The Effects of Pragmatic Difficulties on EFL Learners' Performance in Understanding Academic Texts
(A case of Omdurman Islamic University Students)

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Abstract:

The current investigatory study has mainly set out to investigate the effects of pragmatic difficulties on EFL learners' performance while processing academic texts; in addition to that the study has explored how the performance of the students is highly affected by these problems. The study has adopted a descriptive - analytical methodology. As tools of data collection concerning the present study; 20 university lecturers were selected randomly from different Sudanese universities for a questionnaire, and a test which was given to 40 of Omdurman Islamic University's undergraduates. The data obtained has been processed computationally with statistical package of social science (SPSS) program to verify the hypothesis of this study. The results of both the questionnaire and test analysis supplied the study with a clear specific detailed description for the interpretation of how the pragmatic difficulties hinder EFL learners' performance in comprehending academic texts as the lecturers agreed with and the students' performance has proved.

Keywords: pragmatic difficulties- academic texts

الخلاصة

هدفت هذه الدراسة ألي تقصي أثر الصعوبات التداولية علي اداء دراسي اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية أثناء فهمهم للنصوص الأكاديمية، حالة طلاب جامعة ام درمان الإسلامية. حيث انتهجت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي كما استخدمت الاستبيان والاختبار كأدوات لجمع البيانات. كانت عينة هذه الدراسة (20) محاضراً بقسم اللغة الانجليزية ببعض الجامعات السودانية، و (40) طالب/ة من قسم اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة ام درمان الإسلامية. تمت معالجة البيانات التي حصلت عليها الدراسة من الاستبيان والاختبار باستخدام التحليل الإحصائي (SPSS) لاختبار فرضية هذه الدراسة. أظهرت النتائج أن طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية يواجهون عدة مشكلات متعلقة بفهم ومعرفة علم التداولية وكيفية التعامل معه في النص الاكاديمي، وان هذه الصعوبات أثرت علي أداء هم الاكاديمي العام.

الكلمات الافتتاحية: الصعوبات التداولية ـ النصوص الأكاديمية

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Through observations in the period of lecturing at Sudanese universities the researchers observed that, some students encounter many problems while processing academic texts due to some reasons on the very top of them are pragmatic difficulties. They negatively affect their comprehension and led to a passive impact on their performance. The students do not fully grasp and ransack the texts given by lecturers and that may refer to either lecturers' strategies or students'. Although pragmatics is taught since second year as a branch of linguistics at Omdurman Islamic University, students still face a set of problems. However; there are some students who keep trying to overcome those obstacles by exerting more efforts to get at least a reasonable knowledge about pragmatics and how it works in order to get a better understanding of the academic texts which are a part of the university's curriculum. The present study will identify and examine these pragmatic difficulties and shed light on how the university syllabus leaves out of account the linguistic main branch; pragmatics.

1.2. Aims and scope of the study

The present study aims at investigating the nature of the pragmatic difficulties that EFL learners face while processing academic texts.

The scope of the study is limited to EFL lecturers and learners as well. The total number of the sample of the study was 20 lecturers from some Sudanese universities and (40) undergraduates at Omdurman Islamic University. The study will be conducted in the academic year (2019-2021).

1.3. Question of the study
- What are the pragmatic difficulties EFL learners encounter while processing academic texts?
- To what extent EFL learners' performance is affected by these pragmatic difficulties?

1.4. Hypothesis of the Study
- EFL learners encounter a number of pragmatic difficulties while processing academic   texts.
- EFL learners' performance in academic texts is highly affected by the pragmatic difficulties.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Definitions of pragmatics:
Like syntax and semantics, pragmatics is sub-field of linguistics inquiry developed in the 1970s. Thomas, (2006, p.92) refers to pragmatics as "the study of meaning in use which is concerned with how language is actually used by non-native speaker to perform diverse function in interaction, this includes how politeness is conveyed, how speech acts are realized, and the effect of grammatical structure of an utterance on degree of directness and utterance interpretation. Pragmatics is identified and defined by many applied linguists, educators and researchers from a variety of perspectives. Some of the definitions are as follow:

Leech, (1983, p.6) defines pragmatics as meaning in relation to speech situation, this definition highlights language user's ability to use language in different communicative purposes in different situations.

Crystal, (1985, p.15) defines " pragmatics as the study of language from the point of view of the users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social

interaction, and the effects their use of Language has on the other participants in an act of communication".

Yule, (1996, p.229) pragmatics deals with the relationship between linguistic forms and the users of these forms This entails the ability to employ linguistic forms to perform particular language functions properly.

2.2 Aspects of Pragmatics:

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

2.2.1 Speech Acts

One of the most widely studied connections between computational linguistics and pragmatics is speech-act theory (Searle 1969; Searle and Vanderveken 1985), and there are a number of excellent existing resources on this topic (Jurafsky 2004; Leech and Weisser 2003; Jurafsky and Martin 2009: 21, 24). It is interesting therefore to concentrate on the issue of how speech act (illocutionary) force is assigned to utterances, casting this as a problem of context dependence and highlighting the ways in which the context develops. Speech-acts broadly categorise utterances based on the speaker's intentions for their core semantic content, indicating whether it is meant to be asserted, queried, commanded, exclaimed, and so forth.

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

Speech acts are the certain verbs that are used within sentences in towards classifying it accordingly. Austin defines his idea accordingly when in order to introduce the differences between two

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

2.2.1.1 Classification of Speech Acts according to their structure:

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

A. Direct Speech Acts

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

B. Indirect Speech Acts

An indirect speech act is an act when the propositional context (the literal meaning) differs from that which the speaker wishes to express. Some basic analysis show that some speech acts tend to be expressed directly, others indirectly. Therefore, statements are generally expressed directly, considering the following statement The English article is hard nut to crack vs. I say that the English article is hard nut to crack. Questions are also expressed directly for instance; can you help me? Vs. I wonder if you can help me. As for requests,

they are more often expressed indirectly than to be direct, for example open the window, please. (Direct) vs. could you open the window? (Indirect). Speech acts which expressed indirectly are politer than direct ones, so the motivation for indirect speech acts is politeness and tact. Therefore, it is worth mentioning to illustrate the divide drawn between the two main categories of speech acts, according to their structure: direct and indirect speech acts.

2.2.1.2 Types of speech acts according their functions:

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

It is often assumed that there is a deterministic relationship between clause-types and speech-act force: imperative clauses are for commanding, interrogative clauses are for querying, declaratives are for asserting, and so forth, with the deviations from this pattern seen as exceptional (Sadock and Zwicky1985; Hamblin 1987). The most noticeable about speech acts the three basic types of direct speech acts which corresponds world's three special syntactic types those seem to occur in most languages, which is considered to be a function classification concerned. According to Austin; when anyone engages in a speech, they carry out three types of acts: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts.

A. Locutionary Acts:

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

B. Illocutionary acts:

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

It also includes; telling, asking, warning, ordering, offering, thanking, congratulating, appointing, and firing. Verschueren (1980) counted more than 150 such illocutionary verbs in English. According to John Searle (1975b), these acts differ principally in what he called their illocutionary point, their primary publicly intended Perlocutionary effect. In making a request, speakers are trying to get their addressees to do something: the illocutionary point is to get them to do that something. For other illocutionary acts, the point is different. Searle in Levinson (1983: 240) classified speech acts into five main categories:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The first is an invitation to interpretational caution in attributing a deficit: the missing observation of an expected performance may be comprehended only when a strong theory is available that predicts the deficit and explains it in terms of competence and performance. The second is an invitation to

courageously eliminate any data the collection of which is not based on a theory: these data are quite simply useless in as much as they are performance data not connected to competence. For example, the inability to comprehend a communication act may depend on the fact that the person does not possess the essential tools required to do so; alternatively, the person might possess the necessary tools but might not have applied them for any reason whatsoever: she was tired, distracted, overwrought. For instance, all animals interact with members of their own species, using communicative modes of increasing complexity. A minimal degree of communication is necessary in every gendered species in order to guarantee continuity through sexual reproduction.

Certain types of insects seem to constitute an exception, but bees and termites have a social structure where every type of interaction is rigidly predetermined at birth, even if the number of agents is extremely high indeed. Communication is sometimes effective, as in the dance of the bees described by Karl von Frisch (1966): a bee that has found a source of nectar is capable of indicating the location to her companions, signaling both the direction with respect to the sun and the distance from the hive.

2.4 The communication process

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

are many principles to be applied such politeness, clearness and truthfulness principles.

There should be a clear message in order to achieve good communication results. the message which is simply the information that it is intended to be communicated (the intended meaning). Without a message communication is useless. The sender (the addresser) is the main source of the message, so they must know why the communication is necessary and the result is highly needed, and the listener the one who spoken to (the addressee). Successful communication can not only be through speaking, it can be via writing, body language or eye contact (channel-the medium through which the message is sent), also the category of the message as: invitation, congratulation or condolence (the topic) in addition to the language (the code) also the Context in which the message is said like: time and place (setting). (McPheat, 2010).

2.5 'Semantic' and/or 'Pragmatic' difficulties in a broad term:

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

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

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

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

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

According Anne Whitaker (2009) that academic papers are a specifically-designed torture instrument. They are desirable because instructors are not directly involved in that issue. Usually students make themselves busy by waiting until the last minute to conduct their papers and by not knowing what they are doing. A paper is not supposed to be of that kind of torture, it is supposed to be a good chance for the students to explore something that interests them from their courses. Therefore; students are free to choose a topic, empty pages on which to express their own thoughts, and an audience that is interested in reading what they think.

In assignments, students will start by asking a relevant appropriate question, then find and analyze answers to it, and choose their own best answer(s) to discuss in their paper. Their paper will share their thoughts and results and justify their answer logically and prove it with evidence. Anne Whitaker (2009) added that the goal of academic writing is not to show off everything that students know

about the topic chosen, but rather to show that their understanding and also can think critically about their topic. That will help them obtain good grades and more important it will develop their skills in researching, evaluating information, organizing, arguing, responding to others' arguments, analyzing, and expressing themselves clearly in writing.

2.6.2 Principles of academic writing

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

a. **Persuasive purpose:** the purpose here is that students get readers to adopt their answer to the question. So they will choose one answer to their question, support that answer with reason and evidence, and try to change the readers' opinion about the topic. Persuasive writing includes argumentative and position papers.

b. **Analytical purpose:** the aim here is that students explain and evaluate possible answers to their question, selecting the best answer(s) based on their own criteria. Analytical writing often investigates causes, examine effects, and it also aims at evaluating effectiveness, assessing ways of problems solving, identifying relationships between set of ideas, and analyzing other people's arguments. Examples of this type of academic writing include analysis papers and critical analyses.

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

2.6.3 Assessment of EFL learners' writing (ability)

A critical aspect of any planning towards writing courses for students is that the course designer has to know, within reasonable limits, what the student profile is. Considering the fact that students are individuals with unique characteristics in terms of their writing ability (and general academic literacy). H. G. Bulter (2016) it is a practical necessity, in dealing with large numbers of students, the

possibility of grouping students together according to their writing needs is to be considered. He also added that after the primary issues that should be addressed in a writing course have been identified from the perspective of student needs and abilities, the suitability and ultimate relevance of the course would clearly depend on the degree of flexibility as the need arises, of such a course in changing emphasis. What may be problematic, it is the increasing differentiation between course designers and language instructors in the sense that the person who designed the course may not always be the instructor.

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

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

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

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

2.7 The reader of students' texts

Apart from being readers of academic texts themselves, students' written texts are read by peers and most importantly, by their

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

2.8 Role of feedback on academic writing:

Feedback student writers receive from their both lecturers and supervisors regarding the written texts they produce. The type and quality of feedback provided can support student writers in the long term to become more proficient academic writers in specific disciplines.

In this regard; H. G. Bulter (2016) stated that two connected issues are at stake in the provision of feedback. Where revision tends to focus primarily on improving ideas, information flow and argumentation, editing is usually associated with error correction. In practice, however, it is difficult to separate these issues, since incorrect language use regularly leads to muddled ideas. In this sense (Lee, 2003) explains that, there is some support for the positive effect of indirect feedback (e.g. only indicating the place of errors rather than directly correcting them), and dealing with error patterns

regarding selective (as opposed to comprehensive) error feedback. H. G. Bulter (2016) added that individual consultation also has a positive effect on the production of specific error types as well as the error frequency of first year and postgraduate students. The main point, however, is not to have inflated expectations of long-term, sustained development of language ability as a result of error correction or feedback. While students may in the short term find it possible to eliminate errors which they have received feedback on, but they may not always be able to sustain this. To close H. G. Bulter (2016) argues that; this kind of 'back-sliding' is due to the fact students may not be at the right developmental stage to learn the language component or structure at which the feedback is directed.

Part Two: Previous Studies

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

2.2.1 The First Study

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

2.2.2 The Second Study

This study was carried out by Muawia Mohammed Al Hassan Gaily in 2014, at college of science and Arts, Taif University- Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the title "Developing Pragmatic Competence of the Sudanese University EFL learners via planned classroom instruction. It was PhD thesis. The study intends to explore pivotal role played by planned classroom instruction in promoting pragmatic

competence of the Sudanese EFL learners. Four types of speech acts were selected by the researcher to be the focus of the program: apology, request, complaints, and refusal. The tools of the study are Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT) was conducted as pre and post-tests. The findings reveal remarkable advancement in the subject performance in the four target speech acts. Both pragma-linguistics and sociolinguistics of the four speech acts of apology, request, complaints and refusal have increased after the instructional treatment.

2.2.3 The Third Study

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

3- STUDY PROCEDURES

3.1. Research Method: The present study has adopted descriptive analytical methods to achieve its purposes.

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

3.3. Sample: The subjects of this research are (40) EFL learners, who were chosen randomly from Omdurman Islamic University, Faculty of Arts, Department of English language and Literature. The purposive sample of the research was chosen from some Sudanese universities teachers.

3.4. Tool of study: For data collection; the researchers used both a questionnaire which university teachers are requested to respond to and test was given to the fourth year level to carry out.

4- STATISTICAL ANALYSIS:

The research will present the results according to research questions:
- What are the pragmatic difficulties EFL learners encounter while processing academic texts?
- To what extent EFL learners' performance is affected by these pragmatic difficulties?

After tabulating the results of research questions the results clearly stated **in the following table:**

Table: 4.1.1

No.	Statements		Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	EFL learners face a number of pragmatic difficulties.	frequency	0	0	5	15
		percentage	0%	0%	25.0%	75.0%
2	Learners gain much competence than performance which leads to inaccurate use of language.	frequency	0	0	7	13
		percentage	0%	0%	35.0%	65.0%
3	EFL learners fail in identifying the meaning relationships between words -linguistic level- and ideas-conceptual level.	frequency	0	0	8	12
		percentage	0%	0%	40.0%	60.0%
4	EFL learners are incapable to identify the content of the academic texts due to lexical structure' misunderstanding.	frequency	0	0	13	7
		percentage	0%	0%	65%	35%
5	EFL learners lack understanding content and don't spend much time or effort to get way out of such difficulty.	frequency	0	1	12	7
		percentage	0%	5.0%	60.0%	35.0%
		percentage	0%	0%	70.0%	30.0%
6	EFL learners' insufficient knowledge about cultural framework impact	frequency	0	0	17	3
		percentage	0%	0%	85.0%	15.0%

negatively on accessing and comprehending academic texts.	percentage	5.0%	40.0%	35.0%	20.0%
	percentage	0%	55.0%	40.0%	5.0%
	percentage	25.0%	60.0%	10.0%	5.0%
	percentage	20.0%	65.0%	10.0%	5.0%
	percentage	50.0%	20.0%	25.0%	5.0%
	percentage	40.0%	20.0%	30.0%	10.0%

4.3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

According to above table of data analysis results show that:

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

In the first statement 'EFL learners face a number of pragmatic difficulties', the participants' (5) agree with the statement with percentage (25%) and the majority (15) strongly agree with the statement with percentage (75%). That means all of the participants see that EFL learners face a number of pragmatic difficulties.

The Second Statement: Learners gain much competence than performance which leads to inaccurate use of language.

The second statement result is similar to the first statement the number of participants that agree with the statement is (7) and the number of the participants that strongly agree with the statement is (13) with percentages (35%) and (65%) respectively. That is, the participants think that learners gain much competence than performance which leads to inaccurate use of language.

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

The result of the third statement shows that the number of participants that agree with the statement is (8) and the number of the participants that strongly agree with the statement is (12) with percentages (40%) and (60%) respectively which means that the participants see that EFL learners fail in identifying the meaning relationships between words -linguistic level- and ideas-conceptual level.

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

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

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

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

The sixth statement: EFL learners' insufficient knowledge about cultural framework impact negatively on accessing and comprehending academic texts.

In the seventh statement, the number of participants that agree with the statement is (17) and the number of the participants that strongly agree with the statement is (3) with percentages (85%) and (15%) respectively which means that the participants see that EFL learners' insufficient knowledge about cultural framework impact negatively on accessing and comprehending academic text.

3.2 Test analysis:

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

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

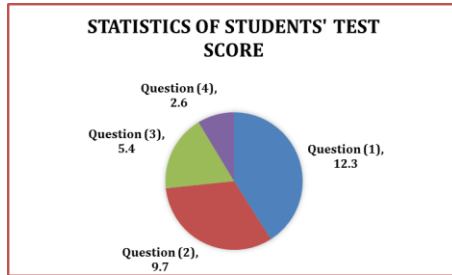| Test parts	Full marks	Pass Marks	Min. score	Max. score	Mean score	St. deviation
Question (1)	30	15	0	27	12.3	7.05
Question (2)	30	15	0	30	9.7	11.26
Question (3)	20	10	0	20	5.4	5.7
Question (4)	20	10	0	14	2.6	3.7
Total	100	50	6	72	29.7	18.20

Figure (4.2.1): Statistics of Students' test score

Table and figure (4.2.1) show the general statistics of (40) students. The test consists of four main questions; the first question has full mark (30), the second question has also (30), the third and fourth question has (20) for each.

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

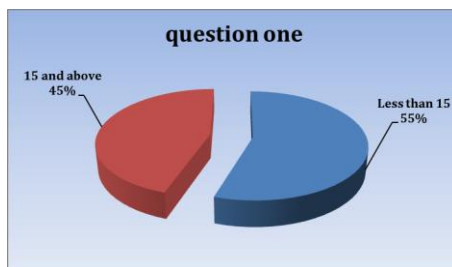| Attained marks		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Less than 15	22	55%	55%
	15 and above	18	45%	45%
	Total	40	100.0%	100.0

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

Table (4.2.2) showed that more than a half of the students 22(55%) scored less than (15) marks in the first question. Figure (4.2.1) illustrates that graphically.

The first question was conducted to examine students' understanding to pragmatics social language skills; praising, convincing, offering etc. Results revealed that students performed poorly and their performance is highly affected.

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

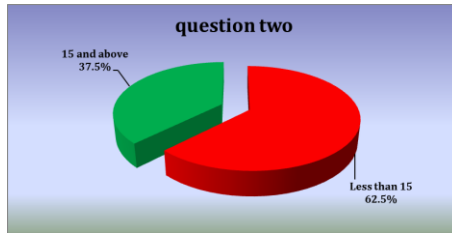| Attained marks		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Less than 15	25	62.5%	62.5%
	15 and above	15	37.5%	37.5%
	Total	**40**	**100.0%**	**100.0**

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

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

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

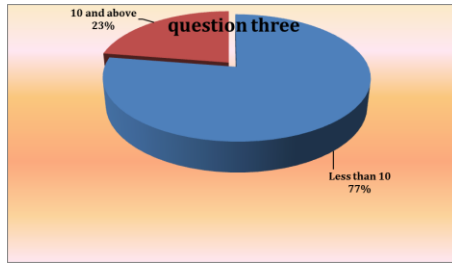| Attained marks		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	**Less than 10**	31	77.5%	77.5%
	10 and above	9	22.5%	10%
	Total	40	100.0%	100.0

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

Table (4.2.4) showed that the majority of the students 31(77.5%) scored less than (10) marks in the third question. Figure (4.2.3) illustrates that graphically.

The third question was carried out to assess students' performance in guessing pragmatics references or what the speaker intended to say. Results proved that students were unable to figure out the speakers' intentions so their performance is negatively affected.

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

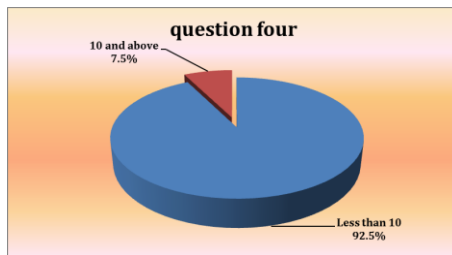| Attained marks		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Less than 10	37	92.5%	92.5%
	10 and above	3	7.5%	7.5%
	Total	40	100.0%	100.0

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

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

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

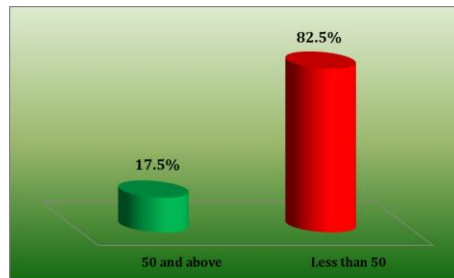| Attained marks		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Less than 50	33	82.5%	82.5%
	50 and above	7	17.5%	17.5%
	Total	40	100.0%	100.0

Figure (4.2.6): students' overall test achievement

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

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

Table (4.2.8): Test of regression

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

Figure (4.2.8): Test of regression

5. CONCLUSION:

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

- A large number of lecturers at Sudanese universities agreed that EFL learners face a number of pragmatic difficulties in understanding the given academic texts.
- The students' performance is highly affected by their focus on competence more than performance.
- The university teachers agreed that EFL learners fail in identifying the relationships between words that represent the linguistic level and the ideas which are clearly reflected on the conceptual level.
- The researcher has found out that EFL learners are incapable of identifying the content of academic texts due to misunderstanding to their lexical structure.

5.1 Recommendations of the study:

The present study involved a limited number of participants in a college EFL setting in one country, Sudan and thus its replication will be worthwhile in other settings to explore other students' performance, therefore; the study recommends the following:

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

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