

DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES AT A NON-LINGUISTIC UNIVERSITY IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

The increasing use of English as a language of communication raises additional questions in the course of its teaching. This article explores the need to make changes in the process of learning English, which should be reflected from the point of view of intercultural pragmatics. In the article attention is drawn to some misconceptions that may arise from an inadequate interpretation of the results of intercultural research, and it is argued that in order to establish which politeness strategies should be used in the context of global communication, the focus of intercultural research should be shifted from the study of linguistic and cultural differences to the study of linguistic and cultural similarities.

Keywords: Intercultural pragmatics, global English, intercultural communicative competence, English as a lingua franca, teaching English.

INTRODUCTION

Today, English is most often used as the lingua franca. This use involves communication between representatives of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in various contexts, ranging from personal to educational, business and political. The widespread use of the English language in global contexts raises new questions for teachers of the English language, which determines their relevance and the need for urgent solutions.

The purpose of the article is to explore some of the consequences that today's the widespread use of English as a language of communication has an impact on pedagogical practice. The perspective of intercultural pragmatics is considered with an emphasis on such speech acts as a request, a conditional/hypothetical threat and a conditional/hypothetical promise.

Objectives:

- to provide a brief overview of the English language system as a global one;
- to introduce the concept of intercultural communicative competence, which it is extremely important when preparing students for global communication;
- to consider different approaches to the study of intercultural pragmatics

using the example of studying speech acts in English classes. Novelty of the research: the author argues that in order to solve the pedagogical problem of which politeness strategies to use in the context of global communication, the focus of intercultural research should be shifted from the study of linguistic and cultural differences to the study of linguistic and cultural similarities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

English as a lingua franca (ELF) involves communication not only between native speakers of different first languages, but also representatives of different linguistic and cultural strata, which must be understood as a number of linguistic and cultural norms and codes to achieve

communicative success. Communication in the language *Lingua franca* goes beyond the standardized English language codes that are introduced in traditional English as a Foreign Language (TESOL) classes and evaluated using standardized language testing. Indeed, the multifaceted nature of the contexts and functions of the English language in a globalized world has led to the development of a global English language framework that includes research on the English language in the world (with an emphasis on national varieties of English, for example, such as British English or Sri Lankan English);

English as a *lingua franca* (learning to use English as a *lingua franca* the language of communication within and outside national varieties) and hybrid language practices such as translation and plurilingualism. One of the consequences of rethinking the English language in terms of its global character is the growing interest in the practice of its teaching. In particular, six areas of change have been identified that are indispensable in order to make English language teaching (ELT) more relevant and more accurately reflect how English is used today. We agree with N. Galloway and T. Numajiri, who argue that the proposals Global English Language Training (GELT) programs include:

- Emphasizing respect for multilingualism in ELT;
- Raising awareness of English language options in the world;
- Raising awareness of learning strategies (ELT) in language training programs;
- Emphasizing respect for diverse culture and identity in ELT [1, c. 7].

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Teaching English as a foreign language (ELF) currently relies on the teaching of standardized varieties and forms of the English language, but it must also be functional the continuation of such teaching, an extension that allows students to apply the English language as it is now used in real life.

In accordance with this argument, it seems necessary to introduce students to what are called "non-standard" varieties of the English language, including the use of English by both native and non-native speakers, which can be achieved by:

- identification of differences in spelling, pronunciation, use and grammatical and lexical (denotative and connotative) meanings of words in the UK, USA, Australia and India;
- raising students' awareness of accent variability;
- to raise students' awareness of grammatical variations;
- creating research assignments for the study of World Englishes so that they can independently find information about differences in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, idioms and communication styles related to various varieties of the English language;
- carrying out activities aimed at raising awareness of how different social and cultural contexts affect nature language and meaning;
- to increase intercultural awareness in order to develop students' confidence in using their own version of English language;
- the use of international media to illustrate the diversity of cultural values and attitudes faced by users of English as a foreign language (ELF).

It is noteworthy that the above examples illustrate a wide range of linguistic and cultural phenomena that ELF students face and that need to be studied in order to achieve communicative success in real-life situations.

R. Skollon and S.V. Skollon identify three types of approaches to intercultural communication:

- cross-cultural communication,
- intercultural communication and inter-course communication [3, p. 284].

The cross-cultural approach assumes the existence of various national, cultural groups (British, American) and includes comparative studies of models in the communicative practices of such groups. The intercultural approach is similar in the sense that it usually starts with the assumption of cultural differences between different cultural or other (for example, ethnic) groups, but focuses on, how do the members of such groups reconcile their differences in interaction. For the purpose of this article, we will use the term "intercultural communication in interaction."

According to R. Scollon and S.V. Scollon, the purpose of the inter-course approach is to, to ask "how and under what circumstances concepts such as culture are developed by participants as relevant categories for interpersonal communication" [3, p. 244].

Similarly, the reproduction of cross-cultural stereotypes can put people working in international companies at a disadvantage. In this context, a study of Finnish-Swedish companies conducted after the merger showed that "... some entities often find cultural differences convenient objects for attribution. Consequently, bad luck or bad experiences are often purposefully attributed to cultural differences, while successes are explained by other factors, such as leadership actions" [4, p. 92].

These two cases illustrate that there is a connection between cultural stereotypes and explanations of failures. The integration of language and culture is considered pedagogically important. However, the problem is that ELT materials tend to represent an idealized image of English-speaking culture. As a result, students receive instructions on the use and interpretation of language in accordance with monolithic, often unshakable assumptions about cultural norms, and not according to specific communication situations. In order to reflect the reality of ELF communication, ELT materials must emphasize both cross-cultural and intra-cultural diversity.

Analysis and Results

A number of studies suggest that sociopragmatics, for example, Spanish, Greek, Polish, Russian and Hebrew, is characterized by a greater use of direct strategies for the formation of speech acts compared to in English. Indeed, a study of query strategies conducted by M. Chalupnik [5] showed that Polish respondents chose a direct query strategy in 34% of cases, compared with 22% in the case of native English speakers. Direct criticism was chosen by Poles in 48% of cases, compared with 32% in the case of English speakers. "The success and effectiveness of interaction is predetermined not only by language proficiency, but also by knowledge of the national and cultural specifics of speech and non-speech behavior, knowledge of socio-cultural norms, the dominant features of communication, and national politeness systems" [6, p. 2].

Often, intercultural approaches to linguistic and cultural politeness inevitably lead to overly generalized results, which, therefore, cannot accurately explain the causes of communicative failures. They show that there may be some national trends, but they are too general to focus on individual variations. In other words, they are not detailed enough to be used as a basis for making recommendations on how to interact when speaking with the British, Poles, Germans, etc.

Conditional/hypothetical motivations are statements made in order to influence the behavior of listeners by telling them about the consequences of their behavior. They can take the form of a

conditional/hypothetical promise, as in paragraph 1) below, or a conditional/hypothetical threat, as in paragraph 2).

1. If you work hard, I'll take you to the Zoo.

2. If you don't eat your dinner, I won't give you an ice-cream.

Conditional/hypothetical promise (1) is used to influence the listener's behavior by promising that the speaker will receive a reward (the listener will be taken to the zoo) if the listener performs the action desired by the speaker (the listener works hard). Conditional/hypothetical threat (2) it is used to influence the listener's behavior by threatening that punishment will follow (the listener will not receive ice cream) if the listener behaves in an undesirable way for the speaker (the listener will not eat dinner).

Speakers have the choice to formulate the urge in (1) as a threat (If you don't work hard, I won't take you to the Zoo / If you don't study hard, I won't take you to the zoo) and the urge in (2) as a promise (If you eat your dinner, I will give you an ice cream/ If you eat your dinner, I will give you ice cream). The difference in the formulation of a conditional motivation lies in the motivational type. In other words, we are talking about how to formulate an incentive as a reward or as a punishment.

Let's take a deeper look at the question of how conditional motives can be formulated. As already discussed, the conditional promise in (1) can be reformulated as a threat, and the conditional threat in (2) can be reformulated as a promise. The resulting formulations are "If you don't work hard, I won't take you to the Zoo / If you don't study hard, I'm not taking you to the zoo" and "If you eat your dinner, I will give you an ice cream/ If you eat dinner, I'll give you ice cream" will be called complementary. Perhaps some conditional promises can also be formulated using the reverse form, that is, "If I give you an ice cream, you will eat dinner / If I give you ice cream, you'll eat dinner." However, the reverse wording is completely inappropriate for conditional threats "If I don't take you to the Zoo/ you won't work hard/ If I don't take you to the zoo, you won't study hard." Conditional threats can be formulated using a back-complementary form: «If I take you to the Zoo/ you will work hard/ If I take you to the zoo, you will study hard", but promises cannot: "If I don't give you an ice cream, you won't eat dinner/ If I don't give you. You'll have ice cream, you won't eat dinner."

Situation: Frank doesn't usually lend his bike to classmates. However, Henry wants to borrow it today. Harry tries to achieve this goal by threatening Peter with something. Harry knows that Peter needs his help with today's homework, and Harry usually helps him. The participants were then presented with four conditions (canonical, complementary, inverse, and inversely complementary), and instructed to choose the one that seemed to be the "best choice" to motivate the interlocutor. Variants were as follows:

- a) "Peter, if you lend me your bike, I'll help you with your homework" (canonical for promises, complementary for threats);
- b) "Peter, if you don't lend me your bike, then I won't help you with your homework" (canonical for threats, complementary for promises);
- c) "Peter, if I help you with your homework, will you lend me I need my bike" (reverse for promises, reverse-complementary for threats);
- d) "Peter, if I don't help you with your homework, then you won't lend me your bike" (back-complementary for promises, reverse for threats).

Table 1 summarizes the results of the formulation task in research among German-speaking, English-speaking and Russian-speaking respondents.

Table 1

The choice of formulations by German-speaking [7], English-speaking [8] and Russian-speaking respondents

Language	German-speaking respondents	English-speaking respondents	Russian-speaking respondents
Promises, %			
Canonical	94	86	91
Complementary	6	–	8
The reverse	1	1	1
Back-complementary	–	3	–
Threats, %			
Canonical	85	62	86
Complementary	15	23	13
Reverse	–	–	–
Reverse complementary	–	15	–

In the study of native speakers of German and Russian, the results are similar, they did not reveal a significant statistical difference in the frequency of canonical formulation of conditional promises and threats. However, this difference was significant in the English-language study. Participants of the English study were more inclined to avoid the canonical formulation of the threat than the participants in the German and Russian studies: a significant number of English participants formulated the threat as a complementary promise or a back-complementary promise. It can be said that these participants preferred to threaten indirectly. M. Stensel and L. Clark [8] express concern about attempts to interpret these differences in cross-cultural terms. Indeed, in the German study with Bellera [7], in which the participants were school students with an average age of 16.6 years, only 16% chose the canonical formulation of the threat. In other words, the choice of an indirect strategy among German high school participants was higher than among English-speaking, German-speaking and Russian-speaking participants. Again, the choice of younger participants may have been influenced by their actual language preferences, combined with an under-developed skill to discard their sociolinguistic conventions in order to follow the instructions of the experimental study.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the article was to investigate the influence of the use of English language as a lingua franca for making changes in the practice of teaching it. This issue was discussed in the context of the English language learning system as a global one, it is associated with an interdisciplinary approach to the study of intercultural pragmatics. We argue that politeness strategies are an essential aspect of developing students' intercultural communicative competence. The need to develop this competence determines the importance of teaching intercultural pragmatics in English classes.

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