

PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE AND ENGLISH CLASSROOM

Article Review

Asst. Prof. Dr. Sundus AJ.Kamil

sundus.a@ircoedu.uobaghdad.edu.iq

UNIVERSITY OF BAGHDAD/COLLEGE OF EDUCATION FOR HUMAN
SCIENCES-IBN- RUSHD

Abstract:The article” The role of Pragmatics in English Language Teaching. Pragmatic Competence” written by (Nivis Deda:2013) ,throughout the reading of the article the author highlights the pragmatic competence and the role it plays in enhancing English learning in language classroom. .Pragmatic competence refers to the ability to comprehend, construct utterances which are accurate and appropriate to the social and cultural circumstances where the communication occurs. Pragmatic competence should be a leading goal for all those who teach English as a second language, which simultaneously represents a challenging task as well. It’s” the ability to analyze language in a conscious manner.” (as cited in Holmes & Brown,2007:524). Pragmatics is the way we express the meaning through the communication in real situation. Meaning normally involves linguistic and paralinguistic elements and it diverges according to the setting, to the relationship between interlocutors, in addition to other social factors .Since English is an international language that connects people all over the world, English can be regarded as the common focus of all English speakers who do not share a language or a culture. As a matter of fact, English is spoken in different settings and levels of intercommunication. As a result, speakers must know many pragmatic elements to avoid inaccuracies and misunderstandings during communication. Such a great usage of English language requires a pragmatic competence which will be quite helpful for those who speak or learn English as a second language.

Key Words: (pragmatics; competence; English classrooms).

(الكفاية التواصلية وصفوف اللغة الانكليزية)

مراجعة مقال

أ.م.د.سندس عبد الجبار كامل

كلية التربية/ابن رشد/اللغة الانكليزية

sundus.a@ircoedu.uobaghdad.edu.iq

الملخص: من خلال اطلاع الباحث للمقال (دور الكفاية التداولية في تدريس اللغة الانكليزية) للكاتب نيفاس ديدا (٢٠١٣) فان المؤلف قد سلط الضوء على دور الكفاية التداولية المهم في تدريس وتعلم اللغة الانكليزية. ذلك ان الكفاية التداولية تشير الى المقدرة على استيعاب وصياغة الالفاظ الملائمة والتي توافق السياق الثقافي والاجتماعي للتواصل اللغوي. حيث ان التدريس بهدف الوصول للكفاية التداولية يجب ان يكون هو الهدف الاساسي من تعلم اللغة الثانية وهو يمثل بذاته التحدي الاكبر في تعلمها بذات الوقت. فالمقدرة على تحليل اللغة باساليب واعية ونقل معانيها الخفية في الحوار اليومي هو المغزى من الكفاية التداولية كما عبر عنها (براون وهولمز: ٢٠٠٧).

وعادة ما يعبر عن المعنى اما بالصياغات اللفظية او من خلال العوامل الالفظية (تعايير الوجه ولغة الجسد) وهذا يتنوع بطبيعة الحال وفق الموقف والاشخاص والعوامل الاجتماعية. وطالما ان الانكليزية هي لغة العالم اجمع فلذا هي محط اهتمام جميع الناطقين بها كلغة ثانية ممن ينتمون لثقافات متباينة ومتنوعة، حيث يتم التداول بها في الحوارات والتواصل بين شعوب وثقافات متعددة مما يحتم على متداوليها اتقان العناصر والعوامل التداولية لتفادي الوقوع في الخطأ الذي من شأنه تعثر المعنى وانقطاع التواصل. لذا فان تدريس الكفاية التواصلية وتعلم الطلبة لعناصرها الرئيسية له الاثر الاسمي في دعم تعلم اللغة الانكليزية واتقان الحوار بها.

مفاتيح الكلمات: التداولية، الكفاية، صفوف اللغة النكليزية

Introduction: Recent methods and approaches in teaching English as a second language focus on English as a practical tool and world commodity rather than a cultural enrichment. As Richards (2001) states , English is no longer viewed as the property of the English-speaking world but it is an international commodity sometimes referred to as English an International Language. The approach which survived in the new millennium is Communicative Language Teaching. the principles of this approach are as follows:

- Language learning is done through acquiring communicative competence
- Learners learn a language through communication and interaction
- Fluency and accuracy are important keys of authentic and meaningful communication.

Canale and Swain (1980) define communicative competence as a consistence of four aspects: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic

competence. According to Canale (1983), grammatical competence refers to mastering the linguistic code of the language that is being learnt; sociolinguistic competence means knowing the sociocultural rules of the use of the second language; discourse competence refers to the ability to select and arrange lexical items and syntactic structures in order to achieve well-formed texts; strategic competence refers to the ability to command verbal and non-verbal devices in order to compensate insufficient mastery or to enhance communication. Bachman (1990) suggests that language knowledge includes two types of knowledge that a second language learner must internalize:

a) Organizational knowledge, that is knowing how to control the formal structure of a second language so as to produce correct sentences and organize these in texts. It subsumes grammatical and textual knowledge.

b) Pragmatic knowledge, which involves knowing how words and utterances can be assigned specific meanings in context and function according to the user's intentions. This knowledge is also structured in lexical knowledge, functional knowledge and sociolinguistic knowledge.

The above concepts of communicative competence have one thing in their central that is Pragmatics. In fact, Blum-Kulka (1982), underlines the need to train second language learners to specific aspects of particular speech acts in the target language, to perform them, what motivates their performance in certain contexts, therefore when, where, how and with whom they can perform.

Aspects of competences in the process of language teaching: To have better perspective on the development of pragmatic competence in language teaching, the aspects of competences can be briefly handled as follows according to various linguists' 'points of view.

a. Sociolinguistic Competence: Savignon (1983:37) defines, "Sociolinguistic competence is the knowledge of socio-cultural rules of discourse and language. It requires 'an understanding of the social context in which language is used: the roles of participants, the information they share, and the function of interacting.'" Erton (2007) indicates that the sociolinguistic information which the speakers convey to each other

share a pragmatic competence which helps them to interpret and act in different situations by making use of different contextual clues. Moreover 'culture' and 'interaction', which reflect the fundamental concepts of verbal and non-verbal communication can be highlighted within pragmatic competence.

b. Interactional Competence: Kramersch (1986: 367) defines ‘interaction’ as “. . .interaction entails negotiating intended meanings, i.e., adjusting one’s speech to the effect one intends to have on the listener. It entails anticipating the listener’s response and possible misunderstandings, clarifying one’s own and the other intentions and arriving at the closed possible watch between intended, perceived, and anticipated meanings.” As Erton (2007) points , it can be said that interactional competence not only makes the use of structural rules of language, but also runs the psycho-linguistic and socio-linguistic functions of language which aid to provide accuracy and clarification to the reciprocal comprehension of the speech acts implied within the course of a conversation.

c. Cultural Competence: Culture is defined by Lyons (1990:302) as, “Culture may be described as socially acquired knowledge: i.e. as the knowledge that someone has by virtue of his being a member of a particular society.” Accordingly, cultural competence can be defined as the skill to understand and use language in a manner that is comprehensible by the members of that culture. Le Page (1978:41) indicates that “When we come to the central question of ‘competence’ we have to ask: ‘What is it an individual needs to know, in order to operate as a member of this society?’ a language only survives through its users competence , and competence is regarded as a living social action which affects social behavior.

d. Communicative Competence: (Widdowson:1989) supposes, communicative competence is the ability to put language for communicative purposes. communicative competence depicts language as a tool used for communication. This competence emphasizes on the development of four language skills, and on the correlation between the skills. Canale and Swain (1980) consider the term **communicative competence** as a mediator which refers to the relationship between grammatical competence (the knowledge of the rules of language) and the sociolinguistic competence (the knowledge of the rules of language use).

e. Strategic Competence : Canale and Swain (1980) define strategic competence as “an ability which deals with the knowledge of language and the ability to use this knowledge effectively and appropriate to purpose in order to take an active part in communicative interaction” Erton (2007:64) further clarifies, “. . . the strategic competence is the link that ties ‘everything’ together. For instance, if you couldn’t respond to an invitation, the white lie that

you utter to apologize at that time is a merchandise of your strategic competence which mirrors the kind of competence you develop as a language user.

f. Discourse Competence: Erton (2007: 64) indicates that "... discourse competence deals with the ability to arrange sentences into cohesive structures". As a result, the development of discourse competence assists language learner to gain insight by experiencing different interactional patterns in varying socio-cultural and physical contexts.

g. Pragmatic Competence: Simply, Pragmatics is related to culture , communication, and in the case of second languages, about intercultural communication .i.e. second language learners to acquire pragmatic competence need to acquire cultural understanding and communication skills.

According to Watzlawick , on Novinger (2001, p.19) "We cannot communicate. All behavior is communication, and we cannot behave." What we act or how we behave can be considered communication, and each of our actions replicate our cultural background including our attitudes towards gender, religion, sexual orientation, lifestyle, politics and even personal space.

Pragmatics and Language classroom: The study of pragmatics explores language learners' ability to coincide utterances with contexts in which they are appropriate; as termed by Stalnaker(1972, p. 383) pragmatics is "the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed"). The teaching of pragmatics aims to facilitate the learners' sense of being able to find socially appropriate language for the situations that they encounter. Within second language studies and teaching, pragmatics engirds speech acts, conversational structure, conversational implicature , conversational management, discourse organization, and sociolinguistic aspects of language use such as choice of address forms. Kasper & Schmidt (1996) elucidate further that learners exhibit substantial differences from native speakers in the area of language use, in the execution and comprehension of certain speech acts, in conversational functions such as greetings and leave takings, and in conversational management such as back channeling and short responses.

The goal of instruction in pragmatics is not to assert on conformity to a certain target-language norm, but somewhat to have learners familiarized with the a variety of pragmatic devices and practices in the target language. With such instruction learners can maintain their

own cultural identities and contribute actively in target language communication with more control over both intended force and outcome of their contributions.

The first issue is to provide learners with opportunities for observation. Some speech acts, such as invitations, refusals, and apologies often take place between individuals, and so learners might not have the opportunity to observe such language without being directly involved in the conversation. The second issue is salience. Some necessary features of language and language use are quite indirect in the input and not immediately noticeable by learners; for example the turns that occur before speakers actually say “goodbye” and the noises that we make when encouraging other speakers to continue their turns are of this type. Differences in making requests by asking “Can I” (speaker-oriented) versus “Can you” (hearer-oriented) might not be immediately salient to learners. By highlighting features of language and language use, instruction can inform the learner.

Conclusions: The learner need to be enlightened that language is a combination of not just linguistic and lexical elements; rather, language mirrors the social context as well, taking into consideration contextual and social factors in the process of communication. As Pragmatic competence is the one to combine all these factors, the growth of the pragmatic ability should be established as one of the principal teaching goals. Students will have the ability to act in various communicative patterns, they will be actively involved in concrete acts in the classroom. Pragmatic competence will further ensure them sufficient levels of grammatical and functional competences. They will react fluently, coherently and accurately. Moreover, pragmatic competence will urge their critical thinking.

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