Integrating pragmatic strategies into English language pedagogy: A comparative analysis of teaching approaches

Indu A Nair [1] * , **Dr. Amit Kumar Dwivedi** [2]

1. Research Scholar, University of Technology, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India
indujanaki1985@gmail.com ,

2. Professor, Department of English, University of Technology, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

Abstract: The use of pragmatic strategies into English language training is necessary in order to cultivate communicative competence among students. The ability to effectively use language in a variety of social contexts will be facilitated for learners as a result of this. The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of various teaching approaches that are based on pragmatic tactics in terms of assisting students in dealing with circumstances that they would encounter in real life. The research compares and contrasts traditional methods of teaching language, such as direct and grammar-translation instruction, with more modern methods, such as communicative and task-based language education, in order to investigate the impact on pragmatic competence. With a special emphasis on social norms, politeness tactics, conversational implicature, and speech acts, this study relies on a broad body of literature and empirical research to demonstrate how both explicit and implicit education may assist students in becoming more pragmatically aware. Specifically, the study focusses on how students may become more aware of social norms. Exposure to real conversation and contextualised interaction are examples of implicit tactics that might lead to more organic learning over time. While metapragmatic awareness-raising and direct feedback are examples of explicit teaching that may speed up pragmatic development, examples of implicit approaches include exposure to genuine conversation and contextualised interaction.

Keywords: Pragmatic strategies, English language pedagogy, communicative competence, teaching approaches

- X -

INTRODUCTION

One requires more than simply a vast vocabulary and faultless grammar in order to communicate well in a second language. They also need to know how to employ pragmatic approaches, which help them adjust their language use to a variety of social and cultural circumstances. Both of these things are necessary for effective communication. One of the most important aspects of successful communication is pragmatic competence, which refers to the ability to comprehend and make proper use of language in a variety of distinct settings. As a result of the fact that typical methods of teaching English as a second language (ESL) have a tendency to focus greater emphasis on lexical and structural concerns, learners who are proficient in grammar may have problems with pragmatic awareness. Therefore, the incorporation of pragmatic strategies into the instruction of English as a second language is now considered to be of utmost importance in modern educational practices.

In order to enhance pragmatic competence, a wide variety of instructional frameworks have been used. These frameworks vary from more traditional ones, such as the direct method and the grammar-translation

method, to more contemporary ones, such as communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching (TBLT). When it comes to language, conventional approaches have a tendency to concentrate on linguistic accuracy, but they do so at the cost of taking into consideration the socio-pragmatic and discourse-pragmatic properties of language. On the other hand, learners have the opportunity to refine their pragmatic and linguistic talents in real-world situations by using communicative and task-based strategies, which put a focus on interaction and meaning-making. The purpose of this comparative research is to investigate the ways in which different educational approaches approach the implementation of pragmatic strategies in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

Being able to strike a healthy equilibrium between overt and covert modes of instruction is a key component of pragmatic teaching. The cornerstones of implicit teaching include authentic speech and contextualised interaction, in contrast to the use of direct explanations, metapragmatic awareness-raising, and corrective feedback that are used in explicit education. In light of the fact that students learn most effectively when they are presented with both organised and unstructured material, research suggests that a hybrid approach is the most effective method. Students get the opportunity to exercise their language skills in a real-world setting via the use of digital resources, collaborative activities, role-playing, and simulations, all of which contribute to the development of pragmatic competence.

When it comes to supporting pragmatic development among English as a Second Language (ESL) students, the main objective of this study is to provide light on which teaching strategies are the most successful. For educators, curriculum designers, and legislators who are interested in enhancing English language instruction, this research offers insightful information that may be very beneficial. The purpose of this study is to analyse and assess the various instructional methods and how they influence the ability of students to manage social interactions. The development of students' pragmatic awareness throughout the course of their language studies has a dual benefit: it improves their communicative competence and provides them with the tools they require to achieve success in academics, the workplace, and social settings where they are required to interact with people who come from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

OBJECTIVE

1. To analyze the role of pragmatic strategies in English language pedagogy.

2. To compare different teaching approaches in developing pragmatic competence.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Pragmatic Competence

A person's ability to be pragmatically competent may be improved as a result of language learning. There are a number of academics who, when asked to define pragmatic competence, provide a variety of responses.

After extending on Norm Chomsky's competence concept from the 1960s, Hymes (1972) originally proposed that communication competence has four components: possible, feasible, suited, and performing. These components are the four components that make up communicative competence. It is a widely held idea that linguistic competence is comparable to the first component, and that pragmatic competence is

equivalent to the other three components simultaneously. Leech (1983) was the first person to distinguish between the two schools of thought that fall under the umbrella of pragmatic competence: pragmalinguistic competence and sociopragmatic competence. An example of pragmatic competence is the use of appropriate grammar and appropriate language form in order to accomplish certain communication objectives. On the other hand, an example of formal competence is the adherence to social rules which govern the utilisation of language. In addition, Bachman provided an illustration of language competency in 1990 that was slightly more complete. Regarding the two aspects of pragmatic competence, his example demonstrates that illocutionary competence refers to the capacity to perceive and carry out a communication act, while socio-cultural competence refers to the capability of making efficient use of language within a certain social and cultural context. Blackman classified illocutionary competence as a subset of communicative competence. Illocutionary competence is comprised of capabilities such as the capacity to do certain speech acts and tasks, as well as the ability to use language in an appropriate manner within the context of a given situation.

Pragmatic Failure

The most important indicator of pragmatic competence is the presence of pragmatic failures, which are a key contributor to the blockage or failure of communication. In the year 1983, Thomas, a linguist from the United Kingdom, established the concept of pragmatic failure. In this context, the phrase refers to the inability of the listener to comprehend the message conveyed by the speaker. According to Thomas's thesis, there are two different types of pragmatic failures: those that involve language and those that involve social relations. In the event when two individuals use different languages and, as a consequence, are unable to grasp the semantic aim of the other, this is an example of linguistic pragmatic failure. These language blunders, which are often referred to as socio-pragmatic failures, may be caused by a lack of awareness of the other person's culture, social background, habits, and customs.

According to the opinions of specialists, pragmatic failures take place when people make mistakes in their verbal communication, which results in undesirable consequences or an inability to achieve their communicative goals. Due to the fact that English language lessons in China place a greater emphasis on enhancing students' grammar and spelling abilities than they do on assisting students in becoming more fluent communicators, students often fail to realise their potential for pragmatic competence. As part of our English language training, we need to place a greater emphasis on assisting students in developing pragmatic competence and understanding in dealing with people from different cultural backgrounds. In light of this, it is imperative that English as a Second Language (ESL) courses devote appropriate attention to linguistic pragmatic failures as well as social pragmatic failures. Students may be able to reduce the number of pragmatic errors they make if lesson plans were designed to include the concepts of pragmatic competence.

STRATEGIES TO CULTIVATE STUDENTS' PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE

Enhancing Pragmatic Awareness

In order to begin the process of cultivating pragmatic competence, the first step is to raise pragmatic awareness. This involves developing awareness among students of foreign languages as well as teachers of

such languages. The primary objective of language education is to enhance one's ability to communicate in terms of language. The only way to enhance the process of teaching and learning English, as well as to assist students and instructors in becoming more pragmatic and communicatively competent, is for all parties involved to acknowledge the significance of pragmatic competence and strive towards improving it. Languages fluctuate based on context, which includes differences in purpose, event, and topic. Additionally, the identity of the communicator influences the selection of phrases such as formal and informal, courteous and unpleasant, direct and euphemism. These differences have a role in the language that is used. Educators should, whenever possible, serve as a model for their students in terms of effective workplace communication and language use, raise students' pragmatic awareness through the study of a variety of typical scenarios, and emphasise that the development of students' pragmatic competence requires sustained exposure to authentic contexts.

Introducing Pragmatic Knowledge

Taking into consideration the new standards, the English curriculum for high school students need to include understanding of pragmatics. Pragmatic knowledge is information that assists in understanding others and expressing oneself appropriately in certain contexts. It is also known as "knowledge that helps." Students are better able to adjust their language choices—whether spoken or written, formal or casual, direct or indirect—to the context of their interactions, the people they are dealing with, and the aim of their communications when they have a good understanding of pragmatic knowledge. This is true whether the language is spoken or written. Activities that entail explaining, utilising films, and imitating real-life settings are all examples of activities that may be incorporated into pragmatic knowledge classes by teachers. Students are able to develop a greater awareness of the formality of various forms of communication, the manner in which things are done, and the individuals who are participating in the discussion via the use of these exercises. Therefore, individuals acquire the ability to modify their language choice in response to a variety of circumstances.

Integrating Language Function and Language Form in English Teaching

Traditional English language education has, for a very long time, placed a greater emphasis on students' grammatical structure mastery than on their pragmatic skill. Teachers have spent a significant amount of time and effort on mechanical exercises that are aimed to guarantee that students properly acquire language form. According to the guideline, teachers are required to have an awareness of the fact that comprehending grammar in the context of language use requires the harmonious combination of form, meaning, and application. The purpose of learning grammar is to acquire the ability to apply what you have acquired in a given situation, both to grasp and to explain concepts in a clear and concise manner. Therefore, it is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that their students have a solid understanding of the many kinds of language that may be used to transmit a certain meaning or to carry out a particular activity. When instructing grammar, it is of utmost significance for teachers to emphasise the significance of grammar as well as its practical applications. Utilising language in some kind is required for it to be considered. In the course of teaching pupils about imperative phrases, for instance, teachers could present a variety of examples that illustrate the meanings that lie under the surface of these kinds of sentences. It is also possible for teachers to assist their students in comprehending the fact that sentences that seem to have

the same meaning (for example, "Open the door" and "Please open the door") transmit totally different emotions and attitudes. For the purpose of teaching students how to utilise modal verbs to convey speculation, teachers should place a focus on the stress of each modal verb as well as the intention that it communicates. By doing so, students will be able to increase their pragmatic awareness and competency, as well as have a better understanding of the actual usage of language.

Developing Students' Cultural Awareness

There is a possibility that persons with different cultural backgrounds will have quite different interpretations of the same phrase. According to Thomas (1983), the linguistic choices of language users have been adversely influenced by cross-culturally divergent assessments of social characteristics, which has led to sociopragmatic failure that has occurred. Various cultures have different ways of thinking and speaking, as well as different ways of valuing societal concerns and the relative relevance of pragmatic principles. It is a lack of information about the target culture that is the major reason of pragmatic failure among senior high school students who are learning a foreign language. This lack of awareness leads to misconceptions and misuses of the language. The Chinese, for example, are known to exhibit a certain degree of humility if they are praised for anything. On the other side, the Western culture is well-known for its confident delivery of the phrase "thank you" in response to compliments. On a cultural level, the West and the East couldn't be more diverse from one another. In addition, it is abundantly evident that the majority of high school students do not comprehend either the English language or the culture of the United States. It is not enough to just have a command of languages in order to comprehend such profound cultural differences.

Conversations are the perfect environment for learning a language because they give the perfect context. When students are engaged in the investigation of western culture when they are learning a language, they make it possible for them to learn the language in context. By putting what they learn into context, students have the potential to do more than simply change their perception of grammar as being dry and boring; they can also build a better grasp of the world that exists outside of the classroom for themselves. Only one session per week is required for teachers to include Western culture knowledge and present a wide range of Western cultural behaviours and customs. This may be accomplished via the use of contemporary multimedia teaching approaches.

Designing Various Real Contexts

It is recommended by a large number of linguists that the process of learning a language take place in natural environments. When teaching English, teachers need to lay a strong focus on context. Every single one of his or her lectures have to include an awareness of the surrounding environment. As was seen in the prior conversation, the meaning and intent of a statement may shift based on the circumstances that surround it. The obligation of ensuring that students understand the vital significance of context when utilising language lies with the educators who are responsible for their education.

As part of the six primary components that are described in the New Curriculum Standard, the English lesson plans that are taught in high schools are required to include three thematic contexts: man and society, man and nature, and man and nature. It is possible for teachers to aid students in applying what

they have taught and developing their pragmatic competence by including these three subjects into their classes and devising genuine contextual tasks. They may organise a broad variety of classroom activities, such as competitions for reading, writing, speaking, and acting; they might also establish English corners; they might organise class reunions and celebrations for a number of significant holidays; and so on. All of these things depend on the conditions. By including a wide range of activities, it is possible to significantly improve the environment and setting that is conducive to learning English. In order to gradually improve their English pragmatic ability, they not only motivate students but also provide them sufficient language input material and a variety of opportunities to talk in English. This is done in order to help them improve their English pragmatic ability.

Focusing on Non-Verbal Language Instruction

It is well knowledge that one component of pragmatic competence is the ability to be close to non-verbal signals. It is also possible that it is related to the comprehension of how to behave in certain circumstances, such as knowing when to talk and when to keep silent. An excellent instance of this is the fact that the word "quiet" is associated with both positive and negative meanings in Eastern cultures, but in Western cultures, the opposite is true. The ability to constantly answer vocally while speaking or engaging with other people is something that Westerners place a great significance on. Within the context of Chinese culture, silence is highly valued since it fulfils an essential function in the process of conversation. The people who live there are of the opinion that long pauses and periods of silence communicate great meaning, and that a pause that is strategically placed may evoke an unexpected reaction. Another example that is readily apparent is body language, which includes the most basic postures, gestures, and courtesies, such as smiling, embracing, and shaking hands. Additionally, it takes into account the signals that are sent by the activities of the human body, which include things like eye contact, hand gestures, facial emotions, and some other similar things. There are a variety of cultural differences in the degree to which certain body languages and movements are controlled and shown.

Consequently, teachers who engage with pupils who are learning foreign languages would do well to highlight the relevance of sharpening their abilities in non-verbal communication. During the course of education, instructors should highlight the non-verbal communication behaviours and techniques of both the local culture and the target language, as well as any differences or conflicts that may exist between the two. It is possible to teach students the verb "glance" together with other words that are similar to it, such as "stare," by discussing how it is used and highlighting the differences between it and other related terms. As an alternative, in order for students to absorb not just the language but also the culture, the teacher can give them a brief summary of both Western and Chinese visual behaviour. This would allow them to acquire both the language and the culture. In order to take things a step further, it is suggested that instructors of foreign languages make full use of multimedia, the Internet, and visual aids such as photos, slides, and videos. Students will not only be able to learn the language, but they will also be able to see the non-verbal communication behaviours and techniques of the target culture. This will enable them to "speak" and "see" concurrently.

As a consequence of this, students will be able to transition from having a portion of their knowledge of nonverbal communication that is fragmented and irrelevant to having a more comprehensive, integrated

understanding and skill in this area.

CONCLUSION

It is crucial that English language training make use of pragmatic strategies in order to assist students in becoming more skilled communicators and better prepared to manage a broad variety of social settings. This study highlights the need of finding a medium ground between explicit and implicit instruction in order to build pragmatic awareness. This is accomplished by comparing and contrasting various training approaches. When compared to traditional approaches, which place a focus on verbal accuracy, teaching strategies that are task-based and communicative provide students a wonderful chance to participate in activities that will help them enhance their pragmatic skills. In addition, students have the opportunity to practice language in ways that are culturally appropriate via the use of digital resources, role-playing exercises, and collaborative activities. These activities successfully imitate real-world communication scenarios. After analysing the findings, it was determined that the most effective method for assisting language learners in becoming more pragmatic is to use a hybrid approach that integrates many forms of instruction. In addition to focussing on language proficiency, educators and curriculum authors need to put an emphasis on pragmatics in order to ensure that students are able to interact successfully across cultural borders in a variety of contexts, including the workplace, social situations, and educational institutions.

References

1. Al-Aghbari, D. (2016). Integrating pragmatic competence in teaching English to the students of medicine at Taiz University. Linguistics. Université de Strasbourg, 2016.

2. Aufa, F. (2014). The Use of Discourse Completion Task (DCT) as Explicit Instruction on Indonesian EFL Learners' Production of Suggestion Acts. International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature. (IJSELL), 2(6), 1-10.

3. Bardovi-Harlig, K. (2001). Evaluating the empirical evidence: Grounds for instruction in pragmatics? In K. R. Rose & G. Kasper (Eds.), Pragmatics in language teaching (pp. 13-32). Cambridge University Press.

4. Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. (1989). Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies. Ablex.

5. Byram, M. (1997). Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence . Multilingual Matters.

6. Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. Applied Linguistics, 1 (1), 1-47

7. Choraih, M., Loutfi, M., and Mansoor, A. (2016). The Importance of Pragmatic Competence in the EFL Curriculum: Application and Implications. Arab World English Journal, December 2016. ASELS Annual Conference Proceedings, 2016 Mohammed V University of Rabat, Morocco

8. Dörnyei, Z. (2001). Motivational strategies in the language classroom . Cambridge University Press.

9. Ellis, R. (2008). The study of second language acquisition (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

10. Firth, A., & Wagner, J. (1997). On Discourse, Communication, and (Some) Fundamental Concepts in SLA Research. Modern Language Journal, 81, 286-300.

11. Hudson, T., Detmer, E., & Brown, J. D. (1995). Developing prototypic measures of cross-cultural pragmatics . University of Hawai'i Press.

12. Hymes, D. (1972). On communicative competence. In J. B. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds.), Sociolinguistics (pp. 269- 293). Penguin.

13. Ishihara, N., & Cohen, A. D. (2010). Teaching and learning pragmatics: Where language and culture meet . Pearson Education.

14. Kasper, G., & Rose, K. R. (2002). Pragmatic development in a second language. Blackwell.

15. Kecskes, I. (2014). Intercultural pragmatics. Oxford University Press.

16. Kramsch, C. (1993). Context and culture in language teaching. Oxford University Press.

17. Lange, D.L & Paige, R.M. (2003). Culture as the Core: Perspectives on Culture in Second Language Learning. Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

18. LoCastro, V. (2012). Defining the territory. In V. LoCastro , Pragmatics for language educators: A Sociolinuistic Perspective. pp.3-17. London: Routledge.

19. Martínez-Flor, A., & Usó-Juan, E. (2006). A comprehensive pedagogical framework to develop pragmatics in the foreign language classroom: The 6Rs approach. Applied Language Learning, 16 (2), 39-64.

20. Mohammed, M. (2012) Teach ability of Pragmatic Competence: The Impact of Explicit Instruction on the Development of Iraqi Freshmen EFL Learners' Pragmatic Competence. The Arab Gulf Journal, Vol. (40), Issue (1-2)