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**Speech Act Theory in Teaching Language to Adults**

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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this submission is entirely my own work, in my own words, and that all sources used in researching it are fully acknowledged and all quotations are properly identified to our best extent. It has not been submitted, in whole or in part, by me or another person, for the purpose of obtaining any other credit, except where due acknowledgement is made in the project. I understand the ethical implications of my research, and this work meets the requirements of the Faculty of Language Sciences Ethics Policy.

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## Abstract

This thesis explores the application of Speech Act Theory (SAT) in teaching language to adults, aiming to address gaps in current methodologies and enhance communicative competence. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative data from structured surveys and qualitative insights from open-ended questions. Participants included 25 adult language learners, predominantly aged 19-25, highlighting the demographic concentration towards younger learners. The findings reveal that while a significant portion of students engage regularly in practicing speech acts such as requests, apologies, and compliments, there remains a notable disparity in how consistently these practices are integrated into language classes. The study also identified several challenges faced by learners, including cultural differences, contextual understanding, and insufficient practice opportunities. Despite these challenges, students generally perceive SAT-based instruction as relevant and useful for improving their communicative skills. The research underscores the potential of SAT-informed practices to significantly enhance pragmatic awareness and communicative competence, although further improvements in teaching methodologies are necessary. Recommendations include enhancing teacher training, integrating cultural education, increasing practice opportunities, and utilizing multimedia resources. Future research should focus on the long-term impacts of SAT-based instruction and employ larger, more diverse sample groups to validate and expand upon these findings.

*Keywords: Speech Act Theory, communicative competence, adult language learners, language teaching methodologies, pragmatic awareness, cultural education, mixed-methods approach*

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

Language learning and teaching have long been significant areas of inquiry within the field of linguistics and education. The complexities of language acquisition, particularly in adult learners, have led researchers and educators to explore various theoretical frameworks and pedagogical approaches, prompting a reassessment of existing approach in order to facilitate effective language instruction. One such theoretical framework that has gained prominence in language teaching is Speech Act Theory (SAT), which provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing the communicative functions of language beyond mere grammar and vocabulary. SAT posits that utterances are not only linguistic entities but also actions, whereby speakers perform various speech acts to accomplish specific goals in communication. These acts include assertions, requests, commands, promises, apologies, and many others, each with its own set of rules and conventions governing their use. However, despite the growing interest in integrating SAT into language teaching methodologies, there remains a need for further exploration and empirical research to elucidate its effectiveness and practical implications in adult language learning contexts. Notably, an adult refers to an individual who has the ability to autonomously generate and analyze knowledge regarding language and culture, while recognising the interconnectedness of these two concepts. This research explores the application of Speech Act theory in teaching language to adults, aiming to address gaps in current methodologies in enhancing communicative competence. Specifically, by communicative competence it is meant to understand and effectively utilize speech acts in language instruction, enabling learners to engage more proficiently in real-life communication contexts. Also, by incorporating SAT principles into language pedagogy, educators can help learners not only develop linguistic proficiency but also navigate the intricate social and cultural nuances inherent in language use. Through an examination of



relevant literature, empirical studies, and practical insights, this thesis endeavors to provide a comprehensive understanding of how SAT can inform and enrich language instruction for adult learners. Moreover, this study will seek answers to such questions as:

1. What are the specific gaps or limitations in current language teaching methodologies related to the integration of Speech Act Theory (SAT) for adult language learners?
2. How does the incorporation of SAT principles impact the development of communicative competence in adult language learners?
3. What are the perceived challenges or barriers to effectively implementing SAT-based instruction in adult language learning contexts?
4. How do adult language learners perceive the relevance and usefulness of SAT-based instruction in improving their communicative skills?
5. What role do contextual factors, such as cultural differences or proficiency levels, play in shaping the effectiveness of SAT-based language teaching methodologies?
6. To what extent do SAT-informed language teaching practices contribute to learners' pragmatic awareness and ability to navigate real-life communication situations?

As a result, by delving into the theoretical underpinnings of Speech Act Theory and its application in educational settings, this research aims to offer valuable insights for educators, curriculum developers, and language practitioners seeking to optimize language teaching methodologies and enhance the communicative competence of adult language learners.

## Chapter II

### Literature Review

#### 2.1 Theoretical background of Speech Act Theory

The objective of the current literature review is to determine the answers to the above mentioned questions by examining previous works and investigations conducted by various scholars. Also, it aims to identify the existing knowledge and results in the field of Speech Act, as well as provide accurate definitions for the terms associated with the topic, relying on the groundbreaking studies of academics who initially developed these terms. The primary themes that will be examined in literature review part include the following:

1. Theoretical Background to Speech Act Theory
2. Language Teaching Methodologies concerning Speech Act
3. Challenges and limitations on implementation of Speech Act
4. Impact of Speech Act on Communication Competence
5. Cultural differences and Learners perceptions of Speech Act

To conduct a comprehensive and advanced investigation on the chosen topic, a range of literature and articles were analyzed. This included foundational works by Austin (1967) and Searle (1977), as well as more recent articles that mentioned contemporary methodologies related to the integration of Speech Act Theory, surveys conducted by other scholars, and analyses of their findings.

It is clear that SAT is a subject of research for several philosophers and linguists who want to get a deeper comprehension of human communication. Milleret (n.d.) asserts that mastering speech acts is crucial for students' effective communication, as these acts include both verbal and non-verbal expressions, facilitating appropriate interactions within specific cultural contexts. For instance, the speech act can be composed of one word only, for instance, "sorry," so do several sentences such as "I'm sorry, I forgot your birthday. It just

slipped my mind” (Milleret, n.d.). Furthermore, she highlighted the significance of the Speech Act as a concept that plays a vital role in negotiation. This implies that not appropriately verbalizing leads to such consequences as laughter, embarrassment, or misunderstanding by listeners in the second language community. In a research paper by Lamarque (1997), he clarified that the Speech Act is a form of social contact, which is why it happens when a person or writer says something to a reader or listener in a proper situation. In other words, the Speech Act is when the speaker says something that is understandable to the listener, who is ready to understand, resulting in an agreement between each other (Habermas, 1979). Accordingly, Milleret (n.d.) indicated that speech acts encompass interpersonal exchanges and require not just linguistic proficiency, but also a deep understanding of how to use language effectively in a certain context within a particular cultural setting. Undoubtedly, a sentence that is impactful in a second language may not have the same weight when translated into a different language. Moreover, while implementing the Speech Act, a person should take into consideration such factors as; for whom the question is addressing, specifically, age, social status, familiarity, and gender of the person, the setting of the conversation, namely, place (at work, school, home, in public), surroundings (family, friends, acquaintances, strangers); and the current activity of people that might be eating, working, etc. Accordingly, the person will be able to choose a way of delivering that is formal or informal (Milleret, n.d.).

To determine Speech Act Theory, Levinson (2017), in his article, described SAT as a linguistic area within pragmatics that examines the utilization of words for both informative purposes and the accomplishment of actions. In fact, it is a theory that explains what words and phrases mean by looking at how they are used in different types of speech.

To begin with, in order to dive into the history and gain a more holistic understanding of Speech Act Theory, it is worth mentioning the foundational works of J. L. Austin and

J. R. Searle. The idea of Speech Acts was initially proposed by J. L. Austin, a philosopher from Oxford, in his work "How to Do Things With Words." Further, the work was expanded and developed by J. R. Searle, an American philosopher. In order to understand Speech Act Theory, it is essential to distinguish between different aspects of an utterance: the locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts that were proposed by Austin in 1967. The previously mentioned differentiations facilitate understanding that language operates not solely to transmit information but also to carry out actions. Across all aspects of human life, certain events or acts done by humans may elicit feelings, wants, or attitudes that are commonly seen as desirable or appropriate replies. These reactions are seen inherent in such circumstances, as our emotions or desires are not readily perceivable by others, it is customary to communicate to others that we have them. In addition, "behaviors" refer to the notion of reacting to the conduct and situations of others, as well as the attitudes and expressions of attitudes towards someone else's past or future actions. Specifically, we use "apologies" to express regret, "thanks" to show gratitude, and "deplore" to convey sympathy (Austin, 1967).

According to Austin (1967), when someone speaks a phrase, they simultaneously do three actions: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. Commencing from a locutionary act that utilizes words with their own pitch and stress, which helps the speaker to convey the message. Through the use of Austin's work, Allwood (1977) studied that the locutionary act of a statement corresponds to the exact meaning or the intended meaning of the words used. For example, in the sentence "It's snowing" the locutionary aspect provides information about the weather condition, in other words it conveys that snow is falling which is the exact meaning of the sentence. In addition, there is a propositional act in between locutionary and illocutionary acts, which involves senses in addition to pitch and stress to deliver the message (Austin, 1967). Whereas, the illocutionary act has a function to make a statement such as asking, ordering, promising and etc., and has to deal with the hidden message behind the

utterance, in other words, it relates to what a speaker intends to accomplish when they say something. Directly quoting from Austin (1967) work, he claimed as “the conventional force of an utterance”. For better understanding, it is going to be helpful to refer to the article of Allwood (1977), he provided an example “I promise to buy you a drink”. Current statement illustrates both a statement and a promise. The statement (locutionary act) just to inform the listener about a future action (buying a drink). While, the term "promise" automatically encompasses the conventional meaning of committing oneself to the future step of action. It means that the speaker intends to do that action. Following that, it is considered that when someone says "I promise," they are making a declaration that they are obligated to convey the truth. In addition, Searle (1977) stated that speakers may reach just five illocutionary points while making statements, namely, assertive, commissive, directive, declaratory, and expressive. Speakers reach the assertive point by accurately representing the state of affairs in the world. They reach the commissive point by making a commitment to take certain actions. Next, the directive point could be reached by attempting to persuade listeners to do something, the declaratory point by performing actions in the world simply by stating that they are doing so and the expressive point by expressing their attitudes towards objects and facts in the world. Finally, perlocutionary acts refer to the impact that a speaker's statement has on the listener, specifically the responses and behaviors that the listener exhibits in reaction to the speaker's utterances. For instance, when someone says, "I promise to buy you a drink" the perlocutionary act involves the reaction this promise evokes in the listener (Allwood, 1977). In addition, Allwood's examination of Austin's work underscores the need of considering the locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary aspects of an action in order to gain a more profound understanding of the relationship between language phenomena and action. He stated that there are four commonly used approaches for determining an action:

1. Through analyzing the consequences or results of the action

2. By analyzing the motives and goals of the individual doing the action
3. Through careful observation of the evident behavior used to carry out the action.
4. By considering the contextual factors in which the action occurs.
5. Additionally, by acknowledging the social consequences of a certain act of communication.

In general, it is always important to thoroughly examine the environment in which the words are spoken to be appropriate in some way and how speaking might have an impact or result in an action (Austin, 1967). Nevertheless, Austin emphasized that there are more potential occurrences that may be regarded as marginal, unpleasant, or overlapping. Besides, although the findings of Austin, Allwood and Searls serves as a basis and covers different aspects of language implementation, and provides thorough understanding of Speech Act, Nordquist (2020), in his paper mentioned that some researchers consider the method of Austin and Searle relied mostly on intuitions, due to a singular focus on isolated sentences without considering their surrounding context.

## **2.2 Language Teaching Methodologies concerning Speech Act**

Judd (1999) stated that teaching Speech Acts is a great way to connect language learning to real-life situations from the very first day of class and all the way through the rest of the language programme. By including Speech Act in the curriculum, teachers can get students ready to show that they are really good at communicating by helping them improve both their language and social skills. Also, she notified about the barriers for second language learners, such as the complicatedness of understanding the Speech Act as a phenomenon; however, she stated that the Speech Act activities could be included in the learning programme during the educational process, providing smooth integration into the learning curriculum. Rose (2002) suggested that before beginning any kind of activity, no matter whether it is concerning Speech Act or any other, first learners of second language should be

motivated and interested, as it helps them to keep focus and attention during actual activities. According to Milleret (n.d.), learners of second language initially hesitate to speak fluently even though they know the targeted language at an advanced level due to a lack of confidence of appropriateness of the speech, because L1 and L2 initially are culturally different. Moreover, she noticed that Speech Act mistakes were less tolerated in society than linguistic ones. Consequently, in order to gain the confidence in L2, learners must be aware of the appropriateness of the delivering speech that can be taught during classroom practice. Meier (2003) has also suggested that teaching language mostly should be oriented to pragmatic, intercultural and strategic competences. Pragmatics has been discussed by a significant number of scholars including Cohen (2006), as a field of study in linguistics which includes Speech Acts. In other words, pragmatics refers to the communication processes and cultural performances that occur within the area of study, helping students to make a connection between language and culture (Cohen, 2006). Also, Eslami-Rasekh (2005) analyzed the previous investigations relating to the topic of pragmatic competence of second language learners and made a conclusion that grammatical competence does not necessarily ensure a comparable level of pragmatic development. Particularly, even advanced learners may struggle to understand or express intended goals and polite values. Furthermore, referring back to Meier's (2003) investigation, the second factor that should be taken into consideration while teaching a foreign language is intercultural competence. This suggests that the meaning of a sentence could be interpreted differently in various cultures and the speaker has to differentiate the distinctions among the factors that influence communication, including gender, social standing, age, and level of education. Finally, the third factor is strategic competence, which is important when there is communicational misunderstanding during conversation between speakers. Besides, Judd (1999) highlighted the importance of Meier's suggestion about combining three different aspects while learning and teaching a

second language, because according to her own research, combination of above mentioned three factors greatly enhanced students' awareness about connection of language and culture. In addition, she proposed several steps on how the Speech Act could be implemented during the teaching and learning process. To begin with, students should grasp the idea of Speech Act in general, secondly, repeat small practices in the classroom and thirdly, give a chance to soak to the real, authentic environment to see the actual implementation of the Speech Act. Alternatively, Cohen (2006) claimed that memory aids, practices with classmates and native speakers, in addition with feedback from listeners might be helpful in order to properly implement the Speech Act. Moreover, Judd (1999) suggested that involving students in peer evaluation helps them understand how their words and actions are perceived by others and whether they are appropriate. Correspondingly, one more strategy that was first mentioned in the research of Tanaka (1997) called “noticing”, the meaning of it is to adjust SA according to the learning style of students and if students face difficulties or misunderstanding during the actual conversation, they should be able to recover from it using before ahead developed strategy. Besides, the authors brought some information about the other sources that might be helpful in recognition of SA which are movies, serials and various sorts of programmes that provide information for analyzes of different cultural or context situations. In fact, even though there are books and teachers who can incinerate the situation, it is not always enough to gain wide awareness of SA and might confuse students as there is no visual presentation of the situation (Cohen, 2005). Judd (1999) stated that instructors should utilize increasingly complicated language learning resources to teach speech actions that need advanced language skills and cultural awareness, which includes the knowledge about making complaints, requests, refusals, and apologies. In the same time statement of Sun (2011) sounded like the teacher should design some more conversations or situations connected with the factors of speech acts such as speaker, topic, ways of communication, time and place. During practices,



the teacher can also ask students to design some activities and perform the activities that students will get a deeper impression of effectively through such practice. Therefore, they are able to use language appropriately and understand its intention exactly in different situations. Investigation conducted by Milleret (n.d.), within the learners of Portuguese in Brazil to the question “Which is more important: to speak Portuguese well, or to act appropriately in Brazil?” revealed that most students indicated that behaving correctly was of more importance, explaining their answers in such a way that if the speaker manages to successfully handle the communication in a social context, others will disregard grammatical errors. Others also highlighted that violating social norms is considered more offensive than mispronouncing a word. Following that there were responses that conducting oneself in a suitable manner will make individuals more receptive towards you as an individual from another country. Millert (n.d.) also accomplished quite significant research on a current topic and provided important insights that were cited previously, nonetheless, despite quite significant research done by Milleret (n.d.), there was a lack of information about failed or unsuccessful communication practices, that would have been helpful to make some conclusions about strategies used in such cases by speakers to recover from those failures.

Furthermore, it comes to the question “How do we know that students comprehend SA in a proper way?” In order to answer this question Judd (1999) developed a protocol to give an evaluation to students' performance, including linguistic and socio-cultural abilities of the students. In terms of written assessment Judd (1999) used a “Discourse Completion Task (DCT)” that suggests text with missing lines in a dialogue and students should fill the gaps with appropriate situational sentences or phrases. As a result, the teacher will get a comprehension of whether the student is understanding the situation or not. However, Judd (1999) urged the limitation of the current assessment method (DCT), mentioning the fact that students usually want to answer in accordance with the norms of the target language.

The study conducted by Halenko and Jones (2011) assessed the influence of explicit instructional treatment on the improvement of pragmatic awareness among Chinese learners of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in the United Kingdom. The research employed an experimental design over a 12-week period with 26 students divided into an explicitly instructed group and a control group. The performance was measured through pre-tests, immediate post-tests, and delayed post-tests using Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs). The study found that explicit instruction significantly facilitated the development of pragmatically appropriate request language among the learners. This was evident from the improved scores in the immediate post-test compared to the pre-test for the explicitly instructed group (Halenko and Jones, 2011). Mentioning the limitation, the study revealed that the pragmatic competence was not notably maintained after six weeks. This suggests that although classroom instruction can successfully enhance understanding of practical skills in the immediate period, ongoing reinforcement is required for the information to be retained in the long run (Halenko and Jones, 2011). In line with Halenko and Jones (2011), Eslami-Rasekh (2005) previously claimed that learners may resist pragmatic instruction if they do not see its immediate relevance. Moreover, they may struggle to understand the implicit cultural norms governing Speech Acts in the target language. In order to bridge this gap, she proposed to include activities that may raise pragmatic awareness. For instance, translation exercises and discourse completion tasks can highlight the differences between learners' native languages and the target language. To illustrate, the tactics employed for apologizing in one's native language (L1) and second language (L2) vary. As a result, actions that are considered offensive in one's own culture may be seen as varying degrees of offense in the target culture. In terms of translation exercises, directly translating speech actions from students native language into second language, is a compelling way to demonstrate how cultural norms are mirrored in language. Consequently, Eslami-Rasekh (2005) proposed activities which should

be helpful for students to be aware of pragmatic differences between their native language and the target language, including analyzing speech acts in both languages and discussing cultural norms. Pragmatic activities may be categorized into two primary types: activities that attempt to increase students' understanding of pragmatics, particularly, asking sort of Speech Act situations and investigate the opinion of students, rating acceptable, more or less acceptable or unacceptable, and activities that provide chances for practical communication, namely, collecting and analyzing authentic language data from native speakers, the aim of which is to comprehend the implementation of speech acts in real life situations (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005). In addition, Eslami-Rasekh (2005) provided insights from her study by utilizing examples to illustrate the unique cultural values of the two civilizations. These examples could be used to discuss cultural differences and communicative competence. In Persian, the level of politeness in making recommendations increases as the degree of forcefulness and directness increases. Offers in the English language are communicated indirectly. English lacks a substantial degree of ceremonial formality, resulting in potential cross-cultural misunderstandings (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005). Another illustration pertains to the varying levels of emotion exhibited when offering apologies. In Persian, many formulations are employed to say sorry, but in English, the most commonly utilized approach is the phrase 'I'm sorry'. To enhance the intensity, one might simply use quantifiers such as 'extremely' or 'terribly' (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005).

Additionally, Savignon (2023) introduced the term "communicative competence" that is going to be discussed explicitly further in the section "Impact of Speech Act on Communicative Competence". The term was used to describe the proficiency of language learners in a classroom setting to effectively communicate and understand others, rather than simply memorizing dialogues or demonstrating grammatical knowledge through isolated tests. Teachers consistently prompted learners to actively request information, clarify doubts,

employ circumlocution, and utilize any available linguistic or nonlinguistic tools to effectively communicate and remain focused on the task at hand. Consequently, learners were consistently encouraged to take risks and surpass the limitations of memorized language patterns.

Generally speaking, based on several scholars' investigations, learners of second languages found pragmatic instruction valuable, suggesting that such instruction should be integrated at the pre-departure stage to better prepare learners for real-life communication in academic settings. Therefore, with the further development of language teaching, students would make progress in the speech component without boring language sentence teaching and memory (Sun, 2011).

### **2.3 Challenges and Barriers**

One major challenge highlighted by the study of Halenko and Jones (2011) is the difficulty in sustaining the pragmatic gains over time. Learners may resist SAT-based instruction if they do not immediately perceive its relevance to their communicative needs. As it was mentioned before, Halenko and Jones (2011) identified the decrease in performance after six weeks of including Speech Act to the regular classes programme. In the section of "Teaching Methodologies" it was mentioned that activities with the initiation of the second language environment can enhance the long-term retention of pragmatic skills. However, the study of Halenko and Jones (2011) argued that simply being in an target language-speaking environment does not automatically enhance pragmatic competence. Because, it is essential to provide learners with clear guidance to help them recognise and comprehend the practical rules (Halenko and Jones, 2011). In addition, it is crucial to ensure that educators have sufficient training and resources to proficiently instruct pragmatics. This is because teachers frequently face a shortage of authentic materials that exemplify how native speakers carry out speech acts within certain contexts. Whereas, authentic materials may include recorded

conversations or situational comedies (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005). In contrast, Hinkel (2001) found out that authentic materials like recorded conversations, situational comedies, and real-life interactions are essential but not always feasible, particularly in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) settings where access to native speakers may be limited. Concerning training of educators, Eslami-Rasekh (2005) determined that numerous instructors may lack enough training in incorporating SAT into their teaching methodologies, hence limiting the effectiveness of such education. The absence of proper instruction might lead to an excessive emphasis on grammatical correctness, disregarding the development of practical skills. Furthermore, Milleret (n.d.) noted that language classes often focus on studying and learning the language without considering its context or ensuring sufficient interaction. For example, when apologizing or complaining, a person needs another individual to respond, making it challenging to predict the other person's reaction and practice these interactions effectively. Thus, to improve one's ability to perform verbal communication, it is important to participate in collaborations and engage in consistent practice (Milleret, n.d.). Previously, Judd (1999) pointed out that the abstract nature of pragmatic concepts can also make it challenging for learners to grasp without extensive contextual practice.

Supporting Judd (1999), Milleret (n.d.) revealed that creating contexts in a classroom setting can be challenging. This leads to the next obstacle that is a lack of adequate instructional materials that focus specifically on teaching Speech Acts. Moreover, Milleret (n.d.) claimed that during her research it was hard to adequately assess whether students could actually produce a suitable answer in a specific context due to the fact that there was no proper assessment tool and precise criteria for evaluation. Consequently, she utilized vague rubrics containing such categories as: “vocabulary, strategies used, interest in the other person, touching the person for a reason, expression of emotion, and physical distance between speakers” (Milleret n.d.). Additionally, she argued that while Speech Acts are taught

in some second language classes, most instructional materials are created based on the intuition of textbook authors rather than structured guidelines. Accordingly, Taguchi (2011) mentioned that assessing learners' pragmatic competence is a significant practical issue. Traditional assessments often focus on grammatical accuracy and vocabulary knowledge, neglecting the evaluation of pragmatic skills. Developing reliable and valid assessment tools that measure learners' ability to use language appropriately in various contexts is essential but challenging.

Moreover, Kinginger (2011) stated that the classroom, as a social setting, has been overlooked in relation to other sociolinguistic difficulties in language learning. The differentiation between form-focused drill and meaning-focused communication was not clearly defined in several textbook exercises and language test models, which had an impact on curricula. Learners of a second language may rely on pre-existing beliefs about pragmatic competence and incorrectly utilize them. They might depend on stereotypes or overly simplistic portrayals provided in textbooks or other materials they have come across. Correspondingly, Hinkel (2001) stated that learners have the ability to transfer the standards from their native language community to the second language. As follows, while learners may acquire proficiency in speaking a second language (L2), their initial cultural background still influences them. Furthermore, there is a common societal belief that native English speakers inherently understand how to engage in linguistic interactions and should be capable of explaining the social conventions of the language to learners. For example, here is the formal phrase that was written in textbook:

- "Hello, How was the flight? I see you got a new bag

However, the natural one would sound something as:

- "Hey, man — what's happening? I like your bag. It's awesome!" (Tobbi, 2019)

Overall, language usage often occurs unconsciously, and while native speakers may be able to suggest what one "ought to say," they are unlikely to have a precise, comprehensive, or unbiased understanding of how people actually communicate. This implies that what ESL learners get from textbooks may be grammatically accurate, but lacks authenticity in terms of authentic language and interactions with native speakers. It is important to recognize that achieving pragmatic competence can take many years, and some speakers may never fully attain it (Milleret, n.d.).

#### **2.4 Impact of Speech Act on Communicative Competence**

A number of scholars have proposed approaches, emphasizing the importance of considering Speech Acts within their interactional contexts rather than as isolated phenomena. Sun (2011) stated that Speech Acts are always learnt in the integration with the context and in combination with other methodologies, telling readers that we cannot consider Speech Act in separation from other aspects. In order to possess communicative competence as a second language learner, one must possess more than just mastery of grammar (Farahian, Rezaee, and Gholami, 2012). Taguchi (2011) said that grammatical competence relates to the understanding of language norms, whereas pragmatic competence involves the skill to proficiently apply these principles in social interactions. The association between two skills suggests that language instruction should include both parts to improve learners' overall communicative ability.

Having a thorough understanding of the concept "Communicative Competence" enables learners to choose the appropriate language structures and strategies in various situations. The primary theoretical notion in communicative language education is "Communicative Competence". Competence is determined by how well someone can articulate, comprehend, and negotiate meaning. Farahian et.al. (2012) referenced Rueda's (2006) findings, highlighting that communicative competence comprises more than just

linguistic ability, it also includes the ability to effectively employ language in many social contexts, which is something that the SAT explicitly analyzes. The integration of Speech Act Theory concept into language instruction has the possibility to greatly enhance the communication skills of adult learners. More precisely, it refers to the ability to comprehend and generate language that is suitable for different communication scenarios, taking into account certain socio-cultural elements. Alternatively, Housel (2023) emphasized language as a kind of social interaction rather than just a process of acquiring language. To illustrate, Housel (2023) provided an example of Chinese greeting in comparison with Western greeting, in order to understand how the Speech Act influences communication. Chinese speakers frequently use rhetorical questions or remarks such as (Ni chifan-le ma)?" which translates to "Have you eaten?" and (Qu nar)?" meaning "Where are you going?" instead of the direct greeting phrase "Hello". The purpose of these questions was not to really inquire about someone's eating state or destination, but rather to politely recognise the other person's existence and preserve social peace. Followingly, it is clear that by examining these areas of misunderstanding, researchers can develop teaching strategies that help learners navigate and comprehend the pragmatic aspects of their target language more effectively, leading to improved communicative competence. Next study was on the basis of research of House and Kádár (2023) where they examined the expected linguistic behaviors in the target culture and compared them to the actual utterances of the L2 learners. The findings highlighted a significant pragmatic issue, that is many learners preferred to realize the speech act of just "wishing well" rather than "congratulating". Also, Housel (2023) explored the difficulties Chinese learners of English encounter with certain expressions, such as the altered use of "Thank you very much," which can function as a complaint rather than a simple expression of gratitude. This pragmatic transfer often resulted in confusion when learners faced real-life situations.



SAT is usually integrated with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) techniques to offer a comprehensive language learning experience. As Housel (2023) stated this integration guarantees that learners possess not only a high level of competence in grammar and vocabulary, but also the ability to successfully utilize language in real-life conversation. The CLT methodology frequently utilizes interactive classroom activities, including role-plays, simulations, and group discussions. These exercises are optimal for honing speech actions since they promote active engagement and immediate use of language. Nevertheless, Judd (1999) contended that assessing the actual execution of Speech Acts, such as skits and role-plays, caused more challenges due to the influence of students' acting abilities, pronunciation, and real behavior on the acceptability of the role-play. Besides, in modern days Savignon (2023) stated that experiential learning strategies might improve communicative competence by giving learners hands-on experience in utilizing language for specific reasons. His research found that learners who engaged in communicative activities showed significant improvements in fluency and pragmatic competence compared to those who focused solely on grammatical drills. This supports the idea that SAT-based activities can enhance overall communicative competence. Housel (2023) proved that the integration of SAT with CLT offers a framework for language acquisition that is based on contextual factors. For instance, engaging in role-playing exercises that involve making requests or delivering compliments enables learners to practice these speech actions in authentic situations. This facilitates learners' comprehension of not just the language structures but also the societal conventions that regulate their utilization. An article of Housel (2023) included in Language Teaching Cambridge Core underscored the need of instructing ESL learners on pragmatic functions. The study demonstrated that individuals who were provided with clear and direct guidance on Speech Acts, such as making requests and offering apologies, had enhanced proficiency in performing these actions effectively across different social situations.

This methodology is based on the SAT and is consistent with the concepts of CLT by emphasizing the use of language for certain communicative goals. As a result, teaching speaking is not only a form of involvement, but rather a micro-environment that closely resembles actual life (Sun, 2011).

The study of sociolinguistics has played a crucial role in comprehending the consequences of norms, appropriateness, and variability for communicative language teaching. The utilization of authentic language data has emphasized the significance of context, including factors such as setting, roles, genre, etc., in the interpretation of a text's meaning. Exposing learners to a diverse selection of spoken and written texts within specific situations allows them to get a wide range of language experiences. These experiences are crucial for learners to develop their own ability to use language effectively and to make informed decisions about the appropriateness of their own expressions of meaning. Thus, understanding the strategies used in negotiating meaning allows for the improvement of essential skills in educational settings (Savignon, 2023). L2 learners may encounter challenging situations due to the accurate or inaccurate use of speech actions. Moreover, language teachers pay more attention on “meaning” and “function”, consequently, methods and materials of language teaching are becoming more and more communicative due to a greater concern on research of language application and language function (Sun, 2011). Furthermore, according to Martinez-Flor and Uso Juan (2006), in order to understand how well students can use language in real-life scenarios, they need to be exposed to situations where they have to understand what others are saying in a certain context or communicate with various people in diverse settings. In contrast to second language learners in authentic settings, learners who are acquiring a language in a foreign language environment lack opportunities to engage in communicative scenarios that would facilitate the complete development of their language proficiency. In addition, students seldom have the chance to

see proficient speakers conversing in their mother tongue. Hence, it is important to establish favorable circumstances for the enhancement of learners' pragmatic ability, not only for those learning foreign language settings, but also for those in second language situations (Martinez-Flor and Uso Juan, 2006). To sum up, through discussion of the speech acts theory, the teacher should pay more attention to the theory in teaching language and practice to allow students to use the appropriate language in different context and understand both the utterances literal force and illocutionary force. It is imperative that the language teachers should develop proper teaching materials and combine this theory with other pragmatic theories to further develop the students' competence in language teaching (Sun, 2011).

## **2.5 Cultural differences and learners perception of Speech Act**

Performing speech actions in a foreign language might be challenging due to their strong connection to culture (Milleret, n.d.). Contextual understanding is crucial in teaching pragmatics because it allows learners to use language appropriately in various social situations. Without this understanding, learners may misinterpret or fail to convey intended meanings, leading to communication breakdowns and potential social misunderstandings (Bachman, 1990). However, there is a lack of a universally accepted definition of pragmatic competence, complicating its integration into language curricula (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005). Hinkel (1999) found that the directness of requests or the formality of apologies can vary widely between cultures, necessitating a culturally sensitive teaching approach. He asserted that culture serves as the structure in which linguistic behavior is considered suitable, or even permissible. In a similar vein, Eslami-Rasekh (2005) posited that culture poses a level of intricacy that surpasses that of the language code. Consequently, it necessitates a learning environment and methodology that enable students to assume authentic roles as if they were immersed in the target culture. In addition, she highlighted that cultural barriers in pragmatic instruction arise from differences in sociolinguistic norms and the context-dependent nature

of language use. Regarding cultural differences, one of the delicate and practical concerns is the act of declining or rejecting that occurs in the everyday communication of native speakers. Specifically, if second language learners are not acquainted with the many methods of refusing, their counterparts in the second language setting may misinterpret their intentions (Savignon, 2023). Consequently, identifying how refusal may occur in different cultural settings could help learners to properly integrate to the situation. For instance, according to Al-Kahtani (2005), a denial is the act of responding negatively to an offer, request, invitation, or similar. He asserts that in several communities, the manner in which one declines or refuses something is of greater significance than the actual response, as non-native speakers often find it challenging to convey a negative response. Following that Lingli and Wannaruk (2010) cited Brown and Levinson (1987) who claimed that refusal may be described as a speaking act that poses a danger to one's social status and is emotionally unpleasant. It is typically a response to someone else's action, such as a request, invitation, offer, or recommendation, rather than being initiated by the speaker. Refusals are seen as face-threatening acts because they jeopardize the positive or negative face of the listener or speaker. Farahian et.al. (2012) contend that the frequent use of refusals by the second participant in a discussion makes it impracticable and difficult to premeditate and foresee them. This makes them more vulnerable and complex to be included into an educational programme.

Ishihara (2004) conducted a study that examined student perceptions, focusing on learners of English who received 200 minutes of explicit instruction over four sessions. Initially, Ishihara assessed the students' understanding of compliments and found that they struggled with determining appropriate responses, both in giving and receiving compliments in English, and with interpreting the intentions behind compliments from English speakers. Assessments conducted immediately after the lessons and one year later showed that the

learners engaged in longer conversations, used a wider range of syntactic structures, and provided more varied responses to compliments. Moreover, Ishihara (2004) conducted a second study by organizing a one-month online course focused on Speech Acts. The course aimed to develop a sense of proper language usage among voluntarily enrolled Japanese university students. Data were collected through journal entries written by the students after completing each of the five speech act components. The students' feedback confirmed that intentional instruction on pragmatic elements and their associated cultural beliefs led to an increased level of awareness. A noteworthy aspect for this article is the discovery that students enrolled in the online course expressed the belief that the instruction of speech actions should be incorporated into the curriculum. Similarly, research by Halenko and Jones (2011) has demonstrated that learners typically see SAT-based education as advantageous for comprehending the pragmatic elements of a language. For instance, learners have said that receiving clear and direct teaching on how to do certain speech acts, such as making requests and offering apologies, assists them in successfully managing social relationships. In addition, students liked the contextualized learning experiences offered by SAT, since they enhance the relevance of language learning to real-life circumstances (Farshia and Baghbani 2015). In addition, the study by Farahian, Rezaee, and Gholami (2012) explores the effectiveness of direct instruction in developing pragmatic competence among Iranian EFL learners, focusing specifically on teaching refusals. Indeed, Fordyce (2014) stated that students find Speech Act particularly useful in understanding the subtle nuances of language use in various contexts as they often experience initial frustration when adapting to SAT-based instruction due to its abstract nature. However, over time, as it was claimed in research, they recognized its value in improving their communicative competence and ability to navigate social interactions more effectively. Whereas quantitative studies of Fordyce (2014) suggested that individuals who are provided with clear and direct guidance in the use

of speech acts have superior performance in pragmatic tasks in comparison to those who do not get such training. For example, a research discovered that learners who engaged in role-plays and simulations to practice speech actions showed notable enhancements in their pragmatic competence. In Fordyce's (2014) research, a total of 81 Japanese EFL learners were separated into two groups: one receiving explicit teaching and the other receiving implicit instruction. The findings from Fordyce's study underscore the importance of explicit instruction in enhancing learners' pragmatic competence. Learners perceive SAT-based instruction as highly relevant and useful, especially when it includes explicit guidance and contextualized practice. These insights suggest that integrating explicit SAT-based instruction into language curricula can significantly improve adult learners' communicative skills and pragmatic awareness. Moreover, the research also highlighted that explicit instruction leads to better long-term retention of pragmatic skills compared to implicit instruction. The learners in the explicit teaching group were able to sustain their increases in pragmatic competence for a period of five months following the intervention. This suggests that the benefits achieved by explicit instruction were long-lasting and durable (Fordyce, 2014). These results are consistent with another study that showed learners' proficiency in using language effectively in different situations increased with focused SAT education (Farahian, Rezaee, and Gholami, 2012).

## **2.6 Conclusion**

Research by previous scholars has shown that within the field of pragmatics, linguists study a specific aspect known as speech acts, which involve using language and cultural behaviors to perform actions like requesting, apologizing, or thanking. In terms of sociolinguistic norms, different cultures have varying norms for performing speech acts. For instance, in some cultures, direct refusals are considered impolite, whereas in others, indirect refusals may be seen as evasive or insincere. These cultural differences can lead to

misunderstandings if not properly addressed in language instruction. Besides, in the context of second language teaching, integrating Speech Act Theory (SAT) presents both theoretical and practical challenges. Several researchers proved that as early as the first few days of language learning, when students are practicing greetings and goodbyes, introductions, thank-yous, and other basic social skills, they can start to become more aware of Speech Acts.

## **Chapter III**

### **The method**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The research will be guided by Speech Act Theory (SAT), which posits that language use involves performing actions such as making requests, giving commands, and making promises. SAT provides a framework for understanding how language functions in communication and offers valuable insights into teaching communicative competence. By focusing on the pragmatic aspects of language use, SAT-based instruction aims to equip learners with the skills needed to navigate real-life communication situations effectively. This research aims to explore the application of Speech Act Theory (SAT) in teaching language to adults, addressing gaps in current methodologies and enhancing communicative competence. The mixed-methods approach will provide a nuanced understanding of the challenges and benefits of integrating SAT into language teaching, contributing to the development of more effective pedagogical practices. The study will be conducted online using Google Survey, targeting a diverse group of adult participants, including high school learners aged 17-18, university students, and graduates who are currently practicing as teachers of second languages. The anticipated sample size is 25-30 participants. The data collection will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research questions. Quantitative data will be collected through a structured survey distributed via Google Survey. The survey will include multiple-choice questions, Likert scale items, and open-ended questions designed to assess participants' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes towards SAT-based language instruction. This method will allow for the collection of a broad range of data, enabling the identification of common trends and patterns. Qualitative data will be gathered through open-ended questions included in the same online survey, providing detailed, narrative responses, offering



rich insights into their experiences and perspectives regarding the integration of SAT principles in language teaching. It is intended that qualitative and quantitative data will help to contextualize the survey, offering a more holistic view of the integration of SAT in language instruction. The hypothesis driving this research is that the incorporation of SAT principles into language teaching methodologies significantly enhances the communicative competence of adult language learners. It is anticipated that SAT-based instruction will improve learners' pragmatic awareness and their ability to navigate real-life communication situations. Furthermore, it is hypothesized that cultural differences and proficiency levels will play a crucial role in shaping the effectiveness of SAT-based teaching methodologies, with varying impacts on learners' communicative skills.

Data analysis will involve both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data from the surveys will be analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize responses and identify trends. Qualitative data will be analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves coding the data to identify recurring themes and patterns. Further, in order to ensure ethical treatment of participants, informed consent will be obtained at the beginning of the Google Survey. The complete consent letter provided in Appendix B. Participants will see consent as they just open the link of Google survey, where it was explained their rights, the purpose of the study, confidentiality and the voluntary nature of their participation. They will need to click a checkbox to indicate their consent before proceeding with the survey. Participants' responses will be anonymized to protect their privacy, and data will be securely stored with access limited to the researcher. Participants will also be informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences. In conclusion, this research design outlines a comprehensive approach to investigating the application of Speech Act Theory in teaching language to adults.

### 3.2 Procedure

The research procedure was meticulously planned to explore the application of Speech Act Theory (SAT) in teaching language to adults, with the aim of addressing current gaps and enhancing communicative competence. The methodology involved the design and deployment of two distinct Google Surveys—targeted to adult learners of second language. This mixed-methods approach allowed for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, providing a comprehensive understanding of the research questions. To begin with, the second language learners survey was designed to include a combination of multiple-choice and open-ended questions. The survey commenced with background information, including age, current level of language proficiency, and duration of language study. This section aimed to contextualize the participants' responses by providing demographic and experiential data. Following this, the main body of the survey was structured to progress from simpler to more complex questions, gradually building up to more detailed qualitative inquiries. The multiple-choice questions in the survey addressed various aspects of language learning, particularly focusing on the integration and impact of SAT principles. Questions were designed to gauge the frequency and effectiveness of SAT-based activities, the challenges faced by students in understanding and using language in different contexts, and the perceived relevance of SAT-based instruction. For instance, questions asked how often language classes incorporated practical examples of speech acts, how well the courses prepared students for real-life communication, and the degree of difficulty students faced in understanding the appropriate use of language in various situations. In addition to these structured questions, the survey included three key open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed qualitative data. These questions were:

1. Can you give an example of a time when learning how to ask for help or make a request helped you in real life?

2. What difficulties do you have when trying to use the language correctly in different situations?
3. How can language teaching be improved to help you use the language better in real-life situations?

All responses, particularly the open-ended responses, were accurately transcribed and compiled into a single document (Excel for quantitative and Google Document for qualitative) for ease of access and organization and facilitate the subsequent analysis. These questions were intended to capture the nuanced experiences of the students, providing insights into the practical application of SAT principles and identifying areas for improvement in language teaching methodologies. Prior to the full deployment, a draft version of the surveys was piloted to ensure functionality and accessibility. This involved testing the survey with a known individual to confirm that it opened correctly and that responses could be submitted without issues. The survey was then made accessible to a broader audience in “Quora” online platform, ensuring that all potential participants had the opportunity to respond. Besides, the data collection process spanned two months, during which participants were invited to complete the surveys. Invitations were distributed on social media platforms to reach a diverse group of adult learners and teachers. Responses were collected and securely stored, with quantitative data from multiple-choice questions downloaded and stored in a password-protected file. Qualitative responses from open-ended questions were transcribed and organized for thematic analysis. This dual approach allowed for a thorough examination of the data, with quantitative analysis providing statistical insights into trends and patterns, and qualitative analysis offering in-depth understanding of participants’ experiences and perspectives. The mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative data, provided a rich and comprehensive dataset that addressed the research questions effectively.

Generally speaking, the procedure for this research was carefully designed to collect robust and meaningful data on the application of Speech Act Theory in language teaching. The structured approach to survey design, combined with rigorous data collection and ethical considerations, ensured the reliability and validity of the findings. This comprehensive methodology enabled a detailed exploration of the impact of SAT-based instruction on communicative competence, providing valuable insights for improving language teaching practices.

### **3.3 Analysis**

The analysis phase of this research will undertake a rigorous examination of both quantitative and qualitative data to explore the application of Speech Act Theory (SAT) in teaching language to adults. This analysis aims to elucidate the impact of SAT-based instruction on communicative competence, identify gaps and limitations in current language teaching methodologies, and investigate the challenges and benefits perceived by learners and teachers in implementing SAT principles. The first step in the analysis will be to organize and clean the data. Quantitative responses from the multiple-choice and Likert scale questions will be downloaded from Google Survey and imported into statistical analysis software such as Excel. This data will be reviewed for completeness and accuracy, with any inconsistencies or missing values addressed appropriately.

Qualitative data will be analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns in the responses. This process will involve familiarization with the data, coding the data, identifying themes, analyzing themes, interpreting the data, and presenting the findings. Specifically, the initial step involved reading through all the responses multiple times to get an overall sense of the content. The coding process involved developing different ideas, concepts, or themes that emerged from data, it was done manually by highlighting and annotating the responses. The codes were then grouped to form broader themes representing

major patterns in the data. The process of grouping codes involved reviewing and refining the initial codes to ensure they accurately represented the data. Similar codes were merged to form cohesive themes, while complex themes were broken down into sub-themes if necessary (see Appendix A). Each identified theme was analyzed in detail, including writing detailed descriptions for each theme and explaining what the theme entailed and how it was supported by the data. The interpreted themes were contextualized within the broader framework of the research questions and theoretical perspectives. This involved linking the themes to the research questions and discussing the broader implications of the findings. The significance of the findings was considered in relation to existing literature and theories. Representative quotes from the participants were included to illustrate each theme and provide evidence for the interpretations. Overall, the thematic analysis will provide rich, detailed insights that complement the quantitative findings, offering a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives.

The analysis of the data will directly contribute to answering the research questions. For instance, the quantitative data will reveal how frequently SAT principles are integrated into current teaching practices and how effective these practices are perceived to be in enhancing communicative competence. This will help identify specific gaps or limitations in existing methodologies. The qualitative data, on the other hand, will provide nuanced insights into the challenges faced by learners and teachers in implementing SAT-based instruction, as well as the perceived relevance and usefulness of these methods in real-life communication. My own explanation of the chosen problem centers on the recognition that while traditional language teaching methods often emphasize grammar and vocabulary, they may neglect the pragmatic aspects of language use, such as making requests, apologizing, or giving compliments. Speech Act Theory offers a framework for understanding these pragmatic functions, but its integration into language teaching has been limited. By exploring the

application of SAT in teaching adults, this research aims to address this gap and improve the effectiveness of language instruction. One of the strong points of this research is its mixed-methods approach, which combines quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research questions. The use of both types of data allows for a more holistic analysis, capturing not only statistical trends but also the lived experiences of learners and teachers. Another strength is the focus on adult learners, a group that is often underrepresented in language education research despite their unique needs and challenges. However, there are also weak points and limitations to consider. The relatively small sample size (25 participants) may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data in surveys and interviews may introduce biases, such as social desirability bias or recall bias. These limitations need to be acknowledged and addressed in the discussion of the results.

The effect and impact of SAT-based instruction on communicative competence are expected to be significant, as the preliminary data suggests that learners benefit from explicit instruction on how to use language appropriately in different contexts. However, the analysis will also need to consider potential criticisms. For example, some may argue that focusing too much on speech acts could detract from other important aspects of language learning, such as grammar or pronunciation. Additionally, the practical challenges of integrating SAT into existing curricula and teacher training programs need to be critically examined.

Ultimately, the analysis of the data collected from students and teachers will provide valuable insights into the application of Speech Act Theory in language teaching. By combining quantitative and qualitative methods, the analysis will offer a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness, challenges, and benefits of SAT-based instruction. The findings will contribute to addressing the current gaps in language teaching methodologies and offer practical recommendations for enhancing communicative competence among adult learners.

Despite the limitations and potential criticisms, this research has the potential to make a significant impact on the field of language education.

## Chapter IV

### The Results

#### 4.1 Introduction

In broader view, the results of the survey were analyzed to address the following two main research questions and also sought the answers to the questions from Introduction part:

1. What are the specific gaps or limitations in current language teaching methodologies related to the integration of Speech Act Theory (SAT) for adult language learners?
2. How does the incorporation of SAT principles impact the development of communicative competence in adult language learners?

To investigate these questions, a questionnaire was constructed for students with a combination of background, quantitative, and qualitative data. The background questions included:

1. What is your age?
2. What is your current level of language proficiency in the target language?
3. How long have you been studying the target language?

These questions aimed to contextualize the responses by providing brief information about the participants.

The quantitative questions focused on specific aspects of language learning and the integration of SAT principles, including:

1. How often do you practice making requests, apologies, compliments during language classes?
2. How well do you think your language classes prepare you for real-life communication situations?
3. How helpful do you think activities like role-playing and dialogues are in improving communicative skills?



4. What challenges do you face when learning how to use the language appropriately in different situations?
5. How difficult is it for you to understand the appropriate way to respond when someone is asking, apologizing, or making a request?
6. To what extent do you agree that learning how to use language appropriately in different situations (like asking for something, apologizing, or making requests) is essential for effective communication in a new language?
7. How much do cultural differences between your native and second language cause confusion for you when asking for help, apologizing, or making requests?

Additionally, three open-ended questions were included to gather qualitative data:

1. Can you give an example of a time when learning how to ask for help or make a request helped you in real life?
2. What difficulties do you have when trying to use the language correctly in different situations?
3. How can language teaching be improved to help you use the language better in real-life situations?

The analysis of the collected data aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of SAT integration in language teaching, its effectiveness in improving communicative competence, and the challenges and recommendations for enhancing language instruction. Further, the findings from both the quantitative and qualitative data, highlighting key trends, patterns, and themes derived from the responses are going to be presented.

#### **4.2 Brief background information**

In terms of a questionnaire that was dedicated for learners of foreign languages, a total of 25 respondents participated in the survey. Summarizing background information it is

clear that this survey has the answers of 1 person of age 17-18, 2 people of age 35 and older, 3 people of age 26-35 and the majority (19 people) at the age 19-25. Followingly, it is considered that most respondents are young adults likely in a university or early career stage. Following that there was a question about students' proficiency level of targeted language, the data shows that 2 people have pre-intermediate level, 5 people on intermediate and significant majority of respondents (18 people) consider themselves to be at an advanced level of language proficiency. This suggests that the participants are relatively confident and experienced in their language skills. Final question in the section of "Background information" considered the duration of studying the target language. According to the results, only one person studies targeted language for 1-3 years, from 3 to 5 years 4 people and more than five years 20 participants are studying. This long-term engagement with the language further supports the high proficiency levels reported by the participants. In addition, in order to see the authentic results and additional details about background information of participants, refer to Appendix C.

### 4.3 Quantitative data

To begin with, authentic and raft data for quantitative data (multiple-choice questions) could be found in Appendix D. Firstly, the survey question regarding the frequency of practicing speech acts, such as making requests, apologies, and compliments, during language classes yielded the following results, summarized in Table 1.

*Table 1. Frequency of Practicing Speech Acts during Language Classes*

Frequency	Number of responses	Percentage
Never	2	8
Rarely	2	8
Sometimes	11	44

Often	5	20
Always	5	20

The data indicates that a significant proportion of students engage in practicing speech acts during their language classes. Specifically, 44% of respondents indicated that they "sometimes" practice these activities, while 20% reported practicing them "often" and another 20% "always." This suggests that for the majority of students, practicing speech acts is a regular component of their language learning experience. Conversely, a smaller portion of the participants reported lower frequencies of practice, with 8% indicating that they "never" practice speech acts and another 8% reporting that they "rarely" do so. This highlights a disparity in the frequency of speech act practice among different student groups, suggesting that some classes may not be incorporating these activities as consistently as others.

Next, the survey assessed students' perceptions of how well their language classes prepare them for real-life communication situations. The responses are summarized in Table 2.

*Table 2. Effectiveness of Language Classes in Preparing for Real-Life Communication Situations*

<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Not well at all	2	8
Slightly well	3	12
Moderately well	11	44
Very well	6	24
Extremely well	3	12

As shown in Table 2, a significant portion of students feel that their language classes moderately prepare them for real-life communication situations. Specifically, 44% of respondents indicated that their classes prepare them "moderately well." Furthermore, 24% of students rated their preparation as "very well," and 12% considered it "extremely well." This indicates that the majority of students perceive their language classes as at least moderately effective in equipping them with the necessary skills for real-world communication. In terms of small percentages, 12% of respondents felt their classes prepared them "slightly well," and 8% reported that their classes did not prepare them well at all. Following that, the third question assessed the helpfulness of activities like role-playing and dialogues in improving students' communicative skills. The results indicated in Table 3.

*Table 3. Helpfulness of such activities as Role-Playing and Dialogue in Improving Communicative Skills*

<b>Helpfulness</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Not helpful	1	4
Slightly helpful	3	12
Moderately helpful	6	24
Very helpful	5	20
Extremely helpful	10	40

The given data shows that the highest percentage (40%) gained the answer "extremely helpful," while "moderately helpful" and "very helpful" stood at 24% and 20%, respectively. This indicates that interactive activities are highly valued for their effectiveness in improving language proficiency. It is worth noting that there exist different perceptions among students regarding the effectiveness of role-playing and dialogue activities as there are still 12% of learners who think such activities are slightly helpful, whereas 4% think it is not helpful at all. Further, in order to know what kind of difficulties students experience while

they have to ask something in a new environment, or make a request to an unknown person, or any other Speech Act that demands using Second Language, it was included in the survey the questions about challenges and difficulties Table 4 and Table 5.

*Table 4. Challenges Faced in Using the Language Appropriately in Different Situations*

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Cultural differences	10	40
Lack of examples	6	24
Insufficient practice opportunities	7	28
Difficulty understanding context	12	48
Other	0	0

Summarizing results of Table 4, it is clear that the most significant challenge faced by students is difficulty in understanding context, with 48% of respondents identifying this as a problem. Consequently, it means that many students struggle to grasp the appropriate context for using language, which is crucial for effective communication. Referring to cultural differences, 40% of students report this issue indicating that understanding and adapting to cultural norms and practices in language use is a significant barrier. Additionally, approximately the same number of 6 and 7 people voted that lack of examples and practice opportunities are other obstacles in proper implementation of language in different situations. Also, no respondents selected "Other," indicating that the provided options adequately covered the main challenges faced by students.

*Table 5. Difficulty in giving appropriate responses in different situations*

<b>Difficulty</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very difficult	2	8
Difficult	11	44
Neutral	5	20

Easy	7	28
Very easy	0	0

In addition, approximately half of the respondents indicated that it is hard for them to give appropriate responses in different Speech Act situations, moreover, for 8% of learners it is extremely difficult. In comparison, 28% of learners have no problem and can answer easily, while 20% have a neutral attitude. This suggests that more than half of the students face substantial challenges in responding appropriately during communication (Table 5). Besides, it was important to know the perception of students towards Speech Act Theory, therefore this survey included a question about the importance of learning how to use language appropriately in different situations like asking for something, apologizing, or making requests is essential for effective communication in a new language. The data reveals that a majority of students recognize the importance of learning appropriate language use in different situations for effective communication. Specifically, 44% of respondents "strongly agree" with this statement, and 28% "agree," indicating strong overall support for the necessity of appropriate language use (Table 6).

*Table 6. Agreement on the Importance of Learning Appropriate Language Use in Different Situations for Effective Communication*

<b>Agreement</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly disagree	2	8
Disagree	1	4
Neutral	4	6
Agree	7	28
Strongly agree	11	44

On the lower end of the spectrum, 4% "disagree" and 8% "strongly disagree" with the importance of learning appropriate language use in different situations. These findings suggest that while most students value the role of appropriate language use in effective communication, there is a small subset who may not see it as critically important. This highlights the need for educators to emphasize the practical benefits of mastering appropriate language use in various contexts, potentially through real-life examples and practical exercises. Finally, the last question in the section of quantitative data was about contextual factors, namely, the impact of cultural differences between the native language and the second language on the level of confusion experienced when asking for help, apologizing, or making requests. The responses are summarized in Table 7.

*Table 7. Impact of Cultural Differences on Confusion in different situations*

<b>Impact</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Not at all	2	8
Slightly	6	24
Moderately	10	40
Significantly	6	24
Very significantly	1	4

The data indicates that cultural differences have a varied impact on students' experiences of confusion when using language in different situations. Particularly, the largest group of respondents (40%) reported that cultural differences moderately impact their level of confusion. Next, 24% of students indicated that cultural differences impact them significantly, and another 4% reported that the impact is very significant. This suggests that for many students, cultural nuances play a significant role in how they interpret and respond to communication situations. However, there are another proportion of people who voted that cultural differences slightly or have no impact at all to their level of confusion being 24% and

8%, respectively. To conclude, this variation in responses suggests that while many students struggle with cultural nuances, a notable minority do not find them to be a significant barrier.

#### **4.4 Qualitative data**

The responses to the first open-ended question that sounded: "Can you give an example of a time when learning how to ask for help or make a request helped you in real life?" revealed several distinct themes that illustrate the practical applications and benefits of language learning in real-life contexts. These themes encompass interactions in public buildings, social and public interactions, interpersonal communication and relationships, and experiences while traveling. The detailed and authentic survey results are presented in Appendix E.

Overall, the responses for the first question were divided into three particular themes, the first theme comprised two groups, which is considered, from my point of view close to meaning. As it was already mentioned during the procedure stage, responses within the theme were highlighted with two different colors, according to minor topics. To clarify, one prominent theme that emerged from the responses is the utilization of language skills in public buildings and during social and public interactions (see Appendix A). Respondents frequently mentioned that learning how to effectively ask for help or make requests was particularly beneficial in formal and service-oriented settings such as post offices, banks, airports, and hospitals. Therefore, it comprised a code group - public building. For instance, one participant highlighted their experience in a post office, noting that the ability to communicate clearly and politely helped them navigate the process efficiently. Similarly, another respondent recounted a situation at the airport where their knowledge of making polite requests enabled them to resolve a travel-related issue smoothly. These examples underscore the importance of integrating practical communication exercises in language curricula, especially those that simulate interactions in public and service environments. Such



practice can equip learners with the confidence and competence needed to handle real-life situations effectively. Furthermore, the ability to manage social and public interactions was another significant aspect of the respondents' experiences, and as it is close to the situation in public buildings, it was decided to make one theme for two topics. One participant shared how they successfully introduced themselves and joined a group conversation at a social gathering, which facilitated making new friends and feeling included. This instance highlights the role of knowing how to use language appropriately can foster social connections and navigate social settings with ease. Another respondent mentioned their experience during a concert, where they were able to handle a situation politely while also protecting their own boundaries. These experiences reflect the broader applicability of language use in enhancing social interactions and ensuring that individuals can participate fully and assertively in various public and social contexts. Second theme is - interpersonal communication and relationships, which emerged as a critical theme in the responses. Also, this theme was divided into two subtopics as interpersonal communication and another one is relationship and merged together. Participants frequently cited situations where their language skills helped them manage and resolve interpersonal conflicts, make requests, and offer apologies effectively. For example, one learner described how they asked their landlord to fix a broken pipe, leading to a prompt resolution without any argument. This highlights the importance of clear and respectful communication in maintaining harmonious relationships. Another participant shared how they were able to apologize to a friend in their native language after a misunderstanding, illustrating the role of language skills in repairing and strengthening personal relationships. It is clear from examples of the necessity for language instruction to include modules on conflict resolution, making requests, and offering apologies, as these skills are crucial for fostering positive interpersonal relationships.

Thirdly, traveling was another significant context in which respondents applied their language skills. Many participants recounted experiences where their ability to ask for help or make requests facilitated smoother travel experiences. For instance, one student mentioned asking for directions while traveling abroad and noted that their polite request in the local language helped them get the necessary information. Another participant described how they successfully navigated a situation in Paris by politely asking for help to buy a ticket, an approach they learned from observing interactions in the media. These examples highlight the practical benefits of language learning in travel contexts, where clear and respectful communication can enhance the overall travel experience and ensure that individuals can navigate unfamiliar environments with ease.

Second open-ended question was about "What difficulties do you have when trying to use the language correctly in different situations?". The themes identified include cultural and contextual understanding, linguistic competence, practice, pronunciation and intonation. These insights provide a comprehensive overview of the various obstacles students encounter as they strive to use language effectively in diverse scenarios. One of the most prominent themes that emerged from the responses was the difficulty in cultural and contextual understanding. Many respondents reported that they often find it challenging to navigate the nuances of cultural norms and expectations, which can significantly impact their communication effectiveness. For instance, some participants mentioned that certain phrases deemed acceptable in their native language could appear too direct or even rude in English. This cultural disconnect often leads to confusion and uncertainty about how to phrase requests or apologies appropriately. Additionally, understanding and using slang or idiomatic expressions proved to be particularly problematic for some students, as these elements of language are deeply rooted in cultural contexts and are not always straightforward to learn. Another critical theme identified was linguistic competence, which encompasses vocabulary,

grammar, and idioms. Respondents frequently expressed concerns about their word choice and grammatical accuracy. Many students indicated that they often second-guess whether they are using the correct words to express their points, leading to hesitations and a lack of fluency. Grammar was another significant area of difficulty, with participants noting struggles with prepositions, verb tenses, and sentence structure. These linguistic challenges highlight the need for more focused and extensive grammar instruction and practice in language courses. Furthermore, some students reported that they find it difficult to remember specific words or phrases required for particular situations, suggesting that vocabulary retention and usage are also critical areas needing attention in language education. The theme of practice was also prevalent in the responses. A substantial number of students indicated that they require more time to think about what they want to say, often resulting in missed opportunities for timely communication. This delay can be attributed to insufficient practice and the lack of real-life speaking opportunities that allow students to build fluency and confidence. Some respondents mentioned that they feel rushed and lack the necessary vocabulary when approached by someone, highlighting a gap between classroom learning and practical application. These insights point to the necessity of creating more immersive and interactive language learning environments where students can regularly practice speaking in various contexts, thereby enhancing their spontaneous communication skills. Pronunciation and intonation emerged as another significant area of difficulty. Respondents reported concerns about their pronunciation, worrying that incorrect pronunciation might lead to misunderstandings or convey unintended meanings. Intonation was also a common issue, with students noting that their requests sometimes sound like statements, which can confuse listeners. These challenges indicate the importance of incorporating pronunciation and intonation training into language programs. By focusing on these aspects, educators can help students develop clearer and more effective spoken communication. Incorporating cultural

context into lessons, providing ample opportunities for real-life practice, and focusing on both grammar and pronunciation can significantly enhance students' communicative competence. This comprehensive approach will not only improve their language skills but also boost their confidence and ability to navigate diverse communicative situations effectively.

The final question in the section open-ended question and in qualitative data sounded like "How can language teaching be improved to help you use the language better in real-life situations?" provided rich insights into various ways language instruction can be enhanced to better prepare students for practical communication. In order to see authentic responses and detailed answers of each participant, refer to Appendix E. The themes identified from the responses include the integration of media resources and different activities, teaching cultural norms, providing ample practice and creating a supportive atmosphere, and focusing on real-life conversations. These suggestions highlight the multifaceted approach needed to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world language use. A significant theme that emerged was the integration of media resources and diverse activities into language teaching. Many respondents emphasized the value of incorporating social media, videos, podcasts, movies, and language learning apps into the curriculum. For instance, one participant suggested using multimedia resources like videos and podcasts that show how language is used in everyday life, while another mentioned the benefits of discussing movies and serials to enhance practical understanding. These modern tools can make learning more engaging and relevant, helping students see and hear language as it is naturally used. Additionally, respondents highlighted the potential of simulation games and role-playing activities to create realistic language use scenarios, thereby enhancing their ability to apply what they have learned in practical settings. This indicates that leveraging various media resources and interactive activities can provide students with a richer, more immersive

language learning experience. Teaching cultural norms emerged as another crucial theme. Respondents expressed a strong desire to learn more about the cultural aspects of language use, such as etiquette norms and social customs. For example, one participant noted the importance of teaching etiquette norms associated with different situations to ensure they know how to respond appropriately in the future. Another suggested including lessons on cultural differences and how they affect communication styles. Understanding cultural context is essential for effective communication, as it helps students navigate social nuances and avoid potential misunderstandings. These findings suggest that integrating cultural education into language curricula can significantly enhance students' communicative competence by providing them with the knowledge needed to interact appropriately in various cultural contexts. The theme of practice and creating a supportive atmosphere was also prevalent. Respondents highlighted the need for more interactive and engaging classroom environments that encourage speaking and peer interaction. For instance, one participant emphasized the importance of creating a classroom environment that encourages speaking, while another suggested more interaction between peers. Immediate feedback during speaking activities was also mentioned as a valuable tool for improving language skills. These responses indicate that students benefit from a supportive atmosphere where they can practice language use without fear of judgment. Such an environment can boost their confidence and help them become more fluent and comfortable in their language abilities. Additionally, focusing on daily-life conversations rather than complicated grammar rules that are infrequently used can make learning more practical and less intimidating for students. Real-life conversations were another significant focus among the responses. Many students expressed a desire for more opportunities to practice conversations that mirror real-life situations. For instance, participants suggested incorporating more role-playing activities, real-life scenarios, and interaction with native speakers into the curriculum. One respondent

mentioned the value of practicing conversations with native speakers to enhance their practical communication skills. This focus on real-life conversations highlights the need for language instruction to move beyond theoretical knowledge and provide students with ample opportunities to practice speaking in diverse, realistic contexts. By doing so, students can develop the skills and confidence needed to communicate effectively in everyday situations.

## **Chapter V**

### **Discussion**

The research investigated the application of Speech Act Theory (SAT) in teaching language to adults, aiming to address gaps in current methodologies for enhancing communicative competence. Incorporating SAT principles into language pedagogy allows educators to help learners develop not only linguistic proficiency but also the ability to navigate the intricate social and cultural nuances inherent in language use. This research delves into the theoretical underpinnings of Speech Act Theory and its application in educational settings, offering valuable insights for educators, curriculum developers, and language practitioners. The ultimate goal is to optimize language teaching methodologies and enhance the communicative competence of adult language learners. Specifically, communicative competence refers to the understanding and effective use of speech acts in language instruction, enabling learners to engage more proficiently in real-life communication contexts.

Referring back to the research question stated during the introduction part about limitations in current language teaching methodologies and combining it with finding and results of survey, the analysis revealed several specific gaps and limitations in current language teaching methodologies related to the integration of Speech Act Theory (SAT) for adult language learners. One prominent gap is the inconsistent incorporation of practical speech act activities in language classes. As highlighted in the survey, the high proportion of

students who "sometimes," "often," or "always" practice speech acts suggests a positive trend towards integrating Speech Act Theory (SAT) into language teaching methodologies.

Consequently, it could be concluded that students who frequently engaged in SAT-based activities demonstrated better communicative competence. However, the presence of students who "never" or "rarely" practice Speech Acts highlighted potential gaps in the implementation of SAT-based instruction. These gaps could stem from varying teaching styles, differences in curriculum design, or the differing emphasis placed on speech acts across classes or educational institutions. This suggests that not all students are receiving equal opportunities to practice and develop their skills in using speech acts, which may impact their overall communicative competence. This inconsistency suggests that current methodologies may lack a standardized approach to integrating SAT into the curriculum, resulting in uneven exposure and practice among students. Therefore, standardizing the incorporation of speech acts in language teaching methodologies could help ensure that all students benefit from these important components of language learning. Regular practice of Speech Act is likely beneficial for enhancing communicative competence, as it provides students with practical experience in using language appropriately in various contexts. Furthermore, ensuring that instructional approaches effectively bridge the gap between classroom learning and practical application can help address the concerns of students who feel less prepared, ultimately improving overall communicative competence.

Additionally, challenges related to understanding cultural and contextual nuances were evident, with 48% of students identifying difficulty in understanding context as a significant barrier, and 40% pointing to cultural differences. These gaps highlighted the need for more systematic and comprehensive integration of SAT principles, particularly in addressing cultural and contextual elements of communication. By incorporating more contextual learning, increasing practice opportunities, and providing sample examples,

educators can better support students in overcoming these barriers and improving their communicative competence. Additionally, several perceived challenges and barriers to effectively implementing SAT-based instruction in adult language learning contexts emerged from the data. The most significant challenge reported was the difficulty in understanding the appropriate context for language use, with 48% of respondents highlighting this issue. Additionally, cultural differences were identified as a substantial barrier by 40% of students. These findings suggest that while SAT principles are beneficial, their implementation may be hindered by students' struggles with contextual and cultural aspects of language use. Furthermore, insufficient practice opportunities and lack of examples were also noted as challenges by 28% and 24% of students, respectively, indicating that more frequent and varied practice scenarios are needed to fully realize the benefits of SAT-based instruction

In terms of the impact of Speech Act Theory on Communicative Competence, it is clear that it has a notable impact on the development of communicative competence in adult language learners. It could be proved by the results of a survey indicating that interactive activities like role-playing and dialogues are highly effective, with 40% of students rating them as "extremely helpful" and another 44% finding them "moderately" to "very" helpful. These findings suggest that while role-playing and dialogue activities are generally perceived as valuable tools for enhancing communicative competence, there is still a subset of students who may not fully benefit from these methods. This variation could be attributed to individual learning preferences or differences in the implementation of these activities in the classroom. Halenko and Jones (2011) emphasize the challenge of maintaining long-term pragmatic gains in SAT-based instruction, highlighting the need for practical, real-life activities to sustain learners' competence. Concerning the challenges referring back to previously discussed literature Milleret (n.d.) and Taguchi (2011) highlighted the challenge of assessing pragmatic competence due to traditional assessments focusing on grammatical



accuracy instead of pragmatic skills, and the inadequacy of current assessment tools that fail to capture the nuances of pragmatic use. Similarly, in the survey conducted by me, during the stage of analyzing qualitative data, a couple of participants's answers included exactly the same challenge and decision. Similar to the findings of Hinkel (2001) and Kinginger (2011), the current study highlights cultural differences and contextual understanding as major challenges. Students reported difficulties in adapting to cultural norms, emphasizing the need for more culturally-informed instruction and resources that reflect authentic language use.

Adult language learners generally perceive SAT-based instruction as highly relevant and useful for improving their communicative skills. The data shows that a significant majority of students value interactive and practical learning activities. For example, 84% of students found role-playing and dialogue activities to be helpful to varying degrees. Additionally, qualitative responses highlighted the practical applications of language skills learned through SAT-based instruction, such as navigating public buildings, managing social interactions, and handling travel-related communication. These findings suggest that learners recognize the practical benefits of SAT-based instruction in enhancing their ability to communicate effectively in real-life situations. These activities, which align closely with SAT principles, help students develop the ability to use language appropriately in various social contexts, thereby enhancing their communicative competence. Moreover, students' recognition of the importance of learning appropriate language use for effective communication is strong, with 72% agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement, it means that the majority of students find their language classes at least moderately effective, aligning with the expectation that language classes generally prepare students for real-life communication from a moderate to high extent. Given the structured nature of language classes and their focus on practical communication skills, it is not surprising that a significant majority of students feel adequately prepared. The finding that 44% of students rate their

preparation as "moderately well" supports the notion that language instruction often provides a solid foundation, though not always comprehensively addressing all aspects of real-life communication. However, there are still 20% of language learners who feel less prepared, which means there are gaps in the teaching methodologies or variations in instructional quality. It is possible that some classes emphasize theoretical knowledge over practical application, leading to less effective preparation for real-life situations. Additionally, individual differences in learning styles and needs might contribute to these perceptions, suggesting that some students may require more tailored or intensive practice to feel adequately prepared. Several alternative explanations would account for the varied effectiveness of language classes. One possibility is the difference in teaching approaches among instructors, where some may incorporate more interactive and practical activities, while others might focus more on grammar and vocabulary. Another factor could be the students' own engagement and participation levels, as those who actively practice and seek out opportunities for real-life communication might feel more prepared. Additionally, the availability of resources such as language labs, native speaker interactions, and multimedia tools could significantly impact students' perceptions of preparedness. Variations in these resources across different classes or institutions could explain the differences in perceived effectiveness.

Contextual factors, such as cultural differences and proficiency levels, play a crucial role in shaping the effectiveness of SAT-based language teaching methodologies. The survey revealed that cultural differences significantly impact students' experiences of confusion in language use, with 40% of respondents indicating a moderate impact and 28% reporting significant to very significant impacts. This suggests that SAT-based methodologies must be sensitive to cultural nuances and provide learners with the tools to navigate these differences effectively. Additionally, the proficiency levels of students influence their ability to benefit

from SAT-based instruction. The survey showed that most participants were at an advanced level of proficiency, which may have contributed to their positive perceptions of the effectiveness of their language classes. However, for lower proficiency learners, more foundational support may be necessary to build the skills required for effective speech act use. These findings underscore the importance of incorporating cultural competence into language teaching methodologies. Addressing cultural differences explicitly and providing strategies for navigating them can help reduce confusion and improve students' communicative competence. Educators should consider integrating cultural awareness activities and discussions into their curriculum to better prepare students for real-life communication scenarios.

SAT-informed language teaching practices contribute significantly to learners' pragmatic awareness and their ability to navigate real-life communication situations. The survey responses indicate that students who engage in regular practice of speech acts, such as making requests and apologies, feel more prepared for real-life communication. Specifically, 56% of respondents felt that their language classes prepared them "very well" to "extremely well" for real-life communication situations, reflecting the positive impact of SAT-informed practices. Furthermore, the ability to understand and use language appropriately in different contexts, as emphasized by SAT, enhances learners' overall communicative competence, enabling them to respond effectively and appropriately in various social interactions. Besides, the relevance of this research is underscored by its potential to inform and enhance language teaching methodologies. By integrating SAT principles, educators can help learners develop not only linguistic proficiency but also the social and cultural competencies necessary for effective communication. These findings corroborate previous research by Judd (1999), Halenko and Jones (2011), and Eslami-Rasekh (2005), highlighting the importance of pragmatic awareness in language learning. New insights suggest that a more holistic

approach, combining SAT with other communicative strategies, could further optimize language instruction for adult learners.

In conclusion, the findings from this study highlight the significant benefits of incorporating SAT principles into language teaching methodologies. While there are notable challenges and gaps that need to be addressed, the overall impact on communicative competence and pragmatic awareness is positive. Future language instruction should focus on standardized integration of SAT principles, increased practice opportunities, and greater emphasis on cultural and contextual understanding to further enhance the effectiveness of language education for adult learners.

### **5.1 Limitations**

This study faces several limitations that should be explicitly acknowledged. First and foremost, obtaining responses to the survey proved challenging. Despite uploading the survey to the "Quora" platform and keeping it open for a duration of two months, only 25 individuals responded. The demographic profile of the respondents revealed that most were aged between 19-25, representing a younger generation. This age concentration could limit the generalizability of the findings across a broader spectrum of adult language learners. From my point of view, several factors may have contributed to the low response rate. Potential participants might have lacked the motivation to complete the survey, possibly finding it too time-consuming or uninteresting. Additionally, the language used in the survey might have been too complex for pre-intermediate language learners, discouraging their participation. Another factor could be the absence of incentives or reimbursements for completing the survey, which might have otherwise increased participation rates. Furthermore, the choice of the "Quora" platform may not have been the most effective for reaching a diverse and willing participant pool. Exploring other platforms could have potentially yielded a higher response rate.

Another significant limitation is the absence of responses from teachers of second languages. Initially, the study intended to conduct a separate survey targeting language teachers to obtain a more holistic perspective on the integration of Speech Act Theory in language teaching. However, finding volunteers for this part of the study proved difficult. Consequently, the focus of the research was narrowed to solely include language learners. The insights from teachers would have been valuable in providing a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and effective practices related to SAT-based language instruction. Furthermore, the small sample size of 25 respondents raises concerns about the robustness of the quantitative data. While the qualitative insights are valuable, the limited number of responses may not be sufficient to draw definitive conclusions or generalize the findings to a larger population. This limitation suggests a need for caution when interpreting the quantitative results and highlights the importance of future research with larger and more diverse sample sizes to validate and expand upon these findings.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

To enhance language teaching practices, educators should integrate Speech Act Theory (SAT) principles into their curricula through practical activities such as role-playing, simulations, and discussions on cultural norms. These methods can provide students with the necessary tools to navigate real-life communication situations more effectively. Moreover, students should be provided with more opportunities to practice language use in real-life scenarios through role-plays, simulations, and interaction with native speakers. Immediate feedback during these activities can help students improve their communicative competence. Additionally, future research should focus on the long-term impacts of SAT-based instruction, employing larger and more diverse sample groups to validate and expand upon the current findings. Exploring the integration of SAT with other communicative teaching strategies could also offer a more comprehensive approach to language instruction. In line with

incorporating modern tools such as social media, videos, podcasts, and language learning apps into the curriculum to provide a richer, more immersive language learning experience. The study recommends that educators incorporate regular, explicit instruction of speech acts into language teaching curricula. It might be lessons on cultural norms and etiquette to help students navigate the social nuances of language use. This integration will enhance their ability to communicate appropriately in various cultural contexts. Teachers need professional development opportunities to learn how to effectively incorporate pragmatic instruction into their lessons. As emphasized by Eslami-Rasekh (2005), pragmatic competence is not automatically acquired alongside lexical and grammatical knowledge; explicit instruction is necessary to develop this competence. This is particularly important because pragmatic errors are common even among advanced learners. Pragmatic competence encompasses both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge, which are essential for effective communication in social interactions. Apart from that, teachers should receive professional development opportunities to learn how to incorporate SAT principles into their lessons effectively. This training should include strategies for creating interactive and engaging activities that emphasize practical language use. Therefore, targeted efforts to teach these aspects can significantly improve students' communicative abilities and overall language proficiency.

## **Chapter VI**

### **Conclusion**

This research has thoroughly examined the application of Speech Act Theory (SAT) in teaching language to adults, addressing significant gaps in current methodologies aimed at enhancing communicative competence. Through a combination of theoretical exploration and empirical investigation, this study has provided valuable insights into how SAT can be effectively integrated into language pedagogy to improve both linguistic proficiency and

pragmatic awareness among adult learners. The study highlighted that the incorporation of SAT principles into language teaching methodologies significantly enhances learners' ability to perform various speech acts, such as making requests, apologies, and compliments. The quantitative data indicated that a significant portion of students regularly practice these speech acts during language classes, suggesting that SAT-based instruction is already somewhat integrated into current teaching practices. Whereas, the effectiveness of language classes in preparing students for real-life communication situations was evaluated as moderately well, with a substantial proportion indicating that their preparation was very or extremely well. This suggests that while current methodologies are somewhat effective, there is still room for improvement to better equip students for real-world interactions. Also, activities such as role-playing and dialogues were identified as highly beneficial in improving communicative skills. The qualitative data supported this finding, with many students emphasizing the value of these activities in providing practical, hands-on experience. This underscores the importance of incorporating more interactive and engaging activities into language curricula to enhance the practical application of speech acts. In terms of perception of Speech Act Theory the majority agreed that learning how to use language appropriately in different situations is essential for effective communication. However, there are several challenges that might occur during the educational process with integration of Speech Act, specifically, cultural differences, lack of examples, insufficient practice opportunities, and difficulty understanding context were the primary barriers highlighted. The study found that cultural differences significantly impact students' experiences of confusion when using language in different situations. This finding highlights the importance of incorporating cultural education into language instruction to help students understand and adapt to different cultural norms and practices. This research has demonstrated that integrating Speech Act Theory into language teaching methodologies can significantly enhance communicative

competence among adult learners. By addressing both linguistic proficiency and pragmatic awareness, SAT-based instruction helps learners navigate the intricate social and cultural nuances of language use. Although the study faced limitations in sample size and demographic diversity, the findings offer valuable insights for educators and curriculum developers. Implementing the recommended strategies can lead to more effective language teaching practices, ultimately improving learners' ability to communicate proficiently in real-life situations.



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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Color coding of Qualitative data

1. Can you give an example of a time when learning how to ask for help or make a request helped you in real life?

#### Theme 1. Public building, social and public interactions

1. Especially in public buildings like post offices or banks I made use of it (public building)

3. Once I had a trouble at the airport abroad, this knowledge really helped to solve difficulties.

9. . At post office

14. When I had to go to the hospital in a foreign country.

15. At a restaurant, I could ask the waiter to modify my meal due to dietary restrictions

16. ask for help at a pharmacy

10. yeah, during the concert, i was able to handle situation and be polite at the same time protect my own boundaries (social and public events)

11. At a social gathering, I could introduce myself and ask to join a group conversation, which made it easier to make new friends and feel included.

21. During a minor emergency

24. asked for a refund for a defective product at a store

## Theme 2. Interpersonal communication and relationship

2. once, asked my landlord to fix a broken pipe, and they sent a plumber the next day. I was happy not to have an argument and explain my position properly (conflict resolution)

4. It helped me when I met a rude girl, not hesitate but precisely ask what I needed from her without emotionally involving to the conversation

20. during the psychotherapy session, I was able to point what I didn't like and requested to discuss in other way

22. I think it helped me to be more polite. For instance, if I weren't taught to use polite forms

"Could you..", "Can you.." or "Is it possible to ...," I would probably direct request like

"Give me.." but I think most English textbooks cover polite ways of expressing request.

5. I was able to apologize to a friend in their native language after a misunderstanding (relationship)

6. ask a bus driver to let me know when my stop, so not to miss my station

7. I made a request to my boss for some time off work and got the days I needed

13. I was able to ask my professor for an extension on a paper deadline in a respectful and effective manner (request)

## Theme 3. Travelling

8. Asking for directions at strangers at the street, ordering things at a restaurant, making a restaurant reservation (travel and navigation)

12. While traveling abroad, I needed directions to a tourist spot. Knowing how to politely ask for help in the local language made it easier for me to get the information I needed (travel and navigation)

17. When I got lost I was able to ask strangers in English how to find the correct way to a certain place.

18. when i was in Paris, when I couldn't buy ticket I asked smb in polite and correct way as I think, because i have seen from serial "Friends" how to do so, and eventually I got a nice help

19. It's helps a lot when travelling.

25. In language course we learned how to reserve a table at restaurant by calling. I used this technique while travelling to book hotels and dining reservations. It helped to save my time as I could call ahead to check if places were open avoiding going there only to find that they are full, then searching for other options.

## Appendix B

### Consent letter

# Speech Act Theory in teaching language to adults

**B** *I* U ↻ ✕

**Title of the Study:** Speech Act Theory in Teaching Language to Adults

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**Institution:** Ca`Foscari University of Venice

**Contact Information:** 898457@stud.unive@it

**Introduction:** You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Zhanibekova Shamshyrak from Ca`Foscari University. This study aims to explore the application of Speech Act Theory (SAT) in teaching language to adults, focusing on enhancing communicative competence. Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without penalty.

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of SAT-based instruction in improving the communicative competence of adult language learners. We aim to understand the benefits and challenges associated with integrating SAT into language teaching methodologies.

**Procedures:** If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an online questionnaire. The questionnaire will include multiple-choice questions, Likert scale items, and open-ended questions designed to assess your experiences, perceptions, and attitudes towards SAT-based language instruction. The estimated time to complete the questionnaire is approximately 15-20 minutes.

**Confidentiality:** Your responses will be kept confidential. All data collected will be anonymized and stored securely, with access limited to the research team. No identifying information will be linked to your responses, and results will be reported in aggregate form only.

**Risks and Benefits:** There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this study. While there may not be direct benefits to you, your participation will contribute to a better understanding of effective language teaching methodologies, which may benefit future adult language learners.

**Voluntary Participation:** Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. If you choose to withdraw, any data you have provided will be destroyed and not included in the study.

**Informed Consent:** By clicking the consent box and proceeding to the questionnaire, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the information provided above. You voluntarily agree to participate in this study and understand that you may withdraw at any time.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact Zhanibekova Shamshyrak at 898457stud.unive@it

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely, Shamshyrak

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study \*

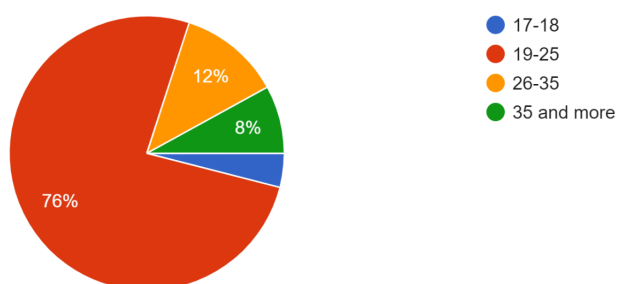
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## Appendix C

### Background information of Students

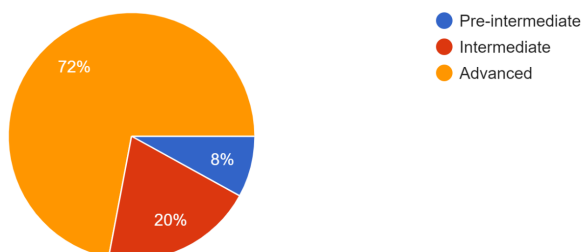
What is your age?

25 ответов



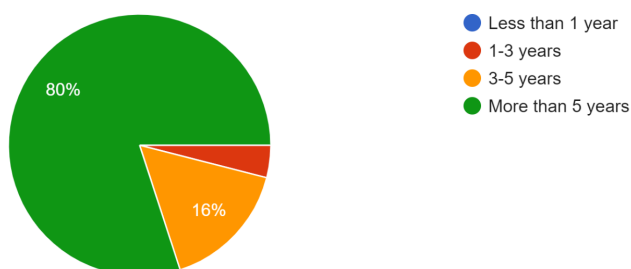
What is your current level of language proficiency in the target language?

25 ответов



How long have you been studying the target language?

25 ответов

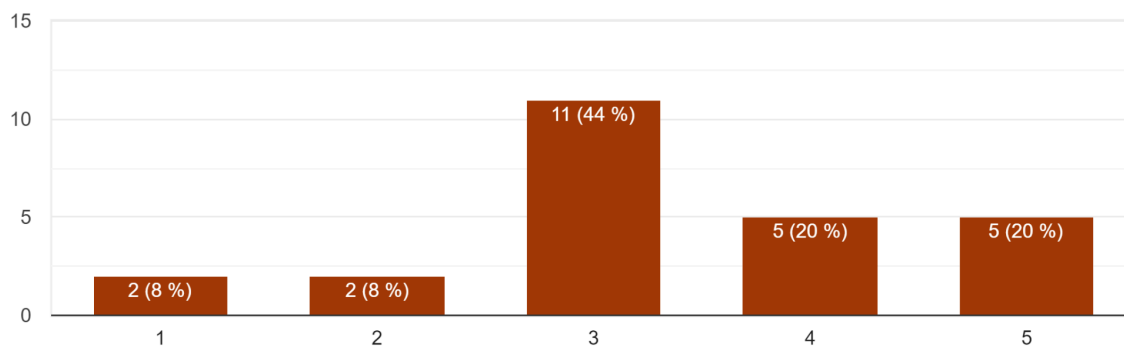


## Appendix D

### Quantitative data

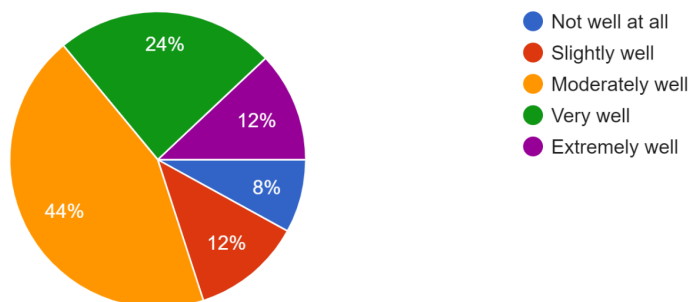
1. How often do you practice to make e.g., requests, apologies, compliments during language classes?

25 ответов



2. How well do you think your language classes prepare you for real-life communication situations?

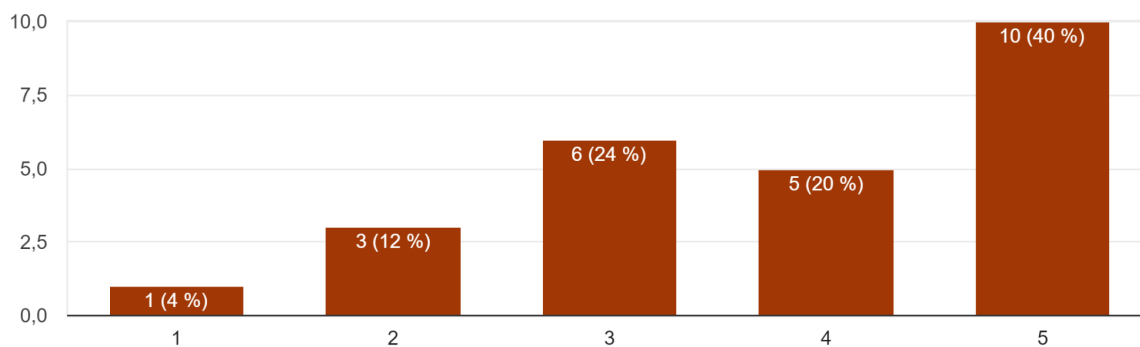
25 ответов





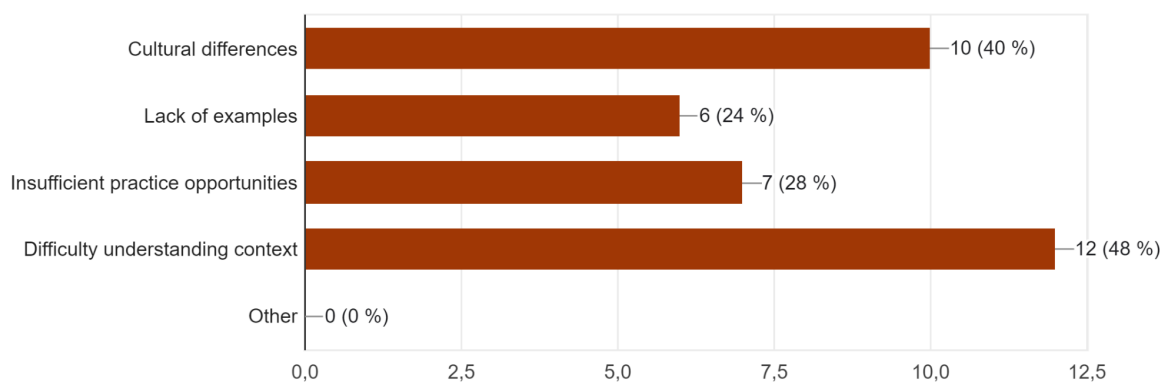
3. In improving communicative skills how helpful do you think activities like role-playing and dialogues?

25 ответов



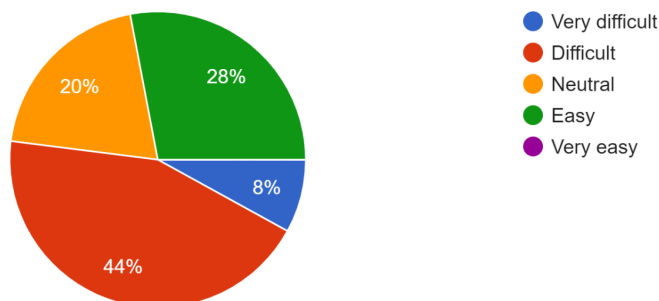
4. What challenges do you face when learning how to use the language appropriately in different situations? (Select all that apply)

25 ответов



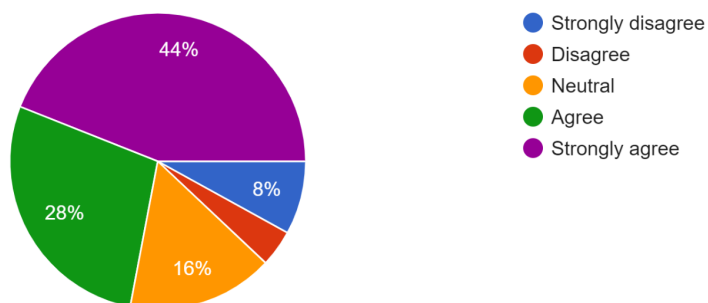
5. How difficult is it for you to understand the appropriate way to respond when someone is asking, apologizing, or making a request?

25 ОТВЕТОВ



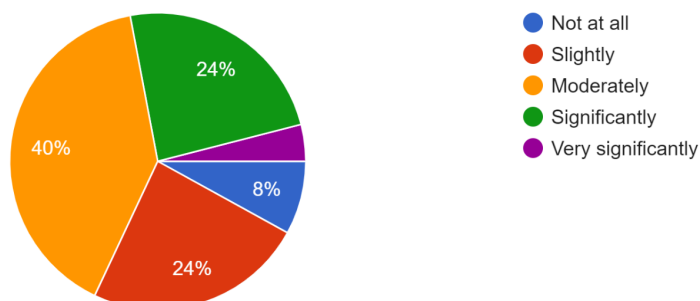
6. To what extent do you agree that learning how to use language appropriately in different situations (like asking for something, apologizing, ...l for effective communication in a new language?

25 ОТВЕТОВ



7. How much do cultural differences between native and second language cause confusion for you when asking for help, apologizing, or making requests?

25 ОТВЕТОВ



## Appendix E

### Open-ended questions

1. Can you give an example of a time when learning how to ask for help or make a request helped you in real life?

25 ответов

Once I had a trouble at the airport abroad, this knowledge really helped to solve difficulties.

When I had to go to the hospital in a foreign country.

When I got lost I was able to ask strangers in English how to find the correct way to a certain place.

I think it helped me to be more polite. For instance, if I weren't taught to use polite forms "Could you..", "Can you.." or "Is it possible to ..," I would probably direct request like "Give me.." but I think most English textbooks cover polite ways of expressing request.

Especially in public buildings like post offices or banks I made use of it

It's helps a lot when travelling.

At a restaurant, I could ask the waiter to modify my meal due to dietary restrictions

## 2. What difficulties do you have when trying to use the language correctly in different situations?

25 ответов

I often have second thoughts about whether I am using right or wrong words to express my point, even now.

Sometimes I struggle to understand the other person if they use a specific type of slang

At the beginning, I was afraid to use wrong grammar and vocabulary. Thought that people might misunderstand what I was requesting or asking.

It depends on the context. Most of the time with people who have good command of English, everything goes smoothly. However, it doesn't always work that way. You will need to express yourself well and polite when you talk to people with lower level of English.

Sometimes it is confusing to use formal and informal pronoun rules

Lack of context

Sometimes, I'm not sure how formal or informal I should be, especially in a professional setting.

## 3. How can language teaching be improved to help you use the language better in real-life situations?

25 ответов

Practicing more examples from everyday life and relatable situations.

There should be more focus in training listening skills

I would say that role-plays, improvised situations and examples are helpful to increase person's usage of their knowledge.

Perhaps, adding more simulation games and authentic materials. Role play would also be a nice option.

I believe that social media should be integrated more

Use simulations

Include lessons on cultural differences and how they affect communication styles

Provide opportunities to practice conversations with native speakers