



## IMPLEMENTING AND ASSESSING PRAGMATIC SPEECH ACT DIVERGENCES IN THE ESL CLASSROOM

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### KEY WORDS

pragmatics, speech acts, compliments, pragmatic divergences, activities, interaction, deductive method, inductive method, implicit, explicit.

Language production and performance can be integrated or specified during the social communications between the negotiators.

The following activities and procedures are based on two types of divergence which can be noticed in miscellaneous cases.

#### **General characteristics of Activity 1 Designed for A2/B1 level learners**

Activity type: Dialogue (situational)

Duration: 20 minutes

Outlined type of the divergence:

Overgeneralization of L2 pragmatic norms

Mode of teaching: explicit Mode of instruction: deductive

Goals: By the end of the activities

-learners will be able to develop their critical and problem solution skills,

### ABSTRACT

*Interactions and negotiations may occur in different situations. Speakers mostly tend to express themselves clearly, while it is also important to be heard and understood properly. But there might be some problems when representatives of various cultures commence a conversation.*

*According to Ishihara (2006) pragmatic divergences decode some possible obstacles in these occasions. It can happen due to the speakers' pragmatic awareness as they may have distinct gaps in their language production.*

-learners will be able to demonstrate their personal opinions according to the specific situation,

-learners will be able to identify different types of speech acts through the context.

Language and content objectives: By the end of the activities;

-learners will be able to brush up their grammatical knowledge on noun and verb forms

#### **The script of the activity**

##### **Situation 1**

English class at the secondary school. The teacher is explaining how to make the plural forms of singular nouns.

The teacher: So, dear children, as I have told you above, we simply put "s" or "es" suffixes at the end of singular nouns. For example, a book – books, a table—tables, a bag—bags,



an elephant – elephants, a room—rooms.  
Did you get me?

Children: Yes, we did.

The teacher: Ok, then, I will demonstrate you some singular nouns on the board and you will have to make plurals.

Singular nouns on the board: A helicopter, a teacher, a lamp, a computer, an article, a mouse, a vase.

The teacher: Could you make plural forms, my dear pupils?

Children: Yes, we could.

The teacher: Ok, in this case, now use these plurals in your sentences. You will be given 5 minutes.

The teacher: So, who is going to be the first?

Johnny: Let me be the first.

The teacher: Well, Johnny you my start.

Johnny: Thank you. There are two helicopters in the garage. There are ten teachers in our school. There are three mice in the yard.

The teacher: Oh, well done Johnny, but you had to make the plural form of the word “mouse” as “mice”, not “mouses”.

Johnny: But I added “s” as you explained.

The teacher: Well, sit down Johnny; I will explain this rule from another angle.

Specific characteristics of Activity 1

The gap (type of overgeneralization): Using plural suffixes of nouns.

How it happened? The teacher did not relied on exceptional rules of making plurals, here the problem occurred.

How it could be avoided? The teacher had to start explaining two types of plural making forms: an ordinary way (a book -- books) and an irregular form (a mouse -- mice).

Recommendations: If the teachers are teaching grammar deductively, they have to reconsider rules and explanations initially, then offer some samples and finally involve the learners.

The types of speech acts that have been used in the dialogue: request, confirmation, refusal, apology.

## **General characteristics of Activity 2**

Designed for B1/B2 level learners

Activity type: Dialogue (situational)

Duration: 20 minutes

Outlined type of the divergence: Negative transfer

Mode of teaching: explicit

Mode of instruction: deductive

Goals: By the end of the activities

-learners will be able to develop their critical and problem solution on different cultures,

-learners will be able to demonstrate their personal opinions according to the diverse cultures,

-learners will be able to identify different types of speech acts through the context.

Language and content objectives: By the end of the activities:

-learners will be able to brush up their grammatical knowledge an indicative mood and active voice tenses.

## **Script of the activity**

### **Situation 2**

Pakistan. Karachi. At an international conference of “Teaching English as a foreign language”

A conversation between American and Pakistani teachers

A Pakistani teacher: What do you think? Does this conference meet my needs?

An American teacher: Hopefully, it will comprise all aspects of teaching English globally. It also supports projects and programs on expanding the spread of the English language all around the world; in addition, it presents clear recommendations for ESL teachers who tend to grow in their future career.



A Pakistani teacher: That would be great! Recently I have started to attend online TESOL sessions. By the way, I have heard that you have been honored to be an expert in this field. I also want to obtain a TESOL certificate and continue my career abroad, in particular, in the USA.

An American teacher: It sounds great. I hope you will possibly be able to achieve your goal.

A Pakistani teacher: I will do my best. Here, I would like to know, how much does a teacher earn in your society?

An American teacher: Well, I think it is high time to return to the conference hall. Will you please take me there?

A Pakistani teacher: Oh, yes, sure.

**Specific characteristics of Activity 2**

The gap (type of overgeneralization): Personal matters.

How it happened? The first teacher did not consider the cultural aspects.

Recommendations: It would be better to reconsider cultural, racial and sex aspects while interacting with a representative of another country or area.

The types of speech acts that have been used in the dialogue: compliments, request, confirmation, refusal, inquiry.

**How to assess pragmatics in the classroom?**

Assessing pragmatics has not been considered to be a right option in the last few decades. But recent research has denominated that it is essential to assess pragmatics in the classroom. Cohen (2004) reveals some reasons of this aspect.

Initially, teachers will be able to understand whether their students are capable of learning the pragmatics which is accompanied by the instruction or not, thus, it presents a great opportunity for educators. Secondly, teachers will be able to examine their students' performance on diverse types of speech acts.

Finally, teachers will be able to evaluate the learners' abilities and behavior in various sociocultural situations. Ishinara (2009) decodes assessing pragmatics as classroom based assessment and teacher based assessment. The author also depicts three types of pragmatic ability assessment (linguistic, cultural, analytic aspects).

**Rubric and rationale for Activities**

Criteria	Poor	Not bad	Good	Excellent
Specific language	Cannot use the vocabulary	Lacks in using the vocabulary	Uses the vocabulary in some phases	Uses the vocabulary efficiently in all fields
Frequency of using speech acts	Cannot show the ability of using speech acts	Shows the ability of using speech acts with minor errors	Shows the ability of using speech acts in some situations	Shows the ability of using speech acts in all situations



Appropriate grammar	Uses only some elements	Uses some basic elements	Uses some specific elements	Uses a good range of grammar elements
Communicative competence	Cannot interact in sociocultural interactions	Can interact in some familiar interactions	Can interact in major interactions	Can interact in all situations

### Justification of the assessment

This type of assessment is easy to follow, monitor and reflect. It can be an effective tool for teachers. Even instructors can design the activities based on these criteria. It indicates what to involve, how to comprise and when to implement.

Rubrics and rationales provide a great opportunity for teachers and learners. Learners can work in groups and pairs; even they can be attracted individually. Instructors measure learners' capabilities, such as, their use of speech acts,

interactions, grammar knowledge and frequency of utilizing pragmatic patterns.

### Conclusion

In the final analysis, social interactions play a crucial part in building a good rapport between speakers. Understanding and analyzing divergences in different situations may simplify or even make easier the functions of communicators. The aspects of race, gender, sex and culture can directly influence on the conversation and negotiators should consider both these aspect and pragmatic divergences while expressing themselves.

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