

# The Pragmatic Competence of the Grade 3 Teachers in San Jose District, Division of Camarines Sur

Charmaine C. Tansico<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Graduate Studies, University of Northeastern Philippines

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## ABSTRACT

Interactive classroom mathematics games have increasingly been recognized as pedagogical tools that can Pragmatic competence constitutes a critical dimension of effective teaching as it shapes how teachers utilize language strategically to facilitate understanding, manage classroom dynamics, and foster meaningful interaction among learners. In multilingual and culturally diverse educational contexts, teachers' ability to interpret communicative cues, adapt discourse strategies, and respond to learners' needs becomes essential in ensuring quality instructional delivery. This study examined the pragmatic competence of Grade 3 teachers in San Jose District, Division of Camarines Sur during School Year 2024–2025. Specifically, it determined the extent of teachers' pragmatic competence across discourse, sociocultural, strategic, interactional, and functional domains; tested the level of agreement in the rank ordering of these competence areas; identified challenges encountered in improving pragmatic competence; determined the agreement on the ranking of these challenges; and formulated policy recommendations for enhancing pragmatic instruction toward improved educational quality. The study employed a descriptive–evaluative–correlational research design involving sixty-one Grade 3 teachers. Data were gathered using a researcher-developed questionnaire and analyzed through weighted mean, percentage, rank, and Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance with corresponding chi-square test at the 0.05 level of significance. This methodological approach enabled the study to capture both the extent of pragmatic competence manifested in classroom communication and the degree of consensus among teachers regarding competence indicators and contextual challenges. Findings revealed that teachers' pragmatic competence was very highly manifested across all domains, with interactional competence emerging as the most evident dimension. Significant agreement was observed in most competence areas except interactional competence, indicating variability in teachers' prioritization of interactional strategies. Teachers also reported that challenges in improving pragmatic competence were generally challenging, particularly in adapting communication to diverse learner contexts and assessing learners' pragmatic development. Despite high competence levels, the persistence of contextual difficulties suggests the need for sustained professional development and institutional support mechanisms. The study concludes that pragmatic competence is a foundational professional capability that influences classroom participation, learner comprehension, and the inclusivity of instructional environments. Strengthening pragmatic communication skills through policy-aligned training programs, curriculum integration, and systematic supervision can enhance instructional quality and contribute to the attainment of broader educational goals.

## 1. Introduction

Effective teaching in contemporary classrooms extends beyond mastery of subject content and pedagogical strategies; it requires the ability to communicate meaningfully, responsively, and appropriately across diverse instructional situations. Pragmatic competence—defined as the capacity to use language strategically and contextually—plays a vital role in shaping how teachers engage learners, clarify concepts, manage classroom interactions, and promote collaborative learning. In elementary education, where learners are still developing linguistic awareness and social communication skills, teachers' pragmatic competence becomes particularly influential in determining the quality of classroom discourse and the inclusivity of learning environments. In the Philippine basic education system, classrooms often consist of learners with varying linguistic backgrounds, cultural orientations, and levels of communicative confidence. Teachers must therefore navigate multiple discourse demands, including the balancing of formal and informal language registers, the interpretation of implicit meanings, and the adaptation of communication strategies to accommodate learners' developmental needs. Pragmatic competence enables teachers to negotiate these demands by fostering clarity, empathy, responsiveness, and instructional flexibility. Through effective pragmatic

communication, teachers can scaffold learning experiences that encourage participation, reduce misunderstandings, and strengthen learners' confidence in expressing ideas.

The construct of pragmatic competence encompasses several interrelated domains that collectively shape classroom communication dynamics. Discourse competence involves organizing spoken or written language coherently to facilitate comprehension. Sociocultural competence requires sensitivity to contextual and cultural norms that influence communication patterns. Strategic competence reflects the ability to anticipate communication breakdowns and employ adaptive strategies to maintain interactional flow. Interactional competence emphasizes active listening, turn-taking, and collaborative dialogue, while functional competence relates to the purposeful use of language to achieve instructional objectives. Examining teachers' performance across these domains provides a comprehensive understanding of how communication practices contribute to effective teaching and learning processes.

Despite the recognized importance of pragmatic competence, teachers may encounter challenges in enhancing their communicative practices. These challenges may stem from contextual diversity, time constraints, lack of structured training, limited assessment tools for evaluating pragmatic development, and the complexity of integrating communicative objectives within content-focused lessons. Investigating these issues is essential for informing policy initiatives that support teacher development and promote quality education.

This study was therefore conducted to assess the pragmatic competence of Grade 3 teachers in San Jose District and to explore how competence levels and perceived challenges can serve as bases for policy recommendations. By situating pragmatic competence within broader educational improvement efforts, the research contributes to the discourse on teacher professionalism, communicative pedagogy, and inclusive instructional practices in elementary education.

**2. Methodology**

The study utilized a descriptive–evaluative–correlational research design to examine the pragmatic competence of Grade 3 teachers and the challenges encountered in improving such competence. The descriptive component enabled the determination of competence levels across selected domains, while the evaluative dimension focused on identifying the degree to which teachers experienced instructional challenges. The correlational component examined the level of agreement among respondents regarding the ranking of competence indicators and challenges through Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance. This integrated design provided a multidimensional perspective on classroom communication practices.

The respondents consisted of sixty-one Grade 3 teachers in San Jose District. A researcher-developed questionnaire served as the primary instrument, containing items that measured pragmatic competence across discourse, sociocultural, strategic, interactional, and functional domains. Additional items captured challenges related to communication adaptation, assessment practices, classroom management, and instructional integration. Ethical considerations were observed by securing permission from school authorities and ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation.

Data were analyzed using weighted mean, percentage, and rank to determine competence levels and challenges. Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance with chi-square test at 0.05 significance level was employed to assess agreement among respondents. These statistical tools enabled the identification of patterns of convergence and divergence in teachers' perceptions regarding pragmatic competence and contextual constraints.

**3. Results and Discussion**

*3.1 Extent of Pragmatic Competence*

Table 1: Extent of Pragmatic Competence of Grade 3 Teachers

Domain	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Interactional	4.89	Very Much Evident	1
Sociocultural	4.87	Very Much Evident	2
Strategic	4.81	Very Much Evident	3
Functional	4.78	Very Much Evident	4
Discourse	4.78	Very Much Evident	5

The findings reveal that pragmatic competence among Grade 3 teachers was consistently very high across all domains, indicating that teachers demonstrated strong communicative capabilities in managing classroom discourse and facilitating learner engagement. The highest rating for interactional competence suggests that teachers effectively foster collaborative dialogue, encourage learner participation, and maintain responsive communication during instructional processes. This reflects an instructional environment where teachers prioritize interpersonal interaction as a key mechanism for knowledge construction and classroom management.

The strong performance in sociocultural competence indicates teachers' awareness of learners' diverse backgrounds and their ability to adapt communication strategies accordingly. This is particularly significant in multilingual classroom contexts, where sensitivity to cultural norms and communication preferences enhances inclusivity and learner confidence. Teachers who demonstrate sociocultural competence can create supportive learning environments that reduce communication barriers and promote equitable participation.

The high rating for strategic competence reflects teachers' capacity to anticipate communication challenges and employ adaptive discourse strategies. This includes clarifying instructions, rephrasing explanations, and using scaffolding techniques to ensure learner comprehension. Such practices contribute to minimizing misunderstandings and sustaining instructional momentum.

Although functional and discourse competence ranked slightly lower, they remained within the highest descriptive category. This suggests that while teachers are proficient in structuring lessons and using language purposefully, there may be opportunities to further refine coherence in extended classroom discourse and to align communicative functions more closely with instructional objectives. Overall, the results indicate a robust foundation of pragmatic competence that supports effective teaching practice.

3.2 Agreement on Rank Orders of Pragmatic Competence

The analysis of Kendall’s Coefficient of Concordance revealed significant agreement in discourse, sociocultural, strategic, and functional competence domains, indicating shared perceptions among teachers regarding the relative importance of these communication practices. This consensus suggests the presence of common instructional norms and professional expectations across schools within the district.

However, interactional competence showed non-significant agreement, implying variability in how teachers prioritize specific interactional strategies such as questioning techniques, peer collaboration facilitation, and feedback delivery. This variability may be influenced by differences in classroom management styles, learner behavior patterns, and contextual teaching realities. While teachers universally recognized the importance of interactional competence, they may differ in their approaches to implementing it effectively. Such findings highlight the need for structured professional learning communities where teachers can share best practices and develop consistent frameworks for fostering classroom interaction.

3.3 Challenges Encountered in Improving Pragmatic Competence

Table 2: Challenges Encountered by Teachers

Challenge Domain	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Adapting to Diverse Contexts	3.12	Challenging	1
Assessing Pragmatic Competence	3.12	Challenging	2
Classroom Management	3.11	Challenging	3
Integrating Pragmatic Skills	3.11	Challenging	4
Balancing Language Registers	2.79	Challenging	5

Teachers perceived multiple challenges in enhancing pragmatic competence, with adapting communication strategies to diverse classroom contexts emerging as the most prominent difficulty. This finding underscores the complexity of managing linguistic diversity and varying learner needs within instructional settings. Teachers must continuously adjust communication styles, instructional pacing, and interaction patterns to accommodate different proficiency levels and learning preferences.

Similarly, the challenge of assessing pragmatic competence reflects the lack of standardized tools and clear performance indicators for evaluating communicative skills. Unlike traditional academic competencies, pragmatic abilities involve subtle behavioral and contextual factors that are not easily quantified. This creates uncertainty among teachers regarding how to measure learners’ progress in communication and interaction.

Challenges related to classroom management and integration of pragmatic skills suggest that teachers may struggle to balance content delivery with communicative objectives. Ensuring discipline, maintaining engagement, and facilitating dialogue simultaneously can be demanding, particularly in large or heterogeneous classes. The relatively lower rating for balancing language registers indicates that while teachers find it challenging, they may already possess strategies for adjusting speech levels between formal instruction and conversational interaction.

These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions that provide teachers with practical tools for communication assessment, culturally responsive pedagogy, and integrated lesson design.

3.4 Agreement on Rank Orders of Challenges

The statistical analysis showed significant agreement among respondents regarding the ranking of challenges, indicating shared recognition of the difficulties encountered in improving pragmatic competence. This consensus reinforces the urgency of institutional support mechanisms such as training programs, mentoring systems, and curriculum guidelines that address communication-related instructional issues.

The convergence of perceptions also suggests that pragmatic competence challenges are systemic rather than individual. Addressing them requires coordinated efforts involving school leadership, district supervision, and policy frameworks that prioritize communicative pedagogy as part of quality education initiatives.

3.5 Integrated Discussion

The overall findings reveal a dynamic interplay between high pragmatic competence and persistent instructional challenges. Teachers demonstrate strong communication skills that support learner engagement and classroom interaction, yet contextual factors continue to influence the consistency and effectiveness of pragmatic practices. This duality suggests that pragmatic competence development is not solely a matter of individual teacher capability but also of institutional structures that shape instructional environments.

Enhancing pragmatic competence requires sustained professional development opportunities that focus on reflective communication practices, collaborative learning strategies, and culturally responsive instruction. Additionally, the integration of pragmatic objectives into curriculum design and assessment frameworks can help institutionalize communicative pedagogy as a core component of quality education.

#### 4. Conclusions and Implications

The study concludes that Grade 3 teachers possess very high levels of pragmatic competence, particularly in interactional and sociocultural communication practices. However, variability in agreement regarding interactional strategies and the presence of significant challenges highlight the need for systematic interventions to strengthen pragmatic instruction.

Implications include the development of standardized assessment tools for pragmatic competence, implementation of training programs on adaptive communication strategies, promotion of collaborative professional learning communities, and alignment of policy initiatives with communicative pedagogy goals. These measures can enhance instructional quality and support inclusive learning environments in elementary education.

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