

Revisiting Grammatical versus Pragmatic Competence in Learning a Language

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meninjau kembali perbedaan kompetensi gramatikal dan kompetensi pragmatik dalam pembelajaran bahasa. Desain makalah ini adalah penelitian kepustakaan dengan mempelajari buku, jurnal, literatur, catatan, dan laporan yang berkaitan dengan kompetensi gramatikal dan pragmatik. Sumber data untuk laporan proyek ini adalah buku-buku yang relevan dan penelitian sebelumnya berupa artikel jurnal tentang kompetensi gramatikal dan pragmatik. Hasil penelitian menyatakan bahwa hanya mengetahui kaidah-kaidah gramatikal atau bahasa saja tanpa mengetahui kapan dan di mana kaidah-kaidah itu harus diterapkan tidaklah cukup. Ini tidak hanya membahas tata bahasa tetapi juga makna. Ini bisa berarti bahwa harus ada lebih banyak latihan untuk mengidentifikasi kesalahan tata bahasa dan pragmatik. Guru kemudian harus mendorong siswa mereka untuk menyadari kesalahan tata bahasa dan pragmatik dan memperlakukan mereka dengan serius. Akibatnya, penelitian ini telah menarik perhatian pada masalah ini dan dapat membantu pembelajar bahasa dalam mempromosikan kompetensi pragmatik mereka.

Kata kunci: *kompetensi gramatikal, kompetensi pragmatik.*

ABSTRACT

This study aims to revisit the difference between grammatical and pragmatic competence in language learning. This paper design is library research by studying books, journals, literature, notes, and reports related to grammatical and pragmatic competence. The data sources for this project report are relevant books and previous studies in the form of journal articles about grammatical and pragmatic competence. Result of the study stated that knowing only grammatical or language rules without knowing when and where the rules must be applied is insufficient. It addresses not only grammar but also meaning. This could imply that there should be more practice exercises for identifying grammatical and pragmatic errors. The teachers should then encourage their students to be aware of grammatical and pragmatic errors and treat them seriously. As a result, this study has brought this issue to light and may aid language learners in developing their pragmatic ability.

Keywords: Grammatical competence, pragmatic competence.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the goals of learning a language is to be able to communicate effectively. In this regard, communicative competence is divided into three categories: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence (Canale and Swain, 1980). Grammatical competence focuses on knowledge of a language's syntax or morphological structure to derive it. Meanwhile, sociolinguistic competence and strategic

competence, which are both grouped under pragmatic competence (Gumperz et al., 2008), emphasize the ability of learners to understand a speaker's intent through their appreciation of the factors governing a speaker's choice of language in a given social context, as well as their ability to understand how the context affects their use of language.

In 1998, Bardovi Harlig, K., and Dörnyei, Z. conducted research titled "Do language learners recognize pragmatic violations?" In instructed L2

learning, pragmatic awareness trumps grammatical awareness. Consequently, they provided an early study investigating the ability of language learners to recognize pragmatic and grammatical faults. The investigated factors were the learning environment (LOR) and overall L2 competency. The researchers sought out the help of students and teachers from Hungary and Italy who were studying and teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), and those from the United States who were studying and teaching English as a second language (ESL).

The data analysis found that in the learning environment, ESL students in the United States placed a higher value on total L2 proficiency and were more forgiving of grammatical faults but less tolerant of pragmatic errors. On the other hand, the EFL students had the opposite trend. Pragmatic breaches were emphasized, whereas Hungarian and Italian EFL students were more concerned with grammatical faults.

According to Mundby (1981), to communicate effectively, a speaker must be able to produce and use all grammatical utterances of a language. It is difficult for someone who does not have sufficient knowledge of grammatical competence to interact with other people. Therefore, language cannot be used communicatively without grammar, a necessary component of language communication (Nunan, 1989).

Swain and Lapkin (1998) demonstrated that without grammar, learners could not acquire accurate language from long-term rich and meaningful input. Finally, Brown (2000) contends that grammar plays an essential role in developing communicative competence.

To communicate successfully, a learner will require knowledge that extends beyond grammar and vocabulary. Mastering pragmatic competence is one way to do so.

Chomsky (1980) defined pragmatic competence early on as "knowledge of the conditions and manner of appropriate use (of the language) in conformity with various purposes." The speaker must also know what to say, to whom, when, and where. It implies that understanding the literal meaning of the utterances and the implied meaning far beyond them is critical. Failure to do so may lead to misunderstandings, breakdowns in communication, and characterizing TL learners as insensitive, impolite, or incapable (Thomas, 1983).

This concept was seen as opposed to grammatical competence, which Chomsky defined as "knowledge of form and meaning." Therefore, it may be stated that pragmatic competence is an integral aspect of the communicative competence of the learners rather than a supplement to their previous grammatical knowledge (Kasper 1997).

When it comes to effective linguistic communication, there is a disconnect between language form (the grammatical aspect) and language function or language use (the pragmatic component), as the previous explanations have demonstrated. They are seen as the opposite competencies by the researchers. Regarding the gap, this paper revisits the difference between grammatical and pragmatic competence in learning a language.

2. METHODS

This paper design is library research by studying books, journals, literature, notes, and reports related to grammatical and pragmatic competence. The data sources for this project report are relevant books and previous studies in the form of journal articles about grammatical and pragmatic competence.

Data were collected by doing some steps. They were 1) collecting some relevant research/journal articles on grammatical competence and pragmatic competence on the internet (google

scholar); 2) read those books and journal articles carefully; 3) carefully selected good quality journal articles that are relevant to the objectives of this paper.

Data were analyzed by doing some steps. They are: 1) identifying and discussing grammatical and pragmatic competence relevant to this paper's objectives. Then, 2) presenting and describing the findings in the Findings and Discussion section according to the objective of this study. Lastly, 3) this paper concludes by summarizing the important notions between grammatical competence and pragmatic competence.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Grammatical Competence versus Pragmatic Competence

Grammatical competence, according to Diaz-Rico and Weed (1995), enhances correctness and fluency in L2 production and becomes more important as the learner progresses in proficiency. Grammatical competence involves understanding of the language code, vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling conventions, word formation and function, and sentence structures.

Grammatical (linguistic) competence, according to Chomsky, is the theoretical and practical knowledge of a small number of grammatical rules that allow an unlimited number of accurate sentences to be generated (Chomsky, 1965). Grammatical competence, according to Nassaji and Fotos (2011), is the speakers' understanding of grammar forms and meanings, as well as their theoretical understanding of how to apply them. This type of information is reflected in the grammatical rules. Competence, in other words, is a mental state. Sentence-based exercises are commonly used to develop grammatical competence.

Grammatical competence includes knowledge of all lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence grammar, semantics, and phonology

(Purpura, 2004:53). As a result, it entails managing the language code's pure language aspects in terms of verbal and nonverbal codes. This is consistent with Hymes' grammatical knowledge, including the lexicon, syntax, phonology, and semantics. As a result, it entails the formulation of rules and limits for students to match sound and meaning; form words and sentences using vocabulary; use language through spelling and pronunciation; and handle linguistic semantics (Larsen-Freeman, 2001:120).

As a result, appropriate grammatical competence will assist learners in acquiring such ability to produce the language. It is closely related to correctly combining lexical resources as well as rules. Furthermore, it is related to comprehending the message or idea while interacting with others. As a result, it plays a vital role in facilitating such communication.

Grammatical competence is the knowledge of grammar and the ability to apply grammar in meaningful contexts. In other words, it is the ability to use the internal rules and system of language.

Furthermore, grammatical competence is regarded as a foundation for developing communicative competence. According to Canale and Swain (1980), Grammatical competence is "knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence grammar semantics, and phonology" and is a component of communicative competence. When people speak in their native language, they adhere to formal linguistic standards such as grammatical rules and relevant linguistic principles (Shu & Radio, 2018). In this case, systematic grammar can assist us in controlling a language's formal structure to write acceptable sentences and arrange them in texts (Deda, 2013). As a result, when we communicate with one another, we can use grammar in a context-appropriate manner.

Meanwhile, for less than a decade, the concept of pragmatic competence and its development toward second language acquisition has been a source of explicit concern in L2 studies. For example, in a more contextualized manner, Canale and Swain (1980) incorporated pragmatic skill as a crucial component of their model of communicative competence. In a nutshell, pragmatics is concerned with culture, communication, second languages, and intercultural communication.

Second language learners must cultivate cultural understanding and communication skills to acquire pragmatic competence. Understanding, constructing, and conveying meanings that are both accurate and appropriate for the social and cultural contexts in which communication occurs is referred to as pragmatic competence. Theorizing that pragmatic competence is a component of communicative competence, Blackman (cited in Barron, 2003) distinguished it from illocutionary competence. These refer to the combination of speech acts and speech functions, as well as the use of language appropriately in context.

Bardovi-Harlig (1996) highlights the significance of pragmatism and the repercussions of its absence: Speakers who fail to employ pragmatically acceptable language risk looking, at best, uncooperative and, at worst, unpleasant or disrespectful. This is especially true for advanced learners, whose high level of linguistic competency causes native speakers to anticipate a high level of pragmatic ability.

Understanding, constructing, and conveying meanings that are both accurate and appropriate for the social and cultural contexts in which communication occurs is referred to as pragmatic competence (Deda, 2013). According to Horn and Ward (2006), some aspects of pragmatic competence are implicature, presupposition,

reference, speech acts, deixis, Definiteness, and Indefiniteness.

Jung provides a more detailed explanation of pragmatic competence (2001). Jung (2001) defines a pragmatically competent language user as someone who possesses the subsequent attributes:

1) Capacity to Deliver Speech Acts

The speech act was created by Austin (1962), and it was later built upon by Searle (1969). Austin worked harder on speech acts and enhanced their effectiveness a few years later, in 1969. Yule (1996) classified them into five subsets: Declaratives, Representatives or Assertives, Expressives, Directives, and Commissives.

2) Capacity to Express and Understand Nonliteral Meanings

This skill is inextricably linked to Grice's cooperative ideas and the definition of implicature. Grice defined the cooperative principle that underpins conversation: Make your conversational contribution as required by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged, at the stage at which it occurs (Grice 1975). Grice's cooperative principle is a set of expected norms in conversations. It is made up of four maxims that we must follow to be cooperative and understood: the maxim of quality, the maxim of quantity, the maxim of relation, and the maxim of manner. Implicatures can help us communicate more effectively than simply saying everything we want.

3) Politeness Strategies

As stated by Holmes (2008), politeness involves mastery of the community's language and cultural values. She also states that "generally speaking, politeness consists in considering the feelings

of others."

4) Capability to Perform Discourse Functions

Linguists discovered for several decades that sentence is not the only criterion of communication, and that examination of language and language learning should extend beyond sentences to texts called discourse. Different parts of the text are interconnected, albeit in different ways. In some cases, linguistic elements can distinguish the cohesion of facts and their association with sentences, while in others, the semantic association between them is what offers cohesion and cohesiveness.

5) Cultural knowledge

It is what individuals "need to know in order to act as they do, create the things they create, and interpret their experiences in their own unique way" (Quinn & Holland, 1987:4). Bloch (1991) defines culture as "what humans are required to become familiar with to materialize reasonably and efficiently in the social environment." Retnowaty (2017) stated that when the teacher only teaches grammar and vocabulary to students who never travel outside the country, it can also influence their lower pragmatic competence because they do not understand the culture.

Chomsky (1980) defined pragmatic competence as "knowledge of the conditions and method of proper use (of the language) in conformity with distinct goals" in relation to grammatical versus pragmatic competence (Tello Rueda, 2006:173). Chomsky differentiates it from grammatical competence by claiming that grammatical competence is limited to knowledge of the language's form. In contrast, pragmatic competence is more closely related to its application.

Regarding the link between grammatical and pragmatic ability, two claims have been advanced. First, Bardovi-Harlig (1996) presents evidence against the concept that a grammatical foundation is a necessity for pragmatic development, i.e. that L2 learners cannot learn pragmatics without the grammar to express it. Knowing only grammatical or language rules without knowing when and where the rules must be applied is insufficient. It addresses not only grammar but also meaning.

Kasper supports this finding, and Rose (2002), points out that pragmatics' reliance on grammar can take three forms: Illocutionary power is not expressed or modified by learners' knowledge of a particular grammatical structure or feature. One of the three ways in which learners can show they have an understanding of grammar is by using it to express pragmalinguistic functions that aren't commonly used in their native language, as well as by using it in ways that don't alter the illocutionary force of the speaker.

The other demonstrates that students are capable of being appropriate from a pragmatic perspective even if they do not understand the grammatical structures that native speakers expect. A study conducted by Mojabi (2014) also supports this finding. The goal of the study was to determine the levels of pragmatic competence among Iranian EFL students and to correlate these levels with their grammatical abilities. The findings reveal a weak or non-existent link between grammatical and pragmatic ability among EFL Iranian university students. However, the data demonstrate that learning approaches have a considerable impact on the pragmatic and grammar ability of Iranian students.

4. CONCLUSION

Finally, two claims have been made about the discussion related to grammatical and pragmatic competence. Firstly, A grammatical foundation is required for pragmatic growth. Secondly, learners can be pragmatically appropriate even if they do not understand the grammatical structures that native speakers expect. However, knowing only grammatical competence (language rules) or pragmatic competence (when and where the rules must be applied) is insufficient. Students need to understand both competencies to be able to communicate effectively.

The teachers should then encourage their students to be aware of grammatical and pragmatic errors and treat them seriously. As a result, the article has brought this issue to light and may help language learners improve their pragmatic ability. However, this study recommends that additional efforts should be made to increase pragmatic competence by encouraging learners to employ alternate ways outside of the classroom, such as viewing movies, using interactive software, and, when possible, speaking with native speakers.

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