

## **EFL Students 'Level of Pragmatic Awareness :One Aspect of Receptive Pragmatic Competence**

**By**

**Zainab Ali Hussein Abed**

University of Kerbala, College of Education, Department of English language

Email [mirzahyder9194@gmail.com](mailto:mirzahyder9194@gmail.com)

**Haider Kadhim Khudair Bairmani (PH)**

University of Kerbala, College of Education, Department of English language

Email [haiderbairmani@gmail.com](mailto:haiderbairmani@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

This study investigated EFL Iraqi students' level of pragmatic awareness, one central component of receptive pragmatic competence. Thus, to achieve its aims, the study employed a quantitative approach, where two hundred- forty EFL Iraqi students from Kerbala, Babylon, and Al-Qadysiah universities, participated. The students were asked to respond to a pragmatic reading questionnaire(test) consisting of two questions to measure their pragmatic awareness, of their meta-pragmatic and mat-linguistic skills, at both levels of micro and macro one. Then, using SPSS, the quantitative data is examined. Its results showed that there is an apparent lack of pragmatic awareness among EFL students due to language-related difficulties such as grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence structure.

**Keywords:** English as a Foreign Language(EFL), Pragmatic Competence, Pragmatic Awareness, Exploratory Study

### **1.Introduction**

It is now well recognised that practical language usage, or pragmatic competence(hereafter PC), plays a crucial role in foreign or L2 education systems. However, there is currently no consensus on how it may be adequately described and assessed (Sickinger and Schneider,2014). As mentioned by Fraser, Gosling, and Sorcinelli (2010), it has long been acknowledged that pragmatic proficiency is a crucial part of overall language proficiency. It is defined as having the ability to convey the intended message in all of its Complexity in any sociocultural context and to recognise the intended message of the interlocutor. That is to say, effective communication and SLA success require pragmatic skills. However, L2 learners may have trouble developing PC regardless of language proficiency. Even people with high L2 ability might miscommunicate in daily life due to a lack of pragmatic awareness (Ren, 2013)

Hence, this study aims to measure Iraqi EFL college students' (of Kerbala, Babylon, A l-Qadysiah) pragmatic awareness as one central component of receptive pragmatic competence. It hypothesises that: there is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of Iraqi EFL students' level of pragmatic awareness among Kerbala, Babylon, and Al-Qadysiah universities. Thus, to achieve the study's aims, several procedures are followed, such as:1.Presenting a theoretical background on pragmatic awareness; 2. Choosing and selecting the population and the context for the present study; 3. Constructing the instruments

of the study, namely of Pragmatic Reading test; 4. Conducting a pilot study to ensure the validity and reliability of the test; 5. Presenting the analysed data and discussing its quantitative results using SPSS, and; 6. Drawing the study's conclusions, the recommendation and some suggested areas for further investigation.

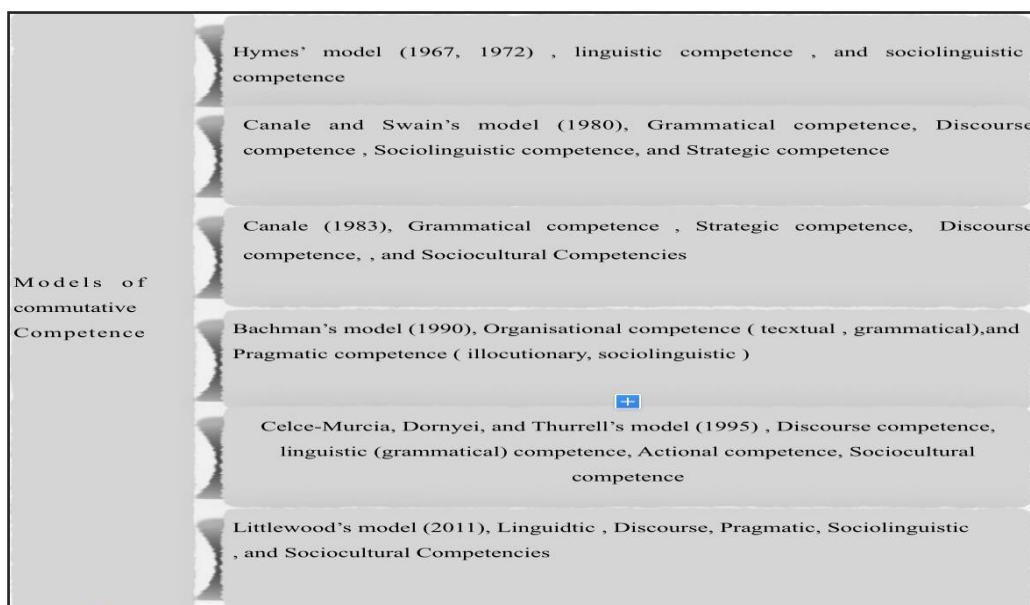
However, the limitation of this study is set to evaluating the pragmatic awareness of third-stage students at the universities of Kerbala, Babylon, and Al-Qadisiah. Additionally, the researcher cannot alter some limitations of the research tools. The pragmatic reading task questionnaire, for instance, has some restrictions because it prohibits the use of hesitancy, repetition, inversion, and longer supportive movements by the student during oral performances (Aufa, 2012). Finally, the study will be significant in filling the gap of research on teaching and learning English by providing valuable data regarding the Iraqi EFL learners' level of pragmatics competence with regard to its central receptive aspect of pragmatic awareness. Additionally, it aims to assist teachers, curriculum designers, and EFL instructors in better meeting the needs of EFL students to use the target language appropriately in sociocultural contexts. Moreover, the research will provide the Iraqi EFL educational system and Iraqi EFL instructors with the implications and recommendations on how pragmatics can be developed effectively in an EFL environment, aiming at filling the gap between what research in pragmatics has found and how language is generally taught today.

## **2. Review of the Related Literature**

### ***2.1 Pragmatic competence from Different perspectives***

#### ***2.1.1 Pragmatic Competence in the Perspective of Communicative Competence Models.***

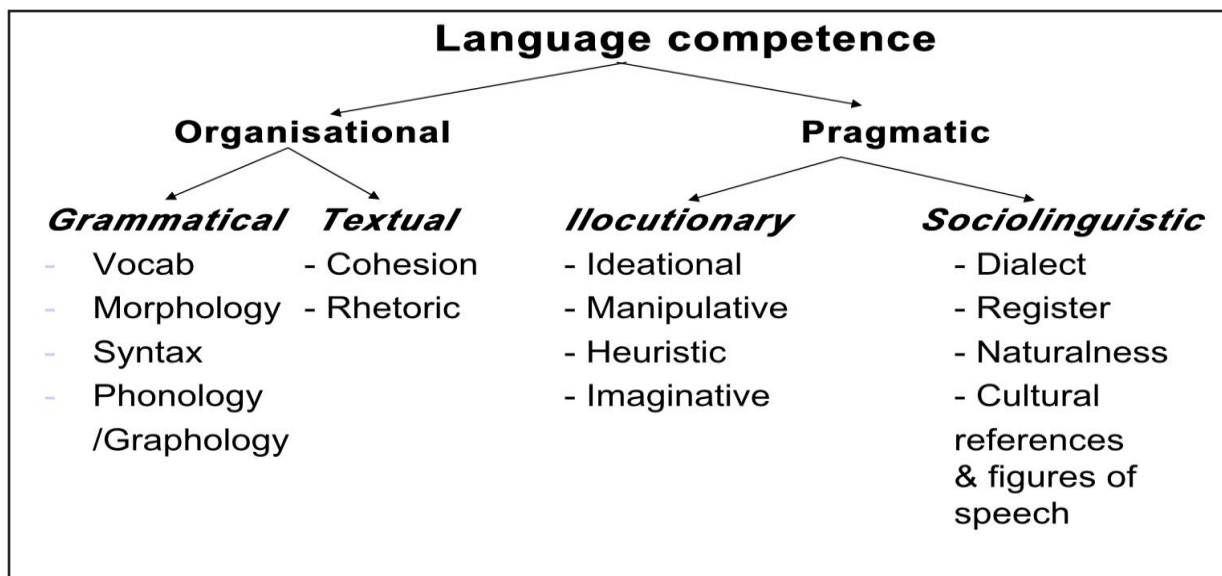
To understand the definition of PC from the perspective of communicative competence (hereafter CC) models, we need to know the concept of CC first. If competence is the capacity to perform something well, CC may be defined as the ability to communicate well (Oxford, 2017). The concept of communication, however, is far more complex than this basic interpretation suggests. In a typical discussion, there are numerous subtle interplays among interactional aspects that one would not perceive at first look (Tas & Khan, 2020). As Eghtesadi (2017) stated, CC is a term invented by the American sociolinguist and anthropologist Dell H. Hymes (1927-2009) in his response to Chomsky's idea of linguistic competence. According to Hymes (1967), CC is "the ability for a community member to know when to talk and when to keep silent, which code to use, when, where, and to whom, and so on" (p. 13). Since then, however, the idea has evolved throughout time, and other researchers have proposed several models of CC; some of the most common ones are: Hymes' model (1967, 1972), Canale and Wain's model (1980), Canale (1983), Bachman's model (1990), Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurrell's model (1995), Littlewood's model (2011), as figure(1) below shows



The first three models and the last two models do not coin the term PC; however, the ability to use language efficiently within its social context is embedded within their use of sociolinguistic competence. For instance, as Canale and Swain's model (1980) stated, the laws of conversation and sociocultural usage make up sociolinguistic competency. And, based on the speaking components of communicative events described by Hymes (1967), sociocultural rules of use assist language users in effectively producing and comprehending language data. Cohesion and coherence rules, which concentrate on the communicative purposes of the combination of utterances, are among the regulations of emergent discourse. That is to say, sociolinguistic competence is concerned with the capacity to use language effectively in different contexts based on the present state of the 'conversational contract'; it includes the capacity to pick communicative acts and relevant tactics for implementing them (Fraser, 1990). In this context, it seems interesting to say, as Boutet and Maingueneau (2005) explained, that the concept of sociolinguistics has sparked a lot of discussions; sociolinguistics is a convergence (or conflation) of three distinct topics: the sociological question of language's place in human societies and the social process, the 'linguistic' question of language variations and the problems they pose to linguistic theory, and the 'practical' question of language's social use.

However, the first communicative competence model that uses the term PC explicitly is Bachman's (1990). When his proposed framework, PC, is included within language competence, he defines it as "the relationship between utterances and the acts or functions that speakers (or writers) intend to perform through these utterances" (Bachman, 1990, p. 89). In Bachman's model, PC includes illocutionary competence (knowledge and skill in using language functions proposed by Halliday (1970), such as conceptual, manipulative, regulatory, and imaginative functions) and sociolinguistic competence (that is similar to Canale's conceptualisation, sociolinguistic competence which is the sensitivity to, or control of the

conventions of language use that are determined by the features of the specific language), as figure (2) shows.



Source:( <https://slideplayer.com/slide/7567411/>)

In addition to Bachman’s model (1990), as the ultimate objective of L2 learning, Littlewood’s model (2011) also recognises PC as one of five dimensions of CC. Although he does not claim that his interpretation is unique from other theories, it does have certain distinguishing characteristics. Littlewood's approach to CC focuses on linguistic, discourse, pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural competence. According to him, In language education, CCis realised by the careful integration of these five characteristics. In this approach, the synthesis transforms grammatical and strategic (or illocutionary) components into linguistic and PC, respectively. As he explains that these new words better represented the extent of their definitions than the labels used in prior models. Also, rather than being considered a part of sociolinguistic competence, sociocultural competence is recognised as an independent entity (Taş & Khan, 2020).

To summarise, Pragmatic competence has been highlighted as part of linguistic competence (Bachman, 1990) and interactional competence in second and foreign language education and acquisition (Young, 2011), as Figure (1) shows. Grammatical and discourse competence intersect with PC. Speakers and writers can choose contextually relevant actions and use them in communication due to this interaction.in addition to selecting and performing communicative activities, developing fluency and interactional competence through exhibiting participation in the conversation, perceiving implicit meaning, and demonstrating face-saving measures with conversation partners are parts of PC; even though they were learned in L1, these may appear to be concealed rules of discourse in the target language (Vivekmetakorn, 2018).

### **2.1.2 Pragmatic Competence in The Cognitive Perspective Models**

In this regard, Bi (2021) noted that pragmatic competence in L2 learners is composed of both pragmatic knowledge and cognitive processes, just like other language abilities. Researchers may be able to comprehend L2 learners' PC better if they concentrate on the cognitive processes involved in their pragmatic performance in addition to their pragmatic knowledge, given the rising emphasis on pragmatic performance in particular (e.g., Robinson,

1992; Cohen, 2005; Ren, 2014; Chen, 2015). Such studies have shed more light on the variables influencing PC in language productions and choices. However, most prior research on the cognitive processes of L2 learners in their speech activities has been influenced by practical theories as opposed to learner strategy theories. Hence, to fully comprehend the nature of the cognitive processes underlying L2 pragmatic performance, more research relating to ideas from other disciplines (for example, language acquisition, psychology, and metacognition theories) are required. In other words, as mentioned above, most studies on learners' pragmatic cognitive processes have been based on L2 pragmatic theories, in which pragmatic scholars have used retrospective verbal reports (RVRs) to explore the cognitive processes involved in pragmatic formation. However, those researchers have found that L2 learners use a variety of mental processes when performing different speaking movements. The two primary theoretical components of PC, socio-pragmatic knowledge and pragmalinguistic knowledge creation, have gained the researchers' interest in L2 learners' cognitive processes.

Bi (2021) further revealed that a closer look at the most current studies of cognitive processes in L2 PC demonstrates that the L2 pragmatic theories appear to be missing in representation. In addition, as he asserted, the initial research's tools do not adequately reflect L2 pragmatic proficiency. L2 PC includes a complex and multifaceted collection of skills, such as the capacity to take and organise turns effectively when speakers engage in pragmatic tasks in conversation. And therefore, instruments must reflect the complex characteristics of L2 PC if researchers seek to uncover more precise and thorough cognitive processes involved in L2 pragmatic performance. In a similar vein, Li (2019) called for more detailed investigations of learners' cognitive functions before and during pragmatic performances. Oxford (2017), in this regard, also added to this perspective by stating that language performance goes through three stages for language learners' cognitive processes: planning, actual performance, and self-reflection. However, there hasn't been much research on how these cognitive processes varied during L2 performances.

Bi (2021) mentioned that since 1990, many studies have started cataloguing the cognitive strategies employed by L2 learners. And the literature uses various terms to describe learners' cognitive processes, including learning/learner methods, mental processes, metacognition, and self-regulation. However, as it seems interesting to pinpoint, the term "strategies" has been used to describe a subset of cognitive functions, including language learner techniques (for example, metacognitive and cognitive strategies) and strategies connected to language (e.g., pragmatic approach). This classification was also in line with how pragmatic researchers have referred to mental activity in their research as "cognitive processes." Finally, it is essential to remember that pragmatic approaches have received far less attention than other language abilities, as Cohen (2020) declared. However, the taxonomies of pragmatic strategies have already been developed by academics (e.g., Cohen, 2005). In his taxonomy, Cohen categorised speech activities into the following categories for learners: cognitive, metacognitive, social or emotional, communicative, and techniques. The taxonomy has been an invaluable tool for examining the cognitive processes involved in speaking activities. Nonetheless, as the taxonomies are based on general language, further research is required to support them and develop a more accurate assessment of cognitive processes as opposed to particular language-use contexts, such as an academic setting.

### ***2.1.3 Pragmatic Competence in Interaction***

With respect to this view, as Kasper and Ross (2013) wrote, except for a few significant works (e.g., Walters, 2007, 2009), the rationalist pragmatic theories have dominated defining and operationalising pragmatics, notably speech act theory (Searle, 1969, 1975) and politeness

theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987). However, despite the importance of these theories, the rationalist speech act theories are inadequate for conceptualising how pragmatic meanings are obtained in contact since they are based on human cognition and have limitations when establishing PC in interaction. Therefore, as Roever (2011) argued, there is a need for a discursive re-orientation of pragmatics assessment that takes into account: A pedagogically motivated model of CC (i.e. Celce-Murcia, 2007; Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell, 1995) and discursive pragmatics, which are crucial to the understanding of sequential organisations of turns in conversation and conversational practise of how speakers produce and understand the meaning in talk. Discursive pragmatics, according to Kasper and Ross (2013), emphasises analytical attention to sequence organisation of interaction and argues for turn-by-turn analyses of how participants jointly accomplish pragmatic meanings and actions in organised sequences, which provide pragmatics with a conversation-analytic foundation that allows for analysing participants' interactional skills and emic understandings of pragmatic acts.

However, pragmatic competence in interaction can be characterised as the capacity to carry out a variety of pragmatic meanings and actions in concert with one another while utilising various pragmatic and interactional resources. In this regard, Taguchi (2017) pointed out that understanding interactional competency, which considers multiple resources that students contribute to the cooperative construction of discourse and meaning formation, necessitates an account of a dynamic and sequential context. These tools include comprehension of rhetorical devices, practice-specific lexicon and grammar, turn-taking procedures, subject-management techniques, repair and recognition techniques, and the development of speech activity boundaries (e.g., Kasper 2006; Young 2011). Finally, as it seems interesting to clear, the present use of Conversational Analysis (CA) to analyse the action, meaning, and context demonstrates the significance of interactional competency in ILP. CA examines talk-in-interaction using the emic technique to show how participants sequentially co-construct an activity and plan their turns to execute the job at hand cooperatively. Hence, CA has started to influence ILP, as seen by the increased studies looking at L2 pragmatics behaviour from a CA perspective (e.g., Al-Gahtani and Roever 2014; Flores-Ferrán and Lovejoy 2015; etc.) (Taguchi, 2017).

#### ***2.1.4 Pragmatic Competence in Intercultural Perspective***

The language was no longer seen as an independent, unitary system but rather as a type of social activity throughout the 1970s when the emphasis on language instruction switched from what language "is" to what language "does" (Wilkins, 1976). Since then, communicative approaches have emphasised self-knowledge activities that include discussion of ideological subjects and conflicts, respect for emotional elements, and encouragement of empathy for the target cultures. However, many studies still treat culture as a mere annexe after each unit in the course, even though their authors define them as communicative (Baccin & Pavan 2014). As stated by Pavan (2010), in Szczepaniak-kozak and Romanowski (2014), most language teachers and students, who work in a multicultural environment, have multicultural communication, necessitating the development of intercultural competence. According to this perspective, the emphasis of the teaching and learning process must also consider cross-cultural factual knowledge about one's own and other cultures, as well as a practice concerned with the development of all the sociocultural/intercultural skills required to understand non-linguistic cultural communication in a novel or unfamiliar situations.

Consequently, learning an L2 entails learning the language of the other, according to Brazilian linguist Filho (1993). Who exactly is this "other," though? Our forefathers? Those who conquered? Foreigners? The primitives? Filho contended, further, that a gradual "de-

foreignisation of the language of the other" is necessary for the teaching-learning process. In other words, to the extent that students continue to ingrain the new language as they advance in their learning. Eventually, it stops being a foreign language and becomes part of each student's personality. Therefore, the degree of identification and tolerance each student and teacher have for the target culture determines how much they can learn. Intercultural interactions are defined as two persons interacting while showing tolerance and respect for one another. Because it refers to actual issues, it implies the application of various values to particular circumstances and has ethical implications. As a result, being an intercultural speaker requires the ability to interact with complexity and different identities, thereby avoiding the stereotyping that comes with viewing someone through a single identity, as Byram (1997) figured out. That is to say, rather than considering the interlocutor as a representation of an externally given identity; this process is predicated on seeing them as a person whose traits are to be identified. However, this suggests that a language learner who connects to other cultures interprets and comprehends various viewpoints and questions what is (and isn't) taken for granted in their community (Kramsch, 1998).

In this respect, Knutson (2006) suggested that teaching students to understand their cultural identity in connection to other cultures is the first step in developing their cultural awareness. Additionally, he recommended that teachers assess students' academic and real-world demands regarding their cultural knowledge, awareness, or capacity for proper function. In this line, Byram (2001) mentioned that the intercultural speaker must be able to interact with "others," accept diverse worldviews, mediate between various viewpoints, and be aware of their assessments of difference. As a result of the fact that modern societies are multicultural, it can also be said that intercultural competence is required whether or not a different language is present when learners encounter an otherness represented by a community with a foreign language. And hence, as asserted by Sercu (2005), learning an L2 is inherently international. As a result, according to Risager (2007), preparing children for effective interactions in a multicultural setting has highlighted the intimate connection between language and culture. Therefore, L2 learners must become wise to individuals and groups within the target language community as Stern (1992) maintained, who reiterates that one of the main goals of culture teaching is to assist the learner in comprehending the perspective of the native speaker. It fosters intellectual growth, tolerance, and the development of cultural awareness and empathy in students (Tomalin & Stempleski, 2004). In this context, it seems interesting to mention that cultural awareness, as Tomalin and Stempleski (2004) stated, includes three characteristics: the capacity to articulate one's cultural viewpoint, knowledge of one's culturally-induced conduct, and awareness of the culturally-induced behaviour of others.

Thus, this complexity of intercultural contact, a broad term referring to a set of skills required to engage successfully and respectfully with others linguistically and culturally different from oneself, is increased because these abilities are typically culturally distinctive, and speakers bring their standards to communication. According to a recent study on lingua franca communication, participants constantly negotiate interactional norms, politeness and directness standards, communication styles, and cultural conventions as encounters develop (e.g., Kecskes 2014). They either create a brand-new communication standard or interpret others according to their L1 norms (Fantini & Trimizi, 2006). Finally, It's interesting to note that, as Spencer-Oatey (2010) argued, pragmatics research can undoubtedly be useful in intercultural competency research. Pragmatics research has revealed common communication patterns in intercultural encounters through intercultural engagement and lingua franca communication. By presenting data from actual interactions, pragmatic studies can further assist in demonstrating a successful cross-cultural engagement. Hence, ILP can increase our

understanding of PC by using its paradigm for intercultural competence. And finally, several of the major concepts of intercultural competence, such as communicative awareness and intercultural empathy, include PC (i.e., the ability to engage and execute language functions in context). Additionally, such a conception would go beyond the typical notion of PC, which focuses on how learners carry out a pragmatic act in the L2, to incorporate knowledge of how learners successfully participate in cross-cultural interactions.

## **2.2 Pragmatic Awareness (PA)**

On its own, awareness seems to be inexorably tied to knowledge. Thus, many scholars treat the two terms as semantically comparable, whether on purpose or accidentally. In contrast, others use the words in ways intended to be separate, but they don't maintain that (Trevethan, 2017). However, one crucial component of receptive PC is Pragmatic Awareness (hereafter PA) (Ren, 2015). According to Alcón Soler and Jordà (2007), PA is "conscious, reflective, and explicit pragmatic knowledge." Hence, PA plays a crucial role in foreign language acquisition (Takahashi, 2005). According to the noticing hypothesis, conscious noticing or awareness is required and sufficient for input to be turned into intake for learning to occur (Schmidt, 1993). In this regard, Garcia (2004) defined PA as the ability to use the language they have learnt in specific contexts. However, this does not guarantee that they will do so appropriately. According to Ishihara (2006), PA can be associated with various skills, such as linguistic approaches, contextual components, PA, and cultural awareness.

Therefore, 'pragmatic awareness' and 'MPA' can be used interchangeably, according to Jordà (2003). In this regard, It is pertinent to note that numerous researchers have looked at the effects of various factors on the growth of PA (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei, 1998; Schauer, 2006). And, It has been determined that this research and perceptions of the L2 community are positively correlated. It seems interesting to mention here that research on learners' pragmatism may provide important information regarding those demands and challenges related to their language learning process. According to many experts, learners' PA is limited, as demonstrated by their capacity to recognise and distinguish speech act categories. However, Having looked through the literature, PA, the recognition or knowledge of how language is used to encode social meaning through conscious reflection on the links among components involved in PCr and production, is of two types: pragmalinguistic awareness and socio-pragmatic awareness (Yang & Ren, 2019).

As they stated, pragmalinguistic awareness is a clear comprehension of the form-function relationships relevant to certain sociocultural contexts. For instance, a person exhibits pragmalinguistic knowledge of the formulation of one type of request if they are aware that the interrogative form used to inquire about an interlocutor's capability also functions as a request; "Can you open the window?" is an example of this type of knowledge. While socio-pragmatic is the explicit knowledge of the relationships between communication action and environmental factors like social status, social distance, and imposition as a result of the communication action .it is demonstrated, for instance, when a person is aware that a given culture favours a more indirect method of addressing arguments presented by a higher-status individual than by a status-equal or status-low individual. These two types of PA have each been independently and concurrently examined, giving us important new information on the function of PA in learning L2.

However, Schmidt's (1995, 2001) noticing hypothesis favours this strategy. From a theoretical perspective, PA is crucial for understanding each step in developing pragmatic features. According to the noticing hypothesis, for L2 development to take place, learners must detect L2 elements in the input. It is suggested that learning about target Norms involves



conscious awareness during learning. The term "notice" is broadly understood as detection with conscious awareness. Furthermore, the noticing hypothesis proposes two levels of consciousness: awareness at the noticing level (i.e., identification of goals without defining rules) and awareness at the comprehension level (i.e., recognition of the targets with the explicit formulation of regulations). In this regard, it seems interesting to pinpoint that most studies on PA in SLA have looked at whether either of the two levels of awareness supports the noticing hypothesis (Schmidt, 2001).

Accordingly, the previous study on L2 PA can be classified into two categories. Studies investigate consciousness at the level of noticing, and studies, in response to Kasper and Schmidt's (1996), call for additional research into the developmental features of L2 pragmatics. In this regard, it is interesting to note that awareness is viewed as conscious; pragmatic knowledge refers not just to comprehension but also to production, as both involve some degree of consciousness of PA and their level of pragmatic output. In other words, as pragmatic understanding develops, so does pragmatic comprehension; language learners who are more pragmatically aware can comprehend more conventional expressions appropriately.

### ***2.3 The Relevance-theoretic Tripartite Cognitive Assumption***

Modern pragmatics is based on Grice's theory that listeners want communicators to adhere to the Cooperative Principle, to be logical, and to adhere to the maxims of quantity and quality as well as relation and manner. When Grice influenced pragmatics, it became clear that an utterance's explicit and implicit content is considerably underdetermined by the linguistically encoded meaning and is entirely determined by substantial pragmatic inferences rather than the other way around (Sperber and Wilson, 2005). Regarding pragmatics, the relevance-theoretic approach emphasises the mind's role as an information-processing system for assessing people's ostensive communication behaviour rather than just the mind's ability to perceive words (Recanati, 2010). Thus, it is considered a continuation of Grice's Cooperation Principle and Relation maxim (Sperber & Wilson, 2002). Two of Grice's fundamental assumptions underlie the relevance theory (Sperber & Wilson 1986): (a) the primary domain of pragmatic theory is overt, intentional communication, and (b) utterance interpretation is a non-demonstrative inference process in which listeners infer the intended interpretation using contextual assumptions and general principles of communication. However, it deviates in several ways from this concept.

With this respect, (Wilson, 2016) indicated that a natural theoretical region with its own set of laws and generalisations could be found in overtly deliberate communication, according to Grice. Overt, intentional communication varies from unintentional information transmission and covert communication in that the speaker means to impart a specific message. It is actively assisting the hearer to recover it and would acknowledge it if questioned; for example, Relevance theory agrees with Grice that overt purposeful communication is a natural theoretical domain with its own academic rules and generalisations, despite its emphasis on unintended information transmission and covert communication. Since Grice's maxims demand relevance, Relevance Theory is focused on this aspect of Grice's maxims. However, the relevance-theoretic approach to pragmatics is not only a supplement to the semantics of natural languages but a technique of study in its own right when contextualised within a cognitive scientific framework. That is to say; pragmatic theorising explains how the mind can function as an information-processing mechanism.

The Cognitive Principle of Relevance is the foundation of the theory. The theory contends that the human brain is wired to look for pertinent information. Relevance, characterised by positive cognitive results and processing effort, is a property of incoming

inputs to mental processes. Therefore, a person's level of importance depends on their setting. That is to say, the cognitive impact and effort required to analyse an addressee's comment increase as its relevance increases. Ostensive-inferential competence is a PC defined by relevance theory as the capacity to pay attention to and infer meaning from the speaker's appearing behaviour. Hence, learners of L2 must become aware of both the speaker's ostensive and the hearer's inferential functions to enhance their PC. The notion that a person's behaviour is influenced by the behaviour of the person instructing them is further substantiated by this. Both attentional and inferential skills, essential for success, are involved in ostensive-inferential competence. Thus, the speaker intends to communicate since their ostensive behaviour or other signs suggest they do so (Sperber & Wilson, 2002).

Studies on pragmatics acquisition via relevance mechanisms have been examined by Ifantidou (2013ab, 2014, and 2016)(as cited in Madella, 2020). Specifically, she has looked into how relevance theory assumptions might be used to evaluate and teach PC to L2 readers and writers. Hearers are free to accept an interpretation equally probable as the speaker's intended meaning if they are looking for the most relevant performance. Students learn to scrutinise their understanding critically and, as a result, adjust their level of epistemic vigilance, resulting in new expectations. The definitions of pragmatic competence, pragmatic awareness and meta-pragmatic awareness provided by Ifantidou (2014) serve as the foundation for assessing pragmatic competency. She defined PC as the ability to understand language in a conversation and apply it to a particular situation. MPA awareness is the ability to explain the connection between evidence and intention. Recognising the pragmatic impacts of the target language is known as PA.

The argument for cognitively inspired models of L2 processing is that SLA theories must include models of general pragmatic principles and expansive human cognitive capacities to comprehend L2 mechanisms (Jodawiec, 2010). However, relevance theory is one analytical method that can assist us in understanding the inner workings of an L2 learner and the guiding principles of SLA (Nizegorodcew, 2007). In L1 or L2, as shown by Žegarac (2004), English information processing is governed by the need for optimal relevance. Language learners reportedly assess, reject, and choose the most proper interpretations of the utterances they come across, according to Taguchi (2002). Thus, it appears that relevance mechanisms are not language-specific because relevance theory assumptions have been supported by SLA research that followed relevance-theoretical guidelines: "the pragmatics of the comprehension process operate just as they do for native speakers." (Foster-Cohen, 2000, P. 89). Due to the likelihood that utterance comprehension reasoning would be repeated while processing information in the target language, according to Jodowiec, will have an impact on SLA research (2010). Because of this, it has been utilised in SLA research to develop theories about SLA mechanisms. Less focus has been placed on how these biases affect learning a second language.

It has been shown that the relevance theory's communicative principle can be used to direct input enhancement techniques in EFL. However, applying its principles to L2 learners' awareness of form and function is considered unnatural because it promotes "pragma-linguistic strategies" (Jodowiec, 2010), which assume a focus on bottom-up processing from linguistic form to encoded pragmatic meaning. The premise of the relevance theory does not support these techniques. Because of this, individuals fail to recognise the value of attentional and inferential processes in the processing and understanding of information. The relevance theory's version of human communication also downplays the importance of top-down processing, which calls for considering input from the user's perspective. When applied to instruction that prioritises vocabulary and grammar learning, relevance theory has, as proposed

by Ifantidou, concealed a more significant meaning for the interlanguage development of L2 learners. She claimed that while she advocated using pragma-linguistic strategies in L2 teaching, her relevance theory adaptations ignored the theory's central tenet and what it revealed about the nature of language and communication. Ifantidou (2001) argued that communication involves more than only understanding linguistic cues following relevance theory.

Thus, the comprehension heuristic of the approach can be used to derive L2 inferential comprehension mechanisms that more precisely reflect the relevance theory's main findings. Ifantidou's attention shifted away from connecting a form to meaning. She adopts a PC development strategy, which aligns with the idea that L2 readers use linguistic cues like meaning. Ifantidou (2013) was the first to examine L2 knowledge as an inferential process in relevance theory and the implications for L2 training, which is significant (Ifantidou, 2014, p. 12). The study aims to ascertain how inferential communication affects pragmatic development in the second language. Despite the difficulties, she believed that it is possible to "develop PC as spontaneous inference in learning environments" (Ifantidou, 2014, p. 6). It is crucial to incorporate our knowledge of language and information processing as the cornerstone of instructional models that imitate these cognitive inference processes in L2 hearers to promote pragmatic development. These teaching strategies must include the L2 hearer in a mental activity related to their function as translators. Relevance theory should be utilised instead of educational tasks that centre on the teacher's intentions to draw students' attention to the intended input forms to engage L2 students in cognitive processes that replicate deliberate communication and focus on comprehending communicative purposes.

Even so, as Ifantidou (2001) pointed out, incorporating relevance theory into SLA research necessitates acknowledging that theories of language comprehension and learning must account for non-linguistic language elements that do not encode any information but are instead used procedurally by listeners to aid in guiding and fine-tuning their interpretations of the speaker's intended meaning. An adult's ability to deduce the thoughts of others is in line with MacNamara's (1972) thesis, which asserts that children are born with a natural ability to infer the views of those with whom they are communicating. For example, while learning their first words, they utilise meaning to indicate language rather than language to indicate meaning. When learning a new language, a child's cognitive abilities are identical to those required for adult inference understanding. Adults, like toddlers, must attribute intents and analyse natural cues to acquire word meanings in the same way toddlers do. In this context, Wharton (2014) stated that a speaker's choice of words can be interpreted by paying attention to "natural signals," which are contextual clues to the speaker's meaning that are picked up by attention. Similarly, Ifantidou (2001) and Bloom (2001) found that children learn the intended meaning of words by paying attention to the user's intent from an early age. Relevance theory is essential for L2 development, and MacNamara's assertion (1972) bolsters the perspective against the form-to-meaning model of input processing in light of this.

According to Ifantidou(2001), PC in L2 English may not be established through relevance mechanisms. The speaker's intention must be considered when making decisions that are not governed by grammar or structure standards. Because of this, L2 instruction is critical in helping L2 learners focus clearly on the speaker's nonverbal communication behaviours and interpret them as ostensive signs that can be used to infer meaning. It is expected that L2 listeners will react to linguistic cues and use them as input for inferential processes. To use a technical word, we must acquire lexical attentional biases. By focusing the learner's attention on universally applicable and shared goals, language-specific stimuli, such as paralinguistic

stimuli, may aid in developing their ostensive-inferential ability. Adult learners have the cognitive capacity to conclude, and relevance processes are not language-specific. Still, if relevant information is not used during inferential processing, the inference may result wrong. Hence, for a second-language learner, it is essential to know how and to what extent the target language interacts with pragmatic principles.

However, Ifantiduo (2001) discovered that no studies have attempted to apply relevance theory to a model of instruction that aims to increase PC in L2 hearers by exposing them to paralinguistic inputs. In this model of instruction, the mental processes involved in taking the input are crucial for developing interactive abilities in the L2 learning context and even more so for developing interactive skills in L2 English as English. She argued that rather than using input-augmentation approaches that prioritise encoded meaning and restrict learner behaviour above that of a communicator, these processes should be publicly used to enhance L2 interpreters' interaction skills. She contended that Relevance theory should offer a predictive and explanatory explanation of the mental processes necessary for input processing to support SLA theories that emphasise input processing and inference. However, De Paiva and Foster Cohen (2004) provided important insights into how relevance could direct L2 instruction that prioritises evaluating inferential and interactive abilities when combined with SLA models. De Paiva and Foster-Cohen (2004) further showed the value of relevance theory in SLA research by highlighting how basic theory ideas might improve state-of-the-art information-processing models.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Research design

The researcher used a quantitative design to answer the study's research question. Adopting Creswell's (2012) interpretation of quantitative design, this study concentrates on "PC" as a trend that has to be explained, identifying a pattern in the participants' responses and examining how that trend varies among them. Following him (Creswell), this study is set up as a descriptive analysis to give a wider range of information on such outcomes where the variables were compared. Thus, the reason for adopting such a design is that this study is after measuring and analysing variables to reach specific outcomes. It involves utilising and analysing numeral data by utilising particular statistical procedures to get certain answers to the given hypothesis.

#### 3.2 Population the Study

Population of the Study			
Universities		Value Label	N
	1	Kerbala	80
	2	Alqadysiah	80
	3	Babylon	80

As a quantitative examination demands a large number of participants, the study was conducted in three universities in Iraq to recruit participants with convenience sampling: Kerbala, Babylon, and Al-Qadisiya universities (as the table below(1) indicates). Two hundred forty (240) Iraqi EFL students in the third stage are the total participants in the study who are subjected to the test for the academic year (2021–2022/morning studies). The individuals who

participated were all the same; they had the same first language experience and the same knowledge of English as an FL. The main reason they chose the third stage is that they consider being the best source for research data since they are neither beginner nor advanced.

### **3.3 Research Instruments**

Reading is the act of exchanging information from one person to another via the use of language and related expertise. However, as the reader gets a message from the writer, reading is a receptive skill (Chastain, 1988). In this regard, as cited in Espinoza-Rivera (2022), Cassany et al. (1994) mentioned that it is one of the key components in the learning of L2 since it contributes to the development of linguistic competence, comprehension, and interpretation of texts. Reading means comprehending," it is said to be the process in which the readers, from their previous knowledge, build in their mind a new meaning with the information taken from the text. Its process is not just about decoding and recovering implicit elements of a text. It is also given from a sociocultural process; this means that every community has its own words and expressions that distinguish them from other cultural contexts, where these meanings change as society and culture evolve; therefore, the way of reading changes. On the other hand, comprehension is a strategy for creating meaningful learning through which the reader connects with the text through their engagement with it as a result of prior knowledge experience.

The current study employed a pragmatic reading test in which participants were required to choose or write the pragmatically inferred meaning from the dialogue. The dialogue of this pragmatic reading test was taken (with its two recognition tests) from (Palangngan et al., 2016). The test was designed in a way that meets the objective and nature of the study. It comprised two questions, each intended to measure a particular aspect of the test. The test aimed to measure one central aspect of receptive PC (pragmatic awareness). PA was assessed by measuring students' meta-pragmatic (hereafter MPA) and metalinguistics (hereafter MLA) skills. Furthermore, the test measured students' level of this aspect of pragmatics (PA) at both levels of recognition and production. As far as the first level (of recognition) is concerned, students' level of PA is measured via their MLA competence, infill in blanks test (Q3), where students are asked to relate the linguistic form(s) to the environment to which it occurs. For the production level, students' level of PA was assessed via their meta-pragmatic awareness. They were asked to: pragmatically infer the title of the dialogue (Q1/A), identify the social meaning of the highlighted word(s), and; explain how they relate to the pragmatically inferred title that they came up with (Q1/B)).

Finally, as it is important to mention, the reasons for utilising such an instrument can be put in point as follows:

- 1- Reading comprehension is today an important topic among universities in Iraq, as most students read without comprehending a text, making it difficult to answer questions about it. That is why, nowadays, universities are focusing on improving the reading comprehension skill to enable students to comprehend and follow instructions and questions when they are being asked in different classroom activities, tests, assessments, exams, and even in their interaction with their world

- 2- Few investigations of L2 PCr using the Reading Comprehension Questionnaire have been conducted in the literature on second language (L2) pragmatic development (Kasper and Rose, 2002).
- 3- To conduct a more thorough analysis of L2 learners' PC that focuses on their cognitive processes and pragmatic knowledge (Chen, 2015).
- 4- The most common speech-act identification/production surveys, role-play, and interviews do not provide insights into participants' MPA and metacognitive abilities (Kasper & Ross, 2013)
- 5- The study aims to highlight participants' capacity for pragmatic meaning retrieval, which is best achieved through reading and manifested in writing rather than through aural comprehension or production (Ifantidou, 2013).
- 6- In addition to gradually developing a cognitive skill, PC is also a sociolinguistic ability that may show up as increasing levels of sophistication. A graded ability needs to be refined so that different levels can become evident and be distinguished using criteria that learners meet to differing degrees. Therefore, defining PC as the capacity to recognise, address, and carry out making requests, compliments, or apologies by eliciting focus-on-form discourse completion tasks offers fundamental but incomplete insights into PC as a whole, as well as occasionally fabricated ones (Ifantidou, 2011)
- 7- As Cummings (2009) claimed, viewing nonverbal behaviours as pragmatic conditions is a mistake. Lack of linguistic proficiency may cause nonverbal behaviours like lack of fluency and pauses when taking turns (false starts, repairs) rather than a lack of PC. So, as he said, it is preferable to test pragmatic ability, which reveals itself in verbal behaviour. Due to this, the objectives of the L2 pragmatic ability test administered in this study were to trigger a clear, salient interpretation of the students' level of PC using written stimuli data. a
- 8- Instead of using inference procedures to determine the intended meaning, pragmatic ability testing should focus on determining the speaker's intended or inferred meaning (Cummings, 2009). And this can be best achieved with reading comprehension tasks.
- 9- As mentioned by Cummings (2009), testing pragmatics should involve a global, dynamic context rather than a local and constrained linguistic context. It is also achieved with the proposed instrument, where the researcher used authentic trigger texts interpreted in a global, evolving context.
- 10- Exams, exams, and other comparable events are simulated to measure knowledge, competence, or performance, which could be valuable in dispersing life opportunities. Assessing a learner's capacity to use a foreign language is difficult. The essential notions of language testing and the validity of the test should be taken into account (Kasper & Rose, 2002)

### 3.4 Scoring of The Test.

Question	Score				
	1	2	3	4	5
Q1/ Meta-Pragmatic Awareness	Pragmatically inferred the dialogue title	Write the Pragmatically inferred title and explain how does it relate to his comprehension of the linguistic cues	Identify the social meaning of the highlighted words	Explain how the highlighted words relate to the Pragmatically inferred title he just write	Write the Pragmatically inferred title, explain how does it relate to his comprehension of the linguistic cues, Identify the social meaning of the highlighted words, and explain how the highlighted words relate to the Pragmatically inferred title he just write

In the test, each aspect of pragmatic comprehension is measured via two tasks, each of which is measured out of 5 points. At the recognition level, The amount of responses students gives for each stimulus determines the students' scores. Then, irrelevant responses are eliminated, and each accepted answer receives five points. Whereas at the production level, a rubric is constructed as shown in table (2) below:

### 3.5 Validity and Reliability

#### 3.5.1 Validity

A well-made test is featured two qualities; validity and reliability. Validity is one of the criteria used in constructing a test. Accordingly, validity is "the amount to which the test assesses what is designed to measure and nothing else," according to Heaton (1988, p. 159). In Tavakoli's words (2012, p. 699), validity is "the degree to which a study and its results correctly lead to or support what is claimed". In the present study, the test had internal validity, as it was expert-peer-reviewed.

After establishing the test, it is sent to several specialists at Iraqi Universities. Each specialist receives a copy of the test with an attached letter to explain the nature of the test (See Appendix B). For a particular item to be changed, there should be an agreement made by (75%) of the jury members. Accordingly, the test has internal validity, guaranteed by jury members who approve all the two questionnaires' items. Further, it also has external validation, on the other hand. Firstly, Excel was used to organise the results in frequencies that helped us to

distribute every question and its percentages among the participants. Then the researcher validated these gathered data through SPSS, an important statistical tool for hypothesis testing, in this case, because it helps to organise the gathering data and analyse the results provided.

### 3.5.2 Reliability of the test.

Another quality of a good test is reliability. Mehrens and Leman (1991) agreed on the assumption that the reliable test produces the same results on different occasions if the conditions remain the same. In this regard, Marczyk, DeMatteo, and Festinger (2005) stated that if the measurement is reliable at that point, then there is less opportunity for the attained score due to haphazard factors and measurement error.

Following KR-21, which is used for dichotomously scored items that are all about the same difficulty, as follows:

$$KR21 = [n/(n - 1)] \times [1 - (M \times (n - M) / (n \times Var))]$$

KR21 = estimated reliability of the full-length test

n = number of items

Var = variance of the whole test (standard deviation squared)

M = mean score on the test. (<https://www.researchgate.net/post/Should-I-use-KR-21-or-KR21-to-calculate-the-reliability-coefficient-of-a-test>)

The result showed that the test reliability was of extremely type at 3.934, as the table(3) below indicates

PR	Q1	Q2	Total Score
1	0	3	3
2	1	3	4
3	1	2	3
4	3	5	8
5	0	1	1
6	2	5	7
7	3	0	3
8	2	5	7
9	2	5	7
10	0	3	3
11	0	4	4
12	2	2	4
13	5	5	10
14	3	4	7



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15	0	2	2
16	2	3	5
17	0	1	1
18	0	0	0
19	0	3	3
20	2	1	3
21	2	3	5
22	0	1	1
23	0	0	0
24	2	1	3
25	2	1	3
26	1	3	4
27	0	0	0
28	1	2	3
29	1	3	4
30	1	3	4
31	0	0	0
32	0	5	5
33	1	1	2
	AVR		3.606
	VAR		5.875
	KR-21		3.934

---

### ***3.6 Items Analysis***

According to Linden and Glas (2010), item analysis refers to collecting, summarising, and utilising the results obtained through students' performance to make an objective and comprehensive assessment of the quality of the items. The main information to be obtained about individual items is item discrimination.

**3.6.1 Difficulty Coefficient (DFC)**

PAR.	Pragmatic Awareness	
	Q1	Q3
1	5	5
2	3	5
3	3	0
4	3	4
5	2	5
6	2	5
7	2	5
8	2	2
9	2	3
10	2	1
11	2	3
12	2	1
13	2	1
14	1	3
15	1	2
16	1	3
17	1	2
18	1	3
19	1	3
20	1	1
21	0	3
22	0	1
23	0	3
24	0	4
25	0	2
26	0	1
27	0	0
28	0	3
29	0	1

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<b>30</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>31</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>32</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>33</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>
MS	22	38
MW	0	3
DSC	0.55	0.87

---

Soraya et al. (2021) mentioned that the difficulty coefficient is, by definition, the proportion of test-takers who get a question right. Hence, following Jandaghi & Shaterian's (2008) formula for calculating the difficulty coefficient for non-MCQ questions ( $DFC = \frac{MS(i)}{N(B) * m}$ ), the coefficient difficulty of the question is moderate, as its range between 0.20 to 0.80, as the table (4) below shows

### ***3.6.2 Discrimination Coefficient (DSC)***

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<b>PAR.</b>	<b>Pragmatic Awareness</b>	
	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q3</b>
1	5	35
2	3	5
3	3	0
4	3	4
5	2	5
6	2	5
7	2	5
8	2	2
9	2	3
10	2	1
11	2	3
12	2	1
13	2	1
14	1	3
15	1	2
16	1	3

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17	1	2
18	1	3
19	1	3
20	1	1
21	0	3
22	0	1
23	0	3
24	0	4
25	0	2
26	0	1
27	0	0
28	0	3
29	0	1
30	0	0
31	0	0
32	0	0
33	0	5
MS	22	38
MW	0	3
DSC	0.55	0.87

---

The discrimination coefficient shows how much the question differentiates between the best and worst groups (Soraya et al., 2021). However, following Jandaghi & Shaterian's (2008) formula for calculating the discrimination coefficient for non-MCQ questions ( $DFC = \frac{MS(i) - MW(i)}{N \cdot m}$ ), the coefficient difficulty of the question is excellent, as its range between 0.45 and above, as the table (5) below shows

### **3.7 Test Implementation**

This section explores two test implementation-related topics, the pilot study and the original test administration, to give insights about the required time and modifications whenever necessary.

#### **3.7.1 The Pilot Study**

The pilot study is "a small-scale trial of the proposed procedures, materials, methods, and sometimes includes coding sheets and analytic choices" (Mackey & Gass, 2016). The pilot study is carried out to discover any problems or difficulties with the test and to solve them before the original test is carried out. Moreover, the pilot study is required to set the time testees

need to apply the test and show the usefulness of the techniques and items used. Additionally, pilot testing must make some necessary modifications and explanations before administering the main test (Fulcher, 2010).

Accordingly, to carry out the pilot study, thirty-two third-year students are selected randomly to perform the test on Tuesday, 5 April 2022. Participants are from the University of Kerbala, College of Education for Humanities, English Department. They are asked to pose any inquiry, clarification, or difficult items to simplify unclear issues. In addition, instructions are directed to them to ease their process of implementing the test.

After the completion of the pilot study, several factors are emphasised, including:

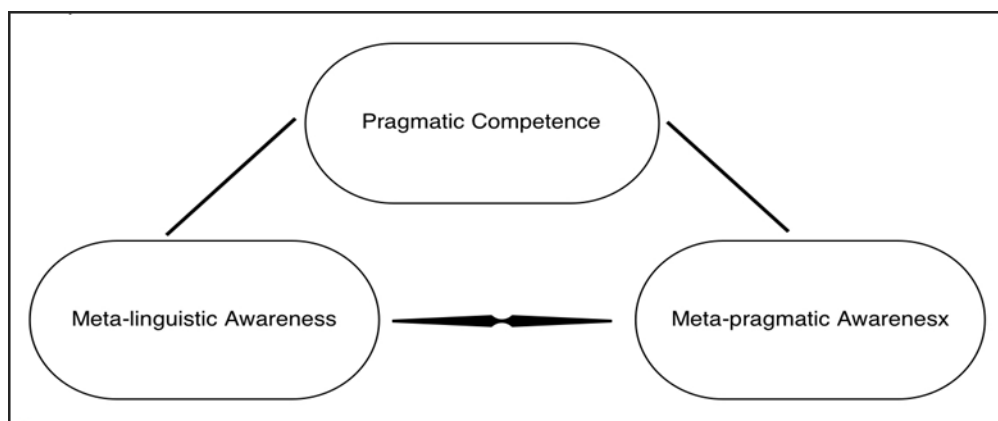
1. One hour is needed to complete the test.
2. No problems are apparent with the students.
3. No adjustments are made to the test's initial administration.

### **3.7.2 Test Administration**

The participants are asked to respond to the test on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday (10th, 12th, and 13th of April 2022) at the universities of Al-Qadysiah, Babylon, and Kerbala, respectively. Two-hundred forty participants in the third year of the English Department, College of Education for Humanities, Universities of Al-Qadysiah, Babylon, and Kerbala for the academic year (2021-2022/ morning studies), participated in the study implementation. On the test sheet, the participants are required to answer. To prevent potential test-related embarrassment, they are informed that the piece of paper is name-free. Moreover, they are motivated to pose any question that perhaps prevents them from performing their answers.

### **3.8 Adapted Ifantidou's (2014) framework of assessing pragmatic competence in L2 pragmatic**

The operational definition of PA presented in section 1.9.3 is the foundation for Ifantidou's idea of pragmatic competence (2014). In other words, Ifantidou's approach considers the notion of PA, which comprises two processes: (a) Metalinguistic Awareness (hereafter MLA) and (b) Metapragmatic Awareness. Attention to ostensive linguistic stimuli is necessary to retrieve pertinent pragmatic effects in MLA. MPA includes understanding the relationship between linguistic cues and their practical effects and using this knowledge to figure out what the speaker meant to say (). As a result, (a) and (b) illustrate the fundamental idea of PA. For L2 learners to develop epistemic vigilance and their capacity to recognise linguistic cues as relevant input, it is essential to understand how (a) and (b) are related. So, as shown in figure (1) below, the new framework measures how well students understand MPA and how well they understand language.



According to Ifantidou (2014), Ifantidou (2014) states that MPA is "the intentional and deliberate process of linking acts with planned results." The current framework measures students' PA rather than their total degree of pragmatic skill, which is a fundamental distinction between it and Ifantidou's (2014) paradigm. By reflecting inwardly on the links between the different parts of pragmatic understanding and production, how language encodes social meaning, and PA, the study of how language conveys social meaning, is gained. The two components of PA are pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. A clear understanding of the form-function relationships pertinent in particular sociocultural contexts is referred to as PA. Socio-pragmatic awareness includes understanding how social closeness, social standing, and imposed boundaries affect communicative action, as Takahashi (2012) mentioned.

## 4. Data Collection And Analysis

### 4.1 An analysis of student's scores at pragmatic Awareness tasks

This subsection is concerned with measuring students' pragmatic awareness level, manifested in their performance of Q1 and Q3.

#### 4.2.1.1 An Analysis of Students' Metapragmatic Level (Q1)

	MPA	Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	101	41.9
	1	60	24.9
	2	37	15.4
	3	38	15.8
	4	5	2.1

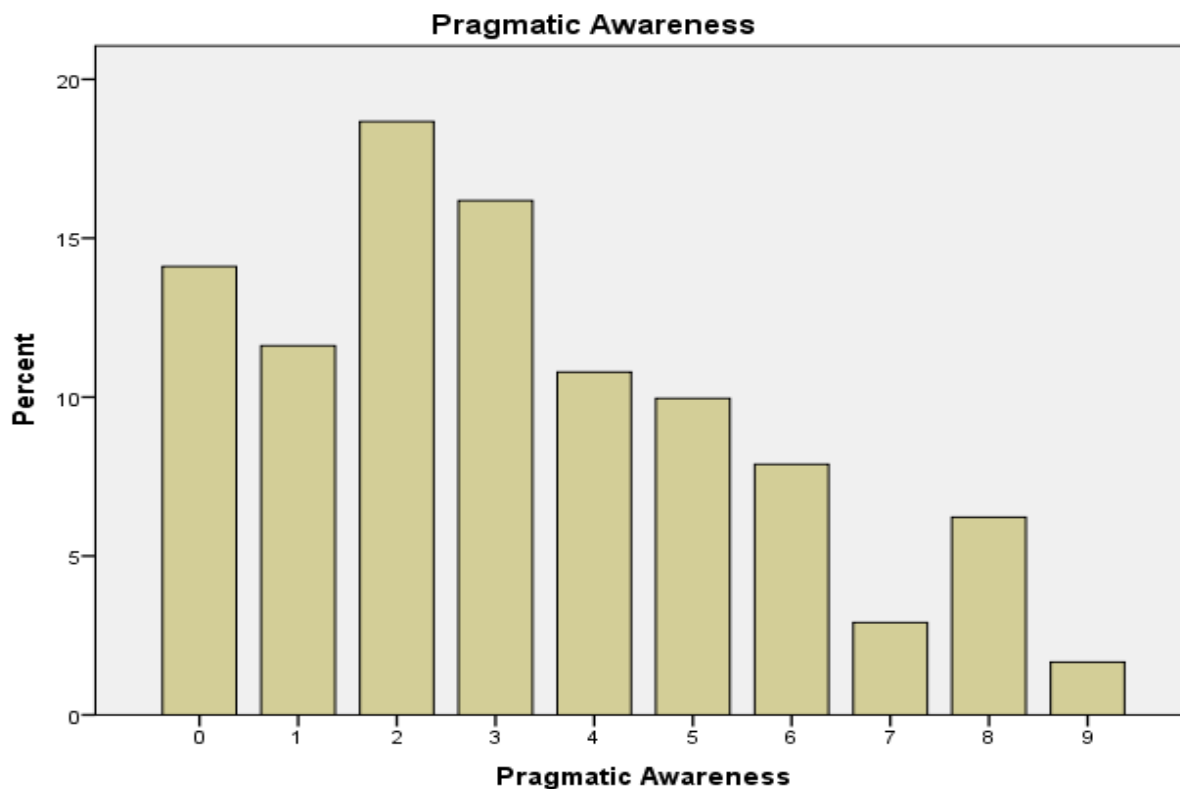
With regard to the first question, the data presented in table 6 above shows that The majority of them (41.9%) did not respond to the first question, which suggests that they did not write the pragmatically inferred meaning of the dialogue's title or recognise the social meaning of the highlighted word (s). The rest (15.8% and 2.1%) we're somehow good. As a result, it suggests that students have very little MPA. However, this is because of several factors, including the students' poor vocabulary skills, inability to recall words' social connotations, and failure to recall appropriate L2 linguistic knowledge. That is to say, students could not employ

the cognitive strategy of recalling appropriate L2 linguistic knowledge that seeks to use language from a second language, such as appropriate vocabulary and grammar. Additionally, students were unable to analyse several linguistic options for the encounters. As a result, EFL instructors in Iraq must receive training in support of action research so they may examine the issues their students face and use practical teaching strategies to solve them. However, to raise their level of metapragmatic awareness, teachers have to encourage students to participate more actively in their learning. In a number of nations, instructors' primary duties now include creating engaging learning environments, assisting students in problem-solving skills development, and guiding and monitoring their learning. To raise learners' awareness of L2 pragmatic elements, such as problem-solving tasks, which are categorised into the consciousness-raising approach and incredibly effective at raising learners' competency level, they must also use metapragmatic discussion, one method of utilising videotaped discourse. These exercises successfully foster explicit knowledge and, in turn, notice. They can also, if desired, give students a chance to interact with one another and negotiate the meaning of the target qualities to employ the cognitive strategies that assist them in retrieving linguistic knowledge.

#### ***4.2.1.2 An Analysis of Students' Metalinguistic Level (Q3)***

<b>MLA competence</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
0	57	23.7
1	45	18.7
2	42	17.4
Valid 3	50	20.7
4	4	1.7
5	43	17.8
Total	241	100.0

The data presented above, in table 7, shows that, with respect to the second question, the majority of students (23.7%) chose not to respond to the second question, indicating that they could not connect the speech to its context. It suggests that students did not analyse the explicit or implicit information in a communicative setting. Students did not understand the text to which the utterance was related because they failed to evaluate an explicit term from the text describing the speaker concerning the statement. The fact that students cannot comprehend social norms and contextual factors that affect language usage and interpretation suggests that they have low sociopragmatics. The evidence, therefore, shows that Iraqi EFL students' MLA awareness is insufficient. To be pragmatically appropriate, The relationship between speakers and the context of circumstances is one example of a social and contextual component that students must understand. To increase students' knowledge of MLA concepts, teachers must employ socio-pragmatic strategies that orient students to specific contextual components, such as the levels of imposition and the numerous interactions between interlocutors. They must also emphasise to their students the value of monitoring and evaluating their application of pragmatic knowledge by employing metacognitive strategies, which are higher-level cognitive processes that control cognitive procedures. These techniques (meta-cognitive strategies) were applied both before and during the task performances or all during. Additionally, it demonstrates that PC comprises cognitive processes crucial to this competence and knowledge.



Consequently, as chart(1) above shows, EFL I Iraqi students' levels of PA are very low. They were unable to activate their MPA and MLA. Hence, Students' low levels of PA are related to either problem with language use (pragmalinguistics/MLA) or issues with the social context of the target language (socio-pragmatic/meta-pragmatic), which happened during performance rather than at the pre-task stage. In other words, a student's PA can be judged by their ability to recognise appropriate sociocultural and linguistic norms in both their native and target cultures. In a concerted attempt to practise L2 pragmatics, PA stored in learners' long-term memory may aid in managing situation-specific socio-pragmatic and pragmalinguistic strategies. Regardless of their proficiency levels, the students employed socio-pragmatic strategies between the pragmalinguistic and socio-pragmatic components, which were also addressed before and following the pragmatic performance.

## **4.2 Discussion of the results**

### **4.2.4 Results Related to the First Hypothesis**

Hypothesis One: There is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of Iraqi EFL students' level of Pragmatic Awareness among Kerbala, Babylon, and Al-Qadysiah universities.

In this respect, and to find out whether there is a statistically significant difference in the mean score of Iraqi EFL student's level of PA among Kerbala, Babylon, and Al-Qadysiah universities, a univariate analysis of test is utilised using SPSS, the result of which is presented in table (8) below. However, Given that the p-value for universities is .257, which is more than the level of significance (0.05), the test's results demonstrate, at this level, that the null hypothesis is accepted.



**Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**
**Dependent Variable: Pragmatic Awareness**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	23.173 <sup>a</sup>	3	7.724	1.355	.257
Intercept	299.413	1	299.413	52.514	.000
universities	23.173	3	7.724	1.355	.257
Error	1351.275	237	5.702		
Total	3886.000	241			
Corrected Total	1374.448	240			

a. R Squared = .017 (Adjusted R Squared = .004)

**4.2.2 Results related to the second hypothesis**

Hypothesis Two: There is no statistically significant correlation between Iraqi EFL students' levels of meta-pragmatic and metalinguistic skills among Kerbala, Babylon, and Al-Qadysiah universities

With this regard, and to find whether there is a statistically significant correlation between students' meta-pragmatic and metalinguistic skills, a correlation analysis conducting using SPSS, the result of which is presented in table (9) below. However, the test results showed a significant relationship between these two factors

Correlations		actual situational co-created knowledge	student prior knowledge
actual situational co-created knowledge	Pearson Correlation	1	.310**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	241	241
student prior knowledge	Pearson Correlation	.310**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	241	241

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## 5. Conclusion And Recommendation

### 5.1 Conclusion

Pragmatic competency is one of the challenging language skills for EFL students. Learners of a second language must develop their pragmatism to use the language responsibly

in accordance with the sociocultural values of the L2 users. It may be accomplished through the unique treatment they receive from their language instructors. However, It is evident that there is no single set of teacher traits and behaviours that are universally successful for all types of students and learning situations, particularly when schooling differs widely between countries. However, as far as Iraqi EFL students are concerned, the data shows that their pragmatic competence level is insufficient. They have a low level of pragmatic awareness. Furthermore, they are in one of the first stages of developing pragmatism in their second language. They have learned a limited number of words and phrases in the target language. Thus, most students used the same wording regardless of the task. Also, as it seems to be, they have used their L1 when answering the task items. And hence, it implies that pragmatics isn't taught in EFL classes. Moreover, as the findings of this investigation indicate, the universities in question do not employ much of effective tasks of teaching pragmatics.

Hence, EFL instructors should be innovative and committed to their work to be effective motivators for students' success in learning English as a foreign language. English language instructors should possess the skills required to instruct their students in the language and have knowledge of the language themselves. Further, according to the circumstances in their respective classroom settings, they should be able to use various English language teaching techniques. They should also be knowledgeable about their classes' individual and collective features. Their teaching materials also affect students' outcomes. Suppose teaching goals, student proficiency, and students' practical demands for the language in the target society are considered. In that case, the learning process for English as a foreign language will be more successful. For this reason, It is essential to restructure the English curriculum and develop a curriculum sensitive to cultural diversity to foster social inclusion, improve critical cultural consciousness among instructors and learners, and support the preservation of regional cultures.

Iraqi universities also need to prioritise teaching pragmatics by adding courses that can be taught separately or as a part of the university curriculum and address topics like community involvement, social responsibility, and morality. They are also increasingly expected in many systems to guide their growth processes with the knowledge gained through testing, self-evaluation, and outside evaluations. Hence, they must develop new data collection, analysis, and parent communication methods. Besides the development of universities, project management and monitoring skills are required. Universities must now often collaborate on collaborative projects and forge partnerships with colleges abroad. Furthermore, Iraqi universities must establish connections with regional businesses and organisations, including libraries, museums, and companies, to acquire additional funding and offer varied educational opportunities. EFL teachers must therefore have the skills necessary to establish and maintain these partnerships.

## ***5.2. Recommendative Activities for Integrating Pragmatic Aspects in Teaching Language Skills***

University-level English language classes aim to help students develop a balanced set of English communication abilities, including reading, listening, speaking, and writing. So, integrative and communicative assessment methods should be used.

### ***5.2.2.2 Recommendative Activities for Teaching Speaking***

- 1- jigsaw reading: Students read a short piece of text for jigsaw reading. Then, students in three groups read three connected but separate works. After finishing their reading

- assignments, students gather to figure out what is happening. Students use a jigsaw puzzle to learn to read and talk.
- 2- Newspapers: They can be used in many ways. Students could read the newspaper's letters section and try to imagine what the writers went through. The letters, then, are open to replies.
  - 3- Following instructions: Students practice following directions by doing simple things correctly, like using a phone booth. We might have the students read the rules to ensure they follow them.
  - 4- Prose-poetry: Using an overhead projector or computer screen, the instructor can read poetry to the class while presenting it line-by-line without the words. They must make a good guess when they see the terms that are not there. When they read the lines again, they can see the first letter. By the third time, the first two letters will have been added. It makes it easier for students to find idiomatic phrases that fit the situation.
  - 5- Play extract: Students read a scene from a play or movie, answer questions about it, and then act it out.
  - 6- Reading aloud: To be good at reading aloud, students need to read a text slowly, figure out what it means, and plan to say what they understand. We can use different texts to practice.
  - 7- Predicting from words and pictures: Students learn to conclude from textual and visual clues by analysing words. Students must figure out what kind of story or genre an unknown piece of writing is. After guessing, they read the text to back up their ideas. We do not need to give them a list of words. Give them words and pictures to help them make up a story. Students can also guess based on what they see or read.
  - 8- Different responses: There are more ways to answer reading comprehension questions than filling in the blanks, saying yes or no, or writing words. Teachers might ask students to figure out why an author wrote something. Students can also look at the structure of magazine ads and compare them to make a standard for the genre.

### ***5.2.2.3 Recommendative Activities for Teaching Writing***

- 1- Write right away: students who hate writing can be encouraged to write more by giving them writing challenges. Students do not have much time to write essays or answer questions. "Quick writing activity": Have them finish sentences like "My favourite relative is..." or "I will never forget the time I..." We can ask for two sentences at once. They might be told to say something quickly in three words. Instant writing is meant to do two things: 1) get students to write more, and 2) give them time to think before they read.
- 2- Images, motives and music: instructors can move and start a story, then let the students finish it. Then they can have them repeat the first scene and create a new story. As it is being read out loud, the students can try to figure out which piece of the scene inspires them to write their own.
- 3- Multimedia: it can be used in many ways. Students can talk about pictures, and their friends can try to figure out which one. They will get photos to use as ideas for postcards. Students can look at portraits and write about the people in them in essays, diaries, or obituaries. These writing ideas give students a chance to be creative.
- 4- Newspapers and magazines: they can be used for genre analysis and writing that comes after. We can give students readings from different sources and ask them to look at the titles and structure of the articles. They write about a real or made-up event that they think is newsworthy. In higher grades, we might tell students to look at how other news outlets have covered the same story and change how they write based on what they find.

- 5- Brochures, guides: Brochures can be looked at by students to see how they are made (for a city, an amusement park, a health club, or a recreation facility, for instance). They can use this information to create brochures or ads.
- 6- Poetry: Because poetry enables students to express themselves in a manner that other genres, maybe, do not, instructors encourage students to create poems. However, since many of them would be unfamiliar with this type of writing, instructors need to provide students with models to help them write (at least to begin with).
- 7- collaborative writing: After telling a story to the class, they could act it out in small groups. To improve their language awareness, students who have attempted to imitate what they have heard and compare their performances with the original ones.
- 8- Writing in other genres: Students can produce discursive essays by gathering evidence for and against a topic, rationally arranging information, researching and examining model essays, and writing their own.

#### ***5.2.2.4 Recommendative Activities for Teaching Listening***

- 1- Jigsaw listening: In groups of three, students listen to related cassettes (i.e. different news stories which explain a strange event). Students can only see the whole picture by comparing notes, where they have a better chance of grasping a situation or issue, knowing the entire story, or solving a riddle if they do this.
- 2- Message taking: Students can also learn through railway and airport announcements, which they can match with photos or answer with their ideas.
- 3- Music and sound effects: Instructors can play instrumental music to set the mood and inspire them to create (imagining film scenes, responding to mood and atmosphere, saying what the theme is describing, etc.) and develop stories from sound effects.
- 4- News and other radio genres: Radio phone-ins, games, quizzes, and radio adverts can teach students. Depending on the quality of the audio tape and how well the students understand it, the scenarios may seem natural.
- 5- Poetry: It has many uses. Students listen to poetry and identify the feelings it evokes. They can name poems they hear. For instance, teachers can call three poems to the class and then ask them to describe each one. People are ready to see if their ideas about what poetry could be are right.
- 6- Stories: instructors can do a few things while students listen to storytellers. Putting pictures to tell a story may help. Even if they don't know how the story ends, they can still learn from it. They try to guess before they hear the sound. They could stop the story at important points and ask the audience what they think will happen. Both kids and adults can use these tips.
- 7- Monologues: instructors can get their students to listen to "vox-pop" interviews, where five different speakers each give their opinion on a certain subject, and the students must match the speakers with the appropriate viewpoints.

#### ***5.2.2.5 Recommendative Activities for Teaching Speaking***

- 1- information-gap activities: Students work in pairs, and each look at a photo that, though they are unaware of it, is strikingly identical to the one their partner has. Without seeing one other's photos, they need to identify ten differences between them. To uncover the distinctions, they will need to do a lot of description and ask and respond to questions.
- 2- Telling stories: The teacher can show the class six real or imagined objects. They must create an account that links the objects in groups.
- 3- Favourite Object: Instructors can ask their students to discuss their objects in groups, and the groups then report to the class which thing was the most strange or interesting.

- 4- Meeting and Greeting: Students act out a formal/business social event where they meet several people and make introductions.
- 5- Surveys: Students can interview one another using surveys. For instance, they could create a questionnaire asking subjects. They then ask each other questions while going around the class.
- 6- Students Presentation: instructors can ask Each student to speak about a particular subject. Instructors could provide them with models to assist them in doing this. Students listening to presentations must also be assigned some listening assignments, potentially involving giving feedback.
- 7- Moral dilemma: instructors get their students to decide how to settle a "moral dilemma".

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*Appendices*



**Appendix (A)**

Appendix (B)

University of Kerbala  
College of Education for Human Sciences  
Department of English

To the Jury Members

Dear Sir. / Mam.

The researcher intends to conduct a study entitled " FFL Students 'Level of Pragmatic Awareness: One Aspect of Receptive Pragmatic Competence". The Present study is limited to the third-grade university students and their instructors at the departments of English in the three Colleges of Education, namely Kerbala, Babylon, and Al-Qadisiyah. This study aims at:

1. Measuring Iraqi EFL college students' level of pragmatic awareness.
2. Identifying Iraqi EFL university students ' meta-pragmatic and metalinguistic skills.
3. Pointing out the correlation between students' meta-pragmatic and metalinguistic skills

To achieve the aims of the study, a **Pragmatic Reading Test** has been constructed.

The researcher would be grateful if you, as an outstanding figure in the field of TEFL, kindly requested to read the attach instruments and pass your judgments on the VALIDITY and SUITABILITY of the scales and the form of tests.

Needless to say, that all your comments including any proposed suggestions and recommendations will be taken into account and highly appreciated. Thanks are due to your cooperation.

M.A Candidate  
Zainab Ali Hussein Abed

Supervisor,  
Prof. Haider Bairmani

### **Pragmatic Reading Test**

Read the following conversation:

Jeremy: So you were 12 when you came to Canada.

Abidemi: That's right.

Jeremy: Do you remember anything that was either really similar or really different from how teachers taught or from the classroom experience? Were they more or less the same or were they shockingly different?

Abidemi: Actually, I think they were different in a lot of ways. For some reason, I had finished my grade 6, which is like primary 6; they called it in Nigeria, which is the end of high school—no, sorry. The end of elementary school in Nigeria.

So when I came to Canada, they put me into grade 7 thinking it's the next level. But my level was higher so they put me into grade 8 after that. So I got to skip a grade, which was really great. But I remember in terms of the way of thinking; in my English literature class, we had a conversation and we had to finish a story. And it was like, "Suddenly, something appeared in the sky. What is it?"

And all my classmates were, "It's a UFO." For me, I'd never heard of a UFO. So they were like it's a UFO. It makes somebody disappear, it picks up somebody, and one of their classmate and another person disappears.

But in my essay, I'm like—it was just weird. I had a totally different way of thinking and processing things. And that really surprised my teachers because when they wrote my composition, they compared it to the rest of the class, to my classmates and they were like, "Wow, this is interesting that you're the same age and we're all speaking the same language, but the way we view things is very different."

And I guess, to me as well, it was my first exposure to cultural differences. And then after that, many years later, coming to Japan and being different again, in a different setting, it made me think back to that time thinking, wow, you can't always expect the same things. Differences come in weird places sometimes.

Jeremy: I see.

Abidemi: So yeah, that's one thing I remember. But a lot of things were the same. We are the same, and yeah, different.

Jeremy: So Abidemi, just in terms of sort of the simple things in life, when you came to Canada, were there any foods or drinks that you were particularly fond of right away or thought were particularly strange?

Abidemi: Hmm, very good question. Food, a lot of food was all right, right off the bat, like we didn't have any difficulties with that. But one thing I do remember was nacho chips. We were not used to cheese, the taste of cheese. So my sisters and I, what we would do is we would buy nacho chips, like, Doritos—I don't know if everyone knows that—and we would wash it because the cheesy taste was strange. So we would wash it before eating it and then we would eat it. And I have some friends who will just stare at us, like, "What's the point? Why would you buy that flavor of chips? That's the whole point, to taste that." But we were like, "No, we can't eat this."

But eventually now, I love Doritos. I have grown accustomed to the taste.

Jeremy: You probably made it healthier though.

Abidemi: That's true.

**Now answer the following:**

**Q1:A-Write a suitable title for the conversation above?**

.....

**Q1: B- What are the meaning of the highlighted words within a conversation, explain how each one contribute to develop your comprehensive understanding of the dialogue.**

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**Q2: Fill in the blanks from the following words:**

(shockingly, weird, simple things, right off the bat, accustomed)

1. You can find wifi at ..... places these days .
2. My granddad likes the ..... in life.
3. She has grown ..... to motherhood.
4. He was ..... tall at over 190 cm.
5. He joined a gym .....