

**FACTORS THAT FACILITATE LANGUAGE LEARNING:  
AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

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The present study outlines specific factors of pragmatic language acquisition highlighted by researchers across cultures and in interlanguage settings. Spoken and written discourses are investigated from the viewpoint of integrating and evaluating the boundaries between languages, cultures, stereotypes, and identifications. The most common patterns of cross-cultural pragmatics are revealed in the areas of social life, education, and workplace. The notion of ‘teachability’ of pragmatics is disclosed through illustrating learners’ preferences and experiences.

Preliminary research on pragmatics combines in itself consideration of different methodological approaches. For example, G. Kasper and K. Rose [3] point out that comparative pragmatics incorporates methodological resources from social sciences, such as descriptive linguistics, sociology, linguistic anthropology, developmental pragmatics, cognitive psychology, psycholinguistics, social psychology, social cognition, and communication research. Furthermore, cross-cultural pragmatics is characterized by the authors as “the study of communicative practices in different speech communities”, whereas interlanguage pragmatics is explained to focus “on communicative abilities and actions of nonnative speakers and the way their pragmatic knowledge and skills in a second language develop over time” [3: 73–74]. D. Boxer [1] specifies that interlanguage pragmatics constitutes a part of applied linguistics that focuses on second language acquisition while cross-cultural pragmatics refers to sociolinguistics. According to this consideration, interlanguage pragmatics contains a task for the language learner “to acquire the norms of the host community”; in contrast, cross-cultural pragmatics is claimed to maintain the view that “individuals from two societies or communities carry out their [contextualized] interactions (whether spoken or written) according to their own rules or norms, often resulting in a clash of expectations and, ultimately, misperceptions about the other group” [1: 151]. Therefore, baseline studies on native speech behavior should consider communicatively interacting nations first separately and then in some contrastive pragmatics research within at least three most relevant domains of cross-cultural pragmatics—social interaction, educational encounters, and workplace.

Proficiency, however, is not always associated even with a generalized “native-like competence.” Substantiating this point of view in a pragmalinguistic study of Americans living in Brazil vs. in the USA and Brazilians living in Brazil vs. in the USA, R.S. Silva [6], for example, found that both in the home and foreign countries Brazilians maintained their identity in particular pragmatic situations, preserving their own cultural judgments of denial that the communicative expression “*Why don’t you*” could be considered polite. In another study of a social domain of cross-cultural pragmatics, H. Saito and M. Beecken [5] revealed a certain invalidity of the stereotype that the Japanese would definitely reject compliments whereas the Americans would prefer a “thank you” response of acceptance. This study found that both in communication with friends and with a reserved teacher Japanese did not consider it polite to deny a compliment and, moreover, accepted the appraisal if it did not contradict the truth of their performance. However, in the majority of cases, they

mitigated the evaluation with an indirect, additional, return phrase of the communicative act of their appraisal. On the contrary, Americans studying Japanese could answer either in a direct acceptance or a direct denial, depending on whether they had already acquired or preferred the stereotypical judgment of what response would be appropriate for Japanese. In conclusion, to avoid acquiring biased stereotypes, cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatic information should be carefully identified and verified.

Examining spoken discourse as a source for pragmatic research, G. Kasper and K. Rose [3] describe the following variants of eliciting / identifying pragmatic information: (1) three types of spoken discourse data: authentic discourse, sociolinguistic interviews and conventional tasks, and role-play, (2) different types of questionnaires: discourse completion, multiple-choice, and scaled-response questionnaires, and (3) diverse forms of oral and written self-report: interviews, verbal protocols, and diaries. The researchers emphasize that validity and reliability of pragmatic data can be achieved by multi-method approaches. Moreover, the choice of research approaches should be predetermined by a thorough understanding of what information a particular method can or cannot reveal.

Studies of cross-cultural pragmatics in the fields of education and workplace reveal validity of the four maxims of the Cooperative Principle initiated by P. Grice (1989), postulating that the communicator is presumed to abide by: (1) truthfulness (communicators should do their best to make contributions which are true), (2) informativeness (communicators should do their best to be adequately informative), (3) relevance (communicators should do their best to make contributions which are relevant), and (4) style (communicators should do their best to make contributions which are appropriately short and clearly expressed). In this respect, a case study by D. Li [4] on language socialization describes how a Chinese immigrant woman pragmatically implemented these maxims in developing and achieving communicative competence in ESL (English as a second language) in her workplace. She became understood and respected when in the L2 (second language) workplace setting she had learned to make her requests and statements more directly than she had been accustomed to by adopting certain sociolinguistic strategies and expressions in studying. Thus, communicatively truthful, informative, relevant, and stylistically appropriate pragmatic competence is acquired through genuinely authentic interlanguage and cross-cultural communication.

Another perspective of cross-cultural pragmatics is acquisition of cross-cultural rhetoric of “English for specific purposes situations”—namely, academic and professional genres with a focus on the reader or perceiver of information [2]. Although different nations and cultures may have their styles of, for instance, letter writing, contemporary studies represent comparatively uniform or gradually homogenized preferences of rhetoric for effective delivery and exchange of information. For instance, Z. Yunxia [8] compared English and Chinese sales letters and has found that the former were longer because of detailed specifications and emphasizing the benefits of the suggested products, whereas the latter contained greetings and introductory moves to establish long-term relations with the clients. In the other aspects, however, the letters displayed a comparative similarity. Another

issue concerning discourse strategies of business letters is disclosed by C. Vergaro. In the study, the author described a computer-based training for money chasing letters writing by Italians. The program compared discourse strategies between English and Italian business letters and taught pragmatic and ethnolinguistic use of references, mood, modality, and metadiscourse [7].

In conclusion, cross-cultural communication exemplifies certain effective rhetoric principles which become adapted and homogenized for international purposes. Moreover, clarity and politeness can be viewed as the basic prerequisites of effective implementation of cross-cultural pragmatics. Cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics are teachable and should be either instructed in classroom settings or observed in pragmatic studies by a conscious and motivated learner for effective communication in the second or foreign language. Relevant awareness-raising tasks can include both teacher-guided in-class and teacher-encouraged autonomous analyses of rhetoric means and devices of various functional styles and situations of communication, with comparison of communicative differences and similarities across cultures as well as ethnographic observance of real-life situations.

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#### ***PRECEDENT PHENOMENA AND ETHNIC STEREOTYPES IN THE ANECDOTE TEXT***

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In order to explain and prevent communicative deviations, it is important to identify and describe precedent phenomena (PF) and ethnic stereotypes in the anecdote text, as it is a universal, extremely developed and productive phenomenon of national culture and communication. This is the relevance and novelty of this work.