



## Research Article

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# Making Suggestions: A Perspective of Perspectives

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### Abstract

*The purpose of this cross-sectional quantitative study is to explore suggestion strategies as employed by gender in the Iraqi EFL context. It is a pragmatic descriptive approach where the speech act of suggestion is dealt with from the aspect of perspective based on a model developed by Li (2010). The study covers 26 males and 47 females who are asked to complete an open-ended WDCT encompassing 12 suggestion-required situations. The gleaned data are descriptively quantified and then statistically analyzed utilizing SPSS version 22 in addition to MS Excel 2016. Findings revealed a gender discrepancy at types of suggestions in which females are found to make more suggestions with hearer dominance and implicit dominance than males, whereas both genders make an almost equal amount of suggestions with speaker dominance, speaker-hearer dominance, and other dominance. Regardless of gender, it is revealed that Iraqi EFL learners tend to produce suggestions with speaker dominance more than other types of suggestions.*

**Keywords:** suggestion; perspective, gender, Iraqi EFL learners, dominance

## 1. Introduction

With its introduction in 1962 by J.L. Austin, the theory of speech act has undergone waves of criticisms and approvals by many linguists. The theory was received and developed later by J.R. Searle in 1969. It is the first systematic theory in which speech acts are viewed not only as verbal behaviour but as kinds of human actions (Al-aadeli, 2014). Both Austin and Searle believe that when a person says something, it means he/she does something (Levisen & Waters, 2017). Since the time this argument came into being, speech act theory attracted a great deal of attention by researchers, especially from the western world.

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics dealing with the function of language and the effect of its use in the act of communication (Leech, 2016). It is the study of how users make sense when they perform different functions (speech acts) From a pragmatic perspective, the language is expressed solely by means of speech acts (Leech, 2016) like requests, warnings, apologies, commands, blames, suggestions, etc.

Suggestions, according to Austin (1962) and Searle's (1969) classification of acts, belong to a set called 'directive acts'; types of acts in which a speaker instructs a hearer to perform something (Septianingsih & Warsono, 2017). By making a suggestion, a hearer is dictated mildly to take an idea or do an action by a speaker. Although the idea or action is devoted to the interest of the hearer,

however, theorists consider the act of suggestion as a face-threatening act (Aminifard, Safaei, & Askari, 2014). The face-threatening potentials inherent in suggestions may not be clear in other languages since speech acts are culture-bound. And here lies the necessity for the EFL learners to be aware of this fact in order to be able to make native-like suggestions.

The speech act of suggestion is an act that is commonly employed in many situations, whether urgent or not. People in general and EFL learners in specific come to need to make suggestions during their interactions in order to propose their ideas about what is best to do or behave. Thus, no doubt that instances, where EFL learners make and receive suggestions are frequent in university and public contexts. Any piece of suggestion can be viewed as a means or a panel through the use of which a hearer can improve his or her performance (Farnia & Sattar, 2014). For example, a reviewer of a journal can suggest certain ideas and modifications to the authors in order to improve the quality of their research papers. This means that suggestions are solely made to the benefit of the hearer. Despite being so, suggestions, according to Li (2010), can be looked at from the 'perspective' aspect of their formation; the domain in favour of which the act of suggestion is made. Here, suggestions are branched into (1) speaker dominance, (2) hearer dominance, (3) speaker-hearer dominance, (4) implicit dominance, and (5) other dominance. More elaborations on these types of strategies are given in the next literature review section.

Based on the claim that a variety of linguistic productions and perceptions in gender-based studies are more than they are in non-gender studies (Litosseliti, 2014), the current study is expected to reveal gender variations in the use of the above-mentioned strategies.

Hence, the purpose of this research is to explore how Iraqi EFL males differ from females in the production of suggestions. To attain this purpose, the researcher sets the following non-directional null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and its related research hypothesis ( $H_1$ ).

$H_0$ . There is no difference between males and females in the production of perspective strategies.

$H_1$ . There is a difference between males and females in the production of perspective strategies.

The rationale for employing such a hypothesis is to enable the researcher to count for every single gender variation that may occur.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Previous Studies on the Speech Act of Suggestion

Mastering speech act sets constitute the core of the pragmatic competence (Ifantidou, 2014) that the learners to achieve in order to understand and use in their non-native interactions. Speakers make sense of what they say only when they shape their messages in a form of speech acts like requesting, apologizing, disagreeing, commanding, refusing, offering, suggesting, etc (Leech, 2016). This means that the ability to speak in a native-like depends heavily on our knowledge of different types of speech acts.

Although speech act skills were emphasized by scholars interested in the EFL domain, from a wide-ranging linguistic perspective, it has been claimed that EFL eastern investigations on speech acts have remained underdeveloped and unsaturated (Pishghadam & Sharafadini, 2011). From a gender standpoint, it was confirmed that speech act literature does not pay heed to the factor of gender (Sharqawi & Anthony, 2019b; Sharqawi & Anthony, 2019c; Moradi, 2017; Coates, 2015). In specific, works conducted on the speech act of suggestion are reported as relatively low (Petrey, 2016; Sharqawi & Anthony, 2019b) when compared to other speech acts. In their systematic review, Sharqawi & Anthony (2019b: 486) state that modern linguistic trends focus majorly on speech acts "involved in everyday argumentative talks called 'dispreferred act' namely 'disagreement' and 'refusal'." By examining the available studies on suggestions, scholars seem to focus on examining certain sets of strategies over the other. Some focused on the formal aspects like (Rintell (1979), on directness aspects like Liu & Zhao (2007), on politeness aspect like Sharqawi & Anthony (2019, d), and

others focused on different combinations of strategies. The table below summarises an inventory of the recently published suggestion literature and its features and limitations.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of the current literature and the current study.

	Authors	Study Title	Type of Strategies	Investigated language level	Gender	Regional Context	Limitations
1	Jiang (2006)	"Suggestions: What should ESL students know?"	Structure & Politeness	Production	-	China	No clear instrument used to collect natural data.
2	Liu & Zhao (2007)	"Suggestions in Teacher-Student Conferences"	Directness	Production	-	China	Insufficient number of participants that is only six
3	Li (2010)	"Making Suggestions: A Contrastive Study of Young Hong Kong and Australian Students"	Perspective, Directness, & Politeness	Production	-	China	The same data were analysed three times in terms of perspective, directness, & politeness
4	Pishghadam & Sharafadini (2011)	"A Contrastive Study into the Realization of Suggestion Speech Act: Persian vs English"	Structure & Politeness	Production	?	Iran	Insufficient DCT consisted of only six situations. Not clear outcomes about gender
5	Heidari-Shahreza (2014)	"A Sociolinguistic and Cross-cultural Investigation into the Speech Act of Suggestion"	Perspective, Directness, & Politeness	Production	+	Iran	The DCT included only 4 situations to measure politeness. Social distance is not considered in the situations
7	Darweesh & Al-Aadili (2017)	"Investigating Iraqi EFL Learners' Performance in Utilizing the Speech Acts of Advice and Suggestion"	Politeness	Production	+	Iraq	Inadequate DCT consisted of only two questions. The DCT does counts for the social distance
8	Sharqawi & Anthony (in press, a)	"Analysing Gender Effect on the Speech Act of Suggestion A Pilot Study"	Structure, Directness, & Politeness	Production & Recognition	+	Iraq	The study dealt with only the effect of gender on suggestions without telling details about gender types
9	Sharqawi & Anthony (2019, d)	"Recognizing Suggestions by Iraqi EFL Learners: A Politeness Perspective"	Politeness	Recognition	-	Iraq	The participants have to choose one from three existing suggestions rather than making (writing) suggestions
10	Sharqawi & Anthony (current study)	"Making Suggestions: A Perspective of Perspectives"	Perspective	Production	+	Iraq	Restricted to quantitative production level

To meet the standards of academic criticism, the researcher highlights the limitations in each study and tries to objectively criticize the previous studies in order (1) fill in the literature gap and to (2) highpoint the novelty of the current study.

Thus, critically speaking and as the above gap table depicts, it clear that no Iraqi study has ever dealt with suggestions from the perspective aspect. It can be seen that although the perspective strategies of suggestion were examined by two scholars, however, the first study by Li (2010) used the data for multiple analyses; the same data were analysed three times for perspective, directness, & politeness strategies. The other study by Heidari-Shahreza (2014) performed the same multiple analysis in addition to using very insufficient situations to measure suggestions in terms of politeness. In fact, the presence of social distance could have had the participants modify, if not change, their suggestions because, for instance, a person should be polite when making a suggestion to someone to whom he/she is new. So, by including social status only can lead to different perspective strategies than if the social distance is included. Interestingly, from an objective critical view, it was found that Heidari-Shahreza (2014) has exactly replicated the instrument developed by Li (2010) with its defects

in his study. Bearing in mind that both studies are comparative, quantitative, non-gender, cross-sectional, and both investigated the production of suggestions in terms of perspective, directness, and politeness strategies. One more point we can make out of this table is that there are two studies examined the role of gender in altering the suggestions; the first by Darweesh & Al-Aadili (2017) and the latter by Sharqawi & Anthony (in press, a), but none has examined how gender alter the perspective strategies of suggestion and this is what this research intends to explore.

Thus, the current study is set to be a cross-sectional quantitative approach employing a Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT) as an instrument to collect data in terms of how gender differ the perspective strategies of suggestions. More explanations and elaborations on the notion of perspective strategies are given in the next sub-section.

### 2.2 Pragmatic Perspective Strategies for Making Suggestions

Blum-Kulka (1989) proposed that a suggestion can be viewed from a pragmatic aspect of its benefit. Perspective refers to someone or aspect in favour of whom a suggestion is made. In this respect, suggestions are oriented to be: (1) Speaker dominance (SD) as in 'I can fix the car.' (2) hearer dominance (HD) as in 'you may borrow her dictionary for one day.', (3) speaker and hearer dominance (SHD) as in 'Let's get back to the topic.', and (4) implicit dominance (ID) as 'how about giving her a present?'. Li (2010) updates these perspectives by adding a fifth perspective that is (5) 'other dominance' (OD) to whom the benefit is not overtly stated as in 'she should make her decision.' Hence, the current study adopts the model in the analysis. Below is a table explaining the realizations of suggestions under this taxonomy.

**Table 2.** The perspective of suggestions with their realization forms.

Dominance	Realized by	Example
1	SD	The pronoun 'I'. 'I suggest...', 'I propose...', etc.
2	HD	The pronoun 'you'. 'You should...', 'Try to...', etc.
3	SHD	'Let's', or the pronoun 'we' 'Shall we...?', 'Let's...', etc.
4	ID	No pronoun (no person) 'Why not...?' 'How about...?', etc
5	OD	3 <sup>rd</sup> person: 'he', 'she', 'People' 'People should ...', 'I've heard that one should...'

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Design and Tools of Analysis

This is a cross-sectional quantitative study. It is pure quantitative due to its quantitative-data-collecting instrument; WDCT. By its nature, the WDCT gleans the students' speech act of suggestion in terms of numerical data which are quantifiable and analysable using statistical tests.

For quantitative analysis, SPSS version 22 was utilized to run descriptive statistics and T-tests associated with Levene's tests as inferential statistics. For T-tests the alpha level was set on 0.05. In addition to SPSS, some manual calculations were performed.

### 3.2 Sample and Setting

The sample was drawn from the English Language Department at Al-imam Al-kadhum State University. The sample included 63 Iraqi undergraduate students majoring in the English language. They were the third and fourth-year students. 74 volunteered to join the study but the sample included only 63 students.

To eliminate bias in selection, the students' names were put in a box and were drawn randomly one by one by the researcher until 26 male and 37 female students were selected.

### 3.3 Instrument and Procedures

The instrument is WDCT. This WDCT was piloted by Sharqawi & Anthony (in press, a) and thus, the researcher replicated it without any modification. The WDCT comprised 12 situations simulating student-like interactions to be more familiar to the students' reality. See Appendix B for the WDCT.

Before distributing the WDCT to the students and after getting the approval of the department, written consent forms were given to the students and were asked to read well and sign. Samples of the consent forms are given in Appendix A. After that, the researcher handed over the WDCT sheets to the two groups; males and females. The researcher read and explained the WDCT situations twice and translated them into Arabic to make sure the students understood the context of situations well. The researcher encouraged and welcomed questions from the students before they commence to respond.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptively, by looking at the means, it is seen that the majority of the learners' suggestions were SD whereas the least suggestions were OD. The specifics of these suggestions (strategies) are tabulated underneath.

**Table 3.** The learners' production of perspective strategies.

Priority	Str.	Mean	StDv.	Freq.	%	N
1	SD	3.7619	2.24839	237	39.9%	59
2	HD	2.6190	1.99538	165	27.8%	53
3	SHD	1.6984	1.96448	107	18%	39
4	ID	1.2539	1.41385	79	13.3%	39
5	OD	0.0793	0.32634	5	0.8%	4

Where Freq. = frequency, % = percentage,

As the means enumerate, the second higher strategy was HD, followed by SHD, and then ID. Having 59 and 53 participants produced SD and HD respectively, indicates that these two strategies are very common by the learners. With the StDv. values of SD and HD below their mean values indicate that the production of these strategies was less dispersed and less deviated. This ultimately confirms that the learners were not only familiar but also aware of their use. On the other hand, having OD produced by only 4 learners with StDv. higher than its mean, can give a preliminary clue that its production was due to mere chance. This was as far as the learners' performance is concerned but in terms of gender, the next discussions go into it carefully.

In terms of gender, both males and females prioritized their strategies in the same order as Table 4 depicts. However, the means seem to exhibit differences.

**Table 4.** Descriptive inventory of the perspective strategies in terms of gender

Males					Females					Difference of Means
Priority	Str.	Mean	StDv.	N	Priority	Str.	Mean	StDv.	N	
1	SD	4.3846	2.4343	26	1	SD	3.3243	2.0283	33	1.0603
2	HD	2.0000	1.8110	19	2	HD	3.0540	2.0268	34	1.0540
3	SHD	1.5384	2.0828	16	3	SHD	1.8108	1.8979	23	0.2724
4	ID	0.6923	0.8840	13	4	ID	1.6486	1.5849	26	0.9563
5	OD	0.0384	0.1961	1	5	OD	0.1081	0.3932	3	0.0697
Total		8.6537	7.4082		Total		9.9458	7.9311		1.2921

Where Str. = strategy, StDv. = standard deviation, N= number of participants

It is obvious that females have employed more strategies due to the higher total of means with a difference of 1.2921. It is also obvious that SD and HD were the dominant strategies over others by both genders. Speaking of data spread from their means, it seems that the StDv. values remained below their mean values in both genders which indicates a good level of consistency. The descriptive statistics depicted in Table 3 shows that Iraqi learners have a considerable tendency towards SD. Since SD strategies are realized by the pronoun 'I' then Iraqi learners can be said to tend towards more self-centred strategies. The gender descriptive statistics depicted in Table 4 reveals that males tend towards more SD than the females who tend towards more HD. Since HD are characterized by the use of the pronoun 'you', then their strategies are regarded as others-centred.

As far as gender discrepancy, no significant gender differences can be spotted unless statistical tests are performed and this what the next discussion goes through.

#### 4.2 Inferential Analysis

It is worthy to mention that we cannot rely on testing the main hypothesis only because if do so, we will not be able to tell from which of the five strategies the variation come from. So, to test the above-mentioned research hypothesis, we need to break it down into five sets of sub-hypotheses as there are five types of suggestion strategies; SD, HD, SHD, ID, and OD. Doing this enables us to test if there is a significant gender difference in every single strategy. When done, then we move to test the whole strategies in total, i.e., testing the main hypothesis.

##### 4.2.1 Sub-hypotheses of SD

<sup>SD</sup>H<sub>0</sub>. There is no difference between males and females in the production of SD.

<sup>SD</sup>H<sub>1</sub>. There is a difference between males and females in the production of SD.

Inputting the necessary data into SPSS, the following t-test associated with homogeneity test were generated in one table.

**Table 5.** Testing <sup>SD</sup>H<sub>0</sub>

Variances		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Difference of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
SD	Equal variances assumed	.948	.334	1.880	61	.065
	Equal variances not assumed			1.821	47.493	.075

Before interpreting the significance level of difference, i.e., Sig. (2-tailed) value, we must look at 'Levene's Test' for the homogeneity of gender variations. It is important to know that the Sig. value of the Levene's test must be interpreted in reverse to the Sig. of the t-test. Because Levene's test measures the homogeneity in the samples' distribution, so it is better to have Sig. value of more than 0.05. In the above test, Sig. = 0.334 > 0.05 the alpha level, so the variation between the male and the female is statistically significant and therefore, the two samples are homogenous. Since the samples are homogenous, we have to look at the first row of the table where 'equal variances assumed'. The t-test shows that Sig. = 0.065 > 0.05 alpha. So, we cannot reject the sub-H<sub>0</sub>. This means that there is no significant gender difference between males and females in the production of SD.

##### 4.2.2 Sub-Hypotheses of HD

<sup>HD</sup>H<sub>0</sub>. There is no difference between males and females in the production of HD.

<sup>HD</sup>H<sub>1</sub>. There is a difference between males and females in the production of HD.

**Table 6.** Testing  $H_0^{HD}$

Variances		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Difference of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
HD	Equal variances assumed	.170	.681	-2.122	61	.038
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.164	57.461	.035

The Levene's test shows that Sig. = 0.681 > 0.05. So, equal variances are assumed and, in this case, we have to look at the first row of the table where the t-test reveals Sig. = 0.038 > 0.05. Based on this result, we can reject the above  $H_0^{HD}$  and accept the  $H_1^{HD}$ . This means that there a gender difference in the production of HD. To identify where the difference comes from difference, we look at the 't' value in the t-test. The value is (negative) -2.122 indicating that the significance is directed towards the left, i.e., the females. So, the difference in means between males and females, shown earlier in Table 4, is statistically significant. Since the difference in means 1.054 is counted for females, so females significantly employed more SD than males.

4.2.3 Sub-Hypothesis of SHD

$H_0^{SHD}$ . There is no difference between males and females in the production of SHD.

$H_1^{SHD}$ . There is a difference between males and females in the production of SHD.

**Table 7.** Testing  $H_0^{SHD}$

Variances		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Difference of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
SHD	Equal variances assumed	.391	.534	-5.39	61	.592
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.30	50.697	.599

Equal variances are assumed as the Levene's test reveals Sig. > 0.05. So, we look at the first row where the t-test Sig. is 0.592 > 0.05. This means we cannot reject the  $H_0^{SHD}$ . Therefore, no statistical gender difference between males and females in the production of SHD were found and the difference in means seen Table 4 appeared to be insignificant.

4.2.4 Sub-Hypothesis of ID

$H_0^{ID}$ . There is no difference between males and females in the production of ID.

$H_1^{ID}$ . There is a difference between males and females in the production of ID.

**Table 8.** Testing  $H_0^{ID}$

Variances		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Difference of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
ID	Equal variances assumed	6.322	.015	-2.783	61	.007
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.056	58.439	.003

The Sig. of the Levene's test is 0.015 < 0.05, so equal variances are not assumed and thus, we look at the second row. Since, the t-test Sig. = 0.003 < 0.05 so can reject the  $H_0^{ID}$  and take the  $H_1^{ID}$ . The difference in means (0.9563) seen in Table 4 appeared to be significant. The 't' value is negative and it

tells that females employed more ID than males.

#### 4.2.5 Sub-Hypotheses of OD

<sup>OD</sup>H<sub>0</sub>. There is no difference between males and females in the production of OD.

<sup>OD</sup>H<sub>1</sub>. There is a difference between males and females in the production of OD.

**Table 9.** Testing <sup>OD</sup>H<sub>0</sub>

Variances		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Difference of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
OD	Equal variances assumed	2.941	.091	-.832	61	.409
	Equal variances not assumed			-.926	55.907	.359

Because the Levene's test Sig. < 0.05, we look at the first row. The Sig. of the t-test is 0.409 > 0.05, so we cannot reject the sub-<sup>OD</sup>H<sub>0</sub> and thus, no statistical gender difference between males and females in the production of OD. In other words, the difference in means (0.0697) seen earlier in Table 4 was found insignificant.

After testing the above five sets of sub-hypotheses, it is now the turn to test the main hypothesis to examine whether gender has an overall effect in on all five types of strategies as a whole and this is discussed in the next sub-section.

#### 4.2.6 The Main Hypothesis

H<sub>0</sub>. There is no difference between males and females in the production of perspective strategies.

H<sub>1</sub>. There is a difference between males and females in the production of perspective strategies.

**Table 10.** Testing the main hypothesis of SHD

Variances		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Difference of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
All Strategies	Equal variances assumed	7.482	.008	-2.723	61	.008
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.566	42.072	.014

The first Sig. = 0.008 < 0.05, so we take the second row. The t-test Sig. = 0.014 < 0.05, so we can reject the H<sub>0</sub> and take the H<sub>1</sub>. In other words, males differ significantly from females in the production of all suggestion strategies. So, the gender difference in means (1.2921) stated in Table 4 is significant. The 't' value is -2.7577 and this tells that females employed more suggestions than males. Broadly and according to the above table, it is concluded that gender has an effect on the perspective strategies of suggestions but this effect is partial since gender significant differences were identified only in the production of HD and ID strategies as Tables 6 and 8 depict.

## 5. Discussions

Although Li (2010) employed a DCT designed to glean strategies in terms of politeness while the current study does not, but it seems that the results of the current results meet some those of Li (2010) who found that the Cantonese students employed significantly less implicit suggestion strategies as compared to their counterparts (Australian students).

Regardless of gender variation, as Table 3 depicts, Iraqi EFL learners tend to resemble the Cantonese students in the paucity of the ID strategy. The table shows that only 13% of the strategies are implicit and this percentage is very low when compared with other percentages. But by taking gender variation, the current study reveals that females significantly employed more ID strategies (these realized by the use of 'How about...?', 'What about...?', 'Why not...?') and HD strategies (these realized by the use of 'You should...', 'You can...', 'Try to...', etc.) than males. This means that the production of ID was not due to chance despite its low frequency. To compare this finding with Li's (2010), it can be assumed that the Australian students (of Li) and the females (of the current study) were both familiar with and aware of the use of this strategy. From another comparative viewpoint, both Li's (2010) Cantonese and Australian students in one hand and the two genders of the current study in the other hand have uncovered that SD and HD were the most common strategies due to high percentages.

In opposition to the current results, Heidari-Shahreza (2014) argued about the no influence of gender on the types of suggestions. He concluded that the majority of Iranian suggestions were SHD with no gender discrepancy. Nevertheless, the current study showed that Iraqi EFL learners tend to towards SD with significant gender differences in HD and ID.

Although the study was not meant to measure the learners' suggestions in terms of politeness, but it can be assumed that one thinkable motivation for females to produce HD and ID may be due to their desire to be more polite than males who were more explicit in their responses, bearing in mind that the less explicit the act (of suggestion) is, the more polite it is (Leech, 2016). So, the females generally acted as politely as the Australian students of Li (2010). At the halt of politeness, it is worthy to mention that Darweesh & Al-Aadili (2017) also found that Iraqi EFL females tend to make less explicit and thus polite suggestions as compared to their male counterparts. This is confirmed by the fact that Iraqi culture is male-centred where females are anticipated to show supportiveness and solidarity to males and this is undeniably reflected on language forms.

## 6. Conclusion

Based on the above results, the conclusions are drawn as follows: According to the descriptive statistics, Iraqi EFL learners tend to produce suggestions with speaker dominance perspective more than other types of suggestions. Regarding gender variation, it was found that gender is partial but an effective factor in varying only two suggestions strategies in which females were found to produce more suggestions with hearer dominance and implicit dominance than males. This means that the male strategies tend towards self-centrality than the females whose strategies were significantly others-centred. No gender variations were identified at the other three types of strategies; speaker dominance, speaker-hearer dominance, and other dominance. Although studies dealing with the perspective aspect of suggestions like Li (2010) and Heidari-Shahreza (2014) do not reveal exactly the same findings, they partially meet the current findings at some points.

## 7. Limitations and Recommendations

The current study, being quantitative in nature, it only investigated how the two genders differ in making suggestions. Thus, for a study to be wide-ranging, it is recommended to qualitatively investigate why the two genders make such types of suggestions rather than others. Doing a mixed-method approach will present an inclusive study counting for grounds and motivations causing gender variations (qualitatively) in addition to the description of their actual productions (quantitatively).

The restriction of the current study to the WDCT makes it limited to the production level only, i.e., how gender produce (make) suggestions. It is advised that using Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Task (MDCT) (as the one employed by Sharqawi & Anthony (in press, a)) in order to measure how the two genders recognize suggestions.

## 8. Novelty and Originality

By and large, this study, along with its results, is confidently claimed to be the first approach measuring Iraqi EFL learners' perspective strategies. Moreover, specifically, it is the first gender study of its kind describing how the two genders differ in the making of suggestion in terms of the strategies under study.

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**Appendix A (Informed Consent Forms)**

**Informed Consent Form  
Permission from the English Class Lecturer/Course Coordinator/Head of Department**

I am currently a PhD student at the Centre for Language Studies, the Faculty of Applied Science and Technology at *Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia* (UTHM). I would like to conduct a study to identify if gender affects the production of the speech act of suggestion used by Iraqi EFL learners. As part of the study, I would like to collect data from selected students of your class using written discourse completion tasks (WDCT).

Thus, I would like to request your permission to conduct the WDCT and record the tasks with the students. I would be thankful if you could sign and return the form as soon as possible.

Thank you very much.

**Consent Statement**

I, the undersigned, have understood the above explanation and have given my consent to allow the researcher access to my students during lessons.

I agree to allow you to conduct the DCTs with my students during lessons.

I agree to the collected data being analysed for the research purposes. Anonymity should be preserved if extracts are included in research publications or reports.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Informed Consent Form**

Dear Participant,

I am currently a PhD student at the Centre for Language Studies, the Faculty of Applied Science and Technology at *Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia* (UTHM). I would like to conduct a study to identify if gender affects the production of the speech act of suggestion used by Iraqi EFL learners. Data will be collected using a Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT). Your honest participation is highly appreciated and it is the key to the success of this study.

Thus, I would like to request your consent to voluntarily participate in the WDCT and you should be aware that you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with this department, the instructor, or the university. Do not hesitate to ask questions about the study before participating in or during the study. I would be thankful if you could sign and return the form as soon as possible.

Thank you very much.

**Consent Statement**

I, the undersigned, have understood the above explanation and have given my consent to voluntarily participate in the discourse completion tasks.

I agree to allow you to photograph the tasks.

I agree to the collected data being analysed for the research purposes. Anonymity should be preserved if extracts are included in research publications or reports.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix B

WDCT

Dear Participant,

This written discourse completion tasks (WDCT) is intended to gather information on gender effects on the production of the speech act of suggestion used by Iraqi EFL learners. This is a research in applied linguistics at Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM).

I assure you to use the collected data for the research purposes only. You are further assured to feel safe about the secrecy of your personal data. In case of any inquiry, please feel free to contact me via e-mail: [mushtaq12008@gmail.com](mailto:mushtaq12008@gmail.com) or phone: 009647816234291.

**Mushtaq Abdulrazzaq Sharqawi**  
PhD Student of Applied Linguistics  
Centre for Language Studies  
Faculty of Applied Science and Technology  
Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM)

Please respond to the following situations using English suggestions.

1.  
Your classmate and you meet by chance in a bookshop. He/she wants to buy a book about the four language skills. You know that the book is quite expensive. You already have found the same book with a lower price in another bookshop. **Make him/her a suggestion.**

**Your classmate:** That's the book I was looking for.  
**You:**  
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2.  
You are sitting in the seminar room waiting for a presentation to begin. One of your classmates comes in and sits in the chair in front of you. You look at him/her and notice the price tag of his/her new jacket has not been removed. The tag is rather big and can be recognized easily. **Make him/her a suggestion.**

**Your classmate:** My presentation starts in five minutes.  
**You:**  
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.....

3.  
You meet your classmate at the local grocery store. He/she is going to buy some canned fish. You have just examined the cans and seen that the date of expiry is December 2017; this is September 2018. **Make him/her a suggestion.**

**Your classmate:** Yes, these. I need to get these favourite canned fish.

**You:**

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4.  
Your classmate has recently started to smoke heavily and cough badly. You think that he/she is going to be addicted to smoking and you feel bad for him/her. **Make him/her a suggestion.**

**Your classmate:** I've been coughing badly for a week.

**You:**

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5.  
Your classmate asks you to help him/her with a Word file to do some modifications on the tables. He/she sends a copy of the Word file from the computer to the USB flash drive. But, he/she immediately removes the flash drive without performing the proper electronic removal. You know that doing this may damage the files and the flash drive too. **Make him/her a suggestion.**

**Your classmate:** This is my second USB drive. The first one broke down.

**You:**

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6.  
You encounter one classmate in the Internet cafe in the afternoon. He/she searches the Internet to download some papers relevant to his/her research project. He/she looks very tired and it is now 4:30 pm. **Make him/her a suggestion.**

**Your classmate:** I've been downloading papers since the morning. I'm so exhausted.

**You:**

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7.  
Your classmate wants to communicate with people from English speaking countries in order to practice the English language and discover some about their culture. You think that there are specialized online forums offering English language exercises and information about the culture. **Make him/her a suggestion.**

**Your classmate:** I need to find a way to communicate with English native speakers.

**You:**

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8.

Your classmate is playing a game on his/her mobile phone. While playing, he/she gets trapped in the game and does not know how to proceed. He/she asks you for help but you are not familiar with this game. You are sure that the other classmate Ali knows a lot about this game. **Make him/her a suggestion.**

**Your classmate:** Ah, I'm stuck in this game. I need to find a way out.

**You:**

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9.

Your classmate and you have been invited to have lunch at your professor's house. The last time you were there almost everyone wore formal clothes. Your classmate intends to wear casual clothes. **Make him/her a suggestion.**

**Your classmate:** I like wearing jeans on such occasions.

**You:**

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10.

Your classmate tells you that his/her phone that is so slow and unresponsive. He/she will take the phone to the Rapid Repair Phone Centre. You already took your phone there last week and felt you were overcharged. **Make him/her a suggestion.**

**Your classmate:** I'll be taking my phone to the Rapid Repair Phone Centre.

**You:**

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11.

You spent your last summer holiday in Arbil city. It was quite hot and the prices were so high. You did not enjoy your time there. Now one of your classmates tells you that he/she is planning to go there for the whole summer holiday. **Make him/her a suggestion.**

**Your classmate:** I will be enjoying my time in Arbil for the whole holiday.

**You:**

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12.

You are walking on the campus and you encounter a classmate who is heading to the periodicals' room in the library. You are aware that the periodical room is under repair and noisy. **Make him/her a suggestion.**

**Your classmate:** Hi, I'm going to the periodical room in the library. It is a quiet place.

**You:**

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*Thank You!*