The Egyptian EFL learners' sociopragmatic competence and L2 pragmatic instructions

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Introduction:

Bardovi- Harlig (2013) introduced what she termed as "cocktail party" definition. She (2013:68) defined pragmatics as "how-to-say-what-to-whom-when". That is, the pragmatic knowledge of ESL learners to use various speech acts; their linguistic competence that helps them to grammatically and syntactically form proper speech acts forms; their awareness of the social distance powers with their interlocutors; and their awareness of the native-speakers' cultural and social norms that govern the social settings or contexts in which conversations are held.

Kasper and Rose (2002) defined pragmatics as the investigation of how L2 learners use the target language particularly in making choices to use certain language forms. They also added to their definition the obstacles that control and affect ESL learners' use of the target language when they use that language for the purpose of communication with others. Those obstacles hamper the ESL learners' ability to socially interact and affect their conversation interlocutors as well. In 1991, Kasper and Dahl used the term 'interlangauge pragmatics' to explain how L2 learners comprehend and produce the L2 speech acts and how they acquire their L2 pragmatic knowledge in order to produce those speech acts. Kasper and Rose also included ways to manage conversation and organize discourse and the ESL sociolinguistic competence that governs their target language use.

Therefore, it was felt necessary to measure the L2 pragmatic competence of Egyptian EFL learners when they tend to apologize for actions occurred within socially and contextually governed situations. The speech act of apology is defined, according to Goffman (1971), as an act of remedy that helps gain back the might be damaged social harmony because of a real offence. According to Searle (1976), the act of apology is considered as an expressive act. The present study adopts the five strategies of apology proposed by Olshtain and Cohen (1983) and employed by Nuredden (2008). They are as follows:

1. An illocutionary force indicating device (IFID) through using performative verbs like 'I apologize', 'forgive me', 'excuse me', 'I'm sorry'.
2. Acknowledgment of offence responsibility like ' it's my fault', 'I didn't see you', 'you're right, 'I didn't mean to'.
3. Justification of violation cause. That is the offender tends to justify why the offence occurred. For example, to justify being late for an interview, meeting, etc., the offender may say 'the traffic jam was very terrible', 'the bus was late', 'my car was broken'.
4. An offer of repair like 'I'll pay for it', 'I'll compensate you'.
5. A promise of forbearance like 'I promise not to do it again', 'I promise it will never happen again', 'I promise to be punctual'. 'I promise not to forget again'.

Problem Statement

The study was intended to be a cross-sectional study. It attempted to answer questions related to the description of L2 pragmatics among Egyptian EFL learners in terms of using L2 apology strategies. In other words, it described the

frequency of using different types of apology strategies among the Egyptian EFL learners. It analyzed the Egyptian EFL learners' L2 pragmatics in relationship with certain social variables, namely social distance, power and severity of offence. It finally handled the point of L2 pragmatic instructions to improve the awareness and development of L2 pragmatics among Egyptian EFL learners.

Aims

The study fundamentally aimed to describe the strategies which Egyptian EFL learners adopt whenever they develop their use of L2 pragmatics in order to express apology. The study also aimed to:

1. Determine the order and frequency of apology strategies used by Egyptian EFL learners.
2. Determine how influential the above mentioned social variables are on the development of the apology strategies among some Egyptian EFL learners.
3. Use the findings in drawing some teaching implications for L2 pragmatic instructions in Egypt.

Questions

Therefore, the study provided answers for the following questions:

1. What are the apology strategies which Egyptian EFL learners tend to employ in order to express apology in the target language?
2. What are the frequencies of using the different types of apology strategies among Egyptian EFL learners?
3. To what extent can different social distance, social power and the severity of offence affect the development of apology strategies used by Egyptian EFL learners?

4. Pedagogically speaking, how can Egyptian EFL learners be trained and taught to develop their ability to properly interact in such situations of apology?

Significance and Contribution

The study was deemed significant as it provided an analysis of how Egyptian EFL learners used apology strategies in various situations that reflects different social distances, powers and severity of offence. The study is of a special significance in the sense that it set a model for investigating other pragmatic strategies used by Egyptian and other EFL learners. That is, it can be applied with other EFL learners in different countries. The study provided teaching implications for the teaching of the L2 pragmatic strategies in terms of apology strategies at the Egyptian Higher learning institutes.

Limitations of the study

This study was limited to measure the L2 pragmatic production of ten Egyptian undergraduates at the Higher Institute for Specific Studies and hence discussed the appropriate L2 pragmatic instructions that can be taught to them and their counterparts at other higher learning institutes.

Literature review

This section is devoted to introduce the studies conducted on both the development of L2 pragmatic competence and the development of L2 pragmatic instructions.

Kasper and Schmidt (1996) clarified that the cross-sectional studies usually investigated how ESL learners of different proficiency levels used the realization strategies of different speech acts. For example, Takahashi and Dufon

(1989) examined the strategies which Japanese ESL learners applied to realize the request speech acts. Meanwhile, Takashahi and Beebe (1987), Robinson (1992) examined the use of refusal strategies by Japanese ESL learners. Whereas Maeshiba, Yoshinaga, Kasper, & Ross (1996) investigated how Japanese ESL learners used apology strategies, Trosborg (1987) examined the use of the same speech acts by Danish learners of English. All these studies shared the result that non-native speakers, like their native counterparts, could attain the same realization strategies of different speech acts regardless of their proficiency levels. Takahashi and Dufon (1989) and Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985) reported similar findings of pragmatic development on the Japanese and Hebrew non-native speakers of English; as the ESL learners developed more direct strategies of request speech act. Although Takashahi and Dufon attributed that pragmatic development to the development of L2 proficiency levels; Olshtain and Blum-Kulka explained that development in lights of the length of stay in L2 native-speaking country. Similarly, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986) reported results on development of using supportive moves of request strategies because of the development of L2 proficiency levels. Maeshiba et al., (1996) as well found that Japanese advanced EFL learners outperformed their Japanese intermediate counterparts in attaining native-like apology strategies.

As to the longitudinal studies, Kasper and Schmidt (1996) explained that Schmidt (1983), based on an observation approach which spanned three years of Wes who was a Japanese adult learner of English, reported that

SLA occurred because of the expansion of Wes' communication and interaction in a native-speaking country and not due to formal L2 pragmatic instruction. Wes tended to misuse the '-ing' as a request marker. Finally he could use correct imperatives and produce correct formulas of directives. In another longitudinal study, Ellis (1992) applied the observation approach to two Pakistani and Portuguese boys at the age of 10 and 11 years old. Both boys could not speak English at all when they first arrived in England. The Pakistani boy was observed for two years whereas the Portuguese boy was observed for one year and three months. After receiving formal pragmatic instructions, the two boys could develop their L2 pragmatic production of request strategies; initially they used incomplete prepositions to express directives like 'me no'. Gradually, their use of incomplete directives reduced over time; they also developed their use of direct and indirect request imperatives. In this concern, Ellis (1992: 16-17) gave examples of pragmatic development use of request strategies " Me no (blue), Give me (a paper), Can I have a rubber?, You got a rubber?, Miss I want (i.e., the stapler), Tasleem, have you got glue?, Can I take book with me?, Can you pass me my pencil?, Can I borrow your pen sir?"

Bardovi- Harlig and Griffin (2005) examined the use of apology and request strategies among other strategies by Forty three ESL learners. They are of different English language proficiency levels as they ranged from high-intermediate to low-advanced levels. The participants belonged to 18 language backgrounds including Asian, European and South American languages. The participants were asked to watch video tapes and detect the pragmatic

improper ways of using English in twenty scenarios. It is a L2 pragmatic data collection technique which Bardovi-Harlig (2013) highly recommended due to its authenticity and interactive situations. They were asked, then, to perform short role plays in order to correct those improper ways of using certain speech acts like apology, request, suggestion and refusal. The participants' role plays were video-taped as well. The pragmatic improper ways included in the 20 scenarios were categorized as grammatically incorrect pragmatic sentences; grammatically correct but pragmatically ill-formed sentences; and grammatically and pragmatically well-formed sentences. The researchers found that the participants were able to detect and correct their pragmatic lapses. However, the corrections were not native-like language. This indicated that the pragmatic development and awareness occurred in stages among ESL learners. In this concern, the speech acts content and forms were of great difficulty for the examined ESL learners. Whereas the former is socio-cultural in nature, the latter is more related to the ESL learners' linguistic development. The speech act content is simply related to appropriateness and relevancy determined by the target language speech community. As to the speech acts forms, it could be difficult for instance for ESL learners to differentiate between the use of 'could' and 'would' at an early stage of pragmatic development as proven through the longitudinal conversational studies (e.g. Salsbury and Bardovi-Harlig, 2000). The researchers also emphasized the important role of EFL teachers to help their students identify their pragmatic lapses. Finally, the study stressed the importance of classroom activity in healing and providing remedy for

the ESL learners' pragmatic lapses. Working in pairs also gives the ESL learners an opportunity to naturally communicate among themselves to detect and correct the pragmatic lapses.

Koike and Pearson (2005) examined how effectively L2 pragmatics can be taught by using explicit or implicit pragmatic instructions in order to develop L2 pragmatic competence. For the purpose of data collections, the researchers designed a unit of instructions on how to use suggestions in the Spanish language by the English native speakers. They explained that there was no significant difference between the explicit and implicit type of feedback concerning the development of English learners' ability to use suggestion strategies in the Spanish language. For example, the explicit pragmatic feedback yielded positive results of improving the use of Spanish suggestion strategies by the English-speaking learners in the multiple choices exercises. However, the implicit pragmatic feedback proved important effect on developing the subjects' pragmatic production of Spanish suggestion ways in the open ended dialogues. This finding suggested according to Koike and Pearson (2005) that both types of feedback and instruction, whether explicit or implicit, contribute effectively in developing the pragmatic competence of the target language learners. However, the explicit and implicit types of instruction and feedback may differ according the nature of the task being experienced by the target language learners as shown in the case of multiple choice exercises and open ended dialogues.

Nureddeen (2008) examined how 110 undergraduates used apology strategies in the Sudanese variety of Arabic.

Data were collected through a 10-item DCT reflecting different social relations and powers and severity of offence among the participants. She found that Sudanese tended to use 'less dangerous' apology strategies IFID and explanation (i.e. justification) and did not favour the use of strategies that cause damages to the speaker's face like taking responsibility and promise of forbearance.

Glaser (2009) stated that pragmatic competence is considered as one of the objectives of foreign language teaching. According to Austin (1962), pragmatic competence refers to EFL learners' success in using the speech acts well or "doing things with words" in consistency with the cultural norms of L2 community and avoid the occurrence of cultural pragmatic misunderstanding. Paulston (1977) asserted the importance of EFL learners' mastery of the social parameters of using a target language; these parameters are as equally important as the linguistic rules that lead to L2 mastery. Kasper, 2001; Alcón- Soler, 2002 clarified that the development of pragmatic competence does not necessarily occur concurrently with the development of linguistic features competence; i.e. the mastery of linguistic rules of grammar, lexis and so on. It is common that EFL learners develop their grammatical competence in prior to the pragmatic competence. On such basis, Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, (1998) accounted for the communicative failure among the EFL learners of different proficiency levels even the higher-intermediate and advanced ones. Thomas (1983); Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998); Zamborlin (2007); Hwang (2008) explained that the failure of successfully using L2 pragmatic aspect is not attributed to failure of using

grammatical rules properly, but it can be also a failure to use language according to its proper social parameters.

Kogetsidis (2010) posed these questions: how do social variables affect the production of L2 pragmatics? What is the effect of 'social context' on utterances and verbal communication? What are the most widely discussed and tested variables? And how are the social variables of social distance, power, and imposition perceived and assessed? According to Brown and Levinson (1978) and Brown and Levinson (1987) the social variables in terms of social distance and imposition are the most influential and significant contributors affecting the linguistic choices made by ESL learners when they employ indirect patterns of speech acts. Blum-Kulka, (1997) and Kasper and Rose (2001) reported that the social context is vital in interpreting the utterances and verbal communication and understanding the production of language. Several studies like Becker et al., (1989); Blum-Kulka and House (1989); Trosborg (1995); Le Pair (1996); Fukushima (1996, 2000); Ballesteros Martin (2001, 2002); Kwong (2004) asserted the high influence of social and contextual variables on the choice of indirect and/or direct speech acts employed in different social situations. Based on the influential model of politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978) and (1987), the social distance (D), social power (P) and imposition of the request speech acts (R) are the most significant and influential social variables which determine the ESL learners' linguistic choices of the speech acts. They explained that these three variables are additive fashion. That is, the higher degree of the social power, social distance and imposition increases the face-threatening act

and the choice of indirect speech acts by the speakers. In other words, these social variables are positively correlated to the speakers' choices of indirect speech acts. Brown and Levinson (1987) explained that people affiliated to different speech communities have different ways of perceiving the social situations and other social factors related to those situations. In this concern, Spencer Oatey (1993) stated that groups affiliated to different socio-cultural backgrounds have different norms of evaluating the social power and distance.

Kogetsidis (2010) came to the conclusion that variation in using the request strategies between the ESL Greek participants and the English native speakers was highly affected by the social variables of social distance (familiarity), social power and imposition. The findings showed the ESL Greek participants tended to use more indirect request strategies compared to their native-speaker counterparts as in the tuition fees situations. In addition, the ESL Greek participants adopted more direct request strategies than the English native speakers as in the assignment situation as the native speakers tended to adopt more indirect request formulas. Furthermore, the analysis of the request strategies employed ten situations, which differ in their social contexts and variables, indicated there was a high level of cross-cultural agreement between the ESL Greek participants and the native speakers of English. That is, higher levels of direct request strategies were permitted in some situations than other situations according to the cultures of both groups. The agreement across the two cultures of both groups was explained in Kogetsidis views based on the 'standard nature of the situations' as they used

direct request formulas in situations like 'bank loan, ticket and restaurant). In addition, Kogetsidis also found some levels of varied use of direct request strategies among the two compared and examined groups. According to Kogetsidis this variation was attributed to the different perception of those situations from the two examined group. Kogetsidis argued that although the social variables explained the differences between the ESL Greek participants and the English native speakers, none of them was indeed influential on the participants' production of the request strategies. This finding represents, according to Kogetsidis, a challenge to the findings of Brown and Levinson (1978) and (1987) as they considered these social variables as the most important and influential to the speech acts production. Rather, Kogetsidis attributed that variation to a more complex picture of sociolinguistic variables that includes other elements and constraints that control the request speech acts. These elements include, according to Kogetsidis, rights, obligations and urgency of the request speech acts.

Bella (2012) called for further investigation of the ESL learner's pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic expertise. This aimed to lessen and reduce the hearer's unwanted effects and accomplish the success of interaction. This means that the users of request acts should have knowledge of the linguistic resources to help formulate request in an appropriate way and knowledge of cultural, social and contextual variables that help them choose the appropriate pragmalinguistic form suitable for the contextual situation. Therefore, request acts could constitute obstacles for ESL/EFL learners who should know how to form

appropriate request acts in order to avoid the hearer's perception of being rude, offensive or demanding. Bella (2012) concluded that regardless of the participants' proficiency levels of Greek, they all followed the contextual parameters of situations including the social powers and social distance and they observed the politeness rules. She added that the GFL learners of lower-intermediate proficiency levels tended to use direct request strategies. This tendency, however, decreased among the advanced proficiency level learners who relied on the use of conventional indirect request formulas. The lower-intermediate learners were more interested to focus on the grammar and vocabulary of the DCT. The study affirmed that the tendency to use nonconventional indirect request was not a result of serving indirectness but rather it had a compensatory function; it compensated the lack of pragmalinguistic means on the part of GFL learners. In spite of the decreased frequency of using direct requests among the participants, the intermediated participants had the preference of using the imperative forms of requests on the contrary to the lower-intermediate learners. This is attributed to the morphological complexity of imperative in the Greek language which can be difficult for the lower intermediate learners of GFL to use in comparison with the intermediate ones. Although advanced learners opted for using conventional indirect requests, they did not attain the native-like formulas. That is, there were differences between GFL advanced learners and the native speakers of Greek in choosing the conventional indirect request subcategories.

Do pragmatic instructions help ESL learners improve their use of conventional expressions? This question according to Rose (2000) refers to the potentiality of teaching L2 pragmatic features to ESL learners. Bardovi-Harlig and Vellenga (2012) found that using the noticing activities can help improve the ESL learners' awareness of the repeated conventional expression in speech. This, of course, improves their understanding of how to use them in interactive situations. Bardovi- Harlig (2009) found that ESL learners tended to use different conventional expressions from those used by the native speakers in similar contexts. In Bardovi- Harlig and Vellenga's study (2012) they found that ESL learners preferred to generalize the expressions of thanking 'thanks' and 'thank you' to that instructed expression taught in the pragmatic instructions 'that'd be great'. That is, the participants preferred to use a single-form expression which is known in second language acquisition as one-to-one principle. In other words, ESL learners tend to develop one expression per each pragmatic function in the early stages of pragmatic development. Bardovi- Harlig et al. (2012) concluded that there was significant improvement in the use of Group participants of the conventional expressions after have instructions on their usage. Group A participants as well showed significant improvement in using the conventional expressions instructed to Group B. on the contrary, the participants of both groups A and B failed to improve their use of the conventional expressions instructed to Group A. the researchers found that the use of metapragmatic noticing activities along with the contextualized examples led to the improvement in using some conventional expressions;

particularly those expressions which are consistent with the participants' interlanguage grammar. However, the analysis of the participants' production indicated that they did not try to use even the contextually suitable conventional expressions whose grammar was not acquired by the participants' interlanguage grammar. In spite of the constraints imposed by the learners' poor grammar knowledge and how transparent the conventional expressions were, the L2 pragmatic instructions proved vital in improving the participants' recognition of conventional expressions. The researcher did focus on including production activities, although they laid metapragmatic focus on the L2 pragmatics input. The researchers tended to use excerpts from television transcripts instead of TV clips when they introduced their L2 pragmatic input. The written used model on contrary to the oral one did not provide the learners with the desired model of pragmatic production as it lacked the advantages of the oral production model, namely stress, patterns of intonation, rhythm and proper ways of words pronunciation.

Cai and Wang (2013) concluded that there was an increasingly grown interest in handling the methodological issues of interlanguage pragmatic research with focus on L2 classroom settings. The field of interlanguage pragmatic research which emerged more than thirty years ago achieved great contribution, when compared to other fields in SLA, with several research topics, several research methods. Yet, there are plenty of topics that need to be investigated under the field of interlanguage pragmatic research. For instance, it is necessary as Kasper and Rose

(2002) called for to relate pragmatics to other components of communicative competence. That is, L2 pragmatic researchers can examine how pragmatic and communicative abilities of ESL learners are related to each other instead of only and separately examining each component of the communicative competence. Most of interlanguage pragmatic studies indicated that ESL learners' pragmatic competence is influenced by the learning environment including learning contexts and opportunities. It is evident that some of the ESL learners and not all of them have accessibility to the L2 environment. Instead they rely of listening to L2 songs; watching L2 movies; or reading L2 novels. According to Cai and Wang (2013), there is no scientific evidence that those media of learning are helpful. Therefore, they suggested that interlanguage pragmatic researchers should determine the exact features of the L2 learning environment so as the ESL/EFL teachers can attempt to provide similar environments for their learners. This is a necessary step as it is not enough to realize the importance of L2 pragmatics, but what is more important is to implant pragmatic proficiency into the ESL learners in an effective way. In addition, the interlanguage pragmatic research proved that different speech acts can be taught. Thus, the EFL/ESL teachers' pragmatic instructions are direly needed and interlanguage pragmatic researchers should find ways to broaden their and examine more pragmatic teaching methods. Furthermore, Cai and Wang (2013) showed that pragmatic competence is not separated

from other components of communicative competence, social and cultural values and aspects of L2 community members. Therefore, interlanguage pragmatic researchers need to explore other individual factors affecting ESL/EFL learners' pragmatic competence including age, gender, motivation, psychological distance and social identity.

Methodology

Participants & instrument of data collection

Ten English-majoring Egyptian undergraduates participated in this study out of the total number of fourth-year fifteen students enrolled in the academic year 2013-2014. They were asked to complete ten situations on apology strategies included in a written discourse completion task (DCT). The DCT is valid and reliable as it was adopted from Nureddeen (2008), pp 299-301and was originally designed by Blum-Kulka (1982). It was intensively used in other studies like those of Blum Kulka (1982) House (1988), Kasper (1989) and Suszcyznska (1999), and Nureddeen (2008) (Appendix A). As to the methodological framework of the present study, the DCT-ten situations are of different levels of social distance, power and severity of offence. The social distance is of three levels: closeness, acquaintance and distant relationship between the offender and the victim. The social power is of three levels as well: high-low, equal and low-high. The severity of offence can be mild or serious. Table

1 shows the classification of social distance, power and the severity of offence for the ten situations adopted from Nureddeen (2008: 297).

Table 1: Distribution of social distance, power and severity of offence

H's damaged face	Type of offence	Severity	Power	Distance	Situations	No.
-	Possession	Serious	Equals	Close	Damaged car	1
-	Possession	Mild	Equals	Close	Damaged book	2
+	Integrity	Serious	High-low	Acquaintance	Failed student	3
-	Possession	Mild	Low-high	Acquaintance	Borrowed book	4
-	Place	Mild	Equals	Distance	Wrong office	5
-	Physically	Serious	Equals	Distance	Falling bag	6
-	Possession	Mild	Equals	Acquaintance	Delayed message	7
+	Integrity	Serious	Equals	Acquaintance	Borrowed money	8
-	Time	Serious	High-low	Distant	Late for interview1	9
-	Time	Serious	Low-high	Distant	Late for interview2	10

It might seem as a disadvantage of this study since it lacks the comparison of EFL learners' collected data with English native speakers like all other studies on L2 pragmatics do. However, the lack of such a comparison is attributed to two justified reasons. First, it is the difficulty of getting native speakers to participate in this study within the data-collection environment. The researcher had sent many emails to universities based in different English native-speaking countries seeking the participation of some native speakers. However, there were in vain no replies. Second according to its main aim, the present study essentially aimed to delineate a picture of how frequently Egyptian EFL learners use the types of apology strategies.

Then, it is the role of English curricula developing departments and units to look into the inappropriate ways of using apology strategies in order to revise, devise or modify the activities of L2 pragmatics. Furthermore, some studies on pragmatic strategies did not rely on the comparison with native speakers. For example, Bjorkman (2011) measured the use of English pragmatic strategies by non-native speakers of English who were enrolled in postgraduate programmes in Switzerland. The literature revealed some studies did not rely on the comparison with NS L2 pragmatic production as that of rose (2009) who measured the developed interlanguage pragmatics of Cantonese speakers of English. In addition, Bardovi-Harlig and Griffin (2005) examined the L2 pragmatic development of 43 EFL learners belonged to 18 different language background without eliciting data from native speakers.

Administration of data collection

In a session spanned almost two hours, participants were instructed on how to reply to the ten-situation DCT. They were informed that each situation describes an action for which they were supposed to apologize. They were also instructed to imagine what they would say in such situations if they occurred in real life. The DCT was not translated into the participants' mother tongue as they were all English-majoring undergraduates who found no difficulty to understand the written situations.

Comments on the data collection instrument (written DCT)

In this concern, the researcher wanted to defend the written DCT selection for the purpose of data collection in spite of the recent criticism against using it as a means of data collection. Kogetsidis and Woodfield (2007:67) quoted the view of Kasper and Rose (2002:96) in defending the advantages of written DCT as they said "when carefully designed, WDCTs provide useful information about speakers" pragmalinguistic knowledge of the strategies and linguistic forms by which communicative acts can be implemented and about their sociopragmatic knowledge of the context factors under which particular strategic and linguistic choices are appropriate". In addition, Glaser (2009) analyzed the utterances of disagreement of 27 non-native speakers versus the disagreement utterances of 27 English native speakers. For the purpose of data collection, the participants were asked to respond to a DCT task which consists of a 10-item written questionnaire which reflects daily language situations. Furthermore, Kogetsidis (2010) collected request data through a written DCT task. The purpose of the DCT was to collect written data of the request formulas employed by the Greek ESL learners. The DCT contained 10 different social situations. The ten situations were varied in the sense that they indicated different social variables, i.e. social distance- which Kogetsidis referred to as familiarity- social power and imposition. The participants were asked to complete

missing parts in a dialogue to provide a required request strategy**.**

Data analysis

Theoretically, the study adopts the conceptual framework introduced by Nureddeen (2008). Statistically, data were analyzed based on the frequency analysis and percentage scores of the used apology strategies by the ten participants. The mean score of using each strategy was calculated by dividing its total of frequency by the number of participants (Dornyei, 2002).

Results and Discussion

1. **An illocutionary force indicating device (IFID)**

Table 2 indicated that participants employed IFID strategy in all situations. The IFID frequency ranged from 30% to 100%, where situations 3 and 4 (30% and 40%) received the lowest frequencies while situations, 9 and 10 got the highest frequencies. In terms of serious-severity of offence situations, the lowest IFID frequencies can be related to the high social power of the offender towards the offended. It is hard due to the Egyptians' culture for those in power to explicitly apologize for their wrong doings. On the contrary, where the social power is equal among the two interlocutors (situations 1, 6 and 8) or the offender is of lower social power compared to the offended as in situation 10 there was high frequency of using IFID. That is, Egyptians tend to apologize in order to maintain their close relationships as in situations 1, 6 and 8 and because of their financial needs due to economic stress as in situation 10 which reflects the offended person's need for getting the

job. As to mild severity of offence situations (2,4,5 and 7) where the interlocutors are of equal social power with the exceptional of situation 4 that reflects low-high social power, varied frequency levels of using IFID strategy. The total frequency of using IFID was 70 and its mean score was 7.

Table 2: Frequency of using IFID strategy among Egyptian EFL learners

%	F10	%	F9	%	F8	%	F7	%	F6	%	F5	%	F4	%	F3	%	F2	%	F1	St.
100	10	40	4	100	10	90	9	90	9	80	8	70	7	30	3	50	5	50	5	IFID

2. **Acknowledgment of offence responsibility (AOR):**

Table 3 showed Egyptian EFL learners acknowledged their offence responsibility in a range varied from 10% to 100%. The highest (AOR) frequency occurred in situations 1 and 10 while situations 2 (1%) and 5 (20%) had the lowest (AOR) frequencies. As to serious severity of offence situations (1,3,6, 8, 9, 10), participants expressed their highest (AOR) in situations 1 and 10 where the interlocutors are of equal social power and low-high social power. In situations 3 and 9 due to the high social power of the offender, the AOR frequency strategy was low at 30%. However, the (AOR) frequency strategy was high in situations 6 and 8 where the two interlocutors were of equal social power. As to mild severity of offence situations (2,4,5, and7), Egyptian EFL learners had the lowest rate of using (AOR) situations 2 (1%) and 5 (20%) where both interlocutors where of equal social power. However, they had high rate in situation 4 where the interlocutors were of low-high social power. The frequency of using (AOR)

strategy was also high in situation 7 as the interlocutors were of equal social power. The total frequency of using AOR was 65 and its mean score was 6.5.

Table 3: Frequency of using (AOR) strategy among Egyptian EFL learners

%	F10	%	F9	%	F8	%	F7	%	F6	%	F5	%	F4	%	F3	%	F2	%	F1	St.
100	10	40	4	90	9	80	8	80	8	20	2	90	9	40	4	10	1	100	10	AOR

3. **Justification of violation cause (JVC):**

Table 4 shows the frequency of using JVC ranged from 60% to 100%. The highest JVC frequency occurs in situations 2,5, and 10 while its lowest frequency occurs in situation 3. As to serious severity of offence situations (1,3,6,8,9,10), the highest use of JVC was in situation 10 where there was low-high social power between the offender and interlocutor reflecting a trend in the Egyptian culture of providing justification for those who have higher social power. On the contrary and based on the Egyptian culture, those who have high social power are not so keen on to provide justifications as shown in situations 3 and 9. In addition, Egyptians tend as well to provide justification for their wrong doing whenever they have equal social power with their victims; as an indication for intimacy particularly in the case of close, acquaintance social distance as shown in situations 1,6, and 8. The total frequency of using JVC was 86 and its mean score was 8.6.

Table 4: Frequency of using (JVC) strategy among Egyptian EFL learners

%	F10	%	F9	%	F8	%	F7	%	F6	%	F5	%	F4	%	F3	%	F2	%	F1	St.
100	10	70	7	90	9	80	8	80	8	100	10	90	9	60	6	100	10	90	9	JVC

4. **Offer of repair (OR)**

Table 5 indicated that Egyptian EFL learners do not frequently tend to employ the offer of repair strategy whose frequency ranged from 0% to 100%. The highest use of this strategy was in situation 3 where the offender was of a higher social power than the victim. This highest frequency score is not mainly related to cultural norms but rather to academic norms. The lowest frequency (0%) occurred in situations 5,6,7,8,9 and 10 where the offenders and victims are of varied social powers (equal as in situations 5,6,7 and8) , high-low as in situation 9, and low-high as in situation 10). The severity of offence reflected in these situations ranged between mild and serious. In situation 4 which represents low-high social power, the offer of repair frequency recorded a high percentage of 90%. It reflected the culture of submission prevailed among Egyptians to those who have high social power. Meanwhile situation 1 of equal social power showed an average frequency (50%) of using offer of repair among Egyptian EFL learners. The total offer of repair frequency was 25 and its mean score was 2.5.

Table 5: Frequency of using offer of repair among Egyptian EFL learners

%	F10	%	F9	%	F8	%	F7	%	F6	%	F5	%	F4	%	F3	%	F2	%	F1	St.
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	90	9	100	10	10	1	50	5	OR

5. **Promise of forbearance (PF)**

Table 6 showed Egyptian EFL learners seldom tend to use the promise of forbearance strategy as its lowest frequency percentage (0%) occurred in all situations except

situation 10 (90%). This finding affirms the culture of financial need prevailed among the needy Egyptians in general as their main concern is to satisfy their financial needs and promise not to repeat their wrong doing for that purpose. The total frequency of promise of forbearance was 9 and the mean score was 0.9.

Table 6: Frequency of using promise of forbearance among Egyptian EFL learners

%	F10	%	F9	%	F8	%	F7	%	F6	%	F5	%	F4	%	F3	%	F2	%	F1	St.
90	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	PF

Conclusion and discussion of L2 pragmatic instructions

Findings of the present study on the social variables influence on the EFL learners' pragmatic production and choices were consistent with those of Rose (2000) Nureddeen (2008), Glaser (2009), Kogetsidis (2010), Bella (2012)

As to the first two research questions, Egyptian EFL learners were found to mainly employ three apology strategies, namely justification of violation cause (JVC) with the mean score of 8.6, IFID (mean score 7), and acknowledgment of responsibility (AOR) (mean score 6.5). However, they did not frequently use the offer of repair strategy (mean score 2.5) and seldom use a promise of forbearance strategy (mean score 0.9).

As to the third question and in serious severity of offence situations, Egyptians tended to use IFID strategy with the highest frequencies when they have equal social power in order to maintain their close relationships or when the offender is of lower social power compared to the

offended person in a clear reflection and manifestation of their L1 culture influence on their L2 pragmatic production. The degree of social power affects the Egyptian EFL learners' frequency of acknowledging the offence responsibility which was expressed with low rates in the case of high offender social power and with high rates when both offender and offended person were of equal or low social power. The highest frequency of providing justification for a wrongdoing occurred whenever the offender has low social power compared to the victim. On the contrary, the lowest justification frequency occurred when the offender has high social power over the victim. Yet, Egyptian EFL learners have a relatively high justification frequency whenever there is equal social power between the offender and the victim in a move to maintain social intimacy. In addition, Egyptian EFL learners did not frequently use the offer of repair strategy and seldom employed the promise of forbearance strategy. Although the highest frequency of offer of repair strategy occurred in a high-low social power situation, it was not attributed to cultural domain but rather to academic one. Regardless of the social power type, most of Egyptian EFL learners did not promise to repeat their wrong doings. However, the highest frequency of this strategy occurred in a low-high social power situation reflecting the cultural influence prevailed among Egyptians in order to satisfy their financial needs.

As to the fourth question which is mainly related to L2 pragmatic instructions, the teaching of conversation courses

should not be solely left to either demonstrators or language instructors who are not majoring in TEFL. Demonstrators are not experienced enough to handle such highly important courses that form and develop not only the learners' listening and speaking skills but also their sociopragmatic competence in using different speech acts in order to attain the native-like use. As to language instructors majoring in areas like literature, they cannot fulfill the full purpose of teaching conversation. The process is not only about teaching language rules as many parties may claim so any instructor can do. It is rather a process of building and forming correct language formulas including the elements of syntax, grammar, lexis, etc and a familiarization process of the cultural and social norms that highly influence, control and govern the functions and uses of different speech acts. For instance, a tourism-specialized assistant lecturer was selected to teach English as a first foreign specialized language to tourism and tourist guidance majoring undergraduates. Her selection was only justified on the basis that she was a language-school graduate without taking into considerations the assessment of her language skills, her L2 pragmatic knowledge and her awareness of social variables affecting L2 pragmatic production. Such issues are vital to the development of EFL learners' L2 pragmatic competence as they pose questions on the speech acts teaching and the role of EFL instructors.

The description of various speech acts should mainly aim to develop the use of such acts by EFL learners in a way which is similar to their use in L2 speech community.

Since there are different language functions, speech acts cannot be taught in isolation but in a discourse context instead. In order to train and instruct EFL learners on how to deal with various speech acts in natural settings, EFL instructors should make them aware of the L2 pragmatic functions. For this purpose, EFL instructors should be aware of functions and components of the speech acts in order to expose their learners to natural setting situations. This helps motivate EFL learners to adopt a native-like use of speech acts and think of the various language functions based on culture appropriateness. In this regard, it is the role of EFL instructors to integrate the pragmatic appropriate use of speech acts into EFL classes. This role is built on three stages. First, EFL instructors can observe their EFL learners' L2 pragmatic production in order to define their trouble spots when using the speech acts. Second, they should assess the authenticity of their instructional materials; how the speech acts are distributed in the conversational situations; and the types of social distance and power between the interlocutors. The social conversational parameters are necessary to avoid possible misunderstanding and ensure interactive communication because EFL learners, regardless of their proficiency levels, may not have the adequate L2 pragmatic competence which helps them successfully fulfill the communication act. Third, EFL instructors can modify the available instructional materials and even create new pragmatically appropriate activities in which EFL learners perform role plays or spontaneously converse in pairs.

The design of L2 pragmatic instructions should give EFL learners rooms to practice language in different formal and informal settings. For this purpose, the use of audio-visual materials including different speech acts situations can provide good models of language exposure for EFL learners. In this concern, the researcher provides a suggested teaching model of speech acts. First, EFL learners watch a video tape on any of the speech acts, be it apology, request, invitation, etc., without instructors' intervention. In the second time of watching the video tape, instructors can pause the video tape to allow their learners write down the utterances they have heard. Then, EFL learners can perform in pairs the roles which they have written out of the video tape. After their performance, the whole EFL class can be engaged in a discussion on the social aspect of the performed situation. Instructors can then ask their learners to devise similar situations on other speech acts to be performed and discussed in the class in other sessions. This exercise helps create and develop the L2 pragmatic awareness among the EFL learners as their language use will vary according to the different social aspects which govern the situation and the different settings in which the speech act occurs.

Suggestions for further research:

Below are possible suggestions for further research:

1. A study may investigate the use of English as a lingua franca (ELF) among Egyptian EFL learners.

2. A research can handle the impact of L2 environment on the development of the development of L2 pragmatic competence.
3. The study can be replicated using natural speech data instead of the written data.
4. The study can be replicated using different types of the speech acts and a larger number of samples.

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