ABSTRACT

The present study takes off from the premise that teaching of English as a Second Language at the Undergraduate level in India limits the learners’ capacity to use the skills so learnt outside the classroom in real life situations.

The study, therefore, aims at broadening the Communicative Language Teaching perspective in ESL by incorporating a pragmatic component into the curriculum in order to enable learners overcome difficulties in English language use by pragmatic awareness raising in classroom setting.

It was hypothesized that pragmatic competence can be taught through explicit and interventional teaching in which learners acquire a holistic understanding of all the parameters in producing and comprehending speech acts. The role of a pragmatic approach in the ESL classroom acquires significance because it bridges the gap between learners’ linguistic knowledge and their inability to perform appropriately and adequately in real life situation. Inclusion of pragmatic concepts in a teacher fronted classroom situation will have a positive effect on learners’ proficiency in English as a Second Language. Such a conviction and approach can solve the difficulties of the learners.

The methodology was both theoretical and empirical, and the instrument used in the study was in the format of a Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT). This test was administered as a pretest and a posttest to assess learners’ status in their pragmatic
competence at entry level and their progress after instruction in pragmatic aspects at terminal level. Their initial and terminal test scores for language use were compared. The sample consisted of twenty students of Second year B. A., Ahmednagar College, Ahmednagar, Maharashtra.

Results of the study established that learners successfully achieved an expected level of pragmatic competence in the four particular speech act functions undertaken for the study, namely, Requests, Compliments, Compliment Responses, Complaints, Apologies and Inferencing Implicatures. Besides, there was a qualitative change in the learners’ use of speech act realizations by use of more polite forms with social appropriateness. Similarly, there was a demonstrated quantitative increase of speech act productions in terms of longer and complex forms of communication. There was qualitative and quantitative improvement in recovering the ‘hidden’ meaning of implicatures, too.