

## **IMPROVING PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE OF TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS USING COCA: A CORPUS-BASED APPROACH**

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## **TEXNIKA YO'NALISH TALABALARINING PRAGMATIK KOMPETENTSIYASINI COCA TEXNOLOGIYASI YORDAMIDA OSHIRISH: KORPUSGA ASOSLANGAN YONDASHUV**

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## **УЛУЧШЕНИЕ ПРАГМАТИЧЕСКОЙ КОМПЕТЕНЦИИ СТУДЕНТОВ ТЕХНИЧЕСКИХ УНИВЕРСИТЕТОВ С ПОМОЩЬЮ СОСА: ПОДХОД, ОСНОВАННЫЙ НА КОРПУСЕ**

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**Abstract.** The importance of pragmatic competence in communicative competence has been proved by several researchers and still remained as an issue of the day in the research area. Thus, implementing pragmatic competence in the classroom became significant to enhance the oral and written speech of learners. Improving pragmatic competence demands a great deal from instructors as the young generation's needs are high. Especially in English for specific purposes, students come across significant difficulties compared to students who learn English as specification. Developments in technology make the education sphere manageable to use various tools in the teaching process. One of them is corpus technology, which is the largest base of texts. COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English) is one of these corpus technologies and enables learners to compare and contrast the words within text in different contexts. Students of technical universities who become future engineers and IT specialists take the opportunity to improve pragmatic competence using COCA effectively. It enables students to use language appropriately in spoken and written language as it provides students with context and resources from various authentic sources. The aim of this research is to identify the effectiveness of COCA in improving the pragmatic competence of students of technical universities. IT specialists were chosen for this research. The qualitative and quantitative ways of data collection were used to conduct the research and take results. Through experiment, it was clear that usage of COCA significantly

contributes to improve pragmatic competence in e-mail writings and communication of students of technical universities.

**Keywords:** Corpus; pragmatic competence; sociolinguistic competence; linguistics; discourse; context; communication; intercultural; speech act; productive skill; receptive skill.

**Annotatsiya.** Kommunikativ kompetensiyada pragmatik kompetensiyaning ahamiyati bir qancha tadqiqotchilar tomonidan isbotlangan va tadqiqot sohasida hamon dolzarb masala bo'lib qolmoqda. Shunday qilib, o'quv jarayoniga pragmatik kompetensiyani joriy etish talabalarining og'zaki va yozma til ko'nikmalarini oshirishda muhim ahamiyat kasb etdi. Pragmatik kompetensiyani takomillashtirish o'qituvchilardan katta sa'y-harakatlarni talab qiladi, chunki yosh avlodning ehtiyojlari juda yuqori. Xususan, ingliz tilini maxsus maqsadlarda o'rganishda talabalar ingliz tilini mutaxassislik sifatida o'rganayotgan talabalarga nisbatan sezilarli qiyinchiliklarga duch kelishadi. Texnologiyaning rivojlanishi ta'lim sohasini yanada yengillashtirib, o'quv jarayonida turli xil vositalardan foydalanishga imkon beradi. Ulardan biri eng katta matn bazasi bo'lgan korpus texnologiyasidir. COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English) ana shunday korpus texnologiyalaridan biri bo'lib, talabalarga matndagi so'zlarni turli kontekstlarda qiyoslash va solishtirish imkonini beradi. Kelajakda muhandis va IT-mutaxassislari bo'ladigan texnika yo'nalishi talabalari COCA dan samarali foydalanish orqali o'zlarining pragmatik kompetensiyalarini oshirish imkoniyatidan foydalanadilar. Bu talabalar uchun turli autentik manbalardan olingan kontekst va resurslarni taqdim etish orqali tilni og'zaki va yozma nutqda to'g'ri qo'llash imkonini beradi. Ushbu tadqiqotning maqsadi texnika yo'nalishi talabalarining pragmatik malakasini oshirishda COCA samaradorligini aniqlashdir. Ushbu tadqiqot uchun axborot texnologiyalari bo'yicha mutaxassislarni tanlandi. Tadqiqotni o'tkazish va natijalarni olish uchun ma'lumotlarni to'plashning sifat va miqdoriy usullari qo'llanildi. Tajriba davomida COCA dan foydalanish texnika yo'nalishi talabalarining pragmatik kompetensiyasini oshirishga katta hissa qo'shishi aniqlandi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Korpus; pragmatik kompetensiya; sotsiolingvistik kompetensiya; tilshunoslik; nutq; kontekst; mulloqot; madaniyatlararo; nutqiy harakat; ishlab chiqarish mahorati; retseptiv mahorat.

**Аннотация.** Важность прагматической компетенции в коммуникативной компетенции была доказана несколькими исследователями и до сих пор остается актуальной проблемой в исследовательской области. Таким образом, внедрение прагматической компетенции в учебный процесс стало важным для улучшения устной и письменной речи студентов. Совершенствование прагматической компетенции требует больших усилий от преподавателей, поскольку потребности молодого поколения очень высоки. В частности, при изучении английского языка для специальных целей студенты сталкиваются со значительными трудностями по сравнению со студентами, изучающими английский язык как спецификацию. Развитие технологий делает сферу образования управляемой, позволяя использовать различные инструменты в процессе обучения. Одним из них является корпусная технология, которая представляет собой крупнейшую базу текстов. COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English) – одна из таких корпусных технологий, позволяющая учащимся сравнивать и сопоставлять слова в тексте в разных контекстах. Студенты технических вузов, которые в будущем станут инженерами и IT-специалистами, пользуются возможностью улучшить

прагматическую компетенцию, эффективно используя СОСА. Он позволяет студентам правильно использовать язык в устной и письменной речи, поскольку предоставляет им контекст и ресурсы из различных аутентичных источников. Цель данного исследования – выявить эффективность СОСА в улучшении прагматической компетенции студентов технических вузов. Для этого исследования были выбраны специалисты в области информационных технологий. Для проведения исследования и получения результатов использовались качественный и количественный способы сбора данных. В ходе эксперимента выяснилось, что использование СОСА значительно способствует повышению прагматической компетенции в написании электронных писем и общении студентов технических вузов.

**Ключевые слова:** корпус; прагматическая компетенция; социолингвистическая компетенция; лингвистика; дискурс; контекст; коммуникация; межкультурный; речевой акт; продуктивный навык; рецептивный навык.

## Introduction

Pragmatic competence plays a crucial role in teaching English. Although it was underestimated for a long time, it is impossible to ignore this competence in the classroom in modern era. The pragmatic competence was clearly defined by local and foreign linguistics in the first chapter. The importance of pragmatic competence in learning and teaching the English language was proved through several researchers in their investigations.

The study of pragmatics looks at how language form and context relate to one another, where that form is used, and how this relationship is perceived and realized in social interactions [Taguchi 2019: 1]. A number of factors, such as linguistic form, context, language use, interaction, and society, are taken into account in this concept of pragmatics. There is a close relationship between these parameters. The majority of students just concentrate on linguistic form since they think it's the most challenging aspect. Although they study English grammar, they nevertheless speak their native language. For instance, they only consider word order and grammar norms during a conversation, but they rely on L1 when discussing context, proper language, and culture. So, it may lead to communication failure when speakers speak different languages.

According to Zolotov [Золотов & Сысоев 2020:18], the conventional approach to teaching foreign languages did not systematically examine the development of pragmatic ability. The discursive approach to teaching a second language, which placed an emphasis on discourse analysis, grew in popularity alongside pragmatics. Simultaneously, students in general and those in linguistic training in particular will benefit from the development of pragmatic competence, which will improve their proficiency in a foreign language and enhance the efficacy of foreign language teaching and communication. This will increase the efficiency of communicating in a foreign language and help them learn it much more quickly.

Additionally, new linguodidactic scenarios created by contemporary information and communication technology speed up the process of learning a foreign language. When used with a discursive approach, corpus

technologies will significantly enhance students' language practice and aid in the development of pragmatic competence. The significance of this research is further demonstrated by the fact that the creation of a method for demonstrating pragmatic competency based on corpus technologies was not the focus of a different study.

All four skills — productive (speaking and writing) and receptive (listening and reading) — need to employ pragmatics. Enhancing receptive comprehension and productive language usage is the result of incorporating pragmatic competence into the classroom [Munir & Yavuz 2024: 2]. The majority of language learners believe that pragmatics has little bearing on receptive abilities. But properly understanding context is also an important task. It is impossible to react appropriately if you do not fully comprehend the situation. While pragmatic competence is equally necessary for receptive skills, the process can be more complex for productive skills. The primary cause of language learners' frequent difficulties is with oral and written speech production. It takes more work and experience to relate pragmatics proficiency to speech. Successful conversations require a unique pragmatic approach depending on the circumstances.

Corpus technology contributes to enhance vocabulary of learners and appropriate implementation of vocabulary according to given situation. Learners gain experience in different contexts using only one source in different contexts, which makes it comfortable and saves time. Through corpus learners can improve mostly productive skills (writing and speaking). Corpus technology can be especially helpful in writing e-mails, letters, and any type of writing which demands a response to an exact situation considering pragmatic competence. Moreover, acquired vocabulary can be used in speaking.

Students of technical universities often struggle in writing e-mails and interviews with English speakers. For instance, an Uzbek engineer is asked, "Where is the box placed?" by a native English speaker. If an Uzbek engineer does not speak English as their first language, they may misunderstand during the project. The word "box" in engineering refers to "wardrobe," and misinterpretations result in poor communication. Observing real communication regularities when learning communicative pragmatic tools is the most important theoretical position governing the effectiveness of the pragmatic competence building process.

Another place to start is with overgeneralization. Like language, pragmatics is susceptible to overgeneralization. Selinker claims that students frequently overgeneralize grammatical rules when they are not relevant [Ishihara & Cohen 2010: 101]. In pragmatics, the same holds true. Certain pragmatic rules in language learning are overgeneralized by learners as a result of their ignorance of the target culture norms. Uzbeks tend to communicate indirectly more often than native English speakers. They may use indirect communication in situations where direct communication is appropriate. This results in pragmatic failure. As an alternative, they could use phrases they've learned in class, such as "I'm sorry" or "Pardon me," when they're not appropriate. They are unaware that this works for certain issues but not for others.

According to Zaxarova [2020: 3], pragmatics in English for particular purposes is founded on the synthesis of a number of ideas and

theories, such as the theory of politeness, the theory of speech actions, the concept of communicative competence, and the principle of cooperation. Thus, regardless of country, culture, or language, being courteous results in fruitful dialogue. Understanding intercultural pragmatics is crucial for facilitating communication between speakers of different languages. Teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) entails customizing language instruction to meet the unique needs of students, such as those of academic or professional contexts.

By meeting their unique language needs, effective ESP training gives pupils the real-world abilities they need to succeed academically or professionally in their disciplines. The corpus-based approach is considered a trustworthy source for portraying actual language usage since it generates objective data on language usage [Biber 2001: 2]. Corpus technology is a revolutionary development in the field of teaching English as a second language, especially at technical colleges, where it helps students become more pragmatically proficient. Teachers can design engaging and dynamic learning environments that support students' authentic and meaningful engagement with language by utilizing corpus-based techniques.

In ESP, pragmatic competence goes beyond grammatical accuracy and describes a learner's ability to use language appropriately and effectively in specific contexts. In formal or academic settings, it entails being aware of and applying sociocultural norms, customs, and communication strategies. The capacity to understand discourse patterns, registers, and genre conventions specific to a discipline that are required for successful communication in specialized subjects is known as pragmatic competence in ESP. Understanding audience expectations, communication objectives, and contextual factors is essential.

Speech is significantly influenced by pragmatics. The speaker who employs it effectively will steer the conversation instead of the one who does not. Kotovskaya said that rhetoric, the study of oratory, is regarded as pragmatics' forerunner because it was the first to show interest in the best ways to sway the audience [Kotovskaya 2021: 8]. Since not all language learners can understand and react, taking into account variable factors like culture, society, and situation, it is the art of speaking.

There are various ways of implementing pragmatic competence into classroom. Instructors can improve the pragmatic competence of students through role-plays, dialogues, and videos. However, these methods are already obsolete. One of the latest ways of conducting lessons effectively is using corpus technology. The field of corpus linguistics, which builds, produces, and utilizes a variety of linguistic text corpora, is where corpus technology first appeared. According to corpus linguistics, corpora gathered in natural settings with little experimental intervention are more likely to yield more accurate language analyses [Золотов & Сысоев 2020: 43]. A linguistic corpus was defined by P. V. Sysoev. An array of texts gathered in a single system based on specific attributes (language, genre, author, time of text creation, etc.) and furnished with a search system is how the author defines this idea [Sysoev 2010: 99]. A "corpus" is a collection of electronic text fragments selected according to external criteria to accurately reflect a language or language variation, according to Sinkler, the term's creator in corpus linguistics [Abjalova 2022: 6]. A state-



of-the-art method that can improve conversational skills and foreign language learning is corpus technology. . Corpus linguistics is a novel methodology or approach to the study of language rather than a distinct field within language studies [Dash 2024: 224].

The importance of language corpora in the development of reference, instructional, and dictionary materials should not be undervalued from the standpoint of teaching and learning foreign languages. To the best of our knowledge, every modern dictionary that explains the English language and is intended for language learners—including the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, the Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary, and others—is corpus-based, which means it is based on corpus data. Their attention is on corpora. Therefore, it may be claimed that the dictionary entry contains all of these idiomatic expressions, collocations, and definitions of linguistic units [Павлова 2021: 287].

The most common grammatical constructions used by native speakers in modern speech are collocations and idiomatic phrases, which correspond to the meanings of linguistic units in contemporary discourse and, hence, follow current usage. As illustrative material — not lexicographer-created examples or excerpts from ancient fiction, but real contemporary writings that the learner will have to produce — that will illustrate concepts, lexicographers did not make up the examples in this text. A learner of a foreign language will have to produce in both everyday and professional contexts. Additionally, statistical data analysis employing the corpus can identify important features of linguistic occurrences depending on form (spoken or written), register, style, genre, etc. All of this invariably increases the effectiveness of learning a foreign language.

A speaker or writer who speaks true to themselves (He has found his authentic voice) or to the group they belong to (She is the genuine voice of her generation), that a particular phrase is properly attributed (This isn't a real Lincoln quotation), or that the speech is direct and honest (the vernacular of common folks) are just a few examples of the many connotations of "authenticity" in language. Authenticity is much more broadly related to what McEnery & Wilson [McEnery & Wilson 2001: 27] call "real life" language usage in corpus linguistics and often in linguistics in general [Stefanowitsch 2020: 24].

This type of authenticity is produced by COCA, a popular corpus technology that gives students exposure to language use in many contexts. Pragmatic proficiency is particularly crucial for language learners, particularly those pursuing English for Specific Purposes (ESP). It entails knowing the social and cultural nuances of language in addition to its literal meanings and being able to use it appropriately in a range of contexts. The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), which offers real-world language examples from a range of genres and situations, is an invaluable resource for enhancing the pragmatic skills of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learners.

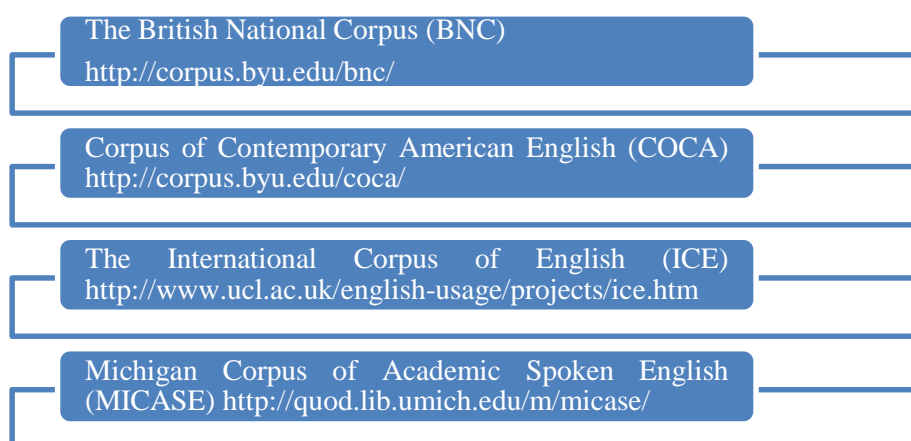
For ESP learners who must interact well in particular professional or academic settings, COCA is a very useful corpus since it is thorough and balanced, containing texts from spoken conversations, fiction, academic writing, and more. Analyzing language use in everyday contexts helps

students see how language works in many contexts, which is essential for improving their pragmatic skills. Their ability to identify and understand pragmatic indicators, speech acts, and conversational implicature, all essential for successful communication in specialized fields, is enhanced by this exposure.

The methodology of teaching foreign languages is always looking for new and efficient ways to transfer expertise, aiming to deliver complex and varied linguistic material in an approachable and straightforward manner. The chaotic diversity of language is transformed into a more structured, ordered collection of words using corpus tools, which are methods for organizing massive amounts of data [Scott & Tribble 2007: 200].

One of the most important corpora, which is often used by researchers, is the British National Corpus (the commonly used abbreviation in English is BNC). The corpus consists of 100 million words. Like the British Monitoring Corpus, the corpus contains both written and speech material, but unlike the BoE, the British National Corpus is finite; that is, no more texts are added after its completion. The texts in the British National Corpus were selected according to carefully defined criteria to make the corpus balanced. The texts were coded with markup providing information about the texts, authors, and speakers.

Other national corpora were later created, including the American National Corpus and the National Corpus of the Russian language, which contain millions of word usages. Modern linguistic corpora must fulfill a number of criteria, or parameters. The first of these criteria is representativeness. This means that the corpus must be reliably representative. This is achieved through the right volume and genre diversity of texts. Following figure contains popular corpora such as BNC, COCA, ICE, MICASE:



*Figure 1. Types of corpora (self-made)*

Effective professional communication requires pragmatic competency. Text corpus linguistics is the analysis and compilation of large collections of natural language texts to find linguistic patterns, frequencies, and conventions [McEnery & Wilson 2001: 27]. Additionally, the corpus includes words, collocations, and entire or partial texts taken from various newspapers [Meyer 2023: 3]. In terms of language

instruction, corpora offer real-world examples of language usage in a variety of contexts and registers, providing insightful information that is sometimes absent from traditional teaching resources. Corpus technology includes a variety of corpora, including learner corpora, general language corpora, and specialized corpora tailored to specific topics or genres.

One of the main benefits of corpus technology is its ability to be used in language acquisition. Dictionary lists and definitions are the cornerstones of traditional vocabulary teaching approaches, which might not adequately convey contextual appropriateness or nuanced usage differences [Stubbs 2001: 55]. The field of pragmatics, which studies how people use language in social contexts, includes discourse conventions, professional communication standards, and politeness techniques [Holmes 2008: 78]. By providing tangible examples of language use in specific contexts, corpus technology gives educators useful resources for teaching pragmatics [Flowerdew 2013: 45].

Teachers can identify common pragmatic aspects, such as suitable tone in technical reports, professional correspondence norms, and effective communication tactics in workplace contacts, by analyzing corpora of technical texts and discourse. As a result, this helps pupils comprehend pragmatics and effectively use them in their own speech. In practical applications, corpora aid in the acquisition of cultural and contextual knowledge [Yoon 2008: 1055]. Because they frequently deal with international coworkers and clients, technical university students must learn to be sensitive to cultural variances in pragmatic norms. By giving students examples of how pragmatic norms might differ throughout nations and fields, corpora help students become more adept at navigating a variety of professional settings.

Using corpora, educators can create activities that mimic real-world problems encountered in technical domains [Nesi & Gardner 2012: 88]. As an example, students can take part in role-plays that are based on actual events that are taken from corpora. Additionally, they can use language patterns found in technical corpora to create professional documents or evaluate corpus data to determine the proper language usage in particular technical settings. These exercises foster both practical competence and the cognitive abilities of critical thinking and problem-solving that are essential for success in the workplace.

Instructors can identify common errors and modify their approach to successfully handle certain language difficulties by analyzing student corpora. This focused strategy assists students in overcoming language barriers and advancing to greater levels of proficiency by enabling adapted learning experiences. Evidence-based understandings of language usage and learning processes inform the use of corpus technology in instructional strategies [O’Keeffe et al., 2007: 134]. Teachers can use corpus-informed strategies, including data-driven pedagogy, task-based learning, and encouraging learner autonomy. These methods encourage motivation, engagement, and long-term language growth by giving students the resources they need to take charge of their language learning process.

Recent studies have shown that using a corpus can significantly enhance learners’ understanding and contextually appropriate language production. Chen and Baker’s research [2010: 44] showed that students who work with corpora like as the Freiburg-Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen



(FLOB) corpus, and the British Academic Written English (BAWE) corpus are more adept at identifying linguistic patterns, such as how polite speakers manage conversations, express emotions, and convey attitudes. For ESP students who must navigate the difficulties of communication in their professional settings—such as academia, business, or healthcare—this information is particularly crucial. One practical use of COCA for ESP learners is the analysis of linguistic characteristics specific to different genres. Students might look into the terminology used in business emails, reports, and presentations, for instance.

By examining real-world examples, they can learn about the conventions of their discourse community, including appropriate levels of formality, jargon usage, and communication structure. This focused practice boosts their confidence in social situations and improves their linguistic skills. Additionally, because of COCA's rich tagging and categorization, learners can focus on specific pragmatic elements relevant to their fields, finding examples of directives, hedging, or politeness techniques in the corpus to better understand how these components function in context. This targeted approach helps students develop a more sophisticated understanding of language use, which is crucial for effective communication in their fields.

The Corpus of Contemporary American English is an effective resource for raising ESP learners' pragmatic proficiency. Through the use of real-world language examples and focused analysis of genre-specific elements, COCA gives students the tools they need to communicate effectively in both academic and professional settings. Language learners can gain a lot from interacting with these corpora.

## Methods

Qualitative and quantitative types of data collection were used in order to identify the importance of corpus technologies in incorporating pragmatic competence into English classrooms. Students from the University of Management and Future Technologies were selected for this study. Overall 22 participants took part in the research. Since this university only offers one year of English instruction, first-year students were drawn to it. A single group was used for an experiment with various levels. Firstly, placement test was taken in order to identify students' level of English. The placement test was assessed according to CEFR. The English Radar website helped to get data about levels of students. The test was taken online through <https://www.englishradar.com/english-proficiency-certificate/>. It took 80 minutes to take the test. Overall, there were 60 questions including 1-20 questions for A1-A2 level, 21-40 questions B- B2 level and 41-60 questions for C1 level. A2 level students were the lowest level, while B2 level students were the highest. The students' area of expertise was computer programming. In one group, there were eleven students.

In order to verify the students' needs, interests, strengths, weaknesses, background information, preferred learning styles, and English language ability, observations were made. While conducting the study, the researcher observed four lessons. Recognizing the topics and the

teacher's teaching style in the classroom was helpful. The researcher could observe the syllabus and lesson plans, which aided in designing the survey.

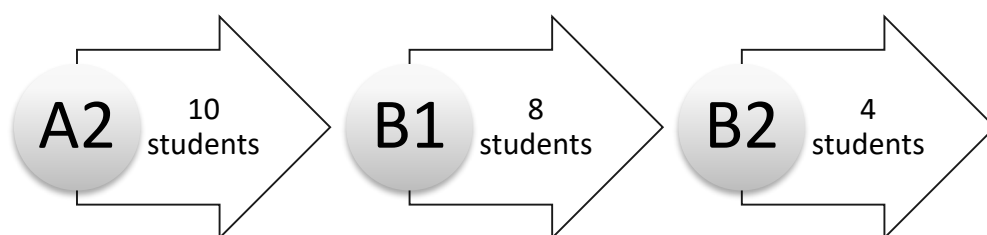
To ascertain the students' pragmatic competence, strengths and weaknesses, a questionnaire was employed. A pre-test and post-test task designed for learners to assess awareness of pragmatic competence. A pre-test task contains 4 multiple choice questions, 4 questions from real life situations, 4 completing dialogues, and 4 true-false questions. Each student needs to get 20 points, and each group needs to get 220 points overall. In order to identify difficulties in writing skill students were asked to write e-mails. Situations for role plays and e-mail writing tasks were designed with the help of COCA as a post-test to check the progress of students.

Quantitative data collection was used to analyze the collected data. Analysis was made possible by contrasting and comparing the observation's results with the questionnaire answers. Assessment of the questionnaire and e-mail writing was made with the help of a self-made rubric which was based on CEFR criteria. Rubric contained assessing linguistic competence, pragmatic competence, sociolinguistic competence and discourse competence. Analyzing results were made through mathematical analysis calculating points of students. Results were given in the form of table (Table 1 and 2). Results compared and contrasted according to points in the table. It was evident that experimental group achieved more success with 20-30 points higher than control group.

The capacity to verify the hypothesis and monitor participants' actual proficiency had a significant role in obtaining tangible results. Qualitative and quantitative data collection and data analysis helped to prove the hypothesis of usefulness of COCA in improving pragmatic competence of students of technical universities.

## Result

Placement test showed following results:



*Figure 2. Results of levels of students according to CEFR (self-made)*

The students in this study were divided into two distinct subgroups: the experimental group and the control group. Students in both groups had different levels of skill. The majority of students are keen to learn English because of the professional demands of working in multinational corporations. There were just men among the participants. Since they struggle during interviews, the majority of respondents stated that speaking proficiency is their main demand. However, some of them admitted to having trouble in writing, whether they were creating program codes or corresponding via email with employers of large international companies.

Every student expressed a preference for engaging in interactive education, particularly when it involved technological challenges.

It became evident through close observation that English classes primarily use traditional teaching methods, with a focus on teaching vocabulary and grammar structures and a special emphasis on terminology. In contrast, learners' communicative competence is not taken into account, and writing proficiency is also overlooked during lessons.

Pre-test showed that the controlled group and experimental group possess similar challenges in using appropriate words in context and behave according to the situation. The test consists of 4 parts:

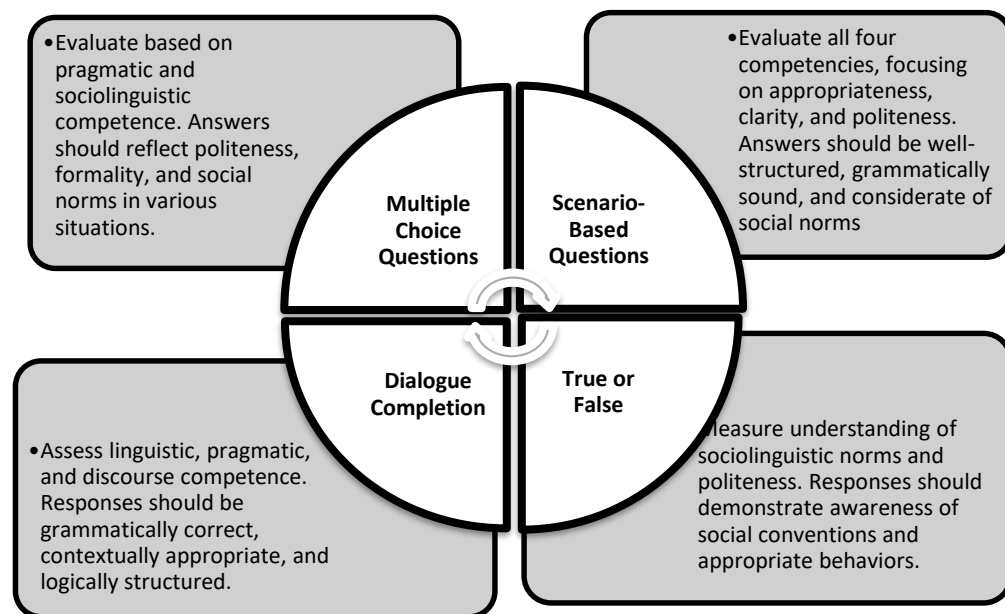


Figure 3 Types and evaluation of pre-test (self-made)

These questions check the awareness of linguistic, pragmatic, sociolinguistic and discourse competence of students. Students' scores were assessed according to the rubric which was designed by researcher based on CEFR.

Criteria	Excellent (5 points)	Good (4 points)	Satisfactory (3 points)	Needs Improvement (2 points)
Linguistic Competence	Uses grammatically correct sentences with appropriate vocabulary.	Minor grammatical errors that do not hinder understanding.	Some grammatical errors that affect clarity.	Frequent errors that impede understanding.
Pragmatic Competence	Responses are fully appropriate to the situation and purpose.	Mostly appropriate responses with minor lapses.	Some responses are inappropriate or unclear.	Responses are frequently inappropriate for the situation.

<b>Sociolinguistic Competence</b>	Uses correct politeness levels and considers social norms.	Generally polite with minor lapses in social appropriateness.	Occasionally impolite or inappropriate for the situation.	Lacks awareness of politeness and social norms.
<b>Discourse Competence</b>	Responses are well-structured, logical, and fluent.	Generally clear and coherent with minor hesitations.	Some lack of clarity or organization in responses.	Responses are disorganized and difficult to follow.

Figure 4. Assessment rubric for pre-test and post-test (self-made)

**Table 1.**  
Results of pre-test (self-made)

Groups	Competence				Total score (220)
	Linguistic	Pragmatic	Sociolinguistic	Discourse	
<b>Controlled group (points)</b>	30	25	24	28	107
<b>Experimental group (points)</b>	29	26	22	29	106

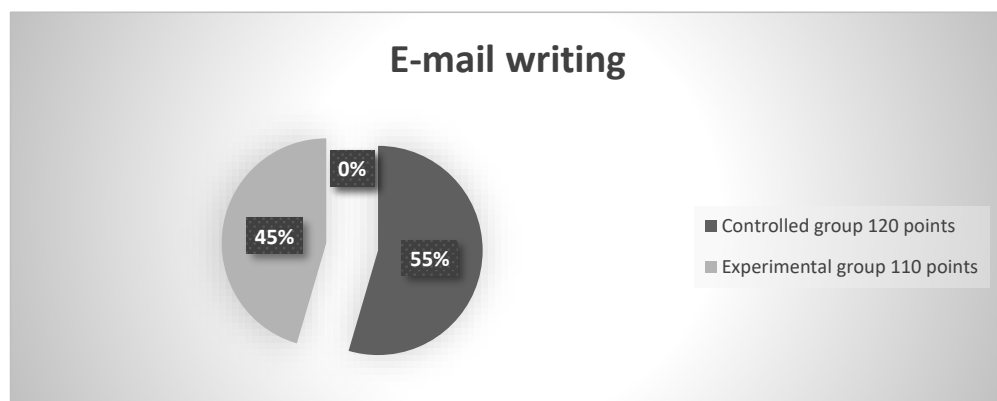


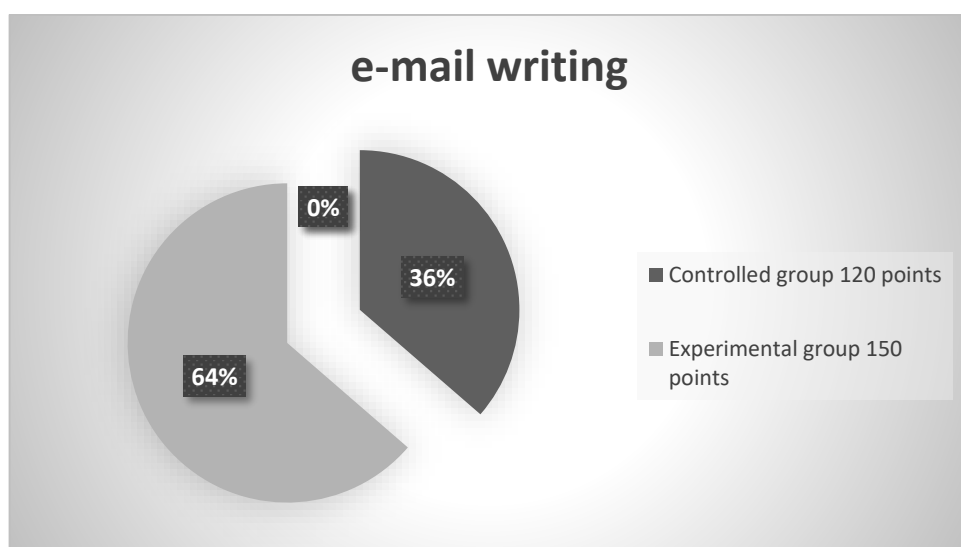
Figure 5. Results of e-mail writing (self-made).

According to pre-test (test and e-mail writing) both groups showed lower results containing almost 100-110 out of 220. After 4 lessons practicing with COCA students could extremely improve their pragmatic competence. During the lessons Experimental group was given tasks like making dialogues, interviews and writing e-mails using COCA while controlled group relied on dictionaries as traditional way of teaching which is common for them. For the post test students were given real life situation and e-mail writing to check the progress of students. Following table and diagram shows results of post-test.

**Table2.**

*Results of post-test (self-made)*

Groups	Competence				Total score (220)
	Linguistic	Pragmatic	Sociolinguistic	Discourse	
<b>Controlled group (points)</b>	34	27	29	31	121
<b>Experimental group (points)</b>	45	34	30	35	144

*Figure 6. Results of e-mail writing (self-made).*

According to the post results, the control group maintained its pre-test result, with 120 points out of 220, while the Experimental group increased its result to 140-150 out of 220.

## Discussion

The study confirmed the notion that COCA can significantly improve pragmatic competence and more effective than traditional textbook-based approaches. The use of tools greatly aided the collection of quantitative data and subsequent analysis. Through the use of a placement test, the researcher was able to accurately determine the participants' level of English proficiency based on the CEFR; most of them were at a low level due to being English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learners. With scores ranging from 100 to 110 out of 220, the pre-test findings showed that linguistic, pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competence were areas in which both the controlled and experimental groups struggled. These results corroborate the literature's claim that conventional teaching



approaches fail to sufficiently address communicative and writing proficiency in favor of focusing exclusively on vocabulary and grammar structures [Zolotov 2020:18].

The study's conclusions are consistent with those of Munir and Yavuz [Munir & Yavuz 2024: 2], who emphasized that more intricate integration of pragmatic competence is necessary for productive abilities like speaking and writing. This was demonstrated in the pre-test, when students' pragmatic failures resulted from their incapacity to use language in context. For instance, according to Ishihara and Cohen [2010: 101], a large number of students misunderstood scenarios during the pre-test, demonstrating a lack of sociolinguistic awareness. For instance, Ishihara and Cohen [2010: 101] highlighted that learners had a propensity to overgeneralize pragmatic rules, and many students misread scenarios during the pre-test, demonstrating a lack of sociolinguistic awareness. The experimental group's post-test results demonstrated a notable improvement following the use of corpus technology. With significant gains in linguistic competence (from 29 to 45 points) and pragmatic competence (from 26 to 34 points), their overall score rose from 106 to 144 out of 220. This development supports the assertions stated by Chen & Baker [2010: 44] and Flowerdew [2013: 45] that corpora give learners real-world examples of language use, improving their capacity to identify linguistic patterns and use them correctly in context. The experimental group used COCA to practice writing emails, conducting interviews, and creating dialogues — activities that have been shown to promote pragmatic and discourse competence — in contrast to the controlled group, which did the same using more conventional techniques like dictionaries and memories.

Zaxarova [2020: 3] emphasized that the integration of multiple concepts and theories is the source of pragmatics in English for certain goals. These consist of the cooperative principle, the philosophy of politeness, communicative competence, and the theoretical framework of speech activities. Consequently, politeness promotes fruitful communication in every language, regardless of nationality or culture. It became clear from close observation that the curriculum does not improve pragmatic competence, which is necessary to learn how to use speech acts in conversation. Students were, therefore, unaware of this component of competency. The traditional way to learning grammar rules and speaking is rote memorization, which is ineffective for improving communication skills. This investigation process was further complicated by the lack of knowledge regarding pragmatic competency. Despite having trouble understanding pragmatic competence, participants demonstrated a strong desire to use it in real-world scenarios. They demonstrated a desire to learn more and use this idea in real-world contexts. The pre-test results indicated that many students defaulted to their L1's indirect communication style, often leading to pragmatic failures, as noted by Ishihara and Cohen [2010: 101]. However, the post-test revealed a shift toward more contextually appropriate responses, demonstrating the students' growing awareness of the importance of politeness strategies and cultural nuances in communication.

The controlled group's slight improvement, from 107 to 121 points, suggests that traditional teaching methods alone are insufficient for

developing pragmatic competence. This supports Zolotov's [2020: 18] claim that conventional approaches often overlook discourse analysis and pragmatic skills, hindering learners' communicative effectiveness. The research also highlighted the students' preference for interactive and technology-based learning, reinforcing the need for modern teaching strategies. As the literature points out, corpus technology not only accelerates language learning [Sysoev 2010: 99] but also equips students with practical skills needed for real-life professional settings [Nesi & Gardner 2012: 88]. Given the students' desire to enhance their speaking skills for job interviews and email writing for corporate communication, integrating corpus technology into ESP classrooms appears crucial.

This data-driven approach supports a more focused and experiential learning experience by allowing students to study and analyze the language they will use in their future careers. Technical university students can use corpus techniques to identify subtleties in language use, such as variations in register, tone, and style, to improve their communication in academic and professional settings. Additionally, teachers can create materials that are specifically suited to the linguistic challenges faced by students in technical professions due to corpus technology. Corpus technology is crucial to enhancing English instruction since it offers a plethora of benefits to both teachers and students. By providing teachers with access to vast, legitimate collections of linguistic data, corpus technologies enable them to expose students to real-world language usage, increasing the relevance and utility of learning. By employing this technology to examine language patterns, word frequency, collocations, and grammatical usage, educators and learners can gain a better understanding of how English is used in many contexts.

Corpus-based English training is very beneficial to technical university students because it helps them develop language skills that are directly relevant to their academic and professional needs. Through the use of authentic, domain-specific corpora, these students can get an understanding of the language used in technical domains such as biotechnology, computer science, and engineering. By providing real-world examples of how language functions in these specialized situations, corpus technology aids students in learning technical terminology, collocations, and speech patterns specific to their disciplines.

The questionnaire contributed considerably to conducting the research and getting results. Pre-test and post-test showed contradictory results. Tests were assessed with the help of a rubric which was designed based on CEFR by the researcher. Rubric contains not only pragmatic competence but also linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competence as all of them are related to each other. Linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competencies are all included in the CEFR's list of communicative language competencies. According to the CEFR, the following topics are considered sociolinguistic competencies: dialect and accent, folk wisdom expressions, politeness norms, linguistic indicators of social relationships, and register variations. The learner's understanding of the principles that govern how messages are: a. structured, ordered, and arranged (discourse competence); b. utilized to carry out communicative tasks (functional competence); and c. sequenced in accordance with

interactional and transactional schemata (design competence) is a component of pragmatic competence [Kusevska et al., 2015: 151].

Since the participants learned most of the grammar during the class sessions, they had no trouble with grammatical structure. They did not make any serious mistakes in their sentence structure. In ESP, pragmatic competence refers to a learner's capacity to utilize language in certain settings in a suitable and efficient manner, in addition to grammatical precision. Understanding and using sociocultural customs, conventions, and communication techniques in formal or academic contexts is known as sociocultural competency. The learning process is aided by the empirical examples offered in COCA. The employment of a "concordance program," which makes it possible to identify linguistic patterns, is central to corpus-based research [Conrad 2000:6]. Successful dialogues can be produced more efficiently by using corpus linguistics techniques like keywords in context (KWIC) and concordance. Seretan and Wehrli [2013:158], for instance, present an enhanced concordance that integrates statistical data on word co-occurrence with syntactic data on sentence structure. Because they had the chance to view the Key-Word Identity Check (KWIC) or concordance in the COCA dataset, the experimental group's participants took control of the study.

Finding out how important COCA is for improving pragmatic competence was the aim of this study. The use of corpus technology was successful in improving English language proficiency. Even though pragmatic competence was a challenge for the participants, corpus technology can be a useful tool for teaching pragmatic competence in speech actions in a variety of circumstances. Since speaking and grammar are thought to be the primary areas of emphasis in the classroom, more research is needed to improve pragmatic skills in English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Another essential productive talent in their line of work is writing, especially when it comes to writing emails and letters. The researcher noticed numerous mistakes in the students' writing skills while they were creating dialogues. The participants' mistakes in word structure and order point to a lack of writing practice in the classroom. Proficiency in pragmatics is crucial for both oral and written communication.

The study's results strongly affirm the literature's stance on the importance of pragmatic competence in English language teaching. The significant progress made by the experimental group highlights the effectiveness of corpus technology in fostering linguistic, pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competence. This research underscores the necessity of moving beyond traditional methods and adopting innovative tools like corpora to better prepare students for real-world communication challenges.

## Conclusion

It might be challenging to increase pragmatic competence in ESP since language learners typically have poor proficiency levels. However, since English is taught in kindergarten these days, it is more beneficial to incorporate pragmatic skills as early as feasible in the learning process. Improving students' pragmatic English for Specific Purposes (ESP) ability is essential to help them communicate effectively in both academic and professional contexts. Pragmatic competence is the capacity to use

language effectively while adhering to the social and cultural norms of the specific situation in which communication occurs. For ESP students, this means mastering the subject's technical language and structures in addition to the social and cultural subtleties of professional communication.

According to the results of the investigation, the COCA's practical applicability was judged appropriately in terms of improving pragmatic competence. Participants gradually learned how to utilize the COCA and profited from it in the communication process, even though the results did not live up to expectations because of other outside factors. It made it easier for students to expand their vocabulary and use it successfully in real-world contexts.

Even if the corpus-based approach significantly influences the teaching process, further research is necessary to determine its importance. Up till now, very few studies have been conducted on the use of corpus technology, especially in the realm of ESP. Further research endeavors in the subject of corpus technology studies could be stimulated by the methods used in the presented work. Significant progress in applied linguistics and educational research will be made possible by the amazing potential of corpus technology to transform language instruction and learning.

In conclusion, teaching English to technical university students through COCA enhances the relevance and authenticity of the learning process. By using corpus data, teachers may help students gain a deeper, context-driven understanding of language and enhance their communication skills in their specialized fields. A small number of linguists have investigated this theory, and scholars are still working to validate it.

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