

**Researcher**

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**Title of Project**

Designing an Interaction-Oriented Diagnostic  
Assessment of L2 Pragmatic Competence:  
An Evidence-Centered Design Approach

**Research Supervisor**

Prof. Gary Ockey  
Iowa State University

**TIRF Research Topic Investigated**

Language Assessment

**Bio**

Ananda Astrini Muhammad is a doctoral candidate in applied linguistics and technology at Iowa State University. Her dissertation investigates the construct of interactional pragmatics in the U.S. university setting through the development and administration of a diagnostic assessment. Her work has been presented at the Language Testing Research Colloquium, Midwest Association of Language Testers Conference, and Language Assessment Research Conference.

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**Project Summary**

The assessment of L2 pragmatic competence is critical for understanding the readiness of learners embarking on university study in an L2 environment. While the number of empirical studies investigating the construct of L2 pragmatic competence has increased, few have followed the recommendation of Ishihara and Cohen (2022) to develop and evaluate diagnostic assessments for classroom purposes. This study aims to address this need. In this study, the diagnostic assessment's target users are instructors and ESL students in an ESL academic speaking and pronunciation course at a large Midwestern university. The course aims to help students develop and improve their pragmatic speaking skills necessary for communicating with professors, teaching assistants, classmates, and staff in various academic situations. Thus, this study's goals are to: (1) describe the domain analysis process and findings that contributed to the diagnostic assessment's test construct definition, (2) discuss the connection between the domain analysis findings and task design characteristics, and (3) highlight findings from the test administration. To achieve these goals, the study begins with an expansive domain analysis involving syllabi and textbook analyses, surveys, and interviews with university stakeholders (faculty, staff, and students). Then, a diagnostic assessment will be developed and administered to ESL students with varying English-proficiency levels. Examinees' scores will be analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The expected outcomes will theoretically contribute to an empirically informed construct of L2 pragmatic competence in the U.S. academic setting. Practically, the diagnostic assessment results can be used by instructors to tailor the direction of the teaching and learning process.