

English as Foreign Language Teachers' Beliefs in Developing Pragmatic Competence

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ABSTRACT

English is spoken at various intercommunication settings and levels. Thus, speakers have to master pragmatic aspects to avoid misunderstandings during communication. As a result, Pragmatic competence can help EFL speakers. The purpose of this study is to look into EFL teachers' perspectives on how to help students build pragmatic competence. The qualitative research approach was used in this study, utilizing descriptive qualitative as the framework. In order to collect the data, this study used teachers' responses on a questionnaire derived from five features in sources of teacher beliefs. Three teachers from varied backgrounds participated in this study as respondents. Teachers' beliefs in pragmatic competence development are taken from five sources: teachers' experience as language learners; experience from teaching; teachers' own personality; experience from the school, parents, government, and local society; education-based or research-based principles. This study will, ideally, add to the body of knowledge in the field of education, allowing English teachers to better understand, discover, and enhance their teaching in the area of pragmatic competence development.

Keywords: Teachers' beliefs, Pragmatic competence, EFL Context

INTRODUCTION

English is now used as globalization commandment and worldwide communication. As a result, there are numerous reasons to learn it. In line with this statement, Richards (2001) stated that English is no longer just a possession of the English-speaking world, but rather as International Language. Current approaches and tactics for teaching EFL, rather than cultural enrichment, EFL focuses on English as a genuine tool and global asset. The method that has weathered the new millennium in this regard is Communicative Language Teaching (Hymes, 1966).

Several linguists have applied the term competence to different kinds of expertise in different contexts. On the other hand, Noam Chomsky coined the phrase "competence". Chomsky (1965) later distinguished between competence (the speaker's or listener's language knowledge) and

performance (the speaker's or listener's ability to communicate in a foreign language) (the actual use of language in concrete situations). He found a distinction between knowledge and knowledge application in his research.

Learning a language has evolved into a social and cognitive endeavor. Chomsky's view of linguistic competence and universal grammar, as well as Vygotsky's view of the scaffolding process, which focuses on the gap between what a learner can do and the next stage in learning that takes place in a social context, have influenced Foreign Language Acquisition theory today, according to Richards (2001). The capacity to use language effectively in a social environment is referred to as pragmatic competence (Taguchi, 2009). It's one of the keys to communicating effectively in a foreign language. In the EFL classroom, grammatical competence is clearly taught and cultivated, but pragmatic competence is frequently overlooked.

Language knowledge, according to Bachman (1990), consists of two forms of knowledge that a foreign language student must internalize:

1. a) Organizational knowledge, which is the ability to govern a second language's formal structure in order to make correct sentences and organize them in texts. Grammatical and textual expertise are included.
2. b) Pragmatic knowledge, which entails understanding how specific meanings can be attributed to words and utterances in context and function according to the user's goals. This information is also divided into three categories: lexical, functional, and sociolinguistic.

Pragmatics is at the heart of all of the foregoing notions. To support this context, Blum-Kulka (1982) underlined the necessity of exposing 12 learners to specific characteristics of specific speech acts in the target language, how to execute them, what drives their behavior in various settings, and when, where, how, and with whom they can perform them. Several studies on teachers' beliefs have been conducted. However, there has been surprisingly little research into teachers' beliefs about developing pragmatic competence for EFL teaching. There were some studies that looked at similar variables, including one by Gilakjani, Abbas & Sabouri, and Narjes (2017). The authors define belief, describe the nature of teachers' views, identify sources of teachers' beliefs, and discuss previous teacher belief studies. By stressing the key theoretical components of pragmatics, Tulgar (2015) aims to provide a concise review of pragmatics and pragmatic competence, as well as the pedagogical significance of pragmatic competence. As a result, the purpose of this study is to fill a gap in the literature by conducting a detailed examination of the relationship between teacher beliefs and pragmatic competence development. The following is the study question:

1. What are EFL teachers' beliefs in developing pragmatic competence?

2. Literature Review

This chapter consists of theories and sources that support the research.

a. Teacher's Belief

Different scholars describe teachers' beliefs in different ways. Cabaroglu and Roberts define beliefs as "conceptual depictions of reality, truth, or trustworthiness to the possessor in order to secure dependence on it as a guide to personal thought and behaviour" (as cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017:79). Belief, according to Raymond, is a personal judgment established as a result of experiences (1997, as cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017:79). According to Calderhead, beliefs are generally defined as "suppositions, commitments, and ideologies" (as cited in Li & Walsh, 2011:40). According to Pajares (1992, cited in Kim, 2014), the definition of teachers' beliefs varies greatly, and teachers' beliefs share some similarities and differences with knowledge. Kagan stated that, despite differences, the majority of a teacher's knowledge can be classified as beliefs (1992, as cited in Kim, 2014). To summarize, it is reasonable to assume that a teacher's belief is a set of psychological characteristics that serve as the fundamental and necessary foundation for a teacher's decision-making and behavior, and that belief is the result of a teacher's life experiences. Belief is an explanation for something a teacher does or thinks about.

b. Sources of Teacher's Belief

Kindsvatter, Willen, and Ishler (1988, as cited in Abdi and Asadi, 2015) suggested that these followings are the sources of teachers' beliefs.

i. Teachers' experience as a language learner

Every teacher has gone through a phase in which they acted as students. One of the sources that shape their teaching beliefs is their reflection on how they were taught during that phase.

ii. Experience from teaching

Teachers' experiences in the classroom can be an important source of teachers' beliefs. Teachers could form opinions about a particular method if they observed how it works for a specific group of students.

iii. Teachers' own personality

Teachers may prefer one method of instruction over another for one simple reason: it fits their personality.

iv. Experience from the school, parents, the government, and the local society

A school, a community, or an institution may prefer a particular teaching style or method. For a period of time, a teaching method/style or approach

that is rooted in a school, community, or institution may be regarded as the most effective.

v. Principles based on education or research

Teachers' teaching beliefs can be founded on principles from sla research, school, or even ideologies like psychology.

Teacher's Belief in Teaching and Language Learning

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001, as cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017), teachers have beliefs about language learning, and these beliefs have helped them develop a unique approach to language teaching. According to Horwitz (1987, as cited in Altan, 2012), prior language learning experiences and cultural background are very likely to influence and shape learners' beliefs about foreign or second language learning.

According to Abdi and Asadi (2015), Many EFL learners have strong opinions and convictions about studying a foreign language., and these beliefs undoubtedly influence language learning. Learners' beliefs, according to Mori (1999, as cited in Abdi & Asadi, 2015), lead them to execute a language learning assignment differently, and compensate for individual differences found among language learners of similar proficiency. Language learning beliefs, according to Huang (as cited in Abdi & Asadi, 2015), are "preconceptions language learners have about the task of learning the target language."

According to Johnson (1992, as reported in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017), Many teachers held firm theoretical assumptions that recommended one of three methodological approaches: function-based, skill-based, or rule-based, according to the study. Johnson watched three teachers from a total of 30 participants based on their various sorts of views, and he came to the conclusion that the three chosen teachers' beliefs were consistent with their theoretical beliefs based on his research.

Burns (1992, as quoted by Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017) investigated teachers' ideas about teaching writing and how those beliefs affected their students' writing. According to the findings of the study, teachers employed written language to illustrate appropriate pronunciation of a spoken language, placed an emphasis on increasing learners' reliance, practice, and repetition, and recognized themselves as classroom directors and facilitators of class interactions.

To sum up this chapter, the teacher's attitudes about teaching and learning languages have a substantial impact on their teaching style.

c. Pragmatic competence

Language and communicative competence are both regarded to include pragmatic competence. Language competency, according to Rasekh (2005), can be separated into two categories: organizational competence and pragmatic competence. Knowledge of linguistic units and the rules for connecting them together at the level of sentence structure and text constitutes organizational competence. Knowledge of speech acts and functions, as well as social competence, are all part of pragmatic competence. The capacity to use language effectively in specific settings is referred to as sociolinguistic competence. It entails being able to choose the most acceptable communication acts and techniques for a specific context. The ability to communicate our message effectively and properly in any cultural setting, as well as understanding the meaning of what the other person is saying, is referred to as pragmatic competence (Fraser, 2010). Many people argue that pragmatic competence in the teaching of a foreign or second language is not given the attention it deserves, resulting in speakers lacking in pragmatic competence speaking with impeccable grammar but failing to achieve the desired outcomes.

d. Teaching pragmatic competence

Kulka et al. found that. In 1989, researchers found that even advanced language learners frequently make pragmatic errors in their communication. This means that they are not able to convey or comprehend the intended illocutionary force. This suggests that there is a need for EFL instruction to highlight the pragmatic aspects of the language. In Thomas Grossi's 2009 book, it is stated that teachers should equip students to express themselves in whichever way they choose - rudely, tactfully, or with elaborate politeness. We don't want them to be inadvertently disrespectful.' As a result, when teaching EFL, the teacher should be conscious of increasing learners' pragmatic ability. It is the teacher's obligation to ensure that his or her students have the necessary knowledge to use the target language effectively.

The ultimate purpose of learning a language is to be able to communicate effectively. Nonetheless, according to Amaya (2008), "many students are astonished when they learn they have difficulty initiating a conversation with native speakers." As a result, she asserted that pragmatics is a critical component of a learner's language competence. Teachers, usually disregard pragmatics in favor of grammatical characteristics of language due to the difficulty of teaching it. The lack of pragmatic competence that results can lead to pragmatic failure and, more importantly, total communication collapse. Pragmatic failure, according to Ming and Yan (2010), is a problem since it leads to misunderstanding and

even antagonism between native speakers and foreign language learners. One of the most important criteria for language learners' successful communication is identifying and reducing pragmatic failure.

METHOD

1. Research Design

In order to obtain a substantial result, the research should be conducted using a certain method and design. The purpose of this study is to look into instructors' perspectives on the development of pragmatic competence. As a result, the study was carried out utilizing a qualitative research method with descriptive qualitative data. According to Creswell (2012), qualitative research places a greater emphasis on the perspectives of participants than on the literature review that may be included in the study. He went on to say that the goal of qualitative research is to determine the precise meaning of data rather than to generalize the findings and standardize the replies of all research participants.

The descriptive qualitative method was used in this investigation. The descriptive technique, according to Nazir (1988), is a way for examining the current situation of human groupings, an item, a collection of conditions, a system of ideas, or a class event. This method was designed to describe and investigate everything relating to the study's issue. The writer described and investigated the beliefs of EFL teachers in establishing Pragmatic Competence.

2. Research Setting

This research was conducted in a State University located in Bandung city. The reason this university was chosen to be a research site is that the university has an EFL Teaching program, therefore making it a suitable site for the research. But since the pandemic has not recovered yet, the entire process is carried out online.

3. Participants

The participants of this study were three English teachers from different backgrounds. The teachers then were abbreviated with the label of T1, T2, T3. The brief description of the three teachers is presented in the tables below.

Teacher	Grade	Enrolled in Pragmatic	in Educational Background	Length of English Teaching
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		Course		Experience
T1	ES (Elementary School)	4 Months	English Education (Magister program-ongoing)	16 years

Teacher	Grade	Enrolled Pragmatic Course	in	Educational Background	Length of English Teaching Experience
T2	JHS (Junior High School)	4 Months		English Education (Magister program-ongoing)	10 years

Teacher	Grade	Enrolled Pragmatic Course	in	Educational Background	Length of English Teaching Experience
T3	SHS (Senior High School)	4 Months		English Education (Magister program-ongoing)	11 years

4. Data Collection

The instrument used in this was a questionnaire. The main reason for the use of the questionnaire is the impracticality of conducting any in-

depth interviews in this time of the pandemic. The questionnaire contained five questions that were meant to discover EFL teachers' beliefs in developing pragmatic competence. The questionnaire was adapted by the sources of teacher's belief suggested by Kindsvatter, Willen, and Ishle (1998), and the themes that are discussed in this research. The data obtained from the questionnaire then analyzed to investigate the teachers' beliefs of pragmatic competence. After the questionnaire has been answered by the teachers, the researcher then elaborated the result of researcher's analysis.

5. Data Analysis

After deciding on the three teachers who would be participants in this study, the researcher emailed them a questionnaire with five questions. After the teachers completed the questionnaire, the researcher categorized the responses based on aspects of the teachers' beliefs, such as Teachers' experience as a language learner, Experience from teaching, Teachers' own personality, Experience from the school, parents, the government, and the local society, Education-based or research-based principles, and Education-based or research-based principles. After categorizing the responses, the researcher expounded on the findings of his or her investigation in a descriptive manner.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Teachers' experience as a language learner

T1 believes that pragmatics is one of the interesting and challenging courses that she wants to master because it related to social and linguistic phenomena. In pragmatics, T1 learns linguistic and philosophical theories so that it helps her to understand and analyze language use based on context. In her daily communication, she actively contributes Pragmatics theories, for instance, implicature and explicature. Therefore, she claimed that Pragmatics Competence becomes an important tool to think critically about linguistic phenomena around her.

Initially, for T2 Pragmatic was a general subject learning at university. However, after getting to know pragmatics more deeply in postgraduate education, T2 can conclude that Pragmatic Competence is the art of understanding someone's speech. Furthermore, there are some people who don't speak according to the meaning of the sentences they say, that's where Pragmatics plays its role.

T3 relates the theories about Pragmatic competence that he has obtained from existing sources with phenomena in everyday life.

2. Experience from teaching

T1 agrees that developing Pragmatics Competence means developing students' sensitivity, whether explicitly in English communication or implicitly through students' attitudes.

In T2's teaching, sometimes she imparts pragmatic learning implicitly. Often times, she introduces to the students about speech acts, for instance, how to cultivate good speech in the delivery of her learning.

T3 tends to apply pragmatic abilities indirectly while communicating with his students.

3. Teachers' own personality

T1 prefers to use a direct method in developing Pragmatic Competence which means it should be clearly mentioned in the textbook or courses.

In FL classrooms, when possibilities for the whole spectrum of human interactions are limited, learners have more difficulty adopting proper language use patterns, explicit pragmatic training becomes even more necessary (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). In accordance with this quote, T2 chooses to teach pragmatics explicitly, that way she can show some material to be discussed pragmatically, for example, presidential speeches, characters in short stories and even the habits of people speaking from relatives or friends around us. That way, they will understand more about what is pragmatic and how it is applied in everyday life.

T3 prefers to use Politeness in developing Pragmatic Competence because it suits his personality as a person who has a high sense of empathy. With Politeness, he can make the people around him feel comfortable in conducting communication.

4. Experience from the school, parents, the government, or the local society

T1 believes inquiry learning is helpful to trigger students to think, observe, and implement actively and critically because this method requires a student's full participation in self-research. It might be effective in developing Pragmatics Competence

Based on T2's experience with explicit teaching in developing Pragmatics Competence, there were times when someone could not accept the essence of the learning. That is why she always does it in an implicit way, which is accompanied by actions that show to the person, both verbal and action. Although she actually prefers explicit teaching.

Based on T3's experience in the English speaking community. In obtaining Pragmatics Competence, He tends to get it by a method entitled 'Natural Approach'. He believes that this is very effective in introducing Pragmatics Competence. The natural approach gives off a sense as if the students are not "learning" pragmatics directly, but they still obtain the concept of pragmatics in a non-formal environment. As a requirement to teaching, such methods deny the formal (grammatical) organization of a language.

5. Education-based or research-based principles

T1 finds that Relevance theory in humour and memes is interesting in developing Pragmatic Competence.

T2 claimed that in developing Pragmatic Competence, theories that relate to observation could be used as a proper core reference.

T3 opt for three notions in Pragmatics in developing Pragmatic Competence, namely, Say nothing to prevent offensive words and let other people take the initiative to ask, Say something to show there are communication and verbal clarity, and Bald in the record to use for straightforward and not complicated in conveying the real meaning of communication .

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to look into the beliefs of EFL teachers regarding the development of Pragmatic Competence. To answer the research question, which is based on questionnaire analysis, it can be concluded that, based on their experiences as language learners, T1 and T3 agree that, in addition to learning from existing theories, Pragmatic Competence also exists in everyday life, and T2 stated that she frequently observes Pragmatic Competences in someone's speech. From their teaching experiences, all of the teachers implied Pragmatics Competence in their teaching implicitly, T1 added that developing Pragmatics Competence means developing students' sensitivity whether explicitly in English communication or implicitly through students' attitudes. Based on teachers' own personality in developing Pragmatics Competence, T1 and T2 choose to teach pragmatics explicitly, while T3 prefers to share the awareness of Pragmatics Competence to the students in Politeness. According to their experiences, T1 believes inquiry learning is an effective way in developing

Pragmatics Learning since it is helpful to trigger students to think, observe, and implement actively, Based on T2's experience with explicit teaching in developing Pragmatics Competence, there were times when someone could not accept the essence of the learning, That is why she always does it in an implicit way. T3 believes that Natural Approach is very effective in introducing Pragmatics Competence because this approach delivers the concept of pragmatics in a stress-free environment. Lastly, regarding their preference of education-based or research-based principles in developing Pragmatic Competence T1 finds that relevance theory in humour and memes is interesting, T2 claimed observation could used as a proper core reference, and T3 promotes three ideas, such as say nothing, say something and bald in the record.

Overall, the three teachers agreed and well informed about the significance of Pragmatic Competence in the educational setting. However, further study will be required to deeply analyze the teachers' beliefs in developing Pragmatic Competence. Similarly, it would be beneficial to observe Pragmatic Competence implementation at various levels of education. Furthermore, the subject of future research could involve a larger number of people.

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