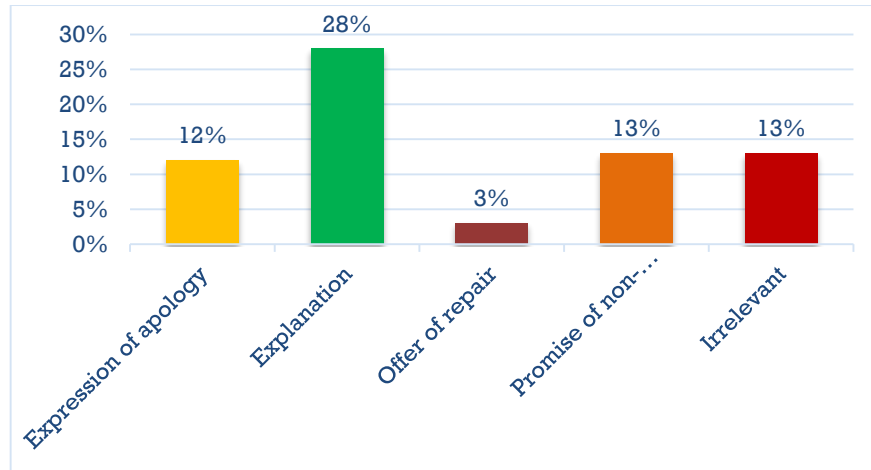
Concerning the seventh situation, students had picked offer of repair with a remarkable preference rate of (67%), then, explanation or account (4%), and then expression of apology with a very low percentage of (3%). However, (5%) of them provided irrelevant responses.

Diagram 2.7: Apologizing Strategies Used in Question 7

In situation 8, the informants had selected three strategies with close preferences rates. First, expression of apology (24%), second, offer of repair (20%), and lastly, explanation or account (17%). Promise of non-recurrence has been completely neglected, and only (1%) of them chose for acknowledging responsibility. Yet, (1%) of them failed to respond in a relevant manner.

Diagram 2.8: Apologizing Strategies Used in Situation 8

As far as the last situation is concerned, the majority of participants choose explanation or account strategy with a preference degree of (28%), followed by promise of non-recurrence (13%), expression of apology (12%), and then offer of repair with a small degree of (3%). However, (13%) showed irrelevant information.

Diagram 2.9: Apologizing Strategies Used in Situation 9

The following table summarizes the students' answers provided in each situation within the DCT of apologizing:

Table 2.6: Participants' Apologizing Strategies Used in each Situation

	<i>Expression of apology</i>	<i>Acknowledging responsibility</i>	<i>Explanation or account</i>	<i>Offer of repair</i>	<i>Promise of non-recurrence</i>
<i>Situation 1</i>	30 (40%)	23 (31%)	4 (5%)	2 (3%)	0
<i>Situation 2</i>	11 (15%)	3 (4%)	1 (1%)	39 (53%)	0
<i>Situation 3</i>	5 (7%)	2 (3%)	8 (10%)	40 (54%)	5 (7%)
<i>Situation 4</i>	9 (12%)	0	46 (62%)	3 (4%)	4 (5%)
<i>Situation 5</i>	8 (11%)	1 (1%)	33 (45%)	6 (8%)	6 (8%)
<i>Situation 6</i>	16	3	1	0	0

	(22%)	(4%)	(1%)		
<i>Situation 7</i>	2 (3%)	0	3 (4%)	0	0
<i>Situation 8</i>	18 (24%)	1 (1%)	13 (17%)	0	0
<i>Situation 9</i>	9 (12%)	0	21 (28%)	10 (13%)	10 (13%)

The following table displays the average number and percentage of students for each preferred strategy in relation to the entire nine situations proposed to them in the same apologising DCT:

Table 2.7: Students' Preferred Apologizing Strategies Selected in the whole DCT

	offer of repair	explanation or account	expression of apology	acknowledging responsibility	promise of non-recurrence
all	20	14.44	12	3.66	2.77
DCT	(27%)	(20%)	(16%)	(5%)	(4%)

Important to mention that 32% of the research population (24 students) mixed two apologizing strategies within one situation (See table 3.7). Additionally, most students tended to express verbally their apologies (*I am sorry, I apologize, I am very sorry...*) in the beginning of each sentence. However, two students mentioned that they would not apologize at all since nothing is wrong with their behavior.

Worth to note that the abbreviations mentioned in the below table stands for:

- EXPL: explanation or account
- REPAIR: offer of repair
- ACK: acknowledging responsibility

- PROM: promise of non-recurrence

Table 2.8: *Mixed Apologizing Strategies Used in Various Situations*

EXPL+REPAIR	ACK+REPAIR	EXPL+PROM	REPAIR+PROM
14 (19%)	3 (4%)	5 (7%)	2 (3%)

Moreover, the results obtained revealed that the respondents opted mainly for three apologizing strategies. These are: offer of repair (*I'll make it up for you*) with a preference rate of (27%). Explanation or account (*I was sick*) with a preference rate of (20%), and expression of apology (*please accept my apologies*) with (16%) preference percentage. Whereas only a small proportion used acknowledging responsibility (5%) and promise of non-recurrence (4%).

Therefore, it is concluded that the participants relied mostly on offering a repair through which the speakers exhibit willingness to repair the damage they caused, and seek to save their faces and show respect to their interlocutors. In addition and based on the data analysis, it is obvious to notice that students tend to explain the reason behind their wrongdoing and provide accounts to their bad behaviors. Yet, native speakers perceive the use of such a strategy as needless and inadequate.

The third opted for strategy is expression of apology, in which the participants explicitly displayed their apologies "*I'm so sorry, I didn't mean it, accept my apologies*". These words confirm the students' consciousness of the importance of using at least one apologizing utterance in order to indicate the feeling of regret and sincerity towards their interlocutors.

However, the low percentages of acknowledging responsibility and promise of non-recurrence strategies demonstrates the learners' inability of fulfilling proper speech acts. This is because native speakers base their apologies acts on these last two mentioned strategies.

Regarding the respondents' linguistic competence, the majority of them exhibit a weak vocabulary repertoire, inappropriate use of tenses and a lack of coherence and cohesion between words and expressions.

What may be concluded from the data gathered is the students' deficiency in realizing the SA in question as required.

2.5 Analysis of the DCT of Requesting:

With the same aim of evaluating the learners' pragmatic competence, another DCT was implemented emphasizing on the realization of the speech act of request in various contexts.

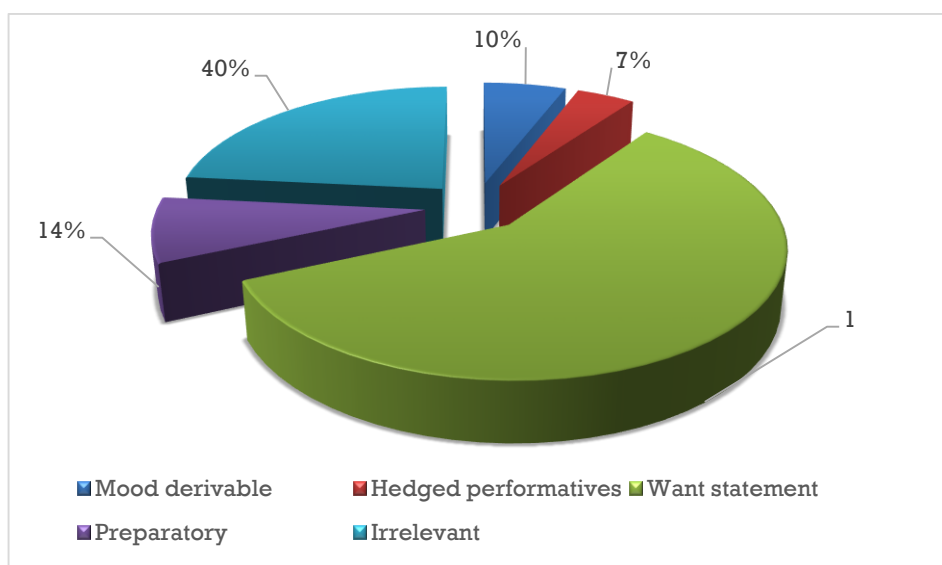
2.5.1 Procedure:

The same (A), (B), (C) groups of 2nd year EFL students at the English department were required to complete the DCT of requesting (see appendix D) that includes five different scenarios. The researcher supplied the participants with extra explanations whenever they asked for.

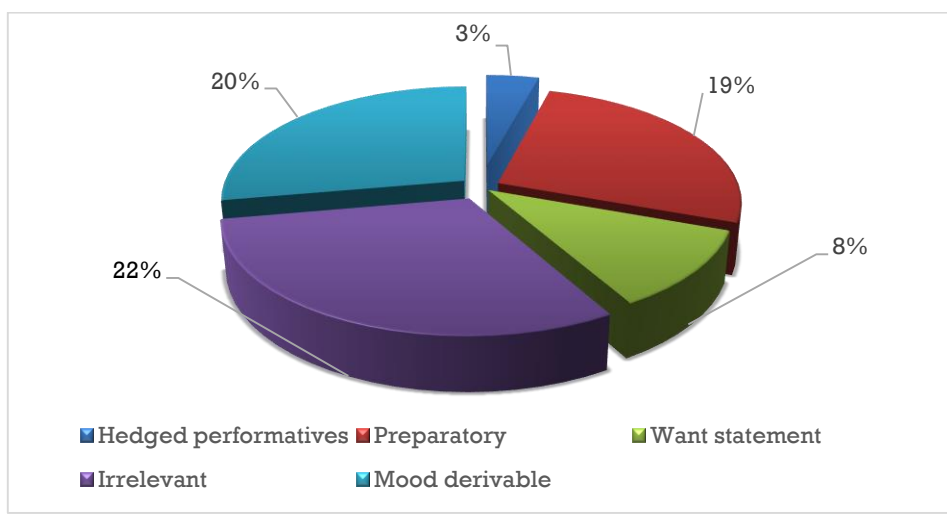
2.5.2 Results:

For the analysis of the requesting DCTs' answers, the researcher has utilized the same norms suggested by Blum-Kulka and Olsain (1989).

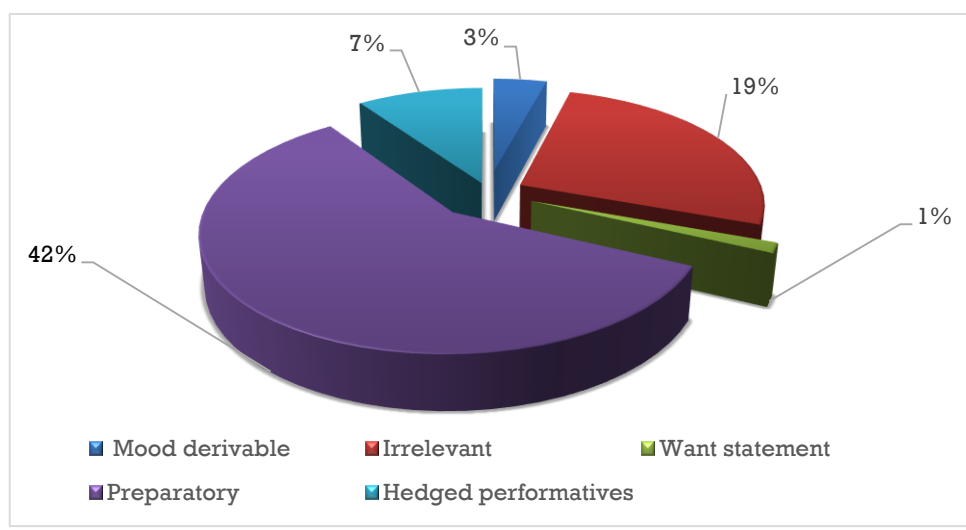
The data obtained showed that the respondents employ only four requesting strategies in the discourse tasks, with a complete avoidance of the strong hints. However, there is a variety in preferences rates. As far as situation one is concerned, the most used strategy is preparatory with a degree of 19%, followed by mood derivable (10%) and hedged performatives (7%), the strategy that had the lowest rate of preference (1%) is want statement. Yet, a large number of students (40% of them) produced irrelevant sentences.

Pie chart 2.1: Request Strategies Used in Situation 1

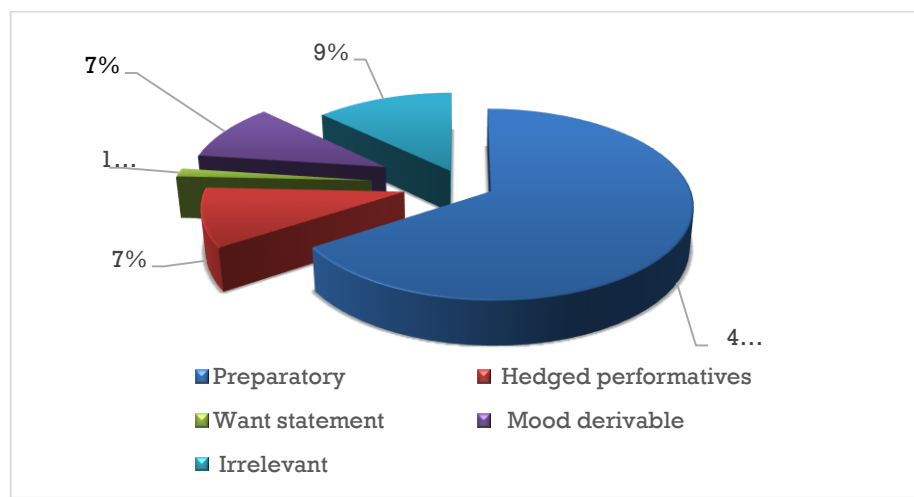
As for the second situation, the respondents tend to utilize four strategies, which are mood derivable, preparatory, want statement and hedged performatives, yet differ in preference percentages with (20%), (19%), (8%) and (3%) respectively. However, irrelevant responses were provided by (22%) of them.

Pie chart 2.2: Request Strategies Used in Situation 2

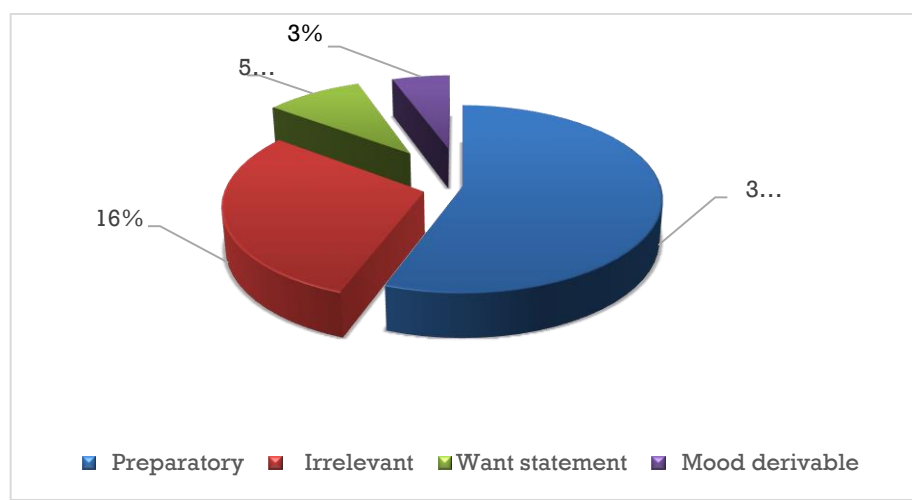
Preparatory in situation 3 has been selected with a significant preference proportion of (42%), followed by hedged performatives (7%), mood derivable (3%) and then want statement (1%). A rate of (19%) failed to write appropriate requests.

Pie chart 2.3: Request Strategies Used in Situation 3

Concerning the fourth situation, the informants also focused on choosing preparatory with a preference proportion of (46%), when mood derivable and hedged performatives were used with the very same percentage of (7%). Yet, a degree of 9% revealed students' irrelevant answers.

Pie chart 2.4: Request Strategies Used in Situation 4

As long as the last situation is concerned, preparatory is still the mainly preferred strategy by students with a percentage of (30%), want statement (5%) and mood derivable (3%). A preferable degree of (16%) represents irrelevant information provided by respondents.

Pie chart 2.5: Request Strategies Used in Situation 5

All the gathered data is calculated systematically and classified in numbers and percentages in the below table:

Table 2.9: Students' Preferred Request Strategies Selected in the whole DCT

	Preparatory	MoodDerivable	Hedged Performatives	WantStatement	StrongHints
all	23	6.4	3.4	2.6	0
DCT	(31%)	(9%)	(4%)	(4%)	

What is concluded from the entire DCT results is that students emphasized mainly on utilizing two strategies: preparatory (31%) and mood derivable (9%). The less consideration is pointed to hedged performatives and want statement with a percentage of (4%), in addition, the participants have totally abandoned the use of strong hints in the realization of the speech act of request.

Based on the overall data obtained, it can be deduced that participants' competency to carry out the speech act in question is below average. This is due to the application of imperative verbs while requesting, which is considered as impolite in TL pragmatic norms. Furthermore, there is an obvious absence of the strong hints requesting strategy.

2.6 Discussion and Interpretation of the Main Data:

The employment of the three different research instruments focused on collecting information that contribute to answering the three research questions and testing their respective hypotheses. The two discourse completion tasks (DCTs) were utilized to evaluate 2nd year EFL learners' pragmatic competence. The findings obtained indicate that students have weak pragmatic skills. Furthermore, in the DCT of apologizing, students fail to realize the situational speech acts according to native speaker standards. This is due to their tendency to use explanations and ignoring promises of non-recurrence and acknowledging responsibility, which are the commonly opted-for strategies in making apologies.

As for the analysis of the data gathered from the requesting DCT, the respondents employed some requesting strategies mostly preparatory. The latter aligns with native speaker appropriate norms. Yet, their pragmatic ability is still below the average, and that is because of neglecting the indirect request strategy of strong hints and the use of want statements. Thus, the findings tend to strengthen the second research hypothesis which dictates that students have inadequate pragmatic competence.

Moreover, a remarkable deficiency was observed in students' linguistic ability in the speech acts responses. This encompasses spelling mistakes ("*It's my body*" instead of *it's my bad*), inappropriate grammar use, and irrelevant answers. Worth to mention that a huge number of participants tend to use word-to-word translation from L1 to the TL (*I don't to break your soul, try to burry myself, I scan on her dress* instead of *I wipe the coffee stain off her clothes*). Likewise, many answers included L1 expressions such as (الله أكبر، نعوذها، راضية عليا، زهايمر). This confirms students' inability to use the English language properly in various aspects.

As for the teacher interview, the research outcomes provided the investigator with reliable data regarding the introduction of pragmatic features into OCE syllabus design and lectures. Besides, the instructors assessed their students' pragmatic competence as weak. This would greatly validate the first hypothesis that noted the insufficient integration of pragmatics into oral classes on the teacher's part. For the last question in the interview, the teachers provided insightful recommendations that would answer the last research question of what strategies would be used to enhance learners' PC.

Regarding the learners' questionnaire, the results obtained provided valuable insights into the targeted population, and the influence of OCE activities on students' cross-cultural outcomes, communicative skills, and their interest in studying pragmatics.

2.7conclusion:

To conclude, this analytical chapter stresses the importance of integrating pragmatics into teaching and learning process. It has been shown that second year EFL learners lack both linguistic and pragmatic competencies. The teachers reported their mainly encountered challenges in teaching oral expression module. Additionally, they suggested some relevant and crucial recommendations seeking better consequences and enhancement in their learners' competencies mostly the pragmatic one, like including task-based approach activities and podcasts tasks.

Chapter Three:

Suggestions and Recommendations

3.1 Introduction:

In the light of the findings obtained, it has been approved that implementing pragmatics into English language teaching and learning particularly in oral sessions is of a great importance. Yet, it is vital to consider, as it was highly recommended by most teachers-participants, some psychological concerns when doing so. Therefore, this chapter is dedicated to some recommendations and suggestions addressed to both teachers and learners in the sake of creating effective language learning atmosphere, in which teachers would be able to accurately promote their EFL students' pragmatic competence so that they prepare them to use the target language effectively within their classes and in real settings. The researcher would represent some affective factors that serve the instructional process equipped with a range of activities and tips, which make the learning process more enjoyable and effective. Then, the reachability of pragmatics will be discussed and provided with relevant and useful techniques.

3.2 Affective Teaching Strategies:

Any human practice is worthless without the consideration of psychological aspects. As for teaching, the aforementioned teachers' recommendations in chapter 2 highlighted the necessity of the psychological aspects in the enhancement of classrooms' outcomes. EFL learners should have a peaceful and supportive learning atmosphere in order to learn and perform the TL in a convenient way. Thus, paying attention to affective factors is one of the key elements in the amelioration of the entire learning process, particularly of the foreign language learning. In this respect Marzban and Sadighi (2013) in (Ranjbar and Narafshan, 2016: 14) stated, "*Affective variables are the only important factors in foreign language learning*". Thus, the researcher believes that the coming suggested points would be valuable.

3.2.1 Sense of Belonging:

The establishment of a strong sense of belonging relates to the very perception of being heard, valued, respected and actively involved within the learning community. Nevertheless, this sense of belonging has a remarkable influence on the educational outcomes of students, as well as it cultivates a positive milieu for their improvement. The moment the learner experiences a profound sense of belonging within his working-group and classroom settings, he is more likely able

to overcome the fear of rejection and break the introversion mechanisms. He would be more open to argumentation and criticism among members whom he trusts (PhuQuy, 2017).

The educators' role in here is to create a conducive environment for learning, through employing a set-up of activities at the very first sessions to break down any kind of psychological barriers that would hinder students' abilities, engagement and participation. Regarding this particular issue, Barkley, Major, and Cross (2014, *ibid*) suggested some *social icebreakers interviews* and strategies to decrease students' anxiety and strengthen classroom members' relationships (*ibid*).

3.2.1.1 My Little Secrets Activity:

Level: intermediate to advanced, time: 15-20 minutes. In this activity, the class would be organized into groups with the teacher assigning the task of identifying the challenges and difficulties students encounter in learning the English language (the topic can be flexible). Subsequently, each student within his group would provide pieces of advice to his peers. After, each group has the opportunity to share their identified issues and offer suggestions to one another. In this case, the role of the instructor is that of a facilitator i.e. he interferes only when necessary.

Learners tend usually to offer general advice like *"You should try harder"*. Therefore, the teacher should direct them to speak about the issues they face such as *I have difficulty inferring the meaning from the context, or I find listening to different accents really challenging*.

The underlying objective of integrating learners in such a task is to boost their sense of empathy and compassion that in turn promotes a sense of belonging. Through sharing their weaknesses, students, especially the passive ones will discover that making mistakes and struggling within different contexts of learning is perfectly normal. This way, they would feel more comfortable and supported to express themselves and perform freely the language.

3.2.1.2 We Are a Team Activity:

Level: intermediate to advanced, time: 15-20 minutes. Students in this activity are requested to reorganize tables and chairs to create obstacles. Then, each three students should form a group in which,

- Person 1 is blind-folded and directed by Person 2 to find the vocabulary list. Once he/she finds the list, he/she removes the blindfold and describes the words to Person 3.
- *Person 2 stands at the back of the class* and guide Person 1.
- *Person 3 stands in the front of the class* and try to guess the words described by Person 1.

Each group has one minute to select the right person for each role. The teacher should hide the vocabulary list once Person 1 is blindfolded, declaring the beginning of the competition.

Worth to mention, each person plays only his role in the game i.e. Person 3 cannot give directions to Person 1, and Person 2 cannot guess the words. Otherwise, points would not be counted.

When the game is over, some questions should be discussed:

- *What do you think of this activity?*
- *Is it a good teamwork activity?*
- *Why did/didn't your team win the competition?*
- *What strategies could be taken to win the competition?*

Such an activity fosters trust and cooperation between group members that consequently activate a sense of belonging. Additionally, it helps learners in assigning responsibility for each role, as well as to reflect on their own working strategies during the competition.

3.2.2 Positive Rapport:

It is very common that when learners like and respect their teacher, they would show more interest and passion towards learning the subject or the module. Thus, BuskistandSaville (2001 in De JesúsGirón Chávez et al., 2017) recommend

language educators to establish a positive rapport with their students in order to attract shy learners' attention and invite them to participate in classroom activities. In the same line of thoughts, Dornyei (2001, *ibid*) affirms that one of the effective motivational strategies that improve the language learning process is building a strong teacher-student relationship.

De JesúsGirónChávez et al. (2017) mention that the ability to develop the interpersonal opportunities with students encourages EFL learners to share confidently their opinions, and promotes their communicative skills in the TL. Besides, these researchers cite some suggestions, which lead to a positive relationship between teachers and learners such as:

- Using students' names instead of pronouns when referring to them. This way they would feel appreciated and comfortable (Harmer 2007, Dornyei 2001, Edge 1993).
- Listening actively to students and showing interest towards their behaviors, habits and favorite activities. As a result, they feel valued and accounted in the learning process Dornyei (2001).
- Communicating in an informal way (using frank language and casual conversations) in order to socialize with learners and guarantee a successful learning (Yadav, 2012).
- Showing respect, friendliness and sense of humor when talking to learners inside and outside classes shorten the distance between educators and their students. This keeps them more engaged and breaks down the psychological barriers (Yadav, 2012).
- Taking into account students' preferences. Therefore, Dornyei (2001) recommends employing personal subjects and illustrations. For instance, teachers may bring videos or articles that goeswith their learners' interests.

Considering the students' affective dimension serves as a crucial element is teaching and learning foreign languages. Teachers are invited to employ captivating pedagogical activities. In addition, they can adapt relevant methods and approaches to create a calm and safe atmosphere for learners to feel engaged, motivated, and excited to learn. As for students, they should not rely only on classroom input. They need to invest more in the learning process through positive thinking, doing research

to enhance their competencies and overcome the negative thoughts that threaten their improvement.

3.3 Teaching Pragmatics:

Traditional teaching approaches used to boost the learners' language use efficacy through grammar and lexis competencies (Savignon, 1997 in Hamdani, 2019). In this respect, some linguists stated that in order to understand the intended meaning, the context – in which communication occurs- is needless as long as the sentence produced is grammatically correct. Yet, even those linguistic competent learners may fail to communicate appropriately using the target language in various cross-cultural situations. Therefore, pragmatics came to the fore aiming to bridge the gap between the form and the function of the language (ibid).

Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan and Reynolds (1991:13) in (Vu, 2017:29) highlighted the importance of teaching pragmatics noting, *“Teaching pragmatics empowers students to experience and experiment with the language at a deeper level, and thereby to participate in the purpose of language – communication –, rather than just words”*.

3.3.1 Teaching and Learning Challenges:

Knowledge of pragmatics paves the way to a successful and fluent communication between language users. However, it is quite challenging to teach it due to various factors (as cited in Sharif, 2022):

- Teachers' lack of appropriate foreign language (FL) pragmatic awareness. Plenty of them acquired English as a FL, then, they had less exposure to authentic interactional contexts (Savvidou and Economidou-Koetsidis, 2019).
- EFL students cannot practice the FL on daily basis (home, schools... etc.). They lack a proper explicit exposure to the target language (TL) pragmatic nuances, which may hinder their improvement (Webb, 2013).
- Textbooks content lack adequate representation of TL pragmatics norms. They provide EFL learners with surface explanation of speech acts instead of illustrating how to perform a SA in different manners (Cohen, 1991).
- EFL classrooms structural syllabus puts emphasis on the grammatical accuracy over the pragmatics appropriateness of the TL (Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei, 1998).

- In EFL classroom settings, language is perceived as an object rather than a means of communication. Thus, the chances of socialization are reduced (Cook, 2001).
- Teachers' overloaded curriculum that should be covered within a small period imposes a limited integration of pragmatics features to their EFL students (Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor, 2008).

3.3.2 How to Teach Pragmatics in EFL Classes?

Many researchers investigated the implementation of pragmatics into teaching foreign language. However, a gap still exists between the researches findings and instructional practices (Cohen, 2012). Bardovi-Harlig (2018) stresses the importance instruction of pragmatics in order to expose TL learners *to see and hear the actual use of language* (as cited in Naiboğlu, 2023).

3.3.2.1 Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT):

Task-based language teaching approach – originated in communicative language teaching (CLT) – is mostly used in foreign language teaching settings. Unlike traditional methods, TBLT has different characteristics (Chen, 2023):

- TBLT is a learner-centered approach (learners are active not passive agents).
- Educators are facilitators instead of knowledge providers in the learning process.
- Its emphasis is on engaging students in communicative and practical activities so that to develop their language skills.
- TBLT focuses on fluency and accuracy.

According to Nunan (n.d) TBLT is *“a communicative task, a classroom activity that requires learners to engage with the target language in a way that focuses on meaning rather than just the form or structure of the language”* (as cited in Li, 2023:191). In this respect, Blog (2024) suggests some TBLT practical tasks that could be used within EFL setting:

- ✓ Plan a trip activity: divided into groups and engaged in a stimulating conversation about travelling, the students are required to brainstorm on planning a trip. The teacher encourages them to include aspects such as: the duration of the trip, the budget, the kind of activities they would do. The participants are equipped with tools like maps or a timeframe and are allowed

to choose a real or fictional destination and create the travelling plan using the TL.

- ✓ Problem solving activity: present learners with various problems that they face in their daily lives. For advanced learners as second year university students, social issues would be suitable for them.
- ✓ Story making activity: provide a character or a beginning of an unfamiliar story or a fairytale and give them time to brainstorm the end individually. Then, ask them to work in pairs so that they would share their imaginative end together. All groups would retell what they have imagined, and to make it more exciting only one “end” would be collectively selected as the best one.

3.3.2.1.1 Role-plays:

Ladousse (1987) in (AnselandBouakacha, 2022:9) views role plays as: *“an educational technique, known to generate a lot of fun, excitement, joy and laughter in the language class as ‘play’ itself guarantees a safe environment in which learners can be as inventive and playful as possible”*.

3.3.2.1.2 Show me what you have activity:

The teacher should prepare in advance some written cards with different speech acts scenarios, considering his learners language proficiency and areas of interests. Students are required to work in pairs and randomly choose a card. Then, the instructor gives them 15 minutes to brainstorm ideas about the given scenario they should perform on stage. Afterward, have a fruitful discussion about learners’ performance particularly on the realization of speech acts, asking questions such as:

- Why did you choose this strategy to apologize/request?
- Do you know other strategies to apologize/request?
- How would you assess your performance?

As it has been shown in chapter two, 2nd year EFL learners lack the awareness and the adequate realization of speech acts. The purpose behind such an activity is enabling EFL students to practice speech acts in a funny way. They would learn about the different strategies used to apologize, request, complain ...etc. Additionally, the teacher would instruct them explicitly in how to perform proper

speech acts like native speakers, and encourage them to assess their performance (self-assessment).

3.3.2.2 Four SURE Steps:

To answer the question of how to integrate the pragmatics of English to students, Brock and Nagasaka (2005, as cited in Ghembaza, 2016) suggest the acronym S.U.R.E, which stands for *See, Use, Review* and *Experience*.

➤ See:

As far as this step is concerned, they suggest that teachers can engage students in occasions that would help them to see *language in context* and raise their awareness about pragmatics and its significant role in language communication. In order to support students in making a polite request or any other speech act using English, Brock and Nagasaka (2005) propose an activity derived from Brown and Levinson politeness theory (1978). Initially, the instructor asks his learners to brainstorm the frequent requests they usually make in classes (with both teachers and peers). After the elicitation of students' language, the teacher presents the politeness continuum using the following table:

Indirect: *I forgot my pencil. /My pencil's broken.*

Direct: *Lend me a pencil.*

Polite: *Could I borrow a pencil, please? /Would you mind lending me a pencil?*

Familiar: *It'd be terrific if I could borrow your pencil.*

Brock and Nagasaka (2005: 21) in Ghembaza (2016: 206)

After explaining and illustrating the politeness continuum to students, the teacher should ask them to perform requests with each other as mentioned below:

1. Polite: *Ask a classmate to lend you his/her ruler. Measure this paper and write the width along with the classmate's name here.*

2. Familiar: *Ask a classmate to lend you 10 dollars. Write his/her name here.*

3. Indirect: *Ask a classmate to lend you his or her pencil. Write his or her name here*

_____.

4. Polite: Ask a classmate to sign his/her name

(ibid)

At the conclusion of this activity, a discussion about adequacy and the politeness continuum is needed. This ensures that students have sufficiently recognized the importance of pragmatics in making requests in the English language. This approach may be modified and expanded on in future classroom tasks, for the continuous improvement of students' awareness of pragmatics.

➤ **Use:**

Brock and Nagasaka (2005) suggest that EFL students should use the target language *in contexts (simulated and real)*, in which they decide how to interact based on what they comprehend from the suggested exercise situation.

The purpose behind adapting this step is to promote students' communicative abilities. Therefore, many researchers as Olshtain and Cohen (1991) suggest using *role-plays, drama, and mini-dialogs* to practice language where learners have the opportunity to choose what to say. An example of complimenting speech act may be implemented as a practical activity. To strengthen students understanding, the following task would be helpful:

1. A: *I really like your handbag.*

B: *This old thing? It's about to fall apart.*

2. A: *Wow! What a great car!*

B: *Yeah, I love it, even if I did pay too much for it.*

Brock and Nagasaka (2005: 22) in Ghembaza (2016: 207)

After introducing the above dialogues, students would be instructed to work in pairs where one student presents a compliment while the other provides a downplaying response to the item. However, another strategy is suggested that is a role-play where students should adjust their language use and production based on the situation being role-played and their relationship with their interlocutors.

➤ **Review:**

As for the third step, teachers can *review, reinforce, and recycle* the pragmatic elements they have already taught their students. *One readily available opportunity* to achieve this is through communicating in the target language in daily classroom management. This latter is viewed by some teachers as separate from the English course; hence, they utilize L1 instead of the TL. In this regard, Kasper (1997) states that even classrooms where the teacher is dominating a conversation, learners have a valuable chance to grasp and practice pragmatic and language skills. Thus, educators are invited to avoid giving instructions in their mother tongue since this would reduce learners' opportunities to discover how the English language is employed in real-life classroom interactions (ibid). According to Brock and Nagasaka (2005):

“Using English for classroom management takes the language out of its all-too common role as an abstract, lifeless linguistic system to study, and places it in the role of a real-life, breathing communication system. When teachers and students use English to complete common communicative functions in the classroom, such as requests, commands, openings, closing, refusals, apologies, and explanations, students’ developing pragmatic knowledge can be reinforced through the common communicative events that take place daily in every EFL classroom”.

Brock and Nagasaka (2005: 23)

The teachers' classroom management conversations, thus, have a crucial role in teaching learners' different language uses (greetings, requests, openings... etc.) as stated in the examples below:

Example Openings:

Indirect: *It's time to get started.*

Direct: *Sit down now.*

Polite: *Would you sit down, please?*

Familiar: *Boys and girls, it would be helpful if you could take a seat.*

Example Requests:

Indirect: *It's cold in here. /I'm freezing.*

Direct: *Close/Shut the window.*

Polite: *Could you close the window, please? /Would you mind closing the window?*

Familiar: *Be a dear and close the window. /Would you close the window for us?*

(Ibid)

➤ **Experience:**

For a successful comprehension of pragmatics features, teachers can help their learners to experience and observe the role of pragmatics in communication (Brock and Nagasaka, 2005). Equipping EFL students with authentic language exposure boost their understanding of language use in a variety of contexts (Kasper & Rose, 2001). The use of videos reflects how native speakers utilize the language and interact in social settings. Many researchers indicate the crucial role of videos in EFL classrooms. The they could be summarized in the following points:

- Videos provide learners with a clear image of language use in the foreign contexts.
- They help students observe how native speakers utilize English in real social interactions.
- Videos reflect the foreign culture to students.

3.3.2.3 Podcast Activity:

Among the previous stated recommendations, one teacher recommend employing podcast activity or as she refers to as “the gossip fashion” into OCE activities. Students nowadays are influenced by social media trends, and a foreign language teacher should bring activities that go along with their interests. In this respect, Mikat et al. (2007) in Yazmin and Clara (2024:176) expresses, “*Podcasts are versatile, reusable, interesting, and stimulating to the new generation of technology-savvy students*”.

➤ **Procedure:**

Pre-listening: the teacher can have a conversation with his students about their perceptions on podcasts, their favorite podcasters and topics that trigger their attention.

While listening: students are requested to listen carefully to the podcast and take notes for further discussion.

Post-listening: the instructor may address learners to give their opinions about the points discussed in the podcast and open the door for critical thinking. As he can ask students to work in pairs and make their own podcast episodes in front of everyone.

Podcasts would help EFL learners to observe how native speakers use the language in different social events, regarding the foreign language cultural and social norms.

3.3.3 Pragmatic Competence and Assessment:

3.3.3.1 Assessment:

Assessment is a pedagogical technique teachers use in order to test their learners' language comprehension and skills (particularly speech acts). Therefore, Cohen recommends involving pragmatics assessment into the process of teaching via short and long tests (2014). Consequently, he suggests six key assessment strategies for teachers as follows (in Sharif, 2022):

- Plan realistic and engaging speech acts situation for learners.
- Look for key aspects of performance.
- Make a discussion with students after their speech acts performance.
- Ask students to compare their performances to that of a native speaker.
- Let students provide you with a rationale for their responses in those social situations.
- Be strategic about when and what to assess.

3.3.3.2 Measuring Speech Acts:

Assessing learners' pragmatic competence covers both comprehension and production. Without being taught about how to realize the speech acts, it would be quite challenging to successfully perform it. Therefore, Cohen (2010) suggest two kinds of measurement:

✓ Measuring Comprehension of Speech Acts:

Assessing EFL learners' pragmatic competence need to be often indirect, following a *metapragmatic approach*, where students are requested to rate someone else's pragmatic skills. For instance, they may watch a video clip or a role-play between two interlocutors and then, they should rate their realization of the speech act in hand (apologizing for example). Moreover, they would be asked to give a rationale to their rating through which different opinions will be shared and discussed. Teachers in here are supposed to adjust their responses.

✓ Measuring Speech Acts Production:

Exercising speech acts – orally in particular – would help learners to practice the target language spontaneously regarding the tones used, gestures, facial expressions and the negotiation of meaning between participants. A relevant activity that would be suggested is a role-play. Students in such an activity may be either open to talk and say too much or may be hesitant and say nothing at all. Additionally, they would perform the role-play without adequate consideration of the TL norms.

In order to “*bias for the best*”, teachers may give their learners a warm-up activity, in which they have time to rehearse with their partners what would they say in the proposed situations.

By the end of this task, a teacher-based assessment should be provided. In other words, instructors should equip their students with a native speaker response as an illustrative example. This way they would help them to understand and learn the appropriate way of making an apology, a request ...etc.

3.3.3.3 Positive Feedback:

Many educators hold the belief that explicit correction of learners' errors – the moment they happen – is the best way to give their feedback. Yet, studies indicate that this is not always the effective method to address mistakes. It may be observed as an embarrassing, demotivating and potentially discouraging action that would hinder students' involvement in classroom activities.

Feedback is an important part in learning that helps students in:

- Improving areas that need more attention.

- Addressing their strengths and weaknesses.
- Gaining more self-confidence to keep going towards their objectives.
- Honing their potentials through highlighting their areas of improvement.

Harmer (n.d) suggests some simple, yet essential techniques to positively provide students with feedback, some of them are mentioned in the table below (as cited in Bakreti, 2017):

Table 3.1: Positive Feedback techniques. Adapted from (Harmer; Bakreti, 2017)

Techniques	Explanations	Examples
Repeating	The teacher asks the learner to repeat what he said.	Would you please repeat the sentence?
Echoing	A more precise technique, in which the teacher re-says the wrong part uttered by the student.	Student: lends me your pencil. Teacher: lends me (with a doubting tone).
Statement and question	Questioning the student's statement to indicate that something has not worked as required.	<i>We can say simply good try, but that is not quite right or do people think that is correct?</i>
Expression	Facial expressions or gestures are enough to show that student's speech is inadequate.	Making eye contact with the learner at the moment the learner does the mistake.
Hinting	A quick way to remind the learner with the correct rule of what he said.	Student: I forgotten Teacher: what about the auxiliary?
Reformulating	The teacher provides the correct form of what the learner failed to say without making it a big deal.	Student: give me the book. Teacher: can you please pass the book?

Important to state, Bakreti (2017) proposes further feedback techniques that teachers can employ, such as the following:

- ✓ Recording mistakes: teachers act as observers only. They attentively watch and observe their learners performance and postpone the feedback for future session. Instructors may write their remarks in a sheet of paper, charts or any other form of categorization. They may even transcribe it for a future study.
- ✓ After the event: after recording students' performance, in-class feedback should be offered. The teacher can objectively assess the activity through sharing, evaluating learners' performance, as he asks them about what was easy, and what was challenging in the given task. Writing some errors on the board would help students recognize their mistakes and correct them. Another possible option is to provide each student with his individual written feedback noting their recorded mistakes, and suggesting some helpful resources (dictionaries, books, articles...) for further clarification.

3.3.3.3.1 Take care of me list:

Providing learners with the opportunity to offer feedback to their teachers is quite a new practice. Therefore, an American teacher (as cited in Hamdad, 2018) suggests the "Take Care of Me List" concept, supporting students to candidly share their perspectives about the leaning journey. They would write a detailed feedback in which they identify areas where instructors fail to meet their expectations. Students would mention the things, which seem ambiguous and requires more illustration. This would perfectly re-shape the teacher's syllabus, materials adaptation, style of teaching, classroom management, and student-learner relationship. In other words, this student's list would help the teacher to detect the areas of improvement and ultimately work on them.

Notably, empowering learners to offer feedback to their teachers contributes to a sense of mutual trust between them. In addition, the learner would feel himself as part of the learning community that would foster his engagement and motivation in the instructional process.

3.4 Conclusion:

This chapter presents some relevant suggestions and recommendations related to enhancing EFL students' communicative skills in general, and pragmatic ones in particular. In this regard, it is worth to point to the importance of the affective variable in the teaching process. The researcher examines also the

teachability of pragmatics and strengthens this assumption with a variety of activities such as TBLT tasks and podcast tasks. In addition, various suggestions and recommendations have been presented aiming to improve the instructional outcomes. For instance, establishing a positive rapport between teachers and students and implementing real-life activities to enhance learners' pragmatic competence. Then, feedback and assessment have been discussed and equipped with some essential additions, addressing their effectiveness in the teaching-learning journey.

General Conclusion

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General Conclusion:

Incorporating pragmatics into language instructional process is quite fundamental. Pragmatics gives valuable opportunities to use the target language in different communicative contexts. Introducing pragmatic and cultural standards provides students with both pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics abilities that improve and direct their choices while performing the language on daily basis.

Teaching pragmatics to EFL students, particularly in oral classes helps them to prevent miscommunication and misinterpretation. Assessing learners' pragmatic competence raises their awareness towards the foreign language linguistic and social norms, which enlighten them with the diverse possibilities they can opt for in social interactions inside and outside classrooms.

This research has examined the complexity of assessing learners' pragmatic competence within EFL oral sessions, as it has highlighted its impact on their communicative competency. Additionally, emphasizing on the explicit teaching of pragmatics would reduce the difficulties students usually encounter when communicating in the target language.

This study aims to examine the correlation between assessing pragmatic competence and the enhancement of learners' communicative skills in oral classes. In other words, teaching pragmatic competence affects students' ability to transmit and interpret meanings in different contextual situations – mainly speech acts –. In addition, the absence of pragmatic competency would lead to misunderstanding and failure in exchanging ideas and thoughts.

The analysis of the questionnaire report that 2nd year EFL students have very limited prior knowledge about the notion of pragmatics and they view it as a sub-field of linguistics. A large group of participants encourages the instruction of pragmatics mainly in OCE sessions so that to develop their communicative competence in language use.

The results obtained from the interview indicate that the EFL learners are not pragmatically competent since they show inadequate performance in classroom activities. This is related to the insufficient incorporation of the foreign language pragmatics and culture into their teaching of oral expression.

General Conclusion

As far as the discourse completion tasks are concerned, the results reported reveal students' deficiencies in realizing the speech acts in hand, due to no authentic exposure to real-life foreign contexts. In addition, their answers often lack grammar accuracy and are influenced by their native language (Arabic) while completing the DCTs' scenarios.

Based on the research literature, educators training in integrating pragmatics into teaching is of a great importance. Pragmatics should be the core component of oral expression syllabus since it significantly affects the communicative abilities of learners, and reflects the real use of the target language in conversational contexts.

In the process of conducting this research work, the researcher encountered some limitations. Collaboration with teachers in order to deliver the DCTs to the target population has been challenging. Many teachers refused to allocate around 30 minutes to distribute and fulfill the DCTs situations due to their busy schedule and very limited time. Under these conditions, a considerable number of DCTs' papers were left blank.

In the sake of improving the educational system, future researchers are invited to have an in-depth investigation in the following points:

- ✓ The efficacy of the explicit teaching of pragmatics in the instructional process.
- ✓ Effective assessment strategies to improve learners' pragmatic competence.

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Appendix A: Students' Questionnaire

Dear participants, you are kindly requested to answer this questionnaire that is a part of a master research study entitled “Assessing EFL Students Pragmatic Competence in Oral Classes”. Your collaboration and honesty would be highly appreciated. Your answers will contribute in full filling the research conducted. The data gathered from this questionnaire will be kept confidential.

Section One: *Background Information*

1. Your decision to study English at university is:

☐ Personal ☐ imposed

2. How would you describe your level in English?

☐ Elementary ☐ Intermediate ☐ Advanced ☐ Proficient

3. You are:

☐ An autonomous learner ☐ A dependent learner

4. To what extent do you benefit from oral classes?

☐ Extremely ☐ Quite a bit ☐ Little ☐ Very little

Section Two: *Classroom Activities and Performance*

5. How often do your teacher incorporate you in real-life foreign situations tasks

(Ex: apologizing, requesting...)?

☐ Always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely

6. What kind of activities do you work on during oral sessions?

☐ Commenting on & watching videos ☐ Debates ☐ Role-plays

☐ Others

- If “others”, mention them

.....

7. Do oral sessions’ activities improve your communicative skills?

Y ☐

N ☐

8. Oral classes activities ameliorate your:

V ☐ocabulary repertoire

f ☐oreign culture knowledge

☐social skills

9. How often do you participate in oral activities?

Always ☐

Often ☐

Somet ☐

Rarely ☐

Section Three: Learners and Pragmatics

10. Have your teacher ever introduced the term pragmatics to you?

☐s

No

☐

- If “yes”, how?

.....

11. According to you, oral classes should aim to:

☐n new vocabulary
 appropriately

☐ Understand foreign culture and use language

☐oth of them

12. How would you rate your pragmatic competence?

Lo ☐

Av ☐ge

Sa ☐ing

Hi ☐

Appendix B: Teachers' Interview

- 1) For how long have you been teaching?
- 2) For how many years have you been teaching oral expression?
- 3) How is the experience? Explain.

Enjoy ☐

Challenging ☐

- 4) How do you design your syllabus? What are the criteria?
- 5) Do you explicitly include pragmatics into your sessions?
 - If “yes”, to what extent do you include it? How?
- 6) To what extent do students show interest towards learning the conversational acts?
- 7) How would you rate your students' pragmatic competence?
☐ Low ☐ Average ☐ Satisfying ☐ High
- 8) What activities do students mostly get involved in? Why?
- 9) How do you assess your students' pragmatic competence in oral classes?
- 10) Do you consider the absence of the pragmatic aspect in oral expression sessions as a failure?
- 11) Any recommendations for oral expression teachers?

Appendix C: DCT of Apologizing

You are kindly requested to fill the following DCT of apologizing that is part of a master study on assessing EFL students pragmatic competence in oral classes. Thank you for your collaboration.

1- You are at a restaurant. You think you have ordered your drinks, but you haven't. You blame the waiter for forgetting your order. Do you apologize when you find out the waiter is not to be blamed? If so, what do you say?

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2- You washed your partner's clothes and you ended up ruining his/her favorite tshirt. What do you tell him/her?

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3- You promised your nephew you'd get him a souvenir from your trip, but you forgot. What to say?

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4- You've missed your morning class at university. In the afternoon, you run into your professor. How do you explain yourself?

Appendices

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5- You lied to your parents about the final grade you got in Math. Unfortunately, they find out about your lie. What do you tell them?

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6- You're at your friends' house. You accidentally break one of his mothers' precious statues. How do you react?

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7- You forgot your mother's birthday and she's very upset. How do you make it up to her?

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8- You're late for your doctor's appointment. You're running on the street. You accidentally bump into a lady, causing her to spill coffee all over herself. How do you apologize to her?

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Appendices

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9- You miss a very important meeting at the office with your boss. You call him to apologize. The problem is that this is not the first time you forget such a meeting. What do you tell him?

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Adapted from Zeaiter (2016 : 71-72)

Appendix C: DCT of Requesting

You are kindly requested to fill the following DCT of requesting that is part of a master study on assessing EFL students' pragmatic competence in oral classes. Thank you for your collaboration.

1. You have to hand in a project the following day. You have been ill and you haven't finished it yet. You go to talk to your professor, with whom you have a good academic relationship to ask for an extension. You say to him/her:

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2. You belong to a non-profit organisation and you have decided to invite a famous person to give a speech. Members of your group have appointed you so that you speak to this person and ask him/her to give a speech about ecological disasters. You approach the person and you say:

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3. The meeting has just ended. Your bus has just left and the next one will not be along for another hour. The couple sitting next to you live on the same street and have come by car. You would like a ride with them and you say:

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Appendices

4. You were sick last week and missed two class sessions. Since the exam is coming up soon, you would like to ask Judith, a friend of yours, to borrow her class notes. You say to her:

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5. Ruth, a friend of yours at the university, comes up to you after class and tells you that she has finally found an apartment, but that she must pay \$300.00 down payment immediately. At present she only has \$200.00. She turns to you and says:

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Adapted from Daskalovska et al. (2013)