

# Study on the Contribution of Pragmatics to the Development of Communicative Competence from the Perspective of Applied Linguistics

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**Abstract:** This article explores the contribution of pragmatics in the cultivation of communicative competence from the perspective of applied linguistics. Firstly, the development and definitions of applied linguistics and pragmatics were reviewed, and the theoretical system and core concepts of pragmatics were elaborated. Furthermore, the role of pragmatics in cultivating communicative competence was analyzed, including the cultivation of pragmatic awareness, learning of pragmatic knowledge, application of pragmatic strategies, enhancement of pragmatic competence, enhancement of language appropriateness, and cultivation of cross-cultural communicative competence. On this basis, the application of pragmatics in teaching practice was explored, such as the principles and methods of pragmatic teaching, the development and selection of pragmatic textbooks, and the design and implementation of pragmatic assessment. Finally, the challenges and coping strategies faced in cultivating communicative competence were analyzed. This article aims to provide theoretical guidance and practical reference for the cultivation of communicative competence in the field of foreign language education in China.

**Keywords:** Applied linguistics; Pragmatics; Communication skills; Teaching practice; cross-cultural communication.

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## 1. Introduction

With the acceleration of globalization, cross-cultural communication has become an indispensable part of people's daily life and work. As an applied discipline, the focus of linguistic research has gradually shifted from language itself to the application of language in practical communication, namely pragmatics. Communicative ability, as the core of cross-cultural communication, has become a focus of attention in the field of foreign language education.[1]

## 2. Applied Linguistics and Pragmatics

### 2.1. Definition of Applied Linguistics

Applied linguistics is a discipline that studies the application and function of language in real life, aiming to explore the interactive relationship between language and the real world. Applied linguistics covers various language fields, such as education, translation, interpretation, language teaching, language barrier correction, literary creation, etc. As an interdisciplinary field, applied linguistics not only focuses on language itself, but also involves interdisciplinary knowledge such as psychology, sociology, cultural studies, and education. In China, applied linguistics plays an important role in foreign language education, minority language research, language policy, and planning. There are various research methods in applied linguistics, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research methods. [2]Its research fields are constantly expanding, including sociolinguistics, cognitive linguistics, functional linguistics, discourse analysis, language teaching, etc. In recent years, with the advancement of globalization, applied linguistics has increasingly focused on cross-cultural communication, multicultural education, and the interaction between language and culture. In China, the research and development of applied linguistics not only helps to improve the quality of foreign language education, but also promotes the

internationalization process of language disciplines. Applied linguistics is a highly practical and interdisciplinary research field aimed at exploring the application and function of language in real life, with broad social value. Through the study and research of applied linguistics, one can better understand the essence of language, improve language application ability and communication effectiveness, and provide theoretical support and practical guidance for the development of foreign language education and cross-cultural communication in China.

### 2.2. Theoretical System and Core Concepts of Pragmatics

Pragmatics, as a discipline that studies language use and communication, has its unique theoretical system and core concepts. The theoretical system of pragmatics mainly includes pragmatic principles, contextual views, communication strategies, language appropriateness, and other aspects. Among them, pragmatic principles focus on the logical and semantic relationships behind speech acts, providing guidance for communication; The contextual perspective emphasizes the correlation between language communication and specific socio-cultural environments, and emphasizes the role of the communicator's background knowledge in the communication process; Communication strategy refers to the methods and techniques people adopt in communication to achieve specific goals; Language appropriateness focuses on whether language use meets contextual requirements and whether it produces expected communicative effects. The core concepts of pragmatics include intention, meaning, context, speech acts, and conversational implicature. Intention refers to the purpose that the speaker intends to express through speech acts; Meaning involves the information and connotation carried by language symbols; Context refers to the background information involved in language communication, such as time, place, characters, events, etc; Speech act refers to the

actual actions expressed by the speaker through language; Conversational meaning refers to the implicit meaning expressed by the speaker through language.

### **2.3. Definition and Development of Pragmatics**

Pragmatics, as a discipline that studies the use and function of language in practical communication, aims to explore the relationship between language, interpersonal interaction, and socio-cultural environment. It originated in the 1960s and has undergone expansion from traditional linguistics to functional linguistics, cognitive linguistics, and other fields. Firstly, pragmatics focuses on the application of language in practical communication, emphasizing the influence of context on language use. Its research scope includes speech acts, conversational implicature, intention, meaning, context, etc. With the expansion of research fields, pragmatics has gradually formed its own theoretical system and methodology. Secondly, the development process of pragmatics can be divided into three stages. The first stage was from the 1960s to the 1970s, mainly focusing on speech acts and conversational implicature; The second stage was from the 1980s to the 1990s, involving theories such as contextual views and pragmatic principles; The third stage is the integration of pragmatics with other disciplines such as cognitive science and socio-cultural theory since the 21st century, showing a trend of interdisciplinary and diversified approaches. During this period, numerous scholars have made significant contributions to pragmatics. American linguist Austin proposed the theory of speech acts, British scholar Grice proposed the pragmatic principle, and American philosopher Searle further developed the theory of conversational implicature. These theories and concepts laid the foundation for the development of pragmatics and made it an important component of modern linguistics. Pragmatics, as a discipline that studies the practical application and function of language, has a wide theoretical system and research scope. Its definition and development process reflect the practical significance and interdisciplinary characteristics of linguistic research, further promoting the prosperity and development of the field of linguistics.<sup>[3]</sup>

### **2.4. The role of pragmatics in cultivating communicative competence**

Firstly, pragmatics helps to enhance learners' pragmatic awareness. By studying pragmatics, learners can better understand the characteristics of language use in different contexts, and thus pay more attention to the appropriateness of language in practical communication. Secondly, pragmatics helps learners master pragmatic knowledge. Learning pragmatics can help learners understand language usage rules in different cultural backgrounds and how to use appropriate language expressions in specific contexts. Again, pragmatics helps to cultivate learners' pragmatic strategies. Learning pragmatics can enable learners to use language more flexibly in communication and choose appropriate communication methods based on context and purpose. In addition, pragmatics helps to enhance learners' pragmatic abilities. By studying pragmatics, learners can better understand the logical and semantic relationships behind language, and thus use language more freely in practical communication. Finally, pragmatics helps to enhance learners' cross-cultural communication abilities. Learning pragmatics can help learners understand language usage differences in different cultural backgrounds, which can help

reduce misunderstandings and conflicts in cross-cultural communication.

## **3. The Contribution of Pragmatics in The Cultivation of Communicative Competence**

### **3.1. Cultivation of Pragmatic Awareness**

Pragmatic awareness refers to learners having a sufficient understanding of the characteristics of language use in different contexts, and being able to pay more attention to the appropriateness of language in actual communication. By studying pragmatics, learners can realize that language use is not only determined by grammar rules, but also influenced by factors such as context, communicative purpose, and communicative object. Cultivating pragmatic awareness helps learners to use language more appropriately in communication, avoiding misunderstandings and conflicts caused by inappropriate language. In teaching practice, teachers can help learners improve their pragmatic awareness by explaining theoretical knowledge such as pragmatic principles and contextual perspectives, as well as designing practical communication activities such as situational dialogues and role-playing. In addition, cultivating pragmatic awareness also requires learners to have more exposure to practical communication scenarios in daily life and accumulate practical experience. Through various means such as reading, watching, and listening, learners can understand the language usage characteristics in different cultural backgrounds, thereby improving their pragmatic awareness. Pragmatics plays an important role in cultivating communicative competence. By cultivating learners' pragmatic awareness, they can improve their language proficiency in practical communication and create favorable conditions for cross-cultural communication.<sup>[4]</sup>

### **3.2. Learn something about pragmatism**

Pragmatic knowledge refers to the various rules and skills that learners need to understand when using language in practical communication, including contextual perspective, pragmatic principles, communication strategies, etc. Mastering pragmatic knowledge helps learners to use language more freely in communication and improve communication efficiency. First, the contextual perspective is an important theory in pragmatics, emphasizing the correlation between linguistic communication and specific socio-cultural environments. Learners need to understand the rules of language use in different cultural contexts and how to use appropriate language expression in specific contexts. Teachers can help learners to understand and master the view of context through interpretation and case analysis. Secondly, the pragmatic principle is the criterion to guide the communicative behavior, including the principle of cooperation, politeness principle and so on. Learners need to understand these principles in order to use language more appropriately in communication.

### **3.3. Application of pragmatic strategies**

Pragmatic strategy refers to the various methods and techniques adopted by learners to achieve specific goals. The use of pragmatic strategies helps learners use language more flexibly in communication and improve communication efficiency. First, teachers can help learners to understand and master various pragmatic strategies by explaining the basic

concepts, types, and application methods of pragmatic strategies. For example, teachers can explain how to use verbal behavior strategies such as apology, Requests, and gratitude, as well as communication strategies such as repetition, correction, and topic switching. Secondly, teachers can help learners to use pragmatic strategies by designing practical communication activities such as situational dialogue and role-playing. In practical communication activities, learners can try to use the learned language strategies to improve their language skills. In addition, teachers can guide learners to use pragmatic strategies by setting communicative tasks. For example, the teacher can ask the learner to write an apology letter with an apology strategy, or schedule an appointment. For example, a teacher can design a situational task in which learners can act as a travel assistant to help visitors solve problems. In this task, learners can use the request strategy to ask tourists for specific needs, and use the suggestion strategy to give tourists the most suitable advice. Through such practical communication activities, learners can exercise and improve their pragmatic ability, and at the same time, they can experience the pragmatic challenges in real communication scenes and prepare for practical communication. Pragmatic strategies play an important role in improving learners' communicative competence. Teachers can help learners to use these strategies by explaining and guiding them to master various pragmatic strategies, and through practical communication activities and communicative tasks. Through continuous practice and reflection, learners can improve their pragmatic abilities and communicate more effectively.

### **3.4. Improve practical ability**

Linguistics plays an important role in improving communicative competence. Pragmatic competence refers to the ability to use the language accurately and correctly during communication. Pragmatics helps learners to improve their pragmatic ability by learning the meaning and pragmatic principles of speech behavior. First, the core of pragmatics is the meaning of speech behaviors, including direct and indirect speech behaviors, and reveals the interpretation methods of different speech behaviors in different contexts. By learning the knowledge of pragmatic learning, learners can understand the meaning and usage of different speech behaviors, so as to accurately interpret the speech behaviors of others in communication and make appropriate responses. Secondly, the pragmatic principles studied in pragmatics, such as the principles of cooperative and politeness, guide the use of language in communication. By learning these principles, learners can choose appropriate language strategies based on specific situations and relationships with others, and follow social communication norms to improve their pragmatic abilities. For example, at a business meeting, one person said: "Your opinion is very creative, but I think we should consider other options." This sentence contains both verbal direct and indirect verbal behavior. From the perspective of direct speech behavior, this sentence expresses the affirmation of the other party's opinion, and puts forward their own different opinions. However, from the perspective of indirect verbal behavior, this sentence also implies that there are some problems with the other party's opinion, and other options need to be considered. By learning the knowledge of pragmatic learning, learners can understand the meaning of this sentence, understand the implication and euphemism, and can make appropriate responses according to the specific

situation, such as asking the other party what other solutions need to consider, or put forward their own more specific solutions. In addition, learning the principles of pragmatic learning can also help learners improve their communicative competence. For example, the principle of cooperation requires the two sides to work together to achieve effective communication and mutual cooperation. According to the cooperative principle, when one person raises a question, another person should provide relevant information to help solve the problem. Therefore, learners can guide their own expression in the communication according to the principles of cooperation, and actively provide useful information in order to better communicate with others. Pragmatics provides learners with guidance to improve their communicative competence by studying the meaning and pragmatic principles of speech behavior. By learning pragmatic knowledge, learners can accurately understand the verbal behavior of others and make appropriate responses. At the same time, learners can also choose the appropriate language strategies according to the pragmatic principles to better participate in social communication.

### **3.5. Improve the language suitability**

Linguistics makes an important contribution to improving the suitability of language in the cultivation of communicative competence. Language suitability refers to the ability to follow social linguistic norms and adapt to specific communicative environments when using language. First, pragmatics studies pragmatic rules and sociolinguistic habits in different contexts. By learning these rules and habits, learners can better understand and use the language. Linguistics helps learners realize the language styles and vocabulary they should use in different situations and when communicating with different populations, avoiding inappropriate or offensive language. Secondly, pragmatics focuses on the meaning and implicit meaning of verbal behavior. By learning the meaning of verbal behavior and its interpretation in a specific context, learners can more accurately understand others' verbal intentions. Moreover, pragmatics studies pragmatic phenomena such as social etiquette and humble behavior to help learners show appropriate language and behavior in communication. Furthermore, pragmatic strategies were investigated.

### **3.6. The significance of cultivating cross-cultural communication skills**

Promoting cultural exchange and mutual understanding: cross-cultural communication skills enable individuals to effectively communicate and interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds. By understanding and respecting the values, beliefs and customs of different cultures, we can establish a relationship of mutual understanding and integration, and avoid misunderstandings and conflicts. Promoting international exchanges and cooperation: With the deepening of globalization, international exchanges and cooperation have become increasingly important. Having cross-cultural communication skills can help individuals to better cooperate with others on the international stage and promote the establishment and development of cooperative partnerships. Broaden our personal vision and cognition: Through communicating with people from different cultures, we can perceive and understand different ideas, opinions and ways of thinking. This can help us to broaden our personal horizons and

improve our cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity, so as to better adapt to the multicultural social environment. Enhancing personal competitiveness and employment opportunities: In the context of globalization, cross-cultural communication skills have become an important skill in many career fields. Having cross-cultural communication skills can improve individual competitiveness and create more job opportunities for individuals, especially in the field of international enterprises, multinational organizations and international exchanges. In order to develop cross-cultural communication skills, we can improve our skills by learning foreign languages, understanding the background and values of other cultures, and participating in cross-cultural communication activities. At the same time, it is also necessary to cultivate an open mind, respect and tolerance of different cultures, and constantly reflect on and adjust their own communication methods, so as to achieve good interactive results in cross-cultural exchanges.

## **4. Application of Pragmatics in Teaching Practice**

### **4.1. Principles and methods of grammar teaching**

The application of pragmatics in teaching practice is reflected in the principles and methods of pragmatic teaching. The principles of pragmatic teaching mainly include the principles of communicative authenticity, context relevance and meaning priority. The principle of communicative authenticity emphasizes that the teaching content should be close to the actual communication situation, so that learners can feel the practical application of language in the learning process; the context correlation principle emphasizes the specific context, so that learners can better understand the use of language in the learning process; and the principle of meaning first emphasizes the practical meaning of language, so that learners can better understand the function of language in the learning process. Grammar teaching methods mainly include situational teaching method, communicative strategy teaching method, pragmatic knowledge teaching method, etc.

### **4.2. Writing and selection of pragmatic teaching materials**

Communication authenticity: the content of the pragmatic textbook should be real, reliable, and consistent with the actual communication scene. This means that textbooks should contain real conversations, scenarios and examples so that students can learn and apply language in a real context. Contextual relevance: pragmatic textbooks should be related to the specific context to help students understand the use and meaning of language. The textbook should contain dialogues, scenes and cultural backgrounds in a specific context so that students can better understand and use the language. Meaning first: pragmatic teaching materials should pay attention to the practical meaning of language. Students need to understand the superficial and deep meanings of language, as well as the way it is interpreted and used in different contexts. Textmaterials should help students understand the concepts and principles of pragmatic learning and be able to use these knowledge for practical communication. Pragmatic textbooks should be practical and operable, that is, they can help students to apply the knowledge learned in practical communication. The textbook should provide rich exercises and practices to help students improve their pragmatic ability

and deepen their understanding of language use. When choosing textbooks, ensure that they contain a wealth of pragmatic knowledge and examples, covering different speech behaviors and contexts. For example, examples and dialogues involving different types of verbal behaviors such as apology, invitation and request can be selected. Consider its form and organizational structure to ensure that students can clearly understand the content of the textbook. Textbooks with clear goals and structure can be selected, such as by type of speech behavior, by context or topic. When choosing the textbooks, we should consider the students' language level and learning needs, and choose the appropriate difficulty. You can choose the corresponding textbooks according to the degree of the students, such as the primary, intermediate or advanced textbooks. Some common grammatical textbooks include PRAGMATICS: AN INTRODUCTION (Introduction to Pragmatics) and INTERCULTURAL PRAGMATICS: REQUESTS AND APOLOGIES (Intercultural Pragmatics: Request and Apology). These textbooks provide basic concepts, principles, and examples of pragmatics, and help students understand how to apply pragmatics in cross-cultural communication. The writing and selection of pragmatic teaching materials should follow the principles of communicative authenticity, context relevance and meaning priority, and pay attention to the practicability and operability of the teaching materials. Teachers can choose the appropriate pragmatic teaching materials according to the teaching objectives, students' needs and the content, form and difficulty of the teaching materials.[8]

### **4.3. Design and implementation of pragmatic assessment**

The application of pragmatics in teaching practice is reflected in the design and implementation of pragmatic assessment. The design of pragmatic assessment should focus on the accuracy, comprehensiveness, objectivity, and other aspects of the assessment to ensure that it accurately reflects the language proficiency of learners. The design of pragmatic assessment should also focus on the practicality of the assessment to ensure that it can provide effective feedback for teaching. When implementing pragmatic assessment, teachers should pay attention to the timing, methods, and content of the assessment to ensure that it accurately reflects the learner's language proficiency. Teachers can choose appropriate evaluation methods based on teaching objectives, teaching content, teaching methods, etc. At the same time, teachers can also choose interesting and inspiring evaluation methods based on the learning needs and interests of students.

## **5. Challenges and Countermeasures in Cultivating Communication Skills**

### **5.1. Challenges Faced**

In the process of cultivating communicative competence, learners may face some challenges. These challenges may include language barriers, cultural differences, communication anxiety, and other related issues. Firstly, language barriers are the main challenges that many learners face in developing their communicative abilities. Learners may be limited by language ability, unable to express themselves fluently, or have difficulty understanding the expressions of others. This may lead to poor communication or difficulties in communication. Secondly, cultural differences are also an important challenge. There are

different values, behavioral norms, and social habits among different cultures. Learners may make communication errors or cultural conflicts due to lack of understanding or inaccurate comprehension. Learners need to adapt and understand different cultural communication methods, and improve their cross-cultural communication skills. In addition, communication anxiety is also a common challenge. Some learners may feel nervous and uneasy due to concerns about unclear expression or language errors. This may lead to a lack of confidence in their communication, affecting their ability to communicate effectively.[9]

## 5.2. Response strategies

**Improve language skills:** learners can improve their language skills through continuous practice and accumulation. For example, you can listen and speak more, participate in language communication activities, expand your vocabulary, and learn common expression habits and language structure. In addition, various language learning resources, such as language learning App, online courses and language communication communities, can be used to further improve language skills. **Learning cross-cultural communication skills:** learners need to actively understand and learn the characteristics and habits of different cultures. You can read books and articles about cross-cultural exchanges, watch cases and lectures about cross-cultural exchanges, and participate in training and activities about cross-cultural exchanges. By understanding and respecting the cultural differences of others, learners can better adapt to different communication scenarios and establish mutual understanding and integration relationships. Seek help and guidance from others: Learners can actively seek help and guidance from others, such as seeking advice from a foreign language teacher or a course advisor. They can provide expertise and guidance on language learning and intercultural communication, helping learners overcome difficulties and improve communicative competence. In addition, learners can also seek out language learning partners or participate in the language communication community, interact with and learn from others. **Coping with communication anxiety:** For communication anxiety, learners can overcome it through active learning and practice. You can choose some exercises and activities, such as role playing, speech and debate, to exercise your oral expression skills, and gradually increase your confidence and expression skills in different occasions. Furthermore, the effects of communication anxiety can be mitigated by relaxing and regulating one's emotions, such as deep breathing, positive thinking, and positive self-suggestion. Facing the challenge of cultivating communicative competence, learners can adopt a series of coping strategies. By improving language skills, learning cross-cultural communication skills, seeking help and guidance from others, and coping with communication anxiety, learners can gradually improve their communication skills and achieve more effective cross-cultural communication and communication.

## 6. Conclusion

The research on the contribution of pragmatics to the

cultivation of communicative competence from the perspective of applied linguistics has important theoretical and practical significance. By studying the role of pragmatics in cultivating communicative competence, we can gain a deeper understanding of the essence of language communication, thereby improving the communicative competence of learners. In teaching practice, we can follow the principles of pragmatic teaching, apply appropriate teaching methods, write practical textbooks, and design effective evaluation methods to address the challenges faced in the process of cultivating communicative competence. [10]In addition, we also need to pay attention to individual differences among learners, and develop personalized teaching plans based on their language foundation, pragmatic knowledge, communication strategy application ability, and other aspects to improve teaching effectiveness. In summary, the research on the contribution of pragmatics to the cultivation of communicative competence from the perspective of applied linguistics provides us with valuable theoretical and practical insights. In future research and teaching practice, we should continue to pay attention to the relationship between pragmatics and the cultivation of communicative competence, strive to improve learners' communicative competence, and create favorable conditions for cross-cultural communication.

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