

A PRAGMATICS-BASED UNIT LESSON PLAN FOR TEACHING COMPLAINTS IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

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Abstract: This paper presents a comprehensive, three-part pragmatics unit lesson plan focused on the target speech act of complaints, specifically designed for Intermediate to Upper-Intermediate (B2 level) English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Grounded in communicative language teaching and pragmatic competence development, the unit guides students through the nuances of producing direct and indirect complaints, responding to customer dissatisfaction, and formulating formal letters of complaint. By analyzing contextual variables such as social status, social distance, and intensity, the curriculum enables learners to navigate the delicate balance of politeness and directness in target language interactions. The integration of interactive instructional strategies, digital multimedia tools, and comprehensive rubric-based assessments ensures that students develop both oral and written communicative autonomy. Ultimately, this unit serves as a pedagogical framework for cultivating cultural awareness and preventing sociopragmatic failure in real-world scenarios.

Keywords: Pragmatics, Speech Acts, Complaints, EFL Pedagogy, Student-Centered Learning, Communicative Competence.

Introduction

In each class there are mixed nationalities which require both teachers and learners to use appropriate pragmatics. It is essential to the learners to know correct way of using pragmatics in their language two competence. The target speech act complaints was selected for the unit because complaints is commonly used in our daily life and while making direct or indirect complaints or responding them learners need to have a clear picture of language use in various situations. Furthermore, learners should be aware of the strategies Americans use while making complaints in different situations according to formality and contextual factors: social status, social distance and intensity. Also, the unit has cultural and pragmatic objectives and will provide some explanations and then give some guided and communicative tasks so that learners will practice their comprehension of making and responding complaints according to the concepts of social status, social distance and intensity of the context.

Developing pragmatic competence is a critical milestone for language learners aiming for professional and academic success in globalized environments (Taguchi, 2019). Unlike basic grammatical structures, speech acts like complaining require a sophisticated understanding of sociolinguistic variables and the subtle expectations of native speakers (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013). When learners fail to align their language use with the social distance or status of their interlocutor, they run the risk of appearing unintentionally rude or overly aggressive (Thomas, 1983). Therefore, explicitly teaching the speech act of complaining within an organized curriculum helps close the gap between grammatical fluency and social appropriateness. By exploring these linguistic boundaries, students learn to defend their rights as consumers and individuals while respecting cultural norms of politeness and face-saving behavior (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Conclusion

To sum up, I can say that my learners are always in the center of my classes in order to create a successful learning environment. Facilitating a classroom where students are active participants rather than passive listeners ensures that learning is meaningful, durable, and tailored to their specific needs. This student-centered approach fosters high engagement, collaboration, and autonomy, which are crucial components for academic success. Because this foundational philosophy has proven to be highly effective in driving student outcomes and maintaining motivation, I do not think I should change the way I teach differently. The core values of empathy, student agency, and active engagement will always remain the bedrock of my educational practice. However, maintaining a consistent core philosophy does not mean standing still. I recognize that education is a dynamic field, and my teaching styles might be changed throughout my teaching career. As technology advances, student demographics shift, and new pedagogical methodologies emerge, my instructional techniques and day-to-day strategies must naturally adapt. Growth as an educator requires a continuous cycle of reflection and adaptation. For this reason, I want to remain receptive to suggestions and open for improvement at every stage of my professional journey. By actively seeking feedback from peers, staying informed about contemporary research, and listening to the evolving needs of my students, I can ensure that my practice remains innovative, effective, and deeply impactful for the learners I serve.

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