# THE ROLE OF PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE PLASTICITY IN EFL STUDENTS' COMMUNICATION

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## THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that in my opinion the thesis submitted by Zahraa ABD ALAMIR MOHAMMED titled “THE ROLE OF PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE PLASTICITY IN EFL STUDENTS' COMMUNICATION” is fully adequate in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

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This thesis is accepted by the examining committee with a unanimous vote in the Department of English Language and literature as a Master of Arts thesis. Jan 23, 2023

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Director of the Institute of Graduate Programs

# DECLARATION

That this thesis is my work, and all information contained herein has been gathered and presented in compliance with the academic regulations of the institute and its ethical policy. There are no errors in this thesis's citations or references to non-original assertions, results or resources.

Without being bound by a certain time, I accept all moral and legal consequences of any discovery that goes against the above statement.

**Name Surname:** Zahraa Abd Alamir Mohammed

# FORWORD

This paper's development and completion was not a simple undertaking.

This acknowledgement is in recognition of the many hours of guidance, consultation, and assistance I received from Assist. Prof. Dr. Najwa YASEEN ISMAIL, she has been a tremendous asset in guiding me through the thesis-writing process. Your kindness is greatly appreciated, professor!

## DEDICATION

First of all, I'd like to thank ALLAH, who helped me get my simple work done on time...

With all my respect, I want to thank my supervisor Assistant Professor Najwa Yaseen Ismail, for her help and support.

Also, I thank my father, mother, brothers, son, daughter and friends.

# ABSTRACT

Pragmatic Competence, in general, has attracted the interest of lots of studies. However, limited studies have been conducted on pragmatic competence plasticity. Therefore, the current study aims to investigate the role of pragmatic competence plasticity in EFL students' communication. Quantitative research methods, such as descriptive statistical analyses, are used in the study. The participants of this study are from Tikrit University in the College of Education for Humanities from Department of English and specific from Fourth Stage. The sample of this study is 170 Iraqi EFL students included male and female participants during the first semester of the academic year 2022–2023. The results of the students responses indicate that the aims of the current study raised by Iraqi EFL students and seem significant in the results of the study. Furthermore, the results of students responses indicate that pragmatic competence plasticity is an important aspect in language learning since it affects the students ability in choosing the suitable response. The results also show that EFL female students have a slightly higher mean in pragmatic competence plasticity than EFL male students who show the lower of the effect of gender indicate that the EFL female students perform better in pragmatic competence plasticity than the male ones. Moreover, the results prove the positive impact of pragmatic competence plasticity in students' communication in better and suitable way. Finally, we can list suggestions for future studies to improve EFL students' pragmatic communication competence at the research's end.



**Keywords:** Pragmatic Competence, Plasticity, EFL, communication

# ÖZ

Pragmatik Yeterlilik, genel olarak, birçok çalışmanın ilgisini çekmiştir. Bununla birlikte, pragmatik yeterlilik plastisitesi hakkında sınırlı sayıda çalışma yapılmıştır. Bu nedenle, mevcut çalışma EFL öğrencilerinin iletişiminde pragmatik yeterlilik plastisitesinin rolünü araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmada tanımlayıcı istatistiksel analizler gibi nicel araştırma yöntemleri kullanılmaktadır. Çalışmada tanımlayıcı istatistiksel analizler gibi nicel araştırma yöntemleri kullanılmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın katılımcıları Tikrit Üniversitesi Beşeri Bilimler Fakültesi İngilizce Bölümünden ve Dördüncü Aşamadan özeldir. Çalışmanın örneklemini, 2022–2023 akademik yılının ilk dönemindeki 170 Iraklı EFL öğrencisi erkek ve kadın katılımcılardan oluşmaktadır. Öğrencilerin verdiği yanıtların sonuçları, mevcut çalışmanın amaçlarının Iraklı EFL öğrencileri tarafından ortaya atıldığını ve çalışmanın sonuçlarında önemli göründüğünü göstermektedir. Ayrıca, öğrenci yanıtlarının sonuçları, öğrencilerin uygun yanıtı seçme becerisini etkilediğinden, pragmatik yeterlilik plastisitesinin dil öğreniminde önemli bir yön olduğunu göstermektedir. Sonuçlar ayrıca EFL kız öğrencilerinin edimbilimsel yeterlilik esnekliğinde EFL erkek öğrencilerine göre biraz daha yüksek bir ortalamaya sahip olduğunu göstermektedir; cinsiyetin etkisinin daha düşük olduğunu gösteren EFL kız öğrencilerin edimbilimsel yeterlilik esnekliğinde erkeklerden daha iyi performans gösterdiğini göstermektedir. Ayrıca, sonuçlar pragmatik yeterlilik plastisitesinin öğrencilerin iletişimindeki olumlu etkisini daha iyi ve uygun bir şekilde kanıtlamaktadır. Son olarak, araştırmanın sonunda EFL olarak öğrenen öğrencilerin pragmatik iletişim yeterliliğini geliştirmek için gelecekte yapılacak çalışmalar için öneriler sıralayabiliriz.

**Anahtar Kelimeler :** Pragmatik Yeterlilik, Plastisite, EFL, ileti

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**EFL** **:** English as a Foreign Language

**ESL** **:** English as a Second Language

**ELT** **:** English Language Teaching

**DCT (s)** **:** Discourse Completion Task (s)

**K.B.U** **:** Karabuk University

**L.R.** **:** Literature Review

**P.N.** **:** Page Number

**P.** **:** Participants

**SPSS.** **:** Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

## SUBJECT OF RESEARCH

The main topic of the current research is The Role of Pragmatic Competence Plasticity in EFL Students' Communication.

## PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The aim of the research is to investigate the role of pragmatic plasticity in the communication of English foreign language students.

## METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

The research used a quantitative research design, adopted by Bachman’s model (1990) of pragmatic competence, and later the study under this model found some competences in which Iraqi EFL university students can adopt to communicate pragmatically

## HYPOTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH

Iraqi EFL university students effectively use pragmatic competence plasticity in communication, appearance, and personality characteristics. Iraqi EFL university students have good pragmatic competence in communicating in specific situations and in real life contexts.

## RESEARCH PROBLEM

Since there haven't been many studies done on Iraqi students at Iraqi universities about using pragmatic competence plasticity in EFL students' communication, the present study will close this gap.

## POPULATION AND SAMPLE

170 Iraqi EFL students from Tikrit University in the College of Education for Humanities from Department of English and specific from Fourth Stage are participated to be the sample of the current study.

## SCOPE AND LIMITATION/ DIFFICULTIES SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

There is a limited number of students due to time limitation. The study is limited to Iraqi EFL university students. The study only focused on the pragmatic competence plasticity in communication thought; it could be more studied; however, it can be used for further investigations.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Background of the Study

People need to learn English as a foreign language because English is thought of as the language of science and knowledge across the whole world. So, there is a desire to learn English and other languages from this site. In the past, English was the most common language because it was used for many different things, like education, science, commerce, and tourism. People worldwide now learn English so they can do these things, and they can do them better. You can use language to say what you need, what you want, what you think, and your beliefs. These are some things that show how communities are different from each other in terms of their culture. English has come to prominence as a global language in recent years, owing to its role as a medium of communication in commerce, science, and technology. Because of this, the use of this language for learning and communication is believed to be an important aspect in the development of talents in the English language in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In recent times, English has been the language of globalisation, worldwide communication and trade, and music and the media. As a result, various motives for learning the language are in play. According to Richards (2001), the English language is no longer considered to be a property of the English-speaking world but rather a global commodity, often referred to as English as an “International Language”.

English is an essential language to learn because it is used worldwide. People who teach and learn English as a foreign language have stressed the importance of teaching communication skills and how to use language in real-world situations because the goal of learning and teaching English is to communicate well. Broughton also says that we have thought of English as a second language so far. However, the rest of the world does not speak English. It is often taught in schools, but it does not essential in national or social life. It means that teaching English as a foreign language makes it possible for students to use English as a lesson in school. If you teach a foreign language class, you want students to talk a lot and not just say what the teacher tells them to say. Students should be able to speak and write in English to communicate with each other.

Teaching English as a foreign language has changed a lot in recent years. People now think English is a practical tool and a world commodity, not a cultural experience. Because of this, the method that stayed around in the new millennium is Communicative Language Teaching. Even so, the main principles of this method are as follows:

- Language learning is the ability to speak and write in another language.
- People learn a language by using it to communicate.
- Fluency and accuracy are essential for honest communication.

When teaching English to foreign students, they should learn how to speak and write in English and how to use the language effectively by learning about the pragmatic rules that govern the correct combination of utterances and communication functions so that they can use the language more effectively. Some experts in language instruction are aware of the significance of pragmatic competence, but little is known about teaching it or assisting students in achieving it. Explicit instruction, role play, and simulation are the primary methods used in this research to teaching pragmatic competence to international students. In the 1970s, the term pragmatics started to be used as a sub-field of linguistics. In this case, it is about the speaker's intended meaning and the listener's interpretation of that meaning. Pragmatics is the study of how people communicate in a social and cultural setting. Pragmatics has two main parts: pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. People who study pragmatics and sociopragmatics want to make sure that the form and meaning are suitable for their situation.

The term competence refers to a person's capacities in general, and there are three types of competences: pragmatic, grammatical, and communicative (Hymes, 1972). The researchers, Pishghadam and Zarei (2011), stress the significance of two competencies, namely pragmatic and grammatical, in order to communicate effectively in a variety of contexts using an appropriate language. Language knowledge and rules about appropriateness and politeness are called "pragmatic competence." These rules help the speaker think about and make sense of speech acts. There are many different types of speech acts that are important to linguistic pragmatics, like apologies, compliments, refusals, requests, and suggestions. Learning pragmatic rules of other languages helps people speak in a socially and culturally correct way because the languages are not the same. It was done in many languages compared to how it was done in English.

Pragmatic competence is very important when learning a new language. When EFL speakers speak or write in a way that is polite and culturally acceptable, they show that they have good pragmatic skills. Koike (1989) says pragmatic competence means that speakers will understand and write down their speech acts. Pragmatically sound people make sure that the communication goals are met and that there are no chances of miscommunication or misunderstanding. For example, people who want to learn how to be polite in a second language might want to look at the ordinary speech acts that people use in their words and the politeness strategies they use to reach their communication goals. As a result, second language speakers may become more culturally and pragmatically aware of their own words. This could also help teachers of EFL to improve the pragmatic competence of EFL learners by giving them new ideas.

Learning a language does not just mean learning vocabulary and grammar. It also means learning about a culture, which cannot be done without a sense of how things work in the real world. From the point of view of Hymes (1972), pragmatic competence means "learning how to use language, to communicate and understand others appropriately and effectively in a wide range of social contexts and activities while taking on increasingly complex social roles." This means that pragmatics is used to study how well people can communicate. Crystal (1997) says that pragmatics is the study of language from a user's point of view, including how they make decisions about how to use language in social situations and how their use of language affects other people who are in communication. So, in summary, pragmatics is the study of how people communicate in their social and cultural contexts.

It is very important for postgraduates to learn how to communicate with people from different cultures. First, they need to learn how to speak English pragmatically. Soon after Chomsky (1977) introduced the word "pragmatic competence," many researchers researched how second language learners used their skills. Many studies have been done by EFL researchers on English learners in different cultures since the 1980s about their pragmatic skills (He Ziran & Yan Zhuang 1986; Wang Dexing 1990; Hong Gang 1991; and Dong Xiaohong 1994). Communication is an essential part of any community where students need to interact for a specific reason. This is why communication is so important. Through the idea of language, students can communicate with many people in a lot of different situations. However, when talking, learners need to pay attention to not just words, how utterances work, and how language

is used to communicate. They must know how to say something. They also need to know when and where they should say it. Communication is not just about putting words in a specific order to make a set of things in different situations. It is important for people learning a new language to follow a set of rules that will make their conversation both meaningful and appropriate. This study of saying things in the right ways and places is called pragmatics (Takkaç 2016).

Also, pragmatics usually talks about what words mean that are not in the dictionary. In other words, it talks about what people mean when they say something based on the rules and conventions of the society where the conversation is taking place. So, having a good understanding of the conventions allows the learner to communicate effectively and understand each other clearly (Yule, 1996). This ability is called pragmatic competence. Pragmatic competence has been becoming increasingly important in educational circles since the shift in language pedagogy from linguistic to communicative purposes. Consider pragmatic competence as an important part of teaching communicative functions in an EFL setting.

In this study, we will talk about the role of pragmatic competence plasticity which is used by Iraqi EFL students in communication. The competence (both communicative and pragmatic), the need to teach pragmatic competence plasticity, the goals of teaching pragmatic competence plasticity, and how to teach pragmatic competence plasticity.

## 1.2. Problem Statement

English has become an important language for business, science, and technology. So, using this language to learn and talk is a way to improve English listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The current study aims at filling the gap in the development of pragmatic competence plasticity, by centring on its role in the EFL students' communication. Pragmatic competence is the set of skills you need to be able to use language well for different purposes. Al Falasi (2007) says, "Most of the problems that EFL learners have when communicating with people from other cultures are primarily pragmatic. Unfortunately, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers often does not emphasise pragmatic competence in their classes. Instead, they focus on linguistic competence.

Even though there is more and more research on these topics, few studies have been done to look at pragmatic competence and social power awareness in the workplace, as Marra, Holmes, and Riddiford (2009), Riddiford (2007), and Riddiford and Joe (2010) suggest. So, the innovative part of this paper's empirical study is that it looks beyond the linguistic outcomes in the English language curriculum and focuses on developing pragmatism in EFL. By focusing on the difference between powerful and powerless language, the research hopes to fill a gap in the advancement of pragmatic competences.

No matter how good a learner is at language or grammar, most of the time they can't reach the level of pragmatic competence they want while learning a language. Most people who are learning a language are good at using the language, but they have trouble communicating. This is especially true in EFL settings, where students are often not given the tools they need to become pragmatically competent in the target language (Rose, 1999). Because of this, it is important to look into what students and teachers think about the idea of pragmatic competence in the EFL context. Kasper (1997) says that in order to communicate well in a target language, a person must have a good level of pragmatic competence in their Foreign language. However, it is not easy to get good at being pragmatic. EFL (English as a foreign language) students often have trouble getting good at being pragmatic in the target language. So, EFL teaching and learning environments should take into account pragmatic competence, which is made up of knowing how speech acts work and being good at sociolinguistics.

No matter how good a learner is at language or grammar, they cannot reach the desired level of pragmatic competence as they learn a language. Most learners have a good grasp of linguistics but trouble communicating. This is especially true in EFL settings, where students are not often given the tools they need to become pragmatically competent in the target language (Rose,1999). Even though many scholars have talked about how important pragmatics are (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper, 1989; House, Kasper, and Ross, 2014; Kasper, 1997; Kasper and Schmidt, 1996; Rose, 1999; Takahashi, 2001; Tateyama, 2001; Tateyama, Kasper, Mui, Tay, and Thananart, 1997; Weisman, 1985), it might be hard to find subjective pedagogies so many scholars talk about how important it is to understand different cultural and linguistic points of view, but as far as I know, few or no textbooks give examples and

cases of misunderstanding that could be given to students who might or might not know how important pragmatics is.

Even though there is more and more research on these topics, few studies have been done to look at pragmatic competence in the workplace, as Marra, Holmes, and Riddiford (2009), Riddiford (2007), and Riddiford and Joe (2010) suggest. So, the innovative part of this paper's empirical study is that it looks beyond the linguistic outcomes in the English language curriculum and focuses on developing pragmatic competence in Foreign language. Based on what they have seen and done in their own EFL classrooms and elsewhere, many professionals in the field of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) have stressed and emphasised the importance of teaching pragmatic competence. However, when teaching a language, teachers still forget to teach pragmatism. Some of the reasons could be that the teachers are too busy, that they do not have enough time, and, most importantly, that the EFL teachers do not have enough or enough practical knowledge of the language (Koran, 2015).

Cohen's (1996) study shows that language learners can have all the syntactic context and lexical items they need but still not be able to get their message across because they have not been taught the pragmatics they need to get the message across. Even though some Iraqi students seem to know what they are doing when they speak Arabic, this does not always show in their foreign language skills. So, they need to learn pragmatism through teaching pragmatics in the EFL classroom. This helps them make requests in a way that makes sense and makes them more aware of how their own words are used. A study adopted by Bataineh and Hussein (2015) revealed that pragmatic focuses not on grammatical knowledge, but rather on the meaning of students' language use in the acts of communication, as well as on assisting the student to create meaning as opposed to improving grammatical structure or syntactic forms. Research on pragmatic competence has shown over and over that even good English speakers often don't have the right pragmatic competence (Bataineh, 2014). That is, they don't know the social, cultural, and speech rules that must be followed in different situations. There has also been research done on the difference between grammatical and practical skills. Less attention has been paid, though, to how classroom-based instruction can help foreign language learners improve their pragmatic competence.

Although the rising interest in teaching pragmatic in many studies, little numbers of studies has been presented on the role of teaching pragmatic on Iraqi EFL students, where most of foreign language teaching lacks adequate teaching pragmatic. This study tries to insist on this problem by discovering the main role of teaching pragmatic competence plasticity in language learning and how teaching pragmatic may affect the growth of Iraqi students communication. Also, there is need for EFL teachers to take care with teaching pragmatic into their English language teaching that is because that teaching pragmatic helps EFL students to communicate in any situation successfully (Barron,2003). The culture misunderstanding is one of the difficulties which faced both teachers and students when communicating in EFL (Rashidi and Ramezani, 2015), acquiring appropriate pragmatic competence plasticity is most important in intercultural communication. It was discovered that Iraqi EFL students whose native language is Arabic frequently lack pragmatic competence when attempting to converse in their foreign language, English. Eventually, the student's English communication with others appears less courteous. Specifically, this occurs when pupils engage in the three most common face-threatening acts when they react to specific real life situations.

Washburn (2001) shows that EFL learners have trouble learning pragmatics because they do not get enough natural and varied input, they do not know about the rules, methods, and limits, the information they get is not important enough, and they do not get clear or direct feedback when they break the rules in everyday situations or their textbooks. The study will focus on a few issues in the field of pragmatic competence, such as the fact that English language learners have different levels of skill, which is seen as a barrier to developing competence in foreign language classrooms. Gender differences are also seen as a factor that affects pragmatic competence, as is the length of time spent learning English.

## 1.3. Objective of the study

The main aims of the current study are:

- To explore the current pragmatic competence plasticity in EFL students' communication.

- To provide some instructional implications based on the problems highlighted in the questionnaire.
- To identify problems and limitations in the EFL students' communication of pragmatic competence plasticity according to the right percentage of each item.
- To explore how native Arabic speakers make use of the researcher-provided solutions to DCTs.
- To find out the correct and suitable answers to the research questions.

## 1.4. Research Questions

This study tries to answer the following questions:

- What are EFL students' understandings of pragmatic competence plasticity ?
- How does pragmatic competence plasticity affect the communication of EFL students?
- Is the pragmatic competence plasticity used by the EFL students' communication differ in terms of gender?
- Does pragmatic competence plasticity positively or negatively impact EFL students' communication?
- What are the suggestions of EFL students' communication to enhance their pragmatic competence plasticity?

## 1.5. The Hypotheses of the Study

This study hypotheses that Iraqi EFL university students effectively use pragmatic competence plasticity in communication, appearance, and personality characteristics. Iraqi EFL university students have good pragmatic competence in communicating in specific situations and in real life contexts

## 1.6. Limits of the Research

There is a limited number of students due to time limitation. The study is limited to Iraqi EFL university students. The study only focused on the pragmatic competence

plasticity in communication thought; it could be more studied; however, it can be used for further investigations

## 1.7. The Significance of the Research

The English language is popular all over the world, and in this age of globalisation and the internet, learning a foreign language requires more than just knowing grammar and vocabulary. They don't just want to be able to pass an English test so they can get a job or a graduate degree. They want to be able to communicate well with native speakers of English or other languages. Foreign language learners would need sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence for using English well, or any language for that matter. Using words, grammar, and the four skills is not always enough to say what you want to say in communication. pragmatics is an important part of communication. At this point, it's so important for communication to teach and learn pragmatics. The purpose of this paper is to look into how EFL students' pragmatic competence can change over time by using statistical data and some theories from the past. By its very nature, this is a pragmatic attempt to find out how flexible EFL students' communication skills are. So, the results and findings have led to some suggestions for how Iraqi EFL learners can improve their ability to use pragmatic competence plasticity, avoiding miscommunication as much as possible so they can get to the point of communication.

## 1.8. Definitions of Terms

### 1.8.1. Pragmatic

According to Leech (1983), Charles Morris came up with the first modern definition of pragmatics. Since then, many other linguists have thought about how this branch of linguistics works. Morris originally said that pragmatics was "...the discipline that studies the relationships of signs to interpreters, while semantics studies the relationships of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable." This is how it was originally said (as cited in Leech, 1983).

### 1.8.2. Competence

Linguists use the word competence in many different ways to describe their knowledge, and it has been employed in many different situations. Linguistics pioneer Noam Chomsky first coined the word competence. "Linguistic theory is principally concerned with an ideal speaker-listener," he writes in 'Aspects of the Theory of Syntax'. Whoever lives in a completely homogeneous speech community and has perfect knowledge of the language and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention, and errors (random and characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance," theorist Noam Chomsky (1965).

### 1.8.3. Plasticity

Plasticity refers to the ability to change, but in modern science, the term is usually used to describe things that happen quickly. (Greenough et al., 1987; Kelly & Garavan, 2005).People think that Plasticity results from secondary changes because of a more considerable change in the system. For example, when someone has a brain injury, the ability of the brain to change is shown, not by the damage itself, but by the way the brain responds to it (Ward & Cohen, 2004).

### 1.8.4. Pragmatic Competence

Pragmatic competence is the ability to understand, make, and communicate meanings that are correct and appropriate for the social and cultural contexts in which communication occurs. According to Barron (2003), pragmatic competence is one of the elements of communicative competence. In addition, Barron says pragmatic competence is part of illocutionary competence, a combination of speech acts and speech functions with the proper use of language in a given situation.

## 1.9. Organization of the Study

Each of the following sections makes up the present investigation:

**Chapter One: Introduction:** This chapter offers the background of the study, the problem statement, the research aims and questions, the study's hypotheses, the significance of the study, definitions of key terms, and the organization of the thesis.

**Chapter Two: Literature Review:** Chapter 2 gives a review of the literature and a framework for thinking about pragmatic competence.

**Chapter Three: Methodology:** Chapter 3 talks about the methods that were used in this study. This includes the research design, setting, and population, as well as the ways that data were collected and analysed.

**Chapter Four: Findings:** The fourth chapter analyses the study's outcomes of the findings.

**Chapter Five: Discussion of Research:** The fifth chapter analyses the study's discussion of the findings.

**Chapter Six: Conclusions and Suggestions for future studies**

The sixth chapter provides a conclusions, limits, and suggestions for further research.

# 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

The second chapter discusses the theories and definitions that underpin them. Additionally, it provides a synopsis of all relevant papers and introduces the conceptual framework and chapter summary.

## 2.1. The Concept of Pragmatic

Language learning is a long and never-ending process that requires not just mastery of grammatical rules but also pragmatic knowledge of the target language. The revelation of the importance of skills other than grammar cleared the path for the development of new academic topics. Pragmatics is how we communicate with each other. It's how we show what we're saying. There are verbal and nonverbal parts to the meaning, and it changes based on the context, the relationship between the people who say it, and many other social factors. Many people from all over the world speak English because of its rapid growth. People who speak English but don't speak the same language or have the same culture can think of English as their common point. As it turns out, English is used in many different places and at varying levels of communication.

"Pragmatics" is a well-known field in the study of language. It was started by Charles William Morris in 1938. Morris created the area of "pragmatics" inside "semiotics," which he characterised as "a broad science of signs," by separating the study of language into three parts: syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. The first definition by Morris and especially the second definition by Crystal look at pragmatics from the point of view of the people who use language. As each researcher in the field of pragmatics focuses on a different part of the field when describing it, they also make different distinctions between the different parts of pragmatics. For example, Leech (1983) points out that pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics are two important parts of pragmatics that are different from each other. In the first part, he talks about pragmatic’s linguistic part.

Since pragmatics is still a new field of study in linguistics, there is no agreement on a single definition of the term. As Mey (1993) says, it is hard to say where pragmatics starts and stops. Since the field is still growing, there have only been rough definitions given so far. This section will look at some definitions that set the stage for the current

study. At the start of its development, pragmatics was defined as "the study of the relationship between signs and their interpreters" (Morris, 1938; Schauer, 2006). In the following years, people in the field came up with some other more detailed definitions. Crystal's (1985) working definition of pragmatics is the study of language that looks at the choices of language users, the limits they face when interacting with others, and the effects of how they use language on those around them.

According to Yule (1996), pragmatics is the study of the following four things:

- What people mean by what they say and what the words and phrases in what they say may mean on their own?
- How speakers plan what they want to say based on who they are talking to, where they are, and what the social context or situation is?
- How listeners might understand the intended meanings of utterances and appropriately perceive the message being transmitted?
- How does the amount of what is said or not said depend on how far away or close you are?

Searle's speech actions theory (1969) develops Austin's (1962) concept of illocutionary force and suggests the following five primary forms of illocutionary act:

**Representatives**: These are general statements about how the speaker thinks the world is. They are what the speaker thinks.

**Commissives** are words like promises, threats, and so on that are used to make someone promise to do something in the future.

**A directive** is what the speaker says someone else should do (advice, requests, invitations), and they are the words that show what the speaker wants someone else to do.

**Expressives** are the words that show how the speaker feels (apologies, no, requests, etc.).

**Declarations** are the type of speech acts that alter the universe immediately upon their utterance (e.g., "I now pronounce you husband and wife").

The study of language from the point of view of the people who use it is called pragmatics, and Crystal (1997) says that pragmatics is the study of language from the

point of view of the people who use it. This includes their choices, the constraints they face when they use language in social situations, and the effects their use of language has on other people involved in communication. This means that it looks at language from the people who use it, and it helps EFL students communicate more efficiently and effectively. People who have good pragmatic skills know how to use the linguistic resources in a given language to make certain kinds of speech acts, think about the sequence of speech acts and use the language's resources in the proper context.

## 2.2. The Concept of Competence

Competence, according to McClelland, means having the skills needed to do certain things well. However, he does not go into more detail about the concept with any one theory. Some of these competencies may be more traditional cognitive ones, like reading, writing, and calculating skills. However, they can still be seen as "competences" if they help predict how well someone will do in a real-world situation. Others should think about what has been called "personality variables," but they might be better called "competences" (McClelland, 1973). Even though White used the term "Competence" for the first time in 1959, when he wrote a paper called "Motivation Reconsidered: The Concept of Competence," he used it for the first time then. He said that competence was a person's ability to perform well and be motivated. McClelland, the founder of McBer and Company, which is now part of Hay Group, came up with the idea of "Competence." He is the person who started the modern competence movement and is one of the best-known authors in the field of how the concept of competence came to be and how it changed over time (Sharma, 2014).

People who studied psychology in the early 1970s used a term called "functional competence." This term isn't about the person's generative, cognitive system that isn't affected by the situation, or normative goals of education like fostering autonomy. Instead, it's about how well a person can deal with challenges in specific situations. In 1973, McClelland said that "testing for competence rather than 'intelligence'" was a bad idea because it was based on traditional intelligence tests. Intelligence tests are intentionally taken out of the context of the people who take them. McClelland said that educational and psychological research needs concepts and assessment procedures that consider the situation and context in which people act.

Competence, according to Kasper (1997), is a type of knowledge that can be learned, owned, used, or lost. In the process of learning, the word "pragmatics" refers to the act of communicating. So, pragmatic competence is being able to talk with people in a foreign language. Thomas (1983) says that pragmatics competence is the ability to use a language well and to understand the illocutionary force of words used in a social and cultural setting. The models of language competence by Canale and Swain (1980) and Bachman (1990) say that it is an important part of being able to communicate. Bachman (1990) says that there are two parts to competence: being organised and being able to solve problems. The organisational competence refers to knowledge of linguistic structures, like grammar, that is needed to run a business. But there are two parts to pragmatism: illocutionary and sociolinguistic. Sociolinguistic competence has to do with the situation, while illocutionary competence is about knowing how to communicate.

When Spencer and Spencer published "Competence At Work: The Model for Superior Performance" in 1993, the competence movement gained momentum and achieved new heights. Academics, researchers, and practitioners have used the book's generic competence models, including five widely accepted competency models with upwards of ten elements, known as generic competence models (Spencer and Spencer, 1993). The Iceberg model of competence, which divides competence into visible and hidden components, is the most widely used of the five models. Le Deist and Winterton (2005) looked into how the term "competence" is used in training and development activities. It was based on HRD practises in the USA, the UK and France as well as Germany, Austria, and France. They came up with a whole picture of competence. The model is used to find and improve different combinations of cognitive, functional, social, and meta-competence that are important for a wide range of jobs. Researchers and people who work in the field of competence development gradually came to understand the role and importance of organisational culture in this process. Weinert (2001) talks about "key competencies" that have a wide range of transferability, like language skills, and "meta competencies" that help people learn and use specific skills, like math skills. As you learn, think, plan, and govern, you need meta-competencies, which are skills that help you know about tasks and strategies and your strengths and weaknesses.

It is important to note that the pragmatic psychological tradition sees competencies as context-specific dispositions for success that can be learned. In

addition, they work well in specific fields and can handle different situations and needs. The scope of these domains or the situations they apply can range from particular competencies in very narrow domains to broad concepts of critical competencies. All of these concepts are about summarising and learning. When it comes to measuring educational outcomes, this pragmatic, contextualized concept of competence is a good one to use.

### 2.2.1. Competence in Learning the Foreign Language

Language teachers and learners of foreign languages must be able to speak and act correctly, clearly, expressively, and richly. They must also be able to defend their point of view in a debate, listen to their communication partner, be tactful, build a strategy for speaking in different situations, and build a plan for speaking in different situations. Consequently, a whole range of forms and methods for teaching students how to communicate should be used to help them learn how to speak in a way that helps them do their jobs well, like teaching. When teaching communication in a foreign language in the context of intercultural dialogue, it is necessary to create didactic methodological conditions for the comparative humanist study of foreign languages and native cultures and develop communicative integration skills for intercultural communication.

The following are some of the main principles of the communication-oriented socio-cultural education of students learning a foreign language:

- The idea is that students should think a lot when communicating in school.
- The principle of taking into account the profiles of people who want to study languages:
- The idea is that students should balance their academic and extracurricular activities to learn how to communicate with people from other countries.
- The idea that foreign pedagogical language communication should have a humanistic psychological component.

The level of competence of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors is crucial in ensuring that their students get enough amounts of linguistic input during the course of their classroom studies (Cahyono, 2014; Soepriyatna, 2012). Lengkenawati conducted a research in 2005 that indicated the majority of Indonesian instructors lacked

proficiency in at least some of the English abilities they were teaching. A teacher may have strong knowledge of English grammar but worse comprehension and expression. The instructors' lack of knowledge on how to organise thoughts, poor grammar, and limited vocabulary were all shown in an analysis of writing samples. In two ways, students will benefit from a teacher's native English proficiency while taking EFL classes When this occurs, pupils have instructors to look up to as role models when it comes to using English in the classroom. In order to stand out from other educators, English instructors need to excel in the language they teach. Having students see native English speakers is an integral aspect of any English as a Foreign Language course.

## 2.3. Communicative Competence

The term competence was used to talk about different parts of the communicative competence. All of these parts are connected and can be put together into a bigger term called pragmatic competence. As it was said above, pragmatics is a field of study that looks at both the words and the people who say them, as well as the actions and their intentions. As a way to better understand the development of pragmatic competence in language teaching, the types of competence can be summarised as the following. This is how some linguists see them.

Communication is a two-way process in which an individual alternately takes on the roles of speaker and listener. Thus, rather than focusing exclusively on individual skills, these should be assessed in their entirety. Students must build communicative competence, particularly strategic competence, to overcome difficulties with their listening and speaking skills. In speaking, strategic competence refers to the ability to maintain a conversation, end it, and resolve communication breakdowns and comprehension issues. (2002; Shumin).

Communicative competence is a term that is often used when learning a foreign language. After Hymes shot down Chomsky's model of linguistic competence in 1972, the idea of communicative competence began to get more and more attention in the field. Chomsky's model from 1965 says that linguistic competence is a set of rules that help a person understand what is and is not acceptable in their language.

Immediately after Chomsky made his idea, some sociolinguists and psychologists were very against the idea of using idealised, purely linguistic competence as the theoretical ground for the way people learn, teach, and test languages. They said that parts of what they called "performance" were governed by rules, but they were also linked to the social and cultural context in which the speaker-hearer was operating. It was said that these should be considered part of the language user's skills. Moreover, "...all rule-systems that describe their knowledge of language and how to work with it" are now part of the definition of competence, so they have gone one step further (Brumfit, 1987). Adejare (1995) claims that Hymes (1972) created the term "communicative competence" and that Campbell and Wales (1970) investigated it in order to clarify Chomsky's definition of "linguistic competence." The strong version of competence is what Campbell and Wales called communicative competence. Communicational competence is described as "the capability, or ability to make and interpret utterances that are not so much grammatical but acceptable in the context where they are employed" by the authors. However, they have been described as confusing in explaining this concept. Nevertheless, Hymes remains the father of the concept of communicative competence, according to Cazden (1996), because he described it in full, clear and explicit terms.

"Communicative competence is not a question of understanding rules for the creation of sentences and being able to use such rules to create expressions from scratch as and when occasion arises," said H.G. Widdowson (1989) of communicative competence. It's a lot more about having a library of pre-assembled patterns, formulaic frameworks, and a set of rules that you can use to make any required alterations based on the environment in which you're working. Adaptation is the key to effective communication in this perspective, and norms serve just as guidelines.In other words, as Widdowson said, communicative competence is the ability to use language for communication. A person who has good communicative skills thinks of language as a tool for communicating. Four language skills are the focus of this competence. It also looks at how the skills connect and how they grow together. Communicative competence is a term that Canale (1983) used to talk about the relationship between grammatical competence (the ability to know the rules of language) and sociolinguistic competence (the ability to communicate with other people) (the knowledge of the rules of language use).

### 2.3.1. Theory of Communicative Competence

In the 1970s, Dell Hymes came up with "communicative competence" (CC). He said that to understand how people learn a new language, they need to look at both how they learn grammar and how they learn to use language in the right way, which means focusing on sociolinguistic competence in native speakers. Hymes described and explained what speakers and listeners need to know to communicate well in different social situations. It is a key idea in sociolinguistics and other ways of studying language that focus on how it is used in society. His idea of CC came from the meeting of transformational generative grammar and the ethnography of communication. It was first talked about at a conference on language development among disadvantaged children, where it was suggested that "sociolinguistic interference" might be more important for education than dialect differences. Hymes says that "competence" is a person's ability, and he translates Noam Chomsky's idea of shared knowledge as "systemic potential."

A long line of theorists has helped to define what makes up communicative competence, as well as the idea that culture is an important part of learning a new language. Canale and Swain (1980) said that communicative competence was grammatical competence, social language skills, and strategic skills. Canale & Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) thought that communicative competence was a combination of the knowledge and skills that people need to communicate. Whether an individual is aware of it or not, he or she knows about language and other things about languages. There are three types of knowledge that people need to know: how to use language in a social setting to meet communication needs, and how to combine utterances and communication needs with rules for discourse. In their definition of skill, there is a difference between the ability to do something and how it shows up in real life, which is to say, performance.

### 2.3.2. The Main Components of Communicative Competence

The term "communicative competence" according to Widdowson (1989) refers to how well students can communicate with each other in a foreign language, like English. There are two words in this term: communicative and competence. The main

characteristics of communicative competence can be stated as follows**:** A dynamic, interpersonal nature and the need for two or more people who share some of the same symbolic systems make it unique.

- It can be used with both spoken and written language and many other types of symbols.
- There are so many different ways that people communicate, and they all depend on how well they understand the situation and how well they have done this before. This is why it is important to know how to communicate differently.
- There are different levels of communicative competence, which makes it possible to talk about different levels of competence. This makes it possible to talk about different levels of communication skills.

In other words, as Widdowson said, communicative competence is the ability to use language for communication. A person who has good communicative skills thinks of language as a tool for communicating. Four language skills are the focus of this competence. It also looks at how the skills connect and how they grow together. Communicative competence is a term that Canale (1983) used to talk about the relationship between grammatical competence (the ability to know the rules of language) and sociolinguistic competence (the ability to communicate with other people) (the knowledge of the rules of language use). Since Hymes (1972) came up with the term "communicative competence," different researchers have come up with a different part. One of these parts was made by Canale and Swain in 1980, and Canale expanded on it in 1983. Its main idea is that the most important things about knowledge and skills for interactional events are their key characteristics. Communicative competence comprises four main parts:

#### 2.3.2.1. Sociolinguistic Competence

It is necessary to have sociolinguistic competence to understand the social significance of linguistic expressions and the capacity to choose and use language in a way that best serves one's communication needs. In Savignon's (1983) words, "Sociolinguistic competence is awareness of socio-cultural norms of speech and language. It is necessary to understand the social environment in which language is utilised, including roles, information, and how it is employed in interactions.

#### 2.3.2.2. Grammatical Competence

Grammatical competence means arranging language, such as vocabulary, morphology, and syntax, at the sentence level that a language user has. For example, grammatical ideas in a student's grammatical or language skills can be used to describe the correct English sentence. N. Chomsky (1965) said that grammatical or linguistic competence is the theoretical and practical knowledge of a small number of grammatical rules that allow you to make an unlimited number of correct sentences.

#### 2.3.2.3. Strategic Competence

"... the strategic competency is the link that connects 'everything' together," says Erton (2007). If you're running late to a meeting and need a decent reason, your white lie is a result of your strategic competence, which represents a criterion of the competence kinds that the language user possesses. Strategic competency, on the other hand, may take into account the analytical and creative abilities of the human mind."

#### 2.3.2.4. Discourse Competence

As stated by Erton (2007), "...discourse competence concerns with the capacity to organise phrases into coherent frameworks". Using Discourse Analysis, the phrase "discourse competence" is defined as the ability to communicate effectively in conversational settings. When it comes to interactional patterns, there is a wide range. According to Akmajian (1997), "There are different sorts of discourse and conversation exchange. Writing, speaking, and listening are all forms of discourse; conversing is a form in which people engage in discussion, such as in an argument, a business meeting, or a chat. It's not uncommon for a conversation to be the result of several speakers expressing themselves at the same time."

As a result, the acquisition of discourse competence aids the language learner in gaining insight into various interactional patterns in various social, cultural, and physical situations.


**Figure 1.** Components of Communicative Competence

## 2.4. Pragmatic Competence

It is important to have "pragmatic competence," which means that you can understand, make, and communicate meanings that are both accurate and appropriate for the social and cultural contexts in which you are communicating. Pragmatics is how we communicate with each other. It's how we show what we're saying. There are verbal and nonverbal parts to the meaning, and it changes based on the context, the relationship between the people who say it, and many other social factors. Many people from all over the world speak English because of its rapid growth. People who speak English but don't speak the same language or have the same culture can think of English as their common point. As it turns out, English is used in many different places and at varying levels of communication. As a result, speakers need to know many practical things to avoid mistakes and misunderstandings when they talk. This kind of language skills will help all those who speak or are learning English as a second language.

In Barron, 2003, said that pragmatic competence was one part of communicative competence and that pragmatic competence was part of illocutionary competence, a combination of speech acts and speech functions, with the correct use of language in a given situation, as well. As part of the study, it's important to first figure out what competence is. This is so the study can figure out what pragmatic competence is all about. Then, authors move on to define communicative competence, which pragmatic competence is seen to be a part of, as well. The field of pragmatics is divided into pragmalinguistics and sociolinguistics by Leech (1983). Pragmalinguistic competence

and sociopragmatic competence are the two types of pragmatic competence people need to be good at. Pragmalinguistics skills are built on grammatical skills, which are skills that deal with rules of language usage. It includes skills like using grammar rules correctly to make sentences and skills like using the language form in the right way to reach the goal of specific communication. Sociopragmatic competence is how well you understand and use words in interpersonal communication, such as the Cooperative Principle (CP) and how appropriate they are.

Thomas said pragmatic competence was "... the ability to think about language in a conscious way." Pragmatic competence is the ability to understand and write correct and appropriate words for the social and cultural context in which the communication is taking place. Everyone who teaches English as a second language should work hard to ensure their students have good pragmatic skills, which is also a challenging job. Pragmatic competence is not an extra piece of knowledge that the learners already know about grammar. It is an integral part of the learners' communicative competence, and it is not a separate piece of knowledge (Kasper, 1997). Because pragmatic does not focus on grammar, but on the meaning of how learners use language when they communicate, this means it doesn't focus on grammar at all. Furthermore, it focuses on helping people make sense rather than making sure their grammar is perfect.

### 2.4.1. Concept of Pragmatic Competence According to Bachman's Model

Pragmatic competence is a part of communicative competence. Bachman (1990) provides a model of linguistic competence that contains all of the mentioned facets of pragmatic competence. Bachman (1990) looked at pragmatic competence as one of the two most important parts of being able to use a language. She put language skills into two groups: ***organizational competence*** and ***pragmatic competence.*** Later, researchers came up with a number of ways to describe a speaker who is pragmatically competent.

The following is a figure that Bachman uses to show her model:

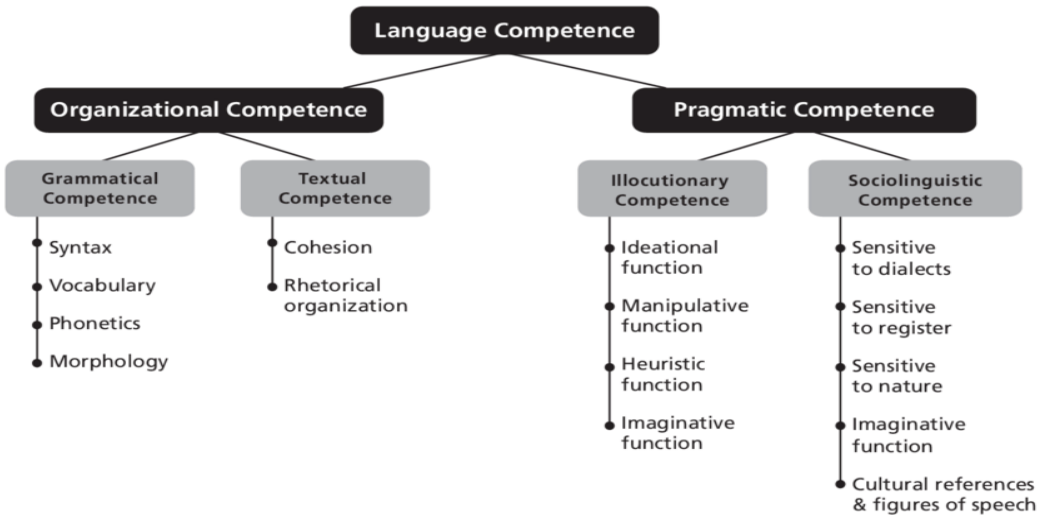


**Figure 2.** Bachman's model of Language Competence (Bachman,1990).

This diagram shows how there is a structure of language skills. Each part is different and works on its own, but when the language is used, all of the parts work together. Her concept of linguistic competence identifies organisational and pragmatic competence as the two primary components of linguistic competence. There are two subheadings under the organisational competency category. The first is *grammatical competence*, which may be defined as the understanding of linguistic structures such as vocabulary, morphology, and syntax that a language user has.

***Textual competence*** is the second sub-heading of organisational competence in Bachman's model. It means knowing about cohesion and coherence, which is similar to discourse competence in Canale and Swain's model from 1980. Bachman (1990) says that textual knowledge is "the knowledge of the rules for putting together utterances to make a text, which is basically a unit of spoken or written language."

***Illocutionary*** and ***sociolinguistic competence*** are required for the second most important component, pragmatic competence. Illocutionary function necessitates the user of the language to possess four different capacities. People can express their thoughts and emotions thanks to the ideational function of language; the manipulative function assists them in obtaining what they desire; the heuristic function affords them the chance to learn new things and find solutions to existing problems through the medium of language; and finally, the imaginative function fosters the growth of people's creative potential.

In Bachman's concept, the second component of pragmatic competence is sociolinguistic competence, which focuses on the needed awareness of differences and variances in various communication circumstances. According to Bachman (1990), sociolinguistic competence allows language users to develop language suitable to the environment in which it is used. To have sociolinguistic competence, one must be sensitive to the changes in language that might occur within or across groups due to geographical or social inequalities. Taking into consideration Bachman's model, one may conclude that, in addition to grammatical knowledge, pragmatic competence is an essential component of language competence that must be mastered to be successful in any communicative activities. Put another way; linguistic competence would be severely lacking without pragmatic competence. Both of the models that were developed by Canale and Swain (1980) and Bachman (1990) emphasise the need for communicative competence in a person to have in order for them to be a competent user of language. However, none of these theories provides any specifics about the links between linguistic proficiency's primary and secondary aspects.

### 2.4.2. The Importance of Pragmatic Competence in EFL Classes

The study of pragmatics looks at how language users can match their words to the right situations. Pragmatics is "the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed" (Hymes,1972). In order to help the learners find socially acceptable language for different situations, pragmatics is taught. There are many different types of pragmatics in foreign language studies and teaching. These include speech acts, conversational structure and implication ; conversational management; discourse organisation; and sociolinguistic aspects of language use, such as the choice of address forms. For example, when we were teaching one of our students, he asked us if we could teach him "the secret rules of English." Unfortunately, language and language use areas have not been traditionally covered in language teaching curricula.

Many people do not think about pragmatic rules for language use until they see them broken. Even people who speak the language well do not know about pragmatic rules until they see them broken (and feelings are hurt or offence is taken). As a result, pragmatics is not given as much attention in language teacher education programmes as other parts of language are. Because of this, rules of language use do not have to be

"secret rules" for people who are learning or teaching about them. More and more studies describe how people use language in different English-speaking communities, and these studies have given us important information about how to teach pragmatics, which is how people use language. There are many examples of this: Bardovi-Harlig 1996, 1999, 2001, Kasper and Schmidt 1996, Kasper and Rose 1999, and Rose and Kasper 2001.

Observing how people use words to do things has made the pragmatic process less mysterious for teachers. This means that we can now teach responsible, concrete lessons and activities to language learners. As a result, there is a good chance that they will be able to learn pragmatics in their second or foreign language and join a group of people who speak English well. Teaching pragmatics in the EFL classroom is considered to be one of the most significant methods. According to a research by Kasper (1997), enhancing students' pragmatic competence has become one of the most important aims in the EFL classroom, and many studies have focused on the teaching pragmatic and its crucial role in increasing EFL students' pragmatic features Kasper and Rose (2001; Rueda, 2006; Alcn-Soler and Martnez-Flor 2008). Bardovi-Harlig (2016) also found that teaching pragmatic components in FEL contexts was critical to students' ability to acquire pragmatic knowledge. Without adequate exposure to teaching pragmatics in the Foreign Language setting, students' functional abilities cannot be demonstrated in the EFL classroom. Students do not communicate with native speakers of the target culture and have very few opportunities to practice. Thus they become less sensitive and more communicative as more emphasis is placed on language rules. It is important to note that (Niezgoda & Roever, 2001).

## 2.5. The Concept of Plasticity in Language Learning

The concept of plasticity concerning adult language acquisition is frequently traced back to Penfield and Roberts (1959), who suggest that the adult brain is "inferior" to recovering from aphasia. However, the child's brain is "plastic," or more likely to regain language function. Additionally, Lenneberg's (1967) passing remarks are crucial, as he associates adult L2 learning difficulties with hemisphere functional specialisation and losses in plasticity that limit primary language acquisition. The idea of "plasticity" is closely linked to the idea of "development as a process of lifelong adaptation" in the lifespan theory (Baltes, Lindenberger and Staudinger,1998). Lifespan theory says that

development can be changed or is "plastic" at all stages of development. However, developmental plasticity is limited and constrained at different stages of development. Therefore, one of the main goals of research on development across the lifespan has been to look at the range and limits of plasticity at different stages of life.

Learning a new language is becoming more common, but it is also one of the most challenging things that adults try to do. On the other hand, adult language learners are a great way to see how learning-dependent plasticity works. People can continue to learn new words and phrases and new languages well into their middle and late adult years. This is because they rely on the adult language system's ability to change. An example of this plasticity is when a person learns a second language later in life and becomes bilingual.

### 2.5.1. Pragmatic Competence Plasticity

A model that looks at how language learning works is called a mechanistic model. To focus on the effects of language learning, they do not look at how it works. Specifically, they think that linguistic signals tell us everything we need to know about what we are saying and ignore that this is not true in actual language use. The main difference that models with this idealised representation of language use do not account for is the difference between signal meaning and speaker meaning (e.g. Grice 1957, 1968; Clark 1996). It is the information the speaker wants to communicate in a specific communication activity known as speaker meaning. On the other hand, signal meaning refers to the meaning linked to the linguistic form in the user's linguistic knowledge, the meaning encoded in a linguistic signal, and the meaning linked to the linguistic form. Grice first said that the two are not the same (1957). A signal meaning can change its meaning depending on where it is used. This is what they call pragmatic plasticity. Signal meanings become speaker meanings when they are used in a specific way.

Malabou's philosophy is based on the idea of "plasticity." In her thoughts, you can see the outline of a new materialist ontology where change is important. Malabou's philosophy has a lot to do with how we think about change in some way, but it also has a lot to do with how we think about form. This is because Malabou reads neuroscience through a Hegelian and deconstructive lens. Hogstad, 2020a: Her philosophy is semiotic materialism because it sees plasticity as a semiotic framework and a semiotic structure.

It also suggests that the body, represented by the brain, is where this framework and structure come from and that the body is the source and author of this framework and structure (Malabou, 2014). The relationship between the material and the symbolic is now seen as a symbiotic one, with each having a part of the other. Throughout her writing, Malabou has thought about this relationship, and she thinks that form's ability to be flexible might be what allows and allows for the exchange between them (Malabou, 2020; Malabou, 2009; Malabou, 2011; Malabou, 2012a; Malabou, 2016).

Plasticity can be thought of as an ontological principle that helps form be able to change itself. This means that the form's concept will also have to change (Hogstad, 2020b; James, 2012). The central unit of thought, or "form," in Malabou's words: 'Form is the metamorphic but immovable barrier of thought' (Malabou, 2010). There is no longer a difference between symbolic and physical forms because the form is an ontological and ontologizing feature of thinking. As someone learns something, their brain's material and neurological makeup change. This is an example of how the symbolic and real come together (Malabou, 2008).

Her first book, The Future of Hegel, was all about neuroplasticity. Malabou has been inspired by it ever since. There, she says that "plasticity" is a term used in both neurology and immunology. Biology talks about how cells and their surroundings can change and change again. The muscles in the face and fingers also get stronger when someone learns to play the saxophone. If the immune system gets an infection, it can build up its defences against that infection in the future, like when it does this in the future (Malabou, 2005).

As a philosophical concept, plasticity might be called a "material concept," because it sees form as both material and symbolic. It helps form be able to take on shape from the outside while also resisting and giving shape. At least in terms of when Malabou found out about the concept in Hegel, and how he tried to make it into a lens through which Hegel's philosophy could be read. Malabou's goal is to portray Hegel as a thinker of and for the future, as someone who thinks about the future and whose thinking has a future of its own (Malabou, 2005). While Malabou's philosophical interlocutors are varied, her repeated encounters with Hegel and Derrida, Heidegger, and Freud are significant inspirations for her reconstructed theory of form (Malabou, 2010), as is her engagement with biology (Malabou, 2016).

These interactions are all part of a theoretical framework for plasticity as an ontological concept that comes together from these different things. So when I say that it is an ontological concept, They think it is a primary metaphor that can help them understand how they think about how they think. Indeed, Malabou's initial intention for the concept of plasticity is as "form a concept" means first to take up a concept (plasticity), which has a specific and limited role in Hegel's philosophy. Only then can it be changed into a comprehensive concept that can "grasp" (saisir) the whole. A concept is a word that means both "seizing" and "understanding." In this case, the word "prendre" can be used to mean both "seizing" and "understanding." Plasticity is made into a concept by showing that Hegel's philosophy is held together by plasticity, which allows the reader to "comprehend" it. At the same time, plasticity is both a structure and a condition for being able to understand it (Malabou, 2005).

Once plasticity has been formed, it is a kind of hermeneutic concept that can be used to understand things. It is a piece of Hegel's philosophy that has been rearranged to be seen as a whole. This makes it both a structure of intelligibility and a condition of intelligibility. When we think about an object or form, we think about how we think about or understand it. In this way, the concept of plasticity is like a double hermeneutic. It can explain both the object being studied and itself as a process. Malabou underscores this point by adding in other words, to form a concept is to take an object that can give form to what it sees and then make it even more complex. Even though the concept is a logical form, it should not be seen as an empty container but as a power that can make its content. Hegel keeps stressing this point (Malabou, 2005). Malabou's main idea is that the above plastic hermeneutic is linked to neurology, which is a very important thing to keep in mind. She first came up with her concept of plasticity in 2005 when she wrote What Should We Do With Our Brain? Her thinking took a "neurological turn" while writing What Should We Do With Our Brain? (2008). Whether it was already the case or not, Malabou's work has focused on the relationship between the body and thinking since then, or maybe it has always been this way.

### 2.5.2. The Principle of Plasticity in Pragmatic Competence

Using the idea of plasticity as a frame concept in the Humanities is not the first time it has been used that way. Educability is a word that the German philosopher J. F.

Herbart used. He said that it was very similar to ductility and plasticity. For him, educability is the result of systemic changes that can be seen. This means that there is much room for people to change their behaviour. It also shows up in Hegel's philosophy, according to Malabou (2007), who says that people can be educated and changed, get rid of ways of being that people have been in for a long time, think of new ways to replace the old ones, and plan for new events. In light of the growing knowledge of plasticity, we might speculate that the relationships between our nervous system, genes, and experiences are dynamic and ever-changing in our lives. Experiential impacts have a distinctively personal and relational nature depending on the individual life histories of each subject, as can be seen from the dimensions mentioned earlier. It is, therefore, preferable to use the concept of "experience" rather than "environment," as the latter contributes but does not necessarily have the same effect on people. People's experiences are framed in their ability to adapt and change.

Scholars domestically and internationally have studied difficulties from the viewpoints of pragmatic knowledge, contextual adaptability, communicative competence, and even cognitive schema since it is more complicated than linguistic failure. The development of pragmatic competence is one of the areas of interest in the study of pragmatic competence as it matures. Numerous empirical investigations have shown the plasticity of pragmatic competence development. The study of pragmatic competence in intercultural communication has its roots in communicative competence. According to Barron(2003), pragmatic competence studies are sparked by people's interest in communicative ability. Different interpretative models of communicative competence in linguistics and applied linguistics develop precisely due to people's attention to pragmatic competence. Interlanguage pragmatics has evolved as a new study area to investigate how foreign language learners acquire pragmatic ability. Studies conducted abroad on developing and acquiring pragmatic competence are reasonably advanced. The development of pragmatic competence is a topic that certain scholars have explored, and they have noted that explicit instruction is more effective than implicit education.

It is thought that when you study things that affect how people learn, like memory, attention, perception, reflection, language, intelligence, sensitivity, and self-awareness, you have to look at how the brain works. So neuroscience and educational science could be interested in learning why we are so flexible and how to protect and

grow this ability. In a systemic relationship, there were three levels of plasticity that could be found. First, genes can be expressed, and genes can control development. The first level of genetic plasticity is about how genes are expressed and how genes control development. It is at this level that "intrinsic factors" (factors of genetic transcription) and "bio-environmental factors" (factors that affect how genes are turned on) work together. The second level of systemic plasticity is about how people build, store, and change their memories and experiences. There is much flexibility in how the conversation between the internal and external worlds is seen and thought about. People who have had much experience learn about how their brains work as they grow up. This process leaves a mark on the neuronal network. It changes the efficiency parameters that are used to send instructions.

There is a lot of information out there about the plasticity of the nervous system, which is the ability to change neuronal circuits. People talk about plasticity at this third level of systemic thinking. This word describes how flexible and adaptable the nervous system is. This means that it is always ready for change, ready for contingencies, and open to new possibilities that come with each new experience. In synaptic activity, plasticity is shown by small changes in the organisation of patterns (Kandel 2007); in the flexible configuration of circuits of interaction between uncountable populations of neurones (Gazzaniga 2012); and in the structures that polarise a specific modifiable function, which helps to create something more complex, which implies the development of something more complex. These three subsystems can be broken down into three levels or levels. Plasticity refers to how well an organism can change its biology to adapt to environmental changes, especially when these changes are stressful to the organism's body (Bogin, 1999). For example, the lengths of body parts have been studied to look at how growth can be flexible. For example, samples living in different environments (Bogin, Smith, Orden, Silva, and Loucky, 2002; Padez, Varela-Silva and Bogin, 2009; Payne, Kumar, Pomeroy, Macintosh, and Stock, 2018; Pomeroy et al., 2012) or from different generations have been looked at (Tanner, Hayashi, Preece, and Cameron,1982).

Plasticity is an important quality of motor activity that shows how fit a person is, and it can be used to solve a lot of problems for a person's physical, aesthetic, and intellectual development. One of the most powerful reasons to keep doing physical activities for yourself is because they look good. In artistic sports, many motor acts are

judged on how quickly and accurately they are done, but the most important factors in determining their effectiveness are their looks. Plasticity, like motor coordination, has a lot of different types and forms. To make each one, you need to use many different tools and methods. Methodological techniques are used to improve movements' artistry, grace, and expressiveness. Improving flexibility in shaping the structure's content contributes to the development of a creative attitude to classes, which stimulates the cognitive activity of those involved. It also increases the emotional state of those involved, educates the taste for aesthetics, and makes relationships with people more constructive. Plasticity can be thought of in terms of structure (brain microstructure or macrostructure) or function (how the brain works) (brain function or behaviour, which is the expression of brain function). For example, structural synaptic plasticity in a neural network causes changes in CNS function that make it easier for people to learn and remember (Teyler et al., 1995). Functional plasticity is the behavioural mechanism that helps people learn new skills and become more competent (Greenough et al., 1993).

The evidence for the idea that functional plasticity is linked to age is not clear. It may be possible to change the function of parts of the immature cortex by recruiting parts of the brain that have short-term connections instead of long-term ones, which happens with immature neural connections. For example, it has been thought that early brain injuries may help keep connections between different parts of the brain stable, which could be used as a foundation for how the brain works (Webster, Ungerleider and Bachevalier, 1991). Plasticity can be described as the brain's ability to change its structure in response to what it has been told to do. This changes the behaviour repertoire. It is important for many organisms, including birds and mammals, to grow up. It shapes organisms into unique individuals. Plasticity may also help slow down cognitive decline in adulthood and old age2. Thus, the idea that the human mind can be changed has drawn much scientific and public attention.

In modern science, "plasticity" is usually used only to describe things that happen quickly (e.g., Greenough et al., 1987; James, 1890; Kelley and Garavan, 2005; Kempermann 2006; Kolb, 1998; Paillard 1976; Pascual-Leone et al., 2005; Will et al., 2008), but plasticity is also used to describe things that can be changed. People think that plasticity is the result of secondary changes that happen because of a bigger change in the system. As an example, when someone has a brain injury, it is thought that the brain's ability to change is shown by how it repairs itself and how it compensates for the

damage (e.g., Brion et al. 1989; Buckner et al. 1996; Chen et al. 2002; Ward and Cohen 2004).

### 2.5.3. Significant of Pragmatic Competence Plasticity

Before talking about how important pragmatic competence is, it would be better to give some definitions of the term and its related words. Pragmatics is a field of study that looks at how language is used and how it might be affected by things like interpersonal or social dynamics. Morris (1938) came up with one of the first definitions of pragmatics, and he thought it was about how an interlocutor thinks about the sign that another interlocutor comes up with. Another standard definition comes from Crystal (1985). He says pragmatics is the study of language from the point of view of the people who use it and how their preferences, the effects of the interactional context, and how utterances can affect other people during or after the communication are all important parts of pragmatics. Leech (1983) and Levinson (1983) also emphasise that the context in which people make meaning is important when they define pragmatics.

Many people think pragmatic competence is essential for people to have, but there is no clear, widely agreed-upon definition of the term. In Bachman's model (1990), language competence is broken down into 'organisational competence' and 'pragmatic competence.' At both the level of the sentence and the level of the whole text, "organisational competence" includes knowledge of linguistic units and the rules for putting them together. Pragmatic competence comprises two components: illocutionary competence, an understanding of speech acts and functions, and sociolinguistic competence. 'Sociolinguistic competence' refers to utilising language effectively in specific situations. Thus, it encompasses the capacity to choose acceptable communicative acts and techniques for enacting them in response to the situation's contextual characteristics. According to Bachman's approach, pragmatic competence is not subordinate to the knowledge of grammar and text structure but instead coordinated with formal linguistic and textual knowledge and interacts in complicated ways with 'organisational competence.'

Chomsky (1980) said that pragmatics competence is the knowledge of the current situation and the right way to use language for different purposes. Pragmatic competence is the ability to make, build, and share appropriate and correct meanings for

the cultural and social conditions in which communication occurs. Brown and Levinson, 1987, came up with the "politeness theory" as a way to think about pragmatic competence. Politeness has always been a very important rule for any kind of human interaction, even if that interaction is with other people. "Face" is a concept that affects how people choose social expressions. Goffman said that "face" is the "positive social value a person effectively claims for himself or herself by his or her self-presentation" (1967), and Deutsch (1961) said that "face" is "one of individuals' most sacred possessions" that needs to be kept to have a healthy sense of self-esteem. The definitions mentioned earlier of "face" can be summed up as follows: "face" refers to the speaker's public self-image.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), there are four primary politeness strategies: blatant on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record/indirect.

- **Bald on-record :-** Strategies do not try to make the listener's faceless vulnerable. Instead, they are used to directly talking to the other person and saying what they need to say. For example, close the window, and say, "I want to use one of your pens." These are good examples to show how they work.
- **Positive politeness:-** People try to keep the hearer's positive face safe by using expressions that show that the relationship is friendly and shows that they want to be respected, but also show that they want to be liked and show that they want to be liked back.
- **Negative politeness:-** Strategies refer to things like not imposing on the person you are talking to, respecting their autonomy, and asking permission to ask a question or do something else.
- **Off-record or indirect strategy:-** is called the use of indirect language in order to take the pressure off of the hearer and instead get the hearer to infer the indirect request for himself or herself, like the ones below:
  - Using clues
  - Employing irony and metaphor
  - Displaying ambiguity
  - Generalizing and not talking about the person you are talking to directly.
  - Through associations, you can give people clues about what to do.

Any idea of teaching pragmatic skills is not complete without the central idea of speech acts. There are many different ways to classify and group speech acts. Austin (1962), Leech (1983), and many more have done this, but the grouping that has become the most popular is Searle's classification of illocutionary acts (1969). In recent years, most humans learning a second language have had the same goal: to be able to communicate well and use their second language well in social situations (Hymes, 1972). Pragmatics can be thought of as the basis for good communication skills. Even though it has been ignored and pushed to the side under the name "syntactic understanding" and not seen as an important part of learning a language, this has started to change a lot. Dessalle's theory from 1998 is a good example of this growing emphasis. It shows how important pragmatic competence is in preparing FL learners to use language correctly in different situations.

The significance of studying English is self-evident in today's environment. The requirement for language proficiency resulted in the establishment of numerous language instruction courses and institutes globally. Though, more often than not, EFL students graduate with a good grasp of the "form," i.e. grammar and extended vocabulary, but without communicative or, more precisely, pragmatic competence in the target language, lacking interaction skills, intuition, and knowledge of linguistic rules, and thus unable to respond appropriately to a variety of verbal and non-verbal situations. People who have good pragmatic skills know how to use the linguistic resources in a given language to make certain kinds of speech acts, think about the sequence of speech acts and use the language's resources in the proper context.

In 2003, Barron said that ( There are many different types of pragmatic competence. For example, it can be said that it is about knowing how to use and interpret language resources in different situations. Pragmatic competence, or the ability to communicate and understand a message as it is meant to achieve its communicative goal, has become more important in language learning over the last two decades. This means that we need more than just knowledge of words and grammar to communicate well in a language (Fraser, 2010). Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993), Koike and Pearson (2005), and Wishnoff (2000), for example, have written about how to teach pragmatic fluency in a second language and how to help students learn how to do so.

### 2.5.4. Pragmatic Competence Plasticity and Communication

Pragmatic competence, which is the ability to communicate effectively and requires knowledge beyond the level of grammar, became a big part of Backman's model of the communicative language ability, which he came up with (1990). Pragmatic competence is one of the most important skills you need to be able to communicate well (Bachman, 1990; Brown, 2001; Canale & Swain, 1980) When a person is born, they begin to communicate with others through crying, touching, and eventually using words. There are, of course, omissions; discrepancies arise between what speakers intend to say and what they say. As a result of their need to communicate, speakers look for solutions to solve issues, says Corder (1981). They are called communication strategies because they help people communicate when problems with their language or communication skills (CSs).

**.** Having the ability to speak a language is what most people think of as knowing a language. However, speaking seems complicated for people who learn a new language (Lazarton, 2001). Martinez-Flor, Uso-Juan, and Alcon-Soler (2006) say that to be able to talk, you need to know the language and social and pragmatic rules about how to use the language correctly. CSS is a part of oral communication for people learning a new language. These strategies help speakers be more flexible and confident, making their communication more effective as a whole. Many studies have looked into CSS in oral communication (Nakatani, 2005; Phothongsunan, 2010, Puffer, 2006.)

**.** Writing is also very important when it comes to communication. In the past, writing was thought to be a one-way process that did not connect with people or make sense in the world. The writer, the reader, and the text all play a role in writing today. This is because writing is thought to be a collaborative process. So, studying CSs in written communication is very important.

"Communication" is one of the most famous words in the research world. However, it has also had a significant impact on language instruction, primarily because of the important meaning it symbolises, reflecting the gradual globalisation over the past century Xin(2007). According to him, communicating and negotiating information through verbal and non-verbal symbols is a necessary part of human life because all social people seek to meet their communicative requirements. Although the reasons for talking to each other may differ, they all aim to produce a comprehensible outcome.

When Pope (1998) looked into the history of communication through French, he found that the word came from the Latin word communicare, which means "to share," "make common," as well as "give (information) and "convey" (a word) (goods). Brown (1987) also says that communication is a mix of speech acts that serve a specific purpose. Communication is not just an event or something that happens; "it is functional, purposeful, and designed to have some effect – some change – on the environment of the people who hear and the people who speak."

For both speakers and writers and readers and listeners, Harmer (1991) provides a list of compelling reasons to engage in the communicative act:

For speakers and writers, they:-

- want to say something instead of not talking,
- have a communicative goal to get something.
- pick the correct language from their infinite language library.

For listeners and readers, they:-

- want to listen to "something";
- are interested in the ideas that speakers and writers are trying to get across, which might affect the speakers and writers' wants.
- Have a wide range of language skills to understand what people say and write.

The information in the natural way people communicate could be conceptual, something social, something cultural, something emotional, or even psychological (Canale, 1983). There is also the fact that not all participants in the conversation have the same level of knowledge or experience or personality or metacognition, etc. This means that authentic communication might be unpredictable and riddled with information gaps. In order to agree, participants engage in a series of talks and evaluations. When two people communicate with each other using the same tools, they are very close and can carry out the communication act well (Byers and Byers, 1972). However, they cannot talk to each other or work things out because their positions are not the same in silent communication.

Communication is used to tell a person about a situation and get them to do something. This is called the " perlocutionary effect," which is the goal of communication (Austin 1962). As a result, language has a primarily social purpose: to

influence the behaviour of a conspecific. This can be accomplished through communication by providing the person you are communicating with information that they may not have had access to before in the hopes that it will elicit the response you want. Then, a change in the addressee's cognitive state is the first and most important change that communication is meant to bring about. Communication can be said to be the exchange of information from one person's cognitive environment to another person's cognitive environment. Humans are not telepathic, so this plan has a big problem. They cannot send information directly from one person's mind to another person's. Smith (2003a) says that this simple fact is essential to understanding how languages change. He says that models of language evolution that assume direct transfer are not good. As a result, if people could send information directly from one person's mind to another, they would not need to use signals. This means that their existence, such as in the form of language, would not make sense. To solve this problem, they must say that a communication system like a language is the first thing they need to do. How can information be exchanged and a person's mental state be changed when people do not have direct access to each other's minds?

Communicators should change the physical environment they share with their addressees so that they prompt and makes it easier for the addressee to get the information they want. It is important for the person communicating to show the person who is being talked about her communication intention and her informational intention, Sperber and Wilson (1997) say. In addition, there are many ways to change the physical environment. For example, you can change the sound of your voice or the way you move your hands when you communicate. *Communication* is a process in which two information-processing devices work together. One thing changes the physical environment of the other. So, the second device makes representations similar to the representations already stored in the first device, making new representations. So, if you are talking about oral communication, for example, you change the acoustic environment of the person you are talking to so that they have similar thoughts.

### 2.5.5. Activities for Enhancing Pragmatic Competence Plasticity in Communication

Non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) are interested in improving their language skills. However, there is not much research on how to do this in general and improve their pragmatic skills in particular. Mahboob, 2004; Medgyes, 1994; Pasternak and Bailey, 2004; Samimy and Brutt-Griffler,2013. As part of Bachman's (1990) model of language competence, pragmatic competence includes the ability to use language in a wide range of ways and understand its illocutionary force based on the sociocultural contexts in which they are used. He says that "organisational competence" and "pragmatic competence" do not just work together in Bachman's model but that they work together in many different ways. In order to be able to communicate effectively in a target language, pragmatic skills in the foreign language (EFL) must be reasonably well developed. This is called pragmatic competence. There is a lot of variation in how well EFL learners are at pragmatic and grammatical skills in interlanguage (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995; Koike & Pearson, 2005). Pragmatic competence often falls behind grammatical competence (Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985). People who study foreign language teaching say that students become more aware of their metalinguistic abilities without a pragmatic focus. Nevertheless, they do not learn how to be metapragmatically aware in their second language, so they can tell what is and is not appropriate in a given situation. Without a pragmatic focus, students do not learn how to be metapragmatically aware of their second language.

Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) say that even "fairly advanced language learners" make "pragmatic errors, or deficits," which means they do not convey or understand the intended illocutionary force of politeness value. There is a need for L2 instruction to focus on the pragmatics of the language, and researchers in this field say that instruction that helps students become more aware of how the language is used can be beneficial (Bardovi-Harlig and Griffin, 2005; Eslami-Rasekh et al., 2004; Kasper, 1997; Koike and Pearson, 2005). People who are not native English speakers (NNESTCs) may not be confident in their English language skills, and they may not be as good at practical skills as they are at organisational skills. This is based on research (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005; Pasternak and Bailey, 2004). However, it also does not seem like teacher education programmes for English as a Second Language (ESL) ignore the pragmatic aspects of

language and teach candidates how to teach the pragmatic aspects of language (Biesenback-Lucas, 2003; Rose, 1997).

Most teacher preparation sources (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1997 is an exception) have chapters on teaching the four essential skills, which would give the teacher some declarative knowledge of grammar but not pragmatics, but not pragmatics, but not pragmatics much. A few people have talked about pragmatics in ESL teacher education programmes: Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1997), Eslami-Rasekh (2005b) and Rose (1997) are the only ones who have talked about this. While most studies have looked at how to make the target pragmatic features or use them in a conversation, Rose (2005) says that little attention has been paid to improving learners' pragmatic comprehension.

There has been much research on the development of learners' productive pragmatic competence and their development, but Schauer (2006) says that there has not been much research on the development of one learner's pragmatic awareness and production. Many people have said that interlanguage pragmatics is not important, and this study tries to fill that gap in the literature. It looks at the effect of instruction on the pragmatic awareness and production of NNESTCs in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) situations. In terms of pragmatic competences, Haghighi's et al. (2019) study seems to be the first one to look into how flipped learning affects English learners' language fluency. Using Telegram in the Iranian context, the study found a link between flipped classroom instruction and students' ability to speak in public. More recently, a study by Hazaymeh and Altakhaineh (2019) found that the learning method had a significant impact on the pragmatic abilities of Emirati students. These studies (e.g., Haghighi et al., 2019; Singay, 2020; Hazaymeh and Altakhaineh, 2019) say that a much bigger project should be done to ensure the results of their research are accurate. This is because these studies looked at many people and in a lot of different places. In this way, this experimental study tries to fill in the gaps in our knowledge about how flipped classroom instruction affects a group of learners' pragmatic skills in the Indonesian setting.

It is important to think about this when planning activities to improve pragmatic skills. First, make sure the activities are accurate and meaningful. There are ways to develop meaningful input for students, like aligning and matching them to their

interests and cultural backgrounds. Moreover, there are also ways to think about how likely the students will come across these kinds of speech events in the future (Hedge, 2001). They can recommend a lot of things that help people learn how to be more pragmatic. Activities like this can be broken down into two main types: ones that help students become more aware of their own actions, and ones that give them chances to practise speaking (Kasper 1997). Awareness raising activities are activities that help students recognise when language forms are used in the right way in a given situation. This paper will mostly talk about pragmatic awareness activities, but both of these types of activities deserve a lot of attention. Many ways can help students become more aware of how things work in real life. Techniques that are used most often are for teachers to show and talk about research findings on different aspects of pragmatics and for students to learn about pragmatics through observation, questionnaires, and interviews (Kasper 1997)

In order to learn English through traditional teaching, students aren't able to understand how the language is structured, what it means, and how it's used. So, the students become passive recipients of knowledge when they are taught this way. But now, multimedia technology has been a big help in integrating teaching and learning and giving students more incentives, which helps them be more competitive in the future. Communicating in a foreign language is more difficult if you do not have good "pragmatic competence," or the ability to speak and write in the right way in many different situations (FL). As a result, teaching that focuses on improving students' abilities to communicate effectively in a second language must also improve students' pragmatic competence.

Here, some aspects can be used to improve pragmatic competence plasticity in communication as:

- **Using grammar and vocabulary lessons to teach pragmatics competence**

Pragmatic competence comprises two components: pragmalinguistic competence, or linguistic knowledge of suitable language forms and speaking tactics, and sociopragmatic competence, or awareness of the "social contexts influencing language usage" (Röver2005). Students may make pragmatic errors merely due to a lack of linguistic information regarding how to finish the speaking activities in their second language. Pragmalinguistic competence and overall pragmatic competence are better

when students learn the grammar, vocabulary, and phrasal bits they will need, then review and practise these things. Students will be more comfortable complaining in their second language when they have the right pragmalinguistic skills to finish the speech act. There are examples of language that can be used to make socially acceptable complaints in English. There is also a practice exercise to help students learn the vocabulary and grammar they need.

- **Identifying and correcting pragmatic competence mistakes**

The activity that helps students improve their pragmatic skills is having them look at, explain, and fix examples of pragmatic mistakes. After changing the script, students can act out the new version for the class. Analysing and correcting pragmatic mistakes helps students become more aware and skilled. When students are done, they can use the same analysis, repair their conversations and experiences, and make them better. To communicate effectively in a wide range of situations and with a wide range of people, learners need to build a toolbox of practical situation-based communication choices. It is called pragmatics, and it is important for people learning a new language to be aware of all the different ways they can use language and think strategically in certain situations. Though pragmatics is a broad field in linguistics, much research has examined how people learn to speak and what words and strategies they use (Mitchell, Myles, and Marsden, 2013).

## 2.6. Related Previous Studies

Some related studies related in some aspects to the current study are discussed in this section.

### 2.6.1. Studies related to Pragmatics

Firstly, Nguyen (2008) his study looks at how Vietnamese students of English as a foreign language (EFL) use pragmatic strategies when they criticise in English. The goal is to shed light on the pragmatic properties of this little-studied act. All 36 adult learners who participated in this study were chosen at random. They were participating in an English programme run by a team of Vietnamese and Australian teachers in Hanoi, Vietnam, at the time the data was collected. The results indicated that English language

learners criticised in significantly different ways from Australian NSs in terms of their preference for realisation techniques, their selection of semantic formulae, and their selection and usage of mitigation devices.

According to Ishihara (2011), this study talks about how teachers came up with their ways of thinking about pragmatic awareness during a professional development seminar that focused on instructional pragmatics, which is what this study was about. Eight secondary school teachers from all across Japan participated in a teacher development programme held at a large private university in Central Tokyo. Seven of the eight participating teachers gave their written agreement to participate in this research.

A study done by EKİN and Damar (2013) Looked into the pragmatic awareness of EFL teacher trainees and how they used and struggled to use practical, pragmatic applications in real life. For this purpose, a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) was administered to 30 EFL teacher trainees. Students also prepared reflection papers on the strengths and limitations of their teaching practises and a lesson plan and practicum on pragmatics. In addition, ten teacher trainees were interviewed to learn more about the difficulties they encountered in teaching pragmatics in the classroom. Teacher candidates showed pragmatic awareness in DCT results. However, reflection papers and interviews demonstrated that they were more conscious of pragmatic theoretical knowledge.

Another study conducted by Herraiz-Martinez (2018), this study looks at how pragmatics is taught in English as a Foreign Language classrooms and how the traditional way to teach languages can be changed. It also wants to show how important it is to use computer-aided activities and other resources in the classroom to teach pragmatics. 15 students participated in an action research test of the lessons after school, and they found out how well they worked. This study shows that action research is a good way for teachers to learn more about how pragmatics affects students in class.

Finally, Rasheeda (2020). The purpose of her research was to investigate the pragmatic functions of the requests made by the study participants. Classroom observation was used to get data from the participants by watching the students in the classroom. Five Baghdad University EFL classrooms were used for the research. Arabic is the primary language of all respondents. Participants are first- and third-year college

students. The findings indicated that students used all request types, both directly and indirectly. Students employed derivable and imperative locutions, whereas they utilised inquiry preparation locutions for indirect requests. Students made more requests for want/need and clarification categories, demonstrating the pragmatic purpose of requests.

### 2.6.2. Studies Related to Pragmatics Competence

Several studies have looked into the use of "PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE" and how it affects different skills, with different tools and samples, and with different goals. So some studies related to this one were looked at from one side or the other: These things are put together in chronological order, from the oldest to the most recent. According to, Jianda (2006) this study looks into how to test Chinese EFL learners' pragmatic competence and see if learners with different levels of English proficiency do better on pragmatics tests. 89 Chinese EFL students participated in the study's last round of data collecting. This study found that the test methods used to measure Chinese EFL Learners' interlanguage pragmatic knowledge were reliable and valid, which means they could be trusted.

Another study conducted by Mohammed (2012), this research aims to propose and assess the efficiency of a pragmatic programme containing two activities to teach two speech actions, namely requests and refusals, in the context of building students' pragmatic competence. Twenty first-year students from the Department of English at the University of Basrah's College of Education were randomly selected to participate in the research as an experimental group. Researchers found that both experimental and control groups could not create requests and refusals in the same manner as native English speakers could during a pre-test.

Moreover Chen (2017), in his research, he wanted to find out about the pragmatic competence of NEMP and how pragmatic abilities differed between individuals, such as how different their genders, majors, age, and work experience were. In this study, the participants are 115 first-year non-English-major postgraduates from various majors at ECUT (East China University of Technology), including 52 females and 63 men. The study's results are as follows, based on quantitative and qualitative analysis: The overall level of pragmatic competence of NEMPs is relatively low at the moment, but with their growing cultural awareness, they perform better in sociopragmatic competence than in

pragmalinguistic competence; there are significant differences in pragmatic competence between genders, with females performing better than males, while differences in majors, age, and work experience are not as pronounced in the participants' E.

A study done by Al-Qahtani (2020), investigated how Saudi Arabian EFL classroom teachers use pragmatic competency aspects in their daily teaching practice. Classroom procedures and practices were also mentioned as a source of difficulty for the participants. Questionnaires were sent to 160 Saudi English teachers, and the qualitative data came from (20) classroom-unplanned observations and (10) semi-structured interviews in which teachers talked about their work. The study found three main things. In the first place, when it comes to the teacher's teach ability of pragmatic competence in an EFL context, quantitative data showed that pragmatics was taught in Saudi teachers' classrooms. The study found much pragmatic competence being used to give a lot of feedback and outputs factors, but there was a gap in integrating enough inputs factors. The results of the unstructured observation notes were in line with these findings. However, the study also found that teachers use their experiences teaching English as a second language to develop intuitive and practical knowledge. On the other hand, teachers will be able to see the implications of pragmatic features in teaching and see how important intercultural awareness is. The second thing that EFL teachers have to deal with when they teach pragmatics is that there are not enough authentic materials in the textbook for a short time. For example, there are not enough tools to show cultural aspects of the language, like video-audio instruments. Third, English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers stress the importance of specific training programmes that can help them improve their pragmatic competence in the classroom.

### 2.6.3. Studies Related to EFL Communication

According to Rodríguez Cervantes and Roux Rodríguez (2012), their study looked at how communication strategies were used in the beginning EFL classroom. Students and professors from two beginner-level English classrooms were the subjects of this study. The participants ranged from high school students to university students to working adults in the classes. There were 27 students in one class, while only 23 in the other. The two teachers that took part in this study were both men. Findings showed that both groups employed language switching as their primary method of

communication. While the instructor who appeared more interested with students used explanation requests, comprehension checks and asking for confirmation, the teacher who appeared more detached from students employed comprehension checks and repetition.

Other researchers Yaman, Irgin, and Kavasoğlu (2013), their study aims to research how EFL students deal with communication challenges by investigating speaking and listening strategies (so-called "communication strategies") that can be implemented into language training to increase students' strategic competence. Students from Mersin University's Department of English Language Teaching who took preparatory, freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior-level courses in English during the 2010-2011 academic year participated in this study. According to the findings of this study, EFL students were shown to employ negotiation for meaning, compensation, and the gist in communication. The study also indicated that female and higher-level students employed communication tactics more than males.

Moreover, Rabab'ah (2016), his study looks at how communication strategy instruction affects EFL students' oral communication skills and their strategic abilities. The 124 participants in this study were all undergraduates at the University of Jordan's Department of Linguistics who were native Arabic speakers and majored in English. The study found that participants who learned how to speak better on the IELTS outperformed people who did not understand how to communicate better. After the post-test transcription data was looked at, it was found that participants in the strategy training group used more CSs, which could be because they had been taught how to use them.

Finally, Weizheng (2019). One of the goals of this research was to determine whether or not teachers in EFL classes use communication accommodation strategies to improve student-teacher interaction; the other goal was to determine which strategies are most frequently employed in EFL classes. Three English teachers from a university in central China were among the participants in the study. They are all thirty-three, thirty-five, and thirty-six-year-old College English Teaching Department grads and will be referred to as Teachers A, B, and C in the following study. Non-English specialised first-year students in their second semester from three classes with fifty to fifty-five students each are the focus of their attention in the second semester. Findings showed that communication accommodation strategies were used by the teacher and the

students. Approximation, interpretability, emotional expression, and interpersonal control were the primary strategies used by the three participants in each session of the EFL class. 3/ Interpreting skills and strategies for managing discourse, such as face-maintenance, turn-taking, topic control, asking referential questions, conversational repair, and feedback were used a lot in how the discourse was going.4/ As the teacher used more ways to make things easier for students, the more interaction they had in the classroom.

# 3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter concerns with the adopted procedures which are used to collect the data. It include : research design , participants, data collection methods, instruments, and models of analysis.

## 3.1. Research Design

The present study is a pragmatics study, and the design is descriptive quantitative, supported by statistical analysis. When doing a cross-cultural study, there are many things to consider, like socioeconomic status, cultural context, and linguistic background. Since the study is only about Iraqi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, the researcher used a multi-lingual approach. A quantitative research method is used to study pragmatic competence plasticity. Researchers use statistical analysis as a way to look at the data they have. Iraqi EFL students' pragmatic competence plasticity in communication skills, including their written efficiency, are the focus of this study. Using Bachman's model and Hyme's theory, the study created a DCT that checks pragmatic competence plasticity in the context of real-world situations. The primary method was used in the DCT to evaluate the pragmatic competence plasticity. According to Bachman, there are several types of communicative competence, all of which deal with attitudes and social conduct. The pragmatic formulas, according to Bachman show how the situations in these DCTs were created.

The primary goal of this chapter is to examine the use of pragmatic competence plasticity by Iraqi EFL students at Tikrit University/ English department, recognizing that they are part of a larger group because Tikrit University is one of the top Iraqi universities. Typical Iraqi EFL students were selected for the study, making them suitable for the task. The results of this study will tell us a lot about how well Iraqi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students are doing in studies . Iraqi EFL speakers must pay close attention to the sociolinguistic norms, structural rules, and discourse rules of the target language to meet the high standards for cross-cultural communication. Therefore, quantitative and statistical methods are used for this study.

As a result, the researcher would go over how the data was collected. The study itself is descriptive quantitative, but the Appendix includes statistical methods to support

those findings statistically more robust. The results can be summarized and interpreted using a statistical method.

## 3.2. Participants

The participants of this study are 170 Iraqi EFL students from Tikrit University Department of English Fourth Stage in the College of Education for Humanities. The research included 90 female participants and 80 male participants. The Iraqi EFL students have been used randomly and they have been asked to participate in DCT which is presented by the researcher. The sample of the current study can be seen clearly in the Table 1:

**Table 1.** The Sample of The Study

| Participants | Male | Female | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Forth year Students | 80 | 90 | 170 |

## 3.3. The instrument of the study

Discourse Completion Task (DCT)

The review of relevant literature revealed that in order to gain an understanding of language learners' pragmatic abilities, DCTs are one of the most commonly preferred tools for data collection. A DCT can be described as a data collection instrument that is purposefully created with the aim of obtaining responses to problematic statements (Zuskin, 1993). Therefore, with a goal to identify the level of student participants' pragmatic competence, the researcher decided to adopt a DCT which was originally formed by Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998).

Therefore, the test has been conducted on fifteen students randomly selected from the fourth year students in Department of English in The College of Education for Humanities at Tikrit University. To conduct the current research, a Google form-based DCT is used, which includes 20 situations. The obtained results indicate that the time needed to answer all the test items ranges between 40-45 minutes and there is no ambiguity in the difficulty level and discrimination power of the items and of the instructions of DCTs.

## 3.4. Data Collection

The sample of 170 students from the fourth-class students in the Department of English at Tikrit University are presented, a researcher with the help of lecturers at the specific department presented the DCT to the students to collect data. The items of DCT had exposed to a jury of experts in the field of specialization to check its validity and some elements are modified and other are added to ensure that the items are suitable. Final revisions were made after all items had been corrected by the supervisor and before the final copy was distributed to students. To conduct the current study, a DCT which consists from 20 situations are used. For the most part, the test was distributed and collected in the lectures at the University. Descriptive statistics were then done on the acquired data in SPSS.

### 3.4.1. The Validity of the DCT

According to Bynom(2001), validity is the truth of the test when it measures the content that the researcher intended to measure. Anastasia and Urbina (1997) say that content validity is "the systematic examination of the test content to determine whether it covers a representative sample of behaviour domain to be measured". While Harris (1967) states that face validity is "the way the test looks to the examinees, test administrator, educators and the like".

To ensure the face validity of the DCTs of the current study, it has been exposed to a jury of specialists in the field of specialization, as shown in the appendix (A). All the notes and modifications stated by jurors have been considered.

## 3.5. Data Analysis Procedure

The investigator started analysing the data after verifying the answer sheets.

- Pragmatic competence plasticity can be identified by analysing the Iraqi EFL students responses in given situation of DCTs.
- The role of pragmatic competence plasticity in communication is analysed according to Hyme’s theory of communicative competence.

- Understanding the mentality of each male's and females' approach to problem-solving by using t- test formula for two dependent samples.

Statistical analysis is the method that researchers used to analyse data because of previous research and studies pragmatic competence plasticity. This research relied on SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to summarize and analyse the findings. Descriptive statistical methods were employed in the study's DCTs data to determine percentages and frequencies of students using students' responses.

## 3.6. Pilot Administration of the DCT

A pilot study is an experimental study that is conducted with a limited number of students who are not part of the sample. The purpose of the pilot study is to assist the researcher in identifying any potential issues that may develop when the actual exam is administered (Good, 1976). The purpose of the pilot study is to provide the researcher with information regarding the functionality of the instrument and the amount of time required to respond to all of the test questions or items. In addition, it intends to determine the level of difficulty and variety of the test items and the level of clarity of both the test items and the instructions.

As a result, the examination was carried out on fifteen students chosen randomly from the fourth-year students studying English in the Department of English at The College of Education for the Humanities at Tikrit University. According to the findings, the amount of time required to answer all test questions falls between 40 and 45 minutes, and there is no uncertainty about the degree of difficulty, discriminating power, or directions of the DCTs.

## 3.7. Analysis of the Test Situations

### 3.7.1. Difficulty Level of the Test (DL)

The level of difficulty can be measured by how many students answered each test question correctly (Rosas, 2000). An item's perceived ease of administration over a sample size of tests is its item difficulty. In principle, it only represents the proportion of students who provide the correct answer. The ideal item on the examination will have a difficulty rating of between 0.15 and 0.85. (Brown and Abeywickrama, 2010). The DL

of the existing test items was calculated to lie between (0.54) and (0.83), as indicated in the table below (2).

### 3.7.2. Discrimination Power of the DCT

Discrimination power according to Alderson (1995) means "calculating the degree to which a particular item's results correspond with the results of the entire test' . This means that an object is seemed to have weak power of discrimination if it is correctly marked by high-marked students as well as low-marked students. Item discrimination refers to the degree to which an object makes a difference between good and poor students. An object has good power of discrimination if it collects the right answers from the good students and the wrong answers from the bad students. It is worth noting that the high power of discrimination will be close to 1.0, and no power of discrimination will be nil at all (Brown and Abeywickrama, 2010).

The results obtained indicate that the discrimination power of the test situations ranges from (0.35) - (0.**6**8). The table below shows the test items in discrimination power and difficulty level.

**Table 2.** The Difficulty Levels and Discrimination Powers of the Test Situations

| Situations | Item | Discrimination | Difficulty |
|---|---|---|---|
| Discourse- Completion Test | 1 | 0.56 | 0.68 |
| | 2 | 0.52 | 0.76 |
| | 3 | 0.46 | 0.74 |
| | 4 | 0.68 | 0.65 |
| | 5 | 0.45 | 0.63 |
| | 6 | 0.53 | 0.76 |
| | 7 | 0.34 | 0.83 |
| | 8 | 0.35 | 0.84 |
| | 9 | 0.42 | 0.68 |
| | 10 | 0.55 | 0.76 |

## 3.8. Reliability of the DCTs

One of the most crucial aspects of a high-quality examination is its reliability. When it comes to determining whether or not a test is trustworthy, one looks at whether or not its level of accuracy is steady and consistent no matter how many times it is administered to the same set of students under the same conditions (Veram and Beard, 1981).

Alderson (1995) says that one of the things a good test must have is reliability. It means "how much test scores stay the same." The DCT's reliability is measured by the Alpha-Cronbach formula. The correlation is (0.82), which is acceptable.

# 4. FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

This chapter provides the results and analysing of the data collected from the sample of pragmatic competence plasticity responses from Iraqi EFL students. The results of the study were analysed based on the research questions.

## 4.1. Responses in the 20 Situations by Iraqi EFL learners

Students asked to response to real life situations and then choose the answer they deemed most appropriate based on their own knowledge and competence. The act of questionnaire distinct contexts in the 20 situations presented in DCTs.4.1 Pragmatic competence Plasticity Responses in the 20 Situations by Iraqi EFL Students

According to Hymes (1977), pragmatic competence is one of the most important aspects of language and it affects the way of communication in different real life contexts. Pragmatic competence is one of communicative competence components. As (Crystal, 1997) shows " pragmatics is the study of language from the point of view of user, 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 other participants in the act of communication". Pragmatic competence plasticity helps EFL students to change their responses in a specific context with the way that suits the context and ties the main idea behind using a specific contexts. The following tables show some of Iraqi EFL students responses in specific situations by depending on their pragmatic competence plasticity.

**Table 3.** Percentage of the responses given by Iraqi EFL students

| Situations | A | B | C |
|---|---|---|---|
| Situation 1 | 52% | 30% | 18% |
| Situation 2 | 34% | 50% | 16% |
| Situation 3 | 16% | 31% | 53% |
| Situation 4 | 46% | 30% | 24% |
| Situation 5 | 48% | 12% | 40% |
| Situation 6 | 39% | 38% | 23% |
| Situation 7 | 31% | 38% | 33% |
| Situation 8 | 22% | 60% | 28% |
| Situation 9 | 17% | 43% | 40% |
| Situation 10 | 22% | 37% | 40% |
| Situation 11 | 24% | 32% | 44% |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Situation 12 | 22% | 28% | 50% |
| Situation 13 | 25% | 20% | 55% |
| Situation 14 | 30% | 44% | 26% |
| Situation 15 | 33% | 34% | 33% |
| Situation 16 | 44% | 21% | 35% |
| Situation 17 | 23% | 33% | 44% |
| Situation 18 | 42% | 20% | 38% |
| Situation 19 | 26% | 38% | 46% |
| Situation 20 | 38% | 44% | 18% |

## 4.2. Findings on Research Questions One and Two:

For answering the first and second questions of the current study which are state as:

- What are EFL students' understandings of pragmatic competence plasticity ?
- How does pragmatic competence plasticity affect the communication of EFL students?

The students responses in the used situations in DCTs were analysed as the following tables:

**Table 4.** Situation 1

| Situation | Responses | percentage |
|---|---|---|
| You and Dany are university classmates. You planned a study session with him in order to prepare together for your exams. Dany came for the appointment half an hour late. What will you say? | Why do you come late ? | 52% |
| | Is there a problem, I'm waiting for you? | 30% |
| | It looks like you forgot our meeting. | 18% |

Table 4 shows how Iraqi EFL students response to a situation when a friend came late. The majority of Iraqi EFL students (52%) response in representative form as "why do you comer late" while the lowest percentage response as "It looks like you forget our meeting".

**Table 5.** Situation 2

| Situation | Responses | percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Due to an outbreak of covid-19, Jolia is roaming without practising social distancing. You have seen her from the balcony. What would you assert to her as a friend? | You should follow social distancing rules | 34% |
| | If you can't follow the rules, you should stay home | 50% |
| | You don't care for yourself and others too. | 16% |

Table 5 shows how Iraqi EFL students response situation 2. The majority of Iraqi EFL students is (50%) response in representative form as "If you can't follow the rules, you should stay home" while the lowest percentage response 16% as "You don't care for yourself and others too".

**Table 6.** Situation 3

| Situation | Responses | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| You in the birthday party with your friends and invite your close friend to the party. And when he comes he reduce his respect with one of your friends' parents, how would you express the situation? | Respect the parents, they are so important for us. | 16% |
| | Parents are originators, we must not disrespect them | 31% |
| | If you disrespect, then your children will also disrespect you in the near future. | 53% |

Table 6 shows how Iraqi EFL students response on situation 3. The majority of Iraqi EFL students (53%) response in representative form as "If you disrespect, then your children will also disrespect you in the near future" while the lowest percentage 16% response as "Respect your parents, they are so important for us". 31% Iraqi EFL students response the situation as "Parents are originators, we must not disrespect them."

**Table 7.** Situation 4

| Situation | Responses | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Your friend is coming home for group studies but while studying, her points are not clear to you? How would you represent yourself in the situation? | Can you make your points clear in a better way? | 46% |
| | You are not good at studies I do not understand what you are saying? | 30% |
| | I will study alone, I don't need your help. | 24% |

Table 7 shows how Iraqi EFL students response on situation 4. The response of Iraqi EFL students (46%) response in representative form as “Can you make your points clear in a better way?” while the lowest percentage response 24% as “I will study alone, I don’t need your help”. 30% Iraqi EFL students response the situation as “You are not good at studies I do not understand what you are saying?”

**Table 8.** Situation 5

| Situation | Responses | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| You see that you forgot to bring your note book with you to an important lecture and you decide to ask your friend’s help. What will you do? | Could you lend me your note book, please? | 48% |
| | Give me your note book . | 12% |
| | I need your note book. | 40% |

Table 8 shows how Iraqi EFL students response situation 5. The majority of Iraqi EFL learners (48%) response as “Could you lend me your note book, please?” while the lowest percentage (12%) response as “Give me your note book”. 40% of Iraqi EFL learners compliment the situation in requesting manner “I need your note book” .

**Table 9.** Situation 6

| Situation | Responses | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| While travelling, you put your big and heavy bag on the bus herself. The bud stopped suddenly and the bag fell on the passengers and one of them shout your face angry. What will you say? | Sir, please will you talk politely? | 39% |
| | You can’t talk to me like that. | 38% |
| | Stop the bus. I will leave. | 23% |

Table 9 shows how Iraqi EFL students response situation 6. The majority of Iraqi EFL students (39%) response as “Sir, please will you talk politely? While the lowest percentage (23%) response as “Stop the bus. I will leave”. 38% of Iraqi EFL students response the situation in ordering manner “You can’t talk to me like that”.

**Table 10.** Situation 7

| Situation | Responses | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Henry is a hardworking boy; as a result, he got a promotion in the office. How would you bless him as a friend? | Wow, Henry congratulations, I'm really happy for you | 31% |
| | Great job Henry, Keep working hard | 38% |
| | c. Congratulation Henry, let's have a party. | 33% |

Table 10 shows how Iraqi EFL response situation 7. The majority of Iraqi EFL students (38%) response as "Great job Henry, Keep working hard". While the lowest percentage (31%) response as "Wow, Henry congratulations, I'm really happy for you". 33% of Iraqi EFL response the situation as "Congratulation Henry, let's have a party."

**Table 11.** Situation 8

| Situation | Responses | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Sofia is from Paris. Her friend Sally has recently moved to Paris. Sofia asked Sally "how do you like Paris so far" and Sally answered "I love it". What does Sally mean? | Paris is a normal city. | 22% |
| | She is yet to see much of Paris. | 60% |
| | She likes Paris and enjoy living there. | 28% |

Table 11 shows how Iraqi EFL students response situation 8. The majority of Iraqi EFL students (60%) response as "She is yet to see much of Paris." while the lowest percentage (22%) response as "Paris is a normal city". 28% of Iraqi EFL students response the situation as She likes Paris and enjoy living there.

**Table 12.** Situation 9

| Situation | Responses | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| You are an instructor and you choose one of your students to perform a special play at college. He do the task very well . How would you express your proud of him? | I appreciate your skill. | 17% |
| | I have made no mistake in choosing you for the performance. Proud of you boy. | 43% |
| | Excellent, you are always a bright student of the college. | 40% |

Table 12 shows how Iraqi EFL students response situation 9. Here, the majority of Iraqi EFL students (43%) response as "I have made no mistake in choosing you for the performance. Proud of you child" while the lowest percentage (17%) response as "I

appreciate your skill". 40% Iraqi EFL students response the situation as "Excellent, you are always a bright student of the college".

**Table 13.** Situation 10

| Situation | Responses | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| You are poor in your studies but with the support of your teachers, you pass the exams. How would you express the situation? | a. Thank you so much for the support. | 22% |
| | b. I think I could not pass but with your support, I passed the exam. | 37% |
| | c. You have made a bright future for me, from now I will do more hard study. | 40% |

Table 13 shows how Iraqi EFL students response situation 11. Here, the majority response 40% as "You have made a bright future for me, from now I will do more hard study." 22% response as "Thank you so much for the support", and 37% response as "I think I could not pass but with your support, I passed the exam.".

**Table 14.** Situation 11

| Situation | Responses | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Rahma, your friend, sees you at the mall. She comes and meets you when you are paying; you see that you do not have enough money in the purse. You are returning a few things but she stops you and pays the remaining money. How would you say in the situation? | a. Thank you Rahma, you are so helpful. | 24% |
| | b. I am thankful for your nice nature . | 32% |
| | c. Thank you, I will return your payment soon. | 44% |

Table 14 shows how Iraqi EFL students response situation 11. Here, responses like majority (44%) response as "Thank you, I will return your payment soon". 24% response as "Thank you Rahma, you are so helpful" and 32% response as "I am thankful for your helpful nature".

**Table 15.** Situation 12

| Situation | Responses | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| You invite on of your friends to join a party with family. When he/ she arrive, you say… | Welcome, and enjoy the party. | 22% |
| | Nice to see you at the party, have fun. | 28% |
| | I think that you will not come, but welcome. | 50% |

Table 15 shows how Iraqi EFL students response situation 12. Here, responses the situation, 50% response as "I think that you will not come, but welcome". 22%

response as “Welcome, and enjoy the party” and 28% compliment as “Nice to see you at the party, have fun”.

**Table 16.** Situation 13

| Situation | Responses | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| you meet your neighbour suddenly in the park. She looks at your sweater and she compliments it. What would be your say in this situation? | Thank you for complimenting | 25% |
| | You are so nice; I will get you a new one. | 20% |
| | Oh, thank you dear, you have also a good one. | 55% |

Table 16 shows how Iraqi EFL students response situation 13. Here, responses to the situation in a thankful manner in their different style like 55% response as “Oh, thank you, dear, you have also a good one”. 25% response as “Thank you for complimenting” and 20% response as “You are so nice; I will get you a new one”.

**Table 17.** Situation 14

| Situation | Responses | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Your friend at college won the game which hold by university. What will you say to congratulate him? | a. I know you will win. you play good | 30% |
| | b. Yeah, my favourite won. One day, I will also play like you | 44% |
| | c. You are the best player I have ever seen | 26% |

Table 17 shows how Iraqi EFL students response situation 14. The majority of Iraqi EFL students (44%) response as “Yeah, my favourite won the match. One day, I will also play like you” while the lowest percentage (26%) response as “you are the best player I have ever seen”. 33% Iraqi EFL students response the situation as “I know you will win. you play good”.

**Table 18.** Situation 15

| Situation | Responses | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| You visit your friend Samir in his house; you see him look very well. What would you say to him about his appearance? | You look better than you think you do, Samir. | 33% |
| | I’m astonish to see you in a different look. | 34% |
| | Wow, Samir you look great. | 33% |

Table 18 shows how Iraqi EFL students response in situation 15. The majority of Iraqi EFL students (34%) response as “I’m astonish to see you in a different look” while the lowest percentage (33%) response as “You look better than you think you do,

Samir". 33% Iraqi EFL learners compliment the situation as "Wow, Samir you look great".

**Table 19.** Situation 16

| Situation | Responses | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Zaid bought a new car and he invited you for a ride as a friend? What would you say to him? | Hey, Zaid colour of the car is so eye-catching | 44% |
| | Nice car, this makes your appearance more perfect | 21% |
| | You have good taste in the selection of the cars | 35% |

Table 19 shows how Iraqi EFL student response in situation 16. The majority of Iraqi EFL students (44%) response as "Hey, Zaid colour of the car is so eye-catching" while the lowest percentage (21%) response as "Nice car, this makes your appearance more classy". 35% Iraqi EFL students response the situation as "You have good taste in the selection of the cars".

**Table 20.** Situation 17

| Situation | Responses | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Ahmed and Fatima, a husband and a wife, were invited you to dinner at their house, what would you say about their appearance? | You look made for each other. | 23% |
| | You both are looking adorable. | 33% |
| | I must say, brother, your wife is so beautiful. | 44% |

Table 20 shows how Iraqi EFL students response in situation 17. The majority of Iraqi EFL students (44%) response as "I must say, brother, your wife is so beautiful" while the lowest percentage (23%) response as "You look made for each other" and 33% of Iraqi EFL students response the situation as "You both are looking adorable ".

**Table 21.** Situation 18

| Situation | Responses | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| As you enter the mall, you see your friend trying on shoes which looks so nice. What would you say to compliment her? | This shoes do suit you; I think you should take it. | 42% |
| | You must buy it | 20% |
| | You like dark colour; it suits you. | 38% |

Table 21 shows how Iraqi EFL students response in situation 18. The majority of Iraqi EFL students (42%) response as "This shoes do suit you, I think you should take it". The lowest majority of students' (20%) response as "You must buy it." and 38% of students response as "You like dark colour; it suits you.".

**Table 22.** Situation 19

| Situation | Responses | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| While you were spending your holidays, you met your friend Peter. You want to greet him with special words? | It's been a nice holiday with you, my lovely friend. | 26% |
| | I am happy to have you as a friend. | 28% |
| | I would like to come with you on holiday again. | 46% |

Table 22 shows how Iraqi EFL students response in situation 19. The majority of Iraqi EFL learners (46%) response as "I would like to come with you on holiday again because of your joyful nature". The lowest majority of learners' (26%) response as "It's been a nice holiday with you, my lovely friend" and 28% of learners response as "I am happy to have you as a friend".

**Table 23.** Situation 20

| Situation | Responses | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Your friend is from a rich family; therefore, he is so show-off . How would you deal with the situation? | As a friend, I am telling you no one will talk to you as friend. | 38% |
| | You should be polite to everyone; this personality will not help you in all times. | 44% |
| | I can't be your friend anymore because of your behaviours. | 18% |

Table 23 shows how Iraqi EFL students response in situation 20. The majority of Iraqi EFL students (44%) response as "You should be polite to everyone; this nature will not help you in all times". The lowest majority of students' (18%) response as "I can't be your friend anymore because of your behaviours" and 38% of students as "As a friend, I am telling you no one will talk to you as friend".

The obtained results of students' responses show that pragmatic competence plasticity impacts positively in students' choices of suitable responses. The lack of pragmatic competence plasticity takes the students to choose unsuitable response from the presented ones. Some Iraqi EFL students face difficulties when communicating in foreign contexts because of their lack of pragmatic competence plasticity. The reasons behind that may relate to teachers' lack of experiences that enhance the students pragmatic competence plasticity and direct their ability towards choosing appropriate words and expressions in a given contexts. The results of the students responses indicate that the aims of the current study raised by Iraqi EFL students and seem significant in the results of the study. This proves that the Iraqi EFL students tend to use their

pragmatic competence plasticity when responding to DCTs situations by using suitable speech act in target culture rules.

Furthermore, the results of students responses indicate that pragmatic competence plasticity is an important aspect in language learning since it affects the students ability in choosing the suitable response. So, the EFL students need to be familiar with the instructions of pragmatic competence plasticity in using suitable words in real life situations.

## 4.3. Findings on Study Third Question:

For answering the third question of the current study which states "Is the pragmatic competence plasticity used by the EFL students' communication differ in terms of gender?" , the mean scores of both male students and female students was compared and the results show that EFL female students have a slightly higher mean in pragmatic competence plasticity (M = 29.34; SD = 15.56) than EFL male students who show the lower level (M = 22.06; SD = 9.22). The of the effect of gender indicate that the EFL female students perform better in pragmatic competence plasticity than the male ones. For Maccoby (2002), gender differences generally show the higher performance of women on communicative tasks and men on the written task.

Thus, this opinion proves that female EFL students are more better thorough communication and, as such, are favourably correlated with more suitable responses relative to the target language in a social and real life context. These results can be seen clearly in table 24 .

**Table 24.** EFL Students Mean Scores According to Gender.

| Gender | No. of students | Mean | SD. | T-Value | | DF | Level of Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Calculated | Tabulated | | |
| Females | 90 | 29.34 | 15.56 | 0.06 | 1.99 | 168 | 0.5 |
| Males | 80 | 22.06 | 9.22 | | | | |

## 4.4. Findings on Study Fourth Question

According to students' responses in the situations presented by DCTs, the answering of fourth question that states "Does pragmatic competence plasticity positively or negatively impact EFL students' communication?", the results prove the

positive impact of pragmatic competence plasticity in students' communication in better and suitable way. The use of suitable response depends on the EFL students' competence and experience in which it direct their success in communication.

## 4.5. Findings on Study Fifth Question

For answering the fifth question of the current study which states "What are the suggestions of EFL students' communication to enhance their pragmatic competence plasticity?", we can state a list of suggestions for improving EFL students' pragmatic competence plasticity in communication. These suggestions are presented due to the students responses in specific situations in DCTs. Some of the suggestions are as follows:

- Giving the students the main instructions of using their pragmatic competence plasticity suitable in communication.
- Encouraging the students to communicate by using the target language.
- Finding the students main challenges and difficulties and trying to solve them by helping the students to overcome them.
- Directing the students attention to situations concerning pragmatic competence plasticity and its role in communication.
- Training the teachers with the appropriate methods and strategies that help the students to overcome pragmatic competence plasticity and enhance their ability in using appropriate response in real life situations.

## 4.6. Summary

This chapter highlighted the findings from the Iraqi EFL students on pragmatic competence plasticity. 170 Iraqi EFL students have participated in the study. The findings are collected and analysed. The data were analysed on the basis of Hyme's theory of communicative competence. After analysing the data, the next chapter deals with the discussion on the collected data by comparing it with related previous studies.

# 5. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Pragmatics is a modern term related to philosopher Charles Moriss (1938), who was concerned in defining the overall structure of a field of signs or semiotics. He distinguishes three branches of semiotics: syntax, semantics, and pragmatics (Levinson, 1983). Saeed (1997) describes pragmatics as the study of "the relationship of signals to interpreters" as part of his semiotics theory, alongside syntax and semantics. This research is motivated by a desire to understand how plasticity in pragmatic competence affects conversational outcomes.

Therefore, the primary purpose of this research is to better understand how to help EFL students develop their communicative pragmatic ability. The results of this study show that the gaps related to these linguistic problems are caused by individuals not knowing enough about how pragmatic competence plasticity can change. However, they also say that the concerns brought up by the EFL teachers and students in this study seem to be important and must be addressed to improve the EFL students' language skills. Moreover the results show how well students understand pragmatic competence plasticity based on gender, which shows that EFL female students perform better than their male colleagues. Teaching pragmatics does not force students to use the same pragmatic choices as native speakers. Instead, the goal is to show students good examples and make them aware of the different linguistic resources used in different situations. Then, as students interact in the situations, this knowledge helps them decide which language to use better.

One important part of learning a language is using it in real life. For example, suppose language education aims to teach students how to use a language correctly and effectively in different interactional settings. In that case, it is important to raise students' pragmatism awareness and give them some valuable strategies they can use to keep communicating in different settings with different people. It is often agreed that pragmatics is one of the most challenging aspects of language study. Unfortunately, some students mistakenly believe that pragmatics can only be learned from an expert or personal experience. As long as an effort is put into studying this phenomenon and textbooks are published with emphasis on case studies of conversation patterns and cultural variations.

Some researchers think pragmatism skills and knowledge should be taught formally as a regular part of the FL curriculum. However, although there are plans for teaching different parts of pragmatic competence, not many have been tested in the classroom to see how well they help students learn the skill in question. Because of this, it is important to study the effects of instruction in real-world situations. Pragmatic skills can be taught both explicitly and implicitly, with explicit instruction being more common and through various activities and situations. However, particular attention should be paid to rules and norms that are different from those in the learners' home cultures. After all, communication is not just about sending and receiving messages; it is also about understanding each person's intentions and knowing how to respond to them.

According to the students' responses in situations in DCTs in the current study, Iraqi EFL students response positive semantic structure in possession as 'nice, wow, good, beautiful' while they response positive as well as negative sematic structure like 'angry, kind, bad, good' as nature in personality characteristics. On the semantic level, Al-Rassam (1999) stated that each response must contain of at least one term which have positive semantic structure. Because of this, it is essential to include elements of pragmatism in EFL lesson plans and curricula. pragmatic competence is one of the goals of college English classes, and it should be taught along with language skills. The ways we've talked about so far to help students improve their pragmatic skills are just ideas that need to be tested and proven in the future.

The study is different from previous studies like the study of Nguyen (2008) which is based on a specific program for enhancing the students' pragmatic competence. while the current study tries to find the role of pragmatic competence plasticity in Iraqi EFL students' communication. Previous studies have not applied on students such as Ekin and Damar (2013) study have applied on EFL teachers and Al- Qahtani (2020) researched in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the study aims to focus on Iraqi EFL students. The study focused on classification of Hyme's theory of communicative competence and the components of communicative competence. The study showed that in the responses, Iraqi EFL students have different manners to response in the given real situations. While other studies used different theories as Searl's theory as Cervantes and Rodriguez(2012). Some previous studies insisted on using small sample as Nguyen(2008) who used 36 participants while the present study used 170 university

students as participants in the study. Also different levels of students have been used as primary, secondary and advanced level. The current one used university level as sample of collecting data

# CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCHES

Pragmatic Competence, in general, has attracted the interest of lots of studies. However, limited studies have been conducted on pragmatic competence plasticity. Therefore, the present study goals to investigate the role of pragmatic competence plasticity in EFL students' communication.

This chapter presented the conclusions which were come up based on findings, limitations of study and some suggestions for further studies.

## Conclusions and Implications

The current research includes both theoretical and practical components, and it has arrived at the following results as a result of these conclusion**:**

- Because students of English as a foreign language (EFL) face many difficulties with pragmatic competence plasticity in response to situations, they require classroom activities that will help them develop their explicit and implicit communicative competence to use appropriate responses.
- It is necessary to discuss many circumstances to assist students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in developing their pragmatic competence plasticity and communicating appropriately within a social setting.
- The students ability in pragmatic competence proves their language skills.
- It is clear from the findings of this research that female students perform significantly better than male students when it comes to reacting appropriately to various circumstances.

## Recommendations

- EFL teachers must pay more attention enhancing EFL students responses in the EFL context.
- Teacher should be able to receive sufficient knowledge in the area of pragmatic competence plasticity while they are on job or taking undergraduate courses

- Researchers should be conducted exploring the effects of instruction in pragmatic competence plasticity of the English language in EFL setting.
- Pragmatic competence plasticity should be taught on it is own right instead of being taught as a portion in linguistic courses of undergraduate studies.

**Limitations of the study**

This study is limited with:

- There was a limited number of students because of the time and resources needed to collect data.
- Only Iraqi EFL students are included in this research.
- The study depends on only questionnaire for data collection
- Students are limited to Undergraduate Iraqi EFL students at the University of Tikrit's

Department of English in the College of Education for Humanities for the Academic Year 2022/2023.

**Suggestions for Future Studies**

Based on what this study found, here are some suggestions for how pragmatic competence plasticity should be used in future studies:

- Using a mixed- methods research design and adding another field of study.
- It will be necessary to use other methodologies, such as interviews and observations, to provide a more accurate idea of pragmatic competence plasticity.
- Students may choose to study at more than one university, or even all four levels.
- Finally, for future research on a similar topic, it could be suggested that giving participants more time would let them give a more representative sample.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### The Jury Members

| No. | Name | Specialty | Position |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Prof. Dr. Nahida .Majeed | TEFL | University of Tikrit |
| 2 | Prof .Dr. Amra I. Sultan | TEFL | University of Tikrit |
| 3 | Prof.Dr.Nagham Q.Yahya | TEFL | University of Tikrit |
| 4 | Prof. Dr. Abdulkareem Fadhil Jamil | TEFL | University of Baghdad |
| | Asst. Prof. Dr. Shoaib S. Abdulfatah | TEFL | University of Mosul |
| 5 | Asst.prof Dr.DuniaT.Hameed | TEFL | University of Tikrit |
| 6 | Asst. Prof.Dr. Kanaan K. Hassan | Linguistics | University of Tikrit |
| 7 | Asst.prof. Dr.Manal O.Musa | TEFL | University of Tikrit |
| 8 | Asst. prof. Maysaa Rashid | TFFL | University of Baghdad |
| 9 | Asst. prof. Marwan Mezhir Sahab | TFFL | University of Tikrit |
| 10 | Instructor. Wesam Shaher | Linguistics | University of Tikrit |

## APPENDIX B

### Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs)

**Instructions:** My master's thesis research, titled "The Role of Pragmatic Competence Plasticity in English Foreign Language Students' Communication," examined how Iraqi English language students employ pragmatic competence. Do the Discourse Completion Tasks and respond in English to the following situations. Because this is not an exam, you do not need to register for it. This DCT aims to determine how you express different communicative functions while speaking English as a Foreign language. We will be able to examine how your native language affects your ability to speak the target language using this way. That was thoughtful of you.

To learn more about pragmatic competence, please look at the following praise in three different situations. First, when given a speech situation, you should answer with the natural English word you would use if you spoke directly in that language. The tasks below must be done in 40 minutes.

***RQ1/ What are EFL students' understandings of pragmatic competence plasticity ?***

***RQ2/ How does pragmatic competence plasticity affect the communication of EFL students?***

**1.** You and Dany are university classmates. You planned a study session with him in order to prepare together for your exams. Dany came for the appointment half an hour late. What will you say?

**a.** Why do you come late ?

**b.** Is there a problem, I'm waiting for you?

**c**. It looks like you forgot our meeting.

**2.** Due to an outbreak of covid-19, Jolia is roaming without practising social distancing. You have seen her from the balcony. What would you assert to her as a friend?

a. You should follow social distancing rules

b. If you can't follow the rules, you should stay home

c. You don’t care for yourself and others too.

3. You in the birthday party with your friends and invite your close friend to the party. And when he comes he reduce his respect with one of your friends’ parents, how would you express the situation?

a. Respect the parents, they are so important for us.

b. Parents are originators, we must not disrespect them

c. If you disrespect, then your children will also disrespect you in the near future.

4.Your friend is coming home for group studies but while studying, her points are not clear to you? How would you represent yourself in the situation?

a. Can you make your points clear in a better way?

b. You are not good at studies I do not understand what you are saying?

c. I will study alone, I don’t need your help.

5. You see that you forgot to bring your note book with you to an important lecture and you decide to ask your friend’s help. What will you do?

a. Could you lend me your note book, please?

b. Give me your note book .

c. I need your note book.

6. While travelling, you put your big and heavy bag on the bus herself. The bud stopped suddenly and the bag fell on the passengers and one of them shout your face angry. What will you say?

a. Sir, please will you talk politely?

b. You can’t talk to me like that.

c. Stop the bus. I will leave.

7. Henry is a hardworking boy; as a result, he got a promotion in the office . How would you bless him as a friend?

a. Wow, Henry congratulations, I’m really happy for you

b. Great job Henry, Keep working hard

c. Congratulation Henry, let's have a party.

8. Sofia is from Paris. Her friend Sally has recently moved to Paris. Sofia asked Sally "how do you like Paris so far" and Sally answered "I love it". What does Sally mean?

a. Paris is a normal city.

b. She is yet to see much of Paris.

c. She likes Paris and enjoy living there.

9. You are an instructor and you choose one of your students to perform a special play at college. He do the task very well . How would you express your proud of him?

a. I appreciate your skill.

b. I have made no mistake in choosing you for the performance. Proud of you boy.

c. Excellent, you are always a bright student of the college.

10. You are poor in your studies but with the support of your teachers, you pass the exams. How would you express the situation?

a. Thank you so much for the support.

b. I think I could not pass but with your support, I passed the exam.

c. You have made a bright future for me, from now I will do more hard study.

11. Rahma, your friend, sees you at the mall. She comes and meets you when you are paying; you see that you do not have enough money in the purse. You are returning a few things but she stops you and pays the remaining money. How would you say in the situation?

a. Thank you Rahma, you are so helpful.

b. I am thankful for your nice nature.

c. Thank you, I will return your payment soon.

12. You invite on of your friends to join a party with family. When he/ she arrive, you say…

a. Welcome, and enjoy the party.

b. Nice to see you at the party, have fun.

c. I think that you will not come, but welcome.

13. you meet your neighbour suddenly in the park. She looks at your sweater and she compliments it. What would be your say in this situation?

a. Thank you for complimenting

b. You are so nice; I will get you a new one.

c. Oh, thank you dear, you have also a good one.

14. Your friend at college won the game which hold by university. What will you say to congratulate him?

a. I know you will win. you play good

b. Yeah, my favourite won. One day, I will also play like you

c. You are the best player I have ever seen.

15.You visit your friend Samir in his house; you see him look very well. What would you say to him about his appearance?

a. You look better than you think you do, Samir.

b. I'm astonish to see you in a different look.

c. Wow, Samir you look great.

16. Zaid bought a new car and he invited you for a ride as a friend? What would you say to him?

a. Hey, Zaid colour of the car is so eye-catching

b. Nice car, this makes your appearance more perfect

c. You have good taste in the selection of the cars

17. Ahmed and Fatima, a husband and a wife, were invited you to dinner at their house, what would you say about their appearance?

a. You look made for each other.

b. You both are looking adorable

c. I must say, brother, your wife is so beautiful.

18. As you enter the mall, you see your friend trying on shoes which looks so nice. What would you say to compliment her?

a. This shoes do suit you; I think you should take it.

b. You must buy it

c. You like dark colour; it suits you.

19. While you were spending your holidays, you met your friend Peter. You want to greet him with special words?

a. It’s been a nice holiday with you, my lovely friend.

b. I am happy to have you as a friend.

c. I would like to come with you on holiday again.

20. Your friend is from a rich family; therefore, he is so show-off . How would you deal with the situation?

a. As a friend, I am telling you no one will talk to you as friend.

b. You should be polite to everyone; this personality will not help you in all times.

c. I can’t be your friend anymore because of your behaviours.

Dr. Najwa and Dr. Shaker helped me in analysing the data

# CURRICULUM VITAE

Zahraa ABD ALAMIR MOHAMMED graduated from the English Language Department in Ahlulbait University. Then, she moved to Turkey to start his Master's education at Karabuk University