



The Capacity of Pragmatics in ESL Teaching of English Students in Buleleng Regency, Bali

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Abstract

This study is focused on the capacities of pragmatics in ESL teaching and limited to three essential discussions; first, the investigation of teaching pragmatics relevancy stated on pragmatics elements, second, the presentation of the effective ways in teaching pragmatics by applying SURE steps (Brock and Nagaska, 2005), and the elaboration of pragmatics effects towards ESL learners. It is necessary to conduct a research of pragmatics capacities in ESL teaching. Due to the problems discussed, the theories suggested in this research include pragmatics definition, pragmatic competence, pragmatic elements and SURE method. Then, the method applied in this research is descriptive qualitative in nature and the data are from the 3rd semester of STKIP Agama Hindu Singaraja students. The data analysis is performed to investigate the relevancy of pragmatics in ESL teaching, the pragmatics teaching methods, and the effect of pragmatics towards ESL learners. This study finds pragmatics is a relevant point to be taught in the language classroom due to language is an arbitrary. Through SURE methods, students are expected to comprehend the language used in contexts. Pragmatics affects the ESL learners to be sensitive about the surroundings, other cultural interactions, also how they must behave towards circumstances as ESL learners.

Keywords: *pragmatics, pragmatics relevancy, ESL, pragmatics teaching methods*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini difokuskan pada kapasitas pragmatik dalam pengajaran ESL dan dibatasi pada tiga diskusi esensial; pertama, investigasi relevansi pengajaran pragmatik yang tertuang pada unsur-unsur pragmatik, kedua, penyajian cara efektif dalam pembelajaran pragmatik dengan menerapkan metode SURE (Brock dan Nagaska, 2005), dan penjabaran efek pragmatik terhadap peserta didik ESL. Untuk itu perlu dilakukan penelitian tentang kapasitas pragmatik dalam pengajaran ESL. Berdasarkan permasalahan yang dibahas, maka teori yang disarankan dalam penelitian ini meliputi pengertian pragmatik, kompetensi pragmatik, unsur pragmatik dan metode SURE. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan data dari mahasiswa-mahasiswa STKIP Agama Hindu Singaraja semester 3. Analisis data dilakukan untuk mengetahui relevansi pragmatik dalam pembelajaran ESL, metode pembelajaran pragmatik, dan pengaruh pragmatik terhadap peserta didik ESL. Studi ini menemukan bahwa pragmatik adalah poin yang relevan untuk diajarkan di kelas bahasa karena bahasa bersifat sewenang-wenang. Melalui metode SURE, mahasiswa diharapkan memahami bahasa yang digunakan dalam konteks. Pragmatik mempengaruhi mahasiswa ESL untuk peka terhadap lingkungan sekitar, interaksi budaya lainnya, juga bagaimana mereka harus berperilaku terhadap keadaan sebagai peserta didik ESL.

Kata kunci: *pragmatik, relevansi pragmatik, ESL, metode pembelajaran pragmatik*

Introduction

As the implementation of English spreads and expands in number of speakers, it becomes a common connection of second language learners who do not share a language or a culture. This makes English a language that will also be used in a variety of settings where learners will be required to have interaction not only for basic interpersonal communication, but also in academic and business settings. Consequently, many pragmatics elements need to be known by the speakers in order to avoid inaccuracies or misunderstandings. Recently, some learners of English learn language in foreign environments, where English is not the language of the surrounding setting. For example, a person may learn English as a foreign language in Indonesia, Spain, or other non-English speaking countries challenged by lack of comprehensible input that needs to be provided unnaturally by the teacher. This condition may lead to a pragmatic competence that it is limited to what can be taught in the classroom.

On the other hand, some learners can study English as a second language in countries where English is the most widely spoken, such as Britain, USA, New Zealand, and Australia. These learners not only study from textbooks, but also receive instructions from native or non-native speakers' teachers of English who have different backgrounds and experiences, and have a more interactive contact with the culture. These learners may pay attention to the use of correct pragmatics elements in speech acts such as greetings, apologies, acceptances, and refusals, because they have had more exposure to the language in a native speaker setting.

Pragmatics includes in Micro-Linguistics which studies the ways in which context contributes to meaning. Kasper defined the term as the study of people's comprehension and production of linguistic action in context (1993:3). This brief definition describes the understanding of people about context and situation linguistically. Context consists of social and cultural circumstances in which communication occurs. These circumstances play a critical role in how messages are constructed, conveyed, and how they are received.

Moreover, Crystal (2008) stated pragmatics as:

“...the study of language from the point of view of the users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction, and the effects their use of language has on the other participants in an act of communication.”

The explanation above analyzes pragmatics from the perspective of the users. It figures out the different choices that speakers are able to make when using the Target Language, depending on the social interaction and their communication. The choices bring another aspect into consideration useful to language learners, namely, developing the ability to make the right choices among a variety of pragmatics

elements. Another definition is proposed by Sharples, Hogg, Hutchinson, Torrance, and Young. They defined pragmatics as those aspects of the study of language that pertain to identity and intention of the speaker and hearer, and the context in which speech takes place (Sharples et al., 1996). Here, they also consider context and identity as factors that may influence pragmatics competence, which means that the style or manners of the speakers change according to these factors. In conclusion, pragmatics tends to be a situational learning. Context is the main reason why pragmatics exists in the conversation. The speakers' manners and identities also play important role in building a context itself. Context has a deep relation with cultures and circumstances.

In internal social group, people easily use appropriate language to a variety of communication setting. It is because language is used in fairly regular ways. One source of this regularity is that members of social groups follow general patterns of behavior expected by the group. Related to the statements above, Bialystok (2016) stated that pragmatic competence encompasses a variety of abilities in the use and interpretation of language in context. Here, Bialystok inserted a speaker's ability to use language for different purposes such as greeting, requesting, informing, demanding, apologizing, and etc, also the speaker's ability to adapt or change language according to the needs or expectations of the listener or situation, moreover the speaker's ability to follow accepted rules.

On the other hand, in social setting outside of social group, sometimes people unsure whether the language they use is appropriate and whether the interpretations of conversational events are accurate, even people share the same first language with the outside group. It is a factor contributing to the regularity of language use derives from the fact that people living in communities share certain non-linguistic knowledge and experiences which often allow interlocutors within these communities to interpret each other's utterances without the need for detailed explanation. A famous and familiar example from textual discourse is that of the children's clothing shop with the sign in the window stating "*Baby Sale-This Week Only!*" Because of pragmatic competence, people know without asking that it is not babies which are on sale but rather items from babies are on sale. In addition, pragmatic competence rises because of a speaker's ability to use language for different occasions and interpret each other's utterances without explaining detail about the implicit topics based on the context.

Pragmatics, as the above discussion shows, is all about communicating appropriately in context. Communication involves language, verbal or written, but it involves many other aspects that go beyond the words in specific speech acts. Many sociolinguists have addressed the elements of pragmatics. Hymes (1974) proposed the model using the mnemonic devise S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G to illustrate the key elements. S represents "setting" and "scene", the social and physical situation where the communication occurs. P stands for "participants", the people involved in the communication and their roles and relationships. E describes "ends", the purpose or

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intended outcome of the communication. A represents “act sequence”, the order of exchanges or pieces of the overall communication. L stands for “key”, the tone or manner of the exchange. It describes “instrumentalities”, forms, and styles of speech, including register. N represents “norms”, the social expectations or rules that underlie or inform the communication, namely, what is acceptable. G stands for “genre”, the kind of speech act or communication involved. This model provides a broad picture of relevant aspects in analyzing and understanding how they are part of appropriate communication.

Due to the above situations, it is necessary to conduct a research of pragmatics capacities in ESL teaching. It is such a challenging topic that pragmatics involves in one of Micro-Linguistics studies. Thus, this research is concerned to investigate whether pragmatics is a relevant element to be taught in language class completed by some theories from the experts. Besides, the effective ways of pragmatics teaching methods also play important role in this study. Moreover, the effects rising after learning pragmatics becomes the final result of this study analysis. This study is focused on the capacities of pragmatics in ESL teaching and limited to three essential discussions; first, the investigation of teaching pragmatics relevancy stated on pragmatics elements, second, the presentation of the effective ways in teaching pragmatics by applying SURE steps (Brock, 2005), and finally the elaboration of pragmatics effects towards ESL learners.

Method

The method applied in this research is descriptive qualitative in nature and the data are from the 3rd semester of STKIP Agama Hindu Singaraja students in the academic year 2020/2021. The subjects in this research are 23 students. The analysis which was based on the specified problems and the theoretical framework were presented descriptively. In this phase, the data were interpreted in order to investigate teaching pragmatics relevancy stated on pragmatics elements, second, the presentation of the effective ways in teaching pragmatics by applying SURE steps (Brock, 2005), and finally the elaboration of pragmatics effects towards ESL learners. In presenting the data analysis, the formal method was applied in this study because it used the random sampling and the analysis was in the form of wording and describing the data analysis. In this case, the presenting data analysis was divided into three analyses: Analysis of teaching pragmatics relevancy investigation stated on pragmatics elements, Analysis of the effective ways in teaching pragmatics by applying SURE steps (Brock, 2005); analysis of pragmatics effects towards ESL learners.

Result and Discussion

Traditionally, ESL instruction has focused on teaching the grammar or the language, with a plenty of concentration on the verb tense system. Recently, more

attention has been given to vocabulary, often divided into categories like “colour” or “animals”. Less attention has been given to pragmatics, or the social use of language, using language in a way appropriate to the context and to get things done. For example, *Excuse me* in contemporary American English has taken on a function of getting *someone who is blocking the way to move*. More obscure but still necessary to know are familiar phrases and their contemporary usages, such as *May I help you?* which sometimes is not an offer of help at all but rather request to be left alone (when said in a flat tone, while the speaker is obviously busy and is not a service person whose job is in fact to help the addressee). In order to comprehend about the different contexts as the above example, pragmatics is a relevant point to be taught in the language classroom due to language is an arbitrary, people communicate based on their contexts implied. People understand each other based on the sense of language which is reached by understanding the context. A strong and important case can be made that pragmatic competence needs to be a focus of classroom instruction, even in contexts where English is studied primarily as a foreign language. Teachers should not view pragmatics as simply a bonus that can be added on if time and student interest allow. Indeed, in order to communicate successfully in target language, some measure of pragmatic competence in the second language is a necessity. But how do teachers in ESL settings, where there are relatively few opportunities for students to use the language in communicative contexts, begin to introduce students to pragmatics in English? Answering the question, some strategies are suggested to teachers consider adopting the simple acronym S.U.R.E to guide them as they help their students **See, Use, Review, and Experience** pragmatics in ESL classroom.

By seeing, teachers can help their students see the language in context, raise consciousness of the role of pragmatics and explain the pragmatics function plays in the specific communicative events. Many students do not know how to make polite request in English in the classroom. In this activity, teachers first ask students what common requests they make in the classroom (of classmates and of their teacher). Eliciting the language of requests from students, the teacher then introduces the politeness below:

Indirect	:	I forgot my book/ My book is lost
Direct	:	Lend me a book
Polite	:	Could I borrow a book, please? /Would you mind lending me a book?
Familiar	:	It'd be terrific if I could borrow your book.

After the teacher has explained and illustrated the politeness continuum, students make requests of each other using an activity sheet similar to this:

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- Polite : Ask a classmate to lend you his/her ruler.
Familiar : Ask a classmate to lend you Rp 50. 000.
Indirect : Ask a classmate to lend you his or her pencil.
Polite : Ask a classmate to sign his/her name

(Situation 1)

Mirna as the 3rd semester of STKIP Agama Hindu Singaraja students in the academic year 2020/2021 asked her friend, namely Dewa Ayu:

- Mirna (indirect) : I forgot my ruler. My ruler is broken
Direct : "Lend me a ruler"
Polite : "Could I borrow a ruler, please?" / "Would you mind lending me a ruler?"
Familiar : "It'd be terrific if I could borrow your ruler".

Here, teachers play important role to be a wise corrector in order to have a nice polite request by seeing the condition and applying the correct expression. After that, students need practicing with their friends and it could be with the teachers. By using, teachers can develop activities through which students use English in contexts (simulated and real) where they close how they interact based on their understanding of the situation suggested by the activity. For example, in certain contexts in the United States some compliments will be met with a devaluating of the item complimented. If someone commented to her friend that she liked her handbag, it would not be unusual for the friend to reply that the handbag was old or that she purchased it on sale or that it was indeed nice but a bit too small. To prepare students for the activity, brief dialogs such as the following could be introduced,

- A : I really like your bag.
B : This old thing. It's about to fall apart
A : Wow! What a great car!
B : Yeah, I love it even if I paid too much for it.

On the other hand, Indonesian has different situation in answering such a nice compliment. Indonesian will feel shy if someone gives compliment about a new thing. For example:

(Situation 2)

Wijaya as the 3rd semester of STKIP Agama Hindu Singaraja students in the academic year 2020/2021 gave the compliment about a new bag of his friend, namely Adi.

Wijaya : Wow! Your new bag is gorgeous!
Adi : Not really, you want it?

(Situation 3)

Yuni as the 3rd semester of STKIP Agama Hindu Singaraja students in the academic year 2020/2021 gave the compliment about a new dress of her friend, namely Risma

Yuni : I think you are wearing a new dress.
Risma : No, I'm not. I have worn it before

The context shows different response of answering the compliment. It happens in accordance with cultural boundary. American seems to be happy if they have compliment and be proud in wearing a new thing, however, Indonesian seems to cover the new things by saying that the thing is not new. That is a different context that students must be aware in applying the expressions.

By reviewing, teachers should reinforce and recycle the areas of pragmatic competence previously taught. Using English for classroom management takes the language out of its all-too-common role as an abstract, lifeless linguistic system to study, and places it in the role of a real-life, breathing communication system. When teachers and students use English to complete common communicative functions in the classroom, such as requests, commands, openings, closings, refusals, apologies, and explanations, students' developing pragmatic knowledge can be reinforced through the common communicative events that take place daily in every ESL classroom. For example, in opening lessons and transitioning to new activities, teachers can choose from a variety of language choices, depending on the immediate context and need as follows:

(Situation 4)

Mr. Gorby as the lecturer of Pragmatics lesson in STKIP Agama Hindu Singaraja started the lesson.

Openings:

Indirect : It's time to get started.
Direct : Sit down now.
Polite : Would you sit down, please?
Familiar : Boys and girls, it would be helpful if you could take a seat.

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Requests:

Indirect	:	It's hot here/I'm sizzling
Direct	:	Open the window!
Polite	:	Could you open the window, please/Would you mind opening the window?
Familiar	:	Be a dear and open the window/Would you close the window for us?

The example above shows that reviewing is important to be drilled because it can avoid something missing in delivering the expressions. Review can help student to repeat the correct pragmatics expression depending on the situation.

Experiencing can support teachers in arranging for their students to observe the role of pragmatics in communication. Some medias can be used to succeed this method such as films, televisions shows, and other video programs to provide excellent resources for experiencing and analyzing language use in specific contexts. Situation comedies also can enrich students' understanding because there are many implicit situations where students can observe and learn about the use of the utterances. Other ways, teachers can help students experience and observe pragmatics at work to invite native-speaking guests to class to interact with students. After this experience, students can reflect on the language and manner about what they have already observed. Arranging for students to interact with native speakers outside class and report on what they observed is another activity that can help students experience, observe, and reflect on the role of pragmatics when communicating in English. In addition, through the SURE methods of teaching pragmatics, students are expected to comprehend the language used in contexts because the utterances will feel different in they come into contexts, moreover, understanding contexts is not enough by seeing, but it needs using, reviewing, and experiencing.

Pragmatics, in simple terms, is about culture, communication, and in the case of second languages, about intercultural communication. In order for second language learners to acquire pragmatic competence, they need to acquire cultural understanding and communication skills. Every behaviour or action can be considered communication and each of our actions reflect our cultural background including our opinions towards gender, religion, sexual orientation, lifestyle, politics, and even personal space.

Here is the situation which can represent the effect of pragmatics towards ESL learners:

(Situation 5)

Romzi is as the 3rd semester of STKIP Agama Hindu Singaraja students in the academic year 2020/2021. He and his American friend Albert went to grocery shopping at a local grocery store in the Singaraja. Initially, he found the place remarkably similar to the ones on his hometown, so he felt confident in his language performance there. He and his friend were walking in one of the aisles and there were two people ahead who suddenly stopped and started reading the very complete labels in the bread section. Albert also stopped and made signs asking Romzi to do the same. Albert stared at the bread readers and silently they moved one step back so Albert and Romzi could move. They moved ahead while Albert apologized for the inconvenience. What happened there? Why was Romzi surprised? Why did they need to apologize? And how did the bread label readers understand the message without any words?

In this example, it is clear that the concept of personal space of Romzi and Albert are totally different. Romzi's first reaction included a request for permission accompanied by a fast-paced walk between the couple and the bread shelves. In contrast, Albert reacted by body language items, he first stopped, stared at the couple, waited for a few seconds, then he walked past, and at the end he offered an apology. It is the example of the use of pragmatics and intercultural communication.

Through considering the example above, definitely pragmatics brings a lot of benefit in communicating due to pragmatics is about situational learning. Context is the main point in understanding the words used. Pragmatics affects the ESL learners to be sensitive about the surroundings, other cultural interactions, moreover about how they must behave towards circumstances as English Second Language Learners.

Conclusion

As pragmatics is intended to be a situational learning, context is the main subject why pragmatics exists in the conversation. The speakers' manners and identities also play important role in building a context itself. It makes pragmatics is relevant in teaching a language class, because not all words or grammars have the real intention when they come to a situation. Social life and cultural boundaries are the factors of making them naturally used in conversation based on the context intended. In accordance with the relevancy, this study offers pragmatics teaching method by using the concept namely SURE steps, which stands for *See, Use, Review, and Experience*. *See* means students are able to understand about pragmatics, and then they can *use* it in their conversation. To succeed the goals of teaching, students need *reviewing* to have a deep understanding, finally, they must experience by themselves to face the real situation by using media, such an interesting video. Those steps definitely help teacher in delivering the concept of pragmatics. Further, pragmatics brings more advantages to the ESL learners. One day, if they go to English speaking countries, they can easily adapt the new circumstances because they have a pragmatics

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concept within. In conclusion, pragmatics affects the ESL learners to be sensitive about the environments, other cultural communications, moreover about how they have to aware about do or don't towards circumstances as English Second Language Learners.

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