



**Sudan University for Science and Technology**



**College of Post Graduates**

**College of Languages**

## **The Effects of Pragmatic Difficulties on EFL Learners' Performance in Understanding Academic Texts**

A case of Omdurman Islamic University Students

أثر الصعوبات التداولية علي اداء دارسي اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية في فهم النصوص الأكاديمية  
حالة طلاب جامعة ام درمان الإسلامية

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**(Applied Linguistics)**

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## The opening Verse

الآية الكريمة

قال تعالى:

"فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُقْضَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ وَقُلْ رَبِّ  
زِدْنِي عِلْمًا"

"So high [above all] is Allah, the Sovereign, the Truth. And, [O Muhammad], do not hasten with [recitation of] the Qur'an before its revelation is completed to you, and say, "My Lord, increase me in knowledge."

Surah Taha 114

# **Dedication**

To my parents & my sisters

To my colleagues & students

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## **Abstract**

This study aims at focusing on investigating the effects of pragmatic difficulties on EFL learners' performance in understanding academic texts. The current study identifies the nature of these problems and examines their effects on the general performance of the students.

The researcher used descriptive analytical methods to achieve the study's objectives. A four- question test has been given to forty students at Omdurman Islamic University and questionnaire to twenty English language teachers at some Sudanese universities. The data obtained has been analysed through SPSS programme and the results have been submitted to this study. The analysis of both the test and questionnaire proved that EFL learners encounter a number of pragmatic difficulties affecting their performance while dealing with academic texts, and pragmatics is not adequately covered in university syllabus. These obstacles are results of many issues which among them; that EFL learners are not exposed to pragmatics or the realization of its significant aspects in academic texts.

In such situation; the study strongly recommended that syllabus designers should include pragmatics in universities' curriculum, and also consider students' individual differences. Both tutor and students are advised to adopt more effective techniques and subtle strategies to deal with these issues and exert more efforts in practicing as well.

The present study involved a limited number of participants in a college EFL setting in one country, Sudan and thus it will be worthwhile to explore how other student groups (ESL, other academic disciplines, other English proficiency levels) in other places would report their experiences and provide a better detailed description to their performance. Therefore, further studies need to consider replication of the current study in other settings would be beneficial.

## مستخلص الدراسة

هدفت هذه الدراسة ألي تقصي أثر الصعوبات التداولية علي اداء دراسي اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية أثناء فهمهم للنصوص الأكاديمية، حالة طلاب جامعة ام درمان الإسلامية.

حيث انتهجت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي كما استخدمت الاستبيان والاختبار كأدوات لجمع البيانات. كانت عينة هذه الدراسة (20) محاضراً بقسم اللغة الانجليزية ببعض الجامعات السودانية، و (40) طالب/ة من قسم اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة ام درمان الإسلامية. تمت معالجة البيانات التي حصلت عليها الدراسة من الاستبيان والاختبار باستخدام التحليل الإحصائي (SPSS) لاختبار فرضية هذه الدراسة. أظهرت النتائج أن طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية يواجهون عدة مشكلات متعلقة بفهم ومعرفة علم التداولية وكيفية التعامل مع النص الأكاديمي، وان هذه الصعوبات أثرت علي أداءهم الأكاديمي العام. وأيضاً اثبتت الدراسة ان مقرر طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية في الجامعات السودانية لم يتناول علم التداولية مادة منفصلة وانما يتطرق لبعض المحاور الأساسية مما أدى لخلق فجوة معرفية لدى دارسي اللغة الإنجليزية.

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## Definitions of Terms

<b>The terms</b>	<b>The Translations</b>
<b>Discourse completion task</b>	The multiple choices discourse completion task is the third tool designed in this study. It is used as a main tool for more clarification for study hypothesis.
<b>socio-pragmatic competence</b>	The knowledge of use these forms and strategies in an appropriate context.
<b>pragma-linguistic competence</b>	Taguchi, (2009, p.1) states that: it is understood as knowledge of forms and strategies to convey particular illocutions.
<b>Deixis</b>	Merriam Webster dictionary defined deixis as follows: the pointing or specifying function of some words such as - definite articles and demonstrative articles- whose denotation changes from one discourse to another. It was introduced in 1946.
<b>Speech Acts</b>	The use and the view of social interactionists about any language can be stated as; linguistic phenomenon, therefore it deals with the social action, whenever the speaker has to say something to someone.

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# **Chapter One**

## **1.0 Background**

Nowadays many of Sudanese undergraduates encounter a number of pragmatic difficulties which hinder their performance in understanding academic texts that are written in English. Although pragmatics is taught since second year as a branch of linguistics at Omdurman Islamic University, the students still face many difficulties. However, there are some students who keep trying to overcome these problems by exerting efforts to get at least a basic knowledge about general aspects of pragmatics and how pragmatics works in order to get a better understanding of the given academic texts which are integral part of the university's curriculum.

As Patrick (2000) stated that; compared with the other branches of linguistics, pragmatics has only recently come on to the linguistic map. Some may doubt, in fact, whether it has become a respectable branch of linguistics, or even if there is any legitimate field of study called 'pragmatics. It nevertheless became a significant factor in linguistic thinking in the 1970s, and since then has developed as an important field of research. In this study, the main pragmatic constraints will be investigated to be tackle down and some effective solutions will be proposed. Pragmatics may roughly be described as the study of the meaning of linguistic utterances for their users and interpreters.

The American philosopher Charles Morris (1938), and later used by logicians such as Rudolf Carnap (1942, 1955) (as Patrick cited in 2006); It is important, as far as its origin is concerned, to see pragmatics as part of a triad of studies distinguished. Pragmatics, according to this line of thought, is the study of signs (and sign systems) in relation to their users; whereas semantics is the study of signs in relation to their designate (what they refer to). The two fields are subdivisions of semiotics, the study of signs and sign systems, and may therefore be just as fittingly applied to the study of artificial signs such as traffic lights, or of signs used in animal communication, as to human language. But, in practice, work in pragmatics has principally been carried out on human language or 'natural language as logicians are accustomed to call it.



Therefore, the significance of understanding pragmatics and how it works is vital to the language's users including undergraduates who come across different types of academic texts that are structured in a very specific or academic language in various fields of their study.

Anstrom, (2010) points out that academic language is:

Language used in academic settings and for academic purposes to help students acquire and use knowledge. Words and syntactic structures that students are likely to encounter in textbooks and tests, but not those in everyday spoken English. Accordingly, academic texts are structured in specific ways in various subjects for different purposes; considering that they are not meant to be read, but they are meant to be ransacked and pillaged for essential contents so achieving this purpose may consider more challenging for the undergraduates. Although, they come across a wide range of texts -which is central to the study of English- for understanding, critical analysis, interpretation and pleasure which are appropriate to their needs, interests and abilities but the pragmatic difficulties distract and hinder their performance which may result in a lack of understanding to the language of these texts. When undergraduates have a clear sense of general ideas of academic texts, their understanding is likely to be better as well.

Also individual differences may affect how students understand academic texts. For instance, students within one class may their linguistic skills and vocabulary knowledge differ from each other and having different motivations as well. They may also have little or extensive experience with academic language either in English or their first language. In addition, students may bring varying cultural expectations and attitudes toward English, which might be influenced by their families or societies. As Nergis (2013) cited that (Birch, 2007); has shown, students' awareness of their own reading strategies may help them better to understand the texts they read.

All these factors can play an important role in how undergraduates' performance in understanding academic texts is affected; not only by the pragmatic difficulties but they are on the very top of these factors.

### **1.1 The statement of the study:**

Learning English as a foreign language is not an easy task. It needs much effort, in particular with regard to understand and comprehend scientific language namely academic texts because a certain level of knowledge and essential skills are needed and that can be acquired over a long time with a lot of practice. Sudanese EFL learners are expected to acquire adequate communicative competence in English as a foreign language including the enhancement of their understanding to academic texts. Despite the efforts made within the area of teaching English, still the outcomes in students' skills and competencies in English below expectations. Developing a good understanding to academic texts and improving proficiency skills among learners is one of the major goals in the process of English teaching. In the ESL situation, English is learned within the context of an English-speaking society. Considering; ESL learners who are exposed to English in and out of the classrooms. Thus, they have opportunities to practise their English and observe how the language used in real situations by interacting with communicatively competent English speakers. These opportunities can lead to the development of pragmatic competence in ESL learners because the learners acquire their knowledge of English language as it is used in actual situations.

On the other hand, the EFL learners' opportunities for English practice are limited solely to classroom activities as the case of the Sudanese learners majoring in English, because they are learning the language in a social environment where it is not commonly used for communication. Therefore, Sudanese EFL learners lack both the chance to practice and observe multiple instances of genuine English communication and which may hinder the process of developing pragmatic communication knowledge. Hence, it is of utmost importance that teachers of

English as a foreign language use pedagogical practices that can provide and foster pragmatic skills development in the EFL situation.

Through observations in the period of lecturing at universities the researcher observed that, some students encounter many problems in understanding academic texts due to some reasons on the very top of them are pragmatic difficulties. EFL learners face a number of problems which lead to passive impact on their performance. The students cannot fully grasp and ransack the texts that are given to them by lecturers and that may refer to either lecturers' strategies or the students'. This study will investigate pragmatic difficulties that EFL learners encounter while understanding the academic texts, as well as it will examine and analyse how these pragmatic difficulties affect the students' performance at the university level. The problem which this study addresses is that majority of Omdurman Islamic University's students encounter a number of pragmatic difficulties while comprehending academic texts which are constructed in English. Although the Students are exposed to a variety of courses in which they come across a number of academic texts.

## **2.2 The Significance of the study:**

This investigatory study has both research and pedagogical value. From a research perspective, the nature of its inquiries and its research design made possible a kind of examination of EFL learners rarely seen in the field of pragmatics and allowed for a vigorous degree of validity and trustworthiness. The study has demonstrated the importance of looking at EFL learners from an inside, or emic, perspective, and over a sustained period of time. With respect to pedagogy, the findings generated from this descriptive analytical investigation provide important curricular and pedagogical insights, especially as related to higher education and English language instruction in Sudanese context.

The significance of this study stems from the issue it tries to address, therefore; this study aims at proposing some solutions after identifying and investigating the pragmatic difficulties which are encountered by EFL learners in understanding academic texts. The proposed solutions are expected to facilitate the process of comprehending the pragmatic constraints which may help the undergraduates to enhance their performance in processing English academic texts. This study will contribute in improving both undergraduates' knowledge about pragmatics in general and about how to overcome such constraints in particular; in addition to making use of academic text's language structure in enriching the knowledge about English and also it will motivate university lecturers to identify the challenges that their students may face and how to overcome them. The choice of undergraduates' level, as a target of the present study is done on purpose to provide the study with a more challenging dimension.

### **1.3 Objectives of this study:**

This study aims to shed light on pragmatic difficulties and their effects on EFL learners' performance in understanding academic texts, therefore it is trying to achieve the following:

- To investigate pragmatic difficulties that EFL learners' encounter in understanding academic texts.
- To examine their effects on the EFL learners' performance.
- To show whether that pragmatic aspects are adequately included in EFL learners' syllabuses.

#### **1.4 Questions of the Study:**

This study will be carried out to answer the following three questions:

- What are the pragmatic difficulties that EFL learners encounter while understanding the academic texts?
- To what extent the EFL learners' performance in understanding academic texts is affected by pragmatic difficulties?
- Are pragmatic aspects adequately included in EFL learners' syllabuses?

#### **1.5 Hypotheses of the Study:**

This study hypothesizes the following:

- EFL learners encounter a number of pragmatic difficulties in understanding the academic texts.
- EFL learners' performance while processing academic texts is highly affected by these pragmatic difficulties.
- EFL learners' syllabus is not adequately included pragmatic aspects.

#### **1.6 Methodology of the Study:**

This study will employ the descriptive analytical methods for collecting data and relevant information to investigate the pragmatic difficulties that EFL learners encounter while comprehending academic texts and whether they affect their performance. Therefore, the data will be collected through a questionnaire will be given to lecturers at some Sudanese universities a test for undergraduates of Omdurman Islamic University to prove the hypotheses of this study. The data of this study will be fed into computer so as to be analyzed using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences programme (SPSS). The researcher will also confirm the validity and the reliability of the research tools before their application. These methods supply a detailed description for the interpretation of how the pragmatic difficulties hinder EFL learners' performance in comprehending academic texts.

### **1.7 Limits of the study:**

The current study has three major limitations. The first one is to investigate the pragmatic difficulties that EFL learners face while processing academic texts, and it will be carried out with reference to Sudanese university students specifically Omdurman Islamic University, fourth year level namely majoring English language students, to examine their ability in understanding a group of given English texts. The last limitation; is to be conducted in the academic years 2019-2021.

# **Chapter Two**

## **Literature Review and Previous Studies**

## **Part one: Literature Review**

### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter consists of two parts; the first one reviews some relevant literature on the conceptual framework of the study, whereas the second part handles some previous studies related to this study. Also the chapter introduces other concepts that are important in the study of linguistic meaning which directly relate to the matter under discussion. Other technical terms are going to be brought in which are strongly needed for getting a reasonable initial grasp on pragmatics.

### **2.1 Definitions of Pragmatics**

Pragmatics is identified and defined by many applied linguists, educators and researchers from a variety of perspectives. Some of the definitions are as follow:

According to the Robin; the field of pragmatics is understood as meaning concerned phenomenon that involves around the different factors of speech situation, (1964:23). Like syntax and semantics, pragmatics is sub-field of linguistics inquiry developed in the (1970). Leech, (1983, p.6) defines pragmatics as meaning in relation to speech situation, this definition highlights language user's ability to use language in different communicative purposes in different situations.

Crystal, (1985, p.15) defines " pragmatics as the study of language from the point of view of the users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction, and the effects their use of Language has on the other participants in an act of communication.

Crystal (1987:62-5) stated that; Pragmatics deals with the factors that manages the language for what we want to choose within the pool of language that could satisfy whenever it is used within a social interaction and its effects on others. Therefore, the factors of pragmatics that effect on our selection of grammatical construction are as sound pattern, and the meaning which we are producing by presenting the



vocabularies through the intended procedure as a way to communicate (Crystal, 1987:62-5). Therefore, the study of pragmatics is tending to relate it with the meaning of words that people used within their social situations and choice of the words in a context. Fasold, (1990, p.121) defines pragmatics "pragmatics as a topic in linguistics, is the study of the use of context to make inference about meaning".

Yule, (1996, p. 127) Pragmatics is the study of „invisible“ meaning or how we recognize what is meant even when it is not actually said or written. In other words, pragmatics is the study of language according to context. In another word; pragmatics deals with the relationship between linguistic forms and the users of these forms this entails the ability to employ linguistic forms to perform particular language functions properly. Yule, (1996, p.3) says the field of pragmatics concerned the way by which interlocutors choose their speech and the impact of their language on other, the study of speaker's meaning and its interpretation as made by a hearer is central to pragmatics.

Thomas (1999, p.14) states that: when pragmatics is discussed in linguistics the common definition of pragmatics is "the meaning in use" Or "the meaning in context. Siddiqui 2018 defines pragmatics as a major study of linguistics that defines the hidden meanings of a writer and speaker towards the conjoining effort of linguistic form. It is stated along with its user. Within pragmatics the importance is usually given to a contextual meaning, where every other meaning of given context is referred to speaker as well as writer that wishes to state something.

In this regard Siddiqui (2018) discussed that; the major purpose of pragmatics is engaged with addressor's intended words to communicate with the addressee. Pragmatics deals not only with the meaning making of a given sentence; however, it goes necessarily with a relation to the hidden meaning of a speaker. It could be referred that the field of pragmatics investigates what is unsaid. It depends on the notion of the speaker that processes for intention that what s/he wants to say to the listener while dealing with different situations. It is through the pragmatics that

defines what a listener or a reader can analyze the intended meanings and so it allows them to investigate their purposes, within their assumptions inside to explore them in form of behaviour in state to different actions of what they want to perform when they speak with front audience.

Thomas, (2006, p.92) refers to pragmatics as "the study of meaning in use which is concerned with how language is actually used by non-native speaker to perform diverse function in interaction, this includes how politeness is conveyed, how speech acts are realized, and the effect of grammatical structure of an utterance on degree of directness and utterance interpretation.:

Mey, (2001, p.7) states that: pragmatics studies the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society. He holds that communication in society happens chiefly by means of language. However, the users of language, as social beings, communicate and use language on society's premises; society controls their access to the linguistic and communicative means; Pragmatics, as the study of the way humans use their language in communication, bases itself on a study of those premises and determines how they affect human language use. Chapman, (2011, p.8) argues pragmatics investigates "production and interpretation of language in relation to context of use". Schauer, (2009, p.22) states that: pragmatics is a relatively young linguistic discipline since it has begun to establish itself as an independent area of linguistic inquiry.

Leech (1983:13-4), pointed that the pragmatics is a study of meaning and the way to relate that speech with any provided situations, along with an aspect to make a speech in a situation and further it paves a path to determine a core principle that whether it deals with semantic or the pragmatic phenomenon. The more important aspects of pragmatics have indicated that it is the study of meaning that is related towards speech making situation. Stalnaker 1970: defined "Pragmatics is the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed." In addition to

Kempson's definition 1988: "pragmatics provides an account of how sentences are used in utterances to convey information in context."

## **2.2 Historical background of pragmatics**

Pragmatics as a field of linguistics inquiry was initiated in the 1930 by Morris, for whom syntax addresses the formal relation of signs to one another, semantics addresses the relation of signs to what denote and pragmatics addresses the relation of signs to their users and interpreters. Late in the 20th century after linguistics has come to prominence, pragmatics developed as an identifiable branch of linguistics; it emerged as a field of study in the 1970s and it became well established in the 1980s.

Pragmatics is an outgrowth of language study, which is specifically concerned with the speaker, listener and context. First; the term pragmatics appears in linguistic philosophy when western philosophers have begun to shift their focus on study of language symbols, which develop into semiology early pragmatics is just a branch of semiology under philosophers' studies and this shows clearly that it originates their philosophy study of language. Second; the theoretic basis for pragmatics is from philosophy. Or the study of functional linguistics on language forms. Third; the main studies of pragmatics such as presupposition, deictic also have philosophical background. At this juncture, it is necessary to mention some philosophers who have played very important roles in the development of pragmatics; Morris, Austin, Searle, Levinson, Leech, Pierce, Carnap, Grice, and so on. Austin had once discussed the origin of pragmatics in England, France and Germany in 1930s. On his part, Morris who had played the most important role in the first stage of the development of pragmatics holds an opinion that the study must involve the aspects of society, of psychology, of nerve, of culture and other things that affect the symbols and their meanings. In fact, the most influential thing he did on pragmatics in 1938 was his division of semiology into three parts: syntax, semantics and pragmatics. Also, the famous philosopher, Carnap, had very similar

ideas with Morris but made some supplement. He suggested that the study of pragmatics should have relationship between language users and words as well as the reference of words. By this, he makes the aims of the study of pragmatics more specific. In addition, Bar Hiller the student of Carnap suggested that: study of pragmatics should have definite aims and he claims that the definite aims should be deictic, such as “I”, “Here”, “Now”. On their part, Austin and Searle put forward the Speech Act Theory, which is the most influential topic in the study of pragmatics. Grice also made contribution to the study of speech act theory and puts his famous conversational implicature in the study. Furthermore, the publications of the journal of Pragmatics in Holland by Mey in 2001, and principles of pragmatics by Levinson and Leech in 1983 and the establishment of International Pragmatic Association (IPA) in 1987 at Antwerp, Belgium, are considered the most important issues for the development of pragmatics and these indicate that pragmatics has become an independent discipline in linguistics. Lastly, pragmatics has been developing very quickly and soundly since the 1980s. So far, it has made some delightful progress, and attracted more students as well as scholars to conduct researches. In the present pragmatics has developed new branches which includes: Inter-language pragmatics, cross-cultural pragmatics, pragmatics and language teaching etc. It has been widely recognised that the field of pragmatics does not exclusively explore language in its own right like phonology, morphology, syntax or semantics; in fact, it involves communicators (speaker-producer) and (hearer-interpreters) at the same time manipulate language to shape and infer meaning in a socio-cultural context.

### **2.3 Pragma-linguistics and socio-pragmatics**

Pragmatic competence is “the ability to use language appropriately in a social context” which involves both innate and learned capacities and develops naturally through a socialization process. Pragma- linguistics is understood as knowledge of forms and strategies to convey particular meaning includes strategies like directness, indirectness, routines, and a large range of linguistic forms which can intensify or

soften communicative act. In the other hand socio-pragmatics is the knowledge of use these forms and strategies in appropriate context; it refers to the social perception of communication action. Taguchi, (2009, p.1) states that: it is understood as knowledge of forms and strategies to convey particular illocutions is (pragmalinguistic competence) and the knowledge of use these forms and strategies in an appropriate context is (socio-pragmatic competence). In order to be pragmatically competent, learners must map their socio-pragmatic knowledge on pragmalinguistic forms and strategies and be able to use their knowledge under the constraints of a communicative situation. Roever (2006, p.5). The distinction between pragmalinguistic and socio-pragmatics aspects of communication is an important for both learners and teachers since both aspects must be considered in learning or teaching a language Trosborg, (2010, p.16). Any failure in L2 learners' comprehension and production of the idiosyncrasies of either component in any language use situation would lead to pragmatic failure, or communication breakdown. As he states that: pragmalinguistic failure relates to a linguistic deficiency "caused by differences in the linguistic encoding of pragmatic force", while socio-pragmatic failure results from a lack of socio cultural knowledge and "cross-culturally different perceptions of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behaviour". In order to decrease instances of pragmatic failure, students should learn pragmalinguistic as well as socio-pragmatic aspects of the target language use. However, as Yates, (2010, p.26) pointed out, these two aspects cannot be taught unless teachers almost consciously know how these facets of communicative acts are realized in various contexts of language use. The study of speech act realization patterns and strategies in a wide range of language use situations has so forth yielded insightful results in comparative cross-cultural and inter language pragmatics. Barron, (2008, p.17), States that: a cross-cultural pragmatics line of inquiry has mainly examined how different types of speech acts are realized by non-native speakers of a second language with a variety of language backgrounds and other learner-specific variations.

## **2.4 The Scope of Pragmatics**

Scope here means the area to which the study of pragmatics has been extended. On perspective of pragmatics, as this study is an applied research, and will identify pragmatic difficulties which EFL learners encounter while dealing with academic texts and it will examine their comprehension and production of linguistic action in context. By investigating Sudanese EFL learner' comprehension and realization of pragmatics aspects and appropriate language use in academic texts, it also attempts to shed a light on the learners' attitudes towards pragmatic development of English. This study also aims at examining the role of pragmatic competence and its impact on Sudanese EFL learners' performance. For purposes of this work, it is needful to mention that the term linguistic pragmatics as popularly used today is far more restricted than the term "pragmatics". Currently, linguistic pragmatics majorly dwells on those factors of language use that govern the choice individuals make in social interaction and the effect of those choices on others.

## **2.5 Aspects of Pragmatics:**

As it is linguistically well known, pragmatics deals with the use of language generally, or considering how people do things with words therefore; it is worth mentioning to go thoroughly over the four common aspects of pragmatics namely; speech acts, rhetorical structure, conversational implicature, and the management of reference in discourse- which all will be explained in this part of the research.

### **2.5.1 Speech Acts**

One of the most widely studied connections between computational linguistics and pragmatics is speech-act theory (Searle 1969; Searle and Vanderveken 1985), and there are a number of excellent existing resources on this topic (Jurafsky 2004; Leech and Weisser 2003; Jurafsky and Martin 2009: 21, 24). It is interesting therefore to concentrate on the issue of how speech act (illocutionary) force is assigned to utterances, casting this as a problem of context dependence and highlighting the

ways in which the context develops. Speech-acts broadly categorise utterances based on the speaker's intentions for their core semantic content, indicating whether it is meant to be asserted, queried, commanded, exclaimed, and so forth.

The idea of the speech acts was first introduced by the British philosopher John Langshaw Austin in (1911-1960) who worked in Oxford and defined his idea within the series of his delivered lectures that were even published before his death in 1962. The name is, "How to do things with words". Austin represents the language of philosophy towards maintaining one of the main functions of language in order to carry the significant actions which are concerned socially. It is the concern of the speech acts that guides the use of language.

Speech acts are the certain verbs that are used within sentences in towards classifying it accordingly. Austin defines his idea accordingly when in order to introduce the differences between two major verbs as "Performative and constative". The formal use of the verbs as 'Constative' and describes it, in the form of reality, e.g. 'Rain' to use it in a sentence 'Through the week rained heavily'. Some sentences have a value of truth but they evaluated in the form of true and false. Whereas, on the other hand 'Performative verbs are different in use, they are like the instruments to achieve the goals of interaction between two or more speakers. The most appropriate example is of verb; 'promise' which deals with linguistic act in a pure manner. The use of promise within a sentence, for example; 'I promise I will help you with your assignment or work, in the sentence the sincere intention showing by the speaker is expressed by him to do in the future.

#### **2.5.1.1 Classification of Speech Acts according to their structure:**

The notion of direct and indirect speech acts has been in traditional syntax since the rise of syntactic studies (the beginning of the 20th century).

## **A. Direct Speech Acts**

According to Yule in his book *Pragmatics* (1996:55) direct speech acts will happen if there is direct relationship between the structure and the function of the utterance, while indirect speech acts will happen if there is no relationship between the structure and the function of the utterance. Three types of direct and indirect speech acts have been proposed by Yule: imperative, declarative and interrogative based on their three functions which have been represented by order/ command, statement and questions.

## **B. Indirect Speech Acts**

An indirect speech act is an act when the propositional context (the literal meaning) differs from that which the speaker wishes to express. Some basic analysis show that some speech acts tend to be expressed directly, others indirectly. Therefore, statements are generally expressed directly, considering the following statement The English article is hard nut to crack vs. I say that the English article is hard nut to crack. Questions are also expressed directly for instance; can you help me? Vs. I wonder if you can help me. As for requests, they are more often expressed indirectly than to be direct, for example open the window, please. (Direct) vs. could you open the window? (Indirect). Speech acts which expressed indirectly are politer than direct ones, so the motivation for indirect speech acts is politeness and tact. Therefore, it is worth mentioning to illustrate the divide drawn between the two main categories of speech acts, according to their structure: direct and indirect speech acts.

### **2.5.1.2 Types of speech acts according their functions:**

The use and the view of social interactionists about most of languages can be stated as; linguistic phenomenon that is used within terms of speech acts. Speech acts that deals with the social action, whenever the speaker has to say something to someone. In case of writer who writes something for someone in order to convey the meaning to its hearer, within a specific place and specific time. Speech acts can even underline



to this assumption that it surely engages to the speaker with the hearer in the form of communication, that speaker wants to convey something to the hearer. A speech act is a spoken utterance that mainly focuses in dealing with some actual situation to the communication.

It is often assumed that there is a deterministic relationship between clause-types and speech-act force: imperative clauses are for commanding, interrogative clauses are for querying, declaratives are for asserting, and so forth, with the deviations from this pattern seen as exceptional (Sadock and Zwicky 1985; Hamblin 1987). The most noticeable about speech acts the three basic types of direct speech acts which corresponds world's three special syntactic types those seem to occur in most languages, which is considered to be a function classification concerned. According to Austin; when anyone engages in a speech, they carry out three types of acts: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts.

#### **A. Locutionary Acts:**

This type of speech act usually deals with the speaker a certain reference and sense is expressed by him. In this specific conversation, the grammatical principle is also concerned with the speaker. A locutionary act tends to perform by the speaker as series of message is linked that gives the expression usually those dealing with the value of truth.

Example: Earth is round. Birds fly in the sky.

#### **B. Illocutionary acts:**

Here the speaker uses some performative verb to express the intentions within the sentence. Example: I baptize his ship.

It also includes; telling, asking, warning, ordering, offering, thanking, congratulating, appointing, and firing. Verschueren (1980) counted more than 150 such illocutionary verbs in English. According to John Searle (1975b), these acts differ principally in what he called their illocutionary point, their primary publicly

intended Perlocutionary effect. In making a request, speakers are trying to get their addressees to do something: the illocutionary point is to get them to do that something. For other illocutionary acts, the point is different. Searle in Levinson (1983: 240) classified speech acts into five main categories:

**a. Assertive** is to get addressees to form or attend to the belief that the speaker is committed to a certain belief. When Paul tells Jean, "I'm tired," he is trying to get her to accept the belief that he is tired. Assertives range from simple assertions through predictions, notifications, confessions, denials, retorts, conjectures, suppositions, and many others.

**b. Directive** is to get addressees to do things. When Paul asks Jean to sit down, he is trying to get her to do something, to sit down. Directives fall into two major classes: requests for non-linguistic actions (as with most commands and suggestions), and requests for linguistic actions (as with most questions). In asking Jean, "What time is it?" Paul is requesting a linguistic action: she is to tell him what time it is. Directives range in force from mild hints to commands, and they vary on other dimensions, too.

**c. Commissive** refers to commit the speaker to some future action. The commonest commissive is the promise. When Paul Herbert H. Clark says to Jean, "I'll be there in a minute," he is committing himself to being there in a minute. A promise can be absolute or conditional, and when it is conditional, it is called an offer. When Paul says to Jean, "Can I get you a beer?" he is committing himself to getting Jean a beer, but only if she wants one.

**d. Expressive** indicates to expressing certain psychological feelings toward the addressees. When Paul steps on Jean's foot by mistake, he says, "Sorry." In doing so, he presupposes that he has caused Jean some harm and tries to get her to recognize his regret in having done so. Expressive include thanking, greeting, congratulating, apologizing, well-wishing, and many other types.

**e. Declarations**, this point of a declaration is to affect an institutional state of affairs. Declarations take place within institutions such as the law, the church, and organized

games, and speakers do certain things by virtue of their institutional roles as judges, priests, or referees. In a company, a boss can appoint, promote, or fire people, and an employee can quit, simply by saying the right words at the right time: "You're fired" or "I quit." Likewise, with the right words at the right times, a judge can indict, pardon, and sentence people; a referee can start a game, call fouls, and call time-outs; a police officer can arrest people; and a priest can baptize, marry, and bless people. As Austin noted, all of these acts must be performed with the proper institutional authority or they are defective, null and void.

Like any taxonomy, this scheme has problems. Some illocutionary acts appear to belong to more than one category; for example, the order of a general or of a police officer has properties of both a directive and a declaration. The categories are not by any means mutually exclusive or exhaustive. The scheme has also been criticized for misclassifying acts (Hancher, 1979; Linell, Alemyr, & Jonsson, 1993; Line!! & Markova, 1993; van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1982) and cultural bias (Wierzbicka, 1985). Other schemes have been proposed (e.g., Austin, 1962; Ballmer & Brennenstuhl, 1981; van der Auwera, 1980), but they suffer from similar problems. Still, the scheme illustrates the range of what speakers can intend to do with respect to their addressees, and it has heuristic value for describing illocutionary acts.

**C. Perlocutionary Acts:** This type of act deals with the effect of an action that is from linguistic point of view. However, the Perlocutionary acts are quite visible effects on the speaker, when s/he conveys the meaning to the hearer. Examples are as insulting someone, convincing, surprising and persuading.

### **2.5.2 Deixis**

The word deixis have been derived from a Greek origin, which means 'display' and 'reference'. Deixis can also be read as (deiksqs/or daiksqs). Merriam Webster dictionary defined deixis as follows: the pointing or specifying function of some words such as - definite articles and demonstrative articles- whose denotation changes from one discourse to another. It was introduced in 1946.

One can find various guesses to occur for this word. One of the major terms to discourse has been introduced. It was a pronominal reference, in which pronoun referring to a noun to serve its function. This form can also perform a vital role within field of pragmatics and the other two areas of Deixis that is showing in a vital role to language. One of it is the temporal sphere of language; it shows expressions within language to describe the time or points for expressing on time. Like for example, later, tomorrow, now, before and today. In language, there are the tenses. Like in the English language, there are three tenses. Namely, present past and the future. The future perfect tense can also fulfill required functions with time. The second area of Deixis is named as spatial. The spatial works to describe a set of choices from adverbs and prepositions like as, down, over, up, under, underneath, across, etc. The English language has two main ways for pointing as well as demonstrating the pronouns. They are as;

- One is the object that is close to speaker;
- Second is the object that is away from present speaker. In English language, it is referred with that/this, etc.

## **2.7 Competence and performance:**

The term competence refers to that abstract set of capacities which the system possesses, independently of the actual use to which those capacities are put. Performance, instead, refers to the capacities actually exhibited by a system in action. These may be inferred directly from the system's behaviour in a specific situation. The difference is vital since it enables the distinction to be made between what the system is capable of doing in principle (competence), and what it actually does in a concrete situation (performance). The distinction between competence and performance was introduced, as is well known, by Chomsky (1965: 4) who modelled it after Saussure's distinction between *langue* and *parole*. Therefore, there are differences between Saussure's and Chomsky's dichotomies.

In conclusion, the sole evidence of the existence of a given competence is example of the related performance. The non-detection of a performance has no intrinsic meaning. It might refer a deficit in competence, a deficit in performance, or a defect in the support structures. Especially at the developmental phase, the non-detection of a performance might be due to the immaturity of the support structure. In such situation is considered to be complex and it warrants two comments. The first is an invitation to interpretational caution in attributing a deficit: the missing observation of an expected performance may be comprehended only when a strong theory is available that predicts the deficit and explains it in terms of competence and performance. The second is an invitation to courageously eliminate any data the collection of which is not based on a theory: these data are quite simply useless in as much as they are performance data not connected to competence. For example, the inability to comprehend a communication act may depend on the fact that the person does not possess the essential tools required to do so; alternatively, the person might possess the necessary tools but might not have applied them for any reason whatsoever: she was tired, distracted, overwrought. From an experimental standpoint, it is a question of distinguishing between a systematic failure in carrying out a task, which usually indicates a problem at the level of competence, and occasional failures that may be attributed to specific causes, which may be eliminated and which are generally symptomatic of problems at the performance level. For instance, all animals interact with members of their own species, using communicative modes of increasing complexity. A minimal degree of communication is necessary in every gendered species in order to guarantee continuity through sexual reproduction. To be more precise, those animals whose social life is more intense than that required for the elementary interaction constituted by the reciprocal declaration of one's availability to mate develop a system of communication that is correspondingly more articulated.

Certain types of insects seem to constitute an exception, but bees and termites have a social structure where every type of interaction is rigidly predetermined at birth,

even if the number of agents is extremely high indeed. Communication is sometimes effective, as in the dance of the bees described by Karl von Frisch (1966): a bee that has found a source of nectar is capable of indicating the location to her companions, signaling both the direction with respect to the sun and the distance from the hive.

## **2.8 Pragmatics and other linguistic branches:**

Pragmatics is considered to be one of the micro- linguistic major branches and it deals with the meaning of utterances beyond language. Since these branches are descended from one main branch and interrelated; it worth mentioning to give account for that relations between them with reference to pragmatics.

### **2.8.1 Pragmatics and discourse**

Pragmatics and discourse both of them are micro linguistic branches and major components of complex activity called conversation. According to George Yule (1985), the word “discourse” is usually defined as ‘language beyond the sentence’. In recent linguistic studies, the branch discourse analysis has been introduced and also has been defined by Yule ‘the analysis of discourse is typically concerned with the study of language in text and conversation. It is worth mentioning to introduce main aspects or elements of discourse analysis cohesion and coherence.

According to Merriam Webster cohesion is the act of sticking together tightly specifically. Considering cohesion devices which are connecting words or cohesive ties as known linguistically that exist within texts to unify and link it up whole as one unit.

Considering the second element; coherence which is not something that can be found in words or structures but something that exist in people. It is people who make sense of what they hear or read. George Yule (1985), state that ‘coherence everything fitting together well’. It means that people have their knowledge beyond linguistics which enables them to make appropriate interpretations for the ongoing conversation.

### **2.8.2 Pragmatics and semantics**

Cratylus Plato (427-347 B.C.) discusses the origin of words, and particularly the question whether the relation between the things and words which name them is a natural and necessary relation or merely the result of human conversation. This dialogue gives a first glimpse into a century-long controversy between the analogists, who believed that language natural and therefore at bottom regular and logical, and the anomalists, who denied these things and pointed out the regularities of linguistics structure.

Coming up with a definition of “pragmatics” (or any other scientific field) is not the most rewarding job ever. The divide between semantics and pragmatics is often a matter of how the field has developed, not a matter of following a particular definition. The most basic goal of pragmatic theories is to provide an account for how everyday exchanges are interpreted. This is the goal informing Grice (1989), as well as Horn (1984 and onwards) and Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995 and onwards), all following Grice. In line with this argument only Grice’s pragmatic theory will be presented. In fact, all pragmatic theories are in this sense Gricean. Most of theories assume that every act of communication is actually inferential, because the addressee is required to infer the speaker’s intention.

Therefore, it is the study of pragmatics that is closely linked with field of semantics as these both are concerned towards meaning making and its elaboration. Semantics is the study of the literal meaning towards the speaker or a writer that establishes a relationship with linguistic form and is connected to the individual and the outer world things (Yule, 1996). Semantics make relationships to the verbal and the description that produce it in the form of speaking and writing (Yule, 1996). Whereas, the field of pragmatics deals with study of form and its user, that uses the given forms into different orders for involving within conversational field. In pragmatics, the people are engaging themselves to understand the given intended meaning, along with their different goals, purpose and the action of the speaker. One of the major significance of the pragmatics, in this study is towards a speaker, who

wants to convey the contextual meaning towards the hearer according to provided situation. Therefore, the study of pragmatics is concerned mainly with meaning and its definition of role variation with different communicative tasks that are provided by speaker in a way to interpret by a reader or listener.

The truth about semantics, which focuses on the meaning of the sentence and its purpose, is to analyse different meaning forms to formal way and it also deals with the surface meaning. However, it lacks the contextual definition. In simple terms, the field of semantics deals with the overall structure of sentences and it determines the lexical condition of the content that formulates information of meaning from the other sources to supply it (Chapman 2000). A Language can even deal with many other instruments, the instrument that is of thought as well as the instrument of social action (Capone, 2005).

### **2.8.3 Pragmatics and context:**

As context is a significant component, therefore it is worth mentioning to give brief about contexts' types:

**2.9.1 Physical context** which means objects surrounding the communication, place and time of the communication, what is going on around, etc. A. I want that book. accompanied by pointing.

B. Be here at 9:00 tonight. place and time reference.

**2.9.2 Linguistics context:** refers to what has been said before in the conversation.

A. Linda came home yesterday, she thought nobody would notice. B. If my mom heard you talk that,

**2.9.3 Social context:** refers to the social relationship of the people involved in the communication.

(A) To the president: Mr. President, stop bugging me and go home.



(B) To your friend: I do hereby humbly request that you might endeavor to telephone me with news of your arrival at your domicile when such arrival occurs.

Better: you call me when you get home.

(A) and (B) are considered pragmatically odd.

**2.9.4 Epistemic context** means what is known by both speaker and listener.

## **2.9 Communication**

Communication is the exchange of ideas, information, etc., between two or more persons. In an act of communication there is usually at least one speaker or sender, a message which is transmitted. And a person or persons from whom this message is intended (the receiver). Communication is studied from many disciplinary perspectives, is often viewed as a discipline in its own right, and is central to sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and information theory. Richards & Schmidt, (2010, p.98).

Absolutely, everyone needs a good communication in his everyday life conversations, for studying at university, college or at school. He needs it as well in his future career based on his previous studies. Many students spent about twelve years at school trying to improve their writing skills, yet they neglected developing their ability to converse, to address an audience, so they are now lacking the ability to express themselves or their thoughts clearly and effectively in English as they study it as a foreign language. That is why employers sometimes complain that many graduate students applying for jobs are still have poor communication skills. Education courses at schools should be intended to improve students' communication skills and to develop other interpersonal skills related to enhancing their English. The problem is that a lot of students did not try before to test their good ability to speak in public, they did not think much about it until they have to address an audience or attend an important interview or a conference. Students have to engage in presentations and seminars held at universities to develop their

communication skills and have much practice on how to convey their message and address others.

- *McPheat (2010) argues: “When we asked to define communication, how would you respond? Most people will relate to the form of communication-talking or listening. But communication goes beyond that. Communication involves getting information from one person to the other person. Yet even this not a complete definition because communicating effectively involves having that information relayed while retaining the same in content and context. If I tell you one thing and you hear another, have I communicated?” (p. 10).*

## **2.10 The communication process**

There are many different definitions of communication as well as language. For example, (Sreekumar.2011: p.5 and Yousif .2017:11) introduce different definitions of language. The first says that, Language is a means of communication. It is a means of conveying our thoughts, ideas, feelings and emotions to other people. The second writer indicates that, "Communication is a matter of sending and receiving knowledge, information, ideas, opinions and feelings. In his variable definitions, Egthesadi (2017:35) cites Canale's who reminds the reader that in the communicative competence model, communication is meant to be “The exchange and negotiation of information between at least two individuals through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, oral and written/visual modes, and production and comprehension processes”. A teacher who is teaching is communicating a message; a person who reads a newspaper is also acting a kind of communication, watching TV is a kind of communication and so on. In order that communication goes on there are many principles to be applied such politeness, clearness and truthfulness principles.

There should be a clear message in order to achieve good communication results. the message which is simply the information that it is intended to be communicated (the intended meaning). Without a message communication is useless. The sender

(the addresser) is the main source of the message, so they must know why the communication is necessary and the result is highly needed, and the listener the one who spoken to (the addressee). Successful communication can not only be through speaking, it can be via writing, body language or eye contact (channel-the medium through which the message is sent), also the category of the message as: invitation, congratulation or condolence (the topic) in addition to the language (the code) also the Context in which the message is said like: time and place (setting). (McPheat, 2010).

According to Bruno G. Bara (2007) stated that communication is a social activity of a combined effort of at least two participants, who consciously and intentionally cooperate to construct together the meaning of their interaction. Humans are continually creating new expressions and novel utterances by manipulating their linguistic resources to describe new objects and situations. While it is true- on the basic level- that many sentences do carry information in a straightforward way, it is also true that many sentences are used by speakers not to give information at all, but to keep the social wheels turning smoothly.

As (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p.98) viewed that communication is studied from many disciplinary perspectives, is often viewed as a discipline in its own right, and in central to sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and information theory. Students have to engage in presentations and seminars held at universities to develop their communication skills and have much practice on how to convey their message and address others. The people judge you by the way you speak, the way you express yourself and the way you have good communication skills. (Barrass, 2006, p. 1)

- *Crystal (2003) says as follows about communication: "If a language is a truly international medium, it is going to be most apparent in those services which deal directly with the task of communication – the postal and telephone systems and the electronic networks. Information about the use of English in these domains is not easy to come by, however. No one monitors the language*

*in which we write our letters; there is no one noting the language we use when we talk on the phone. Only on the Internet, where messages and data can be left for indefinite periods of time, is it possible to develop an idea of how much of the world's everyday communications (at least, between computer-owners) is actually in English" (p. 114).*

## **2.11 Pragmatic difficulties “Challenges and prospects”**

The phrase “the pragmatic wastebasket” evokes a messy, neglected place. It seems to have been coined by Bar-Hillel (1971a: 405), who warns against “forcing bits and pieces you find in the pragmatic wastebasket into your favourite syntactico-semantic theory”. That was an era in which Chomskyan linguists saw syntax wherever they looked. The present-day concern is usually about the reverse direction. As Bach (1999b) writes, “In linguistics the category of pragmatics has served mainly as a bin for disposing of phenomena that would otherwise be the business of semantics (as part of grammar) to explain.” The winking presumption is that we can have elegant formal theories of semantics as long as we agree that the messiest stuff belongs to another field. Despite the prominent “waste” metaphor, therefore the outlook for the field is bright, for three central reasons as has been mentioned by Christopher Potts (2011). First, we have a clearer empirical picture than ever before, thanks to a number of important corpus resources (Stoia et al. 2008; Thompson et al. 1993; Prasad et al. 2008; Calhoun et al. 2010) and increasing consensus about which psycholinguistic methods are most effective for exploring meanings in context. Second, the field is moving towards collaborative models, in the spirit of pioneers Lewis (1969,1975) and Clark (1996). Whereas earlier models were overwhelmingly focused on the interpretive (listener) perspective, these new models truly embrace the fact that we are all constantly shifting between these roles as we work collaboratively in discourse (Benz et al. 2005; Stone et al. 2007). Third, pragmaticists are establishing, or re-establishing, connections with cognitive

psychology, artificial intelligence, and natural language processing, which is having the effect of adding to their theoretical toolkit, sharpening the empirical picture, and making results more relevant and accessible than ever before.

### **2.12 ‘Semantic’ and/or ‘Pragmatic’ difficulties in a broad term:**

A person with ‘Semantic’ and/or ‘Pragmatic’ difficulties may show some, but not necessarily all, of the following features in their communication or behavior.

They may encounter a difficulty in joining in a conversation at the right time, or asking too many questions but not showing any interest in the answers, or knowing the answers already. Another difficulty might be to saying something that has nothing to do with ongoing conversation or shifting from one subject to another very quickly, leaving the addressee wondering what they are talking about. Also not giving adequate eye-contact during the conversation, besides they do not understand body language or tone of voice. Echoing what someone else has said or using phrases that they have heard on many occasions. Difficulty in working out some of the things that are ‘inferred’ in what it is being said (but do not actually put into words) an example may help explain this:

For instance, a child might say: ‘Can I go outside to play’ and his mum says, ‘Well it’s nearly tea-time’. What she means is that there isn’t enough time before tea for him to go outside to play. So the answer is ‘No, because it’s tea-time’. The child may find it hard to ‘infer’ what is meant from what is actually said. As a result, a lot of misunderstandings can occur.

They may face difficulties in concentrating, particularly when the activity has been chosen by someone else, or in understanding questions and instructions. Also another obstacle is that appearing quite comical or bizarre in the things they say and do. Sometimes they may speak too much and not giving the listener a chance to talk. Least but not last; they do not even check whether the listener is interested in the conversation or understands what they are saying. Another difficulty that beyond

linguistics is that having repetitive movements such as shaking their hands or flicking their fingers.

### **2.13 Pragmatic competence and academic texts interpretation**

Traditionally, it was claimed that grammatical competence was sufficient to communicating smoothly, and that means comprehension and production of sentences was simply a matter of encoding and decoding messages. If sentences are presumed to have a fixed interpretation irrespective of their context of use, this would cause problems for the L2 speaker as they would not be aware of the multi-layered meanings inherent in each single utterance (Finegan and Besnier, 1989:327).

Naturally the speaker who does not have the ability to use language in context would struggle because they need different kind of knowledge (one that is beyond linguistic conventions) to be able to infer what a speaker intended to convey, especially if inference is based on “knowledge of the world” of the target language. For an EFL speaker to communicate successfully, they therefore need to have pragmatic competence which is the type of knowledge of conventional language rules that must be used appropriately in the production and interpretation of utterances (Thomas, 1983:88).

Although speakers already have pragmatic competence (knowledge of how to use language in context) in their native language (L1) and are aware of speech act conventions and have the ability to make contextual inferences, problems may arise if they attempt to transfer their L1 conventions to the target language. Thus the pragmatic competence of an EFL speaker can be judged by their ability to understand and apply the indirect speech act rules (knowledge of linguistic conventions included) as well as the ability to positively transfer rules from their L1 to the target audience successfully (Blum-Kulka, 1982:31-32). However, according to Sperber and Wilson (1981:285) “pragmatics is not a separate device or sub- device with its own specialized structure: it is simply the domain in which linguistic abilities, logical

abilities and memory interact”. This is important because it highlights the fact that the process of interpretation is not solely governed by lexical cues, but by pragmatic considerations. An example where pragmatic process is when a literal or metaphoric expression needs to be interpreted figuratively in context in order to be understood (Kecskes 2010:54). Andreou and Galantomos (2008:09) suggest that since idioms are a part of everyday language of the target language L2 learners’ proficiency can be related to their knowledge of idiomatic language therefore; both authors refer to research by Ellis (1997) and Yorio (1989) to show that “adequate knowledge and appropriate use of idioms in an L2 is an important indicator of L2 communicative competence.” Kasper and Schmidt (1996:150) further added specific knowledge is necessary in order to process meaning which has been linguistically and intentionally communicated. Of great concern here is whether EFL learners, from diverse cultural backgrounds, have knowledge to process English texts.

Adding to the lack of resources, parents of EFL students in this situation often do not speak English so EFL Learners may not be able to even gain much familiarity with verbal cues which may then be transferred to written documents. Hinkel (1994:353) refers to Jackendoff and Hudson statement that research has shown that when readers prove to have insufficient data for interpreting abstract notions and unfamiliar information, both L1 and L2 speakers default to assumptions in order to negotiate meaning. Since language is cultural-specific it is necessary for users of the language to have knowledge beyond the sentence level. So language users need to know or understand the cultural references that underlie the message.

### **2.14 Influence of culture on pragmatic interpretation**

If language is culture specific, created by people in specific environments in order to communicate about common social practices and cultural artifacts, then it follows that a learner who is part of another environment would struggle to access pragmatic features alien to them. Kim and Hall (2002) state that:

*“Children from birth obtain necessary pragmatic skills through interaction with parents or with communicators. thus children are given resources to understand language use, and over time children develop the ability to understand discourse patterns and its communicative patterns and become aware of the rules of language use. Knowledge acquired in this way becomes part of their pragmatic competence”*

Bacalu (2011:762) states that the way children learn to think and behave is regulated by contextual and cultural norms and values of the culture to which they belong. Rituals and traditional events help them understand symbolism. Through the acquisition of language and meanings of expressions, children learn to make associations.

Hinkel (1999:11) further postulates that language can be seen as a referential framework of expression: “in all language behaviour there are intertwined enormous complex patterns. These can be expressed as patterns of reference and patterns of expression. Hinkel (1991:1) claims that culture does more than catalogue the rituals and beliefs of people; it shapes a person’s cognitive and social concepts and defines how people and objects are perceived. Schechter and Bayley (1997:514) also suggest that cultural identity is defined by the way that an individual behaves within a particular social and cultural framework and uses language as a social action.

Graesser et al. (1994:371-374) describes a constructionist theory that explains how knowledge based inferences are constructed when readers comprehend narrative texts. One of the primary problems with L2 comprehension of English texts is that the learner possesses insufficient background and contextual knowledge to process all the relevant information.

Saville- Troike (2006) refers to cognitive style as the way an individual think, the “preferred way of perceiving, conceptualising, structuring and recalling information”. Graesser et al. (1994:374), adds that inferences are based on knowledge, so inferences can only be activated when “prior knowledge structures in



long term memory” are accessed and used to unlock meaning in a text<sup>4</sup>. Adding to this, Bernhardt (2001:45) suggests that “the reason for L2 learners’ poor performance in inferencing contextual aspects of literary texts could be that each learner has a unique linguistic and conceptual framework and the process of reconstruction is founded on the conceptualisation of linguistic and cultural data that forms part of their background knowledge. Richards (1985:265) adds that when presented with propositions in a text in which references need to be made, the reader must draw upon inferences or a relevant context from previous knowledge which provides a range of assumptions from which contextual implications can be achieved. This may be problematic for a L2 speaker of English with a different cultural background.

Gee (2001: 719) refers to language socialisation as “Discourses with a big D.” By this he refers to language use beyond words and grammar, to include mannerisms and social norms around talking, listening, writing, reading, behaving, believing and feeling which communicators acquire within a particular environment or language community. Accordingly, children who grow up in a particular community would learn the discourse behaviour of their speech community and this would form a part of early language socialisation of which L2 speakers would be excluded. This does not mean that all L2 speakers would experience problems as L2 learners should make every attempt to which creates a barrier to learning. In situations where L2 learners’ environment does not create opportunities or provide resources needed to develop pragmatic awareness of the target language, and the only exposure to English is in the L1 class, then these learners may not develop skills to the extent that it would facilitate the interpretation of pragmatic aspects of a text.

In support to this, Kramsch (1993:48) asserts:

*teaching how to shape contexts of interaction cannot be done directly by well dosed administration of fact...Pragmatic knowledge... can only be acquired through*

*observation and analyses and a feel for the whole context...It is not an if then affair. It requires, therefore, a totally different pedagogic approach.*

Additionally, Kecskes and Papp (2000:08) suggest that learners, “when acquiring a non- primary language should not only attempt to learn the grammatical structures of that language but also the conceptual structures.” If learners do not have access to the “conventionalised conceptualisations” of the target language, then L2 learners would resort to their L1 conceptual base. Danesi (1995:6) defines conceptual fluency as a means of knowing how the target language encodes its language with metaphors and other cognitive devices.

Bernhardt (2001) also explains that some literary texts contain inherent ambiguity, metaphors and inter-textual connectivity to which L2 readers may not have access. Lyons (1981:222) explains that some references like connotations in a name can only be inference in the context in which it is implied and context is very relevant to this type of meaning. A name like Napoleon has historical significance to a certain group of people. In an English context, “there will be a whole host of shared associations and connotations around that name.” This means that L2 learners who are not part of the culture will be unable to reference the implication if it is found in English literature.

## **2.15 The importance of English as an academic language**

Education in Sudan has had a chequered history, mainly as a result of educational policy during the Apartheid Era. This policy distinguished between students on a racial basis, and directly affected the quality of education students received. Apart from the inferior quality of education to which they were generally exposed, black students also had to face the further complication of receiving tuition in English, an additional language to most. A very similar situation with regard to the languages used for education prevails in present-day South Africa, where, in tertiary education

particularly, thousands of students are engaged in studies through a language – English – which is not their primary language.

With English increasingly becoming the default global language, it is inevitable that more and more students who use English as an additional language will enroll at universities worldwide. Apart from its unavoidable status, English is also generally regarded as a language of upward mobility. As a result of its elevated status, the language is preferred by many students as a language of learning at institutions of higher education (cf. Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2000; Dalvit & De Klerk, 2005; De Kadt, 2005). The difficulty of engaging successfully in tertiary study in Sudan through an additional language (English) that one has not acquired adequately is well documented (cf. Blacquiere, 1989; Palazzo, 1989; Puhl & Swartz, 1989; Jiya, 1993; Moyo, 1995; Nyamapfene & Letseka, 1995; Orr, 1995; Kroes, 1996; Zulu, 2005). Consequently, it is of crucial importance that programmes for the development of academic text in English seek constantly to address effectively the needs and difficulties of learners.

## **2.16 The scope of academic writing:**

Academic writing is highly significant; since university syllabus is always constructed in that style of writing. In this regard; relevant elements of academic writing will be tackled down in the following sections.

### **2.16.1 The structure of academic writing:**

Academic writing is essential for university courses. Instructors may have different names for academic writing assignments (essay, paper, research paper, term paper, argumentative paper/essay, analysis paper/essay, informative essay, position paper), but all of these assignments have the same goal and principles.

According Anne Whitaker (2009) that academic papers are a specifically-designed torture instrument. They are desirable because instructors are not directly involved in that issue. Usually students make themselves busy by waiting until the last

minute to conduct their papers and by not knowing what they are doing. A paper is not supposed to be of that kind of torture, it is supposed to be a good chance for the students to explore something that interests them from their courses. Therefore; students are free to choose a topic, empty pages on which to express their own thoughts, and an audience that is interested in reading what they think.

In assignments, students will start by asking a relevant appropriate question, then find and analyze answers to it, and choose their own best answer(s) to discuss in their paper. Their paper will share their thoughts and results and justify their answer logically and prove it with evidence. Anne Whitaker (2009) added that the goal of academic writing is not to show off everything that students know about the topic chosen, but rather to show that their understanding and also can think critically about their topic. That will help them obtain good grades and more important it will develop their skills in researching, evaluating information, organizing, arguing, responding to others' arguments, analyzing, and expressing themselves clearly in writing.

### **2.16.2 Principles of academic writing**

The goal of students to write paper is to answer the question they arise about a certain topic. The most common purposes in academic writing according to Anne Whitaker (2009) are:

- a. Persuasive purpose:** the purpose here is that students get readers to adopt their answer to the question. So they will choose one answer to their question, support that answer with reason and evidence, and try to change the readers' opinion about the topic. Persuasive writing includes argumentative and position papers.
- b. Analytical purpose:** the aim here is that students explain and evaluate possible answers to their question, selecting the best answer(s) based on their own criteria. Analytical writing often investigates causes, examine effects, and it also aims at evaluating effectiveness, assessing ways of

problems solving, identifying relationships between set of ideas, and analyzing other people's arguments. Examples of this type of academic writing include analysis papers and critical analyses.

- c. **Informative purpose:** Its goal is to explain possible answers to students' question, giving the readers new information about certain topic, without revealing their viewpoint on the readers, but rather try to enlarge the readers' view. Examples of these assignments research paper, term paper.

When students write a paper, that means they have a pre-determined purpose and one topic is chosen but some assignments may have two purposes. In all cases, the purpose will be clear at the beginning of their paper, and their paper to be successful must achieve its purpose in order.

### **2.16.3 Assessment of EFL learners' writing (ability)**

A critical aspect of any planning towards writing courses for students is that the course designer has to know, within reasonable limits, what the student profile is. Considering the fact that students are individuals with unique characteristics in terms of their writing ability (and general academic literacy). H. G. Bulter (2016) it is a practical necessity, in dealing with large numbers of students, the possibility of grouping students together according to their writing needs is to be considered. It is therefore necessary for the writing course designer to compile a profile of student writers with regard to a number of pertinent writing-related issues. He also added that after the primary issues that should be addressed in a writing course have been identified from the perspective of student needs and abilities, the suitability and ultimate relevance of the course would clearly depend on the degree of flexibility as the need arises, of such a course in changing emphasis. What may be problematic, it is the increasing differentiation between course designers and language instructors in the sense that the person who designed the course may not always be the instructor.

H. G. Bulter (2016) two related aspects; on the one hand one needs to collect general background information on students that includes information on current level of study, the specific course registered for, literacy history, student perceptions of their own levels of academic literacy and their expectations of academic writing.

Gee (1998) added that it is crucial to realise the manner in which students are initiated into the discourses of the university will to some extent determine how successfully they will be able to use these discourses in order to succeed in this environment. Johns (2005:12), for instance, indicates that:

*... a course that focuses upon situated, communicative, meaningful language needs to begin with texts and experiences with which students are familiar, then move to the academic or professional genres and contexts with which they are less familiar.*

If this connection is not established, students will probably grope aimlessly for something familiar in what they should experience as a frustrating and meaningless void. She suggests that one could make use of meaningful (genre-based) tasks in the classroom where students work on familiar genres first and then work towards the genres prominent in the university context. Apart from what could be accomplished in the classroom in terms of learning about and incorporating students' past literacies into learning opportunities, it is often difficult to trace students' previous literacy experiences and writing history.

However, as Johns (2005:1) mentions, "*... reading needs are often submerged ..., whereas elements of good and bad writing are there on paper for all to see.*" Although reading difficulties and needs might thus not be as overtly observable as writing needs, there is clear evidence that if students' reading ability is weak, it will affect the quality of what they write. Belcher (1990:220) offers further support for this notion by stating that "*... it has been known for some time now that there is a positive correlation between amount of reading done and writing proficiency, i.e., the more reading, the better the writer.*"

Put differently, a writing course that is so designed as to focus exclusively on writing will be deficient in a number of respects. It is therefore suggested that if a determination of the academic writing ability that enables students to produce coherent longer written texts cannot be included in a literacy assessment, such results be specifically augmented by a determination of writing ability. In addition to determining general academic literacy levels, the framework needs to provide for a strategy that will distinguish between students with real language problems (i.e. not being sufficiently proficient) in the language of learning and those who are simply unfamiliar with the conventions of academic discourse in a tertiary academic environment.

Hedgcock (1998) highlight the fact there may be differences between the schemata of these groups of learners. The different prior experiences of learners are displayed in knowledge about content as well as knowledge about texts. Additional language users often experience difficulties with the rhetorical organisation of texts, resulting from the fact that texts are embedded in specific contexts with which additional language users might be relatively unfamiliar.

Though these distinctions have been criticised, it is this embeddedness that led to Cummins' (1984) distinction between 'basic interpersonal communicative skills' (BICS) and 'cognitive academic language proficiency' (CALP). Such differences affect students' abilities in comprehending and analysing texts, as well as in their production of texts that meet the requirements of specific contexts (Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998:13).

Another fundamental question that needs to be addressed in the context of students' literacy background and writing ability focuses on how student writers construct written texts. One therefore needs to ascertain the behaviour of student writers when they engage in more extensive writing tasks.

#### **2.16.4 Textual features of academic writing:**

Academic writing is a demanding task for students specifically at university level where they carry out different kinds of assignments. Academic texts or scientific papers are of various types, such as books, book reviews, research proposals, research reports, and scientific articles, whereas university students' specific target genres e.g. essays, reports, journal articles, theses. General characteristics of academic texts are simple, concise, objective, and logical. Therefore; these common characteristics of the text, linguistically, are able to reveal to the reader the level of scholarly an academic text.

M.A.K. Halliday (2005) offers a language approach that is able to reveal the scholarly text to the reader by analyzing the text through the type and function of the sentence and seen from the lexico-grammar point of view. Abdul Salam, Mahmudah Mahfud & Nurhusna Nurhusna (2018) explain that; lexicographer reveals and dismantles all four scholarly traits as follows: First, the use of simplex phrases, nominalization, and the utilization of lexical words represent simplicity of sentence structure. Second, dense information is revealed through simplex sentences, nominalization, and optimizing lexical words utilization. Third, objectives can be expressed by means of using identifiable relational processes and attributive relational processes. Fourth, the assignment can also be conducting by using relational of meaning identification, and the utilization of passive sentences.

The surface features of academic texts distinguish them than other kinds of writing which include grammatical, stylistic and structural characteristics in the past aim at the development of writing ability. In this regard; Grabe and Kaplan (1996) argue that the irresponsibility of downplaying the importance of the linguistic knowledge that is necessary in written academic texts production. Perhaps the question of whether this type of knowledge is necessary is not so much of an issue as is figuring out a productive way for learners to acquire this knowledge.



H. G. Bulter (2016) stated that students will be required to produce written texts of a variety of types (e.g. informative, factual, descriptive and argumentative texts) within specific genres.

### **2.16.5 The reader of students' texts**

Apart from being readers of academic texts themselves, students' written texts are read by peers and most importantly, by their lecturers/ supervisors. In such academic context, students might also have the opportunity to write for a wider academic audience in the production of articles for academic journals. According to H. G. Bulter (2016) claims that this group of readers share one common denominator which is they are all expected to be academically inclined and probably to share important ideas and conventions as to what an academic text should be. He added that a mismatch of expectations needs to be clarified that often exists between reader and writer expectations of academic writing in this context. Raising awareness of both writer and reader about each one's expectations might help in solving this mismatch. In the past student writers think to live up to their lecturers and supervisors' expectations, more recent work in critical approaches to writing suggests that it is just as important for lecturers and supervisors to be aware of student writers' expectations and needs. Although critical literacy focuses on the potentially oppressive facets of writing in a tertiary context, it has generally not provided practical approaches that could be used in developing students' confidence, critical abilities and proficiency (Weideman, 2007; Lillis, 2003). So it is crucial that an approach to literacy and writing development includes techniques which create a context that will allow for the positive construction of students' academic identities.

### **2.16.6 Role of feedback on academic writing:**

Feedback student writers receive from their both lecturers and supervisors regarding the written texts they produce. The type and quality of feedback provided can support

student writers in the long term to become more proficient academic writers in specific disciplines.

In this regard; H. G. Bulter (2016) stated that two connected issues are at stake in the provision of feedback. Where revision tends to focus primarily on improving ideas, information flow and argumentation, editing is usually associated with error correction. In practice, however, it is difficult to separate these issues, since incorrect language use regularly leads to muddled ideas. In this sense (Lee, 2003) explains that, there is some support for the positive effect of indirect feedback (e.g. only indicating the place of errors rather than directly correcting them), and dealing with error patterns regarding selective (as opposed to comprehensive) error feedback. H. G. Bulter (2016) added that individual consultation also has a positive effect on the production of specific error types as well as the error frequency of first year and postgraduate students. The main point, however, is not to have inflated expectations of long-term, sustained development of language ability as a result of error correction or feedback. While students may in the short term find it possible to eliminate errors which they have received feedback on, but they may not always be able to sustain this. To close H. G. Bulter (2016) argues that; this kind of 'back-sliding' is due to the fact students may not be at the right developmental stage to learn the language component or structure at which the feedback is directed.

### **2.16.7 The development of writing course materials:**

The development of writing course materials can be seen as a culmination of the effects or influences of many different elements.

H. G. Bulter (2016) explains that materials should be regarded as the dynamic end product of an intensive process of investigation of matters related to the context and nature of academic writing, but should also be scrutinised constantly regarding what effect such materials have on the development of students' writing ability. Therefore; the development of writing materials will depend to some extent both on the

subjective awareness and observational capabilities of writing educators and course designers, and on the objective measurements of such development that can be made.

H. G. Bulter (2016) argues that although content-based and subject-specific models have been employed for many years in the teaching of language proficiency type courses, one should ask oneself whether this is a feasible option within the specific context of the development of writing ability. A university presents a context where a large number of different courses are presented to students. It is therefore crucial such materials should be relevant to their studies, as well as engage their interest.

Another important principle that is closely allied to the degree of specificity of writing courses is how authentic these materials are with regard to what is expected in a university context. Where writing tutors from specific disciplines are used in individualised consultation, one expects them to be well-versed in the writing conventions of those disciplines. This, however, is not necessarily the case with generalist writing lecturers/tutors who facilitate writing courses for large groups of students. In such a case the compromise could be to focus on generic principles of academic discourse, and, if students' writing assignments from other subjects could be used, to provide feedback on such principles.

Depending on students' familiarity with the context of tertiary academic literacy, materials should also be developed in such a way that progression in such materials connects to students' past literacy contexts. In this context, Grabe and Kaplan (1996) discuss two types of production strategies – information telling and information transforming – that are used by inexperienced and experienced writers respectively. It is typically the second type, information transforming, which is increasingly valued as students proceed through to the postgraduate level at university. Another important feature of materials is that, based on a process of writing, they should show a progression that foregrounds writing activities. H. G. Bulter (2016) added that the ability to revise constructively as a way to revisit previous ideas and hypotheses is crucial in such a context. As it has been stated before, it would be unwise to assume

that students already control adequate revision strategies. In short, the development of relevant materials will have to account for important considerations including the writer, the written text, the reader, institutional conditions and the theoretical and practical considerations.

#### **2.16.8 Writing development in classroom:**

Ultimately, materials for writing development will be activated in the context of classrooms, tutorial sessions or individual consultations. H. G. Bulter (2016) stated; the manner in which such contexts are managed by writing educators will influence the potential for constructive writing development in these environments. Apart from issues such as interest and relevance of materials, it will depend on the writing instructor/ consultant to create and sustain an affective environment in which students feel secured and prepared to take risks without the possibility of being ridiculed. Parkerson (2000:122) advocates very strongly that effect is crucial in the language learning process, and that students should feel as comfortable as possible in the learning situation. One should therefore be aware that learning contexts that are intimidating (including materials that are too challenging) to students would probably not be very effective in getting them to produce language. Even more important, students might not be very willing to reflect on their own language use in contexts that appear risky and of possible detriment to their self-image. H. G. Bulter (2016) added that hence, one should carefully consider the effects of error correction masquerading as 'feedback', and the possible negative effect of inhibiting students' language production. The risk for students is obviously that of losing face. The way that learners avoid such risk is by sharply curbing production, which is exactly the opposite of what a course in developing academic writing has as its main purpose: the production of more, not less, writing.

## **2.17 Pragmatics syllabus at Sudanese universities:**

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics which deals with the meaning of the language beyond texts. As EFL learners are exposed to a number of language courses at Sudanese universities. Considering as an example pragmatics course at Omdurman Islamic University, it is taught as part of an introductory linguistic course for third year level students. Introduction to linguistics course shed light on main branches of linguistics including pragmatics. This part of the course covers few definitions, sub-branches and significant theories in the field of pragmatics. It is noticeable that the course leaves out of account example texts of real world situations which would clarify how pragmatics works in real life. The course doesn't focus on foreign cultural content to present a logical detailed explanation to the subject. As the course neglects the essential parts of the culture related meanings and how they can be inferring specifically including figurative language. The students' prior knowledge and skills aren't accurately assessed by EFL syllabus designers, therefore a gap between what to be taught- course content- and what students already know. It is advisable that EFL syllabus designers bear in mind the students' limited exposure to foreign culture.

Since pragmatics is not introduced in earlier years, this makes it more challenging for students regardless of how long it takes to get familiar with the new language and aspects that course covers. Another challenge is that pragmatics is not being taught as a separate course; therefore, it covers only theories and rules of language about how pragmatics works within texts. Adding to this; the course provides few examples to illustrate the relationships between the texts, new language and situations of real world. To sum up the course doesn't cover properly the important aspects pragmatics which students basically need.

## **Part Two: Previous Studies**

Different studies have been carried out by different researchers on university students' The Effects of Pragmatic Difficulties on EFL Learners' Performance in Understanding Academic Texts. The researcher is going to provide some of these relevant studies.

### **2.1 The First Study**

This study was carried out by Istabrag Rasheed Ibrahim in 2010, at Basic Education, AL-Mansoura University –Egypt, under the title “The distinction between Semantics and Pragmatics, a contrastive Study”. It was PhD thesis. The study aimed at showing the distinction between semantics and pragmatics. A Cloze test was employed for data collection. The study draws conclusion, findings, recommendation and suggestions. The findings reveal that students are not aware about the differences between semantic meaning of the discourse or text, Therefore, the study recommended that syllabuses need to be revised and presumably students“ need more practice”.

### **2.2 The Second Study**

This study was carried out by Muawia Mohammed Al Hassan Gaily, at college of science and Arts, Taif University- Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the title “Developing Pragmatic Competence of the Sudanese University EFL learners via planned classroom instruction. It was PhD thesis. The study intends to explore pivotal role played by planned classroom instruction in promoting pragmatic competence of the Sudanese EFL learners. Four types of speech acts were selected by the researcher to be the focus of the program: apology, request, complaints, and refusal. The tools of the study are Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT) was conducted as pre and post-tests. The findings reveal remarkable advancement in the subject performance in the four target speech acts. Both pragma-linguistics and sociolinguistics of the four speech acts of apology, request, complaints and refusal have increased after the instructional treatment.

### **2.3 The Third Study**

This study was carried out by Ali Ahmed Osman Zakaria in April 2018, at Kassala University- Sudan/Qassim University- KSA, under the title “Exploring Sudanese EFL Learners” Pragmatic Competence”. It was PhD thesis. This study attempts to investigate Sudanese EFL Students” discourse of appraise their non-verbal communication expressive skills, topic maintenance, and their ability to abide by speech conventions during their social interaction. The subject of the study comprises 40 fourth level students who are taking English as a major course of Kassala University to collect data for the present study. The tools of data collection for this study include questionnaire and a free discussion panel with the students were employed. The results showed that Sudanese EFL students did not experience any sort of problems with regard to nonverbal communication. They could speak clearly with varied and appropriate tone and value. The study also showed that only a few students had the ability to develop the topic being discussed skillfully without repeating one point over and over again. This reveals students” weakness and their inability to verbally communicate their thought. The study concluded that the students never attempted to use figurative language which made it difficult whether they know them or not.

### **2.4 The Fourth Study**

This study was carried out by Seifoddin Rajabi, Majid Farahian. The study examined the effect of pragmatic instruction on the awareness of suggestions of Persian EFL learners. 34 Persian EFL learners of English participated in this study, 16 of whom received 10 sessions of awareness-raising instruction on the main head acts and downgrades in suggestions as the experimental group and the rest served as the control group with no instruction on the main head acts and downgrades. All the participants engaged in rating assessment tests before and after the study. The results indicated that the experimental group receiving pragmatic instruction outperformed the control group in awareness of appropriate and accurate suggestions. It became

evident that explicit instruction on pragmatic aspects of L2 to foreign language learners could aid both learners and teachers in developing learners' pragmatic competence. The findings of this study imply that integrating specific instructional treatments in foreign language classroom may raise learners' pragmatic awareness in the target language.

## **2.5 The Fifth Study**

This study was carried out by Bernice Badal. The study investigates differences in L1 and L2 Grade 12 learners' interpretation of an English literary text. In particular, the research focuses on pragmatic features of the text, or features which require knowledge of the cultural and situational context in order to be understood. It is hypothesised from the outset that L1 learners will be more adept at interpreting the pragmatic features of the text since L2 learners may lack the necessary linguistic and cultural knowledge needed to derive meaning from an English literary text.

The research takes the form of a qualitative study in which data was derived from ten participants in the form of a standardised test and semi-structured interviews. The test was based on F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and aimed to determine learners' textual and pragmatic competence through a series of questions. Semi-structured interviews then followed in order to investigate the students' own reasons for shortcomings in the test. In addition, the research draws on theories put forth by Brown and Levinson (1978) and Sperber and Wilson (2005) regarding "pragmatic competence", Hymes (1972) notion of "communicative competence", as well as research into how narratives are embedded into cultural mores, customs and norms. These concepts and ideas were incorporated into the research so far as they could assist in articulating the reasons for shortcomings in the literacy test.

The two methods of data collection and subsequent analysis generated significant information which was then correlated. First, the L1 learners outperformed their L2 peers in the literary test, both in terms of understanding the literary elements and in terms of understanding the cultural and contextual elements of the text. Second, the



semi-structured interviews revealed two contrasting methods of language socialisation pertaining to the learners: while the L1 learners acquired English through direct methods and were found to engage more with English literary texts in the home, the L2 learners generally revealed that English was not practised outside of the classroom and engagement with English or English texts was not explicitly encouraged in the home. The study reveals that inadequate exposure to a language not only affects text-comprehension on a grammatical level, but prevents the learner from engaging with and understanding critical pragmatic elements of the literary text such as idioms, metaphors and other cultural references.

# **Chapter Three**

## **Research Methodology**

### **3.0 introduction**

This chapter will describe the methodology of the study. It will cover the methods, population samples, and tools employed for data collection, namely a questionnaire, test instrument and procedures of data analysis.

### **3.1 The methodology**

This study is descriptive analytical. It focuses on the Effects of Pragmatic Difficulties on EFL Learners' Performance in Understanding Academic Texts. The researcher will use the descriptive analysis, and quantitative methods by virtue of the questionnaire, and the test as data gathering tools to verify the hypotheses of the study and to find out answers to the questions of the study as stated earlier in chapter one. Also the researcher will use the statistical package for social Sciences (SPSS) for data analysis.

### **3.2 Design of the Study**

In research studies, the researcher usually goes through a series of inter-related phases which together make up the design of the study. A research design therefor; refers to the general plan of data collection and procedures, which are used in the analysis of data, in order to shed light on the problem(s) under investigation. The aim is to obtain data which serve to answer the research questions thus, a research design in this sense can be defined as the procedures for conducting the study including when, from, whom and under what condition data were obtained. Its purpose is to provide the most valid, accurate answers as possible to the research questions. This study adopts descriptive analytical method.

The aim of such mixed method is to provide quantitative qualitative questionnaire to teachers of English language at some Sudanese Universities, and the multiple choices discourse completion task which designed for 40 of 4th year students at Faculty of Arts in Omdurman Islamic University, simple random sampling method was used.

### **3.3 Population of the study**

This part includes the samples who respond to both the questionnaire, and discourse completion task. The first sample group of this study was English language teachers at some Sudanese universities who were requested to identify their options in the given questionnaire statements, whereas the second sample group of this study were undergraduate students at Faculty of Arts in Omdurman Islamic University who were asked to carry out the discourse completion task DCT. The questionnaire was analyzed statistically through SPSS program.

### **3.4 Data collection Instruments**

Choosing a method that enables the researcher to collect relevant information is quiet important, thus selecting the data and gathering tools which apparent to be more suitable and adequate for the study are very crucial. In this study a descriptive analytical method is used. Two tools were chosen. They are; questionnaire and discourse completion task test.

### **3.5 Teachers' questionnaire**

The questionnaire is considered as a tool for gathering data on the topic of the research. Questionnaire, is any written instrument, that present respondents with a series of questions or, statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or, selecting their options from

among existing answers, so it is one of the main instrument used in this study, it is designed for foreign English language teachers. They were requested to identify their options by ticking in the proper place, relating to the mentioned statements. It was 15 statements, extracted from the hypotheses of the study. These statements were about the Effects of Pragmatic Difficulties on EFL Learners' Performance in Understanding Academic Texts. The questionnaire is divided into two parts: the first part includes, information about the teacher's demographic data such as, age, years of experience and qualifications. The second part consists of the three domains of the study. The aim of the questionnaire is to see teacher's views about the Effects of Pragmatic Difficulties on EFL Learners' Performance in Understanding Academic Texts. In this study, questionnaire was designed based on the questions of the study. The questions of the study were turned to statements that suggested answers from the teachers at university level who were supposed to select the option which correspond to their opinions.

### **3.6 Population of the Questionnaire**

The populations for this study were university staff members at some Sudanese Universities. The researcher used the simple random sampling to select the population of this study.

### **3.7 Sample of the Questionnaire**

The informants were (20) English language teachers at university level. Most of them were full-time lecturers. Questionnaire was given to the English EFL teachers in my own place of work as well as at three other similar universities in Khartoum with the same teaching context. This is important to maintain the validity of the current study.

### **3.8 Discourse Completion Task (DCT)**

The second tool is a four- questions test designed which is considered aa a discourse completion task (DCT). It is used as a main tool for more clarification to the present study's hypotheses.

#### **3.8.1 What is a (DCT)**

DCT is the most popular data collection instrument in this field of pragmatics and it defines as “written test including a number of brief situational descriptions, followed by a short dialogue with an empty slot for the speech act under study” Kasper & Dahl, (1991, p. 221), and are used by many researchers to assess the Participants’ pragmatic competence. According to Kasper and Dahl, (1991), DCT along with role play serves as one of the main data collection instrument in pragmatics research. Kwon, (2004, p. 342) argues that “a DCT is an effective means of data collection when the purpose of the study is to inform about speakers’ pragma-linguistic knowledge of the strategies and linguistic forms by which communicative acts can be implemented, and about their socio-pragmatic knowledge of the context factors under which particular strategic and linguistic choices are appropriate”. Based on these arguments, Kwon, (2004, p.5) believes that DCT is the most appropriate instrument in his study since the purpose of his study is to reveal participants’ use of language.

#### **3.8.2 The Sample of the test**

The sample of DCT was 40- 4th year students at Omdurman Islamic University, Faculty of Arts, department of English language and Literature fourth year level.

### **3.8.3 Validity and Reliability**

Validity and reliability are two important criteria for assuring the quality of the data collection procedures. In social science research, Merriam (1998, p.13) argues that, all kinds of researches are concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner. Validity and reliability are utilized as criteria for judging the quality of this research design.

### **3.8.4 Validity of the questionnaire**

Validity is the touch stone of all the types of educational research that a researcher tries to ensure. In order to check the apparent validity for the study's questionnaire and validation of its statements according to the formulation and explanation, the questionnaire was checked by three professors as referees who were specialists in the study field. They recommended adding, omitting, editing some statements. The researcher studied all the recommendations and suggestions and some corrections which all have been accommodated in the questionnaire. It worth mentioning to make it clear that the first three referees have checked the questionnaire and the last three checked the test. The following are the referees, their jobs and their place of work.

Prof. Ahmed abdullah, Nileen University

Prof. Mahmoud Ali, Sudan University for Sciences and Technology

Prof. Salah Alkareib, Nileen University

Prof. Eshraqa Babiker, Sudan International University

### **3.8.5 Validity of DCT**

The discourse completion task (DCT) was also shown to the same referees. Again their suggestions and comments were considered and accommodated in the test.

### **3.9 Summary**

This chapter presents information about the data corpus used in this study, including instruments of data collection and methods of presenting data. Besides, the research instruments adopted for data collection. Also it's provided a detailed description of all the procedures about each instrument, including population, sample, validity and reliability of the instruments. As this chapter explains how the samples were selected. Thus, the next chapter will be devoted to the analysis of the research data including both the questionnaire and the test.



# **Chapter Four**

## **Data analysis and Discussion**

### 3.0 Introduction:

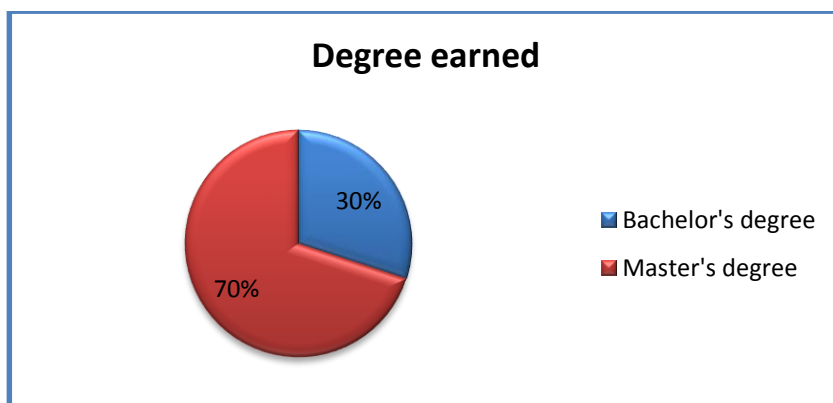
In this chapter the researcher provides a detailed analysis on the obtained data in a quest to get the results that answer the study's questions and hypotheses. Frequencies and percentages are calculated for each statement in the questionnaire along with descriptive statistics and Chi-square analysis for testing the hypotheses. This chapter divided into two sections; the first one deals with the questionnaire analysis whereas the second one shows the analysis of the test.

### 3.1 questionnaire analysis:

The following section is devoted to questionnaire analysis and related discussion.

**Table (4.1.1):** Highest degree earned

Degree	Frequency	Percentage
Master degree	6	30.0
PhD degree	14	70.0
Total	20	100.0

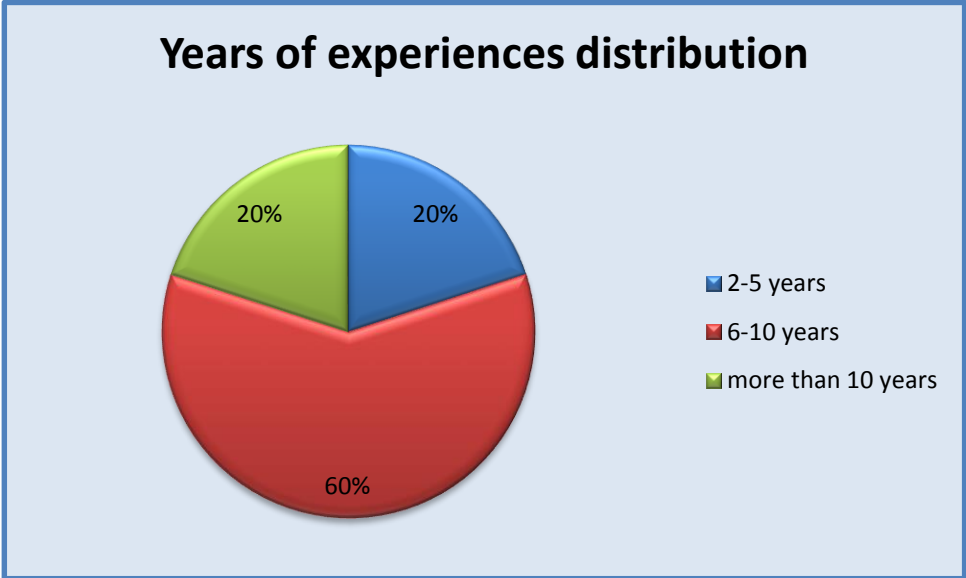


**Figure (4.1.1):** degree earned distribution among the participants

The table and figure above show the participants' degree distribution, where Master degree holders are (6) with percentage (30%) while the majority of the participants are PhD holders with dominant percentage (70%).

**Table (4.1.2):** How many years have you been teaching English

Experience	Frequency	Percentage
2-5 years	4	20.0
6-10 years	12	60.0
more than 10 years	4	20.0
Total	20	100.0



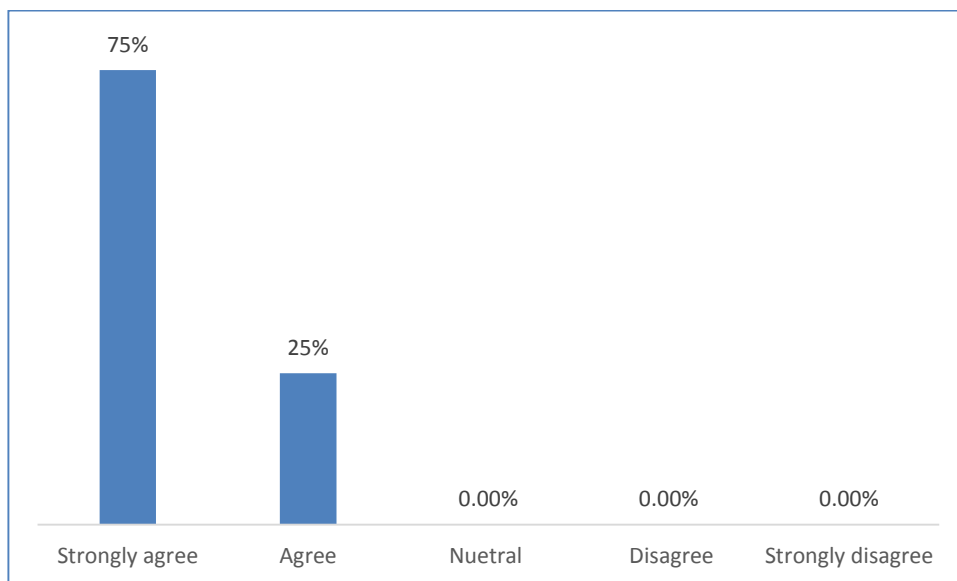
**Figure (4.1.2):** shows the years of experience distribution among the participants

For the participants’ years of experience demonstration, the table and figure above show the frequency and percentage of years of experience where most of the participants have 6 to 10 years of experience in the field contributing with (60%) percentage while (4) of the participants have (2-5) years of experience and (4) with more than 10 years and their percentage is (20%) for each.

**First statement:** EFL learners face a number of pragmatic difficulties.

**Table 4.3** The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers of statement No. (1):

Valid	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agree	15	75%
Agree	5	25%
Neutral	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>



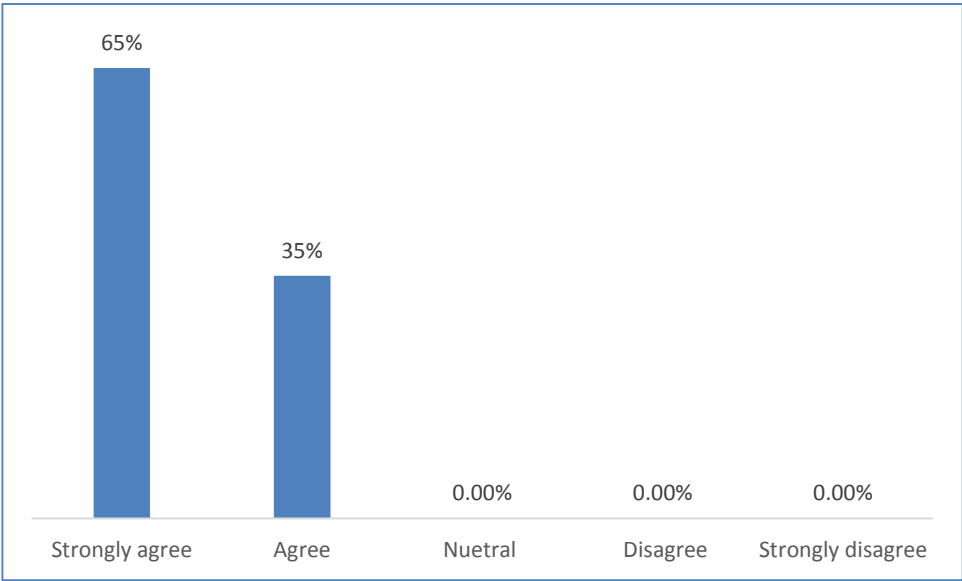
**Figure: 4.3:** Frequency distribution for the respondents' answers of statement No. (1)

The above table and figure show that the majority of participants (15) agree with the statement with (75%) percentage and (5) strongly agree with (25%) percentage. That means all of the participants see that EFL learners face a number of pragmatic difficulties.

**Second statement:** EFL Learners gain much competence than performance which leads to inaccurate use of language.

**Table 4.4:** The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement No. (2):

Valid	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agree	13	65%
Agree	7	35%
Neutral	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>



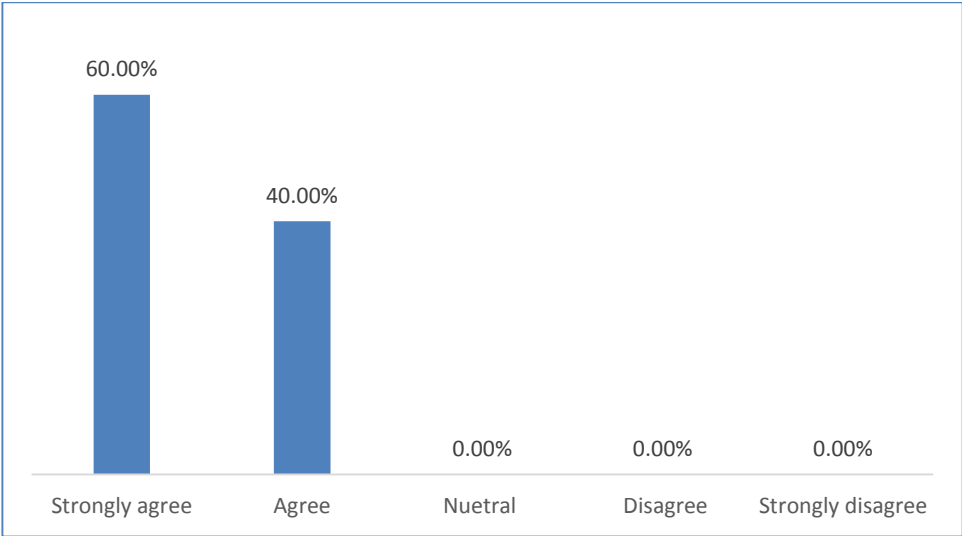
**Figure 4.4:** Frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement No. (2)

The table and figure illustrate the number of participants that strongly agree with the statement is (13) whereas is (7) agree; with percentages (65%) and (35%) respectively. That means participants think EFL learners gain much competence than performance which leads to inaccurate use of language.

**Third statement:** EFL learners fail in identifying the meaning relationships between words -linguistic level- and ideas-conceptual level.

**Table 4.5:** The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement No. (3):

Valid	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agree	12	60.0%
Agree	8	40.0%
Neutral	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>



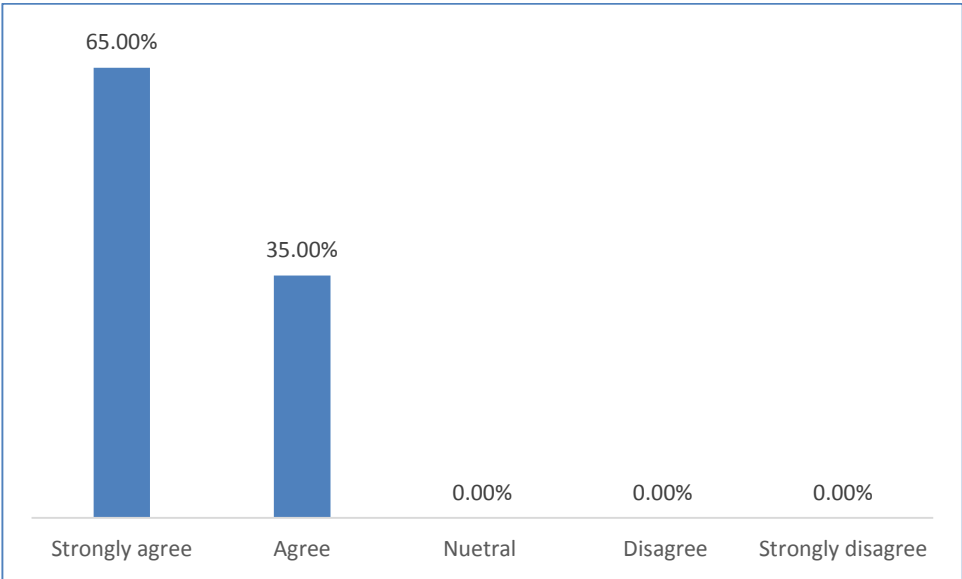
**Figure:4.5** Frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement No. (3):

The above table and figure illustrate the number of participants that strongly agree with the statement is (12) whereas (8) agree; with percentages (60%) and (40%) respectively which means the participants agree the claim that EFL learners fail in identifying the meaning relationships between words -linguistic level- and ideas-conceptual level.

**Fourth statement:** EFL learners are incapable to identify the content of the academic texts due to lexical structure' misunderstanding.

**Table 4.6** The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers of statement No. (4):

Valid	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agree	7	65.0%
Agree	13	35.0%
Neutral	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>



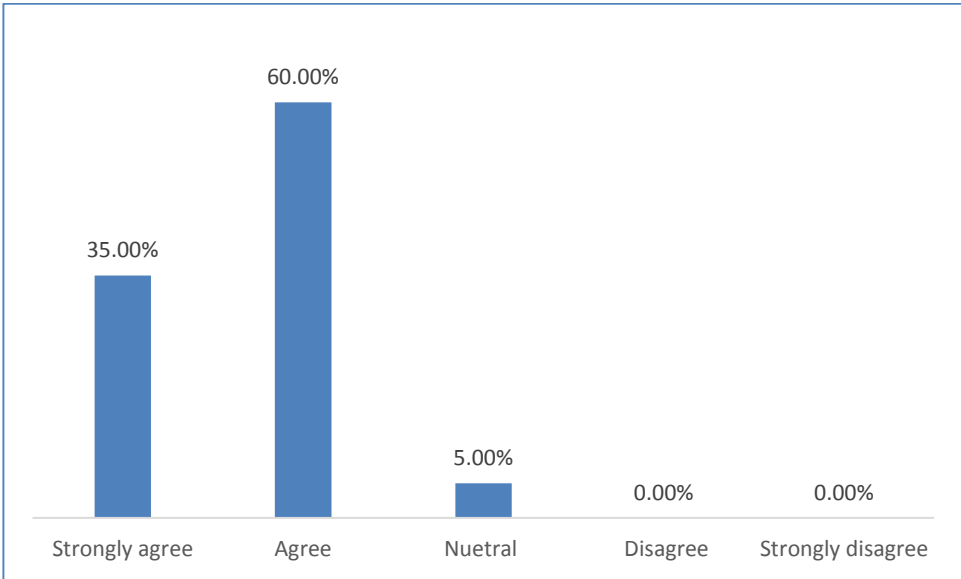
**Figure:4.6** Frequency distribution for the respondents' answers of statement No. (4):

The table and figure show the number of participants that strongly agree with the statement is (7) and the ones who agree with the statement is (13); with percentages (35%) and (65%) respectively; which means that the participants see that EFL learners are incapable to identify the content of the academic texts due to lexical structure' misunderstanding.

**Fifth statement:** EFL learners lack understanding content and don't spend much time or effort to get way out of such difficulty.

**Table 4.7** The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers of statement No. (5):

Valid	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agree	7	35.0%
Agree	12	60.0%
Neutral	1	5.0%
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>



**Figure:4.7** Frequency distribution for the respondents' answers of statement No. (5):

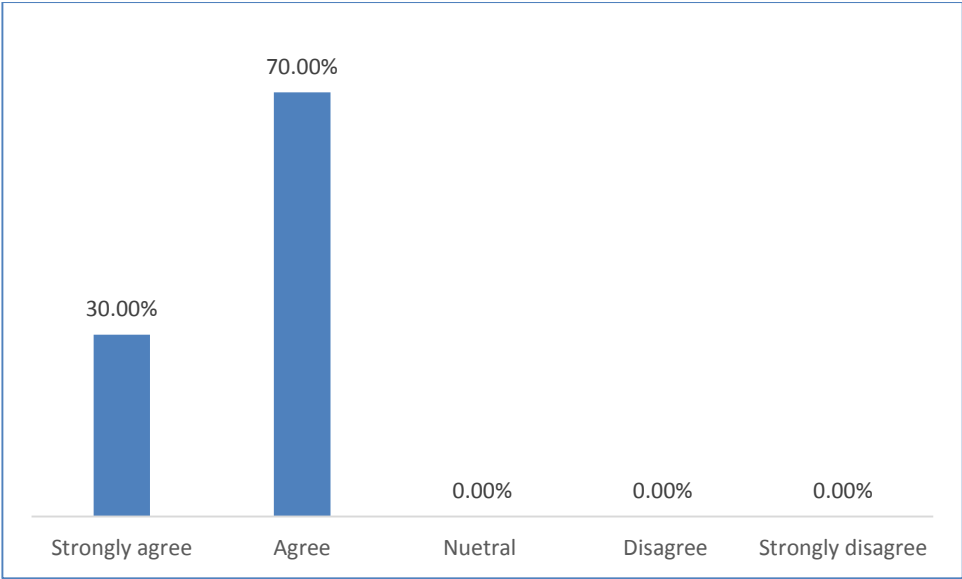
The table and figure show that (7) participants responds with strongly agree and (12) agree with whereas (1) is neutral, with percentages (35%), (60%) and (5%) respectively. That is, the participants see that EFL learners lack understanding content and don't spend much time or effort to get way out of such difficulty.



**Sixth statement:** pragmatics is not properly covered in the university syllabus.

**Table 4.8** The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement No. (6):

Valid	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agree	6	30.0%
Agree	14	70.0%
Neutral	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>



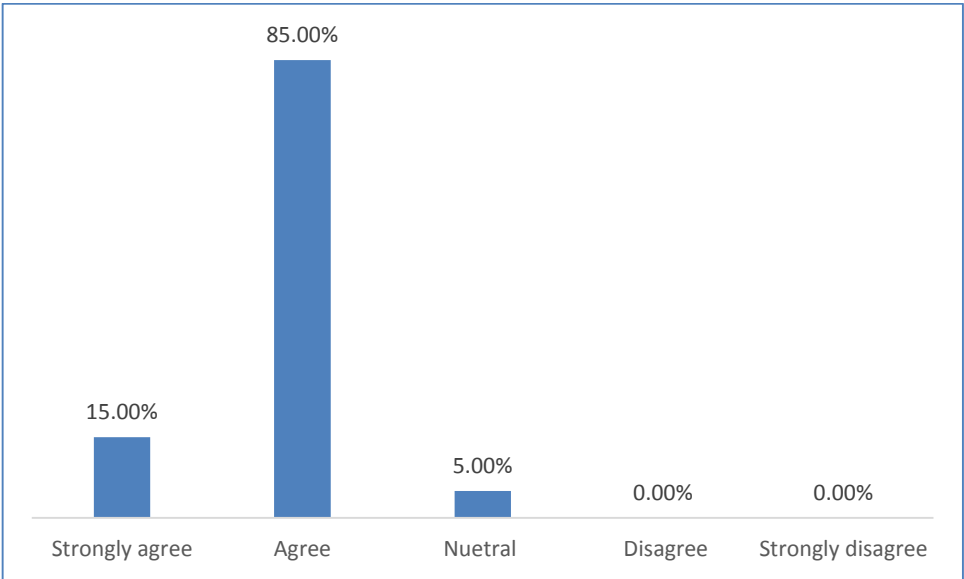
**Figure 4.8** Frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement (6).

The above table and figure show that the number of participants that strongly agree with the statement is (6) and (14) agree with the statement with percentages (30%) and (70%) respectively; which means that the participants see that pragmatics is not properly covered in the university syllabus.

**Seventh statement:** EFL learners' insufficient knowledge about cultural framework impact negatively on accessing and comprehending academic text.

**Table 4.9** The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers of statement No. (7):

Valid	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agree	3	15.0%
Agree	17	85.0%
Neutral	1	5.0%
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>



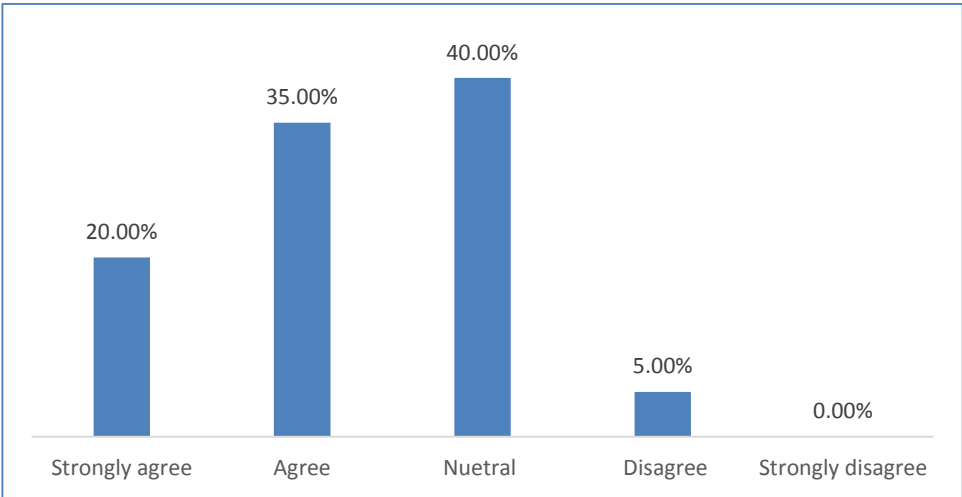
**Figure: 4.9** Frequency distribution for the respondents' answers of statement No. (7):

The above table and figure show (3) of participants that strongly agree with the statement and (17) agree with percentages (15%) and (85%) respectively; which means that the participants see that EFL learners' insufficient knowledge about cultural framework impact negatively on accessing and comprehending academic text.

**Eighth statement:** EFL Learners' lack of contextual and linguistic knowledge affects their ability to process all texts-relevant information.

**Table 4.10** The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers of statement No. (8):

Valid	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agree	4	20.0%
Agree	7	35.0%
Neutral	8	40.0%
Disagree	1	5.0%
Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>



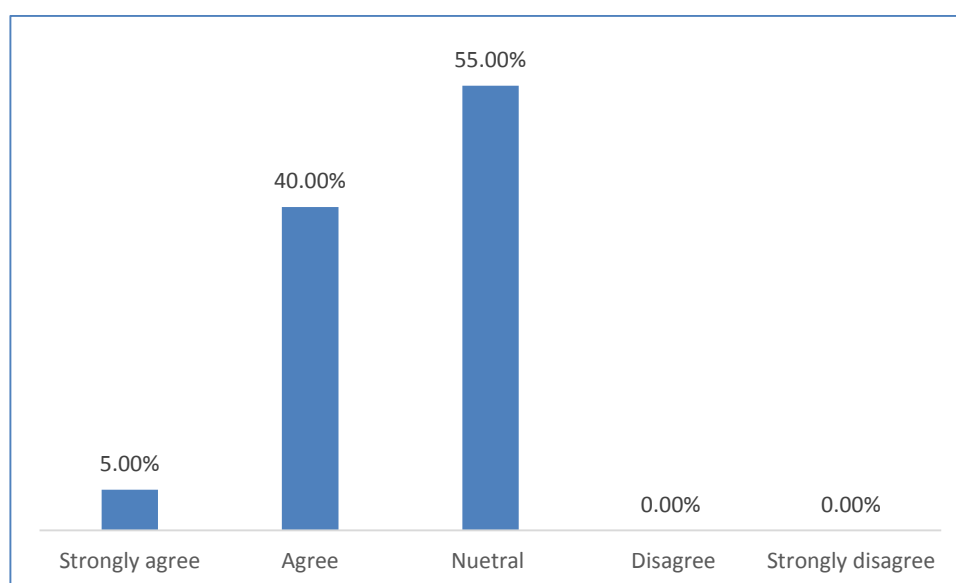
**Figure:4.10** Frequency distribution for the respondents' answers of statement No: (8):

The above table and figure show that (4) participants strongly agree with the statement and (7) agree, whereas (8) remain neutral, and (1) disagrees with percentages, (20%), (35%), (40%) and (5%) respectively. The number of the participants who agree and strongly agree combined is (11) with percentage (55%) which means the participants see that EFL Learners' lack of contextual and linguistic knowledge affects their ability to process all texts-relevant information.

**Ninth statement:** EFL learners misunderstand figurative language.

**Table 4.11** The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers of statement No. (9):

Valid	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agree	1	5.0%
Agree	8	40.0%
Neutral	11	55.0%
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>



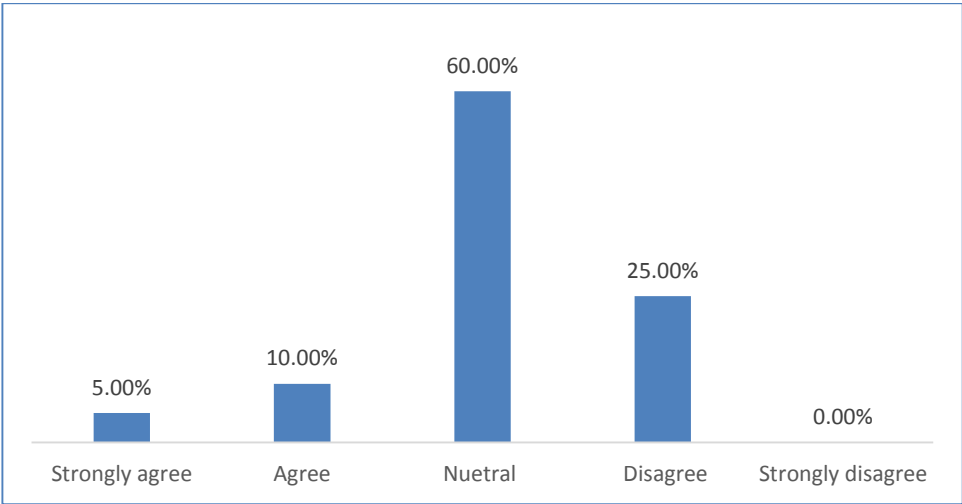
**Figure: 4.11** Frequency distribution for the respondents' answers of statement No. (9):

The above table and figure show that (1) participant strongly agrees with the statement and agree (8) whereas (11) remain neutral with percentages (5%), (40%) and (55%) respectively; which means that the participants don't think that EFL learners misunderstand the figurative language.

**The tenth statement:** The focus of the classroom instruction on grammatical and discourse rules of target language may lead EFL learners to pragmatic errors and miscommunication.

**Table 4.12** The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement No. (10):

Valid	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agree	1	5.0%
Agree	2	10.0%
Neutral	12	60.0%
Disagree	5	25.0%
Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>



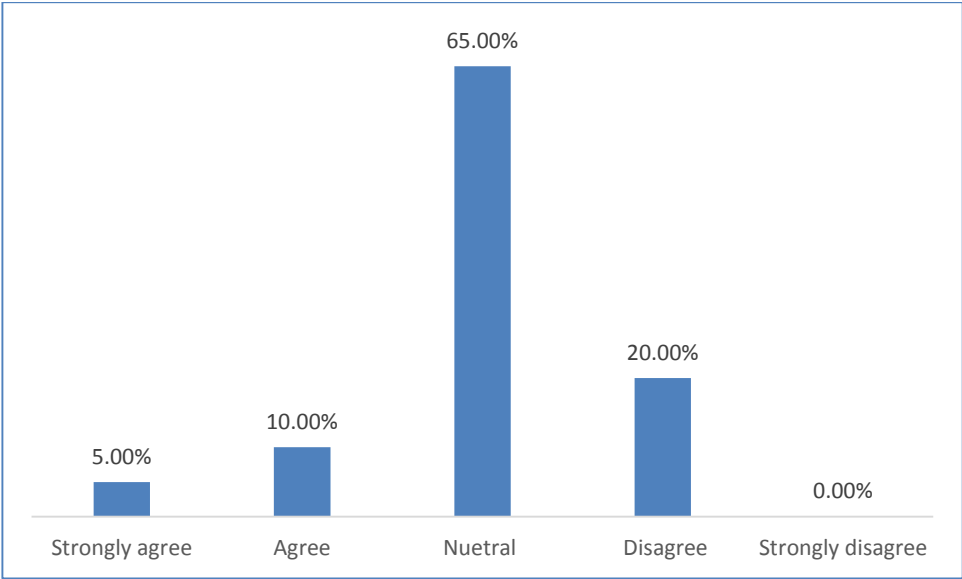
**Figure: 4.12** Frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement No. (10)

The above table and figure show that (1) participant strongly agrees with the statement (2) agree and whereas (12) of the participants remain neutral and (5) disagree with percentages (5%), (10%), (60%) and (25%) respectively; which means that participants don’t agree with the claim ‘*The focus of classroom instruction on grammatical and discourse rules of target language may lead EFL learners to pragmatic errors and miscommunication*’.

**The eleventh statement:** EFL learners' syllabus does not seek constantly to address the needs and difficulties of learners.

**Table 4.13** The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers of statement No. (11):

Valid	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agree	1	5.0%
Agree	2	10.0%
Neutral	13	65.0%
Disagree	4	20.0%
Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>



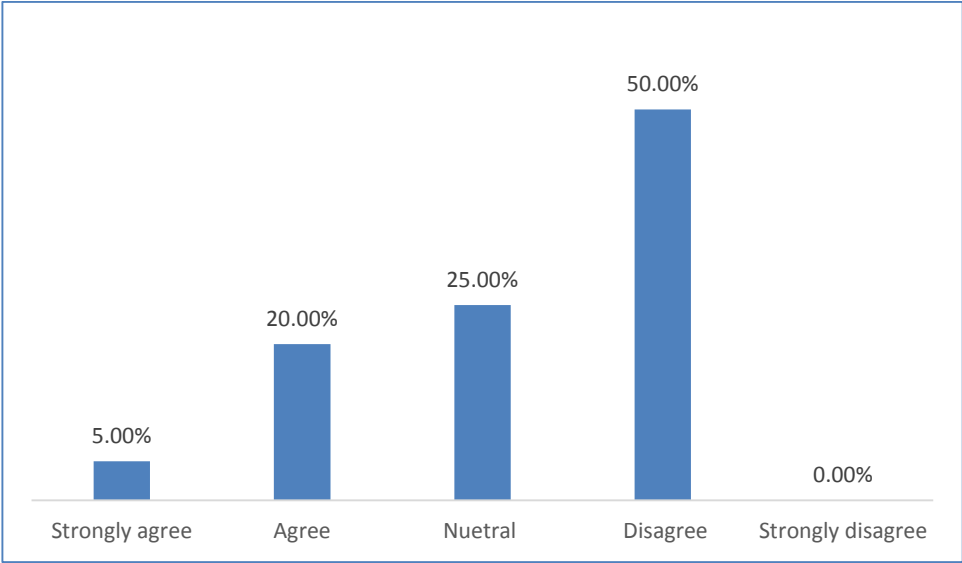
**Figure: 4.13** Frequency distribution for the respondents' answers of statement No. (11)

The above table and figure show that (5) participants strongly agree and (2) agree whereas (13) remain neutral other (4) and with percentages (5%), (10%), (65%) and (20%) respectively; which means that the participants do not agree with the claim that 'EFL learners' syllabus does not seek constantly to address the needs and difficulties of learners.

**The twelfth statement:** EFL Learners' syllabus must treat pragmatics as an essential part of language use throughout the learning.

**Table 4.14** The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers of statement No. (12):

Valid	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agree	1	5.0%
Agree	4	20.0%
Neutral	5	25.0%
Disagree	10	50.0%
Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>



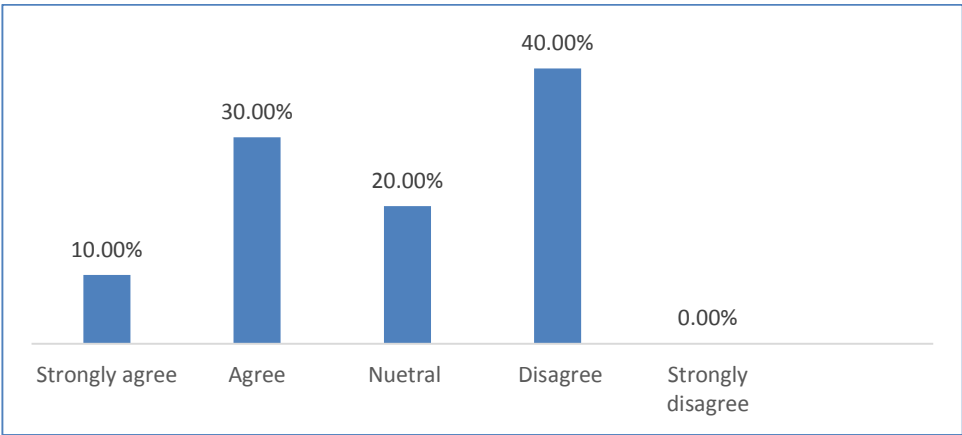
**Figure: 4.14** Frequency distribution for the respondents' answers of statement No. (12)

The above table and figure show that (1) participants strongly agrees and also (4) other participants agree with the statement whereas (5) remain neutral and (10) disagree with percentages (5%), (20%), (25%) and (50%) respectively; which means that the participants do not agree with the claim that 'EFL Learners' syllabus must treat pragmatics as an essential part of language use throughout the learning'.

**The thirteenth statement:** Syllabus should use authentic materials and stress the importance of consistent exercising to emphasize pragmatic use of language.

**Table 4.15** The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement No. (13):

Valid	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agree	2	10.0%
Agree	6	30.0%
Neutral	4	20.0%
Disagree	8	40.0%
Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>



**Figure: 4.15** Frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement No. (13)

The above table and figure show that the number of participants that strongly agree with the statement is (2) and other (6) agree whereas the number of the participants who remain neutral is (4) and (8) disagree with percentages (10%), (30%), (20%) and (40%) respectively; which means that the participants does not agree with the claim that ‘Syllabus should use authentic materials and stress the importance of consistent exercising to emphasize pragmatic use of language’.



**Table (4.16):** Descriptive statistics

No.	Statements	Mean	Mode	Std. Deviation
1.	EFL learners face a number of pragmatic difficulties.	4.7500	5.00	.44426
2.	Learners gain much competence than performance which leads to inaccurate use of language.	4.6500	5.00	.48936
3.	EFL learners fail in identifying the meaning relationships between words -linguistic level- and ideas-conceptual level.	4.6000	5.00	.50262
4.	EFL learners are incapable to identify the content of the academic texts due to lexical structure' misunderstanding.	4.3158	4.00	.47757
5.	EFL learners lack understanding content and don't spend much time or effort to get way out of such difficulty.	4.3000	4.00	.57124
6.	Pragmatics is not properly covered in the univrsity syllabus.	4.3000	4.00	.47016
7.	EFL learners' insufficient knowledge about cultural framework impact negatively on accessing and comprehending academic texts.	4.1500	4.00	.36635
8.	EFL Learners' lack of contextual and linguistic knowledge affects their ability to process all texts-relevant information.	3.7000	3.00	.86450
9.	EFL Learners misunderstand figurative language.	3.5000	3.00	.60698

10.	The focus of the classroom instruction on grammatical and discourse rules of the target language may lead EFL learners to pragmatic errors and miscommunication.	2.9500	3.00	.75915
11.	EFL learners' syllabus does not seek constantly to address the needs and difficulties of learners.	3.0000	3.00	.72548
12.	EFL Learners' syllabus must treat pragmatics as an essential use of language throughout the learning.	2.8500	2.00	.98809
13.	Syllabus should use authentic materials and stress the importance of consistent exercising to emphasize pragmatic use of language.	3.1000	2.00	1.07115

The table above shows the descriptive statistics where mean (average value), mode (the most frequent value) and the standard deviation are calculated for each statement. Looking at the Mean value in the first column, the values are greater than 3 for most of the statement which means that participants respond mostly with agree or strongly. Only for the statements from (10) to (13) one can notice that their Mean values are less than or equal to 3 which means either the participants remain neutral or they disagree with the statements. The Mode values show the most frequent response of the participants in each of the 13 statements while the last column shows the standard deviation.

### **Chi-square Analysis:**

This type of analysis shows whether the participants accept the statements claims in light of the study hypothesis. That is, the hypotheses' claims are agreed upon if the participants accept all or most of the questionnaire's statements.

**Table (4-17):** Chi-square analysis Statistics

No.	Statements	Chi-Square	Df	p-value	Decision
1)	EFL learners face a number of pragmatic difficulties	5.000	1	.025	Accept
2)	Learners gain much competence than performance which leads to inaccurate use of language	1.800	1	.008	Accept
3)	EFL learners fail in identifying the meaning relationships between words - linguistic level- and ideas-conceptual level	.800	1	.003	Accept
4)	EFL learners are incapable to identify the content of the academic texts due to lexical structure' misunderstanding	2.579	1	.018	Accept
5)	EFL learners lack understanding content and don't spend much time or effort to get way out of such difficulty.	9.100	2	.011	Accept
6)	Pragmatics is not properly covered in the university syllabus.	3.200	1	.0074	Accept
7)	EFL learners' insufficient knowledge about cultural framework impact negatively on accessing and comprehending academic texts	9.800	1	.002	Accept
8)	Learners' lack of contextual and linguistic knowledge affects their ability to process all texts-relevant information	6.000	3	.012	Accept

9)	EFL learners misunderstand the figurative language.	7.900	2	.019	Accept
10)	The focus of the classroom instruction on grammatical and discourse rules of the target language may lead EFL learners to pragmatic errors and miscommunication.	14.800	3	.002	Accept
11)	EFL learners' syllabus does not seek constantly to address the needs and difficulties of learners	18.000	3	.600	Reject
12)	EFL Learners' syllabus must treat pragmatics as an essential use of language throughout the learning	8.400	3	.380	Reject
13)	Syllabus should use authentic materials and stress the importance of consistent exercising to emphasize pragmatic use of language	4.000	3	.261	Reject

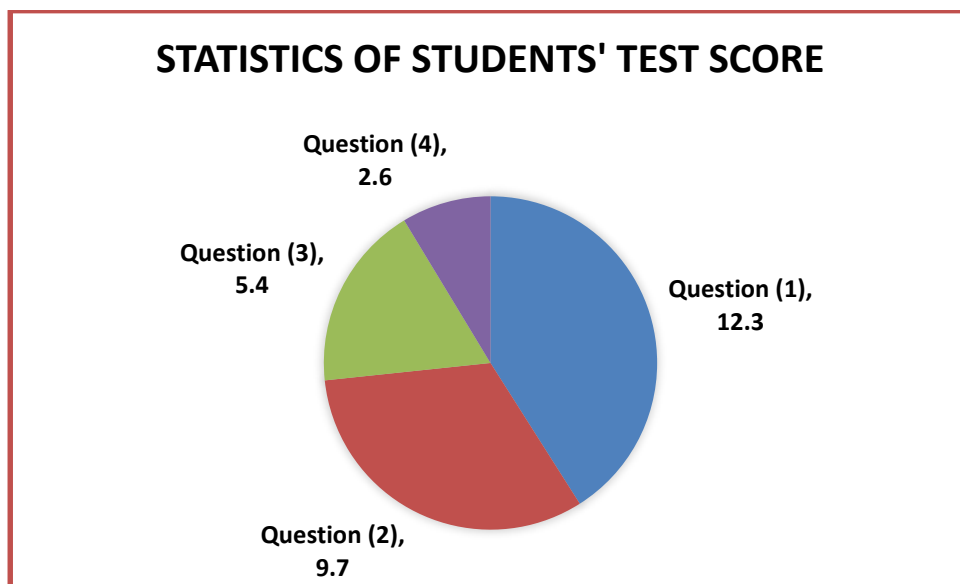
The table above shows the chi-square analysis of the 13 statements, and as can be noticed, the first ten statements are accepted by the participants according to their chosen response. The accepted statement has p-value of less than or equal to (0.05) which is true for the accepted statements. The hypotheses claim of the study are valid and true according to the chi-square analysis as most of the statements are significantly valid and accepted.

### 3.2 Test analysis:

The present section will give a clear detailed analysis and discussion for the students' performance in the discourse completion task, known as test.

**Table (4.2.1):** Statistics of Students' test score (n=40)

Test parts	Full	Pass	Min.	Max.	Mean	St.
Question	30	15	0	27	12.3	7.05
Question	30	15	0	30	9.7	11.26
Question	20	10	0	20	5.4	5.7
Question	20	10	0	14	2.6	3.7
<b>Total</b>	100	50	6	72	29.7	18.20



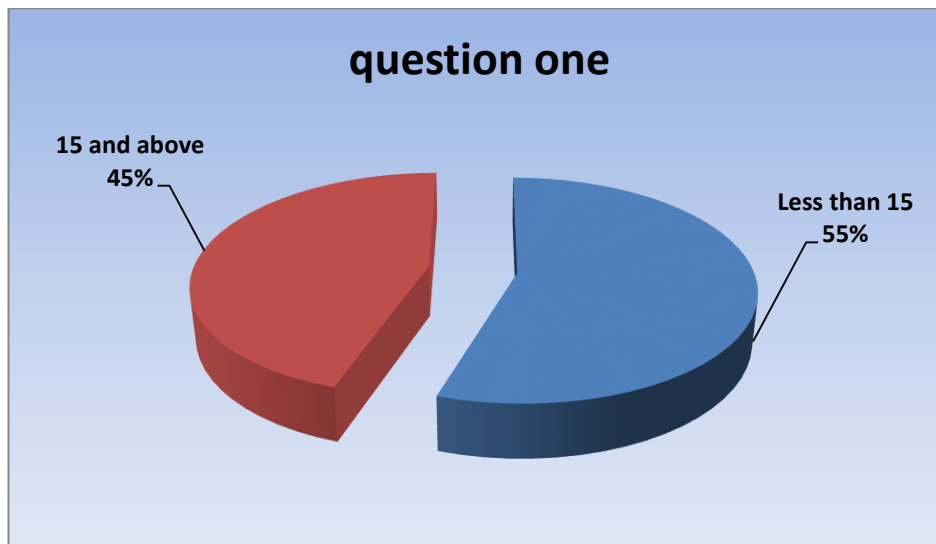
**Figure (4.2.1):** Statistics of Students' test score

Table (4.2.1) shows the general statistics of (40) students. The test consists of four main questions; the first question has full mark (30), the second question has also (30), the third and fourth question has (20) for each. Results revealed that students' general performance in the first questions showed minimum score of zero and maximum score of (27) out of (30), the range was large which reflect dispersion of students' score which indicates variation of level.

The mean score was (9.7) which is less than (15) pass mark, with standard deviation of (7.05) that indicates scattered scores away from the mean value. Results also revealed that students' general performance in the second questions showed minimum score of zero and maximum score of (30) out of (30), the range was larger than in the first question, which reflects distancing of students' scores. The mean score was (9.7) which is less than (15) the pass mark, with standard deviation of (11.26) which is considerably higher, that indicates scattered scores away from the mean value. The students' score in the third question was also low. The minimum mark was zero and the maximum was (20) out of (20), of range equal (20). The mean score was (5.4) which is less than (10) the pass mark, with standard deviation of (5.7) which is higher than the mean value, that indicates poor distribution of students' scores far away from the mean value. The students' score in the fourth question was worse. The minimum mark was zero and the maximum was (14) out of (20), of range equal (14). The mean score was (2.6) which is less than (10) the pass mark, with standard deviation of (3.7) which is higher than the mean value, that indicates very poor distribution of students' scores far away from the mean value. The overall result showed that maximum total score was (72) out of (100), and the total minimum score was (6). The average mean value was (29.7) which less than (50) the pass mark, the standard deviation was (18.2) which indicates high distancing between students' score and the mean score value. The figure (4.2.1) illustrates graphically.

**Table (4.2.2):** Distribution of students' scores in the first question (n=40)

Attained marks		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Less than 15	22	55%	55%
	15 and above	18	45%	45%
	Total	40	100.0%	100.0

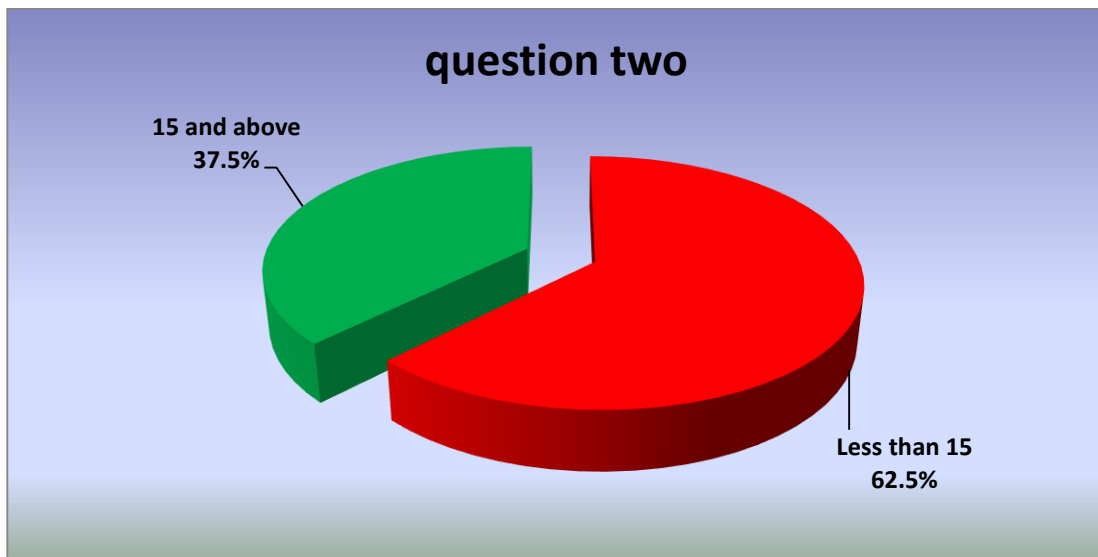


**Figure (4.2.2.):** students' achievement in the first question

Table (4.2.2) showed that more than a half of the students 22(55%) scored less than (15) marks in the first question. Figure (4.2.1) illustrates that graphically. The first question was conducted to examine students' understanding to pragmatics social language skills; praising, convincing, offering etc. Results revealed that students performed poorly and their performance is highly affected.

**Table (4.2.3):** Distribution of students' scores in the second question (n=40)

Attained marks		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Less than 15	25	62.5%	62.5%
	15 and above	15	37.5%	37.5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0</b>



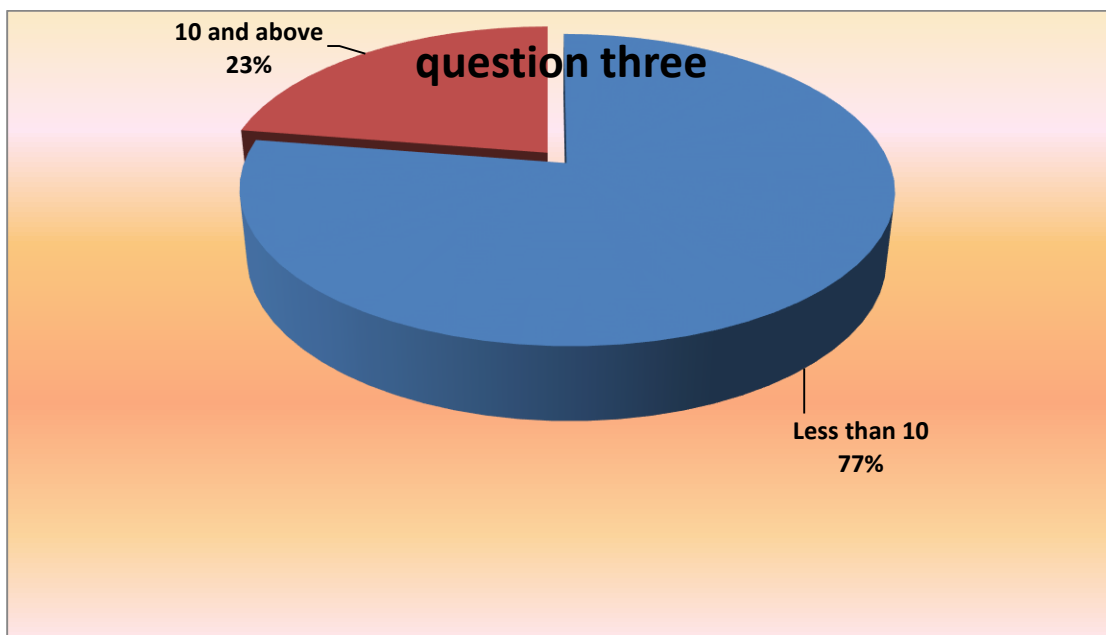
**Figure (4.2.3):** students' achievement in the second question

Table (4.2.3) showed that more than a half of the students 25(62.5%) scored less than (15) marks in the second question. Figure (4.2.2) illustrates that graphically. The second question was designed to assess students' performance in guessing real-word situations or where these conversations take place; airport, library, restaurant etc. Results showed that students were unable to make appropriate guessing so their performance is negatively affected.



**Table (4.2.4):** Distribution of students' scores in the third question (n=40)

Attained marks		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Less than 10	31	77.5%	77.5%
	10 and above	9	22.5%	10%
	Total	40	100.0%	100.0

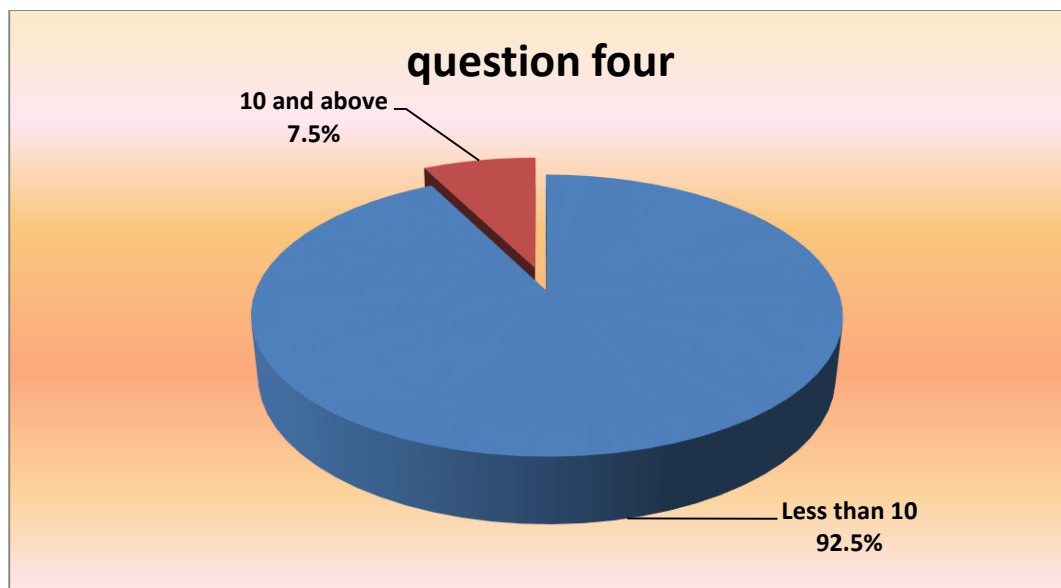


**Figure (4.2.4):** students' achievement in the third question

Table (4.2.4) showed that the majority of the students 31(77.5%) scored less than (10) marks in the third question. Figure (4.2.3) illustrates that graphically. The third question was carried out to assess students' performance in guessing pragmatics references or what the speaker intended to say. Results proved that students were unable to figure out the speakers' intentions so their performance is negatively affected.

**Table (4.2.5):** Distribution of students' scores in the fourth question (n=40)

Attained marks		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Less than 10	37	92.5%	92.5%
	10 and above	3	7.5%	7.5%
	Total	40	100.0%	100.0

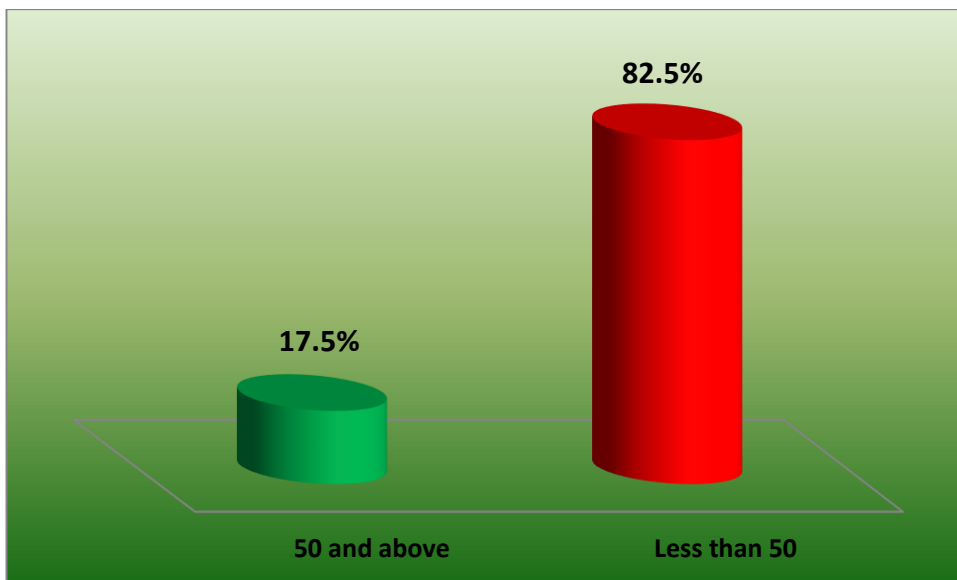


**Figure (4.2.5):** students' achievement in the fourth question

Table (4.2.5) shows that vast majority of the students 37(92.5%) scored less than (10) marks in the fourth question. Figure (4.2.4) illustrates that graphically. The fourth question was designed to assess students' performance in using direct and indirect speech acts. Results demonstrated that students were unable to rewrite sentences in direct speech acts so their performance is noticeably affected.

**Table (4.2.6):** Distribution of students' overall scores (n=40)

Attained marks		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Less than 50	33	82.5%	82.5%
	50 and above	7	17.5%	17.5%
	Total	40	100.0%	100.0



**Figure (4.2.6):** students' overall test achievement

Table (4.2.6) shows that vast majority of the students 33(82.5%) scored less than (50) marks in total. Figure (4.2.5) illustrates that graphically.

That means EFL learners face a number of pragmatic difficulties which hinder their understanding and affect their general performance while dealing with academic texts.

**Table (4.2.7):** Analysis of association of attainments in each question and the total score (n=40)

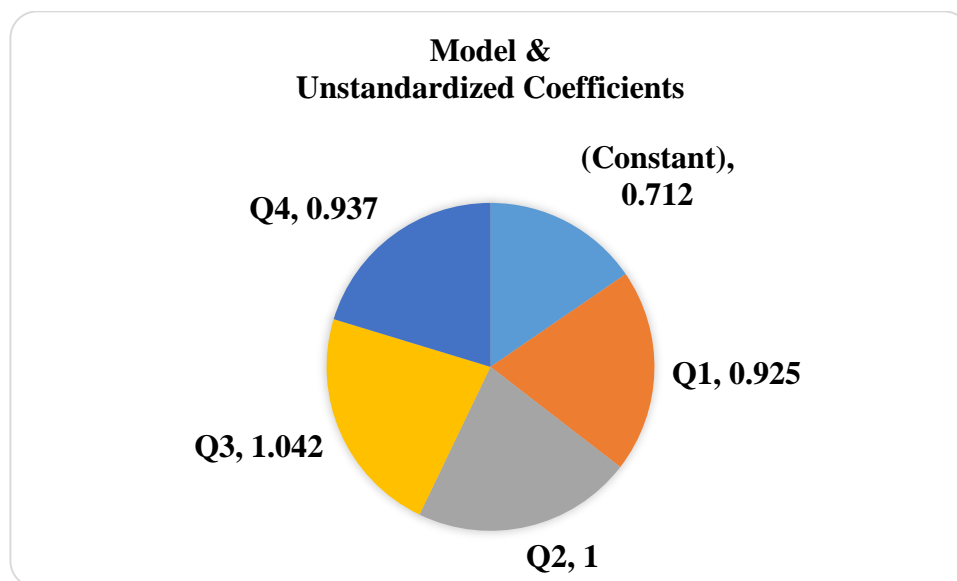
<b>Total score</b>					
<b>Test parts</b>		<b>Mean squares</b>	<b>R squared</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Valid</b>	<b>Question (1)</b>	<b>554.1</b>	<b>0.21</b>	<b>2.094</b>	<b>0.063</b>
	<b>Question (2)</b>	<b>1193.7</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>10.959</b>	<b>0.000*</b>
	<b>Question (3)</b>	<b>1311.7</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>11.211</b>	<b>0.000*</b>
	<b>Question (4)</b>	<b>670.00</b>	<b>0.11</b>	<b>5.436</b>	<b>0.026*</b>

The students' differences in overall performance were significantly associated to their performance in the second, third and fourth question (sig. < 0.05). But it was not significantly associated with the first question (sig. > 0.05).

Students' attainment in the second question interprets (69%) of differences in overall score, while question three interprets (57%), and question four interprets only (11%). This means that second question the main source of variation in students overall scores.

**Table (4.2.8):** Test of regression

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error		
1	(Constant)	0.712	0.733	0.971	0.338
	Q1	0.925	0.050	18.501	0.000
	Q2	1.000	0.038	26.432	0.000
	Q3	1.042	0.076	13.792	0.000
	Q4	0.937	0.096	9.792	0.000



**Figure (4.2.8):** Test of regression

The total score of students can be represented by the following model:

$$Y \text{ total} = 0.925 q_1 + q_2 + 1.04q_3 + 0.93q_4$$

### **4.3 Summary of the chapter:**

In this chapter, a test is given to forty students at Omdurman Islamic University and questionnaire to twenty English language teachers at some Sudanese universities. By analyzing the data, it has been proved that EFL learners face a number of pragmatic difficulties affecting their understanding to academic texts.

### **4.4 Verification of the study hypotheses:**

It can be confidently said that the study hypotheses raised earlier in chapter one, are confirmed. These hypotheses are:

- EFL learners encounter a number of pragmatic difficulties in understanding the academic texts.
- EFL learners' performance while processing academic texts is highly affected by these pragmatic difficulties.
- EFL learners' syllabus is not adequately included pragmatic aspects.

# **Chapter Five**

## **Summary, Main Findings, Recommendations**

## **5.0 Introduction**

This closing chapter includes the following sections: a summary of the study which covers the main points of the previous chapters then it presents the main findings that the study has drawn on the basis of the data analysis which carried out in chapter four, the results of the students' test will be brought to light and the hypotheses of the study will be clearly verified and then the questions of the research will be answered as well. It also provides recommendations and some suggestions for further studies in the subject matter.

### **5.1 Summary of the study:**

This investigatory study has mainly focused on identification to the nature of the pragmatic difficulties that EFL learners encounter while processing academic texts and how that hinder their understanding. In addition to that the study has explored how the performance of the students is highly affected by these problems. Besides this; the study has proved that the pragmatics aspects are not adequately included in the university syllabus. Accordingly; a set of subtle and effective techniques proposed later in the recommendation section. So as to achieve these objectives; the study adopted a descriptive analytical methodology.

As tools of data collection 20 university lecturers were selected randomly from different Sudanese universities for a questionnaire, and a test which was given to 40 of Omdurman Islamic University's undergraduates. The results of both the questionnaire and test analysis supplied the present study with a detailed description for the interpretation of how the pragmatic difficulties hinder EFL learners' performance in comprehending academic texts as the lecturers agreed with and the students' performance has proved.



Most of the questionnaire's statements were accepted by the participants according to their responses which were varied from strongly agree to agree. In addition to that the test findings have shown that majority of the students encounter a number of problems in comprehending and processing the academic texts which as a result of both a knowledge gap in addition to a lack of understanding in the field of pragmatics. Another very noticeable result is that students' performance is negatively highly affected, which was very clear in the test.

## **5.2. Findings of the Study:**

As this research has been conducted to investigate the effects of pragmatic difficulties on EFL learners' performance in understanding the academic texts therefore; the following results were drawn:

- A large number of lecturers at Sudanese universities agreed that EFL learners face a number of pragmatic difficulties in understanding the given academic texts.
- The students' performance is highly affected by their focus on competence more than performance.
- The university teachers agreed that EFL learners fail in identifying the relationships between words that represent the linguistic level and the ideas which are clearly reflected on the conceptual level.
- The researcher has found out that EFL learners are incapable of identifying the content of academic texts due to misunderstanding to their lexical structure.
- The study has examined EFL learners' lack of content understanding and approved that students don't spend much time or effort to get way out of such difficulty.

- The study also has shown that pragmatics subject is neither taught as a separate university subject nor properly covered in the other related subjects.
- The tutors themselves strongly agreed that EFL learners' insufficient knowledge about cultural framework impact negatively on accessing and comprehending academic text.
- In addition to that Learners' lack of contextual and linguistic knowledge affects their ability to process all texts-relevant information.
- Also a clear misunderstanding to the basic aspects of pragmatics was proved in the study.

### **5.3 Recommendations of the study:**

The present study involved a limited number of participants in a college EFL setting in one country, Sudan and thus it will be worthwhile to explore how other student groups (ESL, other academic disciplines, other English proficiency levels) in other places would report their experiences and provide a better detailed informative description to their performance. Replication of the current study in other settings would be beneficial, therefore; the study recommends the following:

1. Students of English Language especially those who are involved in the field of linguistic studies should explore the importance of pragmatics as a challenging area deserved to be investigated.
2. University lecturers are advised to exert more efforts in the area of pragmatic aspects, by helping students to conduct researches, and assignments and feed them back.
3. Students are advised to expose to a reasonable number of academic texts to enhance their knowledge of English pragmatics and develop more communicative skills.

4. It is better for EFL university tutors to draw students' attention to the significance of pragmatics as an integral linguistic part which enables them to process the relevant academic texts properly and efficiently.
5. Students should be aware of that comprehending pragmatics will help them developing both their competence and performance in English.
6. Another valuable line of research would be to look at students farther along in the course of their education regarding their individual differences in the accumulated background knowledge about how pragmatics functions within other related linguistic fields.
7. Last but most notable of all is the need to address the factors beyond language that directly related to pragmatics.

#### **5.4. Suggestions for further Studies**

The current study proposes the following suggestions for further studies in the subject matter under discussion:

- Further studies are strongly required to investigate reasons behind students' weak performance in processing academic texts whether that directly relate to pragmatics or other linguistic related fields.
- How to teach pragmatics is a challenging topic that needs more research as well as what ways or methods to be followed to solve these common problems in the area of linguistics generally and in pragmatics in particular.
- Study more on how university syllabus can be designed according to students' needs and their various interests in learning process.
- Studying more about pragmatics will facilitate identifying more effective strategies or practical techniques so tutors can opt among them to improve their students' performance and develop their language skills as well.

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**Appendix (1):**

**A Questionnaire for a PhD thesis entitled "The Effects of Pragmatic Difficulties on EFL Learners' Performance in Understanding Academic Texts".**

Dear Colleague,

Your opinion will be of great help to the present study, and your responses will be confidentially kept and used for research purposes only.

Thank you for giving your time.

**Personal data:** Please tick (√) where appropriate.

1. Name:  
"optional".....

2. Highest degree earned:

Bachelor's Degree       Master's Degree       PhD

3. How many years have you been teaching English?

1. 1-5 years       2. 5-10 years       3. more than 10 years

Please answer the following questions with the suitable response:

No.	Statement	Responses				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	EFL learners face a number of pragmatic difficulties in comprehending academic texts.					
4.	EFL learners gain much competence than performance, which lead to inaccurate use of language.					
5.	EFL learners fail in identifying the meaning relationships between words -linguistic level- and ideas- conceptual level.					
6.	EFL learners are incapable to identify the content of the academic texts due to lexical structure' misunderstanding.					
7.	EFL learners lack understanding content and don't spend much time or effort to get way out of such difficulty.					
8.	Pragmatics is not properly covered in the university syllabus.					
9.	EFL learners' insufficient knowledge about cultural framework impact negatively on accessing and comprehending academic texts.					
10	EFL learners' lack of contextual and linguistic knowledge affects their ability to process all texts-relevant information.					
11	EFL learners misunderstand the figurative language.					
12	The focus of the classroom instruction on grammatical and discourse rules of the target language may lead EFL learners to pragmatic errors and miscommunication.					
13	EFL learners' syllabus does not seek constantly to address the needs and difficulties of learners.					
14	EFL learners' syllabus must treat pragmatics as an essential use of language throughout the learning.					
15	Syllabus should use authentic materials and stress the importance of consistent exercising to emphasize pragmatic use of language.					

## Appendix (2):

**Omdurman Islamic University**  
**Faculty of Arts**  
**Department of English Language and Literature**

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**Name: ..... Class: 4<sup>th</sup> Year Time: 1 hour**

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### Answer ALL questions

#### **Q1: Match the following statements with the suitable items:**

Praising	Offering	Insulting	Apology	Command	suggesting	requesting

1. A person of your intelligence deserves much better than this.
2. In my view, this is the best thing to have ever happened.
3. A. Shall we have a walk along the river side? B. I don't feel I like it.
4. Could you please take off your raincoat?
5. A. Would it be possible for you to come here at 8:30 a.m.? B. all right.
6. I think you should leave now. It is very late.
7. Turn the music down! I am trying to sleep
8. . Couldn't we invite your grandmother to our party? B. What a good idea
9. A: would you like a magazine to read while you're waiting? B. that would be very kind of you.
10. A: would you like me to type your letters for you? B: don't worry, I will do it myself.

#### **Q2. Guess the situations to the following statements:**

1. Excuse me; is the plane taking off at 03:20.....
2. A. Shakespeare takes up the whole bottom shelf, we need to have a space for this novel too.....
3. Go and get me my luggage, the train is leaving now.....
4. Would you add some more sugar to the coffee.....?
5. Your graduation research will be marked out of 100%.....
6. Please turn off the TV I want to sleep.....
7. Excuse me. How much is that umbrella? .....
8. Your temperature is all right, it is nothing to worry about.....
9. You are driving fast slow down, please.....

10. Can we get the dress done by tomorrow morning? .....

**Q3. Guess the references to the following statements- what the speaker intended to say:**

1. You are at the class, your classmate said, isn't it hot here?  
.....
2. I declare a state of emergency in the country.  
.....
3. A. Can you lend me your Shakespeare? B. Yes, it is over there.  
.....
4. Don't you think the weather is so nice to stay indoors?  
.....
5. It is 12:30. Your father shouted where have you been son?  
.....

**Q4. Re-write the following sentences in direct speech acts form:**

1. She thought that she needed a new direction in life.  
.....
2. She said that I visited Oxford University the previous day.  
.....
3. They said respectfully that the time was over.  
.....
4. They said we would apply for a visa.  
.....
5. He said that Bill had arrived Austria on Saturday.  
.....
6. She said that he got his tickets, and he will fly tomorrow.  
.....
7. He said that Beirut was very nice in summer.  
.....
8. He said that he will be in Geneva on Monday.  
.....
9. They told me that they had been living in Paris.  
.....
10. He told me that he had been to Spain.  
.....

**Good luck**

### **Appendix (3):**

A number of PhD holders and lecturers revised the tools of data collection including the questionnaire and the test, examining it carefully. The following are the names of those who positively contributed in revision and editing process.

#### **List of Referees:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Institute</b>
Prof. Mahmoud Ali	PhD	Professor	Sudan University for Sciences & Technology
Prof. Ahmed Abdullah	PhD	Professor	Alneelain University
Prof. Salah Alkarib	PhD	Professor	Alneelain University
Prof. Eshraqa Babiker	PhD	Professor	International Sudan University