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OF SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY**

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**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE INTERLANGUAGE PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE OF
LEARNERS AT EENHANA SECONDARY SCHOOL**

BY

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**THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the interlanguage pragmatic competence of learners at Eenhana Secondary School. The study sought to analyse the strategies employed by learners when performing the speech acts of request, apologising and refusal, as they interact with their teachers and fellow learners. The causes of interlanguage pragmatic failure among the learners were examined, and the different strategies to enhance the learners' pragmatic competence were also assessed using the interlanguage pragmatics theoretical framework. A mixed method approach was used for data collection and analysis. The study made use of a random sampling method to collect quantitative data, while purposive sampling was employed to gather qualitative data. The study employed two instruments for the data collection process; A Written Discourse Completion Test which was administered to a study sample of 165 Grade 11 learners, and an interview guide containing structured questions was given to 7 English teachers to elicit data for the factors of interlanguage pragmatic failure and the linguistic strategies to enhance pragmatic competence. The findings of the investigation revealed that interlanguage pragmatic failure is present at Eenhana Secondary School, as learners tend to use direct strategies when formulating the speech acts of request and refusal. Moreover, the findings showed that learners are able to offer expressions of apologies, however, they tend to overuse one particular strategy the most. Furthermore, the study demonstrated that there is a limitation of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge as well as a lack of sociocultural awareness among the learners, resulting from ineffective language teaching and limited exposure to the target language. The study concluded that for effective interactions to take place, then the learners need to develop a culture of reading English literature, as it reflects real life interactions, incorporate pragmatic content into the four English language skills and to use multimedia content, as they offer authentic instructional input.

DECLARATION

I, **Ndeutila Uunyuni Namundjebo**, hereby declare that this thesis entitled, **An investigation into the interlanguage pragmatic competence of learners at Eenhana Secondary**, is my own original work and that not any part of this study or its entirety has been submitted at any university or any other institution of higher learning for the awarding of a degree.

Signature: 

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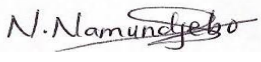
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father, Fillippus Shikambe Namundjebo, who nurtured my passion for learning and taught me the value of perseverance. Your unconditional love and support throughout this entire journey have made this possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	2
DECLARATION	3
AUTHENTICATION OF THE THESIS.....	4
RETENTION AND USE.....	5
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	6
DEDICATION.....	7
LIST OF FIGURES	10
Table of Graphs	11
LIST OF TABLES	12
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	13
Chapter One: Introduction.....	14
1.1. Introduction.....	14
1.2. Background of the Study.....	14
1.4. Research Objectives	17
1.5. Significance of the Study.....	17
1.6. Delimitation of the Study.....	17
1.7. Limitation of the study.....	17
1.8. Definition of Key Terms	18
1.9. Summary of Chapter One	18
Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework	19
2.1. Introduction.....	19
2.2. Interlanguage Pragmatics	19
2.3. Request Speech Act.....	25
2.4. Apology Speech Act.....	35
2.5. Refusal Speech Act	45
2.6. Interlanguage pragmatic Failure.....	58
2.7. Effectiveness of different strategies in improving pragmatic competence	71
2.8. Research gap	80
2.9. Theoretical framework	81
2.7. Summary of the chapter	87
Chapter Three: Research Methods and Procedures	88
3.1. Introduction.....	88
3.2. Research Design	88
3.3. Research Paradigm.....	89
3.4. Research Approach	89

3.5. Research Setting.....	90
3.6. Study Population.....	90
3.7. Sample and Sampling Procedures.....	91
3.8. Research Instruments.....	92
3.9. Data Analysis.....	94
3.10. Ethical Considerations.....	94
3.11. Summary of the chapter.....	95
Chapter Four: Findings and Discussions.....	96
4.1 Introduction.....	96
4.2. Demographic data.....	96
4.3. Formulation and Realisations of Request Strategies.....	98
4.4. Formulation and Realisation of Refusals.....	112
4.5. Causes of interlanguage pragmatic failure.....	120
4.6. Effectiveness of different strategies in improving pragmatic competence.....	123
4.7. Discussion.....	125
4.7.2. Formulation and realisation of Apologies.....	128
4.7.3 Formulation and realisation of Refusals.....	130
4.8. Interlanguage Pragmatic Failure.....	133
4.9. Effectiveness of different strategies in improving pragmatic competence.....	136
Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendation.....	139
5.1. Introduction.....	139
5.2 Conclusions.....	139
5.2.1. Formulation and realisation of Requests.....	139
5.2.2. Realisation and formulation of Apologies.....	139
5.2.3. Realisation and formulation of Refusals.....	140
5.3. Interlanguage pragmatic failure.....	141
5.4. Effectiveness of different strategies in improving pragmatic competence.....	141
5.6. Recommendations.....	142
References.....	144
Appendix A.....	163
Appendix B.....	166

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.....55

Figure 2.....90

Figure 3.....91

Table of Graphs

Graph 191

Graph 2.....92

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.....	92
Table 2.....	94
Table 3.....	96
Table 4.....	98
Table 5.....	100
Table 6.....	101
Table 7.....	102
Table 8.....	103
Table 9.....	104
Table 10.....	105
Table 11.....	106
Table 12.....	107
Table 13.....	109
Table 14.....	111
Table 15.....	112

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

SLA – Second Language Acquisition

ILP – Interlanguage Pragmatics

L2 – Second Language

NNNs – Non-Native Speakers

NSs – Native Speakers

EFL – English Foreign Language

FTA – Face Threatening Act

LAs – Low Achievers

HAs – High Achievers

WDCT – Written Discourse Completion Test

ESL – English Second Language

IFID – Illocutionary Force Indicating Device

TEs – Low Exposure to the target language

TEHs – Strong Exposure to the target language

L1 – First language

L2- Second language

BLEs – Bahrani English learners

ILEs – Indian English learners

CCPF – Cross-Cultural pragmatic failure

NUST – Namibia University of Science and Technology

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, a statement of the research, research objectives, significance of the study, and delimitation of the study and the definition of technical terms. They are presented in this logical order.

1.2. Background of the Study

The key for acquiring a second or foreign language successfully is through effective communication. However, many learners of second language find it difficult to use their target language in communication, despite possessing an excellent grasp of linguistic elements including phonetics, syntax, semantics and phonology (Altheeby, 2018). According to Kasper and Rose (2002), knowing when a statement is acceptable in a particular situation and knowing when to select one viable from over another are two of the most crucial abilities pertaining to pragmatic competence.

The primary goal of learning a second language is to improve one's ability to communicate. However, more advanced learners are often taken aback when they discover that, regardless of adequate knowledge of one's grammatical conventions of the target language, they still encounter interpersonal challenges when trying to initiate a conversation in that language (Taghzideh, 2017). According to Nakale (2018) students enter higher learning institutions from high schools where the focus on teaching second languages is on developing grammar. In schools, it is crucial for learners to understand the appropriate fundamental rules for utilising the language for which they will be evaluated for progress. Pragmatics, however, is not really given adequate time.

Learners of second languages need interlanguage pragmatics awareness because they typically struggle to comprehend the non-literal meaning of expressions that are regularly influenced by their native culture. According to several research findings, second language learners frequently employ different tactics than native speakers do to realise particular speech acts. Learners may conduct particular speech acts more or less indirectly, and with regard to acquisition, even second language learners who have a high degree of grammatical or linguistic proficiency can occasionally only achieve an average level of pragmatic competence (Hamdami, 2019).

According to Tran and Yeh (2020), second language learners have little exposure to the target language's culture, which makes English pragmatic competency a significant problem for second language learners. They claim that there is a significant disconnect between classroom learning and real-world communication, which causes students to be less aware of pragmatic knowledge. Retnowaty (2017) contends that since students have limited opportunities to utilise English in meaningful communication, English second language learners occasionally employ different terms for the same emotions. Additionally, they are hesitant to engage in English-language interactions with

their fellow classmates or surroundings. Additionally, Asghar (2020) claims that English second language learners lack pragmatic expertise, which becomes evident when they interact with people from different backgrounds. Teachers of English as a second language are not sufficiently concerned with helping their students acquire pragmatic knowledge. They mainly concentrate on grammar and vocabulary while ignoring pragmatic practical aspects.

Xu and Wannaruk (2017) conducted a study in order to better understand the interlanguage pragmatic ability of English foreign learners and how it varies by gender when performing speech acts. The findings revealed that Chinese English Foreign Language learners demonstrated a medium degree of interlanguage pragmatic proficiency. The reason behind the interlanguage pragmatic competency of English foreign learners at the medium level could be attributed to cultural disparities.

Linde (2009) performed a comparative investigation of interlanguage pragmatic competence of Spanish and Moroccan English Foreign Language university students. The findings demonstrate that a majority of learners, including those who are competent, lack sufficient interlanguage pragmatic understanding. The results further indicate that the two groups agreed that the speech act of refusal is the hardest. The investigator concluded that the primary cause may be ascribed to the impact of their mother tongue or negative first language transfer.

Mutandi (2022) carried out a study on interlanguage pragmatics of interactions between lecturers and students. A Discourse Completion Test was designed to examine how students formulate and produce refusals while paying close attention to their interlanguage pragmatic competence and awareness. The study found that the students used fewer internal and external modification techniques due to length of the sentences required and the knowledge of choosing the correct language structures and units. This conclusion can be attributed to interlanguage pragmatic transfer. This can result from the fact that these types of strategies do not exist in the first language of the students.

Various studies have examined interlanguage pragmatic competence among EFL/ESL learners. A recurring problem has been found in previous studies that even with good language skills, learners frequently struggle with pragmatic competence. According to research already conducted, cultural background, a lack of exposure to real-world interactions, and a habit of language training to emphasise grammar over pragmatics all have an impact on the acquisition of pragmatic competence.

However, despite these insights, several key gaps remain unexamined. Studies like Mutandi (2022) have looked at pragmatic difficulties in academic contexts, but they have not gone far enough in examining difficulties that Namibian high school learners encounter when attempting to use English pragmatically in classroom communication. Given Namibia's distinct linguistic and sociocultural

environment, where English coexists with several native languages, this study aimed to investigate this understudied topic. In addition, the study is essential as it addresses the knowledge gap on how Namibian learners deal with interlanguage pragmatics in everyday communication, especially in academic contexts. The results can help guide more successful English language teaching strategies that incorporate the development of pragmatic competence with the teaching of grammar and vocabulary by addressing the role that cultural and linguistic background play in pragmatic issues.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

When it comes to comprehending or executing linguistic expressions, learners at Eenhana Secondary School struggle greatly due to their lack of interlanguage pragmatic competence. These learners frequently depart from the pragmatic rules of well recognised second languages, which results in pragmatic failure. When performing various speech acts, these learners frequently generalise the rules of the target language or transfer pragmatic knowledge from their mother tongues which causes misunderstandings. Additionally, since some of the learners lack the necessary interlanguage pragmatic knowledge and are unsure of how to select the right words or phrases, these learners end up modifying their linguistic techniques in order to undertake interactions in the second language. These learners struggle to comprehend and respond appropriately to advanced level speech acts due to their limited ability to understand complex structures. Moreover, when teachers employ significantly more complex grammatical structures or vocabulary in their speech acts, the learners typically struggle with grasping them. Furthermore, these learners generally use simple sentences that are brief and comprehend less high level speech acts. According to Ishihara (2010) low-level language learners are not capable of producing and comprehending complex, compound phrases in their speech acts, however, they can comprehend communications from others when they employ structures that they are familiar with. Lastly, teachers rarely include pragmatic aspects in their lessons, meaning that learners are not exposed to pragmatic guidelines in a sufficient manner in the classroom, which contributes to the learners' lack of interlanguage pragmatic competence. Even though learners possess some linguistic competence, they struggle with interlanguage pragmatics which causes communication breakdowns. In order to properly carry out and interpret speech acts, learners should ideally acquire pragmatic competence. However, this objective is not achieved because of little exposure and poor teaching methods. While previous studies (e.g., Ishihara, 2010) have highlighted the challenges of pragmatic competence among low-level language learners, there is limited research focusing on secondary school learners in Namibia. This study aims to fill that gap by investigating the specific pragmatic challenges learners at Eenhana Secondary School face and proposing strategies to enhance their pragmatic competence.

1.4. Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to investigate the interlanguage pragmatic competence of learners at Eenhana Secondary School. Specifically, this study aims:

- To determine the interlanguage pragmatic competence in performing speech acts of request, apologising and refusal through standardised testing.
- To study the causes of interlanguage pragmatic failure.
- To Assess the effectiveness of different strategies in improving pragmatic competence.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study will benefit the teachers, learners and curriculum developers. It will help second language teachers on how to incorporate pragmatic aspects in their classroom instructions in order to help learners become aware of how the expressions for requests, refusals, and apologies in their native languages vary from those in English so that they can use the target language effectively. Additionally, this study will help teachers to emphasise pragmatics education more and present learners with insightful criticism on how well they are doing when it comes to pragmatic performances. Moreover, the study will assist both teachers and learners in learning how to effectively interact with one another within as well as outside of the classroom by utilising suitable language that fits the situation. Learners will gain from this study by acquiring foundational level of communicative and pragmatic knowledge before leaving high school which may help them later on in their university education as well as in their workplace environments. Requests are frequently made in a variety of contexts, so having the ability to do so politely and directly might assist learners become more effective English speakers. The curriculum developers will benefit from this study as it will make them enforce English teachers to understand the importance of teaching pragmatic knowledge, and it will also assist them in devising pragmatic materials that will help to bring engagement in the classroom among the teacher and learners.

1.6. Delimitation of the Study

This study will only be conducted at Eenhana Secondary School, and it will study a small population and not the whole school which will not provide the researcher with sufficient data. Moreover, the study will specifically deal with the pragmatic competence of learners when it comes to the performance of speech acts of requests, apologising and refusal leaving out other speech acts of thanking, congratulating, etc. Furthermore, there is a lack of local literature regarding pragmatic competence of learners in the Namibian context.

1.7. Limitation of the study

The study was limited by a number of constraints, such as, only one data collection tool was used to gather data from the learners. The study might have produced a variety of findings if different data

collection instruments like role plays and dramas had been used. Moreover, there is insufficient literature on the internet that has documented the interlanguage pragmatic competence of second language learners in Southern African countries. Furthermore, the study did not take into account the sociolinguistic elements, such as, gender pragmatic norms and non-verbal communication.

1.8. Definition of Key Terms

1. Pragmatics - Is the study of how language is employed to effectively communicate what someone truly means in specific contexts, even when the words themselves might seem to mean something else (Puspitarini, 2019).

2. Interlanguage pragmatics – Is the study of how non-native speakers employ and acquire linguistic action structures in a second language (Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993).

3. Pragmatic failure - The phrase "pragmatic failure" describes the inability to interpret what is being communicated (Sheng, 2016).

4. Pragmatic competence - Is the capacity to comprehend and apply language in a suitable and effective manner in order to enhance communication and eventually accomplish the desired goal (Chongy-yuan, 2021).

5. Speech acts - Refers to the entire conversational situation, which includes the utterance's setting and any other factors that may have an impact on the interaction's meaning (Hamdani, 2019).

1.9. Summary of Chapter One

This chapter covered the background of the study. Furthermore, it deliberated on the problem statement by emphasising the challenges that learners at Eenhana Secondary School experience, research objectives, it also touched on the significance of the research, delimitation of the study as well as the definition of technical terms.

Chapter Two

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1. Introduction

This section of the study reviewed literature related to interlanguage pragmatic competence based on the three research objectives. The literature included the interlanguage pragmatic competence in performing speech acts of request, apologising, and refusal, the causes of interlanguage pragmatic failure, and lastly, the effectiveness of different strategies in improving learners' pragmatic competence. Furthermore, it also provided insights of the theoretical framework that guided the investigation.

2.2. Interlanguage Pragmatics

A subfield of second language acquisition (SLA) called interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) studies how second language (L2) learners acquire, apply, and develop their ability to carry out sociocultural tasks. To conduct daily social interactions in the target language, second language learners require certain linguistic structures and abilities. In addition, learners must understand which forms are acceptable for certain situations since the way we communicate is influenced by context, that is, the person we are speaking to and under what conditions. Thus, there are two levels of interlanguage pragmatic competence: language knowledge and sociocultural awareness of social norms, customs, and interactional standards. The main subjects of investigation in ILP research include the ways in which learners acquire these knowledge foundations, individual differences among learners in the process of learning, and factors influencing the process (Taguchi, 2017).

“As the study of second language learning, interlanguage pragmatics investigates how L2 learners develop the ability to understand and perform action in a target language (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 5). Huang (2010) points out that, “As a new interdisciplinary branch of study based on the theories of pragmatics and second language acquisition, interlanguage pragmatics is very practical for foreign language teaching, so theoretical model of interlanguage pragmatics will bring about a lot of enlightenment for foreign language teaching, (p. 684). According to Kasper and Schmidt (1996), “focus is given to the ways non-native speakers' (NNSs) pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge differs from that of native speakers (NSs) and among learners with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds” (p. 150).

According to Amine (2024) sociopragmatics knowledge refers to the ability to comprehend the social rules that influence or regulate communication as well as the proper use and selection of language in line with context. If a language user possess the sociopragmatic knowledge to recognise that a polite request is required in a particular context, but lack the pragmalinguistic knowledge of interrogatives, modals, and conventionalised formulations to perform it, pragmatic failure is likely to occur. On the

other hand, a language user who is in possession of pragmalinguistic tools, but lacks an understanding of sociopragmatic rules may generate grammatically correct sentences that are either too unconventional to be understood or have terrible relationship-level effects. Pragmalinguistic knowledge deals with language formulation, while sociopragmatics is concerned with the linguistic rules employed in various communicative contexts, and are essential for expressing desires. If one is lacking, the other is ill-transmitted and communication will not be conveyed properly.

ILP is primarily concerned with how second language learners make effective use of their developing abilities in the second language to interact effectively in spite of their lack of understanding of the linguistic structures and sociopragmatics of the target language. That is to say, in order to communicate successfully in a second language, learners need to demonstrate not just a basic level skill in lexis, phonology and syntax, but also an understanding of the rules associated with conveying pragmatic concepts in the target language. One approach to get an understanding of their skills is to analyse their performances both within and outside of second language classrooms (Tarone & Swierzbina, 2009). There are various reasons to study the language of learners. One is an interest of researchers to establish a body of knowledge regarding learners' interlanguages and to develop a more thorough theory explaining that phenomena. The second objective is to enable educators to identify areas of weakness so that they can address them in real-life classroom teaching. A third goal is to assist students in assessing their own interlanguage performances and working on self-study tasks to strengthen their proficiency in a second language using online tools, media spaces on campuses, and libraries (Taguchi, 2017).

Recent advances in Interlanguage pragmatic competence

Intercultural Pragmatics

A focus that sets interlanguage pragmatics apart from other fields has emerged. First, research focuses on how people produce and perceive communication using language systems rather than the language system itself. This has caused intercultural pragmatics research to concentrate on the interpersonal aspects of cross-cultural communication, such as rapport and relationship building (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021). It rejects the notion that native-speaker styles are "correct" and that deviations from them are signs of ignorance or lack of awareness. Instead, it argues that language use in a second language is not defined by a native-speaker norm, but rather by an intercultural process where participants create hybridised communication styles that utilise their full pragmatic repertoire to accomplish communicative objectives.

Liddicoat (2024) states that intercultural pragmatics' specific focus has caused a rethinking of how culture manifests itself in cross-cultural encounters. Specifically, intercultural pragmatics research views cultural membership as fluid and multifaceted, both within and across languages and cultures, rather than as an isolated phenomenon that can be readily attributed to participants as a result of their nationality or language. Additionally, it recognises that people in intercultural communication who interact across cultural boundaries use their language and cultural repertoires in ways that are complex.

Intercultural pragmatics expands the field's focus by delving deeper into the cultural aspects of language usage and offering insights into how individuals use intricate linguistic and cultural sign repertoires to create and understand meanings in a variety of languages and cultural contexts. It results in a broader comprehension of fundamental ideas like metapragmatic awareness, which values the contributions made by each participant in the communication while taking into account the nature of meaning-making in intercultural interactions. Additionally, it broadens the application of pragmatics to the complexities of interpretation and the procedures that cross-cultural communicators must follow in order to reach a common understanding.

Interlanguage in Multilingual/EFL/ESL settings

On the other hand, African nations, where multilingualism is prevalent, pragmatic competence development is especially challenging. For instance, English is frequently studied as a second or third language in Kenya, and it differs greatly from the regional languages in terms of pragmatics. According to Mokoro (2023), Kenyan English language learners encounter practical difficulties, especially when it comes to comprehending and utilising indirect communication and politeness techniques. The study suggests incorporating pragmatic education into language instruction while paying attention to the learners' individual needs and cultural backgrounds.

In order to challenge this predicament in multilingual settings, Erdogan and Kitson (2025) assert that the teaching of interlanguage pragmatic instruction in EFL settings has progressed to help learners build their pragmatic skills. One promising approach to improving young English learners' pragmatic ability is the incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into language teaching. Numerous AI solutions, like dialogue systems, chatbots and AI-powered visual storytelling platforms has given English language learners opportunities to practice various pragmatic ideas. These resources are now used to explicitly teach English language learners how to comprehend implicature, the meaning that is implied in speeches, draw conclusions, interpret presuppositions, and use various speech acts correctly in the target language for successful communication. Though the application of AI tools offers creative ways to improve pragmatics training for young English language learners, there is currently inadequate

research on how to put these tools into practice. It is essential to look into how well these tools work in different learning settings, especially with regard to learner outcomes and engagement.

Interlanguage Pragmatic in digital communication

According to Kamsinah (2024) the consequences of pragmatics are particularly noticeable in the context of social media, where conciseness and immediacy are frequently valued. Online users use a variety of linguistic techniques, including implicature, politeness, and contextual signals, to properly communicate their intents and understand others' messages. For instance, users negotiate the difficulties of constrained language expressions in digital communication, by using pragmatic strategies to improve clarity and build relationships. In addition to advancing pragmatics, this knowledge offers helpful insight to users looking to enhance their online communication abilities.

Kamsinah (2024) asserts that cultural differences have a significant impact on how people utilise language on social media. Different methods to pragmatic communication are influenced by cultural contexts, as evidenced by differences in humour, politeness standards, communication styles, and the use of visual clues. Understanding these distinctions is essential to developing successful cross-cultural communication since it gives users the understanding they need to handle situations in a polite and considerately way.

In relation to Kamsinah (2024) views, AlMamoory (2024) conducted a study which demonstrated the necessity of using language strategies in online digital communication, especially in pragmatic communication. In order to convey attitudes and feelings, participants used emoticons, which improved the overall tone and nuance of their communications. Abbreviations were used in order to convey information quickly and efficiently. To enhance efficient communication and avoid misunderstandings, turn-taking was also used, allowing participants to switch between speaking and responding to one other's messages. However, despite the expanding corpus of literature on digital communication, there is still a big gap in the study of pragmatics strategies, particularly in social media contexts. The majority of current research frequently ignores the complex ways in which users negotiate pragmatic components in their interactions in favour of concentrating on either linguistic traits or broad communication patterns.

2.2.1. Speech Acts

According to Saud (2019), speech acts are the expressions that people make in order for the hearer to respond and take certain actions. As stated by Austin (1962), the fundamental idea underlying the speech act, also known as the communicative act, is that language is employed to carry out actions. Austin (1962) also noted that in order to engage in communicative interactions in daily life, one must

use the correct words in the appropriate situations. In addition, Austin (1962) asserts that speech acts are realised by universal rules, meaning that speech acts are produced in distinct languages in the same manner. Austin (1962) believes that when we convey a particular thing, we consequently carry out a communicative activity through the application of words in life. Some of the examples of speech acts are apologies, requests, refusals, expressions of thanks and many more. In contrast, Blum-Kulka (1987) argues that social elements influencing linguistic variations of a particular speech act such as a refusal, are culture-specific and provides evidence for the notion that every culture and language has its own unique method of producing speech acts.

Isaac (2020) contends that Austin's speech act theory of language offers a clear foundation for comprehending the linguistic meaning of a sentence or statement. It is also known as the performative theory of language. He did not, however, distinguish clearly between the various types of illocutionary acts. In theory, his concept of speech acts restricts or confines human communication to the employment of verbs alone, disregarding other speech components.

Speech acts need to take into account the relationship that exists between the speaker and the listener (Brown & Levinson, 1987). This is because communication is only effective when both parties are in agreement and understand the same meaning that needs to be communicated, which calls for the application of both pragmatic and linguistic knowledge. Moreover, the linguistic variations of a given speech act are also somewhat influenced by social variables, so it is consequently essential to understand these differences. If not, miscommunication may result in misunderstandings, disputes, disappointment, or even a breakdown in communication. Similarly, "speech acts are context bounded and thus the interpretation and the negotiation of speech acts are strongly correlated with the context in which they are used" (Cebi, 2021, pg. 904).

According to Brown and Levinson's (1987) the three main contextual aspects of distance, authority, and imposition should be carefully considered by the speaker when making face-threatening acts like apologies or requests. These elements are thought to be universal and are anticipated to affect the selection of linguistic techniques in many languages and cultures. However, in their study, Ed-deraouy and Sana (2024) offer a more complex picture that challenges the theory's universality, at least when considering Moroccan EFL learners.

Ed-deraouy and Sana (2024) observed that Moroccan EFL students did not rigorously follow Brown and Levinson's approach. For example, the participants frequently chose "Implicit Performatives" even in settings when power imbalances were not explicitly present, despite the theory's prediction that indirect methods would be used more frequently in situations involving greater imposition or higher power distance. This implies that rather than just adhering to a universal set of politeness standards,

the learners are modifying their language use in response to a more intricate collection of sociolinguistic elements, perhaps impacted by their cultural surroundings.

Furthermore, the theory suggests that the speaker should modify their words according to the 'face-threatening' potential of the act, which is determined by taking into account the three previously mentioned elements. However, the participants showed a more adaptable strategy. For instance, in the context of apologies, the frequent usage of Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs) such as "regret" did not strictly correspond with the power distance or amount of imposition, as suggested by Brown and Levinson's model. Instead, the choice appeared to be impacted by a wider variety of factors, such as the interlocutors' relationship and the perceived seriousness of the offense (Ed-deraouy & Sana, 2024).

There are various ways to view this departure from Brown and Levinson's theory. One explanation could be that EFL learners have a distinct set of sociopragmatic skills that are not well represented by existing theories. As an alternative, it can imply that the theory itself has to be expanded or modified to take into consideration the unique characteristics of various linguistic and cultural contexts. The disparity between Ed-deraouy and Sana (2024) results and the hypotheses of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory presents significant questions regarding the generality of sociolinguistic norms and offers opportunities for further investigation. These results demonstrated that EFL learners are active participants in their linguistic exchanges, modifying their language use in response to a variety of intricate social and cultural factors. According to a number of scholars, such as, Taguchi and Kádár (2025) politeness cannot be uniformly modelled. More focus should be placed on evaluating politeness than on producing it, as no form is intrinsically polite or unfriendly.

2.2.2. Pragmatic Competence

According to Khan et al. (2023), mastering the correct application of the language in various contexts is crucial for learning a second language. In order to effectively utilise a language, one must be aware of its cultural norms and regulations in addition to its vocabulary. Every language is linked to the values and conventions of the society that uses it. This implies that individuals from various cultural backgrounds may employ language according to different norms. For this reason, learning a language's vocabulary and syntax is not enough; one must also learn how to interact successfully in that community. Hymes (1964) argues that pragmatic knowledge is just as important for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners as good communication skills. EFL students occasionally possess language competency, but lack the ability to use it in social interactions. Understanding pragmatic proficiency in language usage enables second language learners to communicate their ideas and goals clearly. These modes of communication might, however, vary depending on the culture. In order for

undergraduate students to grasp how to use a language in the target culture, researchers stressed that a significant deal of attention should be devoted to the pragmatic application of a language. Hence, learners can only communicate effectively in a particular language if they have a solid understanding of how that language functions inside that particular culture.

It should be noted that the term "competence" has caused notable misunderstanding among linguists because of its many different meanings. Some linguists have interpreted it in a complete manner, while others have construed it in a relative and dynamic sense, equating it to a skill or proficiency. Ahmed (2023) proposed a framework that unifies linguistic competency under the umbrella term of "communication proficiency." The ability of a language user to communicate is referred to as communication proficiency, and it covers every competency and skill needed for communication, whether it be written or spoken. Therefore, Ahmed (2023) highlights that in order to help EFL learners speak effectively in English, we need to assist them in achieving a high degree of English communication proficiency.

Ahmed (2023) highlights that a learner's acquisition of grammatical and sociocultural knowledge does not ensure that he will be able to use it in communication unless he has developed a high degree of effortlessness and fluency that allows him to access, retrieve, and use his underlying linguistic and sociocultural knowledge quickly and easily in communication.

2.3. Request Speech Act

Elasfar et al. (2023) claim that making requests is a common speech act in conversational interactions and that language acquisition pragmatics gives it a lot of consideration. It is considered to be humiliating behaviour where the speaker tries to benefit themselves at the listener's expenses. It is imperative for learners to perform this speech act accurately because making a mistake could lead to negative feelings. All languages observe requests, and this has a significant influence on many languages' cultural standards. Performing requests in conversations is essential, but if they are not framed correctly, then individual carrying them out run the risk of coming off as unfriendly. Thus, it is important to ensure that requests are appropriately executed in order to maintain harmony and prevent upsetting anyone. Saadatmandi et al. (2018) claim that requests made as the first component of linguistic acts in adjacency pair sequences constitute a Face Threatening Act (FTA) because they put the hearer's negative face in danger. Trosborg (1995) suggested that, the production of requests should be softened by being more polite since the speaker's goal is to gain non-verbal services. The speaker can accomplish this politeness by employing linguistic indirectness.

Lin (2007) claims that the speech act of requesting and receiving may explicitly and fully display a number of pragmatics problems, such as linguistic variations among socioeconomic classes, cultural

gap and different ways of expressing politeness. When a request performance is made in an inappropriate way, it hinders effective communication between speakers, it can also give the impression that the speaker is harsh or abrupt in social situations, impolite, or uninterested. As a result, operating outside the rules of language use or making pragmatic errors might have various implications, which is why knowing the request speech act is crucial.

2.3.1. Formulation of the Request Speech Act

According to a study conducted by Dendenne (2016) with two groups of Algerian EFL learners, namely, freshmen with low competence and seniors with high proficiency discovered that transfer in interlanguage production is present at both the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic levels among all the learners. When addressing a close interlocutor, Algerian EFL learners typically transfer the use of simple imperatives in their requests. On the other hand, most of the learners frequently employed indirect requests like English native speakers, however, this aspect matches the pattern of requests in mother tongue. The researcher contends that this component of the performance of the learner has the least transferability. Language limitations, interlanguage-specific features, and a lack of pragmatic ability are other factors that, in addition to transfer, have an impact on learners' performance.

According to the study, interlanguage users, for instance, employ mind modals and openers that are similar to non-native ones. The study has also indicated that when making requests, students frequently misuse the methods they have learned, such as the intensifier "so" and the marker "please," at the expense of other structures or strategies. Therefore, the study concluded that linguistic ability did not provide seniors an advantage over freshmen, since both transfer types and non-transfer characteristics are present in both groups' performances. The low-proficiency group showed stronger pragmalinguistic transfer, while the linguistic proficiency did not influence transfer at sociopragmatic level. Moreover, the two groups' performances are observed to differ from one another. Even when they are sceptical of linguistic structures, first-year students frequently vary them, and they eventually end up with lengthy requests with more linguistic deviations. The study focused on how cross-cultural and interlanguage studies can provide empirically-based content, as opposed to the intuitively-based content typically found in textbooks. A Discourse Completion Task was utilised to collect data for the study, which concentrated on the speech acts of request, and the average length of time that the students have studied English is eleven years for seniors and seven years for freshmen (Dendenne, 2016).

Insufficient pragmatic competence may influence low achiever's communication in the target language as a consequence of their use of incorrect expressions, resulting in unsuccessful interactions. Regarding mood derivable, Alshraah et al. (2023) revealed that Low Achievers (Las) employed mood-

derived sentences, which start with an imperative verb. According to face threatening act, using mood derivable in situations involving social power dynamics and distances between the interlocutors is deemed disrespectful and indicates a lack of pragmatic awareness of the LAs, as this strategy falls under the category of bald record method. This finding points out that low achievers do not have the capability to initiate utterances in order to communicate their desired goals in a target language, and this is because they are relying on a restricted set of request expressions. Moreover, LAs face difficulties with regard to semantic level, along with having challenges regarding spelling and grammatical mistakes, the utilisation of weak sentences concerning grammar and word choice exhibited their low proficiency. It is clear that LAs are lacking in vocabulary and pragmatic understanding, which hinder their capability to carry out request strategies successfully, making their sentences structures difficult to understand and end up employing the direct strategy.

Furthermore, compared to the LAs, the study has also discovered that High Achievers (HAs) possess higher levels of proficiency than LAs regarding the utilisation of well-structured sentences that contain appropriate grammar and word choice. In addition, HAs are more prone toward employing mitigating request devices and polite strategies than LAs. Moreover, HAs made use of non-conventionally indirect strategies, which demonstrates their high proficiency level as in contrast to the LAs. Meaning that advanced learners are liable to make use of more internal and external modifications in their speech acts. According to Al-Sallal and Ahmed (2022, p. 2) "it requires speakers to have adequate pragmatic competence in a language that enables an interlocutor to mitigate the use of direct strategies to prevent any misunderstanding or offensive interaction". They assert that such wordiness could indicate the speaker's purpose to stress their linguistic knowledge that is to demonstrate that they are adequately proficient at executing verbosity statements in the context of speech act. The study compared the interlanguage pragmatic ability of 48 Low Achievers and a group of 51 High Achievers. Two instruments were used to extract request utterances: the Scale Response Questionnaire and the Discourse Completion Test (DCT).

Regarding social variables, Al-Otaibi (2015) conducted an investigation and revealed that the interrogative form "Could I, Can I" was found to be used frequently by the NNSs, indicating that it is a more straightforward and simpler approach, and does not require a higher level of linguistic knowledge. Additionally, the results demonstrated how NNSs disregarded social variables, such as social distance, and social power, the degree of imposition present in the situations and the utilisation of various lexical and syntactic modifiers that can be used to reduce the request force in situations where the speaker was not familiar with the recipient. Al-Otaibi (2015, p. 303) asserts that "to use the language appropriately, when variables such as social distance or social power, or degree of imposition are involved in the communicative act, such speech acts, and particularly requests, need to be

carefully delivered in order to minimise their imposition and avoid pragmatic failure.” The overall results of the study demonstrated that students’ awareness of performing requests based on the level of directness was almost identical to that of native speakers. However, the distinction was observed in using different direct request strategies, such as want statement and mood derivable, syntactic and lexical modifiers contrary to native speakers, which demonstrates their insufficient knowledge of these two features of second language pragmatics. All in all, it seems that NNSs’ interlanguage pragmatics proficiency in terms of carrying out requests is fairly better taking into consideration they are still EFL students. The investigation examined the interlanguage pragmatics knowledge of final-year Saudi English majors and their pragmatic awareness when performing requests.

Devecia and Hmida (2017) evaluated whether formal email writing teaching enhances students’ pragmatic proficiency and how the request speech act set is performed by native English speakers and Arab university students in an English-medium university in the United Arab Emirates. A discourse completion task was used to gather data, in which students were required to send their professors an email asking for feedback. The discourse structure was compared, and it was found that the NNSEs did not utilise the necessary components as often as the NSEs. Put differently, the required important discourse structure components, with the exclusion of ‘thank-you notes’ at the end, were noticeable in nearly all the emails written by the NSEs. This demonstrated that the Arabic NNSEs participants in the study did not fully comply with requestive email rules regarding discourse structures in the second language. The researchers discovered that the Arabic speakers generally have restricted resource of lexical bundles and phrases employed in ending their emails. One explanation for this can be the learners’ lack of prior experience in writing emails. It is also noted that Arab tends to place more stress on direct discussion via face to face or telephone conversations compared to written communication. Moreover, the Arab individuals of this study also frequently made the remark that they do not usually write emails in their mother tongue, which probably has an impact on their ability to write emails in foreign languages. Devecia and Hmida (2017) expressed that a request is regarded as face-threatening because it can be intimidating, leading people to choose not to carry it out. The situation may become much more difficult when the addressor must communicate with someone in a higher position, for example, a professor.

The pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of 50 EFL students from a Spanish secondary school were explored by Iendzhiievska (2021). The data gathered showed instances in which grammatically incorrect answers were pragmatically acceptable, for example, they were polite, while a lot of grammatically accurate requests lacked politeness marking and came off as quite direct and harsh. According to this study, some students placed greater value on grammatical accuracy than on being polite, however, in contrast, those who struggled with grammar made an effort to sound polite. The

students' attempts to seem polite despite their poor language proficiency may indicate that they are at least partially aware of the social environment in which language is employed and the role language plays in the development of social interactions. This somewhat agrees with the discovery reported by Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1997) in their study, that learners were able to distinguish between grammatically incorrect and pragmatically acceptable utterances more easily than between grammatically correct and pragmatically inappropriate phrases.

Pinyo (2010) looked at the pragmatic competence of 29 Thai English teachers in terms of requesting, accepting, and refusing requests. First of all, based on the ODCCT findings, in informal situations, the majority of their statements were excessively polite, while in formal situations, some of their statements came across as impolite. Certain responses were deemed unsuitable as they did not convey the respondents' intended intentions. The second issue was that the respondents' utterances had inappropriate amount of information. They either had insufficient information, when they failed to express the speaker's true intention, or they were extremely verbose, where too much information was provided. Kulka and Olshtain (1986) asserts that departing from the native rules of utterance length can result in several forms of pragmatic failure. The last difficulty noticed with the participants' utterances was connected to grammar. While some participants committed simple grammatical mistakes, others produced serious ones that may result in communication breakdown. This implies that learners' inadequacy in linguistic proficiency of the target language bring about misinterpretation in cross-cultural communication. This linguistic deficiency makes speakers to turn to their native language which results in first language transfer. In this instance, when speakers were lacking linguistic patterns to use in the provided situations, they converted their linguistic forms of the Thai language to what they believed to be an English component. Even though grammatical inappropriateness is regarded as a minor issue for pragmatic competence and may not impede communication, improper or awkward usage of verbs sometimes fails to communicate speakers' goals, resulting in them not accomplishing the set cross-cultural communication purpose.

In addition, it was discovered that in some scenarios, some of the participants gave no responses at all. The absence of response was attributed to two factors, first, it was because of the participants' inadequate knowledge of the language. It is therefore evident that linguistic proficiency plays a major role in pragmatic competence. The other reason was that due to time constraints, the individuals were too nervous to speak in the predetermined scenarios. The conclusion made by the study is that both linguistic proficiency and pragmatic competence are important factors for successful and efficient global interactions. The collected data suggests that the pragmatic competence of the participants in requesting, accepting, and denying requests was positively connected with their proficiency in English,

but on a weaker level. Using scoring guidelines derived from the Cohen and Olshtain Communicative Ability Scales, five native English speakers evaluated the exam (Pinyo, 2010).

Altasan (2016) conducted a contrastive study of making requests between two Saudi learners of English from distinct academic levels. The findings were categorised and evaluated for both internal modification (phrasal and lexical downgrade) and external modification (supportive moves). The data showed that despite the outstanding performance of the advanced learner with regard to employing lexical items and grammar competence in comparison to the intermediate learner, it was discovered that both learners underutilised internal and external modifications in comparison to the native speaker. The study's findings demonstrated that even at advanced proficient levels, non-native speakers' pragmatic performance may indicate divergence from that of native speakers. Moreover, even though the high-level learner outperformed the intermediate level learner and demonstrated a broad range of pragmalinguistic ability in comparison with the native speakers in performing requests, there were quite variation in the pragmatics of Ns and NNs. Altasan (2016) concludes that the linguistic proficiency or competence does not guarantee a corresponding level of interlanguage pragmatic awareness. The study further indicates that pragmalinguistic competence is one of the elements that influence the level of politeness and accuracy present in learners' use of English. Learners may generate speech act with what they consider to be correct grammar, acceptable lexical variables, yet certain native English speakers can find it as lacking in the politeness and appropriateness that was anticipated by the speaker.

Similarly, the findings of Altasan (2016) are closely linked to the study conducted by Halupka-Rešetar (2014). The findings of Halupka-Rešetar's research validate the basic hypothesis that intermediate ESP learners' request production will exhibit relatively little variance in terms of the kinds of modifications (internal and external) and how often they are used. In most cases the learners performed the required speech act and in most cases they chose the conventionally indirect request. The findings of the analysis of the utilisation of request modifications in the pragmatic performance of ESP learners demonstrated that, although the majority of the participants employed the conventionally indirect request strategy in most instances, their pragmatic ability in utilising request modifications, both internal and external, is considerably below their linguistic proficiency. The study investigated the kinds and frequency of use of internal and external request changes in an effort to present a more complete picture of ESP learners' request performance, and six scenarios with different social power and degree of imposition were used to collect performance data using a modified version of the written discourse completion test (WDCT).

Another study conducted by Hocine (2022) focused on how third-year English language learners at Tlemcen University produced and perceived three distinct speech acts in order to evaluate characteristics of pragmatic competence. It was observed that learners tend to favour 'could and can' while performing their request forms, this can be interpreted in context of cross-linguistic influence as the first language frequently uses the ones of ability. Such terms are seen to be less polite to request for a favour from an individual who has more authority than the speaker. Additionally, some students gave lengthy responses when producing requests, while others misinterpreted the situations or what they were expected to accomplish, as a result, they detailed how they would speak to fulfil the request act instead. The conclusion made by the study is that, pragmatically, learners should be able to distinguish between modal verbs, as the infrequent use of some suggests a deficiency of pragmalinguistic proficiency. Moreover, English modal verbs convey politeness and register, thus, they should be used carefully. A questionnaire, an assessment in the form of discourse completion tests, and an interview were used as part of a mixed method technique to gather data.

The findings of Hocine are supported by the study undertaken by Wachuku (2017) on Igbo-speaking Nigerian undergraduate ESL students. The study focused on interlanguage request production, and it provided valuable information, demonstrating that Nigerian ESL students displayed inadequacies in their production of the requestive speech act. On pragmalinguistic level, the study revealed that direct strategies were generally preferred by the students, it was also discovered that formulaic expressions contributed significantly on the learners' request production, particularly in the utterance of conventionally indirect requests. While different modals were employed in such expressions, the findings show that the modal 'can' was over utilised. It appeared that the students were not quite aware of the role of its past form 'could' as a tool for mitigating the impositive force of requests. The study concluded that the socio-pragmatic elements of social distance and social power were noticed to impact the choice of request production of the students. A sample of 89 students was employed in the investigation, and the data was collected through a discourse completion task containing six situations.

An analysis of the linguistic expressions employed for carrying out speech acts in English, taking into account the subject's linguistic background as well as the interlocutor's social position and gender was carried out by Iragai (1996). A discourse completion task involving the speech acts of apologising and requesting was completed by 96 university students. Some noteworthy distinctions between native and non-native English speakers are shown by the study's findings. The outcome demonstrated that the usage of alerters and intensifiers by native English speakers, supports most studies on interlanguage pragmatics that indicated that native English speakers employ more politeness markers than the non-native speakers, who prefer to be more direct. According to the study the limited usage

of alerters and other politeness markers by Basque English language learners provides proof of pragmatic interference. Furthermore, the study has demonstrated that the learners appear to be speculating the degree of respect required in various situations. This assumption may result in the overuse of certain politeness markers, for example, syntactic downgraders. The study implies that limited usage of alerters may be considered as offensive by native English speakers.

In light of the above discovery, Maros and Halim (2018) state that alerters are a key sociopragmatic element in starting a conversation. Effective communication in both language varieties relies on the users' sociopragmatic competence, which includes understanding, planning, and using contextually appropriate forms and functions during interactions. For instance, knowing how to begin a conversation effectively with the right choice of alerters can significantly impact the clarity and quality of a request. Similarly, Senft et al. 2009 posits that linguistic proficiency must be combined with the sociopragmatic proficiency of the target language in order for an individual to become a proficient first or second language speaker. That means acquiring a language requires understanding the sociopragmatic rules and customs which add to the meaning of the language itself, hence it is inadequate for learners who are learning a second language to be proficient solely at the linguistic level.

According to a study conducted by Li (2023) in terms of directness level, the respondent demonstrated a limited repertoire of request strategies, since conventionally indirect request (preparatory modals) were used in all the roleplays and direct request. According to Nguyen and Ho (2013, p. 686) "when it comes to English language and culture, directness is often equated to impoliteness because it shows a lack of consideration for face". Moreover, the study indicated that the respondent was unaware of contextual factors of distance and social power prior to performing requests, which could be the cause of the excessive use of two direct requests in the first and third roleplay. The study concluded that the respondent relied on intuition when making requests. It is determined that even though the participant demonstrated strong language competency and minimal grammatical errors in their speech, their pragmatic competence still needs to be improved. Furthermore, the study points out that metapragmatic training, especially in higher education should be taught to expand students' repertoire of speech act realisation strategies. The investigation was carried out using four distinct role-play scenarios in which relative power and social distance were purposefully created as the contextual constraints in an effort to specifically investigate the use of second language request strategies by a single English major in China.

The interlanguage pragmatic awareness of Chinese EFL learners in terms of both production and awareness was explored by Li et al. (2015). The study revealed that direct request methods were

used, and while making a request, students were unable to distinguish between the use of imperative and interrogative sentences. Faerch and Kasper (1989) state that the imperatives are the least efficient method to perform a request in English, so English native speakers would favour internal medications. The following view is upheld by Li et al. (2015) by pointing out that Chinese EFL learners need to further develop their pragmalinguistic knowledge, as they continue to face difficulties with linguistic forms and strategies to fulfil communicative purposes. They struggle to use appropriate linguistic forms to express communicative intentions and have difficulty managing the relationship between linguistic forms and the pragmatic meaning or force that various forms may convey. A sample of 85 undergraduate English majors from a Chinese institution was employed for the study, and the data was collected using a multiple-choice discourse completion task.

Nugroho and Rekha (2020) outlined the most common request strategies accomplished by Indonesian learners learning English as well as the motivations behind those techniques. The outcome indicated that Indonesian students tend to employ polite sentences when making a request to any individual, especially someone with a higher social position. It is undisputable that in the process of communicating, individuals will naturally be influenced by their social cultures. According to He (2019) when speakers from distinct cultures are communicating, the cultures would interact, penetrate and merge with one another. Thus, the choice of Indonesian EFL learners to employ conventionally indirect strategies in nearly every scenario of the DCT questionnaire and role-plays suggests that they do not possess pragma-linguistic diversity in their understanding of performing the speech act of request. The overuse of the auxiliary words "can" and "could" is one of the examples identified in this study. Jeanyfer and Tanto (2018) claim that the massive utilisation of these type of auxiliary verbs by English second or foreign learners is that it gives them an advantage to have the same level politeness with native speakers. Role-plays, a DCT questionnaire and focus group discussions were used to collect the data.

As one of the primary issues of pragmatics, speech acts of requests has been examined by Ozcan (2021). The study was carried out with 20 students and six teachers at an English preparatory program of a state university in Türkiye. The results have indicated that despite their high level of proficiency, students' performance of the speech act of request in the DCT does not exhibit variations regarding the use of direct and indirect strategies. The most commonly used conventionally direct (query preparatory) strategy also does not demonstrate any variety in terms of pragmalinguistic use. The situational element of social power is comparatively easier for EFL learners to understand. However, when the social distance and imposition rank are considered, the same problem still appears to be present. As a result, students use the same pragma-linguistic patterns irrespective of the situations. The results also showed that Turkish EFL learners answered various scenarios with longer responses.

Forming requests is a significant problem for nearly all second language learners because of the variations in learners' practices and strategies that they choose to follow. Sanal and Ortactepe (2019) explored the Turkish EFL learners' conceptual socialisation by investigating the similarities and differences between native English speakers and Turkish learners of English in performing the request speech act. The outcome of the study demonstrated that Turkish EFL students were unable to generate entirely adequate speech acts for requests in both their oral and written compositions. Moreover, compared to native speakers, Turkish EFL learners were observed to be less polite and formal when using the request speech act in the majority of the English-speaking contexts. The main causes of this could be the lack of pragma-linguistic complexity and the transfer from first language socialisation to English. Thus, the study stresses that it is crucial to support learners in recognising the linguistic and cultural variations in the speech acts they employ, in order to assist them in gaining both pragmatic proficiency and conceptual socialisation in the intended language.

Although second language learners are exposed to the same repertoire of speech acts and realisations as native speakers, they employ different strategies. Jalilifar (2011) conducted a study in order to determine the degree of interlanguage production of the speech act of requesting among Iranian EFL learners, and how their request speech act strategies differ from those of native speakers. According to the data, it was found that high competent EFL learners over utilised the conventional indirect strategy types. Regarding the social factors, the results of this study demonstrated that, when it comes to social dominance, the EFL learners performed more like native speakers, however, in terms of social distance, there were a number of distinctions found between the request strategies used by Iranian EFL learners and native speakers. It appears that the EFL students lacked the sociopragmatic understanding necessary to act appropriately in social situations. In other words, they were insensitive to both social distance and social power. Regarding this finding, Rose and Kasper (2001) make the following claim that, while second language learners are extremely context-sensitive when choosing pragmatic strategies in their native tongue, they may fail to distinguish between contextual factors like social power and social distance in the target language.

The pragmatic competence of Karachi ESL undergraduate students in terms of the request strategy was explored by Anwar (2019). According to the data, it was discovered that the English second undergraduate students mostly employed the direct request strategies even when interacting with interlocutors of higher position. Brown and Levinson (1987) reported that higher levels of indirectness results in higher level of politeness, thus, the free will of the recipient will be honoured if the indirect requests are more often used. However, direct request strategies were frequently employed by the students which are more unpleasant and violates the free will of the hearer as direct requests are face threatening. This is most likely due to the fact that the public sector university's ESL undergraduate

students lacked the necessary vocabulary or syntactic understanding to generate an indirect request strategy that necessitates structures that are more complex. Moreover, it was also discovered that indirect request strategies were mostly employed by females in the speeches utilised by them compared to their male peers, indicating that women tend to execute language politely than men.

2.4. Apology Speech Act

Ardiati (2023) defines the speech act of apologising as an expressive speech act that serves to preserve peace between the speaker and the individual being addressed. The act of apologising is directly linked to the politeness component, so the techniques to be employed must be carefully considered. In order for the effect of the apology to be communicated, the chosen approach must also represent the genuine feelings. In that regard, offering an apology serves as a kind of politeness technique. Apology speech strategies are categorised by the ground breaking study of Cohen and Olshtain (1983), which has been primarily utilised by other scholars as formulaic expressions that can also be referred to as direct or indirect apologies, promise of forbearance, explanation or account, offer of repair and acknowledgement of responsibility.

Aydin (2013) suggests that apology methods can be combined or used in conjunction with intensifiers like adverbs to increase the intensity of the apology or to reduce the offender's responsibility. Language teachers and language learners should be aware of the factors that influence the development of pragmatic knowledge in language acquisition, as different languages have different ways of apologising. The conclusion implies that while requests and apologies may have universal characteristics, the distribution of these methods may differ among cultural groups (Aydin, 2013).

The above argument is also supported by Olshtain and Rosenstein (1986) who carried out a study to characterise the distinctions in apology methods employed by native speakers and advanced level non-native speakers of English by using classifications of action severity and interlocutors' distance. In order to collect data, investigators administered two versions of the same questionnaire that covered a range of scenarios with varying degrees of formality and offense to 180 respondents, 96 Native American English speakers and 84 advanced students of English who are native Hebrew speakers. The findings indicated that although there are some variations in the ways that native English speakers and non-native English speakers modify their apologies, there are generally quite a number of differences in the techniques used by the two groups. Compared to native speakers, non-native speakers apologised more intensely. Although there are some variations in the methods used for changing apologies, the research primarily demonstrated that high level learners used comparable strategies to those employed by native speakers. The study concluded that the degree of proficiency that English foreign or second language students possess is one factor that can significantly impact their ability to build pragmatic competence.

a) Direct Apologies

As to Cohen and Olshtain's (1983) findings, the majority of apology expressions consist of explicit illocutionary force indicating devices (IFID), which are formulaic statements or utterances that communicate regret or apology. Among these formulaic expressions are performative verbs like "excuse," "be sorry," and "apologise". These are regarded as direct apologies because they involve explicit expressions of remorse and forgiveness. According to research, the most common apology strategy in the English language is direct apologies.

b) Indirect Apologies

An IFID or performative verb are not usually present in apology sentences, so in order to express the meaning of a speech act, a range of verbs or assertions might be employed (Searle, 1976). When it comes to apologising, there are various ways to offer indirect apologies. The following are the categories that Cohen and Olshtain (1983) used to group the indirect apologies: offering an explanation, acknowledgement of responsibility, making an offer of repair, and a promise of forbearance.

2.4.1. Formulation of the Speech Act of Apology

A comparative study between English and Urdu was conducted by Khan et al. (2023), it was discovered that students used interlanguage pragmatics to develop their own special methods of apologising, departing from the accepted conventions of both English and Urdu languages. According to the study neither their second language nor their native language provides the foundation for the rules and strategies they used in these situations. Due to the students' lack of exposure to the cultural rules connected to the target language, these customised strategies frequently produced an inefficient application of apology strategies. Furthermore, the study has demonstrated that there is an inclination to overgeneralise a single method known as IFID. This tendency may have resulted from situations in which participants unintentionally used this strategy after hearing about it being used somewhere. When dealing with interlanguage pragmatics in such situations, especially when depending primarily on the same apology method, one major consequence may be the unintentional use of language that is interpreted as excessively polite or, on the other hand, disrespectful. It is simple to disturb this delicate balance, which could accidentally cause motives or feelings to be misunderstood. The interlocutor may misunderstand the speaker's genuine intention or perhaps perceive it completely differently, thus this demonstrates the delicate nature of effective utilisation of apology strategies in these situations (Khan et al., 2023).

The findings of Khan et al. (2023) have demonstrated that exposure to the culture associated with the target language is crucial for learners to become proficient communicators in the English language, and to understand the pragmatic application of language in order to achieve competency. Out of all of these variables, exposure appeared to have the biggest effect on learners' apologies, even non-native speakers gained tremendously from cultural exposure, which vastly increased their repertoire of apologies, outperforming those who did not have such an experience. When greater exposure and improved language competency are paired, learners are better able to expand their repertoire of apology expressions and modify them for various contexts, bringing their application more in accordance with native speaker conventions. It is important to be both pragmatically and linguistically competent in the target language, since mastery of the language on its own facilitates learners' use of a wider variety of apology strategies. The goal of the study was to identify the knowledge gap that exists between Pakistani undergraduate students and the cognitive aspects of apology methods. The investigation compared and analysed the answers using DCT questionnaires in both English and Urdu. According to Saleem (2014), even when students have learned the target language's grammar and structure, they frequently begin to encounter issues with the social and cultural norms that limit their ability to use the language. Therefore, during the communication process with native speakers, the students' preference to transfer their own societal and cultural norms into the target language pushes them in the direction of interlanguage pragmatics.

Khan et al. (2023) findings are closely linked to the results of Istifçi (2009) who studied the act of apologising in an effort to determine whether there are any patterns or distinctions between participants with two different levels of English proficiency, and whether they resembled native speakers' apology rules. The findings showed that these two groups' apology formulae varied depending on the circumstance. The usage of BLAME in context by intermediate participants might be interpreted as the translation of sociocultural norms into English. It might be claimed that Turkish English speakers employ apology in a different way than native English speakers. When native Turkish speaker and native English speaker data are compared, participants in the advanced level can be considered to be approaching native English speakers' conventions. However, it may be claimed that intermediate-level respondents use Turkish rules when using the target language. Notably, participants at both levels, particularly those at the intermediate level, employed particular formulations in certain contexts that are not present in their target language as they created their own unique interlanguage formulas. It is possible to argue that their first language has an impact on how they utilise apologies, particularly for intermediate-level students who modelled native Turkish speakers' conventions in English, such as placing blame on the other person. The study's sample included 5 native English speakers as well as 20 people at the intermediate and advanced levels of the

language. Eight apology scenarios were included in the Discourse Completion Test, which collected the data.

Studies have shown that there are cross-cultural differences in how individuals from various cultures comprehend social variables such as social status and social distance, and depending on their evaluations, they employ different linguistic strategies for suitable language usage. The findings of Eslami et al. (2023) showed that students in the pre-intermediate and, to a smaller extent, intermediate levels demonstrated an interpretation that was responsive to contextual elements, such as the social position of the addressee. However, they were not proficient enough to express their understanding in their performances, which could be proof of inadequate pragmalinguistic competence. Additionally, while learners at the advanced and to a certain extent intermediate levels shared many characteristics with native speakers, it was discovered that learners hardly ever used certain structures that were employed by the native speakers. This may have to do with matters of intercultural relations.

Moreover, several students went so far as to completely deny the incident. The data has also demonstrated that the lower the learners' competency levels, the less their application of situational variations concerning the utilisation of 'adjuncts'. As it was observed, the respondents in the pre-intermediate level only employed more 'intensifiers' and more 'alerters' when dealing with a non-equal status person, for example, teacher. This indicates that their sociopragmatic development is less advanced than that of the native speakers and the other two groups. Chang (2011) asserts that the development of sociopragmatic competence occurs on two levels. The first one involves being conscious of social rules, and the second one entails using various forms, strategies, and content to make this awareness visible. In conclusion, apologising in a target language with accuracy and appropriateness may prove to be difficult. The study focused on investigating the cross-cultural and interlanguage variations of the learners in performing apologies across different situations involving interlocutors of different social positions.

An interlanguage study of Thai EFL learners' apology was undertaken by Chiravate (2019), and the outcome of the study showed that learners with high and low exposure levels employed apology strategies differently. It was demonstrated that when it came to the learners' employment of apology methods, the low exposure to the target language (TEs) were less likely to apply expression of regret in low severity offense situations than in medium and high intensity offense scenarios. This implies that learners' usage of second language for communication is influenced by their cultural background. In contrast to the TEs, learners with strong exposure to the target language (TEHs) resorted to utilise expressions of apology as frequently as possible, despite the severity level. As such, the TEHs

employed apology methods that were closer to the NEs and were less impacted by their cultural background than the TELs, who were more influenced by their cultural conventions. The findings indicated that the degree to which second language learners are exposed to the target language influences how closely they perform in the intended language as well as how much their own cultural background impacts their performance. The analysis used data from a questionnaire with 12 scenarios that evoked different situations for offenses. Three categories of participants were identified: Thai EFL learners with low exposure to the target language, Thai EFL learners with strong exposure to the target language, and native speakers of English.

Kusevska (2015) reported on the findings of a corpus study on the development of pragmatic competence in face-to-face communication of Macedonian English language learners. The data demonstrated that learners of all ages and skill levels prefer to express their apology in the context provided by using the word 'sorry'. Due to its formality connotation, the learners are not fully cognisant of the situations in which using 'I'm sorry' is more suitable or acceptable. Moreover, it appears that they view the verb "apologise" as intensifying and enhancing their sincerity of apology. Despite knowing the verbs to apologise, Macedonian learners do not know the associated noun, apology, even at the B2 level. Kusevska asserts that there are a few possible reasons for this, learners may have confused the plural forms of 'apologies' and 'apologise', the verb form appears more frequently than the noun, or teachers may not have given word formation adequate attention in the classroom. It was observed that Macedonian English learners at the A1 level frequently avoided the DCT tasks, including the apology assignment. However, the quantity of speech acts collected indicates that they are cognisant of the fact that saying 'sorry' serves as an express apology in the event of an IFID. Despite this, the semantics of these formulaic expressions, however, remain a source of uncertainty for them. Since they do not yet know how to forgive, the word 'sorry' serves as a substitute for all other apology functions in their interlanguage, including asking for forgiveness. For students at lesser levels, intensification results in greater issues as their apology can come across as inauthentic because they do not often employ intensifiers. The only tools they have available are repetition and the magic word 'please', since they lack the appropriate knowledge for the task at hand.

Politeness is one of the most important elements of pragmatic competence. Fareh et al. (2023) evaluated the pragmatic ability of Arab English foreign language learners at university level through the use of a special created discourse completion test. It was discovered that the majority of the participants' apologies were expressed directly, generally by using a performative verb. Indirect strategies typically signify higher level of politeness which were not employed by the students. This could be attributed to both cultural factors and an absence of pertinent activities that instruct learners on how to use the various apology strategies. The study raised a crucial point that Arab EFL learners

be trained to employ a variety of speech act realisations and structures in order to be able to apply the correct structures in the right context by taking into account the cultural conventions in which these particular expressions and strategies can be utilised. Politeness strategies are essential on how people perform these speech acts, since they are designed to preserve face and reduce any potential threats when apologising. Kulsawang and Ambele (2024) state that, in the EFL context, language use in EFL communities is characterised by a particular cultural and social context. Therefore, in the EFL settings, speech acts such as apologising can be greatly influenced by social conventions and cultural rules.

The diversity in the usage of apology strategies of 110 Norwegian pre- and in-service upper-elementary English instructors at three distinct proficiency levels was investigated by Krulatz (2018). The most important conclusion drawn from the data is that there were no statistically significant variations in the primary apology strategy chosen by the three participant groups. The study's participants appear to have overgeneralised the utility of saying 'I'm sorry' while neglecting other key strategies like acknowledgement of responsibility or an offer of repair. The findings further showed that there was a statistically significant rise in the average number of adjunct strategies used. Although the widespread use of adjunct methods may be attributed to higher levels of second language competence, it has been observed that there is some degree of repetition, and such verbosity has the potential to come across as excessively polite. According to Kasper and Rose (2002) such verbosity, which can be perceived as too polite, has been previously discovered in research on interlanguage pragmatics and has been linked to more advanced learners' interlanguage. In conclusion, the investigation has demonstrated that more proficient language learners made use of more adjunct strategies when carrying out apologies, however, a higher level of competence does not necessarily mean that they perform the main apology in a more diverse manner. This points out that more proficient speakers can over exploit the strategies that they have at their disposal. The data was gathered through a discourse completion test and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Parsa and Jan (2015) undertook a study into the apology and non-apology strategies of native Persian-speaking ESL university students in order to identify variances related to culture, mother tongue, and gender using Cohen and Olshtain's (1981) framework. The study's conclusions showed that when the study participants tried to apologise or show sympathy for the victims, they incorrectly applied the phrase 'excuse me'. The findings further indicated that the learners overused and misused this English expression, which can lead to misunderstandings and can be regarded as disrespectful in some situations. These kinds of mistakes made by ESL students with such high competence levels demonstrated the necessity of pragmatic and sociopragmatic TESOL instructions to guarantee that students understand these linguistic and cultural variations between different languages and cultures.

In a cross-cultural context, ignorance of these linguistic and cultural effects could lead to misunderstandings or miscommunication.

Research on interlanguage pragmatics and pragmatic transfer has demonstrated how non-native speakers' understanding of a given speech act differs from native speakers' due to the influence of their home language, leading to miscommunication and misunderstandings. A study by Saleem et al. (2014) examined how Pakistani English university students employ the speech act of apology. The findings suggested that the way Pakistani English language learners choose and employ apology strategies may be influenced by cross-cultural differences. Additionally, the participants appear not to have understood the situations correctly as their application of apology methods in English seems to be impacted by their insufficient knowledge of these strategies. The respondents' lack of experience or ability in employing apology strategies in English, and differing cultural values and principles can be used to explain why a large number of learners did not utilise any of the eleven different types of apology strategies. Since language and culture are closely linked, it makes sense that English language learners in Pakistan would have some challenges when learning the nuance elements of the language that are so culturally bounded. Furthermore, regarding refusal to acknowledge guilt, individuals may feel compelled to maintain their integrity with the other person and preserve their positive face value. This suggests that Pakistani English language learners were unaware of these strategies and did not see the necessity to apply them. Saleem et al. (2014) posit that the pragmatic rules of the target language must be adequately instilled in second language learners in order to support their development of functional proficiency, as well as their ability to communicate effectively in a variety of contexts.

Sa'd and Mohammadib (2014) conducted a study aimed to understand the politeness techniques used by Iranian EFL students during the speech act of apologising. According to the study, Iranian EFL learners most commonly used both positive and negative politeness strategies in all three of the speech acts under investigation, regardless of whether there were symmetrical or asymmetrical power relations. According to the evaluation of the apology responses by native speakers on the scale of politeness demonstrated that more than half of the statements were assessed as 'Partially polite'. One significant component of impoliteness was the fact that the native speakers judged the apology utterances to be both excessively lengthy and verbose or too brief, and included the response 'no', which may lead the hearer to interpret it as an offense. Moreover, the apology strategies employed by the participants lacked diversity as they depended on a small number of strategies to carry out this speech act. Additionally, it was found from the qualitative analysis of the apology responses that Iranian EFL learners found it challenging to understand the notion of the addressee's power at all

levels of social status or relative power, especially when they were in a higher position than their addressee.

Since pragmatic transfer is the outcome of inadequate pragmatic knowledge, which according to Leech (2014) can be positive but often negative as it would cause interference or breakdown in communication due to contrasting features of both languages, it therefore, essential for interlanguage speakers to become competent in pragmatics. Regarding this, Noprianto (2018) conducted a case study with two English graduate students in order to learn about their apologies strategies and investigate any potential conflicts between their strategies and pragmatic transfer. It was discovered that in nearly all scenarios given, both participants chose to offer explanations of account while apologising. It was also found that despite having studied English for a long time, participants' apologies were less diversified. Moreover, it was found that the inappropriate use of general familiarisers had an impact on the sociopragmatics transfer, which changed the way they expressed regret, as well as the pragmalinguistic transfer, which transferred the semantic form of Indonesian to English.

According to Saoussen (2019) majority of the studies on interlanguage apologies have demonstrated that despite students having complete access to the same apology mechanisms as native speakers, learners' apologies nonetheless deviate from the native speakers' rules as negative transfer was observed in most investigations. The outcome of Saoussen's study demonstrated that most of the students are cognisant of the linguistic methods utilised to express apologies. However, it was observed that the formal or more polite apologies were excessively overused in all the situations. For instance, it is not necessary to use the formal or more polite apology when apologising to a friend. Moreover, the majority of them are unaware that it is not required to make use of intensifiers or more polite approaches, such as 'sorry, deeply sorry, very sorry' with friends. Thus, the conclusions drawn by the study is that the students might be undergoing sociolinguistic or pragmatic transfer, for example, the learners might be thinking in the context of their own language. This implies that although students had developed an adequate linguistic skill necessary to employ a specific strategy, they lacked the socio-pragmatic knowledge necessary to determine the proper context in which to apply the English semantic formula. The study was conducted with third-year students at Mohamed Khider Biskra University.

Hmouri (2022) undertook a study which investigated the interlanguage apology employed by Moroccan EFL learners. A sample of 64 subjects was randomly selected to complete a written discourse completion test that included six apology scenarios. According to the data, the individuals opted for the IFIDs plus account over the alternative approaches. If their decision was made in front

of an English native speaker, it would be seen as an excuse and not an apology, hence it would be unacceptable. A few individuals defended their decision by claiming that by providing the explanation, the person receiving the apology would feel sorry for them, however, this would result in pragmatic failure. In conclusion, the manner in which Moroccan EFL learners perform apologies fails to match the native speakers' conventions, causing them to experience communication breakdown while interacting with a native speaker of English.

Yuan (2012) in a study on the Chinese College English students' perceptions of pragmatics and their pragmatic knowledge in selected speech acts observed that even though the students could identify the situations they were in, only a few of them were able to comprehend the speech act of apology and handled the situation well enough in English. A majority of them only provided brief apologies and failed to offer further details, which could hinder the ability to interact with other people. Although some students provided detailed information, a considerable number of them failed to effectively communicate the speaker's true intentions, which could lead to miscommunication with the listeners. Some of the apologies provided by the students even threatened the recipients' face. As grammatically proficient language learners, college students must have known that being polite is crucial in order to save the recipient's face. However, they were unable to use their linguistic knowledge to this scenario, as some of the words used by the students were not sufficiently accurate to express their apologies. In conclusion, the results showed that not all college English students were fluent language users. Their poor levels of linguistic and pragmatic knowledge has caused pragmatic failure in the social interactions shown in the DCTs. The study raised a crucial point that learners' first language and its pragmatic rules, along with their first culture, influenced how they use the target language, and these components have to be taken into account when it comes to intercultural interactions.

Comparing apologies in emails, Liu and Ren (2016) investigated the performance of two groups of college learners, namely third year English and first year non-English majors. The findings showed that the Chinese learners of the two proficiency levels interpreted the sociopragmatic elements similarly. The data also demonstrated that the apology emails from the low group were, on average, far longer than those from the high group. One possible explanation is that the low group respondents were not pragmatically competent enough to communicate effectively. They might be insecure while apologising through email, which makes them want to write as much as they can since they think they have not apologised enough. On the other hand, the high group learners, were more pragmatically competent and could apologise more clearly, for instance, through upgraders, which led them to write shorter emails. Additionally, the low group participants used far more strategies of IFID and taking responsibility, while they employed fewer upgraders compared to their counterparts in the high

group. The study implies that internal speech act modifiers may present difficulties for second language learners in their learning of pragmatics, as seen by the low number of upgraders in their apology emails. The goal of the study was aimed at looking at the developmental patterns in learners' pragmatic competence, and the sociopragmatic factors were evaluated using a metapragmatic questionnaire.

Tuncel (2011) studied apology strategies employed by prep-school students and senior year college students in the Turkish context by comparing them to native English speakers. The outcome of the study demonstrated that Turkish learners transferred their first language rules to the target language frequently. Moreover, the survey also revealed that several formulas utilised by learners, particularly those at advanced levels, did not conform to Turkish or English standards. This could be a sign that as Turkish learners of English gained more ability, they created their own interlanguage forms. The researcher aimed to see whether students applied native English pragmatic rules or Turkish pragmatic norms to their English speech by utilising a DCT based methodology. The sample of the study consisted of 20 intermediate EFL, 20 advanced level students and five native speakers of English.

A study aimed at examining the apology strategies employed by 30 Saudi EFL teachers by taking into consideration factors such as power, social distance and offence severity was conducted by Alsulayyi (2016). According to the results, among all the apology strategies, IFID is the most utilised apology strategy by both males and females Saudi participants. This finding demonstrated the impact of interlanguage pragmatics in choosing the most correct apology strategy. It revealed how Saudi participants are positively influenced by their first language transfer into their target language production as they prefer to use the direct expression of apology based on their cultural customs. Put differently, the Saudi participants have adopted the IFID as the most direct means to perform an apology.

Wilson (2016) looked at how Japanese university students studying English in Japan used apologies methods in relation to gender. According to the findings, out of the twelve various types of apology strategies, only four were found to be primarily used by the participants in English, such as an explicit account, an explanation or account, intensifiers of apology and expressing self-deficiency. Moreover, the results have also demonstrated that there are no statistically significant variations between the ways in which the strategies are used by men and women, nevertheless, females demonstrated a marginally greater grasp and familiarity with the usage of various apology strategies than males. In summary, this demonstrated a lack of understanding on the part of both genders regarding the many kinds of apology strategies in various situations and clearly highlights the necessity of improving the pragmatic skill of second language English learners in Japan.

A study sought to assess how Iraqi EFL university students comprehended and applied apologies on a sociopragmatic level was carried out by Al-Ghazalli & Al-Shammary (2014). According to the study the results have shown that the majority of the apologies employed by the students have been categorised as direct translations of the students' first language culture into the target language. Certain responses have demonstrated incorrect interpretation due to students' pragmatic inadequacy to comprehend the situations that require apology leading to non-apology responses. Some responses have revealed that the students do not understand the meaning of certain terminologies used in the provided scenarios. As a result, individuals have generated answers referencing meanings or interpretations unrelated to the scenarios at hand. Regarding the speech act of apology, Iraqi EFL university students' semantic competency hinders their ability to identify and appropriately produce the speech act of apology in the provided situations. Thus, they are unable to adequately apologise due to their lack of pragmatic competence, which ultimately causes them to fail. Their reliance on their mother tongue while interpreting situations that necessitate an apology appears to be the cause of these problems.

2.5. Refusal Speech Act

These days, there is growing concern about the speech act of refusal. One can utilise refusal to say no to invites, offers, suggestions, and requests. The speech act of refusals happen in every society, but they do so in different ways, what is acceptable in one culture might not be in another (Saud, 2019). According to Campillo et al. (2010), refusing an invitation, request, or suggestion from an interlocutor is a complicated matter because it involves the speaker either explicitly or implicitly saying no. The potentially face threatening aspects of this speech act have drawn the interest of scholars. This is because the addressee's negative face, or the wish for unrestricted future actions or language choice, is threatened by refusals. Chen (1996) claims that indirect strategies are frequently used to realise refusals, therefore demanding a high degree of pragmatic ability. If refusals pose difficulties for native speakers (NSs), since they necessitate extensive negotiating strategies, the situation gets even more complicated when NSs encounter with non-native speakers (NNSs), or when NNSs communicate with other NNSs. Moreover, refusing can actually be a challenging task for NNSs because it might lead to a breakdown in communication. Restricted linguistic skill in the target language or a lack of sociocultural understanding in the second language might result in pragmatic inappropriateness. In the EFL setting, this sociocultural barrier necessitates the teaching and knowledge of appropriate refusal techniques.

According to Levinson (1987), face can be gained, lost, or preserved and needs to be constantly maintained during conversations. Speakers and addressees can preserve their face by employing politeness techniques. It is necessary to employ techniques which take context and status into account in order to save speakers' faces. In the same way, Yamagashira (2001, p. 260) interprets the formation

of the refusal speech act as “a sensitive pragmatic task.” Non-native speakers employ indirect techniques in order to avoid coming across as unfriendly or disrespectful, however the target community may misinterpret an indirect refusal. It is expected that non-native English speakers will rely on the techniques of their first language’s culture if they are unable to refuse in the target community, and this will result in transfer in their refusals. Therefore, the speech act of refusal is quite challenging and prone to misinterpretation (Levinson, 1987). Refusing someone is a difficult verbal interaction that demands the use of a variety of linguistic skills (Levinson 1983). The sociocultural understanding of the society in which individuals reside has a major role in the language coding of refusals. For instance, refusing someone with more status involves understanding the dynamics of power relations, distance, and other additional variables (Afghari, 2007).

According to Maroti (2016) when selecting an appropriate technique for formulating refusal, the factor of social position, the distance based on the relationship or rank that exists between the specific speech partners, is a determining factor in selecting a suitable way to convey refusal. Other elements impacting this decision are the accepted norms surrounding what is considered polite or unpleasant behaviour in a certain group. Therefore, it is advised of students to employ politeness as a means of improving communication. Similarly, Mutandi (2022) also touched on the important elements that are connected to the execution of refusals. The sociological point of view has been identified as a factor in addition to the pragmalinguistic component. The understanding of forms and meanings cannot be parted from the context in which the communicative process takes place. Thus, Maroti emphasises socio-pragmatic knowledge as an important element for effective formulation and maintenance of positive face in communication.

2.5.1. Formulation of the Refusal Speech Act

Al-Mahrooqi and Al-Aghbari (2016) in their study on refusal strategies among Omani EFL college students discovered that the Arabic cultures of EFL learners had a significant impact on the refusal methods they employed. A lot of the strategies used by the students resulted in transfer of the first language speech rules into the target language, which leads to misinterpretation, offenses, and poor communication. The study emphasises that culture impacts the way people perform refusal acts even when someone possesses both the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge of the target language. This indicated that the mother tongue or first language plays a role in how refusals are expressed. The study demonstrated that the cultural norms of the first language may have an adverse effect on the development and utilisation of these skills throughout the second language interlanguage communicative process. Moreover, the study found huge differences in the accuracy and appropriateness by the non-native and native speakers.

According to the researchers, most of the learners' responses were deemed grammatically and pragmatically acceptable by the native speaker rater. These answers might sound reasonable when said aloud, but not in writing. To illustrate this, for example, a response that drops the third person singular "s" may not impede understanding, but, it is not grammatically correct. The native speakers might consider this as acceptable, however, the non-native speaker, who had taken formal English language training, was more careful in assessing the correctness of these written answers. Therefore, non-native speakers marked incorrect responses that did not include the third person singular 's', and those using the incorrect verb tenses as well as those with misplaced prepositions and punctuation. The differences between non-native and native are because of the degree of their tolerance for errors, teaching experiences, their linguistic orientations and their training. According to the findings, the structure of the first language can cause negative transfer of components in the target language. The sample of the study consisted of 41 participants and the data was collected through a Discourse Completion Test (Al-Mahrooqi and Al-Aghbari, 2016).

In a study involving Pakistani EFL students showed that Pakistani EFL students made several errors when responding to speech acts of refusal in the target language as they found it more challenging understanding the actual speech acts. Moreover, the majority of the students misinterpreted the speech acts and employed the incorrect ones, as a result, demonstrating the extremely low understanding and production competency of English language learners. In addition, some of them instead of refusing the remark, they accepted it and did not object the speech actions. The results further indicated that some refusal speech acts were left unanswered which further demonstrated the pragmatic failure of EFL students. The study highlighted that poor pragmatic knowledge can get in the way of learners' production and performance of refusal strategies. In light of this, it can be argued that, in contrast to native speakers, Pakistani EFL learners employed direct refusal as a face-saving strategy rather than the indirect refusal method. The study has indicated how learners struggle to come up with explanations or justifications that could accompany the strategies that they have chosen. The data for the study was collected using a WDCT that measures the pragmatic competence degree and challenges faced by Pakistani EFL learners through speech acts of refusal (Ashraf, 2021).

In an investigation carried out in Turkey with a cohort of sixteen Turkish EFL learners regarding their refusal strategies and modification tools through a DCTs containing various role-plays by Demirkol (2019), found out that Turkish EFL students could successfully execute refusals without anyone noticing that they were foreigners. However, results also indicated that individuals need to expand their linguistic repertoire, in order to perform refusal strategies in English. The study's conclusion concerns the limited range of linguistic tools that the participants employed to carry out certain strategies. Thus, verbal expressions such as, "I'm sorry, No, and I can't" were the only strategies that

the learners could employ. Refusals are essentially face threatening acts, and stating a direct 'No', particularly during face to face conversations should intensify the threatening aspect of the refusal. According to Abarghoui (2012, p. 2441), "Saying no is difficult for non-native speakers of a language. How one says 'no' is more important in many societies than the answer itself. Therefore, sending and receiving a message of 'no' is a task that needs a special skill. The speaker must know when to use the appropriate form and its function depending on his and his interlocutor's cultural-linguistic values."

Demirkol's findings supports the notion that general education curricula do not adequately emphasise pragmatic elements, and that students require pragmatic instructions. The restricted selection of refusal techniques and modification tools points to the need for pragmatic training to improve students' understanding of speech acts. In addition, the results of the study further support the claim that if the scenarios are explained well in details and the tools are used effectively, any data gathered through role plays and DCTs will result in compatible content when it comes to strategy variety. Although the number of strategies employed by the students differed based on the structure of data collection tool, for example, role plays generated a higher number of strategies as a result of more negotiation attempts, the data collection instrument did not seem to make a significant difference in the content of the data collected for the refusals.

The conclusions and findings of Demirkol are linked to the study by Abarghoui (2012) that Iranian EFL students typically employ a restricted range of strategies when declining requests from their interlocutors. This may suggest that when refusing demands from their interlocutor, Iranian EFL learners have a limited pragmatic competence to fall back on. Furthermore, according to the questionnaire data, native refusal patterns differ greatly from non-native ones in terms of what individuals would actually do, despite certain similarities. In addition to cultural differences, one of the main reasons Iranian EFL students struggle to use the correct strategies in certain situations is the absence of clear instruction of refusal strategies in the classroom. The study was conducted on 40 Iranian students and 40 native speakers, and a discourse completion task was used to extract the data.

In order to find out how Americans and Yemenis perform refusal strategies of offers and suggestions to individual of higher, lower and equal social status, Alrefaee (2020) conducted an investigation. The conclusion derived from the study is that Yemeni EFL learners tended to use their first language pragmatic rules in utilising more direct and wish strategies. Pragmatic failure result from L1 transfer was noticeable in the overall strategy use of direct strategies and fewer adjuncts to refusals. Moreover, with respect to the content of excuse strategy, Yemenis employed more general, vague excuse which are less specific. According to the study there were some refusal strategies that were only present in the refusal responses provided by the ANS grouped and were never employed by the

English native speakers. Alrefaee (2020) points out that first language conventions are problematic in interlanguage pragmatic, as learners rely more on the rules of their first language which lead them to negative transfer. On the other hand, the study presented interesting data when it came to the negative willingness strategy, Yemeni EFL learners of both proficiency level demonstrated a low frequency use. It is noteworthy here that Yemeni EFL learners did not employ their first language pragmatic rules nor of their second language, having their own interlanguage systems. In simple terms, they never used the patterns that correlate with the first language nor the target language.

Chinese college students' speech acts of refusal were explored by Liu and Qian (2017) from a gender perspective. The study concluded that male and female students both frequently employ indirect refusal strategies, however, there are some notable differences between them. Compared to male students, female students typically refuse in a more polite and direct manner. Female students would rather provide explanations and employ precise, elaborated responses as compared to their male counterparts who typically refuse in a more direct, brief, and even blunt way. According to Liu and Qian (2017) females refrain from saying "no" when it comes to interlanguage pragmatic communicative processes. The study involved 50 males and 50 females college students who were asked to complete questionnaires and participate in an interview. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used, and data was collected using an online system.

The conclusions by Liu and Qian (2017) link to the findings of Balan et al. (2020) that female participants stressed the concept of politeness which emerge as less face-threatening while refusing to communicate successfully, while the male college students tend to be more direct in expressing refusals as a method of communication. Similarly, regarding pragmatic transfer in refusals, Robinson (1992) (as cited in Eslami 2010, p. 222) notes that "there was a socio-cultural problem in Japanese-speaking women's refusals of requests and invitations since they are brought up not to say 'no' easily, and, thus, the task of refusing was a difficult concept for them." This highlights how culture plays a significant role in determining or influences how females and males are trained to formulate refusal strategies, and it also indicates the socially and widely rules of a group of individuals. On the other hand, Kamal and Ariffin (2023) in their study found that female students were often more direct than male students, and this disputes the stereotypical perspective of men to women communication styles.

Turki et al. (2020) looked into the ways in which Iraqi EFL students refuse certain speech acts at varying proficiency levels. The study sought to investigate the suitable strategies employed by second-year English majors in contrast to fourth-year students when they declined suggestions, invitations and offers from their interlocutors. Data was gathered from 40 Iraqi English undergraduate students, 20

in their second year and 20 in their fourth year using the WDCT questionnaire. Based on the findings, it was discovered that second-year English students appear to refuse invitations, suggestions, and offers more bluntly than their fourth-year counterparts. According to the study, second-year students exhibited lower competency in applying the most suitable techniques given the situational context. Moreover, the results of EFL learners with poor proficiency levels would not close the gap between the grammatical form of the target language and the pragmalinguistic methods. This indicated that they lacked the necessary pragmatic language skills to apply the proper pragmalinguistic techniques. In this sense, it may be claimed that learning a target language's grammar does not automatically translate into the ability for language learners to perform their refusals effectively, and their lack of pragmalinguistic understanding of the target language is the cause of this.

Communication breakdown may naturally result from refusals that are not properly conveyed during a communicative process. In line with Turki et al. (2020) findings, Zhang's (2022) highlights that developing pragmatic competence is a difficult task that takes into account a variety of interaction factors that are multidimensional in nature. In order to be considered pragmatically competent, learners must, at minimum, possess a range of linguistic tools at their disposal, be able to evaluate the context and choose the right language expressions according to their evaluation of all the contextual elements at play, and be able to use those expressions correctly in real-world language communication. Research has established that grammatical proficiency does not always imply pragmatic ability (Barron, 2003). Pragmatic competence and grammatical knowledge are interconnected, but linguistic understanding may significantly limit learners' pragmatic growth. According to Zhang (2022) refusals are highly demanding and inherently face-threatening type of speech act. As a result, it may be challenging for second language learners with limited pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic skills to improve in a short time, especially in contexts where no explicit instruction is provided.

In a comparative investigation of the pragmatic competency of Turkish EFL learners with that of native English speakers regarding refusal strategies by Can and Cengizhan (2015), discovered that Turkish EFL learners are unable to execute acceptable refusals in English. Their statements do not always align with those of native speakers in terms of suitability for the situation. In addition, it was found that Turkish EFL learners are prone to perform more explicit refusal elements of semantic formulas (use of direct no) compared to native English speakers when refusing an inferior, superior, and equal social level interlocutor. Turkish EFL learners appear to hold on to their cultural conventions while performing speech acts of refusals. As a result, using their refusals strategies in an English-language setting will not be practical. The findings also showed that they are unable to employ different semantic formulae for speech acts of refusal and instead chose to use basic strategy combinations. It

can be concluded that Turkish EFL learners did not consider the factors of social position of the speakers, context and cultural differences. In support of these findings, Hymes (1972) posits that the use of speech acts needs sociopragmatic knowledge. In view of this, students need to be aware of sociopragmatic conventions, they should be mindful of what to say to whom, when to talk to them, and under what conditions. Lack of use and execution of a variety of semantic formulae suggests that learners may misunderstand or overlook important concepts that are being communicated. The study was conducted with 26 learners Turkish EFL learners and 10 Native speakers of English.

A study conducted by Zhang (2022) found that regarding the arrangement and the contents of the semantic formulas, individuals utilised an overwhelming significant proportion of the indirect strategies and adjuncts to express their refusals. This partially influenced their linguistic tendency for verbosity. In this particular study, verbosity primarily takes two forms: the first is the overlapping application of pragmatic strategies throughout one major category and the second is the repeated employment of one major group of refusal strategies. According to Hassall (2003), verbosity in intermediate-level students may indicate an absence of confidence or a wish to set oneself apart from the beginners. It is proposed that the verbosity serves two purposes: first, it helps to clearly offer more information, increasing the communicative goal's transparency, second, it shows these learners' attempts to achieve the optimal politeness effect. This suggests that L2 learners are not able to strategically perform refusal due to their insufficient sociocultural and linguistic expertise. The findings have two educational implications: the necessity of clear instruction and the duration of instruction. In an EFL setting, pragmatic proficiency requires explicit pedagogical intervention of both sociopragmatic and pragmatic linguistic knowledge, and a certain degree of language proficiency is required for pragmatic performance as well as its methods. Throughout three phases of data collection, the study examined the pragmatic progress of Chinese English major undergraduates' use of refusal strategies.

Al-Khadhmi et al. (2021) points out that the learners' level of pragmatic English competence is insufficient. Their pragmatic capacity in understanding and performing the speech act of refusal was not very strong. In contrast with their responses and the frequency of refusal strategies employed by them with those used by the American NSs, a notable gap was observed, specifically in the utilisation of indirect refusal strategies and adjuncts. In most cases they hardly employ some refusal strategies and in some instances they did not utilise any strategies at all, for example, in statements of regret and gratitude. This variance is almost ascribed to cultural differences in taking account politeness rules as the strategies for direct refusal do not need high linguistic proficiency from the side of the Yemeni NNSs of English. Moreover, the Yemeni NNSs of English appear to have an insufficiency linguistic competency that are necessary to enhance their responses with more indirect refusal strategies. In

short, in view of the fact that the Yemeni NNSs have not ever lived in the target language environment, they were disadvantaged from utilising and exercising English in its original contexts in order to better their pragmatic proficiency. In conclusion, NNSs competency in the second language does not warrant a corresponding pragmatic competency. The study was conducted with 40 (YNNs) and 40 American Native Speakers (ANSs) of English, and the purpose of the study was to investigate the pragmatic competence of Yemeni Non-Native Speakers of English by analysing their performance in the speech act of refusals.

The speech act of refusing in a second language is a complex exercise as it needs the possessions of the socio-cultural values of the target language culture. The study conducted by Zivkovic (2020) with Serbian speakers, found that while responding to interlocutors of higher position and authority, the Serbian respondents used the direct refusal technique, in contrast to when responding to individuals of equal rank. As a result of using the direct refusal method, the study's findings indicated that Serbian EFL experienced pragmatic failure and interpreted incorrectly the communication. The purpose of the study was to explore the refusal strategies employed by Serbian and English native speakers focusing on two sociological variables, namely, social distance and power. The participants of the study included 20 Serbian speakers and 20 Native American English speakers. Moreover, the study used a Written Discourse Completion Test containing 12 scenarios in which respondents were expected to formulate refusals to requests as a data collection instrument.

Similarly, a study conducted by Hairiri and Moini (2020) found that participants were unable to decline requests in high-power situations, and after trying a number of different strategies for refusal, they ultimately chose to accept the request. This could indicate that even though they had many reasonable reasons on the role card to decline an offer from someone with a higher status, they accepted it because they felt so ashamed of turning it down. Moreover, the data demonstrated that the participants experienced pause fillers. Thus, it seems that the primary cause of the excessive use of pause fillers is uncertainty about the content of the speech and an attempt to consider every word. According to Bulma- Kulka (1989) refusal is culture specific, for this reason, socio-cultural components such as power and social distance between individuals are among the most significant factors. The study examined how social factors, such as social distance (familiar versus unfamiliar) and power (high, equal, low) affect how refusal methods are used differently among 70 Iranian language learners learning English at three separate language institutes.

When EFL students are unable to retain their roles in a discussion by producing pragmatically suitable utterances employing appropriate forms, they risk being perceived as impolite or inconsistent with the position of the speaker. Chen and Yang (2007) examined how 40 English as a foreign language

learner and 40 native speakers of the language performed in terms of cross-cultural parallels and differences in their refusal performance, with a focus on the initiating acts. A Discourse Completion Task consisting of twelve scripted dialogues with manipulated initiating acts was given to each of the two participant groups, and they were asked to respond in writing. According to these findings, EFL students, in contrast to native speakers, either overused indirect refusals, which could lead to misunderstandings between different cultural contexts. Refusing a suggestion can have negative consequences for the person receiving it. Thus, EFL learners found it challenging to sustain the necessary balance in a conversation. According to Campillo et al. (2009) foreign language learners should be conscious that social factors come into play when they refuse, and that their improper refusals make them seem so abrupt, impolite, or ambiguous. Cohen (1996) as cited in Campillo et al. (2009, p.147) asserts that “achieving effective communicative competence in a foreign language is a difficult task, and a continual concern for language learners because it implies knowledge of the social values of the target language culture and the ability to produce adequate speech act strategies in a specific situation.”

When EFL students encounter unfamiliar situations, they often make errors in expressions or directly translate their first language phrases into English without taking their suitability in the English context into account. A study carried out by Na and Yan (2023) with Chinese students revealed that the participants lack the ability to refuse, and they had difficulty articulating themselves effectively as there is no refusal meaning expressed in their responses. This is a result of the common Chinese practice of submitting to those with a greater social position than oneself. For them, nothing matters more than following orders from superiors or lecturers. They are very aware that it is impolite to refuse face to face, so they pretend to accept the invitation, request, proposal, or offer. This type of work or responses do not follow the target language rules, since English is more direct compared to Chinese in certain expressions. . The Discourse Completion Test framework served as the main study element in analysing the refusal realisation patterns of Chinese and Australians, and the data was analysed using thematic analysis. The study involved 30 Chinese students and 30 Australian university students in intercultural communication regarding their refusal strategies.

The study undertaken by Moaveni (2014) on gender distinctions in the refusal techniques used by American and foreign college students found that, compared to international female students, male students used direct refusals more frequently in all the scenarios, while female students offered an explanation in every situation. Moreover, positive viewpoints and options were lacking for the international students. It may be due to the influence of first language cultural norms, since they frequently overused expressions of regret and gave more detailed explanations. When a refusal is made, an explanation is given in order to soften the face threatening act. However, if the reason or

explanation is overly specific and seems unreal, then pragmatic failure may occur, and the refuser and the interlocutor's relationship can suffer as a result of this failure. As long as the other person's feelings are taken into consideration, refusing does not mean losing face. Therefore, it is not required (as it may be in other cultures) to fabricate a reason in order to preserve face. In order to avoid this kind of issue, foreign students could be specifically trained about cross-cultural differences to avoid miscommunication with Americans.

Moreover, the study has noted that new channels of communication, for example, emails, despite its efficiency, have made it challenging to build rapport. This is because when communicating via email, one cannot see the body language or read facial expressions or detect intonations. Therefore, the expression of the message in an email must be carefully thought out and articulated properly. Given the recent technological advancements, it is even more crucial than ever to carry out practical research that looks at how technology affects communication as well as how culture and gender play a part. The study focused on how English foreign learners and Americans sent email refusals to academic department staff members, friends, and professors. Six scenarios were created and categorised into two stimulus kinds that elicited refusal to an invitation and a request using a written Discourse Completion Task (Moaveni, 2014).

The pragmatic performance of Indian and Bahraini second language learners was examined by Al-Sallal (2024). The results indicated that while native English speakers used the phrase "direct no" only three times, Bahraini English learners (BLEs) and Indian English learners (ILEs) used it more frequently (28 and 45 occasions), which may be related to their lower competence levels. In lower social distance contexts, such as with family and close friends, BLEs and ILEs tried to employ "avoidance" more regularly, which is regarded as an inexplicit strategy to negotiate the meaning of refusal. This explains the urge to keep things peaceful with the people in your close circle and to avoid doing anything that could be perceived as face threatening. Refusing offers revealed that Bahrainis' cultural upbringing influenced the kinds of practical strategies they employed, for instance, they found it simpler to turn down offers from friends and relatives than from outsiders. "When the social distance is near, people tend to speak directly, otherwise they will express their ideas and opinions in a roundabout way" (Guo, 2012, p. 252). The conclusions made by the study call for the need of pragmalinguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge to be put into considerations. In other words, learners need to be mindful of the important role and impacts of contextual elements, such as, social distance, gender, and degree of imposition in understanding and performing speech acts, specifically refusals. Three groups of respondents made up the study, 20 Bahraini Learners of English, 20 Indian learners of English, and 12 native English speakers. The Discourse Completion Test and role plays were employed for data collection.

In order to better understand Korean EFL learners' pragmatic competence as well as their refusal in extended discourse, Park and Oh (2019) conducted a study. Based on the results, it can be concluded that the students found it more difficult to refuse the professor, as they were more successful at refusing a friend. Additionally, in this study, students projected insert expansions to delay conveying a refusal, specifically to the professor, while this tendency did not frequently occur in their interactions with the friend. Moreover, the study has demonstrated significant findings that there were distinct types of pauses in their interactions, with the less skilled learners exhibiting more frequent intra-turn pauses in their performances. For one participant, there were multiple long pauses that commonly happened in between sentences as well as at clausal boundaries, which interfered with the flow of the respondent's turn. The frequent pauses seem to indicate the respondent's level of proficiency, suggesting that he is struggling to recall the following word when generating second language utterances. In any event, these silences indicate that the participant needed more time to consider what he was saying. The interactions of less proficient learners have been found to contain more intra-turn pauses, with longer durations, and at locations other than clausal boundaries. Thus, the features of intra-turn pauses demonstrate how differently learners are able to perform their language skills and plan ahead.

The second kind of mismatch happened when the students seemed certain that they had communicated their objectives clearly, but their interlocutors did not understand their refusals in the same manner. The performances were rated differently by the native English speaker, who thought that several of the turns were improper, excessively forceful and unpleasant. The phrase "I don't want to," for instance, was perceived as a protest and was therefore considered impolite and ineffective form of reasoning. Students' performances sounded unaccommodating, impolite, or occasionally overly aggressive due to their use of language forms that were inappropriate for the situation. These incidents happened as a result of neglecting to take into account the pragmatic purposes of the language forms they employed (Park and Oh, 2019). The participants were 16 college students who took part in the oral roleplay with two native English speakers and were directed to refuse the request of their interlocutors. In conclusion, the findings of the study emphasise the significance of pragmalinguistic concept in the learning of second language pragmatics. The learners' incorrect performances, can be attributed to their insufficient second language pragmatic knowledge, demonstrating that learners produced those inappropriate expressions without taking into account their effects on the interlocutor.

Allami and Naeimi (2011) reframed the question of how Iranian EFL learners produce refusals by examining the shift, frequency and semantic formulas in relation to learners' language competency, the position of interlocutors. According to the investigation, the usage of direct refusal is one area

where Iranian respondents are comparable to one another. The frequency of direct refusal was lowest, while speaking to an individual with a higher position. The findings further show that the semantic formulations used by members of EFL groups to refuse suggestions had sociocultural similarities to first language standards in their actual substance. It is particularly noteworthy that a large number of these similarities were reportedly generated by upper-intermediate learners. Furthermore, when it came to giving an explanation or justification for refusing their boss's recommendation, Iranians tended to give some plain responses, primarily highlighting habitual behaviour. Thirty Persian-speaking English language learners were invited to complete the Discourse Completion Test, which consists of twelve scenarios in which four different types of soliciting activities are refused.

Ashraf (2021) investigated the speech act techniques and pragmatic competency level of Pakistani EFL students. The study looked at the difficulties EFL students had understanding and formulating proper English speech acts. The results showed that Pakistani EFL students made several errors when responding to speech acts of refusal in the target language as they found it more challenging understanding the actual speech acts. Moreover, the majority of the students misinterpreted the speech acts and employed the incorrect ones, as a result, demonstrating the extremely low understanding and production competency of English language learners. In addition, some of them instead of refusing the remark, they accepted it and did not object the speech actions. The results further indicated that some refusal speech acts were left unanswered which further demonstrated the pragmatic failure of EFL students. Lastly, the majority of individuals refused the situations directly and without providing an explanation or a justification or expressing gratitude. In light of this, it can be argued that, in contrast to native speakers, Pakistani EFL learners employed direct refusal as a face-saving strategy rather than the indirect refusal method. Thus, it can be concluded that EFL learners have very poor pragmatic understanding and speech act formulation as majority of them failed to understand the intended interpretation. The data was collected using a WDCT that measures the pragmatic competence degree and challenges faced by Pakistani EFL learners through speech acts of refusal and apology.

Tabatabaei (2020) conducted a study with an attempt to investigate the effect of language proficiency on production of the refusal speech act among Iranian EFL learners. Using the Preliminary English Test, the participants were divided into high and low groups based on their proficiency scores. According to the study, Iranian EFL learners with distinct proficiency levels utilised nearly similar type of strategies with varied frequency patterns. Contrary to expectations, even highly proficient learners did not use strategies that closely resembled those of English native speakers. One explanation for this could be the transfer of first language rules into the second language. According to the results of

learners' scores on the DCT based on four factors of appropriacy, revealed that learners with different competency levels did not perform differently in all the scenarios of the refusal speech acts. The findings also showed that, unfortunately, EFL students who depend on the cultural norms of their native tongue misuse these strategies and fail to recognise that some of them are culturally specific. Ignoring linguistic differences causes issues and makes it more difficult for speakers of different languages to communicate with one another. Second language learners do not take into account the cultural differences between their first and second language, thus, they end up employing politeness strategies from their mother tongue when carrying out a speech act in the intended language which can cause pragmatic failure in the target language community.

Moreover, the study has shown that while high EFL learners scored higher on three appropriateness dimensions, namely, correct expression, the ability to utilise the correct speech act, and degree of politeness than low EFL learners, the difference was not statistically significant. However, in the case of the quantity of information, there was a notable distinction between these two groups in the performance of refusal speech act. The primary component that may be proposed as a plausible explanation for the higher performance of EFL learners regarding the amount of information retention is their language competency. Put differently, high EFL learners in possession with better linguistic proficiency tended to utilise longer sentences compared to low EFL learners. On the other hand, low EFL learners mostly used short sentences because they lacked linguistic resources. According to a study conducted by Saud (2019), refusals differ from culture to culture, and it is important for the students to learn about the cross-cultural strategies of face-threatening acts. By doing this, they could accomplish effective communication and avoid going against any social-cultural conventions.

In a comparable study, Ekmekci (2015) investigated the variations between native and non-native instructors. The data demonstrated that when the non-native instructors' utterances were compared to that of the natives, it was observed that their words were inadequate or inappropriate, particularly when it came to the elements of refusal such as statement of regret and statement of alternative. According to the total number of words each instructors used, it was discovered that the non-native instructors generated longer utterances, which proves verbosity in the expressions. It was also found that, when analysing the utterances of both non-native and native instructors, the non-native instructors used more semantic formulas. The participants did not favour the entire semantic formulations for refusals developed by Beebe et al. (1990). They only made use of the six formulas, and did not use the rest for their refusal performances. In summary, the study found that although non-native speakers generated longer responses to refuse prompts and employed a wider range of methods, their production appeared to diverge significantly from that of native speakers. The study's conclusions and discussion are especially significant to the current investigation since they showed

that second language proficiency may not always be a measure of pragmatic competence. Considering that the study's non-native participants were English teachers, it was expected of them to show a high level of linguistic proficiency. The data, however, contradicted this hypothesis, suggesting that elements other than proficiency may be involved in the formulation of the refusal speech act.

Umale (2011) carried out research to investigate the similarities and differences between the British and the Omanis when performing the speech act of refusal. The way the Omani people refuse requests differs greatly from that of the British native speakers. It was discovered that Omanis employed more direct refusals than the British people. Moreover, Omani respondents gave lengthy explanations in their responses, overindulging in polite language, which led to pragmalinguistic failure. According to Umale (2011), culture affects the kinds of communication strategies that are employed as well as the possibility of first language components being transferred into the target language, which can lead to pragmatic failure that causes embarrassment, miscommunication, or misinterpretation.

Mutandi (2022) conducted a study which aimed to explore the strategies employed by the students when performing refusals as they interact with their lecturers at the Namibia University of Science and Technology. The study discovered that the degree at which blunt, and negation of proposition refusal strategies were used, highlighted the likelihood of a complex interlanguage pragmatics communication situation between the students and lecturers in the Department of Informatics at the Namibia University of Science and Technology. The use of blunt and negation of proposition strategies do not take into consideration the face of the interlocutor and it is an undesirable and unexpected phenomenon in an interlanguage pragmatic communicative process. The study made conclusions that the lack of pragmalinguistic knowledge, in formulating and performing of refusals, was the root of the problem. Moreover, it was found that the students used fewer strategies in external and internal modification due to the length of the sentences needed and the knowledge for choosing the correct linguistic forms and units. Such a conclusion can be connected to interlanguage pragmatic transfer.

2.6. Interlanguage pragmatic Failure

2.6.1. Pragmatic failure

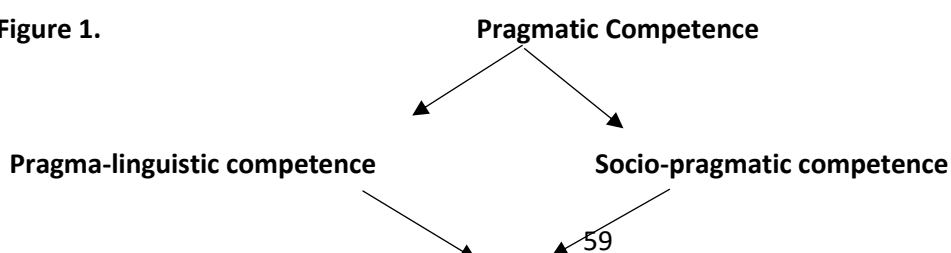
The term pragmatic failure was initially used in 1983 by British linguist Thomas in her paper Cross-cultural Pragmatic Failure. She contends that when the speaker's intended meaning and the addressee's interpretation of the conversation vary, pragmatic failure results. The risk associated with pragmatic failure is that it can lead to miscommunication between speakers of the native language and those learning it, as well as strain positive relationships between individuals.

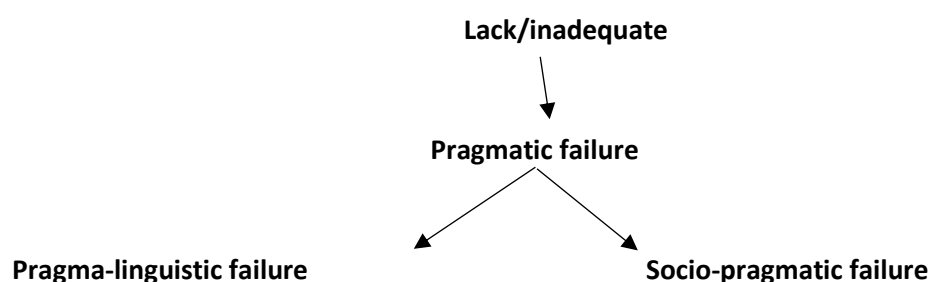
According to Ding (2022, p.73), “The errors that occur in verbal communication because they do not achieve a complete communicative effect are collectively referred to as “pragmatic failure”. The reasons for the pragmatic failure are mainly attributed to the improper way of speaking or not being in line with the habits of expression or speaking out of time. Specifically, the communicator in cross-cultural communication activities unconsciously violates the rules of language, social rules, or does not fit the time and space, does not look at the object, regardless of the identity, status, occasion, etc., against the target language-specific cultural values, so that communication cannot achieve the desired effect or achieve the perfect communication effect, such errors are called pragmatic failure.”

There are two types of pragmatic failure, according to Thomas (1983): a) pragmalinguistic failure, which occurs when an individual transfers speech act strategies from the first language to the target language incorrectly, or when the speaker uses the pragmatic force in a manner different from that of a native speaker of the second language. The second one is called sociopragmatic failure which refers to the application of insufficient strategies related to the social context of the language being used. Similarly, Tlemcani and Zoubida (2021) define sociopragmatics as the inability to decide on what to say in particular social contexts and circumstances. Riley (1989) defined it as applying the social norms of one culture in a communicative context when the social norms of another culture should be used. In other words, the pragmatic rules and cultural conventions that influence language use in various contexts are the root cause of this type of pragmatic failure, since speakers from diverse cultural backgrounds perceive the correctness of verbal communication differently.

Pragmatic failures is caused by when EFL learners use language forms incorrectly or inappropriately, such as adopting an overly direct request form that could be interpreted as impolite in English. Additional factors that contribute to pragmatic failure in EFL learners include language transfer, which occurs when learners adapt the communication patterns of their first language to the second language. According to Altakhaineh et al. (2024), learners' expectations regarding the target language are likewise limited by their prior knowledge, regardless of how accurate or comprehensive that knowledge may be. Moreover, Rao (2023) asserts that a number of factors, including cultural context, can contribute to pragmatic failure. Therefore, culture has a significant role in determining how people communicate and what their expectations are. As a result, cultural differences may make it difficult for EFL learners to comprehend and use proper language forms while interacting with native speakers.

Figure 1.





The figure above simplifies the various competencies to provide insight into the origins of pragmatic competence, (Nakale, 2018, p. 17)

2.6.2. Limited linguistic proficiency

When it comes to interlanguage pragmatic failure, Davletnazarova (2021) argues that students with low language proficiency levels tend to generate short, basic sentences, and their inability to comprehend pragmatics is caused by their lack of competency in the language they are studying. Additionally, learners who are unaware that modal verbs come in a variety of intensities and typically cannot be substituted with one another can overuse them. This finding is supported by Hilmi et al. (2022) who looked into how the AES (Australian English-Native Speakers) and IEL (Indonesian English Learners) realised request speech acts differently and explained the elements driving these differences. The outcomes demonstrated that the IEL's request speech act realisation was influenced by two elements, linguistic and non-linguistic, which were responsible for the variations in request realisation between the IEL and AES groups. The variations in request speech were caused by linguistic issues, specifically IEL's poor vocabulary proficiency, inadequate pragmatic comprehension, and restricted knowledge of vocabulary.

Hafsi (2019) asserts that proficiency in a language is essential for acting adaptably in various situations. Learners with a good command of the language are able to apply the right strategies for the particular situation. Tagushi (2006) also pointed out that proficiency promotes higher-quality speech acts with regard to grammaticality, appropriateness, and understanding of language expressions, making learners with greater linguistic proficiency to successfully transfer linguistic structures from the first language to the target language. On the other hand, this finding contradicts the study carried out by Dendenne (2016) that learners with high linguistic proficiency do not have a significant advantage over those with low proficiency. Therefore, Hafsi (2019) argues that insufficient competency in this area might impede learners' capacity to modify their language usage in various contexts, leading to pragmatic difficulties. For example, when a learner responds to the speaker's request for an appointment by stating, "Yeah that's right," as though assessing the speaker's speech, he or she is

pragmatically unable to respond with the appropriate response, such as "ok" or "fine," due to a language barrier. Students limited second language linguistic knowledge or trouble easily accessing it seems to be the primary barrier preventing them from fully utilising their general pragmatic knowledge base.

According to Luo and Gao (2011), students of second languages are accustomed to choosing linguistic resources in the target language to express themselves according to their own mental models, which lead to interlanguage pragmatic failures. Sometimes these breakdowns keep people from communicating, while other times the speaker's meaning may be understood by English speakers, but their use of the language is inconsistent, making the statements hard to take seriously. Luo and Gao (2011) further contend that interlanguage pragmatic failure could be interpreted from the phonetic, lexis and syntax perspectives. From the phonetic viewpoint, the researchers argue that the way learners from different languages pronounce words can impact the comprehension of English. Meanwhile, from the lexicon stance, in reality, the majority of words have numerous comparable forms in the other language depending on the context and circumstances. Therefore, if students fail to grasp the correct meaning of the word, they may also experience negative transfer. Luo and Gao came to the conclusion that language is a cognitive tool that develops alongside the development of thinking skills. So, the features of a language naturally influence thought patterns, and learning a new language involves one adopting or developing a new way of thinking. Therefore, the learners must overcome the challenge of second language thought patterns and aim to think in English to avoid committing errors, which is a much harder task to accomplish.

This type of direct translation of linguistic units into the second language is emphasised by Pinyo (2010). The study looked at the factors affecting the participants' pragmatic competence and the effect of the social position and social distance of the interlocutor on the respondents' speech patterns. 29 Thai English teachers were utilised as study sample and three sets of instruments, namely, a questionnaire, interview, and the oral discourse completion test were used to gather data. The study concluded that the learners translated their Thai language into what they believed to be its English equivalent because they do not possess the linguistic strategies to employ in the specific circumstances. This finding highlighted that sometimes individuals might turn to their mother tongue due to linguistic inadequacies, which results in first language transfer. Furthermore, it is possible that the students' lack of exposure to English has reduced their grasp of the pragmatic rules of the target language, which resulted in their limited vocabulary for various contexts.

In accordance with research carried out by Zainab (2022) with Iraqi EFL students, the study demonstrated that the inadequate degree of interlanguage pragmatic ability among EFL students is

that they have only acquired a small number of phrases and vocabulary in the target language since most of them are at the beginning stages of learning pragmatics. Due to this, regardless of the topic of the task, the majority of students employ the same terminologies during interactions. Similarly, Nguyen (2021) posits that it may be challenging to understand complex linguistic concepts such as presupposition, speech acts and implicature, which are all important elements in pragmatics. Moreover, it has been suggested that linguistic competence is essential in foreign language instruction and learning, and without adequate grammar and vocabulary, students cannot communicate effectively in various social settings. In short, insufficient grammar and vocabulary lead to pragmatic failure, (Ammouche, 2019).

A study conducted by Cao (2016) examined the request-making habits of Chinese learners of Japanese in order to investigate the acquisition process of interlanguage pragmatics through a discourse completion task balanced by hierarchy and propriety. The study identified a gap between learners and native speakers of several linguistic devices that appear to be less transferable, such as speech levels, preparators, and lexicons and hedged sentence endings. The study claims that other elements such as lexicons are more difficult than syntactic downgraders and mastering them well takes continuous effort on the part of learners. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers at least work harder to increase students' awareness of the use of different speech levels, a diverse vocabulary, more euphemistic sentence endings, and laying a strong foundation for a variety of speech actions under a range of circumstances. The study also recommended that teachers should help students become more conscious of those characteristics and encourage them to practice frequently as they play a crucial role in interactions because if they are left unattended, they might prevent learners from learning language-specific features.

Tabatabaei (2020) conducted a study with the goal of looking into how linguistic competency affected Iranian EFL learners' ability to produce the refusal speech act. The data was gathered using an open-ended questionnaire in the form of a Discourse Completion Task, which consists of 12 refusal scenarios, in order to assess their pragmatics competency. The grammar translation method, which has long been the predominant teaching approach in Iran with an emphasis on language forms, is the primary cause of Iranian EFL learners' inability to perform in pragmatic functions. Regrettably, teachers overlook the fact that in order to have proficient language learners, they must be taught both language forms and language functions.

In actuality, pragmatic functions are hardly ever taught to EFL students instead, they are typically subjected to form-oriented training. Unfortunately, EFL students who depend too heavily on the cultural conventions of their native tongue misuse these strategies and fail to see that certain

techniques are culturally specific. The study concluded that ignoring linguistic disparities causes challenges and makes it more difficult for speakers of different languages to communicate with one another. Moreover, second language learners frequently employ politeness techniques from their home language when executing a speech act in a target language because they are unaware of the cultural distinctions between the two languages, which might result in interlanguage pragmatic failure in the target community competency.

2.6.3. Negative transfer of first language rules

According to Rose and Kasper (2001), it is widely established in educational psychology that learners do not always apply their existing knowledge and methods to new assignments. This also holds true for certain facets of learners' pragmatic knowledge that are universal, or first language based. Moreover, Rose and Kasper (2001) emphasise that although learners typically do not utilise or transfer their free pragmatic abilities from their native tongue to the target language, they do possess a substantial quantity of free pragmatic knowledge, namely, universal pragmatic knowledge that they may use in the second language (positive transfer). This inability could be caused by the learners' ignorance of such free knowledge or by their lack of linguistic competency that allows them to communicate universal aspects in the target language.

Chen (2023) undertook a study to better comprehend the pragmatic transfer process in both English and Chinese, as well as a number of other elements. The study revealed that when second language learners implement speech act techniques in the target language, they obtained speech act strategies from their first language to achieve the communicative goal. This causes the native language to be transferred, particularly the negative social-linguistic transfer, which leads to errors in communication on the part of the students. These claims are also supported by Hammouri and Al-Khanji (2023) who assessed the pragmatic competence of Jordanian EFL learners through their performance of the speech acts of responding to making threats, request, making suggestions and expressing farewells. The findings show that, among many other things, the learners transferred their sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic skill from the first language to the second language. It seems that they had difficulty performing the four speech acts, lacked proficiency in executing them, and lacked the application of pragmatic competence. Hammouri and Al-Khanji (2023) emphasised that educational materials may have provided them with inadequate and simplified information, which may have contributed to the challenges they experienced and the methods they employed. This study offers recommendations for addressing the pedagogical problems in Jordanian EFL textbooks.

Regarding the above findings, Chen (2023) argues that language transfer is a multifaceted process that can take many different forms, when learning a second language. Its production is also influenced by

a wide range of subjective and objective circumstances. Furthermore, when learning a second language negative pragmatic transfer happens naturally and regularly when engaging with people from different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, it is crucial to thoroughly examine this phenomenon and develop related instructional consequences because it is unavoidable. It has been proposed that a number of factors, such as the disparities between the two languages' rules and language proficiency, may influence pragmatic transfer.

To support Chen (2023); Hammouri and Al-Khanji (2023) findings, Oban (2009) claims that interlanguage pragmatic failure in second language implies strategic planning, whereby non-native speakers of English prefer positive strategies and avoidance of face-threatening acts. Takahashi (1993) also addressed the transferability of first language indirect strategies to the target language situations. Using data from Japanese English as a second Language students, the researcher claims that contextual elements were found to be important in establishing the transferability at the pragmatic level, and identified some proficiency impacts on transferability of those request methods. Put differently, while certain strategies appear to be universal, their transferability is limited to specific situations, conversely, some language-specific strategies can also be transferred in some contexts. In addition to contextual factors, the study discovered that proficiency affects transferability.

Furthermore, the results showed that advanced second language students' pragmatic transfer indicated that in pragmatic domains, learners' production of speech acts departed from generally commonly accepted linguistic rules to a larger extent than their overall language competency would indicate. The study also revealed that metapragmatic knowledge and affective variables have a greater influence on pragmatic competence than they do on acquisition of other domains of competence. According to the study's findings, higher competence is associated with stronger transfer, since learners with greater proficiency have more resources at their disposal to translate what they would have stated in their first language. This indicates that pragmatic transfer rises with language proficiency because inadequate language competence hampers learners to appropriately surrender their first language pragmatic rules. Although students want to get into greater details with their answers, their limited language skills will prevent them from doing so. As a result, their language competency enables to demote pragmatic transfer and adhere to the second language cultural rules by utilising simple strategies (Takahashi, 1993).

2.6.4. Lack of cultural awareness

Differences in culture and a lack of cultural knowledge of the target language impact the ability to interpret the meaning of utterances. Temam (2016) argues that linguistic proficiency is insufficient to practice functions of the language. The researcher believes that second or foreign learners'

communication breakdowns stem from insufficient knowledge of the socio-cultural norms of the target language. Temam further pointed out that cultural background is crucial for language mastery because every culture has its own rules, and understanding cultural differences helps interlocutors avoid misinterpretations and challenges during interactions. This type of lack of cultural awareness is highlighted in the study by Al-Eryani (2016), which looked at the request strategies in English utilised by Yemeni undergraduates studying English in the Faculty of Education, Tamar University. According to the findings of this study on the YEFLLs' intercultural pragmatic ability, the learners in question find it difficult to adequately communicate appropriately when placed in social communicative contexts of the target language. Although they possess a strong general language proficiency, their grammatical development failed to reflect a comparable level of pragmatic development. Despite being proficient English speakers, they were unable to effectively communicate or comprehend the target language intended illocutionary force or politeness standards.

The study concluded that interlocutors who possess socio-cultural, socio-pragmatic, and pragma-linguistic competency are able to communicate across cultural boundaries more easily and successfully. This means that understanding each of those pragmatic levels makes it easier for language users to recognise the pragmatic meaning of messages, and all of these factors extend beyond the literal meaning of spoken words. Therefore, if a second language learner is unable to go beyond the literal meaning of utterances, major incorrect interpretations could emerge at the pragmatic level, leading to interlanguage pragmatic failure (Al-Eryani, 2016).

Thomas (1983) states that when communicating across cultural boundaries, individuals from various cultural backgrounds use the same language, however, cultural differences influence word selections. When the intended meaning differs from what the listener perceived, then meanings that were previously accepted are suddenly called into question and become problematic. Therefore, disparities in linguistic connotations, societal values, speech norms, pragmatic ways of thinking, and other elements cause communication breakdown. Moreover, the study concluded that cultural errors are frequently more detrimental than linguistic ones and frequently lead to negative feelings between English native speakers and non-native speakers. According to Thomas (1983), a speaker who does not follow the standard grammatical code is at most criticised for "speaking poorly," while someone who follows different formulated pragmatic rules may be judged for acting badly, and can be viewed as being dishonest, deceitful, or insincere. The researcher stresses that the manner of communicating is often just as crucial as the content being communicated.

Language is a communication instrument that is intricately and multifaceted linked to culture. Similarly, Sun (2017) expressed that learning English without understanding its culture results in

acquiring symbols that have no meaning or that learners might interpret incorrectly. Sun (2017) asserts that without an awareness of the target culture in which the language is ingrained or situated, effective communication with native speakers of the target language is impossible. Thus, we need to acknowledge that a person learning a language is inherently learning about the associated culture. Thus, if second language learners of English enhance their understanding and become better acquainted with the cultural differences between English and their mother tongues, and place greater emphasis on those cultural interferences in during their learning process, they can potentially avoid a number of pragmatic misunderstandings in communication caused by a lack of cultural knowledge.

According to Temam (2016), a language cannot exist without its cultural context. This is because effective communication can only take place when EFL learners prioritise and increase their awareness of the target language's culture. The researcher claims that cultural awareness improves communicative competence and influences the learning process as it helps to balance both linguistic and cultural competence, by comprehending the meaning behind an utterance or sentence. Therefore, understanding culture entails understanding communication techniques to become fluent and subsequently facilitate the way native speakers and non-native speakers communicate.

2.6.5. Teaching and learning materials

Shi and Li (2019) pointed out that improper classroom teaching can be detrimental to second or foreign language learners acquiring language communicative functions. The researchers argue that English pragmatic rules and culture have not yet been fully, purposefully, and methodically reflected in ESL or EFL education, and the mother tongue of the learners may interfere because of this instructional gap. Moreover, according to the study, primary school language instruction frequently covers basic and imprecise concepts, such as meaning and cultural connotations. However, the concepts that adults wish to convey are complex and modest, and this creates a contradiction between them, resulting in interlanguage pragmatic failure. The primary issue with ESL is that it neglects the variations in language use brought about by social functions like language function and context and instead concentrate on teaching and acquiring language knowledge and structure for an extended period of time. Additionally, due to the impact of behavioural psychology, English instruction places a strong emphasis on repeated practice of spoken English. Meaning that learners are expected to understand how to provide comprehensive information using full sentences. However, the use of full sentence is constrained by the context. Meaning that in some situations, a complete sentence is unnecessary, and using one may seem out of place, potentially leading to communication failures. Therefore, the study concluded that foreign language learners may suffer

from some ineffective teaching strategies, leading to pragmatic language problems in cross-cultural communication (Shi and Li, 2019).

The key contributing factors of interlanguage pragmatic failure in Uzbek's ELT Classrooms were explored by Umedilloevna and Ruslanovna (2023) and the problems that lead to pragmatic failure were highlighted. The study revealed that many English language learners in Uzbekistan struggle to use the language in everyday situations, even after years of practice, and the key variable contributing to this unsatisfactory result is the lack of authentic input. As it stands, adequate exposure to authentic, varied, understandable, and challenging linguistic and cultural elements of the target language is one of the prerequisites for successful language learning. However, the study highlighted that students in Uzbekistan have limited opportunities to immerse themselves in an English-speaking environment to gain communicative skills. As a result, they depend primarily on the teaching materials and teachers' instructions to improve their English language proficiency, which is not adequate. Moreover, the study points out a crucial aspect that English texts are not well suited to meet the needs of developing students' pragmatic competence because they are primarily chosen for their literal value, grammatical practice, and reading comprehension improvement. The research concluded that the development of students' pragmatic competence in ELT classes is vital since pragmatic failure frequently results in misinterpretation or confusion in cross-cultural interactions.

Similarly, Dendenne (2016) made a significant point by emphasising that identifying instructional areas within learners' interlanguage systems and putting that input into practice is not always sufficient. According to the study, the quality and quantity provided by ESL or EFL learning materials is insufficient as it lacks meta-pragmatic cues. The researcher states that it is crucial to use and incorporate meta-pragmatic knowledge since it solidifies pragmatic development and awareness. Such type of information acknowledges the significance of choosing the right linguistic forms and elements as well as the impact of sociocultural factors in cross-cultural communication. The study was carried out with a primary focus on interlanguage and cross-cultural pragmatics, with an emphasis of offering insights into how to improve the content of Algerian EFL textbooks. The study emphasises the need for empirical speech act data covering the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic aspects alongside metapragmatic information to be added to EFL textbooks rather than solely linking the production and comprehension of speech acts to isolated linguistic structures.

Regarding the findings of Umedilloevna and Ruslanovna (2023); Dendenne (2016), Kasper (1996) claims that there are three requirements to acquire pragmatic knowledge; relevant input must be there, this input must be noticeable, and learners must have plenty of opportunities to gain a high degree of control. Similarly, Shimizu (2009) states that pragmatic competency requires more than just

input, and that learners also need to be aware of the language forms they employ, which is frequently easier to do in ESL situations than in EFL ones. Shimizu further argues that when it comes to cultivating pragmatic competence, the ESL or target language setting frequently offers greater advantages than the EFL context. This is advantage is not solely because of having more access to real feedback in an ESL setting, but due to the intensity of contact with native speakers that results in noticing. On the other hand, the study by Taguchi (2008) contradicts the findings of researchers like Shimizu that the duration of a prolonged stay in the target language community is not a sufficient variable for the development of pragmatic competence. Rather, it makes pragmatic characteristics of the target language more apparent by increasing the opportunity for connections with native speakers to grow.

According to a study carried out by Ashraf (2021), which investigated the challenges experienced by English as a Foreign Language learners in understanding and performing proper English speech acts found that most English language learners believe Pakistani English textbooks, which serves as resources in language classrooms, lack the conversational rules and knowledge required for interactions in everyday situations, as well as the cultural context of the target language, meaning that learners find it challenging to understand the pragmatic meanings behind English phrases when involved in communicative activities. According to the study majority of the learners expressed their dissatisfaction with the teaching and learning environment, claiming that it prevents them from engaging in acceptable communication since language classes do not address the target language's culture. Furthermore, the majority of the participants claimed that pragmatic failure arises from inadequate instructions and indicated that tasks and activities employed in language schools leave them unsatisfied. The above finding highlighted that a majority of EFL teachers do not share information or discuss the target language culture in their classes, which lead to interlanguage pragmatic failure. The study investigated the challenges experienced by English as a Foreign Language learners in understanding and performing proper English speech acts.

EFL teachers' opinions on the importance of pragmatic knowledge, their own teaching, and other elements greatly influence their pedagogical choices when teaching pragmatic content. In a study conducted by Shu (2018) found that in classes, sociopragmatic language elements were either completely ignored or underemphasised. When such elements are ignored, it leads to communication breakdown as learners find it difficult to comprehend or utilise language appropriately in different social settings. Additionally, the teachers' methods of education were restricted to going over the content in the textbooks and other additional resources. It is especially dangerous to depend on these resources because research has shown significant concerns about how the pragmatic aspect of language is covered and handled in ELT textbooks. In general, the EFL teachers in the study used little instructional strategies to help the learners build their pragmatic competence. Even while this would

seem to indicate that the participants supported implicit teaching, further investigation indicated that the teachers' pedagogic subject knowledge was lacking. The majority of participants, including those with and without a TESOL degree, were unable to offer metapragmatic knowledge.

Regarding the above findings, Basturkmen (2012) presented a complex phenomenon that teachers' backgrounds, experiences, expertise, and beliefs all influence what and how they teach, and research on teacher cognition shows that teachers' knowledge is crucial in directing their instruction in the classroom. Moreover, the integration of language and culture in the foreign language learning curriculum and the incorporation of pragmatics in teachers' development and training programs is essential in order for learners to attain pragmatic proficiency. However, the knowledge and abilities needed to teach second language pragmatics, and cultural awareness may not come naturally to all second language teachers. It is understandable that some language teachers may feel uneasy about being the source of the target language pragmatics if they have not received enough teacher education or exposure to the target second language culture, which contributes to interlanguage pragmatic failure among the learners.

Furthermore, Shu (2018) study highlighted that the development of pragmatic competence as an objective in the training of EFL teachers was not mentioned in the Iranian High Council of Planning's review of the academic materials and courses of the Curriculum for master's program in TESOL. The study emphasised that even though pragmatic competence is important, second language teacher preparation programs have not given it the attention it needs, and EFL teachers are frequently left to figure out how to help their students build pragmatic knowledge on their own. Additionally, the EFL teachers primarily addressed linguistic problems, using a variety of error treatment strategies, and rarely addressed pragmatic errors. This implies that the instructors' inability to offer feedback on pragmatic faults might have more to do with their belief that the errors are irrelevant or cannot be corrected. Instead, it is possible that the study's EFL teachers lack awareness of these mistakes because of a knowledge gap.

Savvidou and Economidou (2019) asserts that since pragmatic competence evolves best with some explicit training entails that language teachers must be sufficiently knowledgeable and aware of the pragmatic aspects at hand and, more importantly, know how to include them into their lessons. This does not necessarily imply that instructors should enforce second language pragmatic norms on learners. Instead, they are supposed to make learners more aware of pragmatic meanings and cultivate their pragmatic awareness so that they can recognise, and understand pragmatic interpretations when they come across them outside of the classroom and make informed pragmatic decisions.

2.6.6. Time constraints

The goal of Savadkouhi and Alaei's study (2023) was to identify the elements that contribute to cross-cultural pragmatic failure (CCPF) and the difficulties that EFL students encounter when attempting to resolve miscommunication issues. A sample of 10 teachers of both genders from private English language institutes were chosen through purposive sampling amongst the Iranian EFL instructors who agreed to take part in the semi-structured interviews. The results show that the amount of time, effort, and energy dedicated to second language learning is a contributing factor to CCPF. In actuality, learning English as a second language takes a lot longer in EFL settings than it does in an ESL context because English is not often spoken as a language of communication in offices, schools, colleges, or other formal settings. The study stressed that it is insufficient to learn English by attending classes once, twice, or three times a week. Furthermore, the results demonstrated that EFL students typically lack the time and energy necessary for studying, practicing, and completing homework outside of the classroom. Therefore, the researcher concluded that, due to the limited amount of time in class and the large number of pupils, learners are unable to practice speaking in front of the class. Additionally, when learners are given extra, supplementary assignments, they typically do not finish them thoroughly.

Similarly, Idri (2014) concurs with the results of Savadkouhi and Alaei's study (2023) that teachers give their learners chances to improve their oral proficiency and pragmatic competence, but the time allocated for oral expression sessions is insufficient, and as a result, the teachers' efforts continue to be inadequate. Regarding this concern, the researcher stressed that appropriateness of language is essential for effective and meaningful communication. However, given the ongoing lack of sufficient linguistic competence among EFL learners, the teachers' focus remains primarily on enhancing learners' competency rather than their pragmatic English language proficiency. Therefore, the study concluded that time constraints have detrimental impacts on the interlanguage pragmatic competence of the learners. For this reason, individuals typically fail to meet their demands for communication, which can differ depending on the communicative setting, and to accomplish their goals for communication.

Korkmaz and Karatepe (2023) also argue that teachers are not able to devote much time to developing learners' sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge in an organised and efficient manner. The researchers state that even though textbooks cover pragmatic components, teachers are under pressure to meet deadlines and prepare learners for tests, making them unable to devote enough time to pragmatic aspects. Consequently, their learners are thereby deprived of access to this important source of knowledge. Moreover, Korkmaz and Karatepe (2023) point out that there is an

excessive amount of content on the syllabus, with the primary goal appearing to be getting learners ready for the end-of-year exam. Due to this, instructors are encouraged to omit the sections of their course book where learners primarily address issues relevant to pragmatics. Although English teachers appear to be aware of how this choice may affect learners' pragmatic knowledge, the exam-focused educational system forces them to make difficult decisions. To sum up, the teachers are denied the opportunity to utilise high beneficial resources to teach what they call functional language.

2.7. Effectiveness of different strategies in improving pragmatic competence

Research supports the claim that interlanguage pragmatics' second language components can be learned through efficient teaching. Additionally, studies have shown how beneficial instructional teaching can be in easing some of the more difficult components of interlanguage pragmatics for non-native English speakers. The literature review process has discovered that a variety of teaching methods and resources, including videos, can be used to teach pragmatic competency.

2.7.1. Short stories

Short stories have shown to be effective when it comes to teaching pragmatic competence. Afroozeh (2020) looked at the impact of employing short stories as opposed to video clips on the development of foreign language students' verbal production of English speech acts, for example, disagreement, request, refusal, apology, and thanks at the Isfahan University Language Center. The findings of this comparison research showed that short stories and video clips can be seen as superior teaching tools for speech acts compared to conventional written materials because they reflect real-world communicative events more accurately. By using an explicit education technique that included short stories and video clips, it was shown that there was significant progress in the oral production of speech acts such as refusal, thanking, apology and disagreement.

These findings agree with the study conducted by Heidari et al. (2020) aimed to examine the impact of utilising short stories compared to video clips in order to enhance foreign language learners' oral performance of English speech acts. The outcome of this comparative study showed that short stories and video clips are more authentic in representing real-life, communicative interactions occurring in the real world than traditional written materials, making them superior options for teaching speech acts. The primary reason is that, rather than being a useful teaching tool, short stories have historically been employed as a discourse analysis tool and as a means of identifying speech acts. The study's most intriguing finding, however, was that different types of input are necessary for meeting the unique needs and interests of language students. Specifically, authentic instructional resources can meet a critical language development need by providing language learners with real-world examples of language employed by native English speakers. One benefit of authentic language input is that it

gets language learners to engage in verbal exchanges that perfectly mimic the speech generated by native speakers of that language. Authentic resources, for example, offer a viable substitute by introducing learners to vocabulary and structures they are unlikely to encounter in artificial, non-authentic books.

Moreover, Wijayanti and Miqawati (2022) claim that authentic material is essential when teaching EFL as students find it easier to follow the phrases when they are presented with authentic information. It is believed that increasing learners' exposure to authentic content tailored to their interests and proficiency levels will increase their sensitivity to the target language. Similarly, Underwood (1989) asserts that authentic materials such as short tales and video clips give students the opportunity to practice real-world communication skills with all the interactive elements that are typically absent from written materials. According to Nunan (1999) authentic language material as written or spoken language content that is not specifically produced with language learning in mind, but rather mimics real-world communication. Given that it draws on real-world experiences, it will help learners express a particular linguistic expression.

A study carried out by Bataineh (2014) showed that there are significant benefits to be achieved from incorporating literature into the English curriculum for non-native speakers in order to strengthen the students' pragmatic competence. To educate students how to develop their feelings for language or how to respond to literary texts, teachers can use both language and literature. By reading and analysing literary books, students can improve their memory retention of practical quotes and expressions that they can utilise in everyday conversations. Furthermore, by employing language in a variety of social contexts, the literary writings combine pragmatic and linguistic proficiency. To a great extent, the acute realisation of cultural differences can be bridged through literature or literary work, which deepens our comprehension of normal and inherent human differences. In addition to cultivating intelligence, understanding, and tolerance for diversity, literature offers doors to cross-cultural awareness. For example, poetry would greatly help language learners broaden their understanding of the wider human reality, which in response can help to mould and enrich their language with more meaning and complexity. Therefore, it is essential for language instructors to give their students engaging short stories drawn from the greatest works of English literature in order to encourage them to read regularly and help them build text reading techniques. Reading in the target language provides practice in the pragmatic contextualisation of language expression, which is beneficial for foreign language learners (Bataineh, 2014).

2.7.2. Receptive activities

According to the findings of a study conducted by Ahmed (2022), educators should use communication tasks that can be carried out in a variety of ways in the classroom in order to increase students' pragmatic ability. This is so that students can acquire the interactive, receptive, and productive abilities needed for successful communication. The goal of these listening and reading exercises is to improve the learners' capacity for information acquisition. Additionally, exercises that involve speaking and writing help students improve their ability to produce knowledge, and exercises that focus on communication strategies help them improve their ability to communicate. The students participate in a variety of tasks that enable them to practice diverse communication skills in order to comprehend their peers and be understood by other people. The investigation concentrated on students' perceptions of utilising English as a communication tool and to highlight the importance of language context, function and real-world scenarios to enhance pragmatic competence among Sudanese English Language University Students.

Corsetti (2009) looked into the function of listening comprehension exercises as a different methodological strategy to encourage the development of pragmatic knowledge. The study demonstrated that comprehending exercises that target particular listening sub-skills can reveal pragmatic and semantic factors that influence the literal meaning of utterances. The pragmatic competence of all eight learners preparing for the IELTS increased as a result of completing those listening activities. Those listening exercises created target the subsequent micro skills such as distinguishing between literal and implied meanings; using paralinguistic cues to deduce meanings; identifying speakers through turn-taking conventions; detecting the speaker's attitude toward the subject matter; identifying and reconstructing topics from ongoing conversations involving one or two participants; recognising the communicative roles of utterances based on the situations and respondents; recognising links and relationships; appreciating cohesive devices in conversation to determine connections between speech units. In conclusion, listening comprehension exercises can be used as a methodological technique by second language teachers who understand the value of pragmatic development and who want to enhance their students' pragmatic comprehension abilities in their second language.

According to Wijayanti and Miqawati (2022), students can become more conscious of sociopragmatics by engaging in locally situated processes. Discourse Completion Tasks, movie snippets, and comic strips can be used to carry out this process. The idea behind these classroom exercises is to provide students with opportunities to practice language so they can speak English with sensitivity. Another way to improve learners' sociopragmatics skills is through comic strips, which is a collection of narrative-telling drawings housed inside a box. Baker (2011) agrees that comics can be used to educate social scenarios, historical events, parts of speech, and a host of other subjects. Baker goes on to say

putting both words and pictures together encourages readers to consider the relationship between the two in great details. Teachers can use comic strips to get learners thinking more carefully about how they use language. These cartoons would be extremely stimulating and challenging. Through comics, students are given sufficient instructional inputs through the use of vivid illustrations, a narrative, social contexts, and language expressions. It is advantageous to use these inputs when practicing language. With these concepts, the students learned that in order for the speakers to effectively communicate, they also need sociopragmatic skills that fit within the context of the conversation in addition to grammatical skills. As part of the lesson plan, the instructor could use these comic strips to spark a group discussion.

2.7.3. Productive activities

Ansel and Bouakacha (2020) looked at the efficacy of role plays as a teaching technique. As shown by the study's findings, role plays have a favourable effect on the participants' performances. The researchers concluded that role plays were useful in strengthening the pragmatic competence of Algerian EFL learners in producing requesting. Additionally, according to the results, this approach assisted students in recognising their communicative abilities and weaknesses and inspired them to improve their pragmatic competence. These hands-on exercises would provide students with an opportunity to practice speaking in the presence of an audience, allow for correction of mistakes, and improve their communicative ability. Furthermore, the researchers state that free role playing is a common method for teaching students to talk naturally without having to read what they are intended to say. By putting themselves in the role of another character, students are more at ease performing on stage and are able to overcome some psychological problems, such as stress. Similarly, Hitomi and Ayako (2019) also assert that teachers should employ role plays as a lesson plan to help their students become more pragmatically competent. The results of the study make it abundantly evident that employing plays as English teaching resources can increase the pragmatic understanding among English language learners as well as inspire them to comprehend and acquire pragmatic competence. This study was done with the goal of recommending a practical method for increasing students' pragmatic awareness using American TV drama.

Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2019) set out to introduce a learner-based instructional approach intended to foster learners' pragmatic competence when employing request mitigating tools in English. The researchers are of the opinion that students should be given written and spoken opportunity to create request head acts and their mitigation mechanism. Therefore, writing emails is heavily recommended here when it comes to written opportunities. Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2019) argue that it is crucial to present learners with circumstances that are in contrast, or scenarios

with various sociopragmatics aspects. Teachers may instruct students to send an email to a friend who is borrowing a text book or other course materials. If students are brought to the computer lab to send emails to addressees specifically established for this exercise, it will make the activity much more effective.

The above notion is also supported by a study carried out by Puspitarini (2019) who used emails to discuss how important it is to increase students' pragmatic knowledge in reading sessions. According to the study, reading classes are the ideal setting for introducing learners to pragmatic knowledge, therefore, the right books with various pragmatic facts could guarantee success in the reading class. Students will also be required to have finished the assigned reading material for each reading lesson, with specific emphasis being made to language similarities and distinctions from the pragmatic perspective view, and this is done to increase students' pragmatic knowledge. Thus, the readings assigned to learners will act as starting points for discussion in the classroom. Puspitarini states that the ideal examples for teaching pragmatics to pupils would be through personal letters and emails, particularly Speech Acts because they are regarded as legitimate sources. The language is a blend of speech and writing, contains the vocabulary used in daily conversation, and has a short, concise style, so the students may understand how it is used in everyday life. As a result, it will be simpler for the learners to analyse the components of the Speech Acts.

The importance of pragmatic competence in the educational setting was highlighted by Peng (2019) in a research titled "On the Cultivation of Pragmatic Competence for College Students in the Information Age." The study suggests that various language practices should be included in the classroom with the objective to increase the students' understanding of linguistic usage. For instance, performances, gatherings, group projects, discussions, recounting, and extracurricular activities can all increase student participation. Depending on the subject of each lesson, teachers can create a variety of games. Students' speaking, listening, and comprehension skills would be improved through class language interactions, which would also help them develop a variety of other communicative abilities. Enyi and Orji (2019) claims students can improve their speaking, listening, and pragmatic abilities in the classroom by participating in an exercise called "Classroom Guest." The teacher sets up a "classroom guest," someone who comes in to give a message, pose a question, or engage in any other brief but convincing conversation. The teacher puts on a tape recorder and records the entire conversation before the scheduled exchange. The instructor then gathers the class to discuss the interactions after the guest has left, with the teacher serving as the facilitator, and asks the pupils to summarise their discussions, and there is also video of the re-enactment. The entire class then watches the two exchanges, the actual ones and the students' re-enactment, and discusses the results.

Vu (2017) looked into how teachers at a Vietnamese university perceived pragmatics and how it is taught, as well as methods for teaching pragmatics in particular and EFL in general. The findings indicated that some teachers adhered to particular guidelines, such as presenting a picture as a context, asking students to discuss how to behave in that situation and then clarifying or providing linguistic features and modelling their use to provide students with practice and increased knowledge of language use. So students ought to be aware of how others utilise it before they can put it to use. With the help of the reading material and the vocabulary they are taught, learners may comprehend how certain words and expressions are used in writing. Upon realising this, they will attempt to utilise those for speaking and listening in the future when they need to use them independently, and they need to pay attention to how others use those phrases in context if they wish to speak well.

Communicative language teaching and building pragmatic competence can help students become more proficient in English as a Foreign Language speakers by having them participate in social discussions and round tables. The study concerning this strategy was carried out by Cortés et al. (2020), and the findings revealed that, students' attitudes toward the class shifted and they appeared more engaged in the discussion after the teachers clarified that the courses demonstrated how social issues impact them and their community on a regular basis. Using debates and round tables as educational exercises was simpler and more successful because the subjects covered in the courses were already familiar to them. The need for their opinions to be heard and considered prompted students to participate in class debates. As a result, during the lesson plan development process, there was progress in terms of involvement, awareness, and performance. At the conclusion of the project, there was a noticeable improvement in the vocabulary that the students had worked so hard to learn in order to be able to discuss the subjects. They gradually began to notice a shift in how the information they had been getting for many years was being used. They can now make use of that information to voice their opinions and establish their own, or to express disagreement with those of others. Consequently, this instilled the confidence in students to not only engage in more active participation, but also to begin rectifying mistakes made by themselves and one another. As a result, students were able to exhibit their language engagement for exercises like round tables and debates during courses, which helped them enhance their pragmatic ability.

According to Noviyenty (2023), in the classroom, instructors can use a variety of methods to help their students to develop pragmatic competence. With the help of pair work and small group discussions, students can practice speaking up in front of others, giving presentations, pose questions, controlling the conversation, and mimicking native speakers' real-world speech patterns. Additionally, according to the study, practicing pronunciation is one technique that can help students become more pragmatically competent in the classroom as they are required to put emphasis on intonation, rhythm,

and pronunciation stress. So students will be encouraged to participate in discussions and speak up, whereby they are expected to use the grammar rules to construct sentences and other utterances appropriately in context, making it an interactive exercise.

2.7.4. Multimedia content

In order to determine whether teachers think the study of pragmatics is necessary for learning a second language, Bergman (2021) looked into how pragmatics is perceived in the Swedish upper secondary school as well as how the subject is used and presented to pupils. The study recommended using movies, news, and TV shows as teaching tools to introduce pragmatics concepts to students in upper secondary schools in Sweden. The students have the chance to imitate native English speakers while using these resources, and they also have the chance to model their own language after what they hear or read. Conversations about the usage of the language could then come after this. According to Chavarrla and Bonany (2007), as cited in Borer (2018) the usage of movies and video transcripts that feature polite behaviour and conversation samples with speech act content activates engagement in the classroom. Under the teacher's direction, students watch the dialogue videos and study the transcripts to identify the speech patterns and vocabulary that the speakers employ in the conversations. Additionally, the students learn about the situation or context surrounding the speech act and make assumptions about the contextual elements influencing the speech act patterns. There should also be a film that shows many forms of behaviour and etiquettes through actions rather than words. Both kinds of movies are meant to spark conversations about cultural rules and social standards, which are crucial components of pragmatic competence.

Wijayanti (2020) also claims that digital classroom can raise learners' pragmatic awareness. According to Wijayanti, incorporating technology into the classroom is essential for introducing students to novel, enjoyable, and comfortable experiences. Teaching professionals need to take advantage of this condition as members of the global community in industry 4.0. For example, using YouTube video clips for educational purposes is one way to help children with pragmatics, so the teacher can select the appropriate resource from this platform with ease, depending on their needs. By using YouTube, teachers could push their learners to watch the films' material from different perspectives. The teacher can help the learners watch a variety of films or movie snippets that depict both high and low culture from diverse nations. The film, which contrasts elite and low culture, would teach the students how to communicate. In light of this, students would comprehend that the appropriate way to communicate a given language function depends on the social factors that reflect the linguistic resources as well as the contextual setting in which it occurs.

There is evidence from current interlanguage pragmatics research that certain components of pragmatics can be taught in second or foreign language classrooms. Birjandi and Derakhshan (2013) evaluated the relative impact of consciousness raising video-driven prompts on the understanding of the three speech acts of refusal, requests and apology on 42 females and 36 males upper-intermediate Persian learners of English who were randomly allocated to four groups, namely, role-play, metapragmatic, control and form-search. In light of this, the findings showed that each of the three groups improved their interlanguage pragmatics and gained awareness of the pragmatic similarities and distinctions between their target language and their mother tongue. The ability of films to replicate real-world scenarios, authenticate real-world scenarios, and bring the closest possible resemblance of actual-life situations to the classroom setting has increased understanding of the pragmatic elements involved in the speech acts of request, refusal and apology.

Abilasha and Ilankumaran (2019) argues that no one can directly impart proficiency in communication or speech to learners. The students must routinely and persistently practice the skill until they are able to take advantage of the possibilities presented to them and reach the desired outcome. According to the study, learners can frequently employ interrogatives when engaging with one another, which improves pragmatic competence. Additionally, paying close attention to English native speakers helps a lot in developing pragmatic competence. Moreover, listening to songs in English and watching English news on television are other authentic ways to improve learners' competency. Meanwhile, Al-Sallal (2024) states that teachers should employ a wide range of speaking and listening exercises. This implies that they should describe several refusal techniques according to social distance, level of imposition, and gender. Additionally, they could incorporate textual dialogues to emphasise the sequence in which particular strategies should be utilised as well as specific statements that should be avoided in certain contexts. On the other hand, Saoussen (2019) recommended that teachers of the grammar courses should provide additional clarification of modal verbs in terms of social and cultural factors. For instance, emphasising the utilisation of "sorry, forgive me..." and other similar phrases as more polite ways to carry out a given speech act. They should also provide examples in all contexts that indicate whether the hearer is above or below the speaker as well as the speaker's social standing.

2.7.5. Integrated skills approach

Park and Sun-Young (2019) assert that it is necessary for English teachers to highlight the pragmalinguistic objectives of the target expressions by providing instances of suitable situational contexts while instructing students on them. Students would be less likely to cause a breakdown in communication or mistakenly say something unpleasant or demeaning if they understood not only

the literary meaning and grammatical aspects of the words, but also when to use them and what they imply. The goal of instruction should be to increase students' awareness of pragmatic elements while they study English. This will enable them to recognise the pragmatic purposes of language patterns and use them effectively within context.

The purpose of Özdemir (2011) article was to provide a brief theoretical overview of pragmatic competence, identify the instructional types that are most effective in raising second language pragmatics awareness, and demonstrate how this theoretical perspective can be applied to instructional pragmatics to increase pragmatics comprehension in second language learning through activities that teach requests in English. According to the article, students should be handed a little scenario card with a scene from a movie on it. After then, learners participate in a multi-turn dialogue between the characters in the scenario card. During the multiple-turn discussion, the request remains unfilled. In order to carry out the act, learners are required to compose a request. After watching the scene, students fill in the spaces appropriately, and use a chart to contrast their own answers with those from the film. Students are required to share their responses. Additionally, students are requested to highlight the methods their classmates used to perform requests. The objective is to focus learners' attention on pragmalinguistic elements. Finally, after receiving the correct responses from the teacher, which is extracted from real data, students can then locate request tactics employed in the real data and contrast them with their own.

Madina and Musaeva (2023) carried out a study that presented guidelines for teaching pragmatics, more especially, apologies in EFL classes. The paper highlights the significance of teaching students about the linguistic and cultural components of apologising and offers examples of exercises that may be utilised to educate them how to use language appropriately in various situations. With the aid of realistic resources like films, audio clips, and real world scenarios, students can gain an understanding of the context and proper application of apologies in various contexts. Additionally, this can assist learners in learning the proper register and tone to employ in various situations. Authentic materials can also offer a more interactive and greater learning experience, since students may observe how apologies are employed in actual situations. For instance, employing dialogues, films, or news stories containing apology sections can offer students a wealth of real-world language experience and context-specific knowledge. Additionally, they can support students in improving their understanding of reading and listening as well as their capacity to identify and use suitable language and nonverbal signals when expressing regret.

Madina and Musaeva (2023) claim that in order to assist students gain a comprehensive grasp of language use, pragmatics training should also be combined with the teaching of other language skills

like speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Students can read articles regarding cultural distinctions in apologies, participate in role-playing exercises, listen to real audio samples of apologies, and compose essays about their own encounters giving and receiving apologies. Here is an illustration of how educators might incorporate all language skills into the pragmatics of teaching apology: Students should participate in a listening exercise where they listen an authentic audio clip of someone apologising in English, for example a public figure. This will motivate students to recognise the components of an apology, including the usage of particular words, the expressing of regret, and the acknowledgment of responsibility. It will also enable students to concentrate on the cultural setting by talking about how apologies might be conveyed differently in other cultures and how cultural differences can affect interaction and comprehension. Moreover, as part of a role-playing exercise, students can practice apologising in a different situations. Students will be encouraged to exhibit empathy and compassion as well as apologise using acceptable language by saying "I apologise" or "I'm sorry". Additionally, the students will conclude by talking about cultural norms around apologies, including how different cultures may communicate apologies and how these variations might affect understanding as well as interaction.

2.8. Research gap

The review of the literature has indicated that there is a research gap in interlanguage pragmatics as a large number of the studies concentrated on adults, specifically university or college students enrolled in English language teaching courses. Indicating that not many studies have been done at the elementary and secondary levels. Therefore, additional research may be required to comprehend pragmatics instruction at various educational levels. Furthermore, a review of latest interlanguage pragmatics research reveals that, historically, ILP research has focused exclusively on non-native English speakers from a limited range of linguistic and cultural communities, primarily Thais, Arab and Chinese students, while ESL learners in Namibia are among these unexplored populations. It is generally acknowledged that ILP studies in the Namibian context is currently in its early stages.

The field of interlanguage pragmatics has not received much attention in the Namibian context. Few studies that have been carried out by Namibian scholars have only focused on university students. The current Namibian research papers demonstrate that no researcher has explored the pragmatic competence of high school learners, and this is where researchers need to begin because the few studies carried out on Namibian university students have shown that students complete high school without attaining pragmatic knowledge. Moreover, the related Namibian studies have only focused on pragmatic competence that students possess and the factors that contribute to pragmatic failure, but no researcher has concentrated on the linguistic strategies that can help learners enhance their performances of speech acts in order to avoid pragmatic failure.

2.9. Theoretical framework

The study made use of interlanguage pragmatic as a theoretical framework. The phrase "interlanguage pragmatics" borrows its initial word from second language acquisition, particularly from Selinker (1972) and Tarone's (1980) attempts to account for learners' emerging linguistic systems that are neither those of their mother tongue nor those of the second language they are learning. According to the theory, interlanguage refers to intermediate, ever-changing, and temporary language systems that keep evolving over time as learners get closer and closer to achieving native-like competency. Interlanguage pragmatic is primarily concerned with how second language learners manage to communicate effectively while having limited understanding of the linguistic structures and sociopragmatics of the target language (Al-Rashidi, 2017).

According to Selinker (1972), the earlier investigations on interlanguage study consisted solely of grammar system research. According to Huang (2010, page 682) "the study of interlanguage was only limited from speech phonemes, lexical, syntactic to semantic etc." In the early 1980s, as research into the subject became more comprehensive, the researchers discovered that interlanguage study of grammar system alone is insufficient to answer many context-related problems. As a result, pragmatic research and interlanguage study were joined to create interlanguage pragmatic. The first book on interlanguage pragmatics was published in 1993, and Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) are two well-known experts in the field.

Interlanguage pragmatics studies how second language learners are acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to apply pragmatic norms and conventions as well as perform target language activities (Kasper, 1998). According to Xu (2015, p. 40) "Interlanguage pragmatics denotes the systematic but transient nature of language learners' pragmatic knowledge of the target language. It implies the factors that have been identified to have influence on SLA research may affect interlanguage systems: transfer, simplification, overgeneralisation, amount and quality of input, attention, awareness, motivation, aptitude, and so on."

The study of interlanguage pragmatics is concerned with how a learner understands and performs speech acts in the target language as well as how their pragmatic knowledge changes as they progress. Additionally, the student may incorporate words from his or her native tongue, a process known as transfer. Linguists distinguish two categories of transfer: a) since the two cultures are comparable, positive transfer happens when first language tactics and target language techniques coincide when speech acts are performed. However, negative transfer takes place when a pragmatic failure results from differences in culture (Thomas, 1983). There are two parts to interlanguage pragmatic: pragmatics and interlanguage. According to researchers, interlanguage is frequently defined as a learner's understanding of structure (Kasper, 1998).

Kasper 1992 (as cited in Xu, 2015) the native language and cultural background of learners can impact their performance in the target language, either in beneficial or detrimental ways. A positive effect may arise when certain language conventions, though not universally recognised, are shared by both the native and target languages. However, negative influence can occur when learners apply their native pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge to the target language, which may differ from the expected pragmatic behaviours and perceptions in that language.

The goal of interlanguage pragmatics is to comprehend the process through which the pragmatics of the target language are learned. In order to accomplish this, various learners' pragmatics phases of learning are examined to determine if they are universal to all learners and whether they take place in a particular order. Selinker (1972) asserts that researchers are attempting to comprehend how second language learners' usage of pragmatics differs from that of native speakers. This is significant because failures brought on by a lack of pragmatic and sociolinguistic competence may cause a learner to be seen negatively.

According to Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), the research concerns investigated in interlanguage pragmatics are substantially the same as those explored in cross-cultural pragmatics. What are the linguistic techniques and tactics used to carry out a given speech act? Are these methods accessible everywhere? What are the contextual elements that influence the decisions that speakers make from speech act sets? What is the arrangement of realisation patterns across context? How does cross-cultural contextual differences vary? Another issue that has repeatedly come up in interlanguage pragmatics is the impact of learners' first languages and cultures on their ability to produce and understand speech acts in the target language, (Kasper and Schmidt, 1996).

The field of interlanguage pragmatics differentiates between the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competencies of learners. Leech (1983) defined pragmalinguistic as the linguistic tools a language comprises to express a particular illocutionary force. In contrast, sociopragmatics, is the "sociological interface of pragmatics" (Leech, 1983, p. 10), or the impact that social conventions and principles have on the selection of linguistic forms to carry out a specific illocutionary act. Based on this differentiation and with regard to language acquisition, Thomas (1983) distinguished between what he termed sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic failures. By paying closer attention to grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary, language learners can prevent the typical mistakes known as pragmatic failure. On the other hand, sociopragmatic failure concerns the transmission of social and cultural standards from the first language to the target language. When this type of transfer deviates from second language socio-cultural rules, it can be damaging and potentially dangerous, ultimately resulting in misinterpretations and negative perceptions. According to Yunanda et al. (2012), the fundamental

tenet of Interlanguage Pragmatics is that understanding words and sentences that meet grammatical requirements in the second language acquisition is insufficient. Students should think about a number of factors while choosing appropriate speech, including what can be said, the context in which it can be spoken, when it can be stated, and how to perform that speech successfully. Requests distinctly demonstrate one of the realisations of Interlanguage Pragmatics.

2.9.1. Application of the Interlanguage pragmatics theory to the study

Trosborg's (1995), Campilo et al. (2009) and Cohen and Olshtain (1983) taxonomies and classifications are important for comprehending interlanguage pragmatic competence as they offer a systematic framework for analysing how language learners acquire pragmatic competencies in a second language. They are divided into several speech acts, such as, requests, apologies, and refusals, and the strategies employed to carry them out (Alzeebaree and Yavuz, 2017). They are helpful in assessing how learners adjust to the differences between the rules of their first language and the target language. These taxonomies assist researchers in identifying prevalent patterns in the pragmatic use of second language learners, such as whether their strategies deviate because of interlanguage interference. They reveal weaknesses in the pragmatic competency of second language learners.

Through these frameworks, the researcher aimed to classify frequent mistakes made by learners in the production of their speech acts, like excessively direct refusals, incorrect politeness techniques, or grammatical speech acts, and investigate the relationship between these and the learners' developmental stage or proficiency level. The analysis of speech acts such as requests, refusals, and apologies are fundamental to second language learners' social interactions. They frequently comprise of complex social factors like formality, politeness, and social status. Learners may have trouble deciding how direct or indirect to be depending on the situation, and these decisions are a reflection of their background and level of proficiency. The researcher wanted to find out what type of pragmatic knowledge is currently being taught in English Second Language classrooms? What are the aspects of pragmatic knowledge that learners should be aware of? How can teachers enhance second language learners' understanding of interlanguage pragmatics, and address their resistance to target pragmatics?

The study employed Trosborg's (1995) taxonomy (see Table 1. below), which is primarily broken down into three categories: indirect requests, conventionally indirect requests (either hearer-oriented or speaker-based), and direct requests. Furthermore, the researcher also made use of an additional group of different types of strategies in case the learners incorporated them.

Table 1:

Type	Strategy	Example
Indirect	Hints	Statement
Conventionally Indirect (Hearer oriented)	Ability	Could you...? Can you...?
	Willingness	Would you...?
	Permission	May I...?
Conventionally Indirect (Speaker based)	Wishes	I would like...
	Desire/needs	I want/need you to...
	Obligation	You must... You have to...
Direct	Performatives	I ask you to...
	Imperatives	Lend me your car.
	Elliptical phrase	Your car

Trosborg's (1995) taxonomy of request modification items, which is divided into internal and external changes, was used in the study to analyse the act of requesting in case learners made use of peripheral modification devices to soften their performance of requesting. Utilising these mitigators is crucial since they offer many approaches to changing a request to make it less threatening and more polite.

Table 2: Trosborg's taxonomy of request modification items, adapted from (Trosborg 1995, p.209-219).

Type	Subtype	Example
	Syntactic downgraders	I wonder if you would be able to pass me the bread
	Lexical/phrasal downgraders	Could you pass me the bread, please?

Internal modification	Upgraders	I'd be very grateful if you'd pass me the bread
	Preparators	Are you busy right now? I need that you pass me the bread
External Modification	Disarmers	I'm sorry to trouble you, but could you pass me the bread?
	Supportive reasons	Could you pass me the bread? I cannot reach it.

The investigation employed Campilo et al. (2009) Taxonomy of refusals to analyse learners' refusal strategies, which divides refusals into direct, indirect and adjuncts to refusals.

Table 3: Campilo et al. (2009) Taxonomy of refusals

1. Bluntness	No/I refuse
2. Negation of proposition	I can't, I don't think so
INDIRECT STRATEGIES	
1. Plain indirect	it looks like I won't be able to go
2. Reason/Explanation	I can't. I have a doctor's appointment
3. Regret/Apology	I am so sorry I can't
1. Alternative	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change option 	I would join you if you choose another restaurant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change time (postponement) 	I can't go right now, but I could next week.
5. Disagreement/Dissuasion/Criticism	Under the current economic circumstances, you should not be asking for a raise right now!
6. Statement of principle/ philosophy	I can't. It goes against my beliefs.
7. Avoidance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-verbal: Ignoring (silence, etc.) 	Well, I'll see if I can

- Verbal:
 - ✓ Hedging
 - ✓ Change topic
 - ✓ Joking
 - ✓ Sarcasm

ADJUNCT TO REFUSALS

1. Positive opinion	That is a great idea, but.....
2. Willingness	I'd love to go, but.....
3. Gratitude	Thanks so much, but.....
4. Agreement	Fine! But.....
5. Solidarity/Empathy	I'm sure you will understand, but...

The study also made use of Cohen and Olshtain (1983) table of indirect apologies to analyse the learners' apology responses, which has been mainly used by other researchers as formulaic expressions.

Table 4: Cohen and Olshtain (1983) table of indirect apologies

Strategy	Examples
1. Expression of apology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expression of regret • Offer of apology • Request for forgiveness 	<p>I'm sorry</p> <p>Excuse me</p> <p>Excuse me</p>
2. Explanation of account of the situation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepting the blame • Expressing self-deficiency 	<p>The bus was late</p> <p>It's my fault</p> <p>I wasn't thinking</p>

3. Acknowledgement of responsibility	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepting the blame 	It's my fault
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing self-deficiency 	I wasn't thinking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising the other person as deserving apology 	You are right
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing lack of intent 	I didn't mean to
4. An offer of repair	I will pay for the broken vase
5. Promise of forbearance	It won't happen again

2.7. Summary of the chapter

The literature review highlighted the interlanguage pragmatic proficiency level of English second language learners, and the existing research gaps by emphasising the need for practical and detailed instructions among the learners. The chapter also incorporated the basic tenets of the interlanguage pragmatic theory that was utilised in the study. This research will benefit English Second Language teachers by offering perspectives on how learners develop and enhance their pragmatic competence. It will assist them in creating more efficient, culturally sensitive, and focused lessons, which will help learners communicate more effectively in their target language, avoiding mistakes and misunderstandings brought on by pragmatic and cultural differences.

Chapter Three

Research Methods and Procedures

3.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the overview of the research design for this study, research paradigm, research approach, as well as the target population, sample size and sampling procedures, data collection instruments and procedures, and how the data presentation was analysed throughout the process.

3.2. Research Design

The study was conducted using a sequential explanatory research design in which the researcher first carried out quantitative research, interpreted the findings and then built on the data to explain it in depth with qualitative research (Creswell and Clark, 2018). The questions that are posed to the study's subjects and the kinds of participants that need to be specifically chosen for the qualitative stage are usually determined by the quantitative results. Therefore, the general goal of this design was to use the qualitative data to provide a more thorough explanation of the preliminary quantitative findings (Creswell, 2014). Through the sequential explanatory research design, the study first began with the quantitative phase by using A Written Discourse Completion Test. It was then followed by the qualitative phase which involved interviews, which helped build up and explained in more details the statistical data gathered through the quantitative data collection tool. This demonstrated how learners' interlanguage pragmatic competence is influenced by various factors contributing to pragmatic failure. In short, results from the qualitative phase was employed to supply a more thorough contextualisation and explanation of the conclusions and interpretations derived from the quantitative phase. The quantitative findings from the WDCT established the interview questions. Patterns such as excessively direct strategies, politeness markers, low usage of internal and external modification found in the quantitative data (WDCT) were directly addressed by the qualitative data (interviews), which provided explanations of the trends observed.

When using both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies in one study, they have to be carried either concurrently or sequentially. Data from sequential mixed methods analysis is analysed in a certain order in an effort to complement or clarify the results of one methodology with another (Creswell, 2013). As per Wipulanusat et al. (2020), investigators initially gather and examine quantitative data, thereafter employing qualitative techniques to derive additional clarification and comprehension of the quantitative outcomes acquired during the initial stage. The main technique of the investigation would be the analysis of quantitative data. This strategy was justified by the fact that the quantitative data, along with the statistical analysis that followed, gave rise to a general understanding of the problems that were being investigated.

3.3. Research Paradigm

The study utilised the pragmatic paradigm which helped interpret the patterns and irregularities that kept reappearing when learners performed speech acts, uncover the reasons behind those irregularities and the consequences of lack of interlanguage pragmatic competence. The term pragmatic paradigm refers to a set of philosophical ideas of value for addressing difficulties or problems (Biesta, 2010).

Creswell (2014) claims that pragmatism allows mixed method researchers to embrace a variety of approaches, perspectives, and assumptions, along with the diverse techniques for gathering and analysing data. Pragmatism is focused on finding solutions to real-world practical issues that need to be solved, instead of resting on presumptions about the nature of knowledge (Creswell, 2014). According to Allemang et al. (2021) the pragmatism paradigm emerged from the need to concentrate efforts on using inquiry to solve real-world problems that are practical. Pragmatism argues that one must have experience in order to give an event significance. Therefore, pragmatic research aims to understand the world and construct knowledge primarily through the application of individual experiences rather than by depending on unchangeable truths. Pragmatism offers an action-oriented framework for research in which the researcher uses the most relevant methodologies to answer the study's questions while attempting to tackle real-world problems that emerge from societies.

3.4. Research Approach

The researcher made use of a mixed-method approach. Bryman (2012) defines mixed-methods research (MMR) as a research approach which includes gathering, analysing, evaluating, and presenting both qualitative and quantitative data in order to answer research questions in a suitable and ethical ways. Combining two approaches may be better than utilising just one since it will probably yield deep understanding into the study's phenomenon that are not possible to completely understand when employing simply qualitative or quantitative methodologies. Various data sources can be integrated and combined through a mixed-methods approach, which can help in the research of complicated issues (Poth & Munce, 2020).

Using mixed methods facilitates the collection of data, from an extensive range of respondents, enhancing the likelihood that the results can be applied to a large population. Moreover, the qualitative offers a greater understanding of the problem under investigation. The mixed-method approach was used to analyse quantitatively and qualitatively the construction of the learners' speech acts. The quantitative approach in this research was utilised to interpret the occurrence or percentages of speech acts that were successfully or incorrectly produced by the learners. Moreover, the qualitative approach was employed to describe all three objectives in details by interpreting the level of learners' interlanguage competence, the factors that contribute to interlanguage pragmatic

failure, and lastly the strategies that can be utilised to help learners improve their pragmatic competence.

The integration of both quantitative and qualitative data in a research project has several strong arguments in its favour. The first reason for using an MMR strategy is the expansion of the research. This indicates that using an MMR approach enables researchers to broaden their investigation to a suitable depth and scope. For example, gathering both closed-ended quantitative data and open-ended qualitative data helps researchers understand a research problem when they wish to generalise or extend the results to a population and provide a detailed understanding of the meaning of a concept or phenomenon for individuals (Creswell, 2003). In addition, qualitative data, for example, focus groups and interviews can strengthen the study's inquiry, since narratives offer a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. The study can then be made more comprehensive by using a quantitative method to data collecting, which helps the researcher gather information from various individuals regarding various elements of a phenomenon (Dawadi et al., 2021).

The idea that there will be additional value in merging the two approaches is another motivating factor for doing so. This is because both research methodologies have validity and are complementary in certain ways. As stated in (Dawadi et al., 2021), (Maxwell, 2016; Morgan, 2014), the investigators employ both data sets to address the same research issue, which can lead to greater accuracy and broader implications in the conclusion. In other words, combining two approaches results in a more comprehensive picture and offers the chance for a wider range of opposing or complementary viewpoints. These are valuable because they do not only encourage further investigations and deepen our comprehension of a phenomenon, but they also create new research opportunities.

3.5. Research Setting

This study was conducted at Eenhana Secondary School in Eenhana Town, Ohangwena Region.

3.6. Study Population

According to Ahmad et al. (2023) the population in research is the full set of people, things, or events that are the subjects of the study and have a common attribute. As reported by (Jilcha, 2020; Garg, 2016) it stands for the entire set of variables the researcher hopes to investigate and make judgments about. Ahmad et al., (2023) state that the process of determining the population is a crucial aspect of research design, as it establishes the parameters and extent of the study's conclusions. The study population for this study was 285 Grade 11 learners and 6 English teachers. The researcher chose this study population as they have demonstrated common aspects of pragmatic failure that were being investigated in this study.

3.7. Sample and Sampling Procedures

A sample in the context of research is a portion of the population chosen for investigation. Researchers use the sample, which is a smaller, more controllable group, to establish conclusions and generalisations about the population as a whole (Taherdoost, 2018). By studying a smaller group, researchers can draw valid conclusions about the larger population, which is one benefit of employing a sample. There is a degree of certainty that the results of the investigation can be used across the entire study population if the sample is representative and correctly represents the variety and features of the population (Andrade, 2020).

According to Ahmad et al. (2023), this random selection procedure ensures that each learner has an equal opportunity of being included in the sample and assists in minimising bias. Singh and Masuku (2014) asserts that in the Simple Random Sampling approach, each element in the population has an equal probability of being included in the sample, and in the event that the population is homogeneous, this method yields a more objective and superior assessment of the variables. Similarly, Delice (2010) states that the underlying presumption is that the target population as a whole possesses the required qualities equally. Thus, it is easy to apply the sample's findings to the full population.

Random sampling was employed to collect quantitative data, which provided each participant of the population with an opportunity to be included in the sample (Taherdoost, 2020). The samples were randomly picked across all the Grade 11 classes so that every learner had a chance to be chosen for the study. The sample size for quantitative methods was 165 learners. The reason for choosing these participants is that they are in their final year of high school, and this means that they have been directly and indirectly exposed to pragmatic knowledge. With the experience that they have, they were able to provide the objectives of the study with eligible and sufficient data. Moreover, the researcher chose a limited sample size as it will be a manageable group, which allowed the researcher to assess the learners effectively based on the speech acts that they were required to produce. In addition, the 165 sample size was selected to guarantee that the information gathered is representative and generalisable. Furthermore, 165 participants were selected to ensure control over the collection and evaluation of data. The sample size was limited by several constraints; time was a factor in this since the data gathering period was one of the busiest times for learners on the school calendar. Moreover, the thesis submission deadline left little time for analysing large amount of data. Since random sampling method was used for the quantitative data, the researcher used the class lists and randomly ticked off the names of the learners who participated in the study before meeting them in order to remove any potential bias.

In addition, Purposive sampling was utilised to gather qualitative data, which is an intentional choice of the researcher due to characteristics that the participant possesses (Etikan et al., 2016). It is a non-random method that does not require a predetermined number of participants or underlying ideas. In other words, the researcher determines what information is necessary and then searches for sources willing and able to supply it based on their expertise or experience. For the best possible use of the materials at hand, Patton (2002) states that it is commonly employed in qualitative studies to locate and identify cases that contain an extensive amount of information. This entails finding and choosing people who are knowledgeable about a topic of interest and who are skilled in it (Creswell & Clark, 2011). The researcher selected all the 6 English teachers at school to participate in the study as they were able to provide information based on their experiences with the learners when it came to interlanguage pragmatic concept. With the qualitative result, all 6 English teachers were chosen. This choice was made because of the small population size, which allowed for the inclusion of all teachers rather than leaving out some. By choosing all the 6 teachers, the study wanted to prevent potential bias and assure full representation of the population.

3.8. Research Instruments

The researcher utilised A Written Discourse Completion Test to collect quantitative data whereby learners were required to write responses for different scenarios that were provided by the researcher. The qualitative data was gathered by making use of an interview guide, which was for the teachers in order to provide their perspectives about this concept of interlanguage pragmatic, whereby they were required to explain the factors that lead to pragmatic failure, and to suggest the linguistic strategies that will help learners enhance their pragmatic competence.

a) Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT)

Ogiermann (2018) claims that the Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT) is the most popular tool for gathering data in interlanguage pragmatics, which studies students' pragmatic knowledge and development, and cross-cultural pragmatics, a field of study that contrasts different speech acts across languages. The WDCT is the only data collection tool that produces sufficiently large data sets of comparable, systematically different speech act data, which makes it particularly important for these areas of research where the goal is to identify culture-specific forms in speech act performances or the pragmatic characteristics of a particular interlanguage that requires to draw on extensive amount of data. Similarly, Woodfield (2008, p. 43) as cited in Muthandi (2022) points out that, Written discourse completion tasks have frequently been used in pragmatic research as a primary tool to prompt second language learners to produce speech acts. Therefore, it is a valuable instrument that worked well for cross-sectional studies and allowed for the quick collection of meaningful data.

Discourse Completion tasks known as written questionnaires consist of several short scenario descriptions, followed by a brief dialogue, and an empty space for the speech act that is being studied. Participants are asked to provide a response that they believe appropriately matches the provided context (Kasper & Dahl, 1991). According to several scholars, the WDCT has been demonstrated to be a valid exam, making it a useful tool for evaluating the pragmatic ability of second language learners. After applying certain statistical approaches on six different test instruments, Hudson et al. (1995) reported that the WDCT sufficiently had good validity.

Considering the test's usefulness, the WDCT can be regarded as a very efficient instrument for rapidly collecting a lot of data. For example, in large classes with over thirty students, the WDCT can be used successfully if the teacher wishes to evaluate the pragmatic proficiency of second language learners. In particular, the instructor does not have to spend a lot of time receiving as many responses from the students (Rover, 2011). Furthermore, as stated by Kasper (2000), the instructor possesses the ability to regulate situational factors in the WDCT, including familiarity, level of imposition, age, social distance and relative power among the speakers. More importantly, the teacher may quickly analyse the results and determine the students' level of pragmatic competency because this test does not require transcription.

b) Interview Guide

According to Rashidi et al. (2014), an interview is a technique for gathering data that entails asking those participating in research questions in order to elicit desired responses. During an interview, researchers can gain insight into a respondent's awareness and comprehend the meaning they have created. This includes the respondent's explanation of an event and their own interpretation of reality.

The adaptable format of interviews encourages participants to provide more personal information, which enhances the quality of the qualitative data. The interviewer can successfully examine the interviewee's ideas, emotions, and views in a productive and efficient manner. Unlike other methods, this approach enables the interviewer to probe farther into the ideas, sentiments, and thoughts underlying the answers provided. Additionally, interviews provide participants a chance to expand on their responses to questions, which helps to improve the accuracy of the information that is gathered. The interviewer, who is often the investigator, can help clarify the questions to the participant, who then has a chance to explain and go deeper into the phenomenon being studied (Alamri, 2019). The investigator employed semi-structured interviews to gather data which enabled the researcher to make use of both open-ended and follow-up questions.

The interview guide was structured by looking at the responses from the WDCT that was used during the pilot study. It also contained categories of questions which were guided by Objective 2 and 3. Categories of questions which contained specific themes, such as terminologies in intercultural communication, exposure, factors, etc. The average length of each interview lasted between 15-20 minutes, depending on the depth of the responses. All the interviews were conducted in person at Eenhana Secondary School. The interview guide consisted of 6 open-ended questions, with additional follow-up questions based on the participants' answers. The semi-structured questions permitted participants to go into further details about their experiences, ensuring that the main study themes were consistently covered.

3.9. Data Analysis

The quantitative data from the Written Discourse Completion Test were analysed using statistical and thematic procedures whereby the data was tabulated and displayed in tables in order to group the learners' responses from the Written Discourse Completion Test into themes. To analyse the data collected through the WDCT, the researcher used the percentage proportion approach to quantify the participants' responses. To calculate the percentage, the number of participants who provided a similar strategy in question was divided by the entire sample size, and then multiplied by 100 to give the percentage. For example, if 85 participants out of 165 selected a particular strategy, the calculation would be as follow: $85/165*100 = 51.5\%$. This means that 51.5% of the participants chose that same technique or strategy. Through this method, the researcher was able to analyse data patterns and identify trends in the participants' language use.

The qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis which interpreted and described teachers' responses. Moreover, the data was analysed manually. According to Braun and Clare (2006), thematic analysis is a technique for evaluating, detecting, and presenting patterns in data analysis. Open coding was used to analyse the qualitative interviews, which involved marking sentences or phrases in the teachers' responses that addressed the same aspect, or the reasons why learners communicated in that manner. Their response were coded as exposure, lack of correct terminology, first language etc.

3.10. Ethical Considerations

With regard to ethical issues, Creswell (2013) asserts that it is an important issue and caution researchers to familiarise themselves with the respective universities rules and requirements. Creswell (2013) goes on to warn researchers against committing ethical transgressions such as plagiarism, falsifying data and findings. Researchers are advised to communicate in a manner that is clear, straightforward and appropriate. With regard to language use, further caution is given to researchers to ascertain that their research does not use language or words that are biased against

persons because of gender, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic group, disability, or age (Creswell, 2013).

The researcher applied for ethical clearance from NUST and asked for permission from the Ohangwena Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture to conduct the study or collect the data at Eenhana Secondary School. The researcher was granted approval from NUST and Ohangwena Education Directorate before the commencement of data collection. Participants were provided with consent forms which were signed by their teachers in order for them to take part in the study. Participants were kept anonymous as they were given numbers to represent them instead of using their real names, for example, Respondent 6. Moreover, participants were ensured that the information gathered will be used for academic purposes, and specifically for the research project. Before administering the test and interview guides, the researcher first explained the objectives of the research to the participants. In the maintaining of data storage and handling, the participants' scripts were stored safely at a secured place with limited access, whereby the researcher was the only one who had access to the storage room. With the interviews data, password were used to protect the recorded voices, as they were kept on the phone

3.11. Summary of the chapter

This chapter discussed the research methodology employed in the study. The study made use of a mixed method approach while employing a random sampling procedure as well as a purposive sampling. The rationale for selecting a mixed-method approach is that it integrates qualitative and quantitative techniques in order to offer a more thorough comprehension of the research problem, while random sampling ensures that the validity of the research findings enable statistical generalisation. A Written Discourse Completion Task was administered to the learners, while a semi-structured interview guide was used for teachers as a data collection instrument. Finally, the ethical considerations outlined in this chapter were adhered to. The following chapter, Chapter Four, concentrates on presenting and discussing the study's findings.

Chapter Four

Findings and Discussions

4.1 Introduction

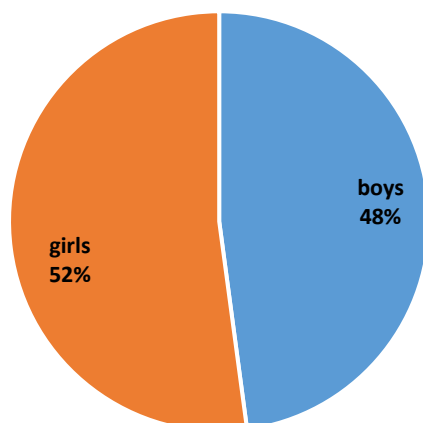
This chapter presents the findings of the study by providing insights of the interlanguage pragmatic competence of Grade 11 learners at Eenhana Secondary School, the factors that cause interlanguage pragmatic failure as well the linguistic strategies that could be used to enhance learners' pragmatic competence. The data was collected using two sets of instruments, namely, The Discourse Completion Test which was distributed among the learners to answer objective one, and an Interview Guide for the English teachers, which consisted of structured questions, in order to answer objective two and three. The data was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively.

4.2. Demographic data

4.2.1. Gender representation

The study sample consisted of girls and boys.

Fig. 2



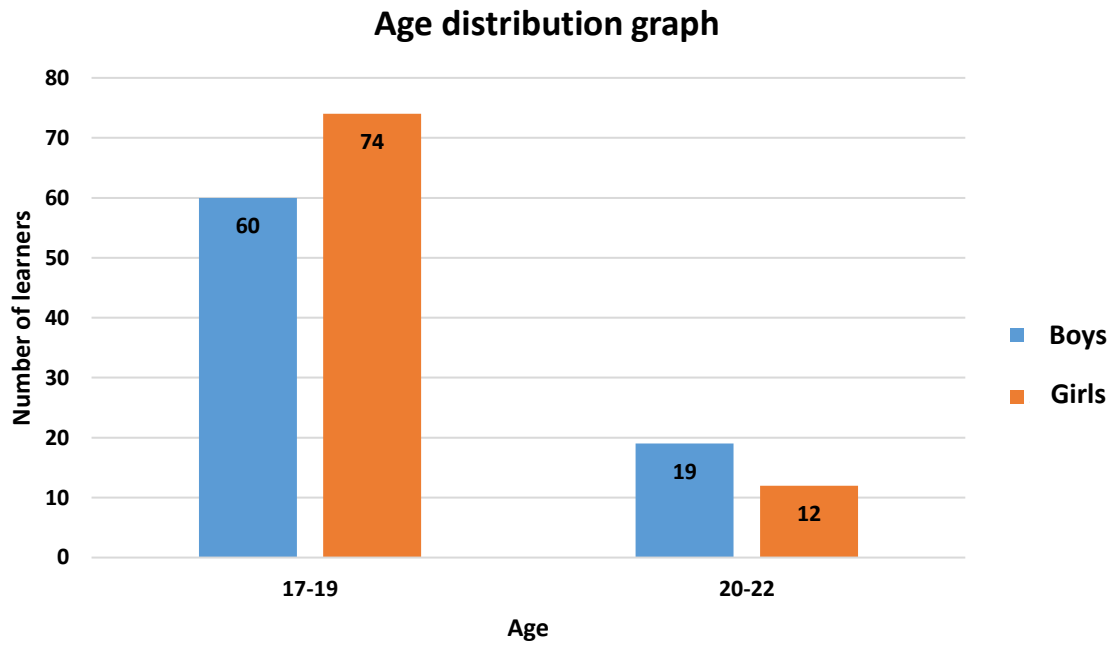
As demonstrated by the figure, 52% of the participants were girls, that is a total of 86, while the 48% of the respondents were boys, and that is a total of 79 boys.

4.2.2. Age distribution of the participants (learners)

The graph below shows that a total of 60 boys were between the ages of 17-19, and this accounted for 36.4% of the study sample. The total number of girls who fell under the bracket of 17-19 years was 74, and this made up 45% of the participant group. Moreover, under the range of 20-22 years the total number of boys was 19, which represented 12% of the sample group. Lastly, in the age range of 20-

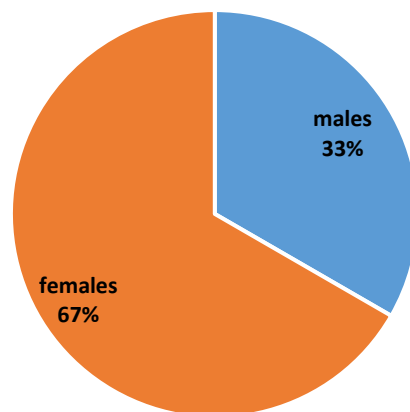
22 years, there were 12 girls in total, which made up 7.2% of the sample size. The age distribution demonstrates a variety of data gathered from the Discourse Completion Test.

Graph 1.



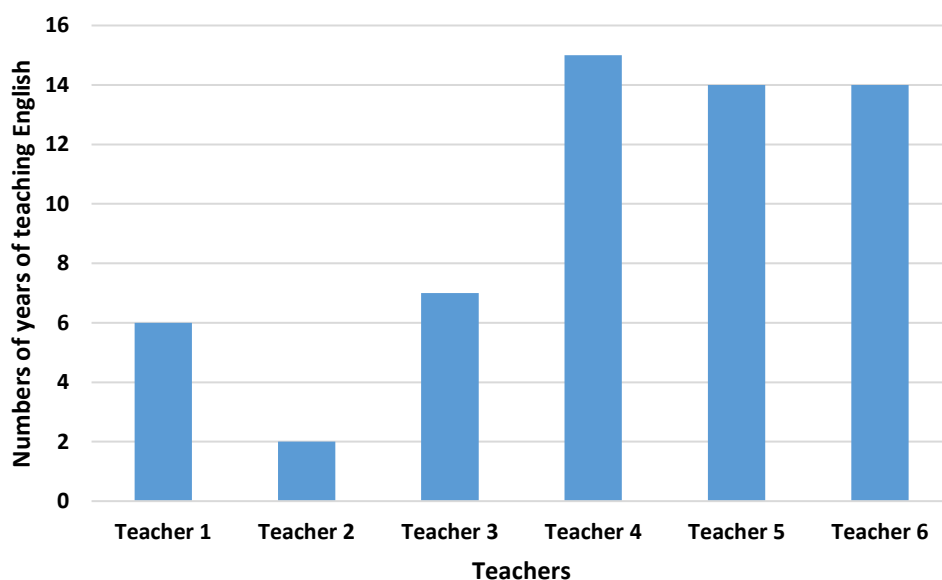
4.2.3. Gender representation for teacher

Fig. 3



As illustrated by the figure, 67% of the participants were females that is a total of 4, while 33% of the respondents were males, and that is a total of 2.

Graph 2.



The graph below demonstrates the teaching experience of English teachers at Eenhana Secondary School. Teacher 1 has been teaching for 6 years, while Teacher 2 has been teaching for 2 years, Teacher 3 has 7 years of teaching experience, Teacher 4 has been giving English for 15 years, and lastly, Teacher 5 and 6 have 14 years of teaching experience.

Quantitative Data Analysis

4.3. Formulation and Realisations of Request Strategies

The Discourse Completion Test was given to a sample of 165 participants who were selected using a random sampling method. The Discourse Completion Test consisted of five situations or scenarios that required the participants to formulate requests, and the participants' production of requests were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The qualitative analyses provided deep perception into the linguistic formulae utilised by the participants by using the Tronsborg's (1995) taxonomy of request realisation strategies. The total request responses that were expected from the learners was 825, however, only 746 responses were analysed. The analysis presents the findings of the Requests Discourse Completion Test concentrating on each situation in order to have a thoroughly understanding of the concept and its practical realisation amongst the learners.

Situation 1 (See Appendix A)

You missed the deadline for your English Project because you did not have enough time to work on it. What do you say to the teacher so you will be given a second chance for submission?

Table 1

TYPE	STRATEGY	STRUCTURE	N	%
Indirect	Hints	Statement		
Conventionally Indirect (hearer-Oriented)	Ability	Could you.....?	6	3.6
		Can you.....?	26	15.6
	Willingness	Would you...?	3	1.8
	Permission	May I....?	3	1.8
		Can I....?	13	7.9
Suggestory Formulae	May you....?	28	16.9	
Conventionally Indirect (speaker-Based)	Wishes	I would like you....	2	1.2
	Desires/Needs	I want/need you to	4	2.4
	Obligation			
Direct	Performatives	I ask you to.....	4	2.4
	Imperatives	Lend me your car	52	31.5
	Elliptical phrase	Your car		
Internal Modification		I wonder if you..... Could you....please? I'd very grateful if.....		
External Modification		Excuse me Please I'm sorry to trouble you Could you pass me the bread? I cannot reach it	35	21.2

The data demonstrated that the most employed request linguistic realisation is the imperative strategy. The ability strategy was divided into two parts depending on the modal verb being used,

namely, *could and can*. (For example, *“Teacher can you please give me a second chance to submit my project because I am not yet done”*. *“Could you give me a second chance for me to submit?”*). The analysis showed that the use of the ability strategy accounted for 19.2% in total, (Could you 3.6 + Can you 15.6% = 19.2%). The next strategy that was used is the willingness which accounted for 3%. The willingness strategy used expressions such as; *“Would you give me an extra time because I do not complete my work.”* *“Sir would you please give me a day to submit my English project?”* Furthermore, the learners utilised the permission strategy which was also divided into two parts depending on the modal auxiliaries *May I and Can I*. The permission strategy accounted for 9.7% in total, (May I 1.8 + Can I 7.9 =9.7). The learners gave expressions such as; *“May I have a second chance to submit?”* *“Can you please allow me to submit tomorrow?”* On the other hand, the suggestory strategy was represented by 16.9% whereby the learners utilised expressions like *“May you give me one chance to done it?”* *“May you assist me to give me a second chance for my project?”* Meanwhile, under the Conventionally Indirect (Speaker-based) learners employed the wishes strategy which was represented by 1.2% (*“Ms I would like you to give me a week to complete my project.”*), while the Desires/Needs strategy accounted for 2.4%, for example, *“I want you to give me a second chance to submit my project.”* The performative strategy was also observed in the 2.4% of the requests. The respondents gave responses such as, *“I ask you to give me extra minutes to finish my work.”* Direct requests in the form of imperatives were evident in the data, which accounted for 31.5%. Examples of direct requests, *“Give me a second chance to submit.”* *“Teacher allow me to submit my project tomorrow.”*

Internal modification could be noted in 4% of the requests. For example, *“Could you please give me a second chance to submit?”* On the other hand, external modification linguistic formulae which recorded 10% was in responses such as *“I am sorry for missing the due date, but may you please give me another chance for submission?”* Moreover, the results indicated that 24 respondents failed to make requests, and gave responses that entails apologies or expressing what they were going to say to the teacher. For example, *“I would like to apologies for not submitting your work on time, because I really got some disturbing work for that day.”* *“I am telling the teacher why the reason why I had not submit on time.”*

Situation 2 (see Appendix)

You have been missing school due to personal reasons. You heard that your classmates received handouts for the exam. What do you say to the teacher in order to be given the notes?

Table 2

TYPE	STRATEGY	STRUCTURE	N	%
Indirect	Hints	Statement		
Conventionally Indirect (hearer-Oriented)	Ability	Could you...?	3	1.8
		Can you.....?	38	23.0
	Willingness	Would you....?	4	2.4
	Permission	May I....?	3	1.8
		Can I....?	3	1.8
	Suggestory Formulae	May you....?	36	21.8
Conventionally Indirect (speaker-Based)	Wishes	I would like...	4	2.4
Desires/Needs	I want/need you to	7	4.2	
	Obligation	You must/You have to		
Direct	Performatives	I ask you to...	2	1.2
	Imperatives	Lend me your car	50	30.3
	Elliptical phrase	Your car		
Internal Modification		I wonder if you....		
		Could you.... Please	3	1.8
		I'd very grateful if....		
External Modification		Excuse me		
		Please		
		I'm sorry to trouble you	3	1.8
		Could you pass me the bread?		
		I cannot reach it.		

The findings demonstrated that just like in the first situation, most respondents did not hesitate to make direct requests. About 24.8% respondents made use of the ability strategy, whereby the modal verb *Can you* was frequently used. For example, *"Can you give me a handout if there is a left over?"* *"Could you please help me the exam handouts...?"* Moreover, the willingness strategy comprised of 2.4%, as demonstrated in the following expression *"Sir would you please help me the notes you handed out..."* The utilisation of the permission formulae made up 3.6% of the responses. This was noticeable in the following linguistic expression, *"May I please get the handouts for the exam that was given yesterday?"* *"Can I also get a handout?"* Under the Conventionally Indirect (hearer-oriented) the

suggestory formulae was the most second used making up 21.8% of the responses. As an illustration, *“I was not present when you were giving handout for the exam, may you help me a handout?”* Moreover, 2.4% of the learners made use of the wishes strategy in order to be given handouts. The expression *I would like to* was observed in their answers. For instance, *“I would like you to provide me a note which you give to others.”* Furthermore, the Desires/Needs strategy contributed 4.2% of the responses. This was visible in the following examples; *“I heard my classmates were given handouts and I want you to help me the handout.” “I need you to give me handouts.”* The utilisation of the performative formulae under direct request strategies represented 1.2% of the data. Some of the expressions that were provided by the participants are as follow; *“I am not receive handout that given yesterday so I ask you Mrs to help me handouts.” “I asking you to help me handouts for the exam.”* The request strategy for imperatives accounted for 30.3%. For instance, *“Give me the handouts.” “I have been missing school, help me a handout?”* Internal modification was observed in 1.81% of the responses by the learners. For example; *“Could you please give note that you give to others yesterday?”* Moreover, the external modification occurred in 1.81% of the responses. For instance, *“I am sorry for not coming to school yesterday, may you please help me with the notes?”* It is significant to point out that 9.1% of the population failed to make requests for this situation. Some of the expressions that they gave were like *“If even I was sick, I show my hospital card.” “I have to go to she/he if able to give me an handouts for me to go study exam.”*

Situation 3 (See Appendix)

It is your turn to clean the classroom, but you have an appointment with the doctor. You want to be excused, so you sweep the following day. You approach your teacher, what will be your request?

Table 3

TYPE	STRATEGY	STRUCTURE	N	%
Indirect	Hints	Statement		
Conventionally Indirect (hearer Oriented)	Ability	Could you...?	2	1.2
		Can you....?	22	13.3
	Willingness	Would you...?	1	0.6
	Permission	May I....?	9	5.5
		Can I....?	35	21.2
Suggestory	May you...?	18	10.9	

Formulae				
Conventionally	Wishes	I would like...	1	0.6
Indirect(speaker- Based	Desires/Needs	I want/need you to	10	6.0
	Obligation	You must/You have to		
Direct	Performatives	I ask you to...	1	0.6
	Imperatives	Lend me your car	42	25.4
	Elliptical phrase	Your car		
Internal Modification		I wonder if you.... Could you.... Please I'd very grateful if....	6	4
External Modification		Excuse me Please I'm sorry to trouble you Could you pass me the bread? I cannot reach it.	5	3.03

The participants were asked to make a request to sweep the classroom the following day, and they provided diverse responses. Under the conventionally indirect (hearer-oriented) the permission strategy entailing *Can I* attracted a significant attention of 21.2% while the *May I* component received 5.5%, mainly with these examples; *"I have an appointment with my doctor today right now, so can I just sweep on the following day?" "I think I would not be able to clean today. May I sweep the following day sir?"* The second frequently used strategy in the conventionally hearer-oriented was the ability which accounted for a total of 14.5% (Could you 1.3 + Can you 13.3= 14.5%). The participants gave expressions such as *"Miss, can you please let me sweep tomorrow, because I have an appointment with the doctor today."* *"I have an appointment with the doctor so could you please help me to go now and clean tomorrow?"* The suggestory formulae recorded 10%, and the analysed responses are as follow; *"Teacher may you please excuse me I have an appointment with my doctor."* *"May you help me to live I will come and sweep following day."*

The unconventionally indirect willingness strategy was the least used with 0.6%. For example, *"Miss would you allow me to clean tomorrow..."* The wishes strategy for speaker based recorded 0.6% of the responses as in: *"Sir I have a flup with the doctor today I would like you to give me permission for me to come sweep tommorow."* Moreover, the desire/needs recorded 6.0%, and the following were realised; *"I have an appointment with the doctor I want you to assit so that I will sweep the following day."* *"I want you to help me permission for me to leave the classroom without cleaning, because I am*

have an appointment...” The direct performative made up 0.6% of the responses. For example, *“I have some dialogue with my doctor so I ask you that am no longer clean today but tomorrow.”* Moreover, under the direct strategy, imperatives accounted for 25.4%, and it was the most employed strategy in this situation. The expressions noted under the concept of imperatives are such as: *“Allow me to sweep the following day...” “Help me to clean in following day.”*

Internal modification occurred in 4% of the responses. For example, *“Could you please help me to go now and clean tomorrow.”* External modification were realised in 3.03% of the responses. For example, *“I’m sorry Miss can I please clean the class the next day...”* It is essential to note that 12.1% of the study failed to make requests under this situation as some misinterpreted the scenarios. For example, *“I should go to memorial service at my one family member thats pass on, so please mis accept me to go.”* Moreover, some requests were made in the form of interrogatives, and this accounted for 2.4%. For example, *“I have an appointment with my doctor why can’t sweap the next day?”*

Situation 4 (See Appendix)

Your teacher opened the windows, but you are feeling cold. How do you ask the teacher to close the windows?

Table 4

TYPE	STRATEGY	STRUCTURE	N	%
Indirect	Hints	Statement		
Conventionally	Ability	Could you...?	3	1.8
Indirect (hearer-Oriented)		Can you.....?	50	30.3
	Willingness	Would you..?	4	2.4
	Permission	May I....?	1	0.6
	Suggestory	May you..?	41	24.8
	Formulae			
Conventionally	Wishes	I would like...		
Indirect(speaker-Based)	Desires/Needs	I want/need you to	2	1.2
	Obligation	You must/You have to	1	0.6
Direct	Performatives	I ask you to...	2	1.2
	Imperatives	Lend me your car	52	31.5
	Elliptical phrase	Your car		

Internal	I wonder if you....		
Modification	Could you.... Please	3	1.8
	I'd very grateful if....		
External	Excuse me		
Modification	Please		
	I'm sorry to trouble you	7	4.2
	Could you pass me the bread?		
	I cannot reach it.		

The data showed that 1.8% of the population utilised the modal verb *could*, which falls under the ability strategy. For example, *“Teacher, am feeling cold, could you please close the windows?”* On the other hand, the other concept of ability strategy which is the modal verb *Can* recorded 30.3% of the responses. For instance, *“Miss I am feeling cold, can you assist me to close the windows.”* The least used strategy under the hearer oriented is the permission formulae which comprised of 0.6% of the expressions. This can be observed in the following request; *“Teacher am feeling too much cold, may the windows clouset?”* Requests in the form of willingness accounted for 2.4% of the answers. Example of the analysed response, *“Mrs I am feeling cold, would you please close the windows?”* The participants also formulated their responses using the suggestory formulae which contributed 24.8%. The expression is demonstrated in the following example; *“May you close the windows Mrs because I am feeling cold.”* The analysed responses indicated that 1.2% of the population made use of the desires/needs strategy which belonged to the conventionally (speaker-based). Here is an example; *“Mrs I want you to help me to close for me the windows because I am feeling cold and I have flu.”*

Interestingly the data recorded a strategy that was not found in the previous situations. This strategy is the obligation and it constituted 0.6%. For instance, *“Teacher, I am feeling cold. I think you must close the window just for now.”* Under the direct strategy, performatives recorded 1.2%, and this can be observed in the following statement: *“Mrs is too cold and I ask you please to close the widhoew.”* Moreover, just like in the previous situations, direct imperatives recorded the highest percentage, which accounted for 31.5%. Here is an example of the most evident expression in the participants' responses that were realised; *“Help me sir to closed a window it's cold.”* The external modification was recorded in 1.8% of the data. For instance, *“Could you please close the windows because I am feeling cold if you can.”* The participants employed external modification in their responses which accounted for 4.2%. For example, *“Sorry teacher its very cold. Can you please close the windows?”* The data demonstrated that 5.4% failed to make requests. For examples, *“I feel colder.”*

Situation 5 (see Appendix)

You are working on your Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga Research in your classroom, but it is almost time for the teacher to lock up. How do you ask him/her to leave the class open/leave the key behind.

Table 5

TYPE	STRATEGY	STRUCTURE	N	%
Indirect	Hints	Statement		
Conventionally	Ability	Could you...?	3	1.8
Indirect (hearer- Oriented		Can you.....?	48	29
	Willingness	Would you..?	5	3
	Permission	May I....?		
		Can I...?	1	0.6
	Suggestory	May you..?	31	18.8
	Formulae			
Conventionally	Wishes	I would like...		
Indirect(speaker- Based	Desires/Needs	I want/need you to	2	1.2
	Obligation	You must/You have to		
Direct	Performatives	I ask you to...	2	1.2
	Imperatives	Lend me your car	66	40
	Elliptical phrase	Your car		
Internal Modification		I wonder if you.... Could you.... Please I'd very grateful if....		
External Modification		Excuse me Please I'm sorry to trouble you Could you pass me the bread? I cannot reach it.	2	1.2

The utilisation of the modal verb *can* has not reduced in the ability strategy, and it accounted for 29%. For example, “*Ms can you help me to leave a key because I am not done my done, after I done I lock.*” Moreover, the use of the modal verb *could* totalled 1.8%. For example, “*Could you please leave your*

key behind if you can.” The use of the expression would you was evident in the request expressions which made up 3% of the responses, and this is demonstrated in the following example; *“I’m very busy working on my Oshikwanyama Research, would you like to leave the key for today?”* The least used strategy is the permission which made up 0.6% of the responses. For example, *“Can I have your key please teacher I have to do my Oshikwanyama Research.”* The suggestory formulae was noticeable in 18.8% of the expressions realised by the respondents. For example, *“Ms may you leave the class open for me to do my work.”* Under the speaker-based, the desires/needs contributed 1.2%. Example of the realised expression, *“Sir, I did not done with my research, so I want you to trust me and leave the key with me.”*

The analysed responses showed that the direct performatives recorded 1.2%, and an example can be observed in the following expression, *“We ask that it is your responsibility to lock the door than we ask you to either left the classroom open or either you give one of us key please Mrs.”* In addition, the direct imperatives recorded the highest responses of 40%. The examples are demonstrated in the following illustrations, *“Miss don’t lock the door, just give me the key so I will lock it when I done my research and I will keep the key safe.”* *“Teacher, help me the keys, I have Oshikwanyama Research but I want to write it in the class.”* A total number of 5 participants failed to make requests under this situation. For example, *“Miss today I am going to work on my research but now is time to go can I please leave the class.”* Moreover, 1.2% of the population made use of the preparatory expression as an external modification, therefore, the word excuse me was evident in the following response; *“Excuse me sir can you please leave me your class keys I am busy doing my Oshikwanyama research.”*

4.2.5. Formulation and Realisation of Apologies

The Discourse Completion Test was administered to 165 participants who were selected randomly. The apology responses were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively using Cohen and Olshtain (1983) table of indirect apologies. Only 675 responses were analysed and presented in table forms.

Situation 1 (See Appendix)

You borrowed a textbook from your Mathematics’ teacher, but your baby sister tore the cover page. It is time to return the textbook, what do you say to your teacher.

Table 6

Strategy	Examples	N	%
1. Expression of regret	I’m sorry	142	86.1
2. Explanation of account	The bus was late	95	57.6
3. Acknowledgment of responsibility			

Accepting the blame	It's my fault	21	12.7
Expressing lack of intent	I didn't mean to	6	3.6
4.An offer of repair	I will pay for the broken vase	18	10.9
5. Promise of forbearance	It won't happen again	12	7.3

The data demonstrated that most of the apologies realised by the learners consisted of the expression of regret and this accounted for 86.1%. Direct apologies were provided by the learners by showing regret, and this was observable in the use of lexical items such as; *"I am sorry", "really/very sorry", "I apologise", "Apologies to you" and "My apologies"*. Some of the apologies were accompanied by explanation of account or offense which accounted for 57.6%. For example, *"Sir, am so sorry for my baby sister's action, she tore the book cover page by mistake, so she thought it was not important." "The cover page was tore by my little sister, please accept it."* Moreover, about 16.3% of the responses expressed acknowledgment of responsibility. This was observable in the following responses; *"I am sorry teacher for not taking care of your textbook." "The textbook cover is tore to my sister it was not my will."* On the other hand, 10.9% of the population provided an offer of repair, *"My sister tore one page from that page and I lime it that page." "I can even replace it with a different cover."* About 7.3% expressed promise of forbearance, and this was exemplified in the following responses; *"I am not more trying it again next time I will keep it safe."* It is noteworthy to highlight that 7.9% of the population failed to apologise. They provided responses such as, *"I went to the teacher than I tell her information about that my textbook, tore the cover page to my sister."*

Situation 2 (See Appendix)

Your school football team has friendly match with Haimbili Haufiku soccer team. You are part of the team that is playing that day, but you were late because you had an emergency. How do you apologise to your coach?

Table 7

Strategy	Examples	N	%
1. Expression of regret	I'm sorry	131	79.4
2. Explanation of account	The bus was late	134	81.2
3. Acknowledgment of responsibility			
Accepting the blame	It's my fault	7	4.2
Expressing lack of intent	I didn't mean to	2	1.2

4.An offer of repair	I will pay for the broken vase		
5. Promise of forbearance	It won't happen again	11	6.7

The table shows that most apologies provided by the learners expressed regret. For example, *"I am very much /so sorry", "I am apologising", "sorry" and "I am apologise"*. Some of the responses were combined with explanation of an account which totalled 81.2% of the responses. For instance, *"I had an emergency to work on, my bad."* *"I was went to my mother at hospital"*. Compared to the previous situation, the utilisation of the acknowledgement of responsibility in this situation decreased, and recorded 5.4%. *"Coach I am sorry because I don't respect the time you have given us."* *"I didn't mean to be late, it's just that I had an emergency."* Furthermore, a few participants expressed a promise of forbearance and this was observed in 10 responses, and this accounted for 6.7%. For instance, *"I had an emergency that's way I'm late really sorry it won't repeat itself again."* *"Sir now I apology to you that sorry next day I come early."* It important to note that 11 learners failed to make apologies, and this can be observed in the following response. *"May I play for this few minutes that left?"*

Situation 3 (See Appendix)

You and your friends were playing during break time. As you were running, you unexpectedly bumped your principal. How do you apologise?

The principal: *Hey! Watch where you are going!*

Table 8

Strategy	Examples	N	%
1. Expression of regret	I'm sorry	155	93.9
2. Explanation of account	The bus was late	62	37.5
3. Acknowledgment of responsibility			
Accepting the blame	It's my fault	8	4.8
Expressing lack of intent	I didn't mean to	63	38.2
4.An offer of repair	I will pay for the broken vase		
5. Promise of forbearance	It won't happen again	23	13.9

The data demonstrated that 93.9% made apologies by showing regret to the hearer. For example, *"I'm sorry/ my apologies, so sorry/ sorry/ I apologise"*. The analysis showed that responses were

accompanied by explanations which recorded 37.5%: *“We were playing with Titus and I was run away because I am tired playing.”* Moreover, about 43% of the learners took responsibility of their offenses or actions. For example, *“I am disappointed into bumping into you sir, may you please forgive me?” “I am really sorry sir. I didn’t know if you were here.”* Interestingly, compared to the other previous situations, quite a number of learners expressed promise of forbearance, and it accounted for 13.9%. This was noticeable in the following examples, *“I will not do it again.” “I won’t do it any more my respective.” “I never repeat it.”* Lastly, about 5.5% of the participants failed to make apologies and some of the reasons provided were not aligning with the situations as there is evidence of denial of accepting responsibility. They expressed responses such as; *“I will ask hem to give my paces.” “I was running to go to the toilet.”*

Situation 4 (See Appendix)

You were sent to the Life Skills’ office and entered without knocking, only to notice there was a meeting. The people stopped what they were doing and looked awkwardly at you. You have realised that what you have done is wrong, so apologise.

Table 9

Strategy	Examples	N	%
1. Expression of regret	I’m sorry	154	93.3
2. Explanation of account	The bus was late	38	23
3. Acknowledgment of responsibility			
Accepting the blame	It’s my fault	63	38.1
Expressing lack of intent	I didn’t mean to	37	22.4
4. An offer of repair	I will pay for the broken vase		
5. Promise of forbearance	It won’t happen again	20	12.1

The data indicated that 93.3% of the learners included expression of regret in their responses. Such as; *“sorry/my apology/ very much sorry/ apologise/ really sorry”*. Almost 23% of the learners provided explanations for their offenses. This is illustrated by the following responses; *“My apologys to you all because I need a help in faster moment.”* Quite a high number of learners responded by giving responsibilities for entering the office without knocking, and these strategies contributed 60.5%. *“Sorry miss for coming into your office without knocking I really made a mistake.” “I have noticed that I did something wrong.” “Sorry for interfering in your meeting I did not know that there was a meeting.”* Moreover, about 12.1% of the learners provided responses encompassing a promise of forbearance

in order to avoid from carrying out the same offense in the future. For example, *“Sorry for what I have done I will be knocking before I enter.”* *“Sorry for you meeting that I disteped am not going to do that again.”* Just like with the other situations, 4.2% participants failed to make apologies.

Situation 5 (See Appendix)

Ruth accused Martha of taking her English Note Book. During their exchange, a schoolmate from the next class came in and told Ruth that she was the one who borrowed the note book and not Martha. How will Ruth apologise to Martha?

Table 10

Strategy	Examples	N	%
1. Expression of regret	I’m sorry	100	60.6
2. Explanation of account	The bus was late	88	53.3.
3. Acknowledgment of responsibility			
Accepting the blame	It’s my fault	42	25.5
Expressing lack of intent	I didn’t mean to	2	1.2
4.An offer of repair	I will pay for the broken vase		
5. Promise of forbearance	It won’t happen again	5	3

In this situation learners were asked to pretend as if they were Ruth who is supposed to offer Martha an apology. The data indicated that 60.6% of the answers included an expression of regret to their apologies. About 53.3% of the responses provided by the learners were accompanied by an explanation of account. For example, *“I thought you you’re the one who took it as usual.”* *“I thought I gave my book to you and I completely forgot the person that I exchanged with.”* About 26.7% of the respondents acknowledged their offenses, and provided expressions such as; *“Please forgive me for accused you that you take my English note book.”* Furthermore, the participants made a promise of forbearance in order not to repeat the same mistake in the future, and this accounted for 3%. For example, *“I think if it was you my sister, I will learn to ask next time.”* *“Please never mind I will not repeat this next time.”* About 17.6% of the population misinterpreted the situations, and ended up not making apologies. For example, *“Martha your English note book I have given it to a wrong person, I will copy for you the new one.”*

4.4. Formulation and Realisation of Refusals

The participants' refusals formulae were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. Learners were expected to formulate 825 refusals, however, only 774 refusal responses were realised. The refusals were analysed according to Campilo et al. (2009) taxonomy of refusals and displayed in tables, indicating the type of strategy employed, the number for each type of refusal utilised by the learners as well as the percentage of the total number of refusal responses.

Situation 1 (See Appendix)

You show good behaviour and do well academically. The chairperson for the LRC Committee at school approaches you to convince you to run for the position of head girl/boy in the coming election. How do you refuse her request?

Table 11

REFUSALS		N	%
Direct strategies	Hints		
1 Bluntness	No/I refuse	60	36.4
2 Negation of proposition	I can't, I don't think so	45	27.2
INDIRECT STRATEGIES			
1 Plain indirect	It looks like I won't be able to go		
2 Reason/Explanation	I can't. I have a doctor's appointment	21	12.7
3 Regret/apology	I'm sorry I can't	21	12.7
3 Alternative:			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change option I would join you if you choose another restaurant • Change time I can't go right now, but I could next week. 		
5 Disagreement/Dissuasion/Criticism	Under the current economic circumstances, you should not be asking for a rise now!		
6 Statement of principle/philosophy	I can't. It goes against my beliefs		
7 Avoidance			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-verbal: Ignoring (silent, etc.) Well. I'll see if I can • Verbal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Hedging ✓ Change topic ✓ Joking ✓ Sarcasm 		

ADJUNCTS TO REFUSALS			
1 Positive opinion	This is a great idea, but.....	4	2.4
2 Willingness	I'd love to go, but.....	2	1.2
3 Gratitude	Thanks so much, but...	5	3
4 Agreement	Fine! But....		
5 Solidarity/ Empathy	I'm sure you will understand, but.....		

The data demonstrated that a direct “no” was provided as responses by the participants. Some of the direct refusals were accompanied by excuses. Therefore, the bluntness strategy received 36.4%, and it was the most frequent used strategy. This is exemplified in the following responses; “No I cannot because I will not be having enough time to complete school work.” “No, I don’t want.” Moreover, about 27.2% responded with negation of proposition. For example, “I don’t want to be an head boy.” Under the indirect strategies, the participants utilised the reason/explanation strategy which accounted for 12.7%. For instance, “Chairperson I can’t I have lack of communication with people, so I will not be able to be the head boy.” About 12.7% of the population responded with the regret/apology strategy, indicating that they were willing to accept the proposal, but due to certain circumstances they are unable to accept the request. For example, “Sorry miss I can’t, because I have much more responsibility to do.” Interestingly, a few participants employed adjuncts to refusals. The positive opinion occurred in 2.4% of the responses. For example, “That is good opportunity for me but I have much worker to be done that so I ask you to find another person.” In addition, the willingness strategy accounted for 1.2%. For instance, “I would like but I use to spent most of the time studying my books, I actually have no time.” Lastly, a few expressions realised by the learners showed gratitude. This is demonstrated in the following example, “Thank you for that, but I don’t have knowledge to be at that position.” It noteworthy to highlight that 4.2% of the population failed to make refusals and instead accepted the request. This can be illustrated through the following expression, “Ok, I am ready to do that.” “Please vote me, I want to do chairperson for LRC this year, vote me I am help you to how study.”

Situation 2 (See Appendix)

Your friend is having a party on Friday night. He/she invites you to the party, but you need to study for the Biology test to be written on Monday. How do you turn down the offer?

Table 12

REFUSALS		N	%
Direct strategies	Hints		
1 Bluntness	No/I refuse	19	11.5
2 Negation of proposition	I can't, I don't think so	33	20
INDIRECT STRATEGIES			
1 Plain indirect	It looks like I won't be able to go		
2 Reason/Explanation	I can't. I have a doctor's appointment	49	29.7
3 Regret/apology	I'm sorry I can't	37	22.4
3 Alternative:			
• Change option	I would join you if you choose another restaurant		
• Change time	I can't go right now, but I could next week.	2	1.2
5 Disagreement/Dissuasion/Criticism	Under the current economic circumstances, you should not be asking for a rise now!		
6 Statement of principle/philosophy	I can't. It goes against my beliefs		
7 Avoidance			
• Non-verbal: Ignoring (silent, etc.)	Well. I'll see if I can		
• Verbal			
✓ Hedging			
✓ Change topic			
✓ Joking			
✓ Sarcasm			
ADJUNCTS TO REFUSALS			
1 Positive opinion	This is a great idea, but.....	1	0.6
2 Willingness	I'd love to go, but.....	7	4.2
3 Gratitude	Thanks so much, but...	6	3.6
4 Agreement	Fine! But.....		
5 Solidarity/ Empathy	I'm sure you will understand, but.....		

In this situation the use of bluntness strategy reduced, and accounted for 11.5%. For example, *"No! I don't have a time to do."* *"I refuse I am not take part I that day because I was study my biology test that be written on Monday."* Compared to the first situation, the use of the negation of proposition strategy

also decreased and recorded 20%. The realisation of this strategy could be observed in the following responses, *“I am not coming to the party I reading my test for Biology.” “I can’t come to the party on Friday.” “I don’t need to go to the party, because I have a test to be written.”* Under the indirect strategies, reason/explanation recorded the highest percentage, which totalled 29.7%. For example, *“My friend I have to write biology test on Monday so, I have to study, I don’t have enough time.”* Moreover, expression encompassing regret/apology which might be soothing to the hearer were realised by the learners, and this made up 22.4% of the responses. For example, *“Sorry my friend I can’t go today because I have a test to be written on Monday and the chapter is too long, so I need more time to study.”* Interestingly, 1.2% of the population employed the alternative (change time). For instance, *“I will be busy reading my Biology test, maybe you can shift it to the other days.”* Furthermore, just like in the previous situation a few participants realised their responses utilising adjuncts to refusals. The positive opinion accounted for 0.6%, for example, *“My friend I here what you are seing but I busy with study Biology test that on Monday please.”* The willingness strategy contributed 4.2%. *“I would like to come but I need to study for the Biology test that is written on Monday so I can’t come.”* Lastly, 3.6% respondents utilised the gratitude adjunct, and it can be observed in the following example; *“Thank you for your invited me to your party let me wish you all the best because I am not going to alive I have Biology test to be written on Monday.”* It is significant to point out that 11 participants failed to formulate or produce refusals. This can be observed in the following example; *“I wasn’t noticed this for now I decided to make myself with something else can you please forgive me for not coming to your part anymore.”*

Situation 3 (See Appendix)

Your classmates are struggling with Probability in Mathematics. Your teacher has asked you to stay for extra two hours so you could assist your classmates, but you need to pick up your little brother from kindergarten. How do you refuse to such a request?

Table 13

REFUSALS		N	%
Direct strategies	Hints		
1 Bluntness	No/I refuse	34	11.5
2 Negation of proposition	I can’t, I don’t think so	30	18.1
INDIRECT STRATEGIES			
1 Plain indirect	It looks like I won’t be able to go		
2 Reason/Explanation	I can’t. I have a doctor’s appointment	23	13.9

3 Regret/apology	I'm sorry I can't	17	10.3
3 Alternative:			
• Change option	I would join you if you choose another restaurant		
• Change time	I can't go right now, but I could next week.	32	19.4
5 Disagreement/Dissuasion/Criticism	Under the current economic circumstances, you should not be asking for a rise now!		
6 Statement of principle/philosophy	I can't. It goes against my beliefs		
7 Avoidance			
• Non-verbal: Ignoring (silent, etc.)	Well. I'll see if I can		
• Verbal			
✓ Hedging			
✓ Change topic			
✓ Joking			
✓ Sarcasm			
ADJUNCTS TO REFUSALS			
1 Positive opinion	This is a great idea, but.....	4	2.4
2 Willingness	I'd love to go, but.....	14	8.5
3 Gratitude	Thanks so much, but...		
4 Agreement	Fine! But.....		
5 Solidarity/ Empathy	I'm sure you will understand, but.....		

In this situation the respondents were expected to refuse a request from the Maths teacher regarding helping out others with Probability. The data showed that a large number of participants directly refused the teacher. About 11.5% of the population responded with a direct “no” which falls under the bluntness strategy, however, some of the responses were accompanied by reasons and excuses. For example, “No miss am not going to do that because I have I go and pick up my little brother from kindergarten.” “No Mrs I don't have time.” The negation of proposition strategy recorded 18.1% of the responses. “Sir I don't want to teach mathematic because I have a lot of things to do please.” “I do not have enough time to stay, I cannot stay.” The learners employed the strategies of providing reasons and explanations to their refusals. This strategy accounted for 13.9% of the responses. For example, “Sir, I can't stay, because I have to pick up my little brother from kindergarten and I have to

do this in hurry because he didn't with a lunch box. So I have to go and cook for him." The regret/apology was evident in 10.3% of the responses. For example, "Sorry but I can not stay for extra hours I have to pick my little brother at the kindergarten and he must be hungry next time." Surprisingly, in this situation the alternative (change time) recorded quite a high number of responses which accounted for 19.4%. For example, "Sir I have to go and pick up my little brother from kindergarten so could you help me so that I can assist them tomorrow when my brother can't go to school." Only a few learners utilised positive opinion strategy which fall under adjuncts to refusals, which was evident in 2.4% of the responses. For instance, "That was good but truly I had my little brother that need to pick up each and every day so please may you find someone." In this situation, the willingness strategy increased, and accounted for 8.5%. For example, "I would like to stay, but I always don't have time and I need to go pick up my brother from kindergarten." It is noteworthy to highlight that 6.7% of the population failed to make refusals for this situation.

Situation 4 (See Appendix)

Your school is hosting an award ceremony, and you have been tasked to welcome the guests. You are not feeling confident to stand in front of a large gathering. How do you refuse such a request?

Table 14

REFUSALS		N	%
Direct strategies	Hints		
1 Bluntness	No/I refuse	35	21.2
2 Negation of proposition	I can't, I don't think so	73	44.2
INDIRECT STRATEGIES			
1 Plain indirect	It looks like I won't be able to go		
2 Reason/Explanation	I can't. I have a doctor's appointment	21	12.7
3 Regret/apology	I'm sorry I can't	11	6.7
3 Alternative:			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change option I would join you if you choose another restaurant • Change time I can't go right now, but I could next week. 		
5 Disagreement/Dissuasion/Criticism	Under the current economic circumstances, you should not be asking for a rise now!		
6 Statement of principle/philosophy	I can't. It goes against my beliefs		
7 Avoidance			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-verbal: Ignoring (silent, etc.) Well. I'll see if I can • Verbal 		

✓ Hedging			
✓ Change topic			
✓ Joking			
✓ Sarcasm			
ADJUNCTS TO REFUSALS			
1 Positive opinion	This is a great idea, but.....	1	0.6
2 Willingness	I'd love to go, but.....	6	3.6
3 Gratitude	Thanks so much, but...	4	2.4
4 Agreement	Fine! But.....		
5 Solidarity/ Empathy	I'm sure you will understand, but.....		

The data showed that this situation recorded a high number of responses under the direct strategies. The bluntness strategy consisted of 21.2%, and the expression “no” was observable in the following responses, whereby some were accompanied by excuses or reasons. *“No, I am not feeling confident to stand in front of large gathering.” “I refuse, I don’t want to say welcome to any body please.”* Moreover, the learners utilised the negation of proposition which was the most frequent used strategy among all the strategies under refusal. This accounted for 44.2% of all the responses. For example, *“I do not want.” “I don’t think I will be free to stand in front of people so I don’t want.”* However, 12.7% of the population made use of the reason/explanation strategy. For example, *“I can’t stand in front of a large gathering sir, I always feel shy and most of people use to lough when I’m talking, because my voice is somehow.”* In addition, the participants utilised the regret/apology strategy. This contributed 6.7% of the responses. For example, *“So sorry madam, but I can’t I am a bit uncomfortable with the idea of standing in front of a large crowd.”* The learners expressed adjuncts to refusals whereby one learner utilised the positive opinion strategy. This was observable in the following expression; *“It was a good decision, but I really can’t be able to stand in front of a large gathering, so am sorry for that.”* A few participants employed the willingness strategy, which accounted for 2.4%. For example, *“I really would like to but I am not confident enough to do so in front of a large gathering.”* It is important to highlight that 8.4% of the population did not manage to make refusals, and one participant left a blank space. They provided responses such as; *“I am telling the principal or who else before time to choose any one because I am scared.”*

Situation 5 (See Appendix)

Your English teacher gave you a project to work on during the weekend. You have completed your assignment. Your best friend asked you if he/she can copy from your work. How do you refuse such a suggestion?

Table 15

REFUSALS		N	%
Direct strategies	Hints		
1 Bluntness	No/I refuse	68	42.2
2 Negation of proposition	I can't, I don't think so	58	35.1
INDIRECT STRATEGIES			
1 Plain indirect	It looks like I won't be able to go		
2 Reason/Explanation	I can't. I have a doctor's appointment	13	7.9
3 Regret/apology	I'm sorry I can't	13	7.9
3 Alternative:			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change option I would join you if you choose another restaurant • Change time I can't go right now, but I could next week. 		
5 Disagreement/Dissuasion/Criticism	Under the current economic circumstances, you should not be asking for a rise now!		
6 Statement of principle/philosophy	I can't. It goes against my beliefs	6	3.6
7 Avoidance			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-verbal: Ignoring (silent, etc.) Well. I'll see if I can • Verbal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Hedging ✓ Change topic ✓ Joking ✓ Sarcasm 		
ADJUNCTS TO REFUSALS			
1 Positive opinion	This is a great idea, but.....		
2 Willingness	I'd love to go, but.....		
3 Gratitude	Thanks so much, but...		
4 Agreement	Fine! But.....		
5 Solidarity/ Empathy	I'm sure you will understand, but.....		

The analysis demonstrated that most of the learners made use of the direct strategies which dominated this situation. The findings indicated that the most frequent used strategy was the bluntness strategy which consisted of 42.2%. For instance, *“No I did not write correct answer.” “No! That is a weekend work you were having enough time to do it, I can not afford that one.”* In the same category of direct strategies, negation of proposition recorded 25.1%. The learners provided expressions such as; *“I don’t want please.” “I don’t want you to copy in my work please because you where given enough time to do your work, go and do your work with your self.” “I didn’t come from your house, and copying from one another it’s not good.”* Under indirect strategies both reason/explanation and regret/apology recorded 7.9% each. An example of reason/explanation, *“My friend, the teacher will see that we a coping each other and we will dedacted marks, so you do not need to copied in my paper please.”* Expression of regret was seen in some of the responses. For instance, *“I am sorry I cannot, because the teacher sad every one should do his own work.”* Quite a few number of learners employed the statement of principle which accounted for 3.6%. For example, *“I really can’t hand you my work, it’s not a right thing to do.” “Please that’s not the right thing to do let me just help you how to fill the assignment.”* It is important to note that in this situation 7 learners failed to make refusals. An example of the response provided by the respondents; *“I am telling him that our teacher will find it out and got punished.”*

Qualitative Data Analysis

4.5. Causes of interlanguage pragmatic failure

One participant out of 6 highlighted that learners are unable to communicate effectively due to the environment they find themselves in. This factor contributes to how learners are exposed to different communicative processes. Moreover, 2 participants mentioned that the cause of interlanguage pragmatic failure is brought by the educational background of the learners. The respondents are of the believe that majority of the learners at Eenhana Secondary School are born, raised and attended primary and middle school in remote areas and this has influenced the way they interact in different situations, due to the little or no engagement of learners when it comes to the English language as they tend to be confined in environments where they hardly communicate in the target language. **Teacher 5** said, *“Mmmhh these learners have little or no exposure to different scenarios. Uhhmm most of them are born, raised and schooled in rural areas, so they tend to be confined in environments where they hardly communicate in the English language.”* **Teacher 4** said *“No, most learners cannot really communicate effectively reason being ummh the background. Most of the learners here schooled in the bushes and remote areas and they are not exposed, so they don’t communicate well.”*

Lack of appropriate terminologies or vocabulary among the learners as a cause of interlanguage pragmatic failure was mentioned by all the 6 participants. They assert that learners have a limited

competency or lack the language proficiency needed to engage in English communication. The participants explained that the learners tend to use simple words such as *'I am sorry'* to carry out the speech act of apology, without giving reasons as to why they are sorry, or when requesting they will simply just say *'No Ms I do not want.'* **Teacher 3** said, *"For me, I would definitely say they are not able to use the correct terminologies, mostly when it comes to apologising and refusing. Mmmhh, when it comes to apologising they would use the simple words which is 'I am sorry'. They don't even give a reason as to why they are sorry, they just state the word I'm sorry without generalising or being specific as to why they are apologising to the other one."* **Teacher 6** said, *"Uhhm in many cases, learners are not able to use the appropriate or correct terminologies in their communication. When learners are giving apologies, they mostly just use the words "I am sorry" and are not exposed to more advanced apology phrases such as "I am really sorry for what happened, I did not mean to cause you any harm..."*

In addition to the limited vocabulary, the factor of mother tongue was raised by 4 participants who claimed that the formulation of the speech acts by the learners is influenced by their mother tongue. They made it clear that the learners' thought processes take place in the mother tongue, and translate to English and then in the translation they now go to the closest word that they can find and sometimes those words are *'sorry'* and *'peace'*. So it is a direct translation and it might dilute what they are trying to say especially if the person they are communicating with does not speak the same mother tongue as them, then one might not understand what they want to say. **Teacher 1** said, *"Mmmh aiii, but then you will get to notice that some of these things are influenced by the mother tongue which means the thought process takes place in the mother tongue, and translate to English."* **Teacher 6** said, *"The other factor includes learners' lack of exposure in English and they tend to translate phrases from their native language directly into the target language, leading to inappropriate expressions."*

Three participants revealed that the lack of knowledge when it comes to cultural awareness impacts the way the learners communicate in different settings or situations. They highlighted that learners are not aware that each language has its own culture, so sometimes they apply their first language culture conventions to the second language. **Teacher 2** said, *"Ummh it could also be caused because of the cultural knowledge, maybe they are not really aware, it's like they are doing English but they are not aware that each language has its own culture. So they apply their first language culture sometimes to the second language."* In addition to this, two participants noted that learners are not able to communicate effectively in different contexts such as they do not know how to differentiate formal contexts from informal contexts, in such a way that the next person may misunderstand the intentions of the communication. They stated that learners are not able to adjust the language that they use with their peers when speaking, for example, to authority figures or teachers. They still use

the same language, the same choice of words and sometimes the same tone. **Teacher 6** said, *“No, learners are not able to communicate effectively in different contexts such as they do not know how to differentiate formal contexts from informal contexts, in such a way that the next person may misunderstand the intentions of the communication.”*

Moreover, 2 participants mentioned that interlanguage pragmatic failure of learners is a result of not knowing the target language politeness strategies or markers. They asserted that some of the learners are aware of the appropriate structures of making requests, but they do struggle with using the correct level of politeness or choosing appropriate phrases for different contexts. **Teacher 6** said, *“Mmmh they however know the structure of making requests, but may struggle with using the correct level of politeness or choosing appropriate phrases for different contexts. For example, learners mostly use: “Can you help me?” which is a basic request instead of making a formal request by using a phrase such as “Could you please help me with this?”* Furthermore, all the 6 participants agreed that learners commit interlanguage pragmatic failure as they lack the general exposure to the language and different situations where these expressions are commonly used. They stated that when it comes to English most of the learners at Eenhana Secondary meet it in the classroom, and it ends there and it is mostly from the teachers. **Teacher 1** said, *“So I think when it comes to English, they are not exposed to such situations. First of all they are second language speakers, and in a school like ours the setup is such that almost if not all the learners speak the same mother tongue. So when they speaking to each other and you will even find that they are talking to their teachers they communicate in their mother tongue. Also I believe even at the home situation they are still not exposed to that, be it now from maybe the people in the house, or even from how they socialise with others out there I don’t think they are exposed to such situations.”*

The data analysis has shown that 5 participants mentioned that the syllabus is one of the major factor of interlanguage pragmatic failure among the learners. The participants highlighted that although there is a section in the syllabus that requires teachers to teach learners how to communicate socially, it comes with a problem which is the challenge of time. The respondents stated that they tend to focus more of their teaching on training the learners for the exams. **Teacher 1** said, *“You will find sections in the syllabus where you have to teach learners how to communicate socially, but one problem comes in is the challenge of time. We tend to focus most of our teaching on training them for exams.”* Even though those concepts are there, they hardly touch them as they focus more on polishing the skills that the learners are lacking and will be assessed in the exams because they believe it is baseless to concentrate on teaching them how to communicate properly while the end goal is for them to get better marks in the exam and not necessarily for them to be good speakers because at the end of the day some of these skills are supposed to be picked up from society, as they are social skills and not

necessarily skills that learners need to get from the classrooms. So even though these skills are incorporated in the syllabus the teaching time does not really allow the participants to entirely focus much on them. **Teacher 6** said, *“Uhhmm I hardly touch on the part of expressions and I mostly put more emphasis on preparing learners for their examinations, such as paying more attention on grammatical aspects and continuous writing.”*

Lastly, 3 participants mentioned that a lack of confidence and anxiety plays a role in learners not using the language to communicate effectively. The respondents highlighted that these learners have a fear of being judged, hence they do not practice communication in English. They will rather interact in their first language even when carrying out requests, apologies and refusals. For instance, one participant gave an example that in the cases of speaking assessment where learners are being assessed on unprepared or impromptu speeches, most of them tend to not say anything at all because they tend to have a fear of being judged by their fellow learners or the teacher. This contributes to interlanguage pragmatic failure as the learners have a very negative outlook on the usage of the English language. **Teacher 5** said, *“In cases of speaking assessment where learners are being assessed on unprepared or impromptu speeches, most of them tend to not say anything at all because they tend to have a fear of being judged by their fellow learners or the teacher.”* **Teacher 4** said, *“Some don’t communicate because ummh they have fear of being judged. They are scared, maybe when they speak they will be judged. They have fear of making mistakes.”*

4.6. Effectiveness of different strategies in improving pragmatic competence

Two participants mentioned that there are methods that learners can utilise in order to improve their pragmatic competence. Since these are social interactions, it would be best to submit these learners in social situations, socially not necessarily in the classroom. So the learners are supposed to be among people who speak English on a regular basis. **Teacher 1** said, *“Because these are social interactions nee, the best thing to do would be to submit these learners in such situations.”* Moreover, 3 participants suggested that learners should develop an interest in English literature, watch films and cartoons. One participant specifically stated that the learners should be motivated to read drama books and plays in order to enhance their vocabulary. **Teacher 1** said, *“Mmmh motivate them to develop a culture of reading because from reading they can and not the reading of newspapers, reading of literature not necessarily novels, it should be more of drama and plays or poetry. They can equip them with those skills much better than reading a romantic novel, for example or yeah.”* **Teacher 4** said, *“They should normalise reading newspapers because the school provides newspapers for them. The school also has a library whereby they are allowed to borrow books from there. So I also encourage them to that they go in the library, borrow a book.”*

Furthermore, 2 participants advised that there is one paper in the syllabus that could help the learners, which is the Listening Paper. The respondent explained that there are sections in that paper where one can find for instance a person asking for directions, through these four to five questions learners then have an opportunity to be exposed to such situations. In addition to the listening method, 1 participant recommended that the learners start listening to English radios, for example, Fresh FM. **Teacher 1** said, *“Also from the school there is one paper that can actually help them, the listening paper. There are sections where you find for instance the person will be asking for directions.”* **Teacher 4** said, *“Yeah they should also start listening to radios such as Fresh FM, the English radios.”*

The data analysis demonstrated that 2 participants encouraged that the learners go on the internet and try to find videos. For instance, they can make use of YouTube, there is this old sitcom from the 70s *“Mind your Language”* where foreigners are being taught English and they are taught mostly everything. It could be one way to expose them because in that sitcom, for example, there are people committing errors and the teacher is there correcting them, so they can maybe pick a few strategies that they can use in formulating requests, apologies and refusals. **Teacher 3** said, *“They should use YouTube because YouTube is a platform where learners can also see, not only hear but can also see what is being done as well. I would definitely suggest YouTube as a way of them acquiring social skills.”* **Teacher 1** said, *“It would be good to go on the internet and try to find videos and what not. For instance, they can make use of YouTube, there is this old sitcoms from the 70s “Mind your Language” where foreigners are being taught English and they are taught mostly everything.”* Furthermore, 1 participant expressed that there are various methods that English teachers can use in order to improve learners’ abilities in communicating effectively in different contexts such as paying attention to the skill of speaking in the syllabus where they can focus on the objective that states *“Use English in appropriate contexts”* with the competencies focusing on making requests, apologising and declining an offer.

Moreover, 3 participants added that other method that teachers can use is designing role plays, dramas and simulations where learners can practice communication in such a way that they base those role plays on different contexts or settings. For instance, designing a role play where learners have to pretend in a formal setting, such as a business meeting where they have to communicate formally with other learners. This type of activity will enable learners to learn how to communicate effectively in different contexts. After these role plays, learners should be given an opportunity to give each other feedback and self-reflection to enable them to know what others think of their communication and in turn improve their communication skills. **Teacher 3** said, *“For example, use the method of drama by giving the learners a certain topic, and also to give the other group to probably demonstrate not communicating properly, and other learners can pick up those certain mistakes.”*

Teacher 6 said, “*The other method that teachers can use is designing role plays and simulations where learners can practice communication in such a way that they base those role plays on different contexts or settings.*” Furthermore, one participant advised that learners should be taught to use the correct verbs that are not too harsh or inappropriate for example when making a request, learners should be taught to use polite phrases.

4.7. Discussions

This section discussed in detail the findings of the study by providing explanations for learners’ current interlanguage pragmatic competence and relate the study’s findings to the reviewed literature.

Quantitative Results

4.7.1 Formulation and realisations of Requests

Based on the responses of the participants, the findings revealed that the conventionally indirect (hearer-oriented) recorded the highest percentage of responses compared to the direct strategy. It is important to note that under the hearer-oriented, the ability strategy (*Can you*) accumulated a larger number of responses, followed by the suggestory formulae (*May you*). The utilisation of these two strategies demonstrated the over reliance of two strategies over the other strategies that are available to carry out requests. This is imperative as it highlights the interlanguage pragmatic competency level of these learners when it comes to the formulation of requests. This indicates the limitation of accessing their pragma-linguistic knowledge that they are supposed to possess at this level of education, in order for them to employ other strategies when formulating requests.

Similar findings were found in a study conducted by Hocine (2022) whereby third-year English language learners at Tlemcen University preferred using ‘could’ and ‘can’ when performing their request forms. From a pragmatic perspective, existing literature emphasises that learners need to differentiate between modal verbs, as the limited use of certain ones indicates a lack of pragmalinguistic competence (Hocine, 2022). Similarly, Wachuku (2017) also discovered that Igbo-speaking Nigerian undergraduate ESL students overused the modal verb ‘can’. The current study argues that this is a result of instruction that the learners have received in the classroom or during their years of learning English, since these are regarded as general or ordinary forms for conveying requests taught at lower levels of proficiency. In other words, this finding has demonstrated that there are certain aspects of communication that are lacking in the participants, and when learners are exposed to only one or two strategies then it can restrict their ability to communicate their intentions effectively.

On the other hand, the hearer-oriented accumulating a greater percentage of realisations exhibits that some participants are conscious of maintaining or preserving the hearer's positive face. Although the learners managed to use the hearer-oriented, a lot of responses or expressions were not mitigated to lessen the effect of requests, only a few participants managed to include the politeness marker "please" in their responses. Moreover, the data also revealed that the participants only know of one mitigating device which was observable in the overuse of the lexical downgrader "please" in their expressions. This illustrated that there is a limitation of functional language knowledge among learners since there were no syntactic downgraders in their responses. Therefore, the findings revealed that this is the only politeness marker available in the thought processes of these learners because the word "please" is one of the components of English that is introduced to them at a very early stage of learning a second language. It is embedded in their minds, hence, the misuse of it. Moreover, the overuse of the politeness marker "please" aligns with the request patterns in their native language, which indicates transfer. This finding aligns with the existing literature of Dendenne (2016) that learners often overuse techniques that they have been taught while neglecting other structures or strategies, demonstrating stronger pragmalinguistic transfer.

Similarly, the use of internal and external modification was extremely rare in the formulation of the Eenhana learners' requests. This suggests that, although the respondents were able to make use of the conventionally indirect strategies, their pragmatic proficiency in employing requests modification devices, namely internal and external, is drastically below their language competence. This aligns with a study carried out by Altasan (2016) whereby Saudi learners from different academic levels made less use of internal and external modification or adjustments when compared to the native speaker. Altasan (2016) study concludes that pragmalinguistic competence plays a role in determining the degree of politeness and correctness in learners' English usage. While learners may produce speech acts with what they perceive as proper grammar and suitable word choices, some native English speakers might still find these expressions lacking in the expected politeness and appropriateness. With regard to this, learners at Eenhana Secondary are unable to modify their requests, as this task requires an individual to have a high level of linguistic proficiency.

In addition, the findings revealed that quite a number of learners employed strategies falling under the speaker-based which might pose some discomfort to the hearer in cross cultural communication, and might be interpreted wrongly. The utilisation of the words I would like/ I want/need you to/ you must were evident in the learners' responses, and the use of such expressions by the participants conveyed undesired elements in interlanguage pragmatic communications which might cause misunderstandings. Moreover, the utilisation of these expressions demonstrated that the learners were making demands or commanding the hearer instead of requesting politely. This showed that the

learners did not consider the position of the person in communication with, in this case the teacher, and could have framed the requests softly by using polite language to reduce the imposition on the hearer. This finding can be compared with a study carried out by Dendenne (2016) who discovered that Algerian EFL learners made use of imperatives in their requests, and this feature matches the pattern of request in the first language. Similarly, Li et al. (2015) study with Chinese EFL learners also revealed that learners made use of direct request methods, and they were unable to distinguish between the use of imperative and interrogative sentences. The current study argues that, in order for learners to carry out requests appropriately, then they need to possess both the linguistic proficiency as well as sociopragmatic knowledge and be able to put into consideration the degree of politeness of utterances in the second language in order to avoid being regarded as rude or impolite. Rose and Kasper (2001) assert that although second language learners are highly aware of context when selecting pragmatic strategies in their native language, they may struggle to recognise key contextual factors such as social power and social distance in the second language they are learning.

The data showed that the use of direct performatives and imperatives highlights a complex or an underlying interlanguage issue among the learners. The utilisation of these two strategies by quite a large number of respondents demonstrated a low pragmatic competence among the participants especially that at this level they are expected to have social knowledge when it comes to communicating in different contexts. Moreover, when it comes to interlanguage pragmatics, the usage of direct imperatives and performatives indicated that there are important elements of knowledge, namely; sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic that is lacking among the learners of Eenhana Secondary. The missing of such important elements in cross-cultural communication can result in undesired and serious consequences when it comes to the formulation of requests. Requests are face-threatening for the hearer, and they put pressure on the listener to carry out an action, thus causing threats. Thus, learners are cautioned not to make use of imperatives and performatives when communicating with a person of high status or in a high position as such type of sentences or responses can come off as disrespectful, and can be interpreted as giving orders or demanding. This finding corresponds with literature which highlights that the overuse of direct strategies revealed that the learners lack awareness of contextual elements such as social distance and power before making requests (Li, 2023).

Furthermore, the current research demonstrated that the utilisation of direct imperatives by the learners if not structured well, then learners might end up using them inappropriately causing an imbalance in power, and the learner might come off as instructing the teacher instead of asking for guidance, which might result in communication breakdown or pragmatic failure. Anwar (2019) argues that when students make use of direct strategies, which are rude and infringe on the hearer's

autonomy this is likely because they lack the vocabulary or syntactic knowledge required to form indirect strategies, which demand more complex structures. Moreover, the current study has revealed that majority of the direct imperatives formulated by the participants were not accompanied by mitigating devices, whereby some of them sounded blunt and might be interpreted as rude by the hearer. Meaning that the learners at Eenhana Secondary School lack contextual awareness, which makes it hard for them to access the correct terminologies that they could use to formulate requests.

4.7.2. Formulation and realisation of Apologies

The findings demonstrated that most of the apologies formulated by the learners were accompanied by expression of regret which is *"I am sorry"*, and only a few participants were able to use phrases such as *"my apologies"*, *"I apologise"* etc. Since all the participants are Oshiwambo speakers, one can argue that their usage of the expression of regret *'I am sorry'* stems from the Oshiwambo formulae of apologising, which is *"ombili"*, hence it was frequently used. Moreover, the results indicated that the learners do not know the differences between the verb *'I apologise'* and the noun *'apologies'*. They wrongly used these two terms.

The data revealed that learners at Eenhana Secondary School are somehow able to offer expressions of apologies. Majority of the apologies offered were under explanation of account which accounted for 363 of the total responses. This was the most used strategy by the learners and it is one of the most common option that is used in their first language, hence it recorded the highest number. This finding highlights the influence of interlanguage pragmatics in choosing the most suitable apology strategy. It demonstrates how Eenhana learners are positively influenced by their first language transfer into the target language output as they opt to select the explanation of account strategy which is centred on their cultural habits. So a lot of learners offered an apology to explain their offenses. The study by Noprianto (2018) found similar findings whereby participants opted to provide explanations for their actions. Additionally, despite having studied English for an extended period, the participants' apologies lacked diversity. Khan et al. (2023) states that in interlanguage pragmatics, particularly when relying on a single method of apologising, one significant outcome may be the unintended use of language that comes across as either overly polite or conversely disrespectful.

On the other hand, quite a large number of learners acknowledged the responsibility of their actions whereby they accepted blame or took ownership of their offenses and expressed lack of intent, and this accounted for 218 of the total responses. This finding can be compared to the results of a study conducted by Istifçi (2009) with Turkish English learners. The results demonstrated that participants in the advanced level can be considered to be approaching native English speakers' conventions. However, the utilisation of BLAME in context by intermediate participants could be seen as a translation of sociocultural norms into English. Moreover, in the current study, quite a few number of

learners provided remedies for the offenses committed whereby they provided an offer of repair. In this instance the learners demonstrated a high level of pragmatic competence as they utilised politeness in their responses to save the hearer's face when they apologised. Furthermore, the participants were able to use the promise of forbearance, which again revealed a high pragmatic proficiency among the learners. Meaning that some of the participants are aware that their apology expressions need to be polite in order to rebuild trust and avoid similar mistakes or behaviour in the future. Chang (2011) claims that sociopragmatic competence evolves on two levels. The first level involves recognising social norms, while the second requires applying different forms, strategies, and content to demonstrate this understanding. In summary, delivering apologies accurately and appropriately in a target language can be challenging for second language learners.

Although the learners were able to come up with apologies, some of the participants gave apologies which only contained the expression of regret *"I'm sorry"*, and this could potentially result in interlanguage pragmatic failure. Furthermore, the findings also revealed that the learners had a tendency of using double expression of regret in their apologies, and this is due to a lack of semantic knowledge which could pose a threat to the hearer because there is no sincerity in the apology. This finding corresponds with the results of the study carried out by Kusevska (2015) with Macedonian English language learners. The findings revealed that learners of various ages and proficiency levels tend to use the word *"sorry"* to express their apology in the given contexts. Due to its formal tone, learners are not entirely aware of the contexts where using *"I am sorry"* is more appropriate or acceptable, and, therefore, the word *"sorry"* acts as a substitute for all other apology functions in their interlanguage. Similarly, Krulatz (2018) discovered that Norwegian pre- and in-service upper-elementary English instructors appear to have overgeneralised the utility of saying *'I'm sorry'* while ignoring other key strategies like an offer of repair or acknowledgement of responsibility. This indicates a lack of diversity in their use of apology strategies or expressions.

In addition, some of the learners provided simple and short sentences as their apology expressions. This highlighted that the cause of this is that the learners have a limited linguistic competency which hinders them from selecting the appropriate linguistic units or vocabulary which could assist them in formulating long and more elaborated responses. Moreover, the findings revealed that the learners do not have diverse linguistic terms that they could make use to produce their apologies, hence most of them ended up lifting words that were already in the situations or scenarios to formulate their responses. This is a demonstration that the learners are unable to come up with their own expressions in order to clarify the reasons behind their offenses or transgressions. Moreover, it is also an indication that the learners are not capable of producing apologies containing complex structures, hence the use of simple and short responses. This points out an important issue relating to the learners' awareness

and knowledge concerning the speech act of apology in interlanguage pragmatic communicative processes. Furthermore, the data demonstrated that the learners made use of religious concepts in the formulation of the apologies. Additionally, the study highlighted that some of the participants failed to apologise, therefore, ending up detailing what they were going to do. This finding is in agreement with the results of a study conducted by Saleem et al. (2014) that Pakistani English university students appear not to have understood the situations correctly as a large number of them did not use any of the eleven different types of apology strategies. Likewise, the results of Al-Ghazalli & Al-Shammary (2014) revealed that some responses have shown a misunderstanding of situations requiring an apology due to the students' pragmatic inadequacy, resulting in non-apologies replies. Additionally, certain answers indicated that students did not grasp the meaning of specific terms used in the scenarios, leading them to provide responses based on unrelated interpretations or meanings.

4.7.3 Formulation and realisation of Refusals

The findings of the WDCT demonstrated that the learners' pragmatic competency in the speech act of refusal was at a low level. The analysis showed that the participants frequently utilised the direct strategies to realise and formulate their responses. The bluntness and negation of proposition together received 454 responses out of 825, and the use of these two direct strategies highlighted an interlanguage pragmatic concern or problem among the learners. This finding is consistent with the results of a study by Demirkol (2019) that Turkish EFL were only able to employ verbal expressions such as, "I'm sorry, No, and I can't" as their strategies. In the current study, considering that the learners were refusing people of greater social standing, their responses sounded rude, as they did not take into account the formal setting of where the communication is taking place and the person whom they are communicating with. One could argue that this is a result of limited linguistic knowledge and not being aware of the socio cultural differences between their first language and English and the lack of knowledge about the speech act of refusal. Therefore, the speech act of refusal can be face threatening to the hearer, and when learners are not mindful of the elements like social distance and relation of power when they are involved in communication then they might end up offending the next person and being considered as impolite. According to Mutandi (2022) the use of blunt and negation of proposition strategies fails to consider the interlocutor's face, making it an undesirable and unexpected occurrence in the interlanguage pragmatic communication process, and it is a result of a lack of pragmalinguistic knowledge.

Giving a direct "no" as a refusal to the teacher indicated that the participants are not aware of the face-saving strategies that are used in conversations or interactions, which suggests that the learners' pragmatic proficiency is inadequate, and they are lacking the appropriate linguistic resources or units that they can use in formulating refusals or repair conversations. Moreover, making use of bluntness

and negation of proposition strategies could result in intercultural communication breakdown and misinterpretation of information or messages between the interlocutors. Therefore, this displayed the influence of interlanguage pragmatics in choosing the appropriate refusal strategy among the learners. So, learners need to have a high level of pragmatic competency in order to carry out the speech of refusal, whereby they are expected to use the appropriate forms so that they could achieve the specific purpose of the communication, and be able to understand and use language in different contexts. This this type of knowledge and skill is lacking in them, as they failed to demonstrate the necessary linguistic resources pertaining to sociopragmatic variables, hence the overuse of direct strategies without mitigation linguistic formulae. According to Abarghoui (2012) saying no is challenging for non-native speakers because in many societies how one expresses 'no' is more significant than the response itself. Thus, delivering and interpreting a 'no' requires a special skill, with the speaker needing to choose the proper form and function based on both their own and listener's cultural and linguistic values.

Under the indirect strategies the most frequent used options were reason/explanation and regret/apology which accounted for 266 responses. The findings demonstrated that there are quite a few learners who are able to use face-saving strategies so that they do not damage the face of the hearer. Even though some of the learners are able to use these two strategies, at some point it highlights an interlanguage pragmatic incompetency among the participants as these are the common strategies used in their first language, hence they were the most used options under the indirect strategies. Meaning that most of the learners who used this option are not aware of other available strategies for formulating refusals, as they relied heavily on those two strategies. The study by Moaveni (2014) made the same discovery too, that participants frequently made use of expressions of regret and elaborated explanations, which was influenced by the cultural norms of their first language and this made their responses to lack positive perspectives and options.

On the other hand, it is imperative to note that a few learners (34) managed to make use of the alternative strategy, demonstrating that they had put into account the relationship that is between them and their teachers. Moreover, the statement of principle was minimally used whereby only 6 responses pertaining to this were formulated. Again, this suggests that the participants are not aware of the other polite strategies that one could employ to realise refusal responses in order not to come off as abrupt. Considering the number of indirect strategies that the respondents could have made use of and the low number of responses falling under alternative and statement of principle, it has disclosed a linguistic form discrepancy among the learners of Eenhana Secondary School as the direct refusal strategies dominated the participants' responses.

The findings have revealed that in total the adjuncts to refusal strategy was used 54 times, which accounted for 6.5% of the total responses. This demonstrated that the learners have a limited scope of lexical patterns and politeness strategies used in English communication which reflected their low pragmatic performance. Putting into consideration the minimal usage of adjuncts to refusals, the way a refusal is structured can influence the relationship between the interlocutors, meaning that the participants of this study are unable to navigate conversations, cultural expectations or turn down requests properly which might result in misunderstandings or conflicts. This finding contradicts Zhang (2022) who discovered that Chinese English major graduates used an overwhelming significant proportion of indirect refusals and adjuncts to express their refusals. It demonstrates how these students try to maximise the politeness impact. Even though it shows effort, it implies that second language learners' lack of social and linguistic proficiency prevents them from strategically performing refusal. Moreover, in the current study, some of the refusal responses formulated by the learners were too long because learners lack the knowledge of softening them with the adjuncts, and this is because for an individual to use these adjuncts then the he/she needs to be in possession of a high linguistic competence, namely; linguistic units and putting into consideration the social cultural variables of the target language. This finding is in contrast to studies that have discovered that excessive wordiness in intermediate-level learners might reflect a lack of confidence or a desire to differentiate themselves from beginners. Furthermore, it suggests that verbosity serves two functions; first, it provides additional information, enhancing the clarity of the communication goal; second, it demonstrates the learners' efforts to maintain politeness. This implies that second language learners struggle to refuse requests strategically because they lack necessary sociocultural and linguistic knowledge, potentially leading to pragmatic failure (Hassall, 2003).

The findings revealed that the positive strategy was used minimally with only 10 responses, while the willingness strategy was utilised 29 times and the gratitude received 15 responses. Similarly, Al-Khadhmi et al. (2021) study revealed that Yemeni NNSs of English hardly use some refusal strategies and in some instances they did not employ any strategies at all, for example, in statements of regret and gratitude. The current study states that this is an indication that the language proficiency of the learners is lacking, as they are not capable to adapt the language to different contexts and this is also a demonstration of a limited pragmatic language knowledge as they failed to make use of a high number of adjuncts. In other words, the results confirmed that these learners are not in possession of a good and strong pragmalinguistic awareness.

Qualitative Findings

4.8. Interlanguage Pragmatic Failure

The findings of the interpreted data highlighted several causes of interlanguage pragmatic failure among learners of Eenhana Secondary School. The study has revealed obstacles or challenging situations regarding the interlanguage pragmatic competence of these learners. Two participants indicated that the educational foundation of the learners is one of the contributing factor of interlanguage pragmatic failure. This kind of information is important as it points out why Eenhana learners have a limited knowledge and proficiency pertaining to the pragmalinguistic and socio-pragmatic skills necessary for social interactions in the target language. For that reason, the type of exposure to the English language learning that the learners receive during their primary years of schooling can have long-lasting impacts on their interlanguage pragmatic competence that they are required to use in cross-cultural communication.

Moreover, the aspect of environment was found to be the source of errors that learners commit when involved in communication. Considering the setup of Eenhana Secondary, majority of the learners at the school belong to Aawambo ethnic groups, therefore, they speak the same mother tongue which forces them to interact with one another in their vernaculars. So these learners do not have any form of interactions with the native speakers of the second language or other people who do not speak their first language. Thus, this type of evidence demonstrated how the learning environment and situation at home can negatively influence how learners acquire certain social skills relating to pragmatic because the less they communicate in English, the high the percentage of committing errors during interactions. In other words, their environment does not provide them with opportunities to improve or practice how people utilise the English language in different contexts because they only meet the target language in the classrooms with their teachers. Ashraf (2021) study points out that many students struggle to grasp the pragmatic meanings of English expressions because their teaching and learning environment hinders their ability to communicate effectively because language classes do not incorporate the culture of the target language. Similarly, Shu (2018) also discovered that English second language students seldom have opportunities to engage with native speakers or experience an authentic English-speaking environment. Their main avenues for practical knowledge and exposure to foreign cultures are through English classes and textbooks. On the other hand, Taguchi (2008) contradicts the current study's findings that an extended stay within a target language community alone does not necessarily lead to the development of pragmatic competence.

The current study revealed that the lack of appropriate terminologies or vocabulary is the driving factor of interlanguage pragmatic failure among the Eenhana learners. This cause can be linked to the sources of educational foundation and the environment where the learners find themselves in. When

learners have not been provided with effective English language teaching then their linguistic proficiency is also negatively impacted and will end producing responses that will be considered as rude or impolite. Thus, in order for learners to carry out speech acts appropriately then they need to be in possession of rich, elaborated vocabulary and suitable sentence structures. When they do not have access to that then they are unable to express themselves properly, leading them to either formulating short or long responses, or using terminologies which are not suitable for the situations that they find themselves in. This result is in agreement with the findings of Hilmi et al. (2022) who discovered that Indonesian English learners request speech act realisations were impacted by linguistic issues, such as, poor vocabulary proficiency, limited pragmatic comprehension, and restricted knowledge of vocabulary. Therefore, having the appropriate vocabulary allows learners to use the most applicable strategies that will not end up threatening or imposing pressure on the other interlocutor. This finding is also supported by the results of a study conducted by Zainab (2022) that second language students have a limited level of pragmatic competence as they have only learned a small range of phrases and vocabulary in the target language. Consequently, most students relied on the same terms, regardless of the task's subject matter.

The participants noted that the disturbance of the mastery skills to acquire the interlanguage pragmatic competence was caused by the mother tongue. This again points to the issue of limited pragmalinguistic knowledge as learners do not have the appropriate linguistic units to help them formulate speech acts. Therefore, they tend to translate phrases from their native language directly into the target language, leading to inappropriate expressions. This is mostly common in cases where learners try to translate idiomatic expressions from their vernaculars to English, where some words do not exist in the target language or are not easy to translate to English, therefore leading to incorrect or inappropriate language. For example, when a learner is apologising they would say "I want to give you a peace." The word 'peace' has been translated from the Oshiwambo term 'ombili' which might result in pragmatic failure as they simply wanted to say 'I am sorry'. Therefore, learners using their first language strategies to formulate responses indicate a complex issue in interlanguage pragmatic communication.

Correspondingly, in a study with Chinese second language learners, Chen (2023) found that learners retrieved speech act strategies from their first language to the target language in order to achieve the communication goal. This causes the native language to be transferred, particularly the negative social-linguistic transfer, which leads to errors. Takahashi (1993) claims that while some strategies seem universal, their transfer is limited to particular contexts, and certain language-specific strategies can also be applied in selected situations. Moreover, the research highlighted that proficiency levels impact the ability to transfer these strategies. This suggests that pragmatic transfer increases with

language proficiency, as insufficient language skills hinder learners from effectively applying their second language's pragmatic rules. While students may wish to provide more detailed responses, their limited language abilities restrict them, hence the translation of content from the mother tongue to the target language.

Moreover, the element of mother tongue is somehow linked to the lack of cultural awareness that was raised by some of the participants. This pointed out a crucial concern that learners do not know that each language is determined by its own culture, and that cultural variation knowledge amongst the learners is lacking, hence, they end up formulating expressions that do not exist in the second language. Al-Eryani (2016) study reinforces this finding that although Yemeni English undergraduates possess a strong general language proficiency, they struggled to communicate appropriately when placed in social communicative contexts of the target language. The current study emphasises that understanding the culture of the target language is very important to the interlanguage pragmatic competence in the learners as misinterpretations in communicative processes are caused by not putting into consideration elements such as social distance, politeness strategies, the choice of words to use and the different type of contexts the communication process is taking place, which are all important aspects in pragmatics. Thus, the lack of knowledge of the English communicative conventions could pose major obstacles to the interlanguage pragmatic competence of the learners. Temam (2016) suggests that linguistic ability alone is not enough to effectively use language functions. According to the findings, communication issues for second or foreign language learners often arise from a lack of understanding of the target language's socio-cultural norms. Temam also emphasises the importance of cultural awareness in language proficiency, as each culture has unique rules, and recognising these differences enables speakers to prevent misunderstandings and difficulties in conversations.

The identified factor of interlanguage pragmatic failure, such as less time allocated to teach communicative components stated in the syllabus demonstrated how teachers and curriculum developers overlook the concept of pragmatics. The participants neglecting the concepts of cross-cultural communication in their lessons could be a barrier to developing learners' interlanguage pragmatic competence. The teaching and learning objectives of communicative aspects could potentially be integrated into the teaching of the listening and speaking skills instead of ignoring them. This is an indication that teachers are not spending time discussing and exposing the learners to these aspects, and this might have long-lasting impacts on the learners' communicative mastery skills. For example, one day these learners are going to leave for universities, and if they happen to miss orientation day they will not even have the skill to approach a person to ask for directions to their destination. Therefore, teachers focus more on the teaching of grammar and the concepts to be

assessed in the exams while ignoring the aspects of pragmatics, which could be a hindrance to acquiring successful cross-cultural communication skills. The study by Korkmaz and Karatepe (2023) discovered similar findings too, that English teachers are not putting effort on the functional aspects of the language as they are unable to allocate sufficient time to systematically and effectively enhance students' sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic skills. This is because the syllabus contains excessive amount of content, with the main focus being on preparing students for the final exam. As a result, teachers are often prompted to skip parts of their course book that focus on pragmatics-related topics.

4.9. Effectiveness of different strategies in improving pragmatic competence

All the 6 participants emphasised that there is a need to expose learners to the necessary methods that will help strengthen learners' pragmatic competence in order for them to be able to express themselves effectively in communication or interactions. Some of the participants were of the opinion that the classroom should not be the only place or source where learners are exposed to pragmatics, but the learners should be placed in other social settings where they will have an opportunity to engage with English native speakers or people who do not share the same first language as them. This will play a significant role in enhancing learners' interlanguage pragmatic proficiency by increasing their awareness of the target language or English culture, enabling them to successfully formulate, express and interpret the speech acts of request, refusals and apologies. However, considering the social settings of Eenhana Secondary learners, this will not materialise as their communities are mainly made up of one ethnic group.

Moreover, the participants suggested that the learners need to develop a culture of reading English literature specifically drama books and plays. By reading different types and genres of English materials, learners are provided with natural, authentic and contextually detailed examples of how to utilise language in different contexts. Furthermore, drama books and plays incorporate various elements that could be useful to the learners, assisting them to have a deeper understanding of interactions in cross-cultural communication. Example of these elements are, formal and informal exchanges, politeness strategies, social settings, authority dynamics, relationships between the characters and cultural insights. All these components depict how language varies based on context, social structure or order and social conventions.

Moreover, English literature impart learners with a variety of terminologies and strategies that can be employed during interactions. In addition, learners will also get an opportunity to familiarise themselves with different sentence structures that are complex, which they can use to phrase different speech acts in a socially acceptable manner, thus, helping them in improving their ability to communicate successfully in real-life situations. The study concurs with the findings of Bataineh (2014) that by utilising language in diverse social settings, literary works integrate both pragmatic and

linguistic expertise. Moreover, literature, to a large extent, serves as a bridge across cultural differences, enhancing our understanding of common and natural human distinctions. In addition, beyond fostering knowledge, empathy, and acceptance of diversity, literature also opens pathways to greater cross-cultural awareness.

The findings demonstrated that the participants are of the idea that teachers should put more emphasis on the existing method, which is the Listening Paper in order to improve the learners' pragmatic competence. The Cambridge listening activities that teachers use during their lessons for practice feature English native speakers engaging in dialogues that are held in different social settings, and these listening passages permit learners to identify cultural rules and expectations concerning communication styles, such as, how to carry out requests, apologies and refusal based on interpersonal relationships. Moreover, listening exercises enable learners to acquire and comprehend contextual cues, such as, tone and intonation which are both important in communication as they frame dialogues in social interactions. Apart from enhancing the learners' pragmatic proficiency, listening tasks provide learners with a great opportunity to become active listeners which give them an opportunity to learn how to interpret expressions and be able to respond positively to what they hear. This correlates with the result of Corsetti (2009) that the pragmatic competence of all eight learners preparing for the IELTS enhanced as a result of completing those listening activities. They were able to understand pragmatic inferences and illocutionary force of utterances. Understanding exercises aimed at specific listening sub-skills can uncover both pragmatic and semantic elements that affect the literal interpretation of statement. This is because the developed listening activities focus on micro-skills such as differentiating between literal and implied meanings and interpreting paralinguistic signals to infer meaning.

Moreover, the data analysis show that the participants' recommended a platform like YouTube in order for learners to increase their pragmatic proficiency. YouTube provides learners with the chance to watch tutorial videos of content creators explaining how to incorporate politeness strategies in their responses, and videos containing content like meetings, interviews and role plays illustrating people in different settings using language to interact. Learners can then mimic what they have watched and engage in the comment section with other viewers and content creator, making it an interactive learning resource. In line with this finding Birjandi and Derakhshan (2013) explored impact of consciousness raising video-driven prompts on the understanding of the three speech acts with Persian learners of English. The study revealed that each of the three groups improved their interlanguage pragmatics, and gained awareness of the pragmatic similarities and differences between their mother tongue and target language. According to Wijayanti (2020) integrating technology into the classroom is crucial for providing learners with new, engaging, and comfortable

learning experiences. Wijayanti suggests that teachers can assist students to watch different films or movie clips that represent both high and low culture from various countries. In this context, students would understand that the correct way to express a specific language function is influenced by social factors, which are shaped by both the linguistic resources available and the situational context in which communication takes place.

Furthermore, participants suggested that teachers need to pay attention to the skill of speaking whereby they could devise activities focusing on making requests, apologies and refusals. For example these speaking exercises can include a task like roleplays or dramas, whereby learners get an opportunity to practice the language they come across outside the classroom. Through this experiential learning, learners' vocabulary, interactions skills, sensitivity to culture, speaking skill and confidence will be improved as they learn how to adjust language in different contexts. Moreover, through acting out different scenes learners are able to identify pragmatic errors committed by other learners with the help of their teacher, therefore, prompting discussions during the lessons. Correspondingly, Ansel and Bouakacha (2020) agree that practical activities such as role plays, would give students the chance to practice speaking in front of an audience, receive feedback on their errors, and enhance their communication skills. Their study showed that that role plays were useful in enhancing the pragmatic competence of Algerian EFL learners in requesting.

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Recommendation

5.1. Introduction

This study investigated the interlanguage pragmatic competence of Grade 11 learners at Eenhana Secondary School by assessing their formulation of the speech act of request, apology and refusals in English as a second language. Moreover, the study also looked at the factors that cause interlanguage pragmatic failure among the learners and sought to assess the effectiveness of different strategies in improving learners' pragmatic proficiency. The research utilised two sets of instruments, namely, The Written Discourse Completion Task and an interview guide.

5.2 Conclusions

5.2.1. Formulation and realisation of Requests

The request realisation strategies were analysed according to Trosborg (1995) realisation taxonomy. Based on the data analysis, there was a balance in the production of indirect and direct strategies. However, a big gap exists in the formulation of the requests responses as half of the participants (273) opted for direct requests. The utilisation of such request direct strategies in the interlanguage pragmatic communication of the learners might have serious impacts that could strain relationships, and results in misinterpretation of messages by the interlocutors, potentially leading to interlanguage pragmatic failure.

The results obtained from the Discourse Completion Test demonstrated that interlanguage pragmatic failure at Eenhana Secondary School is taking place. Learners are cautioned to put into consideration the aspects of contexts and social position of the interlocutors when formulating speech acts in the target language, however, these key elements are missing in majority of the participants' responses. Therefore, the use of conventionally indirect (speaker-based) and direct strategies to request something from the teachers highlights a complex issue in the interlanguage pragmatic communication of the learners, and this inadequacy is mostly influenced by a limited pragma-linguistics proficiency. The learners' responses showed that they have difficulty accessing the appropriate linguistics units that could be employed to request something from a person in a high position, in this case a teacher. Therefore, the utilisation of imperatives by the learners lack the expression of positive politeness devices, which emphasises that the choice of language involved in interlanguage pragmatic communication or settings influences the way learners interact.

5.2.2. Realisation and formulation of Apologies

The speech act of apology was analysed and classified according to Cohen Olshain (1983) table of indirect apologies. The Discourse Completion Test demonstrated that the learners are able to offer apologies to a certain degree. The study revealed that the strategy of explanation of account was the

most utilised, and this demonstrated transfer from the first language as it is centred on the learners' cultural practices or norms. This pointed out a complex aspect in the interlanguage pragmatic communication of the learners, as relying on one strategy could result in unintended utilisation of the language, potentially resulting in interlanguage pragmatic failure.

On the other hand, the Discourse Completion Test showed that quite a few number of learners demonstrated a high level of pragmatic competence, as they took responsibility of their actions and were able to offer remedies for their offenses. Meaning that learners are in possession of the politeness knowledge that accompany apologies in interlanguage pragmatic communication as they are able to combine appropriate pragmalinguistic resources with the sociocultural norms of the second language. However, the study also observed that some learners could only offer apologies which were short, simple and some only contained the expression of regret "I am sorry". The study concluded that limitation of pragmalinguistic knowledge in formulating some refusal responses was the root cause of this problem as it prevented learners from providing elaborated apologies, which contained appropriated complex structures.

5.2.3. Realisation and formulation of Refusals

The refusal formulations were classified according to Campilo et al. (2009) taxonomy of refusals, and the Discourse Completion Test revealed that the interlanguage pragmatic competence of the learners in the speech act of refusal is significantly below the required level. The use of bluntness and negation of proposition strategies dominated the learners' responses whereby social variables, such as distance and power involved in pragmatic communication were not considered by the learners. The utilisation of such strategies in the target language is regarded as an undesirable phenomenon in interlanguage pragmatic communication. Therefore, the study determined that this unwanted aspect was caused by a limited pragmalinguistic knowledge as well as lack of sociocultural norms of the second language.

The study noted that the learners are not aware of face-saving strategies employed in the target language communication, hence a limited utilisation of adjunct to refusals. Majority of the learners provided long sentences as a way of softening their responses, and this type of verbosity could potentially lead to interlanguage pragmatic failure. Moreover, it was also observed that the learners had a tendency of inclining to two indirect strategies, namely, reason/explain and regret/apology, and this was classified as transfer from the first language of the learners, and these might have emerged from the fact that the other available strategies are not present in the learners' first language or improper classroom teaching. Furthermore, the study revealed that some of the participants failed to formulate refusals, and instead detailed what they were going to do. This highlighted that some of the learners failed to interpret the provided situation carefully, which hindered them from carrying out this task.

5.3. Interlanguage pragmatic failure

An interview guide was employed to elicit information from the English teachers regarding the factors that cause interlanguage pragmatic failure among the learners. Based on the responses analysed, learners experience interlanguage pragmatic failure due to the fact that they have not been provided with effective English language teaching during their educational foundation years. This has resulted in them having limited pragmalinguistic knowledge and sociopragmatic skills required for communication in the target language. Moreover, the aspect of environment was raised as a concern when it comes to the formulation and production of speech acts. Indicating that the Eenhana Secondary learners' environment does not provide them with beneficial opportunities that expose them to the appropriate pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge whereby they could utilise the English language in different contexts. The study concluded that such exposure only happens during the teaching and learning process, as the learners prefer to use their vernaculars outside of the educational setting.

The study came to a conclusion that the lack or limited of appropriate terminologies or vocabulary is a hindrance to the success of the learners' interlanguage pragmatic communication, as they are unable to provide appropriate terms that suit different communicative contexts, and this has been linked to the aspects of environment as well as poor education foundation of English as a second language. Moreover, the study concluded that the target language cultural awareness is lacking among the learners as they are uniformed that each its language is shaped by its own culture. Meaning that the learners fail to put into account the target language communicative elements such as, politeness strategies, social distance, power, different communicative contexts for better interpretation, which could prevent misunderstandings in interactions.

It was noted that the learners' mother tongue get in the way of successful formulation and production of speech acts. This is because learners tend to transfer or translate first language pragmatic conventions to realise second language pragmatic concepts, and this is brought on by a limited pragmalinguistic knowledge. Moreover, it was concluded that teachers focus more on grammar concepts to be assessed in the examination rather than on interlanguage pragmatic competence.

5.4. Effectiveness of different strategies in improving pragmatic competence

According to the interview guide, the study concluded that there is a need for Eenhana Secondary learners to improve their pragmatic competence in order for effective interactions to take place. Different strategies were highlighted by the English teachers, such as, learners need to develop a culture of reading English literature which expose them to various elements like social contexts, politeness strategies, concept of power, formal and informal interactions, cultural perspectives as well as a variety of terminologies, which are all aspects of pragmatics. Moreover, it was suggested that the

use of listening activities can strengthen the learners' interlanguage pragmatic competence as such exercises incorporate English native speakers engaging in dialogues, cultural rules of the target language, contextual cues, tone and intonation, which are all used to shape conversations in social interactions.

Based on the interview guide, it was put forward that the teachers should incorporate technological applications, such as YouTube in their lessons. The use of such technological resources will allow learners to be exposed to authentic instructional input by watching videos encompassing of characters in different contexts, while paying attention to aspects of culture and other social variables required for interactions in the target language. Lastly, it was also noted that the skill of speaking needs to be strengthened by putting emphasis on tasks like roleplays or dramas, which will provide learners with an opportunity to practice the language that they meet outside the classroom. In summary, all these linguistic strategies will improve learners' communication skills, expose them to low and high cultures, and enhance their pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge.

5.6. Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study, here are some recommendations regarding the interlanguage pragmatic competence of the learners at Eenhana Secondary School.

- The researcher suggests that the curriculum developers and teachers should put emphasis on the teaching and learning of pragmatic aspects from the primary and secondary phase, and not just focus their attention on the grammatical aspects.
- Teachers should expose learners to authentic teaching and learning materials that incorporate other elements of pragmatics such as, different strategies used to formulate speech acts of request, apology and refusals, social variables such as power dynamics, relationships between interlocutors and cultural insights. The use of authentic instructional materials will allow learners to enhance their pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge.
- The teachers and learners should prioritise the speaking and listening skills to strengthen learners' pragmatic competence as these two skills provide learners with opportunities of navigating around conversations paying attention to the communicative rules of the target language.
- The English teachers need to prioritise the use of technological applications such as YouTube, movies and films to teach pragmatics in order to expose learners to the target language environment, since they do not have the privilege to interact with English native speakers.
- The study also recommends that the English teachers and learners do activities which compare the pragmatic rules of the target language and that of the first language, discuss them in class so that the

learners can make a difference between what is right in one culture and what is not acceptable in the other culture.

The development of interlanguage pragmatic ability is important to learners' overall language proficiency and successful communication in diverse social settings. Teachers should provide learners with the tools needed to succeed in actual English-speaking situations by incorporating pragmatic learning into the curriculum, using real-world materials, harnessing technology and promoting cross-cultural awareness. This study recommends that future researches or studies should look into other unexplored speech acts such suggestion, complaint, invitation etc., and be able to investigate the long term effects of these strategies as well as other ways to improve pragmatic competence in Namibian secondary schools.

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Appendix A
Instrument 1 (For the learners)

Number:

Discourse Completion Test

1h30 Minutes

Do not write your real name, you will be represented by a letter. For example: A

Please study the following 15 situations carefully. You will be required to write down a response in the space provided where it is indicated **“You”** after each scenario. Please take your time reading the situations/scenarios. Take these scenarios as real-life situations as if you are the one involved in the communication or conversations. Please be assured that the information that you are providing will be treated confidential and used for academic research purposes only.

Part A: Request Strategies Discourse Completion Test

1. You missed the deadline for your English Project because you did not have enough time to work on it. What do you say to the teacher so you will be given a second chance for submission?

You:

.....
2. You have been missing school due to personal reasons. You heard that your classmates received handouts for the exam. What do you say to the teacher in order to be given the notes?

You:

.....
3. It is your turn to clean the classroom, but you have an appointment with the doctor. You want to be excused, so you sweep the following day. You approach your teacher, what will be your response.

You:

.....
4. Your teacher opened the windows, but you are feeling cold. You would like the windows to be closed. What will you say?

You:

.....
5. You are working on your Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga Research in your classroom, but it is almost time for your teacher to lock up. How do you ask him/her to leave the class open/ leave key behind.

You:

Part B: Refusal Strategies Discourse Completion Test

1. You exhibit good behaviour and excel academically. The chairperson for the LRC Committee at school approaches you to convince you to run for the position of head girl/head boy in the coming election. How do you refuse her request?

Chairperson: I would please like you to run for the position of head girl or head boy.

You:

.....
2. Your friend is hosting a party on Friday night. He/she invites you to the party, but you need to study for Biology's test scheduled for Monday. How do you turn down the offer?

You:

.....

3. Your classmates are struggling with Probability in Mathematics. Your teacher has asked you to stay for extra two hours so you could assist your classmates, but you need to pick up your little brother from crèche. How do you refuse to such a request?

Teacher: I would please like to assist others with probability.

You:

.....

4. Your school is hosting an award ceremony, and you have been tasked to welcome the guests. You are not feeling confident to stand in front of a large gathering. How do you refuse such a request?

You:

.....

5. Your English teacher gave you a project to work on during the weekend. You have completed your assignment. Your best friend asked you if he/she can copy from your work. How do you refuse such a suggestion?

Friend: May I please copy from your work?

You:

.....

Part C: Apology Strategies Discourse Completion Test

1. You borrowed a textbook from your Mathematics' teacher, but your baby sister tore the cover page. It is time to return the textbook, what do you say to your teacher.

You:

.....

2. Your school football team has a friendly match with Haimbili Haufiku soccer team. You are part of the squad that is playing that day, but you had an emergency. How do you apologise to your coach.

You:

.....

3. You and your friends were playing catch me during break time. As you were running, you unexpectedly bumped your principal.

The principal: Hey! What are you doing?

You:

.....

4. You were sent to the Life Skills' office to take documents there. When you got there, you just opened without knocking, and there was even a meeting. The people stopped what they were doing and looked up. You have realise that what you have done is wrong.

You:

.....

5. Ruth accused Martha that she is the one who took her English Note Book. During their exchange, a schoolmate from the next class came in and told Ruth that she was the one who borrowed the note book and not Martha.

Martha: (Fuming). Are you now convinced that it was not me?

You:

.....

Appendix B
INSTRUMENT 2

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

An investigation into the Interlanguage Pragmatic Competence of learners at Eenhana Secondary School

I am Ndeutila Namundjebo from the Namibia University of Science and Technology. I am conducting a research to investigate the interlanguage pragmatic competence of learners at Eenhana Secondary School. The study seeks to determine the interlanguage pragmatic competence of learners in performing speech acts of request, apologising and refusal, to study the causes of pragmatic failure

among learners, and lastly to evaluate the linguistics strategies that can enhance learners' pragmatic competence.

Please be informed that the researcher will use a tape recorder for quality of data collection and interpretation. Please be assured that the information that you are providing will be treated confidential and used for academic research purpose only. Your anonymity is guaranteed and your participation purposes only.

Your genuine response will be of great importance for the success of this study. Kindly note that there is no right or wrong answer to questions contained in this guide, hence what is required is to show your personal opinion about each item.

Instructions

- Please know that your response will be kept confidential.
- Please respond to all questions contained in this questionnaire to the best of your ability.
- Participation in this study is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time.
- Thank you very much for your time and willingness to participate in this research.

Section A: General Information

In this section, I would like to know a little about yourself. Please indicate your response by putting a cross mark (x) in the appropriate box.

1. Gender

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Number of years teaching English

SECTION B: STRUCTURED QUESTIONS

Your personal opinion is highly valued in this study. Please let your personal experience determine your answer.

1. In your experience, are learners able to communicate effectively in different contexts?

2. Tell me, are the learners able to use the correct terminologies in their communication, for example, when requesting, apologising, and refusing.
3. Are the learners exposed to different scenarios/situations where the correct terminologies are used in making requests, apologies, and refusals?
4. In your opinion, what could be some of the factors that contribute to the ineffective use of the language in different contexts?
5. What are some of the methods you use to improve learners' abilities in communicating effectively in different social contexts?
6. In what ways do you suggest learners can improve their social skills during interactions?

"THE END"

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION