Pragmatics

> "A través de la educación multicultural, capacitamos a los estudiantes para convertirse en ciudadanos globales que abrazan y respetan las diferencias culturales, fomentando la paz y la armonía en nuestro mundo. La verdadera belleza del multiculturalismo reside en su capacidad para unir divisiones, fomentar la empatía y crear un sentimiento de pertenencia para todos".
>
> *"Through multicultural education, we empower students to become global citizens who embrace and respect cultural differences, fostering peace and harmony in our world. The true beauty of multiculturalism lies in its ability to bridge divides, foster empathy, and create a sense of belonging for all."*
>
> —*Ada & Campoy*, 2023a

This chapter addresses pragmatics as one of the language subsystems and emphasizes its importance in language study. Pragmatics is the study of how language is used in real-world contexts. It considers factors such as context, social dynamics, and speaker intentions to convey meaning beyond literal interpretations. Pragmatics is especially important to consider in bilingual and bicultural settings as individuals navigate between different cultural frameworks and communication styles. The importance of context in interpreting meaning is highlighted throughout this chapter, including physical setting, speaker identity, shared knowledge, and cultural norms. Cross-linguistic strategies and lessons are also shared, along with several methods for assessing pragmatics. This chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of pragmatics and its implications for language learning, cross-cultural communication, and biliteracy.

In This Chapter

Pragmatics

Pragmatics and Biliteracy In Action

Assessment Considerations for Pragmatics

Assessment Considerations for Writing

Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a vital aspect of language study. It focuses on how language is used in real-world contexts to convey meaning beyond the literal interpretations of words and sentences. It deals with the ways in which context, social factors, and speaker intentions influence communication. As a language subsystem, pragmatics examines the rules and conventions that govern effective communication within a particular language community.

Language can serve various basic functions such as expressing needs, making requests, giving commands, asking questions, and making promises. For example, asking "Could you please pass the salt?" is not just a question about salt, it is expressing a need and a request.

Pragmatics also involves the importance of context in interpreting meaning. This context can include the physical setting, the identities and relationships of the speakers, shared knowledge, cultural norms, and the ongoing conversation. For example, the meaning of the phrase "I'll think about it" could signify genuine consideration in one context, while in another it may be a polite way of saying "no" without directly declining.

Three important dimensions of pragmatics are implications, assumptions, and politeness. Implication involves conveying meaning indirectly. Speakers often imply information rather than explicitly stating it, relying on shared understanding and contextual cues. For instance, if someone says "There are cookies in the staff lounge," this may imply that it's okay for staff members to eat these cookies.

Assumptions are presuppositions that speakers make about the shared knowledge or beliefs of their audience. Speakers often structure their speech based on these assumptions. For example, saying "Have you stopped drinking coffee?" presupposes that the person being addressed was previously drinking coffee.

Finally, courtesy language or politeness is used to maintain social harmony. To avoid causing offense or conflict, speakers employ various strategies, such as using indirect speech, employing honorifics, and mitigating requests.

Most important of all, pragmatics acknowledges that language behaviors and norms can vary across different cultures and communities. What may be considered appropriate or polite in one culture could be perceived differently in another. What can be assumed or presupposed in one culture may be completely opposite in another.

In *Guiding Principles of Dual Language Education* (2018) Howard and colleagues affirm cross-cultural competence as a pillar of dual-language education. Pragmatics is about understanding the intricacies of language use in everyday communication—and how competent speakers navigate the complexities of social interaction through language. It is a crucial subsystem of language study as it sheds light on how meaning is constructed and conveyed beyond the literal interpretation of words and grammar. The dynamics of cross-cultural competence is embedded in pragmatics.

> **"** Pragmatics...focuses on how language is used in real-world contexts to convey meaning beyond the literal interpretations of words and sentences. **"**

Learn More

Ducuara, J. J., & Rozo, H. A. (2018). Biliteracy: A systematic literature review about strategies to teach and learn two languages. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 8*(10), 1307–1318.

Butvilofsky, S., Escamilla, K., & Hopewell, S. (2023). *Biliterate writing from the start: The literacy squared approach to asset-based writing instruction.* Brookes Publishing.

Pragmatics and Biliteracy

Pragmatics plays a significant role in understanding how bilingualism and biculturalism intersect. In the process of becoming bilingual and bicultural, individuals navigate between multiple cultural frameworks, each with its own set of "pragmatic norms" and communication styles. Understanding cultural pragmatics—the implicit rules and conventions governing communication within a culture—is essential for bicultural individuals to navigate social interactions effectively.

Bilingualism and biculturalism involve complex processes of identity negotiation, where individuals navigate multiple linguistic and cultural identities. Language pragmatics plays a role in shaping how individuals express their identity, establish rapport with others, and negotiate their belonging within different linguistic and cultural communities. Bilingual individuals may strategically adapt their pragmatic behavior to align with specific cultural norms or social expectations, depending on the context. Bicultural individuals may draw on their knowledge of both cultures to adapt their communication style and negotiate their identity within different social contexts.

Key Terms

Implications: Information conveyed indirectly without explicitly stating it.

Assumptions: Presuppositions that speakers make about the shared knowledge or beliefs of their audience.

Politeness: Courtesy language used to maintain social harmony.

Politeness strategies vary across cultures and languages, influencing the way individuals express courtesy, respect, and social hierarchy in communication. Bilingual-bicultural individuals may employ different politeness strategies depending on the language and cultural context of the interaction. Understanding the pragmatic nuances of politeness is crucial for bilingual individuals so they can navigate social interactions smoothly in both linguistic and cultural settings.

Understanding the pragmatic aspects of language use is essential for bilingual and bicultural individuals seeking to communicate effectively, negotiate their identity, and navigate their social worlds across languages. Respecting cultural differences is essential for effective cross-cultural communication and building positive interpersonal relationships in diverse contexts.

Caveat

Certain pragmatic norms or speech acts may be more prevalent in one language and culture than another, leading to pragmatic interference. For example, nonverbal communication, including gestures, facial expressions, and body language, varies across cultures and can convey different meanings.

Emerging bilingual-bicultural individuals may mistakenly use pragmatic strategies or norms from one language and try to apply them to the other. Because these norms often vary from one culture to another, a direct transfer is not always possible. For example, cultural norms around personal space and physical proximity influence interpersonal interactions. Some cultures prefer closer physical proximity during conversations, while others maintain greater distance. Understanding these differences is crucial for effective cross-cultural communication.

Other cultural, linguistic, and pragmatic factors that impact communication across languages include:

Turn-Taking and Interrupting: Cultures differ in their expectations regarding turn-taking in conversations and the acceptability of interrupting. In some cultures, such as those in Western societies, individuals often take turns speaking and may interrupt to express agreement or disagreement, while in others, listening without interruption is valued.

Conflict Resolution: Cultural norms influence approaches to conflict resolution and negotiation. Some cultures prioritize direct confrontation and resolution of conflicts, while others may avoid conflict or seek harmony through indirect communication strategies.

Hierarchy and Authority: Cultural hierarchies and power dynamics affect communication styles and interactions. In hierarchical cultures, individuals may show deference to authority figures and use formal language registers, while in more egalitarian cultures, communication may be more informal.

Cross-Linguistic Connections

Several scholars and researchers have written about various aspects of cultural parameters, contributing to our understanding of how culture shapes human behavior, social interactions, and identity. Edward T. Hall (1966) introduced the concept of "proxemics" in his book *The Hidden Dimension*, where he discusses the role of space and how people use space to communicate. Others, like Gary Weaver (2013), use an iceberg analogy for intercultural relations to illustrate the complexities of culture. Like an iceberg, much of culture is unseen, below the surface. The visible aspects of culture, above the waterline, represent observable categories, such as language, clothing, and food. These aspects are easily noticed and are often the focus of cultural stereotypes. However, below the surface lies the bulk of culture, the invisible and deeper elements that shape behaviors. These include values, beliefs, norms, and worldview. These aspects are often implicit and not immediately apparent to outsiders. Yet they play a crucial role in shaping how individuals and societies function.

language food
clothing

Visible Aspects of Culture

Invisible and Deeper Aspects of Culture

beliefs worldview
values
norms
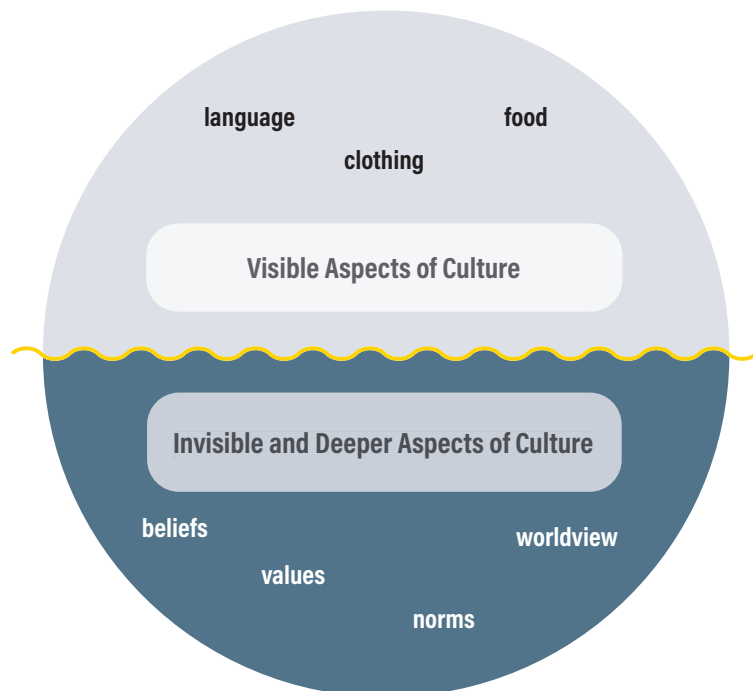
Culture encompasses a broad range of parameters that collectively shape the beliefs, values, practices, norms, and behaviors of a particular group of people. These parameters are interconnected and dynamic, reflecting the complex and multifaceted nature of all human cultures. Nelson Brooks (1968) describes twenty-five parameters of culture. He emphasized the importance of culture for language learning. Some of the key parameters of culture include the ones shown in this table. This is not an all inclusive list, but it highlights the most important parameters that are relevant to K–12 instruction.

Cultural Parameters	
Parameter	**Definition**
Language	Language is a central aspect of culture, serving as a primary means of communication and expression within a community. It shapes thought patterns, social interactions, and cultural identity, influencing how individuals perceive and interpret the world around them. There are different registers of language: formal register, such as language used in academics, official documents, and ceremonies. Neutral register, language used in everyday communication, is generally clear and respectful, but not formal. Informal register, used in casual or familiar settings such as conversations with family and close friends, may not strictly adhere to grammatical rules or standard usage.
Beliefs and Values	Beliefs and values encompass the guiding principles, ideologies, and moral codes shared by members of a culture. They shape individuals' attitudes, priorities, and decision-making processes, influencing social norms and behaviors within the community.
Customs and Traditions	Customs and traditions refer to the rituals, ceremonies, practices, and behaviors passed down through generations within a culture. They play a significant role in social cohesion, identity formation, and cultural continuity, providing a sense of belonging and shared heritage.
Social Organization	Social organization encompasses the structure and dynamics of relationships within a society, including family structures, kinship systems, social roles, and hierarchies. It defines patterns of interaction, distribution of power, and social obligations between individuals and groups.
Art, Literature, and Aesthetics	Art, literature, and aesthetics encompass the creative expressions, artistic forms, and cultural artifacts produced by a society. They reflect cultural values, historical narratives, and aesthetic preferences, serving as vehicles for cultural expression, identity assertion, and collective memory.
Cultural Norms and Etiquette	Cultural norms and etiquette encompass the unwritten rules, conventions, and expectations governing social behavior and interaction within a culture. They dictate appropriate conduct, communication styles, and social etiquette in various contexts, facilitating social cohesion.
Religion and Spirituality	Religion and spirituality encompass the beliefs, rituals, practices, and sacred texts that provide meaning, purpose, and moral guidance to individuals within a culture. They influence worldview, ethics, and social institutions, shaping cultural identity and community cohesion.
Cultural Symbols and Icons	Cultural symbols and icons encompass the tangible and intangible representations of a culture's identity, values, and heritage. They include flags, emblems, landmarks, myths, heroes, and other symbolic artifacts that evoke both shared meanings and collective identity.
Technology and Resources	Technology and resources encompass the tools, artifacts, and material resources produced and utilized by a culture. They reflect technological advancements, economic systems, and lifestyle practices, shaping everyday life and cultural practices.
Cultural Geography and Environment	Cultural geography and environment encompass the geographical context, ecological conditions, and natural resources that influence cultural practices and adaptation strategies within a society. They shape settlement patterns, subsistence strategies, and cultural landscapes.

(Brooks, 1968)

These parameters evolve over time through interactions with internal and external influences across cultures. They contribute to the richness, diversity, and complexity of human societies, shaping individuals' identities, behaviors, experiences, and language. Educators who are familiar with these parameters can highlight them as they teach content knowledge as well as literature by asking students to consider how they impact the cultural and linguistic perspectives of diverse groups of people.

Social Interactions

Language and culture play a crucial role in social interactions, influencing the dynamics, outcomes, and perceptions within interpersonal communication. The charts that follow give examples of social interactions and explain how to intentionally connect, compare, and contrast these types of interactions across languages.

It is best to use examples drawn from literature, content knowledge, or students' existing funds of knowledge. Use questions and discussion prompts to invite students to notice cultural and linguistic nuances, implications, and assumptions. The teacher asks students to think about assumptions and implications of the language use in each language. Prompts in each language are slightly different so that these various aspects can be studied in each language while avoiding redundancy.

Pragmatics includes social dynamics and interactions.

Greetings and Courtesies	Saludos y cortesías
Description The way people greet each other varies across cultures and social contexts. Language dictates the choice of words, tone, and gestures used in greetings, which can convey respect, warmth, familiarity, or formality.	**Descripción** La forma de saludarse varía según la cultura y el contexto social. El lenguaje dicta la elección de las palabras, el tono y los gestos utilizados en los saludos, que pueden transmitir respeto, calidez, familiaridad o formalidad.
Instructional Strategy Invite students to act out the different greetings. Notice the different registers. *How do we use language to show our respect? Do we greet everyone in the same way?*	**Estrategia de enseñanza** Invite a los estudiantes a actuar los diferentes saludos. Observen los diferentes registros. *¿Cómo usamos el lenguaje para demostrar nuestro respeto? ¿Saludamos a todos de la misma manera?*
Formal Greetings - It is a pleasure to meet you. - Nice to meet you. - How do you do? - Have a nice day! - Excuse me. - Pardon me. **Informal Greetings** - Howdy! - What's up? - What's happening? - See ya later. - Take care. - Sorry folks! - Oops, my bad!	**Saludos formales** - Es un placer conocerle. - Encantado de conocerle. ¿Cómo está usted? - Tenga un buen día. - Con permiso. - Disculpe. **Saludos informales** - Hola. ¿Qué tal? ¿Qué pasa? - Nos vemos luego. - Cuídate. - Lo siento amigos. ¡Qué pena! Mi culpa.

Conversation Dynamics	Dinámica de conversación
Description Language shapes conversational dynamics, including turn-taking, topic maintenance, and the balance between speaking and listening. Politeness strategies, such as using indirect speech acts or hedging, can influence the flow and tone of conversations.	**Descripción** El lenguaje determina la dinámica de la conversación, los turnos, el mantenimiento de los temas y el equilibrio entre hablar y escuchar. Las estrategias de cortesía, como los actos de habla indirectos o las evasivas, pueden influir en la fluidez y el tono de las conversaciones.
Instructional Strategy *Let's connect, compare, and contrast the language we use during our academic conversations.* *Why is it important to know these conversation moves in English and in Spanish?* *How do we use language strategically to succeed during academic or personal conversations?*	**Estrategia de enseñanza** *Conectemos, comparemos y contrastemos el lenguaje que utilizamos durante nuestras conversaciones académicas.* *¿Por qué es importante conocer estrategias para las conversaciones en inglés y en español?* *¿Cómo usamos el lenguaje estratégicamente para tener éxito durante las conversaciones académicas o personales?*
▪ I agree with you because _____. ▪ I have a question about _____. ▪ Based on the text, I think that _____. ▪ Based on my experience, I know that _____. ▪ Please explain what you mean by _____. ▪ I would like to add that _____.	▪ Estoy de acuerdo contigo porque _____. ▪ Tengo una pregunta sobre _____. ▪ Basándome en el texto, creo que _____. ▪ Basándome en mi experiencia, sé que _____. ▪ Explica qué quieres decir con _____. ▪ Me gustaría añadir que _____.

Negotiation and Persuasion	Negociación y persuasión
Description Language is instrumental in negotiating agreements, resolving conflicts, and persuading others to adopt certain viewpoints or behaviors. Effective negotiation skills involve using language strategically to convey arguments, offer concessions, and reach mutually beneficial outcomes.	**Descripción** El lenguaje es fundamental para negociar acuerdos, resolver conflictos y persuadir a los demás para que adopten determinados puntos de vista o comportamientos. Para negociar con eficacia hay que utilizar el lenguaje de forma estratégica para transmitir argumentos, ofrecer concesiones y alcanzar resultados beneficiosos para ambas partes.
Instructional Strategy *What are key phrases that may be used to acknowledge others' points of view while disagreeing? When and where would you use this language?*	**Estrategia de enseñanza** *¿Cuáles son las frases clave que pueden utilizarse para reconocer los puntos de vista de los demás al tiempo que se discrepa? ¿Cuándo y dónde utilizarías este lenguaje? ¿Por qué es importante reconocer las perspectivas de los demás? ¿Qué notas igual en ambos lenguajes?*
▪ I understand your perspective, however _____. ▪ While I respect your opinion, I must disagree because _____. ▪ While I value your input, I have a different perspective on this _____.	▪ Entiendo tu perspectiva, sin embargo _____. ▪ Aunque valoro tu opinión, tengo que ofrecerte un punto de vista diferente _____. ▪ Puedo apreciar tu perspectiva, aunque tengo un punto de vista diferente _____.

Social Hierarchies and Power Dynamics	Jerarquías sociales y dinámicas de poder
Description Language reflects and reinforces social hierarchies and power dynamics within interactions. Formal language registers, titles, and deferential speech patterns are used to show respect to those in positions of authority or higher social status.	**Descripción** El lenguaje refleja y refuerza las jerarquías sociales y las dinámicas de poder en las interacciones. Los registros lingüísticos formales, los títulos y los patrones de habla deferentes se utilizan para mostrar respeto a quienes ocupan posiciones de autoridad o tienen un estatus social más elevado.
Instructional Strategy *How does language reflect respect?* *Why is it important to use language to demonstrate respect? Compare and contrast the English and Spanish phrases. Showing respect during conversations or with someone in authority or with an older person is important for personal and social success. Where, when, and with whom would you use these phrases?*	**Estrategia de enseñanza** *¿Cómo es que el lenguaje refleja respeto?* *¿Por qué es importante utilizar el lenguaje para demostrar respeto? Compara y contrasta frases en español y en inglés. El demostrar respeto durante las conversaciones o con alguien de autoridad o con una persona mayor es importante para el éxito personal y social. ¿Dónde, cuándo y con quién usarías estas frases?*
▪ Please. ▪ Thank you. ▪ Excuse me. ▪ I value your ideas. ▪ I respect your opinions. ▪ I am grateful to you for _____.	▪ Por favor. ▪ Gracias. ▪ Con permiso. ▪ Valoro sus ideas. ▪ Respeto sus opiniones.* ▪ Estoy agradecido por lo que usted _____. * Se usan los pronombres su y usted para indicar formalidad.

Expressing Emotions and Empathy	Expresión de emociones y empatía
Description Language enables individual expression and understanding. Language enables individuals to express and interpret emotions, fostering empathy and connection in social interactions. Through verbal and nonverbal cues, people convey feelings such as joy, sadness, anger, and empathy, which contribute to building rapport and understanding.	**Descripción** El lenguaje permite expresión propia y comprensión. El lenguaje permite a las personas expresar e interpretar emociones, fomentando la empatía y la conexión en las interacciones sociales. A través de señales verbales y no verbales, las personas transmiten sentimientos como la alegría, la tristeza, la ira y la empatía, que contribuyen a crear compenetración y comprensión.
Instructional Strategy *How do expressing emotions and empathy help when making connections with others?* *What similarities or differences do you notice as you analyze the English and Spanish phrases?* *Why is it beneficial to know how to express emotions and empathy in more than one language? Do you notice any difference between English and Spanish phrases?*	**Estrategia de enseñanza** *¿Cómo ayudan la expresión de emociones y la empatía a establecer conexiones con los demás? ¿Qué similitudes o diferencias observas al analizar las frases en español y en inglés?* *¿Por qué es beneficioso saber expresar emociones y empatía en más de un idioma? ¿Notas alguna diferencia entre las frases en inglés y en español?*
▪ How are you, how are you doing? ▪ Is there something I can do to help? ▪ I am here to support you. ▪ I care about you. ▪ I care about how you feel. ▪ I am sorry to hear that. ▪ I understand.	▪ ¿Cómo estás? ¿Cómo te sientes? ▪ ¿Hay algo que puedo hacer para ayudarte? ▪ Estoy aquí para apoyarte. ▪ Me importas mucho. ▪ Me importa cómo te sientes. ▪ Lamento escuchar esto. ▪ Te comprendo.

Sayings and Proverbs	Refranes y proverbios
Description Sayings and proverbs are short, traditional expressions that convey wisdom, advice, or cultural insights. They are often passed down through generations within a particular culture or community and are used to teach lessons, offer guidance, or comment on human behavior and experiences.	**Descripción** Los refranes y proverbios son expresiones breves y tradicionales que transmiten sabiduría, consejos o conocimientos culturales. Suelen transmitirse de generación en generación dentro de una cultura o comunidad determinada y se utilizan para enseñar lecciones, ofrecer orientación o comentar el comportamiento y las experiencias humanas.
Instructional Strategy *Have you heard any of these saying or proverbs?* *Who were you with and when did you first heard it?* *What values are expressed that are the same or similar in English and Spanish?*	**Estrategia de enseñanza** *¿Has escuchado alguno de estos proverbios o refranes?* *¿Con quién estabas y cuando lo escuchaste? ¿Cuáles de estos refranes dan un consejo similar en inglés y en español?*
▪ Better late than never. ▪ An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. ▪ Tell me who you walk with, and I will tell you who you are. ▪ Silence is golden. ▪ Every cloud has a silver lining. ▪ Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today.	▪ Más vale tarde que nunca. ▪ Más vale prevenir que lamentar. ▪ Dime con quién andas y te diré quién eres. ▪ Ojos que no ven, corazón que no siente. ▪ En boca cerrada no entran moscas. ▪ No hay mal que por bien no venga. ▪ No dejes para mañana lo que puedes hacer hoy.

Cultural Norms and Identity Expression	Normas culturales y expresión de identidad
Description Language reflects cultural norms and values, shaping how individuals express their identity and belonging within social groups. Slang, dialects, code-switching, and idioms are examples of linguistic practices that signal group membership and cultural identity.	**Descripción** El lenguaje refleja normas y valores culturales y determina la forma en que los individuos expresan su identidad y su pertenencia a un grupo social. La jerga, los dialectos y los cambios de código son ejemplos de prácticas lingüísticas que señalan la pertenencia a un grupo y la identidad cultural.
Instructional Strategy *What do you think about code-switching between Spanish and English?* *Connect, compare, and contrast the code-switched sentences.* *Why do you think it is beneficial or advantageous to understand slang phrases and idioms in both English and Spanish?*	**Estrategia de enseñanza** *¿Qué piensas sobre los cambios de código entre el español y el inglés? Conecta, compara y contrasta las frases con cambios de códigos.* *¿Por qué crees que es beneficioso o ventajoso entender frases hechas y modismos tanto en inglés como en español?*
Idioms ▪ Piece of cake. ▪ He is on cloud 9. ▪ Spill the beans. ▪ Hit the road. ▪ Hang out and chill out. ▪ It costs an arm and a leg. ▪ Don't get FOMO. ▪ He is the black sheep.	**Expresiones idiomáticas** ▪ Pan comido. ▪ Está en las nubes. ▪ Cuesta un ojo de la cara. ▪ Está como una cabra. ▪ Está en las últimas. ▪ Echar agua al mar. ▪ Ponte las pilas. ▪ Es la oveja negra.
Code-Switching Examples ▪ I am going to *la tienda* with *mi primo*. ▪ The *maestra* said to clean out *los* desks.	**Ejemplos de cambios de código** ▪ Dame el *pencil* para terminar mi *work*. ▪ *Hurry-up* y come que vas a llegar *late*.

Social Media and Online Communication	Redes sociales y comunicación en línea
Description In the digital age, language is central to online interactions through social media platforms, messaging apps, and virtual communities. The use of emojis, hashtags, and memes adds layers of meaning and facilitates connection in digital social spaces.	**Descripción** En la era digital, el lenguaje es fundamental en las interacciones en línea a través de plataformas de redes sociales, aplicaciones de mensajería y comunidades virtuales. El uso de emojis, hashtags y memes añade capas de significado y facilita la conexión en los espacios sociales digitales.
Instructional Strategy *How is knowing two languages an advantage when it comes to social and online communication?* *What do you notice about the technology terms used in English and in Spanish? Create a media term glossary.* *Do you use social networks to communicate in Spanish and English?* *How do you think emojis and visual symbols contribute to communication between different languages? Design a new symbol or emoji.*	**Estrategia de enseñanza** *¿De qué manera el conocimiento de otros idiomas supone una ventaja para la comunicación social y en línea? ¿Qué observas en los términos tecnológicos utilizados en inglés y en español?* *Crea un glosario de términos relacionados con los medios de comunicación.* *¿Usas las redes sociales para comunicarte en español y en inglés? ¿Cómo piensas que los emojis y los símbolos visuales contribuyen a la comunicación entre diferentes idiomas? Diseña un símbolo o emoji nuevo.*
• Hashtag • Like • Share • Retweet • Post • Notification • Influencer • Follower • Emoji	• Etiqueta • Me gusta • Compartir • Retuitear • Publicar • Notificación • Influenciador • Seguidor • Emoji

As seen in the previous tables' examples, interpersonal communication is both complex and nuanced, especially when we consider it in a bilingual context. Language serves as a multifaceted tool for navigating social interactions, shaping interpersonal relationships, and constructing social reality within diverse cultural contexts.

Pragmatics and Writing

Pragmatics plays a crucial role in writing by influencing how writers convey meaning, establish rapport with readers, and achieve their communicative goals. Here are several ways in which pragmatics relates to writing and how teachers can incorporate cross-cultural awareness in writing assignments and writing prompts.

Audience Awareness

- In both English and Spanish, audience awareness emphasizes the importance of considering the audience's background, expectations, and cultural norms when crafting written texts. Teachers alert writers to use their cultural and linguistic knowledge to anticipate how their audience will interpret their words and adjust their writing style, tone, and content accordingly to engage their specific audience effectively.

Politeness and Tone

- Pragmatics also informs decisions about politeness strategies and tone in writing. Teachers guide students by having them choose language and expressions that align with the desired level of formality, respectfulness, or familiarity appropriate for the intended audience and purpose of the text. Students can consider using politeness markers such as please, thank you, and expressions of deference. These can enhance rapport with the reader and convey respect.

Adaptation to Medium

- Pragmatics also considers how the medium of communication influences writing strategies and conventions. Teachers point out to students that writing style must be adapted and formatting choices should suit different mediums—such as print, digital platforms, or social media—while also considering cultural factors such as audience engagement, readability, and interactivity.

Understanding the dynamics of pragmatics provides valuable insights into the communicative strategies and considerations involved in writing—guiding writers in crafting texts that effectively engage readers, convey meaning, and achieve their communicative goals within the diverse linguistic and cultural background of the intended readers.

Writing styles need to adapt to the medium used for communication.

Writing Instruction in a Biliteracy Context

Ideation and organization of thinking, as well as the writing process, are general transfer skills; therefore, they are the same for English and Spanish. However, the syntax and grammar conventions applied in writing are specific to each language. For example, when writing narrative, informative, or opinion essays, students undergo the same mental process in both languages, use the same organizational skills, and adhere to the same characteristics of the writing type. While teaching writing, teachers emphasize text-type characteristics, text structures, and transition words, using similar anchor charts and graphic organizers for each language. The written outcome, however, is specific to the language that the text is written in and must adhere to its language rules. Cross-linguistic transfer in writing is achieved across languages through similarity of learning conditions.

It is recommended that teachers focus on the same writing type (narrative, informative, opinion) simultaneously in both languages because transfer is achieved through similarity of learning conditions. In other words, during a unit, students learn and focus on the characteristics of the same writing type in each language. In doing so, they are able to maximize their understanding of genre characteristics, text structures, transition words, and text organization in each language.

In both Spanish and English, teachers model and guide students explicitly while teaching the specific grammar and syntactical features that apply in reading and writing. The examples that follow present suggestions for allocating writing support in a biliteracy context. All options may be implemented in any writing type or genre.

Allocating Writing Support in a Biliteracy Context

Option	Allocation	Instructional Focus Example
1	Allocate writing process lessons in one language. Allocate constructed responses to the partner language that support the content knowledge of the writing.	**Genre** Students follow the writing process and learn the writing type and its characteristics in one language. For example: *Write an informative essay on a particular habitat.* Students write constructed responses relating to the same topic in the other language. For example: *According to the text, how do animals survive in a desert habitat?*
2	<u>Same reading text</u> in both languages, but students respond to <u>a different prompt</u> in each language.	**Text Reference** By analyzing the same text in two languages, students respond to different prompts in each language and develop text referencing skills across languages as they evaluate and interpret ideas when reading. For example, after reading the Aesop fable *The Lion and The Mouse*, they must respond to: **Spanish prompt:** *Si fueras el ratoncito, ¿que más le hubieras dicho al león para que te dejara libre?* **English prompt:** *You are the lion. Provide additional reasons for letting the mouse go free instead of eating it.*
3	<u>Different reading text</u> in each language and students respond to <u>a different prompt</u> in each language.	**Content Knowledge** As students reference and convey information in writing about related topics within a unit in two languages, they develop and increase their content-area knowledge and vocabulary—as they select, organize, and express ideas in each language. For example: while exploring how Earth changes over time, the Spanish text relates to volcanoes and the English text relates to earthquakes. **Spanish prompt:** *Explica cómo se forman los volcanes.* **English prompt:** *Explain how an earthquake happens.*
4	<u>Different text read</u> in each language, but students respond to <u>the same prompt</u> in each language.	**Author's Craft** When students analyze the language and techniques used by authors, they are motivated to adapt their own language choices when writing. They notice how meaning and cultural nuances are conveyed in each language. For example: after reading Alma Flor Ada's *Ser como Tú* (2023) in Spanish and Campoy and Howell's *Maybe Something Beautiful* (2016) in English, students must respond to: **Spanish prompt:** *¿De qué manera Alma Flor Ada usa los símiles en Ser como tú? Provee ejemplos.* **English prompt:** *How do Campoy and Howell use similes in* Maybe Something Beautiful? *Provide examples.*
5	<u>Same or different text.</u> Students write in one language and **translate** a sentence or paragraph to the partner language.	**Cross-Linguistic Analysis** Students employ their grammatical and syntactical awareness when translating their own writing from one language to another. Students avail themselves of what they know and have learned in one language and apply it to the other, resulting in deeper understanding of how language works in both languages. Students choose a piece of writing to translate into the other language.

In Action

Mr. Cervantes and Mrs. Torres are dual-language teachers who want to emphasize pragmatics in their Grade 6 classroom. They recognize the benefit of linguistic and cultural competence for their students and are always seeking ways to extend students' understanding of language beyond grammar and function.

Spanish to English Lesson: Using Registers

Mr. Cervantes wants to use role-play to teach language registers. By using simple drama strategies, he will engage students in various scenarios. A drama prompt will be assigned to a pair or triad of students. Students will then role-play to demonstrate how they can use and adapt their language resources according to social context in Spanish, then in English.

Paso 1: Usar lo que ya sabemos y hemos aprendido sobre el español				
Establecer el objetivo de la lección y la relación de transferencia Repasar la definición de registros de lenguaje Confirmar el concepto de lo repasado y aprendido	*Hoy vamos a ver cómo podemos usar el lenguaje para interactuar apropiadamente para conversar en diferentes contextos sociales.* *Ya sabemos que tanto en inglés como en español existen diferentes registros de lenguaje.* *Registro de lenguaje se refiere al nivel de formalidad en que se usa un lenguaje. Por ejemplo: Registro formal – se usa en contextos académicos, asuntos de gobierno, o con personas mayores.* *Registro informal – se usa entre amigos y familiares.* *El nivel de formalidad con la que se usa un lenguaje de acuerdo con las normas culturales.*	**Tipo**	**Contexto**	**Ejemplo**
		Formal	Uso en contextos formales académicos, asuntos de gobierno, o con personas mayores.	Es un placer poder conversar con usted.
		Informal	Uso en contextos informales en el hogar, con amigos y familiares.	¡Qué bueno que vamos a hablar juntas!

Paso 2: Conectar, comparar y contrastar con el inglés		
Preparación de manipulativos	*Vamos a formar grupos pequeños de 2 o 3 estudiantes para hacer una pequeña dramatización de acuerdo con una pauta.*	Ejemplos de pautas para la representación dramática: *Eres un maestro o maestra. Explícale el ciclo de vida de una mariposa a un estudiante de primer grado.*
Colaboración y trabajo en pares o grupos		
Promover conocimientos previos y asociaciones	Instrucciones: *Escojan la pauta que van a actuar. Lean la pauta.*	*Eres un científico. Dile a tu colega que no estás de acuerdo con su opinión sobre los cambios climáticos.*
Invitar a los estudiantes a compartir conocimientos con un compañero	*Preparen una breve escena. Cada persona tiene que hablar. Dramaticen la escena en español, y luego en inglés.*	
		Eres una mamá. Tu hija quiere ir al cine con su amiga. No estás de acuerdo.
Afirmar la comparación y contraste entre ambos idiomas	Los grupos toman turnos presentando sus escenas.	

Paso 3: Promover destrezas metalingüísticas al resumir lo aprendido	
Resumir lo aprendido	*¿Qué hemos aprendido? ¿De qué manera cambia el lenguaje y entonación según las personas y el ambiente de la conversación? Tanto en inglés como en español existen los diferentes registros de lenguaje. Al hablar o conversar, usamos el lenguaje, tanto como las normas culturales para comunicarnos.*
Afirmar la lectoescritura bilingüe y las conexiones con el inglés	*Al hablar tanto en español como en inglés, tendremos más éxito en nuestras relaciones personales, en entornos académicos y en futuros ambientes de trabajo si somos conscientes de nuestro uso del idioma y de las normas culturales de quienes nos rodean.*

English to Spanish Lesson: Sayings and Proverbs

Mrs. Torres wants to emphasize how language carries cultural traditions, folklore, and wisdom that gets passed on from generation to generation in the form of sayings and proverbs. She recognizes that this is a great opportunity for meaningful parental involvement. She has students ask parents for any proverb or saying they remember or value. Some students have brought back their sayings in English while have brought back their sayings in Spanish. Mrs. Torres will ask students to share their sayings with a partner. She has also prepared a few correlating sayings in English and in Spanish. Students will analyze and pair the sayings according to the meaning they convey.

Step 1: Review what we know and have learned about English		
Introduce the Lesson Concept State the Lesson Objective State Transfer Relations Review Concepts Already Learned Model	*Today we are going to analyze sayings in English and in Spanish. In both English and Spanish, sayings are short, memorable phrases passed on from generation to generation that convey cultural wisdom and advice. While they can vary in the language used, some sayings convey similar values in a culture.* *For example, "Better late than never." This saying in English is conveying or expressing that doing something late is better than not doing it at all. In Spanish there is a similar saying: "Más vale tarde que nunca".* *While not a direct translation, it also conveys the advice that doing something late is better than not doing it at all. Having similar sayings in two distinct cultures is one way of recognizing common values across language and cultures.* *These two sayings express a common value that has been conveyed in different languages and existed across generations in two distinct cultures.*	**Better late than never** **Más vale tarde que nunca**

Step 2: Connect, compare, and contrast with Spanish		
Collaboration Work in Pairs or Small Groups Promote Prior Knowledge and Use of All Linguistic Resources Invite Students to Share with a Partner What They Have Learned Affirm the Transfer Relation by Stating Comparisons and Examples in English and Spanish	*Next, you will analyze a few sayings in English and Spanish.* *First, read each saying in each language.* *Then analyze the meaning and the cultural value, wisdom, or advice they convey.* *Next, match a saying in English with a saying in Spanish that has a similar message.* *Be ready to discuss with the whole class how you recognized the similar meanings and implications.*	Students pair English and Spanish sayings by similar meanings. Students receive them scrambled and must read and analyze them to pair them up. ▪ The early bird gets the worm. ▪ *Al que madruga, Dios lo ayuda.* ▪ Patience is a virtue. ▪ *La paciencia es la madre de todas las virtudes.* ▪ You reap what you sow. ▪ *El que siembra vientos, recoge tempestades.*

Step 3: Promote metalinguistic skills by summarizing the learning	
Summarize What Was Learned	*In both English and Spanish, sayings are short, memorable phrases passed on from generation to generation that convey cultural wisdom.* *Having similar sayings in two distinct cultures is one way of recognizing common values across language and cultures.*
Affirm Biliteracy and Language Connections	*Sayings and proverbs capture the insights and cultural wisdom of a culture.* *As we become bilingual and bicultural, we can recognize common ground between languages and cultures and attain multicultural proficiency that helps us interact successfully with others.*

Assessment Considerations for Pragmatics

Assessing pragmatics in the context of dual-language education involves evaluating students' ability to understand and use language appropriately within diverse cultural and linguistic contexts. The following are several strategies for assessing pragmatics in a dual-language context:

Observational Assessment Checklist

- Observational assessment involves observing students' interactions in naturalistic settings, such as classroom discussions, role-playing, group activities, or social interactions. Educators can observe students' use of language, politeness strategies, turn-taking behavior, and adherence to cultural norms to assess their pragmatic competence. The checklists on the following pages may be used by students and teachers to systematically observe, heighten awareness, and assess behaviors and attitudes related to cross-cultural awareness in various contexts.

Observation of students' adherence to cultural norms is helpful for assessing their awareness of bilingual bicultural pragmatics.

Observational Checklist for Cross-Cultural Awareness
Verbal Communication
☐ Demonstrates active listening skills
☐ Asks questions to clarify cultural nuances
☐ Uses respectful language without offensive remarks
Nonverbal Communication
☐ Maintains culturally appropriate eye contact
☐ Adapts body language and gestures to cultural norms
☐ Respects personal space boundaries across cultures
Empathy and Perspective-Taking
☐ Shows empathy toward individuals from different cultures
☐ Considers situations from multiple cultural perspectives
☐ Understands how cultural backgrounds influence behaviors
Cultural Sensitivity
☐ Recognizes own cultural biases and stereotypes
☐ Shows sensitivity toward cultural customs and traditions
☐ Demonstrates openness to learning about unfamiliar cultures
Conflict Resolution
☐ Handles conflicts with cultural sensitivity
☐ Resolves conflicts respectfully, considering cultural perspectives
☐ Negotiates mutually acceptable solutions across cultures
Collaboration and Teamwork
☐ Effectively collaborates with peers from diverse cultural backgrounds
☐ Navigates cultural differences within team settings
☐ Contributes to creating an inclusive learning environment
Cultural Knowledge and Awareness
☐ Demonstrates knowledge of different cultural practices and traditions
☐ Shows curiosity and engagement in learning about various cultures
☐ Recognizes and appreciates diversity within and across cultures
Self-Reflection and Growth
☐ Reflects on own cultural identity and its influence on interactions
☐ Open to feedback and willing to learn from experiences
☐ Commits to ongoing growth and development in cross-cultural competence

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Lista de observaciones para la concientización intercultural
Comunicación verbal
☐ Demuestra capacidad de escuchar activamente
☐ Hace preguntas para aclarar matices culturales
☐ Utiliza un lenguaje respetuoso sin comentarios ofensivos
Comunicación no verbal
☐ Mantiene un contacto visual culturalmente apropiado
☐ Adapta el lenguaje corporal y los gestos a las normas culturales
☐ Respeta los límites del espacio personal de todas las culturas
Empatía y toma de perspectiva
☐ Muestra empatía hacia las personas de diferentes culturas
☐ Considera las situaciones desde múltiples perspectivas culturales
☐ Comprende cómo influyen los contextos culturales en los comportamientos
Sensibilidad cultural
☐ Reconoce sus propios prejuicios y estereotipos culturales
☐ Muestra sensibilidad hacia las costumbres y tradiciones culturales
☐ Demuestra receptividad al aprendizaje de culturas desconocidas
Resolución de conflictos
☐ Maneja los conflictos con sensibilidad cultural
☐ Resuelve conflictos respetuosamente, teniendo en cuenta las perspectivas culturales
☐ Negocia soluciones mutuamente aceptables entre grupos y entre culturas
Colaboración y trabajo en equipo
☐ Colabora eficazmente con compañeros de diversos orígenes culturales
☐ Maneja las diferencias culturales dentro de un equipo
☐ Contribuye a crear un entorno de aprendizaje integrador e inclusivo
Conocimiento y conciencia cultural
☐ Demuestra conocimiento de diferentes prácticas y tradiciones culturales
☐ Demuestra curiosidad y compromiso por aprender sobre diversas culturas
☐ Reconoce y aprecia la diversidad dentro de las culturas y entre ellas
Autorreflexión y crecimiento
☐ Reflexiona sobre su propia identidad cultural y su influencia en las interacciones
☐ Está abierto a la retroalimentación y dispuesto a aprender de las experiencias
☐ Se compromete a crecer y desarrollar continuamente la competencia intercultural

Desarrollado por Silvia Dorta-Duque de Reyes

> **"**
>
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>
> **"**

Educators may want to focus on one or two areas of the checklist at a time, depending on the emphasis of a piece of literature or unit of study. This checklist can be adapted for student self-evaluation by starting the key indicator statements with "I can" and changing the initial verb to first-person form. For example:

Verbal Communication
☐ I can demonstrate active listening skills.
☐ I can ask questions to clarify cultural nuances.
☐ I can use respectful language without offensive remarks.

Comunicación verbal
☐ Puedo demostrar el escuchar activamente.
☐ Puedo hacer preguntas para aclarar matices culturales.
☐ Puedo utilizar un lenguaje respetuoso sin comentarios ofensivos.

Role-Play and Simulations

- Role-play activities and simulations provide opportunities for students to practice and demonstrate pragmatic skills in culturally and linguistically diverse scenarios. Educators can assess students' ability to adapt their language use, negotiate meaning, and navigate social interactions within different cultural contexts. Role-playing can be recorded to be included in digital portfolios. Students can provide a brief reflection of their learning.

Scenarios and Case Studies

- Presenting students with pragmatic scenarios or case studies allows educators to assess their understanding of cultural norms, social expectations, and appropriate language use. Students can analyze the context, identify relevant pragmatic features, and propose appropriate communication strategies to address the given situation. These scenarios can be drawn directly from texts studied in the classroom.

Assessment Considerations for Writing

Written assignments, such as essays, narratives, or reflections, can provide insights into students' pragmatic awareness and cultural sensitivity. Educators can assess students' ability to convey meaning effectively, consider audience expectations, and use appropriate language registers and politeness strategies in their written communication. Students may be asked to provide brief reflections, opinions, or personal narratives based on one of the parameters of culture as it relates to the essential understandings of a unit of knowledge currently implemented.

In *Biliteracy from the Start* (2014), Kathy Escamilla and her colleagues emphasize the importance of assessing student writing across languages side-by-side. This approach is rooted in the understanding that biliteracy development is a complex and multifaceted process that benefits from a holistic perspective.

By using a side-by-side assessment method, educators can collect both quantitative and qualitative evidence of students' writing in Spanish and English. This includes examining content, structural elements, spelling, and bilingual strategies at various levels such as discourse, sentence/phrase, word, and phonics. The cross-linguistic writing assessment charts that follow have been designed to facilitate the process of evaluating student writing across languages. Using these charts will help educators to discern and prioritize next instructional steps holistically as well as explicitly.

By employing a variety of assessment strategies differentiated to meet the linguistic needs of language learners in a dual-language context, educators can effectively evaluate students' pragmatic competence and provide targeted support to enhance their communicative skills within diverse cultural and linguistic contexts.

Cross-Linguistic Writing Assessment Analysis in a Dual-Language Context

Student's Name:	Date:	Writing Type:
English Notations	**Criteria**	**Spanish Notations**
	Adherence to Prompt Focus Development Coherence	
	Organization and Structure Text-Type Features Cohesion Condensing Ideas Connecting Ideas	
	Sentence Structure Word Order Literal Translations Code-Switching Sentence Variety	
	Grammar-Language Use Noun Phrases Verb Phrases Modifiers	
	Vocabulary Academic Content Specific Figurative High-Frequency Words	
	Spelling L1 Spelling Applied to L2 Absent Phonemes Phoneme Collapse Unfamiliar Pattern Word Boundaries L1 Substitutions	
	Punctuation Grade-Level Specific	
	Capitalization Grade-Level Specific	
NEXT INSTRUCTIONAL STEPS:		

Análisis translingüístico para la evaluación de escritura en dos idiomas

Nombre del estudiante:	Fecha:	Tipo de Escritura:
Apuntes en español	**Criterio**	**Apuntes en inglés**
	Cumplimiento a la Pauta Enfoque Desarrollo Coherencia	
	Organización y Estructura Características del texto Cohesión Condensar ideas Conectar ideas	
	Estructura de Oraciones Orden de las palabras Tradiciones literales Cambio de códigos Variedad de oraciones	
	Gramática y uso del Lenguaje Frases sustantivas Frases verbales Modificadores	
	Vocabulario Académico De contenido específico Figurativo Palabras de uso frecuente	
	Ortografía Ortografía L1 aplicada al L2 Fonemas ausentes Colapso de fonemas Patrón de letras desconocido Contorno de las palabras Substituciones en L1	
	Puntuación específico al grado	
	Capitalización específico al grado	

PRÓXIMOS PASOS PARA LA INSTRUCCIÓN:

Conclusion

The study of pragmatics is a crucial pillar in language understanding and communication. By going beyond the literal interpretations of words and sentences, pragmatics illuminates the intricate ways in which language is wielded to convey meaning within real-world contexts. From the nuances of politeness strategies to the subtle implications and assumptions embedded in communication, pragmatics unveils the dynamic interplay between language, culture, and social dynamics.

In a world marked by linguistic diversity and cultural plurality, the insights gleaned from pragmatics become indispensable. Whether navigating cross-cultural interactions, fostering biliteracy and biculturalism, or honing communicative competence in diverse linguistic settings, an understanding of pragmatics equips individuals with the tools to bridge divides and foster understanding.

Educators play a pivotal role in nurturing communication skills and cultural sensitivity between learners. By incorporating pragmatic considerations into teaching practices and assessment strategies across languages, educators can empower students to navigate the complexities of language and culture with confidence and competence.

Ultimately, the study of pragmatics serves as a testament to the richness and complexity of human communication. By embracing its principles, we not only deepen our understanding of language, we also cultivate empathy, foster mutual respect, and pave the way for meaningful connections across linguistic and cultural boundaries.