

**EFFECTIVENESS OF TECHNOLOGIES IN DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC
COMPETENCE OF TOURISM STUDENTS**

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Abstract: In an increasingly interconnected world, effective communication is vital, especially in fields like tourism where interactions often occur across cultures. Pragmatic competence, which refers to the ability to use language appropriately based on social and cultural contexts, is crucial for tourism students. With the rapid advancement of technology in education, integrating technological tools into the teaching of English provides innovative ways to enhance pragmatic competence. This article explores the effectiveness of various technological tools in fostering pragmatic competence in tourism students, including virtual simulations, mobile applications, language exchange platforms, and immersive learning environments. Drawing from relevant scholarly perspectives, it examines how these technologies offer authentic learning experiences, cultural exposure, immediate feedback, and interactive opportunities. The findings suggest that technology, when properly integrated into the curriculum, can significantly enhance students' ability to navigate cross-cultural interactions in professional tourism settings.

Keywords: Pragmatic Competence, Tourism Education, Technology in Language Learning, Cross-Cultural Communication, Virtual Reality, Mobile Learning, Interactive Learning, English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

In the modern tourism industry, effective communication is one of the most essential skills required of professionals. Tourism students, in particular, need to acquire pragmatic competence, which involves not only mastering the language but also understanding how to use it appropriately in varying social and cultural contexts. Pragmatic competence helps students adjust their language choices based on factors like the relationship between speakers, the formality of the situation, and the cultural norms governing interaction.

As the tourism sector becomes increasingly globalized, there is a pressing need to provide students with dynamic and immersive learning experiences. Technological tools such as mobile apps, online platforms, virtual reality (VR), and gamification have emerged as valuable resources for enhancing language learning, especially in the development of pragmatic skills. This article explores the effectiveness of these technologies in enhancing pragmatic competence among tourism students, examining their potential to foster communication skills that are

essential in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Pragmatic competence is defined by Kasper and Rose (2002) as the ability to use language in a manner that is both contextually and culturally appropriate. It involves several components:

1. **Speech Acts:** The ability to perform communicative functions like making requests, offering apologies, and giving advice appropriately.
2. **Contextual Adaptation:** Adjusting the language register (formal vs. informal), tone, and style depending on the social situation.
3. **Cultural Sensitivity:** Understanding how language interacts with cultural norms and values, crucial in the diverse tourism industry.

For tourism students, pragmatic competence is critical because they frequently interact with clients, colleagues, and stakeholders from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In such settings, the ability to choose the correct language based on cultural expectations is paramount.

The integration of technology into language learning offers unique advantages in the development of pragmatic competence. Benson (2013) suggests that technology allows for exposure to authentic language contexts that would be difficult to replicate in traditional classrooms. Moreover, Swain (2000) argues that digital tools foster interactional competence, which is essential in tourism settings where communication is dynamic and context-dependent.

Technological Tools for Developing Pragmatic Competence

1. Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR)

Virtual reality and augmented reality provide immersive learning experiences that simulate real-world tourism settings, such as hotel lobbies, airports, or guided tours. These tools allow students to engage in role-play scenarios where they can practice language use in various professional situations. Thornbury (2006) emphasizes the importance of contextual learning, where learners can practice language in authentic situations. VR-based platforms like ENGAGE and ClassVR have been used to simulate intercultural communication scenarios. For instance, students may act as tour guides or hotel receptionists and interact with digital avatars or other learners, mimicking interactions with international tourists. Such simulations are valuable in enhancing students' ability to choose appropriate language and perform speech acts like greetings, making requests, or apologizing based on the situation.

2. Mobile Applications

Mobile applications for language learning, such as Duolingo, Rosetta Stone, and Memrise, provide interactive exercises that focus on both linguistic skills and pragmatic competence. These apps often include exercises that involve cultural nuances—for example, knowing when to use formal vs. informal language or how

to adapt language for different social contexts.

According to Vygotsky (1978), scaffolding—a process of providing learners with support as they develop new skills—is critical for language development. Mobile apps often use adaptive learning algorithms that adjust the difficulty of tasks based on learners' proficiency, ensuring that students are constantly challenged while also receiving feedback on their progress.

For tourism students, such apps can simulate situations like checking in a guest at a hotel, handling customer complaints, or giving directions, all of which require a blend of linguistic accuracy and cultural sensitivity. Immediate feedback provided by these apps helps students refine their language use in practical situations.

3. Online Language Exchange Platforms

Technology also facilitates cross-cultural communication through online language exchange platforms such as Tandem and Hello Talk. These platforms allow students to connect with native speakers from around the world, enabling them to practice real-time communication and gain cultural insights into how language is used in various contexts.

Taguchi (2009) suggests that these platforms provide learners with opportunities to engage in pragmatic reflection, a process through which learners analyze how their language use is received and interpreted by speakers of different cultures. Through these interactions, tourism students can better understand the cultural expectations behind speech acts like requests, invitations, or apologies.

4. Gamification and Interactive Learning Platforms

Gamification introduces elements of game design into language learning, making the process more engaging and motivating. Platforms like Kahoot!, Quizlet, and Lingoda use gamified exercises to teach language pragmatics in a fun and interactive way. Students can participate in role-playing games or answer quizzes that require them to respond to scenarios involving cross-cultural communication.

Gee (2003) points out that learning through games promotes affective learning, where emotional engagement helps learners retain knowledge more effectively. By simulating real-world tourism scenarios, these tools help students practice how to interact with tourists, handle customer service situations, and manage intercultural communication. The immediate feedback and the competitive elements inherent in games also provide students with the opportunity to improve their pragmatic skills.

5. Online Video and Podcast Analysis

Video-based tools like YouTube and podcasts provide a wealth of real-world examples of how language is used in the tourism sector. Students can watch or

listen to interactions between tourism professionals and tourists, such as interviews, hotel check-ins, or guided tours, and analyze the language used in these contexts.

Kasper and Rose (2002) argue that these authentic materials expose students to real-life speech patterns and the cultural context in which language is used. Students can learn how to adjust their communication style to different social situations, such as being more formal with clients or using informal language with colleagues. By discussing and analyzing these examples, students can better understand the nuances of language use in tourism-related interactions.

Scholars' Perspectives on Technology and Pragmatic Competence

Several scholars have explored the effectiveness of technology in enhancing pragmatic competence. Kasper and Rose (2002) argue that technological tools are invaluable for teaching pragmatics because they enable learners to engage with diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. They note that learners can practice pragmatic strategies such as politeness, indirectness, and appropriateness in a range of settings, from formal business interactions to informal social exchanges.

Similarly, Breen (2001) highlights that technology makes it possible to simulate intercultural communication, a process that is crucial for tourism students who need to navigate diverse cultural expectations. Through interactive platforms, students can engage in real-time, cross-cultural dialogues, which helps them develop interactional competence—the ability to initiate, maintain, and terminate conversations appropriately.

Taguchi (2009) stresses that technology should not replace traditional instruction but should complement classroom learning. By using technology, educators can create blended learning environments that combine the best of both worlds—providing students with opportunities to practice language in interactive settings while still offering the guidance and structure of formal education.

The integration of technology into tourism education provides numerous benefits for developing pragmatic competence in students. Through immersive learning environments, interactive mobile applications, language exchange platforms, and gamified experiences, students are exposed to authentic scenarios where they can practice the language skills necessary for effective communication in the tourism industry. Scholars like Kasper and Rose (2002), Gee (2003), and Taguchi (2009) support the idea that technology can enhance pragmatic competence by offering students real-world context, immediate feedback, and cross-cultural exposure.

As the tourism industry continues to grow, educators must embrace technology to provide students with the tools they need to succeed in a globalized environment. Technology is not just a supplement to traditional language

instruction—it is an essential component of modern education that fosters the development of pragmatic competence, which is critical for effective communication in the tourism and hospitality sectors.

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