

DETERMINING THE COMMUNICATION CONTEXT THROUGH PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE

by:

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Pragmatic competence refers to the ability to use language appropriately in a social context. (Taguchi, 2009, as cited in the article The Importance of Developing Pragmatic Competence in the EFL Classroom, 2015) It is one of the essential elements to effective communication in a second language. It is the key to send a particular purpose through the language and be understood by the receiver of the message. However, this competency is often overlooked by learners.

We often encounter students who are very good at English grammar yet cannot use the language effectively. When they apply the knowledge in language through writing or speaking, they began to realize that knowing the structure of the language alone is not enough. They must not only know what the word and its structure is, but they should also know how to use it in a context.

Having this situation, the responsibility of an English Second Language Teacher now brings into play. the following approaches must be used in teaching and later serve as an advice to them how important pragmatic competence is.

- Enhance pragmatic awareness. This should be one of our main goals in our class. Being aware of it or knowing what it is all about can change their mindset as well as ours in learning English as a second language.
- Put pragmatic competence into practice. For them to learn completely, they should start practicing it by using it in their daily communication with others. And

teachers can help learners in this part by providing situations where students can use their knowledge in the language.

- Have a background on the cultural differences of the language. Students must see that there are words in Filipino which do not have a direct translation in the English language. This is one of the reasons why ESL learner has difficulty in communicating effectively. Students must find out how cultural background affects one's understanding of the word, which also affects effective communication.
- Reflect on the results of their assessment. ESL teachers must provide important feedback in the learners' output. And students must learn to reflect on their works through the feedback given. With this, students can reflect on their errors and can improve such errors toward effective communication.

Since English is widely used, as an ESL teacher we should ensure that students must not only good in grammar but as well as in pragmatic to have more effective communication and actual achievement in learning the language.

References:

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