The Use of Language Functions to Promote the Foreign Language Learners' Motivation and Fluency at the Advanced level

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The current study aims to focus on the effect of teaching language functions on promoting learners' motivation and fluency; it measures the achievement in language functions for the third year students at Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Basra. The theoretical part of the study tackles the main areas of the study such as discussing language functions, the origin of language functions, ways of teaching language functions, the notional functional syllabus and the communicative language learning. The study alsodiscussesthe motivation as a vital component in the pedagogical process, the types of motivation, theories and the ways of developing motivation. In addition, the research tackles fluency in teaching, the theories of fluency and the different techniques for promoting fluency. The practical part of the study is mainly concerned with the questionnaire and the two tests – spoken test and written test- and the conclusions aimed at by the researcher.

استخدام وظائف اللغة لتحسين دافعية وطلاقة متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية من ذوي المستوى المتقدم

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الخلاصة

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى التركيز على تأثير تدريس وظائف اللغة على تعزيز دافع المتعلمين والطلاقة؛ ويقيس الإنجاز في وظائف اللغة لطلاب السنة الثالثة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية، جامعة البصرة. يتناول الجزء النظري من الدراسة المجالات الرئيسية للدراسة مثل مناقشة وظائف اللغة، وأصل وظائف اللغة، وطرق تدريس وظائف اللغة، المنهج الوظيفي النظري وتعلم اللغة التواصلية. وتناقش الدراسة أيضا الدافع كعنصر حيوي في العملية التربوية، وأنواع الدافع والنظريات وطرق تطوير الحافز. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك، فإن البحث يتناول الطلاقة في التدريس، ونظريات الطلاقة، وتقنيات مختلفة لتعزيز الطلاقة. ويتعلق الجزء العملي من الدراسة أساسا بالاستبيان والاختبارين – الاختبار المنطوق والاختبار المكتوب – والاستنتاجات التي يستهدفها الباحث.

1.Introduction:

Language functions play a very essential role in teaching and acquiring any language in that they are the basis of any communication. The process of acquiring language functions becomes more important when we aim at acquiring a foreign language,not the mother tongue. It could be affected by the general factors affecting any pedagogical processes such as the learner's motivation, the teaching method, the teacher's and learner's personality and their intelligence.

The process of acquiring foreign language functions starts in the early years of education.The study is built on the hypothesis that students do better communication when they are aware of the functions of the target language and including more language functions in the syllabus design promotes learners' motivation and fluency.The study aims to encourage both learners and teachers to practice language functions and promote communication.

2. Theoretical Background of Language Functions

When the field of language teaching has emerged and developed, various language teaching methods have appeared, starting from the different linguistic schools and intellectual currents, among which the Prague school and the British traditions are perhaps the most known. The first traditional approaches of teaching English as a second or as a foreign language is the Grammar-Translation Method.After that, most of the methods were more concerned with teaching grammar and vocabulary in a way of adopting memorization and a very restricted use of language functions. Accordingly learners were not able to practice language functions or express their needs freely. So, Language functions passed over a somehow long time of being neglected or they were used very little.Wilkins (1972-1976) a member of the Council of Europe was working on outlining the common core of linguistics and suggested an alternative for the traditional approaches. Green (2012) stated that instead of taking the grammatical structure as a basis for syllabus design, Wilkins recommended that the meanings that the learner wants to express should be the entry point, with the grammatical structures functioning as the linguistic tools for realizing meanings(p. 9). Green in his book, **Language functions Revisited** (2012) has shown that the origins for the concept oflanguage function and its dependence on form and function can be traced back to the Scottish Enlightenment philosopher Thomas Reid (1710, p.96) and his 'social acts'. The same term was used by the theorist Reinach as well as in the later of Wittgenstein (1955) and Austin (1962). By the time of the first Rüschlikon Symposium in 1971, the ideal meaning and its relation to context and its centrality was already established in British linguistics, especially through the London School associated with J R Firth.As Green (2012) has pointed out, the

origins were of two directions: the British direction and the American one (p.17). The British origins of language functions were contrasted with the situation in the USA where the structuralist linguistics of Bloomfield and his followers, which preferred the study of language as a decontextualized system, was in the ascendancy. However, American sociolinguistics has an early influence through the work of Hymes in particular, with its insistence that 'communicative competence' includes the ability to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others' (Hymes, 1972, p. 277) .For Hymes speech acts are units within speech events. The speech event is bounded by beginning, end, rules and norms. The speech event may occur within different situations.

3.The Importance of Language Functions

Language is composed of forms and functions; both play a fundamental role in shaping any language. Language functions representthe essence (meaning and goal) of any linguistic structures. The importance of communicativecompetence and its consequences on the effectiveness of language came from its different components that had played a vital role in the field of communication and conveying meaning.   Hymes was the first to propose the notion of communicative competence; then it was used broadly by Noam Chomsky (cited in Floer, Alicia, Esther and Frenandez ,2003, p. 10).

Through language functions, communication is achieved, the needs and purposes are fulfilled and thus language is functionalized. By language functions, language is explained, expressed and understood. We use certain language functions in any single event since by using functions we can evoke our social needs and intentions. Language functions explain every situation and serve the whole process of communication. Language really works through its functions. In general, Functions means communication and without them language is dysfunctional. Language form is the continuum of the linguistic function.

4. Types of Language Functions

There are different classificationshave been innovated concerning language functions by many different linguists and grammarians. Leech (1974, p. 69) classifies language functions into five types which are set as follows: Informational, Expressive, Directive, Phatic, and Aesthetic. In this respectHalliday(1975)in a number of influential books and papers has elaborated a powerful theory of the functions of language, which complements Hymes's view of communicative competence for many writers on Communicative Language Teaching; he summarized seven basic functions that language performs for children acquiring their first language. They are as follows: the

instrumental function, the regulatory function, the interactional function, the personal function, the heuristic function, the imaginative function, and the representational function(Brumfit and Johnson 1979; Savignon 1983) (cited in Schopler et al ,1993, p. 490). Modern studies categorize language functions according to the purpose behind using language functions as in the examples given bellow:

1. Making suggestion   2. Inviting
3. Giving advice   4. Requesting
5. Making apologies   6. Refusing
7. Agreeing   8. Regretting
9. Offering   10. Complaining
11. Informing and retelling   12. Contrasting
13. Persuading   14. Concluding
15. Hypothesizing

These are the most noticeable examples of the different language functions we face in our everyday life situations. Language functions are unlimited since in every single event we need to provide or think of a language function to express it. Each function is resembled by a certain language form, for example the function of concluding can be expressed as " As can be seen, learners have low motivation in learning a foreign language".

5. Teaching Language Functions

The main goal for language teachers is to provide students with a language ability to be effective communicators in the real life situations.We in our daily conversations perform several language functions simultaneously. Our communication is full of functions. It is language functions and meaning that make sense in our conversations and communication. Adhikari (2012) stated: " I used language functions as a key concept to teach communicative skills, and I found teaching language function very much helpful to develop the other language skills of my students",(p. 1). So, developing language functions learning leads directly to the development of other language skills.The basic issue in teaching language functions is the teacher's understanding of language functions. The teacher should understand the functions clearly; he must give the students on example in each function and also a situation to express the language function. Three important hints are presented by the UK Essays website under the title "*Teaching Language Functions*" for teaching language functions as follows:

1- **Contextualizing language functions**, we should remember that the function does not appear in isolation. A request, or incitation, needs a reply. So, teachers should teach in pairs and groups in order to practice language functions

appropriately.

2- **Intonation** is a very important practice to bearticulated by the teacher when speaking full English and presenting language functions. The tone in speaking and emphasis is just as important as the particular choice of words. For example, "Could I have your attention, please?"is used when we speak in class, even though it is spoken as a request, it is a demand. "Could I have ... the spaghetti? Which is spoken in a restaurant, would be a polite request.

3- **The aspect of the appropriateness** (Using the appropriate language functions). It is very important that the students must be careful indifferent situationswhether in forma or informal lanaguage. In a restaurant, "Can I have the spaghetti?" is less polite than "Could I have the spaghetti, please؟". It is the teachers' responsibility to represent language functions in the different uses of language functions according to their suitable purposes

Appropriateness is the most important point in expressing language functions is the "". There are two dimensions for this term: the first dimension is the semantic appropriacy, which is the pragmatic competence. The speaker must comprehend the linguistic structure of the conversation very well so that s/he would produce the suitable (correct) function. The second one is the appropriateness of the linguistic form which isused to express that function.

6.Motivation as Promoted by Adopting Language Functions
6.1 Introduction and Definition of Motivation
Motivation is considered as one of the important aspects in language teaching. It has vital importance since it reveals the reasons that drive peopleto make certain decisions and to invest effort in pursuing them. Dörnyei (1998) statesthat when trying to explain any success or failure in second language (L2) learning, the term 'motivation' is often used by teachers and students alike(P. 203). Motivation is considered as a basic significant ingredient in second language acquisition. Gardner defined motivation as a 'combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes towards learning the language' (Gardner, 1985,p. 10).The results of Gardner and Lambert research show that success in language acquisition depends largely upon the learner's affective orientation toward the target culture, (cited in Dwaik&Shehadeh, 2011, p. 335).Brumfit and Roberts (1983) defined motivation as " the driving force felt or demonstrated by an individual in carrying a task",(p. 113) . Rivers (1987), on the other hand, asserts the idea that " motivation springs from within, it can be sparked but not imposed from without". According to River's ideas, the teacher's role is to facilitate the process of learning but not to motivate his students, (p. 5)

6.2 Types of Motivation

Within the field of psychology and related studies, a number of different types of motivation have emerged as explanations for the forces driving our behavior. According to Gardner and Lambert (1972) andGardner (1976) there are two types of motivation: Integrative and Instrumental motivation, (cited in Mahadi and Jafari, 2012, p.232). In the words of Lambert (1974), an integrative orientation entails a desire to learn second language because of "a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other language group" (p. 98).The instrumental motivation implies that a learner learns the language in support of a purpose relating to occupation or further useful motive,(Mahadi and Jafari, 2012, p.232).

The most basic distinction concerning motivation is that between the 'intrinsic motivation' which refers to doing something because it is inherently interestingor enjoyable, and the 'extrinsic motivation' which refers to doing somethingbecause it leads to a separable outcome.Also Ball (2012, p. 5) has presented three binary classifications for the types of motivation. Each one is based on a different point of view; they are as follows:

1 Positive vs Negative

Motivation is classified according to its forces to be *positive,* as in impelling one to reach a certain goal, or they can be *negative*, as in driving one away from an unwanted situation. For example, a person can be positively motivated about going to work because he likes his colleagues and some parts of the work, and negatively motivated because he has bills to pay (moving away from poverty) andbecause he would not dare not show up.

2.Internal vs External

The *internal*motivation(or push) is an internal state that impels one to act towards achieving a certain goal whereas the *external* motivation occurs when an external goal influences one's behavior towards it. Behavior is a complex blend of internal pushes and external pulls. We can be internally motivated to go to work because it makes us feel useful and creative. At the same time, it is expected that, we may be motivatedby our surroundings which partly fulfills our desires.

3. Basic vs learned

Motivation leans on motives. Motives are often categorized into basic motives and learned motives. *Basic or primary motives*are unlearned and common to both animals and humans. They include: hunger, thirst, avoidance of pain, and perhaps aggression and fear. The *learned or secondary motives*include achievement, power, recognition and love.

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6.3 Promoting Motivation

Student's motivation is an essential element that is necessary for quality education.We know that our students are motivated when they pay attention to an exact issue. They begin working on tasks immediately; they ask questions and volunteer answers, and they appear to be happy and eager (Palmer, 2007), (cited in Williams, 2011, p 2). Dorynei (1998, p.207) has given three points that are claimed to be the main types of sources of motivation in language learning.They can be outlined as follows:

1) *Course-specific motivational components*, which are related to the syllabus, the teaching materials, the teaching method and the learning tasks. These are best described within the framework of four motivational conditions proposed by Keller (1983) and subsequently by Crookes and Schmidt (1991): *interest* (intrinsic motivation centered around the individuals' inherent curiosity and desire to know more about themselves and their environment), *relevance* (the extent to which the student feels that the instruction is connected to important personal needs, values or goals), *expectancy* (perceived likelihood of success) and *satisfaction* (the outcome of an activity, referring to the combination of extrinsic rewards such as praise or good marks, and to intrinsic rewards such as enjoyment and pride).

2) *Teacher-specific motivational components*, which are related to the teacher's behavior, personality and teaching style, and include the *affinitive motive* to please the teacher, *authoritytype* (authoritarian or democratic teaching style) and *directsocialization of student motivation* (modelling, task presentation and feedback).

3) *Group-specific motivational components*, which are related to the group dynamics of the learner's group and include *goal-orientedness*, the *norm and rewardsystem, group cohesion* and *classroom goal structure*(Competitive, cooperative or individualistic).

In order to promote motivation, the motivation sources should be developed and worked on.Williams(2011) outlined five key ingredients impacting student motivation; they are: student, teacher‹ content, method or process, and environment, (p. 1).For example, the student must have ability, interest, and value education. The teacher must be well trained, must focus and monitor the educational process, be dedicated and responsive to his or her students, and be inspirational. The content must be accurate, stimulating, and pertinent to the student's current and future needs. The method or process must be inventive, encouraging, interesting, beneficial, and provide tools that can be applied to the student's real life. The environment needs to be accessible, safe, positive, personalized as much as possible, and empowering. In a final note, motivation is

optimized when students are exposed to a large number of these motivating experiences and variables on a regular basis.

7. Fluency as a Feature of Reading and Communication

7.1. Introduction

Speaking in a foreign language has been considered the most challenging and complex of the four language skills because the speaking process occurs in real time, dynamic interrelation between the speaker and the hearer should arise under time constraints (Dincer, Yesilturt and Goksu, 2012, p. 2).). In ELT classroom, it is normally a difficult task to ask learners to speak as they feel inferior in using the language without the fear of committing language errors or being subjected to ridicule by their peers, especially if their peers are perceived as more proficient than them. So, Learners need to have the full opportunity to practice the foreign language and gain fluency. Providing opportunities to communicate in the classroom constitutes one of the central tenets of communicative language teaching (CLT) and is considered a core principle of contemporary approaches to instructed language learning (Ellis, 2014, p. 32).

Speaking fluency is considered as an important dimension of communicative language teaching according to Yang (2014, p. 2).Richards, Platt, and Weber (1985) define fluency as "the features which give speech the qualities of being natural and normal, including native-like use of pausing, rhythm, intonation, stress, rate of speaking, and use of interjections and interruptions.", (p. 108).

7.2 Accuracy and Fluency

Methodologically, teaching speaking has undergone prominent changes since the late 1950s from traditional teacher-centered methods (e.g. the Audio-Lingual Method) to more student-centered ones (e.g. Communicative Language Learning). In this respect, there are two different teaching approaches to teaching speaking which are related to teaching methods. First, the traditional teacher centered methods are accuracy-oriented which accepts that the grammatical errors cannot be neglected, because they can result in fossilization. Instant error-correction is strictly needed to avoid fossilization. This approach focuses on repetition of newly introduced forms and grammatical structures in speaking (Willerman, 2011, p. 42).The latter is the fluency-oriented approach which states that grammatical or pronunciation errors are insignificant, especially in the early stages.All approaches are not fully adequate and characterized by some points of weaknesses and therefore being eclectic and combinatory approaches is more feasible than being strictly bound to one approach. Then, the necessity of combining these two approaches in English speaking classes and using them separately or together according to students' needs, English levels, activity types, lessons' purpose, etc. will be a more

plausible answer to how we foster English speaking skills in order to gain authenticity in oral communication. Lastly, it should not be forgotten that accuracy and fluency are not contradictory, because they affect each other. Accuracy brings fluency and fluency brings further accuracy (Willerman, 2011, P. 42).

7.3 Promoting Fluency

Fluency and production skills represent a great part of the building blocks of any language and thus promoting them is a continual procedure for the process of acquiring any language and becoming a good communicator at that language. We can only help students become fluent by creating opportunities for them to practice communicating and then stepping out of the way of acquiring the foreign language and to be real communicators. Unlike language knowledge, fluency is about automatizing the language knowledge. Schmidt (1992) elaborates "Fluent speech is automatic, not requiring much attention, and is characterized by the fact that the psycholinguistic processes of speech planning and speech production are functioning easily and efficiently" (Cited in Brown, 2003, p. 10). This automaticity can only occur when the students themselves are trying to use their language knowledge to actually communicate in real situations. Gatbonton and Segalowitz (1988) have outlined that the teacher's goal is promoting repetition of specific utterances in order to develop their automatization throughout specific activities (p. 481). In this sense, the important thing is to ensure that the activities chosen to promote automatization meet certain criteria, particularly those concerned with promoting intensive rehearsal while avoiding the pitfalls of traditional pattern drills. Gatbonton&Segolowit(1988) presented five of such criteria which are outlined as below:

1- Be genuinely communicative

An activity is genuinely communicative if it results in the student's making use of utterances from a genuine desire to communicate or to receive information rather than from a desire to say something simply for the purpose of serving a language-learning goal.

2- Be psychologically authentic

The activity should be designed to allow learners to experience some of the normal psychological pressures felt by people engaged in real communication. These pressures include having to anticipate the next turn of events and making appropriate utterances to continue, redirect, or terminate the course of the conversation without outside help.

3- Be focused

According to Wilkins (1976), the activities should be designed around basic

functions and notions that learners are likely to handle in everyday life, such as directing, describing, and apologizing (p. 18).Each activity should highlight only one or two functions from among the many that would usually be required in a situation(Johnson &Morrow, 1977, P. 92).

4- Be formulaic

The activity should be designed so that short, memorizable utterances or utterance frames are naturally elicited. These utterances should be multisituational; that is, they should be usable in many situations with little or no modification.

5- Be inherently repetitive

This feature is perhaps the most crucial one for promoting fluency. The repetition should be natural to the activity. There are many different ways to achieve this. One way to ensure inherent repetition is to select a communication activity whose nonlinguistic goal requires carrying out a series of related activities in a specific sequence. The activity may involve role-playing and how to get a machine (e.g., a photocopier) repaired.

Gatbonton and Segalowitz (1988) commented that these criteria must meet class activities invented by teachers,by shifting the focus from the learning of structures to the practice of specific utterances, to devise activities that promote repetition practice and hence automatization, without resorting to mechanical and meaningless drills (p. 489). In sum, language functions role in promoting fluency is clear since language functions represent the base of any activity of communication and without that base, no fluent speech will be produced.

8. Research Methodology

This practical part is mainly devoted to present the research methodology followed in the investigation of the objectives of this study. It focuses on analyzing the data gathered from testing the learner's Communicative and Grammatical competencies and applying the teacher's questionnaire. The investigation of the study is done at the college level, University of Basra, College of Education for Human Sciences and College of Arts. The problem of the study shows that the Iraqi EFL learners have low communicative level and thus they are grammatically competent rather than communicatively competent. The study suggests that that students can do better communication when they are aware of the functions of the target language and inclusion and practicing language functions that help promoting learners' motivation and fluency towards communication. To achieve the objectives of the research, the researcher has used two means: a questionnaire and two tests. The sample of the university teachers who participated in the questionnaire of the research study was**40,** and the Iraqi EFL learners of the 3rd year stage who participated in the test were **56**.

8.1 The Questionnaire

The Questionnaire has been done and analyzed to investigate the teachers' support and awareness of the importance of language functions in teaching English for the EFL learners. In order to analyze the data of the questionnaire, the descriptive statistics is used. The weighted Mean and the weight Percentage as statistical means are adopted to analyze the informants' responses to the items of the questionnaire based on a Likert's scale.The Chi Square Test is used to see if there is a relationship betweenthe items of questionnaire and the percentages of the answers of each item, as it is shown in the table below:

(1) The Mean and the Chi values of the Items of the Questionnaire

No	Item	Mean	Chie	P. Value
1	The learner's role in teaching is crucial and should go beyond the traditional view of learner as a passive recipient of knowledge.	4.75	98.99	0.001
2	Functional language plays a prominent role in our daily life and thus it promotes daily communication.	4.40	26.0	0.001
3	Social Function means language event (an act of speaking) which is used to serve daily needs.	4.22	23.84	0.001
4	We communicate throughout the use of language functions and forms.	4.33	42.55	0.001
5	The basic communication is created inside the classroom first and success will consequently happen in the real world.	4.05	45.5	0.001
6	Teaching is best developed by interacting with learners in using language functions.	4.28	49.98	0.001
7	The main goal of language teachers is to provide learners with the ability to be effective communicators.	4.47	41.96	0.001
8	The *Situational and *Structural syllabi are limited and less helpful to achieve learner's communicative events.	3.45	42.85	0.001
9	The functional syllabus gives more attention to attain good communication in language teaching.	3.95	120.5	0.001
10	Meaning, based on interactional functions, should be the entry point of the syllabus design in language teaching.	4.25	21.17	0.001
11	To be functional, language should be used in a communicative interaction which includes everyday life situations.	4.45	30.67	0.001
12	Creating natural events in classroom is essential reinforcer for teaching language functions.	4.38	40.71	0.001

8*The Situational syllabusis that in which students are initially presented with a "problem situation" or "illustrative situation". This "problem situation" is then followed by drills and

inventions and then by "practice situations".The situational syllabus comprises units indicating specific situations, such as 'At the Post Office' or 'The Job Interview'.... etc.

:*The Structural syllabus is that in which grammatical structures form the central organizing feature. A structural syllabus proceeds from simple grammatical structure to more complex grammatical structure.

13	Teaching and learning language functions affect learners' motivation positively.	4.20	11.66	0.003
14	Motivationis one of the mostimportantfactors in learning language functionally.	4.50	45.5	0.001
15	More inclusion of language functions in the syllabus design promotes learners' motivation towards communication.	4.25	26.21	0.001
16	The teacher will be motivated when he realizes the developed motivation of his learners.	4.22	42.85	0.001
17	Learners' motivation is affected by: the syllabus, teaching method, the teacher's personality, teaching style and the group dynamics of the learner's group such as goal orientation, group cohesion....etc.	4.25	9.88	0.007
18	Learner's awareness of the functions of the target language helps promoting their Motivation in revealing their needs and feelings and facilitates their communication.	4.22	34.23	0.001
19	Learners' awareness of the functions of the target language promotes their language fluency to express their daily needs well.	4.13	29.54	0.001
20	Providing many opportunities to communicate in the classroom is one of the central issues of communicative language teaching	4.25	55.95	0.001
21	The spoken fluency seems to be more important than the written one.	3.73	16.74	0.001
22	Fluency is not accuracy but fluency and accuracy affect each other.	4.10	13.4.0	0.001
23	Repetition of the used function is an essential crucial process that promotes learners' fluency.	4.05	81.37	0.001
24	The teacher could, by conducting language activities for a group of learners, use many expressions of the same target utterances that help them develop their fluency.	3.95	79.41	0.001
25	Fluent speech is automatic and not requiring much attention for the psychological processes of speech planning and speech production.	3.63	3.27	0.351
26	Correction of errors may hinder learner's development in speaking skill; therefore it should be dealt with tolerantly.	3.75	30.0	0.001

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27	The language functions and meaning are the major means that make sense of our conversations.	4.30	57.74	0.001
28	Teaching language functions plays a fundamental role in developing the different linguistic skills and basically the speaking skill.	4.38	46.71	0.001
29	Iraqi EFL learners seem to have low communicative competence outside the classroom.	4.30	15.5	0.001
30	Iraqi EFL learners are not aware of the most necessary used English language functions	4.25	21.17	0.001
31	Iraqi EFL learners are nearly competent in grammatical competence but they are incompetent in Communicative competence.	4.00	26.0	0.001
32	the hindrance against communication will be highly reduced by the learners when they know how to express themselves functionally,	4.08	39.28	0.001
33	Through language functions communication is achieved, the human needs and process are fulfilled and language is more functionalized.	4.05	38.92	0.001

Basically, the above table shows a high level of weighted means and percentages of the teachers' responses towards the items of the questionnaire. The results show that the informants tend to have a quite positive attitude toward the pedagogic importance of language functions in that 97% of the questionnaire items has scored a significant p. values and weighted means. This outcome is quite obvious in the graph below.
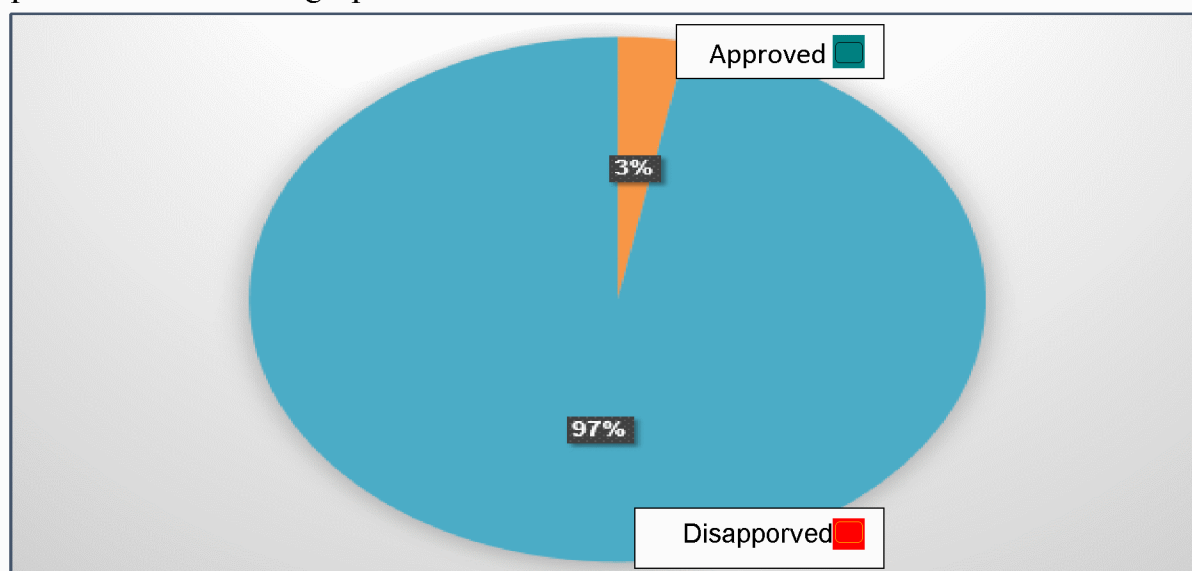
(1) **The Lecturers' Approval of the questionnaire**

In general, 93 % of the items has scored highly and showed significant scores in both of the weighted mean and chi value except for two items (17, 25) which have given insignificant scores. Most of the objectives have been achieved and affirmed positively. The lecturers' results show high support to the whole study

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in general and to the different topics specifically. The different topics presented by the questionnaire such as the role of language functions in communication, the priority of functional syllabuses over the structural and situational ones, the implications of language functions on learners' motivation and fluency .... etc, have been highly validated, supported and agreed upon. This reflects the lecturers' awareness of the issues presented and also indicates a willingness to function the communicative language teaching truly to promote learners' communicative competence.
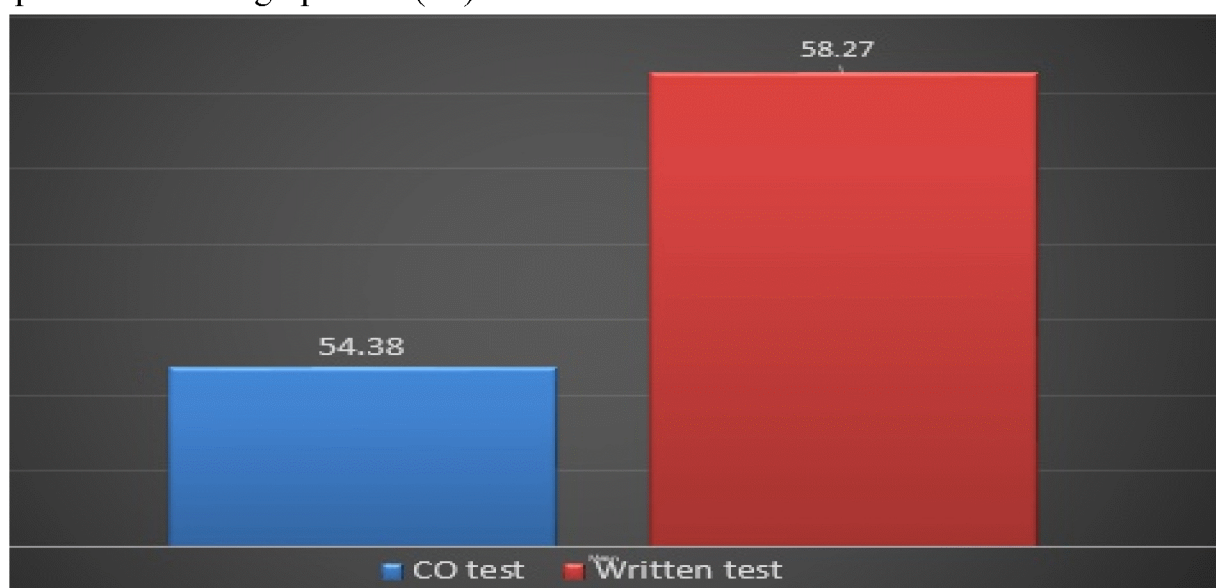
8.2 The Spoken and Written Tests

In order to investigate the difference in the levels of learner's communicative competence and grammatical- structural competence, the T-Test was made by using the 'SPSS' statistics in which the achievement of tests were compared to level the difference between the two competencies. Statistically, the results shows that there is no significant difference between the two tests. The Arithmetic Mean for the testees within the communicative test was **(54.38)** with a standard deviation (1.263), whereas the Arithmetic Mean for the testee in the written test was (58.27) with a standard deviation of (1.706). The slight difference between the results of the two tests is illustrated in the table below:

(2) T-Test for the written and spoken test to Find the Difference between the Tests

Samples	No. of Individuals	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-Value
co. test	56	54.38	9.451	0.069
written test	56	58.27	12.764	

This table shows that the **arithmetic mean** of the **Written Test (58.27)** is slightly higher than that of the **Co-test(54.27)**(communicative test), and it is quite obvious in graph No. (2) below.

(2) The Mean value of the spoken and written test

Statistically, this outcome might indicate that there is no significant difference among the results of the learners' written and communicative test since the difference is not high. But the standard deviation of the written test **(12.764)** is more than that of the communicative test **(9.451)**. This outcome means that the written test scores vary more than the communicative test scores but the difference is not significant.

On the other hand, there is a big variance between the performances of the testees in the two tests by applying the SPSS statistic results. The communicative test has proved 30 % of its results to be failure in that 17 students failed in the communicative test and their scores were under 50 which ranged from 32 – 49. While the percentage of failure in the written test is lesser,(about 21%) only 12 testees failed in the test with their scores graded from 31-49. These numerical manual statistical scores showed that students' performance in the grammatical structural tests is in away better than that found in the communicative test. Also, the range of the degrees of success scored in both of the tests is divergent. The communicative test shows only three students scoring highly (70,73,77) which can be considered as good marks from the part of some of the testees. The written test shows a number of twelve students who scored good (70, 71, 74, 77) and very good (80, 83, 80) scores as it is shown in the following table:

(3) **The testees' scores in the communicative and the written test**:

No.	CommunicativeTest	Written Test	No.	CommunicativeTest	Written Test
1	69	70	29	64	83
2	70	71	30	62	74
3	64	71	31	60	56
4	56	70	32	60	61
5	56	57	33	43	66
6	61	71	34	36	33
7	58	62	35	46	54
8	49	31	36	53	49
9	38	58	37	69	77
10	49	49	38	60	54
11	62	58	39	54	55
12	55	58	40	66	80
13	65	37	41	42	48
14	52	49	42	47	37
15	56	45	43	44	47
16	53	64	44	44	35
17	54	65	45	53	63
18	61	58	46	62	55
19	51	53	47	48	52

20	50	51	48	72	52
21	43	47	49	77	83
22	50	59	50	56	36
23	51	51	51	56	60
24	63	67	52	37	67
25	38	53	53	42	56
26	52	8	54	63	64
27	45	83	55	46	63

These numerical results present another core of evaluation of the testees' performance in both tests. It proves the hypothesis of the study that states the superiority of students' performance in the grammatical tests over the communicative one and this achieves objective no. 3 which shows that the learners are a little better in the grammatical test than the communicative (spoken) test.

The results also indicate the weakness of the students' performance resulted from the consequences of the whole period of study for each of the students; starting from the syllabus being taught during all of their previous years and the teaching approaches under which they were being taught. It is well known that the change of syllabus from the old structural one to the functional communicative one was done only in the recent years. It is done slowly and it is barely shown in the students' performance. In addition to that, the weakness of the students' level in terms of their motivation towards acquiring the foreign language and their psychological pedagogical status are quite low. Generally speaking andregardless of the results achieved , the teaching environment – in Iraq particularly - last years was not very suitable to gain the normal pedagogical level to most of the learners. In fact, the tests are given after measuring the cumulated knowledge of language functions and to measure their linguistic competence, but what has been shown is that learners have not gained that necessary abilities over language functions that could enable them to communicate and convey their needs in real life situations. Learners also have not shown competence in the language functions within their performance at any level whether in the spoken or the written test . It has been evident that their recognition ability has failed to an extent in showing the functioning of language functions and in showing their knowledge of the target language functions of the target language. In many examples, the learners were not able even to choose the suitable structural form that expresses the intended language functions. This clearly indicates the low level of the functioning of language functions and the leaners' low communicative competence.

9. Conclusions

In the light of the analysis of the results and the data introduced, the study came

up with certain conclusions concerning teaching language functions and its implications on promoting learners' motivation and fluency. The conclusions are as follows:

1. The third-year students in the department of English, college of Education for human sciences seem to have their Grammatical – Structural competence better than their communicative competence. The T-Test results shows that their accomplishment in the written test was better than that of the communicative spoken test. They scored %58.27 in the written test whereas %54.27 in the communicative test. This conclusion leads to other partial conclusions as the following ones:

   a- Language structures are the most dominant part of language components over language functions within the students' linguistic competence. Learners have the linguistic structures butin comparison with their communicative competence, they have low employment of language functions.

   b- The learners have shown unawareness of the most important language functions that are very necessary for the daily communication. They have also shown weak levels in the written test, especially in their production test ability.

   c- The clear failure of the learners' pervious accumulated study of language functions does not enable them to be good communicators. There is no functioning of the necessary language functions of the daily life needs. They do not have the basic knowledge of language functions structures nor do they have the appropriate skill to determine which function to use and when it is used.

2. In turn, learners' motivation and Fluency have not been promoted due to the weak activation of language functions within their communicative competence. This was noticed in the spoken test when learners were characterized by weak basis of language functions which scored more than 50% of them. They faced problems in their fluency and motivation during the test. They could not develop conversation or speak easily and smoothly with complete comprehensible sentences. In the communicative language teaching, it is quite clear that the most important and crucial aim is how to arrive at true communication and to convey appropriate meaning. On the contrary, what learners showed was barely considered communication with unconnected and incomprehensible structures.

3. The Lecturers of the department of English and Translation at the college of Arts and the Lecturers of armentDep of English at College of Education for human sciences showed high support for the study and its different objectives. This was clearly shown by the scores obtained from the items of the

questionnaire. The Chi-square test results for the questionnaire showed 29 significant items with high scores while only 4 were insignificant as illustrated in table (1). The reason behind this conclusion is attributed to the high correlation between the items of the questionnaire within each other and the whole study which is clarified in table (2) ,referring to the high validity of the questionnaire.

4.The results of the questionnaire shows the lecturers' awareness of the importance of language functions in the pedagogical field and mostly in promoting the learners' communicative competence is clearly proved throughout their support of the questionnaire items. The questionnaire scored high chi values in supporting the results of the study.

5.The lecturers' agreement on the failure of the EFL learners to have good communicative competence is shown by the results of item no. 31 in the questionnaire. This also refers to their awareness of the wrong functioning of many components of the syllabus-design and teaching approaches which ultimately will lead to no effective change in the whole process of teaching.

10. Suggestions for Future Studies

The researcher suggests the following areas to be taken into consideration in the field of English language teachingand particularly language functions:

1- Conducting long experimental studies with courses of language functions focusing on measuring and testing the effect of language functions on promoting learners' motivation and fluency. In this study, the effect of language functions is measured and based on the learners' accumulated study.

2- Assessing the extent to which teachers themselves use and teach language functions in their classes and the extent to which these functions have their effect on their learners' achievement.

3- Conducting a study on the different factors affecting learners' bad achievement in using language functions as learners may be exposed to certain other factors such as the psychological factors and the study environment which play a vital role in the learners' communicative competence improvement.

4- One of the things that falls out of the scope of the study is to determine the exact causes (linguistic or beyond linguistic) that hinder the development of learners' communicative competence. In this connection, more studies should be done on the reasons behind the learners' failure to be good communicators in English.

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