

COMPLAINING ACROSS CULTURES: PRAGMATIC REACTIONS IN INTERCULTURAL SETTINGS

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Abstract: *This study's main focus is on the nature, implications, and handling of complaints in cross-cultural exchanges between foreign students and staff. It seems that the manner the concerns are handled during these exchanges frequently irritates the overseas students. The success of a complaint as a speech act is dependent on how it is articulated, interpreted, and enacted in the social environment. In this sense, the study looks at how cultural variations affect how complaints are raised and handled in the aforementioned cross-cultural encounters. The purpose of the study is to analyze cross-cultural scenarios involving the expression and comprehension of grievances that might lead to miscommunications.*

Key words: *Complaints, foreign, staff, student, culture, language.*

INTRODUCTION:

People from five distinct national and ethnic cultures—China, Germany, the United States of America, Uzbekistan, and South Africa—as well as Afrikaans speakers—are involved in the intercultural encounters this research looks at. The research offers an investigation of cross-cultural interactions that might lead to miscommunication and even misconceptions when complaints are raised and addressed. The interactions between international students will be the main emphasis of this. For this reason, a lot of these businesses give official, cost-free complaint services to their clients. International clients occasionally file complaints with corporate and public organizations.[1:56]

However, it seems that overseas students frequently express dissatisfaction with the manner in which their grievances are handled, just like domestic students do. A complaint is examined as a speech act, or an act a speaker performs by stating something, from a linguistic and, more precisely, pragmatic standpoint. In turn, this speech act may consist of a number of "smaller" speech actions. Furthermore, a complaint's effectiveness as a speech act is contingent upon the social context in which it is delivered as well as how it is articulated and perceived. In this regard, the research will aim to respond to the subsequent three inquiries:

1. Do cultural differences influence the way that complaints are made and responded to?
2. If so, what are the potentially problematic consequences of such differences?
3. How can these consequences be addressed and remedied?

A. The way in which complaints are made and responded to is influenced by factors that relate to cultural differences.

B. Cultural differences in the way that complaints are made and responded to may lead to misunderstandings and even communication breakdown.

C. Conscious efforts to create greater awareness of cultural differences will lead to a better understanding of the way in which people of different cultural groups (specifically, different national and ethnic groups) make and respond to complaints.

Austin distinguished three fundamental dimensions of a speech act which correspond to different acts that a speaker performs (or may perform) in saying something (Graham 1977:87). These dimensions are: locution, illocution and perlocution.[3:90]

A. The locution dimension addresses the grammatical structure and literal meaning of the phrase that is spoken as well as the physiological process of making speech sounds. For example, when a speaker says, (It is pouring)., they are expressing something about the weather in addition to making speech sounds. Austin refers to the act of uttering a phrase as a "locutionary" act, which a speaker does when she speaks anything.

B. The Illocution dimension concerns the speaker's intention conveyed by the sentence uttered. To put it differently, the illocutionary aspect of an utterance has to do with the force (or the value) the speaker gives to that utterance, that is, the way the utterance is intended to be understood by the hearer (Graham 1977:88). In the case of the utterance in, for example, it could be asked whether the speaker is merely describing the weather, or whether she is perhaps warning the hearer against driving too fast. When a speaker utters a sentence in order to do something like warning, ordering, requesting, apologizing, etc., she performs what Austin calls an "illocutionary" act.

C. The Perlocutionary dimension concerns the effects produced on the hearer by a speakers' performance of an illocutionary act. For instance, by uttering the sentence the speaker may convince the hearer not to go outside, or to drive carefully, etc. When a speaker produces certain effects on her hearer by saying something, she performs what Austin calls a "perlocutionary" act.

The three aspects of a speech act listed above are not exclusive of one another. In fact, as example makes evident, when a speaker uses the locutionary act of stating "It's raining," they may also wish to warn the hearer (illocutionary act) about the risks of driving too fast in the rain. As a result of the warning, the hearer may choose not to go outdoors. Focusing on the illocutionary aspect of speech acts, observes that when the social, customary, and relevant rules conditions - that is, the felicity criteria - for the execution of a particular act are not met, the act's performance may not be as effective as it could be. For example, the illocutionary behavior connected to the speech.[4:35]

A speech act verb, such in the example below, is a verb that indicates the act that the speaker performs when speaking a statement.

Example: I deny the charges against me. (Menga qo`yilgan ayblovlarini rad etaman)

In this instance, the word deny is a speech act verb because it implies that the speaker is truly acting out the act of denying by pronouncing the statement.

Example: I am fed up with this house. (Men bu uydan charchadim)

This is an example of a third-party complaint in which the speaker expresses her negative stance (I am fed up) on a "complainable matter" (the house). The second core feature of a third-party complaint is that its performance is oriented towards getting the addressee(s)' affiliation, that is, getting the addressee(s)' to agree with the speaker.

But studies have also revealed that not all pragmatic competence is the same. The present study investigates the expression of and response to the speech act of complaint in intercultural interactions involving local and international students and administrative staff in University residences. This chapter provides information about the subjects from whom the data were elicited; it furthermore explicates the instruments which were used in collecting the data, and the method used for analysing the data.[5:78]

For many years, the development of students' linguistic competence has received a lot of attention in Uzbek ELT classrooms. In other words, the English teachers' ELT pedagogies primarily support the students' mastery of a rich grammar and a large vocabulary, but they pay less attention to the development of the students' pragmatic competence. Thankfully, a growing number of academics are realizing how crucial it is to develop pragmatic competence in ELT classes.[7:78]

In order to address these shortcomings, the current paper investigates the causes of pragmatic failure in Uzbek ELT classrooms and offers some recommendations. Culture is inherently connected to its creators. Though they have a tendency to be more forthright and honest, English people respect individual privacy. Conversely, as a courteous gesture of care, Uzbeks like asking each other personal questions about things like age, marital status, family size, and income. They frequently overlook this cultural gap in cross-cultural contact, which leads to a breakdown in communication. This cultural gap is not given enough emphasis in Uzbek ELT courses because Uzbek culture does not view issues that are considered private in the English culture as private. Furthermore, people in every location polled expressed dissatisfaction with the poor quality of the building and said that it did not match specifications. Additionally, the residential structures' surrounding infrastructure was frequently inadequate, which resulted in concerns with drinking water, sewage, and other problems.[8:89]

CONCLUSION

The significance of imparting pragmatics and cultural behavior to foreign language learners in addition to grammar and vocabulary has been highlighted in this essay.

In particular, it has concentrated on a critical topic related to inter language and cross-cultural pragmatics: the complementing speech act. The essay has demonstrated how speech actions differ throughout cultures and how using the right techniques may prevent misunderstandings and salvage a situation. It has suggested a number of in-class exercises to increase students' understanding of the cultures they study in school as well as those outside of their own, and to provide them with a repertoire of techniques for responding politely to compliments. In conclusion as such, while teaching foreign languages, educators need to be mindful of contextual and cultural factors. Rather than enclosing pupils in grammar books and textbooks, the purpose is to educate them into good communication strategies and prepare them for real-life scenarios.

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