



## DIRECTIVES IN L2: ANALYZING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE OF PAKISTANI ENGLISH LEARNERS

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### Abstract

*Realization of directives namely ordering, commanding and asking effectively in English language is a problem for EFL speakers as they cannot recognize underlying pragmatic functions of speech acts (Beebe et al 1990 and Alam and Gill, 2016). L2 speakers usually look at the semantic meanings of the words which may cause communication breakdown as well as discourtesy in discourse. The research aims at finding similarities and differences in terms of using directives between Pakistani English learners (here on PELs) and native speakers (here on NSs). To achieve the objectives of the study quantitative method approach research design was utilized. The population for the study was native speakers from England and non-native speakers from Pakistan. The participants of the study were chosen through non-random purposive sampling technique and a total number of 80 samples (20 native British students studying in The Sheffield College, South Yorkshire England and 60 non-native Pakistani students of BS English studying in public-sector colleges of Lahore, Pakistan) were selected for collecting responses through DCTs. Data were analyzed per model of analysis of semantic formulae as proposed by Blum-Kalka and Olshtain (1984). The data were analyzed through SPSS. The results of the study were: (a) Pakistani EFL learners, with Punjabi as L1, were found deficient in terms of accuracy in uttering directives as compared to native speakers, (b) Pakistani EFL learners were found more direct as compared to native speakers, and (c) PELs were using less politeness strategies as compared to native speakers. The implications of the research are for the EFL learners, EFL teachers, curriculum designers, authors, and assessment purposes.*

**Keywords:** Directives, speech acts, native speakers, politeness, EFL speakers, Pragmatic competence

### Introduction

In the present age of globalization, information technology, and economic interdependence, communication among people belonging to different nations, cultures, and linguistic backgrounds have increased many times. With this advancement the world has reduced to a global village which has helped remove geographical boundaries and people have come closer. They can easily communicate with one another. Held, McGrew, Goldblatt & Parraton (1999) while supporting the argument claim that globalization may be considered as the widening,

deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of present-day social life,

The current age witnesses that English language has emerged as an international language and most of the communication among people belonging to different cultures and languages, mostly non-natives, takes place in it. According to McKay (2002) English is one of the five most extensively spoken languages of the world. It can be safely said that there are almost 427 million native English speakers, and there are arguably about 750 million second and foreign language speakers of English throughout the world (Crystal, 1997). Adding to it, Crystal (2003) estimates that up to 80 % of global communication in English takes place between non-native speakers. Kikpatrick (2005) lends support to this and adds that English is used more to communicate between non-native speakers of English than it is between native speakers. So English can be called a global language in all respects.

L2 communication, between non-native speakers as well as between native and non-native speakers, is a remarkable feat. It involves a complex process of acquiring second or foreign language (L2), comprehending and being understood in communication and interaction. In order to meet the challenges regarding acquisition of English language for the purpose of efficient communication non-native nations are striving hard. They are spending their energy, resources and time on second language acquisition.

Among a variety of aims of Second Language Acquisition an important one requires non-natives to speak and write English as grammatically, lexically and pragmatically correct as spoken and written by natives. The researchers in most of the speech act studies (e.g. House 1982; Thomas 1983; Cohen and Olshtain 1981; Kasper 1981; Blum-Kulka 1982 etc) have claimed that non-native speakers fail to communicate effectively. In other words they show pragmatic failure. The researchers also claim that second language learners despite having excellent grammatical and lexical command over English language demonstrate failure in following pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic rules of language.

Although there are several reasons of pragmatic failure yet cross-linguistic differences, negative pragmatic transfer and the issue of variability may be held the main reasons. Widdowson (1978) lent support to the idea by arguing that second language learners remain unable to communicate effectively because they are just liable to transfer 'rules of use' (having to do with contextual precision) as those of 'usage' (related to grammatical accuracy). Kasper (1992) pinpointed another reason of pragmatic failure on the part of EFL speakers. He claimed that two types of negative pragmatic transfer i.e. pragmatic linguistic transfer and socio-pragmatic transfer might interfere with successful performance of speech acts. Apart from cross-linguistic differences and negative pragmatic transfer the issue of variability is another hindrance in the way of accurate speech act realization by second language learner. The issue may be explicated in three types of variability i.e. cross-cultural variability, intra-cultural situational variability, and individual variability. Hence, there might be systematic differences in speech acts' realization which depend on the social restriction embedded in the context.

The ability to realize different speech acts like request, apology, orders, suggestions etc. appropriately (according to acceptable universal norms) is termed as pragmatic competence. The concept of pragmatic competence has been used by Canale and Swain (1980), Bachman and Planer (1982), and Bachman (1990) as component of their models of communicative competence. According to Bachman (1990) pragmatic competence consists of two types of competences (1) illocutionary competence, which means knowledge of speech acts and speech functions and (2) socio-linguistic competence, the ability to use language appropriately in socio-cultural contexts.

Empirical Inter Language Pragmatics (ILP) investigations suggest that pragmatic competence of L2 learners can be gauged in two ways. The first method is raters' evaluation of the responses of EFL/ESL learners. In most of the ILP investigations raters are native speakers. However, there are some studies which have requested non-native speakers, having wide experience of teaching pragmatics, to evaluate the responses. The second method is that of approximation. According to this method pragmatic competence of non-native speakers are compared for similarities and differences with that of native speakers' pragmatic competence. The current study, relates to second method of measuring pragmatic competence, aims at analyzing the pragmatic competence in realizing various speech acts of both Pakistani EFL learners and British native speakers.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the current global world EFL speakers are required to use grammatically and pragmatically accurate language. Although they are able to speak grammatically correct sentences yet they show pragmatic failure while uttering sentences in English language. Beeb et al (1990) while supporting the argument claim that communication in English language in general and realization of various speech acts effectively in English language, in particular, is a problem for EFL speakers as they cannot identify underlying pragmatic functions of speech acts. As PELs are considered L2 learners they also face pragmatic difficulty while communicating in target language which in turn may result in communication breakdown or strained relationship between NSs and PELs. According to Asif, Deng & Hussain (2019) Pakistani L2 learners are usually unable to handle the situations entailing pragmatic abilities. In Pakistani context few research studies have been conducted on the speech acts of compliment, request and apology (e.g. Irshad, Irfan ullah, & Shehzad , 2016; Saleem, Azam & Saleem, 2014; Alam and Gill, 2016 etc). There is dearth of research on directives which are considered highly face threatening speech acts and need special focus by ILP researchers. Hence, the current study aims at analyzing the pragmatic competence in realizing speech acts of directives by both Pakistani EFL learners and British native speakers.

### **Research Questions**

1. Is there any significant difference between Pakistani English learners' and native speakers' realization of directive strategies?
2. How do Pakistani English learners and native speakers use directive strategies with regard to mitigation devices?

### Significance of the study

As the current study aims at analyzing pragmatic competence of Pakistani EFL learners in realization of directives, the findings of the study will be useful for L2 learners, English teachers, and researchers. The study will help English learners in identifying their pragmatic deficiencies. It will help them to learn how to perform speech acts i.e. directives, appropriately. It will also provide insight to English teachers and will convince them to adopt such strategies and activities in their teaching as aim at enhancing pragmatic competence side by side grammatical competence of their students. The findings of the study will be useful for researchers as they may conduct more research on English learners' pragmatic competence and suggest ways to improve it.

### Literature review

The current section has been divided into two parts. The first part is based on the definitions and explanation of related theories and terms. This part has been represented in order to provide scientific precision to the study. The second part entails past studies related to the research problem of the study.

### Definition of pragmatics

Several linguists have attempted to define pragmatics. According to Yule (1996) pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning as communicated between interlocutors, and interpreted by a listener or a reader. Mey (2001) also defines pragmatics in some other words. According to him pragmatics studies the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society. Hence pragmatics focuses on the construction and interpretation of meaning in a given context and the influence of the context on meaning.

### Speech act theory

One of the main concepts in pragmatics is a speech act. Speech act theory emerged in 1960s by Austin's (1962) introduction of speech acts and the notion of locutionary (literal meaning), illocutionary (intended meaning), and perlocutionary (actual effect) acts and accordingly felicity conditions were proposed by Austin (1962) and formulated by Searle (1976, as cited in Renkema 2004). It was then Searle's (1976) categorization of different speech acts and Grice's (1975) maxims which earmarked for discussions and studies of the time (e.g. Wunderlich, 1980; Young, 1989). Direct and indirect speech acts were recognized and a great number of researchers devoted their studies to recognize them within speech types (e.g. Clark, 1979; Brown, 1980; Cheng & Warren, 2003).

### Speech acts of directive

The speech act of directive is one of the five main speech acts' categorization developed by Searle (1976). It reflects an attempt on the part of the speaker to get the hearer to do something. While defining directive Jucker and Taavitsainen (2008) state that directive is an utterance of the speaker to make the hearer do something for the speaker. Searle (1969) through (Leech, 1993:64) explains that the directive speech act is an illocutionary act that aims at producing an effect in the form of an action taken by the addressees.

Syntactically speaking directives can be expressed through different types of sentences e.g. through imperative, declarative, and interrogative sentences. The sentence like "*Polish my shoes*" is an example of imperative sentence. Another statement "*You are supposed to type this*"



*letter first and have lunch break later on.*” is an instance of declarative sentence. Likewise hearer can be directed using interrogative sentence e.g. *Can you type this letter, please?* While shedding more light on the structure of directive speech act Jucker and Taavistsainen (2008) add that directive speech act contain a verb and a requested task performed by the speaker and the hearer.

According to Lailiyah (2015) a wide variety of actions can be performed through directive speech act such as ordering, requesting, asking, commanding, suggesting, advising, and inviting and so on. Jucker and Taavistsainen (2008) put forward 20 sub-categories of directive speech act which are advising, admonishing, ordering, asking, begging, challenging, dismissing, recommending, excusing, forbidding, instructing, permitting, inviting, requesting, requiring, suggesting, warning, commanding, urging and challenging.

Although all the directive speech acts are face threatening yet ordering, forbidding, requesting, warning, admonishing are more severe in this regard. For the current study the directive speech acts of ordering, asking, and commanding have been chosen because considerable research studies have not been conducted on them.

### **Sub-fields of pragmatics**

Within the field of pragmatics several subfields developed which include cross-cultural pragmatics, intercultural pragmatics and interlanguage pragmatics. A cross cultural pragmatics’ approach is comparative. It analyzes and compares linguistic behavior of speakers of various languages and representatives of various cultures and identities (Wierzbicka, 1991). On the other hand, intercultural pragmatics, based on socio-cognitive perspective, is defined as “ the way the language system is put to use in social encounters between human beings who have different first languages, communicate in a common language, and usually represent different cultures” (p. 14).

Another important subfield of pragmatics is interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) which focuses on non-native speakers’ (NNS) comprehension and production of speech acts (Kasper & Dahl, 1991). Among several concepts ILP entails communicative competence as its central concept. Many scholars view and analyze pragmatic competence too within this construct.

### **Communicative competence**

The term ‘communicative competence’ was first coined by Hymes (1966, 1972) in response to Chomsky’s (1965) notion of competence based on rule-governed creativity. Hymes distinguished between linguistic and communicative knowledge to highlight the differences between the knowledge of language forms and the knowledge that enables a person to communicate functionally and interactively. Communicative competence empowers language learners and users to convey and deduce messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within precise contexts. In other words it allows the users to interact appropriately. A speaker with communicative competence is able to produce appropriate utterances and understand the instant conversational content, and the general extensive social-cultural context.

The notion of communicative competence was further developed by Canale and Swain (1980). They defined four components of communicative competence namely grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence, and included pragmatic competence into the category of sociolinguistic competence. Bachman’s (1982) model is too noteworthy in this regards which divided language competence into organization competence and pragmatic competence.

### Pragmatic competence

In a recent conceptualization of pragmatic competence, Timpe Laughlin, Wain, and Schmidgall (2015) viewed it as a combination and synthesis of multiple components of pragmatic functional and socio-cultural knowledge. Components of pragmatic-functional knowledge include speech acts, functions, cohesion, coherence, register/modality, naturalness, dialects/varieties, formulaic expressions, cultural references, figures of speech, and genre. Components of sociocultural knowledge are topic, role of participants, norms, convention of interaction, power relations, gender, and age. In this view, pragmatic competence represents “a conglomerate of multiple distinct, yet interrelated knowledge components” and a “mastery of strategically relating linguistic and nonlinguistic contextual information in order to generate meaning beyond the grammatical level in oral, written, or a hybrid mode of communication” (p.19). The common idea of the above-mentioned studies refers to pragmatic competence as a distinct component in a language, necessary and crucial to achieve communicative competence, and interconnected and actively interacting with other aspects of language competence.

Although there are several areas of research in ILP like language transfer, acquisition of grammar and pragmatics, stages of SL/FL pragmatic development etc. yet the main area of ILP research is concerned with speech acts and their acquisition, comprehension and production by non-native speakers (Kasper & Dahl, 1991).

### Related Studies

Great number of studies has been done about different types of speech acts examining variables such as proficiency, gender, cultural background, effect of instruction and so forth. The most important breakthrough in the research of speech acts realization was the investigation done by Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984) which focused on **requests and apologies** in eight languages: Australian English, American English, British English, Canadian French, Danish, German, Hebrew and Russian. It analyzed cross-cultural differences of the particular speech act realization under three contextual factors which were defined by Brown and Levinson (1987), namely, P, D, and R. The data were elicited through a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) where participants were given prompts with certain situations and were instructed to write what they would say. The CCSARP classified categories used by NSs and NNSs according to a coding scheme, analyzed their occurrence, and identified and investigated similarities and differences.

Brubaek (2012) investigated Norwegian students' pragmatic competence in the production of **request** in English language. Forty students answered a simplified version of a discourse completion test (DCT) consisting of four different situations in which students have to make requests. The results indicated that most of the students were at one of the beginning stages of English pragmatic development. Their language use was characterized by first language (L1) transfer and overuse of familiar and informal expressions. When faced with more formal and demanding situations, they fell short and clearly lacked the knowledge and competence that would allow them to communicate successfully.

Another significant investigation of the types **of apology** used by Egyptian EFL learners as speech act was conducted by Marghany, M. M (2012). He focused his research on socio-pragmatic factors affecting the development of apology strategies used by Egyptian EFL learners. As far as methodology is concerned ten English-majoring Egyptian undergraduates participated in this study. They were asked to complete ten situations on apology strategies



included in a written discourse completion task (DCT). The results of the study indicated that Egyptian EFL learners were found to mainly employ three apology strategies namely, justification of violation cause (JVC), IFID, and acknowledgment of responsibility (AOR). It was also found that Egyptians tended to use IFID strategy with highest frequencies when they have equal social power in order to maintain their close relationships.

Torghabeh and Rabieefar (2015) analyzed the students' performance of speech act of **ordering** and its similarities and differences between English native speakers and Iranian EFL learners. For achieving the research aim a DCT consisting of 20 different situations was distributed among 150 participants in Iran and the United States. Data were analyzed by employing percentage and chi-square. The results reveal both similarities and differences in using speech act of ordering in such a way that both native speakers and Iranian EFL learners used almost the same strategies for ordering but differed in the frequency of applying them.

Saleem, Azam & Saleem (2014) investigated the use of **apology** strategies in English by Pakistani EFL university students in Pakistan. The study was based on Holmes' (1990) and Blum-Kalka's (1989) apology speech act sets. The results of the study reveal that out of 106 almost all the respondents (105) used "explanation or account" (there was terrible traffic) and 97 used "explicit apology" (sorry). Interestingly none of the respondents reports using "recognizing H as deserving apology" (you are right) and "acknowledgement of responsibility" (oh, I made a mistake). There is no statistically significant difference in use of apology strategies between male and female respondents.

Alam and Gill (2016) investigated the functions and effectiveness of Pushto and Saraiki English language learners' pragmatic transfer from L1 to L2 that facilitates learning English. This study investigates the learners' accomplishment of speech acts such as **apology and requests** in the target language by relying on the linguistic conventions and pragmatic norms of their mother tongue. A qualitative method and two data collection tools are used in the process of collecting and analyzing the data that were written discourse completion tasks (DCTs) and semi-structured interviews. The data revealed that Pashto speakers were more pragmatic and indirect in the realization of speech acts on requests and more direct in apologies whereas Saraiki speakers were more indirect and polite during the accomplishment of speech act.

Another study operationalizing the speech act of compliment in Pakistani context was conducted by Irshad, Irfan ullah, & Shehzad (2016). The first objective of the study was to explore what type of compliments in English were used by Pakistani undergraduate students. The second objective was finding the recurrence of utilization of compliments among male and female Pakistani students. In order to meet the objectives the researchers utilized quantitative research design method even the nature of the data was qualitative. As far as the samples of the study were concerned they comprised 200 graduate students studying in 4 different Pakistani universities located in Islamabad and Mansehra, Pakistan. The students were selected through non-random purposive convenient sampling method. Discourse Completion Test (DCT) was used for the purpose of data collection. The data were coded and analyzed quantitatively. The results of the study indicated that Pakistani undergraduates both male and female immediately pay compliment where they understand the circumstance. The study uncovered some non-uses of the compliments which convey that pragmatic ability of Pakistani students might be improved through pragmatic instruction.

Asif, Deng & Hussain (2019) has lately investigated the phenomenon of pragmatic failure of Pakistani L2 learners. The study aimed at examining the relationship between pragmatics and language proficiency. In order to assess the samples' linguistic proficiency Oxford Quick Placement Test (1999) was used. The samples having Urdu as their L1, 80 in number, were selected from two private sector universities (40 from each university) namely University of Management and Technology Lahore, Pakistan and Minhaj University, Lahore, Pakistan. The data gathered were analyzed through SPSS software (version 22). In order to evaluate data One Way ANOVA was run to see the level of significance among three groups which were High, Middle and Low. The results indicated that Pakistani learners showed pragmatic failure in their performance. They also showed incapability in language proficiency. However, the study suggested that there was a significant relationship between pragmatics and language proficiency. It was also found that there was no considerable difference between male and female learners in pragmatic field.

Inter-language pragmatics has pre-dominant research in speech act paradigm. The most well-studied speech acts are those examined in the CCSARP: requests (e. g. Kasper, 1989; Blum-Kulka, 1991; Alam and Gill, 2016, Brubaek, 2003 etc) and apologies (e. g. Cohen & Olshtain, 1981b; Saleem, Azam & Saleem 2014; Alam and Gill, 2016,). Other speech acts that have been analyzed in ILP include complaints (e. g. Tatsuki, 2000; Wijayanto, Laila, Prasetyarini, & Susiati, 2013 etc.), compliments and compliment responses (Chen, 2010; Chen & Boonkongsan, 2012; Chen & Rau, 2011; Yun, 2015; Irshad, Irfan ullah, & Shehzad 2016), and refusals (Allami & Naeimi, 2011; Eslami-Rasekh, 2010; Keshavarz, Eslami-Rasekh, & Ghahraman, 2006; Nelson, Carson, Al Batal, & ElBakary, 2002; Ren, 2013)

In the light of above literature it is established that much of ILP research has been conducted on the speech acts of requests, apologies, compliments etc. while there is lesser investigation on highly face threatening acts like directives (ordering, asking, and commanding) particularly in Pakistani L2 context where according to Asif, Deng & Hussain (2019) L2 learners are usually inapt to handle the situations involved pragmatic abilities especially when there is a need to produce and respond to speech acts like directives.

### **Methodology**

As the study was focused on analysis of pragmatic competence of the Pakistani English speakers for which descriptive design was utilized. The quantitative method was utilized.

### **Population**

The population of the study was undergraduate non-native Pakistani English language learners studying in public sector colleges of Lahore district, Province of the Punjab, Pakistan. The undergraduate native students belonging to England were also considered as population of the current study.

### **Sampling**

The subjects for the present study were selected through non-random convenient purposive sampling. According to Nunan (2002) purposive sampling is advantageous as it is purposeful selection or procedural selection. Those speakers were selected who presented themselves voluntarily. The sampling size was as under:



1. A sample of 60 BS English Pakistani students (with Punjabi as L1), studying in public-sector colleges of Lahore, Pakistan, was approached and their responses were obtained.
2. Another sample of 20 students (natives) from The Sheffield College, South Yorkshire, England was asked to respond to a DCT in English language. The data served as baseline data for better analysis of directive speech act realization.

### Data collection instruments

Measuring pragmatic competence by simple questions and answer is comparatively difficult. For this purpose a Discourse completion task (DCT) was designed as modalities discussed by Billmyer and Varghese (2000) for designing effective DCTs with suitable interlocutors. The DCT aimed at eliciting participants responses of directive speech acts. Directive speech acts were chosen because they were considered highly 'face threatening acts' (Brown & Levinson 1978) as they could lead to unintentional offense and communication breakdown if they were not performed accurately. In the DCT the situations from 1 to 11 belonged to order or command speech acts. First 9 responses were for higher (H) level situations while last two were for equal (E) level situations. The responses belonging to lower situations could not be included as individuals belonging to lower status or age seldom pass orders to higher ones. Given situations DCT was coded i.e. SE -1 to SE -11 in English DCT. The DCT was then piloted with 10 Pakistani EFL learners and 3 native speakers prior to the main study for the purpose of validity and reliability. Most of the situations were eliciting relevant responses except situation numbers SE-6 and SE-11 which were improved for better elicitation.

### Analysis of directive speech act

For the purpose of analyzing participants' speech act production coding of linguistic expressions or semantic formulae method was used. The responses were classified into various categories drawn at directness levels based on the coding system adopted from Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) and categories pertaining to modification devices as presented by Edmondson (1981), House and Kasper (1981), and Edmondson and House (1989) frameworks, which had been extensively used in cross-cultural research studies like Pishghadam & Rasouli (2011), Dalton-Puffer (2003), Shamas and Afghari (2011) etc.

**Table 1:** Coding framework representing directness and indirectness levels

| Serial Number | Expression and type                     | Examples  |
|---------------|---|---|
| 1             | Direct expressions                      |   |
|               | 1. Mood derivable                       | e.g. Clean your room, please.                       |
|               | 2. Explicit Performatives               | e.g. I am asking you to clean up your room.         |
|               | 3. Implicit/Hedged performatives        | e.g. I would like to ask you to clean up your room. |
|               | 4. Locution derivable                   | e.g. You will have to clean up your room.           |
| 2             | 5. Scope stating                        | e.g. I really wish you'd clean up this mess.        |
|               | Indirect expressions                    |   |
| 6             | I. Conventional indirect                |   |
|               | 6. Language specific suggestory formula | e.g. How about cleaning up this mess?               |

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 7. Reference to preparatory condition | e.g. Could you clean up the room, please? |
| II. Non-conventional indirect         |   |
| 8. Strong hints                       | e.g. You left the room in a mess.         |
| 9. Mild hints                         | e.g. Is this room a storehouse?           |

Table 1 representing the framework, adapted and modified, for the purpose of eliciting fine-tuned responses, comprises two distinct levels of directive expressions: direct and indirect. Each level has further its own types. Direct directives have mood derivable/ imperative, explicit performative, implicit / hedged performative and locution derivable. Indirect directives have been further divided into two categories i.e. conventional indirect expressions and non-conventional indirect expressions. Conventional indirect responses include scope statement, language specific suggestory formula, and reference to preparatory condition. Non-conventional indirect directives include strong hints and mild hints.

**Table 1: Coding framework reflecting mitigation devices**

| Internal mitigation devices   | External mitigation devices   |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Checking on availability</b> e.g. "Do you have some extra time to clean up the mess here?"</li> <li>2. <b>Getting pre-commitment</b> e.g. "Will you do me a favor? Type this letter first and then have your lunch."</li> <li>3. <b>Grounder</b> e.g. "I have noticed that you are doing one wheeling. Can I have your license please?"</li> <li>4. <b>Sweetener</b> e.g. "You are a very good boy. Would you clean your room quickly?"</li> <li>5. <b>Disarmer</b> e.g. "Excuse me, I hope you will not consider me a strict boss. Is there any chance of completing report first and then have lunch break?"</li> <li>6. <b>Cost minimizer</b> e.g. "Pardon me, but could you give me a favour and let my child not watch TV unless he finishes his homework because her teacher often complaints about his</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Downgraders (Syntactic and lexical)               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Syntactic downgraders                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Interrogative</i> e.g. "Could you do the cleaning up?"</li> <li>2. <i>Negation</i> e.g. "Excuse me sir, I hope you won't mind showing me your license."</li> <li>3. <i>Past tense</i> e.g. "I wanted to ask you to type report first and then have lunch break."</li> <li>4. <i>Embedded 'if' clause</i> e.g. "I would be happy if you immediately clean up your room."</li> </ol> </li> <li>b. Lexical downgraders                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Consultative devices</i> e.g. "Do you think that you can live in this messed up room?"</li> <li>2. <i>Understaters</i> e.g. "Could you type this report before having lunch break?"</li> <li>3. <i>Hedges</i> e.g. "It would really helpful if you mark the answer sheets well in time."</li> <li>4. <i>Downtoners</i> e.g. "Will you be able to submit the assignments within due date?"</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> <li>B. Upgraders               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Intensifiers</i> e.g. "Clean up this mess, its disgusting."</li> <li>2. <i>Expletives</i> e.g. "You still have not typed this urgent report!"</li> </ol> </li> </ol> |

incomplete home work.”

Table 2, reflecting the adapted and modified framework, concerns mitigation devices which are used to mitigate or intensify the impact of directives as FTAs. These devices have been divided into internal and external modification devices. Internal modification devices include checking on availability, getting a pre-commitment, grounder etc. External modification devices comprise downgraders and upgraders. Downgraders have syntactic and lexical or phrasal categories in them while upgraders have only two categories i.e. intensifiers and expletives.

### **Procedure**

In the line of assumption that there is difference of realization of directive strategies between native and non-native speakers all the public-sector colleges of Lahore offering BS English were visited for an informal interaction to have background knowledge. Formal permission for conducting the research had been acquired via written letter. For data collection the DCTs were administered to the participants by the researchers personally. As far as data from England were concerned, one of researchers' close friends who has been residing in the city of Sheffield, England for the last 15 years, and had been working as research assistant in The Sheffield College was requested to help in this regard. The DCT for native speakers were sent to him via e mail. He administered it among the final semester students of The Sheffield College and collected their responses.

### **Data Analysis**

Data for frequencies were analyzed quantitatively for numerical inferences for the use of different strategies in a transformational parallel method per Model of analysis of semantic formulae of speech act proposed by Blum-Kalka and Olshtain (1984).

### **Findings**

This section deals with the distribution of directive strategies used by PELs and NSs in their responses.

**Table 1:** *Coding framework representing directness and indirectness levels*

| <b>Expression and type</b>              | <b>NSs (%)</b> | <b>PELs (%)</b> |
|---|----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Direct expressions</b>               |                |                 |
| 1. Mood derivable                       | 84 (34.71%)    | 352 (53.33%)    |
| 2. Explicit Performatives               | 00 (00%)       | 106 (16.06%)    |
| 3. Implicit/Hedged performatives        | 04 (1.65%)     | 21 (3.81%)      |
| 4. Locution derivable                   | 10 (4.13%)     | 36 (5.45%)      |
| 5. Scope stating                        | 60 (24.79%)    | 22 (3.33%)      |
| Sub-total of direct expressions         | 158 (65.28%)   | 537 (81.98%)    |
| <b>Indirect expressions</b>             |                |                 |
| <b>I. Conventional indirect</b>         |                |                 |
| 6. Language specific suggestory formula | 08 (3.30%)     | 08 (1.21%)      |
| 7. Reference to preparatory condition   | 60 (24.79%)    | 18 (2.72%)      |
| <b>II. Non-conventional indirect</b>    |                |                 |
| 8. Strong hints                         | 16 (6.61%)     | 93 (14.09%)     |
| 9. Mild hints                           | 00 (00%)       | 04 (0.60%)      |
| Sub-total of indirect expressions       | 84 (34.7%)     | 123 (18.62%)    |

|             |              |              |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Grand Total | 242 (100.0%) | 660 (100.0%) |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|

Table 1 indicates the frequency and percentage of different types of directive strategies used by PELs and NSs. The strategies, used by PELs and NSs, showing noticeable difference were *mood derivable*, *explicit performative*, *scope stating strategy*, *reference to preparatory condition* and *strong hint*. The majority of the speakers, both PELs and NSs, used *mood derivable* strategies i.e. 352 (53%) and 84 (34%) respectively. The number of 106 (16%) PELs used *explicit performative* strategy while no NS used this strategy in their responses. Another significant result indicated by the table is the use of *scope stating strategy*. PELs used this strategy 22 (3%) times while NSs used it 60 (24%) times which shows significant difference between the use of this strategy. As far as *reference to preparatory condition* strategy is concerned it also shows noticeable results i.e. PELs used this strategy 18 (2%) times while NSs used it 60 (24%) times. *Strong hint* strategy which falls under non-conventional indirect strategies also shows distinctive results. PELs opted to use this strategy 93 (14%) times while NSs used it 16 (6%) times which shows evident difference.

The semantic formulae, employed by PELs and NSs, showing negligible difference were *implicit/hedged performative*, *locution derivable*, *language specific suggestory formula* and *mild hint*. PELs employed hedged performative strategy 21 (3%) times while NSs employed this strategy 4 (1%) times. *Locution derivable strategy* was used by PELs 36 (5%) times while NSs used this strategy 10 (4%) times. Another strategy named *language specific suggestory formula* was employed by PELs for 8 (1%) times while NSs for 8 (3%) times. As far as *mild hint* strategy was concerned PELs employed it for 4 (0.60%) times while NSs did not use it in their responses.

Table 1 also suggests that PELs used direct strategies more than NSs. They employed 537 (81%) direct expressions in their responses while NSs expressed directives directly 158 (65%) times. The difference is quite evident that PELs used direct expressions in using speech acts like directives. As far as the indirect expressions are concerned PELs used 123 (18%) while NSs used 84 (34%) indirect expressions in their responses. The difference here too is self-explanatory.

**Table 2:** Coding framework representing internal mitigation devices

| Internal mitigation devices        | NSs       | PELs       |
|------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1. <i>Checking on availability</i> | 00        | 00         |
| 2. <i>Getting pre-commitment</i>   | 02        | 01         |
| 3. <i>Grounder</i>                 | 23        | 145        |
| 4. <i>Sweetener</i>                | 05        | 00         |
| 5. <i>Disarmer</i>                 | 04        | 01         |
| 6. <i>Cost minimizer</i>           | 04        | 00         |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>38</b> | <b>147</b> |

Table 2 demonstrates that both PELs as well as NSs employed internal mitigation strategies significantly. NSs employed 38 internal mitigation devices out of 242 responses. PELs, on the other hand employed 147 internal mitigation devices out of 660 responses. PELs used these strategies more than NSs (PELs 22% while NSs 15%). Among different types of internal



mitigation strategies *grounders* (reasons) are the most preferred strategies used by both PELs and NSs. PELs have hardly used strategies like *sweetener*, *disarmer* and *cost-minimizer* while NSs have used them in their responses.

**Table 3:** Coding framework representing external mitigation devices

| External mitigation devices            | NSs        | PELs       |
|--|------------|------------|
| A. Downgraders (Syntactic and lexical) |            |            |
| a. Syntactic downgraders               |            |            |
| 1. <i>Interrogative</i>                | 34         | 35         |
| 2. <i>Negation</i>                     | 06         | 16         |
| 3. <i>Past tense</i>                   | 06         | 10         |
| 4. <i>Embedded 'if' clause</i>         | 20         | 54         |
| b. Lexical downgraders                 |            |            |
| 5. <i>Consultative devices</i>         | 04         | 06         |
| 6. <i>Understaters</i>                 | 06         | 15         |
| 7. <i>Hedges</i>                       | 00         | 01         |
| 8. <i>Downtoners</i>                   | 00         | 01         |
| 9. <i>Politeness marker 'please'</i>   | 76         | 43         |
| C. Upgraders                           |            |            |
| 3. <i>Intensifiers</i>                 | 08         | 27         |
| 4. <i>Expletives</i>                   | 04         | 32         |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>164</b> | <b>240</b> |

Table 3 indicates that both PELs and NSs used external mitigation strategies in their responses. NSs employed 164 external mitigation devices out of 242 responses. PELs, on the other hand employed 240 external mitigation devices out of 660 responses. The percentage of the responses (NSs 67% and PELs 36%) shows thatb NS used more mitigation devices in their responses as compared to PELs.

Another category termed as *politeness marker 'please'* has been added in lexical downgraders. The category has also been used by Yazdanfar and Bonyadi (2016) in their study on speech acts of request. The results of this category are significant. The data suggests that there is a great difference in the use of this strategy. NSs used this strategy 76 times while PELs used this strategy only 43 times. Other than this, the category of *interrogative* has been frequently used by both PELs and NSs. However, it has been used more time by NSs (34 times) than PELs (35 times). Likewise the category of *embedded 'if' clause* has been used more frequently by NSs than that of PELs, but with a minor difference. NSs used this strategy (20 times) while PELs employed it (54 times). Besides, the categories of *negation* and *past tense* have also been used more by NSs than that of PELs. NSs used both strategies (6 times) while PELs used them (16 and 10 times respectively) in their responses. The results of the *understaters* and *consultative devices* categories also show insignificant difference, where NSs used these strategies more than

PELs. Contrary to these results, the categories of *intensifiers* and *expletives* indicate that PELs used these strategies more than the NSs. PELs used them 27 and 32 times while NSs used them 8 and 4 times respectively.

## Discussion

The results of the current study with regard to direct and indirect linguistic expressions demonstrated that PELs used direct strategies more than NSs. They employed 537 (81%) direct expressions in their responses while NSs expressed directives directly 158 (65%) times. As far as the indirect expressions are concerned PELs used 123 (18%) while NSs used 84 (34%) indirect expressions in their responses. The difference suggests that PELs, with Punjabi as their L1, are more direct in passing directives in their conversation. There may be different reasons to it. The first one is L1 influence. In Punjabi language most of the speech acts are uttered directly. Secondly, lack of cultural awareness on the part of PELs about the accurate use of directive speech acts by NSs who use conventionally indirect strategies. NSs' use of conventionally indirect strategies is due to their cultural baggage which they carry. According to Brandon (1994) native English speaker use conventionally indirect strategies because of the fact that Western cultures are under the influence of individualism which provides every individual the right to think and judge independently. The results of the current study are consistent with the findings of Brubaek (2012), Torghabeh and Rabieefar (2015), Saleem, Azam & Saleem (2014) etc. However, the results of the present investigation are not in congruence with Alam and Gill (2016) who claim that PELs, with Pushto and Saraiki as First languages, were found more pragmatic, polite and indirect in realization of speech acts. The present investigation partially agrees to the study conducted by Yazdanfar & Bonyadi (2016) who claim that both native speakers and EFL learners use direct strategies in realizing request speech acts. However, English speaker use more conventionally indirect strategies than EFL speakers.

As far as use of mitigation devices, in realization of speech acts of directives, is concerned PELs used internal mitigation strategies more than NSs (PELs 22% while NSs 15%). Contrary to it, NSs used more external mitigation devices in their responses as compared to PELs (NSs 67% and PELs 36%). The difference between the uses of external mitigation devices is significant. It shows that NSs use more mitigation devices than that of PELs because they tend to be polite even to the individuals who are lower to them in age, social status or position. The data of the current study included the word '*please*' as *politeness discourse marker*. NSs used this strategy 76 times while PELs used this strategy only 43 times. The data claim that NSs tend to be more polite in using directives than PELs. The results of the present study are in agreement with the findings of Saleem, Azam & Saleem (2014) Torghabeh and Rabieefar (2015), and Yazdanfar & Bonyadi (2016) who claim that in making requests or apologizing specifically and in uttering other speech acts generally EFL speakers are deficient in following the norms of politeness as set by native English speakers. The results of current study are inconsistent with the results drawn by Alam and Gill (2016) in their investigation who claim that PELs with L1 as Pushto and Saraiki are polite in realization of speech acts.

## Conclusion

The study aimed at analyzing the pragmatic competence of PELs in terms of realization of speech acts of directives. The focus of the study was on the use of semantic formulae or linguistic expressions and modification devices by PELs in comparison with NSs. The data suggested that PELs were found deficient in terms of accuracy in uttering directives as compared to native speakers. The study also indicated that PELs were found more direct as compared to native speakers, and PELs were using less modification and politeness strategies as compared to native speakers. The overall results of the study provide a better insight that PELs need proper implicit or explicit instructions in pragmatic competence besides grammatical and linguistic competence in order to meet the goals of communicative competence.

The current investigation has been delimited in certain ways. First of all, the sample of the study is very limited. Only 60 PELs and 20 NSs were selected as samples. Secondly, only three public sector colleges, offering BS 4 Year Programme, were selected. Thirdly, samples with Punjabi as their L1 were chosen. Although there are several regional and local languages spoken in Pakistan yet PELs with Punjabi as L1 were chosen because it spoken and is provincial language of the largest province of Pakistani namely Punjab. The limitations mentioned above provide room to further ILP investigations in Pakistani context. First a larger sample covering national language Urdu and other provincial languages i.e. Sindhi, Balochi, Pushto etc may be selected for a comprehensive study. Then, a large number of speech acts falls under pragmatic competence. Research studies on other speech acts like refusals, suggestions, requests etc may be conducted for better ILP insights. Finally, there is dearth of instructional ILP research investigations. The speech acts of directives can be taught through different teaching approaches and their efficacy may be tested.

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