

From Communicative Competence to Pragmatic Competence: What Impact on FL Teaching and Learning?

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Abstract

This paper shows the importance pragmatic competence has gained through time with the development of the concept of communicative competence. Towards that aim a description of the circumstances in which the concept of communicative competence emerged is presented in addition to two different models of communicative competence: the model of Canale and Swain (1980, 1983) and the model of Bachman (1990). As a consequence of the role pragmatic competence plays to help learners be communicatively competent, the area of learners' interlanguage pragmatics has gained increased attention. Observational and interventional studies have been conducted to understand the process of pragmatic acquisition. Factors that influence the learning of pragmatics have been identified, and issues related to the teachability of pragmatics and testing pragmatic ability have been tackled.

Keywords:

communicative competence - pragmatic competence - pragmatic interlanguage - pragmatics tests.

ملخص

يتناول هذا المقال الأهمية التي اكتسبتها الكفاءة البراغماتية عبر الزمن. لهذا الغرض تم عرض نموذجين مختلفين للكفاءة التواصلية . نموذج كانال وسوين ونموذج باكرمان. نظرا للدور الذي تلعبه الكفاءة البراغماتية في تطوير الكفاءة التواصلية للمتعلمين أجريت عدة دراسات نظرية وأخرى تداخلية من أجل استفسار عن كيفية اكتساب الكفاءة البراغماتية عند المتعلمين. كما قام بعض الباحثون بدراسة بعض العوامل التي تؤثر على تعليم وامتحان الكفاءة البراغماتية.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

الكفاءة التواصلية - الكفاءة البراغماتية - البراغماتية عند المتعلم - الاختبارات البراغماتية.

Résumé

Cet article traite de l'importance que la compétence pragmatique a acquis au fil du temps et suite au développement du concept de la compétence communicative. A cet effet, deux modèles différents de la compétence communicative sont présentés : le modèle de Canale et Swain (1980,1983) ainsi que le modèle de Bachman (1990). En raison du rôle que joue la compétence pragmatique dans le développement de la compétence communicative des apprenants, le domaine de l'interlangue de la pragmatique a suscité l'intérêt des chercheurs. Des études observationnelles ainsi que des études interventionnelles ont été menées afin de comprendre le processus d'acquisition de la pragmatique. Certains des facteurs qui influencent l'apprentissage de la pragmatique ont été identifiés et les questions liées à l'enseignement et à l'évaluation de la pragmatique ont été abordées.

Mots clés:

Compétence communicative - compétence pragmatique - pragmatique d'interlangue - tests pragmatique.

Introduction

Crystal (1997) 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).

Given the importance of pragmatics in communication, pragmatics has gained much attention in second and foreign language teaching (Kasper & Rose 2001). There is now a large body of literature on interlanguage pragmatics; that is to say, on learners’ use and acquisition of FL/L2 pragmatic ability (Kasper & Blum-Kulka 1993, Kasper & Rose 1999). The rationale behind these studies lies in the fact that FL learners have little access to the target language input and even less productive use outside the classroom. Even second language learners who have opportunities to practice outside the classroom receive formal instruction to develop their linguistic competence more than the pragmatic one (Kasper & Rose 2001). As a result, many researchers carried out studies that aimed at examining the extent to which the pragmatics component appears in the EFL/ESL classrooms, and the effects various approaches to instruction have on pragmatic development.

This paper starts first with a description and explanation of the circumstances in which the concept of communicative competence emerged and how it can be linked to the concept of pragmatic competence within the communicative competence framework. Two models of communicative competence are considered, namely the model of Canale and Swain (1980; 1983), and the model of Bachman (1990). In the former, pragmatic competence is implicitly included in the sociolinguistic component while in the latter pragmatic competence appears explicitly as a main component of communicative competence. The model of Bachman (1990) implies that learners become communicatively competent unless they develop their grammatical competence in addition to their pragmatic competence. Hence, more and more attention is devoted to the learners’ interlanguage pragmatics. Thus, in addition to communicative competence, this paper tackles research in the field of interlanguage pragmatics, presents the factors that influence the development of learners’ pragmatic competence in FL contexts, and addresses the issue of teachability of pragmatics in FL contexts. The paper ends with a brief discussion on the testing of pragmatic ability.

I. The concept of pragmatic competence in the communicative competence construct

The source of the term ‘communicative competence’ was a paper written for a conference as far back as 1966 which was concerned with language in disadvantaged children. Hymes wrote it as a deliberate comment on Chomsky’s use of the term ‘competence’ the previous year in *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965).

In his criticism, Hymes (1971) observed that Chomsky’s binary distinction of competence and performance provided no place for competency for language use; that is to say, the theory failed to account for the socio-cultural dimension. Howatt&Widdowson (2004) argue:

‘In Aspects Chomsky used ‘competence’ to refer to the ‘speaker-hearer’s knowledge of this language’, in contrast to ‘performance’ which meant the actual use of language. But he went much further than any ‘In Aspects, Chomsky used ‘competence’ to refer to the speaker-hearer’s knowledge of his language, in contrast to ‘performance’ which meant the actual use of language. But he went much further than any of his predecessors when he dedicated linguistics itself to the study of ‘competence’, and in doing so he underlined his conviction that ‘language was essentially a mental process rather than a social process. By adding ‘communicative’ Hymes intended to remind people that Chomsky’s definition was deficient in respect of dimensions of knowledge that had to do with the communication of meaning’ (330)

In Hymes’ (1971) words, applied linguistics needs a theory that ‘can deal with a heterogeneous speech community’ (p. 11). Towards this aim, Hymes redefined the notions of competence and performance. In his redefinition, the contrast is between ‘the actual’ and the ‘underlying’. The term ‘performance’ is to be used to refer strictly to the ‘actual use’ of language, in the sense proposed by Chomsky. Hymes proposed a far more general concept of competence than the one found in *Aspects* (1965). For Chomsky, competence simply means ‘knowledge of the grammatical system’. But if competence is viewed as the overall underlying knowledge and ability for language use which the speaker-hearer possesses; then this involves more than knowledge of grammaticality. There are in Hymes’ (1971) words, ‘rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless’ (15). Thus, if a speaker were to produce grammatical sentences with no regard to the situations in which they are being used, he would be considered inappropriate. Hence, competence seen as overall underlying

linguistic knowledge and ability includes concepts of appropriateness and acceptability; notions which in Aspects (1965) are associated with performance. Hymes (1971) lists four aspects of communicative competence:

1- ‘Whether or not something is formally possible’ :

This is roughly equivalent to Chomsky’s restricted notion of competence as grammaticality.

2- ‘Whether something is feasible by virtue of the means of implementation available’:

A sentence like ‘the mouse the cat the dog the man the woman married beat chased ate had a white tail’ is grammatically possible, but is meaningless and inappropriate.

3- ‘Whether something is appropriate in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated’:

The speaker-hearer’s underlying competence includes rules of appropriateness and a sentence can be grammatically possible but inappropriate.

4- ‘Whether something is in fact done, actually performed, and what its doing entails’.

A sentence may be possible, feasible, appropriate, and not occur.

Munby (1978) notes that by including a psycholinguistic component in this conception of communicative competence, Hymes was mainly concerned with the fact that language users’ competence entails judgements and abilities related to and interdependent of socio-cultural features. This suggests that rules of use and language features appropriate to the relevant social context need to be taught in addition to grammaticality. This led to great changes in language teaching enhanced by Canale & Swain’s concept of communicative competence in SLA.

Next to Hymes’ concept, the functional approach played a significant role in developing this concept. This approach has its roots in the traditions of the British linguist J.R. Firth (1937) in the *Tongues of Men* who viewed language interactive and interpersonal. Halliday (1970; 1973) developed this approach and provided an exposition of language functions.

Following Firth (1937), Halliday was interested in language in its social perspective, and so he was concerned with language use to account for the language functions realised in speech (Munby 1978). Halliday’s approach to the question of the language user’s competence is different from Hymes in the sense

that he rejects the distinction between competence and performance as being of little use in a sociological context. Halliday (1970) argues:

'Here we shall not need to draw a distinction between an idealised knowledge of a language and its actual use: between 'the code' and 'the use of the code' or between 'competence' and 'performance'. Such a dichotomy runs the risk of being either unnecessary or misleading: unnecessary if it is just another name for the distinction between what we have been able to describe in the grammar and what we have not, and misleading in any other interpretation' (17).

Thus unlike Hymes who accepted Chomsky's dichotomy of competence and performance but redefined the notions they imply, Halliday (1970) rejected this binary distinction. He considered it unnecessary and misleading, and preferred to focus on the sociological aspects of language use.

Halliday (1970, 1973) developed a socio-semantic approach to language and the speaker's use of language. At the heart of this approach is his notion of 'meaning potential'.

This relates behaviour potential to lexico-grammatical potential:

What the speaker can do → can mean → can say

Halliday points out that his notion of meaning potential is not the same as Chomsky's notion of competence. Halliday's 'can do' interacts with 'does' in a simple and direct relation whereas Chomsky's 'knows' is distinct from his does. For Halliday, his meaning potential is not different from Hymes' notion of communicative competence, except that Hymes defined this in terms of competence in the Chomskyan sense of what the speaker knows; whereas, Halliday talked about what a speaker can do in the special linguistic sense of what he can mean, avoiding the additional complication of a distinction between doing and knowing. One needs to point out that although Hymes retained the notion of competence, he completely changed it to include much more than Chomsky's 'knows'.

After Hymes' definition of communicative competence in 1971, seminal work on defining communicative competence within the context of SLA was published by Canale & Swain (1980). In Canale & Swain's (1980) and later in Canale's (1983) definition, four different components compose communicative competence. The first two categories reflect the use of the linguistic system itself; the last two define the functional aspects of communication.

Grammatical competence

It is that aspect of communicative competence that includes ‘knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, sentence-grammar, semantics, and phonology’ (Canale & Swain 1980; 29). It is the competence associated with the linguistic code.

• Sociolinguistic competence

It is the knowledge of the socio-cultural rules of language and discourse. This type of competence:

‘requires an understanding of the social context in which language is used : the roles of the participants, the information they share, and the function of the interaction. Only in a full context of this kind can judgements be made on the appropriateness of a particular utterance’ (Canale & Swain 1980, p. 37)

Scarcella & Oxford (1992) argue that sociolinguistic competence includes knowledge of speech acts such as: apologies, requests, invitations. This kind of competence allows speakers to vary their language appropriately according to the addressee and to signal levels of politeness and formality.

• Strategic competence

According to Swain (1980), it refers to the:

‘mastery of the communication strategies that may be called into action either to enhance the effectiveness of communication due to limiting factors in actual communication or to insufficient competence in one or more of the other components of communicative competence’ (p. 189).

This competence involves the speakers’ ability to make repairs and avoid communication breakdown through strategies such as : paraphrase, circumlocution, repetition, and avoidance.

• Discourse competence

This component was added by Canale in 1983 when he expanded the first model proposed by Canale & Swain (1980) and which included the three previous components.

It implies the ability to connect sentences or a series of utterances to form a meaningful whole. Discourse represents everything from simple spoken conversation to lengthy written texts.

Rose and Kasper (2001) point out that the notion of communicative competence proposed by Hymes (1971) and Canale & Swain (1980) played the role of construct to serve the overall goal of language teaching and assessment.

In this model pragmatics does not appear as a term among components of communicative competence. Pragmatic ability is included under sociolinguistic competence called rules of use (Canale & Swain 1980, 1983). In 1990, Bachman suggested a model of communicative ability that includes pragmatic competence as one of the two main components of language competence. Bachman's model includes the following:

1. Organizational Competence

This concerns knowledge of linguistic units and the rules of joining them together. This competence comprises two subcategories:

- Grammatical Competence: it is concerned with sentence-level rules (grammar)
- Textual Competence: it consists of rules that govern how we string sentences together (discourse).

2. Pragmatic Competence

It involves being able to use language in interpersonal relationships, taking into account such complexities as social distance and indirectness. It is divided into two separate categories:

- Illocutionary Competence: it deals with the functional aspects of language. It concerns knowledge of speech acts or what Kasper (1997) calls 'communicative action'. She argues that this term is more accurate than the more familiar term 'speech act' because it acknowledges the fact that communicative action can also be implemented either by silence or non-verbally.
- Sociolinguistic Competence: it relates to the ability to use language appropriately according to context. It thus includes the ability to select communicative acts (speech acts) and appropriate strategies to implement them depending on the current status of the 'conversational contract'.

In Canale and Swain's (1980) model, sociolinguistic competence includes pragmatics implicitly since it refers to rules of discourse and rules of use. The latter relate to the appropriateness of an utterance with respect to a specific speech event. However, in Bachman's model, pragmatic competence is mentioned explicitly. It parallels 'organizational competence' and includes 'sociolinguistic competence' and 'illocutionary competence'. The latter implies the relationship between utterances and the acts performed through these utterances whereas the former has to do with the sociolinguistic conventions involved in using the language. The idea underlying this model is that improving

learners' grammatical competence does not suffice to achieve communicative competence. Developing pragmatic competence is also needed. From this point of view, pragmatic instruction became the focus of attention in FL classrooms. This led to increase attention paid to the field of interlanguage pragmatics which aims at examining the developmental stages learners go through when acquiring the pragmatic system of the target language.

II. Classroom Research on Interlanguage Pragmatics

Researchers are increasingly paying attention to pragmatic aspects of learner language. According to Ellis (1994), this is partially due to the belief that a full understanding of how formal properties are learnt will not be achieved without examining the way in which these properties are used in actual communication. Ellis (1994) argues that the goal of SLA research is to:

'describe and explain not only learners' linguistic competence but also their pragmatic competence. The growing interest in interlanguage pragmatics reflects the enormous developments in the theoretical and empirical study of pragmatics over the last two decades' (159).

The focus of research on interlanguage pragmatics has been a relatively small set of well-defined illocutionary acts (Ellis 1994, Brown 2001). Requests, apologies, and refusals are three acts which have received considerable attention. Complaints were investigated by Olshtain&Weinbach (1987), invitation by Scarcella (1979), suggestion by Bardovi-Harlig& Hartford (1990), compliments by Wolfson (1989).

In 1994, Ellis observed that although studies of interlanguage pragmatics had concentrated on describing the differences between the way in which L2 learners and native speakers perform the same speech acts in addition to the pragmatic problems that learners experience, research into the use and acquisition of illocutionary acts is somewhat limited due to the lack of longitudinal studies. Ellis (1994) states:

'Less attention has been given to how learners' pragmatic competence develops over time. As a result, although quite a lot is now known about how learners use an L2, very little is known about how 'rules of speaking' are acquired. For this longitudinal studies are needed' (186)

Indeed research has focused on the stages of first language acquisition and L2 language learning with regard to grammatical competence. However, as far as pragmatic competence is concerned, there are presently more questions than answers about the different stages learners go through in the acquisition of

pragmatics.

Another reason for the limitation of research in the acquisition of pragmatics is that pragmatics played a considerable role in first and second language classroom research while classroom research played only a minor role in interlanguage pragmatics. In this respect, Kasper (2001) argues:

‘Virtually all of the instruments designed for L2 classroom observation include, or are even entirely based on pragmatic and discourse categories Whereas pragmatics has thus figured prominently as a research tool, much less attention has been paid to pragmatics as the object of classroom research’ (33).

For years pragmatics and discourse categories were used to design research instruments that served to conduct studies in second language classroom research. But classroom research outcomes were seldom used to serve research on interlanguage pragmatics.

Kasper (2001) presented an account of classroom-based studies that investigated pragmatic learning within SL and FL classroom settings. Kasper (2001) distinguished between observational studies and interventional studies. The former focus primarily on classroom processes, either without a view to learning outcomes or with learning outcomes related to classroom interaction. The observed classrooms are authentic in the sense that they are not in essence arranged for research purposes. The latter, on the other hand examine the effect of a particular instructional treatment on learners’ acquisition of the targeted pragmatic feature.

1. Observational Studies

The first observational studies focused on language use rather than pragmatic development in classroom settings (Long et al 1976, Kasper 1985, House 1986, Poole 1992). Initial research on the acquisition of pragmatic ability in L2 classrooms was inspired by constructs on communicative classroom. From the first study by Long et al (1976) until the late 1980’s, the question raised by the non-development observational studies was what opportunities for pragmatic input and conversational practice the language classroom affords. Studies examined speech acts and discourse functions, discourse organization and management, discourse markers and strategies, repair, and politeness. Such aspects of pragmatics and discourse were investigated in conversation analysis, and research on speech act realisation and politeness were seen as central components in L2 learners’ discourse and pragmatic competence.

Another set of observational studies was developmental. The goal was to examine how learners develop pragmatic ability over time. Ellis who highlighted the need for longitudinal studies in 1994 was the first to investigate learners' development of pragmatic ability in a second language classroom. He observed request of two beginning ESL learners (aged 10 and 11) for a period of two years. He found that the stages of pragmatic development were congruent with early grammatical development. Over time, the two learners' use of direct requests decreased while conventionally indirect requests increased, a pattern also found in L1 pragmatic development and cross-sectional interlanguage pragmatic studies (Kasper & Rose 1999). Ellis also argued that the learners' range of request strategies archived at the end of the observation period remained considerably more restricted than those of adult native speakers, suggesting among other possible reasons limited input opportunities in the classroom setting.

Examining the different studies, Kasper (2001) pointed out that the observational studies were informed by different theoretical orientations:

'pedagogically oriented models of discourse-pragmatic competence, second language acquisition theories, language socialisation, and socio-cognitive theory. These different orientations are reflected in the selection of topics and issues for study, their treatment, methodological choices, and, of course, in the evaluation of outcomes' (47)

Moreover, Kasper (2001) remarks that one recurrent result that transcends such differences is the limitation of teacher-fronted teaching as an interactional format and the benefits of peer interaction in the acquisition of discourse-pragmatic ability. Other studies adopting language socialisation and the socio-cognitive approach argue that teacher-fronted teaching and predictable exchange structure allow in Ohta's words 'beginning language learners to anticipate how classroom discourse is likely to unfold' (Ohta 1999: 1498), contributing to language socialisation.

2. Interventional Studies

The first interventional studies were grounded in pragmatic theory and research, and, in some cases in pedagogical approaches. For instance, Wildner-Bassett (1984, 1986) compared the effectiveness of suggestopedia and an eclectic teaching approach in teaching pragmatic routines to EFL learners.

According to Kasper (2001) these studies reveal that opportunities for learning pragmatics in FL settings are much more restricted. Interventional studies that provided pragmatic instruction over an entire semester (House & Kasper 1981, House 1996) or a weeklong intensive course (Wildner-Bassett;

1984, 1986) showed that through sustained input and collaborative practice, learners had acquired pragmatic routines and conversational skills. Supported by meta-pragmatic instruction and discussion, learners can make significant gains in pragmatic ability in FL classrooms.

III. Factors that Affect the Development of EFL Learners' Pragmatic Competence

Research on interlanguage pragmatics in SL contexts has also provided information about the factors that influence the development of learners' pragmatic competence (Barron 2003). Those factors consist of: availability of input, SL proficiency, and instruction. They have also been addressed in FL contexts (Alcon & Martinez-Flor 2008)

1. Availability of Input

Research conducted in FL settings reveals that the range of speech acts and realization strategies is quite narrow, and that the pragmatic input is restricted to the practice of discourse organization strategies (Lorscher & Schulze 1988). In addition, Crandall & Basturkmen (2004) report that textbook conversations do not provide adequate pragmatic input. Boxer & Pickering's (1995) analysis of complaints and Gilmore's (2004) study on discourse features show that textbook conversations are not a reliable source of pragmatic input. In contrast, the use of audiovisual input has been reported as being useful to address knowledge of a pragmatic system and knowledge of its appropriate use in FL contexts (Alcon 2005, Grant and Starks 2001)

2. Learners' Level

The second factor that has been investigated in interlanguage pragmatics research is the impact of learners' level of the target proficiency on developing their pragmatic competence. Some studies show that FL learners' pragmatic ability progresses with the development of their language proficiency (Rose 2000, Takahashi & Beebe 1987). In addition, most interlanguage studies have found that the more learners are proficient in the target language, the less negative pragmatic transfer is produced (House & Kasper 1981, Kobayashi & Rinnert 2003). However, one must point out that research results show that even long exposure to the target language does not always result in pragmatic learning (Bardovi-Harlig 2001)

3. Instruction

The role of instruction has also received attention in interlanguage pragmatics

research. Since FL contexts provide learners with little exposure to pragmatic input (Alcon & Martinez-Flor 2005, Rose & Kasper 2002), this factor has been further examined in FL contexts. Rose (2005) states that three central questions need to be considered, namely ‘whether pragmatics is teachable, whether instruction in pragmatics produces results that outpace exposure alone, and whether different instructional approaches yield different outcomes’ (Rose 2005; 386)

First, as far as the ‘teachability’ of pragmatics is concerned, studies showed that pragmatics is teachable and that pragmatic instruction has a facilitative role in learning pragmatics in FL contexts (Olshtain & Cohen 1990). Second, research indicates that learners receiving pragmatic instruction outperformed those who benefited from simple exposure (Lyster 1994, Yoshimi 2001). Furthermore, research on the effect of different teaching approaches points at the advantages of explicit over implicit instruction (Alcon 2005, House 1996). Hence, the outcome of studies on the effect of instruction in pragmatics is relevant for learners in FL contexts.

The teaching and learning of pragmatics are not the sole components of developmental pragmatics, testing is an important dimension of it which deserves to be examined.

IV. Testing pragmatic ability

A test is one type of measurement designed to elicit a specific sample of a test taker’s behavior (Bachman 1990). It involves the process of quantifying the characteristics of persons by assigning numbers, letter grades or labels such as excellent or good.

The assessment of pragmatic proficiency has only recently begun to be explored. Nevertheless, various instruments of testing pragmatic ability have been included in studies in order to test production and comprehension. Researchers have tested pragmatics using at least six types of instruments (Brown 2001). These are: the written discourse completion tasks, multiple-choice discourse completion tasks, oral discourse completion tasks, discourse role-play tasks, discourse self-assessment tasks, and role-play self-assessment. This part is devoted to the definition of each of the six types of pragmatics tests.

1- Written discourse completion task (WDCT):

It is any pragmatics instrument that requires the learners to read a written description of a situation, including factors as: setting, participant roles, and degree of imposition.

2- Multiple-choice discourse completion task (MDCT):

It is also a pragmatics instrument that requires learners to read a written description of a situation, but, unlike the WDCT, an MDCT requires the learners to select what would be best to say in that selection.

3- Oral discourse completion task (ODCT):

It is a pragmatic instrument that requires learners to listen to a description of a situation (usually on a tape recorder) and to say aloud what they would say in that situation into another tape recorder.

4- Discourse role-play tasks (DRPT):

It is any pragmatics instrument that provides a description of a situation and asks learners to play a particular role with another person in that situation.

5- Discourse self-assessment task (DSAT):

It is any pragmatics instrument that provides a written description of a situation and asks the learners to rate their own ability to perform the pragmatics necessary in that situation.

6- Role-play self-assessment (RPSA):

It is any pragmatics instrument that combines the DRPT with the DSAT by requiring learners to rate their own pragmatics performance in a previously performed role-play that was video recorded.

Brown (2001) did not limit himself to the presentation of the six types of tests, he also compared their actual practice in two different settings. Brown (2001) ranked the six types of tests for each of the following characteristics:

Easiness, variance, reliability, ease of administration, ease of scoring, degree of oral language, degree of self-reflection, and suitability for high stakes decisions.

From best to worst the tests are ranked as follows:

- 1- Discourse self-assessment task (DSAT)
- 2- Discourse role-play tasks (DRPT)
- 3- Role-play self-assessment (RPSA)
- 4- Written discourse completion task (WDCT)
- 5- Oral discourse completion task (ODCT)
- 6- Multiple-choice discourse completion task (MDCT)

These results from the comparison of the six pragmatics tests in the EFL context are to be taken into consideration in the evaluation of learners' pragmatic ability. However, it is worth to point out that interlanguage pragmatics is at its beginning stage and has many problems to solve. More methods of testing are

needed to assess aspects of interlanguage pragmatics.

Conclusion

This article has started with an overview of the development of the concept of communicative competence; and has presented the concept of pragmatic competence as framed in the communicative competence framework. The importance pragmatic competence gained with the model of Bachman (1990) led to an increased focus of research on interlanguage pragmatics. There had been more and more developmental observational studies, non developmental observational studies, and interventional studies. The developmental observational studies investigated the development of pragmatic ability over time while the non developmental observational studies aimed at examining opportunities for pragmatic input present in the classroom. The interventional studies, on the other hand, explored the effect of meta-pragmatic instruction on the learner pragmatic competence. Research on interlanguage pragmatics has also provided information about the factors that influence the development of learners' pragmatic competence, namely availability of input, learners' level, and instruction. The outcomes of these studies are relevant for the teaching and learning of pragmatics in FL contexts in that they reveal that pragmatics is teachable and that explicit instruction facilitates the learning of pragmatics in FL contexts.

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