

The importance of the speech act of request in the Iraqi EFL classroom

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Abstract

This study described the need for speech act of request in EFL environments, the speech act of request in EFL learning and teaching, and learners' pragmatic competence in chosen speech act of request. The research tended to present a public curriculum lead that prioritizes the necessity for English EFL learners to develop their ability to use speech act of request successfully in academic or social communications. Additionally, Many English instructors fail to focus on teaching speech act of request in EFL classroom that is because they concentrate on language rule while they neglected teaching speech act of request. There is growing material of researches on value of teaching of speech act of request on developing EFL learners' communicative language, and enhanced their awareness in pragmatic aspects. However, the researchers have pointed to concentrate on how English students require teaching speech act of request to develop their production of request in the EFL schoolroom. The new methods of teaching speech act of request to these Iraqi EFL learners have been discussed in details of the current paper.

Keywords: speech act of request, speech act of request in EFL learning and teaching, and EFL learners

Introduction

With growth of technology and development of sciences, there has been a worldwide increasing demand for effective communication in the English language. Being multilingual is becoming a strategic investment that learners from all walks of life have been expending their time, their effort and their riches to realise. To achieve effective communication with people of other nationalities, cultures and linguistic backgrounds is a remarkable feat. It includes obtaining a foreign language, comprehending and being understood communication among the people. Adopting a teaching speech act of request to achieve this undertaking has placed more stress on accomplishing the practical component of the L2 along with its linguistic component. Numerous researches (Cohen, 1996; Kasper and Roever, 2005; Rose, 2005; Deda, 2013; Bataineh and Hussein, 2015) ^[13, 22, 28, 15, 11] indicate that language learners do not only have to develop their language rules or structure, but also their speech act of request which denotes to the function and the use of the language. Language is a complex system that is utilized fundamentally for social and cultural communication or a type of message that is used necessarily for culture or academic communication. As well as, Whong (2011:1) ^[34] defines language as two complementary terms: 'language as form' and 'language as function'. The first is concerned with the structures of the language and the second is interested in what the language does, to develop communication among people. Due to the intricacy of the processes included, acquiring L2 by adult learners is regarded a daunting venture. Thus, a greater understanding of speech act of request and their attributed features will absolutely be supportive to effective L2 learning.

More importantly, it was found that EFL students in a university or institution in Iraq, they seem to sometimes lack teaching speech act of request when trying to communicate in English language, which is their foreign language. As a

result, Iraqi students seem less speech act of request when communicating in the English language; more specially when performing face-threatening acts (FTA) such as requesting that is because they don't know how speech act of request may affect the development of their communication. Referring to study by Cohen (1996) ^[13] stated that language learners can have all of the linguistic context and lexical items and still not be able to communicate their message because they lack the necessary of teaching speech act of request to communicate their intent. Although some Iraqi students seem pragmatically competent when speaking in the Arabic language, this competence is not necessarily reflected in their foreign language. Consequently, they need to learn speech act of request through using teaching pragmatic, and teaching speech act permit them to produce the request suitably, and they also become more realistically and culturally aware of their own utterances.

The Necessity for teaching speech act of request in EFL Environments

Kasper (1997a) indicates raising learners' usage of speech act of request has become one of the major goals in the EFL schoolroom, and various researches have been focused on the speech act of request and its essential role on rising EFL students' pragmatic ability (Kasper & Rose, 2001; Rose, 2005; Rueda, 2006; Alcón-Soler and Martínez-Flor 2008; Bataineh and Hussein, 2015; Barron, 2016) ^[21, 28, 29, 11, 10]. Furthermore, Bardovi-Harlig (2016) ^[9] also claims a necessity for speech act of request in the achievement of pragmatic awareness in FEL situations. The absence of adequate opportunities for exposure to speech act of request in the Foreign Language location cannot make the students' demonstration of the functional abilities in EFL schoolroom, where students do not interact with native speakers of the target culture with very few opportunities to practice and

thus they become less sensitive and less communicative while more importance on language rules (Hassall 2008; Niezgodna & Roever, 2001; Bataineh and Hussein, 2015) ^[25, 11]. In other words, the most EFL contexts tend to be less conducive to developing pragmatic knowledge, with reduced TL input where trainers and learners share the same first language as well as the same social background in process of speech act learning, with a limited range of cultural communications among countries, and less complex conversion organizations, and fewer politeness levels in general curriculum. This is a specific problem for Iraqi environment. Therefore, the lack of adequate teaching speech act of request to Iraq EFL learners, particularly in the case of renowned academic institution can cause major problems in process of teaching English. A case in point is one of the notable private higher education in Iraq, where the language learning contexts include a lack of teaching speech act of request, and the teaching of language don't provide cultural or authentic request of the language for EFL learners.

Furthermore, there have been encouraging studies that speech act of request results in "acquisitional gains" in diverse fields (Bardovi-Harlig & Griffin, 2005; Bardovi-Harlig, 2013, 2016; Bataineh and Hussein, 2015; Barron, 2016) ^[7, 10, 9, 11, 10]. This study highlights the necessity for teaching of speech act of request in EFL environments particularly in Iraq, such as in expressing speech act of requests in different conversations. Alcón-Soler (2005) indicates that it is important to teach speech act of request in order to develop EFL learners' pragmatic awareness, and in order to help them to increase social and cultural conversions in contextual sentences. It is important to equip students with linguistic tools that would enable them to realise, and understand and in a contextually suitable manner. According to Rueda (2006) ^[29] states in her study that the significance of teaching speech act of request may be to furnish the EFL learners with high understanding of the socio-cultural expressions of the target language, as well as securing them the opportunity to decide whether they would like to converge with the NSs' norms. As well as, Achiba (2003) ^[2] asserts the scarcity of researches on the growth of teaching speech act of request on increasing EFL learners' ability. Thus, further study is required to discover how to provide these Iraqi EFL learners with enough opportunities to benefit from teaching speech act of request. Despite of the increasing interest in teaching speech act of request in different forms of studies, little in-depth study has been conducted on the teaching of speech act of request on Iraqi EFL learners, where most of foreign language teaching lacks adequate teaching speech act of request in classroom. This study attempts to address this main problem by discovering the main role of teaching speech act of request in language learning classroom particularly in Iraq as an EFL environment and how teaching speech act of request may affect the development of Iraqi students' pragmatic awareness in various dialogues, as well as discovering the students' attitudes towards understanding of appropriate request, when English learners acquire pragmatic competence. A lot of the available English language curriculum in Iraq assume that language students know when and how it is suitable to utilize a particular language rule and at the same time they do not able to produce suitable requests for EFL contexts. Consequently, there is need for EFL teachers incorporate teaching of speech act of

request into their English language instruction that is because that teaching speech act of request facilitates the learning of pragmatic aspects in EFL environments. In specific, language use in some materials does not seem to present a good source of speaker-hearer communications (Rueda, 2006; Bataineh and Hussein, 2015; Barron, 2016) ^[29, 11, 10]. To clarify, Vellenga (2004) ^[33] stresses the lack of teaching speech act of request in EFL syllabus terms of amount and quality, after inspecting ninety ELT textbooks for social and cultural attitude, speech function, and level of politeness, speech acts, and expressions. Mohammed (2012) ^[24] [believes that foreign language teaching/learning curriculum are deficit in speech act of request. Barron (2016: 2172) ^[10] states that the majority of curriculum consider "employed teaching speech act of request and cognitively simple forms of modification"; yet, "many strategies of speech act of requests are not dealt with and that modification is only touched on." Therefore, there is no evidence that classroom trainers combine teaching speech act of request into their English language teaching. As well as to the lack of opportunities for displaying teaching speech act of request in the EFL environments, in addition to the lack of opportunities to practice the different forms of request made achieving the functional abilities of the language even more complicated in teaching English language. Accordingly, the necessity for teaching speech act of request is more critical for foreign learners who are not exposed to adequate speech act from native speaker and hence are not provided the opportunity to acquire request (Achiba, 2003; Edwards & Csizer, 2004; Bataineh and Hussein, 2015) ^[2, 16, 11].

Moreover, Kasper (1997) ^[20] maintains that without some processes of teaching speech act of request, many aspects of pragmatic do not develop suitably. She points out that some pragmatic aspects could be acquired without teaching speech act of request if learners' L1 form-function is similar to that of L2. Unfortunately, learners do not know what they possess, so they do not make use of it. Therefore, it is necessary to make Iraqi EFL learners aware of what they already know in L1 and encourage them to use it in L2 through using teaching of speech act of request. Referring to the review above, it can be concluded that English instructor can be a key factor to help Iraqi EFL learners obtain speech act of request. However, an instructor who gives teaching speech act of request to Iraqi EFL students must be equipped with a good command of pragmatic knowledge. Therefore, the current paper highlights the main role of teaching of speech act of request and it's a positive influence on learners' pragmatic awareness, it is to discover the teaching of speech act of request in Iraqi College English learning.

The Speech Act of Request in EFL Learning and Teaching

Before of all, the researcher tend to explain pragmatics then clarified the main role of speech act of request in EFL teaching and learning. Pragmatics is advanced as a recognizable part of linguistics mainly in the late of 20th century, it seemed as a field of study in the 1970s and it advanced well recognized in the 1980s. Pragmatics is a development of language study, which is precisely focused on the speakers' meaning in the context (O'Keefe *et al.*, 2011). Pragmatics is defined by numerous linguists, educationalists and scholars from a variety of viewpoints

(Schauer, 2009; Yule, 1996; Grundy, 1995) ^[31, 35, 18].

Additionally, Chapman (2011:11) maintains pragmatics investigates “performance and understanding of language use in relation to contexts.” Also, a study by Thomas (2006: 92) indicates that pragmatics as the study of ‘meaning in use’, which is focused on how language is actually utilized by native speaker to produce several functions in social and cultural communication. These contain aspects that play a vital role in production of utterance: how level of politeness is conveyed, how speech acts are realized in different contexts, the effect of the syntactic structure of an utterance on its degree of directness, and “utterance interpretation” of the intent. Moreover, a research by Crystal (1997: 301) ^[14] states that pragmatics is “the study of communicative action in its sociocultural context” suggesting that 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 and cultural communication and the effects their utilize of language has on other contributors in the act of communication.” He also highlights that pragmatics contains those “factors that govern our choice of language in social and cultural communication and the effects of our choice on others” (1997: 120). According to Bataineh and Hussein (2015) ^[11] pragmatic doesn’t focus on grammatical knowledge, but it focuses on the meaning of learners’ language use in the acts of communication, Moreover, it focuses on helping learner to create meaning rather than improve perfectly grammatical structure. Pragmatic have several aspects, speech act of request is one of pragmatic aspects that is used in EFL learning and teaching.

Earlier researches (Vellenga, 2004; Alcón-Soler, 2005; Rueda, 2006; Bataineh and Hussein, 2015) ^[33, 29, 11] on speech act of request in EFL learning and teaching has stated that it is necessary to help language learners to increase speech act of request so as to acquire pragmatic competence in different dialogues. Findings of the preceding studies provide rich evidence to support the need for EFL learners to develop speech act of request in daily life, yet further researches need to be conducted in different contexts, with various samples to gain a deeper understanding of how learners can cultivate such acts effectively in their classroom. It is also worth discovering role of speech act of request for learning pragmatic aspects as study has discovered that strategy-based teaching has been effective for EFL learners to improve four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

More essentially, procedures of motivation and supportive attitudes towards teaching and learning in speech act of requests were reported by Kim (2016) ^[23]. In her study, she shows that the learners are motivated and that they voiced their necessity for teaching speech act of request to facilitate their social communications in L2, and increase their awareness of pragmatic. She purports that they embraced encouraging perception that speech act of request fostered their communication skills and improved their understanding of making a suitable conversions, enhanced their awareness on social-culture differences, as well as instilling confidence in their English communications. She carried out an investigation into the learners’ perception toward the speech act of request through using pragmatic instruction. Therefore, the results revealed that teaching of speech act of request is necessarily crucial and supportive for Iraqi EFL learners to communicate more effectively.

More significantly, speech act of request learning assisted EFL learners to use second language or foreign language successfully and helped them to engage in effective communication (Salehi, 2013) ^[30]. According to (Grace, 2010; Abdul Sattar & Farnia, 2014; Bataineh and Hussein, 2015) ^[17, 1, 11] have indicated that the acquisition of adequate teaching speech act of request is significant for foreign language use because extensive speech act of request help EFL learners to use the language and functions for effective and understandable communication. By the same token, speech act of request is an important act in teaching and learning any language and it is significant aspect in the development of English language (Nivis, 2013; Alinezhad, 2015; Bataineh and Hussein, 2015) ^[26, 5, 11], they stated that speech act of request learning is regarded as the most important aspect in academic achievement for foreign or second language students. Moreover, teaching speech act of request has a vital role inside EFL classroom, it can be effective in rising learners’ communication skills, and enhance social-culture expressions (Cohen, 2010; Bataineh and Hussein, 2015) ^[11]. In other study by Kasper and Rose (2001) ^[21, 25] showed that teaching of speech act of request includes different forms of request, request strategies politeness marks, expressions of request, information, hedges, and conversational structure. These aspects improve language students' awareness of language use inside the classroom environment. Therefore, the teaching speech act of request plays important role in increasing Iraqi EFL students' awareness of communicative language and it can be used by the instructor to convey the main aspects of English language.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed the main role of teaching speech act of request as a new method in a new field of Iraqi EFL, as well as its explanations and features. It has demonstrated researches on teaching speech act of request in EFL learning as well as its effect on Iraqi EFL students’ communicative language. Different studies show a consensus that teaching speech act of request can be taught strategies in EFL learning and teaching helps language Iraqi EFL students in their progress of pragmatic aspects, and enhance social-culture expressions. Furthermore, it has been indicated that learners’ different language speech act of requests may have served them achieve fruitful language learning findings. However, this summary also find out that more investigation needs to be conducted in diverse situations to identify elements that may affect the way learners go about teaching speech act of request. Finally, the researcher tends to put a new method such as teaching speech act of request and resolve the problem of Iraqi EFL students’ communication in EFL classroom.

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