

The Role of Strategies on Developing Iraqi Learners' Usage of Request in EFL Classroom

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Abstract— This study described English learners' pragmatics development, learners' pragmatics competence in the selected speech act of request as a one of the most importance aspects of pragmatic, request strategies that they utilized in gaining pragmatic ability. The study was presented by a public curriculum lead that prioritizes the necessity for English students to develop their ability to utilize request strategies positively in academic and cultural communications. Moreover, Many English students fail to present pragmatic aspects on how to understand different strategies by relating utterances to their meanings, knowing the intention of language users, and how request strategies are utilized in specific locations. There is developing material of studies on awareness-raising of the value of pragmatic competence and request strategies for EFL schoolroom teaching. However, researchers have pointed to concentrate on the traditional methods rather than how English learners require or understand request strategies to develop the students' production of request in the EFL schoolroom. The request strategies and methods of teaching English to these Iraqi learners have been deliberated in details of the existing paper.

Keywords— *Pragmatics growth, Request strategies, Pragmatic competence, and EFL learners.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the learning of a foreign language is a great challenge not only for an English student but also for an English trainer in EFL locations. Students need to be equipped with the fitting communicative ability to accomplish successful interaction among the students to master a foreign language. As one of the features of a language is to provide appropriate meaning in process of learning, it is needed for language students to know how to use lexical units or grammatical structures for achieving efficient communication (Kurdghelashvili, 2015). Earlier studies (Canale, 1983; Krasner, 1999; Kurdghelashvili, 2015; Hussein & Albakri, 2019) confirmed that understanding only vocabulary or grammar is insufficient to be a competent language learner. A student considered as an excellent language learner may not be able to connect with students of the target language. Hence, English students need to have communicative competence which contains both language competence and pragmatic competence for accomplishing communication among students in diverse situations. Language competence includes pronunciation, vocabulary, spelling, word formation, and sentence rules while pragmatic competence concerns students' use of language and picking the appropriate utterance in the given situation (Leung, 2005).

Moreover, pragmatic competence is considered as one of the main components in the training of communicative language (Hymes, 1972), and it plays a vital role in acquiring diverse cultures of the foreign language. In the same vein, a research by Bataineh and Hussein (2015) stated that pragmatic doesn't focus on grammatical knowledge, but it emphasizes on the meaning of learners' language use in the acts of communication, in addition it focuses on helping the student to create meaning rather than improve perfectly grammatical structure. A study by Hussein and Elttayef (2018) indicated that EFL students' pragmatic which is an aspect of communicative competence. Such pragmatic should be successfully and purposefully chosen in such a way that they should be more testable, teachable, interesting, motivating in FL classroom language. Hence, through teaching pragmatic aspects, English learners can obtain diverse cultures of language. EFL learners display pragmatic competence when the written or spoken language produced is polite and culturally suitable. Besides, pragmatic competence is defined as the students' use of language and utilizes suitable rules and politeness dictated by the way it is understood by the student and express speech acts such as request strategies (Koike, 1989). In order to achieve the goals of students' communication, and improve students' pragmatic ability in

the EFL schoolroom. Therefore, students should recognize pragmatic aspects such as speech acts, specifically request strategies that students employ in their utterances and find out strategies employed by the students to achieve their communication objectives in diverse countries. This may help foreign learners become more pragmatically and culturally aware of their own utterances, and offer insight into language trainers in order to improve EFL students' pragmatic competence in EFL situation.

II. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

From experience of previous studies, and our experiences in teaching English language as a foreign language, it was found that EFL learners in a college in Iraq, they seem to sometimes lack pragmatic competence when trying to communicate or speak in English language in the classroom, which is their foreign language. Additionally, our experience in teaching English as a foreign language in universities, and other educational institutions in Iraq has led me to believe that English language majors/graduates in Iraq have problems in using English for communication, not only in academic expressions but also even in situational conversations of street (Hussein & Albakri, 2019). Moreover, a study by Hussein & Albakri, (2019) stated that increasing interest in teaching pragmatic in many forms of researches, a little in-depth study has been conducted on the effect of teaching pragmatic on Iraqi EFL students, where most of the foreign language teaching lacks adequate teaching pragmatic. As a result, Iraqi learners seem less request polite when connecting in the English language; more specifically when performing face-threatening acts (FTA) such as request in the EFL classroom. As well as, a study by Cohen (1996) stated that language learners can have all of the syntactic setting and lexical items and still not be able to communicate their message because they lack the necessary strategies to communicate their intent. Although some Iraqi learners seem pragmatically competent when speaking in the Arabic language in their communications, this competence is not necessarily reflected in their foreign language when communicating in the EFL classroom (Hussein & Albakri 2019). Consequently, they need to learn request strategies to permit them to make the request suitably.

III. THE AIM OF RESEARCH

Lately, there has been a little empirical research into explanation the importance of strategies on increasing EFL students' usage of the request in academic settings within the Iraqi environment, also explain the usage of request strategies

among EFL learners through using teaching pragmatic. A part of a Ph.D. dissertation, the current study aims to describe the role of strategies on developing Iraqi students' usage of request in EFL classroom. The request is one of the major speech acts that are standard in the part of pragmatics as it is more usually found in everyday students' utterances in diverse situations (Hussein & Albakri, 2019). It is the most produced utterance in the foreign language classroom situation. Therefore, identifying the role of strategies made in the class may help Iraqi EFL learners to be aware of their politeness level and a suitable usage of request in the EFL contexts. Furthermore, teaching pragmatic by using strategies put forward by Iraqi EFL students are also essential to EFL teachers as it can help them comprehend utterances produced by students and respond appropriately. Therefore, findings of different studies (Ellis, 1992; Hill, 1997; Jalilifar, 2009; Hussein & Albakri, 2019) that focused on the importance of request strategies on developing English learners' ability to use request in diverse cultures.

IV. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

4.1 Earlier Studies on Role of Pragmatics in EFL

Learning and Teaching

Before of all, the researcher want to explain the definitions of pragmatics in different studies. Pragmatics is defined "a general cognitive, cultural, and social viewpoint on language phenomena in relation to their usage in forms of behavior in various contexts" (Verschuereen 1999: p.7). In other words, He also defined pragmatics as a part of linguistics, presents a different perspective, which includes a radical departure from the recognized component view that tries to assign to pragmatics its own set of linguistic characteristics in contradiction with morphology and semantics. Of particular interest to this study is the idea of the speech act of request as a part of pragmatics aspects in the English language. Moreover, request means that "by each utterance a talker not only says something but also does certain things: giving information, expressions, stating a fact or hinting an attitude" (Byram, 2000, p.477).

In the same vein, various studies have shown the main role of teaching pragmatics on developing English learners' usage of request in the EFL classroom (Bachman, 1990; Schmidt 1993; Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1997). As well as, Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, (1997) stated syntactic development does not confirm an equivalent level of pragmatic growth, and even excellent learners may not be able to comprehend or convey their intended objectives and contents. For instance, a language learner may pass an exam, but they are not able to

convey the same language suitably in real-life situations because of the lack of pragmatic ability in the classroom. In addition to this view, Kasper (1989) revealed that excellent learners' communicative acts usually had pragmatic failures and proposed that there was a need for pragmatic instruction with assist usage of strategies to include the application of pragmatic aspects in different situations (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1997). Besides, a study by Hussein and Elttayef (2018) and Hussein and Albakri (2019) stated that EFL learners' pragmatic which is an aspect of communicative competence in the classroom. Such pragmatic should be effectively selected in such a way that they should be more testable, teachable, interesting, appealing in the FL classroom. More essentially, an empirical research by Bataineh and Hussein (2015) and Hussein & Albakri (2019) specified that pragmatic doesn't focus on grammatical knowledge, but it emphasizes on the meaning of students' language use in the acts of communication when they learn language. Therefore, pragmatic instruction has been identified as one of the important instructions that help language students become successfully competent in the application of request in different environment.

As well as, concerning pragmatic developing in the instruction of language, a number of activities are beneficial for pragmatic progression and can be classified into two main classes: activities to increase learners' pragmatic awareness and usage of request, and activities providing opportunities for communicative drills (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1997). Both of classes help to develop students' pragmatic aspects especially speech act of request. With regard to awareness-raising activities are those that have been intended to grow recognition of how learners' language forms are utilized appropriately in situations (Eslami- Rasekh, 2005). For instance, a study by Schmidt (1993) states a consciousness-raising method that includes paying conscious attention to related forms, their pragmalinguistic purposes and the sociopragmatic constraints these specific forms include. On the other hand, other activities that provide opportunities for communicative exercise may contain group work, in-class consultations and cultural communications outside the lesson. Therefore, those two activities help to develop EFL learners' pragmatic aspects such as request.

4.2 Earlier Studies on the Role of Strategies in EFL Learning and Teaching

Request strategies played a vital role in developing students' knowledge of the requests in diverse contexts. Besides, they are described as actions and procedures utilized in learning

English language (Oxford, 1993). A study by Oxford & Nyikos (1989) indicated that strategies are frequently referred to as actions or practices that learners utilize to remember what they have learned in the schoolroom, and they also help learners promote their own achievement in language production (Bremner, 1998; Hussein & Albakri, 2019). Therefore, learning strategies put forward by English students are also crucial to English teachers as it can help them understand request produced by students and respond properly.

As well as, prior studies have been conducted to discover the implication of request strategies on language learning and teaching, the findings of studies revealed that significance of strategies on increasing learners' usage of request in post-test (Alcón-Soler, 2005; Rueda, 2006; Hussein & Albakri, 2019). A study by Green and Oxford (1995: p.285) maintained that "more proficient language learners use more learning strategies and more kinds of strategies than less proficient language students". Thus, language learning request strategies not only help learners become competent in learning and utilizing a language in classroom, but they also improve learners' usage of request (Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006).

In the same vein, numerous studies had provided that the students were aware that learning request strategies were a portion of their language learning and pragmatic competence (Yang, 1999; Hong-Nam and Leavell, 2006; Tuncer, 2009; Li, 2010; Hussein & Albakri, 2019). In addition to this view, request strategies were the most prioritized actions that helped in directing, organizing language, and learning pragmatic aspects in the EFL classes. Students at the intermediate level applied more request strategies than beginning or advanced level learners regarding instructor interference in the learning procedure. Essentially, various studies explained the major role of request strategies in developing students' usage of request in EFL environments (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1997; Bremner, 1998; Tuncer, 2009; Hussein & Albakri, 2019). More request strategies learners progressed along the production continuum quicker than less strategic ones. Consequently, this study highlights the learning and teaching of request strategies and its relation with the language production to better know Iraqi students learning situations.

Additionally, it was noted that practical request strategies helped language students develop their communicative languages and pragmatic aspects in the EFL situations (Shridhar & Shridhar, 1986, 1994; Sheorey, 1999; Hussein & Albakri, 2019). It was also observed that request strategies helped EFL students become more effective in their communicative contexts mainly in-class discussions, group

communications. Moreover, the students' social and cultural backgrounds influenced some of the request strategies they utilized when they communicating in classrooms. A study by Yang (1999) indicated quantitative proof to discover English students' learning request strategy in the context of an indigenized form of English. The findings of study uncovered that the important role of request strategies relevant to cultural and educational backgrounds used in learning English language and pragmatic aspects such as request. Furthermore, many studies focused on learning request strategies in language learning have shown that language learning strategies are essential to students in developing their language production, especially in EFL situations (Griffiths, 2003; Ersözli, 2010; Li, 2010; Purdie & Oliver; Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006; Yılmaz, 2010; Hussein & Albakri, 2019). Therefore, the researcher tries to focus on the learning of request strategies for developing Iraqi students' communicative language in EFL schoolroom.

V. CONCLUSION

To conclude of the study, this paper has addressed the major role of strategies as a system in a new field of EFL, as well as its descriptions and characteristics. It has shown studies on pragmatic aspects in EFL learning as well as learners' language request strategies in EFL learning. The studies display a consensus that pragmatic knowledge can be taught request strategies in EFL learning and teaching helps language learners in their progress of pragmatic aspects. Moreover, it has been mentioned that learners' different language request strategies may have served them obtain fruitful language learning findings. However, this summary also reveals that more investigation needs to be conducted in diverse situations to recognize elements that may affect the way learners go about pragmatic development as well as the request strategies they utilize to obtain pragmatic competence. Finally, the researcher tends to put an appropriate strategies and resolve the problem of Iraqi learners' communication in EFL classroom.

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