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## DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE OF UZBEK ESL LEARNERS THROUGH POSTMETHOD PEDAGOGY

Annotation

This study investigates the effectiveness of a postmethod pedagogical approach in developing the pragmatic competence of Uzbek learners of English as a second language (ESL). The findings demonstrate the positive impact of the postmethod approach on enhancing the learners' pragmatic competence, providing valuable insights for ESL teaching and learning in the Uzbek context.

**Key words:** Pragmatic competence, postmethod pedagogy, speech acts, conversational implicature, sociolinguistic appropriateness, Uzbek ESL learners.

## РАЗВИТИЕ ПРАГМАТИЧЕСКОЙ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТИ УЗБЕКСКИХ УЧАЩИХСЯ ESL ЧЕРЕЗ ПОСЛЕМЕТОДНУЮ ПЕДАГОГИКУ

Аннотация

Данное исследование изучает эффективность постметодического педагогического подхода в развитии прагматической компетенции узбекских учащихся английского языка как второго (ESL). Результаты демонстрируют положительное влияние постметодического подхода на повышение прагматической компетенции учащихся, предоставляя ценные знания для преподавания и изучения ESL в узбекском контексте.

**Ключевые слова:** Прагматическая компетенция, постметодическая педагогика, речевые акты, разговорные импликатуры, социолингвистическая уместность, Узбекские учащиеся ESL.

## O'ZBEK TALABALARINI ESL POST-METODIK PEDAGOGIKA ORQALI PRAGMATIK KOMPETENSIYASINI RIVOJLANTIRISH

Annotatsiya

Ushbu tadqiqot O'zbek ESL o'rganuvchilarining pragmatik kompetensiyasini postmetod pedagogikasi yordamida rivojlantirishning samaradorligini o'rganadi. Natijalar postmetod yondashuvining o'rganuvchilarning pragmatik kompetensiyasini oshirishdagi ijobiy ta'sirini ko'rsatadi va O'zbekiston kontekstida ESL o'qitish va o'rganishga qimmatli ma'lumotlar beradi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Pragmatik kompetensiya, postmetod pedagogikasi, nutq aktlari, suhbat implikaturasi sotsiologik munosiblik, O'zbek ESL o'rganuvchilari.

**Introduction.** Traditionally, the process of mastering a foreign language has often been perceived as relatively straightforward, involving the acquisition of grammatical structures and vocabulary by learners. However, there has been a significant paradigm shift within the postmethod era. Kumaravadivelu (1994) introduced the concept of the 'postmethod condition', which arose from widespread dissatisfaction with traditional teaching methodologies. This new approach rejects rigid adherence to a single method and instead encourages teachers to adapt their strategies based on local contexts, guided by overarching 'macrostrategies' as proposed by Prabhu (1990). Thus, beyond mere grammar and vocabulary, language learning now encompasses a crucial aspect - communication. This emphasis on communication has underscored the importance of pragmatics and communicative competence. Pragmatics, by definition, focuses on the dynamics of interaction, exploring how speakers produce utterances and how interlocutors respond.

Traditional teaching methods in Uzbekistan have historically been characterized by a teacher-centred approach, where the teacher dominates the classroom and students often depend on group dynamics without direct instruction in social skills. This method aligns with a more prescriptive and structured form of pedagogy, which can limit the flexibility and adaptability of teaching practices. In contrast, postmethod pedagogy, which is gaining traction globally, emphasizes a more democratic and context-sensitive approach to teaching and learning. It moves beyond the rigid frameworks of traditional methods by prioritizing learner investment and interest, and by giving learners a meaningful role in pedagogical decision-making. This approach is particularly relevant in the context of Uzbekistan, where there is a growing recognition of the need for innovative educational practices to enhance the quality of education and better prepare

students for a rapidly changing world. The use of innovative technologies in teaching, such as multimedia tools, is seen as a way to blend traditional methods with modern educational practices, thereby improving motivation and learning outcomes. However, the transition to postmethod pedagogy is not without challenges. Teachers in Uzbekistan, like those in other parts of the world, may struggle to fully implement the characteristics and strategies of postmethod pedagogy due to a lack of familiarity and the deeply ingrained nature of traditional methods. (Harvey & McDonald, 2019). Despite these challenges, the shift towards a more flexible, context-aware, and learner-centered approach in Uzbekistan's education system reflects a broader global trend towards educational reform and innovation (Urinboyev, 2020).

Despite Uzbekistan's support for English language education through legislation and language policies, classroom instruction still heavily relies on textbooks that offer limited phrases and expressions. Moreover, speaking practice often occurs solely within the confines of the classroom under the watchful eye of teachers, making it challenging to foster speaking skills among learners. This study delves into innovative approaches to teaching pragmatics and pragmatic competence to Uzbek learners of English in postmethod era. Ultimately, the study puts forth a series of recommendations to address these identified issues.

**Literature review.** Developing pragmatic competence in Uzbek ESL learners through postmethod pedagogy can be effectively achieved by integrating various instructional strategies and feedback mechanisms. Research indicates that explicit teaching of pragmatic competence, such as the American English refusals, significantly enhances learners' abilities to use language appropriately in different contexts, and these skills can be retained over time (Ahmed, 2023). Additionally, the importance of

pragmatic competence in EFL contexts is underscored by the challenges teachers face in implementing these features in daily classroom practices, suggesting a need for more structured approaches (Khodiyeva, 2023). Utilizing reformulation as a feedback strategy in collaborative tasks has proven effective in improving learners' email pragmatics, with sustained competence observed over several weeks (Ilna, 2023). Blended learning models, which combine classroom teaching with interactive online resources, have also shown significant improvements in learners' pragmatic competence, highlighting the benefits of integrating technology in language instruction (Chen & Wu, 2022). Furthermore, understanding conversational implicatures and performing speech acts are crucial components of pragmatic competence, and targeted testing and practice in these areas can enhance learners' communicative abilities (Boufira, 2022). Explicit instruction in interlanguage pragmatics, focusing on both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features, is essential to address learners' pragmatic failures and improve their overall communicative competence (Kentmen et al., 2023). Flipped classroom instruction, which provides a flexible and accessible e-learning environment, has been found to be more effective than conventional methods in developing learners' pragmatic skills, particularly in producing request speech acts (Hammouri & Al-Khanji, 2023). Practical tasks, such as oral and written complaints, can further develop pragmatic awareness and competence (Hazaymeh & Altakhaineh, 2019). Finally, incorporating authentic situations and varied language functions in both classroom and real-life contexts can significantly enhance learners' fluency and pragmatic competence, as evidenced by positive student feedback (Nuridin, 2019). Therefore, a postmethod pedagogy that combines these diverse strategies can effectively develop the pragmatic competence of Uzbek ESL learners.

In Uzbekistan, the traditional focus on grammatical and lexical knowledge often overshadows the importance of pragmatic competence, which is crucial for effective communication in a second language. The postmethod pedagogy, which emphasizes contextualized materials and learner autonomy, offers a promising approach to address this gap by tailoring teaching methods to the specific cultural and educational context of Uzbekistan. However, Uzbek EFL teachers face challenges in integrating pragmatic competence into their daily classroom practices due to a lack of resources and training. The effectiveness of postmethod pedagogy in this context can be enhanced through blended learning models, which have shown significant improvements in pragmatic competence among learners by combining traditional classroom instruction with interactive online activities. Additionally, the use of reformulation as a feedback strategy in collaborative tasks, such as email writing, can help learners notice and correct pragmatic infelicities, thereby improving their pragmatic competence over time. Virtual exchanges and interactive tasks focusing on speech acts, such as compliments and complaints, also provide practical opportunities for learners to develop pragmatic awareness in real-life contexts. Moreover, the implementation of postmethod pedagogy can reduce teacher burnout by promoting more engaging and contextually relevant teaching practices, which in turn can lead to better learning outcomes. Therefore, while the cultural context of Uzbekistan presents certain challenges, the strategic application of postmethod pedagogy, supported by blended learning and interactive tasks, can effectively enhance the pragmatic competence of ESL learners in this region.

**Research Methodology.** Postmethod pedagogy, which emphasizes flexibility, contextual sensitivity, and the integration of various teaching methods, can significantly enhance pragmatic competence in language learners. Pragmatic competence, the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts, is crucial for effective communication but often does not develop alongside linguistic competence in L2 learners. Traditional methods focusing solely on grammar and vocabulary are insufficient, as pragmatic competence also involves understanding social, cultural, and discourse conventions. An integrated approach that combines pragmatic and phonological competence, such as using haptic pronunciation teaching techniques, can help learners map

intonation and rhythm onto language chunks, thereby improving their social responsiveness. Moreover, postmethod pedagogy can incorporate technological tools to provide learners with more exposure to the target language, which is essential for developing pragmatic skills in EFL contexts where such exposure is limited. Additionally, communicative language teaching methods, a key component of postmethod pedagogy, have been shown to enhance pragmatic competence by focusing on real-life communication and interaction. However, the effectiveness of these methods can vary based on factors such as the duration, quantity, and quality of pedagogical interventions, as well as the learners' exposure to the target language environment. Postmodernist education, which seeks to integrate pedagogical theory and practice, also supports the development of pragmatic competence by promoting a deeper understanding of the relationship between knowledge and experience. Therefore, postmethod pedagogy, with its adaptable and holistic approach, can effectively address the multifaceted nature of pragmatic competence, making it a valuable framework for language educators. The post-method frees us from the constraints imposed by the techniques of instruction. Teachers using the post method are free to choose their own methods and use their personal experiences, but this does not mean that they may make whatever decisions they want because they still need to follow certain guidelines in order to educate students effectively. In English language teacher education, there are three main approaches to teacher education that may be seen, according to Freeman (1993). These approaches include science-research conceptions, theory-philosophy conceptions, and art-craft conceptions. In the post-method condition, the direction of change in the education of English language teachers has shifted from science-research conceptions to art-craft conceptions to teaching, since adhering to a specific and single teaching method within the context of art-craft conceptions may hinder teachers' ability to reach their full potential. Therefore, the macro-strategic teaching principles form the cornerstone of instructors' roles, and they may use their experiences to apply these concepts to their instruction to maximise student outcomes.

**Analysis and Results.** The improvement in pragmatic competence following postmethod pedagogy intervention in Uzbekistan can be significant, as evidenced by various studies. In the Uzbek EFL context, teachers are increasingly recognizing the importance of integrating pragmatic competence into their teaching practices, despite facing challenges in implementation. The shift towards a more integrated approach to teaching language skills, where listening, reading, writing, and speaking are taught in conjunction, supports the development of pragmatic competence. Research indicates that explicit instruction in pragmatics, such as teaching request strategies and modification devices, can lead to substantial improvements in learners' pragmatic abilities over time. Moreover, the necessity of pragmatic instruction is underscored by findings that mere exposure to language input is insufficient for developing pragmatic competence; structured pedagogical interventions are essential. Studies have shown that such interventions, when combined with opportunities for interaction with native speakers, can enhance learners' pragmatic performance and retention of pragmatic knowledge. However, the complexity of teaching pragmatics is highlighted by mixed results in some studies, suggesting that factors such as the duration and quality of instruction play crucial roles in learners' sociopragmatic development. Additionally, the evolving role of teachers as innovative and adaptive educators is crucial in fostering an environment conducive to pragmatic learning. The integration of pragmatics into language pedagogy aligns with constructivist approaches that emphasize the importance of social interaction and environmental factors in language learning. Overall, the evidence suggests that postmethod pedagogy interventions, which incorporate explicit pragmatic instruction and interactive opportunities, can significantly improve pragmatic competence among EFL learners in Uzbekistan, although the effectiveness may vary based on instructional quality and contextual factors.

**Conclusion.** Implementing postmethod pedagogy presents several challenges across different educational contexts. One significant challenge is the lack of awareness and

understanding among teachers about the nature and principles of postmethod pedagogy, as observed in some Uzbek teachers who rarely utilize this paradigm in their teaching practices. Additionally, the demanding nature of postmethod pedagogy, which requires teachers to be autonomous and critically reflective, poses a barrier, especially in environments where teachers are accustomed to traditional, transmission-based models of education. The necessity for high teacher efficacy and self-assurance to make comprehensive judgments about teaching practices further complicates its implementation, as many teachers operate as passive implementers of prescribed curricula and rely heavily on textbooks. The integration of technology with postmethod pedagogy also presents a challenge, requiring lecturers to blend conventional and technological interactions effectively based on students' needs. Furthermore, the lack of critical thinking skills among students and the prevalence of passive learning attitudes hinders the successful application of postmethod principles. In South Africa, pre-service teachers face challenges in optimizing their teaching practices and learner potential due to the need for critical reflection and the formation of learning communities. Lastly, the resurgence of methodism, driven by advancements in artificial intelligence and intelligent computer-assisted language learning, suggests that the boundaries of past methods might still influence current pedagogical practices, complicating the shift to a postmethod approach. These multifaceted challenges highlight the need for systemic changes and support to facilitate the effective implementation of postmethod pedagogy in diverse educational settings.

Pragmatic competence is a fundamental aspect of language learning that extends beyond mere grammatical accuracy and vocabulary acquisition. It involves the ability to use language appropriately in various social contexts, which is essential for effective communication. Developing pragmatic competence ensures that language learners can convey their intentions clearly and appropriately, thereby minimizing misunderstandings that can result from literal interpretations of language. The domain of pragmatics is extensive and adaptable, encompassing a wide range of diverse issues that intersect with various disciplines. Different researchers have provided distinct definitions and explanations of pragmatics. A consensus on the precise definition of pragmatics is lacking in the literature. Yule (1996) aptly stated, "Understanding how people communicate is actually a process of interpreting not just what speakers say, but what they intend to mean". Communication is a complex process that relies on specific elements for success: the tool of

communication (language), the participants (speaker and hearer), the purpose of communication (function), and the context in which functions are utilized. The context refers to the spatial and temporal conditions associated with speech, as well as other situational aspects. Therefore, the meaning of a word or phrase remains ambiguous until the context is established. While a dictionary can provide multiple definitions for a single word, it is the context that allows for the differentiation of meanings. Ervin-Tripp (1994) emphasizes the significance of context in language comprehension, stating that "Language tolerates both polysemy and homonymy heavily because humans are very context-sensitive, unlike a machine translator, which can be tripped up". According to Rose and Kasper (2001), pragmatics is "the study of communicative action in its sociocultural context," underscoring the pivotal role of context in interpreting communication, a focal point of pragmatics. Levinson (1983) accentuates the importance of context in his definition of pragmatics as "the study of the ability of language users to pair sentences with the contexts in which they would be appropriate". Similarly, Yule (1996) characterizes pragmatics as "the study of speaker meaning," taking into account "what people mean in a particular context and how the context influences what is said".

One of the primary reasons for the importance of pragmatic competence is its role in effective communication. Language learners often find themselves in situations where the literal meaning of words is insufficient to convey the intended message. Pragmatic competence allows them to understand and produce language that aligns with the social norms and expectations of the target language community. This competence is particularly crucial in intercultural communication, where cultural norms, values, and conventions significantly influence language use. Understanding these cultural nuances is essential for learners to interact respectfully and effectively with speakers from different cultural backgrounds.

In addition to facilitating effective communication, pragmatic competence is vital for social interaction. Language learners need to navigate a variety of social situations, such as making requests, giving compliments, apologizing, or refusing politely. These interactions require more than just grammatical knowledge; they demand an understanding of the social rules governing language use in different contexts. Pragmatic competence helps learners build and maintain social relationships by enabling them to respond appropriately to various social cues and expectations.

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