

**DEVELOPING TRANSLATION STUDENTS' PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE
THROUGH CONTEXT-BASED ACTIVITIES IN ENGLISH-UZBEK LANGUAGE
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Annotation. This article investigates how context-based activities can be effectively used to develop pragmatic competence among translation students working with English and Uzbek. The focus is on teaching learners to recognize and apply pragmatic elements such as speech acts, politeness strategies, and cultural context in translation tasks. The study draws on practical classroom experiences, translation samples, and student feedback to demonstrate how situational exercises improve both accuracy and naturalness in translated texts. By engaging with real-world communication scenarios, students learn to convey meaning beyond words, capturing tone, intention, and cultural appropriateness. The article concludes that incorporating context-based activities into translation training significantly enhances students' communicative and intercultural skills, making them better equipped for professional translation tasks in both academic and applied settings.

Keywords: pragmatic competence, context-based activities, translation, English-Uzbek, speech acts, culture, communication.

Introduction. In the field of translation studies, there has been growing recognition of the importance of pragmatic competence the ability to understand and convey intended meaning within a specific context as a core skill for future translators. While linguistic accuracy remains a fundamental requirement, successful translation increasingly demands a deeper awareness of how language operates in different communicative settings. This is particularly true when translating between languages and cultures as distinct as English and Uzbek, where direct translation may not always yield natural or meaningful results. In such cases, pragmatic competence becomes a critical component of professional translation ability. Pragmatics is the branch of linguistics that studies language in use and the contexts in which it is used. It involves understanding how meaning is constructed through speech acts, politeness strategies, implicature, tone, and social conventions¹. For example, a simple English sentence like *"Could you pass the salt?"* is more than just a question it functions as a polite request.

When translating this into Uzbek, the translator must not only convey the lexical meaning but also consider the level of formality, politeness, and cultural norms surrounding requests. Failure to do so can lead to translations that are technically correct but pragmatically inappropriate, thus altering the communicative intent of the original message. Unfortunately, in many translation training programs, especially at the undergraduate level, pragmatic elements receive limited attention. The traditional focus is often on developing grammatical competence, vocabulary building, and literal translation skills. As a result, students may excel in translating basic texts but struggle with nuanced or culturally rich materials such as dialogues, speeches, idiomatic expressions, or literary texts. These shortcomings highlight the need for innovative pedagogical approaches that address the pragmatic dimension of translation more directly.

¹ Baker M. In *Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*. – UK: Routledge, 2018. – 332 p.

One promising method is the use of context-based activities, which are designed to simulate real-world translation scenarios and force learners to think beyond words and sentences. Such activities include translating dialogues, interpreting culturally loaded phrases, role-playing conversational exchanges, and analyzing speech acts in various genres. These tasks encourage students to engage with language as a dynamic tool of communication rather than a static system of rules. By interpreting texts within their sociolinguistic and cultural context, students develop a stronger sense of appropriateness and sensitivity to tone, register, and intention. This article examines how context-based activities can enhance the pragmatic competence of translation students working with English-Uzbek language pairs. It draws on both theoretical insights from pragmatics and practical examples from classroom experiences. The aim is to demonstrate that when learners are exposed to authentic communicative situations and guided in analyzing them, they become more capable of producing translations that are not only accurate but also natural and effective. The findings of this study have implications for curriculum development, suggesting that pragmatic awareness should be integrated into translation pedagogy as a vital component of translator training. By doing so, educators can better prepare students for the complex demands of real-world translation, where meaning often lies not just in what is said, but in how, when, and why it is said.

Translation is more than just transferring words from one language to another it involves conveying meaning, tone, and communicative intent in a way that feels natural and culturally appropriate in the target language. One of the major challenges faced by translation students, especially in English-Uzbek language pairs, is the gap between literal meaning and pragmatic meaning. While a literal translation might be grammatically correct, it can often miss the underlying purpose or sound awkward, impolite, or even misleading to the target audience². This is where developing pragmatic competence becomes essential. Pragmatic competence refers to the ability to use and interpret language appropriately in various social and cultural contexts. It includes understanding indirect speech, politeness norms, implied meanings, idioms, and cultural references all of which are critical for successful translation.

To help students develop this competence, context-based activities have proven effective. These activities simulate real-life communication situations and force learners to consider not just what is being said, but how and why it is being said. Such activities are based on the idea that translation is not merely a technical task, but a dynamic communicative act that requires social and cultural interpretation. For example, in classroom activities, students might be asked to translate customer service conversations, political speeches, informal messages, or news reports. Each of these genres requires a different level of formality, tone, and audience awareness. Without pragmatic knowledge, students may translate all texts in the same neutral style, failing to capture the communicative essence of the original.

Table 1.

Common pragmatic differences between English and Uzbek expressions.

| English expression | Literal translation | Uzbek | Pragmatically appropriate Uzbek equivalent | Pragmatic feature |
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² Hatim B., Mason I. *The Translator as Communicator*. – UK: Routledge, 1997. – 248 p.

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|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| “Could you help me, please?” | “Siz menga yordam bera olasizmi?” | “Iltimos, yordam bera olasizmi?” | Politeness strategy |
| “He passed away”. | “U o‘ldi”. | “U vafot etdi.” | Euphemism, cultural sensitivity |
| “Break a leg!” (idiom for good luck) | “Oyoqni sindir!” | “Omad tilayman!” | Idiomatic meaning, context |
| “Make yourself at home”. | “O‘zingizni uyda his qiling”. | “Bemalol o‘tiring, uyim sizniki”. | Hospitality expression, tone |
| “What do you mean?” | “Nima demoqchisiz?” | “Qanday ma’noda aytdingiz?” | Softeners, face-saving strategy |

As the table shows, a direct translation is not always pragmatically appropriate. For instance, “Break a leg!” is a culturally specific idiom in English that symbolizes wishing someone good luck, especially before a performance. If translated literally into Uzbek, it might sound absurd or even alarming. A student trained in pragmatics would recognize the idiomatic usage and search for a culturally equivalent expression like “Omad tilayman!” Similarly, polite requests in English often use indirect questions, while Uzbek tends to favor direct but respectful expressions³. If students are not trained to recognize these patterns, their translations may sound unnatural or even rude to the target audience.

To address such challenges, context-based classroom activities must be designed to foster pragmatic awareness. One effective strategy is role-playing, where students take on different roles (e.g., customer and employee, teacher and student, host and guest) and practice translating dialogues with appropriate levels of politeness and tone. These exercises simulate authentic language use and expose students to the nuances of interpersonal communication. Another useful activity is discourse analysis, where students examine real texts such as political speeches, interviews, or letters and identify how pragmatic elements function in each language. This allows students to understand not only what is being said, but how it is being framed, structured, and received in different cultural contexts. Translation of speech acts such as requests, refusals, compliments, and apologies is especially helpful in building pragmatic competence. Students can compare how the same act is performed differently in English and Uzbek. For example, English refusals often include hedging and apology (“I’m afraid I can’t”), whereas Uzbek refusals may involve longer, more respectful reasoning (“Kechirasiz, lekin imkonim yo‘q”). By analyzing such differences, students learn to approach translation with greater sensitivity to cultural norms.

Another context-based task involves working with authentic dialogues from films, TV shows, or interviews. Students are asked to translate selected scenes and pay attention to emotional tone, informal expressions, body language, and background culture⁴. This helps them learn not just to translate words, but to recreate the communicative experience. Students can also be given peer feedback tasks, where they evaluate each other’s translations based on pragmatic accuracy and naturalness. This encourages collaborative learning and critical thinking. Practical research

³ Nord C. *Text Analysis in Translation: Theory, Methodology, and Didactic Application*. – Netherlands: Rodopi, 2005. – 276 p.

⁴ Karimova M. *Tarjimada kontekst va pragmatik yondashuv*. – Toshkent: Fan, 2020. – 198 b.

carried out with a group of third-year translation students at a university in Uzbekistan revealed that those who were consistently exposed to context-based pragmatic tasks performed significantly better in interpreting indirect language and adjusting formality levels. They reported greater confidence in translating idiomatic and culturally sensitive material. Their translation assignments reflected more creativity, context awareness, and reader orientation. In contrast, students taught only through grammar- and vocabulary-focused methods often produced translations that, while accurate in form, failed to convey the intended meaning effectively.

To ensure the success of these methods, educators must provide clear instruction on pragmatic concepts and give structured feedback. Students need to be taught the theory behind pragmatic strategies such as Grice's maxims, speech act theory, and politeness theory and then guided in applying these concepts through practical tasks. Teachers can use bilingual comparison charts, cultural scenarios, and real translation samples to support learning. Furthermore, translation exams and assessments should include criteria for pragmatic adequacy, not just linguistic correctness, so students learn to value meaning-making alongside language structure.

Ultimately, the integration of context-based activities in translation education represents a shift toward a more holistic, communicative model of learning⁵. It aligns with the professional demands placed on translators in the real world, where understanding the purpose, tone, and audience of a text is just as important as knowing the correct word. In the English-Uzbek context, where cultural values, politeness norms, and communicative styles differ considerably, pragmatic competence is indispensable. It empowers students to produce translations that are accurate, appropriate, and culturally resonant ensuring that their work functions effectively in real communicative contexts.

Conclusion. Developing pragmatic competence is essential for translation students, especially when working with English and Uzbek, two linguistically and culturally distinct languages. This study has shown that context-based activities—such as role-plays, dialogue translations, and discourse analysis—play a vital role in helping students move beyond literal translation and toward communicative accuracy. These activities enhance students' ability to interpret speaker intentions, manage tone and formality, and recognize culturally specific expressions. By actively engaging with real-world scenarios, learners become more confident and skilled in producing translations that are both natural and effective. Integrating pragmatic training into translation curricula not only improves linguistic performance but also fosters intercultural awareness, which is key to professional success in today's globalized environment. Therefore, educators should prioritize pragmatic elements in translation instruction, ensuring that students are well-prepared to meet the nuanced demands of the translation profession. This approach builds a foundation for more meaningful and contextually appropriate translation practices.

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