



## METHODOLOGY OF USING BLOOM'S TAXONOMY IN DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE

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### ABSTRACT

This article explores how Bloom's taxonomy can be used as a pedagogical framework to develop pragmatic competence in language instruction. Pragmatic competence entails an individual's ability to interpret and produce language in context, ensuring utterances are appropriately tuned to social norms, intentions, and interlocutor roles. While many language curricula emphasize grammatical and lexical proficiency, systematic attention to pragmatic skills remains comparatively underrepresented. Bloom's taxonomy, which classifies cognitive processes from remembering to creating, can serve as a useful scaffold to structure increasingly sophisticated pragmatic tasks. By mapping pragmatic targets onto the six levels of Bloom's revised taxonomy—remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create—teachers can foster deeper thinking about contextualized language use. This article examines the theoretical foundations of Bloom's taxonomy, explains how each level can correspond to specific pragmatic objectives, and demonstrates how instructors might design lesson sequences that progress from simple identification of speech acts to creative, context-rich communication. A table is included to illustrate possible pragmatic tasks at each cognitive level, with suggestions for classroom application. The article concludes that a thoughtful integration of Bloom's taxonomy and pragmatic skill-building not only enriches communicative competence but also sharpens learners' critical thinking about how language operates across diverse social and cultural situations.

**KEYWORDS:** Pragmatic competence, Bloom's taxonomy, cognitive levels, language instruction, communicative tasks, contextualized learning.

### INTRODUCTION

Pragmatic competence is increasingly recognized as vital for learners seeking to navigate authentic interactions in a target language. To act competently, speakers must adapt their utterances to audience, purpose, and context, employing strategies such as politeness, indirectness, or humor where appropriate. Traditional foreign language classes, however, often concentrate on grammar drills, translation, or formal conversation, leaving little room for analyzing real-life discourse scenarios. Over time, many educators have turned to communicative approaches that highlight functional language use, yet pragmatic competence can remain neglected if lessons lack a structured, cumulative approach. In this regard, Bloom's taxonomy offers a means to scaffold pragmatic objectives so that learners progress through fundamental awareness toward reflective and creative engagement with pragmatic nuances. Bloom's taxonomy emerged in the mid-twentieth century as a system to categorize educational goals, helping instructors formulate learning outcomes that move beyond simple recall. The revised taxonomy organizes cognitive processes in six ascending levels: remember

(knowledge), understand (comprehension), apply, analyze, evaluate, and create. This hierarchical approach, though classically associated with content-based subjects, can enrich language teaching by aligning activities with deeper cognitive operations. For pragmatic competence, teachers can begin with lessons that make learners remember or recognize key speech acts, e.g., how to greet politely, say “please,” or use the right intonation for offers. Next, learners come to understand the social norms tied to these speech acts—realizing that politeness forms might differ in directness based on cultural context. They then apply newly learned forms in controlled or semi-authentic tasks such as scripted role-plays. Over time, tasks become more analytical, prompting learners to examine the structure of a given conversation or to dissect how an utterance changes meaning with variations in prosody. Later, they evaluate real or fictional interactions for appropriateness, culminating in the create stage where they design or script entire dialogues reflecting nuanced pragmatic decisions.

The synergy between Bloom’s taxonomy and pragmatic competence is grounded in the recognition that pragmatic skill demands more than memorized phrases. Learners must reflect on context, weigh alternatives, and shape discourse with an awareness of implicit social rules. This reflection maps onto higher cognitive processes: analyzing and evaluating pragmatic choices, eventually generating one’s own flexible discourse strategies. Through such reflection, learners begin to see that the difference between a direct request (“I want you to...”) and an indirect one (“Would you mind...?”) goes beyond grammar alone; it signals social meaning. Over multiple lessons, students can tackle a range of speech acts (requests, refusals, compliments, apologies, etc.), each time proceeding from simpler identification or reproduction toward reflective analysis and self-generated variations. The teacher’s role is to facilitate discussions that reveal the underlying interpersonal functions, ensuring each new skill or piece of language fits into a broader pragmatic repertoire rather than staying a mere set of memorized expressions.

One of the clearest ways to illustrate how Bloom’s taxonomy may guide pragmatic tasks is through a structured table that categorizes activities by level. Below is an example:

**Table: Sample Activities for Developing Pragmatic Competence According to Bloom’s Taxonomy**

Level (Bloom’s Taxonomy)	Pragmatic Focus and Activity	Learner Actions	Example Tasks
Remember	Recognize and recall typical forms of speech acts	Students identify key phrases for greetings, requests, apologies, etc.	“List 5 expressions for polite invitations”
Understand	Comprehend how these forms vary by context, function, or culture	Students paraphrase or explain why an expression suits a certain situation	“Explain why ‘Could you lend me a pencil?’ might be more polite than ‘Lend me a pencil’”
Apply	Use appropriate forms in controlled conversations or role-plays	Students practice functional dialogues with context-based guidelines	“Role-play a restaurant scenario applying polite requests and thanks”

Level (Bloom's Taxonomy)	Pragmatic Focus and Activity	Learner Actions	Example Tasks
Analyze	Compare variations, identify pragmatic shifts in a text or dialogue	Students dissect transcripts to see how tone or phrasing changes meaning	"Examine a chat excerpt, highlighting where the speaker softens direct demands with modal verbs"
Evaluate	Judge appropriacy, discuss the cultural resonance of certain forms	Students critique a recorded conversation, deciding if utterances are tactful or awkward	"Evaluate how well the speaker refused an invitation, propose improvements"
Create	Develop unique dialogues or scenarios showcasing advanced pragmatic skill	Students design new role-plays or scripts, applying cultural norms creatively	"Write an e-mail complaint to a service provider that is firm yet courteous"

As the table shows, each level in Bloom's revised taxonomy corresponds to a different cognitive depth. At the "Remember" level, learners simply list or name. At "Understand," they interpret or re-express. As they move to "Apply," they produce basic language forms in role-plays or short dialogues. The "Analyze" level requires close scrutiny of language in context, identifying how small changes in phrasing affect meaning. By "Evaluate," students assess the appropriacy of sample dialogues or their classmates' attempts, culminating in "Create," where they invent new situations that reflect nuanced pragmatic knowledge. In this manner, the teacher gradually encourages deeper reflection on how speech acts function, building confidence and authenticity in real communication.

For successful implementation, classroom design must be flexible and interactive. Teachers can begin a lesson cycle by presenting a speech act or pragmatic theme, like "Refusals in polite contexts," with some initial examples and short tasks addressing remember/understand levels. Then, learners might proceed to apply the forms in short role-plays. On a subsequent day, they might receive transcripts or recordings of real refusals, analyzing them to see how small lexical choices or intonation modulations convey acceptance or rejection. That analysis moves them up Bloom's ladder. Next, learners evaluate the dialogues for social success or hidden rudeness, discussing how cultural expectations affect interpretation. The final step might prompt them to create new dialogues or comedic sketches in which multiple characters attempt to refuse an invitation tactfully. By weaving all these steps together, each lesson or series of lessons matches the progressive complexity of Bloom's taxonomy with the layered development of pragmatic skill.

Materials to support these efforts can vary widely: short videos, transcripts, real e-mails or text messages, even short comedic sketches from local or international media. The teacher's challenge is to find or adapt resources that illustrate typical social contexts. Because each culture has different norms, teachers must remain mindful that local learners might interpret scenes from English-speaking countries differently. This mismatch is not a flaw but an opportunity for "Analyze" or "Evaluate" tasks. Students can be prompted: "If this conversation happened in your hometown, how would the speaker sound? Would that shift in style be more direct or indirect?" This cross-cultural reflection intensifies their pragmatic awareness.

Technology too can play a supporting role. Teachers may use digital tools that enable interactive branching dialogues, where learners choose their response and see how an AI or recorded sequence reacts. This approach fosters high levels of engagement and instant feedback, encouraging risk-taking in exploring different pragmatic pathways. While advanced tools might be costly or require specialized training, simpler ones—like recorded phone call simulations—can achieve a similar effect. Students can also do group editing of each other's short scripts using collaborative documents, providing feedback on whether certain lines meet or violate pragmatic norms. This collaborative environment fosters a communal sense of exploration, removing the fear of mistakes in front of an audience.

Assessing pragmatic competence can be done through scenario-based evaluations, discourse completion tasks, or teacher observation of real and simulated interactions. While not as straightforward as grammar quizzes, these methods reflect the complexity of pragmatic usage. A teacher might present an incomplete scenario—"You must ask your boss for permission to leave early"—and request that learners produce an utterance. The teacher then judges whether it shows courtesy, correct register, and clarity of intent. Over time, systematic records of such tasks can map each student's progress up Bloom's taxonomy. The "Analyze" or "Evaluate" tasks can serve as summative assessments if students, for instance, must critique a recorded group interaction, highlighting strong or weak pragmatic moves. These evaluations stress quality and context over mechanical accuracy, so rubric-based scoring often works best, balancing attention to form, function, and sociocultural alignment.

Teachers also must note the inherent challenge of bridging learners' comfort zones. Some learners prefer explicit grammatical instruction and might feel uncertain about exploring ambiguous or context-dependent expressions. Another challenge is ensuring that advanced learners do not get bored repeating the basics, while novices are not overwhelmed by complex tasks. A tiered approach, also known as differentiation, can align with Bloom's taxonomy: some students remain at earlier stages of pragmatic skill (applying or analyzing simpler forms), while others progress to evaluate or create more nuanced dialogues. The classroom dynamic might involve rotating groups, where each set of learners works on tasks best suited to their readiness. A teacher can unify them through short, whole-class reflection at the lesson's conclusion. In this design, Bloom's taxonomy not only guides lesson planning but also supports flexible group management.

It is equally important to note that pragmatic instruction resonates with broader goals of intercultural competence. By situating language within social and cultural frames, teachers help learners see how different norms shape language choices. They also show how miscommunications can arise from ignoring such norms. In advanced tasks, students examine how historical or generational factors cause changes in politeness forms or evaluate the globalization of certain speech acts in online spaces. These expansions reflect the "Create" level of Bloom, where learners reframe or re-invent language for novel contexts. For instance, in a culminating project, students might produce a short interactive video or a mock social media conversation that addresses cross-cultural confusion—like using direct requests with an older professor. They then present to classmates for critique. Such a culminating, creative step cements the idea that language use is neither random nor purely grammar-based, but shaped by intangible social rules that require critical reflection.

In concluding, one must stress how crucial teacher expertise is to guiding all phases of Bloom's taxonomy. The teacher chooses each scenario, scaffolds tasks, offers feedback, and fosters a safe environment for trial and error. Pragmatic knowledge is not always as codified as grammar; it emerges from real data, conversation examples, personal experiences. Teachers who themselves have limited exposure to English-speaking cultures or limited training in pragmatics may need continuous professional development. Workshops on speech act theory, conversation analysis, or cross-cultural pragmatics can expand their repertoire of tasks and sharpen their interpretive lens. Over time, a robust community of practice can form, with teachers exchanging role-plays, transcripts, and local cultural references that match the cognitive levels of Bloom's taxonomy. This synergy fuels consistent improvement in how pragmatic competence is woven into mainstream language curricula.

In short, integrating Bloom's taxonomy into the development of pragmatic competence represents a powerful methodology for language teachers seeking to elevate communicative instruction. By conceptualizing pragmatic learning as a progressive climb from basic recognition of speech acts to creative application in unfamiliar contexts, educators clarify objectives and structure consistent practice. The synergy of pragmatic tasks at each level fosters deeper awareness of how language interacts with culture, social relationships, and speaker intentions. Though challenges exist—limited resources, teacher training gaps, and the intangible nature of pragmatic phenomena—this approach ultimately enriches learners' skill sets in ways that pure grammar training cannot. Learners emerge not only capable of speaking correctly, but also of choosing contextually apt utterances, reflecting critical thinking about cultural differences, and taking ownership of their communicative identity. As global communication becomes ever more central to personal and professional success, pragmatic competence stands at the forefront of language education's evolution.

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