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# The Effects of Excluding Pragmatics from University Syllabus on EFL Learners' Performance in Academic Texts (A case of Omdurman Islamic University Students)

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## Abstract:

*The present investigatory study has mainly focuses on investigation to the effects of excluding pragmatics from university syllabus on EFL Learners' performance in academic texts. In addition to that the study has examined how the performance of the students is highly affected while processing academic texts. The descriptive - analytical methodology is used. For data collection concerning the current study; 20 university lecturers from different Sudanese universities were selected randomly and requested to respond to a questionnaire, and a test which was given to 40 of Omdurman Islamic University's undergraduates. The data obtained has been fed to computer using statistical package of social science (SPSS) program to be analyzed for verifying the hypothesis of this study and answering its questions as well. The results of data analysis submitted to this study adding a clear specific detailed description for the interpretation of how the exclusion of pragmatics hinders EFL learners' performance while dealing with academic texts as the lecturers agreed with and the students' performance has proved.*

**Keywords:** pragmatics – academic texts.

### الخلاصة:

هدفت هذه الدراسة ألي تقصي أثر استثناء علم التداولية من المقرر الجامعي علي اداء دراسي اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية في النصوص الأكاديمية، حالة طلاب جامعة ام درمان الإسلامية. انتهجت هذه الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي لتحقيق اهدافها، ولجمع البيانات استخدمت الاستبيان والاختبار. كانت عينة هذه الدراسة (20) محاضراً بقسم اللغة الانجليزية ببعض الجامعات السودانية، و (40) طالب/ة من قسم اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة ام درمان الإسلامية. حيث تمت معالجة البيانات التي حصلت عليها الدراسة من الاستبيان والاختبار باستخدام التحليل الإحصائي (SPSS) لاختبار فرضية هذه الدراسة والاجابة على أسئلتها. اوضحت النتائج أن استثناء علم التداولية من المقرر الجامعي له عدد من التأثيرات السلبية البارزة علي اداء الدارسين في اللغة عامة و النص الأكاديمي خاصة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: علم التداولية - النصوص الأكاديمية

## 1.1. INTRODUCTION:

Studying linguistics and learning its different branches is crucial to EFL learners at university level. While lecturing at universities both researchers observed that pragmatics is not taught as a separate subject or properly covered in the Sudanese university syllabus. Students only expose to pragmatics as a main branch of micro-linguistics in introductory courses of linguistics leaving out of account its basic aspects, functions and how it is realized in academic texts. The exclusion to this field has clear negative effects on students' comprehension which led to a passive impact on their performance while they process academic texts. Therefore; students do not fully grasp the given texts. However; some students try to fill this knowledge gap by exerting more efforts to get at least a reasonable knowledge about basic elements of pragmatics and how it works in order to get a better understanding of academic texts which are part of university's curriculum. This study will shed light on how university syllabus leaves out of account the linguistic main branch; pragmatics, and examine its effects on students' performance.

## 1.2. Statement of the study:

The current study set to investigate the effects of excluding pragmatics from university syllabus on EFL learners' performance when processing academic texts. The scope of the study is limited to

EFL lecturers and learners as well. Therefore; students face difficulties in dealing with academic texts generally and pragmatics related texts in particular even if in real life situation. This can be attributed to insufficiency of university linguistics curriculum. The total number of the study sample was twenty lecturers from some Sudanese universities and forty undergraduates at Omdurman Islamic University. The study will be carried out in in the academic year (2019-2021).

### **1.3. Question of the study :**

- Are pragmatic aspects adequately included in EFL learners' syllabuses?

### **1.4. Hypothesis of the Study :**

- EFL learners' syllabus is not adequately included pragmatic aspects.

## **2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND PREVIOUS STUDIES**

### **2.1 Definitions 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.

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" 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). 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 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.

### **2.2.1 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.

### **2.2.3 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.

#### **2.2.4 Pragmatics and context:**

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

**a. 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.

**b. 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,

**c. 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.

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

### **2.3 '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 behaviour:

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.

#### **2.4 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.

#### **2.5 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.

## **2.6 Pragmatics and semantics**

In his dialogue; Cratylus Plato (427-347 B.C.) argues about the origin of words, and particularly discusses whether the relation between the objects and words which refer to is a natural and essential relation or merely a result of human conversation.

This dialogue gives a first glimpse into a century-long controversial debate between the analogists, who believed that language natural and therefore at bottom regular and logical, and the anomalists, who denied these ideas and pointed out regularities of linguistics structure. The analogists believed that the origin and the true meaning of words could be traced back in their shape; they name this investigation etymology.

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 and that was common understanding among Grice (1989), as well as Horn (1984 and onwards) and Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995 and onwards). In line with this argument is worth mentioning to shed light on the on the fact that all pragmatic theories are in this sense



Gricean. A set of these 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 following study involves the interpretation of the people in general form about what they usually mean in a particular context and the way they influence within a given context. This all is possible with course of communication between utterer and its speaker. Consequently, it is said that pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning.

Pragmatics deals with meaning and it involves the fundamental approach to view meaning and its relationship with reality. As it is for the related theories of meaning that view the language itself as systematic to designate many specific things and its symbols. 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).

## **2.6 Writing development in classroom:**

Ultimately, materials for writing development will be activated in the context of the classrooms, tutorial sessions or individual consultations. 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 affect 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. 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.

## **2.7 Pragmatic competence and interpretation of academic texts**

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. However, transfer is not entirely impossible, if certain rules of discourse are not language specific. 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 interpretation process is not solely governed by lexical cues, but by pragmatic considerations. An example where pragmatic process is paramount 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 add that “approaches to language instruction and assessment should be informed by theory and research on pragmatic development”. This would allow contrastive analysis which would serve the need to understand how L1 speakers’ socio-pragmatic knowledge differs from that of L2 speakers who are from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. That means 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.

## **2.8 Textual features of academic writing.**

The surface (grammatical, stylistic and structural) features of academic texts have been the focus of numerous writing courses in the past which aimed at the development of writing ability. The text production model by Grabe and Kaplan (1996) discussed earlier highlights the irresponsibility of downplaying the importance of the linguistic knowledge that is necessary in the production of written academic texts. 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.

In addition to an understanding linguistic knowledge types required of students to construct coherent academic texts, the application of such knowledge should be related to the contextual discourses of different disciplines in a tertiary environment. It is therefore important that a surface feature textual description aimed at the design of writing courses includes a description of the specific target genres (e.g. essays, reports, journal articles, theses) that students are required to produce in a specific discipline. One therefore needs to ascertain what dominant written genres, as well as internal variations on these genres, are expected of students in specific fields. Furthermore, students will be required to produce written texts of a variety of types (e.g. informative, factual, descriptive and argumentative texts) within these genres. For the sake of providing tailor-made courses to specific groups of students, if this is required, one should collect information on these issues in such a way that it could be organized into specific requirements for different fields and disciplines, departments or specific degrees. One therefore needs an information-gathering instrument that would elicit this type of information from those responsible in specific disciplines for conceptualizing and assigning writing tasks to students.

Another important aspect of the textual description of academic texts relates to issues of style, register and general language usage. H.G. Bulter assumes that students should be aware what concepts such as style and register refer to, situate them in the tertiary academic context, and be able to identify them in others' as well as their own academic writing. They should further have the ability to contextualize and operationalize their own use of style, register and general academic language not only within the constraints of the general tertiary academic environment, but also within the unique parameters of their own academic disciplines.

A textual description will further have to take into account the structural features of textual organisation (macro organisation) and how this could become part of the language knowledge of student writers at university. A number of functional descriptions regarding the development of ideas have been proposed in the form of broad distinctions between 'theme' and 'rheme', 'given' and 'new' information, etc. (Martin & Rose, 2001 and Grabe & Kaplan, 1996).

These strategies towards the development of text coherence have already been applied with great success in a number of contexts in education. To this end, Grabe and Kaplan (1996) provide an extremely useful overview of research specifically aimed at tracing such development.

### **2.9 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.

### 3- Study Procedures

**3.1. Research Method:** The research has adopted a descriptive analytical methodology to realize the objectives of the current study.

**3.2. Population:** The population of this study's some fourth year level students at Omdurman Islamic University and teachers of English language at some Sudanese universities.

**3.3. Sample:** The research's subjects are (40) EFL learners at Omdurman Islamic University, Faculty of Arts, Department of English language and Literature. The purposive sample of the study was chosen from some Sudanese universities teachers. Both subjects and purposive sample will be chosen randomly.

**3.4. Tool of study:** The researchers used both a questionnaire for university teachers and test to the fourth year level students for collecting data.

### 4- DATA ANALYSIS

This section divided into two sections; the first one deals with the questionnaire analysis whereas the second one shows the analysis of the test. In accordance with research question and hypothesis results will be presented as follow:

- \_ EFL learners' syllabus is not adequately included pragmatic aspects.
- \_ Are pragmatic aspects adequately included in EFL learners' syllabuses?

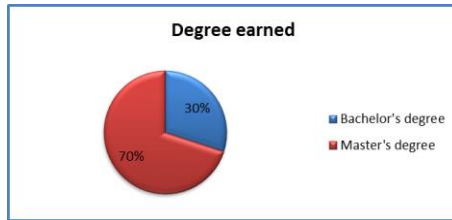
#### 4.1. Questionnaire analysis:

The following tables show results of research question after tabulating them supported graphs related discussion. Frequencies and percentages are calculated for each statement in the questionnaire along with descriptive statistics and Chi-square analysis for testing the hypotheses.

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

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



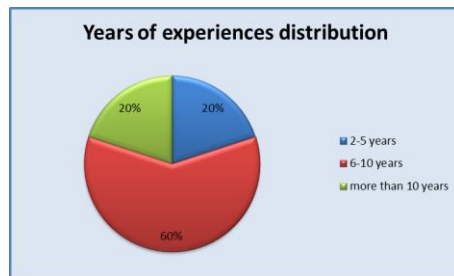
**Figure (4.1.1):** degree earned distribution among the participants

The table and graph 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

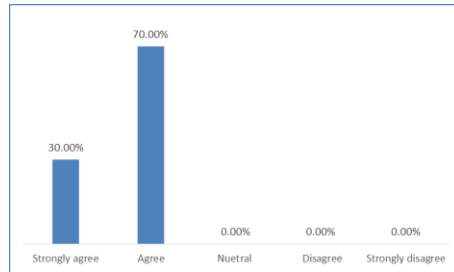
For the participants’ years of experience demonstration, the table and figure above show the frequency and percentage of years of experience where most of the participants have 6 to 10 years of experience in the field contributing with (60%) percentage while (4) of the participants have (2-5) years of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

#### 4.1.1 Results and Discussions:

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

**Table 4.1.3** The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement No. (1):

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



**Figure 4.1.3** Frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement (1).

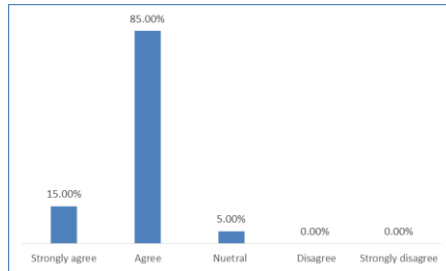
The above table and figure show that the number of participants that strongly agree with the statement is (6) and (14) agree with the statement with percentages (30%) and (70%) respectively; which means that the participants see that pragmatics is not properly covered in the university syllabus.

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

**Table 4.1.4** The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement No. (2):

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>

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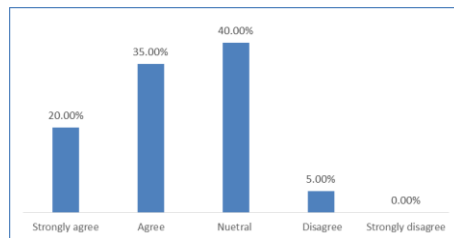
**Figure: 4.1.4** Frequency distribution for the respondents' answers of statement No. (2):

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.

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

**Table 4.1.5** The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers of statement No. (3):

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>



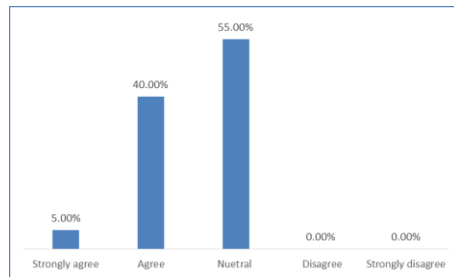
**Figure: 4.1.5** Frequency distribution for the respondents' answers of statement No. (2):

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.

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

**Table 4.1.6** The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement No. (4):

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: 4.1.6** Frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement No. (4):

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 students misunderstand figurative language.

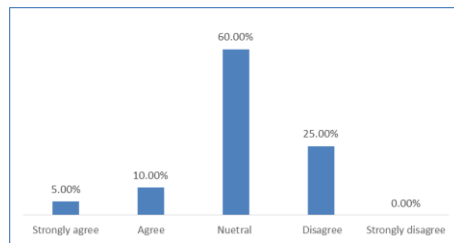
**The fifth statement:** The focus of the classroom instruction on grammatical and discourse rules of target language may lead EFL learners to pragmatic errors and miscommunication.

**Table 4.1.7** The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement No. (5):

Valid	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agree	1	5.0%
Agree	2	10.0%

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Neutral	12	60.0%
Disagree	5	25.0%
Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>



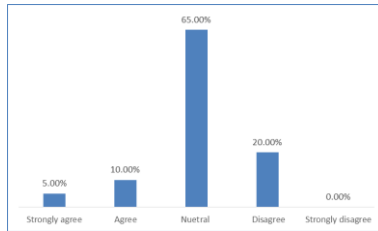
**Figure: 4.1.7** Frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement No. (5)

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

**Table 4.1.8** The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement No. (6):

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>

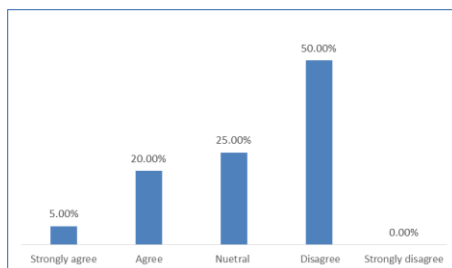


**Figure: 4.1.8** Frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement No. (8) The above table and figure show that (5) participants strongly agree and (2) agree whereas (13) remain neutral other (4) and with percentages (5%), (10%), (65%) and (20%) respectively; which means that the participants do not agree with the claim that ‘EFL learners’ syllabus does not seek constantly to address the needs and difficulties of learners.

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

**Table 4.1.9** The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement No. (7):

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: 4.1.9** Frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement No. (7)

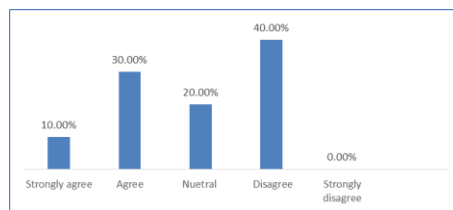
The above table and figure show that (1) participants strongly agrees and also (4) other participants agree with the statement whereas (5) remain neutral and (10) disagree with percentages (5%), (20%), (25%) and (50%) respectively; which means that the participants do not agree with the claim that 'EFL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



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

**Table 4.1.10** The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement No. (8):

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: 4.1.9** Frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers of statement No. (8)

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

No.	Statements	Chi-Square	Df	p-value	Decision
1)	Pragmatics is not properly covered in the syllabus	3.200	1	.0074	Accept
2)	EFL learners' insufficient knowledge about cultural framework impact negatively on accessing and comprehending academic texts	9.800	1	.002	Accept
3)	Learners' lack of contextual and linguistic knowledge affects their ability to process all	6.000	3	.012	Accept

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	texts-relevant information				
4)	How far do students understand figurative language?	7.900	2	.019	Accept
5)	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
6)	EFL learners' syllabus does not seek constantly to address the needs and difficulties of learners	18.000	3	.600	Reject
7)	EFL Learners' syllabus must treat pragmatics as an essential use of language throughout the learning	8.400	3	.380	Reject
8)	Syllabus should use authentic materials and stress the importance of consistent exercising to emphasize pragmatic use of language	4.000	3	.261	Reject

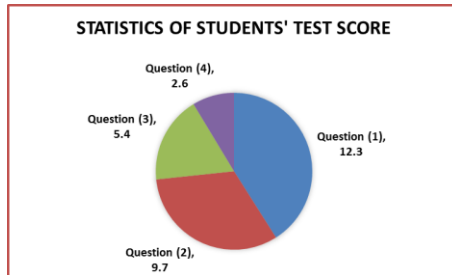
The table above shows the chi-square analysis of the 13 statements, and as can be noticed, the first ten statements are accepted by the participants according to their chosen response. The accepted statement has p-value of less than or equal to (0.05) which is true for the accepted statements. The hypotheses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

#### 4.2. 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 marks	Pass Marks	Min. score	Max. score	Mean score	St. deviation
Question (1)	30	15	0	27	12.3	7.05
Question (2)	30	15	0	30	9.7	11.26
Question (3)	20	10	0	20	5.4	5.7
Question (4)	20	10	0	14	2.6	3.7
Total	100	50	6	72	29.7	18.20

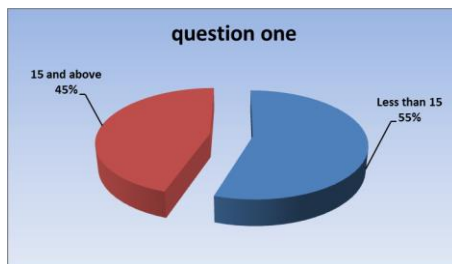


**Figure (4.2.1):** Statistics of Students' test score

Table (4.2.1) shows the general statistics of (40) students. The test consists of two main questions; questions have full mark (30).

**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



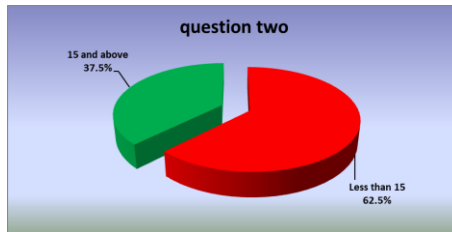
**Figure (4.2.):** students' achievement in the first question

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.

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**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%
Total		40	100.0%	100.0

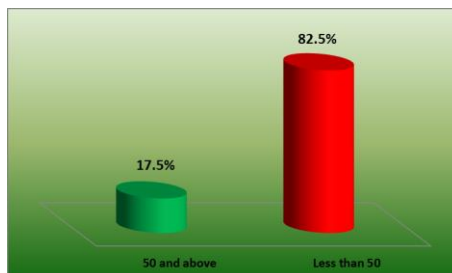


**Figure (4.2.3):** students' achievement in the second question

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 (4.2.6):** 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)

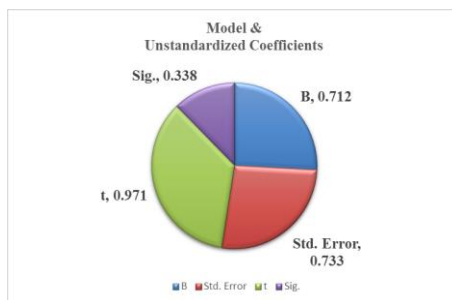
Total score					
Test parts		Mean squares	R squared	F	Sig.
Valid	Question (1)	554.1	0.21	2.094	0.063
	Question (2)	1193.7	0.69	10.959	0.000*
	Question (3)	1311.7	0.57	11.211	0.000*
	Question (4)	670.00	0.11	5.436	0.026*

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



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

## **5. CONCLUSION:**

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

- 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.

### **5.4. Recommendations of the study:**

1. EFL syllabus designers are strongly advised to cover at least the essential elements of the pragmatics in the curriculum.
2. 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.
3. Students should be aware of that comprehending pragmatics will help them developing both their competence and performance in English.
4. 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.
5. Last but most notable of all is the need to address the factors beyond language that directly related to pragmatics.

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