

Ali Derakhshan Farzaneh Shakki: Instructed Second Language Pragmatics for The Speech Acts of Request, Apology, and Refusal: A Meta-Analysis

(New York: Springer. 2023. 114 p.)

Pragmatics, the interlocutors' intention in their joint action (Locastro, 2013), has been acknowledged as an interminable area of research in language learning, teaching, and assessment over the last decades. Furthermore, pragmatic instruction, as one of the most prevailing aspects of pragmatic research, commenced to establish itself as an independent area to ameliorate pragmatic competence. *Instructed Second Language Pragmatics for The Speech Acts of Request, Apology, and Refusal: A Meta-Analysis* is a book of six chapters published from the second language and learning series by Springer (DOI <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-37093>). Ali Derakhshan, who is an Assistant Professor in the English Language and Literature Department at Golestan University, Iran, and Farzaneh Shakki, a post-doctorate researcher, present an in-depth academic work that investigates the effectiveness of instruction in second language (L2) pragmatics.

The book sets the stage with an all-inclusive overview of its contents. In the introductory part, it highlights the discipline of pragmatics within the realm of second language acquisition (SLA). It first introduces the role of formal instruction in second language acquisition and explores how structured teaching methods can facilitate the development of linguistic and pragmatic skills in learners. Various models of communicative competence that incorporate pragmatic elements are then discussed. These models provide a framework for understanding the different components of language proficiency, including grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence. Key terms such as pragmatics and interlanguage pragmatics are defined and introduced in depth, as the authors highlight the necessity for integrating pragmatic instruction into classroom pedagogy, which has been shown to improve learners' overall pragmatic competence in a second language context. Key objectives of the book are also laid out in the overview as they outline the purpose of the meta-analysis synthesizing existing research on the instruction of request, apology, and refusal speech acts. The final section explains the methodology of meta-analysis, which is used throughout the book to synthesize findings from multiple studies. It outlines the steps involved in conducting a meta-analysis, including study selection, data coding, and result analysis, paving the way for later chapters to discuss them.

The second chapter touches upon recent experimental and quasi-experimental studies on the role of different instructional methods in developing L2 pragmatic competence. These studies addressed two main themes: Instruction of the Speech

Acts of Request, Apology, and Refusal, as well as previous global meta-analyses-based research in L2 pragmatics. The comprehensive overview of these studies from various contexts, including Spain, China, Iran, Thailand, Iraq, Philippines, Norway, and the USA, has consistently demonstrated that various forms of pragmatic instruction, especially explicit instruction discussed in this chapter, significantly improve learners' pragmatic competence in the L2 context as opposed to implicit instruction. At the end of this chapter, the authors highlight the uniqueness of this book to the field of Instructional L2 pragmatics, arguing that as opposed to previous unitary analysis studies of speech act instruction in addition to the scarcity of meta-analysis-based studies since their infancy, the present book aims to enrich the effectiveness of L2 pragmatics instruction in the case of request, apology, and refusal in papers published between 2000 and 2022.

The third chapter discusses the methodology. In this chapter, Derakhshan and Shakki set the cornerstone for understanding the rigor and depth of the research conducted as they outline the design of the study in which the inclusion and exclusion criteria, effect size calculation, coding of the variables, and reliability are presented. At first, the authors outline two primary objectives: assessing the overall effectiveness of pragmatic instruction and examining the moderating variables that might influence this effectiveness, such as age, gender, proficiency level, and more. Research questions are then presented to the reader, aiming to determine the overall efficacy of L2 pragmatic instruction and identify the variables that moderate this effectiveness. Using a thorough search strategy and meticulous inclusion and exclusion criterion, the authors identified 84 relevant studies using a quantitative and systematic meta-analysis approach. They then used Hedge's g to calculate effect sizes, carefully code moderator variables, ensure coding reliability, and look for publication bias to ensure the validity and reliability of their findings. In the end, they provided a valuable methodological resource for future research.

The 84 papers that make up the meta-analysis are first reviewed by the authors, who highlight the variety of speech acts, participant demographics, and instructional contexts in the 4th chapter comprising results. Then, the chapter reiterates the two main goals that were previously stated in the methodology chapter: determining the general efficacy of pragmatic instruction and investigating the moderating factors, such as age, gender, proficiency level, and more, that may have an impact on this efficacy. Meta-analysis findings suggest a notable improvement in learners' capacity to execute speech acts of request, apologies, and rejection as a result of pragmatic instruction, according to the study's mean impact size ($g = 1.43$). Moderator variables were thoroughly coded by the authors, who also made sure these codes were reliable. In order to determine how factors like age, gender, and proficiency level impacted the effectiveness of pragmatic education, these factors were

examined in the analysis. The results demonstrated that these factors can, in fact, modify the effectiveness of instruction.

Chapter 5 is the discussion part of the book, where the authors relate the findings of their book to past reviews and meta-analysis studies on instructed second language acquisition (ISLA). Kasper and Rose's (2002) seminal work highlighted the importance of instruction in pragmatics, prompting further research by scholars such as Bardovi-Harlig, Birjandi & Derakhshan, Blyth & Sykes, Cohen, Culpeper et al., González-Lloret, Shakki, Taguchi, and Takahashi.

The results, limitations, pedagogical consequences, and future directions for research in informed second language pragmatics (ILP) are the main topics of Chapter 6 of the book. It recognizes a number of shortcomings, such as the small number of research, the insufficient data, and the narrow scope of only three speech acts. The need for clear instruction, investigation of less-studied speech acts, efficient treatment modalities, and a variety of data-gathering techniques is highlighted by the pedagogical implications. Overall, the chapter emphasizes the importance of pragmatic instruction for enhancing communicative competence and provides a comprehensive framework for future studies.

In sum, Derakhshan and Shakki's book provides an essential addition to second language acquisition and pragmatic instruction as it moves away from the conventional unitary speech act research analysis in the second language context. Additionally, the book's detailed meta-analysis and meticulous approaches shed light on the efficiency of pragmatic training, presenting practical pedagogical implications while highlighting the significance of explicit teaching and contextual components. The study's scope is, however, somewhat constrained. The authors have mentioned that future studies should consider the contextual and cultural aspects, age distribution, intercultural communication, non-majors in English, qualitative designs, technological integration, and ecological validity. By addressing these issues, we may build on the accomplishments of this work and deepen our understanding of pragmatic education that works well for second-language learners.

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