Awareness Raising Strategies for improving speaking competence

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Key words: Communication competence, cultural awareness, raising awareness, confidence, vocabulary, pragmatics, different strategies.

Introduction

It is known that in today's competitive world, language learning and its research is one of the essential topics. Different approaches and strategies are being developed by linguists and scientists around world in order to facilitate the learning process of language learners. Not only in the whole world, but also in Uzbekistan, learning a language and introducing it into the practical teaching process is one of the important priority tasks. This research paper is about the challenges in the process of speaking and awareness of raising different strategies to develop learners` communication competence. This analyzes the various research works on the importance of communication ability and its development, in addition, it can give some information based on the new strategies of learning speaking skills. During the process, ESL/EFL instructors can use these techniques in order to work with the students` speaking skills.

New approaches for improving communication competence

Different approaches and strategies are being developed by linguists and scientists around world in order to facilitate the learning process of language learners. Not only in the whole world, but also in Uzbekistan, learning a language and introducing it into the practical teaching process is one of the important priority tasks. According to research, it is important to acquire all types of abilities of the language, and pay special attention to the ability to speak. As the Indonesian scientist Nugroho (2010) said, 4 different language skills, such as speaking, learning, listening and reading, are important, but the most important thing is to engage in communication.

In fact, it is observed that any student learning a foreign language faces some difficulties in mastering the language and communicating accurately and fluently in it. Because foreign languages, especially English, are structurally different from our native language. In addition, during free speech, students face several problems related to vocabulary, lack of self-confidence, and pronunciation. In addition to this, differences in terms of culture could make the speaking process difficult. This can influence the effectiveness of the communication competence.

According to the pragmatic norms (Ishihara & Cohen p.77), there are particular causes of learners` divergence, such as negative transfer, limited grammar ability, overgeneralization, instructional effect, and learners` choice to using. These causes can lead learners to misunderstandings in international communication in target languages. As I had no teaching experience, I can describe two of them, which may affect learners` pragmatic abilities in the future. The first is negative transfer, which refers to the effect of learners` knowledge of their cultures on the use of the L2. For example, for Arab women, it is not acceptable to greet with men by shaking hands, while it is usual for American women. If an American man greet with one of the Arab women in this usual way, it can cause some problems in terms of negative transfer. Ishihara & Cohen stated that every learner needs to be careful with norms of pragmatics while transferring. When it comes to limited grammar ability, it can be one of issues in communicating in pragmatics. As some learners have little grammar accuracy, they may have difficulty in interpreting messages as indented and producing pragmatically accurate sentences (Schmidt.1983). For example, there are some expressions and grammatical structures, which help to produce different pragmatic norms for learners. By these words, listeners can understand the intended meaning by speakers and have good conversation between them.

The following activities can help to improve learners` pragmatic ability by solving the issues of learners` divergence, particularly negative transfer and limited grammar ability.

Activity 1   Compare & Contrast

In this activity, learners need to find similarities and differences between native and target languages. Learners should give responses by using terms, expressions in grammar and complete the table below:

Cultural features	Native language	Target language
Greeting		
Apologizing		
Thanking		
Complaining		
Compliments		

The activity can be completed with some features in order to know more about pragmatic norms.

Activity 2   Problematic situation

Let learners try to find some expressions and terms related to pragmatic norms. They should solve problems in this situation by using different strategies in pragmatics. Let them think about the influence of these words in pragmatics on integrating the intended messages to the listener.

Work in groups of three. The teacher is going to give different types of shop. The thing to do is to complain the service or equipment, which was bought. The student should find terms or expressions on how to complain criticize the issue by taking into consideration of different pragmatic norms. The activity can be changed by adding more categories of speech acts, such as thanking or apologizing.

Activity 3   Role-play

Promote students to work individually. Each student should choose any nationalities or culture based on his or her option or teacher`s preferences. In this activity, they need to become a member of particular culture and behave them in such manner. A student will be interviewer by interacting with these guests and giving questions to answer. In this role-play, students have to search some features related to a particular culture and answer the questions given by the interviewer considering these differences or similarities. The activity encourages learners to use pragmatic norms in communication as well as making aware of misunderstandings or mistakes occurred by negative transfer. Example:

American interviewer: Good morning, how is your wife and children?

Portuguese:…………………………..

Japanese:…………………………..

Indian:…………………………….

Arab:…………………………………

Uzbek:………………………………….

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