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**An Evaluation of the Communicative Competence of
Palestinian Fourth Level English Major
Students at Gaza Universities**

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated :

To my parents, who lighten my eyes towards success,

*To my husband for making me what I am today, giving me
all support and love,*

To my baby, who has not seen the light of sun yet,

To my brothers, sisters and their sons and daughters,

To my best friend, Ayat Seif.

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All praise to Allah, the Lord of the world; and prayers and peace be upon Mohammed his servant and messenger.

The successful completion of this study would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of many people in my life who offered their assistance along the way. I would like to recognize and thank the following for their support and guidance:

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Abstract

This study aimed at evaluating different components of communicative competence among fourth level English major students at three universities in Gaza (The Islamic, Al-Azhar and Al-Aqsa) and discovering to what extent students' competence matches their performance. It also aimed at identifying the areas of weaknesses in learning communicative competence.

To fulfill the aims of the study, the researcher followed the descriptive analytical approach. She used two tools to collect the needed data: a questionnaire and diagnostic test and conducted them among 88 students from Gaza universities. Benefiting from the previous studies, related literature, books and institutions' publications, the researcher built the criteria of evaluation which constituted the questionnaire. The tools were shown to eleven experts for benefiting from their comments in regard to any potential modifications, additions and deletions to achieve validity. Also, reliability was examined before conducting the tools.

The results of the questionnaire according to the scale of preparedness showed the following conclusions about fourth level English major students at the three universities:

1. They were moderately well prepared to acquire the different components of linguistic competence.
2. They were moderately well prepared to acquire sociolinguistic competence.
3. They were somewhat well prepared to acquire pragmatic competence.
4. They were moderately well prepared to acquire strategic competence.
5. They were moderately well prepared to acquire discourse competence.

And the results of the diagnostic test showed the following conclusions:

6. Students at the three universities had some areas of weaknesses in learning communicative competence especially strategic competence.
7. Students at the three universities have the competences, but they have poor performance in other words students' competence did not match their performance.

Based on the study findings, the researcher recommends faculties of education to increase the number of methodology courses, review the educational courses at the beginning of each year, enhance exchanging and sharing experience between each other, train students on the use of tools of self-evaluation, enhance providing students with creative education, and adapt educational technology. Moreover, suggestions for teaching strategic competence were provided since students had a problem in learning it. Finally, recommendations for further study were provided.

Arabic Abstract

الملخص باللغة العربية:

لقد هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تقويم مختلف مكونات الكفاءة التواصلية بين طالبات اللغة الانجليزية في المستوي الرابع في ثلاثة جامعات رئيسية في غزة (الإسلامية ، الأقصى ، الأزهر) كما هدفت إلى اكتشاف مدى تطابق هذه الكفاءات مع أداء الطالبات ، وأخيرا هدفت إلى تحديد مناطق الضعف في تعلم الكفاءة التواصلية.

ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة اتبعت الباحثة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي. وقد اتخذت الباحثة أداتين لجمع البيانات اللازمة: استبانة واختبار تشخيصي ، وقد تم تطبيق هذه الأدوات على عينة مكونة من 88 طالبة من الثلاث جامعات. وقد قامت الباحثة ببناء معايير التقويم والتي شكلت الاستبانة بعد مراجعة الدراسات السابقة والأدب التربوي ذات الصلة وكالكتب ومنشورات المؤسسات. ولتحقيق صحة الأدوات تم عرضها على أحد عشر خبيراً للاستفادة من ملاحظاتهم فيما يتعلق بأي تعديلات محتملة من حيث الإضافة والحذف.

وطبقا لمقياس الاعداد الذي استخدم في هذه الدراسة فإن نتائج الاستبيان أظهرت أن طالبات المستوي الرابع في اللغة الانجليزية في الثلاث جامعات:

1. يمتلكن الكفاءة اللغوية بشكل معتدل.

2. يمتلكن الكفاءة اللغوية الاجتماعية بشكل معتدل.

3. يمتلكن الكفاءة الوظيفية (الواقعية) إلى حد ما.

4. يمتلكن الكفاءة الخطابية بشكل معتدل.

5. يمتلكن الكفاءة الاستراتيجية بشكل معتدل.

كما وأظهرت نتائج الاختبار التشخيصي ما يلي:

1. وجود بعض مناطق الضعف في تعلم مكونات الكفاءة التواصلية وخاصة الكفاءة الاستراتيجية.

2. ضعف أداء الطالبات في الكفاءة التواصلية حيث أن نتائج الاستبانة تتعارض مع نتائج الاختبار التشخيصي.

وبناء على نتائج الدراسة فقد أوصت الباحثة رؤساء الأقسام في كليات التربية بضرورة زيادة المواد التربوية التي تعزز اكتساب الكفاءة التواصلية وتقويم المواد المنهجية بداية كل عام وتعزيز تبادل الخبرات بين المحاضرين في الثلاث جامعات. علاوة على ذلك قدمت الباحثة توصيات لتدريس الكفاءة الاستراتيجية حيث كان هناك مشكلة في تعلمها. وأخيرا قدمت الباحثة توصيات لمزيد من الدراسات المتعلقة بالدراسة الحالية.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Long Form
CC	Communicative Competence
FLEMS	Fourth Level English Major Students
HOTS	High Order Thinking Skills
IUG	Islamic University of Gaza
CEF	Common European Framework
QUT	Queensland University of Technology
TOEFL	Test Of English as a Foreign Language
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
CLA	Communicative Language Ability
NNS	Nonnative Speakers'
FLT	Foreign Language Teaching
CSs	Communication Strategies
LCE	Linguistic Competence in English
SCMC	Synchronous Computer Mediated Communication
FMF	Form-and-Meaning Focused
MF	Meaning Focused
IPSyn	The Index of Productive Syntax test
PAT	Phonological Awareness Test
GRW	Get Reading Website
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
PAJT	Pragmatic Acceptability Judgment Task
WDCT	Written Discourse Completion Task
ODCT	Oral Discourse Completion Task
DCT	Discourse Completion Test
CET	College English Test
ETS	Educational Testing Service
SILL	Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

Chapter I

Study Statement and Background

1.1 Introduction

1.2 The Need for the Study

1.3 Statement of the Problem

1.4 Research Questions

1.5 Purposes of the Study

1.6 Significance of the Study

1.7 Definition of Terms

1.8 Limitations of the Study

1.9 Summary

Chapter I

Study Statement and Background

This chapter introduces the research problem, the need for the study, the statements of the problem, the research questions, the purposes, the significance of the study, the definitions of terms and the limitations of the study.

1.1 Introduction

Teachers of foreign languages have struggled throughout the years trying to help their students communicate in the target language. The overall question for these teachers is often the following: “Why is it so difficult for students in foreign language classrooms to become proficient?” The Massachusetts Department of Education (1999:11-34) stated, “many adults complain that although they took two or more years of foreign language and obtained high grades on grammar examinations, they are unable to speak the language at all”. The standards of foreign language learning which published by the same university also commented that traditionally foreign language education has focused on teaching the “how (i.e., grammar)” and “what (i.e., vocabulary)” of the target language. One reason for the focus on grammar and vocabulary is the fact that foreign language classes tend to be for short times during the day 3-5 days a week.

At the university level, students face great difficulties in communicating their ideas and opinions orally or in written forms. The problem becomes even worse when they go to Britain or the United States for advanced study because they find out that the language they learned is quite different from the language spoken in those

countries. This situation suggests that something is wrong with the English language teaching system in the Arab countries.

Learning of language is now viewed as including not only the grammar of that language, but also the capacity to use the language in a way that is appropriate to the situational and verbal constraints operating at any given time. These constraints may come from the relationship between the speaker and the addressee, the nature of topic, the medium that is being used..... and so forth (Barqawi, 1995:45). Additionally, current language teaching methodology views language use as a communicative and interactive process taking the notion of communicative competence as its starting point.(Niakaris,1997:20).

Communicative competence is the ability to use the language correctly and appropriately to accomplish communication goals in different contexts. The desired outcome of the language learning process is the ability to communicate competently, not the ability to use the language exactly as a native speaker does. Moreover, it is the degree to which a communicator's goals are achieved through effective and appropriate interaction (Harmer, 1991:23). Swain and Canale (1980:243) proposed the most influential model of communicative competence. It comprised four competencies: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence.

Recently, there have been several reformulations of the components. One of them was proposed by Savignon (1991:26), who added pragmatic competence. Also, the Council of Europe's Common European Framework (CEF) of Reference for Languages (2001:123) added the pragmatic competences to the four components of the communicative competence. In addition, Widdowson (1998:67) stated that along with linguistic competence and communicative competence, pragmatic competence

should also be brought into focus since pragmatic competence was the one that underlined the ability to use the language along with a conceptual system to achieve certain aims or purpose.

The curricula need to be assessed periodically in order to make sure that they enhances the different components of communicative competence (Scarcella & Zimmerman, 1996:58). Although communicative competence is very important in our daily life, few studies were conducted to assess it. In order to evaluate communicative competence, Sauvignon (1997) presented six criteria for assessing it. These are criteria organized under the following: Adaptability (flexibility), conversational involvement, conversational management, empathy, effectiveness , and appropriateness.

Additionally, the Research Students Centre in Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Brisbane Australia (2008), published self-assessments items to evaluate the five components of communicative competence. Moreover, the Council of Europe's Common European Framework (CEF) of Reference for Languages (2001) published international criteria for evaluating different components of communicative competence. The researcher adopted those items and criteria with some modification to evaluate the communicative competence in her study.

To sum up, the focus of this study will be limited to the evaluation of the five components of communicative competence among fourth level English major students at Gaza Universities. Moreover, this study will examine if students' competence matches their performance or not.

1.2 The Need for the Study

It is believed that there is an urgent need for continual examination and evaluation of communicative competence among fourth level English major students at Gaza universities. The need for the evaluation arises from the fact that teaching communicative competence has not been paid a considerable and desirable attention by many professors at Gaza Universities. Moreover, lots of English language courses do not enhance communicative competence among students such as courses related to social studies. Consequently, considerable effort should be paid to the evaluation process and research should be directed to collect information and make judgments for future improvements and innovations.

It is hoped that this evaluative study will participate in developing and improving the quality of communicative competence among fourth level English major students at Gaza Universities .

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Many students complain that although they took two or more years of foreign language and obtained high grades on grammar examinations, they are unable to speak the language at all. As a result, they face great difficulties in communicating their ideas and opinions orally or in written forms. Moreover, graduates complain that they get poor performance in TOEFL and IELTS exams. Thus, the researcher found it is necessary to conduct this evaluative study in order to discuss communicative competences among fourth level English major students at Gaza Universities and to discover if students' competence matches their performance or not. It is hoped that this study will evaluate the communicative competence in terms of its weaknesses in order to provide effective improvements.

1.4 Research Questions

The problem of the study can be stated in the following main question:

"What are the main standardized components of communicative competence that Palestinian fourth level English major students at Gaza universities have?"

The above-mentioned question encompasses the following sub questions:

1. To what extent do fourth level English major students have the linguistic components ?
2. To what extent do fourth level English major students have the sociolinguistic component?
3. To what extent do fourth level English major students have the pragmatic component?
4. To what extent do fourth level English major students have the discourse component?
5. To what extent do fourth level English major students have the strategic component?
6. To what extent do the competences of fourth level English major students match their performance?

1.5 Purposes of the Study

2. To formulate standard criteria for evaluating communicative competence.
3. To evaluate the communicative competence among fourth level English major students at Gaza Universities in light of standard criteria.

4. To identify the degree of matching between students' competence and students' performance.
5. To identify the areas of weaknesses in learning communicative competence among fourth level English major students at Gaza universities by conducting a diagnostic test in the light of the standard criteria.
6. To give suggested perspective for improvements and innovations.

1.6 Significance of the Study

1. It provides professors and specialists at Gaza universities with criteria of evaluating communicative competence.
2. It seeks to motivate professors at Gaza universities to evaluate and develop the English department curricula by finding out materials that enhance communicative competence.
3. It would be great help for the professors of fourth level students to benefit from the improvements and suggestions in teaching communicative competence that the researcher will make .
4. It provides the Heads of Departments with the level of satisfaction among fourth level students regarding the communicative competence they received during their study.
5. This study may be an essential step to encourage researchers to discuss the problems that face students in learning communicative competence.
6. It helps professors in developing new methods and strategies in teaching communicative competence.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Evaluation: The researcher adopted the definition of Brown (1989 cited in Weir and Roberts 1994:4) who defined evaluation as "the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of the curriculum, and assess its effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the participants' attitudes within a context of particular institutions involved".

Communicative Competence: is a broad term which includes linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, discourse and strategic competence. The specific learning outcomes under communicative competence deal with knowledge of the language and the ability to use that knowledge to interpret and produce meaningful texts appropriate to the situation in which they are used. Communicative competence is best developed in the context of activities or tasks where the language is used for real purposes, in other words, in practical applications (Swain and Canale 1980, Bachman 1990).

Linguistic Competence: is knowing how to use the grammar, syntax, and vocabulary of a language. Linguistic competence asks: What words do I use? How do I put them into phrases and sentences? (Chomsky,1965)

Sociolinguistic Competence: is a field which concerned with the knowledge and skills required to deal with the social dimension of language use.(Mizne , 2002)

Pragmatic Competence: is the ability to use specific communicative acts such as greetings, leave takings, requests, suggestions, invitations, offers, refusals, acceptances, (dis)agreements, apologies, complaints, compliments, and expressions of gratitude to achieve the speakers purposes. (Bardovi, 2001)

Discourse Competence: is the element of the communicative competence which involves the development of texts in language learning. Moreover, it is the ability of a user/learner to arrange sentences in sequence so as to produce coherent stretches of language. (Martin, 2004).

Strategic Competence: is the ability to apply communication strategies to keep the communication channel open and to maintain the interaction between the interlocutors and to run the conversation in accordance with the intentions of the speaker. (Duquette et al., 1998:90)

Fourth Level English Major Students: Female students who are enrolled in English Departments at Gaza Universities in the second semester of the academic year 2011-2012.

Gaza Universities: The three universities that the study concerns with. These are the Islamic University of Gaza, Al-Aqsa University and Al-Azhar University.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

1. The evaluative study was limited to the communicative competence.
2. The total population of the study was all the fourth level English major students in faculties of educations at Gaza universities (female students).
3. The study took place at the second semester of the academic year (2011–2012) .
4. The study was restricted to the used tools (The questionnaire and the diagnostic test).

1.9 Summary

This chapter provided a relevant introduction to the research problem. It also introduced the need for the study, the statement of the problem, the research questions, the purpose, the significance of the study, the definitions of terms and the limitations of the study.

By the end of this chapter it was concluded that this study had two main purposes. The first one was to determine to what extent do fourth level English major students have the different components of communicative competence. The second one was to discover if students' competence matches their performance or not. Throughout the chapters that follow the researcher tried to discuss these two purposes.

Chapter II

Literature Review

- **Section I: Theoretical Framework**
- **Section II: Previous Studies**

Section I

Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Communicative Competence: Historical Overview of the Development of the Notion of Communicative Competence

2.3 Components of Communicative Competence

2.4 Summary

Chapter II

Literature Review

Section I: Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of two sections: the theoretical framework and the previous studies. The theoretical framework covers six parts. The first one presents the concept of communicative competence in terms of its definition and the development of its models according to the different writers. The second part discusses the linguistic competence as the first component of communicative competence. The third part investigates the sociolinguistic competence as the second component of communicative competence. The fourth part discusses the pragmatic competence as the third component of communicative competence. The sixth part presents the discourse competence as the fourth component of communicative competence. The last part discusses the strategic competence as the fifth component of communicative competence.

The second section of this chapter deals with the previous studies that the researcher reviewed.

2.2 Communicative Competence: Historical Overview of the Development of the Notion of Communicative Competence

A variety of definitions of communicative competence are offered by different specialists. The following is a historical overview of the notion communicative competence:

A) Chomsky's Perspective on Competence

Chomsky (1965:76) clearly distinguished the description of language form (competence) and language use (performance) and established that the speaker-listener's internal grammar that judges the grammaticality of sentences should be the main object of investigation for linguists. Thus, competence in the Chomskian original referred to 'linguistic competence', a set of organized knowledge which consists of several sub-competences, the phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and lexical components (Belinchon et al., 1994:261-262).

Chomsky's definition of competence was limited to the knowledge of grammar, and performance was categorized into the other kind of knowledge of when, where, how and with whom, which was unsatisfactory (Hornberger,1989:216) since he simply produces the grammatical sentences with no regard for their appropriateness (Paulston,1990: 288).

B) Hymes' Model of Communicative Competence

Pointing out the limitations of Chomsky's (1965) distinction between competence and performance, Hymes (1972) proposed a broader notion of communicative competence, covering not only grammatical competence, but also contextual or sociolinguistic competence. Above all, Hymes' distinction between language knowledge and ability for language use, as well as his incorporation of sociolinguistic knowledge into the framework of communicative competence, had contributed to many of the discussions of language testing constructs (Canale & Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983; Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996).

To the notion of competence Hymes (1972) added the communicative element

describing it as:

"...rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless. Just as rules of syntax can control aspects of phonology, and just as rules of semantics perhaps control aspects of syntax, so rules of speech acts enter as a controlling factor for linguistics form as a whole."

Hymes (1972) maintained that competence is dependent upon the four features listed below:

1. Whether (and to what degree) something is possible.
2. Whether (and to what degree) something is visible (in relation to the means available).
3. Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate (adequate, happy, in relation to the context in which it is used).
4. Whether (and to what degree) something is performed (actually done and what the doing entails).

C) Canale and Swain's Model of Communicative Competence

In Canale and Swain's (1980:27) version of communicative competence, it composed minimally of grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and communication strategies (strategic competence). Later on, Canale (1983:6) added another one, discourse competence.

Here, according to Hornberger's (1989:227) idea, Canale and Swain's framework included socio-cultural rules of use in the sociolinguistic component to highlight the importance of context, but they seem to overemphasize Hymes' appropriateness sector. Moreover, they limit the conception of appropriateness into the context, but somehow ignore the formulation of the form (grammatical accuracy)

in order to achieve the directive function (communicative function). It is not difficult to notice that Canale and Swain's version of communicative competence relates more with the communicative approach application in language teaching, which is a route from theoretical cognition to practical testing.

To sum up, Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) distinguished four aspects of communicative competence:

- a. Grammatical/Linguistic Competence: it includes knowledge of the lexicon, syntax and semantics (mastery of language codes).
- b. Sociolinguistic Competence: it concerns with the appropriateness of communication depending on the context including the participants and the rules for interaction.
- c. Strategic Competence: it is a set of strategies devised for effective communication and put into use when communication breaks down (grammatical and sociolinguistic strategies).
- d. Discourse Competence: it concerns with the cohesion and coherence of utterances/sentences.

D) Bachman's Model of Communicative Competence

Bachman's model (1990) is a more current attempt to take forward the subdivision of communicative competence provided by Canale and Swain (1980). He proposes the framework of Communicative Language Ability (CLA). According to him, CLA includes language competence, strategic competence, and psychophysiological mechanisms (Bachman,1990:84). His interest is placed on the influence of strategic competence on language test performance and its measurement.

The discussion of the historical overview shows that communicative competence consists of four components: Linguistic, sociolinguistic, strategic, and discourse competence.

More recently, some modern writers added pragmatic competence to these four components. In this context, Widdowson (1998) stated that if linguistic competence is an abstraction of grammatical knowledge, communicative competence is an abstraction of social behavior, along with linguistic competence and communicative competence, pragmatic competence should also be brought into focus since pragmatic competence is the one that underlines the ability to use the language along with a conceptual system to achieve certain aims or purpose. Also, it determines how the tool can be effectively put to use: It is user-oriented.

Additionally, Savignon (1991) stated that pragmatic ability in a second or foreign language is part of a nonnative speakers' (NNS) communicative competence and therefore it has to be located in a model of communicative ability .

Moreover, the Council of Europe's Common European Framework (CEF) of Reference for Languages (2001:123) added the pragmatic competences to the four components of the communicative competence as it concerned with the user/learner's knowledge of the principles according to which messages are used to perform communicative functions.

To sum up, communicative competence has been defined and discussed in many different ways by language scholars of different fields. After this historical overview of communicative competence, the researcher could extract that communicative competence can be divided into five main categories:

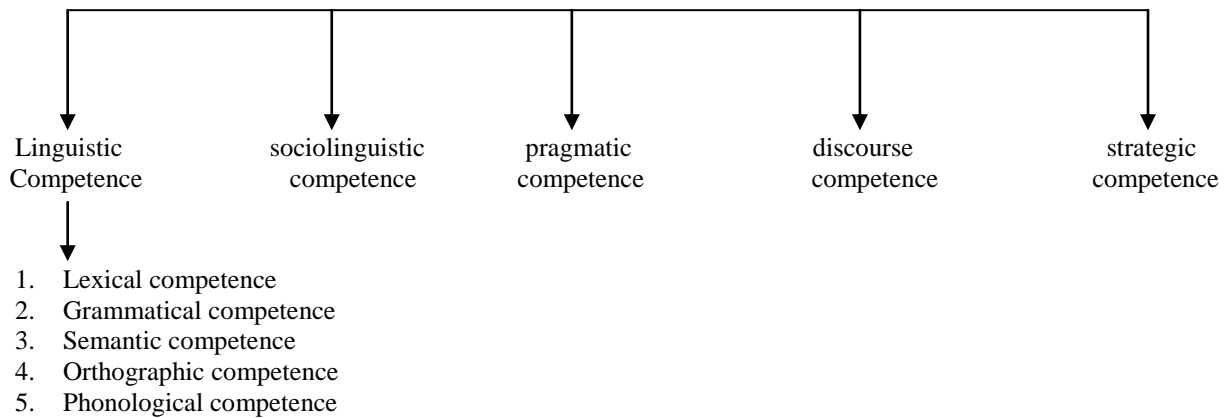
1. Linguistic competence

2. Sociolinguistic competence
3. Pragmatic competence
4. Discourse competence
5. Strategic competence

This study will discuss these five components of communicative competence, focusing on the components of linguistic competence because all of them are included in the English curricula which fourth level students studied in the three universities. The following diagram summarizes the competences that will be discussed in this study:

Diagram (2.1)

Components of Communicative Competence that will be Discussed in this Study



2.3 Components of Communicative Competence

2.3.1 Linguistic Competence

2.3.1.1 Definition of Linguistic Competence

Chomsky (1965) believes that linguistic competence can be separated from the rest of communicative competences and studied in isolation but socio-linguists as Hymes (1972) believe that the notion of linguistic competence is unreal and that no significant progress in linguistic is possible without studying forms along with the ways in which they are used. In addition to this, basically the linguistic competence falls under the domains of communicative competence because communicative competence is made up of five competence areas including linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, discourse, and strategic.

Linguistic Competence is knowing how to use the grammar, syntax, and vocabulary of a language. "Linguistic competence asks: What words do I use? How do I put them into phrases and sentences?" (Chomsky,1965)

2.3.1.2 Linguistic Competence and Linguistic Performance

Linguistic competence is what you actually know about a language, and linguistic performance is how you actually use it. So, if you make grammatical mistakes, but you know they are mistakes, then your performance does not match your competence. But if you don't know they are mistakes, then your competence matches your performance, and you are probably not native (Andersen, 1990:5).

Chomsky (1965) called linguistic competence grammatical competence, however the Council of Europe's Common European Framework (CEF) of Reference

for Languages (CEF,2001:108) regarded grammatical competence as part of linguistic competence.

Linguistic competence is an exhaustive and voluminous field, and beyond it, the Framework distinguishes between lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological, orthographic, and orthoepic competence. (CEF,1996:109). In this context, grammatical competence is understood as "knowledge of, and ability to use, the grammatical resources of a language" (CEF,1996:112). Simply, it means to be in the possession of the knowledge which enables the language learner/user to produce and express meaning by utilizing the embedded principles of grammatical principles in the target language, as opposed to merely memorizing and reproducing grammar (CEF,1996:113).The researcher agrees with the CEF in dealing with grammatical competence as a part of linguistic competence.

Linguistic competences as presented in the Common European Framework comprised six elements:

- a) Lexical competence
- b) Grammatical competence
- c) Semantic competence
- d) Phonological competence
- e) Orthographic competence
- f) Orthoepic competence

After a lot of investigation by the researcher, it was found that orthoepic competence is part of phonological competence since it is concerned with the correct

pronunciation of individuals, so the researcher is going to discuss the first five components of linguistic competence and deals with the last one as part of phonological competence.

2.3.1.3 Components of Linguistic Competence

A) Lexical Competence

- Definition of Lexical Competence

Bogaards (2000) stated that lexical competence involves learning and using vocabulary. More than just knowledge of a large number of words, other important features of lexical competence include knowledge of:

- Multiple meanings of words, including unusual and technical meanings. For example, the word bank: the side of a river, a financial institution, a big pile or row of something (such as clouds or slot machines); it also functions as a verb in many of those same contexts.
- The various contexts in which words can be used. For example, Politicians could say "We are going deeper into debt", but they prefer to call it "an economic stimulus plan". Most people do not realize that it means actually the same thing
- Idioms, slang, humor, and culturally specific words. For example, a chip on your shoulder - means you think you know a lot.

It is important to know professional language proficiency is not possible without high-level lexical competence. Michael (1998) stated that students are taught vocabulary in the classroom, but they are not taught strategies for developing a high-level of lexical competence. She added even at high levels of language proficiency,

learners often encounter unknown vocabulary. Moreover, dictionaries do not always provide sufficient information to fully understand unfamiliar words. For example, it may be difficult for a learner to learn the precise meaning of a scientific term that s/he does not understand in English.

Ozturk (2003) stated that lexical competence in a second language can be described in four different ways: With respect to what is known about words, how well words are known, how many words are known, and which words are known.

- Evaluating Lexical Competence

Most of the studies that assess the different components of communicative competence depend on the criteria of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF). The CEF (2001) published international criteria for evaluating lexical competence. Also, the Research Students Centre in Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Brisbane Australia (2008) and Council for Cultural Cooperation (1996) published self-assessments items to evaluate lexical competence. After studying these criteria, modifying, adapting, adding, and deleting some of them, the researcher used them in her study to evaluate different components of communicative competence among fourth level students at Gaza universities.

Some of the criteria that assess lexical competence: Whether students are able to deduce the meaning of words from their context or not; use similar sounding words accurately (e.g. noticeable and notable); form words from given common syntactic roots/stems (word formation); master a vocabulary that is adequate to express knowledge, experience, perceptions, emotions and personal opinions; distinguish between British and American English words; identify the root, prefix and suffix in a

word; distinguish between standard words and their non-standard forms (e.g. die and kick the bucket).

- Recommendations and Activities for Improving Lexical Competence

- **Reading:** Cook (1993) recommended reading a lot to achieve high level of lexical competence. He stated that most vocabulary words are learned from context. The more words students are exposed to, the better vocabulary they will have. While they read, they should pay close attention to words they do not know. First, they should try to figure out their meanings from context. Then look the words up. It is better to read and listen to challenging material, so that they will be exposed to many new words.
- **Improving context skills:** Laufer (1990) stated that if students want to improve their lexical competence, they should improve their context skills. Research shows that the vast majority of words are learned from context. If students want to improve their lexical skills, they should pay close attention to how words are used and related with each other.
- **Practicing:** Nation (1990) stated that learning a word will not help very much if students promptly forget it. Research shows that it takes from 10 to 20 repetitions to really make a word part of students' vocabulary. It helps to write the word - both the definition and example about it - perhaps on an index card that can later be reviewed. As soon as students learn a new word, they should start using it and review it periodically to see if they have forgotten any of their new words.
- **Making up as many associations and connections as possible between similar sounding words:** Meara (1996) pointed that this activity depends on

saying the word aloud to activate students' auditory memory and then relating the word to words they already know.

- **Using vocabulary lists:** Laufer and Paribahkt (1998) indicated that students must make basic divisions of lexical fields that they could arrange them in groups of standard and non-standard words. This will facilitate better understanding and further processing by students.
- **Taking vocabulary tests and playing games:** Waring (1997) stated that playing games that test students' knowledge will help them to learn new words and also let them know how much progress they are making.

B) Grammatical Competence

- Definition of Grammatical Competence

According to Chomsky (1965) grammatical competence is the ability:

1. To recognize and produce the distinctive grammatical structures of a language and to use them effectively in communication.
2. To use the forms of the language (sounds, words, and sentence structure).

From the previous definition, it appears that Chomsky includes phonological competence with grammatical competence. But later the CEF (2001), Widdowson (1998), and other writers separated phonological competence from grammatical one and regarded both of them as components of linguistic competence. Thus, the definition of grammatical competence becomes the ability to recognize and produce the distinctive grammatical structures of a language and to use them effectively in communication.

- Evaluating Grammatical Competence

Some of the criteria that assess grammatical competence are: Distinguish between tenses according to their use; distinguish parts of speech in their basic forms; use prepositions correctly; correct the ungrammatical part of a sentence; use articles correctly; distinguish between transitive and intransitive verbs; use question tags correctly; distinguish between sentences that are written in different tenses; distinguish between finite and nonfinite verbs; and formulate sentences from words, groups of sentences from sentences by observing semantic and formative relations.

- Recommendations and Activities for Improving Grammatical Competence

- **Make a plan:** Thornburry (2001) recommended students try to get an overview of English grammar from a text book or online resource, and note the grammar points they need to work on and plan to work on each for at least a few days.
- **Find a tutor:** Krashen (2003) stated that some of students may disagree with the idea of going to a teacher for grammar lessons, but why not? If they are looking for an alternative, practice grammar using online exercises. There are a number of sites that offer exercises on a range of topics. While using a computer to type a document, grammar checkers can be very helpful too.
- **Identify common mistakes:** Ellis in Richards (2002) reported that people who speak the same language often make the same mistakes in English grammar. For example, many Arab speakers have trouble using "a" and "the" in English. He advised students to find out what grammar points are often difficult for them then to pay extra attention to learning those grammar points.

- **Find some grammar exercises:** Richards (2002) indicated that to learn English grammar well, students will need to practice each grammar point until they can use it easily. They should look for a book of grammar exercises that also has answers. Online activities and quizzes can also help. Moreover, they should focus on just one grammar point each time they study
- **Pay close attention to semantic and formative relation when you read English:** Swan in Richards (2002) stated that when students are trying to learn correct English grammar, it is not enough to understand general idea of what they read. They will need to understand exactly why each sentence is written that way. When they read a sentence, they should ask themselves if they can make similar sentences. If they cannot or they will not be sure, they should find textbook exercises for those grammar points and practice them.

C) Semantic Competence

- Definition of Semantic Competence

Semantic is the study of meaning. It is a wide subject within the general study of language. An understanding of semantics is essential to the study of language acquisition (How language users acquire a sense of meaning, as speakers and writers, listeners and readers) and of language change (How meanings alter over time). It is important for understanding language in social contexts, as these are likely to affect meaning, and for understanding varieties of English and effects of style. It is thus one of the most fundamental concepts in linguistics. The study of semantics includes the study of how meaning is constructed, interpreted, clarified, obscured, illustrated, simplified negotiated, contradicted and paraphrased (Crystal, 1995).

Davidson (1984) stated that semantic competence consists of the ability to determine the meaning of a particular string of words. Since a particular string of words may correspond to more than one syntactic structure, we can take semantic competence to consist of the ability to determine the meaning of a particular syntactic structure. This ability also consists of the ability to determine the relationships between the meanings of distinct syntactic structures.

Thus, Semantic Competence Consists of:

- Knowledge of the meaning of individual lexical items.
- Knowledge of how the syntactic structure guides the construction of sentence (and phrase-level) meaning from the meanings of individual lexical items, and of the operations by which meaning is constructed.

Stephen (1992) referred to some important areas of semantic theory including these: Symbol and referent, words and lexemes, denotation, connotation, implication, ambiguity, synonym, antonym, hyponym, polysemy, homonymy, homophones and homographs. It is very useful to take these parts in consideration when evaluating semantic competence (to see if the learners are professional on them or not).

- Evaluating Semantic Competence

Some of the criteria that evaluate semantic competence are: Identify topics related to semantics; recognise the main ideas and details in a text; identify different meanings of the same word in different contexts; recognise the main ideas and details in a text; explain the meaning of a given word/word phrase from the text; be aware that the meaning of the word affects the meaning of the text; compare word meanings,

particularly synonyms or partial synonyms, homonyms and polysemy; identify the aim of the speaker in an utterance, considering the context.

- Recommendations and Activities for Improving Semantic Competence

Stephen and Philip (1993) referred to some activities to develop semantic competence. These activities are:

- **Comparative questions:** e.g. (Is the red ball bigger than the blue ball?)
- **Opposites:** it can be conducted by using everyday objects (e.g. thin/fat pencils, old/new shoes).
- **Sorting:** (e.g. items we can eat, items we use for writing and drawing).
- **Bingo:** students should understand the category on their baseboard before they begin the game.
- **Odd one out:** to identify the items that should not be in a specific category and give reasons why.
- **Concept opposites:** to introduce concept vocabulary within different areas of the curriculum, using visual/concrete materials (e.g. hard/soft, full/empty, heavy/light, sweet/sour, rough/smooth).
- **Homophone pairs:** using pictures and words (e.g. see/sea, meet/meat).
- **Word families:** to collect words that belong to the same category (e.g. vegetables, fruit, clothing).
- **Synonym snap:** this provides an introduction to the use of a simple thesaurus (e.g. big/large, small/little).

D) Orthographic Competence

- Definition of Orthographic Competence

An orthography is a standardized system for using a particular writing system (script) to write a particular language. It includes rules of spelling, and may also concern other elements of the written language such as punctuation and capitalization (Stanovich & West, 1989).

Orthography is largely concerned with matters of spelling, and in particular the relationship between phonemes and graphemes in a language. Other elements that may be considered part of orthography include hyphenation, capitalization, word breaks, emphasis, and punctuation. Orthography thus describes or defines the set of symbols used in writing a language, and the rules about how to use those symbols (Cook, 1999).

Thus, Orthographic Competence is the ability to decipher and write the writing system of a language. In linguistics the term *orthography* is often used to refer to any method of writing a language, without judgment as to right and wrong, with a scientific understanding that orthographic standardization exists on a spectrum of strength of convention. The original sense of the word, though, implies a dichotomy of correct and incorrect, and the word is still most often used to refer specifically to a thoroughly standardized, prescriptively correct, way of writing a language (Khurma & Hajjaj, 1989) From the discussion above it seems that spelling and punctuation are the most important elements of the orthographic competence.

- Evaluating Orthographic Competence:

Some of the criteria that assess orthographic competence are: Use punctuation to represent types of sentences; use orthographic and punctuation rules appropriately; disambiguate meanings resulting from the sound and the spelling of a word (homophone); write simple types of communication correctly both in terms of content and form. write words with silent letters correctly (e.g. Knife); write i/y correctly after consonants (e.g. study – studies); spell my address, nationality and other personal details correctly; copy familiar words and short phrases (e.g. simple sign or instruction).

- Recommendations and Activities for Improving Orthographic Competence

Phenix (2001) recommended students pay attention to the following rules in order to achieve high level of orthographic competence:

- End sentences with a period (full stop), question mark, or exclamation mark.
- Use the semicolon and colon properly.
- Understand the differences between a hyphen and a dash.
- Use the double quotation mark and single quotation mark/apostrophe for different purposes.
- Understand the difference between parentheses, brackets, and braces.
- Know how to use the slash (/).

- In formal writing, try to avoid excessive use of question marks and exclamation points. Most of your sentences should be declarative statements.
- Answer a lot of advanced missing letters activities to enhance the spelling ability.

E) Phonological Competence

- Definition of Phonological Competence

Phonology is the study of the sound systems of languages. It is distinguished from phonetics, which is the study of the production, perception, and physical properties of speech sounds; phonology attempts to account for how sounds are combined, organized, and convey meaning in particular languages (Goswami, 2000).

Haddad (2004) stated that phonological competence is the ability to recognize and produce the distinctive meaningful sounds of a language, including:

- Consonants.
- Vowels.
- Tone patterns.
- Intonation patterns.
- Rhythm patterns.
- Stress patterns.
- Any other suprasegmental features that carry meaning.

To be able to speak and listen in a second language, it is clear that language learners need something other than a general phonemic correctness which is essential elements of communication. Learners need to further enhance the ability to comprehend and produce good pronunciation using appropriate stress, intonation, rhythm, and pacing, and to use gestures and body language appropriately; in other words, to have both linguistic and sociolinguistic competence while producing speech sounds (Celce, Brinton, & Goodwin, 1996; Florez, 1999).

- Evaluating Phonological Competence

Some of the criteria that assess phonological competence are: Distinguish between long and short vowels; recognise a word's phonetic forms (transcription); pronounce sounds correctly; segment words into phonemes; vary intonation and place sentence stress correctly in order to express fine shades of meaning. feel confident about pronouncing words in English; distinguish between the manner and place of articulation; employ suitable verbal, non-verbal and paralinguistic features (stress, tempo, intonation...etc) of speech in both prepared and improvised oral expressions; distinguish between voiced and voiceless sounds and their effects on pronouncing words.

- Recommendations and Activities for Improving Phonological Competence

Chomsky and Halle (1968) presented some solutions to the phonological competence difficulties. These solutions are:

- It is important to listen to how native speakers pronounce various words and phrases and try to pronounce these words as they do.

- Pronunciation can be improved by consulting the etymology or the origin of the words in the modern dictionaries.
- Learn the Phonetic alphabets in order to pronounce the symbols exactly.
- Know that every English word has its own stress, or intonation. For example, the word "believe" has two syllables (be and lieve), but only the second syllable is stressed. We say be'lieve and not 'be lieve. So, the stress must not be wrong.
- Students should try to learn to recognize the spelling patterns. For example, the pattern "ough" can be pronounced "uff" as in "enough" and "tough", or "ot" as in "ought" and "bought" or "oh" as in "although" and "dough".
- Students should seek good teachers and guides that can help them to learn phonetic symbols with proper sound practice and recognition.
- Students should have the possession of a good ear because if a person has a good ear then he will be able to pronounce the foreign words correctly.
- Finally, students should have a good memory in order to remember the acoustic qualities of the foreign sounds.

2.3.2 Sociolinguistic Competence

2.3.2.1 Definition of Sociolinguistic Competence

Mizne (2002) defined sociolinguistics as the study of language in context; the study of how situational factors (such as time; setting; age, and gender of the participants) affect the language being used and he defined sociolinguistic competence as a field concerned with the knowledge and skills required to deal with the social dimension of

language use. The matters treated here are those specifically relating to language use and are not dealt with elsewhere. While the CEF (2001) defined it as the ability to produce utterances appropriate to the social situation in which they are spoken.

2.3.2.2 Components of Sociolinguistic Competence

Canale and Swain (1980) stated that sociolinguistic competence is seen as encompassing two relatively distinct components:

A: Sociocultural Component: Assesses the appropriateness of the strategies selected for language performance in a given context, taking into account (1) the culture involved, (2) the age and sex of the speakers, (3) their social class and occupations, and (4) their roles and status in the interaction.

The scale for sociocultural ability also rates what is said in terms of the amount of information required in the given situation, and the relevance and clarity of the information provided.

B: Interlingual Sociolinguistic Component: Assesses the use of linguistic forms in language performance. For example, when a student bumps into a professor, spilling her coffee on the professor's dress, "Sorry!" would probably constitute an inadequate apology. This category assesses the speakers' control over the actual language forms used to realize the speech function, in this case referred to as a *speech act* (such as, "sorry," "excuse me," "very sorry," "really sorry"), as well as their control over register or formality of the utterance from most intimate to most formal language.

2.3.2.3 Learning Sociolinguistic Competence

The process of learning sociolinguistic competence is challenging even in one's first language. If we all had perfect sociolinguistic competence, we would not

need advice about the proper way to send wedding invitations or give a dinner party. Having good sociolinguistic competence means knowing how to "give every person his or her due." It means knowing when to be quiet, and when to talk, when to give compliments to others, and when to apologize. It also means being able to read situations and know what is the right thing to say or do (Thanasoulas, 2001).

Good sociolinguistic skills in a second language are important because if you make serious mistakes in this type of competence, people will not simply think that you are ignorant (which they may think if you have poor grammar); rather, they will think that you are ill-mannered, dishonest, insincere, rude, pushy, etc. If your grammar is excellent, you will be judged all the more severely for sociolinguistic gaffes. Misunderstandings result in amusement, contempt, disappointment, shock, bewilderment, serious insult, or ethnic stereotypes (Xu,2001).

Improving sociolinguistic competence needs to be a part of the language learning process from the beginning. Many language schools and language learning programs focus almost exclusively on language components such grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, and very little attention is paid to helping students understand how to be appropriate in a new cultural context. An assumption is often made that language learners will pick up sociolinguistic competence simply by being exposed to the culture. Unfortunately, this is not often the case (Berry, 1994 & Broersma, 2001).

2.3.2.4 Evaluating Sociolinguistic Competence

Some of the criteria that assess sociolinguistic competence are: Use different speech techniques to appreciate/evaluate politeness; speak fluently and accurately in most situations with a complexity appropriate to the situations of communication;

select suitable verbal as well as non-verbal means of expression in everyday situations both at school and outside of school; interact spontaneously and confidently in formal communicative situations; differentiate between subjective and objective messages and recognize the communicative intent of the conversation partner; write personal letters giving news and expressing thoughts about abstract or cultural topics; explain how a person can offend others through language use; starting, maintaining and closing simple conversation.

2.3.2.5 Recommendations and Activities for Improving Sociolinguistic

Competence

Mizne (2002) stated that students can achieve high level of sociolinguistic competence when they:

- Consider the vast cultural differences in ways of viewing the world and how the rules of speaking vary as a reflection of these differences.
- Understand how culture is deeply embedded in a person through socialization resulting in cultural myopia.
- See how pragmatic transfer occurs as language learners are unaware of cultural differences in language use and apply their native language rules of speaking to the target language.
- See how pragmatic fossilization occurs as language learners continue to use pragmatic transfer despite years of time spent in the target language culture.
- Understand the importance of understanding one's cultural context in order to interpret the appropriateness of statements.

- Conclude that sociolinguistic competence is a most difficult achievement that may never occur through immersion in the target language culture alone, and perhaps is a skill that must at least in part be addressed in the foreign language classroom.

Moreover, Berry (1994) and Broersma (2001) presented the following suggestions for increasing students' sociolinguistic competence:

- Learners need to take individual responsibility for seeing that this dimension of the language learning process is included in their program of study from the beginning. When an individual takes responsibility for this part of the language learning process, he or she is in a good position to develop meaningful relationships with members of the target culture. These relationships can lay a foundation for meaningful language learning for years to come. By taking language learning into their own hands, language learners are assured that their learning will not end when their formal instruction comes to a close (often long before learners are fluent in their target languages).
- Language learners need to remember that sociolinguistic competence is part of a larger system. When learning new grammatical structures, the learner should immediately try to practice the new structures with the goal of testing sociolinguistic appropriateness. Some learners have even gone so far as to deliberately say something wrong so that native speakers would correct them, and they would learn something new about what was appropriate.
- As language learners become more proficient in a second language, they also need to be increasingly committed to becoming observers of the interactions

of native speakers around them. They should watch how people stand when talking to each other. They should watch for the kinds of physical touching people do (handshaking, kissing, gentle punches on the shoulder, etc.) Are such things influenced by the gender of the speakers? How does language change when someone important enters a room? By knowing what to look for, learners can discover a great deal through observation.

- Another suggestion for developing sociolinguistic competence is to keep a language journal which records questions, problems, and discoveries. If there is some feature of the target language which is troubling or frustrating to a language learner, it may be the key to an insight about the communication process.
- As one way to bring together the suggestions made above, language learners should make a focused effort to learn the speech acts they need in order to function in the target language. (Speech acts are the things people do with language such as apologize, invite, accept and refuse invitations, compliment, sympathize, complain.) They should then assess the kinds of variables which will influence the performance of specific speech acts, and discuss the speech acts with their language helpers. Finally, working with their helpers, they can practice the language and skills they are learning.

2.3.3 Pragmatic Competence

2.3.3.1 Definition of Pragmatic Competence

Crystal (1987) defined 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 effect their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication and thus, pragmatics is concerned with communicative action in its sociocultural context " (quoted in Bulut & Ozkan, 2005: 39).

Al-humaidi (2002) stated that the pragmatic aspect of communicative competence are those that have to do with how language is used in communication situations to achieve the speakers purposes.

Bardovi (2001) stated that pragmatic competence minimally comprises implicit knowledge and ability to use specific communicative acts such as greetings, leave takings, requests, suggestions, invitations, offers, refusals, acceptances, (dis)agreements, apologies, complaints, compliments, and expressions of gratitude (quoted in Kasper & Rose, 2001: 165).

2.3.3.2 Components of Pragmatic Competence

Leech (1983) and his colleague Thomas (1983) proposed to subdivide pragmatics into a pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic component.

Pragmalinguistic: referred to the resources for conveying communicative acts and relational or interpersonal meanings. Such resources include pragmatic strategies like directness and indirectness, routines, and a large range of linguistic forms which can intensify or soften communicative acts.

Sociopragmatics: was described by Leech (1983:10) as 'the sociological interface of pragmatics', referring to the social perceptions underlying participants' interpretation and performance of communicative action. Speech communities differ in their assessment of speaker's and hearer's social distance and social power, their rights and obligations, and the degree of imposition involved in particular communicative acts (Takahashi & Beebe, 1993; Blum & House, 1989; Olshtain, 1989).

2.3.3.3 The Importance of Pragmatic Competence

Pragmatic competence is indispensable in face-to-face interactions in a foreign language. Children acquire pragmatic competence in their native language through interaction with their caretakers or older children, in other words, engagement in contextualized communicative activities. They receive continuous feedback from parents and peers who model appropriate routines, establish rules, and "correct" children's inappropriate behavior. This feedback contributes to the acquisition of the pragmatic skills required to function in their community. In contrast, most adult foreign language learners lack that type of input. Consequently, the classroom becomes the most important, and perhaps the only, source of relevant input for the development of their pragmatic competence (Schauer,2006).

Kasper and Schmidt (1996:160) claim that adult learners require explicit instruction. Otherwise, they will experience "difficulty in acquiring appropriate language use patterns, especially in foreign language or classroom settings where opportunities for the full range of human interactions is limited." Thus, language programs must provide ample opportunities to develop those skills. Nelson et al. (2002:164) summarize some of the negative consequences of lacking pragmatic competence as follows:

"The importance of pragmatic competence has been demonstrated by numerous researchers (...) whose work reveals that while native speakers often forgive the phonological, syntactic, and lexical errors made by L2 speakers, they are less likely to forgive pragmatic errors. Native speakers typically interpret pragmatic errors negatively as arrogance, impatience, rudeness, and so forth. Furthermore, pragmatic errors can lead to a listener's being unable to assign a confident interpretation to a learner's utterance".

2.3.3.4 The Role of Pragmatic Competence

Communicative language pedagogy and research into communicative competence have shown that language learning exceeds the limits of memorizing vocabulary items and grammar rules (Canale 1983). Pragmatic competence, although sometimes in disguise, has been a part of the models describing communicative competence. As mentioned before pragmatic competence is the knowledge of social, cultural, and discourse conventions that have to be followed in various situations (Edwards & Csizer, 2001).

Pragmatic competence is not a piece of knowledge additional to the learners' existing grammatical knowledge, but is an organic part of the learners' communicative competence (Kasper 1997). Bardovi et al. (1996) highlighted the importance of pragmatic competence and pointed out the consequences of lacking this competence:

" Speakers who do not use pragmatically appropriate language run the risk of appearing uncooperative at the least, or, more seriously, rude or insulting. This is particularly true of advanced learners whose high linguistic proficiency leads other speakers to expect concomitantly high pragmatic competence".

2.3.3.5 Evaluating Pragmatic Competence

Some of the criteria that assess pragmatic competence are: Give clear instructions, advice and/or directions to others in English; understand instructions

addressed carefully and slowly to me and follow short, simple directions; ask questions, to make requests, give an opinion, justify a point of view; contribute effectively to class or group work in gradual formal situations; conduct a dialogue, a telephone conversation, and understand pragmatic implicature; use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know; pay attention to the listeners' verbal and non-verbal reactions in order to redirect the speech whenever necessary; assess my own and other people's oral presentation.

2.3.3.6 Recommendations and Activities for Improving Pragmatic Competence

To improve pragmatic competence Kasper and Rose (2002) recommended teachers to encourage students to:

- Talk a lot in the classroom and they should encourage to use language in social interaction.
- Provide with different opportunities to express their opinions in different ways.
- Provide with classroom input that enriched with real-world materials such as recording native speakers conversations, radio program....etc.
- Depend on themselves on searching for additional books that focus on pragmatics.
- Pay attention to the listeners' verbal and non-verbal reactions in order to redirect the speech whenever necessary .

2.3.4 Discourse Competence

2.3.4.1 Definition of Discourse Competence

The discourse competence was not founded until the communicative competence was broken into sub-competences to appear as a goal in FLT (Cabeza, 2002). Discourse competence is the element of the communicative competence which involves the development of texts in language learning. It is related to notions such as cohesion, coherence, genres and text types, and it is deeply linked to the integration of the four skills in language teaching (Martin,2004).

Martin (2004) stated that the discourse competence is, then, defined as “the ability of a user/learner to arrange sentences in sequence so as to produce coherent stretches of language. It included knowledge of and ability to control the ordering of sentences in terms of:

- Thematic organization.
- Coherence and cohesion.
- Logical ordering.
- Style and register.
- Rhetorical effectiveness.

Thus, discourse competence can be seen as the ability to understand, create and develop forms of the language that are longer than sentences (stories, conversations, letters, ...) with the appropriate cohesion, coherence and rhetorical organization to combine ideas.

2.3.4.2 Components of discourse competence

Llobera (1996:379:391) mentioned two types of discourse competence:

1. **Textual Competence:** This is basically a measure of how well an individual can read different texts and understand them. Different kinds of text include fiction and nonfiction, narratives, instructional guides, and other types of written communications, like transcriptions of recorded conversations or technical materials. The better readers can understand these texts, the more textual discourse competence they have.

2. **Rhetorical or Effective Discourse Competence:** This is often defined as how well an individual can contribute to a conversation. This kind of discourse ability, or competence, also includes multiple components. One is how well the individual can understand what is being said by a range of speakers. Another is how well the individual can interject his or her own opinions, and how well that person can express ideas to an audience within a general scenario.

The Council of Europe (2001:187) stated in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages that discourse competence is analyzed into a number of operational components. These components are:

1. Flexibility.
2. Turn taking.
3. Thematic development.
4. Coherence and cohesion.

2.3.4.3 Innovations about the Discourse Competence

Martin (2004) introduced three principles related to discourse competence:

1. The discourse competence at school must be linked to subject-matter contents:

From the perspective of the discourse competence, a content-based approach is associated to the academic genres. The materials for language learning are those texts used in other subject-matters, with all their discourse features (cohesion, coherence, rhetorical structure, etc.) as well as the tasks are also those normally performed in other subject-matters (map-reading, problem-solving activities, etc.). Thus, a discourse-oriented type of instruction may not only help improve the communicative competence, but also general academic competences the learner must control during their school experience (Spanos,1989).

2. The discourse competence is related to reflective thinking and action:

Critical thinking applied in school and in language learning may take two directions. On the one hand, it means to bring into the classroom, for their study and discussion, situations and texts where domination and power strategies can be observed; on the other hand, it means to think of solutions and alternative situations to those of unbalanced power and domination.

3. The discourse competence is culture bound:

Culture and discourse are contrastive rhetoric: Contrastive rhetoric represents the study of diversity in discourse. Facing two written texts from two different communities, contrastive rhetoric wonders what these texts are like, what similarities and differences they have. After the analysis, it interprets both the similarities and the differences looking for historical, social, educational or any other plausible explanation. Finally, it provides teachers with suggestions to deal with diversity at the discourse level .

The three of the innovations represent the expansive nature of discourse competence in education.

2.3.4.4 Evaluating Discourse Competence

Some of the criteria that assess discourse competence are: Use appropriate connectives and vary them as required by the utterance (cohesion); lay out a text with heading, introduction, body and conclusion; use a range of words which are relevant for the subject; combine utterances in coherent and cohesive texts ; write simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like and, but and because; write simple, short essays on topics of interest; deal with sentence problem (e.g. fragment , choppy , run onetc.); paraphrase and summarize the given text.

2.3.4.5 Recommendations and Activities for Improving Discourse Competence

Martin (2004:322) pointed out some examples of exercises to develop the discourse competence:

- Lexical cohesion devices in context (e.g. use of synonyms)
- Grammatical cohesion devices in context (e.g. ellipsis, logical connectors, parallel structures)
- Oral discourse patterns (e.g. the normal progression of meanings in a casual conversation)
- Written discourse patterns (e.g. the normal progression of meanings in a formal letter)
- Linking a paragraph with the following one.

- Working out an introduction/development/conclusion of a piece of oral or written language.

2.3.5 Strategic Competence

2.3.5.1 Definition of Strategic Competence

Canale's framework (1983) as well as Duquettes' (1998) model of communicative competence recognize strategic competence as an important component of communicative competence although they neither assign it a central role nor differentiate between its components. Canale and Swain (1980) are the first to include strategic competence as a separate component in their framework of communicative competence. They described strategic competence as providing compensatory function when the linguistic competence of the language users is inadequate:

"Strategic competence...will be made up of verbal and nonverbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence" (Canale and Swain, 1980:30).

Duquette et al. (1998:90) defined strategic competence as the ability to apply communication strategies to keep the communication channel open and to maintain the interaction between the interlocutors and to run the conversation in accordance with the intentions of the speaker.

2.3.5.2 Components of Strategic Competence

A) Goal Setting Component

According to Bachman and Palmer's (1996:71) formulation, goal setting involves the language user in identifying and selecting one or more tasks he or she

might attempt to complete, and deciding whether or not to attempt to complete the task(s). They enumerate the following areas of goal setting (deciding what one is going to do), which involve:

- Identifying the language use task or test tasks.
- Choosing, where given a choice, one or more tasks from a set of possible.
- Deciding whether or not to attempt to complete the task(s) selected.

B) Assessment Component

The assessment component of strategic competence is referred by Bachman and Cohen (1998:5) as taking stock of what is needed, what one has to work with, and how well one has done. It provides a means by which the individual relates their topical knowledge and language knowledge to the language use setting and tasks or to the testing situation and tasks. Assessment also takes into consideration the individual's affective responses in the application of assessment. Assessment component enables language users to:

- Identify the information – including the language variety, or dialect – that is needed for realizing a particular communicative goal in a given context.
- Determine what language competences (native language, second or foreign language) are at our disposal for most effectively bringing that information to bear in achieving the communicative goal.
- Ascertain the abilities and knowledge that are shared by our interlocutor.
- Following the communication attempt, evaluate the extent to which the communicative goal has been achieved.

Bachman and Cohen, (1998:6) claimed that the assessment component operates in three ways. The first of them is referred to as *assessment of the characteristics of the language use or test task*, which identifies the characteristics of the language use task or test task, in order to determine:

- The desirability and feasibility of successfully completing the task .
- What elements of topical knowledge and language knowledge this is likely to require.

The next one is *assessment of the individual's own topical and language knowledge*, which involves determining the extent to which relevant topical knowledge and areas of language knowledge are available, and if available, which of them might be utilized for successfully completing the task. This aspect of assessment also considers the individual's available affective schemata for coping with the demands of the task.

The final one is referred to as *assessment of the correctness or appropriateness of the response to the test task*, and involves evaluating the individual's response to the task with respect to the perceived criteria for correctness or appropriateness. The relevant criteria pertain to the grammatical, textual, functional, and sociolinguistic characteristics of the response, as well as its topical content. In the event the response appears to be incorrect or inappropriate. This aspect of assessment enables the individual to diagnose the possible causes of the problem, which might lead to the change of the communicative goal, the plan for implementing that goal, or both, depending on the situation. Affective schemata are involved in determining the extent to which failure was due to inadequate effort, to the difficulty of the task, or to random sources of interference.

C) Planning Component

Bachman and Palmer (1996:101) described the planning component as retrieving relevant items (grammatical, textual, illocutionary, sociolinguistic) from language competence and formulating a plan whose realization is expected to achieve the communicative goal.

In case of a monolingual speech context, relevant items will be drawn from the native language (L1) competence, while in a bilingual, second, or foreign language use context, the items may be retrieved from the native language, from the language user's interlanguage rule system (L1), or from the second or foreign language (L2).

According to Bachman and Palmer (1996:101) planning involves deciding how to utilize language knowledge, topical knowledge, and affective schemata to complete the test task successfully. Assuming that the assessment strategies have determined which of these components are available for use, planning (deciding how to use what one has) involves three aspects:

- The retrieval of the relevant items from linguistic and topical knowledge, (for example, concepts, words, structures, functions) that will be used in a plan.
- Formulation of one or more plans for responding to the task.
- The selection of one plan for initial implementation in a response.

Formulating a plan may involve an internal prioritization among the various elements that have been selected, as well as the consideration of how these can be most effectively combined to form a response. The plan thus specifies how the various elements will be combined and ordered when realized as a response. The

product of the planning strategy, then, is a plan whose realization is a response to the task. (Bachman & Palmer, 1996:71-73)

D) Execution component

According to Bachman (1990:103) execution component draws on the relevant psychophysiological mechanisms to implement the plan in the modality and channel appropriate to the communicative goal and the context.

Clark and Clark (1977:224) stated that the division between planning and execution is not a clear one because at any moment speakers are usually doing a little of both so it is impossible to say where planning leaves off and execution begins. Faerch and Kasper's (1983) model identifies two phases of strategic competence: a planning phase and an execution phase.

According to Faerch and Kasper (1983:25) the planning phase is the learner's preparation for communication and results in formulation of a plan to achieve communicative goal. In this phase, a language user "selects rules and items which he considers most appropriate for establishing a plan, the execution of which will lead to verbal behavior which is expressed to satisfy the original goal". The execution phase refers to the actual communication and the result is the execution of the plan, i.e. observable speech. This phase is controlled by the plan and consists of less observable neurological and physiological processes resulting in the articulation of speech organs, miming and gestures.

2.3.5.3 Communication Strategies as Part of Strategic Competence

Strategic competence is one element of a learner's overall communicative competence and is used by L2 learners dealing with the language in unfamiliar

contexts. Strategic competence also helps students to overcome imperfect knowledge of rules and gaps in their knowledge of L2 with the use of communication strategies (CSs) (Bialystok, 1990).

Corder (1981:103) defined a communication strategy as a “systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his (or) her meaning when faced with some difficulty.” Cohen (1990:56) wrote that “a major trait of successful speakers is that they use strategies to keep the conversation going.” Students are often taught CSs in class or read about them in their textbooks, but how or when do they decide to use them? Students are probably already using CSs, but are not consciously aware of doing so. In-class strategy training can help students to realize when and how they are using CSs and when/if they should be using them more often or in a more directed fashion.

According to Savignon (2002:10), the effective use of communication strategies “is important for strategic competence in all contexts and distinguishes highly effective communicators from those who are less so.” Along with the teachability debate revolving around communication strategies (Dornyei,1995), there is also the task of finding an appropriate way to assess their usage among students. It is important to note though that competence cannot be measured, performance can be measured (Canale & Swain, 1980). Researchers and teachers alike are still searching for ways to get students to use CSs, but students must at the same time be taught to monitor their own usage in order to strengthen their strategic competence and overall awareness.

2.3.5.4 Gestures and Strategic Competence

Although in Anderson's (1983:375) cognitive theory of language production gestures belong to the execution stage as involving "the mouth and the hands", Martin (2004) presented them as constituting the goal setting and planning components of strategic competence. Gestures have proven a powerful concept for explaining how planning and analyzing of motor acts could have evolved into verbal communication (Floel et al., 2003).

McNeill (1992:73) believed that gestures contribute to a thinking process and reflect mental representation in the mental lexicon. Gabrys (2004:170) presented the following functions of gestures. They function as:

- a. Communicators of the semantic content, adding to information, especially in the L2 context as a communication strategy of the L2 user in a situation of communicative failure.
- b. Anxiety or tension reduction devices in the context of communication problem
- c. Lexical access to be one of the representational modes in memory, which when activated "tends to activate related concepts in other formats"

2.3.5.5 Evaluating Strategic Competence

Some of the criteria that assess strategic competence are: Use the verbal and non-verbal communication strategies; foreignise a mother tongue word and ask for confirmation; use translation as the last strategy in learning a new situation; use more than one strategy in a new learning situation. recognise and use strategic techniques such as repetition; contrast and simple metaphors and images; start again using a different tactic when communication breaks down; use orthographic and phonological

clues to understand new words. improve my strategic competence through reading more and more.

2.3.5.6 Recommendations and Activities for Improving Strategic Competence

- **Non-verbal Language:** Bialystok (1990) stated that 80%-90% of our communication is non-verbal, which includes: eye movement, tone of voice, posture, facial expressions and hand gestures. He advised students to be aware of non-verbal communication and keep it consistent with their message.
- **Vocal Cues:** Duquette et al. (1988) recommended students to not use an excessive amount of 'filler' words (sayings or words repeated often), sounds such as "uh, um" or use lengthy pauses during conversation. The listener will lose interest in what are saying and will become bored.
- **Additional Classes:** Bachman and Palmer (1996) stated that they strongly believe that to develop strategic competence there should be overt classes not only during methodology course but it should be included into their conversation classes syllabi.
- **Determining Goal of Communication:** Bachman and Palmer (1996) stated that students who do not know what strategic competence will not have an opportunity to improve effectiveness of their communication. That is why Bachman and Palmer would like the conversation classes' syllabus to be combined with theoretic issues regarding communicative competence. These conversation classes will develop strategic competence among learners.

- **Using Technology** : Rabab'ah (2001) stated that with the growing development of technology students were recommended to use it as a modern strategy of learning.

2.4 Summary

To sum up, this section provided a clear vision about the topics related to the issue of evaluating the different components of communicative competence. It can be concluded from the different opinions of writers that communicative competence includes five components: linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, discourse and strategic competence. Understanding these components will lead to investigate to what extent do fourth level English major students have these components and whether students' competence matches their performance or not as will be shown later. Before doing such investigation, it is necessary to have a full picture of this issue and benefiting from the previous studies which will be discussed in the next section.

Section II

Previous Studies

Introduction

- 1. Studies Related to Linguistic Competence**
- 2. Studies Related to Sociolinguistic Competence**
- 3. Studies Related to Pragmatic Competence**
- 4. Studies Related to Discourse Competence**
- 5. Studies Related to Strategic Competence**

Commentary on the Previous Studies

Section II: Previous Studies

Introduction

This section presents forty studies related to the five components of communicative competence discussed before in an attempt to benefit from their procedures, tools, results, and recommendations. The studies are divided into five parts related to the five components of the communicative competence as follows: nine studies related to the assessment of linguistic competence, eight studies related to the assessment of sociolinguistic competence, eight studies related to the assessment of pragmatic competence, seven studies related to the assessment of discourse competence, and eight studies review studies related to the assessment of strategic competence. The studies in all these five parts are sequenced thematically, followed by the researcher's commentary at the end of this section.

1. Studies Related to Linguistic Competence

The purpose of Lima's et al. (2001) study was to determine the linguistic competence in English (LCE) profiles of Mexican freshman students as well as the main factors associated with differences in linguistic competence between proficient and poor speakers of English. Freshman students from nine major institutions of higher learning in Mexico city participated in this study. The subjects were administered a three-band test of LCE as well as a questionnaire on previous education in foreign languages. Significant correlations among LCE, academic achievement, and self-perceived skill development in the second language were found. A significant correlation between socioeconomic factors of students and LCE was revealed. The existence of significant differences in LCE profiles for institutions

under study makes evident the importance of revising curricula of foreign language education in Mexico.

Collocation is part of lexical competence (which is part of linguistic competence). Although it is widely acknowledged that collocations play an important part in second language learning, learners' difficulties with collocations have not been investigated. As a result, the purpose of Miyakoshi's study (2009) was to examine ESL learners' use of verb-noun collocations such as *take notes*. Sixty Japanese students (30 intermediate, 30 advanced) took fill-in – the- blank tests followed by one session of instruction, involving a brief introduction to collocation and a discussion of common mistakes with collocations and differences in the collocational restrictions between English and Japanese. After analyzing data, it was found that 11 types of error were identified in the pretest. Significant important results were observed in the learners' performance in the post test. These findings highlighted the efficiency of improving second language learners collocational knowledge to enhance their proficiency in the target language, and the explicit instruction using learners' selective attention to input indeed improve their collocational competence in the target language .

A further study about linguistic competence was conducted by Agoren (2004). He examined the role that Synchronous Computer Mediated Communication–chat room-(SCMC) played in grammatical development. In particular this study set out to determine whether consciousness-raising in chat conferencing assisted in the grammatical development to a greater degree than in either face-to-face interaction with consciousness-raising or in SCMC chat without consciousness-raising. 20 participants between the ages 19-25 years old were divided into two groups: one group was designated as form-and-meaning focused(FMF) while the other was meaning focused (MF). Each group engaged in weekly chats and addressed the same

discussion topics in the computer lab. Three pre-and post-tests were administered. Results indicated that there were statistically significant differences in the post-tests in favor of the FMF group. Moreover, the FMF group produced greater quantities and more accurate quantities of language. In addition to that, the FMF group demonstrated higher levels of syntactic maturity. The researcher recommended focusing on form and meaning rather than meaning to achieve high level of grammatical development among students.

Related to the aim of the previous study, Chernobilsky's study (2009) considered the overall grammatical development in Russian and English for Russian. The Index of Productive Syntax test (IPSyn) was used as the tool of this study. The main question of the study was whether bilingual speakers, exposed to both languages from an early age, are as competent users of their two languages as are their peers who speak a single language at the time they are entering school. The participants in this study were 23 children ages 5–6 years. Eight of these children were monolingual English speakers, eight children were monolingual Russian speakers and seven were bilingual (Russian-English) speakers. Results indicated that statistically, there was no difference between the monolingual and bilingual speakers in their common language as measured by the prepared test. Moreover, results indicated that bilingual children, as a group, perform as well, and in some categories, better than the monolingual children in either language. Finally, the study offered a new assessment methodology to examine grammatical competencies in English and Russian monolingual and Russian-English bilingual. The researcher of the current study agrees with the results of this study since students must study English besides Arabic from early ages.

In the same context, the study of Neumann (2010) investigated how grammatical ability was assessed in L2 academic writing classrooms. In a mixed

method triangulation design using both quantitative and qualitative methods, this study examined the indicators of grammatical ability that writing teachers attend to when assessing their students' grammatical ability in academic essays. In addition, the study considered to what extent the students' learning was affected by the teachers' assessment criteria. Thirty-three students and their teachers (N = 2) participated in this study. In the first phase of this study, the students' essay exams and the teacher-assigned grammar grade were collected and analyzed quantitatively using accuracy and complexity measures. In phase two, student questionnaires were administered, and student interviews were conducted to determine the students' knowledge of the teachers' assessment criteria for grammar. In phase three, the teachers were interviewed about their criteria and their priorities in the assessment of grammar. Results indicated that writing teachers focused on grammatical accuracy when assessing their students' grammatical ability. Consequently, writing teachers seem to assess a reduced construct of grammatical ability in academic writing, compared to definitions in the L2 assessment literature. The study concluded with a discussion of implications and makes recommendations for L2 writing assessment such as focusing on more than one criteria in assessing students' writing rather than focusing on the accuracy only. This means focusing on meaning besides form.

Additionally, Robertson and Salter (1995) developed the Phonological Awareness Test (PAT) as a tool to measure students' ability on five phonemic awareness tasks: segmentation, isolation, deletion, substitution, and blending. In addition to assessing a students' phonological and phonemic awareness skills, the Phonological Awareness Test provided information on a student's knowledge of grapheme's and their corresponding sounds, decoding ability, and spelling competency. The researchers implemented this test among a sample consisting of 30

American students in their first level of the university. The researchers found that the test provided them with the actual phonological levels of students. They advised all teachers to use that test as continual examination of the phonological information of students.

Related to the previous study, Taylor (2008) conducted a study to determine if direct explicit systematic phonics instruction using the Get Reading Website (GRW) increased the phonological awareness and orthographic awareness of female Emirati students aged 18-25 studying in an English language diploma foundation program. All participants were Emirati females between the ages of 18-25 for a total number of 74 participants took an English phonological awareness test and an English orthographic awareness test as pre- and post-treatment measures of phonological and orthographic awareness. The two pre-study and post-study tests measured the English phonological awareness and orthographic awareness of the students participating in the study. Results indicated that adult female students who receive explicit phonics instruction have significantly higher scores on an orthographic and phonological awareness test at the end of 16 weeks of instruction than students who do not receive explicit phonics instruction. The researcher recommended using the direct explicit systematic instructions in teaching to achieve high level of phonological and orthographic development. However, the researcher of the current study thinks that students need indirect instruction in some cases in order to develop high order thinking skills.

Similarly, Alperin (2007) conducted two studies. The first one investigated the contribution of Spanish phonological and orthographic processing skills to English reading and spelling in 89 Spanish-English bilingual children in grades 2 (N = 42) and 3 (N = 47). Comparable measures in English and Spanish tapping phonological and orthographic processing were administered to the bilingual children and to 53

monolingual English-speaking children in grades 2 (N = 32) and 3 (N = 21) as a comparison group. The researcher found that cross language phonological and orthographic transfer occurs from Spanish to English for real word and pseudoword reading. However, Spanish orthographic processing only predicted reading, not spelling.

The second study conducted by the same writer examined spelling errors committed on specific linguistic units – vowels that are spelled differently in the two languages (i.e., contrastive vowels) – to determine whether Spanish-speaking children spell these vowels using Spanish spelling rules. Participants for this study (N=72) were carefully recruited; error analysis indicated that the 27 native Spanish-speaking children who received prior literacy instruction in Spanish did indeed spell these contrastive vowels using Spanish orthography; therefore, these errors were influenced by their L1 orthographic knowledge. Taken together, these two studies highlighted the importance of taking into consideration bilingual children's L1 phonological and orthographic knowledge in understanding L2 reading and spelling acquisition. The results of the two studies supported the notion that bilingual children are indeed both positively and negatively affected by the differences in orthographic depths of the languages.

The final study of this part was conducted by Park (2011) to investigate English L2 spellings among Korean L1 learners of English on the basis of linguistic differences in their L1 and L2 phonology and orthography. Two groups of third graders, Korean L1 English learners (N=36) and native English speakers (N=30), performed a pseudoword spelling task, in which they listened to an audio recording of a total of 34 pseudowords and dictated what they heard. The task material targeting phonological difference consisted of two types of pseudowords: The consonants that

exist in both English and in Korean and the consonants that do not exist in Korean but exist in English. The task material targeting orthographic difference consists of two types of pseudowords: More consistent vowels and less consistent vowels. The results supported the prediction that Korean L1 learners of English would have difficulty in spelling pseudowords containing phonemes which do not exist in Korean but are present in English phonology and that learners whose L1 is relatively transparent had difficulty in spelling L2 words whose grapheme phoneme correspondence is less transparent. As a result, the researcher recommended taking in consideration bilingual students in teaching spelling, and tried to introduce for them extra activities that enhance the differences between the two languages.

2. Studies Related to Sociolinguistic Competence

In order to assess sociolinguistic competence, Broersma (2001) kept a language journal which records questions and problems of 40 Brazilian students who studied in an American university. The researcher noticed that most of the problems of those students were related to the difference between their cultures. He presented some suggestions for increasing students' sociolinguistic competence. These suggestions are applicable not just for those living abroad, but also for those who need to interact and work with people from other cultural backgrounds:

1. Language learners need to remember that sociolinguistic competence is part of a larger system. When learning new grammatical structures, the learner should immediately try to practice the new structures with the goal of testing sociolinguistic appropriateness. Some learners have even gone so far as to deliberately say something wrong so that, native speakers would correct them, and they would learn something new about what was appropriate.

2. As language learners become more proficient in a second language, they also need to be increasingly committed to becoming observers of the interactions of native speakers around them. They should watch how people stand when talking to each other. They should watch for the kinds of physical touching people do (handshaking, kissing, gentle punches on the shoulder, etc.)

Similarly, the study of Piotroska (2008) undertaken to assess the sociolinguistic competence of 32 students (Seven were male and twenty five were female, aged 20-25) at the English Department in the University of Hong Kong. The study also aimed to discover students' ability to communicate effectively in a complaint situation, as well as to determine the areas in which they may need further help to achieve an optimal level of "communicative performance". A role-play method was used by which controlled situations could be given to the subjects to elicit specifically desired data. The results indicated that students had the level of sociolinguistic competence required to produce successful communication. The researcher recommended using the role play method to develop the sociolinguistic competence among students since this method increases students' motivation towards learning.

Close to the aim of the previous two studies, Lussier et al. (2007) used the culture log and the profile diagram to assess the sociolinguistic competence of 50 European students. The culture log is a journal in which students record their ideas and cultural facts at regular intervals to keep track of their progress and of any changes in their attitudes towards other cultures. The culture log comprises notes on the following: cultural background, human life style, societal systems, religious influences, intercultural and linguistic experience. The profile diagram refers to the students' self-evaluation of their attitudes towards other cultures at five levels of

perception, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. During the learning process, the students were asked to use a portfolio, in which they keep evidence of their progress in the development of sociolinguistic competence. The portfolio contains their personal observations, reflective essays regarding intercultural situations experienced by them, audio or video recordings of the interviews conducted, self-evaluation profiles and culture logs. The results showed that the portfolio provides continuous assessment of the students' sociolinguistic competence according to the criteria specified in the evaluation grids. Consequently, the researchers recommended using logs and profile diagrams with specified criteria in order to develop sociolinguistic competence since these logs and profiles provide teachers with area of strength and weaknesses in learning.

In the same context, the study of Witty and Caryn (2000) worked to develop the sociolinguistic competence among Spanish college learners at their first year by using the input enhancement techniques that required learners to actively view videos. Previous research shows that native speakers are more sensitive to sociolinguistic errors than to grammatical errors made by nonnative speakers. Therefore, the study hypothesized that educating language learners about sociolinguistic differences would result in their having more positive relationships in future contacts with speakers of other languages. On nine occasions, the control group students independently viewed episodes of a Spanish videotaped soap opera that used authentic language and culture. Following each viewing, they took in-class quizzes on the plot of the story. The intervention group viewed the same video and took the same quizzes, but before each of the nine viewings, they were given a take-home quiz to fill out while watching the video. At the end of the semester, all students completed three feedback instruments to determine their sociolinguistic awareness. Results indicated that the intervention

group outperformed the control group at statistically significant levels in several areas. Interactive video viewing positively influenced their effect and time on task and enhanced sociolinguistic competence. It also increased students' global comprehension. As a result, the researcher recommended all the teachers to expose their students to different real and taped situations in order to improve sociolinguistic competence.

In his study Schuetze (2008) aimed to know if online messages develop intercultural communicative competence or not. The researcher selected two groups of students . The first one was from an American university and the second group was from a German university (Those German students willing to learn English) The first online exchange between students of both universities took place for six weeks. The idea is for students from different countries and different languages to help each other learn their own language and culture by means of online interactions. Data collected showed a general positive view of the experience regarding language development and cultural awareness. The researcher of the current study recommended female students to use the Moodle of the Islamic University in order to exchange online messages, which develops language and culture awareness since culture is part of sociolinguistic competence.

Guerrero (2009) hypothesized that an intercultural approach to teaching foreign languages facilitates the development of the learners' intercultural communicative skills and sociolinguistic proficiency while raising cultural awareness, developing contextualized cultural knowledge, and fostering intercultural attitudes of respect and understanding for one's own culture and the cultures of others. The participants of this study were 12 university students from a middle Atlantic university. Quantitative and qualitative instruments including pre/post learners'

questionnaires and pre/post learners' journals were used as a mixed methods design in this study. Results indicated that learners developed their sociolinguistic competence as they: (1) Developed critical thinking skills and skills to interpret cultural differences in a more ethnorelative perspective; (2) Showed intercultural attitudes of understanding other perspectives (3) Raised self-cultural-awareness; and (4) Improved their language proficiency. The researcher recommended using intercultural approach to develop learners' sociolinguistic competence since this approach provides students with the differences between cultures.

Additionally, Emert (2008) stated that despite the need for intercultural competence, teachers are not being adequately prepared to respond to the realities of culturally diverse students setting. One way for teachers to develop intercultural competence is through teaching abroad. To determine if teaching abroad has an impact on teachers' intercultural competence and to document teachers' personal and professional experiences abroad, the study of Emert (2008) explored the experience of twelve teachers. Those participants completed the Intercultural Development Inventory, a measure of intercultural sensitivity, and the strategies inventory for learning culture. Both pre and posttest provided information for their time abroad prior to teaching in their host countries. Monthly questionnaire was filled by the participants followed by interview about their experience. Study results showed positive growth in intercultural competence overall. It also showed that teaching abroad enhanced understanding of similarities and differences of educational systems and sociolinguistic competence. As a result, the researcher highly recommended choosing teachers who have an experience of teaching abroad to teach sociolinguistic competence.

The final study of this part was conducted by Lai (2001). He aimed to investigate the compliment responses of Chinese second language speakers of English in view of their length of stay in the US and topic of the compliment, i.e. appearance, clothes, performance and possession. Four participant groups were involved: a US group, and three Chinese ESL groups with different length of stay in the US (less than 6 months, 1 to 2 years, and more than 3 years). Particularly, 27 US college students and 45 Chinese ESL students with 15 students in each group were selected from a US college campus. The instrument included a written questionnaire with four complimenting scenarios. Both quantitative and qualitative results showed that all groups shared a similar tendency to employ compliment responses. Although some differences were found in how participants formulated their responses, overall the four groups were rather homogeneous. The implications of these results are that there may be a new concept of culture developing, which is not bound to geographic location and first language.

3. Studies Related to Pragmatic Competence

The study of Stehberger (2009) investigated how pragmatic competence was being taught using communicative language teaching methodology in an online language learning environment. An online English language school was selected for this case study because it was believed to have the potential to be exemplary in the way it sought to develop students' pragmatic competence. Three sources of evidence were presented in this case study: detailed observation of the online environment supported by visual screenshots, students and teacher surveys and interview, and related documents, such as the course handbook and the syllabus. Results indicated that using communicative language teaching methodology in an online language

learning environment can enhance learning pragmatic competence. At the end of the study, the researcher provided some suggestions for how this online environment can be more helpful in developing students' pragmatic competence such as choosing the suitable time for involving students in these online environment.

Related to the previous study, Xu (2009) tried to explore the influence of the learning environment and overall L2 proficiency on the development of pragmatic competence. Participants were three groups of English language learners: 120 international students who speak English as a second language from a research institute in a western state of the U.S. (ESL groups 1 & 2) and 60 Chinese college students in northeastern China who speak English as a foreign language (the EFL group). The participants were pre- and post-tested. They completed a questionnaire consisting of scenarios that measured their pragmatic competence. The statistical results showed that the learning environment play an active role in L2 pragmatics among those participants. The researcher recommended all teachers to take care of the learning environment when teaching students pragmatic competence.

In the same context, the study of Ahn (2007) attempted to account for differential pragmatic development among 50 graduate-level Korean students in a target speech community in regards to functions of their level of motivation, amount of contact with English, as well as length of residence in the target language community. Those participants were studying at Texas University in the U.S. The data for the present study were collected using three types of elicitation instruments: a written background questionnaire, a discourse completion test, and the mini-Attitude/Motivation Test Battery. The findings of the study provided that (a) the levels of motivation examined demonstrated a positive and moderate relationship to the Korean ESL learners' L2 pragmatic competence; (b) overall, the amount of L2

contact appeared to have only a weak and insignificant impact on the participants' pragmatic competence; (c) the participants' length of residence moderately influenced the participants' level of pragmatic competence. The researcher recommended using multiple tools in order to account for the differential pragmatic development among students.

Additionally, the purpose of Tchoutezo's study (2010) was to explore the perception and attitudes of ESL instructors regarding pragmatic instruction in second language classes. Five ESL instructors participated in this study. The participants were from both the United States and other countries. This quantitative research study used a pragmatic instruction survey, in-depth interviewing, and classroom observation as methods of data collection. The data were used to explore participants' ESL demographic background information and pragmatics instruction practices. Results illuminated a variety of approaches used by instructors in the integration of pragmatics instruction in their second language classes. In total, the instructors believe that there are positive impacts of the pragmatic instruction and that learners who receive pragmatics instruction perform better and improve their communicative competence. The study implications focused on taking instructors' opinions about their teaching through periodical questionnaires and surveys in order to improve their teaching strategies.

Close to the aim of the previous study, Jernigan (2007) conducted his study to investigate whether output in the context of instruction has a significant effect on developing L2 pragmatic competence. The participants of this study were 34 learners. Among the participants, 18 male and 16 female learners. The participants were assigned to one of two treatment groups: those receiving opportunities for output (the + Output group) and those who did not (the – Output group). The central activity of

the study was video-based instruction designed to raise awareness of pragmatic strategies and associated pragmalinguistic forms. The testing materials (output) included an instrument to gauge pragmatic perception called a Pragmatic Acceptability Judgment Task (PAJT) and, Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT). Oral discourse completion task (ODCT). Results indicated that there is an effect for output in the context of video-based pragmatic instruction (including output-focused tasks) on developing L2 pragmatic competence of adult ESL learners, as evidenced by the acquisition of pragmalinguistic forms. The study recommended using the output instructions which depend on (PAJT), (WDCT) and (ODCT) in developing students' pragmatic competence.

To assess pragmatic competence, Hudson (2001) examined three types of measures, language lab DCT (Discourse Completion Test), open-ended DCT, and role play, the participants of this study were twenty-five Japanese learners of English as a second language (ESL). Even though there was little variation among the participants and different speech acts, the results revealed that the role play performed differently from the other two measures, indicating a method effect between a role play and the DCT format. In his study, refusals seemed to be more difficult to perform for participants than requests and apologies. The researcher recommended using the role play method to develop different aspects of pragmatic competence.

Related to the purpose of the previous study, Roever (2001) examined the development and validation of web-based tests of ESL and EFL learners' pragmatic competence knowledge. The tests were composed of assessing knowledge of implicatures and routines, using multiple choice items, and knowledge of three speech acts (refusal, request, and apology), using productive Discourse Completion Test (DCT) items with rejoinders. Based on correlational analyses, it was found that the

tests indeed assess learners' pragmatic competence knowledge with reasonable accuracy. Also, there were negligible effects of computer familiarity to the test scores, which implicates the promising potential of web-based language tests in pragmatic assessment. As a result, the researcher highly recommended using the web-based test in assessing pragmatic competence of ESL and EFL students.

The final study of this part was conducted by Baca (2011) to evaluate the interlanguage pragmatic development of 17 native English-speaking American students. Those participants were split into two proficiency levels. This study used an open oral role-play situation to elicit student speech. Additionally, post-role play questionnaires were administered immediately following the role-play interactions in order to gather the students' and the interlocutors' impressions of the interactions. Students were also given a background questionnaire at the start of the semester to determine their eligibility for the study. Reflective interviews were also conducted at the beginning and end of the semester in order to gather some qualitative data on student expectations, motivations, and experiences in the target culture at the beginning and end of the semester. Results indicated that both sets of learners expressed empathy, involvement, and respect for the interlocutor, while at the same time they used advice-giving strategies of varied illocutionary force to claim authority in addressing the interlocutor's dilemma. The researcher recommended using the role play method to develop the pragmatic competence of students and this agrees with the results of Hudson's study (2001).

4. Studies Related to Discourse Competence

Concerning the specificity of the discourse competence, a number of exercises have been suggested that could help the transfer from text to text and could help in

improving discourse competence. Madrid and McLaren (1995) described the following activities: completing texts with missing words, completing a text by choosing the appropriate information from another source, finding mistakes and differences, punctuating texts, and narrating events and expressing sequence with visual support. After Madrid and McLaren (1995) had implemented those activities to a sample consisting of 28 students, they found that discourse competence improved among those students. The researchers recommended all teachers to use these activities in order to develop students' discourse competence.

A further study about discourse competence was conducted by Congjun (2006). He aimed to investigate Chinese university students' textual competence in English reading. 75 subjects were chosen to participate in this study. Among those subjects, there were twenty-five males and fifty females. He used the College English Test (CET) to assess students' textual competence in English reading. The idea of this test is to give the students reading passage with connectors or pronouns indicating the cohesion taken away from the passage assuming the participants can choose or fill in those connectors and give the appropriate explanation for their choice. The results of this study showed that most of the participants have passed the CET. The researcher recommended using this test to discover students' problem in learning discourse competence.

A portfolio is an effective tool for evaluating discourse competence. Brown (2001) used the portfolio to develop discourse competence among 20 students from a secondary school. He defined the portfolio as a selection of some of the learner's task outcomes so as to document and illustrate their progress and achievement. Brown (2001) stated that " Portfolios include essays, compositions, poetry, book reports, art work, video- or audiotape recordings of a student's oral production, journals, and

virtually anything else one wishes to specify ". He collected some portfolios of the participants and found that these portfolios help him in assessing learners' performance of the discourse competence, stimulating learners' performance, and assessing progress and achievement. Brown recommended using portfolios in assessing discourse competence since it is an effective tool for providing teachers with the areas of strengths and weaknesses in learning discourse competence.

Related to the previous study, Regan et al. (2005) stated that the most popular form for assessing students' discourse competence are direct writing samples and portfolios. 47 Chinese students were given ten topics to write about one topic a day. the student' writing was assessed and then students were given feedback about their writing. Results indicated that students' writing improved after the feedback of each topic. The researcher highly recommended using direct writing sample and portfolios in assessing discourse competence.

In their study, Marchisan and Alber (2001) presented practical and specific strategies for developing discourse competence. They used the strategy called GETTING IT to assess the discourse competence of 22 Japanese students. This strategy depends on providing students with some words and then asking students to classify these words into: (1) Words that signal more of the same; (2) Words that signal the order or sequence of events; (3) Words that change the direction of thoughts; (4) Words that signal a conclusion or a summary; (5) Words that signal cause and effect. After classifying the words, students can use them to write a short story using their own words. The results of the study showed students' ability to classify words that establish textual cohesion. As a result, the researchers recommended using GETTING IT strategy in order to develop students' discourse competence.

Related to the purpose of the previous study but different in results, Rogers and Rymer (2001) used the Analytical Writing Assessment (AWA) composed of 4 tools (task, coherence, reasoning units, and error interference) to develop the discourse competence of 42 Korean students who are in their first level. For the AWA, individuals composed two short essays (30 minutes for each), one analyzing an issue, the other critiquing an argument. Under the administration of the Educational Testing Service (ETS), these essays were assessed holistically to produce a single overall AWA score (ranging from a low of 1 to a high of 6) for each student. After they had conducted the test, the writers distributed a survey among the students to judge the effectiveness of the test. Results indicated that the AWA diagnose students' problems in writing and this can motivate teachers to search for ways and suggestions to overcome students' problems in writing. The researchers recommended teachers use AWA method to discover students' problems in learning discourse competence.

The final study in this part was conducted by Collopy (2008) to emphasize direct and indirect instruction in improving discourse competence. 80 Korean students from a secondary school participated in this study. He divided them into two groups . Each group consisted of 40 students. Students were asked to write a letter for the researcher. He used direct and indirect instructions with the experimental group and no instructions with the controlled group. The results of the study indicated that the performance of the experimental group is better than the performance of the controlled group. The researcher at the end advised all teachers to give direct and indirect instructions for their students to improve the quality of their writing.

5. Studies Related to Strategic Competence

The purpose of Mariano's study (2009) was to examine how strategic competence and communication strategies can contribute to the development of an overall communicative competence. He used several samples of activities such as role play and materials in developing communicative strategies among 45 Italian students who learn English as a second language. He used a video-recorder to record students' performance, and then he used the recorder to discuss and evaluate students' use of communication strategies. Results revealed that good strategic competence can help learners to remain in conversation, give them more chance to use the language in real-life context. Moreover, results revealed that communication strategies train learners in the flexibility they need to cope with unexpected and unpredictable situations. Mariano recommended using these activities to develop strategic competence. He also recommended recording students' responses to these activities to decide which of them is more suitable for students.

To develop strategic competence, Macam (2001) designed a strategy assessment survey. This assessment tool, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), was currently recognized as the most comprehensive and widely used instrument for identifying strategy preferences of language learners throughout the world. The (SILL) has been extensively checked for reliability and validated in multiple ways. This tool was used with approximately 70 learners from an American university. Research findings indicated significant variation in learning strategy preferences based on a number of learner variables, including gender, motivation, setting, cultural background, attitudes/beliefs, learning styles, and language

proficiency. The researcher recommended using (SILL) assessment too to develop strategic competence.

Additionally, Nisbet et al. (2005) stated that the main concern of strategic competence is on the actions taken by the learners to make learning faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations. They performed a checklist to assess strategic competence among 46 students from a secondary school in Australia. Their findings revealed that students with high level of achievement were able to use strategies more effectively than other students (low achievers). The results revealed that high achievers used different strategies in learning such as planning, evaluating, organizing, deducing, inferring, and summarizing. While low achievers found difficulties in understanding the situations because of their lack in using learning strategies. The researchers recommended giving students training lessons to teach them how to use different learning strategies in learning.

In the same context, Rabab'ah (2001) stated that much research has been conducted discussing the various problems of Arab learners of English, but there has been very little discussion to the various ways of solving these problems or tackling the importance of the development of foreign language learners' strategic competence, i.e. the use of communication strategies (CSs) to solve communication problems, an essential component of communicative competence. As a result, Rabab'ah's study (2001) tried to present some communication strategies to solve students' communication problems. The subjects were 74 students from King Saud University. After using some communication strategies with those students, they managed to solve communication problems. As a result, the writer stated that teachers should provide students with the definition of CSs and ask them to perform tasks that

required them to use CSs, such as definition, story –telling and role-play tasks. Then, students should be audio or video- recorded while performing these tasks. Finally, students should watch their performance in the target language and be asked to see the communication problems they encountered and how they managed to solve them.

Kang's (2005) qualitative study was conducted to examine what types of communication strategies (CS) are used to manage linguistics problems in L2 oral communication. 12 Korean students studying in a university in the U.S participated in this study. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and conversations. From the inductive and taxonomic analysis, seven types of CS were identified: (a) phonetic CS, (b) lexical CS, (c) syntactic CS, (d) dual lexical-syntactic CS, (e) semantic CS, (f) time-gaining CS, and (g) comprehension CS. The study revealed that high achiever students used more than one CS to manage linguistics problems. Similar to the recommendation of Nisbet's et al. (2005) study, the researcher recommended giving students training lessons in order to develop the multiple use of communication strategy.

Close to the aim of the previous study, Abu Shamais (2009) tried to investigate English language learning strategies used by Arabic-speaking English-majors enrolled at An-Najah National University in Palestine. The subjects of the study were (99) male and female students who were studying for their BA degree. The study also investigated the frequency of strategies used among these students according to gender and proficiency variables. Results of this study showed that An-Najah English majors used learning strategies with high to medium frequency, and that the highest rank (79.6%) was for metacognitive strategies while the lowest (63%) was for compensation strategies. In general, the results showed that gender and proficiency had no significant differences on the use of strategies. Based on these

findings, the researcher recommended that more training should be given in using cognitive, memory and compensation strategies by embedding them into regular classroom activities.

In addition, the study of Cheng (2007) sought to investigate the communication strategies that Taiwanese students use when they interact formally or informally with native English speakers. This study measured the students' use of communication strategies to enrich their verbal communication skills; it also measured their perceptions of their oral proficiency and other personal characteristics. This study included 2006 Taiwanese international graduate students studying at University of Southern California (USC). A survey consisting of three parts and 45 questions was designed specifically for this study. Results indicated that there are three major communication approaches that Taiwanese students use and prefer: *Meaningful communication approach*, *Word utilizing approach* and *Playing it safe approach*. The results also indicated that communication strategies were related to oral proficiency but was not related to personal characteristics. The study recommended enhancing second language learning interacting and speaking with native English speaking students since the results revealed that communication strategies were related to oral proficiency.

The final study of this part was conducted by Wood (2009) In a one-year study of the effects of CS training on 44 first-year university students, Wood (2009) found that explicitly teaching CSs in class along with implementing extra strategy based activities resulted in increased usage and understanding of CSs. Overall usage of CSs by the students went up although certain CS usage went down or stayed relatively unchanged throughout the year. After new strategies were taught in class, students had a chance to immediately use them while communicating with their partners.

Throughout the year, more and more activities were created in order to allow students to practice using the newly learned CSs. This process gave students a quick way to experiment with the strategies and to hopefully realize their overall importance. Students eventually seemed more confident in using CSs and used them more freely throughout the year. During students' recordings over the year (4 in total) students were asked to listen to their recorded conversations and to search for and identify by name any CSs they had used. This resulted in students realizing that they had used many CSs, many they had not even noticed using. Finally, the researcher recommended explicit teaching of CSs in class in order to increase students' using of CSs. However, the researcher of the current study recommended also using implicit way of teaching CSs since it develops high order thinking skills.

Commentary on the Previous Studies

Previewing those studies enriched this study especially on specifying and identifying the criteria and tools for evaluating communicative competence. Also, those studies had confirmed the effectiveness of the process of evaluation. An international standard criteria with some modification were used in the current study to evaluate communicative competence. These criteria were built after revising different sources (previous studies, related literature, books and institutions' publications).

Additionally, those studies emphasized the following principles:

1. Using role play method to develop the acquisition of communicative competence. This confirmed with the studies of Piotroska (2008), Baca (2011), Mariano (2009) and Hudson (2001).

2. Focusing on training lessons to train students to use different communication strategies in different situations. This agreed with the studies of Nisbet et al. (2005) and Kang (2005).
3. Using direct and explicit instructions with students to develop different competences among students. This corresponded with the studies of Wood (2009) and Tylor (2008).
4. focusing on the importance of learning environment when teaching communicative competence since it has an important role in learning process. This confirmed with the study of Xu (2009).
5. using teachers' self-assessment which motivates teachers to develop themselves professionally as confirmed with the study of Tchoutezo (2010).

The most important issue that the researcher benefited from those studies was the variant results and findings that the studies gave. It was clear that most of the studies gave positive findings such as Stehberger's study (2009) which showed that using communicative language teaching methodology in an online language learning environment can enhance learning pragmatic competence. Also, the study of Brown (2001) who found that portfolios help him in assessing learners' performance, stimulating learners' performance, and assessing progress and achievement. However, Hudson's study (2001) revealed how students faced some problems in learning pragmatic competence.

Additionally, some studies introduce new ideas for improving communicative competence such as the study of Schuetze (2001) who used the online message to evaluate sociolinguistic competence. Additionally, the study of Lussier et al. (2007) who used culture log and the profile diagram to assess sociolinguistic competence.

Moreover, the study of Brown (2001) who used portfolios to evaluate discourse competence.

The last comment to be made was the varied instruments used in the previous studies which gave the researcher clear insights to carry out this study effectively. Some of the important and suitable tools used to conduct these studies include questionnaires such as the studies of Emert (2008) and Neumann (2010), tests such as the studies of Miyakosh (2009) and Roberson and Salter (1995), checklists such as the study of Nisbet et al. (2005), and observations such as the studies of Tchoutezo (2010) and Kang (2005).

Chapter III

The Methodology

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Research Design

3.3 Instrumentations

3.4 Statistical treatment

3.5 Procedures of the study

3.6 Summary

Chapter III

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the practical aspects of the study including the various techniques of collecting and describing the data through employing suitable tools to achieve the purposes of the study. In this chapter there will be an illustration of the methods decided to be used, the tools of the study that involve constructing a questionnaire and diagnostic test, examining their validity and reliability and the procedures that were followed.

3.2 Research Design

The descriptive analytical methodological framework was employed in this study to describe and analyze the data. Brown and Rodgers (2002:117) defined the descriptive research as, "A research that describes group characteristics or behaviors in numerical terms". They maintain that, "The descriptive statistics are those statistics used to analyze descriptive research data, usually in terms of central tendency and dispersion".

The researcher conducted this method due to its relevance to the study. The descriptive analytical method of research has many advantages. These advantages, according to Seltzer and Cook (1986) enable the researcher to:

1. Collect detailed factual information that describes existing phenomena about a population.

2. Identify problems or justify current conditions and practices that are occurring within a population .
3. Make the comparisons and evaluations of a population.
4. Determine what others are doing with similar problems or situations and thus benefit from their experience in making future plans and decisions.

However, it also has many disadvantages such as:

1. Respondents may answer superficially especially if the questionnaire takes a long time to complete. The common mistake of asking too many questions should be avoided.
2. Students may not be willing to answer the questions. They might not wish to reveal the information or they might think that they will not benefit from responding perhaps even be penalized by giving their real opinion.

3.3 Instrumentations

The researcher used two main tools: questionnaire and diagnostic test with the form of multiple choice questions. The questionnaire was designed to identify the competences that the fourth level English major students have; while the diagnostic test was designed to know the area of weaknesses in learning communicative competence and to know if students' competence matches their performance or not. Both tools were conducted together because the diagnostic test measured the same items of the questionnaire. For example, the item in the questionnaire "deduce the meaning from the context" was measured by the question " I'm really hungry! That apple didn't appease my hunger. I want a sandwich now. What does appease probably means?" Only the items that got the highest ranks from the referees had

questions. For example, the domain pragmatic competence has 8 items in the questionnaire, 4 of them got the highest rank from the referees; as a result, only those four items had questions (not all the 8 items) and each item of the four has two questions (Appendix 3 illustrates numbers of items in each domain and items that got the highest ranks). As stated before, the tools are conducted together, they had the same sample and population; however, they are discussed separately for the aim of study only.

3.3.1 The Questionnaire

The design of the questionnaire was based on extensive surveying of related literature. The chosen criteria were built only to suit the purpose of the study. Most of the criteria were international taken from the Council of Europe's Common European Framework (CEF) of Reference for Languages and from the research students centre in Queensland University of Technology (QUT). The researcher modified some of these criteria to suit the aim of the study.

3.3.1.1 Constructing the Questionnaire

The questionnaire underwent different stage processes, such as:

1. The related literature and institutions' publications were reviewed.
2. The researcher produced the first draft of the questionnaire with 97 items .
3. The questionnaire was handed to 11 experts of educational specialists at the three universities in order to verify it.
4. The questionnaire was created and piloted on 30 fourth level English major students at the three universities.

5. The final questionnaire had (72) items administered to 88 fourth level English major students at the three universities after getting the permission from the three universities (Appendices 5&6).

6. The (72) items distributed among 5 domains: linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, discourse, and strategic competence.

7. The (72) items of the questionnaire were distributed among five main domains according to Likert sliding scale included (1=strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= disagree, 4= strongly disagree, 5= not applicable). The questionnaire addressed the following initiation at the beginning of each domain (I was prepared to). The final questionnaire was shown in (Appendix 1).

3.3.1.2 Description of the Questionnaire

- Purpose of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire aimed at collecting data about communicative competence that fourth level English major students at the three universities have. It is a kind of self-evaluation done by students .

- The Population of the study

The study was confined to fourth level English major students who were registered in the second semester of the scholastic year 2011-2012 in Faculties of Education-English Department in the three universities as shown in Table (3:1) and also in (Appendices 7, 8 and 9).

**Table :(3.1)
The Population of the Study**

faculty of Education in	No.
The Islamic University-Gaza	163
Al-Aqsa University	169
Al-Azhar University	105
Total	437

The population included female students who were similar in terms of their cultural and educational background. All of them were enrolled in English department. Their ages ranged from 21-24 years old. The students were enrolled in the academic year 2011-2012 in the fourth university level. Moreover, they received almost the same amount of education, and more specifically, they were exposed to the same amount of instruction in English language and teaching practice, despite the fact that they were representing three individual programmes.

- The Sample of the study

The simple random sampling procedure was used in this study. All of fourth level students majoring in English–Education had equal chance of participating in the study. Once, The sample was identified, the questionnaire and the diagnostic test were distributed randomly. 100 questionnaires were distributed in each university totaling 300 ones, only 88 participated in completing the tools as illustrated in the following table. The following table shows the numbers of female students and the percentage of the sample size from each university.

**Table (3.2)
The Sample of the Study**

Faculties of Education in	No.	%
Islamic University	33	37.50
Al-Aqsa University	34	38.64
Al-Azhar University	21	23.86
Total	88	100.00

3.3.1.3 Validity of the Questionnaire

To validate the questionnaire three types of validity were applied: content, internal consistency and construct validity.

a. Content Validity of the Questionnaire (Expert Referees' Judgment)

The questionnaire was administered in its initial draft to 11 university professors specialized in curriculum and teaching methods. (Appendix 4 shows list of jurors). The panel of referees was asked to assess the content of each item using a scale of 1 to three (1 meaning related, 2 meaning neutral , 3 meaning unrelated). In the light of their views as well as the clarity of linguistic formulations, some items of the first draft were excluded, some were modified, bringing the number of the whole items of the questionnaire to (72) as shown in Table (3.3) below.

Table (3.3)
The Final Construction of the Questionnaire

Sections	No. of items
1. Linguistic competence	
a. Lexical competence	7
b. Grammatical competence	10
c. Semantic competence	6
d. Orthographic competence	8
e. Phonological competence	9
2. Sociolinguistic competence	8
3. Pragmatic competence	8
4. Discourse competence	8
5. Strategic competence	8
Total	72

Once the questionnaire was validated, a pilot test of the instrument was applied to (30) fourth level students at the three universities. This aimed at checking the clarity of items and relevance of content.

b. The Internal Consistency Validity

The internal validity of the tool was examined by implementing the questionnaire on pilot (30) individuals out of the sample of the study. This type of validity indicates the correlation of each item degree with the total average of the questionnaire. Pearson correlation formula was used to calculate both the correlation between the score on each domain of the questionnaire with the total score of the questionnaire, and the correlation between the score on each item of the questionnaire with the total score of the questionnaire by using the statistical analytical programme (SPSS). The correlation co-efficiency of the questionnaire can be illustrated in Tables from (3.4) to (3.12) below:

It is concluded from Table (3.4) below that all the items are statistically significant at significance level = (0.01,0.05). This certifies that the questionnaire is highly consistent and valid.

Table (3.4)
Pearson Correlation coefficient for every item from the first domain (linguistic competence) with the total degree of this domain
a) Lexical Competence

No.	Item	Pearson Correlation	Sig. level
1	deduce the meaning of words from their context.	0.538	sig. at 0.01
2	form words from given common syntactic roots/stems (word formation).	0.758	sig. at 0.01
3	distinguish between British and American English words.	0.587	sig. at 0.01
4	distinguish between standard words and their non-standard forms (e.g. die and kick the bucket).	0.450	sig. at 0.05
5	identify the root, prefix and suffix in a word.	0.805	sig. at 0.01
6	use similar sounding words accurately (noticeable and notable)	0.812	sig. at 0.01
7	master a vocabulary that is adequate to express knowledge, experience, perceptions, emotions and personal opinions.	0.685	sig. at 0.01

*r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.05) = 0.361

**r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.01) = 0.463

It is concluded from Table (3.5) below that all the items are statistically significant at significance level = (0.01). This certifies that the questionnaire is highly consistent and valid.

Table (3.5)
Pearson Correlation coefficient for every item from the first domain(linguistic competence) with the total degree of this domain
b) Grammatical Competence

No.	Item	Pearson Correlation	Sig. level
1	distinguish between tenses according to its use.	0.591	sig. at 0.01
2	use prepositions correctly.	0.689	sig. at 0.01
3	use articles correctly.	0.585	sig. at 0.01
4	use question tags correctly.	0.766	sig. at 0.01
5	distiguish between finite and nonfinite verbs.	0.770	sig. at 0.01
6	correct the ungrammatical part of a sentence.	0.649	sig. at 0.01
7	distinguish between transitive and intransitive verbs	0.660	sig. at 0.01
8	distinguish between sentences that are written in different tenses.	0.764	sig. at 0.01
9	distinguish parts of speech in their basic forms.	0.806	sig. at 0.01
10	formulate sentences from words, groups of sentences from sentences by observing semantic and formative relations.	0.534	sig. at 0.01

*r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.05) = 0.361

**r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.01) = 0.463

It is concluded from Table (3.6) below that all the items are statistically significant at significance level = (0.01). This certifies that the questionnaire is highly consistent and valid.

Table (3.6)
Pearson Correlation coefficient for every item from the first domain (linguistic competence) with the total degree of this domain
c) Semantic Competence

No.	Item	Pearson Correlation	Sig. level
1	identify different meanings of the same word in different contexts.	0.474	sig. at 0.01
2	explain the meaning of a given word/word phrase from the text.	0.659	sig. at 0.01
3	compare word meanings, particularly synonyms or partial synonyms, homonyms and polysemy.	0.473	sig. at 0.01
4	recognise the main ideas and details in a text .	0.558	sig. at 0.01
5	be aware that the meaning of the word affects the meaning of the text.	0.744	sig. at 0.01
6	identify the aim of the speaker in an utterance, considering the context.	0.649	sig. at 0.01

*r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.05) = 0.361

**r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.01) = 0.463

It is concluded from Table (3.7) below that all the items are statistically significant at significance level = (0.01). This certifies that the questionnaire is highly consistent and valid.

Table (3.7)
Pearson Correlation coefficient for every item from the first domain(linguistic competence) with the total degree of this domain
d) Orthographic Competence

No.	Item	Pearson Correlation	Sig. level
1	use punctuation to represent types of sentences.	0.708	sig. at 0.01
2	disambiguate meanings resulting from the sound and the spelling of a word.(homophone)	0.561	sig. at 0.01
3	write words with silent letters correctly (e.g. Knife).	0.725	sig. at 0.01
4	spell my address , nationality and other personal details correctly.	0.765	sig. at 0.01
5	write simple types of communication correctly both in terms of content and form.	0.658	sig. at 0.01
6	write i/y correctly after consonants (study – studies).	0.729	sig. at 0.01
7	use orthographic and punctuation rules appropriately.	0.674	sig. at 0.01
8	copy familiar words and short phrases e.g. simple sign or instruction.	0.573	sig. at 0.01

*r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.05) = 0.361

**r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.01) = 0.463

It is concluded from Table (3.8) below that all the items are statistically significant at significance level = (0.01). This certifies that the questionnaire is highly consistent and valid.

Table (3.8)
Pearson Correlation coefficient for every item from the first domain (linguistic competence) with the total degree of this domain
e) Phonological Competence

No.	Item	Pearson Correlation	Sig. level
1	distinguish between long and short vowels.	0.610	sig. at 0.01
2	pronounce sounds correctly .	0.640	sig. at 0.01
3	vary intonation and place sentence stress correctly in order to express fine shades of meaning.	0.756	sig. at 0.01
4	distinguish between the manner and place of articulation.	0.856	sig. at 0.01
5	distinguish between voiced and voiceless sounds and their effects on pronouncing words.	0.538	sig. at 0.01
6	feel confident about pronouncing words in English .	0.588	sig. at 0.01
7	segment words into phonemes.	0.810	sig. at 0.01
8	employ suitable verbal, non-verbal and paralinguistic features(stress, tempo, intonation...etc) of speech in both prepared and improvised oral expressions.	0.618	sig. at 0.01
9	recognise a word's phonetic forms (transcription).	0.836	sig. at 0.01

*r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.05) = 0.361

**r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.01) = 0.463

It is concluded from Table (3.9) below that all the items are statistically significant at significance level = (0.01). This certifies that the questionnaire is highly consistent and valid.

Table (3.9)
Pearson Correlation coefficient for every item from the second domain with the total degree of this domain
2. Sociolinguistic Competence

No.	Item	Pearson Correlation	Sig. level
1	use different speech techniques to appreciate/evaluate politeness.	0.763	sig. at 0.01
2	select suitable verbal as well as non-verbal means of expression in everyday situations both at school and outside of school.	0.843	sig. at 0.01
3	differentiate between subjective and objective messages and recognise the communicative intent of the conversation partner.	0.758	sig. at 0.01
4	explian how a person can offend others through language use.	0.681	sig. at 0.01
5	interact spontaneously and confidently in formal communicative situations.	0.661	sig. at 0.01
6	write personal letters giving news and expressing thoughts about abstract or cultural topics	0.685	sig. at 0.01
7	speak fluently and accurately in most situations with a complexity appropriate to the situations of communication.	0.566	sig. at 0.01
8	starting, maintaining and closing simple conversation.	0.663	sig. at 0.01

*r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.05) = 0.361

**r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.01) = 0.463

It is concluded from Table (3.10) below that all the items are statistically significant at significance level = (0.01). This certifies that the questionnaire is highly consistent and valid.

Table (3.10)
Pearson Correlation coefficient for every item from the third domain with the total degree of this domain
3. Pragmatic Competence

No.	Item	Pearson Correlation	Sig. level
1	give clear instructions, advice and/or directions to others in English.	0.554	sig. at 0.01
2	ask questions, to make requests, to give an opinion, to justify a point of view.	0.585	sig. at 0.01
3	conduct a dialogue, a telephone conversation, and understand pragmatic implicature.	0.789	sig. at 0.01
4	pay attention to the listeners' verbal and non-verbal reactions in order to redirect the speech whenever necessary.	0.765	sig. at 0.01
5	understand instructions addressed carefully and slowly to me and follow short , simple directions.	0.678	sig. at 0.01
6	use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	0.614	sig. at 0.01
7	contribute effectively to class or group work in gradual formal situations.	0.770	sig. at 0.01
8	Asses my own and other people's oral presentation.	0.766	sig. at 0.01

*r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.05) = 0.361

**r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.01) = 0.463

It is concluded from Table (3.11) below that all the items are statistically significant at significance level = (0.01). This certifies that the questionnaire is highly consistent and valid.

Table (3.11)
Pearson Correlation coefficient for every item from the fourth domain with the total degree of this domain
4. Discourse Competence

No.	Item	Pearson Correlation	Sig. level
1	use appropriate connectives and vary them as required by the utterance(cohesion).	0.474	sig. at 0.01
2	use a range of words which are relevant for the subject.	0.629	sig. at 0.01
3	write simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like and, but and because.	0.511	sig. at 0.01
4	deal with sentence problem(fragment , choppy , run onetc).	0.737	sig. at 0.01
5	combine utterances in coherent and cohesive texts	0.824	sig. at 0.01
6	write simple , short essays on topics of interest.	0.845	sig. at 0.01
7	lay out a text with heading, introduction, body and conclusion.	0.701	sig. at 0.01
8	paraphrase and summarize the given text.	0.755	sig. at 0.01

*r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.05) = 0.361

**r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.01) = 0.463

It is concluded from Table (3.12) below that all the items are statistically significant at significance level = (0.01,0.05). This certifies that the questionnaire is highly consistent and valid.

Table (3.12)
Pearson Correlation coefficient for every item from the fifth domain with the total degree of this domain
5. Strategic Competence

No.	Item	Pearson Correlation	Sig. level
1	use the verbal and non-verbal communication strategies	0.439	sig. at 0.05
2	use translation as the last strategy in learning a new situation.	0.427	sig. at 0.05
3	recognise and use strategic techniques such as repetition, contrast and simple metaphors and images.	0.745	sig. at 0.01
4	use orthographic and phonological cues to understand new words.	0.488	sig. at 0.01
5	use more than one strategy in a new learning situation.	0.801	sig. at 0.01
6	start again using a different tactic when communication breaks down.	0.669	sig. at 0.01
7	foreignise a mother tongue word and ask for confirmation	0.701	sig. at 0.01
8	improve my strategic competence through reading more and more.	0.825	sig. at 0.01

*r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.05) = 0.361

**r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.01) = 0.463

c. Construct Validity

Construct validity examines the fitness between the conceptual definition and the operational definition of variables. In other words, it discusses how the instrument will be operationalized and qualified .

In order to investigate the construct validity of the main domains of the questionnaire; the correlation coefficient factor was calculated among the score of each domain on one hand, and the other domains, as well each domain in correlation to the total score of the questionnaire as shown in the Table (3.13) below :

Table (3.13)
Pearson Correlation coefficient for every scope from the questionnaire with the total degree of the questionnaire and the scopes with others scopes

	SUM	Linguistic competence	Sociolinguistic competence	Pragmatic competence	Discourse competence	Strategic competence
Linguistic competence	0.953	1				
Sociolinguistic competence	0.725	0.566	1			
Pragmatic competence	0.856	0.765	0.680	1		
Discourse competence	0.789	0.651	0.530	0.628	1	
Strategic competence	0.808	0.682	0.577	0.603	0.762	1

*r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.05) = 0.361

**r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.01) = 0.463

It is clearly concluded from the previous table that all the domains are inter- correlated consistently, as well as, with the total score of the questionnaire in statistical significant correlation at the significance level (0.01). Thus, it can be concluded that the questionnaire is highly valid and of high degree of reliability and internal consistency.

3.3.1.4 Reliability of the Questionnaire

“Cronbach Alpha is considered the most general form of reliability estimates and it is also concerned with homogeneity of items comprising the scale” (Thorndike,1997). The researcher used Alpha Cronbach and the Split half Formulae. An estimation of the questionnaire reliability over the pilot sample was predicted by using split half formulae and Cronbach alpha.

1. Split Half Reliability

The scores of the pilot sample were used to calculate reliability of the questionnaire in terms of Split half method, in a manner the scores were calculated of the first half in each section of the questionnaire as well as the scores of the second half of the degrees and calculated by using the correlation coefficient factor between them. Then longitude was modified using Spearman Brown equation as illustrated in Table (3.14):

Table (3.14)
Correlation coefficient between the two halves of each domain before modification and the reliability after modification

Scope	No. of items	Correlation between two parts	Reliability after modifying
a. Lexical competence	*7	0.781	0.877
b. Grammatical competence	10	0.897	0.946
c. Semantic competence	6	0.709	0.935
d. Orthographic competence	8	0.523	0.687
e. Phonological competence	9	0.865	0.928
2. Sociolinguistic competence	8	0.895	0.945
3. Pragmatic competence	8	0.391	0.562
4. Discourse competence	8	0.657	0.793
5. Strategic competence	8	0.789	0.882
Total	72	0.859	0.924

***Guttman Scaling was used because the two halves are not equal.**

Table (3.14) above shows that the Split half reliability functions after amendment are all above (0.562) and the overall total consistency coefficient is (0.946) and this shows that the questionnaire is highly consistent to reassure the researcher to apply the instrument to the sample of the study.

2. Cronbach Alpha Method

Another model of calculating consistency was used in order to calculate the reliability of the questionnaire which obtained a value coefficient Alpha for each domain of the questionnaire as well as the whole questionnaire as illustrated in Table (3.15)

Table (3.15)

Alpha Correlation Coefficient of the Questionnaire Reliability

Scope	Number of Items	Alpha kronbach
1. Linguistic competence		
a. Lexical competence	7	0.903
b. Grammatical competence	10	0.927
c. Semantic competence	6	0.676
d. Orthographic competence	8	0.657
e. Phonological competence	9	0.898
2. Sociolinguistic competence		
3. Pragmatic competence		
4. Discourse competence		
5. Strategic competence		
Total	72	0.916

Table (3.15) shows that all Cronbach Alpha Coefficients are above (0.608) and the total reliability coefficient was (0.903). According to the results, the questionnaire is highly reliable to be applied on the same sample of the study.

3.3.2 The diagnostic Test

3.3.2.1 The Definition of the Diagnostic Test

Ohio Department of Education Testing (2002) defined diagnostic tests as tests designed to identify weaknesses in the learning processes. After building the criteria of the questionnaire a diagnostic test related to these criteria was designed. Only the items that got the highest ranks from the referees had questions. The total number of items in the questionnaire was 72, only 37 got the highest ranks from the referees. Two questions to each item were formed, so the number of question was 74. (Appendix 2 illustrates the final construction of the diagnostic test). A number of experts who verified the questionnaire were consulted also to verify the test because both tools were conducted together.

3.3.2.2 Purpose of the Diagnostic Test

The main purpose of the test was to find out the area of weaknesses in learning communicative competence among fourth level English major students. Moreover, it was conducted to discover if students' competence matches their performance or not.

3.3.2.3 Validity of the Diagnostic Test

Alagha (1996: 118) stated that a valid test is the test that measures what is designed to measure. To validate the test the researcher applied three types of validity: content, internal consistency and construct validity.

a. Content Validity

The test was checked by a group of jurors (11 jurors) from the three universities to ensure its clarity and relevance (see Appendix 4). Ambiguous items

were modified according to the jurors' suggestions. Consequently, the number of the questions became 74, distributed as shown in Table (3.16) below.

Table (3.16)

The Final Construction of the Diagnostic Test

Sections	No. of questions
1. Linguistic competence	
a. Lexical competence	8
b. Grammatical competence	10
c. Semantic competence	6
d. Orthographic competence	8
e. Phonological competence	10
2. Sociolinguistic competence	8
3. Pragmatic competence	8
4. Discourse competence	8
5. Strategic competence	8
TOTAL	74

b. Internal Consistency Validity of the Diagnostic Test

Pearson correlation coefficient was used to compute the internal consistency of the test items. Pearson Correlation computed the correlation of the following: the items with their domains, the items with total test and the domains with test as a whole Table (3.17) describes the internal consistency of the test.

Table (3.17)

The Internal Consistency of the Test

Domain	Item	Pearson Correlation	Sig. level	Item	Pearson Correlation	Sig. level
1. linguistic competence a. Lexical competence	1	0.401	sig. at 0.05	5	0.840	sig. at 0.01
	2	0.827	sig. at 0.01	6	0.880	sig. at 0.01
	3	0.913	sig. at 0.01	7	0.483	sig. at 0.01
	4	0.840	sig. at 0.01	8	0.911	sig. at 0.01
b. Grammatical competence	1	0.876	sig. at 0.01	6	0.799	sig. at 0.01
	2	0.805	sig. at 0.01	7	0.957	sig. at 0.01
	3	0.778	sig. at 0.01	8	0.876	sig. at 0.01
	4	0.490	sig. at 0.01	9	0.895	sig. at 0.01
	5	0.835	sig. at 0.01	10	0.415	sig. at 0.05
c. Semantic competence	1	0.702	sig. at 0.01	4	0.598	sig. at 0.01
	2	0.581	sig. at 0.01	5	0.626	sig. at 0.01
	3	0.636	sig. at 0.01	6	0.605	sig. at 0.01
d. Orthographic competence	1	0.444	sig. at 0.05	5	0.694	sig. at 0.01
	2	0.446	sig. at 0.05	6	0.520	sig. at 0.01
	3	0.379	sig. at 0.05	7	0.537	sig. at 0.01
	4	0.653	sig. at 0.01	8	0.672	sig. at 0.01
e. Phonological competence	1	0.446	sig. at 0.05	6	0.877	sig. at 0.01
	2	0.877	sig. at 0.01	7	0.765	sig. at 0.01
	3	0.706	sig. at 0.01	8	0.791	sig. at 0.01
	4	0.926	sig. at 0.01	9	0.453	sig. at 0.05
	5	0.854	sig. at 0.01	10	0.525	sig. at 0.01

2. Sociolinguistic competence	1	0.473	sig. at 0.01	5	0.556	sig. at 0.01
	2	0.543	sig. at 0.01	6	0.385	sig. at 0.05
	3	0.437	sig. at 0.05	7	0.655	sig. at 0.01
	4	0.621	sig. at 0.01	8	0.450	sig. at 0.05
3. Pragmatic competence	1	0.723	sig. at 0.01	5	0.466	sig. at 0.01
	2	0.558	sig. at 0.01	6	0.572	sig. at 0.01
	3	0.404	sig. at 0.05	7	0.590	sig. at 0.01
	4	0.528	sig. at 0.01	8	0.404	sig. at 0.05
4. Discourse competence	1	0.457	sig. at 0.05	5	0.738	sig. at 0.01
	2	0.724	sig. at 0.01	6	0.852	sig. at 0.01
	3	0.452	sig. at 0.05	7	0.611	sig. at 0.01
	4	0.462	sig. at 0.05	8	0.813	sig. at 0.01
5. Strategic competence	1	0.664	sig. at 0.01	5	0.836	sig. at 0.01
	2	0.383	sig. at 0.05	6	0.443	sig. at 0.05
	3	0.767	sig. at 0.01	7	0.797	sig. at 0.01
	4	0.918	sig. at 0.01	8	0.832	sig. at 0.01

*r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.05) = 0.361

**r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.01) = 0.463

Table (3:17) shows that all the items are statistically significant at significance level = (0.01,0.05). This certifies that the test was highly consistent and valid to be used as a tool for this study.

c. Construct Validity

In order to investigate the construct validity of the main domains of the test the correlation coefficient factor was calculated among the score of each domain

on one hand, and the other domains, as well each domain in correlation to the total score of the test as shown in the Table (3.18) below :

Table (3.18)

Pearson Correlation coefficient for every scope from the test with the total degree of the test and the scopes with others scopes

Domain	Pearson Correlation	Sig. level
1. Linguistic competence	0.769	sig. at 0.01
2. Sociolinguistic competence	0.695	sig. at 0.01
3. Pragmatic competence	0.651	sig. at 0.01
4. Discourse competence	0.591	sig. at 0.01
5. Strategic competence	0.561	sig. at 0.01

***r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.05) = 0.361**

****r table value at df (28) and sig. level (0.01) = 0.463**

Table (3:18) shows that all the domains are inter- correlated and consistent, as well as, with the total score of the test in statistical significant correlation at the significance level (0.01). Thus, it can be concluded that the test was highly valid and of high degree of reliability and internal consistency.

3.3.2.4 Reliability of the Diagnostic Test

Mackey and Gass (2005:128) pointed out that the test is reliable when it drives similar results if it administrated twice within similar conditions. The test reliability coefficient was computed through:

1-Kooder Richardson: (K-R20): It relies on calculating the percentages of the correct answer to the items and on the variance of every item.

2.Split Half Reliability : The scores of the pilot sample were used to calculate reliability of the test in terms of Split half method, in a manner the scores were calculated of the first half in each section of the test as well as the scores of the second half of the degrees and calculated by using the correlation coefficient factor between them.

Then longitude was modified using Spearman Brown equation as illustrated in Table (3.19):

Table (3.19)
(KR20) and Split half coefficients of the test domains

Test Domains	KR20)	Split half coefficients of the test domains
a. Linguistic competence		
a. Lexical competence	0.790	0.804
b. Grammatical competence	0.871	0.897
c. Semantic competence	0.613	0.488
d. Orthographic competence	0.826	0.791
e. Phonological competence	0.862	0.892
2. Sociolinguistic competence	0.852	0.726
3. Pragmatic competence	0.844	0.771
4. Discourse competence	0.842	0.774
5. Strategic competence	0.772	0.710
TOTAL	0.961	0.871

The results show that the reliability coefficients are acceptable because they are above (0.70) which means that the test was reliable and valid to apply.

3.4 Statistical Treatment

The researcher used the following statistical styles:

1. To calculate the rank of each item frequencies and percentages were used.
2. To calculate the reliability of internal consistency of the questionnaire Pearson correlation coefficient was used .
3. To find out the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire Pearson Brown correlation coefficient of equal split halves and Guttman unequal split half formula and Cronbach Alpha coefficient were used.
4. To calculate the reliability of the diagnostic test Kooder Richardson (K-R20) and split half method were used.

3.5 Procedures of the study

1. Building the criteria of evaluation through reviewing the literature and institutions' publications related to communicative competence.
2. Consulting a number of experts for verifying the tools (the questionnaire and the diagnostic test) that had been prepared.
3. Modifying the questionnaire and the diagnostic test according to the referees' comments.
4. Getting the permission from the three universities administrators to carry out the tools. (Appendices 5&6)
5. Applying the questionnaire and the diagnostic test in the three universities.

6. Analyzing the collected data in the form of frequencies and percentages and organizing it through tables.
7. Giving interpretations and comments.
8. Presenting recommendations and suggestions.

3.6 Summary

This chapter described how the research was conducted, the instrumentations that were used, how the data were collected, recorded and analyzed and how validity and reliability of the data were ensured.

It discussed the following major sections: research design, instrumentations, constructing the questionnaire, its purpose, population, sample, validity, and its reliability. Then, the diagnostic test, its description, purpose, population, sample, validity and its reliability. Finally, the procedures of the study were discussed.

By the end of this chapter, it was concluded that the descriptive analytical methodological framework was the most suitable design to conduct this study. Also, it was concluded that the tools of the study were both valid and reliable to be used and conducted among the sample which consisted of 88 female students from the three universities.

Chapter IV

The Study Findings

- 4.1 Introduction**
- 4.2 Results of the Questionnaire**
- 4.3 Results of the Diagnostic Test**
- 4.4 Summary**

Chapter IV

The Study Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter puts forward the statistical analysis of the data collected through the study. The results listed below answer the main question "What are the main standardized components of communicative competence that Palestinian fourth level English major students at Gaza universities have?" The results of each component of communicative competence will be presented in tables by using the frequencies, the sum of responses, means, std. deviation and the percentage weight and rank of each item from the questionnaire.

The results of the three universities will be presented as a whole because students at the three universities nearly have the same background of knowledge. Additionally, a table will be presented to summarize the differences between the three universities after discussing the results of the three universities as a whole.

4.2 Results of the Questionnaire

4.2.1 Linguistic competence

The first question is: **To what extent do fourth level English major students in faculties of Education at Gaza universities have the linguistic competences?**

A : Lexical Competence

Table (4.1) below illustrates the items that got the highest weight:

- No (A1) "deduce the meaning of words from their context" occupied the first rank with a percentage weight (82.50%).
- No (A5) "identify the root, prefix and suffix in a word" obtained the second rank with a percentage weight (74.55%).
- No (A7) "master a vocabulary that is adequate to express knowledge, experience, perceptions, emotions and personal opinions" also obtained the second rank with a percentage weight (74.55%).

And the items that got the least weight were:

- No (A6) "use similar sounding words accurately (noticeable and notable)" Took the sixth rank with a percentage weight (68.18%).
- No (A4) "distinguish between standard words and their non-standard forms (e.g. die and kick the bucket)" got the seventh rank with a percentage weight (67.27%).

Table (4.1)

The sum of responses, means, std. deviation and the % weight and rank of each item from the lexical competence

No.	Item	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	% weight	rank in the scope
A1	deduce the meaning of words from their context.	363	4.125	0.920	82.50	1
A2	form words from given common syntactic roots/stems (word formation).	327	3.716	1.193	74.32	4
A3	distinguish between British and American English words.	305	3.466	0.946	69.32	5
A4	distinguish between standard words and their non-standard forms (e.g. die and kick the bucket).	296	3.364	1.019	67.27	7
A5	identify the root, prefix and suffix in a word.	328	3.727	1.345	74.55	2
A6	use similar sounding words accurately (noticeable and notable)	300	3.409	1.131	68.18	6
A7	master a vocabulary that is adequate to express knowledge, experience, perceptions, emotions and personal opinions.	328	3.727	1.058	74.55	2
		2247	25.534	4.773	72.95	

B: Grammatical Competence

Table (4.2) below presents the items that got the highest weight:

- No (A8) "distinguish between tenses according to its use" obtained the first rank with a percentage weight (84.55).
- No (A10) "use articles correctly" took the second rank with a percentage weight (78.86)
- No (A11) "use question tags correctly " also, took the second rank with a percentage weight (78.86)
- No (A15) "distinguish between sentences that are written in different tenses" Also, got the second rank with a percentage weight (78.86)

And the items that got the least weight were:

- No (A13) "correct the ungrammatical part of a sentence" occupied the ninth rank with a percentage weight (74.09).
- No (A17) "formulate sentences from words, groups of sentences from sentences by observing semantic and formative relations." obtained the tenth rank with a percentage weight (72.27).

Table (4.2)

The sum of responses, means, std. deviation and the % weight and rank of each item from the grammatical competence

No.	Item	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	% weight	rank in the scope
A8	distinguish between tenses according to its use.	372	4.227	0.840	84.55	1
A9	use prepositions correctly.	343	3.898	0.885	77.95	5
A10	use articles correctly.	347	3.943	1.010	78.86	2
A11	use question tags correctly.	347	3.943	1.158	78.86	2
A12	distiguish between finite and nonfinite verbs.	331	3.761	1.072	75.23	8
A13	correct the ungrammatical part of a sentence.	326	3.705	0.996	74.09	9
A14	distinguish between transitive and intransitive verbs	341	3.875	1.123	77.50	6
A15	distinguish between sentences that are written in different tenses.	347	3.943	1.032	78.86	2
A16	distinguish parts of speech in their basic forms.	340	3.864	1.063	77.27	7
A17	formulate sentences from words, groups of sentences from sentences by observing semantic and formative relations.	318	3.614	1.011	72.27	10
		3412	38.773	7.219	77.55	

C: Semantic Competence

Table (4.3) below illustrates the items that got the highest weight:

- No (A18) "identify different meanings of the same word in different contexts" occupied the first rank with a percentage weight (81.59%)
- No (A22) "be aware that the meaning of the word affects the meaning of the text" obtained the second rank with a percentage weight (80.45%).

And the items that got the least weight were:

- No (A19) "explain the meaning of a given word/word phrase from the text" got the fifth rank with a percentage weight (77.73%).
- No (A20) "compare word meanings, particularly synonyms or partial synonyms, homonyms and polysemy" took the sixth rank with a percentage weight (73.18 %).

Table (4.3)

The sum of responses, means, std. deviation and the % weight and rank of each item from the semantic competence

No.	Item	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	% weight	rank in the scope
A18	identify different meanings of the same word in different contexts.	359	4.080	0.925	81.59	1
A19	explain the meaning of a given word/word phrase from the text.	342	3.886	0.940	77.73	5
A20	compare word meanings, particularly synonyms or partial synonyms, homonyms and polysemy.	322	3.659	1.049	73.18	6
A21	recognise the main ideas and details in a text .	344	3.909	1.046	78.18	4
A22	be aware that the meaning of the word affects the meaning of the text.	354	4.023	1.039	80.45	2
A23	identify the aim of the speaker in an utterance, considering the context.	351	3.989	1.034	79.77	3
		2072	23.545	4.397	78.48	

D: Orthographic Competence

Table (4.4) below shows the items that got the highest weight:

- No (A29) "write i/y correctly after consonants (study – studies)" occupied the first rank with a percentage weight (80.23 %)
- No (A24) "use punctuation to represent types of sentences." obtained the second rank with a percentage weight (79.55 %).

And the items that got the least weight were:

- No (A30) "use orthographic and punctuation rules appropriately" took the seventh rank with a percentage weight (71.14%).
- No (A25) "disambiguate meanings resulting from the sound and the spelling of a word.(homophone)" got the eighth rank with a percentage weight (68.64%).

Table (4.4)

The sum of responses, means, std. deviation and the % weight and rank of each item from the orthographic competence

No.	Item	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	% weight	rank in the scope
A24	use punctuation to represent types of sentences.	350	3.977	0.994	79.55	2
A25	disambiguate meanings resulting from the sound and the spelling of a word.(homophone)	302	3.432	1.026	68.64	8
A26	write words with silent letters correctly (e.g. Knife).	333	3.784	1.077	75.68	4
A27	spell my address , nationality and other personal details correctly.	343	3.898	1.185	77.95	3
A28	write simple types of communication correctly both in terms of content and form.	329	3.739	0.977	74.77	5
A29	write i/y correctly after consonants (study – studies).	353	4.011	1.140	80.23	1
A30	use orthographic and punctuation rules appropriately.	313	3.557	1.102	71.14	7
A31	copy familiar words and short phrases e.g. simple sign or instruction.	321	3.648	1.135	72.95	6
		2644	30.045	6.164	75.11	

E: Phonological Competence

Table (4.5) below clarifies the items that got the highest weight:

- No (A36) "distinguish between voiced and voiceless sounds and their effects on pronouncing words." occupied the first rank with a percentage weight (78.18%)
- No (A32) "distinguish between long and short vowels." got the second rank with a percentage weight (76.36%).

And the items that got the least weight were:

- No (A38) "segment words into phonemes " took the eighth rank with a percentage weight (66.14%).
- No (A39) "employ suitable verbal, non-verbal and paralinguistic features (stress, tempo, intonation...etc.) of speech in both prepared and improvised oral expressions." obtained the ninth rank with a percentage weight (62.27%).

Table (4.5)

The sum of responses, means, std. deviation and the % weight and rank of each item from the phonological competence

No.	Item	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	% weight	rank in the scope
A32	distinguish between long and short vowels.	336	3.818	1.170	76.36	2
A33	pronounce sounds correctly .	323	3.670	1.111	73.41	3
A34	vary intonation and place sentence stress correctly in order to express fine shades of meaning.	295	3.352	1.051	67.05	7
A35	distinguish between the mannar and place of articulation.	320	3.636	1.126	72.73	4
A36	distinguish between voiced and voicless sounds and their effects on pronouncing words.	344	3.909	1.100	78.18	1
A37	feel confident about pronouncing words in English .	304	3.455	1.082	69.09	6
A38	segment words into phonemes.	291	3.307	1.010	66.14	8
A39	employ suitable verbal, non-verbal and paralinguistic features(stress, tempo, intonation...etc.) of speech in both prepared and improvised oral expressions.	274	3.114	1.022	62.27	9
A40	recognize a word's phonetic forms(transcription).	308	3.500	1.083	70.00	5
		2795	31.761	6.994	70.58	

4.2.2 Sociolinguistic Competence:

The second question is: **To what extent do fourth level English major students in Faculties of Education at Gaza universities have the sociolinguistic competences?**

Table (4.6) below presents the items that got the highest weight:

- No (B8) "starting, maintaining and closing simple conversation." occupied the first rank with a percentage weight (74.09%)
- No (B3) "differentiate between subjective and objective messages and recognize the communicative intent of the conversation partner." took the second rank with a percentage weight (72.27%).

And the items that got the least weight were:

- No (B5) "interact spontaneously and confidently in formal communicative situations." obtained the seventh rank with a percentage weight (70.00%).
- No (B7) "speak fluently and accurately in most situations with a complexity appropriate to the situations of communication." got the eighth rank with a percentage weight (68.64%).

Table (4.6)

The sum of responses, means, std. deviation and the % weight and rank of each item from the sociolinguistic competence

No.	Item	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	% weight	rank in the scope
B1	use different speech techniques to appreciate/evaluate politeness.	313	3.557	0.981	71.14	3
B2	select suitable verbal as well as non-verbal means of expression in everyday situations both at school and outside of school.	310	3.523	1.017	70.45	6
B3	differentiate between subjective and objective messages and recognise the communicative intent of the conversation partner.	318	3.614	0.863	72.27	2
B4	explian how a person can offend others through language use.	311	3.534	1.072	70.68	4
B5	interact spontaneously and confidently in formal communicative situations.	308	3.500	0.971	70.00	7
B6	write personal letters giving news and expressing thoughts about abstract or cultural topics	311	3.534	1.005	70.68	4
B7	speak fluently and accurately in most situations with a complexity appropriate to the situations of communication.	302	3.432	0.968	68.64	8
B8	starting, maintaining and closing simple conversation.	326	3.705	1.146	74.09	1
		2499	28.398	5.314	74.83	

4.2.3 Pragmatic Competence:

The third question is: **To what extent do fourth level English major students in Faculties of Education at Gaza universities have the pragmatic competences?**

Table (4.7) below illustrates the items that got the highest weight:

- No (C2) "ask questions, to make requests, to give an opinion, to justify a point of view. " got the first rank with a percentage weight (77.05%)
- No (C6) "use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know." also obtained the first rank with a percentage weight (77.05%).

And the items that got the least weight were:

- No (C5) "understand instructions addressed carefully and slowly to me and follow short, simple directions" occupied the seventh rank with a percentage weight (72.50%).
- No (C3) "conduct a dialogue, a telephone conversation, and understand pragmatic implicature." took the eighth rank with a percentage weight (70.91%).

Table (4.7)
The sum of responses, means, std. deviation and the % weight and rank of each item from the pragmatic competence

No.	Item	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	% weight	rank in the scope
C1	give clear instructions, advice and/or directions to others in English.	333	3.784	1.044	75.68	3
C2	ask questions, to make requests, to give an opinion, to justify a point of view.	339	3.852	0.965	77.05	1
C3	conduct a dialogue, a telephone conversation, and understand pragmatic implicature.	312	3.545	1.016	70.91	8
C4	pay attention to the listeners' verbal and non-verbal reactions in order to redirect the speech whenever necessary .	321	3.648	1.115	72.95	6
C5	understand instructions addressed carefully and slowly to me and follow short , simple directions.	319	3.625	1.021	72.50	7
C6	use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	339	3.852	1.120	77.05	1
C7	contribute effectively to class or group work in gradual formal situations.	332	3.773	1.003	75.45	4
C8	Asses my own and other people's oral presentation.	323	3.670	1.181	73.41	5
		2618	29.750	6.463	70.99	

4.2.4 Discourse Competence:

The fourth question is: **To what extent do fourth level English major students in Faculties of Education at Gaza universities have the discourse competences?**

Table (4.8) below clarifies the items that got the highest weight:

- No (D3) "write simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like and, but and because" Took the first rank with a percentage weight (79.32%)
- No (D7) "lay out a text with heading, introduction, body and conclusion" also got the first rank with a percentage weight (79.32%).

And the items that got the least weight were:

- No (D6) "write simple, short essays on topics of interest" occupied the seventh rank with a percentage weight (72.05%).
- No (D4) "deal with sentence problem (fragment, choppy, run onetc.)." obtained the eighth rank with a percentage weight (71.14%).

Table (4.8)

The sum of responses, means, std. deviation and the % weight and rank of each item from the discourse competence

No.	Item	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	% weight	rank in the scope
D1	use appropriate connectives and vary them as required by the utterance(cohesion).	323	3.670	1.058	73.41	6
D2	use a range of words which are relevant for the subject .	344	3.909	0.879	78.18	3
D3	write simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like and, but and because.	349	3.966	0.952	79.32	1
D4	deal with sentence problem(fragment , choppy , run onetc).	313	3.557	1.163	71.14	8
D5	combine utterances in coherent and cohesive texts	326	3.705	0.924	74.09	5
D6	write simple , short essays on topics of interest.	317	3.602	1.099	72.05	7
D7	lay out a text with heading, introduction, body and conclusion.	349	3.966	1.011	79.32	1
D8	paraphrase and summarize the given text.	340	3.864	1.116	77.27	4
		2661	30.239	6.032	74.38	

4.2.5 Strategic Competence

The fifth question is: **To what extent do fourth level English major students in Faculties of Education at Gaza universities have the strategic competences?**

Table (4.9) below shows the items that got the highest weight:

- No (E8) "improve my strategic competence through reading more and more." got the first rank with a percentage weight (75.00%)
- No (E1) "use the verbal and non-verbal communication strategies." obtained the second rank with a percentage weight (72.05%).

And the items that got the least weight were:

- No (E2) "use translation as the last strategy in learning a new situation" took the seventh rank with a percentage weight (68.64%).
- No (E4) "use orthographic and phonological cues to understand new words." occupied the eighth rank with a percentage weight (67.05%).

Table (4.9)

The sum of responses, means, std. deviation and the % weight and rank of each item from the strategic competence

No.	Item	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	% weight	rank in the scope
E1	use the verbal and non-verbal communication strategies	317	3.602	1.078	72.05	2
E2	use translation as the last strategy in learning a new situation.	302	3.432	1.081	68.64	7
E3	recognise and use strategic techniques such as repetition, contrast and simple metaphors and images.	309	3.511	1.072	70.23	5
E4	use orthographic and phonological cues to understand new words.	295	3.352	1.145	67.05	8
E5	use more than one strategy in a new learning situation.	310	3.523	1.072	70.45	4
E6	start again using a different tactic when communication breaks down.	311	3.534	1.072	70.68	3
E7	foreignise a mother tongue word and ask for confirmation	304	3.455	1.060	69.09	6
E8	improve my strategic competence through reading more and more.	330	3.750	1.271	75.00	1
		2478	28.159	6.074	75.60	

Table (4:10) Below Summarizes the Differences between the Three Universities

**Table (4.10)
The sum of responses, means, std. deviation and the % weight and rank of each domain from the questionnaire**

University	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	% weight	rank in the scope
Islamic University- Gaza					
1. Linguistic competence					
a. Lexical competence	888	26.118	4.298	74.62	
b. Grammatical competence	1434	42.176	5.750	84.35	
c. Semantic competence	816	24.000	4.445	80.00	
d. Orthographic competence	1055	31.029	5.807	77.57	
e. Phonological competence	1148	33.765	6.840	75.03	
1. Linguistic competence	5341	157.088	27.14	78.31	4
2. Sociolinguistic competence	993	29.206	5.353	78.54	3
3. Pragmatic competence	1084	31.882	5.204	73.01	5
4. Discourse competence	1069	31.441	5.389	79.71	1
5. Strategic competence	988	29.059	5.784	78.60	2
Al-Aqsa University					
1. Linguistic competence					
a. Lexical competence	846	25.636	4.696	73.25	
b. Grammatical competence	1271	38.515	6.778	77.03	
c. Semantic competence	788	23.879	3.160	79.60	
d. Orthographic competence	993	30.091	5.252	75.23	
e. Phonological competence	1029	31.182	6.287	69.29	
1. Linguistic competence	4927	149.303	26.16	74.88	3

University	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	% weight	rank in the scope
2. Sociolinguistic competence	923	27.970	5.139	69.92	5
3. Pragmatic competence	1000	30.303	4.991	75.76	2
4. Discourse competence	1002	30.364	5.104	75.91	1
5. Strategic competence	928	28.121	4.955	70.30	4
AL-Azhar University					
1. Linguistic competence					
a. Lexical competence	513	24.429	5.609	69.80	
b. Grammatical competence	707	33.667	7.172	67.33	
c. Semantic competence	468	22.286	5.772	74.29	
d. Orthographic competence	596	28.381	7.807	70.95	
e. Phonological competence	618	29.429	7.698	65.40	
1. Linguistic competence	2902	138.192	34.058	69.55	2
2. Sociolinguistic competence	583	27.762	5.612	69.10	4
3. Pragmatic competence	534	25.429	8.328	69.40	3
4. Discourse competence	590	28.095	7.835	63.57	5
5. Strategic competence	562	26.762	7.911	70.24	1

4.3 Results of the Diagnostic Test

4.3.1 The Answer of the Sixth Question:

The sixth question is: **To what extent do the competences of fourth level English major students match their performance?**

First :The Three Universities

Table (4:11) below summarizes the results of the three universities. Moreover, this table gives a whole picture about communicative competence among fourth level English major students at the three universities.

According to table (4.11) below it appears that the linguistic competence took the first rank with a percentage weight reaching (51.89%), followed by the sociolinguistic competence which got the second rank with a percentage weight reaching (50.99%). After that, the discourse competence obtained the third rank with a percentage weight reaching (50.57%). The pragmatic competence occupied the fourth rank with a percentage weight reaching (50.14%). Finally, the fifth domain took the strategic competence rank with a percentage weight reaching (42.19 %).

Among the components of linguistic competence, the grammatical competence took the first rank with a percentage weight reaching (54.77%), followed by the orthographic competence which took the second rank with a percentage weight reaching (53.13%). After that, the lexical competence took the third rank with a percentage weight reaching (52.13%). The semantic competence took the fourth rank with a percentage weight reaching (50.38%). Finally, phonological competence took the fifth rank with a percentage weight reaching (48.75%).

Table (4.11)
The sum of responses, means, std. deviation and the % weight and rank of each domain from the diagnostic test

Domain	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	% weight	Rank	Rank in the scope
a. Lexical competence	367	4.170	1.341	52.13	3	
b. Grammatical competence	482	5.477	2.139	54.77	1	
c. Semantic competence	266	3.023	1.446	50.38	4	
d. Orthographic competence	374	4.250	1.889	53.13	2	
e. Phonological competence	429	4.875	1.905	48.75	5	
1.linguistic competence	1918	21.795	6.301	51.89		1
2. Sociolinguistics competence	359	4.080	1.750	50.99		2
3. Pragmatic competence	353	4.011	2.215	50.14		4
4. Discourse competence	356	4.045	1.893	50.57		3
5. Strategic competence	297	3.375	1.802	42.19		5
Total	3283	37.307	11.269	50.41		

Second : The Islamic University-Gaza

Table (4.12) below illustrates that the discourse competence took the first rank with a percentage weight reaching (61.36 %), followed by the linguistic competence which got the second rank with a percentage weight reaching (61.33%). After that, the pragmatic competence obtained the third rank with a percentage weight reaching (59.47%). The sociolinguistic competence occupied the fourth rank with a percentage weight reaching (59.09%). Finally, the strategic competence took the fifth rank with a percentage weight reaching (45.83%).

Among the components of linguistic competence, the grammatical competence took the first rank with a percentage weight reaching (66.36%), followed by the orthographic competence which obtained the second rank with a percentage weight reaching (64.02%). After that, the semantic competence got the third rank with a percentage weight reaching (59.60%). The phonological competence occupied the fourth rank with a percentage weight reaching (58.48%). Finally, lexical competence took the fifth rank with a percentage weight reaching (57.20%).

Table (4.12)
The sum of responses, means, std. deviation and the % weight and rank of each domain from the diagnostic test

Domain	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	% weight	Rank	Rank in the scope
1. Linguistic competences						
a. Lexical competence	151	4.576	1.324	57.20	5	
b. Grammatical competence	219	6.636	1.636	66.36	1	
c. Semantic competence	118	3.576	1.300	59.60	3	
d. Orthographic competence	169	5.121	1.596	64.02	2	
e. Phonological competence	193	5.848	1.544	58.48	4	
1. Linguistic competence	850	25.758	5.178	61.33		2
2. Sociolinguistic competence	156	4.727	1.663	59.09		4
3. Pragmatic competence	157	4.758	2.031	59.47		3
4. Discourse competence	162	4.909	1.843	61.36		1
5. Strategic competence	121	3.667	1.671	45.83		5
Total	1446	43.818	9.033	59.21		-

Third :Al-Aqsa University

Table (4.13) below shows that the sociolinguistic competence took the first rank with a percentage weight reaching (50.37%), followed by the discourse competence which got the second rank with a percentage weight reaching (49.26%). After that, the pragmatic competence obtained the third rank with a percentage weight reaching (47.79%). The linguistic competence occupied the fourth rank with a percentage weight reaching (47.34%). Finally, the strategic competence took the fifth rank with a percentage weight reaching (40.81%).

Among the components of linguistic competence, the lexical competence took the first rank with a percentage weight reaching (49.63%), followed by the grammatical competence which took the second rank with a percentage weight reaching (48.82%). After that, the phonological competence took the third rank with a percentage weight reaching (47.06%). The semantic competence took the fourth rank with a percentage weight reaching (46.08%). Finally, orthographic competence took the fifth rank with a percentage weight reaching (44.49%).

Table (4.13)
The sum of responses, means, std. deviation and the % weight and rank of each domain from the diagnostic test

Domain	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	% weight	Rank	Rank in the scope
1. Linguistic competences						
a. Lexical competence	135	3.971	1.487	49.63	1	
b. Grammatical competence	166	4.882	2.226	48.82	2	
c. Semantic competence	94	2.765	1.394	46.08	4	
d. Orthographic competence	121	3.559	2.106	44.49	5	
e. Phonological competence	160	4.706	2.008	47.06	3	
1.linguistic competence	676	19.882	6.376	47.34		4
2. Sociolinguistic competence	137	4.029	1.660	50.37		1
3. Pragmatic competence	130	3.824	2.480	47.79		3
4. Discourse competence	134	3.941	1.808	49.26		2
5. Strategic competence	111	3.265	1.746	40.81		5
Total	1188	34.941	12.690	47.22		-

Fourth: Al-Azhar University

Table (4.14) below illustrates that the linguistic competence took the first rank with a percentage weight reaching (44.44%), followed by the sociolinguistic competence which got the second rank with a percentage weight reaching (39.29%). After that, the pragmatic competence also took the second rank with a percentage weight reaching (39.29%). The strategic competence obtained the fourth rank with a percentage weight reaching (38.69%). Finally, the discourse competence occupied the fifth rank with a percentage weight reaching (35.71%).

Among the components of linguistic competence, the orthographic competence took the first rank with a percentage weight reaching (50.00%), followed by the lexical competence which took the second rank with a percentage weight reaching (48.21%). After that, the grammatical competence took the third rank with a percentage weight reaching (46.19%). The semantic competence took the fourth rank with a percentage weight reaching (42.86%). Finally, phonological competence took the fifth rank with a percentage weight reaching (36.19%).

Table (4.14)

The sum of responses, means, std. deviation and the % weight and rank of each domain from the diagnostic test

Domain	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	% weight	Rank	Rank in the scope
1. Linguistic competences						
a. Lexical competence	81	3.857	0.964	48.21	2	
b. Grammatical competence	97	4.619	1.962	46.19	3	
c. Semantic competence	54	2.571	1.535	42.86	4	
d. Orthographic competence	84	4.000	1.414	50.00	1	
e. Phonological competence	76	3.619	1.431	36.19	5	
1.linguistic competence	392	18.667	4.509	44.44		1
2. Sociolinguistic competence	66	3.143	1.652	39.29		2
3. Pragmatic competence	66	3.143	1.682	39.29		2
4. Discourse competence	60	2.857	1.424	35.71		5
5. Strategic competence	65	3.095	2.095	38.69		4
Total	649	30.905	5.804	41.76		

4.4 Summary

This chapter answered the questions of the study by presenting the results of the two instruments used (the questionnaire and the diagnostic test). To answer the questions of the study, the researcher used the frequencies, the sum of responses, means, std. deviation and the percentage weight and rank of each item of the questionnaire. Results indicated that students had the competences, but they had poor performance since there was no matching between students' competence and students'

performance. Moreover, results indicated that students had a problem with the strategic competence. In the light of these results, the discussion will be provided in the next chapter.

Chapter V

Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Discussion of the Results of the Questionnaire

5.3 Discussion of the Results of the Diagnostic Test

5.4 Conclusions

5.5 Recommendations

Chapter V

Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces, interprets and discusses the findings of the study and match them to the theoretical framework, to the findings of the previous studies and to the opinions of some writers. The researcher will just take the highest and the lowest two items from each domain to be discussed because the other items in the same domain are mediates between the highest and the lowest items. For example: Lexical competence consists of seven items, the highest and the lowest two items in the percentage will be taken for the discussion. In addition, suggestions and recommendations depending on the study findings will be presented at the end of this chapter.

5.2 Discussion of the Results of the Questionnaire

As stated in chapter III, the questionnaire addressed the following initiation at the beginning of each domain (I was prepared to). As a result, before discussing the sub-questions the researcher would presents the standard scale of preparedness in order to better analyze the results. This standard scale is mentioned in Barzaq (2007) and published by Council for Cultural Cooperation (1996) Table (5.1)

Table (5.1)
Standard Scale of Preparedness

From 50 to 60	Not at all prepared to acquire communicative competence.
More than 61 to 70	Somewhat well prepared to acquire communicative competence.
More than 71 to 80	Moderately well prepared to acquire communicative competence.
More than 81 to 90	Very well prepared to acquire communicative competence.
More than 91 to 100	Exemplary prepared to acquire communicative competence.

5.2.1 Answer and discussion of the first sub-question:

To what extent do fourth level English major students in Faculties of Education at Gaza universities have the linguistic competences?

A: Lexical Competence: Seven items were included under this domain, from A1-A7. (Table 4.1).

The Items that Got the Highest Weight were:

- No (A1) "deduce the meaning of words from their context" occupied the first rank with a percentage weight (82.50%). Students got the highest rate at this item because of their familiarity of guessing the meaning of unknown words by using the information around the word to help. Moreover, context clues use the words, phrases, or sentences surrounding an unfamiliar vocabulary word to figure out the meaning of the word. From the researcher's point of view, teaching students how to use context clues involves the teacher first modeling the strategy. As teachers are reading with students, they can stop at an unfamiliar word in a sentence and show students how they deduce the meaning based on the clues around it. Teachers should practice this frequently with students, and once they understand what context clues are and how to use them, teachers should have them practice it independently. This result corresponds with Cook (1993) who stated that most vocabulary words are learned from context. The more words students are exposed to, the better vocabulary they will have. While students read, they should pay close attention to words they do not know. First, they should try to figure out their meanings from context. Then look the words up. It is better to read and listen to challenging material, so that they will be exposed to many new words.

- No (A5) "identify the root, prefix and suffix in a word " obtained the second rank with a percentage weight (74.55%). Students took the second rank on this item because suffixes and prefixes are common topics in English and they study it from early ages before entering universities. This result confirms with White (1988) who stated if students learn just the four most common prefixes in English (un-, re-, in-, dis-), and the four most common suffixes in English (-able, -er, -ness, -less), they have the key to deciphering two thirds of all English words that have prefixes and suffixes.

- No (A7) "master a vocabulary that is adequate to express knowledge, experience, perceptions, emotions and personal opinions" also took the second rank with a percentage weight (74.55%). Students obtained the second rank on this item because they have the choice to choose their own words to express knowledge, experience, or personal opinions, so they will not feel frustrated or unconfident because as mentioned they used the words that they master. From the researcher's point of view, students will need encouragement to use this strategy. The strategy can be extended to help students prepare to write reports about particular topics; however, this needs a lot of practice. This agrees with Nation (1990) who mentioned that learning a word will not help very much if students promptly forget it. Research shows that it takes from 10 to 20 repetitions to really make a word part of students' vocabulary. It helps to write the word - both the definition and a sentence you make up using the word - perhaps on an index card that can later be reviewed. As soon as students learn a new word, they should start using it and review it periodically to see if they have forgotten any of their new words.

And the Items that Got the Least Weight were:

- No (A6) "use similar sounding words accurately (noticeable and notable)" got the sixth rank with a percentage weight (68.18%). Students ranked this item sixth because they do not have the adequate amount of similar sounding words in English, so they have difficulty in using this type of words. Moreover, EFL students will inevitably require more time and practice when learning how to understand many of the similar sounding words. This result relates to what Meara (1996) suggested, when stated that an activity which depends on making up as many associations and connections as possible between similar sounding words. This activity depends on saying the word aloud to activate students' auditory memory then relating the word to words they already know.

- No (A4) " distinguish between standard words and their non-standard forms (e.g. die and kick the bucket)" obtained the seventh rank with a percentage weight (67.27%). Students got the seventh rank on this item because of its difficulty. Moreover, students do not have the adequate amount of nonstandard words in English because they used to learn English in academic places which focus on standard form of the words. From the researcher's point of view, English graduates should have some of nonstandard words, so it is better to enhance or provide students with activities that encourage them to seek nonstandard words. In this context, the results of the researcher agrees with Laufer and Paribahkt (1998) who recommended using vocabulary lists. Students must make basic divisions of lexical fields that they could arrange them in groups of standard and non-standard words. This will facilitate better understanding and further processing by students.

The total percentage weight of lexical competence reached (72.95%), and according to the scale presented in Table (5.1), students were moderately well prepared to acquire lexical competence.

B: Grammatical Competence: Ten items were included under this domain, from A8-A17. (Table 4.2).

The Items that Got the Highest Weight were:

- No (A8) "distinguish between tenses according to its use " occupied the first rank with a percentage weight (84.55). Students obtained the highest rate on this item because of their familiarity with tenses. They have studied tenses since they were at prep schools. Moreover, grammar courses at the university enhance this topic more and more and provided a lot of exercises related to this topic, so students feel that they have the ability to distinguish between tenses according to their usage. This result goes with what Richards (2002) stated that if students want to learn English grammar well, they will need to practice each grammar point until they can use it easily. They should look for a book of grammar exercises that also has answers. Online activities and quizzes can also help. Moreover, they should focus on just one grammar point each time they study

- No (A10) "use articles correctly" Got the second rank with a percentage weight (78.86). Students ranked this item second because of their familiarity with articles. Moreover, students love this topic because they can learn it through different activities and games. In addition, articles is not a big topic in English. Students can read the usage of articles and then they can answer any question easily. This result corresponds with Richards (2002) who stated that more exercises and more practice can help a lot in achieving the desired goal of the learning process.

- No (A11) "use question tags correctly" also got the second rank with a percentage weight (78.86). Students obtained the second rank on this item because they were interested in this topic. For students, this topic is not complex one because it had less exceptions. As a result, students feel that this topic is easy and they can do well in this type of questions.

- No (A15) "distinguish between sentences that are written in different tenses." Also obtained the second rank with a percentage weight (78.86). While (A8) talked about the usage of the tenses, this item talked about the form of tenses. Students ranked this item second because of their familiarity with tenses. Students studied tenses from very young age, so when they reached to the fourth level, they felt that they have the adequate information about the form and usage of different tenses.

And the Items that Got the Least Weight were:

- No (A13) "correct the ungrammatical part of a sentence" occupied the ninth rank with a percentage weight (74.09). When teachers gave students a sentence and asked them to identify the tense and form of that sentence, they could easily do it. However, when teachers gave them ungrammatical sentence and asked them to correct the ungrammatical part of this sentence, students found difficulty in identifying it. From the researcher's point of view, this is because teachers used to use the deductive way of teaching grammar. As a result, students used to identify the usage, form, and key words of sentences. They did not use to take ungrammatical sentences to correct them. Teachers always wrote the correct sentence and explained the usage, form and key words of the tense. As a result, it is better to follow the inductive or consciousness raising way of teaching English grammar. These results confirm the result of Thornburry (2001) who indicated that Arab students have difficulties in learning

grammatical competence, and he advised learners to try to get an overview of English grammar from a text book or online resource and to note the grammar points they need to work on for at least a few days.

- No (A17) "formulate sentences from words, groups of sentences from sentences by observing semantic and formative relations." took the tenth rank with a percent weight (72.27). Students took the tenth rank on this item because this item needs students to have a very big number of words and needs knowledge of English connectors and their usage. Moreover, as Swan in Richards (2002) stated that identifying the semantic relations in English is not an easy topic because there are a lot of kinds of semantic relations such as synonym, antonym, holonymy – which is the semantic relation between a whole and its part. Meronymy, part to whole relation - the semantic relation that holds between a part and the whole.... etc. As a result , students feel that they need more practice to be professional in this type of knowledge. In this context, the result of the researcher agrees with Swan in Richards (2002) who recommended paying close attention to semantic and formative relation when reading English, When students are trying to learn correct English grammar, it is not enough to understand general idea of what they read. They will need to understand exactly why each sentence is written that way. When they read a sentence, they should ask themselves if they can make similar sentences. If they cannot or they are not sure, they should find text book exercises for those grammar points and practice

The total percentage weight of grammatical competence reached (77.55%), and according to the scale presented in Table (5.1) students were moderately well prepared to acquire grammatical competence.

C : Semantic Competence: Six items were included under this domain, from A18-A23. (Table 4.3).

The Items that Got the Highest Weight were:

- No (A18) "identify different meanings of the same word in different contexts." got the first rank with a percentage weight (81.59%). Students got the highest rate on this item because context clues help them to identify the different meaning of the same words. For example, the word "pupil" when a teacher put it in two different sentences, students will be able to distinguish between *pupil* which means students and *pupil* which means part of the eye. And this is as mentioned before because of the context clues. This goes with Cook (1993) who indicated that vast majority of words are learned from context. If students want to improve their context skills, they should pay close attention to how words are used and related with each other

- No (A22) "be aware that the meaning of the word affects the meaning of the text." took the second rank with a percentage weight (80.45%). Students obtained the second rank on this item because they were aware of the different meaning of words and because students at fourth level have the ability to choose the words related and relevant to the topic. This agrees with Davidson (1984) who pointed out that students were aware that parts of a written or spoken statement that precede or follow a specified word or passage can influence its meaning.

And the Items that got the Least Weight were:

- No (A19) "explain the meaning of a given word/word phrase from the text." took the fifth rank with a percentage weight (77.73%). When students are given words in context, they can guess their meaning. However, when teachers extract this word from the context and ask students about its meaning, they will have difficulty. As a result,

when teaching English vocabulary, teachers should vary the way in which they introduce it. they can use realia when possible, pictures, drawings on the board, antonyms, demonstration, readings and stories. These results confirmed with Stephen and Philip (1993) who suggested some activities to improve semantic competence such as Bingo , odd one out....etc.

- No (A20) "compare word meanings, particularly synonyms or partial synonyms, homonyms and polysemy." obtained the sixth rank with a percentage weight (73.18 %). Students got the sixth rank at this item because giving a synonym is easy to do, and the vast majority of teachers will do. However, the only problem with it is that there are no true synonyms. Every word has its own history and character, and usually its own usage. For example , the words *tall* and *high* are synonyms but in some cases we cannot use them interchangeably e.g. we can say tall building, tall boy, high building, but we cannot say high boy. Therefore, care is needed when explaining vocabulary by giving synonyms, homonyms and polysemy. An explanation of the word's usage, and actual classroom practice using it are necessary. And as Cook (1993) mentioned the basic principle of teaching English vocabulary is to teach words in relationship to other words. Moreover, these topics need to be taught through a lot of activities. This agrees with Stephen and Philip (1993) who referred to some activities to develop this topic such as word families, classification, opposites...etc.

The total percentage weight of semantic competence reached (78.48%), and according to the scale presented in Table (5.1) students were moderately well prepared to acquire semantic competence.

D: Orthographic Competence: Eight items were included under this domain, from A24-A3. (Table 4.4).

The Items that Got the Highest Weight were:

- No (A29) "write i/y correctly after consonants (study – studies)." took the first rank with a percentage weight (80.23 %). Students took the highest rate on this item because this is a very easy rule, and it has not any exceptions, students can add *ies* to the words which end by y if the y was preceded by a consonant, and they can only add s if y was preceded by a vowel. This agrees with Phenix (2001) who indicated that students feel they are professional at writing i/y correctly after consonants because it is a very simple rule. The only thing that they need to know is vowel letters!

- No (A24) "use punctuation to represent types of sentences." occupied the second rank with a percentage weight (79.55 %). Students obtained the second rank on this item because of their familiarity with punctuation marks and their usage in English. Moreover, English courses at the university such as *Writing I & II* teach students different kinds of sentences and introduce different activities for students to distinguish between sentences according to the punctuation marks. In this context, Phenix (2001) suggested some activities to develop students' punctuation. These activities need students' continuous practice to be professional in using punctuation marks.

And the Items that Got the Least Weight were:

- No (A30) "use orthographic and punctuation rules appropriately." took the seventh rank with a percentage weight (71.14%). Here, students may be familiar with punctuation marks but may have problem in orthographic rules. As a result, students

need a lot of practice in this item. As Halliday (1984) stated " Practice is very important to master any language rule"

- No (A25) "disambiguate meanings resulting from the sound and the spelling of a word. (homophone)." obtained the eighth rank with a percentage weight (68.64%). When teachers gave students two words such as *beet* and *beat*, according to its pronunciation they will be able to identify the relation between these two words" homophone", but when teachers asked them to disambiguate meaning resulting from the sound and spelling they will have difficulty because students did not use to take activities in this kind. They used to be asked what a homophone is and what examples of homophone they can give. In this context, Rabab'ah (2001) stated that vocabulary items in Arab countries are still taught in isolation though the communicative language teaching stresses the importance of teaching vocabulary items with considerable attention to its relation with other vocabulary.

The total percentage weight of orthographic competence reached (75.11%), and according to the scale presented in Table (5.1) students were moderately well prepared to acquire orthographic competence.

E: Phonological Competence: Nine items were included under this domain, from A32-A4. (Table 4.5).

The Items that Got the Highest Weight are:

- No (A36) "distinguish between voiced and voiceless sounds and their effects on pronouncing words." occupied the first rank with a percentage weight (78.18%). Students took the highest rate on this item because students at fourth level have the adequate information about voiced and voiceless sounds. Moreover, phonology courses at the university provide students with enough information about voiced and

voiceless sounds and their effects on pronouncing words. This confirms with Rabab'ah (2001) who indicated that Arab learners did not have difficulties in learning voiced and voiceless sounds since this depends on specific rules without exceptions.

- No (A32) "distinguish between long and short vowels." got the second rank with a percentage weight (76.36%). Students got the second rank on this item because of their familiarity with short and long vowels. Moreover, these are specific sounds not a lot. Also, phonology courses provide students with enough information about short and long vowels from the first level. As a result, students at the fourth level feel that they have the adequate information to distinguish between short and long vowels. This agrees with Rabab'ah (2001) who pointed out that long and short vowels in English have specific numbers, so students can easily remember, keep and distinguish between them.

And the Items that Got the Least Weight were:

- No (A38) "segment words into phonemes" obtained the eighth rank with a percentage weight (66.14%). Phoneme segmentation is the ability to break words down into individual sounds. For example, the learner breaks the word run into its component sounds— r, u, and n, and students can do this easily. However and from the researcher's point of view, when the phoneme combined with the other phonemes to form a new word, students will have difficulty in the segmentation because this needed from students to have information about the etymology, stem, and root of the word. As a result, students need to learn this item through enough activities. In this context Chomsky and Halle (1968) presented some solutions to the phonological competence difficulties such as listening to how native speakers pronounce various words and phrases and try to pronounce these words as they do.

- No (A39) "employ suitable verbal, non-verbal and paralinguistic features (stress, tempo, intonation...etc.) of speech in both prepared and improvised oral expressions." Occupied the ninth rank with a percentage weight (62.27%). Students may not have problems with verbal and nonverbal features as will appear in (E1). However, students have problems with paralinguistic features (stress, tempo, intonation...etc) although they studied many courses which enhance this topic at the university. The researcher thinks that native speakers also have difficulty in this topic. From the researcher's point of view, negative transfer between English and Arabic causes this difficulty for the Arab learners. As a result, students need more practice about these topics to be proficient in paralinguistic features. In this context Kasper and Rose (2002) who stated that one must pay attention to the listeners' verbal and non-verbal reactions in order to redirect the speech whenever necessary

The total percentage weight of phonological competence reached (70.58%), and according to the scale presented in Table (5.1) students were somewhat well prepared to acquire phonological competence.

5.2.2 Answer and discussion of the second sub-question:

To what extent do fourth level English major students in Faculties of Education at Gaza universities have the sociolinguistic competences?

Sociolinguistic Competence: Eight items were included under this domain, from B1-B8. (Table 4.6).

The Items that Got the Highest Weight were:

- No (B8)" starting, maintaining and closing a simple conversation" took the first rank with a percentage weight (74.09%). Students obtained the highest rate on this item

because they can use their own words to start and close a simple conversation. Also, students used to do simple conversations from very young age before entering the university. Moreover, English Departments provide students with material which enhances this skill such as *Oral Communication Skill and Listening and Speaking*. As a result, students are motivated to start, maintain and close simple conversations because this depends on role play methods. This confirms with the results of Piotroska (2008) who recommended using role play in teaching.

- No (B3) "differentiate between subjective and objective messages and recognize the communicative intent of the conversation partner." got the second rank with a percentage weight (72.27%). Students got the second rank on this item because students at the fourth level have the adequate information to distinguish between subjective and objective messages. Moreover, they can depend on other things such as stress, intonation, eye contact and body language to recognize the communicative intent of the conversation partner. This agrees with Broersma (2001) who indicated that body language, stress and intonation can help learners to differentiate between different moods of speakers.

And the Items that Got the Least Weight were:

- No (B5) "interact spontaneously and confidently in formal communicative situations." occupied the seventh rank with a percentage weight (70.00%). Students got the seventh rank on this item because they used to use English in very planned situations such as lectures, so students feel confident in lectures because they prepare what they are going to talk; however, they do not have the ability to interact spontaneously and confidently in formal communicative situations because they were not prepared well.

- No (B7) "speak fluently and accurately in most situations with a complexity appropriate to the situations of communication." took the eighth rank with a percentage weight (68.64%). Students obtained the eighth rank on this item because it needed from students to speak both fluently and accurately together, and this is difficult for students because it needed a very big amount of vocabulary and needed good knowledge of English grammar. Moreover, students did not use to be accurate and fluent from the beginning because most teachers at schools explained English in Arabic. This corresponds with Rabab'ah (2001) who indicated that one third of courses in the English departments are taught in Arabic .

The total percentage weight of sociolinguistic competence reached (74.83%), and according to the scale that presented in Table (5.1) students were moderately well prepared to acquire sociolinguistic competence.

5.2.3 Answer and discussion of the third sub-question:

To what extent do fourth level English major students in Faculties of Education at Gaza universities have the pragmatic competences?

Pragmatic Competence: Eight items were included under this domain, from C1-C 8. (Table 4.7).

The Items that Got the Highest Weight were:

- No (C2) "ask questions, to make requests, to give an opinion, to justify a point of view." obtained the first rank with a percentage weight (77.05%). Students got the highest rate on this item because they have the enough information and instructions to ask questions, make requests, give an opinion, and to justify a point of view as they used to these things from schools. In this context, the result of the researcher agrees

with Hudson (2001) who pointed out to role play as an effective way to train students to make requests and give opinions.

- No (C6) "use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know". also occupied the first rank with a percentage weight (77.05%). Students at prep schools can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where they live and people they know. As a result, students at the fourth level feel that they have the adequate knowledge to describe these things and other complex things, so this item got high rate. In this context, Crystal (1987) indicated that most of students are professional in describing things related to them or to their families.

And the Items that Got the Least Weight were:

- No (C5) "understand instructions addressed carefully and slowly to me and follow short , simple directions." got the seventh rank with a percentage weight (72.50%). Students got the seventh rank on this item because they feel hesitate when others gave them instructions. Students used to give instructions in their own words, but they were unconfident when others gave them the instructions. This goes with Leech (1983) who stated that students began to feel worried when others give them instructions especially when those others are unfamiliar to them such a manger of company or hotel.

- No (C3) "conduct a dialogue, a telephone conversation, and understand pragmatic implication" occupied the eighth rank with a percentage weight (70.91%). Students obtained the eighth rank on this item because they used to conduct a simple dialogue with each other in face to face situations. They do not have the ability to conduct a telephone conversation because they used to talk with their relatives in Arabic. Even if they want to talk in English, their relatives will not understand them because not all

of them speak English. As a result, the lack of practice is the reason that let students feel it difficult to conduct a telephone conversation. Moreover, students got the lowest rate at this item because of their unfamiliarity of pragmatic implication. In this context, the result of the researcher agrees with Kasper and Rose (2002) who suggested some activities for students to develop pragmatic competence such as encouraging students to talk a lot in the classroom to use language in social interaction. Also, students should be provided with different opportunities to express their opinions in different ways.

The total percentage weight of pragmatic competence reached (70.99%), and according to the scale presented in Table (5.1) students were somewhat well prepared to acquire pragmatic competence.

5.2.4 Answer and discussion of the fourth sub-question:

To what extent do fourth level English major students in Faculties of Education at Gaza universities have the discourse competences?

Discourse Competence: Eight items were included under this domain, from D1-D 8. (Table 4.8).

The Items that Got the Highest Weight were:

- No (D3) "write simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like "and", "but" and "because" occupied the first rank with a percentage weight (79.32%). Students got the highest rate on this item because " and, but , because" are simple connectors and they studied them at schools. As a result, students at the fourth level are familiar with these and other connectors. In this context, the result of the researcher agrees with Martin (2004) who suggested some activities to develop

discourse competence among students, they must use grammatical cohesion devices in context (e.g. ellipsis, logical connectors, parallel structures)

- No (D7) "lay out a text with heading, introduction, body and conclusion." also took the first rank with a percentage weight (79.32%). Students took the highest rate at this item because heading, introduction, and conclusion of any topic has specific forms and students at the fourth level have the adequate information to lay out a text with heading, introduction, body and conclusion. Moreover, courses such as *Writing I & II* enhance these skills among students through their studying in different levels. This goes with Martin (2004) who pointed out that students in English departments should be able to work out an introduction/development/conclusion of a piece of oral or written language.

And the Items that Got the Least Weight were:

- No (D6) "write simple, short essays on topics of interest." Took the seventh rank with a percentage weight (72.05%). Students obtained the seventh rank at this item because they used to write simple topics not essays. Moreover, there was only one course " *writing II*" which talked about writing essays in English. As a result and from the researcher's point of view, students need more practice to be proficient in writing essays.

- No (D4) "deal with sentence problems (fragment, choppy, run onetc.)." occupied the eighth rank with a percentage weight (71.14%). Students got the eighth rank on this item because teachers used to use the deductive way of teaching. For example, they write a fragment sentence and asked students to correct this fragment sentence. However, when a teacher writes a group of sentences and ask students to identify the type of problem and to correct it, students will have difficulty in this kind

of exercises because they are not used to this type of questions as stated before because most teachers depend on the deductive way of teaching. This corresponds with the result of Rabab'ah (2001) who observed that most of Arab teachers depend on deductive way of teaching rather than inductive way. Moreover, they depend on the method of Teacher Taking Time (TTT) instead of Student Taking Time (STT).

The total percentage weight of discourse competence reached (74.38%), and according to the scale that presented in Table (5.1) students were moderately well prepared to acquire discourse competence.

5.2.5 Answer and discussion of the fifth sub-question:

To what extent do fourth level English major students in Faculties of Education at Gaza universities have the strategic competences?

Strategic Competence: Eight items were included under this domain, from E1-E 8. Table (4.9).

The Items that Got the Highest Weight were:

- No (E8) "improve my strategic competence through reading more and more." occupied the first rank with a percentage weight (75.00%). Students obtained the highest rate on this item because reading is the easiest skill. Moreover, through reading students can develop a lot of strategies especially strategies related to vocabulary because context clues help them a lot in reading. In this context the researcher's result agrees with the result of Rabab'ah (2001) who stated that more students are exposed to reading passages, more they learn about strategic competence.

- No (E1) "use the verbal and non-verbal communication strategies." took the second rank with a percentage weight (72.05%). Students got the second rank on this item

because they are familiar with verbal and non-verbal communication strategies. Moreover and as it is said, actions speak louder than words; therefore, nonverbal communication strategies can be an effective way to get a message across. Nonverbal communication can range from shaking a fist in the air and rolling the eyes, to stepping away from someone during a conversation. This result confirms the result of Bialystok (1990) who indicated that 80-90 percent of all human communication is based on non-verbal cues, or anything other than the words. This is how human beings communicate emotions and attitudes. It includes a variety of things like body language, gestures, facial expressions, touch, smell, voice rate and intonation.

And the Items that Got the Least Weight were:

- No (E2) "use translation as the last strategy in learning a new situation." got the seventh rank with a percentage weight (68.64%). From the researcher's point of view, it is good that using this strategy occupied the seventh rank because students should not use translation as the first strategy when meeting unfamiliar words. This will kill the creative thinking among students. This goes with Bachman and Palmer (1996) who recommended students to search for additional class and depend on other strategies such as context clues, antonyms, synonyms...etc. and use translation as the last strategy in learning a new situation.

- No (E4) "use orthographic and phonological cues to understand new words." took the eighth rank with a percentage weight (67.05%). Students got the eighth rank at this item because they used to use the familiar strategies such as context clues, realia, antonyms, synonyms...etc. As a result, students at the fourth level feel that they need more practice to be good at using orthographic and phonological cues to understand new words. This result is related to Rabab'ah (2001) who stated that most Arab

students depend on simple communication strategies rather than the effective and new ones.

The total percentage weight of strategic competence reached (75.60%), and according to the scale presented in Table (5.1) students were moderately well prepared to acquire strategic competence.

5.3 Discussion of the Results of the Diagnostic Test

5.3.1 Answer and discussion of the sixth sub-question:

To what extent do the competences of fourth level English major students match their performance?

Table (5.2) below shows that linguistic competence took the first rank with a percentage weight reaching (51.89%), followed by the sociolinguistic competence which took the second rank with a percentage weight reaching (50.99%). After that, the discourse competence took the third rank with a percentage weight reaching (50.57%). The pragmatic competence took the fourth rank with a percentage weight reaching (50.14%). Finally, the strategic competence took the fifth rank with a percentage weight reaching (42.19 %).

About the components of linguistic competence, the grammatical competence took the first rank with a percentage weight reaching (54.77%), followed by the orthographic competence which took the second rank with a percentage weight reaching (53.13%). After that, the lexical competence took the third rank with a percentage weight reaching (52.13%). The semantic competence took the fourth rank with a percentage weight reaching (50.38%). Finally, phonological competence took the fifth rank with a percentage weight reaching (48.75%).

From the results in Table (5.2) below, it appeared that the results of the diagnostic test contradicted the results of the questionnaire. For example, the total percentage weight of the sociolinguistic competence reached (50.99%) in the diagnostic test while it reached (74.83) in the questionnaire. As a result, this means that students' competences do not match their performance. Also, the results revealed that students at the three universities had a lot of areas of weaknesses in learning the components of communicative competence, especially the strategic competence.

One possible reason for these results is the disadvantages of the questionnaire in which students might not wish to reveal the information or they might think that they will not benefit from responding, perhaps even may be penalized by giving their real opinion although the researcher told the students why the information is being collected and how the results will be beneficial. Moreover, the researcher asked them to reply honestly and told them if their response is negative this is just as useful as a more positive opinion. This agreed with Seltzer and Cook (1986) and Popper (2004) who stated that questionnaires invite people to lie and answer the questions very vaguely which they would not do in an interview.

Besides the disadvantages of the questionnaire, the researcher returned the contradiction between the results of the questionnaire and the diagnostic test to the differences between students' attitudes and students' achievement. According to the results of the questionnaire students seem to have positive attitudes towards learning communicative competence, but these positive attitudes do not mean that students will get high marks on the diagnostic test, exactly like the person who loves the Turkish language and is not able to speak it. In other words, students have the competences, but they have poor performance.

Moreover, students got low marks at the diagnostic test because it was the first diagnostic test that they took as a whole. Students used to be told about the time of the test and prepared themselves to the test, but that did not happen in this situation. Finally, the last possible reason for the results is the methodology used by instructors. Some of them neglect the recent ways of teaching and depend on the traditional ones. Moreover, not all instructors encourage students to use the tool of self- evaluation. As a result, students feel that they know everything, but when they addressed to an exam, instructors are shocked of their results.

Table (5.2)

Comparison between Students' Results in the Questionnaire and the Diagnostic Test in the Three Universities

Competence	Students' Competence (% weight of the questionnaire)	Students' Performance (% weight of the test)
1. Linguistic competence	74.93	51.89
a) Lexical competence	72.95	52.13
b) Grammatical competence	77.55	54.77
c) Semantic competence	78.48	50.38
d) Orthographic competence	75.11	53.13
e) Phonological competence	70.58	48.75
2) Sociolinguistic competence	74.83	50.99
3) Pragmatic competence	70.99	50.14
4) Discourse competence	74.38	50.57
5) Strategic competence	75.60	42.19

5.4 Conclusions

5.4.1 Conclusions Related to the Questionnaire

According to the scale presented in Table (5.1) and going through chapter five, the following conclusions can be noticed about the fourth level English major students at the three universities:

1. They were moderately well prepared to acquire the different components of linguistic competence.
2. They were moderately well prepared to acquire sociolinguistic competence.
3. They were somewhat well prepared to acquire pragmatic competence.
4. They were moderately well prepared to acquire strategic competence.
5. They were moderately well prepared to acquire discourse competence.

5.4.2 Conclusions Related to the Diagnostic Test

Based on the discussion in chapter five, the following conclusions can be noticed from the diagnostic test:

1. Students at the three universities have some areas of weaknesses in learning communicative competence especially on strategic competence.
2. Students at the three universities have the competences, but they have poor performance. In other words, students' competence did not match their performance.

The researcher attributes these weaknesses to the following reasons:

1. The disadvantages of the questionnaire as the results of the questionnaire did not match the results of the diagnostic test.

2. The differences between students' attitudes and students' achievement. Exactly like the person who likes Turkish language but cannot able to speak it.
3. May be because it is the first diagnostic test that students took, students used to be informed about test before taking it, so they prepared themselves. However, in this study there was no preparation.
4. Using Arabic language rather than the target language by many instructors in explaining difficult words and rules. Moreover, most of the listening courses did not provide students with the listening materials. Therefore, teachers try to read dialogues to their students, and this does not provide the learners with the necessary native speakers model. This also demotivates learners and makes them bored. As a result, lack of the target language exposure as spoken by its native speakers could be another reason for the English majors' weaknesses in communicative competence.

5.5 Recommendations

To overcome such weaknesses, here are categorized recommendations:

5.5.1 Recommendations for Faculties of Education-English Departments:

Faculties of Education-English departments are recommended to:

1. Increase the number of methodology courses which enhance the learning of different components of communicative competence. Moreover, these courses will develop students' awareness of current trends in language teaching and give them new ideas and materials to use. In this context, the researcher suggests that it would be more helpful if some courses such as Islamic studies and social studies are taught in English rather than Arabic because the number of methodology courses in the

bachelor degree is not enough to help graduates communicate freely and effectively. For example, in the Islamic University of Gaza four courses out of seven are taught in Arabic at the first semester (Appendix 10 shows the academic plan that students at the Islamic University of Gaza study)

2. Review the curricula at the beginning of each year to ensure that the plans are suitable for students' needs. This means that the curricula should be regularly revised and re-developed because knowledge, methods...etc. taught at universities are also constantly changing. In this context, heads of English departments and instructors are advised to create and use learner-centered syllabi where students and their ability to learn are at the center of what they do. This confirmed with Martin (1996) who mentioned that learner centered approaches use active learning strategies to engage students directly in learning processes, enhance academic achievement and promote the development of important learning skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving, and the ability to cooperatively work with others. This means that they focus on the process of learning rather than the content, that the content and the teacher adapt to the students rather than expecting the students to adapt to the content, that responsibility is placed on students to learn rather than on professors to teach. So, ideally, students should progress from a primarily instructor-led approach to a primarily student-initiated approach to learning.

3. Enhance the exchange and share experience between each other at the three universities. The exchange of experience between instructors has many benefits. First, the instructor can evaluate his work by comparing it with others. Also, when instructors share experience, they are addressing some issues with each other such issues related to recent methods and skills. Moreover, they can put plans together for achieving the goals of different courses.

4. Train students on the use of tools of self-evaluation. In order to become lifelong learners, students need to learn the importance of self-evaluation. They can do this by filling out self-evaluation forms, taking tests, writing revisions of work, asking questions, and through discussions. When students evaluate themselves, they are assessing what they know, do not know, and what they would like to know. They begin to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses. They become more familiar with their own beliefs, and possibly their misconceptions. After they self-evaluate, they will be able to set goals that they feel they can attain with the new knowledge they have about themselves. Instructors should encourage self-evaluation because self-assessment makes the students active participants in their education (Patton, 2002). There are a variety of ways for instructors to provide the students with self-assessments. Research suggests that the simplest tools to encourage student self-assessment are evaluative questions that force students to think about their work (Silverman, 2011). One thing instructor can do is to ask their students for feedback on how the class is going and what the instructor is doing well and not so well. In this way the instructor is showing that they want to make improvements where needed. Instructors could put up a suggestion box, and they can hand out evaluation forms at different times of the year. This shows students that continuous improvement is important.

5. Enhance providing student with creative education and help them acquire the creative thinking skills by adopting the contemporary trends of language teaching. Instructors should change their way of lecturing and try to use the questions that evoke the critical thinking among students rather than normal thinking. This means that instructors should focus on HOTS questions which means high order thinking skills such as evaluation.

6. Adapt educational technology, to emphasize the e-learning projects, to elaborate the online learning (e.g. Web.ct in IUG) as well, train student-on technological applications and add the computer technology as a mandate requirement in faculties of education. There is great importance of integrating technology in the process of teaching. When students are taught through slide shows or by showing films, it makes the lessons very easy and interesting for them. It helps in their learning, at the same time it motivates them to attend lectures every day. Moreover, using technology means more student involvement, so they are not bored and inactive. In addition, when students are learning through technology, they are themselves looking for information on the internet. Also, by using technology students can make their own decisions regarding the information i.e. whether it is relevant or irrelevant. They have control over how to use or present this information. Thus, one of the main benefits of using technology is that unlike an instructor-led classroom, where students passively receive whatever information the instructor is providing, students are active participants. One important thing to be mentioned here is that instructors need to receive ongoing training to be competent and to be able to use technology in classroom.

5.5.2 Recommendations for Developing Strategic Competence

Strategic competence is the only component of communicative competence that got less than 50% in the diagnostic test. As a result, the following suggestions are recommended for both students and instructors to develop strategic competence:

1. Non-verbal Language: Bialystok (1990) stated that 80%-90% of our communication is non-verbal, which includes: eye movement, tone of voice, posture,

facial expressions and hand gestures. He advised students to be aware of non-verbal communication and keep it consistent with their message.

2. Vocal Cues: Duquette et al. (1988) recommended students to not use an excessive amount of 'filler' words (sayings or words repeated often), sounds such as "uh, um" or use lengthy pauses during conversation. The listener will lose interest in what are saying and will become bored.

3. Additional Classes: Bachman and Palmer (1996) stated that they strongly believe that to develop strategic competence there should be overt classes not only during methodology course but it should be included into their conversation classes syllabi.

4. Determining Goal of Communication: Bachman and Palmer (1996) stated that students who do not know what is strategic competence will not have an opportunity to improve effectiveness of their communication. That is why Bachman and Palmer would like the conversation classes' syllabus to be combined with theoretic issues regarding communicative competence. These conversation classes will develop strategic competence among learners.

5. Using Technology: Rabab'ah (2001) stated that with the growing development of technology students were recommended to use it as a modern strategy of learning.

6. Raising Consciousness among Students: Rabab'ah (2001) indicated that raising consciousness of some strategies is important for the following reasons. First, communication strategies can lead to learning by eliciting unknown language items from the interlocutor, especially in the appeal for help strategy. Second, communication strategies are part of language use. Even native speakers use communication strategies in their speech and use time-gaining devices in order to keep the conversation going, such as "you know", "what do you call it?", and other

such strategies. Finally, the use of a communication strategy is not an indication of communication failure; on the contrary, it can be very successful in compensating for the lack of linguistic knowledge, and they can help the English language learners solve their communication problems and achieve their communication goals.

7. Guiding Students: Rabab'ah (2001) stated that teachers should provide students with the definition of communication strategies and ask them to perform tasks that require them to use communication strategies, such as definition, story-telling and role-play tasks. Then, they should be audio or video- recorded while performing these tasks. Finally, they should watch their performance in the target language and be asked to see the communication problems they encountered and how they managed to solve them.

Finally, the researcher could extract that all teachers and learners need to understand that successful language learning is not only a matter of developing grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse competence, but also the strategic competence which involves the use of communication strategies to transmit comprehensible information successfully.

5.5.3 Recommendations for Further Studies

In order to extend the findings of this study, the researcher recommended the following:

1. Conducting other studies related to the current one among faculties of arts and male students.
2. Conducting other studies related to the current one to differentiate between females' and males' performance in communicative competence.

3. Carrying out other studies to evaluate each component of communicative competence e.g. evaluating the components of sociolinguistic competence.
4. Carrying out other studies to evaluate the curricula of English Departments to make sure that it included the activities that enhance communicative competence among students.

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Appendices

Appendices

Appendix 1 The questionnaire

The Islamic University of Gaza
Faculty of Education
Department of English Teaching Methods
MA Program



The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information about the different components of communicative competence. The study title is:

An Evaluation of the Communicative Competence of
Palestinian Fourth level English Major
Students at Gaza Universities

This study aims to identify the degree of the different components of communicative competence that fourth lever English major students at Gaza universities (Islamic, Al-Azhar and Al- Aqsa University) have .Your response, along with information from other graduates and supervisors, will be used for research purposes aiming to investigate the different components of communicative competence to come out with concrete conclusions and recommendations. The requested information will remain confidential.

Thank you for your co operation

Researcher ,

Wafaa Ibrahim Qishta

A Questionnaire about Evaluating Communicative Competence of Fourth Level Students at Gaza Universities

Part A: please insert requested information:

1- Faculty	Education <input type="checkbox"/>	Art <input type="checkbox"/>
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2- Gender	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>
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3- University:	Islamic university <input type="checkbox"/>
	Al-Azhar university <input type="checkbox"/>
	Al-Aqsa university <input type="checkbox"/>

Part B:

Please respond to the following questions, in terms of the degree of your current level of ability. Use the key below to indicate the level of competency that you feel your level prepared you to carry out the indicated functions:

(key: 1=strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= disagree, 4= strongly disagree, 5= not applicable).

1- Items Related to the Assessment of Linguistic Competence:

a) Assessing Lexical Competence:

(Lexical competence is the ability to recognize and use words in a language in the way that speakers of the language use them).

I was prepared to :

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5
1	deduce the meaning of words from their context.					
2	use similar sounding words accurately (noticeable and notable)					
3	form words from given common syntactic roots/stems (word formation).					
4	master a vocabulary that is adequate to express knowledge, experience, perceptions, emotions and personal opinions.					
5	distinguish between British and American English words.					
6	identify the root, prefix and suffix in a word.					
7	distinguish between standard words and their non-standard forms (e.g. die and kick the bucket).					

b) Assessing Grammatical Competence:

(Grammatical competence is the ability to recognize and produce the distinctive grammatical structures of a language and to use them effectively in communication).

I was prepared to :

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5
1	distinguish between tenses according to its use.					
2	distinguish parts of speech in their basic forms.					
3	use prepositions correctly.					
4	correct the ungrammatical part of a sentence.					
5	use articles correctly.					
6	distinguish between transitive and intransitive verbs					
7	use question tags correctly.					
8	distinguish between sentences that are written in different tenses.					
9	distiguish between finite and nonfinite verbs.					
10	formulate sentences from words, groups of sentences from sentences by observing semantic and formative relations.					

c) Assessing Semantic Competence:

(Semantic competence is the ability to determine the meaning of a particular syntactic structure and the ability to determine the relationships between the meanings of distinct syntactic structure).

I was prepared to :

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5
1	identify topics which related to semantics.					
2	recognise the main ideas and details in a text .					
3	identify different meanings of the same word in different contexts.					
4	recognise the main ideas and details in a text .					
5	explain the meaning of a given word/word phrase from the text.					
6	be aware that the meaning of the word affects the meaning of the text.					
7	compare word meanings, particularly synonyms or partial synonyms, homonyms and polysemy.					
8	identify the aim of the speaker in an utterance, considering the context.					

d) Assessing Orthographic Competence:

(Orthographic competence is the ability to decipher and write the writing system of a language) .

I was prepared to :

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5
1	use punctuation to represent types of sentences.					
2	use orthographic and punctuation rules appropriately.					
3	disambiguate meanings resulting from the sound and the spelling of a word.(homophone)					
4	write simple types of communication correctly both in terms of content and form.					
5	write words with silent letters correctly (e.g. Knife).					
6	write i/y correctly after consonants (study – studies).					
7	spell my address , nationality and other personal details correctly.					
8	copy familiar words and short phrases e.g. simple sign or instruction.					

e)Assessing Phonological Competence:

(**Phonological competence** is the ability to recognize and produce the distinctive meaningful sounds of a language , including : consonants, vowels, tone, intonation, rhythm, and stress pattern).

I was prepared to :

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5
1	distinguish between long and short vowels.					
2	recognise a word's phonetic forms(transcription).					
3	pronounce sounds correctly .					
4	segment words into phonemes.					
5	vary intonation and place sentence stress correctly in order to express fine shades of meaning.					
6	feel confident about pronouncing words in English .					
7	distinguish between the manner and place of articulation.					
8	employ suitable verbal, non-verbal and paralinguistic features(stress, tempo, intonation...etc) of speech in both prepared and improvised oral expressions.					
9	distinguish between voiced and voiceless sounds and their effects on pronouncing words.					

2- Items Related to the Assessment of Sociolinguistic Competence:

(**Sociolinguistics competence** is the ability to interpret the social meaning of the choice of linguistic varieties and to use language with the appropriate social meaning for the communication situation).

I was prepared to :

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5
1	use different speech techniques to appreciate/evaluate politeness.					
2	speak fluently and accurately in most situations with a complexity appropriate to the situations of communication.					
3	select suitable verbal as well as non-verbal means of expression in everyday situations both at school and outside of school.					
4	interact spontaneously and confidently in formal communicative situations.					
5	differentiate between subjective and objective messages and recognise the communicative intent of the conversation partner.					
6	write personal letters giving news and expressing thoughts about abstract or cultural topics					
7	explain how a person can offend others through language use.					
8	starting, maintaining and closing simple conversation.					

3- Items Related to the Assessment of Pragmatic Competence:

(The pragmatic aspect of communicative competence are those that have to do with how language is used in communication situations to achieve the speaker's purposes).

I was prepared to :

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5
1	give clear instructions, advice and/or directions to others in English.					
2	understand instructions addressed carefully and slowly to me and follow short , simple directions.					
3	ask questions, to make requests, to give an opinion, to justify a point of view.					
4	contribute effectively to class or group work in gradual formal situations.					
5	conduct a dialogue, a telephone conversation, and understand pragmatic implicature.					
6	use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.					
7	pay attention to the listeners' verbal and non-verbal reactions in order to redirect the speech whenever necessary .					
8	Asses my own and other people's oral presentation.					

4- Items Related to the Assessment of Discourse Competence:

(Discourse competence is the ability to combine utterance in coherent and cohesive text using different kinds of connectors).

I was prepared to :

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5
1	use appropriate connectives and vary them as required by the utterance(cohesion).					
2	lay out a text with heading, introduction, body and conclusion.					
3	use a range of words which are relevant for the subject .					
4	combine utterances in coherent and cohesive texts					
5	write simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like and, but and because.					
6	write simple , short essays on topics of interest.					
7	deal with sentence problem(fragment , choppy , run on ...etc.).					
8	paraphrase and summarize the given text.					

5- Items Related to the Assessment of Strategic Competence:

(**Strategic competence: The development of which largely determines the learner's fluency and conversational skills, this includes using different strategies in learning new words or situations).**

I was prepared to :

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5
1	use the verbal and non-verbal communication strategies					
2	foreignise a mother tongue word and ask for confirmation					
3	use translation as the last strategy in learning a new situation.					
4	use more than one strategy in a new learning situation.					
5	recognise and use strategic techniques such as repetition, contrast and simple metaphors and images.					
6	start again using a different tactic when communication breaks down.					
7	use orthographic and phonological clues to understand new words.					
8	improve my strategic competence through reading more and more.					

Appendix 2 The Diagnostic Test

**The Islamic University of Gaza
Faculty of Education
Department of English Teaching Methods
MA Program**



The purpose of this diagnostic test is to gather information about the different components of communicative competence. The study title is:

**An Evaluation of the Communicative Competence of
Palestinian Fourth level English Major
Students at Gaza Universities**

This study aims to identify the degree of the different components of communicative competence that fourth level English major students at Gaza universities (Islamic, Al-Azhar and Al- Aqsa University) have .Your response, along with information from other graduates and supervisors, will be used for research purposes aiming to investigate the different components of communicative competence to come out with concrete conclusions and recommendations. The requested information will remain confidential.

Thank you for your cooperation

Researcher ,

Wafaa Ibrahim Qishta

**Diagnostic Test about Evaluating Communicative Competence of
Fourth Level Students at Gaza Universities**

Part A: please insert requested information:

1- Faculty	Education <input type="checkbox"/>	Art <input type="checkbox"/>
-------------------	---	-------------------------------------

2- Gender	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>
------------------	--------------------------------------	--

3- University:	Islamic university <input type="checkbox"/>
	Al-Azhar university <input type="checkbox"/>
	Al-Aqsa university <input type="checkbox"/>

Part B:

Please respond to the following questions in the final page

1. Items Related to the Assessment of Linguistic Competence:

f) Assessing Lexical Competence:

1. I'm really hungry! That apple didn't appease my hunger. I want a sandwich now. What does appease probably mean :

- a. frustrate b. increase c. satisfy d. confuse

2. Many ships have vanished during hurricanes. No survivors from the lost ships have ever been found.

- What does vanished probably mean?

- a. arrived b. departed c. returned d. disappeared

3. The word brunch is an example of :

- a. coinage b. backformation c. blending d. acronym

4. CIA is an example of :

- a.. abbreviation b. coinage c. blending d. acronyms

5. Yesterday she bought pants for her son . The word pants mean:

- a. trousers b. sweet c. biscuits d. jacket

6. Could you pass me an eraser? I need to erase this mistake. The word eraser is:

- a. American b. British c. a +b d. none of the previous

7. He kicked the bucket yesterday . This sentence means that he:

- a. graduated b. travelled c. died d. married

8. Yesterday , Ahmad put down Ali. This sentence means that Ahmad.....Ali .

- a. respect b. killed c. injured d. none of the previous

g) Assessing Grammatical Competence:

9. I'm very tired. _____over four hundred miles today. The correct answer is:

- a. I drive b. I have driven c. I have been driving d. I driving

10. By the year 2020, we there for 20 years.

- a. will worked b. will have worked c. will have been working d. will work

11. Sam jumpedthe bed.

- a. in b. over c. on d. across

12. My fingers were injured, so my sister had to write the note _____ me.

- a. at b. with c. to d. for

13. I see a monkey.monkey is playing the drum.

- a. The b. 0 c. a d. an

14. Mount Everest is in Himalayas.

- a. 0 b. the c. a d. an

15. No one suspects us , _____?

- a. are they b. don't they c. do they d. did they

16. Let's go for a walk,.....

- a. Will we b. shall we c. will not we d. shall not we

17. The girl who was sitting there has gone . The underlined verb is :

- a. nonfinite b. finite c. transitive d. intransitive

18. He decided to go . The underlined verb is :

- a. finite b. nonfinite c. transitive d. intransitive

h) Assessing Semantic Competence:

19. His pupil was damaged by an accident . Pupil means :

- a. student b . part of his eye c. leg d. arm

20. The best definition for the word man is :

- a. The human species (i.e., man vs. animal)
b. Males of the human species (i.e., man vs. woman)
c. Adult males of the human species (i.e., man vs. boy)
d. all of them are true.

21. My library card will be cease to be effective in December. The phrase cease to be effective means :

- a. expire b. renew c. extend d. cancel

22. Be sure that your voice is able to be heard by all students. The underlined words are

- a. superior b. genuine c. audible d. low

23. - The house is at the foot of the mountains.

- One of his shoes felt too tight for his foot.

The word foot is an example of :

- a. synonyms b. antonyms c. polysemy d. homonyms

24. The maid comes once a week to clean.

- She made a beautiful cake

- The words maid and made are two examples of :

- a. synonyms b. antonyms c. homonyms d. polysemy

i) **Assessing Orthographic Competence:**

25. When foreign students come to the united states ,they sometimes suffer from culture shock. This sentence is a ----- sentence.

- a. compound b. simple c. complex d. compound complex

26. After I graduated from high school , I wanted to travel, but I had to work in my family's business. This is :

- a. compound b. simple c. complex d. compound complex

27. The words sea and see are example of :

- a. blends b. acronyms c. homophones d. synonyms

28. The _____ of my shoe leaves a designer footprint in the sand.

- a. sprite b. sole c. spirit d. soul

29. The transcription /wei/ is for the word :

- a. weight b. weigh c. way d. b +c

30. The transcription of /ti:z/ is for the word:

- a. tees b. teas c. tease d. all of them

31. Woman: Would you please spell your name for me, sir?

Man: Sure. W-i-double t-n-e-r.

Question: How does the man spell his last name:

- a. Wiwtner b. Wittmer c. Wittner d. Wittrer

32. He is from Palestine . The spelling of his nationality is :

- a. palestenian b. palstinian c. Palestinian d. palestienian

j) Assessing Phonological Competence:

33. /i:/ is available in:

- a. mean b. lip c. breakfasts d. head

34. Which word has a short /o /

- a. on b. only c. open d. none

35. One of the following words doesn't contain the sound / 0 /

- a. thing b. throw c. breathe d. breath

36. One of the following words doesn't contain the sound / t /

- a. Wittner b. twitter c. castle d. a+c

37. The stressed syllable in the word comfortable is on :

- a.com b. for c. ta d. able

38. Please turn off the television before you go out. The stressed syllable in the word television is on:

- a. tel b. e c. vi d. sion

39. The manner of articulation for /f/ sound is:

- a. stop b. affricate c. fricative d. nasal

40. The place of articulation for / s / sound is :

- a. velar b. dental c. alveolar d. labio-dental

41. The final /ed/ in the verb talked is pronounced as:

- a./d/ b. /id/ c. /t/ d. /ed/

42. The final /s /in the word cards is pronounced as :

- a. z b. s c. iz d. ez

2- Items Related to the Assessment of Sociolinguistic Competence:

43. You are in the lobby, and you want to ask the hotel manager for the dinner time. You say:

- a. Tell me when the dinner time b. Could you tell me when the dinner time is, please?
c. Could you tell me about the dinner time? d. Tell me where the dinner time, please?

44. When you are asking a stranger for time , you said:

- a. what time is it? b. Excuse me, what time is it?
c. Please , what time is it? d. Do you know the time , please?

45. When you feel you shake your fist.

- a. happy b. angry c. sad d. afraid

46. When we dance Dabka ,we.....our feet.

- a. stamp b. raise c. a +b d. non of the previous

47. Woman : Would you like to have a piece of cherry pie?

Man: No thanks . I'm on a diet .

Question : What does the man mean ?

- a. He wants to lose weight b . He doesn't like sweets
c. He's suffering from diabetes d. He is just eating one

48. Assume a husband and wife are getting ready to go out for the evening:

Husband: How much longer will you be?

Wife: Mix yourself a drink.

Question: What does the wife mean?

- a. The wife need some time to be ready b. she didn't want to go
c. a +b d. all of them

49. You met one of the Chinese people , you tell your friend that you met a Chinaman. This means that you the Chinese person.

- a. respect b. offend c. like d. dislike

50. You are talking to your friends , and you put in your mind the cultural and emotional state of your friend ,so youher.

- a. offend b. respect c. hate d. non of the previous

3- Items Related to the Assessment of Pragmatic Competence:

51. Your students are fresh ones in the course. You want to advise them not to stay up late. You say:

- a. Don't stay up too late b. You aren't to stay up too late
c. You shouldn't stay up too late d. You mustn't stay up too late.

52. If I were you, ----- less and study more.

- a. you'd work b. I'd work c. I worked d. I had worked

53. Woman: Dr. Horowitz, could you let me audit your class?

Man : Sure. No problem.

Question : What does the woman want to do ?

- a. Add a class b. Attend the class for no credit
c. Drop a class d. Withdraw a class

54. Why is the software are so expensive . The kind of this question is :

- a. justification b. request c. a +b d. non of the previous

55. Man: Honey, we are out of milk. **Woman:** There is another one in the bag.

Question : What does the woman mean ?

- a. He has to go and get some milk b. They don't need milk
c. They don't like milk d. They aren't out of milk.

56. Alan: Are you going to Paul's party?

Barb: I have to work. **Question : What does Barb mean:**

- a. She wants to go b. she will go next week.
c. she went before Alan d. she doesn't want to go

5- Items Related to the Assessment of Strategic Competence:

67. One of these strategies is a verbal communication strategy:

- a. Eye contact b. Speaking c. Facial expression d. Gesture

68. One of these strategies is non verbal communication strategy:

- a. speaking b. nodding c. smiling d. b+c

69. Your students don't understand the meaning of a word by explanation . The last way to introduce this word is :

- a. discarding b. foreignising c. deletion d. translation

70. It is wrongly to use..... as the first strategy when teaching vocabulary to students.

- a. translation b. gesture c. pictures d. a +b

71. Which is the best way to present the word sad to your students:

- a. contrast b. image c. translation d. metaphor

72. This is Fred. He has short black hair, strong arms and big hands.

- Which is the best way to present the underlined words:

- a. translation b. pictures c. using part of body d. b+c

73. your students are having difficulty with the word free , you could give them a cue by telling them that the word they are looking for rhymes with tree or three. Here you are using:

- a. orthographic cues b. semantic cues c. rhyming cues d. a+c

74. " It is red . It is a fruit, it grows in a tree " (The answer is apple)

The cue which used in this example is

- a. orthographic cues b. phonological cues
c. semantic cues d. rhyming cues

Please , write your answer here:

1.		2.		3.		4.		5.		6.		7.		8.	
9.		10.		11.		12.		13.		14.		15.		16.	
17.		18.		19.		20.		21.		22.		23.		24.	
25.		26.		27.		28.		29.		30.		31.		32.	
33.		34.		35.		36.		37.		38.		39.		40.	
41.		42.		43.		44.		45.		46.		47.		48.	
49.		50.		51.		52.		53.		54.		55.		56.	
57.		58.		59.		60.		61.		62.		63.		64.	
65.		66.		67.		68.		69.		70.		71.		72.	
73.		74.													

Appendix (3)
The Number of Items in each Domain and the Number of Items that Got the Highest Rank from referees

Sections	No. of Items	No. of Items that got high rank from the referees
1. Linguistics competence		
a. Lexical competence	7	4
b. Grammatical competence	10	5
c. Semantic competence	6	3
d. Orthographic competence	8	4
e. Phonological competence	9	5
2. Sociolinguistics competence	8	4
3. Pragmatic competence	8	4
4. Discourse competence	8	4
5. Strategic competence	8	4
Total	72	37

Appendix (4)

The List of Jurors

1. Dr. Sadiq Ferwana	PhD. in TEFL	The Islamic University
2. Dr. Hassan El-Nabih	PhD. in TEFL	The Islamic University
3. Dr. Awad Keshta	PhD. in TEFL	The Islamic University
4. Dr. Kamal Murtaja	PhD. in TEFL	The Islamic University
5. Dr. Akram Habib	PhD. in TEFL	The Islamic University
6. Dr. Muhamad El-Hajj Ahamad	PhD. in TEFL	The Islamic University
7. Dr. Muhamad Musheer Amer	PhD. in TEFL	The Islamic University
8. Dr. Mohammed Attia	PhD. in TEFL	Al-Aqsa University
9. Dr. Basil Skik	PhD. in TESOL	Al-Azhar University
10. Mrs. Amani Abu Jarad	M.A. in TEFL	Al-Azhar University
11. Mrs. Maha Barzaq	M.A. in TEFL	A researcher at (QCERD)

Appendix (5)

Permission for Applying the Tools in Al-Aqsa University

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

 **الجامعة الإسلامية - غزة**
The Islamic University - Gaza

هاتف داخلي : 1150

عمادة الدراسات العليا

الرقم ج م ع / 35
2012/03/06
التاريخ

الأستاذ الدكتور / نائب الرئيس للشؤون الأكاديمية
جامعة الأقصى - غزة

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته.

الموضوع / تسهيل مهمة طالبة ماجستير

تهنئكم عمادة الدراسات العليا أعطر تحياتها، وترجو من سيادتكم التكرم بتسهيل مهمة
الطالبة/ وفاء إبراهيم عيد الرحمن قشطة، برقم جامعي 220090344 المسجلة في برنامج
الماجستير بكلية التربية تخصص مناهج وطرق تدريس - لغة إنجليزية، وذلك بهدف تطبيق أدوات
دراسها للماجستير والحصول على المعلومات التي تساعد في إعدادها والتي بعنوان

**An Evaluation of the Communicative Competence of Palestinian
Fourth Level English Major Students at Gaza Universities**

والله ولي التوفيق،،،

عميد الدراسات العليا

أ.د. فؤاد علي العاجز



سورة إلى:-
للجنة
٢٠١٢

P.O. Box 108, Rimal, Gaza, Palestine fax: +970 (8) 286 0800 فاكس Tel: +970 (8) 286 0700
public@iugaza.edu.ps www.iugaza.edu.ps ص.ب. 108 الرمال غزة فلسطين هاتف

Appendix (6)

Permission for Applying the Tools in Al- Zhar University

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

 **الجامعة الإسلامية - غزة**
The Islamic University - Gaza

عمادة الدراسات العليا

هاتف داخلي: 1150

رقم: ج س غ/35
Ref: 2012/03/06
التاريخ: Date:

الأخ الأستاذ الدكتور/ نائب الرئيس للشئون الأكاديمية
جامعة الأزهر - غزة
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته،

الموضوع/ تسهيل مهمة طالبة ماجستير

تحيةكم عمادة الدراسات العليا أعطر تحياتها، وترجو من سيادتكم التكرم بتسهيل مهمة
الطالبة/ وفاء ابراهيم عبد الرحمن قشظة، برقم جامعي 220090344 المسجلة في برنامج
الماجستير بكلية التربية تخصص مناهج وطرق تدريس - لغة إنجليزية، وذلك بهدف تطبيق أدوات
دراستها للماجستير والحصول على المعلومات التي تساعدها في إعدادها والتي بعنوان

**An Evaluation of the Communicative Competence of Palestinian
Fourth Level English Major Students at Gaza Universities**

والله ولي التوفيق،،

عميد الدراسات العليا
د. فؤاد علي العاجز
أ.د. فؤاد علي العاجز



الأخ الأستاذ الدكتور/ عميد الدراسات العليا والحياتيين
التكرم بتسهيل مهمة الطالبة .
ع. بشر
2012/4/4

لدينا طلب من الطالبة فؤاد العاجز
منه بتسهيل تنفيذ مرفوعة
صورة البكالوريا
تسليم العلم الإنجليزية
تعد

ص.ب. 108 الرمال غزة فلسطين 070 286 0700 Tel: +970 (8) 286 0800 فاكس
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Appendix (7)

The Number of Fourth Level Female Students at the Islamic University of Gaza


تاريخ : 2012/06/04 12:06

احصائية بعدد الطالبات المسجلين
الفصل الدراسي الثاني للعام الجامعي 2011/2012

الكلية	طالبات					طلاب				
	الرابع	الثالث	الثاني	الأول	المجموع	الرابع	الثالث	الثاني	الأول	المجموع
كلية التربية	163	197	153	216	68	19	8	25	16	68
المجموع الكلي	729	729	729	729	729	19	8	25	16	68
المجموع الكلي	729	729	729	729	729	19	8	25	16	68

برئاسة الأستاذة : الدكتور بوس

797 : المجموع الكلي



Appendix (8) The Number of Fourth Level Female Students at Al-Aqsa University

PALESTINIAN NATIONAL AUTHORITY
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
AND HIGHER EDUCATION
AL-AQSA UNIVERSITY



السلطة الوطنية الفلسطينية
وزارة التربية والتعليم العالي
جامعة الأقصى

التاريخ : ٢٠١٢/٦/٣

إحصائية بعدد الطلاب حسب المستوى

كلية التربية / اللغة الانجليزية

تفيد عمادة القبول والتسجيل بجامعة الأقصى بأن عدد طلبة تخصصات اللغة الانجليزية بكلية التربية للفصل الثاني ٢٠١٢/٢٠١١ حتى تاريخ ٢٠١٢/٦/٣ حسب الجدول التالي:

المستوى الرابع	المستوى الثالث	المستوى الثاني	المستوى الأول		
٣٥	٥٢	١٠٤	٢١٩	اللغة الانجليزية وأساليب تدريسها	كلية التربية
١٦٩	١٣٤	١٣٧	٢٠١	تعليم اللغة الانجليزية	
٠	٢	١٦	٨٦	اللغة الانجليزية	كلية الآداب

عميد القبول والتسجيل
د. فايق رمضان الناعوق
جامعة الأقصى
عمادة القبول والتسجيل

Gaza-Palestine
P.O.Box:4051

Tel :08/ 2826819/809 Fax :08/ 2826829
Email :registration@alaqsa.edu.ps

غزة - فلسطين
ص.ب 4051

Appendix (9)
The Number of Fourth Level Female Students at Al-Azhar
University

Al-Azhar University

Gaza - Palestine



جامعة الأزهر - غزة

غزة - فلسطين

Admission & Registration

عمادة القبول والتسجيل

Ref:

الرقم:

Date:

التاريخ:

إحصائية بعدد الطلاب حسب المستوى
كلية التربية/اللغة الانجليزية

تفيد عمادة القبول والتسجيل بجامعة الأزهر بأن عدد طلبة تخصصات اللغة الانجليزية
الخاص بكلية التربية للفصل الثاني 2011/2012 حتى تاريخه حسب الجدول التالي :

طالبات	طلاب	التربية
177	36	المستوى الأول
136	40	المستوى الثاني
101	31	المستوى الثالث
105	45	المستوى الرابع
519	152	المجموع



Appendix (10)

The academic plan of English Department at the Islamic University of Gaza

توزيع مقررات الخطة الأكاديمية على الفصول الدراسية

كلية: التربية قسم: تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية عدد الساعات الكلية: 142 : الخطة: 5

سنة أولى - الفصل الثاني			سنة أولى - الفصل الأول		
ن.المقرر	اسم المساق	رقم المساق	ن.المقرر	اسم المساق	رقم المساق
كلية	التربية الإسلامية	EDUC 1211	جامعة	اللغة العربية (نحو وصرف)	ARAB 1301
تخصص	مدخل الأدب الإنجليزي	ENGL 346	كلية	مدخل في العلوم التربوية والسلوكية	EDUC 1201
جامعة	قرآن كريم (2) جزء تبارك	HAD B1100	جامعة	دراسات في السيرة	HADT 1302
جامعة	دراسات في الفقه	SHAR 1 03	جامعة	قرآن كريم (1) جزء عم	HADT 1100
كلية	النمو والصحة النفسية	EDUC 1301	تخصص	النحو الإنجليزي (I)	ENGL 1321
تخصص	مهارات الاتصال الشفوي(2)	ENGLB1322	تخصص	مهارات الاتصال الشفوي(1)	ENGLA1322
تخصص	كتابة أكاديمية (1)	ENGLA1325	تخصص	قراءة أكاديمية	ENGL 1327
18	المجموع		18	المجموع	
سنة ثانية - الفصل الثاني			سنة ثانية - الفصل الأول		
ن.المقرر	اسم المساق	رقم المساق	ن.المقرر	اسم المساق	رقم المساق
تخصص	صوتيات و فونولوجيا	ENGL 2344	كلية	مناهج البحث العلمي	EDUC 2102
تخصص	الرواية	ENGL 2349	تخصص	القصة القصيرة	ENGL 47
جامعة	قرآن كريم (3) جزء قد سمع	HADTC2100	جامعة	النظم الإسلامية	SHAR 2207
كلية	اساسيات المناهج	EDUC 220	كلية	علم نفس تربوي	EDUC 2301
كلية	الأصول الإجتماعية والفلسفية للتربية	EDUC 2303	تخصص	النحو الإنجليزي (2)	ENGL 2321
تخصص	ترجمة (1)	ENGL 2324	تخصص	اللغويات	ENGL 2322
تخصص	كتابة أكاديمية (2)	ENGLB2325	تخصص	مقدمة في النقد الأدبي	ENGL 2326
18	المجموع		18	المجموع	
سنة ثالثة - الفصل الثاني			سنة ثالثة - الفصل الأول		
ن.المقرر	اسم المساق	رقم المساق	ن.المقرر	اسم المساق	رقم المساق
جامعة	لغة عربية أدب (فن الكتابة والتعبير)	ARAB 3202	تخصص	الشعر	ENGL 3358
جامعة	حاضر العالم الإسلامي	HADT 3306	تخصص	لغويات نفسية و إجتماعية	ENGL 3372
جامعة	قرآن كريم (4) جزء الذاريات	HADTD2100	جامعة	دراسات في القرآن وعلومه	HADT 2201
تخصص	متطلب إختياري (1)	OPTI 3301	جامعة	دراسات في العقيدة	HADT 2303
جامعة	دراسات فلسطينية	OLS 3220	كلية	تكنولوجيا التعليم	EDUC 3301
كلية	قياس وتقييم	EDUC 3313	كلية	طرق تدريس لغة إنجليزية	EDUC 3324
تخصص	الأدب المقارن	ENGL 433	تخصص	الأدب الإليزابيثي	ENGL 3330
كلية	مهارات تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية	EDUC 3231	20	المجموع	
19	المجموع				
سنة رابعة - الفصل الثاني			سنة رابعة - الفصل الأول		
ن.المقرر	اسم المساق	رقم المساق	ن.المقرر	اسم المساق	رقم المساق
جامعة	مبادئ الإقتصاد والإقتصاد الإسلامي	ECON 4203	تخصص	علم اللغة المقارن	ENGL 4371
كلية	تربية مقارنة	EDUC 4214	جامعة	قرآن كريم (5) جزء الأحقاف	HADTE3100
جامعة	دراسات في الحديث الشريف	HADT 4204	جامعة	حقوق الإنسان في الشريعة والقانون	SHAR 2208
جامعة	الإسعافات الأولية	NURS 4000	كلية	تدريب ميداني (1)	EDUC 4201
تخصص	متطلب إختياري (2)	OPTI 4302	كلية	إدارة صف	EDUC 4205
كلية	تدريب ميداني (2)	EDUC 4202	تخصص	المسرحية الإنجليزية الحديثة	ENGL 4376
تخصص	الأدب الإنجليزي المعاصر	ENGL 4373	تخصص	مهارات كتابة البحث (مشروع التخرج)	ENGL 4338
14	المجموع		16	المجموع	