

The Appropriateness in Advice-Giving From a Cross-Cultural Perspective

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Abstract

This cross-cultural study investigates the differences in the perceptions of the appropriateness in advice giving in English between American English native speakers (AEL1) and Jordanian learners of English as a foreign language (JEFL). Data were collected using an adopted version of a Multiple Choice Questionnaire (MCQ) by Hinkel (1997). The questionnaire consists of eight situations that required advice giving or opting out to a peer acquaintance (equal status) and an instructor (higher status). Each situation was accompanied by three MC selections in random order: direct advice, hedge advice, and indirect comments. The fourth selection was an explicit choice for opting out that remained constant for all selections. Results revealed that both groups have the same perception of the social distance in the situations involving peer acquaintance and instructor. They, however, differed in the types of advice they showed as the appropriate choice. JEFL participants considered direct advice or hedge advice as appropriate option to be used with peer acquaintance and with instructors where in American culture the AEL1 participants found these strategies as least likely appropriate. The paper suggests EFL programs that promote awareness for JEFL on various appropriate conversational strategies in English. The results are expected to be useful information in cross-cultural comparison studies and other related areas.

Key words: Speech act, Giving-Advice, Individualism and Collectivism.