INTERNATIONAL BLACK SEA UNIVERSITY
FACULTY of Education and Humanities
PhD PROGRAM in Education Sciences

Developing Sociolinguistic and Pragmatic Competences in English as Foreign Language (EFL) Students at University Language Schools (Iraqi Case)

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Extended Abstract of Ph.D. Dissertation in Education Sciences

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INTRODUCTION

Since the introduction of the term ̶*communicative competence* as a concept became the cornerstone of modern linguistics and its subfields and acquired great importance in teaching any foreign language. What does the notion imply?

Communicative competence is the intuitive functional knowledge and control of the principles of language usage. As Hymes observes: "…a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others" (Hymes, 1972, p.277).

Sociolinguistic competence is one of the components of communicative competence alongside linguistic, discourse and strategic competences.Sociolinguistic competence is the knowledge of sociocultural rules of use, i.e. knowing how to use and respond to language appropriately. The appropriateness depends on the setting of the communication, the topic, and the relationships among the people communicating. Moreover, being appropriate depends on knowing what the taboos of the other culture are, what politeness indices are used in each case, what the politically correct term would be for some notion, how a specific attitude (authority, friendliness, courtesy, irony, etc.) is expressed, etc.

Pragmatic competence is also one of the components of the communicative competence and is the ability to convey the intended message, and to interpret the message intended by one's interlocutor.

For years English has been taught in Iraq using predominantly Grammar-Translation method, by focusing on grammar rules, teaching them using the learners' native language, getting the students to memorize the rules, etc. In fact, this way of teaching was not adequate in meeting the needs of the learners. Consequently, there were 'speakers' of English who knew the grammatical rules, had extensive vocabulary but could not use the language to actually communicate.

A few years ago some attempts were made to bring changes to the EFL teaching in Iraq such as changing the textbooks from the ones printed in 1970s into the new series published in the United

Kingdom. The new books were more communicatively oriented; however, it did not solve all the problems. Developing communicative competence is one of the main objectives of most methods and approaches used in TEFL, in Iraq as well, and it is expected that the advanced speakers of English demonstrate high levels of the competence. However, according to my personal experience and observations, backed with some studies (Jaroszek, 2008; Mizne, 1997), many EFL learners end up not being able to respond appropriately in certain social situations or interpret the utterances correctly, making grammatically correct but awkward statements, unnatural responses in communicative encounters, and translating some certain expressions from their L1.

There might be numerous reasons for this. One of them might be the teachers' low level of communicative competence, particularly of pragmatic and sociolinguistic competences which are hard to learn in an EFL situation where the interaction with native speakers is either very limited or is not present at all, and there is a small number of EFL teachers that had had a chance to live in an English speaking country. Another reason might be the fact that language curricula can be too overloaded with topics to cover during the course and teachers find themselves skipping the communicative activities in the book in order to keep up with the syllabus.

The observations and experience mentioned above always made me wonder if it is possible to teach sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences at all and if they have an impact on overall speaking performance and this is the reason why I chose this topic as a focus of the current research.

The statement of the problem- the low level of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences is common among students of university language school; EFL teachers possess insufficient knowledge of the two above abilities and there exist inefficiencies and failures in teaching them to L2 learners.

The goals of my doctoral dissertation were:

- To find/develop an efficient way of teaching and developing sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences;
- To check and measure if the instruction of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences has an impact on learners' overall oral proficiency;
- To assess the efficiency of the suggested teaching model.

Hypothesis of the thesis

Teaching sociolinguistic competence to adult EFL learners enhances their communicative competence in the target language, increases their overall oral proficiency in the language learnt, assists them to overcome obstacles English as a L2 presents culturally and sociolinguistic ally, develops in them skills of interpreting the language and skills of interacting in the target language.

Below are **the research questions** of this dissertation:

1. What is the concept of communicative competence?

2. Which aspects of communicative competence its main components – sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences cover?

3. What ways and methods of teaching an FL efficiently develop sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences in EFL students?

4. Does developing sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences affect students' overall oral language proficiency?

5. How much valuable modern EFL textbooks and language programs are for developing L2 learners' socio/pragmatic competence?

6. How much EFL teachers are aware of the importance of teaching socio/pragmatic competence to L2 learners?

7. What are effective ways of testing and assessing socio/pragmatic competence?

The methods of research in the dissertation were**:**

> ➢ review and analysis of existing literature on the topic
> ➢ questionnaire
> ➢ experiment
> ➢ interview
> ➢ observation
> ➢ statistical analysis of the data obtained through questionnaire surveys and experiment

Quantitative Paradigm:

- ➤ a pre-test (one week before the study)
- ➤ a while-test (in the middle of the experiment)
- ➤ a post-test (immediately upon completion of the experiment)
- ➤ statistical analysis of obtained data from the experiment
- ➤ a survey for measuring teacher communicative competence
- ➤ an analysis of textbooks for the components of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences

Qualitative Paradigm:

- ➤ interviews of randomly selected students after the experiment
- ➤ observation and assessment of learners' oral proficiency
- ➤ observation of classes as a part of curriculum evaluation
- ➤ observation of teachers' communicative competence
- ➤ discussion of the curriculum with learners
- ➤ discussion and evaluation of the curriculum with/by teachers

Thus, the methods of research were both quantitative and empirical.

Urgency of the research

For decades since the advent of communicative language learning in TEFL the practice has experienced decline and stagnation. EFL learners in most cases end their studies without communicative competence in the target language, lacking interaction skills, intuition and knowledge of rules of interpreting the language, unable to appropriately respond to different verbal and non-verbal situations. Hence, the thesis is undoubtedly urgent in order to update practices of teaching sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences properly.

Novelty of the research

One of the approaches that aim to teach communicative competence is the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The studies that focus on CLT are aplenty. However, there are very few studies that concentrate on the notion's subcomponents, particularly, on sociolinguistic and

pragmatic competences, probably because they deal with the cultural aspect of the language and culture is quite abstract and sensitive topic to deal with.

The research systematized key aspects of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences for the purpose of teaching them at pre-intermediate and intermediate levels to adult EFL learners (junior university students). The novelty of the current study is in its approach to developing sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences and its effect on oral proficiency in the target language which also includes the analysis of factors affecting the process of instruction such as the curriculum, teaching materials, and teachers.

Theoretical value of the thesis

Theoretical basis of the current research are the following:

➢ the notion of communicative competence by different scholars and researchers (Bachman, 1990; Canale, 1983; Canale and Swain, 1980; CEFR, 2001; Hymes, 1972)

➢ teaching communicative competence, the Communicative Language Teaching (Larsen-Freeman, 2008; Richards, 2006; Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Savignon, 2002)

➢ teaching sociolinguistic competence (Handford, 2002; Mizne, 1997)

➢ teaching pragmatic competence (Xiao-le, 2011; Ekin, 2013; Jernigan, 2007; Kasper and Rose, 2001; Littlewood, 1981)

➢ testing and assessing sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence (Byram, 1997; Underhill, 1987; Kasper and Rose, 2001)

Knowledge concerning teaching sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence in TEFL was systematized, new approaches and methods of developing these competences were worked out, an effective model for teaching the two competences was offered.

Practical value of the thesis

The research with its practical outcomes will improve practice of teaching interactional skills to adult EFL learners; will, hopefully, help teachers be oriented on real, genuine communication to

fully equip their students with sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences so that they appropriately conduct verbal communication in the English language.

Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation is comprised of: introduction, 4 chapters, conclusion and appendices. It includes 25 tables and 10 figures.

CHAPTER 1: Review of Literature

This chapter deals with the following issues: definition of the concept of communicative competence, types and models of the notion proposed by the most reknowned scholars; the two main components of communicative competence: pragmatic competence and sociolinguistic competences respectively, and a brief history of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

The term *communicative competence* was coined by Dell Hymes (1966), he argued that a person who could produce all kinds of grammatically correct sentences of a language without considering the appropriateness would be institutionalized, as a counterargument to Chomsky's (1965) definition of *linguistic competence*. *Communicative competence,* as previously mentioned*,* involves not only knowing the language code and its syntactic rules but also the knowledge of what is appropriate and not so in any given context. In other words, it includes the knowledge of what to say to whom, or when to remain silent, how to speak appropriately in any given situation, how to address persons of different statuses, roles and/or gender, how to command, how to express criticism, how to accept or reject offers, how to make requests, etc. Shortly, the term encompasses all aspects of language use, and in some cases non-verbal means (posture, gestures, silence, etc), as well.
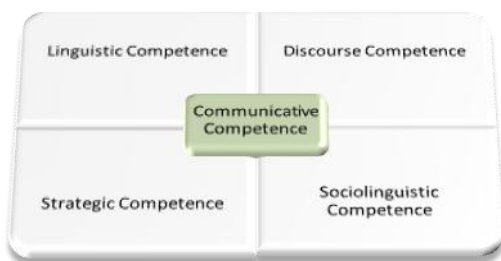
Definitions of the term are aplenty. We summarized the views of some of the prominent researchers of the field regarding the basic components of the concept.

Canale and Swain in 1980 and 1983 respectively (cited in Hadley, 1993) break down communicative competence into four parts:

(1) linguistic competence, the knowledge of and the ability to use the linguistic code, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary correctly;

(2) discourse competence, the ability to maintain coherence and cohesion between segments of discourse;

(3) strategic competence, which is the ability to repair and work around communication gaps in his or her knowledge of the target language, and finally,

(4) sociolinguistic competence, the ability to use language appropriately in various social situations.

Figure 1.1. The Model of Communicative Competence by Canale and Swain (1980, 1983)
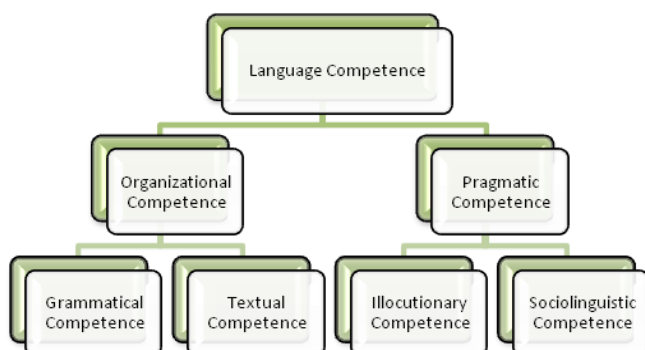

Bachman (1990), proposed a new model of communicative competence which evolved from that of Canale and Swain's (1983). He preferred to name it communicative language ability, a broader term which included communicative competence and language proficiency. He divided the concept into several components such as language competence, strategic competence and psychophysiological mechanisms. We shall focus on the language competence. Language competence, according to him, is composed of two parts:

Organizational competence: a) grammatical competence b) textual competence

Pragmatic competence: a) illocutionary competence b) sociological competence.

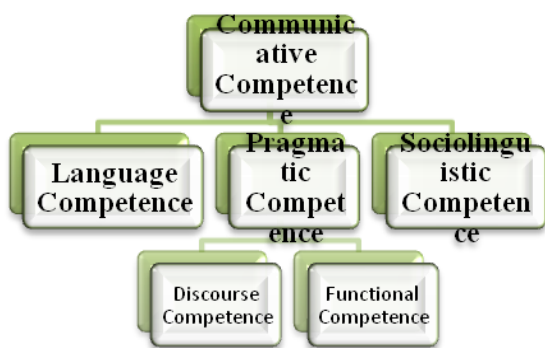**Figure 1.2. The Model of Communicative Competence by Bachman (1990)**

The last model that we looked into was the CEFR 2001 model. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment, abbreviated as CEFR or CEF is an important document developed by the Council of Europe between 1989 and 1996 in order to standardize language teaching, learning and assessing across Europe. In CEFR, communicative competence is taken into consideration as knowledge. It has three basic components: language competence, pragmatic competence and sociolinguistic competence. Language competence stands for the knowledge of and the ability to use language resources to form well-structured sentences/utterances.

Sociolinguistic competence is the knowledge and ability to use language appropriately in any given social context including the awareness of the politeness notions of the target language culture, taboos, address forms, register differences, turn taking, knowing when to speak, when to remain silent as well as the linguistic markers of dialects, accents and so on.

Pragmatic competence, the next subcomponent of the term, is subdivided into two subcompetences: discourse and functional competences. Discourse competence is required to be able to organize coherent and cohesive stretches of speech/written text in terms of register, logical sequencing, rhetorical effect and thematic organization. Functional competence is concerned with using the written or spoken discourse in communication for serving concrete functional goals.

Figure 1. 3. The Model of Communicative Competence by the Council of Europe (2001)

The concept of communicative competence, summarized above, served as a basis for a language teaching approach, perhaps, of the most popular one, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). CLT is a rather broad approach to language teaching rather than a method with clear-cut instructions and prescribed classroom practices. Therefore, it can be defined as a set or a list of general principles, a few of them are written below (Larsen-Freeman, 2008):

- The target language is not just an object of study, but also a vehicle for classroom interaction.
- Students should work with language at the discourse level, that is beyond a sentence level. They should also acquire understanding of speech coherence and cohesion.
- Games are important, especially, when it comes to negotiating meaning and practising communicatively.
- Students should be given a chance to express their personal opinions and ideas.
- Errors can be tolerated and are considered a natural part of developing communication skills.
- The teacher's role is that of a facilitator in setting up communicative activities and that of an advisor during the activities.
- In communication, it is important to know not only what to say, but also how to say it.

Methods preceding CLT failed to teach the language learners to actually communicate in the target language. The need for a new approach that would teach to communicate, that is not only to know the rules of linguistic usage, but also to be able to actually use the language, led to the emergence of

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Communicative language learning/teaching absorbed the best from the most eminent theories chronologically preceding it or concurrent with this approach of FLT/SLT such as the Direct Method, Audio-Lingual Method, and Grammar Translation Method, etc. From social constructivist and constructivist philosophical attitudes to learning and teaching it borrowed the focus on social and communicative skills, learner-orientedness, practice of collaborative learning (Pishghadam & Mirzaee, 2008; Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983), learners' active participation to build knowledge, utilizing the target language as a means of creating meaning, the emphasis on sociocultural aspects of language learning (Schcolnik, Kol, & Abarbanel, 2006). From philosophies of pragmatism, progressivism, existentialism, and critical thinking CLT/CLL was endowed with group/pair work preferences, problem-solving activities, experimenting, adapting L2 learners' knowledge to real-life situations, great emphasis on students' needs and the flexibility of L2 curriculum in that respect, opportunities for self-actualization learners are provided with in CLL classrooms, practicality of teaching methods eclipsing mere theorizing (Massouleh and Jooneghani, 2012) and at last the most dominant trend of postmodern educational doctrines ensuing from all the theories above - learner-centeredness - the process of language teaching and learning being triggered by students' interests, prospects, needs, not by a teacher and an institution where education takes place.(Pishghadam and Mirzaee, 2008)

CHAPTER 2: Developing sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence in adult EFL learners

This chapter starts with an overview of the ways of teaching communicative competence further narrowing the focus down to the two subcompetences: sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence respectively, handled separately as independent subchapters.

Teaching of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences is impemented through various procedures and activities. Some of them are given below:

- playing videotaped materials focusing on various elements of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences with native speakers of the language
- holding discussions on a range of topics with a purpose of teaching/learning and practising the competences

- presentations by students on topics of their interest with the purpose of teaching speech acts such as agreeing/disagreeing politely, congratulating, etc; and techniques for building speech coherence and cohesion
- explicit instruction of the basic speech acts such as requests, apologizing, invitations, greetings, etc.
- role-play activities used both as means and goal of teaching/learning the competences
- teaching proverbs in order to introduce the target culture beliefs, values, lifestyle and customs.

During the process of teaching/learning the two competences and after the process has been completed, the level of the progress that students had made should have been tested and assessed. Literature concerning teaching sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence clearly states what optimal ways of testing the above competences are. These are found as most effective assessment mechanisms:

- the Written Discourse Completion Tasks (WDCT),
- Multiple-Choice Discourse Completion Tasks (MDCT),
- Oral Discourse Completion Tasks (ODCT),
- Discourse Role Play Talks (DRPT),
- Discourse Self-Assessment Talks (DSAT),
- Role-Play self-assessments (RPSA) (Kasper and Rose, 2001, pp.301, 302).
- SOLOM (Students Oral Language Observation Matrix)

Some of the mechanisms mentioned above were used for testing the sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences in the current study, some of them are: SOLOM, WDCT, MDCT, ODCT, DRPT, DSAT.

CHAPTER 3: Practical Considerations of the Research

Teaching and developing sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences involves many factors such as: evaluation of language program or curriculum in terms of its value for teaching sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences and its renewal; selection of materials used for teaching the above competences, i.e. textbooks, audio-visual material, etc. and their assessment; selecting the methods,

procedures, and activities used for teaching the competences along with making decisions on the proper ways of testing and assessing the competences; examining EFL/ESL teachers' competences and awareness in this respect. This chapter deals with the aforementioned factors.

Language programs, their curricula, textbooks, and eventually, classes based on them usually are the only source of target language input the students are exposed to. As every language program serves a certain goal, what is the way of finding out the merit of the program, identifying the extent to which the objectives were met and the general weaknesses and strengths of the language program? The answer, without a doubt, is evaluation. Its purpose is to improve the program or curriculum, in terms of teaching, learning and assessment and it involves considering various alternatives when needed, reflecting on the outcomes and making changes whenever needed. Evaluation in its broadest sense is very much general and looks at all the aspects of a curriculum to ensure that the course is the best possible and requires to look at the results of the course along with the planning and actual implementation of the course. However, in fact, most of the evaluations have more narrowly focused objectives. Carrying out an evaluation is to a large extent similar to carrying out a research.

In the light of the information given above we have evaluated our current language program in terms of its value for teaching sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. The instruments employed for gathering data were interviews with teachers and learners, questionnaires, analyzing and comparing the program syllabus with the CEFR requirements for teaching sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences and mostly analyzing and observing classes and L2 learners.

The school syllabus was evaluated and analyzed from the following aspects:
1) General information about the course
2) Environment and context of the course
3) The content of the course and the needs of the learners, how much they coincide.
4) The teaching approach adopted.
5) The extent to which the program covers elements of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences.

The results of the evaluation are given in Chapter 4.

The next step was the analysis of two very popular EFL textbooks, published by world-renowned publishing houses such as Oxford, Cambridge, and Macmillan, in terms of their value for teaching sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. Criteria for their selection were the following: they are

both taught in university English language preparatory schools, their main purpose is to teach communicative competence. The result of the analysis can be summarized as follows: both of the textbooks can be good sources for developing sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences, yet they cannot be totally relied on for teaching them for several reasons. One of the reasons is that both of the textbooks do not focus enough on teaching the most common everyday speech acts such as: apology, making requests, responding to requests, agreeing/disagreeing, etc.

Another very important factor affecting development of pragmatic and sociolinguistic competences are teachers. But to what extent are they aware of the importance of the two aforementioned competences, and to what extent do they themselves possess them? In order to reveal this a survey and a test were designed to which 10 teachers responded. The results of the survey and of the test revealed that

- the teachers believe that teaching the learners how to be communicatively competent is crucial,

- their view of themselves in terms of their own communicative competence is quite high, although the respondents managed to answer correctly nearly half of the questionsof the test and thus their level of communicative competence cannot regarded as high enough.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH AT ISHIK UNIVERSITY

This chapter overviews the research design and methods employed to achieve the goals of the study. The current research employed a mixed method: both quantitative and qualitative approaches in order to obtain the necessary data.

In terms of quantitative research methods the following instruments were used:

➢ Pre-test
➢ While-test
➢ Post-test
➢ Experiment on the suggested model of teaching and developing sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences
➢ Survey with teachers

With respect to qualitative method the following instruments were employed:

- ➢ Interview with students (following the experiment)
- ➢ Observation of learners
- ➢ Observation of teachers
- ➢ Observation of classes
- ➢ Discussion of the curriculum with students
- ➢ Discussion of the curriculum with teachers

Table 4.1. Research Design

Study	Objective of Study	Data Collection Tool
Part 1: Curriculum Evaluation	To determine the value of the curriculum used in Ishik University Preparatory School for teaching sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences	1. Discussion with students 2. Discussion and evaluation of the curriculum with teachers 3. Observation of classes 4. Analyzing the curriculum with a criterion checklist
Part 2: Textbook Evaluation	To determine the value of the textbooks used in the university language schools for teaching sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences	1. Analyzing the textbooks with a criterion checklist
Part 3: Teacher Evaluation	To determine the teachers' level of awareness of the importance of communicative competence and to evaluate their levels of communicative competence.	1. Teacher Survey 2. Brief test on sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences for teachers as a part of the survey above
Part 4 (a): Measuring and Testing the learners' level of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences	Initially to determine the learners' level of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences, and later to measure their progress.	1. Pre-test 2. While-test 3. Post-test
Part 4(b): Measuring and Testing the learners' general oral proficiency in English.	To evaluate the learners' level of overall oral proficiency	1. Oral Proficiency Assessment Pre-test 2. Oral Proficiency Assessment While-test 3. Oral Proficiency Assessment Post-test

Part 5: Reflections from the students	To get feedback from the students on the experiment.	1. Interview with four randomly selected students from the participating classes 2. In-class discussions with students

The study was carried out in Ishik University, Preparatory School, Erbil, Iraq. There were 17 students in the experimental group and 19 in the control group, thus 36 students participated in the experiment in total.

The first interview was held in order to find out if the students favored the experimental way of teaching: that is, learning components of pragmatic and sociolinguistic competences in class through various activities developed for this purpose. The purpose of the other interview was to find out the students' views regarding the contributions that the experiment made to their language skills.

Observation and analysis of the school's language curriculum was carried out in order to determine its value in terms of teaching sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. The process involved visiting and observing classes, discussing and evaluating the curriculum with some of the teachers/learners, and analyzing the curriculum.

A set of activities for developing pragmatic and sociolinguistic competences was planned and carried out during the experiment. There were two groups: control group and experimental group. The control group was instructed in the traditional way with no extra exercises and activities, while the experimental group received specialized instruction for teaching the competences, in addition to the school curriculum. The experiment lasted for six months.

Analysis of the data obtained from the pre-test, while-test and post-test revealed that students who followed the specialized curriculum with additional activities for developing pragmatic and sociolinguistic competences, the experimental group, demonstrated a greater achievement in both learning the competences and in oral language proficiency compared to the control group.

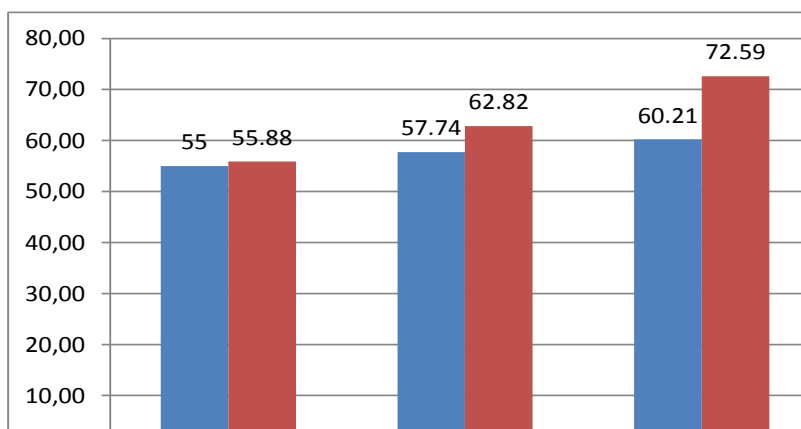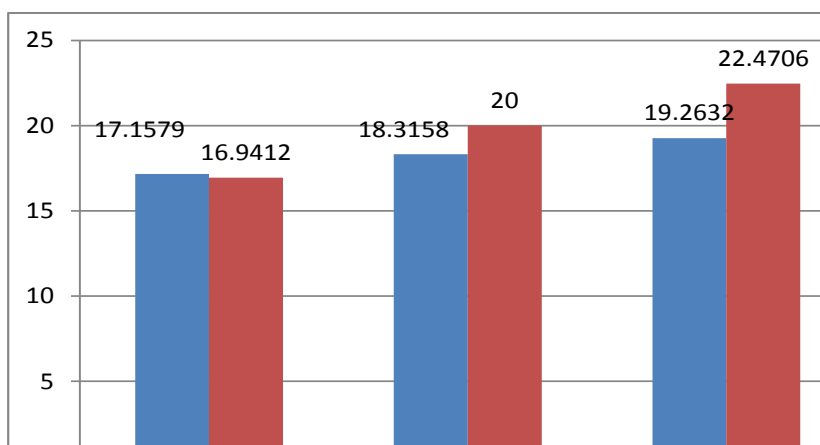**Figure 4.1. Pretest, While-Test and Posttest Scores over 100 for CG and EG**

Figure 4.2. Oral Proficiency Pretest, While-Test and Posttest Scores over 25 for CG and EG

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The outcomes of this research are as follows:

1. When we acquire our first languages, we also acquire the sociolinguistic and pragmatic norms with it, in other words, we produce not only grammatically correct sentences in our mother tongue, but also sentences that are appropriate in any given social context. In learning a foreign language we do not usually learn the latter. We are taught grammar rules, vocabulary, pronunciation and other aspects of the language form. In an EFL situation, a language classroom is usually the only place where

students are exposed to the target language and when the students are not taught sociolinguistic and pragmatic aspects of the language even in class, we get speakers of English language who are not communicatively competent, that is, speakers who cannot use the language in real life situations.

2. Communicative competence is crucial in language teaching; however, its components such as sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence are usually overlooked for different reasons. To overcome this it is important to include them in language curriculum and allocate them a fair share within it along with grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc.

3. Pragmatic competence is the ability to convey messages with intended meaning and to interpret messages with the intended meaning as well. The competence is subdivided into two sub-competences: discourse and functional competences. Planning/design competence is a part of both of the components of pragmatic competence: discourse and functional competences respectively, which stands for the ability to order messages according to transactional and interactional schemata. Discourse competence is the ability to organize written and spoken text coherently and cohesively. The ability to use written or spoken discourse in communication for serving specific functional goals is called functional competence.

4. Sociolinguistic competence refers to the knowledge and skills involved in using the language in an appropriate way in terms of social norms and customs. Therefore, it deals with issues such as differences in register, dialects and accents, rules of address, politeness, and expressions of folk-wisdom among others.

5. The approach to which the notion of communicative competence is of central importance is the Communicative Language Teaching. CLT is a broad approach to language teaching, a set of general principles rather than a method with clear-cut instructions. Some of its principles are as follows:
    ➢ Language use should be authentic, as used in a real context, whenever possible.
    ➢ Communications is both means and the ultimate goal of the classroom instruction.

> Being able to infer speaker's attitude or intentions is an important part of communicative competence.

> The target language is not only the object of study but also a medium for classroom interaction.

> Games and other activities which focus on negotiating meaning and communication are important.

> Students should be given a chance to express their ideas and opinions in the target language.

> Errors are a natural part of language learning and developing communications skills and thus can be tolerated.

> The vocabulary and the grammatical forms are also acquired through the situational context, the function and the roles of the speakers.

> The role of the teacher is that of a facilitator in setting up communicative activities and that of an advisor in the process of those activities.

6. The key factors in developing the students' sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences are the means of teaching such as a textbook, the language curriculum and the teachers. All of the factors above were analyzed and observed in terms of their value for teaching the competences and the following are the brief lists of conclusions reached as a result of the analysis, the surveys and the observations.

With respect to textbooks the analysis indicated that:

> They do not cover all the necessary elements of communicative competence, particularly, its pragmatic and sociolinguistic components, such as speech acts for requests, invitations, complaints, apology, and politeness strategies.

> Therefore, textbooks alone are not a sufficient source for developing the sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences.

With respect to the language curriculum:

> In it the means for developing pragmatic and sociolinguistic competences such as activities, tasks, etc. are scarce in comparison to those that aim to teach grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary.

> The few activities focusing on the two competences and on communicative competence, in general, are usually omitted during instruction due to time

constraints or the teachers' personal view of them as being not important when compared to the grammar rules and other components of the linguistic form.

With respect to EFL teachers:

➢ The teachers are aware of the importance of teaching the communicative competence.

➢ They stated they received no formal instruction on pragmatic and sociolinguistic competences during their studies.

➢ The majority may not be considered communicatively competent themselves.

7. Based on the review of the literature the following activities and procedures were developed to be implemented in the experiment:

➢ Politeness continuum activities followed by discussions of their appropriateness.

➢ Videotaped materials with various social situations and featuring native speakers.

➢ Discussions to ensure genuine information exchange.

➢ Presentations followed by teacher's feedback to practice body language and other means of non-verbal communication.

➢ Explicit instruction of speech acts followed by discussion of their appropriateness.

➢ Teaching proverbs and sayings to develop culture awareness in the target language.

➢ Role plays both for teaching/learning the competences and for practicing them.

➢ Sharing random comments and information about the norms of the target language culture.

8. It was hypothesized that a language curriculum enriched with elements of pragmatic competence and sociolinguistic competence will increase the students' level of the competences; and will also result in the learners becoming more orally proficient

speakers of the target language unlike the traditional way of teaching, without using additional activities, aimed at developing the competences, in the curriculum. The skills and competences were measured by while-test and post-test. The quantitative results revealed that both the control group (CG) and the experimental group (EG) improved their mean scores on while-test and post-test compared to their mean scores in pre-test. However, the experimental group (EG) performed significantly better than the control group (CG) in both written and oral assessment tests. Thus, the hypothesis was confirmed.

9. The quantitative (experiment) results supported the hypothesis that the instruction of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences results in the increased level of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence and overall oral proficiency in the target language among L2 learners. The control group's score increased from 55.00 (written pre-test) and 17.15 (oral proficiency pretest), to 57.74 (written while-test) and 18.31 (oral proficiency while-test), and finally, to 60.21 (written post-test) and 19.26 (oral proficiency post-test). While the scores of the experimental group increased from 55.88 (written pre-test) and 16.94 (oral proficiency pre-test), to 62.82 (written while-test) and 20.00 (oral proficiency while-test), and finally, to 72.59 (written post-test) and 22.47 (oral proficiency post-test). The final increase in the EG score yielded to 16.71 in the written tests and 5.53 in the oral proficiency tests, which is significantly more than that of the control group which is 5.21 in written tests and 2.11 in the oral proficiency assessment tests, thus confirming the hypothesis.

10. It was also hypothesized that teaching sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence develops the learners' skills of interpreting the language and skills of interacting in the target language. In the post-experimental interview, the learners stated that they became more competent in interpreting the speaker's intended meaning and tone such as sarcasm, irony, humor, and seriousness, than before, and that they favored the way of experimental teaching and learning sociolinguistic and pragmatic components of the language. Their responses indicate that the experimental instruction:
   - ➢ Involves using technology
   - ➢ Makes learners more competent speakers of English

- ➢ Increases the level of pragmatic competence in learners
- ➢ Increases the level of sociolinguistic competence in learners
- ➢ Develops their skills in interpreting the speaker's intended meaning and tone
- ➢ Teaches grammar, pronunciation and other aspects of language in a more stress-free way.

Thus, the qualitative results in this thesis also support the hypothesis of the research.

11. At the beginning of the experiment the students in both EG and CG were at a pre-intermediate level and were able to make grammatically correct sentences in social situations but they were not as competent sociolinguistically and pragmatically. Since the beginning of the experiment the students in the EG showed enthusiasm in learning the pragmatic and sociolinguistic competences. Starting from the first weeks of the experiment they began to make more appropriate choices in daily speech acts such as requests, invitations, and agreeing/disagreeing. Gradually their skills in interpreting speaker's intended meaning and tone improved as well which enabled them to respond appropriately when needed.

12. The results of an experiment, interviews, observations, which were used in order to assess the effectiveness of this model, suggest that the model is an effective way to develop EFL learners' sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. It can be recommended to apply this method not only for university level students but virtually in any EFL program ranging from high-school to language courses provided that the learners are in their late teens or adults and are minimum at B1 level (CEFR). Of course, additional research might be needed in order to tailor the suggested model to the particular case.

13. The implication of the research for EFL/ESL teachers is that they should periodically update and enhance their sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences, and in general, their overall communicative competence; and to impart this valuable knowledge to their L2 students with the modern methods of TEFL/TESL in this way making their classes truly communicative and improving their teaching outcomes by achieving higher degree of proficiency in learners.

List of publications related to the doctoral dissertation:

1.Koran, E. (2015). Practical Value of EFL Textbooks For Teaching Main Aspects Of Communicative Competence (Sociolinguistic and Pragmatic Competences). *International Journal on New Trends in Education and Their Implications-IJONTE, Volume 6, Issue 1, p. 28-37*

2.Koran, E. (2015). Awareness of Importance of Communicative Competence in TEFL among EFL Teachers in Iraq. *Proceedings of VESAL 2015 Conference 26th-27th April 2015, Erbil, Iraq. p. 159-171*

3.Koran, E. (2015). The Making Of Communicative Language Teaching -A Brief History Of The Approach. *Proceedings of IRCELT 2015 Conference 1st-2nd May, Tbilisi, Georgia. p. 237-244*

4. Koran, E. (2015). Assessment of EFL learners' sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence and performance*, Journal of Education in Black Sea Region, vol. 1, issue 1, p. 45-53*