Both experts and lay people would agree that learning a second language (L2) involves more than learning grammar and vocabulary. Learning sociocultural conventions and norms of language use—what to say or not to say in a certain situation, how to convey intentions in a contextually fitting manner, and how to achieve a communicative goal collaboratively with others—is a crucial part of becoming a competent speaker in L2. The field of L2 pragmatics addresses this fundamental yet often neglected area of L2 learning and teaching. L2 pragmatics encompasses two broader disciplines—pragmatics and second language acquisition (SLA)—which are complementary in defining the objectives and substances of the field. Pragmatics serves as a goal for L2 acquisition, and SLA provides frameworks and empirical methods to examine the process and impetus of the acquisition.

Pragmatics studies the connection between a linguistic form and a context, where that form is used, and how this connection is perceived and realized in a social interaction. Our linguistic choices (as it pertains to the use of form) are bound by several factors. Certainly, contextual factors such as settings, speakers’ relationships and their roles, and topics of conversation affect our way of speaking, but our linguistic choices are also shaped by agency and consequentiality. We choose to speak in a certain way depending on the type of ‘self’ that we want to project (Duff, 2012; LoCastro, 2003). We are also mindful of the consequences of our linguistic behavior—how it impacts others’ perceptions and reactions. These elements of pragmatics are reiterated in Crystal (1997), who defines pragmatics as ‘the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication’ (p. 301).

Given the intricacy involved in pragmatics, one can easily imagine that it can take a village to achieve full competency in pragmatics in L2—if it is ever possible. The challenge comes from many sources. One source is the influence coming from the first language (L1) (or any additional language in the system). Adult learners already have a foundation of pragmatic knowledge in L1 when they come to learn L2. Hence, they need to develop processing control over pre-existing pragmatic representations while re-learning new connections between linguistic forms and the social contexts in which they occur in L2 (Bialystok, 1993). Knowledge of how to express social and interpersonal concepts like politeness, formality, or solidarity in L1 does not directly transfer to L2 because linguistic expressions and strategies required in L2 are different. These concepts also vary in degrees across cultures.
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Another challenge for L2 pragmatics acquisition is the sociocultural nature of pragmatics as a learning object. Because social norms and conventions of communication are not salient, it is often difficult for learners to notice what linguistic means are used to project appropriate levels of politeness or formality in a situation, or how meaning is conveyed indirectly with specific linguistic and non-linguistic means (Wolfson, 1989). Those means, and social conventions behind the means, also exhibit considerable variation even in a single community. This variable and tacit nature of forms and conventions further challenges pragmatics learning.

Finally, pragmatics involves wide-ranging dimensions that encompass linguistic and sociocultural language use, which makes learning pragmatics a challenging task. Thomas (1983) defined these dimensions in a distinction between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. The former refers to linguistic resources for performing a communicative act, while the latter involves knowledge of sociocultural norms and conventions associated with the act. To become pragmatically competent, L2 learners need a range of linguistic resources, as well as the ability to evaluate contextual information, select appropriate resources, and use them efficiently in a real-time interaction. For instance, when learners want to ask someone a favor, they need to know what linguistic forms are available to convey such illocution. They also need to assess the nature and size of the favor and to whom it is directed in what occasion, as well as its likely outcomes. Learning pragmatics is taxing because of this combination of linguistic knowledge and sociocultural sensitivity required for a pragmatic act. The combination also indicates that grammar and pragmatics are distinct yet interdependent in L2 learning (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000; Kasper & Rose, 2002). Knowledge of formal aspects of language (e.g., grammar, lexis) does not automatically lead to better pragmatic performance, but pragmatics learning does not occur without it. Threshold linguistic knowledge is pre-requisite and serves as a means for pragmatic performance.

These observations suggest that acquisition of L2 pragmatics is a long-term process shaped by multiple interweaving factors: L1 pragmatics, L2 proficiency, knowledge of social conventions and norms, context of language use, and experience in the target community. These factors involved in pragmatics learning also inform a larger field of SLA. SLA is a multi-faceted and interdisciplinary field in which numerous factors—linguistic, psychological, and sociological—need to be examined together all at once to understand the process of L2 development and influences on the process (Gass & Mackey, 2012). As a branch of SLA, L2 pragmatics is a field that investigates the construct of pragmatics and process of acquiring the construct.

The Routledge Handbook of SLA and Pragmatics illustrates the long-standing relationship between L2 pragmatics and SLA research. The starting point of the relationship goes back to the term interlanguage pragmatics, which was originally coined by Kasper in the 1980s and later defined in Kasper and Dahl (1991) as L2 learners’ pragmatic systems. Since this term debuted, L2 pragmatics has accumulated a critical mass of empirical findings that have enhanced our understanding of SLA from a pragmatics perspective. This handbook surveys this body of literature in six distinct areas: (1) constructs of pragmatic competence, (2) theoretical foundations, (3) research methods, (4) instruction and assessment of pragmatics, (5) contexts of learning and individual differences, and (6) L2 pragmatics in the global era. The handbook provides a critical review of the L2 pragmatics field by evaluating the existing literature, problematizing the current state, and identifying future directions.

As an introduction to the handbook, this chapter presents a historical background of the field in response to critical questions that have guided L2 pragmatics research thus far. My goal is to present an introductory overview of the field and encourage readers to leap into subsequent chapters so they can read further on the issues raised in this chapter. I will address questions in three major areas of L2 pragmatics research: construct, development, and instruction.

- **Construct:** What does it mean to be pragmatically competent? What elements are involved in the construct of pragmatic competence?
• Development: How does pragmatic competence develop over time? How do individual learner characteristics and contextual resources shape pragmatic development?

• Instruction: What is the role of instruction in pragmatic development?

In the following, I will present representative literature addressing these questions.

Background

Construct: What does it mean to be pragmatically competent? What elements are involved in the construct of pragmatic competence?

The definition of pragmatic competence has evolved over time corresponding to the changing view of L2 ability and to epistemology of the field of SLA. The early definition goes back to the theoretical models of communicative competence, which situated pragmatic competence as a fundamental component of L2 ability, distinct from grammatical, discourse, and strategic competences (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Canale & Swain, 1980). These models view pragmatic competence as involving two dimensions: functional and sociolinguistic knowledge. The former involves the use of proper linguistic forms for achieving a communicative function (e.g., what to say when greeting a colleague), while the latter involves understanding contextual characteristics and selecting appropriate forms to use in that context (e.g., how to greet a colleague in a business meeting vs. a roommate at a party). In these early models, pragmatic competence is postulated as the knowledge of form–function–context mappings—which forms to use for what communicative functions in what social contexts.

With a surge of discursive pragmatics (Kasper, 2006) and interactional competence (Young, 2011), the view of pragmatic competence has moved away from the one-to-one correspondence among a form, function, and context of use. It is now well accepted that the form–function–context associations are not stable or pre-existing within individuals. Rather, they are contingent upon an unfolding course of interaction and are jointly constructed among participants in discourse. The form–function–context associations also shift constantly, corresponding to changing contextual dynamics such as the speakers’ attitudes, affect, and directions of discourse. Hence, ability to adapt to dynamic interaction and achieve a communicative act collaboratively with others is a fundamental aspect of pragmatic competence. Critically, with interaction as part of the construct, pragmatic knowledge is now understood as interactional resources. As Young (2011) claims, participants draw on numerous interactional resources during interaction, including register-specific linguistic forms, speech acts, topic management, turn taking, and repair. These resources are shared among participants as they co-construct a communicative act.

More recently, the field of intercultural pragmatics has expanded our understanding of pragmatics-in-interaction. Intercultural pragmatics studies how people from different cultures communicate using a common language (Kecskes, 2014, 2016). Kecskes proposed the socio-cognitive approach as a theoretical foundation. This approach combines the cognitive–philosophical perspective, which views intention as pre-existing in the speaker’s mind before it is uttered, and the sociocultural-interactional perspective, which views intention as emergent and jointly constructed among participants in discourse. People draw on their own norms and expectations, but these L1 norms are negotiated and re-defined as they seek common ground during interaction. Hence, individuals’ prior norms eventually develop into new, hybrid norms, creating a ‘third culture that combines elements of each of the speakers’ L1 cultures in novel ways’ (Kecskes 2014, p. 13). These tenets of intercultural pragmatics are directly applicable to L2 pragmatics. Learners draw on their own knowledge of form–function–context associations from their L1 (or other prior experiences), but their individual-level knowledge transforms to shared knowledge with new standards of politeness, directness, and conventions emerging from interaction.
Hence, learners’ willingness to suspend their own standards and seek mutual standards is a critical aspect of pragmatic competence. Also important is the skilled use of communication strategies, which directly affect the process of mutual understanding.

While interactional competence (Young, 2011) and the socio-cognitive approach (Kecskes, 2014, 2016) both capitalize on the concept of interaction to explain pragmatic competence, another concept that has recently expanded our understanding of pragmatic competence is learner agency. LoCastro (2003) defines agency as a self-defining capacity that works with volition to bring about a certain effect on or change to one’s behavior. In this definition, learners are viewed as social beings with their own values, beliefs, and perceptions of the world. Following their personal principles, learners make their own linguistic choices to create social positions for themselves, even when their choices do not conform to the norms widely practiced in the local community (Ishihara & Tarone, 2009). Hence, when examining L2 pragmatic competence, it is critical to consider learners’ desired social identity and how it impacts their pragmatic choices. Knowledge of the normative form–function–context associations is one thing, but deciding whether or not to actually use the knowledge with others can be a totally different matter.

In summary, the concept of pragmatic competence has evolved over time, shaping our understanding of what it means to be pragmatically competent. Given this evolving conceptualization, pragmatic competence in the current era is best understood as a multi-dimensional and multi-layered construct that involves several knowledge and skill areas: (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 the community. In the current transcultural society, pragmatic competence is often at stake in intercultural encounters where learners from different L1 backgrounds communicate using a common L2. In such a context, pragmatic competence goes beyond the traditional focus of how learners perform a pragmatic act in L2. It extends to how learners co-construct pragmatic norms with others and how they appropriate the norms.

The chapters in this handbook collectively illustrate this multiplicity of pragmatic competence. Chapters on constructs and units of analysis in L2 pragmatics present a diverse scope, including traditional constructs of speech acts, conversational implicatures, and routines, as well as more recent areas of prosody, humor, and interactional competence (Part I). Chapters on theoretical foundations also show diverse representations, ranging from cognitive theories that view pragmatic knowledge as individuals’ mental representations, to socially oriented theories that situate pragmatic knowledge in an interpersonal interaction (Part II). Finally, uniform standards of pragmatic language use, as seen in the form–function–context associations, are critically discussed in chapters in the section on pragmatics in the global era, including variational pragmatics, intercultural communication, and multilingual pragmatics (Part VI).

**Development: How does pragmatic competence develop over time? How do individual learner characteristics and contextual resources shape developmental trajectories?**

Despite the explicit longitudinal orientation in the mainstream SLA research (Ortega & Byrnes, 2008), L2 pragmatics, particularly in its early years, has fallen short of this trend. This is because of the dominance of cross-linguistic and cross-sectional studies in the 1980s and 1990s, which focused on describing pragmatic language use rather than its development (e.g., Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993). Many studies in these periods used a questionnaire-based instrument to elicit speech acts (e.g., a discourse completion test or DCT) and examined how many different speech act strategies exist in a language, whether these are direct or indirect strategies, and how they differ across languages, situations, and participant groups (e.g., L2 learners vs. native speakers). Cross-sectional studies that emerged in this trend
generated insights into development by comparing learners’ speech acts across different proficiency levels. The early cross-sectional practice still remains today with new target languages (e.g., Greek in Bella, 2014; Arabic in Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2014) and new constructs (e.g., argumentative discourse in Dippold, 2011; interactional competence in Galaczi, 2014).

Longitudinal studies, although still outnumbered by cross-sectional studies, started to show more prominence in the 2000s. This shift is largely owed to a series of seminal publications that underscored the paucity of longitudinal practice and encouraged researchers to explore issues in *acquisitional pragmatics* (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999, 2000; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Taguchi, 2010). According to Bardovi-Harlig (1999), acquisitional pragmatics addresses two fundamental issues: changes within the L2 pragmatics systems and influences on those systems. Longitudinal research can address both issues: It can document changes in pragmatic competence and explain those changes by examining influences—both contextual and individual—that may be related to these changes.

Several longitudinal studies have documented changes in pragmatic language use and uncovered distinct stages of development. A classic study is Ellis’s (1992) investigation into two young ESL learners’ classroom requests. Changes in request forms found in classroom interaction data were interpreted as belonging to one of three developmental stages: (1) A pre-basic stage where learners conveyed a request intention in a context-dependent manner; (2) A formulaic stage where learners performed requests with chunks (e.g., ‘Give me that.’); and (3) An unpacking stage where formulae turned into productive language use with conventional request forms (e.g., ‘Can you’ + verb). Kasper and Rose (2002) later expanded these three stages into five stages of pragmatic development: (1) pre-basic, (2) formulaic, (3) unpacking, (4) expansion (entry of new forms), and (5) fine-tuning (understanding of associations among form, participants, goals, and context).

Ohta (2001), on the other hand, analyzed naturalistic interactions in Japanese classes and identified a six-stage development of Japanese acknowledgment and alignment expressions (i.e., feedback signals used to show listeranship and empathy). She found that acknowledgment expressions emerged first in learners’ production, followed by alignment expressions, and each expression expanded in lexical variety. In another study, Shively (2013) documented stages of humor production by analyzing an L2 Spanish learner’s conversations in a study abroad program over a semester. Data revealed three changes: (1) decrease in failed humor; (2) decrease in deadpan humor (humor without contextualization); and (3) increase in humorous revoicing.

Studies using Conversation Analysis also revealed developmental stages, but unlike other studies focusing on linguistic strategies, these stages were presented from the standpoint of growing repertoire of interactional resources to create meaning. For instance, Al-Gahtani and Roever (2012) analyzed semi-naturalistic role play data to trace development of request-making in L2 Arabic over a semester. Participants increased their use of pre-expansion (explaining the reason for request), which occurred in sequence with the interlocutor’s acknowledgment token. Pakarek Doehler and Berger (2017), on the other hand, examined story-openings by an L2 French learner in a home stay setting. Analysis of 20 conversations recorded over a period of eight months showed that the learner gradually expanded her interactional resources for a story launching: preparing the listener for the upcoming story; relating the story to the prior talk; and projecting the nature of the story (e.g., funny, serious).

These studies documenting distinct stages of development are rather under-represented in the longitudinal practice because most existing studies have primarily focused on documenting changes using a pre–post design, rather than revealing a staged progression over multiple data-points. Hence, the studies described above, albeit the minority, have generated valuable insights into patterns and stages of development, which in turn shed light on SLA issues like developmental order and time scale, ultimate attainment, and variation in developmental patterns.

Although changes in pragmatic systems have been documented widely in the literature, when it comes to the other dimension of acquisitional pragmatics, i.e., influences on pragmatic systems,
findings are rather limited. Existing studies are largely descriptive, and do not explain how and why certain changes occurred. When considering ‘how’ and ‘why,’ the most obvious sources of influence are individual learner characteristics and contexts of learning.

Individual characteristics have been the paramount area of SLA research (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009; MacIntyre, Gregersen, & Clément, 2016). Because learners often exhibit variation in their degrees of success in L2 acquisition, studies have strived to identify individual factors that can explain the variations and predict success in L2 learning. L2 pragmatics has followed this trend, as seen in a large body of studies that examined proficiency impact on pragmatic competence, and a smaller body of studies looking at other factors (e.g., gender, age, motivation, cognitive abilities, personality, and identity) (for a review, see Taguchi & Roever, 2017).

Given the recent surge in the social turn (Block, 2003; Firth & Wagner, 1997) and in the dynamic, complex systems approaches (e.g., de Bot, 2008; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008), it is more current to situate individual characteristics within a context where learning occurs. Indeed, the recent trend has been that, instead of treating individual characteristics as fixed and discrete variables independent from context, researchers view individual factors as interacting with each other and changing dynamically in context (Dörnyei, 2009). Hence, it is not individual characteristics per se that affect learning; it is a constellation of characteristics mediated by context and time that shapes learning. The interdependence between context and individuals is also seen in L2 pragmatics research. Recent studies have taken a qualitative, case study approach or mixed methods design in longitudinal investigations. These studies have documented learners’ changes over time, with a conjoined analysis of individual characteristics and resources available in a learning context affecting the changes (Brown, 2013; Cook, 2008; D. Li, 2000; Diao, 2016; DuFon, 2010; Hassall, 2006; Ohta, 2001; Shively, 2011; Taguchi, 2012).

Many of these studies took place in a study abroad program or sojourn. This trend indicates that the target language community has served as a prolific environment to observe individual and contextual influences on pragmatics learning. Given the sociocultural nature of pragmatic competence, researchers consider that pragmatic development can be best observed in a target language community where learners have opportunities to observe local norms of interaction and experience real-life consequences of their pragmatic behavior. Study abroad settings involve unique participant memberships, activities, and organizations of interactions that could facilitate pragmatics learning to a greater extent than formal classroom settings.

Another common feature among these studies is their application of language socialization theory as a guiding framework (e.g., Cook, 2008; Diao, 2016; Li, 2000; DuFon, 2010; Ohta, 2001; Shively, 2011). The language socialization approach contends that linguistic knowledge and sociocultural understanding of the knowledge develop together as learners participate in routine activities (Duff & Talmy, 2011; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Socialization is characterized as a process of novices becoming competent members of a community through interaction with expert members in the community. Using observations, field notes, and analyses of interaction data, researchers have uncovered instances of explicit and implicit socialization leading to pragmatics learning. Ohta (2001), for example, showed how L2 Japanese learners were socialized into the role of empathetic listener through exposure to teacher talk demonstrating acknowledgment and alignment expressions. DuFon (2010) revealed how feedback and modeling coming from local members socialized learners into Indonesian leave-taking routines and cultural values associated with those routines. Diao (2016) analyzed conversations between L2 Chinese learners and their Chinese roommates to reveal socialization into gendered language use. These studies demonstrate a clear connection among learners, contexts, and pragmatic development. By looking at the data, we understand what kind of pragmatics learning opportunities occurred, how they occurred, and what learning outcomes were produced.

To summarize, various issues related to pragmatic development can be paraphrased in a single question: What mechanisms drive development, moving learners from their current stage to a
higher stage of pragmatic competence? This question has been addressed by a line of longitudinal studies, particularly by qualitative research conducted in a naturalistic context. A number of qualitative studies performed a holistic analysis of all the elements involved in a context, revealing a reciprocal relationship between contextual affordances and learners’ characteristics shaping development in a dynamic manner.

This handbook will help us evaluate the current practice of acquisitional pragmatics based on two sources of influences on changing pragmatic systems: individual learner characteristics and contexts of learning (i.e., study abroad programs, classrooms, workplaces, and technology-enhanced environments) (Part V). The theoretical foundations section reviews a range of SLA theories from the standpoint of the mechanisms driving pragmatic development (Part II). The research methods section discusses methodological options for examining pragmatic development from a variety of perspectives, including discourse analysis, conversation analysis, corpus linguistics, psycholinguistic approaches, and mixed methods approach (Part III).

**Instruction: What is the role of instruction for pragmatic development?**

Instructed SLA (ISLA) is a growing sub-field of SLA as it has rigorously explored how systematic manipulations of learning mechanisms and conditions can lead to the development of an additional language (Loewen & Sato, 2017). L2 pragmatics has followed this trend. Researchers have proposed theoretically grounded hypotheses and tested them systematically using empirical data (for a review, see Takahashi, 2010; Taguchi, 2015). The contribution that pragmatics has made to ISLA is in the target area of instruction. While formal aspects of linguistics (e.g., grammar and lexis) have been the primary interests in ISLA, pragmatics has offered an opportunity to examine instructional effects beyond morpho-syntax, extending to sociocultural aspects of language use. Correspondingly, instructional materials have been designed to incorporate socially oriented communicative goals—whether learners can produce intended communicative effects on others or whether they can convey interpersonal meanings such as politeness, formality, and affect.

Early studies in the 1980s and 1990s reached a consensus that pragmatics is teachable, given that instructed groups often outperformed their non-instructed counterparts (for a review, see Kasper & Rose, 1999). Studies in the next decade addressed the question of effective instruction by comparing different teaching methods for learning outcomes. By far, the comparison between explicit and implicit teaching method has dominated the field. Motivated by Schmidt’s (1993) noticing hypothesis that capitalizes on the role of consciousness and attention in learning, studies generally revealed that explicit metapragmatic explanation (e.g., information about which linguistic strategies to use when refusing someone’s invitation) is more instrumental than an implicit condition that promotes learning through input exposure and consciousness-raising (e.g., identifying refusal strategies in input). More recent literature suggests that effective teaching is closely related to depth of processing (Taguchi, 2015). Studies showed that implicit teaching can be equally effective when learners are strategically guided to notice pragmatic features and process those features at a deeper level (e.g., deducing why certain refusal strategies are used in a particular situation).

In the same period, tips and guidelines for practitioners have also emerged, informing instructors how to design materials that can package key elements of pragmatics—contextual understanding, language use for communicative functions, cultural knowledge, and social interaction (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Tatsuki & Houck, 2010). The general consensus emerging in this literature is three-fold: instructional tasks should be designed to enhance learners’ awareness and reflection of pragmatic language use, have learners engage in pragmatic-focused interaction activities, and guide learners’ discovery and understanding of pragmatics-related conventions and rules (Cohen & Ishihara, 2013).
Parallel to the development in pedagogy, assessment practice has also been fortified. Traditional practices of testing—construct definition and operationalization, measurement design, validity argument, and reliability estimates—have been incorporated to develop a valid, reliable assessment battery of pragmatic competence. Hudson, Detmer, and Brown’s (1995) book was the forerunner of this trend, attempting the multi-trait, multi-method approach to the assessment of pragmatic competence. The study showed how different measures (e.g., written and spoken DCTs, role plays, and multiple-choice questions) can be used to evaluate speech acts of requests, apologies, and refusals. Roever (2005) advanced the practice with technology by developing a web-based test assessing speech acts, implicature, and routines. More recently, in line with the popularity of interactional competence (Young 2011), test developers have addressed learners’ ability to participate in extended discourse as an area of assessment in L2 pragmatics (Roever, Fraser & Elder, 2014; Youn, 2013; for a review, see Ross & Kasper, 2013).

In the current decade, instructed pragmatics has grown further in two distinct directions. One is the increasing diversity in the theoretical epistemology underpinning the studies. The field has moved away from the dominance of noticing hypothesis and the comparison between explicit and implicit teaching. Researchers have started to adopt different SLA theories that represent both cognitive and social camps, including input processing (VanPatten, 2015; see Takimoto, 2009 for an example study), skill acquisition theories (Anderson, 1993; see S. Li, 2012), sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978; see van Compernolle, 2014), Cognition Hypothesis (Robinson, 2011; see Kim & Taguchi, 2015), and collaborative dialogue (Swain & Lapkin, 1998; see Taguchi & Kim, 2016). These theories differ in terms of how they view the mechanisms and conditions that drive learning. Studies guided by skill acquisition theories focus on the knowledge of form–function–context associations, which require initial noticing and a large amount of practice to develop. Likewise, studies under sociocultural theory and collaborative dialogue capitalize on the role of interaction assisting co-construction and emergence of pragmatic knowledge. Cognition Hypothesis, on the other hand, informs the nature of an instructional task, focusing on how task features impact learners’ attention and processing of pragmatics and subsequent learning. This growing theoretical diversity has presented an array of conditions to consider when teaching pragmatics.

Another recent trend in instructed pragmatics is the increasing popularity of technology application (for a review, see Taguchi & Sykes, 2013 and Taguchi & Roever, 2017). Technology has firmly established its position in SLA research and teaching, as seen in the wide-spread use of digital media for collecting data and delivering instruction, as well as examining technology-mediated contexts (e.g., computer mediated communication or CMC, social media, and multiuser virtual environments) for L2 language use and interaction (Chapelle & Sauro, 2017; Chun, Kern, & Smith, 2016). In their seminal paper, Chun et al. (2016) contend that ‘the use of technology should not be seen as panacea, or a goal in and of itself, but rather as one means to support specific learning goals’ (p. 77). When considering this statement, it is apparent that technology plays a beneficial role in supporting learning goals specifically in pragmatics. The most obvious benefit is the contextualization of learning made available via technology. As Harris (2000; also cited in Chun et al.) argues, the computer is ‘the most powerful contextualization device ever known because it not only integrates language with images and sound in variously manipulable configurations, but also because it links information across languages and cultures’ (p. 242).

This contextualization effect of technology is most beneficial for pragmatics learning because pragmatics fundamentally draws on the context of language use. A variety of CMC tools (e.g., chat, blogs, online discussion, and video/web conferencing) can provide a platform for learners to directly interact with other language users across time and physical space (e.g., Cunningham, 2016). Digital games and virtual environments can provide an interactive, input-rich, and self-guided space where learners simulate different participant roles in diverse social settings (Sykes, 2013). In such environments, learners can directly participate in an interactional situation, rather than observing the situation as a third person. They can also experience the direct consequences
of their pragmatic behavior—what impact their language use has on others and how it shapes subsequent linguistic actions. Only recently these characteristics of technology-enhanced learning, i.e., contextualized language use, interaction with consequences, autonomous learning, and experience-based learning, have been integrated into an instructional study in L2 pragmatics. Research is currently underway to examine whether these characteristics actually lead to increased pragmatic knowledge.

In summary, pedagogical issues in L2 pragmatics have diversified over time. Early investigation into the teachability of pragmatics has shifted into methods debates over effective instructional approaches and materials. This shift has been characterized by the explicit integration of mainstream SLA theories in designing instructional materials, along with a growth of the theoretical paradigms in guiding the investigation. The question of effective teaching methods has taken a new direction recently with technology as a potential for expanding traditional options of instruction.

In this handbook, the chapters on pedagogical approaches address these various recent developments in teaching pragmatics (Part IV). A meta-analysis of instructional studies presents the current landscape of methods, approaches, and findings of pragmatics teaching. An emerging trend on the application of task-based language teaching (TBLT) to instructed pragmatics is highlighted in a chapter advocating this connection (see also Taguchi & Kim, 2018). Principles and guidelines for material design and development are presented through a systematic evaluation of textbooks and pedagogical practices. Also included in this section is the chapter on pragmatics assessment, which reviews various test types (e.g., DCTs, role plays, multiple-choice items, and performance-based tasks) for reliability and validity. Chapters in the contexts of learning also discuss pedagogical issues by highlighting learning resources and opportunities available in different contexts (e.g., CMC, virtual games, classrooms, workplaces, and study abroad programs) (Part V).

Structure and Features of This Handbook

A range of research developments described above indicates that L2 pragmatics has firmly established its position as a branch of SLA. L2 pragmatics has constantly offered a window through which core issues of SLA—patterns of L2 development, and individual characteristics and contexts shaping the development—can be observed and understood. This handbook further illustrates the SLA–pragmatics interface. By presenting a critical survey of the existing literature, this handbook intends to exemplify how L2 pragmatics as a field has contributed to the accumulation of knowledge in SLA and identified areas to be taken further in future research. The handbook has several unique features as outlined below.

Depth and Scope in Coverage

This handbook strives for both scope and depth in its survey of L2 pragmatics research by reviewing literature in the following six sections:

1. Constructs and units of analysis
2. Theoretical approaches
3. Methodological approaches
4. Pedagogical approaches
5. Contextual and individual considerations
6. L2 pragmatics in the global era

These sections together represent the essential structure of the L2 pragmatics field in its entirety, and collectively define both the fundamentals and new directions of the field.
Chapters in the section on constructs (Part I) illustrate what it means to become pragmatically competent in L2 by surveying typical constructs and units of analysis in pragmatic competence. Those constructs include traditional areas of speech acts, conversational implicatures, and routines, as well as recent areas of interactional competence, humor, and prosody. The section on theoretical approaches (Part II) showcases diverse theoretical assumptions underlying pragmatic development, ranging from cognitive to social epistemologies (e.g., noticing hypothesis, skill acquisition, usage-based approaches, language socialization, sociocultural theory, and identity/agency). The section on methodology (Part III) presents an overview of data collection methods and specific research designs (e.g., mixed methods). This section also features data analysis frameworks that are relatively under-represented in L2 pragmatics research, such as corpus linguistics, systemic functional linguistics, and psycholinguistics approaches. The section on pedagogy (Part IV) includes classic areas of instructional studies, material development, and assessment, as well as more recent topics of TBLT and classroom socialization. The section on contexts and individuals (Part V) presents chapters on individual factors and contexts of learning, including typical areas of study abroad and classroom, extending to more recent areas of workplaces and technology-enhanced contexts (e.g., CMC, digital games, virtual environments). The final section on L2 pragmatics in the global era (Part VI) features recent trends by situating L2 pragmatics within the discourse of multilingualism, heritage language learning, lingua franca communication, and intercultural competence.

Across sections and chapters, this handbook aims at problematizing the current state and identifying future directions of L2 pragmatics. To achieve this goal, each chapter presents a critical survey of the existing literature and concrete suggestions on how to advance the current practice.

Theoretical, Empirical, and Practical Considerations

This handbook incorporates theoretical, empirical, and practical considerations together into the survey of L2 pragmatics research. These three dimensions are made explicit in separate sections dedicated to theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical approaches to L2 pragmatics (Parts II, III, and IV). The theoretical section addresses conceptualization of pragmatic competence and common frameworks used to investigate pragmatics learning and development. The methodological section addresses research designs, data collection measures, and data analysis methods used to investigate pragmatic competence and development. The section on pedagogy surveys instructional intervention studies and their major findings, instructional materials and tasks, and assessment practice. By presenting these three areas separately, the handbook intends to achieve a comprehensive review that appeals to both researchers and practitioners. The theory–research–pedagogy link will also help underscore the ‘applied’ orientation of SLA as a field.

Conceptual Diversity

This handbook promotes diversity and an interdisciplinary stance toward the field. Conceptual diversity is achieved by incorporating both orthodox L2 pragmatics topics (e.g., speech acts, implicatures, instruction, assessment, and learning pragmatics while abroad), as well as rather under-represented, emerging topics. For example, theoretical frameworks such as cognitive approaches (e.g., noticing hypothesis), language socialization, and sociocultural theory appear often in the pragmatics literature. An overview of data collection methods and Conversation Analysis are also common topics in the methods of L2 pragmatics research. In order to go beyond these revisited topics, this handbook presents other theories and methods, such as usage-based
approaches, corpus linguistics, systemic functional linguistics, and psycholinguistic methods. Although existing findings in these under-represented topics are still small, inclusion of these topics will generate new interests and directions in future research.

As another attempt to increase conceptual diversity, I have incorporated new perspectives into long-standing, revisited topics. For example, instructed pragmatics has been a common topic for decades, but this handbook addresses this topic with a recent perspective of meta-analysis. New instructional paradigms are presented through chapters on classroom pragmatics socialization and TBLT. Classic topics such as speech acts and implicatures incorporate more recent orientation of interaction as centrality of pragmatic performance.

Finally, conceptual diversity is achieved by dedicating an entire section to globalization in L2 pragmatics with regard to current issues such as native speaker norms and variation, heritage learner pragmatics, intercultural competence, and multilingual pragmatics.

By covering both classic topics and recent trends, this handbook aims to appeal to a wider audience including those who are new to the field and want to have a general outlook, as well as those who are already active in the field and want to explore new agendas in L2 pragmatics research. It is my hope that this handbook cultivates interests among students, researchers, and teachers who can take a critical look at L2 pragmatics from their own terrain of activity, and identify gaps and areas to be taken further. I believe that the collective insights coming from a number of stakeholders are impetus to strengthening the field of L2 pragmatics within SLA, as both fields continue to grow in the next decade.

Note

1 In this volume, L2 refers to any additional language(s) that learners acquire including a foreign language (FL) in a formal classroom setting and target language in the context where the language is spoken. As the reviewer of this volume pointed out, I am aware that the distinction between L2 and FL is important for pragmatics learning. I opted for using ‘L2’ as a cover term in this handbook for several reasons. First, the purpose of the handbook is to illustrate the connection between pragmatics and the larger field of SLA in which ‘second language (L2)’ is used as a cover term for ‘foreign language,’ ‘target language,’ and ‘additional language.’ Second, in the current era of globalization, the distinction between L2 and FL has become blurry. Even in a traditional FL context where the target language is not an official language, people have plenty opportunities to interact with target language speakers in both face-to-face and technology-supported mediums.

References


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