



PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN SPEAKING

¹Putri Lidiana Permata Sari, ²Zihan Mutia

^{1,2}Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Univeritas Asahan

¹putrilidiana88@gmail.com, ²zihanmutiasitorus@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The goal of the current study is to examine the pragmatic competence instruction in the speaking for general communication course, to evaluate the students' pragmatic competence growth, and to determine the students' degree of pragmatic competence following exposure to the teacher's teaching methods. A qualitative case study design was used for this investigation. Data were gathered using Discourse Completion Tasks in tests and classroom observation (DCT). The processes taken to evaluate the data gathered through observation include documenting the occurrences, transcribing them, and coding them. According to the results, the two teachers who are teaching pragmatic competence encourage students to communicate orally, introduce equivalent expressions, increase students' awareness of pragmatic competence, identify expressions in context, introduce the politeness continuum, assign students to work in pairs to practice dialogue dealing with speech acts, and facilitate students' search for appropriateness in English communication.

Keywords: Pragmatic, Competence, Speaking

INTRODUCTION

The accomplishment of communicative competence as the primary aim of learning English as a foreign language or as a second language is strongly tied to the current trend in teaching English to suit the demands of students in learning English. This means that the scope of learning the English language, especially oral English learning, which includes the English language instructional curriculum and syllabus, the preparation of English teachers, as well as approaches, methods, techniques, or models of English language instruction, exquisitely echoes communicative competence (Ahmed, S.T.H. & Pawar, S.V, 2018). Thus, when learning English, especially in oral communication

classes, communicative competence is changed into a competency that cannot be negated. The availability of high-quality resources is becoming more and more important in the realm of English teaching and learning in terms of the organization of English instruction as well as the supplies and tools used in its teaching and learning, so that students can communicate effectively in the language. In English teaching and learning, especially in oral communication classrooms, communicative competence in spoken language becomes the demand that must be present.

Thus, teaching a language is an attempt to help students become more proficient communicators. According to Celce-Murcia in Soler & Jorda (2008), in order for students to demonstrate adequate communicative



competence, they must be taught sociocultural competence, discourse competence, linguistic competence, formulaic competence, interactional competence, and strategic competence. In other words, they must be taught not only organizational competence but also pragmatic competence (Bachman, 1990).

High school graduates frequently struggle with their inability to communicate in English in a way that complies with the social standards of the native English-speaking population. Even though English has been taught and used as a foreign language for years, this still occurs, especially in Indonesia. In some other nations where English is taught in classrooms, graduates of high school or an equivalent level encounter the same situation (Lie, 2007). These students' inability to communicate in English requires more urgent intervention, especially from English professors. In a similar spirit, it is really alarming to see how unprepared English learners in Indonesia are to use the language for verbal engagement in their daily lives. When compared to the English language proficiency of students who are taking English classes in a number of adjacent nations, this is very different (Sulistiyo, 2016). All parts of our country must right away find a solution to this critical issue, especially those that have to deal with English instruction or training in Indonesian schools.

The primary focus of EFL study is typically the target language's grammar and vocabulary. In addition to instructing their EFL students to recall vocabulary in the target

language, EFL teachers also teach their students how language functions in various contexts. But just as important as understanding these linguistic elements are knowing how to utilize them correctly when learning a language. To be able to communicate effectively in the target language, it is required to possess pragmatic competence, the capacity to comprehend and apply foreign language conventions, in addition to, of course, being aware of the form and vocabulary of the target language (Viljamaa, 2012).

In actuality, pragmatic competence the ability to convey our intended message with all of its nuances in any socio-cultural setting and to interpret our interlocutor's intended message has grown to be more and more crucial in learning foreign languages (Fraser, 2010). For instance, the university's speaking syllabus for the general communication course stipulates that after completing the program, EFL students should be able to speak English fluently and as it should be. From a grammatical perspective, language mastery has changed to a communicative perspective that emphasizes the understanding and proper use of language in communicative circumstances (Liu, 2007). Since developing pragmatic competence is seen as an essential component of learning a foreign language, the pragmatic competence of EFL learners was evaluated in the current study.

The lack of pragmatic skills development by English teachers among their students leads to high school graduates who are unable to



communicate effectively in English. The ability to use language effectively is less stressed by EFL teachers than is grammatical proficiency, which is frequently viewed as a difficult component of language to teach. It takes a lot of effort for teachers to execute pragmatic instruction in the classroom, just as it does to develop students' pragmatic competence.

Failures in grammar could even make speakers appear unpleasant or disrespectful (Tavares, 2014). The difficulty with pragmatic failure is that it frequently results in miscommunication and even hostility between native speakers and foreign language learners (Ming & Yan, 2010). Because of their consequent lack of pragmatic proficiency, high school graduates rarely communicate English properly and effectively. The students' inability to communicate with native speakers suggests a lack of pragmatic competence. Because of this, there may be pragmatic failure and, more crucially, a total breakdown of the linguistic exchange. Thomas (1983) first described pragmatic failure as the inability to use an appropriate language form to express a specific meaning in a specific context and to understand the speaker's intention when that person makes an utterance. Pragmatic failure is primarily caused by a lack of or inadequate pragmatic competence. The two categories of this failure are socio-pragmatic failure and pragmatic-linguistic failure. The former primarily addresses the linguistic issue that arises when improper language forms are employed to carry out actions. Contrarily, the latter is brought on by misunderstandings that result from

disparate views that influence language decisions in cross-cultural interactions

REVIEW LITERATURE PRAGMATICS

One definition of pragmatics that is relevant to second language pedagogy is that it is "the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter when using language in social interaction, and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication," as proposed by Crystal (in Kasper, 2001, p. 2). In other words, the study of communicative action in its sociocultural setting is what pragmatics is. According to Kasper (2001, p. 2), communicative actions also involve participation in speech events of variable length and complexity as well as utilizing speech acts (such as asking, apologizing, complaining, complementing, and complaining).

Pragmatics was split into two parts by Leech and Thomas (in Kasper, 2001), pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. The term "pragmalinguistics" refers to the tools used to express interpersonal and relationship meanings through communication. These tools include routines, a variety of verbal forms, pragmatic tactics like directness and indirectness, and other tools that can soften or intensify communication. Kasper gives an illustration where two apology types are suggested, such as in Sorry and I'm completely devastated—could you possibly find it in your heart



to forgive me? Both statements indicate regret, although they are made under quite different situations. Here, the speaker who made the latter apology used a pragmalinguistic technique to express regret. According to Leech (1990, p. 10), sociopragmatics is the sociological interface of pragmatics, and it refers to the social perceptions that participants rely on to interpret and carry out communicative activity. Speech societies differ in how they see the social distance and social power between the speaker and the hearer, as well as those parties' rights and obligations and the level of encroachment involved in certain communication activities (Holmes, 2001). Sociopragmatics is the study of appropriate social conduct. It's important to make learners aware of the effects of their own decisions.

PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE

Three sub competencies are proposed by Canale and Swain in Rose and Kasper (2001, p. 64), and these are expanded by Canale into four sub competencies. Grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence are the sub competences.

1. Knowledge of language code elements like phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics is referred to as grammatical competence.
2. Sociolinguistic competence is the understanding of how to utilize language in context.

3. The ability to achieve coherence and cohesion in oral or written communication is known as discourse competency.
4. The ability to apply communication strategies to address communication breakdowns and improve communication is referred to as strategic competency.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study's research design was qualitative, which has a number of key characteristics, including the following: (1) importance of context (conducted in the phenomenon's actual setting), (2) emphasis on the process, (3) inductive approach (i.e., extracting its concepts from the mass of particular detail), and (4) focus on understanding and description (F.A Hamied, 2017).

To respond to the research questions, a study design with the aforementioned features is required. The first is the significance of context, which is why this study concentrated on the instructor and students' words and deeds in their actual environments, in this case, two teachers and 68 pupils. The emphasis on the process is the second trait. This indicates that "how" is more of a concern than the study's conclusions. In this study, the growth of the students' pragmatic ability and the teaching methods of the teachers were both observed. Third, the inductive methodology assumes that data are unstructured when they are first gathered. Data for this study were gathered through watching what the



teacher and students did in class. Finally, the study's emphasis on understanding and description shows that it made an effort to comprehend the significance of the teachers' instructional strategies, their interactions with the students, and the impact these interactions had on both the growth and level of the students' pragmatic competence.

In order to gather data for this study, two methods were used: classroom observation and tests with discourse completion tasks (DCT). The actions of the teacher and the pupils were watched during the classroom observation, and notes of the instructional strategies used by the teachers were made. The data gathered through observation was analyzed using the observation sheet adapted from Celce-in Murcia's Soler and Jorda's (2008) Communicative competence components and Bachman's (1990) pragmatic competence framework.

An observation sheet and a videotape were employed as the observational tools to record the EFL classroom activities. The majority of the observation sheets were handwritten notes on the field activities that followed the guidelines provided by Celce-Murcia in Soler and Jorda's (2008) discussion of the communicative competence components of sociocultural competence, discourse competence, linguistic competence, formulaic competence, interactional competence, and strategic competence, which Bachman (1990) divided into organizational competence and pragmatic competence. All participant actions in the classroom were also

videotaped to provide the most complete record of the procedure. The goal of this observation was to examine the manner in which speaking for a general communication course teaches pragmatic competence. Until the patterns of instructors' activities in the teaching of speaking could be recognized, the EFL classroom was successively watched. Additional information about the observation was captured on videotape. Any actions, especially those involved in teaching and learning, were captured on camera.

The steps taken to evaluate the data gathered through observation included documenting the occurrences, transcribing them, and afterwards coding the data to represent different activity types in the teaching-learning strategies created by the teachers. The framework of pragmatic competence derived from Bachman (1990) and the components of communicative competence described by Celce-Murcia in Soler and Jorda (2008) were utilized to analyze the data. The researcher carefully reviewed the observation sheet regarding the teaching process during this step, drawing and dropping the pertinent meaning units into the same coding group. When new meanings that did not fit into any of the preexisting coding groups were encountered, new codes were established. At the end of the analysis, the subject gradually emerged from the sets of data as all the detected codes connected to form links. In other words, to address the relevant study topic, the transcription of the observational data was followed by categorization and interpretation. To



ensure that the transcription of the data accurately reflects what the respondents say and mean, it was confirmed or given back to the participants (Kvale, 1996).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The use of actual language in meaningful circumstances is one of the fundamental components of speaking instruction that is worthwhile of being taught in the classroom. Teachers must therefore improve the materials they are using. It takes additional explanation to show that the speaker is absolutely certain, not merely confident, when they say, "I'm absolutely convinced that he stated the truth." It should be noted that the degree of certainty is stressed in this sentence.

The emphasis on language use is highly expected in a spoken English lesson for higher degrees (perhaps for tertiary levels or adults). The example that follows, which is drawn from New English Course Book 3B, shows how different requests are handled for various situational settings between the same interlocutors.

[*At the Quinn's house...*]

Mr. Quinn: Tell the children to be quiet, will you? Mrs. Quinn: Timmy! Johnny! Would you lower your voices a little, please? You're making too much noise.

Your father's making a phone call.

[*But the noise continues...*]

Mr. Quinn: Tell those kids to quiet down!

Mrs. Quinn: I'll tell them, dear. Children! Children! Stop that

yelling! Your father's on the telephone.

From the dialog above, we can notice the different requests performed by a husband to his wife. Different forms are used, and the aspects of situation are clearly illustrated so readers will notice this difference and find out by themselves how requests are performed, particularly between participants with close relationship.

CONCLUSION

English language learners must acquire pragmatic competence in order to communicate effectively in the target language. This can be done in the classroom by providing pragmatic education, especially in spoken English classes. It is anticipated that learners would gain competence and that their performance in the target language will improve as pragmatic awareness increases. Pragmatic competence should be added to the teachers who are exploring and enhancing the speaking test.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed S.TS. & Pauer, S. V. (2018). Communicative Competence in English as Foreign Language: Its meaning and the Pedagogical Consideration for its Development. *The Creative Launcher*.
- Bachman, L. (1990). *Fundamental considerations in language testing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Canale, M. (1983). From Communicative Competence to



Prosiding Seminar Nasional Multidisiplin Ilmu Universitas Asahan ke-5 Tahun 2022
Tema : "Implementasi Hasil Penelitian dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat Dalam
Proses Pembelajaran MBKM Di Era 5.0". Kisaran, 19 Oktober 2022

Communicative Language
Pedagogy. In J. C. Richard, & R.
W. Schmidt (Eds.), *Language and
Communication* (pp. 2-14).
London: Longman.

Celce-Murcia, M. (2014). An
overview of language teaching
methods and approaches. In M. Celce-
Murcia, D. M. Brinton, & M. A. Snow
(Eds.), *Teaching English as a second*

or foreign language (4th ed., pp. 2-
13). Boston, USA: Sherrise Roehr.

Kasper, G., & Rose, K. (1999).
Pragmatics and SLA. *Annual Review
of Applied Linguistics*, 19, 81-104.

Rose, K. R., & Kasper, G. (Eds).
(2001). *Pragmatics in language
teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press.