



Under the Lens:

# Pearson Affordable Learning Fund

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**Pragmatics**

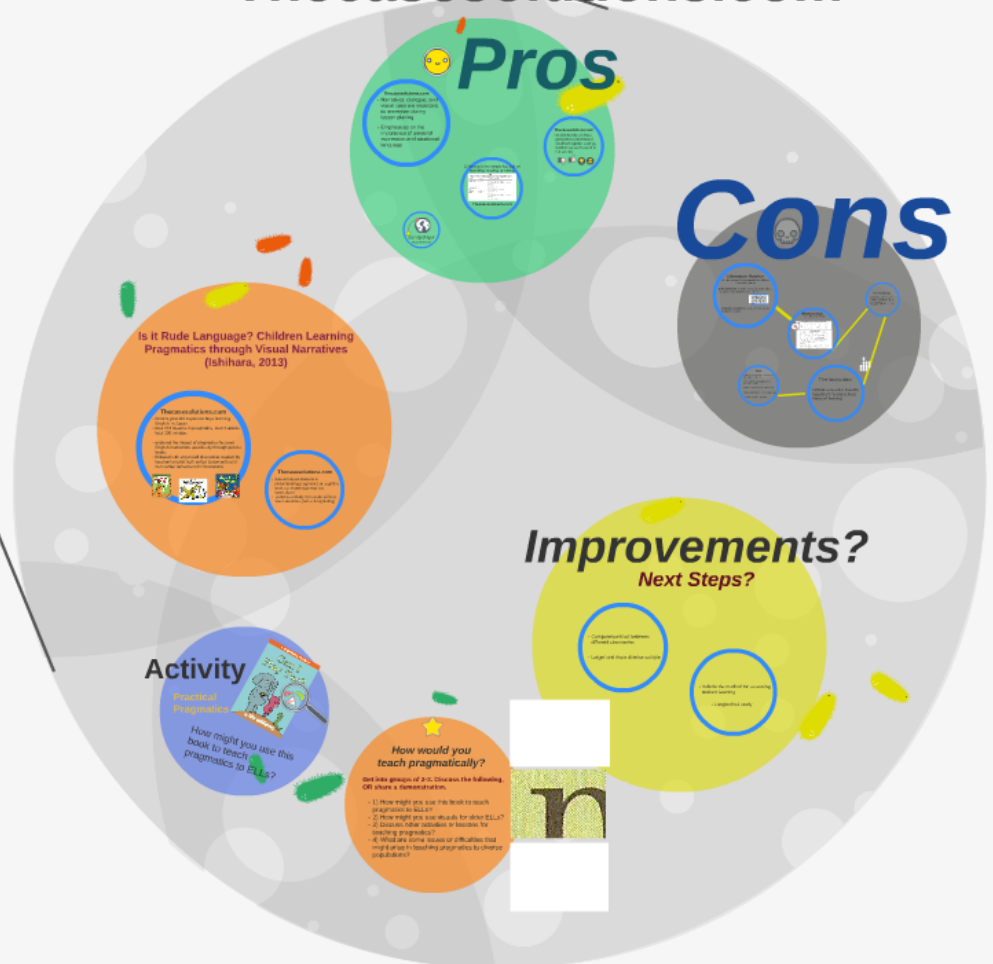
How context contributes to meaning

Involves 3 major communication skills:

- using language for different purposes
- changing language in accordance to listeners' needs or situation
- following rules for conversation and storytelling

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What is Pragmatic Language?



Ishihara, N. (2013). Is it rude language? Children learning pragmatics through visual narratives. *TESL Canada Journal*, 30(7), 135-149.



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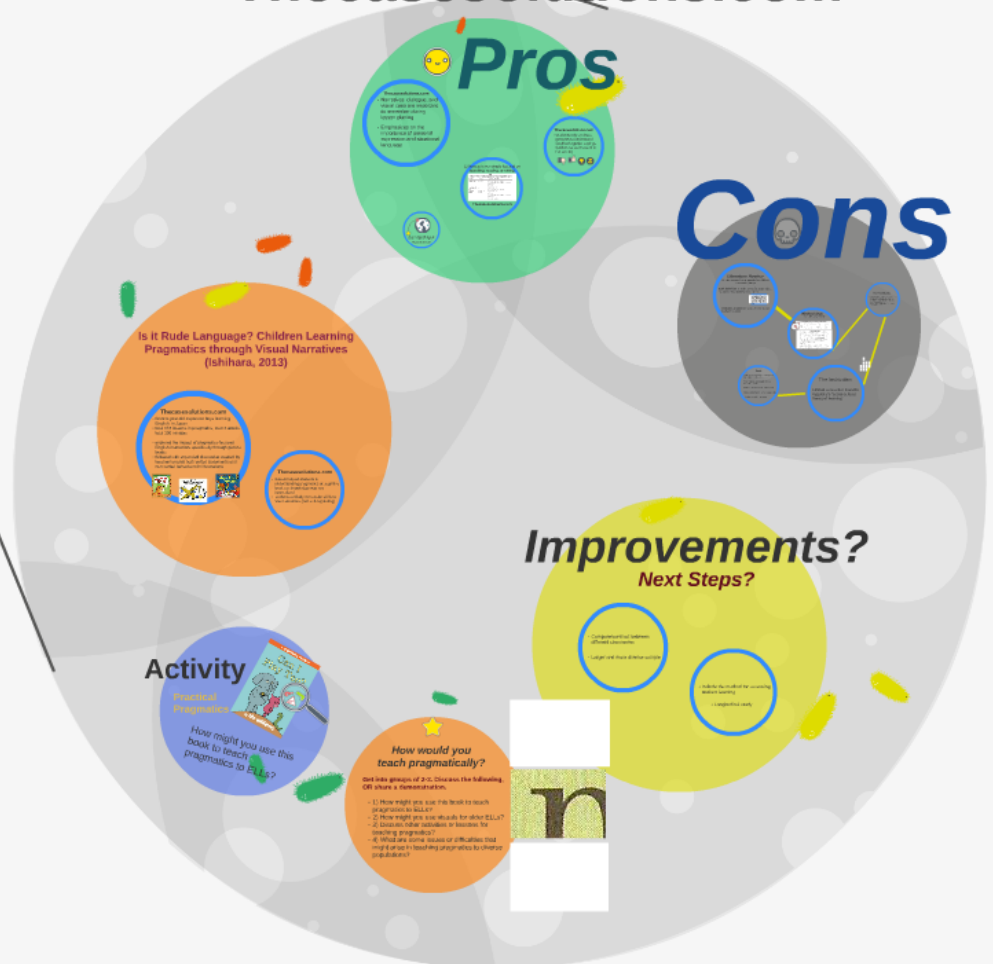
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# Pragmatics



*How context contributes to meaning*

***Involves 3 major communication skills:***

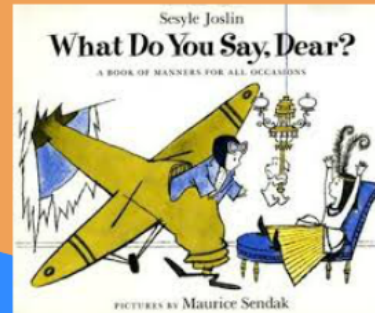
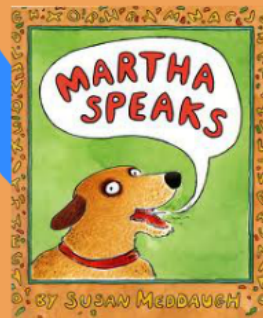
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- three 9-year-old Japanese boys learning English, in Japan
- total of 3 lessons in pragmatics, over 6 weeks, total 120 minutes
- explored the impact of pragmatics-focused English-instruction, specifically through picture books
- followed with expanded discussion steered by teacher towards both verbal statements and non-verbal behaviours in illustrations



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- visuals helped students in understanding pragmatics at cognitive level, yet knowledge was not internalized
- students unlikely to transfer skills to novel situations (not self-regulating)

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- Narratives, dialogue, and visual cues are important to remember during lesson planing
- Emphasizes on the importance of personal expression and situational language

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- Students rely on visual gestures to understand positive/negative sayings (politeness as it's used in the article)



# L2 literacy is not simply focused on speaking, reading, & writing

Table 1  
Picture Books for Teaching Pragmatics and Target Pragmatic Features<sup>2</sup>

Book title	Author(s)	Target pragmatic features
<i>Martha speaks</i>	Meddaugh	Levels of directness and politeness Sociopragmatically appropriate and less appropriate behaviors Requests
<i>What do you say, dear?</i>	Joslin	Pragmatic formulas Levels of politeness and formality
<i>Forget their manners</i>	Berenstain & Berenstain	Pragmatic formulas Requests Sociopragmatically appropriate and less appropriate behaviors Urgency and politeness

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- Exploratory study (very little research into pragmatic for children, most research into pragmatics examines adult learning)

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