Pragmatics Should Be Included in Engineering English Curriculum

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Abstract

This research paper brings about the emergence of including Pragmatics into English course book in engineering curriculum of Andhra Pradesh. It throws light on pragmatics its kinds in detail. Various examples are illustrated for bringing awareness on learning this one of the linguistics branch. The importance of inclusion of pragmatics is illustrated and represented through a diagram. It compares learning foreign language to regional language which feels technical students home. It also reveals how significant to be mastered in pragmatics rather than knowledge in functional grammar.

Introduction:

The role of English is globalized as it is employed in all the contents and in various fields. The regional languages of the world are confined to certain boundaries whereas English is the 'Lingua Franca' of the world to share our views, exchange business transactions, for banking and casual chat. English is spoken as a first language by 300 million people approximately and 20 % Earth's population speaks it as a second language or third language.

English language learning was forced by the British during their rule in India. It was the official language to be used for all the transactions, communication and a medium of acquiring education. Though it was initially protested and refused by the Indians to learn but gradually it was absorbed in Indian culture, tradition and education. There are tremendous changes brought with the advent of English in the curriculum of Indian traditional education system due to this teaching and learning methods were slowly taken into new shape and adopted a style of teaching in some regions where the impact of English rule is predominated.

Introduction to pragmatics:

Pragmatics is the study of words and it is a part of linguists which deals with the areas of expression of relative distance, external meanings, speaker's meaning and how one gets

communicated. Pragmatics is otherwise known as social communication skills. It is very important to learn pragmatics to build relations with others in the society. Students have to learn pragmatics as to participate in group activities according to their prescribed curriculum by the board or university.
 There are lots of advantages in learning pragmatics. It helps to intend meaning, assume the situation, goal and kinds of actions of the speaker. It varies from person to person as everyone has their own approaches. Pragmatics is one of the branches of linguistics whereas it can be considered as it's a study of language that is not directly spoken by the speaker instead of that he suggests or hints something which the listener has to assume the appropriate intention. It doesn't need any grammatical expertness to converse in this method of expression. Its all about the speaker to convey the situation accurately through the knowledge in English.Pragmatics is defined by many of the educationists few among them are mentioned in connection with this research discussion.

The study of Pragmatics explores the ability of language users to match utterances with contexts in which they are appropriate. It is the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed – Stalnke

The term pragmatics is often used in a much broader sense, outside of the USA so as to include a great number of phenomena that American linguists would regard as belonging strictly to sociolinguistics: such as politeness, narrativity, and the signaling of power relations." (R.L. Trask, Language and Linguistics: The Key Concepts, 2nd ed., ed. by Peter Stock well. Routledge, 2007) .
The interpretation of the messages is occurred with pragmatics and it is based on knowledge about the context and meaning of the word. Pragmatics can be dealt with four contexts mainly which are used by the linguists. They are
Linguistic context
Physical context
Language in context
Deixis

Linguistic context: it deals with the set used in same phrase or context. Homonyms can be highlighted in this context.
Example: 'Pupil'
It can be used as a part of an eye or to refer students in the class. It is decided by the context used by the speaker.
Physical context: it deals **with** the location that it influences and interprets the situation.
Example: Go slowly, pupils crossing the street…

It indicates that people have to go slowly as it is the school road that students generally reach the school. In this context pupil doesn't mean an eye-pupil.
Language context:

it deals with the aspects of context, intentions, shared knowledge and cultural implications. The listener can't implicate anything till he has an idea about what the speaker is conveying to him. It sometimes leads to misunderstanding, misinterpretations if it is not involving two both the speaker and listener. Sometimes the context might be invisible and it needs the attention of the listener.
Example: A: I have two kids. Jane and Jack
             B: Oh, great.
             A: I also have a pet rabbit
              B: I am extremely sorry!
The context is happened between two persons who is the owner of the apartment and the one who wants it for rental and he is providing him with the required details a owner needs from a tenant.

He doesn't accept pets as he finally said sorry for him. It may not be understood once it is known completely.

Example: Have you seen Aunt Jane?

- The blue umbrella holding there

The situation is incoherent unless we know about Aunt Jane who has a blue umbrella and holding it. Deixis: words that cannot be interpreted alone, without being put in a context. There are person, place and time deixis.

Place deixis: I, them, you, us

Person deixis: there, here, that.

Time deixis: now.

The condition of English language skills in engineering colleges of Andhra Pradesh:

English language is given a priority as a second language in this regional state. Students who ever step into engineering colleges are instructed in regional medium or English medium since their schooling. The criterion students' performance is measured mostly in the form of marks rather than the knowledge what they acquire from level to levels. Due this contagious phenomenon, the teaching language is less prioritized and left the students deficient in language skills.

Students whoever nurtured in this marks oriented environment are certainly failed to express themselves in other language. it is a fact to be accepted that reading skills are at least to the extents where other language skills are not at all developed in any way. Students of engineering stream are given much scope for learning a language through language labs apart from their theoretical language subject. It is an undeniable fact that 80% of the engineers are failed to get through an HR round due to inefficiency in English speaking and writing, a report given by Times of India recently. At this juncture, introduction of pragmatics in their English course book considerably helps students.
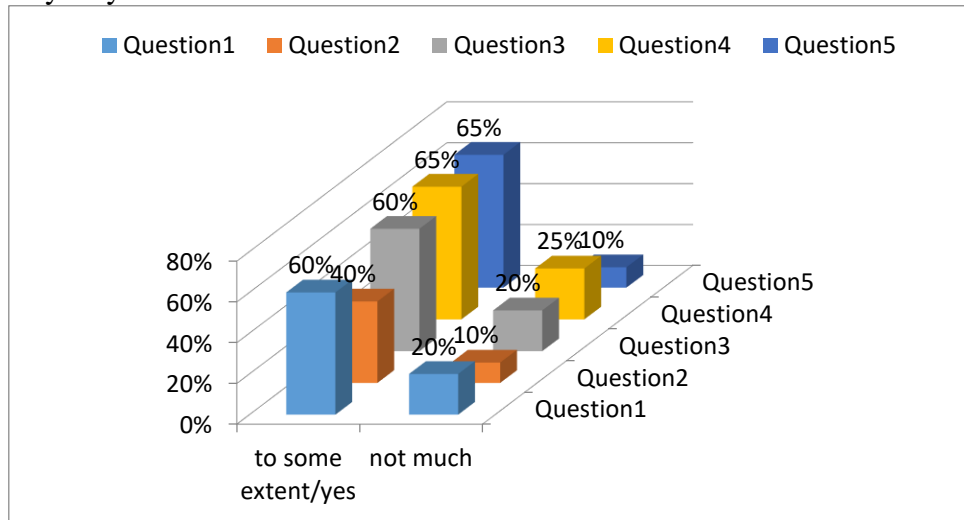
The significance of Teaching Pragmatics at engineering level in Andhra Pradesh:

According to Locastro (2012) "Improving learners Pragmatic knowledge is as important as developing one's IT technology skills. Both the skills are essential for today's competitive world. Information Communication Technology and Language skills are intertwined in technical courses. In this context, students can be taught Pragmatics to acquire language skills. Government of Andhra Pradesh has introduced skills development program in view of developing English language skills among young engineers of the state.

A survey has been conducted on faculty of five engineering colleges in rural Andhra Pradesh through a brief questionnaire consists five questions of about the advantages of the inclusion of Pragmatics in engineering curriculum and the benefits for technical students equip with language skills and get through the campus interviews.

1.   How far teaching pragmatics help students to acquire practical language knowledge in technical graduation?
        a) To some extent   b) not much c) no
2.   To what extent the knowledge of pragmatics support students to get through interviews held in campus recruitments?
        a) to some extent b) not much c) no
3.   Do you find teaching pragmatics is easier than regular grammar?
        a) Yes b) no c) not much
4)   Do students feel that pragmatics is similar to conversations taken place in regional language?
        a) yes   b) no c) not much
5)   Do you recommend pragmatics to be included in Engineering English Course Book?
        a) To some extent b) not much c) no

The below diagrammatic representation illustrates that the first question considers that 60% of the faculty support that teaching pragmatics definitely help students to acquire practical language knowledge for students to develop social skills and working with their peers. For Question two 40% of the faculty accepted that learning pragmatics definitely help the learners to cop up with interviews held in the campus recruitments. For question three 60% of the faculty acknowledged that teaching grammar may not come to good terms with engineering students whereas teaching pragmatics assist students in many ways.

For question four 65% of the faculty and students agreed with the statement that pragmatics are similar to regional language conversation because the listener has to understand the speaker's conversation in a casual chat or classroom conversation. It can be expresses in their own language without minding much grammatical sense. It impacts that regional language usage. Question five is supported 65% by the faculty recommend pragmatics to be a part of English course book in engineering education.

Conclusion:

It is understood by the above case study by the researcher that pragmatics are necessary for equipping language and also should be taught and implemented in the classroom. Students must be aware of using pragmatics in their day to day activities and also learn to use them with the assistance of using information and technology in the class room and also in language laboratory in the college. it is also a noteworthy factor to mention that pragmatics must be a part of teaching a language as it plays vital role in developing learners' communicative ability.

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