Teaching Implicature Through Video Edited Clips in ESL Listening Classes

Susi Damaiyanti

STAIN Gajah Putih Takengon, Aceh Tengah, Aceh
Email: susidamaiyanti@yahoo.com

Abstract: This article is aim at reporting the teaching of pragmatic competence as part of communicative competence to enhance the students listening comprehension. It focuses on knowing how conversational implicature is taught in listening classes by using short video clips taken from some English-medium movies. Since pragmatics deals with language use in its contexts, incorporating pragmatics in EFL instructions, particularly in listening class, is imperative. This article discussions start with EFL listening comprehension process, the importance of pragmatics in EFL listening comprehension processes, pragmatic elements that make listening comprehension difficult, conversational implicature, the benefits of using movies in EFL listening instructions, and a lesson plan that incorporates implicature instruction.

Key Words: Implicature, Listening Comprehension, Video Edited Clips.

Background

Pragmatics which is defined as the study of language use it contexts (Burk, 2001) has been increasingly gaining an important role in EFL instructions. As elaborated by some models of communicative competence such as Canale and Swain's model (1983), Bachman's model (1990) and Celce-Murcia's model (1995), communicative competence is not only determined by linguistic competence, but it is also very much related to pragmatic aspects (Soler & Martinez-Flor, 2008). Therefore, if EFL instructions are to enable learners to attain communicative competence, developing their pragmatic competence should be as equally developed as their linguistic competence.

Observations from the field, however, reveal that language classrooms put more emphasis on grammar instruction rather than pragmatic meaning (Schultz, 1996; Borg, 1999; Sarac-Suzer, 2007 as cited in Alagözlü & Büyüköztürk, 2009; Celce-Murcia et al., 2005 as cited in Eslami & Eslami-Rasekh, 2008), causing an imbalance between pragmatic competence and grammatical competence. Therefore, incorporation of pragmatics in the EFL instruction needs to be done because "without pragmatic focus, foreign language teaching raises students' metalinguistic awareness but it does not contribute much to develop their metapragmatic consciousness in L2 to be able to distinguish between what is and is not appropriate in given contexts" (Eslami & Eslami-Rasekh, 2008).

The importance of pragmatic account also applies in ESL listening contexts. Alagözlü & Büyüköztürk (2009) highlight that violations in communication can appear if the pragmatic aspects of language such as speech acts and implicatures are not taken into

account. In everyday life, the same utterance may perform different acts in different contexts. They exemplify that the utterance "Your hair is so long" may be interpreted as a compliment or an insult, or may simply mean "have your hair cut." Therefore, insufficient understanding of speech acts may result in communication problems. Conversational implicatures may also bring about difficulties for L2 comprehension (Alagözlü & Büyüköztürk, 2009). This is because the speaker who is assumed to be cooperative does not prefer to state his/her intention clearly.

As the message is not transmitted, the interpretation should be based on some inferences and presuppositions created during the communication, making the process of interpretation somewhat challenging. Furthermore, Alagözlü & Büyüköztürk (2009) mention that comprehension of natural (aural) discourse is dependent not only on linguistic knowledge but also on situational context. Thus, if only linguistic contexts are properly understood but without sufficient understanding of situational contexts, linguistic meaning will be ambiguous and misleading, causing communication breakdown likely to occur. Situational contexts here include knowledge of participants, subject matters, physical contexts, and knowledge of the world shared by the members of the interaction. Since pragmatics deals with language use in its contexts, incorporating pragmatics in EFL instructions, particularly in listening class, is imperative. This is especially so since in EFL settings like Indonesia, the provision of pragmatic input and opportunities for practicing pragmatic competence is relatively narrow (Eslami & Eslami-Rasekh, 2008). In addition, as argued by Schmidt (1993 as cited in Eslami & Eslami-Rasekh, 2008), simply exposing learners to target language is not enough for developing pragmatic competence because pragmatic functions and relevant contextual factors are often very subtle to learners and "so not likely to be noticed even after prolonged exposure".

In this paper, the writers will discuss a way in which implicature is taught in the listening lesson by using short video clips taken from some English-medium movies. The paper will start with discussions on EFL listening comprehension process, the importance of pragmatics in EFL listening comprehension processes, pragmatic elements that make listening comprehension difficult, conversational implicature, the benefits of using movies in EFL listening instructions, and a lesson plan that incorporates implicature instruction.

1. EFL Listening Comprehension Process

In EFL context, listening is referred as listening comprehension. In terms of its process, listening comprehension has been defined in three cognitive processes, i.e. bottom-up process, top-down process, and interactive process. According to Buck (2001), listening as a bottom-up process happens in a one-way process from the lowest process to the highest one, that is, it begins with decoding acoustic input into phonemes, from which then larger units such as words and sentences are identified to be able to arrive at the understanding of the literal meaning of the sentences. The final step is interpreting that

literal meaning to understand what the speaker means. Thus, based on this view, listening happens in some successive stages, and the output of one stage becomes the input of the next higher stage.

On the other hand, top-down process (Nation, 2010) proceeds from the whole to the parts, that is, listeners use their prior knowledge and their content and rhetorical schemata to understand what is conveyed by speakers. The key word here is inferencing. In EFL listening practices, neither approach is superior to the other in the sense that learners with bottom-up processing often fail to activate higher oder L2 schemata and those with top-down processing often neglect the language input (Hinkel, 2006). Rather, listening is viewed as an interactive process which sees both bottom-up and top-down process as complementary to one another (Alagözlü & Büyüköztürk, 2009). In other words, both identification skills such as that in the bottom-up process and interpretation skills like the one in top-down process are of the same importance for fluent comprehension.

To conclude what is meant by listening comprehension from the three approaches, Burk (2001) defines listening as "the active process of constructing meaning and this is done by applying knowledge to the incoming sound". The kinds of knowledge that are involved in understanding spoken language, according to Burk (2001) are:
1. Knowledge of the language, which includes the ability to identify phonemes, words, sentences, and discourse as meaningful units. This also covers the ability to identify stress and intonation.
2. Knowledge of the world, which is very important in the listening comprehension process since it presupposes a wide variety of general non-linguistic knowledge about the world, which is very important for inferring process as this knowledge, e.g. knowledge of specific facts, is very useful in filling in details that not explicitly stated in the text listened.
3. The context of communication, which consists of two components, i.e. co-text, that is, parts of the text that accompany the text being processed (parts after and before the part being processed), and context of situation, that is the social situation in which the communication takes place as well as non-verbal information, especially visual information which can supplement or contradict the verbal message.

Given the three kinds of knowledge, it is very clear that pragmatic knowledge plays an important role in the listening comprehension process, especially with regard to the importance of the knowledge of the context of situation where the communication takes place, as well as to the inferring process (knowledge of the world) since inference is part of pragmatic aspects of language and since it often involves presupposition which is very closely related to pragmatics.

The pragmatic competence is very important, sometimes more important that the grammatical competence, as is stated by Thomas (1982) who argues that …"While

grammatical error may reveal a speaker to be a less than proficient language-user, pragmatic failure reflects badly on him/her as a person" (cited in Rylander, 2005).

2. Some factors that affect the listening process?

Listening is a demanding process, not only because of the complexity of the process itself, but also due to factors that characterize the listener, the speaker, the content of the message, and any visual support that accompanies the message (Brown & Yule, 1983).

The Listener

Interest in a topic increases the listener's comprehension; the listener may tune out topics that are not of interest. A listener who is an active participant in a conversation generally has more background knowledge to facilitate understanding of the topic than a listener who is, in effect, overhearing something from a conversation between two people whose communication has been recorded on an audiotape. Further, the ability to use negotiation skills, such as asking for clarification, repetition, or definition of points not understood, enable a listener to make sense of the incoming information.

The Speaker

Colloquial language and reduced forms make comprehension more difficult. The extent to which the speaker uses these language forms impacts comprehension. The more exposure the listener has to them, the greater the ability to comprehend. A speaker's rate of delivery may be too fast, too slow, or have too many hesitations for a listener to follow. Awareness of a speaker's corrections and use of rephrasing ("er. . . I mean . . .That is . . .") can assist the listener. Learners need practice in recognizing these speech habits as clues to deciphering meaning.

Content

Content that is familiar is easier to comprehend than content with unfamiliar vocabulary or for which the listener has insufficient background knowledge.

Visual Support

Visual support, such as video, pictures, diagrams, gestures, facial expressions, and body language, can increase comprehension if the learner is able to correctly interpret it.

3. The Importance of Pragmatics in EFL

Bagarić (2007) highlights that pragmatics is the study of meaning including context, users and interaction. According to Yule (1996), pragmatics is defined as the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker and interpreted by a listener. Pragmatics goes beyond sentence level since it studies utterances which include a variety of linguistic and non-linguistic properties (Sperber & Wilson, 1986 as cited in Bagarić, 2007). From those definitions, it is clear that pragmatics is very important for language learners since it is very closely related to language as it is used in its contexts.

Pragmatics is so important in EFL especially since it is acknowledged as one of the important components of communicative competence. Since Bachman was the first scholar who explicitly stated pragmatic competence in his communicative competence model, the paper discusses Bachman and Palmer's communicative competence, which is the revision of Bachman's previous model (proposed in 1990) to make clearer the position of pragmatic competence in language instruction.

Bachman and Palmer's communicative competence (1996 as cited in Bagarić, 2007) - communicative language ability in their term - consists of two main areas, i.e. language knowledge and strategic competence. Language knowledge is comprised of two main components: organizational knowledge and pragmatic knowledge which complement each other in order to achieve communicative and effective language use. Organizational knowledge refers the ability in terms of formal language structures, i.e. grammatical and textual knowledge. Grammatical knowledge is comprised of independent areas of knowledge like knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, phonology, and graphology, which make recognition and production of grammatically correct sentences as well as comprehension of their propositional content possible. Meanwhile, textual knowledge enables comprehension and production of spoken or written texts. It includes knowledge of conventions for combining sentences or utterances into texts, i.e. knowledge of cohesion which is related to ways of signaling semantic relationships among two or more sentences in a written text or utterances in a conversation and knowledge of rhetorical organization which refers to how to develop narrative texts, descriptions, comparisons, classifications etc. or conversational organization which includes conventions for initiating, maintaining and closing conversations.

Pragmatic knowledge is defined as abilities for creating and interpreting discourse. It is comprised of two kinds of knowledge, i.e. functional knowledge which refers to pragmatic conventions for expressing acceptable language functions and for interpreting the illocutionary power of utterances or discourse and sociolinguistic knowledge which refers to the ability to create and interpret language utterances which are appropriate in a particular context of language use.

Strategic knowledge refers to a set of metacognitive skills which include goal setting, assessment of communicative sources, and planning. Goal setting involves identifying a set of possible tasks, selecting the tasks which are possible to achieve and deciding on which one is to be achieved. Assessment is relating language use context to other areas of communicative language ability: topical knowledge and affective schemata. Planning includes deciding how to make use of language knowledge and other components involved in completing the chosen task successfully.

Based on Bachman and Palmer's model, it is very clear that pragmatic competence plays an important role in order to be able to effectively use the language for

real communication since it enables which language functions to be used for certain contexts and how to use those expressions appropriately.

4. Cooperative Principle and the Conversational Implicature

a. Cooperative principle

Grice (1975 as cited in Wang 2005) observed that conversations, like other human interactions, are governed by a cooperative principle, telling that you should "make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged". This implies, i.e., that you need not and should not supply information which you can assume that your audience already has - just as suggested by the principles of necessity and sufficiency. Further, this principle is called maxims. Here are the maxims:

WHAT SHOULD BE SAID
N1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange)
N2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
Q1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
Q2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
R1. Be relevant
HOW IT SHOULD BE SAID
M1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
M2. Avoid ambiguity.
M3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
M4. Be orderly.

Abbreviations: N quantity, Q quality, R relation, M manner.

Grice's Co-operative Principle and maxims appear very simple, straightforward, and common-sensical at first sight. The basic assumption here is that any discourse, whether written or spoken, is a joint effort. Both the speaker and the addressee have to follow certain pragmatic, syntactic, and semantic rules in order to communicate effectively. They have to co-operate.

b. Conversational implicatur

In the above we have had a full discussion about Grice's CP and its maxims, and what is meant by Grice's standards. We have observed that in any kind of conversation it's usually the case that both the speaker and the listener will observe the CP. However these maxims are not always fulfilled. A speaker may quietly violate a maxim (and mislead his audience), he may explicitly opt out, he may be faced with a clash between different maxims, or he may flout a maxim in such a way that the listener can be assumed to understand that this is being done. The latter case is especially interesting since it gives

rise to a "conversational implicature" that is at variance with the literal meaning of the utterance. In such a case, the speaker is said to "exploit" a maxim.

The following are some examples of maxim-based implicatures:

Maxim	Examples

Quantity- based implicatures
 	
(Assuming the speaker is being informative)
	a. Kid: Mom, can I go to the movies with Jesse?
	   Parent: Maybe.
	b. Some of the senators believed Monica's story.
	   -> Triggers inference that not all the senators did.
	c. John is 5 feet tall.
	   -> *Triggers inference that he is not taller than 5 feet.*

Relevance- based implicatures	A: Is the professor teaching English any good? B: She keeps her shoelaces tied
Manner- based implicatures	Cecilia had a baby and she married Tim. vs. C*ecilia married Tim and she had a baby.* Manner- based implicatures: *Hearers infer some specific intent for using one expression instead of an alternative*

5. Pragmatic elements that make listening comprehension difficult

In college English listening comprehension, as far as the conversations are involved, they fall into several categories.

A: Those that observe the Cooperative principle very strictly and are easy to infer the meaning. For example:

   a) M: I'd like to see the blue jacket in the window.
      W: What size do you want?

   In this example the answer to the question is both informative and relevant, so it brings not too much difficulties to the student listener. Only by the interpretation of the literal meaning of the sentence can the student understand all the information conveyed through the dialogue.

B: Through the flouting of CP maxim(s) there evokes the conversational implicature that listeners should try hard to interpret. In listening comprehension classroom, the types of conversation that need to be interpreted to figure out the implicature includes (Laurence F.B, 1999):

   a) Relevance
      A: How about going for a walk?
      B: Isn't it raining out?

   b) Minimum Requirement Rule—Two golfers are talking about their chances in the local university golf tournament.

A: What do you think it will take to make the cut tomorrow, Brad?
B: Oh, a 75 ought to do it. Did you have a 75? I didn't.

c) The POPE Q implicature:

The POPE Q implicature answers one question with another. For the implicature to work, the person asking the first question with another. For the implicature to work, the person asking the first question must realize that the answer to that question is the same as the answer to the second one and just as easy. This implicature is highly formulaic and is named for the prototype response, *Is the pope Catholic?*
A: Does Sr. Walker always give a test the day before vacation?
B: Does the sun come up in the East?

d) Indirect criticism**:**

The *Indirect Criticism* implicature often follows a request for an evaluation of something. When expressed using this implicature, the evaluation is negative. That effect is achieved by praising some unimportant feature of the item being evaluated, thus implying that there is nothing more flattering that can be said.
A: Have you seen Robin Hood?
B: Yeah. I went last night.
A: What did you think of it?
B: The *cinematography* was great.
A: Oh, that bad, hug?

e) Sequence-based implicature

Sequence-based implicatures are based on the assumption that unless there are indications to the contrary, events being described occur in the order in which they are expressed. The effect of this assumption is easily seen in the difference in the sequence of events implied by sentences such as :
Jack drove to Chicago and had dinner.
Jack had dinner and drove to Chicago.

f) Irony

Bill and Peter work together in the same office. They sometimes are sent on business trips together and are becoming good friends. They often have lunch together and Peter has even invited Bill to have dinner with him and his wife at their home several times. Now Peter's friends have told him that they saw Bill out dancing with Peter's wife recently while Peter was out of town on a business trip. On hearing this, Peter's comment was…
Peter: *Bill knows how to be a really good friend, doesn't he?*

In relation to the explanation above, what kind of implicature is difficult for the students to interpret?. Based on the empirical study conducted by Wang in China (2005),

who testing 60 students to listen to 30 short conversations from College English (Book 4, Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 1997), and assign it for the students to finish within 45 minutes time by listening to it just one time.

What the students find easy to infer the implicature   (N=60)

Item	Number of students deem it as		Type
	Easy	Difficult	
6	49	11	Relevance
2	43	17	Min.Req.
6	12	48	POPE Q
6	15	45	Ind.crit
6	9	51	Irony

From the analysis we find that the easiest for the students to interpret the implicature are those concerning relevance. However those are difficult to the students are all concerning the culture differences. So culture also plays an important role in interpreting the conversational implcatures in listening comprehension.

6. Why Using Videos/Movies?

As stated previously, context of situation very often involves non-verbal information, particularly the visual one, which can supplement and/or contradict the verbal message conveyed. If listening materials are mainly delivered in the form of audio input, learners cannot learn the visual element which is very important in determining the context of situation of a communication. Thus, the use of videos/movies in the teaching of listening is particularly due to the fact that they can provide clear visual representation for the listeners, so that the pragmatic elements focused in the listening lesson can be effectively given to the students.

Most of the time, especially in Indonesian context, EFL teachers very much depend on textbooks to conduct the lessons. This phenomenon provides little chance for teaching pragmatics, and if any, this is usually done through dialogues in the textbook. According to Wong (1996), however, textbook dialogues fail to mirror elements found in naturally occurring speech (Rylander, 2005). Since EFL contexts provide narrow range of speech act use and interactions which restrict language input (Eslami & Eslami-Rasekh, 2008), EFL teachers cannot depend much on dialogues in the textbooks. Therefore, movies become a good alternative to provide pragmatic input.

Empirically, the use of movies is also positive in increasing students' pragmatic awareness. For example, Rylander's study (2005) which reported that the use of video-edited clips taken from English-medium films and television shows were able to make students gain in speech act awareness and production. Furthermore, Lestari (2009) through her research concluded that the use English movies can improve the students' listening skill.

Conclusion

The use of movies video edited clips an oral skills course and other skill courses may be integrated through the use of common themes, functions, and/or grammar featured in the movies. Although listening activities in oral skills textbooks may share a theme, they are unlikely to carry much intriguing content at the beginning level. Moreover, text activities, unlike movies, are often disconnected. The use of movies, however, provides a rich context by which students can improve comprehension and practice listening and speaking (Altman 1989, Kitajima and Lyman- Hager 1998, Burt 1999, and Stoller 1993 as cited in Ishihara and Julie C. Chi 2007).

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