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May 21, 2026
Opinion and Ideas

Edition I.VII-2026

FOSTERING PRAGMATIC AGENCY IN EFL CLASSROOMS: THE “SCENARIO OF SUCCESS” ROLE-PLAY WITHIN THE BEHAVIORAL COMPONENT OF THE ISPM FRAMEWORK

Annotation. The article describes integrating the “success” concept into EFL methodology via ISPM’s behavioral component. The “Scenario of Success” role-play trains pre-service teachers to use politeness strategies and positive framing for transforming classroom tension. Findings show scaffolded success-oriented discourse practice develops pragmatic competence and professional agency.

Keywords: EFL methodology; concept-based instruction; pragmatic competence; behavioral pedagogy; role-play simulation; success-oriented learning; teacher education.

Contemporary EFL pedagogy recognizes that linguistic competence alone is insufficient for authentic communicative effectiveness. Future language educators must develop pragmatic agency –the ability to navigate and transform challenging interpersonal dynamics through targeted language use. Traditional methodologies often relegate conflict resolution and affective regulation to implicit domains, leaving pre-service teachers underprepared for real classroom demands. Addressing this gap, the Integrated Success-oriented Pedagogical Model (ISPM) operationalizes “success” as a multidimensional construct, with its behavioral component serving as the active manifestation of success-oriented communication.

EFL methodology

This thesis examines the “Scenario of Success” role-play exercise, designed to train EFL student-teachers in leveraging politeness strategies, positive framing, and pragmatic adaptation to convert classroom tension into pedagogical opportunity. By embedding success as a communicatively enacted process, the study demonstrates how structured behavioral tasks can simultaneously develop linguistic accuracy, intercultural pragmatic competence and professional resilience.

The behavioral block within ISPM is conceptualized as the pragmatic enactment of success-oriented communication. Drawing on sociocultural theory and pragmatics, it posits that language learners achieve competence when they can strategically deploy linguistic resources to shape interactional outcomes (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). In the context of EFL teacher education, this translates into the ability to use English not merely for information exchange but for affective regulation, conflict mediation, and classroom climate construction. Politeness theory provides a foundational lens: learners are trained to recognize face-threatening acts in classroom discourse and deploy positive and negative politeness strategies to preserve student dignity while maintaining instructional flow. Furthermore, the axiological-behavioral linkage ensures that linguistic choices are guided by a success-oriented mindset—viewing disruptions as diagnostic feedback rather than failures, and reframing corrective feedback as collaborative problem-solving.



“Scenario of Success”

This aligns with contemporary competency-based frameworks that emphasize communicative flexibility, emotional intelligence, and pragmatic adaptability as core teacher competencies (Richards, 2017). Within ISPM, the behavioral component is systematically scaffolded: learners first analyze authentic discourse samples, then practice strategic language use in controlled simulations and finally apply these strategies in unscripted, context-rich scenarios. The “Scenario of Success” exercise represents the culmination of this progression.

The “Scenario of Success” is a structured, multi-phase role-play intervention targeting the behavioral component of ISPM. Designed for third-year EFL methodology students at the B2 CEFR level, the exercise simulates a high-friction classroom scenario: a “difficult lesson” characterized by student disengagement, mild defiance, and emerging conflict. Participants assume the role of novice English teachers tasked with transforming the situation into a pedagogical success using only English-medium communicative strategies. The exercise unfolds across three phases.

Phase 1 (Diagnostic Deconstruction) involves analyzing a video transcript of a classroom conflict, identifying face-threatening utterances, and mapping alternative pragmatic responses. Phase 2 (Strategic Rehearsal) focuses on explicit instruction in politeness markers, hedging, positive framing, and directive softening (e.g., replacing “Stop talking” with “I appreciate your energy; let’s channel it into our pair work”). Learners practice these structures through guided dialogues and micro-teaching drills. Phase 3 (Scenario Enactment) is the core role-play: students perform 8-10 minute simulated lessons where a trained peer or actor plays the role of a disengaged or resistant learner. The instructor-teacher must maintain target language use, apply pre-taught pragmatic strategies, and verbally articulate their reframing process in real time. Success is not measured by conflict elimination but by the teacher’s ability to linguistically construct a collaborative atmosphere, de-escalate tension, and guide the interaction toward a productive learning outcome. Assessment employs a criterion-referenced rubric evaluating pragmatic appropriateness, linguistic accuracy, strategic flexibility, and affective tone, with peer and instructor feedback integrated for metacognitive reflection.



Edition 1.VII-2026

Qualitative analysis of reflective journals confirmed a cognitive-behavioral shift: students reported viewing classroom management not as control but as “linguistic co-regulation,” where language serves as the primary tool for success construction. These findings align with the broader ISPM experimental results, which demonstrated an 18% improvement in behavioral engagement metrics and a strong correlation between pragmatic fluency and self-reported teaching efficacy (Abdullayeva, 2026). The exercise proved particularly effective because it isolated the behavioral component while maintaining integration with cognitive (strategic analysis) and reflective (post-performance journaling) dimensions. By making pragmatic success explicit, rehearsed, and assessable, the intervention transformed abstract pedagogical ideals into actionable communicative habits.

The “Scenario of Success” role-play exemplifies how the behavioral component of ISPM bridges linguistic knowledge and pedagogical agency. By training pre-service teachers to use English pragmatically to de-escalate conflict, reframe challenges, and co-construct success, the exercise demonstrates that language learning can directly cultivate professional resilience and interpersonal effectiveness. This approach moves beyond traditional EFL paradigms by treating success not as a terminal metric but as a communicatively enacted process, achievable through deliberate pragmatic strategy use. Future iterations should explore digital simulation environments and longitudinal tracking of strategy transfer into actual practicum placements, further validating the behavioral block’s role in holistic teacher preparation.

"Scenario of Success"

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