



# Challenges Of Teaching English to Uzbek Pupils Of Secondary Schools Through Pragmatic Approach

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**Abstract:** This study aims to identify the challenges in implementing a pragmatic approach in teaching productive English language skills to secondary school students in Uzbekistan. A qualitative research method was employed, including face-to-face interviews and structured observations. Twenty English teachers from the Namangan region participated in interviews discussing their awareness of the pragmatic approach, its advantages, and the challenges faced in its application. Additionally, observations were conducted over two months in 15 teaching sessions at various secondary schools. The findings indicate that the pragmatic approach effectively enhances students' communication, problem-solving, confidence, and collaboration skills. However, major challenges include time constraints, difficulties in assessment, and lack of student motivation. By integrating engaging activities and providing positive feedback, these challenges can be mitigated to improve the effectiveness of the pragmatic approach in English language teaching.

**Keywords:** Pragmatics, Pragmatic Approach, Excellence Of Pragmatic Approach, Difficulties Of Using Pragmatic Approach In Teaching EFL

## Introduction

Nowadays it is nearly impossible not to feel the importance of owning foreign language skills. A lot of states is paying attention to improve the teaching systems of foreign languages as knowing foreign languages can give several benefits for not only individuals in terms of education, professional privileges, personal development, but also it has a positive impact on developing economics, medicine, education, politics, commerce of countries. In teaching foreign languages there are many approaches all of them have their advantages and disadvantages. Pragmatic approach is one of them. Many scholars conducted researches on using pragmatic approach in teaching EFL, merits and demerits of this approach worldwide.

## Literature Review

Pragmatics and its importance in teaching foreign languages are the matters which a number of scholars have had researches on them. D.Crystal (2008) defined Pragmatics as "the study of language from the point of view of the users, especially of the choices they

make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction, and the effects their use of language has on the other participants in an act of communication". "The teaching of pragmatics aims to facilitate the learners' sense of being able to find socially appropriate language for the situations that they encounter. Within second language studies and teaching, pragmatics encompasses speech acts, conversational structure, conversational implicates, conversational management, discourse organization, and sociolinguistic aspects of language use such as choice of address forms" (Badovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003).

As a language learner, owning knowledge of grammar and vocabulary may not mean the learner is capable of communicating effectively. Because contextual factors can affect meaning and conversation process. G. Leech (1983) and J. Thomas (1983) divided pragmatics into two components: pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics (Kasper, 2001). "Pragmalinguistics - A term sometimes used within the study of pragmatics, to refer to the study of language use from the viewpoint of a language's structural resources; it contrasts with those pragmatic studies which examine the conditions on language use which derive from the social situation" (Crystal, 2008). G. Leech (as cited by Kasper, 2001) defines Sociopragmatics as "the sociological interface of pragmatics," referring to the social perceptions underlying participants' interpretation and performance of communicative action" (Kasper, 2001). As many scholars say it is nearly impossible to separate pragmalinguistics from sociopragmatics in most cases. In order to deliver the message as intended the speaker must be aware linguistic resources which is a communicative act and why it is used, where it is used and when. In brief, pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics are interwoven. It is acknowledged that pragmatic approach is very productive in teaching foreign languages, especially, in teaching speaking skills. "In teaching speaking, the pragmatic approach is utilized by teachers to train students in practical speaking practices to enhance their speaking abilities. This approach instructs students to use language expressions or phrases that are appropriate to the given conditions and situations of communication. Through the pragmatic approach, students have the opportunity to directly apply the language theories they have learned, both orally and in writing, in relevant contexts" (Anita et al., 2023).

Pragmatic approach in writing according to Grabe and Kaplan (as cited in Norhidayah, 2021) is "the approach uses the process view as the foundation where it concentrates on how people use language meaningfully. However, it builds on the social aspects of writing. This approach also uses a whole language approach where writing is taught across the curriculum through reading, listening, writing, and speaking" (Norhidayah, Ameli, Hidayat, 2021). Pragmatic approach in teaching speaking is a good approach to practice casual conversation which one may encounter any time.

Difficulties of using pragmatic approach is the topic which several researches have been conducted. For example, Sufanti, Fatimah, Sholeh, and Huda (2023) did action research on "the implementation of pragmatic approach in the short appreciation learning" and clarifies pros and cons of using pragmatic approach as follows (see figure 1).

Merits	Demerits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• giving a freedom in interpreting the short story;</li> <li>• giving the opportunity to work together;</li> <li>• absorbing value of the short story according to the maturity of the students' thinking;</li> <li>• activating the students to learn;</li> <li>• stimulating students to talk;</li> <li>• fostering confidence;</li> <li>• strengthening character in accordance with the content of the short story.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• it takes a long duration;</li> <li>• needs the teachers' accuracy and patience;</li> <li>• adequately needs the students' reading competence</li> <li>• needs activeness of the students in discussion [Sufanti et al., 2023; 5]</li> </ul>

**Figure 1.** Merits and demerits of pragmatic approach by Sufanti et al.

## Methodology

To acquire reliable results we used qualitative research methods including face-to-face interview and structured observation. In the interview twenty English teachers from Namangan voluntarily took part in. During the interview, English teachers were asked about difficulties and opportunities of using pragmatic approach in teaching pragmatic approach. We used observation to analyze pros and cons of pragmatic approach in English classes at secondary schools, especially, grades 10-11.

In face-to-face interview, our interviewees are about 20 English teachers of schools in Namangan region. In the interview three questions were given:

- 1) Are you aware of pragmatic approach in EFL teaching? Have you used this approach in your practice?
- 2) What are advantages of pragmatic approach in teaching productive skills?
- 3) What kind of disadvantages does pragmatic approach have, in your mind?

Structured observation was held for 2 months aforementioned schools to identify merits and demerits of this approach in natural settings (classrooms). Overall, 15 lessons were observed in different schools and in the lessons of grade 10-11.

## Result and Discussion

We gained our results through interview and observation for 2 months from secondary school in Namangan region. Through our observation and face-to-face interview with teachers, we identified the following pros and cons of pragmatic approach:

Advantages of the approach in teaching productive skills:

- This approach emphasizes on practicing real-life situations in order to prepare pupils for future usage.
- Improves pupils' communication, problem-solving and decision-making skills by making them act different situation and contexts.

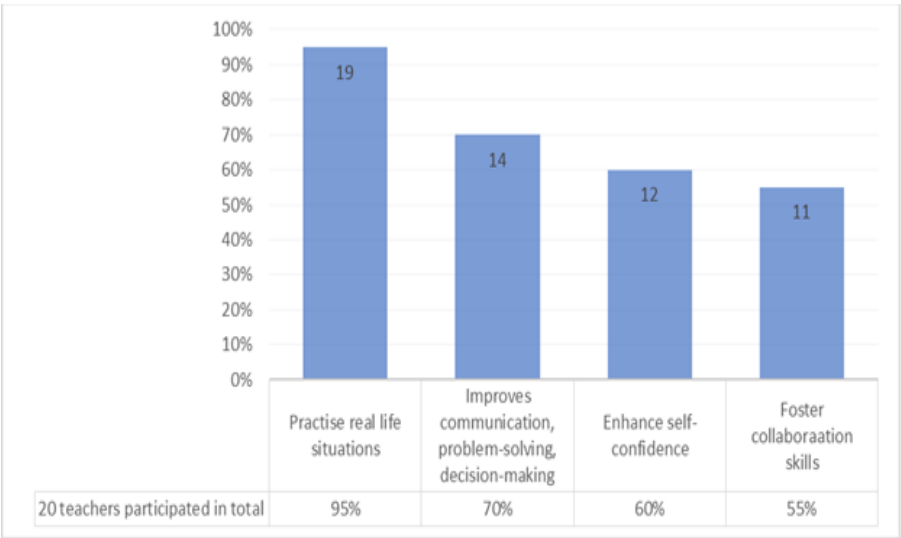
- By acting different roles and participating different group or teamwork successfully pupils begin to believe in themselves. That means, it is a good opportunity to improve their self-esteem.
- It is widely known that most tasks in this approach are groupwork and teamwork. Doing different task or activities together make them feel a sense of collaboration as a group member.

Disadvantages of pragmatic approach in teaching productive skills.

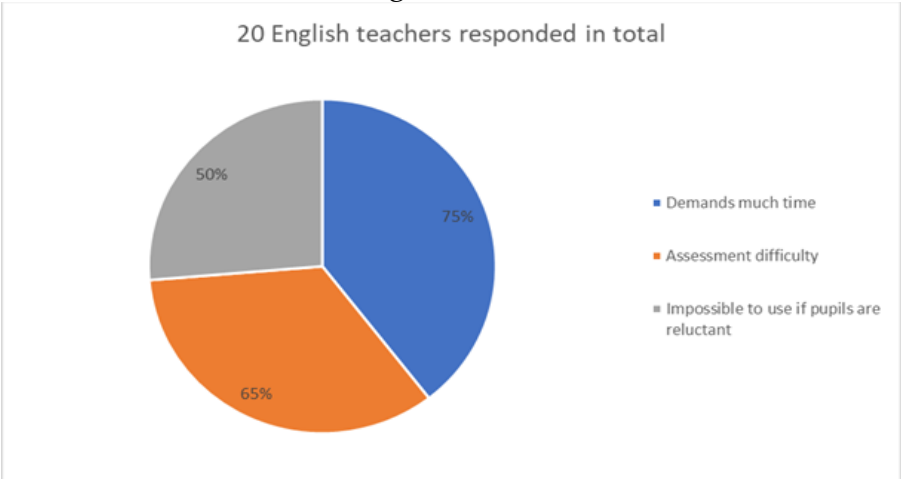
- As tasks and activities are practical in this approach most teachers found the approach time-consuming.
- It can be said that it is more difficult to assess pupils' performance in this approach. Because it can be challenging to have right criteria to assess the development of pragmatic abilities exactly (however it is a good chance of experience and getting peer feedback).
- In most cases, it is determined there is no use in this approach if pupils are unwilling to participate in the class.

**Table 1.** Advantages and disadvantages of pragmatic approach determined through observation and voted by school English teachers

Pros	How many teachers answered "yes"	How many English teachers said "no"
Practice real life situations	19/20	0
Improves pupils' communication, problem-solving and decision-making skills	14/20	1
Enhance self-confidence	12/20	3
Fosters collaboration skills	11/20	1
Cons		
Demands much time	15/20	5
Assessment difficulty	13/20	2
Impossible to use if pupils are reluctant	10/20	10



**Figure 2.** Teachers’ choice of advantages of using pragmatic approach in teaching English



**Figure 3.** Disadvantages of using pragmatic approach voted by teachers

It is time to classify all disadvantages of pragmatic approach in teaching productive skills. It is preferred to divide all merits and drawbacks into certain classes (see table 2).

**Table 2.** Classification of challenges of pragmatic approach identified by scholars and observed by the author in teaching productive skills

Physical	As tasks and activities are practical in this approach most teachers found the approach time-consuming [Sufanti et al., 2023; 5];
Psychological	In most cases, it is determined there is no use in this approach if pupils are unwilling to participate in the class; Lack of intrinsic motivation [Vu, 2017;123]; shyness in carrying out activities concerning cultural matters [Vu, 2017, p.123];
Methodological	It can be said that it is more difficult to assess pupils’ performance in this approach. Because it can be challenging to have right criteria to assess the development of practical skills (however it is a good chance of experience and getting peer feedback;

<b>Physical</b>	<b>As tasks and activities are practical in this approach most teachers found the approach time-consuming [Sufanti et al., 2023; 5];</b>
	lack of first-hand experience in the culture of the target language and contexts [Vu, 2017;123];
<b>Linguacultural</b>	difference in proficiency levels [Vu, 2017;123].
	being very influenced by L1;
	cross-cultural and cross-linguistic difficulties;
	lack of knowledge of English in use;
	lack of cultural literacy [Vu, 2017;123].

It can be felt a lot of difficulties were found by many scholars worldwide. This research can add some challenges to the list of difficulties of pragmatic approach in teaching productive skills. There is the classification of difficulties in teaching speaking and writing in b1 level at secondary schools (see the table 3).

**Table 3.** Basic difficulties of pragmatic approach in teaching writing and speaking skills to senior pupils at secondary schools

<b>Difficulties in teaching speaking</b>	<b>Difficulties in teaching writing</b>
<b>Assessment complexity</b> There is no standardized assessment criteria in pragmatic approach which can assess pragmatic abilities exactly. Teachers must adopt the criteria to measure target pragmatic abilities at a certain level.	<b>Assessment complexity</b> It can be difficult to find appropriate writing assessment criteria in teaching through pragmatic approach. Because different pragmatic abilities are required at different levels.
<b>Overemphasis on context</b> As this approach tends to pay attention more using appropriate language in contexts, it may lead to an underestimation of grammar, vocabulary and formal sentence structure. As a result, it may be difficult for a pupil to use speaking skills in different contexts e.g., casual conversations versus formal debates.	<b>Use of discourse markers</b> Writing at B1 level often requires effective use of discourse markers ( e.g., however, therefore, on the one hand, besides). Learners are asked to not only understand these markers but they are also need to be used to connect the ideas to provide coherence which can be challenging for B1 learners.
<b>Challenges in classroom settings</b> As pragmatic learning often involves authentic interactions, such as role plays, dialogs, simulations ect. which make the class easily noisy, teachers may have challenges to manage classes and evaluate their performance.	<b>Limited vocabulary and expressions</b> Secondary school pupils are known not yet to have enough vocabulary to express themselves fully showing empathy or making indirect requests as pragmatic approach requires can be difficult.
<b>Time constraints</b> Pragmatic activities, like role-plays, simulations often require more time than grammar-based exercises. Furthermore, giving feedback on	<b>Genre understanding</b> Different genres (emails, letters, reports, reviews) each with specific purposes, intended audience, and tone can can be taught applying pragmatic approach. For B1 learners it can be

Difficulties in teaching speaking	Difficulties in teaching writing
pupils' performance and pragmatic aspects of language use can be time-consuming.	hard to understand these differences and to adopt their writing style as required. Besides, pupils may have difficulty even in choosing formal and informal language for their writing.
<b>Demotivated pupils</b>	<b>Demotivated pupils</b>
Unwilling pupils are real problems of this approach. Because pragmatic approach needs active learners for practical activity and tasks	Not all pupils are motivated to learn writing skills, especially, pragmatic writing which pays attention social aspects of writing.

## Conclusion

It can be concluded, pragmatic approach offers many opportunities for senior pupils at secondary schools, such as, improves collaboration skills, self-esteem, decision-making skills, besides, it improves pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competencies of learners. On the other hand, pragmatic approach has some challenges both teachers and pupils may encounter like, time constraints, assessment difficulty, genre understanding, unmotivated pupils and so forth. These difficulties can be overcome to some extent by adding interesting activities, incorporating listening and reading activities to analyze pragmatic aspects of the language, providing pupils with positive feedback.

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