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THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR ENHANCING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO FUTURE TOURISM PROFESSIONALS

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Annotation. This article explores the theoretical foundations for enhancing pragmatic competence in teaching English to future tourism professionals. It examines pragmatics as a core component of communicative competence, emphasizing the ability to use language appropriately in culturally and professionally specific contexts. Drawing on theories of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), intercultural communication, and discourse-based language teaching, the study highlights the importance of speech acts, politeness strategies, and context-sensitive communication in tourism settings. The paper also analyzes the role of authentic materials and situational tasks in developing pragmatic awareness. Particular attention is given to the integration of linguistic and sociocultural knowledge, which is essential for effective interaction with international tourists. The findings underline the need for systematic incorporation of pragmatic instruction into tourism-oriented English curricula to ensure professional communicative effectiveness.

Keywords: pragmatic competence; tourism English; ESP; communicative competence; intercultural communication; speech acts; language teaching; professional communication.

Аннотация. В данной статье рассматриваются теоретические основы совершенствования прагматической компетенции в процессе обучения английскому языку будущих специалистов сферы туризма. Прагматика анализируется как ключевой компонент коммуникативной компетенции, акцентируется способность использовать язык адекватно в культурно и профессионально обусловленных контекстах. Опираясь на теории английского языка для специальных целей (ESP), межкультурной коммуникации и дискурсивно-ориентированного обучения языку, в исследовании

подчеркивается значимость речевых актов, стратегий вежливости и контекстно обусловленного общения в туристической сфере. Также анализируется роль аутентичных материалов и ситуативных заданий в формировании прагматической осведомлённости. Особое внимание уделяется интеграции лингвистических и социокультурных знаний, необходимой для эффективного взаимодействия с международными туристами. Полученные результаты подтверждают необходимость системного включения прагматического компонента в учебные программы по английскому языку для сферы туризма с целью обеспечения профессиональной коммуникативной эффективности.

Ключевые слова: прагматическая компетенция; английский язык для туризма; ESP; коммуникативная компетенция; межкультурная коммуникация; речевые акты; обучение языку; профессиональная коммуникация.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada bo‘lajak turizm sohasi mutaxassislariga ingliz tilini o‘qitish jarayonida pragmatik kompetentlikni takomillashtirishning nazariy asoslari yoritiladi. Pragmatika kommunikativ kompetentlikning muhim tarkibiy qismi sifatida tahlil qilinib, tilni madaniy va kasbiy jihatdan muayyan kontekstlarda mos ravishda qo‘llay olish qobiliyatiga alohida e’tibor qaratiladi. Ingliz tilini maxsus maqsadlar uchun o‘qitish (ESP), madaniyatlararo muloqot hamda diskursga yo‘naltirilgan til o‘qitish nazariyalariga tayangan holda, turizm sohasida nutq aktlari, muloyimlik strategiyalari va kontekstga mos kommunikatsiyaning ahamiyati asoslab beriladi. Shuningdek, pragmatik xabardorlikni shakllantirishda autentik materiallar va vaziyatli topshiriqlarning roli tahlil qilinadi. Xalqaro turistlar bilan samarali muloqotni ta’minlashda lingvistik va sotsiokultural bilimlarning integratsiyasiga alohida e’tibor qaratiladi. Tadqiqot natijalari turizm yo‘nalishiga mo‘ljallangan ingliz tili o‘quv dasturlariga pragmatik komponentni tizimli ravishda kiritish zarurligini asoslaydi.

Kalit so‘zlar: pragmatik kompetentlik; turizm uchun ingliz tili; ESP; kommunikativ kompetentlik; madaniyatlararo muloqot; nutq aktlari; til o‘qitish; kasbiy muloqot.

Introduction. In the context of modern education, the preparation of future tourism professionals requires not only the acquisition of linguistic knowledge but also the development of competencies that ensure effective professional communication. Among these, pragmatic competence occupies a central position, as it enables learners to use language appropriately in specific communicative situations, taking into account cultural norms, social conventions, and contextual factors. In the tourism industry, where communication with representatives of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds is inevitable, the ability to employ language pragmatically becomes a key professional requirement.

In language teaching methodology, pragmatic competence is widely recognized as an integral component of communicative competence. It encompasses various elements such as

speech acts, politeness strategies, implicature, and discourse appropriateness [11]. Therefore, teaching English to tourism students should go beyond grammatical accuracy and focus on the appropriate use of language in real-life professional contexts. For instance, in hotel service, tour guiding, transportation, and customer relations, effective communication depends largely on the ability to select contextually suitable linguistic forms and strategies.

In recent years, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has gained particular importance in tourism education, as it aligns language instruction with professional needs and real-world communication demands. At the same time, intercultural communication theory and discourse-based language teaching provide essential theoretical foundations for developing pragmatic competence. These approaches emphasize the importance of cultural awareness, contextual sensitivity, and interactional skills, which are crucial for successful communication in international tourism settings [12]. An integrative approach combining these perspectives allows for a more comprehensive development of both linguistic and pragmatic abilities.

However, despite the recognized importance of pragmatic competence, it is often insufficiently systematized in existing curricula and teaching practices. As a result, students may face difficulties when engaging in authentic communicative situations. Therefore, this study aims to examine the theoretical foundations for enhancing pragmatic competence in teaching English to future tourism professionals and to justify methodological approaches that can effectively support its development in tourism-oriented language education.

Literature review. Pragmatic competence has been widely recognized as a fundamental component of communicative competence, particularly in professional domains such as tourism. The theoretical foundation of communicative competence was first articulated by Dell Hymes, who emphasized that effective communication requires not only grammatical knowledge but also the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts [5]. This perspective was further developed by Sandra J.Savignon, who highlighted the functional and context-dependent nature of language use [10].

Within the framework of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Henry G. Widdowson underscored the importance of pragmatics in aligning language instruction with professional needs [6]. Similarly, Anna Klimczak-Pawlak and Angela Wilson emphasize that tourism-oriented communication requires sensitivity to context, cultural norms, and discourse conventions [3]. Research by Kobra Afzali further demonstrates that tourism coursebooks often lack sufficient pragmatic content, highlighting the need for targeted instructional design [7].

In addition, Naoko Taguchi identifies key trends in pragmatics teaching, stressing the role of authentic input and interaction in developing pragmatic awareness [9]. Lyle F. Bachman and Adrian S. Palmer contribute to this discussion by linking pragmatic competence with language assessment and performance-based evaluation [8]. Studies by Abdul Amin highlight the specific pragmatic needs of tourism students, while Bardis B.

emphasizes the role of intercultural competence in avoiding communication breakdowns [1,4].

The literature indicates that pragmatic competence is a multidimensional construct requiring the integration of linguistic, sociocultural, and professional knowledge. However, despite extensive theoretical contributions, there remains a need for systematic integration of pragmatics into tourism-focused English language teaching.

Research methodolgy. This study employed a mixed-methods research design to investigate the theoretical and methodological foundations for enhancing pragmatic competence in teaching English to future tourism professionals. The research combined qualitative analysis of theoretical sources with elements of pedagogical modeling to develop a structured framework for pragmatic competence formation. The participants consisted of 60 undergraduate students majoring in tourism, divided into two groups: an experimental group (30 students) and a control group (30 students).

The experimental group was instructed using an integrative approach that incorporated English for Specific Purposes (ESP), communicative language teaching (CLT), and discourse-based instruction, with a strong emphasis on pragmatic elements such as speech acts, politeness strategies, and context-based communication. Instructional techniques included role-play, simulation tasks, case studies, and the use of authentic tourism-related materials. The control group followed a traditional language teaching model with limited focus on pragmatics.

Data collection tools included observation checklists, pragmatic competence assessment tasks, and reflective feedback from students. Quantitative data were analyzed using comparative statistical methods, while qualitative data were interpreted through descriptive and thematic analysis to evaluate changes in learners’ pragmatic awareness and communicative performance.

Results/discussion. The results of the study demonstrate a significant improvement in the level of pragmatic competence among students in the experimental group compared to those in the control group. At the initial diagnostic stage, both groups showed relatively similar levels of pragmatic competence, particularly in terms of understanding basic speech acts and applying simple politeness strategies. This confirms the initial equivalence of the groups and ensures the reliability of further comparisons.

Following the implementation of the integrative instructional approach, notable differences were observed in all components of pragmatic competence. Quantitative analysis revealed that the experimental group achieved a considerable increase in overall performance, with mean scores rising from 2.7 to 4.3, whereas the control group showed only a moderate improvement from 2.8 to 3.4. The calculated statistical indicators confirmed that the differences between the groups were significant, indicating the effectiveness of the applied methodology. A more detailed analysis showed that the greatest progress in the experimental group was observed in the use of context-appropriate speech acts, such as

making requests, offering assistance, and handling complaints in tourism-related situations. Students also demonstrated improved ability to apply politeness strategies, adjusting their language according to the social status and cultural background of interlocutors. Furthermore, their awareness of intercultural communication norms increased, allowing them to avoid pragmatic misunderstandings and communication breakdowns.

Qualitative data obtained from classroom observations and student feedback further support these findings. Participants in the experimental group exhibited greater confidence in real-life communicative tasks, actively engaged in role-play and simulation activities, and demonstrated the ability to adapt their language to various professional scenarios. In contrast, students in the control group tended to rely on memorized structures and showed limited flexibility in communication. The findings indicate that the integration of ESP-oriented content, communicative activities, and pragmatic instruction creates an effective learning environment that significantly enhances students’ pragmatic competence.

To present the quantitative outcomes more systematically and to illustrate the comparative development of pragmatic competence across key components, the following table summarizes the pre-test and post-test results for both experimental and control groups.

Table 1. Comparative Results of Pragmatic Competence Development (Experimental vs Control Groups)

Components of Pragmatic Competence	Groups	Pre-test (Mean Score)	Post-test (Mean Score)	Growth (%)
Speech Acts (requests, offers, complaints)	Experimental	2.6	4.4	+69.2%
	Control	2.7	3.5	+29.6%
Politeness Strategies	Experimental	2.8	4.3	+53.5%
	Control	2.9	3.4	+17.2%
Intercultural Awareness	Experimental	2.7	4.2	+55.5%
	Control	2.8	3.3	+17.8%
Contextual Language Use	Experimental	2.7	4.3	+59.2%
	Control	2.8	3.4	+21.4%

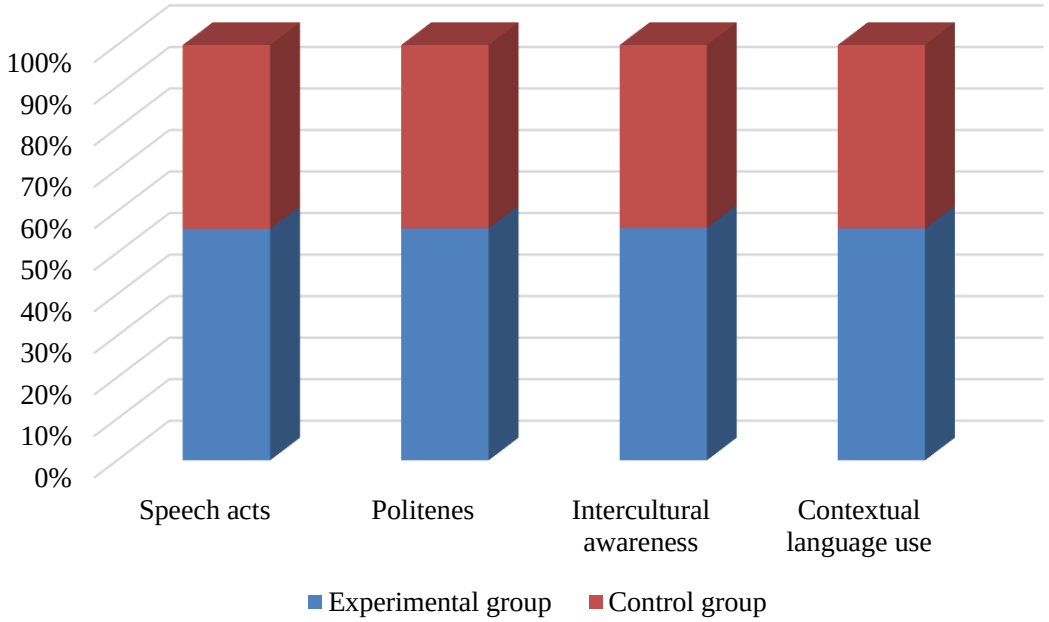
As shown in Table 1, the experimental group demonstrates substantially higher growth across all components of pragmatic competence compared to the control group. The most significant improvement is observed in the use of speech acts, indicating that students became more capable of performing communicative functions effectively in tourism-related contexts. Similarly, considerable progress in politeness strategies and intercultural awareness reflects enhanced sensitivity to social and cultural norms.

In contrast, the control group shows only moderate gains, which may be attributed to the lack of systematic pragmatic instruction. These results confirm that the integrative approach, combining ESP content with communicative and context-based activities, plays a decisive role in developing learners’ pragmatic competence and preparing them for real professional communication in the tourism industry.

The data presented above also reveal an important trend related to the qualitative transformation of students’ communicative behavior. In the experimental group, learners demonstrated a shift from form-focused language use toward meaning-oriented and context-sensitive communication. This indicates that students were not only acquiring linguistic knowledge but were also developing the ability to interpret situational cues and adjust their responses accordingly.

Furthermore, the consistent improvement across all components suggests that the integrative approach ensures balanced development rather than isolated skill enhancement. The interaction between speech acts, politeness strategies, and intercultural awareness created a synergistic effect, enabling students to construct more appropriate and flexible communicative responses. It is also noteworthy that students in the experimental group became more active participants in classroom activities, particularly during role-play and simulation tasks, where they were required to engage in authentic tourism-related scenarios. This increased engagement contributed to deeper internalization of pragmatic norms and more confident performance in communicative situations. To further visualize the comparative outcomes of pragmatic competence development, the bar graph above presents the post-test performance of both experimental and control groups across key components.

Figure. Post-test pragmatic competence comparison.



As illustrated in the chart, the experimental group consistently demonstrates higher scores in all components, including speech acts, politeness strategies, intercultural awareness, and contextual language use. The most noticeable difference can be observed in the “Speech Acts” and “Contextual Use” categories, where the gap between the two groups is particularly pronounced. This indicates that the integrative approach significantly enhances students’ ability to perform communicative functions effectively in real-life tourism contexts.

In contrast, the control group shows relatively lower and more uniform results, suggesting limited development due to the absence of systematic pragmatic instruction. The visual comparison clearly highlights that students exposed to integrative, context-based, and communicative methodologies achieve more advanced and flexible language use. Thus, the bar graph reinforces the statistical findings and provides a clear demonstration of how targeted pedagogical intervention contributes to the comprehensive development of pragmatic competence in future tourism professionals.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that an integrative approach plays a crucial role in enhancing pragmatic competence among future tourism professionals. The significant differences between the experimental and control groups indicate that pragmatic skills develop more effectively when instruction is grounded in context-based, communicative, and professionally oriented activities. In particular, the improvement in speech acts and contextual language use suggests that students benefit from exposure to authentic tourism scenarios that require immediate and appropriate linguistic responses.

Moreover, the integration of intercultural elements contributed to increased awareness of sociocultural norms, which is essential for avoiding misunderstandings in international communication. The use of role-play and simulation tasks enabled students to actively engage in realistic situations, thereby strengthening their ability to adapt language according to context. These results highlight that pragmatic competence cannot be developed through traditional grammar-focused instruction alone but requires systematic, experience-based, and integrative pedagogical strategies.

Conclusion. In conclusion, this study has demonstrated that the development of pragmatic competence in future tourism professionals can be significantly enhanced through the implementation of an integrative approach in English language teaching. By combining English for Specific Purposes (ESP), communicative language teaching, and discourse-based instruction with context-oriented and practice-driven activities, the research provides both theoretical justification and empirical evidence for the effectiveness of such a methodology.

The findings indicate that pragmatic competence is a multidimensional construct that includes the appropriate use of speech acts, politeness strategies, intercultural awareness, and context-sensitive communication. The experimental results clearly show that students exposed to integrative and situational learning environments achieved higher levels of communicative flexibility and professional language use compared to those taught through traditional methods. In particular, the ability to respond appropriately in real tourism contexts and to adapt language according to social and cultural norms has been significantly improved.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of incorporating authentic materials, role-play, and simulation tasks into the teaching process, as these methods create realistic communicative conditions that foster deeper pragmatic understanding. The

integration of linguistic and sociocultural knowledge also proved essential for preparing students to interact effectively with international clients.

Overall, the research highlights the necessity of systematically embedding pragmatic instruction into tourism-oriented English curricula. Such an approach not only enhances students’ communicative competence but also contributes to their professional readiness, enabling them to operate successfully in the global tourism industry and to maintain effective intercultural communication in diverse settings.

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