

PRAGMATICS AND ITS ROLE IN TOURISTIC CONTEXT

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Abstract:

Globalization has facilitated the development of international tourism. As a result, there has been a significant movement of English language into tourism context. This can be seen from the presence of English, used both in spoken and written discourses in tourism environments to promote iconic landmarks and local cultures. In Uzbekistan, English is the main language, which is used in host-tourist and tourist-tourist spoken interactions. It is also a default language, used in huge numbers of tourism materials such as inflight magazine of Uzbekistan Airways, postcards, guidebooks, like Central Asia Travel and blogs, like Welcome to Uzbekistan.

Key words: Language Franca, tourist, host, touristic context, pragmatics.

Introduction.

This article studies spoken interaction in English between local Uzbeks and tourists during brief communicative encounters. In the context of tourism, the nature of these encounters was transactional, i.e. exchange of information. Such kind of interactional talk took place when foreign tourists and local Uzbeks had an opportunity to chat socially. The aim of this investigation was on the use of pragmatic strategies towards negotiation of meaning, mostly when there are problems with understanding take place and there are signs of misunderstanding. This article looks through the ways how better understanding will be achieved in touristic context and where the pragmatic strategies are employed in negotiation of meaning to achieve shared understanding.

We know that Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics concerned with the use of language in social contexts and the ways people produce and comprehend meanings through language. The history tells that term pragmatics was coined in the 1930s by psychologist and philosopher Charles Morris. Pragmatics was developed as a subfield of linguistics in the 1970s.

Based on my work experiences in English language teaching at college and institute of foreign languages together with working part time in Tour Company, I came to conclusion that there is some kind of mismatch of English in education and in actual use. That is to say, linguistic knowledge massively acquired in language classrooms is not the mere resource in using English as a means of communication, but pragmatic competences are also essential for exchanging meaning and co-constructing understanding in actual communication. As an English-language teacher, I

believe that English learners, who will later be speakers of English, should be equipped with linguistic and pragmatic resources, so that they will be able to use their linguistic knowledge and pragmatic and/or communicative competences to handle unpredictable situations in multicultural communication.

Main part.

This article tries to show how local people and tourists achieve negotiation of meaning and understanding through pragmatic strategies. This mainly happens with local shop keepers at touristic destinations and local markets. Most of time there will be a tour guide but when there is a big group of tourists, then no way and foreign tourists have to chat with local shop keepers by themselves.

Definitions of key terms

English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)

According to Seidlhofer (2011, p. 7), ELF refers to "any use of English among speakers of different first language for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option". ELF functions as "a contact language" (Firth, 1996, p. 240) which is "a medium of communication used by people who do not speak the same first language" (Kirkpatrick, 2007b, p. 7).

Touristic context

The term refers to the use of English in tourist-local interactions and tourist-tourist interactions, which are primarily related to exchanging information, providing services, and social talks in the context of the tourist industry and international travel.

Negotiation of meaning

A process in which speakers and listeners make an effort to produce and exchange meaning by adjusting linguistic forms and using strategies in order to reach a mutual understanding, including working on non-understanding until understanding is shared (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Cogo & House, 2018; Cogo & Pitzl, 2016).

Pragmatic strategies

In this study, pragmatic strategies refer to strategic practices and communicative strategies that ELF users employ throughout the process of negotiation of meaning in order to convey messages and manage interactions. In this sense, the pragmatic strategies are considered as the means to exchange meaning, negotiate meaning, and co-construct understanding until ELF speakers achieve shared understanding (Bjorkman, 2011, 2014; Cogo, 2010; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Cogo & House, 2018; J.Kaur, 2015).

Tour industry facilitates the opportunity in communication among speakers. International tourism involves a huge movement of people who come into contact with each other, i.e. foreign tourists and local Uzbek people in Uzbekistan. Mostly they are sales persons in markets and touristic destinations. Sometimes host families in guest houses or in yurts. These are situations where English language is the only language of choice. This process can be called "touristic context", which refers to the use of English in tourist-local and tourist-tourist interactions, where the only aim is exchanging information, providing services, and social chat. Participants in above mentioned situations have not necessarily got target language skills through formal education. In exchanging

meaning intelligibly and sharing understanding, the locals and the tourists exploit their linguistic resources and use pragmatic strategies to negotiate meaning.

Conclusion.

International tourism is one of the biggest industries in the world. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, there were about 1 million tourists visited Uzbekistan in 2016, the figure rose to 2.7 million in 2017, and more than 5.3 million in 2018. The number of foreign tourists is expected to rise to 7 million by 2025, and the annual foreign currency earnings from foreign visitors will reach as much as \$2 billion. It is also one of the main sources of employment around the world with the UNWTO estimating that 1 in 10 jobs is in some way linked to tourism. As a truly international industry which is both growing and diversifying consistently, tourism has been labeled as one of "the greatest population movements of all time" (Bruner 2005: 10). It is then one of the most diverse, far-reaching and lucrative industries – and employment sectors – in the world. State Tourism Committee announces the number of tourists who visited Uzbekistan in 2019. The State Committee for Tourism Development said that in 2019, 6,748,500 tourists visited Uzbekistan (in 2018 – 5,346,200 people).

Although little work has been done on tourism in this respect, a large number of studies have shown how English constitutes a key resource for in situ meaning making in comparable situations of intercultural contact. Research focused on English as a lingua franca (ELF) – that is, as a language of communication between speakers from two or more different linguistic groups – in naturally occurring settings has shown how speakers develop strategies at different linguistic levels in order to facilitate mutual understanding (Jenkins et al. 2011 for an overview).

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