

الكفاءة العملية لفعل الطلب الصادر والمدرک لدى الطلاب الأردنيين في صفوف عبر الإنترنت من وجهة نظر المدرسين د. جبريل محمد السعودي*

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الملخص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى استكشاف ووصف قدرة التواصل العملي وممارسات فعل الطلب بين الطلاب الأردنيين الذين انضموا إلى التعلم القائم عن بعد في جامعة العلوم الإسلامية العالمية (WISE) في الأردن. كما يهدف إلى التحقق مما إذا كانت كفاءتهم العملية قد تأثرت بالتغيير السريع من الفصول الدراسية التقليدية وجهاً لوجه (Face-2-Face) إلى الفصول عن بعد الناتجة عن ظروف جائحة COVID-19 من وجهة نظر محاضريهم. تم تطبيق منهج البحث الكمي في هذه الدراسة باستخدام الاستبانة كأداة. وشملت عينة الدراسة 10 محاضرين في جامعة العلوم الإسلامية. أظهرت نتائج هذه الدراسة أن المعرفة البراغماتية (العملية) التي تعكس درجة الألفة والقوة ومستوى الأدب والصراحة كانت متوسطة بشكل عام في أقوال الطلاب الأردنيين في إدراك وإنتاج فعل الطلب في فصول عن بعد من وجهة نظر محاضريهم. فيما يتعلق بتصورات أعضاء هيئة التدريس حول تأثير التغيير السريع من الحصص الوجيهة التقليدية إلى فصول عن بعد على الكفاءة العملية للطلاب الأردنيين، تبين أن الكفاءة العملية لم تتأثر بشكل كبير. من المتوقع كون هذه الدراسة مادة تقييمية للعديد من الأطراف، بما في ذلك صناع القرار في التعليم العالي، عند تصميم وتطوير الدورات التدريبية عبر الإنترنت التي تلبي حساسية تعليم أفعال الكلام بشكل عام وفعل الطلب بشكل خاص.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكفاءة العملية، الطلب، الفعل الكلامي، الفصول الدراسية عبر الإنترنت.

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Pragmatic Competence of Request Speech Act Produced and Perceived by Jordanian Students in Online-Classes from Instructors' Perspective

ABSTRACT

This paper is concerned with exploring and describing the pragmatic competence and practices of request speech act among Jordanian students who joined online-based learning at the World Islamic Sciences & Education University (WISE) in Jordan. It also aims at investigating whether their pragmatic competence was affected by the rapid change from conventional face-to-face (F2F) classes to online classes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic conditions as perceived by their instructors. The quantitative research approach was applied in this study using a questionnaire as an instrument. The subjects in this study were 10 lecturers at WISE. The findings of this study indicated that the pragmatic knowledge that reflects the degree of familiarity, power, and the level of politeness and directness was generally average in the utterances of Jordanian students in perceiving and producing request speech acts in online classes as perceived by their lecturers. Regarding the perceptions of faculty members toward the impact of the rapid change from conventional F2F classes to online classes on the pragmatic competence of Jordanian students, it was found that pragmatic competence was not significantly affected. This study was predictable to be an assessment material for numerous parties, including decision-makers of higher education, when designing and developing online courses which meet the sensitivity of teaching speech acts in general and request speech acts in particular.

Keywords: Pragmatic competence, Request, Speech act, Online classes.

Introduction:

In Jordan, online learning at universities has been presented as one of the best available choices to deal with the current academic challenges, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the COVID-19 pandemic, university students had to continue their education via virtual learning platforms. However, the outcomes of virtual learning environments vary across countries. Infrastructures of online learning, such as internet speed, accessibility, and the availability of the needed electronic equipment and computers, affected their studies (Almomani et al., 2021). Mujiwati and Istiqomah (2020) point out that in online learning, lecturers play a major role as they are committed to being fully interactive in the online lectures to achieve the required learning outcomes. However, this academic year was so unusual that both students and instructors suffered. How could instructors of English create an environment of English in online classes without physically meeting the students? It was a big challenge, particularly for the instructors of English who encourage student-centered learning (Kumari et al., 2020).

An essential part of maintaining effective online teaching and learning is communicating using the appropriate speech acts in online-based learning. The current study discusses the use of suitable speech acts found primarily on the learning theme, context, and psychological and social relationship between students and lecturers. Ma and Ghitheeth (2021) added that the news of COVID 19 has inspired researchers to conduct studies in many fields in general and in the field of linguistics in particular. The significance of the English language is rapidly increasing due to its status as a globally recognized lingua franca, an incontrovertible reality. This ascendancy is particularly evident in its pervasive utilization within academic, industrial, and commercial domains.

Although the literature has examined pragmatic failure and how L2 students perceive, understand, and perform language acts in a regular face-to-face classroom,

given the rapid change in English language teaching through online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher believes that it is crucial to investigate the impact of this rapid change in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic on students' pragmatic competence. To the researcher's knowledge, no studies have examined college students' communication using inquiry language from the perspective of their instructors during online classes. In order to fill this gap in the field, the current research is conducted to investigate how college students produce and perceive required speech acts from their teachers' perspective during online classes.

Researchers in the area of pragmatics have highlighted the significant role of pragmatics in learning English and investigated how learners perceive, understand, and produce speech acts. The existing literature predominantly focuses on investigating pragmatic failure and L2 learners' perceptions, comprehension, and production of speech acts within the traditional face-to-face classroom setting. However, given the rapid transition to online English instruction necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, there arises a compelling need to examine the consequential impact of this shift on students' pragmatic competence. Surprisingly, there is a need for research exploring university undergraduates' communicative use of request speech acts as assessed by their instructors in the context of online classes. Recognizing this research gap, the present study aims to investigate how university students both produce and perceive request speech acts, with a specific emphasis on the evaluation provided by their instructors within the online learning environment.

For communication to be successful, pragmatic skill is crucial. However, it appears that both the university level and the secondary school level also neglect to teach pragmatics in Jordanian English language classrooms. By examining instructors' perceptions of students' pragmatics and how these students utilized their pragmatic

knowledge in their communication during recently adopted online classrooms, this research sheds light on the pragmatic competence at WISE in Jordan. This study helps in evaluating students' level of pragmatic competence and their experience of communication during online classes. This study is primarily regional in scope but holds the potential for broader national application. Given that instructors' observations significantly shape their instructional strategies and classroom practices, it is essential to gain insights into their perspectives. Instructors play a key role in the learning and teaching processes, along with assessing students' competence and performance. Therefore, understanding their perceptions is invaluable. Additionally, according to Vu, (2017), instructors often integrate educational theories and principles into their pedagogical approaches making their perspectives particularly relevant to educational research.

The novelty of this study lies in the perspective of the use of language to analyze the behavior in terms of response toward some issues. The current study offers value for both researchers and readers who need to follow a certain policy or decision, especially in the field of education. By investigating language aspects, we can determine whether the current online learning system that is being applied is effective or not.

Therefore, this study endeavors to specifically investigate and describe the pragmatic competence and practices related to the request speech act among English learners utilizing online learning methods. Additionally, it seeks to assess the influence of online classes on the pragmatic competence of these students, as evaluated by their instructors at the World Islamic Sciences & Education University (WISE) in Jordan.

Literature Review:

Within the context of pragmatics in Jordan, Al-Mahameed and Al-Ajalein (2019) conducted a study focusing on pragmatic failures among Jordanian English learners,

particularly concerning the development of specific English functions, while considering the influence of gender and power dynamics. Results showed that the students tested failed practical thinking. Practical Ability (also called Practical Language Impairment), Poor Social-Practical Transition (also called Social-Practical Failure), and sociocultural disparities were blamed on these students by researchers. The results showed that the pupils who were put to the exam failed in pragmatic reasoning. These pupils' lack of pragmatic competence (also known as pragmatic-linguistic failure), poor socio-pragmatic transfer (also known as socio-pragmatic failure), and sociocultural disparities were blamed by the researchers.

Rababah et al. (2019) examined the language of request used by hotel trainees in Jordan. The study was conducted to investigate the methods by which trainees make requests at the service counter in English as a foreign language. It explored how much the Jordanian trainees' usage of internal modifiers differs from that of the speakers—who are also the hotel supervisors—when managing interpersonal and cross-cultural communication, and it related any such differences to politeness and cultural variables. They concluded that trainee's underuse internal modifiers to decrease the weight of the requests and prefer the marker "please" over all other modifiers. The outcomes also demonstrated that the trainers' loudness and kind of modifier performance were different from those of native speakers. Some of the deviations were attributed to Arabic language influence as a mother tongue, i.e., socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic transfer or insufficient.

The above-related studies conducted in the field of pragmatic competence and request speech act, (Al-Mahameed & Al-Ajalein, 2019 and Rababah et al., 2019) investigated speech acts in a physically face-to-face setting. They did not investigate speech acts after the rapid change to the new online classes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Other researchers (AL-Momani et al., 2021); however, examined the

effect of COVID-19 pandemic and the isolation practices on university students and their attitudes toward the virtual learning experience in the context of Jordan.

In the international context, Simamora (2020) investigated the challenges of electronic connection during the COVID-19 pandemic by examining both lecturers' and learners' experiences and perspectives. Videla et al. (2020) conducted a similar study during the pandemic, delving into the specific challenges faced by both educators and students in adapting to online learning. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mujiwati and Istiqomah (2020) examined the speech acts employed by lecturers in the virtual learning environment. They explored how instructors communicated with students and delivered content during the transition to online education.

Additionally, Renaldo (2021) explored the emotions and illocutionary acts used by polytechnic students to express various issues in an online context. This study examined the emotional and communicative aspects of how students interact online and how they conveyed their concerns or experiences during the COVID-19 period. Further, Kumari et al. (2020) conducted research during the COVID-19 pandemic that focused on pragmatic language learning practices. The study investigated how language learning and communication strategies were adapted or affected by shifting to online and remote learning environments.

Based on the abovementioned literature, it becomes evident that within the Jordanian context, there is a noticeable absence of studies examining the pragmatic competence and speech acts of students at the instructor-assessed level within online classes. This gap is not only attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic but has continued independently. Therefore, the present survey comes to fill this gap and achieve the research objectives of the study.

Pragmatic Competence:

The capacity to execute the appropriate communication actions and strategies in a given circumstance is referred to as pragmatic competence. According to Koike (1989), "the speaker will understand and formulate speech acts based on the speaker's knowledge and use of rules of appropriateness and politeness" (279).

Thomas (1983) further distinguished between socio-pragmatic competence (perception), which is concerned with using the proper speech act in the proper context, and pragma-linguistic competence (production), which is concerned with using the proper language to carry out a particular speech act. According to Kasper and Roever (2005), pragma-linguistic competence (production) has been defined as the ability to communicate communicative acts and perform pragmatic functions using specific speech acts and their associated forms and strategies. Socio-sober-minded capability (discernment) has been seen as the information on the utilization of these structures and procedures in a proper setting.

Speech Act Theory:

Searle (1969) proposed a theory of speech act that depends on the original theory produced by Austin (1962), which talks about the perlocutionary, illocutionary, and locutionary acts of speech. In Searle's Theory (1969), the illocutionary act (the intent of locutionary speech) is characterized into five classes that are mentioned below: It is an assertive speech act, which represents the state that the speaker asserts a concept to be true.

-Declarative Acts: This is an utterance the speaker uses to change a situation.

-Representative Acts: It is an assertive act that represents the state in that the speaker asserts a concept to be true.

-Expressive Acts: It is a psychological state that conveys speakers' emotions.

-Directives Acts: It is an encouraged action in which the speaker tells someone to do



something.

-Commissive Acts: It is a promising action in which the speaker makes a commitment.

Furthermore, Searle (1969) made the difference between two categories of speech acts. These two speech acts are indirect and direct speech acts. The distinction between indirect and direct speech actions is based on how the speech is organized. According to Yule and Widdowson (1996), a speech act is deemed direct if the form and function of an utterance are directly related. On the other hand, it is referred to as an indirect speech act if the structure and function are not directly related. An example of a direct speech act is a declarative sentence used to make a declaration, whereas an indirect speech act is a declarative sentence used to make a request. In contrast to direct speech actions, indirect speech acts are actually linked to higher levels of politeness (Brown et al., 1987).

Request:

A request is a form of speaking activity that includes an action that will benefit the speaker, whereas a speaker who does not want to clearly specify a bad goal will instead use hints (Trosborg, 1995). For instance, the supplicant can make clear to his or her audience what he or she wants to do by forming a statement that describes the situation or asking a question. The requester may fully or partially state what is necessary, depending on his or her preference. The requester can be hesitant to ask because they do not want to appear needy or because they don't want the recipient to look bad. Requests are, therefore, potentially humiliating for both the requester and the recipient. The speaker can lessen the burden on the listener by using indirect tactics rather than direct ones. A request's transparency and load on the recipient to comprehend it decrease with more directness. Directness levels can be characterized by considering the following three strategies: Direct strategies that are perfectly clear as requests, conventionally indirect strategies that mention dependent preconditions

essential for its performance as conventionalized in the language, and non-conventionally indirect strategies that are relatively pointing out to the object which depends on contextual clues (Blum-Kulka, 1989).

Methodology:

To collect the required data, the study adopted a quantitative approach to meet the research objectives. The quantitative approach allows investigators to explain themselves with the concept or problem to be studied and perhaps produce hypotheses to be tested as well (Taghizadeh, 2017). Based on the results of the sample, the researcher makes generalizations or draws inferences about that population (Creswell, 2014).

Participants: The research employed a quantitative approach involving a limited sample of 10 participants. While this sample size is acknowledged as a limitation, it should be noted that this study focuses on the specific context of WISE in Jordan.

Data Collection: Data collection did not occur through face-to-face interactions, even with this limited number of participants. Instead, an online data collection method was employed, aligning with the context of online learning that has been in place for two years, not solely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The study did not explicitly state the duration of data collection. However, it should be noticed that the research context spans the period of online learning, which, as previously mentioned, has been in place for an extended period.

By conducting this research, the researcher aims to bridge the gap in understanding students' pragmatic competence within the online learning environment at WISE, Jordan. This entails assessing how students perceive and utilize pragmatic knowledge in their communication during online classes. Recognizing the pivotal role of instructors in shaping instructional strategies and evaluating students' competence, the study offers valuable insights into instructors'

perspectives, particularly as they incorporate educational theories and principles into their pedagogical approaches.

Questionnaire:

An online survey questionnaire was employed for data collection. It explored the pragmatic competence and practices of English as a foreign language undergraduate (EFLU) attending online classes. It also assessed if their pragmatic competence was affected by the shift from conventional to online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic, as perceived by their lecturers at WISE. The study questionnaire was designed in Google Forms, which is to be filled out easily by the lecturers because of the imposed restrictions on face-to-face meetings resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The study link was sent to the emails of the English lecturers at The World Islamic Sciences & Education University. The responses will be rated according to their capacity to employ proper speech acts, typicality of expressions, appropriateness of the amount of speech and information supplied, formality, directness, and politeness (Kusevska et al., 2015).

In order to attain the study objectives of the survey, the researcher composed a 15-item questionnaire to be answered by English language lecturers who delivered online classes on virtual learning platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic. The questionnaire was developed based on previous studies and related literature. The items are composed with a five-way gradient: (I strongly agree = 5, I agree = 4, neutral = 3, I disagree = 2, I strongly disagree = 1).

The questionnaire's validity was determined by a number of experts in English language learning and teaching. Three professors reviewed the questionnaire. The first reviewer is a professor in Linguistics at the Department of English at Hashemite University (HU) in Jordan. The second one is an associate professor at the Department of English at the World Islamic Sciences and Education University (WISE), who is specialized in TESOL. The third reviewer is also an associate professor

at the Department of English at Al-Balqa'a Applied University who is specialized in linguistics. The questionnaire was reviewed for appropriateness, relevance, and correctness of the content. Finally, based on the reviewers' comments and suggestions, the questionnaire was approved before it was administered to the applicants of the study. Besides, to guarantee reliability, the questionnaire was electronically filled out by a non-sample survey of (5) faculty members at Tafilah Technical University. Thus, to test the strength of the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha test was used with a rate of (0.75). The population of the study was 10 lecturers of English who delivered courses to about (300) students of English at The World Islamic Sciences & Education University in Amman (the capital city of Jordan).

Discussion:

This survey was applied to a sample of (10) lecturers at the World Islamic Sciences & Education University in the English department. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the survey sample:

Table 1. Demographic data of the sample study (N=10)			
Demographic Variables		Count	(%)
Gender	Male	5	70
	Female	3	30
Teaching English	Less than 5 years	1	10
	5-10 years	3	30
	10-15 years	0	0
	More than 15 years	6	60
Award	Bachelor	0	0
	Master	2	20
	PhD.	8	80
Overseas English	Yes	6	60
	No	4	40
Pragmatics knowledge/courses	Yes	10	100
	No	0	0

As shown in Table (1), the participants of the study consisted of (10) lecturers; the majority of participants (70.0%) were male lecturers, while only (30.0%) of them were female lecturers. With regards to years of teaching English, 60% have experience teaching English for more than (15) years. A total of (30%) out of the total number of participants were under the category of (5-10) years of teaching English, while of the remaining participants, only (10%) of the participants have teaching experience of less than (5) years. In addition, most of the participants were Ph.D. lecturers (80%). As for overseas English learning, (40%) of the sample answered (No). On the other hand, all of the participants got pragmatic knowledge/courses. Figure (1) shows the demographic data.

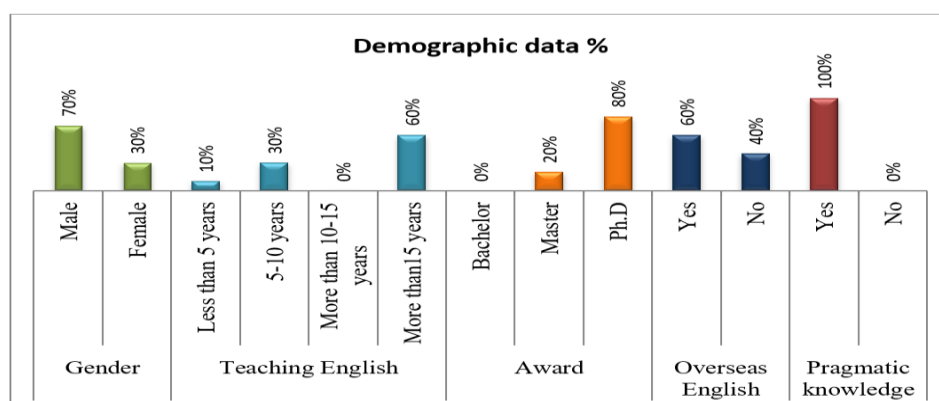


Figure 1. Demographic Data:

Statistical Analysis:

Data was gathered through the use of questionnaires. For the purpose of analysis, the responses were organized, coded, and entered into SPSS. The arithmetic averages and standard deviations were then calculated using descriptive statistics. The five-step categories have also been converted to three-step categories as follows:

$$(5-1) = (4)$$

$$(4/3) = (1.33)$$

The length of the phase was determined by this value :

(2.33) Low

(2.34) – (3.67) Average

(3.68) – (5.00) High

Results:

The results were presented and analyzed in light of the sequence of questions of the current study. For the analysis of this questionnaire, the standard deviations and arithmetic mean of the study area were calculated. The results for the question "1- How does the pragmatics knowledge reflect the degree of familiarity, power, and the level of directness and politeness in the utterances of Jordanian undergraduates of English as a Foreign Language when they perceive and produce request speech act in the online class?" was as in Table (2).

Table 2. Standard deviations and arithmetic mean of the pragmatics knowledge level, which reflects familiarity, the level of directness, and politeness.

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Estimated value
1. The students understand the language as intended by the speaker.	3.0000	1.06904	Average
2. The students' language is effective in conveying their intentions during online classes.	3.0000	.75593	Average
3. Students choose and produce appropriate speech acts taking into consideration the level of politeness, formality, and directness during online classes.	3.0000	.53452	Average
4. Learners' handling of the cultural reasoning or ideologies behind the L2 pragmatic norms, i.e., learners adopt target culture ideologies (if this is their intent).	2.1250	.83452	Low
5. Students realize the relative social status and power of the speaker/ writer and the listener/reader when communicating and interacting during online classes.	4.0000	.00000	High
6. Students realize the intensity or imposition of the act, e.g., (the magnitude of the imposition in a request).	2.5000	1.06904	Low
7. The request speech act produced by the students contains valid content, e.g., "Asking a professor to change the whole date of the test sounds kind of inappropriate."	3.5000	1.06904	Average

8.	During online classes, the request speech act produced by the male students contains more politeness markers like please or excuse me.	2.8750	1.64208	Average
9.	Students' expressions of request are at a proper level of directness, e.g., "Could you please explain the last point", "Please, explain the last point", or "Explain the last point" during online classes.	2.8750	1.55265	Average
10	The request speech act produced by the female students contains more politeness markers like "please" or "excuse me".	3.6250	1.40789	Average
Total		3.0500	.51547	Average

The table above illustrates the perceptions of the lecturers towards the pragmatic level of knowledge that reflects the degree of familiarity, power, and the level of politeness and directness in the utterances of their students when they perceive and produce request speech acts during the online classes. According to Table (2), the fifth paragraph, "Students realize the relative social status and power of the speaker/writer and the listener/reader when communicating and interacting during online classes." achieved (4) with a standard deviation of (0). This result indicates that the level of the lecturers' perception was high for this paragraph.

The fourth paragraph, "Learners' handling of the cultural reasoning or ideologies behind the L2 pragmatic norms, i.e., learners adopt target culture ideologies (if this is their intent)." achieved the lowest arithmetic average, which was (2.125), with a standard deviation of (0.834), which indicates that according to the lecturers' perception was low. The general average of those paragraphs that look for the lecturers' perception of the "Politeness of speech" was average. This indicates that their perception of their students' competence with regard to the request speech acts was average, with an average arithmetic value of (3). With regards to question (2), "What is the impact of the rapid change from conventional classes to online classes on the pragmatic competence of Jordanian undergraduates of English as a Foreign language as perceived and assessed by their instructors?"

Table 3. Standard deviations and arithmetic mean of the impact of the rapid change from conventional classes to

online classes on the pragmatic competence of the undergraduates				
Item		Mean	Std. Deviation	Estimated value
1	The request speech act is produced more frequently in online classes compared to face-to-face classes.	2.8750	1.12599	Average
2	Students realize the levels of social distance and power and psychological distance (how distant or close the speaker and the listener feel to each other).	3.6250	1.06066	Average
3	During online classes, the student perceives the illocutionary act "it seems the voice is not clear enough" as an indirect request to the speaking student to speak louder or to move closer to the microphone. If he/ she does that as a perlocutionary act	3.2500	1.03510	Average
4	During online classes, the amount of speech produced by the students is appropriate, e.g., "Saying 'excuse me' is overdone."	3.2500	.88641	Average
5	The students' intention is communicated clearly, e.g., "The student said, "Could you borrow a webcam?" Not clear what he meant.	3.3750	.51755	Average
Total		3.1750	.54968	Average

Table (3) shows that all the items for the perceptions of faculty members toward the impact of the rapid change from the conventional classes to the online classes on the pragmatic competence of EFL Jordanian Undergraduates were all average. Further, the second item, "Students realize the levels of social distance and power, and psychological distance (how distant or close the speaker and the listener feel to each other)," got the highest arithmetic mean of (3.625) and the standard deviation was (1.060), whereas the first item "The request speech act is produced more frequently in online classes compared to face-to-face classes" achieved the least mean of (2.875) with a standard deviation of (1.125). However, the general arithmetic mean for all the above items was (3.175), and the standard deviation was (0.549), which is an estimated mean value. Actually, this indicates that the perceptions of the lecturers towards the impact of the rapid change from conventional classes to online classes on the pragmatic competence of Jordanian undergraduates of English as a Foreign language were average. Furthermore, the

results were discussed in light of the two questions of the study as follows:

The results of the first question concerning the pragmatic level of knowledge that reflects the degree of familiarity, power, and the level of politeness and directness in the utterances of EFL Jordanian undergraduates when they perceive and produce request speech act in the online classes as perceived by their lecturers at WISE showed that the arithmetic means with a high degree. These results are attributed to the familiarity of students and their lecturers with power and the directness level and politeness in the request speech act in face-to-face classes, which was reflected in the online classes.

The second question is concerned with the perceptions of the faculty members toward the impact of the rapid change from conventional face-to-face classes to online classes on the pragmatic competence of EFL Jordanian undergraduates. The findings reveal that pragmatic competence was not significantly affected by this rapid shift to online classes. This can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, it is likely that the faculty members at WISE implemented effective online instructional strategies. These strategies may have included adapting course materials, using interactive online tools, and providing clear guidelines for effective communication in the online learning environment. Such measures could have mitigated the potential negative impact on pragmatic competence.

Secondly, Jordanian undergraduates, as learners, may have demonstrated a high degree of adaptability to the online learning format. They might have quickly adjusted to the new mode of instruction, including the digital communication tools and platforms, which could have supported the retention of their pragmatic competence. Further, faculty members might have received training and support in delivering effective online instruction, including strategies for maintaining and assessing pragmatic competence. This training would have equipped them to facilitate successful online communication among students. Furthermore, Jordanian

students may have actively engaged in online discussions, group projects, and interactive activities, which are essential for developing and maintaining pragmatic competence. Their engagement in meaningful online interactions could have compensated for any potential decline.

Conclusion:

Contemporarily, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, universities and other institutions of higher education have been looking for alternatives to the conventional teaching and learning processes to adapt to this novel condition. As a result, platforms for online classes were globally adopted. This paper aimed to explore and obtain an accurate description of the pragmatic competence and practices of request speech act among university students joining online classes and to find whether their pragmatic competence was affected by the rapid change from conventional physical classes to online classes resulting from the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic at The World Islamic Sciences & Education University as perceived by their lecturers. The results of this survey indicated that the pragmatic knowledge that reflects the degree of familiarity, power, and the level of politeness and directness was generally average in the utterances of EFL students when they perceive and produce request speech acts in the online class as perceived by their lecturers.

Concerning the faculty perceptions of the shift from traditional classes to online classes on EFL Jordanian undergraduates' pragmatic competence, the study found no significant impact. This study serves as valuable evaluation material for higher education decision-makers, guiding the development of online courses, especially for teaching speech acts like requests. Finally, this study recommends that the curriculum designers in the institutions of higher education meet the sensitivity of teaching speech acts generally and request speech acts, particularly when designing

and developing online courses. It is also highly recommended for further future research to cover other speech acts, such as apologies in other universities in Jordan. In conclusion, the study offers valuable insights into the pragmatic competence of EFL students in online learning contexts, shedding light on both student performance and faculty perceptions. These findings have implications for the design of online courses and offer a foundation for future research endeavors in this field.

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Appendix: A

Questionnaire:

The ability to deliver speech acts with the appropriate level of formality, directness, and politeness in the given circumstances was the overall relevance of the request speech act. A five-point rating scale, ranging from 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent), was used to assess correctness.



- 1.Very Poor:** Not sure if the target speech act is performed.
- 2.Poor:** Clearly inappropriate. Expressions sound almost rude or too demanding.
- 3.Fair:** Somewhat appropriate in the level of formality, politeness and directness. Expressions are more direct or indirect than the situation requires.
- 4.Good:** Not perfect but sufficiently suitable in the level of formality, politeness and directness. Expressions are a little off from target-like, but pretty good.
- 5.Excellent:** Almost perfectly appropriate and effective in the level of formality, politeness and directness.

Demographic Information (Please tick your choice)

- 1.What is your gender? Male: ... Female:
- 2.How long have you been teaching English? Less than 5 years: 5-10 years: More than 10-15 years: More than 15 years: ...
- 3.What is the highest degree you have? Bachelor: Master: Ph.D.
- 4.Did you study for your degree(s) overseas, or have you had any overseas English learning experience?
Yes..... No.....
- 5.Which country/countries?
- 6.Did you receive pragmatic knowledge when you studied for your degree(s)?
Yes..... No.....

Questionnaire:

	Assessed Pragmatic Criteria	1	2	3	4	5
1	The learners understand the language as intended by the speaker					
2	The students' language is effective in conveying their intention during online classes					
3	The request speech act is produced more frequently in online classes when compared to face-to-face classes					
4	Students choose and produce appropriate speech acts taking into consideration the level of politeness, formality, and directness during online classes.					
5	Learners' handling of the cultural reasoning or ideologies behind the L2 pragmatic norms, i.e. learners adopt target culture ideologies (if this is their intent)					

6	Students realize the relative social status and power of the speaker/writer and the listener/reader when communicating and interacting during online classes.					
7	Students realize the levels of social distance and psychological distance (how distant or close the speaker and the listener feel to each other).					
8	Students realize the Intensity or Imposition of the act (e.g., the magnitude of the imposition in a request.					
9	The request speech act produced by the students contains valid content, e.g., "Asking a professor to change the whole date of the test sounds kind of inappropriate."					
10	During online classes, the request speech act produced by the male students contains more politeness markers like please or excuse me.					
11	During online classes, the student perceives the illocutionary act "it seems the voice is not clear enough" as an indirect request to the speaking student to speak louder or to move closer to the microphone. If he does that as a perlocutionary act, then the student has perceived the illocutionary act					
12	During online classes, the amount of speech produced by the students is appropriate, e.g., "Saying 'excuse me' is overdone."					
13	The student's intention is communicated clearly, e.g., "The student said, "Could you borrow a webcam?" Not clear what he meant.					
14	Students' expressions of request are at a proper level of directness, e.g., "Could you please explain the last point", Please, explain the last point", or "Explain the last point" during online classes.					
15	The request speech act produced by the female students contains more politeness markers like "please" or "excuse me".					