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THE ROLE OF TEACHING SPEECH ACTS IN TEACHING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE

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ABSTRACT

Teachers play the role of organizers and facilitators in the whole process of teaching and learning. English classrooms are required to be set up as the teaching and learning aim is to develop students' communicative competence in using English. As a component of non-native English speakers' communicative competence, pragmatic competence is an important ingredient of language proficiency. Pragmatic knowledge allows people to be able to understand how utterances or sentences and texts are related to the communicative goals of the language user and to the features of the language use setting.

Keywords: ability, pragmatic competence, speech acts, communicative competence, pragmatic knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

Pragmatic competence is essential if users of a global language are to achieve successful communication in the foreign language. It is proposed in this work that the lack of pragmatic competence prevents academic lyceum students from developing communicative competence.

Many academic lyceum students do well in their written tests but fail to communicate effectively with others in spoken English; they have limited pragmatic knowledge. In particular, academic lyceum students need to develop pragmatic competence, which is the ability of a foreign language learner to use the target language appropriately in corresponding social contexts, in order to use the language effectively and correctly within various contexts. The development of the ability to use English appropriately in a given communicative situation is essential.

Pragmatic development is important to the field of foreign language teaching. Central to our work is the importance of the development of academic lyceum students' pragmatic competence. The teachers can develop students' pragmatic competence through teaching speech acts.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Before explaining the field of pragmatic competence, it is necessary to mention the notion "competence".

The concept of competence was presented by Chomsky. An American linguist suggested using this notion to characterize the ability of human beings to perform the actions, appended speech activity in native, and later, foreign language to it. He set out the competence as the tacit knowledge of language structure that separates competence, the description of language form, from sociocultural factors, scilicet this notion is the unconscious knowledge of the language structure that enables the speaker to produce and understand sentences that have never been produced or heard before. Competence, therefore, refers to one's underlying knowledge of a system, event or fact. It is the non-observable theoretical ability. Linguistic competence is a language user's underlying knowledge of the system of a language, such as its rules of grammar, its vocabulary and how these are acceptably combined. Chomsky highlighted the difference between competence, the knowledge of the language signs and their rules, and performance, the ability of using these signs in speech activity.

Hymes stressed that Chomsky's notion limits competence to the knowledge of the rules of grammar. A linguist added that Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance did not pay attention to aspects of language in use. Hymes's concept of competence refers not only to knowledge, but also the ability to communicate appropriately in different social contexts by using the rules of grammar.

Communication is a defining factor in our life, we request, exchange and keep information all the time, it plays an important role in personal and professional development, in that communicative competence is the most significant in our opinion.

Hymes was the first who proposed the concept of communicative competence that consists of grammatical competence and knowledge of the sociocultural rules of appropriate use. The North American linguist and anthropologist offered communicative competence as a widespread and superordinate term to comprise the language facilities of the individual that include both principal components knowledge of the language and knowledge of how to use the language.

Canale and Swain redefined communicative competence as the basal systems of knowledge and skills needed for communication. In their researches, the linguists put forward four-part theoretical model, which is made up of grammatical competence (the knowledge of linguistic code features such phonology, morphology, semantics, lexis, syntax), sociolinguistic competence (the knowing of situationally

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suitable use of the language), discourse competence (the knowledge of how to achieve coherence and unity in spoken or written communication) and strategic competence (the knowing of how to use communication strategies to handle breakdowns in communication and make communication effective). In this model, there is a distinction between communicative competence and actual communication, also called communicative performance, which not necessarily reflects communicative competence through factors such as fatigue and nervousness.

Bachman proposed a model of communicative language ability, namely the knowledge of the language structure and the capacity to use this knowledge in appropriate social contexts. This model is composed of language competence, strategic competence, and psychophysiological mechanisms. For the most part, language competence is subdivided into pragmatic competence and organizational competence. Organizational competence, in turn, involves knowing the rules of word formation and sentence formation, in other words, grammatical competence, and constructing texts cohesively and coherently, briefly textual competence.

METHODOLOGY

Communicative competence as a rule include a code constituent element, describing a language learner’s procedural and interpretive knowledge of phonology, syntax, semantics, morphology rules, and a use detail, describing a language learner's knowledge of the social criteria managing language use and the appropriation of linguistic options to speech goals for production and comprehension.

The term "communicative competence" refers to knowledge of the social and cultural rules of language in addition to the structural rules. Contemporary linguists pinpoint communicative competence as a person’s awareness of the rules controlling the appropriate use of the language in social situations. Furthermore, communicative competence is that which allow a person to act using concretely linguistic means.

In Common European Framework of Reference linguists define "competence" as the set of knowledge, skills and characteristics that allow a person to perform actions. "Communicative competence" is that which empower a person to act using specifically linguistic means. Moreover, linguists distinguish several elements of communicative competence: linguistic, which involves the language, speech units and rules how to use them, sociolinguistic, as the relation between linguistic signals and their situational meaning, and pragmatic, which is concerned with the functional use of linguistic resources.

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In the Republic of Uzbekistan the major aim of foreign language teaching is the formation of foreign language communicative competence in the educational process and its functioning in social, cultural, scientific and professional spheres. According to State Educational Standard of Foreign Language Teaching, foreign language communicative competence is the readiness to use foreign language speech activity. Communicative competence is the result of foreign language teaching.

The concept of pragmatic competence was originally developed in the realm of theoretical linguistics, and its application to foreign language learning is a recent phenomenon. However, the common meaning of pragmatic competence is nearly the same as communicative competence. Thomas referred to pragmatic competence as "the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context".

Pragmatic competence is one of the main components of communicative competence that is related to cognitive ability and social experience. Pragmatic competence contributes to learning the language function as an instrument of thinking.

Blum-Kulka, Kasper and House stressed that even sufficiently advanced language learners' communicative acts frequently are made up of pragmatic mistakes, in that way they fail to express or comprehend the intended politeness value. The pragmatic competence of a language takes into consideration the relations between what is learnt and what is to be learnt, and consequently pays much attention to the context of reference and the role of the user in the act of communication.

Kasper explained pragmatic competence as the knowledge of linguistic forms, the functions of these forms, and the social rules that allow speakers to paraphrase and perform a message in a specific language. On the whole, pragmatic competence is one of the leading units of communicative competence, particularly related to cognitive ability and social experience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pragmatic competence deals with two important aspects of language use: the binding between language signs and referents and the binding between users and the context in which communication takes place. On the basis of pragmatic competence we can advance in solution of communicative tasks: informing, motivation, expression of opinion, estimation, effectiveness of message's influence on the hearer's behaviour in solicitous direction for speaker.

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Pragmatic competence refers to knowledge of the linguistic elements available in a particular language and the ability to use this knowledge appropriately in a peculiar context. Foreign language learners must acquire an ability to understand and convey pragmatic meanings in order to interact successfully in foreign language.

Schukin stated pragmatic competence as an aspiration and skill to orientate in communicative situation and constitute the utterances in obedience to communicative intention of speaker and the abilities of listener, the capacity to choose more effective way of expressing the idea depending on the communication conditions and final goal.

Particularly pragmatic competence is dealt with the learner's knowledge of the principles in accordance with messages, which are structured and organised, sequenced, used to introduce communicative functions.

Pragmatic competence can be divided into pragmalinguistic competence, which deals with the relations between specific intentions and actual utterances, and sociopragmatic competence, which concerns the effects of general socio-cultural factors on language use. In contrast to the external orientation of sociopragmatic competence, pragmalinguistic competence concerns the internal relation between the speaker's intentions and specific utterances. For example, the effect of a hearer's status on the realization of an apology is a sociopragmatic issue. The effect of the severity of the imposition is a pragmalinguistic concern. Separating pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic effects is complicated by the fact that the same linguistic features may respond to either type or both types of effects.

Pragmalinguistics addresses the linguistic resources that speakers can make use of to convey a particular communicative act. In other words, depending on the meaning speakers want to express, they can choose a particular form from among the wide range of linguistic realizations they may have available. Sociopragmatics deals with speakers' appropriate use of those linguistic forms according to the context where the particular utterance is produced, "the specific roles the participants play within that contextual situation and the politeness variables of social distance, power and degree of imposition".

Acquiring pragmatic competence in a foreign language involves learning the "contextual (situational) and cotextual (linguistic) constraints governing speech act selection and modes of realization in the target language and culture". Put another way, it entails learning what is possible, feasible, appropriate and done in carrying out speech acts in foreign language. Pragmatic factors are by nature so embedded in

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the contexts of real communicative situations that they may be easiest to learn naturalistically.

Foreign language teaching must concentrate on the significance of pragmatic competence. As we note from State Educational Standard of Foreign Language Teaching, pragmatic competence provides communicative ability in foreign language in accordance with development of communicative situation and strategy, which assist communication efficiency, as for instance, strategy of elaboration, strategy of interruption, strategy of compensation in situations with difficult communication. In this document, pragmatic competence includes discourse competence, which develops the ability to connect the ideas successively, using relevant language means in spoken and written communication and the ability to understand and interpret linguistic signals in spoken and written forms.

The presence of pragmatic competence is one of the major factors, which determine a successful communicative interaction. In the process of teaching foreign language in the framework of teaching pragmatic competence we should provide the knowledge how use the language means to affect on the partner. For the most part, the knowledge is the essence of pragmatic competence.

Generally, pragmatic development is important to the field of foreign language acquisition. Foreign language learners must obtain an ability to understand and convey pragmatic meanings in order to interact successfully in their foreign language. The role of teaching pragmatic competence in the process of foreign language teaching focuses on the development of the acquisition of pragmatic ability by non-native speakers.

When speakers with high levels of semantic and syntactic proficiency commit pragmatic errors, their hearers may not detect the error at all but rather assume that the speaker understood the force of his utterance. Wolfson noted that "since linguistic competence is an aspect of communicative competence, people who have one are expected to have the other and are therefore held responsible for sociolinguistic violations in a way in which those with less ability to communicate would not be". For example, Russian speakers of English are prone to overuse the imperative mood in commands and requests, but their hearers may simply assume they are domineering by nature.

The significant role in pragmatic competence has been carried out on speech acts, which can be considered the most basic units of communication, minimal components of comparable discourse.

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John Austin in 1962 put forward the speech act theory in his study 'How to Do Things with Words'. In spite of the fact that Austin did not, as expected, use the term "speech act", he had been developing the speech act theory. Austin is a philosopher, who explained certain utterances, language functions, or speech acts. As such, the study of speech acts typically falls more within the realm of the philosophy of language than within linguistics proper. What Austin argued was that speech acts are utterances that, if pronounced in harmony with certain felicity conditions, have a definite force. It is having this force instead of having sense and reference that distinguishes speech acts from statements. For Austin, what the speaker is doing is creating social realities within certain social contexts.

In his seminal work on functions of language, Austin asserts that what he has to say about language is "neither difficult nor contentious. The phenomenon to be discussed is very widespread and obvious". Austin's fundamental insight is that an utterance can constitute an act. That is, in making an utterance one can "do" things, as well as "say" things. An act performed through speech is a "speech act".

Knowing the meanings of the words spoken is important to understanding any utterance; but to know if the speech act has gone through, it is also essential to know the sociopragmatic conventions that are agreed upon in the community where those utterances are used.

Austin emphasized that speech acts have to meet two important criteria regardless of their form: both speaker and hearer have to understand and accept that a speech act has been made. A speech act cannot be performed if it is recognized only by the speaker. This feature of speech acts Austin calls "audience uptake" and it illustrates the importance of context for the performance of speech acts.

Speech acts are ways of doing something as opposed to simply stating something. Austin stressed that the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action - it is not normally thought of as just saying something, we may apologize, complain, disagree, advise, request, and so forth.

The notion of speech act was originated in the philosophy of language as a functional unit of communication that is conditioned by rules of production and interpretation. Searle provided a description of a speech act as the fundamental unit of linguistic communication is conditioned by rules of production and interpretation [76:16]. Primarily, a speech act is communicative of sense and reference for the persons involved in the linguistic exchange. Precisely, speech acts are ways of doing something as opposed to simply stating something.

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A speaker performs a communicative action using an utterance, this utterance is a speech act. Cohen defines it as a functional unit of communication that is conditioned by rules of production and interpretation.

On the whole, speech acts are the acts we perform when we speak. As we can see, in order for speech acts to be performed successfully, the utterances must follow a basic structure as well as be conducted in a corresponding context. Considerable significance of a speech act as a public utterance in the pragmatic competence is the statement that a speech act cannot be a silent thought, and its impacts are acquired in virtue of its being a widespread and common thought, in other words public.

Analyzing the presented notions of speech act in linguists' works, we account for speech act as a statement, which is originated and pronounced with a definite aim; and the statement is motivated by language for creating practical action. Teaching speech acts in the framework of teaching pragmatic competence plays a major role in that the students should concentrate their attention on the utterances and their accordance of speech intentions and intentions of students' partners. Many methodologists put a lot of emphasis on training speech acts, which are close to environment and behaviour of students.

CONCLUSION

While using language the speaker usually takes some, at least, of these factors into consideration in his/her intention to make what is said suit the occasion (context) of the verbal interaction. The way a speaker chooses what to say suggests that some of the contextual elements are reflected in what is articulated in order to show that the speaker aims to stay within the conventionalized limits of politeness. On the other hand, the speaker may violate the code of politeness to express different meanings, such as to show contempt against the addressee. While speaking, people make choices from among different language elements; and so, how people say something is as important as what they say. This is so because the form of what is said and its significance are innately connected. One method, therefore, to look at this connection is to study some aspects of communication like, for instance, the choice between singular or plural second person pronouns in addressing a single person. Another way of showing politeness and solidarity in speech is the usage of terms of address like first or last name, nickname, titles, or a combination of these. In English, for instance, the asymmetric use of title, last name, and first name, indicates inequality in power and unfamiliarity, while the mutual use of first name, for instance, habitually indicates equality and familiarity.

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Speech acts mainly deal with the domain of language use in context. Successful performance of speech acts is achieved through an elaborate mapping of verbal interactions. Studies in speech act realization, therefore, should consider a constellation of speech acts within the context of discourse in order to provide a more complete picture of conventionalized patterns and interactive rules embedded in a whole conversation.

To summarize, in most cases, significance of pragmatic teaching in the EFL classroom includes its role in easing and facilitating the process of learners assimilation and integration in the foreign language speech community and attaining pragmatic proficiency that lead in the end to familiarize the learners with cultural diverse and further enhance their ability to habituate themselves to foreign language speech community.

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