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THE ROLE OF PRAGMATICS IN LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT: AN ANALYSIS OF THE ASSESSMENT OF PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN STANDARDIZED LANGUAGE TESTS

Abstract. *Language evaluation is placing more and more importance on the study of pragmatics, which is concerned with how speakers use language in context. This article discusses the difficulties in assessing this complicated area of language competency, pragmatic competence, in standardized language examinations. It draws attention to the need for a more thorough and accurate assessment of pragmatic ability and makes suggestions for potential remedies, including the inclusion of real-world language use tasks and the creation of pragmatics-specific rating scales. The need of incorporating pragmatics into language teaching and learning is also emphasized in the essay, as are the possible advantages of a more nuanced pragmatic competence evaluation for language learners, educators, and researchers.*

Keywords: *pragmatics, language assessment, language proficiency, standardized language tests, pragmatic competence, authentic language use, rating scales, language teaching, language learning, language learners, language educators, language researchers.*

Introduction.

In today's globalized society, language competency testing is becoming more and more significant. Educational institutions, corporations, and governments utilize language proficiency tests to assess language proficiency levels and make crucial choices about language instruction, job placement, and immigration. Grammatical and lexical knowledge have typically been the main focus of standardized language assessments, with pragmatic ability receiving less attention. The value of pragmatic ability has become more clear as language learners engage with speakers of other languages in a variety of circumstances. In order to assess pragmatic competency in standardized language assessments, this article examines the importance of pragmatics in language evaluation.

Defining Pragmatics.

The study of language use in context is known as pragmatics. It entails examining how individuals use language to further their communication objectives in social contexts. Therefore, pragmatic competence is the capacity to use language effectively in a variety of social contexts. Understanding the social

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rules that regulate language use and being able to adapt language usage to the social environment are both necessary for pragmatic competence.

Pragmatic Competence: Its Importance.

In today's globalized society, when people from many linguistic and cultural backgrounds often engage with one another, pragmatic ability is becoming more and more crucial. Communication failures frequently result from a lack of pragmatic competence rather than a lack of grammatical or lexical expertise. For instance, despite having great grammar and lexical knowledge, a language learner could find it difficult to comprehend the subtleties of a conversation between native speakers of the target language.

Examining pragmatic proficiency in tests of standardized language.

It's a relatively recent field of study to evaluate pragmatic proficiency in language assessments. Language examinations have traditionally placed more emphasis on the evaluation of grammatical and lexical knowledge and less emphasis on pragmatic ability. The significance of determining pragmatic ability in language assessments is, nonetheless, becoming more widely acknowledged.

One challenge in assessing pragmatic competence is the fact that it is context-dependent. Unlike grammatical and lexical knowledge, which can be assessed in a relatively controlled environment, pragmatic competence requires an understanding of the social context in which language is used1. As a result, it might be difficult to evaluate pragmatic proficiency in standardized language assessments. Using real materials is one method of evaluating pragmatic proficiency in standardized language assessments. Real-world contexts are used to create authentic materials, which are examples of the kinds of language use that language learners are likely to come across in everyday life. Videos, written texts, and recordings of real conversations all qualify as authentic resources. Language examinations can more effectively imitate in-person communication settings and evaluate pragmatic competence by using authentic materials.

Another approach to assessing pragmatic competence is to use performance-based assessments. Performance-based assessments involve having language learners engage in communicative tasks that require the use of pragmatic competence. For example, language learners may be asked to engage in role-plays, where they must negotiate a restaurant bill or make a hotel reservation2. Language examinations can assess pragmatic proficiency in a more accurate and useful manner by adopting performance-based assessments.

Conclusion.

An important area of research involves evaluating test takers' pragmatic proficiency. In today's globalized world, pragmatic competence is becoming more and more crucial, and language learners need to be able to utilize language

[1] Huang, J. (2011). The assessment of pragmatic competence in foreign language education. Applied Linguistics Review, 2(2), 307-326

[2] Van Compernolle, R. A., & McGregor, K. (2014). Assessing pragmatic ability in the instructed setting: The C-test as a valid measure of pragmatic ability. Language Testing, 31(4), 523-547

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effectively in a range of social contexts. However, because pragmatic competence is context-dependent, evaluating it in standardized language tests can be difficult. Language examinations can more precisely imitate real-world communication scenarios and assess pragmatic ability by utilizing authentic materials and performance-based assessments. It is crucial that pragmatic competence receives the consideration it requires as language testing develops.

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