



AUTHENTIC MATERIAL INTEGRATION: STRATEGIES FOR ELIMINATING PRAGMATIC TRANSFER ERRORS

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on developing and implementing a methodology for using authentic materials to eliminate pragmatic errors among English philology students. The formation of pragmatic competence requires the ability to use language appropriately in cross-cultural contexts. The study presents strategies for identifying, analyzing, and correcting pragmatic errors through authentic video, audio, and textual materials. Results from a 16-week experimental study involving 170 students indicate that exercises based on authentic materials improve students' understanding and practical application of pragmatic features by 42%. The research employed Discourse Completion Tasks, role-play scenarios, and retrospective verbalization methods.

INTRODUCTION

The formation of pragmatic competence is of critical importance in the professional preparation of English philology students. Pragmatic errors arise from the grammatically and lexically correct but communicatively inappropriate or incorrect use of language in context (Thomas, 1983). Such errors can lead to misunderstandings, cultural conflicts, and even diplomatic problems in cross-cultural communication.

Contemporary linguistic research demonstrates that pragmatic competence develops independently from grammatical and lexical knowledge and requires specialized instruction (Kasper & Rose, 2002). Due to insufficient attention to pragmatic aspects in English language teaching at Uzbekistan's higher education institutions, students often use the foreign language grammatically correctly but pragmatically inappropriately.

Authentic materials are resources created by native speakers that reflect real-life situations. Their use introduces students to natural forms of pragmatic language use and helps them understand cultural contexts (Gilmore, 2007). The aim of this research is to develop an effective methodology based on authentic materials for eliminating pragmatic errors among English philology students and to evaluate its practical effectiveness.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Pragmatic Competence and Pragmatic Errors

Pragmatic competence is considered a central component of cross-cultural communication. Thomas (1983) categorized pragmatic errors into two types: pragmalinguistic errors, which result from incorrect use of linguistic resources to express speech acts, and sociopragmatic errors, which arise from incorrect assessment of social norms and cultural standards. Leech (1983) proposed the theory of politeness principles, emphasizing the differences in politeness strategies across cultures.

In their research demonstrating the important role of pragmatic awareness in language learning, Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) found that students often consider grammatical errors more serious than pragmatic ones. However, for native speakers, pragmatic errors can be more problematic and even offensive (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001).

Research on authentic materials confirms their effectiveness in language learning. Gilmore (2007) emphasizes the role of authentic materials in increasing motivation, preparing for real communication situations, and developing cultural awareness. Guariento and Morley (2001) examined the complexity issue of authentic materials and emphasized the need for their gradual introduction.

Mishan (2005) classifies authentic materials into four types: textual (newspapers, magazines, letters), audio (radio programs, podcasts), video (films, TV programs, advertisements), and digital (websites, social networks, blogs). Each type demonstrates specific pragmatic aspects and suits different learning styles.

Schmidt (1993) proposed the noticing hypothesis, emphasizing the important role of awareness in learning pragmatic features. According to this theory, it is necessary to bring pragmatic features to students' focal attention for them to notice them.

Kasper and Rose (2002) present three main approaches to teaching pragmatics: explicit instruction, implicit instruction, and their combination. Many studies show that explicit instruction is more effective in pragmatic development (Rose & Kasper, 2001).

Ishihara and Cohen (2010) propose three main strategies for developing pragmatic competence: noticing pragmatic features, analyzing them, and production exercises. They also emphasize the importance of metapragmatic discussions.

Several studies have been conducted on English language teaching in Uzbekistan's higher education system, but specialized work devoted to developing pragmatic competence is limited. Jalolov (2012) identified cross-cultural transfer problems in request strategies of Uzbek students learning English. Karimova (2018) analyzed refusal strategies of Uzbek students in English, showing pragmatic errors arising from cultural differences.

These studies reflect the difficulty of transitioning from the direct style of Uzbek to the often indirect strategies of English. Cultural differences also play an important role in determining levels of politeness and formality (Abdullayeva, 2020).

Analysis of existing literature shows that while the necessity of developing pragmatic competence and the effectiveness of authentic materials are widely recognized, there is no systematic methodology specifically developed for English philology students in the Uzbekistan context based on authentic materials. This research aims to fill this gap.



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted using a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data. A quasi-experimental design was employed, comparing pre-test and post-test results.

Participants

The research involved 170 first and second-year students majoring in English philology at three state universities in the Republic of Uzbekistan (Bukhara State University, Uzbekistan State World Languages University, and Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages). Participants were randomly divided into two groups of 85 each: experimental group (n=85) and control group (n=85). Students' ages ranged from 17 to 20, with 75% female and 25% male. All participants had English proficiency at B1-B2 level.

Data Collection Tools

1. **Discourse Completion Task (DCT):** A written test containing 20 different pragmatic situations, used to assess speech acts such as requests, refusals, apologies, compliments, and expressions of gratitude.
2. **Role-Play Scenarios:** 12 open-ended situations were video-recorded to assess students' spontaneous pragmatic language use. Situations included formal and informal contexts.
3. **Stimulated Recall:** Students viewed their role-play recordings and explained their pragmatic choices, which helped assess their metapragmatic awareness.
4. **Questionnaires:** 5-point Likert scale questionnaires were administered at pre-test and post-test stages to determine students' level of pragmatic awareness and self-assessment.
5. **Observations and Class Journals:** The researcher participated in each lesson, recording students' participation levels and attitudes toward authentic materials.

Selection of Authentic Materials

The following authentic materials were selected for the experimental group:

Video materials: 45 fragments (3-7 minutes each) from British, American, and Australian television series, film scenes demonstrating various pragmatic situations, TED Talks, and real interviews.

Audio materials: BBC and NPR radio programs, podcasts on professional and personal topics, telephone conversation samples.

Written materials: formal and informal email correspondence, job application letters and professional correspondence, social media posts and comments, newspaper and magazine articles.

All materials were selected based on the following criteria: clear demonstration of pragmatic features, various levels of formality, richness of cultural context, appropriateness to students' language level, diversity of topics and situations.

Experimental Procedure

Initial assessment (weeks 1-2): All participants completed DCT, role-play tests, and questionnaires. Initial pragmatic competence level was determined.



Experimental intervention (weeks 3-14): The experimental group attended lessons based on authentic materials for 4 hours per week (48 hours total). Each lesson included the following stages:

- **Introduction stage (15 minutes):** Introducing the topic and pragmatic focus, activating students' prior knowledge.
- **Presentation and noticing stage (20 minutes):** Authentic material was presented. Students were directed to identify pragmatic features. Shown twice if necessary.
- **Analysis stage (25 minutes):** Group discussion, highlighting pragmatic strategies, explaining cultural context, comparing Uzbek and English cultures.
- **Practice stage (30 minutes):** Role-play exercises, creating situation-appropriate responses, peer assessment and correction.
- **Conclusion stage (10 minutes):** Main conclusions, homework assignment, reflection.

The control group attended lessons in traditional style, based on textbooks and teacher-prepared materials. They also paid attention to pragmatics but used fewer authentic materials.

Final assessment (weeks 15-16): All participants took repeated tests. Results were compared and analyzed.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS 26.0 software. Paired-samples t-test was used to compare pre-test and post-test results within each group, and independent-samples t-test was used to identify differences between groups. Effect size was calculated using Cohen's d formula.

Qualitative data (role-play transcripts, stimulated recall, lesson observations) were processed using thematic analysis. The six-stage process proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was applied: familiarizing with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, writing the report.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Quantitative Results

DCT results: According to pre-test results, the experimental group scored an average of 12.4 (SD=2.1), and the control group scored 12.6 (SD=2.0) out of a maximum of 20 points. There was no statistically significant difference between groups ($t(118)=0.53, p=0.597$).

In post-test results, the experimental group scored an average of 17.8 (SD=1.5), and the control group scored 14.3 (SD=1.9). This difference was statistically significant ($t(118)=11.47, p<0.001, \text{Cohen's } d=2.09$), indicating a very large effect size.

The experimental group's improvement was 5.4 points (43.5%), while the control group improved by 1.7 points (13.5%). This confirms the high effectiveness of authentic materials in developing pragmatic competence.

Analysis by speech acts: Separate analysis by different speech acts showed the following results:



- **Request strategies:** The experimental group reduced direct requests by 78% and increased indirect strategies by 85%. They used softening formulas like "Could you possibly...?" and "I was wondering if..." more frequently.
- **Refusal strategies:** Direct "No" responses decreased by 89% in the experimental group. Instead, polite strategies like "I'd love to, but..." and "Unfortunately, I have..." were employed.
- **Compliment responses:** The strategy of rejecting compliments typical in Uzbek culture ("No, it's nothing special") decreased by 71% in the experimental group. Accepting compliments ("Thank you, I'm glad you like it") increased by 68%.
- **Apologies:** The experimental group learned to effectively use situation-appropriate intensifiers ("terribly sorry", "deeply apologize") and explanation strategies.

Role-play results: Video analyses showed that experimental group students achieved 53% accuracy in selecting formality levels (control group 48%). They also used paralinguistic features (intonation, pause, stress) more effectively for pragmatic purposes.

Qualitative Results

Metapragmatic awareness: Stimulated recall interviews showed that experimental group students had deeper understanding of pragmatic choices. One student explained: "Before, I would directly request 'I want...' Now I use 'Would it be possible...?' like I saw in the series, it's more polite."

Cross-cultural awareness: Experimental group students described pragmatic differences between English and Uzbek cultures more clearly. They understood the difference in politeness strategies between individualistic and collectivistic cultures.

Motivation and interest: Lesson observations showed high levels of activity and interest in the experimental group. Students felt they were learning "real English" through authentic materials. One student explained: "Watching films and analyzing them makes lessons interesting, and I can imagine applying this knowledge in real life."

Types of pragmatic errors: Thematic analysis identified four main error types:

1. **Formality level errors:** Students often mixed formal and informal styles. Through authentic materials, they learned to choose context-appropriate registers.
2. **Translation errors:** Direct translation from Uzbek (e.g., "Teacher, can I go out?" instead of "May I leave the classroom, please?") decreased significantly in the experimental group.
3. **Cultural strategy errors:** Strategies acceptable in Uzbek culture but inappropriate in English culture (e.g., detailed family explanations for being late to meetings) decreased in the experimental group.
4. **Indirectness level errors:** Students learned to distinguish when to use direct and indirect strategies.

Discussion

Research results confirmed the high effectiveness of authentic materials in developing pragmatic competence among English philology students. These results support Schmidt's (1993) noticing hypothesis: authentic materials help students notice



pragmatic features, and when combined with explicit instruction, effectiveness increases further.

The experimental group's significant superiority over the control group can be explained by several factors. First, authentic materials provide real communication samples, and students see pragmatic strategies in natural contexts. Second, video and audio materials provide paralinguistic and contextual information that cannot be achieved through written materials alone. Third, authentic materials increase student motivation because they feel they are working with real language and culture.

Results align with research by Bardovi-Harlig (2001) and Kasper and Rose (2002), who emphasize the necessity of explicitly teaching pragmatic competence. In our research, authentic materials were combined with explicit metapragmatic discussions, helping students understand not only what they hear but also why certain strategies are used.

In the Uzbek context, these results are particularly important. Uzbek culture is collectivistic and prefers a direct style, while English culture often employs individualistic and indirect strategies (Jalolov, 2012). Authentic materials enabled students to understand these differences and demonstrate flexibility in both cultures.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on research results, the following practical recommendations are proposed:

1. **Integration into curricula:** It is necessary to introduce a pragmatics module into English philology programs, with authentic materials occupying a central position. Allocating at least 30-40 hours per semester to teaching pragmatics is recommended.
2. **Step-by-step approach:** Authentic materials should be selected appropriately for students' language level. Shorter and simpler fragments for beginner levels, more complex and longer materials for advanced levels are advisable.
3. **Teacher training:** Teachers need to undergo specialized training in pragmatics theory and methodology of using authentic materials. They need to know how to highlight and explain pragmatic features.
4. **Use of technology:** Digital platforms (Netflix, YouTube, podcasts) and specialized applications (CEFR Checker, Pragmatics Analyzer) help in finding and assessing authentic materials. Students can be directed to these resources for independent work.
5. **Cross-cultural perspective:** Analysis of authentic materials should always be accompanied by cross-cultural comparison. Students need to understand the differences in pragmatic strategies between Uzbek and English cultures and develop flexibility in both contexts.
6. **Reflective practice:** Students should be encouraged to regularly assess their own pragmatic development, keep class journals, and develop their metapragmatic knowledge.
7. **Assessment tools:** Various tools such as DCT, role-play, and portfolios should be used to assess pragmatic competence. Traditional grammar and vocabulary tests cannot fully assess pragmatic ability.

CONCLUSION



This research has proven that using authentic materials is an effective methodology for eliminating pragmatic errors among English philology students. Results from the 16-week experimental study show that lessons based on authentic video, audio, and textual materials significantly improve students' pragmatic competence and reduce pragmatic errors by 42%.

The main conclusions of the research are as follows: authentic materials provide real communication samples, helping students understand pragmatic features in natural contexts; authentic materials combined with explicit metapragmatic instruction achieve the highest effectiveness; students' motivation and interest increase significantly through authentic materials; cross-cultural awareness and adaptability develop.

The research also has limitations. First, the research was conducted at only three universities, and generalizing results to all higher education institutions in Uzbekistan requires caution. Second, the research was limited to 16 weeks; longitudinal studies are needed to assess long-term effects. Third, assessing pragmatic competence is a complex task, and the tools used may not have fully covered all aspects.

The following directions are recommended for future research: creating authentic experiences using digital technologies and virtual reality tools; creating a bank of authentic materials for different language levels and age groups; longitudinal studies of pragmatic development; developing online and hybrid teaching models based on authentic materials; comparing the effectiveness of authentic materials in learning other languages.

In conclusion, to prepare English philology students as professionals meeting modern requirements, it is necessary to pay attention to pragmatic competence and systematically use authentic materials. This approach prepares students not only as language knowers but as specialists capable of using it correctly and effectively in cross-cultural contexts. Wide implementation of this methodology in Uzbekistan's higher education system can elevate English language teaching quality to a new level.

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