



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Navigating the Nuances: Pragmatic Competence in English Language Processing

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Fluency in English is becoming increasingly important in international communication due to the current globalization of the world. Facilitating the development of communicative competence in language learners is crucial as they want to meet the demand. English is recognised as a universal language since it has been essential to international communication. As a result, those who live today recognise the necessity of speaking English fluently and correctly. Although students desire to become fluent in English, they need help understanding and speaking according to the context. Students are memorising the content from the book to score marks in examinations but need help to develop pragmatic proficiency since they cannot grasp the contextual meaning of the words and reply appropriately. This paper explores the concept of pragmatic competence in English language processing, highlighting its significance in everyday communication and its implications for various fields. Examining theoretical foundations and empirical studies aims to provide a comprehensive overview of how pragmatic skills are acquired, developed, and applied in real-world interactions. It also discusses the challenges and strategies in teaching and assessing pragmatic competence, particularly in second language learning contexts.

INTRODUCTION**Preamble**

In recent years, studies in the language processing field have witnessed remarkable advancements, pushing the boundaries of how humans understand and generate language. Human beings need language to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and ideas. The ability to communicate effectively is crucial for human beings' daily lives. As a global lingua franca, English is significant in international communication, business, and academia. For non-native speakers, mastering English is about acquiring linguistic skills, navigating cultural nuances, and achieving communicative competence.

English as a second Language

Psychologically and cognitively speaking, learning a new language is the most spectacular part of human development. On the other hand, normal people pick up any language they encounter. The subsequent languages they learn will be distinct from the first language they pick up through exposure. There are significant distinctions between a person's native language and their second language (Nor & Rashid, 2018). A person whose second language is English faces many problems during communication.

During communication in English, it would take a few minutes to explain and, even then, would not guarantee that the explanation had been understood correctly and could be translated quickly and

accurately into the native language (Rabiah, 2012). Acquiring a first language is analogous to activating a dormant instinct, with further development occurring due to exposure to the target language. Learning a second language is a deliberate decision. The rate at which someone picks up a second language varies depending on the learner and the second language. Still, it has yet to approach the rate at which they learned their first language since acquired and learned languages differ (Hoque, 2017).

Communicative competence in a second language

The acquisition of a second language requires active engagement in learning and practice, which diverges significantly from the passive nature of first language acquisition. Whereas the first language is absorbed effortlessly and naturally, mastering a second language's intricacies demands deliberate and sustained effort. This intentional approach is essential for truly assimilating the nuances of a second language's structures.

Earlier, the focus on developing English competence was predominantly on learning vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. However, the present scenario has shifted towards emphasizing the development of communication skills (Ji, 2007; Kim & Hall, 2002). Proficiency in English is essential to effectively communicating with speakers of different languages. Communicatively competent students not only grasp language codes but also possess the ability to engage with various speakers (Fabry & Kiessling, 2021).

Communication competence is crucial as it enables speakers at various linguistic levels to interact with one another more positively (Gray, 2022). For communicative competence, a speaker should be aware of social and cultural knowledge and linguistics from the listener's language. Human communication goes beyond simple message encoding and decoding during communication in English. Globalisation has raised the status of English as it is the most broadly spoken language in the world. With more and more people learning English as a second language, it is a unifying factor for those from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This is useful for everyday interpersonal communication and academic and professional contexts, where students will be compared and expected to communicate like native speakers. As a result, those who live in today's society understand the necessity of speaking English fluently and appropriately (Zhuge & Wu, 2005).

People understand English but need help to communicate it according to context. The speakers need help to make the listener understand their shared context and concept. A crucial aspect of language competency goes beyond grammatical accuracy and includes pragmatic competence, or the ability to utilise language effectively in various social circumstances. It involves understanding implicit meanings, managing conversational implicatures, and being conscious of the social norms that govern language use (Palanques & Julian, 2018). This holistic approach ensures they are equipped for diverse interactions in a globalized world.

Pragmatic inferences

Pragmatics is the study of appropriate linguistic behaviour in social contexts. To have pragmatic ability is to have the knowledge and skill to use pragmatics. The speaker and listener should have pragmatic competence to avoid mistakes and misinterpretations. The speaker should be able to understand the language pragmatically. It helps understand how context affects how words are understood and sentences are interpreted. Since the meaning of words depends on how an utterance is made, where it is made? when it is made? etc., it explains how language users can resolve apparent ambiguity. The main goal of pragmatics is to use the speaker's intended words to communicate with the listener in this way (Nordquist, 2020). It also seeks to convey the contextual meaning to the listener in accordance with the given situation. According to (Cambridge Dictionary), pragmatics is "the study of how language is affected by the situation in which it is used, of how language is used to get things or perform actions, and of how words can express things that are different from what they appear to mean". It is based on practical judgments rather than principles. "It is a branch of linguistics concerned with the relationship of sentences to the environment in which they

occur" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Given that speakers sometimes say what they mean and listeners need to interpret the intended meaning of a message accurately, it is difficult to grasp the pragmatic meaning. Pragmatics involves people's use of language in context" (Fromkin, 1988).

Language is a way of communicating what they want to convey. The speaker often wants to say something, but the receiver predicts something else (Gałajda, 2012). This creates chaos between them since they lack pragmatic inference. It examines context and analyses statements with literal and deeper meanings. It shows how context affects sentence meaning. Pragmatics considers the speaker's intent and context and also includes more facts. It studies what a speaker implies and what a listener deduces from that implication in light of the situational context, the mental states of the parties involved, and the previous discourse, among other things (Grice, 1975).

Pragmatics describes how a speaker's implicit meanings contribute to the joint effort of linguistic form. In pragmatics, individuals actively understand the intended meaning, objectives, purposes, and the speaker's activity (Sperber and Wilson, 1986). It determines an utterance's semantic content and leads to various forms of meaning contextualization at the lexical level rather than pragmatic inference being perceived as fixed and independent of the semantic content of a lexical item (Levinson 1983).

Pragmatic competences

Pragmatic competence, the ability to use language effectively and appropriately in various communicative contexts, is a fundamental aspect of human language processing (Thomas, 1983). This competence allows individuals to convey and interpret meanings beyond the literal interpretation of words, encompassing the subtleties of intention, context, and social norms. Understanding how humans achieve and utilize pragmatic competence offers valuable insights into linguistic theory and practical applications in education, communication, and technology.

Central to this progress is pragmatic competence, a nuanced approach that emphasizes the importance of context, intent, and practical application in language processing (Taguchi, 2011). Unlike traditional methods that rely heavily on syntactic and semantic analysis, pragmatic competence incorporates a deeper understanding of the communicative goals and situational factors influencing language use (Rafieyan and Rozycki, 2018).

Meaning is collaboratively and cooperatively built or negotiated throughout ongoing interaction, and this pragmatic process results in semantic variety and change. For students to acquire the skill of conscious language analysis, they must be able to use English pragmatically (Holmes and Brown, 2007). According to Kasper (1997), the capacity to communicate successfully in a given circumstance and grasp communication mechanics is known as pragmatic competence. It is not possible by teaching but by allowing them to practice the skill. Since more pragmatic competence may lead to better understanding. Pragmatics is a tool used in English communication to transmit meaning that, although seemingly well-articulated on the surface, is communicated more successfully through choosing the correct word than through a linguistic form (Kasper and Rose, 2002). Students who understand a language's pragmatics can better communicate in various contexts. Understanding social and cultural norms enables the speaker to use and comprehend linguistic forms successfully (Thomas, 1995). The communicative proficiency required for second language learners to effectively communicate in the target language is pragmatic competence. (Kim and Hall, 2002).

The significance of pragmatic competence in language learning cannot be overstated. For language learners, mastering pragmatics is essential for achieving communicative competence, which enables them to interact successfully in diverse social situations (Taguchi, 2011). However, the challenges associated with teaching and assessing pragmatic skills are substantial due to their context-dependent and often subtle nature.

Glitches encountered by ESL learners during communication

Pragmatic competence is an essential component of language proficiency, particularly in understanding and producing contextually appropriate utterances. For ESL learners, making accurate pragmatic inferences can be particularly challenging due to various linguistic and extralinguistic factors (Thomas, 1983). The ability to infer meaning from context is often influenced by the learner's exposure to the target language, cultural background, and level of proficiency. One of the primary challenges ESL learners face understands the cultural nuances embedded in pragmatic inferences. Different cultures have varied norms for politeness, directness, and social interactions, which can lead to misinterpretations (Blum-Kulka, 1987).

Limited vocabulary and grammatical knowledge can also hinder ESL learners' ability to make pragmatic inferences. Without a strong foundation in the language, learners may not recognize subtle cues or idiomatic expressions that native speakers use to convey implicit meanings (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013). This limitation often results in a reliance on literal interpretations, which can be inappropriate or incorrect in certain contexts. Cognitive load is another significant factor that affects the ability of ESL learners to make pragmatic inferences. Processing a second language requires more cognitive resources, especially for learners who have not yet achieved fluency. This increased cognitive load can make it difficult for learners to pay attention to contextual cues and infer the intended meaning accurately (Sperber & Wilson, 1995).

Techniques to amend pragmatic competence

When students understand the literal meaning of words but lack awareness of the interpretive rules, it can result in misunderstandings, significant communication breakdowns, and even distort the intended communication objectives. The challenges ESL learners' faces in making pragmatic inferences are complex and involve cultural, linguistic, and cognitive factors. To address these challenges, strategies that increase learners' exposure to authentic language, cultural sensitivity, and contextual comprehension are crucial. As ESL instruction progresses, placing a stronger focus on developing pragmatic competence will be vital for enabling learners to communicate more effectively in English. Students may also be unaware of the diverse linguistic structures available for conveying their intentions (Kasper, 1997). The following activities can help enhance pragmatic competence.

Active Listening

Active listening is a crucial component of effective communication, as are analytical reasoning and problem-solving abilities. Effective listening skills are highly regarded in most businesses, and interviewers use them to gauge interpersonal talents. It displays their ability to guide and work with others in a group and solve problems by consensus and consultation (Khanna, 2020). It pays close attention to what others say and how they say it. Listen not only to the words being spoken but also to tone, emphasis, and non-verbal cues. It is a form of communication that goes beyond simply hearing and involves empathy, attention, practice, and conscious effort.

Role-play

Role-playing is a useful method for helping English language learners become pragmatically strong. According to Abdoola et al. (2017), it allows students to hone and improve their communication abilities in real-world situations. Students can practice pragmatic language skills in role-playing scenarios in a safe and supervised environment. Students can refine their social abilities by assuming diverse roles and engaging in simulated social events. This teaches children to initiate discussions, take turns, and respond appropriately. It has been discovered that using role-playing exercises to teach speaking aids in the advancement of communicative methods. This enhances their language proficiency and ability to use language in certain situations and contexts (Idham, 2022). Students can practise speaking in real-world situations by participating in role-playing activities. Assign various roles and scenarios that require students to navigate a variety of social contexts with skill. This practical activity can develop Students' pragmatic competency by applying it to real-world scenarios (Kaliska, 2018).

Drama

Drama's practical and communicative nature makes it an ideal partner for language learning. Active engagement in real-life scenarios that mimic genuine interactions enables students to hone their pragmatic skills (Hughes, 2021). Dramatic exercises give students a good setting to hone their pragmatic ability. Learners can experience various social circumstances and experiment with language use by adopting different roles and characters. They can practise using language to negotiate meaning, express viewpoints, make requests, and offer advice, among other things. Since play is an immersive and interesting medium, students can learn directly about the subtleties of language use and the cultural elements that affect communication (Zyoud, 2010). Dramatic plays are a great way to increase pragmatic English language ability. By engaging in drama-related activities and procedures, language learners can strengthen their proficiency in various social contexts and practise language in a genuine and relevant way (Samantaray, 2014).

Storytelling

Storytelling can be valuable for improving pragmatic competence in English (Larrazabal, n.d). During storytelling, individuals can practice using language meaningfully and contextually appropriately, enhancing their pragmatic competence. Moreover, storytelling engages listeners and promotes active participation, creating an immersive language-learning experience (Velásquez and Rodriguez, 2015). By incorporating storytelling into language learning activities, individuals can enhance their pragmatic competence in English (Speaker et al., 2005).

Group discussions

Group discussions help the learner become more pragmatically proficient in English. Motivate students to participate in class discussions that examine pragmatic distinctions. This may entail examining and contrasting how language is used in various social and cultural contexts. By talking about these distinctions, learners can get a more sophisticated grasp of pragmatic competence and acquire insights into how language is utilised differently (Kaliska, 2018). It is possible to develop and hone pragmatic abilities, including suitable expressions, tone, register, and politeness (Mansoor et al., 2016).

Debate

Debate is an admirable way to help children develop their pragmatic language skills because it makes them listen intently, take turns speaking, and voice their viewpoints. As a result of these activities, students have the ability to respect the opinions of others, have meaningful conversations, and provide evidence to back up their claims (Shu, 2018). Learners who get explicit training may be more aware of language use's pragmatic and cultural implications. Teachers can assist students in developing their comprehension of when and how to use language effectively in various contexts by giving them clear instructions (Choraih, 2016). Learners can benefit from explicit instruction by developing a greater awareness of language use's pragmatic and cultural components. Teachers can support students in developing their comprehension of when and how to use language effectively in various contexts by giving them clear guidance. The greatest ways to learn it are immersion and exposure to real-world language usage. Exposing students to authentic communication scenarios is important to build their pragmatic abilities through practice and observation (Kaliska, 2018).

Collaborative projects

The students' pragmatic competence can be significantly enhanced by engaging students in collaborative projects. One effective approach is to assign them a group writing project, such as crafting a persuasive essay or developing a fictional story. This practice promotes negotiation, compromise, and teamwork. According to Hilliard (2017), students must successfully interact with their group members to produce a cohesive and coherent final product. In addition to assisting students in reaching a shared objective, collaborative projects help them hone their pragmatic language abilities. Working in groups gives students practice in effective communication, negotiation, and problem resolution. Students can apply their expertise from various topic areas in these trans-disciplinary projects. These activities help children develop

problem-solving, effective communication, and active listening skills essential for successful social interaction (Everyday Speech). This method not only fosters teamwork but also sharpens their practical language skills.

Video modeling and analysis

As part of a video modelling exercise, students view films about social interactions and evaluate the communication strategies utilised. By viewing and discussing these films, students can pick up constructive social skills and identify areas where they can grow in their interpersonal relationships (Alsmari, 2020). Teachers can select from various videos featuring various social circumstances, including friend chats, job interviews, and public speaking engagements. After watching the films, students can hold discussions about language use, nonverbal cues, and problem-solving strategies (Everyday Speech, n.d).

Board games

Pragmatic competence in the English language can be elevated using board games. Gunderson (n.d.) describes it as an interesting and dynamic strategy that integrates language acquisition with social engagement. Players in the board game Apples to Apples must draw analogies and justify their decisions. It pushes participants to communicate persuasively and modify their style in response to other people's viewpoints and preferences.

Players must use quick thinking and creativity to create words in categories that fit into particular categories. It encourages participants to communicate their ideas succinctly and clearly within a time constraint while expanding their vocabulary and linguistic flexibility. Taboo is a difficult game that encourages clear communication. The objective is to use clues to describe a word or phrase, but players cannot use specific "taboo" terms. Players must be able to think critically, speak clearly, and use a variety of languages. In Balderdash, players must develop inventive explanations for strange occurrences or plausible meanings for difficult words. It pushes players to strive to persuade others that their definitions are accurate by using language imaginatively and convincingly.

In the word association game Codenames, players must provide one-word hints to facilitate their teammates' guesses at the correct terms. It encourages clear and accurate communication because participants must identify the most efficient clues to convey meaning without being misleading. Playing games requires children to take turns, follow the rules, and talk in a way that makes sense. They will also need to pay great attention to the other players so they can understand their plays and modify their approach accordingly. These board games can help students improve their speaking skills, social interaction, and pragmatic English language competency in language learning environments (Larrazabel, nd).

CONCLUSION

Pragmatic ability, a basic component of human communication, significantly impacts English language processing. At the core of the pragmatic approach to language learning is the ability to choose the most appropriate mode of communication for a given situation, considering the local context and cultural standards. Pragmatic competence helps learners to know how to communicate freely and prevent misunderstandings in social situations, which is beneficial for learners of any language or culture. The investigation of pragmatic competence in the processing of the English language highlights its essential function in accomplishing successful communication.

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