

Speech Acts, Politeness, and Pragmatic Failures in Intercultural Contexts

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ABSTRACT: Pragmatics plays a fundamental role in mediating meaning and facilitating effective communication across cultural boundaries. This narrative review aims to examine the role of pragmatic competence in intercultural communication by synthesizing theoretical and empirical evidence from diverse contexts. Literature was systematically collected from databases including Scopus, PubMed, and Google Scholar using keywords such as “intercultural pragmatics,” “speech acts,” and “pragmatic competence.” Studies were included based on relevance, methodological rigor, and empirical contribution, encompassing research from educational, professional, and societal settings. The results highlight five key themes: speech acts and politeness strategies, pragmatic failures and communication barriers, technology in pragmatic learning, cultural and religious pragmatics, and teacher and curriculum integration. Findings reveal that pragmatic competence is culturally contingent, with speech acts and politeness norms varying widely across societies. Pragmatic failures are shown to disrupt communication and, in high-stakes domains such as aviation and healthcare, may have critical consequences. Technology-enhanced learning, particularly through AI and gamification, demonstrates potential in fostering pragmatic competence, while culturally embedded expressions and religious idioms illustrate the importance of contextual awareness. The integration of pragmatics into teacher education and curricula emerges as essential for preparing learners to navigate intercultural interactions effectively. This review concludes that systemic reforms, policy innovations, and targeted pedagogical strategies are required to address persistent gaps in pragmatic education. Future research should examine long-term pragmatic adaptation and digital communication contexts to further advance understanding and practice. These findings emphasize the urgent need for pragmatic competence as a core dimension of intercultural communication.

Keywords: Intercultural Pragmatics, Pragmatic Competence, Speech Acts, Intercultural Communication, Pragmatic Failures, Language Education, Technology-Enhanced Learning.



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INTRODUCTION

Pragmatic competence has emerged as a core dimension of intercultural communication because it directly shapes outcomes in education, healthcare, aviation, and international business—domains where miscommunication carries material risks. Evidence from high-stakes settings shows that

context-dependent misalignments in intent, inference, and politeness strategies can escalate from interpersonal friction to operational failures: in global aviation, pragmatic failures between pilots and air-traffic controllers have been linked to safety risks (Kale et al., 2021), while in healthcare, misunderstandings of metaphor and prior context compromise quality of care (Macagno & Rossi, 2019). These cases anchor the present review's central premise: pragmatic competence is not merely an ancillary linguistic skill but a decisive capability for navigating culturally diverse interactions.

Theoretical developments clarify why pragmatic competence is both culturally contingent and teachable. Relevance Theory has been leveraged in translation pedagogy to heighten learners' sensitivity to contextual cues and intended meanings, thereby strengthening sociopragmatic judgment (Amine, 2024). Experimental contrastive pragmatics further demonstrates cross-cultural variability: when speakers from different cultures confront identical communicative scenarios—even with standardized, robot-mediated prompts—they enact systematically different strategies for implicature, repair, and facework (Fischer & Prondzinska, 2020). Together, these perspectives motivate a shift from textbook-style definitional treatments of pragmatics toward applied, domain-specific inquiry: How, precisely, do culturally patterned speech-act realizations and politeness norms enable or hinder coordination under real constraints?

Empirical research highlights recurrent challenges. In L2 contexts, pragmatic transfer—carrying L1 norms into L2 interactions—predictably yields refusals, requests, and turn-taking patterns that violate interlocutors' expectations (Altakhaineh et al., 2024; Matsukawa, 2024). In professional discourse, seemingly small choices in person reference and stance can derail financial communications (Camiciottoli, 2014). Even affective meaning is precarious: across cultures, people encode and interpret emotion through divergent pragmatic lenses, amplifying the risk of misreading commitment, criticism, or empathy (Naiditch, 2011). These findings reinforce that pragmatic competence sits at the nexus of sociocultural knowledge and real-time inferencing.

At the same time, digital and mediated contexts introduce both new affordances and novel ambiguities. Emoji and other paralinguistic cues can scaffold rapport and identity work in intercultural computer-mediated communication, but their meanings are community-bound and context-sensitive (Concu & Raffo, 2024). Interpreter-mediated encounters pose additional coordination problems (Hlavač et al., 2015). Such settings underscore the need to examine how pragmatic repertoires adapt as interactional ecologies change—from face-to-face exchanges to platformed, asynchronous, or role-triadic communication.

Responding to these challenges, technology-enhanced learning shows promise. AI-supported practice environments (e.g., chatbots and dialog systems) allow repeated, low-stakes rehearsal of implicature, presupposition, and repair strategies with immediate feedback, complementing exposure to heterogeneous peer groups that broaden pragmatic repertoires (Erdogan & Kitson, 2025; Upadhyay, 2020). Yet transfer from simulations to live, culturally situated interaction remains an open problem—one that calls for integrated curricular design and assessment aligned with authentic communicative demands.

This narrative review advances the field in three ways. First, it **synthesizes** theoretical and empirical insights across education, healthcare, aviation, and business to specify where and how pragmatic failures arise—and with what consequences (Kale et al., 2021; Macagno & Rossi, 2019). Second, it **integrates** evidence on speech-acts, politeness, and indexicality with findings from technology-mediated communication to map contemporary sites of risk and opportunity (Matsukawa, 2024; Dinh, 2019; Concu & Raffo, 2024). Third, it **derives implications** for teacher preparation, curriculum, and policy, situating classroom interventions alongside professional training needs in high-stakes sectors (Hlavač et al., 2015; Erdogan & Kitson, 2025). In doing so, the review reframes pragmatic competence as a policy-relevant learning objective rather than a peripheral add-on to grammar and vocabulary instruction.

The scope is deliberately global and comparative. Studies from the Middle East document EFL learners' pragmatics-related misalignments (Altakhaineh et al., 2024) and Allah-centered expressions that sustain social harmony in Arabic-speaking communities (Qub'a et al., 2025). Contrastive analyses illuminate how British English and Japanese manage invitations and refusals through culturally distinct turn designs (Matsukawa, 2024), while metapragmatic commentary work traces how interlocutors explicitly negotiate relationality across cultures (Kim & Spencer-Oatey, 2020). By foregrounding such cross-context evidence, the review clarifies both the universals (e.g., the need to establish common ground; Dinh, 2019) and the particulars (e.g., domain- and culture-specific facework) that together constitute pragmatic competence in contemporary intercultural life.

In summary, rather than restating broad definitions, this introduction positions pragmatics as an applied, risk-sensitive field of inquiry and practice. The remainder of the article operationalizes this stance: the **Methods** section details the search strategy and selection criteria; the **Results and Discussion** distill five themes—speech acts and politeness; pragmatic failures; technology and learning; cultural and religious pragmatics; and teacher/curriculum integration—each grounded in domain-specific evidence and connected to actionable educational and policy implications.

METHOD

The methodological design of this review was developed to ensure a comprehensive and rigorous examination of literature related to pragmatics in intercultural communication. The primary objective of the methodology was to systematically gather, evaluate, and synthesize research evidence from diverse scholarly sources to provide a reliable foundation for the analysis. The methodology was structured to include database selection, keyword identification, inclusion and exclusion criteria, types of studies considered, and the process of screening and evaluation.

The literature collection process involved a systematic search across multiple academic databases renowned for their extensive coverage of peer-reviewed publications. The databases utilized included Scopus, PubMed, and Google Scholar, supplemented with searches in Taylor & Francis Online, SpringerLink, and Wiley Online Library. These sources were selected for their breadth in covering both applied linguistics and interdisciplinary research in social sciences, communication

studies, and education. Scopus, in particular, provided access to high-impact journal articles and conference proceedings, while Google Scholar offered a broader spectrum that included working papers, theses, and cross-referenced citations. By combining these databases, the review ensured a diverse and representative set of publications addressing intercultural pragmatics.

Keywords played a central role in guiding the literature search. To refine the scope, the search strings were carefully constructed by combining primary and secondary terms. Frequently used keywords included “intercultural pragmatics,” “pragmatic competence,” “sociopragmatic competence,” “speech acts,” and “pragmatic transfer.” These were often paired with thematic variations such as “cross-cultural communication breakdowns,” “pragmatic failures in intercultural communication,” or “pragmatic strategies in cross-cultural contexts.” For more targeted searches, narrower terms such as “pragmatic competence in L2 learners” were employed, which specifically addressed challenges encountered by second-language learners in pragmatic usage (Erdogan & Kitson, 2025; Naiditch, 2011). The use of Boolean operators and combinations, including “AND,” “OR,” and “quotation marks” for phrase searches, enhanced precision by linking core terms with contextual subtopics.

In defining the parameters of the review, inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to ensure quality and focus. Studies were included if they were published in English or in the target language of the research, addressed pragmatic elements directly relevant to intercultural communication, and were published within the last fifteen years to maintain relevance and contemporaneity. Types of research considered for inclusion encompassed empirical studies, narrative reviews, and case studies, with particular attention to works that analyzed pragmatic competencies and failures in communication across different cultural groups (Macagno & Rossi, 2019; Altakhaineh et al., 2024). By contrast, exclusion criteria ruled out publications that did not focus on verbal communication, lacked empirical grounding, or had not undergone peer review. This filtering ensured that only high-quality studies with demonstrable contributions to the field were included in the synthesis. As Macagno and Rossi (2019) emphasized, contextual understanding in pragmatic research must be substantiated by empirical data, making methodological rigor a vital consideration.

The selection of literature also sought to capture diverse perspectives by including studies conducted across varied geographical and cultural contexts. For instance, Hlavač et al. (2015) provided insights into pragmatic competencies within healthcare interactions between Chinese and English speakers, illustrating the importance of contextual pragmatics in professional communication. From a Middle Eastern perspective, Altakhaineh et al. (2024) examined pragmatic failures among Jordanian EFL learners, emphasizing the cultural and linguistic dynamics influencing educational outcomes. In Europe, Camiciottoli (2014) investigated intercultural financial communication, showing how pragmatic misalignments in earnings calls can jeopardize business interactions. Incorporating such regional diversity enabled the review to present a global perspective while acknowledging context-specific nuances.

The types of studies incorporated were selected to reflect a wide range of methodological approaches. Empirical research formed the backbone of the review, particularly studies employing discourse analysis, experimental designs, and case-based observations. Randomized controlled trials, though rare in this field, were included when they provided relevant insights into pedagogical

interventions or language training strategies. Cohort studies that tracked learner progress over time were also reviewed for their ability to capture developmental aspects of pragmatic competence. Case studies contributed contextual depth, often highlighting unique cultural challenges or professional domains where pragmatic failures were particularly impactful. The balance of qualitative and quantitative research facilitated a multidimensional understanding of the field.

The literature selection process was conducted in several phases to ensure transparency and accuracy. The initial phase involved identifying potentially relevant articles through keyword searches, resulting in a large corpus of publications. Titles and abstracts were then screened to remove studies that clearly fell outside the scope of intercultural pragmatics. The second phase involved full-text reviews of shortlisted articles, where studies were evaluated for methodological rigor, empirical grounding, and thematic relevance. During this stage, the inclusion and exclusion criteria were rigorously applied, and articles that lacked sufficient methodological transparency or empirical evidence were excluded. Finally, reference lists of included studies were scanned to identify additional relevant publications that may not have surfaced in the initial database searches.

The evaluation of studies followed a qualitative synthesis approach, focusing on the identification of key themes and recurring patterns across the literature. Empirical findings were analyzed in relation to the theoretical frameworks that underpin pragmatics, such as Relevance Theory, politeness theory, and sociocognitive approaches. Emphasis was placed on studies that demonstrated both theoretical innovation and practical application. Particular attention was given to the contexts in which pragmatic failures occurred, such as aviation (Kale et al., 2021), healthcare (Macagno & Rossi, 2019), and professional finance (Camiciottoli, 2014), since these domains provided concrete illustrations of the consequences of pragmatic misalignments. Through this systematic evaluation, the review sought to highlight both the advances in understanding and the persistent gaps requiring further investigation.

The methodological approach adopted in this study ensured a systematic and critical engagement with existing research on intercultural pragmatics. By combining diverse databases, refining keyword strategies, applying rigorous selection criteria, and evaluating studies across multiple cultural contexts, the review was able to synthesize a robust and representative body of literature. This methodology reflects the growing scholarly recognition that intercultural pragmatics is a complex, multifaceted field requiring both empirical grounding and contextual sensitivity. In capturing these dynamics, the review establishes a reliable foundation for subsequent analysis of results and discussion of broader implications in intercultural communication.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Speech Acts and Politeness Strategies

Research in intercultural pragmatics consistently highlights the role of speech acts and politeness strategies as central to effective communication across cultural contexts. Cultural differences in speech act realization have been thoroughly documented, particularly in relation to requests, refusals, and invitations. Matsukawa (2024) conducted a contrastive study of invitations in British

English and Japanese, finding that speakers of the two languages employed different turn designs in symmetrical invitation-refusal situations. Japanese speakers frequently adopted indirectness as a politeness strategy, while British speakers were comparatively more direct, reflecting broader cultural norms surrounding collectivism and individualism (Kim & Spencer-Oatey, 2020). These findings align with Altakhaineh et al. (2024), who applied Brown and Levinson's politeness theory to analyze requests and refusals among Jordanian EFL learners. Their study demonstrated how misapplication of culturally appropriate strategies often resulted in pragmatic failures, particularly when learners transferred first-language norms into second-language interactions.

Empirical investigations further underscore the variability of politeness across contexts. Naiditch (2011) compared American and Brazilian speakers, showing that Brazilians tend to express greater warmth and suggestiveness in their requests, while Americans favor directness. This divergence illustrates the impact of cultural orientations, where collectivist cultures privilege relational harmony and individualist cultures emphasize clarity and efficiency. Complementing this, Dinh (2019) emphasized the pragmatic role of indexicals in constructing common ground. His findings suggested that cultural interpretations of referential markers vary considerably, leading to differences in how politeness and cooperation are negotiated. Collectively, these studies reinforce the conclusion that speech acts and politeness strategies are deeply embedded within cultural norms, shaping communicative practices in ways that require heightened awareness among intercultural interlocutors.

Pragmatic Failures and Communication Barriers

Pragmatic failures are a recurrent theme in intercultural communication, often producing communication breakdowns with tangible consequences. Kale et al. (2021) explored pragmatic failures in global aviation, where misinterpretations between pilots and air traffic controllers from different linguistic backgrounds posed severe risks to flight safety. Their study revealed that cultural differences in speech act expectations and communicative conventions often led to misunderstandings, highlighting the need for standardized yet culturally sensitive protocols. Similarly, Hlavač et al. (2015) examined interpreter-mediated healthcare interactions between Chinese and English speakers. They found that pragmatic misalignments, particularly in politeness strategies and turn-taking, frequently led to misunderstandings in critical clinical contexts.

Pragmatic failures manifest differently across professional domains, yet they consistently demonstrate the consequences of inadequate pragmatic competence. In healthcare, Macagno and Rossi (2019) documented how misunderstandings in chronic care settings were often attributable to differing prior contexts and metaphorical interpretations, which compromised patient care. In aviation, the stakes of pragmatic failure were even higher, as Kale et al. (2021) showed that failures in intercultural communication could directly threaten lives. In educational contexts, Altakhaineh et al. (2024) highlighted how Jordanian EFL learners' lack of pragmatic competence hindered effective classroom interactions, limiting their ability to engage meaningfully with teachers and peers. These findings collectively suggest that pragmatic failures not only disrupt interpersonal exchanges but also have systemic consequences in professional and institutional environments.

Technology and Pragmatic Learning

The integration of technology into pragmatic learning has become an increasingly prominent theme in recent scholarship. Erdogan and Kitson (2025) investigated the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) tools to facilitate pragmatic learning in L2 contexts. Their findings demonstrated that AI-based platforms, including chatbots and dialogue systems, provided learners with immersive opportunities to practice pragmatic skills such as implicatures, presuppositions, and speech acts. These tools offered contextualized practice environments that fostered both engagement and the development of pragmatic competence.

Evidence from digital communication further illustrates the role of technology in shaping pragmatic awareness. Concu and Raffo (2024) examined emoji use among Colombian and Argentinian learners of German, demonstrating how digital symbols function as pragmatic devices that support social identity construction and intercultural understanding. Emojis were found to serve as universal yet contextually nuanced tools, bridging linguistic gaps and supporting relational harmony in digital communication. Complementary evidence from gamification-based interventions indicated that simulated intercultural interactions can significantly improve learners' pragmatic skills. Erdogan and Kitson (2025) noted that repeated exposure to interactive gaming environments provided learners with risk-free opportunities to experiment with pragmatic strategies, resulting in measurable improvements in their communicative competence.

Cultural and Religious Pragmatics

Cultural and religious dimensions of pragmatics significantly influence communicative practices in specific societies. Qub'a et al. (2025) examined Allah-centered expressions in Jordanian spoken Arabic, documenting their pragmatic functions in maintaining social harmony and reinforcing shared cultural and religious values. These expressions, deeply embedded in local communicative traditions, performed roles ranging from expressing admiration to offering emotional support, demonstrating how pragmatics operates as a cultural resource. Camiciottoli (2014) similarly emphasized the importance of culturally embedded expressions in intercultural financial dialogues, showing that communicators must possess contextual awareness to avoid misinterpretations that could affect professional outcomes.

Cross-cultural studies also highlight how pragmatic practices preserve social harmony differently across cultural settings. Naiditch (2011) found that Brazilian speakers, drawing from collectivist traditions, preferred indirect strategies that prioritized relational harmony, whereas American speakers, operating in a more individualistic cultural frame, favored direct disagreement strategies. These findings illustrate how cultural pragmatics mediates interpersonal rapport and demonstrates that effective intercultural communication requires sensitivity to divergent cultural expectations. The comparative evidence underscores the necessity for intercultural communicators to develop heightened awareness of both religious and cultural pragmatic norms.

Teacher and Curriculum Integration

The role of teachers in cultivating pragmatic competence among learners has emerged as a crucial dimension of intercultural pragmatics. Upadhyay (2020) highlighted the benefits of heterogeneous learning environments, where exposure to diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds enhanced students' pragmatic awareness. Teachers were shown to play a pivotal role in designing activities

that fostered pragmatic sensitivity, enabling learners to navigate intercultural communication more effectively. Altakhaineh et al. (2024) reinforced this perspective by demonstrating how teacher guidance in Jordanian classrooms significantly influenced the development of pragmatic competence, particularly when culturally relevant examples and practices were integrated into the curriculum.

Curricular integration of intercultural pragmatics has also advanced in response to evolving educational needs. Erdogan and Kitson (2025) described how AI-based tools were increasingly embedded into curricula to prepare young English learners for intercultural communication. By leveraging technological innovations, curricula have shifted toward more interactive and practical approaches that mirror real-world communicative demands. In healthcare education, Hlavač et al. (2015) noted the importance of including pragmatic training in interpreter preparation programs, emphasizing that awareness of intercultural politeness strategies was indispensable for accurate and empathetic interpretation. These developments collectively demonstrate that pragmatic competence is not merely an ancillary skill but a foundational component of educational programs aimed at fostering effective intercultural communication.

Summary

The synthesis of findings across these themes illustrates the multifaceted role of pragmatics in intercultural communication. Speech acts and politeness strategies reveal the deeply cultural nature of pragmatic norms, while pragmatic failures highlight the severe consequences of miscommunication across professional and educational settings. The integration of technology has opened new avenues for pragmatic learning, offering immersive and interactive opportunities that align with contemporary communication practices. Cultural and religious pragmatics underscore the embeddedness of pragmatic strategies in local traditions and values, while teacher and curriculum integration emphasize the role of education in developing pragmatic competence. By presenting these diverse perspectives, the review underscores the complexity of intercultural pragmatics and highlights both the advances made and the challenges that remain in preparing individuals to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries.

Systemic Factors Shaping Pragmatic Competence in Intercultural Settings

The findings across the reviewed literature highlight the strong influence of systemic factors such as educational policies, institutional practices, and pedagogical frameworks on the development of pragmatic competence in intercultural settings. Many national language curricula continue to prioritize grammatical knowledge and vocabulary acquisition over pragmatic awareness, which leaves learners unprepared for real-world intercultural encounters. Upadhyay (2020) emphasizes that heterogeneous learning environments, where learners are exposed to diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, are particularly effective in broadening pragmatic awareness. By contrast, rigid institutional structures that focus heavily on standardized testing often restrict opportunities for authentic interaction, thereby constraining the acquisition of pragmatic skills.

Pedagogical frameworks that explicitly account for pragmatics have demonstrated potential in addressing these shortcomings. Amine (2024) shows how the application of relevance theory within translation programs enhances students' sociopragmatic competencies by encouraging them to consider context and cultural nuances. This suggests that systemic changes at the

curriculum design level, which promote contextually rich and inclusive approaches, can have a transformative effect on pragmatic competence. Nevertheless, institutional inertia and limited teacher training in pragmatics remain obstacles, signaling the need for structural reform within language education systems.

Implications for Policy-Making in Language Education and Intercultural Training Programs

The implications of pragmatic competence for policy-making are evident in both educational and professional contexts. Studies have consistently shown that pragmatic failures, often rooted in cultural misalignments, lead to communication breakdowns that hinder not only interpersonal relations but also institutional efficiency. Altakhaineh et al. (2024) document how Jordanian EFL learners' lack of pragmatic awareness frequently resulted in miscommunication, while Camiciottoli (2014) highlights the detrimental impact of such failures in intercultural financial communication, where misunderstandings may jeopardize organizational performance. These findings point to the necessity of integrating pragmatic instruction into language education policies, ensuring that curricula equip learners with both linguistic proficiency and intercultural communicative competence.

Policymakers must also recognize the importance of teacher preparation and professional development in this domain. Teachers are often under-equipped to teach pragmatics due to limited training opportunities. As Naiditch (2011) demonstrates, emotional expression and pragmatic interpretation vary significantly across cultures, suggesting that teachers need specific strategies to prepare learners for such differences. Evidence-based intercultural training programs can fill this gap, helping to align policy objectives with the actual communicative demands learners face in diverse contexts.

Beyond formal education, intercultural training programs in professional sectors are equally crucial. Kale et al. (2021) highlight the severe implications of pragmatic failures in global aviation communication, where safety itself may be compromised. Similarly, Macagno and Rossi (2019) reveal that in healthcare, inadequate pragmatic competence can disrupt patient care by fostering misunderstandings between providers and patients. These examples demonstrate that policy initiatives must extend beyond schools and universities to include professional training contexts where pragmatic competence directly affects outcomes.

Proposed Solutions and Strategies to Overcome Barriers from Pragmatic Failures

The literature points to several promising strategies for addressing pragmatic failures, although each comes with limitations. Technological innovations represent one of the most widely discussed solutions. Erdogan and Kitson (2025) argue that AI-driven tools such as chatbots and dialogue systems can simulate intercultural interactions, providing learners with opportunities to practice pragmatic strategies in safe and interactive environments. Such tools encourage experimentation with implicatures, presuppositions, and speech acts, aligning with real-world communicative demands. However, despite these benefits, the reliance on technology may not fully capture the nuances of face-to-face interaction, and learners risk developing competence in simulated environments that may not transfer seamlessly to authentic settings.

Another proposed solution involves embedding culturally specific content into L2 curricula. Altakhaineh et al. (2024) recommend incorporating pragmatic examples tailored to learners' cultural contexts, enabling them to anticipate and manage intercultural communication challenges more effectively. While this approach shows promise, it requires substantial investment in curriculum development and teacher training, which may not be feasible in under-resourced educational systems. Additionally, the effectiveness of culturally specific curricula depends heavily on teachers' ability to deliver nuanced instruction that bridges local and global pragmatic norms.

Contextualized pedagogical frameworks such as relevance theory also provide valuable insights for pragmatic instruction. Amine (2024) demonstrates that encouraging learners to consider context-specific interpretations enhances their sociopragmatic competence. However, adapting such approaches across diverse learning environments remains challenging, particularly where systemic constraints limit curricular flexibility. Fischer and Prondzinska (2020) highlight that pragmatic strategies observed in controlled settings, such as experimental studies involving robots, may not align perfectly with the complexities of real-world communication. This discrepancy underscores the difficulty of bridging theory and practice in pragmatic education.

Furthermore, institutional reforms are necessary to ensure that pragmatic instruction is not marginalized within broader educational frameworks. The current emphasis on standardized testing and measurable linguistic outcomes often sidelines pragmatics, which is less easily quantifiable. To overcome this barrier, policymakers and educators must collaborate to establish pragmatic competence as a central learning objective. This involves rethinking assessment practices to capture pragmatic awareness and communicative effectiveness, alongside traditional measures of grammatical accuracy.

Overall, while the literature provides a variety of potential solutions to address pragmatic failures, their implementation requires systemic support, resource allocation, and ongoing adaptation. Technology, culturally specific curricula, and contextualized teaching frameworks each offer unique advantages but must be integrated into comprehensive strategies that account for institutional realities. Recognizing the limitations of these approaches is crucial for developing sustainable, evidence-based practices that enhance pragmatic competence in intercultural communication.

CONCLUSION

This narrative review underscores the pivotal role of pragmatics in shaping effective intercultural communication across educational, professional, and societal domains. The synthesis of findings demonstrates that speech acts and politeness strategies are deeply embedded in cultural norms, influencing how individuals construct meaning and maintain social harmony. Empirical evidence highlights that pragmatic failures often lead to communication breakdowns with significant consequences, particularly in high-stakes contexts such as aviation, healthcare, and international business. The discussion further reveals that systemic factors, including national education policies and institutional practices, substantially shape pragmatic competence by either enabling or constraining authentic communicative opportunities.

The urgency of addressing these challenges lies in the persistent gaps between grammatical instruction and pragmatic awareness in many language programs. Without targeted interventions, L2 learners remain vulnerable to miscommunication in real-world contexts. Policy reforms that prioritize pragmatic competence, combined with teacher training and the integration of culturally specific content, are essential to bridging these gaps. Technological innovations, such as AI-based learning tools and gamified environments, hold considerable promise, but their limitations highlight the continued need for authentic, context-rich instruction.

Future research should explore the cumulative effects of pragmatic failures over time, investigate pragmatic adaptation in digital communication, and examine how professional training can be systematically aligned with intercultural demands. By advancing pragmatic awareness through education, technology, and policy, stakeholders can foster more effective, respectful, and inclusive communication across cultural boundaries.

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