

CHAPTER 17: CURRENT VIEWS AND PRACTICES IN TEACHING PRAGMATICS

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1. Introduction

Pragmatic knowledge is knowing how to adapt one's language use to other people, and pragmatics is viewed as the study of language in use with consideration of contextual factors such as the physical setting, the relationship between interlocutors in terms of power relations, social distance and status, the degree of imposition involved in a communicative act, topics of conversation, and shared knowledge regarding social rules and norms (Roever, 2012). This field of study focuses on the use of language within a social context with a focus on meaning-in-context (Bardovi-Harlig, 2014) including intended meanings, assumptions, and actions performed when speaking. It extends analyses beyond linguistic form, and concerns itself with situated language function. This is all captured in a well-known formal definition by Crystal (1997), who defines pragmatics as “the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication” (p. 301).

The fact that the relationship influences how we talk might be obvious to native speakers and high-proficiency speakers, but it is difficult for lower-level learners to know this. How do learners know how to talk to people depending on their relationship with the person and the situation? The stakes are high here: talking to someone in a way that is culturally inappropriate can make speakers appear rude even though they do not mean to be. However, as Taguchi and Roever (2017) and Roever (2005; 2013) put forward, how to use language with people appropriately is not systematically taught in most language courses, not systematically developed in most language textbooks, not included in most language tests, and quite scattered even in such an influential document as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR; Council of Europe, 2001, 2020).

Traditional language teaching, which is still overwhelmingly used in Turkish EFL context, primarily consists of structural aspects of language such as grammar and vocabulary.

However, recently-shaped language teaching pedagogy indicates that grammar and vocabulary knowledge does not lead to successful communication (Bardovi-Harlig, 2014; Kim, 2014; Roever & Dai, 2021; Taguchi, 2015). This paradigm shift incorporated social, cultural and contextual factors together with main language skills, and pragmatic competence became a criterion for high language proficiency. Welcoming a communicative and functional perspective recognizes the importance of context, discourse strategies, and cultural awareness in communicating meaning appropriately and interpreting the intentions of other speakers. As a result, pragmatics teaching has become an integral part of language education, emphasizing the importance of context, cultural factors and functional language use by utilizing authentic materials, explicit/implicit teaching, and cultural awareness (Taguchi, 2013).

To facilitate the acquisition of pragmatic competence, educators use a variety of teaching practices. One approach is to use authentic materials such as videos, dialogues and real-life situations that expose students to real language use in different communicative contexts. Role plays and simulations are also utilized to create interactive and meaningful opportunities for students to practice their pragmatic skills in a controlled environment. Explicit instruction methods play a vital role in pragmatics teaching as it provides students with the necessary knowledge and strategies to navigate social interactions effectively. This includes teaching the speech acts, implicatures, pragmatic rules, formulaic expressions, routines, and discourse markers necessary for proper communication. By explicitly addressing pragmatic conventions, students can develop a deeper understanding of how to express politeness, make requests, apologize, and deal with other social functions (Can, 2022; Can Daşkın & Can, 2022).

However, pragmatics teaching also carries its own challenges. Pragmatics is a complex and context-dependent aspect of language, making it difficult to define and teach. Assessing students' pragmatic competence poses a significant challenge, as traditional assessment methods often focus more on grammar and vocabulary than on pragmatic competence (Roever, 2005). Additionally, the ongoing debate between explicit instruction and implicit instruction raises questions about the most effective pedagogical methods for developing pragmatic skills. While pragmatics is part of all the major constructs of communicative competence (e.g., Bachman & Palmer, 2010; Canale & Swain, 1980), which situate language teaching under the communicative paradigm, and it is represented in major policy documents like the CEFR, very little systematic pragmatics teaching happens in classrooms. Several factors probably conspire to bring about this underrepresentation. Most pivotally, many teachers have limited awareness of pragmatics as an aspect of language competence that needs to be treated systematically as

part of the curriculum. Most language teacher training courses do not explicitly cover pragmatics, and textbooks and syllabi do not include it as a skill to be learned. This means that there are few incentives and little support for teachers to teach pragmatics, even if they want to. In addition, most language tests do not specifically assess pragmatics so there is no positive washback from the test to the classroom (Roever & Dai, 2021).

While challenges remain in pragmatics teaching, such as assessing pragmatic competence and identifying the most appropriate teaching methods, educators can develop their pedagogical strategies to equip students with the pragmatic skills necessary for successful communication in a variety of linguistic and cultural contexts. Considering these current views and practices, the present chapter aims to focus on pragmatics and its areas (e.g. speech acts, implicature, and formulae), teaching materials and tests for pragmatics, and teaching pragmatics and its importance.

2. Pragmatics and Language Teaching

Pragmatics emerges as a linguistic subfield that deals with the use of language and examines how language functions in real-world communication contexts. Pragmatics explores how the meaning of language is shaped not only by word and sentence structures, but also by factors such as speakers' intentions, social context, and communication status. Therefore, understanding the practical use of language is one of the cornerstones of effective communication. This field of linguistics offers a broadened perspective to understand how people make and understand meanings in their daily communication. Analyzing subtexts and implicatures in communication means going beyond the superficial level of language. Pragmatics shows that the same sentence can have different meanings in different contexts, so language is not limited to grammar and vocabulary (Taguchi, 2015).

The importance of pragmatics goes beyond providing effective meaning transfer in communication. It plays a big role in areas such as understanding the relationships between people, resolving cultural differences, understanding the intentions of the interlocutors, and minimizing possible ambiguities in communication. Understanding and applying pragmatic rules is a fundamental requirement for peaceful communication and cooperation, especially in multilingual and multicultural societies (Shively, 2011). If we think the role of English language as the world language, then it makes pragmatic competence as important as ever before for English language learners. As a result, pragmatics emerges as an important linguistic area that helps language learners understand the role of language in real-world communication. It offers

the key to functional, effective communication that deals with the meaning of language not only with structural elements but also with social, cultural and communicative context.

Language learning and teaching is a steep slope for individuals to gain language skills and improve their communication skills. Practices on the role of gestures, intonation, and eye contact in communication contribute to language learners' development of nonverbal communication skills. It also supports language learners to gain cultural awareness and adapt to different language usage contexts. Language learners' understanding of the pragmatic aspects of language can reduce misunderstandings, increase their cultural sensitivity, and help them communicate more fluently. Therefore, incorporating pragmatic principles into the teaching and learning process makes language education more effective and comprehensive so that language learners improve their communication skills and understand the real-world communication context (Taguchi, 2013; Taguchi & Roever, 2017).

To put it briefly, pragmatics deals with the social use of language. It explores why language users speak differently in different social settings, for example, in a casual conversation at a bar, in a formal job interview, or when purchasing a service at a store. It is also interested in how people understand each other when they talk in a non-literal way ("I've asked you a thousand times to clean your room") (Kasper & Rose, 2002). In addition to these, it deals with the way people use chunks during interaction ("Don't worry.", "Can I get you something else?") and how they manage to establish long conversations effortlessly and without thinking about it. Unlike syntax, which deals with the accuracy of language, the field of pragmatics deals with the appropriate and conventional use of language. Based on these frameworks, pragmatics is interested in conducting research in the following areas:

Research in the field of speech acts and politeness try to answer how language users know that they need to speak differently with their bosses and spouses and how they decide what to say. Understanding what the other speaker means is another critical issue. For example, when person A casually asks, "Where's your phone?" "Mine's out of battery," most language users will understand that this does not mean that Person A just wants to know where it is, but Person A wants to use the phone. This question has been addressed in the studies conducted on implicature. People often use the same phrases such as "no worries" to express a certain meaning in a situation, and this is also explained by pragmatics. Research on routine formulae has shed light on this point.

Leech (1983) identified two areas of pragmatic competence that interactants should have: sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic competence, as demonstrated in Figure 1.

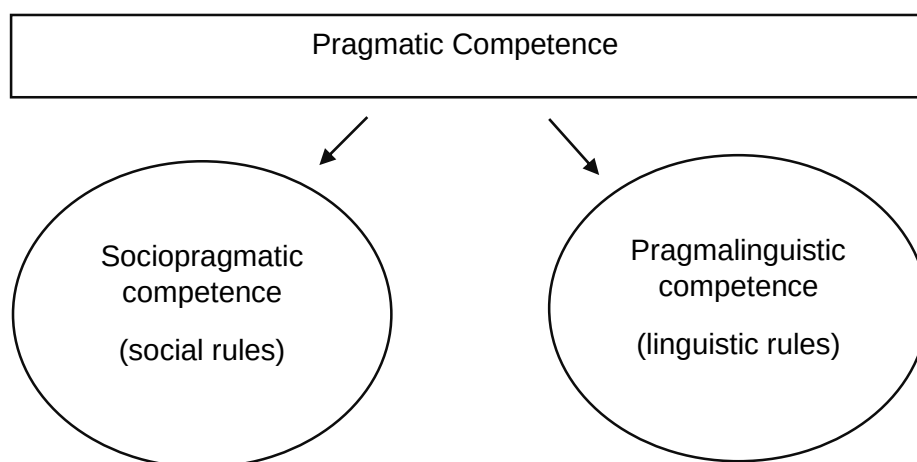


Figure 1. Sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic competence

The sociopragmatic competence of a language user is his knowledge of the social rules and norms governing the use of language. What is normal and acceptable? Who deserves respect and who is considered your equal? How do gender and age affect the way you talk to someone? What is considered a small favour and what is a large imposition on the interlocutor? (Leech, 1983). According to Fraser et al. (1980), sociopragmatic knowledge is about how social relationships affect speech. This knowledge also includes knowing that you can comfortably talk to people who are very close, such as a spouse, but you need to be more polite to people who are less close, such as an acquaintance. Sociopragmatic knowledge is largely implicit: language users usually do not need to think about what their relationship with another person is and whether they should be casual or polite. Although those who have grown up in the target speech community intuitively know what it is, second language (henceforth L2) users may have difficulty with sociopragmatics (Siegal, 1996). Since they are not socialized in the target culture, they may not have an intuitive understanding of how people relate to each other and what is ‘normal’, and for example, they may unintentionally offend the other person by misinterpreting an official situation as a casual situation, or they can treat a person who needs to be respected as a close friend.

The second and equally important component of pragmatic competence is pragma-linguistic competence. Pragma-linguistic competence includes knowledge of the linguistic tools for saying what you want to say while being guided and limited by sociopragmatic rules and norms (Leech, 1983). Pragma-linguistic knowledge is essentially linguistic knowledge, but

more importantly it is the knowledge of how language can be used for pragmatic purposes. How do you formulate a request or suggestion? How to start a story-telling in a conversation? More generally, what are the conventional linguistic means used to express certain intentions? A person learning a second language may be pragmalinguistically deficient due to low overall language proficiency. For example, an ordinary phone request from Person A (“Where is your phone?”) does not require a very complex language, but low-level students may still have difficulty formulating a question. However, neutral and polite requests are linguistically much more complex: in addition to question formation, they require modals, if-clauses, and expressions such as “I was wondering”. Being able to produce these language features requires more than a basic level of language competence. If the learner’s proficiency is low and they have not yet acquired English modals (can, might, want, etc.), their linguistic toolkit for making requests in English will be limited. Having sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge is important but not sufficient for successful language use. Both types of knowledge need to be matched, i.e. language users need to be able to use the right kind of linguistic tools given social rules (Taguchi, 2012; Taguchi & Yamaguchi, 2019). For example, it is useful to know what linguistic options are available for making requests and for softening or strengthening them, but this knowledge needs to be linked to sociopragmatic knowledge of how to speak to a particular interlocutor under particular circumstances. Language users also need to be able to access their knowledge quickly and effortlessly so that they can comprehend and produce language under the time pressure of real-time speech. Sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge are useful concepts, but they are not detailed enough to explain how language users adjust their language to the other speaker/s and the situation. There are other factors like speech acts, politeness, implicatures, etc. to have a broader understanding of what and how to speak.

2.1. Speech Acts

There are some basic concepts included in the content of pragmatics, and these concepts help us understand the revolving wheels in this subfield of linguistics. Speech act theory is one of them, and it argues that language includes more than just the semantic structure of words and sentences. This theory examines the use of language by considering the action and intention dimensions of speech (Searle, 1969). Sentences in communication not only mean something, but also have the purpose of performing certain actions. Therefore, the term "speech act" emphasizes the operational aspect of language use (Can, 2022).

Linguists like John Searle and J. L. Austin laid the foundation for the Speech Act Theory. In his book "How to Do Things with Words", Austin (1962) argued that language not

only has an explanatory function, but a function of making what he calls “acts of speech” or “acts of language”. For example, in a sentence we not only mean something, but also make a contract, make a request or make an offer. Speech Act Theory is mainly based on three main categories:

- Illocutionary Act: This refers to the action taken by the speaker to achieve a particular intention or purpose. For example, by saying “I’m sorry” we express an apology.
- Locutionary Act: Expresses the basic grammatical and semantic components of speech. In other words, it is the grammatical and semantic structure of a sentence.
- Perlocutionary Act: It expresses the effect of speech on the listeners. That is, it includes the changes that occur in the thoughts, feelings, and behaviours of the listeners as a result of communication (Searle, 1969).

Speech Act Theory helps us understand the complexity of communication and evaluate intentions, motives and interaction in language use. It is a means of analysis not only for the surface level but also the deep layers of communication, allowing us to understand how effective communication takes place.

People modify their way of speaking to match the recipient primarily in order to preserve social concord. This adaptation takes place whenever communication occurs with another individual, yet it has been extensively scrutinized within the context of speech acts (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969, 1976). A speech act involves utilizing language to achieve a certain outcome in the real world, or as defined by Austin (1962), “how to accomplish things using word” (p. 1). These speech acts encompass various linguistic functions like making requests, offering apologies, expressing refusals, presenting suggestions, voicing complaints, delivering criticisms, expressing gratitude, offering compliments, extending congratulations, exchanging greetings, and others.

Speakers also incorporate mitigated language, known as hedges, to temper the request’s impact and lessen the pressure placed on the listener. All these strategies collectively work to enhance the politeness of the request, diminishing the insistence and thereby heightening the chance of approval. Nevertheless, the query remains: what sociopragmatic benchmarks do speakers utilize to gauge the appropriate level of politeness? Brown and Levinson (1987) pinpointed three pivotal factors that speakers use when gauging their relationship with the listener to determine the tone of their speech acts:

Power: Refers to the power dynamic between speaker and hearer. High Power indicates hearer's superiority, Equal Power denotes balanced control, and Low Power implies speaker's dominance. Interaction with higher-power individuals requires more politeness.

Social Distance: Reflects closeness between speaker and hearer, encompassing familiarity and shared group membership. High Social Distance applies to strangers, Medium Social Distance suggests some commonality, and Low Social Distance pertains to close relations.

Degree of Imposition: Measures imposition on the hearer. High Imposition requests impose significant burden, while Low Imposition entails minimal inconvenience.

These contextual factors vary across cultures. Notably, Brown and Levinson's (1987) approach has faced criticism for being overly strategic. Nonetheless, some politeness aspects are culturally required. Additionally, factors like age, entitlement, and relative cultural norms influence speech (Bardovi-Harlig, 2014; Bella, 2014). Research into sociopragmatic rules is ongoing, offering a partial explanation rather than a strict system.

Language teaching is a complex process that is not only limited to teaching the structures and rules of the language, but also aims to improve communication skills. At this point, "Speech Act Theory" plays an important role in language teaching. This theory provides teachers and students with a framework for explaining not only the semantic aspect of language, but also how language works in the real world and how it is used in communication. With the operational dimension of language, Speech Act Theory emphasizes that language is not only about the ordering of words and sentences, but also has the purpose of performing certain actions. Teaching students how much of a sentence expresses "what is meant to be done" helps them understand the intent and purpose in communication. With this guidance, students communicate more effectively and fluently in real life (Taguchi, 2013). The application of Speech Act Theory in language teaching involves teaching students how language is used for different purposes. Teaching students different speaking purposes, such as making offers, begging, apologizing, making suggestions, and language patterns that express these goals helps them develop pragmatic competence for real-life communication skills. This approach focuses on students' understanding of intentions and subtexts in communication, in addition to grammar and vocabulary (Roever et al, 2014; Taguchi, 2015).

The research covering pragmatics primarily focuses on the investigation of learner performance with speech acts in L2 pragmatics. The most extensively studied speech acts are requests, refusals, and apologies, while others have received less attention. In terms of developmental progression, learners evolve from simple, minimally tailored speech acts to

more intricate and context-sensitive productions. Kasper and Rose (2002) outline five stages of speech act development:

Pre-basic stage: Learners with limited L2 competence employ linguistic and non-linguistic means to convey intentions, without adapting to interlocutors.

Formulaic stage: Learners use basic linguistic forms, like frequent phrases or simple verbs, displaying simplicity and lacking variation in politeness.

Unpacking stage: Learners acquire a broader range of pragmalinguistic tools, using conventional indirectness in requests. Utterances become longer with some situational adaptation, although full mapping of pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics is not achieved.

Pragmatic expansion: Proficiency growth widens pragmalinguistic choices. Speech act complexity increases, attaining higher politeness levels. Mismatches between sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge might occur due to excessive speech content.

Fine-tuning: Learners master various pragmalinguistic tools, accurately aligning them with sociopragmatic rules. Their speech adapts to different situations and interlocutors.

Kasper and Rose's (2002) sequence indicates that early-stage learners' pragmatic abilities are limited by overall proficiency. Their linguistic toolbox and processing load impact complex speech act formulation. With increased pragmalinguistic resources and streamlined language production, learners craft longer, more intricate speech acts. Less experienced learners tend to be concise and direct, while higher competence results in extended, nuanced pragmatic production.

Much like other facets of acquiring a second language, the phenomenon of transferring skills from one's first language (henceforth L1) is also evident in L2 pragmatics. Sociopragmatic transfer is challenging to evade for (adult) learners since they possess fully developed knowledge of sociopragmatics rooted in their L1, which they initially resort to when navigating the L2 context. Pragmalinguistic transfer, however, presents a distinct scenario. Initial-stage learners have such a limited array of pragmalinguistic tools that transfer becomes impractical (Kasper & Rose, 2002). As proficiency grows, learners might apply L1 sociopragmatic-pragmalinguistic mappings, as seen in Shivel's (2011) investigation. For instance, learners utilized U.S.-style greetings and requests in a Spanish service setting, whereas the local preference favored swift and direct task completion.

Similar to broader second language acquisition trends, progress in L2 pragmatics does not invariably follow a linear trajectory from limited competence to nearly native-like proficiency. In an analysis involving learners of L2 Modern Greek, Bella (2014) identified that

even advanced learners at CEFR C1 level exhibited noticeable disparities in their use of refusal strategies compared to native Greek speakers. Notably, some strategies were underutilized while others were overused. Moreover, pragmatics is closely intertwined with individuals' self-presentation and desired image projection. This can lead learners to intentionally deviate from target language pragmatic norms due to discomfort. An illustrative study by Siegal (1996) on Western women learning L2 Japanese revealed instances where participants chose not to adopt the conventional female Japanese speech style, deeming it incongruent with their identity as equals to men. Kim (2014) recounted the challenges Korean ESL learners faced in employing first names when addressing professors in a Western academic context where such informality was standard. Some learners deliberately avoided this due to personal discomfort, intentionally importing their L1 norm while flouting the local sociopragmatic norm.

Sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge constitute the fundamental components of pragmatic proficiency, linking language to societal conventions. Language users assess social dynamics and modify their expressions accordingly. This process can be challenging for second language learners due to their evolving sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic skills. This may result in deviations from the desired target language norm, potentially causing them to be perceived as impolite or generally unconventional in their second language interactions (Kasper & Rose, 2002; Shively, 2011; Taguchi, 2015). While extensive research has been conducted on speech acts and politeness, not all aspects revolve around politeness. Beyond the realm of politeness, language users employ alternative methods to convey indirectness, such as hinting, and adopt various strategies to convey meanings that are not strictly literal.

2.2. Non-literal Speech: Implicature

The study area of pragmatics also concerns with the importance of interactants' speaking appropriately and understanding indirect language in communication. People often use non-literal language to convey underlying meanings. This is known as conversational implicature, a concept introduced by philosopher Grice (1975). According to Grice's (1975) conversational maxims, people generally assume that communication is cooperative, truthful, relevant, and clear. However, implicature occurs when these maxims are intentionally disregarded, implying additional meanings. For instance, when a parent claims to have asked their child "a thousand times," they are flouting the Maxim of Quality, suggesting they have had to ask more often than expected. The listener's role is to infer these implied meanings. Violating the Maxim of Quantity in communication leads to intriguing implicatures. For

instance, when B is asked about their thoughts on dinner at a new restaurant and responds by saying, “The waiters were friendly,” they are not providing sufficient information. By emphasizing only one aspect of the experience and omitting other important details, B indirectly criticizes the other aspects, implying dissatisfaction with the rest of the dining experience. Likewise, violating the Maxim of Relation results in implicature. When one person responds with an apparently unrelated statement, it is the listener’s task to deduce the implied meanings. For instance, replying to the question “How do you like my new dress?” with “I can’t believe how cold it’s been.” appears irrelevant, but a skilled communicator can understand that this intentional shift of topic reflects a reluctance to discuss the suggested subject and probably indicates a negative view of the new dress. Lastly, flouting the Maxim of Manner involves responding indirectly. For instance, when one peer asks another to proofread a final project task and receives the response, “I need to sleep early because I have an important exam in the morning,” the question is not directly addressed. Yet, a skilled communicator would understand the implied negative response due to the abundance of reasons given for not complying. As could be seen in these examples, conversational implicature is prevalent in communication, making it crucial for learners to interpret instances of non-literal language and grasp the implied meanings effectively.

Taguchi and Yamaguchi (2019) present a comprehensive review of research on second language implicature. Notable findings include the significance of implicature comprehension proficiency and the supportive role of conventional responses. A crucial determinant of implicature comprehension is the learner’s proficiency level. Research by Roever et al. (2014) revealed that high-proficiency learners possessed five times the implicature comprehension ability of beginners. Proficiency was observed to have a stronger impact on implicature comprehension compared to producing speech acts and recognizing routine phrases. Though proficiency aids in processing implicature, Taguchi and colleagues (Taguchi, 2011; 2012; Taguchi et al., 2013) identified additional factors influencing implicature difficulty. They demonstrated that implicature comprehension is easier when the implied meaning aligns with the propositional meaning and when the implied meaning is conventionally expressed. For instance, conventional implicatures in refusals (e.g., “Do you want to come shopping with me?” – “I have to wash the dishes.”) were better understood than less conventional ones involving opinions (e.g., “How was the weather during your trip?” – “I’m glad I had an umbrella.”).

The researchers argue that more conventional implicatures are simpler to interpret due to listeners implicitly recognizing that responding to an invitation with a statement typically

indicates a refusal. In contrast, non-conventional responses require activating background knowledge, such as associating umbrella with rainy weather during a trip. Shared conventionality between a learner's first language and second language also significantly affects comprehension. Unconventional patterns, like indirect criticism through praise ("What did you think of his school?" – "The meeting room was nice."), can be challenging in some languages but can be taught effectively, as shown by Bouton (1999). Overall, L2 implicature research indicates that learners must employ diverse resources, including their grasp of discourse norms, background knowledge, and language skills, to decipher implied meanings. The greater the disparity between propositional and implied meanings and the less conventional the implicature, the harder it is to interpret.

2.3. Routine Formulae

Pragmatic competence also involves familiarity with set phrases linked to specific situations and social roles, termed routine formulae or conventional expressions. These phrases recur consistently in similar contexts and forms. Examples like "how are you?," "thank you for having me," and "can I get you anything else?" are associated with particular situations: greeting, expressing gratitude for hospitality, and serving in food encounters. Routine formulae can closely align with distinct social roles and situations. For instance, "no, thanks, I'm full" is strictly used to decline food offers during meals. In contrast, "how are you doing?" is limited only by its role as a greeting, adaptable to various settings. The fixed nature of routine formulae varies. "Thanks a lot" is unalterable, while "I'm full" allows slight modifications (pretty/quite/really full). Some formulae are highly flexible, potentially challenging their status as formulae, like "I am/was wondering if...," which can have countless completions (Taguchi & Roever, 2017).

Routine formulae present a dual advantage and challenge for language learners due to their fixed nature. They serve as both a helpful tool and a potential stumbling block. These formulae allow learners to exceed their current language proficiency. Even beginners, unfamiliar with most aspects of a language, can quickly use expressions like "how are you?" as greetings. This is because learners acquire routine formulae as whole chunks, allowing them to store and recall them efficiently. The clear link between the chunk and its meaning, along with its high frequency of use, makes it easy to use (Roever, 2012). Dechert (1983) likens these formulae to "safety islands" that provide learners refuge amidst unfamiliar language. However, the rigidity of these formulae leaves little room for errors. Bardovi-Harlig (2014) has demonstrated that learners can make mistakes in producing longer or more complex formulae,

potentially due to memory limitations. Proficiency does influence routine knowledge, though less so than with implicature and speech acts. Advanced learners outperformed beginners in recognizing routine formulae, while the advantage in implicature and speech acts was more substantial. Interestingly, Roever (2012) found that short-term exposure, even just three months, significantly enhances learners' recognition of routine formulae. This is likely due to the high frequency and utility of these expressions in the target language context.

3. Teaching Materials and Tests for Pragmatics

There are various tools that are applicable for designing activities aimed at instructing and evaluating L2 pragmatics. Most of these tools were initially designed for research in pragmatics but can equally serve educational and evaluative purposes. These instruments can be categorized into two main types: receptive tools, which evaluate learners' comprehension of pragmatic meaning, and productive tools, which encourage learners to practice generating pragmatic meaning (Taguchi, 2013; 2015). Examples of receptive tools encompass tasks involving metapragmatic judgment and multiple-choice questions, while productive tools include activities such as discourse completion tasks, role plays, and elicited conversations, as depicted in Figure 2.

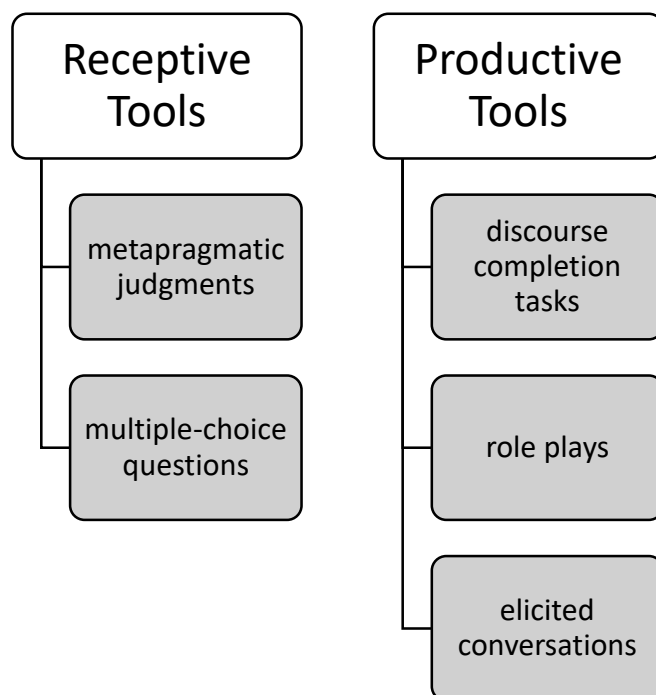


Figure 2. Tools for teaching and testing L2 pragmatics

Teaching materials and test exercises for L2 pragmatics and interactional competence must fulfill a fundamental and essential criterion: they must establish a contextual framework. The essence of pragmatics revolves around the utilization of language within a specific context,

as the primary concept of pragmatics is how context shapes our speech patterns (Roever 2005; Taguchi, 2012; 2013). Our way of speaking varies when interacting with friends versus acquaintances, during social gatherings versus business meetings, face-to-face or online conversations, and based on the topic and communication goal. Consequently, any activities or tasks in pragmatics must consider these elements, much like grammar tasks need to indicate the necessity of using plurals or simple past tense. As educators, we need to involve there main aspects of context into our designs: the physical context (where – when – how); the social context (who to whom); and the goal of the interaction (why or for what purpose) (Taguchi, 2012).

In the context of effective teaching of L2 pragmatics, the physical setting plays a significant role. This encompasses where the communication occurs (like an office, hospital, living room), communication channels (face to face, phone, online, email), and potentially the timing. The way one approaches seeking help from a friend’s door at 3 am versus 3 pm involves different pragmatic considerations. The social context also holds importance and involves clarifying the roles of the conversational participants (e.g., student-professor, housemates, father-son). Additionally, it is crucial to define the aspects of social context based on Brown and Levinson’s (1987) framework: Power, (Social) Distance, and Imposition. Power is often implied in the social relationship (e.g., a manager holds more power than an employee, a teacher over a student), while peers like housemates, friends, or colleagues are typically equal in power. On the other hand, Social Distance is not inherently clear from individuals’ roles and necessitates explanation within the task. For instance, strangers and individuals who have not met before carry a high social distance, whereas those with significant social interaction (friends, housemates, family members) have low social distance. People who share some commonality but lack deep familiarity (like new co-workers, classmates who haven’t spoken, distant cousins seen infrequently) have medium social distance.

The level of imposition significantly impacts the politeness level of an utterance and should be evident from the context. As discussed previously, high imposition implies a substantial “cost” to the listener in terms of money, effort, time, or social standing. Generally, the more the listener must deviate from their usual activities, the higher the imposition. Borrowing a friend’s laptop for an hour, for example, is moderately imposing as it inconveniences them but not excessively. However, this imposition can escalate to high if the friend urgently needs the laptop, or become low if they do not require it immediately. Clearly stating this information in task prompts empowers teachers, testers, and researchers to

manipulate the imposition level. Particularly in research and testing contexts, ensuring that test-takers or participants perceive social context settings the same way as the researcher is essential, as cultural variations can lead to misinterpretations. Consequently, piloting with representatives from the target community is recommended. Lastly, it is crucial to define the purpose of the interaction. What is the speaker attempting to accomplish? In everyday conversations, individuals understand their intentions, but in pragmatics tasks, it is necessary to inform learners/participants about the objective of communication (Roever, 2005; Taguchi, 2013; Taguchi & Roever, 2017).

Incorporating these three main aspects might appear to make the task overly lengthy, but the aim is to maintain conciseness. This is less difficult than it seems, as not every aspect requires extensive elaboration. The subsequent example illustrates a scenario for a discourse completion task created to prompt a request:

Request item (adapted from Roever, 2005)

Jack is employed as a restaurant server. Although his shift is scheduled for this afternoon, he has been unwell and intends to visit a doctor. As his co-worker Kate is not assigned to work during the same period, Jack intends to request her to cover his shift. During their morning break, Jack is seated beside Kate.

What would Jack probably say?

In general, the depiction of the communication context should span approximately one paragraph. If it extends beyond this, there is a risk of transforming it into a reading comprehension test, which respondents are unlikely to read carefully. While it is possible to augment the description with images or videos, for everyday classroom situations or cost-effective assessments, a concise, lucid, yet comprehensive written explanation suffices. To ensure respondents can visualize the scenario and engage with their response, it is generally advisable to incorporate both male and female names in the scenarios. Most scenarios can include a mix of genders, with some involving same-gender interactions. Lastly, it is highly recommended to pre-test scenarios with a small group of individuals, ideally resembling the research learners, participants or test takers. This step ensures that the tasks are coherent and free from ambiguity or oddness communication (Roever, 2005; Taguchi, 2013; 2015; Taguchi & Roever, 2017).

4. Conclusion

Pragmatics research has long examined the incorporation of L2 pragmatics into language instruction, accumulating substantial insights. Yet, these findings have not

significantly influenced teaching materials and classroom practice. Despite being an integral component of communicative competence and being acknowledged in significant frameworks like the CEFR, pragmatic instruction is scarcely implemented in educational settings (Bardovi-Harlig, 2014; Kim, 2014; Taguchi, 2013; 2015). Several factors contribute to this deficiency. Primarily, many teachers lack awareness of pragmatics as a systematic element of language competence within the curriculum. Teacher training rarely covers pragmatics, and instructional materials do not incorporate it as a teachable skill. Consequently, there is inadequate encouragement and support for teachers to impart pragmatics, even if they are inclined to do so. Furthermore, most language assessments do not specifically evaluate pragmatics, leading to a lack of positive washback from assessments to the classroom (Roever & Dai, 2021).

The current research undeniably demonstrates that pragmatics can be effectively taught, leading to enhanced pragmatic understanding among learners. Taguchi (2015) conducted an analysis of 58 instructional investigations utilizing pre-post designs, measuring learners' pragmatic proficiency before and after instruction to calculate progress. In her review, she reveals that 57 out of these studies exhibited improved learning outcomes as a consequence of the instruction. By looking at the results of recent studies (e.g. Plonsky & Oswald, 2014; Plonsky & Zhuang, 2019; Taguchi, 2015), it can be claimed that sparing instructional time on pragmatics helps learners become pragmatically competent language learners.

As pragmatics brings a social and contextual dimension to the study of language, pragmatics teaching has an important role in the field of language education. With the globalized communication opportunities, language learners feel the urge to communicate effectively in diverse interpersonal situations, and this increases the importance of appropriate use of pragmatic aspects of language. Therefore, researchers, teachers, educators, and curriculum designers need to look for alternative ways of teaching language pragma-friendly.

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