ADVANCING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN EFL TRAINING: INSIGHTS FROM TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING AND NEEDS ANALYSIS PERSPECTIVES

Yeshanov Marat Urazaliyevich (Eshchanov)
PhD Student,
Uzbekistan State World Languages University

In the present globalized world, pragmatic competence in language learning is of equal importance as technical and technological skills. The present study aims at investigating the role that task-based language teaching and explicit pragmatics instruction may play in developing the pragmatic competence of EFL students.

The research points out the gains made by integrating tasks, technology, and intercultural perspectives into instructional practices while reviewing recent developments in teaching methodologies and empirical studies. Results have underlined explicit pragmatics instruction, metapragmatic awareness, and learner autonomy with a basis in meaningful and authentic tasks. The study concludes that aligning instruction with learners' needs, incorporating global English norms, and leveraging digital tools can effectively develop EFL learners' ability to navigate diverse communicative contexts.

INTRODUCTION

In the globalized world, proficiency in pragmatic competence is as vital as acquiring skills in information technology and other technical domains. Both competencies are fundamental for effective engagement in today's globalized environment, irrespective of cultural or geographical boundaries. This study highlights the importance of understanding the social dimensions of language use across diverse, everyday contexts. By focusing on the nuances of language as a tool for conveying meaning beyond formal linguistic structures, we aim to foster deeper insights into how variation in language signals intent and facilitates interaction.

In second-language (L2) education, English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers play a pivotal role in developing learners' pragmatic capabilities. These teachers face unique challenges, particularly in settings where the target language is used for academic or professional purposes. Effective teaching requires educators to critically analyze language data and provide explicit instruction on pragmatics, enabling learners to address communication challenges autonomously. Such efforts empower learners to refine their competence and navigate complex L2 interactions successfully.

The significance of cultivating a non-deficit perspective toward language use cannot be overstated. It is crucial to acknowledge that speakers of nonstandard varieties of a language or nonnative speakers may employ communication strategies that differ from standard norms without being inherently deficient. Embracing diversity in communication fosters mutual understanding and reduces stereotyping and discrimination. Given the global dominance of nonnative English speakers, the need for educators to promote a nuanced and inclusive approach to language instruction is paramount. Early research in the 1990s demonstrated that pragmatic competence is both teachable and essential for mastering a target language (Kasper & Rose, 1999). Subsequent studies have focused on identifying effective methodologies for teaching L2 pragmatics, laying the foundation for this paper's exploration.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Recognizing the evolving demands of globalization and English as an International Language (EIL), this study reviews recent advancements in L2 pragmatics instruction. A central challenge in this domain is the limited opportunities for practical application of pragmatics within traditional classroom settings. To address this gap, researchers advocate the integration of task-based approaches, which involve goal-oriented activities designed to simulate authentic language use (Long, 2015). Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has gained prominence as an effective framework for fostering pragmatic competence, as evidenced by various empirical studies (Kim, Lee, & Kim, 2018; Nguyen, 2013; Taguchi & Kim, 2018). For instance, Alcón (2018) investigated how task-supported language teaching influenced Spanish ESL

learners' ability to use politeness strategies in email requests. Her study demonstrated that collaborative classroom tasks enhanced learners' pragmatic awareness, particularly in peer-to-peer interactions. The findings underscored the value of explicit instruction coupled with meaningful task implementation.

In addition, recent scholarship has explored the intersection of TBLT with emerging technologies and digital tools to facilitate telecollaboration and real-world language practice. Such innovations offer promising avenues for enhancing learners' pragmatic competence while accommodating diverse instructional contexts and learner needs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Developing learners' metapragmatic awareness requires an intercultural approach that emphasizes sensitivity to cultural and linguistic diversity (McKay, 2018). Teachers must guide students in expressing their pragmatic norms authentically while fostering an understanding of potential differences in their interlocutors' norms. Recent trends in L2 pragmatics instruction highlight several key considerations, including:

1.   The advantages of explicit instruction in pragmatic competence.
2.   The use of language corpora to provide authentic EIL input.
3.   Incorporating tasks to encourage meaningful communication.
4.   Leveraging technology for real-world language practice.
5.   Fostering learner autonomy through strategy-based instruction.

Taguchi and Ishihara (2018) advocate for an integrative pedagogical approach that combines these elements. They recommend introducing pragmatic variations in classroom activities, guiding students to observe and document authentic interactions, and encouraging reflective discussions on the global role of English. By promoting empathy and respect, educators can enhance learners' ability to build rapport and adapt to diverse communicative contexts.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of aligning pragmatic instruction in English as a foreign language context with learners' needs and contextual realities. Drawing on recent pedagogical trends, educators are encouraged to adopt flexible, inclusive approaches that prioritize learners' perspectives and intercultural competence. By integrating explicit instruction, task-based methodologies, and technology, English language teachers can foster the development of pragmatic skills essential for effective global communication.

REFERENCES

1.   Alcón Soler, E. (2018). Effects of task-supported language teaching on learners' use and knowledge of email request mitigators. In N. Taguchi & Y. Kim (Eds.), _Task-based approaches to teaching and assessing pragmatics_ (pp. 56–81). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
2.   Kasper, G., & Rose, K. (1999). Pragmatics and SLA. _Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 19_, 81–104.
3.   Kim, Y. (2008). The contribution of collaborative and individual tasks to the acquisition of second language vocabulary. _Modern Language Journal, 92_(1), 114–130.
4.   Long, M. H. (2015). _Second language acquisition and task-based language teaching_. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
5.   McKay, S. L. (2018). English as an international language: What it is and what it means for pedagogy. _RELC Journal, 49_(1), 9–23.
6.   Nguyen, T. (2013). Instructional effects on the acquisition of modifiers in constructive criticisms by EFL learners. _Language Awareness, 22_(1), 76–94.
7.   Taguchi, N., & Ishihara, N. (2018). The pragmatics of English as a lingua franca: Research and pedagogy in the era of globalization. _Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 38_, 80–101.
8.   Taguchi, N., & Kim, Y. (Eds.). (2018). _Task-based approaches to teaching and assessing pragmatics_. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.