

Pragmatic Competence of Request: A Critical Overview

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Abstract – Since pragmatic competence facilitates the process of communication and improves the communicative competence in English learners, this paper intended to study one of the speech acts, namely request, to investigate its effectiveness in developing students' pragmatic competence. The present paper critically covers the pragmatic competence of request by perusing the related literature and the studies have been conducted in the area. According to Schmidt and Richards (1980), "speech act theory has to do with the functions and uses of language" (p. 129). Byon believes that the speech act of request is "a directive that embodies an effort on the part of the speaker to get the hearer to do something, generally for a speaker's goal" (2004, p. 1674).

Keywords: Communicative Competence, Explicit Instruction, Pragmatic Competence, Pragmatic Competence of Request, Speech Act

I. INTRODUCTION

In the core of the philosophy of language, the term pragmatics was originally used (Morris, 1938) and then divided into sociolinguistics and other related fields and it focuses on people's comprehension and production of a speech act or communicative act in a speech context.

Pragmatics was defined by Levinson (1983) as the study of linguistic features in relation to the meaning-based use of the language. His definition suggests that this field of study focuses on both linguistic features and on the meaning of language use to clarify and discriminate two meanings and intents in every utterance or verbal communication act.

One of them is the sentence meaning or the informative intent, and the other is the speaker meaning or the communicative intent (Leech, 1983). Leech (1983) propounded to classify pragmatics into the pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics components. According to Leech, pragmalinguistics refers to the supplies for transferring communicative acts and interpersonal and relational meanings. Sociopragmatics refers to "the sociological interface of pragmatics" (Leech, 1983, p. 15), which deals with the social realizations based on interpretations of participants and performances of communicative action.

Crystal (1997, p. 301) believed that, "pragmatics is 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 have on other participants in the act of communication." This description implies the theory of Morris

(1938), the semiotic conceptualization of pragmatics, in which pragmatics explains one side of the semiotic triangle: the relation between the sign and its interpreters or users.

II. PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE

Chomsky (1980) primarily defined the notion of pragmatic competence as the “knowledge of conditions and manner of appropriate use (of the language), in conformity with various purpose” (p. 224). The notion was realized in contrast to grammatical competence that Chomsky defined as “the knowledge of form and meaning.” In opposition to Chomsky’s notions of performance and competence, Hymes (1972) proposed that communicative competence should be unified into language skill. Hymes (1972) claimed that not only communicative competence does deal with grammatical competence, but also with sociolinguistic competence.

As an important component of communicative competence, Canale and Swain (1980) thought of pragmatic competence. For decades communicative competence has been of great importance for discussion (Bachman, 1990; Canale, 1983; Canale and Swain, 1980; Faerch and Kasper, 1984; Hymes, 1972). Three components forms this model: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence.

The learners’ ability to make grammatically or phonologically precise sentences is referred to grammatical competence. The learners’ ability to precisely show their responsiveness to linguistic variation in various social situations is referred to sociolinguistic competence. Simply, the ability to successfully “get one’s message across” is referred to strategic competence. In Canale and Swain’s model, pragmatic competence is clarified as sociolinguistic competence and introduced as the knowledge of contextually acceptable language use. Canale, later, developed this definition to encompass “illocutionary competence, or the knowledge of the pragmatic conventions for performing acceptable language functions, and sociolinguistic competence, or knowledge of the sociolinguistic conventions for performing language functions appropriately in a given context” (p. 90).

A. Language Instruction and Pragmatics

The opportunity to improve second language pragmatics for second- or foreign-language learners comes from two basic directions: being exposed to input and producing output via target language use in the classroom and a determined educational intervention to acquire pragmatics (Kasper and Rose, 2002). Compared to real life situation outside the educational setting, language classrooms have been realized to be poor contexts to develop pragmatics in a target language since they usually provide little interaction with target language native speakers.

This restriction inserts huge necessities in instruction that probably cannot be achieved via the traditional form of classroom.

Comparing to second-language learners, foreign-language learners have limited exposure. Activities in EFL classes often orbit around decontextualized language exercises,

which do not pave the way for the learners to be exposed to the sorts of sociolinguistic input that accelerates pragmatic competence acquisition. Additionally, it has found out that without central attention on pragmatics instruction many components of pragmatic competence are impossible to be acquired (Kasper, 2000). Schmidt (1993) proposed that it is not sufficient to be simply exposed to the target language; relevant contextual factors and pragmatic functions are often not crucial to learners, so are possibly not noticed in spite of long exposure. Moreover, Schmidt pointed out that even the first language pragmatics learning is softened by a various number of strategies that are used by caregivers to teach communicative competence to the children, i.e. children learning first language pragmatics accomplish so with something more than just target language exposure. Bardovi-Harlig (2001) suggested the need for pragmatic instruction by proving that second language learners who are deprived of pragmatic instruction vary noticeably from native speakers in their production of pragmatics and the target language comprehension.

As mentioned earlier, the pragmatics attachment to the classroom could overcome confined opportunities for competence development in a foreign language situation. Additionally, permanent practice results in faster and more efficacious sociopragmatic acquisition and pragmlinguistic knowledge in interlanguage system of the learners.

Kasper and Rose (2002) mentioned that students may extend the target language pragmatic competence through two conditions observed in the classroom: learners may benefit from input exposure and production via instructional activities not inevitably aimed for improvement of a pragmatic function, and they may also benefit as an outcome of planned educational flow propelled to pragmatics acquisition.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This study applies different theoretical models. Based on the work of Schmidt (1990, 1993, 1994, and 1995) the noticing hypothesis is the base for studying the impact of explicit instruction in second language pragmatic knowledge acquisition. In this study, the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1987) and the speech acts theory of Austin (1962), described in the following sections, supply a framework to study learners' pragmatic productions.

A. The Noticing Hypothesis

Schmidt's (1990, 1993, 1994, and 1995) noticing hypothesis focuses on the role of conscious process in acquisition of the L2. It deals with the primary step of input (the extant L2 resources in the learner's context) processing and the necessary conditions for input (Schmidt, 1995). Schmidt's believed that learning entails awareness at noticing level. Schmidt's noticing hypothesis is considered for input initial recognition and concentrates on the significance of consciousness and attention in second language acquisition (1993). Schmidt proposed that in order to purify intake from input and provide its availability for further processing, related input must be noticed (Schmidt, 1995, and 2001).

Some researchers have already suggested that language learning is an initially unconscious process (Chomsky, 1965, 1986; Krashen, 1982). The attention paid to subconscious processes in learning a language brought about the prior foreign language teaching methods rejection that stressed the rules and patterns of a target language within a kind of pedagogy based on meaning with little or no grammar explanation, correction of error, or focused practice (e.g., the Natural Approach). Some other researchers (Fisk and Schneider, 1984; Kihlstorm, 1984), however, defend the idea, which also exists in the work of Schmidt, that “there is no learning without attention” (Schmidt, 1995, p. 9). Moreover, different consciousness theories (Gardner, 1985; Schmidt, 1990) have claimed a vital position for consciousness in coping with inexperienced behavior, new information, and learning.

Schmidt, in second-language acquisition studies, found evidence that intensifies the role of consciousness in language learning. The study by Leeman, Arteagoitia, Friedman and Doughty (1995), conducted on the preterit/ imperfect difference, found that intensified input in a communicative methodology of teaching covering no special rules discussion resulted in higher rates of frequent and accurate use of past tense forms in Spanish by learners comparing to those who were merely received the communicative teaching technique.

For acquiring pragmatics in second or foreign language, Schmidt (2001) mentioned that global alertness to the input of target language is not enough; attention has to be paid to specific learning materials, or “directed to whatever evidence is relevant for a particular domain. . . . In order to acquire pragmatics, one must attend to both the linguistic forms of utterances and the relevant social and contextual features with which they are associated.” (p. 30). Additionally, Schmidt discriminated the concepts of noticing from the concept of understanding. Noticing implies the “conscious registration of the occurrence of some event,” while understanding is defined as “the recognition of some general principle, rule, or pattern.” “Noticing refers to surface-level phenomena and item learning, while understanding refers to deeper levels of abstraction related to (semantic, syntactic, or communicative) meaning, system learning” (p. 29).

Schmidt (1995) extensively discriminated the concepts of noticing from the concept of understanding as follows:

In pragmatics, awareness that on a particular occasion someone says to their interlocutor something like, ‘I’m terribly sorry to bother you, but if you have time could you please look at this problem?’ is a matter of noticing. Relating the various forms used to their strategic development in the service of politeness and recognizing their co-occurrence with elements of context such as social distance, power, level of imposition and so on, are all matter of understating (p. 30).

B. Speech Acts Theory

Speech acts is one of the most prominent notions in the study of language use (Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper, 1989). Speech acts have been investigated from various viewpoints, such as philosophy, linguistics, and cultural anthropology. Based on a historical

perspective, speech acts study roots in the language philosophy (Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper, 1989). The main insights suggested as the results of the work of philosophers (Austin, 1962; Grice, 1975; Searle, 1969) are founded on the assumptions that the minimal units of human communication are not linguistic expressions, but rather the performance of definite sorts of acts, including greeting, asking questions, apologizing, and requesting.

In the core of the framework of human communication theory, particular utterances have been tagged as “speech acts.” Austin (1962) and Searle (1969, 1975), linguistic philosophers, studied and analyzed the speech acts. Austin (1962) described the speech act's nature that “In saying something, a speaker also does something.” Austin (1962) proposed that the speech act performance encompasses the performance of three sorts of acts: a locutionary act that carries the utterance's literal meaning; an illocutionary act that carries out a specific social function involved in the written text or utterance; and a perlocutionary act, including the result produced by the utterance within the interlocutor of the message. Moreover, Austin specified these acts as “the *locutionary* act . . . which has a meaning; the *illocutionary* act which has a certain force in saying something; the *perlocutionary* act which is the achieving of certain effects by saying something” (p. 120). For example, in uttering, “I am cold,” the speaker produces the locutionary act of declaring something that mirrors his or her present physical state. He/she may also produce the illocutionary act of allocating some worth to this act via requesting a jacket, for example. Additionally, the speaker may produce the perlocutionary act of making what Austin referred to as “certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience” (p. 10), so that the audience may react as the speaker desired. Austin believed that words carry more than produce a statement of fact; “to say” something is “to do” something (p. 12).

Following Austin's studies, Searle (1969) caused a great improvement in speech act theory. He classified speech acts into five classes. Committing the speaker to the truth of some proposition called *Assertives* (e.g., claiming, announcing, reporting, and so on). Attempts to cause some impact via the hearer' action called *Directives* (e.g., ordering, requesting, and so on). Committing the speaker to some future action called *Commissives* (e.g., offering, refusing, and so on). Expressions of some psychological state called *Expressives* (e.g., thanking, apologizing, and so on). Bringing about the conformity between reality and the propositional content called *Declarations* (e.g., dismissing, sentencing, and so on).

Searle (1975) claimed that a successful speech act must meet particular conditions called “felicity conditions” including the satisfactory form and context of an utterance if it is to do what is desired. For example, at a wedding ceremony, a man and a woman exchange vows and rings; their explicit expressions such as “I do” demonstrate their decision to be married, but it is the officiated pronouncement that they become husband and wife that makes them so. The pronouncement itself is the actual speech that produces the union, and the rest is the context necessary for the speech act to be effective.

During the last two decades, as a theoretical foundation for many interlanguage pragmatic and cross-cultural studies, speech act theory has been applied. Achiba (2003) mentioned the significance of speech act theory for pragmatics studies:

According to speech act theory, speakers perform illocutionary acts by producing utterances. An illocutionary act is a particular language function performed by an utterance. That is, through their utterances speakers convey communicative intentions, such as requests, apologies, promises, advice, compliments, offers, refusals, compliments and thanking. The study of speech acts provides a useful means of relating linguistic form and communicative intent (p. 2).

C. Politeness and Speech Acts

Speech acts have been defined from different viewpoints, and some researchers have believed that speech acts are governed by universal principles of cooperation and politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983). Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed the theory of politeness, a thorough construct to analyze the speech acts realization and the various criteria affecting it. From this perspective, researchers have applied politeness theory based on the fields of cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics (Brown and Levinson, 1987) to recognize and study the speech act behaviors in both native and non-native speakers.

Brown and Levinson demonstrated their theoretical framework via presenting different examples from three languages: American and British English; Tamil from South India; and Tzeltal from Chiapas, Mexico. Their model considered Cooperative Principle validity for language use suggested by Grice (1975), a scholar who documented how a favored conversation can take place between interlocutors. Grice (1975) introduced four principles or maxims that empower speakers to interact most efficiently: quality, quantity, relation, and manner. Quality means be sincere, be non-spurious, and speak the truth. Quantity refers to the required amount. Relation refers to relevance, and manner means be explicit or to refrain obscurity and ambiguity. Since the violation possibility with these principles, politeness could be considered as the origin for “flouting” or deviating from these maxims. Grice supposed that these four rules are always noticed in any interaction.

In order to facilitate communication, speakers take their own needs and the recipient’s desires into account. Politeness theory is made based on the concept of *face*, introduced by Goffman (1967) and specified by Brown and Levinson as the “public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself” (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 61). The self-esteem maintenance and a person’s self-respect in private situations or public is referred to face, such as trying to avoid make others ashamed or making them feel uneasy. Politeness is conveyed in both linguistic and non-linguistic actions that individuals fulfill within interactions with the goal of maintaining both their own face and others'. Positive and negative face are included in the concept of face. Positive face deals with the fact that people wish that their possessions, goals, and achievements be admired, understood, or liked—they desire to be approved by others. Negative face deals with the fact that people wish that their actions be unrestricted or without invasions of territory (p.62).

Brown and Levinson believe that in order to defend the hearer’s face politeness strategies are developed. According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 69), face-threatening

acts (FTAs), acts that exceed the hearer's demand to conserve his or her self-respect and revere from others, are to be abstained or carried out merely with measures to alleviate the probability of offense.

Brown and Levinson also proposed some other factors as distance, power, and imposition that speakers are supposed to consider when performing the face-threatening act. Distance (D) refers to "social distance" between the speaker and hearer. It is a connection that originates from the contact frequency and kinds of interactions occurred between the interlocutors. Power (P) refers to an uneven relationship that directs the extent to which hearers can seek admission of their wishes at the expense of the speaker's wish. In the case of ranking (R), culture and context specify the rankings of impositions. Brown and Levinson proposed that D, P, and R factors are independent, relevant, and subsume all others (including authority, ethnic identity, friendship, occupation, situational, and status factors) that carry a basic impact on the accomplishment of face-threatening acts.

IV. SPEECH ACT OF REQUEST

Speech acts cover a lot of subcategories, such as requests, apologies, suggestions, compliments, greetings, etc. The research on pragmatics often interprets utterances in the case of special speech acts. The speech act of requesting, the focus of instruction in this study, has been studied many times. Since requesting imposes on the hearer, Trosborg (1994) defined it as an "impositive" speech act. "A request is an illocutionary act whereby a speaker (requester) conveys to a hearer (requestee) that he/she wants the requestee to perform an act, which is for the benefit of the speaker" (Trosborg, 1994, p. 187).

Blum-Kulka (1991, p. 256) specifies requests as "pre-event acts, intended to affect the hearer's behaviors;" based on this viewpoint, "an effective request is one for which the hearer recognizes the speaker's intent," and recognizes what he or she is expected to do.

Requests show expectation of the speakers towards some future verbal or non-verbal action, which the hearer is supposed to fulfill (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). Additionally, a request is a pre-incident act because the wanted result occur after the request is done. Requests are realized face-threatening acts not only for the requestee, whose ease of action can be prevented, but also for the requester, who endures the risk of losing face if the requestee does not tend to fulfill.

A person who requests something of a hearer means to carry out one or more of these possible purposes: action, goods, information, and permission (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). For instance, a hearer may be asked to do some action (e.g., "Would you please wash the dishes?"). Requesting goods is used when a hearer is desired to transfer an item or items (e.g., "Can I borrow your car?"). A request for information is not the same as a request for goods since the speaker is asking for verbal information (e.g., "Do you know where the bank is?"). The request for permission is applied when a hearer is asked to approve an action (e.g., "Can I take a week off?").

In order to avoid miscommunication, requestors should bear in mind that if the outcome of the request is proper according to common social norms. Familiarity with the

sociocultural norms of the community of the target language supports the language learners in selecting an acceptable request. If advanced language learners have not acquired the sociocultural norms of the community of the target language, they may make an ill-formed request.

Kim (1996) depicted the exigency of language learners' acquisition of the sociocultural norms of the community of the target language for fluid L2 communication as:

- Nonnative English Speaker: Could you please send the package for me?
- Native English speaker: Not a problem. I have some errands to do myself at the post office today anyway.
- Nonnative English speaker: I am terribly sorry. I wouldn't ask you this if I wasn't so busy.

The non-native English speaker's sentence of "I am terribly sorry" is not suitable in Kim's example. In order to make more sense under the norms of target language an expression like "thank you" would be appropriate. Several criteria can support a non-native English speaker's in using expressions like "thank you" such as proficiency, his or her experience in the community of the target language, and the realization of status between interlocutors. Experience in the community of the target language provides the opportunities for the language learners to be exposed to L2 pragmatic input and encountered with the proper responses on the part of native speakers.

A. Studies Focusing on Requests

An early study on development of pragmatic was Schmidt's (1983) three-year longitudinal research on a Japanese artist's English acquisition. The subject, Wes, lived in Hawaii. Schmidt understood that Wes used a restricted span of unanalyzed request formulas at the primary stage of his linguistic development. He also made use of a requestive marker like "please" as a marker of politeness. Schmidt noticed that Wes inserted Japanese pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic norms into L2 English. Schmidt realized that Wes experienced crucial development after living in Hawaii for three years. First, Wes did not apply progressive forms of the directive function any more, and enhanced his use of imperatives. Moreover, Wes elaborated the use of requests and used it in longer utterances. On the other hand, Schmidt found some non-native features in Wes's use of requests, such as the use of "Can I —?" (e.g., "Can I bring cigarette?" to convey the request of "Can you bring me the cigarette?").

Ellis (1992) studied two beginning English learners, an 11-year-old Pakistani boy and a 10-year-old Portuguese boy in classroom settings. Ellis found that they made use of direct requests more than all other directives. Conventionally indirect request forms (e.g., "Can I —?") were also noticed in their use of requests. During the period of observation,

nonconventional requests like hints were hardly used. In addition, the two boys could not systematically change their use of request sorts of forms based on the addressee; no recognition was made between hearers who were adult or peers. Despite showing some pragmatic achievements such as the use of indirect requests on the part of the boys, Ellis believed that the scope of request strategies these boys had arrived during the period of observation remained more limited than that of adult native speakers. For this confined progress Ellis suggested two accounts. First, Ellis contended that the two young learners were still in the acquiring process of pragmatic and what was needed to fulfill requests in an ESL situation was linguistic knowledge. Second, he claimed that the boys did not think of necessity to use strategies of elaborate request because they attended classroom settings and knew each other very well. However, the results of the study suggest that other studies with adults in ESL situations are required to grasp the final achievement of request strategies.

Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) conducted a study in which they examined how in an American university foreign graduate learners expanded skills of negotiation with their academic advisers over time. They claimed that in the case of adviser's suggestions nonnative students (NNSs) made more rejections than did the native students (NSs). NNSs more repeatedly applied rejections than NSs, probably because NNSs preferred to leave course suggestions to their advisers and later on respond to them, whereas NSs were probably more eager to begin course suggestions which resulted in fewer rejections by NSs. The mentioned various approaches to course suggestions showed that even high L2 proficient NNSs still confronted the challenge to apply proper form based on the sociocultural norms of applying suggestions in an American educational center. Additionally, it was found that NNSs also used improper excuses to turn down the suggestions of their academic advisers, mentioning that the course was either too hard or too easy. The results revealed that high L2 proficiency is not merely enough to develop pragmatic competence in NNSs; therefore advanced language proficiency does not necessarily lead to a sufficient level of pragmatic competence.

In a research, Hill (1997) studied 60 Japanese learners of English who promoted request strategies regarding different levels of L2 proficiency. According to the findings, in low proficiency groups learners preferred to make direct requests and as their L2 proficiency increased they tend to use fewer direct requests.

In summary, the above-discussed studies suggest that pragmatic competence mastery by NNSs is challenging and complicated. Learners of language with advanced proficiency still deal with the challenge of applying proper forms of a special target community, which suggests that language learners of advanced proficiency may not automatically arrive at corresponding levels of pragmatic competence.

B. Instruction and Pragmatic Development

Studying the methods of pragmatic instruction has chiefly been classified into two classes: *explicit* teaching, known as *deductive* teaching, and *implicit* teaching, or so-called *inductive* teaching (Rose, 1997). Based on the explicit teaching method, students involve in metapragmatic activities that centralize the principals of the target language. The implicit

teaching method does not bring about such opportunity. As discussed earlier, there is a proven demand for pragmatics instruction in foreign language classrooms. Thus, intervention of explicit pedagogical is believed to be one of the methods in which L2 learners can most effectively promote pragmatic competence.

Various studies have tested the impact of instructional intervention on pragmatic knowledge development. These studies have included pragmatic routines (Tateyama et al., 1997; Tateyama, 2001; Wildner-Bassett, 1994), pragmatic fluency (House, 1996), conversation closing (Bardolvi-Harlig et al., 1991), compliments (Billmyer, 1990; Rose and Kwai-fun, 2001), conversational implicature (Bouton, 1994; Kubota, 1995), apologies (Eslami, 2005; Olshtain and Cohen, 1990), and requests (Eslami et al., 2004; Rose, 1994; Fukuya, 1998). Most of these studies resulted in a positive effect on learners' pragmatic knowledge, which advocates the hypothesis that pragmatic knowledge can be developed or enhanced via systematic planned activities in the classroom.

Billmyer's (1990), as was one of the first interventional studies, studied adult Japanese females in the case of the impact of instruction on compliment and compliment responses. Billmyer's wanted to focus on the gaps by non-native speakers in interacting properly at advanced levels. All advanced English language participants were divided into two groups. During their ESL courses, one of the two groups received explicit instruction on English compliments for six hours while the control group did not receive this instruction. The study demonstrated that the learners who received the instruction could manage to present a greater number of compliments and manage more spontaneous compliments than the participants of the control group who complimented mostly in answering the task. Additionally, the participants who received the instruction used a more various list of adjectives and used more native speakers' principal of deflection strategies when answering the compliments. Billmyer found out that the instruction on English compliments and compliment response practically paved the way for the learners to formulate more suitable functions of speech act.

Lyster (1994) studied the impact of instruction on the sociolinguistic use of language in Grade 8 French immersion classes. Referring to the studies done in the domain of the language learning of immersion students, Lyster (1994) suggested that in spite of years of input and communicative opportunities in target language, the sociolinguistic competence of these learners-defined as "the ability to recognize and produce socially appropriate language in context" (p. 263)-maintained to be analogous to that of non-native speakers. In his research, Lyster studied the use of the French *tu/vous* in oral and written tasks in formal and informal situations. The learners benefited from the opportunities to rehearse applying French formal and informal registers in role-playing exercises and in writing letters of invitation or request to various individuals. Lyster's study proved that the learners who received treatment developed significantly their ability in using the formal *vous* when necessary in written and oral interaction. They also improved their consciousness of the sociostylistic recognition in the target language by presenting knowledge about the felicity of specific utterances in various situations. Lyster concluded that helping immersion learners be aware of French

sociolinguistic aspects and providing class-based contextualized practice resulted in more socially proper target language uses.

House (1996) studied advanced learners in English communication courses in teaching conversational routines. She contrasted the impact of implicit and explicit teaching techniques on the various linguistic devices acquisition to organize interactions such as greetings, gambits, and discourse strategies as a pragmatic proficiency measure. Focusing on the conversational routines and their uses, participants received metapragmatic information in the explicit group. On the other hand, in the implicit group, participants received no explanations on the pragmatic rules. House recognized that, in both treatment groups, participants increased their fluency in terms of beginning and shifting topics. Nevertheless, explicit group participants represented a broader array of strategies for refusing a last request. In spite of these achievements, both groups continued to have difficulties responding properly in conversations. Accordingly, House argued that the classroom context and the course length might not have establish enough practice and input in internalizing the pragmatic knowledge.

Tateyama et al. (1997) studied the functions teaching of routines formula *sumimasen*—and the same routine expressions in request strategies. In this study, a number of 27 students registered in a Japanese class at university level. The participants received two different treatments of explicit teaching and implicit teaching. Students who received explicit teaching were instructed how to use *sumimasen* and other analogous routine expressions, applied in request strategies, and watched a short film covering the target features. Handouts explaining the different usage of the routine formulas based on social situations were also delivered. In the implicit teaching group, students were not involved in any of the explicit metapragmatic activities, but they twice watched the same video clips that the explicit teaching group watched once. The results demonstrated a merit for the students in the explicit teaching group. Students who received explicit teaching outperformed the students in the implicit teaching group in terms of role-playing exercises and multiple-choice tests.

Takahashi (2001) conducted a study the impact of input enhancement on improving pragmatic competence and learning request strategies. Classroom tasks, aimed at making the learners attention on the target strategies in a specific way, increased the input. Four conditions of input including explicit teaching, form-search, form-comparison, and meaning-focused were considered. These varied input enhancement degree, with the explicit teaching situation representing the highest input enhancement degree and the meaning-focused condition the least. A total number of 138 Japanese college students who had been taught formal classroom instruction in English between seven and ten years. The outcomes of a quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test demonstrated that the learners in the explicit teaching group presented more use of the target forms than the learners in the other three groups. The outcomes confirmed the hypothesis that the input enhancement degree influences the learning of target request strategies and offered that the principals of the target pragmatic were most efficiently learned when a fairly high input enhancement degree was recognized with explicit teaching on pragmatics.

Eslami et al. (2004) scrutinized the impact of explicit metapragmatic instruction on the advanced EFL learners' comprehension of the speech acts of complaining, apologizing,

and requesting. Classroom tasks contained role playing, cooperative grouping, teacher-fronted discussions, and other pragmatically directed activities that developed the intended speech acts learning. The participants of the study were Iranian undergraduate students majoring in teaching English as a foreign language, with a group of American students that provided the baseline. The pre-post control group design was applied in this study. The results showed that the comprehension of students' speech act developed considerably, proving the claim that interlanguage pragmatic development is accelerated through explicit metapragmatic instruction.

Koike and Pearson (2005) studied the impact of teaching pragmatic knowledge via implicit or explicit pre-instruction, and implicit or explicit feedback on Spanish language learners. A number of 99 adult native speakers of English participated as the participants; 67 attended in the experimental groups and 32 attended in the control groups. Outcomes on the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test demonstrated that learners who received the explicit pre-instruction and explicit feedback significantly outperformed the other experimental group and the control group in multiple-choice items. In the case of open-ended dialogues, students who received implicit instruction with implicit feedback performed better. Moreover, the two post-tests showed that the groups that received feedback instruction, whether implicit or explicit, turned out to grasp a greater number of choices to make suggestions than the control group. The results of the study introduced a positive effect of pragmatic instruction on language learners' pragmatic competence development.

In a nutshell, the results of the mentioned studies highly support the pragmatics instruction need in language classrooms and suggest enough documents for the merits of pragmatic instruction.

V. CONCLUSION

The review of the literature implies that pragmatic competence development plays a notable role in the second or foreign language learning. Additionally, a need for covering instruction in pragmatics is completely felt in language learning contexts. Findings based on the studies focusing on the improvement of pragmatic ability and pragmatic knowledge in a second or foreign language were also taken into account in proving the accelerating function of instruction in pragmatics, particularly in the EFL classroom, where developing target language pragmatic competence receives limited opportunities.

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