

BEYOND HELLO: EXPLORING EFL LEARNER'S PROFICIENCY OF GREETINGS

Hadjer Boukerria, Mouloud Mammeri University, Tizi-Ouzou, Algeria,
h.boukerria@centre-univ-mila.dz

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Abstract:

This study examines the performance of EFL learners of greeting speech acts. To achieve its objectives, a DCT questionnaire was administered, presenting eight situations to prompt appropriate greetings. The questionnaire was distributed to 50 randomly selected students at Mila University. Analysis of the data reveals that EFL learners employ various greetings, including religious, formal, informal, and negative greetings. Importantly, sociolinguistic factors exert control over the choice and use of these greetings among the participants.

key words: politeness, greeting pattern, speech act, EFL Learners.

Introduction

Language serves a dual purpose as both expressive and instrumental, primarily functioning to facilitate communication. In the realm of communicative events, linguistic behavior is driven by the speaker's intention to convey a message, regardless of its syntactical accuracy. Expressive speech acts, such as greetings, hold significant social importance across global societies. Greetings, intentional acts of communication, serve to acknowledge presence, convey attention, and imply various types of relationships between individuals. Given their crucial role in enhancing social relations, greetings occupy a prominent position in societal interactions.

This paper delves into the examination of EFL learners' behavior concerning the speech act of greeting. The focus lies on the diverse patterns of greetings adopted by EFL learners, anticipating distinctions that set them apart from speakers of other languages. The study aims to unravel the types of greetings employed by EFL learners and explore the factors influencing their choices within specific communicative contexts.

In summary, the paper centers on exploring the behavior of EFL learners in the realm of greeting speech acts, acknowledging the diversity in greeting patterns. The study anticipates variations among respondents and seeks to uncover the types

of greetings used by EFL learners, along with the factors influencing their choices in different communicative situations.

THE FIRST TOPIC: THE THEORETICAL PART

In this part, we will explore various studies on greetings, examining their meanings, their significance in EFL classrooms, and their diverse uses and functions. Additionally, we will delve into the classification and various forms of greetings, shedding light on the comprehensive landscape of this essential aspect of communication.

FIRST REQUIREMENT: Studies about Greetings

Politeness stands as a pivotal concern within sociolinguistics and pragmatics, permeating nearly all our interpersonal exchanges. Numerous sociolinguistic inquiries have approached politeness through the lens of "face." According to Brown and Levinson's seminal work (1978)¹ individuals possess two distinct facets of face: positive and negative. Positive face encapsulates an individual's yearning for their desires to be acknowledged and appreciated in social interactions, while negative face pertains to the individual's aspiration for autonomy and freedom from external imposition. Consequently, greetings represent a form of speech act designed to address the positive face needs of individuals, conveying good will and fostering a sense of solidarity. Ferguson (1967)² stated that greeting expressions serve as a notable instance of "politeness formulas" applicable across various contexts. The argument extends to emphasize the significance of these expressions within a specific context, placing importance on their presence or absence rather than the specific semantic content conveyed by their individual components. Al-Abdul Halim (1994)³ explored greetings in Jordanian Arabic employed to foster an intimate social connection between speakers. Data collection encompassed diverse settings, including hospitals and universities. The researcher's findings indicated the existence of multiple forms for each greeting, with certain greetings being more commonly utilized than others. Additionally, the study highlighted that the nature of the relationship between the speaker and the listener played a pivotal role in shaping the selection of a specific greeting form. Bouchara (2015)⁴ claimed that The utilization of religious

¹. Penelope Brown, Stephen Levinson, *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*, Cambridge University Press, 1987, p 312.

² Charles. Ferguson, "The Structure and Use of Politeness Formulas," *language and society* 5, no. 2, 1967, p 141.

³. Ali Al-Abdul Halim, *Greetings in Jordanian Arabic: A Sociolinguistic Study*, master's thesis, yarmouk university, 1994, p 8 .

⁴. Abdelaziz. Bouchara, *The role of religion in shaping politeness in Moroccan Arabic: The case of the speech act of greeting and its place in intercultural understanding and misunderstanding*. Journal of Politeness Research, 2015, p 86 .

expressions in greetings as a politeness strategy remains comprehensible only when the interacting individuals share common socio-cultural norms and beliefs. In the absence of such shared understanding, there is a risk of potential misunderstandings.

Derrin Pinto (2008)¹, in his article, "Passing Greeting and Interactional Style: Across-cultural Study of American English and Peninsular Spanish", stated that when Spanish people greet one another in passing, they commonly employ farewell expressions such as "adios" or "hasta luego." This contrasts with languages like American English, where greeting formulas like "hi," "hello," or "how are you?" are more typical. The study delves into the cultural origins of this variation and elucidates how the conventional speech patterns in both language communities align with their distinct interactional styles. The researcher contends that passing greetings in English reflect speakers investing verbal energy in conveying good intentions, maintaining social harmony, and employing strategies of negative politeness to avoid imposing on the listener. In contrast, passing farewells in Spain align with a cultural inclination toward positive politeness, emphasizing solidarity and directness in communication.

Bagwasi (2012)², in his paper, investigated how gender and age influence the execution of greetings, positing that the expression of politeness is not universally standardized among Setswana-speaking groups. The primary contention of the paper is that various factors, including age, gender, and ethnicity, impact the performance of greetings. The argument is grounded in a comparative analysis of greeting strategies within two Botswana ethnic groups: the Bangwato of Serowe and the Bangwaketse of Kanye. By examining the greeting practices of these communities, the paper concludes that the manifestation of politeness not only varies from one society to another but also within a specific ethnic group, influenced significantly by factors such as age and gender.

SECOND REQUIREMENT: Decoding the Significance of Greetings

The definition of "greeting" according to the Hyper-Dictionary³ of English is An expression conveying good wishes, especially upon encountering someone. Austin (1962, p. 156)⁴ Greetings" are classified within the realm of behabitives by Austin, encompassing responses to others' behavior and attitudes regarding their

¹. Pinto. Derrin, passing greetings and interactional style: a cross cultural study of American English and peninsular Spanish, 4, no. 27, 2008, p 379.

². Mompolki Bagwasi, The effect of gender and age in Setswana greetings, *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* 30, no. 1, 2012, p 95.

³. Hyper-Dictionary of English. Website design and production by MegaDoc., 2003

⁴. John Austin, *how to do things with words*, Oxford: Calarendon Press, 1962, p156 .

past or future actions. In his categorization, Austin identifies "greeting" as a form of performative speech act, serving as a verbal display of one's sentiments and attitude toward others. Broadly, the term "greet" and its synonymous counterparts, such as "salute," are employed to convey sentiments of kindness, friendliness, and acknowledgment. Leech (1983)¹ notes that speech acts like greetings, praising, offering, thanking, inviting, and congratulating inherently possess politeness, as they align with social goals and contribute positively to interpersonal relationships. These speech acts are termed "convivial," a classification consistent with Austin's behabitives and Searle's expressives. Expressive acts, in this context, serve the purpose of establishing a connection between the speaker and the listener by articulating a psychological state regarding a situation involving the listener. Bach and Harnish (1979, p. 51)² Categorize "greeting" as a form of acknowledgment that perfunctorily, if not genuinely, expresses specific sentiments toward the listener. This may include expressing pleasure at the encounter or sighting of someone."

THIRD REQUIREMENT :Greetings and Teaching English Environment

Understanding the linguistic elements of a language is only one aspect of its expression; however, it is crucial for EFL learners to explicitly learn how to perceive and generate effective communicative speech acts. According to Kakiuchi (2005)³, Infants are frequently taught greetings in their native language, underscoring the fundamental nature of these communicative activities. Nevertheless, there is a prevailing interpretation that the communicative role of greetings is typically contingent on other functions, all collectively contributing to the overarching purpose of effective communication. (Dufon, 1999)⁴. In the educational setting, the subordinate situation indicates a tendency to overlook explicit instruction on greetings. There is a diminished emphasis on understanding the diverse cultural roles of greetings and how they can influence the ultimate goal of interaction. (Zeff, 2016)⁵. Indeed, it is advisable for EFL instructors to incorporate lessons that address the utilization of "greetings" and guide EFL students in acquiring the skill of greeting in a manner consistent with native expressions

¹. Geoffrey Leech, *Principles of pragmatics*, London Longman, 1983, p 203.

². Kent Bach, & Robert Harnish, *Linguistic communication and speech acts*, Cambridge Mass, The MIT Press, 1979, p 51.

³. Yon Kakuichi, *Greetings in English: Naturalistic speech versus textbook speech*, Tokyo, Japan The Japan Association for Language Teaching, 2005, p 779 .

⁴. Ann Dufon, *The acquisition of linguistic politeness in Indonesian as a second language by sojourners in a naturalistic context*, PhD diss, 1999, p 252.

⁵. Bricklin Zeff, *The pragmatics of greeting: Teaching speech acts in the EFL classrooms*, *English Teaching Forum* 54, no. 1, 2016, p 7.

FOURTH REQUIREMENT: Utilization and Purpose Greeting Forms

The act of greeting holds a central and vital role among speech acts, given its high frequency in everyday social interactions and its primary function in establishing and maintaining interpersonal connections. Each speech community adheres to its unique conventions and traditions, influencing the interpretation of any speech act. Language and culture are inherently intertwined, causing the function and usage of speech acts to vary across different languages. Although greetings have been extensively examined within fields such as sociology, anthropology, discourse analysis, and sociolinguistics as a crucial aspect of politeness, there remains a gap in systematically investigating their use across languages from both pragmatic and sociolinguistic perspectives. As a result, numerous studies have been conducted to elucidate the precise purpose and usage of greetings in diverse linguistic contexts. Firth (1972, p. 30)¹, A prominent figure in this domain asserts that greeting expressions function as a "system of signs conveying implicit messages rather than explicit ones."

In this context, when employing a greeting formula, the underlying meaning or intention of the speaker is not deduced solely from the literal interpretation of the greeting expressions. For instance, when someone asks, "how are you?" their primary concern may not be the addressee's physical well-being; rather, they are expressing a friendly attitude or even respect. In this case, "how are you?" serves as a perlocutionary act, conveying a particular impact or effect beyond its literal meaning. However, Quirk (1985)² identifies a collection of implicit formulaic expressions within the greeting event, commonly employed in "stereotyped communicative" scenarios. Examples include "Good Morning," "Good Afternoon," "Hello," "Good Bye," and "So long," among others, which function as "expressions." Additionally, expressions like "How do you do?" and "How are you?" are categorized as "questions." Furthermore, the study posits that "questions" tend to serve as the direct speech act, while the "greeting" forms function as their indirect speech act. Notably, greetings are characterized as both "conversational routines" and an integral component of the "linguistic repertoire of politeness." To scrutinise closely more details, Youssouf, Grimshaw and Bird (1976, p. 812)³ claim that "Greeting" forms encompass a language repertoire, encompassing both linguistic and non-linguistic tools utilized for the initial

¹. Smith Firth, Greetings from the highlands of Yemen, *American Ethnologist* 13, no. 2 ,1973, p 30.

². Randolph Quirk, *comprehensive grammar of the English language*, London, New York: Longman, 1985, p 122.

³. Ibrahim Youssouf, Allen Grimshaw, and Charles Bird, Greetings in the desert. *American Ethnologist* 3(4): 1976, p 811.

management of encounters. An "encounter" is defined as the social acknowledgment of an individual or group. Consequently, "greeting" forms exhibit a high degree of formulaic expression. Moreover, these forms are employed to initiate conversations and establish the trajectory that any ensuing discussion may follow. According to Eabsworth, Bodman and Carpenter (1996, p. 98)¹, Greeting forms represent some of the initial speech acts that children acquire in their respective languages. Furthermore, opening conversations serves another function, intending to establish an acceptance platform that fosters positive connections between interlocutors. Finegan and Besnier (1989, p. 344)² believe that greetings convey messages such as "I'd like to speak to you," yet people's perceptions of the greeting speech act vary.

This has sparked debates on whether greetings are predominantly ritualistic or genuinely honest, with the latter being perceived as lacking in some cultures. Many speakers are consciously aware of only a few high-frequency, ritualized semantic formulas; in the target language, they often rely on just two or three greeting formulas a common reaction among second or foreign language learners. Consequently, compared to many other speech acts, greetings may be easier to recall and execute in a second language. However, their performance, whether in a native or non-native manner, is often assessed differently by speakers. Referencing back to Goffman's work (1971, p. 74)³, Greetings primary function, namely social functions, involving the establishment, restoration, and recognition of social relations and diverse social status. Additionally, they fulfil "communicational" roles by validating one's presence, displaying oneself, and asserting identity. For this, Goody (1972)⁴ emphasises once again the social function of greetings that involves initiating a communicative act and concurrently establishing and maintaining identity and social rank. The social aspect of greeting is mentioned in Felecan's (2015)⁵ recent description where he claims that "greeting is a communicative action or behaviour through which the speaker demonstrates his/her availability towards the learner" (p. 5). Laver (1981, p. 30)⁶ claims that all

¹. Meriam Eabsworth, John Bodman, and Mary Carpenter, Cross-cultural realization of greetings in American English, *Speech Acts Across Cultures*, 1996, p 95.

². Edward Finegan, *Language: Its structure and use*, San Diego etc.: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989, p302.

³. Erving Goffman, *Relations in public*, New York, NY: Basic Books, 1972, p74.

⁴. Esther Goody, Greeting, 'begging,' and the presentation of respect, in *Interpretation of ritual*, London, UK: Tavistock, 1972, p 40.

⁵. Diana Felecan, Conventional vs unconventional linguistic means of address. Old and new greetings in Romanian, *Diacronia*, no. 1, 2015, p 5.

⁶. John. Laver, Linguistic routines and politeness in greeting and parting, in *Conversational routine: Explorations in standardized communication situations and Prepatterned speech*, Walter de Gruyter, 1981, p.30

forms of greetings, encompassing formulaic phrases, terms of address, and phatic communication, collectively constitute "routine rituals." This concept is defined as the capacity to be recognized as highly significant strategies for negotiating and managing social identity and relations among conversation participants. Simultaneously, these rituals are described as somewhat mechanical and seemingly devoid of intrinsic social meaning. In essence, greetings serve as tools for indexing and reflecting the social relationships between speakers and listeners.

FIFTH REQUIREMENT: Classifications and Forms

Numerous researchers categorize greeting forms in diverse ways, each striving to establish classifications based on specific criteria or standards. Jibreen (2010)¹ In her article titled "The Speech Act of Greeting: A Theoretical Reading," the author explores diverse classifications of greeting forms, emphasizing the wide-ranging variations in greeting types. She contends that multiple forms of greetings are associated with different types or status of individuals. According to Halliday (1979)², greeting forms are graded according to their association with time. He calls them "time-free greeting forms" and "time-bound greeting forms".

1. Time-free and Time-bound Greeting Forms

Halliday (1979)³ explores "time-free greeting forms" by citing examples like "How do you do?" "Hello, how are you?" and "Hi, how are you?" Additionally, expressions such as "glad to meet you," "It's good to see you again," and "long-time no see you" fall into this category. In contrast, "time-bound greeting forms," including "good morning," "good evening," "good day," and "good night," are often associated with formal daily greetings. For instance, individuals may say "Good morning, Mrs. Smith!" in the morning, "Good afternoon, Dr. John" in the afternoon, or "Good evening, sir!" in the evening. "Good day" is a commonly used greeting during the day, like "Good day, Miss!" At night, "Good Night" is frequently employed, as in "Good night, mom!" The author also highlights a second type of time-bound greeting forms known as "seasonal formal greetings," providing examples such as "Happy New Year," "Happy Birthday," "Happy Christmas," "Happy Easter," "Merry Christmas (to you)!" "Happy Anniversary!" and "Happy Returns (of the day)!" It's worth noting that not all of these greeting

¹. . Kamil Jibreen, The Speech Act of Greetings: A Theoretical Reading, *Journal of Kerbala University* 8, no. 1, 2010, p 9.

². Make Halliday, *Learning how to mean: Explorations in the development of language*, Elsevier Publishing Company, 1979, p 240.

³. Make Halliday, op. cit. p 241.

forms may be commonly used among EFL learners, as some expressions are specific to certain foreign cultures.

2. Verbal and Non-verbal Greeting Forms

Certainly, in human interactions, individuals convey messages either verbally through spoken language or non-verbally using a combination of gestures and body language. According to Firth (1973)¹, Greeting forms are categorized into "verbal and non-verbal." The verbal forms can manifest in one of three linguistic structures: "question forms," such as "how are you doing?" "What's up?," and "how are you?"; "interjection forms," like "Hello!," "Hi!"; and "affirmation forms," including "Good morning," "Good afternoon," "Good day," and "Good evening." The "affirmation form" can also be expressed through gestures and facial expressions. Common non-verbal greetings are assumed to include shaking hands and kissing cheeks. For instance, shaking hands is a prevalent greeting, particularly among men, while women engage in this gesture less frequently. Additionally, when a man and a woman encounter each other, the decision to shake hands may vary.

3. Formal and Informal Greetings

The classification of greetings into "formal and informal" is suggested based on contextual factors such as "strength, range, age, number of interlocutors, and degree of formality." Formal greetings are typically employed in professional and formal settings, among peers, and with individuals of higher social status. They may also be used when interacting with individuals who are not very familiar with each other, involving the use of rank titles like Dr. (name), Mr. (name), and Mrs. (name). Informal greetings, on the other hand, are reserved for interactions among relatives, close friends, colleagues, and informal settings in general. Examples include using "Hello" or "Hi" before someone's name, using the generic greeting "Greetings," or simply addressing a person by their name, like "James," without the use of any specific greeting forms, furthermore, greetings can be categorized based on the context of social settings, including "service contacts" with phrases like "Can I help you?," "telephone conversations" involving greetings such as "summons," and "TV shows" with introductions like "This is BBC News." (Qian, 1996)². In each of these contexts, a specific introductory expression functions as a salutation. Employing the suitable level of formality or informality serves to minimize misunderstandings and uphold positive social relationships..

¹. Smith Firth, op, cit, p 40.

². Houshang Qian, Greetings and Partings in English and Chinese- A Contrastive Study of Linguistic Routines and Politeness, *Beijing the commercial press*, 1996, p 51.

4. Personal and Non-personal Greetings

When encountering someone familiar and socially close, individuals often address them directly, bypassing formal traditions and customs. In informal settings, inquiring about the person's well-being and expressing intimacy is characteristic. Greetings are categorized based on their "content," leading to two highlighted categories: "personal and non-personal." Personal greetings involve direct engagement with the individual, inquiring about their health, emotions, desires, and expressing interest. Examples of such greetings include questions like "How are you?" or "How is your family?" along with appropriate comments like "you are looking bright-eyed this morning" or "what a bunch of books you've got to hold!" (Martin, 1983) ¹. On the other hand, non-personal greetings pertain to broader topics and shared interests. Examples include phrases like "what a lovely day!" where the focus is on general observations or widely shared subjects rather than specific personal inquiries.

5. Casual Greetings

Another frequently employed form of greetings is "casual greetings." Common expressions in this category include "Hey," often used alongside a person's name, and "what's up," also employed before a person's name or nickname. These casual greetings are typically utilized among close friends or colleagues, whether in emails, phone messages, or on social networking platforms like Facebook or Telegram. It is important for individuals to exercise care and selectivity when using such greetings to leave positive impressions and avoid conveying a lack of respect towards their audience.

6. Greetings' Closings

It is valuable to illuminate a lucid understanding of what closings entail. Closings serve as a collaborative means to strengthen relationships and lay rational foundations for both current and future interactions. In contrast, greetings represent a distinct manner in which a speaker or writer establishes their social identity with the intended audience. Eckert & Ginet (2003) ² note that "Greetings and farewells provide formulas to alleviate the tension associated with the commencement and conclusion of interactions" (p. 138). In other words, greetings and closings serve a crucial social function in spoken or written conversations, as well as in various modes of interaction. Consequently, the inclusion or omission of greetings and

¹. Sea Martin, Language as a set of shared expectations, *Korean studies* 7, 1983, p 24.

². Penelope Eckert and Genet McConnell, *Language and Gender*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p138.

their specific forms determine the tone that will characterize the subsequent conversation. Greetings and closings, therefore, influence the speaker's choice of language style during interaction, and at the same time, they guide recipients in responding to the physical and facial cues of the addressee. (Goffman, 1967)¹.

Indeed, greetings and closings act as indicators of politeness, playing a pivotal role in establishing and maintaining relationships, be it in classrooms or any social setting. These linguistic expressions enable a speaker or writer to communicate sentiments of warmth or distance, along with conveying certain physical attributes and gestures that are challenging to express without direct face-to-face contact.

Similarly, greetings and closings in written messages serve as tools for personalizing texts and enhancing status relationships, highlighting positional expectations. Concluding a message or an interactional conversation by signing off is a way to express respect or deference, maintaining a code of mannerism and conduct that fosters a considerate social-relational rank in the addressee.

Closings can be stated in one of the following forms, itemising them according to the degree of formality. First of all, in formal situations, forms like: "Good bye", "Have a nice day", or "Take care" are tend to be used by the interlocutors. Another form that can be simultaneously used formally includes "Nice to see you/ Nice to meet you", or "Glad to meet you". Switching to informal and casual situations, speakers and recipients may adopt expressions such as: "Bye", "See you", or "See you around", "Keep in touch", "See you soon", "see ya" and "later on".

Thus, greetings and closings are used to establish not only as more/ less deserving of respect and close-casual and friendly relationships among different interlocutors, but also as more or less socially distant connections in the conversational-relational community. Hence, an analysis of greetings and closings can provide useful insights into various social behaviours even of students in classrooms as predominantly defined to be a small conversational-involving community.

THE SECOND TOPIC: THE PRACTICAL PART

In this part, we will outline the participants who were subjects of the investigation, detail the tools employed, and provide a comprehensive discussion of the diverse results obtained.

¹. Erving Goffman, *Interaction ritual: Essays in face to face behaviour* ,Aldine Transaction, 1967, p 113.

FIEST REQUIREMENT : Participants

The target population of the study included 3rd year Algerian university students majoring in English. The participants were both female and male 3rd year students (N=50) from the whole population (N=200) students at the English language department at Mila university, with the age range of 21-26. This sample is deemed to have acquired a sufficient linguistic background.

SECOND REQUIREMENT : Instrumentation

A written discourse completion test (DCT) was developed and used to accumulate data about the informants' ability to produce and socio-pragmatically realise the greeting speech act in English. That is, a written questionnaire underlying brief descriptions of particular situations that are meant to entail certain patterns of speech acts that are mostly embodied within these situations (Kasper and Dahl, 1991)¹. Moreover, Jianda (2006)² The efficacy of the instrument in uncovering both speakers' pragmatic awareness and the realization of speech acts is underscored. To fulfill the study's objective of exploring how EFL learners greet one another, a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) questionnaire was administered to a randomly selected group of (50) participants, all of whom were Algerian students enrolled at Mila University.

The DCT involves a written description of different situations. The context specified in the situation is designed in such a way that the particular pragmatic aspect under investigation is elicited. The written DCT consists of eight situations in which participants were expected to give written responses in the form of greetings to the eight people in different situations. The situational descriptions are classified as occurring in place of work (situation= (2) and (3)) or at different places in the participant's environment as street (situation= (1), (6) and (7)); in restaurant (situation= (4), (8)) and at home (situation= (5)).

THIRD REQUIREMENT: Data analysis

After collecting the data, the answers were read several times. Then, the present researcher classified the data as follows:

¹. Gabriel Kasper, and Merete Dahl, Research methods in interlanguage pragmatics, Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 18/21, 1991, p 12.

². Liu Jianda, Assessing EFL learners' interlanguage pragmatic knowledge: Implications for testers and teachers, *Reflections on English Language Teaching*, 5, no. 1, 2006, p7.

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Situation	Contextual setting	Participant's role	Greetings: male/female	Social status	Social distance	The addressee's age
1	Street	The participant is required to greet his old neighbour who is repairing his car	- Good morning anti how are you? - May god help you	equal	Intimate	Old
2	Place of work	The participant is required to greet his colleagues at work	- Peace, how are you? - Good morning how are you? - Peace be upon you	Equal	acquaintance	The same age
3	Place of work	The participant is required to greet his boss at work	- Good morning, sir - Peace sir, how are you?	Low	Acquaintance	Older
4	Restaurant	The participant is required to greet his friends at the restaurant	- Hi everyone - Peace girls, what's up - Hi girls, how are you	Equal	Intimate	The same age
5	Home	The participant is required to greet his family members after work	- Peace be upon you all	Equal	Intimate	Older / younger
6	At the shop	The participant is required to greet his teacher from high school	- Peace sir, how are you? - Good morning, sir, how are you	Low	Acquaintance	Older
7	The street	The participant is	- Excuse me, I want to ask	Equal	Stranger	The same age

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		required to greet a stranger to ask him about a direction	you if you don't mind			
8	At university	The participant is required to greet his/ her classmates	- Peace how are you good - Good morning, how are you	Equal	Intimate	The same age

The table above indicates that EFL learners greet one another in different ways. The description for the situations suggests the status of the person being greeted to the participant and social distance between interactants. As for the status of the person being greeted relative to the participant, situations are classified as low (situation= (3)), equal (situations =1,4,5,6,7,8). Regarding the social distance between interactants, situations are planned to be intimate (situation=1, 4, 5, 6, 8), acquaintance situation (3, 2) and stranger for the situation number seven

THE SIXTH TOPIC: Findings and Discussion

EFL learners have a diverse array of greetings and salutations in which people greet one another. Generally, the listener's social status, familiarity, and age shape the speaker's greeting pattern. Hence, the speaker chooses one of the following greeting patterns as a result of the influence of one or more of the aforementioned factors.

FIRST REQUIREMENT: Types of Greeting Patterns

There are different ways in which an EFL learner may greet another with. Some of these are the following:

1. Good morning and good evening: these types of greetings are called time bounded; they are considered to be very formal. Hence, the participants used them whenever they greet someone older (situation number one) to show politeness, or someone socially distant as greeting the boss to keep formality.

2. The religious greeting patterns: The most widely used religious term is *peace be upon you* or *peace* which is a transfer of the Arabic religions greeting *assalamu a'laykum warahmatu illah wa barakatuh*, "may the peace, mercy and blessings of Allah (God) be upon you" and this can be shortened as *assalamu a'laykum*, "peace be upon you" or *salam*, "peace". The replay to these

greeting patterns would be with the Arabic conjunction *wa*, “and” as *wa a'laykum assalam warahmatu illahi wabarakatuh*, “and may the peace, mercy and blessings of Allah (God) be upon you”, *wa a'laykum assalam warahmatu allah*, “and may the peace, mercy of allah (God) be upon you”, *wa a'laykom assalam*, “and peace be upon you”, *salam*, “peace”. These religious greeting patterns, in the Algerian society, are used to greet family members at home, in funerals, places where God is worshiped as mosques, and rarely at work and school. These expressions are used for greeting as well as leave taking. Participants used this kind of greetings in all situations at work at university at the shop at home, in the street. This indicates the influence of religion on EFL learners' performance of the greeting speech act.

3.Hi and what's up: these are other kinds of greetings that EFL learners used, which are considered informal. Such greeting patterns are used with close friends but not in formal places such as work or school. Greeting one's teacher in such a manner is inappropriate and will be unappreciated. Sometimes the above-mentioned greeting patterns are used for sarcasm, for instance; people may use, “hi” to draw the attention of someone staring and not following the speech or to indicate that someone has understood an idea late. EFL learners' answers exhibit an accurate use of the previously mentioned greetings, in the sense that, they used them in informal situations with friends and at informal place like restaurant.

4.May God help you”: this greeting expression is a transfer of the Arabic expression *Allah yfawnak*. When a person passes by someone who is working in the Algerian society, he may say *Allah yfawnak*, “may God help you” or *sahiit*, “may God give you the good health”. Though this seems as a prayer, it functions as a greeting speech act. Unfortunately, this may create misunderstanding and pragmatic failure in cross -cultural communication.

5.“Excuse me”: The expression “excuse me” is a negative greeting. It is used to draw someone's attention to ask for something. This greeting is used in situation number seven where the participants are required to ask someone for the direction. To draw the attention of stranger, the participants utilize the previously mentioned greeting.

People in Algeria often use the word *ismahli*, “excuse me” as greeting pattern whenever they ask someone about something.

6.Silent greetings: The Algerian society, as in every society around the world, has special body movements that express greetings. Moving the hands, fingers, and head are forms of greeting whenever the person being greeted is far away from the greeter. Often these movements are accompanied with a verbal

greeting in order to give assurance for the greeting and to reflect the intimate feeling of the greeter.

SECOND REQUIREMENT: Factors affecting choosing a particular greeting pattern

In every society around the world, there are factors which form our greeting patterns and the Algerian society is no exception. Among the factors that exclusively shape the Algerian greeting patterns are the following.

1. Age: When greeting an old person in Algeria, people are more likely to use Arabic greeting patterns or the religious ones but not French greeting patterns.

2. Relations: The type, the depth and the intimacy of a relation has great impact on the way we greet one another. Because greeting one's friend saying "peace", "hi" is acceptable, but it will not be the case when greeting the boss at work, for example, where the situation requires formality. So, what is appropriate is saying "good morning" or "peace be upon you" "*salamu ʕalaykum*",

3. Environment: One of the factors that shape our greeting patterns is the environment. The greeting pattern, that one may use to greet his or her friends in the classroom, is different from the one used when greeting them outside in the street because location demands a particular greeting pattern.

Conclusion:

In this study, an attempt was made to examine the greeting patterns that EFL Learners use to greet one another. Although the form and the amount of the collected data cannot allow one to make generalisation, certain points can still be made about speech act performance of L2 learners. The present results show that the EFL learners use different ways to greet one another, such as, good morning, good afternoon, good evening, hi, hello, what's up, excuse me, peace, and peace be upon you. These greetings are categorised into time greetings, religions greetings, informal greetings, formal greetings and silent greetings.

The aforementioned greeting patterns are influenced by sociolinguistic factors such as age, familiarity, and setting, which speakers prioritize during greetings. Notably, within the provided scenarios, speakers exhibit a tendency to employ religious greeting patterns within the family or at home, while opting for informal greeting patterns with friends, at university, and with colleagues at work. The results suggest a significant inclination among students towards language transfer, wherein they translate expressions from their mother tongue into English. This inappropriate usage points to their limited proficiency and insufficient

understanding of sociolinguistic norms. Consequently, the limited socio-pragmatic realization of speech acts may lead to miscommunication and misunderstandings, resulting in breakdowns in communication.

Thus, the study highlights the pressing need to integrate the pragmatics of L2 language use into Algerian EFL syllabi, addressing the existing gaps between the two languages and cultures. Furthermore, it is recommended that EFL teachers establish connections between the forms of speech acts and socio-pragmatic appropriateness in context. This consideration should be tailored to the students' proficiency levels in both producing and interpreting speech acts.

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