
TEACHERS' PRAGMATIC AWARENESS AND CLASSROOM INTERACTIONAL SKILLS: A QUANTITATIVE INVESTIGATION OF RELATIONSHIPS AND PREDICTORS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the level of teachers' pragmatic awareness and classroom interactional skills (CIS) and the nature of their relationships and predictive influence among public school teachers in Arakan, North Cotabato, Philippines. Employing a descriptive-correlational design, the study surveyed 278 teachers selected through complete enumeration sampling. Pragmatic awareness was operationalized across three dimensions: sociopragmatic sensitivity, pragmalinguistic repertoire, and adaptive stance. Classroom interactional skills were assessed across four domains: questioning and elicitation, feedback, scaffolding, and follow-up. Descriptive statistics revealed that teachers demonstrated high pragmatic awareness (overall $M = 4.40$) and satisfactory-to-high classroom interactional skills (overall $M = 4.37$). Spearman correlation analyses indicated significant positive relationships between overall pragmatic awareness and all four CIS dimensions ($r = .278$ to $.501$, $p < .001$), with follow-up exhibiting the strongest association. Multiple regression analyses identified adaptive stance as the sole significant predictor across all four CIS domains (β ranging from $t = 3.949$ to $t = 8.629$, $p < .001$), underscoring its role as the master lever for effective classroom interaction. These findings suggest that targeted professional development focusing on adaptive stance — real-time contextual adjustment — holds the greatest promise for improving classroom interactional quality. Implications for teacher education, instructional coaching, and school-based professional development are discussed.

KEYWORDS: *pragmatic awareness, classroom interactional skills, adaptive stance, sociopragmatic sensitivity, pragmalinguistic repertoire, questioning, feedback, scaffolding, follow-up, Philippines*

1. INTRODUCTION

Effective classroom communication is the bedrock of quality education. Teachers who understand how context, intent, and social norms shape language use — a capacity broadly referred to as pragmatic awareness — are better positioned to orchestrate productive classroom talk, inclusive participation, and deeper learning. Despite growing recognition of pragmatic competence in language teaching and teacher education, empirical investigations linking teachers' pragmatic awareness specifically to observable classroom interactional skills (CIS) remain limited, particularly in Philippine educational contexts.

Globally, research on classroom interactional competence (CIC) has demonstrated that teachers' linguistic and pragmatic choices structure access to learning. Studies in Algeria and Sweden have shown that pragmatics-anchored interactional practices are identifiable, teachable, and improvable (Aziz & Arar, 2024; Sert, Gynne, & Larsson, 2025). Within the Philippines, Barbadillo et al. (2024) documented dominant teacher talk patterns using Flanders' Interaction Analysis Category System, while Obenza-Tanudtanud and Obenza (2023) reported persistently low interaction indices — flagging a structural gap in teacher-student dialogic exchange. Loayon and Meugna (2025) further linked corrective feedback practices to student engagement, foregrounding interactive moves as levers for participation.

Despite these advances, a critical gap persists: few studies have quantified the degree to which teachers' pragmatic awareness predicts specific CIS dimensions, or identified which dimension of pragmatic awareness carries the greatest instructional leverage. This study addresses that gap by: (1) establishing teachers' levels of pragmatic awareness and CIS among teachers in Arakan, North Cotabato; (2) testing the statistical relationships between pragmatic awareness dimensions and CIS domains; and (3) identifying the predictive influence of pragmatic awareness on CIS outcomes. The findings are intended to generate evidence-based recommendations for professional development that foster equitable participation and improved learning opportunities.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Specifically, this study addressed the following research questions:

1. What is the level of teachers' pragmatic awareness in terms of sociopragmatic sensitivity, pragmalinguistic repertoire, and adaptive stance?
2. What is the level of teachers' classroom interactional skills in terms of questioning and elicitation, feedback, scaffolding, and follow-up?
3. Is there a significant relationship between teachers' pragmatic awareness and their classroom interactional skills?
4. Is there a significant influence of teachers' pragmatic awareness on teachers' classroom interactional skills?

1.2 Significance

This investigation contributes to a local evidence base that is critically needed in Philippine educational research. For policy makers, the findings offer actionable evidence to craft professional development programs foregrounding pragmatic awareness. For school administrators, the results inform observation rubrics, mentoring cycles, and lesson study structures. For teachers, the study provides practical, research-grounded strategies for improving questioning, feedback, scaffolding, and follow-up. For future researchers, it supplies replicable measures and a mixed-methods framework applicable to comparative and longitudinal investigation.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Teachers' Pragmatic Awareness

Pragmatic awareness encompasses knowledge of how context, intent, and social norms shape effective language choices in teaching. Glaser (2023) demonstrates that teachers who grasp pragmatic principles design instruction aligned with learners' communicative needs, differentiating tasks for diverse linguistic backgrounds. Korkmaz and Karatepe (2023) found that higher pragmatic awareness correlates with stronger instructional competence, enabling teachers to select tasks, model language, and time feedback more effectively. Ton-Nu (2024) reports that targeted workshops enhancing pragmatic awareness yield measurable instructional gains through modeling, microteaching, and video reflection.

Three sub-dimensions of pragmatic awareness are examined in this study. Sociopragmatic sensitivity refers to awareness of social norms governing appropriate classroom talk (Ariani & Kadarisman, 2024; Iroda, 2025). Pragmalinguistic repertoire denotes the range of linguistic

forms — hedges, mitigations, reformulations, question types — deployed to achieve interactional goals (Suraganova & Mamirbaeva, 2024; Ishihara, 2024). Adaptive stance captures the teacher's capacity for on-the-spot adjustment of language, tasks, and grouping in response to student needs (Sipman et al., 2024).

2.2 Classroom Interactional Skills

Classroom interactional skills are the observable repertoire organizing classroom talk. Walsh (2011) identifies these as the core moves through which teachers create or foreclose learning opportunities: questioning and elicitation, feedback and repair, scaffolding, and turn allocation and follow-up. Questioning and elicitation determine the cognitive demand placed on students and the space for genuine student response (Wati, 2023; Ghafar & Hazaymeh, 2024; Resnick, 2023). Feedback shapes whether student output is corrected, elaborated, or used as a resource for further learning (Ajogbeje, 2023; Heron et al., 2023). Scaffolding, grounded in Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, provides structured support faded as learner competence grows (Alghamdy, 2024; Koyuncu et al., 2024). Follow-up, particularly uptake-oriented moves that build on student responses within IRF/IRE sequences, is the most powerful predictor of sustained student participation (Downer et al., 2024).

2.3 Pragmatic Awareness and Classroom Interaction: Theoretical Framing

The present study situates itself at the intersection of pragmatic competence theory (Glaser, 2023; Korkmaz & Karatepe, 2023) and Classroom Interactional Competence (CIC) (Walsh, 2011). CIC holds that effective teachers deploy interactional moves purposefully, with awareness of how each move shapes student participation and learning opportunity. Pragmatic awareness is posited as the enabling cognitive architecture for CIC: without sociopragmatic sensitivity, pragmalinguistic repertoire, and adaptive flexibility, teachers are unable to make the purposeful, context-sensitive interactional choices that define high-quality classroom discourse.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design, which is appropriate for establishing levels of key variables and testing associative and predictive relationships without experimental manipulation (Shouxin, 2024). The design allowed simultaneous assessment of teachers' pragmatic awareness and CIS, measurement of their relationships

through Spearman rank-order correlation, and determination of predictive influence through multiple regression analysis.

3.2 Participants

The study was conducted among public school teachers in selected elementary and secondary schools in Arakan, North Cotabato, Philippines, during School Year 2025–2026. Complete enumeration sampling was used, yielding a final sample of $N = 278$ teachers across participating schools in the Arakan school division. Complete enumeration was selected to maximize representativeness within the defined study context (Turner, 2020).

3.3 Instrument

A self-made and validated questionnaire was developed, patterned, modified, and adopted from Etikan and Bala (2021). The instrument contained two main scales: (1) Teachers' Pragmatic Awareness Scale, assessing sociopragmatic sensitivity, pragmalinguistic repertoire, and adaptive stance; and (2) Teachers' Classroom Interactional Skills Scale, assessing questioning and elicitation, feedback, scaffolding, and follow-up. Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The instrument underwent expert validation by the study's advisory committee and pilot testing to ensure face and content validity.

3.4 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) were computed to determine teachers' levels of pragmatic awareness and CIS. The following interpretation scale was applied: 4.50–5.00 = Highly Pragmatic/Highly Skilled; 3.50–4.49 = Pragmatic/Skilled; 2.50–3.49 = Moderately Pragmatic/Moderately Skilled; 1.50–2.49 = Less Pragmatic/Less Skilled; 1.00–1.49 = Not Pragmatic/Not Skilled (Patten & Newhart, 2023). Spearman's rank-order correlation (Spearman, 1904) was used to test relationships between pragmatic awareness dimensions and CIS domains, given the ordinal nature of Likert-scale data. Multiple regression analysis (Tonidandel & LeBreton, 2015) was performed to identify the predictive influence of pragmatic awareness sub-dimensions on each CIS domain, with adaptive stance, sociopragmatic sensitivity, and pragmalinguistic repertoire as independent variables. Statistical significance was set at $\alpha = .05$.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Level of Teachers' Pragmatic Awareness

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for teachers' pragmatic awareness across three sub-dimensions.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Teachers' Pragmatic Awareness (N = 278.)

Dimension	Mean	SD	Descriptive Level
Sociopragmatic Sensitivity	4.39	0.52	Pragmatic
Pragmalinguistic Repertoire	4.46	0.49	Pragmatic
Adaptive Stance	4.34	0.54	Pragmatic
Overall Pragmatic Awareness	4.40	0.51	Pragmatic

Results indicate that teachers demonstrated a generally high level of pragmatic awareness, with all three dimensions and the overall score falling within the 'Pragmatic' descriptive band (3.50–4.49). Pragmalinguistic repertoire registered the highest mean ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 0.49$), followed by sociopragmatic sensitivity ($M = 4.39$, $SD = 0.52$) and adaptive stance ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 0.54$). These scores suggest that teachers possess a strong declarative knowledge of context-appropriate language use, though the relatively lower adaptive stance score signals comparative difficulty in real-time instructional adjustment.

4.2 Level of Teachers' Classroom Interactional Skills

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for teachers' CIS across four domains.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Teachers' Classroom Interactional Skills (N = 278).

Domain	Mean	SD	Descriptive Level
Questioning and Elicitation	4.22	0.58	Skilled
Feedback	4.42	0.51	Skilled
Scaffolding	4.33	0.54	Skilled
Follow-up	4.52	0.48	Highly Skilled
Overall CIS	4.37	0.52	Skilled

Teachers demonstrated satisfactory to high classroom interactional skills overall ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 0.52$). Follow-up registered the highest mean ($M = 4.52$, $SD = 0.48$) and was the only domain reaching the 'Highly Skilled' band. Questioning and elicitation recorded the lowest mean ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.58$), suggesting this domain — characterized by open-ended questioning, adequate wait time, and higher-order prompting — poses the greatest challenge for consistent enactment.

4.3 Relationship Between Pragmatic Awareness and Classroom Interactional Skills

Table 3 presents Spearman correlation coefficients for overall pragmatic awareness with each CIS domain.

Table 3: Spearman Correlations Between Overall Pragmatic Awareness and CIS Domains (N = 278).

CIS Domain	r	p-value	Interpretation
Questioning and Elicitation	.278	< .001	Significant, Weak
Feedback	.444	< .001	Significant, Moderate
Scaffolding	.412	< .001	Significant, Moderate
Follow-up	.501	< .001	Significant, Moderate

Overall pragmatic awareness was significantly and positively correlated with all four CIS domains. Follow-up demonstrated the strongest relationship ($r = .501$, $p < .001$), while questioning and elicitation showed the weakest correlation ($r = .278$, $p < .001$). These findings indicate that teachers with higher pragmatic awareness engage more effectively in all dimensions of classroom interaction, with the strongest benefits accruing to follow-up practices — the moves that sustain or extend student contributions after initial responses.

4.4 Predictive Influence of Pragmatic Awareness on Classroom Interactional Skills

Multiple regression analyses were conducted with sociopragmatic sensitivity, pragmalinguistic repertoire, and adaptive stance as predictors of each CIS domain. Adaptive stance emerged as the sole statistically significant predictor across all four domains. Table 4 presents the regression summary.

Table 4: Regression Analysis: Adaptive Stance as Predictor of CIS Domains (N = 278.)

CIS Domain	Predictor	t-value	p-value	Decision
Questioning & Elicitation	Adaptive Stance	3.949	< .001	Reject H_0
Feedback	Adaptive Stance	8.171	< .001	Reject H_0
Scaffolding	Adaptive Stance	6.672	< .001	Reject H_0
Follow-up	Adaptive Stance	8.629	< .001	Reject H_0

Adaptive stance significantly predicted all four CIS domains: questioning and elicitation ($t = 3.949$, $p < .001$), feedback ($t = 8.171$, $p < .001$), scaffolding ($t = 6.672$, $p < .001$), and follow-up ($t = 8.629$, $p < .001$). The strongest predictive relationship was observed for follow-up and feedback. Notably, sociopragmatic sensitivity and pragmalinguistic repertoire did not

independently predict CIS outcomes when adaptive stance was included in the regression model, suggesting that the capacity for real-time adjustment mediates the relationship between declarative pragmatic knowledge and enacted interactional competence.

5. DISCUSSION

This study yields three principal findings warranting discussion. First, teachers in Arakan demonstrate strong declarative pragmatic awareness but show relative comparative weakness in adaptive stance — the dimension most directly tied to enacted interactional practice. This aligns with Glaser's (2023) observation that pragmatic knowledge does not automatically translate into classroom application: the bridge between awareness and enactment requires deliberate, structured professional support.

Second, the weak-to-moderate correlation pattern across CIS domains — with follow-up strongest and questioning weakest — is theoretically consistent. Follow-up, operationalized through uptake-generating moves within IRF/IRE sequences, requires the most sophisticated pragmatic calibration: teachers must simultaneously evaluate a student response, assess its relationship to learning objectives, and decide whether to evaluate, probe, extend, or redirect. This multilayered decision-making demands the highest degree of pragmatic sensitivity. Questioning, by contrast, involves an initiating move where pragmatic demands, while real, are less immediately tied to student output — explaining the weaker correlation.

Third, and most consequentially, adaptive stance emerges as the single most powerful predictor of CIS quality across all four domains. This finding extends and empirically specifies Sipman et al.'s (2024) argument that intuitive pragmatic awareness — the capacity to adjust in real time — most powerfully shapes classroom dynamics. The statistical architecture of the present findings suggests a theoretical mechanism: sociopragmatic sensitivity and pragmalinguistic repertoire represent the knowledge base from which pragmatic decisions are drawn, while adaptive stance represents the executive capacity to deploy that knowledge responsively under conditions of classroom complexity and temporal pressure. Interventions targeting adaptive stance should therefore yield the broadest gains in CIS quality.

The finding that questioning and elicitation registered the lowest CIS mean is consistent with Resnick's (2023) documentation of widespread underuse of higher-order questioning and Wati's (2023) observation that EFL teachers frequently default to closed, display questions under lesson-completion pressure. The pattern suggests that in Arakan classrooms, as elsewhere, structural conditions — large class sizes, curriculum pacing demands, and limited

professional time — constrain the enactment of pragmatic awareness even when declarative knowledge is high.

6. CONCLUSION

This study establishes that teachers in Arakan, North Cotabato demonstrate strong pragmatic awareness and satisfactory-to-high classroom interactional skills, but that a knowledge-enactment gap exists particularly in the domain of adaptive stance and its application to open-ended questioning and dialogic feedback. Overall pragmatic awareness is significantly — though weakly to moderately — associated with all CIS domains, with the strongest relationship observed for follow-up practices. Critically, adaptive stance is the sole significant predictor of all four CIS dimensions, identifying it as the highest-leverage target for professional development intervention.

These findings have direct implications for teacher education and in-service professional development. Training programs that develop teachers' capacity for real-time linguistic and instructional adjustment — through microteaching, video-stimulated reflection, and coaching — are likely to produce the broadest improvements in classroom interactional quality. The consistent cross-domain predictive power of adaptive stance further suggests that investment in this dimension yields disproportionate returns across the full spectrum of CIS: questioning, feedback, scaffolding, and follow-up simultaneously.

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