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**Developing Learners' Pragmatic Competence through Speaking : Case of the  
Global Virtual Classroom in the Department of English at Tlemcen University**

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fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in language  
studies.*

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## **Dedication**

*To my beloved parents whose love always strengthens my will*

*To my lovely brother and sisters*

*To all my friends with whom I shared the university and the work  
life*



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## **Abstract**

This research brings to light, the relevance of developing learners' pragmatic competence in the Global Virtual Class at the University of Tlemcen. Thus, the researcher intend to focus on finding out if this class is taking into account the pragmatic aspects of English language and how can a teacher develop students' pragmatic competence. To reach so, a case study was conducted at the University of Tlemcen, dealing with GVC students. Data were collected using students' questionnaire and classroom observation. The obtained results were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Through the data gathering tools, the researcher discovered that the GVC students are aware of the pragmatic competence and the class does not give much importance in developing this skill. To sum up to develop learns pragmatic competence the learners need to perform different communicative tasks in oral interactions and the learners should focus more on this skill as being an important ability among language competencies.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

**CLT:** Communicative Language Teaching

**CC:** Communicative Competence

**DCT:** Discourse Completion Task

**EFL:** English as Foreign Language

**ICT:** Information Communication Technology

**GVC:** Global Virtual Class

**PC:** Pragmatic Competence

**CC:** Communicative Competence



# **General Introduction**

## General Introduction

English as Foreign Language learners may find difficulties when interacting with other users of the English language (being natives or non natives). The difficulty lies on the fact that the speaker and the listener are said to be of a distinct culture; so, the EFL learners may find difficulties to choose the appropriate language to express his/her intended meaning.

Accordingly, the learners of the Global Virtual Class (GVC) at the University of Tlemcen may find the same problem. This issue is highly noticeable among the GVC learners as they depend on the speaking skill as being an important mean of communication.

Thus, in this research, the attempt is to develop the learners' pragmatic competence through the speaking skill. Therefore, this study aims at Figuring out if this class is taking into account the pragmatic aspects of English language and how can a teacher develop students' pragmatic competence.

However, despite the fact the GVC learners are said to be linguistically competent, they find difficulties when interacting with the different users of English language from different cultural backgrounds. For this reason, this research tries to shed the light on this difficulty and intends also to give importance to the pragmatic aspects of the English language.

Therefore, This research attempt to answer the following research questions:

- Are the Global Virtual Class learners aware of the pragmatic competence?
- Does the GVC develop learners' pragmatic competence?

The above mentioned questions helped us to formulate the following hypotheses:

- The GVC learners may not aware enough about the pragmatic competence comparing with the linguistic one.
- The Global Virtual Class may develop learners' pragmatic competence.

To support these hypotheses, a case study of the Global Virtual Class students is taken. Quantitative and qualitative data are collected from different sources relying

on two research instruments: a questionnaire for students and structured classroom observation.

This work is divided into two chapters: the first chapter provides a theoretical overview of the pragmatic competence. Thus, some definitions related to this concept. While the second chapter tackles the research design and methodology. The description of the research methods, sampling, instrumentation used in this study are also explained. Then, the results of the investigation are analyzed and discussed. This chapter seeks also to answer the research questions by confirming or invalidating the research hypotheses. And by the end of this chapter some suggestions and recommendation are put forward to give the reader a further space for research.

# Chapter One

## **Chapter 1: Definition of the Main Concepts**

### **1.1 Introduction**

### **1.2 The Speaking Skill**

#### **1.2.1 Definition of the Speaking Skill**

#### **1.2.2 Types of Activities to Develop the Speaking Skill**

##### **1.2.2.1 Jigsaw Activity**

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#### **1.5.1 The Communicative Language Teaching Approache**

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#### **1.5.1 The Definition of Speech Act Theory.**

#### **1.5.1 Direct and Indirect Speech Acts.**

### **1.7 The Teacher's Role in Developing the Pragmatic Competence in a Speaking Classroom**

#### **1.7.1 A Brief Description of the Global Virtual Class**

#### **1.7.2 The Importance of using ICT's in Promoting Learners' Pragmatic awareness**

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### **1.8 Activities to Develop Learners' Pragmatic Competence.**

#### **1.8.1 Role Play Activity**

#### **1.8.2 Contrastive Role Play Activity**

#### **1.8.3 Feedback and Discussion**

#### **1.8.4 Discourse Competition Task**

### **1.9 Conclusion**

## **Introduction:**

It is of a great importance to claim that EFL learners need not only the linguistic competence but also the pragmatic competence so that they will be able to communicate effectively. Therefore, teachers should develop both competencies in the different language skills so that EFL learners will be able to use these abilities. Speaking skill is one of the skills that EFL learners may have difficulties in using it in different cultural contexts. In other words, when communicating, EFL learners may face different pragmatic problems which may hinder their communication with other users of English language. Consequently, EFL learners need to develop the pragmatic competence so that they will be able to communicate effectively in different contexts. Hence, this chapter discusses the theoretical aspects of both the speaking skill and the pragmatic competence.

## **1.2 The Speaking Skill**

### **1.2.1 The Definition of the Speaking Skill**

It is a common place to say that Language is a mean for communication i.e. without language people cannot communicate their ideas, feelings and so forth. Therefore, communication appears when there is spoken interaction. That' is to say, without speech, we cannot realize communication .Accordingly, we can define speech as those human speech sounds which produced by speech organs that is used in effective communication. Bygate. M (1987) defines the speaking as follow:

**"Speaking is the vehicle par excellence of social solidarity, of social ranking, of professional advancement and of business .It is also the medium through which much language is learnt, and which for many is particularly conducive for learning. Perhaps, then, the teaching of speaking merits more thought"**

Bygate. M (1987:1)

Moreover, speaking is recognized as one of the four skills of human communication in addition to listening, reading and writing. This skill allows the speaker to convey his message in a comprehensive way. In EFL classroom, the speaking skill is very important so that the learners will be able to attain their communicative aims. In this regard Bygate. M (1987) points that:

**“Speaking is, however, a skill which deserves attention every bit as much as literary skills, in both first and second languages. Our learners often need to be able to speak with confidence in order to carry out many of their most basic transactions. It is the skill by which they are most frequently judged, and through which they may make or lose friends. It is the vehicle par excellence of social solidarity, of social ranking, of professional advancement and of business. It is also a medium through which much language is learnt, and which for many is particularly conducive for learning”**

Bygate.M (1987:57)

That is to say, learning a foreign language requires communication and communication requires a speaking skill so that both the speaker and the receiver will be able to exchange information, express their thoughts and convey their emotions and feelings.

### **1.2.2 Types of Activities to Develop the Speaking Skill**

To be able to be understandable and to communicate usefully are the main essentials of a speaking classroom. Therefore, to develop the speaking skill in a foreign language classroom requires a real exposure to language i.e. the learners are invited to tackle the different topic and discuss them freely using the English language. For this reason, it is of a great importance to set different speaking

activities inside the classroom so that the learners will be more motivated to speak and interact effectively.

### **1.2.2.1 Jigsaw Activity**

The jigsaw activity was developed by psychologist Aronson in the 1970s. The jigsaw activity can be defined as a cooperative learning between the learners who are gathered in small groups. In this group, the learners are invited to divide the whole group assignment into separate individual assignments. That is to say, in the jigsaw activity each member is working alone then he shares his finding with the group so that they fulfill the whole work. In other words language learning through the jigsaw activity according to (Benson, 2003:292) is “**more interdependent than independent**”.

Studies have shown that this activity is very beneficial for EFL learners. For instance, the learners are more involved in the activity because they have a space for communication and exchanging ideas. Also, this activity develops the learners' motivation to work in teams and promotes better learning. During this activity, the learners speak the language and become more fluent. Moreover, the learners through this activity develop the peer-teaching strategy i.e. the learners will take the responsibility of correcting and helping each other which is very useful strategy so that the learners will benefit from each other.

### **1.2.2.2 Discussion Activity:**

It is generally agreed that discussion seems to be the best way which motivates the learners to speak inside the classroom. Therefore, it helps the EFL learners to develop their speaking skills and communicative abilities. In this regard Thornbury (1998:102) states "**Many teachers would agree that the best discussions in class are those that arise spontaneously either because of something personal that a learner reports or because a topic or a text in the course book triggers some debate**". That is to say, discussion in EFL classroom enables the learner to debate his/her personal experiences and show it to the audience in the classroom, where



several topics are discussed from different perspectives and with different styles in an organized way. In a similar vein, Littlewood (1999) argues that learners in discussion classes are motivated to talk about their personal experiences, convey their views and managing their social experiences.

Additionally, Harmer (2001) states that there are many speaking difficulties that the students may hinder the learners' communication for this reason he introduces what is called "Buzz group". For instance, Buzz group is a small group in which the learners can talk and interact with each other freely.

Accordingly, Harmer (2001) suggests some techniques that help the learners to debates in this Buzz groups. For instance, let students to predict the content of a reading text or invite them to talk about their reactions to it after reading. Discuss what should be included in a news broadcast or have a quick conversation about types of music for example. Also, train learners to respond directly and spontaneously through instant comments through showing them pictures or introducing any topic at any stage of the lesson then ask them to make their first impressions. Involve formal debates in which the learners are asked to prepare argument in favour or against the propositions given by the audience.

### **1.2.2.3 Role Play Activity**

Role play can be defined as an exercise in which you pretend to be in a particular situation, especially to help you learn a language or deal with problems (**Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics,1998**). In a similar vein, Learner's Dictionary, defines role play as an activity in which people do and say things while pretending to be someone else or while pretending to be in a particular situation.

According to Brown (2001:183), "**Role play minimally involves a) giving a role to one or more members of a group, and b) assigning a purpose or objective that participants must accomplish**". That is to say Role play is an

important activity which develops both teacher learner interaction and learner learner interactions.

In a similar vein, Kuipers & Clemens (1998:12-17) assert that role play activity regard to be useful in effective English language teaching and learning. For instance, role play improves learners' enthusiasm, self-confidence and advocates their critical thinking.

#### **1.2.2.4 Information Gap Activity**

Information gap activity was introduced by Long (1980). This type of activity requires communication between learners. That is to say learners are invited to work collaboratively to solve the task. The learners through communication and interaction can bridge the gap and try to complete the activity successfully. In this regard, Hedge (2000:58) points that this activity **“involves a transfer of given information from one person to another or from one form to another, or from one place to another generally calling for the decoding or encoding of information from or into language”**. In other words, the information gap activity involves the learners' communication between them so that they all take parts in removing the obstacles they may face in oral communication.

In a similar regard, Johnson and Morrow (1981:62) maintains that this activity is **“one of the most fundamental in the whole area of communicative teaching”**. In other words this activity can change the atmosphere of the EFL classroom from directed instruction routines into a communicative atmosphere where the learners are invited to speak English language with reduced anxiety and more joyful mood. Also, the information gap activity motivates the learners to speak more since they are discussing interesting topics and trains them how to ask and give information between them.

### **1.3 Definition of Pragmatic competence:**

#### **1.3.1 Definition of Pragmatics:**

Pragmatics is a field of linguistics that is used in foreign language pedagogy. Pragmatics, therefore; is defined in various ways, reflecting each author's theoretical orientations. The term pragmatics first introduced by Morris (1938). The

latter defines it as the study of relationship between signs and their interpreters (cited in Yule, 1996). Crystal (1997:301) defines pragmatics as **“the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication.”** In other words, pragmatics is said to be any communicative behavior in a socio-cultural context. That’s to say pragmatics studies the humans’ language in their social environment that influence speakers’ choice of words.

In a similar vein Yule (1996:4) defines pragmatics as **“the study of the relationship between linguistic forms and the users of these forms”**. That’s to say there is a connection between grammar and context, that is, according to the context the speaker chooses different structures to mean what he wants. Additionally, in the case of foreign language users, the choice of utterances will be more consciously chosen, however, in the case of a native speaker, this would be more natural.

### **1.3.2 Definition of pragmatic competence:**

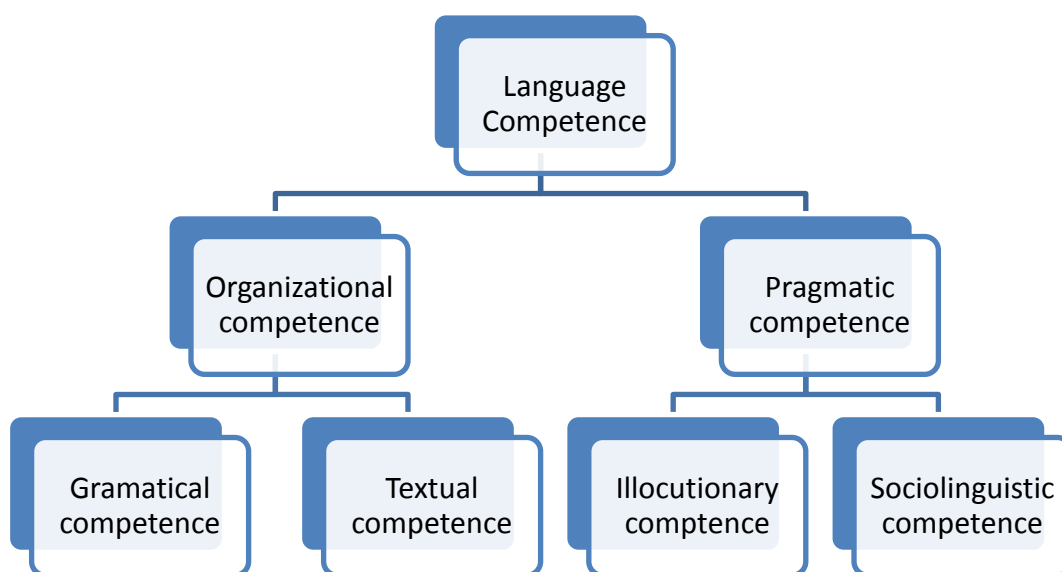
Before defining what is meant by pragmatic competence, it is necessary to define competence in the first place. Therefore, Crystal (1997:74) defines competence as:

**“a term used in linguistic theory, and especially in generative grammar, to refer to speakers’ knowledge of their language, the system of rules which they have mastered so that they are able to produce and understand an indefinite number of sentences, and to recognize grammatical mistakes and ambiguities.”**

In other words, competence refers to the person’s ability to form and understand sentences, including sentences s/he has never heard before. It also includes a person’s knowledge if this sentences of the language is familiar with are correct or false.

Accordingly, Chomsky (1980:224) refers to pragmatic competence as the **“knowledge of conditions and manner of appropriate use (of the language), in conformity with various purposes”**. That is to say pragmatic competence refers to the speakers’ ability to achieve certain goals in different appropriate manners.

In a further explanation, Canale & Swain (1980) included pragmatic competence as a key notion in their model of communicative competence. According to them, pragmatic competence is sociolinguistically oriented and defined as was identified as sociolinguistic competence and defined as the knowledge of contextually appropriate language use. Later on, Canale (1988:90) subdivided the notion into illocutionary competence i.e. the knowledge of the pragmatic conventions for performing acceptable language functions, and sociolinguistic competence i.e. the knowledge of the sociolinguistic conventions for performing language functions appropriately in a given context. In a similar vein, in Bachman’s (1990) model of language competence, in which pragmatic competence is a central component incorporating the ability to use the language to express a wide range of functions, and interpret their illocutionary force in discourse according to the sociocultural context in which they are uttered



**Figure n°1: Components of language competence (Bachman, 1990:87)**

Additionally, Rose (1999: 167) defines the concept as **“The ability to use available linguistic resources (pragmalinguistics) in a contextually appropriate fashion (sociopragmatics)”**. For instance, according to Kasper (1997a) pragmalinguistics **“includes strategies like directness and indirectness, routines, and a large range of linguistic forms which can intensify or soften communicative acts.”** And Sociopragmatics” refers to the social perception of communicative action.”

#### **1.4 The significance of the Pragmatic Competence**

It is a common place to claim that in communication, the grammatical aspects of a language would be not the only key of sending messages. However, Hymes, D. (1971:269) suggests that:”**there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless”** moreover he continues: **“just as rules of syntax can control aspects of phonology, and just as semantic rules perhaps control aspects of syntax. So rules of speech acts enter as controlling factor for linguistic form as a whole.”** That’s to say, there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar will be useless i.e. the grammatical rules enables the users to frame correct sentences and the rules of the use of the languages accomplish the communicative purposes.

Accordingly, Fulcher (2003) introduced the speaking rules by which the learners are required to take into account both the appropriacy and the linguistic code. For instance, appropriacy means the way in which speakers use the language and the linguistic code refers to the code used by the speakers to achieve social interaction. Consequently, the users of a language may take in to account some consideration before sending their messages in order to miss understanding or to be offensive sometimes.

However, this process of filtering if we may say seems to be easy for native speakers, but it is not for EFL learners. That is to say, EFL students may find difficulties to produce utterances that reflect the intended meaning and also it is hard for them to know whether the speaker meaning is produced explicitly or implicitly. Therefore, it is of great deal for EFL students to develop their pragmatic

competence. That is to say, there is an inter relation between language proficiency and pragmatic competence. In this regard Crystal (1997) claims that pragmatics knowledge is necessary and useful in second language learning as it help to be aware of his/ her choices and the effects of their language in social interaction. So, EFL students are asked to be familiar with how to use the appropriate language to achieve their intention in communication.

### **1.5 The significance of teaching pragmatic competence in speaking classroom**

It is a common place to say that the speaking classroom seems to be the most useful place for EFL students to practice their target language. In other words it due the class the EFL students are invited to develop their competence to communicate effectively. Therefore, teachers seem not only are in charge of making students able to utters words correctly, to use new lexis or to speak fluently, they are rather teaching them how to communicate successfully in different situation inside or outside classroom. In other words the teachers are notonly focusing on how to make EFL students linguistically competent but also pragmatically competent. Accordingly there several approaches to teaching in which the teacher attains this goals for instance; Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT)

#### **1.5.1 Communicative language teaching Approach (CLT)**

The Communicative Language Teaching Approaches was developed in the 1980's. This approach came out from the idea that learning a language requires a real communication so that the learner should be put in real communicative situations. For instance; (Brown, 1994: 245) he provides four interrelated criteria to identify the term communicative language teaching i.e. Classroom goals are focused on all of the components of communicative competence and not restricted to grammatical or linguistic competence. Also, Language teaching techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Language forms are not the central focus but rather aspects of language that enable the learner to accomplish those purposes. In addition, Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying

communicative techniques. At times fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use. Also, in the communicative classroom, students ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts. In other words, the CLT involves more the learner in the learning process by giving him the opportunity to communicate and the teacher's role remains as a facilitator in making him communicating effectively. In this way, teachers use the appropriate approach that would be helpful in improving the EFL students' four skills.

## **1.6 Speech Acts and Pragmatic Competence**

Is it generally agreed that if the learners needs to be pragmatically competent, they will have to be able to execute speech acts such as openings and ending conversations, apologizing, complementing, requesting and so forth. For this reason there is a serious connection between speech act and pragmatic competence. In other words, the EFL students will accomplish the rules of communication i.e. conveying his meaning if he only performs this speech acts. In this regard, Vitale (2016:31) states that: "the evidence of a speech act's role in pragmatic competence can be reflected in its communicative nature. This is because the socio-cultural context of an utterance determines the actual grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic entities of the speech act". To sum up the teacher should guide the students to be able to perform the speech acts in the different languages communication contexts.

### **1.6.1 The Definition of Speech Act Theory:**

By means of definition we say that speech act theory is the relation between the speaker and the listener when communicating utterances and ideas with each other. For instance Stelmann (1982:279) defines speech act as follow: "**Linguistic communication is more than merely saying something; it is saying something in a certain context, with certain intentions, and with the listener's recognition of what is said and of these intentions**". In other words, speech act theory studies the speaker utterances and the listener perception of what the speaker is saying i.e. decoding the hidden messages of the speaker's utterances. In a similar vein, Yule (1996:47) defines the speech act as an action showed via utterances. This idea was

defined in 1959 by the British philosopher John L. Austin in his book, 'How to Do Things with Words'. The title of it book itself reveals the truth which says that the words have always behind meaning. Latter on the American John Searle philosopher developed this idea. The butter of this theory is that whatever we say we always have an illocutionary meaning i.e. we needs to achieve something from our utterances.

### **1.6.2 Direct and Indirect Speech Acts.**

It is clear to say that students and users of the language when they use a construction (interrogative, imperative, declarative) to perform a typical speech-act (e.g. statement, question, request), they perform direct speech-act. On the other side when the construction is used with an illocutionary force, then they perform indirect speech-act. In this regard Yule (Yule, 1998: 54-56) made a clear distinction between direct speech acts and indirect speech acts. For instance, when the relation between the structure and the function is indirect there must be indirect speech act. On the other side, Direct speech act are said to be like so when they have a direct relation between the structure and the function i.e. the speaker deliver the literal meaning of the utterances as they denote or express.

## **1.7 The Teacher's Role in Developing the Pragmatic Competence in a Speaking Classroom.**

### **1.7.1 A Brief Description of the Global Virtual Class**

The Global Virtual Class (GVC) is an interesting cultural exchange experience conducted in English between the University of Tlemcen in Algeria and other international institutions. In this in class web tools were integrated as part of a virtual classroom. The purpose of this classroom is related to cross-cultural communication, all the students expressed an initial action towards learning English (foreign language). The GVC is designed to meet different objectives i.e. Learning foreign languages as a means of promoting the inter understanding between students and the integration and participation of society in the process of Globalization highlighted the need to train managers mastering English as well as



ICT tool. The GVC provides students with real-time interaction opportunities to increase their knowledge collectively. It also allows a constructive process of guided knowledge acquisition supported by a team. The GVC allows the sharing of knowledge (cultural knowledge) and this knowledge results in the global understanding.

### **1.7.2 The Importance of using ICT's in promoting Learners' Pragmatic awareness**

It is quite obvious that in a foreign language classroom, learners normally do not have direct contacts with English native speakers so the only and the ultimate solution for EFL learners is through the virtual world of the internet i.e. through information and communication technology (**ICT**). That is to say the ordinal English classroom doesn't provide the learners authentic communication in target language unless it is equipped with the information tools to connect with the native speakers. According to Kasper (1997) a foreign language classroom which aims at developing the pragmatic competence in oral classes must fulfill three functions: (1) exposing learners to appropriate target language input, (2) raising learner's pragmatic awareness, and (3) arranging authentic opportunities to practice pragmatic knowledge.

In the same regard, Rose (1994) proposes active video-viewing activities i.e. EFL learners will have the opportunity in video conferencing with the native speakers of English language. The aim of using the video here is that the EFL learners will have direct contact with native speaker and to know how certain acts are performed through their utterances.

### **1.7.3 The Teacher's Role in Developing the Pragmatic Competence in a Speaking Classroom.**

It is a common place to argue that in order develop the speaking and communicative skills, EFL teachers should consider all the competencies that the learners are invited to develop among which the pragmatic competence. Therefore, it is high time that teachers focus more on increasing learner's pragmatic awareness.

Therefore, an EFL teacher need to make the learners acquainted with the illocutionary force of the utterances. For instance, it is worth mentioning that there are different types of illocutionary utterances such as representative, directive, commissive, expressive and declarative. EFL teachers should consider all these types of illocutionary acts while teaching and practice them more in communication activities.

Another point, the EFL teachers should present a further explanation of the speech acts and teach the learners when to use them. To highlight this Brown (2001: 9) presents a list of expressions of certainty:

1. I'm sure about it.
2. I'm quite sure that he told the truth.
3. I'm absolutely sure about the news.
4. I'm no doubt about it.
5. I'm absolutely certain that he told the truth.
6. I'm sure/certain about .....
7. I've no doubt about .....
8. I'm sure/certain about ....

These examples seem to be the same in their context for the EFL learners, but in fact they have slight differences. Therefore, the EFL learner need to know this difference to perform the right speech acts in the right situation.

Moreover, in a speaking classroom, EFL teachers need to present and explain the authentic language in meaningful contexts. For instance, in the use of the expression "I'm absolutely certain that he told the truth", the expression here though it seems clear for the EFL learners but it requires more explanation from the teacher. That is to say, the teacher here need to comment on the point that in this expression the focus in on the degree of certainty as the example present that it is absolutely certain.

## **1.8 Activities to Develop learner's Pragmatic Competence**

There are different activities in which the EFL learners can develop their pragmatic competence, for instance; role play activities, Contrastive role-play activity, Feedback and discussion, Discourse completion task and so forth.

### **1.8.1 Role-play activity**

According to Olshtain & Cohen (1991) role play activity is type of activity in which the learners use the speech acts. That is to say, the teacher explains the situation and the different role for the learners and let him/her decide the suitable speech act. Consequently, through practice the learner get more acquainted the speech acts and will be able to use them appropriately.

### **1.8.2 Contrastive Role-play activity**

According to Judd (1999) in contrastive role-play activity the learners are invited to use the different sociolinguistics factors such as status, social distance on their production of linguistic forms in the different roles they play. Consequently the learners will be more aware of these sociolinguistics elements.

### **1.8.3 Feedback and discussion**

According to Olshtain & Cohen (1991) through this communicative activity the learners and invited to express their beliefs and views about the divergences and the similarities between their language i.e. mother tongue and the target language. Therefore, this activity enhances the learners' pragmatic competence as far as they are debating and providing feedback with other learners.

### **1.8.4 Discourse completion task (DCT)**

According to Cohan (1996) this activity enables the learners to deduce the suitable speech act. That is to say, DCT put the learner in a situation to complete a discourse with the appropriate form of speech acts taking into consideration the sociolinguistics elements. Consequently, the learners will be more trained to decide the appropriate speech acts.

## **1.9 The Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the theoretical aspects about and both the speaking skill and the pragmatic competence. The interrelation between the speaking skill and the pragmatic competence is highly noticeable. That is to say an effective English speaker must be pragmatically competent. In other words, the EFL need to communicate effectively in the different context and this come through the real exposure to the target language. In this regard, Olshtain and Cohen (1991:154) state, "if we wish to master another language we need to become more communicatively competent".

# Chapter Two

## **Chapter 2: Research Design and Data Analysis**

### **2.1 Introduction**

### **2.2 Research Design**

### **2.3 Sample Population**

### **2.4 Data Collection Instruments**

#### **2.4.1 The Students' Questionnaire**

#### **2.4.2 Classroom Observation**

### **2.5 Data Analysis**

#### **2.5.1 The Learners' Questionnaire Analysis**

#### **2.5.2 The Observation Analysis**

### **2.6 Data Interpretation**

### **2.7 Suggestions and Recommendations**

#### **2.7.1 Teacher's Role in Developing Students' Pragmatic Competence**

#### **2.7.2 The Use of the Speaking Activities**

### **2.8 Conclusion**

## **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter provides a description of the research methodology of the study including the research questions and hypotheses, the research design, the participants involved in the study. The data gathered in this chapter are analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Then, the main results drawn from this research are summarized and related to the research question put by the researcher to check its validity. Finally, some suggestions and recommendation are put forward on how to develop learners' pragmatic competence.

## **2.2 Research Design**

This research is a case study involving 20 of the students of the Global Virtual Class at the English department of Tlemcen University. For instance, case study can be defined as **“an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used”** (Yin, 1984:23). That is to say a case study is a research methodology that has commonly used in all sciences especially the social one which opts for obtaining results from real situations. Accordingly, in this research the aim of choosing a case study is to make sure whether the study of the Global Virtual Class are aware of the pragmatic competence and how are going to develop this competence.

## **2.3 Sample Population**

In this research, the sample population is taken randomly so that all the Global Virtual Class students are involved to participate in this research. The students of the Global Virtual Class are selected through a contest which the headmaster of this class organizes according to different criteria and mainly; they are able to communicate easily using English language.

In this research, the sample population contains license and master English students. They study in the Department of English at Tlemcen University and they are from the two specialties: Language studies and literature and civilization .The

20 selected students in this research are between 20 and 23 years except for informant who have 55 years old. They come from literary and scientific streams as well as a number of transfer students from other department.

## **2.4 Data Collection Instruments**

It is generally agreed that Data collection is one of the most important stage in conducting a research. Therefore, in this research, two research instruments are used for data collection; a questionnaire that was addressed to the Global Virtual Class students at the department of English language and structured observation during the classes. The purpose of using more than one instrument of research is to gather information from diverse sources and study the problem from different perspectives.

### **2.4.1 The Students' Questionnaire**

Before discussing the students' questionnaire it is needed to define what a questionnaire is in the first place. For instance, Richard (2005:60) defines the latter as the following:

**“Questionnaires are one of the most common instruments used. They are relatively easy to prepare, they can be used with large numbers of subjects and they obtain information that is relatively easy to tabulate and analyze. They can also be used to elicit information about many different kinds of issues, such as language use, communication difficulties, preferred learning styles, preferred classroom activities and attitudes and beliefs”.**

Accordingly, any questionnaire should include different types of questions. For instance, close ended question which require answers with ‘yes’ or ‘no’, Multiple-choice which involves a set of responses and the respondents are required to select one answer or more. Therefore, both close-ended questions and multiple choice questions are said to provide quantitative data. Also there are open -ended questions, which require a long answer i.e. the answers expresses the ideas of the



informants without being restricted or guided .This type of questions provides qualitative data.

In order to valid the hypothesis of this research, the researcher administered twenty questionnaires addressed to Global Virtual Class students. This questionnaire consists of twelve questions. The questionnaire starts with a small description of the research and the questions were devised as follow:

**Question 1:** asked the informants about their level of proficiency of their English and if are they able to communicate with the foreign students.

**Question 2:** asked about the reason why these students registered in this class.

**Question 3:** inquired to what extent they students of the Global Virtual Class are able to understand and make the foreign students understand them.

**Question 4:** asked the student about the type of difficulties which may hinders their understanding of the foreign students.

**Question 5:** asked the informants if ever they hear about pragmatic competence.

**Question 6:** asked the informants to choose one of the definitions of pragmatic competence.

**Question 7:** asked the informants to choose a way in which pragmatic competence is going to be enhanced.

**Question 8:** asked the informants the degree of the teacher's involvement when the student found difficulties when communicating.

**Question 9:** asked the informants about the way of the teacher's help when the students need help in communication.

**Question 10:** close -ended question which seeks an answer about if it is important to have a prior knowledge about pragmatic competence before the class.

**Question 11:** asked the informants if the speaking skill is the only skill needed to develop the pragmatic competence.

**Question 12:** asked the informants' opinion about id the class enhanced their pragmatic competence.

#### **2.4.2 Classroom Observation**

Classroom observation seems to be a quantitative tool to measure data collection as it gives direct information about the topic of research. In this regard, Dornyei

(2007:178) points out: **“Observation is fundamentally different from questioning because it provides direct information rather than self-report account, and thus it is one of three basic data sources for empirical research”**

Therefore there two main types of observation i.e. structured observation and unstructured observation. According to (Dornyei, 2007) structured observation is restricted by organized plan or scheme in which he tackles his/ her observation, while unstructured observation is not restricted

Accordingly, the current work spots on the light the importance of developing learners’ pragmatic competence. The observation was carried out at the Global Virtual Class, University of Tlemcen. The major objectives of this observation was to obtain the most pieces of information about the learners’ awareness of the pragmatic competence and the teacher’s role in enhancing learner’s pragmatic competence.

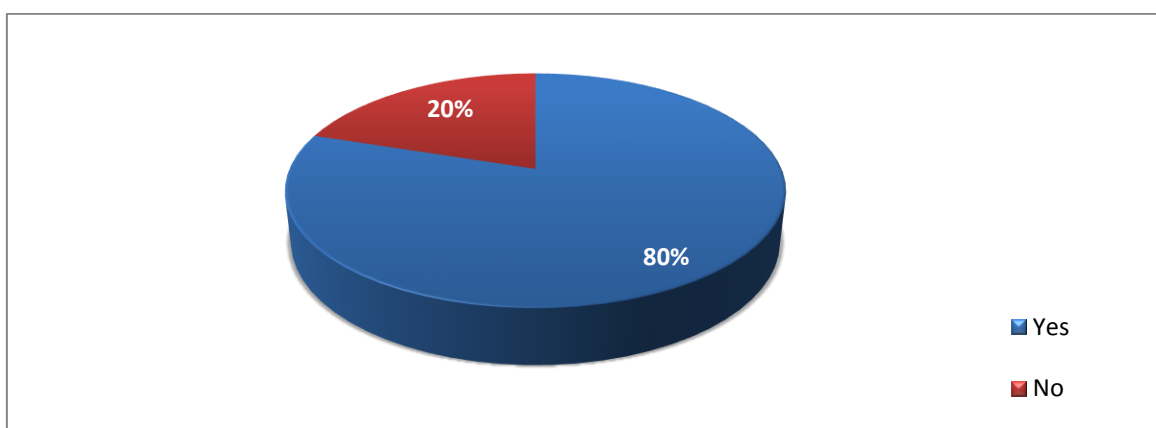
## 2.5 Data Analysis

In the following section, data collected from learners’questionnaire and classroom observation. The collected data will be analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

### 2.5.1 The Learners’ questionnaire analysis

The questionnaire contains twelve questions and the results of the questions are summarized as follow:

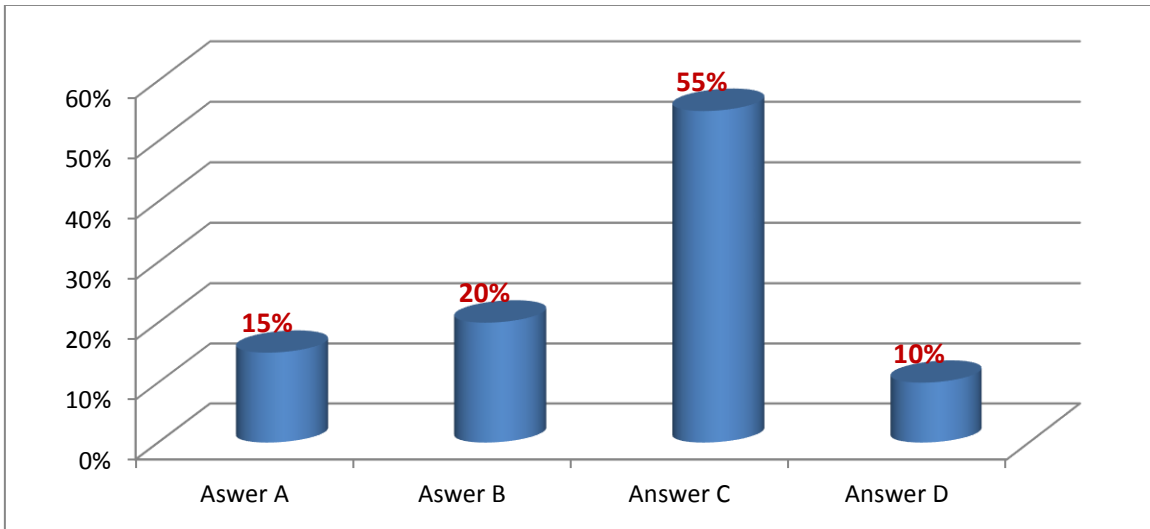
- **Question 1:** Is the proficiency of your English language enable you to communicate with foreign students?



**Pie chart 2.5.1:** Students’ Proficiency of Communication with Foreign Students.

Form the result gathered, it noted that 80% of the informants said that they are able to communicate with the foreign students while 20% said that they aren't able to communicate.

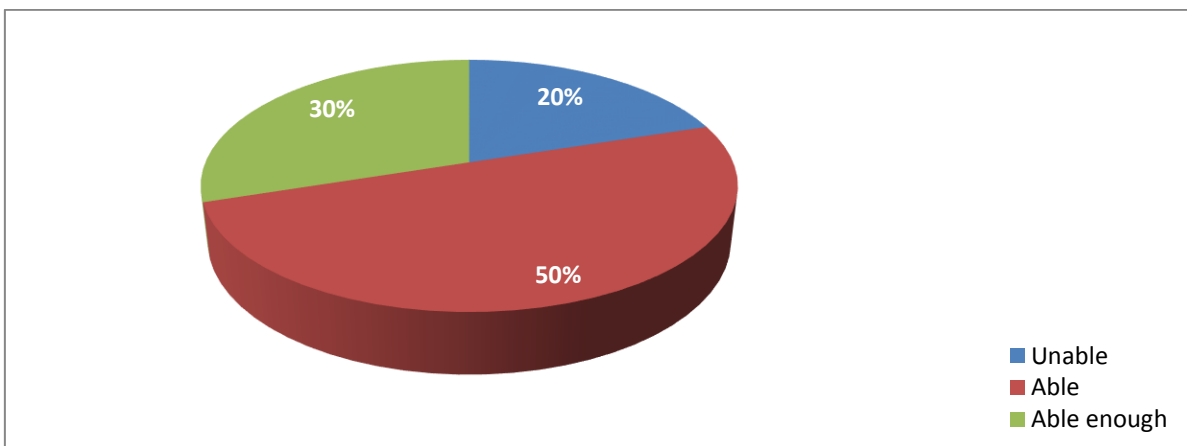
- **Question 2:** Why have you registered in this class?



**Bar graph 2.5.2:** The Aim of Registering in This Class.

Form the result gathered, it noted that the informants chosen this class for several reasons. For instance 55% of the students chosen this class to learn how to communicate with foreign students, 20% of the students said that the aim of registering in this class is to develop their speaking skills. On the other hand 15% of the students said that the aim is to know different people speaking English language i.e. social connections while 10 have other aims.

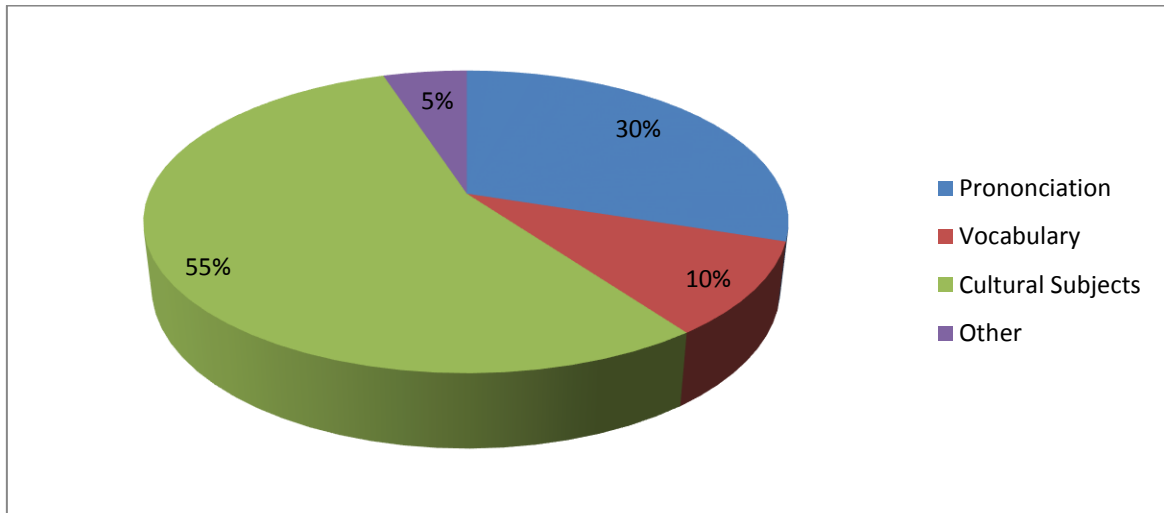
- **Question 3:** To what extent do you think that you are able to understand and make foreign students understand you?



**Pie chart 2.5.3:** The Degree of Students' Understanding of the Foreign Students.

Form the result gathered, it noted that 30% of the informants said that they are able enough to understand and make the foreign students understand them while 30% of the informants said that they are able to achieve that and 20% of the informants said that they are unable to achieve that.

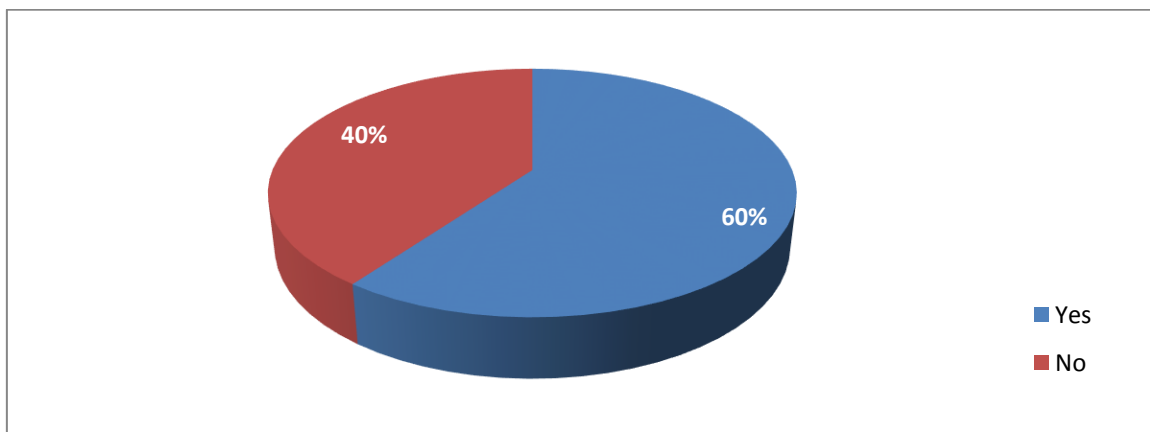
- **Question 4:** Which type of difficulties you may think hinders your better understanding of the foreign students?



**Pie chart 2.5.4:** The Types of Difficulties which the Students may face when Communicating with Foreign Students.

Form the result gathered, it noted that the students may face different types of difficulties when communicating with foreign students. For instance, 55% of the sample population said that they problems when dealing with cultural subjects, 30% said that they have prononciation problems, 10% they have vocabulary problems and the rest 10% have other problems.

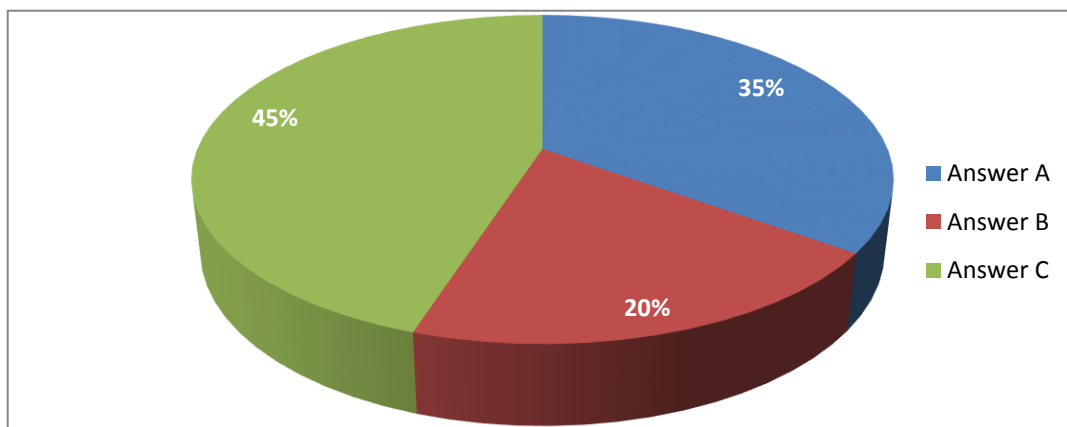
- **Question 5:** Did you hear before the pragmatic competence?



**Pie chart 2.5.5:** The Knowledge of the Pragmatic Competence among Students.

Form the result gathered; it noted that 60% of the informants have a prior knowledge about the pragmatic competence while 40% of them they didn't know this competence before.

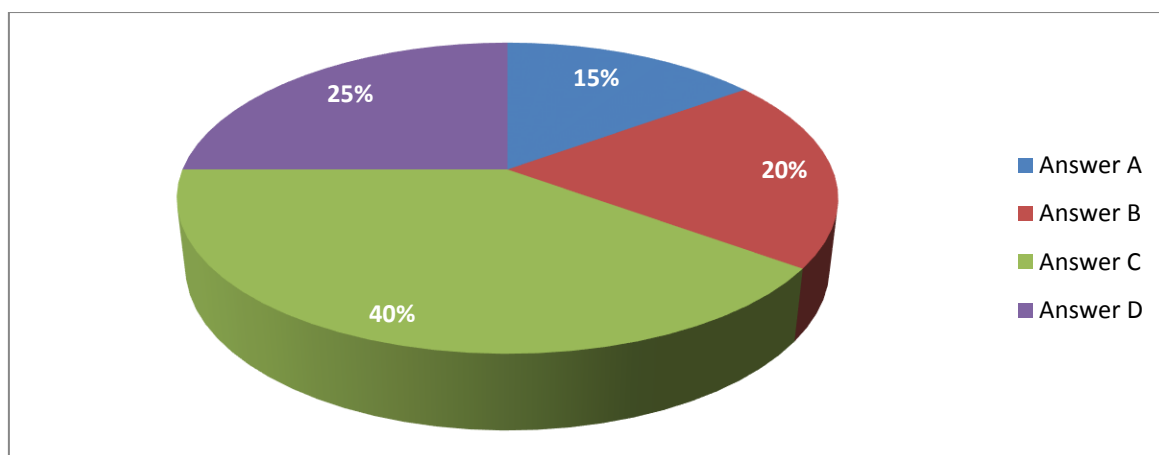
- **Question 6:** multiple choice question: Do you think pragmatic competence is:



**Pie chart 2.5.6:** Students' Definition of the Pragmatic Competence

Form the results gathered; it noted that 35% of informants defines pragmatic competence as the knowledge of others 'culture, 20% said that the pragmatic competence is the knowledge of the speakers 'meaning through their utterances while 45% defines it as the knowledge of the art of communication.

- **Question 7:** Multiple choice question: Pragmatic competence is a kind which needs to be:

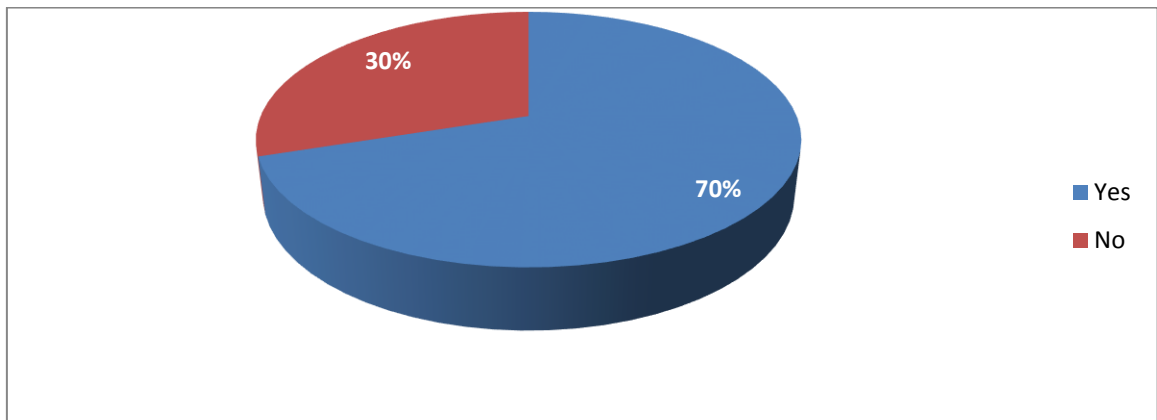


**Pie chart 2.5.7:** The Sources of in which the Students Enhance the Pragmatic Competence.

Form the results gathered; it noted that 15% of the informants said the pragmatic competence should be developed by the students' themselves, 20%

declares that it should be acquired from the teacher. 40% of the informant on the other hand said that the pragmatic competence is developed through the experience of communication while 25% said it is developed through the triangulation of the different sources.

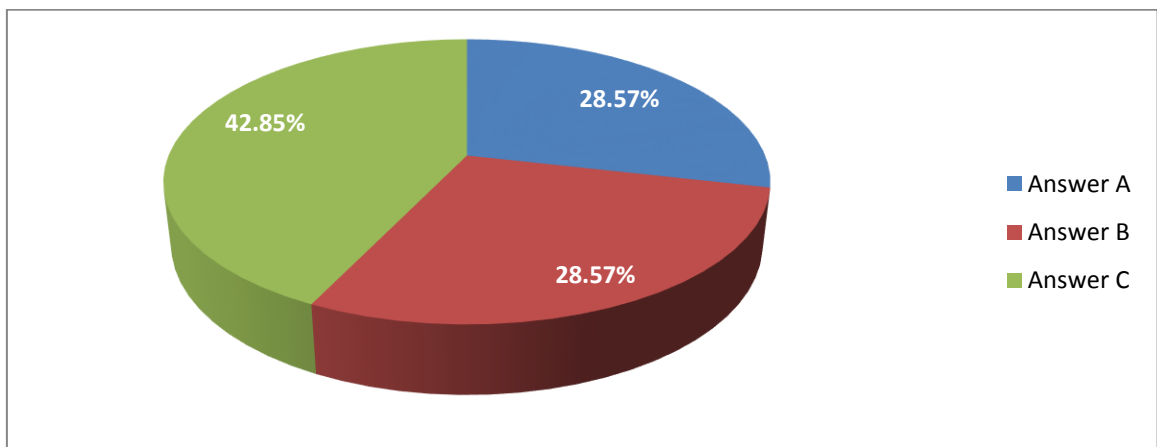
- **Question 8:** Do you ask you teacher for help when you find difficulties related to cultural issues when communicating with foreign students?



**Pie chart 2.5.8:** The Degree of the Teacher Involvement in Helping the Students

Form the results gathered; it noted 70% of the informants seek help from the teacher when the face difficulties in terms of cultural subjects while 30% refuse to ask the teacher's help.

- **Question 9:** In your opinion, what is the form of the teacher's help?

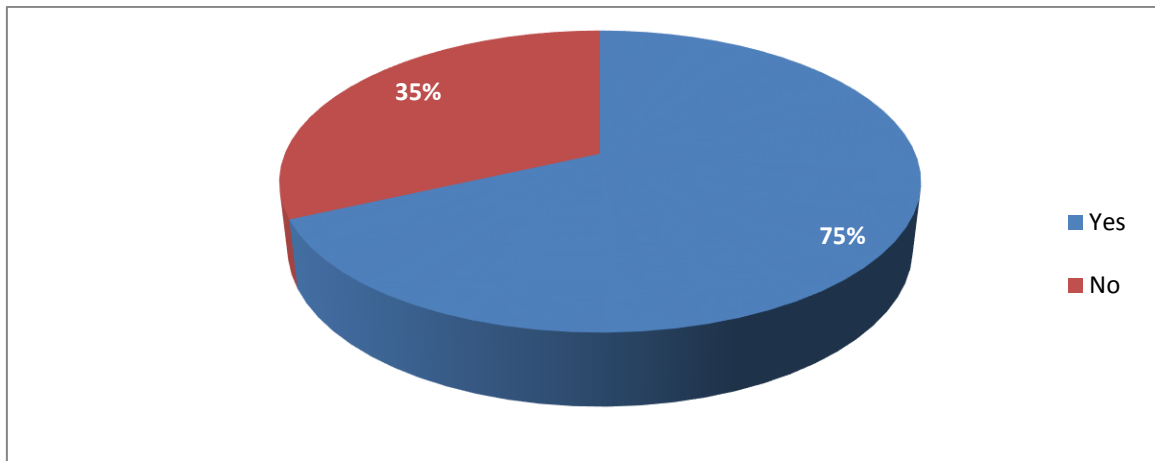


**Pie chart 2.5.9:** The Teacher's ways of helping the Students.

Form the results gathered; it noted that 28.57% said that he teacher's form of should be notes on how to ask questions about such topics, 28.57% said that the teacher should give a full theoretical lesson about this topic while 42.85%

confirmed that the teacher should give just technique on how to avoid such topics.

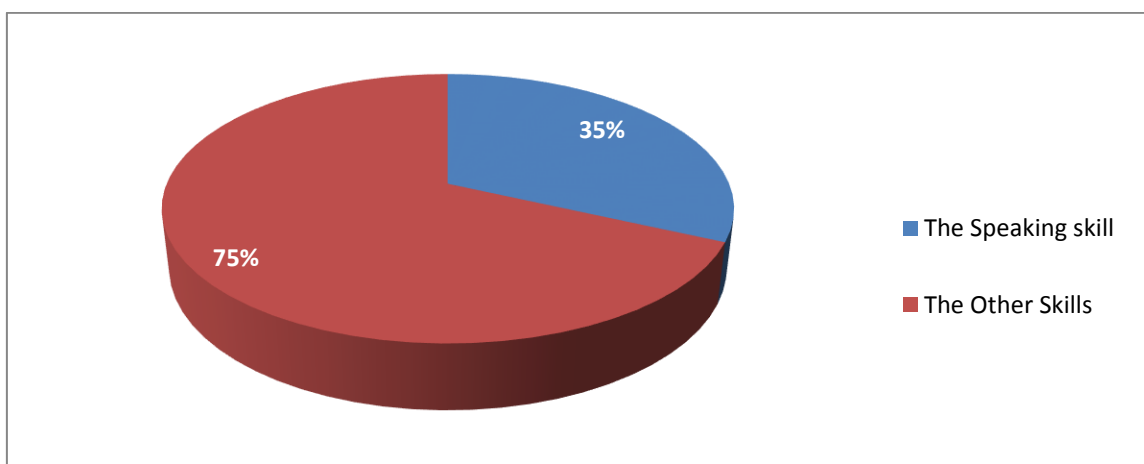
- **Question 10:** Do you think it is necessary to have a prior knowledge about pragmatic competence before having an online speaking communication?



**Pie chart 2.5.10:** The Necessity of having prior Pragmatics' Knowledge.

From the results gathered; it noted that 80% of the sample population they said that it is necessary to have a prior knowledge about pragmatic competence while 20% said that it wouldn't be necessary.

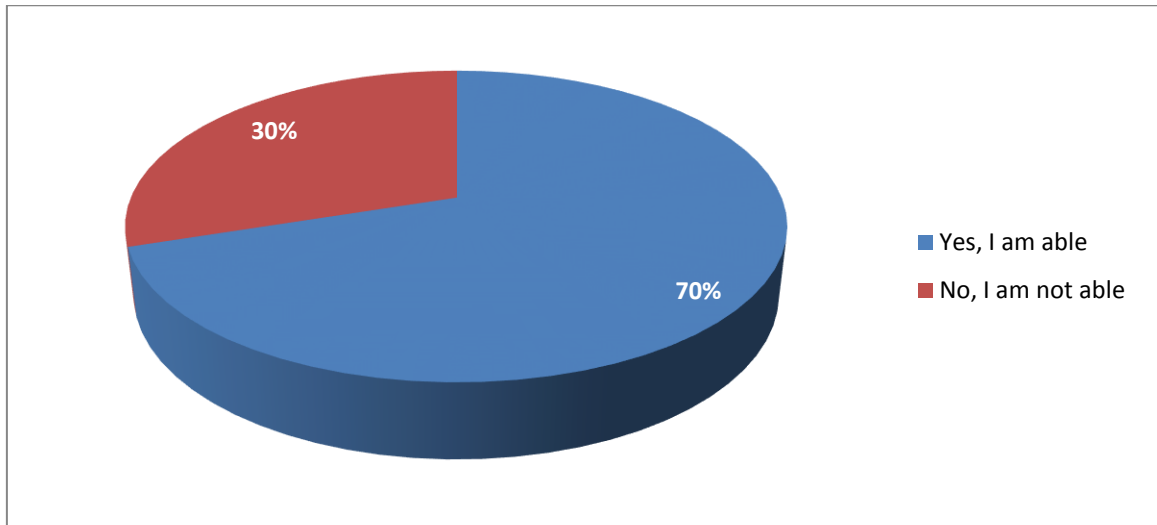
- **Question 11:** Do you think the speaking skill is the only skill needed to develop the pragmatic competence or you need other skills?



**Pie chart 2.5.11:** The Skills needed in Developing the Pragmatic Competence

From the results gathered; it noted that 35% of the informants said the speaking is enough to develop the pragmatic competence while 65% said that it wouldn't be enough and there must be other skills such as listening, speaking, writing or the electing of all skills.

- **Question 12:** Do you think by the end of this class you will be able to communicate easily with foreign students using cultural subjects?



**Pie chart 2.5.12:** The Students' ability to deal with Cultural Subjects with Foreign Students.

Since it was an open-ended question the answers varied out of twenty informants 70% students answer with yes but they are able to some extent to communicate with foreign students dealing with cultural subjects while 30% said they are not yet able to communicate in these subjects.

### 2.5.2 The Classroom Observation Analysis

The observation was preceded in a form of a grid which contains certain items to guide the observer. The first item was designed to observe the students' interaction in the Global Virtual Class with the foreign speaker of English language. The second was designed to observe the teacher interference to hinder students' difficulties when dealing with cross cultural topics. The following results were achieved

#### Item One: Students' Interaction

The results obtained from the classroom observation reveal that the students' interaction varies from one session to another. In the two first sessions the students showed more motivation when interacting with the foreign speakers of the English language. This may be because of the nature of the topics which seem to be easy for them to tackle as it talks mainly about school life and family life. However, in the remaining two observed sessions, almost all students started to show low motivation



to interact. This may be because the students were afraid to express himself / herself, give his/her opinion in a comfortable and relaxed way about the discussed topic which seemed to be more complicated than the first topics such as religion and marriage.

### **Item Two: teacher s' Interference**

Results from classroom observation reveal that during the observed sessions, the teacher's interferences was limited in the first two sessions. The Learners were free in their conversation and the teacher's role remain as an observer. This may be because the topics seemed to be more easy and smooth with no offence. However, the two last sessions the teacher marked his interferences with some comments and sometimes he answered the questions instead of his learners and sometimes he gives some tips on how to deal with the taboo questions. This may be because the topics were a little bit sensitive such as religion and marriage.

## **2.6 Data Interpretation**

In the beginning of this research, it was suggested in the first hypothesis that The GVC students are not aware enough about the pragmatic competence comparing with the linguistic one. After the collection of data through two research instruments, the research work revealed that not all the students of the Global Virtual Class are aware of this competence since their answers to question 5 and 6 in the students' questionnaire were not in the right position. These answers validate the first hypothesis.

In the second hypothesis, the researcher suggested that the Global Virtual Class doesn't develop the students' pragmatic competence. That is to say, since the students are not aware about the pragmatic competence they are not yet in the right position to judge whether the class help them to develop this competence or not. For instance, in question 7 in students questionnaire the majority of the students sais that the this competence should be developed by the students themselves and ignored to some extents the teachers' role and even class as being a speaking class. Also, the aims of the students aren't to develop this competence as the second

question denotes but it diverged according to students' aims. As a consequence, all these above-explained results nullify the second hypothesis put by the researcher.

## **2.7 Suggestions and recommendations**

The pragmatic competence is an effective tool in developing learners' communicative skills in socio-cultural subjects. Therefore, stating from the results obtained which affirms that the GVC are not pragmatically competent, the research proposes some useful recommendations to tackle the problem. It outlines a number of suggestions to raise learners' pragmatic competence to communicate effectively.

### **2.7.1 Teachers' Role in Developing Learners Pragmatic Competence**

It is generally agreed that the teacher is the responsible of his/her class. Therefore, teachers look always for the best ways to enhance the learners' awareness of pragmatic competence. In this regard, Eslami-Rasekh (2008:301) points out "The responsibility of teaching the pragmatic aspect of the language use falls on teachers".

Accordingly, Bardovi-Harlig (as cited in Shemanski, 2000) in order to help the teacher, he proposes four basic steps to incorporate pragmatics into the curriculum. These steps are: 1) identification of the speech act 2) data collection and description (journals, prediction charts, etc.), 3) evaluation of texts and materials (critiquing dialogues, and group discussions), and 4) development of new materials.

### **2.7.2 The Use of the Speaking Activities**

Also, the EFL teacher should develop learners' pragmatic competence through the different speaking and communicative activities. That is to say, in a communicative activity, aspects of speech situation should be taken into account. Leech (1990: 13) mentions the aspects of speech situation as follows:

#### 1) Addressers or addressees

Addressers are the other term used to refer to speakers or writers, whereas addressees refer to hearers or readers.

2) The context of an utterance

Context is any background knowledge assumed to be shared by speaker and hearer and which contributes to hearer's interpretation of what speaker means by a given utterance.

3) The goal(s) of an utterance

In Leech's view, the goal of an utterance is to talk about the intended meaning of the utterance, or speaker's intention in uttering it. The term goal is more neutral than intention because it does not commit its user to dealing with motivation, but can be used generally of goal-oriented activities.

4) The utterance as a form of act or activity: a speech act

5) The utterance as a product of a verbal act.

## **2.8 Conclusion:**

This chapter spotlighted on the analysis of the collected data both qualitatively and quantitatively. The main findings related to the research hypotheses were also discussed. The results revealed that the majority of the Global Virtual Class students aren't aware about the pragmatic competence compared with the linguistic one. The participants believed that since they are able linguistically competent so they are able to communicate with foreign students. Also, the students do not pay enough attention of developing this competence inside the class because their main interest is to practice the language in front of the foreign students who are sometimes native speakers.

# **General Conclusion**

## **General Conclusion**

It is a common place to claim that In order to communicate effectively in the target language, learners of English as a foreign language need to develop pragmatic competence, which can be accomplished through pragmatic instruction in oral English classroom. With the raise of pragmatic awareness, it is expected that learners will acquire the competence and their target language performance will improve.

Thus, this study spots the light on the correlation between the pragmatic competence and speaking skill. It tends to develop the GVC learners' pragmatic competence through the speaking skill at the University of Tlemcen. To test this issue, an investigation was made to check the hypotheses put forward i.e. the GVC learners may not be aware of the pragmatic competence and the class may not develop this competence.

This work is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the main concepts of both the speaking skill and the pragmatic competence. The second chapter deals mainly with the practical study i.e. methods and procedures in addition to the analysis of the student questionnaire and the classroom observation and it finished with some recommendations.

The analysis of the students' questionnaire reports that the GVC students aren't aware of the pragmatic competence; in other words, they cannot use the language effectively in different cross cultural situations. This is because the class does not give much focus on the pragmatic aspects of the English language. The classroom observation affirms that the students in the GVC give more intention to other objectives such as being fluency and mastering the English language with natives rather than being pragmatically competent

The results reported in this dissertation revealed that; developing the EFL students' pragmatic competence would be achieved through the use of the explicit pragmatic instructions and the use of different speaking activities that aim at

developing the EFL students' pragmatic competence. Accordingly, students will be pragmatically competent.

This study remains limited regarding the findings obtained that requires further research to broaden the understanding. The first limitation is time constraints. That is to say longer time can give to the researcher more chance to conduct his/her work. Another point is that the sample population is always limited to no more than twenty informants so the results aren't always trustworthy to a large extent.

All in all it can be concluded that developing the EFL students' pragmatic competence would be achieved through the use of the explicit pragmatic instructions and the use of different speaking activities that aim at developing the EFL students' pragmatic competence. Accordingly, students will be pragmatically competent. However, this is not the ultimate answer to our research questions and hypotheses as this work is opened for another further future research.

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UE8eiUpGklvAJ#q=J.+Vitale,+Sarah.+%E2%80%9C+Towards+Pragmatic+Competence+in+Communicative+Teaching:+the+Question+of+Experience+vs.+Instruction+in+the+12+Classroom%E2%80%9D.+Diss,+Southeastern+Louisiana+University,+2006.+Web



6) Do you think pragmatic competence is:

- a) The knowledge of others' culture
- b) The knowledge speakers' meaning through their utterances
- c) The knowledge of the art of communication

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

7) In your opinion, pragmatic competence is a kind of competence which need to be:

- a) Developed by the student himself
- b) Acquired from the teacher
- c) Learned from the experience of communication
- d) All of the possibilities

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

8) In case you find difficulties related to cultural issues when communicating with a foreign student, do you often ask your teacher for help?

Yes  No

9) Based on you experience, the help of the teacher will be in a form of:  
(You can tick more than one answer)

- a) Notes on how to ask questions about such topics
- b) A full lesson plan about this issue
- c) Techniques on how to avoid such topics

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

10) Do you think it is necessary to have a prior knowledge about pragmatic competence before starting online speaking communication

Yes  No


11) Do you think the speaking skill is the only skill needed to develop your pragmatic competence?

- a) Yes, it enough
- b) No, there must be other skills

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

12)By the end of this class, Do you think that you are able to communicate with the foreign students dealing with the socio-cultural subjects (yes or no and justify your choice)

.....

 **Thanks for  
collaboration**

### Appendix B: Classroom Observation Grid

<b>Observer:</b>	<b>Classroom:</b>
<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Session:</b>	<b>Academic Year:</b>

<b>Interaction</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Low</b>
<b>Item</b>			
<b>Students' interaction</b>			
<b>Observation</b>			
<b>Teacher's interference</b>			
<b>Observation</b>			