CHAPER FIVE
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

“Teaching how to shape context of interaction cannot by directly achieved by well-dosed administration of fact... pragmatic knowledge... can only be acquired through observation and analysis and a feel for the whole social context. It is not an “if then” affair. It requires, therefore, a totally different pedagogic approach” Kramsch (1993:92).

5.1 Summary of the Research and Results

This research study of the pragmatic competence of the YUEFLLs has proved that the learners in question struggle to communicate appropriately when they encounter the TL in social communicative contexts. In spite of the fact that they have a high level of general language proficiency, their grammatical development does not show a corresponding level of pragmatic development. Although they are advanced learners of English, they are found unable to convey or understand the intended illocutionary force or politeness norms of the TL. The type and amount of external modifications used by the YUEFLLs in realizing requests in English in this study explore the unsuitable level of their pragmatic competence. The consequences of their pragmatic failure are more serious than that of the grammatical failure. While NSs find it possible to identify a grammatical error produced by a NNS as a language problem, they are less likely to identify a pragmatic error as such.

ILP, the new interdisciplinary area belonging to two different disciplines, namely; SLA and pragmatics, has not received enough amount of attention and consideration in Yemeni educational institutions where English is learnt/taught and used as an FL. The concern so far, in the English department mainly, has been widely with the grammatical and linguistic abilities of the YUEFLLs. As a result, these learners are found to experience some problems when they are placed in a situation where they feel they lack the sufficient means of appropriate communication. This fact pertains to those learners who have only mastered the basic vocabulary and syntax in the TL, but who have not developed full competence in the pragmalinguistic and socio-pragmatic skills of the TL. Therefore, this study aims at, mainly, exploring the importance of the extra-linguistic devices that are essential for successful communication and appropriate pragmatic achievement in English. In this direction, as the title entails, this study is of three-dimensional significance. First, to
test the ILP of the YUEFLLs to analyse their pragmatic and communicative competence in English and to analyse their approximation to the norms of politeness followed by the AENSs. Second, to tackle the YUEFLLs needs to find out what leads them to be inappropriate and incompetent when they are encountered in social interactions in English. Third, to assess the methods and materials currently in use in the English Department to weight up the pros and cons from a pragmatic stand point, and, hence, to suggest the appropriate and functional remedies that could minimize these problems quantitively and qualitatively.

Accordingly, this current research encompasses six main objectives (See section 3.1 for further details) to match the multi-dimensional title on the one hand, and to pin point the study procedures of data collection and analysis. Thereby, this study is composed of three main components. The first component is the communicative and pragmatic competence analysis of the YUEFLLs in English. This component investigates the request strategies used by the students in question compared to those used by the AENSs. The sample of the study consists of eighty YUEFLLs and forty AENSs. Data for this part of the study has been elicited from the samples through the DCT. The questionnaire of this component involves twelve dialogues that involve twelve different situations. Participants in each group are asked to complete each dialogue by writing a suitable request in English. This section aims at achieving the first two objectives of the research.

The second component is the needs analysis of the YUEFLLs. The intention behind this component of the study is to tackle the main factors, which may have a positive or negative impact on the learners’ pragmatic development in English. The students in question receive a 16-item-Yes/No questionnaire in order to elicit their communicative needs, objectives and resources available to them and some of the socio-cultural norms that may affect their learning. The items of this questionnaire are based on some of the resources of pragmatic failure such as motivation, inadequate or uninformed instruction, lack of exposure, loyalty to first culture and stages in ILP development, etc.

The third component aims at assessing and evaluating the teaching materials and methods currently in use in the English department. The intention here is to examine the effectiveness of the current materials and methods in introducing to learners some motivating experience and the necessary amount of opportunities for exposure to the different norms and varieties of interpersonal talk in the TL. The
findings of the previous two components are expected to give hints into the review and assessment of the teaching methods and materials to have a broad framework to account for any deviation in the speech of L2 learners and identify the salient rules of polite communication in order to incorporate them into the target syllabus.

Analysis of the three components of this study has yielded the following results:

1. **REQUEST STRATEGIES:** In spite of the differences in the type of request strategies given by the two groups, YUEFLLs and AENSs; in many situations, the YUEFLLs are still found to have the necessary pragmatic knowledge to perform their request in English properly.

2. **LEVELS OF DIRECTNESS:** The levels of directness of YUEFLLs are, to some extent, similar to the levels of directness of the AENSs. This means that the YUEFLLs are observed to show good indications of pragmatic competence in the sense of directness and politeness norms usually used in the TL.

3. **APPROXIMATION TO TL NORMS:** However, this approximation of the YUEFLLs to the TL norms of directness and politeness of the TL could be attributed to the similarities between the learners’ NL and the TL. That is, pragmatic transfer might have its role in directing the learners’ native norms of directness towards the TL ones.

4. **EXTERNAL MODIFICATIONS:** The type and amount of external modification used by the YUEFLLs in comparison to the AENSs is a decisive indication of the formers’ lack of sufficient knowledge of the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatics devices that help them to be communicatively and pragmatically more competent in English.

5. **INPUT:** The inadequacy of the kind of input the students are exposed to inside and outside the classroom plays a negative role in the development of the pragmatic knowledge of the YUEFLLs in English.

6. **OUTPUT:** Inspite of the absence of enough opportunities for output and language reproduction, most of the YUEFLLs are found to be enthusiastic to reproduce what they have received in English.

7. **ROLE-PLAY:** Dearth of role-play and group-work tasks either inside or outside the classroom deprives the students of different communicative activities of the chance to enhance and develop their pragmatic abilities in the TL.
8. FEEDBACK: YUEFLLs are found not to have the necessary opportunities to be in contact with the NSs of the TL to receive the appropriate feedback in English. The kind of feedback they gain from their peers or outside the classroom may not be the feedback they really need for the level of pragmatic in English.

9. TARGET CULTURE: Although 60% of the YUEFLLs are found attracted to the target culture, it is found that this target culture has not been appropriately addressed in the FL classrooms and syllabus. Instead, the English FL teachers in Yemen, coming from different cultural backgrounds other than English, reduce culture to geography, food, art, music etc. that is why most students remain monocultural and ethnocentric even after years of English language study, failing to develop intercultural understanding.

10. EXPOSURE TO TL ENVIRONMENT: Unfortunately, none of the YUEFLLs have been exposed to the host environment. This disadvantage deprived them of the exposure to more sufficient and adequate input since the length of stay in the L2 community is positively correlated with the level of achievement in various areas of pragmatics.

11. INSTRUCTION: None of the students have received any kind of instruction from English NS teachers. This means that those teachers, who are neither English nor Arab, employ their L1 social and cultural norms in the language classroom, or part of them at least. As a result, students are found to be further driven away from the appropriate norms of pragmatic competence of English.

12. MOTIVATION: The majority of the YUEFLLs are instrumentally motivated to learn English. This fact is attributed to various reasons like the context in which English is learnt and used, the kind of instruction the students receive and their need to get better jobs in the market. These attributes hinder the communicative and pragmatic competence of the students and make them, socially, deviant from the TL community.

13. SPEAKING SKILL: Due to the lack of the TL situations encounters, YUEFLLs find difficulties in developing their spoken skill in English, which is the most effective means they can use to activate their pragmalinguistic ability to deliver appropriate messages in their L2.

14. LISTENING SKILL: Although listening is the primary channel by which the learner gains access to L2 and also is the trigger for acquisition, YUEFLLs are found to rank listening as one of the most difficult skills they practice in English. This result
has its negative impact on the way learners perceive their L2 input quantitatively and qualitatively.

15. READING SKILL: Due to communicative and interactive abilities that the direct communication skills like speaking and writing require at the cost of the hearer or reader, YUEFLLs find reading an easy skill to practice. Although reading is a necessary resource for input to the TL, it does not guarantee pragmatic development.

16. WRITING SKILL: The kind of syllabus and teaching methods currently in use in the English department lead the YUEFLLs to put the utmost of their power in writing. It is the only available medium of communication to the learners, which occurs at the expense of the oral communication skills like speaking.

17. TL GRAMMAR: The intention in English language education, at all levels of education in Yemen, is heavily directed towards the grammatical features of the TL. This happens at the expense of the extra-linguistic features, which are essential for appropriate and effective interaction in the TL.

18. TRANSLATION: Reduction and lack of translation courses that are one of the most effective means to explore the similarities and differences between the learners L1 and L2 in the grammatical and pragmatic levels, and to bridge the gaps between the two cultures Arabic and English.

19. AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS: The insufficient use of audio-visual aids, in the English Department and in schools as well, deprives students of exposure to various authentic opportunities to spot the necessary appropriate sources of input by the TL native speakers.

20. REQUIREMENT COURSES: Around one third of the English Department programme is devoted to courses of university and faculty requirements that are taught in Arabic. This fact reduces the amount of instruction in English and leads the students to focus more on these requirements so as to score higher marks in the total grade.

21. TEACHER-FRONTED APPROACH: The teacher-fronted approach followed in the English department minimizes the learners’ chances to spell out their needs and discourage them to raise questions or ask for ambiguity explanations. In such contexts, students are not given any real chance to share their acquired language with each other in the classroom and, hence, they fail to perform well outside the classroom.
22. DISTRIBUTION OF ENGLISH COURSES: The unsystematic distribution of the courses for each semester and each level in the English Department does not help the strategies of building and developing the learners’ capacities in English in a well disciplined way.

23. EVALUATION: The inadequate system of examination and evaluation mislead the outcome of the English Language programme. The written-examined graduates find themselves incompetent to communicate in English.

24. SELECTION OF MATERIALS: As a result of ignorance of the syllabus objectives, the randomly, unsystematic selection of materials prescribed in the English Department increases the degree of inadequacy of the whole programme in developing the learners’ abilities in English.

25. ENGLISH LANGUAGE TASKS: Restricting the language learning/teaching process to the classroom context deprives the students of broaden encounters to practice the already acquired aspects of the TL. Learners are rather frozen out and discouraged from reinforcing their creativity and communication abilities in English.

In the light of the importance of pragmatics in SLA, one needs to reconsider the fact that the development of communicative competence has been the primary goal of teaching English as an SL or FL for close to 20 years, shaping the research interest and instructional approaches in significant ways. One aspect of communicative competence considered essential to successful engagement in face-to-face interaction in the TL is pragmatic competence. This competence entails knowing how to connect utterances to locally situated circumstances and thus is an integration of both linguistic and cultural knowledge. Pragmatic knowledge and skills that are essential to successful interpersonal communication include a knowledge of contextually situated vocabulary words, routinized language patterns and extra-linguistic behaviour. Also included are such conversational skills as turn-taking, exchanging invitations, closings, elaboration and self-and-other corrections.

Unlike FL contexts, children in their L1 environments obtain these pragmatic features via engagement in communicative activities with their caregivers or the other expert communicators around them. They are provided with a substantial amount of input in which, through interaction, stress and other contextualization resources, the more important cues are made salient to them. In addition, they receive verbal instructions that direct them to perceive these cues and make connections between the cues and their contexts. Overtime, and with the directed help of adults, the children
learn to recognize the communicative activity that is taking place along with the relevant linguistic cues and their meanings. As they take on more responsibility for the realization of an activity, the children build up habits of language use and expectations about the pragmatic values of the various areas of language. The children, thereby forming their pragmatic competence, eventually internalize this accumulated knowledge. Similar principles and circumstances of language realization and socialization apply to the SL situation. SL learners develop their pragmatic competence through their extended engagement in a wider range of contexts and communicative activities in school and other social settings with more competent speakers of the SL.

In this sense, conditions of learning English as an FL in Yemen are different, because English is neither a common medium of communication outside the classroom nor a medium of instruction in the classroom, in school at least. Thus, since there is virtually no chance for learners to observe or engage in English-based communicative practice outside school, the English classroom becomes the central site for the development of their communicative/pragmatic competence. Moreover, Arabic, the learners’ NL is employed to teach English which leads to the reduction of the amount of input in English even inside the classroom. Within this context, the limited opportunities for such development in the pragmatic features of the TL are tied to instructional activities that constitute their classroom experience. As this current study examines the activities involved in the EFL context in Yemen, they are found to be, often, limited to the direct teaching of fixed conversational expressions, if pragmatic competence is dealt with at all. Accounting, at least in part, for the limited focus on pragmatic knowledge and pragmatic competence in the EFL context in Yemen is the teachers’ own level of pragmatic competence. In fact, the English language teachers in schools have learnt English as an FL, so they might not have had enough opportunities to develop their pragmatic knowledge and skills fully. Thus their ability to provide ample learning opportunities for their students may also be rather limited. However, relying solely on the direct teaching of knowledge and skills needed for pragmatic competence might not lead to its development.

5.2 General Symptoms

According to the type of strategies and the amount of external modifications used by the YUEFLs in sections 4.1 and 4.1.7 to realize their requests in English in
comparison to the AENSs, it is found that the situation is not satisfactory. The YUEFLs show the minimum level of competence in their pragmatic performance in English. Accordingly, sections 4.2-4.4 tackle and explore the main resources and causes behind the students’ weakness in this concern in the senses of needs analysis and syllabus description. Before moving to the last aim of the study, it would be valuable to summarize the characteristics of teaching English in an FL context and the features of teaching English in the English Department so as to get a broad image of the whole situation that affects the learners in shaping their IL from a pragmatic standpoint.

5.2.1. Characteristics of Teaching English as an FL

1. Classroom interaction usually involves a narrow range of speech acts and discourse markers that learners need in communication outside the instructional setting.
2. The classroom situation is an inadequate source of pragmatic knowledge in terms of teacher-student roles and power equality. Teacher-talk usually displays a lack of politeness markings. The monopolization of discourse organization and management by the teacher do not serve as a pragmatically appropriate model for learners.
3. Teachers’ instruction and textbooks may inadvertently prejudice learners toward a specific type of input and steer them away from others.
4. Textbooks as a source of pragmatic input do not always provide authentic and representative languages to learners. Either speech acts are not presented, or they are presented unrealistically. In addition, there is a lack of pragmatic explanation in textbooks to facilitate L2 pragmatic learning.
5. Learners in an FL setting do not have enough amount of exposure to the TL outside the classroom to use language for real life purposes. Additionally, they do not have a direct observation of NSs that may provide them with the appropriate models to follow.
6. EFL Classrooms involve large classes and limited contact hours that prevent teachers from organizing an appropriate environment to facilitate the development of the learners’ pragmatic ability.
7. In an FL classroom, then, learners can successfully learn grammar and literacy, but not the various pragmatic features and the sociocultural norms of the TL.
8. Dearth of the two main components necessary for pragmatic development, communication practices and corrective feedback deprive learners from enriching their communicative knowledge in the TL.
9. Whereas SL learners identify more pragmatic errors and rate them as more severe than grammatical errors, FL learners recognize more grammatical errors and assess them as more serious than pragmatic errors (Bardovi Harlig, 1999).
10. An FL environment does not afford an ample opportunity for exposure to and meaningful use of the TL where learners can acquire the necessary features of pragmatics without instruction (Rose, 2005).
11. In an FL context the range of speech acts and realization strategies is quite narrow and the typical interaction patterns restrict pragmatic input and opportunities for practicing discourse organization strategies.
12. Large classes, limited contact hours and little opportunities for intercultural communication are some of the features of the EFL context that hinder pragmatic learning (Rose, 1999).
13. In the teacher-fronted approach mostly used in FL contexts, it is pointed out that the requests teachers made to students were status-bound, and as a consequence they could not serve as direct models for the learner (Bardori-Harlig and Hartford, 1996).

5.2.2 Characteristics of Teaching English in the English Department, Thamar University
1. The lack of native English speaking teachers of English. Most of the language teachers are neither English nor Arab, which makes the implementation of the required pragmatic behaviour more complicated.
2. The lack of EFL qualified teachers in schools. Most of the Yemeni English teachers are neither fluent nor adequately qualified with reference to their command of English. They can express themselves neither in spoken nor in written English (Mudhish, 2006).
3. The absence of audio-visual aids, which are essential to raise and develop the TL pragmatic features through examples of authentic communication situations.
4. The monocultural environment has a negative impact on the learners’ attitude towards the target culture. Moreover, YUEFLs are found, as well as all Arabs, to be anti-Anglo-Americans due to the complicated political circumstances in the region.
This leads most of the students towards a negative attitude towards the target culture and the TL.

5. The examination and method of evaluation are also hurdles facing the adequately communicative English language education. These tests address the teaching material rather than the learners’ linguistic and communicative abilities.

6. Learners do not receive any type of instruction in pragmatics which makes them significantly different from NSs in their pragmatic production and perception in the TL.

7. Lack of knowledge on the part of school graduates when they join the University: The transition from an introductory school level to a more advanced university level is as difficult as passing from lack of knowledge to an introductory level. That is because of the inadequate mastery of the four skills; namely, speaking, listening, writing and reading (LSRW).

8. English language Department curricula: The curricula of the English Department are heavily dominated by the literature component. The other component of syllabus i.e., language, particularly, stands out as the weakest.

9. Teaching methodology: The teaching methods currently in use are rather outdated and do not in any way encourage the communicative use of the language. The grammar-translation approach is still in use, and the use of the NL (Arabic) makes the task harder for them to cope with the TL.

10. Lack of the TL-like environment: Lack of the TL exposure as spoken by its NSs is a crucial reason behind the English majors’ weakness. Arabic is the language of instruction for the other content subjects. Students get very little input in English and this greatly affects their performance as they hardly use it for communication even among themselves.

11. The learners’ motivation: Students are instrumentally motivated to learn English. The main stimulus for learning English is to achieve a goal, e.g. a career. The majority of English majors join the English Department because it will be easier for them to get a job with a BA in English than in any other specialization.

12. Teaching the TL to large groups of students: Students are made to sit in heavily packed and overcrowded classrooms where the environment is not receptive. So it is virtually impossible for them to get any personal attention or seek clarification.
5.3 Pedagogic and Classroom Implications

This study comes up with a set of pedagogic and classroom implications that would help in awakening, raising and developing the YUEFLs’ pragmatic knowledge in English. This set of recommendations is based on the areas of weakness and the causes of the learners’ incompetence in English.

5.3.1 Input

There is a pressing need to increase the sources of inputs to the TL since successful instructed language learning requires extensive L2 Input. Language learning, whether it occurs in a naturalistic or an instructed context, is a slow and labour-intensive process. Whereas L1 acquisition takes place between two to five years and achieves full grammatical competence due to the exposure to massive amounts of input, the same is undoubtedly true of L2 acquisition especially in an FL context. If learners do not receive enough amount of exposure to the TL, it would be very hard for them to learn the language. The more exposure to the TL, the more and the faster the learners will learn. This comes from the fact that the length of residence in the host community where the language is spoken is related to language proficiency and there has been found positive correlation between the length of residence and the level of achievement in the various aspects of pragmatics. Concerning the learner’s pragmatic competence, teachers have to equip their students with different situational interactions in the classroom through several authentic conversations in the TL. Providing opportunities beyond teacher-fronted, status-unequal encounters are also indicated for its value in pragmatic input and practice as well as for its general pedagogic benefits. Making contextualized, pragmatically appropriate input available to learners from the early stages of learning/acquisition onward is the very least that pedagogy should aim at.

5.3.2 Output

The need to create opportunities for output, including pushed output, where the learner is stressed to express messages clearly and explicitly, constitutes one of the main reasons for incorporating tasks into a language programme. This kind of output is of relevance to the context in which the Yemenis learn English due to the lack of their interest to be part of the interacting groups either in the classroom or outside. Learners should be encouraged to get involved in open or long turn social activities
using the TL. Since exercises, especially the more controlled type, typically result in output that is limited in terms of length and complexity. It does not afford students opportunities for the kind of sustained output that theorists argue is necessary for ILP development. Students need sufficient practice in order to obtain the necessary sociocultural competence for successful and effective communication in the TL. The development of linguistic competence does not guarantee pragmatic competence. Students have to be trained to develop their ability to understand and generate messages with praise accuracy in accordance to the communicative contexts that can be social, cultural or situational. In contrast to the argument that acquisition is dependent entirely on comprehensible input, most researchers now acknowledge that learners’ output plays a part in the following directions:

a) Learners’ production (output) serves to generate and modify better input through the process of feedback that learners’ efforts at production elicit.
b) Provides opportunities to develop their communicative and discourse skills for example, by producing long turns.
c) Helps the learners to develop their personal voices by steering conversations on topics they are interested in contributing to (Ellis, 2005).

5.3.3 Interaction

While it is useful to consider the relative contribution of input and output to boost and improve the language learning process, it is also important to acknowledge that both co-occur in oral interaction and that socio-cultural theories of L2 learning have viewed social interaction as the matrix in which learning takes place. The opportunities of interaction help in fostering the learning process when a communication problem arises and learners are engaged in negotiating meaning and familiar forms of speech. The interactional modifications help to make input comprehensible, provide correct feedback, and push learners to modify their own output in uptake. It should be noticed that interaction is not just a means of automatising existing linguistic resources but also of creating new resource from the various norms and contentions of politeness of the TL. There are some advantages of interaction that are deemed important for learning the socio-cultural and pragmalinguistic norms of the TL. The key requirements for these advantages in the classroom are:
a) Creating contexts of language use where students have a reason to attend to language.
b) Providing opportunities for learners to use the language to express their own personal moods.
c) Helping students to participate in language related activities that are beyond their current level of proficiency.
d) Offering a full range of contexts that cater for the different types of speech acts and the related systems of politeness in the TLs (Ellis, 2005).

For this purpose, it is also useful to present and share examples from cross-cultural misunderstanding, and to use examples of potentially problematic interaction that evidence some sort of pragmatic peculiarity and then present these examples to students for discussions. Teachers can take field notes to collect their own data of similar examples and also train their students to be good observers of such cases. Students may be able to share other personal cases of problematic interaction from their own experience, or from watching movies and programmes in the TL. The examples illustrate the types of cross-cultural pragmatic issues that teachers and learners of English might encounter. The point here is that teaching materials can be derived from such encounters and can be shared with students during the introductory phase of classroom instruction on pragmatic issues. The various examples can be presented to learners with an aim to determine whether the interaction seems acceptable to them. Then, learners can offer tentative explanations for the pragmatic peculiarities in the exchanges.

5.3.4 Audio-Visual Aids

As a consequence of the difficulties involved in dealing with pragmatic competence in the FL context mentioned earlier in this chapter, the use of authentic audio-visual input like videos, films and TV has been reported as a useful tool to address the knowledge of the pragmatic system of the TL and acknowledge its appropriate use. These authentic audio-visual inputs could provide ample opportunities to address all aspects of language use in a variety of contexts. Besides, it offers the possibility of choosing the richest and most suitable systems, analysing them in full and designing software to allow learners to access the pragmatic aspect as needed. In an EFL context, Alcon (2005) agrees with Rose (2005) on the advantages
of using authentic visual input. First, audio-visual materials may be useful to expose learners to the pragmatic aspects of the TL. Second, pragmatic judgment texts can be based on audio-visual discourse analysis and prepare learners for communication in a new cultural setting.

5.3.5 Awareness Raising

There is a need to add awareness raising activities to the language/teaching process to help students acquire sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic information. For instance, what function does complimenting have in the target culture, what the appropriate topics for complementing are and by what linguistic formula are compliments given and received. Some other features of pragmatics could be raised by awareness raising activities like what strategies are used for such speech act in the TL, what is considered an offence in the target culture compared to the native culture, what are the degrees of offence of different situations and how the nature of the relationship between the participants affects the use of such speech act. The learners should be exposed to the various features of pragmatics of the TL and provide them with the necessary analytical tools they need to arrive at their own generalizations concerning contextually appropriate language use. These pragmatic features can be observed in various sources of written or oral data, ranging from NS classroom guests to videos of authentic interaction, feature films and other fictional and non-fictional written and audiovisual sources. These activities should also be employed to make learners consciously aware of differences between the native and TL norms of politeness and appropriateness. The rationale for this approach is that such differences are often ignored by learners and go unnoticed unless they are directly addressed. To achieve these goals, several techniques can be used: mainly the teacher presentation and discussion of research findings on different features of pragmatics and student-discovery procedures in which students obtain information through observation/discussion can be used to relay information from research pragmatic issues to students. This can be done inductively (from data to rules) or deductively (from rules to data). Teachers also need to show the role of textual variables in the use of different language forms by providing detailed information on participants, their status, their situation and the speech events that are taking place.
5.3.6 Loyalty to L1 Culture

One of the main findings of this study implies that learning a language is inevitably associated with learning its culture. It cannot be denied that language and culture are inseparable. When such learners learn L2, they negotiate and produce their L2 performance based on their L1 and the already existing L2 knowledge. As these YUEFLIs come from a culture which is different from that of the TL it is advisable that both teachers and learners should learn to understand the nature of the two cultures involved; the learners’ native culture and the target culture. English language teachers need to understand the systems of the two cultures to provide effective instruction in the classroom and language learners need to learn to become good language users. Teachers can, then, indicate the pragmatic distinctions together with some common ground of the two culturally different languages.

In this connection, this study reveals that 60% of the YUEFLIs are attracted by the target culture, which is an encouraging result. However, this concern should not be overlooked since many of them are subconsciously think that they might lose their self identity as they learn an SL and use its cultural and social features in the interactions where native proficiency is not the ultimate goal. This fact suggests that linguistic instruction in the EFL classroom is not enough for the L2 learners to acquire the appropriate use of the TL pragmatic systems. The data given by the YUFFLLIs in this study shows evidence of the imbalance of linguistic and pragmatic competence in the TL. Their linguistic abilities seem to outdo their pragmatic ones. The unsystematic and limited variations of their L2 pragmatic behaviour indicate lack of adequate understanding about the TL pragmatic rules. Thus, it would be of great benefit if EFL teachers lay emphasis on the pragmatic and socio-cultural instructions of the TL in their classrooms. Class activities should be based on the practice of the use of L2 pragmatic rules in varied situational contexts. Learners should be instructed to be familiar with the new socio-cultural norms of the TL and remain restricted to these norms in order to be communicatively competent.

5.3.7 Peers and group work

Apart from teacher talk and presentation through different speeches and materials, learners should also be exposed to a different source of input, which is of their peers. Besides what learners bring to the classroom, their motivation for learning the TL and its socio-cultural rules, collaboration and peer interaction also play an important role for the development of their pragmatic knowledge. Students should be
encouraged to help each other through collaboration in English. Their collaborative work will provide opportunities for a wider range of contexts, and the participation in peer-work contributes to increase learners’ appropriate use and application of the pragmatic principles of English.

5.3.8 Materials

Input in the EFL classroom comes mainly in two ways, through teacher talk and through instructional materials (pedagogic intervention). In the traditional English classroom in schools or universities both are problematic. When a teacher makes a request to students in the course of lesson or in classroom management, like, to close the door or to open a window, these requests are status-bound and, thus, cannot serve as direct models for the students. Instructional materials, on the other hand, are found to be barren in the sense that they do not afford the minimum limit to enhance the learners’ communicative and pragmatic knowledge in English.

Therefore, apart from the teacher’s input, bringing authentic materials into the classroom would positively widen the learners’ exposure to various kinds of pragmatic input in the TL. The point of having pragmatically accurate materials is to have classroom materials that are easily accessible and represent authentic interaction. However, materials will never represent every speech act in every possible situation. Not only because it is too enormous task but because it is not believed that learners acquired language that way. Authentic language and representative cases are used as input triggers for learners to acquire more. If one believes that learners only learn what is modeled and what they memorize, then the task will be enormous indeed. The input, then, will have to fully specify any and all of the expected output. The position in this case is that the real responsibility of the classroom teacher is not to instruct students specifically in the intricacies of requesting, complementing, direction-giving or close a conversation, but rather to make students more aware of that pragmatic functions in language, specifically in discourse, to make them aware of these functions as learners. EFL teachers should acknowledge these speech acts and their component parts in order to determine what naturalistic input is for students, but it would be impossible to impart this knowledge concerning everything explicitly. If students are encouraged to think for themselves about culturally appropriate ways to compliment a friend or say good-bye to a teacher, then they may awaken their own latent abilities for pragmatic analysis.
To sum up, there is a need to base materials and teaching practices on natural language data if the aim is to provide the necessary conditions in the classroom to make learners aware of appropriate communication patterns. There are several alternatives to this artificial presentation of natural conversation in textbooks. On the one hand, the use of spoken corpora has been regarded as a useful instrument to present authentic speaker input in the classroom. On the other hand, suitable materials that represent authentic audiovisual input make use of video, films and T.V. The use of film in the classroom helps to develop learners’ motivation and activate their cognitive domain. The uses of audiovisual materials provide a contextualized view of language and help learners to visualize words and meanings. Moreover, visual materials change classroom routines. Therefore, all these features are of crucial importance when developing pragmatics in the EFL classroom, since students should be aware of the relationship between participants when performing specific speech acts and also the contextual factors affecting their conversational interaction.

5.4 Proposal for Teaching Pragmatics in Classroom

Among the various proposals and pedagogic activities suggested by different scholars in ILP, Olshtain and Cohen (1991) were the first authors to propose a framework with different steps for teaching speech acts. According to them, this process should go under the following three stages:

a. Learners need to be exposed to the most typical realization strategies of the particular speech act under study.

b. After this presentation, they should be explained the factors that are involved in selecting one specific form rather than another.

c. Finally, they should be provided with opportunities to practice the use of the speech act.

In order to plan and implement these suggestions, Olshtain and Cohen (1991) elaborated five steps (techniques) that include the three conditions for learning any aspect of the TL, (i.e. input, output, and feedback) previously mentioned in 4.2, as follows:

1. The diagnostic assessment was proposed with the aim of determining the learners’ level of awareness of speech acts in general and, more particularly, the specific
speech act under study. By means of acceptability rating tests and oral/written tests, the teacher could establish the learners’ ability to both comprehend and produce speech acts.

2. The model dialogue consists of presenting learners with short natural examples of dialogues where they can observe the speech act in use. The purpose of this activity is to make learners guess whether the participants involved in the dialogues know each other and other aspects such as their age or status. In this way, learners become aware of the social and pragmatic factors that may affect speech acts.

3. The evaluation of a situation is regarded as a technique that reinforces learners’ awareness of the factors that affect the choice of an appropriate speech act strategy, since learners are asked to discuss and evaluate different situations.

4. Learners in this step are involved in various role-play activities that are suitable for practicing the use of speech acts. An important aspect when preparing the activities is to give enough pertinent information regarding the situation and the participants intervening in it.

5. Finally, learners should be provided both feedback and discussion to make them realize whether any possible inappropriate expressions have been used during the role-play. They should also be given the opportunity to express their perceptions and any differences they have noted between their mother tongue and the TL.

By means of a careful planned implementation of these techniques, it is recommended that learners should have opportunities to interpret different speech acts and react in a more appropriate way when faced with them. In addition, they could be provided with chances to practice the speech act in a real communication situation and to discuss the possible factors that affect their use in those conversations. Some of the suggested pedagogical practices involve natural dialogues, opportunities to produce output by performing role-plays and feedback on their performances.

5.4.1 Lesson Outline

Goal: To increase awareness of the factors involved in speech acts in American English.

Description of the Activity

This activity can be adapted to any speech act. It requires the teacher to collect and record or transcribe short authentic dialogues performed by NSs for the presentation phase of the lesson. These dialogues are representative of potential situations in which the learners may find themselves and require the learners to
accomplish a communicative purpose by using the target speech act. Further, these dialogues should be based on authentic language data and should introduce students to two essential parameters that guide appropriate linguistic choice: (1) the relationship between interlocutors (either informality/non-distance, or formality/distance), and (2) the task type (for each speech act, at least two task levels can usually be identified; for example: requests can be easy or difficult to comply with; invitations can be to a casual or a more formal event; apologies can follow a minor or a major offense).

Thus, dialogues need to be presented so that students can discover both parameters, as well as the respective linguistic realization, for each given dialogue. For example, for requests, the dialogue situations will present learners with the following:
informal/non-distant request that is easy to comply with; informal/non-distant request that is difficult to comply with; formal/distant request that is easy to comply with; and formal/distant request that is difficult to comply with.

As students move through the presentation phase of the lesson, during which they listen to and read the sample dialogues, the teacher leads them to inductively discover the parameters relevant for the given speech act. A visual organizer/grid is used to transfer the different linguistic realizations of the speech act from the dialogues into the appropriate cells of the grid (see Teacher Resource ) below. Thus, the visual organizer raises students' awareness of the factors that affect linguistic choice in an explicit, lucid and well-structured way. This grid then functions as the students' reference point for the selection of the appropriate speech act form in subsequent activities in the lesson. The practice phase of the lesson gives students the opportunity to use the target speech act in a communicative-pair or small group situation set up by the teacher. While this does require teachers' creativity and awareness of communicative situations in which their students are likely to engage, dialogic practice tasks allow students to build confidence in using the speech act in the safe confines of the classroom. Activities need to be carefully sequenced from controlled tasks to more communicative tasks in order to build fluency and automaticity. If students are given sufficient time, they will have gradually less need to refer back to the grid in order to make an appropriate linguistic choice.
Procedure

1. Language presentation

a. The target speech act is presented in four short dialogues.

b. Each dialogue shows a different speaker relationship (informal/non-distant and formal/distant) and different task type (for requests, for example, easy to do and hard to do; for invitations, for example, casual event and formal event; for apologies, for example, minor offense and major offense).

c. Students listen to each taped dialogue and infer what the speakers are talking about.

d. The teacher has students practise the dialogues and draws attention to target speech acts by eliciting their realization in the dialogues.

e. The teacher elicits relationship between the speakers and type of task from students.

2. Highlighting of speech act

a. Teacher has prepared a grid, which is provided to students—but not yet filled out—and shown on OHP (see Teacher Resource) below.

b. Focused elicitation: teacher leads students to identify for each dialogue (1) the relationship between the speakers and (2) the type of task (e.g., How well do you think the speakers know each other? Is what person A asking person B to do easy or difficult for B? To what kind of an event is A inviting B? Is this event casual or is it a more formal event? Is A apologizing to B for something that is insignificant or for something that is serious?)

c. Students, with the teacher's help, complete the grid by adding the appropriate linguistic realizations in the relevant quadrants; teacher shows completed grid on OHP.

d. Students can easily see how the linguistic forms that realize the target speech act differ, depending on the two main variables.

e. Teacher and students discuss what other relationships between people are considered informal/non-distant and formal/distant.

f. Similarly, teacher and students discuss if task types are considered similarly in their cultures (i.e., what is considered an easy/hard request, casual/formal event, minor/major offense in American culture may be considered differently in their culture).
3. Practice activities:

a. Controlled: Students can infer the relationship between speakers or task type from various speech act realizations the teacher provides.

   Example: For each request (or other language function), circle the appropriate relationship between the speakers.

   *Do you think you can help me with the computer?*

   Employee to boss to co-worker to co-worker

b. Controlled: Students focus on either speaker relationship or task type in separate activities.

   Example: Make informal or formal requests (or other language function) for something that is easy to do. Student to student in the school cafeteria:

   *Can you hand me my book bag?*

b. Controlled: Based on the target speech act, students are presented with additional short dialogue scenarios and have to identify (1) the relationship of the speakers and (2) the type of task; then they select the appropriate speech act realization for each situation.

   Example: You can't leave work to pick up your child. You ask your neighbor to do so.

   (1) relationship: informal/non-distant or formal/distant?

   (2) Type of request: easy to do or hard to do? How would you ask your neighbor?

c. Semi-controlled: Students have some options as to the scenario they choose.
**Example:** Make up requests (or other language function) for the following situations:

friend to friend –

**borrowing bicycle** or **borrowing car**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A: Can I borrow your bike this weekend?</th>
<th>Do you think I could borrow your car tomorrow?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B: Sure, no problem.</td>
<td>I'm not sure yet. I'll let you know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: Thanks.</td>
<td>Okay.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**d. Communicative:** Students design mini role plays based on scenarios they choose; thus students determine the relationship of speakers as well as task type and create mini-dialogues practicing the target speech act. Later, they exchange their scenarios with others and create dialogues based on others' scenarios.

**e.** Various dialogues are acted out in front of the class; teacher and students confirm the speakers' relationship and task type in each, referring back to the speech act grid.

**Rationale**

The purpose of the lesson sequence described above is to enhance the students' communicative competence by helping them make appropriate linguistic choices in the realization of communicative intentions. It is known that a focus on grammatical competence, as is still the standard procedure in most ESL and EFL learning environments, does not lead to communicative competence and often leads to serious pragmatic failure. Students' speech act realizations often deviate significantly from NS norms and may be the result of negative transfer from the students' first language. There is evidence that pragmatic competence is acquired slowly unless it is explicitly taught. Students have few usable strategies at their disposal for effective and appropriate speech act production.

Available textbook materials do not adequately prepare students for appropriate participation in unrehearsed real-life communication. Many textbooks examined for their presentation of speech acts either neglect completely the dimensions of speaker relationship and task type or they present learners with a
plethora of different linguistic realizations of a speech act along an imaginary politeness continuum, but without guiding learners in how to choose a linguistic strategy to express the speech act appropriately. In addition, many textbooks rely on metalanguage more difficult than the language to be taught instead of providing a clear display that learners can understand. Furthermore, available practice materials are limited in the communicative scenarios they expose students to and clearly do not provide sufficient practice for linguistic realization of speech acts to become automatized.

An appropriate response to these problems is to provide the following:

1. Language in contexts with which targeted learners can identify. For example, if learners are university students, the situations for speech acts should relate to those scenarios that these learners will find themselves in, e.g., situations with professors, university personnel, other students, friends, landlords, roommates, and service personnel.

2. A visual reference point for students that helps them understand that appropriate linguistic choices depend on crucial factors in the speech situation.

3. Carefully sequenced activities that move from controlled to less controlled communicative situations, so that students are given ample practice time to gradually become aware of differences in the way the speech act is realized in American English as compared to their own language. Carefully sequenced activities will also allow students to gradually automatize the linguistic realization of a speech act within given situational parameters. The language classroom is the environment in which students can be provided with structured, yet authentic input; the proposed lesson sequence can accomplish this goal. While one might argue that complex subtleties of human interaction are simplified in this model, the emphasis in this activity is clarity in language presentation and practice that is facilitated through a visual organizer/grid assisting learners in making appropriate linguistic choices.

Alternatives and Caveats

The lesson plan outlined above is appropriate for adult learners at an intermediate level of proficiency. However, the same approach can be adapted for the beginning as well as more advanced levels. For beginning learners, the two situational parameters of the target speech act should be presented and practiced independently. For
example, instead of a four-cell visual organizer, the teacher can focus either on the interlocutor relationship or on the task type dimension, as indicated below:

- Easy requests with both formal/distant and informal/non-distant relationships, or
- Difficult requests with both formal/distant and informal/non-distant relationships; or
- Formal/distant relationship with both easy and difficult requests, or
- Informal/non-distant relationship with both easy and difficult requests.

At an advanced proficiency level, the grid can expand in its depiction of interlocutor relationships. While a relationship may be characterized as informal/non-distant or formal/distant, the speakers in that situation may in fact not be equal, but hierarchically related. Thus, while many work and teaching environments in the Yemen are characterized by formality, the specific addressee direction may be either upward (an employee addressing his/her supervisor; a student addressing his/her dissertation mentor) or downward (the supervisor addressing the employee; the professor addressing the student). Thus, each formality level (informal/non-distant and formal/distant) would need to depict three possible realizations of a given speech act: hierarchically upward, hierarchically downward and equal. It is clear that in order to restrict the cognitive load on the students and guarantee that limited linguistic forms can be attended to and practised, the teacher will be limited to what can be presented in one lesson. Finally, this approach can target learners in very specific learning environments through highly focused speech act situations. For example, adults in an adult education programme will benefit from communicative situations related to their work environment and situations dealing with their children’s school, their landlord, or shopping. In contrast, pre-academic ESL students will benefit more from communicative situations involving their professors, peers, university staff and personnel. Teenagers in high-school will benefit from other situations that help them act appropriately with friends, teachers, neighbors, or coaches.

To conclude, a word of caution is in order. This approach requires the teachers’ awareness of NSs’ realizations of speech acts. Following Wolfson (1986), this requires the observation of authentic language; not only by non-native English speaking teachers, but also by native English speaking teachers. If the goal is to help students achieve communicative competence (Nunan, 1999; Canale & Swain, 1980), then our lessons need to prepare students for language that is used by NSs. If teachers
are aware that speech acts are realized with regard to speaker relationship and task type, they can increase their students’ awareness and ensure that their TL/SL production is pragmatically appropriate.

**Teacher Resource: Sample Grids**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech Requests</th>
<th>Act: Task Type</th>
<th>Easy to do</th>
<th>Difficult to do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Informal/ non-distant</strong></td>
<td>Colleagues at work:</td>
<td>Can you hand me that stapler over there?</td>
<td>Two friends: Do you think you can help me with my paper?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker Relationship</strong></td>
<td>Student to last semester’s professor:</td>
<td>I was wondering if you could write a letter of recommendation for me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech Invitations</th>
<th>Act: Task Type</th>
<th>Casual event</th>
<th>Formal event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Informal/ non-distant</strong></td>
<td>Two students:</td>
<td>Do you want to go for a cup of coffee?</td>
<td>I was wondering if you’d want to go to the Kennedy Center?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Formal/Distant

Student to professor:

Would you like to join us for some coffee after class?

Student to professor:

I'd like to invite you to my graduation dinner.

Speech Act: Task Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apologies</th>
<th>Minor offense</th>
<th>Major offense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal/non-distant</td>
<td>Two friends: (Oops), sorry!</td>
<td>Two neighbors: I am so sorry!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Speaker Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal/Distant</th>
<th>Strangers in the street: I'm sorry.</th>
<th>Student to professor: I really apologize.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal/Distant</td>
<td>I forget the due date.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5 Recommendations for future studies

1. This study comes up with some indications of the relationship between grammatical and pragmatic competence, hence, it is recommended that further studies in this field should examine this kind of relationship and the negative or positive impacts they have on each other.

2. Further studies are recommended to examine the ILP of the YUEFLs at both level one and level four to reveal the effectiveness of the syllabus and methods currently in use in the English department in developing the students’ pragmatic abilities in English.

3. The similarities between the strategies used to realize the speech act of request in this study, in the request head act level, between the two groups of respondents,
YUEFLs and AENSs, could be attributed to some factors other than their pragmatic competence in English. Therefore, further studies are recommended to address the norms of directness in the same situations in both languages Arabic and English in order to examine the role of pragmatic transfer here.