



Using Sitcoms to Improve the Acquisition of Speech Acts by EFL Students: Focusing on Request, Refusal, Apology, and Compliment Response

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Abstract

Raising EFL students' awareness on how to communicate appropriately using English language is very important. Thus, the aim of this research was to investigate the effect of using sitcoms to improve EFL students' use of speech acts of request, refusal, apology, and compliment response. Sitcoms which mean situational comedy were used as the treatment in this research. Sitcoms sessions were held for three weeks, one-hour session a week. In each session, the students were exposed to targeted speech acts through the use of English sitcoms (The Big Bang Theory, Friends, and Seinfeld). The participants of this research were 18 Saudi female freshmen students. Their ages were between 19 to 25, majoring in Applied linguistics at Yanbu University College. This research was quantitative research where the data was collected using a written discourse completion test as pre-post-test and a close-ended questionnaire. The result of this research showed that the participants' use of speech acts improved after the treatment. This result suggests that using sitcoms might help in EFL's acquisition of speech act of request, refusal, apology, and compliment response.

Keywords: sitcom, speech act, request, refusal, apology, compliment response

INTRODUCTION

Learning a language means acquiring not only the linguistic competence of it which includes vocabulary, grammar, but also the pragmatic competence which involves how to use the language appropriately in different situations. Using the language appropriately in different situations requires a good knowledge of how to use speech acts in a language. The action performed using a language to serve a social function is called speech acts (Austin, 1962). Some different types of speech acts in English include apology, request, complaint, and refusal. The ability to understand and produce speech acts of a given language makes a part of the learners' pragmatic competence. In addition, learning speech acts serves one of the main aims for learning a language which is communication. There are a variety of techniques that can be used to improve EFL students' use of speech

acts; one of them is using sitcoms. Sitcoms were used as a tool to improve EFL students' use of speech act of request, refusal, apology, and compliment response.

Many EFL students have difficulties in using effective speech acts. One of the reasons is not having a variety of natural, everyday life input in EFL contexts. Also, lacking the emphasis on pragmatic issues. Moreover, relying too much on textbooks which focus on linguistic competence more than pragmatic competence. Another reason is the pragmatic transfer from Arabic into English which resulted from the absence of a complete understanding of the target culture for EFL students. If EFL students cannot use speech acts appropriately, they will face difficulty in communication.

THIS STUDY

The purpose of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of using sitcoms to improve EFL students' use of speech acts of request, refusal, apology, and compliment response. This research also attempted to find out students' attitude toward using sitcoms to improve their use of targeted speech acts.

This research answered two main questions:

- Does using sitcoms improve EFL students' use of speech acts of request, refusal, apology, and compliment response?
- What are the EFL students' attitudes toward the use of sitcoms to improve their speech act of request, refusal, apology, and compliment response?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presented the theoretical background of this research. The key concepts defined in this chapter were pragmatic competence, speech act, politeness theory, request, refusal, apology, and compliment response. Also, it presented the previous studies that tackled with the effect of using sitcoms on improving EFL students' use of speech act of request, refusal, apology, and compliment response.

Pragmatic competence. the knowledge beyond grammar level which can be used to communicate effectively is what pragmatic competence means (Thomas, 1983). Moreover, it is the needful knowledge and organizational competence that a speaker needs to produce a comprehending discourse. In fact, pragmatic competence is divided into two categories. The first one is the illocutionary competence which is about the intended meaning. The second one is the sociolinguistic competence which is associated with politeness, register formality, and culturally related aspects of language (Bachman, 1990).

Speech act. speech act is causing an action or serving a function by uttering a sentence while communicating with others. For example, apology, greeting, request, complaint, compliment, or refusal (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). Speakers are simultaneously involved in three speech acts: locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act. Locutionary act is related to the basic linguistic analysis of an utterance. Illocutionary act describes what a speaker does by saying the sentence while keeping social factors in mind. Perlocutionary act is what a speaker achieves by saying something (Austin, 1962).

Politeness theory. a set of linguistic theories which relate linguistic actions or behaviors to social behaviors. Politeness theories try to formulate a scientific conceptualization for the reasonable notion of politeness (Thomas, 1995). In addition, Kasper (1990) suggests that politeness can be a part of human attempts to make their interactions more successful and mannerly.

Request speech act. request speech act comes under illocutionary acts. As mentioned by Searle (1969), request is the speaker's attempt to get the hearer to do an action.

Refusal speech act. as suggested by Al-Eryani (2007), saying 'no' directly or indirectly to a request or an invitation is what refusal means. Refusals considered complex speech acts to function, linguistically and psychologically, because the opportunity of offending the other is in the act itself (Kwon, 2004).

Apology speech act. Válková (2013) pointed out that apology is universal in the general human need. It is used to express regret over offensive acts. In addition, apology has accompanied human communication from the oldest times up to the present.

Compliment response. while a compliment is a played-out result of a reciprocal negotiation between the speaker's illocution and the addressee's perlocution, compliment responses either verbally or nonverbally are predictable reactions to a compliment (Válková, 2013).

Sitcoms. a set of chosen sitcoms clips were given to the participants as a treatment. The sitcoms clips were taken from different shows like The Big Bang Theory, Friends, and Seinfeld. The set of sitcoms clips focused on request, refusal, apology, and compliment response speech acts. The clips were no more than 3 minutes where each speech act of the targeted ones could be easily identified.

PREVIOUS STUDIES IN THE LITERATURE

The first study was carried out by Birjandi and Derakhshan (2013) in Iran to investigate the effect of consciousness-raising video prompts on the comprehension of speech acts of apology, request, and refusal. This study took place at an English Language Institute in Tehran, Iran. Seventy-eight Iranian EFL learners (36 males and 42 females) ranging in age from 16 to 26 participated in this study. Their mother tongue was Persian and their English proficiency level was upper- intermediate. In addition, no one of them had living experiences in any English-speaking country. It was a quantitative study and the tool used in this research was a pre-post-test. The participants were assigned randomly into four groups: metapragmatic, form-search, role play, and control group. First, the researcher tested their speech acts comprehension level by giving them a pragmatic comprehension listening test of apology, request, and refusal. After that, each group received 45 video clips. The videos were divided to 15 apologies, 15 requests, and 15 refusals. The sessions were held for 60-minute once a week for the first three groups while the control group received a normal conversational treatment. Moreover, no instructions on speech acts were provided to the control group. The aim of this treatment was to raise students' awareness of the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic aspects that are needed in making apologies, requests, and refusals. The basic treatment was the video prompts, but each

group focused on a specific strategy accompanied by this treatment. The main focus of the form search group was the target language forms used in targeted speech acts. The metapragmatic awareness-raising group focused on the pragmalinguistic and sociolinguistic features were explicitly highlighted in this group. The role-play group used role-play as an activity to mimic the character in the videos. They were taking notes while watching and the scripts were provided to them. Then, they acted out different character taking into account the relationship between the speakers, the degree of imposition and formality. The control group focus was on comprehension questions, repetition, and vocabulary with no mention for sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic aspects. The post-test was Multiple Choice Discourse Completion Test (MCDT) and its result showed that students have benefited from the three different types of instructions. In addition, after applying the Post hoc test of Hukey, the greatest improvement was for the metapragmatic group.

Gaily (2014) conducted a study to investigate the effect of programmed pedagogical sessions on the participants' performance of four speech acts which are apology, request, complaint, and refusal. A group of 20 male Sudanese EFL learners, ages between 18-22, studying at different five Sudanese universities participated in this study. There was no mention of their proficiency level. What was mentioned about their language proficiency level is that there was no significant difference between them. Also, all of them have been studying English language for more than six years. Moreover, the students were not exposed to the English culture, and none of them have visited any English-speaking country before. Two kinds of tools were used to collect the data: written discourse completion test (WDCT) and multiple-choice pragmatic comprehension test (MCPCT) as a pre-test and post-test. In addition, two types of data were involved in this study: production data and comprehension data. While the WDCT test was used to collect participants' pragmatic production of target speech acts data, MCPCT was also used to evaluate participants' pragmatic comprehension and perception of targeted speech acts. A planned program to raise pragmatic awareness was given to the participants. The researcher designed this program considering four speech acts as the focus of this program: apology, request, refusal, and suggestions. The basis of this program was different traditional textbooks. The main aim of this program was developing students' oral communicative ability and enabling them by the end of the program to choose ways and strategies of saying things appropriately in different situations with different people. The results of this study disclosed a remarkable development in the participants' performance of targeted speech acts in the post-test.

Derakhshan and Arabmofrad (2018) conducted a study on the effect of instruction on the pragmatic comprehension of speech acts of apology, request, and refusal among Iranian intermediate EFL learners. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of using video-enhanced input on the comprehension of speech acts of apology, request, and refusal. This study took place in Iran at Hezare Sevom English Language Institute. The participants of this research were 69 Iranian intermediate EFL learners (27 males and 42 females). Their mother tongue was Persian and their English proficiency level was intermediate level and none of them had living experiences in any English-speaking

country. The participants were studying English at Hezare Sevom English Language Institute. They were randomly divided into four groups: metapragmatic group, form-search group, interactive translation group, and control group. The instruments for collecting the data were pretest/posttest. The first three groups were exposed to a set of selected clips from different episodes of Annie Hall movie, Friends, and Seinfeld sitcoms. The purpose of choosing this kind of treatment was to raise their sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistics knowledge. The main focus was on three speech acts which were request, refusal, and apology. They had 8 sessions twice a week for 4 weeks. The form-search group included 18 students. Their main focus was on any native-like usage including forms, grammatical structure, strategies native used while performing the speech acts. In the metapragmatic group, 19 students were involved in this group. Their primary focus was on the pragmalinguistics, sociolinguistics, and the use of formality and politeness while performing speech acts. Interactive translation group involved 17 students and they were asked to translate the scripts cooperatively and to find the similarities and the differences between Persian and English in performing speech acts while translating. After that, they acted out the dialogue which they translated using different strategies in different situations. In the control group, 15 students were involved in normal conversation without any instruction. T-test, a one-way ANOVA, and the post-hoc Tukey test (HSD) were used to compare the effectiveness of the three experimental treatments regarding the participants' ability in the comprehension of three speech acts. The result showed that the metapragmatic group outperformed the other groups.

Hashemian, Domakani, and Ansari (2016) conducted a study in Isfahan, Iran on the effect of movies on L2 learners' pragmatic competence of request and apology. The purpose of this study was to find out if employing movies can help in pragmatics teaching which affects the L2 learners' usages of different request and apology strategies. The participants involved in this study were 37 upper-intermediate students (18 females and 19 males) studying English for 3 years, aged 21 to 25, studying at an English institute. Their mother tongue was Persian. In addition, they were assigned into two groups based on the result of the Quick Oxford Placement Test (QOPT). First, A version of a discourse completion test (DCT) was used as a pre-test. After that, the participants spent 30-40 minutes watching the movie followed by another 30-40 minutes analyzing segments of the movie, exploring the relationship between language and its social implementation and analyzing both speech acts of request and apology. In addition, the participants were asked to create a dialog making a request or apology based on the prompt considering their way in realizing these speech acts and comparing their own realizations with those of the characters. On the other hand, the control group studied pragmatics to the minimal extent of what was presented in the textbooks. Then, they completed some activities to practice vocabulary and check comprehension of the movie. DCT was used as the post-test to check the request and apology strategies used by the participants. The result of this study showed a positive effect of using movies to improve EFL students' usages of different request and apology strategies after watching the movies.

Hosseini (2016) carried out a study on the effect of role-play on pragmatic competence among male and female Iranian EFL learners in Iran at Karaj Azad university. This study included 40 undergraduate university students (15 males and 25 females) studying English at Karaj Azad university. Their mother tongue was Persian and their English proficiency level was high intermediate. It was a quantitative study including a pre-post-test which was a discourse completion test (DCT) and the treatment which was role-play. The experimental group did role-play while the control group did conversation followed by free discussion. Both groups took the pre-test which consisted of nine situations of request speech acts corresponding to the nine role-play tasks which were developed by the researcher. In DCT Students were asked to refuse the requests provided in each item and they gave their reason for such an answer. After the pre-test, group A which was the experimental group was taught to perform the role-play, and group B, which was the control group, was instructed to do ordinary conversation in the classroom followed by free discussion techniques within an 8-session period. For role-play, all the scenarios were encompassed an enhanced photograph which was presented to learners on a screen with a written description for both the requester and the refuser. Photographs were used to provide information about the context of an interaction. Moreover, the situations were considered for the status and position of the requester relative to the learner and social distance between the interactants. The results showed the positive effect of role-play on increasing pragmatic competence among the participants because the experimental group outperformed the conversation group on the DCT.

Most of the studies had been conducted to show the effect of using video- prompts, sitcoms, programmed pedagogical sessions, instruction, movies, or role-play, but the present research used sitcoms through pedagogical intervention to improve EFL students' use of targeted speech acts. Moreover, most of the researches were applied on both genders or only males while the current research focused entirely on female EFL students. Furthermore, none of the mentioned researches has been conducted in Saudi Arabia, so the present research would be the first one. In addition, this research investigated Saudi EFL students' attitudes toward the use of sitcoms to improve their speech act of request, refusal, apology, and compliment response.

METHODOLOGY

This section presents a detailed description of the proposed research and the methods used to collect data. For gathering data in this research, pre-post-test, sitcoms, pedagogical intervention, and a close-ended questionnaire were the chosen tools. This section covers research type, research tools, participants, and data collection procedures.

Research Design

This research was a quantitative research. The data was collected from pre-post written discourse completion tests, sitcoms, pedagogical intervention, and a close-ended questionnaire for an experimental group of the participants.

Participants

The participants of this research were 18 freshmen students, all females, between the age of 19-25. They were majoring in Applied linguistics at Yanbu University College. Their mother tongue was Arabic and their English proficiency level was pre-intermediate. Moreover, the participants were EFL students studying English for almost eight years.

Instruments

Pre-post written discourse completion test (WDCT)

The WDCT was given to the participants as a pre-post-test. WDCT is a written discourse completion test to measure the participants' use of targeted speech acts. It involved fifteen situations of targeted speech acts. For request, refusal, and apology, 3 situations were used for each and 6 situations were used for compliment response, with a context and a speech act to use. Some of the situations were borrowed and modified from other researches as Al-Gamal (2017) and Muhammed (2012). Moreover, the situations emphasized on the status, position, politeness, and social distance between the interactants. After the pre-test, the treatment was applied on the participants one-hour session a week for three weeks. After the treatment, a post-test was given to them. The pre-post-test's responses were assessed as correct or incorrect response. The correct responses mean that the participant succeeded in using targeted speech acts. The incorrect responses mean that the participant failed in the use of targeted speech acts. One point was assigned for each correct response from the total which was 15 points and no point was assigned for the incorrect responses. The results of the post-test were compared with the pre-test to find out if there was any improvement in the use of targeted speech acts.

Questionnaire

A close-ended questionnaire was distributed among the participants after the post-test. It was designed to gather information about students' attitudes toward the use of sitcoms to improve their use of targeted speech acts. The questionnaire contained 7 statements related to the use of sitcoms to improve their use of targeted speech acts. A Likert scale consisted of five responses from strongly agree to strongly disagree was used.

Data Collection Procedure

In the beginning, the participants' use of the targeted speech acts was tested using WDCT as a pre-test to measure their current level and to compare the collected scores with the post-test scores. To assess the test, the participants' responses were corrected as correct or incorrect responses. One point was assigned for each correct response from a total of 15 points and no point was assigned to the incorrect responses. Then, the researcher applied the treatment on the participants for three weeks, one-hour session a week. During the experiment, the participants observed native speakers talking and interacting in sitcoms. Moreover, the treatment was applied through pedagogical intervention as three phases: pre-viewing, while-viewing, and post-viewing. In the pre-viewing, the participants were introduced to clips from different sitcoms shows which were no longer than three minutes, where the speech acts can be easily identified. While-viewing activity

was about discussing the dialogues in the clips, the characters, their relationship, and how their relationship affect the way they speak to each other. Post-viewing activity was about clarifying complex points, encouraging discussion, and explaining and assigning follow-up activities. After three weeks, the WDCT was given to them as a post-test. The results of post-test were compared with the results of pre-test to find out if using sitcoms had a positive effect on participants' use of targeted speech acts or not. At the end of the experiment, a questionnaire was distributed among them. All the responses were analysed individually.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to investigate the effect of using sitcoms to improve EFL's use of speech act of request, refusal, apology, and compliment response. Therefore, the researcher used quantitative method research design to answer the research questions: "Does using sitcoms improve EFL students' use of speech acts of request, refusal, apology, and compliment response?" and "What are the EFL students' attitudes toward the use of sitcoms to improve their speech act of request, refusal, apology, and compliment response?"

Pre-test

A pre-test was conducted with the participants in order to test their current level in the use of targeted speech acts. Before applying the treatment, one pre- test was given to the participants. The pre-test included 15 situations for targeted speech acts. Request, refusal, and apology had 3 situations for each, and compliment response had 6 situations considering positions, relationship, and politeness in mind (see Appendix A). Situations were borrowed and modified from different sources. The result of the pre-test can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The mean, maximum, and minimum scores in the pre-test

Numbers of students	18
Mean	8.2
Maximum	12
Minimum	5

From the table above, it can be seen that the mean score of the students was low. Also, the maximum and the minimum scores were 12 and 5 respectively. The mean, maximum, and minimum scores indicated that the participants had difficulty using the targeted speech acts.

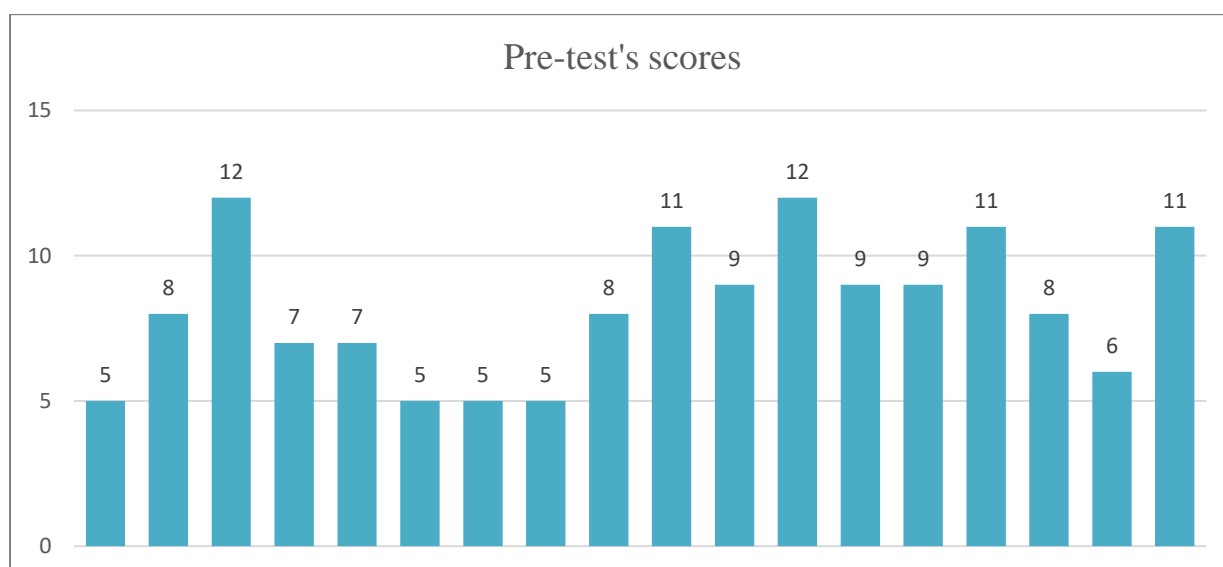


Figure 1. Distribution of the scores on the pre-test

As can be seen from the figure above, 10 out of 18 scored below average. None of the students scored full mark on the pre-test which was out of 15.

Post-test

The second tool was a post-test which was given to the students at the end of three sessions treatment. The post-test also included 15 situations for targeted speech acts with a total mark of 15. It was designed the same way as the pre-test, but the situations were different (see Appendix B). The result of the post-test can be seen in the table below.

Table 2. The mean, maximum and minimum scores on the post-test

Numbers of students	18
Mean	13.8
Maximum	15
Minimum	11

The result of the post-test' mean score showed great improvement from 8.2 to 13.8 out of 15. In addition, the maximum scores rolled from 12 to 15 and the minimum from 5 to 11.

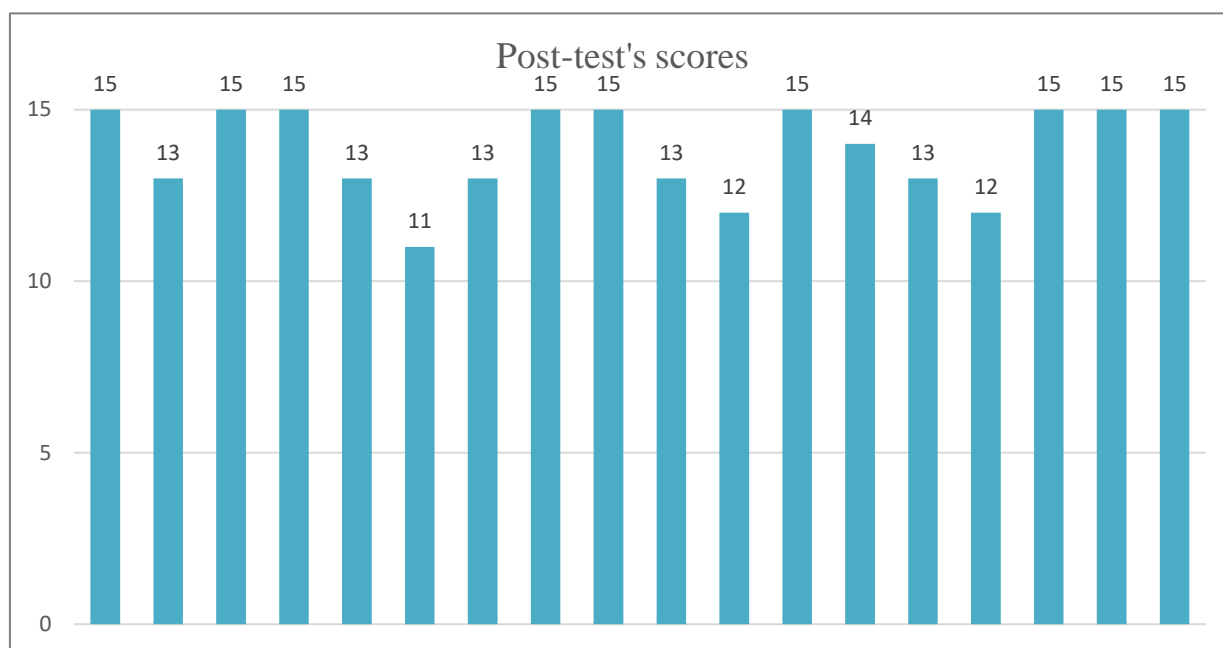


Figure 2. Distribution of the scores on the post-test.

As can be seen from Figure 2, all the participants improved in the post-test with 10 of them scored above average and 9 scored full mark.

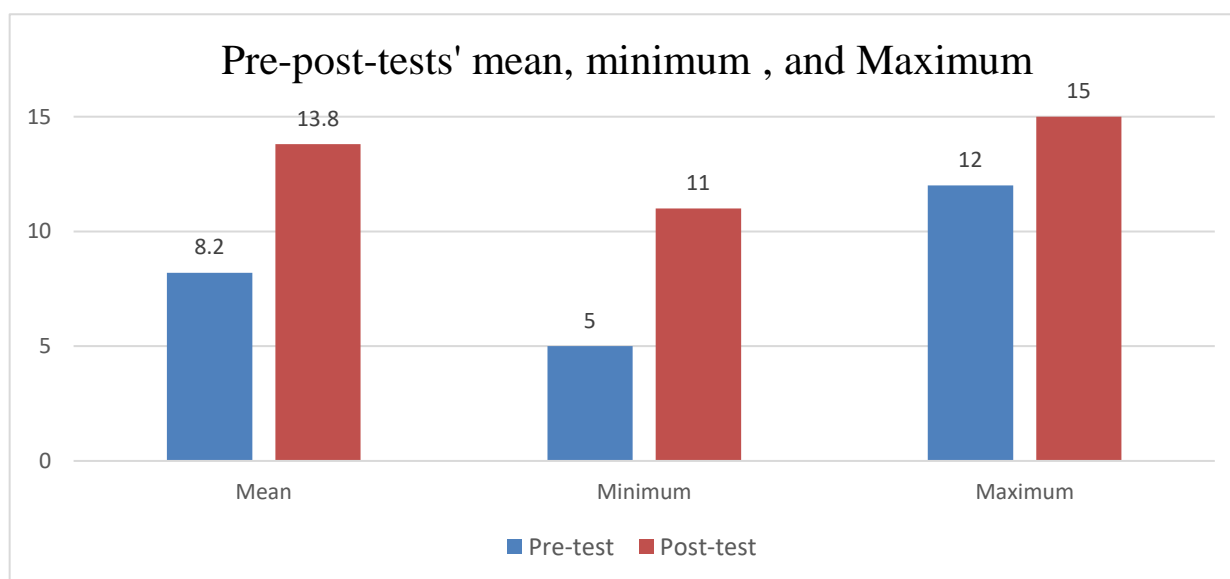


Figure 3. Distribution of the mean, minimum, and maximum scores on the pre-post-test.

The figure above showed the participants' improvement between the pre-test and the post-test. The pre-test's mean score was 8.2 while in the post-test it became 13.8. The minimum of the participants scores increased from 5 to 11. While in the pre-test the maximum was 12, the post-test' maximum became 15.

Questionnaire

The researcher distributed a questionnaire among the participants after the post-test. It was designed to collect data about students' attitudes toward the use of sitcoms to

improve their use of targeted speech acts. The questionnaire consisted of 7 statements related to using sitcoms inside the classroom (see Appendix C). A Likert scale consisted of five responses from strongly agree to strongly disagree was used.

Table 3. Response frequencies for questionnaire items

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	MR
1- Sitcoms can help me improve my English proficiency.	10	7	1	0	0	3.6
2- The humorous feature of sitcoms motivates me in learning English	8	6	3	0	0	3.4
3- Sitcoms helped me to be more aware of the English culture	8	8	2	0	0	3.6
4- After taking these sessions, I would love to learn English by watching sitcoms.	9	6	3	0	0	3.6
5- After taking these sessions, I feel more confident in using speech acts (apology, request, refusal, compliment response)	9	9	0	0	0	3.6
6- In order to communicate appropriately with the native speakers, I think we need to be exposed to their real-life conversation.	10	5	2	1	0	3.6
7- I think sitcoms are a useful resource for learning everyday conversations in English.	10	8	0	0	0	3.6

The mean response to statement one, three, four, five, six, seven was (3.6) and the mean response to statement two was (3.4). Having such a high mean response for all the statements indicated that students have a positive attitude toward the use of sitcoms to improve their use of speech acts of request, refusal, apology, and compliment response. Most of the students thought that sitcoms could help them improve their English proficiency, be more aware of the English culture, and motivate them in learning English. Also, most of them agreed that they would love to learn English by watching sitcoms, they needed to be exposed to English real-life conversation. In addition, a lot of them agreed that they felt more confident in using speech acts of request, refusal, apology, and compliment response after taking these sessions.

After analyzing the result of the pre-post-test and the questionnaire, the research questions, “Does using sitcoms improve EFL students’ use of speech acts of request, refusal, apology, and compliment response?” and “What are the EFL students’ attitudes toward the use of sitcoms to improve their speech act of request, refusal, apology, and compliment response?” were answered. For the first question, the participants’ result of the post-test showed a great improvement in their use of the targeted speech acts. The findings of this research are consistent with Birjandi and Derakhshan (2013), Gaily (2014), Derakhshan and Arabmofrad (2018), and Hashemian, Domakani, Ansari (2016). In the mentioned studies they suggested that using consciousness-raising video prompts, movies, instruction, or pedagogical intervention had a positive effect on students’ use of speech acts. Although this research was not qualitative, the researcher would like to point some of the observations. The researcher noticed three repeated points in the students’ responses in the pre-test. First, most of the students tended to use direct expressions especially in request and refusal speech acts which are considered as impolite.

Example of request: (teacher, give me 5 more minutes)

Example of refusal: (I do not want to study with you).

Second, a lot of the expressions that were used by the participants in apologizing showed that they tended not to take responsibility for their wrong actions and try to put the blame on someone else while apologizing to others.

Example of apology: (Sorry teacher my driver delay in coming to me and you have time to listen to me what the problem?).

Third, most of the students used culturally specific expressions in responding to a compliment. Using culturally specific expression while communicating using the target language might causes communication breakdown.

Example of compliment response: (*euyunik alhulwa*) “your eyes are beautiful”

These three repeated points were noticed by the researcher while correcting the students’ pre-test papers. In answering the second question, the researcher found out that students had a positive attitude toward the use of sitcoms to improve their use of speech act of request, refusal, apology, and compliment response. That can be seen from the mean responses of the statements in the questionnaire where all of the responses’ mean scores were 3.4 or above

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of using sitcoms to improve EFL students’ use of speech acts of request, refusal, apology, and compliment response. Therefore, the researcher collected data using pre-test, post-test, and a questionnaire. The result suggested that using sitcoms had a positive effect on EFL students’ use of the targeted speech acts. In addition, students had a positive attitude toward the use of sitcoms to improve their speech act of request, refusal, apology, and compliment response.

Even though the findings of this research showed a great improvement in the participants’ use of targeted speech acts, this result cannot be generalized due to some reasons. First, the sample size was small, it just included 18 participants as one experimental group. Second, only four speech acts were included in this research. The number of the participants at the beginning of the research was 23, but then the number was reduced to 18 because only 18 attended the three sessions and the post- test.

The present research focused on improving students’ use of speech act of request, refusal, apology, and compliment response by using sitcoms. In the light of this research, it can be suggested that using sitcoms in EFL classroom can be beneficial for improving students’ pragmatic competence as well as linguistic competence. The humorous feature in sitcoms might help in creating positive atmosphere in EFL classrooms which will be beneficial for both teachers and students. Researchers in Saudi Arabia can investigate more about using sitcoms in EFL classroom because it is not commonly used here. Investigating the effect of sitcoms for more speech acts could be taken into consideration in new researches. Also, analysing EFL students’ responses qualitatively in using speech acts could be very beneficial for future researches.

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Appendix A – Pre-test

Written Discourse Completion Test 1 (WDCT)

Request

- Your term paper is due, but you haven't finished it yet. You want to ask the teacher for an extension. What would you say?

- You are having dinner with your friend's family. The food is delicious, and you want to ask your friend's mother for more. What do you say?

- You are talking to your friend after class. You missed the last class and you want to borrow your friend's notes. How do you ask for help in this case?

Refusal

- A class mate, who you do not prefer to work with and you do not want to, ask you to study with her for the exam. What would you say to her?

- Your teacher asks you to present your work in front of a lot of people, but you feel shy and you do not want to. How would you reply to her?

- Your best friend invites you to her graduation party, but you have a very important final exam and you have to study? How would you tell her that?

Apology

- You were to discuss some of your problems with your teacher, but your driver was late for 45 min. What would you say to your teacher as you see her?

- You have borrowed your classmate's book and any child at your home tore some of its pages. What would you say when you return the book?

- You have promised your younger sister to take her to the park on Sunday but on Sunday evening, but some of your friends came to meet you and you couldn't go with her. You have forgotten to do so. What would you say to her?

Compliment

- You have just finished presenting your research paper. At the end of the class (when you were just leaving the classroom), one of your classmates say: "You did an excellent job! I really enjoyed your presentation".

-You have some friends and relatives over for coffee and cake that you baked. Someone says: "Tastes Yummy!".

-Some friends are over at your house. One of them looks at a clock hanging on the wall and says: "I love your clock. It looks great in your living room!".

-You're wearing a new shirt and a colleague looks at you and says: "This shirt looks great on you! Blue is a great color for you."

-You dyed your hair and your friend saw you and said it looks very beautiful on you. You answer?

You were shopping for a skirt and a stranger (female) approaches you and says: "This would look amazing on you!"

Appendix B – Post-test

Written Discourse Completion Test 2 (WDCT)

Request

- You went to the library to return a lot of books, and your hands were full. Your teacher was standing near the door of the library. How would you ask her to open the door for you?

- Next week there is a test in a class that is difficult for you. Your class mate seems to understand the course material better than you. You want to ask her to help you get ready for the test. How would you ask her?

- You forgot your wallet at home, and you want your friend to lend you some money. How would you ask her?

Refusal

- Your teacher invited you to a party to celebrate students who are graduating this year. However, you are only in your first year and really do not know the graduates, so you do not want to go. How would you refuse your teacher's invitation?

- A classmate offers you to have lunch with her. You want to leave college early today, so you would do your assignment. Classmate: Hey, do you want to go to the cafeteria and get a bite to eat? You refuse her offer by saying:

- Your friends asked you to read their paper and provide feedback. However, you do not have time to do so. How would you respond to your friends?

Apology

- You were to submit an assignment to the teacher but you woke up very late, you have not been able to even attend the class. What would you say to apologize to your teacher the next session you attend the class?

-The new trainee has lent you his brand-new laptop for you to use for a while. Trying to answer the phone, you accidentally dropped it on the floor and smashed part of the screen. What would you say to her?

- You promised with your friend to go for outing, but suddenly you got an urgent piece of work at home and couldn't go with her. How would you apologize to your friend?

Compliment

-You wrote an article in the college magazine and in the next day your teacher met you and said "I have read your article. It is very great. You are a skillful writer".

Your response:

-You have cooked a traditional meal for your American friend. She liked it a lot, so she said: this is the best dish I ever had.

Your response:

- You are wearing a new ring. A friend noticed that and said: your ring is gorgeous.

Your response:

- This is the first time you wear a red lipstick. You went to your friends' home. She noticed that and said: red lipstick looks really beautiful on you.

Your response:

- You were gathering with your colleagues. One of them saw your brand-new bag and said: wow, this is so trendy. I like it!

Your response:

You were shopping for a necklace and a stranger (female) approaches you and says: "This would look amazing on you!"

Your response:

Appendix C – A questionnaire

Questionnaire

Dear Students,

Kindly choose what suits you the best.

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Sitcoms can help me improve my English proficiency.					
The humorous feature of sitcoms motivates me in learning English.					
Sitcoms helped me to be more aware of the English culture.					
After taking these sessions, I would love to learn English by watching sitcoms.					
After taking these sessions, I feel more confident in using speech acts (apology, request, refusal, compliment response)					
In order to communicate appropriately with the native speakers, I think we need to be exposed to their real-life conversation.					
I think sitcoms are a useful resource for learning everyday conversations in English.					