

Investigating L1 Pragmatic Transfer in Suggestions Performed by Algerian Learners of English as a Foreign Language

التحويل التداولي من اللغة الأم عند استعمال الاقتراح كفعل كلامي من طرف المتحدثين
الجزائريين للغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية

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Abstract

The present study aims at investigating pragmatic transfer in suggestions realized by Algerian learners of English as a foreign language. Data were captured from 35 Algerian native speakers of Arabic whose responses provide the mother tongue baseline data, 20 English native speakers whose responses provide the target language baseline data, and 87 Algerian learners of English as a foreign language whose responses provide the interlanguage data. Data were collected by means of a discourse completion task that includes 10 hypothetical situations. Results showed that the Algerian learners of English as a foreign language use direct strategies and mitigate their suggestions the most frequently. Moreover, their performance reveals that their perceptions of appropriateness and politeness in suggestion-making are different from English natives. Evidence of pragmatic transfer from Arabic to English was also found in their realized suggestions. In view of the phenomenon of pragmatic transfer revealed in this study, it is recommended that English as a foreign language teachers should incorporate cross-cultural differences in the realization of speech acts in their syllabi so that the pragmatic performance of their learners approaches the target language norms.

Key Words

Interlanguage pragmatics; Pragmatic transfer; Suggestion speech act; Algerian English as a foreign language learners

المخلص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى البحث في التحويل التداولي عند استعمال "الاقتراح" كفعل كلامي. شارك في الدراسة 35 مشتركا جزائريا من الناطقين باللغة العربية الذين توفر إجاباتهم بيانات خط أساس اللغة الأم، 20 مشتركا أمريكيا من الناطقين باللغة الإنجليزية الذين توفر إجاباتهم بيانات خط أساس اللغة الهدف، و87 طالبا جزائريا للغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية. إذ تم جمع البيانات عن طريق اختبار كتابي يضم عشرة مواقف تحاكي الواقع. أظهرت النتائج أن المتعلمين الجزائريين للغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية يستخدمون استراتيجيات مباشرة ويخففون من اقتراحاتهم بشكل متكرر. علاوة على ذلك، يكشف أدائهم أن تصوراتهم عن الملاءمة واللباقة في تقديم المقترحات تختلف عن الناطقين باللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أم. علاوة على ذلك تم العثور على أدلة على النقل التداولي من العربية إلى الإنجليزية في اقتراحاتهم. في ضوء ظاهرة النقل البراغماتي التي تم الكشف عنها في هذه الدراسة، يوصى بأن يقوم مدرسو اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية بالتطرق للاختلافات الثقافية في تنفيذ أفعال الكلام في المناهج الدراسية لكي يقترب الأداء البراغماتي للمتعلمين من أعراف اللغة الهدف.

الكلمات المفتاحية

اللغة البيئية التداولية؛ نقل تداول ؛ اقتراح؛ فعل كلامي ؛ المتعلمين الجزائريين للغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية

1. Introduction

In spite of the universality of speech acts, they are realized differently by speakers of different cultures (Gass & Neu, 1996). This cross-cultural variation may cause communication breakdowns if speakers engaging in cross-cultural encounters are not aware of their cultural differences (Wierzbicka, 1991). Kasper coined the term “interlanguage pragmatics” (ILP) in 1981 and defined it as “the branch of second language research which studies how non-native speakers understand and carry out linguistic action in a target language and how they acquire L2 pragmatic knowledge” (Kasper, 1992, p. 203). Studies in ILP have revealed that English language learners’ production of speech acts often differs from that of English native speakers (ENSs) (Kasper & Rose, 2002). The reason behind this is that the learners’ target language (TL) pragmatic knowledge is limited so they transfer their first language (L1) pragmatic rules into TL production (Kasper, 1992). Because Arabic and English belong to two different language systems, evidence of pragmatic transfer (PT) of Arabic into English by Algerian learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is most likely to be detected in their cross-cultural communication. The speech act of suggestion can possibly be subject to this transfer.

Despite the worldwide rapid development of ILP in the last three decades, this field is still in its infancy in Algeria. The present study aims to contribute to the knowledge which concerns Algerian EFL learners’ ILP behavior as far as suggestion strategies and PT are concerned. In so doing, it attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What kind of PT is extant in Algerian EFL learners’ suggestion strategies and mitigators?
2. How does PT occur in Algerian EFL learners’ suggestion strategies and mitigators?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Previous Interlanguage Pragmatic Studies on Suggestion Speech Act and Strategies

The pioneers who addressed the suggestion speech act are Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford. In their study conducted in 1990, they scrutinized the real-life conversations between teachers and students in order to investigate whether or not the linguistic forms used by both parties are congruent with their respective status. They also stressed the importance of using status-preserving strategies such as downgraders to minimize the threat of students’ suggestions. When comparing the linguistic negotiation of status between native English-speaking students and nonnative English-speaking ones, they concluded that even non-native English-speaking students who were linguistically competent could not employ the status-preserving strategies in accordance with their status (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990).

Within the same framework of status congruence, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford conducted a longitudinal study for suggestions and rejections in 1993. The participants consisted of 16 graduate students and 7 English-speaking faculty members who were taped in 35 advising sessions over the course of a semester in order to examine the change over time in the students' ability to develop their pragmatic competence. Results showed that nonnative English-speaking students produced better suggestions but they did not exhibit a better ability to employ appropriate linguistic forms of the speech act of suggestion.

Relying on the two previously mentioned studies of Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, Alcón (2001) also examined the speech act of suggestion within the framework of status congruence in English as second language (ESL) setting. In order to analyze suggestion in terms of frequency and from, she taped 30 sessions of Spanish ESL learners who received input by teachers. She found that learners' pragmatic competence did not improve. This was revealed by the absence of mitigators. Alcón concluded that mere exposure to language does not suffice to develop the learners' pragmatic competence in the context of academic advising and that pedagogical intervention is a must.

In addition to Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1990) as well as Alcón (2001), Koike (1996) also studies the suggesting speech act. Collecting data through a questionnaire, that 114 Spanish ESL learners of different proficiency levels filled in after watching a video which consisted of 7 speech acts, the researcher examined their awareness of suggestions. She focused on the effect of linguistic proficiency on pragmatic competence as well as PT. It was found that proficiency affected the way the learners understood speech acts while it did not have an influence on PT as it occurred at all proficiency levels. Koike concluded that ESL learners should be taught contextualized language to improve their recognition of speech acts.

Matsumura (2001, 2003) studies advice acts. In a longitudinal study (2001), she compared two groups of Japanese learners of English in two distinct learning environments: ESL setting and EFL setting. The study aimed at identifying the degree of change in Japanese learners' perception of social status in advising speech act. Results showed that Japanese ESL learners outperformed Japanese EFL learners with regard to perceptions of social status in the speech act in focus because the former had relatively more opportunities to figure out how native English speakers perceive advice depending on social status than the latter. Matsumura suggested that EFL learners need pedagogical intervention to improve their pragmatic competence.

2.2. Previous Studies on Pragmatic Transfer in Speech Acts Performed by Algerian EFL Learners

The phenomenon of PT in speech acts realized by Algerian EFL Learners is underexplored. What follows is an overview of some studies on this issue. To start

with, Dendenne (2016a) attempts to investigate PT in interlanguage apologies performed by two groups of Algerian EFL learners. The findings show that pragmalinguistic transfer is operative in the wording of the strategies and word by word translation from learners' L1. The sociopragmatic type is at play in the use of apology strategies which reflects the mother culture's assumptions in weighing the situational variables. Also, linguistic proficiency does not give remarkable advantage to the high-proficient learners over the low-proficient. It was also found that in addition to transfer, other factors impact the interlanguage production: lack of pragmatic competence, interlanguage-specific features and language constraints.

Dendenne (2016b) investigates the performance of the speech act of request by Algerian EFL learners as part of their interlanguage pragmatics, focusing on the phenomenon of PT. A discourse completion task (Henceforth DCT) was administered to two control groups in Arabic and English and two groups of Algerian learners at two proficiency levels (low and high). The findings reveal many areas of cross-cultural variability in Arabic and English requests. For example, in Arabic, requesters tend to employ imperatives, terms of address, hearer-oriented expressions, lexical softeners and religious-bound expressions while in English, they seem to favor modal items, speaker-oriented requests, consultative devices, imposition minimizers and apologies. Moreover, both types of transfer are evident in the learners' performance. Pragmalinguistic transfer is extant in the employment of linguistic items inspired by L1 and word-for-word translation. Sociopragmatic transfer is evidenced in learners' perception of situational variables and the evaluation of contexts which resemble, to a great extent, those of the mother culture. In requests, transfer is evidenced in *head acts*, *modification* and *request perspective*. It was also found that linguistic proficiency neither gives a marked advantage to the high-proficient group nor does it trigger more transfer.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The sample of this study comprised three groups: The first group consisted of 35 participants of Algerian native speakers of Arabic (henceforth ANSs). They are second year students at the Arabic department of Batna 1 University. Their responses provide L1— i.e. Arabic— baseline data. The second group consisted of 20 participants of English native speakers (henceforth ENSs). They are American undergraduate and graduate students who major in different fields at three different Chinese universities. Their responses provide the TL baseline data. The third group consisted of 87 Algerian EFL learners. They are second year students at the department of English at Batna 2 University who have been studying English for 8 years on average and none of them has ever been to an English-speaking country. Their responses provide the interlanguage (IL) baseline data.

It is worth mentioning that the three groups enjoy age homogeneity but lack gender homogeneity. With regard to age, the calculation of the mean in these groups gave the following results: ANSs (21.68), ENSs (22.36), and EFL learners (21.89). As far as gender is concerned, females outnumbered males in the three groups by chance: ANSs (Males: 9, females: 26), ENSs (Males: 7, females: 18), EFL learners (Males: 19, females: 68). Gender is not considered a variable in this study though it may be influential in such studies.

3.2. Research Instruments

A DCT was used in order to elicit the data related to suggestions' production. The DCT provided the study participants with descriptions of ten hypothetical situations with spaces to respond using would-be appropriate suggestions (Appendix). Because in IL pragmatics, the DCT situations should be equivalent cross-culturally, the researcher consulted two native Arabic language teachers from Batna 1 University and one American high school teacher to ensure the situations' feasibility in the participants' lives. In order to avoid native Arabic speakers' misunderstanding of what they are required to do, the DCT given to them was translated into Arabic. In order to achieve the equivalence in the DCT translation, back translation technique was employed so as to reduce the threat to reliability and validity of the research.

3.3. The Coding Manual

The subjects' suggestions were classified and analyzed according to Martinez-Flor's (2005) taxonomy of suggestions. Martinez-Flor divided suggestion strategies into three levels according to their directness. They are direct suggestion strategies, conventionalized suggestion strategies, and indirect suggestion strategies. The direct strategies are acts in which the speakers clearly state what they mean. They are stated by performative verbs (advise/suggest/recommend), noun of suggestion (e.g., My suggestion is to set off early), imperative (e.g., Check the methods with your supervisor first), and negative imperative (e.g., Don't follow that format). Conventionalized suggestion strategies are not as direct as direct ones but the hearer could yet understand the speaker's intention behind the suggestion. This second type includes a variety of linguistic realizations such as interrogative forms (e.g., Why don't you text him?), possibility/probability (e.g., You may ask for your manager's permission first), should (e.g., You should see a doctor), need (e.g., You need to talk to your teacher first) and conditional forms (e.g., If I were you, I would never call him again). The last type is indirect strategies which are acts in which the speaker does not clearly state his/her suggestion. In other words, the utterance carries no suggestive force. This type is realized by means of impersonal strategies and hints (Table 1).

Table (1): The Coding Scheme for Suggestion Strategies

| Type | Strategy | Example |
|------------------|--|---|
| Direct | Performative verbs | I suggest that you... |
| | | I advise you to... |
| | | I recommend that you... |
| | Noun of suggestion | My suggestion would be... |
| | Imperative | Try using... |
| | Negative imperative | Don't try to... |
| Conventionalized | Specific formulae (Interrogative forms) | Why don't you...? |
| | | How about...? |
| | | What about...? |
| | | Have you thought about...? |
| | Possibility/Probability | You can... |
| | | You could... |
| | | You may... |
| | | You might... |
| Should | You should... | |
| Need | You need... | |
| Conditional | If I were you, I would... | |
| Indirect | Impersonal | One thing (that you can do) would be... |
| | | Here's one possibility... |
| | | There are a number of options that you... |
| | | It might be better to... |
| | | A good idea would be... |
| | | It would be nice if... |
| | Hints | I heard that... |

Source: Martinez-Flor (2005)

In addition to suggestion strategies, hedging devices are also considered in this study. It has been mentioned that suggestions are face-threatening acts. Therefore, they should be softened in order to minimize the threat to the hearer's face by means of hedging devices which can be classified into two categories: syntactic downgraders and lexical downgraders. The former are hedging devices which mitigate the imposition force of suggestions by syntactic structures, while the latter soften the force by lexical items. The hedging devices used in this study are mainly based on Blum-kulka, House and Kasper (1989), Hinkel (1997), Guerra and Martinez-Flor (2006) and Zhan (1992). They are listed in Table 2.

Table (2): The Coding Scheme for Hedging Devices

| Type | Sub-type | Examples | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--|---------------|
| Syntactic downgraders | Question Forms | Why don't you...? Don't you...? Do you want....? | |
| | Probability Modals | Can/Could.....? May/Might.....? | |
| | Conditional Clause | If you....., you can..... | |
| | Subjunctive Clause | If I were you, I would..... | |
| | Impersonals | It is a good idea to... | |
| Lexical downgraders | Subjectivizers | I think..., I suppose..., I am afraid that... | |
| | Downtoners | Maybe; possibly; It's likely that..... | |
| | Need to | You need to follow the APA format. | |
| | Inclusive "we" | Maybe we should follow the MLA format. | |
| | Others | Appealers | Isn't? |
| | | Past Tense | I thought.... |
| Passive Verbs | | Your mistake has not been corrected. | |

Source: Blum-kulka, House and Kasper (1989), Hinkel (1997), Guerra and Martinez-Flor (2006) and Zhan (1992)

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results of the Overall Use of Suggestion Strategies

Three different types of suggestion strategies are identified in this study. The frequencies and percentages of each strategy by the three groups are displayed in Table 3. Given the fact that the three groups have unequal sample sizes, the researcher relied on the mean (M), not on the raw frequencies.

Table (3): Frequencies and Percentages of Suggestion Strategies

| Group/ Type | Group/ Strategy | ANSs | | EFL Learners | | ENSs | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------|------|--------------|------|----------|------|
| | | %(N) | M | %(N) | M | %(N) | M |
| Direct | Performative verb | 11.43(4) | .11 | 10.34 (9) | .10 | 10.00(2) | .10 |
| | Noun of suggestion | 5.71(2) | .06 | 1.15(1) | .01 | .00(0) | .00 |
| | Imperative | 2.86(1) | .03 | 5.75(5) | .06 | .00(0) | .00 |
| | Negative imperative | 2.86(1) | .03 | 8.04(7) | .08 | .00(0) | .00 |
| Conventio-nalized | Specific formulae | 25.71(9) | .26 | 34.48(30) | .34 | 20.00(4) | .20 |
| | Possibility/ probability | 11.43(4) | .11 | 4.60(4) | .05 | 10.00(2) | .10 |
| | Should | 20.00(7) | .20 | 9.19(8) | .09 | .00(0) | .00 |
| | Need | .00(0) | .00 | 1.15(1) | .01 | .00(0) | .00 |
| | Conditional | 17.14(6) | .17 | 19.54(17) | .19 | 5.00(1) | .05 |
| Indirect | Impersonal | 2.86(1) | .03 | 5.75(5) | .05 | 40.00(8) | .40 |
| | Hints | .00(0) | .03 | .00(0) | .00 | 15.00(3) | .15 |
| Total | | 100(35) | 1.00 | 100(87) | 1.00 | 100(20) | 1.00 |

According to Table 3, ANSs and EFL learners use conventionalized strategies the most frequently while ENSs use indirect strategies the most frequently. For ANSs and EFL learners, the second most frequently used strategies are the direct suggestion strategies while the least frequently used are the indirect ones. As for ENSs, the second most frequently used strategies are the conventionalized suggestion strategies while the least frequently used are the direct ones.

Table 4 shows the frequencies and percentages of the different hedging devices used by the three groups in their suggestions.

Table (4): Frequencies and Percentages of Hedging Devices

| Group/Type | Group/Sub-type | ANSs % (N) M | EFL Learners % (N) M | ENSs % (N) M |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Syntactic downgraders | Question forms | 28.57(12) .28 | 13.59(14) .13 | 8.82(3) .09 |
| | Probability modals | 19.05(8) .19 | 21.36(22) .21 | 20.59(7) .20 |
| | Conditional clause | 9.52(4) .09 | 7.77(8) .08 | 5.88(2) .06 |
| | Subjunctive clause | .00(0) .00 | .00(0) .00 | 2.94(1) .03 |
| | Impersonals | 4.76(2) .05 | 9.71(10) .10 | 11.76(4) .12 |
| Lexical downgraders | Subjectivizers | 11.90(5) .12 | 15.53(16) .15 | 17.65(6) .18 |
| | Downtoners | 16.67(7) .17 | 23.30(24) .23 | 11.76(4) .12 |
| | Need to | 2.38(1) .02 | 0.97(1) .01 | 17.65(6) .18 |
| | Inclusive "we" | 2.38(1) .02 | 0.97(1) .01 | .00(0) .00 |
| | Others | 4.76 (2) .05 | 6.80(7) .07 | 2.94(1) .03 |
| Total | | 100(42) 1.00 | 100(103) 1.00 | 100(34) 1.00 |

As shown in Table 4, the ENSs group uses *probability modals* the most frequently followed by *subjectivizers* and *need to* which are used equally. The ANSs group employs *question forms*, *probability modals*, and *downtoners* the most frequently. The *subjunctive clause* is not used at all either by EFL Learners or ANSs. Subjects in EFL Learners' group use *downtoners* the most frequently to soften their suggestions. This device is followed by *probability modals* and *subjectivizers* in terms of frequency.

4.2. Comparison between the Algerian EFL Learners' Group and the ENSs' Group with regard to the Frequency of Suggestion Strategies Used

English natives and Algerian natives demonstrate totally different preferences in the use of suggestion strategies. From the first look at Table 3, it seems that the subjects in the EFL Learners' group use direct and conventionalized suggestion strategies more frequently than the subjects in the ENSs' group who favor indirect strategies to inform the hearer of the problem or send regards to him. These preferences may stem from two different perceptions of the speech act of

suggestion. In collectivistic cultures, such as Algerian one, making suggestions is regarded as a way of building rapport (Hinkel, 1994, p.73) and it is at the same time a token of solidarity (Du, 1995; Lii-Shih, 1994). In other words, suggestion after informing of the problem is a way of keeping the interpersonal relationship harmonious (Hofstede, 1991; Kim, 1993). However, in an individualistic culture, such as the English one, this positive perception of suggesting speech act is not existent (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey & Chua, 1988). On the contrary, suggestion-making in an unsolicited way is considered an offence or at least an imposition or interference in other's affairs (Hofstede, 1991). A possible explanation of this is that in societies where individualism is prevailing, personal territory is sensitive and it is not allowed to intrude (Hofstede, 1991; Hsu, 1981; Miller, 1984). Therefore, respondents in the ENSs' group are eager to use indirect suggestion strategies more frequently so as not to impose suggestion on the hearer, not to be considered rude, and at the same time mitigate the imposition force of their suggestions.

Another difference between the two groups' semantic formulae used lies in the frequency of imperatives and negative imperatives which are noticeably opted for by the Algerian EFL Learners' group and are not employed at all by the ENSs group. This can be explained by cultural values and norms of the two different cultures. The Algerian culture appreciates egalitarianism and harmony—an Islamic preaching. The Algerian society does not value hierarchical structure but rather works on the basis of a deference politeness system. It believes that the interlocutors should demonstrate mutual respect no matter their position, age, and status are. The use of imperatives and negative imperatives as suggestion realization strategies do not threaten this respect. In other words, in the Algerian culture, it is appropriate for speakers to suggest things to hearers using imperatives and negative imperatives even if hearers enjoy a higher social status. To maintain the power distance, this is carried out through the use of appropriate address terms as well as enough hedging devices in addition to conformity to the rules of ritual politeness and other conventions. This Algerian norm of regarding imperatives and negative imperatives as suitable suggestions strategies is transferred from Arabic to English. This leads the subjects of Algerian EFL Learners' group to employ these strategies quite frequently in their suggestions.

4.3. Comparison between the Algerian EFL Learners' Group and the ENSs' Group with regard to the mitigation devices used

As for mitigation devices, it is shown in Table 5 that the subjects in the Algerian EFL learners' group employ question forms as hedging device more frequently than the subjects in the ENSs' group. This pragmalinguistic form is transferred from the EFL learners' Arabic language into the TL. Suggestions carried through questions presuppose that the hearer's acceptance of the suggestion

is optional. Such suggestions are less coercive and less face-threatening for the speaker and the hearer. English natives use questions to make the hearer aware of the situation. This presupposes that the interlocutors share a common concern for the matter in question and gives the hearer his/her responsibility for dealing with the situation. Therefore, the subjects in the ENSs' group occasionally consider question forms to be an appropriate suggestion strategy. Question forms are not the only pragmalinguistic feature transferred from Arabic. This is also the case for downtoners too.

The present study also finds that there are differences in the use of conditional clauses between the Algerian EFL learners' group and the ENSs' group. These differences may result from the teaching-induced errors. Rahmawati (2014) notes that EFL learners are taught conditionals without being informed of how to appropriately use them in the right context for the right speech act. Such kind of teaching-induced errors leads the EFL learners to overgeneralization which makes them employ such softening device more frequently than subjects in the ENSs' group.

4.4. Comparison between the EFL Learners' Group and the ANSs' Group with regard to the Frequency of Suggestion Strategies Used

The performances of the Algerian EFL learners' group and the ANSs' group share a common feature—preference for direct suggestion strategies. This can be explained by the fact that the Algerian culture is a collectivistic one. In such cultures, harmonious social relationship is highly valued. Suggestion-making is not only a method of showing care and keeping good relations among people, but also a duty. This positive culture orientation of suggestion-making stands behind the tendency of Algerian EFL learners and ANSs of using direct suggestion strategies more frequently than English natives.

4.5. Comparison between the Algerian EFL Learners' Group and the ANSs' Group with regard to the Frequency of Mitigation Devices Used

No unique similarities in the use of mitigation devices is found between the Algerian EFL learners' group and the ANSs' group when they make suggestions. As can be seen from Table 5, subjects in the Algerian EFL learners' group use hedged suggestion strategies more frequently than those in both the ENSs' group and ANSs' group. This can be explained by the fact that EFL learners, as already highlighted, have a tendency of overgeneralization of hedged suggestion strategies. Subjects of this group used three softeners more frequently than the other two groups, namely: *probability modals*, *downtoners* and *others*. EFL learners are not informed of how to use hedging devices in the right context for the right speech act

when they are taught grammar. Hence, they tend to overuse their English linguistic knowledge and pragmatic rules and this verbosity can be considered pragmatic failure (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986). This is in line with the findings of previous studies which found that EFL learners, especially advanced ones, tend to use more linguistic forms than native speakers do (e.g., Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Chen, 2006; House, 1989; Lin, 2008; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993).

5. Conclusion, Pedagogical Implications and Suggestions for Further Research

The present study contributes to the cross-cultural understanding of the speech act of suggestion. The performance of the Algerian EFL learners' group reveals that their perceptions of appropriateness and politeness in suggestion-making are different from English natives. Evidence of pragmatic transfer from Arabic to English is also found in their realized suggestions. Algerian EFL learners use conventionalized and direct strategies and mitigate their suggestions the most frequently. In view of the phenomenon of PT revealed in this study, some pedagogical implications are put forward:

- First, EFL teachers should incorporate cross-cultural differences in the realization of speech acts in their syllabi so that the pragmatic performance of EFL learners approaches the TL norms.
- Second, EFL teachers and syllabus designers should present suggestion realization strategies and formulae as well as mitigation devices to learners, but they should not pay attention to linguistic forms only. They should rather teach their learners contextual information and emphasize on the rules of appropriate language use in order to achieve successful communication with native speakers of the TL.

It is worth noting that this study focuses on equal-level social variables of status and distance. Future studies may investigate suggestion-making in which social variables such as status, distance, gender, and level of formality are different. With regard to data gathering tools, the present study uses DCT which might yield data different from naturally occurring data. Future studies may collect data from a corpus of natural spoken language so as to broaden our understanding of interlanguage suggestion behavior in natural settings. A longitudinal approach may be even adopted for a deeper understanding of the development of pragmatic competence in suggesting speech act by Algerian EFL learners.

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Appendix: DCT

Dear students,

How would you respond to the following situations? Please write down the exact words you would say. Thank you so much for your cooperation.

1. Your classmate is delivering his presentation in class. You are interested in the topic and you have enjoyed the presentation very much. But you notice that there is a mistake in one of his Power Point slides. What would you say to him?
2. A classmate is going to have an oral presentation in tomorrow's class. At the beginning of this semester, the teacher has distributed the outline format for the oral presentation. However, you find that the outline your classmate has prepared is different from the one the teacher requires. You think that it is better to follow the teacher's format. What would you say to him?
3. You are sitting in the classroom, waiting for class to begin. One of your classmates walks into the classroom and sits right in front of you. You notice that the price tag of his T-shirt has not been removed and it can be easily seen. What would you say to him?
4. Your classmate would like you to help him with an electronic file. After he copies the file from his USB flash drive to the computer, he directly unplugs the USB without using the safe removal procedure. This could damage the USB flash drive and the computer. What would you say to him?
5. You are walking on campus. A classmate walks by. You see that the classmate has an ink stain on his sleeve. What would you say to him?
6. Your classmate and you have a mutual foreign friend who is an international student. How do you make a suggestion about taking him/her to beautiful places in your city?
7. You are walking down the hall on campus. You encounter a classmate. He is going to the reading room in the library. You are aware that the reading room is undergoing repairs and therefore noisy. What would you say to him?
8. In the library, a classmate would like to borrow a novel and you know there is a more interesting one. What would you say to him?
9. You are using a computer at the computer center on campus. Your classmate sits next to you. He would like to use the printer but fails to get it to operate because he does not know that the printer requires clicking a certain button before printing can be proceed. What would you say to him?
10. Your cousin needs your suggestions on choosing the right major to study in university. How are you going to suggest?