Comparative Study of Pragmatic Failures in English-Chinese Communicative Interaction Based on Data Analysis

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Abstract. In cross-cultural communication, due to the different social norms, values, and thinking patterns of communicators, pragmatic failures will inevitably occur, which will affect the smooth progress of cross-cultural communication. Using data analysis method, this paper makes a comparative study on English and Chinese pragmatic failure from three aspects: pragmatic language failure, socio-pragmatic failure and non-verbal communication pragmatic failure, and analyzes the relationship between variables based on variable covariance by structural equation model relationship between the variables. The results of the survey show that the students surveyed all have pragmatic failures in different degrees and aspects.

Keywords: Pragmatic Failure · data analysis · computer technology · structural equation mode

1 Introduction

With the continuous development of society and the acceleration of globalization, the exchanges between countries in the world are becoming more and more frequent. The exchanges between countries will inevitably bring about exchanges between people with different cultural backgrounds [13]. Pragmatic failures, as a commonly seen phenomenon in contemporary world, may be seen in many occasions, such as shopping malls, supermarkets, classrooms, conferences and so on. Under such circumstances, it is vitally important for us to pay close attention to pragmatic failures in order to ensure a smooth communication and avoid possible conflicts, troubles and even economic losses [3]. As a result, the appearance of pragmatic failures may be an obstacle that poses a negative effect on the process of verbal communication. Pragmatic failure, as a major scientific subject in terms of both pragmatics and intercultural communication, was firstly proposed as a term by Jenny Thomas in her article Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure in 1983 [1], in which she made great contributions to the causes of pragmatic failure, and she also laid a solid foundation for other scholars to carry out deeper research. What' s more, it can be confirmed that most of scholars hold the perspective of pragmatic failure, to a large extent, is caused by cultural differences. According to cooperative principle

put forward by Herbert Paul Grice, a well-known American linguist, using language is a process of selecting languages. Because language can be characterized by variability, adaptability and negotiability [6].

2   Concept and Connotation of Pragmatic Failure

Jenny Thomas first put forward the concept of pragmatic failure in 1983, which refers to the phenomenon that people with different cultural backgrounds have misunderstandings, obstacles or conflicts in communication due to one party's lack of understanding of the other party's social and cultural background knowledge. Thomas divided it into pragmalinguistic failure and sociopragmatic failure, and established a solid theoretical basis for the study of pragmatic failure [11]. In fact, pragmatic failure also exist in non-verbal communication, that is, both parties cannot correctly understand the non-verbal signals generated during the communication, thus forming pragmatic failure. Other studies have shown that only 7% of emotional information in the total amount of information is reflected in verbal communication, while the other 93% of information exists in various forms of non-verbal communication [14]. Therefore, this paper studies the pragmatic failures in English-Chinese communicative interaction from three aspects: pragmalinguistic failure, sociopragmatic failure and non-verbal communication pragmatic failure.

2.1   Pragmalinguistic Failure

Pragmalinguistic failure refers to people's failure to choose and use the correct form of language expression according to the specific context at that time, which is contrary to the pragmatic principles and eventually leads to communication failure [9]. The two major influencing factors of the failure are language and pragmatics.

Pragmalinguistic failure includes two levels: one is that the speaker violates the language usage convention and makes the wrong expression or fails to accurately express his true intention in the correct target language; the other is the listener misunderstands the speaker's real intention or the speaker fails to express his real intention clearly and accurately [10]. The pragmatic failures at these two levels are related to the language itself. Even when two languages are used to express the same situation in the same situation, pragmatic failure will occur.

2.2   Sociopragmatic Failure

Sociopragmatic failure refers to the neglect of each other's cultural background and customs, the wrong choice of language form, and finally lead to pragmatic failure. The influencing factors of pragmatic failure in this category include familiarity with the topic, position and current state, etc. In other words, when communicating with others, it is extremely important to really understand what to say and what not to say. According to Jenny Thomas' theory, pragmatic transfer is the most direct and fundamental cause of pragmatic failure [7]. In other words, people from different cultural backgrounds directly translate their native language into the target language in the process of communication,

without considering the social norms and customs that should be observed. As a result, the effect and function of language will lose its function in a certain context. For example, modesty and politeness is a fine tradition advocated by Chinese culture, so when invited to an activity, Chinese people are more willing to say "no" back and forth to show their politeness [12]. But in fact, they already want to participate in the activity from the heart. In western countries, when invited to an event, people are more willing to give a positive answer; if they answer "no", it means a straightforward refusal in western culture.

2.3 Non-verbal Communication Pragmatic Failure

Nonverbal communication plays an important role in cross-cultural communication because many nonverbal behaviors reflect the same meaning. Due to the existence of nonverbal failure, people from different cultural backgrounds have different meanings and interpretations of some of the same nonverbal acts [15]. Different social groups have different ways of nonverbal expression in communication. They transmit information through facial expressions, eyes, gestures, space and time, and communicate in all forms except words. Improper use of nonverbal communication means will lead to pragmatic failure, because nonverbal behavior is also rooted in the cultural background of both sides of the communication.

3 Survey Design of Pragmatic Failure in English-Chinese Communicative Interaction

3.1 Research Questions

Previous studies on pragmatic failure mostly focused on the field of foreign language teaching, and did not systematically compare the pragmatic failure of English-Chinese interaction from the perspective of cross-cultural communication. Based on the questionnaire data, this paper makes a detailed analysis from three aspects: pragmalinguistic failure, sociopragmatic failure and non-verbal communication pragmatic failure, and points out how the differences in the content, primary and secondary ranking and dynamic changes of linguistic pragmatic rules lead to pragmatic failure from the perspective of cross-cultural communication, as well as the cultural, cognitive and presupposition reasons hidden behind the rules [8]. And then, puts forward countermeasures to avoid pragmatic failure, in order to provide reference samples for the connotation development of cross-cultural research, enrich new perspectives and inject new ideas into pragmatic failure research, contribute to strengthening the construction of international communication capacity, and make a positive contribution to promoting the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind.

The research questions of this subject are mainly as follow:

a) Combined with the survey data and information, we make a detailed comparative analysis of English and Chinese misusage from the perspective of cross-cultural communication;
b) We discuss the causes of pragmatic failure in English-Chinese communicative interaction from the perspective of cross-cultural communication;

c) We put forward suggestions and improvement countermeasures to improve the pre-vention of pragmatic failure from the perspective of cross-cultural communication, so as to provide reference for the cultivation of cross-cultural communication ability and further promote the construction of international communication ability.

3.2 Subjects

In this study, 40 medical undergraduates and 40 international students of grade 2022 of Qiqihar Medical University were selected as the subjects of investigation. Through the methods of questionnaire, interview and observation, combined with quantitative and qualitative analysis, this paper makes a comparative study of pragmatic failure in English and Chinese from three aspects: pragmalinguistic failure, sociopragmatic failure and non-verbal communication pragmatic failure. Based on the analysis of survey data, explore the failure in cross-cultural English and Chinese use, analyze the causes, and put forward corresponding improvement suggestions and relevant measures to be taken, so as to promote the improvement of cross-cultural communication ability and further promote the construction of international communication ability.

3.3 Instruments

The design of research instruments is an important task because the main findings and conclusions of a study are based on the data collected, which is entirely dependent on our research instruments.

a) Questionnaire
   Questionnaire survey is a data collection method in social survey, and it is one of the tools used to collect quantitative data widely. Compared with observation, interview and other survey methods, the advantage of questionnaire survey is that it takes less time and costs, but it is difficult to design a high-quality questionnaire.

   The questionnaire designed in this research has a full score of 100 points, all in the form of multiple-choice questions. The questionnaire first collects personal infor-mation, and the subsequent questions involve three aspects: pragmalinguistic failure, sociopragmatic failure and non-verbal communication pragmatic failure. The ques-tionnaire is mainly based on the "Pragmatic Competence Survey" in "Introduction to Pragmatics" written by Prof. He Ziran, which aims to test students' pragmatic competence in a targeted manner and accumulate empirical data for subsequent analysis.

b) Interview
   Interview method collects information through face-to-face direct conversation between researchers and respondents, which has good adaptability and flexibility [5]. Interview methods mainly include unstructured interview, structured interview and semi-structured interview. This study mainly carries out structured interview, where interviewers set a series of questions in advance and conduct one-to-one interactive interviews with the same wording and order of questions, which helps to provide balanced information and ensure the comparability of data. Moreover, structured interview can produce more comprehensive information, not limited to

the information obtained from the questionnaire, supplement the data survey, and strive to explore the deeper causes of pragmatic failure.

c) Observation

Observation method refers to the research method that starts from the research purpose, takes the research outline and observation table as the basis, makes use of human senses and auxiliary tools, directly observes the research object, and finally obtains the corresponding data. In order to supplement and improve the research data, observation method is also adopted in this study.

4 Analysis of Survey Results

4.1 Questionnaire Statistics

The questionnaire consists of three parts: pragmalinguistic failure, sociopragmatic failure and non-verbal communication pragmatic failure. The questionnaire covers most of the above three items, such as the failure caused by the referential meaning of pragmalinguistic failure, the failure caused by the connotative meaning, the failure caused by the collocation meaning, the pragmatic failure caused by the cultural implication, and the failure caused by improper expression; refusal, address, greeting, differences in values, praise and invitation pragmatic failures in sociopragmatic failure; the non-verbal communication pragmatic failures caused by spatial distance, silence, physical contact, eye contact and different gestures. The questionnaire collection and data statistical results are shown in Table 1.

4.2 Reliability Test

In practice, due to revealing the stability of the survey results from different angles, there are different methods to calculate the reliability. At present, the commonly used reliability test and evaluation methods include test-retest reliability, split half reliability and lower bound reliability. Since test-retest reliability is difficult to operate in practice and split half reliability has certain limitations in samples, lower bound reliability estimation method is more used in reliability estimation. The most commonly used method of lower bound reliability is the internal consistency reliability method, that is, Cronbach's α coefficient, which can be calculated as follow:

$$\alpha = (k/k - 1)\left[1 - \sum\nolimits_{i=1}^{k} \sigma_i^2 / \sigma_x^2\right] \qquad (1)$$

In the formula, k refers to the number of questionnaire questions; σ_i^2 refers to the variance of the answer x_i to question i; σ_x^2 is the variance of the sum of all survey answers. The value range of coefficient α is [0,1], and the closer it is to 1, the greater the reliability, indicating that the design of the questionnaire is better, otherwise it is considered that there is a problem.

In principle, the reliability test can only be carried out on the Likert scale questionnaire. The questionnaire designed in this study belongs to the Likert scale, therefore, the reliability and validity analysis can be accepted. The software SPSS 24.0 is applied to analyze the data of pragmatic failure questionnaire, and the overall reliability analysis results of the pragmatic failure questionnaire are shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Statistics of questionnaire results.

Dimension	Capability elements	Failure rate
Pragmalinguistic failure	Failure caused by referential meaning	52.17%
	Failure caused by connotative meaning	59.02%
	Failure caused by collocation meaning	38.17%
	Pragmatic failure caused by cultural implication	33.28%
	Average failure rate	45.66%
Sociopragmatic failure	Refusal	47.82%
	Address	58.33%
	Greeting	26.38%
	Praise	60.76%
	Invitation	64.29%
	Farewell	67.74%
	Average failure rate	54.22%
Non-verbal communication pragmatic failure	Space distance	64.85%
	Silence	30.78%
	Body contact	33.99%
	Eye contact	57.35%
	Gesture	50.05%
	Average failure rate	47.40%

Table 2. Reliability analysis results of the pragmatic failure questionnaire.

Object	Cronbach's α coefficient	Conclusion
Pragmatic failure questionnaire	0.776	The questionnaire is highly reliable and acceptable

4.3   Validity Test

Commonly used validity indicators include content validity and construct validity, among which construct validity refers to the degree to which a certain theoretical characteristic of the questionnaire is measured, and the frequently used evaluation method is factor analysis. In general, the construct validity can be judged by KMO and Bartlett test.

According to the SPSS 24.0 validity test method, KMO and Bartlett tests are used to test the correlation validity of the 18 variables constructed in the questionnaire, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett validity test results.

Kaiser Meyer Olkin measure of sampling adequacy		0.818
Bartlett sphericity test	Approximate chi square	3341.029
	df	191
	Sig.	0.001

4.4 Structural Equation Model Validation

Generally, on the basis of meeting the evaluation criteria of reliability and validity, the structural equation model can be further used to evaluate the accuracy and reliability of the questionnaire. Structural equation modeling (SEM) is a statistical method to analyze the relationship between variables based on the covariance of variables. SEM is the combination of measurement model and causal model. It is the integrator of linear relationship model. The expression of SEM is as follow:

$$X = \Lambda_x \xi + \delta, Y = \Lambda_y \eta + \varepsilon \qquad (2)$$

In the formula, X and Y are the observed variables for the latent variables ξ and η, respectively; δ and ε are the random error terms of their measurement models, respectively; the two Λ refer to the factor loading matrices for X and Y, respectively.

$$\eta = B\eta + \Gamma\xi + \zeta \qquad (3)$$

The above is the causal model of latent variables ξ and η; B is the dependent variable coefficient matrix; Γ represents the relationship between the independent variable ξ and the dependent variable η, and ζ is the random error term between the latent variables.

Aiming at the 18 observation variables of the pragmatic failure questionnaire in this paper, after the structural equation model test, it reflects the influence degree of the final result and the final result from the three dimensions of pragmalinguistic failure, sociopragmatic failure and non-verbal communication pragmatic failure. From the cross-fitting of each dimension and the fitting of the SEM, each index has a good effect within the scope of application, which indicates that the questionnaire has high reliability and validity.

5 Analysis of Survey Results

If there are differences in cultural backgrounds between the two sides of communication, there will often be deviations in understanding in the process of communication, resulting in pragmatic failure. If a communicator does not follow the grammatical rules to choose words and make sentences, he can only be regarded as a lack of language ability at most; however, if he does not adhere to pragmatic principles in communication, the judgment is "behaving badly", and people usually think that he is not sincere or has a problem with his conduct [2]. Therefore, the consequences of pragmatic failure are much more serious than grammatical failure. Then, to explore the reasons and try to avoid pragmatic failure has become the key to solve the problem. There are many reasons for pragmatic failure, which can be summarized as the following aspects.

5.1 Differences in Culture

The culture of any nation is developed and accumulated in the process of continuous development, and has its own style and heritage. Each culture has its own set of thinking mode, code of conduct and way of doing things. Most of the communication failures caused by cultural differences belong to sociopragmatic failure. Due to certain cultural differences among ethnic groups, the languages and ways of expression of ethnic groups are different. In the process of cross-cultural communication, communicators often make appropriate estimates of cognitive resources based on their own inherent values and thinking patterns, and then choose what they think is the appropriate way to act and express. Once this behavior of communicators is different from the assumed meaning of communicators in the new environment, it will lead to misunderstanding, communication failure and even hatred, that is, what we call pragmatic behavior failure.

5.2 Differences in Thinking Mode

Thinking mode is closely related to culture and plays an extremely important role in cross-cultural communication. People's thinking mode will be different due to their different cultural backgrounds. One of the reasons for pragmatic failure in cross-cultural communication is that they have different thinking modes. Usually, we will record the things we have experienced or seen in some more vivid ways, such as symbols, graphics or metaphors, according to the more imaginative thinking mode of China, and we communicate far less information through language than we emphasize. While logical and rational thinking are the main thinking modes of European and American countries, so they would pay more attention to rational and objective reasoning and analysis in the process of thinking about problems and dealing with affairs [4]. Our imaginative thinking mode is a subjective and perceptual thinking mode. This thinking mode mainly comes from the direct feeling of things, which is usually the process of lack of logical thinking and rational analysis.

The formation of thinking mode is the expression of its culture. Anyone who participates in cross-cultural communication will be affected by its thinking mode. There will be more or less differences between cultures, which makes the development process and thinking mode of each culture very different from that of another culture.

5.3 Unfamiliar with Language Environment

Language usually occurs in a certain language environment, and language environment refers to the actual language environment or specific situation, which is composed of a series of sub languages and subjective and objective environments closely related to communication. These factors play an important role in semantic expression. The language environment provides us with ways to actively participate in the dialogue and how to carry on the dialogue. When a word appears in a specific language, its semantic meaning will become complex and diverse, including the meaning of the word itself and the specific meaning given by its cultural context. Therefore, to understand the meaning of a word, we should not only understand it from the perspective of vocabulary and grammar, but also consider its cultural and contextual factors.

Our English learners from children to adults rarely have the opportunity to learn in a foreign language environment, so they only make mechanical expression of the content to be expressed, and cannot achieve rational consideration and rational use. Language environment restricts the choice of language. In cross-cultural communication, pragmatic failure is more likely to be caused by the restrictive use of contextual factors on language and native language factors. Therefore, in cross-cultural communication, both sides of communication should better understand the cultural background of both sides, cultivate better contextual cognitive ability, and remove the interference factors in the native language, so as to achieve the purpose of smooth communication in cross-cultural communication.

5.4 Lack of Cultural Knowledge

Cultural knowledge refers to common sense and knowledge in all aspects of communication, such as knowledge of history, literature, astronomy, logic, geography, etc. In fact, none of this knowledge needs to be deeply understood. If the cultural common sense of western countries is ignored or not understood enough to a certain extent, misunderstanding will be caused in cross-cultural communication, and it will have a wrong influence on verbal communication, thus resulting in language pragmatic failure.

In addition, the pragmatic failure that occur in the process of cross-cultural communication are mainly due to the lack of cultural identity between the two parties. Cultural identity is necessary in cross-cultural communication and has a little reciprocity. The existence of cultural identity allows cultural communication barriers to be improved. The pragmatic principle of intercultural communication is the principle of cultural identity. Therefore, in cross-cultural communication, both parties need to work hard to achieve cultural identity in order to achieve the best communication effect.

6 Countermeasures for Pragmatic Failure in English-Chinese Communicative Interaction

6.1 Learning Each Other's Culture and Enhancing the Cultural Consensus

After all is said and done, the most rooted reasons for pragmatic failure are cultural differences. So, the most urgent thing people need to do is to get a better understanding on both Chinese and western cultures and to fill the gap between them. Thus, the first thing for them is to work hard on Chinese culture. In other words, people need to be familiar with the language and culture, traditions and customs and values of Chinese nation. At the meantime, they also need to work hard to learn the culture of western countries.

To begin with, it is very necessary for people to make a detailed comparison between both Chinese and western cultures. According to learning the culture of each other, people need to figure out the differences between both Chinese and western cultures and quest for consensus. Only by doing the above-mentioned requirements can we make every effort to avoid pragmatic failure in intercultural communication and lead to a harmonious conversation.

For instance, a feasible approach for English learners in China is to take active part in various of English activities that hosted by foreign teachers, such as English salons, English drama performances and English talk shows. By doing so people can become closer to build areal English context and improve the pragmatic competence of English learners, which are very useful and helpful for them to avoid pragmatic failures in verbal communication with foreigners in intercultural communication.

Furthermore, English learners in China should clearly know the relationship between culture and language and build a correct attitude of learning culture. Language and culture influence for each other. So it is impossible for people to learn languages apart without learning culture. Similarly, if we pay close attention to the learning of culture, without giving any consideration to language, will also not succeed. Cultures of different countries are unique and diverse, but no culture is superior to others. Therefore, people should not only promote and develop the culture of our nation, but also learn and respect the culture of other nations.

6.2   Cultivating the Pragmatic Competence

Pragmatic competence refers to the ability of language users to effectively use languages in line with specific communicative contexts. With regard to the cultivation of pragmatic competence, the following methods are quite adoptable.

First, the cultivation of pragmatic awareness. According to a lot of research, it is of great significance to improve the pragmatic competence and the language communicative competence of English learners in China. English learners should adopt some authentic teaching materials in English teaching, make use of all the authentic contexts and introduce some knowledge about pragmatic knowledge.

What' s more, in the course of teaching, language teachers should demonstrate the relevant pragmatic knowledge and tell the English learners the means to adopt various of dialogical principles and strategies through analyzing various of conversational intentions. Therefore, the goal of cultivating the contextual awareness can be achieved. Furthermore, the authentic language materials reflecting the culture of object language can also be used by teachers, such as VOA standard news, BBC news and NPR news. They can also, together with the English learners, give further plat to the pragmatic materials such as listening materials or literary works, by which they can discuss the differences between the Chinese and western cultures and explain them.

Finally, some instructions after class can also be assigned. The goal and key point for this is to make the English learners figure out and summarize various of verbal behaviors and learn some possible strategies and linguistic devices avoiding pragmatic failures. English learners should also learn to conclude what is the native English speaker' s verbal behaviors under different contexts and conditions.

6.3   Cultivating the Competence of Intercultural Communication

Social contact, especially intercultural communication, is closely related to cultural factors. Therefore, English learners in China should cultivate their intercultural communication competence in order to reduce and avoid pragmatic failures.

The famous linguist Zhang Zhanyi divides culture into two parts: cultural knowledge information and communicative culture. Communicative culture refers to the speech that is apt to cause some misunderstandings and conflicts when a conversation is conducted between a Chinese and a foreigner; and knowledge culture refers to the knowledge that is unable to cause misunderstandings and conflicts. The goal of English language learning is to make the learners master English and its culture and communicate with them. In face of diverse and complex English culture, English learners should give high priority to both cross-cultural communication learning and the learning of knowledge cultures. The scholar Zhou Jian holds the view that English learning should be carried out according to the following four points: cultural factors related to language, non-verbal elements related to social contacts, contextual factors and factors related to values.

In fact, the learning of communicative culture should be in line with the levels of English learners. In its first stage, English learners should learn some knowledge related to social norms and local customs, such as title norms, greeting norms and the strategies of inviting and refusing. In this stage, it is not a suitable mean to teach the English learners in China the knowledge about history, philosophy, art and literature, otherwise it may lead to some negative effects. In the high stage, the English learners can choose some cultural knowledge that can reflect the deeper psychological structures of people. Cultural study should be carried out by combining the cultivation and pragmatic competence at the same time. The English learners should aware that the learning of communicative culture are not tantamount to the learning of communicative competence. In other words, English learners in China, in the course of learning communicative culture, should pay much attention to the practice and guidance of pragmatic competence in the perspective of pragmatics. Therefore, their communicative competence will be finally improved in an all-round way.

In summary, it is a better way for English learners in China to avoid pragmatic failure in intercultural communication.

7   Conclusion

This study mainly explores the causes, classification, and manifestations of pragmatic failure in English-Chinese Communicative Interaction. In this study, 40 medical undergraduates and 40 international students of grade 2022 of Qiqihar Medical College were selected as the subjects of investigation. Through the methods of questionnaire, interview and observation, combined with quantitative and qualitative analysis, this paper makes a comparative study of pragmatic failure in English and Chinese from three aspects: pragmatic language failure, sociopragmatic failure and pragmatic failure in non-verbal communication.

The results of the survey show that the students surveyed all have pragmatic failure at different levels and in different aspects. Sociopragmatic failure rate is higher, over 50%, followed by verbal pragmatic failure, and the lowest is non-verbal communication pragmatic failure. Of course, pragmatic mistakes in these aspects should be paid attention to, they are all important parts of daily communication and foreign language acquisition.

There are many reasons for pragmatic failure. For example, there are different cultural backgrounds between Chinese and western countries. Our foreign language learners are

easily affected by negative cultural transfer, resulting in pragmatic failure. In response to pragmatic failure in cross-cultural communication, this paper proposes some counter-measures including learning each other's culture and enhancing the cultural consensus, cultivating the pragmatic competence and cultivating the competence of intercultural communication.

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