



THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAGMATIC ABILITY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract: Since pragmatic ability is defined by the comprehension through both productive and receptive skills which are reading, listening, speaking and writing both native and non-native speakers are expected not only to be able to understand direct or literal meaning of written or oral messages, but also implied or hidden sense of the delivered message to be acknowledged as pragmatically competent. Whether the user of the language is pragmatically successful in reception and production the language stems from various contributory factors such as “proficiency in L2, age, gender, occupation, social status, and experience in the relevant L2-speaking communities, and previous experiences with pragmatically competent L2 speakers and multilingual experiences in general”. (Ishihara,2010).

Key words: pragmatic, ability, English language, learning skills.

According to Cohen(2010) “Having pragmatic ability means being able to go beyond the literal meaning of what is said or written, in order to interpret the intended meanings, assumptions, purposes or goals, and the kinds of actions that are being performed. We noted reasons why speakers of a language in a given speech community may purposely be indirect in their communication and in their behavior in general, and that consequently learners may need to find out how to be effective pragmatically in those given situations.”

As for the **Activity1.1**, it primarily aims at enhancing pragmatic ability through a certain case by which students’ productive and receptive skills are also improved. According to the case a teacher is being accused of teasing the women in his class by the department chair even though Charlie (teacher) is not purposefully intending to do so. The main aim of him having humor in class was to make his learners engaged into the lesson and to conduct an interesting lesson. However, he was blamed of making a fun of them. The sole but noteworthy fault of the teacher is that he is not pragmatically successful or competent in the language. As Cohen (2009) notes “Since the focus of pragmatics in the real world involves the use of language in a host of social and cultural contexts, learners of a language invariably have a lot to learn if they do choose to avoid cross-cultural misunderstandings.



They need to be aware of social norms for when speech acts are likely to be performed (e.g., knowing if and when to ask the boss about a raise or moving to another office), cultural reasoning as to why they are performed that way, and knowledge about the consequences of utterances in that particular culture.” With the help of this activity students come to realize that teacher’s unawareness about social and cultural contexts is leading to cross-cultural misunderstandings and serious problems in mutual intelligibility. As a result his humor is being interpreted as teasing or making a fun on students.

Via role plays and analyzing the situations students will be able to recognize the importance of pragmatic behavior, comprehend level of formality and politeness and serious consequences of cultural, social misunderstandings. That’s why, I would be wise to admit the activity meeting its objectives.

In terms of level of formality, chair’s address to the teacher with his first name (Charlie) does refer to visible informality of him, actually chair should have been calling him with a special title before his name as a respect. When it goes about politeness, Charlie’s rudeness toward a chair saying he should work somewhere else where his labor appreciated more rather than apologizing and promising not to make the same mistake anymore. In turn, these mentioned points making students realize serious consequences of not being familiar with social and cultural contexts.

Supplied dialect that activity involves, goes through between teacher and the chair of the department and, in turn, the dialog is observed by another person to evaluate the process, therefore, it should be acknowledged that students have to produce and receive to certain extent of language to complete the task while they are learning about speech acts simultaneously.

I could find the strengths of the task in its authenticity, first of all since it is reflecting on of the common situations happening in a daily life, therefore, it can ease for learners to comprehend the topic in the reflection of real life examples. Additionally, the activity is enabling students to practice their productive and receptive skills at the same time with learning about speech acts. Another significant advantage of the activity is that it is offering students physical movements, namely, role-play which can easily engage students in activity and offers a room for productive learning and practicing.



Upon elaborating on drawbacks, it is crucial to state its impracticality, that is, the task is targeted for 45 minutes, however, Part 1(including 5 steps) and Part 2(requires mini group work) do not allow students to manage with time. Secondly, students are provided with only one case to role play which inevitably causes irritating repetition and therefore boredom and disappointment of students. Lastly, the activity can be criticized in terms of being ambiguous for each part in the activity since it allocates 45 minutes in general not specifying clear time period for each part. Moreover, elaborating on teachers' and students' directions separately would contribute to the efficiency of the task.

Taking into consideration aforementioned weaknesses, it would be a good idea to work on practicality of the practicality of the task through some reductions on the steps involved in the task. Furthermore, giving options of various cases during a lesson or encouraging students to create a situation themselves would serve to colorfulness of the lesson and lead to engaging interesting lesson. As well as, personally I would prefer being specific with allocated time for each part and go thoroughly with directions both teachers and learners to make the lesson as productive as possible.

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