

Testing EFL Communication: Speech Act Theory and the Communicative Approach

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Abstract

The study examined the relationship between Speech Act Theory and the Communicative Approach in assessing foreign languages, emphasizing the theoretical foundations and everyday applications of each approach. The study aims to present the theoretical and practical connections between these two approaches and highlight the emphasis on real-world communication in the Communicative Approach. The opening section examines Speech Act Theory as a forceful linguistic framework for analyzing the semiotic functions of language, elucidating how speeches not only communicate information but also enact actions within communicative encounters. The speech act theory's illocutionary, perlocutionary, and locutionary actions are explained in depth, emphasizing that language usage is dynamic and how its context affects interpretation. Examining existing research on Speech Act Theory, the Communicative Approach, and their applications in language assessment, the paper investigated the Communicative Approach to Foreign Language Testing, which deviates from conventional paradigms for language evaluation and builds on Speech Act Theory. It was found that the Communicative Approach, which has its roots in Speech Act Theory, emphasizes the practical use of language in real-world contexts. The results shed light on the theoretical foundations of the Communicative Approach, enhancing its application in practice.

Keywords: communicative approach, foreign language assessment, pragmatic approach, real-world communication, semiotic function of language, speech act theory

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Introduction

Speech Act Theory

Speech Act Theory is a linguistic theory that investigates the performative side of the language, demonstrating how utterances not only carry information but also execute actions. Building upon the foundational work of Austin (1962), philosopher Searle (1969) further developed and elaborated upon speech-act theory. The theory explores language's dynamic function in forming social reality, going beyond the conventional understanding of language as only a descriptive instrument. The idea of illocutionary acts, or the planned consequences of a statement, is at the heart of Speech Act Theory. Austin (1962) made a distinction between illocutionary actions, which are acts done in the process of expressing something, and locutionary acts, which are the acts of speaking something. When someone says, "*I assure you, this won't slip my mind,*" for instance, they are not only performing a locutionary act, stating a fact, but making an Illocutionary statement of reassurance, too.

Building on Austin's studies, Searle (1969) proposed the concept of perlocutionary actions or speech's actual effects on the recipient or listener. For instance, the perlocutionary act may reassure the audience or foster trust. The triple distinction helps to explain the complexity of language usage. Speech Act Theory classifies illocutionary acts into expressive, declarative, directive, assertive, and commissive categories. Every category represents an alternate form of illocutionary power or speech act function. In contrast to the primarily informative or declarative nature of aggressive speech acts, instructive speech acts are inherently persuasive, aiming to guide listener behavior or elicit a desired response through direct commands or requests.

The Speech Act Theory acknowledges context's importance in understanding a statement's meaning. The same words used in different circumstances might have different illocutionary effects. Contextual awareness highlights the dynamic nature of language and how social norms impact speech acts. The valuable applications of the theory may be found in many fields, including communication studies, artificial intelligence, and the subject of linguistic philosophy. It provides a framework for the linguistic research of pragmatic language aspects, emphasizing the role of context, goal, and social norms. From a philosophical perspective, it disputes the widely held belief that language is an objective tool for conveying ideas and maintains that language is inextricably related to social interaction and behavior.

In communication studies, Speech Act Theory facilitates understanding the subtleties of interpersonal interaction and the consequences of language usage in different settings. By analyzing the technicalities of communication, speech-act theory spells out how language can be controlled and managed to wield influence, affect opinions, and institute hierarchical power dynamics within social contexts. The information is crucial for fields like rhetoric and political discourse analysis. Speech Act Theory influences natural language processing (NLP) in artificial intelligence. NLP algorithms recognize the literal meanings of words and attempt to understand the intentional illocutionary behaviors within a given context. It enhances Artificial Intelligence (AI) system's ability to hold more sophisticated and appropriate conversations in various settings (Kasirzadeh & Gabriel, 2023).

Three Steps of Speech Act Theory

Undoubtedly, a link to human existence is essential. According to the Speech Act Theory, words and phrases used in speeches have specific functions in society. Several experts believe that one such technique is physical expressiveness (Kissine, 2020). Word components are commonly

referred to as verbal techniques, according to Kissine (2020). Three steps make up the theory: illocutionary, perlocutionary, and locutionary.

Locutionary Act

The main phase of Speech process Theory, locutionary actions, embodies the fundamental process of creating a meaningful remark. Austin (1962, p. 109) used the term "locutionary act" to characterize the literal or surface-level interpretation of a statement or the act of articulating something utilizing a specific vocabulary and grammatical structure (Searle, 1968). Understanding the significance of locutionary actions requires an examination of the three interrelated aspects that comprise the initial step of the speech act process.

Act Phonetically

The phonetic act is the creation of the sounds or written symbols that comprise the speech, and it is the first phase of the locutionary act. It refers to the arrangement of letters and characters in written language; in spoken language, it encompasses word pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm.

Phatic Act

The second component, the phatic act, focuses on the communication part of language. It is concerned with the social function of language, focusing on establishing and preserving communication between the speaker and the person who is listening (Kadar & House, 2020). The phase guarantees that the speech is identified as a communication act instead of random noises or words. The phatic act connects the speaker with the listener, paving the way for information transfer and the prospective execution of illocutionary acts.

Rhetic Act

The third component of the locutionary act, the Rhetic act, concerns propositional content or the meaning of speech. It entails transmitting information or articulating a particular idea through language (Kadar & House, 2020). The Rhetic act deals with what is spoken, including the semantic content and the utterance's syntactic form. The component converts authentic sounds or symbols into meaningful statements with precise cognitive content.

Illocutionary Act

Illocutionary actions are essential in Speech Act Theory because they investigate a statement's intended force or function. Searle (1968) introduced and built on the feature, which explores a speaker's different speech actions outside the literal meaning of what they say. Illocutionary activities illuminate the speaker's intentions, showing a specific utterance's underlying meaning or power. To fully appreciate the component of Speech Act Theory, it is necessary first to examine the three major categories of illocutionary acts: assertive, directions, and commissive.

Assertive

Assertive are statements or beliefs the speaker expresses concerning a condition of events. The illocutionary act communicates information, depicts reality, or expresses an opinion. When someone states, "The rain is hammering the pavement outside," they aggressively present weather

information. The speaker's dedication to the integrity of the statement serves as the illocutionary force here.

Directives

Directives or Regulations are illocutionary acts in which the speaker seeks to persuade the listener to act. Requests, demands, recommendations, and invites are all examples of Directives. For example, when someone says, "Pass me the bookmark," the illocutionary force is directive since the speaker wants the listener to perform a specific action. Directives' success depends on the listener's understanding and reaction to the desired illocutionary force.

Commissive

Commissive implies that the speaker is committing to a future direction for action. Promises, oaths, and vows are illocutionary acts that communicate the speaker's desire to undertake a particular act in the future. When someone says, "I will see you in the evening," they commit to future action and perform a commissive illocutionary act. The speaker's dedication to the stated purpose is the driving force here.

Illocutionary behaviors must be understood to unravel the complexity of human communication. It analyzes the speaker's communicative goals in addition to the literal meaning of words, offering insight into the performative character of language (Kissine, 2020). The illocutionary actions also highlight the significance of context in comprehending the intended meaning since the exact words can convey various illocutionary forces in different contexts.

Categorizing illocutionary acts offers a platform for evaluating the social dynamics and power structures accompanying language usage. Recognizing the illocutionary power in an utterance provides a more nuanced view of how language is a tool for delivering information and as a way of influencing, guiding, and committing to acts within social situations.

Illocutionary actions of Speech Act Theory provide a complete framework for investigating the motives underlying speech. The classification of expressions into assertive, directive, and commissive forms constitutes the basis of the aspect of speech act theory, illuminating the diverse ways language interacts with and shapes the environment via these distinct speech acts.

Perlocutionary Act

The third stage of Speech Act Theory is perlocutionary actions, which focus on the repercussions or consequences of a speech on the listener or receiver. As defined by Searle (1969), perlocutionary actions investigate how language impacts the listener beyond the speaker's apparent intentions. Understanding perlocutionary acts entails studying the listener's reactions, responses, or changes resulting from the speech.

Influence on the Audience

Perlocutionary actions are based on the premise that speech may directly influence the listener's ideas, feelings, or conduct. For example, if a speaker makes a joke and the listener laughs, the perlocutionary act is successful. Similarly, if the speaker delivers a persuasive speech, the goal of perlocutionary impact may be to persuade the audience to adopt a given point of view or perform a specific action (Kasirzadeh & Gabriel, 2023). Recognizing the perlocutionary component acknowledges the power of language in affecting the cognitive and emotional reactions of the listener.

Acts of Speech as Social Actions

Perlocutionary activities underline that speech is more than just information transmission; it is also a form of activism with real-world implications. Utterances can form social relationships, affect decisions, and shift views. Whether a speaker wishes to convince, entertain, convince, or provoke, the effectiveness of perlocutionary speech. The component emphasizes language's performative nature, actively impacting social interactions and results.

Contextual Variability

The perlocutionary aspect recognizes that an utterance's impact might change depending on contextual circumstances such as the listener's opinions, feelings, and cultural background. What is compelling in one situation may be ineffective or objectionable in another. Consideration of perlocutionary actions necessitates understanding the various ways the language can be heard and understood, emphasizing the relevance of context in influencing communicative outcomes.

Intention Vs. Impact

While illocutionary actions are concerned with the speaker's purpose, perlocutionary acts are concerned with the actual consequences of the speech act. A speaker's intention may be to soothe, but the perlocutionary impact may vary depending on the listener's mind. The distinction emphasizes the dynamic and occasionally unpredictable character of communication, underlining the need to consider both the speaker's goal and the actual effect on the listener.

Persuasion and Influence

Perlocutionary activities are critical in the study of influence and persuasion. A persuasive speech, for example, aims not simply to transmit a message (illocutionary) but additionally to modify the listener's views, attitudes, or actions (perlocutionary). Understanding the perlocutionary component is critical for assessing the efficacy of persuasive communication tactics and the intricate interplay between behavior and language.

Categories of Speech Act

Speech Act Theory divides utterances into five categories, each representing a particular function or communication goal. Searle's categories give a thorough framework for understanding how language is employed to accomplish actions in social circumstances.

Acts of Representative Speech

The speaker makes comments that describe or reflect a condition of things in representative speech actions. The principal role is to deliver information or express world views. Statements, affirmations, descriptions, and explanations are some examples. Saying "It's too hot outside" or "Trees release oxygen" are examples of representative speech actions since they try to convey facts or information.

Acts of Directive Speech

Directive speech acts attempt to persuade the listener to do something. Requests, directives, ideas, advice, and invites are all included in the category. The illocutionary force underlying directed speech actions is to affect the listener's conduct. Examples include instructions such as the English poet Pope's frenzied directive in his poem, 'Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot,' "Shut, shut the

door, good John,” (1954, p. 24) requests such as Keats’ passionate pleading to the Nightingale, in ‘Ode to the Nightingale,’ “Fade, far away dissolve, and quite forget . . .” (Keats, 1981, p. 293) and invites such as “Join me for a cup of Arabic coffee tonight.” The function of language in influencing activities or eliciting particular reactions is highlighted by directive speech acts.

Acts of Commissive Speech

The speaker commits to a future course of action in a permissive speech act. Promises, vows, pledges, and other statements of commitment fall within the category. Under this classification, the speaker accepts a commitment or commits to do something in the future, for example, statements such as “I will help you with your homework” or “I promise to give you the report tomorrow.” Commissive speech stresses the speaker’s desire to carry out the stated objective.

Acts of Expressive Speech

The speaker expresses their sentiments, attitudes, or psychological states through expressive speaking acts. Apologies, congratulations, gratitude, complaints, and emotions of delight and grief fall within the category. Expressive speech actions are concerned with the speaker’s personal feelings and emotions. For example, stating “I’m sorry for being late” or “Congratulations on passing your exam” are expressive speech acts that transmit feelings rather than facts or directions.

Acts of Declarative Speech

Declarative speech actions are performative in character, meaning the utterance changes the external world. The act of saying the words causes it to be so. Proclamations, declarations, and announcements fall within the category. Examples include “I at this moment pronounce you husband and wife” and “I declare the meeting adjourned.” Declarative speech actions demonstrate language's potential to create or modify reality via speaking. Recognizing these speech act types is critical for assessing the depth and complexities of communication. Speakers frequently use several of these speech acts in their daily conversations, and the efficacy of communication depends on listeners' awareness and interpretation of these acts. Furthermore, categorizing speech actions sheds light on the social dynamics, structures of power, and interpersonal relationships entwined with language usage. Scholars and linguists better grasp how language works as a tool for affecting, expressing, committing, and modifying social reality by investigating the many purposes of speech actions.

Problem statement

The pragmatics approach must be considered while discussing speech act theory and the communicative method. The central tenet of pragmatics is that language should be integrated into social contexts (Thomas, 2013). It suggests that comprehension of language use within a social context is necessary for language acquisition.

Socio-pragmatics and pragma linguistics are two subdisciplines of pragmatics. Transmitting interpersonal or relational meanings together with communication actions is known as praxis. Conversely, socio-pragmatics focuses on the social perception that guides a speaker's participation and communication behavior. When these two input-based strategies are used together, learners' ability to identify and construct English-request hedges is improved (Widodo & Sari, 2023). After

exploring the details of the speech act theory, the research aims to identify the methods through which pragmatics impact communicative speech. These particular goals are examined in detail throughout the study:

- i. Examine the theoretical foundations, core ideas, and principles of Speech Act theory.
- ii. Examine how Speech Act Theory has impacted conceptions of language testing.
- iii. Describe the benefits and drawbacks of using Speech Act Theory in language assessments.

Main aim and significance of the study

The study contributes to ongoing discussions about effective and holistic language assessment methods. It sheds light on the theoretical foundations of the Communicative Approach, enhancing its application in practice. By emphasizing real-world communication, it aligns assessment with actual language use, potentially improving learning and evaluation outcomes. The main of the study is shared below:

- i. Analyze the connections between Speech Act Theory and the Communicative Approach in foreign language assessment.
- ii. Highlight the emphasis on real-world communication within the Communicative Approach.
- iii. Demonstrate how understanding can inform language assessment practices.

The research questions that the study sought to answer are as follows:

- i. How does Speech Act Theory relate to the Communicative Approach in foreign language assessment?
- ii. What are the theoretical underpinnings of each approach?
- iii. How do they manifest in practical applications to language assessment?

Literature Review

Importance of Communicative Approach to Foreign Language Testing

Lee & Wallace (2018) uphold the Communicative Approach's potential to evaluate the true significance of language skills in day-to-day communication. By giving precedence to how language abilities are used instead of just being familiar with them, the Communicative Approach presents a more expressive and poignant assessment of foreign language proficiency. Speech Act Theory, a linguistic theory that sees communication as a sequence of purposeful acts with defined purposes, is the foundation for the strategy. The Communicative Approach differs from traditional approaches, which frequently emphasize separate language components and rote memorization. Instead, it emphasizes the capacity to utilize language in genuine and meaningful ways that mirror how language is used in real-world interactions. The Speech Act Theory, which maintains that language is a tool for accomplishing communicative objectives rather than just accumulating grammar rules and vocabulary, supports the change (De Jong, 2018).

According to Sifakis (2019), the Communicative Approach's forte lies in its ability to evaluate various features of language proficiency outside grammar, such as critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving, contributing to a well-rounded evaluation of language competence. Conventional evaluation methods frequently focus only on specific abilities, such as speaking, writing, listening, and reading, which results in a disjointed picture of a learner's language proficiency. The Communicative Approach, on the other hand, combines these abilities,

understanding that linguistic, social languages, and pragmatic capabilities are all necessary for good communication.

Additionally, the method heavily emphasizes task-based evaluation, where learners' proficiency in real-world language activities is used to evaluate them (Shohamy, 2020). These exercises simulate real-world communication situations, such as taking part in a discussion, making a presentation, or composing an argumentative essay. The Communicative Approach gives a more realistic picture of students' language competency and preparation for language usage in everyday situations by evaluating them in context.

The emphasis of the Communicative Approach on the function of language and communication skills is another essential feature. Language is a dynamic instrument for communicating meanings, motives, and emotions rather than just a collection of rules that must be obeyed (Savignon, 2017). Evaluating a learner's capacity to use language effectively in various social and cultural circumstances is crucial to communicative competency assessment. The method acknowledges that language is naturally social and that correct grammar alone is insufficient for effective communication.

Furthermore, instead of having students passively memorize facts, the Communicative Approach promotes a learner-centered setting in which students actively interact with the language. In addition to encouraging learners to employ their information in various contexts, the active involvement fosters a better comprehension of language structures (Zhang, 2019). These assessments, exemplified by their stress on creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving, add to the emergence of a holistic language proficiency that surpasses mere grammatical knowledge and disseminates successful communication in varied contexts.

Giraldo (2018) postulates that the Communicative Approach expedites the incorporation of technology within language assessment.

Digital tools and online platforms provide innovative methods for evaluating language proficiency in real-world settings. Rich and dynamic evaluation experiences are offered through interactive activities, multimedia tools, and virtual communication simulations. It helps students meet the language needs of the modern world and is in line with how communication is changing in the digital era.

The Communicative Approach also considers students' varied requirements and backgrounds. Evaluation bias may result from unintentionally favoring particular cultural or linguistic communities in traditional assessments (Zheng & Cheng, 2018). The Communicative Approach supports various linguistic variations and cultural expressions since it emphasizes language use in everyday situations. The inclusiveness makes the language assessment system more just and equal.

Pragmatic Approach in Language Testing

According to the study by Clark (2018), the Pragmatic Approach, which emphasizes language's pragmatic and contextual usage in everyday contexts, marks a substantial shift from conventional evaluation techniques in language testing. The method provides a sophisticated knowledge of language competency and is based on the ideas of pragmatics, which examines how language is used in a conversation.

Im, Shin & Cheng, (2019), argued that language usage in context, including the social, cultural, and contextual dimensions of communication, is the focus of pragmatics. These ideas are extended to assessment in language testing with the Pragmatic Approach, which recognizes that

language competency involves more than just vocabulary and grammar and the capacity to use language correctly in various communicative contexts.

The Pragmatic Approach's emphasis on communication skills is one of its core principles. Conventional language evaluations frequently place a higher priority on linguistic proficiency, emphasizing vocabulary and grammatical correctness. But effective communication demands more than language skills; it also requires knowledge of how language is used in particular social and cultural situations (Lee & Wallace, 2018). Thus, pragmatic evaluations consider discourse rules, register, politeness, and other contextually relevant aspects when assessing an individual's capacity to utilize language.

According to the study by Jenkins & Leung (2019), the fundamental building blocks of communication, or speech actions, are a central idea in pragmatics. Speech actions incorporate the listener's interpretation, the speaker's purpose, and the words' literal meaning. Evaluating pragmatic competency entails determining how well a student can perform speaking actions. It involves employing language to carry out tasks like asking, apologizing, or persuading, identifying indirect speech actions, and comprehending suggested meanings. Therefore, by analyzing the effectiveness with which students use language to accomplish particular communicative goals, pragmatic assessments offer a more nuanced assessment of a student's communicative competence.

The Pragmatic Approach also acknowledges that language use is dynamic and context dependent. Language changes depending on the social and cultural environment in which it is used; it is not a static system. Pragmatic evaluations consider how language is used differently in various contexts (Im, Shin & Cheng, 2019). Adaptability is especially vital for evaluating language learners' readiness for real-world communication since context awareness and adaptability are critical components.

Moreover, emphasizing the value of intercultural competency is a pragmatic examination. In multicultural and multilingual contexts, effective communication frequently occurs, necessitating that people understand cultural subtleties and modify their language use accordingly (Savignon, 2017). When evaluating a learner's cross-cultural communication skills, pragmatic evaluations consider the importance of cultural sensitivity, empathy, and awareness.

The pragmatic approach aligns with the trend toward task-based, honest evaluations. Conventional language exams frequently consist of isolated, contrived tasks that do not accurately represent language use in everyday situations (Clark, 2018). Conversely, pragmatic evaluations include activities and situations, such as role-playing, problem-solving, and negotiation, that mimic real-world communication. Because these activities evaluate the capacity of learners to apply language abilities in real-world settings, they offer a more comprehensive picture of their language competency.

According to the study by Kehal & Beghoul (2018), using technological devices in pragmatic language testing signifies a revolutionary change in the assessment procedure, providing an engaging and dynamic evaluative encounter. Digital platforms are essential because they make creating interactive situations that resemble real-world communication settings easier (Meyerhoff et al., 2023). These scenarios provide a more sophisticated assessment of learners' pragmatic skills than the standard, static exams. Educators and assessment designers may create realistic and captivating scenarios that require students to traverse the nuances of language use in various contexts by utilizing the possibilities of digital tools.

Among the most essential elements for improving pragmatic language testing are online exchanges. Learners can participate in real-time conversations on virtual communication platforms, which mirror genuine communication's dynamic and impromptu character. A study by Jenkins & Leung (2019) discovered that practicing different kinds of conversations, from casual chats to formal discussions, helps learners adjust their language to fit the situation. Online interactions are instantaneous, capturing the flow of language and allowing for a more precise evaluation of learners' communicative agility and reactivity.

Because multimedia resources incorporate several communication modes, they add to the complexity of pragmatic language assessment. Assessments using auditory and visual components can more thoroughly evaluate learners' pragmatic abilities. For instance, instructors could show students audio or video recordings that capture the tone of voice, cultural quirks, and nonverbal cues, all crucial for effective communication (Kasirzadeh & Gabriel, 2023). It is ensured that students' abilities to comprehend and react correctly to the intricate layers of meaning present in real-world communication circumstances are comprehensively understood when they are assessed using a variety of modalities.

Pragmatic language testing gains additional authenticity from virtual environments. By engaging learners in digitally produced environments, assessments can mimic specific settings, such as social gatherings, professional meetings, or business interactions (Meyerhoff et al., 2023). Learners are challenged to use their pragmatic knowledge and abilities in ways that are relevant to the setting through these virtual scenarios. Because virtual environments are immersive, learners respond more realistically, giving assessors important information about how well they can negotiate communication's cultural and social facets.

Students can exhibit their pragmatic proficiency to fit the changing face of 21st-century communication in a digitally connected environment. Technology integration improves the assessment process and equips students for the world of digital communication they will face in their academic, professional, and personal lives. Kehal & Beghoul (2018) argue that the continuous improvement and growth of pragmatic language testing in the digital sphere will lead to more precise, pertinent, and significant evaluations of students' communicative proficiency as technology develops. The progression signifies a dedication to equipping people with the skills necessary for the intricacies of interpersonal relationships while utilizing the benefits provided by modern digital platforms (Clark, 2018).

According to the study by Alemi & Haeri (2020), understanding the functional and contextual components of language use requires understanding the Pragmatic Approach and Speech Act Theory. Pragmatics, as a linguistic study, investigates how the environment affects interpretation of meaning in communication. Speech Act Theory, on the other hand, explores the idea that utterances are more than just expressions of information. They are actions with specific communication goals.

By emphasizing the performative element of language, Speech Act Theory provides a theoretical foundation for a pragmatic evaluation. According to the idea, utterances can be divided into speech acts such as claims, requests, promises, and apologies (Kehal & Beghoul, 2018). These activities involve not only delivering information, but also performing social responsibilities and duties within a particular setting.

The Pragmatic Approach includes and extends Speech Act Theory ideas into language testing and analysis. It recognizes that effective communication takes more than just grammatical correctness; it also necessitates an awareness of how language functions in various social and

cultural settings (Alemi & Haeri, 2020). Pragmatic evaluations, which are informed by Speech Act Theory, measure a learner's capacity to use language not merely to convey information but also to do specific communicative acts in various settings.

Evolution of Pragmatic Language Testing

In the 1960s, the psychometric-structuralism method began to dominate language testing. Carrol (1961) made a clear distinction between discrete point testing and integrative testing, which aims to examine a learner's ability to employ several bits simultaneously. Since 1980 language testing has entered a new, active phase. The integrative assessment evaluates a learner's ability to utilize many bits simultaneously. More scholars and linguists recognize the relevance of language naturalness as pragmatics develops.

In the 90s, language assessment progressed to the Communicative-Pragmatic stage. According to Johnson and Johnson (1998) communicative language testing was designed to assess communicative proficiency and employ communicative events as test items. The items are frequently related to language use, and the activities are authentic and feasible. Examinees may choose what they want to talk about or what degree of proficiency they wish to be assessed on in some tests.

Role-play, interview, debate, and recounting are considered to be pragmatic oral tests. Role-play is the use of words in a simulated real-life scenario. At the same time, interview activities directly examine language use that assesses verbal abilities by requiring the tester and test takers to converse.

Methodology

For the purpose of research and analysis, the researchers have adopted the "Cohen (1994)" method for assessing pragmatic ability and oral proficiency. The intended focus here is on explaining and potentially justifying the chosen assessment method within the context. The study employed Cohen's (1994) methodology, which draws on Speech Act Theory and the Communicative Approach. Based on the literature review and the different methods discussed there, the researchers found that Cohen's (1994) methodology seems relevant to assessing pragmatic ability and oral proficiency, given the reasons discussed below.

The three assessment methods proposed by Cohen (1994), supported the practical oral test as a new methodology for evaluating pragmatic ability and oral proficiency. Cohen's (1994) assessment is divided into two parts: form and substance. There are three sub-items in the form:

1. Naturalness of discourse: Is the speaker's speech intelligible?
2. Style of expression: Is the style of expression authentic or idiomatic?
3. Clarity of expression: Can native speakers understand the speech?

Content also consists of three items:

1. Suitability: Is the language appropriate to society or function?
2. Accuracy of information: Can the testee accurately narrate an event, describe an object, and strive for logic?
3. Amount of information related: Is the amount of information appropriate to function?

Subsequently, there are five ratings or bands for each item. The total number of points represents the tester's overall integrative ability. The tester's integrative oral ability will be determined by the total scores in each rating. The scores can also be converted into a hundred-point scale (Cohen, 1994). The formula below is employed:

$(C * 5) S = 100 * Ct (1)$

Ct stands for the test takers' integrative oral rating. The number of items included in the evaluation is denoted by the letter C.

Sample of Evaluation

Two students' performance in a role-play test was assessed, according to Cohen's evaluation method for oral examinations.

Student A's mission is to retrieve her wallet from B, while Student B's task is to refuse to return the wallet if A fails to describe it appropriately. In the discourse, A made a lot of verbal faults or mistakes. The meaning of some statements and expressions in A's speech is unclear, so A receives a band four for the item.

In role-play, both students performed admirably. Student A used the word "er" ten times to express her eagerness to get her hands on the wallet. We do not consider the item in the evaluation since the justification given by student B for refusing to return it is implausible.

It was not enough to teach and test linguistic forms without considering how they were used. Social appropriateness, such as who is speaking to whom, when, and under what circumstances, are as essential as linguistic accuracy. Pragmatic language tests were created to help with it. Pragmatic language tests are an innovative technique for evaluating users' language skills, particularly for oral testing. It examines communicative action in its sociocultural context, considering language knowledge and people's ability to use language in a situational setting and an acceptable manner to evaluate test-takers' ability to communicate effectively in social situations. The integrated oral scores of the exam taker are the sum of the bands for the six items.

Discussion

Communicative Approach to Language Testing

The first principle of language testing is to encourage the utilization of language in productive and sometimes repetitive circumstances. It should dictate real-life experience. It is what the communicative approach to language testing entails. Exercises in a communicative manner are developed based on experience (Legutke, Thomas, & Candlin, 2014). Sholeh and Nur (2020) concentrated on task-based assignments. They utilized a set of tasks consistent with themes. Such tests as TOEFL and IELTS are designed based on a communicative approach. They are reviewed constantly to maintain their relevance.

To create tests based on the communicative approach, test designers attempt to create real-world activities. Test creators start from content; they make a bias for the test. The bias is based on what test-takers require the test for. These requirements could be explained as travelling for career opportunities, advancement in education, or travelling for fun. Hence, such tests as IELTS are categorized based on purposes such as, academic or general. In all of these settings, they have to communicate. To clarify test-taking needs, test creators have developed tests based on four communicative principles, as laid down by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) (Phan, 2008). These principles include:

1. Starting somewhere: It entails that test designers briefly state what they expect from test-takers, that is, what they wish to do.
2. The second principle is "concentration on content." That is, not only the topic, but the tasks are also needed to be implemented. The purpose of the test is expected to feature in the

principle. The language task will guide them in future jobs. It could include reading traffic signs: Danger; Do Not Turn for a Driver.

3. The third principle is termed “bias for best”: It measures the degree of strategic involvement on the student’s part in preparing for a test. That is, tests are prepared according to the learner's expected ability regarding advancement in proficiency.
4. “Working on washback”: Clear scoring criteria are created. Course objectives and test contents are put into consideration in the hope of promoting positive feedback.

Hence, to achieve success in tests, test takers require undisputed attention. It entails Hymes’s (1972) idea of communicative competence (Wiemann & Backlund, 1980). According to the theory and technique, understanding language is more than knowing its laws. Test designs based on the method are characterized by two approaches: receptive to production and understanding social roles in circumstances. Language is deemed an external reality in the communicative approach. Nonetheless, under both systems, language is a means of communication. The primary purpose of tests is to evaluate students' capacity to communicate effectively and to put what they have learned receptively to good use.

Additionally, the communicative approach differs from other approaches, such as the integrative approach. A test for medical students in an Arab country must vary from one for medical students in Japan or China; that is, cultural considerations must be considered. Of course, the last aspect along with an emphasis on the exam criteria based on learners' needs, are two key benefits and strengths of the communicative approach (Han, 2022). In contrast, for other strategies, such as the psychometric-structuralist approach (used in universal careers, medical doctors, for instance), a test can be used globally, regardless of cultural differences across countries.

Collectively, researchers have agreed that the communicative approach is preferred to all previously devised methods. It is a worthy replacement for such tests as the fill-in-the gap or multiple-choice questions, which are purely theoretical. A test based on the communicative approach would comprise pure and hybrid tests, focusing on language use rather than language knowledge.

Pragmatics and Speech Act Theory

According to Jens Allwood (1977) in "A Critical Look at Speech Act Theory," the most crucial study in contemporary pragmatics research is the invention of a theory of linguistic communication that is merely a portion of a more extensive theory of human communication (Allwood, 1977, pp. 53–99). Allwood's article recommended ways to improve theoretical tests. The distinction between the locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary explains most of the characteristics of Pragmatism.

The pragmatic approach has gained popularity rapidly. Pragmatics and speech act theory are two schools of study that delve into linguistic phenomena that cannot be explained only by grammatical analysis. In the 1950s, a group of "ordinary language philosophers" at Oxford criticized logical analysis because they focused on daily speech (Avramides, 2016, p.720). They assert that “truth conditions” can be used to test a claim. For example, “the cat is on the mat” would only be correct if the cat was indeed on the mat. There are many other kinds of speech acts, such as promises, declarations, and so on, each with its own set of felicity conditions prescribed by tradition and context. Every sentence contains presuppositions, implications, and promises. For example, suppose A vows to marry B. In that case, it is assumed that A is not already married. It is presumed that A will marry B. These pragmatic conditions are vital as they play a cognitive

function where presuppositions, according to Austin, are irrelevant. The method is founded on an intentional or mentalist perspective, which assumes that the speaker's goals are significant and the implications of those intentions.

From the short review above, the communicative approach to testing does not take a purely linguistic approach. Instead, it devises pragmatics and semantics as means of creating purposeful tests. Most of our words are interpreted by listeners based on the speaker's true meaning as indicated by his actual purposes, not merely the linguistic meaning. As a result, while speech act theory contributes significantly to pragmatics, the emphasis has shifted considerably from speech analysis to non-explicit meaning analysis, highlighting the interwoven relationship between psychology and linguistics. It is strongly recommended that instructors educate students focus on the semantic and pragmatic aspects of language.

Language testers can benefit from the precision and rigor provided by expert researchers (Kopriva, 2000). Conclusively, the communicative approach has noted the importance of relevance, quality, and quantity. The key questions that have emerged from the research involve issues related to the mainstreaming of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) since the 1980s, the development of utilization of approaches, and lastly, the challenge of operationalizing a theoretical knowledge of the communicative approach to language testing.

Conclusively, the research focused on utilizing and operationalizing models of communicative ability. The operationalization is derived from the theoretical approaches to Second Language Testing which can be summarized as grammar, sociolinguistics, and strategic competence. Sociolinguistics competence serves the purpose of pragmatic competence.

Consequently, the communicative approaches to language testing have flourished by adjusting to the principles of practical models that exemplify real-life and task-driven approaches. It is apparent that the recent communicative approach to language testing is a synthesis of all these methods of communicative language testing. The clearer examples of these types of testing can be found in Buck's (2001) book "Assessing Listening" for further reading.

Conclusion

Even though pragmatics and semantics inform and illumine meaning, the latter concentrates on its linguistic foundation, laying stress on grammar. On the other hand, pragmatics goes a step further and analyzes the complex design and structure of context inherent in the utterances, revealing the social and cultural atmosphere under whose influence words derive meaning. A comprehensive and critical analysis of the scholarly studies carried out by the present researchers on the subject of speech acts and language testing has revealed that particular speech acts are used in the teaching and testing of English. The continued usage and effectiveness of speech act theory emphasizes the crucial function Pragmatics plays in fostering language integration within social contexts. Consequently, sociocultural underpinnings of linguistic communication inform the development of communicative language tests.

It has been critically and substantially analyzed and explained in the present paper that the communicative method of language testing involves using language in productive and receptive scenarios to simulate real-life situations and experiences. It uses pragmatics and semantics to create purposeful tests like the TOEFL and IELTS, continually assessed to ensure relevance. Test designers seek to develop real-world activities to construct tests based on the communicative method. The test creators start with the content and create a bias for the test. The bias is based on what the test takers aim to learn, but effective communication is essential regardless of the purpose

and situations in which they take tests. The communicative approach to language testing does not just focus primarily on language and its knowledge. It also assesses students' ability to communicate effectively, that is, to apply what they have learned practically and in real-life situations.

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