

Preface

Teaching and Assessing Pragmatic and Intercultural Competence in Foreign Language Contexts

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1 Introduction

It is my pleasure to introduce this volume of the Indiana University Linguistics Club Working Papers (IULCWP) which makes a welcome contribution to the teaching and assessment of pragmatics and intercultural competence in foreign language contexts. The nine pedagogical activities, written by skilled language instructors of Spanish and French at Indiana University, are informed by current research in second language pragmatics and intercultural competence. The instructional units were conceptualized and completed in two of my graduate courses, L2 Pragmatics: Language Learning and Teaching (HISP-S 716, Spring 2018) and The Intercultural Speaker Abroad (HISP-S 612, Fall 2020). These pedagogical activities were designed during the semester to test key models of pragmatics instruction and intercultural communicative competence. Authors also had the opportunity to pilot their activities with Indiana University students learning Spanish or French. The first five contributions were piloted in face-to-face classroom interactions, while the last four, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, were tested virtually through Zoom teaching sessions. The final versions are the result of revisions based on reviewers' detailed comments and suggestions, followed by editorial advice from IULCWP.

The contributions in this volume examine different dimensions of pragmatic and intercultural competence. Pragmatic competence is understood as “a composite of abilities that allow the intercultural speaker to understand and negotiate different aspects of communication such as speech acts in interaction, address forms in formal and informal situations, and direct and

indirect meaning, based on knowledge of the sociocultural expectations of the target culture. It also includes awareness of the contextual factors and the status of participants that are part of the communicative event (social power, social distance, and degree of imposition) (Félix-Brasdefer, 2021, p. 13; see also Félix-Brasdefer, 2019a). Pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge represent two components of pragmatic competence (Leech, 1983; see also Kasper & Rose, 2002; Taguchi & Roever, 2017). Pragmalinguistic knowledge refers to knowledge about and performance of the conventions of language use or the linguistic resources available in a given language that convey “particular illocutions” (Leech, 1983, p. 11). Sociopragmatic knowledge refers to knowledge of and performance consistent with the social norms, as well as familiarity with assessments of (im)politeness and variables of social power and social distance. On the other hand, intercultural competence has been defined from diverse perspectives, but typically includes various dimensions (knowledge, attitude/affect, skills, awareness), abilities (cognitive, affective, and behavioral), and individual characteristics (e.g., open-mindedness, motivation, flexibility/adaptability, empathy, and tolerance) (Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017; Byram, 1997; 2021; Fantini, 2019). In this volume, intercultural communicative competence is understood as “a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself” (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006, p. 12). ‘Effectiveness’ refers to the intercultural speaker’s ability to manage social interaction, while ‘appropriateness’ refers to the learner’s ability and willingness to perceive socially appropriate behavior along with flexibility and willingness to adapt according to the sociocultural expectations of the target culture.

The first five papers included here (DiBartolomeo, Pollock & Blaker, Guo & Martínez Rodríguez, Caudell & Denbaum, and Arróniz & Coulter-Kern) focus on pragmatic competence, while the last four (Tiffany, Guo & Rodríguez, Di Maggio & Sosa, and McHugh & Uribe)

examine different dimensions of intercultural communicative competence in foreign language contexts. With regard to the second-language (L2) and foreign-language (FL) distinction, an L2 is presumably being learned in a context where the target language is used by the dominant language group (e.g., Americans learning Spanish in Mexico) and an FL is being learned in a context where the language may have more limited use (e.g., Americans studying Spanish at Indiana University). According to Cohen (2016), teaching the pragmatics of an FL is “more challenging than teaching the pragmatics of an L2 since in FL learning the learners are presumably not living in the target-language context” (p. 578).

2 Teaching and assessing pragmatic and intercultural competence

2.1 Pedagogical intervention

Research in instructional pragmatics supports the effectiveness of pedagogical intervention to enhance various components of pragmatic competence, such as speech acts, deixis, and indirect meaning (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, Mossman, & Vellenga, 2015; Félix-Brasdefer & Cohen, 2012; Félix-Brasdefer & DiBartolomeo, 2021; Hasler-Barker, 2016; Kasper & Rose, 2002 [Chapter 7]; Koike & Pearson, 2005; Sessarego, 2021; Taguchi, 2015; Taguchi & Roever, 2017 [Chapter 8]). Taguchi (2015) reviewed 95 studies that looked at the effects of pedagogical intervention in L2 pragmatics through explicit and implicit instruction. The aim of explicit instruction is to direct the learner’s attention to the pragmatic target (e.g., speech act strategies and internal/external modification) through a variety of awareness-raising activities and metapragmatic explanation. Metapragmatic instruction includes explicit presentation of both pragmalinguistic forms and sociopragmatic norms in social interaction. Ishihara and Cohen (2010) provide a comprehensive overview of examples with lesson plans that can be used to raise awareness of the pragmatic target. Schmidt’s (1993, 1995) noticing hypothesis has been used in instructional treatments that

consider consciousness, pragmatic function, and contextual features. On the other hand, implicit instruction allows learners to induce the pragmalinguistic forms and sociopragmatic norms through a variety of resources such as input enhancement (e.g., underlining, color, or bolding pragmatic features) and implicit feedback (e.g., recasts). While the instructor monitors the learner's development through metapragmatic explanation and practice, the learner is responsible for noticing the pragmatic forms available in the input through self-discovery of pragmalinguistic forms and sociopragmatic norms. In general, the goal of pedagogical intervention is to raise awareness of pragmalinguistic forms and sociopragmatic expectations, as well as providing opportunities for frequent practice and feedback. The contributions in this volume use both explicit and implicit techniques to foster various dimensions of pragmatic and intercultural competence.

Research on intercultural communicative competence shows that pedagogical intervention fosters awareness and the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Byram, 1997/2021; Fantini, 2019). Previous research also shows that learners improve aspects of intercultural competence through reflection, collaboration, awareness, and engaged sociocultural discussions in the classroom (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; McConachy, 2018 [Chapter 3]. For example, McConachy (2018) used role plays to develop awareness of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of requests, compliments, and apologies by engaging his learners in metapragmatic discussions both in their first language (Japanese) and in L2 English. Specifically, the author used reflection on experience as a resource for intercultural learning. Finally, Wagner, Perugini, & Byram (2018) proposed research-based pedagogical activities for the development of intercultural competence among students in elementary and high schools in the United States.

Research on the teaching of intercultural competence is based on previous models of intercultural communicative competence. In this section, I describe three models that are used by

the authors in the last four papers of the volume (Tiffany, Guo & Rodríguez, Di Maggio & Sosa, and McHugh & Uribe). Byram's (1997/2021) model of intercultural communicative competence includes four components, namely, linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and intercultural competence. Intercultural competence includes four dimensions: knowledge, attitudes, skills, and critical cultural awareness. Fantini's (2019) componential model includes five components: characteristics (e.g., open-mindedness, patience, motivation, tolerance, and empathy), target language proficiency, dimensions (i.e., knowledge, attitudes, skills, awareness), and abilities (i.e., relationships, communication, and collaboration). Finally, Deardorff (2006) proposed a process model of intercultural competence that comprises four elements: attitudes, knowledge, skills, and internal and external outcomes. Overall, Byram's model focuses on teaching and assessment, Fantini centers on development of intercultural competence through reflection and introspection, and Deardorff emphasizes progressive assessment of intercultural competence over time, including qualitative and quantitative assessment.

In sum, research in L2 pragmatics and intercultural competence has shown that pedagogical intervention is more beneficial than no instruction among learners in both FL and study abroad contexts (Félix-Brasdefer & Cohen, 2010; Félix-Brasdefer & DiBartolomeo, 2021; Pérez-Vidal & Shively, 2019; Rose & Kasper, 2001). The nine contributions in this volume offer myriad effective and creative ways to maximize the teaching of pragmatic and intercultural knowledge in the classroom.

2.2 Assessing pragmatic and intercultural knowledge

Assessment provides researchers with information on what learners know about the target language; specifically, the conventional resources for the service of pragmatics (pragmalinguistic information), what learners know about situational variation and what is considered appropriate or inappropriate behavior, how learners perceive indirect meaning, what learners can do with

language during social interaction, and what information intercultural speakers know about their own and the target language. Researchers in L2 pragmatics use various methods to assess different dimensions of pragmatic competence (e.g., Cohen, 2019; Félix-Brasdefer, 2019a, Chapter 10; Félix-Brasdefer & Shively, 2021; Shively, 2021; Youn & Bogorevich, 2019). In this section, I review three methods that have been predominantly used to assess pragmatic competence, as well as those used in the pedagogical activities included in this volume. If the aim is to observe pragmatic ability related to pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge, Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) offer an indirect means to observe non-interactive speech acts in different situations, as they elicit “what test-takers think they would say and draw on their explicit knowledge (i.e., knowledge of which a person is conscious and aware), rather than their implicit knowledge (i.e., rapidly accessible knowledge of which a person is unaware)...” (Shively, 2021, p. 135; see also Bell, Shardakova, & Shively, 2021). Role plays can be used to assess spoken interaction at the discourse level through the analysis of speech act sequences, turn-taking, overlap, repair, and overall organization of discourse (Félix-Brasdefer, 2018). Finally, multiple-choice questionnaires are often used to analyze pragmatic receptive skills, such as comprehension of L2 implicatures (Roever, 2005; Taguchi, 2019). In general, the selection of the instrument depends on the research question and the dimension of pragmatic competence the researcher aims to assess.

On the other hand, assessment of intercultural competence utilizes qualitative instruments to develop awareness of sociocultural norms, knowledge, skills, and language use. Some of the methods used to assess intercultural competence include engaging intercultural speakers in reflective journals, essays, and portfolios to raise awareness and reflection. In addition, role plays (Félix-Brasdefer, 2018) are employed to assess interactional aspects of language use (e.g., greetings, invitation responses, apologies, complaints, etc.), impoliteness events to examine

perception of impolite behavior, and surveys to assess various dimensions of the learners' knowledge, skills, and attitudes at the beginning and end of their experience abroad (e.g., Byram, 2021 [Chapter 5]; Fantini, 2019 [Chapter 3]; Félix-Brasdefer, 2017).

3 The Present Volume

Pragmatics has been defined from different perspectives (Félix-Brasdefer, 2019b [Chapter 1]; Levinson, 1983 [Chapter 1]), but in this volume the authors follow Crystal's (1997) definition which adopts a discursive-pragmatic view: "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). This volume is divided into two sections: Part I, Teaching and Assessing Pragmatic Competence (DiBartolomeo, Pollock & Blaker, Guo & Martínez Rodríguez, Caudell & Denbaum, and Arróniz & Coulter-Kern), and Part II, Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Competence (Tiffany, Guo & Rodríguez, Di Maggio & Sosa, and McHugh & Uribe). Eight of the contributions focus on Spanish and one on French (Tiffany). Each instructional unit is organized as follows: 1. Introduction; 2. Context; 3. Curriculum, tasks, and materials; 4. Assessment; 5. Reflection as a means for learning; and 6. Conclusion and extensions to other learning contexts. Each instructional unit identifies the proficiency level, the unit of analysis (e.g., a speech act or sociocultural knowledge), and the grammatical structures necessary to communicate effectively and appropriately in formal and informal contexts targeted in the activity. The aim of these activities is to promote explicit and implicit instruction of pragmatics and intercultural competence in the FL classroom by engaging the learners in reflection, discussions, critical cultural awareness, collaboration, and practice.

Part I: Teaching and Assessing Pragmatic Competence showcases innovative ways to teach four speech acts (requests, recommendations, advice, and responses to invitations) in face-to-face and in virtual interactions (Arróniz & Coulter-Kern; DiBartolomeo). The authors used Schmidt's noticing hypothesis, because attention to linguistic forms, functional meaning, and contextual features of the situation are necessary for pragmatic input to become intake (1993, 1995). DiBartolomeo opens the volume with a pedagogical activity, entitled "Teaching E-mail Requests in Spanish," to introduce second-year students to the politeness strategies needed to make appropriate requests to instructors via e-mail, taking into account both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge. It encourages students to produce appropriate e-mail requests, followed by reflection on and analysis of their responses. Pollock and Blaker's activity, entitled "*¿Qué me recomiendas?* Teaching the Pragmatics of Recommendations," provides instructors with various pedagogical activities to aid second-year learners of Spanish in producing appropriate recommendations. This speech act requires both pragmalinguistic (e.g., subjunctive forms) and sociopragmatic knowledge (e.g., formal vs. informal social contexts). The authors used role plays to engage students in giving and responding to recommendations. Guo and Martínez Rodríguez's activity, entitled "*¿Puedo tener el menú?* Teaching Requests at Restaurants," offers a series of activities employed to teach first-year FL Spanish learners how to make appropriate requests for service. Input included videos of naturalistic interactions by native speakers at restaurants, followed by role-play practice and feedback. Caudell and Denbaum's teaching unit, entitled "*¡No te pongas eso!* Teaching How to Give Advice," provides instructional tools for learning the speech act of advice-giving in Spanish to first- or second-year students. To ensure learners can efficiently utilize pragmalinguistic resources, such as imperative or subjunctive, for the service of pragmatics, the authors use production questionnaires (DCTs) and role plays to analyze and reflect on their responses. To close this section, Arróniz & Coulter-

Kern's teaching activity, entitled "Teaching Responses to Invitations through Face-To-Face and Computer-Mediated Communication in the Spanish Classroom," equips second-year learners of Spanish with the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge to produce appropriate acceptances and refusals to invitations through the use of Computer-Mediated Communication. The authors employed DCTs and role plays to allow learners to produce written and oral discourse, followed by discussion and reflection.

Part II: Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Competence focuses on sociocultural topics and conversational routines that promote reflection, metapragmatic awareness, and collaboration. The authors use Byram's model (1997/2021) of intercultural communicative competence and Deardorff's (2017) notion of assessment. The teaching activity by Tiffany, entitled "Teaching Openings and Requests in French Café Encounters," promotes intercultural competence among first-year learners of French in a virtual FL classroom. Using Byram's model, this activity aims to help students develop skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural knowledge with regard to requests and opening sequences in café encounters. Learners engage in role-play interactions to promote sociopragmatic reflection. The next instructional unit by Guo and Rodríguez, entitled "*¡Estás de buen ver!* Teaching Topic Appropriateness," fosters second-year learners' intercultural competence by raising awareness of topic appropriateness and discussions of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatics resources to engage in small talk. It focuses on Byram's (1997/2021) components of intercultural communicative competence, namely, knowledge, attitude, skills of discovery, and interaction skills on topic appropriateness. Next, the activity by Di Maggio and Sosa, entitled "Teaching Compliments and Physical Appearance in Spanish," is designed to raise awareness and discussion of topic appropriateness among second-year students. This activity develops curiosity and interaction skills by reflecting on compliments and topic appropriateness

across Spanish-speaking cultures. Finally, McHugh & Uribe's instructional unit, entitled *¿Se come igual en todo el mundo? Teaching Intercultural Competence through Food,* is designed for first-year students to develop knowledge and skills of interpreting and relating in regard to food, habits, and beliefs surrounding food from different Spanish-speaking countries. The authors designed an activity to engage learners in reflection on and discussions about food in Spain and in their native culture.

Taken together, the nine contributions offer insightful and innovative ways to teach, explicitly or implicitly, various dimensions of pragmatic and intercultural communicative competence in FL contexts. The pedagogical activities are informed by current research models on L2 pragmatic instruction, intercultural communicative competence, and assessment in order to engage students in reflection, awareness, and collaboration. The ultimate goal is to incorporate these pedagogical activities in the language curriculum. The [Pragmatics & Discourse Website at Indiana University](#) offers additional activities that instructors can incorporate in their classes. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the IULCWP reviewers and the Editorial Board, in particular, Alessia Cherici for her outstanding role as lead editor of this special volume.

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