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Pragmatic Dimensions in ESP Teaching: The Case of Master I Business Law Students at Ahmed Draia University, Adrar

Khadidja KHALILI^{1*}

Mohamed KOUDEED²

**¹ Laboratory of English Language, Literature,
Translation and Knowledge Production, Faculty of
Letters and Foreign Languages, Kasdi Merbah
University of
Ouargla(Algeria),khalili.khadidja@univ-ouargla.dz**

**² Laboratory of English Language, Literature,
Translation and Knowledge Production, Faculty of
Letters and Foreign Languages, Kasdi Merbah
University of
Ouargla(Algeria),koudded.mohamed@univ-
ouargla.dz**

ABSTRACT

ESP has increasingly directed English learning towards meeting students' professional needs, necessitating pragmatic competence for effective communication within specific language community norms. The present study examines the role of pragmatics in ESP teaching through a questionnaire addressed to 119 master 1 postgraduate students of Business Law and an interview with three English teachers at Ahmed Draia University of Adrar. The results show that students need real-life situations to develop pragmatic skills, prompting teachers to prioritize diverse cultural perspectives and real-life communication skills.

Keywords: Business settings, communication, ESP, legal contexts, pragmatic competence.

*Khadidja KHALILI

INTRODUCTION

Owing to its extensive historical legacy and widespread adoption on a global scale, English has assumed a preeminent status as the primary language of business, science, technology, and legal transactions. In fact, the current lingua franca, no longer exclusive to the English-speaking community, has evolved into an international commodity. In that vein, teaching English has increasingly become an all-embracing demand and, simultaneously, a rewarding experience for people who do not share a single tongue. Many countries have incorporated English as a compulsory or secondary language in their education systems, enabling learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds to acquire proficiency in English. English Language Teaching (ELT) has emerged as a significant area of study and practice worldwide, particularly in countries where English is not the native language. ELT focuses on teaching English to non-native speakers and facilitating its use in international communication. This field is dynamic and constantly evolving, driven by ongoing research and the development of innovative teaching approaches and methods.

ELT is also concerned with teaching English for specific purposes, known as ESP. Within this area of study, educators recognize the importance of addressing learners' specific language needs within their respective disciplines or areas of expertise. However, ESP is not exclusive to teaching a set of grammar rules or vocabulary within a specific domain. It attempts to enhance effective communication in specific contexts and facilitate learners' ability to use language appropriately and efficiently for their intended purposes. In fact, learners need to be empowered with the necessary communicative skills and cultural understanding to effectively navigate professional and academic contexts, ensuring that their language use is appropriate, contextually sensitive, and conducive to achieving their specific communicative goals. The latter cannot be achieved without incorporating pragmatic aspects into teaching ESP.

Many researchers claim that there is an intrinsic correlation between ESP and Pragmatics to facilitate the English learning process. Martinez-Flor and Alcón Soler (2004) have conducted a study to investigate learners' pragmatic awareness and production within ESP disciplines such as Business English, Computer Sciences and Law, which results in the need to integrate pragmatic aspects to teaching these fields. Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor (2006) also stress that ESP learners need exposure to suitable input in the classroom. However,

this idea does not seem ideal to some teachers since learners cannot use the target language outside the classroom, and most ESP textbooks miss the essence of pragmatic competence. Therefore, the present study sheds light on the pragmatic dimensions in teaching ESP to post-graduate law students, namely Master 1 Business Law students at the University of Ahmed Draia, Adrar. In that regard, this paper endeavours to review the crucial role of Pragmatics in the ESP teaching-learning process, as well as to investigate the pragmatic competence roles in learning a foreign language in a particular context.

To reach the study objectives, the following research questions are departed:

1. How does pragmatics contribute to the teaching of ESP?
2. How do ESP practitioners address learners' pragmatic competence?

In response to the previous questions, the researchers suggest the following hypothesis:

- Incorporating pragmatics into ESP teaching takes learning beyond grammatical accuracy to include the subtleties of language use, such as speech acts and politeness strategies, conversational implicature and cultural considerations. Such an approach helps learners communicate effectively within their specialised fields, decoding not only the message conveyed but also how it is delivered professionally, using different strategies as needed. Therefore, tailoring instruction to real-world contexts relevant to learners' specialised fields can help ESPpractitioners enhance learners' pragmatic competence.

1. Literature Review

1.1. ESP and Pragmatics

Approximately half a century ago, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) emerged as a subfield within the realm of ELT to assist international students with their academic writing tasks, particularly in educational settings where English serves as the medium of instruction. Later on, ESP evolved from the pressing demands of a dynamically growing post-war world in which communication systems, fast-increasing international trade, global companies, modern technology, and other factors made access to an academic business lingua franca inevitable. As globalisation intensified in the latter half of the 20th century, the need for a common language to facilitate international

business transactions and collaboration became increasingly apparent. Accordingly, non-native speakers considered English The new lingua franca effectively addressed their requisites pertaining to cross-cultural communication, business transactions, and the interchange of information (Teodorescu, 2010). Within this context, language teaching methodology developments during the 1960s and 1970s made ESP a viable, valuable, and cost-effective method for teaching English to non-native learners.

Many traditional approaches have a narrow focus on teaching only the linguistic repertoire within specific study areas in the ESP context, where learners are taught the linguistic structure separately from the sociocultural context. They are primarily instructed on the grammatical rules and vocabulary without sufficient emphasis on the social and cultural aspects that shape language use within a specific discourse, leading to misinterpretation and misunderstanding in communication. In fact, ESP practitioners need to be equipped with an intermediate or advanced level to design a course and select authentic learning materials appropriate for learners. Axiomatically, one essential aspect of language learning is pragmatic skills, which occur naturally through authentic discourse and genuine language instruments within various disciplines (Demo, 2001). Therefore, Schiffirin (1994) claims that discourse analysis encompasses a wide range of theoretical and analytical approaches, drawing from various perspectives such as pragmatics, communication ethnography, speech act theory, and conversation analysis. They perceive language as a form of social interaction and emphasize the importance of incorporating pragmatic sub-categories into ESP textbooks and instructional communication.

Pragmatics, as a subfield of Linguistics and Semiotics that, studies meaning in context and considers the study of communication within a sociocultural setting. It has been regarded as an integral aspect of language learning and teaching that helps learners understand how to use language appropriately in different social situations and allows them to develop communicative competence (Yule, 1997). Bardovi-Harlig (1996) and Griffin (2005) assert that teaching pragmatics and developing pragmatic competence, in particular, is valuable to increase learners' awareness of cultural essentials and how they are expressed. In narrower scopes, pragmatics has several dimensions in an ESP course. Corrizzato (2015) underlines that “developing pragmatic abilities in the acquisition of the target language in the ESP courses is one of the primary teaching aims” (p. 70). To illustrate, cultivating pragmatic skills is a fundamental objective of ESP courses, as it prepares learners to

communicate effectively in their chosen field and beyond. Thus, developing pragmatic competence helps learners eliminate mistakes at the professional level, where this kind of mistake is critical to consider.

Several scholarly investigations have been undertaken to explore the incorporation of pragmatic elements within the pedagogical framework of ESP instruction. One research conducted by Triki (2002) is one of the studies that offers a cogent rationale for the association between ESP and pragmatics. The paper elucidates the underlying connection between these two fields, highlighting their interdependence and mutual benefits. He assumes that the inherent characteristics of pragmatics, such as sensitivity to context and intentionality, are intrinsic to the notion of ESP. In that vein, Triki (2002) argues that:

The preposition *for* has a constraining function having to do with language use and not simply language competence. This constraint makes the approach essentially functional. Moreover, the zero article in specific purposes, coupled with the plural, conveniently inserts an element of indefiniteness which is so flexible that it can account for a variety of contexts. Thus context-sensitivity and intentionality, which are fundamental to Pragmatics, are constitutive of the very term ESP. (p. 3)

The core concept is that the preposition *"for"* in *"English for Specific Purposes"* imposes a constraint related to language usage rather than solely language competence, rendering the approach functionally oriented. Additionally, the absence of the article *"the"* in *"specific purposes"* combined with the plural form introduces a sense of indefiniteness adaptable to various contexts.

1.2. Speech Act Theory

Many ESP practitioners primarily emphasise verbal communication since the main goal is often to facilitate effective and efficient communication in specific professional or academic domains. The use of words and utterances in these contexts serves not only as a means of conveying information but also as a way of carrying out actions. These principles are underlined within the various subfields of pragmatics, one of which is speech act theory. The latter was originally coined in J.L. Austin's (1959) *How to do things with words* book. Speech act theory is founded on the notion that language possesses meaning beyond the mere definitions of individual words (Austin, 1962). In essence, it suggests that when individuals speak, they are not solely conveying literal meanings but also performing actions through their speech. As mentioned

above, most ESP textbooks lack pragmatic input since they are designed to suit professional settings requiring cautious attention to language function. This lack leads to restricted utterances of speech acts such as apologies, complaints, and offers.

The speech act theory encompasses three crucial elements: the locutionary-referential value, the illocutionary-performative function, and the perlocutionary-perceived effect. Searle (1979) argues that elements can be integrated into ESP contexts via the document types, functions, the intended and actual effects on the audience. In more details, the locutionary-referential value refers to the semantic and literal significance of the utterance conveyed by the words with a certain sense and reference contingent upon the understanding of the hearer. In addition, the act of uttering words is inherently driven by the speaker's specific intention or purpose and their effect on the listener. This idea is embodied within the illocutionary-performative function that emphasizes that utterances can function as direct actions, such as making requests, giving commands, or expressing opinions. Furthermore, the perlocutionary-perceived effect focuses on the impact of speech acts on the listener or the audience. It recognizes that a speech act can have different outcomes, ranging from influencing the listener's beliefs or emotions to prompting specific behaviours or responses. According to Lorenzo Fiorito (2005), speech acts can be included in ESP as communication genres, namely, documents such as complaint letters and apologies. In that endeavour, the figure below illustrates the utterance acts relevance for ESP as follows:

Fig.1.1. Locutionary, Illocutionary and Perlocutionary Relevance in ESP

Utterance act	Its meaning	Relevance for ESP
The Locutionary Act	uttering a sentence with determinate sense and reference	producing the document type (cable, fax, minutes etc.)
The Illocutionary Act	making a statement, offer, promise, etc. in uttering a sentence, by virtue of the conventional force associated with it (or with its explicit performative paraphrase)	the list of functions found in the table of contents of any ESP book.
The Perlocutionary Act	bringing about effects on the audience by means of uttering the sentence, such effects being special to the circumstances of utterance	desired versus actual effects on intended audience

Source:Searle, 1979, p.12-17

Thus, learners' awareness of speech acts helps them improve their communication within ESP contexts.

1.3. The Cooperative Principle: Maxims of Conversation

Politeness emerges as a central position within the realm of pragmatics and stands as a key focal point in ESP teaching, particularly in social interaction and communication. Individuals are anticipated to effectively engage in discourse by supplying the pertinent information necessary to confer significance upon the conversation. The cooperation that speakers and listeners provide in the communication process may be attributed to their need to communicate their intentions and the implicit significance of their utterances. This idea is exhibited within Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle (CP), which reinforces the assumption that participants in a conversation usually try to be informative, honest, relevant, and clear. CP's primary concern is to distinguish between utterances and meanings, trying to discover the ways in which the speaker knows how to generate implicit meanings and assuming that the recipient will reliably understand the intentions. Grice's CP is divided into four maxims of conversations, the Gricean maxims, which are elaborated in the table below as follows:

Fig.1.2. Grice's Cooperative Principle Conversational Maxims

1	Quantity	Make your contribution as informative as required (do not be under-informative) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required (do not be over-informative) <i>Example of flouting the maxim of Quantity:</i> Person 1: "Where did you go yesterday?" Person 2: "Somewhere on this earth."
2	Quality	Do not say what you believe to be false Do not say what you lack adequate evidence for <i>Example of flouting the maxim of Quality:</i> (The weather is stormy and bad outside) Person 1: "Nice weather."
3	Relation	Be relevant <i>Example of flouting the maxim of Relation:</i> Person 1: "Do you love me?" Person 2: "I think we should order pizza tonight."
4	Manner	Avoid obscurity of expression Avoid ambiguity Be orderly <i>Example of flouting the maxim of Manner (from Attardo 1994, 272):</i> Person 1: "Do you believe in clubs for young people?" Person 2: "Only when kindness fails" (attributed to W.C. Fields)

Source: Grice, 1975, p. 41-58

The four maxims, as shown in **Fig.1.2.**, delineate explicit rational principles adhered to by individuals who follow the cooperative principle in pursuit of

achieving effective communication.

The Gricean maxims of communication are crucial for effective and appropriate information exchange in ESP contexts. The quantity maxim focuses on the amount of information provided, excluding unsupported phrases. Triki (2002) illustrates the inclusion of this maxim in business emails through specific document details, excluding the legal documents that prioritise accuracy and may intentionally flout the quantity maxim for ambiguity. The quality maxim emphasises avoiding falsehoods and inadequate evidence, which is particularly important in ESP courses prioritising precision and accuracy in writing. In fact, composing error-filled emails diminishes credibility, as reported in English for Personal Assistants (2007). Still, this maxim may be violated in business settings to prioritise client service. In addition, the relevance maxim requires learners to focus on topic-related information, adhere to concise and precise communication guidelines in business proposals and reports, and avoid contentious topics to prevent conflicts. Therefore, this maxim is violated when participants engage in irrelevant conversations. Lastly, the maxim of manner emphasises clear communication, where learners are instructed to avoid obscure words and ambiguity. However, complex terms and technical jargon can flout the manner maxim, hindering comprehension for the addressees. Thus, the four maxims of communication play a pivotal role in facilitating effective and appropriate information exchange in ESP contexts.

Another theory proposed by Anderson and Pearson acknowledges the mutual scaffolding process that occurs during interactions. The schema theory posits that pre-existing knowledge plays a crucial role in comprehending new information within a specific text or context (Anderson and Pearson, 1984). In that vein, the theory states that readers' mental stores are categorized into "content schema" representing readers' background knowledge of the world, and "formal schema" representing readers' familiarity with textual structures through which readers construct a cohesive interpretation of the text during the reading process. In ESP educational contexts, the implementation of cooperative or collaborative teaching methods, guided by an ESP instructor possessing Functional Academic Literacy (FAL), facilitates the acquisition of formal language structures pertinent to academic discourse. Kired (2017) argues that these structures are derived from academic content that learners are already acquainted with due to their current and prior academic engagements.

2. Methodology and Data Analysis

The present study was conducted in an Algerian EFL setting where

English is the second foreign language in education. As the study area sheds light on Higher Education, it is critical to mention that Algerian universities adopt English courses in different departments at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Due to its paramount status on an international scale, Algerian professionals and academics have always sought to master this language for research and work-related purposes. The present study combines quantitative and qualitative methods of research. Given the objective of this study, which is to explore the pragmatic dimensions of ESP teaching, a mixed-methods research design is chosen. This approach incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The qualitative approach is deemed appropriate for understanding the nuanced aspects of ESP teaching. In contrast, the quantitative approach complements research by presenting the findings in numerical and statistical terms, thereby providing a comprehensive perspective. By combining these two methods, the study aims to understand the pragmatic dimensions in ESP teaching comprehensively.

2.1. Sampling and Procedure

The study's sampling consists of 119 Master 1 students of Business Law at the Faculty of Law, University of Ahmed Draia Adrar, Algeria. The participants were provided with a survey questionnaire through which they were asked to answer ten questions regarding the study's concerns. Three (3) ESP teachers at the same faculty were also concerned in this study through a scheduled interview. In this attempt, the same three teachers were interviewed individually in both face-to-face and distance modes: (2) virtually via Google Meet and (1) in person. Furthermore, the students' questionnaire was delivered virtually as a Google Forms' sheet via emails, Facebook group, Messenger, WhatsApp and Telegram. In that vein, 95 students answered the questionnaire, while only 24 did not send back the questionnaire filled. The following table illustrates the study's sampling:

Table 1.The Study's Sampling

Sample	Answered	Not Answered	Total
Teachers	3	0	3
Students	95	24	119

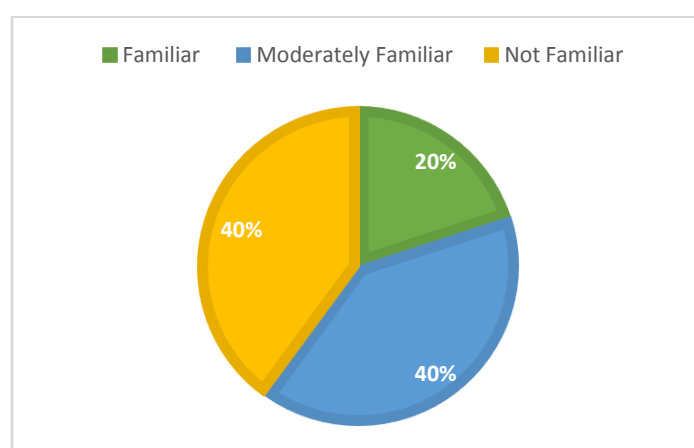
Source:The study's researchers, 2023

The study's sampling in the table above presents a comprehensive overview of the response rates among the participants, encompassing three teachers and 119 students. It can be noted that the three teachers responded to the study's concern, resulting in 100% of them being interviewed. However, 95 out of 119 students engaged in the survey accounting for an 80% learner response rate. It is also acknowledged that a subset of 24 students did not respond to the study's questionnaire, with a 20% non-response rate.

2.2. Students' Questionnaire

The first data collection approach utilised in the present study entailed the distribution of a questionnaire to a sample of 119 Business Law students at the University of Adrar. Given the prevailing circumstances, with students predominantly engaging in online learning during the second semester, the questionnaire was disseminated via Google Forms to the students' emails and the abovementioned social media platforms. This method yielded a total of 95 respondents who actively participated in the survey, while 24 students opted not to contribute to the research endeavour. In that regard, the questionnaire comprises a comprehensive set of ten structured inquiries designed to elicit and capture the learner's perspectives concerning the subject matter under investigation.

Fig.2.1.ESP Familiarity

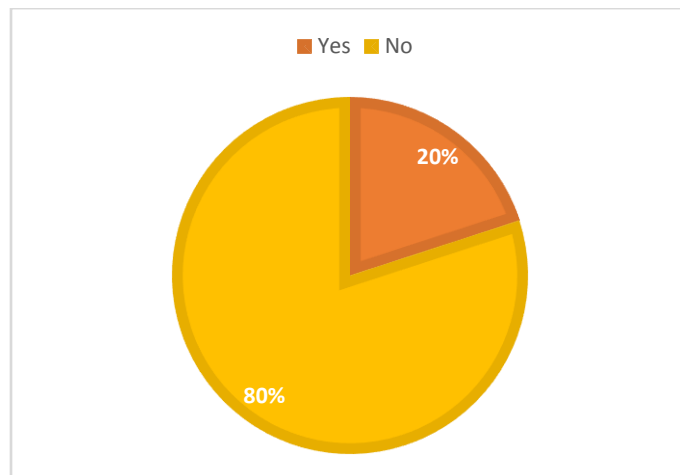


Source: The study's researchers, 2023

In the pursuit of investigating students' familiarity with ESP, the pie chart above shows that 20% of them possess a degree of familiarity with the concept. However, 40% of the respondents demonstrate a moderate level of familiarity

with ESP, while an equivalent 40% manifest a lack of familiarity with the aforementioned term.

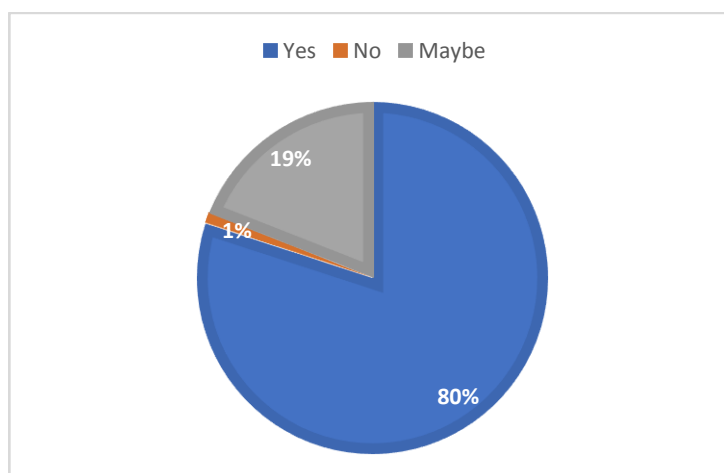
Fig.2.2.English Courses Tailored to Learners' Specific Interests



Source: The study's researchers, 2023

The second concern of the questionnaire is about receiving any English courses specifically tailored to the learners' field of study or professional interests. In that vein, a great majority of 80% claim that the type of courses they receive address their specific needs and professional endeavours. In contrast, approximately 20% of the participants contend that the courses offer lack congruence with their professional interests and needs.

Fig.2.3.Context and Target Audience Consideration

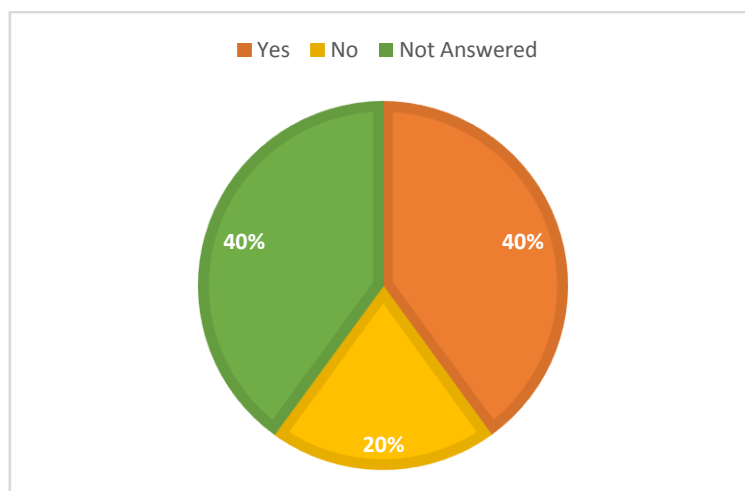


Source: The study's researchers, 2023

Considering the importance of context and the intended audience when utilizing ESP, the majority of participants recognize the significance of considering the aforementioned factors. Within this context, 80% of students

agree with this concern. In addition, a minority comprising 19% exhibit a degree of indecision in this regard. However, only 1% find it unnecessary to consider the previous factors while learning or using ESP in the target situation.

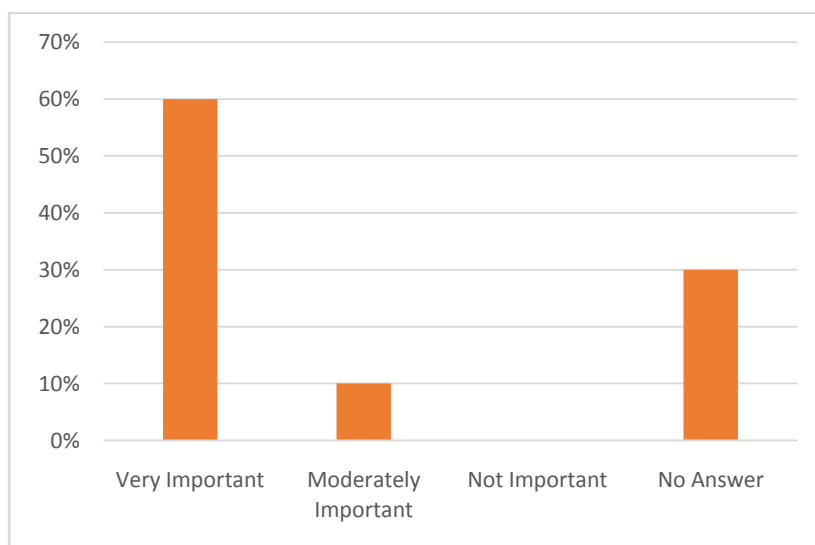
Fig.2.4.English-speaking Countries Cultural Norms and Conventions Importance



Source: The study's researchers, 2023

The fourth questionnaire question concerns the importance of learners' understanding of English-speaking countries' cultural norms and conventions when using ESP. In that respect, 40% of the participants find it essential to comprehend such norms. By way of contrast, a minority of 20% of learners find it unessential to take into account these countries' norms within the ESP context. Besides, it is noteworthy to mention that a set of 40% of respondents prefer to avoid answering the present question.

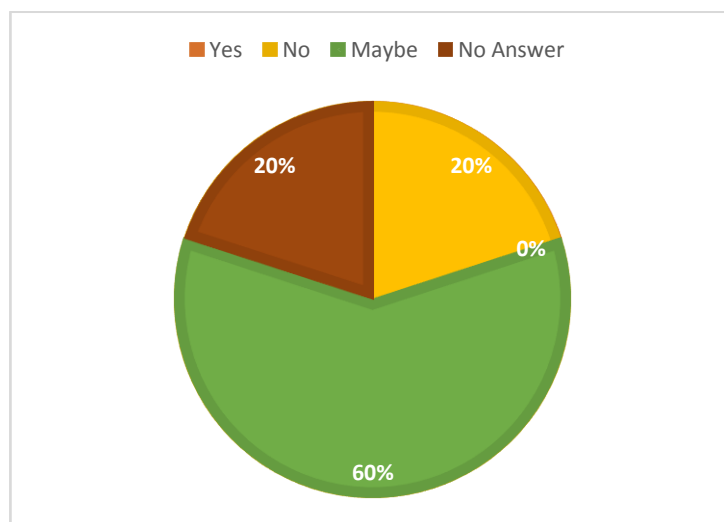
Fig.2.5.Pragmatic Skills Importance



Source: The study's researchers, 2023

The bar graphs above illustrate the perceived significance of pragmatic skills in learners' future career or academic pursuits, with 60% of participants indicating "very important," 10% selecting "moderately important," no respondents opting for "not important," and the remaining participants abstaining from providing a response.

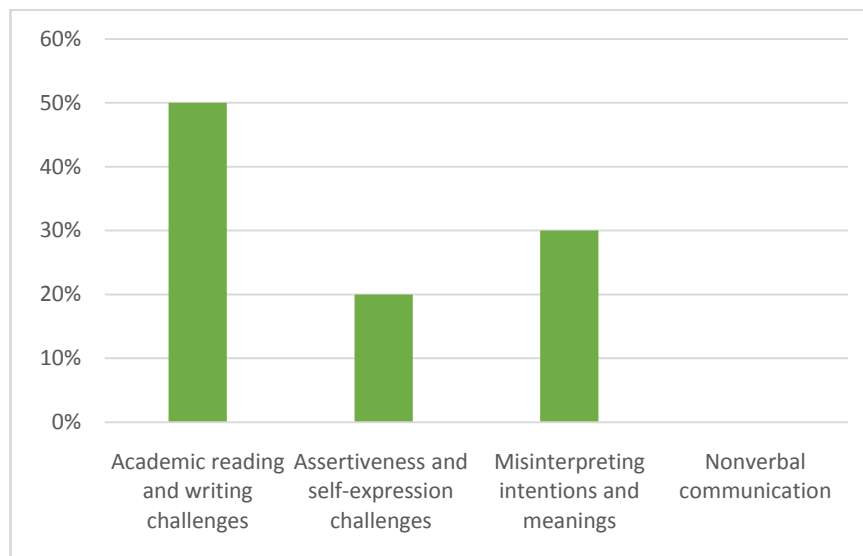
Fig.2.6.Interests English Courses Pragmatic Aspects Inclusion



Source: The study's researchers, 2023

The sixth inquiry in the survey pertains to whether the present English courses address pragmatic dimensions, such as understanding cultural contexts and using language appropriately in specific situations. Most respondents display a level of uncertainty, with 60% choosing "maybe" as an answer. Besides, a minority of 20% agree that their current English courses address pragmatic dimensions. Similarly, 20% of them decide not to provide a response. Finally, none of the participants agree that the courses do not include pragmatic aspects.

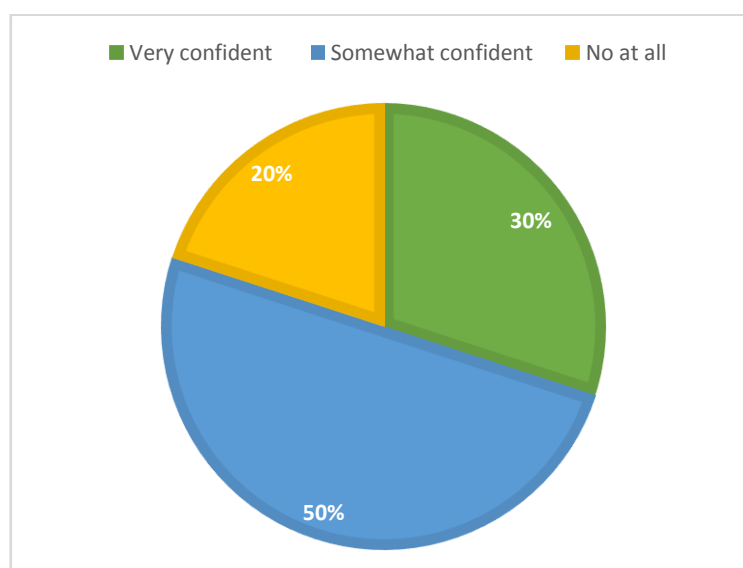
Fig.2.7.ESP Learning Challenges



Source: The study's researchers, 2023

On the challenges students encounter throughout their learning journey, the bar graph above illustrates learners' main obstacles while learning ESP. It is evident that the most significant proportion, comprising 50% of participants, struggle with academic reading and writing. In addition, around 30% of the learners have trouble accurately understanding the intentions and nuances conveyed by speakers. The remaining 20% of participants highlight challenges related to assertiveness and self-expression, while none of them consider non-verbal communication a challenging aspect.

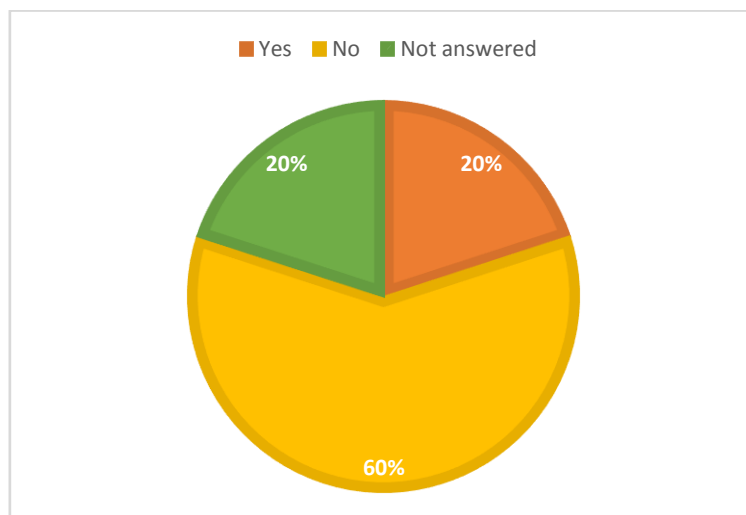
Fig.2.8.Learners' Use of English to Communicate in the Target Situation



Source: The study's researchers, 2023

The eighth concern of the questionnaire investigates learners' confidence in using English for communicating in the target situation. In that vein, half of the participants (50%) express a moderate confidence level in utilizing English for communication in the target situation. Moreover, 30% of learners feel highly confident in using English for communication, whereas 20% of participants lack confidence in this regard.

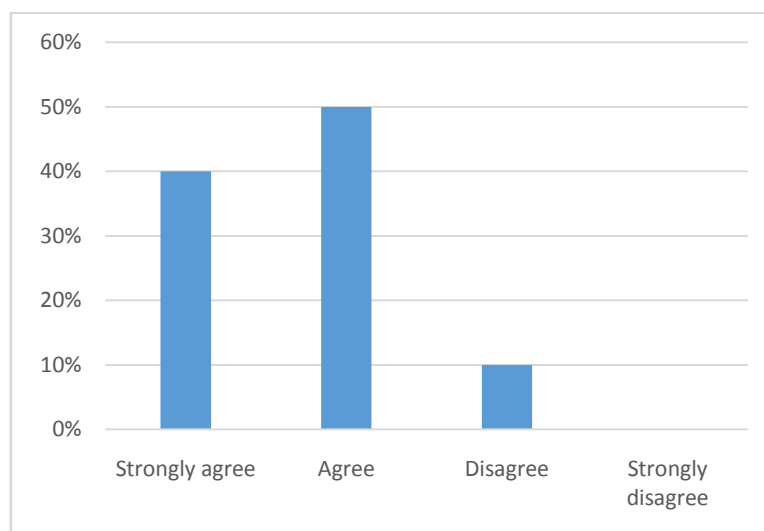
Fig.2.9.English for Professional Purposes Training



Source: The study's researchers, 2023

Regarding participation in training courses to enhance English skills for professional purposes, most learners (60%) have not participated in such programs. The data depicted in the chart indicates that 20% of participants have undergone such training, while the remaining 20% opted not to respond to the ninth question.

Fig.2.10.Incorporating Real Life Scenarios in ESP Teaching



Source: The study's researchers, 2023

The survey's last question concerns students' perspectives on incorporating real-life scenarios in ESP teaching to enhance their ability to use English in specific contexts. In that respect, half of the participants (50%) agree about the positive impact of incorporating these real-life scenarios on their learning abilities. Additionally, 40% of the learners strongly endorse the inclusion of real-life contexts in ESP instruction. On the contrary, a minority of respondents (10%) consider this integration unnecessary, and there are no strong disagreements within this concern.

2.3. Teachers' Interview

In the data collection vein, a comprehensive approach was employed, entailing the engagement of three experienced teachers who were interviewed to provide valuable insights into their perceptions regarding the teaching of ESP. These interviews were structured around a set of six open-ended questions designed to delve deep into their experiences and perspectives on ESP instruction. In that vein, a discerning rationale guided the selection of only three teachers for this inquiry. The interviewees were chosen due to their unique expertise and extensive tenure in delivering ESP instruction tailored for Business Law students, a commitment spanning an impressive three-year duration. This selective approach was deemed necessary to gain insights from those who have demonstrated a sustained dedication to ESP teaching within the specialized context of Business Law.

- **Question 1:** Can you briefly describe your experience and background in teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP), especially in the context of teaching business law students?

The three teachers' experience in teaching ESP in a business law context is summarized by the fact that they hold PhD degrees in Applied Linguistics, Didactics, and Linguistics and have completed specialized training in ESP pedagogy. Two teachers have taught at reputable institutions where they developed tailored curricula and materials to cater to the unique language needs of ESP learners. Their teaching approaches focus on integrating legal terminology and utilizing authentic legal texts, case studies, and real-world business scenarios into language lessons, enabling students to communicate effectively in their professional contexts.

- **Question 2:** Do you incorporate pragmatics into your ESP teaching? If yes, please share some specific strategies or activities you use.

In response to the second question, the interviewees claim that they integrate pragmatics into ESP instruction. One strategy they find beneficial is

explicit instruction on speech acts and politeness strategies through providing learners with frameworks and models for making requests, giving advice, and making suggestions relevant to their field of study or profession. Moreover, two teachers state that they often employ role-play scenarios that simulate workplace interactions to enhance learners' communicative competence in professional contexts. Another approach the teachers find compelling is the use of authentic materials, such as emails, reports, and business meetings, to teach pragmatic norms and conventions. Besides, the three teachers argue that they encourage students to participate in group discussions and presentations, where they practice using appropriate pragmatic strategies.

➤ **Question 3:** What challenges do you commonly encounter when teaching pragmatics in ESP, and how do you address them?

Only one teacher has provided common challenges related to teaching pragmatics in ESP in response to the third question. These challenges, as s/he claims, include learners' limited exposure to context-specific language use, difficulties in grasping sociocultural aspects of communication, and the need for highly contextualized instances. To address these challenges, the teacher claims that s/he employs a combination of authentic materials, role-play activities, and case studies tailored to the specific field of study. Additionally, fostering a collaborative and communicative classroom environment encourages students to engage actively in pragmatic analysis and application, allowing them to bridge the gap between theory and practice effectively. Regular feedback and assessment and encouraging self-reflection also play crucial roles in enhancing students' pragmatic competence within ESP contexts.

➤ **Question 4:** When developing ESP materials or exercises, how do you ensure they are contextually relevant and address your students' specific pragmatic needs?

Through the following question, the researcher aims to explore whether the materials that ESP practitioners adapt are relevant to the course and suit the learners' needs. With ongoing communication, the three teachers claim that they start by conducting a needs analysis to understand the learners' specific requirements based on which they adapt and adjust relevant materials. These materials are aligned with real-world situations so that learners can immediately apply what they learn to their professional context, making the learning experience more practical and effective.

➤ **Question 5:** How do you assess and evaluate the development of pragmatic skills in your students? Are there any assessment tools or techniques you find particularly compelling for this purpose?

The three ESP practitioners employ diverse methods to assess and evaluate their students' pragmatic skills. The first teacher relies on classroom observations and conversations, emphasizing real-life interactions as the primary assessment tool. The second adopts a multifaceted approach, incorporating self-assessment, peer assessment, and structured scenarios, explicitly focusing on role-playing exercises for evaluation. Meanwhile, the third practitioner utilizes a combination of written assignments and video-recorded role-plays to investigate both written and spoken pragmatics, enhancing accuracy through skill-specific rubrics.

➤ **Question 6:** How might teaching pragmatics evolve in the future as the field of ESP education continues to change and develop?

The interview's last concern encompasses the teachers' viewpoints on the future of teaching pragmatics in ESP. One perspective suggests increased technology integration, real-world simulations, and heightened cultural awareness to cater to the ever-evolving communication demands of learners. Another viewpoint expects a shift towards a more learner-centred approach, embracing diverse cultural perspectives and a strong emphasis on real-life communication skills tailored to specific contexts. Furthermore, the future of teaching pragmatics in ESP education may encompass increased interdisciplinary collaboration, personalized learning paths, and a concentrated focus on digital communication tools.

3. Findings, Discussion, and Recommendations

The study's results offer valuable critical insights and draw meaningful conclusions. Within the context of the questionnaire's findings, it can be concluded that ESP is not widely understood among the surveyed students. A smaller percentage of learners are familiar with the concept, while the majority have moderate familiarity or lack significant knowledge about ESP. Moreover, most respondents are satisfied with the relevance of English courses to their field of study or professional interests, and a notable minority find that improvements are critical in this regard. These findings suggest the importance of ongoing efforts to tailor English courses more effectively to all participants' specific needs and interests. The findings also suggest that most learners recognise the importance of context and audience considerations when using ESP. However, there is still some level of uncertainty among a minority of participants. Furthermore, the analysis reveals a significant divide in terms of understanding cultural norms and conventions, with the majority finding it essential and others needing more support in this regard. These findings highlight the varied perspectives and potentially differing levels of awareness among learners regarding the role of context, audience, and cultural

understanding in ESP.

The results obtained from the questionnaire analysis demonstrate that a significant number of the surveyed learners consider pragmatic skills crucial for their future career or academic pursuits. Regarding the relevance of the current English courses to pragmatic dimensions, there is a notable level of uncertainty among respondents, with a smaller but still significant percentage indicating that their courses cover these aspects. It is also interesting to note that no participants believe their courses completely lack pragmatic elements. In examining the obstacles students face during their ESP learning journey, the data clearly shows that the largest group of participants encounter difficulties with academic reading and writing. In addition, a substantial portion of them struggle with grasping the intentions and meanings conveyed by speakers, assertiveness and self-expression. Furthermore, the analysis indicates a range of confidence levels among learners in terms of using English for communication in the target situation, where the majority have moderate to high confidence and a minority lack confidence. For professional reasons, the participants have not engaged in training courses to improve their English skills. At the same time, a significant minority have actively participated in such programs, indicating a willingness among some learners to invest in their professional language skills. Finally, the analysis indicates a generally positive attitude among students toward incorporating real-life scenarios in ESP teaching, with a majority agreeing or strongly endorsing this approach.

The analysis of the teachers' interviews has also offered insightful findings obtained from their answers and perspectives in integrating pragmatic aspects based on their ESP teaching experiences. Within the study's context, the participants claim that effective teaching strategies for enhancing communicative competence in professional contexts include explicit instruction, role-play scenarios, authentic materials, and active student participation in group discussions and presentations. These strategies help learners acquire the necessary skills for successful communication in their chosen fields of study or professions. Moreover, the analysis highlights several challenges learners face, including limited exposure to context-specific language use and difficulties in understanding sociocultural aspects of communication. These challenges indicate that students may struggle with real-world language use and cultural diversity. In that respect, it is critical to emphasise the importance of context-specific language learning, tailored materials and activities, a collaborative classroom environment, practical application, feedback, and self-reflection in improving students' pragmatic

competence within ESP contexts. In a narrower scope, teaching materials need to be aligned with the course objectives and learners' needs. Hence, the ESP teachers have stressed that conducting a needs analysis to understand students' learning gaps and requirements is one of the critical steps to adopting relevant materials aligned with real-world situations successfully.

In addition to what has been stated earlier, teaching materials can help teachers employ effective assessment methods to observe learners' progress. In that respect, ESP teachers employ various assessment methods to measure their students' pragmatic skills, indicating a commitment to comprehensive evaluation. The findings from this concern emphasise the importance of varied assessment methods, a focus on real-life interactions, and a commitment to evaluating both written and spoken pragmatics in ESP teaching. Each teacher employs a particular approach tailored to their teaching principles and the needs of their learners. Furthermore, the teachers offer valuable insights into the future of teaching pragmatics in ESP education. Their perspective underscores educators' need to adapt to a technologically advanced and globally interconnected world. Additionally, they emphasise the potential shift towards a more learner-centred approach, indicating a move away from traditional teaching methods. This approach stresses the importance of embracing diverse cultural perspectives and encouraging real-life communication skills relevant to specific contexts, ensuring students are prepared for practical application. Besides, interdisciplinary collaboration, personalised learning paths, and digital communication tools may play significant roles in the future of teaching pragmatics in ESP, underlining the need for innovation and adaptability in education to meet the evolving demands of learners.

In light of the findings presented in this paper, several recommendations for future research and practical implications have emerged:

- ✓ ESP practitioners in Business Law courses might need to prepare hypothetical business situations mirroring real-world legal predicaments to address learners' specific needs and encourage them to apply legal principles to resolve these cases. Students can engage actively with legal concepts in practical contexts by analysing contracts, negotiating settlements, or simulating courtroom proceedings. In addition, guest lectures by legal professionals or visits to courtrooms can offer direct exposure, deepen comprehension of legal complications, and enhance learners' ability to navigate real business scenarios within the bounds of the law.

- ✓ The ESP course should include cultural sensitivity training to help learners navigate diverse professional environments effectively. Considering cultural diversity implies that pragmatic skills are essential for the students' future careers. In that respect, ESP courses should incorporate pragmatic aspects more explicitly, focusing on real-world communication scenarios.
- ✓ Real-life scenarios need to be incorporated into ESP teaching to enhance learners' pragmatic skills. In that respect, ESP practitioners should emphasise integrating practical and real-world situations, such as role-play scenarios and authentic materials, into the ESP course and teaching materials to enhance communicative competence.
- ✓ Identifying students' challenges in an ESP setting can guide practitioners in developing targeted support and resources to address these issues. Accordingly, additional support and confidence-building tasks may be valuable in overcoming the learners' challenges.
- ✓ Professional language training is one of the most critical reforms that higher education stakeholders should encourage among university students. This kind of training should be planned to meet learners' business needs by emphasising precise language and communication skills.
- ✓ Conducting needs analysis and employing various assessment methods are critical in ESP teaching. Teachers should continuously assess students' learning gaps and requirements to ensure teaching materials effectively align with real-world situations.
- ✓ ESP practitioners should consider embracing a more learner-centred approach, incorporating diverse cultural perspectives, and leveraging technology for future ESP teaching.
- ✓ Promoting interdisciplinary cooperation among teachers and learners can help bridge the gap between language learning and specific fields of study or professions. ESP teachers should be open to innovation and adaptability in their teaching methods and materials to meet the evolving demands of learners.

CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, integrating pragmatics into ESP instruction is of paramount importance. It equips learners with the essential communication skills required for learners' specific professional or academic contexts. By incorporating pragmatics, ESP practitioners enable students to not only master the technical vocabulary of their fields but also to interact effectively in real-world scenarios, understand context-dependent language distinctions, and communicate with cultural sensitivity. Therefore, integrating pragmatic aspects ultimately

empowers learners to excel in their chosen professions by enhancing their language competence in a given context. More precisely, incorporating pragmatics into ESP instruction enriches students' language skills, making them more proficient, adaptable, and culturally aware communicators within their professional domains, enhancing their chances of success in their chosen careers. Hence, incorporating the recommendations mentioned above can help improve the quality and relevance of ESP education, better-preparing students for success in their chosen fields. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the study's present concern is broad. Thus, further research is needed to better cover the pragmatic dimensions of ESP teaching.

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Appendices

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

The present questionnaire serves as a data collection tool for Master 1 Business Law students. It is designed to gather students' perspectives on the pragmatic dimensions in ESP teaching. Your contribution and responses are immensely valuable to us.

Make a tick (✓) in the corresponding box.

1. How familiar are you with the concept of English for Specific Purposes (ESP)?

ما مدى معرفتك بمفهوم اللغة الإنجليزية لأغراض محددة؟

- a. Familiar مألوف ☐ b. Moderately familiar مألوف إلى حد ما ☐ c. Not familiar غير مألوف ☐

2. Have you received any English courses specifically tailored to your field of study or professional interests?

هل تلقيت أي دورات لغة إنجليزية مصممة خصيصًا لتتاسب مجال دراستك أو اهتماماتك المهنية؟

- a. Yes نعم ☐ b. No لا ☐

3. When using English for a specific purpose, do you think it is important to consider the context and the intended audience?

عند استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية لغرض معين ، هل تعتقد أنه من المهم مراعاة السياق والجمهور المستهدف؟

- a. Yes نعم ☐ b. No لا ☐ c. Maybe ربما ☐

4. Do you believe that understanding the cultural norms and conventions of English-speaking countries is important when using English for specific purposes?

هل تعتقد أن فهم الأعراف والتقاليد الثقافية للدول الناطقة باللغة الإنجليزية مهم عند استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية لأغراض محددة؟

- a. Yes نعم ☐ b. No لا ☐

5. In your opinion, how important are pragmatic skills (e.g., understanding idiomatic expressions, using appropriate discourse markers) in your future career or academic pursuits ?

برأيك ، ما مدى أهمية المهارات البراغمية (على سبيل المثال ، فهم التعبيرات الاصطلاحية ، واستخدام علامات الخطاب المناسبة) في حياتك المهنية أو مساعيك الأكاديمية المستقبلية؟

- a. Very important مهم جدًا ☐ b. Moderately important مهم إلى حد ما ☐
c. Not important غير مهم ☐

6. Do you think your current English courses address pragmatic dimensions, such as understanding cultural contexts and using language appropriately in specific situations?

هل تعتقد أن دورات اللغة الإنجليزية الحالية تتناول أبعادًا عملية ، مثل فهم السياقات الثقافية واستخدام اللغة بشكل مناسب في مواقف معينة؟

a. Yes نعم ☐ b. No لا ☐ c. Maybe ربما ☐

7. What specific challenges do you encounter when using English for academic or professional purposes?

ما هي التحديات المحددة التي تواجهها عند استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية لأغراض الأكاديمية أو المهنية؟

- a. Academic reading and writing challenges تحديات القراءة والكتابة الأكاديمية ☐
- b. Assertiveness and self-expression challenges تحديات الحزم والتعبير عن الذات ☐
- c. Misinterpreting intentions and meanings إساءة تفسير النوايا والمعاني ☐
- d. Nonverbal communication التواصل غير اللفظي ☐

8. How confident are you in your ability to communicate effectively in English within your field of study or future profession?

ما مدى ثقتك في قدرتك على التواصل الفعال باللغة الإنجليزية في مجال دراستك أو مهنتك المستقبلية؟

- a. Very confident واثق جدا ☐ b. Somewhat confident إلى حد ما ☐
- c. Not at all غير واثق ☐

9. Have you received any specific training or guidance on using English for professional purposes, such as writing emails, participating in meetings, or giving presentations?

هل تلقيت أي تدريب أو إرشادات محددة حول استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية لأغراض مهنية ، مثل كتابة رسائل البريد الإلكتروني أو المشاركة في الاجتماعات أو تقديم عروض تقديمية؟

- a. Yes نعم ☐ b. No لا ☐

10. Do you agree that incorporating real-life scenarios, role plays, or case studies in English language instruction would enhance your ability to use English in specific contexts?

هل توافق على أن دمج سيناريوهات الحياة الواقعية أو لعب الأدوار أو دراسات الحالة في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية سيعزز قدرتك على استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية في سياقات محددة؟

- a. Strongly agree أوافق بشدة ☐ b. Agree أوافق ☐ c. Neutral حيادي ☐
- d. Disagree لا أوافق ☐

THANK YOU