

## ADDING PRAGMATIC ACTIVITIES IN A CLASSROOM: AN EFFORT TO SHAPE STUDENTS COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

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### ABSTRACT

*Teaching and learning languages involve more than targeting grammatical and lexical knowledge. To achieve communicative competence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, EFL learners need to develop their pragmatic competence which is better taught by activities. The central point of this article is that pragmatics is deeply rooted in people's communication ability. Being able to interact and communicate with others in various situations becomes the pivotal goal in teaching English as a foreign language. Yet, little empirical evidence shows how to deploy pragmatics awareness, particularly, among senior highschool graduates. To fill this gap, this special affinity requires the English teachers to explore the activities in speaking classroom in which these help students use appropriate expression and have accurate interpretation to result successful communication. There are three activities listening to passages about complaining in other cultures, presenting L2 strategies for complaining and performing role play with discussion, which fleshed out procedural activities to trigger successful communication. The article contributes a deep insight of pragmatic competence as a yeildful context for building the students' language competence.*

**Key words:** *pragmatic competence, pragmatic activities, English as a Foreign Language (EFL).*

### 1. Introduction

English has become the international language and has been used widely. Mastering English, therefore, has become very important. Realizing the importance of English, many students want to study English, even it is not their major. However, since English is one of the compulsory subjects taught in School, English has been exposed. In reality, many Senior High School graduates are not able to perform English skills. Meanwhile, they encounter a high demand for English mastery, since English is an important extra credit for finding a job. In fact, many companies demand that the employees should be able to use English and have a high English proficiency. This is related to the fact that as an international language, English is used widely. When a person has a high level of English mastery, one will be able to access information and

broaden his knowledge more easily and more widely, as well as sharing the information. Speaking is an important skill that students need to be able to perform. It is a verbal productive skill which will be very useful in communication. In order to be able to express ideas, thoughts, feelings, opinion or information and message verbally, they will have to master the skills in speaking. Moreover, unlike any other language skills, when speaking, the speaker produces speech. Since speaking is a productive skill, it involves the ability of communicative competence, pronunciation, intonation, grammar, vocabulary and fluency. Many students find it difficult to speak using English. They are confused about its grammatical pattern, pronunciation and are still not quite fluent in delivering their speech. Although English is taught since Junior to Senior High School, in reality, many Senior High School graduates are not able to perform English skills, especially speaking. This article reports on the teachers' innovation particularly in Speaking for Daily Communication class, involving 15 students. In fact, in order to make the students involve in speaking activities, particularly on complaining language function, the teachers provided three activities, which provided chances of having pragmatic activities in this class. They were required to actively engage in all activities; listening to passage about complaining in other culture, presenting L2 strategies for complaining, and the last is role playing with discussion. The teachers should not rely too much on the use of textbook in the classroom. Although textbooks provided prepared materials, and often categorized as an unproblematic solution, many textbooks also tumble in terms of appropriate language use in context (Ishihara, 2011; Pulverness, 2003.) Therefore, they should provide activities which give chances to them to produce effective communication. The ability to use language appropriately in myriad contexts is urgent to be done especially on communication in a second language. She further said that to develop the students' communication skill, it should include pragmatic competence. It is really needed to be owned by the learners since it becomes their provision to produce successful communication in the real encounter. Farashaiyan and Tan (2012) in revealed the fact that in the real classroom, English teachers in EFL context frequently dominate the materials delivered in the class on linguistics features and do not pay great attentions to the pragmatic features. The students, particularly in Speaking for Daily Activity class, were not aware of using pragmatic competence; therefore, the communication did not run successfully. Sometimes, they did not apply the language expression appropriately during communication. They were also shy and reluctant to get involved in speaking activities. These barriers made a gap in communication, which made them failed to catch intended messages delivered by other people. To cope with these problems, thus, during the teaching learning process in Speaking for Daily Activity class, the teacher deployed some speaking activities, particularly on complaining

language function; listening to passage about complaining in other culture, role playing with discussion. This article discusses pragmatics activities in English Language Teaching (ELT) classroom in enhancing students' language competence.

## **2. Research Method**

The research employed a qualitative descriptive method. The subject of this study was an English lecturer teaching English for Daily Activities at English Study Program. The data were obtained from interview and observation. The lecturer were interviewed twice and was asked about her teaching strategies and activities in her Speaking for Daily Activity class and the underlying conceptual framework for implementing them. In the observation, the researchers used observation checklist and note to record classroom activities conducted by the lecturer. the observation was carried out six times, following schedules of the practicum classes conducted by the lecturer. The data obtained from the interview and observation were then analyzed descriptively to describe the phenomenon studied.

## **3. Result and Discussion**

To answer the research objective related to the lecturer's pragmatic activities in English Language Teaching (ELT) classroom, interview and observation were conducted. From the interview and observation, it was found out that there were three pragmatics activities conducted by the lecturer. The first was listening to passages about complaining in other cultures. The English lecturer used this technique to provide a great number of contexts from different cultures. This activity provided stated information about the speech act of complaining from other country. Thus, the students got exclusive experience by listening to it. In this activity, she divided the class into 5 groups which consisted of 3 students each. Each two groups got the same recording and they had to fill the table given by the lecture. The groups played the recording and tried to finish the table by listening carefully to the recording. After filling the table, they had to present the result of discussion in front of the class, then, compared the result with another group who had the same recording. Providing them with the recording passages in each group enabled them to have authority within the group to manage how many times they would listen and discuss the content of the passages cooperatively among their group members. This could be used also as a pedagogical language input as a source to construct the students' knowledge also facilitated them to create free topic group conversation about complaining by involving four strategies of complaining. The teacher mentioned that assigning the students to perform the conversation in front of the class and letting the other groups to evaluate the performance became a great chance to increase the students' confidence, particularly in joining classroom interactions. Therefore, interaction among the students in groups

or even as a whole class established a catalyst to create interactive fundamental communication which helps them involve in it confidently.

The second activity was presenting L2 strategies for complaining. In most cases, the students were reluctant to get involve in practicing conversation. They felt afraid and hesitate of producing utterances especially complaining when they were provided with myriad contexts. Limberg (2015) recommends specific steps to complete speech act. This catalyzes a strong foundation to build the knowledge of producing utterances of complaining step by step. He further presents the worksheet which eases the students to draw on complaining utterances. First, the students were divided into smaller groups. They were introduced with the speech act step of complaining. Then, they sequenced the phrases provided to be a good order. In the final step, they were invited to create their own new complaint in groups. The first and second activities to build students' communication skills were supported by that pragmatics includes politeness/impoliteness, speech acts (greetings, thanks, requests, compliments, apologies, complaints, etc.), conversational style, humor, sarcasm, teasing, cursing, discourse markers, conversational implicature, and deixis, and focusing on the notion of speech act, this teaching tip concentrates in the hands of students' pragmatic competence of giving complaint. This provides technical guideline in producing utterances of showing dissatisfaction. Hilliard [4] added that by following the components or strategies in the speech act of complaining, the communicative function will be accomplished successfully.

The third activity was role play with discussion. The lecturer mentioned that the easiest way to facilitate the students with pragmatic activities is through role play. It requires them to practice the conversation like in a real encounter. In class, the students were divided into small groups. The teacher gave them complaint cards which provided them with context situation. Then, they made a conversation to be performed in front of the class, while the other groups had to pay attention on the performance. The other groups had to involve in this activity by identifying the steps of complaining and filling the provided table. After that, there was an open discussion, inviting all students to exchange ideas about presented complaint. In this activity, interactions among students were deployed. It provoked the students engaged in every situation to practice their English communication. What the lecturer did was in line with, who said that it is very crucial to give them a variety of context and social setting, thus those make them get sufficient social practice

#### **4. Conclusion**

To reach this goal, the activities in the classroom play a very crucial role. Particularly in the speaking activities, they were introduced with pragmatics competence since they have to face different context situation in the real workplace.

By being provided pragmatic activities in speaking class, the students' awareness to adjust the expression used in different situations can be enhanced. The activities of listening to passages about complaining in other cultures, presenting L2 strategies for complaining and performing role play with discussion encouraged them to confidently engage in classroom interaction. These allowed them to practice complaining through using effective guideline of complaining speech act. Furthermore, the effort to implement these pragmatics activities was intended to help students to avoid misuse of expressions which lead to failure of communication.

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