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CARRERA DE LENGUA Y LITERATURA INGLESA

“Using Conversation Analysis to Enhance the Pragmatic Skills of Senior High
School Students at Unidad Educativa Particular Nuestra Familia”

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Resumen

Este estudio se basa en la investigación de la teoría de la Pragmática, y su objetivo es el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa. La Pragmática nos ayuda a entender que todos los estudiantes son capaces de aprender una lengua extranjera. Este estudio ha demostrado, que el estudio de la pragmática es una necesidad para la gente que quiere ganar capacidad de comunicación en contextos lingüísticos y culturales. Los profesores pueden desarrollar actividades que facilitan el aprendizaje de los estudiantes. En este proyecto, he reunido información que nos ha ayudado a proporcionar evidencia general del tema. El grupo de trabajo tenía veintidós estudiantes que pertenecen al último año en la Unidad Educativa Nuestra Familia. Un Discourse Completion Test se realizó con el propósito de saber si tenían conocimientos acerca de este tema y asimismo se aplicó un cuestionario el cual fue administrado a los estudiantes con el fin de determinar su conocimiento referente a Pragmática. Además, fueron también administrados el pre-test y un post-test sobre su comprensión acerca a Pragmática. El material que fue creado para este proyecto se aplicó durante cuatro sesiones de cuarenta y cinco minutos cada uno. El pre-test y post-test determinaron diferencias en las calificaciones que obtuvieron los estudiantes. Estas diferencias fueron analizadas estadísticamente y muestran el aumento significativo de su conocimiento de Pragmática. Los resultados de la investigación han demostrado que la teoría de la Pragmática puede ser un método prometedor al aprender el idioma Inglés.

Palabras clave: Pragmática, capacidad de comunicación, Cuestionario de

Contexto (Discourse Completion Test), Aumento



Abstract

This research study is based on the theory of Pragmatics, and its aim is to develop communicative competence. Pragmatics helps us understand that all students are able to learn a foreign language. This study has demonstrated that studying pragmatics is a must for people who want to gain communicative competence in both linguistic and cultural contexts. Teachers can develop activities which will facilitate the students' learning. In this project, I have gathered some information that has helped us provide general evidence of the topic. The target group was twenty-two students that belong to the senior year at Unidad Educativa Nuestra Familia high school. A Discourse Completion Test was held with the purpose of knowing about this topic in a giving situation and a questionnaire was administered to the target students in order to determine their knowledge of Pragmatics. In addition, a pre-test and a post-test about Pragmatics comprehension were also administered. The material that was created for this project was applied during four sessions of forty-five minutes each. A pre-test and a post-test determined differences in the scores. These differences were statistically analyzed and show a significant increase in their knowledge of Pragmatics. The results of the research have demonstrated that the theory of Pragmatics can be a promising method for improving students' performance.

Key words: Pragmatics, communicative competence, Discourse

Completion Test, increase



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Dedication

This monograph is dedicated to my wife, my son, my parents, and my sisters who helped me since the beginning of my career. They have been with me in good and hard moments of my life, so they have supported me for the fulfillment of one of my goals.



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Introduction

Teachers of English as a second or foreign language have always faced a very difficult task: how to teach communicative competence in the target language. It has become clear that teaching the grammar and vocabulary of a language is not enough. One also needs to teach pragmatic and cultural competence. In addition, understanding the importance of socially and culturally specific aspects of language function in different languages needs to be studied, as learners have to be aware of the differences between not only their native language and the target language, but also between the two cultures involved. Being aware of such differences, as well as the similarities, would help students better understand the target culture, and thus use the target language in a socially and culturally appropriate way.

A common thread in these studies is the effect of language transfer or crosslinguistic influence that the first language has while learners are attempting to acquire the pragmatic and politeness principles that are central to the target language and culture. One speech act that is particularly of interest to researchers is *compliment responses* because they require a great deal of the speaker's pragmatic insight and, therefore, are often rich with data. The present study attempts to bring together the research that has been done on this speech act and clarify it using data from senior year at Unidad Educativa Nuestra Familia high school. This research will illustrate that in the second-language classroom, pragmatic accuracy in the second language often does not simply emerge with grammatical instruction. Instead, these data will show that explicit instruction might be a better tool for pragmatic accuracy in compliment responses. Results will



indicate that with theoretical instruction of pragmatics students will be able to produce grammatically correct responses. These results have pedagogical implications since pragmatic competence largely remains an overlooked aspect of second-language acquisition in the language classroom.



CHAPTER I

1 The problem

1.1 Topic

This research aims at reflecting on how important it is to show that all students are capable of achieving and advancing in their learning of English. This can be accomplished through the teacher's implementation of pragmatic knowledge. It is necessary for every teacher of English to understand and be able to apply pragmatics in order to assist his/her students in the learning process. This means the teacher/professor must understand utterances, the social functions of what is being said and the overall cultural effect of the context of the subject they are teaching. The result of these practices with the students will be better understood by them, if and when they travel to an English-speaking country.

1.2 Description of the Problem

The target students, as well as many others, have problems in English comprehension activities. As most teachers know, the ability to understand language in context (or within its multiple contexts) is difficult for students. Most of them lack knowledge of the common usage of language in its pragmatic background. The students that are involved in this project are senior year at Unidad Educativa Nuestra Familia high school, and are functioning level; it is not



the standard textbooks grammatical vocabulary level. Many teachers think it is the students' fault. As a result, students become frustrated; then, they cannot understand English at all. Teachers need to find other ways to teach pragmatics to their students, so as to help them in its English comprehension skills.

1.3 Justification

Many studies regarding the importance of developing pragmatic skills while learning another language have been carried out throughout the world. These studies have demonstrated that studying pragmatics is a must for people who want to gain communicative competence within both the linguistic and cultural contexts of "the other language". However, this area of linguistics and language learning has not been researched to a great extent in our English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, particularly in, Cuenca, Ecuador. I found, after searching for references at the library of the University of Cuenca, there are no studies regarding the development of pragmatic skills in EFL students at high school level. Additionally, there are only two pieces of research at the post-graduate level.

Learning pragmatics goes beyond studying grammar, morphology, syntax, and phonetics. One well-evidenced fact that must be both acknowledged and remembered is that the English language is not used in real contextual situations as it is presented in most EFL texts. In order to have a better understanding of what this area of linguistics is about and why it is important in language learning



and teaching in general, let us review one definition that is more closely related to the focus of the present proposal than others.

George Yule, in his book, *Pragmatics*, states the following definition:

“Pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader). It has consequently more to do with the analysis of what people mean by their utterances than what the words or phrases in those utterances might mean by themselves. Pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning. Pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning.”

1.4 Aim and Objectives

1.4.1 Aim

- To acquire pragmatic knowledge while getting involved in real situations through conversation analysis and the application of a discourse test.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

- To determine which pragmatic resources are useful to develop the skills of senior high school students.
- To contribute to the comprehension and communication of American culture discourse.



- To measure the effectiveness of the use of a discourse pragmatic skill test.



CHAPTER II

2. Literature review

Understanding a sentence in a literal way won't give us all the facets of meaning that it has. The proposition, which is made by uttering a sentence, needs to be observed in context with physical behavior, background assumptions, real-world knowledge and other factors. Pragmatics attempts to eliminate the gap between a sentence and its entire meaning.

The subject of pragmatics is very interesting-both for the teacher/professor and the students in the class. However, it is abundantly clear that all of the information regarding pragmatics has already been accomplished by the authors cited. The contribution of this work is the direct research that has been accomplished with the students of senior year at Unidad Educativa Nuestra Familia high school citing the authors' methods.

Definitions of pragmatics abound. One particularly useful definition has been proposed by David Crystal. According to him, "Pragmatics is the study of language from the point of view of 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 other participants in the act of communication". In other words, pragmatics is the study of communicative action in its sociocultural context. Communicative action includes not only speech acts - such as requesting, greeting, etc., - but also participation in conversation, engaging in different types of discourse, and sustaining interaction in complex speech events. Leech, an author



of pragmatics suggests that we should focus on interpersonal rhetoric - the way speakers and writers accomplish goals as social actors who do not just need to get things done, but attend to their interpersonal relationships with other participants at the same time.

Leech and his colleague, Jenny Thomas, proposed to subdivide pragmatics into pragmlinguistic and sociopragmatic components. *Pragmlinguistics* refers to the resources for conveying communicative acts and relational or interpersonal meanings. Such resources include pragmatic strategies like directness and indirectness, routines, and a large range of linguistic forms, which can intensify or soften communicative acts. For one example, compare these two versions of apology - the terse¹ 'I'm sorry and I'm absolutely devastated. Can you possibly forgive me?' In both versions, the speaker apologizes, but s/he indicates a very different attitude and social relationship in each of the apologies (House & Kasper).

2.1 Speech Act Theory

Speech act theory attempts to explain how speakers use language to accomplish intended actions, and how listeners infer intended meaning from what is said. Although speech act studies are now considered a sub-discipline of cross-cultural pragmatics, they actually have their origin in the philosophy of language.

¹ Terse as defined by Webster's Dictionary is: brief and direct in a way that may seem rude or unfriendly



The assumption of philosophers has always been that the business of a statement can only be to 'describe' some state of affairs, or to state some fact', which it must do either truly or falsely. However, in recent years, many things, which would once have been accepted, without question as 'statements' by both philosophers and grammarians have been scrutinized with new care. It is commonly believed that many utterances which look like statements are either not intended at all, or only intended in part, to record or impart straight forward information about the facts (Austin).

Philosophers like Austin, Grice, and Searle offered a basic vision into this new theory of linguistic communication based on the postulation that "the minimal units of human communication are not linguistic expressions. Rather, they are the performance of particular acts, such as making statements, asking questions, giving directions, apologizing, expressing gratitude, and so on" (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper). According to Austin, the presentation of uttering words with a substantial purpose as "the performance of a locutionary act, and the study of utterances have different definitions. According to this theory, these functional units of communication have propositional or locutionary meaning (the literal meaning of the utterance), illocutionary meaning (the social function of the utterance), and perlocutionary force (the effect produced by the utterance in a given context).

2.2 The Meaning of Speech Acts

According to Austin's theory, what we say has three kinds of meaning:



2.2.1. Propositional meaning

- the literal meaning of what is said.

It's hot in here.

2.2.2 Illocutionary meaning

- the social function of what is said.

'It's hot in here' *could be*:

- an indirect request for someone to open the window.
- an indirect refusal to close the window, because someone is cold. - a complaint implying that someone should know better than to keep the windows closed (expressed emphatically) .

2.2.3. Perlocutionary meaning

- the effect of what is said.

'It's hot in here' could result in someone opening the windows.

2.3 Terms Related to language and Context

The act of using language and its context needs an explanation of the terms.



The definitions of these terms will be helpful to clarify one's ideas, as there are some terms that sound difficult, but they are certainly not complex, such as diexis², exophora, and intertextuality

The first word to be analyzed is *reference*. According to Cutting, reference is “the act in which a speaker uses linguistic form known as referring expressions to enable the hearer to identify something”. Then, it is clear to say that people use referring expressions to identify or select the object or person that one is talking about. Such object or person will be called a *referent*.

The term, *diexis*², refers to “the function of deictic words, which are used to specify or identify their referent in a given context” (American Heritage Dictionary). There are three types of *diexis* that are related to: person, place and time. *Person deixis* relates to the use of expressions to point to a person, with the personal pronouns. *Place deixis* has to do with words that indicate a location. *Time deixis* is the use of expressions used to point to a time.

Finally, the term *exophora*³ is the use of a pronoun or other word or phrase to refer to someone or something outside the text, either in the situation or in the background knowledge. When a referring item refers to entities in the background knowledge that have already been mentioned in a previous conversation, it is called *intertextuality*, which can be cultural or interpersonal.

² Diexis, as defined by Webster's Dictionary is “The pointing or specifying function of some words (as definite articles and demonstrative pronouns) whose denotation changes from one discourse to another.”

³ Exophora as defined by Wikipedia is: is, “In linguistic pragmatics, exophora is reference to something extralinguistic, i.e. not in the same text. Exophora can be deictic, in which special words or grammatical markings are used to make reference to something in the context of the utterance or speaker. For example, pronouns are often exophoric, with words such as “this”, “that”, “here”, “there”, as in that chair over there



2.4 Language of the Context inside: Cohesion

Cohesion is used to combine the sentence; it is the formal link that marks various types of inter-clause and inter-sentence relationship within discourse.

In Halliday and Hasan (1976), cohesive ties are classified under two main headlines:

2.4.1 Grammatical Cohesion

It refers to a combination of terms between sentences that form the grammatical aspect. It can be divided into four categories:

2.4.1.1 Reference

It is a grammatical cohesion device in a text that can only be interpreted with reference either to the text or to the world experienced by the sender and receiver of the text.

2.4.1.2. *Substitution:*

It holds the text together and avoids repetition. There are also ways of signaling omission through substitution using a small class of words such as “do”, “so”, “not” or “one.”

is John's said while indicating the direction of the chair referred to. Given "Did the gardener water those plants?", it is quite possible that "those" refers back to the preceding text, to some earlier mention of those particular plants in the discussion. But it is also possible that it refers to the environment in which the dialogue is taking place — to the "context of situation", as it is called — where the plants in question are present and can be pointed to if necessary. The interpretation would be "those plants there, in front of us". This kind of reference is called exophora, since it takes us outside the text altogether. Exophoric reference is not cohesive, since it does not bind the two elements together into a text."



2.4.1.3. *Ellipsis*

It refers to the omission of a clause, or a part of a clause, because the meaning is understood. This is a common feature of spoken language because conversation tends to be less explicit.

2.4.1.4. *Conjunction*

It is a link used to connect sentences. Conjunctions can function as additive (and), adversative (but), temporal (then), casual (so.)

2.4.2. *Lexical Cohesion*

Lexical cohesion is the result of chains of related words that contribute to the continuity of lexical meaning. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), lexical cohesion is divided into five classes:

2.4.2.1. *Repetition*

The most common lexical cohesion device is repetition, which is simply repeated words or word-phrases, threading through the text.

2.4.2.2. *Synonym:*

It concerns words that have a similar meaning. Instead of repeating the same word, a speaker or writer can use a synonym.



2.4.2.3. Hyponymy ⁴:

It consists of the relation between a constituent that has general meaning, called the sub-ordinate, and a constituent that has specific meaning, called hyponymy.

2.4.2.4. Antonym:

This is a word that has an opposite meaning.

2.4.2.5. General word:

It can be a general noun, as “thing”, “stuff”, “place”, “person”, or a general verb like “do” and “happen”. The general word is a higher level superordinate; it is the term that covers almost all the meanings.

2.5 Politeness

Politeness in pragmatics refers to the choices that are made in language use, the linguistic expressions that give people space and show a friendly attitude to them.

2.6. Politeness and Context

In almost all societies, politeness plays a big role in the effectiveness of social life and interaction within the context of both inter-cultural and cross-cultural

⁴ Hyponymy as defined by the American Heritage Dictionary: A word whose meaning is included in the meaning of another more general word. For example, *bus* is a hyponym of *vehicle*



communication. In different cultures, the definition of politeness may vary substantially, because it is a pragmatic phenomenon. As a result, politeness may be appropriate in ways that are largely misunderstood within the context of other cultures. Politeness lies in the form of behavior as well as verbal language.

Considering politeness as a pragmatic situation, it is influenced by elements of the context. There are three kinds of context that influence politeness:

2.6.1. Situational context

There are two variables:

1. Size of imposition: the greater the imposition the more polite (indirect).
2. Setting of the interaction: the more formal the setting, the more polite the strategy.

2.6.2 Social Context:

1. Social distance between participants:

The social distance is decided on through variables:

- Degree of familiarity (how well and how long you have known each other).
- Differences of status: boss/employee.
- Roles: teacher/students, parent/child.
- Age, gender, education, social class.

2. Power relations between participants:



Differences of status, age, role, gender, education, and social class give speakers power and authority.

Power and authority can be expressed through the linguistic choices a speaker makes. In terms of politeness, those who possess power can be more direct.

2.7 Cultural Context:

The relationship between indirectness and social variables is not so simple. The entire issue of politeness and language is exceedingly culture-bound. Culture and language learning is a major variable in differentiating one culture from another. As a result, politeness is a basic form of cooperation, and it underlies all language in some way or another (Cutting 52).

2.8. Positive politeness strategies

A positive politeness strategy leads the requester to appeal to a common goal, even friendship. For instance:

Hey, buddy, I'd appreciate it if you'd let me use your pen.

There is a greater risk of refusal if no friendship has been established. Therefore, the various requests are often preceded by 'getting-to-know-you-talk' to establish common ground. For instance:



“Hi, how’s it going? Okay if I sit here? We must be interested in the same crazy stuff. You take a lot of notes too, huh? Say, do me a big favor and let me use one of your pens”.

It is possible to use positive politeness forms such as the solidarity strategy (used more by groups than individuals). It includes personal information, nicknames, even abusive terms-especially among males, shared dialect/slang expressions, inclusive terms (‘we’, ‘let’s’, etc). For instance, *Come on, let’s go to the party. Everyone will be there. We’ll have fun.*

Finally, politeness is a phenomenon that has to do with our own beliefs, manners and culture. It is also important to know that cultures have their own rules regarding politeness. In this way, politeness is culturally bound. As an example, we can mention England and Japan as especially polite countries.

2.8.1 Politeness maxims

The politeness principle is a series of maxims, which Geoffrey Leech has proposed as a way of explaining how politeness operates in conversational exchanges.

According to Leech, (1983) these maxims are: tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement and sympathy. The tact and generosity maxims form a pair, as well as the approbation and modesty. (Cutting: 47)

Tact maxim: It minimizes the cost to other; and it maximizes the benefit to other.



Generosity maxim: It minimizes the benefit to self; and it maximizes the cost to self.

Approbation maxim: It minimizes the dispraise of other, and it maximizes the praise of other.

Modesty maxim: It minimizes the praise of self, and it maximizes dispraise of self.

Agreement maxim: It minimizes disagreement between self and other; and it maximizes agreement between self and other.

Sympathy maxim: It minimizes the antipathy between self and other; and it maximizes sympathy between self and other.

“Leech defines politeness as forms of behavior that establish and maintain comity” (Barbulet:1).

That is the ability of participants in a social interaction to engage in interaction in an atmosphere of relative harmony. First, one has to know what being “polite” means. According to the Webster on-line dictionary: “Showing regard for others in manners, speech, behavior, etc!”

In a word, the point of politeness as a principle is to minimize the effects of impolite statements and to maximize the politeness of polite illocutions.

2.9 Culture and Language Learning

2.9.1 Structure

There are differences in terms of discourse structure, the following are just some examples taken from different cultures.



Style: East Asian: It is inductive; start with the topic or background and then move to the main point.

Western: It is deductive; give the main point and then explain the reasons.

German: "You did a bad job."

Latino: "I want to tell you that you have to improve your job."

In this case, Germans are very direct about what they think. Conversely, latinos need to be more direct and say what they think.

2.9.2 Misunderstanding

It can occur because of the conversation structure differences. For instance: Spanish people interpret the long pauses of the Chinese as a lack of comprehension and repeat their questions before the Chinese can respond.

American: "I want to invite you to have lunch with me."

Latino: "Great, because I don't have any money."

American: "I will invite, you but that doesn't mean I will pay for you."

In this case, the differences are cultural. For instance, when a Latino invites you, it means that the inviter is going to pay for the invitee; it is not the same for Americans.

Opening and closing sequences: Meetings for instance: Westerners want to get down to business immediately, while Asian people want to do socializing first. Asians prefer to slow the process undertaking of business, while westerners want quick negotiations.



American: “How about if we sign the terms of this contract now?”

Chinese: “We should have a wonderful meal to celebrate first.”

In this case, the American wants to get the contract as soon as he can; however, the Chinese want to socialize first.

Interlanguage pragmatics. - It provides synchronic or diachronic developmental studies of second language learning.

Synchronic is a term that describes one level of language learner; and the term diachronic compares two levels of language learners.

2.9.3 Synchronic Studies

- Some learners, especially lower-level students, have difficulty understanding indirect speech acts.
- Teachers should be direct with statements or instructions given to learners.
- The following question is an indirect one and may be ambiguous for learners.

For example: An indirect form would be: *Would you like to work on page 10?*

A direct form, however, would be: *Work on exercise 2, page 10.*

- Learners understand the illocutionary force but miss the conversational function.

A: Nice laptop.

B: Thanks.



A: Where did you buy it?

B: At Best Buy.

(The conversational opener is not understood by the listener, thus the listener does not follow the conversation)

- Opening sequences differ from culture to culture. The greeting “Hola, como estás?” for Ecuadorians is a formulaic question; it does not expect a conversation. While for other people, the same greeting invites the listener to start a conversation.

2.9.4 Developmental studies

- As long as learners advance in their studies, they gain more confidence and are able to speak more directly.
- Speakers do not hesitate. They sometimes give the impression of being unwilling to accept advice.
 - *For example: I have just decided not to take this course. I already know this subject.*
 - On the contrary, other students become more indirect over time.
 - *For example: I don't know if you agree but I was thinking on meeting you so that we can concur on the topics for the test.*

2.10. Learner's Beliefs and Attitudes

Native speakers and their particular attitudes related to culture and learning can affect the acquisition and understanding of pragmatics.



According to Schumann, pragmatic development depends on:

1. The learners' social distance from native speakers.

In sense of identity learners may either behave like the foreigner so as not to be judged or separate themselves from the culture to assert their own identity.

Native speakers' attitudes to learners when the learners have a low second language proficiency, native speakers can either show politeness norms, or they might prefer learners to act as foreigners and not to claim in-group membership.

2. The learners' psychological distance to learners from native speakers.

Schuman's theory is that low socio-psychological distance leads to high integration of the learners with the native speakers group, which in turn leads to acquisition.

2.11 Teaching Intercultural Pragmatics

Participants in lingua franca conversations are representatives of their individual mother cultures. It is not just competence in the language they use. It demands that speakers cope with the unexpected, by having to apply imperfect knowledge of and competence in the language they use.

2.11.1 Whether to Teach Intercultural Pragmatics

Most of the time, textbooks focus their lessons on teaching skills not on the pragmatic aspects themselves.



There are many assumptions about whether to teach pragmatics or not. For instance:

1. The only way to achieve pragmatic fluency is to go to the country where the language is spoken.
2. Pennycook (1994), Phillipson (1992): Intercultural pragmatic should not be taught in EFL classes.
3. Other theorists agree that pragmatics should be taught: second language subtle meanings and native language function.

How To Teach It?

- Teachers must assist the students in understanding how relevant and useful are some intercultural aspects.
- To be aware that it's not enough to expose the learners to the language in class.
- Small group discussions are better than teacher-centered.
- Socio-pragmatic error corrections are better than a simple correction by the professor.

2.12 Intercultural Pragmatics

2.12.1 Pragmatics

The complete meaning of a sentence, a text, or an utterance results not only from the units and structures of signification studied in semantics. It is also the outcome of other factors located at the border zone between linguistics and extra-



linguistics. This is the domain of pragmatics.

2.12.2 Intercultural communication

Intercultural communication examines how people from different cultures, beliefs, and religions come together to work and communicate with each other.

Discussions of intercultural communication are generally concerned with the ways in which culture-specific-aspects of communicative competence affect what goes on in situations of communication between people from different cultural backgrounds. An insight into pragmatic transfer (where by 'pragmatic transfer' we mean, roughly, the carryover of pragmatic knowledge from one culture to another) is important for a good understanding of intercultural communication (Zegarac and Pennington, 1)

2.13 Levels of communication differences

What is it that can be culturally relative in communication? The answer is, just about everything-all the aspects of what to say and how to say them.

When we talk

- People experience silence when they think there could or should be talk.
- If two people are sitting together, one may think there's silence when the



other does not.

- Athabaskan Indians consider it inappropriate to talk to strangers while a non-Athabaskan wants to get to know the other by talking and the other feels it is inappropriate to talk until they know each other.

What to say

- Once a speaker decides to talk, what is it appropriate to say? Can one ask questions, and what can one ask them about?

- Australian Aborigines never ask the question “why”. Alaskan Athabaskans rarely ask questions, because they are regarded as too powerful to use, and they demand a response.

- However, many of us take it for granted that questions are basic to the educational setting. How would one learn anything if one didn’t ask?

Formulaicity⁵

- It is the property of a particular string as processed by a particular individual, either a native speaker or a second-language learner.

⁵ The term formulaicity has been defined as “any fixed unit of two or more words which recurs in the discourses of a linguistic community” (Norrick, 2000, p.49) and refers to all kinds of phraseology ranging from collocations and lexical phrases to more fixed units such as idiomatic expressions and proverbs. Formulaicity is important in narrative in interaction because familiar fixed expressions are easier for speakers to access and verbalise in narrative production and easier for the listener to process in narrative reception.



- Our native talk is full of figures of speech (slang), which we don't recognize as such-until we hear them fractured or altered by non-native speakers.



CHAPTER III

3. Methodology

This project is based on quantitative research. Since quantitative data by itself does not need interpretation, the researcher will make judgements about the data collected in terms of pragmatic aspects to elicit the speaking skill. Such interpretations include results based on previous research. According to Michael J. Wallace, quantitative analysis is used to express data which can be counted or measured and is reflected as “unbiased.”

3.1 The Group

As has been stated previously, the main purpose of this project is the development of pragmatic skills of senior high school students at Nuestra Familia High School through conversation analysis.

3.2 Material and Procedure

The material, which was used for the treatment, was created based on the pragmatic theory. This material was applied in weekly sessions with the purpose of contributing to their knowledge and the understanding of implicit contexts, such as situational context, cultural or mixed cultural context, interpersonal context, language context, etc. (See Appendix 1, and Appendix 2.)



3.3 Collection Data

Data analysis was implemented by using the following process: The data were organized through graphics and trends about the results obtained from testing in specific pragmatic situations. Structured discussions, based on Discourse Completion Tests, were used to collect information, which were then coded.

(See Appendix 3.)

3.4 Pre-test and Post test

Before the treatment, a pre-test was applied and after it a post-test was applied to the participants at “Nuestra Familia” High School, so that the results from both tests were compared to discern whether the treatment was successful or not. In addition, it is necessary to know how much students know of pragmatics and how the new knowledge could help students elicit a better comprehension of situations in a specific cultural context.

The pre-test was taken with the purpose of measuring the students’ knowledge of Pragmatics and how they developed this. (See Appendix 4.)

The post-test was taken at the end of the application in order to evaluate the students’ knowledge obtained through the application of the Pragmatics theory and to know if this methodology had been successful during the learning acquisition process. Moreover, these data helped to know if there were any significant differences between the pre-test and the post test.



This research study is basically an action research project, since it only focuses on one particular issue of one classroom, and its results cannot be generalized to other classrooms or students of similar age.



CHAPTER IV

4. Results

4.1 Analysis and Interpretation

4.1.1 Result and analysis: Discourse completion test

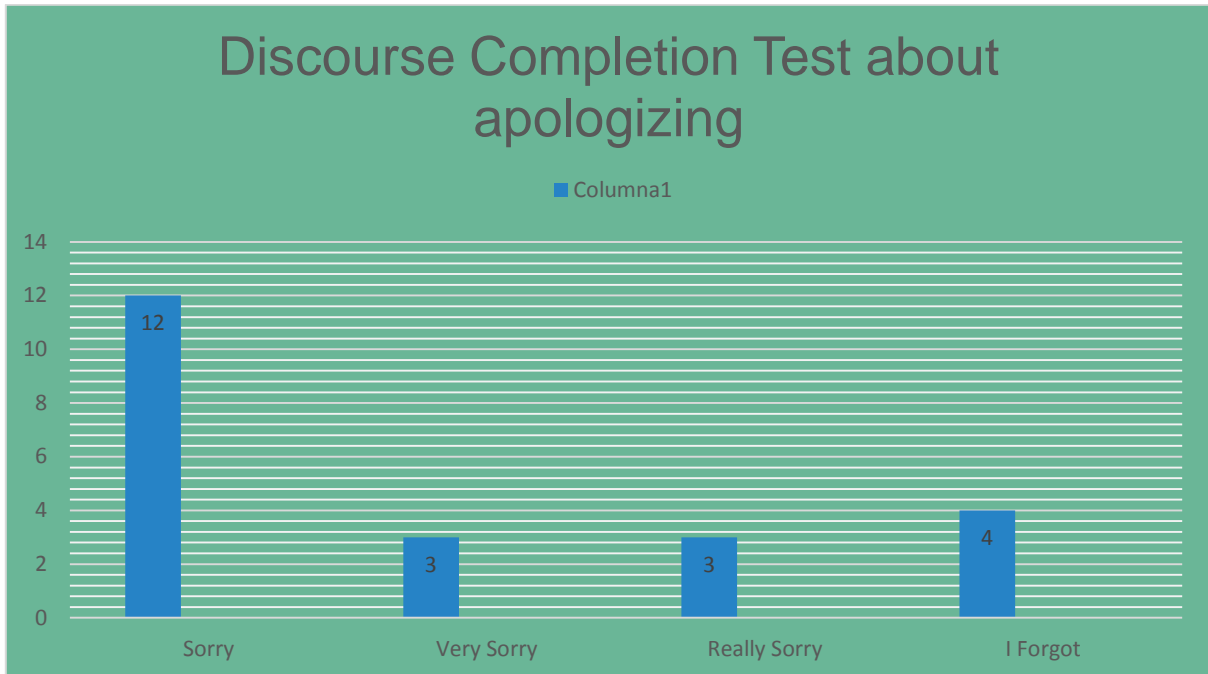
It is significant to identify that all students are different and each one has his or her diverse strengths and weaknesses inside the classroom. Therefore, the Discourse Completion Test about apologizing shows how they face this specific situation. The following graphs demonstrate the results of the students' pre-test.

During the administration of pretest to twenty-two senior students at Unidad Educativa Particular Nuestra Familia was an interesting experience in which the students were able to explain their ideas in written and spoken forms to apologize.

The results show a quantitative analysis because they were calculated using the number of students that the test was applied to. Also, they were assessed for the purpose of collecting data to support this monographic research.

Please write down what you would say if you were in this situation: The students were given the following situation to respond and to indicate the manner in which they would respond.

You completely forgot a crucial meeting at the office with your boss to go over the final draft of an important document. Two hours later, you realize what you have done, and you call him/her to apologize. You say:



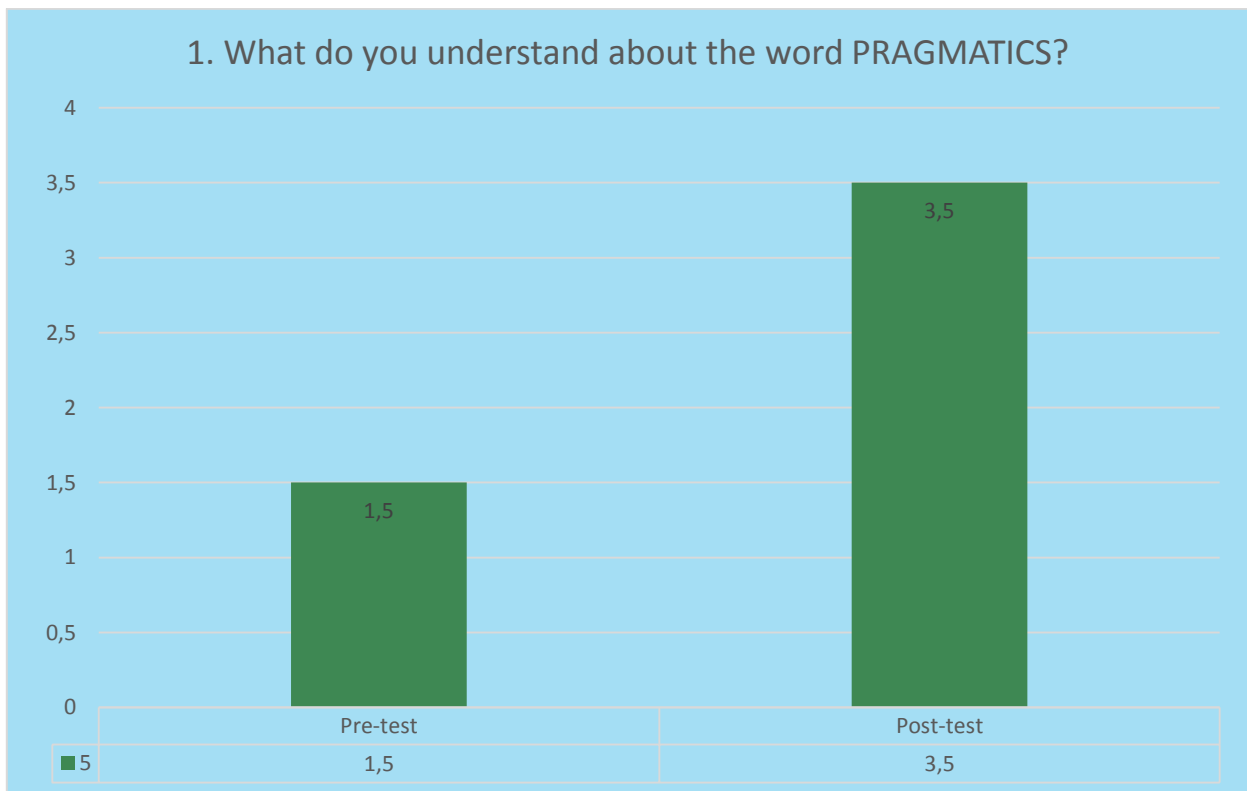
Twelve students answered “sorry”, which is 54.4 % of the sample. Thus, it was concluded that most teenagers would use this phrase to apologize in this particular situation. Three students answered “very sorry”, which is 13.6%. Meanwhile, three students answered “really sorry” which is 13.6%. Finally, four students, representing 18.1% answered, “I forgot”. This gives a clue of how they would react in a real situation. Consequently, these phrases are needed to accomplish their interests and necessities.

Regarding this information, it could be concluded that the majority of students are able to apologize in an understandable manner. However, they enjoy learning through these activities and routines, and all of them felt motivated.

4.2 Result and analysis: Pre-Test and Post-test

As mentioned above, there was a pre-test and a post-test that were applied to twenty-two students at “Unidad Educativa Particular Nuestra Familia” High School. There were three questions and each question had a different result. The total of these tests was about fifteen points.

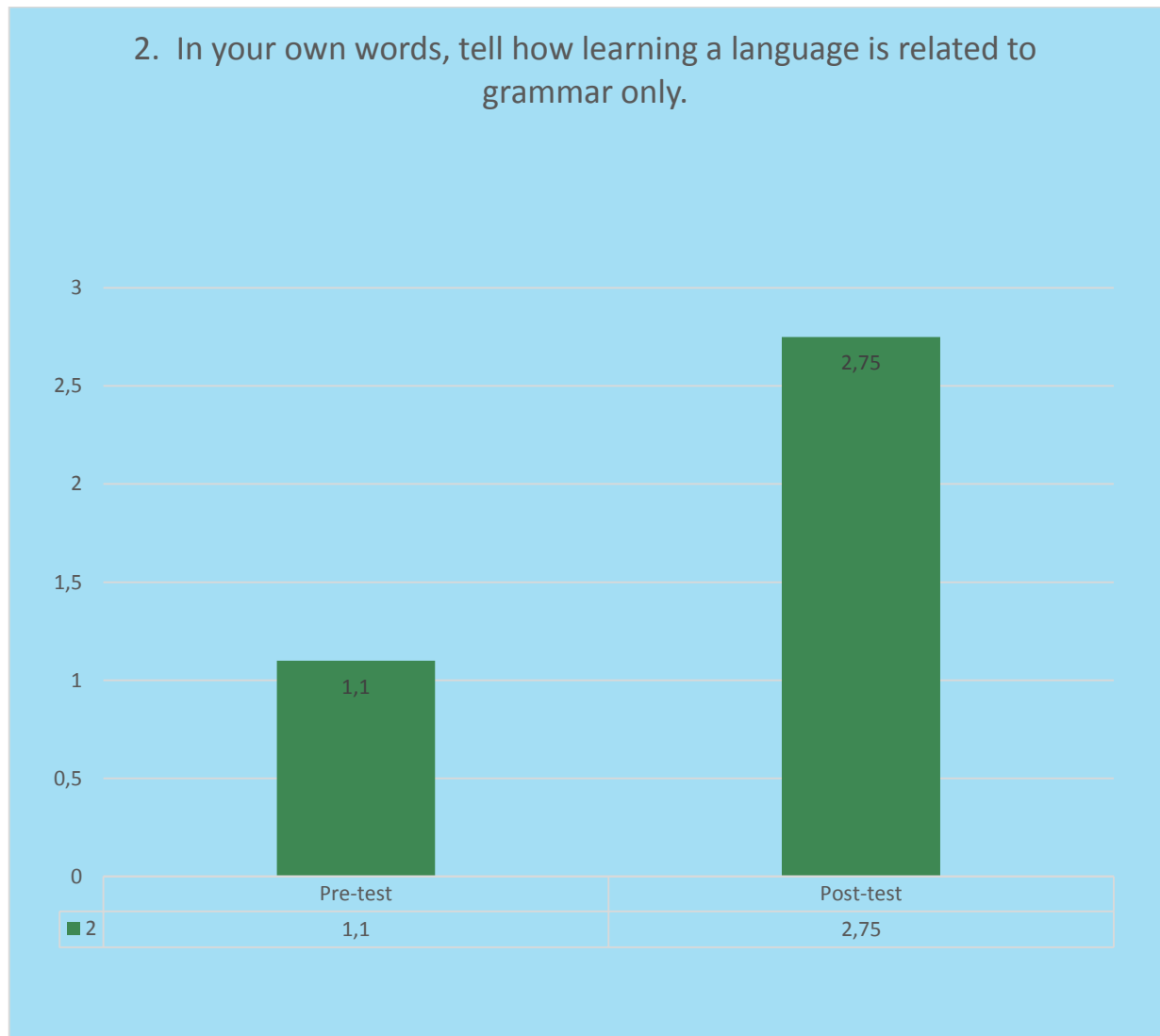
Figure 1



The overall average of the first question was over five points. As a result, the general grade that all the students achieved was 1.5 over 5 in the pre-test. Applying the principle of pragmatics, the average score varied 3.5 over 5 in the post-test. This means that there was considerable improvement from the pre-test

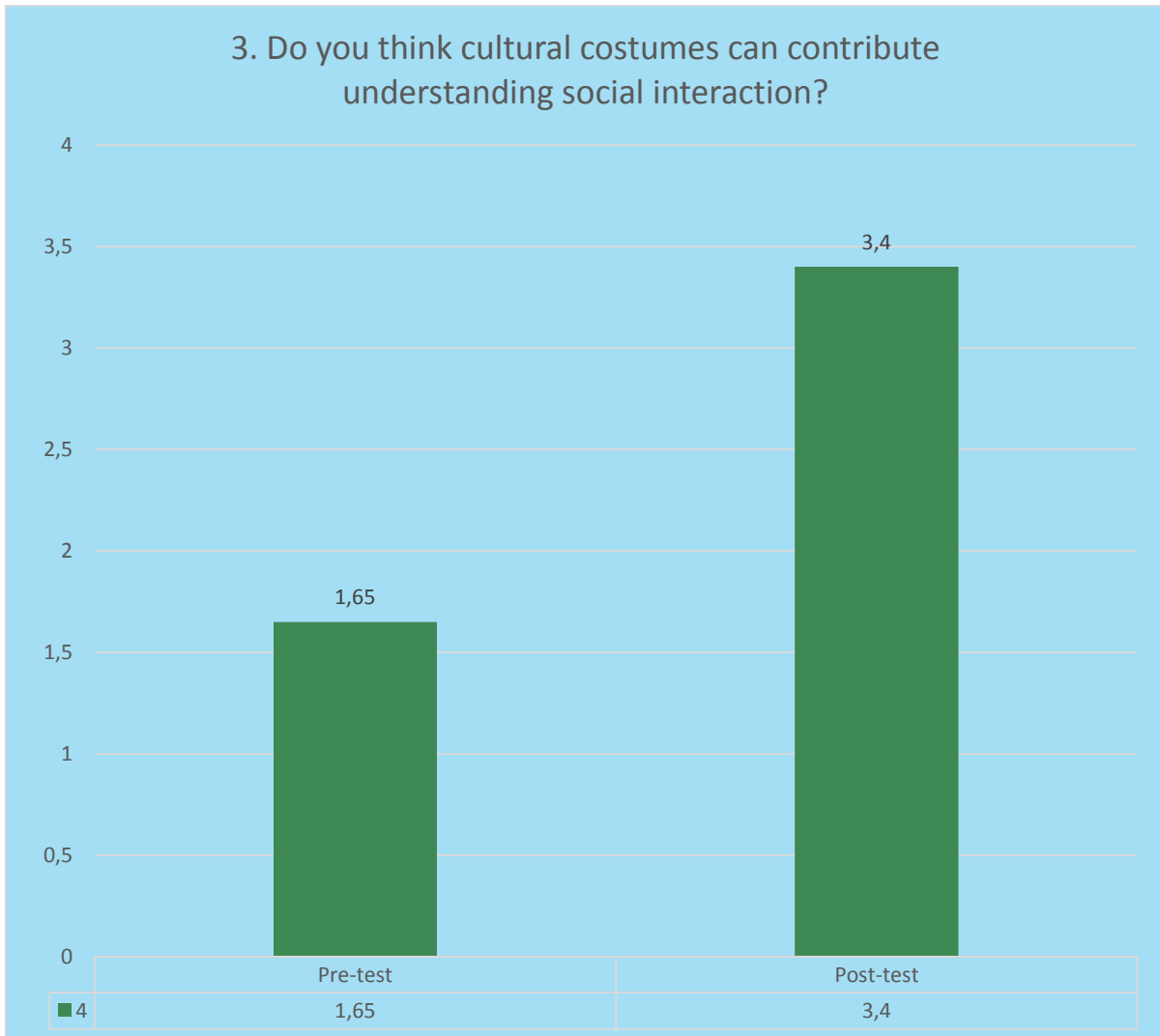
to post-test. Therefore, it was determined that all students are capable of developing pragmatic knowledge.

Figure 2



In the second question, the result was over 4 points. Here students received 1.10 over 5 points in the pre-test, and they got 2.74 over 5 in the post test. This question was a little bit difficult for them.

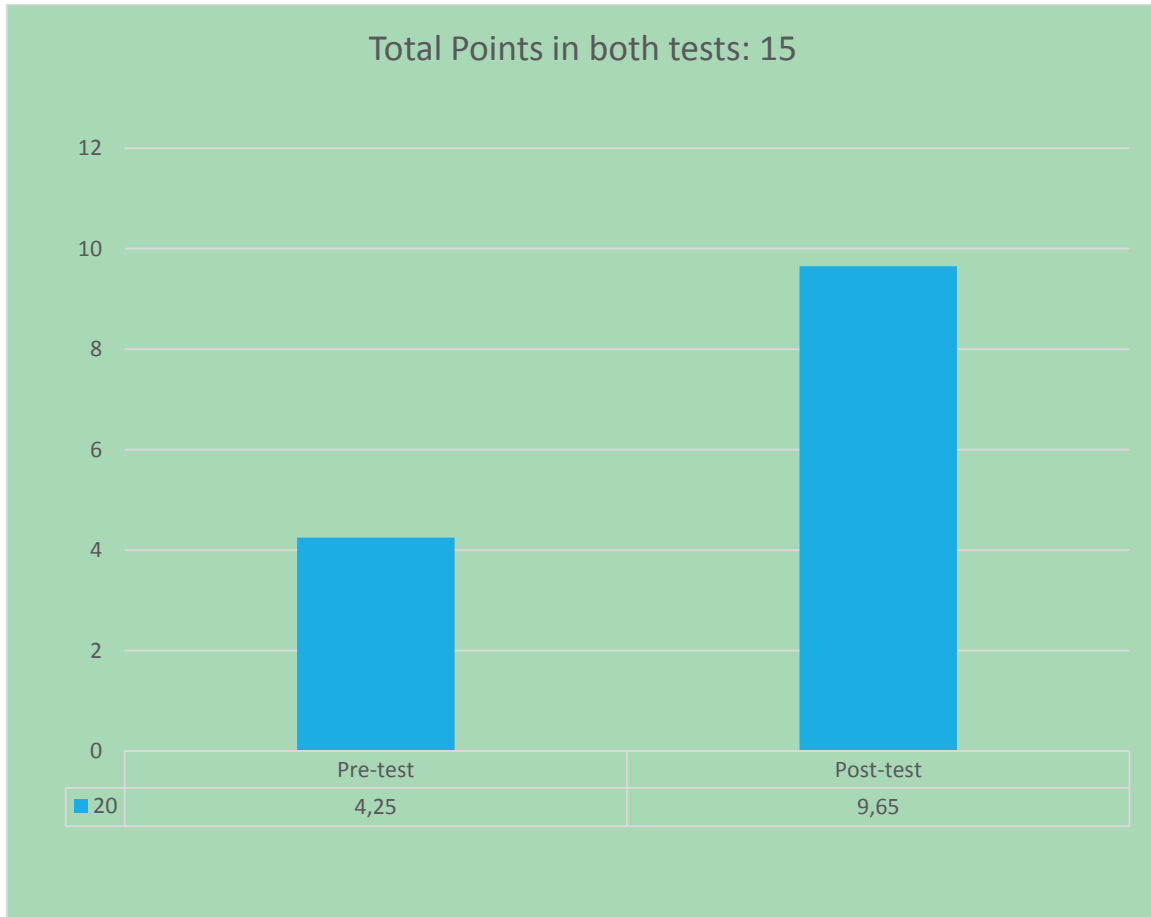
Figure 3



In the third question, the result was over 4.95 points. The students got 1.65 over 5 in the pre-test. They had difficulties with this question in which they had to provide cultural aspects from their own point of view. Then, applying the theory, the average increased to 3.4. That is to say, after the application of Pragmatic definitions, they could come up with better ideas.

4.3 Total results of pre-test and post-test

Figure 4



In this graph, we can observe the results of the pre-test and the post-test. In the pre-test, students obtained 4.25, and in the post-test we can see that the average is higher 9.65. This means that after the application of Pragmatics definitions, students acquired an increase in learning through the activities.

During the application, and development of learning through the process of Pragmatics, students felt comfortable doing activities according to their interests. Altogether, they had a positive attitude, when we were working in each activity.



CHAPTER V

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

With all the previous information based on the bibliographic sources, the Pre and Post-tests, it could be determined that:

Pragmatics provides a huge range of benefits to both teachers and students. These benefits are the enjoyment of the classes by the students, and the significant or meaningful learning they experience. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers take advantage of the benefits of planning a class using Pragmatics. It has become a popular and effective tool in the EFL classroom.

According to the results of the study completed at Unidad Educativa Particular Nuestra Familia, in-class application of this theory, I am convinced and have concluded that the implementation of this theory helps in the process of teaching and learning, especially exploring deeper meanings of expressions in English beyond normal grammar rules. The activities are based on the interests and different cultural contexts and the students can apply and understand the use of them in real life situations. This theory can be applied to different skills, and it is an important option for both teachers and students in the teaching/learning process.

By implementing the theory of Pragmatics in the classroom, students achieve increased learning through cultural context. In this project, these studies have demonstrated that by studying pragmatics, most people gain communicative



competence. As a conclusion of this research and the in-class application, I have realized that students learned and also enjoyed participating in this project.

Finally, I can conclude by stating that the application of this theory in the classroom provides excellent results in the teaching/learning process. Students learn more and the teacher accomplishes his or her goals which are to engage and motivate students more effectively. It improves and advances the learning outcomes for all students, including those who normally may not be very interested or engaged.

5.2 Recommendations

Senior students at Unidad Educativa Nuestra Familia High School have demonstrated they possess a high level of second language proficiency. They have the ability to express themselves in the target language and are able to understand everything they listen to. However, working with them also helped to corroborate the theories that state the existence of a misunderstanding between the literal meaning of language and cultural context meaning. It is important to mention that not only oral communication was a part of the research, but activities in which students were cognitively challenged were also practiced. They were asked to perform writing tasks, where higher order thinking skills, such as analysis and synthesis, were involved. As well as with spoken activities, some students failed to complete these tasks. For this purpose, learners need to be cognitively



challenged, but with the necessary contextual and linguistic support so that they can complete the given activities and thus start acquiring pragmatic proficiency.

We teachers are an important part in the teaching/learning process. It is significant to choose a suitable methodology to instruct our learners, according to their specific needs. However, it is also important to be present not only to share knowledge but also to encourage students to be convinced that they are able to perform any activity. Students have become true communicators who are engaged in the entire process. The teacher is a facilitator for the students' learning and a manager of the classroom activities. The teacher is the one in charge to create the most appropriate environment, where she/he and his/her students are human beings who can learn from each other. A good learning environment can lead students to acquire knowledge easily, and to create critical thought processes and practical intelligence.

I recommend that the person who wants to apply this theory in his or her class should search for information about this theory. By so doing, the teacher will gain the necessary knowledge to identify the context that students will have to face. Depending on the time available, I recommend that this project should be applied for a longer period than I had, which was only four (4) sessions.



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Appendices

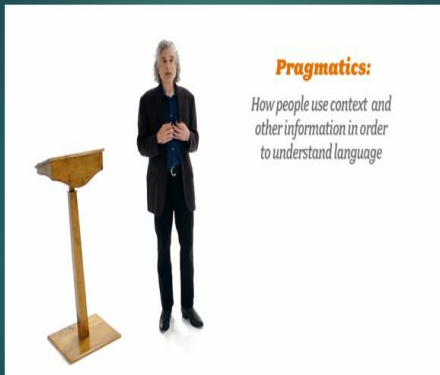
Appendix 1

PRAGMATICS...?

HOW PEOPLE USE CONTEXT AND OTHER INFORMATION IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND LANGUAGE

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND
MISSUNDERSTANDING SITUATIONS !!!!!

VIDEO ABOUT PRAGMATICS



VIDEO: INFORMATION IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND LANGUAGE



Appendix 2

Cross-Cultural Pragmatics and Research

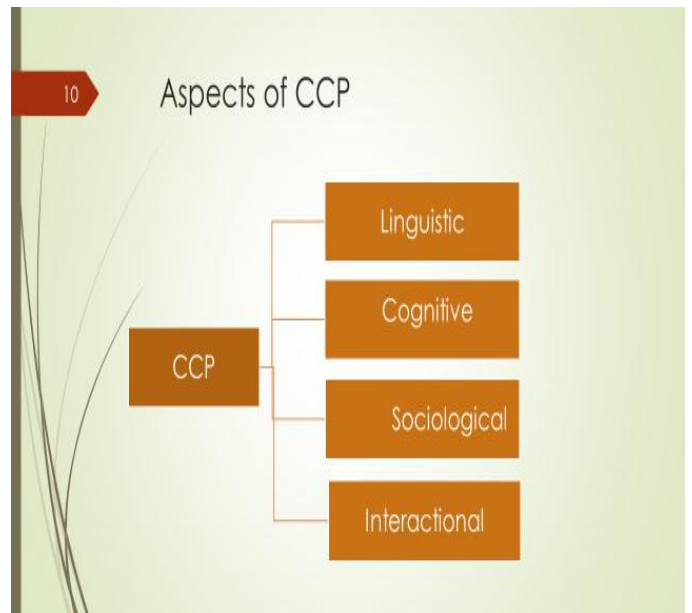
2 Scope of Today's Discussion

I assume that you are well familiar with the following areas in general pragmatics:


1. Deixis
2. Conversational implicature
3. Presupposition
4. Speech acts
5. Conversational structure

Our discussion will go beyond these subtopics

8 VIDEO: PRAGMATICS OF "HELLO"




12 1. Linguistic analysis of CC misunderstanding



What is the possible cause?

- "Language proficiency"
- "Nature of language"
- "Semantics"
- "Linguistic typology"
- "Metaphor"
- "Culture-dependent language use"

13 2. Cognitive analysis of CC misunderstanding



- Misunderstandings are caused NOT by difficulty in drawing the intended implicature, but by lack of access to the correct explicature of the utterance.

14 2. Cognitive analysis of CC misunderstanding

1)

A: It's cold in here.
B: I can turn off the AC now.

2) Phone rings

D picks up the phone.
D: Good morning.
C: Hi, is Jeff in?
D: One sec please.

16 2. Cognitive analysis of CC misunderstanding

1. Speaker's intention is crucial in this domain.
2. The addressee's recognition of the speaker's communicative intention allows him to make inferences in order to understand the speaker's informative intention.

- Informative intention: the intention to inform an audience of something.
- Communicative intention: the intention to inform an audience of one's informative intention.

19

3. Sociological analysis of CC misunderstanding

1. Politeness theory
 - a) Face
 - b) Positive face and negative face
 - c) FIA's



Preference Organization

- a) Preferred (affiliative) action
- b) Dispreferred (disaffiliative) action

27

4. Interactional analysis of CC misunderstanding



29

Misunderstandings in CC interaction

1. When to talk
 - a) Silence can be highly valued.
 - b) Some culture believe it inappropriate to strangers.
 - c) Familiarity vs. chance and amount of talk.
 - d) Some don't talk when expected to by other groups.
 - e) Stereotype of 'other'
 - a) Talking 'other'
 - b) Quiet 'other'

37

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!!





Appendix 3

Discourse test and task in Pragmatics Completions

Where are you from? _____

Please write down what you would say if you were in this situation:

You completely forgot a crucial meeting at the office with your boss to go over the final draft of an important document. Two hours later you realize what you have done, and you call him/her to apologize. You say:

- Sorry Very Sorry Really Sorry I Forgot



Appendix 4

Pre-test and Post Test

Discourse test and task in Pragmatics Completions

Role Number _____

1. - What do you understand about the word PRAGMATICS? /5

2. – In your own words, tell how learning a language is related to grammar only. /5

3. – Do you think cultural costumes can contribute understanding social interaction? /5



Appendix 5

Pictures of a Classroom Application



