

Iraqi EFL University Students' Manipulation of Pragmatic Terms

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Abstract

This study sheds light on Iraqi EFL learners' abilities to handle pragmatic terms as an indispensable part of the EFL learners' communicative competence which is substantially different from linguistic competence because the former is associated with language use and, in consequence, constitutes a daunting challenge for all foreign learners of English as James (1980: 21) sustains.

This work classifies pragmatic terms into two groups: those which are pragmatic one hundred percent in character, and those which are related to pragmatics and another linguistic discipline. It is worth noting that this research is restricted to the main pragmatic terms that are of concern to the university students, overlooking the trivial concepts and details. After surveying such terms, the current study considers a questionnaire made for a representative sample of one hundred students chosen randomly from the 4th year level (academic year 2021-2022) in the Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences, Al Muthanna University with the purpose of checking those learners' abilities in this regard.

توظيف طلبة الجامعة العراقيين الدارسين اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية للمصطلحات التداولية

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الكلمات المفتاحية: المصطلحات التداولية، المصطلحات الصرفية، المصطلحات الهجينة، الإدراك، الإنتاج، طلبة الجامعة
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المستخلص

إن هذه الدراسة تسلط الضوء على إمكانيات متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية العراقيين كلغة أجنبية على المستوى الجامعي في التعامل مع المصطلحات التداولية باعتبارها جزء لا يستغنى عنه في المعرفة التواصلية والتي تختلف عن المعرفة اللغوية لأن الأولى تركز على استعمال اللغة و بذلك تشكل عائقاً قوياً للمتعلمين الأجانب كما يؤكد جيمز (1980:21). إن هذا العمل يصنف المصطلحات التواصلية إلى مجموعتين: تلك التي تكون تداولية 100% في شخصيتها، وتلك التي تضم التداولية إضافة إلى فرع آخر في اللغة. و من الجدير بالذكر إن هذا البحث يحدد بالمصطلحات التداولية الرئيسية التي تخص طلاب الجامعة متجاهلة المفاهيم الهامشية والتفاصيل. و بعد استعراض هذه المصطلحات فأن الدراسة الحالية اعتمدت استبيان صمم لعينة مكونة من (100) طالب تم اختيارهم عشوائياً من طلبة المرحلة الرابعة (العام الدراسي 2021-2022)، قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية، جامعة المثنى بهدف فحص قابليات الطلبة المعنيين بهذا المجال.

1. Pragmatics: An Independent Linguistic Branch

Many years ago, pragmatics was scarcely raised by linguists and is seen as a waste basket into which it is stuffed what is not accounted for by means of grammar. Nowadays, pragmatics is flourished and it becomes an independent branch of linguistics that cannot be overlooked since it addresses so many phenomena with regard to language use in communication. Pragmatics emerges as a reaction to the limitations of semantics in analysing sentences by dint of their truth conditions; a sentence like '*Close the door*' cannot be assessed as true nor false and, hence, proponents of pragmatics analyse such types of sentences by means of felicity conditions which will be discussed later on in this study (Leech, 1983: 9-11).

Looked at from another angle, pragmatics zeros in on the speaker's intended meaning. Alternatively defined, pragmatics pertains to the contextual meaning, meaning that is context-bound as opposed to context-free meaning. Stated otherwise, pragmatics is after what is unsaid rather than what is said, and, therefore, speakers are entitled to be armed with linguistic knowledge and non-linguistic knowledge as well in order to grasp and decipher the linguistic messages encoded in linguistic utterances. Worded differently, language users are required to depend for their interpretation upon assumptions, expectations to construct and understand linguistic messages (Yule, 2010: 114).

Accordingly, pragmatics is to be described as reading between lines since it pays more attention to language use and function; that is to say it has nothing to do with formal properties of language and linguistic competence which is accentuated by Chomsky (1965) as a defining feature of language user. Instead, pragmatics underscores communicative competence as an indispensable factor contributing to the native speaker's development in using language by mastering non-linguistic variables that enhance his/her understanding and formation of linguistic expressions (Leech, 1983: 14-15).

Following Aitcheson (1999), there is a fine line of demarcation between pragmatics and discourse analysis, an assumption which depends on the premises that both disciplines draw upon the speaker's communicative intent in determining the shape and content of the linguistic messages conveyed though the latter underscores the texture of the message and the former emphasizes the restoration of missing elements.

2. Pragmatic Terms

Term is defined as the name that is imputed to a concept. One might assume that terms are problematic, but it turns out they are used to clarify, rather than mystify, what we write

or say. Because of the rapid evolution in science, literature and technology and the resultant increase in the accompanying concepts, terms emerge to systematize these concepts and thoughts precisely (Krommer, 1977: 22-7).

Attention to terminology and terms has been increased and, in consequence, this topic has been taught in so many universities. Due to the significance of terms, there is a pressing need to pinpoint the pragmatic terms exclusive to EFL learners so that they could get access to the concepts of pragmatics that are essential to the language user's knowledge (Lyons, 1981: 9-10). The following terms are to be considered in this concern beginning with highly pragmatic terms.

2.1 Context

As a leading term in pragmatics, context refers to the properties of non-linguistic factors accompanying the recognition and/or production of linguistic utterances (Crystal, 2003: 104). Alternatively terms as situation, context involves the non-linguistic knowledge of an utterance or a text and the environment where an utterance is made or interpreted.

Following Mey (2009: 120-1), context is a decisive factor which tends to eradicate the possible interpretations of the utterance produced, leaving the most candidate one to be strengthened and established. In this regard, there are negotiations between all contextual variables surrounding an utterance to arrive at the most suitable interpretation. Context has bearing on the issuance and recognition of linguistic messages, a case which is not based on the conventional properties of language as it is motivated by situational imports. Context, despite the so lengthy accounts on its essence and scope, constitutes a controversial dispute among scholars, linguists, analysts and philosophers of language because its scope is still elusive. Some linguists, like Simpson (2004), even incorporate the interlocutors' mentality into context while others strongly reject this process claiming that this element is fraught with subjective judgments that differ from person to person or culture to culture, yielding a great of confusion.

All in all, there are four types of context to be discussed in the following sections:

2.1.1 Linguistic Context

Explicable as the host of words that accompany a given word, i.e. the word that the speaker wants to match intention, linguistic context which is also known co-text, pertains to the influence of the preceding and following words on the target word; the word '*bank*' can be taken to mean a '*financial establishment*' or a '*river shore*'. Nonetheless its presence

in such a sentence as '*She has to get to the bank to withdraw some money*' suppresses the second interpretation, supplementing the former meaning due to the occurrence of the words '*withdraw some money*'. By the same token, the word '*left*' can be construed as opposed to the word '*right*' or the past tense form of the verb '*leave*' (Yule, 2010: 114).

2.1.2 Physical Context

Referring to place, time or other surroundings that shape the interpretation of a word, a phrase or any linguistic expression, physical context may form the home environment or a public place where interactions happen. In conversational interaction, the speaker and the addressee have the same physical situation; however in some other forms of spoken language, such as telephone conversation, the speaker and hearer are physically distant (Simpson, 2004: 35).

2.1.3 Social Context

Drawing upon the power relationships between the interlocutors, social context, which can alternatively be known as personal context, accommodates social networks and group memberships that embark upon the relationship holding between participants. Worded differently, social context tackles such relations as father/son, old man/young man, employer/employee, rich/poor, strong/weak, etc., that indicate the asymmetric relations between interlocutors (Palmer, 1981: 63).

Meanwhile, social context may involve symmetrical relations which account for the equal status between the participants as manifested in the relationships between pupils in the same class as far as their scientific status is concerned. The same is said about the relationship between two brothers or close friends who descend from the same economic and social class (ibid.).

2.1.4 Mental Context

Alluding to the mental knowledge and shared background competence involving in a given interaction, mental context extends to a speaker's world view, shared cultural background and past experiences. That is to say, when interlocutors coming from different cultures engage in a conversational event, there are sometimes words that feature in their speech which one of the interlocutor does not decode, a practice that triggers a breakdown or block in communication (Palmer, 1981: 35). The same problem is detected once there is a lack of knowledge concerning a given society's social conventions on the behalf of a participant, a practice referred to as social

incompetence. It is worth mentioning that social context is amenable to change when conversation proceeds (ibid.).

Generally speaking, context is regarded as an indispensable factor that shapes the meaning of an utterance and predicts its contentment irrespective of the form it takes. For illustration, consider the following conversation between Kiki and Sharon, who are students at a British University. They are roommates in a student-house for a short time and do not know each other very well. Kiki is a Greek student and Sharon is a British one:

Kiki: *Where are you going tonight?*

Sharon: *Ministry.*

Kiki: *Ministry?*

Sharon: *Ministry of Sound: A club in London. Heard of it?*

Kiki: *I've not been clubbing in London before.* (Schmitt, 2002: 76).

In this extract, Kiki begins asking about the place to which Sharon is going; yet Sharon's one-word response is not sufficient for Kiki to be able to pinpoint what Sharon refers to. It follows that Kiki and Sharon do not share the same background knowledge and social norms; 'Ministry' is not understood by Kiki; as a famous club and that is why she was astonished for this word has nothing to do its literal meaning when it was uttered. In consequence, Sharon was required to clarify what Kiki considers as ambiguous. On the contrary, Sharon's question '*Heard of it?*' Though grammatically ill-formed is understood by Kiki since both girls have a mutual knowledge with respect linguistic competence though they differ socially (ibid: 75-6).

2.2 Deixis

Simply defined, deixis is pointing via language. Wholly dependent on context for their interpretation, some words in English and other languages are referred to as 'indeixicals' or 'deictic expressions'. In this regard, these expressions are of three types: person deixis, spatial deixis and temporal deixis (Levinson, 1983: 61).

2.2.1 Person Deixis

Operating on a three-fold distinction, person deixis is manifested by the pronouns of the first person (I), second person (you) and third person (he, she, it or they). Related to this taxonomy is that which is referred to as honorifics, which is subsumed under the title social deixis. Social deixis draws upon the relative status of the speakers involved in a

conversational event; that is to say, the speaker may be superior to the addressee or inferior to him, or the speakers are of the same status. Asymmetrical relationships between participants consist in addressee terms in, say, French in which 'tu' denotes familiarity whereas 'vous' refers to non-familiar relations. The same is applicable in German where 'du' expresses informal relations as opposed to 'sie' which indicates formal communication. English, it should be mentioned has no such distinction (Yule, 1996: 10-11).

Concerning third person, the members of this group are regarded as distal pronouns. However, this is not a sweeping generalization where one can use a third person in some situations to allude to the second person pronoun. This can be realized in English for an ironic or humorous sense as when one servant, who is busy in the kitchen, talks to another, who is very lazy, by saying:

'Would his highness like some coffee?' (ibid: 11).

In the same vein, English poses some sort of ambiguity in using 'we'. The pronoun 'we' can be an exclusive first person pronoun or an inclusive pronoun. The former involves the speaker and the other(s), apart from the addressee(s), while the latter extends in its coverage to the addressee(s) in addition to the speaker(s) and other(s). Being so, the hearer, once hearing *'We clean up after ourselves around here'* is required to decode whether 'he' is included within the scope of the pronoun 'we' or 'he' is an outsider who is far away from 'we' (Yule, 1996: 11-12).

2.2.2 Spatial Deixis

Closely pertinent to distance, spatial deictic words are assessed in terms of 'here' and 'there' relative to the speaker though Old English presents a third expression 'yonder' which is taken to mean 'more' distance from the speaker that is still employed nowadays (Yule, 1996: 12). Additionally, there are two archaic words: 'hither' (to this place) and 'thence' (from that place). Spatial expressions can be consisted in some verbs of motion, namely 'come' and 'go', when used to signal 'towards' and 'away' from the speaker respectively. It is claimed that children can first learn the deictic expressions with distal sense (i.e. this, here, come, etc.) (ibid.).

It should be emphasized that spatial deixis expressions sometimes are not restricted to physical location that the speaker evaluate but they also extend to his mental assessment; people, when are away from their homes, may employ 'here' to pinpoint what is physically far away. Likewise, they are able to express their existence in some area ahead to being

there as in '*I'll come later*' (movement to the addressee's location), a phenomenon called 'deictic projection'. By the same token, technology enables us to manipulate location. Being so, 'here' is not peculiar to the speaker's current place, but it refers to the required location where a future audience can spot as in '*I am not here*' when recorded on a telephone answering machine (ibid: 13).

Nonetheless, there is another dimension by which spatial deictic expressions are accounted for. Occasionally, distance can be measured psychologically in relation to 'likes' and 'dislikes'. Worded differently, the speaker may handle what is physically close as psychologically close as in '*That man over there*'. By contrast, the speaker can regard what is physically close as psychologically distant. For example, a perfume which does not smell well, when sniffed by someone, is treated as distant and this is demonstrated by the speaker's utterance '*I don't like that*', when that is utilized in this context to denote the speaker's non-favourite taste (ibid.).

2.2.3 Temporal Deixis

Usually revealed by '*now*' vs. '*then*', temporal deixis is an essential and indispensable part of deictic system. In fact, '*now*' involves coincidence of the speaker's theme with the time of the speaker's words being reached the hearer. The pronoun '*then*', on the other hand, revolves around past and future events, as in the following utterances:

1. *November 19th, 1999? I was in Britain then.*
2. *Dinner at 8:30 on Friday? Okay, I'll see you then* (Yule, 2010: 115).

Viewed as objects, temporal deictic expressions do involve psychological implications simply because events with such temporal deixis are seen as movable objects approaching to the speaker or moving away from him/her. Verb tense is a case in point that shows temporal relationships which are manifested by past tense standing for distal form versus present tense representing the proximal form, a distinction exemplified in the following pair of sentences (a) and (b) respectively:

- (a). *I lived there then.*
- (b). *I live here now.* (Levinson, 1983: 74-5).

In addition, temporal deictic expressions can be expressed by means of such adverbs as '*today*', '*tomorrow*', '*yesterday*', '*last week*', '*this week*', '*next week*', '*two days ago*', etc.

Interestingly enough, a distinction need to be drawn between distance in time and that in reality as illustrated in the following example sentences:

- a. *He left for Baghdad last week.*

b. *If I were a teacher,*

In sentence (a), the verb (was) denotes that the act of leaving took place a week ago whereas sentence (b) has nothing to do with time since it involves the speaker's wish to be a teacher, something which is far from reality (Quirk et al., 1985). Syntactically speaking, non-factual cases like the one stated in sentence (b) above are also realized by some constructions such as those beginning with '*as if*' or '*as though*'.

2.3 Reference

Following Lyons (1968: 404), reference is understood as the relationship between words and things. It turns out that this assumption is misleading since it is people who refer and the linguistic signs are not germane to reference. As such, reference can be best defined as "an act in which a speaker, or writer, uses linguistic forms to enable listener, or reader, to identify something" (Yule, 1996: 17).

Linguistic forms used to indicate reference are termed as referring expressions which can be definite noun phrases (e.g. the boy), indefinite noun phrases (e.g. a man, a woman, a girl, etc.). the selection of one referring expression rather than another heavily relies on what the speaker assumes the hearer realizes (ibid.). Concerning proper nouns, it is not always the case that proper nouns refer to individuals; that is to say, there are sometimes contextual variables that override this assumption. Accordingly, 'Chomsky' in the utterance '*Where is your Chomsky?*' when directed by a student to his colleague does not pick out the well-known linguist but pinpoints one of his publications (Brown and Yule, 1983: 210).

2.4 Inference

Described as an extra information used by the listener to grasp the speaker's intended meaning, inference involves using vague expressions (e.g. the icy stuff) as used by the speaker with the hope that the listener can recognize the former's intended meaning as in when a waiter, while talking to his friend, asks him '*Where is Mr. Salad sitting?*' receiving the latter's responding '*over there*'. (Yule, 2010: 116).

Following Brown and Yule (1983: 259), inference is said to bridge the gap between two utterances as in the case in the following pair of sentences:

a. '*I bought a bicycle yesterday*' and b. '*The frame is extra-large*' where sentences (a) and (b) entail sentence (c) that says (c) '*The bicycle has a frame*', which is absent from the text.

Generally speaking, inference is of two types: one is automatic inference and needs no processing time and the other is seen as a 'bridging assumption' with additional processing time. To conclude, texts have missing links and it is the readers and listeners who make inference (ibid: 259-60).

2.5 Presupposition

Described as what the speaker assumes as true or taken for granted prior to the production of utterance, presupposition is associated with the relationships between two propositions as illustrated in the utterance '*Mary's dog was cute*' which implies (presupposes) that Mary has a dog. Characterized by consistency under negation the supposition of statement will stay constant even when that statement is negative. In '*John's sister is clever and John's sister is not clever*', the same presupposition still stands which is John has a sister (Yule, 1996: 27).

There are six types of presupposition:

- a. Existential presupposition: It consists in possessive constructions such as '*Ahmed's car is new*' which presupposes that Ahmed has a car. In addition, it can be realized in noun phrases where the speaker is regarded as committed to the presence of the objects nominated as in '*the cat*', '*the king of Sweden*', '*the girl next door*', '*the counting crows*', etc. (ibid.).
- b. Factive presupposition: It covers the expressions following the verbs 'know', 'realize', 'regret' and the like as exemplified in the utterance '*Everybody knows that Samir is an officer*'. What is more, factive presupposition extends to the expressions that follow such adjectives as 'aware', 'odd' and 'glad' as in '*It is not odd that he left early*' (>> *He left early*) (the symbol >> means '*presuppose from now onwards*').
- c. Lexical presuppositions: they are forms whose asserted meaning is construed in light of its another non-asserted meaning, these forms imply. '*He stopped smoking*' implies that 'He used to smoke'. Similarly, '*You are late again*' presupposes '*You were late before*' (ibid: 28).
- d. Structural Presupposition: It means that some structures imply that another structure is taken to be the case. For example, '*When did you leave?*' presupposes '*He left*' (ibid.).
- e. Non-factual presupposition: It involves that something is not to be true. Some verbs like '*dream*', '*imagine*', and '*pretend*' are the main verbs that are included in this group as in '*I dreamed that I was rich*' (>> *I was not rich*) (ibid: 29).

f. Counter-factual presupposition: It involves that what is presupposed is the reverse of what is being the case, i.e. 'country to facts'. Conditional constructions as in '*If I were a teacher, I would have punished the lazy students severely*' fall within the scope of this group (ibid.).

2.6 Co-operative Principle

Calculated on the basis of semantic meaning together with the assumption that interlocutors behave reasonably and co-operatively, co-operative principle presupposes that human beings communicate ideas, beliefs and thoughts to one another in a sufficient way (Aitchison, 1999: 104). Grice, who proposes this principle, sustains that co-operative principle say that:

"Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (1975: 45).

Having four supportive maxims, co-operative principle requires the participant to observe the maxims that are listed below:

- a. Maxim of quantity which demands the speaker to provide the hearer with the suitable amount of information,
- b. Maxim of quality which requires the speaker not to say what he lacks and evidence for,
- c. Relevance Maxim which guides the speaker to be relevant, and
- d. Maxim of manner which stresses the order and clarity of the speaker's communicative contribution (Yule, 2010: 130).

It should be emphasized here a breach for any maxim leads to additionally conveyed. For example, when someone asked about war and receives the response that says "War is war" which obviously violates quantity maxim. However, such a reply can communicate the negative implications associated with war such as an economic crisis, murder of more innocent people and other dire consequences, a phenomenon termed as conversational implicature (Levinson, 1983: 44-5).

2.7 Anaphora

Explained as "subsequent reference to an already introduced entity", anaphora is used in utterances to trigger reference (Yule, 2010: 116). Pragmatically speaking, there is intimate connection between anaphora and reference as is illustrated by the following pair of utterances:

1. We found a house to rent, but the kitchen was small.

2. I caught a bus and asked the driver if it went near the downtown area (ibid: 117).

The inference in sentence (1) above consists in the fact that any house has a kitchen, an analysis that captures the speaker's intended meaning though this connection is not explicitly stated. By the same token, the link between the antecedent (a bus) in sentence (2) and the anaphora (the driver) is logically implicit. Worded differently, these connections and other similar ones are to be explicable within the umbrella of pragmatics which underscores recalling what is unsaid in light of the context in which utterances are made (Yule, 1996: 22-3). However, there is a particular kind of anaphora which will be discussed later on, is to be accounted for formally.

Contextual influence on the identification of anaphora can be also seen in elliptical anaphora where the audience is entitled to restore what is deleted. For illustration, consider the following instructions that are considered as a recipe of cooking:

A. *Peel an onion and slice it.*

B. *Drop the slices into hot oil.*

C. *Cook for three minutes* (Yule, 1996: 23)

The deleted pronoun (it) in Sentence (c) is evaluated as an anaphora to onion, i.e. the sliced onion in Sentence (A).

2.8 Face

Simply defined as the social image of a person referring to the emotional and social aspect of self, face is an urgent demand of all members of a given society. Accordingly, this notion should be taken into account when approaching politeness premises mainly because politeness can be tackled as the device used to display awareness of the addressee's face to achieve a balance in the social relationships between the interlocutors. Any violation of this social equilibrium will surely spark face-threatening act, a practice which can clearly be observed in (a). inaugurating unsolicited conversation, (b). arguing against the addressee's opinion, (c). interrupting another person's turn, (d). altering the topic under discussion, (e). mentioning socially undesirable topics or those with taboo expressions, and (f). terminating the interaction (Bloor and Bloor, 2007: 101-2). On the contrary, the speaker can say some words that defuse the tension between interlocutors and lessen the possible threat by mitigating the influence arising from flouting some social conventions, a practice called a face-saving act. Let's consider a night scene in which a neighbouring teenager plays music loudly, bothering an old couple who want to sleep. One of them proposes a face-threatening act and the other adopts a face-saving act.

Him: *I'm going to tell him to stop that awful noise tonight now.*

Her: *Perhaps you just ask him if he is going to stop soon because it's getting a bit late and people need to get to sleep* (Yule, 1996: 63).

Digging deep in this regard, two strategies are inherent in our daily conversations concerning face: (1). Negative face and (2) positive face. The former concerns itself with the person's need for independence and freedom of action and freedom of imposition while the latter demonstrates the speaker's great wish to be a member of the social group to which he belongs. Put otherwise, positive face is preoccupied with solidarity and integration of the social group which a person aims to join and, hence, is characterized by abusive terms and first and nick names as titles. By contrast, negative strategy is marked by last names, titles and full of apologetic language (Schmitt, 2002: 80-81).

2.9 Schema

Related to the speaker's intention and language use, schema is defined as a "conventional knowledge structure" that inheres in the memory and constitutes an essential part of one's communicative competence in arriving at what is unsaid or unwritten when one is making use of the previous experience to utilize it in interpreting a new experience. Accordingly, we use our schema of what a classroom is like once we try to make sense of the previous knowledge about classroom environment. The same is said about when talking about a supermarket, an office, a farm, a house and so on (Yule, 2010: 132).

Alternatively called frame, schema is preoccupied with covert and apparently irrelevant conversational events as in the following examples:

Salesman: *Pink sinks are the latest fashion, madam.*

Customer: *My dishwasher's red* (Aitchison, 1999: 107).

The memorized frame concerning a particular entity is restored to fit in the current situation. For instance, a person might have a schema of a typical kitchen, which is a mental representation having slots for a sink, a cooker, a dishwasher and the like. The audience here can comfortably realize what the speaker means in virtue of the shared knowledge between the interlocutors. Put differently, a schema revolves around what a social group shares with regard to the prototypical image; a schema or a frame of apartment, for example, requires such components as kitchen, bathroom and bedroom, which do not surface in an advertisement like '*Apartment for Rent. \$ 500 a month*' (ibid: 108).

2.10 Speech Act

According to Yule (2010: 118), speech act is a term used to describe an action performed by means of words such as 'warning', 'promise', 'order', 'threat', 'request', 'command', 'offer', 'invitation' and so on. In consequence, the utterance 'I'll be there at six' is taken to mean a promise when used in appropriate conditions.

The action-like character of such utterances is endorsed by Levinson (1983: 223) who argues against the truth condition of these utterances in favour of a set of parameters so-called felicity conditions by dint of which utterances are assessed. For illustration, a command is evaluated as so when there is a difference in power relations between the speaker and the hearer. What is more, the speaker should be superior to the addressee, and, in the same vein, the addressee should have the ability to do the recommended action. A defect in any one of the three criteria so far discussed causes a misfire; that is to say, the speech act of command would not be performed, and such a progress of fallacy is technically referred to as misfire which causes a breakdown in communication.

Speech acts, in general, are of two types: direct and indirect. The former type shows close correspondence between the form of an utterance and the function it performs: an imperative sentence, for example, can perform an order as in 'Close the door' when produced by a teacher, say, to one of his pupils. By the same token, an interrogative sentence is used by someone to issue the speech act of question which usually aims at eliciting information from the address. On parallel lines, declarative sentences are employed to make statements with the aim of supplying the address with information.

Nonetheless, this form-function connection may be suspended, speech acts that are termed as indirect speech acts simply because their structure has nothing to do with the functions performed as in 'Could you pass me the salt?' which should be taken as a question since it is not intended to ask about the addressee's, but is evaluated as a request. It should be noted that indirect speech acts are mainly issued in formal situation and occasions requiring some sort of politeness (Aitchison, 1999: 98-9).

According to Mey (2009: 1043), a speech act consists of three parts: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary. The locutionary component is concerned with syntactic and semantic structure of speech act, the illocutionary part is preoccupied with the force of utterance and the function it performs (and this is what speech act is after and it is the interest of pragmatics), and the perlocutionary portion of the speech act tackles the impact that a speech act brings about upon the addressee. Leech (1983: 126) analyses speech act

from a different point of view; that is to say, a speech act is evaluated as so in light of cost-benefit variable. Some utterances have the same form but they are considered as different speech acts such as promise and threat which may take on the same future form but they are only differentiated by means of the benefit and the sacrifices assigned to the interlocutors; in promises the benefit is imputed to the addressee and the speaker is to be the sacrifice, but these values are reversed in case of threats. All in all, speech act theory is one of the key building foundations upon which pragmatics is considered.

3. Hybrid Terms

Envisioned as a group covering terms that are not pragmatic perse, the terms subsumed under this title are to label borderline disciplines between two linguistic areas one of which is pragmatics. Worded differently, there is an overlap between some concepts which belong to pragmatics and another discipline (Aitchison, 1999: 108-9). The following terms are the principal ones that fall within the scope of this sub-section:

3.1 Conventional Implicature

Conversational implicature involves flouting one or more of the maxims in order to trigger an additional conveyed meaning and, hence, it is considered pragmatically. In contrast, conventional implicature does not rely on the co-operative principle and its maxims. Associated with particular lexical items, conventional implicature has nothing to do with the context in which they occur. The conjunction '*but*', for instance, indicates contrast between two propositions as in '*Mary has suggested black, but I chose white*'. The same thing can be said about '*even*' and '*yet*' which show contrary to one's expectation as in '*Even John came to the party and he is a brilliant student; yet he failed the exam*' (Yule, 1996: 45-6).

The various meanings of '*and*' are a case in point where these meanings denote conventional implicature. As a result, the conjunction '*and*' combining sentences with static information is construed as "plus" as in '*Yesterday Mary was happy and ready to work*', while it is meant to combine events in sequence as in '*I washed the dishes and dried them*' when combining dynamic events. By the same token, this conjunction integrates conditional clauses where the first clause contains a condition and the second one is a result as exemplified by '*Give me some money and I'll help you escape*' (Quirk et al., 1985: 930).

3.2 Phonetic Context

Unlike social, linguistic, physical and mental contexts which are accounted for pragmatics, phonetic context is considered phonetically in light of a particular sound system. Alternatively known contextual variants, phones (or allophones) are found in "mutually exclusive environments" due to the influence of phonetic context, which is reflected in the sounds that precede and/or follow the sound segment under influence; dark [ɫ] and light [l] are pronounced in, say, 'milk' [mɪɫk] and 'flight' [faɪt] respectively due the influence of the following sound, that is to say, the phoneme /l/ is pronounced as dark [ɫ] when is followed by a consonant sound, but it is realised as light [l] when it is followed sound is a vowel (Hyman, 1975: 62).

Seen as complementary distribution, the presence of one phone rather than another is conditioned by the phonetic environment in which the influenced sound occurs; [p^h], for instance, occurs word initially as in 'perhaps' [] while [p] is found elsewhere as in 'speak' [spi:k], 'spread' [spred], etc. Similarly, context influence is realized in altering consonant voiced sounds to their devoiced counterparts when found intervocalically, a process realised in the pronunciation of [d] instead of [t] in 'eat it' [i:d it]. Additionally, affrication is another process arising from contextual factors; that is to say, the phone [tʃ] results from the phone [t] followed by [r] as in 'try' [tʃraɪ], 'train' [tʃreɪn] (Yavas, 2011: 62-3).

Some other processes are due to the context effect. Nasalization of vowels, which are quite common in some American dialects, is formed thanks to the presence of a vowel after a nasal sound as in 'room' [rù:m], 'noon' [nù:n], 'fan' [făn] where [ù:] and [ă] are nasalized. Contextual influence can clearly be observed in the pronunciation of sibilants to serve as plural suffixes. Worded differently, the suffix-s is realized as [z] when added to a word ending with a voiced sound as in 'beds' [bedz], 'bags' [bagz], 'reads' [ri:dz], etc., but is uttered as [s] once formed at the end of a word ending with a voiceless sound as in 'helps' [helps], 'books' [buks], 'tapes' [teips], etc., and still pronounced [ɪz] when preceding a sibilant sound as in 'washes' [], 'watches', 'roses' [], etc. (ibid: 63). All in all, phonetics and pragmatics share the notion of context since contextual factors in both linguistic areas spark a considerable degree of influence.

3.3 Formal Anaphora

In fact, pragmatic treatment of anaphora is introduced as something that is construed in reference to context alongside the speaker's intention and mutual knowledge between participants. However, there exists anaphora that is expressly inherent in the text and, hence, is handled semantically as the direct link between two forms in a given text as in

'There's a clean towel in the cupboard, if you need one' where the two words 'towel' and 'one' refer to the same entity. This reference is captured by virtue of textual recoverability. Noteworthy is that the co-reference of antecedent and anaphora here is recognized by a variety of syntactic and semantic connections (Quirk, et al., 1985: 867).

The connection here is reflected in the first mention (technically referred to as antecedent) which is usually indefinite and the second mention (technically termed as anaphora) which draws upon pronouns (like he, she, it, etc.) as in 'I met a man and he is very honest', the realization of anaphora is also indicated by proforms as exemplified by the following exchange|:

A. 'I like going abroad'. B. 'So do I'.

Such an anaphora occurrence is also triggered by means of synonymy, antonymy, repletion, metonymy and other relations. The following example is an illustration of this trend:

'Samir drinks a lot of water from this tank. This liquid is dirty'. Here 'this' link is arrived at by the synonymous lexical items 'water' and 'liquid' which are explicitly found in the sentence in question. In brief, the difference between pragmatic anaphora and formal anaphora can be manifested in that the former is context-dependent, while the latter is context-free since it heavily relies on a formal criteria (Yule, 1996: 22-3).

3.4 Irony

Approached differently, irony is an essential topic over which identity there is a hotly controversial debate among linguists and scholars and, hence, there is a pressing need for its analysis (Mey, 2006: 406). Consequently, it can be semantically approached when it is thought of as saying something to mean the opposite of what is uttered. Being so, this semantic-based interpretation by lexical substitution as in 'What a lovely day, when said on a day which is stormy to be recognized as lexical irony since the original meaning of the utterance above can be recalled by word substitution (e.g. 'lovely', 'for', 'awful'). That is to say, this type of irony stands in contrastive relations.

Related to this oppositeness character of irony is the mention theory which states that an utterance is ironic when it is seen as the echoic representation of another utterance. As such, 'You've been a great help!', said to someone whose deeds and words cause problems for you; i.e. the ironic remark is the one that repeats some or all words of another one with the aim of making fun of what is said by the first speaker (Cruse, 2006: 90). Consider the following exchange between two persons talking about a lazy manager called Mazin:

A. Mazin is an active manager.

B. Mazin's activity is so obvious.

B's echoic response is taken to be an ironic expression. However, the semantic approach to irony is indefensive and most linguists see it is suitable to tackle it from a pragmatic perspective, viz, co-operative principle and its supportive maxims proposed by Grice (1975) just because irony is mostly envisioned as violation of the maxim of quality; 'Don't mind me, will you?', for instance, is an ironic expression when said to someone who has just barged into the speaker. Likewise, 'Do you have to spill the ash on the carpet?' is another ironic construction with the speaker's intention that the addressee is unable to abandon the fault at issue. By the same token, irony can be triggered by breaching the quantity maxim; the ironic sentence said by Mark Twain, the great American writer, 'Some of his words were not Sunday school words' is spelt out as "one expects that all his words are Sunday school words, but this expectation is not true as some of them are not so" (Leech, 1983: 142-3).

Additionally, overstatement and understatement are two strategies that bring about irony; the former recommends that the description of an object be greater than that indicated by the state of affairs as when one talks about a very stupid boy whose name is Rami by saying 'He is a genius', the latter concerns itself with the description of an entity less than its real expert in response to a novice teacher's false remark on a certain topic pertaining to education setting (ibid.).

3.5 Script

Sometimes called 'dynamic schema', script is usually approached from a discursive point of view though there is an overlap between pragmatics and discourse analysis in tackling this linguistic area and other areas since the two branches are amalgamation of the speaker's intention and textual interpretation. In discourse analysis, a script is a pre-existing knowledge structure pertaining to a series of actions or events like 'Going to the dentist, grocery shopping or going to the movies' (Yule, 2010: 133).

Following Brown and Yule (1983: 24102), script accommodates relations described as conceptual dependencies. The example, 'John ate the ice-cream with a spoon' implicitly involves an utterance like '*John ingested the ice-cream by transiting the ice-cream on a spoon to his mouth*' and the action is made by getting the ice-cream and John's mouth in contact. By further illustration, consider the following two-sentence text:

A. 'We went on a hunting expedition'.

B. 'We shot two bucks' (ibid: 242).

This text lacks some entities like rifles, bullets and dead animals that the audience or reader is entitled to capture in this textual interpretation. That is to say, crucial information is suppressed from texts because it turns up in the reader's mind on the assumption that the reader has already been acquainted with such data due to his/her experience of the world and language, an experience that the interlocutors are all conscious to it. Stated differently, since the vast majority of details are regarded to be known, they are not necessarily to be mentioned (Yule, 1996: 86-7). In consequence, two superficially related, though genuinely distinct, types of script emerge: pragmatic and discursal scripts that are so far discussed thoroughly.

The dual character of script is usually discerned by adapting the action or event as soon as one comes across one's mental interpretation that arises from the daily experience, a practice that falls within the scope of discourse analysis and pragmatics (Verschueren, 1999: 150).

4. Test Design

It has been pointed out that the purpose of test for the teachers and scholars is to check the learners' achievement in a particular linguistic area. Accordingly, the researcher devised a two-part questionnaire with the first part including ten items each one of them has four options among which the testee is required to select the appropriate term that matches what is asked for, a procedure Al Jubouri (2014: 56-7) calls a close-ended test. The second part, which is designated to cover the students' measure also encompasses ten items having blanks to be filled by a suitable term.

This test can be described as an achievement test since it looks back over a long term learnability of a testee as Harrison (1983: 7) affirms. In order for this to be carried out, the questionnaire under scrutiny incorporated two types of pragmatic terms: those which are purely pragmatics and those which incorporated pragmatic and non-pragmatic concepts at the same time. In recognition part, items (4), (6), (8) and (10) represent the latter group and are intended to involve various hybrid terms while the rest of items draw upon purely pragmatic terms. The second question, the production question, set out to pinpoint the Iraqi learners' pragmatic ability in using the appropriate terms that enable them to express and communicate the concepts grounded in pragmatics. In this part, items (1), (2), (3), (4), (9) and (10) are biased towards pragmatic terms, while items (5), (6), (7) and (8) demand terms naming concepts which are of hybrid nature.

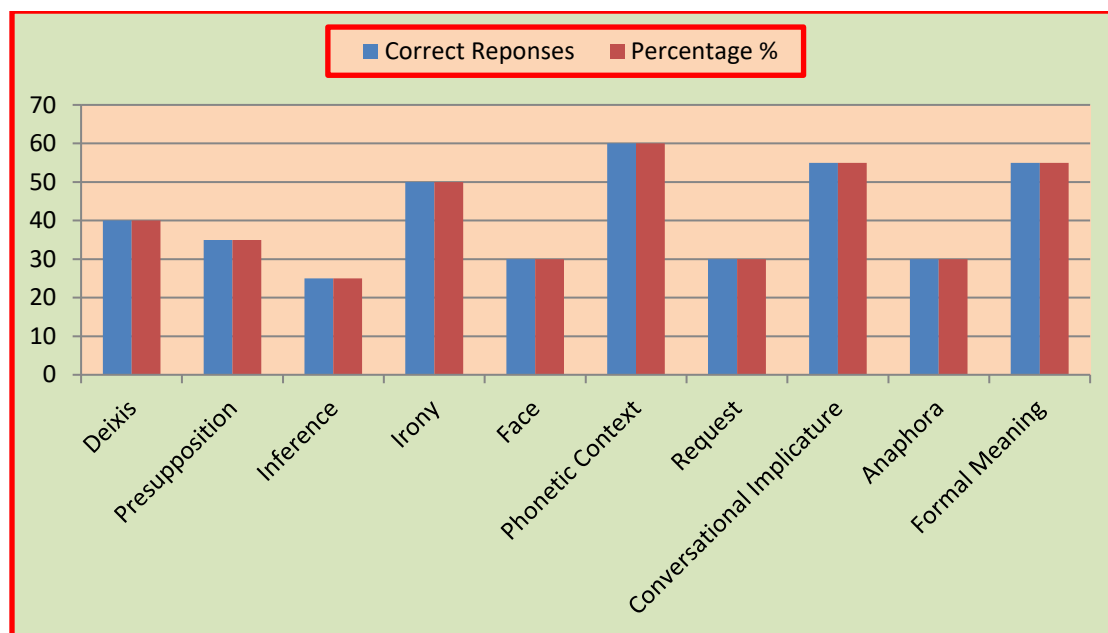
After the questionnaire structure, one hundred 4th year students (academic year 2021-2022) from the Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences, Al Muthanna University are randomly chosen as a representative sample of Iraqi EFL college learners. The items of the test are chosen carefully to cover the pragmatic material. Furthermore, the items are worded with a great care and attention so that ambiguity is ruled out totally. As such the items demand no more than a single response (ibid: 19-20).

5. Results and Discussion

After collecting the data which represent the testees' responses, it is clear that the students encounter a grave difficulty when coming to handle the items involved. The following table indicates the learners' disappointing performance in the recognition part.

Question Items	Pure / Hybrid Terms	Terms	Correct Reponses	Percentage
1	Pure Term	Deixis	40	40%
2	Pure Term	Presupposition	35	35%
3	Pure Term	Inference	25	25%
4	Hybrid Term	Irony	50	50%
5	Pure Term	Face	30	30%
6	Hybrid Term	Phonetic Context	60	60%
7	Pure Term	Request	30	30%
8	Hybrid Term	Conventional Implicature	55	55%
9	Pure Term	Anaphora	30	30%
10	Hybrid Term	Formal Meaning	55	55%

Table (1): EFL Iraqi University Learners' Recognition Achievement in Key Pragmatic Terms



Figure

(1): EFL Iraqi University Learners' Recognition Achievement in Key Pragmatic Terms

As illustrated from Table (1) and Figure (1), Iraqi learners' performance is severely restricted in distinguishing pragmatic terms. Item (1), which is meant to cover deixis, displays considerable failure (60%) of incorrect answers and thus indicates that the concept is intelligible but the label is not so for the learners in question. Badly needed a sophisticated analysis, presupposition, which is accounted for in item (2), is of (35%) only of the students' correct answers since presupposition, like other terms, is a new concept in the students' linguistic knowledge. As regards inference, inference, which is codified in item (3), is a term to which the students find difficulty to get access and, hence, they cannot distinguish it from reference, anaphora or other similar terms as Yule (1996) has asserted.

Assumed to have nothing to do with pragmatics, face, which is rooted in item (5), is a big challenge for the learners concerned because they think it is not workable in pragmatics and seldom do they attribute it to the person's social image as Mey (2006: 226) argues.

The speech act of request, which item (7) deals with, is somewhat difficult to detect by the testees since most learners are deceived by the form of the utterance rather by the function it fulfills as Schmitt (2004:) point out and, hence, the students select

'question' choice as the term that matches this utterance. In consequence, the students' performance is a failure in this paradigm.

On the other hand, items (4), (6), (8) and (10) show somehow better performance; item (4), which is designated to check irony, witnesses (50%) of the correct answers, indicating that half of the students can pass this item successfully and one main reason for this James (1980) mentions is the positive interference; that is to say, this trope abounds in Arabic and, therefore, the students involved can successfully manage it in English. Item (6) is seen as the most successful item in the learners' performance simply because it is related to phonetics and share nothing with pragmatics but the name. What is more, instructors as well as textbooks designers considerably emphasize the importance of phonetics and phonology in English syllabuses for foreign learners of English as Roach (1983) usually overstresses. Conventional implicature, which is included in item (8), is easier than its conversational implicature since it is largely associated with the form of the utterance and the semantic structure of conjunctions such as 'and', 'but', 'because', and so forth as Quirk, et al. (1985) argue. consequently, the learners gain (55%) of the correct answers. Item (9), which refers to 'anaphora', shows a sharp difficult (30%) in the learners' performance simply because the learners are not accustomed to such a term. That is to say, the testees used to employ 'proforms' to indicate the subsequent referent especially in syntactic analysis which they are busy with right from the beginning. As for formal meaning, which is involved in item (10), is expected to display a remarkable success on the part of the testees as it makes appeal to literal meaning as opposed to contextual meaning as Yule (2010) indicates when he (ibid.) says it is the meaning that is directly derived from words, phrases and sentences.

As for the production part, the plight is fiercer when one comes across the results gained by the testees as illustrated by table (2) below:

Question Items	Pure / Hybrid Terms	Terms	Correct Reponses	Percentage (%)
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1	Pure Term	Pragmatics	30	30%
2	Hybrid Term	Irony	25	25%
3	Pure Term	Presupposition	30	30%
4	Pure Term	Inference	25	25%
5	Hybrid Term	Irony	20	20%
6	Hybrid Term	Formal Anaphora	55	55%
7	Hybrid Term	Phonetic Context	55	55%
8	Hybrid Term	Script	55	55%
9	Pure Term	Conversational Implicature	30	30%
10	Pure Term	Promise	25	25%

Table (2): EFL Iraqi University Learners' Production Achievement in Key Pragmatic Terms

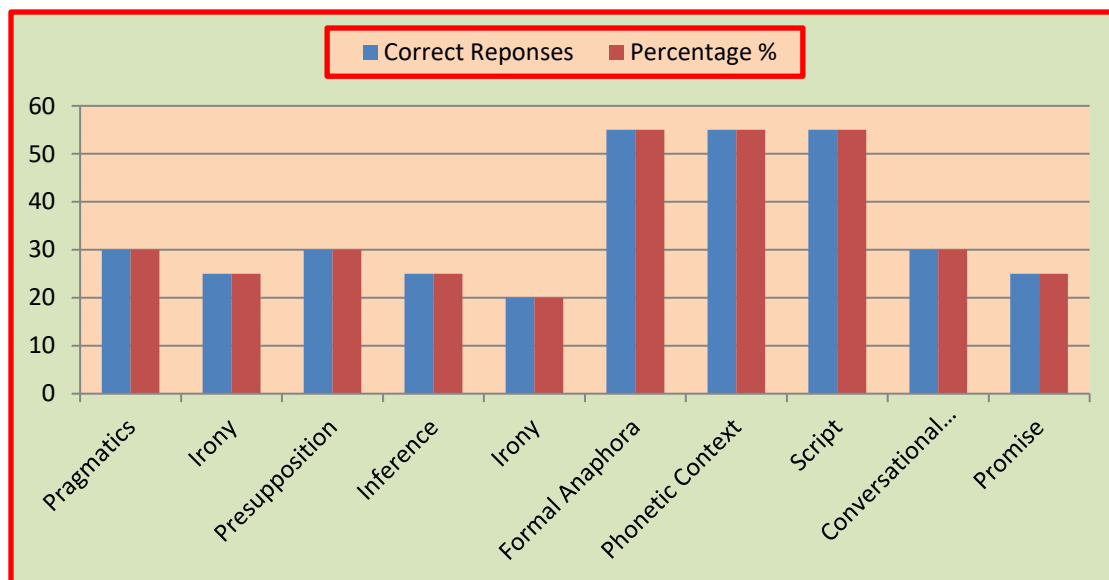


Figure: (2): EFL Iraqi University Learners' Production Achievement in Key Pragmatic Terms

In fact, there is a thorny problem with the testees who sit for this questionnaire. Item (1), which is designated to elicit from the learners the umbrella term of pragmatics that

covers all pragmatic terms, sees a sharp decrease in the learners' responses (30%), an indication that displays that this linguistic area which Yule (2010: 115) describes as invisible meaning constitutes a cement barrier in the foreign learners' linguistic and non-linguistic competence. Similarly, irony which is codified in item (2), represents a grave difficulty on the part of students in question, a practice which so many analysts justify as infrequent use of this trope in the textbooks devoted to foreign learners. Item (3), which stands for presupposition, gains only (30%) of the proper answers as this notion is no so intelligible by these learners and the instructors as well, therefore the latter usually leave it with no discussion or give a very brief account on it by the time that all linguists, including Yule (1996: 57) who suggests the significance of such a topic.

Proceeding in this track, which is intended to disclose 'inference', item (4) witnesses only (25%) of the correct answers. This questionnaire foretells us that such topic is in need of more processing in order to arrive at the speaker's intended meaning as Leech (1983: 112) says. Accordingly, the students involved fail in labeling this concept. Item (5) touches upon the pragmatic notion of irony at which the examinees get the lowest mark (20%), a daunting challenge which indicates the learners' handclapped ability in this concern. This failure can be justified as so because it is seen as integration of both politeness and rudeness at the same time as Leech (1983: 118) points out. Item (6) is not so problematic and half of the students can answer it correctly due to the fact that this term is related to semantics as Quirk, et al. (1985) assert and its meaning is not relevant to pragmatics.

Item (7), which is devised to examine the context in which the sound is determined, is also manageable and more than half of the learners can respond properly. Likewise, script which is mostly discussed in discourse analysis, and which is accommodated in item (8), shows no difficulty in its management by the learners at issue. Considered as pragmatic notion *per se*, conversational implicature included in item (9) represents a challenge for learners (30%) as indicated by Brown and Yule (1993). Item (10) which implies promise as a speech act constitutes a barrier for the learners at hand who are greatly deceived by its form rather than the function it performs.

Conclusions

This study arrives at the following conclusions:

1. Iraqi EFL learners are considerably affected by the form of hybrid and pure pragmatic terms.
2. Iraqi EFL learners perform in hybrid terms better than purely pragmatic terms.
3. Irony, face and presupposition are the key topics that EFL learners much more suffer from.
4. In hybrid terms, Iraqi EFL learners are more prone to non-pragmatic concepts than their pragmatic counterparts and, hence, they fail in recognizing and producing the pragmatic terms.
5. The learners at issue may succeed, to a certain extent, in managing some main pragmatic terms but their abilities are nothing but a total failure in facing the terms that subsume under the key ones.
6. There is a pressing need for teaching pragmatics right from the first year in Departments of English in all Iraqi universities.

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Appendix

The Questionnaire Form

Part I (Recognition): Choose the most appropriate answer (2 marks for each item)

1.means 'pointing' via language.

(Deixis / Reference / Presupposition / Inference)

2. The utterance "Stop Smoking" presupposes that the addressee

(didn't smoke / gave up smoking / used to smoke / decided to smoke)

3. Additional information used by the addressee to connect what is said and what must be meant is termed

(reference / inference / anaphora / context)

4. Someone borrowed your new car without your knowledge of that, a practice you hate too much, and when he got it back, you say "I like this too much" in response to his "thanks" to you. This is

(irony / inference / compliment / gratitude)

5. refers to the social image that everyone wants the others to notice and respect.

(schema / face / anaphora / inference)

6. is meant to involve the sounds that precede and follow a given sound segment.

(context / speech act / script / presupposition)

7. "Could you pass me some salt?". This uttered is

(request / order / question / offer)

8. "He is a brilliant student, but he failed the final exam". The contrast in these two clauses is interpreted as

(conversational implicature / conventional implicature / presupposition / inference)

9. The second mention of an entity that is previously stated elsewhere in a text is called

(reference / inference / presupposition / speech act)

10. of linguistic forms is directly derived from words, phrases and sentences.

(Literal meaning / Formal meaning / Context / Indirect Meaning)

Part II (Production): Fill in the blanks with the term that best suits the utterance in which it occurs. (2 marks for each item)

1. is the speaker's intended meaning that depends on the context in which utterances are produced or interpreted.

2. A very qualified teacher in linguistics and his colleagues as well as students, in consequence, call him Chomsky, an act that is described as
3. "When did you leave for Basrah?" This question implies that the addressee left for Basrah, a term so called
4. "Where is Mr. Salad sitting?" A waiter asks one of his colleagues in reference to someone who is fond of eating salad. This remark is construed as
5. Suppose someone barged into you one day and you said "Don't mind me, will you?" This utterance is regarded as
6. (A): "I like studying physics in Russia". (B): "So do I". This utterance is considered as
7. Voiceless sounds in American English usually get voiced due to the influence of the preceding and following vowels as in 'catty' [kædi], a phonetic environment technically termed as
8. A pre-existing knowledge structure alluding to a series of events or actions is labeled as
9. (A) 'The driver: I'm out of petrol'. (B)'A passenger: There is a petrol station around the corner'. B's answer violatesmaxim.
10. 'A father to his young son on the latter's success in the final exam, "I'll buy you a new bike". This utterance is pragmatically considered as