Explicit Sociopragmatic Instruction between Necessity and Reality: Investigating Algerian EFL University-Level Teachers' Perceptions and Classroom Practices

التعليمات الاجتماعية الصريحة بين الضرورة والواقع:

التحقيق في تصورات الأساتذة الجزائريين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية والممارسات الصفية

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Abstract

It has been noticed that the Algerian EFL learners think in Arabic when they speak in English.   In a foreign language context, their teachers are partly blamed because they do not teach them explicitly how to think in English. Despite the rich literature on interlanguage pragmatics, there are hardly any studies investigating EFL sociopragmatics teaching in Algeria. By means of a questionnaire, the present paper attempted to investigate how the Oral Expression teachers at the English department of Batna 2 University perceive the need for and importance of explicit sociopragmatic instruction. Moreover, it aimed to identify their approach to teaching sociopragmatics. Results showed that they considered explicit sociopragmatic instruction necessary but taught sociopragmatics implicitly due to some difficulties.

Key words: Sociopragmatics, explicit instruction, Algerian EFL teachers, perceptions, sociocultural context

الملخص: لقد لوحظ أن المتعلمين الجزائريين للإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يفكرون بالعربية عندما يتكلمون الإنجليزية، ولأن الإنجليزية تدرس كلغة أجنبية في الجزائر، فإن جزءا من اللوم يقع على أساتذتهم لأنهم لا يعلمونهم بوضوح كيفية التفكير بالإنجليزية، وعلى الرغم من وفرة الدراسات التداولية لا تكاد تكون هناك أي دراسات تبحث في تدريس السوسيوتداولية في الجزائر ، ومن خلال استبيان حاولت هذه الدراسة إستطلاع رأي أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية على مستوى الجامعة فيما يخص تدريس السوسيوتداولية، علاوة على ذلك هدفت إلى تحديد نهجهم في تدريسها، حيث أظهرت النتائج أنهم يعتبرونها مهمة لكنهم يدرسونها بطريقة ضمنية بسبب بعض الصعوبات.

الكلمات الدالة: السوسيوبراغماتيك، تعليمات صريحة، أساتذة إ.ف.ل. الجزائريين، التصورات، السياق الاجتماعي الثقافي

1. Introduction

Internet chatting has engaged Algerian EFL learners in real interactions with English native speakers. To communicate successfully with them, the Algerian EFL learners should use English appropriately. As an Algerian EFL university-level teacher with three years of teaching experience, I noticed that my learners at the English department of Batna 2 University, even those with a high level of English language proficiency and good knowledge of English culture, still encounter problems when communicating in English. Their problem is that they think in Arabic when they speak in English. In other words, they do not use English in its appropriate sociocultural context. This makes it clear that learning the grammar, phonology and lexis in addition to the target language culture is not sufficient for a successful communication with its native speakers, but Algerian EFL learners should be taught how the sociocultural context is reflected in the native speakers' utterances. In today's globalized world, the need for instructing them explicitly on sociopragmatics has then become imperative.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Language, culture and social meaning

Language, culture and social meaning are tightly interrelated. Language mirrors culture since it embodies the cultural content of its owners. It is obvious that the values and norms that members of a particular culture share certainly shape the way they communicate (Kramsch, 1998)[1]. In other words, their linguistic repertory is controlled by culture-bound parameters such as comprehensibility and appropriateness (Ekwelibe, 2015)[2]. The existence of these social norms which reflect how people use language highly proves that the human behavior has a social meaning. If people are unaware that the linguistic behavior of others who belong to a different culture is controlled by a

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[1] Kramsch, C. (1998). *Language and culture*. Oxford University Press.
[2] Ekwelibe, R. (2015). Sociopragmatic Competence in English as a Second Language (ESL). *Humanity & Social Sciences Journal*, *10 (2)*, 87-99.

different set of rules that define the appropriate way of speaking, misunderstandings may arise in cross-cultural encounters.

2.2 Sociopragmatics and sociopragmatic competence

According to Leech (1983)[3], pragmatics consists of two main components: pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. The former refers to "the particular resources which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions" (Leech, 1983: 11). By contrast, the latter deals with the "social interface of pragmatics" (Leech, 1983: 10). In other words, sociopragmatics concerns itself with the way conditions of language use originate from the social norms and situations. As an aspect of sociolinguistic competence, sociopragmatics also concerns itself with the issue of appropriateness, which is how utterances are conveyed and interpreted appropriately in different sociolinguistic contexts.

Harlow (1990)[4] states that the interconnected relation between the linguistic form and the sociocultural context is what characterizes sociopragmatics. The sociopragmatic competence is then the speaker's ability to vary his linguistic output according to contextual social variables and the hearer's capacity to interpret not only the literal meaning of an utterance but also the meanings that derive from the norms of formality and politeness that exist in the society where the language is used as well as the unstated meanings that derive from the shared previous knowledge of the speaker and hearer and the situation in which the utterances are used. Sociopragmatic competence is a very crucial aspect of communicative competence which takes into account the appropriate use of language in a given sociocultural context.

2.3 Approaches to Teaching L2 Sociopragmatics

Research on acquisitional sociopragmatics has addressed two main issues so far. The first one concerns the effects of instruction on learners' sociopragmatic competence while the second one relates to the teaching approaches. With regard to the latter, two types of

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[3] Leech, G. (1983). *Principles of pragmatics.* London: Longman.

[4] Harlow, L. (1990). Do they mean what they say? Sociopragmatic competence and second language learners. *The Modern Language Journal, 74 (3)*, 328-351.

instructional approaches have been compared: explicit and implicit. Explicit instruction equips learners with exhaustive metapragmatic information, while implicit instruction does not. In most of the studies, the explicit instruction has proven more useful than the implicit one (Rose, 2005)[5]. Instructing the learners on sociopragmatic rules explicitly adopts the three P's methodology (Presentation-Practice-Production) (McCarthy, 1998)[6]. At the first stage i.e. presentation, the learners are provided with examples of language in use using authentic materials. At the second stage, they reinforce the gained sociopragmatic knowledge through tasks; while in the final one, teachers may elicit learners' production through role plays or discourse completion tests (Takahashi, 2005)[7]. Olshtain and Cohen (1990)[8] consider discussion and corrective feedback useful techniques that can be used after learners present their performance. In addition to the methodology of the three P's, awareness-raising tasks can be used to enhance learners' sociopragmatic knowledge about a target feature (Bou-Franch & Garces-Conejos, 2003)[9]. In doing so, teacher-fronted discussions – either deductive or inductive – are frequently used to clarify how the investigated target feature is represented in both L1 and L2 (Rose & Ng, 2001)[10].

2.4 Rationale for Explicit Sociopragmatic Instruction

The rationale for instructing EFL undergraduate learners at the English department of Batna 2 University on sociopragmatics explicitly

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[5] Rose, K. R. (2005). On the effects of instruction in second language pragmatics. *System*, *33(3)*, 385-399.

[6] McCarthy, M. (1998). *Spoken language and applied linguistics*. Cambridge University Press.

[7] Takahashi, S. (2005). Noticing in task performance and learning outcome: A qualitative analysis of instructional effects in interlanguage pragmatics. *System*, *33(3)*, 437-461.

[8] Olshtain E. & Cohen, A. D. (1990). The learning of complex speech act behavior. *TESL Canada Journal*, 7, 45-65.

[9] Bou-Franch, P. & Garces-Conjos, P. (2003). Teaching linguistic politeness: A methodological proposal. *IRAL,* 41, 1-22.

[10] Rose, K. R. & Ng, C. (2001). Inductive and deductive teaching of compliments and compliment responses. In K. R. Rose & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Pragmatics in language teaching* (pp. 145-70). Cambridge University Press.

is twofold. First, research on sociopragmatics' acquisition shows that even second language learners who are surrounded by sufficient linguistic and cultural input find it quite difficult to achieve native-like levels of pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 2005[11]; Cohen, 2008[12]; Kasper & Rose, 2002[13]). For Algerian EFL learners, who have neither adequate input nor practice opportunities, the challenge grows greater and hence explicit instruction on sociopragmatics becomes indispensable. Second, second language acquisition theorists assert that even in purely meaning-oriented L2 use, "learners may not detect relevant input features, and that for achieving learners' noticing, input should be made salient through input enhancement" (Eslami-Rasekh et al., 2004: 3)[14]. It is believed that input enhancement, as perceived by Takahashi (2001)[15], will raise the learners' consciousness about the target feature by having it described, explained or discussed. EFL undergraduate learners at the English department of Batna 2 University should then be instructed on sociopragmatics explicitly in order to raise their sociopragmatic awareness.

There is hardly any research on the Algerian EFL university-level teachers' perceptions of the need for and importance of explicit sociopragmatic instruction as well as their related classroom practices. In his paper which stresses the need for intercultural and sociopragmatic competence in Algerian foreign language learning and

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[11] Bardovi-Harlig, K., & Hartford, B. S. (2005). Institutional discourse and interlanguage pragmatics research. In K. Bardovi-Harlig & B. S. Hartford (Eds.), *Intercultural pragmatics: Exploring institutional talk* (pp. 201-221). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

[12] Cohen, A. D. (2008). Teaching and assessing L2 pragmatics: What can we expect from learners? *Language Teaching*, *41*(2), 213-235.

[13] Kasper, G., & Rose, K. R. (2002). Introduction to second language pragmatic development. *Language Learning*, *52* (s1), 1-11.

[14] Eslami-Rasekh, Z., Eslami-Rasekh, A. & Fatahi, A. (2004). The effect of explicit metapragmatic instruction on the speech act awareness of advanced EFL students. *TESL EJ, 8 (2),* 1-12.

[15] Takahashi, S. (2001). The role of input enhancement in developing pragmatic competence. In K. R. Rose & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Pragmatics in Language Teaching* (pp. 171-200). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

teaching, Neddar (2011)[16] states that "Our teachers used to tell us that we had to *think in English* (Italics as in the original), but no one could tell us how", but he does not show with evidence that the Algerian EFL teachers do not teach their learners how to think in English. The present empirical study, which could be considered a continuation of Neddar (2011), aims to fill the gap in the field of instructional pragmatics in the Algerian EFL context by attempting to answer the following questions:

1. How do Algerian EFL university-level teachers perceive the need for and importance of explicit sociopragmatic instruction?
2. Do they teach sociopragmatic features (if they do) explicitly or implicitly?

3. Methodology

3.1 Population and Sample

The issue of explicit sociopragmatic instruction would be best addressed to the teachers of Pragmatics but since this module is not taught to undergraduates at the English department of Batna 2 University, it was judged that Oral Expression teachers of the three undergraduate grades at the aforementioned department would comprise the most suitable population for the present study for the nature of the module – being spoken and productive – makes it more likely to integrate such sociopragmatic insights into its syllabus. There are 19 teachers of Oral Expression in the three undergraduate grades. It is practical to deal with this number. Thus, sampling is needless and all of them were selected as the target population of the present study.

3.2 Research Instruments

Assessing teachers' perceptions of the need for and importance of explicit sociopragmatic instruction and investigating the extent to which they teach sociopragmatics explicitly calls for the use of a

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[16] Neddar, B. (2011). The need for intercultural and sociopragmatic competence in foreign language learning and teaching. In A. Bedmarek, & I. Witczak–Lisiecka (Ed.), *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Intercultural Communication* (pp. 77-87). Poland: WSSM.

descriptive method. To achieve such an objective, a questionnaire was used. It was regarded an appropriate tool as "it affords a good deal of precision and clarity, because the knowledge needed is controlled by the questions" (McDonough and McDonough, 1997: 171)[17]. Moreover, the use of the questionnaire enables the researcher to collect standardized answers since all the participants respond to the same questions and saves him/her time and effort either in data collection or handling (Dornyei, 2003)[18].

3.3 Questionnaire description, piloting and administration

The questionnaire consists of three sections. The first section concerns teachers' demographic information such as age, gender, teaching experience, qualifications, etc. The second section aims at identifying their perceptions of the need for and importance of explicit sociopragmatic instruction and the last one investigates their actual classroom practices. Because piloting is an important step that does not only help the researcher identify any irrelevant questions or any problems with the survey instruments that might cause biased answers but also tests the validity and reliability of the items (Hazzi and Maldaon, 2015)[19], the questionnaire was piloted with four teachers from the English department of Batna 2 University. Taking into consideration their feedback, some items were reworded and others omitted. Then, it was finalized. All the questionnaires were conducted in person in the teachers' room of the English department at Batna 2 University. The in-person method of distribution was unavoidable due to the probable unfamiliarity of some teachers with pragmatics-related terms. Another reason for opting for this method is that it allows high percentage of completion.

4. Analysis and Discussion

[17] McDonough, J. and McDonough, S. (1997). *Research Methods for English Language Teachers.* London: Arnold.

[18] Dornyei, Z. (2003). *Questionnaires in second language research: Construction, administration, and processing*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers.

[19] Hazzi, O. A. & Maldaon S. I. (2015). A pilot study: Vital methodological issues *Business: Theory and Practice, 16 (1)*: 53–62.

4.1 Teachers' general information

Table 1 *Teachers' general information*

Gender	Male		Female	
n	4		15	
(%)	(21,05)		(78,95)	
Age	between [22-26] years old	Between [26-30] years old	between [30-34] years old	More than 34 years old
n	3	7	2	7
(%)	(15,79)	(36,84)	(10,53)	(36,84)
Qualifica-tions	Master	Magistère	PhD	Professor
n	6	12	1	0
(%)	(31,58)	(63,16)	(5,26)	(0)
Overseas learning experience	Yes		No	
n	1		18	
(%)	(5,.26)		(94,74)	

Note. In the whole paper, n = number of teachers, % = percentage of teachers

Among the 19 participants, there are four male and 15 female teachers. Concerning their age, those aged between 26 and 30 and those who exceeded 34 years old took the lion's share equally. As can be seen from Table 1, though the participants' teaching experience varied,

it was noticed that the percentage of teachers with less than 5 years of experience (62,07%) was dominant. In other words, the majority of teachers are novice. With regard to their qualifications, the majority of them have a Magistère degree (63,16%). All the teachers have not been abroad for a learning experience except one who spent one and a half years in an English university for completing her PhD thesis. It is worth mentioning here that the teachers' demographic information is just to help foreground the study's context. In other words, the effect of age, gender, teaching experience, etc. on the teachers' perceptions of the importance of sociopragmatic instruction as well as their classroom practices will not be analyzed as this goes beyond the scope of this study.

 4.2 Teachers' perceptions of the need for explicit sociopragmatic instruction

Table 2 *Teachers' evaluation of their EFL learners' sociopragmatic competence level*

Answers	**Excellent**	**Good**	**Average**	**Low**
n	0	1	6	12
(%)	(0)	(5,26)	(31.58)	(63,16)

        Table 2 shows that the highest percentage is that of the teachers who evaluated the majority of their EFL learners' sociopragmatic competence level as low. The "average" level got the second rank followed by the "good" one. No teacher thought that the majority of his/her learners have an excellent sociopragmatic competence level. This reveals the pressing need for instructing the undergraduate learners at the English department of Batna 2 University on sociopragmatics explicitly.

Table 3 *Teachers' perceptions of the importance of explicit sociopragmatic instruction*

Answers	**Yes**	**No**

n	18	1
(%)	(94,74)	(5,26)

Results from Table 3 show that almost all the respondents agreed upon the importance of explicit sociopragmatic instruction (94,74%) for it directs the learners' attention to sociopragmatic features, and hence helps them develop their sociopragmatic competence. The only teacher who held a different opinion thought that Algerian EFL learners can never reach a native-like pragmatic proficiency whatever and however they have been taught especially if we take into account the low English proficiency level of the majority of them. Hence, explicit sociopragmatic instruction, for that teacher, is meaningless. Teachers' admission of the importance of explicit sociopragmatic instruction in enhancing the Algerian EFL learners' sociopragmatic competence is in line with Bouton (1994)[20] and Kasper and Rose (2002)[21] who maintained that learners will not acquire the target language pragmatics unless it is deliberately taught to them.

4.3 Sociopragmatics teaching

4.3.1 Teachers' awareness of sociopragmatics teaching

Table 4 *Teachers' awareness of their sociopragmatics teaching*

Answers	Yes	No
n	4	15
(%)	(21,05)	(78,95)

As it is seen in Table 4, the majority of the respondents (78,95%) were not aware of their sociopragmatics teaching. This does

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[20] Bouton, L. F. (1994). Conversational implicature in the second language: Learned slowly when not deliberately taught. *Journal of Pragmatics, 22*(2), 157-167.

[21] Kasper, G., & Rose, K. R. (2002). Introduction to second language pragmatic development. *Language Learning*, *52* (s1), 1-11.

not only mirror the scant attention paid to this area, but also proves Neddar's (2008)[22] claim that the sociopragmatic dimension has been neglected in the Algerian EFL classroom.

4.3.2 Teachers' sociopragmatic classroom practices

4.3.2.1 Teaching the connection between the target language and context

Table 5 *Teaching the connection between the target language and context*

State ment	Never n (%)	Occasionally n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Often n (%)	Always n (%)
1	0 (0)	4 (21,05)	3 (15,79)	9 (47,37)	3 (15,79)
2	9 (47,37)	6 (31,58)	4 (21,05)	0 (0)	0 (0)
3	11 (57,89)	5 (26,31)	3 (15,79)	0 (0)	0 (0)

Statement 1 I tell my learners that a single utterance might convey various meanings in different contexts.
Statement 2 I show my learners how to vary the way they frame their speech acts according to the sociopragmatic variables such as power, social distance and degree of imposition.
Statement 3 I show my learners how to interpret the sociopragmatic meanings in communicative situations with sociocultural differences.

The results of Statement 1 show that the dominant percentage was that of teachers who often tell their learners that a single utterance might convey various meanings in different contexts. For Statement 2, the teachers who never show their learners how to vary the way they frame their speech acts according to the sociopragmatic variables such as power, social distance and degree of imposition, took the lion's share. Likewise, the highest percentage in Statement 3 was that of

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[22] Neddar, B. (2008). L'enseignement des Langues Etrangères en Algérie et la Nécessité d'acqisition des Systems Pragmatiques de la Langue Cible. *Synergie Algérie, 2,* 17-28.

teachers who never show their learners how to interpret the sociopragmatic meanings in communicative situations with sociocultural differences.

Data analysis of Statements 1, 2, and 3 reveal that Oral expression teachers at the English department of Batna 2 University teach language in context but they do not do this explicitly as they do not show their learners how the linguistic and situational factors affect native speakers' way of conveying and interpreting speech acts. In other words, the contextual use of language is taught implicitly. This implicit contextualized teaching may be due to teachers' lack of knowledge of the target language real world situations.

4.3.2.2 Teaching the connection between the target language and culture (cultural context)

Table 6 *Teaching the connection between the target language and culture*

State ment	Never n (%)	Occasionally n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Often n (%)	Always n (%)
4	0 (0)	1 (5,26)	0 (0)	9 (47,37)	10 (52,63)
5	16 (84,21)	3 (15,79)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
6	17	2	0	0	0

	(89,47)	(10,53)	(0)	(0)	(0)
7	8	6	5	0	0
	(42,10)	(31,58)	(26,31)	(0)	(0)

Statement 4 I tell my learners some cultural facts about the target language.

Statement 5 I explain to my learners how the English native speakers' culture is manifested in their utterances. The American value, for instance, often gives speakers a clearer right to refuse which makes them direct in their refusals.

Statement 6 I show my learners how the target culture affects the turn-taking conventions such as how turns are distributed and how much overlapping is acceptable.

Statement 7 I explain to my learners how culture can be a factor responsible for the speakers' varying assessments of the contextual variables (e.g. power, social distance and degree of imposition) resulting in differences in the selection of (in)appropriate strategies.

As table 6 displays, for statement 4, the percentage of the respondents who always tell their learners some cultural facts about the target language took the lion's share. With regard to Statements 5 and 6; the majority of the respondents admitted that they never do the tasks mentioned in the previous statements whereas the remaining ones said that they occasionally do them. The results of Statement 7, however; show that the highest percentage was that of the respondents who admitted that they never explain to their learners how culture can be a factor responsible for the speakers' varying assessments of the contextual variables (e.g. power, social distance and degree of imposition) resulting in differences in the selection of (in)appropriate strategies.

Data analysis of Statements 4, 5, and 6 and 7 indicate that the respondents always teach their learners cultural knowledge but never show them how native speakers' culture affects the way they communicate.

4.3.2.3 Teaching L1 positive and negative sociopragmatic transfer

Table 7 *Teaching L1 positive and negative sociopragmatic transfer*

State ment	Never n (%)	Occasionally n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Often n (%)	Always n (%)
8	0 (0)	3 (15,79)	4 (21,05)	7 (36,84)	5 (26,31)
9	1 (5,26)	10 (52,63)	3 (15,79)	3 (15,79)	2 (10,53)
10	11 (57,89)	6 (31,58)	2 (10,53)	0 (0)	0 (0)

Statement 8 I show my learners the commonalities and differences between their own cultural norms and those of the target culture.
Statement 9 I ask my learners to interpret the meaning both in English and in Arabic and negotiate it in case it is different in the two languages.
Statement 10 I tell my students which of their cultural norms should be used when speaking English and which must not be used.

As Table 7 shows, results of Statement 8 reveal that the majority of the teachers show their learners the commonalities and differences between their own cultural norms and those of the target culture. For Statement 9, the highest percentage was that of the teachers who occasionally ask their learners to interpret the meaning both in English and in Arabic and negotiate it in case it is different in the two languages. As for Statement 10, the dominant percentage was that of the teachers who admitted that they never tell their learners which of their cultural norms should be used when speaking English and which must not be used. The second dominant one represented the ones who occasionally do the task while the third dominant one referred to the teachers who sometimes do it. No teacher said that s/he often or always do the task.

Data analysis of Statements 8, 9 and 10 show that the Oral Expression teachers often highlight the commonalities and differences between their learners' cultural norms and those of the target culture but never tell them which of their norms can be transferred when speaking English and which must not. In other words, they do neither facilitate L1 positive sociopragmatic transfer nor help prevent the negative one.

4.3.2.5 Correction of sociopragmatic mistakes

Table 8 *Correction of sociopragmatic mistakes*

State ment	Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Always
	n	n	n	n	n
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
11	0	7	2	9	1
	(0)	(36,84)	(10,53)	(47,37)	(5,26)
12	6	8	2	3	0
	(31,58)	(42,10)	(10,53)	(15,79)	(0)

Statement 11 I correct the mistakes my learners make when they use inappropriate words although the sentences are grammatically correct.
Statement 12 I give my learners explicit corrective feedback in the form of comments on infelicitous realizations of speech acts.

It seems apparent from Table 9 that the majority of the respondents often correct their learners' inappropriate use of words even though the sentences are grammatically correct. Nonetheless, the majority of them give their learners explicit corrective feedback in the form of comments on infelicitous realizations of speech acts just occasionally. Hence, data analysis of statements 11 and 12 suggest that the respondents do not pay much attention to explicit corrective feedback on leaners' inappropriate language use.

Results from Tables 5, 6, 7 and 8 are consistent with Neddar (2011) who claimed that the Algerian EFL teachers always asked their learners to think in English but they could not show them how. In other words, they did not instruct them on sociopragmatic features explicitly.

4.3.3 Teachers' excuses for non-explicit sociopragmatic instruction

The teachers' responses to the open ended question that addressed their justifications for not teaching sociopragmatic features explicitly could be grouped under five broad categories.

Table 9 *Teachers' excuses for non-explicit sociopragmatic instruction*

Excuse	1	2	3	4	5
n	15	8	5	3	1
(%)	(78,95)	(42,10)	(26,31)	(15,79)	(5,26)

Note.
1= Lack of knowledge of target culture and contexts
2= Lack of materials on language in use
3= Lack of training on how to teach language in use
4= Variety of English cultures
5= Ineffectiveness of explicit sociopragmatic instruction

As it seems apparent from Table 10, teachers' lack of: knowledge of target culture and contexts, materials on language in use, and training on how to teach it; in addition to variety of English cultures and ineffectiveness of explicit sociopragmatic instruction were all behind their non-explicit sociopragmatic instruction with the first excuse taking the highest percentage of responses and the last one the least. All these excuses reveal the teachers' awareness of the importance of context and culture in English teaching. It is worth mentioning here that the first four excuses echo EFL teachers' difficulties when teaching pragmatic knowledge (e.g. Yuan, 2012[23]).

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[23] Yuan, Y. (2012). *Pragmatics, Perceptions and Strategies in Chinese English College Learning*. PhD thesis, Queensland University of Technology, Australia.

Concerning the last excuse, most of the previous studies to date have shown that the learners who receive explicit instruction outperform those who receive implicit or no instruction (Rose, 2005).

5. Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

In today's globalized world, Algerian EFL learners frequently engage in online interactions with English native speakers. In doing so, they have to consider using the target language appropriately in order not to suffer from sociopragmatic failure. In a foreign language context where even course books are not commonly used in speaking classes, as in Algeria, teachers become the biggest providers of the sociopragmatic information. Hence, it was necessary to unveil their perceptions of the need for and importance of explicit sociopragmatic instruction. The present study showed that the sample selected, i.e. Oral Expression teachers at the English department of Batna 2 University, considered it necessary. Yet, there was evidence that their learners' thinking in Arabic when speaking in English stems from the implicit approach they adopted when instructing them on sociopragmatic features. Thus, we feel the urging need to sensitize the Algerian English teachers to embrace the explicit approach in teaching sociopragmatics as much as possible. The following practical points below, which aim at solving at least part of the problem, are suggested.

EFL teachers should:
- Show their learners explicitly how the contextual factors affect native speakers' way of using the language,
- Teach their learners explicitly how the target culture is manifested in native speakers' utterances,
- Tell their learners exactly which of their cultural norms can be transferred when speaking English because they are similar to those of the target culture. Besides, they show them which ones must not be used because they hinder communication as they differ from the target culture,
- Provide corrective feedback that takes the form of explicit comments on their learners' sociopragmatic errors

The above practical points will not work alone. As can be seen from the teachers' demographic information, most of them are novice. So, in order to get the most out of explicit sociopragmatic instruction, they need to be trained on how to adopt this strategy.

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Bou-Franch, P. & Garces-Conjos, P. (2003). Teaching linguistic politeness: A methodological proposal. *IRAL,* 41, 1-22.

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Cohen, A. D. (2008). Teaching and assessing L2 pragmatics: What can we expect from learners? *Language Teaching*, *41* (2), 213-235.

Dornyei, Z. (2003). *Questionnaires in second language research: Construction, administration, and processing*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers.

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Appendix: Questionnaire

Dear Colleague(s),

This questionnaire is part of a research study that attempts to pinpoint the Oral Expression teachers' perceptions of the importance of sociopragmatics and their way of teaching it in their classes at the Department of English of Batna 2 University. As there is no right or

wrong answer, please answer all the questions as honestly as you can. The data you provide in this questionnaire will be handled in an anonymous basis and will be used for research purposes only. Your cooperation in this regard is highly valued and appreciated.

Please tick the answer you think the most appropriate, or provide relevant information in the provided space.

Section I: Teachers' General Information
1. Gender: ☐ Male   ☐ Female

2. Age: Is your age:
☐ Between [22-26] years old   ☐ Between [26-30] years old
☐ Between [30-34] years old   ☐ More than 34 years old

3. Including this year, how many years have you been teaching Oral Expression:
☐ Less than 5 years   ☐ 5 to less than 10 years
☐ 10 to 15 years   ☐ More than 15 years

4. What is your highest academic completed degree?
☐ Master   ☐ Magistère
☐ PhD   ☐ Professor

5. Did you study for your degree(s) overseas or have you had any overseas English learning experience?
☐ Yes, Which country / countries? …………………………
☐ No

Section II: Teachers' Perceptions of the Need for Explicit Sociopragmatic Instruction
6. How do you evaluate your EFL learners' sociopragmatic competence level?
☐ Excellent   ☐ Good
☐ Average   ☐ Low

7. Do you think it is important for EFL Oral Expression teachers to teach sociopragmatics explicitly?
☐ Yes   ☐ No
Please justify your answer whatever your opinion is.
……………………………………………………………………………
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……………………………………………………………………………

Section III: Teachers' Sociopragmatics Classroom Teaching

8. Are you aware of your sociopragmatics teaching?

　☐ Yes   ☐ No

9. How often do you do these tasks in your classroom? Please tick only one answer.

1 = Never   2 = Occasionally   3 = Sometimes   4 = Often

5 = Always

Classroom Practices	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. I tell my learners that a single utterance might convey various meanings in different contexts.					
2. I show my learners how to vary the way they frame their speech acts according to the sociopragmatic variables such as power, social distance and degree of imposition.					
3. I show my learners how to interpret the sociopragmatic meanings in communicative situations with sociocultural differences.					
4. I tell my learners some cultural facts about the target language.					
5. I explain to my learners how the English native speakers' culture is manifested in their utterances. The American value, for instance, often gives speakers a clearer right to refuse which makes them direct in their refusals.					
6. I show my students how the target culture affects the turn-taking conventions such as how turns are distributed and how much overlapping is acceptable.					
7. I explain to my students how culture can be a factor responsible for the speakers' varying assessments of the contextual variables (e.g. power, social distance and degree of imposition) resulting in differences in the selection of (in)appropriate strategies.					

8. I show my learners the commonalities and differences between their own cultural norms and those of the target culture.					
9. I ask my learners to interpret the meaning both in English and in Arabic and negotiate it in case it is different in the two languages.					
10. I tell my students which of their cultural norms should be used when speaking English and which must not be used.					
11. I correct the mistakes my students make when they use inappropriate words although the sentences are grammatically correct.					
12. I give my students explicit corrective feedback in the form of comments on infelicitous realizations of speech acts.					

10. What do not you instruct your learners on sociopragmatic features explicitly?

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Thank you for your cooperation.