

Causes of pragmatic failure in intercultural communication

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Abstract. Pragmatic failure in intercultural communication is an important issue in intercultural research and pragmatics. An in-depth analysis of the causes of cross-cultural pragmatic failures will help find out the countermeasures to avoid pragmatic failures. This paper analyses the types and causes of pragmatic failures in intercultural communication, and then provides some ideas for the corresponding countermeasures.

1. Introduction

Pragmatic failure is a common phenomenon in intercultural communication. The study of pragmatic failure has practical significance for cross-cultural communication and English teaching. For one thing, it can help people of different cultural backgrounds to better understand each other, realize what they think appropriate will be considered abnormal speech or acts in different cultural environments. For another, finding out the causes of communication failure and know what remedial measures to take will avoid communication conflicts.

2. The Causes of Pragmatic Failure in Cross-cultural Communication

2.1 monotonous rigidity of language learning methods

In the process of second language acquisition, learners' habits of using the first language directly affect the acquisition of the second language, and play a positive or negative role in promoting or interfering with it. "Similarity between two languages (mother tongue and target language) leads to positive transfer; difference between two languages leads to negative transfer". This is the main cause of pragmatic language failure.

When expressing ideas, students usually sort out their ideas in Chinese and translate them word by word into English. In other words, English expression is carried out within the framework of Chinese. But in fact, there is no one-to-one correspondence between the materials and structures of the two languages. When comparing Chinese and foreign vocabulary, there is a complex relationship of one-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-one, one-to-zero and many-to-many. The use of words is not authentic because many students recite English words by means of one-to-one correspondence in the meaning of Chinese, but in many cases, the two languages do not fit perfectly. Inappropriate speech is often reflected in misuse of address forms and improper use of words. Essentially, students are separated from contextual linguistics, and the specific meaning of words should be combined with context, or even with a broader social and cultural background to determine. In the course of foreign exchange, the students who grew up in the immersion of Chinese culture can't reproduce things with Chinese cultural characteristics in English well.

The problem of learning methods is also reflected in the obsolescence of language learning materials. Chinese students like to use "Every coin has two sides" in argumentation. When we use it, we are still complacent. However, we don't know such a metaphor has already become clichéd. It can't make the analogy vivid, concrete and impressive, and it can only make the reader disgusted and bored. What is more serious is that the laziness of word selection and word practice will make the reader or listener think that the speaker's whole thought is full of wisdom and lacking of goodness. Of course, it is not easy for non-native language learners to distinguish "idiom" from "cliché", but

because of this, we should make efforts to "adapt to local conditions" when expressing our feelings. In fact, the process of expressing ideas is also a process of organizing ideas. Compared with native speakers, intercultural communicators have to consider more elements. However, they should not lower their requirements because they are not native speakers.

2.2 insufficient understanding of cultural differences

The primary cause of pragmatic failure should be attributed to cultural differences. In cross-cultural communication, because one party (or both sides) lacked understanding of the other's social and cultural traditions, the two sides of communication took part in cross-cultural communication with different cultural views and speculated about people of other cultural backgrounds from their own cultural perspectives. As a result, the two cultural concepts could not be integrated with each other, and they found that they did not meet their expectations. At the same time, there will be cultural conflicts. The reasons for inappropriate words and deeds are as follows: differences in manners, appellations, values, social factors (such as the location of time and space in conversation, the identity or social status of the object of conversation, etc.) understanding differences between the two cultures. Therefore, the communicative strategies adopted by people with different cultural normative systems are also different, which may lead to misunderstandings in communication.

2.3 Ignoring Individual Differences

In many cases, we only use a vague "foreigner" label to apply to all the objects of communication, but do not define each other from the deep cultural differences. English words or sentences written down with painstaking efforts are used only in communication, often without looking at the object, regardless of the occasion. Just like in a ball game, if you only want to touch the ball, you will be thankful. Whether you can pass the ball or score the goal is often out of consideration, and naturally you can not achieve a good communication effect. In Chinese communication, we will consciously abide by the implicit rules and choose the appropriate speech according to the identity, age and intimacy of the communicating object. However, in cross-cultural communication, we tend to generalize the communicating object into a whole, ignoring the differences between individuals, which is often interpreted as contempt for the other person.

2.4 Lack of Emphasis on Pragmatic Teaching

One of the main reasons for pragmatic failures in verbal communication is the insufficient attention paid to pragmatic teaching in language teaching. Chinese students usually study English for ten years, but most of their energies are devoted to coping with the exam. Students recite words and do exercises, mostly to pass the exam. The design of test questions is more focused on the mastery of spelling, collocation and grammatical rules, rather than on the actual use of language in real situations. Once entering the real communication scene, there will be inaccuracy and inappropriateness. The content of the examination mainly belongs to the category of pragmatic language failures, while inappropriate handling of people and inappropriate speaking are the manifestations of social pragmatic failures. As far as the essence of language use is concerned, the process of using language is the process of choosing language. Choice is based on highly flexible pragmatic principles and strategies so as to achieve certain communicative purposes. The reason why we can make choices is that language has variability, which means that language has a series of possibilities to choose. We can not but admit that this is the fundamental cause of communication failure. In addition, the unavoidable implicitness of language use may also make it difficult for the pragmatist to code.

3. Summary

Since the same idea can be expressed in different linguistic forms, the appropriateness of language expression must also be considered, what form is appropriate in what context. This requires us to pay attention not only to the mastery of linguistic knowledge but also to the cultivation of pragmatic competence in cross-cultural communication and foreign language teaching. We should combine the teaching of linguistic forms with the teaching of linguistic functions, situations and cultures.

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