



Role of Texts and Narratives in Building of Pragmatic Competence

Tanya Baranwal , Student

Department of Electrical Engineering
Institute of Engineering and Management

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to present a perfect way of building pragmatic competence within the youths and even youngsters using movies. Beginning with the definition of pragmatics, 'which is dealing with the problems practically in specific situation' then, relating the term with communicative competence, this paper describes the busy life of the people living in the society. Today's world is so obsessed with their own works which has made their life busy very much. And this busyness does not allow them to work on their pragmatic skills. We are lucky enough that, modern technologies such as television and phone, have provided us a wonderful and profitable option of movies, which can prove to be the best sources of building of pragmatic competence through narration by watching movies. Further this paper presents various movies and their precise moral values that teach pragmatic skills; helps understanding the context and intent of speakers' sentences because many of them are ambiguous in nature; politeness and pragmatic competence; how pragmatism can be used and practiced in engineering. Based on all these, finally, this paper concludes with some good facts relating the advantages of pragmatic skills in our day to day lives.

KEYWORDS: Pragmatic Competence, Narration, Busyness, Movies, Ambiguity, Politeness, Engineering, Pragmatic Skills.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the paper are to:

1. Identify and practice a new way of learning pragmatic skills through movies.
2. Make use of modern technology in a profitable manner.
3. Learn better communication skills despite leading a busy life.
4. Identify the advantages of having good pragmatic and communication skills.

INTRODUCTION

As per Marriam Webster, the definition of Pragmatics is, “dealing with the problems that exist in a specific situation in a reasonable and logical way instead of depending on ideas and theories. It’s full definition is relating to matters of facts or practical affairs often to the exclusion of intellectual or artistic matters.”

In simple words, a pragmatic means a practical approach as opposed to idealistic. So, in linguistics, Pragmatic competence is the ability to use language in a more practical and appropriate manner. It is a fundamental aspect of a more general communicative competence. The term Communicative competence was actually coined by linguist Dell Hymes in 1972. And then, this concept of communicative competence grew out to the concept of Linguistic Competence introduced by Noam Chomsky. Therefore, relatedly the term Communicative Competence refers to both the implicit knowledge and the ability to use it more effectively.

PRAGMATIC SKILLS

Pragmatics skills include conversational skills, asking, giving and responding to information, turn taking, asking for clarification, adjusting language based on situation and asking for help or offering help appropriately are the examples of the skills that should be mastered by the learners. This is because all of these skills are commonly used in our daily life especially during conversation. We communicate with each other through conversation whether in verbal or non-verbal.

NARRATION AND PRAGMATISM

Narrative ability is one of the most interesting and ecologically valid ways in which to measure communicative competence in populations since narratives form the basis of many childhood speech acts. Narrative can be used to assess both linguistic and pragmatic impairments. Narrative ability was found to relate directly to pragmatic skill but in different ways. Implications for both theory and practice can be discussed through this. Narrative competence also associates with literacy ability.

Narrative involves a degree of pragmatic skill which is more formal than normal conversation and can also prove a better option for improving the groups of children with varying difficulties be it the communication problems relating to society or personal problems.

ENGINEERS-TECHNOLOGY-BUSYNESS-PRAGMATICS

Engineering technology is a major ingredient in the economic development of the world at large. We know that the advanced technology in these days have become important in our day to day lives. It provides ease of:

- Access to information
- Saves time
- Cost efficiency

- Better communication means

BETTER COMMUNICATION MEANS

When it comes to mobile phones and androids, this technology has made an adverse effect on our lives including the youths. Also, individuals who are busy at work and have a real lack of leisure time are so obsessed with themselves. So, this busyness of youths really lack face to face conversation which can also be one of the reason of missing pragmatic competence these days. Humans building robotics, machine developing, artificial intelligence have forgotten their actual means.

But looking on the positive side of one of the advanced technologies, television can prove a better option in building pragmatic competence through movies among people.

MOVIES AND NARRATION

As Kerry Pusey of Northern Arizona University, has rightly pointed out in his presentation “Using Films and Television To Teach Pragmatics”, “film and television provide authentic samples of language in use. Familiarity with film and television can help give students a sense of membership within the target language community. Film and television allow to see and hear language in use, thus offering the contextualized input. Film and television are often relevant to students’ personal interests. Using humorous clips (in particular) can help creates positive, relaxed classroom atmosphere. Potential sources of materials are vast.”

People(actors) through movies are better able to reflect relationships between themselves utilizing the social context that usually gets portrayed in the films and explicit institution. Their ability to express pragmatic variability, has implications for understanding pragmatic abilities. So, using films for building pragmatic competence can be a more familiar way, which youngsters and everyone else can easily

access.

AREAS OF INTEREST

There can be various areas under pragmatics, where pragmatic competence can be built through different ways using different movies wherein each movie giving a new moral:

- Setting a rare example, the movie ‘**Taare Zameen Par**’, turned out to be a strong socio-political statement on ignorance among parents, teachers and educators about little-known disabilities their children suffer from, such as Dyslexia. Talking about the leading actor Amir Khan, had said, that the film does not reflect on traditional teaching methods and their efficacy or otherwise. It’s a story about a kid’s life and his relationship with his art teacher, by changing his life through caring and understanding. This movie defines the situation where the things can be communicated even though they are not explicitly expressed, as Ram Shankar Nikumbh (Amir Khan) understood the unsaid words of the little child. Here how reacting so practically he brought his actual interest in front of everyone. This movie as a whole teaches us many things but two of them are, we should communicate frequently and also are an empathetic listener.
- The movie ‘**3-Idiots**’ can be kept under the category of the study of what is meant, as opposed to the intended meaning. Here, Rancho (Amir Khan) how beautifully teaches us that learning is everywhere. Calmly reacting to each worst situation and dealing with them so practically. This movie is one of the excellent movies that help building communicative competence. Being an engineering student, Amir Khan along with his other four friends who totally thought different, how amazingly not only inculcates us the habit of learning concepts and practically apply them academically, also present an example of leading life in a pragmatic manner. Here, Amir dealt with problems in a manner that was always opposed by everyone else. But he proved to be the correct one.

- Last but not the least, a very influencing movie, '**Chhichhore**', can be an example of the teaching us pragmatism on the relative distance of, both social and physical, between speakers in order to understand what determines the choice of what is said and what is not said. Here Anirudh (Sushant Singh Rajput) and Maya's son attempts suicide after failing to do well in exams, just because he thought he had pressure of gaining a good rank since his parents were good rankers. His parents always encouraged him to do well in his exams but he took it as granted and after failing to do so he thought that they would react aggressively and might become sad. He took their words incorrectly which was not actually their intention. But finally his father brought up his son again and with huge confidence and a different thought. This movie teaches us the real meaning of our parents' words that, we should study but our results do not define the journey also neither the societal tags nor the failure defines us. And we should think upon each worst situation calmly and react to it accordingly and not haphazardly.

Not only these above movies, some of the cartoon animation movies can also teach us moral values and help build pragmatic competence in a different way. Little children can easily access this wonderful opportunity to learn communication skills at a very early age.

- One of them is '**Cinderella**'. Authors, 'Rosita Ambarwati' and 'Elin Tri Susilo' of 'Politeness strategies and the effort to build the pragmatic competence through Cinderella' have rightly said in their research paper that, **“the essence of successful communication is that the messages conveyed by speakers can be received well by the listener. This can be pursued by creating comfortable and pleasant conditions for them. This concept is developed in politeness. Being polite is not only smart in choosing the right words, but it relates to the ability to adapt to the context.”** This movie helps to strengthen pragmatic competence by observing

politeness. The appearance of the characters, plot, conflicts, and settings, of this movie reflects real life pictures. It begins with a legendary story and gives precise moral values. The value of politeness strategies here helps open people thinking realities of life. It shows the real face of ill societal thinking that continues to exist. At the same time, it also teaches that bad deeds are always punished but good deeds are never. This movie shows the aggressive and harassing behavior of Cinderella's step-mother and polite nature of the former, who never raised voice against her mother and completed all the works given by her and her step-sisters successfully, also ended up living a royal life that actually she deserved. So, good time takes a lot to come, but it comes.

AMBIGUITY

After this, we realize that many conversational sentences are ambiguous. Different situations with different dialogues create different meaning to us. For example:

1. "I went to the bank"

The word bank can either be in reference to a place where money is kept, or the edge of the river.

2. Similarly, "Sherlock saw the man with binoculars."

It could mean the man by using binoculars or it could mean that Sherlock observed a man who was holding binoculars.

3. "Marcy got the bath ready for her daughter wearing a pink tutu."

It could mean, was Marcy wearing the tutu or her daughter?

4. "Well, I've certainly never tasted chicken cooked that way before!"

Here also, was the chicken good or bad?

5. “Call me a taxi, please.”

Similarly, here, is the speaker asking someone to hail them a taxi or to be called a taxi?

The meaning of the sentence depends on an understanding of the context and the speaker's intent. A sentence is an abstract entity. The more closely conscious subjects stick to common words, idioms, phrasings, and topics, the more easily others can surmise their meaning; the further they stray from common expressions and topics, the wider the variations in interpretations. That suggests that sentences do not have intrinsic meaning, that there is no meaning associated with a sentence or word, and that either can represent an idea only symbolically.

POLITENESS AND PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE

It is more important so that the goal of being polite can be achieved. Politeness and interaction cannot be separated from a community. The concept of communicative competence is the basis for using language as a tool of communication. The use of language in communication is not only emphasized on grammar but what is more important is the accuracy of meaning extracted from socio-cultural elements. Starting from this concept, pragmatic competence is urgent to be built. Pragmatic competence is the ability to communicate and express using language symbols appropriately and acceptably.

IDEAS OF PRAGMATISM- A PART OF ENGINEERING

Students should be made aware that science is dynamic, and that knowledge changes. The pragmatic way would say that we the students should be aware of how scientists make decisions on what they observe.

CONCLUSION

Once students realize the importance of pragmatism in their lives, either learning through movies or by any means, they will understand that life is dynamic which is subjected to change. They will also acknowledge that the idea that truth/fact of yesterday needs to be experienced truly, today and tomorrow. Building of Pragmatic Competence will surely make them believe that no truth is absolute and permanent as it is ever changing from time to time and place to place and from circumstance to circumstance. Thus, whatever was true yesterday need not be the true today. And, modern technologies cater to the educational needs of society at large. Using these, everybody including students get required demonstrations in a limited time that too with a worldwide appeal. Along with this, one of the advantages in learning pragmatics is that the learners can interpret the meanings of language from broader intercultural aspects. So, films can be the best sources for education and building of Pragmatic Competence.

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