1 Second Language Pragmatics: An Introduction

Second language (L2) pragmatics is an interdisciplinary field involving pragmatics and L2 research. Pragmatics is a key domain in linguistics; there are many published definitions, but the most commonly adopted one in L2 pragmatics was provided by Crystal (1997: 301), who defined it 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." This definition highlights that both speaker meaning and recipient uptake should be included in pragmatics research (Kasper and Ross, 2013). Pragmatics is generally distinguished into pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics, with the former addressing the relations between linguistic forms and their function, while the latter addresses the relations between linguistic choices and social constraints (Ren, 2018a). Following the convention in applied linguistics and L2 pragmatics (Kasper and Rose, 2002; Ross and Kasper, 2013; Taguchi and Roever, 2017), in this Element I use L2 as a cover term to refer to an additional language of any status, whether foreign, second, third, fourth, heritage language, or lingua franca.

Second language pragmatics investigates learners' pragmatic competence, which is defined by Thomas (1983: 92) as "the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context." Although many L2 pragmatics studies have examined pragmatic competence from a stable perspective in terms of individuals' abilities (see reviews in Kasper, 2006; Taguchi, 2017, 2019), Thomas' definition actually points to both speaker and hearer meaning in interaction. Nevertheless, it neglects other semiotic and multimodal resources that are used in interaction, such as emoticons and emojis in digital communication. To reflect this, I propose a downgrading of the language part in Thomas' definition and the addition of an appropriateness dimension, thus defining pragmatic competence as the ability to use linguistic, semiotic, and multimodal resources effectively and appropriately to achieve a communicative purpose, and to understand such uses in interaction. It has to be explained that language is also a semiotic resource, but here I would like to highlight it and therefore use linguistic and semiotic in parallel. I agree with Taguchi (2019) that pragmatic competence is best understood as a multi-dimensional and multi-layered construct that entails three main components: "(1) linguistic and sociocultural knowledge of what forms to use in what context; (2) interactional abilities to use the knowledge in a flexible, adaptive manner corresponding to changing context; and (3) agency to make an informed decision on whether or not to implement the knowledge in
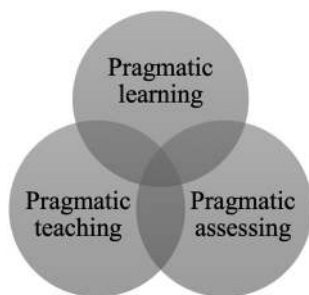
Figure 1 Branches of L2 pragmatics

the community" (Taguchi, 2019: 4). However, I would like to add other semiotic and multimodal knowledge to the first component.

Although many studies focus on acquisitional aspects in L2 pragmatics (e.g., González-Lloret, 2020; Kasper and Rose, 2002; Ren, 2018a), the field is in fact much broader, consisting of pragmatic learning, pragmatic teaching, and pragmatic assessing (see Figure 1).

The main aims of this Element are twofold. First, it will provide an up-to-date overview of the current research on learning, teaching, and assessing L2 pragmatics, as well as learners' cognitive processes during such procedures. However, I do not intend to provide a diachronic overview of the history of the field, but rather to focus on some of its key topics. In addition, when reviewing existing works I have deliberately skewed towards publications in this century. Second, it will explore topics that need particular attention in L2 pragmatics to develop the field both in scope and in depth, in turn to reflect and promote the advancement of its two higher-order fields: pragmatics and L2 research. I also showcase two projects in progress before discussing the future directions and suggestions.

2 Second Language Pragmatics Learning

This section introduces works investigating learners' L2 pragmatic learning, starting with pragmatic production and followed by pragmatic perception. Research modality in L2 pragmatics learning studies is also examined in this section.

2.1 Pragmatic Production

Kasper and Rose (2002: 117) pointed out that L2 pragmatics was "heavily outweighed by the proliferation of studies on pragmatic production." This trend remains and reflects the preference for production in pragmatics in

general. The skew towards production is understandable, since production can provide more nuanced and easily observed data than perception, and in many cases production involves perception of the other interlocutor's communication.

Production studies often investigate learners' production across different influential factors, such as L2 proficiency, learning environment (study abroad vs. study at home), and length of stay abroad. They have yielded controversial and sometimes contradictory findings with respect to the impact of the factors on learners' pragmatic production, so that our understanding of the effects of these influential factors is incomplete. For instance, partially because different pragmatic targets are examined in different studies, the findings relating to the association between pragmatic competence and linguistic proficiency are often inconsistent. Although most researchers agree that learners' pragmatic production and their linguistic proficiency do not show a linear correlation, generalization becomes difficult when studies do not employ standardized tests for determining learners' proficiency levels. Another example is the common finding that learners perform differently from native speakers. However, since a study can only focus on a small cohort of participants, it cannot investigate multiple factors that may influence learners' pragmatic learning. Given that the number of influencing factors and the way in which they may interact are often different for different learners, it is very complex to compare the findings. For example, Takahashi and Beebe (1987) found that learners who had studied abroad for an average of four years had a broader range of expressions and more flexibility to adjust their level of directness according to different situations than those who had studied abroad for an average of seven months. Bella (2011) demonstrated that even learners with a 4.5-year residence-abroad experience still displayed an underdeveloped pragmatic ability in relation to mitigation devices. Ren (2019b) found that with respect to request strategies, learners with two years of study-abroad experience resembled native speakers more, while learners with longer study-abroad experience of two to four years showed more non-target-like development. Therefore, this section focuses on what L2 pragmatics production research has investigated, rather than detailed findings in particular areas.

2.1.1 Speech Acts

Second language pragmatics production has mainly investigated speech acts (Bardovi-Harlig, 2005; Kasper and Dahl, 1991; Ren, 2018a). However, this does not mean that speech acts are sufficiently understood. Indeed, only a couple of speech acts have attracted much attention, with many more being only occasionally explored or even neglected altogether.

Requests. Requests are the most widely investigated speech act in L2 pragmatics research. Among the target languages, English is the most frequently examined (e.g., Achiba, 2003; Economidou-Kogetsidis and Woodfield, 2012; Schauer, 2009), receiving much more attention than any other language. Spanish seems to be the second most frequently examined target language (e.g., Czerwionka and Cuza, 2017; Kuriscak, 2015; Shively, 2011), followed by Arabic (e.g., Al Masaeed, 2017; Al-Gahtani and Roever, 2012), Chinese (e.g., Li, 2014; Ren, 2019b), and Greek (e.g., Bella, 2012b; Vassilaki and Selimis, 2020). German (e.g., Barron, 2003; Cunningham, 2017), Japanese (e.g., Taguchi, 2015a), French (e.g., Lundell and Erman, 2012), and Indonesian (e.g., Hassall, 2003) have also been examined in request production studies, but not frequently.

Many studies examine learners from diverse first language (L1) backgrounds. When learners are from a homogenous L1 background, American English learners appear to be the most frequently examined (e.g., Li, 2014; Shively, 2011; Su and Ren, 2017), followed by Japanese learners (e.g., Economidou-Kogetsidis and Halenko, 2022; Taguchi, 2007b; Takahashi, 1996) and Chinese learners (e.g., Li, 2000; Su, 2010). Learners from other languages have also been examined, but less frequently, including Arabic (e.g., Al-Ali and Alawneh, 2010), French (e.g., Béal, 1994), German (e.g., Schauer, 2009), Persian (e.g., Ghavamnia *et al.*, 2012), Serbian (e.g., Savic, 2014), and Swedish (e.g., Lundell and Erman, 2012).

The studies have examined learners' production of request strategies, and their external and internal modification of requests. The most commonly used coding scheme was developed by Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989) in the well-known Cross-cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP), although it is often used with adaptations. Request strategies are coded in terms of levels of directness in the head act, which are divided into direct, conventionally indirect, and nonconventionally indirect requests. External and internal modification refer to pragmatic strategies which mitigate or intensify the request but do not in themselves carry the request force, with the former falling out of the head act while the latter within the head act (full details can be found in the CCSARP coding manual in Blum-Kulka *et al.*, 1989).

Refusals. Refusals may be the second most investigated speech act in L2 pragmatics production research, although the number of studies on refusals is much lower than the number on requests. Refusal studies predominantly focus on English as the target language (e.g., Al-Gahtani and Roever, 2018; Ren, 2015; Taguchi, 2013b), with only a few studies investigating other languages such as Arabic (e.g., Morkus, 2021), Greek (e.g., Bella, 2011, 2014b), Hebrew

(e.g., Stavans and Webman Shafran, 2018), Chinese (e.g., Hong, 2011), and Spanish (e.g., Félix-Brasdefer, 2003, 2004, 2013).

Studies on L2 refusals often examine learners from homogenous L1 backgrounds, although some studies do include learners with a mixture of L1s (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1993). Interestingly, this research shows a different trend from request studies. When English is the target language, Chinese learners are the most frequently examined (e.g., Chang, 2011; Lee, 2016; Ren, 2013), followed by Iranian learners (L1 Persian) (e.g., Allami and Naeimi, 2011; Shishavan and Sharifian, 2013), Saudi Arabic learners (e.g., Al-Gahtani and Roever, 2018), Japanese learners (e.g., Gass and Houck, 1999; Taguchi, 2007b), Javanese learners (e.g., Wijayanto, 2016), and Thai learners (e.g., Wannaruk, 2008). When languages other than English are the focal target languages, the learners are almost always from English-speaking countries.

Most studies investigate refusal strategies and adjuncts to refusals (i.e., external modification), following the coding scheme developed by Beebe *et al.* (1990). Unlike request studies that often analyze internal modification, only a few studies have examined the internal modification of refusals (e.g., Barron, 2003; Bella, 2011; Ren, 2013). This may be due in part to two reasons. On the one hand, the speech act of refusal is often realized in indirect strategies, which increases the difficulties and complexities involved in identifying internal modifiers. On the other hand, there is no well-accepted coding scheme for the internal modifiers of refusals, as there is for studies on requests.

Apology. Apology is another often-examined speech act in L2 pragmatic production, although it is examined much less frequently than requests. Studies in this area either investigate how English L1 speakers apologize in a target language, such as Arabic (e.g., Al Masaeed *et al.*, 2018), German (e.g., Barron, 2019), and Russian (e.g., Shardakova, 2005), or how learners from other languages apologize in English, for example, Catalan learners (e.g., Barón and Ortega, 2018), Chinese learners (e.g., Chang, 2010), Saudi Arabic learners (e.g., El-Dakhs, 2018), and Serbian learners (e.g., Savic, 2014). Only Warga and Schölmberger (2007) diverge from this trend, examining Austrian German learners' apologies in French.

These studies not only investigate learners' apology strategies but also how they upgrade their apologies, based on earlier coding schemes for apologies (e.g., Blum-Kulka *et al.*, 1989; Olshtain, 1989). The notion of the illocutionary force indicating device (IFID) is important for coding apologies, which is the formulaic form containing "the explicit, performative verbs which express an apology" (Olshtain, 1989: 157). The IFID can be strengthened internally by various means such as intensifying adverbials and emotional expressions (see more in the CCSARP coding manual in Blum-Kulka *et al.*, 1989).

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Other speech acts. More speech acts have been investigated, but most of them have only been examined sporadically. Many have only been investigated with English as the target language. For example, learners' production of advice/ suggestions has been explored in a few studies, all focusing on English (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1993). Among these, Chinese learners seem to be the most frequently examined (e.g., Hinkel, 1997; Li, 2010; Taguchi *et al.*, 2021), and Japanese learners have also been studied (e.g., Matsumura, 2001, 2003).

Further speech acts that have been investigated with English and other languages as the target language include complaints (e.g., Nguyen and Pham, 2021; Tatsuki, 2000; Yuan and Zhang, 2018), compliment responses (e.g., Huth, 2006; Shimizu, 2009), criticisms (e.g., Nguyen, 2008, 2017), greeting responses (e.g., Jaworski, 1994; Ying and Ren, 2021), offers (e.g., Bella, 2016), and sympathy after bereavement (e.g., Meiners, 2017). The studies have enlarged our understanding of learners' acquisition of speech acts, addressing the call for investigating more speech acts and expanding the pool of target languages. However, the findings would be more mutually inferable if the studies could be guided by similar frameworks of speech act taxonomy and employ some standardized measurements for determining learners' proficiency. On the other hand, it is beneficial for L2 pragmatics to follow the trend of pragmatics research to investigate speech acts in a bigger picture of interaction in a more dynamic manner. These achieved, L2 pragmatics can draw more robust gener-alizations and compare its achievement with other branches of pragmatics and L2 research to contribute more to theoretical constructions of the two fields. It is encouraging to see that several studies have explored advanced learners' uses of speech acts to express their identities and enhance their social relations. For example, Habib (2008) examines how four female near-native users of English employ teasing and disagreement to display personal identity, while Ren and Liu (2021) explore how Chinese graduate learners of English express their phatic communion in gratitude emails to professors.

2.1.2 Conventional Expressions

Some studies have investigated learners' production of formulaic expressions. Although different scholars use different terms for these, such as conventional expressions (Bardovi-Harlig, 2009), formulas (Bardovi-Harlig, 2008), and pragmatic routines (Taguchi, 2013a), the terms are often used interchangeably and refer to almost the same concept, that is, of idiomatic multi-word expres-sions (see Bardovi-Harlig, 2012 for a review of the differences among the terms).

Empirical studies often examine both learners' production and recognition of L2 conventional expressions. Production studies have mostly investigated English conventional expressions, apart from a couple of studies on Chinese (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig and Su, 2018; Taguchi *et al.*, 2013). Although conventional expressions have been discussed in other languages (e.g., Kecskes, 2003), few empirical studies have been conducted.

Production research on conventional expressions generally undergoes two preparatory phases prior to collecting data from learners. In the first phase, researchers select candidate formulaic expressions by various methods, including authentic conversations (Bardovi-Harlig, 2009), field notes (Taguchi *et al.*, 2013), discourse completion tasks (DCTs) (Edmonds, 2014), or textbooks and reference works (Taguchi *et al.*, 2013; Yang, 2016). The candidate expressions are then tested with a group of native speakers to decide the "correct" answer that will be used to test learners. Through this checking process the research establishes criteria for the formulae using a cut-off point. Most research chooses a 50 percent cut-off for native speaker preference (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, 2009; Bardovi-Harlig and Su, 2018; Taguchi *et al.*, 2013), although Yang (2016) employs a 67 percent cut-off.

2.1.3 Address Terms

Address terms express sociopragmatic values and affect interpersonal relationships. They are often examined as a type of modification in L2 pragmatics research, either as an alerter (e.g., Ren, 2019b; Taguchi *et al.*, 2016b) and attention-getter (Martínez-Flor, 2012), or as a type of internal modifier (Hassall, 2012; Pan, 2012). However, this section focuses on studies taking address terms as their specific research targets.

The production of address terms in L2 has been investigated in a range of languages. The most often examined types are the T/V address forms in French (*tu* vs. *vous*), German (*du* vs. *sie*), and Spanish (*tú* vs. *usted*) (e.g., Blood, 2018; Kinginger and Belz, 2005; Villarreal, 2014). Studies have also examined learner use of address terms in Korean (e.g., Brown, 2013; Kim and Brown, 2014) and Indonesian (e.g., Hassall, 2013). Studies have explored the difficulties of and the study-abroad effect on English learners' use of address forms in another language, with findings generally indicating a positive effect of study abroad and learners' agency in using those address terms (Ishihara, 2019).

2.1.4 Pragmatic Markers

Pragmatic markers have attracted increasing attention in L2 pragmatics research, with researchers investigating the frequency and functions of learners'

production of one or a group of pragmatic markers. Not surprisingly, English pragmatic markers constitute the majority of the targets, among which *like* is the most investigated (e.g., Liu, 2016; Magliacane and Howard, 2019), followed by *well*, *you know*, and *I mean* (e.g., Buysse, 2015; Fernández-Polo, 2014; Wei, 2011). Other English pragmatic markers that have been examined include *so*, *I don't know*, *and*, *just*, *sort of/kind of*, *I think*, *yes/yeah*, and *please* (e.g., Buysse, 2012; Gablasova *et al.*, 2017; Hosoda and Aline, 2022).

Studies have also examined pragmatic markers in L2 Spanish, such as *pues* (close to *well*, *so*, *then*) and *bueno* (close to *anyway*, *okay*, *so*, *well*), and the turn-initial discourse markers *y* and *sí* (García García, 2021), Italian, such as *sì* (*yes*, *ok*), *allora* (*so*, *then*), *quindi* (*then*, *therefore*), and *dunque* (*therefore*, *be*, *well*) (De Cristofaro and Badan, 2021), and Japanese, such as the contrastive markers *demo*, *kedo*, and *ga* (all can be translated into English as *but*, *though*, *although*) (Geyer, 2007). Chinese markers have also been examined, mostly focusing on utterance-final particles (e.g., Diao, 2016; Diao and Chen, 2021).

2.1.5 Conversation Management

Studies on learners' abilities to manage conversations investigate a range of topics under the framework of conversation analysis (Schegloff, 2007; Sidnell, 2010), such as repair, sequential organization, turn taking, turn design, and preference organization (Kasper and Ross, 2013). For example, Itakura (2002) examines the effect of gender on topic development in informal conversations by Japanese learners of English, Al-Gahtani and Roever (2012) analyze the sequential organizations of requests of Arabic learners of English across four proficiency levels, and Al-Gahtani and Roever (2018) examine preference organization of Arabic learners of English across three proficiency levels. In addition, Savić and Đorđević (2021) investigate relational practices in emails in English by Norwegian speakers.

Languages other than English have also been studied. Guillot (2009, 2012) investigates interruption and overlaps in English learners' L2 French talk, while Huth (2006) examines English learners' sequence organization during compliment response in L2 German. Shively (2015) analyzes English learners' listener responses in L2 Spanish conversations. Preference structure is often examined in requests among learners across different proficiency levels – for example, in L2 Arabic (Al-Gahtani and Roever, 2014), L2 German (Taleghani-Nikazm and Huth, 2010), and L2 Chinese (Su and Ren, 2017).

2.1.6 Prosody

Prosodic features may influence pragmatic meaning. However, despite the importance of prosody in conveying meaning, it has been neglected in L2 pragmatics

(see Kang and Kermad, 2019 for an overview). This lack of research on prosody in L2 pragmatic production may be due to "the lack of a systematic analytical methodology" (Romero-Trillo, 2019: 91). Therefore, Romero-Trillo (2019) proposes an approach to explore the prosodic aspects of pragmatic markers as feedback produced by native and non-native speakers in corpus pragmatics.

Verdugo and Romero-Trillo (2005) carried out one of the few studies that compares the intonation in reading tag questions between Spanish learners of English and native speakers of English. The results revealed that the learners and the native speakers used a similar rising intonation pattern in questioning tags, but, in confirmation tags, while the native speakers used an unmarked tone to indicate certainty and demand agreement, the learners again used a rising intonation. The authors concluded that a lack of pragmatic knowledge and awareness of the functions of tag questions led to the Spanish learners' overuse of a rising intonation.

2.1.7 Concluding Remarks

In summary, pragmatic production studies have investigated a variety of pragmatic features, although with different degrees of attention. However, the studies predominantly examine learners at university level. An underdeveloped area concerns investigation of learners of different ages. Rose (2000) investigated pragmatic development of requests, apologies, and compliment responses among three groups of primary school EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners in Hong Kong (aged approximately 7, 9, and 11). Barón Parés (2012) examined request development in Catalan-Spanish bilingual EFL learners aged 10, 12, 16, and 18–19. Savić *et al.* (2021) investigated the request production of young EFL learners in Greek Cypriot and Norwegian aged 9, 11, and 13. More acquisition studies are needed to explore the pragmatic development of learners across different ages.

More importantly, pragmatic production studies tend to focus on nuanced data coding but lack a solid theoretical orientation. It is often documented that learners may underuse or overuse certain pragmatic features compared with native speakers. However, studies should also explore why such divergence exists by investigating a multiplicity of factors simultaneously, particularly concerning the pragmatic norms of L1 and L2, learners' L2 proficiency, and pragmatic agency.

2.2 Pragmatic Perception

Studies on learner pragmatic perception can be roughly divided into two categories, namely pragmatic awareness and pragmatic comprehension, which will be reviewed in the following two subsections respectively.

2.2.1 Pragmatic Awareness

Pragmatic awareness refers to learners' conscious knowledge or evaluation of certain pragmatic features or practice. This line of research mainly investigates learners' ability to detect pragmatically (in)appropriate language uses and reflexivity on pragmatic phenomena. The following sections will introduce the key themes investigated in the pragmatic awareness literature.

Appropriateness of Speech Acts

Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) pioneered investigation into the relationship between pragmatic awareness and grammatical awareness. They focused on awareness in the sense of noticing in Schmidt's noticing hypothesis (1993, 2001), which refers to "registering the simple occurrence of some event" (Schmidt, 1993: 26). They compared EFL learners in Hungary with ESL (English as a Second Language) learners in the United States using a video-prompted task they developed, which included refusals, apologies, requests, and suggestions. The task required participants to distinguish grammatical errors and pragmatic infelicitous items, and to rate both for severity. The findings indicated that both learning contexts and L2 proficiency influenced the learners' performance, and study-abroad length also played an important role in developing learner pragmatic awareness.

Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's seminal work was replicated in many different contexts, sometimes yielding different results. Also using the video-prompted task, Schauer (2009) investigated German learners' pragmatic awareness and found that the learners increased their pragmatic awareness significantly during study abroad in the UK. In contrast, Niezgoda and Roever (2001) compared EFL learners in the Czech Republic with ESL learners at a US language school; using the same video-prompted instrument, they found that overall the EFL learners outperformed the ESL learners at error identification and severity rating for both grammatical and pragmatic items. Study-abroad length had a clear effect on learners' pragmatic awareness, but L2 proficiency did not have an impact. Surprisingly, however, the longer the learners stayed in the target community, the more tolerant they were to pragmatic infelicities.

Some studies adapted the video-prompted task developed by Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) into questionnaires. For example, Xu *et al.* (2009) used a paper-and-pencil version of the conversations and investigated learners with a mix of L1s living in the United States with different study-abroad lengths and L2 proficiency levels. Ren (2015) compared the development of pragmatic awareness among EFL learners and ESL learners, only focusing on pragmatic items. Ren did not ask the learners to detect whether an item was infelicitous; instead, he asked the learners to directly evaluate the appropriateness of the