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Pragmatic Abilities of School-Aged Students and Materials that Can Be Used to Develop Pragmatic Competence

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Abstract (200) - A discussion of language pedagogy would be inadequate without mentioning the field of pragmatism. We define pragmatics as the principles that guide how people use language, such as where and how to say something. These accepted standards are crucial to our communication in any social scenario, and without them, our learning process will inevitably be restricted to language use. As it is commonly accepted fact that pragmatic competence develops stage by stage as a child grows up from being able to understand only direct speech without any need to read between the lines to an adult who will unconsciously, as often said, feel the actual meaning behind the words in light sarcastic statement or a criticism smoothened by a joke. All these aspects make us to analyze speech acts and include them into language teaching methodology to make the educational programs complete and real-life related. This article aims to analyze and explain the pragmatic abilities of a school aged students in a comparison between their native language and target language that they are learning. In the present literature review, readers were provided with a significant quantity of data in order to evaluate the effects of emphasizing pragmatics on second language acquisition.

Keywords: pragmatics, competence, development, language knowledge, environment, instruction methods, pragmatic ability, language teaching, EFL context.

Introduction

Learning a language is a challenging experience which is intangibly connected to different aspects of a person's social environment, age, gender, financial status, previous experience and overall knowledge of the world. More or less, all these factors influence language acquisition in certain ways. Taguchi (2009) once referred to one of these factors such as pragmatics as "the ability to use language appropriately in a social context" [9] which imply the meaning that language and social context cannot be isolated from each other. Other than that, social context makes the language use distinguishable from other languages. Specifically saying, while some language users can be more confident and extroverted in their second language and be shyer and timid in their first language means that social context of the second language is more talkative and open whereas the other one is vice versa.

Multiple methods are applied, depending on the language, participants, goal, and context, to interpret and understand a speaker's message. Setting up the right environment for the message to be delivered is essential to effective communication. The language itself is relevant to the context. Connecting context and language requires an understanding of pragmatics, or the use of language in communication (Leech, 2016) [5]. The ability to adjust to various situations is necessary for effective communication. In general, pragmatics should strongly be taken into account and used appropriately to reach the initial goal of effective and mutually understandable communication. Green (1996) specified in her book of "Pragmatics and natural language understanding" which has really affected my vision of the subject matter, main notions of pragmatics are "include belief, intention (or goal), plan, and act [2]. Assuming that the means and/or the ends involve communication, pragmatics still encompasses all sorts of means of communication, including nonconventional, nonverbal, non-symbolic ones". To sum, pragmatics and its central notions ideally should be included into the educational programs with the help of appropriate tools of teaching such as techniques and methods assisting in making the pragmatic competence understandable and mostly, teachable.

While exploring the vast field of pragmatics, the interesting fact occurs which follows as it is mainly not the adult learners in academic contexts needing an urgent resolution of the differences in pragmatic approaches and methods, but young children who constantly feel the confusion gaining

the pragmatic knowledge as well as where and how to use this particular language aspect (O'Neill. 2012) [8]. There are a huge mass of different views and opinions of the well-known linguists on how specifically this knowledge should be taught and implied.

Context and observation

The aim of this article was to make a review of literature on pragmatic abilities and observe school-aged students to explore the language use in social context. Specifically saying, the EFL context is Uzbekistan, Tashkent, private school with first language in Uzbek, Russian while target language is English. Particular amount of time was spent in order to analyze their understanding of several speech acts such as jokes, sarcasm and speaking with hints. The results of the observations differed from the expectations that were made initially. At first, students were monitored in their natural environment, without them knowing that they were monitored, which illustrated that younger students such as grades from 2 to 3, understanding speech hints, sarcasm or jokes is partially limited. It was clearly mentioned in Hierarchy of pragmatic abilities which was created by Kimberly Peterson, Western Washington University as Recognizes riddles and jokes based on linguistic ambiguity. Comprehension of the jokes which require logical thinking, analyzing consequences and results is difficult for such age group. Direct speech uttered in clear language is mostly comprehensible. By clear and explicit language it is meant (Liashchova, 2018) that "precisely, in detail and clearly expressed, leaving no room for doubt or confusion" [6]. Older students as those who are between 12-14 years have deeper understanding of the riddles, jokes and sarcasm and as noted in Kimberly Peterson's work mentioned earlier, they understand jokes and riddles based on deep structure ambiguity and the majority of academic content is given in an expository fashion.

Materials focusing on development of pragmatic ability

In terms of choosing materials and resources for developing pragmatic competence, it is essential and even vital to pay utmost attention to the natural and authentic aspect of the language. It means that language that is provided in most of the textbooks for language learners lacks this crucial aspect called authenticity. Gilmore (2007) agrees that according to Morrow (1977: 13), an authentic text is a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some kind [3], [7]. This is how Gilmore described authenticity. That is the real reason why we need to base teaching materials to real life language examples. Mostly about 5 decades age, even nowadays many teachers and language researchers tend to pay attention and focus on linguistic aspect of the language rather than the its relativeness to the real life language usage such as in native speakers. However, at present we can clearly see the shift from linguistic aspect to pragmatic aspect as well that is taken into account. Moreover, that rising relativeness to real everyday usage of the language demands constant observation and such kind of a database that would fit actual written and spoken language in context instead of its usage in isolation. Information about the relative frequency of lexical items is provided by Holmes (1988) [4].

Let's take corpora of authentic language materials called COCA (The Corpus of Contemporary American English). That is an amazing and greatest corpora which was created with the aim of presenting the real language in context and using it for language teaching materials. Mark Davies compiled the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), the only large and "balanced" corpus of American English. COCA, arguably the most prominent English corpus, is linked to other English-Corpora.org corpora that offer unparalleled insight into English variation.

Teachers have long noticed that the authentic language and discourse models found in commercial English language teaching (ELT) textbooks are missing. Twenty-five years of reviews support these conclusions. These textbooks often lack real-world examples and fail to provide students with the necessary exposure to genuine language use. As a result, students may struggle to communicate effectively in real-life situations outside of the classroom.

Bardovi (2014) notes that English language learners gain from authentic language resources in a

number of ways, including improved reading comprehension, easier acquisition of other language skills like speaking and writing, support for academic performance, vocabulary development, and a reduction in social barriers [1]. In ESL classrooms, using authentic or real-life materials encourages students to read more in the target language and helps them make the connection to the real language. Since authentic materials help students become more proficient speakers of the language and are connected to real language, teachers are generally in favor of utilizing them to teach English. Realistic resources support more engaging and productive reading lessons, encouraging children to read more and improving their reading abilities. In order to give reading resources that inspire ELLs to read, authentic materials must be used in ESL lessons. Within one of the initial reviews of pragmatics, Williams (1988) recorded the inconsistency between business meeting jargon and the language of textbooks, coming to the conclusion that "writing dialogues and transactions requires working on educated guesswork or hunches." Regarding textbooks or when choosing which language to instruct, ambiguous (p. 53) [10]. Incorporating authentic materials such as newspapers, magazines, and novels can provide ELLs with real-world language experiences that can enhance their comprehension and vocabulary. By exposing students to a variety of texts, teachers can help them develop the skills needed to navigate different types of reading materials effectively.

Linking Age related abilities of pragmatics and authentic materials usage

Initially, it is significantly unresolved issue and highly doubted argument in what ways relationship between authentic materials should be used and what pragmatic abilities should be shown from the language learners.

Regarding the relationship between age-appropriate pragmatic abilities and authentic resources, the overwhelming body of research from language educators and scientists indicates that there is a complicated issue that has to be addressed right away. The article's primary conclusion is that, as language learners get older, authenticity should be used more frequently. This methodology not only enhances pupils' language proficiency but also cultivates a more profound comprehension of cultural subtleties and context. Through the integration of realistic resources into language learning, instructors can enhance their students' readiness for authentic communication situations.

Conclusion

English language teaching textbooks often lack authentic language and discourse models, causing students to struggle with communication in real-life situations. Authentic resources improve reading comprehension, acquisition of language skills, academic performance, vocabulary development, and reduce social barriers. In ESL classrooms, using authentic materials encourages students to read more in the target language and connects them to real language. Incorporating authentic materials like newspapers, magazines, and novels can enhance comprehension and vocabulary, helping students navigate different types of reading materials effectively. Research suggests that authenticity should be used more frequently as language learners get older, enhancing language proficiency and cultural understanding. Integrating realistic resources into language learning can enhance students' readiness for authentic communication situations.

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