

Pragmatic Competence of Jordanian EFL Learners

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Abstract : The study investigates the Jordanian EFL learners' pragmatic competence through their production of the speech acts of responding to requests, making suggestions, making threats and expressing farewells. The sample of the study consists of 130 Jordanian EFL learners and native speakers. 2600 responses were collected through a Discourse Completion Test (DCT). The findings of the study revealed that the tested students showed similarities and differences in performing the strategies of four speech acts. Differences in the students' performances led to pragmatic failure instances. The pragmatic failure committed by students refers to a lack of linguistic competence (i.e., pragmalinguistic failure), sociocultural differences and pragmatic transfer (i.e., sociopragmatic failure). EFL learners employed many mechanisms to maintain their communicative competence; the analysis of the test on speech acts showed learners' tendency towards using particular strategies, resorting to modify strategies and relating them to their grammatical competence, prefabrication, performing long forms, buffering and transfer. The results were also suggestive of the learners' lack of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge. The implications of this study are for language teachers to teach interlanguage pragmatics explicitly in EFL contexts to draw learners' attention to both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features, pay more attention to these areas and allocate more time and practice to solve learners' problems in these areas. The implication of this study is also for pedagogical material designers to provide sufficient and well-organized pragmatic input.

Keywords : pragmatic failure, Jordanian EFL learner, sociopragmatic competence, pragmalinguistic competence

Conference Title : IC MELT 2023 : International Conference on Multilingual Education, Learning and Teaching

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : October 16-17, 2023