

Conducting Role-plays in EFL Classroom on the Topic Greeting

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Pragmatics is a linguistic science which studies a language from the point of its users, which means the choice of users to produce the message during the communication and its impact into the interlocutor in a speech act. The choice of a speaker and the effect of it are interrelated patterns in achieving desired result from the interpersonal communication. Greeting is one of the ways which is used to reach desired outcome in communication; therefore, greeting is one of the speech acts which is most frequent in everyday life; moreover, greeting is a such important speech act that children are taught commonly in particular native language and from the early language acquisition. The communicative function of greeting is showing politeness, besides greeting serves to begin communication. Comparing all nations' greeting, they have almost same function which is establishing the relationship between people, who are going to communicate. The tone of greeting is also important, because it is the beginning of the conversation which is going to held. If the greeting is failed, it means that communication between speakers may also fail, because the first impressions reveals beyond greeting. "Greeting even if in passing is essential to let members of society know that they count, that 'everything is all right'. Most often, this is to indicate that there are still hard feelings or anger on the part of the greeter, although, in the event of a cold greeting, it may indicate that there are still hard feelings" (Bernard Spolsky, 1998. P.88).

While defining greeting, people give different explanations. One may consider greeting as the means of communication to make friendly atmosphere. Another definition might be the first word or expressions which are usually used to overcome the barriers during the initial part of the interaction between two people or a group of people. At the same time with verbal statements, there vividly occurs

non-verbal communication. Non verbal greeting can be simply a nod, kissing, shaking hands, hugging or just wave of the hand. Like verbal greeting, the expressions of non-verbal greeting are also different in different cultures. Bricklin Zeff is a writer of the article “The Pragmatics of Greetings: Teaching Speech Acts in the EFL Classroom”. In this article, he analyzed a case study of a Japanese student, who moved to Canada, adopted by a Canadian family and his first meeting with his Canadian host mother. Bricklin Zeff provided vivid description of a tired Japanese student’s feeling from an unexpected meeting, as “Taro stood with his arms at his sides looking uncomfortable, if not alarmed. He didn’t know how to react. Japanese do not touch during the initial greeting. When his host mother ended the hug, he gave a nervous laugh. She smiled to disguise the awkwardness of the moment” (Bricklin Zeff 2016). Bricklin Zeff explained the reason of this situation as unawareness of cross-cultural communication, because “Taro was not only one in the group unprepared for the initial meeting with a host mother” (Bricklin Zeff 2016). Even though learners of language are taught to use the language in communication, majority of students have a gap in understanding its function and, in this situation, the speech act of greeting is obviously failed.

Greeting as one of the important speech acts in successful communication is taught to children from early acquiring of the first language. Further children understand the importance of greeting in their communication with other people, because it is obvious that communicative function of greeting actually to reach other purposes in ongoing communication. Mostly Greeting serves to slightly move to actual issue of the communication. However, it should be counted that the form of greeting depends on context. Context identifies the bond of the people and different social position, which are relations between friends or just acquainted people, relations between employer and employee, relations between close and far relatives. Moreover, contexts involve age of the people, the distance between people, timing of people. “English as foreign language learners, the ability to make appropriate greeting is often the first opportunity to demonstrate communicative competence” (Bricklin Zeff 2016). Even though greeting seems very simple

formulaic expression, it requires a special competence in cross cultural communication. Since the first impression comes through the speech act of greeting and it might cause for a lasting one. That's why, it is very important to teach students the communicative competence of greeting.

There are different ways to teach students the rules of greeting and to practice during the classes. Greeting should be taught learners as soon as they began to learn a second language. Teachers should provide explicit information of greeting traditions of particular culture and should explicitly explain implicit meaning that may occur in greetings, after that teacher may conduct activities to enface learners to these types of speech acts.

Bricklin Zeff introduces 4 tasks which can be used for EFL classrooms in order to improve students' awareness of greeting in English:

1. Keeping greeting journal.
2. Observing and documenting greeting on TV shows
3. Using discourse completion tasks
4. Participating in role plays.

The task of Keeping greeting journal is that of students will keep diaries where they write down the explicitly the greeting speech acts which they produce during the day. Then students should analyze these speech acts which they produce on the basis of three questions: "Who are some of the people you greet on a typical day? What expressions do you use when you greet this people? Why do you greet this people differently from others?" This task gives opportunity to students to analyze their greeting speech acts both in native language and in English. While analyzing it will be obviously seen the greeting differences which they are making in different domains. Besides in greeting journal students may right not only their speech acts but some acts which they have observed and have found it very interesting to analyze.

Observing and documenting speech acts on TV shows brings students natural cultural experience. They can watch the real life a speech acts on TV shows and analyzing them improves students' language and culture awareness. For these teacher should bring several speech acts in order to analyze it in the classroom, and then teacher may give an assignment for students to analyze other English native speech acts on TV shows or to find out such examples through the internet.

Using discourse completion task helps students to use their critical thinking, creativity and politeness in speech acts. So, for these task, teacher prepares different a little bit tough situations in which students have to respond them in adequate way. Teacher distributes or students choose themselves different sheet of papers on which have all different situations. For example, 'you are in a hurry to meet with your friends, because you are late. Suddenly you come across with old woman who is your neighbor and she is your grandmother's friend of childhood. How will you greet this person?' After each student's response, teacher may ask others who may be willing to act particular situation in different way or ask students what they think about each others' response. These kinds of situations help students to overcome some difficulties in real life situations where they need to act greeting.

The task of Participating in role plays is another interesting activity where students work in pairs or cooperatively. The number of members of small groups should be organized according to the situations which teacher prepares for students' acting. It will be better if teacher makes situations which may happen abroad, because it helps students to feel themselves as if they are in abroad and they will respond them more seriously. By the way, after their act teacher and students may give feedback and through feedbacks they will be able again to analyze the greeting speech which is one of the important and unavoidable speech acts in communication.

In conclusion, pragmatics studies the speech acts and their outcomes in communication. Greeting is one of the most important communication speech acts

which may give first impression about the speakers if it is the first meeting. Therefore, the second language teachers should teach and give opportunity to practice their students exactly this speech act, in order to be sure greeting people from other countries and not to be in unexpected situations which may give negative emotions. Four tasks which were explained above help teachers to conduct their lessons on this topic, because these tasks help students to analyze greeting speech acts and to apply them into their practice.

Reference

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