

## Developing a Pragmatics Test for Arabic ESL Learners

**Sawako Matsugu**

Liberal and General Education Center, Utsunomiya University,  
Tochigi, Japan

### Abstract

The present study replicated Liu's (2007) study on validating a multiple-choice discourse completion test (MCDCT) for measuring second language (L2) pragmatics. In order to investigate whether his validation methods can be applied to a different speech act with learners from a different linguistic and cultural background, this study was conducted for native speakers of Arabic learning English as a Second Language (ESL) to assess the speech act of refusal. First, an exemplar generation and situation likelihood questionnaire was administered to 15 Arabic participants to elicit refusal situations to be used for constructing a MCDCT. Following this, metapragmatic assessment was carried out in order to determine social variables of status/power, distance, and severity in each of the elicited situations. Then, a situation pilot questionnaire was given to 14 Arabic-speakers and 11 English-speakers to collect responses to be used for answer keys and distracters for the MCDCT. Two native speakers of English rated responses by Arabic-speakers and those marked inappropriate were used as distracters for the instrument, while English-speakers' responses were included as keys. Due to a small sample size and low inter-rater agreement, the resultant item number for the MCDCT became six.

**Key words:** Arabic learners of English, MCDCT, pragmatics, refusals, tests,