

# **A Study of Multicultural Pragmatic Competence from the Perspective of English as a Lingua Franca**

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**Abstract.** Today's globalization and multicultural environment have aroused people's reconsideration toward traditional pragmatic competence. This paper reviewed the birth of Intercultural Pragmatics, and then discussed the evolution of connotation of pragmatic ability and its enlightenment to foreign language teaching in China, aiming at making foreign language teaching of colleges and universities meet the need of intercultural communication in increasingly complex and multivariate globalization environment.

## **1. Introduction**

With the increasing globalization and internationalization of political, economic, technological and cultural information exchange, English has developed from a foreign language to a Lingua Franca. In this process, communicators inevitably bring their own culture into it. Traditional pragmatics aims at the process of discourse production and understanding. It devotes itself to the discovery and description of universal principles and rules, ignoring the multicultural nature of communication. However, the change of social roles in English has led to the use of paradigms different from the one-way context of native English, and pragmatic phenomena different from native English, second English or foreign language communication emerged. The change of pragmatic features brought about the use of language in multiple contexts, which has triggered people's new thinking on traditional pragmatic competence. In this context, whether non-native speakers of English in intercultural communication should still abide by the language, pragmatics and cultural norms of native speakers of English? What abilities should be possessed by both sides for successful communication are all urgent problems to be solved.

## **2. The Birth of Intercultural Pragmatics**

Different stages of the development of pragmatics have different views on the role of culture. Traditional pragmatics regards culture as a static contextual factor, involving countries, ethnic groups and stereotypes with common characteristics, which exist in the form of fixed knowledge prior to communication. Cross-cultural pragmatics, which originated in the 1980s and flourished in the 1990s, is a broad pragmatics, which introduces cultural factors into the study of meaning in cross-cultural communication. It belongs to the cross-cultural study between two or more languages in communication. Based on traditional pragmatics theory, this paper explores the degree of compliance and violation of pragmatic principles and principles in different languages and cultures, and then understands their universality. The purpose of this study is to enhance the interpretation of pragmatic and social pragmatic phenomena in language communication, to avoid the failure of intercultural communication and promote its smooth progress. Intercultural pragmatics focuses on how to protect culture while taking care of communicative needs. It develops traditional pragmatics by studying the intercultural nature, the basis of common knowledge and salience in multilingual and Multicultural Contexts from the perspectives of social culture and individual cognition.

### **3. Reconstruction of Pragmatic Competence in Foreign Languages**

The pragmatic competence of foreign language learners is not equivalent to that of native speakers. The pragmatic knowledge of native speakers is gradually formed through verbal communication in the natural context or in an atmosphere close to the natural context. While people acquire linguistic forms, they also acquire contextual knowledge that matches them; while the pragmatic competence of foreign language learners is in the process of learning the target language, mainly in the way of classroom teaching, for learners. The main contact is linguistic form, rather than experiencing the scene of the target language and internalizing its social significance. Therefore, interpreting and enriching the connotation of pragmatic competence from the perspective of foreign language learners is conducive to deepening the understanding of foreign language pragmatic competence.

#### **3.1 Reconstructing the Pragmatic Knowledge System**

Different language forms reflect to some extent the way people conceptualize and perceive the world. Foreign language learning should not only learn the linguistic forms of the target language, but also learn the concepts and meanings related to these forms. The acquisition of pragmatic concepts is an extremely complex psychological process, in which the acquired pragmatic knowledge and pragmatic awareness of mother tongue will inevitably affect the formation and development of foreign language pragmatic competence. Therefore, foreign language learning should pay attention not only to the accumulation of words and sentences, but also to the differences in pragmatic rules between mother tongue and target language, as well as the differences in cultural values reflected by people's speech acts. The formation of foreign language pragmatic competence is actually a process of experience reconstruction, that is, relying on the form of the target language and the concept of mother tongue, acquiring the competence of using the target language to communicate appropriately from the experience of oneself and others, reconstructing the system of foreign language pragmatic knowledge and developing the pragmatic competence of the target language.

#### **3.2 Pragmatic Information Construction Ability**

In a globalized multicultural environment, verbal communication is no longer a single pragmatic model of passive adaptation, but a dynamic model of discourse construction. The communicative subject will not be totally constrained by the context or merely recognize the context. In order to achieve the communicative purpose, they will also use various strategies to influence or even rebuild the context. In verbal communication, the choice and construction of the speaker's self-identity involves the transfer of pragmatic-linguistic resources. The role, status and power of the communicator and other specific contextual factors will affect and match the language expression to varying degrees. On the one hand, learners can choose to follow the pragmatic conventions of the target language in order to integrate into the target culture; on the other hand, learners can choose pragmatic expressions consistent with the native culture in order to maintain their self-identity in the native culture. Language communication under multicultural background provides a new context space for highlighting self-culture. Therefore, communicators should actively construct context hypothesis, make pragmatic information clearer through pragmatic inference, accurately understand and express themselves under specific context conditions, so as to promote the realization of communicative goals.

#### **3.3 Intercultural pragmatic competence**

To master a language is to understand a culture. Foreign language learning should be based on the choice of language symbols and the recognition of the complex relationship between social history and cultural exchanges. Foreign language learners should learn to jump out of their own cultural circle and consider problems from the perspective of target language culture. A person with intercultural competence should have profound reflective ability, be able to objectively and impartially evaluate and identify native and foreign cultures, pay attention to the cultural customs of the target language in verbal communication, develop conscious pragmatic discrimination, constructively participate in the ideological generation process between each other, and make appropriate strategic choices in

accordance with each other, rather than in the process of verbal communication. In the study of intercultural communication, scholars have proposed two criteria for evaluating intercultural communication: appropriateness and effectiveness, namely, maintaining harmonious interpersonal relationships through communication, enhancing understanding and achieving cooperation. Language is not only a tool to effectively convey and understand pragmatic information, but also a way to establish interpersonal relationships, including interpersonal relationship management and identity construction among communicators, in order to convey specific speaker's meaning, implement specific implementation as the goal, and obtain specific communicative effects.

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