

THE USE OF PRAGMATIC STRATEGIES IN MULTILINGUAL SPEECH

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20791776>

Abstract

In today's globalized world, multilingual communication has become an essential component of social, educational, and professional interactions. Multilingual speakers frequently employ pragmatic strategies to ensure successful communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries. This article examines the role of pragmatic strategies in multilingual speech, focusing on how speakers adapt their language use to achieve communicative goals, maintain social relationships, and overcome linguistic limitations. The study highlights the significance of code-switching, politeness strategies, translanguaging, speech acts, and contextual adaptation in multilingual communication. The findings suggest that pragmatic competence plays a crucial role in effective multilingual interaction and intercultural understanding.

Keywords: multilingualism, pragmatics, pragmatic strategies, multilingual speech, intercultural communication, code-switching, translanguaging

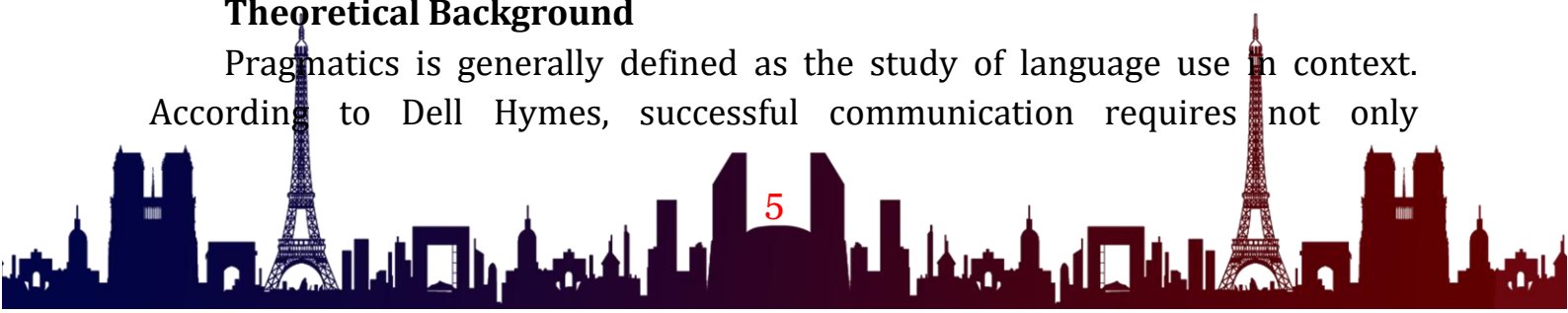
Introduction

The increasing mobility of people, globalization, and technological advancements have led to the expansion of multilingual communities worldwide. Individuals who speak two or more languages frequently engage in communication across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. In such environments, linguistic competence alone is insufficient for successful interaction. Speakers must also possess pragmatic competence, which enables them to use language appropriately according to social and cultural norms.

Pragmatic strategies are communicative techniques that speakers employ to express intentions, manage conversations, avoid misunderstandings, and maintain social harmony. In multilingual settings, these strategies become particularly important because speakers often navigate between multiple linguistic systems and cultural frameworks. Therefore, investigating the use of pragmatic strategies in multilingual speech contributes to a deeper understanding of communication processes in multilingual societies.

Theoretical Background

Pragmatics is generally defined as the study of language use in context. According to Dell Hymes, successful communication requires not only



grammatical knowledge but also the ability to use language appropriately in different social and cultural situations. Hymes introduced the concept of *communicative competence*, emphasizing the relationship between language and its social context.

Building on Hymes' work, Michael Canale and Merrill Swain proposed that communicative competence consists of grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic, and discourse competencies. Sociolinguistic competence enables speakers to interpret and produce language appropriately according to contextual factors such as setting, topic, and social roles.

Pragmatic competence has become a central component of communicative competence. Researchers argue that successful communication depends on the ability to understand implied meanings, perform speech acts appropriately, and adapt language use to sociocultural norms.

Pragmatic Strategies in Multilingual Speech

According to Istvan Kecskes, multilingual speakers develop pragmatic competence through interaction among their languages and cultures. Pragmatic knowledge in bilinguals and multilinguals is dynamic and shaped by both linguistic experience and intercultural encounters.

Code-Switching

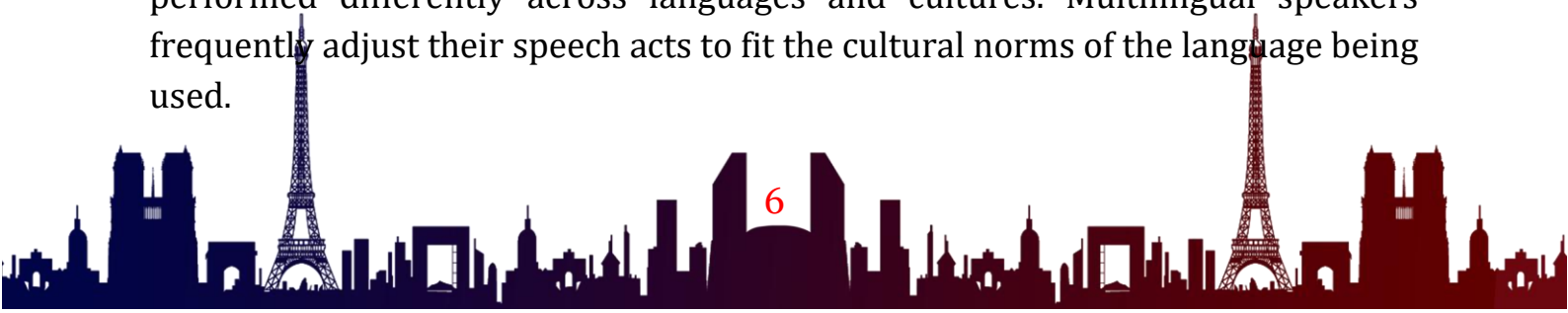
Code-switching is one of the most common pragmatic strategies used by multilingual speakers. It enables speakers to express identity, emphasize information, manage interpersonal relationships, and negotiate meaning in communication. Researchers have shown that code-switching serves important social and communicative functions rather than merely compensating for linguistic deficiencies.

Politeness and Speech Act Strategies

Pragmatic competence involves the appropriate use of speech acts such as requests, apologies, compliments, and refusals. The effectiveness of these speech acts depends on sociocultural expectations and contextual appropriateness. Canale and Swain's model highlights the importance of sociolinguistic competence in ensuring that utterances are interpreted correctly within specific social contexts.

Speech Act Adaptation

Speech acts such as requests, apologies, compliments, and refusals are performed differently across languages and cultures. Multilingual speakers frequently adjust their speech acts to fit the cultural norms of the language being used.



For example, an apology expressed in English may differ in formality and directness from one expressed in Uzbek or Russian. Successful multilingual communication requires sensitivity to these pragmatic variations.

Contextual Adaptation

Multilingual speakers constantly assess contextual factors such as audience, setting, purpose, and social relationships. They modify their language choices and communicative behavior accordingly.

In professional contexts, speakers may use more formal language and specialized terminology, while informal interactions often allow greater linguistic flexibility. Contextual adaptation enables multilingual speakers to communicate effectively in diverse situations.

Benefits of Pragmatic Strategies in Multilingual Communication

The use of pragmatic strategies provides several advantages:

- Enhanced communicative effectiveness.
- Improved intercultural understanding.
- Greater flexibility in language use.
- Reduced risk of misunderstandings.
- Strengthened interpersonal relationships.
- Increased confidence in multilingual interactions.

By employing pragmatic strategies, multilingual speakers can successfully navigate complex communicative environments and bridge cultural differences.

Challenges in Applying Pragmatic Strategies

Despite their benefits, pragmatic strategies may also present challenges. Differences in cultural norms can lead to pragmatic failure, where the intended meaning is misunderstood despite grammatical accuracy. Limited exposure to authentic communication contexts may also restrict the development of pragmatic competence.

Furthermore, language learners often focus primarily on grammar and vocabulary while receiving insufficient instruction in pragmatic aspects of communication. As a result, they may struggle to use language appropriately in real-life situations.

Pedagogical Implications

Language educators should integrate pragmatic instruction into multilingual education programs. Classroom activities may include role plays, authentic dialogues, intercultural discussions, and analysis of real-life communication scenarios.



Teachers should also encourage learners to reflect on cultural differences in communication styles and develop awareness of pragmatic norms across languages. Such practices can enhance both linguistic and intercultural competence.

Conclusion

Pragmatic strategies constitute a fundamental component of multilingual communication. Through code-switching, translanguaging, politeness strategies, speech act adaptation, and contextual adjustment, multilingual speakers effectively manage communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries. As multilingualism continues to expand globally, the development of pragmatic competence becomes increasingly important for successful interpersonal and intercultural interaction. Educational institutions should therefore place greater emphasis on pragmatic awareness and communication skills within multilingual learning environments.

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