THE IMPORTANCE OF USING DIFFERENT APPROACHES AND TECHNIQUES IN DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE OF THE STUDENTS OF TECHNICAL HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

Lack of pragmatic competence may result to problem in communication such as miscommunication and misunderstanding. The utterances in miscommunication or misunderstanding may be considered rude insults. This is the main reason why students need to learn and to have the pragmatic competence to support their communication abilities. In order to teach that pragmatic competence to students, teacher, then, has to own this competence. He or she has to understand and aware of pragmatics knowledge and pragmatics competence.

Students are demanded to own the communication skills that can support them as the part of the society. Not only in the classroom, should students also be able to communicate effectively with language outside classroom or the real world. Therefore, English teaching is supposed to have the main role to carry out the main purpose of language teaching which is to develop students' communicative competence. One way can be done is to integrate English language teaching and pragmatics in the classroom. Teacher is required then to own pragmatic knowledge and competence in teaching English to his or her students.

The term "pragmatics" was introduced in the late 30s of the XX century. Morris used it to designate one of the three sections of semiotics (along with syntactics and semantics). However, the very pragmatic aspect of the existence of sign systems (including language) was first carefully considered by C. S. Pierce at the end of the XIX century. Pierce (like Morris, who largely followed his ideas) considered the pragmatic component to be the main one for determining the essence of the sign. The sign becomes such not because of its physical properties, but because of a certain use of it in the community. Therefore, both the way of constructing sign constructions (syntax) and the relation of signs to designated objects (semantics) are only a means for signs to perform their main function: to provide communication between people.

In simple terms, Pragmatics is about culture, communication, and in the case of second languages, about intercultural communication. In order for second language learners to acquire pragmatic competence, they need to acquire cultural understanding and communication skills.

Furthermore, teaching pragmatic competence is one of the most neglected aspects in English language teaching in most countries where English is taught as a foreign language. Teaching English to FL students should involve not only familiarizing learners with the sounds, vocabulary, and grammar of the TL, but also helping them to use the TL effectively through making them acquainted with the pragmatic rules that govern the appropriate combination of utterances and communicative functions. And the responsibility of teaching pragmatic aspects of language use falls on the teachers. However, as language teachers, we face certain challenges. These include lack of adequate materials and training, which are the result of lack of emphasis on pragmatic issues in ESP/EFL teaching methodology. As we know providing authentic language input is one of the teacher's roles, however, this kind of input is not readily available in the EFL context, and teachers do not have the skills to create pragmatic learning exercises for their learners. Usually, teachers in the FL context do not have frequent contacts with native speakers and therefore, may be unfamiliar with the pragmatic rules of the TL. Consequently, explicit instruction for both teachers and learners seems indispensable.

I know that extending the classroom can be very frustrating. Requiring students to do extra learning on their own time can be a huge waste of effort when they don't do what you've asked – or even worse – when some do and some don't! But firstly you should consider about learning goals as:

~ Identify opportunities for learning outside of the online classroom.

~ List three outside activities that would be appropriate for your own online class(es)

~ Clearly identify assignment goals and design a rubric to assess them.

~ Avoid common pitfalls of nontraditional assignments.

Considering these goals I wanted to extend my lesson by using videos or movies. For example, if we're using supplementary videos for our class, the first assignment could simply be to have the students access the video, watch the first minute, and write down one new vocabulary word they heard. In the next class, model the exact behavior: display the video if you can, watch the first minute together, and then solicit new vocabulary the students heard. You can gradually increase the out-of-class (extension) demands on the students, but only when you have buy-in from the students – that is, when they agree on the value of the extension activity.

The great thing about using videos is that it is everywhere, which makes it easy to find, and simple for learners to practice English in their own time. The materials should reflect a situation that learners may face in an English-speaking environment – this will help them transition into a world where English is the norm. In this world, people use abbreviations, body language is important and they'll use "filler" sounds – such as "ummm" – when they are speaking English – and learners will encounter these in authentic material.

Being a teacher, I know how difficult is to teach students especially in ESP classes. Students have different speed in learning; they are of different intelligence or interest. To combine all the differences is a hard work. Therefore, I have decided to change my teaching. I wanted to make the learning for my students more interesting, helpful and enjoyable with interactive techniques.

In order to raise the efficiency of the lesson we have chosen the techniques "picture, video and poster demonstrations" and get used group work strategies for activating the productive skills of the learners.

There are many reasons for using pictures and videos in language teaching. As Wright (1990: 2) pointed out, they are motivating and draw learners' attention. Furthermore, Wright (1990: 2) refers to the fact that they provide a sense of the context of the language and give a specific reference point or stimulus. Pictures and videos, being suitable for any context or group of learners independently on age or level, can be used in lots of various ways.

Picture Prompt – we gave students an image of warning signs and asked them to say what do they mean, and make/write warning sentences. Also works well as group activity.

Video Demonstrations - we used you tube videos about the explanation of expressing ways of warnings and asked to take notes about warning verbs while watching the video.

The results provided the students with current, meaningful and relevant content, and the combination of both an autonomous learning environment and collaborative, communicative, task-based interaction.

During the application of picture prompt and matching headings they learned new information and practiced the gained knowledge in group works by repeating the warning statements, moreover the listening activity helped me to check comprehension of the learners on new topic.

And for strengthening and for progress check of the gained knowledge we used 'Poster presentations' for producing the pragmatic competence of the learners by using speech act examples of warnings in different two cultures. In poster were written

ready-made situations and the learners read them in two groups and tried to give Uzbek and American style of warnings. And it was very enjoyable for my learners as they felt without knowing the social context it can cause some misunderstandings about language use. This activity helped to enable students to identify the different possibilities of realizing a speech act in a clearly described context, which will accordingly enhance their pragmatic awareness.

In conclusion they understood that culture seems to play a significant role in the use of warning strategies and their frequency by the two subsamples.

Pragmatics and teaching English cannot be separated since they shared one important aspect dealing with communication. Teaching language in general and teaching English in specific should involve an awareness of meaning in context. Teachers should be aware of their pragmatic competence to develop students' pragmatic awareness. The most important knowledge to be taught to students is the rules to use language for communication. Students are demanded to own the communication skills that can support them as the part of the society. Not only in the classroom, should students also be able to communicate effectively with language outside classroom or the real world. Therefore, English teaching is supposed to have the main role to carry out the main purpose of language teaching which is to develop students' communicative competence. One way can be done is to integrate English language teaching and pragmatics in the classroom. Teacher is required then to own pragmatic knowledge and competence in teaching English to his or her students.

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