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MODERN PERSPECTIVES IN THE STUDY OF INTERCULTURAL PRAGMATICS AND THEIR APPLICATION IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS – FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

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Abstract: Contemporary foreign language teaching faces an increasing need to integrate intercultural pragmatic competence as an essential component of the educational process. Pragmatics, which studies language use in real communicative contexts, represents a key tool for understanding how speakers from different cultures structure their interactions and select strategies to express intentions in an appropriate and culturally acceptable manner. The aim of this project is to explore contemporary approaches in intercultural pragmatics and their practical application in the teaching of German and English as foreign languages, in comparison with the Macedonian language and the communicative practices of native speakers. Special attention is devoted to the analysis of speech acts, the phenomenon of politeness, and culturally specific strategies in cross-linguistic communication. The research combines a theoretical framework with empirical data, including the compilation of a corpus, the development of teaching modules, and contrastive analyses, with the objective of enhancing learners' pragmatic awareness in foreign language acquisition. The expected results highlight the applied value of intercultural pragmatics in multicultural educational contexts, while the project offers innovation, scientific relevance, and potential for international academic cooperation.

Keywords: intercultural pragmatics, teaching, speech acts, politeness, contrastive analysis, German language, English language, intercultural communication

1. Introduction

In the context of globalization and intensified intercultural interaction, foreign language teaching is increasingly moving beyond purely grammatical and lexical aspects, shifting its focus toward the development of broader communicative competences. Intercultural pragmatic competence emerges as a crucial dimension that enables effective and successful communication among speakers of different languages and cultures. It encompasses the ability to recognize, interpret, and appropriately apply speech acts, politeness strategies, and culturally marked linguistic patterns. The present paper provides an overview of the project entitled *Modern Perspectives in the Study of Intercultural Pragmatics and their Application in the Educational Process-from Theory to Practice*, funded by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of North Macedonia (2025).

Current research in the field of cross-linguistic pragmatics indicates that cultural differences significantly influence the choice of communicative strategies and the interpretation of discourse. In this regard, foreign language teaching that incorporates the principles of intercultural pragmatics is essential for fostering learners' awareness, allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of specific cultural norms and communicative practices.

Numerous studies have been conducted in this field in the English language (Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; Caffi, 2007; Czerwionka, 2012; Deutschmann, 2003; Economidou Kogetsidis, 2013; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Kádár & Bargiela-Chiappini, 2011; Ogiermann, 2009; etc.) and in the German language (Gethman, 1982; Geissner, 1975; Hoffmann, 2000; Levinson, 1983, 2000; Meibauer, 1999; etc.). In our country, several contrastive studies in the field of pragmatics have been carried out in English, German, and Macedonian (Mitkovska, Kusevska, Buzarovska, 2013; Ivanovska, Kusevska, Daskalovska, 2016; Kusevska, Ivanovska, Daskalovska, 2017, 2018).

This study aims to critically analyze of contemporary pragmatic theories, including sociopragmatics, cultural and anthropological approaches, as well as contrastive pragmatics, and their implementation in the teaching process. The focus is on German and English as foreign languages, compared to Macedonian and Albanian, and the communicative practices of native speakers. Such an approach emphasizes the relevance of the topic in the context of globalization and the growing need for intercultural communicative skills, while also enabling the development of teaching programs that integrate pragmatic awareness and cultural competence. The project brings significant innovation and academic relevance, opening opportunities for international collaboration, the application of new methodological approaches, and the creation of teaching modules and corpora of high practical and scientific value. The project builds upon studies on politeness by Brown, P. & Levinson, S. C. (1987), as well as research on pragmatics and pragmatic competence by Grice, H. P. (1989); Leech, G. N. (1983); Levinson, S. C. (2000); Mey, J. L. (1993); Robinson, D. (2003, 2006), along with more recent studies by Kecskes, I. (2007, 2013) and Finkbeiner, R. (2015) on intercultural pragmatics. In a local context, the project will

complement the still modest number of Macedonian studies in the field of applied pragmatics and open new opportunities for regional and international collaboration.

2. Project objectives

The main objective of the project is to investigate and analyze the practical application of intercultural and cross-cultural pragmatics in foreign language teaching, with a particular focus on German and English and their comparison with the Macedonian and Albanian language.

The first objective is the development and systematization of a methodological and theoretical framework for intercultural pragmatics, based on contemporary scholarly works and models. In this way, the project will provide a solid foundation for further data analysis and the formulation of potential directions for new empirical research.

The second objective is the selection and analysis of authentic teaching situations and discourses that reflect the use of intercultural pragmatics in real classroom contexts. This also includes a comparative analysis of speech acts and culturally marked linguistic forms among foreign language learners and native speakers. In doing so, the project aims to identify the key challenges students face in developing pragmatic competence.

The next objective is the dissemination and practical implementation of the project's results through the creation of digital e-learning modules, the preparation of a scientific publication in the form of a monograph or book, as well as the organization of academic conferences and workshops. This will ensure broader accessibility of the materials and encourage academic discussion on the significance of intercultural pragmatics, both nationally and internationally.

3. Research Subject

The subject of this project is intercultural pragmatics and its application in foreign language teaching, with a particular focus on German and English. The research is directed toward a comparative analysis of the linguistic and pragmatic features in the communication of learners, contrasted with the native strategies of Macedonian speakers. The emphasis is placed on pragmatic competence – the learners' ability to recognize and appropriately interpret the communicative intention underlying what is said or written. This involves going beyond the literal meaning in order to identify the actual message and the cultural expectations that shape it.

Understanding pragmatic meaning represents a particularly challenging aspect of foreign language acquisition, as meaning is not always explicitly expressed. A lack of pragmatic awareness often leads to misinterpretation, misunderstanding, or complete communicative breakdown. In such situations, learners frequently rely on models from their mother tongue, which are not always applicable due to cultural and linguistic differences in pragmatic norms.

The central assumption underlying the project is that pragmatic competence constitutes an essential component of foreign language acquisition, particularly in an intercultural context. Intercultural pragmatics functions as a bridge between language, culture, and social interaction, and foreign language teaching must therefore incorporate methods that foster the development of both cultural and pragmatic awareness among learners.

Based on this theoretical framework, the project is guided by several research questions:

- 1. What influence do linguistic and social contexts exert on language use in intercultural communication?
- 2. How does pragmatic competence develop among learners of German and English as foreign languages in Macedonian and Albanian students?
- 3. Which strategies and teaching methods prove to be most effective in fostering intercultural pragmatic awareness?
- 4. What similarities and differences exist in the interpretation of speech acts among learners of German and English as foreign languages, as well as among native speakers of Macedonian or Albanian, in comparison with native speakers of German and English?

The research is further grounded in the following hypotheses:

- **Hypothesis 1:** Explicit instruction significantly contributes to the development of pragmatic awareness among foreign language learners.
- **Hypothesis 2:** Learners exposed to authentic communicative situations demonstrate greater flexibility in applying appropriate pragmatic strategies.
- **Hypothesis 3:** Culturally specific models of communication influence the interpretation of politeness and speech acts.

4. Research Methodology and Instruments

The empirical research within the framework of the project will be conducted through a combination of various methods for data collection and analysis, with the aim of thoroughly examining intercultural pragmatics among foreign language learners. The applied methods will include surveys, role-play activities, interviews, and discourse analysis, thereby enabling an integrated and multidimensional approach to investigating pragmatic competence.

For data analysis, sociopragmatic and intercultural models will be employed, allowing for an in-depth study of language use in different cultural contexts, with particular emphasis on German, English, and Macedonian. The research will involve both foreign language learners and native speakers to carry out a comparative analysis of linguistic strategies, speech acts, and culturally specific patterns of communication.

5. Significance and Context of the Project

The need for this project within the broader scientific community arises from the importance of intercultural communication in a globalized world and in multicultural education. The project will provide new empirical data that will enrich the body of pragmatic research, as well as practical solutions for improving teaching methods. In addition, the project carries significant interdisciplinary value by linking linguistics, pedagogy, cultural studies, and communication studies with the latest scientific advancements.

The project complements the still limited number of Macedonian studies in the field of applied pragmatics, opening new perspectives for regional and international cooperation.

6. Conclusion

The project represents a significant contribution to the development of intercultural pragmatics as an applied scientific discipline, with a concrete focus on foreign language teaching. The research integrates theoretical concepts and empirical data to foster a better understanding of cultural and pragmatic differences in communication. By systematically employing surveys, role-plays, interviews, and discourse analysis, the project not only identifies key differences in language use between learners and native speakers but also proposes practical teaching strategies for the development of pragmatic and intercultural competence.

Through the inclusion of German, English, and Macedonian, the project opens new perspectives for contrastive linguistic analyses and provides important insights for the broader academic and educational community. The contribution of the project is also reflected in the mutual integration of linguistics, pedagogy, cultural studies, and communication studies, thereby creating a foundation for further regional and international cooperation, as well as for the implementation of effective teaching methods that promote the development of intercultural awareness and competence among students.

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