Article

Producing and Recognising Speech Act of Promising in Saudi Arabia: A Case Study at Jouf University

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Abstract: The current study investigated the ability of Saudi EFL students in the southern region of Saudi Arabia (hereafter SA) to produce and recognise utterances related to the speech acts of making promises. The qualitative study was conducted at Jouf University. To achieve the objectives set in the study, 10 hypothetical situations adapted from Beebe et al.'s (1990) DCT were selected. These 10 situations expressed the speech acts of promising and imitated real-life situations in SA; These situations were collected orally from 8 female Saudi students through semi-structured interviews (hereafter SSI) conducted with them. In addition, three questions of the SSI and five situational statements were proposed to enhance and enrich the findings. The focus was placed on identifying the various ways of promising when producing a promise in communication. The study's population for the SSI was chosen from the English Department at Jouf University in Tabarjal's 3rd and 4th year- 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th levels. The collected data were then transcribed using the NVivo software-12 version and analysed using thematic analysis. The study focused on the various responses to each question provided by each respondent. The findings indicated that Saudi EFL students faced significant difficulties when it comes to recognising the speech act of promising. Specifically, while 45% of students demonstrated the ability to recognise the speech act of promising, the majority of students 55% did not. Additionally, the findings showed that students frequently made unconditional promises rather than conditional promises, refusing promises, or delaying promises. In summary, the analysis revealed that Saudis issue pledges in various ways for various reasons. Indeed, the current study made a contribution to linguistics by focusing on examining speech acts in general and the speech acts of promising in particular by focusing on the prominent ways and reasons of the speech act of promising.

Keywords: speech act theory, promising, produce promising, promising ways, recognise promising

Introduction
The most influential theory for studying how individuals comprehend, produce, and respond to utterances is Austin's (1962) Theory of Speech Acts, which was later developed by Austin's successor, Searle (1969). This study is concerned with producing and recognising the speech act of promising while communicating. It deals with various ways of speech acts performed by the respondents to build the pledge made by Saudi English learners. Also, it enables Saudi EFL students and researchers to further understand about the development of encouraging responses made by Saudi EFL students at Jouf University.

This study contributes to the literature regarding the speech act of promising between EFL students and their lecturers in KSA, as the researcher focus on the ability of Saudi students to produce and recognise their promises employed by Saudi students when answering the SSI' questions.

Furthermore, the current study aims to improve the study results based on the research questions listed below. Only a few studies had previously investigated the speech act of promising used by Saudi EFL students. Indeed, this study investigated the speech act of promising used by Saudi EFL students studying at Jouf University by analysing the various promising ways issued by the respondents when producing and recognizing their promises. Since research on promising speech acts involving Saudi respondents is limited,

the current study has a novelty value. Thus, feedback from this study is expected to elucidate that EFL students in the SA use the various ways of promising when making promises. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate the act of promising by Saudi students.

The current study identifies three issues. These issues include (1) the ability to understand (recognise) the speech act of promising, (2) the ability to use (produce) the speech act of promising (Al-Dwairi; 2008) and (3) the lack of recognition of the ways behind issuing promising (Al-Dwairi; 2008 & Al-Omari and Abu Melhim; 2013). Given the importance of the issues to be addressed, this study seeks to fill a gap in the literature by investigating the Saudi EFL students' pragmatic knowledge (production and comprehension) of the speech act of promising. The speech act of promising offers a rich source of information about both the speakers and the community under investigation. This study differs from previous studies in that it focuses on recognising the promising ways employed by EFL students using EFL context and culture. However, because it is a new area of study in Saudi Arabia, there is a need to investigate the ability of Saudi students to produce and recognise the speech act of promising using the EFL context and culture to highlight the various promising ways when respondents' responses. In this regard, two research questions are discussed which are: How is the speech act produce in communication, performed by the Saudi EFL students at Jouf University? And What are the adopted various ways of promising in communication conducted by Saudi EFL students at Jouf University when responding to the promises?

The primary goal of the current study is to determine the production and the recognition of the speech acts of promising to forge the promise of Saudi EFL students, bridge cultural communicative gaps, and enrich Saudi EFL students, as well as researchers, with regard to communication pertaining to the production of promising responses by Saudi EFL students at Jouf University. The basic objective of the current study was to determine the production of the speech act of promising in communication, performed by the Saudi EFL students at Jouf University and to identify the adopted various ways of promising in communication employed by the Saudi EFL students, at Jouf University.

Rather than that, the current study is a contribution to linguistics advancement because it deals with the act of speech in general and the act of speech of promise in particular by identifying the production and the recognition of the speech act of promising when communicating. The prominent ways of the speech act of promising receive a great deal of attention. According to the literature, few studies has been conducted on the speech act of promising at SA-Jouf University with the goal of examining the issue and the recognition of the promised response among Saudi EFL students. As such, it contributes to the literature and serves as a resource for students of the Saudi EFL as well as researchers in the same field. This study seeks to fill a gap in the literature by investigating the Saudi EFL students' pragmatic knowledge (production and comprehension) of the speech act of promising. It was hoped that this type of discussion contributes to the direction of the discussion toward the resolution of research problems and elucidates more of the functions underlying respondents' promises.

Literature Review

This section presents a review of related studies on speech act in general and promising in particular. Language as a mode of communication emerges either from within, from a human subject who proposes the intentional, meaningful purpose of speaking, or from without, from a speech community in which speaking is subject to community tradition (Del Castillo, 2014). Specifically, "language is born when it is executed in the speech act" (p. 1). As a result, the speech act can be performed with the intention of both individual speaking and social speaking. More specifically, a speech act is individual because it is the "creation" and establishment of perceived things, and it is social because it "is executed using the parameters and means offered to the speaker by the speech community (p. 1)." Speech acts are common in everyday communication. In their daily lives, people talk and perform specific acts known as speech acts (Cheng and Ching, 2015). Based on the manipulation of speech act theory, this study examines a number of acts related to promising known as speech acts.

Yule (1996) defines speech acts as "actions performed through utterances" (p. 47). He explains that the actions that represent an apology, a complaint, an invitation, a promise, and so on are applied to the communicative intentions of the speaker, who expects the hearer to realise these communicative intentions.

Language can be used to describe human actions such as promising, insulting, and criticising, among other things (Ruth Kempson, 1977 cited in Embugushiki, 2010). In particular, language is not only a means of carrying out actions, but also of communicating and expressing feelings as Searle (1979) says that "we attempt to persuade them to act, we commit ourselves to action, and we express our emotions... attitudes... Our words have the ability to affect change. (p. 23)."

Literally speaking, the term "promising" can be defined as: "a declaration that one will do or refrain from doing something specified" (Merriam-Webster dictionary). Comparably, a promise is "a statement which you make to a person in which you say that you will definitely do something or give them something." (Collins Dictionary).

Framework of The Study

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of this study. In the current study, the speech act theory of promising was examined by focusing on the ability to understand (recognise) and to use (produce) the speech act of promising. A focus was spotted on the promising ways when the respondents issued their promises.

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│          Speech Acts Theory:            │
│     Austin (1962) and Searle (1976)     │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Promising in Communication by Examine How   │
│ Producing and recognising the Speech Act of │
│ Promising (Al-Dwairi; 2008 & Al-Omari and  │
│ Abu Melhim; 2013)                           │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Investigating the Production and the        │
│ Recognition of Speech Act of Promising when │
│ Responding Orally toward the SSI at Jouf    │
│ University                                   │
│ The various ways adopted by respondents     │
│ when issuing their promises                 │
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│ Qualitative Methods: the semi-structured    │
│ interviews (consist of a modified version   │
│ of Beebe et al.'s (1990) DCT adapted by the │
│ researcher and some of the SSI's questions) │
│ are applied.                                 │
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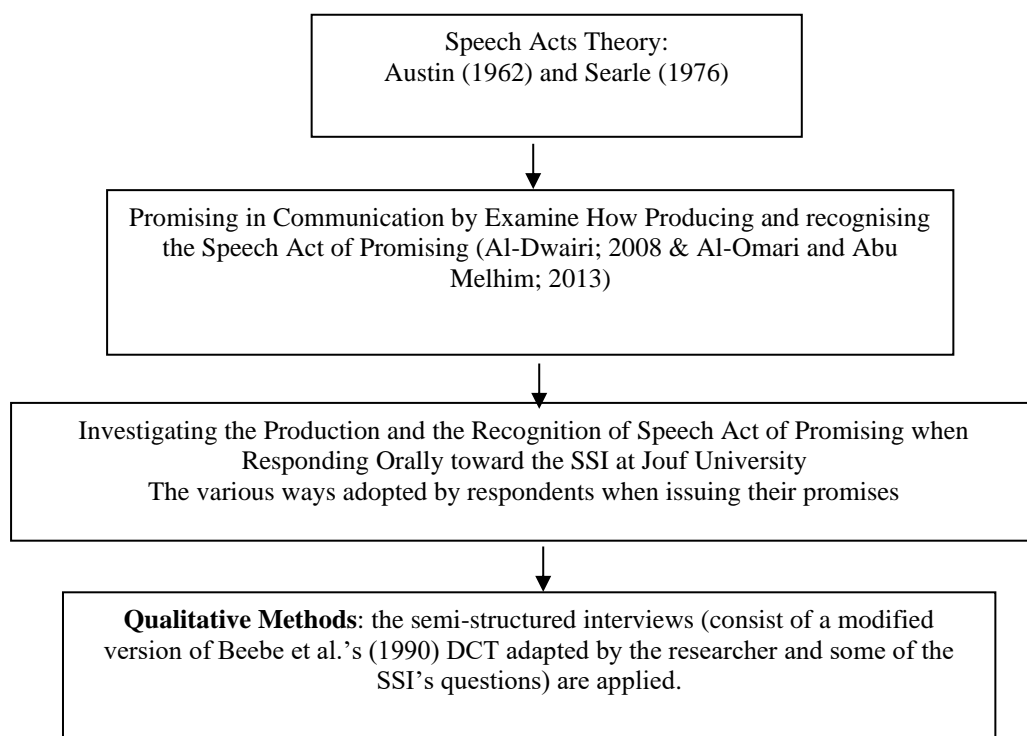
Figure 1. Research Conceptual Framework

Methodology

This study is a qualitative study. The total population of the study was approximately 700 students studying at the Department of English language at Jouf University. Out of this total, 10 female students pursuing a bachelor's degree in English Language in the fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth Levels were chosen as participants for this qualitative study to conduct the SSI. The SSI was conducted individually by meeting each of the 10 interviewers for an hour.

As shown in the table 1, the sample size was constrained by levels of education (5th, 6th, 7th and 8th). In addition, the size of the sample was also limited by gender (female only) and age (19-25). In this study, non-probability sampling (purposive sampling) was used by giving all the participants the same chance to participate in the study. Since the participants attended Jouf University in KSA, the sample chosen for this study was representative. As a consequence, the participants' responses to their promises reflect their understanding and comprehending to issue and recognize their promising.

Table 1. Samples for Main Study

University	Population	Sample Group	Students' Major
Jouf University	700 Students	8 Students	English Language and Literature

With respect to the qualitative data of the discussions, on January, 2021 of the second semester, the researcher assigned a session to perform the SSI. Initially, permission was obtained from Jouf University to start collecting data. The questions of the DCT adapted from Beebe's et al. (1990) and the questions of the SSI adapted by the researcher from Abbood's (2016) were conducted orally and recorded by audio recorder. After that, individual meetings among participants took place around half to one hour in the session. After preparing everything for the discussions, in particular the discussion questions, participants were introduced to the subject of the study in order to familiarise them with the field of study after fixing the time of the discussion. The SSI were mainly conducted by a mediator. The lack of a researcher during the discussion was important in order to avoid bias and to achieve the ethical consideration of the study. However, this study uses a self-build instrument with two sections. Section A is the demographic information of informants and Section B is the SSI questions to solve the Research problems and to enhance the research objectives.

After conducting the individual interviews, data collected were transcribed by using NVivo software- 12 version to elicit data from the respondents. Depending on thematic analysis, data were analysed by dividing the data to different themes compiled with the research objectives of the study to ease the discussion. The adapted analytical technique used to analyse the qualitative data in this study was the thematic analysis in which the data collected from the SSI were analysed.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents the qualitative findings derived from the informants of this study. It begins with an explanation of their demographic profiles. Then, the findings in this chapter are presented according to two objectives of the study.

1. The Demographic Profiles of the Respondents participated in the SSI

Table 2. Demographic Profile of the Respondents of the SSI

Respondent	Gender	Age	Level of Education	Proficiency in English Language
R1	Female	23	7	intermediate fluency
R2	Female	21	6	intermediate fluency
R3	Female	21	8	intermediate fluency
R4	Female	20	5	intermediate fluency
R5	Female	21	5	intermediate fluency
R6	Female	20	6	intermediate fluency
R7	Female	23	7	intermediate fluency
R8	Female	22	8	intermediate fluency

This section presents the demographic profile of eight respondents who participated in the semi-structured interview session. As listed in Table 2, the actual name of the respondents has been replaced with the pseudonym "R" followed by the number of their interview session or known as the "nth". For instance, this study addressed the first semi-structured interview participant as R1 and the second semi-structured interview participant as R2. A similar concept is applicable for the rest of the respondents. The rationale for

using this approach is to secure the anonymity of the respondents, as stated in the informed consent form distributed before the semi-structured interview session began.

As shown in Table 2, all respondents of this study are female aged from 19 to 25 years old and chosen from Jouf University-year three and four. Their level of education ranges from 5 to 8 (2 respondents were chosen from each level), and their major course of study in English. All of them are also intermediate fluency in English language.

2. RO1: The Production of the Speech Act of Promising Performed by the Saudi EFL Students

The first research objective of this study is 'to determine the production of the speech act of promising in communication, performed by the Saudi EFL students at Jouf University.' This research objectives were achieved by utilizing the semi-structured interviews. two questions and five situational statements were asked to the respondents in meeting the first objective of this study.

3. Describing or Defining Promising (Q1 to meet RO1)

The first question is '*Can you describe or define promising?*'. This study attained the answers from all respondents. In details, all respondents attained the definition of promising. The first respondent, R1, explained her understanding regarding promising. She mentioned promising increases the likelihood to issue her promise to act successfully. For instance, R1 stated, '*Okay, a promising showing a possibility of achievement or excellence. Making a promise or promises for assurance*.' The feedback from R1 is quite similar to the input given by R2. Next, R2 explained her understanding regarding promising, whereby an individual need to fulfil his or her promises. She mentioned, '*It's like you give the word, and you have to make it real*.' Then, the third respondent, R3, also explained that promising occurs when the pledge has been done and once, he or she is willing to perform the promises. She said, '*As far as I understand, you will do something for them when you tell somebody, and if she asks me to do something and I said It clearly, so it was clear that I am willing to do it.*'

Other than that, R4 also mentioned promising is a pledge that will be completed in the future. It will be done to reward the person by whom the promise is to be performed. R4 mentioned, '*I believe a promising is an act of promising someone to do something in the future, and it's an act of reward for doing something good*.' Then, R5 and R6 also provide a similar understanding regarding promising as R1. They stated that promise occurs when she assures herself to do certain activities. R5 narrates, '*When someone asks me to do something. I gave assurance to do that.*' Meanwhile, R6 stated, '*That's when you sure you will do something.*'

However, R7 provides a different perspective on promising than other respondents. She relates promising with acceptable situations. In other words, she favours promising to be done based on specific criteria. She mentioned, '*I think the promising is a suitable promise in a suitable situation*'. On the other hand, R8 explained her perspective on promising that any action will be done or will not be done. This perspective is different from other respondents as they perceived promising is related to any acts that only will be performed. R8 mentioned, '*When you tell the person you can do or cannot do it*'.

4. Producing Promising (Q2 to meet RO1)

The second question is '*Can you issue your promising or not?*'. This study attained the responses from all respondents. The majority of the respondents stated that they would issue promising. However, some respondents, such as R1, R2 and R3, give promising based on specific criteria. For instance, R1 stated '*Okay, I don't make a promise that I can't keep or don't know I can fulfil. Sometimes it depends on what you promise some because you should not break a promise.*' R2 and R3 relate their willingness to promise with the situation. Both R2 and R3 mentioned respectively, '*Well, it depends on the situation*' and '*Mostly, I can, but sometimes because of some other issues, I can't do that. It depends on the situation.*' Meanwhile, some respondents, such as R4, R5, R6, R7 and R8, explained their ability to promise without any criteria. For instance, R5 and R7 and R8 stated, '*Yes, I can*'. Then, R4 and R6 said, '*Yes, most of the time*' and '*Sure, I can*'. R8 also mentioned, '*I face no problem to issue a promise.*'

5. Situational Statement to Recognise a Promise (Q3 to meet RO1)

Situational Statement 1

The first situational statement is relating to a situational statement which is, '*I will come to the graduation party*.' six of respondents did not recognise this statement as a promise. Other respondents classified this statement as a promising. The eight respondents provided brief feedback without further elaborations. They narrated,

    R1: 'I am afraid I cannot guess.'
    R2: 'Maybe it is a request.'
    R3: 'Mmmm, it is an apology.'
    R4: 'I think it is a request.'
    R6: 'It is difficult to guess; I have no idea.'
    R7: 'Promising, no it is threat.'
    However, two respondents recognised and classified this statement as a promising. They said,
    R5: 'This statement is the act of promising.'
    R8: 'Surely, it is promising.'

Situational Statement 2

The second situational statement given to the respondents is, '*If you do not give me the money, I will shoot you*.' The classification of this situational statement received mixed feedback from the respondents. Some of them classified this statement as threatening, while the other respondents classified this statement as promising. Accordingly, the majority of the respondents stated that this statement is a promise rather than a threat. For instance, six respondents miscategorise this statement as promising. They stated,

    R1: 'There is this promising that will promise you to hurt you or kill you if you don't follow the instruction or order. So, it is a promising but in a bad kind of promising.'
    R3: 'I think that it is a kind of promising.'
    R4: 'Let me say, it is a promising.'
    R6: 'A kink of promising, conditional promising but not threat.'
    R7: 'It is promise.'
    R8: 'No, it is not threat. It is a kind of conditional promise.'
    On the other hand, other respondents classified this statement as threatening rather than being promising. They said:
    R2: 'Maybe we can classify the function of this statement as a threat.'
    R5: 'Warning.'

Situational Statement 3

The third situational statement given to the respondents is, '*Oh, I would love to see that movie with you, but this Friday just is not going to work*.' In classifying this statement, most of respondents miscategorised this statement as an apology statement. They classify it as promising and other speech acts. For instance, the five respondents mentioned,

    R2: 'It is a request to go to movie.'
    R4: 'Surely, it is threat.'
    R5: 'It is not promising, it is a request.'
    R6: 'Saying no, I am not able to guess.'
    R7: 'Request, without hesitation.'
    However, three respondents classified this statement as a promise. They stated,
    R1: 'No, it is to promise to do something.'
    R3: 'No, it is a promise.'
    R8: 'I feel it is promising, not to fulfil it.'

Situational Statement 4
The fourth situational statement given to the respondents is, '*Could you pass me the mashed potatoes, please?*' Again, there is no argument among the respondents in classifying this statement as the majority of the respondents miscategorise this statement as a promise, a threat, a delay and an apology. For instance, four respondents stated that this statement is promising. They mentioned,

 R1: 'Yeah, let me say: a promise.'
 R4: 'Let me say promising.'
 R7: 'To promise someone to do something; a promise.'

 Other than that, two respondents out of eight miscategorised this statement as a threat, a delay an apology. For example, they narrated:

 R2: 'An apology.'
 R3: 'Threat.'
 R5: 'Maybe I can say it is a delay.'

 However, other respondents without giving more feedback agreed that this statement is a request. For example, the two respondents narrated:

 R6: 'Giving something to speaker not promising.'
 R8: 'To ask someone to give him or her something.'

Situational Statement 5
The fifth situational statement given to the respondents is, '*If I won the lottery, I would buy you a car*.' Again, half of respondents provided a similar classification, which is a promise statement. However, the rest provided misclassification of this sentence by relating it to other speech acts. For instance, the four respondents indicated that this statement is promising and provided brief feedback without further elaborations. They mentioned,

 R2: 'I think [..] the correct answer is promise.'
 R3: 'A kind of conditional promise in which the speaker promises someone to do something if the condition is applied. In this case, the speaker clearly promises that if he or she won the lottery then he or she would buy a car as a gift for the listener.'
 R4: 'If I won, I would buy. It is a promise. It is clear.'
 R6: 'Yes, this is a clear promise.'

 However, the rest of the respondents provided in their clarifications that it may belong to other suggested speech acts such as: an apology, a threat or a request. They stated,

 R1: 'It is maybe an enhancement to encourage someone to do something but not to promise.'
 R5: 'Apology. Let me say.'
 R7: 'Conditional sentence not speech acts.'
 R8: 'Let me say, it is a request.'

6. RO2: Various Ways of Promising Employed by the Saudi EFL Students

The second research objective of this study is "To identify the adopted various ways of promising and the classification of illocutionary acts in communication employed by the Saudi EFL students at Jouf university." By conducting the SSI, a question and twenty hypothetical situations were asked to the respondents in meeting this objective.

7. Hypothetical Situations of the DCT (Q1 to meet RO2)

Hypothetical Situations 1
The first hypothetical situation is, '*Your brother asks you to wash and iron his dress now. How would you promise him to do so?*'. All eight respondents make a promise in addressing this situation. Six respondents managed to make an unconditional promise. For instance, these respondents willingly will assist their brother with no excuses. These respondents mentioned:

 R1: 'I promise to do that.'
 R2: 'Well, I will say I will do it before he asks for doing it later.'

R3: 'Of course, sure I'll do it.'
R5: 'I promise to do it tomorrow.'
R6: 'Of course, I will do it.'
R7: 'I will do it, no problem.'

However, two respondents made a conditional promise. Even though they promised to assist their brother, their promise is subjected to a condition: time. Indeed, they will only fulfil their promise if they are having free time. They mentioned:

R4: 'Yes, I will, not now, maybe later because I'm busy.'
R8: 'I promise I will do that. I will wash and iron the dress if I have time.'

Hypothetical Situation 2

The second hypothetical situation is, '*Your son asks you to take him to an amusement park if he memorizes Surat Al-Tariq. How would you promise him to do so?*'. All respondents except one make a simple promise to their son with no specific instruction to be complied with by their son. The seven respondents narrate:

R1: 'I promise to do whatever I can.'
R2: 'Trust me, I can do it.'
R3: 'Yes, I will do my best to get high marks.'
R4: 'Study hard, my dear. I will take you to the amusement park.'
R5: 'Please remember that, and I will take you there.'
R7: 'I have already memorized it in school, so you should fulfil your promise.'
R8: 'In all cases I will take you darling.'

However, a different viewpoint was expressed by one respondent who refuses to fulfil promise without providing excuses and explanations. She mentioned,

R6: 'Impossible dear.'

Hypothetical Situation 3

The third hypothetical situation is, '*Your university colleague asks you to take her in your car for a week to the university because her father's car was broken. How would you promise her to do so?*'. In addressing this situation, six of respondents managed to make unconditional promise. then, two respondents managed to make conditional promise. They narrate:

R2: 'I assure you that I would be there on time.'
R3: 'It is easy, I'll accept it. Okay, you can come with us.'
R4: 'It's my pleasure to help you.'
R5: 'I will take you in my car for the whole week.'
R6: 'Never mind, my dear.'
R8: 'I will take you in my car for a week till your father repair his vehicle.'

Further, a conditional promise was issued by two respondents compiled with having no urgent circumstance and being on time. As they stated,

R1: 'If I do not have any circumstance, I will drop you.'
R7: 'It is ok, no problem but you have to come on time so that I will not be late to lectures.'

Hypothetical Situation 4

The fourth hypothetical situation is, 'Your father asks you to adhere to your customs and traditions in a Western country you travelled to study. How would you promise him to do so?'. In addressing this situation, all respondents managed to make a promise with no additional condition. They narrate:

R1: 'Without my religious customs and traditions, I cannot live.'
R2: 'I'm going to say, believe me, I won't make you disappointed.'
R3: 'I will accept it. of course, I will adhere to my tradition […] Yes, I will keep mine (custom and tradition).'
R4: 'Okay, I will adhere to my custom and tradition unless it does not contradict my Islamic conventions and tradition.'

R5: 'I promise you; I will adhere to my culture.'
R6: 'Sure, dad.'
R7: 'You don't have to ask me about this thing.'
R8: 'I would custom traditions in a western country when I study there. […] Yes, I would save our tradition and custom.'

Hypothetical Situation 5
The fifth hypothetical situation is, 'Your mother asks you to keep on performing the five daily prayers and read morning and evening Supplications. How would you promise her to do so?'. Similarly, in addressing the earlier hypothetical situation, the respondents totally managed to promise with no additional condition. They narrated:
R1: 'I promise I will do.'
R2: 'Well, I ask her for time, and I will ask her for help. So InchaAllah, I will do it.'
R3: 'Yes, of course, it is a good thing to do. I will do my best, mom.'
R4: 'InchaAllah, I will do that. And I promise you to keep praying all the time and say the evening supplication.'
R5: 'I will keep doing my prayers and morning and evening supplication.'
R6: 'Okay, mom, I will do it. Of course.'
R8: 'Without any hesitation, sure.'
In the meantime, one respondent did not make any promise. Instead, she requested her mother to pray for Allah helping her to keep on performing the five daily prayers and read morning and evening Supplications. She narrated:
R7: 'Pray for me mom.'

Hypothetical Situation 6
The sixth hypothetical situation is, 'Suppose you are married and your mother-in-law asks you to accustom your eight-year-old daughter to wear Islamic clothes. How would you promise him to do so?'. This study attained feedback all respondents. The majority of respondents refused to make a promise, however, two of them make a promise to their mother-in-law. They said:
R2: 'I would promise her to custom her to wear Islamic clothes and hijab.'
R7: 'Of course, but she is too young. So, yes, mom let her get used to it some time. But I'll make sure she will start it step by step.'
Other than that, six of respondents refused to make a promise and sometime asked for delay because their daughter is young. These respondents mentioned:
R1: 'My daughter is young now. Insha'Allah after 2 years she can use to.'
R3: 'Too young my little daughter, let her become older.'
R4: 'Maybe later. She is still young. She still has time to do that.'
R5: 'I will think about it later, in a polite way.'
R6: 'She should enjoy her childhood. Later on, mom.'
R8: 'When my little daughter is bigger than now, I will teach her.'

Hypothetical Situation 7
The seventh hypothetical situation is, '*Your neighbour invites you to attend her son's wedding. How would you promise her to do so?*'. All respondents managed to promise with no additional condition except two. They narrated:
R2: 'I will come and look forward to attending the ceremony.'
R3: 'Definitely will come.'
R4: 'It will be my pleasure to be there.'
R5: 'Without invitation, I will come.'
R6: 'I have an appointment, but I will come for an hour.'
R8: 'Congratulation dearest without invitation, I am as your sister.'

However, one respondent made a promise but with specific criteria. For instance, R1 stated that if she finishes her work, she can attend the wedding. She narrated:

R1: 'I will come if I finish my work.'

Other than that, one respondent, R7, refused to make a promise because she had a specific condition. She said:

R7: 'Sorry, I cannot attend. I have a relatives' occasion at the same time.'

Hypothetical Situation 8
The eighth hypothetical situation is, *'After returning from travel, your friend calls you and says: tomorrow we will have a dinner together … say I accept. But, how would you promise her to do so?'*. five respondents agreed to make a promise by having dinner with their friends even though they are returning from travel. They narrated:

R1: 'I promise I will come.'

R4: 'Surely, I would like to join you.'

R5: 'I will see you tomorrow.'

R6: 'Okay, I will do it as you like.'

R7: 'Sure, I can't refuse because I miss you.'

However, another respondent, R2, made a conditional promise as she only had time. She told:

R2: 'Well, sure, I love to be with you Insha'Allah. I will see if I have enough time to do so.'

In the meantime, another respondent, R3, did not make any promise and request for a delay. She mentioned:

R3: 'Sorry I couldn't, maybe we can postpone. I will refuse.'

A different way of expressing promise was stated by one respondent, R8, in which she refused to fulfil her promise indirectly via using proverbs as a way to express this. She mentioned,

R8: 'When you see your earring.'

Hypothetical Situation 9
The nineth hypothetical situation is, *'Suppose you are a faculty member and your boss asks you to do work instead of another colleague for a particular reason. How would you promise him to do so?'*. Half of respondents made a promise. They told:

R1: 'I will try my best to do the job.'

R3: 'Inshallah I will do, don't worry my boss.'

R5: 'Ok but don't ask me that another time.'

R7: 'Inshallah I will do, don't worry my boss.'

However, another respondent, R9, said she would promise but only with a condition, which depends on her ample time. The other respondents, R4, R7, R12 and R19, refused to promise as the requested task is out of their territory and they have a lot of work. They mentioned:

R2: 'I'll do it depends on the circumstances. So, I'll say I will do it but if I have time.'

R8:' I have a lot of work. Kindly, choose anyone instead.'

In the meantime, three respondents did not make any promise and request for sending an official letter because they supposed that this is not their task. They narrate:

R4: 'Send me an official letter please.'

R6: 'Let the matter be official.'

Hypothetical Situation 10
The tenth hypothetical situation is, 'Your mother asks you to study hard, and if you score high marks, she will bring an iPad for you. How would you promise her to do so?'. In addressing this situation, all respondents totally make an unconditional promise with various speech style as using sometimes promises and proverbs.

One rationale is due to the value of the iPad for them as a student that drives them to fulfil the promise without other conditions. They told:

R1: 'I promise to do whatever I can.'

R2: 'I swear to study hard.'

R3: 'Yes, I will do my best to get high marks.'

R4: 'iPad, yeah.'

R5: 'Don't worry, mom. I promised to study hard for my exam.'

R6: 'You don't have to say it, mom. I will do it, of course.'

R7: 'Oh, my dear mom I love you.'

R8: 'Mom, I will promise I would study hard to have this iPad.'

8. Adopting Ways (Q2 to meet RO2)

The question is, '*Will you adopt the same ways of promising/ different ways for the different situation?*.' all students managed to give their feedback. Generally, they mentioned different situation leads them to make promises differently. All of the responses emphasised on one point that promising related to different ways not to the same ones. They narrated,

R1: 'I think in different ways because it will depend on age, situation, social background.'

R2: 'Let me say: having different promises in different situations, especially those that affected by religion. So, various religions are making promises differently.'

R3: 'I think differently because the kind of promising you to make will differ for other people. For example, in religion, we have a different form of how to promising. It depends on my emotion, but still, we have to fulfil the promise.'

R4: 'The answer is in different ways. It depends on the threat or characteristic of the person. So, the kind of promising you to make will be different when it comes to other people.'

R5: 'In all cases we bind to fulfil the promises but I believe this matter can be occurred by adopting various ways not the same ones.'

R7: 'The age, characteristics, and social background of whom we are making promises and the situation are the different ways of promising. Really it depends on the second party. My father, my friends and age. It is according to the situation, the relationship.'

'R8: 'Of course, different ways for different situation. As we have discussed before, to whom you are speaking affect your promise. It will be different when promising my father, son, grandmother, college, and maybe a foreigner. So anytime I need to be specific in my promise. For me, I will ask my daughter. I will convince my daughter to wear custom. I will promise her because she has the right to ask this. But I will ask her for time to say it to my daughter. I will only say I try and not promise her strongly because I have to try to convince my daughter first.'

Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, this study fulfilled the two research objectives. Firstly, it fulfilled Research Objective 1, which is 'to determine the production of the speech act of promising in communication, performed by the Saudi EFL students at Jouf University.' by attaining answers for two questions and five situational statements. Since this objective sought to ascertain whether Saudi EFL students at Jouf University are capable of issuing and recognising the speech act of promising. All the respondents describe or define and issue promising in their own ways. However, they have a mutual agreement that fulfilling promises are compulsory. Rather than that, the students' ability to determine whether a particular type of speech act is promising or not was tested by highlighting their recognition of the speech act of promising. Specifically, while 45% of students demonstrated the ability to recognise the speech act of promising, the overwhelming majority of students (55%) did not. The table below illustrates the percentages of how many respondents recognise and do not recognise promising.

Table 3.   Summary of Students Responses to the Five Situational Statement at the Recognition Level of Promising

Situation No.	(1) Recognition %	(2) No Recognition %
Statement 1	2 (25%)	6 (75%)
Statement 2	2 (25%)	6 (75%)
Statement 3	5 (63%)	3 (37%)
Statement 4	5 (63%)	3 (37%)
Statement 5	4 (50%)	4 (50%)
Means	**45%**	**55%**

Moreover, this study also fulfilled Research Objective 2, which is 'to identify the adopted various ways of promising and the classification of illocutionary acts in communication employed by the Saudi EFL students at Jouf university.' It can be concluded that all the respondents adopt different ways of making promises according to age, characteristics, and social background of whom they are making promises to and the situation in which the promises are made. Most of the respondents are also willing to give promises if they experience some hypothetical situations asked.

Future researchers are encouraged to incorporate an additional research method when conducting studies on the various speech acts of promising in the Saudi EFL context. Other forms of triangulation, such as conducting qualitative and quantitative methods to gather data from EFL students, would improve the accuracy of the results in future research.

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