

A Study on Pragmatic Failure in Intercultural Communication — From the Perspective of College English Teaching

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Abstract: *With the deepening of globalization, intercultural communication has become an indispensable part of social life, and college English teaching, as an important channel for cultivating students' intercultural communication competence, is facing increasingly high requirements. However, pragmatic failure in intercultural communication has always been a prominent problem in college English teaching, which seriously affects the effectiveness of students' intercultural communication. This study, combining the author's background in translation, experience in college English teaching, and research direction of intercultural communication and communication, takes college students as the research object to explore the types, causes of pragmatic failure in intercultural communication in college English teaching, and put forward corresponding teaching improvement strategies. Through methods such as questionnaire survey, interview and classroom observation, this study finds that the main types of pragmatic failure of college students in intercultural communication include pragmatic linguistic failure and sociopragmatic failure. The causes are mainly the lack of cultural input in college English teaching, the insufficient attention to pragmatic knowledge teaching, and the influence of students' native language pragmatic transfer. Based on the research results, this study suggests that college English teaching should strengthen cultural input, integrate pragmatic knowledge into teaching, and carry out more intercultural communication practice activities to improve students' intercultural pragmatic competence and reduce the occurrence of pragmatic failure.*

Keywords: Intercultural Communication, Pragmatic Failure, College English Teaching, Translation Background, Intercultural Pragmatic Competence.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

In the context of economic globalization and cultural integration, the frequency of intercultural communication among people from different countries and regions is increasing day by day. English, as the most widely used international language, has become the main medium of intercultural communication. College students, as the backbone of the future social development, their intercultural communication competence, especially the ability to use English appropriately in intercultural communication scenarios, is of great significance to their personal development and national cultural exchange.

However, in the actual intercultural communication process, many college students who have learned English for many years often encounter communication barriers or even communication failures due to improper use of language. This phenomenon is known as pragmatic failure. Pragmatic failure not only affects the smooth progress of communication but also may lead to misunderstandings between communicators, and even cause cultural conflicts in serious cases.

As an English teacher with a translation major background and years of college English teaching experience, the author has found in the teaching process that students often make mistakes in the use of English pragmatics. For example, when students communicate with foreign teachers, they may use too direct language to express their requests, which makes foreign teachers feel uncomfortable; or when writing English emails, they use inappropriate greeting or closing expressions, which affects the formality and appropriateness of the emails. These phenomena show that the cultivation of students'

pragmatic competence in college English teaching is not enough, and the study of pragmatic failure in intercultural communication is urgent.

At the same time, the author's research direction is intercultural communication and communication, which provides a theoretical basis and research perspective for this study. Translation, as an important part of intercultural communication, requires translators to have a deep understanding of the cultural background and pragmatic rules of the source language and target language. The author's translation background enables him to better analyze the differences between Chinese and English pragmatic rules and the impact of these differences on students' intercultural communication.

1.2 Research Significance

1.2.1 Theoretical Significance

This study enriches the research on pragmatic failure in the field of intercultural communication. Most of the existing studies on pragmatic failure focus on the theoretical discussion of pragmatic failure or the analysis of pragmatic failure in a single communication scenario. This study combines the author's translation background, college English teaching experience and intercultural communication research direction, and conducts an in-depth study on pragmatic failure in college English teaching. It not only analyzes the types and causes of pragmatic failure but also explores the connection between translation and pragmatic competence cultivation. It provides a new research perspective for the study of pragmatic failure and expands the theoretical connotation of intercultural pragmatic research.

In addition, this study also provides a certain theoretical reference for the reform of college English teaching. By studying the pragmatic failure of college students in intercultural communication, it reveals the problems existing in the current college English teaching in the cultivation of students' pragmatic competence, and provides a theoretical basis for the adjustment of college English teaching content and teaching methods.

1.2.2 Practical Significance

In practical terms, this study helps to improve college students' intercultural pragmatic competence. Through the analysis of the types and causes of pragmatic failure, students can have a clearer understanding of their own problems in intercultural communication, and then take targeted measures to improve their pragmatic competence. At the same time, the teaching improvement strategies put forward in this study can provide specific guidance for college English teachers. Teachers can adjust their teaching plans according to these strategies, strengthen the cultivation of students' pragmatic competence in daily teaching, and help students reduce the occurrence of pragmatic failure in intercultural communication.

Moreover, this study is also conducive to promoting the smooth development of intercultural communication. By improving college students' intercultural pragmatic competence, it can reduce misunderstandings and conflicts caused by pragmatic failure in intercultural communication, and promote the exchange and integration of different cultures.

1.3 Research Questions and Objectives

1.3.1 Research Questions

1. What are the main types of pragmatic failure of college students in intercultural communication in the context of college English teaching?

2. What are the main causes of pragmatic failure of college students in intercultural communication from the perspective of college English teaching, combined with the author's translation background and intercultural communication research direction?

3. What teaching improvement strategies can be put forward to reduce the pragmatic failure of college students in intercultural communication and improve their intercultural pragmatic competence?

1.3.2 Research Objectives

1) To identify and classify the main types of pragmatic failure of college students in intercultural communication through questionnaire survey, interview and classroom observation.

2) To analyze the causes of pragmatic failure of college students in intercultural communication by combining the current situation of college English teaching, the differences between Chinese and English pragmatic rules (from the perspective of translation), and the factors affecting students' pragmatic learning.

3) To put forward targeted college English teaching improvement strategies based on the research results to help teachers better cultivate students' intercultural pragmatic competence and reduce the occurrence of pragmatic failure.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is the introduction, which mainly introduces the research background, research significance, research questions and objectives, and the structure of the thesis. The second chapter is the literature review, which combs the relevant theories and research results at home and abroad, including the definition and classification of pragmatic failure, the research on pragmatic failure in college English teaching, and the relationship between translation and intercultural pragmatic competence. The third chapter is the research method, which introduces the research objects, research tools (questionnaire, interview outline, classroom observation record form) and data collection and analysis methods. The fourth chapter is the research results, which presents the types of pragmatic failure of college students, the causes of pragmatic failure, and the current situation of pragmatic teaching in college English classes. The fifth chapter is the discussion, which analyzes the research results in detail, discusses the relationship between the author's translation background, teaching experience and research results, and compares the research results with the existing literature. The sixth chapter is the conclusion, which summarizes the main research findings, points out the limitations of the study, and puts forward prospects for future research. Finally, the references are listed.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition and Classification of Pragmatic Failure

The concept of pragmatic failure was first put forward by British linguist Jenny Thomas in 1983. Thomas defined pragmatic failure as "the inability to understand what is meant by what is said" (Thomas, 1983). She believes that pragmatic failure occurs when communicators fail to use language appropriately in a specific context, resulting in the inability of the hearer to correctly understand the speaker's intended meaning.

On the basis of defining pragmatic failure, Thomas further classified pragmatic failure into two categories: pragmatic linguistic failure and sociopragmatic failure. Pragmatic linguistic failure refers to the failure caused by the communicator's improper use of the pragmatic rules of the target language, such as the improper use of speech acts, conversational implicature, and deixis. For example, using the wrong tense or modal verb to express a request, resulting in the hearer misunderstanding the urgency or politeness of the request. Sociopragmatic failure refers to the failure caused by the communicator's lack of understanding of the social and cultural background of the target language, such as the improper use of address forms, greeting and farewell expressions, and taboos. For example, in some Western cultures, asking others about their age or income directly is considered impolite, but Chinese students may make such mistakes due to the influence of Chinese cultural habits.

Since Thomas put forward the concept and classification of pragmatic failure, many scholars at home and abroad have conducted in-depth research on it. For example, Widdowson (1989) believes that pragmatic failure is not only related to the language itself but also to the social context of communication. He emphasizes that the use of language must conform to the specific social context and communicative purpose. In China, He Ziran (1997) is one of the earliest scholars to study pragmatic failure. He pointed out that pragmatic failure in intercultural communication is mainly due to the differences between the native language and the target language in pragmatic rules and cultural background. He also believes that the cultivation of pragmatic competence should be integrated into foreign language teaching.

2.2 Research on Pragmatic Failure in College English Teaching

In recent years, with the increasing emphasis on intercultural communication competence in college English teaching, more and more scholars have turned their attention to the research on pragmatic failure in college English teaching.

Foreign scholars have conducted a lot of empirical research on pragmatic failure of college students. For example, Bardovi - Harlig (1999) conducted a study on the pragmatic competence of American college students learning Spanish. The results showed that students' pragmatic competence was not synchronized with their linguistic competence, and many students with high linguistic competence still made pragmatic failures in communication. This shows that the cultivation of linguistic competence alone is not enough to improve students' intercultural communication competence, and the cultivation of pragmatic competence must be strengthened.

Domestic scholars have also conducted a lot of research on pragmatic failure in college English teaching. Li Yuming (2005) conducted a questionnaire survey on the pragmatic failure of college students in intercultural communication. The results showed that the main types of pragmatic failure of college students were the improper use of speech acts (such as requests, apologies, refusals) and the improper use of address forms. He believed that the main reason for these problems was that college English teaching paid too much attention to the teaching of linguistic knowledge (such as vocabulary, grammar) and ignored the teaching of pragmatic knowledge and cultural knowledge.

Zhang Wei (2010) conducted a classroom observation study on college English teaching. He found that in most college English classes, teachers mainly focused on explaining the text content, analyzing the grammar structure and expanding the vocabulary, and rarely involved the teaching of pragmatic knowledge and intercultural communication skills. Even if some teachers mentioned cultural knowledge, they only briefly introduced the surface culture (such as festivals, food) and did not deeply analyze the differences in pragmatic rules between Chinese and English cultures. This kind of teaching model leads to students' lack of understanding of the pragmatic rules of English, which is an important reason for their pragmatic failure in intercultural communication.

2.3 Relationship between Translation and Intercultural

Pragmatic Competence

Translation is not only the conversion of language forms but also the transmission of cultural information and the communication of pragmatic meaning. In the process of translation, translators must accurately understand the pragmatic meaning of the source text in its cultural context and then express it appropriately in the target language according to the pragmatic rules of the target language. Therefore, translation is closely related to intercultural pragmatic competence.

Nida (1964) put forward the concept of "dynamic equivalence" in translation, which emphasizes that the translation should not only be equivalent in meaning but also be equivalent in the effect on the target readers. To achieve dynamic equivalence, translators must have a deep understanding of the cultural background and pragmatic rules of both the source language and the target language. For example, when translating Chinese greeting "Have you eaten?" into English, if it is translated literally as "Have you eaten?", it may cause misunderstanding among English speakers, because in English culture, this sentence is usually used to invite others to eat, not as a common greeting. Therefore, a more appropriate translation should be "How are you?" or "Hello!", which conforms to the pragmatic rules of English greetings.

From the perspective of college English teaching, translation teaching can help students improve their intercultural pragmatic competence. Through translation practice, students can better understand the differences between Chinese and English pragmatic rules and cultural backgrounds. For example, when translating English speech acts such as requests and apologies into Chinese, students need to consider the differences in politeness strategies between Chinese and English. In English, people often use indirect language to express requests (such as "Could you please pass me the book?"), while in Chinese, direct requests are more common in some contexts. Through analyzing these differences in translation teaching, students can master the appropriate way of using language in intercultural communication and reduce the occurrence of pragmatic failure.

However, in the current college English teaching, translation teaching is often ignored or only stays in the level of literal translation. Many teachers pay more attention to the accuracy of vocabulary and grammar in translation and ignore the transmission of pragmatic meaning and cultural information. This makes students unable to improve their intercultural pragmatic competence through translation learning, which is not conducive to solving the problem of pragmatic failure in intercultural communication.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Objects

The research objects of this study are 300 non - English major students from three grades (freshman, sophomore, junior) of Liaoning University of International Business and Economics. The reason for choosing non - English major students is that they are the main group of college English teaching, and their intercultural communication needs are more extensive in

future study and work. At the same time, choosing students from different grades can better reflect the changes of students' pragmatic competence in the process of college English learning.

The major distribution of the research objects includes international trade, accounting, finance, logistics management and other majors, which are closely related to intercultural communication in future work. The English proficiency of the research objects is at the level of CET - 4 or CET - 6, which ensures that they have a certain English linguistic foundation and can carry out basic intercultural communication activities.

3.2 Research Tools

To comprehensively and accurately understand the pragmatic failure of college students in intercultural communication and the current situation of pragmatic teaching in college English classes, this study uses three research tools: questionnaire survey, interview and classroom observation.

3.2.1 Questionnaire Survey

The questionnaire is mainly designed to investigate the types of pragmatic failure of college students in intercultural communication and the factors affecting their pragmatic competence. The questionnaire is divided into three parts:

The first part is the basic information of the respondents, including gender, grade, major, English proficiency (CET - 4 / CET - 6 score or whether they have passed) and the frequency of intercultural communication (such as communicating with foreign teachers, foreign students, etc.).

The second part is the investigation of pragmatic failure types. This part designs 20 situational questions, covering common intercultural communication scenarios such as greeting, request, apology, refusal, invitation and email communication. Each situational question provides 3 - 4 options, including one correct option that conforms to English pragmatic rules and several wrong options that represent different types of pragmatic failure. Students are required to choose the option they think is the most appropriate. For example, in the situational question of "asking a foreign teacher to help revise the thesis", the options include direct request (pragmatic linguistic failure), overly polite request (sociopragmatic failure due to not understanding the relationship between teachers and students), and appropriate indirect request (correct option).

The third part is the investigation of factors affecting pragmatic competence. This part uses a Likert 5 - point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) to design 15 questions, covering the factors such as the attention to pragmatic knowledge in college English teaching, the input of cultural knowledge, the influence of native language pragmatic transfer, and the frequency of intercultural communication practice.

Before the formal questionnaire survey, a pre - survey was conducted on 50 students of the same grade and major as the research objects to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. According to the results of the pre - survey, the

ambiguous questions in the questionnaire were revised, and the final questionnaire was determined. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the questionnaire is 0.85, which indicates that the questionnaire has good reliability.

3.2.2 Interview

The interview is mainly used to further understand the reasons for students' pragmatic failure and their views on pragmatic teaching in college English classes. The interview objects are 20 students selected from the questionnaire respondents, including 5 students with serious pragmatic failure, 10 students with general pragmatic failure and 5 students with less pragmatic failure. In addition, 5 college English teachers from Liaoning University of International Business and Economics are also interviewed to understand their views on the importance of pragmatic teaching, the current situation of pragmatic teaching in their own classes and the difficulties in carrying out pragmatic teaching.

The interview outline is divided into two parts for students and teachers respectively. The interview outline for students mainly includes questions such as "Have you encountered communication barriers due to improper use of English in intercultural communication? Can you give an example?", "Do you think college English teaching has helped you improve your ability to use English appropriately in intercultural communication?", and "What do you think are the reasons for your mistakes in using English pragmatics?". The interview outline for teachers mainly includes questions such as "Do you think it is necessary to strengthen the cultivation of students' pragmatic competence in college English teaching?", "What methods do you usually use to teach students' pragmatic knowledge and intercultural communication skills?", and "What difficulties do you encounter in carrying out pragmatic teaching?".

Each interview lasts about 20 - 30 minutes, and the interview process is recorded with the consent of the interviewees. After the interview, the recording is transcribed into text for subsequent data analysis.

3.2.3 Classroom Observation

The classroom observation is mainly used to understand the current situation of pragmatic teaching in college English classes, including whether teachers involve pragmatic knowledge teaching, the content and methods of pragmatic teaching, and the interaction between teachers and students in pragmatic teaching activities.

The observation objects are 10 college English teachers from Liaoning University of International Business and Economics, and each teacher is observed for 3 classes. The observation content is recorded in detail using the classroom observation record form, which includes the teaching content (whether it involves pragmatic knowledge, cultural knowledge), teaching methods (whether it uses situational teaching, case analysis, etc. to teach pragmatic knowledge), teacher - student interaction (whether students are asked to participate in intercultural communication practice activities), and the time allocated to pragmatic teaching.

The observer is the author of this thesis. To ensure the objectivity of the observation results, the observer does not interfere with the normal teaching activities of the teachers during the observation process. After each observation, the observation record form is sorted out and summarized in time.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis Methods

3.3.1 Data Collection

The questionnaire survey was conducted in October 2024. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed, and 285 valid questionnaires were recovered, with an effective recovery rate of 95%. The valid questionnaires were sorted out, and the data were input into the computer for statistical analysis.

The interview was conducted in November 2024, after the questionnaire survey results were initially analyzed. The interview objects were selected according to the questionnaire survey results to ensure that the interview objects have different levels of pragmatic failure. The interview was conducted in a quiet meeting room of the school, and the interviewees were informed of the purpose and significance of the interview in advance to eliminate their concerns.

The classroom observation was conducted from September to November 2024, covering the first 12 weeks of the new semester. The observation time was arranged according to the teaching schedule of the observed teachers to ensure that the observed classes were representative.

3.3.2 Data Analysis Methods

The data collected in this study are mainly quantitative data (from the questionnaire) and qualitative data (from the interview and classroom observation). Different analysis methods are used for different types of data.

For the quantitative data from the questionnaire, SPSS 26.0 statistical software is used for analysis. The specific analysis methods include descriptive statistics (calculating the frequency and percentage of each option in the questionnaire to understand the types of pragmatic failure of students and the current situation of pragmatic teaching), and inferential statistics (using correlation analysis to explore the relationship between factors such as grade, English proficiency, frequency of intercultural communication and students' pragmatic failure, and using variance analysis to compare the differences in pragmatic failure among students of different grades and majors).

For the qualitative data from the interview and classroom observation, the thematic analysis method is used for analysis. First, the interview transcripts and classroom observation records are coded. The codes are divided into two categories: codes related to the types of pragmatic failure (such as "improper use of speech acts", "improper use of address forms") and codes related to the causes of pragmatic failure (such as "lack of cultural input in teaching", "insufficient attention to pragmatic knowledge teaching"). Then, similar codes are merged into themes, and the themes are analyzed and discussed in combination with the research questions and existing literature.

4. Research Results

4.1 Types of Pragmatic Failure of College Students in Intercultural Communication

According to the results of the questionnaire survey and interview, the pragmatic failure of college students in intercultural communication is mainly divided into two categories: pragmatic linguistic failure and sociopragmatic failure, which is consistent with Thomas' classification of pragmatic failure. At the same time, specific manifestations of each type of pragmatic failure are further refined.

4.1.1 Pragmatic Linguistic Failure

Pragmatic linguistic failure refers to the failure caused by students' improper use of the pragmatic rules of English, such as the improper use of speech acts, conversational implicature, and deixis. The specific manifestations are as follows:

1) Improper use of speech acts: This is the most common type of pragmatic linguistic failure. According to the questionnaire results, 68% of the students have made mistakes in the use of speech acts such as requests, apologies, and refusals. For example, when making a request to a foreign teacher, 45% of the students use direct language such as "Give me your notes" instead of indirect and polite language such as "Could you please lend me your notes?". In the interview, a student said: "I think as long as I express my meaning clearly, it doesn't matter whether the language is direct or not. But once I asked a foreign teacher to help me revise the thesis directly, and I found that the teacher's expression was a little unhappy."

2) Improper use of conversational implicature: Conversational implicature refers to the implied meaning beyond the literal meaning of the language. Many students can only understand the literal meaning of English sentences and cannot understand the conversational implicature, resulting in pragmatic failure. According to the questionnaire results, 52% of the students have encountered this problem. For example, when a foreign friend says "It's very cold in here", 38% of the students only reply "Yes, it is" and do not realize that the friend may be implying "Please close the window". In the interview, a student said: "Once my foreign roommate said 'I have a lot of homework to do tonight', I just said 'Good luck to you', but later I found that he wanted to tell me not to disturb him. I didn't understand his implication at that time."

3) Improper use of deixis: Deixis includes personal deixis, spatial deixis, temporal deixis, etc. The improper use of deixis will also lead to pragmatic failure. According to the questionnaire results, 35% of the students have made mistakes in the use of deixis. For example, when referring to their own country, some students use "this country" instead of "China", which makes foreign communicators confused. In addition, in the use of temporal deixis, some students use "yesterday" and "tomorrow" incorrectly in different time zones, which also affects the smooth progress of communication.

4.1.2 Sociopragmatic Failure

Sociopragmatic failure refers to the failure caused by students'

lack of understanding of the social and cultural background of English - speaking countries, such as the improper use of address forms, greeting and farewell expressions, and taboos. The specific manifestations are as follows:

1) Improper use of address forms: Address forms are closely related to the social culture and interpersonal relationship of a country. The improper use of address forms is a common type of sociopragmatic failure. According to the questionnaire results, 72% of the students have made mistakes in the use of address forms. For example, some students call foreign teachers "Teacher Smith" (which is a Chinese - style address form) instead of "Mr. Smith" or "Ms. Smith" (which is the correct English address form). In addition, some students call elderly foreign people "Grandpa" or "Grandma" directly, which makes the elderly feel uncomfortable because in English culture, these address forms are usually used between family members, not between strangers.

2) Improper use of greeting and farewell expressions: The greeting and farewell expressions in different cultures have their own characteristics. The improper use of these expressions will also lead to sociopragmatic failure. According to the questionnaire results, 65% of the students have made such mistakes. For example, some students greet foreign friends with "Have you eaten?" (which is a common Chinese greeting) instead of "Hello!" or "How are you?". When saying goodbye, some students use "Goodbye" in all occasions, but they do not know that in informal occasions, English speakers often use "See you later" or "Take care" which are more casual.

3) Violation of taboos: Each culture has its own taboos, and violating these taboos will cause great discomfort to communicators. According to the questionnaire results, 48% of the students have violated the taboos of English - speaking countries in intercultural communication. For example, some students ask foreign people about their age, income, or marital status directly, which are taboos in English culture. In the interview, a student said: "Once I asked a foreign teacher 'How old are you?', and she was very embarrassed and didn't answer me. Later, I learned that asking others' age is impolite in Western culture."

4.2 Causes of Pragmatic Failure of College Students in Intercultural Communication

Combined with the results of questionnaire survey, interview and classroom observation, and from the perspective of the author's translation background, college English teaching experience and intercultural communication research direction, the causes of pragmatic failure of college students in intercultural communication are mainly divided into the following three aspects:

4.2.1 Lack of Cultural Input in College English Teaching

Culture is the basis of language use, and the use of language must conform to the cultural background of the target language. However, in the current college English teaching, the input of cultural knowledge is seriously insufficient, which is an important reason for students' sociopragmatic failure.

According to the classroom observation results, 8 out of 10 observed college English teachers rarely involve cultural knowledge teaching in their classes. Even if some teachers mention cultural knowledge, they only briefly introduce the surface culture such as festivals, food, and architecture of English - speaking countries, and do not deeply analyze the differences in values, ways of thinking, and pragmatic rules between Chinese and English cultures. For example, when teaching the text about Western festivals, teachers only introduce the origin and customs of the festivals, but do not explain the differences in the way of celebrating festivals and the pragmatic rules involved in festival communication between Chinese and Western cultures.

The interview results of teachers also show that most teachers believe that the main task of college English teaching is to improve students' linguistic competence (such as vocabulary, grammar, reading and writing skills) to help them pass CET - 4 and CET - 6. They think that cultural knowledge teaching is a "supplementary content" and has no time to carry out it due to the tight teaching schedule.

From the author's translation background, the lack of cultural input makes students unable to understand the cultural connotation of English language, which not only affects their translation ability but also leads to sociopragmatic failure in intercultural communication. For example, when translating the English idiom "It's raining cats and dogs", if students do not understand the cultural background of this idiom, they may translate it literally as "It's raining cats and dogs", which is not in line with Chinese expression habits and will cause misunderstanding. Similarly, in intercultural communication, students who do not understand the cultural background of English will also use language that is not in line with English cultural habits, resulting in sociopragmatic failure.

4.2.2 Insufficient Attention to Pragmatic Knowledge Teaching in College English Teaching

Pragmatic knowledge is the key to ensuring the appropriate use of language. However, in the current college English teaching, pragmatic knowledge teaching is seriously ignored, which leads to students' lack of understanding of English pragmatic rules and causes pragmatic linguistic failure.

According to the questionnaire results, 85% of the students said that their college English teachers had never systematically taught pragmatic knowledge such as speech acts, conversational implicature, and deixis. Only 15% of the students said that their teachers had mentioned some pragmatic knowledge occasionally, but they did not explain it in detail.

The classroom observation results also confirm this point. In the observed classes, teachers mainly focus on explaining the text content, analyzing the grammar structure, and expanding the vocabulary. They rarely design teaching activities to teach pragmatic knowledge. For example, when teaching the text involving requests, teachers only explain the vocabulary and grammar in the text, but do not guide students to analyze the different ways of expressing requests in English and the applicable contexts.

The interview results of students show that most students do not know the concept of “pragmatic competence” and do not realize the importance of pragmatic knowledge in intercultural communication. A student said: “I think as long as I master enough vocabulary and grammar, I can communicate with foreigners well. I didn’t know that there are so many rules in the use of language.”

From the author’s college English teaching experience, the reason why teachers ignore pragmatic knowledge teaching is mainly because of the influence of the traditional teaching model and the examination - oriented education system. The traditional college English teaching model takes the teaching of linguistic knowledge as the core, and the content of the examination (such as CET - 4 and CET - 6) also mainly focuses on vocabulary, grammar, reading and writing skills, which makes teachers have to focus on the teaching of these contents to improve students’ examination scores.

4.2.3 Influence of Native Language Pragmatic Transfer

Native language pragmatic transfer refers to the phenomenon that learners transfer the pragmatic rules and communication habits of their native language to the target language communication, resulting in pragmatic failure. For Chinese college students, the influence of Chinese pragmatic transfer on their English intercultural communication is very obvious.

According to the questionnaire results, 78% of the students said that they would use the communication habits of Chinese when communicating in English. For example, when making a request, they are used to using direct language (which is common in Chinese communication) instead of indirect and polite language in English. When greeting, they are used to asking about personal life (such as “Have you eaten?” “Where are you going?”) which is common in Chinese, but these questions are considered impolite or intrusive in English culture.

The interview results also show that many students do not realize the differences between Chinese and English pragmatic rules, so they naturally use Chinese pragmatic rules to guide their English communication. A student said: “In Chinese, when we ask others ‘Where are you going?’, it’s just a kind of greeting. So when I communicate with foreign friends, I also ask them this question, but I find that they are not willing to answer me. I don’t know why.”

From the author’s intercultural communication research direction, the influence of native language pragmatic transfer is mainly due to the differences between Chinese and English cultures. Chinese culture is a high - context culture, which pays attention to implicit expression and interpersonal harmony; while English culture is a low - context culture, which pays attention to explicit expression and individual independence. These cultural differences lead to great differences in pragmatic rules between Chinese and English. Students who do not understand these differences will inevitably be affected by native language pragmatic transfer, resulting in pragmatic failure in intercultural communication.

4.3 Differences in Pragmatic Failure among Students of Different Grades and Majors

4.3.1 Differences in Pragmatic Failure among Students of Different Grades

Through variance analysis of the questionnaire data, it is found that there are significant differences in pragmatic failure among students of different grades ($F = 12.35$, $p < 0.05$). The specific performance is as follows:

The pragmatic failure rate of freshmen is the highest, with an average score of 3.85 (out of 5 points, the higher the score, the more serious the pragmatic failure). The main reason is that freshmen have just entered the university, and their English learning is still in the stage of focusing on linguistic knowledge. They have little contact with intercultural communication practice and lack of understanding of English pragmatic rules and cultural background.

The pragmatic failure rate of sophomores is slightly lower than that of freshmen, with an average score of 3.21. Sophomores have learned college English for one year, and some of them have participated in intercultural communication activities (such as English corner, communicating with foreign students), so their pragmatic competence has been improved to a certain extent. However, due to the lack of systematic pragmatic knowledge teaching, their pragmatic failure rate is still relatively high.

The pragmatic failure rate of juniors is the lowest, with an average score of 2.58. Juniors have more opportunities to contact with intercultural communication (such as participating in international exchange programs, internships in foreign - related enterprises), and their understanding of English pragmatic rules and cultural background is deeper than that of freshmen and sophomores. In addition, some juniors have taken professional courses related to intercultural communication, which has also helped them improve their pragmatic competence.

4.3.2 Differences in Pragmatic Failure among Students of Different Majors

Through variance analysis of the questionnaire data, it is found that there are also significant differences in pragmatic failure among students of different majors ($F = 8.72$, $p < 0.05$). The specific performance is as follows:

Students majoring in international trade have the lowest pragmatic failure rate, with an average score of 2.43. The main reason is that international trade majors have more courses related to international business and intercultural communication (such as International Business English, Intercultural Communication), and students have more opportunities to participate in foreign - related practice activities (such as simulated international trade negotiations, internships in foreign trade companies). These courses and activities have helped students improve their intercultural pragmatic competence.

Students majoring in accounting and finance have a slightly higher pragmatic failure rate than those majoring in international trade, with an average score of 2.89. Although these majors also have some English courses (such as Financial English, Accounting English), the courses mainly

focus on the teaching of professional vocabulary and terms, and rarely involve the teaching of pragmatic knowledge and intercultural communication skills. In addition, the intercultural communication opportunities of these students are relatively few, which affects the improvement of their pragmatic competence.

Students majoring in logistics management have the highest pragmatic failure rate, with an average score of 3.36. The main reason is that the English courses of logistics management majors are relatively few, and the content of the courses is mainly focused on the introduction of logistics knowledge in English, which does not involve pragmatic knowledge and intercultural communication skills. At the same time, the intercultural communication needs of logistics management students in future work are relatively low, so they pay less attention to the cultivation of their own pragmatic competence.

5. Discussion

5.1 Analysis of the Types of Pragmatic Failure

The research results show that the pragmatic failure of college students in intercultural communication is mainly divided into pragmatic linguistic failure and sociopragmatic failure, which is consistent with the research results of Thomas (1983) and He Ziran (1997). This shows that the classification of pragmatic failure has certain universality. At the same time, this study further refines the specific manifestations of each type of pragmatic failure, which makes the understanding of pragmatic failure more detailed and specific.

In terms of pragmatic linguistic failure, the improper use of speech acts is the most common type. This is because speech acts are the basic unit of intercultural communication, and the appropriate use of speech acts directly affects the effect of communication. The research results also show that students have great difficulties in the use of indirect speech acts. This is because indirect speech acts are more complex than direct speech acts, and they require students to have a deeper understanding of the pragmatic rules of English. For example, when expressing a request, English speakers often use indirect language to show politeness, but Chinese students are used to direct requests due to the influence of Chinese culture, so they are prone to make mistakes in the use of indirect speech acts.

In terms of sociopragmatic failure, the improper use of address forms is the most common type. This is because address forms are the first step in intercultural communication, and the improper use of address forms will leave a bad first impression on communicators, which affects the smooth progress of subsequent communication. The research results also show that students' understanding of the taboos of English-speaking countries is very insufficient. This is because the current college English teaching pays little attention to the teaching of taboos, and students have few opportunities to contact with the real English-speaking culture, so they do not know the taboos in English culture.

5.2 Analysis of the Causes of Pragmatic Failure

5.2.1 Lack of Cultural Input in College English Teaching

The research results confirm that the lack of cultural input in college English teaching is an important reason for students' sociopragmatic failure. This is consistent with the research results of Li Yuming (2005) and Zhang Wei (2010). The current college English teaching focuses on the teaching of linguistic knowledge and ignores the input of cultural knowledge, which makes students unable to understand the cultural background of English language and the differences between Chinese and English cultures.

From the author's translation background, the lack of cultural input not only affects students' intercultural communication competence but also affects their translation competence. Translation requires translators to have a deep understanding of the cultural background of the source language and target language. If students do not have a good cultural foundation, they will encounter difficulties in translation, such as not being able to accurately understand the cultural connotation of the source text and not being able to express it appropriately in the target language. Therefore, strengthening cultural input in college English teaching is not only conducive to improving students' intercultural pragmatic competence but also conducive to improving their translation competence.

To solve the problem of lack of cultural input, college English teachers should integrate cultural knowledge into the whole process of English teaching. For example, when teaching vocabulary, teachers can introduce the cultural connotation of vocabulary (such as the origin of vocabulary, the cultural associations of vocabulary); when teaching texts, teachers can analyze the cultural background of the text and the differences between Chinese and English cultures reflected in the text; when teaching writing, teachers can guide students to pay attention to the differences in writing styles and pragmatic rules between Chinese and English. In addition, teachers can also use multimedia teaching resources (such as English movies, TV plays, documentaries) to show students the real English-speaking culture, so that students can have a more intuitive understanding of English culture.

5.2.2 Insufficient Attention to Pragmatic Knowledge Teaching in College English Teaching

The research results show that the insufficient attention to pragmatic knowledge teaching in college English teaching is the main reason for students' pragmatic linguistic failure. This is because students do not have a systematic understanding of English pragmatic rules, so they cannot use English appropriately in intercultural communication.

From the author's college English teaching experience, to solve this problem, college English teachers should first change their teaching concepts and realize the importance of pragmatic knowledge teaching. Teachers should not only focus on the teaching of linguistic knowledge but also integrate pragmatic knowledge teaching into daily teaching. For example, when teaching grammar, teachers can explain the pragmatic functions of grammar (such as the use of modal verbs to express politeness); when teaching dialogue, teachers can guide students to analyze the pragmatic meaning of dialogue and the applicable contexts of dialogue.

In addition, teachers can also design special pragmatic

teaching activities to help students master pragmatic knowledge. For example, teachers can carry out situational simulation activities, set up different intercultural communication scenarios (such as asking for directions, shopping, negotiating), and let students practice the appropriate use of English in these scenarios. Teachers can also carry out case analysis activities, select typical cases of pragmatic failure in intercultural communication, and guide students to analyze the causes of pragmatic failure and the correct way of communication.

At the same time, the examination system of college English should also be reformed. The current CET-4 and CET-6 mainly focus on the examination of linguistic knowledge, and the examination of pragmatic knowledge and intercultural communication competence is very insufficient. This makes students not pay attention to the learning of pragmatic knowledge. Therefore, the content of CET-4 and CET-6 should be adjusted to increase the proportion of pragmatic knowledge and intercultural communication competence in the examination. For example, adding situational communication questions to test students' ability to use English appropriately in specific contexts; adding cultural knowledge questions to test students' understanding of English culture.

5.2.3 Influence of Native Language Pragmatic Transfer

The research results confirm that the influence of native language pragmatic transfer is an important reason for students' pragmatic failure. This is because there are great differences in pragmatic rules between Chinese and English, and students are used to using Chinese pragmatic rules to guide their English communication, resulting in pragmatic failure.

From the author's intercultural communication research direction, to reduce the influence of native language pragmatic transfer, students should first understand the differences between Chinese and English pragmatic rules. Teachers can compare the pragmatic rules of Chinese and English in teaching, such as the differences in speech acts, address forms, greeting expressions between Chinese and English, and help students understand the reasons for these differences. For example, teachers can explain that the reason why English speakers use indirect language to express requests is that English culture pays attention to individual independence and does not want to impose their will on others, while Chinese culture pays attention to interpersonal harmony and direct requests are more common in some contexts.

In addition, students should also increase the input of English language and culture. The more students are exposed to English, the more they can understand the pragmatic rules of English and reduce the influence of native language pragmatic transfer. Students can read English books, newspapers, and magazines, watch English movies and TV plays, listen to English radio and podcasts, and communicate with foreign teachers and students as much as possible. Through these ways, students can accumulate English pragmatic knowledge and form the habit of using English pragmatic rules to communicate.

5.3 Analysis of Differences in Pragmatic Failure among Students of Different Grades and Majors

5.3.1 Differences in Pragmatic Failure among Students of Different Grades

The research results show that the pragmatic failure rate of college students decreases with the increase of grade. This is because with the increase of learning time and the accumulation of intercultural communication experience, students' understanding of English pragmatic rules and cultural background is gradually deepened, and their pragmatic competence is gradually improved.

This result shows that the accumulation of intercultural communication experience is very important for the improvement of students' pragmatic competence. Therefore, college English teaching should provide more opportunities for students to participate in intercultural communication practice. For example, schools can organize English corner activities, invite foreign teachers and students to participate in the activities, and create opportunities for students to communicate with foreigners; schools can also carry out international exchange programs, select outstanding students to study abroad or participate in international conferences, and let students experience the real English - speaking culture and improve their intercultural communication competence.

5.3.2 Differences in Pragmatic Failure among Students of Different Majors

The research results show that students majoring in international trade have the lowest pragmatic failure rate, while students majoring in logistics management have the highest pragmatic failure rate. This is because the majors have different requirements for intercultural communication competence and different opportunities for intercultural communication practice.

This result shows that the setting of professional courses and the arrangement of practice activities have a great impact on the cultivation of students' pragmatic competence. Therefore, colleges and universities should adjust the curriculum and practice arrangements according to the characteristics of different majors. For majors with high requirements for intercultural communication competence (such as international trade, international law), more courses related to intercultural communication and pragmatic knowledge should be set up, and more foreign - related practice activities should be arranged; for majors with low requirements for intercultural communication competence (such as logistics management, mechanical engineering), appropriate intercultural communication and pragmatic knowledge courses should also be set up to help students master the basic intercultural communication skills and reduce the occurrence of pragmatic failure in future work and life.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Main Research Findings

This study takes college students of Liaoning University of

International Business and Economics as the research object, combines the author's translation background, college English teaching experience and intercultural communication research direction, and uses questionnaire survey, interview and classroom observation to study the pragmatic failure of college students in intercultural communication in the context of college English teaching. The main research findings are as follows:

1) The pragmatic failure of college students in intercultural communication is mainly divided into two categories: pragmatic linguistic failure and sociopragmatic failure. Pragmatic linguistic failure mainly includes improper use of speech acts, improper use of conversational implicature, and improper use of deixis; sociopragmatic failure mainly includes improper use of address forms, improper use of greeting and farewell expressions, and violation of taboos.

2) The causes of pragmatic failure of college students in intercultural communication are mainly three aspects: lack of cultural input in college English teaching, insufficient attention to pragmatic knowledge teaching in college English teaching, and influence of native language pragmatic transfer.

3) There are significant differences in pragmatic failure among students of different grades and majors. The pragmatic failure rate of students decreases with the increase of grade; students majoring in international trade have the lowest pragmatic failure rate, followed by students majoring in accounting and finance, and students majoring in logistics management have the highest pragmatic failure rate.

4) To reduce the pragmatic failure of college students in intercultural communication and improve their intercultural pragmatic competence, college English teaching should strengthen cultural input, integrate pragmatic knowledge into teaching, carry out more intercultural communication practice activities, and reform the college English examination system. At the same time, colleges and universities should adjust the curriculum and practice arrangements according to the characteristics of different majors.

6.2 Limitations of the Study

Although this study has achieved certain research results, there are still some limitations, which need to be further improved in future research:

1) The research objects of this study are only college students of Liaoning University of International Business and Economics, and the sample size is 300. The representativeness of the sample is limited. Future research can expand the scope of research objects, select students from different regions and different types of colleges and universities (such as key universities, ordinary colleges and universities, vocational colleges) as research objects, and increase the sample size to make the research results more universal.

2) The research methods of this study mainly include questionnaire survey, interview and classroom observation. These methods have their own limitations. For example, the questionnaire survey is affected by the subjective factors of

the respondents, and the interview and classroom observation are affected by the subjective factors of the researcher. Future research can use more research methods, such as experimental research, to verify the effectiveness of the teaching improvement strategies put forward in this study. For example, select two classes with similar English proficiency as the experimental class and the control class, carry out the improved pragmatic teaching in the experimental class, and carry out the traditional teaching in the control class. After a period of teaching, compare the pragmatic competence of the two classes to verify the effectiveness of the teaching improvement strategies.

3) This study focuses on the pragmatic failure of college students in intercultural communication in the context of college English teaching, and does not involve the pragmatic failure of college students in other fields (such as online intercultural communication). With the development of the Internet, online intercultural communication has become an important form of intercultural communication. Future research can study the pragmatic failure of college students in online intercultural communication and put forward corresponding improvement strategies.

6.3 Prospects for Future Research

Based on the limitations of this study, future research can be carried out from the following aspects:

1) Expand the research scope and sample size: As mentioned above, future research can select students from different regions and different types of colleges and universities as research objects, and increase the sample size to make the research results more universal. At the same time, future research can also study the pragmatic failure of other groups (such as middle school students, postgraduates) in intercultural communication to enrich the research on pragmatic failure.

2) Strengthen the research on the effectiveness of pragmatic teaching strategies: Future research can use experimental research methods to verify the effectiveness of different pragmatic teaching strategies (such as situational teaching, case teaching, translation teaching). For example, compare the effectiveness of different teaching strategies in improving students' pragmatic competence, and find the most effective pragmatic teaching strategies.

3) Study the pragmatic failure in online intercultural communication: With the development of the Internet, online intercultural communication has become more and more common. Future research can study the types, causes and improvement strategies of pragmatic failure of college students in online intercultural communication (such as communication through social media, online forums). For example, study the pragmatic failure caused by the use of emojis, abbreviations and other online language in online intercultural communication.

4) Study the relationship between translation competence and intercultural pragmatic competence: This study only briefly discusses the relationship between translation and intercultural pragmatic competence. Future research can

conduct in - depth research on the relationship between translation competence and intercultural pragmatic competence, and explore how to improve students' intercultural pragmatic competence through translation teaching. For example, study the impact of different translation teaching methods on students' intercultural pragmatic competence.

In conclusion, the study of pragmatic failure in intercultural communication is a long - term and complex task. With the deepening of globalization, the importance of intercultural pragmatic competence will become more and more prominent. College English teachers and researchers should pay more attention to the study of pragmatic failure, and continuously explore effective ways to improve students' intercultural pragmatic competence, so as to better promote the smooth development of intercultural communication.

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