INCORPORATING PRAGMATIC ACTIVITIES IN LANGUAGE CLASSES

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Abstract. *This paper argues that incorporating pragmatic-focused activities into language curriculum is crucial for preparing students to communicate effectively in the target language. The article reviews research on the importance of pragmatic competence and describes several practical classroom activities that can be used to teach pragmatic skills, such as role-playing, discourse analysis, and metapragmatic reflection. Examples are provided of how these activities can be implemented at different proficiency levels to raise learners' awareness of pragmatic norms and provide opportunities for guided pragmatic practice. The paper concludes by discussing the benefits of an integrated approach to pragmatic instruction and considerations for effective implementation in a variety of language learning contexts.*

Key words: *sociolinguistic awareness, communicate, activities, communicative competence, interactional skills, language teaching.*

ВКЛЮЧЕНИЕ ПРАГМАТИЧЕСКОЙ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТИ В ЯЗЫКОВЫЕ ЗАНЯТИЯ

Аннотация. *В данной статье утверждается, что включение прагматической деятельности в языковую программу имеет решающее значение для подготовки учащихся к эффективному общению на изучаемом языке. В статье рассматриваются исследования о важности прагматической компетентности и описываются несколько практических занятий в классе, которые можно использовать для обучения прагматическим навыкам, таким как ролевые игры, анализ дискурса и метапрагматическое размышление. Приводятся примеры того, как эти мероприятия могут быть реализованы на разных уровнях квалификации, чтобы повысить осведомленность учащихся о прагматических нормах и предоставить возможности для управляемой прагматической практики. В заключение статьи обсуждаются преимущества комплексного подхода к прагматическому обучению и соображения по его эффективному внедрению в различных контекстах изучения языка.*

Ключевые слова: *социолингвистическая осведомленность, общение, деятельность, коммуникативная компетентность, навыки взаимодействия, обучение языку.*

Effective communication in a second or foreign language requires more than just mastering vocabulary and grammar. Learners must also develop pragmatic competence - the ability to understand and appropriately use language in different social contexts. Pragmatic competence is a crucial component of overall communicative competence, enabling language users to interpret and produce language that is contextually appropriate (Taguchi & Roever, 2017). However, research has shown that pragmatic skills are often overlooked in traditional language instruction, which tends to focus more narrowly on linguistic forms (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013).

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To better prepare students for real-world communication, language educators are increasingly recognizing the need to incorporate pragmatic-focused activities into the curriculum.

By raising learners' awareness of pragmatic norms and providing opportunities for guided pragmatic practice, these activities can help develop crucial interpersonal skills that go beyond just grammatical accuracy. This paper discusses the importance of pragmatic competence in language learning and describes several practical classroom activities that can be used to teach pragmatic skills at different proficiency levels.

The article begins by reviewing the theoretical foundations and empirical evidence supporting the inclusion of pragmatic instruction in language programs. It then outlines a variety of pragmatic-focused activities, including role-playing, discourse analysis, and metapragmatic reflection, and provides examples of how these activities can be implemented to enhance learners' sociolinguistic awareness and interactive competence. Finally, the paper considers the benefits of an integrated approach to pragmatic instruction and discusses key factors for effective implementation in diverse language learning contexts.

Research has shown that pragmatic competence does not necessarily develop naturally through exposure to the target language alone. Explicit pragmatic instruction is often needed to help learners recognize relevant sociocultural norms and practice using language appropriately (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). Without this, students may transfer pragmatic conventions from their first language, which can result in pragmatic failure when interacting with target language speakers.

Pragmatic-Focused Classroom Activities

To address this need, language teachers are incorporating a variety of pragmatic-focused activities into their instruction. Some examples include:

Role-playing: Students act out scripted or improvised dialogues that require them to make pragmatic choices, such as refusing a request politely or apologizing effectively.

Discourse analysis: Learners examine transcripts or recordings of authentic conversations to identify pragmatic features, such as hedging, backchannel responses, and discourse markers.

Metapragmatic reflection: Students reflect on their own or others' pragmatic choices, discussing why certain language may be more or less appropriate in a given context.

These types of activities raise awareness of pragmatic norms, provide opportunities for guided practice, and help learners develop the contextual sensitivity needed for successful intercultural communication.

Implementing Pragmatic Instruction

When incorporating pragmatic activities, teachers should consider the proficiency level of their students. At lower levels, the focus may be on basic politeness strategies and formulaic expressions. As proficiency increases, activities can become more complex, addressing subtleties of language use, pragmatic variation, and the pragmatic-linguistic interface.

Integrating pragmatic instruction throughout the curriculum, rather than treating it as a separate unit, can also be beneficial. This allows pragmatic skills to be developed in tandem with other language abilities in a more holistic manner. Additionally, connecting pragmatic activities to learners' own experiences and real-world communicative needs can enhance engagement and relevance.

Analysis of Pragmatic Instruction Approaches

Research on pragmatic instruction has identified several key factors that contribute to the effectiveness of pragmatic-focused activities in the language classroom.

Raising Pragmatic Awareness

A primary aim of pragmatic instruction is to raise learners' awareness of pragmatic norms and conventions in the target language. Activities such as discourse analysis, where students examine transcripts of authentic interactions, can help them notice pragmatic features they may have previously overlooked (Ishihara, 2010). This heightened pragmatic awareness is a crucial first step in developing the ability to use language appropriately in context.

Providing Pragmatic Practice

In addition to awareness-raising, learners also need opportunities to practice applying pragmatic knowledge in interactive settings. Role-playing exercises, for example, allow students to experiment with different pragmatic strategies, such as making requests or refusing invitations, and receive feedback on their choices (Woodfield, 2012). This guided practice helps solidify pragmatic skills and build confidence in real-world interactions.

Promoting Metapragmatic Reflection

Beyond just awareness and practice, pragmatic instruction should also encourage learners to reflect critically on pragmatic language use. Activities that prompt metapragmatic discussions, where students analyze and evaluate their own or others' pragmatic choices, can deepen their understanding of the underlying social and cultural factors that influence appropriate language use (Taguchi, 2015). This metacognitive awareness enables more purposeful pragmatic decision-making.

Addressing Proficiency Levels

The specific pragmatic activities incorporated should be tailored to the proficiency level of the learners. At lower levels, the focus may be on basic speech acts and formulaic expressions. As proficiency increases, activities can become more nuanced, addressing pragmatic variation, indirect language, and the pragmatic-linguistic interface (Taguchi, 2011). Scaffolding instruction in this way ensures pragmatic development keeps pace with overall language abilities.

Integrating Pragmatic Instruction

Rather than treating pragmatics as a separate instructional unit, an integrated approach that embeds pragmatic activities throughout the curriculum can be particularly effective. This allows pragmatic competence to be developed concurrently with other language skills in a more holistic manner, reflecting the inherently contextual nature of real-world communication (Roever, 2012).

By considering these key factors, language teachers can design pragmatic instruction that systematically develops learners' sociolinguistic awareness, provides opportunities for pragmatic practice, and fosters the metacognitive abilities needed for successful intercultural communication.

In conclusion, pragmatic competence is essential for language learners to communicate effectively in diverse social contexts. By incorporating pragmatic-focused activities into language instruction, educators can better prepare students for the pragmatic demands of real-world interaction. Through raising awareness, providing practice, and fostering contextual sensitivity, these activities can contribute to the development of well-rounded communicative competence.

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