

Pragmatic Failure in Iraqi EFL Contexts

الفشل التداولي للمتعلمين العراقيين دارسي اللغة الانجليزية لغة أجنبية

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ملخص البحث

تستقصي هذه الدراسة الأداء التداولي للمتعلمين العراقيين دارسي اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية وعلى جميع مستوياتهم التعليمية في محاولة للتعرف على الفشل التداولي المحتمل إرتكابه من قبلهم عند استخدامهم اللغة الانكليزية. يتبنى هذا العمل الفرضيتين الآتيتين: (١) يفشل الطلبة في تداول اللغة لغويا واجتماعيا و (٢) يتقبل أساتذتهم منهم ارتكاب الأخطاء التداولية طالما إنهم ينتجون جملاً مصاغة صياغة لغوية صحيحة. لتحقيق هدف هذه الدراسة والتحقق من فرضياتها، تم تبني استبانة من عشرين موقفاً لغوياً يشتمل كل منها على أربعة اختيارات صحيحة لغوياً واحد منها فقط يلاءم الموقف المذكور تداولياً. تم اختيار عينة الدراسة التي أخضعت للإستبانة من قسم اللغة الانكليزية في كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية/ جامعة بابل وتكونت من طلبة الصف الأول والصف الرابع لمرحلة البكالوريوس وأساتذة باختصاصات وشهادات وألقاب علمية مختلفة. أثبتت الدراسة صحة فرضيتها واستنتجت أن الأداء التداولي للمتعلمين يتسم عموماً بعدم المقبولية حيث كانت نسبة اختيارهم الصائبة ٥٥.٧٥٪ فقط، ولم يكن لسنوات الدراسة الأثر الكبير في تحسن الأداء التداولي لعينة البحث حيث وجدت الدراسة إن الفرق الايجابي في الأداء التداولي بين طلبة الصف

الأول من جهة والأساتذة من حملة شهادة الدكتوراه من جهة أخرى كان ١٧.٢١٪ فقط.

تكونت الدراسة من ستة أجزاء رئيسية. قدّم الأول منها مشكلة الدراسة وهدفها وفرضياتها بينما تناول الثاني مفهوم "الفشل التداولي" بنوعيه ببعض التفصيل وتعرض الجزء الثالث لأسباب الفشل التداولي وناقشت الدراسة بعض طرق التغلب عليه في الجزء الرابع. أستعرض الجزء الخامس طريقتي جمع البيانات وتحليلها وقدّم الجزء السادس أهم استنتاجات الدراسة.

Abstract

This study investigates Iraqi EFL students' pragmatic performance at all their educational levels in an attempt to identify the potential pragmatic failure they commit when using English. The study hypothesizes that (1) the students under study commit pragmatic failure whether pragmalinguistically or sociopragmatically at all levels, and (2) their teachers allow for such a kind of pragmatic failure as long as students produce well-formed sentences. To achieve the aim of the study and test its hypotheses, the sample of the study is subjected to a questionnaire which consists of twenty situations, each of which includes four well-formed utterances but only one of them is pragmatically appropriate to the situations in which they occur. The sample of the study consists of various levels of students and teachers to check the results on various levels. The subjects are first-year and fourth-year university EFL students and university EFL teachers of various academic titles, degrees and specializations all from the Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences.

The study verifies the hypotheses of the study and concludes that Iraqi EFL learners' pragmatic performance is generally poor since the average pragmatic success they recorded amounts to only 55.75%. Years of study do not seem to satisfactorily develop the pragmatic performance of the Learners since the difference in this regard between the first-year students and their PhD teacher is only 17.21%.

The study falls in six main sections: Section One presents the problem, aim and hypotheses. Section Two elaborates on the notion of "pragmatic failure" along with its types. Section Three explains the reasons of pragmatic failures and Section Four discusses some ways of overcoming such failures. Section Five reviews the methods of data collection and analysis. Section Six puts forward the main conclusions of the study.

1. Introduction

The term “pragmatic failure” refers to the inappropriate use of language across different situations. This means that language users who commit this kind of failure are insufficiently aware of the rules of use of that language. Pertinent awareness of such rules can be developed through giving consideration to the contextual factors that govern the issuance of a certain linguistic expression in a given situation.

As for Iraqi EFL learners, it is expected that they face problems in developing this kind of awareness due to various reasons. One of these reasons is the structural approach according to which those students have been taught for a long time in their pre-university study of English. This approach which focuses on producing error-free sentences has caused the students to pay more attention to producing well-formed sentences than to the contextual factors governing the issuance of those sentences. Add to that, teachers themselves behave similarly, in this regard , in the sense that they accept the students’ error-free sentences even when they are inappropriate to the situations.

This work attempts to investigate this problem, i. e. the students have not developed enough awareness to language use and that teachers allow for inappropriate language use when grammar is correct. This aim is intended to be achieved by subjecting the students and their teachers to a questionnaire which consists of twenty situations, each of which includes four well-formed utterances but only one of them is pragmatically appropriate to the situations in which they occur. The sample of the study consists of various levels of students and teachers to check the results on

various levels. The subjects are first-year and fourth-year university EFL students and university EFL teachers of various academic titles, degrees and specializations all from the Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences.

In relation to the aim of the study mentioned above, this work will check the hypotheses that (1) the Iraqi university EFL students commit pragmatic failure whether that of pragmalinguistic or sociopragmatic type at all levels, and (2) their Iraqi university EFL teachers allow for such a kind of pragmatic failure as long as students produce well-formed sentences.

2. Pragmatic Failure

It seems that most of our misunderstanding of other people is not due to any inability to hear them or working out the literal meanings of their sentences or words. In fact, a far more important source of difficulty in communication is that we so often fall short to recognize a speaker's communicative intention. Thomas (1983: 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 failure which leads, in one sense, to the cross-cultural communication breakdown. Therefore, it is essential to explore the causes of pragmatic failure and find ways to avoid the embarrassing situation by the unwise choice of linguistic forms, or, to avoid, for example, being unintentionally offensive.

Basically, there are two types of pragmatic failure: pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic. Both of them are terms Thomas (1983) picks up from Leech's (1983: 127) treatment of the scope of pragmatics in which the latter distinguishes between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics.

Pragmalinguistics, according to Leech (ibid: 128), refers to our linguistic knowledge of language use. For Crystal (1998), pragmalinguistics refers to the study of language use from the standpoint of a language's structural resources. For example, it determines the available linguistic patterns or forms to express apology or examines the pronoun system of a T/V language to verify the way people use pronouns to show deference or intimacy.

Sociopragmatics, on the other hand, is related to how our sociological knowledge influences our interaction (Leech, 1983: 130). For Crystal (1998), it is the study of the social backgrounds of the participants in an interaction and it looks at the way in which factors (like sex, age, power...etc.) affect people's choice of linguistic patterns or forms.

Pragmalinguistic failure is principally a linguistic problem, caused by differences in the linguistic encoding of pragmatic force; while sociopragmatic failure stems from cross-culturally different perceptions of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behaviour (Thomas, 1983: 101). These two types of failure reflect two fundamentally different types of pragmatic decision-making. Nevertheless, it is crucial to mention that they cannot always be distinguished as they are closely connected and overlapping. An inappropriate utterance may be considered as pragmalinguistic failure from one angle and sociopragmatic failure from another. Correct interpretation of the failure depends upon an understanding of different contexts, interlocutors' intentions and who the interlocutors are (He, 1997: 27).

2. 1. Pragmalinguistic failure

Pragmalinguistic failure occurs when the pragmatic force planned by a speaker onto a certain utterance is thoroughly different from the force most frequently assigned to it by native speakers of the target language, or when speech act strategies are improperly transferred from the speaker's native language to the target language (Reynolds, 1995: 6). In other words, it takes place when a nonnative speaker does an appropriate speech act in the target language but in an inappropriate way. It may arise from two identifiable sources: 'teaching-induced errors' and 'pragmalinguistic transfer' (i. e. inappropriate transfer of speech acts from the speakers' native language to the target language) (Lihui and Jianbin, 2010:47). Some teaching techniques may, in fact, increase the possibility of pragmalinguistic failure. Kasper (1984: 3), in a comprehensive survey, has identified some of what she calls 'teaching-induced errors' which are attributed to teaching

materials (e. g. inappropriate use of modals), or to classroom discourse (e. g. complete-sentence responses, inappropriate propositional explicitness...etc.).

As for Iraqi EFL contexts, English textbooks in pre-university studies have filled up the students with such ideas as whenever speaking English, you should speak strictly grammatical, and produce complete, sentences. However, the fact is that complete sentence responses violate the textual pragmatic 'principle of economy' (Leech, 1983: 67-8). Thus misinterpretations often occur in interaction. Example (1) below illustrates this point:

(1) A: Have you washed the dishes?

B: Yes, I have washed the dishes.

Here 'Yes, I have' (or 'Yes' alone) is the proper answer which is usually given by native speakers of English in similar situations. The complete response in this example implies B's being irritated, annoyed, etc. to give an answer, the matter which gives the unintended impression of B's uncooperativeness (Jernigan, 2007).

Another source of teaching-induced errors can be indicated by placing too much emphasis on meta-linguistic knowledge, which frequently leads learners to the deep-rooted assumption that the grammatical category of imperatives is equivalent to the (impolite) speech act of ordering. For example, the everyday use of the imperatives 'Come in' and 'Have another sandwich' can scarcely be seen as orders nor can they be deemed as impolite. On the contrary, imperatives are usually used to express (sincere) invitations (Dash, 2003: 5).

Another common cause of pragmalinguistic failure can arise from the inappropriate transfer of speech act strategies from the speaker's native language to the foreign language being learnt. A typical example of the transfer of syntactically equivalent structure would be Can you X? which is likely to be interpreted by native speakers as a request to do X rather than a question about one's ability to do X. The following conversation between two family members at dinner table provides evidence:

(2) A: Can you pass me the salt?

B: Yes, I can pass you the salt. (But (s)he did not pass it!)

Here A is actually making a request. B may properly react by saying 'Yes./ 'Yes, I can.' with the action of passing the salt (or simply doing the action). Otherwise, the response in the example implies either The hearer's unsuccessful interpretation of The speaker's intention (if without any action while answering) or The hearer's unwillingness to do the action, and thus communication breaks down (Nelson, et al. 2005: 9).

Other examples of pragmalinguistic failure, mentioned by Thomas (1983:101-102), include the use of “of course” by Russian speakers of English:

(3) Native speaker of English: Is it a good restaurant?

Russian speaker of English: Of course.

In this example, “of course” is acceptable in Russian and it means “yes, it is” but for the English “of course”, which means “how stupid” in this context, seems impolite or insulting because it implies that the speaker is ignorant or stupid, and only an idiot would ask such a question (Reynolds, 1995: 6)

Exactly a similar pragmalinguistic failure occurs with Chinese speakers of English. Lin (2005, 58) states that the drug stores in China are usually open on Sundays. An English visitor did not know that, so he asked the Chinese guide:

(4) Visitor: Are the drug stores open on Sundays?

Guide: Of course.

(The visitor seemed embarrassed.)

Commenting on this example, Lin (ibid) mentions that ‘Of course’ indicates enthusiasm in a Chinese context, meaning ‘Yes, indeed it is’.

According to Kasper (1984: 3), pragmalinguistic failure happens because learners respond to what speakers say rather than to what they mean. The following example presented by Kasper (ibid) shows a pragmalinguistic failure caused by teaching-induced errors: a second language learner (L) is taking leave from her native English speaker landlady (E) with whom she stayed for two years.

(5) E: I've got some sandwiches ready for you here. I hope it'll be enough.

L: Yes, of course it will be enough.

In example (5), E does not mean whether the sandwiches are enough to L or not. She merely tries to express gratitude to L at her termination. Therefore, L's response seems to be impolite to E; it should be something like “thank you how sweet” or “thank you how thoughtful” and so on. L has no intention to offend E but, being pragmatically incompetent in English, she responds literally to E's utterance (ibid).

2. 2. Sociopragmatic failure

Sociopragmatic failure is a term used to denote the breakdown of the social conditions placed on language in use. Put differently, it happens when miscalculations are made about factors like size of imposition, social distance, relative rights and obligations ...etc. Sociopragmatic decisions are, therefore, social in the first place rather than linguistic (Thomas, 1983: 104). So, it is likely that a foreign speaker will assess size of imposition, social distance...etc. differently from a native speaker. Reynolds (1995: 5) narrates that he was once in Poland traveling on a train for two hours with a Polish stranger when they had the following chat:

(6) Reynolds: I wonder how many trees there are in Poland.

[pause]

The Polish: I cannot imagine who would want to know that!

The Polish citizen in this example fails to interpret Reynolds' utterance as a gambit to initiate an idle conversation the purpose of which is only to pass the time of day. In addition to not understanding the intended message, the Polish passenger in fact made his interlocutor feel rebuked for having (supposedly) asked an impossible question or even a foolish one!

Sometimes nonnative speakers' judgment of relative power would result in a sociopragmatic failure. A typical instance of such a case occurs in the following conversation between a Chinese passenger (P) and a native English taxi driver (D):

(7) P: Excuse me; I wonder if you could take me to the airport.

D: Oh...! Well...! (feels at loss!)

Here the passenger feels he is in a position of disadvantage for not being a native speaker and so he speaks too deferentially and, consequently, sounds unnatural and funny. In fact, in such a

situation, native English speakers use only “Airport, please” which is quite appropriate in this context.

Thomas (1983:105) also presents “taboos” as an example of sociopragmatic failure. The following conversation shows an example of a taboo where Sara, a native English speaker has just arrived in Korea, her host country. Laura, a Korean, is helping Sara unpack her clothes (Montgomery and Tinsley-Kim, 2001: 75):

(8) Laura: What nice things you have!

Sara: Thank you. It took me a long time to pack!

Laura: But your clothes are so tiny. You are too thin! How much do you weigh?

Sara: Uh, well ... I'm not sure.

Laura: Not sure! You're about 52 or 54 kilos, aren't you?

Sara: Uhm well....

Laura: My scale is right in the bathroom there. Let's weigh you now.

Sara: Uhm thank you, really, that's OK.

According to Eun-Sook (2006:7), Koreans ask friends or acquaintances questions about age, weight, religion, height...etc. in ordinary conversation, and in (8) Laura asks Sara about her weight. However, in the western culture it is a taboo to ask a question about age, weight, and so on. Like this, taboo can cause sociopragmatic failure.

Thomas (1983: 106) believes that “pragmatic principles, such as politeness, conflict with other deeply held values such as truthfulness or sincerity” and can lead to a sociopragmatic failure. An example of sociopragmatic failure cited by Montgomery and Tinsley-Kim (2001:76) includes the use of “No thank you” by an American native speaker woman (B) in a conversation with a Korean man (A):

(9) A: It's Friday night. Nice music, isn't it? ...

Why don't you dance with me?

B: No, thank you. I don't like this music.

A: (After 10 minutes, another piece of music is on. . .) It is very

romantic. Would you like to dance with me?

B: Uhm, I don't feel like dancing right now.

A: (After few minutes later) How about a drink? You will feel better. Go ahead! Have some drink. And then, let's dance.

B: Umm..... Please, leave me alone!

The American woman's use of "No, thank you" in (9) means she really does not want to dance with him. She already made an obvious decision and has no expectation. But the Korean man thinks about it in a totally 'Korean' way. In Korea, gentlemen usually should offer their interest until they get the positive reaction from a lady. They believe that it is the polite manner for ladies. This situation is an example of a sociopragmatic failure caused by misjudgement about "value judgement" (Thomas, 1983:106).

3. Reasons of Pragmatic Failure

In addition to what has been mentioned in Section 2 above, some other reasons of pragmatic failure as identified by some researchers can be mentioned here. Thomas (1983: 91), for instance, believes that the main reason behind any pragmatic failure is the differences between the 'cultures' of the interlocutors. It is worth mentioning here that the term 'cross-cultural' not only refers to "native-nonnative interactions," but also to "any communication between two people who, in any particular domain, do not share a common linguistic or cultural background".

Tannen (1989:11) goes further to mention that not only the differences in cultures but also differences in the speakers' conversational styles can lead to various subtle misunderstanding and misjudgements. Also, because our verbal communication styles reflect and embody the beliefs and worldviews of our culture, the levels on which differences arise, and the depth of misunderstanding, are far more acute in the case of broad cross-cultural communication. Stated differently, cultures vary from country to country, and also differ among various groups within a country and, as a consequence, culture divergence interferes in language use and may lead to negative transfer generating pragmatic failures (Chen & Starosta, 1998:147).

According to Tannen (1989: 23), indirectness, ellipsis, silence, etc. can lead to pragmatic failure. For instance, indirectness, which is a function of politeness in many cultures, can also bring about misunderstandings with more frank native English speakers. Indirectness can be interpreted as a violation of the Gricean maxims of quality and quantity, and lead to suspicion on the part of the English speaker.

Another important reason causing pragmatic failure is that English learners' pragmatic knowledge in their native language significantly influences their comprehension and production of pragmatic performance in English. Negative pragmatic transfer involves utilizing the sociolinguistic rules of speaking in one's native speech community when interacting within the target speech community (Wolfson, 1989: 54). In this respect, Kasper (1984:1) indicates two types of second language learners' pragmatic misunderstanding of being unable to distinguish between 'phatic talk' and 'referential talk', and of missing the intended illocutionary force of indirect speech acts.

A fourth reason for pragmatic failure that is worth referring to here is the lack of pragmatic knowledge of the target language. It is commonplace for teachers to deliver a lesson by analyzing sentence structures, explaining lexis and answering questions on grammar. In Iraqi EFL contexts and out of our personal experience, we can confidently assert that correctness of the language form is the most important thing to students and teachers. Most, if not all, teachers focus more on the explanation of language points, and seldom integrate cultural knowledge with the teaching of linguistic forms. As a result, there will be occurrences of pragmatic failure and a lack of cultural and pragmatic knowledge among the students and, in this respect, it is not teachers who are to blame. Rather it is the structural approach adopted in most of our academic institutions which focuses only on error-free sentences.

Consequently, for Iraqi EFL students, teaching-induced errors represent an influential source of pragmatic failure. This is so because Iraqi EFL students do not have inconsequential opportunities to be exposed to an authentic English environment

and communicate with native English speakers. English classes, teachers, and textbooks are their main sources of the foreign culture and pragmatic knowledge. For example, though the textbook assigned to the sixth preparatory stage adopts a functional approach, it does not provide the students with enough contextual factors that lead to the development of these learners' awareness of the role played by such factors in using the target language. Moreover, some teaching techniques applied by Iraqi teachers of English actually increase the likelihood of pragmatic failure as they basically resort to the grammar translation approach or the audio-lingual approach for teaching a functional material. The principles of such techniques, especially those of the audio-lingual approach, emphasize the production of error free sentences regardless of how well rules of use have been applied by the students.

Furthermore, since Iraqi teachers of English normally conduct classes in accordance with the materials provided in the textbooks, they may find it unnecessary to introduce much about the foreign culture to their students. However, as cultural differences are the main source of pragmatic failure, students without a good understanding of the foreign culture are likely to have difficulties when communicating with native English speakers.

4. Overcoming Pragmatic Failure

In order to overcome pragmatic failure, reference can be made to a number of factors, the first of which is raising the learners' awareness of the target culture. Doing this demands that learners have to understand their own native values and the values of the target culture, norms, customs and social systems (Chen, 1990: 254). The target culture should be integrated into English learning, not only by including values, beliefs, customs and behaviours of the English-speaking countries, but also by explaining the cultural connotations of words, phrases and idioms. In this regard, it is useful to make intensive use of textbooks together with authentic materials such as film scripts, plays, newspapers, articles and internet to provide relevant cultural information which may increase the students' cultural knowledge. It is also functional, here,

to compare parallel social situations from the learner's native culture and the target culture, talk about the differences and similarities of meaning and appropriateness in such situations.

As pointed out by McArthur (1983:83), nothing that is taught can be isolated from the socio-cultural environment in which it occurs. National policies, cultural attitudes, political disputes, class tensions, economic differences and the like usually walk into the classroom with the student and the teacher, stay there throughout the lecture, and go out again with them at the end. Therefore, the teacher's role is more important in helping students overcome pragmatic failure in the foreign language learning.

Canale (1983:19), discussing boosting communicative competence, presents a curriculum-wide approach as one of the ways of developing pragmatic fluency in the target language. According to him, the main goal of a communication-oriented foreign language programme must be to provide the learner with the information, practice and much of the experience required to meet their communication needs in the foreign language. Canale (ibid: 22) highlights that “learners should be taught about language, drawing as much as possible from the first language programme, and about the second language culture, drawing as much as possible from other subject areas”. In line with this, Wolfson (1983:84) suggests collecting data that are broad enough in scope to offer information on how a particular speech act occurs among different groups of people in speaking of different topics over a broad range of situations.

Jung (2005), believes that learners can acquire the knowledge of how to get meaning across situations as they become socialized through experiencing a variety of roles in interactions in the classroom under the teachers' guidance. In the classroom, it is important for English teachers to create a relaxing, interesting and engaging environment and provide opportunities for learners to use the target language. The teacher should create some situations close to reality, such as how to negotiate with a landlord about renting a room. Role-play, simulation and drama engage students in different social roles and speech events (Kasper, 1997) and provide

opportunities to practise the wide range of pragmatic and sociolinguistic abilities (Olshtain & Cohen, 1991).

5. Data collection and analysis

5. 1. Method of data collection

The data of the work have been collected by means of a questionnaire submitted to university Iraqi EFL students and their teachers, and a group of four native speakers of English.

5. 1. 1. The questionnaire

The questionnaire includes twenty situations, each of which represents a real-life communicative situation which is likely to occur in the target language community. The questionnaire is built upon various situations selected from a number of sources consulted in this study, basically from (Lin, 2008). Some situations; however, have been modified a little by the researchers themselves to ensure the subjects' understanding of the situations, the appropriateness of which has been approved by the control group of the native speakers with some modifications that have been taken into consideration in designing the final version of the questionnaire (see Appendix).

Each situation consists of four options with only one of which is the most pragmatically appropriate one. The four options; however, are all grammatical in order to collect data about whether students and teachers pay attention to rules of use or they are mainly concerned with how well the answer is grammatically correct.

The answers of the native speakers who represented the control group of the study were taken as the key responses against which Iraqi subjects' answers were measured. The subjects were required to encircle the pragmatically most appropriate option. Additionally, the teachers' group was asked to tick the answers that could be tolerable answers when made by the students. Similarly, the students' group was asked to tick other options which they think to be also acceptable responses to the situation to check whether their teachers accept those responses as suitable ones as well by matching them with their teachers' choices.

5. 1. 2 Subjects

The sample of the study consists of three groups: the first and the second groups represent the experimental group while the third represents the control group. the first group involves forty Iraqi first-year and forty fourth-year students randomly chosen from the Department of English/ College of Education for Human Sciences/ University of Babylon during the academic year 2011-2012. The second group comprises seven university teachers holding Ph. D. and twenty-four university teachers holding M. A. degrees representing the teaching staff of the Department mentioned above. The third group includes four British English native speakers working in some NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) in Babylon Province.

5. 1. 3 Task administration

Iraqi EFL students were asked to sit for the questionnaire on February, 2012. Before letting the students respond to the questionnaire, instructions were given to them in their mother tongue (i. e., Arabic). The students' native language was used because, as Olshtain and Cohen (1983: 32) believe, this enables them fully understand what they are required to do and there will be no chance for biasing the students' responses towards certain expressions used in the instructions. Besides, students were encouraged not to hesitate to ask for any illustration regarding how to respond to the situations of the questionnaire. The meanings of difficult words as used in the situations of the questionnaire have been given to them in Arabic. They were also told that the time allotted for answering the questionnaire was only one hour. This as well as the other difficulties expected to occur while conducting the task have been decided in accordance with a pilot task submitted to a number of students representing both levels (ten first-year and ten fourth-year students) two weeks before conducting the main task from which students who have participated in the pilot task were excluded.

Content validity of the questionnaire was ensured by constructing its items in such a way that measured only what was

required by it. Additionally, as mentioned in Section (5. 1. 1.) above, the questionnaire was given for assessment to four native speakers who approved it.

5. 1. 4 Key answers and statistical methods

The answers of the control group, as mentioned in section (5. 1. 1.), are taken as key responses against which Iraqi subjects' answers were checked. All native speakers agreed on certain appropriate answers. No difference was identified in all of their answers, the matter which signalled that their choices really represented the target culture. They allow for only one option in each situation to be the most appropriate one and no other options were allowed by them in all of the situations. The statistical methods used to calculate the results of all the groups were limited to the percentage and frequency equations.

5. 2. Analysis

5. 2. 1. Subjects' overall performance

Table (1) below shows the overall results of the study for the Iraqi subjects in percentage. The results reveal that, generally speaking, the Iraqi subjects' pragmatic performance is poor since the average pragmatic success they recorded amounts to only 55.75%, according to Table (1) which also shows that, on the whole, the first-year students' pragmatic failure amounts to 53.5% while fourth-year students demonstrated a better pragmatic performance than that of the first-year students.

Table (1): Overall performance of Iraqi subjects in percentage

	Pragmatic success	Pragmatic failure	The progress
1st year students	46.5	53.5	
4th year students	51.625	48.375	5.125
teachers with M A degree	61.19	38.81	9.565
teachers with PhD degree	63.71	36.29	2.52
Average	55.75	44.25	

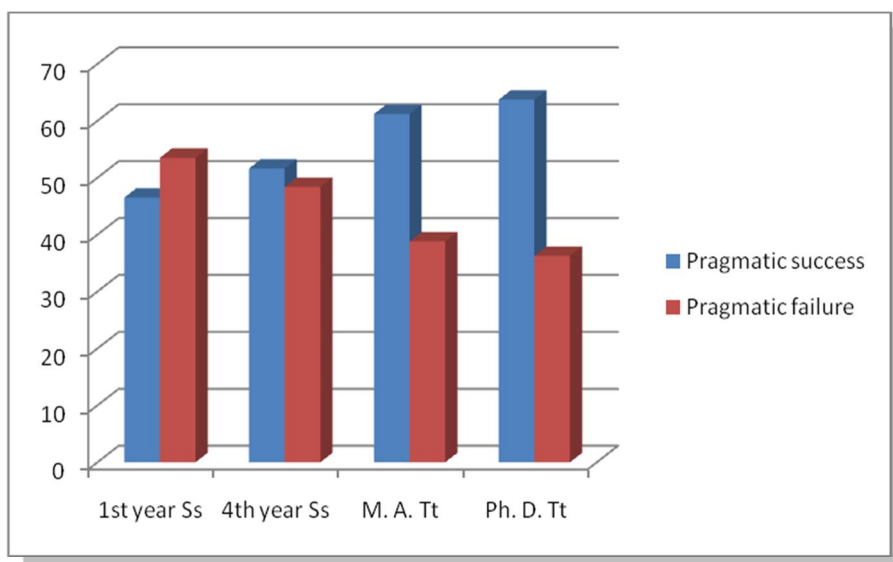


Figure (1) A graphic representation
for the overall performance of Iraqi subjects

However, their pragmatic failure, which amounts to 48.38%, indicates that they have not developed enough awareness of the pragmatic rules of use during the four-year period of the B. A. course of study.

Consequently, the difference in the pragmatic performance between the first-year and the fourth-year students is only 5.125% which is not that important when their period and nature of study at the university level are taken into consideration. The progress between the fourth-year undergraduate students and their teachers who hold an MA degree is again very little since the latter record only a 9.565% of total progress. The comparison between the last two levels (i.e.) MA and PhD teachers is also a slight one: it is only 2.52%. Accordingly, the teachers' performance, as the results in Table (1) suggest, demonstrate an aspect of pragmatic failure which can be considered noteworthy.

The detailed results shown in Table (2) can be taken as an indicator that the students' failure to respond appropriately is due to

the fact that their teachers themselves have not developed a due pragmatic awareness of the rules of use.

Additionally, the teachers also tolerate responses from their students just because they are grammatically correct, though they (i.e. the teachers) think these responses' are pragmatically inappropriate. Thus, and as Table (2) shows, most of the students' responses are considered acceptable by their teachers, despite their pragmatic inappropriateness.

Table (2): Detailed performance of Iraqi subjects in percentage

Sit.	Item	Tt	Ss	Sit.	Item	Tt	Ss	Sit.	Item	Tt	Ss	Sit.	Item	Tt	Ss
1	A	0.16	0.09	6	A	0	0.13	11	A	0.13	0.16	16	A	0.16	0.04
	B	0.61	0.58		B	0.9	0.75		B	0.77	0.64		B	0.16	0.04
	C	0.06	0.05		C	0	0.01		C	0.39	0.13		C	0.19	0.13
	D	0.42	0.31		D	0.1	0.09		D	0.29	0.09		D	0.87	0.79
2	A	0.19	0.14	7	A	0.13	0.1	12	A	0.58	0.6	17	A	0.84	0.65
	B	0	0.03		B	0	0		B	0.16	0.14		B	0.03	0.01
	C	0.06	0.01		C	0.1	0.33		C	0.16	0.15		C	0.23	0.23
	D	0.9	0.81		D	0.84	0.56		D	0.29	0.09		D	0.35	0.04
3	A	0.9	0.74	8	A	0.13	0.05	13	A	0.13	0.08	18	A	0.23	0.15
	B	0	0		B	0.42	0.49		B	0.19	0.11		B	0.71	0.25
	C	0.06	0.11		C	0.32	0.31		C	0.77	0.68		C	0.32	0.33
	D	0.1	0.11		D	0.35	0.33		D	0.19	0.14		D	0.48	0.26
4	A	0.26	0.06	9	A	0.29	0.41	14	A	0.55	0.46	19	A	0.58	0.35
	B	0.03	0		B	0.16	0.06		B	0.19	0.11		B	0.32	0.34
	C	0.97	0.84		C	0.58	0.35		C	0.55	0.28		C	0.06	0.16
	D	0.19	0.06		D	0.13	0.11		D	0.13	0.15		D	0.13	0.1
5	A	0.55	0.4	10	A	0.03	0.25	15	A	0.77	0.48	20	A	0.06	0.09
	B	0.16	0.08		B	0.26	0.2		B	0.13	0.03		B	0	0.09
	C	0.61	0.44		C	0.48	0.3		C	0.19	0.4		C	0.84	0.6
	D	0	0.01		D	0.32	0.19		D	0.23	0.1		D	0.26	0.18

Out of the eighty items of the twenty situations, only five items are used by the students though they are not accepted by their teachers. These five items constitute only 6.25% out of the eighty items, which is a very inconsequential percentage, adding that the frequency of their use is insignificant. As a result, Table (3) gives further evidence that one reason of the students' pragmatic failures is due to their teachers' tolerance of the inappropriate responses just because they are grammatically correct. This finding verifies our second hypothesis which reads: "teachers allow for [...] pragmatic failure as long as students produce well-formed sentences."

Table (3) Teachers' tolerance of students' inappropriate responses

Situation	Option	Ss		Tt	
		percentage	frequency	percentage	frequency
1	b	57.5	46	61.29	19
2	a	13.75	11	19.35	6
3	d	11.25	9	9.68	3
4	a	6.25	5	25.81	8
5	c	43.75	35	61.29	19
6	d	8.75	7	9.68	3
7	a	10	8	12.90	4
8	b	48.75	39	41.94	13
9	a	41.25	33	29.03	9
10	d	18.75	15	32.26	10
11	c	12.5	10	38.71	12
12	d	8.75	7	29.03	9
13	b	11.25	9	19.35	6
14	a	46.25	37	54.84	17
15	c	40	32	19.35	6
16	d	78.75	63	87.10	27
17	a	65	52	83.87	26
18	c	32.5	26	32.26	10
19	a	35	28	58.06	18
20	d	17.5	14	25.81	8

These results of the Iraqi EFL subjects can be attributed to two main reasons. The first reason is related to the syllabi of English in the Iraqi university and pre-university levels. In Iraqi schools, teaching of English strictly follows the structural approach which focuses only on the forms of language (rules of usage): the

students' task has been to memorize words, learn grammar, analyze sentence structures and do reading comprehension. The functions of language (rules of use) are almost completely ignored. In other words, the main pedagogic aim is accuracy (producing error-free sentences) not appropriateness (producing suitable utterances according to context).

The situation in the Iraqi universities is not better: the students are required to study 103 hours weekly during the four years, as Table 4 shows, only 40 hours (that is only 38.8 % of the total hours of study) are related to linguistics. What is worse is that the syllabi again focus on teaching the systems of the language and only part of General Linguistics in the fourth- year teaches pragmatics with a percentage that does not exceed 0.97 % of the total hours of their study.

Table (4) Percentages of the specializations taught in Departments of English/ Colleges of Education in Iraq

	Linguistics	literature	methodology	Non-English subjects	Total
First year	12	3	0	12	27
Second year	10	8	2	10	30
Third year	10	9	3	0	22
Fourth year	8	9	7	0	24
Total	40	29	12	22	103
Percentage	38.8 %	28.2 %	11.7 %	21.3 %	100 %

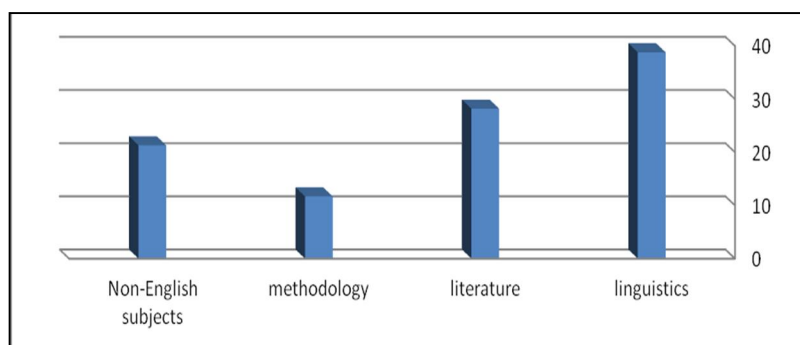


Figure (2) Percentages of specialisation in Iraqi Departments of English/ Colleges of Education

In addition to the problem of the syllabi mentioned above, another serious problem is the exposure to the foreign language and culture (i. e. English). Neither the students nor their teachers are exposed to native speakers of English. They, therefore, do not have the opportunity to observe how English is authentically used in real life situations so that they can practically develop their pragmatic competence.

These two reasons (syllabi and exposure) do deprive the Iraqi learners from developing a pragmatic awareness to use language appropriately. The solution to these two problems is not impossible: it only needs a politico-economic decision to implement new syllabi (with a new approach, of course) and to send EFL university graduates to spend at least a two-month period in an English-speaking community. A solution to the problem of the syllabi is recently put in schools. A similar solution is needed for Iraqi universities; besides, the graduates need to “live” English!

An interesting finding revealed by the results of this study is shown in Table (5) below. In this table, it is clear that the performance of teachers specialized in literature is better than that of those specialized in linguistics, which in turn, is better than that those majoring in methodology. One very probable explanation is that it is not the specialization itself that influences or develops the pragmatic performance but rather it is the knowledge about the target culture, which teachers of literature are better at than other

ones since they deal with poems, plays, novels, and other creative works which are closely tied to culture.

Table (5) performance of teachers according to their specializations in frequency

Situation	Literature	Linguistics	Methodology
1	0.29	0.38	0.55
2	1	0.85	0.91
3	1	0.92	0.82
4	1	1	0.91
5	0.71	0.54	0.45
6	0.86	0.92	0.91
7	0.86	0.85	0.82
8	0.57	0.31	0.27
9	0.71	0.46	0.64
10	0.71	0.62	0.18
11	0.57	0.85	0.82
12	0.57	0.54	0.64
13	0.86	0.69	0.82
14	0.71	0.54	0.45
15	0.43	0.92	0.82
16	0	0.23	0.18
17	1	0.77	0.82
18	0.14	0.54	0.64
19	0.71	0.23	0.18
20	0.86	0.92	0.73

5. 2. 2. Subjects' detailed performance

Table (6) below details the results of all the Iraqi subjects participated in the study. An examination of this table shows that the subjects' responses vary a lot in relation to success and failure in each situation.

In situation 1 (the frowned-upon use of “of course”), Table (6) shows that about half of the fourth-year students and the Ph.D. teachers succeeded in avoiding “of course” while the first-year

students and the M.A. teachers were quite unsuccessful in this regard and they have committed a pragmalinguistic failure.

In situation 2 (a drink invitation), situation 3 (teacher praising a student), and situation 4 (leaving a friend's house), the four levels of subjects were quite successful in selecting the right answer. This might be justified by the similarity, in these situations, between English and Arabic cultures.

In situation 5 (asking about vase), again the four groups gave similar results, but negatively this time. The choice that most subjects have made was "How much did you pay for it?" which represents a sociopragmatic failure which is the usual response Iraqis give when they see something recently bought by an acquaintance believing that they show warmth and concern for the other. In fact when Iraqis meet each other, even sometimes for the first time, they consider it quite normal to ask about each other's age, marital status, children, income and the price of an item they have recently bought. In contrast, English people do not make such an inquiry because they believe that it is regarded as impolite to ask a person such questions which are considered too personal to talk about in public (Lin, 2008: 45).

In situation 6 (buying a dictionary), generally the choices made by the subjects were appropriate. Yet, more than third of the fourth-year students and teachers holding M. A. degrees chose the expression "I hope that you can buy the dictionary for me." As the most appropriate one (which is a sociopragmatic failure) at the time the native speakers of English feel that it does not satisfactorily mitigate the imposition of the face-threatening act of request, considering that there is a great social distance between the students and the professor, so they have no right to force their professors to do anything for them, but some students failed to choose proper strategies to soften the force of the face threatening act. As Xu (2001: 32) mentions, the non-target-like request strategies are indicative of the students' pragmalinguistic incompetence, which results in their inappropriate sociopragmatic use.

In situation 7 (stopping a taxi-driver) the first- and fourth- year students recorded a relatively high percentage of pragmatic failure

whereas the teachers recorded a low percentage of pragmatic failure, the teachers holding M. A. recorded the lowest percentage of pragmatic failure. In this situation, the subjects responded exactly in the same way they do in their native language. In this situation, half of the first- and fourth- year students choose (stop, stop!), which is quite common in our culture in such a situation of “emergency” while it is not acceptable in the English culture since it is in the bold imperative form, thus the students committed a sociopragmatic failure.

Table (6): Iraqi subjects’ detailed performance in percentage with reference to situations

Situation	1st	4th	MA	PhD
1	82.5	55	85.7	50
2	17.5	20	14.3	8.4
3	27.5	25	14.3	8.4
4	22.5	22.5	10	4.2
5	75	55	57.2	41.7
6	25	35	38.6	12.5
7	42.5	45	14.3	20.9
8	90	55	42.9	70.9
9	75	55	38.6	45.9
10	80	60	85.7	45.9
11	42.5	35	14.3	25
12	57.5	22.5	24.3	45.9
13	30	35	24.3	25
14	70	80	28.6	50
15	50	55	24.3	29.2
16	92.5	100	85.8	83.4
17	50	22.5	20	20.9
18	72.5	80	52.9	54.2
19	17.5	80	85.8	62.5
20	50	30	14.3	20.9
Average	53.5	48.38	38.81	36.29

In situation 8, the subjects differed in their choices: most of the first-year students and half of the fourth-year students and teachers holding M. A. used “Yes” in their response which represents a pragmalinguistic failure. Actually what they meant was “yes, I won’t stay”, while for the English speaker the use of ”yes” answers “will you?” which means “yes I will stay.” Native speakers of English in similar situations use “No, I won’t.”

In situation 9 (ordering extra food), the teachers holding M. A. recorded the lowest, whereas the first-year students recorded the highest, percentage of pragmatic failure. The first-year students thought that what they should do in such a situation was giving advice, which is a sociopragmatic failure since the native speakers here offer to share the food and its cost. The teachers holding M. A. degrees responses were successful: about two thirds of them chose “I'd love to share it with you.”

In situation 10 (asking about weight), the highest pragmatic failure percentage was recorded by the teachers holding M. A., while the lowest percentage was recorded by the university teachers holding Ph. D. degrees. Most teachers holding M. A. and first-year students chose “My scale is in the bathroom. Let's weigh you now.” believing that they were offering help and showing concern but not trespassing other’s personal territory. Native speakers, however, consider it taboo to ask about weight, therefore, our subjects have committed here a sociopragmatic failure.

In situation 11 (offering sandwiches), the responses were in general appropriate since most of the subjects chose “Oh, how nice of you! Thanks a lot.” and the others chose “Thank you” which was less appropriate though it did not represent a pragmatic failure by itself.

In situation 12 (ending a conversation), about half of the first-year students and the university teachers holding Ph. D. degrees failed to select the appropriate choice: they used “Thanks” instead of “Enjoyed meeting you too” whereas the fourth-year students and teachers holding M. A. recorded a low percentage of pragmatic failure 22.5% and 24.3 % respectively. Hence, in this situation the

subjects committed a pragmalinguistic failure, though with a low percentage.

In situation 13 (responding to thanking), the subjects' performance was generally satisfactory: most of the subjects have made the right choice that is usually used by native speakers which is "You're welcome!" but still some of them have made other choices.

In situation 14 (responding to an offer), it is surprising that the subjects did not behave appropriately. The subjects' answers varied between the four options given in the questionnaire, which meant that they have had no clear idea as what expression to use in such a situation, thus their failure in this situation is pragmalinguistic. Some of the subjects used "No, please" which was quite inappropriate in such situations, others used "Thanks" which was again inappropriate since it would not be clear whether "Thanks" here meant "Thanks, I don't" or "Thanks, I do". Only one response is appropriate here which is "Yes, please."

In situation 15 (asking your teacher to repeat), the responses made by the subjects are really disappointing because, though they have been taught to use "I beg your pardon!" in such situations since they were pupils in school, they used either "Repeat it, please." or "Again, sir." assuming that the use of "please" or "sir" sufficed to mitigate the imposition of the imperative sentence they are using. Again, a pragmalinguistic failure is committed here.

Situation 16 (inviting a friend to visit your flat) is found to be the most difficult one since the subjects completely failed to select the suitable choice that all native speakers made which was "I'll be very happy to receive you at my flat." Most subjects chose "Why don't you visit me?" which is a literal translation to an expression they usually use in such situations in their native language. Hence, a 'social' interference is apparent here that caused the subjects to commit a sociopragmatic failure.

Conversely, situation 17 (taking another's suitcase) does not seem puzzling: the subjects' performance on the whole was not bad since the majority of subjects used the appropriate answer "I'm really sorry. It resembles mine a lot." However, half of the first-year students selected an inappropriate expression like "Oh, God! This is embarrassing!"

In situation 18 (hiring a taxi to the airport), a sociopragmatic failure was committed by most subjects especially first-year students who wrongly judged the level of politeness required. Some subjects used the over-polite expression "Would you please take me to the airport?" which taxi-drivers do not expect for it is their job to take you where you want and they receive fees in return. Nevertheless, this does not justify the choice made by some subjects of the rude expression "Airport. I'm in a hurry!" Actually, "Airport, please" is what native speakers of English use in such situations.

Situation 19 yields unexpected results: only the first-year students selected the right choice: other subjects recorded a high percentage of sociopragmatic failure. They did not realize that English people always compliment each other on whatever new they wear even though they may not like it. The other subjects selected either "I like your new shirt although it is old-fashioned." which is quite contradictory or "Oh god! Where have you got this shirt from?" in which the use of "Oh god!" suggests that the shirt is very awful.

Finally, in situation 20, some subjects did not realize that the expression used by their interlocutor was only a gambit that was intended to start a conversation and so they responded literally to them. Interestingly enough, some first- and fourth- year students selected item d (No reply) which is gravely offensive for the native speaker since not responding to others' speech reflects disrespect, hence, another case of sociopragmatic failure is recorded in this situation.

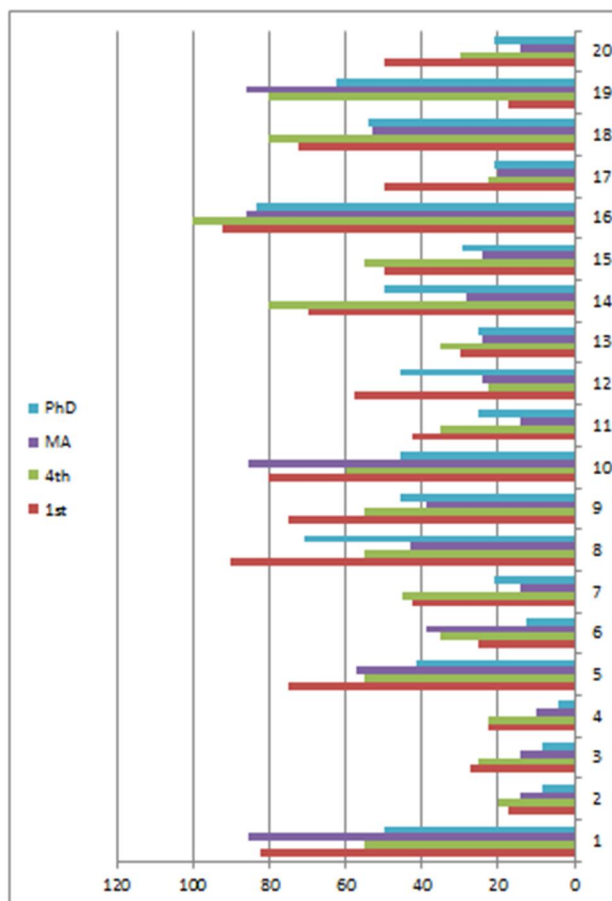


Figure (2) A graphic representation for the detailed performance of Iraqi subjects in percentage

6. Conclusions

In this paper, the notion of pragmatic failure is tackled both theoretically and empirically. In the theoretical part, an attempt is made to identify and define the notion of pragmatic failure in addition to illustrating the role it plays in creating problems for EFL learners when they are involved in authentic English situations.

More importantly, the study empirically investigates the pragmatic performance of Iraqi learners of English as a foreign language for both university students and their teachers. After

analyzing and discussing the data, the following conclusions are arrived at:

1. Teaching English should not be restricted to the rules of usage which, though essential, are less important than the rules of use that guarantee successful communication.
2. Committing a linguistic error when interacting with native speakers, the EFL learner will only be recognized as a nonnative speaker while committing a pragmatic failure usually causes offence and reflects badly on the EFL learner as a person.
3. Pragmatic failures are mainly the result of (a) differences between the learner's native culture and the target culture, (b) lack of pragmatic knowledge of the target language, and (c) negative pragmatic transfer from the learner's native language to the target language.
4. Language and culture are two inseparable entities, thus teaching language without teaching its culture is a defective process that results in pragmatic failure. It is, therefore, very crucial to incorporate the target culture in the teaching of a foreign language.
5. Iraqi EFL learners' pragmatic performance is generally not promising since their average pragmatic success amounts to only 55.75%.
6. Years of study do not seem to satisfactorily develop the pragmatic performance of the learners since the difference in this regard between the first-year students and their Ph.D teacher is only 17.21%.
7. The pragmatic failures committed by Iraqi EFL students can be attributed to the following reasons:
 - a) The teaching approach as well as the syllabi adopted in our schools and universities are defective since their prime concern is accuracy of usage rather than appropriateness of use and as such they are of no help in raising the pragmatic awareness of the learners.

- b) The teachers themselves have not developed sufficient pragmatic awareness; thus, they sometimes committed pragmatic failures and at other times accepted the students' responses because they are grammatically correct despite their pragmatic inappropriateness.
 - c) The lack of exposure to the target culture for both the students and their teachers.
8. Because of the lack of the pragmatic competence in the target language, the learners:
- a. mostly resort to the rules of use of their native language, most of which is considered a negative transfer due to the differences between the two cultures; and,
 - b. wrongly estimate the amount of politeness needed for each situation: they are, consequently, more polite than is appropriate in certain situations and less polite at others.

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Appendix: Situations of the questionnaire

1. Situation: The drug stores in your town are usually open on Sundays. An English visitor doesn't know that, so he asks you:
Visitor: Are the drug stores open on Sunday?
YOU: (a) Of course.
(b) Yes, of course.
(c) What a question!
(d) Yes.
2. Situation: You are at an English colleague's house. He invites you to drink something:
colleague: Tea or Coffee?
YOU: (a) No trouble, please.
(b) No, please.
(c) Yes, please.
(d) Tea, please.
3. Situation: Your teacher of English is talking to you in the class saying to you:
teacher: Your English is excellent.
YOU: (a) Oh, thanks.
(b) No, my English is very poor.
(c) You are right.
(d) No, I don't think so.
4. Situation: After you have stayed in your friend's house, you are ready to leave:
YOU: (a) I'm sorry I took up you too much time.
(b) I'm sorry I stayed with you.

(c) It was nice to stay with you but I have to leave.

(d) I stayed long, so I'll leave.

5. Situation: You are at a friend's house (who is a native English speaker). There, you have seen a vase which, you think, is very beautiful. After expressing your admiration of the vase you ask:

YOU: Look! What a beautiful vase you've got here.

FRIEND: I got it last week. And it was made in China.

YOU: The design is marvellous. And the shape, too.....

(a) How much did you pay for it?

(b) I wish I had it.

(c) I wonder whether I can get one like it.

(d) Give it to me. Why don't you?

Friend: Oh, I bought it at the China Exhibition. It's not expensive. But I don't know if the exhibition is still on.

6. Situation: You are a first-year student in the Department of English. You need to buy a particular dictionary but you could not get it. You think that your professor would be of help to you. Therefore, you say to him:

YOU: (a) I want you to buy the dictionary because I don't know where to buy it from.

(b) I couldn't get the dictionary. I wonder if it is possible, sir, that you help me in buying it?

(c) Buy the dictionary for me and I'll be happy.

(d) I hope that you can buy the dictionary for me.

7. Situation: You are in Britain taking a taxi to a hotel. The taxi-driver does not notice that he has passed the hotel so you want to stop him:

YOU: (a) Can't you notice that you've passed the hotel?

(b) What are you doing?

(c) Stop, stop!

(d) I think we've passed the hotel.

8. Situation: You are in Britain staying in the house of an English colleague of yours for some time. Your colleague will have a trip to Italy during the Easter Holiday. He addresses you saying:

colleague: You won't stay here by yourself, will you?

YOU think that you should leave the house as well, so you say:

(a) Yes.

(b) No, of course not.

(c) No problem, I'll take care of myself.

(d) Don't bother, I can manage it.

9. Situation: You are studying in a flat at Cambridge. You are having the following chat with your flatmate:

FLATMATE: I've ordered a lot of food and paid a lot of money, but I can not eat it up.

YOU: (a) You've wasted your money, don't you think so?

(b) I won't do such a thing.

(c) I'd love to share it with you.

(d) I don't know. But I think you should throw it out.

10. Situation: Talking to your friend who has just moved to live with you in your flat, you have the following conversation:

YOU: Your clothes are so tiny. You are too thin. How much do you weigh?

FFRIEND: Uh, well..... I'm not sure.

YOU: (a) My scale is in the bathroom. Let's weigh you now.

(b) Not sure, or you don't want to confess it!?

(c) Know what? I'm not sure of my weight either!

(d) Come on! I think you need to put on some weight!

11. Situation: You are studying in Cambridge University and in the meantime staying in a flat. You are having the following chat with your English flatmate:

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

YOU: (a) Yes, of course it will be enough.

(b) Oh, how nice of you! Thanks a lot.

(c) Thank you.

(d) Thanks but I don't feel hungry right now.

12. Situation: You are in London to study in its university. One day, you go to the Hide Park to pass some time and have the following conversation with a person (who happens to be a teacher) you meet there for the first time:

OTHER: Nice to meet you.

YOU: Nice to meet you, too.

(After chatting for a while)

OTHER: Nice meeting you.

YOU: (a) Enjoyed meeting you too.

(b) Thank you. In fact, I want to ask you about your school.

(c) Yes, indeed, and I would like to ask you about teaching here.

(d) Thanks.

13. Situation: Your classmate has asked you to provide him with some references. Next day, you bring them to him and he thanks you.

CLASSMATE: Thanks a lot. That's a great help.

YOU: (a) It doesn't matter.

(b) Never mind.

(c) You're welcome.

(d) That's all right.

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14. Situation: You are in your English friend's house for the first time. You have the following conversation:

FRIEND: Would you like a piece of cake?

YOU: (a) Thanks.

(b) No, please.

(c) Yes, please.

(d) Why not?

15. Situation: In a lecture, you could not get what your teacher has explained and want him to repeat:

YOU: (a) I beg your pardon.

(b) I couldn't understand you.

(c) Repeat it, please.

(d) Again, sir.

16. Situation: You are in Britain and want to invite a new English friend to your flat:

YOU: (a) Why don't you visit me?

(b) Come to my place and I'll show you some hospitality.

(c) Visit me someday and you'll enjoy it.

(d) I'll be very happy to receive you at my flat.

17. Situation: At the airport, you have unintentionally taken someone else's bag at the baggage reclaim. The owner of the bag notices that and asks you to give it back to him. Feeling embarrassed, you apologize to him saying:

YOU: (a) I'm really sorry. It resembles mine a lot.

(b) Here you are.

(c) Oh, sorry. Take it.

(d) Oh, God! This is embarrassing!

18. Situation: While in London, you want to take a taxi to the airport to catch your flight. What would you say to the taxi-driver?

YOU: (a) I wonder whether you can take me to the air port.

(b) Airport, please.

(c) Airport. I'm in a hurry!

(d) Would you please take me to the airport?

19. Situation: One day, your workmate comes to work wearing a new shirt which seems to you to be old-fashioned. After "Good morning" you say:

YOU: (a) I like your new shirt although it is old-fashioned.

(b) What a nice shirt! Where have you bought it from?

(c) Why do you wear such an old-fashioned shirt?

(d) Oh god! Where have you got this shirt from?

20. Situation: You are travelling on a train in England; beside you is a person you do not know. The journey is over two hours long. The landscape beyond the window is full of trees. The person starts talking to you saying:

TRAVELLER: I wonder how many trees there are in England.

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YOU: (a) I wonder who wants to know that!

(b) Is it possible to tell how many they are?

(c) Yes, England is famous of its green sceneries. This is my first visit here.
What about you?

(d) (No reply).