

جامعة بابل

استعمال الطلبة العراقيين  
متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية  
لغة أجنبية لفعل الكلام الوعد

رسالة تقدمت بها

الى مجلس كلية التربية في جامعة بابل  
جزءاً من متطلبات الحصول على شهادة الماجستير تربية  
في طرائق تدريس اللغة الانكليزية لغة اجنبية

بإشراف

...

...

آب 2005

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الخلاصة

إن المفهوم العام لفعل الكلام (الوعد) هو التعهد بعمل شيء ما. كما إن ما يلزم المتكلم بالوعد هو إعلانه لفظياً عن قصده لتنفيذ ما وعد به. و يعد الفعل الكلامي (وعد) من الأفعال غير التقليدية, إذ إن ما يجعل لفظ الجملة وعدا هو وجود القرينة المناسبة وليس قاعدةً لصيغة معينة.

و قد يلتبس الأمر على متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية فيعمدون إلى تعميم قواعد اللغة الأم النحوية والدلالية والتداولية الخاصة بأفعال الوعد على اللغة المتعلمة (target language).

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى: (1) تحري استعمال الطلبة من متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية لفعل الوعد على مستوى الإنتاج. (2) تبيان الدور الذي يلعبه عامل التعليم في أداء الطلبة (3) مدى تأثير اللغة الأم في دقة إجاباتهم.

لتحقيق الأهداف أعلاه تتقدم الرسالة بالفرضيات الآتية: (1) يتبنى الطلبة العراقيون من متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية استعمال صيغ الوعد الصريح أكثر من أية صيغ أخرى. (2) يتوقع أن يكون لعامل التعليم دور فاعل في جعل أداء طلبة جامعة بابل أفضل من أداء طلبة جامعة القادسية. (3) يؤثر تدخل اللغة الأم في أداء الطلبة فيجعل إجاباتهم غير دقيقة على مستوى المعنى التداولي.

برهنت مصداقية هذه الفرضيات من خلال تبني استبيان مؤلف من عشرة أسئلة. اذ طلب من المشاركين في الدراسة, طلبة المرحلة الرابعة في قسمي اللغة الانكليزية لكليتي التربية في جامعتي بابل و القادسية, أن يدونوا إجاباتهم عن كل سؤال. ثم جمعت الأجوبة و حللت لاستخلاص النتائج. انتهى التحليل إلى النتائج الآتية: (1) يستعمل كل من طلبة جامعة بابل و القادسية صيغ الوعد الصريح أكثر من صيغ الوعد الأخرى. (2) كان لعامل التعليم دور فاعل في الأداء الأفضل لطلبة جامعة بابل. (3) أدى تدخل اللغة العربية في أداء الطلبة إلى أجوبة غير دقيقة من حيث المعنى التداولي. وهكذا فقد جاءت النتائج مطابقة للفرضيات و مبرهنة لمصداقيتها.

تقع الدراسة في خمسة فصول. يعرف الفصل الأول مشكلة البحث وأهدافه وفرضياته والإجراءات المتخذة والحدود التي وقف عندها البحث و أهميته. ويقدم الفصل الثاني تحليلاً نظرياً مفصلاً يتناول الوعد من جوانب عدة: نحوية و دلالية وتداولية. فيما يتعلق بالفصل الثالث فإنه يعرض آراء بعض الكتاب حول توظيف الوعد كعامل معزز في الجانب التعليمي. أما الفصل الرابع فقد تضمن تحليل البيانات ومناقشة النتائج. ويختتم الفصل الخامس الدراسة بطائفة من الاستنتاجات و التوصيات و البحوث المقترحة.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا  
الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ  
ۙ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا  
أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ ۙ

صدق الله العظيم

( 9 10 )

We certify that this thesis was prepared under our supervision at University of Babylon as a partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Education in Methods of Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

Supervisor:  
Signature :  
Asst. Prof. Riyadh Tariq Kadhim Al-Ameedi (Ph.D)  
Date: / / 2005

Supervisor:  
Signature:  
Asst. Prof. Kadhim Al-Khazraji (Ph.D)  
Date: / / 2005

In view of the available recommendation, I forward this thesis for debate by the Examining Committee.

Signature:  
Name:  
Head of the Department of  
Educational and Psychological Sciences  
College of Education, University of Babylon  
Date: / / 2005

We certify that we have read this thesis and, as Examining Committee, examined the study in its contents and that in our opinion it is adequate with..... standing as a thesis for the degree of Master of Education in Methods of Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

Signature:  
Name:  
Member:  
Date:

Signature:  
Name:  
Member:  
Date:

Signature:  
Name:  
Chairman:  
Date:

Approved by the Council of the College of Education

Signature:

Name:

Dean of the College of

Education

Date:

To: My Family,  
and My Son,  
Mohammed

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## **Abstract**

A promise is universally understood as a commitment to do something. The binding power of a promise derives from the communication of the speaker's intention to carry out the promised thing. The act of promising is unconventional simply because what makes the utterance a promise is the existence of the context, and not a rule of a particular formula.

Confusion on the Iraqi EFL learners' part occurs when they generalize the rules of the native language on the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic levels to the target language regardless of the social and cultural differences which highly affect the use of any expression.

The present study aims at (1) Investigating the Iraqi EFL learners' use of promise on the production level, (2) Showing the effective role

which the teaching factor plays in the learners' performance, and (3) Identifying to what extent the mother tongue affects the accuracy of the learners' responses.

To achieve the goals mentioned above the study hypothesizes that: (1) Iraqi EFL learners adopt the use of explicit promise more than the other forms, (2) The role of the teaching factor is supposed to be very effective in making the performance of the learners of University of Babylon who have received some instruction about promise better than that of the learners of University of Al-Qadisiya who have not, and (3) The mother tongue is expected to be the cause of the learners' inaccurate responses on the pragmatic level.

These hypotheses have been verified through adopting a questionnaire of ten situations. The one hundred participants, students of the fourth year/ Departments of English/ Colleges of Education/ Universities of Babylon and Al- Qadisiya, are instructed to respond linguistically to each of the ten situations. Then their responses are collected and analyzed to draw the findings of this study. The analysis gives the following results: (1) Both the learners of University of Babylon and the learners of University of Al-Qadisiya use the explicit forms more than any other form, (2) The teaching factor is very effective in the better performance of the learners of University of Babylon and (3) The interference of the Arabic Language causes the subjects to give inaccurate responses on the pragmatic level though their responses are syntactically correct. So the results verify the three hypotheses.

The study falls into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the problem, aims, hypotheses, procedures, limits, and value of the study. The second chapter presents a theoretical analysis of promise on different levels: syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic. Chapter three reviews some of the writers' opinions about using promise as a reinforcer in teaching.

Chapter four includes data analysis and discussion of the results. Chapter five closes the study with some conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

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## List of Abbreviations

A	Act
BLs	Learners of University of Babylon
C	Context
H	Hearer
IFID	Illocutionary Force Indicating Device
NP	Noun Phrase
Od	Direct Object
Oi	Indirect object
P	Proposition
QLs	Learners of University of Al-Qadisiya
S	Speaker
Sub	Subject
T	Utterance
V	Verb
VP	Verb Phrase

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# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1 Problem

In attempting to express themselves, people do not only produce utterances containing grammatical structures. They perform actions via those utterances. Language is thus a system of devices for engaging in various sorts of social activities.

An explicit promise, for instance, does not involve the statement that one is promising in the sense of true or false promising. It is an act of a distinctive sort, the very sort (promising) named by the performative verb. This act is communicative because it is intended to be taken as a declaration made by one person to another. This declaration binds the promisor to do something beneficiary to the promisee, and gives the promisee the right to demand a fulfilment.

The variety of linguistic forms that can be used to perform the act of promising is too open ended to be plausibly explained by a special convention:

1. I promise that I 'll be back soon. (explicit promise)
2. I 'll hand in my term paper in time. (implicit promise)
3. Do your best and I 'll help you. (conditional promise)
4. I promise not to tell anyone. (negative promise)
5. You have done your best. I 'll give you a good mark. (complex promise)
6. You need more practice. I promise to help you. (compound promise)

Promise is conventional in terms of context of its use performatively, not in terms of linguistic forms. The context plays an important role in the strategy of using and interpreting this act.

Psychologists refer to promise as some sort of reinforcer. It is an event that signals a reward. Teachers, for instance, frequently give stimuli (promises of good grades) to motivate the students to keep trying to find a way to goals, to do the desired behaviour, and to increase their intrinsic satisfaction.

Since language is strictly a foreign language in Iraq, the teacher and the teaching materials forming the only access to the language for our learners. With the absence of the adequate knowledge of the strategies for using each of the various forms of promise in the target language, the learners are found to fall back to any other resource available to them and in this case it is the learners' mother tongue. These aspects have, as far as we know, not yet been empirically studied, and this is the task of this piece of research.

## **1.2 Aims of the study:**

This study aims at:

1. Investigating the students' production of the speech act of promising.
2. Identifying the effectiveness of the teaching factor in the Iraqi EFL learners' use of promise.
3. Identifying the extent to which the mother tongue interferes in the learners' performance.

### **1.3 Hypotheses**

It is hypothesized that:

1. Iraqi EFL learners tend to use certain forms of promise; namely explicit forms more than the other forms.
2. The level of performance of EFL learners who receive prior information about the act of promising through teaching (i.e. students of University of Babylon) is expected to be better than those who do not (students of University of Al- Qadisiya).
3. Iraqi EFL learners' inaccurate responses may be attributed to the interference of the mother tongue.

### **1.4 Procedures**

1. To provide a theoretical background, a linguistic view of promise will be established through presenting a syntactic, semantic and pragmatic analysis of promise.
2. The act of promising will be handled from a methodological point of view through reviewing some of the psychologists' opinions about using this act as a reinforcer in the long teaching experience.
3. The empirical part of this study will be a test conducted in the form of situations through which the hundred students of universities of Babylon and Al-Qadisiya must imagine themselves and answer accordingly.

## **1.5 Limits**

Data on the learners' use of promise have been collected from a hundred-fourth-year students, Departments of English, Colleges of Education, University of Babylon and University of Al-Qadisiya. The act of promising has been dealt with from syntactic, semantic and pragmatic points of view with some remarks on the reinforcing role of promise in teaching.

## **1.6 Value**

The study draws attention to the importance of the mechanisms which cause a speech act to work. It highlights the importance of the politeness techniques that can be employed to block the possible offences produced by communicative actions.

The study also provides a pedagogical guide for teachers to employ promises correctly for emerging the students to be more cooperative and highly motivated. It provides evidence that when promises are given in undemanding and complementary ways they increase the students' intrinsic satisfaction in doing their tasks, and they create positive emotional environment and confidence between the teachers and their students. This in turn will enhance the learning process during its various stages. Thus it is hoped that this study is valuable to teachers and learners of English, textbook writers and syllabus designers to take such various constructions into consideration.

## Chapter Two

# A Theoretical Background

### 2-1. Introduction

A **Promise** is a speech act that can be used to manipulate the behaviour of other persons. What is meant by **promise** is to assure one by a binding declaration or assurance of something which is beneficiary to that person; to promise the payment of money, to promise a visit of a friend, and to promise to work hard. However, **promise** is a subclass of commissives, which in turn fall in two types: either act obligation or act of proposing obligation.

Although reasoning studies have been able to reveal some peculiarities of these concepts, the explanation has been fragmentary. To fill this gap, this chapter proposes a theoretical analysis of **promise**. This analysis covers the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic views of this act. To have a clear understanding of the meaning and performative use of this act, the chapter ends with the statement of the necessary and jointly sufficient conditions that must be present for the act to be used performatively.

### 2-2. Commissives

**Commissives** are acts of obligating oneself or proposing to obligate oneself to do something specified in the propositional contents which may also specify conditions under which the deed is to be done or does not have to be done. In committing oneself to do an act, one expresses the intention to do act and the belief that one's utterance commits one to doing it at least under the conditions specified or mutually believed to be relevant. These conditions may include hearer's accepting one's proposal or commitment to do act or at least his not rejecting it (ordinarily, the absence of explicit

rejection may be taken as is mutually believed to count as acceptance). In addition to expressing such an intention and belief, the speaker (S) expresses the intention that the hearer (H) takes him to have this intention and belief. The corresponding perlocutionary intention is that H believes S has this intention and he is obligated to do act at least if the required conditions are met (Batch and Harnish, 1979:50).

Batch and Harnish (ibid) distinguish two main types of commissives: **promises and offers:**

Promises are acts of obligating oneself; offers are proposals to obligate oneself. Under promising, a sampling of special cases including contracting and betting, three commissive / constative hybrids (swearing, guaranteeing, and surrendering), and one commissive/directive hybrid (inviting).

**Commissives** are typified by promising or otherwise undertaking; they commit you to doing something, but include also declaration or announcement of intention, which are not promises, and rather vague things which may be called espousals, as for example siding with (Austin, 1962: 151).

Searle, cited in Eriksson (1999: 65), states that the illocutionary point of commissives is that S commits himself to perform an act. The direction of fit is world to word (i.e. through the use of words, I make the world fit my language), and the expressed psychological state is an intention. Searle would have liked to have directives and commissives in the same class because they have the same direction of fit, but it is not possible to assimilate these classes because they do not have the same illocutionary point.

Mey (1993: 164) draws a distinction between commissives and directives denoting that commissives, like directives, operate a change in the world by means of creating an obligation in S, not in H. To compare a

request and a promise: the first is a directive, the second is a commissive. As to their direction of fit, they are identical (world adapted to words). However, the direction of the obligation created is different: whereas the promise creates an obligation in the promisor, the request does so in the requestee (listener). On the other hand, one cannot lump these two acts together into one category of obligatives.

Unlike Searle and Mey, Habermas, who classifies the pragmatic functions (communication acts) into representatives, regulatives and expressives, defines regulatives as the speech acts which are used to regulate the interaction between the actors in the external world. He includes directives-commissives as one subclass of the larger class of regulatives since they have the same direction of fit and they are all oriented towards the external world (Eriksson, 1999: 43).

Yule (1996: 54) presents two distinct definitions for commissives and directives showing that they are two different classes. Commissives are those speech acts that Ss use to commit themselves to some future action. They express what Ss intend. They include promises, threats, refusals, and pledges. These acts can be performed by S alone, or by S as a member of a group. In using a commissive, S undertakes to make the world fit the words (via S):

- 1- *I'll be back.*
- 2- *I'm going to get it right next time.*
- 3- *We will not do that.*
- 4- *We will do our best.*

Directives are those kinds of speech acts that Ss use to get someone else to do something. They express what S wants. In using a directive S attempts to make the world fit the words (via H):

- 5- *Why don't you be quiet?*
- 6- *Jack, open the window please.*

Allan (1986a: 195) mentions two classes of commissives: **promises** and **offers**. Promising performatives include promise, swear, and vow. Special subclasses of promises are bets, contracts, guarantees and surrenders. Offering performatives include offer, propose and volunteer.

Unlike Allan, Levinson (1983: 240) distinguishes three classes of commissives when he defines commissives as “the utterances which commit the speaker to some future course of action. Paradigm cases are promising, threatening, and offering”. The reason for this difference between Allan's and Levinson's classification of commissives is that Allan adopts the idea that promise and threat are two sides of the same coin. Both stem from the illocution of promising. (For further details, see 2.6).

Batch and Harnish (1979: 125) argue that commissives are acts of undertaking obligations, but to undertake an obligation is not automatically to create one, even if S uses a performative like **I promise**. S's utterance may express his belief that an obligation is thereby created, but does not make the belief true even if H shares the belief and is mutual. That S is obligated to fulfill his commitment is a moral question not answerable by the theory of illocutionary acts. Of course in institutional context it makes clear sense to speak of obligations (which may or may not be moral) that exist in the institution as a matter of mutual belief. For commissives issued in institutional contexts to create institutional obligations, there must be institutional rules to effect that one should honor one's commitments, but this does not make them conventional. However, formalized acts like taking an oath, signing a document are genuinely conventional.

Leech (1983: 206) mentions that commissives normally occur in the constructions:

**S+ V+ that X (where the that clause is non- indicative ).**

**S+ V+ to Y ( where construction ‘to Y’ is an infinitive ).**

Commissive verbs, which form a relatively small class, resemble directive verbs in having non-indicative complementizers (that clauses and infinitive clauses), which necessarily have posterior time reference (i.e. time reference later than that of the main verb).

Discussing children's acquisition of speech acts, Clark and Clark (1977: 364) denote that children start off with the speech acts of representatives and directives at the two-word stage, and by six or seven they add to their repertoire the commissives as they start to know several ways of conveying promises and threats.

Grimm, cited in Clark and Clark (1977: 366), conducted an experiment using a certain technique to elicit various directives: ordering, asking, and a commissive: promising. She told children of five and seven a brief story designed to get them to convey particular speech acts to Felix, a large toy cat for whom the experimenter acted as a mouthpiece. To get a child to ask for something for example, Grimm used the following story:

*“ You are at a play ground with Felix. He is sitting on the swing and you're sitting on the slide. Now you'd like Felix to let you swing too. What do you say to Felix?”*

*Child: Felix, will you let me swing too, just once please?*

To get a child to promise for something, she used another story which requires the child to make a promise.

Grimm found that five year-olds managed very well when asking Felix for something and ordering him to do something, but they had considerable difficulty with the commissive. Only 57 percent of the utterances meant to be promises were adequate to convey that speech act (ibid).

One difference between directives and commissives that might help explain Grimm's finding is that directives place an obligation on H whereas commissives place one on S. When S makes a promise, he is the one who is

expected to carry it out, not H. Grimm's results suggest that children find it much easier to work out the conditions under which H is expected to do something than the conditions under which S is (ibid).

Grimm and Scholer, in a similar experiment with German speaking children, found that directives like order and allow were better understood by children of seven than the commissive (promise). The mistake children usually made was to ask their listeners to do something rather than doing it themselves (ibid).

### 2-3. Promise

In a general sense, **promise** is a declaration, written or verbal, made by one person to another, which binds the person who makes it, either in honour, conscious or law to do or forbear a certain act specified; a declaration which gives to the person to whom the promise is made a right to expect or claim the performance or forbearance of the act. The Ss' promise of a visit to a friend gives that friend a right to expect it, and S is bound in honour and activity to perform the promise (Duranti, 1997: 5).

A promise may be absolute or conditional, expressed or implied. An absolute promise must be fulfilled at all events, whereas the obligation to fulfill the conditional promise depends on the performance of the condition. An expressed promise (explicit promise) is one expressed in words. An implied promise is one which is conveyed in a non-conventional way (ibid).

As a speech act on S's part, a promise creates in someone else an expectation that S will behave in some specific ways in the future. That is S commits himself to a particular future course of action. A commitment is more of an internal promise, it is an act whereby H's expectation arises that S will behave in some specific manner in the future. Breaking a promise,

on the other hand, is a failure to fulfill the expectations created by the promise (Krifka, 2001: 3).

If a promise is a speech act which creates expectation, then I will hear a promise whenever I hear something which causes me to have expectations of another person's future behaviour. I will want to check that the promise I heard is accompanied by a matching commitment on the part of the person making the promise. My promises are only successful and ethical if they are, at the same time, commitments of equal strength: that is, my expectations of my own future behaviour are at least as firm as the expectations I intend to create in others when I make the promise (Nemeth, 2002: 2).

Hamblin (1987: 33) believes that promises create not an obligation, but only a situation in which the promisors are obligated. That obligation arises only from the promisee's expectations. Promises are, in fact, more solemn and binding than a mere undertaking and what does or does not constitute a promise has been held to depend on special forms of words, S's competence and the social context.

Promise is based primarily on S's knowledge or supposition concerning his addressee's probable supposition; the alleged addressee's supposition, in its turn, concerns S's intention to act in a way and his supposition about the addressee's failing to exclude his knowledge or conjecture concerning the addressee's wanting the respective state of affairs (Boguslawski, 1983a: 624 ).

Many promises are made with an eye to doing what is regarded as good and with a conditional acceptance of stopping or avoiding what is regarded as bad. This fact is normally recognized by anyone making a promise. This evaluative aspect of making a promise does not come from the fact that a person can be correctly and in institutional sense described as having promised. First, because the semantic component of what is “good” or “evil” is no part of the semantic structure of promise as such, in the capacity of its necessary conditions. And second, because to the extent true values are active in someone's making a promise, they are not created by the promise as something self-contained, independent, and taking place before an evaluative statement can be formulated, but they participate in creating a particular type of promise and obligation as ready-made, independent factors which are established beforehand ( Boguslawski, 1983a: 629 ).

## 2.4 Syntactic View of Promise

Etymologically speaking the verb root of promise was **hat**:

The verb root most often used in old English with the meaning of promise was “hat” (originally a locutionary verb of bidding and naming), and especially its derivatives “gehat, behat”. Somewhat more like oaths and vows than Middle English promising they were used primarily in contexts of social and spiritual contract. The hat promise verbs are all attested in later Middle English as epistemic parenthetical. This epistemic parenthetical is speech-time oriented, in the sense that the sentence may refer to events in any time frame. The promise is that what is said is true (Trogott, 2002: 2).

In later Middle English a new promise verb appeared, **promise** borrowed from the participle of the verb *pro-mittere* **to send forward**, i.e. a promise was something sent forward. In fact the first uses of the verb **promise** were as a (non-performative) speech act verb. First examples that appear to be performative first occur in the later part of the 15th century in drama, and the construction **I promise thee/ you** begins to appear in the different scenes of dramas in its illocutionary force, and the speech time orientation is conventionalized from the present tense comes to be treated as speech time commitment that is conditioned for the future orientation (ibid ).

The act of promising can effectively be conveyed in various ways using different syntactic structures. Among those structures “are those in which the utterance inscription contains an expression that makes explicit the act of promise being performed” (Lyons, 1981: 176):

- **I (hereby) + Vp + you + (that) .....**

7- *I (hereby) promise you (that) I'll do my best.*

- **I (hereby) + VP + to+ infinitive.**

8- *I (hereby) promise to do my best.*

Such utterances contain the performative verb **promise**. "It is this verb **promise** together with the fact that it has a first person subject **I**, and is in the simple present indicative form, which make explicit the nature of the speech act of promise that is being performed when the utterance is uttered" (ibid: 179).

Because the act of promising is performed at the moment S utters the utterance, the tense of an explicit promise has to be present, non-past and non-perfect (Allan, 1986a: 170):

9- *I promise to take Max to a movie tomorrow.*

10- *\*I promised to take Max to a movie tomorrow.*

11- *\*I have promised to take Max to a movie tomorrow.*

In saying **I promise** S makes a promise but the words **I promised**, and **I have promised** do not constitute the making of a promise; instead, they report that a promise was made. Performative promise on the other hand can occur in the progressive aspect:

*12- I am hereby promising you not to scatter chips on the carpet.*

In his discussion of the constructions of the verbs which refer semantically to future plans and actions and are formally distinguished by the possibility of adverbial of future time in the subordinate clause, Palmer (1976: 195) mentions the following constructions:

- NP1      V              [(NP1) V]
- Np1      V              [Np2 V]
- Np1      V      Np2    [(NP2) V]
- Np1      V      Np2    [ Np1 V ]

Palmer mentions that a promise occurs only with construction (13) and (16):

*13- I promise [( I ) will come tomorrow ] .*

*14- \*I promise [ ( you ) will come tomorrow ] .*

*15- \*I promise [ you (you) will come tomorrow ] .*

*16- I promise [ you (I) will come tomorrow ] .*

Palmer (ibid: 191) denotes that the verb **promise** seems to be alone in the set of verbs referring to futurity in not requiring a preposition before the Np to show to whom the promise is made, while all other verbs require a preposition, where there is an Np, to indicate the relation between the verb and the Np following it :

*17- I pleaded with John to go.*

*18- I undertook with John to go.*

Austin proposed various tests to identify performative verbs. The simplest is the possibility of inserting **hereby** before the verb **I hereby**

**promise** .... . The use of **hereby** would of course mark the language as stylistically formal (Stubbs, 1983: 155).

Allan (1986a: 172) views that explicit promise can occur with the modal auxiliaries **shall**, and **will** on one condition that is the modal must be used in its root meaning. In such a case the position of **hereby** is between the modal auxiliary and the performative verb **promise**. When S says:

*19-I will hereby promise to visit you next time I am in town.*

his utterance designates an on going act and can therefore be glossed **I will with these words make the promise to visit you next time I am in town.** Here the modal **will** is used in its root meaning, i.e. designates an actual event namely the act of **promising**. The insertion of **hereby** between **will** and **promise** emphasizes this fact.

One might contrast the performative promise in the utterance above with the following predicted (or even, promised) promise:

*20-Tomorrow when I see her, I will promise to visit her next time I am in town.*

It is notable that **hereby** cannot legitimately be inserted between **will** and **promise** which confirms that the verb **promise** is not a performative verb here. The utterance designates a future act of promising (to take place “tomorrow”), the modal **will** here is used in its **epistemic sense**, i.e. designates an unactualized event namely the future act of promising (ibid).

Palmer (1963: 276) suggests two patterns to express explicit promise:

**-Sub + V + to + infinitive.**

*21- I promise to do my best.*

**-Sub + V +O + that clause**

*22- I promise you that I'll do my best.*

He (ibid: 283) adds two other patterns:

**-Sub +V + Oi + Od**

*23- I promise you an expensive watch.*

**-S + V + *Od* + prepositional object**

24-*I promise an expensive watch for your birthday.*

For Trougott (2002: 3), the construction **I promise you** serves primarily as an assurance or a hedge after the main clause:

25- *I'll come early, I promise you.*

It can also precede the main clause without a complementizer. Here it appears to serve as a comment on the utterance that follows.

26-*I promise, I will not be late again.*

Allan (1986a: 173) assures that explicit performatives occur only in the indicative mood though they can take either emphatic stress or emphatic **do**. For instance the utterance below makes an emphatic promise:

27-*I do promise to come more often.*

There is no such thing as making an **imperative promise**, or a **requesting promise**. An utterance of (28) would be an exhortation or plea that H makes a promise, it cannot be used to force S's promise on H, while (29) is rhetorical question about promise:

28 - *Promise to come and see me more often.*

29- *Do I promise to leave soon?*

Because no performative occurs in the subjunctive mood; so (30) does not make a promise, S is trying to find out whether he can achieve his end by making a promise:

30 - *If I should } promise to leave early, will you come to the party?*  
*Should I } with me?*

On the other hand, the act of promising not to do something is entirely different from the act of not promising in which the particle **not** occurs before the performative verb (Talloon, 1999: 25):

31-*I don't promise to come to your party.*

In the negative promise the particle **not** is inserted after the performative promise as in:

*32-I promise not to come to your party.*

Throughout the discussion above the illocution of promise has been discussed as though the utterance which expresses a promise invariably consists of a single clause. Of course this is not always the case, the illocution of promise may occur in the clauses of compound and complex sentences.

Allan (1986a: 241) argues that illocution can occur in sentences which contain adverbial adjunct clauses, verb phrase complement clauses, and style disjunct clauses (33-35 respectively):

*33-I'll bring the book in case you need it.*

*34-I say I promise to go tomorrow.*

*35-Once and for all, I promise never to do that again.*

A consideration of the syntactic means available for expressing the act of promising shows that S may choose means of expressions other than the basic syntactic type associated with a particular speech act. To some extent, this reflects the existence of diversity of means of expression, but a more persuasive reason is that S may use direct and indirect act.

Indirect or implicit promise can be expressed by using the modals **will** and **shall**. In such cases, one produces "what Austin refers to as a primary (non - explicit) promise in that there is no expression in the utterance inscription itself which makes explicit the fact that it is to be taken as a promise" (Lyons, 1981: 179).

The general rule for the construction of promise realized by **shall** and **will** is to use the auxiliary **shall/will** followed by the infinitive form of the main verb. It is important to indicate that **shall** is used with the same meaning as **will** in the first person singular and plural (Leech, 1975: 76):

I (we) +  $\begin{matrix} \text{shall} \\ \text{will} \end{matrix}$  + infinitive

Balterby (2002: 54) believes that **shall** and **will** were, from earliest English, associated with the obligation imposed by someone or something whether by god, fate, circumstances, the speaker or the like. **Will** is associated with one volition. If I as S promise to do something, I am usually promising on my own volition, hence the form **will** in:

36- *I will go = I promise to go.*

When the subject of the sentence is someone other than S the situation is different. If I as S take it upon myself that someone else will do something, then I am imposing an external obligation **my will** on him, hence:

37- *You shall go = I take it upon myself that you should go.*

When **shall** is used with a subject in the second or third person, it expresses a promise imposing the obligation on S not on H:

38- *You shall have your book = I will see that you get your book.*

Beller's (2002: 4) perspective is that there is a motivational schema for a promise, and it is this schema which can directly determine the formulation appropriate to express the intended act. In the case of a promise, S announces (explicitly or implicitly) that he will react positively if the addressee shows the desired behavior:

**Desired behaviour** ———→ **positive reaction** ———→ **reward**

The conditional **If P then Q** can be used well with this schema:

**If you do P (desired behaviour), then I will reward you with Q (positive reward).**

39- *If you study hard, I'll give you a good mark.*

The conjunctive formulation is also an effective means to express the consequence set by S (the thing promised) and the addressee's behaviour:

**Do P (desired behavior) and I will reward you with Q (reward)**

40- *Study hard and I'll buy you a new bicycle.*

Clark and Clark (1977: 360) consider **promise** among those verbs that do not confirm to the minimal distance principle (this principle means that the subject of any complement following a verb is the nearest noun phrase to the verb). This principle works for most verbs of communication, but not for all. For instance, in (41) it is the nearest noun phrase (you) that is the subject of the complement verb, but in (42) it is the farthest noun phrase that is the subject of the verb in the complement:

*41- I want you to come early.*

*42- I promise you to come early.*

Relying heavily on the minimal-distance principle to identify the subject of complement verb, children consistently choose the most recent noun phrase before the verb. Because children want to a void exception, they treat all complements alike and apply the minimal-distance principle every where. Chomsky (1969) therefore predicates that children would apply this principle to the verb **promise** and tested her predication by asking children to make toys called Donald and Bozo do various actions. The instructions appeared with either **tell** or **promise** as in this dialogue between Peter aged 6:9 and Chomsky herself:

*Adult: Donald tells Bozo to hop across the table. Can you make hop?*

*Peter: [making Bozo hop] Bozo, hop a cross the table.*

*Adult: Bozo promises Donald to do a somersault. Can you make him do it?*

*Peter: [making Donald do the somersault] I promise you you can do a somersault.*

*Adult: would you say that again?*

*Peter: I promise you you can do a somersault.*

Peter's interpretation of the complement of **tell** was correct, but when it comes to promise, he made the wrong toy-Donald-do the somersault. He treated promise as if it also confirmed to the minimal- distance principle.

He did not yet realize that a person making a promise is the one who has to carry it out. Few children under eight succeeded on instructions with the verb promise (ibid: 361).

## **2.5. Semantic View of Promise**

In his distinction between locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary act, Austin restricts meaning to the sense and reference of a locution. He views that the conventional usage of an expression determines the act which S is performing. In general, it seems fair to say that the meaning for Austin is a matter of definition as specified by the object, action, or state of affairs that one is using the word to refer to.

Searle (1969: 18), in rejecting Austin's view of meaning, argues that while sense and reference are conceptually distinct from the illocutionary force, they are intrinsically united with it in the utterance of a complete sentence that they are inseparable from each other:

A study of the meaning of sentences is not in principle distinct from a study of speech acts. Properly construed, they are the same study. Since every meaningful sentence in virtue of its meaning can be used to perform a particular speech act (or range of acts), and since every possible speech act can be given exact formulation in a sentence, the study of the meaning of sentences and the study of speech acts are not two independent studies but one study from two different points of views.

Johnson (2002: 5) states that the illocutionary force is distinct from meaning in the sense in which Austin uses the word. Yet, even if the force of an expression is determined primarily by using the expression according to

some established conventions, it also seems that the force is attached to and carried by an utterance in much the same way as the sense and reference are. So they are closely related, the force is attached through a social convention, while sense through a linguistic convention, and reference is attached intentionally by S:

For instance, if I say to a friend; (I promise that I will help you paint your house on Saturday), I use the sentence to refer to myself (I), another person (you), an activity (paint), an object (your house), a time (Saturday), and a condition (help). Thus I intentionally fix the reference of these words which in turn means that specific definitions of words are applicable in this situation. The word **promise** is added in order to clarify the illocutionary force of the sentence so that my friend knows that I am undertaking an obligation to help him and not merely expressing an intention or making a prediction about what I will probably do on Saturday. All of this taken together and spoken within an appropriate context is what I mean by the sentence and is the meaning which the sentence has when I speak it (ibid: 6).

The researcher in her presentation of the semantic view of promise finds no outlet of the pragmatic interference in the semantic discussion of this act. Consequently, she has the confidence that the meaning of an utterance is not complete apart from an inclusion of the illocutionary force as an aspect of the meaning of the utterance, and it is extremely difficult and sometimes not possible to handle a pure semantic analysis of promise without reference to some pragmatic aspects. For this reason, the researcher starts her discussion

by the opinions of some linguists and writers who support this belief as a justification for the existence of any pragmatic interference that can be found in this discussion.

Bogustawski (1983b: 608) illustrates that the construction (A) below should be understood as equivalent in meaning to (B). Both express the fact that when a sentence takes any of the syntactic forms, it expresses a proposition describing a future act by S:

**A- I promise to...**

**B- I promise that...**

The only difference is that the state denoted by the verbal phrase with **to (promise to...)** is unequivocally ascribed to the promisor while this kind of assignment is not linguistically guaranteed by the complement sentence in (B) **that clause**:

*43- I promise to present the term paper on time.*

*44- I promise you that I'll present the term paper on time.*

*45- I promise you that my son will present the term paper on time.*

The three utterances are used to refer to S (I), another person (you), an object (term paper), a time (on time), and a condition (present). The verb **promise** clarifies the force of the three utterances. The only difference is that in utterance (45), the state of affairs to be achieved is characterized for a person different from the promisor **my son**, and this state is expounded by the **that clause**. This means that S in (45) refers to an authorized person whose position and authority (perhaps his close relation with the other person) enables him to guarantee the achievement of the thing promised even though it is characterized for another person **my son**.

This fact has been referred to by Allan (1986a: 168) who denotes that the performative clause has a first person singular subject **I**. "**We**" referring to

joint speakers, can also be used. But it is not strictly necessary, because a performative can be uttered on behalf of someone else i.e. by an authorized person.

Van Dijk (1979: 61) views that an explanation, an assertion, a motivation, a specification, a generalization, etc are all defined as specific functions of speech acts with respect to other speech acts. Each of these functions has a semantic basis.

Given the semantic functions mentioned above, Van Dijk's view of utterance (46) compared with its corresponding implicit promise (47):

46- *I promise that I'll come early.*

47- *I'll come early.*

is that the promise in (46) is more specific than it is in (47). In (46) there is a form of explicative function: S more explicitly shows the particular act he is making. Such an explication is at the same time a form of repetition which makes the utterance more emphatic.

**I promise that    I'll come early.**

Promise

Promise

Verschueren and Parret (1980: 66) discuss the semantic relation between direct and indirect speech acts which occur in a construction such as:

48- *I promise that I'll help you*

, and they regard such performative utterances as referring to their own situations, i.e. they report themselves as having a particular communicative import. The relation between the direct and indirect act in such a construction is one of similarity.

Mey (1993: 134) compares the meanings of the following utterances:

49- *I hereby promise to come.*

50- *I promised to come.*

Utterance (49) carries two functions: on the one hand it tells the world that the S (I) has performed something namely a promise of "coming". On the other hand, the verb phrase **promise to** and the activity denoted by the verbal phrase **coming** have a future time reference. The verb in utterance (50) describes a state of affairs that happened once upon time. Then the meaning of **promise** in (49) is different from its meaning in (50); in (49) it has a performative usage, in (50) it has a descriptive usage.

Van Dijk (1977: 217) mentions that the meaning of conditional promise should not be understood to mean that a promise is performed only if the conditional clause is satisfied:

*51-If I go to Italy, I'll send you a postcard.*

The utterance of the conditional sentence **I'll send you a postcard** counts as a proper promise, but the domain of validity of the promise is restricted. That is, I only send a postcard in this possible world which is determined by **I go to Italy**. Hence, **If clause** does not pertain to the speech act, but to the act referred to in the main clause. It functions as a sufficient condition for this act. The situation is somewhat similar to that of the modal expression:

*52- May be I'll send you a postcard*

which may count as a promise, but the domain of validity is restricted to at least one possible world.

Sometimes an interpersonal illocutionary act will have an accompanying clause thrown in for co-operative purposes. **If clause** in the following utterance, has a co-operative function which expresses the S's uncertainty whether he can carry out the promise (Allan, 1986a: 242):

*53-I promise to come if I can.*

In addition to what has been mentioned earlier, a promise could be compound or complex:

"In the theory of action we have postulated single acts and composite acts; the latter may either be compound, if they consist of component acts at the same level, or complex, if some act is embedded in one of the component major acts, as an auxiliary act" (Van Dijk, 1977: 214).

The promise can occur in an act sequence, and can be a compound or complex act depending on whether the assertion is an essential component or merely an auxiliary action of the main act "**promise**". Along this line of reasoning, the utterance

*54-You have done your best, I'll buy you a new bicycle.*

is a complex promise. First of all, H already knows that he did his best so he need not be told. The first sentence therefore functions as a praise and as a recognition of the merits of H by S who thereby establishes a certain obligation with respect to H. The assertion here is used to express a part of the promise conditions via the obligation of S. The first sentence "You have done your best" expresses a motivation for the promise. At the same time it satisfies a preparatory condition for the promise. S is in a certain state of gratitude, obligation, or determination. Yet, although the previous praise may be a sufficient condition to establish the context for a promise, it is certainly not necessary. Thus the utterance above is an instance of a complex act of promise (ibid: 216).

However, the utterance below is an instance of a compound promise in which the second sentence "**assertion**" expresses part of the conditions for promising:

*55- I'll give you this resource. You need it.*

Since I only promise to do something if my action is beneficiary for H, the second sentence represents an essential part of the act of promising, which is therefore a compound act (ibid).

The assertive evaluation following the promise in the following sentence:

*56- I 'll give you the money, but you do not deserve it.*

seems to contradict the promise in the first sentence. Yet, this is not the case. In fact, the second clause does not primarily intend to contradict the promise, but it is an assertion which is neither a preparatory nor an auxiliary part of the promise executed by the first clause. Rather, the assertion in the second clause is a qualification of the promise. Hence, one could say for the utterance above that there is a promise, but taking a compound fact, as its interpretation: **I give you the money in the possible world which normally depends on ' you deserve it'** (ibid: 214).

Johnson (2002: 7) argues that meaning is entirely subject dependent, i.e. meaning is not a quality of a sentence which inheres in it in the same way that the actual properties inheres in the real things. Meaning is a quality of speech acts but not of sentences.

To recognize the ontological status of meaning, it is useful to examine Searle's view of meaning. Searle (1979:77) says:

Sentences and words have only the meanings that they have. Strictly speaking, whenever we talk about the metaphorical meaning of a word, an expression or a sentence we are talking about what a speaker might utter it to mean in a way that depart what the word, expression, or a sentence actually means...to have a brief way of distinguishing what a speaker means by uttering words, sentences, and expressions on the one

hand, and what the words, sentences, and expressions mean on the other, I shall call the former speaker's utterance meaning and the latter, word or sentence meaning.

Johnson (2002: 9) comments on Searle's words and shows that the position which Searle takes is that words and sentences have meanings of their own which differ from that of S's meaning in cases of indirect and metaphorical usages. When S's meaning and the literal meaning of a sentence coincide, the meaning of a sentence is that which is in accord with all of the relevant linguistic and social conventions which apply to the normal use of the sentence.

If S uses a sentence metaphorically, he gives the sentence a metaphorical meaning such that it does not have a literal meaning unless H misinterprets S and takes the sentence literally and gives it a literal interpretation. Thus it is possible to speak about a difference between the original S's meaning and the meaning of the sentence if the intention of the original S is prescinded from such that one gives a meaning to the sentence based on the applicable linguistic convention (ibid).

Searle's and Johnson's words emphasize the fact that the S's meaning and the sentence meaning are conceptually distinct at the same time they are inseparably joined together within the context of a particular speech. An appropriate instance of this fact is the expression of threat by using the verb **promise**.

Verschueren ( : 293) demonstrates that the meaning of the verb **promise** has a positive value judgment attached to it. This verb always denotes something which is benefit. In spite of this property, it can be used to express a threat:

*57- I promise I'll kill you.*

**To promise** in this utterance does not carry the negative connotation which **to threaten** is burdened with, so the verb here is used as a euphemism and hence can perfectly and effectively be used to express a threat.

Allan (1986 b: 166) points out that the principal aim for a theory of meaning is to account for the meaning of speech acts. To achieve this, he models steps necessary to determine what can reasonably be taken to be the meaning of the utterance that S utters. The meaning of an utterance can be arrived at through the following steps:

- (i) The recognition of the S's utterance.
- (ii) Recognizing that the utterance consists of a sentence spoken with prosody in language and of the sense or senses of this locution, this is based on the cooperative principles and knowledge of lexiconic, syntactic, and prosodic contributions to meaning.
- (iii) Identifying the denotational act, i.e. what the S is using the locution to refer to in the world.
- (iv) The determination of the illocutionary point of the utterance; this is based on knowledge of language and the use of language. To illustrate, in

*58-I'll go tomorrow.*

Allan (1986a: 232) shows that utterance (58) above is intended to mean:

- 1- S utters the utterance (T) in a context (C). (Hearing S utter T in C)
- 2- The utterance is a sentence spoken in the language. (Knowledge of English)
- 3- (I) refers to S, (tomorrow) refers to the day after today. (Theory of reference)

- 4- S is using the sentence in the English language to mean "S says he will go tomorrow". (Theory of denotation)
- 5- S's reason for saying that he will go tomorrow is to express his willing intention to go tomorrow. (Cooperative principle and definition of speech act)
- 6- S is promising to go tomorrow. (Definition of promise)
- 7- There is no reason to believe that any further illocutionary intention can be inferred therefore S is promising to go tomorrow. (Background information and context)

To Compare the schema for the previous utterance with utterance (59), Allan (ibid: 233) lists the following:

*59-I promise to go tomorrow.*

- 1-S utters the utterance in a context. (Hearing S utter T in C).
- 2-The utterance is spoken in the English language. (Knowledge of English)
- 3-This sentence means, "S says I promise to go tomorrow". (Theory of denotation).
- 4-(I) refers to S, (tomorrow) refers to the day after today. (Theory of reference)
- 5-The S's reason to say this sentence is to express that he undertakes and intends to go tomorrow. (Cooperative principle and definition of illocutionary act)
- 6- S is promising to go tomorrow. (Definition of promise)
- 7-There is no reason to believe that any further intention can be inferred, therefore S is promising to go tomorrow. (Background information and context).

Interestingly, steps to determine the meaning of the two utterances are identical except in step (5) i.e. utterance (58) expresses the willing intention to do something which is a promise, (59) expresses the undertaking and intention to do something which is a binding promise.

The person who hears or sees the words must already know what they mean if he is to be able to understand it. That is why, if someone does not understand the meaning of a word, you must explain it using other words, give examples or point to some real things so that he can come to what it is that you are talking about. It is clear that our words do not directly cause knowledge to appear in the mind of the other person. Instead our words are signs which prompt one to look at things in a new way so as to be able to form new concepts and thereby grow in understanding (Johnson, 2002: 5).

Thus our words can only function as a formal cause of knowledge in that if the other person already knows what the word means, and he will be able to form the appropriate concept in his own mind. Therefore if any meaningful communication is to occur between persons, there must be some intersubjective agreement as to what the words mean, given the context in which they are used. People mean things by what they say, and they give meaning to the expressions which they use, but words and sentences do not have meanings apart from being used by someone. To conclude, words have definitions and sentences have conventional usages, but only linguistic acts have meaning (ibid: 7).

## 2.6 Pragmatic View of Promise

In discussing promises, Austin limits himself to one single instance, one isolated utterance of promising. However if one looks at promises from a slightly wider perspective, one notices that the context in which a promise is

made is of the utmost importance for its status as a promise and for its binding effects.

Stubbs (1983: 156) states that if a performative verb occurs in the first person, simple present tense and in a main clause, then it will have a performative force. However, other forms may also be used to express a performative force:

*60- I promise I will come tomorrow.*

*61- I will come tomorrow.*

Arguably, item (60) has a different illocutionary force from (61). At the very least, they differ in style and emphasis. In other words, the actual use of explicit performative verb depends on the formality of the context, on the emphasis expressed, and on the function of an utterance in denying a preceding utterance (ibid).

The researcher believes that it would be quite wrong to think that the existence of the performative verb **promise** just makes the utterance explicit without changing its pragmatic meaning.

Devitt and Hanley (2003: 69) show that the following two utterances are certainly not interchangeable in the same social or discourse context, and would have different responses:

*62- I'll come tomorrow.*

*63- I hereby promise that I'll come tomorrow.*

The difference may be explained via Grice's maxim (be brief). S does not use extra words without reason, there are no paraphrases without stylistic changes (ibid).

Egner (2002: 5) labels an utterance like (62) a non-binding promise and utterance (63) as a binding promise. He thinks that politeness is the motivation for S to make the non-binding promise and the key assumption in the

inferential process leading to its correct interpretation by H is through Grice's cooperative principle and his conventional maxims which claim to formulate common standard of communication. The cooperative principle reads as follows:

*"Make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged"*

The researcher, in the following paragraphs, is trying to display Stubbs's, Devitt and Hanley's, and Egner's opinions in a simple picture through presenting the following explanation in the light of Grice's principle. S in uttering an explicit promise, he (she) makes a promise without using the explicit performative verb **promise** thereby making his promise by using less words than is required. As S is observing the conversational principle, he will not break the maxim of quantity, by using less words than is required, unless by doing so he can uphold the conversational principle at a deeper level.

If S looks at the circumstances that may occur and prevent him (her) from carrying out his (her) promise, he (she) will produce an implicit promise. In this way, S upholds the maxim of quality **being sincere** at the expense of the maxim of quantity. The point to be mentioned here is that one should not confuse the fact of S's being unable to carry out his promise, and his being careful about the circumstances that may obstacle the fulfilment of his promise, even if such circumstances do not exist at the time of uttering the promise.

Most people who are sensitive in their relation with others prefer not to put themselves under explicit undertaking even though they seriously intend to respect and fulfill their obligations. This fact does not contradict the sincerity of the promise simply because a promise is sincere when S has the sincere and

actual intention to fulfill his promise at the moment of uttering his promise. There is no blame on S if some circumstances out of his will force him not to carry out his promise.

Allan (1986a: 188) discusses this fact by giving the following example: suppose S were to sincerely say:

*64-I promise to give you my mother's ring when we get home.*

On arriving home, S finds his house burgled and the ring stolen and is so prevented from fulfilling his promise, because the facts are incompatible with what S sincerely believed to obtain. Thus sincerity conditions on speech acts involve S's responsibility for what he is saying; i.e. a promise is insincere if S willingly intends not to do the promised thing.

If one argues that the form of explicit promise involves extra words referring to the use of the performative verb **promise** (i.e. S violates the quantity maxim), again the answer will be that S observing the conversational principle upholds the maxim of quality at the expense of the quantity maxim this time to make a more emphasized and binding promise.

For Levinson (1983: 233), explicitness is a relatively specialized way of being unambiguous or specific about what act one is performing in speaking. Instead, one can employ cruder devices, less specific and explicit like the use of the adverb in (65) instead of the performative verb in (66):

*65- I'll be there without fail.*

*66- I promise I'll be there.*

In discussing the necessity of the performative verb's existence, Mey (1993: 115) mentions that children are prone to literalism. For them, a promise is only one that has the word **promise** in it; just as a lie is only that which is called a lie. But in a normal adult contact it should not be so formalistic. In fact one should concentrate on the people who promise rather than what they

say. On the one side of the fence, there are orthodox '**speech act verbers**' for whom a speech act is only valid on condition that there is a valid speech act verb present (as what one often sees it happens among children). On the other side, there are people who point out that some of our most binding promises are given without the verb to promise ever coming into play, as the standard Christian marriage ritual. Worse even, if S says **I promise** in an answer to the question **will thou have this woman for thy wife?** He does not meet the felicity conditions for this kind of promise.

The researcher assures the importance of not confusing the actual verbs with the illocutionary force of the utterance. The two things are closely related but not always the same thing. For instance in utterance (67) below the verb **promise** expresses the illocutionary act of promising, while in utterance (68) it expresses the illocutionary force of threat rather than a promise:

67- *I promise to help you.* (Explicit promise)

68- *I promise to make you regret.* (Implicit threat)

The researcher in this aspect disagrees with Allan's view (1986a: 196) that promise and threat stem from the illocution of promising, and that this name **promising** has been chosen for the common illocution because there is a performative verb **promise** but no performative verb **threaten**:

69- *I warn you, I promise I'll shoot you if you come any closer.*

70- *\*I warn you, I threaten you I'll shoot you if you come any closer.*

Accordingly, the verb **threat** cannot be used to make a threat only to report one:

71- *What I do in the next scene is that I threat to shoot you when you get back from the party.*

The verbs **promise** and **threat** are classified as subclasses of the commissives since they commit S to a certain course of action, future oriented

and operate a change in the world by means of creating an obligation on the part of S. Having shared these characteristics does not mean that they express the same illocutions simply because they have different meanings and different circumstances to be used performatively. To support her opinion, the researcher presents the following arguments made by some linguists which confirm that the verb **threat** has its own syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels that distinguish it from the performative promise.

In an answer to the claim that the verb **threat** cannot be used performatively, it is useful to mention that Palmer (1963: 277) presents the following patterns in which **threat** occurs as a performative verb:

- **S + VP + prepositional phrase.**

*72- I threaten you with punishment.*

- **S + VP + (not) to infinitive.**

*73- I threaten to punish you.*

Beller (2002: 2) on the other hand talks about the form of implicit threat and that it can be expressed by using a disjunctive formulation:

*74-Come early or I'll dismiss you.*

Semantically, this formulation marks alternative. In the case of threat this formulation enables S to express both his goal and the punishment: **refrain from doing the desired behaviour or I will punish you.**

Threat can also be expressed by the conjunctive **and**:

*75-Talk again and I'll dismiss you.*

Semantically, the domain of threat in this utterance is restricted by **talking again** just as is the case in conditional threat **If you talk again I'll dismiss you** (ibid).

Searle (1969:58) draws a distinction between promise and threat:

A promise is a pledge to do something for you, not to you; but a threat is a pledge to do something to you not for you. A promise is defective if the thing promised is something the promisee does not want done; and it is further defective if the promisor does not believe the promisee wants it done since a non-defective promise must be intended as a promise and not a threat or warning. Furthermore, a promise, unlike an invitation, normally requires sort of occasion or situation that calls for the promise. A crucial feature of such occasions seems to be that the promisee wishes, needs, or desires that something be done. I think both halves of this double condition are necessary in order to avoid fairly obvious counter examples.

A threat is situationally different from a promise. That is when S threatens H to do something, S believes that H does not want this thing to be carried out. At the same time, S is willing to carry out his threat and is able to do so, and H is aware of the S's authority and ability to fulfill his threat (Devitt and Hanley, 2003: 76).

It is clear now that what determines the illocutionary force of the utterance is the context or the situation in which it occurs. The existence of the performative verb does not necessarily indicate the illocutionary force of the utterance. There are many cases where an utterance is ambiguous or indeterminate between a promise and a threat since the same verb is used for both:

*76- I promise that I'll make you practice regularly.*

“If this utterance is uttered by a fond parent to a child embarking on learning a musical instrument, it will be interpreted as a promise” (Allan, 1986a: 195). If it is uttered by a teacher to a careless student who used to neglect his duties, then it is a threat. The same thing can be said concerning the modals used to express the illocutionary act of promising and threatening:

*77- I'll mark your paper this evening without fail (ibid).*

This utterance can be either an implicit promise if it is said to a student who has done well, and is eager to show his paper to be estimated and appreciated by his teacher. Or it can be an implicit threat if it is said to a student who fails to do well. In such a case, the utterance implies that the student may be punished.

For Searle, the rules for performing and interpreting the illocutionary acts are conventional: "It is a matter of convention ...that the utterance of such and such expressions under certain conditions counts as the making of a promise." (Searle, 1969: 37). Hence if one asks why a sentence such as

*78- I'll pay you tomorrow.*

spoken by someone who has just borrowed some money, counts as a promise in Searle's definition, the only answer must be **because the rules say so**.

Leech (1983: 24) takes the opposite direction from Searle's, for him a promise is recognized as a promise not by means of rules (except insofar as rules are required in determining sense), but by means of a recognition of S's motive. Searle's rules apply only to the extent that they specify conditions which will normally follow from that recognition. What is conventional is the semantic fact that a sentence of the syntactic form **I'll pay you tomorrow** expresses a proposition describing a particular future act by S. That is, the sense is conventional in that it is deducible from the rules of grammar; but the

force is arrived at by means of a motivated principle such as the conversational principle.

Verschueren and Parret (1980: 81) show that for as the abstract logical meaning is concerned, sentences can be understood in the same way:

*79- I will be here at 9:15 tomorrow.*

*80- You will be here at 9:15 tomorrow.*

*81- He will be here at 9:15 tomorrow.*

Apart from the change of personal pronouns, the intentional or predicative meaning of (will) is present in all cases. Pragmatics enters into the picture, however when one asks how would these sentences be likely interpreted in a conversational context. Those sentences referring to S and H (containing 1st person and 2nd person forms) would acquire a special pragmatic force. Thus utterance (79) can be interpreted as a promise, utterance (80) can be used as a command, and (81) as a prediction depending on the different personal pronouns and the contexts of their occurrences.

Van Dijk (1977: 239) discusses a particular kind of promise namely the macro –act of promising. Macro act of promising is performed by a sequence of acts which are intended, understood, and hence function socially as an act of promising. The following conversation consists of various speech acts as praise, question, assertion, suggestion, confirmation, and promise, but the whole conversation functions as a promise:

*82- Parent looking at a painting done by his son:*

*P- But this is a fantastic painting! Did you do this!?*

*S- Of course I did!*

*P- It's terrific. I like it. But I see you need some more paints.*

*S- Yes, the blue and the red are nearly empty.*

*P- Tomorrow I'll bring you some new ones.*

*S- Please, do not forget them.*

*P- I'll tie a knot in my handkerchief.*

All speech acts in this conversation are optional, or preparatory, or auxiliary acts, such that the context is established for the main speech act of promise. Thus the praise first of all, is conventionally followed by "it is an unbelievable game", in which agents especially parents and children, teachers and pupils engage in order to enhance the praise (ibid: 240).

The praise, traditionally, establishes a weak obligation for the one giving praise, via a form of recompense. Such an act of recompense is successful only when an act is performed which benefits the praised /recompensed person, i.e. when a wanted present is given. This need must first be made conscious by a suggestion like "but I see you need some more paints". If this suggestion is accepted, the one making the suggestion is committed to giving a present, a commitment expressed by the promise to bring it in the near future. By an ironical question, presupposing the breach of a past promise, the son then tries to strengthen the commitment of the parent, who then must guarantee the proper execution of his promise (ibid).

It may be the case that this particular content is not directly expressed in a particular sentence of the discourse, but is macro entailed by the discourse as a whole, typically so in indirect promise. For instance at the end of a longer speech, one may say, "this is a promise". Such an expression is what one might be called macro performative of promise. These sentences themselves are not explicit promise but they express the illocutionary force of the discourse as a whole.

Stubbs (1983: 155) proposes a test for performative verb in addition to the one which involves the insertion of **hereby** before the verb. This test

involves the question whether the saying of an utterance is the only way to perform the act. For example, one cannot promise without saying something to someone. A more accurate formulation is that someone must say something in using a performative verb. So one might have:

83- A- *Do you promise?*

B- (*Nods head*).

which commits B to the promise although B has said nothing. In fact, the proposition, the identification of the speech act may be separated and distributed across different utterances by different speakers:

84- A- *Are you coming?*

B- *Yes.*

A- *Promise?*

B- *Yes.*

Boguslawski (1983b: 611) illustrates that a promise is an event which is correctly describable by means of the linguistic unit and which may or may not be characterized by any further features, does not amount to S's effective undertaking of an intersubjective obligation to do something good to someone else. A promise might turn out to be such an obligation if S's mental state concerning the goal and circumstances of his speech act properly matches the reality. A speech act becomes thus a promise relative to S's knowledge or suppositions. For example, an utterance like:

85- *I'll give you this book.*

has to be called a promise if it is made by someone who just missed the moment of his purported addressee's disappearance. After his having turned away a little from the addressee (while there was no one else to hear the utterance), he thought that the addressee would hear his utterance but this did not happen. He has not been placed under an intersubjective obligation to give

the addressee that book for the simple reason that his utterance had not been heard by anyone; all the other features of a normal situation of promise might have obtained.

Boguslawski's opinion seems to be based on Austin's point of view:

It is obviously necessary that to have promised, I must normally (a) have been heard by someone, perhaps the promisee;(b) have been understood by him as promising. If one or another of these conditions is not satisfied, doubts arise as to whether I have really promised, and it might be held that my act was only attempted or was void (Austin, 1962: 22).

A real promisor believes that his utterance will be taken to involve his placing himself under the relevant obligation and to reflect his knowledge or supposition concerning the probability of ensuing acceptance of that obligation by the addressee. In fact the two notions: that of S's action preventing the H dissatisfaction and that of S's obligation to undertake that action constitute the main pillars of the concept of promise. Without the notion of preventing the H's dissatisfaction one would merely have a proposal of an alternative agreement, i.e. S does so and so and there are no special consequences disagreeable to him. And without the notion of obligation one would only have a declaration of intention supposedly being in harmony with H's preference, such a declaration need not be a promise (Thanasoulas, 2003: 63).

For the addressee to accept S's obligation, the addressee must believe that:

- (i) S's declaration of intention is sincere.

- (ii) It is possible for S not only to act so as to bring the state of affairs, but also actually to bring it about, provided no special obstacles which are not currently predictable to prevent it.
- (iii) S's declaration to act imposes a special burden on him.
- (iv) Some other burden is associated for S with his possible failure to perform the act when such a failure is dependent on him.
- (v) The burden referred to in (iii) and (iv) is not as serious to make the addressee not want S's undertaking the action (ibid: 65).

The above characterization of accepting someone's obligation implies that for anyone who accepts an obligation it is necessary that:

- (i) It is not the case that he thinks S would perform the act anyway, with the same probability as in the case the utterance has not taken place.
- (ii) He does think the act in question is feasible for S and,
- (iii) It is not the case that he thinks that S undertakes so great an effort or sacrifice that he would be more dissatisfied by S's resulting harm, than by the possible failure to achieve his own end. The following examples illustrate the above entailments in the same order:

*86- I promise you that I'll sleep this night.*

Even if it is true that the addressee would suffer severely because of S's failing to sleep that night, he cannot accept (86) as an obligation insofar as he knows that S will fall asleep anyway; and S knows very well that the addressee knows that (Boguslawski, 1983b: 616).

*87- I hereby promise to give every orphan in Africa, India, and South America \$1million each*

If S who says this utterance is deemed to be talking about the familiar everyday world, then this promise could not be judged genuine and H cannot accept the obligation undertaken by this utterance because no individual,

institution or even nation would have enough money to go round. The thing promised is not possible (Allan, 1986a: 162).

*88- I promise you that I'll sack all your offenders.*

Suppose this utterance to be what a manager said to his friend who knows that the action announced is certain to completely destroy the manager's career perhaps even his life. Any normal addressee will not accept the obligation undertaken by this utterance (Boguslawski, 1983b: 616).

Boguslawski (ibid: 619) suggests several features of the obligation undertaken by a sincere promisor:

First, although it is certainly the most common case that the one to exact the obligation is the promisee, we can imagine a genuine promise where the only possible punishment is a negative moral judgement about himself on the promisor's part, who unintentionally fails to carry out his promise. But the promisor knows that the promisee's moral system does not provide for any such judgment about one who fails to do what he has announced to do, and that the promisee simply knows that the promisor's moral system includes conventional obligations undertaken by means of making an utterance such as that of a promise. In fact a negative moral judgment may come not only from the promisee, but from the promisor himself, or from a third party. This means that the notion of obligation covers the whole range of possible relations of the promisor with respect to other people connected with the notion of obligation.

Second, the obligation undertaken in a promise is, more often than not, of a moral character. But it need not be so. Imagine a person (A) whom someone else (B) learns to steal a watch for him from time to time; imagine furthermore, that whenever (A) fails to bring (B) one, having told him he would (something (A) feels he has to do from time to time ), (A) is cruelly

beaten by ( B). The natural way of describing the situation is that (A) on a particular occasion has promised (B) to bring him a watch.

Thus the notion of obligation need not have the form of remorse, i.e. one may assume other forms. This seems to make it necessary to speak in the definition of promise not of **moral obligation** but of obligation in general. So there is no denying that among promises, those involving a moral obligation widely prevail and occupy a special, particularly important position.

The main state of affairs the promisor tries to make known to the promisee is his current intention to act toward a certain end. Intention is the appropriate word here in as much as it entails some preparatory making up one's mind and a kind of self-orientation as regard the S's future behaviour, something the presence of which has to be suggested (at least in the S's opinion) to the addressee if we are to be confronted with a case of genuine promise. An announcement of a sudden decision or determination to directly help someone where no effort to carry this out is required and consequently, there is no kind of problem solving (not even in most simple way) can hardly be called **promise** in a natural way; thus when someone sees a thirsty person and exclaims:

*89- I'll bring you a glass of water.*

A glass of water being readily available, it would be an exaggeration to describe him as having promised rather **having told, having offered, having announced** (ibid: 324).

Promises (Nurmi, 2002: 54) can be discussed under the term of politeness theory discussed by Brown and Levinson (1987). Politeness refers to the theoretical construct to explain the link between language use and social context. In framing our actions (including our utterances) we naturally seek to minimize the threat to other's face (the threat to the positive social value a

person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact). According to Brown and Levinson, face comprises of two universal wants:

Negative face wants: the need to be independent, to have freedom of action and not to be imposed by others. The word "negative" here does not mean (bad), it is just the opposite pole from positive. Promises, requests, offers, and compliments are examples of negative face wants.

Positive face wants: person's need to be accepted and liked by others, to be treated as a member of the same group and to know that their wants are shared by others. Disagreement, apologies, and complaints are examples of positive face wants.

When a person makes a promise, a face saving act is oriented to H's negative face tending to show deference and emphasize the importance of other's time or concerns. For instance; teachers' promises to their students reflect their appreciation and concern of their students' achievements and efforts they spent in doing well their duties and lessons. This in turn satisfies the students' needs of trusting themselves and their doings and this in turn motivates the students to do their best (Stalanker, 1999: 51).

The researcher would like to highlight the fact that the teacher's sincere promises and the way he uses to give such promises can emerge the students to respond to their teacher's words and directions without having the feeling of being imposed upon by the endless advice or remarks of adults whether teachers, parents or others. This can be achieved by providing the students with a feeling of freedom i.e. they have their own choice and their own right to decide. This can best be fulfilled through the act of promising than the other acts such as orders, commands, etc. An utterance such as:

*90-I'll reward you, if you get 90% in Math*

touches the student's will and desire to have the reward, and satisfies his sense of being free in his choice, that is if he cooperates he will get the promised thing, if he does not he will get nothing. Both the feeling of freedom, and the personal desire and ambition to be in the best position will lead any normal student to cooperate and double his effort to achieve the best.

This indicates the importance of promise as an effective device in education and learning since it can realize and satisfy the psychological state of the student, and cope with every detail in the student's psychological background. This is what will be discussed in the next chapter in the light of reinforcement theory.

### 2.6.1 Felicity Conditions of Promise

The original idea in Austin's "How to Do Things with Words" (1962) is that performative utterances are fundamentally different from constative (or descriptive) utterances. Whereas constative utterances could be evaluated in traditional terms of truth and falsehood, performatives were neither true nor false. Instead, they were to be regarded as felicitous or non-felicitous (Leech, 1983: 167).

Felicity conditions can be defined as "certain expected or appropriate circumstances for the performance of a speech act to be recognized as intended" (Yule, 1996: 50).

Austin (1962: 14-15) produces the following typology of conditions which a particular act must meet if it is to succeed or be happy:

- (A.1) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, the procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances.

(A.2) The particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.

(B.1) The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and

(B.2) Completely.

(C.1) Where, as often, the procedure is designed by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts and feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves, and further

(C.2) Must actually so conduct themselves subsequently.

Allan (1986a: 182) shows that Austin in this typology argues for four kinds of felicity conditions: conditions (A.1-2) describe preparatory conditions (to establish whether or not the circumstances of the speech act and the participants are appropriate to its being performed successfully); conditions (B.1-2) describe executive conditions (to determine whether or not the speech act has been properly executed); condition (C.1) describes a sincerity condition (the sincere intention do the act); and condition (C.2) is a fulfilment condition.

In order to illustrate these felicity conditions, Allan (1986a: 183) takes as an instance the marriage ceremony (which is regarded as the most important and sacred type of promises). There are only certain ceremonial conditions under which the effecting of a marriage rite can legitimately take place. Thus, although anyone at all can utter the following words under any circumstances whatever, the illocutionary act will be invalid unless certain conventional circumstances prevail:

*91- Curate: Wilt thou have this woman to the wedded wife...and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?*

*-Bridegroom: I will.*

Only under certain circumstances conventionally recognized as constituting a marriage ceremony, and only with the addressees who are a man and a woman (over the age of 16), and then only with the certain legally defined members of the community functioning as marriage celebrants the uttering of the words above can felicitously affect a marriage rite. These are the preparatory conditions (A. 1- 2).

The Bridegroom is expected to say: **I will** in order for the "procedure" to be valid and ratified. The words uttered must be correct in order to complete the procedure "Executive conditions B. 1-2". Pertaining to condition (C), one could say that violating it is tantamount to being insincere, as in saying (92) when you know that there is no such a party tonight (violation of condition C. (1)), or (93) when you have no intention of doing the act (violation of condition C (2)) (Duranti, 1997: 4).

*92-I promise to take you to the tea party at Allan's house tonight.*

*93-I promise I'll call you tonight.*

According to Searle (1969: 137) when S utters a sentence in the presence of H, then in the utterance of this sentence, S sincerely makes a promise only if:

1- Normal input and output obtain

The terms **input** and **output** cover the large and indefinite range of conditions under which any kind of serious linguistic communication is possible. **Out put** covers the conditions for intelligible speaking and **input** covers the conditions for understanding. Together they include such things as

that S and H both know how to speak the language. Both are conscious of what they are doing; S is not acting under duress or threats; they have no physical impediments to communication, such as deafness, aphasia, or laryngitis; they are not acting in a play or telling jokes, etc.

2- S expresses that proposition (P) in the utterance of T

This condition isolates the propositional content from the rest of the speech act and enables us to concentrate on the peculiarities of promising.

3- In expressing that P, S predicates a future act (A) of S

In the case of promising the function indicating device is an expression whose scope includes certain features of the proposition. In a promise an act must be predicated of S and it cannot be a past act. I cannot promise to have done something, and I cannot promise that someone else will do something. (Although I can promise to see that he will do it.).

The notion of an act includes refraining from acts, performing series of acts, and may also include states and conditions: I may promise not to do something, I may promise to do something repeatedly, and I may promise to be or remain in a certain state or condition. Conditions (2) and (3) are called the **propositional content conditions**.

4- H would prefer S's doing A to his not doing A, and S believes H would prefer his doing A to his not doing A.

The point stated in this condition is that if a purported promise is to be non-defective the thing promised must be something H wants done, or considers to be in his interest, or would prefer being done to not being done; and S must be aware of or believe or know, etc that this is the case.

5- It is not obvious to both S and H that S will do A in the normal course of events.

It is out of order for me to promise to do something that it is obvious I am going to do anyhow. If I do seem to be making such a promise, the only way my audience can make sense of my utterance is to assume that I believe that it is not obvious that I am going to do the thing promised.

6- S intends to do A

The most important distinction between sincere and insincere promises is that in the case of sincere promise S intends to do the act promised, in the case of insincere promise he does not intend to do the act. Also in sincere promises S believes it is possible for him to do the act (or to refrain from doing it), but I think the proposition that he intends to do it entails that he thinks it is possible to do (or refrain from doing) it. This condition is the **sincerity condition**.

7- S intends that the utterance of T will place him under an obligation to do A.

The essential feature of a promise is that it is the undertaking of an obligation to perform a certain act. This condition distinguishes promises from other kinds of speech acts. Notice that in the statement of the condition we only specify S's intention; further conditions will make clear how that intention is realized. It is clear, however, that having this intention is a necessary condition of making a promise; for if S can demonstrate that he did not have this intention in a given utterance, he can prove that the utterance was not a promise. For example, Mr Pickwick did not promise to marry the woman because we know he did not have the appropriate intention.

8- S intends that the utterance of T will produce in H a belief that conditions (6) and (7) obtain by means of the recognition of the intention to produce that belief, and he intends this recognition to be achieved by means of the recognition of the sentence as one conventionally used to produce such beliefs.

9- The semantically rules of the dialect spoken by S and H are such that T is correctly and sincerely uttered if and only if conditions (1) - (8) obtain.

Yule (1996: 50) argues that in everyday contexts among ordinary people, there are conditions on speech acts. These are:

- 1- The general conditions on the participants: For example, they can understand the language being used and that they are not playing acts or being nonsensical.
- 2- Content conditions: for a promise, the content of the utterance must be about a future event, and that future event is a future act of S.
- 3- Preparatory conditions: when I promise to do something, there are two preparatory conditions: first, the event will not happen by itself, and second, the event will have a beneficial effect.
- 4-Sincerity condition: S genuinely intends to carry out the future action.
- 5-Essential condition: which covers the fact that by the act of uttering a promise, I hereby intend to carry out the action as promised. In other words, the utterance changes my state from non- obligation to obligation. This essential condition thus combines with a specification of what must be in the utterance content, the context, and S's intentions, in order for a specific speech act to be appropriately (felicitously) performed.

Consider some of the ways in which one's promise can be infelicitous. If S says:

*94-I promise you that it rained yesterday.*

, he would be violating the propositional content condition. Although this sentence is legitimate as an emphatic assertion, it is not really a promise. If one says:

*95- I promise you that I'll breathe tomorrow.*

, he would be violating the preparatory condition. Promises must be about something one might not necessarily do. If one says:

*96- I promise you that I will go home tomorrow.*

but had no intention of doing so, he would be violating the sincerity condition. And if one had made this promise but did not think he had obligated himself to go home tomorrow, he would be violating the essential condition (Clark and Clark, 1977: 242).

Levinson (1983: 238) summarizes the felicity conditions of promise in the ten points below. He mentions that some of these conditions are general to all kinds of illocutionary acts (namely 7-10). The other conditions (namely 1-6) are actually constitutive of promising:

- 1- S said he would perform a future action.
- 2- He intends to do it.
- 3- He believes he can do it.
- 4- He thinks he would not do it anyway, in the normal course of action.
- 5- He thinks the addressee wants him to do it (rather than not to do it).
- 6- He intends to place himself under an obligation to do it by uttering T.
- 7- Both S and H comprehend T.
- 8- They are both conscious, normal human beings.
- 9- They are both in normal circumstances-not e.g. acting in a play.
- 10- The utterance T contains some illocutionary forces indicating devices (IFID), which is only properly uttered if all the appropriate conditions obtain.

Mey (1993:118) says: "Felicity conditions are not merely dimensions on which utterances can go wrong, but are actually jointly constitutive of various

illocutionary forces". He presents the following conditions necessary for a promise to be performed:

- 1- Normal conditions must obtain for input and output. By this, one means that Ss know how to deal with the language. They must of course speak it, furthermore they must abstain from what Searle calls **parasitic use of language** such as jokes and acting.
- 2- The promise must have content: that which remains as the kernel of the utterance after we have done away with the promise part. Thus in **I promise I'll be there tomorrow** the propositional content is for me to be there tomorrow (or more precisely the day after today).
- 3- At the moment of uttering, the content of the promise must have to do with a future, possible action of S. Clearly, one cannot promise a thing that has happened in the past.
- 4- Clearly, the thing promised must be to the advantage of the promisee...even though the promisor uses the words **I promise**, there is no promise unless it is to the advantage of the promisee. Besides, the situation must be of such a nature that the promisor is certain of the promisee's needs, so that the latter agrees as to the beneficial effect of the content of the promise, and so on. From this, it would follow that a threat remains a threat, in accordance with the mentioned above, even though its wording is that of a promise:
 

*97- If you do not behave, I promise there's going to be trouble*
- 5- The content of the promise must not be something which is going to happen anyway; I cannot promise that the sun will rise tomorrow.

Conditions (4) and (5) are often called **preparatory conditions**.

- 6- This condition has to do with the sincerity of the promisor in carrying out the act of promising. This implies that the sincere promisor must intend to carry out the act that he or she promises to do. Without this intention, we have no sincere promise. This condition is the **sincerity condition**.
- 7- A promisor intends to put himself under the obligation of carrying out the promised act. This is more than just intending to carry out the act: only if the intention is corroborated by the recognition of an inevitable obligation can one properly speak of a promise. This is the essential condition of promise. Conversely, if a prospective promise does not have this property of S being sincere in his intention, as well as being serious about his obligation, then we do not have a promise.

An examination of the of the felicity conditions mentioned above shows clearly that most of the linguists and writers depend mainly on Searle's count of the felicity conditions. Searle lists the sufficient conditions for promising in detail and in a comprehensive style. These conditions are necessary for expecting one's communicative illocutionary intention to be recognized. Satisfaction of the input-output conditions enables H to identify the utterance act. Satisfaction of the propositional content and the preparatory conditions enables H to limit the type of illocutionary act to the act of promising; i.e. delimit the types of illocutionary acts that could be performed in S's utterance. Satisfaction of the essential condition enables H to identify what the illocutionary act is. The sincerity condition is necessary for the act of promising to succeed communicatively.

Although S's choice of speech act has to take account of these felicity conditions, little is known about how they make this choice. Take Allan's promise to Ben:

*98-I promise you that I will go home tomorrow.*

Does Allan begins with the intention of going home (sincerity condition) and then makes sure the other conditions hold? Do the preparatory conditions have to hold before Allan even thinks of intending to go home (sincerity condition)? Does Allan ever commit himself before realizing that he intends to go home tomorrow (sincerity condition)? There may be no uniform procedure by which Ss make their selection of a speech act. Different circumstances may lead by different routes to the same end (Clark and Clark, 1977: 243).

Take this example of a question-answer sequence (ibid):

*99- A- Are you coming tonight?*

*B- Can I bring a guest?*

*A- Sure.*

*B- I'll be there.*

Before B answers A's question, he needs more information. Thus, he inserts his question **Can I bring a guest?** and gets A's answer **sure** before he attempts to answer A's original question. B's question and A's answer together are called **an insertion sequence**. But this insertion can itself contain insertion sequence and, so on. Note that B's original insertion sequence served as an attempt to satisfy certain conditions on his promise **I'll be there**.

Although B could satisfy the propositional condition and the preparatory condition, he did not intend to go (sincerity condition) and would not commit himself to go (essential condition) unless he could bring a guest. After determining that he could, he could then commit himself and sincerely intend to go. In this example, part of B's problem solving in deciding on his promise

is made explicit. B is assuring himself of the sincerity and essential condition before promising **he'll be there**. This proves that the selection of a particular act based on the felicity conditions is determined by the circumstances. Whatever their order of occurrence, all of these conditions must be present for the act to be felicitous.

# Chapter Three

## Promise : Some Methodological Remarks

### 3.1. Introduction

Among the principles of behavioural learning theories is that reinforcers are stimuli (consequences) that bring about the increase or the decrease of a behaviour through the presentation of a stimulus in the case of positive reinforcer (reward), and the removal of a stimulus in the case of negative reinforcer (punishment). A behaviour is thus a function of the consequences associated with that behaviour. Simply, people tend to do things that lead to positive consequences and avoid doing things that lead to unpleasant consequences. The relationship between a behaviour and its consequences is called a reinforcement contingency. Contingency is a situation in which one event happens only after another event has already occurred. One event is contingent on another's prior occurrence. In addition to positive and negative reinforcers there are two other kinds: the secondary and the primary reinforcers. A stimulus which is related to the individual's basic needs is a primary reinforcer while the secondary reinforcer is any stimulus which becomes reinforcing by accompanying the primary reinforcer.

According to behavioural learning theories, shaping individuals' behaviour which occurs through timely feedback (reward or punishment) is an effective teaching practice. Such a practice is highly influenced by the schedules of reinforcement which may increase the probability, frequency, or persistence of the desired behaviour. Behavioural learning theories are thus central to the application of educational psychology in classroom management, motivation, instructional models and other areas. This chapter

is intended to discuss the act of promising as a reinforcer which, if used correctly, is central in creating a positive learning environment.

### 3.2. Promise as a Secondary Reinforcer

Secondary reinforcement occurs when a stimulus, ordinarily neutral, acquires reinforcing properties by pairing it with a primary reinforcer (Stagner, 1961: 100).

There is little doubt that the findings with regard to the effect of secondary reinforcement have great applications to the classroom situation. In the learning-long experience, teachers and educators try to use secondary reinforcers in a continuous chain of interactions with students. Teachers often use praise, approval, promise of reward, and threat of punishment, etc as stimuli to keep their students motivated to achieve more basic goals.

Plant (2003: 9) points out that students study in part because they repeatedly remind themselves of the long range and progress towards a valued future. Secondary reinforcers, including appreciation, teachers' attention, praise, promises of rewards and grades, may make the work a little more pleasant and probably remind students of their long-range goals which are the powerful motivators.

In fact calling the act of promising a secondary reinforcer does not mean that its influence on students' behaviour is less important than primary reinforcers (their long –range goals). Indeed, the opposite seems to be true. If one takes into consideration the fact that "remoteness of students' primary or basic goals makes these goals fairly hard and they may stretch the students" (Lenard, 1997: 3), it becomes clear that promise as a secondary reinforcer has a much greater influence on students' day to day behaviour than a primary reinforcer.

Teachers-students interaction turns to be cold and boring especially when the material is not highly interesting. Thus, teachers apply a variety of reinforcers which functions as

incentives for learning. Such reinforcers carry the burden of teachers-students interaction and bridge the gap between the behaviour and its eventual primary reinforcement (Wood, 1995: 15).

Promises of positive consequences play an important role in directing students towards the right and the proper behaviour. According to Ames (1999: 32), when such consequences come from human beings other than parents, they do much more than merely increase the probability that the response will be repeated and learned. They come to be sought for themselves. Many of our highly valued activities are undertaken not for their own sake but as instrumental in getting other people notice, appreciate, honour, and help us.

Wiggins et al (1976: 56) discuss the idea of reinforcement by observation. They state that people who are in low self-esteem, people who are incompetent at a particular task, and people who are emotionally aroused and uncertain all tend to watch others closely and follow their actions. Such situations are sometimes termed instances of vicarious reward for the observer. Teachers who fulfilled promises motivate the promisees and at the same time make them models for the students who are incompetent. Those models (rewarded students) of course experience rewarding consequences for their behaviours. The same consequences are reinforcing for the incompetent students. They are not rewarded directly, but may have the empathic experience of reward by watching other students' apparent pleasure. A belief on the students' part that they too will be rewarded if they follow their colleagues' actions will fire them to do the best.

Lepper (2002: 19) indicates that one cannot be sure what will be a reinforcer and what will not because the reinforcing value of most reinforcers is largely determined by personal or situational factors. When a

teacher says: “I want you all to be sure to hand in your book reports on time, this will count toward high grades”. The teacher may be assuming that grades are effective reinforcers for most students. However, some students may not care about grades because they have a history of failure in school. So, they have decided that promises of grades are unimportant.

In fact, the school is a socializing agent, and the entire procedure of establishing a contingency between a promise as a secondary reinforcer and students' behaviour and shifting the criterion to direct students to primary goal is, in psychological sense, a process of shaping students to have experiences that lead to growth. Such a process requires the teacher to be aware of the students' personalities, the individual differences between them, and the things interesting for them. If the teacher succeeds in using promises in a way that sates the students' needs and keeps the future in their mind, he will create an interesting learning environment and well-qualified and highly co-operative students.

### **3.3. Promise as an Extrinsic Reinforcer**

Extrinsic reinforcers are administered by external sources such as co-workers, supervisors, or the organization. Promotion to higher jobs and recognition from peers are extrinsic reinforcers since they are administered by external sources. Even though the reinforcers are not tangible and physical rewards, they are classified as extrinsic since they are administered by others. Promises from parents, teachers, and friends are likewise extrinsic reinforcers (Marr, 2000: 12).

Intrinsic reinforcers are associated with the job itself and refer to the positive feelings individuals derive from the work they do. Intrinsic reinforcers are self-administered and are based upon the personal values of each individual. For instance, individuals who have a highly need for achievement feel rewarded when they achieve challenging goals (ibid).

The concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic reinforcers are cardinal concepts in social and humanistic fields. They interact in specific ways that can in turn be observed through observation of individuals in work, schools, and other institutionalized settings.

A classical contention in education is that giving extrinsic reinforcer (promises of grades, tangible rewards, and other privileges) for doing something that should be quite pleasurable, like studying, would reduce the intrinsic satisfaction obtained from studying. Consequently such reinforcers would be problematic in the course of a life time of learning, i.e. providing an incentive programme to encourage high productivity is likely to actually reduce the learners' intrinsic interest in their work and, thus, would be in the long run, counter-productive (Kohn, 1993: 15).

Adopting the classical contention, Cameron (2001: 19) observes that if the extrinsic reward system has been designed to control ones' action and quickly produces some product or accomplishes a very precise outcome, the required actions will very likely focus ones' attention on each small precise step and on speed. This concentration on efficiency will result in little motivation to be creative and little intrinsic satisfaction in the activity. Similarly, when one strives to gain someone's praise, promised reward, or approval, that effort is likely to detract one from enjoying accomplishing the task.

Interestingly, the point adopted against promises as extrinsic reinforcers is that pupils may learn to work only for getting the promised reward or to get the approval of the person in authority represented by the teacher.

Unlike Cameron, Williams (1993: 11) points out that the threat of punishment and promises of future rewards (called incentive motivators) may be successfully used to motivate action. If the individual makes the response only because of these extrinsic motivators provided by avoidance

of pain or anticipation of reward, he/she will be less likely to earn the intrinsic value of the task activity itself.

Brewster and Fager (2000: 79) report the following experiment about the negative effect of extrinsic reinforcer on the intrinsic interest. Fifty one preschool children who showed an initiated intrinsic interest in the drawing activity were randomly assigned to one of three groups: extrinsic reward promised for the engaging in the drawing activity, no reward promised but received, and no reward promised or received. One to two weeks later, the drawing activity was again introduced into the classroom and the children's behaviour was observed and recorded. The results show that promising a reward for engaging in an initially interesting, freely chosen activity lowers its value. It also reduces the amount of time needed to engage in the activity for its sake. The children in the promised reward group spent only half as much time on the target activity as did those in the other two conditions. Children in the other two conditions did not differ from each other in time spent on the target activity.

Extrinsic reinforcer in this situation transformed intrinsically motivated children into free- interpose entrepreneur. This means that even positive reinforcement may be counter-productive in its effect on the emission of behaviours that would have been practiced for their own sake (ibid).

Stipek (1999: 29) who reports the same experiment, has a different opinion concerning the results. He says:

In understanding the results of this study it is important to recall the conditions of the research. The students chosen for the study were ones who showed an intrinsic interest in the drawing activity; those who did not were excluded from the experiment. Many children love to draw, but few are interested in school subjects such as grammar, mathematics, etc. In fact, research on

older students doing more school-like tasks has generally failed to replicate the results of the experiment with children. The promise of rewards sometimes increases motivation especially when rewards are contingent on the quality of performance rather than on mere participation in an activity; when the promises are seen as recognition of competence, when the task in question is not very interesting or when the reinforcer is social rather than material.

Adlerian psychologists oppose the promises because they emphasize the controlling or superior position of the promisor, and the dependent, inferior position of the promisee. Those psychologists resent any reward system. They view that such a system makes people feel that they are being treated as a child or in a mechanical impersonal manipulative manner (Rolls, 2001: 9).

The same idea has been discussed by Deci (1999: 17) in the light of reactance theory. This theory rests on the assumption that people are motivated to maintain their freedom of action. When this freedom is threatened in any way, they will react by doing whatever they can do to restore it. Gifted students may see grades, teachers' evaluation, promises, and even praise as unpleasant, unwanted controls and pressure. This external pressure may be considered unimportant or be resented and resisted. Partly as a result of such a feeling, the students harbor some resistance to this pressure, which represents an external control.

The arguments mentioned above present a controversy about two contradictory directions: promises as an extrinsic reinforcer reduce the intrinsic interest; the opposite direction is that promises increase the intrinsic interest. The first direction is counter to the basic laws of learning. It implies that rewarding the behaviour makes it less likely to occur. The other direction confirms to the basic laws of learning. This contradiction

can be solved by comprehending the fact that learning is more effective when it is within full understanding of the reinforcement process. Only wrong employment and misuse of reinforcers “may lead to learning and to situational applications that are antitheses of what teachers (socializing agent) intended” (Pressey et al, 1933: 399)

Before reinforcing their students, teachers for instance must distinguish between intrinsically and extrinsically motivated students. “The former are thought to relate to long term success. Intrinsically motivated students are said to be guided by their interest in the task in which they are engaged whereas the extrinsic motivated students are said to be guided by external stimulus, such as parental approval, promises of rewards, threats of punishments, and good grades (Els et al, 1977: 117).

Promises for students doing certain tasks usually increase their intrinsic satisfaction in their tasks. The exception to this is when the students are intrinsically interested in those tasks and the promised reward is contingent on successfully completing a specific step, or the fulfilment of the promise communicates that students need to speed up. In such situations students may lose the enjoyment of learning and focus on immediate payoffs (Brooks, 1998: 18).

Gray (1997: 30) argues that students, like all human beings, may tend to take smaller rewards rather than waiting for larger delayed payoffs. In any case, being aware of the appeal and excessive focus on the immediate rewards can help teachers to cope with the situation. Teachers’ promises should not spoil students by directing their tendency toward taking the smaller immediate rewards (promised things). They can avoid such a thing by keeping their students’ eyes on the big long-range consequences. Students should be assumed that the outcome of specific behaviours might lead to the achievement of their major goals. Keeping the future in students’ mind will help to avoid major problems and achieve major goals.

Teachers should attempt to make everything they teach as intrinsically interesting as possible, and should avoid extrinsic reinforcers when they are unnecessary. At the same time, they should not refrain from using extrinsic reinforcers when they are needed. Often extrinsic reinforcers may be necessary to get students started in an activity, but may then be phased out as the students come to enjoy and succeed at the activity.

Gaillard (1994: 4) has the opinion that promising and rewarding success on easy assignments does not build self-confidence, it makes students feel dumber and less able. Such promises misled the students as they are taught that simple efforts are acceptable, and it is easy to succeed. Teachers' promises have to be stimuli (motivators) to dig deeply into topics, to feel the delight of uncovering fascinating new knowledge, and to interact with others (teachers, talent students, etc). The promises should be related to challenging, but achievable tasks. Since challenging but realistic tasks require students to stretch and grow, promises must constantly change to match the students' conditions and abilities.

Whatever different students' personalities the teacher has in the class, he can employ the extrinsic reinforcer effectively if this reinforcer is always kept in perspective with the students' intrinsic interest and their basic goals. When the students focus on keeping high level of performance all the time, this may put them in a state of hesitation and worry. Thus promises should be given in a form of encouragement in order to avoid such a state on the students' part. Teachers are likely to combine their promises with an explanation of their confidence in the students' abilities even if they occasionally fail in doing this or that task. Such a thing may comfort the students and lighten the pressure on them. Students should be encouraged to investigate and explore scientific information. Promises on difficult but achievable tasks are very effective in this respect.

Promising rewards on easy tasks reduces students' motivation. This fact has been discussed by Breiter (2001: 31) in the light of expectancy theory. According to this theory, students' motivation is based on the following formula:

$$\text{Motivation} = \text{perceived probability of success} \times \text{incentive value of success}$$

This formula is called an expectancy model because it largely depends on the persons' expectation of reward. What this theory implies is that peoples' motivation to achieve something depends on the product of their estimation of their chance of success. An important aspect of this theory is that an overly high probability of success can be detrimental to motivation. For instance, the better student is not motivated to do his best because success is extremely likely even with minimal effort. He is likely to get the promised reward. Therefore promises of rewards as motivators should be at maximum moderate levels of probability. Rewards should be administered for achieving tasks which are neither too easy nor too difficult. Promises must be set up so that earning the promised reward is difficult (but possible), and success is within reach, but not easy reach, of all students.

Attribution theory is important in understanding how students perceived teachers' promises, and in suggesting to teachers how they might give promises of rewards that have greatest motivational values. According to this theory, students can be either high achievers or low achievers. High achievers approach tasks related to success. Such students believe that success is due to high ability and efforts. They persist when the work gets hard rather than give up. Failure for them is assumed to be caused by a lack of effort and can be changed by trying harder. The low achievers work with little derives or enthusiasm because they believe that the outcome is not related to effort. For them, the outcome is related to lack, ability and chance. They think that their past failure on certain tasks is due to lack of ability. They are unlikely to expect success in similar tasks. If students

believe they will fail anyway, they may poorly be motivated to do academic work (Anderman, 1998: 22).

In such a situation, teachers' promises are likely to help students see their chances of success depend on their efforts. Even high achievers need to feel that way. Promises which emphasize the amount of effort as the cause of success or failure, and reward effort rather than ability are more likely to motivate all the students to do their goals than promises that emphasize ability. The inclusion of efforts as a component of grading system or as a separate grade, and promises of grades for improvement all are some formal means of rewarding students for efforts. In fact, such means make students feel that teachers will respond fairly and consistently to them, and that they will not be ridiculed for their errors (ibid).

Similarly, Mariani (1999: 12) mentions that students must have a chance to be rewarded if they do their best. It is important to reward students for efforts, for doing better than what they had done in the past, and for making progress rather than only for achieving complete work, and excellent achievement. Not all students are equally capable of achieving an excellent work, but all are equally capable of exerting efforts, exceeding their past records or making progress. In fact, those are often better more available criteria for reinforcing both low and high achievers. It is well known that a teacher who is able to put his students at ease, to make them feel accepted and respected as individuals, is more likely to help them become eager to learning and open to new ideas.

It is clear now that the effect of promise as an extrinsic reinforcer is influenced by the value of the promised reward for the students, the students' reaction to their teacher, their reaction to be in control, and their satisfaction of being successful.

### **3.4. The Best Schedule of Reinforcement**

The timing of the reinforcement has an influential effect on students' behaviour. Reinforcers are most effective if they occur immediately after the desired response, but not necessarily after each response. Teachers for instance, should carry out their promises when their students exert the required efforts, or achieve the required task.

Skinner introduces three schedules of reinforcement: continuous, intermitted, and interval. Among these schedules the intermittent schedules are most effective in maintaining high levels of responding as is shown in the following arguments:

A continuous reinforcement schedule reinforces each desired response. If a teacher tends to give promises of rewards continually for achieving every task, or in pay for every effort, this will produce a steady rate of performance as long as the promised rewards continue to follow every response. This in turn leads to early satiation. Consequently, students' desired responses will be exposed to an early extinction (the gradual decrease in the frequency with which a conditioned response occurs after it is no longer rewarded). Thus students' interests that have been maintained on a continuous schedule tend to extinguish rapidly (Cameron, 2001: 13).

In an interval schedule, the timing of giving a reinforcer is based on an interval of time which can be either fixed or variable in length. With fixed interval schedule, only the first response after a fixed period of time is reinforced. Teachers should be cautious about this schedule. As the promises of rewards come after a specified interval of time, students are expected to do their best during that period. When the interval varies in length of time, responses made during the interval of time are ignored. Only the first response after the end of the interval is reinforced. Reinforcement according to this schedule is delivered on irregular and unpredictable schedules (ibid).

An intermitted (partial) reinforcement schedule occurs when only a portion of the desired responses is reinforced. Only every  $n$ th responses is reinforced.  $N$  can be either a fixed or a variable number. Fixed ratio schedules tend to produce a vigorous and steady rate of response that is typically a little higher than continuous reinforcement schedules. With a variable ratio schedule, a varying number of responses must be made before reinforcement occurs. Thus, the students tend to perform at a higher rate to obtain higher levels of reinforcement. A variable ratio schedule requires the students to respond some number of times in order to obtain reinforcement. The students do not know how many responses are required to produce reinforcement, but they have learned from past experience that their responses occasionally will be rewarded. In fact this schedule is very effective in maintaining behaviour long after the reinforcement has been terminated (Williams, 1993: 39).

Intermitted (Partial) reinforcement keeps students in a constant state of expectancy and ambition to be recognized and appreciated. Consequently, their behaviours will be resistant to extinction under different conditions.

Promises of rewards as positive reinforcers are linked with positive emotional environment. Teachers' feelings of acceptance and approval are communicated to the students and perceived by them as positive appraisals. It is likely that these appraisals encourage the students to seek further teachers' approval by achieving well and behaving in a manner acceptable to their teachers. It is also possible to begin this cycle with students' behaviour. Students achieve well and behave in good manners to please their teachers. Teachers, in turn, communicate positive feelings toward their students, thus reinforcing their desires to be good students. However, which of these variables serve as the primary determiners is a fact difficult to ascertain. It seems that they reinforce each other. The implication is

clear. It is essential that teachers who communicate positive feelings to their students do not only strengthen their positive self appraisal but stimulate their growth, academically as well as interpersonally (Mariani, 1999: 33).

Izard (1991: 35) states that teachers' promises and care for students are closely related to students' perceptions of their own selves. Teachers' promises of rewards and verbal encouragement may transmit teachers' expectations that their students are highly qualified to progress and to be the best. Since students' self-concept is related to their perception of the significant adults (teachers, parents, etc) in the surrounding environment and their feelings towards them, students will (to some degree) live up to the expectations that their teachers express (directly and indirectly) for them.

A promise as a means to communicate teachers' positive expectation about his student is very influential in creating the students' self-confidence. As an educational tool it is more influential and effective than a threat of punishment.

Mager (2003: 27) mentions that very negative emotional states are experienced by people when they get threatened or punished. Thus when a teacher uses threats, students will probably feel angry, fearful or hopeless. They will connect or associate these negative feelings with the source of punishment (the teacher). Of course this is not a good state of affair. A teacher wants to use influential tool to accomplish important learning goals, if the influential tool produces negative effect, the teacher is essentially shooting himself in the foot. Sure, threat helps accomplish one goal, but at the same time threat is making other goals more difficult to achieve.

Pleasures and pains caused by the acts of promising and threatening are highly influential in making the students like or hate the people and the activities associated with these acts. This may lead the students to have

negative reaction toward the school and the learning process and to be uncooperative with their teachers.

# Chapter Four

## Test Analysis

### 4.1 Introduction

In order to collect data of EFL learners' utterances to investigate their ability to use the speech act of promising, a questionnaire of ten situations is adopted. The subjects are asked to write their responses for each situation. These ten situations are prepared in such a way that the learners may respond by using any of the various forms of promise; i.e. the subjects are free to respond the way they like. However, the nature of these situations demands from the learners to be various in their responses.

Though the nature of the questionnaire enforces the learners to use various forms of promise, it does not limit their freedom by obligating them to answer situation (1) by using the explicit promise, situation (2) by using implicit, etc. Any of the different forms of promise is treated as a correct response. In this way, the subjects will respond spontaneously and the test keeps its objectivity in measuring the students' production of this act as well as their knowledge of the strategy for its use.

### 4.2 The Subjects

As a whole, 100 subjects participate in this study. Half of the subjects are the Fourth-Year undergraduate students of Department of English chosen from the College of Education, University of Babylon (henceforth BLs), and the other fifty students are chosen from College of Education of University of Al- Qadisiya (henceforth QLs). The act of promising has been explained indirectly to the students of University of Babylon through a number of lectures by Assist.Prof. Riyadh Tariq Kadhim Al-Ameedi while teaching them grammar in the academic year

2004-2005. The students of University of Al-Qadisiya have not received such an explanation. This enables the researcher to measure the extent to which the teaching factor affects the students' performance.

### **4.3 The Pilot Test**

To determine the effectiveness of the test, a pilot test was conducted on the 15th of January/2005 involving ten fourth-year undergraduate students from the Department of English, College of Education, University of Babylon.

The results of the pilot test show the clarity of the questionnaire to the students. They imagine themselves to be involved in each of the ten situations, and consequently to convey their responses linguistically. Each of these situations has been responded to as if it were a real life situation; i.e. the pilot test proves the face validity of the questionnaire "face validity is the extent to which the test measures what it is supposed to measure and nothing else...The test must aim to provide a true measure of the particular skill which is intended to be measured. If a test item looks right to the other testers, teachers, and testees, it can be described as having at least face validity" (Heaton, 1975: 153).

### **4.4 Administration of the Test**

Before conducting the final test on the 25th of January/2005, the questionnaire was exposed to a jury of experts who suggested some modifications that were followed by the researcher to fulfill the content validity for the test. "Content validity is a professional judgment of the teachers and testers. They are qualified to judge to what extent the test items provide a representative sample of the material" (Robert, 1980: 3). The members of the jury are arranged alphabetically:

- Professor Abdul Latif Al- Jumaily, Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics, College of Arts, University of Baghdad.
- Professor Abdul Wahid Musallad, Ph.D. in Linguistics and Translation, College of Languages, University of Baghdad.
- Professor Kadhim Hayder Al- Jawadi, Ph.D in Linguistics, College of Arts, University of Baghdad.
- Professor Sabah Al-Rawi, Ph.D. in Linguistics and Translation, College of Languages, University of Baghdad.
- Assistant Professor Abbas Deygan Darweesh, Ph.D. in Linguistics and Translation, College of Education, University of Babylon.
- Assistant Professor Adil Al- Akkam, MA in Linguistics, College of Basic Education, University of Babylon.
- Assistant Professor Firas Awad Ma'rouf, MA. in Linguistics, College of Education ( Ibn-Rushd), University of Baghdad.
- Assistant Professor Munthir Manhal Al- Dulaimi, Ph.D in Linguistics and Translation, College of Languages, University of Baghdad.
- Lecturer Fareed Hamid, Ph.D in Linguistics, College of Education, University of Babylon.
- Lecturer Maisaa Kadhim Hussain, Ph.D in Linguistics, College of Education, University of Al-Qadisiya.

## **4.5 Data Analysis**

Below is a discussion of each of the ten situations given to the testees. First, the situation is described followed by some samples of the answers of both BIs and QIs. Then, the different forms of expressing the speech act of promising are analyzed statistically according to the learners' utterances. Finally, an overall estimation of each situation is summarized.

### 4.5.1. Situation (1)

Your teacher catches you looking at your neighbours' paper in the exam. In order to avoid being dismissed, you promise him not to do that again.

#### Some Samples of BLs' Utterances

*BL35- I promise you I will never do that again.*

*BL39- I promise that this will not be repeated again.*

*BL43- Forgive me Sir, I will never do that again.*

#### Some Samples of QLs' Utterances

*QL5- I promise I'll never do that again and I do not mean any harm.*

*QL7- Believe me, I will never do that again.*

*QL11- I promise you that this will be the last time.*

#### 4.5.1.1. Explicit promise

Most of the subjects' responses take the form of explicit promise. This form has been used by (66%) of BLs and (56%) of QLs. What is apparent about BLs' responses is the high tendency to use **that clause** construction with the performative verb. The use of this construction occupies (56%) of BLs' responses and (30%) of QLs' total responses. The learner who deals with the situation as a real life situation may tend to use the explicit rather than the implicit promise in this situation. The state of a student who is about to be dismissed from the exam demands from that student to be direct, explicit and emphatic in declaring his promise.

**Table (1): The Subjects' Use of Explicit Promise in Situation (1)**

Explicit Promise	BLs	QLs
That clause construction	56%	30%
To infinitive construction	10%	26%
Total	66%	56%

#### 4.5.1.2. Implicit Promise

The number of subjects who tend to use this form in both groups is equal. Each of BLs and QLs employ 32% of their responses to be in the implicit form. The larger percentage of the learners use (**never**) rather than (**not**) as the negative particle after the modal. The employment of (**never**) conveys the subjects' appealing to be powerful and emphatic in their responses for this situation (see the samples on page 74). The following table shows the subjects' responses:

**Table (2): The Subjects' Use of Implicit Promise in Situation (1)**

Implicit Promise	BLs	QLs
Never	20%	18%
Not	12%	14%
Total	32%	32%

#### 4.5.1.3 Other Forms of Promise

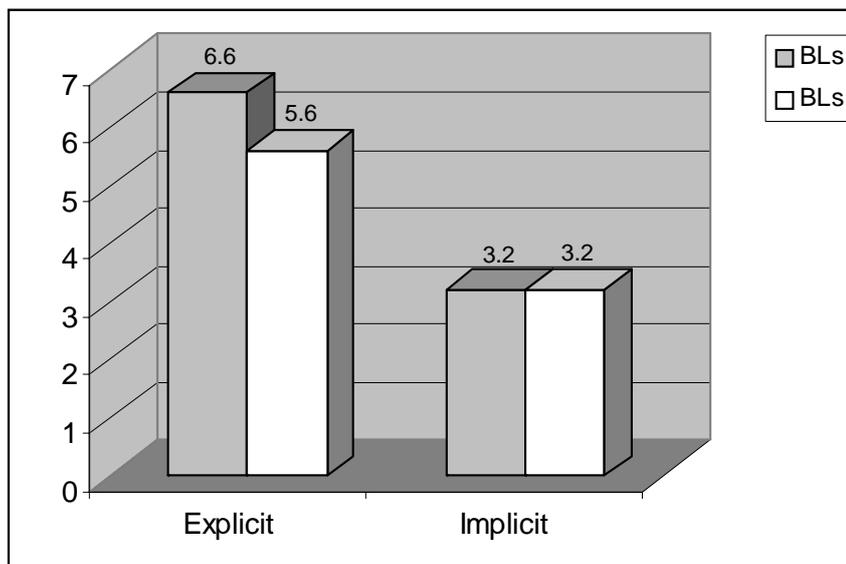
The subjects' responses have been limited to the use of explicit and implicit forms. None of the other forms such as conditional, complex and compound acts of promising has been used in this situation.

#### 4.5.1.4 Overall Results of Situation (1)

After applying Chi-Square statistical method ( $X^2$ ) to test the level of significance between the two groups, it has been proved that there is no significant difference between BLs' and QLs' use of promise in this situation.  $X^2=0.5$

**Table (3): The Subjects' Overall Use Promise in Situation (1)**

Forms of Promise	BLs	QLs
Explicit	6.6	5.6
Implicit	3.2	3.2
Conditional	/	/
Compound	/	/
Complex	/	/
Total	9.8	8.8



**Figure (1): The Representation of the Overall Use of Promise in Situation (1)**

■ Stands for the performance of BLs

□ Stands for the performance of QLs

#### 4.5.2 Situation (2)

You promise to attend your friend's birthday party, but you do not put yourself under direct obligation.

##### Some Samples of BLs' Utterances

*BL5- I'll come if I can.*

*BL6- I will try to attend your party.*

*BL1- I promise to come to your party if I can.*

##### Some Samples of QLs' Utterances

*QL21- I will come if I finish my homework.*

*QL2- Believe me, I shall attend if I can.*

*QL35- Well, I shall try to attend your party.*

#### 4.5.2.1. Explicit Promise

Explicit Promise, expressed via **that clause** construction, has been used by (20%) of QLs. None of BLs use this form.

#### 4.5.2.2. Implicit Promise

It has been noted that (14%) of BLs' and (20%) of QLs' responses imply the implicit promise of trying to do the act, as is the case with the responses of BL6 and QL35 mentioned above, rather than the promise to do it. The latter has been used only by (8%) of QLs. This situation requires from the promisor (the learner) to be sincere, but not under direct obligation. According to the natives implicit promise is a satisfying response for this situation.

**Table (4): The Subjects' Use of Implicit Promise in Situation (2)**

Implicit Promise	BLs	QLs
Promise of trying to do the act	14%	20%
Promise to do the act	/	8%
Total	14%	28%

#### 4.5.2.3. Conditional Promise

The analysis reveals that the learners employ the conditional “if” to a large extent to lighten the obligation of their promises. Conditional promise has been used by (74%) of BLs whereas only (20%) of QLs use this form.

**Table (5): The Subjects' Use of Conditional Promise in Situation (2)**

Conditional Promise	BLs	QLs
With a performative verb	24%	20%
Without a performative verb	50%	/
Total	74%	20%

#### 4.5.2.4. Other Forms of Promise

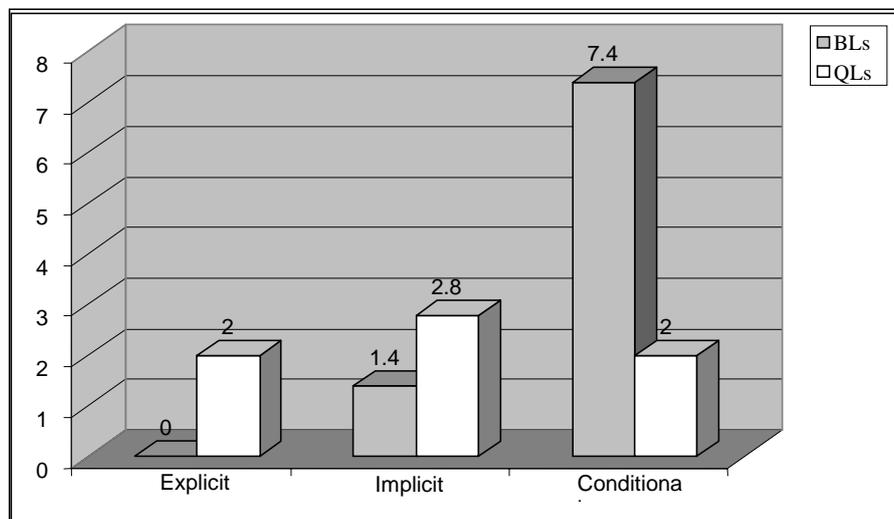
In this situation, neither complex nor compound act of promising has been used by any of the subjects.

#### 4.5.2.5 Overall Results of Situation (2)

It is found that there is a significant level of difference in the performance of BLs and QLs.  $X^2=2.27$ .

**Table (6): The Subjects' Overall Use of Promise in Situation (2)**

Forms of Promise	BLs	QLs
Explicit	/	2
Implicit	1.4	2.8
Conditional	7.4	2
Compound	/	/
Complex	/	/
Total	8.8	6.8



**Figure (2) : The Representation of the Overall Use of Promise in Situation (2)**

#### 4.5.3. Situation (3)

Your son always arrives at school late. One day, the headmaster dismissed him. You, being the father, go to the school and promise the headmaster that your son will arrive early.

### Some Samples of BLs' Utterances

*BL9- I promise not to let him come late again.*

*BL16- I promise you sir that my son will arrive early.*

*BL50- I give you my word that my son will arrive at school early.*

### Some Samples of QLs' Utterances

*QL35- I promise you that he will come to the school early.*

*QL40- I am sorry for the behaviour of my son, I promise not to let him arrive late.*

*QL45- Please forgive him sir, I promise you that he will not arrive late.*

#### **4.5.3.1. Explicit Promise**

In this situation (68%) of BLs use this form whereas the same form represents (72%) of QLs' responses.

**Table (7): The Subjects' Use of Explicit Promise in Situation (3)**

Explicit Promise	BLs	QLs
That clause	68%	56%
To infinitive	/	16%
Total	68%	72%

As is the case with the previous situations, most of the subjects use **that clause** construction with the performative verb. This reflects our learners' tendency to use detailed constructions rather than the brief ones.

#### **4.5.3.2. Implicit Promise**

Regarding the use of implicit promise, the analysis reveals the rarity of such use in this situation. This may be due to the nature of the situation itself, i.e the speaker makes a promise which will be fulfilled by a person other than the speaker. Implicit promise represents (2%) of BLs' responses, and is completely absent in QLs' performance.

#### 4.5.3.3. Other Forms of Promise

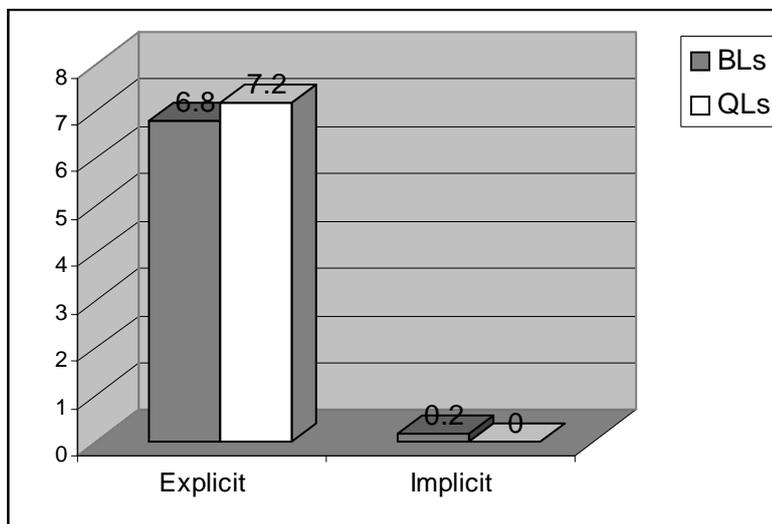
None of the other forms of promise has been used by any of the subjects.

#### 4.5.3.4. Overall Results of situation (3)

To compare between the performance of the two groups, chi-square is used, and it is concluded that there is no significant difference between BLs' and QLs' performance.  $\chi^2 = 0.02$ .

**Table (8): The Subjects' Overall Use of Promise in Situation (3)**

Forms	BLs	QLs
Explicit	6.8	7.2
Implicit	0.2	/
Conditional	/	/
Complex	/	/
Compound	/	/
Total	7	7.2



**Figure (3) : The Representation of the Overall Use of Promise in Situation (3)**

#### 4.5.4. Situation (4)

You promise your child that you will bring him a beautiful toy as a consequence of being quiet during the day.

### Some Samples of BLs' Utterances

*BL2- I'll bring you a beautiful toy if you keep quiet during the day.*

*BL29- Because you are quiet during the day, I'll bring you a beautiful toy.*

*BL45- I promise you that I'll bring you a beautiful toy.*

### Some Samples of QLs' Utterances

*QL8- I will bring you a toy if you be quiet.*

*QL10- Because you are polite, I promise to bring you a toy.*

*QL18- OK. I promise that I will bring you a toy if you be quiet.*

#### **4.5.4.1. Explicit Promise**

In this situation, the large percentage of the explicit promise has been used by QLs (24%), while only (18%) of BLs' responses take the form of explicit promise.

**Table (9): The Subjects' Use of Explicit Promise in Situation (4)**

Explicit Promise	BLs	QLs
That clause	12%	12%
To infinitive	6%	12%
Total	18%	24%

#### **4.5.4.2. Implicit Promise**

Implicit promise has been used by (32%) of BLs, and (24%) of QLs. What draws the researchers' attention is that (24%) of BLs and (16%) of QLs in this situation use the subordinate clause introduced by “**because of**” to indicate the reason behind their promises. This use gives the impression that the addressee has done the desired behaviour before the declaration of the promise, i.e. the promise is a reward rather than a reinforcer. There is no contingency between the promise and the desired behaviour. Here are more instances of the subjects' responses:

*Bl 39- You will be rewarded because of your quietness.*

*Bl14- Because of your being quiet I'll give you a nice toy.*

*Ql9- Because you behave well I'll give you a new toy.*

*Ql2- Well, I'll bring you a present because you are quiet.*

**Table (10): The Subjects' Use of Implicit Promise in Situation (4)**

Implicit Promise	BLs	QLs
With a subordinate clause	16%	8%
Without a subordinate clause	16%	16%
Total	32%	24%

#### 4.5.4.3. Conditional Promise

This form takes up the largest percentage in the learners' performance in this situation. (46%) of BLs', and (36%) of QLs' responses occur in the form of conditional promise. The condition implied in this situation may direct the learners' tendency toward conditional promise rather than other forms:

*Bl30- If you stay quiet I'll buy you wonderful toy.*

*Bl23- If you be quiet during the day I'll buy you a toy.*

*Ql3- If you keep quiet, I will get you a toy.*

*Ql44- you will have a new toy if you be quiet.*

**Table (11): The Subjects' Use of Conditional Promise in Situation (4)**

Conditional Promise	BLs	QLs
With a performative verb	46%	12%
Without a performative verb	/	24%
Total	46%	36%

#### 4.5.4.4. Other Forms of Promise

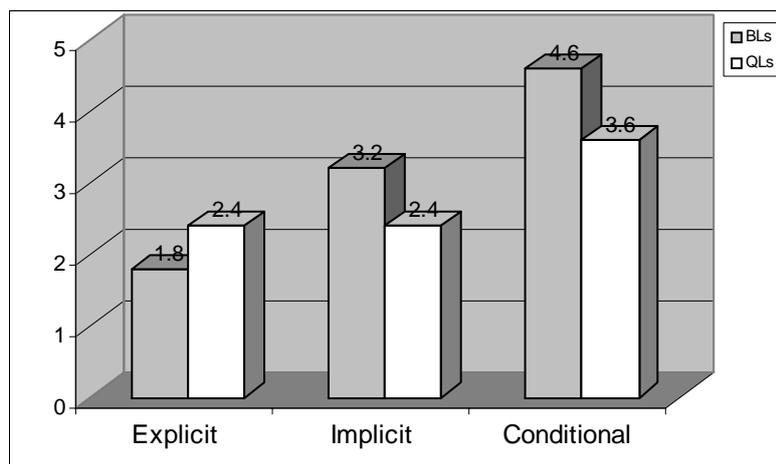
Compound and Complex acts of promising are completely absent in the subjects' responses.

#### 4.5.4.5. Overall Results of Situation (4)

After applying chi-square to the two frequencies, it is proved that the level of difference between them is insignificant.  $X^2 = 0.75$

**Table (12): The Subjects' Overall Use of Promise in Situation (4)**

Forms	BLs	QLs
Explicit	1.8	2.4
Implicit	3.2	2.4
Conditional	4.6	3.6
Complex	/	/
Compound	/	/
Total	9.6	8.4



**Figure (4) : The Representation of the Overall Use of Promise in Situation (4)**

#### 4.5.5. Situation (5)

Your teacher tells you (the class) that your colleague, Ahmed, who has been absent because of his illness, needs your help to understand the last lessons. You (the class) promise your teacher to help Ahmed to understand his lessons.

##### Some Samples of BLs' Utterances

*BL48- We will do our best to help Ahmed.*

*BL37- We promise to explain the material for him.*

*BL25- We promise you that we will help Ahmed to understand the lessons.*

### **Some Samples of QLs' Utterances**

*QL45- Do not worry sir, we will explain the subjects for him.*

*QL50-We promise that we will help Ahmed.*

*QL35- Sure Sire, we will help him.*

#### **4.5.5.1. Explicit Promise**

Concerning this situation, explicit promise represents (22%) of BLs' responses and (12%) of QLs' responses. This is illustrated in table (13):

**Table (13): The Subjects' Use of Explicit Promise in Situation (5)**

Explicit Promise	BLs	QLs
That clause	10%	/
To infinitive	12%	12%
Total	22%	12%

#### **4.5.5.2 Implicit Promise**

Implicit Promise represents the greatest part of the BLs' (30%) and QLs' (20%) responses.

#### **4.5.5.3. Other Forms of Promise**

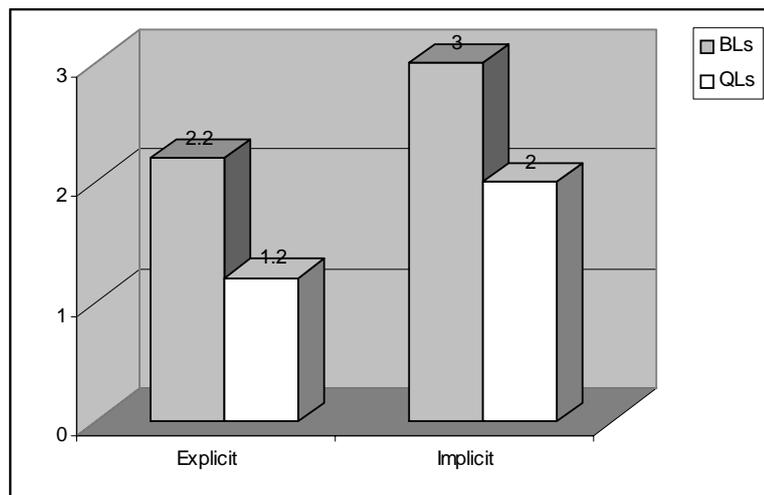
None of the subjects use the conditional, complex or compound act of promising.

#### **4.5.5.4. Overall Results of Situation (5)**

According to chi-square test, it has been noted that the level of difference between BLs and QLs is significant.  $X^2=3.8$

**Table (14): The Subjects' Overall Use of Promise in Situation (5)**

Forms	BLs	QLs
Explicit	2.2	1.2
Implicit	3	2
Conditional	/	/
Complex	/	/
Compound	/	/
Total	5.2	3.2

**Figure (5) : The Representation of the Overall Use of Promise in Situation (5)****4.5.6. Situation (6)**

You promise your little brother that you will get him a new bicycle if he completes his homework within two hours.

**Some Samples of BLs' Utterances**

*BL12- Do your homework and you will have a new bicycle.*

*BL27- I promise you that I'll buy you a new bicycle if you complete your homework within two hours.*

*BL36- You will have a new bicycle If you finished your homework within two hours.*

**Some Samples of QLs' Utterances**

*QL42- I promise you that I will buy you a new bicycle.*

*QL36- If you complete the homework within two hours, I promise to buy you a new bicycle.*

*QL47- I will buy you a new bicycle.*

#### 4.5.6.1. Explicit Promise

Explicit promise occupies the lowest percentage of the subjects' responses in this situation.

**Table (15): The Subjects' Use of Explicit Promise in Situation (6)**

Explicit Promise	BLs	QLs
That clause	6%	4%
To infinitive	2%	/
Total	8%	4%

#### 4.5.6.2. Implicit Promise

(6%) of BLs' and (12%) of QLs' responses take the form of implicit promise.

#### 4.5.6.3. Conditional Promise

In this situation, the majority of the subjects' utterances are conditional promises. (82%) of BLs versus (72%) of QLs use this form.

**Table (16): The Subjects' Use of Conditional Promise in Situation (6)**

Conditional Promise	BLs	QLs
With a performative verb	24%	28%
Without a performative verb	58%	44%
Total	82%	72%

#### 4.5.6.4. Other Forms of Promise

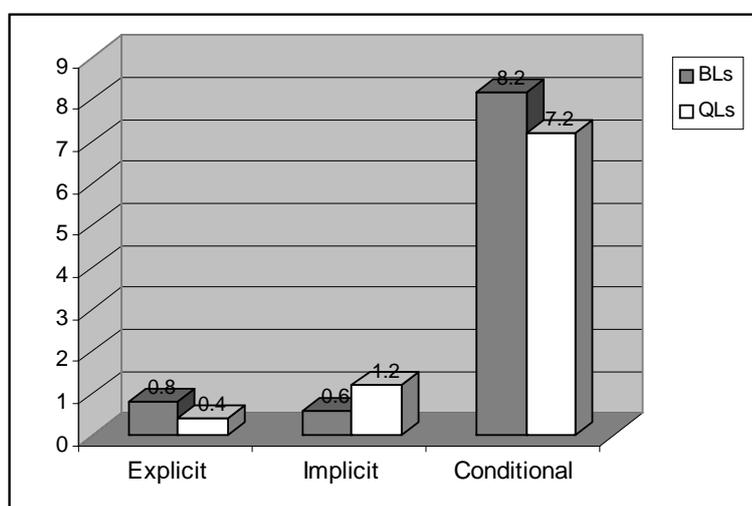
As is the case in the previous situations, Complex and Compound acts of promising are absent in the subjects' responses.

#### 4.5.6.5. Overall Results of Situation (6)

The difference seems to be insignificant between the two frequencies after applying the chi-square.  $\chi^2=0.33$

**Table (17): The Subjects' Overall Use of Promise in Situation (6)**

Forms	BLs	QLs
Explicit	0.8	0.4
Implicit	0.6	1.2
Conditional	8.2	7.2
Complex	/	/
Compound	/	/
Total	9.6	8.8



**Figure (6) : The Representation of the Overall Use of Promise in Situation (6)**

#### 4.5.7. Situation (7)

You told your father that his car window was broken by the neighbour's child. Later, he discovered that you yourself had broken it. To avoid being in such a critical situation, promise him not to tell lies again.

##### **Some Samples of BLs' Utterances**

*BL11- Believe me father, it will be the last time I tell lies.*

*BL20-I promise you that I will never tell lies again.*

*BL49- I am sorry, I will not do that again.*

### Some Samples of QLs' Utterances

*QL20-I promise you not to tell lies again.*

*QL3- I am sorry Dad, I will never do this once more.*

*QL50-I am sorry for telling lies and I promise never to lie again.*

#### **4.5.7.1. Explicit Promise**

It has been noticed that (56%) of BLs use explicit promise whereas (48%) is the percentage of QLs.

**Table (18): The Subjects' Use of Explicit Promise in Situation (7)**

Explicit Promise	BLs	QLs
That clause	34%	24%
To infinitive	22%	24%
Total	56%	48%

#### **4.5.7.2. Implicit Promise**

Compared with explicit promise, implicit form represents the lower percentage of the subjects' responses in this situation. The subjects adopt the use of **never** to add some sense of emphasis and sincerity to their intention of not telling lies.

**Table (19): The Subjects' Use of Implicit Promise in Situation (7)**

Implicit Promise	BLs	QLs
With <b>never</b>	16%	14%
Without <b>never</b>	18%	6%
Total	34%	20%

#### **4.5.7.3. Other Forms of Promise**

Conditional, Complex, and Compound promise are not present in the subjects' responses.

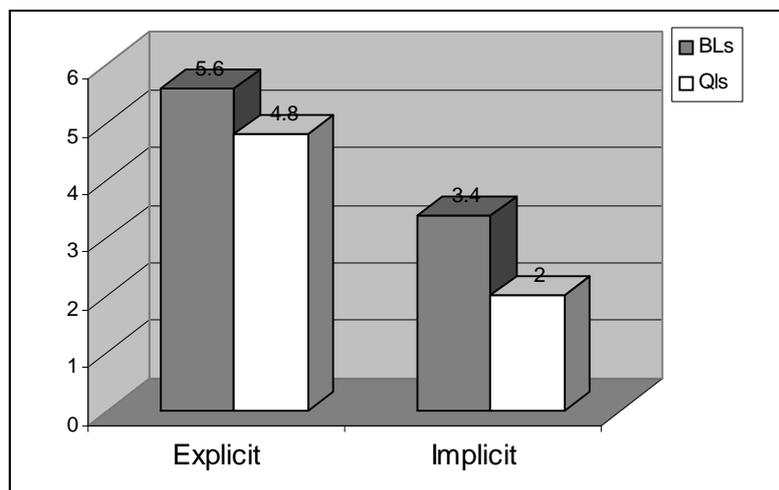
#### 4.5.7.4. Overall Result of Situation (7)

After testing the results by applying chi-square method, it is found that there is significant difference between the performances of the two groups.

$$X^2=2.68$$

**Table (20): The Subjects' Overall Use of Promise in Situation (7)**

Forms	BLS	QLS
Explicit	5.6	4.8
Implicit	3.4	2
Conditional	/	/
Complex	/	/
Compound	/	/
Total	9	6.8



**Figure (7) : The Representation of the Overall Use of Promise in Situation (7)**

#### 4.5.8. Situation (8)

Your colleague needs your grammar book as a resource in his research. You promise to give him this book.

##### Some Samples of BLs' Utterances

*BL10- You need this book, I promise to give it to you.*

*BL4- I promise to lend you my book.*

*BL32- You will get it tomorrow.*

### **Some Samples of QLs' Utterances**

*QL38- Do not worry, I promise that I will give you the book.*

*QL28- I will give you my book.*

*QL23- I promise to give you the book.*

#### **4.5.8.1 Explicit Promise**

Our data reveals that (52%) of BLs adopt the use of explicit promise. This percentage increases to (56%) in QLs' performance.

**Table (21): The Subjects' Use of Explicit Promise in Situation (8)**

Explicit Promise	BLs	QLs
That clause	26%	42%
To infinitive	26%	14%
Total	52%	56%

#### **4.5.8.2. Implicit Promise**

In this situation, (40%) of BLs and (36%) of QLs use the act of promising implicitly.

#### **4.5.8.3. Compound Promise**

This form has never been used in any of the previous situations. However, in this situation (2%) of BLs use the compound act of promising.

#### **4.5.8.4. Other Forms of Promise**

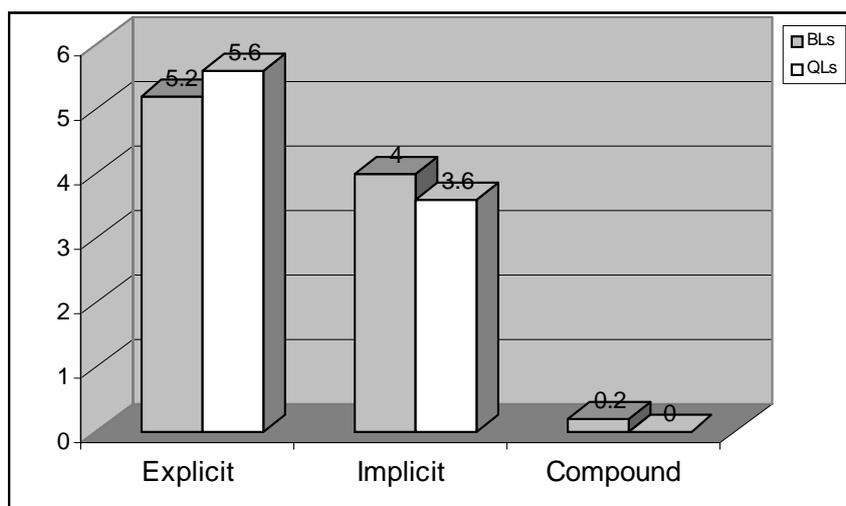
Neither conditional nor complex promise has been used by any of the subjects in this situation.

#### **4.5.8.5. Overall Result of Situation (8)**

Chi-square test shows that the difference is insignificant between BLS' and QLS' performance.  $X^2=0.02$

**Table (22): The Subjects' Overall Use of Promise in Situation (8)**

Forms	BLs	QLs
Explicit	5.2	5.6
Implicit	4	3.6
Conditional	/	/
Complex	/	/
Compound	0.2	/
Total	9.4	9.2

**Figure (8) : The Representation of the Overall Use of Promise in Situation (8)****4.5.9. Situation (9)**

You are grateful to your friend for helping you paint your house. You promise to help him whenever he needs you.

**Some Samples of BLs' Utterances**

*BL15-Thank you and I will help you whenever you need me.*

*BL40- I promise to help you.*

*BL44- Thanks, I promise that I will help you when you need me.*

**Some Samples of QLs' Utterances**

*QL1-You helped me paint my house. I'll help you when you need me.*

*QL49-You are my friend, I promise to do my best to help you.*

*QL26- I'll help you if you need me.*

#### 4.5.9.1. Explicit Promise

The percentage of BLs who express their promises explicitly is (32%) whereas that of QLs is (24%).

**Table (23): The Subjects' Use of Explicit Promise in Situation (9)**

Explicit Promise	BLs	QLs
That clause	14%	24%
To infinitive	18%	/
Total	32%	24%

#### 4.5.9.2. Implicit Promise

This form has been used by (56%) of BLs, and (36%) of QLs.

#### 4.5.9.3. Conditional Promise

Conditional promise, which contains the performative verb “promise”, has been used by only (12%) of QLs. None of BLs has used this form.

#### 4.5.9.4. Complex Promise

Complex promise has been absent in the previous situations. The first time this form appears is in this situation. It occupies (4%) of QLs' responses. None of BLs has used this form (see the samples of Q11 and Q49 on page 92).

#### 4.5.9.5. Compound Promise

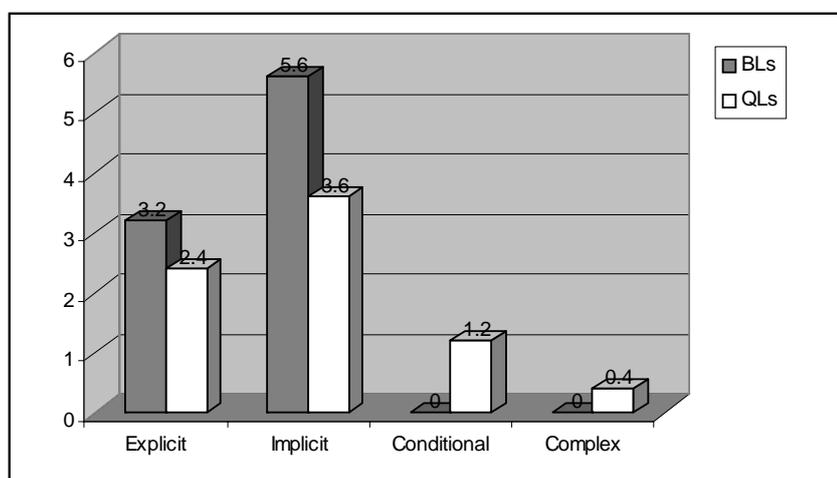
What attracts the attention in this situation is that QLs' responses are characterized by their variety. It is the only situation in which the subjects employ four forms of promise (explicit, implicit, conditional and compound forms). However, complex promise has not been used by any of the subjects.

#### 4.5.9.6. Overall Results of Situation (9)

According to chi-square test, it is found that there is no significant difference between the performance of the two groups.  $X^2=0.8$

**Table (24): The Subjects' Overall Use of Promise in Situation (9)**

Forms	BLs	QLs
Explicit	3.2	2.4
Implicit	5.6	3.6
Conditional	/	1.2
Complex	/	0.4
Compound	/	/
Total	8.8	7.6



**Figure (9) : The Representation of the Overall Use of Promise in Situation (9)**

#### 4.5.10. Situation (10)

You, being a teacher, offer to teach both mathematics and science as the teaching staff in your school lack teachers for such materials. In order not to be misunderstood as adopting to teach the two subjects for the whole year, you negate promising to teach both mathematics and science for the whole year.

##### Some Samples of BLs' Utterances

*BL7 - I promise to teach the two materials but not for the whole year.*

*BL38- I do not promise to teach mathematics and science for the whole year*

*BL22- I can not promise to teach the two subjects for the whole year.*

#### **Some Samples of QLs' Utterances**

*QL24- I promise to teach the two subjects for three months only.*

*QL9- I will teach them until the new teachers arrive.*

*QL15- I can not promise to teach mathematics and science for the whole year.*

#### **4.5.10.1. Explicit Promise**

The most apparent thing in this situation is that our learners use modifying clauses. They depend on such use to convey the idea of not doing the promised act for the whole year, and to restrict the act of promising to a particular period of time.

**Table (25): The Subjects' Use of Explicit Promise in Situation (10)**

Explicit Promise	BLS	QLS
That clause	6%	12%
To infinitive	14%	12%
Total	20%	24%

#### **4.5.10.2. Implicit Promise**

As is the case with the explicit responses, most of the implicit promises in this situation are followed by modifying clauses.

**Table (26): The Subjects' Use of Implicit Promise in Situation (10)**

Implicit Promise	BLs	QLs
With modifying clauses	12%	16%
Without modifying clauses	6%	4%
Total	18%	20%

#### 4.5.10.3. The Act of Not Promising

Concerning the act of not promising, it has been used by (12%) of BLs and (28%) of QLs,.

#### 4.5.10.4. Other Forms of Promise

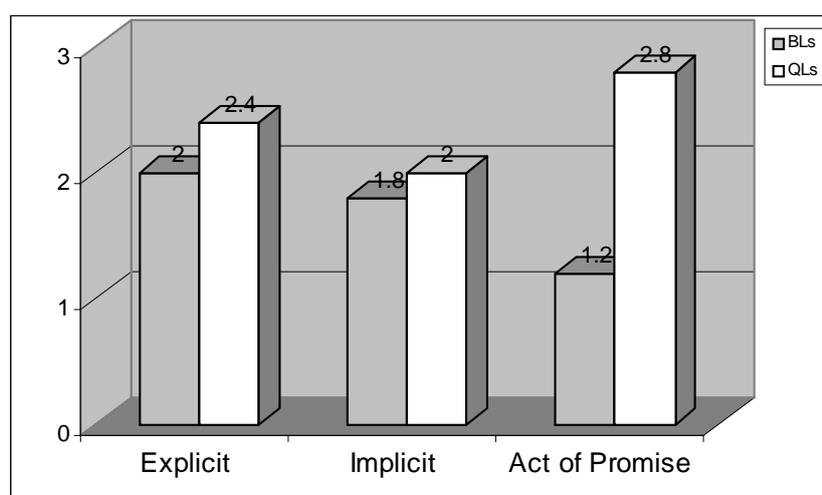
None of the subjects use the conditional, compound or complex act of promising in this situation.

#### 4.5.10.5. Overall Results of Situation (10)

As the table below shows there is a significant difference between the performance of BLs and QLs in this situation.  $X^2=4.8$

**Table (27): The Subjects' Overall Use of Promise in Situation (10)**

Forms	BLs	QLs
Explicit	2	2.4
Implicit	1.8	2
Conditional	/	/
Compound	/	/
Complex	/	/
Act of not promising	1.2	2.8
Total	5	7.2



**Figure (10) : The Representation of the Overall Use of Promise in Situation (10)**

## 4.6. Discussion of Students' Errors

Both BLs and QLs commit the same kinds of errors. All the subjects' wrong responses belong either to the use of declarative sentences, some of which express obligation and necessity, or to the use of completely different act particularly the act of apologizing. This is apparent in the subjects' wrong responses to situations (1), (3), and (7) as shown in the following instances respectively:

*BL1. I am sorry, I do not mean any harm.*

*BL32. I should make him arrive early.*

*BL4. I am sorry for breaking the window, but I do not break it deliberately.*

*QL3. I apologize to you sir.*

*QL30. I must not let him come late again.*

*QL18. I am sorry for telling lie.*

The act of promising includes a declaration of S's good intention toward H, i.e. to do something beneficiary to H. Apology also communicates S's good intention toward H. It implies S's regret about a particular behaviour or a negation of a bad intention as is the case with the responses of BL1 and BL4 mentioned above.

From the contexts of the situations presented, the learners realize that these situations contain Ss' good intentions towards H, but they do not recognize the form which each kind of intention should take. Such a thing causes the learners' wrong responses.

The different states of conditional "if" are falsely employed to express the conditional promise, as is the case in the subjects' wrong responses to situations (2), (4) and (6):

*BL14. I may attend your party if I can.*

*BL50. I would have got you a toy if you were quiet.*

*BL18. If you would have completed your homework within two hours,  
I would bring you a toy.*

*QL22. I would like to come if I could.*

*QL6. I would bring you a toy if you have been quiet.*

*QL28. If you would have prepared the work, I could buy you a bicycle.*

The subjects' errors reveal their unawareness of the conditions under which “conditional if ” can be used to express the conditional act of promising; i.e. the properties which must be present in the sentence to be used performatively.

The high percentage of errors in situation (5) belongs to the use of the declarative sentence which expresses necessity and obligation:

*BL36. We should make him understand the lessons*

*BL14. We must help Ahmed to understand the lessons.*

*QL16. We must help him Sir.*

*QL14. The class have to help Ahmed because of his illness.*

Pragmatically, the atmosphere of the situation implies one of the felicity conditions of promise; that of obligation on S's part. S has to do some act, but some learners fail to express this obligation performatively when they use a declarative sentence rather than a performative one. Perhaps our learners do not differentiate between the meaning of obligation and that of necessity. Hornby (2004: 873) defines obligation as the state of being forced to do something because of law or because you have promised. Necessity is either the need for something or the situation that must happen and cannot be avoided (ibid: 851). The difference between the two meanings is very clear. Giving a promise is neither a basic need that can not be avoided, nor something which must happen in the sense that one cannot manage without. In fact, this act is up to S, he has the choice to use it whenever he sees it necessary.

The wrong responses in situations (8), (9) and (10) are again due to the employment of declarative rather than the performative sentence:

*BL47. when I finish the book, I can give it to you.*

*BL16. I owe to your help.*

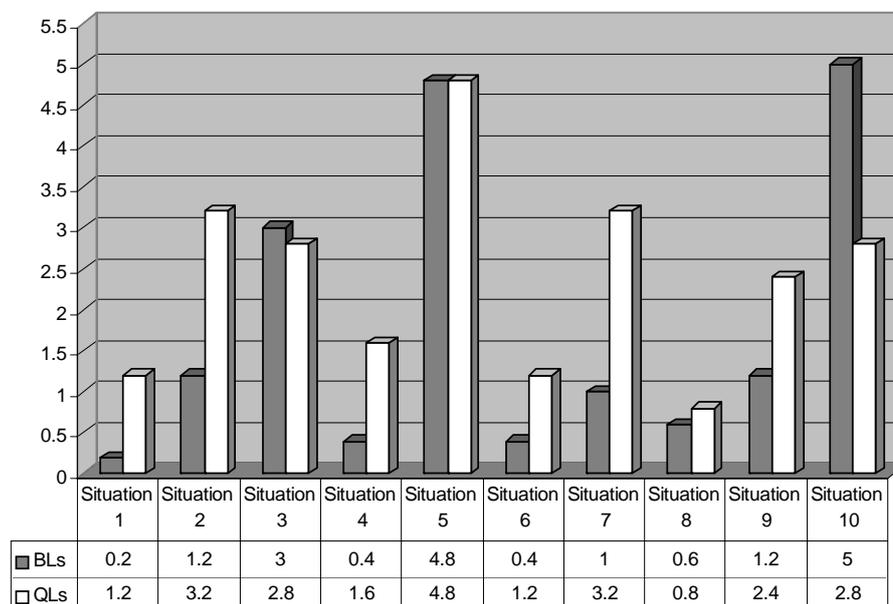
*BL37. I am ready to teach the two subjects for the first course only.*

*QL16. You are welcome to take the book any time.*

*QL10. I am ready to help you.*

*QL8. I can not teach the two subjects for the whole year.*

Most of the learners' wrong responses indicate their appeal to the use of apology. Though this act is irrelevant to the kind of responses the learners are required to make, it is an indication of politeness and manners of the learners. The use of declarative statements reflects the subjects' ignorance of the meaning of the performative statements, and the way in which such statements can be used.



**Figure (11): The Representation of Students' Errors in all Situations**

## 4.7 The Overall Discussion

The results support the first hypothesis which involves the learners' tendency to use the explicit form of promise. It is clear from the percentage showed in table (28) below that most of the learners' responses take the form of explicit promise. Some of the learners use the illocutionary-indicating device represented by the performative verb (promise) even when their responses take the form of conditional promise. Such a tendency can be explained in terms of the following fact:

As non- native speakers, most of the learners of course do not completely master the English Language. Such a fact makes the learners appear to be more direct in expressing their ideas and responses, i.e. they try to adopt literalism in their communication with others via the second language. Being explicit satisfies the learners' care to be accurately understood and correctly comprehended by others.

Though the data analysis reveals that in some situations, the level of BLs' performance is very close to that of QLs, the two groups do not use the various forms of promise with the same frequency. This result comes in accordance with the second hypothesis. For all the situations, implicit and conditional forms of promise are used by BLs considerably more often than QLs. In contrast, the rare use of the complex act of promising occurs only in QLs' performance while the compound act has been used by BLs rather than QLs. The divergence between the frequencies of the two groups is an expected matter if we take into consideration that the percentage of QLs' errors is somehow greater than that of BLs'. Of course, the fact that BLs learners have previously received some information though indirectly about the topic is an effective factor in their better performance.

However, one can say that QLs' performance is relatively good. The researcher views that part of the QLs' good ability to use the speech act of promising can be attributed to the fact that the schemas for using this act in

some situations are shared by both the mother tongue and the target language. Also the exposition to the English language as it is used by the natives through different media whether TV programs, internet chatting and even teachers' words may indirectly provide the learners with background knowledge about this act. The same is true concerning the BLs' performance. The teaching factor may play an important role in BLs' better achievement but certainly it is not the only reason for their good performance.

This can be proved by observing the rarity of complex and compound acts of promising, the unemployment of the adverb (hereby) in addition to the fact that some of BLs' and QLs' responses seem to be highly affected, if not translated from Arabic. An examination of the subjects' responses to situation (2) for instance, reflects the interference of the mother tongue. "To avoid the obligatory aspect of promise, Arab people sometimes realize their promises by the means of conditional sentences. Such sentences contain two propositions of which one conditions the validity of the other" (Beeston, 1970: 104). To be more specific, Arab people who want to avoid being under direct obligation follow their promises by the conditional "if clauses" whereas implicit promise serves the same purpose for the native speakers of English.

About (74%) of BLs and (20%) of QLs use the conditional promise, or the expression (if God want) in order not to be under direct obligation. This means that our learners are under the effect of their own language and culture. This fact, in addition to the fact that the learners' sometimes employ the explicit promise where the implicit one is more accurate, or the conditional where the explicit one is the more appropriate response etc, reflects their need to know more about the strategies for using each of the various forms of promise.

**Table (28): Distribution of the Various Forms of Promise Used by the Subjects in all Situations**

Situation No	Explicit Promise		Implicit Promise		Conditional Promise		Compound Promise		Complex Promise		Act of Promise	
	BLs	QLs	BLs	QLs	BLs	QLs	BLs	QLs	BLs	QLs	BLs	QLs
1	6.6	5.6	3.2	3.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	2	1.4	2.8	7.4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	6.8	7.2	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	1.8	2.4	3.2	2.4	4.6	3.6	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	2.2	1.2	3.	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	0.8	0.4	0.6	1.2	8.2	7.2	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	5.6	4.8	3.4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	5.2	5.6	4	3.6	0	0	0.2	0	0	0	0	0
9	3.2	2.4	5.6	3.6	0	1.2	0	0	0	0.4	0	0
10	2	2.4	1.8	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.2	2.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>34.2</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>26.4</b>	<b>22.8</b>	<b>20.2</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>2.8</b>

# Chapter five

## Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions

### 5.1. Conclusions

From the study conducted in an EFL context, evidence is found supporting the three hypotheses. This can be clarified as follows:

1. The range of explicit promise identified in the performance of BLs (34.2) is almost similar to that identified in QLs' performance (34). More specifically, both BLs and QLs employ the explicit form of promise more than any of the other forms. Such employment of the performative verb by the two groups reflects their appeal to make use of the lexical meaning of the English sentence in communicating their intentions. In order not to be misunderstood, the learners use the meaning of the words to exactly fit S's intended meaning.
2. Though the level of BLs' performance in some cases, is the same, more or less than that of QLs', yet the overall achievement of BLs is better than that of QLs, and their responses are more varied than QLs' responses. Implicit (26.4) and conditional promise (20.2) occur in BLs' performance more than that of QLs' (22.8), (14). Compound promise occurs only in BLs' responses (0.2) while the complex form takes up (0.4) of QLs' responses. (1.2) of BLs and (2.8) of QLs use the act of not promising correctly. The percentage of BLs' errors is (17.8%), and it increases to (24%) in the performance of QLs.

The researcher comes up with the fact that the teaching factor has an effective role in making BLs' responses better and more various

than those of QLs in most of the situations investigated. However, this factor has no effect on the learners' tendency to be explicit. The two groups, those who have prior information about the act of promising and those who have not, use the explicit form of promise with the same percentage.

3. The similarity between the native and the target language in terms of the schemas used for expressing the act of promising misleads the learners by drawing their attention away from the role of the natives' social and cultural background which highly affects the pragmatic context for the accurate occurrence of the different forms of promise. For instance, to avoid being under direct obligation, the learners use conditional instead of implicit promise in situation (2). Almost in most of the situations the learners use one form where the accurate response is another one. Thus the interference of the mother tongue causes the learners to give inaccurate responses on the pragmatic level.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

1. Learners' responses show that language use and usage are equally important in communication via the target language. This enhances the effectiveness of :
  - (a) Providing pragmatic information about the various structures of the target language during the different stages of the teaching process.
  - (b) Ensuring course material that relate to students' lives and how such material can be used in accordance with the natives' cultural and social life.

2. Teachers are recommended to develop activities with students' basic psychological and intellectual needs. The challenging task for our teachers is to create a stimulating learning environment that fulfill all or most of students' needs, gives them some degree of autonomy, develops their sense of competence and provides opportunities for originality and self expression.

### **5.3. Suggestions for Further Research**

1. The speech act of swearing is used with a similar meaning to the act of promising. But swear is stronger than promise in the sense that it is solemn and more serious. It is suggested to investigate the relationship between the act of promising and that of swearing in English and Arabic.
2. Conducting a study that focuses on the role of negative reinforcement (punishment) in teaching and learning and its relation with the speech act of threatening.
3. One of the psychological facts indicates that most people tend unconsciously to behave in accordance with the expectations of the significant people in their surrounding environment. They perceive themselves in the light of the others' (parents, teachers) view of them and live up to their positive expectations. It is suggested to carry out a study about students' perceptions of their teachers' expectations and feelings toward them related to self perception, school achievements and behaviour.

# Appendix 1

## The Letter to the Jury Members

**Dear Sir,**

The questionnaire attached to this letter is intended to provide data about (1) Iraqi EFL learners' use of the act of promising, (2) the role of the teaching factor in the learners' performance and (3) the effect of the interference of the mother tongue in the accuracy of their responses.

The questionnaire contains ten situations through which the students must imagine themselves and answer accordingly. These situations involve the different forms of the speech act of promising: explicit, implicit, conditional, complex and compound acts of promising

You are kindly requested to give your opinion of the validity of the questionnaire by:

1. Indicating the suitability of each situation; and
2. Suggesting any changes or modifications.

The following table might be useful.

<u>Situation</u>	<u>Suitable</u>	<u>Unsuitable</u>	<u>Suggestion</u>
------------------	-----------------	-------------------	-------------------

**Shahla Abdul-Kadhim  
Hadi**

**M.A Student in  
Methods of Teaching  
English  
as a Foreign  
Language**

**College of  
Education  
University of  
Babylon**

**The Questionnaire**

What would you say in each of the following situations?

1. Your teacher catches you looking at your neighbours' paper in the exam.  
In order to avoid being dismissed, you promise him not to do that again.
2. You promise to attend your friend's birthday party, but you do not put yourself under direct obligation.
3. Your son always arrives at school late. One day, the headmaster dismissed him. You, being the father, go to the school and promise the headmaster that your son will arrive early.
4. You promise your child that you will bring him a beautiful toy as a consequence of being quiet during the day.
5. Your teacher tells you (the class) that your colleague, Ahmed, who has been absent because of his illness, needs your help to understand the last lessons. You (the class) promise your teacher to help Ahmed to understand his lessons.
6. You promise your little brother that you will get him a new bicycle if he completes his homework within two hours.
7. You told your father that his car window was broken by the neighbour's child. Later, he discovered that you yourself had broken it. To avoid being in such a critical situation, promise him not to tell lies again.
8. Your colleague needs your grammar book as a resource in his research.  
You promise to give him this book.
9. You are grateful to your friend for helping you paint your house. You promise to help him whenever he needs you.

10. You, being a teacher, offer to teach both mathematics and science as the teaching staff in your school lack teachers for such materials. In order not to be misunderstood as adopting to teach the two subjects for the whole year, you negate promising to teach both mathematics and science for the whole year.

## Appendix 2

### The Statistical Method

The level of significance between the performance of BLs and that of QLs is computed by applying the following formulae:

$$df = k-1$$

df refers to the degree of freedom

$$X^2 = \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

where  $O_i$  : bserved number of cases categorized in  $i^{\text{th}}$  category

$E_i$  : expected number of cases in  $i^{\text{th}}$  category under  $H_0$

$k$  : Directs one to sum overall (k) categories.

When the  $X_c^2 > X_{\text{tab}}^2$  the hypothesis is accepted and the difference is significant on level 95%.

When the  $X_c^2 < X_{\text{tab}}^2$  the hypothesis is rejected and the difference is insignificant on level 95% .

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University of Babylon

**IRAQI EFL LEARNERS' USE  
OF PROMISE**

A THESIS  
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BY  
**SHAHLA ABDUL-KADHIM HADI**

**SUPERVISED BY**  
Asst. Prof. RIYADH TARIQ KADHIM AL-  
AMEEDI (Ph.D)  
Asst. Prof. KADHIM AL-  
KHAZRAJI (Ph.D)

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