

10.18686/rcha.v2i5.4544

# Principles and Approaches of Personalized English Pragmatic Instruction

Jiali Zhou<sup>1</sup>, Lijie Luo<sup>2</sup>

1. Hunan Agricultural University, Changsha, 410000, China

2. Hunan Biological and Electromechanical Polytechnic, Changsha, 410000, China

---

**Abstract:** Personalized English instruction is a pedagogical approach that acknowledges and adapts to the distinct learning profiles of individual students. It is designed to encourage autonomous learning and to facilitate the comprehensive advancement of linguistic competencies, tailored to each learner's personality, interests, and educational needs. Within the domain of English language education, pragmatics, crucial for effective communication, warrants a similarly personalized instructional strategy. This study explores the core principles underpinning personalized teaching in English and examines pedagogical approaches that are congruent with these principles, with a focus on integrating individualized approaches to teaching pragmatics.

**Keywords:** Personalized English instruction; Pragmatics; Pedagogical Approaches

---

## 1. Introduction

Personalized instruction has become one of the core philosophies in the field of international language teaching since the latter half of the 20th century. This concept emphasizes the provision of customized teaching guidance tailored to the unique needs of each learner. In the realm of English teaching, personalized instruction is not only a trend in educational reform but also a significant direction in educational practice. In October 2014, Nanjing University successfully hosted the "7th International Conference on English Teaching in China," with the theme set as "Reform and Research of English Teaching in China: Towards Localization and Personalization," reflecting the academic community's high regard for this topic. Personalized English teaching is not a single method of instruction but an educational philosophy that requires the selection of appropriate teaching content and strategies based on learners' language proficiency, individual characteristics, learning styles, and specific needs<sup>[1]</sup>. Clearly, as an integral part of English teaching, the teaching of English pragmatics also necessitates the adoption of a personalized teaching approach.

## 2. Principles of Personalized Pragmatic Instruction

The essence of personalized foreign language instruction is its learner-centered approach, a principle that should be embraced in the context of individualized pragmatic teaching<sup>[2]</sup>. To achieve a learner-centered orientation in English pedagogy, it is imperative to gain a comprehensive understanding of the learners themselves, acknowledging the diversity that characterizes the classroom. This includes a nuanced appreciation of individual learner attributes such as personality, age, proficiency in the language, and learning style.

### 2.1 The principle of differentiating learners' personalities

The educational landscape mirrors the diversity found in nature, with each learner's learning style being as unique as their face<sup>[3]</sup>. Recognizing individual learning personalities is key to self-discovery and educational advancement. Studies reveal that while introverted learners may achieve high academically, extroverted learners show greater social proficiency, especially in language learning, where they exhibit stronger linguistic intuition. Conversely, introverted learners are often more precise in grammar. This dichotomy underscores the necessity for educators to implement personalized strategies, particularly in supporting introverted learners, to create an inclusive educational setting.

In light of these findings, it is imperative for educators to adopt a differentiated approach when teaching English, particularly by providing focused attention and encouragement to introverted learners, thereby fostering an inclusive and effective learning environment.

### 2.2 The principle of differentiating the age of learners

It is a widely accepted notion among scholars that age significantly influences the process of second language acquisition. The cognitive development and memory capabilities of learners vary across different age groups. Adult learners excel in complex cognitive processing and are adept at drawing upon their long-term memory for understanding, whereas children demonstrate proficiency in mechanical memory and

are in the midst of developing their cognitive faculties. Consequently, the pedagogical approach to second language learning must be tailored to these developmental stages. Adult learners require more in-depth explanations and guided induction to foster their understanding, while younger learners, particularly children, benefit more from extensive exposure to the target language.

### **2.3 The principle of differentiating learners' language levels**

The proficiency level of learners stands as a pivotal determinant in the implementation of individualized pragmatic teaching within the classroom setting. Research indicates a pronounced disparity in pragmatic comprehension accuracy between high and low English proficiency learners. Scholars have observed that advanced learners exhibit a significantly higher degree of accuracy in pragmatic understanding compared to their less proficient counterparts<sup>[4]</sup>.

Conversely, studies have revealed that advanced English learners demonstrate greater diversity in their linguistic expressions during the execution of suggestion speech acts. In contrast, intermediate and lower-level learners tend to rely more heavily on the template examples provided by educators. The advanced learners are capable of integrating their own linguistic repertoire to perform suggestion acts in a variety of forms, showcasing a more nuanced command of language.

### **2.4 The principle for differentiating learners' learning styles**

Learning style is a critical construct in the discourse of pragmatic teaching. Scholars have proposed various taxonomies to categorize learning styles, including distinctions between field dependence and field independence, prudence and impulse types, as well as holistic and analytical orientations. These classifications underscore the diversity in learners' approaches to acquiring pragmatic knowledge. For instance, holistic learners exhibit a propensity for synthesizing fragmented information into a coherent understanding of pragmatic scenarios, whereas analytical learners prefer to deconstruct the whole into its constituent parts.

In the context of implementing personalized pragmatic instruction, it is essential for educators to design teaching plans that are attuned to the learning styles of their students. By doing so, teachers can facilitate a comprehensive development of learners, catering to their individual cognitive preferences and enhancing the overall effectiveness of pragmatic teaching.

## **3. Approaches to Personalized Pragmatic Instruction**

Personalized teaching should take learners as the main body, and on this basis pay attention to distinguish the personality, age, language level and learning style of learners. Based on the principle of learners' needs analysis, we propose that the approaches of pragmatic teaching should be personalized in view of learners' diversified pragmatic learning needs.

### **3.1 Updating the educational philosophy**

To achieve personalized teaching in English language education, a fundamental change in educational philosophy is imperative. This philosophy must prioritize a human-centered approach, emphasizing learner autonomy in knowledge acquisition and the cultivation of independent learning skills. It should also promote an educational setting that encourages student independence, collaboration, inquiry, and creativity.

The shift requires redefining the teacher's role to that of a facilitative leader, while students transition from passive to active participants. Teachers should foster students' creative and independent thinking, advocating for a personalized learning approach aimed at developing comprehensive English skills and individual personalities, as well as instilling a lifelong learning ethos.

Educators must believe in their students' potential, offering guidance without over control. They should support students in self-analysis, self-confidence building, and setting personalized learning objectives. Encouraging students to engage with content through their unique perspectives, interpretations, and expressions is key to realizing a personalized teaching model where students are central and teachers serve as mentors.

### **3.2 Enriching course resources**

The adage "Even a clever housewife cannot cook a meal without rice" aptly illustrates the necessity of foundational elements for any endeavor, including education. While textbooks serve as the staple, akin to rice, a variety of course resources complement them like flavorful dishes, enhancing both the appeal and the nutritional value of a meal. By the same token, a rich array of curriculum resources enlivens pragmatic teaching, making it engaging and stimulating.

To this end, teachers play a pivotal role in the success of individualized pragmatic teaching by enriching and developing course resources that cater to the diverse needs of learners. Adhering to the principle that curriculum resources should be integral to the teaching theme and serve the educational objectives is essential. Teachers must aim to refine the content of teaching materials, leveraging audio-visual materials effectively, and expanding audio-visual resources. The construction of an information resource library is a strategic step towards creating a comprehensive and diverse learning environment that supports personalized educational experiences.

### 3.3 Personification of teaching design

Education fundamentally aims for the holistic development of learners. Personalized pragmatic teaching is anchored in recognizing and respecting the individual differences among learners, tailoring instruction to their unique abilities to foster continuous improvement and growth. Implementation begins with personalizing content, instructional methods, homework assignments, and evaluation techniques.

In personalized English instruction, educators should aim to establish a supportive learning environment that encourages student engagement and participation. This approach is designed to inspire a love for learning and to stimulate students' creative potential by allowing them to experience the joy of education.

The curriculum should be structured to accommodate learners at various levels, ensuring that content is both hierarchical and personalized. Diversified teaching methods are essential to meet the varied learning needs of the class. Evaluation, while challenging to individualize, can be effectively addressed through process-oriented assessments. These assessments should focus on individual differences, monitor each student's development, celebrate their achievements, and provide timely, specific feedback to guide their learning journey.

## 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, personalized pragmatic teaching represents a significant advancement in English language education, offering a more nuanced and effective approach to developing learners' communicative competence. By embracing the principles and approaches outlined in this study, educators can foster an inclusive learning environment that values and leverages the unique strengths of each learner, ultimately preparing them for successful communication in diverse social and cultural contexts.

---

## References

- [1] Henry, R. The individualization of instruction in ESL[J]. *TESOL Quarterly*, 1975, 30(1).
- [2] Xinren Chen, *Pragmatics and Foreign Language Teaching*.; Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press: Beijing, 2013.
- [3] Jack Bagford. What Ever Happened to Individualized Reading?[J]. *The Reading Teacher*, 1985, 39(2).
- [4] Sánchez Hernández Ariadna, Barón Júlía. Teaching second language pragmatics in the current era of globalization: An introduction[J]. *Language Teaching Research*, 2022, 26(2).