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An Investigation on the Pragmatic Competence of Libyan EFL

Students at Misurata University

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DEDICATION

*To my beloved father and dear mother,
who have offered me all possible support throughout my life.*

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ABSTRACT

Although the knowledge of linguistic forms and functions is an essential component in language learning process, it is also important for language learners to know when and how to use these forms appropriately in the target language interaction; learners of a foreign language have to possess *pragmatic competence*. The current study aims to investigate the Libyan EFL (English as a foreign language) students' pragmatic ability to use English in social situations. Three components of pragmatics namely speech acts, implicatures and pragmatic routines were investigated within this study to evaluate the students' level of pragmatic competence as well as to investigate if there is any cultural impact on their ability to use language appropriately. Three research instruments were employed to collect data: a multiple-choice completion task (MDCT), a written discourse completion task (WDCT), and an oral discourse completion task (ODCT). Forty English major students in their final year in English department at faculty of Arts participated in the study. The results revealed that these EFL students' ability to recognize and produce contextually appropriate language was somehow low and needed to be developed; they had some difficulties in using appropriate linguistic forms and strategies to achieve communicative intentions. The research findings also provide evidence of the effect of Libyan culture on EFL learners' pragmatic ability. Some teaching implications were presented in the conclusion to develop and to raise EFL students' awareness and understanding of pragmatic features.

List of abbreviations

DCT	Discourse Completion Task
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
FL	Foreign Language
ILP	Interlanguage Pragmatics
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MCDCT	Multiple-Choice Discourse completion task
NNS	Non-Native Speaker
NS	Native Speaker
ODCT	Oral Discourse Completion Task
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TL	Target Language
WDCT	Written Discourse Completion Task

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the topic by giving some definitions of pragmatics and pragmatic competence and highlights the research problem, the aims and the significance of the study. It also states the research questions and gives brief information about the context of the current study.

English as a Lingua Franca has recently come out as a means of communication between speakers who have different linguistic backgrounds; which in turn has led English teaching and learning to become ever more important in non-English speaking countries including Libya.

Learners of a foreign language are usually taught how the language works in terms of its different forms and functions, learners mainly try to learn and memorize the vocabularies and the grammar rules of the target language (hereinafter TL). Dornyei & Thurell (1991) report that traditional language teaching classrooms aimed at developing grammatical competence above all. The result of this is that after acquiring vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation for a long period of time, language learners are still unable to use what they have learnt appropriately and effectively in social interactions (Cohen 1996). Learners may have mastered the structures of the language but cannot express their intention and emotion appropriately as they desire. Therefore, a considerable amount of

attention has been recently given to the field of pragmatics which concentrates on the use of language in social interaction (Thomas 1995).

Pragmatics mainly deals with what is beyond the literal meanings of utterances. In other words, it is concerned with what is actually meant with an utterance based on the norms and conventions of a particular society, or context, in which conversation takes place. Therefore, having a good command of the target language's conventions enables the learner to establish and maintain appropriate communication as well as understanding others clearly (Yule, 1996). Many researchers (e.g., Brown 1987; Krasner 1999; Kramsch and Thorne 2002) have reported that mastery of formal properties of a language does not guarantee the appropriate use of it. Language learners should possess the ability to use language appropriately in a social context; this ability is called *pragmatic competence* (Taguchi, 2009).

Pragmatic competence in EFL/ESL contexts is studied within the field of interlanguage pragmatics (hereinafter ILP). Research within ILP has mostly concentrated on learners' use of pragmatic aspects such as speech acts, implicature, politeness strategies, pragmatic routines and conversation structures as well as compared non-native speakers with native speakers in terms of their pragmatic ability (Kasper & Rose 2002).

Libyan EFL students' pragmatic competence has not gained much interest amongst ILP researchers. And since the ability to use a foreign language appropriately is recognized as one of the important goals of language learning "... different curricula have noticed that language learners have to be able to use the conventions of the target language successfully

in order to participate in a conversation” (Viljamaa , 2012, p. 5), I consider it important to investigate the level of Libyan EFL students’ pragmatic competence to find out whether their ability to use socially appropriate language corresponds to the goals of language learning.

1.1 The Research Problem

In an EFL environment such as in Libya, it is not easy for learners to surround themselves with large amounts of the input of the target language. As a result, this may affect EFL learners’ pragmatic ability which includes performing various speech acts efficiently, understanding the intention of the speakers, using the appropriate language in appropriate situations and following the TL rules of conversations. These skills and rules may vary across cultures and within cultures, so EFL learners may come across some pragmatic difficulties when using the TL in social situations. Native speakers often interpret the violation of such socio-cultural rules as "bad manners" rather than a lack of pragmatic knowledge (Tanaka 1997, p. 16).

As Orafi & Borg (2009) and Abukhattala (2016) state, curriculum in Libyan schools and universities is mostly exam-oriented that the emphasis has always been on grammar, memorizing vocabularies and pronunciation as well as encouraging students to learn the language but not how to use socially appropriate language in situations that they may encounter with. Both Libyan teachers and students often pay most of their attention to developing language accuracy in exams at the expense of the communicative value of language learning. As a teacher of English for over 12 years, I have realized that most of

the students were not culturally competent and their deficiency was obvious in using and understanding some pragmatic features such as speech acts, implicatures, and pragmatic routines. They mostly transferred their first language norms of speaking into L2.

Some researchers (e.g., Kasper and Rose, 2002) believe that foreign language classrooms (such as the case in Libya) have difficulties in providing authentic material because of that English is a foreign language and as such learners have no exposure to English. Also limited hours of practice and limited intercultural communication in the classroom may hinder learners' pragmatic ability. In fact, committing some pragmatic errors by language learners might result in unfavourable outcomes; these errors may hinder good communication between interlocutors or show speakers being impolite or uncaring.

1.2 The Research Objectives

The objective of the current study is to investigate the level of the Libyan EFL students' pragmatic competence. In particular, it aims to examine the comprehension and the production of three aspects of pragmatics; namely implicature (implied meaning), pragmatic routines and speech acts. In other words, it aims to examine the students' ability to understand the implied meanings in social situations, their ability to use appropriate pragmatic routines in situations and their ability to use different speech acts appropriately and effectively in social contexts.

This study also aims to investigate whether there is any impact of the Arabic culture on the production and the comprehension of these three pragmatic aspects.

1.3 The Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of pragmatic competence of Libyan EFL students in Misurata University?
2. Does cultural background have any significant impact on their pragmatic ability?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study will be a significant endeavour to fill the gap of research on teaching and learning English by providing valuable data regarding the Libyan EFL learners' level of pragmatics competence. Also, it hopes to help curriculum developers, education policy makers, and textbooks writers to better meet the needs of EFL students to use the target language appropriately in the socio-cultural settings. Moreover the research will provide implications and recommendations on how pragmatics can be developed effectively in an EFL environment.

1.5 Context of the Study

Libya is an Arabic speaking country where English is a foreign language; this is to say English is not used outside the classrooms at all. Misurata University, where the current study is conducted, is located in Misurata which is the third biggest city in Libya.

English is a compulsory subject in the Libyan education curricula. It is taught from the fifth primary grade (at the age of ten) till the third year of a secondary school. English is also studied intensively by students who are enrolled in the English department at Libyan universities, including Misurata University. English major students at university study linguistics, literature, applied linguistics and language pedagogy, general Knowledge courses and Educational courses. Abukhattala (2016) declares that the students' level of English language proficiency is hypothetically around intermediate level when they come to the university, and they are supposed to arrive at a near-native level of competence by their last semester..

Libyan teachers tend to focus on the development of students' linguistic competence, ignoring other aspects, including pragmatic competence. And this may lead Libyan EFL students, even after studying English for several years, failing to use language appropriately in social interactions, despite the fact that they possess a good mastery of grammatical rules and vocabulary.

1.6 The Organization of the Study

This dissertation consists of seven chapters:

Chapter one introduces the topic, highlights the problem of the research, the aims and the significance of the study. It states the research questions and gives brief information about the context of the current study.

Chapter two reviews the literature of relevant issues and definitions regarding pragmatics in general and pragmatic competence in particular, and discusses the three aspects of pragmatics which were examined in the current study. It also discusses the culture and its relation to pragmatics, as well as the pragmatic failure in EFL context.. Besides, it gives a review of empirical studies on EFL learners' pragmatic competence and studies on speech acts, implicature, and pragmatic routines.

Chapter three describes the study design, and the instruments used in the current study: written discourse completion task (WDCT), multiple-choice discourse completion task (MDCT) and oral discourse completion task (ODCT). A detailed description of the procedure of data collection and data analysis are also presented.

Chapter four reports the findings of both collected quantitative and qualitative data. The data are presented in the form of tables and texts.

Chapter five analyses the findings to answer the research questions. Specifically, it identifies the students' level of pragmatic competence and find out if there is any impact due to the cultural background of the students.

Chapter six presents the conclusion, the pedagogical implications, limitation of the study, and provides some suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

There has been a growing focus on the topic of pragmatics and the pragmatic competence among language teachers and researchers in the past several years. Pragmatic competence has gained great interest by many scholars (e.g., Levinson 1983; Mey 1993; Trosborg 2010; Yule, 1996). This chapter is divided into two main sections namely theoretical back ground and empirical studies on pragmatics . theoretical background section provides a critical overview and theories of relevant issues regarding pragmatics in general and pragmatic competence in particular, as well as some key concepts such as cultural variation and its relation to language use and pragmatic failures. The second section gives a review of empirical studies on EFL learners' pragmatic competence.

2.1 Theoretical Background

In the 1970s, pragmatics has been developed as an important field of research and became a significance issue in linguistic thinking. Scholars define pragmatics variously based on wider or narrower dimensions. For instance, Levinson (1983), who is considered as one of the pioneers in this field, reports that the field of pragmatics concentrates on how language users can match the utterances with their underlined meaning in a context.

Further, he maintains that “pragmatics is the study of ability of language users to pair sentences in the contexts in which they would be appropriate” (P. 24). This suggests that the study of pragmatics looks into the meaning of language use to identify and distinguish two intents or meanings in each utterance (or act of verbal communication). One is the informative intent (i.e. the sentence meaning), and the other is the speaker intended meaning (Leech, 1983). For example, the utterance “*I am hungry,*” means that the speaker feels pangs of hunger as well as he/she intends to request something to eat. According to this vision, pragmatics studies the context in which an interaction occurs and the intention of speakers, in addition to the relationship between interlocutors. Equally significant is when and where the speech event takes place. To illustrate, the same utterance “*I am hungry*” can convey a different speech act when it is produced by a beggar in a street, it would be generally perceived by a passerby as a request for money rather than for food. (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000).

Another definition of pragmatics has been offered by Crystal (1985). According to him “the study of language from the point of view of users, particularly of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effect their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication” (p. 240). Noticeably, Crystal’s view of pragmatics is restricted to the speaker who produces the utterance, ignoring other important aspects of interaction such as the context. Thus, Yule (1996) provides a more conclusive definition, as he states that pragmatics is “the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker or writer and interpreted by a listener or reader” (p.3). Yule goes on to explain that utterances do not always express the explicit meaning. A

speaker, who is delivering his/her message to the hearer, has some intended meanings. These intended meanings sometimes are not uttered directly, but implicitly for a particular purpose. As such, according to Yule (1996), pragmatics focuses on what is not explicitly stated in the utterances and how people interpret those utterances based on situational contexts. In view of this explanation, pragmatics includes four elements:

First, what people mean by their utterances and what the words in those utterances might mean literally. Second, how speakers sort out what they need to say in accordance with the status of whom they are conversing with, and under what circumstances. This aspect leads to defining pragmatics as the study of contextual meaning. Third, how listeners make inferences about what is said in order to interpret correctly the speaker's intended meaning. Fourth, the social distance between the listener and the speaker determines how much needs to be said (Yule, 1996).

Communication among native speakers who share the same culture and language is full of indirect expressions. Second or foreign Language learners have to understand what the words conveyed rather than the literal meanings of those words. Thus pragmatic knowledge enables language users to understand each other in different settings when the meaning is not clearly stated. The following example (cited from Yuan, 2012) shows how pragmatic competence is essential to keep the flow of conversation.

A: How is Tom going at school?

B: Ah well...you know what they say... Boys will be boys

A: yeah but girls aren't easier... you know what Jess did the other day?

Speaker B in this conversation does not answer directly how Tom does at school; however the speaker A understands what is meant. EFL learners may find it difficult to understand the intended meaning of the sentence “Boys will be boys” since the meaning is not clearly conveyed. The ability to understand another speaker's intended meaning is called pragmatic competence (Kasper, 1997).

Pragmatic competence is a very important component for learners to achieve their goals in communication. According to Hymes (1967), as cited by Zayed, (2014), communicative competence includes not only the knowledge of linguistic components of the language (linguistic competence), but also the knowledge of how, when and where this knowledge is used (pragmatic competence). Canale (1988) reports that pragmatic competence includes “illocutionary competence, which is the knowledge of the pragmatic conventions for performing acceptable language functions, and sociolinguistic competence, which is knowledge of the sociolinguistic conventions for performing language functions appropriately in a given context” (p, 90).

These two constituents (illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence) were adopted again by Bachman’s (1990) in the model of language competence, Bachman considered pragmatic competence as the ability to use the language to express a wide range of functions, and interpret their illocutionary force in discourse according to the socio-cultural context in which they are uttered.

More recently, Rose (1999) proposes a working definition of *pragmatic competence*, which is extensively accepted by researchers in the field of pragmatics. She defines the concept as the ability to use available linguistic resources in a contextually appropriate way. Whereas Barron (2003) defines pragmatic competence as the “knowledge

of the linguistic resources available in a given language for realizing particular illocutions, knowledge of the sequential aspects of speech acts and finally, knowledge of the appropriate contextual use of the particular languages' linguistic resources" (p. 10).

From the above definitions, it can be noted that pragmatic competence has been defined from two perspectives: "knowledge" and "ability". Despite the "ability" or "knowledge" argument, researchers agree that being pragmatically competent involves two basic components: *pragmalinguistic competence* and *sociopragmatic competence*, while the former refers to the resources that learners use to perform communicative acts and express intended meanings, including selection of pragmatic strategies such as directness and indirectness, routines and a large range of linguistic forms which can intensify or soften communicative acts, the latter focuses on the social perceptions underlying learners' interpretation and performance of communicative action (Kasper & Rose, 2001).

2.1.1 Aspects of Pragmatics

Pragmatics is the subfield of linguistics that studies how language is used in social interaction. According to Livenson (1983), the study of pragmatics includes at least five main areas; speech acts, implicature, deixis, presupposition and conversational structure. One emphasis of research in pragmatics is on language learners' ability to use these pragmatic features (i.e. pragmatic competence). This interest has eventually been developed into interlanguage pragmatics (ILP), a branch of pragmatics, which is specifically devoted to how non-native speakers comprehend and produce pragmatic aspects in a target language (Kasper, 1997).

In the field of ILP research, a number of theories and concepts have formed a framework for empirical investigations of learners' pragmatic competence. The theoretical framework of this study draws on the analysis of the speech act theory, cooperative principles theory and pragmatic routines to investigate the pragmatic competence of EFL Libyan learners

2.1.1.1 Speech Act Theory

The notion of speech act has been introduced by Austin, the Oxford philosopher, in his seminal book *How to Do Things with Words* (1962). His views are regarded as an important contribution to the field of pragmatics.

Austin believes that people do not use language to only state something but also to perform a kind of action. He starts his discussion by introducing several sentences to make a comparison between what he calls *constative* utterances and *performative* utterances. His theory suggests that performatives are sentences that represent an action; the interlocutor uses certain words in a certain context to perform certain action. The action, which is performed when a 'performative utterance' is issued, belongs to what he terms speech acts such as requesting, promising and refusing or apologizing, whereas utterances that do not denote performing certain action, are called constative utterances. They are mainly used in descriptions and assertions. He further discusses how constatives might be performatives as well. For example the constative sentence "*the window is closed*" might be a directive to perform certain action, as the interlocutor wants the window to be opened; in this case, the constative utterance is regarded as implicit performative. From this example and many other similar ones, Austin finds out that the distinction between constatives and

performatives utterances is not clear-cut and might be overlapped. This leads him to shift to another classification in order to understand the various acts that sentences may perform; Austin proposed three classifications of acts:

- a) Locutionary act: the act of using words to form sentences (what is said).
- b) Illocutionary act: the intended action by the speaker, or the intention behind the words (what is meant).
- C) Perlocutionary act: the effects that an utterance has on thoughts, feelings and attitudes, or actions of the hearer.

To illustrate, the locutionary act of the utterance, "*it is cold*" is that a speaker complains or states something about the temperature. At the same time, it has an illocutionary act with a force of a request or an offer for closing doors. It also becomes a perlocutionary act when the listener is persuaded to go and close the door.

Later on Austin's ideas have been developed by the American philosopher, Searle (1969, 1975). Searle claims that Austin's classification is based on taxonomy of performative verbs and so the overlap between categories and within a category is unavoidable. He argues that speech acts' classification needs to be based on illocutionary acts, but not on performative verbs, and on a system of criteria which is suitable to speech acts. From this point of view, Searle (1975) proposes five basic categories of illocutionary acts:

1. Representatives (assertive): speech acts that state what the speaker believes to be the case or not; e.g., *it was a warm day*.
2. Declaratives: speech acts that result immediate changes in a particular state; e.g., *I now pronounce you husband and wife*.

3. Expressive: speech acts that state the speaker psychological attitude such as thanking and apologizing; e.g., *I am really sorry*.

4. Commissives: speech acts that compel the speaker with future deeds like promising and refusing; e.g., *I will be back*.

5. Directives: speech acts that are used to make the hearer do something. Such as requesting e.g., *Don't touch that*.

(Yule 1996, p. 53)

In everyday conversations, the relationship between the actual words spoken and their underlying purpose (the speaker's intentions) is not always straightforward. This had led Searle (1975) to distinguish between what he calls *direct and indirect speech acts*. According to Yule (1996), direct speech acts have direct relationship between the structure (form) and the function of an utterance, that is the locution act and the illocution act coincide each other, e.g., *wash the dishes*. Whereas indirect speech acts have indirect relationship between the form and the function of the utterance, in other words the structure and the function are not matched, e.g., *can you wash the dishes?*

In fact, the use of direct and indirect speech acts are claimed to be universal (Kasper and Schmidt, 1996). However Barron (2003) declares that the issue of universality has been considered controversial in that it doesn't account for cultural differences. Languages have similar sets of speech acts but the realisations and contexts of these acts differ from one culture to another. Interlocutors have the choice to use the forms they want in the interaction, but these choices are based on some social conventions. In order to use different aspects of pragmatics such as speech acts appropriately in the target language, L2

learners need to possess knowledge of these different social conventions and develop their pragmatic ability to use these conventions properly in interactions.

2.1.1.2 The Cooperative Principle Theory and Implicature

Another influential contribution to the development of pragmatics as an independent discipline has been made by the philosopher Grice (1975). His theory together with those of Austin's and Searle's, as have been discussed earlier, inspired greatly the research conducted in pragmatics (Davies, 2007).

Grice (1975) introduced the cooperative principle to distinguish between sentence-meaning and speaker meaning. To illustrate, he explained the difference between “what is said” and “what is meant” in the conversations and the social interactions, for example,

A: Are you coming to the party tonight?

B: My parents are coming for a visit.

A competent speaker of English would have little trouble understanding the inferring meaning in B's reply (that B could not attend the party). To give a logical explanation for the process of inferring meanings, Grice (1975) formulates the cooperative principle theory. According to this theory both interlocutors and hearers should speak cooperatively and mutually accept each other to get meanings across and be understood. This is to say that participants in the conversation are cooperating with each other. As Yule (1996) states, Grice's principles, together with the four maxims that participants are expected to obey, is the basis of successful interaction; these maxims are proposed by Grice

as basic assumptions or guidelines that speakers follow in a conversation in order to make it as cooperative as possible:

1. The maxim of Quality: to say only what one believes to be true.
2. The maxim of Quantity: to provide as much information as the listener needs, neither less nor more.
3. The maxim of Relevance: make your words relevant to the discourse and the context in which these words occur.
4. The maxim of Manner: be clear and orderly in your talk to avoid ambiguity.

Based on Grice's principle and these four maxims, participants of a conversation are assumed to cooperate with each other to be understood by providing an appropriate amount of information that is true and relevant to the context, and also being as clear as possible. For instance:

A: Where are my car keys?

B: They're on the table in the dining room.

In the above example, B has answered clearly (Manner), truthfully (Quality), has given just the exact amount of information (Quantity) and has directly answer A's question (Relation). Thus, B cooperates, obeys the four maxims and says exactly what he/she meant.

However, when one or more of these maxims are violated by the speaker, the listener attempts to understand what the speaker intends to convey beyond the literal meaning of the words. For example, the sentence "He is a tiger" violates the maxim of quality, since the word *tiger* is not for human. But the hearer assumes that the speaker is being cooperative and then infers that he/she is trying to say something different from the literal meaning. He can then figure out that the speaker probably meant to say, "He is

aggressive, just like a tiger”. This additional conveyed meaning is what Grice called *implicature*.

Grice (1975) defines implicature as “the conveyed meaning of the speaker” (p. 43). He proposes two different types of implicature; *conversational implicature* and *conventional implicature*. According to him, conventional implicatures do not depend on social contexts for their interpretation, they are associated with specific words (*e.g. but, even and yet*) that result in extra meanings when those words are used. For example, *Sami even helped the little boy to cross the road*. This sentence implies that Sami was not expected to help the boy but he did. The conventional interpretation of the word "even" creates this implied meaning.

Whereas conversational implicature is a kind of extra meaning which depends highly on contextual factors and it is not literally conveyed in the utterance. Levinson (1983, p. 102) gives the following example:

A: *Where's Bill?*

B: *There's a yellow VW outside Sue's house.*

In this example, B's reply is irrelevant to A's question and violates the conversation maxims. However, interlocutor A understands B's implied meaning based on the social context and on their shared contextual knowledge that Bill owns a yellow VW and might be at Sue's house.

Conversational implicatures have different types such as Idiosyncratic Implicature Typology and Formulaic Implicature Typology and some of these types may be particularly difficult or easy for EFL students to understand (Bouton 1994)

Levinson (1983) believes that “the notion of implicature is one of the single most important ideas in pragmatics.” (p.97). Implicature is the key to explain why speakers are able to interpret conventionally indirect utterances (Sabater, 2011). For many applied linguists (e.g., Leech, 1983; Levinson 1983; Yule, 1996), the concept of implicature is acknowledged as an essential part of pragmatic knowledge that EFL learners should possess to be able to use the conventions of the target language successfully and to participate in a conversation.

2.1.1.3 Pragmatic Routines

Pragmatic routines, also known as situational routines, are considered as an important part of pragmatic knowledge (Roever, 2005). Pragmatic Routines are conventional expressions that are used in specific situations such as leave-takings, greeting expressions and question-answer pairings (Roever, 2005). Routine formulae constitute a substantial part of adult native speaker’s pragmatic competence, and language learners need to acquire a sizable repertoire of routines in order to cope efficiently with recurrent and expanding social situations and discourse requirements (Coulmas, 1981). For example, “*thanks for having me*” is a typical pragmatic routine said to the inviter by someone who is leaving a party, “*What brings you here?*” is often said by a medical doctor to the patient when starting a medical interview, and many others such as “*here you go*” and “*sorry for being late*”. Such routines are part of normal interaction and thus, knowledge of the TL’s routine formulae is vital to EFL learners as Bardovi-Harlic (2012) states.

Pragmatic routines are universal phenomena, for example, greeting exists in almost all cultures. However, because cultures differ, there are variations in the use of the routines which are difficult for learners to understand and sometimes cause misunderstanding, Barron (2001) states that "... in some cultures pragmatic routines may be required in situations where in another culture they may not." (p,167)

The ability to master and use pragmatic routines of a TL is beneficial for EFL learners, as they provide speech with a proficient and natural flavor. Some of pragmatic routines, such as "*what does it mean*" and many others, also help learners to solve some regular communication problems when they need time to arrange their thoughts and to prepare the next conversational moves (Coulmas, 1981).

To sum up, these aspects of pragmatics (i.e., speech acts, implicature and routines) discussed above, present what pragmatics entails as a subfield of linguistics. The knowledge of these features is essential in normal interaction. The ability to take part in a conversation involves the ability to use and understand these different aspects of pragmatics. Thus, *pragmatic competence* includes the knowledge of all of these aspects. The learning of some pragmatic features of a new language is often challenging for EFL learners since conventions differ greatly between cultures.

2.1.2 Pragmatics and Culture

Many anthropological linguists and scholars (e.g., Brown, 1987; Geertz, 1973), state that culture and language are inseparable from each other. This implies that a language is a part of a culture; and it cannot be learnt without referring to its culture.

As has been discussed earlier, some pragmatic aspects such as speech acts, routines and implicature, are claimed to be universal in that they exist in almost all cultures (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). However, as cultures use different languages which underlying different ethnicities and values, their pragmatic system is likely to be different from each other.

Trosborg (2010) states that what can be appropriate in one culture might be inappropriate in the other cultures. For example, there are some cultural differences between Arabic culture and English culture. Hofstede (2005), as cited in Nydell (2012), states that the Arabic culture is considered to be collectivistic in the sense that “the Arab people are integrated into strong and cohesive in-group” (P.76). This contrasts with western cultures such as the American, which is highly individualistic, that is the connection between individuals is loose. Cultural differences may have an impact on the way of using language in social contexts.

Many cross-cultural studies have proved that culture has an effect on the way in which language is used pragmatically. Several studies (e.g Blum-Kulka et al. 1989; Kasper 2001; Alzumor, 2010) have shown that different cultures possess different rules of appropriateness (i.e., the preferred ways of speaking and the ways in which speech acts are accomplished). According to Gass and Neu (2006), Speech acts are realized differently from culture to culture, and these differences may result in misunderstanding and communication difficulties that range from the humorous to the serious. To illustrate, the indirectness of speech acts is preferable in many cultures such as in Arabic culture (Sattar & Lah, 2009; Alzumor, 2010) and this can be considered as inappropriate in some other cultures such as German, polish and Russian. Ogiermen (2009) states that indirectness in

communication increases the hearer's interpretive effort and can even lead to perceive a speaker as a manipulative.

Cultural assumption can also be essential in determining speakers' meaning and inferring implicatures. Pragmatic meaning which includes implicature is closely associated with culture as Portner (2014) states. He gave an example of two Chinese girls who are looking at the dessert display in a French restaurant, and one says to the other, "*That tart is not too sweet*" She intends this comment as praise of the tart and might implicate that her friend should order one. This speaker's meaning arises from the fact that most of Chinese people find western desserts too sweet. Among some other cultures, the same comment ("*That tart is not too sweet*") could be interpreted as a criticism, rather than a compliment.

In intercultural communication, interlocutors who are from different cultural backgrounds may adhere to their own cultural conventions, and speak or behave in the way they believe is appropriate without paying attention to the fact that it could be appropriate or not in the target language. Thus, it is commonly acknowledged that if the L2 learners are not aware of the different cultural pragmatic features, they may get a risk of inter-cultural pragmatic failure (will be discussed in the next sub-section). Thomas (1983) believes that the main reason behind any pragmatic failure is the differences between the 'cultures' of the interlocutors.

2.1.3 Pragmatic Failure in EFL Context

One important source of difficulty and misunderstanding in communication is the inability to recognize the speaker's communicative intention. Thomas (1983, p. 92) uses the term 'pragmatic failure' to refer to the inability to recognize what is meant by what is said.

It is this kind of error which leads to communication breakdown. Basically, according to Thomas (1983), there are two types of pragmatic failure in EFL context: *pragmalinguistic* and *sociopragmatic* failures. Pragmalinguistic failure happens because learners respond to what speakers say rather than what they mean (Kasper, 1984, p.3). For example:

A: I've got some sandwiches ready for you here. I hope it will be enough.

B: Yes, of course it will be enough.

In this example, A does not mean whether the sandwiches are enough or not. A merely tries to express gratitude. Therefore, B's reply seems to be inappropriate; it should be something like "thank you" or "how thoughtful". In fact, B has no intention to offend A, but, being pragmatically incompetent, leads to such a response.

While sociopragmatic failure is related to how the speakers' sociological knowledge influences their interaction; it denotes the breakdown of the social conditions placed on language in use. Therefore, sociopragmatic decisions are social in the first place rather than linguistic. The most probable source of sociopragmatic failure might be the learners' limited knowledge of the social and cultural values of the TL (Kasper, 1997).

An example of such kind of failure can be seen in the following conversation between a Libyan student and his English teacher, Miss Helen:

Student: Teacher Helen, how much do you earn per month in our university?

Helen: oh, I'm fully satisfied.

In this conversation, there are two apparent problems. The first problem involves the addressing form of the teacher (teacher Helen). In fact, the word 'teacher' cannot be used as form of addressing in English whereas it is usually used as an addressing form in Libya context. The second problem is that the student is pushing his teacher into an embarrassed situation by asking about personal issue. Some private topics as salary, religious, ages, martial staus etc. would never appear in Westerners' routine conversations.

In fact, both sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic failure do not only affect language production but also affect understanding. Non native speakers may interpret foreign language conversations by following their own cultural norms, which may not match the target language norms. Jung (2002) believes that in order to have effective communication; EFL learners must gain pragmatic knowledge which entails the following abilities:

1. Ability to carry out speech acts. It is necessary for the learners not only to know how to select the speech act required in every situation, but also they should be able to choose the suitable linguistic codification to carry out this speech act.
2. The ability to produce and interpret non-literal meanings beyond words (implicature).
3. The ability to use politeness strategies.
4. The ability to use conversational structure and pragmatic routines for example, taking turns, pauses, greeting expressions, etc.
5. The ability to use cultural knowledge.

To sum up, the aspects of pragmatics, namely speech acts, implicature, Grice's cooperative maxim and pragmatic routines, discussed above, present what pragmatics

entails as a subfield of linguistics. The knowledge and the ability to use these different aspects of pragmatics are essential in accomplishing successful communication. It is also discussed that within different languages and cultures, the categories and the realizations of speech acts may vary, the judgment of implicatures and using routines can differ or can be perceived in different ways, which may lead to communication breakdown especially in EFL context.

2.2 Previous Empirical Studies on Pragmatic competence.

Pragmatic competence is a crucial component in conducting a successful communication; it facilitates matters to interlocutors to convey their communicative intentions and to understand hidden messages. Considerable amount of research has been carried out emphasizing the importance of the pragmatic competence among language learners (e.g. Allami & Naeimi, 2011; Hoffman-Hicks 1992; Hou, 2007; House, 1996; Li et. al., 2015; Ruan, 2007; Viljamaa, 2012; Wang, 2004; Xu, 2003; Yuan 2012; Zangoei & Derakhshan, 2014).

Hou (2007) conducted a survey to investigate the pragmatic competence of Chinese College English learners and to explore the implications of developing the Chinese learners' level of pragmatic competence. In Hou's research study, questionnaires were used to collect data from the participants. Findings showed that the learners' levels of pragmatic competence were much lower than their linguistic levels. According to Hou, the learners' low level of pragmatic competence generated misunderstandings and unpleasant emotions from the side of the listener. Hou in his conclusion related the study's finding to the

teachers' negligence of teaching pragmatic aspects (such as how to use speech acts and perform politeness strategies) which are very essential factors for EFL learners to be effective speakers.

Similarly, Li et al. (2015) conducted a study to investigate Chinese EFL learners' pragmatic competence in terms of both awareness and production. Three research instruments were employed to collect data: a multiple-choice discourse completion task (MDCT), a written discourse completion task (WDCT), and an interview. The results showed that Chinese EFL learners' ability to identify and produce contextually appropriate language is low. The researchers concluded that their participants had difficulties in using appropriate strategies and linguistic features to achieve communicative intentions. A very serious problem that they encountered was the intended meaning and force of different linguistic forms and strategies. The result of Li et al. (2015) study also provided evidence that Chinese EFL learners' pragmatic competence is still much influenced by Chinese language and culture.

Another study was conducted by Viljamaa (2012) to examine the pragmatic competence of EFL Finnish learners of English, and to investigate whether any pragmatic development can be found between students with different grades at a secondary school. The researcher tested the learners' ability to use and understand context-situational routines, implicatures as well as speech acts by using a multiple-choice test.

In contrast with the previous two studies which mentioned above (Hou, 2007 and Li et al., 2015), the results of Viljamaa's study showed that the major level of high secondary school students' pragmatic competence was high. It also showed evidence of pragmatic development in using pragmatic aspects among the different graders examined in

the study. Viljamaa concluded that the developing of pragmatic competence among these learners correlated positively with the exposure to the target language. He explained that some of these learners have stayed in English-speaking countries for some years and others spent a good amount of their free time doing different activities in English. This is to say that the exposure to a sufficient amount of the input enhances the pragmatic ability for EFL learners.

Regarding the Arabic context, there are a number of studies which have focused on the pragmatic competence of EFL learners. For instance, Djail (2012) investigated the importance of developing the pragmatic competence of EFL Algerian university students of English and to find out whether they are able to use English properly in different social situations. Findings of Djail's study indicated that these students were not pragmatically competent; in other words, they could not use the language effectively in different social situations, and sometimes they failed to understand the intention of the language users.

Djail (2012) related this failure to neglecting pragmatics as a necessary tool for language learning and that their teachers do not give much focus on the pragmatic aspects of the English language. Thus, they commit pragmatic errors.

Based on the empirical evidence of these studies and many similar ones, one can state that it is vitally important for language learners to become familiar with the pragmatics of the target language in order to avoid miscommunication in real interactions. In EFL context, Pragmatic competence is an essential area to be investigated to examine the learners' ability of using language effectively.

One major component in the area of evaluating EFL learners' pragmatic competence is the investigation of the appropriateness production and perception of *speech*

acts. Numerous pragmatic studies have been conducted for empirical research purposes to study the performance of different kind of speech acts by language learners. The relevant literature on Arabic EFL learners' production of speech acts is relatively abundant. For instance, there are some studies conducted to investigate requests (e.g., Al-Ammar, 2000; Aribi, 2012), apologies (e.g., Al-Ali, 2012; Alzumor 2011), complaint (Osman, 2006; Umar, 2006), offers (e.g., Alqahtani. 2009; Alaoui, 2011), compliment (e.g., Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001), thanking (e.g., Bataineh, 2013; Elzeini 2001) and refusals (e.g., Al-Eryani, 2007; Alshalwai, 1997; Al-kahtani 2005; Mohammed, 2012; Umale, 2011)

A review of some of those studies (e.g., Al-Ammar, 2000; Al-Ali, 2012; Aribi, 2012; Umar, 2006) revealed that Arab learners of English even at advanced levels may rely on their cultural background when performing speech acts. And they apply their native language social norms and rules to perform and understand speech acts. The major findings of those studies also showed that there were some similarities as well as significant differences between the native speakers of English and EFL Arab learners in terms of the strategies they utilized to perform speech acts. For instance, Umar's study (2006) revealed that Arab learners didn't demonstrate sufficient socio-pragmatic skills that qualify them to produce appropriate speech acts in a given situation. Further, in his study, Al-Ali (2012) investigated the speech act of apology made by Saudi EFL learners and native English speakers. The findings showed that the apology behaviour used by the Arab learners of English reflected some aspects of their linguistic and cultural background.

Some other studies focused their investigation on the strategies used by EFL Arab learners when performing speech acts. For instance, Umale (2011) provided a detailed study of the similarities and differences between the British and the Omani ways of

refusing in English. Findings of Umale's study showed that the Omani learners used more direct strategies than the British in refusing requests and offers. The indirect strategy was only used when they dealt with higher status people by expressing regret and giving reasons for their refusals. The researcher concluded that in some cases, Omani participants used long answers giving a string of reasons and indulged in too many polite words, causing pragma-linguistic failure. Sattar & Farnia (2014) examined the refusal strategies made by Arab Iraqi learners. In contrast with Umale's study, the findings indicated that the Iraqi participants preferred to use more indirect strategies (e.g. excuse and regret) than the direct ones (e.g. No and negative ability _I can't) in expressing refusal.

Alzumor (2011), in his study focused on the speech act of apology. He investigated English apology strategies used by Arab learners of English in India. His study consisted of three groups; Arab students, American speakers and British speakers. The researcher concluded that the linguistic realization of apology in the different given situations showed that English speakers and Arabic speakers assign varied degrees of severity to the same situation which is attributed to cultural differences.

Some comparative studies were conducted on Arabic context as well. For instance, Nelson et.al. (2002) investigated similarities and differences between Egyptian Arabic and American English refusals using a modified Discourse Completion Test. Results indicated that both groups employed similar semantic formulas in making refusals. They also used a similar number of direct and indirect formulas. In contrast with Abed (2011) who investigated Iraqi EFL learners' refusal strategies and compared them with two groups: (Iraqi native speakers of Arabic and American native speakers of English). The results of

Abed's study revealed that refusals of Iraqi learners of English were different from both Arabic and American native speakers.

The EFL learners' inappropriate use of speech acts in different social settings and their choice of inappropriate linguistic forms to realize them is an indication of a lack in their pragmatic competence. Zayed (2014) conducted a study to investigate Jordanian EFL teachers' and students' use of five different speech acts (Apology, compliment, greeting, request and thanking) in the classrooms. The findings of the study revealed that EFL teachers and students did not have proper use of any of the examined speech acts. Zayed (2014) also recommended that that teachers and students alike require more practicing on how to use the English speech acts appropriately in order to develop their pragmatic competence.

Although there is a large body of literature in the Arabic context on the importance of pragmatic competence among EFL learners, most of the studies have centred around examining only speech acts, ignoring other constructs such as implicatures and/or pragmatic routines. Some researchers and scholars such as Roever (2005), Yamashita (2008) and Liu (2010) maintain that it is neither sufficient nor reliable to rely on such studies to investigate pragmatic competence. It does not seem to be appropriate to use only few speech act items to test learners' pragmatic ability and claim that the learner is at a certain level. Also, Ziafar & Maftoon (2015) state 'pragmatic test with high construct validity includes all these three constructs' (p.49).

Therefore, an approach such as including implicatures and routines besides speech acts was suggested by Roever (2005), Garcia (2004) and Trosborg (2012) to assess the

pragmatic competence level of EFL learners. According to them, this approach to assess the pragmatic competence level of EFL learners can provide researchers with more applicable findings.

A number of empirical studies have been carried out in non -Arabic contexts (e.g., Bouton, 1994; Garcia, 2004; Lee, 2002; Taguchi, 2002 and Roever, 2012) to examine how English implicatures and pragmatic routines were interpreted and understood by EFL learners. Their major findings revealed that the EFL learners' ability to figure out the implied meanings was limited and needed to be developed. For example, Lee (2002) investigated the ability of Korean learners of English with high English proficiency to interpret conversational implicatures and compared with that of native speakers of English. She found out that non native speakers of English encountered some difficulties in interpreting the implicatures as well as there were some differences in the strategies employed to interpret them by both groups. Some factors such as language learners' knowledge of the TL culture that includes personal biases and transfer of knowledge from the native culture can influence the performance in interpreting implicatures.

Also Bouton (1994) examined the extent to which EFL students can derive the same message from implicatures as native speakers do. The tool used in the study was the MCDCT. The results showed that non-native students performed significantly poorer in interpreting the implicatures than native students. The results also revealed that language background and cultural background could be factors underlying a person's ability to interpret implicature. Roever (2012) investigated the EFL students' knowledge of pragmatic routines, the results showed that simple formulae, such as "How are you? – Fine, thank you" are usually learned very early in the EFL classrooms, whereas often more

difficult exchanges are learned gradually or during time spent in the target language country

Reviewing the literature in this chapter shows that there is more L2 pragmatics research on speech acts than on any other aspect of pragmatics (Kasper & Rose 2002, p.134). Implicatures and pragmatic routines have received little attention, especially in the literature of Arabic context. In other words, most of the previous studies conducted in the Arabic context are exclusively comparative ones as they have restrictively looked at the similarities and differences on the realizations of the speech acts between Arab learners of English and native speakers of English. Further, some previous studies mainly aim to investigate the strategies used by Arab learners to perform English speech acts. Thus, the current study attends to fill up the gap in the literature by choosing three essential components of pragmatic competence, namely speech acts, implicature and pragmatic routines to investigate the level of EFL Libyan learners' pragmatic. In this way both the EFL learners' production and the comprehension of pragmatic aspects are investigated. Moreover, reviewing the literature demonstrate that there has been little research done in this area in Libya, which is an additional important reason for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEAECH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The assessment of EFL learners' pragmatic competence is a challenging task because of the contextualized nature of pragmatics (Martínez Flor & Usó Juan, 2011; Viljamaa 2012). Reviewing the literature showed that various data collection methods have been introduced and developed by researchers (e.g., Hudson, Detmer, & Brown, 1995; Matsugu, 2014; Roever, 2001, 2005; Yamashita, 2008; Ziafar & Maftoon, 2015). The decision upon which method(s) to use or which method is the most applicable usually depends on the specific objectives of the study. This chapter provides a detailed description of research design , tools and procedure used in the current study.

3.1 Research Design

The present research is designed as a case study conducted at the faculty of Arts in Misurata. A case study usually focuses on one (or few) instances of particular phenomenon with a view to providing an in depth account of events or experiences. It has used for a wide range of purposes in social research and can be categorized into three types; namely exploratory, explanatory and descriptive (Yuan, 2012). The current study was exploratory in that the purpose was to explore the EFL students' pragmatic competence.

The case study approach allows the researcher to use a variety of data and research methods as a part of investigation, through case study methods a researcher is able to go beyond the quantitative statistical results and qualitative results. Thus to achieve the objective of this study, a mixed-method within a framework of both qualitative and quantitative approaches were adopted. Martínez Flor & Usó Juan, (2011) state that combining both qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study can help in better understanding research questions and improves the validity of research. It can also help in analyzing data in form of numbers and words.

3.2 Data Collection Tools

Researchers in the field of pragmatics have used different methods for collecting data. The most popular and widely used method, either oral or written, has been the *discourse completion task* (hereafter DCT), (Felix-Brasdefer, 2010). The reliability and validity of the DCTs have been affirmed as an effective measure of L2 learners' pragmatic competence by many researchers (e.g., Ahn, 2005; Jianda, 2006; Hudson, Detmer, and Brown, 1996; Rose, 1997; Yamashita, 1996).

In order to collect both written and oral data, three types of DCT format were chosen to be used in the current study; written discourse completion task WDCT, multiple-choice discourse completion task MDCT and oral discourse completion task ODCT.

3.2.1. A written discourse completion task (WDCT) is an instrument that requires the participants to read a written description of a situation, including factors such as setting, participant roles, and degree of imposition and asks them to write what they would say in that situation. In general, DCTs can be used to test both production and comprehension of

the different types of pragmatic aspects such as speech acts and politeness. The WDCT provides learners with an opportunity for a display of knowledge that is precluded for many non-native speakers by the cognitive demands of face-to-face interaction (Bergman & Kasper, 1993, p. 101).

In addition, the reliability of the WDCT has been affirmed as a measure of L2 learners' pragmatic competence, Jianda (2006) and Roever (2005) explored some methods to evaluate EFL learners' pragmatic competence. Their findings showed satisfactory results and implied that the internal consistency reliability of the WDCT is highly satisfactory.

3.2.2 The multiple-choice discourse task (MCDCT) resembles the WDCT but instead of open responses, they have several alternative responses and the respondent has to choose the most appropriate answer. It has been widely used to test implicature (e.g., Bouton, 1988, 1994; Garcia, 2004; Roever, 2001) and routine expressions (Hagiwara, 2007; Roever, 2001). For instance, Roever (2005) developed tests for ESL pragmatic ability using MCDCTs, to investigate the comprehension of implicature and routines, and knowledge of speech act strategies. The instruments were pilot-tested several times. Results showed that the degree of imposition and proficiency caused difficulty in only the speech act section. However, strong evidence for the validity of the MCDCT was found in the implicature and routine sections. In addition, MDCTs are very practical in the sense that they can be used to gather data from a large number of participants.

3.2.3 Oral discourse completion task (ODCT) is used to gather more naturalistic data, it requires participants to listen to a description of situation, imagine themselves in that situation and respond orally as if they are in real interaction.

The advantage of both WDCTs and MCDCT is that social and situational variables can be controlled. In addition, it is possible for the researchers to collect a great amount of data in a comparatively short amount of time (Yamashita, 2008). However, WDCT and MCDCT have also been criticized for being artificial in terms of reflecting real communication (Golato, 2003).

As has been discussed in the literature review pragmatic ability for the language learner is the ability to comprehend the pragmalinguistic action as a listener and also be able to produce it as a speaker in the TL and following its cultural norms. In order to measure learners' pragmatic ability in a test, both comprehension and production should be equally important (Yamashita, 2008). Therefore, the current study aims to examine both learners' production and knowledge of some pragmatic features. The speech act section is a production questionnaire WDCT & oral DCT, while the implicature and routines are in multiple-choice formats MCDCT.

3.3 Participants

Participants of the current study were advanced English majors studying at the faculty of Arts in Misurata. They were fourth-year students (in 7th and 8th semesters) in the English department. The rationale behind this choice is that fourth year students of English are supposed to acquire communicative and pragmatic strategies and use these strategies appropriately in different social contexts. Therefore, (40) English majors (35 females and 5 males) in the 7th and 8th semester are selected as the target respondents in order to investigate how well they are pragmatically able to use English appropriately in social situations. Most of them are in their early twenties (20-24). They had been learning English

for the duration of around ten years in school and college, and only (3) of them had ever visited an English speaking country for a period of time.

3.4 Procedure

The data of this study were gathered in two phases. Firstly, students were given a written pragmatic competence test (appendix 1) to answer. This test consisted of the multiple choices DCT and the written DCT. The MCDCT was adopted from (Bouton 1994; Rover 2005) and used to investigate the comprehension of implicature and the knowledge of pragmatic routines. Whereas the WDCT was used to investigate the production of different types of speech acts (apology, requests, refusal, compliment, thanking and advice), the situations were adopted from different related studies (Matsugu, 2014; Lihui & Jianbin 2010; Sattar& Lah, 2009).

The test was given to the students in their normal lecture in addition to a small background questionnaire containing personal questions about students such as age, semester and gender, (See appendix 1).

Secondly, some of the participants were chosen randomly for the oral DCT to obtain more natural responses. The oral DCT test (appendix 2) included nine communicative situations which students are likely to meet in real life contexts. These items were selected on the basis of an extensive review of literature on pragmatic competence. The students listened to the situation and asked to respond immediately, the responses were recorded by the researcher for the sake of analysis.

To evaluate the appropriateness of the responses given by the students in relation to both the pragmatic competence test and the oral DCT test, two native speakers of English were requested to rate the tests. They are English teachers working in Tobactus Language Learning Centre in Misurata. By their assistance, the researcher could determine which of the participants' responses were appropriate and which were not.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data of the current study was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Firstly, the data obtained from the written pragmatic competence test was analyzed quantitatively with the use of SPSS statistics program (version 18). The number of correct and incorrect answers in the three sections of the test was examined. The test had 30 items; every correct answer was given one point while an incorrect answer was give zero. For those items which were left blank, zero points were given. The overall points of the test were 30. Therefore, to examine the learners' level of pragmatic competence, the means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values of the scores in the different sections of the test were calculated.

Secondly, the responses collected from the oral DCT test were analyzed qualitatively. Responses were transcribed and then given to a native speaker of English to rate them as appropriate, acceptable, problematic or unacceptable/inappropriate. The native speaker was also requested to give some comments on the inappropriate ones.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis in two sections. The first is a report on the analyzed data to answer the research questions from the quantitative perspective. This section includes a statistical description of the participants' responses in the pragmatic competence test. The second section explores the data using a qualitative analysis of the results of the oral test.

4.1 Quantitative Findings

The obtained data from the written pragmatic competence test was analyzed quantitatively to evaluate the students' level of pragmatic competence. The following table shows the minimum and maximum scores of the whole test, as well as the mean and the standard deviation (i.e. the measure of the extent to which the values of the distribution) of the test scores:

	Minimum score	Maximum score	Mean of the scores	Standard Deviation
Pragmatic test	09	23	17.2	3.4

Table1 _ Means, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values of the scores in the pragmatic competence test

As discussed in the previous chapter, the written pragmatic competence test contains 30 items (appendix 1); one point was given to each appropriate answer. Thus, the possible range of the scores was (0/30). As Table 1 presents, none of the participants reached the maximum score of 30 points in the test since the maximum value of points was (23), whereas the lowest point was (9). Compared with the total score of 30, the means value of the test score was (17.2) points, the standard deviation was only (3.4) which mean that the gained points clustered around the mean. Table 2 shows the scores that the participants got of in the pragmatic competence test:

Scores (0/30)	Number and percentage of the students	
9	1	(2.5%)
11	2	(5%)
12	2	(5%)
13	4	(10%)
14	5	(12.5%)
17	5	(12.5%)
18	4	(10%)
19	3	(7.5%)
20	4	(10%)
21	3	(7.5%)
22	3	(7.5%)
23	4	(10%)

Table2 _ The distribution of the scores in the pragmatic competence test

As Table 2 shows, only 4 students (10%) from 40 students reached the maximum score (23 points) while only 1 (2.5%) scored the minimum score of (9), 5 students (12.5%) got (17) and 4 had (14) points.

In general, fourteen students (35 %) answered less than half of the questions correctly (09-14 points) while twenty-six students (65%) answered more than half of the questions correctly (17-23 points), however their scores were not relatively high.

The pragmatic competence test has three components; implicature (8 items), pragmatic routines (8 items) and speech act (14 items). The table below presents in detail the students' scores of each component in the test:

	Minimum score	Maximum score	Means of the scores
Implicature (08)	01	07	4.1
Pragmatic routines (08)	02	07	5.5
Speech act (14)	02	12	7.6

Table 3_Means, minimum and maximum values of the scores in each section of the pragmatic competence

As Table 3 shows, the maximum score in the implicature section was (07) points; and the minimum score was (1) point. The mean in this section was (4.1) points.

Furthermore, 2 students got the score of (7) and only one participant got the minimum score of (01) points. Table 4 shows that there was some variation in the number of correct and incorrect answers produced by the participants in the different test questions in the implicature section:

Implicature	Number of correct answers	Number of incorrect Answers
Item 1	36	04
Item 2	16	24
Item 3	17	23
Item 4	28	12
Item 5	11	29
Item 6	12	28
Item 7	26	14
Item 8	15	25
Total	161	159

Table 4 _ the number of correct and incorrect answers in the implicature section

Item 1 in the implicature section (*Do you know where Frank is, Sarah? – Well I heard music from his room earlier*) was answered correctly by the majority of the participants. Likewise, two items 4, 7 (see appendix 1) were answered accurately by (28, 26) participants respectively. The question items that got the most incorrect answers by the

participants were items number (5 and 6); items number 5 was indirect criticism (*How did you like Derek's essay? – Well I think it was well-typed*). Whereas item 6 violated the maxim of relation (*“Do fish swim?” – He thinks they will surely get a low grade*).

The remaining items 2, 3 and 8 were answered incorrectly by a number of participants; item 2 which was a type of *indirect criticism* implicature: (*How do you like what you're having?*) Ted: *“Well, let's just say it's colorful.*), was answered incorrectly by 24 participants (60%). Item 3 demanded the understanding of idiosyncratic implicature was answered incorrectly by 23 participants (57.5%). Whereas item 8 violates the quality maxim: (*“What did Brian sing?” – I'm not sure, but Matt was playing “My wild Irish Rose”*) was answered incorrectly by 25 participants (62%).

Altogether, the total number of the answers in the implicature section was 320. The correct answers were only 161, which constitute 50.3% of the total answers as it is presented in Table5:

The total number of answers	correct answers		incorrect answers	
	n	%	n	%
320	161	50.3%	159	49.7%

n = number

% = percentage

Table5_ the total number and percentage of the answers in the implicature section

As for the second section of the test (pragmatic routine section), the mean of the section was (5.5) as it is shown in Table 3; and this indicates that pragmatic routines section got higher points compared with the implicature section. The maximum score as (7) and the minimum was (02), there were a great variation in the answers of the pragmatic routine items, the following table (Table 6) shows the number of correct and incorrect answers in this section:

Pragmatic routines	Number of correct answers	Number of incorrect Answers
Item 1	17	13
Item 2	24	16
Item 3	24	16
Item 4	13	27
Item 5	34	06
Item 6	22	28
Item 7	37	03
Item 8	24	16
Total	195	125

Table 6_ The number of correct and incorrect answers in the pragmatic routine section

The item which got the most correct answer was item (7) which required replying an apology: (*In a crowded street, a woman steps on your foot. She says “I’m sorry”. What would you probably say?*), this item was answered correctly by participants (92%). Also item question number (5) produced relatively good number of correct answers; it was about how Claudia would leave a message on the phone’s roommate answer to tell her friend something (see appendix 1).

Whereas the item that got the most incorrect answer was item number 4: (*Ted is inviting his friend: “I’m having a little party tomorrow night at my place.”How would Ted probably go on?*). The appropriate response to this situation was (*Do you think you could make it?*”), which was chosen by a few numbers of participants. Item number 1: (*Tom ordered a meal in a restaurant and the waitress just brought it. She asks him if he wants to order something else. What would the waitress probably say?*), was also somewhat problematic for the participants since this item was answered incorrectly by 17 participants. Item questions number 2, 3 and 8 (see appendix1) were answered incorrectly by 16 participants (40%).

The overall answer of this section was 320, Table 7 shows that the number of correct answers produced by all participants was 195; which was about (61%) of the total answer:

The total number of answers	correct answers		incorrect answers	
	n	%	n	%
320	195	60.9%	125	39.1%

n= number %= percentage

Table 7_ the total number of the answers in the pragmatic routines section

Regarding the speech act section, it had 14 items of different kinds of speech acts (namely refusal, request, greeting, apology, thanking, promise, inviting and compliment). This section was a written task, the participants were asked to write what they would find suitable to say in a given situation. The items were evaluated according to which was appropriate answer or acceptable (☑) and which were not acceptable (☒).

The mean of the scores in this section was (7.6), the scores ranged from 2 to 12 points. Three participants got only 2 points whereas five participants reached the maximum score of 12 points. About 53% of the participants answered more than half of the questions correctly.

Table 8 shows the overall numbers of the correct and incorrect answers in the speech act section. The item which got most incorrect answers was item number 14; it was about how to respond a compliment: (*You have bought a new mobile phone. Your friend has looked at it and tried some functions, s/he says: "Wow, how smart! My mobile does not have such functions*). Most of the participants' responses were a kind of thanking or offering to give the mobile to the speaker such as: (*take it if you want is yours*) or (*I will buy you one*). Whereas the appropriate answers which were given by the two native speakers (raters) were (*I know!, why don't you buy one of this*) or (*Yeah I really love it , maybe you should buy one!*).

Item question number 7 also got a considerable incorrect answers, it was about how to greet your English friend on a rainy day: (*You meet your classmate who comes from London on a rainy day. You greet him by commenting on the weather. What would you*

probably say). Most of the participants commented by considering the rainy weather as a wonderful weather (*oh nice weather, isn't it*) and (*it is good to see you in a nice rainy day*). The native speakers who evaluated the responses considered this kind of response as an inappropriate way of greeting.

Items	Type of speech act	The number of correct answers	The number of Incorrect answers
1	Refusal	20	20
2	Refusal	25	15
3	Refusal	24	16
4	Request	25	15
5	Request	26	14
6	Greeting	19	21
7	Greeting	10	30
8	Apology	29	11
9	Apology	31	09
10	Thanking	27	13
11	Inviting	21	19
12	Promise	23	17
13	Advice	17	23
14	Compliment's Response	07	33
Total		304	256

Table 8_ Number of correct and incorrect answers in the speech act section.

Table 8 also shows that the participants' performance was excellent in two test items (item 8 and 9 apology) since approximately 77 % of them answered these items correctly. Items 1,2 and 3 contained a situation in which the participants had to refuse the speaker's request /offer, more than half of the answers were considered appropriate . Item 12 was answered incorrectly by 42% of the participants; it included a situation in which you give promise to your teacher to be ready next class. By contrast, the question items number 13 was answered correctly by 42% of the participants, it was about how to advice to your friend. Only the apology items (8 and 9) were answered correctly by a relatively good number of participants (77.8%). The items with approximately 62.7 % correct answers contained situations that demanded making requests (item 4 and 5), situation 4 demanding to carry out a request to a waiter in restaurant and (item 5) demanded performing a request to professor at university.

Altogether, the total number of the responses was 560. The appropriate answers were 304 which constitute 54.2% of the total answers.

The total number of answers	correct answers		incorrect answers	
	n	%	n	%
560	304	54.2%	256	45.8%

n= number

%= percentage

Table 9_ the total number of the answers in the speech act section

To sum up, Table 10 shows the number and the percentage of all participants' correct answers in the all three sections of the test. The number of the correct answers was (660) which constitute 55.1% of the overall answers (1200), this percentage shows a clear statistic description of the level of the students in the pragmatic competence test:

Components of the test	correct answers n	correct answers %
Implicature	161/320	50.3%
Pragmatic routines	195/320	60.9%
Speech acts	304/560	54.2%
The whole pragmatic competence test	660/1200	55.1%

Table 10_A summary of the participants' correct answers in the whole test

4.2 Qualitative findings

Responses for the oral DCT (see appendix 3) were analyzed qualitatively. The oral DCT (Appendix 2) consisted of different situations in which the participants were asked to answer them orally. Their responses were judged by an English native speaker as appropriate, problematic or inappropriate.

The inappropriate responses were analyzed and classified into four categories. They are *cultural transfer*, *misuse of the linguistic forms*, *inappropriate strategies* and *insufficient linguistic and pragmatic knowledge*.

1. Cultural transfer: Some participants based on their home cultural knowledge to respond some situations; such as when asked to respond to the situation of leave-taking, situation 2: (*you come across one of your classmate; he greets you and inquires about something. You answered him and wanted to leave. What would you say?*). Some students responded:

Any other services!

Okay, any other help you need.

Well anything else.

These three responses and some other similar ones (see appendix 3) were considered problematic by the evaluator of the test and caused miscommunication among interlocutors from different cultures. Libyan people usually say “aya khedmah” which literally means in English “any service” when they intend to close conversation and want to leave. Such a reply may not be understood by English native speakers as an expression of leave taking.

When asked to respond to Situation 7 (*replying a compliment about new dress*), some phrases again related to their cultural background were used and responded inappropriately. They used some expressions that are usually utilized in the same situation in Libyan daily conversations, examples are:

Oh thanks, it is yours.

Oh you love it, please take it.

It is not so expensive, if you want it, I will give it to you.

I will buy you one dear if you want.

No, it is not. Your dress is more beautiful.

Such these kinds of responses are not common in English. As Ishihara & Cohen (2014) state that English native speakers usually accept the compliment gladly and say “*thank you, it is so kind/sweet/nice of you*” or they elaborated positively such as “*I bought it from that shop*”, “*this colour is my favorite*” or “*I love yours too*”.

2. The misuse of the linguistic forms: Some responses showed lack of linguistic competence among participants. This is to say that participants used some inappropriate expressions which may lead to misinterpretations, for example, in responding to situation 1 (*refusing your professor request to fill up a questionnaire*), some participants refused by saying:

I am happy to help you sir but I am in a hurry.

Oh Dr. I love questionnaires but I have a lecture right now.

It is my pleasure to do this but my father is waiting... mmm I have to go home.

I have the honor to do this for you my teacher but you know these days I m busy in studying.

These responses were considered as problematic by the evaluator, because the first part of the speech showed that the speakers accepted to fill the questionnaire. In such cases, it is more appropriate to use subjunctive mood such as “*I would be happy to But...*”

Similarly in situation 6 (*your friend arrived late to an important lecture. You were the presenter and you were account on his/her presence to give you a support on an important matter. After the lecture what would you say to him/her*), some participants' responses were considered as inappropriate and led to misinterpretations because of the improper choice of some linguistic forms, such as:

Thanks dear for your coming!

O they always say to come late is better than never, but today if you never come is better.

3. The inappropriate strategies: Some participants used direct strategy in which indirect strategy is preferable to use such as in situation 1 (*refusing a professor request*). Also more direct strategies were used in situation 4 which was a request to borrow a pen from a stranger.

Some other responses were considered as problematic in the apology situation due to the lack of certain strategies. The participants in situation 9 apologized by saying:

I'm so so sorry I lost your book, I didn't know where I left it, mmm you know everyone forgets.

Oh, Dr. lost your book while I was on the bus.

I am so sorry Dr I do not know how that happened.

I am so sorry; your book has lost by accident.

Such these responses were considered problematic because they did not follow the most appropriate taxonomy of apology strategies [explicit apology expression+ explanation+ acknowledgment of responsibility+ a promise of forbearance] Holmes (1990). Those responses contained only apology expressions and explanations which were not enough to treat the situation. The participants had been expected to acknowledge the responsibility and give suggestions on how they can rectify the fault of losing the professor's book.

4. The insufficient linguistic and pragmatic knowledge: some participants didn't know how to utilize the speech acts and the pragmatic routines needed in some situations; they also were not able to choose the suitable linguistic codification to carry out some speech acts. One of the participants said in the compliment-response situation (situation 7) *"I will say nothing I will only smile because I don't know what is the correct way to reply a compliment in English"*

Some participants made some grammatical mistakes and used poor vocabularies which may lead to misinterpretations or blocked the conversation. Others did not know the meaning of some expressions such as in situation 10 *"Is Pope Catholic"* which is commonly used by English native speakers to mean *"surely yes"*

In situation 3 most of the participants responded by saying "yes" to the negative structured question: *"Aren't you coming along with us"*. However, those who answered correctly by saying "No" tried to make promises to come by saying *"No, i may try to come"* and *"mm maybe, I will see"* (see Appendix3). The evaluator commented that using "maybe"

in such a situation might cause misunderstanding about whether the person is refusing the invitation or not.

Several responses to the situation 4, which was about *how to request a pen from a stranger*, were regarded as problematic:

If you had a pen with you, i need it.

Can you give me your pen if you have?

I need your pen please.

In addition, some responses to situation 5 “*you want to send a phone message to your English teacher who has been absent for three lectures. What would you say*” showed the inability of the participants to use language appropriately as well as rely on their native language in using some expressions:

Hello sir. Where are you? We miss you and get busy on you!

Hello sir. We worried of you? You were absent for 3 classes.

Hello and how are you? You were absent 3 lectures. Are you Ok?

Hello, I want to ask about you, what happened with you.

Some other participants misunderstood the intended meaning and replied “*yes, he is*” in situation 8 which was:

Ali: “do you like linguistics?”

Sam: “well let’s just say that I don’t jump for joy before the class.

Does Ali like linguistics?

To summarize, the qualitative analysis showed that the participants had tried to vary their language to be more polite. However, they had difficulties in using appropriate strategies and linguistic elements to achieve communicative intentions. A very serious difficulty they had was the lack of understanding of pragmatic rules in language and how to use them effectively.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.0 Introduction

The pragmatic competence of Libyan EFL students was investigated within the current study. The results, obtained from both written and oral pragmatic competence tests, were presented in the previous chapter. This chapter discusses these results in order to find answers to the research questions:

1. What is the level of pragmatic competence of Libyan EFL students in Misurata University?
2. Does cultural background have any significance impact on their pragmatic ability?

5.1 Discussion of the Results

The participants' pragmatic competence level was judged by their scores in the written pragmatic competence test in addition to their performance in the oral pragmatic test. The pragmatic tests contained three components; namely implicature, pragmatic routines and speech acts.

Regarding the evaluation of the students' knowledge and understanding of implicatures, the results showed that the mean score of the implicature section was 4.1 out

of 8 and the correct answers were 161, which constitute 50.3% of the total answers. In other words, about half of the total items were answered incorrectly. This result can be compared to Roever's result (2005) and Bouton (1994), as the implicature items used in the current study's test and those two studies were the same. In Roever's study, learners answered 60.41 % of the implicature items correctly which was somewhat higher than the score of the current study's participants (50.3%), Bouton as well found that Japanese learners of English answered 73 % of the implicature items correctly which also was a relatively higher than the current study's result in the implicature section.

The number of incorrect answers in the implicature section also showed that the implicature items, which contained *indirect criticism*, were the most difficult for the students, such as (item 5, appendix 1). The students were expected to comprehend what a professor intended to mean by commenting on an irrelevant element of a students' essay. It is also clearly observed that most of the students were not able to make a correct inference of the given implicatures in the test because they seemed to rely on a literal translation strategy. For example, some students in the multiple-choice DCT chose the alternatives that present the surface meaning of the given utterances, and this may have led them to fail in realizing the intended meaning of the sentences. On the other hand, students could simply interpret the implicature items that based on logical reasoning, for example in situation (1) a great number of students could easily arrive at the correct assumption that *Frank was in his room because of the loud music*. Apparently, this kind of conversational implicature, which appears to be logically universal in its interpretation, was less difficult for EFL students.

It is also observed that some participants could not make any sense of some situations because of their limitation of lexical meaning. Such as the expression in situation 10 in the oral DCT “*Is the Pope Catholic?*”, most of the participants showed no knowledge about the word “*Pope*” or even “*Catholic*”. This expression is used as a response by native speakers of English to imply that the answer to the question was “*obviously, yes*”. Some students asked about the meaning of this expression since they have grasped neither the linguistic nor the cultural background of it. This may explain why the students are not able to make satisfactory scores of the implicature in the written DCT.

To put it briefly, the results of the implicature section indicated the students’ ability to interpret and understand implicatures is limited, and both linguistic and cultural background are factors underlying a person’s ability to interpret implicature.

Regarding the section of the pragmatic routines, the results obtained revealed that the mean score was 5.5 and the number of correct answers given by participants was 195 ; which constitute (61%) of the entire answers. This result was to some extent close to Roever’s (2005) result in the pragmatic routine section, which was (59.5%). Comparing students’ responses in this section, it is apparent that the students found some difficulties in understanding some pragmatic routines more than others. The formulae ‘*Do you think you could make it?*’ was the appropriate answer to the given invitation for attending a party in situation(4), it was chosen by very few students, whereas as the formulae ‘*Say that again, please*’ in the phone situation(6), and ‘*No thanks, I’m full*’ in situations (3) were chosen correctly by most of the students. This proves what Roever (2012) argued in his study (see

literature review chapter) that some routines could be easily recognized and learned by EFL students than others.

The result obtained from the speech acts section showed that the number of correct answers given by the students was 304 out of 560; this number constitutes 54% of the total answers (see Table3). The students participated in the present study showed their awareness of the social distance relations between them and the addressees in most of the situations, so they sometimes exaggerated using polite words which made the utterance obsequious. Also they used long answers and a lot of reasons attached even if the situation didn't require any justifications, as in the case of situation (3), which was about refusing to lend money.

The analysis of the participants' responses in the speech act section also revealed that the students were guided by certain home cultural norms and thinking when they use different kind of speech acts in English, they may subconsciously apply these norms to the target language while communicating, for example the given responses to the situation (6) in the written pragmatic competence test (*about greeting your English friend at dinner time*) illustrated that the students were reliant on their L1 cultural norms and beliefs. In Libya, when you meet friends around dinnertime it is acceptable to greet them by an invitation to share food or by asking whether they have had dinner or not yet. So, the students gave lot of responses such as "*hi dear come and have a dinner with us?*" or "*hello dear if you haven't had a dinner yet come and share it with me?*" However, native English speakers do not usually ask such private questions when greeting each other even at dinner-time as commented by the raters of the tests.

Other illustration of the influence of the L1 cultural norms and thinking was the item of responding to a compliment *“Wow, how smart! My mobile does not have such functions”* this item produced the most incorrect answers as shown in (Table8). Most of the participants’ responses were a kind of thanking or offers to give the mobile to the speaker. Native speakers of English usually accept the compliment gladly and then they tried to elaborate positively such as saying *“I bought it from X shop”* or *“why don’t you buy one”*. A similar kind of cultural influence was found in the situation of (compliment-response) in the oral test. Some students’ responses showed literal translation of Arabic formulaic expressions used as compliment responses such as *“no it’s not, you only compliment me!”*, *“Your eyes are beautiful”* and *“I’m your pupil”* such expressions are commonly used by Libyan speakers to respond a compliment in Arabic in an attempt to show modesty and avoid self-praise. However, these expressions were not always suitable to utilize as a compliment-response in English.

Students relied to a greater extent on their L1 pragmatic ability when communicating in the L2, they assumed some pragmatic principles to be universal and can be applied to the target language, and situation (7) clearly illustrated that. The situation was about how greeting your English friend on a rainy day. Most of the participants greeted the friend by considering seeing him/her in a rainy weather was a wonderful thing *“oh nice to see you in such a beautiful weather”* or *“it seems you come from London with heavy rain!”* The two native speakers who evaluated the responses considered these kinds of responses inappropriate answers, they commented on this situation by saying that rainy weather is not enjoyable to meet friends *“Oh! Lousy day”* and *“hello dear, what a terrible weather!”*

Moreover, the analysis of some students' responses, in both written and oral tests, seems to indicate that most of students relied on using limited strategies in different situations, the ability modals (can/could) seemed to be the most preferred by the students to make requests, apologies exaggerated using polite words which made the utterance and advice. This might indicate that the students are not familiar with other types of strategies used in some formal situations such as "*would you mind if*". Also, they failed to produce the "acknowledgment of responsibility" and "offer of repair" strategy in the apology situations, which were considered as a vital strategy in apology taxonomy, (Holmes, 1990).

Therefore, one might be justified in claiming that, in addition to being unfamiliar with the L2 cultural norms; the students also lack knowledge of appropriate strategies that they can apply in more formally demanding situations.

To sum up, the discussion above revealed that the pragmatic competence's level of the Libyan EFL students at Misurata University is relatively not good and it needs to be developed. Students seem to possess a limited knowledge of the understanding and production of the pragmatic aspects included in the tests. Libyan EFL students appear to be insecure and choose to rely on their L1 cultural background to make judgments in terms of what is meant rather than what is said, students also have inadequate ability to produce socially appropriate language in a particular situation where one is communicating as well as performing a specific sort of speech act.

As has been noted from the data obtained from the participants, the pragmatic knowledge of the Libyan EFL students need to be expanded, also they need to made

familiar with L2 pragmatic techniques and strategies in order to accomplish the communication goals and completing tasks efficiently through suitable and appropriate language.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the current level of pragmatic competence of some Libyan EFL students at English department/ Misurata University in terms of their comprehension and production of pragmatic aspects, namely implicatures, pragmatic routines and speech acts. Considering the data obtained from both written and oral pragmatic competence tests, the level of these participants' pragmatic competence is somewhat low and needs to be developed. Their pragmatic knowledge has to be expanded, as building up pragmatic knowledge is an essential component of the ability to produce appropriate language in social contexts.

Participants in this study, who are in their final year majoring English at Misurata university, still have difficulties in adhering to foreign social and pragmatic conventions while communicating English due to their lack of pragmatic knowledge and cultural information associated with the target language. Perhaps more to the point, a lack of cross-cultural awareness can be a severe hindrance in the understanding of a message which is linguistically accurate or comprehensible. Data provide explanation for the kinds of pragmatic errors they commit most frequently and what kinds of pragmatic knowledge they lack most.

One interpretation of the Libyan students' pragmatic deficiency could be the unavailability of pragmatic knowledge in the materials that provided to them as EFL learners. Despite the many years of studying English in schools and college, Libyan students are not able to use the language in social and communicative situations appropriately; this lack of authentic input might be the leading factor to such a disappointed outcome. In Libya, students don't have a sufficient opportunity to expose themselves to authentic material of English to acquire knowledge, text books and the instructions of their teachers are their major sources to build up their English language proficiency. However it seems that English materials and curricula in Libya are mostly selected in terms of their literal value, for the purpose of practicing grammatical items and improving the student's reading ability, they may not well designed to help of cultivating the student's pragmatic competence.

Many scholars and researchers (Barron 2001; Kasper 2001; Mohammed 2012) have proved that the teaching of pragmatics facilitates the learners' sense of being able to find socially appropriate language for the situations that they may encounter.

6.1 Implications

The findings have indicated that participants have inadequate pragmatic knowledge and lack of cultural information of the TL which both have resulted in committing some pragmatic errors in communication. Some implications for teaching pragmatic features have been included in many of the studies in the field of second language acquisition (e.g.,

Holmes & Brown 1976, Kasper 1996; Olshtain & Cohen 1991; Rose 1997; Shankulie, 2012), they all highlight the need to provide EFL students with sufficient knowledge of cross-cultural differences in communication in order to develop pragmatic ability and to function appropriately in foreign language interactions.

One way of developing learners' pragmatic competence can be *the teaching of the target language in Context*. In the traditional teaching process, EFL teachers usually concentrate on explaining the meanings and pronunciations of the utterances and don't pay much attention to the context in which the utterances are said. As a result, students can utter different sentences and know clearly their semantic meanings, but they cannot use them appropriately in social situations. Students in most cases try to rely on their own understanding and translation, however, due to the cultural difference cross languages, the students' judgments and translation may not fulfil the objective and the intention of the communication. Therefore, teachers have to pay much more attention to the context, to when, where and to whom students can use an utterance instead of regarding it only as an English equivalent of their native language utterance.

Another way is *the Exposure to Authentic Materials in the classrooms*. Authentic materials such as songs, web pages, radio & TV broadcasts, short films, leaflets and posters, present EFL students with real language as it is used by native speakers, and provide them with valid linguistic data for their natural acquisition process. Once they get into contact with plenty of authentic materials, they can imitate the manners of native speakers, and use the language in the same way native speakers use, and, step by step, sense of appropriateness will be formed. Rose (1997) encourages teachers to use short films to

help raising students' pragmatic knowledge and to serve as a source of examples for pragmatic features such as speech acts. Films and videos can be a good representation of language use in real situations.

Some researchers (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig et. al, 1991, kasper 1997) have proved that one of the most effective ways of developing pragmatic competence in EFL class is to provide students with *sufficient opportunities to practice their pragmatic knowledge*. It is not enough to provide learners only with relevant pragmatic input; what is more important is to give them opportunities to practice what they have learnt in the classrooms. According to Kasper (1997), practice requires student-centered interaction in the classrooms, this is to say that students take alternating discourse roles as speaker and hearer, yet different types of tasks in the classrooms should be also concerned with participants' social relationships and include some communicative acts as opening and closing conversations, expressing emotive responses as in thanking and apologizing, or influencing the other person's course of action as in requesting and offering. Furthermore, activities such as role-play, simulation, and drama can engage students in different social roles and speech events. Such activities provide opportunities for EFL students to practice the wide range of pragmatic and sociolinguistic knowledge and unconsciously began using them socially in real communication.

Some other activities can be a class discussion in which learners compare certain functions in their native culture to the same in the target language and recognize the cultural differences. Teachers should take both accuracy and appropriateness into consideration while conducting the discussion task. For example, the teacher may choose

the speech act of compliment as a topic under discussion in the class and asked students to collect natural data from movies, novels or TV about the performance of this speech act. Then in class, students analyze their data, summarize their findings and present it to their groups and together try to observe the strategies and linguistic forms by which complimenting is accomplished (what formulae are used, and what additional means of performing compliments are employed by native speakers of English). Also, after observing some examples, students may examine in which contexts the various ways of performing compliments are used.

Furthermore, intensive training courses for in-service teachers of English should be provided by the education policy to enhance their teaching and linguistic skills.

In brief, to master a foreign language successfully, learners should develop pragmatic competence in addition to the communicative competence. Besides emphasizing other aspects of the TL, teachers should encourage EFL learners to pay more attention to how to use language appropriately in different contexts and help them see the language in context, raise consciousness of the role of pragmatics, and explain the function pragmatics in specific communicative events.

6.2 Limitation of the study

One limitation can be that the test measured only three aspects of pragmatics, which are implicature, situational routines and speech acts. It was not possible, within the scope of the current study, to examine all the aspects of pragmatics or the production of these

features. In spite of the limitations, this study represents one of the first attempts to measure Libyan learners' pragmatic competence.

6.3 Suggestion for Further Research

Future research can investigate the influence of the current learning environment in Libya on the acquisition of the L2 pragmatics of English, such as the syllabi, course design and teacher beliefs and practices, Moreover, the factors contributing to the learning process can also be investigated, such as the effect of different instructional methods and individual variables in order to determine how L2 pragmatic competence can be promoted.

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