On the Cultivation of Pragmatic Competence for College Students in the Information Age

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Abstract: Nowadays, the need of college students' pragmatic competence has shown a diversified trend with the development of society. English Language Teaching is to develop students' capability in pragmatics. Teaching reform keeps deepening and the quality of teaching continuously get improved for meeting the enhancing the comprehensive demands of our nation and society for personnel training application ability of college students. Pragmatic competence belongs to the communicative ability. From this thesis, the significance of competence of pragmatics in ELT classroom will be in a consistent discussion. And, the necessity of cultivating students' pragmatic competence is summarized. In order to make successful communication, some feasible means of developing students' competence of English language are recommended in this thesis.

1. Introduction

Pragmatic competence is a vital portion of communicative competence. It not only includes the correct grammatical rules, but also needs to follow certain contexts and social codes. The study carries out the pragmatic competence investigation of non-English majors between high grade and low grade students on the basis of three dimensions of verbal behavior, decent and social culture through questionnaire. It finds that the students have the highest rate of errors in verbal behavior and the best in social and cultural knowledge. In the context of multimedia, students' pragmatic competence can be cultivated from the aspects of improving pragmatic awareness, multimedia classroom practice, developing the second classroom and creating authentic corpus.

How to use the teaching mode in which computer network is combined with multimedia teaching environment, classroom teaching, stimulation teaching and practical teaching for improving college students' pragmatic competence. Computer network and multimedia teaching environment provide college students will objective conditions for constructing pragmatic knowledge and competence and, in class, imparts pragmatic knowledge by explicit teaching. Tile simulation teaching links the teaching
content and practice in the classroom, and strengthens college students' pragmatic competence.

2. A Study on the Acquisition of Pragmatic Competence

Grammatical competence and pragmatic competence (as shown in fig. 1), the former refers to the knowledge in linguistic form and the latter involves the linguistic practical application ability. Pragmatic competence refer to the illocutionary competence that uses language to act appropriately in a certain context, instead of the ability of using language knowledge correctly. That is to say, the speaker should know how to, in a specific context, use appropriate language forms or strategies to implement a specific communicative purpose. In communication, the language expression error due to little understanding or the ignorance of social and cultural background differences from both sides is pragmatic failure. The correctness of language use is not as important as its appropriateness. Studies show that even high-level learners, when performing speech act, still have insufficient accuracy in language format or form. Take the problem of pragmatic transfer as example, learners cannot appropriately use some "pragmatic lubricant"--the significant symbol of pragmatic competence. The effective language teaching should not merely focus on the teaching of linguistic knowledge and language strategies, but focus on the enhancement of social pragmatic competence.

![Language Competence Expansion Map](image)

Computer network and multimedia teaching environment provides college students with objective conditions for constructing pragmatic knowledge and competence. Thus, education of the competence can absolutely be the basis of this scientific idea and system. Multimedia teaching emphasizes a full interaction between teachers and students, between students and students: it can assist teachers and students to establish and share network resources together; via information management platform, it can carry out on college students file-tracking management and feedback which reflects the personalized teaching idea; in teaching evaluation, it attaches importance to the formative evaluation in the learning process and can carry out systematic teacher evaluation, peer evaluation, self-evaluation, etc.

3. Recommended Tactics for the Pragmatic Competence Education

3.1 To foster students' contextual awareness

The essentiality of competence-based cultivation has been stressed in Chinese ELT Classroom.
Students’ competence attracts more concern. The paper aims to make English teachers realize the essentiality of pragmatic competence in daily intercourse, and appeal to focus on the promotion of students’ pragmatic competence in class. To start with English study, the teacher should focus on cultivating students’ capability to use appropriate expression under particular circumstances, and develop their pragmatic ability by degrees. These applied cases should accord with our surroundings. When it comes to school assignment, teachers could require students to "complete your assignments tomorrow," or leave the message to tell them "Will your homework be done tomorrow?" Given the relationship between teachers and students, utterance is clearer and more suitable.

3.2 To improve students' cultural awareness
Culture takes effects in language acquirement. The background knowledge of English culture must be emphasized by English teachers in order to produce some cultural environment. For instance, students are studying "Roll Over, Beethoven!" (Unit 2, Book II, New Horizon College English). When studying the contents of the text, teachers may offer students a lot of materials about the classical music, such as the music background, the music history and the theme of the piece and so on. In addition, teachers should broadcast several periods of classical piece, so that students will comprehend the context in an easy way.

3.3 To foster students' awareness of linguistic practice
Different kinds of language practices will be chosen in classroom, for instance performance, parties, group work, debates, retelling, as well as extracurricular activities. Teachers may devise various types of games according to the topic of each unit. The class language exchange activities could not only enhance students' capabilities of listening comprehension and speaking, but also enable them obtain diverse communicative skills.

4. Advices on the Development of Students' Pragmatic Capacity
At present, China’s English Language Teaching has acquired a completely new outlook. To some extent, language learning is a course of bringing up pragmatic capacity of the learning materials. Therefore, quantitative data was acquired from the responses obtained from the teachers Wuhan Polytechnic University. Qualitative data have been achieved from the public opinion poll of the background information section of the questionnaire as well as the interview.

| Item | Correct Answer | A | B | C | D |
|------|----------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1.   | B              | 16| 9 | 1 | 14|
| 2.   | A              | 3 | 0 | 3 | 34|
| 3.   | C              | 4 | 1 | 23| 12|
| 4.   | D              | 0 | 2 | 35| 0 |
| 5.   | D              | 3 | 2 | 28| 4 |
| 6.   | B              | 6 | 2 | 26| 10|
| 7.   | C              | 2 | 1 | 9 | 27|
| 8.   | C              | 2 | 33| 2 | 5 |
| 9.   | A              | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| 10.  | B              | 0 | 5 | 35| 2 |
The table shows the different responses that the teachers gave concerning the item. The number of teachers who selected similar response to a given item is indicated depending on their choice. The options available are shown as A, B, C and D. The correct answers to the questions are also indicated on the table. A few of ways of training pragmatic ability will be put forward according to the findings of the table.

4.1. Promote students’ intercultural consciousness

Now that language and culture are closely related, intercultural consciousness should be looked on as one of the aims in English Language Teaching. Since we are engaging in the job of English teaching under this circumstance, in which Chinese is our native language, imparting cultural knowledge should be combined into language classes, particularly into the mainly intensive courses, thanks to the practicability of individual culture teaching. We might as well pass on the knowledge points of culture background, which is of significance to our students. Distinct cultures have distinct definitions of social conditions. Teachers could present various cultural backgrounds before interpreting the text, which will trigger students' concern and help them easily comprehend the content as well. We might cultivate Chinese students' stylistic consciousness when they communicate with the native English speakers, they are inclined to apply the English expression that is suitable on different occasions. We realize this is not necessarily the case. We must also make efforts to develop their sense of non-linguistic communication. Non-linguistic language, like colloquial language, is also a section of culture. It is essential for English teachers to impart different parts of the culture about target language, for example, skinship, range, body languages and so on.

4.2. Introduction of pragmatics about target language

In the course of language learning, linguistics is important, but to know when, where, and how to apply this knowledge to different context is most important. That is, teaching pragmatic appropriateness is of utmost necessity. Firstly, we should teach pragmatic functions of different sentences. Second, we should introduce the techniques of avoiding the verbal taboo topics. There are verbal taboo topics, typically sexual or religious. There are still many other topics, such as age, income, marital status, weight etc., which should be avoided. Last we should alert students to the context because speaker's meaning can be comprehended fully in the context. Pragmatics is the study of the use of context to make inferences about meaning. So understanding context is of utmost importance to use language tactfully and appropriately. As a teacher, we should teach students how to use context to foster their pragmatic competence.

4.3. Make full use of various aids

All kinds of facilities for teaching should be provided with some opportunities to observe how native speakers use English. It is also necessary to invite some native speakers of English who are working in china to give lectures on communicative skills that can be acquired in class. English films and TV programs are materials, because they deeply impress those very natural and real pragmatic phenomena on the learners through the audio-visual channel, especially under the guidance of the teachers.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, a certain relationship between communication, context and pragmatics may exist, and it is imperative to improve learners' ability to apply their expression properly. Also, the development of pragmatic ability should focus on the complete understanding of the following elements: context
circumstances, societal and cultural elements. To improve college students' pragmatic competence, teachers can make efficient use of computer network and multimedia teaching in the information age, create and perfect the social knowledge resource library, input social pragmatic knowledge in English class, design the simulation teaching close to the reality and closely combine with practical links.

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