

PRAGMATICS IN THE ESP CONTEXT: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDY

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Abstract

This paper represents a liaison between pragmatics and English for Specific Purposes. Pragmatics gives guidance on using language appropriately according to the context. As professionals and practitioners, ESP students will need to use English confidently in addition to their professional skills. In fact, the link between pragmatics and ESP has been dealt with in various ways in ESP research studies. A distinguishing factor in this research is its specific context of study. It deals with medical students as the case to be chosen from the ESP context. The current study investigates the importance of developing pragmatic competence for medical students at Taiz University in Yemen. In order to do that, a qualitative approach is employed to look into this issue. An interview was conducted with graduate medical students to identify their experience and viewpoints regarding English learning and use. Then the data were analysed qualitatively. From the analysis, it was observed that their perspectives have changed after working in the medical field. As students, they wanted their English language course to focus on medical English only. However, the interview data demonstrated that, as practitioners, they have become aware of the need to learn English in different contexts in addition to the medical field. The data showed a positive tendency towards developing pragmatic competence in the English classroom. Based on the conclusions drawn from the study findings and inspired by the literature on pragmatics, the study proposes a three-phase model for integrating pragmatic competence into the teaching of English for medical students.

1. Introduction

This paper aims at investigating a topic that lies at the intersection of two disciplines, i.e. English for Specific Purposes and pragmatics. According to Hyland (2019: 338), “ESP has consistently been at the cutting-edge of both theory development and innovative practice in applied linguistics, making a significant contribution to our understanding of the varied ways language is used in particular communities”. This diversity of use has led to a demand for more research in the field of ESP. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) define ESP as an approach to language teaching that aims primarily at learners’ needs or reasons for learning. They emphasize that ESP is not a particular type of language, nor does it involve a different methodology or teaching material,

but rather its content and method depend on the learner's grounds for learning. From another point of view, Robinson (1991) indicates that ESP is seen as an enterprise that on the one hand involves education, training and practice, and on the other hand draws on three fields of knowledge: language, pedagogy and the student's discipline. According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), ESP is a multi-disciplinary approach, which is manifested in two ways: its liaison with other disciplines through teaching and its susceptibility to receive and apply relevant research findings of other disciplines. Similarly, Hyland (2019) asserts that ESP itself has an interdisciplinary nature, thus it receives insights and implications from other fields. It has a strong link with different fields such as pragmatics, communicative language teaching, critical literacy and socio-cognitive theory.

The current study is interested in this sort of interdisciplinarity. It aims at promoting pragmatic competence for ESP students. Thomas (1983: 92) defines pragmatic competence as "the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context"¹. It represents a significant part of a learner's communicative competence (Kasper 1997). Additionally, Safont Jordà (2005: 66) states that pragmatic competence "is one of the main components of the global construct of communicative competence".

In teaching English for specific purposes, many studies concentrate on the linguistic repertoire of students in relation to their specific fields. Consequently, students use the structure of language and apply their own norms of communication based on their L1 culture. As a result, they start using utterances that may be liable to misinterpretation. Murray (2009: 1) underlines that "the consequences of misinterpretation or the inappropriate use of language can range from unfortunate to catastrophic". This issue of misunderstanding comes out of the lack of pragmatic competence on the part of students who have learned the linguistic forms separately from their sociocultural associations. Corrizato (2015) confirms that the random use of linguistic structures and communicative aspects will probably lead to misunderstandings. She (*ibid.*: 70) points out that "developing pragmatic abilities in the acquisition of the target language in the ESP courses is one of the primary teaching aims". This competence can help students "avoid mistakes in a complex profession like that of healthcare professionals, in which communication represents, undoubtedly, a critical element to ponder over" (*ibid.*: 70).

In fact, pragmatics plays an important role as it provides guidance on language usage for better understanding in production and reception. As Mey (2001: 12) underlines: "pragmatics is needed if we want a fuller, deeper and generally more reasonable account of human language behavior". The absence of pragmatic input in ESP textbooks plays a major role in students' insufficient pragmatic knowledge. Mino and Sajedeh (2013) point out that the inadequate inclusion of pragmatic input in ESP textbooks leads to an inappropriate development of communicative competence. In the study by Mačianskienė and Bijeikienė (2018), it was found that students did not feel confident about their communicative efficacy of English in their professional life. Accordingly, they suggest that the content of English courses should concentrate more on work-

¹ Context refers to the spatial and temporal circumstances associated with speech in addition to other 'accessories' included in the situation (Garric and Calas 2007). In pragmatics, the context plays a major role in understanding the intended meaning.

place-related situations. Therefore, it is hypothesized in this study that there is a need to develop ESP students' pragmatic competence. This will enable them to become self-confident speakers of the language in addition to their mastery of professional skills. This area of research deserves to be addressed further in the field of teaching English for medical students.

Various studies have investigated the needs of medical students in learning English. Hwang and Lin (2010) conducted a study that described the linguistic needs of medical students and faculty members in Taiwan. The following year, Hwang (2011) provided some pedagogical implications based on the previous study in order to introduce the resulting linguistic needs into a pedagogical practice. Likewise, Chia *et al.* (1999) carried out a study to identify the perceptions and needs of medical students regarding the English language. In a study at Rangsit University in Thailand, Naruenatwatana and Vijchulata (2001) explored the needs of medical students in the use of academic English by using three sets of questionnaires for three groups: the medical students, the teachers of English and the subject teachers. Using a different research tool, Shi *et al.* (2001) examined the possibility of using authentic data from students' performance to develop an English course that addresses students' needs in clinical training. In their article, Gotti and Salager-Meyer (2016) present an overview of the recent studies on the teaching of foreign languages in medical schools. These studies tackle the following topics: teaching approaches, curriculum design, material development, medical discourse, medical healthcare terminology, and communication in medicine and healthcare.

Other research studies have surveyed the importance of English language proficiency for medical students such as Eggly *et al.* (1998) who studied the relationship between proficiency in the English language and success as a medical resident. Additionally, Malcolm (2009) examined the extent of awareness among Arab medical students regarding their reading strategies, and how this is related to their proficiency in the English language. Wang *et al.* (2008) tackled a different area of research where they presented a corpus-based lexical study of the most frequently used medical academic words in articles on medical research. On the other hand, Dahm (2011) looked into the perception and use of everyday language and medical terminology among international medical graduates in a medical ESP course in Australia.

Lastly, in her review of the origin and development of English for medical purposes, Salagar-Meyer (2014) identified three categories of research conducted on spoken interaction in medical settings. The first category is concerned with pedagogy and it aims at developing the language skills of non-Anglophone medical students and health professionals so that they can communicate effectively in academic situations. The second category focuses on the linguistic analysis of medical conference presentations. The third group has a sociolinguistic goal and deals with the literature on doctor-patient communication. Moreover, Fioramonte (2014) investigated the nature of interaction between international medical graduate residents, physicians and patients during the treatment advice. For her study, she employed a discourse analytic approach and a theoretical framework based on pragmatic competence. Her data demonstrated that patients and medical graduates used interrogatives differently to engage in the treatment decision-making process. They both used indirect strategies to maintain each other's face needs.

Therefore, it appears from the review of these studies that medical English has been widely researched from different perspectives. However, the area of teaching pragmatic competence for medical students has not received a similar focus in research. Consequently, this current study aims to fill a gap in the literature by taking a different angle of research as will be shown in the methodology section. The paper focuses on the importance of developing pragmatic competence for medical students. This will hopefully help medical students become efficient communicators in the future. As highlighted by Lu and Corbett (2012), the medical students' needs as future practitioners are various. In addition to their acquisition of the technical language of the discipline, they need to be able to interact effectively in medical situations and they specifically require advanced communication skills to be used in stressful situations. In a similar vein, Aguilar (2018) proposes that intercultural competence should be integrated in the ESP course by means of seminars. She (*ibid.*: 5) affirms: "participation helps students practice their English skills and provides them with opportunities to develop disciplinary knowledge while debating on a specific topic".

Hence, this study is intended to provide teachers of ESP with a model to enhance pragmatic competence for medical students. It represents a collaboration between ESP and pragmatics. The following section explains the methodology used to carry out this study.

2. Methodology

As previously indicated, the study aims to raise the awareness of pragmatic competence in an ESP context, with a special attention to medical students. To investigate this issue, the following research question is examined: how important is it to develop pragmatic competence for medical students?

This question is explored by means of interviews. The interview is employed to find out the perceptions of graduate medical students concerning pragmatic competence in learning and using English². According to Schutt (2011: 348): "Conducting qualitative interviews can often enhance the value of a research design that uses primarily quantitative measurement techniques". Hence, the interview is categorized as one of the most widely used instruments in qualitative research. Using interviews enables the researcher to understand a phenomenon from the perspectives of the respondents and to find out the meaning of their experiences (Kvale 1996).

In this study, the interview is semi-structured and consists of a pre-prepared guide of questions. This guide is flexible in a way that enables the interviewees to explain and generate new ideas. The interview was conducted with seven graduate students from the Faculty of Medicine at Taiz University. They were asked about their viewpoints and experience with regard to the use of English and the importance of communicative skills. The interview questions revolved around their past experience with English, current use of the language, and the importance of learning it in different contexts whether in medical or non-medical settings. There were no direct questions with pragmatic terminology. Instead, they were given two versions of an apology and they were

² This refers to General English throughout the paper.

asked to identify whether there was a difference between them and to justify their answers. This question was not planned to test their pragmatic knowledge, but rather to engage them in an exercise that exemplified pragmatics in use. The intent was to set the ground for the subsequent question, that is, their opinion about the importance of learning English in use. The questions were formed with the help of reading and reviewing similar studies on pragmatic competence (Chen 1996; Martinez-Flor and Alcon Soler 2004; Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan 2011; Yuan 2012). The full guide of interview questions is shown in the Appendix.

3. Results and discussion

The research question of the study investigates the importance of developing pragmatic competence for medical students. This question is answered by looking into participants' viewpoints and experience with regard to learning English during their study period as well as their use of English after graduation. The aim is to find out their perspectives of using English as previous medical students and as current graduates. The interview data are analysed qualitatively. The method of analysis involves the general steps of coding, growing ideas, interpreting the data and making conclusions. Denscombe (2010: 282) asserts that "Content analysis has the potential to disclose many hidden aspects of what is being communicated through the written text". Therefore, in the interview data, the objective is to look for recurrent ideas in the respondents' comments and opinions regarding the research question addressed in the interview. The analysis process employed in this study is based on Creswell's (2009) process, which includes organizing the data, reading through all data, coding the data, using the codes to generate themes and description, and interrelating themes.

In the data results, it is found that there is a consensus among the participants that it is important to learn how to use a language in context. As students, they were only concerned with medical vocabulary in the English language course. There was a preference for medical English in order to help them understand their medical subjects. Here is an example of what one interviewee stated: "*It was better if the subject was a mini anatomy or histology lecture that the English prof main task is to make the student familiar with science delivered in English language*". Another participant said that the English course should include: "*how I understand the medicine and how I can discuss with our staff in English, how can I discuss with the nurse and lab about result of patient, we need to know about equipment drug and meaning of some ward like patient, nurse, laboratory which help us in medical study*".

However, as physicians, their views regarding learning English have widened. They have become more inclined towards learning how to communicate with others and how to use English appropriately in different contexts, mainly occupational and academic. Their perspectives have changed with time and experience. Here is an example of a participant's opinion in this regard:

In medical university they concentrate on medical terms and sometimes on grammar, but really medical terms are easy to be learnt with studying, the problem is in the speaking fluently and in reading and understanding well and in the communicating with others who

use English as their native language. So reading, speaking and usage of language phrases are important for all medical student and physicians.

Regarding communication skills, another participant stressed their importance by stating: “*most our job is communication between patient and his relative and nurse with staff of lab and social and nutrition, medical record, so all this I have to communicate with them to help the patient, even I have to communicate with the patient and relative about bad news*”.

As shown in the above extracts, the participants’ viewpoints have varied with experience. This might be attributed to the effect of the different circumstances they have encountered as current practitioners. The life of a working doctor is wider than that of a student whose circle of communication is quite limited. As working doctors, their circle of communication has expanded, and they have realized that the use of English is necessary even outside medical settings.

Another obvious result to emerge from the analysis is the consensus among the participants on the importance of pragmatic competence. Their reasons for its importance revolve around two points:

- Avoiding misunderstanding: the participants pointed out that being able to know the different meanings which any utterance has would allow them to produce clear messages and at the same time understand the intended meaning.
- A wide circle of communication: another factor is the wide circle of communication that doctors will have. They will be exposed to discussions with different speakers of English from various nationalities. English will be the means of communication. So being a good speaker will facilitate communication.

Additionally, it can be observed that when the participants were given an exercise³ exemplifying how to use language in context, all of them stressed the importance of developing pragmatic competence for medical students. It follows that pragmatic knowledge can be of interest to medical students.

These findings are supported by the study conducted by Martinez-Flor and Alcon Soler (2004) which advocates the teaching of pragmatic competence in the ESP context. Similarly, Uso-Juan and Martinez-Flor (2006) stress the need to develop ESP learners’ ability to communicate appropriately. They have designed teaching material that aims at fostering pragmatic knowledge and this material would complement the actual ESP textbook used. Another study conducted by Hafsi (2013) reveals that ESP learners lack pragmatic competence which should be developed by explicit teaching and awareness-raising activities in order to make them effective users of English in the target situation. The idea of exposing medical students to non-medical materials has been strongly encouraged by Tseligka and Koik (2021). In their study, they posit that humanities-based resources should be integrated in the medical English course. They (*ibid.*: 53) reiterate: “such interventions can promote the formation of a professional medical identity which goes beyond scientific and clinical expertise”. They have presented a pedagogical application of literary texts, visual arts and imagery in the context of a medical

³ Check the Appendix for this exercise.

English course for undergraduate medical students. This will help students to develop “multidisciplinary tasks that foster linguistic, intellectual and humanistic competence which are crucial for the professional development of future doctors” (*ibid.*: 58).

Thus, the interview data leads to the conclusion that pragmatic competence is important for medical students. In order to motivate them further, this competence can be linked to their future career. A provisional model for integrating pragmatic competence in the ESP classroom is recommended in the following section.

4. Research implications: the model

4.1. *The conceptual framework*

Based on the study results, a model is proposed in order to incorporate pragmatic competence into the teaching of English for medical students. Various methods are suggested for teaching pragmatics in the ESP context. Martinez-Flor and Alcon Soler (2004) propose three tasks in their investigation of pragmatic competence in the ESP context. These different tasks are based on the following objectives:

- **Task 1: Use of film or television scenes**

The goal is to develop both learners’ awareness and oral production of speech acts⁴ by means of contextualized communicative situations in a specific ESP situation.

- **Task 2: Use of a conversation from an oral corpus**

The goal is to make students aware of real conversations in a particular ESP context: the appropriate use of a specific speech act and its peripheral modification devices.

- **Task 3: Use of a multimedia-based activity**

The goal is to make learners differentiate between various speech acts, and develop their oral and written production of these speech acts (*ibid.*: 184-186).

The aforementioned model is founded on awareness raising. The consciousness-raising approach emanates from the “noticing hypothesis” developed by Schmidt (1993, 2001). This hypothesis focuses on the role of awareness in the acquisition of target language knowledge. It asserts that what we notice in input becomes intake for learning. According to Schmidt (1993), the learning process involves awareness and, in order for any aspect of language to be acquired, it needs to be noticed first. Schmidt (2001: 30) further affirms that “in order to acquire pragmatics, one must attend to both the linguistic form of utterances and the relevant social and contextual features with which they are associated”. These two aspects, namely, pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics, constitute the core of pragmatics (Leech 1983). Therefore, learners need to concentrate on the pragmalinguistic functions of certain forms and on the sociopragmatic constraints involved in these particular forms. While the noticing hypothesis requires conscious attention to the pragmatic aspects, Schmidt (1993, 2001) reiterates that simple exposure is not sufficient. It is necessary to provide pedagogical intervention to pinpoint the targeted pragmatic aspects. Consequently, he puts forward a consciousness-raising approach for teaching pragmatics.

⁴ A speech act is an utterance that has a functional purpose like requesting, promising or apologizing. It is “the basic unit of communication” (Searle 1969: 21).

In view of the research conducted in pragmatics, Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan (2010: 9) point out that there exist some theoretical conditions for developing pragmatic competence. They indicate that “learners’ overall ability to communicate successfully in a given TL⁵ is influenced by three main conditions, namely appropriate input, opportunities for output and provision of feedback” (*ibid.*). Therefore, these three conditions are fundamental for developing pragmatic competence, and consequently they are used as the ground for the suggested model in this study. The significance of giving both input and opportunity for output is strongly emphasized in the foreign language classroom. Based on interventional and observational studies, Kasper (2001: 57) asserts that: “sustained focused input, both pragmatic and metapragmatic, collaborative practice activities and metapragmatic reflection appear to provide learners with the input and practice they need for developing most aspects of their pragmatic abilities”.

The following part sheds light on the above conditions:

- **Input**

Input is the samples of language exposed to learners (Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan 2010). The setting of learning usually affects learners’ opportunities to acquire the target language in general, and pragmatic competence in particular. EFL learners, for example, have minimal exposure to the target language, which urges the need for providing them with appropriate input. According to LoCastro (2003), learners are exposed to three types of input: the teacher, the materials and other learners. In the current study, the model focuses on the second type. The materials come in the form of written input as in textbooks and audiovisual input as in TV shows, videos and films. Audiovisual sources are highly useful as they present authentic language samples. Rose (1994: 58) points out that although most videos are scripted and so they do not always represent authentic speech, they remain “most likely the closest learners will come to authentic language in EFL settings”.

- **Output**

Creating opportunities for output is the second condition for developing pragmatics. This involves both encouraging learners to active participation as well as providing them with opportunities for practice (Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan 2010). According to the research conducted in second language acquisition, practising what has been taught improves language learning in all aspects including pragmatic ability (LoCastro 2003). The use of role-play is one possible way for this practice. In the words of Trosborg (1995: 474), using role-plays makes learners “practice a wide range of language functions associated with these roles and positions, and they are responsible for getting the message across and maintaining conversation”.

LoCastro (2003) also indicates that practising language involves engaging learners in group discussions among themselves and interacting with the teacher by asking for clarification and confirmation. Providing learners with discourse completion tasks is another way to practise their pragmatic knowledge. These tasks are performed in oral discussion and in writing.

⁵ TL: Target Language.

- **Feedback**

According to Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan (2010), beside the comprehensible input and output opportunities, feedback is essential in order to integrate communication and accuracy. It proves to be an important step to inform learners about their language use, and to provide corrective feedback accordingly. In this process, teachers need to raise learners' awareness of the areas where they fail to communicate effectively. Feedback is given explicitly by pointing out the error or implicitly by confirmation checks or clarification requests.

4.2. *The proposed model: application*

This part demonstrates how the model is introduced into the classroom. The model employs television series as a way to provide learners with input relevant to their medical context. It is used as a source of authentic language and presents varied and visual contextualization. Ishihara and Cohen (2014) recommend the use of films and TV shows as it is generally approved in teaching pragmatics. Nevertheless, they need to be employed with a specific and obvious purpose, as some pragmatic aspects might be missing in such materials. Furthermore, they highlight that media-based materials can be used to illustrate examples of pragmatic failure especially in situational comedies. Although situational comedies sometimes do not reflect naturally occurring conversations or may exaggerate pragmatic violations, they still provide an opportunity to recognize pragmatic norms in the target language and enable learners to discuss such pragmatic blunders. In fact, media-based input appears to be an appropriate way for teachers and learners to interact with each other and engage in critical discussion (Ishihara and Cohen 2014). Moreover, Viorica (2020) encourages employing authentic materials for teaching and learning medical English; they work as a stimulus for teachers and students. Introducing authentic language into the classroom is useful for students as well as teachers.

The current study employs the medical TV series *Scrubs*. It is an American comedy-drama created by Bill Lawrence. The title "Scrubs" denotes the hygienic costume worn by doctors and nurses at hospital. This series has a very close pertinence to medical students. The characters are interns representing different categories: physicians, surgeons and nurses. The advantage of this series is that the variety of characters adds a sense of appeal and relevance to medical students. The show revolves around a group of medical students: John Dorian, Elliot Reid and Christopher Turk, who arrive at Sacred Heart Hospital as interns under the supervision of their instructors Dr Cox and Dr Kelso. The episodes constitute the diary of Dorian's experiences with his colleagues and working staff at the teaching hospital where he learns the ways of life and friendship in addition to medicine. Besides being an authentic source of input, the show will also help in creating the context where the relationship between the characters is illustrated and the different situational variables are well demonstrated. The main goal is raising awareness and facilitating production of the targeted pragmatic aspects.

Taking the theoretical conditions into consideration, the following figure illustrates the procedure of this implementation.

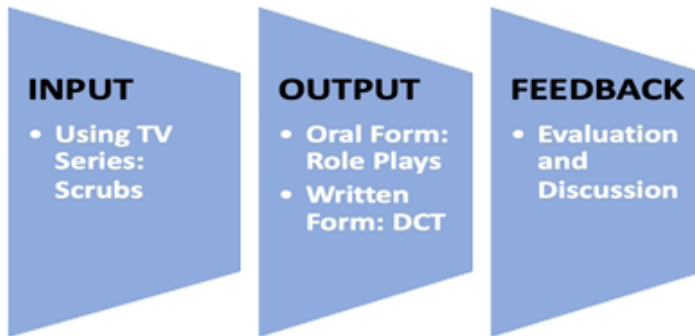


Figure 1. The structure of the model

1. The input phase:

- As shown in Figure 1, the initial step is to familiarize the students with the TV series: what it talks about, who the main characters are, and where the events take place. Another part of this orientation is to start a discussion of students' familiarity with *Scrubs*, i.e. whether they have previously watched it or heard of it. At this stage, it is important for students to understand the aim of making use of the show for learning purposes; namely, to present language use in context to develop their awareness and performance of English.

- The teacher chooses specific scenes in order to highlight a pragmatic aspect. The scenes will serve as the context for the targeted speech acts.

- The students are asked to pay attention to the contextual variables of the selected scenes in terms of social power and distance between the interlocutors. They are also encouraged to pay attention to the way in which the speech act is performed in the target language, and how politeness is represented through direct and indirect strategies.

- As part of raising students' awareness, the teacher guides them to notice the targeted pragmatic failure, the linguistic forms and their occurrence in different contexts in their L1 culture and the target culture. Accordingly, the students can identify the similarities and differences of speech act strategies, as well as the concept of politeness in both cultures. By means of observation tasks, the students will make connections between linguistic forms, pragmatic functions and cultural effects.

Here is an example. The following excerpt is taken from *Scrubs* season 1, Episode 5:

Dr. Kelso: *Well, sport, it looks like a permanent spot just opened up on the golf course. How does joining the Chief of Medicine for a weekly round sound?*

J.D.: *Actually, sir, I'm not really that into golf.*

Dr. Kelso: *[curt] Well, I guess that's your choice, isn't it... Dr. Dorian.*

In this example, the speech act of refusal is presented in context where Dr Kelso, who is superior in social power, asks J.D. (Dr Dorian) to go with him to the golf course. The refusal strategy employed by J.D. in this context is an indirect strategy where he

provided a reason for his inability to accompany him⁶. Using this excerpt, for example, the teacher can discuss with the students about the strategy employed to realize a refusal that is appropriate to this context. Then the students can compare this refusal strategy with the one used in their mother tongue and think what other strategies can be used in order to turn down the offer.

2. The output phase:

- After the students grasp the general idea of the targeted speech act, how it is used in different contexts, they are encouraged to practise what is learned. The production can be in the written or oral form.

- As for the written form, the teacher employs Discourse Completion Tasks (DCT) in order to enable students to write what they would say in various situations. To create a comprehensible context, the teacher can use the situations of the DCT based on the TV series. In this way, the students know the social variables and can evaluate the appropriate ways to express the speech acts.

- In the oral form, the students are encouraged to engage in a role-play to practise the speech acts learned in the input phase. They can imitate the speech act but with the context of their L1 or they can perform the speech act in the same situation as the one they have previously analysed. In the first case, the focus would be on the sociopragmatic aspects in terms of the effects of the social variables on the use of the speech act and the sociocultural repercussions. In the second case, the attention is directed at the pragmalinguistic aspects in terms of the different strategies used to perform a speech act and the ways of mitigating the speech act.

- During the performance, the teacher and the rest of the students take notes in order to evaluate and discuss the activity.

3. The feedback phase:

- At this stage, the teacher provides an evaluation of the performance of students and pinpoints the areas that require further development.

- The feedback on the oral production is provided in the form of discussion with students who express their opinions regarding the performance of their peers. The teacher highlights and explains how these specific areas can be improved.

- In the written form, the teacher checks students' responses in the DCT and provides an evaluation.

- The feedback phase is a learning step, as well. The teacher can check students' understanding and accordingly adjust the learning targets and procedures.

5. Conclusion

Finally, yet importantly, it should be remembered that in the ESP classroom, specialized linguistic terms such as pragmatics, pragmatic competence or speech acts would not be used during the three stages. These terms are irrelevant to medical stu-

⁶ Beebe *et al.* (1990: 72-73) classify this strategy as an indirect strategy: Excuse, Reason, Explanation.

dents. Their implementation is what matters in the ESP classroom. Medical students are not interested in lengthy language-based discussions.

This illustrated model was a tentative attempt to introduce pragmatic instruction in the ESP classroom. The proposed guidelines should not be used prescriptively. Practically speaking, there are important elements that determine the line of adjustment, for instance the teacher's skills, the constraints in the instructional setting, the students' proficiency level and individual characteristics. Taking these elements into consideration, the teacher can modify and choose the most convenient techniques. Furthermore, the role of the students is significant as they are active parts of the learning process.

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Appendix

Interview Questions Guide

1. What is your current educational status or profession?
2. As for your study in secondary school, was it a private or public school?
3. Have you studied English in any language institutes? If yes, please give details.
4. How do you rate your English proficiency level?
5. During your bachelor studies, in which academic year did you take the English subject?
6. How was the course structured in terms of grammar, vocabulary, comprehension exercises, etc.?
7. What was your attitude towards the subject? And how was your motivation level at that time?
8. Did you find the subject useful? Explain your answer please.
9. At that time, did you prefer to learn English in a different way? Explain how.
10. At present, in which situations do you use English?
11. How often do you use English?
12. Have you had any embarrassing situations, or misunderstandings because of language use?
13. Have you had any difficulties, or problems due to language use?
14. Do you think that it is important for a medical doctor to be proficient in English?
15. Do you think that it is important to study English at the faculty of Medicine? Why?
16. According to your current views and experience, what are the language aspects and areas that should be integrated in teaching English for medical students?
Here are two versions of Apology:
 - a. *I am sorry*
 - b. *I am absolutely devastated. Can you possibly forgive me?*
17. Is there a difference between the two versions? If yes, what is it?
18. What are the criteria that govern the choice of one of them?
19. What do you understand by these sentences?
 - a. At the end of the lecture, your teacher says: you may like to read the article entitled “so and so”.
 - b. It is very hot/cold in this office.
20. Do you think that it is important to learn this area of language use (when to say something, how, to whom)?