

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE OF STUDENTS AT THE

UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA: A CASE

STUDY OF THE SECOND YEAR BACHELOR OF EDUCATION STUDENTS

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MONIKA H.N. NAKALE

200911619

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SUPERVISOR: DR. R. MAKAMANI

ABSTRACT

The current study was carried out to investigate the following: firstly, the pragmatic competence of UNAM's second year Bachelor of Education Students majoring in English in selected speech acts, namely, the speech act of refusal, compliment responses and apologies. Secondly, the relationship between pragmatic and grammatical competencies of the students were investigated. Lastly, it studied the factors that influence students' pragmatic competence. The researcher intended to have 30 participants, but only 26 participants took part. Purposive sampling was utilized to select the study sample. Three sets of instruments were used to collect data, namely, the Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT), open-ended questionnaire and the English Language Proficiency (ELP). Data on the students' pragmatic competence as well as grammatical competence was coded using themes and qualitatively and quantitatively analysed. The findings of the study showed that, in terms of the speech act of refusal, students pragmatic competence was somewhat at a low level. However, students demonstrated high level of pragmatic competence in terms of the speech act of compliment responses and that of apologies. Considering the three speech acts of refusal, compliment and apologies results, students' level of pragmatic competence can be rated as moderate, since students' first language at some point interfered in how they responded. In addition, the findings indicated that students with different grammatical ability have different refusal, compliment responses and apology approaches. Lastly, the findings showed that there are many factors that may influence pragmatic competence including grammatical competence, educational background, daily activities using English and awareness in using and learning the English language. Teaching of pragmatic knowledge is however recommended.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this study to my cousin Wilka N. Nicodemus. This disallowed me from coming to see you for the last time and to take you to your resting place. I therefore dedicate this thesis to you my cousin. May your soul rest in peace!

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The concept of pragmatics is defined by scholars such as Gregoriou (2009), Johnston (2008) and Yule (2006). Parker's (1986) definition is that Pragmatics is the study of how language is used to communicate. The claim is that pragmatics is different from grammar, which according to Parker (1986), is the study of the internal structure of language. Grammar is made up of semantics, syntax, morphology, and phonology. Pragmatics has to do with the way we use language to communicate rather than the way language is structured internally. This study therefore evaluated how students use the language when they communicate. The researcher is driven by the reality that being linguistically competent does not necessarily mean one is pragmatically competent hence the need for this study.

Students enrol in tertiary institutions from high schools where the emphasis on second language teaching is on mastering grammar. In schools it is very important for learners to master the correct basic rules of using the language on which they will be assessed for progress. However, pragmatics is not really given much attention. The fact that Namibia is a multicultural and multilingual society is no excuse as, according to Thiba (1988), "a person can be easily pardoned for violating grammatical rules but using language inappropriately results in a person being negatively labelled" (p. 18). Wolfsan (1989) supported this idea that a grammatical or pronunciation error may be easily forgiven by the native speakers of a language but a pragmatic error may not be pardoned. Offence can be easily noticed especially when the interlocutor and speaker are from different cultural backgrounds, however, people from the same speech

community may as well misunderstand each other. This is especially relevant in Namibia where there are diverse cultures. Furthermore, Wolfsan (1989) argued that most textbooks designed for second language learning are in line with the need to equip learners with a mastery of grammatical rules. This is also the case in Namibia as teaching and learning centre around learners being able to utilise grammar correctly.

Leech (1983) claims that, “The subject of pragmatics is very familiar in linguistics today” (p. 1). This statement is crucial and true to the research in the 21st century. Similarly, Thiba (1988) also maintains that “language learning does not only involve the mastery of grammatical rules, however, it further entails the acquisition of the ability to use and understand language in context.” Leech (1983) further argues that people cannot really understand the nature of language itself unless they understand pragmatics which is how language is used in communication. The researcher therefore concludes that for one to claim that he/she knows a language, that person should be both linguistically competent as well as pragmatically competent.

Searle (1969) creates a hypothesis that speaking a language is engaging in a rule-governed form of behaviour. Searle (1969) simply used this hypothesis to explain possibility and not to provide evidence for linguistic characterisations. The hypothesis took the form that speaking a language is performing speech acts such as, making statements, giving commands, asking questions, and making promises. Searle (1969) further states that the reason for concentrating on the study of speech acts is simply because all linguistic communication involves language in action (linguistic acts). What can be drawn from this is that the moment a person utters a word he/she engages in or performs speech acts which can be determined by the situation or context, hence, the need for this study as people engage in communication on daily basis.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Cultural diversity brings about great chance of communication breakdown between native and non-native speakers when it comes to the common shared language, in this case English. Coming from a different cultural background is no excuse, as a person cannot be easily pardoned for using language inappropriately. This will only result in a person being negatively labelled and nationally pigeon-holed according to negative stereotype such as the aggressive Afrikaner and the uncultured coloured, however, one can be easily pardoned for violating grammatical rules (Thiba, 1988). A brief account of ethnic stereotypes resulting from cross-cultural miscommunication is given by Scollon and Scollon (Richards and Schmidt, 1983 as cited in Thiba, 1988). It is on this note that there is a need to examine the pragmatic knowledge at this level as students at tertiary institutions are more exposed (come in contact/ come across) to people of different languages.

Leech (1983) makes an argument that people cannot really understand the nature of language itself unless they understand pragmatics which is how language is used in communication. Scholars (Carmen & Begona, 2014; Ciftci, 2015; Haggan, 2010) have carried out different studies on pragmatics. However, pragmatic competence has not been explored in the Namibian context. Thus, this study sought to explore pragmatic competence by analysing the extent to which the second year Bachelor of Education students majoring in English at the University of Namibia (UNAM) are pragmatically competent. It also investigated or assessed the relationship between students' English pragmatic competence and their grammatical competence. This was useful to judge if pragmatic competence has an effect on students' daily interaction. It was carried out through the evaluation of some aspects of speech acts of requests, apologies,

promises, commands, warnings and statements. Furthermore, the study examined the influencing factors of pragmatic competence of the students.

1.3 Research questions

This study attempted to address the following research questions:

1. To what extent are the UNAM's second year Bachelor of Education students majoring in English pragmatically competent?
2. What is the relationship between pragmatic competence and grammatical competence of students?
3. What are the factors influencing students pragmatic competence?

1.4 Significance of the study

This study is essential as it contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing an analysis of the level of students' pragmatic competence in ESL learning thereby filling the gap. By evaluating pragmatic competence against grammatical competence, the study would help lecturers to understand and communicate with students better. This will enable them to conduct lectures effectively. Moreover, it may benefit them by understanding the implications that are likely to come with language use in social situations as they will be informed about the causes of communication breakdown. Significantly, students will have enough time to acquaint themselves with pragmatic knowledge before they complete their studies and go in the field, and pass it on to their learners in process of teaching. As students live in the target language setting, they have to be able to use the language not only linguistically appropriate, but also be able to apologise, request, refuse, and ask for permission using appropriate language in context. If a learner is linguistically competent but makes a pragmatic mistake, it is considered as more serious than a

grammatical mistake (Abdukarimova & Bezborodova, 2014) hence, the focus on pragmatic competence in this study.

1.5 Limitation of the study

There are some limitations that the researcher cannot control. The sample size of the study was only be a specific group of students from the Faculty of Education, therefore, the findings cannot be generalised to all the university students from other faculties. The Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT) used also has some limitations namely, in oral performance, the students use hesitations, repetitions, inversions, and longer supportive moves, which are missing in the WDCT (Aufa, 2013).

1.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter gave an overview of the orientation of the study by emphasising the importance of pragmatic knowledge in our everyday life. It also looked at the statement of the problem, research questions, the significance of the study as well as the limitation and delimitations of the study. The next chapter reviews the literature and studies done in the field of pragmatics.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The present study investigated the pragmatic competence of student teachers at the University of Namibia. Studies that have been carried out by different researchers in the field of pragmatics were reviewed. This chapter consists of a review of related literature and related studies. The literature includes the similarities and differences between syntax, semantics and pragmatics, deixis and distance, speech acts, politeness and interaction, the distinguishing of different competences, pragmatic competence and pragmatic failure. Significantly, the available information of related studies on pragmatic competence was presented, and gaps in existing knowledge were acknowledged and paved a way on how this study filled them up.

2.2. Review of literature

2.2.1. Pragmatics reviewed

According to Bardovi-Harlig (1998) there are factors that have a direct influence on the acquisition of pragmatic competence. These are factors such as the input, instruction, level of proficiency and length of stay or living in the Second Language (L2) culture, and the first Language (L1) culture. Furthermore, shortcomings pertaining to input may be found in academic materials such as textbooks or even the instructor. These factors were a contribution to the findings of this study.

2.2.2. Syntax, semantics and pragmatics

Smit (2012) indicates that one traditional distinction in language analysis contrasts pragmatics with syntax and semantics. Syntax is defined by Yule (1996) as the study of the relationships between linguistic forms, how they are arranged in sequence, and which sequences are well-

formed. It is further stated that this type of study generally takes place without considering any world of reference or any user of the forms. Regarding semantics, Yule (1996) defines it as the study of the relationship between linguistic forms and entities in the world; that is, how words connect together. In addition, Parker (1986) simplifies semantics as the study of linguistic meaning, that is, the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences. Unlike pragmatics, semantics is part of grammar property; the study of the internal structure of language. Leech (1983) argues that, the moment there is admission of meaning to a central place in language, the exclusion of the way meaning varies from context to context becomes extremely difficult, and consequently semantics spills over into pragmatics. In practice, the hitch of differentiating 'language' (langue) and 'language use' (parole) is based on a boundary argument between semantics and pragmatics. Meaning is the concern of these fields, however the variance between them is traceable to two different uses of the verb to mean, for instance, semantics would ask "What does x mean?" while pragmatics would ask "What did you mean by x?" (Leech, 1983, p. 6).

For a clear distinction, Yule (1996) clarifies that the concept pragmatics "is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader)" p. 3. That is, the focus is on analysing the meaning of the utterances that people make instead of the actual meaning of phrases or words said. In other words, it involves the interpretation of what one mean in a specific context and how the context influences what is said. In this case, how the speakers organise what they want to say in accordance with who they are talking to, where, when, and under what circumstances, has to be considered. Furthermore, it explores how listeners can make inferences about utterances in order to interpret the speakers intended meaning. So here, the listener is able to identify a great deal of what is said through the little that is communicated.

The choice of the said and unsaid is determined by the notion of distance. In other words, closeness, be it physical, social, or conceptual, implies shared experience. It is on this assumption that the speakers determine how much needs to be said (Yule, 1996).

All in all, Smit (2012, as cited in Yule, 1996) concluded that pragmatics is concerned with four areas, namely:

1. Pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning.
2. Pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning.
3. Pragmatics is the study of how more gets communicated than is said.
4. Pragmatics is the study of the expression of relative distance.

Nevertheless, the concern for this study is to investigate the connection between grammatical competence and pragmatic competence of second language speakers.

2.2.3. Deixis and distance

One of the first phenomena that scientific considerations of language use could not ignore was this ‘anchoring’ of language in a real world, achieved by ‘pointing’ at variables along some of its dimensions. This phenomenon is called deixis (Ver Schueren, 1999). Deixis is a Greek word which means pointing by means of language. The linguistic forms used to achieve such pointing are referred to as deictic expressions, which are also known as indexicals. Indexicals can be used to indicate people through person deixis such as [me, you] or indicate location through spatial deixis like [here and there], or point out time through temporal deixis such as [now and then] (Yule, 1996). The deictic expressions interpretations depend on the speaker and hearer sharing the same context.

To shed some light on deictic expressions or indexicals, person deixis operates on a basic three-part division such as the pronouns for first person “I”, second person “you”, and third person “he, she, or it”. For most languages these deictic categories of speaker, addressee with others are elaborated with markers of relative social status, for instance addressee with high status versus addressee with lower status. Spatial deixis, according to Yule (1996), the concept of distance is relevant to spatial deixis, which indicates the location of people and thing. Two adverbs “here” and “there” are the one used in contemporary English. Temporal deixis is well-known with the use of the proximal form ‘now’ as it indicates both the time that coincides with the speaker’s utterance and the time of the speaker’s voice being heard (hearer’s now). On the other hand, the distal expression ‘then’ can be utilised in past and future time relative to the speaker’s present time (Smit, 2012). A clear instance is given by Yule (1996):

- a. November 22nd, 1963? I was in Scotland then.
- b. Dinner at 8:30 on Saturday? Okay, I’ll see you then.

2.2.4. Speech acts

A powerful statement is presented by Yule (1996) that when people try to express themselves, they do not simply produce utterances that contain grammatical structures and words, however, actions are performed through those utterances. These actions performed by means of utterances are known as speech acts. According to Andersen and Aijmer (2011), the study of speech acts started out as a philosophical concern spearheaded by philosophers such as Austin and Searle in the 1960s. Austin paved the way by showing ‘how we can do things with words’ (Austin 1962) and Searle (1969) formulated conditions or rules for the appropriate use of various speech acts such as promises or requests which he claimed to be universal. However, Searle’s (1969)

analysis of speech acts is based on isolated and no attention was given to the embeddedness of speech acts in different social contexts.

Austin's idea of speech acts was developed and extended by Searle (1969), by assumption that all utterances, even those without performative verbs, constitute acts. That is, rather than treating some utterances as examples of doing and others as instances of saying, Searle (1969) claims that both utterances under appropriate circumstances constitute acts. The theory was expanded by categorising all speech events into different types of acts and then trying to determine validity conditions on every type of speech act. All in all, Searle's theory states that everything that people say constitute some sort of speech act namely, promising, stating, apologising, threatening, requesting and predicting. According to Yule (1996) these terms apply to the speaker's communicative intention in producing an utterance. The expectation from the speaker is that the hearer will recognise his/her communicative intention. This is why it is impossible to leave out speech acts in the study of pragmatics due to its significance as a major area in language use.

2.2.5. Locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts

According to Smit (2012), a useful speech act distinction is that between the act's locution, its illocution and its perlocution. Searle (1969) has as well looked at the concept that every speech act consists of three separate acts which are an act of saying something (locution), an act of doing something (illocution), and an act of affecting the listener (perlocution). Locutionary is the act of simply uttering a sentence from a language, in other words it is a description of what the speaker says. For instance, if one says "*My watch is broken*", the expression referring is *my watch* and the predicating expression is *is broken*. Illocutionary act is what the speaker intends to do by uttering a sentence. These acts are those that include stating, promising, apologising,

threatening, predicting, ordering, and requesting. For example, if a mother says to her child “*Take your feet off the table*”, here the illocutionary act is an act of ordering. Furthermore, perlocutionary act is the effect on the hearer of what a speaker says. They include such effect as persuading, embarrassing, intimidating, boring, irritating, or inspiring the hearer. For example, if a husband says to his wife ten times in five minutes “*Hurry up, dear, we’re going to be late for the party*”, the perlocutionary act is likely to be one of irritating (Parker, 1986). These are some of the acts that will be utilised in the WDCT to assess pragmatic competence.

To conclude, the action performed by producing an utterance consists of three related acts, namely, locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act. Briefly, that is, locutionary act is the basic utterance, or producing a meaningful linguistic expression. With illocutionary act, an utterance is formed with some kind of function in mind, whereas perlocutionary act deals with the effect of illocution on the hearer.

2.2.6. Politeness

In language study, politeness goes beyond the obvious or general daily meaning. Politeness is the expressions of the speaker’s intention to mitigate face threats carried by certain face threatening acts (Pinyo, 2010). Brown and Levinson’s (1987) face-based theory of politeness sparked interest in studying how speakers use certain general politeness strategies oriented to saving their own or hearer’s face for instance when asking someone to do something.

The relationship between politeness and indirectness which was a cornerstone for speech act research based on Brown and Levinson’s theories has been shown to be problematic because of its culture-specificity. According to Yule (1996) politeness can be treated as a fixed concept, as in the idea of polite social behaviour, or etiquette, within a culture. Furthermore, a number of

general principles for being polite in social interaction within a particular culture can also be specified. These principles may involve things such as being tactful, generous, modest, and sympathetic toward others. The researcher's assumption is that one's pragmatic competence may be influenced by the etiquette within one's culture.

The concept of face cannot be overlooked when norms and principles that exist in the society at large are discussed. Face has to do with public self-image of person. It refers to emotional and social sense of self that everyone has and expects everyone else to recognise. Yule (1996) then concludes that in an interaction, politeness is "the means employed to show awareness of another person's face". In addition, politeness can be accomplished in situations of social distance or closeness. For instance, showing awareness for another person's face when that other seems socially distant is often described in terms of respect or defence. Showing the equivalent awareness when the other is socially close is often described in terms of friendliness, camaraderie, or solidarity.

Over politeness, external and internal factors which relate to social distance and closeness are useful in conversations as they assist one to make sense of what is said. These are factors such as the relative status of the participants, which has to do with social values that are tied to aspects of age and power. The one which is considered as an internal factor is the amount of imposition or degree of friendliness which takes place during an interaction. With this factor, social distance is likely to change. Therefore, both internal and external factors can influence not only what one says, but how one may be interpreted. Possibilities are that of the interpretation to go beyond a person's intended meaning, which may include evaluations such 'rude' or 'inconsiderate' or vice versa. Recognition of the effect of these evaluations makes it very clear that more is being communicated than said. This flows into the concept of pragmatics which is the centre of this

study. The researcher therefore observes that connection between the two terms, pragmatics and politeness.

According to Andersen and Aijmer (2011) a maxim-based view of politeness was first suggested by Robin Lakoff (1973). What she did was to propose two rules of pragmatic competence, namely, “be clear” this is formalised in terms of Grice’s (1975) Cooperative principle. The next is “Be Polite” and this is formalised in terms of Politeness Principle. This second Politeness Principle entails maxims such as 1) Don’t Impose 2) Give Options and 3) Make your receiver feel good. Moreover, Lakoff (1973) notes that sometimes there would be a clash between the need for clarity and need for politeness. Furthermore, the argument is that, what is more vital in an interaction is to avoid offense than achieve clarity.

2.2.7. Competences

In the study of language, competence is seen from various points of view by different theorists. The emphasis on competence was not necessarily on what competence is, but on competence as seen from a particular perspective. In this study competence will also be explained based on particular perspectives that are crucial to this study.

2.2.7.1. Communicative competence

Communicative competence focuses on the speaker’s ability to produce and understand sentences which are appropriate to the context in which they occur- what he needs to know in order to communicate effectively in socially distinct settings (Crystal, 1985, as cited in Thiba, 1988).

2.2.7.2. Grammatical competence

Grammatical competence is defined as the speaker's ability to utilise the rules of grammar correctly to generate and understand linguistic symbols (Thiba, 1988). Thus grammatical competence is shown through learner's ability to utilise language fluently resulting from correct use of rules of grammar.

2.2.7.3. Linguistic competence

According to Thiba (1988), Chomsky sees the speaker's linguistic competence as his knowledge of the sound system of a language as well as the knowledge of how the sounds and meaning of words are related. Linguistic competence is also defined by Crystal, (1985, as cited in Thiba, 1988) as a person's knowledge of his language, the systems of rules which he has mastered so that he is able to produce and understand infinite number of sentences, and to recognise grammatical mistakes and ambiguities.

2.2.7.4. Pragmatic competence

Pragmatic competence is a component of communicative competence and it is defined by Pinyo (2010) as the ability to use language forms appropriately in a particular context.

2.2.8. Pragmatic competence and pragmatic failure

Thomas (1913, as cited in Thiba, 1988) points out that pragmatic competence is the speaker's ability to use language appropriately and to understand language in context. When the learner is able to utilise language appropriately in a specific context, and when s/he understands language in use, than s/he has pragmatic competence. "Pragmatic competence is to communicative competence what grammatical competence is to linguistic competence. It is easier to explain

pragmatic competence by contrasting it with grammatical competence.” This was addressed in the current study.

2.2.8.1. Pragmatic failure

Pragmatic failure is said to happen when t

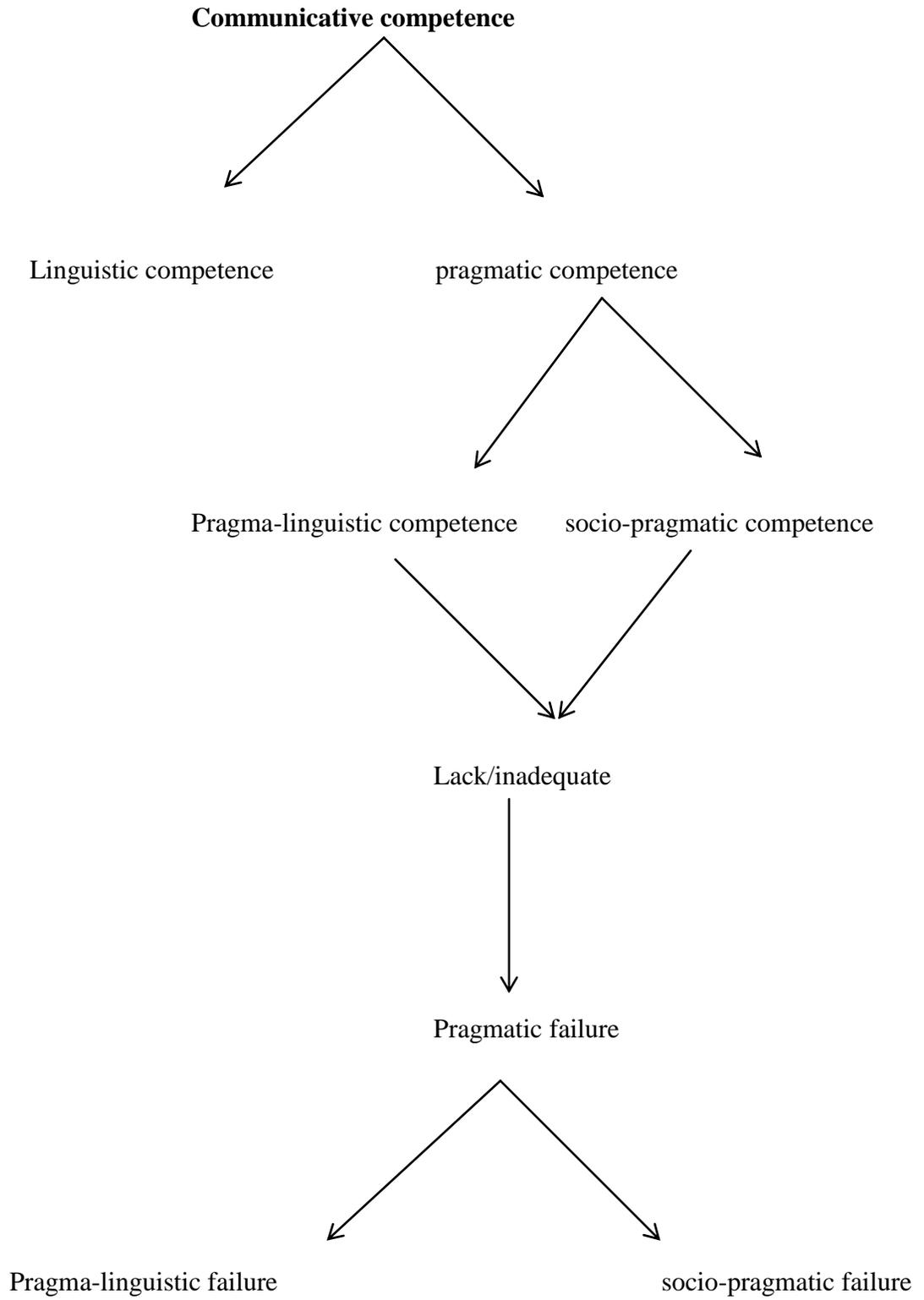
he hearer fails to understand what the speaker means by what s/he says. Cross-cultural communication breakdown is most likely to take place when the speaker and hearer are from different cultural backgrounds. Pragmatic failure can therefore be minimised by mastering both grammatical and pragmatic competence in the target language. Grammatical competence suggests mastery of grammatical rules and systems governing the said language, whereas pragmatic competence is the ability to use language in order to achieve a certain purpose and understanding language in context (Thiba, 1988). Furthermore, rules that govern the grammar are said to be prescriptive whereas pragmatic principles differ across cultures. Both grammatical and pragmatic competences form one’s linguistic competence.

Riley (1984, as cited in Thiba, 1988), notes that pragmatic failure is said to occur when we fail in some way to understand a speaker’s full intention in saying something. For some reason we do not successfully distinguish the difference between what is said and what it meant. It is therefore an umbrella term covering a wide variety of communicative problems which prevent the successful grasping of the contextual meaning of an utterance. Thiba (1988) claims that indirect speech acts appear to cause a lot of pragmatic failure by their lack of straightforwardness.

2.2.8.2. Pragma-linguistics and socio-pragmatic failure

Pragmatic failure is split into two categories, namely pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic. According to Pinyo (2010) Pragma-linguistic has to do with linguistic problems that occur when inappropriate language forms are utilised to perform actions. Pragma-linguistic failure takes place when the speaker mismatches the pragmatic force of an utterance or when s/he inappropriately transfers speech act strategies. Furthermore, socio-pragmatic failure happens as a result of misconception about what is appropriate in the second language speech behaviour. What distinguishes the two concepts is that, pragma-linguistic failure is language-specific whereas socio-pragmatic failure is culture-specific. Pragmatic parameters can be used to assess cultural differences. Parameters such as size of imposition, relative power that one has over another, social distance between participants and the ranking of social values, to a large extent determine linguistic behaviour.

In short the different competences are simplified by the diagram below in order to give an insight as to where pragmatic competence is coming from:



2.2.9. L2 learners' pragmatic acquisition

Learning a second language comes with its challenges, for one may acquire the basic grammatical rules in a language, yet lack pragmatic knowledge which may involve cultural background. According to Pinyo (2010), it has been accepted that in EFL contexts learners have a limited chance to use the language. Pinyo further acknowledges that other researchers suggest that EFL learners' pragmatic development can benefit from factors such as L2 learners' linguistic competence of a target language, a residence in a target country, exposure to authentic input, and pragmatic awareness.

Nguyen (2008) states that previous studies proved one of the factors causing L2 learners to fail in achieving proper pragmatic competence is the lack of target language linguistic knowledge. One can therefore conclude that linguistic competence plays a major role in a person's development of pragmatic competence. This study therefore assessed whether there was a relationship between students' grammatical competence and pragmatic competence as well as finding other factors that are likely to influence their pragmatic competence.

Residence in a target country is also considered as another factor to L2 learner's pragmatic development. According to Kasper and Rose (2002, as cited in Pinyo, 2010), if a learner lives in a country where the target language is used for everyday interaction, they will have better chance to develop both linguistic knowledge and pragmatic competence of that language. Furthermore, if one happens to have contact with native speakers of a language; his/ her pragmatic competence is likely to improve.

In addition, authentic input is believed to be advantageous, that is, “presenting the use of language in real life, implying the existence of social distances, cultural differences and social in values in real communication” (Pinyo, 2010, p. 14). In support, in foreign language contexts, exposure to film is generally the closest that language learners will ever get to witnessing or participating in native interaction (Rose, 1997, as cited in Pinyo, 2010). The same notion is supported by Grant and Starks (2001, as cited in Pinyo, 2010) that television conversations provide a wide variety of language function in an English conversation. That includes things such as imitating natural speech and presenting cultural and linguistic behaviour of both the language and participants. These authentic materials are considered to be especially effective in classroom, since they present real language use in various contexts. Last but not least, awareness in how to use language appropriately according to contexts (pragmatic awareness) is another factor contributing to L2 learners pragmatic development.

2.3. Studies reviewed

Cultural diversity brings about great chance of communication breakdown between native and non-native speakers when it comes to the common shared language, in this case English. Coming from a different cultural background is no excuse, as a person cannot be easily pardoned for using language inappropriately. This will only result in a person being negatively labelled and nationally pigeon-holed according to negative stereotype such as ‘the aggressive Afrikaner’ and ‘the uncultured coloured’. However, one can be easily pardoned for violating grammatical rules (Thiba, 1988). It is on this note that there is a need to examine the pragmatic knowledge at this level as students at tertiary institutions come across people of different languages or cultural backgrounds.

Studies have been carried out on pragmatics, although not specifically in Namibia. For instance Thiba (1988) looked at pragmatic competence in second language teaching and learning. It was specifically based on investigating cross-cultural communication breakdown and its implications on teaching and learning of English as a second language. The emphasis made is that English be taught to non-native speakers to enable them to communicate effectively with native speakers and other speakers of English. That is learners be well-equipped linguistically and have a choice to be appropriate and be given ‘informed choice’. The focus was also on what could possibly be done in a normal ESL classroom to minimise pragmatic failure and to increase the learners’ pragmatic competence. The data were collected through reading. Thiba’s (1988) study however did not scrutinise the pragmatic competence of the student teachers who ought to pass on this knowledge to learners, thus there is a gap.

Hyman (2000) investigates pragmatic competence of ESL learners in Hong Kong in relation to refusal strategies. The participants in the study were 75. Hyman (2000) study explores the pragmatic strategies used in refusals by ESL learners in Hong Kong as well as the pragmatic strategies in refusal used by ESL learners in Hong Kong with different grammatical ability. This study also looked at the relationship between grammatical proficiency and pragmatic competence. The data were collected through a Discourse Completion Task (DCT), which consisted of 13 questions in each and data were analysed qualitatively. According to this study, some distinctive refusal features are found in the Hong Kong ESL learners. It is noted that their refusal behaviours are influenced by their first language. The research provides evidence that learners transfer their sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge from L1 to L2 when performing refusal acts. Furthermore, it has been discovered that learners with different grammatical ability have different refusal approaches. That is, learners with higher grammatical

ability are more capable in adjusting the refusal strategies to interlocutors of different social status and social distance, whereas learners with lower grammatical ability are likely to refer to their L1 norms when refusing. This current study however evaluated the relationship between pragmatic competence and grammatical competence of university students.

Furthermore, Barbosa da Silva (2012) thesis reports on the design and administration of a study that investigated language learners' knowledge of pragmatics and how instruction can help them develop this knowledge in an environment where English is taught as a second language. It was spearheaded by two main ideas, that is, to observe the relationship between language proficiency and pragmatic competence of English second language learners and to also find out if instruction was effective in improving learners' pragmatic knowledge. The discourse judgement tasks, multiple choice discourse completion tasks (MDCTs) and written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs) were used to measure pragmatic competence quantitatively. The language proficiency test was also administered. Thirty-nine adult ESL learners with a range of proficiency studying in the Intensive English Program (IEP) and in a university-level English course at West Virginia University were the participants in the study. The results showed that language proficiency and pragmatic knowledge were positively correlated with a moderate strength ($r = .71, p < .001$). The results of Barbosa da Silva's study is believed to be helpful in understanding the communicative skills and intercultural competence of ESL learners and also verified that instruction in the area of pragmatics is not simply vital; on the other hand, it can be useful at all levels of language proficiency.

Pinyo (2010) looked at pragmatic competence in requests, under which the focus was on the three aspects of making, accepting and declining requests. The study was done with the Thai English teachers as the participants. Their pragmatic competence in making, accepting, and

declining requests was investigated. The factors influencing subjects' pragmatic competence were also addressed; the study further examined the influences of interlocutors' social status and social distance on utterances made by participants. Twenty nine (29) Thai English teachers were the participants in the study. Three sets of instruments were used to collect data: test, questionnaire and interview. The test was rated according to scoring criteria adapted from Cohen and Olshtain communicative Ability Scales. This was done by the five English native speakers. The finding of the study was that 1) the mean score for the pragmatic competence of the Thai English teachers in three aspects was 36.24 out of 54 (67%). This indicates moderate level of pragmatic competence. Lack of pragmatic knowledge, L1 transfer, and linguistic deficiency are regarded as factors that interfere with pragmatic competence. 2) Linguistic competence and pragmatic competence were positively correlated at week level. 3) Social status and social distance of the interlocutors did not have influence on the utterances made by the participants. The recommendation made is for Thai English teachers to be provided with intensive and extensive training on linguistic and pragmatic competencies.

Another study by Siu (2008) examined the pragmatic competence of Cantonese adult learners of English possessing different levels of proficiency when performing the speech act of requesting for formal purpose writing. Pragmatic judgement was examined by studying the most proficient group. While pragmatic performance was explored through studying the weaker groups. The purpose was to examine whether the pragmatic competence of adult learners of English improves when their language proficiency level improves. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of research were utilised. That is, the data collected were quantitatively and qualitatively analysed. The findings of the study were that 1) it is possible for very proficient EFL teachers to achieve native-like pragmatic judgements in most aspects 2) as the English proficiency of L2 learners

improve from Grade E to Grade A/B, their pragmatic performance shows improvement. The gap still remains that study on pragmatic competence and its relationship with grammatical competence is still not given attention, specifically in Namibia hence the need for this study.

2.4. Theoretical framework

This study mainly utilised the theory of pragmatics. It is based on the Bardovi-Harling and Mahan-Taylor's (2003, as cited in Yuan, 2012) working definition on pragmatics as "the ability of language users to match utterances with the context in which they are appropriately, and explore language users' abilities in using appropriate utterances in corresponding context to effectively communicate in English (p.64)." Speech act theory was also utilised in this study since it attempts to explain how speakers use language to accomplish intended actions and how hearers infer intended meaning from what is said. In addition, Petrey (1990) states that speech act theory shifts attention from what language is to what it does and sees a social process where other linguistic philosophies see a formal structure. From a speech act perspective, all linguistic artifacts, including those that count as literary, must be understood in relation to the sociohistorical context of their production and reception. Speech act theory addresses language's productive force, which depends entirely on where and when it's used. Additionally, speech act theory examines the power of language in communities. Thus speech act theory is of such paramount importance to this study.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter consists of a review of related literature and related studies in the field of pragmatics. These include the similarities and differences between syntax, semantics and

pragmatics, deixis and distance, speech acts, politeness and interaction, the distinguishing of different competences, pragmatic competence and pragmatic failure and the related studies. The next chapter discusses the research methodology of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the overview of research methods used in investigating the research problem. That is: 1) to what extent are the UNAM's second year Bachelor of Education students majoring in English pragmatically competent?; 2) What is the relationship between pragmatic competence and grammatical competence of students?; and 3) What factors are influencing students' pragmatic competence? This chapter entails the research design, population, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis as well as ethical considerations.

3.2. Research design

According to Creswell (2012), "Research designs are the specific procedures involved in the process: data collection, data analysis, and report writing" (p. 20). This study employed a mixed method design. Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009, p. 462) state that "mixed methods research designs combine quantitative and qualitative approaches by including both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study." Furthermore, quantitative studies investigate whether there is a relationship between and amongst variables whereas qualitative studies seek thorough understanding of a situation or state of being (Gay, et al., 2009). In this study the relationship between pragmatic competence and grammatical competence was explored using quantitative methods.

3.3. Population

The population of this study was all the second year students doing Bachelor of Education degree (BED) and majoring in English at the University of Namibia. BED students were

selected because they have the responsibility of educating the nation, any wrong teaching may harm the nation in one way or another.

3.4. Sample and sampling procedures

Gay, et al., (2009) allude that purposive sampling is that process of selecting a sample that is believed to be representative of a given population. In this study, twenty five (25) students were purposively sampled from the total population of all second year Bachelor of Education students majoring in English. The purposive sample technique was employed due to same characteristics shared by the population. The researcher believes that since the study was conducted in English language, the expectation was that English students' exposure to language is generally at the same level hence the use of purposive sampling. From the list of students, an attempt was made to balance the number of females and males just to ensure that results were not one gender based.

3.5. Research instruments

The research instruments are said to be those tools that enable researchers to collect data (Gay, et al., 2009). The current study employed three sets of instruments which were Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT), questionnaire and the English Proficiency Test (EPT) in order to find answers to the research questions. In support of WDCT, Aufa (2013) asserts that this test is able not only to test learners' pragmatic awareness, but also to assess learners' production of speech acts. The WDCT was used to assess students English Pragmatic competence. The questionnaire was useful in addressing question three of this current study which is based on the factors that influence students' pragmatic competence, this tool is regarded appropriate as the participants get a chance to give their personal view as to what they think really affect the way they communicate in the English language. The EPT was effective in evaluating the students' grammatical competence which was one of the variables of the research topic. The WDCT is

adapted from Yuan (2012) as it also fits the context of this study and the EPT was obtained from the faculty of education at the University of Namibia. For all these instruments pilot study would not be necessary, as they have been utilised in many studies, for instance the EPT is used by the University of Namibia to assess teachers' language proficiency, and proved to be effective. This strengthens their reliability and validity. Each instrument is described below.

3.5.1 The Discourse Completion Test (DCT)

Hyman (2000) states that, the literature in the research methodology in interlanguage pragmatic research revealed numerous methods for collecting data in interlanguage pragmatic research. That includes the most common ones, namely, discourse completion task, role play and observation. All these methods have their own advantages and disadvantages. DCT is the most commonly used method although its validity is controversial. Houck and Gass (1996, as cited in Hyman, 2000) define a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) as a written questionnaire consisting of a brief description of a situation followed by a dialogue with a blank line where the subject puts in what he believes to be an appropriate response. In addition, regardless of the criticism about the validity of DCT, it remains the popular means of data collection. Some strong preferences of why many scholars employ this instrument are the fact that it can control contextual variables such as sex, social status, and social distance more easily. Furthermore, with it a large amount of data can be collected in a short period of time. It is specifically suitable for cross-sectional studies and the data collected can be compared easily. For the above reasons, this study adopted a discourse completion task.

In addition, Aufa (2013) states that there are some tools used to assess L2 learners' pragmatic competence, such as role plays, multiple-choice questionnaires, rating scale assessments,

simulations, interview tasks and Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT). However, for this study the written discourse completion test is chosen to assess student pragmatic competence. Supporters of the WDCT assert that this test is able not only to test learners' pragmatic awareness, but also to assess learners' production on certain speech acts. According to Liu (2006), WDCTs are written questionnaires including a number of brief situational descriptions, followed by a short dialogue with an empty slot for the speech act under study. With this instrument participants are asked to provide a response that they think is appropriate in the given context. For instance:

At a professor's office

A student has borrowed a book from her teacher, which she promised to return today. When meeting her, however, she realises that she forgot to bring it along.

Teacher: Miriam, I hope you brought the book I lent you.

Miriam: _____

Teacher: OK, but please remember it next week.

(Blum-kulka&Olshtain, 1984, p. 198 as cited in Liu, 2006)

According to Aufa (2013), WDCT has some limitations. For example, using a written form to elicit oral production cannot reflect the cognitive process involved in the interaction. That is, the realisation of targeted speech acts in the actual oral production is quite different from the written form. In addition, it is not possible to play conversational turns in the WDCT since it does not allow the assessment of speech act production in its real discourse context. The conclusion can be made that WDCT does not demonstrate interactive aspect of oral performance in authentic

conversation even though this test portrays the linguistic expression of speech acts. Regardless of these criticisms, WDCT remains essential means of data collection. Therefore, the current study employed WDCT, which is one of the six test types used to assess L2 learners' pragmatic knowledge. The WDCT is adapted from Yuan (2012) in order to ensure validity and reliability as this was successful in that previous study.

3.5.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was used to gather data on research question 3 of the study that is on the factors that influence the students' pragmatic competence. This instrument is regarded appropriate as the participants get a chance to give their personal view as to what they think really affect the way they communicate in the English language. The questionnaire consists of three main parts. The first part is about personal information and educational background, the second part is on Activities using English, and the last part is on Awareness in learning and using English. The questionnaire was adapted from Pinyo (2010) and it was adjusted in order to fit the context of this current study.

3.5.3 English Proficiency Test (EPT)

To assess the grammatical competence of students, an English proficiency test was utilised. The researcher obtained permission to use the EPT that is used by the Faculty of Education at the University of Namibia to assess teachers and student teacher language proficiency. The researcher only extracted the grammar part and did not utilise the entire test. The grammar/language use part was then be used for assessing student teachers' grammatical competence. This grammar part consisted of multiple choice questions on language use and participants were asked to choose the correct answer for each question.

The test normally consists of four parts, namely, part I on Personal information, part II, reading comprehension, part III, I Language use, and, part IV, Writing. Part I to part III consists of multiple choice questions. The student teachers and teachers answer the entire EPT paper for assessment of their language proficiency or for them to be placed into language categories. However, for this study, the researcher selected part III, the language use (grammar part) to assess the students' grammatical competence. The grammatical competence had to be assessed in order to find out if there is a relationship between grammatical competence and pragmatic competence.

The researcher decided to adapt this test because it has been used for years by the University of Namibia to assess teachers' language proficiency which makes it valid and reliable. So there would be no need for pilot study as this test has proven to be effective in assessing language proficiency.

3.6. Data collection procedures

The researcher consulted with the lecturer(s) who offer the module/ course English for teachers at the University of Namibia main campus. Furthermore, to obtain the data required in this investigation the following procedures were carried out: the three sets of instruments, namely, the Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT), questionnaire and the Language Proficiency Test (LPT) were administered to the participants through arrangements with their lecturer for English for Teachers course. However, the test was not written during lecture time. Arrangements were also made with students and they communicated the time that was convenient for them to write the tests. The tasks were explained to students as in oral test and students were requested to write down their answers in a natural way as they speak to a real

person where applicable. The students were as well instructed to use pseudonyms on all the papers; however, the pseudonyms had to be the same on all the three papers for each student to make the data analysis more accurate.

3.7. Data analysis

Data on students' pragmatic competence as well as grammatical competence was qualitatively and quantitatively analysed, making use of coding, which is done by categorising data into different themes and the classifying approach. For the quantitative data such as questionnaire, task analysis for quantitative analysis was utilised and data were transformed into numbers by the process of categorising and applied to the Statistical Package for Social Science for analysis. For qualitative data, the data was transformed into textual forms and used for qualitative analysis. The process of interpreting and analysis the qualitative data in this study included: 1) coding the data; 2) categorising the codes; 3) identifying themes and relationships among the categories; and 4) developing some generalised statements.

3.8. Research ethics

The researcher attained permission from the Centre for Research and Publication at the University of Namibia and consent was sought from the participants. Participation in the study was voluntary and students could withdraw at any time without any consequences. Furthermore, the research was conducted in a way that anonymity and confidentiality was maintained. Anonymity was maintained in such a way that student names were not be used on the test papers and for confidentiality, the information attained was used for academic purposes only, specifically for this study. Permission to use the EPT was sought from the faculty of Education at UNAM.

3.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter provided an overview of the research methods used in investigating the research problem. The chapter explained and justified the research design, population, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis as well as ethical considerations. The next chapter is on the findings and discussion.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and the analysis of the results. The results are based on the following research questions: 1) To what extent are the UNAM's second year Bachelor of Education students majoring in English pragmatically competent? 2) What is the relationship between pragmatic competence and grammatical competence of students? and 3) What factors are influencing students' pragmatic competence? Data on students' pragmatic competence was qualitatively and quantitatively analysed, making use of coding by categorising data into different themes and the classifying approach.

The results are reported in three sections according to the three research questions of this current study.

4.2 The pragmatic competence in speech act of refusals, compliment responses and apologies of UNAM's second year education students

Discourse completion tasks data

According to Gass and Selinker (2001), Lightbown and Spada (1999, as cited in Yuan, 2012), pragmatic competence is the ability to use language forms in a wide range of environments, and affects the relationship between the language users and the social and cultural context of the situation. On this note, Xu (2009, as cited in Yuan, 2012), states that grammatically advanced language learners, who may be regarded as good L2 learners or foreign language learners regarding the mastery of vocabulary and grammar of the target language, might still be unable to

produce socially and culturally appropriate language. Thus an analysis was done to see if this point can be proven once again.

With pragmatics, a variety of speech acts are used by language users to reach the aims of their communication. It is the speech act theory that explains how speakers utilise the language to get to the intended actions and how hearers deduce intended meaning from the words. This study made use of the three speech acts in the WDCT, which were speech act of refusal, compliment response and apology. The main aim was to explore UNAM second year Bachelor of Education students' pragmatic competence. The students' responses regarding pragmatic competence were evaluated in terms of appropriateness, rather than grammar or structure.

The first research question intended to assess or evaluate the students' pragmatic competence. In addressing this research question, students were given a written discourse completion test (WDCT) to complete. This WDCT adapted from Yuan (2012) was set up based on the speech acts of refusals, compliment responses and apologies. With this WDCT scenarios were given and students had to respond as they would talk to the person in English in real life conversation.

First, the data collected from participants based on the speech act of refusals is presented, followed by data on compliment responses and finally data on the speech act of apologies.

4.2.1 Students responses to speech act of refusals

According to Yuan (2012), speech act of refusal can be noticed when a speaker directly or indirectly says no to a request or an invitation. This may be regarded as the face-threatening acts to the requestor as the response refutes the speakers' expectations. Smit (2012) supports this assertion by stating that speech acts that pose a threat to one's positive or negative face are referred to as face threatening acts.

Chen (1996, as cited in Tanck, 2002) points out that in the case of refusal, one may properly produce three speech acts as: 1) an expression of regret, “I’m sorry”, followed by 2) a direct refusal, “I cannot come to your birthday party, followed by 3) an excuse, “I will be on business in the US”. Tanck (2002) also highlighted these 3 components based on a study done by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) that in case of an invitation, the formulaic sequence would comprise of 1) an expression of regret, followed by 2) an excuse, and ending with 3) an offer of alternative. This study used the same components to analyse students’ refusal responses.

The speech act of refusal part in the WDCT consisted of seven situations. The students were expected to decline the requests made. The seven situations are presented in the following table:

Table 4.1 List of seven refusal (decline) situations

Situations	
decline 1	decline a party invitation
decline 2	decline an overtime work request
decline 3	decline a coffee offer
decline 4	decline a teaching method changing proposal
decline 5	decline a borrowing request
decline 6	decline a salary raising request
decline 7	decline a dinner offer

The following table indicates some of the responses given by students in the different scenarios based on the speech act of refusal. The ones indicated in the table are those used by more than one respondent. The following are direct answers given by students.

Table 4.2 Students' responses to speech act of refusal

Refusals responses	Number	Percentage
I'm sorry/ sorry but I can't.	11	42%
No, thank you/ thanks...	20	77%
I can't.	7	27%
I don't think I will...	5	19%
Thanks, but...	4	15%
I would love to, but...	9	35%
That is really a good idea, but...	2	8%
I wish I could do that, but...	4	15%
Yes, but unfortunately	9	35%

To generally analyse the speech act of refusal given by students, Table 4.1 was used. The first seven responses by students were used and judged using the formulaic sequence as used by other researchers: *"I'm sorry, but I can't."*, *"No thanks." I can't."*, *"I don't think I will get time."*, *"Sorry, but..."*, *"I don't think I will make it..."*, *"No"*. A number of responses given by students

demonstrated that they applied the functional expressions of refusal corresponding situation, however some responses could be considered rude or impolite to use, especially to a request that had given an option to decline.

Detailed speech act of refusal situations and students' responses to each situation were presented below. Given in the above Table 4.2 are short indications as to how participants refused or turned down an offer or a request. The detailed responses given by all the participants in each situation are presented below. Situations were directly extracted from the discourse completion test completed by participants without any adjustments and the participants responses were presented as such. Seven situations were given for this part. After each situation, the direct answers given by students are presented. The detailed analyses of all situations are done below according to the three different components stated earlier using the ideas of Chen (1996) and Tanck (2004) on producing speech acts of refusal. The students' responses were as follow:

In situation 1, you are walking on campus. A friend of yours invites you to come to a party at his house this Saturday. You cannot go to the party because you will have three exams to take next Monday, and his house is very far from your place.

Friend: Hi, we are having a party this Saturday. Do you want to come?

You:

- Yes, but I will not be able to make it, I have three exams to take.
- No I don't think I will make it.

- Yes, I would love that but unfortunately I can't make it, I have a lot of school work going on next Monday.
- I would love to, unfortunately I can't make it, I have so much to do this Saturday.
- I am sorry, I cannot since I have upcoming exams and I still have a lot to tackle.
- No thank you we should be studying and I really don't have time.
- No I will be busy studying.
- No, I have three exams coming up.
- I would love to but my schedule won't permit me I have three exams to take the next Monday.
- No, I cannot make it since I have three tests to write on Monday.
- Actually I would like to come but unfortunately I have to study for my upcoming exams on Monday. Next time okay.
- I'm sorry but I can't. I have three exams to study for.
- No sorry, I wish I could be there, but I have 3 exams on Monday.
- Yeah, I may want but, I am afraid I have exams.
- Hello, I would love to come but sorry I really can't make it as I will be writing three exams on Monday.
- Yes I wish I could, but unfortunately I have three exams to write on Monday.
- Yes, but I will not be able to come because I will be preparing for the exam that is to be written. Thank you!
- Yes but unfortunately I have to study, I have three exams to take next Monday, I won't be able to make it.
- Nope, I will be studying for my exams.

- No I'm sorry I won't make it I have exams to take next Monday.
- No, I would not come I will be writing exams Monday.
- I am sorry, I can't make it. I am preparing for my exam.
- No, I will not be able to come since I'm studying for exams.
- I don't think I will make it due to the distance.
- I don't think I will get time.

Situation 1 required the speaker to turn down an invitation to a party that was to be held at a friend's house. The frequency of each components of speech act set for this situation is presented in the table below

Table 4.3 Decline 1-friend's invitation

Components	Frequency of use
Expressions of regret	38.46%
Direct refusal	46.15%
Excuse	15.38%

The findings showed that most participants did not hesitate to directly decline the invitation, for instance, *"No I don't think I will make it."* With this refusal, a direct *"no"* answer was given, followed by an excuse: *"No thank you we should be studying and I really don't have time."* Some were accompanied by an apology, *"No I'm sorry I won't make it, I have 3 exams to take next Monday."* About 39% responded with an expression of regret, showing that they were willing to accept the invitation, but due to some circumstances they were unable to attend. For example, *"I'm sorry but I can't. I have three exams to study for."*

In situation 2, you are at the office in a meeting with your boss. It is getting close to the end of the day and you want to leave the office.

Boss: If it is fine with you, I'd like you to spare two extra hours tonight so that we can finish up with this task.

You:

- But I have something to do home.
- Ok boss, it is fine by me since I have nothing on my schedule.
- No! It's late and I will struggle to get a cab when it's late.
- I had something I wanted to do, but if the work is that important I will stay.
- I won't make it because I would prepare for the next day.
- No, I have work to do at home.
- But I have something to do at home.
- No, I can't, it is getting too late and I have some work to do at home.
- I can't boss; I have to leave the office. I have things to do at home this evening.
- What if we do it tomorrow boss? I have an emergency.
- It's alright boss, I will just stay those couple of hours then leave later.
- I would not mind that much if I did not have my little niece at home alone until this time.
- What if we come back for it some other time please?
- Sorry boss, I can't make it now because it's getting late.
- I am tired and exhausted. Shall we complete it tomorrow?
- Is it that important boss because I really need to head home, it's getting late.
- No, boss it is impossible.

- No, I can't I have to go visit my sick mother at the hospital she really needs my help.
- No, I would like to have proper dinner with my family tonight.
- No boss will continue tomorrow because it is too late.
- I can't make it tonight we should continue after we both have rested.
- Sure sir, but make it at least an hour, I had such a hectic day and I need to rest.
- I wish I could but I got to go, got some errands to run before late.
- I would've stayed but I am really tired today, I am sorry; perhaps I will come early in the morning tomorrow.
- I have a lot to do at home.
- I am sorry sir I will not manage.

Boss: That's too bad. I was hoping you could stay.

On the second refusal prompt, the speaker had to turn down a request to work for extra hours for his boss. The frequency of use of the components of speech act for this is presented in the next table.

Table 4.4 Refusal 2- work overtime request

Components	Frequency of use
Expression of regret	38.46%
Direct refusal	46.15%
Excuse	15.38%

In this situation, once again the participants used high degree of direct refusal; however, the direct "no" was always accompanied by either an excuse such as, *"No! Boss. It's late and I will*

struggle to get a cab when it's late.” Or was accompanied by an alternative: *“No boss, will continue tomorrow because it's too late.”* Furthermore, 19.23% applied expressions were used, *“I would not mind that much if I did not have my little niece at home alone until this time.”* Instead of direct refusal a participant had to give an expression of regret which might be soothing to a hearer, in this case the boss might accept without an offence. Some expressions of regret were also accompanied by an alternative. About 15.38% responded with an excuse instead of direct refusal. Of the 27%, quarter of this percentage gave an alternative rather accepting or declining the request and the rest accepted the request instead of declining it.

In situation 3, you are taking a break in the student lounge. A friend comes by and gets himself a cup of coffee from the coffee machine. He offers you a coffee, too, but you cannot drink now because you have an upset stomach.

Friend: Hey, you want some coffee?

You:

- Not today, am not feeling myself.
- No, thank you.
- Coffee is my favourite, just that I woke up with an upset stomach today, I can't take it now.
- Thanks for the offer, but I am alright at the moment.
- No thanks, I just had one few minutes ago.
- No thank you I have a stomach bug and I wouldn't want you wasting money.
- No, my stomach has been upset lately.

- No, thanks I have an upset stomach.
- No please, thank you very much for your offer.
- Thank you very much, but my stomach isn't feeling well but it was so kind of you.
- No, thank you. I'm not feeling well at the moment.
- No, thanks, I have stomach upset.
- No, thanks.
- Hey I do want coffee, but my stomach does not want me to, it has been aggressive with me since this morning.
- Yes but I am afraid because I have an upset stomach.
- No, thanks very much!
- No thanks.
- Just a little bit I have an upset stomach.
- No, thank you!
- Cool thank you I'm not feeling well in my stomach.
- Thanks, but I have stomach ache.
- No! Later maybe because I'm not feeling ok.
- No, thank you. I'm not feeling well.

The third refusal prompt required the participants to turn down a friend's invitation to have a cup of coffee. The number of use of the individual components of speech act is displayed below.

Table 4.5 Refusal 3- friend’s invitation

Component	Frequency of use
Expression of regret	23.08%
Direct refusal	69.23%
Excuse	7.69%

Few students showed that they are familiar with the Politeness Principle by using expressions “*Thank you*”, “*Thank you.*” It is quite clear that these students are aware that they have to be polite in declining offers such as this. Furthermore, 69.23% of the participants refused the friend’s invitation by providing a “*no*” response, although this shows low level of pragmatic competence, it seems students are aware that refusal should be polite; this became obvious when their “*no*” refusals were accompanied by excuses and alternatives.

In situation 4, you teach English at a university. It is just about the middle of the term. One of the students comes to speak to you.

Student: Excuse me, professor. Some of the students discussed English lessons after class

yesterday. We believe that we could achieve better learning outcomes if you gave us more practice in conversations and less on grammar.

You:

- No grammar is more important.

- No, grammar is also an important work to do as well.
- Thank you for coming with that suggestion.
- Thanks for the suggestion, but we teach according to the content.
- I do not work like that do you want to work on my behalf?
- No please I can't that is impossible.
- I will do that later, busy on something now.
- No you have to get more grammar for you to learn more.
- Well I cannot do that because I am doing what the syllabus is telling me to do, if there are those that can't do more grammar, than I guess they are in a wrong place.
- I will prepare on that.
- Well just remind me then during the lesson tomorrow.
- That is really a good idea, but let me just think about it and then I will get back to you, but it is not necessary.
- I wish I could do that, but I am sorry time won't allow it.
- Okay, that's brilliant of you, if time can allow us, surely I will.
- That is unacceptable I will focus on the work we have.
- It's a good idea but remember neglecting grammar will not really help you to achieve better learning outcomes. We write for exams not have conversation.
- The suggestion is very good, but remember that the exam will be based on grammar writing rather than conversation.
- No that can't be grammar is more important than conversations.
- Alright
- I have to do what is in the syllabus, so I have to teach according to it.

- I could do that but we need to cover the syllabus.
- No problem but only if all students happen to score better in an upcoming grammar test.
- I don't think that will be possible given the time we have until the semester ends. Nice suggestion though.
- You must be aware that grammar is the key behaviour of English, if you don't know grammar, than how will we pass on practising conversations?
- Grammar is more important in English.
- I understand, but you need more practise for grammar to improve.

Student: Well, it was only a suggestion.

Regarding the fourth situation, the participants had to decline a proposal from a student to adjust the teaching methods of English. The table below indicates the frequency of use of the components of the speech act.

Table 4.6 Refusal 4- Teaching method proposal

Components	Frequency of use
Expression of regret	42.30%
Direct refusal	30.77%
Excuse	19.23%

In this situation participants were expected to act as lecturers and were required to refuse a request of a student regarding the English teaching method. Obviously in this situation, the lecturer was considered to be highly educated and expected to have a high level of communication skills, regardless of the top-down relationship with the student. Just as the

researcher expected, most participants did not directly refuse the students' proposal rather responses such as *"Thanks..."* or *"Thank you..."* or *"I wish I could..."* were used to indirectly decline the request. However, about 30% of the participants responded with direct "no" and most responses were accompanied by excuses. Roughly 19.23% responded with an excuse. One participant gave a condition: *"No problem but only if all students happen to score better in an upcoming grammar test."* This suggestion could be given because the lecturer knows the high possibility of some students not scoring better. One participant responded with *"alright"* which was not really convincing that the request had been accepted, it might have been to just end the conversation (get rid of someone). All in all, with this situation awareness of Politeness Principle was shown.

In situation 5, you are a university freshman. You attend classes on time and prepare complete lecture notes. One of your classmates often misses class and asks you to lend him the notes before examination once again.

Classmate: Oh, my god! There is an exam tomorrow but I don't have notes from last week. I am sorry to disturb you, but could you please lend me your notes once again?

You:

- I am sorry, I am using them now.
- I am sorry, I will be using them.
- I just got my notes back from my friend today, so I will have to use them also, I did not study too.
- I wish I could help you unfortunately am busy using them right now.
- I wish to help but I am writing exam tomorrow as well, sorry.

- No I can't we can learn together but I also have to study.
- No I have to read too, unless you will make copies.
- No I can't I am using them.
- No my dear the one I have you cannot read, I have a very terrible handwriting.
- No dear, I am also preparing for the exam.
- Eish! Unfortunately I'll also be studying so try the library.
- It's not my fault you did not attend classes.
- Yes, but you need to complete copying it within an hour, because I need to prepare for the exam too after an hour.
- I'm so sorry; I am busy with them right now.
- Please I cannot, because I will be using them to assist your colleagues too.
- I am using them; can you just make copies from them?
- I cannot give you my notes because I am also studying.
- I can't because I have a lot to study.
- I will email the notes now.
- No please I'm busy using them.
- Nxo! Where were you when I used to attend classes?
- I really wish I could help you, but you will have to ask other students, because I misplaced my notes.
- I'm sorry my friend this week I'm using my notes.
- I'm also using them maybe later.
- No sorry, I also have to study for exam.

Classmate: Well...then I guess I'll have to ask someone else.

The fifth refusal situation was to decline the request to lend a fellow student some lecture notes. The frequency of use of the components of the speech act for this is displayed below.

Table 4.7 refusal 5- request of lecture notes

Components	Frequency of use
Expression of regret	30.77%
Direct refusal	50%
Excuse	7.69%

In this situation it seemed most students did not consider any relationship with this fellow student, thus they gave direct refusal although some responses were accompanied by excuses or alternatives. Therefore it can be concluded that most respondents did not consider the face-saving strategies when they responded. The face-threatening responses were also given: *“It’s not my fault you did not attend classes,” “Nxo! Where were you when I used to attend classes?”* Such responses seemed to blame rather than empathy. The requester may feel offended in this situation, and may not have the courage to continue with the conversation. These findings may suggest a low level of sociolinguistic competence that always results in pragmatic failure, their unable to repair communicative failure.

However, some students used the expression of regret and some gave excuses instead of direct refusal, which showed that they were aware that they should consider face-saving strategies to protect the requester’s face when refusing the request.

In situation 6, you are the owner of a restaurant. One of your best workers asks to speak to you in private for salary increase.

Worker: As you know, I've been working here for over one year, and I know you've been

pleased with my work. I also enjoy working here, but, to be honest I really need an increase in pay.

You:

- It will not be fair to other workers.
- Sorry, but we are running out of cash this month.
- Sorry I could have considered, but expenses too much to pay.
- Due to budget cuts, we will not be able to increase salaries this year.
- The company cannot afford to increase workers' salaries at the moment.
- You know already that there is budget cut, that's impossible.
- For now we can't, unless after two years.
- I will look on that.
- I can't increase your salary just because you pleased.
- You just started and I cannot increase now.
- No! I am still checking up on you.
- How can I increase your salary alone, what about others?
- I will really not be fair to increase your salary only, because I am also pleased with your colleagues' work and I have employed you in the same year.
- We really can't afford that right now. I'm sorry.
- Salary increase doesn't just come like that; wait and the company will increase your salaries for all of you.
- The restaurant is struggling and cannot afford to pay more.

- I admit you are one of the best here, but unfortunately it's not fair with others of the same position as you are, plus my financial is not stable for now.
- No because the agreement was made before you start working.
- I am hearing what you are saying but that the only salary we can offer until next year.
- I cannot, because the restaurant is not making enough profit currently.
- No I cannot do that as all workers will want the same to be done to them too.
- We can speak about it and see what we agree on.
- Point taken but the problem is here that our restaurant profit is very small for a salary increment.
- Yes am really pleased with your work, however I cannot increase your salary, at least not at the moment.
- I can only do that if you take more extra shifts or otherwise I will only add that to the budget the following year.
- That is just impossible! I will not do that.

Worker: Well, then I guess I'll have to look for another job.

The sixth refusal situation required the participant to refuse an employee's request to increase the employee's salary. The frequency of use of the components of speech act for this situation is presented below.

Table 4.8 Refusal 6- request for salary increase

Components	Frequency
Expression of regret	23.08%
Direct refusal	23.08%
Excuse	53.85%

In this situation a relationship of top-down management (between a boss and worker) could be sensed. Regardless of the power that the owner had as the boss, participants opted to use indirect way to refuse or decline the request: *“The restaurant is struggling and cannot afford to pay you more.”*, *“Sorry, I could have considered but expenses are too much to pay for.”* Such responses would cause no offence to the hearer. However, a few participants responded with direct refusal without considering face-threatening principle when refusing requests.

Last but not least (situation 7), you are the president of a large research centre. A salesman from a computer company invites you to one of the most expensive local restaurants to have dinner.

Salesman: We have met for several times, and I’m hoping you will buy my company’s

computers. Would you like to have dinner with me at the restaurant to firm up the contract?

You:

- That will be great, thank you!
- Yes please, that will be lovely. I cannot miss the chance. I think 08:00 pm will do.
- Of course I would, forward the details to my secretary.

- I am sorry but I have a meeting in 1 hour time and cannot cancel it.
- No thank you.
- No, it was not on my intentions, so it is better to come at my office as this is a public place.
- It will be my pleasure.
- Yeah I would love to do that, we need new computers, the ones we have are very old.
- No I cannot afford.
- Okay thank you make it around 20h00.
- I can't. The place is really expensive, I cannot afford it.
- Yes, that is not a problem.
- No I can't. I need time to think about that.
- If the price is negotiable and quality is as good as always, I will be there at seven.
- Absolutely yes, and hope we will reach the agreement.
- I will let you know when I have a free time.
- Yes please. Thank you!
- Yes, it's not a bad idea.
- Nope.
- Yes, I would love that.
- Yes Mrs, I hope I come before our promised arrival time. Yes, we will definitely go through it together.
- Yes it's a good deal though.
- Well ok no problem sir, consider it done.
- Yes we can meet.

- Yes, no problem.

In the last situation of the speech act of refusal, the speaker had to decline a salesman’s invitation to have dinner. The frequency of use of individual components is indicated below.

Table 4.9 Refusal 7- made to a salesman’s invitation

Components	Frequency of use
Expression of regret	3.85%
Direct refusal	23.08%
Excuse	0%

Most participants accepted the invitation rather than declining it, that is about 73%. About 23.08% declined the request directly and only 3.85% refused with regret.

Above are the direct responses from participants on different situations regarding the speech act of refusal. Some answers were appropriate to the given situations although some answers might be considered a bit distant from the situations. Following is the speech act of compliment responses.

4.2.2 Compliment responses

According to Duan (2011), complementing is a very common expressive speech act and can be used to anyone, every day and in many circumstances. A compliment is a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some good such as possession, characteristics and skills which is positively valued by speaker and hearer.

Wolfson (1988, as cited in Duan, 2011), summarises some major topics for completing. That is, it falls into two major categories: appearance/possession and ability. In addition, the most frequent types of compliments are those on addressee's skill or effort, for instance, a well-done job, a skilfully played game, and a good meal.

Wolfson (1988) further explains that the most frequent exchanges of compliments happen between moderately close people, as closely related people such as family members do not exchange compliments frequently not even those of slight acquaintance.

Compliments are part of people's daily conversations. Compliments come unexpected for the speaker and there is no time to plan the response in advance thus the speaker is forced to react promptly to the action or utterance (Schaucer & Adolphs, 2006, as cited in Yuan, 2012). They may therefore feel uneasy, defensive, or even cyclical regarding the compliments they receive, as compliments could be threatening to the addressee's face, and accordingly it may be hard for them to appropriately respond to such compliments (Knapp, Hopper & Bell, 1984, as cited in Yuan, 2012).

Under this section the seven situations designed to examine how students' responses to compliments are analysed and discussed.

Table 4.10 List of compliment response situations

Situations	
Compliment response 1	Compliment on a new hairstyle
Compliment response 2	Compliment on a new watch
Compliment response 3	Compliment on a presentation
Compliment response 4	Compliment on a new sweater
Compliment response 5	Compliment on delicious food
Compliment response 6	Compliment on intelligence in learning computers
Compliment response 7	Compliment on beautiful eyes

This study used the taxonomy of compliment responses established by Holmes (1988; 1995, as cited in Yuan, 2012). Holmes taxonomy includes the following items:

- a) Accept: Appearance/ agreement token, agreeing utterance, downgrading/ qualifying utterance, return compliment
- b) Reject: Disagreeing utterance, question accuracy, challenge sincerity,
- c) Deflect/evade: shift credit, informative comment, ignore, legitimate evasion, context needed to illustrate, request reassurance/repetition (Holmes, 1988, as cited in Yuan, 2012).

Listed below are some of the responses given by more than one student. The responses are based on how the students responded to compliments in different situations. Students were given seven scenarios and below are their responses.

Table 4.11 Responses given by students as they responded to different compliments

<u>Responses to compliments</u>	<u>number of students</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Wow! Thank you very much.	5	23%
Thank you...	25	96%
Really! Thank you...	16	62%
Good to hear that...	3	12%
I like it when you say that, thank you.	2	11%
Yes, I really	2	11%

Referring to the Table 4.11 above the first five responses were: *“Wow! Thank you very much”*; *“Thank you”*; *“Thank you very much, I am feeling myself”*; *“Wow! I can’t believe you said that, thank you”*; *“Thank you everyone tells me the same thing”*. These first five responses generally showed that students were aware of the importance of politeness when responding to compliments.

Students were given seven situations in which they had to respond to different compliments as they would experience it in their daily (everyday) life. Below each situation is the direct answer from the students.

In situation, 8 you have just had your hair cut in a fashionable style, and you bump into a friend in the street.

Friend: That hair cut makes you look great. It makes you look younger!

You:

- Really? Thank you hey.
- Thanks. I am fluttered!
- Thank you my friend.
- Thank you.
- Thanks man you know I always look good.
- Really? Thanks a lot
- Really? Thank you friend.
- Thank you for the compliment.
- Ou really! Thank you my friend.
- Wow! Thank you!
- Wow! Thanks for your compliment.
- Thanks to fashionable style and my barber, he really is awesome. You can also look greater than me, just visit them!
- Really? I like that.
- Thanks. I will take that as a compliment.
- Thank you very much; I recently just had it now.
- Thank you very much.
- Ow! Really? Thanks my friend for the compliment.
- Thank you, but I love it.
- Really? Thank you good friend, I suggest you to go have the same hair cut too.
- Thank you so much, you look good too yourself.

- Wow! Thank you very much.

The eighth situation, which was the first situation on compliment responses required participants to respond to the compliment made on her new hairstyle. The frequency of sequence categories used to make responses to this situation is displayed below.

Table 4.12 Compliment response 1- give to a friend’s response

Category type	Frequency of use
Accept	96.15%
Reject	0%
Deflect/ evade	3.85%

The results showed that most students accepted the compliment made through their responses such as, *“Thanks. I am fluttered!”*, *“Thank you”*, and *“Thanks man you know I always look good.”* Through these responses the respondents had also shown appreciation of, and agreement with the compliments made: *“Thank you very much. I was hoping it would...”* They also returned the compliment: *“Thank you so much, you look good too yourself.”* The latter definitely taps into politeness.

About 23% of the participants who accepted the compliment, first requested reassurance or repetition: *“Really? Thanks a lot”*, *“Really? I like that”*, then they accepted the compliment. Very few participants (about 4%) used deflection that included shifting credit such as, *“Thanks to fashionable style and my barber, he really is awesome. You can also look greater than me, just visit them!”*

In situation 9, you are wearing a new Rolex watch. You meet one friend at your office.

Friend: Wow! What a nice watch. I wish I had one like that.

You:

-
- They are on sale; you can get yourself one as well.
 - They are cheap, they were on sale.
 - Thanks my friend.
 - I know right? It's not that expensive, I will hook you up.
 - Thank you so much, I would surprise you one day.
 - Thanks! I can get you one.
 - You can get yourself one.
 - Thanks.
 - It us very affordable, you can get yourself one too.
 - I will give it to you after two years.
 - Don't worry I can help you out to get it.
 - It is really thanks. It was not easy paying for it though!
 - Thanks. It was a present from my wife.
 - Thanks, we can contribute so you buy one.
 - One day your hard work will pay off.
 - Thank you; it was a present from my dad.
 - Thank you very much.
 - Thank you, I got it from my friend as a birthday present.

- Just buy one for yourself, I think you can afford it and thanks.
- Welcome.
- You can have mine I got a pair.
- Thank you.
- Thank you; I will get you one for your birthday.
- Really? There are a lot more back at the Rolex Shop if you are interested.
- Really! Thank you, my brother bought it for me.
- Thank you, I will tell you where I bought mine.

The ninth situation required the participants to respond to the compliment made on a participant’s new watch. The table below shows the frequency of response categories of compliment responses.

Table 4.13 Compliment response 2

Category type	Frequency of use
Accept	53.85%
Reject	0%
Deflect/ evade	46.15%

Again in this situation no respondents rejected the compliment made about the watch. Most participants (53.85%) accepted the compliment; *“It is really nice thanks. It was no easy paying it though!”* This was also a qualifying utterance and agreement at the same time. About 14.16% of the participants gave deflective responses by shifting credit: *“Thank you, I got it from my friend as a birthday present”*; and informative comment such as, *“Really? There are a lot more back at*

the Rolex Shop if you are interested”, *“It is very affordable, you can get yourself on too.”* These responses were more polite and the participants chose to rather downgrade their utterances instead of showing off. *“One day your hard work will pay off.”* This response seemed to somewhat ignore the compliment or perhaps giving the hearer some hope of getting one for him/herself one day.

In situation 10, you have given a presentation in English class. After the presentation, one of your classmates comes to you.

Classmate: That was a great presentation. I really enjoyed it.

You:

- Wow! Thank you dear.
- Ouh! I did not expect it to be that way, but anyways thanks.
- Thanks a lot am looking forward to your presentation. I am sure it will be great.
- I thought I would be shy, thank you.
- Thank you for telling me I really enjoy presenting.
- Good to hear that, really appreciate that.
- Really? Thank you very much I thought nobody enjoyed it.
- Thank you very much, I have put more effort in it.
- I appreciate that.
- Thank you, I thought I messed up.
- Thank you. I really hard on it.
- Thank you very much, I am feeling myself.
- Thank you for the compliment.

- I like that and thanks for the compliment.
- Thanks a lot, but you could have asked me a question!
- Ou! Thanks I hope the lecturer will give me all my marks.
- Thank you mate! I wish you to do the same!
- But I was nervous, did you not see that? Thank you anyways.
- Oh, really thank you.
- I'm honoured. Thank you.
- Thanks love.
- You know I have prepared it long time ago, I like nice thing.
- Thank you, I am glad you liked it.
- Really! Thanks a lot!
- Thank you. I am glad you did.
- I am glad you did.

In situation 10, the participants were asked to reply to a compliment given on the presentation that the participant had given in an English class. The frequency of sequence categories used to make responses to this compliment is displayed below.

Table 4.14 Compliment response 3- on presentation

Category type	Frequency of use
Accept	91.66%
Reject	0%
Deflect/ evade	8.33%

In this situation the results indicated that 91.66% of the participants appreciated the compliment: *“Wow! Thank you dear”* or *“I appreciate that”* or *“Thank you, I am glad you liked it”*. Such was accompanied by returning the compliment: *“Thanks a lot, am looking forward to your presentation, I am sure it will be great”*. Some downgrading utterance *“But I was nervous, did you not see that. Thank you anyways.”* Around 8.33% of the respondents gave deflective responses: *“You know I have prepared it long time ago, I like nice thing.”* This response might be informative although one might consider it not to be humble.

In situation 11, you are wearing a new sweater. One of your friends meets you on the playground in the morning.

Friend: What a nice sweater! You look great in it!

For situation 11, the researcher overlooked the typing error in the questionnaire that there was no open space left for the answer, therefore most students did not write any responses. Fortunately, a few students wrote their responses next to the question (situation). The responses are as follow:

- I am at a stage of looking good.
- Thanks, I love it too.
- Thank you.
- Thank you love.
- Thank you dearest, I like you dress too.
- I just bought it yesterday, thank you.

Situation eleven required the participants to respond to the compliment on the new sweater worn. The frequency of sequence categories of compliment responses is listed on the following table.

Table 4.15 Compliment 4 – made to a friend’s compliment

Category type	Frequency of use
Accept	25%
Reject	0%
Deflect/evade	4.16%

In this situation, the researcher left no space for the answer in the questionnaire which resulted in only 7 participants responding to the compliment. These few participants responded by accepting and appreciating the compliment: *“Thanks, I love it too”, “Thank you...”* They also returned the compliment such as, *“Thank you dearest, I like your dress too.”* A deflective response was also given: *“I am at the stage of looking good.”* The principle of politeness was yet acknowledged.

In situation 12, you are a teacher in a language school. You have invited a group of students to your house for a meal. After the meal, one of your students comes to speak to you. I didn’t know you were such a talented cook. The food was wonderful!

You:

- Well, I am not really a great cook but I tried.
- I am not that talented as you think. That was my best recipe, but I appreciate the comment.
- Thank you very much, glad you enjoyed it.

- Oohm, I am also thankful you came students.
- Thank you for waiting I feel at home in the kitchen.
- Thank you, I did hospitality.
- If you have a good heart, than everything will be good.
- Thank you, I got the talent from my mother.
- You are welcome.
- Thank you, my mother taught me when I was young.
- I know right? Just kidding. Thank you.
- Wow! I cannot believe you said that, thank you.
- Thank you dear, that's not even my best.
- Wow! Thanks kid! Cooking is my hobby.
- I saw, because you guys didn't leave a bone. Thank you.
- Really? But thanks to my wife she made all these.
- Thank you my kid! That is quite pretty fantastic indeed!
- Mhh thank you.
- Am really good at that, thank you.
- I'm glad you enjoyed. Thank you.
- Ou thanks I can give you some cooking hints.
- I have grown up with my aunt; she taught me how to cook.
- Thank you am glad you enjoyed it.
- Thanks next time again I will invite you!
- Thank you. I am happy you enjoyed the meal.
- Thank you.

In situation 12, the participants had to act as a teacher; in this case they had to respond to a student's compliment on the food they offered the students. The following table indicates the frequency of sequence categories used to make responses.

Table 4.16 Compliment response 5- made to a student's compliment

Category type	Frequency of use
Accept	69.23%
Reject	0%
Deflect/evade	30.77%

In this situation, as the students acted as a teacher the expectation was for them to be polite in their responses because of their identity as educated professional. Only 69.23% of the students used acceptance strategies in taking the compliment made, by for instance using an appreciation: *"Thank you my kid!, "Thank you, am glad you enjoyed it."* In some responses participants combined the strategies: *"I am not that talented as you think. That was my best recipe, but I appreciate the compliment."* At some point they tried to qualify the utterance: *"I saw, because you guys didn't leave a bone, thanks."* This response was quite hilarious but still polite. Few participants gave a deflect response to the hearer: *"Well, I am not really a great cook but I tried."* Some tried to shift credit: *"Really? But thanks to my wife she made all these"*. Informative responses were also given: *"I have grown up with my aunt; she taught me how to cook"*.

In situation 13, you started a computer course three months ago. At the end of a lesson your teacher comes up to you.

Teacher: You are very intelligent and have a flair for computers. Besides, you show a lot of interest in what we do in the lessons.

You:

- I like computers, that's why.
- Thank you I like computers so much, that is why.
- I'm a dedicated student and always serious with my work.
- Thank you sir, I am passionate about my course.
- Thank you ma'am, I want to be one of the best of our generation.
- Thank you Miss/ Mr.
- Thank you I will continue doing that.
- Yeah, I am trying hard.
- I am very good at computers and I enjoy working with them. Thank you teacher.
- Your class is always my best of all classes sir.
- Thanks, but it is my responsibility to convey my knowledge to you.
- Yes, I really do enjoy my lessons with you guys, besides I have been doing it for years now.
- Thank you ma'am I really want to know it well.
- Thank you, I am interested because I need to learn more about computers.
- Really Mrs? I could not have a lot of interest if it was not because of you.
- I try.
- Thank you Mrs, I've always loved computers.
- Thank you very much Ms for your wonderful words.
- Thank you sir, I have been living computers ever since I was a kid.

- I do not want to fail; I want to catch up every detail of the lesson.
- Welcome sir, I really enjoy to play with computer.
- I know thank you for nothing I do try my best.
- I am very proud of you and I hope pass on the experience to different people too.
- Thank you for the compliment miss, you the best teacher.
- Yes, I really like working with computers. I am hoping one day my dream of becoming a computer scientist will come true.
- Thank you so much. It is my pleasure.

On the thirteenth situation, the participants were required to respond to a compliment made by a computer teacher on their intelligence and talent in learning computer operations. The frequency of sequence categories of compliment responses are displayed in the next table.

Table 4.17 Compliment response 6- made to a teacher’s compliment

Category type	Frequency of use
Accept	65.38%
Reject	0%
Deflect/evade	30.77%

The data indicated that a large number of participants accepted the compliment with no rejections. Responses such as, “*Thank you, I like computer so much that is why*”, “*Thanks Miss / Mr*” were regarded as appreciation token. These might as well be regarded as polite in English. Some returned the compliments: “*Thank you for the compliment Miss; you are the best teacher.*” With this response the hearer’s positive mood may be activated. Furthermore,

30.77% responses of participants were deflective, in a way of shifting credit: *“Your class is always my best of all classes sir.”* With this the speaker shifted credit to the hearer. Informative comments were also utilised: *“I’m a dedicated student and always serious with my work.”* The participants also provided additional information to show their determination to work hard or showed more interest: *“I want to be one of the best of our generation”* and *“I will continue doing that”*.

Last was situation 14: You have been recently appointed as the sales manager of a larger department store. You are out for coffee with a group of colleagues. One of your employees says this to you.

Employee: You have beautiful eyes.

You:

- Really! I never thought so.
- I suppose that is why I got the appointment, thank you.
- Really? Thanks for the compliment.
- That sounds lovely, thank you.
- Thank you, so do you.
- I like it when you say that, thank you.
- Concentrate on your work, not my eyes.
- Thank you, I have been told.
- Thanks.
- Thank you, you are not the first to say that.
- Thank you. But this is against my morals, let’s stop here.

- Thank you, everyone tells me the same thing.
- Thanks, but that's not part of my work, respect please.
- Wonderful! No one said that to me before.
- Oh really? Just my eyes? Thanks, but I know.
- Really? Thanks hope I can see things clearly.
- Thank you!
- You the first one to say that thank you.
- Ow! Thank you.
- Thank you, a lot of people say that.
- Thank you gorgeous, do not fall for me.
- Thank you got them from my mom.
- Really! You are the first one saying that thanks for the compliment.
- Stop fluttering me! Anyway thank you.
- Stop looking me in the eyes, I am shy, shy.

Situation 14, the respondents were required to respond to the compliment on their eyes made by an employee. The table below shows the frequency of sequence categories used to give compliment responses.

Table 4.18 Compliment response 7- made to an employee's compliment

Category type	Frequency of use
Accept	80.77%
Reject	11.54%
Deflect/ evade	7.69%

In this situation, as a sales manager the expectation was that he/she has good communication skills and therefore expected to be diplomatic. The data indicated that most participants applied appropriate acceptance strategies, and at some point combined all sorts of responses. The appreciation token such as *“Thank you”* was used. Few participants returned compliments: *“Thank you, so do you.”* Some responses might be considered somewhat rebuffing: *“I suppose that is why I got the appointment, thank you.”* Some tried to use combined strategies: *“Thank you, but it is against my morals, let’s stop here.”* At first one may think the speaker had accepted the compliment however it was the opposite towards the end of the statement. Furthermore, disagreeing utterances were used to reject the compliment: *“Concentrate on your work, not my eyes.”* Deflective responses were also used: *“Stop looking at me in the eyes, I am shy, shy.”*

Through participants responses the observation was that students acknowledged the manager and employee relationship, thus they tried to be polite. This was to avoid threatening the hearer’s face. However, the rejecting response and deflective response that threatens the hearer’s face may show lack of pragmatic knowledge. All in all, the results indicated that students were well acquainted with responding to compliment responses, by trying to avoid offending the hearer.

The next part presents and analyses the data of the final speech act of apology also used to assess students’ pragmatic competence.

4.2.3 Apologies

According to Murphy (2015) the act of apologising can take one of two basic forms, or combination of both. One is that a speaker may use an explicit ‘illocutionary force indicating

device' and the other is that the speaker may make reference to one of the factors which precipitated the need for an apology and the speaker's responsibility for the offence.

Human beings are prone to mistake, they may do wrong to one another, intentionally or accidentally whatever the case may be, apology has to be made at some points to maintain peace. The performative verbs such as sorry, excuse, apologise, forgive, regret, and pardon are used to carry out the speech act of apology (Murphy 2015). Apologies are face-threatening acts (Brown and Levinson, 1987, as cited in Yuan (2012), there is a need for the speaker to admit having done wrong when performing an apology and this undermines his/her face. Should the speaker fail to apologise, it becomes a threat to the hearer's face (Wouk, 2006, as cited in Yuan, 2012). It is thus noted by Bataineh and Bataineh (2006, as cited in Yuan, 2012), that when one offers an apology, one shows willingness to humiliate oneself which makes an apology a face-saving act for the hearer but a face-threatening act for the speaker.

In analysing the speech act of apology, Brown and Attardo (2000) propose the five components of an apology and they are as follow:

- a) an expression of apology, in which the wrongdoer repeats the feeling of regret;
- b) an explanation of the situation, whereby the wrongdoer tries to reconstruct the incident to see that he/she deserves forgiveness;
- c) an acknowledgement of responsibility, in which the wrongdoer states his/her responsibility for what has happened as a part of the apology;
- d) an offer of repair, whereby the wrongdoer tries to offer a way to compensate for the harm; and
- e) a promise of non-recurrence, in which the wrongdoer promises not to repeat the offense.

From these five components of an apology, Yuan (2012) employed three R's: regret, responsibility and remedy. The present study also applied these three R's to analyse the apologies provided by the UNAM second year Bachelor of Education students in WDCTs.

The WDCTs used for this study comprised of six situations designed to examine students' pragmatic competence in making apologies. The following table indicates such.

Table 4.19 List of apology situations

Situations	
Apology 1	Apologise for ripping a magazine cover.
Apology 2	Apologise for mistaking a student's exam paper.
Apology 3	Apologise for being late for a group trip.
Apology 4	Apologise for accidentally interrupting a strange teacher writing.
Apology 5	Apologise for forgetting to pass on a private message.
Apology 6	Apologise for a bad memory and rudeness.

In this study, students were given six different scenarios (situations) which required them to apologise for their wrong doing and below are some of their responses. The ones listed below were said by more than one student.

Table 4.20 Students' responses on speech act of apologies

<u>Responses to apologies</u>	<u>number of students</u>	<u>percentage</u>
I'm sorry/ sorry...	25	96%
It was an error/ mistake...	9	35%
Sorry. Or My apology.	2	8%
Yes, sorry/ I am sorry!	13	50%
forgive me please...	6	23%
yes, I do/ yes (without any apology)	10	38%

The data in Table 4.3 indicated the most lexical items and basic formulaic sequences utilised by participants as they made apologies, such as, “*am sorry...*”, “*sorry*”, “*I am terribly sorry/really sorry*” and “*my apology*”. Most participants’ responses were polite, meaning that they have considered face-saving in giving apologies.

Six situations made up part of the speech act of apologies. Students were once again asked to respond as naturally as possible. Direct responses from students are presented immediately after each situation.

In situation 15, you borrowed a magazine from a best friend, and you ripped the cover page by accident. You are giving back the magazine to your friend.

Friend: Oh, what happened to the magazine?

You:

- Am sorry the cover fell off.
- Sorry my small brother teared one page unintentionally.
- My little sister just tore it, and I'm really sorry.
- I am so sorry, I ripped it by mistake, forgive me please.
- I, I just ripped it accidentally, don't worry we gonna steal one you know.
- I'm sorry the first page ripped off by accident.
- Oh sorry the cover page has ripped.
- I am sorry I accidentally ripped the cover page.
- I am sorry I ripped the cover page by accident. I hope it does not offend you that much.
- I am sorry! I accidentally ripped off the cover page, didn't mean to!
- I am sorry I ripped the cover page by accident.
- I am really so sorry for this, my puppy ripped some pages when I visited the bathroom.
- I'm sorry I ripped the cover page accidentally.
- Sorry dear it was an accident.
- I ripped the cover page by accident, I am sorry.
- Auch, I'm sorry, I accidentally ripped the cover page off.
- I am very sorry my little sister just took off the magazine cover when I was cooking in the kitchen.
- Am very much sorry friend, the cover page ripped off by accident.
- Sorry, I did not intend to hurt you, it happened accidentally.
- I accidentally tore it apart but I'll buy a new one if you like.

- I am sorry the cover page ripped off accidentally. It was not my intention to return it in that condition.
- Am so sorry my little brother ripped the cover page. I was not around.
- I am so sorry it slipped off the table and the cover got ripped off.
- I am so sorry it ripped by accident.

The first apology situation required the participants to apologise to his best friend for accidentally ripping a magazine’s cover page. The table below displays information about the frequency of use of the components of this speech act.

Table 4.21 Apology 1- made to a friend

Components	Frequency of use
Regret	88%
Responsibility	68%
Remedy	2%

The table shows that most apologies offered by students were of regret for the offense committed such as, *“Am sorry the cover fell off”*, *“I am very sorry...”* Some of these responses were combined with responsibility: *“I ripped it by mistake forgive me please”*; or further explanation accompanied responses: *“My small brother teared one page unintentionally.”* Furthermore, a few participants’ apologies included a remedy and some were a combination of remedy and responsibility such as, *“I accidentally tore it apart, but I’ll buy a new one if you like”*.

In situation 16, you are the English teacher who mistook one student's exam paper for another due to the similarity in their names and failed him. You have recognised that you have made a mistake, and the student has known what happened and came to meet you in your office.

Student: What has happened, Sir?

You:

- It was an error.
- It was an error and I will work on it with time.
- It was an error that I misplaced your marks and failed you.
- I'm sorry but I realised my mistake and your marks will be changed.
- I am sorry, I mistakenly gave you someone else marks, I will correct my mistake.
- Oh it's you! Wait I will correct your marks it was a mistake.
- I mistook your exam paper for another, my apology.
- I mistook your name with the other student but I promise I will on it.
- I'm sorry I will fix the matter soon.
- I have made a mistake which I am just going to correct now.
- I'm sorry my boy I thought you submitted two same exam papers due to similarity in your names. I will look for your paper and enter your marks.
- I'm sorry I mistook your paper due to your similarity of your name with one of your colleagues.
- I had mistaken your exam paper for another due to the similarity in your names, I am really sorry that I failed you! I will change your marks as soon.
- Don't worry I'm working on it.

- Sorry, I mistook your paper, I will rectify that.
- I confused your names my son, I will sort it out.
- I seem to have mixed up your papers. I will rectify it as soon as possible.
- I'm human and everyone makes mistakes so I'll try to rectify this.
- I am sorry for what had happened; I mistook your exam paper due to similarity in your names. I will solve this problem.
- I mistook your question paper with another student, but don't worry I will change your grade.
- Am sorry child, it was my mistake I failed you I confused you with someone else.
- I have mistaken your name, so I will sort it out now.
- Sorry for the misunderstanding I mixed up the names.
- I mistook your exam paper with your fellow student's one and I promised to do some changes, apology for inconvenience.
- Am sorry, you have similar names so I mixed your papers, I will change your marks right away.
- I am sorry for the inconvenience I've caused, I will make it right.

The second apology situation, the participants were acting as English teacher, who had mistaken one student's exam paper for another, and needed to apologise to the student. The table below shows the frequency of use of the individual components of the speech act for the situation.

Table 4.22 Apology 2- made to a student

Components	Frequency of use
Regret	52%
Responsibility	68%
Remedy	68%

In this situation, one could sense the top-down relationship between the speaker and the hearer. It was this relationship that speakers were able to make choice of discourse to use. The data highlighted that 52% of the participants made apologies by showing their regret to the hearer: *“I’m sorry”*. About 68% of these respondents accepted further responsibility for the offense in the apologies they offered: *“It was an error that I misplaced your marks”, “I thought you submitted two same exam papers due to similarity in your names.”* The 68% of the apologies made by the participants entailed a remedy for the offense committed: *“Your marks will be changed”, “I will fix the matter soon”, “I will look for your paper and enter your marks.”* In this situation students showed high level of pragmatic competence as they had applied politeness in the conversation to save the recipient’s face when they apologised.

In situation 17, you showed up an hour late for a group trip on a winter morning because you got late on that morning. Your classmates are blaming you at the meeting place.

Classmates: Hey, what happened to you? You are so late!

You:

- I ask for your forgiveness, I woke up late unexpectedly.
- Am so sorry guys, so I couldn't get here as early as I planned.
- I am so sorry but I could not hear my alarm.
- Sorry can we go now.
- I woke up late thus I could not be here on time.
- It was very cold, I was deeply sleeping.
- I am sorry, but the road has been very busy.
- I am sorry for being late I forgot to set my alarm.
- Sorry guys I didn't mean to.
- I was stuck in traffic.
- There was traffic congestion.
- Sorry, I forgot to put my alarm on.
- Sorry guys, it won't happen again.
- Hey, I had to take my brother to school before coming. I am really sorry for coming late.
I promise this would not happen again.
- Sorry guys I could not get the cab on time.
- I am delayed by life issues, I didn't do it deliberately.
- I'm sorry guys I woke up very late today.
- I'm late.
- I woke up late.
- I had some important things to attend to.
 - Hey was drunk last night, I couldn't come on time man.
- I am sorry guys, traffic.

- You know what, I live far and it's hard to get a taxi.
- I was caught up in traffic, sorry ladies and gentlemen.
- I slept late and I forgot to put on my alarm.
- Sorry I got up late.

The third apology situation was for participants to apologise to all other classmates for being late for a group trip. The table below displays the frequency of use of the components of the speech act.

Table 4.23 Apology 3- made to classmates

Components	Frequency of use
Regret	57.70%
Responsibility	80.78%
Remedy	7.70%

The data indicated that almost 81% of the participants responded by giving responsibilities for their lateness: *“Traffic was hectic so I couldn’t get here as early as planned”, “I woke late unexpectedly”, “I couldn’t hear my alarm”* admitting to the offence. However, about 58% of the participants had also included regret in their apologies, before or after responsibility: *“I ask for your forgiveness...”, “Am so sorry”, “I am sorry.”* Last but not least, only about 8% of the participants offered an apology accompanied by remedy (promise) sort of response: *“I promise this would not happen again”, “it won’t happen again”*. Due to the relationship that these

classmates had, some apologies offered may be considered somewhat impolite: “*I had some important things to attend to.*” It implied that the respondent did not value the group trip.

In situation 18, you wanted to meet your English teacher in his office, but you went to the wrong office and interrupted a strange teacher’s writing.

You:

- Sorry miss I think I am lost.
- Am sorry miss, it’s a wrong class.
- Sorry for my interruption sir, I am lost.
- I’m sorry madam, can you please direct me to Miss who, who’s office.
- I am sorry Mrs, I lost my way to Mr Phillip’s office, sorry for interrupting you.
- I’m sorry ma’am I thought its Mr Thomson’s class.
- I’m sorry I thought this is Mr X’s office.
- Sorry I think I’m in a wrong office.
- Ow, sorry sir/madam.
- Excuse me ma’am! Oopz sorry ma’am, I thought it was Mrs Beukes’ office sorry for interrupting ma’am. I am really sorry.
- Sorry sir, I have mistaken your office with another teacher’s office?
- Sorry sir, is this English teacher’s office?
- Oh, I am sorry sir for interrupting you.
- I think I got a wrong office number.
- Sorry sorry sir! I confused your office with English teacher’s office.
- Sorry sir/madam, I am lost, I am looking for our English teacher’s office.

- I am sorry Mrs I came to the wrong office.
- I'm sorry. I thought this was someone else's office.
- Sorry, I thought it was my English teacher's office. I didn't mean to interrupt you.
- Sorry Ms I am looking for Ms Rachel, sorry for disturbing you.
- Sorry sir/Mrs. I didn't mean to interrupt you.
- Sorry Miss, I mistaken the office number.
- Sorry for the interruption I got lost.
- Ouch! Sorry sir, I entered a wrong office.
- I am so sorry Miss I came in a wrong office.
- I am sorry to bother you, I am looking for my English teacher, I assume this is not her office?

Teacher: It's all right. Take it easy.

The fourth apology situation, assumption was that the participants went into the wrong office and interrupted a teacher who was unknown to his/her carelessness. The table below shows the frequency of use of the individual components of the speech act for the situation.

Table 4.24 Apology 4- made to a strange teacher

Components	Frequency of use
Regret	92.31%
Responsibility	73.08%
Remedy	30.77%

In this situation students had shown understanding of the politeness principle, because they apologised as politely as possible. This might be influenced by bottom-up relationship between the interlocutors. The data indicated that 92.31% of the participants made apologies showing regret: *“Sorry”, “I am sorry Mrs”, “sorry Sir/Mrs”*. Most students (73.08%) incorporated responsibilities in their apologies for the offenses committed: *“I think I am lost”, “I confused your office with the English teacher’s office.”* Only about 31% of apologies entailed information of a remedy for the offense *“I didn’t mean to interrupt you”; “Sorry for disturbing you.”* In addition participants provided further explanations to the offense: *“I am looking for our English teacher’s office”; “I am looking for Ms Rachel.”* Some enquired directions: *“Can you please direct me to Miss who, who’s office?”* One participant did not complete the statement it seemed the participant startled: *“Morning sir I ...”*

In situation 19, you and Tom are co-workers. You forgot to pass a private message to Tom, and this is the second time you forgot to pass a message on to him. Tom knew you had a message for him and went to you.

Tom: I’ve been told that you have a message for me.

You:

- Ouh, my God! I forgot again. I am so sorry, next time I will make sure I e-mailed you the message right away and yes I have a message for you.
- I meant to pass it on last night but I was so caught up with other things that I forgot.
- Ou, yes. I just forgot and I think I can give it to you now before I did not forget again, sorry.
- Yes I do you should go to the branch manager to check your clearance.

- Sorry is a mistake.
- Yes I just forgot to tell you.
- Oh my God! I completely forgot your message.
- Ow! Jah I just forgot, I think there's something wrong with me.
- Yes.
- I am sorry, it will never happen again.
- Sorry friend, I had a terrible day, here's your message.
- Mem, I just slept it up again.
- Yes sorry. I have been occupied, I just forgot.
- Yes but I have been looking for you, but I didn't find you.
- Yes but just be patient, will come see you later.
- I totally forgot about it, thank you for reminding me.
- But who told you?
- Oh, I completely forget, yes.
- Ou yeah just forgot, I don't know why I always forget your messages.
- Yea man, I forgot do you have time now?
- Oh! Sorry I totally forgot about it.
- Yes, my friend but I forgot to tell you your message.
- Sorry I totally forgot, that didn't even cross my mind.
- But why didn't you ask me, you know I always forget.
- Yes please.

The fifth apology situation required participants to apologise to a colleague as the speaker forgot to pass on a private message. The frequency of use the individual components of the speech act for this situation is presented in the next table.

Table 4.25 Apology 5- made to a colleague

Components	Frequency of use
Regret	30.77%
Responsibility	65.38%
Remedy	23.08%

For this situation, the data indicated that most participants took responsibility for the offense they had committed: *“I completely forgot your message”*; *“I have been occupied, I just forgot”*. Only few participants made an apology and show regret: *“I am/ so sorry”*, *“Sorry”*. This could be used to avoid offending the recipient and for the speaker to humble him/herself to show regret (accepted the offense committed). A few participants’ responses included a remedy for the offense: *“Yes I do you should go to the branch manager to check your clearance”*, *“Yes, but just be patient I will come see you later.”* Some participants made an apology and a promise: *“It will never happen again.”* Some participants gave an excuse instead of acknowledging the offense they committed and apologise: *“Yes but I have been looking for you, but I didn’t find you”*, *“I think there’s something wrong with me”* was utilised as further explanation. About two participants just accepted they had a message to give but did not give any apology, neither showed responsibility or remedy for the offense: *“Yes”*, *“Yes please”*. One turned the blame on the hearer rather: *“But why didn’t you ask me, you know I always forget.”* Another participant’s

response was somewhat impolite and may be seen as face-threatening for the hearer: “*But who told you?*” Some of these responses show lack of pragmatic competence.

The last situation (20), you and Mary are classmates. Someone in the class borrowed money from you and did not give it back. You insisted that Mary was the person who borrowed money from you. Mary insisted that she did not borrow money from you. At that moment, another student came into the classroom and told you that he was the person who had borrowed the money.

Mary (angrily): Do you believe me now?

You:

- Yes!
- Am very sorry I thought it's you.
- Sorry Mary I thought it was you. Please forgive me.
- Yes and I'm sorry Mary, I totally forgot who it was.
- (Hug her) sorry friend, I couldn't get that person.
- Yes I'm sorry it was just a misunderstanding.
- Yes, sorry for the misunderstanding.
- Oh sorry Mary! I thought it was you.
- Yes I believe you Mary and I hope I am forgiven for having accused you.
- I am sorry Mary! Confusion has ruled me over.
- Yes I'm sorry Mary, hope everything is clear now?
- Yes I do! I am sorry for my accusation, but you two look alike though! Are you guys related?

- Yes, and I'm sorry for that.
- I am very sorry, yes I do.
- Yes and I am so sorry, I will never do it again.
- I'm very sorry Mary. I will not distrust you ever again.
- Ow! Sorry yes I do, I think I'm just mad and forgot who had borrowed money from me.
- Yes, I am very sorry for accusing you.
- Am sorry, I thought it was you.
- Sorry, forgive me please.
- Yes I do.
- Yes, I am very sorry. I promise not to do this again.
- Yes I believe you and am so sorry I mistaken, hope I am forgiven.
- Yes I do, and forgive me for my earlier actions.

The last apology situation, the participant insisted his classmate; Mary had borrowed his money and had not given it back. However, another classmate claimed that it was he who had borrowed money from the speaker. The speaker had to apologise to Mary for his bad memory and rudeness. The table below indicates the frequency of use of the components of speech act for this situation.

Table 4.26 Apology 6- made to classmate

Components	Frequency of use
Regret	96.15%
Responsibility	53.85%
Remedy	23.08%

The data indicated that more than 96% of the participants offered apologies for the offense they had caused: *“Am very sorry”, “yes and I am sorry.”* Some confirmed/ admitted with a *“yes”* that they believed the recipient then some offered their apology. However, some did not offer any apology. About 54% of the responses from participants included their responsibility for the offense such as, *“I totally forgot who it was”*; *“Confusion has ruled me over”*; *“I think I’m just mad and forgot who had borrowed money from me.”* Furthermore, only 23.08% of the participants gave an apology with a remedy or promise sort of for an offense committed: *“I will never do it again”*, *“I will not disturb you ever again.”*

Blum-kulka and Olshtain (1984) state that the speech act of apology can be carried with the following performative verbs as they are classified: sorry, excuse, apologise, forgive, regret, pardon. Looking at the participants’ responses, some responses are in line with these verbs *“yes, I am very sorry. I promise not to do this again”* but some are not *“yes”* or *“yes I do.”* These may not be satisfactory responses because the hearer expected an apology for the offense caused which the speaker seems to ignore.

4.3 The relationship between pragmatic competence and grammatical competence

4.3.1 Students’ grammatical competence

Students’ grammatical competencies were assessed using the English Language Proficiency (ELP) test obtained from the University of Namibia, Faculty of Education. The Faculty of Education use the test as a placement test to assess teachers and student teachers English proficiency. The researcher was granted permission by the relevant authority at the University of Namibia through the Faculty of Education. The researcher utilised the same test to ensure

validity and reliability. The memorandum was also granted to the researcher together with the test to ensure correctness of the answers when marking.

The ELP Test normally consists of four parts. They are divided as follow: Part I, Personal Information, Part II, Reading Comprehension, Part III, Language Use and Part IV, Writing. However, the entire test was not utilised. For the purpose of assessing students' grammatical competence, part III (Language Use) was adapted from the ELP Test. This part consisted of Thirty Five (35) multiple choice grammar questions. Students had to choose a grammatically correct answer for the sentence from the provided list.

The lecturer for English for Teachers Course (module) at the University of Namibia (main campus) assisted in administering the test to the students. Thirty (30) questionnaires were handed out to 30 students and were all fully completed. The researcher marked the test papers using the memorandum obtained with the copy of the test paper.

The test was marked out of 35 marks. The students' performance in this test was exceptionally good; they scored between 60-86%. The highest students scored 30 points, that is 86% and the lowest students scored 21 points which is 60%. To clarify the scores: 7 students (23.33%) were in the score range of 80-86%, 13 students (43.33%) scored between 70-79% and lastly 10 students were in the score range of 60-69%. The table 4.1 below summarises the information.

Table 4.27 Students' ELP test scores

Number of students	Test score range	Percentage range
7	28-30	80-86%
13	25-27	70-79%
10	21-24	60-69%

With these scores (points) above, students' grammar can be rated as above average and acceptable for second year students. To judge the relationship between pragmatic competence and grammatical competence, the two variables will be analysed (weighed) in the next chapter.

A speaker's linguistic competence would be made up of grammatical competence and pragmatic competence, the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language context.

To address this second research question, two sets of data collected were utilised, that is ELP test and WDCT. A brief summary of data from these two sets of instruments presented in the present chapter is given below:

Grammatical competence

Briefly the grammar test written by participants was out of 30 marks, the highest participants scored 30 points (86%), and the lowest participants scored 21 points (60%). These results indicated that the participants' grammatical competence was good, not below average and not perfect.

Pragmatic competence

In assessing pragmatic competence in terms of speech acts of refusal, compliment response and apology, the WDCT was employed. Under the speech act of refusal, students' level of pragmatic competence may be rated low as they have used direct refusal which is regarded as impolite. The level of pragmatic competence under compliment response may be rated moderate as participants used acceptance strategies or combined strategies as they responded to compliments. Last but not least, high level of pragmatic competence was shown under speech act of apology as participants were able to offer proper expressions of apologies in given situations.

Now to address the question, Xu (2009, as cited in Yuan, 2012) made a statement that grammatically advanced language learners, who may be regarded as good L2 learners or foreign language learners regarding the mastery of vocabulary and grammar of the target language, might still be unable to produce socially and culturally appropriate language. It is from this statement the researcher made a conclusion that there is no stable relationship between the two variables. That is, students who are grammatically competent may or may not be pragmatically competent or students with whose grammatically ability is not quite on point may or may not be pragmatically competent. According to Hymes (1972), knowing a language does not just mean being linguistically competent in that particular language. Furthermore, a linguistically well-formed sentence can be appropriate in one context but completely inappropriate in another situation. When something is said inappropriately in one context or when language is used wrongly, it could lead to misunderstanding or it could even result in hurting someone's feelings.

In this study, in terms of the speech acts assessed, some students applied their first language norms to respond to different situations. This obviously may result in negative pragmatic transfer

by learners with lower grammatical ability or vice versa. However, if learners have poor grammatical competence, it would be hard for them to be pragmatically competent due to the fact that constructing proper grammatical sentences to communicate effectively in certain social situation would be somewhat impaired. Therefore, the relationship between the two variables is that grammatical competence can influence the way students use language in order to achieve specific purposes and to understand language in context. Yule (2006) concluded that understanding how successful communication works is actually a process of interpreting not just what speakers say, but what they ‘intended to mean’.

4.4 Factors influencing students’ pragmatic competence

4.4.1 Questionnaire

To address the third research question, questionnaires were handed out to students. The questionnaire consisted of three parts. Part 1 required participants to provide their personal information and educational background. On Part 2, respondents had to tick and/ or mention activities in which they use English language and the third part was based on students’ awareness in learning and using English. A total of 30 questionnaires were given to students but only 24 were returned.

The first part would present the data on participants’ personal information as indicated in the questionnaires.

Part 1

Personal information

Out of the twenty four (24) participants, the majority were 16 females. The data showed that participants were 16 females (66.66%) and 8 males (33.33%). The females ranged between the age of 19-25 and the males ranged between ages 20-25 years.

Table 4.28 participants' personal information

Number of students	Percentages	Gender	Age group
16	66.66%	Females	19-25
8	33.33%	Males	20-25

Educational background

The students educational background consisted of the level at which students began to study English. Here the participants' data showed that 41.66% started studying English from kindergarten while 58.33% indicated that they started at primary level. About 37.5% indicated that they have not studied English with English native teachers at any level of their education. Then 44.12% indicated that they had studied English with English native speakers at some point in their educational life. Half of this population had English native teachers at primary level; other respondents had English native teachers at secondary level. However, one respondent indicated that she had studied with English native speaker from primary to secondary level and only one who had native teachers from primary throughout to university level. The majority of these respondents attended the government schools and only two respondents attended private schools.

An enquiry was also made regarding whether participants had at some point lived in an English speaking country. To this question, 25% of the participants indicated that they had the chance to

live in English speaking country. Half of these respondents gave the purpose of living in that certain country. The purposes were for “study, seminar, born in that specific country” and they indicated that they stayed with their families during that time. However, most of them did not indicate the period of time stayed (lived) in English speaking country. Only one indicated that she stayed for 19 years in that particular English speaking country. The other half only indicated that they had lived in an English speaking country but did indicate the purpose for their stay and the period of time stayed in that country and only one participant indicated that she stayed with her family. The suggested purposes for using English during their living in these English speaking countries are as follows:

- greetings
- talking about personal issues
- talking about work issues
- to be a frequent English speaker
- to know how to speak and write English
- talking about everything

Two respondents of this population did not indicate any purpose. The next part presents the data obtained based on the activities in which participants use English.

Part 2

Activities using English

About 95.83% of the participants indicated that they had a chance to use English in their daily life. Participants had an option to indicate more than one item.

Table 4.29 Students' possible activities using English

Activities using English	Number	Percentage
1. Face-to-face talk with foreigner	16	66.66%
2. E-mail	14	58.33%
3. Watching English movies/series	19	79.16%
4. Reading English novels/cartoons books	15	62.5%
5. Reading conversation books	12	50%
6. Searching for information in English on the internet	20	83.33%
7. Chat on line	16	66.66%
8. Talking on the telephone	16	66.66%
9. Watching talk shows or varieties	14	58.33%
10. Reading English magazines or newspapers	15	62.5%
11. Study English with language institutions	17	70.83%
12. Other answers	3	12.5%

The next part would be the presentation of data based on participants' awareness in learning and using English.

Part 3

Awareness in learning and using English

The participants were given a table to indicate the level of importance for themselves regarding their awareness in learning and using English. The table contained nine statements and students had to indicate the level of importance on five levels (1-5): 1=the least, 2=little 3= moderate, 4= much, 5= the most. The following table was given to students and below it are the results of the number of students who rated in each level.

Item 12-20 please mark in the box you want to indicate the level of importance.

1= the least 2= little 3= moderate 4= much 5= the most

	1	2	3	4	5
12. You think that if you are able to use English, you should use it accurately and appropriately.					
13. You study the culture of the target language.					
14. A speaker influences your utterances.					
15. You try to use English whenever you can.					
16. You notice your mistakes when using English and improve them next time.					
17. When you learn new English expressions, you write them down.					
18. You search for the meanings of the new expressions you learn and study how and when to use them.					
19. You try to speak those new expressions with your friends.					
20. You look for similarities and differences between your mother tongue expressions and English.					

The table below shows the summary of the data obtained from participants regarding their awareness in learning and using English.

Table 4.30 Students awareness in learning and using English

Awareness in learning and using English									
<u>DESCRIPTIONS</u>									
Level of importance	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>
1	0	7	2	0	0	5	0	0	1
2	1	10	2	2	2	6	3	3	4
3	9	5	7	8	1	6	6	5	5
4	6	1	9	7	8	2	8	9	8
5	7	1	3	7	12	4	7	6	5

The third research question aimed to investigate the factors influencing the pragmatic competence of the second year education students majoring in English participating in the study. To address this research question, two sets of data were collected. The first set was the participants' scores from the grammar test extracted from the English Proficiency Test obtained from the University of Namibia, Faculty of Education. The other set is the data obtained from the questionnaire.

The information for the analysis was divided into four categories: grammatical competence, educational background, daily activities using English and awareness in using and learning the English language.

4.4.2 Grammatical competence

According to Thiba (1988) grammatical competence is the speaker's ability to use the rules of grammar correctly to generate and understand linguistic symbols. Now under this section, the question is whether grammatical competence has an influence on pragmatic competence. According to Ariel (2008) when using language, many aspects of our messages are left implicit in what we say. While grammar is responsible for what we express explicitly, pragmatics explains how we infer additional meanings. The problem is that it is not always trivial matter to decide which of the meaning conveyed is explicit (grammatical) and which implicit (pragmatic). Ariel further states that our grammar of today is very often our pragmatics of the past and that both are needed for effective communication. From this point of view, one can conclude that grammatical competence is also one of the factors that influence pragmatic competence. In this study the ELP was marked out of 35 marks and the students' performance in this test was exceptionally good between 60-86%. With the highest students scoring 30 points, that is 86% and the lowest students scored 21 points which is 60%.

The relationship between the participants' grammatical competence and their pragmatic competence in the aspects of refusal, compliment response and apology was positively significant. That is participants with higher grammatical competence tended to possess higher levels of pragmatic competence.

4.4.3 Educational background

In the questionnaire, five areas concerning the participants' educational background were examined, namely the participants' highest educational level, the educational level at which they began to study English, their experience studying English with native speaker, information about their educational institutions, and their experiences living in English-speaking countries.

Based on the information obtained from the questionnaire as presented in Chapter 4, most participants began studying English at a very early age and only a few participants had an opportunity to study English with English native speakers at some point in their educational life. Only one participant had native teachers from primary throughout to university level. Few participants had the chance to live in English speaking country for some time.

The fact that most participants did not have much exposure with English native speakers nor live in English speaking countries also has an influence on their English pragmatic competence because they need to have knowledge of culture of the target language. According to Reigle (2011) a learner cannot fully acculturate without developing shared understanding of the intricacies of social norms within the target language. In order to fully belong, grammatical knowledge and linguistic familiarity are not enough; pragmatic competence is requisite to bridge the gap between bilingualism and biculturalism. With pragmatic awareness a language learner can integrate as part of the target culture and become part of the group.

There is a need for one learning a language to be in contact with native speakers in order to acquire some norms (way of communicating), because according to Bennet (1993, as cited in Reigle, 2011), along with language is the inseparable function of culture, which means that, in

order to achieve communicative competence, sojourners need to develop cultural competence as well as linguistic competence.

4.4.4 Activities using English in daily life

This part of the questionnaire was designed to get data about the participants' exposure to English. It focused on finding out the activities which gave participants an opportunity to use English in their daily lives. The results/findings were presented in the previous chapter. Close to 96% of the participants indicated that they have opportunities to use English in their daily lives. This can influence students' pragmatic competence because the more they use English, the more they learn how the language is used to communicate. That is the input to which the participants are exposed may be appropriate and sufficient to improve pragmatic competence if practised daily or maybe inappropriate and insufficient; therefore the pragmatic competence of the participants cannot be effectively developed.

4.4.5 Awareness in learning and using English

The data about the respondents' language awareness were categorised according to the means resulting from the response based on the rating scale employed. The participants' responses were presented in the previous chapter.

From Table 4.7 in the previous chapter, the participants' responses regarding their awareness in language use was presented. Most respondents indicated that their awareness was moderate, most importantly; this showed that they had very high awareness of the fact that if they use English, they should use it accurately and appropriately. Most students were also slightly aware that it is important to study the culture of the target language, in this case English, however, they were aware that an interlocutor influences their utterance. Furthermore, the participants were very

aware of the significance of trying to use English whenever they can as well as the significance of noticing mistakes when using English and work on them next time. Regarding the last four statements, when participants learn new English expressions, they write them down. They search for their meanings, learn and study how and when to use those expressions. They also try to speak those new expressions with their friends; most participants' responses were moderate.

The participants' level of awareness in language use in this study was high According to Bardovi-Harling (1996), Bardovi-Harling and Dornyei (1998) as cited in Pinyo (2010), learners who are well aware of the differences between the target language and their first language are likely to use the target language appropriately. In addition, Bardovi-Harling (1998) alludes that there are factors that have a direct influence on the acquisition of pragmatic competence. These are factors such as the input, instruction, level of proficiency and length of stay or living in the L2 culture, and the L1 culture. Furthermore, shortcomings pertaining to input may be found in academic materials such as textbooks or even the instructor.

4.5 Conclusion

The present chapter (Chapter 4) was the presentation of the detailed data and analyses of this data that was collected from UNAM students through the three research instruments utilised. The next chapter is the discussions and conclusions of the findings of Chapter four.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter (Chapter 4) was the presentation of the detailed data and analyses of data that was collected through the three research instruments. The current chapter presents the discussions and conclusions of the research findings based on the findings discussed in Chapter Four. The three research questions proposed by this research are addressed in relation to second year education students' level of pragmatic competence in declining an offer, giving a compliment response and making an apology. Furthermore, it sought the relationship between grammatical competence and pragmatic competence. Lastly, it was aimed to uncover the factors influencing their pragmatic competence. The participants consisted of 26 UNAM second year Education students majoring in English in the 2017 academic year. Data were coded using themes to provide answers to the research questions of which the results are summarised below.

5.2 Level of pragmatic competence of UNAM second year Education students majoring in English

5.2.1 Speech act of refusal

The results obtained from the WDCT showed that students' pragmatic competence in the speech act of refusal was somewhat at a low level. This pragmatic competence inadequacy could have been influenced by the fact that some responses sounded rude especially in formal situations. This may be a result of their unawareness of the cultural differences between English and their L1.

All in all, different cultures may have an impact on the application of refusal speech acts. The speech may be influenced by one's first language expressions, for instance, the filler. Giving a direct refusal "no" to decline an offer or request may offend someone or speakers may consider it impolite. However, indirect refusals are considered strategies that speakers use to minimise the offense.

5.2.2 Speech act of compliment responses

The data indicated that most students used acceptance strategies and combined strategies when responding to compliments, which implied that, they had become skillful language practitioners in offering compliment responses. Therefore, the students demonstrated high level of pragmatic competence in the speech act of compliment responses. Furthermore, it is possible that students' first language played a major role in how they responded.

5.2.3 Speech act of apologies

Findings demonstrated that most UNAM second year education students were able to offer proper expressions of apologies given situations. Most of the apologies offered were a combination of apology strategies of regret and responsibility. They all seemed to seek forgiveness from the recipient (hearer) by offering an apology, explaining the situation, acknowledging the responsibility and offering a remedy in their apologies.

They employed appropriate words and speech acts to express their regret for the incident. Remedies provided by the students showed their willingness to make up for the mistake. According to Rose and Kasper (2001, as cited in Yuan, 2012), this kind of appropriate social behaviour in such a social interaction helps to avoid pragmatic failures in communication.

Taking all the three speech acts of refusal, compliment responses and apologies results reveal that students' level of pragmatic competence can be rated as moderate.

5.3 Pragmatic competence versus grammatical competence

The relationship between grammatical competence and pragmatic competence is also examined. Findings indicated that students with different grammatical ability have different refusal, compliment response and apology approaches. Students with higher grammatical ability are more capable in adjusting their refusal, compliment responses and apology strategies to interlocutors of different social status and social distance. Students with lower grammatical ability tend to refer to their first language norms more often when engaged in a conversation in which they are required to refuse, respond to compliments and to apologise.

5.4 Factors influencing pragmatic competence

For the present study, the information for the analysis was divided into four categories: grammatical competence, educational background, daily activities using English and awareness in using and learning the English language. All these components are considered as some of the factors influencing students' pragmatic competence in one way or another. Furthermore, other studies conducted by different researchers also had found some factors which also apply to the current study:

Speech act behaviour is influenced by a speaker's first language and culture. Students transfer their first language socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic knowledge when they perform speech acts in a second language. Students with different linguistic proficiency transfer differently at the pragmatic level. Even for students of the same linguistic proficiency, pragmatic competence may differ (Hyman, 2000). In addition, Bardovi-Harling (1998) alludes that there are factors that have

a direct influence on the acquisition of pragmatic competence. These are factors such as the input, instruction, level of proficiency and length of stay or living in the L2 culture, and the L1 culture. Furthermore, shortcomings pertaining to input may be found in academic materials such as textbooks or even the instructor.

5.5 Conclusions

This study investigated the pragmatic competence of the UNAM second year education students majoring in English in the speech acts of refusal, compliment response and apology. It also looked at the relationship between grammatical competence and pragmatic competence and lastly it looked at the factors that influenced the students' pragmatic competence. This research employed three sets of instruments, namely Written Discourse Completion Task, questionnaire and ELP test to assess the three speech acts.

5.6 Recommendations for further studies

This study investigated the pragmatic competence of UNAM second year Bachelor of Education students majoring in English in declining an offer, accepting a compliment and making an apology. Due to the results, the following suggestions were made.

- The researcher suggests that pragmatic competence be taught or be part of the curriculum of higher education institution, if not from school phases. This should be done to acquaint students with better pragmatic competence and knowledge at an early stage to avoid pragmatic failure. This is not to impose a foreign culture on non-native speakers; however it emphasizes the importance of pragmatic competence and the effects of pragmatic failure on non-native learners. In addition, the textbooks used for teaching English second language should be designed in a way that incorporates teaching of

pragmatic competence. Thiba (1999) made it clear that textbooks used in most ESL classrooms are designed for the teaching of grammar. The suggestion is however not to get grammatical competence out of picture. Since the current research focused entirely on the speech acts of refusal, compliment response and apology, future research should aim to investigate the pragmatic competence of students, such as requests.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Discourse completion test

Dear student,

As part of a research project on pragmatics, I would like you to help me by completing this Discourse Completion Tasks about your pragmatic competence in using English. **Do not write your real name on it.** The information you provide below is most valuable to my thesis. All information you provide will be kept confidential and will be used for academic purpose only.

Thank you for your assistance.

Instructions:

Please read the following situations. After each situation you will be asked to write a response in the blank after "you". Please read each question carefully. Respond as if you would talk to the person in English in real life conversation. Please respond as naturally as possible. Do not worry about your grammar.

1. You are walking on campus. A friend of yours invites you to come to a party at his house this Saturday. You cannot go to the party because you will have three exams to take next Monday, and his house is very far from your place.

Friend: Hi, we are having a party this Saturday. Do you want to come?

You:

2. You are at the office in a meeting with your boss. It is getting close to the end of the day and you want to leave the office.

Boss: If it is fine with you, I'd like you to spare two extra hours tonight so that we can finish up with this task.

You:

Boss: That's too bad. I was hoping you could stay.

3. You are taking a break in the student lounge. A friend comes by and gets himself a cup of coffee from the coffee machine. He offers you a coffee, too, but you cannot drink now because you have an upset stomach.

Friend: Hey, you want some coffee?

You:

4. You teach English at a university. It is just about the middle of the term. One of the students comes to speak to you.

Student: Excuse me, professor. Some of the students discussed English lessons after class

yesterday. We believe that we could achieve better learning outcomes if you gave us more practice in conversations and less on grammar.

You:

Student: Well, it was only a suggestion.

5. You are a university freshman. You attend classes on time and prepare complete lecture notes. One of your classmates often misses class and asks you to lend him the notes before examination once again.

Classmate: Oh, my god! There is an exam tomorrow but I don't have notes from last week. I am
sorry to disturb you, but could you please lend me your notes once again?

You:

Classmate: Well...then I guess I'll have to ask someone else.

6. You are the owner of a restaurant. One of your best workers asks to speak to you in private for salary increase.

Worker: As you know, I've been working here for over one year, and I know you've been
pleased with my work. I also enjoy working here, but, to be honest I really need an
increase in pay.

You:

Worker: Well, then I guess I'll have to look for another job.

7. You are the president of a large research centre. A salesman from a computer company invites you to one of the most expensive local restaurants to have dinner.

Salesman: We have met for several times, and I'm hoping you will buy my company's
computers. Would you like to have dinner with me at the restaurant to firm up the
contract?

You:

8. You have just had your hair cut in a fashionable style, and you bump into a friend in the street.

Friend: That hair cut makes you look great. It makes you look younger!

You:

9. You are wearing a new Rolex watch. You meet one friend at your office.

Friend: Wow! What a nice watch. I wish I had one like that.

You:

10. You have given a presentation in English class. After the presentation, one of your classmates comes to you.

Classmate: That was a great presentation. I really enjoyed it.

You:

11. You are wearing a new sweater. One of your friends meets you on the playground in the morning.

Friend: What a nice sweater! You look great in it!

12. You are a teacher in a language school. You have invited a group of students to your house for a meal. After the meal, one of your students comes to speak to you. I didn't know you were such a talented cook. The food was wonderful!

You:

13. You started a computer course three months ago. At the end of a lesson your teacher comes up to you.

Teacher: You are very intelligent and have a flair for computers. Besides, you show a lot of interest in what we do in the lessons.

You:

14. You have been appointed as the sales manager of a larger department store recently. You are out for coffee with a group of colleagues. One of your employees says to you.

Employee: you have beautiful eyes.

You:

15. You borrowed a magazine from a best friend, and you ripped the cover page by accident. You are giving back the magazine to your friend.

Friend: Oh, what happened to the magazine?

You:

16. You are the English teacher who mistook one student's exam paper for another due to the similarity in their names and failed him. You have recognized that you have made a mistake, and the student has known what happened and came to meet you in your office.

Student: What has happened, Sir?

You:

17. You showed up an hour late for a group trip on a winter morning because you got late on that morning. Your classmates are blaming you at the meeting place.

Classmates: Hey, what happened to you? You are so late!

You:

18. You wanted to meet your English teacher in his office, but you went to the wrong office and interrupted a strange teacher's writing.

You:

Teacher: It's all right. Take it easy.

19. You and Tom are co-workers. You forgot to pass a private message to Tom, and this is the second time you forgot to pass a message on to him. Tom knew you had a message for him and went to you.

Tom: I've been told that you have a message for me.

You:

20. You and Mary are classmates. Someone in the class borrowed money from you and did not give it back. You insisted that Mary was the person who borrowed money from you. Mary insisted that she did not borrow money from you. At that moment, another student came into the classroom and told you that he was the person who had borrowed the money.

Mary (angrily): Do you believe me now?

You:

Appendix B

Questionnaire

Dear participant please tick in the box you want and give details where required.

Part 1: Personal information and educational background

1. Gender male

Female

2. Age _____ years old

3. At what educational level did you begin to study English?

Primary

Secondary

Kindergarten

4. Have you studied English with an English native teacher?

Yes

No (if no, please go to item 7)

5. If you studied English with an English native teacher, at what educational level were you?
(You may choose more than one item)

Primary

Secondary

University

Other (please specify) _____

6. What is the type of school?

Government

Private

Bilingual

Other (please specify) _____

7. Have you ever lived in an English speaking country?

Yes

No (if no please leave out 8, 9 & 10)

8. What is the purpose to live in a country, and how long did you stay there? (You may choose more than one item)

Study ____ days ____ weeks ____ months ____ years

Seminar ____ days ____ weeks ____ months ____ years

Travel ____ days ____ weeks ____ months ____ years

Other (please specify) ____ days ____ weeks ____ months ____ years

9. During living in the English- speaking country, whom did you stay with?

Your family

English native speakers

Other (please specify) _____

10. During living in the English –speaking country, what was your purpose in using English?
(You may choose more than one item)

Greeting

Talking about work issues

Talking about personal issues

Other (please specify) _____

Part 2: Activities using English

11. Do you have a chance to use English in daily life?

Yes

No (if no, please go to number 13)

12. If yes, what is the purpose to use English? (You may choose more than one item)

Face-to-face talk with foreigner

Chat on line

E-mail

Talking on the telephone

Watching English movies or series

Watching talk shows or varieties in English

Reading English novels or cartoons books

Reading English magazines or newspapers

Reading conversation books

Study English with language institutions

Searching for information in English on the internet

Other (please specify) _____

Part 3: Awareness in learning and using English

Item 12-20 please mark in the box you want to indicate the level of importance.

1= the least 2= little 3= moderate 4= much 5= the most

Appendix C

PART III: LANGUAGE USE (Time: 30 minutes)

Instructions: In 16 - 44 below you see sentences with a blank for a missing word or phrase. From the list following each sentence, choose which answer fits the sentence grammatically. Then mark your answer (A,B,C, or D) on your answer sheet.

16. I sent the teachers a memo explaining that _____ on who has taught here the longest.
A. its depend B. it's depending C. it depends D. it depend
17. Manga _____ her uniform today.
A. is not having B. has not have C. is not have D. doesn't have
18. Before the speech began, the other principals _____.
A. had already left B. have already left C. was already leave D. did already left
19. Every afternoon this week, a helicopter _____ over the school.
A. is flying B. has flown C. is fly D. was fly
20. This type of chart _____ help learners expand their vocabulary.
A. is use to B. use to C. is used to D. is using
21. Last week I made the teachers _____ their self-evaluations.
A. to wrote B. write C. writing D. written
22. I don't understand what happened. _____ the child?
A. Are you beat B. Have you beat C. Did you beat D. Did you bit
23. One of the teachers always _____ the meeting early.
A. leave B. is leave C. are leave D. leaves
24. The new teacher with all the emotional problems often _____ to my office.
A. come B. is come C. comes D. are come
25. Why do you think there _____ so many failures in English?
A. are B. is C. it's D. have
26. Most of my school's equipment _____ in the fire.
A. were damaged B. was damaged C. have been damaged D. are damage
27. The boy raising all the issues _____ from my school.
A. don't come B. don't comes C. are not come D. doesn't come
28. All the teachers who failed to hand in a lesson plan _____ reported.
A. has been B. have been C. is been D. was being

(continue on the next page)

29. _____ the blackboard in your classroom have nude drawings on it?
A. Does B. Do C. Are D. Have
30. These children enjoy _____ a noise, but they are not bad children.
A. to make B. making C. to making D. with making
31. You teachers should stop _____ those remarks in front of the learners.
A. to make B. with making C. making D. to making
32. People gathered at the education conference _____ the way forward.
A. to discuss B. discussing C. to discuss about D. discussing about
33. Have you found _____ book yet?
A. you're B. you are C. your D. you
34. Learners are too _____ on getting knowledge from the teacher only.
A. dependant B. dependent C. dependant D. dependent
35. I'm really proud of my teachers' _____ to their jobs.
A. comitment B. committment C. commitment D. committment
36. Our school can be proud of _____ achievement record.
A. its B. it's C. it is D. is
37. Learners who start to read _____ than others can often catch up later.
A. more slower B. slow C. more slowly D. slowlier
38. Look at this learner from my school. He paints pictures so _____.
A. beautiful B. much beautiful C. beautifully D. more beautifuller
39. However, this learner cannot do _____ maths problem in the book.
A. a simplest B. the simpler C. simple D. the simplest
40. Some letters were _____ off the ends of the lines, but I can figure them out.
A. drop B. dropped C. dropping D. being drop
41. This girl plays basketball so _____, but she's too young for the team.
A. good B. better C. goodly D. well
42. I searched all over my office for the missing papers, but I couldn't find _____.
A. it B. these C. its D. them
43. I wish your organisation had told _____ about the available funds.
A. my colleagues and me B. me and my colleagues
C. I and my colleagues D. my colleagues and I
44. My sons lost their money on the way to school, and _____ was never found.
A. they B. its C. it D. theirs

(continue on the next page)

Instructions: For numbers 45 – 47 choose the sentence that is completely correct grammatically, and mark the letter of that correct sentence on your answer sheet.

45. A. Several teacher are sick, so we have to combine these two class today.
B. Several teachers are sick, so we have to combine these two class today.
C. Several teachers are sick, so we have to combine these two classes today.
D. Several teacher are sick, so we have to combine this two classes today.
46. A. Parent often won't help their children with their homeworks, because they don't know how to do it themself.
B. Parent often won't help their childrens with their homeworks, because they don't know how to do it themselves.
C. Parent often won't help their childrens with their homework, because they don't know how to do it themselves.
D. Parents often won't help their children with their homework, because they don't know how to do it themselves.
47. A. We have a lots of broken equipments, and no informations to order more.
B. We have a lot of broken equipment, and no information to order more.
C. We have lot of broken equipments, and no information to order more.
D. We have lot of broken equipment, and no informations to order more.

Instructions: In numbers 48-50, only one of the choices (A,B,C or D) has the correct word order and punctuation. Choose the correct sentence and letter.

48. A. How long the test is taking? B. How long do the test take?
C. How long the test take. D. How long does the test take?
49. A. When the learners' fail, the parents blame us.
B. When the learners fail. The parent's blame us.
C. When the learner's fail, the parents' blame us.
D. When the learners fail, the parents blame us.
50. A. The biggest problem during my first years' here was discipline, the learners and the teachers' discipline was poor!
B. The biggest problem during my first years' here was the discipline. The learners' and the teachers discipline was poor!
C. The biggest problem during my first years here was the discipline the learner's and the teacher's discipline was poor!
D. The biggest problem during my first years here was the discipline. The learners' and the teachers' discipline was poor!