Pragmatic Transfer in Sudanese University Students' Requests

Transferencia pragmática en el acto de habla de solicitud de los estudiantes de las universidades de Sudán

Abstract

This study aims at examining pragmatic transfer in the Sudanese university students' production of the speech act of requesting in English. It tried to identify and study instances of sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic transfer in the subjects' utterances. Two written discourse completion tests were used to collect the study data from 200 students. The study found that the subjects used sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic norms of their mother tongue and culture when realizing the speech act in English.

The subjects resorted to pragmalinguistic transfer when they produced Islamic greetings and made prayers to requestees, and when they translated some Arabic words, expressions, and structures in their English responses. It also found that the subjects made reverse prgamalinguistic transfer from the foreign language to mother tongue when they inserted English words in their Arabic answers.

The study also showed that the subjects used the sociopragmatic norms of their language and culture when they used successive elaborated greetings, native discourse strategies that over-represent reality to gain sympathy of others, kinship address terms with strangers, and when they misperceived the social distance and relation with others.

Resumen

Este estudio tiene como objetivo examinar la transferencia pragmática que llevan a cabo los estudiantes de las universidades de Sudán en la producción del acto de habla de solicitud en inglés. Para ello, trata de estudiar e identificar ejemplos de transferencia *sociopragmática* y *pragmalingüística* en las intervenciones de los sujetos. La recogida de datos se realiza mediante dos '*Discourse Completion Test*' (DCT) con un total de 200 estudiantes. Este test insta a los estudiantes a realizar una producción oral o escrita de una determinada situación, indicando qué dirían o deberían decir en dicha situación.

El estudio ha revelado que los sujetos usaron las normas sociopragmáticas y pragmalingüísticas de su lengua y cultura maternas cuando produjeron el acto de habla en inglés.

Los sujetos recurrieron a la transferencia pragmalingüística al realizar saludos o rezos islámicos y cuando tradujeron algunas palabras, expresiones o estructuras árabes al inglés en sus intervenciones. Al mismo tiempo, ha demostrado que los sujetos realizaron una transferencia pragmalingüística inversa, desde la lengua extranjera a su lengua materna, cuando insertaron palabras inglesas en sus discursos en árabe.

Además, esta investigación demuestra que los sujetos emplearon las normas de sociopragmática de su lengua y cultura maternas cuando usaron sucesivamente saludos elaborados, al poner en práctica estrategias discursivas de la lengua nativa que representan la realidad con el objetivo de ganarse la simpatía de los otros, con los términos de parentesco con extraños y al percibir de manera errónea la distancia y la relación social con otros.

Keywords

Pragmatic transfer, speech acts, Sudanese university students, Sudanese Colloquial Arabic.

Palabras clave

Transferencia pragmática, actos de habla, estudiantes de las universidades de Sudán, árabe sudanés coloquial.

. a r t í c u l o | **Pragmatic Transfer in Sudanese University Students' Requests**

1. Introduction

The relation between language and culture is a complex one. Language is the backbone of any culture and culture is at the core of any language. Culture refers to beliefs, ideas and concepts, in addition to others (Blatchford, 1986), that depend mainly on language in their formulation and expression. Some researchers believe that culture influences and shapes language (Baldwin et al., 2004; Cortazzi, 1990). Language plays a vital role in any culture as it is a means of cultural change and a medium of cultural transmission. Language is the medium through which knowledge, ideas, values, beliefs, traditions, and customs of a certain group of people are molded, evolved, and transmitted (Fishman, 2007; Lange, 1998). Culture shapes language and the language affects the culture it originated from.

A cultural background is considered a prerequisite for mastering any language other than one's own (Brown, 1986; Lee, 1991). It is sometimes difficult to understand and explain the different linguistic structures, lexicon, etc. of a foreign language without comprehending the culture of that language. In order to be fluent and competent, learners of a foreign language need to be aware of more than the mere grammatical rules, lexical items, etc. of that language (Amaya, 2008). An adequate cultural knowledge is essential to achieve proficiency in foreign languages.

In the process of learning a foreign language, learners encounter many difficulties. The most prominent obstacles that challenge them are attributed to differences between native and foreign languages and cultures. Such differences result in erroneous production of many features of the target language. The phenomenon of mother tongue interference in the learning process is well researched and documented. The native language influences the learning, acquisition, and production of the different features of the foreign language (Lado, 1957; Odlin, 1989).

This study aimed at investigating pragmatic transfer in the Sudanese university students' production of the speech act of requesting. It attempted to discover and analyze instances of sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic transfer in the production of Sudanese university students of the speech act of requesting. The speech act was chosen due to its importance as it is intensively used in everyday communication. It is almost employed in all kinds of social and pedagogical interactions to ask others to perform desired actions and to get information, assistance, permission from, and coordinate efforts with others. Requests are formulaic and follow simple patterns in their realization the thing that provides a fertile area for the study of the phenomenon of pragmatic transfer. The study starts with providing an overview of the main concepts dealt with in the study followed by methodology, results and discussion, a conclusion and a list of references.

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2. Overview

2.1. Pragmatic Competence

For foreign language learners, pragmatic failure is considered to result in more serious consequences than linguistic failure. It may make establishing good social and work relationships difficult and may result in the loss of valuable opportunities in addition to the embarrassment and frustration one may experience when dealing with speakers of other languages. Also, it may endanger cooperation between culturally different groups, lead to difficulties in communication, and result in misunderstandings. Such failure would affect the image of the speaker and presents him/her as insensitive, rude, etc. Cenoz (2003: 63) stated that: "Pragmatic failure differs from other types of failure in that it is not easily recognizable by interlocutors who may judge the speaker as being impolite or uncooperative or attribute the pragmatic errors to the speaker's personality" Usually, native speakers overlook non-native speakers' grammatical, lexical, and pronunciation errors, but they barely accept pragmatic errors. They consider such pragmatic errors as manifestations of bad manners, rudeness, impatience, arrogance, aloofness, and as interference in other peoples' affairs (Thomas, 1983; Nelson et al., 2002: 164; Amaya, 2008).

Pragmatic failure is common among learners with low proficiency levels as well as advanced foreign/second language learners. Interlanguage pragmatics research found that even learners with high proficiency levels in the L2 fail to comply with the pragmatic norms of the target language when performing different speech acts (Eslami-Rasekh et al., 2004: 2). Other scholars claimed that pragmatic transfer occurs more frequently in the performance of learners with higher proficiency levels (Arranz, 2005: 121). While others found that sociopragmatic transfer appeared in the production of low proficient learners and pragmalinguistic transfer in that of the advanced and intermediate learners (Dendenne, 2014).

Pragmatic failure occurs due to lack or poor knowledge of the sociopragmatic norms of the target language which help speakers decide whether to or not to perform a certain pragmatic feature and how to adjust it to suit a given social situation. It is also the result of deficient knowledge of pragmalinguistic factors that help learners determine which language forms are appropriate to which contexts (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983).

Moreover, pragmatic failure can result from the efforts made by L2 speakers to compensate for their poor pragmatic competency by utilizing rules of L1 when interacting using the foreign language. A learner may compensate for his/her limited knowledge of the pragmatic rules of the target language by using the norms of his/her native language. The pragmatic rules of first language and those of a target language may differ the thing that leads to pragmatic failure. A speech act in one language may be conceived as appropriate and polite, while in another it may be perceived as intrusive and impolite (Kasper, 1992). A large corpus of studies focusing on speech acts realization of speakers of different languages found that speakers use the same range of speech acts across-cultures while the application of these actions in different social interactions is culture specific (Allami, 2006 :76).

. a r t í c u l o   **Pragmatic Transfer in Sudanese University Students' Requests**

The cultural differences are perceived as a problematic area that affects the production as well as the comprehension of discourse. Odlin (1989:48) stated that:

> Cross-linguistic differences in discourse may affect comprehension as well as production. A learner may interpret conversations and monologues in the target language in terms of native language norms, and may mistakenly believe that native speakers are being rude in situations where they are actually behaving appropriately according to the norms of their speech community.

Some studies claim that if a learner wants to master a foreign language, s/he should be sociolinguistically competent in that language. A learner should be aware of the different rules that help in choosing appropriate language that suits the purpose of contact, the relation between communicators in that language, and the social context in which the utterance occurs. McNamara (2000: 18) defined this competence as: "… knowledge of rules of language use in terms of what is appropriate to different types of interlocutors, in different settings, and on different topics." Also, Cohen (2004: 1) emphasized the importance of this competence to second/ foreign language learners, by pointing out that: "Learners need to determine the situationally-appropriate utterances, namely: what can be said, when it can be said, how to say it most effectively?"

Many studies dealt with pragmatic competence as an essential part of communicative competence. It considered it as one of the components of communicative competence that is concerned with the production of contextually appropriate utterances. Savingon (1991: 261) believed that communicative competence consists of grammatical and pragmatic competencies. Some researchers used the terms communicative competence and pragmatic competence interchangeably (Schmidt & Richards, 1980). Others believed that communicative competence is the 'knowledge' of or 'ability' to employ the different linguistic structures adequately (Hudson, 1996: 224). Moreover, Thomas (1983: 92) explained that: "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 in context)."

An individual's pragmatic competence is assumed to be based on three levels of knowledge that include (i) the appropriate form-function relation, (ii) the social parameters which enter into the act, and (iii) the underlying social values in a society (Simpson, 1997: 11).

Other researchers believed that pragmatic competence is considered to include many abilities. Most important among them are the ability to use language to carry out different functions and the ability to comprehend speaker's intentions (Bilaystock, 1993:43). Context is a determinant factor in deciding the meaning of an utterance. Familiarity with other interlocutors groups' social hierarchies, norms, values and cultural backgrounds facilitate comprehension of their pragmatic messages. To be pragmatically competent, one needs to choose utterances that are appropriate to the context and other social factors that govern it. Thomas (1983: 95) noted that "…in order to be considered pragmatically competent, one must be able to behave linguistically in such a manner as to avoid being unintentionally offensive, for most of the time, to strangers who speak the same language or variety of language as oneself." Cohen (2004:1) distinguished some factors that contribute to

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the contextual appropriateness of language. The author pointed out that if the aspects of "what can be said, where it can be said, when it can be said, and how to say it most effectively" are observed then it will lead to the production of 'situationally –appropriate utterances'.

Leech proposed a model of pragmatic competence that consists mainly of pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. The former is defined by the author (1983:11) as concerned with 'the particular resources which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions.' The sociopragmatics is related more to sociology and he referred to it as the 'sociological interface of pragmatics'. Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993:4) and Kasper (1997:1) categorized pragmatic competence using slightly different taxonomy i.e. illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence. The former is closely associated with knowledge of speech acts and how to perform them and the latter is described with regard to sensitivity to language and context.

2.2. Pragmatic Transfer

The impact of a person's mother tongue and native culture on the acquisition and production of the different systems of other languages is evident. The native language is considered to play a significant role in all aspects of second/foreign language learning and acquisition processes. In the 1950-60s, studies of the L1 influence led to the emergence of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH). At that time, the phenomenon was referred to as 'language transfer'. Lado (1957:2) explicated the phenomenon by noting that "Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture, both productively when attempting to speak the language…and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language…" The term 'language transfer' was briefly defined by Odlin (1989:27) as the "…influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously acquired…"

CAH claimed that the similarities and differences between the native and foreign languages may facilitate or impair the learning of the L2. The theory labelled the facilitating aspect 'positive transfer' and the hindrance to acquisition as negative transfer or interference (Kasper, 1997; Franch, 1998:7).

The comprehensiveness of the term 'transfer' was contested and many researchers criticized it due to its theoretical connotations and preferred to use 'interference' instead (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008:3). Also, the currency of the term 'interference' was assailed using the same grounds employed to criticize its antecedent. Later studies suggested other terms for the linguistic and cultural phenomenon. Some researchers proposed the use of the term 'cross-linguistic influence' that encompasses a wide range of phenomena that includes transfer, interference, avoidance, borrowing, and L2-related aspects of language loss and linguistic failure (Franch, 1998:8).

Language transfer can take place from L1 to L2 which is known as 'forward transfer' and from L2 to L1 that is referred to as 'reverse transfer' (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008:12). Kecskes and Papp (2000: xvi) highlighted the bidirectional nature of 'transfer' by defining the term as: "…any kind of movement or influence of concepts,

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knowledge, skills, or linguistic elements (structures, forms), in either direction between the L1 and the subsequent language(s)."

Within the field of pragmatics, the influence that a previously acquired pragmatic system exerts on another is known as 'pragmatic transfer'. The term was introduced by Thomas (1983) who conceptualized it as the influence of a previously gained pragmatic knowledge on that acquired or being acquired later. Kasper (1992: 207) defined the term as "the influence exerted by learners' pragmatic knowledge of language and culture other than L2 on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information".

The term refers to a phenomenon that is different from language transfer because pragmatic knowledge is to a great extent independent from the linguistic knowledge although the two sometimes interweave with each other (Zegarac and Pennington, 2000:167).

The influence of the foreign learners' language and culture on the performance of pragmatic features in the TL may result in utterances that are considered inoperative because of the different pragmatic rules of the two languages. The utilization of the mother tongue's sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge when interacting with others using the second language usually results in 'perceptions and behaviors' that are deviant from those adopted by the speakers of the second language (Maeshiba et al., 2006:155).

The reason behind the phenomenon was explained by Kasper (1992: 220) as the "lack of culturally relevant schemata irrespective of linguistic proficiency might encourage or inhibit pragmatic transfer."

Thomas (1983) divided this type of transfer into two subclasses i.e. pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic transfer. The first is related to the appropriateness of the linguistic message and the second to the desired function and the adequacy of a speech act to the social context. Thomas (1983: 101) defined pragamlinguistic transfer by explicating that it is:

> the inappropriate transfer of speech act strategies from one language to another, or
> the transferring from the mother tongue to the target language of utterances which are
> semantically/syntactically equivalent, but which, because of different 'interpretive
> bias', tend to convey a different pragmatic force in the target language.

Kasper (1992: 209) added that it is the "process whereby the illocutionary force or politeness value assigned to particular linguistic material in L1 influence learners' perception and production of form-function mappings in L2."

On the other hand, Kasper (ibid) noted that the sociopragmatic transfer occurs when "the social perceptions underlying language users' interpretations and performance of linguistic action in L2 are influenced by their assessment of subjectively equivalent L1 contexts." Moreover, Cenoz (2003: 63) stated that the reason behind such failure is attributed to the speaker's unawareness of social and cultural norms that govern the realization of different speech acts in the foreign/second language that involve a different perception of social distance, power relations, and judgements of in/appropriateness of different behaviors.

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. a r t í c u l o   **Pragmatic Transfer in Sudanese University Students' Requests**

2.3. Requests

Speech acts is a concept in pragmatics and philosophy of language that refers to the principle that when people communicate they do not utter only grammatical constructs and words, but they perform certain acts via their utterances. These performed actions are called speech acts. There are different kinds of speech acts, such as apologies, compliments, invitations, promises, or requests. Searle (1969:16) pointed out that: "Speaking a language is performing speech acts, acts such as making statements, giving commands, asking questions, making promises, and so on…"

Speech acts are fulfilled if the hearer behaves according to the speakers' intentions. Speech acts are useful in accomplishing certain actions, affecting hearers' behaviors and attitudes, and ways of responding to others. In addition to those uses, speech acts are used to change 'situational states of affairs', such as sentencing, promising, requesting, thanking, apologizing, etc. (Bach, 2005:984).

According to Austin and Searle's classification of speech acts, requests come under the rubric of 'directives'. It is a pre-event utterance that is made to influence the hearer's course of action and urge him/her to perform an act for the benefit of one or both parties. Searle (1969:66) pointed out that a request is: "a future act A of H, which is considered as an attempt to get H to do an act which S wants H to do, and which S believes that H is able to do; and which it is not obvious that H will do in the normal course of events or of H's own accord."

Requests are categorized according to the function they accomplish such as requests for action or information, etc. (Bach & Harnish, 1979). A request posits a threat to the face [self-image] of both the requester and the requestee (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Structurally, a request consists mainly of three parts. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) divided a request set into (1) alerters, (2) head-act, and (3) internal and external modifications.

The first element of a request is the alerters which is also referred to as precursors and attention getters. This unit is defined as "external elements which function to draw the interlocutor's attention to the request." (Felix-Brasdefer, 2005:73). Examples for attention getters are: greetings, apologetic formulas, names, titles, etc.

The second element is the head act or the request proper which is the part of an utterance that expresses the request desired to be performed by the hearer. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) referred to the head-act as the smallest unit of a sentence that conveys the force of a request.

The third part is the external and internal modifications that are used to soften and mitigate or intensify the force of a request. These modifications are divided to upgraders and downgraders. Downgraders are used to reduce the force of a request, while upgraders are used to intensify its illocutionary force.

. a r t í c u l o   Pragmatic Transfer in Sudanese University Students' Requests

3. Methodology

The population of the study was the final year Sudanese university students. The total number of the sample was 200 male and female students. The subjects were chosen from eight national universities using a simple random sampling method. The subjects' ages were between twenty one and twenty six and they were enrolled in different academic programs. They share the same mother tongue; they speak the Arabic variety that is spoken in Central Sudan and Khartoum that is referred to in the present study as the Sudanese Colloquial Arabic (SCA).

The subjects studied English as a foreign language for nine years i.e. four years at basic school, three at the secondary, and two at tertiary level. During their study, the subjects were acquainted with the various aspects of English speech acts. They were presumed to be able to produce various types of request strategies in English. University students were chosen on the assumption that their academic and cultural backgrounds will facilitate production of representative and comparable request sets.

The study used an open ended questionnaire known as Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT) to collect data from its subjects. This data gathering instrument has many advantages. Parent (2002: 150) stated that the DCT has the advantage of: "controlling the contextual variables important to the study, as well as effectively comparing the strategies used by NSs and learners of the same language." The instrument gathers large amounts of speech acts data within short periods of time (Beebe & Cummings, 1996:80; Houck & Gass, 1996:46; Kasper & Roever, 2005:327). It also collects large corpuses of data from speakers of the same or different language(s) that could be described as comparable (Houck & Gass, 1996). Beebe and Cummings (1996: 75) noted that in many ways the DCT "reflect [s] the content expressed in natural speech".

The tool was criticized on the grounds that it fails to cater for "prosodic and nonverbal features of oral interaction" and that it puts no restraints on the time given to subjects to respond (Cohen, 1996: 25).

The WDCT employed was based on the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). The study used two versions of the test; one in English and the other in SCA. The Arabic version was based on the same items that appeared in the English one. The items represent nine socially differentiated scenarios that were chosen from the subjects' immediate social and academic life to assist in gathering realistic requests. A detailed description of each situation was presented. At the end of each item the subjects were asked to provide an appropriate written response in a blank provided.

Table (1) provides a brief description of the nine requests that the subjects were asked to produce in the two versions of the test.

. a r t í c u l o | **Pragmatic Transfer in Sudanese University Students' Requests**

Situation No.	Description
1	A student asks a head of department to write a recommendation letter.
2	A student asks a friend to use his/her mobile phone.
3	A summer school teacher asks a student to bring a book from another teacher.
4	A student asks a professor to raise his voice during a lecture.
5	A student asks a colleague to turn down music at a dorm.
6	A patient asks a young girl to bring blood test result at a clinic.
7	A student asks a dean of college to move his/her car at a graduation ceremony.
8	A student borrows lecture notes from a colleague.
9	A teacher asks a student to turn off a mobile phone during class.

Table No. (1): A brief description of the WDCT nine items

To ensure the validity and to improve the two tests, a pilot study was conducted and the feedback of six experts, viz. PhD holders was sought and the tasks were modified accordingly. To ensure the collection of realistic data, the two tests were answered by different groups as 100 students responded to the English version and another 100 did the Arabic one.

The subjects were provided with a comprehensive explanation of the nature of the test and how to respond to it as it was a relatively new type of data gathering method that they were not acquainted with. They were asked then to fill in blanks with written responses. The nature of the responses required by the WDCT was not specified as it may put constraints on the subjects' performance and may result in production of a limited number of requests. The subjects were given thirty minutes to complete the task.

All grammatical, structural, etc. errors that occurred in the data collected from the subjects were not dealt with as they are out of the scope of the present study. The study did not address the individual differences of the subjects nor provided information about it because it is out of its scope. It mainly focused on the identification and investigation of instances of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic transfer and not on the single subject's differences.

. a r t í c u l o   **Pragmatic Transfer in Sudanese University Students' Requests**

4. Results and Discussion

The data gathered from the study subjects found that their production of the speech act was influenced by their mother tongue and native culture. It showed several instances of pragmatic transfer. The subjects utilized many pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic rules of the SCA when realizing requests in English. The following is a detailed account and analysis of the pragmatic phenomenon found in the corpus. It starts with the pragmalinguistic transfer incidences followed by those of sociopragmatic transfer.

Firstly, with regard to the pragmalinguistic transfer the gathered data showed that:

1-Instead of using an English greeting as a precursor to their requests, many subjects used the Islamic greeting *asslamu 'alaikum*[1] in their responses to the English WDCT. Others used a literal translation of the formula which is 'peace be upon you'. The use of the culture specific routine is a violation to the pragmalinguistic norms of the foreign language caused by the influence of the subjects' native culture. The culture of the subjects determined their choice of the greeting formula which is according to the Islamic teachings is the primary greeting pattern. Islam advises its followers to start any encounter by greeting others using the Islamic routine. Many hadiths[2] encouraged Muslims to follow the example of Prophet Mohammed who instructed them to spread greetings among themselves, and described the practice as a major step towards loving each other (Muslim, 1972).

2- Some subjects used religious appealers in their English performance. They produced a literal translation of the SCA phrase '*allāh yibarik fīk*' which is a prayer that is widely used among Sudanese Muslims. The subjects used the formula as external modification to the head act. Religion plays an important role in the country as the majority are Muslims. The marker was used to encourage the hearer to comply with the request by appealing to his/her religious drive. Aspiring to obtain the good reward, mercy, and blessings of Allah the requestee was enticed to co-operate with the request. Also, the English equivalent of the Arabic expression i.e. 'God bless you' was added by some subjects at the end of their English requests as a religious routine. The use of the marker is not widespread in English due to the restricted role religion plays in the West. The pragmalinguistic norm is culture specific that reflects the influence of the subjects' culture.

3- Many subjects translated some words and expressions from the LI to L2, the following is a discussion of the most prominent cases:

A-Some subjects used erroneous translation of Arabic address terms in their English answers. This type of transfer, for instance, was manifested in the interpretation of the combination *al-saīd al-'amīd* which is widely used within the Sudanese academic circles to express deference for dean of colleges. The students translated it to 'Sir Dean' and used it in their responses to the English. The NL influenced the translation of the term as the two English words 'Mr.' and 'Sir' carry the same hue of meaning of the

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[1] The study uses the Library of Congress Arabic Romanization Symbols found at
https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/romanization/arabic.pdf
[2] Hadiths are a collection of narratives of Prophet Mohammed that constitute along with the Holy Quran the major guidance for Muslims.

Lingüística en la red. K o e l p u c s j s e q i l g r e **15 / 11 / 2016**
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. a r t í c u l o   **Pragmatic Transfer in Sudanese University Students' Requests**

Arabic word *al-saīd*. 'Sir' expresses more deference for the hearer than the neutral 'Mr." so the subjects preferred to choose it to show their respect. The respondents thought that a literal translation of the Arabic address term cluster is appropriate if used in the FL.

B- The majority of the subjects employed the Arabic address term '*ustadh*' which is an honorific title that means "teacher" and used it intensively in their English responses. The title is used exhaustively in academic institutions to show respect for educators. The students transliterated the honorific and used it as attention getter before their request sets.

C-The English expressions of 'do me a favor' and 'could you do me a favor' are used to get the hearer's pre-commitment to perform a request. The two expressions appeared in the study's English data with different variations all derived from the SCA pragmalinguistic norms. The two English formulas are simple but the subjects' mother tongue influence resulted in the deviation from the L2 pragmalinguistic norms. The two structures were produced by the subjects using translations from the NL. For instance, the subjects used the following structures in their English responses that carry the imprints of their first language:

1- I want from you to do me a favor.
1- I want a favor from you.
3- I need from you a big favor.

D-The English word 'favor' has two equivalents in the SCA, which are *khidmah* and *mus'adah* that literally mean "service" and "assistance" respectively. The concept of asking a hearer a favor was manifested in the production of some subjects that was hugely influenced by the Arabic varieties of the word. Asking a favor from the hearer was realized in a way that is deviant from the pragmalinguistic norms of the English and in line with that of the subjects' mother tongue. The following are some examples taken from the subjects' English answers:

1- Please serve me.
2- I want you in a service.
3- Can you do this service for me?
4- I beg you serve me.
5- Can you perform to me an assistance?

E- The local expression *khali 'indak iḥsas* that means "*have feelings*" is used by Sudanese to criticize others when they are being inconsiderate. In the local culture when someone preaches the rules of etiquette, s/he is described as being 'without feelings'. Feelings are closely associated with caring for others and respecting their need for privacy, personal territory, and freedom. Offending others in one way or another is not tolerated and wrongdoers are usually asked to have 'some feelings' and stop the offense. The structure was used by one subject when he admonished a roommate for playing loud music

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. a r t í c u l o | **Pragmatic Transfer in Sudanese University Students' Requests**

without recognizing his neighbors' rights. The subject used the following expression which is translated from the SCA and used it inappropriately in English:

1- Can't you feel we are studying here?

F- Several subjects literally translated popular SCA expressions and used them as replies to the English WDCT. The following are some examples that the subjects translated from their mother tongue followed by the original local expressions:

1- Can I take five minutes from your time?
mumkin akhud min zamank khamsa daqaia?

2- Can I talk by your phone?
mumkin atakalm bi talafunak?

3- Can I call from your mobile*?*
 mumkin atakalm bi talafunak?

4- Do you see you are the only one who has a mobile*?*
inta shaif nafasak alwahīd alī 'anduh talafun?

5- Please can you borrow me your lecture [notes] *?*
law samaḥta mumkin tasalifnī muhaḍaratak?

6- Could you turn down the music because I must sit to exam tomorrow and I know nothing?
mumkin tawaṭī al- ṣawṭ 'ashan ana bukrah 'indi imtiḥan wa ana ma 'arif shīī?

G- In addition to the different types of pragmatic transfer that appeared in the subjects' responses, the data displayed that the students' perception was also influenced by their linguistic and cultural background. For instance, the WDCT's description of item number (5) states clearly that the addressee is the respondent's cousin. Although the word 'cousin' was conspicuously included in the details of the situation, some subjects translated the Arabic structure 'my uncle's son' and utilized it instead of writing the English word. The subjects' mother tongue influence is evident as it differentiates between male and female cousins and between those from the mother's and father's sides. In local culture, the strongest allies are usually the cousins from the father's side. Their assistance and help is always sought to carry out different tasks. This preference may have led to the avoidance of the neutral English kinship term and to translate the SCA structure. The following is a response provided by one of the subjects:

1- My uncle's son could you give me the book.

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.artículo   Pragmatic Transfer in Sudanese University Students' Requests

Such type of transfer indicates that not only learners' production of the target language is effected by their mother tongue, but also their perception of the L2. Kecskes and Papp (2000: 109) pointed out that "cross-linguistic differences in discourse can affect production as well as comprehension."

4- Another type of prgamalinguistic transfer was made from FL to NL or what is known as reverse or backward transfer. Subjects mixed their Arabic responses with some English words. The target language had an influence on the subjects' performance using their mother tongue. Some subjects inserted English words into their Arabic answers in different positions and to different pragmatic effects. The English words were written either by using the English or the Arabic alphabet. The phenomenon could be attributed to the prestigious status the English language enjoys among Sudanese university students. It also may be the result of subjects' desire to impress others and appear as sophisticated and knowledgeable. The following are examples of this type of transfer taken from the study's Arabic data (the original responses were presented first then they were transcribed and translated):

1- please وطوا الصوت شوية
waṭua al- ṣawṭ shiwiah pilīz.
Turn down the volume please.

2- يا فلان please please.
pilīz pilīz ya filan
Please please (x)

3- please صايلنت يا جماعة عشان ما نعمل interruptيا اما تقفلوا التلفونات او اعملوها
ya jamaʻa ʻashan ma naʻmal intuhruhpt ya ima taqfilu al-talfunat aw aʻmalouha silint pilīz.
So as not to interrupt others please turn off the phones or put it on the silent mode.

4- OK ممكن تخففوا الصوت شوية عشان اقدر اركز
mumkin takhfidu al-ṣawṭ shiwiah ʻashan aqdar arakiz auki.
Can you turn down the volume a little so as I can study.

5- اتفضل كمل و sorry على المقاطعة
ītfaḍal kāmil wa sūrī ʻala al-muqataʻa.
Please go on and sorry for interrupting you.

6- sorry دايرنك تزح العربية عن الطريق عشان الخريجين داير يدخلوا
dairinak taziḥ al-ʻarabiah ʻan al-ṭarīq ʻashan al-khirijīn dair yidkhulu sūrī
We want you to move the car from the way so as to let the graduates in, sorry.

Secondly, the influence of the subjects' language and culture was manifested in the occurrence of sociopragmatic transfer. This type of pragmatic failure was shown mainly in the subjects' misperception of their

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social relation and distance with others and the degree of imposition of their requests. The following is a discussion of the phenomenon as appeared in the gathered data:

1- Several subjects produced a number of successive greetings in English. Although the subjects were expected to write short English greetings that they studied in different language textbooks, they used elaborated greetings that are characteristic of their native culture. Unlike the individualistic English culture, the collectivist Sudanese traditions put emphasis on the group and its wellbeing. In local communities, one is expected to exchange cascades of greetings with socially related others that include inquiries about their health, work, family, whereabouts, etc. As it is considered impolite and distancing to use a short or one set of greeting(s), the subjects preferred to resort to the sociopragmatic norms of their language and issued prolonged written greetings in the foreign language. The strategy was employed to show interest in the other and as a solidarity marker. The following are some examples taken from the subjects' responses to the English task:

    1- Hello, how are you Ms., I hope you are doing well, how is your family?
    2- Hi there, good evening, how are you?

2- Another type of sociopragmatic transfer is the subjects' exploitation of native discourse strategies that seek to push others to cooperate with their requests. Ignoring the imposition of the request and the distant social relation with others is a characteristic of the local collectivist community that prioritize cooperation among its members. Willingness to help others is a trait that is highly praised in local communities. Usually individuals try to win others' sympathy to ask them favors. An example of this is the exaggeration of the difficulty the speaker will overcome as a consequence of the hearer's compliance with a request. The idea of overstating a speaker's need to which a requestee is urgently required to grant a favor is a routine which is resorted to by natives. In such utterances, reality is overrepresented and the hearer's co-operation is portrayed as sorely needed to put the requester at ease. The scheme is used to put pressure on the hearer and to increase his/her sympathy with the speaker's wants. The following are examples taken from the subjects' responses to the English WDCT:

    1- I am falling in a big problem, so I need your help.
    2- Please my friend can you solve my problem? (the subject was asking to use a friend's mobile phone)
    3- I am in a difficult circumstances I have examination please turn down the music.
    4- I have a problem in lecture notes because I was ill.

3- The use of kinship address terms by subjects is an instance of sociopragmatic transfer that was found in their answers to the English test. The respondents addressed strangers using different terms that emphasize strong familial ties. To express in-group solidarity and politeness, Sudanese tend to refer to strangers as father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, uncle, etc. The routine is used intensively in the country as the

population is a kinship-based one. The gathered data contained intensive use of familial terms that were utilized to address strangers, for instance:

1- Can I send you my daughter?
2- Dear father would you move your car.
3- Please dear young sister could you help me.

4- In some of the subjects' English responses, the speakers assumed the role of one the hearer's senior family members. When resorting to the strategy, the requester pretends to be an older relative of the requestee so as to increase the likelihood of his/her compliance. The tactic invests the respect of senior family members that characterizes the Sudanese society and makes obeying their orders imperative. The routine is commonly used when addressing junior members of the local society. The technique appeared in many instances of the subjects' answers to the English test, for example:

1- Can you help your aunt baby?
2- Can you bring a blood test result for your uncle?

5- In Sudanese culture it is a common routine to ask a child to 'run' or to 'hurry up' to somewhere to fetch or do something. The tactic exploits the hyperactivity of children, their need to play, and love for fun to accomplish the required task. The speaker adds fun to the performance of the desired request by hiding the task and putting emphasis on the amusement. The English data showed that the strategy was used as response to situation number (3) where the subject assumes the role of a teacher at a summer school organized by students' union and asks a student to bring him/her a book from the other side of a school. Some examples of the subjects' use of the strategy were as follows:

1- I want from you to run to the office in the other side of the school and bring me a book.
2- Ahmed run quickly and bring me the book from Ustaz Ali.

It is to be noted that the Arabic data contained traces of the same technique. The following are illustrative examples of the scheme that could be compared to the English ones above:

1-*'alaik allāh ājri al-maktab al-tani jīb lai kitab al-riadiyat.*
I ask you in the name of Allah to run to the other side and bring the math book.

2- *t'al ya wīlaid ājri jīb lai al-kitab sarī'*
Come, little boy, run and bring me the book quickly.

. a r t í c u l o   **Pragmatic Transfer in Sudanese University Students' Requests**

6- Another local request pattern that is widely used with children consists of telling one's intention to 'send' the child somewhere to bring something or to perform an action. It is used to draw the attention of the addressee to the oncoming request as children are known to be easily distracted. Although the formula could be used with other age groups, the Sudanese use it exclusively with kids. Using it with senior members may be perceived as an insult because it implies that the speaker has power over the listener. Subjects exploited the sociopragmatic norms of their native culture when they used the pattern many times in their responses to the English WDCT. The students used it in their responses to situations numbers (3) and (6) where the addressees were described as younger than the subjects. For example:

1- Can I send you my daughter?
2- I like to send you.
3- I want to send you to bring the book.

The Arabic corpus also showed some instances of the use of the same pattern:

1- *t'al law samaḥta 'awazah arsilak.*
Come here please I want to send you.(the speaker is a female)

2- *t'al ya…alnarasilak.*
Come here …. I want to send you.

3- *t'ali ya 'asal arasilik.*
Come here honey I want to send you. (addressed to a female)

5. Conclusions

This study aimed at exploring the influence of the Arabic language and culture on the Sudanese university students' production of requests in English. It attempted to discover and analyze instances of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic transfer in the subjects' production of the speech act. It used two WDCTs one in SCA and the other in English to collect examples of the speech act from its two hundred subjects.

The study found that the performance of the students was influenced by their mother tongue and native culture. It found several instances of pragmatic transfer as subjects used the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic norms of the SCA when realizing the speech act in English. It showed that the Islamic religion and the kinship based culture had an impact on the students' performance. The subjects resorted to pragmalinguistic transfer when they produced Islamic greetings and religious appealers in their English responses. Also, such pragmatic failure occurred when the students translated some words and expressions from the SCA to English such as the professional terms '*al-saīd al-'amīd*' and '*ustadh*' and the Arabic equivalents

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of the English word 'favor' and the expressions 'do me a favor' and 'could you do me a favor' in addition to other local structures. It found also that the subjects made reverse prgamalinguistic transfer from FL to NL when they mixed their answers to the Arabic WDCT with English words.

With regard to the other type of pragmatic transfer i.e. sociopragmatic transfer, the study found that the subjects' used the sociopragmatic norms of their language and culture when responding to the English WDCT the thing that resulted in expressions and structures that are deviant from the rules of the target language. This type of pragmatic failure was manifested in the subjects' use of successive elaborated greetings, native discourse strategies intended to gain the sympathy of others, kinship terms with strangers, and in the misperception of the social distance and relation with others.

The current study dealt with the phenomenon in request sets, but other speech act structures may include more clues about pragmatic transfer, its nature, and causes. Development of pragmatic competence is a good strategy to help students overcome such problem. Raising students' awareness about cultural differences assists them to distinguish the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features of foreign languages and thus produce acceptable pragmatic features.

The researcher suggests the following topics to be addressed in future research:

1\Pragmatic transfer in the production of other speech acts.

2\Investigation of the effect of pragmatic instruction using a longitudinal study that assesses the performance of the foreign language learners before, during, and after they receive pragmatic instruction.

3\A longitudinal study could be carried out on how and through what stages the learners of English as a foreign language acquire and develop pragmatic competence.

4\ Investigation of the phenomenon of the reverse transfer and its causes.

5\ Study that differentiates between the positive and negative pragmatic transfer.

Khalid Tag-Eldin
Assistant Professor
Shaqra University
khalidmogadam@live.com

. artículo | Pragmatic Transfer in Sudanese University Students' Requests

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