



Gender and Responding to Rudeness: A Case Study of Iraqi EFL Learners

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Abstract

Responding to rudeness is one of the speech acts that has been conducted by few researchers particularly on the eastern culture. This study aims to investigate the pragmatic behavior of Iraqi male and female EFL learners in situations where they experience rude behaviours. To this end, 60 participants divided equally into 30 males and 30 females have participated in this study. A discourse completion task (DCT) is used to elicit responses and a structured interview is conducted to support the analysis of data. Beebe and Waring's (2005) coding scheme of responding to rudeness is adapted to code the data of this study. Qualitative and quantitative approaches are used in analysing the data. The findings unveil that these learners are mainly more aggressive in their responses to rudeness in addition to being more acquiescent than persistent. Both Iraqi genders use an identical number of strategies, but evident differences are revealed throughout the results. Iraqi males tend to use more aggressive strategies due to their nature of being conflictive and dominant in their interactions. As for Iraqi females, they prefer to use more acquiescent strategies due to their nature of being unproblematic and incompatible with aggression. Finally, some pedagogical implications for EFL teachers and learners are provided in this study.

Keywords: Speech acts, linguistics strategies, responding to rudeness, gender.

الجنس والاجابة على الفظاظة : دراسة حالة المتعلمين العراقيين للغة الانجليزية لغة أجنبية

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المستخلص

الإجابة على الفظاظة هي واحدة من أفعال الكلام الذي أُدي من قبل باحثين قليلين خاصة في الثقافة الشرقية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحري السلوك التداولي لذكور وإناث متعلمين للغة الانجليزية لغة اجنبية في مواقف كانوا جربوا فيها سلوكيات فظة. لتحقيق هذا الهدف شارك ستون فردا مقسمون بالتساوي الى ثلاثين ذكرا وثلاثين أنثى في هذه الدراسة. استُعمل اختبار إكمال النص لاستنباط الإجابات وأُديت مقابلة منظمة لإسناد تحليل البيانات. تم تعديل موديل الترميزالخاص بالإجابة على الفظاظة لبيب وورنك لترميز البيانات في هذه الدراسة. استُعملت طرق نوعية وكمية في تحليل البيانات. كشفت النتائج أن هولاء المتعلمين عدائيون أكثر في إجاباتهم على الفظاظة بالاضافة الى كونهم مذعنين اكثر من كونهم مصريين. يستعمل كلا الجنسين العراقيين عددا مطابقا من الاستراتيجيات ولكن كُشفت اختلافات واضحة من خلال النتائج. يميل الذكور العراقيون اكثر الى استعمال ستراتيجيات العنف بسبب طبيعتهم المحتمة والمهيمنة في التفاعلات. اما بالنسبة للإناث العراقيات فهن يفضلن استعمال ستراتيجيات الازعان بسبب طبيعتهن غيرالاشكالية والمتنافرة مع العدائية. واخيرا وفرت الدراسة بعض المضامين التربوية لمدرسي ومتعلمي اللغة الانجليزية لغة أجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: أفعال الكلام، ستراتيجيات لغوية، الاجابة على الفظاظة، الجنس

1. Introduction

Interlanguage pragmatics is a subfield of interlanguage research which relates to second language acquisition and pragmatics. It investigates second language learners' production and perception of speech acts in a target context (Schauer, 2009). Native speakers of a language can produce their speech acts properly based on their linguistic and sociocultural knowledge which is known as pragmatic competence. Non-native speakers of a target language have often limited knowledge in that language and thus they produce inappropriate utterances when compared to native speakers of a



second language (Pearson, 2001). Pragmatic competence is originally suggested by Bachman in the 1990s and from that time more studies of interlanguage pragmatics have been conducted on second language learners to show how their utterances are pragmatically different from native speakers' utterances due to either cultural-specific values (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993) or pragmatic transfer (Kasper, 1992). Investigating how to realize speech acts is one of the aspects of comprehending pragmatic competence. Language users produce speech acts to express communicative purposes in a particular context in addition to producing a specific effect on the mind of the addressee (Soo Jin, 2007).

Speech acts are understood diversely in diverse cultures. That is, what is considered proper in one culture may not be so in another culture (Spencer-Oatey, 2000). Any communicative behavior understood as (im)polite may differ from one community to another, from one culture to another, based on the social context included in the situation (Song, 2012). A case in point is that condition of some international learners who may encounter situations where their responses to offensive behaviour make the issue more difficult. Learners in a new community should be acquainted with the cultural norms and the politeness values of that community. Besides, it is difficult to characterize what may constitute (im)polite behavior in social relations. This is due to the issue that that behaviour is a context-based speculative judgment and the condition of usage decides the possibility of being (im)polite (Spencer-Oatey, 2000).

Responding to rudeness is recognized by individuals in their own cultural context. Yet, learners of English as a second or foreign language may not have the ability to recognize rude utterances in a diverse cultural setting, or if they do, they may not have knowledge about the socially proper response to produce (Lanteigne, 2007). They may treat nicely, keep silent, or become angry (Farnia, Abdul Sattar, & Mei, 2014). Thus, second and foreign language learners should be acquainted with the suitable responses to rudeness in order not to face undesirable consequences if they do not respond or respond improperly to a situation (Farnia, Buchheit, & Vedaei, 2010).



Among several studies of diverse speech acts, responding to rudeness is underresearched from an interlanguage pragmatics perspective. This study fills a gap in pragmatics literature because the issue of responding to rudeness by Iraqi EFL learners has not been addressed in a particular research so far. Thus, the current study investigates the pragmatic strategies of responding to rudeness by Iraqi male and female university learners in an Iraqi EFL context.

2. Speech Acts with Special Reference to Responding to Rudeness

Speech acts differ across cultures (Eisenstein and Bodman, 1986). This can be realized by investigating speech acts which in turn can provide us with the relationship between the linguistic aspects and the sociocultural values (Olshain & Cohen, 1983). Pragmatic failure occurs when a language user has inadequate pragmatic competence to produce a proper utterance in a particular situation (Roever, 2011) which in turn causes breakdown in communication (Paltridge, 2006). Therefore, language learners should learn the appropriate behaviour in performing a speech act in a second language (i.e. responding to rudeness) so as to avoid breakdown in communication (Farnia et al., 2010).

Austin (1962) suggested the theory of speech acts. It can be defined as the level that intercedes between the normal level of structure and the rest of a speech event by implicating both the linguistic aspects and the social norms (Hymes, 1972). Based on Austin's theory, speakers use specific act within a speech event in an occasion. A case in point is that example about a passerby who asks about the time on the road. He asks, 'what time is it?' and another person answers 'It's X', so the passerby replies, 'Thank you'. Accordingly, three speech acts are performed in that situation: asking about the time, saying what time it is, and appreciation or thanking (Scollon & Scollon, 1997). This example displays the speakers' use and transference of language functions via speech acts in their interaction (Dietz & Widdershoven, 1991).

Three levels are stated in everyone's speech: 'propositional meaning', 'illocutionary meaning', and 'perlocutionary meaning' (Austin, 1962). Searle (1979) classifies the illocutionary act into five categories: *assertives*,



directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. Based on Searle's taxonomy of speech acts, responding to rudeness is considered as one of the expressive acts that shows the interlocutor's psychological state, feelings and attitudes (Farnia et al., 2014). Beebe (1995) defines rudeness as a face threatening act that results in antagonism, distress, and conflict and causes problems in the social harmony. In addition, it transgresses a socially sanctioned norm of communication of the social setting where it occurs. Rudeness makes individuals react angrily because they assess others' discourse and behaviour based on their personal cultural norms (Eelen, 2001).

Although rudeness is a frequently used act in our daily communication, it must not be considered a trivial issue because it may cause more discomfort than harmful acts such as theft or robbery. It appears in diverse forms and could be evaluated based on the rate of offensiveness (Farnia et al., 2014). Not every utterance makes individuals angry is rude. Cultural diversities in politeness criteria are a factor in deciding if what is interacted is rude or not. Speakers should know how to use the speech act of responding to rudeness by taking into account such aspects as the topic, the addressee, the relationship with him/her, the aim of the speech, and the proper linguistic aspects for the speech act (Farnia et al., 2010). Responding to rudeness is similar to other types of speech acts (such as requests, refusals, etc.) in that it includes different categories of strategies which reveal the social values of diverse communities and cultures. It also requires knowledge of the linguistic forms and the proper use of them within a given culture (Farnia et al., 2014).

Few studies investigated responding to rudeness by speech act theory. Beebe and Waring (2005) conducted their study on foreign language learners to show their pragmatic development in their responses to rudeness. The participants are divided equally into 20 highest proficiency learners and 20 lowest proficiency learners. A DCT is used to elicit responses from the participants. A coding scheme is developed by Beebe and Waring to include three collections of pragmatic strategies: *aggressing* strategies (such as *insult, threat, challenge, criticize, and compliment, greet (sarcastic)*), *persisting* strategies (such as *argue (take issue), justify, and request*) and *acquiescing*



strategies (such as *apologize, thank, acquiesce, opt-out, nonverbal and verbal*). The findings uncover that both learners prefer to use the politer category of strategies (i.e. *acquiescing* strategies) over other types of strategies. Yet, there are differences in the production of strategies because higher proficiency learners are more self-confident in their utterances and thus they approximate target-like utterances. Besides, there are no diversities in the category of linguistic strategies across language proficiency.

Responding to rudeness has been sparingly investigated in diverse languages and cultures such as English and Persian (Farnia et al., 2010) and Malay (Farnia et al., 2014). Moreover, it is contextually sensitive to such social factors as age, gender, status, distance, and imposition degree in order to maintain politeness resources. Research conducted on gender and language uncovers that male speakers engage in conflict and tend to be competitive while female speakers avoid conflict and tend to be cooperative (Tannen, 1994). Similarly, Mills (2003) reports that females are more cooperative than males in their utterances to save their addressee's face.

Consequently, the speech act of responding to rudeness is still underresearched particularly in the Arabic societies such as Iraq. This study adds more to the available research findings via revealing a new context not investigated before (i.e., Iraqi EFL context). It is the first investigation that aims to show the tendencies of male and female genders among EFL learners like Iraqis in responding to rudeness. This is necessary to unveil their realization in responding to situations where they experience rude behaviours directed at them. Thus, the current study looks for answers to the following research questions:

1. How do Iraqi university learners produce the speech act of responding to rudeness in terms of strategies?
2. What strategies of responding to rudeness do Iraqi male and female university learners prefer to use?



3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

A random sampling method is used to select 60 Iraqi university learners (30 males and 30 females) to participate in this study. They are fourth-year undergraduate EFL learners at the department of English, College of Arts, University of Baghdad. These participants are native speakers of Iraqi-Arabic with an age range of between 22 and 23. They have no previous experience in visiting or living in an English-speaking country. Males and females of this study are homogeneous in terms of number, age, level of study, cultural and educational backgrounds ... etc. This is to ensure the compatibility of the two groups under study. Their participation is voluntary and a consent form is provided by each one of them.

3.2 Instruments

A background questionnaire about the participants' personal information is carried out first (refer to Appendix A). Farnai et al.'s (2010) DCT is adapted to fit the context of the participants in this study. That is conducted after asking some participants to write down their current personal experience in which they have faced rude situations in their context. Thus, 50 situations are collected first and five salient situations are selected then. The five situations are quite culturally-specific and situationally and socially common in the Iraqi-Arabic society. These situations have been also validated by experts in pragmatics who are professors in Baghdad University. Accordingly, the DCT consists of five situations written in English (refer to Appendix B). It is piloted by 10 participants (5 males and 5 females) in the current study. The researcher has explained the situations to the participants to make sure that the DCT is not difficult to understand. Besides, test-retest is applied and the reliability result is 84%.

The social variables (status, distance, and imposition degree) have been already controlled in this study. All the situations take place among individuals who are equal in status and unfamiliar to each other; besides, the imposition degree of these situations is equal too. This is also reported by the



participants after asking them by the researcher. In addition, a structured interview is conducted on another day to support the analysis of data. The interview includes questions that are related to the participants' responses on the given situations.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data are coded qualitatively based on Beebe and Waring's (2005) coding scheme of responding to rudeness (refer to Appendix C). The coding scheme is adapted to include new categories that have not been revealed before. These involve: *shush*, *sincere apology*, *sarcastic apology*, and *facial expressions*. This is due to the fact that the data of this study has not been investigated before. Accordingly, the current coding scheme is divided into three clusters: *aggressing strategies* (such as *insult*, *threat*, *challenge*, *criticism*, *sarcastic compliment*, and *shush*), *persisting strategies* (such as *argument (taking issue)*, *justification*, and *request*) and *acquiescing strategies* (such as *apology (sincere apology and sarcastic apology)*, *thanking*, *acquiescence*, and *opt-out (nonverbal (say nothing and facial expressions) and verbal)*). Two inter-raters have participated in coding the data to confirm the reliability of data analysis. Besides, the data are analysed quantitatively using Chi-square test to show if there is any statistically significant difference between Iraqi males and females in the use of strategies of responding to rudeness.

4. Results and Discussion

Based on the results and the structured interview, Iraqi university learners use a number of strategies to respond to rude behaviours in their context. Overall, Table 1 reveals that these learners are mainly more aggressive (45.17%) in their responses to rudeness in addition to being more acquiescent (38.99%) than persistent (15.84%). *Opt out* (22.35%) is the most frequently used strategy by Iraqi learners in their context. Besides, *insult* (15.53%) and *criticism* (14.73%) are the second and third frequently used strategies by these learners, followed by *challenge* strategy (12.36%), *apology* strategy (10.93%), *request* strategy (8.24%), *acquiescence* strategy (5.54%), *argument* strategy (5.23%), *justification* strategy (2.4%), *threat*

strategy (1.74%), *shush* strategy (0.63%), and *sarcastic compliment* (0.16%) and *thanking* (0.16%) strategies.

Table 1: Frequencies and Percentages of Strategies of Responding to Rudeness by Iraqi University Learners

Type of Strategy		Frequency	%
Aggressing Strategies	Insult	98	15.53%
	Threat	11	1.74%
	Challenge	78	12.36%
	Criticism	93	14.73%
	Sarcastic Compliment	1	0.16%
	Shush	4	0.63%
	Total	285	45.17%
Persisting Strategies	Argument	33	5.23%
	Justification	15	2.4%
	Request	52	8.24%
	Total	100	15.84%
Acquiescing Strategies	Apology		
	Sincere Apology	63	9.98%
	Sarcastic Apology	6	0.95%
	Total	69	10.93%
	Thanking	1	0.16%
	Acquiescence	35	5.54%
	Opt out		
	a. Non verbal		
	-Say nothing	117	18.54%
	-Facial Expressions	19	3.01%
b. Verbal	5	0.8%	
Total	141	22.35%	
Total	246	38.99%	
Final Total	631		

It is revealed that Iraqi EFL learners do not use the head acts of responding to rudeness only once in their utterances, but rather multiple head acts are also used throughout their responses. This means that these learners realize responding to rudeness by more than one head act and thus they



increase the strength of their multiple-headed acts and make extra pressure on their speakers. For example,

- *I am sorry (sincere apology strategy). I have to park here I have an emergency (justification strategy).*
- *I guess it is a library not a cafe I cannot read (criticism strategy). Can you go to another seat? (request strategy).*

Table 2 shows that Iraqi males and females use the three clusters of strategies (i.e., *aggressing, persisting, and acquiescing* strategies) in their responses to rudeness. The number of strategies elicited from both genders is similar (i.e. sixteen). In addition, there is no statistically significant difference between both genders in using the whole types of strategies.

Table 2: Frequencies, Percentages, and Chi-square Values of Strategies of Responding to Rudeness by Gender

Type of Strategy		Males (Frequency)	%	Females (Frequency)	%	χ^2
Aggressing Strategies	Insult	53	16.66%	45	14.4%	0.66
	Threat	3	0.94%	8	2.55%	2.27
	Challenge	48	15.09%	30	9.58%	4.167*
	Criticism	55	17.3%	38	12.14%	5.538*
	Sarcastic Compliment	0	0.0%	1	0.31%	1
	Shush	2	0.62%	2	0.63%	0
	Total	161	50.63%	124	39.62%	9.260*
Persisting Strategies	Argument	6	1.88%	27	8.62%	13.36*
	Justification	12	3.8%	3	0.95%	5.4*
	Request	27	8.5%	25	7.98%	0.076
	Total	45	14.15%	55	17.57%	1
Acquiescing Strategies	Apology					
	Sincere Apology	40	12.58%	23	7.34%	2.91
	Sarcastic Apology	1	0.31%	5	1.6%	
	Total	41	12.89%	28	8.94%	
	Thanking	1	0.31%	0	0.0%	1
	Acquiescence	15	4.71%	20	6.4%	0.36
	Opt out					
	a. Non verbal					
	-Say nothing	39	12.26%	78	24.92%	6.82*
	-Facial Expressions	13	4.1%	6	1.92%	
b. Verbal	3	0.94%	2	0.64%		
Total	55	17.3%	86	27.5%		
Total	112	35.22%	134	42.81%	11.636*	
Final Total	318	50.4%	313	49.60%	0.39	

* $p < 0.05$

Despite the fact that both genders have rather an identical profile, they show important differences. Iraqi males prefer to use the *aggressing* strategies over the *acquiescing* strategies and the *acquiescing* strategies over the *persisting* strategies. As for Iraqi females, they prefer to use the *acquiescing* strategies over the *aggressing* strategies and the *aggressing* strategies over the *persisting* strategies. In other words, Iraqi females tend to use the politer end of continuum (and more passive) while Iraqi males tend to be more aggressive and conflictive in their responses to rudeness. This is consistent with Mills (2003) and Holmes (1995) who report that females use strategies



that are more appropriate than male speakers' strategies in order not to threaten their addressee's face.

Results also display that there are statistically significant differences between both genders in the use of *aggressing* (χ^2 9.260) and *acquiescing* (χ^2 11.636) strategies. Iraqi males use more *aggressing* strategies than Iraqi females (50.63% vs. 39.62%) in their responses to situations which are more offensive. They have displayed that it is their nature of being aggressive in their context to attack any rude behaviour that is directed at them. Research also shows that males are generally more aggressive and dominant than females in most communities (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974). In contrast, Iraqi females use more *acquiescing* strategies than their Iraqi counterparts (42.81% vs. 35.22%). These females show a balance in their rapports with their speakers in order to avoid being involved in any human conflict. This is mainly because femininity is related to caring and nurturance and it is incompatible with aggression (Cacchioni, 2004). However, the *persisting* strategies are more frequently used by Iraqi females than Iraqi males, but the result is statistically insignificant in terms of frequency.

In addition, *opt out* is the most frequently used strategy by Iraqi females while *criticism* and *opt out* are the most frequently used strategies by Iraqi males. Yet, results report that there is a statistically significant difference between both genders in the use of *opt out* strategy (χ^2 6.82). Iraqi females use more *opt out* strategy than their Iraqi counterparts (27.5% vs. 17.3%). These females prefer to *say nothing* (24.92%) when compared to Iraqi males (12.26%) due to their female nature of being unproblematic in their Iraqi culture. They tend not to participate in rude situations in order not to encounter any undesirable attitude by the interlocutor. By doing so, they try to keep their respect and abandon or neglect any rude behaviour. Besides, some Iraqi males tend to use more facial expressions than Iraqi females (4.1% vs. 1.92%) to express their attitudes towards some rude behaviours. This is because masculine features are positively related to the use of facial expressions (such as anger) while femininity is negatively associated with such nonverbal expressions (Kinney, Smith, and Donzella, 2001). However,



both genders sparingly use verbal expressions in responding to rudeness. Below are some utterances from both genders:

Opt out Strategy:

Nonverbal (facial expressions):

Male: *Upset, angry, annoyed, awkward, uncomfortable.*

Female: *Angry and stressed.*

Verbal:

Male: *Never mind, take it.*

No problem.

Female: *Never mind.*

No problem.

Furthermore, there are statistically significant differences between both genders in the use of *criticism* strategy (χ^2 5.538), *challenge* strategy (χ^2 4.167), *argument* strategy (χ^2 13.36), and *justification* strategy (χ^2 5.4). On the one hand, Iraqi males use *criticism* (17.3%), *challenge* (15.09%), and *justification* (3.8%) strategies more than Iraqi females (12.14%, 9.58%, and 0.95% respectively). These males have stated that they often use negative commentary to criticize someone because s/he is behaving rudely. They are also challengeable in conflicting situations and sometimes some of them try to justify their attitudes for addressing any problematic situation. On the other hand, *argument* strategy is more frequently used by Iraqi females than Iraqi males (8.62% vs. 1.88%) due to the nature of these females in expressing statements to support their situations. Here are some examples from both genders:



Criticism strategy:

Male: *People come to library to study not to talk.*

Female: *I guess it is a library not a cafe I cannot read.*

Challenge strategy:

Male: *No, this is MY place.*

Female: *This is my car's place.*

Argument strategy:

Male: *It is a library you need to be silent.*

Female: *It is a library you shouldn't talk.*

Justification strategy:

Male: *I'm late I have to leave.*

Female: *You have to consider the fact that people are sometimes over occupied with their heads and their tasks that could make them unaware of their mannerism.*

Yet, other results unveil that there are statistically insignificant differences between both genders in the use of other types of strategies. *Insult* and *request* strategies are more frequently used by Iraqi males (16.66% vs. 8.5%) than Iraqi females (14.4% vs. 7.98). That is attributed to the issue that an insult is used to degrade and offend the offender's rude behaviour and request is used to make the offender know that s/he needs to behave politely because of her/his rude behaviour. With regard to *apology* strategy, it is uncovered that Iraqi males prefer to use it more than Iraqi females (12.89% vs. 8.94%). *Sincere apology* strategy is more frequently used by Iraqi males than Iraqi females (12.58% vs. 7.34%) due to the point that these males do not consider some of the rude behaviours as big issues and thus they accept committing improper performances by the offender and ask for forgiveness. They take care of their expressions in order to avoid any conflict when they talk to other people. Apology is an act of resolution that reduces the person's rude behaviour. By using it, these males can deal with any tension that might be produced by them and the person who is rude in the aforementioned situations.



Besides, some Iraqi females tend to use *sarcastic apology* strategy more than Iraqi males (1.6% vs. 0.31%) in their utterances that have sarcastic meaning because these females have learned to use such a strategy when they expose to situations that they do not know how to deal with. Some of them have illustrated that their use of *sarcastic apology* is the opposite of what they want to really say. They use it unintentionally when they become angry due to the offender's behaviour. Moreover, some Iraqi females use *acquiescence* and *threat* strategies (6.4% vs. 2.55%) more than Iraqi males (4.71% vs. 0.94%). While Iraqi males sparingly use *shush* and *thanking* strategies, Iraqi females sparingly use *shush* and *sarcastic compliment* strategies. *Thanking* strategy is not elicited by Iraqi females whereas *sarcastic compliment* strategy is not elicited by Iraqi males. Below are some utterances of Iraqi males and females:

Insult strategy:

Male: *Bunch of disrespectful nitwits.*

You are a liar idiot.

Female: *Such a slut.*

You are such a terrible liar.

Request strategy:

Male: *Can you find another place?*

Female: *Can you be quiet please?*

Sincere apology:

Male: *Sorry, I did not see you, repeat my apologies.*

Female: *I'm sorry I did not mean to bother you.*

Sarcastic apology:

Male: *I'm sorry it is written by your name.*

Female: *Sorry only human knows that.*

Acquiescence strategy:

Male: *It's okay.*

Ok! Go ahead.

Female: *Ok, I will leave it for you.*

Threat strategy:

Male: *I will talk to the manager.*

Female: *I will tell the manager about you!!*

Shush strategy:

Male: *Shush, I can't hear.*

Female: *Shush!*

Thanking strategy: I thank you for the new information.

Sarcastic compliment strategy: That is very kind!

However, responding to rudeness depends on such factors as family influence, setting, age, surroundings, intonation of the interaction, character, position, the size of rudeness, and culture. All of which should be taken into account when these learners want to address the offender's behaviour. Nevertheless, some Iraqi learners are not taught appropriately to be well-mannered because they escalate the conflict in their responses to rude



behaviours. Therefore, it could be noticed that they have inadequate knowledge about the proper performance that they are supposed to be.

5. Conclusion

Speech act of responding to rudeness can be handled appropriately in exchanges to preserve the face and relationships. This study figures out the pragmatic strategies that Iraqi males and females prefer to use in situations where they experience rude behaviours. Overall, the findings unveil that the *aggressing* strategies are the most frequently used strategies by Iraqi university learners, followed by *acquiescing* and *persisting* strategies. Both males and females do not use the head acts of responding to rudeness only once, but rather multiple head acts are also used by these genders in their responses. Both genders use an identical number and rather similar categories of strategies; yet, remarkable differences are revealed throughout the results. Iraqi males evidently use more aggressive strategies than Iraqi females who prefer to use more acquiescent strategies in their responses to rudeness. That is, Iraqi females prefer to use the politer end of continuum (and more passive) due to their nature of being unproblematic and incompatible with aggression while their Iraqi counterparts tend to be more aggressive, conflictive, and dominant in their interactions. Despite the fact that Iraqi males prefer to use more *criticism*, *challenge*, and *justification* strategies, Iraqi females prefer to use more *opt out* and *argument* strategies.

With regard to pedagogical implication, the current study is useful for EFL teachers and learners. This study provides knowledge about the types of strategies Iraqi male and female EFL learners prefer to use in responding to rudeness. This is an important issue to raise awareness among EFL learners in their EFL context. Such learners are challenged by lack of adequate resources which is related to the issue that (Iraqi) EFL teaching methodology programs do not focus on the pragmatic use of language. English language teachers and curriculum designers can benefit from this study in that they can use its findings to expect and hence reduce the occurrence of rude situations that might be experienced by their learners. That is, they have to teach their learners the pragmatic use of responding to rudeness; i.e., the type of strategy



that can be used properly in certain types of situations to avoid breakdown in communication or undesirable consequences.

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Appendix A: Background Questionnaire

Native language:

Place of birth:

Country of citizenship:

Gender: Male Female.....

Age:

I am currently enrolled in:

Have you ever been in an English-speaking country? How long?

Appendix B: Discourse Completion Task

Direction: In the blank marked "You would say", please write the words you think you would actually say in order to handle the situation. In the blank marked "You would feel like saying", please write the actual words you would feel like saying if you were not held back by social pressure.

1. You get on a crowded bus. Being careful not to hit and bother anybody, you try to reach the front door to get out. All of a sudden, a passenger cries out, obviously to you, "I guess you've never heard the word 'excuse me'?"

You would say:.....

You would feel like saying:.....

2. To do some shopping, you go to a giant supermarket. And stand in a long line waiting to check out. However, another customer pushes into the line, greeting and shaking hands with the person ahead of you. When you accuse him of breaking into the line, he tells you "I was here ahead of you—you just didn't see me!"

You would say:.....

You would feel like saying:.....

3. You are busy reading at the library, and some students are talking loudly at the next table. When you complain about their noise, one of them says "Why don't you change your seat if you are not happy here?"

You would say:.....

You would feel like saying:.....

4. You have gone to the cinema. Two persons sitting behind you start whispering and laughing, and as a result, and you cannot hear the film. When you look back to show them you're upset, the young man tells you: "Excuse me, the screen is in front of you."

You would say:.....

You would feel like saying:.....

5. You want to park your car in the parking area and someone behind you is used to park her/his car in the same place you are trying to park, s/he feels upset and tells you "It is my place!"

You would say:.....

You would feel like saying:.....

Appendix C: Coding Scheme of Responding to Rudeness

1. Insult

"How can you answer it such a dummy manner? You must be a fool."

2. Threat

"I want to talk to the manager of this store."

3. Challenge

"But I want to see THAT book."

4. Criticism

"You're giving a bad example for your child."

5. Sarcastic compliment

"You're really kind...."

6. Shush

"Shush, I can't hear".

7. Argument (taking issue)

"I have a right to see that book even if I don't have intention to purchase it."

8. Justification

"....but I'm not from here and I don't want to be lost."

9. Request

"Could you draw the directions for me?"

10. Apology

Sincere apology: "I'm sorry I did not mean to bother you".

Sarcastic apology: "I'm sorry it is written by your name".

11. Thanking

"Okay, thank you."

12. Acquiescence

"Okay, yes, sire. I will try."

13. Opt out

Nonverbal: Say nothing.

Facial expressions: "Upset", "angry", "annoyed", "awkward", "uncomfortable",
"stressed".

Verbal: "Never mind." "Whatever."



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