

# ices 4 Pragmatics Based Textbooks:

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## Research article

# Pragmatics Based Textbooks: Do They Fulfil the Needs of Teachers and Students?

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### Abstract.

Secondary students must master not only grammar and text organization, but also pragmatic competence in the target language in order to achieve communication competence. The ability to express meaning beyond language rules is referred to as pragmatic competence. Teachers should provide materials that are appropriate for both the learning goals and needs of the students. This study aimed to determine the types of textbooks that teachers and students require. It was a mixed-methods study with a sample of 41 teachers from Semarang secondary schools. The data were gathered using a Google Form and were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. It was discovered that 56.1% disagreed that the textbooks they used contained situational context and communicative language for everyday use. 61% strongly agreed that to be effective textbooks should use communicative language in everyday situations and introduce various expressions based on the context. There was a significant gap between the types of textbooks required and the textbooks in use at the time. The majority of respondents believed that secondary textbooks or pragmatics-based textbooks should include information on the importance of pragmatics. These needs have not been met by existing textbooks. To summarize, teachers require a game-changing textbook. The researchers therefore encourage other researchers and educators to create textbooks that can support the students' expected outcome of being able to communicate comprehensively in English.

**Keywords:** English textbooks, communicative competence, pragmatic analysis, secondary schools

## 1. Introduction

Indonesia has been implementing curriculum 2013 for its education system. As mandated in curriculum 2013, English learning in secondary schools emphasizes on achieving communicative competence. It is a competence to use English or communicate in culturally appropriate manner around English speakers. Celce-Murcia(4)[1] states that to achieve communicative competence, English learners need to master not only the linguistic features but also the pragmatic aspects in the target language. It is what is meant by pragmatic competence in communication. Or in other words, pragmatic competence here is the ability to express meaning beyond language rules. Furthermore, proficiency of language refers to what someone can do/knows in relation to the application of the

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subject in **the** real world' (6[2]). It means how the speakers can apply their language knowledge in a real-world context. To sum it up, aside from mastering grammar and text organization, secondary students need to master pragmatics competence of target language to achieve the learning goals.

In order to support the purpose of learning English, it is necessary for the teachers to provide materials that are in accordance with the learning goals as well as the needs of learners. The materials usually are provided in textbooks. However, textbooks with a pragmatic perspective are needed because they include elements and principles of linguistics acts that are adapted to the context of the situation and culture. It is compatible to support achieving communicative competence in learning goals. Strategic competence is an understanding of how the speaker should communicate politely to who, where, when, and what the context to accelerate the communication, while linguistic competence is knowledge and comprehension of linguistics features which the speaker uses in communication[3,4].

The result of the researchers' observation showed only a few English textbooks, especially for secondary school, that provided pragmatic competence. It becomes a challenge for English teachers to develop English textbooks which integrate pragmatic competence. As Kasper[5] states that "... The challenge for foreign language teaching is how to arrange learning opportunities in such a way that they benefit the development of pragmatic competence in a foreign language." In line with that, Saleh[6] states when the objective of learning a language is to be able to communicate effectively then teachers and students have to develop communicative competence. With the backdrop in mind, it is necessary for the teachers to provide materials that are in accordance with the learning goals as well as the needs of learners.

This is for the reason that this study is trying to fill the gap between the provided textbooks and the student's needs. It reveals the kinds of textbooks needed by the teachers and students so that at the end of learning, students can achieve the expected communicative competencies comprehensively.

## 2. Review of Literature

### 2.1. Pragmatics

Pragmatics is one of the linguistics branches which studies meaning. It explores the dimensions of meaning behind spoken or written messages[7,8]. In line with that, Trask[9] states that pragmatics studies how the speaker conveys utterances meaning

in context. The messages conveyed in context are closely related to social interaction. Crystal<sup>28</sup>[10] defines pragmatics as “the study of language from users’ point of view, 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 other participants in communication”.

By reason of close connection of language usage and context, language has an important function in the communication process. Abdurrahman[11] grouped the functions of language into six, namely 1) conveying and seeking factual information, 2) expressing and changing attitudes, 3) asking others do something, 4) socialize, 5) discourse building, and 6) increase communication effectiveness. Context also has an important role in communication so the goals can be achieved. Without understanding the context of the speaker and interlocutor will experience communication failure.

## 2.2. Pragmatics Competence of SLA

Leech[12] redivided pragmatics into pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. Based on Brown [13], pragmalinguistic is “the intersection of pragmatics and linguistics form”. It deals with how to obey sociopragmatic restraint in our choice of linguistic tools. On the other hand, sociopragmatics is the knowledge of how social rules affect language use. It includes appropriateness, politeness, social conventions, and taboos. With that understanding, being pragmatically correct requires the two facet of pragmatics: to understand and produce sociopragmatic meanings with pragmalinguistic convention[14]. When one of them cannot be fulfilled, it can lead to pragmatic failure.

According to Tanaka<sup>1</sup>[15], social, academic, and professional opportunities for L2 speakers can be affected by a pragmatic failure. In fact, grammatical errors can be tolerated than pragmatic failures by native speakers[8, 16]. In extreme cases, individuals (whether L1 or L2 speakers) may experience difficulty in establishing social relationships with members of the community and may even be denied valuable academic and professional opportunities. These potentially devastating consequences of the lack of pragmatic competence argue strongly for the teaching of pragmatics.

## 2.3. Teaching Pragmatics

Teaching pragmatics has its own difficulties compared with other linguistics aspects. As dealing with context and cultural aspects, pragmatics needs to be taught in a socio-culturally-informed setting. In fact, the most classroom does not fulfill such requirements.

To the extent that these requirements are established in the classroom, the obvious question is whether teaching pragmatics in the class is doable or not. Kasper[5] states that teaching pragmatics likely can be done, however, some aspects of pragmatics seem easier to teach than others.

To help teaching pragmatics, teachers can adapt information from the study of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP). ILP is the study of how second language speakers use L2. Matsuda[17] explains that ILP studies suggest L2 students learn by following three stages to perform speech act successfully: 1) identifying the speech act that is called for in a particular situation; 2) performing the speech act with or without an appropriate expression, and 3) selecting an appropriate expression to the speech act. Furthermore, Choraih[14] also state that teaching pragmatics materials should be based on findings from pragmatics and ILP because it would represent an accurate reflection of naturally-occurring discourse.

## 2.4. Textbook

As argued by Kobia[18], textbooks are essential tools that provide various functions in English and the teaching process. It functions as a tool for the communication between students and teachers. It is also to guide students and teachers in achieving the goal of the curriculum. Based on O'Neill[19], textbook forms the basis of the language input students receive in the classroom. In line with that, Richards[20] states that in some situations, textbooks may deliver the foundation for lessons' content and the kind of language practice the students take part in.

From the reasons above, it is important to compose a textbook with a suitable material and content which are in line with the needs of students. When learning language, students also need to learn different aspects of the culture in which the language is used. It will help them to understand the language usage in a lot context of the target language. Based on Lund[21], textbooks can provide valuable input when it comes to exposing to new cultural expressions and to the diversity of cultures. Integrating target culture elements into textbooks aims to help students enhance their motivation and develop their attitude toward language learning[22]. Furthermore, Yuen[23] explains that adding information from various of cultures of English-speaking countries in teaching materials is effective for learners' intercultural communication.

### 3. Methodology

This study applied a mixed-method as a research design because it combined both quantitative and qualitative data to answer the research questions as [24] states a mixed-method research design is a procedure for processing both quantitative and qualitative methods to better understand the research problem and question. The type of mixed method used here was the explanatory sequential mixed method. This type of method is where the quantitative data is collected first and then qualitative data to help explain or elaborate on the quantitative result.

Based on reference data from the Ministry of Education and Culture, there are 386 English teachers in Semarang. It was chosen as the population in this study. The sample was 41 secondary school English teachers taken from the reference data. This sample was taken by cluster random sampling technique. The data instrument was done through a questionnaire that consisted closed-ended using the Likert Scale Interview with the criteria of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Slightly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (STD).

The data of this study were collected by distributing Google Form and making calls for the interview. The results of the questionnaire from Google Form would be considered quantitative data and the results from the interview call would be considered qualitative data. After the questionnaire was collected, it would be analyzed quantitatively. Then, the results of the call interview would be analyzed qualitatively to support the quantitative data.

### 4. Results

Both quantitative and qualitative data in this study were taken from 41 secondary school English teachers. All the respondents are from 39 schools in Semarang. Most of them teach seventh grade (63.4%) then followed by seventh, eighth, and/or ninth grade (17.1%), eleventh grade (12.2%), and seventh grade (7.3%). Each teacher used different English textbooks. There are around 10 different titles of textbooks they used. They also used complement textbooks and a respondent could use more than one complement textbook.

As this study used sequential explanatory, hence the quantitative data were initially presented. The quantitative data of this study is the result of the questionnaire about English textbooks which the teachers used. They were about to ask the textbooks

being used regarded to the pragmatics elements provided in there. The result of the questionnaire about pragmatics elements in textbooks is presented in Table 1 below.

The result on Table 1 showed that 23 (56.1%) respondents disagree that the textbooks they used were compatible with providing a clear situation context, while 10 (24.4%) respondents strongly disagree, 7 (17.1%) respondents slightly disagree, and 1 (2.4%) agree about it. Considering cultural context in the textbooks, 20 (48.8%) respondents disagree that the textbooks have presented it, 11 respondents (26.8%) slightly disagree, 9 (22%) respondents strongly disagree, and 1 (2.4%) agree. Most of respondents (18 respondents or 43.9%) disagree that the exercises provided in the textbooks give the chance for students to understand and use the language elements, while some of them strongly disagree (13 respondents or 31.7%), slightly disagree (8 respondents or 19.5%), and agree (2 respondents or 4.9%). Question about exercises in the textbooks had presented the comprehension of text through the context led to 18 (43.9%) respondents who disagree about it, 10 (26.8%) respondents slightly disagree, 8 (24.4%)

respondents strongly disagree, and 2 (4.9%) respondents agree. Related to the usage of communicative language for daily usage in the textbooks, most of respondents 23 (56.1%) disagree then other respondents (10 respondents or 24.4%) strongly disagree, 6 (14.6%) respondents slightly disagree, and 2 (4.9%) disagree. In addition, 18 respondents (43.9%) disagree that the textbooks have explained about the meaning of English expression used, whilst 12 (29.3%) respondents slightly disagree, 8 (19.5%) respondents strongly agree, and 3 (7.3%) agree. Next, explanation about the goal of English expression used in the textbooks, 18 (43.9%) respondents disagree that the textbooks have provided it, yet 13 respondents (31.7%) slightly disagree, 9 (22%) respondents strongly disagree, and 1 respondent (2.4%) agree. As much as 16 (39%) respondents disagree that the textbooks provided explanation about politeness level in the expression, while 12 respondents (29.3%) strongly disagree. Next, 19 (46.3%) respondents disagree that the textbooks have presented depth explanation about situation context in the

various expression, 12 (29.3%) respondents strongly disagree, 8 (19.5%) respondents slightly disagree, 1 (2.4%) respondent agree, and 1 (2.4%) respondent strongly agree.

After collecting the data about the pragmatics elements in English textbooks that they used, the researchers also collected the data about what kind of textbook is needed by the teachers and the students. Therefore, they were also asked about the need for new textbooks. The result of questionnaire is presented in the Table 2 below.

Table 2 presented the result of what kind of textbooks needed by the teachers and the students of secondary schools. It is showed that 22 (53.7%) respondents agree about the need of new textbooks because the existing textbooks have not met both

TABLE 1: The need for new textbooks.

Statement	SA	A	SD	D	STD
The need of new textbooks	31.7%	53.7%	9.8%	2.4%	2.4%
Textbooks need to consist of teacher book, student book, and exercise book	43.9%	56.1%	-	-	-
The need of equal portion of 4 language skills	43.9%	48.8%	7.3%	-	-
Text with situation context help students understanding	53.7%	43.9%	2.4%	-	-
Text with cultural context can help students understanding	46.3%	48.8%	4.9%	-	-
Textbooks need to introduce situation context	48.8%	51.2%	-	-	-
Textbooks need to introduce cultural situation	48.8%	51.2%	-	-	-
The need of textbooks with communicative language for daily use	61%	39%	-	-	-
Introduction of expression needs to be followed with the explanation of meaning, goal, and politeness level	48.8%	51.2%	-	-	-
Textbooks need to introduce various expression based on the context	56.1%	43.9%	-	-	-

teachers and student's needs, while 13 (31.7%) respondents strongly agree, 2 (9.8%) respondents slightly disagree, and 1 (2.4%) respondent disagree, and another 1 (2.4%) respondent strongly disagree. Next, 23 (56.1%) respondents strongly agree and the other 18 (43.9%) respondents agree that textbooks need to consist of teacher book, student book, and exercise book. Most of 20 (48.8%) respondents agree that textbooks need to provide equal portion of 4 language skills, while 18 (43.9%) respondents strongly agree, and 3 (7.3%) respondents slightly disagree. Respondents considered that text with situation context help students understanding as evidenced by 22 (53.7%) respondents who strongly agree, 18 (43.9%) respondents who agree, yet 1 (2.4%) respondent who slightly disagree. Aside from that, 20 (48.8%) respondents agree, 19 (46.3%) respondents strongly agree, and 2 (4.9%) respondents slightly disagree that text with cultural context can help students' understanding. In addition, 21 (51.2%) respondents agree and 20 (48.8%) respondents strongly agree that textbooks need to introduce situation context. 21 (51.2%) respondents agree and 20 (48.8%) respondents strongly agree that textbooks need to introduce cultural situations. Considering the need of textbooks with communicative language for daily use, there are 25 (61.5%) respondents strongly agree and 16 (39%) respondents agree. Meanwhile, 21 (51.2%) respondents agree and 20 (48.8%) respondents strongly agree that the introduction of expression needs to be followed by explaining meaning, goal, and politeness level in the textbooks. Then,



23 (56.1%) respondents strongly agree and 18 (43.9%) agree that textbooks need to introduce various expression based on the context.

By the two tables presented, it means quantitative data had been collected. Qualitative data were then collected to support and help to explain more detail about the aim of this study. The qualitative data were taken by interview through call. From the interview, respondents had various opinions about the kinds of textbooks needed by the teachers and students. The following is one of the interviews happened.

TABLE 2: Example of interview data.

18	Interviewer	:	What grade are teaching?
	Teacher	:	Seventh and eighth
	Interviewer	:	What books are you using?
	Teacher	:	Books from the government and complement books entitled "When English Rings the Bell".
	Interviewer	:	Have the books provided communicative competence?
	Teacher	:	Yes.. some.
	Interviewer	:	Do you recommend those books to other teachers?
	Teacher	:	Yes.. but not the only one. There must be another complement book.
	Interviewer	:	What kind of textbook that you think the most recommended one?
	Teacher	:	The cover must be able to attract children's attention, to build a child's interest in the book. The presentation of the material should be serious yet relaxed so that the child is not tensed or burdened from the beginning the lesson. Better use of text comes from native speakers of the language so that the language used does not follow the target language which sometimes even creates misconceptions and misunderstandings. The selected text should not be heavy text and just plain text, for example procedure text, from ancient times until now they still use the example of 'How to make ... (fried rice, a cup of hot coffee, juice and many more) whereas so many procedures text that can be used.

The other facts showed that most respondents need textbooks with varied exercises and are able to measure students' competence. Other respondents had different opinions about what kind of textbooks they need. They explained that they need suitable textbooks which can be implemented in daily life. Furthermore, they need textbooks with authentic texts or texts from native speakers. Textbooks with conversation exercises are also needed.

## 5. Discussion

Considering the results of both questionnaire and interview, most teachers have the same thought that textbooks they used this whole time do not fulfill the need for pragmatics perspective to improve students' communicative competence. It is shown in the result of questionnaire about pragmatics elements in the textbooks they used.

The most disagree (56.1%) occurred in the statement about “situation context in the text”, it means the textbooks they used this whole time has not yet provided context of situation in the text. The interview data support that the textbooks only provided instruction for students to read then followed by the text as instructed without giving any information about context of situation. Another most disagree (56.1%) referred to the communicative language for daily usage. The teachers who had been interviewed said that the textbooks are lack of daily and natural communication language. In other words, textbooks that are in accordance with the application of daily life is very needed.

The statement about cultural comprehension in the text became the next consideration (48.8%). The result showed that English textbooks that the teachers and students used this whole time is lack of cultural comprehension. It leads to the interview data where they said that the conversation used in the textbooks are unnatural. Depth explanation about situation context in the various expression (46.3%) also leads to the same issue on statement 1. It will automatically be an issue when the context of situation had not yet appeared in the textbooks. The same issue happened in discussing the lack of existence of exercises in the textbooks that give students the chance to understand dan use the language elements (43.3%). The same percentage that is 43.3% occurred for the exercises present the comprehension of text through the context as well as the explanation about the goal of English expression used. While the least consideration happened to the statement about explanation of politeness level in the expression (39%). It perhaps refers to the Eastern culture that obviously reflected on the textbooks they used, for example, most of textbooks nowadays are more concern in building good characters.

Those issues that have been discussed above, then, are compared to the questions which lead to what kind of textbooks need by the teachers and the students. In Table 2, there are some statements which led to answer the question. The most strongly agree by the respondents is about the need of textbooks with communicative language for daily use (61%). It refers to the previous data that showed the most crucial issue about the lack of daily use language provided in the textbooks. It is way unnatural. The second strongly agrees that textbooks need to introduce various expressions based on the context (56.1%). It also refers to the previous data which showed the most crucial issue about the lack of context provided in the textbooks. Next is still about the situation context in the text. Text with situation context can help students to have better understanding then it can lead to high competence of theirs. The statements which got 48.8% of strongly agree go to the statements of textbooks need to introduce situation context, cultural context and explanation of meaning, goal dan politeness level. 46.3% of respondents

strongly agree that cultural context can also help students' understanding. The last three statements that got less agreement (43.9%) yet remain important are about the existence of teacher book, student book and exercise book all together, and the need for equal portion of four language skills. While, the need of new textbooks is considered the last with the percentage of 31.7%.

Referring to the results, it is a gap between the existing textbooks used in the learning process by the teachers and the students, and the kind of textbooks needed by the teachers and the students. Mostly about the communicative competence which have not presented in the existing textbooks. This result is supported the interview result. From the interview, some of the needs of textbooks can be highlighted, such as; media or audio can accompany the textbooks so it can be more attractive to students. The cover must be able to attract children's attention, to build a child's interest in the book. The presentation of the material should be serious yet relaxed so that the child is not tensed or burdened from the beginning the lesson. The use of text comes from native speakers of the language so that the language used does not follow the target language which sometimes even creates misconceptions and misunderstandings. The selected text should not be heavy text and just plain text, etc.

However, textbooks that can reflect daily life, authentic texts, and conversation exercises highlight the needs in textbooks yet have not fulfilled. Other than that, the respondents also mentioned that they need textbooks with varied exercises and are able to measure students' competence, especially communicative competence.

## 6. Conclusion

Based on what has been discussed above, a huge gap is found between the kinds of textbooks needed by the teachers and students and the existing textbooks used by them this whole time. Most of the respondents thought about the importance of pragmatics element that should be provided in the secondary textbooks or pragmatics-based-textbooks. Conversely, the needs have not found in the existing textbooks.

In conclusion, teachers need a breakthrough textbook that emphasizes the importance of communicative competence especially pragmatics competence. Hence, the researchers encouraged the other researchers and educators to create textbooks that can support the students' expected outcome of being able to communicate in English comprehensively.

## 6 7. Authors' Contributions

All authors contributed to the design and implementation of the research, the analysis of the results, and the manuscript's writing.

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