

Book review

Savić, Milica, Myrset, Anders & Economidou-Kogetsidis, Maria. *Researching and teaching speech acts with young L2 learners*.

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The title of the book clearly embraces the main topics which are developed throughout the volume. In the first place, the authors introduce relevant and updated research related to pragmatics, particularly speech acts, together with pedagogical activities to enhance pragmatic development in the classroom. Secondly, they show the connection between the above-mentioned topics with a specific group of students, that of young second language learners (YLLs). In this sense, the book is unique in that it exclusively focuses on this specific population, adding to the scant research carried out with young learners (Schauer, 2019).

The eight chapters which make up this volume are grouped into three parts. Part 1 provides the background of terms which will be used throughout the book. In this context, in Chapter 1 the authors first focus on the definition of pragmatics understood as the interplay between linguistic structures, context and speakers' and hearers' intentions and then they illustrate the components of pragmatic competence (i.e.,



pragmalinguistic, sociopragmatic and interactional competence). Chapter 2 is devoted to the discussion of the realization of six well-researched speech acts in English: requests, apologies, refusals, greetings, compliments and compliment responses. Once the key concepts for understanding pragmatic research have been explained in the first two chapters, Chapter 3 introduces an updated account of how YLLs produce and perceive speech acts not only in English, but also in diverse L1s such as Catalan, Chinese, German or Spanish. In this vein, an overview of both longitudinal and cross-sectional research on production of speech acts by YLLs is provided, along with the presentation of studies on speech act perception by this particular group of students.

Part 2 focuses on gathering pragmatic data from young learners by means of elicitation methods. The authors wisely acknowledge in Chapter 4 the challenges of conducting research with children, since power differences between adult researchers and children are at stake and children may produce answers they think may please the researcher (Pinter, 2023). In this regard, the creation of a safe research environment for young learners is paramount in order to avoid or decrease anxiety and inhibition and make children express their views freely. In an attempt to promote children's communication and engagement in the research, some specific elicitation methods are proposed, such as visual methods (photographs, animations), drama and play, and the use of puppets, among others.

Chapter 5 addresses the presentation and discussion of data elicitation methods commonly used in both L2 pragmatic production and perception with YLLs, such as role plays and written or oral discourse completion tasks (DCTs) for production. In these cases, the selection of the appropriate scenarios and roles is paramount so that children can be immersed in familiar situations while playing a role they are likely to perform in their lives. The second part of this chapter focuses on verbal protocols, multiple-choice tasks, scaled response questionnaires and metapragmatic interviews for gathering L2 pragmatic perception data. Accordingly, Chapter 5 can be considered as an introduction to the next, in which more innovative data elicitation methods are presented to be used with YLLs. Indeed, in Chapter 6 four methods the authors used

in their research are introduced, namely, Video-prompted oral DCT for pragmatic production and Readers Theatre, Emoticon task and Ranking circle for pragmatic perception. The authors encourage the readers to implement these methods in their own classrooms and research to critically examine them in different teaching contexts.

The two chapters in Part 3 focus on teaching speech acts in the YLL classroom. Despite the scant number of studies carried out with YLLs with different ages, nationalities and levels of proficiency, all these studies show that L2 pragmatics can be taught to young students. In this sense, Chapter 7 presents comprehensive approaches to teaching pragmatics based on Kasper's (1997) question regarding the teachability of pragmatics. The authors explore the fact that pragmatics is indeed teachable from three different perspectives, i.e., cognitive, socially-oriented and intercultural. The cognitive perspective includes the interlanguage hypothesis and the noticing hypothesis, whereas the socially-oriented approach embraces collaborative dialogue and concept-based perspectives to teaching pragmatics. In turn, intercultural pragmatics emphasizes the multilingual learner in a context in which speakers come from distinct cultural backgrounds. This chapter finishes with the discussion of research on L2 pragmatics instruction with YLLs, a far less explored group if compared with adults. As stated above, the results from this research reveal that L2 pragmatics is also teachable with young learners.

The last chapter of the volume describes a doctoral research project by Myrset (2021) which aimed at exploring the impact of teaching English requests to Norwegian learners aged 12-13. Therefore, the instructional design and materials are presented along with the feedback obtained from the teacher and the learners on their perceptions of the activity Readers Theatre and the instruction. Very positive feedback was obtained from both parties, since the learners reported that they would use what they had learned in the future and the teacher would incorporate L2 pragmatics in her future teaching. This chapter thus shows that L2 pragmatics can be introduced in the classroom much earlier and with low-level students so that they already have the foundation which may be developed later as they become more mature.

In the conclusion, the authors turn to address some future research topics dealing with YLLs in the field of L2 pragmatics. For example, they ask whether the presence of L2 speech acts in language textbooks is intentional or they appear simply because they can be easily inserted in dialogues. Moreover, they propose older YLLs' role of materials developers for their younger peers. Another avenue for further research focuses on L2 speech act performance in the digital world, in which players may request, apologize, or compliment as part of written or spoken communication in the game.

The present volume is a much-needed contribution to L2 pragmatics, as it addresses research on speech acts with young learners. Moreover, it offers relevant data elicitation techniques for this specific population and practical applications in the classroom. For these reasons, the book is an excellent resource for teachers and researchers working with YLLs who wish to carry out research on speech act production and perception.

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