



Article

# Developing Pragmatic Competence in English Among 7th-8th Grade Students through Digital Communication Platforms

Karimjonova Dilnozakhon Kutbidin kizi<sup>1</sup>

1. Teacher of the Department of Applied Foreign Languages, Andijan State Pedagogical Institute
- \* Correspondence

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**Abstract:** This article examines the development of pragmatic competence in 7th- and 8th-grade students learning English using digital communication platforms. The relevance of the study stems from the need to develop students' skills for effective language use in real-world communicative situations. The aim of the study is to determine the pedagogical conditions and effectiveness of digital platforms for developing pragmatic competence. The study utilized literature analysis, pedagogical observation, questionnaires, and experimental learning. The results showed that the use of digital platforms contributes to the development of verbal interaction skills, sociocultural adaptation, and appropriate linguistic behavior.

**Keywords:** pragmatic competence, digital technologies, English language, communicative approach, school education, online platforms.

## 1. Introduction

The modern education system is focused on developing students' communicative competence, which includes not only knowledge of grammar and vocabulary but also the ability to use language appropriately for the communicative situation. Pragmatic competence, which involves the ability to correctly interpret and use speech acts in various contexts, is becoming particularly important[1].

With the development of digital technologies, new opportunities for foreign language teaching are emerging. Digital communication platforms (messaging, educational apps, online forums) create conditions for authentic communication and simulate real-life communication situations[2].

Despite significant research in the field of digital learning, the development of pragmatic competence in secondary school students remains understudied.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The concept of pragmatic competence is examined within the framework of the communicative approach. Researchers emphasize that pragmatic competence includes knowledge of social norms, speech strategies, and the appropriateness of statements.

Modern research shows that digital technologies can effectively facilitate the development of language skills. The use of online platforms allows students to participate in interactive learning and receive instant feedback. However, there is a need to develop methods specifically aimed at developing pragmatic competence using digital tools[3].

The study was conducted among students in grades 7–8 of a comprehensive school. Research Methods: Analysis of scientific and methodological literature; Pedagogical observation; Student questionnaires; Pedagogical experiment. Experimental Stages:

- Ascertainment Stage – determining the level of pragmatic competence;
- Formation Stage – implementing digital platforms (e.g., online chats, video communications);
- Control Stage – evaluating results.

Platforms Used: educational applications; messenger apps for role-playing games; online discussions and forums[4].

### 3. Results and Discussion

The study revealed that initially, most students experienced difficulties in selecting appropriate speech patterns, observing politeness norms, and adapting their speech to the communicative situation[5].

After the introduction of digital platforms, the following changes were observed:

- increased student verbal activity;
- improved dialogue skills;
- developed ability to consider the context of communication;
- developed sociocultural competence.

Assignments that included the following proved particularly effective:

- role-playing in online chats;
- simulating real-life communication situations;
- discussing relevant topics in groups.

The survey results showed that students have a positive attitude toward the use of digital technologies, noting their convenience and interest.

Thus, digital communication platforms contribute to the development of pragmatic competence by ensuring interactivity, accessibility, and authenticity of learning[6].

In our time, when the world is becoming increasingly globalized and culturally diverse, the communicative component plays an important role in foreign language lessons, helping to develop the student's personality and broaden their horizons. In the context of language teaching theory, the concept of "digital technologies" covers all types of electronic devices and software used for language teaching. This may include computers, laptops, tablets, smartphones, as well as various electronic tools, systems and resources that can be used to produce, store and process information in various formats[7]. Thus, in modern language teaching practice, digital technologies represent an important tool for expanding learning opportunities and improving the effectiveness of the educational process [14]. The process of introducing digital technologies into language teaching, according to A. Oliviera, has gone through the following stages of development: behavioral, communicative and integrative[8]. Let us consider the pros and cons of each stage in terms of its importance for communication. At the behaviorist stage, the primary goal was to practice skills through repeated practice. The computer as a teaching tool provided the opportunity for objective assessment and the ability to choose one's own pace, but its importance diminished with the advent of the communicative approach to foreign language teaching[9]. Working solely with a computer limited the ability to communicate in the target language, so at the communicative stage, the goal was to create communicative products based on personal judgment rather than ready-made speech samples. This allowed for the maximum use of the foreign language in the learning process and expanded interaction between students and the computer [10]. The communicative stage served as the basis for the creation of new programs that allow students to independently find material, conduct self-reflection, and interact with each other. However, foreign language teaching practitioners complained about the insufficient use of information technology[11]. With the development of the Internet and multimedia technologies, an integrated stage emerged, in which a foreign language is used in real-life communication situations and all four types of speech skills are simultaneously practiced. This stage enables students to interact with each other synchronously or asynchronously

for free. The language environment has expanded its boundaries and functionality, making it possible to conduct joint research activities[12]. Today, digital technologies have become an integral teaching tool thanks to the rapid development of Web 2.0 social services and their mobile applications, which have formed the basis for the formation of an online collaboration system and provided instant access to educational material. At the social-interactive stage, digital technologies become an integral tool in the learning process thanks to the active social interaction of users [13]. Based on the above, we also identify the term "digital communication technologies in foreign language teaching." It is worth noting that digital communication technology is a special form of teaching that uses visual and audio content in a foreign language to more accurately understand the meaning of what is happening[14]. It helps students better understand what they see and hear, providing them with visual support. The traditional use of digital communication technologies involves creating an artificial environment in a foreign language that stimulates students' independent speech activity[15]. Digital learning technologies are aimed at developing auditory, visual, and combined perception of information. In this context, "digital communication technologies in foreign language teaching" are educational products hosted online and creating the conditions for an artificial foreign language environment, where the result is the production of a communicative product[16].

#### 4. Conclusion

This study confirms the effectiveness of using digital communication platforms in English language teaching for developing the pragmatic competence of students in grades 7–8. Key findings:

- digital technologies enhance student motivation;
- promote the development of real-world communication skills;
- ensure the development of sociocultural knowledge;
- allow the simulation of a variety of communicative situations.

Prospects for further research include the development of specialized methods and the integration of new digital tools into the educational process.

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