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## Review of *New Directions in Second Language Pragmatics*



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*New Directions in Second Language Pragmatics*, edited by J. César Félix-Brasdefer and Rachel L. Shively, Berlin/Boston, 2021, 342 pp., €129(Hardcover). ISBN 9783110721638.

The volume is edited in honor of Andrew D. Cohen, who is a preeminent and leading scholar in applied linguistics and has made great contributions to pragmatics in second language contexts. In particular, chapters in this volume address Cohen's legacy in L2 pragmatics (second language pragmatics) in his seminal work (Cohen and Olshtain, 1981), including learning, teaching, and assessing. More importantly, as the title of the volume indicates, new directions are presented, which is achieved not by simple application of Cohen's idea, but by critical refinement. It is the latter that deserves scholars' attention.

The 17 chapters in the volume are grouped into four parts. Part I focuses on the learning and teaching of speech acts (Chapters 1–5). In Chapter 1, Félix-Brasdefer addresses three key topics for speech acts: pragmatic competence, speech acts in interaction, and pragmatic instruction of speech acts. First, pragmatic competence should be a composite including interactional competence (Young, 2019) and intercultural competence (Byram et al., 2001). Second, the pragmatic-discursive approach to speech acts in interaction is proposed, which represents a shift from utterance level to discourse level. Third, a thorough examination of pedagogical intervention, including its categorization, goal, and effects, calls for pragmatic instruction of speech acts.

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Chapter 2 presents a more discourse-oriented approach to L2 speech acts. This research specifically intends to reveal L2 English learners' ability to produce advice in extended written texts by applying systemic functional linguistics (SFL), which researchers believe is an apt choice for examining text-level resources that determine the effectiveness of a speech act. It is found that both the form-focused coding approach (utterance-level) and the SFL-based approach (text-level) produce information about L2 learners' advice-giving ability in a written text, indicating their complementary roles.

In Chapter 3, Mir examines how pragmatics instruction supplemented by ethnography can help Spanish L2 learners to develop their pragmatic competence in a short-term study abroad program. In addition to in-class pedagogical intervention, this research also involves participants as ethnographers since they took the initiative to observe and analyze Spanish native speakers' interactions in the community and at home with their host families. Such pragmatic improvements as more target-like hearer-oriented requests and a wider range of mitigating devices are witnessed owing to the explicit classroom instruction and learners' role as ethnographers.

Chapter 4 initiates an empirical investigation of Cohen's Language Learning Strategy Instruction (LLSI) recommendations, which "provide tasks for instructors to use for teaching speech acts and pragmatic strategies" (p. 82). Specifically, Gómez and Ede-Hernandez are wondering the particular effects of LLSI on learners' pragmatic competence in giving and receiving compliments in L2 Spanish. By quantitatively measuring learners' performance and qualitatively analyzing their responses to a questionnaire, they find that learners benefited from the LLSI approach which has raised their awareness concerning pragmatic aspects related to making compliments and compliment responses.

In Chapter 5, Rodríguez examines how Spanish speakers currently produce and perceive *piropos* (unsolicited flirtatious remarks), whose uses have been altered because of the heightened awareness of gender discrimination. Applying a written production questionnaire and a Likert scale in an under-researched region of Badajoz, Spain, Rodríguez finds that linguistic patterns of *piropos* preferred by men and women respectively in settings differ in the social distance, with the perception of compliment-like *piropos* as more appropriate by both genders and men's higher favor of *piropos* in production.

Part II is dedicated to the issues regarding the assessment of L2 pragmatic competence (Chapters 6–9). Chapter 6, as a general review, lays the background of the assessment of L2 pragmatics. After examining different theoretical orientations (from speech act theory to interactional sociolinguistics and conversational analysis), Shively outlines how the view on pragmatic competence has been changed, followed by a change in the approaches to the assessment (from rationalist approach to discursive approach). Methods commonly used to explore pragmatic competence have been explained in the light of merits and shortcomings, with an explicit introduction of innovations.

In Chapter 7, Roever and Ellis alert readers to the deficiency of pragmatics tests in real-world relevance, that is, overlooking a proper treatment of implicit pragmatic knowledge. After reviewing how pragmatics assessment has been led by the traditional conceptualization of pragmatic competence, along with corresponding testing instruments, they argue that instruments based on the traditional view mostly assess explicit pragmatic knowledge while interactional competence-based ones implicit. In general, it is necessary to increase the awareness of the two knowledge types and develop measures specific to implicit pragmatic knowledge.

Chapter 8 evaluates the discourse completion task (DCT) as an instrument for quantitatively measuring humor data at a large scale. Given that the inquiry of L2 humor was mainly dominated by a qualitative

approach and involved small numbers of participants, DCT constitutes a worthwhile endeavor. The results indicate that DCT is viable for providing a quantitative perspective on humor. Besides, with DCT, it is possible to examine how other variables, such as perception of humor, target language, and the like, play a role in L2 speakers' perceiving and producing humor.

In Chapter 9, Ross and Zheng argue that role plays do not serve as an efficient means to assess candidates' pragmatic and strategic competence due to the binary scoring system. Therefore, they propose a revision of the scoring system by exploring overlooked facets of strategic and pragmatic competence. Four assessable aspects of role play interaction are proposed as added criteria: interlocutor support, realism (the candidate's knowledge), theory of mind (the candidate's anticipation of the interlocutor's knowledge), and situational and affective concordance with the roles in the scenario.

Part III features the study of digital discourses in L2 pragmatics with three chapters included (Chapters 10–12). In Chapter 10, Sykes focuses the discussion of digital discourses in L2 pragmatics on two areas: the research and instruction of pragmatic patterns within digital discourses, and the research possibilities enabled by digital technologies. Sykes explicitly shows that digital discourses greatly expand L2 pragmatic inquiry, as new types of research questions are raised. In addition, new approaches to research are also made possible by technological advancements. In brief, digital discourses do not only provide learners and researchers with situated contexts to examine pragmatic behaviors, but also hold the potential for shaping L2 pragmatics research.

By considering lower-proficiency learners, Chapter 11, which is directed at examining L2 pragmatic patterns as related to e-request making and recipients' (instructors of Spanish) perception of these requests, expands the description of Spanish learners' email request forms. The results suggest participants' preference for direct requests either in making high- or low-imposition requests, and speaker-oriented requests dominate in both L1 English and L2 Spanish request making. As for recipients, indirect requests and requests with internal modification are perceived as more polite.

Chapter 12 proposes a game-enhanced CBPI (concept-based pragmatics instruction) framework. Since games and CBPI can respectively maximize the possibilities of engaging learners as a social and cognitive actor (Erikson et al., 2017; Schill & Howell, 2011), a synergy between them can better realize learner authentication, which, according to Knight, is an element largely absent from the current formal and informal language education. This accounts for the decline in world language education in the U.S. and prompts the use of learner-centered pedagogical tools and paradigms.

Part IV draws the reader's attention to the key topics in Andrew Cohen's work and deals with the current issues in L2 pragmatics (Chapters 13 through 17). Noticing the neglect of explicit knowledge in the research design for L2 pragmatics, Chapter 13 by Bardovi-Harlig discusses what tasks are likely to activate the use of explicit knowledge, and lists evidence where learners accessed their explicit knowledge. Therefore, researchers in pragmatics are urged to consider explicit knowledge in their research design. Given this, the role of explicit knowledge in L2 pragmatics acquisition and use can be better explored.

Chapter 14 explores the history, the current state, and the new possibilities of speech act research with a focus on theoretical and methodological issues. Boxer and Rossi show their concern of how to re-examine the traditional perspective of language users in the current world characterized by transnationalism and globalization, and outline earlier methods used in speech acts with a discussion of their merits and demerits. From here, they introduce the recent employment of psycholinguistic techniques, which helps to reveal the underlying linguistic and cognitive components of the real-time processing of speech acts.

In Chapter 15, Salaberry endeavors to prove that rationalist approaches to pragmatics are compatible with discursive approaches. The integration of these two orientations is achieved by positing two theoretical sub-constructs under the concept of interactional competence: the stable and generalizable discourse competence based on portable conventional resources (reflecting the rationalist orientation), and the variable and locally bound object of learning of an actual interaction (reflecting the discursive orientation). In particular, Salaberry argues that despite the limited view of interaction by rationalist pragmatics, the focus on conventional resources can greatly inform the teaching of L2 interactional competence.

Chapter 16 examines how the conceptual thinking around native versus nonnative speakers evolves. While this dichotomy underlies Andrew Cohen's early work on interlanguage pragmatics, Cohen revised it later due to the fact that the dividing line between the two becomes blurred in today's multilingualism and global (super)diversity (Ishihara and Cohen, 2010). Beyond identifying the limits of the dichotomous conceptualization, Ishihara proposes a translingual framework, which adopts an integrative perspective rather than the static and comparative one (of the former dichotomy) and focuses on the interconnectedness of languages in the mind of multilingual speakers. Examples are included to illustrate translingual practice.

In Chapter 17, the focus is on the discussion of discourse markers. With a distinction made between discourse markers and their homophonous lexical items, Fraser conceives discourse markers as a separate linguistic entity after revealing their roles in conversation. It also summarizes categories of discourse markers along with concrete examples.

In summary, the volume contributes to the body of L2 pragmatics literature by reflecting and expanding on three major research areas of Andrew Cohen's work: learning, teaching, and assessing L2 pragmatics. Two notable characteristics should be noticed. First, this volume does not only report recent attempts as to how to conduct L2 pragmatics inquiry, as what has been particularly illustrated in Part III which focuses on the integration of digital discourses with L2 pragmatics, but also highlights the careful examination of theoretical issues underlying it. For instance, Chapter 6 is devoted to the theoretical foundation of L2 pragmatics assessment, while Chapter 15 posits theoretical sub-constructs of interactional competence. Second, although this volume is entitled "New Directions in Second Language Pragmatics", it does not only include new trends, as mainly shown by the discursive approach to pragmatics which emphasizes real-time interaction, but also endeavors to verify the potential of traditional assessment instruments, overcome the deficiencies by making necessary revision, and even argue for a more balanced view on the "new" and the "old" as there is a possibility to reconcile the traditional rationalist approach and the emerging discursive approach.

Despite the apparent strengths mentioned above, the volume has some imperfections. First, although some chapters appeal to quantitative research to answer the research questions, the small size of the collected data may greatly limit the generalizability of their findings. Chapter 4, for example, explicitly admits this and advises readers to carefully interpret its findings. Clearly, if a research design is improved in this respect, relevant findings will be rendered more credible and insightful. Second, Chapter 17 may fall short of the writing purpose. It states that "to discuss teaching DMs in a second language" is one essential part of its purpose (p. 314). However, it only ends up with a discussion related to this of no more than 100 words, simply *saying* how important it is to consider the instruction of discourse markers. Third, there are a few typos which may impede readers' comprehension, such as "in Bogotá, Colombia, Ramírez-Cruz, Correa and Mancera (2017) *carried out* an ethnographic study on piropos" (p. 108) and "There is usually only one CPDM, *can be* moved to the end of S" (p. 330). These errors, though minor for the entire book, may impair the quality of it and leave an impression that it is not proofed with enough caution.

Nevertheless, being a critical continuation of Andrew Cohen's influential work in the field of L2 pragmatics, the volume should be considered a substantial contribution. It has refined research methodologies (e.g., Chapters 3 and 9), critically evaluated conventional beliefs in language learning (e.g., Chapters 6 and 16), delved into the underlying theoretical assumptions (e.g. Chapters 1 and 7) and proposed practical suggestions for researching and teaching pragmatics (e.g., Chapters 11 and 12). Those who are interested in expanding their views in both theoretical and methodological issues regarding L2 pragmatics should find in it comprehensive overviews, in-depth speculation, up-dated information, and practical suggestions for further research.

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