

# The Brainstorming of Teaching Pragmatics Issues in EFLTIN

**Imadul Bilad**

English Education Department, STKIP AL Hikmah, Surabaya  
[biladimadul20@gmail.com](mailto:biladimadul20@gmail.com)

**Lina Aris Ficayuma**

English Education Department, STKIP AL Hikmah, Surabaya  
[linaaris.ficayuma90@gmail.com](mailto:linaaris.ficayuma90@gmail.com)

## Abstract

Pragmatic competence is an important factor in determining communication success. In real-life interactions, a language learner is expected not only to use language and produce understandable or grammatically correct utterances but also to produce socio-cultural appropriate utterances. However, for students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), pragmatic competence, which can be acquired naturally through social interaction, is quite difficult to acquire due to the limited, if not non-existent, use of English to achieve a communication goal in an authentic social interaction/setting. This study is to identify some of the challenges associated with teaching pragmatics at ELTL in Indonesia (henceforth, EFLTIN), as well as to investigate potential solutions based on the concepts and methodologies informed by previous research. A descriptive qualitative research is chosen in this study to identify and to investigate the processing data and research findings. The utilization of authentic materials, input and production activities, as well as clear feedback, are mentioned as some of the strategies to fill gaps in EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge.

**Keywords:** *Brainstorming, EFLTIN, Pragmatics Issues.*

---

## Corresponding Author:

**Imadul Bilad**, English Education Department, STKIP Al Hikmah – Jl. Kebonsari Elveka V, Kebonsari, Kec. Jambangan, Kota Surabaya, Jawa Timur 60232

---

## INTRODUCTION

It has been stated that Indonesian youngsters must have bi/multilingual skills. After learning the regional language as his native tongue, he will need to study Indonesian as a second language, followed by English as our country's first and major foreign language. Indonesian language acquisition often begins in formal classrooms in primary schools in places where Indonesian is spoken in the family. In this scenario, in general, he receives a large tax for the use of the official language in society, such as at school, the workplace, the print media, and on the screen. The linguistic context encourages learning Indonesian. Mastery of the mother tongue in children will not create much interference in the context of linguistics in Indonesia since regional languages

such as mother tongues are employed in a limited way in their society. In general, regional languages are employed in informal activities in everyday oral traditions, particularly in rural regions, as well as socio-cultural rites that are regarded sacred, and the vocabulary utilized has values that are frequently not transmitted in other languages. The status of Indonesian as our country's official language greatly favors second language acquisition. Typically, children learn spoken and written language instantly when they are exposed to an appropriate linguistic environment both within and outside of the school.

Mastery of the mother tongue in children will not create much interference in the context of linguistics in Indonesia since regional languages such as mother tongues are employed in a limited way in their society. In general, regional languages

are employed in informal activities in everyday oral traditions, particularly in rural regions, as well as socio-cultural rites that are regarded sacred, and the vocabulary utilized has values that are frequently not transmitted in other languages. The status of Indonesian as our country's official language greatly favors second language acquisition. Typically, children learn spoken and written language instantly when they are exposed to an appropriate linguistic environment both within and outside of the school. Another barrier is cultural because Indonesian is protected by Eastern culture, whereas English is protected by Western culture. Language acquisition that leads to the capacity to speak in English must be accompanied by a grasp of the situation's context, including personal, social, and cultural components.

In an English as a Foreign Language (henceforth, EFL) classroom, particularly in Indonesia, the input for learning is derived chiefly from textbooks, with very little clarification on the contextual application of terms. Furthermore, because English is exclusively used in the classroom and practice is done in a learning setting, children have minimal opportunities to utilize the language in other social encounters that are not connected to classroom work. As a result, it is understandable that learning English pragmatics is hampered.

This work explores to identify some of the problems associated with teaching pragmatics in EFL classrooms in Indonesia, as well as to investigate potential solutions based on the concepts and methodologies informed by prior research. The first part analyses samples of material currently utilized in Indonesian classrooms for teaching pragmatics and emphasizes the mismatch between the students' needs and the learning input. Then, various alternatives are presented, all of which are guided by previous study findings.

## **METHODS**

A qualitative research is chosen in this study to identify and investigate the processing data and research findings. The purpose of this study is to figure out the brainstorming or solution to the

teaching pragmatic issues or problems in EFLTIN so that the researcher decides to apply qualitative research. Thus, for this purpose, a qualitative study is chosen as the research method used in this research. Qualitative research methods are designed in a manner that helps reveal the behavior and perception of a target audience with reference to a particular topic. Based on the definition, the qualitative method is the most appropriate method to be used for finding the brainstorming or solution to teaching pragmatic issues or problems in EFLTIN

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Previous studies have examined a variety of critical elements that contribute to learners' pragmatic growth, such as exposure to authentic input or the availability of pragmatic input, methods of instruction, pragmatic transfer, learners' competency, and length of exposure (Bardovi-Harlig 2001:24). However, for the sake of this study, I will confine the scope of the discussion to the first three elements indicated above. Because they are not part of the target language community, Indonesian English learners rely on classroom input and activities to develop pragmatic competence. It highlights the significance of instructional materials in providing language learners with input for learning. The first significant problem connected to the input, as indicated by Bardovi-Harlig and MahanTaylor (2003a:3), is to make the language available to learners for observation. Because the textbook is the learners' primary source of knowledge about how target language speakers communicate, it is critical that the textbook content be genuine and so provide learners with an accurate picture of language in use by target language (TL) speakers.

According to Kasper (1997), it is critical for language learners to be exposed to authentic content because exposure to authentic material allows language learners to gain sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge. As in the case of compliments, real content will expose language learners to TL norms, such as what role complimenting serves in the TL society, what

proper themes for complementing are, and how compliments are offered and accepted using linguistics formulas.

### **Pragmatic Input**

Three different sorts of speech acts (offering, accepting, and refusing) are taught in Indonesian classrooms. The distinction between the speech act semantic formulae in the TL and those in the L1 may be seen in the accompanying list of helpful phrases. Semantic formulae, according to Bardovi-Harlig (2001:16), are "...the mechanisms by which a specific speech act is completed in terms of the basic content of an utterance." In other words, the semantic formulae of denial in the TL culture incorporate an illocutionary force signaling device, an expression of thanks, a remark on the interlocutor's behavior, and an explanation or reason for rejection.

In contrast to the TL, refusals in the L1 are more forthright, including merely an illocutionary force signaling device or occasionally followed by a statement of thanks. Aside from the many semantic formulae of the speech act, it can also be seen that the language material gives certain linguistic form options and categorizes how the speech act is performed in informal and formal settings. As a result, it is possible to infer that the pupils have received appropriate knowledge regarding the TL linguistic forms.

### **Authenticity**

The authenticity of the learning content has been identified as a significant element impacting language learners' pragmatic development, particularly in EFL settings. Authentic material is seen to compensate well for the lack of exposure and direct contact with the TL community. According to Ishihara (2010:38), genuine content is material gathered from spontaneously occurring conversations or written data and prepared and altered for classroom usage. However, the use of the authors' intuition in creating linguistic content frequently results in 'unnatural' and stilted language (Ishihara op. cit.). Similarly, Bardovi-Harlig (2001:25) emphasized that teachers cannot rely solely on textbooks for pragmatic input for classroom language learners.

Textbooks sometimes contain insufficient specific input or interpretation of language use. Because of significant adaptation, language textbooks described as being based on actual contact typically do not address the linguistic forms that frequently appear in TL real dialogue.

The regularly recurring content of refuse in the TL is not included in the semantic formulations in the linguistic material. According to Bardovi-Harlig (2001:18), content refers to the specific information given by a speaker in that formula, whereas a semantic formula names the types of information given (e.g., an illocutionary force indicating a device, an expression of gratitude, a comment on a compliment, an explanation of refusal). This may differ from one language to the next. Indonesia and Malaysia, for example, used the same semantic formula to accept compliments: they reduced the worth of the objects being appreciated. The substance, however, is distinct. Malaysians decrease the worth of their belongings by stating the price, whilst Indonesians do so by claiming that the quality of their interlocutor is higher. The refusal's illocutionary force signaling techniques are all negative sentences (No, Not for now, I'm afraid I can't) or words in contrast to the appreciation (but, unfortunately). Both of these components make it quite clear to the listener that the offer has been denied. However, in my personal experience, an offer is routinely denied in an actual conversation by simply replying, 'I'm fine.' 'Thank you. This is typically used in greetings and sounds upbeat. As a result, it is very likely that Indonesian English learners would interpret it as acceptance. By associating it with the notion 'I'm fine. They have reasonable grounds for presuming that the offer is accepted by the interlocutor since it sounds like *'I am okay with that* in the context of declining/refusing an offer.

### **Negative Transfer**

The negative pragmalinguistic transfer from L1 to L2 contributes to this incorrect assumption. The phrase 'Terima kasih,' which is the L1 equivalent of 'Thank you,' actually means 'Accept gift.' As a result, it is commonly used in the

L1 community when accepting an offer since they may not have been exposed to this real language (I'm fine. Thank you.).

### **Output Task**

Noticing and comprehending through supported explicit teaching are insufficient conditions for learners to develop L2 forms. According to Ishihara (2010: 103), language learners' grasp of L2 pragmatic forms does not inevitably lead to their capacity to create those forms in interaction. She went on to say that output and interactional tasks are also crucial in the acquisition of L2 pragmatic. When learners struggle to produce language in this endeavor, they may discover holes in their language system and turn to input for appropriate resources to communicate their message. Output exercises may help learners notice forms that they are missing when attempting to convey their intended meaning in the L2'.

Furthermore, during an interactional activity, learners have the option to focus to their own utterances while also paying attention to their interlocutor's speech and reacting properly in real time, much as in actual communication. They may adjust their utterances in terms of linguistic forms, conversational structure, and conversational content during the contact. This improves automaticity in retaining the forms and consequently fluency.

In reality, interactional practice is typically done in a very traditional manner, which involves playing out a specified discussion script in front of the class. While this practice helps learners become highly fluent in expressing the targeted forms of speech act in the script and understanding the context in which they are used, the chances of being fluent in utilizing other forms that are not in the conversation script are quite low. describe those data or statistics sufficiently in paragraph(s).

### **CONCLUSION**

Finally, the primary obstacles to teaching pragmatics in Indonesian classrooms have been

associated with the use of less authentic content, insufficient metapragmatic explanation, negative pragmatic transfer, and less interactional output practice. According to the previous investigation outcomes of earlier investigations, those issues appear to be possibly solved. The corpus-based material development approach addresses the issue of genuine materials. The issue of insufficient pragmatic explanation and negative pragmatic transfer can be addressed by providing specific teaching and awareness-raising exercises to aid in the noticing and comprehending process. To allow learners to utilize the TL as nearly as feasible to real conversation, the output practice should be made more interactive. Finally, it is critical for language learners to stay current with pragmatic research trends in order to be well-informed about the current teaching pragmatics solution.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

In the teaching of pragmatics, Bardovi-Harlig and Taylor (2003) advocate three fundamental pedagogical practices: (1) the use of authentic materials, (2) input first, followed by interpretation and output, and (3) feedback. This will be the framework within which I will present the possible answers to the issues of teaching pragmatics in Indonesian schools today.

### **The use of authentic materials**

Language teachers must prepare additional materials because some studies have found that textbooks are insufficient to provide pragmatic awareness-raising activities that provide learners with the contextual information, a range of linguistic forms, and in-depth cultural information required to make correct pragmalinguistic (the range of forms available) and sociopragmatic (the right form for the right situation) choices (Vellenga 2004). The most current and effective suggestion to address the issue of authenticity comes from Bardovi-Harlig et al (2014), who detail the processes involved in developing corpus-based products. These steps entail choosing a corpus, finding expressions, extracting conversation excerpts, preparing extracts for teaching, and concentrated noticing and creation. Language

teachers may now access actual language in use and extract it into instructional material because of the availability of internet corpora (Ishihara & Cohen 2010).

### Input and Output

Awareness-raising exercises must be devised in order for language learners to notice and so grasp the input. This observation exercise will concentrate on sociopragmatic or pragmalinguistic characteristics. The sociopragmatic task, for example, will be to observe for what reasons TL speakers decline an invitation to a party. This may be accomplished using Rose's (1994) observation sheet, followed by an explanation of metalinguistic knowledge. The pragmalinguistic assignment focuses on the many linguistic forms used to decline and accept an offer. This can be accomplished by introducing language learners to a collection of helpful phrases.

In addition to using textual materials as input for learning, audio and video materials will be used in language classroom activities. Tateyama (2001:220-221) discovered that using video in the EFL classroom is quite beneficial. His study found that using films to teach speech acts can improve learners' fluency in creating chunks and routines. Similarly, Ishihara (2010:247- 248) stated that films provide a rich input for teaching pragmatics because they include both verbal and nonverbal information, both of which impact communication pragmatics (e.g. intonation, pauses, hedges, gestures, and space).

Given the benefits of interactional practice outlined previously, the production job will incorporate role-play exercises to augment the preceding textual activities. This will be accomplished by providing learners with a detailed description of the part they will be playing prior to the practice. According to Kasper (2001:513), while role-playing can give learners the opportunity to practice as in actual communication, it can also be unsuccessful if the learners are not supported by enough context prior to the exercise. When the context is unclear, role plays may be highly tiring since learners must develop an ongoing context while engaging in communication.

### Feedback

Pragmatic instruction is especially crucial in the EFL classroom since the two domains of pragmatic ability, pragma-linguistics, and sociopragmatics, appear to be particularly challenging for EFL students to master. They are oblivious to TL sociocultural norms since they have little or no contact with the TL community. As a result, because students exclusively use the TL in the classroom, the pragmatic mistake is not perceived as a priority, and the chance for conflict is limited because attention is focused more on grammatical precision than pragmatic appropriateness (Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei) (1998). As a result, it is critical for language teachers to provide feedback when students make improper remarks. When students make excessively direct requests (e.g., I want to borrow your book), the instructor should redirect them to a more indirect request (e.g., *Can I borrow your book?*). This strengthens learners' intuition and knowledge of proper language forms

### REFERENCES

- Allami, H., & Naemi, A. (2011). A cross-linguistic study of refusals: An analysis of pragmatic competence development in Iranian EFL learners. *Journal of Pragmatic*, 385-406.
- Choraih, M. A., Loutfi, A., & Mansoor, A. (2016). The Importance of Pragmatic Competence in the EFL Curriculum: Application and . *Arab World Journal English*, 183-195.
- Ifantidou, E., & Tzanne, A. (2012). Levels of pragmatic competence in an EFL academic context: A tool for assessment. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 47–70.
- Lestari, D. E. (2017). Teaching Pragmatics to Indonesian Learners of English. *METATHESIS*, Vol 1, No 2.
- Limberg, H. (2015). Principles for pragmatics teaching: *ELT Journal*.
- MA, N. D. (2013). The role of Pragmatics in English Language Teaching. Pragmatic Competence. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, Vol 2 No 4.

Mazulfah. (2019). The Future and challenges of Pragmatics in English. *Journal of Pragmatics Research*, 156-165.

Zhu, L. (2019). The teaching of Pragmatics: Issues in a Global Age. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 1111-1116.

---

**Author Biodata:**

**Imadul Bilad** is one of English Education Department student in STKIP Al Hikmah Surabaya. His research interest is on technology media and English as a foreign language of Indonesia. He already obtained bronze medal at national English Olympiad 2021.

**Lina Aris Ficayuma**, M.Pd is a lecturer in English Education Department at STKIP Al Hikmah Surabaya, now. Her research interest is TEFL, Language Assessment, English Language Materials, HOTS, and Intercultural Communication. In addition, she is the coordinator of the Fellowship to Enhance Global Understanding (FEGU) between Yogyakarta State University and Michigan State University at 2015-2016. She has experience as a teacher exchange and student exchange at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia 2013. Another is that, she is part of the coordinator of Virtual English Camp, and English Teacher Training for International Baccalaureate School Preparation.

---