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A Consciousness Raisin Approach To Teaching Pragmatics: between Explicit and Implicit Teaching

منهجية رفع الوعي في تدريس الكفاءة السياقية: بين التدريس الضمني والصرح

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Abstract :

Many pedagogical experiences report the pressing need for a pragmatic competence both in spoken or written mode of communication. The present study aims at developing a methodology that can raise learners' pragmatic sensitivity in their communication to ensure an appropriate use of language. On that concern, the work proposes that a consciousness-raising approach to teaching pragmatic aspects may contribute to develop learners' pragmatic competence. Consulting different sources, the study reveals that learners' pragmatic deficiency hinders their performance and results in communication breakdowns. Also, it shows that a consciousness-raising approach to teaching could contribute to some extent in developing learners' pragmatic competence. Drawing on these findings, the study recommends that pragmatic aspects should be a fundamental component in language course.

Key words: pragmatic competence, pragmatic sensitivity, consciousness raising approach, explicit teaching, implicit teaching.

الملخص:

بينت العديد من الدراسات الميدانية أن الكفاءة السياقية للطالب لها دور مهم في الاستعمال السليم للغة الانجليزية وفي التواصل الناجح سواء كان كتابيا أو لفظيا. تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى تطوير منهجية تدريس تمكن الطلبة من بناء كفاءة سياقية التي تساعدهم على الاستخدام الأمثل للغة،، واعتمادا

على الدراسات والأبحاث السابقة توصلت الدراسة إلى أن تطبيق منهجية رفع الوعي السياقي يساهم بالدرجة الأولى في تطوير هذه الكفاءة. وتجدر الإشارة إلى أن هذا المنهج يعتمد بالأساس على التدريس الضمني والمباشر للعناصر السياقية. حيث يتكون من ثلاث مراحل أساسية وتمثل في: المرحلة الأولى تهدف إلى تحديد مضمون الدرس وذلك مع مراعاة حاجيات الطلبة، أما المرحلة الثانية تتلخص في التدريس المباشر والذي بدوره يهدف إلى رفع وعي الطلبة للعناصر السياقية أما المرحلة الأخيرة فتتمثل في التدريس الضمني لمبادئ مجموعة الخطاب التي ينتهي إليها الطلبة وذلك عن طريق إجراء بعض التطبيقات التي تساعد على ترقية مهاراتهم في التحليل السياقي. وعلى ضوء هذه النتائج توصي الدراسة بتدريس العناصر السياقية كعنصر أساسي كغيره من الميزات النحوية والخطابية في تعليم اللغة الانجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكفاءة السياقية، التدريس المباشر، التدريس الضمني، منهجية رفع الوعي، العناصر السياقية

1. INTRODUCTION

“Why do we often fail to communicate though we produce correct sentences?” a question usually asked by most language learners. Language teachers also always search for reason why their learners fail to speak and write in an acceptable way. On this concern, Miller (1974) maintains that communication breakdowns are mostly due to misunderstanding of the intended message (Miller qtd. In Thomas, 1983). In other words, learners do not get what the speaker wants to say because they treat sentences literally neglecting what is between the lines (i.e. the intended message).

In trying to explain this failure, Kasper (1997) argues that “L2 recipients often tend towards literal interpretation, taking utterance at face value rather than inferring what is meant from what is said and underusing information.” (p.3). That is, learners do not make use of contextual clues that aid them in grasping the intended meaning. Not only at the level of understanding but even when producing sentences, teachers notice that their learners fail to generate utterances that is contextually appropriate. In fact, this failure is due to the over-concentration on teaching grammatical areas at the expense of pragmatic aspects (Kasper, 19997; Bardovi-Harlig& Mahan-Taylor, 2003). Put another way, teaching curricula focuses more on areas such as grammar, vocabulary and syntax without any pragmatic dimension. Such curricula can generate learners who are grammatically sensitive and paying no attention to language use norms (Kasper,1997) After a long period of neglect, pragmatics has begun to receive more attention in language teaching (Bardovi-Harlig& Mahan-Taylor, 2003). Teachers and material designers focus more and more on ways to develop learners’ pragmatic competence and its aspects such as speech

acts, implicature, deixis, presupposition, cooperative principles and others. In other terms, they raise some questions such as how to teach pragmatics explicitly or implicitly? What is the teachers’ role and learners’ role in this process? And so on. It was noted in a previous article that there are many causes behind pragmatic failure which refers all to one main cause which is the lack of explicit instruction of pragmatic aspects (Hafsi, 2019). That is, due to the lack of explicit instruction of pragmatic knowledge, learners fail to communicate appropriately. So, is explicit teaching of pragmatic aspects possible? Is it the appropriate way to raise learners’ pragmatic sensitivity? To find answers to the asked questions, many terms require clarification.

1/ Explicit and Implicit Teaching

As noted above, the lack of explicit instruction in pragmatics is the obvious cause of pragmatic failure. Here, it is crucial to understand what explicit and implicit types of instruction are and what each one of them involves. In accounting for explicit instruction, Ellis (2009) starts from the key concept of ‘instruction’ or teaching. She defines it as “an attempt to intervene in interlanguage development” (Ellis, 2009, p.16). According to her, to instruct implies to become involved in a situation of interlanguage development for the sake of adjusting it. This intervention can be direct or indirect. An indirect intervention refers to the process of providing learners with the conditions that aid them to learn language experientially. In essence, learners acquire language rules by practising different tasks on how to communicate in L2 (ibid.). On the other hand, in instructing as a direct intervention, there is a specification of what

should be learnt (ibid.). Direct intervention requires from teachers, course and material designers to structure a syllabus that clearly determines what is to be taught. On the basis of this characterization, Ellis (2009) classifies the two types of instruction, i.e., implicit and explicit, under direct intervention. This means that in implicit and explicit types of teaching, the content of the course is carefully specified. Teachers in both types of instruction plan previously how the process of learning SL will be achieved (see Figure 1). The main difference between implicit and explicit teaching is related to learners' awareness (Schmidt, 1993). Implicit instruction involves teaching learners the rules of language without being aware of the process, while in explicit instruction, learners know what is being taught and for what purpose (Ellis, 2009; Annita& Charles, 2011). Moreover, the focus of the teaching process is deliberately said and achieved explicitly, whereas in the case of implicit teaching the focus is achieved implicitly and without being said (Schmidt, 1993). There are other differences between the two types (see Table 1). To this point, one can say that explicit teaching is a direct intervention in the process of teaching with learners' awareness being raised as to the goal of this intervention (Schmidt, 1993; Ellis, 2009). Practically, explicit instruction can be realized in two ways, deductively or inductively (Ellis, 2009). Using a deductive method in explicit teaching implies starting with a knowledge or rule explanation and moving to the examples and practice. Conversely, an inductive method makes use of examples and practical tasks to explain the projected rule. So, any study that consists of rule explanation, whether as a starting point or as a result of practice can be classified under explicit teaching. Pragmatic explicit teaching, then, means the direct involvement in learners' acquisition of

language by providing explanation about how language user or discourse community uses language in certain settings. It is the process of specifying and drawing learners' attention to the pragmatic features that should be learnt and how they are used. Aiming at improving learners' ability to use language appropriately in a specific context by supplying different tasks and communicative activities and without learners' awareness of the main purpose, a teacher is said to teach pragmatics implicitly. That is, implicit pragmatic teaching is the process of capturing learners' attention to particular pragmatic aspects without being openly the focus of the course or the purpose of the learners.

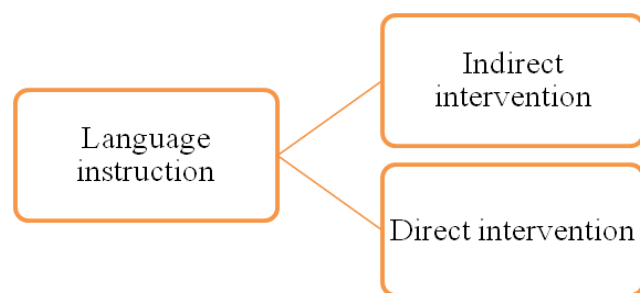


Figure 1.Types of language instruction (Ellis, 2009, p.17)

Implicit FFI	Explicit FFI
attracts attention to target form	directs attention to target form
is delivered spontaneously (e.g. in an otherwise communication-oriented activity)	is determined and planned (e.g. as the main focus and goal of a teaching activity)

is unobtrusive (minimal interruption of communicative meaning)	is obtrusive (interruption of communicative meaning)
presents target forms in context	presents target forms in isolation
makes no use of metalinguage	uses metalinguistic terminology (e.g. ruleexplanation)
encourages free use of the target form.	involves controlled practice of target form.

Table 1. The differences between implicit and explicit instruction (Housen & Pierrard, 2006 cited in Ellis, 2009, P. 18)

2/ Teaching pragmatics

Pragmatic aspects can be taught explicitly to enhance pragmatic competence (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993; Cohen, 1996; Judd, 1999; Rose & Kasper, 2001, Bardovi-Harlig & Hatford, 2005; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010 and others). In order to avoid pragmatic failure, learners have to develop their pragmatic competence, that is, their pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge of TL, effectively *via* explicit teaching (ibid.). In other words, the effective classroom teaching of, say, speech acts can raise learners' ability to express and understand appropriate utterances. More clearly, explaining to learners explicitly how to realize a particular speech act linguistically and sociolinguistically shows that it is a successful way of developing learners' pragmatic competence and of avoiding pragmatic failure. Kasper and Rose (2002) support this view by claiming that "without exception learners receiving instruction in

pragmatics outperformed those who did not" (Kasper & Rose qtd. in Marra, 2013, p.181). Schmidt (1993), in his turn, insists that to learn SL pragmatics "attention to linguistic forms, functional meanings and the relevant contextual features is required" (p.34). That is, drawing learners' attention to pragmatic aspects is a necessary step for a safe pragmatic performance. Before tackling the methodology of teaching L2 pragmatics, some assumptions on L1 pragmatic acquisition have to be explained and explored in L2 pragmatic learning situation. In acquiring L1 pragmatic 'principles', caregivers have an active role of instructing children how language should be used (Schmidt, 1993; Bialystok, 1993; Ellis, 2012). So, in order for a child to learn, caregivers intervene to account for the most appropriate form or behavior in a given context. This does not mean that children have a passive role but a secondary one. After the caregivers' clarification of some principles that organize language use, children begin to notice and analyze input for the sake of expanding their linguistic resources and understanding the relation between forms and sociolinguistic factors (ibid.). L1 pragmatic acquisition, then, requires caregiver' instruction of pragmatic principles as well as children's analysis of more specific forms (Bialystok, 1993) Drawing on L1 pragmatic acquisition insights, a particular role is assigned to teachers and learners in L2 pragmatic learning (Cohen, 1996; Kasper, 1997). Here, it is important to note that learners' background contains a free pragmatic knowledge (Kasper, 1997). A case in a point is the regular use of adjectives like 'nice or good' in making compliments, which is widely known (Cohen, 1996). Therefore, the teachers' role is to draw explicitly learners' attention to what they possess as the available pragmatic knowledge and to the appropriate behavior in L2 use

(Kasper,1997). Teachers, then, should instruct their learners on how to employ this background knowledge aptly in their performance of target communication acts. Kasper (1997) elucidates teachers' role by claiming that There is thus a clear role for pedagogic intervention, here, not with the purpose of providing learners with new information but to make them aware of what they know already and encourage them to use their universals or transferable L1 pragmatic knowledge in L2 contexts. (p.3). Learners, on their part, are required to participate in their learning of pragmatic norms through holding comparison between their native way of performing, say, different speech acts and the target one. In other words, learners' role is to notice the input, analyze it in terms of similarities and differences in comparison with their MT and thus to understand L2 pragmatic principles. Cohen (1996) expresses this role by clarifying that "the role of the learners is to notice similarities and differences between the way that native speakers perform such speech acts and the way that they do..." (p.412). As a matter of fact, these assigned roles to teachers and learners and the fact that pragmatic aspects can be taught remain true for the adopted approaches to teaching (Kasper, 1997). This implies that different approaches to teaching pragmatics agree on the role of teachers and learners and the assumption that instruction can raise learners' pragmatic awareness. For L2 pragmatic learning, Kasper, (1997); Judd, (1999), Rose and Kasper (2001), and other researchers point out that explicit teaching is the most efficient way to pragmatic development. Schmidt (1993) and Rose (1999) add that explicit teaching is a stage forward in pragmatic learning but not the only one. They argue that by explicit teaching, learners construct a pragmatic repertoire; however, they cannot get access to this

repertoire smoothly in using language. The first stage in the acquisition of pragmatics is explicit teaching of pragmatic aspects and general principles. As a second stage, Schmidt (1993) suggests the task-based teaching, that is, implicit teaching of more specific principles of L2 pragmatics. Through explicit teaching, teachers direct learners' attention to the general principles of pragmatics, i.e., to different forms used to perform a certain act and how sociolinguistic factors determine this choice (Judd, 1999). Learners, in this stage, will be endowed with the general framework where pragmatic aspects work. This can help them to notice and analyze an input. In the second stage, teachers provide some tasks on more specific principles such as how determining sociolinguistic factors change in different situations and how they are interpreted in terms of linguistic choices (Schmidt, 1993). Relying on what has been consciously learned, learners have to notice the input and grasp the particular use of forms in a specific context without explicit instruction from teachers. That is, it is a planned teaching process but without learners being aware of it (i.e. implicit teaching). In fact, this is the consciousness-raising approach to teaching pragmatics which calls for a combination of explicit and implicit teaching as they have a 'synergistic' relationship, in the sense that their grouped energy is more effective (ibid.). That is, both types of teaching can produce an extra energy by working together. Consciousness-raising approach will be the focus of the next section.

3/ Teaching methodology

Based on the consciousness-raising approach which cultivates a connection between explicit and implicit teaching and basing on Judd's model (1999) of teaching

pragmatics, the present work suggests a teaching methodology of pragmatic aspects, in general, and of speech acts, in particular. It comprises three main stages.

3.1. Specification of the teaching content

Since explicit and implicit types of teaching stem from direct intervention in the learning process (see Figure 1), it is logical that the specification of what should be learned is the first stage in the present method. In other words, direct intervention implies the determination of content. At this stage, the teacher needs to specify the speech act to be taught on the basis of his/her learners' needs in the target situation (Judd, 1999). S/He has to relate the research findings about the needed speech act to the learning environment such as the routinized forms of the speech act, its combination with other acts (the speech event needed in this learning situation), its specific forms, etc.(*ibid.*). That is, the teacher's role is to match the target situation features (i.e., when, where, with whom, and for what purpose learners have to perform the speech act) with the required speech act findings. The learners' discourse community, for example, may consider the 'academic status' as the determining factor in their communication. The teacher, here, needs to seek for the linguistic forms that reflect this factor in terms of level of formality, directness, and politeness and for the way each of these features are linguistically to be translated (Ishihara, 2010).

3.2. Explicit teaching

The next stage, after choosing the speech act to be taught, aims at enriching the learners' cognitive awareness of the realization of these speech acts (Judd, 1999). That is to say, learners' linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge about the way the

chosen speech act can be realized is explicitly taught. This stage is divided into two steps. In the first step, the teacher starts by providing learners with linguistic forms that are required for the performance of an appropriate speech act in a more general context (Judd, 1999; Rose & Kasper (2002) cited in Ellis, 2012). This step aims at the building of the primary linguistic repertoire needed for the performance of any act. Simultaneously, the teacher accounts for the different sociolinguistic factors that affect the choice of forms (*ibid.*). It is in this step that learners construct the general pragmatic principles that speech acts have different forms and that sociolinguistic factors of the situation such as age, gender, social distance, social status, relative power, etc. regulate the linguistic choice. Similar to the EFL context, this stage in EST context can result in learners recognizing the linguistic forms of a certain speech act and the effect of the sociolinguistic factors on their choice. It is true that this stage teaches general pragmatic principles but this does not hinder the provision of natural occurring examples (Judd, 1999). The second step offers the learners an opportunity to identify the speech act under study when it occurs within the target situation i.e. in their target context. Moreover, the teacher explains to learners the order of sociolinguistic factors in their discourse community and its linguistic realization. At this step, learners are explicitly informed that their discourse community considers the academic status of speaker the determining factor of linguistic choice. It means that if the speaker is a teacher who has a high academic level, s/he has the right to perform, say, an order with less polite, direct or informal forms (Ishihara, 2010). Another discourse community may give to the interlocutors' social distance or age the directive role (*ibid.*). Further, this step does not only aim to improve the learners'

pragmatic awareness about their discourse community use but also their ability to grasp the sociolinguistic factors from contextualized linguistic forms in a discourse (Judd, 1999). The same aim can be achieved with EST learners. Through learning the different

linguistic forms and the sociolinguistic factors, EST learners' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge of certain speech acts as well as their pragmatic receptive ability i.e. the ability to understand the speech act when they encounter it in a target situation discourse will be increased in this stage.

3.3. Implicit Teaching

The third stage concerns the raising of learners' pragmatic production and metapragmatic awareness, i.e. their ability to analyze language use (Thomas, 1983). It aims at training learners to exploit their learned pragmatic knowledge in analyzing input and producing the appropriate utterance (Schmidt, 1993; Judd, 1999). In fact, this stage is achieved implicitly. That is, learners are not aware that the teacher is trying to construct their metapragmatic awareness and pragmatic productive abilities through these activities (Schmidt, 1993). So, learners are provided with tasks whereby they are asked to draw upon their cognitive awareness and their comprehension of the discourse community use of sociolinguistic factors to generate an appropriate form of a speech act (Judd, 1999). In other words, for learners to be able to act out an appropriate speech act, they need to make use of what they learn about the linguistic forms of a particular speech act and the sociolinguistic features in order to analyze the situation and understand the speakers' intention. Judd (1999) maintains that many textbooks neglect the stage of integrating the speech act studied in the other activities of language use. At this stage, learners' attention

is drawn to how the speech act under study is used with other acts and how it is related to other conversational features such as turn taking, interrupting, etc. (Bialystok, 1993). For instance, learners who have learnt the act of 'giving an example' will be asked to act out this speech act with the other ones such as agreeing, disagreeing, comparing, etc. and to understand its relations to the conversational feature of creating more subjects of discussion in conversation, i.e. the feature of opening conversation. By devising different tasks, the teacher implicitly builds learners' productive abilities and their metapragmatic awareness that enable them to analyze different situations and to choose when to observe the discourse community pragmatic norms in terms of sociolinguistic perception and when to keep their own (Judd, 1999). Also, the teacher should raise his/her learners' awareness as to the flexibility of using the act under study with other aspects of language use *via* task-based teaching (Schmidt, 1993). All in all, following these stages in teaching, learners' pragmatic competence and metapragmatic awareness is likely to develop to the extent that they can perform speech acts appropriately in writing an abstract and get successful access to their discourse community.

4/ Task-based teaching

Having sketched out the teaching methodology of pragmatic aspects, now it is time to supply some tasks that reinforce learning. As was previously explained, the teaching in the third stage is mainly based on devising tasks which aim basically to promote learners' ability to analyze and comprehend situational features and to provide an appropriate form. Here, one can suggest some of these tasks. They are classified into two categories, tasks that aid in developing

learners' pragmatic production and those that develop comprehension. The start will be with tasks that have a relation with receptive abilities, supporting Allen and Widdowson's claim (1979) that classroom activities should be gradually progressed from receptive to productive abilities.

3.3.2.1 Tasks to promote learners' pragmatic comprehension

The following tasks can be used to develop learners' comprehension of the pragmatic norms of their discourse community:

1/ Model dialogue

With this activity, learners can notice the speech act in use (Olshtain & Cohen, 1991). The focus, here, is on how speech acts are used in discourse. The teacher presents a dialogue, or in the present case, an abstract to the learners which should be 'short and natural' and then asks them to deduce the speech act performed and the different sociolinguistic factors involved, drawing upon their understanding and analysis of the written piece. In a similar task, the teacher can require learners to guess or choose the possible situation where a given dialogue may happen (Blundell et al., 1982). In the case of an abstract, learners are asked to put a given extract in its appropriate order in the abstract structure on the basis of their rhetorical knowledge and their grasping of functions performed in an extract such as describing results. Another form of this activity may be to question the learners' understanding by giving them a reordered dialogue or abstract that contains acts to be studied and to ask them to order it (Edwards & Cizer, 2004).

2/ The evaluation of situation

The evaluation of situation is a very helpful task in raising the learners' perception of speech acts (Cohen, 1996). Learners are given a situation and are asked to judge whether the form used is appropriate or not. Relying on the consideration of the sociolinguistic factors of the given situation such as the academic status of the recipient, the purpose of writing the abstract, social distance between the interlocutors, relative power, etc., learners can infer whether the form used matches with these factors or not. Learners, here, need to make use of their pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence to provide the right answer. As a follow-up, learners can be required to suggest an alternative form to the given situation, i.e. to develop their pragmatic production (Blundell et al., 1982).

3/ Comparing two situations

In this task, two different situations are given together with a dialogue or an abstract with each, and then learners are requested to explain why the speakers or writers from the same discourse community utilize different forms to act out the same speech act (Judd, 1999). It is clear that to detect the differences between the two situations, learners have to employ what they know about sociolinguistic factors. Another version of the same task is to provide two situations from different discourse communities and ask learners to compare the use of the same speech act by two communities and the different ways of assessing factors.

4/ Discourse rating task

It is also called 'acceptability rating' (Cohen, 1996). It refers to the task where learners are asked to give rates to given forms (e.g. from the most appropriate to the possible form). This improves learners'

comprehension by teaching them the way to relate forms to their appropriate sociolinguistic features and to analyze forms in terms of these features (Baleghizadeh, 2007). This task is, in fact, used also to assess learners' pragmatic competence, notably in the 'diagnostic assessment phase' where teachers use this task to evaluate their learners' level in order to set their teaching goals (Olshtain& Cohen, 1991).

5/ Different Tasks

There are other tasks that can improve learners' ability to analyze and understand pragmatic principles. One of these tasks is to give learners an inappropriate form of a certain speech act in a context with different choices and ask them to choose the appropriate form according to their grasp of the given context (Blundell et al., 1982). Another task is to give learners an abstract together with isolated utterances and ask them to pick up from it expressions that perform the same acts as the utterances provided. Or in a more limited case, the teacher can highlight some acts in the abstract and ask learners to analyze the utterances provided by putting a tick () in the box if the act is the same or a cross (×) if it is not. Later on, a discussion can be held about the shared features or markers between two forms of the same act. For the act of describing, for instance, the teacher can select some descriptive utterances from an abstract and test learners' comprehension by asking them to decide if the utterance is describing the purpose, the method used or the result of the study (adapted from Allen & Widdowson, 1979; Peccei, 1999).

3.3.2.2 Tasks to promote learners' pragmatic production

The following tasks are used to develop learners' pragmatic production

1/ Role play activity

In the role-play activity, learners are given opportunities to use the speech act under study by supplying them with information about the situation and their roles (Olshtain& Cohen, 1991). Then, learners have to perform the roles after discussing the appropriate form of the speech act in the given situation. In the case of writing an abstract, learners can play the roles of, say, the writer and his assumed reader to discuss how a writer makes use of some clues and shared knowledge to help the reader in the interpretation process and how the reader receives and translates these clues. In fact, there are many situations that can be performed to present for learners their discourse community norms of language use such as a situation where a journal reviewer is having a discussion with an abstract writer, or a discussion between an experienced writer and a novice one, or among writers from different scientific discourse communities. Acting out different roles in various situations makes learners more familiar with the natural use of a speech act and their discourse community norms.

2/ Contrastive role-play activity

It is a type of role-play where learners are required to play a set of roles with different sociolinguistic factors each time (Judd, 1999). This activity draws learners' attention to the effect of sociolinguistic features such as status, social distance on their production of linguistic forms. A case in a point is when a teacher assigns for a learner the role of rewriting a part of an abstract to two journals with different sociolinguistic features or to play a role of a reviewer in two different journals.

3/ What are they saying?

It is an activity that has been introduced by Edwards and Cizer (2004). It aims to raise the learners' consideration of the sociolinguistic features in their construction of speech act. This task begins by providing learners' with a situation and distributing the roles randomly. That is, the teacher attaches for every participant in the play a paper in his/her back which contains his/her role. Then, the learner has to guess his/her role from the way other participants talk to him/her. Based on his/her inference, the learners can act out the speech act appropriately in the play. Here, it is not necessary to set a situation that has a relation with abstract writing but any situation that contains the speech act will work since the goal of this activity is to build the learners' flexibility in performing the acts.

4/ Feedback and discussion

It is the space where learners are given opportunity to talk about their attitudes on the similarities and differences between their MT pragmatic norms and the TL ones (Olshtain & Cohen, 1991). Providing feedback and discussing pragmatic aspects with other learners, mainly the sociolinguistic assessment of factors, enriches the learners' sociopragmatic competence (the TL appropriate use) and raises their awareness as to the possible areas of positive and negative transfer or misunderstanding (Li, 2011).

5/ Discourse completion task (DCT)

It is one of the most commonly used tools in pragmatic research (Cohen, 1996). Learners are asked to complete a discourse of a given situation with the appropriate form of speech act taking into account the available sociolinguistic features. This task challenges

the learners' ability to analyze and generate the appropriate form of a speech act. It is worth noting that this task can also be used to enhance learners' comprehension of the role of contextual clues in using the suitable form. The teacher can create other versions of this task. S/He can provide learners with a diagram or a table that shows, for instance, the results of an experiment and asks them to complete an abstract from this diagram or the opposite.

6/ Different tasks

In addition to the above tasks, other activities can aid teachers to raise their learners' pragmatic production and metapragmatic awareness. First, a task can start with the provision of a related group of words like a 'cause and its effect' or comparison with additional materials in a box such as adjectives. The question is to join this group of words using the given materials to form an appropriate act. The goal behind this task is to direct learners' attention to the place and importance of some markers in performing the act under study as is the case with the place of adjectives in the act of comparing. In a second task learners can be asked to rewrite a given utterance twice with different forms. Teachers can enlarge this task by asking learners to rewrite an abstract that s/he supplies through replacing its method, purpose and result with the new ones and making any formal change. These tasks work for promoting learners' ability to vary their forms in performing an act. A third task can be devised to train learners on how to use different acts together in one speech event. It requires from them to fuse two complementary abstracts in one, paying attention to the acts performed and their sociolinguistic factors. Learners are provided with a set of expressions that can help them

(Adapted from, Allen & Widdowson, 1979; Blundell et al., 1982). It is clear that the choice and content of tasks vary according to the act to be studied, the discourse community norms, the learners' level and needs, etc. That is, teachers have to adapt these tasks to their learning situations. Tasks may vary in contents and levels but their ultimate goal is the raising of learners' pragmatic competence and metapragmatic awareness. Here, it is crucial to point out that all these tasks are applicable to EST learners with a focus on scientific content only.

Conclusion

Failing to perform different speech acts appropriately according to the discourse community norms is a serious difficulty that faces learners' in communication. More clearly, pragmatic failure with its two types (pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic) is a serious problem in learners' discourse community. It is true that teachers can observe the two types of failure but what is more important is to know how to deal with them. Another issue that requires teachers' attention is the investigation of the causes that may lead to this failure. Research reveals that there are many causes behind this. Some are related to pragmatic studies, or to teaching curricula, or to pre-service and in-service programs and so on (Olshtain & Cohen, 1991; Kasper & Blum-kulka, 1993; Kasper, 1997 and others). One can argue that all these causes stem from a lack of explicit teaching. As a matter of fact, explicit teaching seems a simple action while its analysis exposes a complete process (Ellis, 2009). It is the act of being directly involved in the learning process with learners' awareness being raised as to ways language is used appropriately in different contexts. Explicit teaching, then, involves the specification and the instruction

of the content of course with learners' awareness. Many pragmatic studies highlight explicit teaching of pragmatic aspects can develop learners' pragmatic competence (Olshtain & Cohen, 1991, Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993; Kasper, 1997; Judd, 1999; Rose, 1999 and others). According to them, to overcome the different causes that may lead to learners' pragmatic failure and to enhance their pragmatic awareness, teachers have to teach pragmatic aspects explicitly. Pedagogical experiences show that *via* explicit teaching learners can build their pragmatic resources but yet lack fluency in exploiting these resources (Schmidt, 1993; Rose, 1999). Learners may know the different forms of a speech act and the sociolinguistic factors but they cannot recall this knowledge smoothly when using language. As a compromise, Schmidt (1993); Bialystok (1993), Judd (1999) and Rose (1999) call for a consciousness-raising approach to teaching pragmatics which combines explicit and implicit teaching. Explicit teaching is assigned the role of consciously drawing learners' attention to how to assign sociolinguistic factors to an appropriate linguistic choice of a speech act (Judd, 1999). Implicit teaching, in its turn, makes use of tasks to direct learners' attention to when and how to use the speech act with other acts and conversational features (Bialystok, 1993). Based on these assumptions, a methodology of teaching speech acts is suggested. It consists of three main stages, starting from the specification of the content according to pragmatic studies, the analysis of learners' needs and the definition of the teaching context (Judd, 1999; Ellis, 2009). Then, learners are taught explicitly general pragmatic principles. Next, ad hoc tasks are devised for the sake of training learners to notice, analyze, understand, and generate speech acts. Granting that learners' see their

pragmatic competence being developed, the issue that arises, then, is how to reliably assess their pragmatic abilities. These abilities can be tested by using different tools which should be selected on the basis of the purpose of assessment and the focus of the teaching process. A consciousness Raising approach to teaching is likely to ensure for learners a rich and flexible pragmatic competence that will help them to produce pragmatically appropriate communication.

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