

Analyzing Pragmatic Failures in Multilingual Interactions

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Abstrak

Berbeda dengan aturan umum kinerja bahasa, kegagalan pragmatik adalah penyalahgunaan komunikasi antarpribadi yang disebabkan oleh pemilihan frasa dan bentuk bahasa yang salah berdasarkan konteks. Tingkat leksikal dan gramatikal merupakan komponen utamanya. Komunikasi antarbudaya tercipta sebagai hasil dari orang-orang dari latar belakang sosial ekonomi dan budaya yang beragam yang mulai berkomunikasi satu sama lain karena berbagai alasan seiring dengan meningkatnya globalisasi. Oleh karena itu, judul penelitian tentang penggunaan metodologi penelitian kualitatif untuk menganalisis kegagalan pragmatik dalam kontak multibahasa diangkat oleh penulis. Bahasa dan budaya saling terkait, seperti yang diketahui, dan setiap budaya memiliki sifat dan hukumnya sendiri. Orang-orang dari berbagai budaya memiliki nilai, perspektif hidup, dan pandangan dunia yang beragam, serta standar moral dan cara berpikir yang berbeda, dll.

Kata kunci: *Interaksi, Komunikasi, Kegagalan Pragmatik, Multibahasa*

Abstract

In contrast to the broad rules of language performance, pragmatic failure is the abuse of interpersonal communication caused by the wrong selection of phrases and language forms based on the context. The lexical and grammatical levels are its primary components. Intercultural communication is created as a result of people from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds starting to communicate with one another for a variety of reasons as globalization intensifies. Therefore, the title of the study on the use of qualitative research methodologies to analyze pragmatic failure in multilingual contact is raised by the author. Language and culture are interwoven, as is well known, and every culture has its own traits and laws. People from various cultures have diverse values, perspectives on life, and worldviews, as well as different moral standards and ways of thinking, etc.

Keyword: *Interaction, Communication, Pragmatic Failure, Multilingualism*

INTRODUCTION

Intercultural communication is created as a result of people from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds starting to communicate with one another for a variety of reasons as globalization intensifies. Communication between native speakers and non-native speakers, as well as interactions with people from any culture, language, or cultural background, are all considered forms of cross-cultural communication (Hu Wenzhong, 1994). The term "pragmatic failure" describes a communication breakdown brought on by the message receiver misinterpreting the message's actual purpose. (Thomas, 1983).

In other words, the recipient of the message may unintentionally break interpersonal norms, social conventions, cultural values, etc., required by the target language, even though the sentences he utters in verbal communication are correct in symbolic relations. This will result in pragmatic failure and communication barriers. Jenny Thomas distinguishes between two types of pragmatic failure: sociopragmatic failure and pragmalinguistic failure (Thomas, 1983). When language learners merely connect the literal meaning of their mother tongue with the foreign

language, or fail to comprehend the language's rules, this is known as pragmatic linguistic failure. To put it another way, they either strictly mimic the foreign language form according to the structure of their home tongue or abuse foreign language terms. The speaker's lack of social and cultural skills leads to sociopragmatic failure. The speaker's inability to finish the illocutionary speech act that is necessary in the communication scenario

Multilingual Interaction involves the ability to communicate and engage in multiple languages, enhancing understanding and collaboration in a variety of settings. It is a key component of today's global society, where multiple languages intersect in many aspects of life. Multilingual Interaction is essential because it facilitates better communication, fosters cultural exchange, and promotes inclusivity. Engaging in multilingual interaction requires an understanding of multiple aspects of language and culture. It is more than just translating words; it involves understanding the context, tone, and cultural nuances that influence communication. Multilingual interaction is essential in education, business, and cross-cultural collaboration. The ability to communicate in more than one language or multilingualism is increasingly becoming a global phenomenon. Research shows that multilingualism in children has a significant impact on their cognitive development, particularly in learning, memory, and language. In a biopsychological context, multilingualism involves the interaction of biological (such as brain structure and genetics) and psychological (such as cognitive and social processes) factors. This provides insight into how multilingualism affects children not only at the linguistic level, but also in broader cognitive capacities.

METHOD

This type of research is qualitative, where qualitative is a research method that focuses on collecting and analyzing non-numerical data to understand social, cultural, or psychological phenomena in depth and detail. According to Moleong (2007: 6) which defines qualitative research as research that aims to understand the phenomena experienced by the research subjects. More acceptable and appropriate for studying topics pertaining to the individuals' behavior, attitudes, motives, perceptions, and actions. A certain kind of literature investigation is required in this situation. Reading scholarly journals, reference books, and published materials that are available at the library in order to find research data or information is known as literature study research. (J. Supranto).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Pragmatic Failure in Multilingual Interaction

Language and culture are interwoven, as is well known, and every culture has its own traits and laws. Individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds possess distinct worldviews, perspectives on life and values, as well as varying moral standards and thought processes. So, these are the reasons why intercultural communication fails pragmatically. Pragmatic failure may occur and intercultural communication will fail if we merely comprehend a culture and ignore the effect of cultural norms while communicating our own meaning.

1. Pragmatic Failures

Studies on pragmatic failure started in the early 1980s. Jenny Thomas, an English linguist, defined the categories of pragmatic failure in her 1983 book *Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure*. Her pragmatic failure in English may be separated into two categories: social pragmatic failure and pragmatic language failure. The former relates to mistakes made because they did not conform to the customs of native English speakers, misused or misunderstood English terms, and changed the mother tongue's semantic structure into English.

The latter describes mistakes brought on by a failure to recognize cultural differences and grammatical flaws. In the same year, Leech, G (1983) further noted that social pragmatic failures occur mostly at the interface, whereas pragmatic language faults are primarily seen in linguistic and pragmatic failures. Indeed, a comprehensive national state may be described as such. Various historical, cultural, and customary factors contribute to pragmatic failure.

In cross-cultural communication, each side attempts to make assumptions based on their own cultural viewpoint, which leads to cognitive disparities and pragmatic failure. Since then, pragmatic failure has evolved in a way never seen before. Scholars have carried out thorough investigations in this area since the phrase "pragmatic failure" was first used in China, and they have also offered extremely insightful judgments. In his work *A Survey of Pragmatics*, He Ziran (1998) noted that pragmatic failure is the mistake of not attaining complete communication effect in verbal communication.

Qian Guanlian (2002) additionally noted in his book *Pragmatics in Chinese Culture* that pragmatic failure is characterized as the speaker's inability to appropriately use symbols in language communication while unintentionally breaking social norms, interpersonal conventions, or time and space, and paying little attention to the partner. Thus, pragmatic failure is the term used to describe the nature of the error. Pragmatic failure, as it is commonly called, is a verbal communication blunder that has an undesirable effect and is not caused by a grammatical fault but rather by speaking incorrectly or contrary to convention.

2. The Causes of Pragmatic Failure

In contrast to the broad rules of language performance, pragmatic failure is the abuse of interpersonal communication caused by the wrong selection of phrases and language forms based on the context. The lexical and grammatical levels are its primary components.

- 1) Lexical level: The most fundamental component of language, vocabulary serves as a vital conduit for cultural knowledge. In their discussion of word meaning, Wang Zuoliang and Ding Wangdao (1987) state that word meaning is complicated. It includes connotation, connection, and emotion in addition to the definition found in a dictionary. According to Wang Li and An Jin (2014), the selection of vocabulary is crucial to the effectiveness of multilingual engagement. It is simple to create misunderstandings and disagreement between the two parties if the terminology used in communication is inconsistent with the rules of multilingual interaction and has negative connotations.
- 2) Grammar level: A language's thought process, which has been shaped over many years of history and cultural tradition, is intimately tied to its grammar (Song Yuelan, 2001). One party must learn and apply a new way of thinking in language when communicating across cultural boundaries. This can lead to grammatical errors, which primarily include three elements: semantic ambiguity, difficulty learning syntax and word formation, and the inability to distinguish affirmative from negative sentences.

Communication failure Non-Verbal

Both spoken and nonspeoken forms of communication are used in human interactions. When communicating between cultures, individuals focus more on linguistic accuracy and acceptability while ignoring cultural variations and the impact of nonverbal cues. The anthropologist Birdwhistell (1970) found that non-verbal communication is used to augment language, which only makes up 35% of the communication process. Both parties can improve the impact of speech and get a deeper grasp of the topic of the conversation by using nonverbal behavior as a means of communicating information and expressing attitudes and sentiments.

- 1) Body language failure: Facial expressions, posture, eye contact, communication distance, and physical touch are all examples of body language. Among them, both parties' facial expressions depend on the intercultural communication setting. Additionally, various languages and cultures have varied reactions to the same facial expression. For instance, smiling at a stranger is considered courteous in many cultures, yet it is viewed as suspicious by Russians. Furthermore, intercultural communication is significantly impacted by the level of eye contact (Gao Yimei, 2016). Public distance (more than 360 cm), social distance (120-360 cm), personal distance (45-120 cm), and intimate distance (less than 45 cm) are all examples of communication distance. While Westerners value individual privacy more and like to maintain a certain distance when speaking, Chinese people are open to sharing space. Intimacy may be achieved through physical contact. diverse cultures have diverse interpretations of body posture as body language. For instance, "OK" denotes money in Japan, zero in France, and yes in the US.

- 2) Failure of auxiliary language: Tone and tone quality are part of the auxiliary language. Pragmatic failure may often result from poorly managed subject changes and silent periods (Zhang Huanxin & Zhang Yiting, 2017). Silence in Chinese culture may also imply silent support or opposition to one's own viewpoint, thus it's not necessarily a bad thing. Silence is viewed as a kind of rudeness and negativity in the West.
- 3) Failure in environment and conditions: Language failure results from the misrepresentation of time and place in cross-cultural communication. Chinese culture prefers close-quarters communication and does not respect either party's personal space. Westerners are conscious of awareness, privacy, and personal space.

3. Multilingual Interaction

Multilingual according to the Big Indonesian Dictionary can be defined as a society that not only has the ability to speak several languages but is also able to use more than two of those languages; the term multilingual in certain cases can also mean something related to more than two languages¹¹⁹. In this 4.0 era, the competence of mastering L1, L2, and L3 is a demand in building a communication network between speakers of different languages. The demand for humans to use several languages makes Multilingualism impossible to separate in the life of a diverse community with very high population mobility and demands to communicate with people who use different languages.

Trade, marriage, and conflict all have a significant impact on multilingualism. Indonesian society is a multilingual society because of the variety of regional languages spoken there, the use of Indonesian as the national language, and proficiency in other languages, particularly English and Arabic. Other foreign languages are also beginning to infiltrate and influence the current languages. The presence of many languages (foreign, Indonesian, and regional) suggests that there is interaction between them, which at first glance manifests as

- 1) a scenario where languages affect one another,
- 2) polyglot, and
- 3) linguistic rivalry or conflict.

This kind of linguistic scenario necessitates adequate and adaptable language planning since, if not detected and predicted, it can lead to societal discord that is highly detrimental to the survival of languages, particularly regional languages.

4. Interaction Multilingual Strategies to Avoid Pragmatic Failure

Learning English involves more than just mastering the language; it also entails paying attention to the cultural context in which the language is spoken. This section offers communication methods to prevent pragmatic failure and enhance intercultural communication competency based on an investigation of the types and reasons of pragmatic failure experienced by Chinese English learners during intercultural communication.

Improving language ability

Three qualities define language: flexibility, negotiability, and variety. Because of these three traits, language users are more likely to be adaptable in their language use, which increases language efficacy. In order to achieve the communication goals, other people's emotions and sentiments should be taken into consideration first in any intercultural communication process, whether it be oral or written (Chen Shuting, 2014). In addition to being a crucial component of language proficiency development, cultural adaptation is also a prerequisite for avoiding pragmatic failure in cross-cultural communication. Using an adaptation strategy is essential to ensuring the effectiveness of intercultural communication since cultural adaptation is a dynamic and long-term process.

Improving personal pragmatic competence

To cultivate and enhance personal pragmatic competence is an important measure to avoid language failure in intercultural communication. The key to improve personal pragmatic competence is to learn communication principles and strategies by analyzing the intentions in different situations. For example, by listening to foreign language news such as CNN and BBC, the

differences between China and West can be realized. This can improve the ability of intercultural communication, so as to avoid language failure.

Improving Multilingual interaction ability

It is very important to understand the historical and cultural traditions as well as customs of other countries. On the one hand, communicators should cultivate cultural competence, treat cultural differences with an inclusive attitude. On the other hand, communicators should cultivate intercultural consciousness in emotional level and be good at cultural reflection. In addition, communicators should have a deep understanding their own culture, emotional attitude, and communication style. In cross-cultural communication, communicators should respect each other's personal privacy, respect each other's values in terms of customs and habits, and adapt to cultural traditions.

CONCLUSION

This paper analyzes the reasons for pragmatic failure in multilingual interaction and puts forward some reference opinions on the development of pragmatic competence. Admittedly, the correction of pragmatic errors and the development of pragmatic competence are complex and difficult problems to deal with. In order to make great progress in innovation and breakthrough in the learning process, educators should make more efforts in this area. However, there is still a long way to go for them. As we know, language and culture are inseparable, and each culture has its own characteristics and rules. People from different cultures have different worldviews, outlooks on life and values, as well as different moral standards and ways of thinking, etc.

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