A USEFUL GUIDE TO THE TEACHING AND TESTING OF PRAGMATICS IN THE EFL/ESL CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT: *This thorough analysis of the literature reviewed on pragmatics provides a practical and knowledge-based guide to EFL/ ESL teachers with the aim to assist them when they deal with the teaching and testing of pragmatics in the classroom. It also considers itself as an informational profile that might be of help whenever teacher-education and teacher-training are thought of as it reflects on an important aspect of language that seems to be overlooked in foreign language teaching/learning process and detached from real communicative language use. At first, an overview of how pragmatics is taught in the foreign/second language classroom is critically previewed so as to unfold the reality of the traditional pragmatics instruction in EFL/ESL contexts. Within this instructional perspective, an integration of the most up-to-date theoretical orientations to pragmatics instruction is shed lighted in order to better equip EFL/ESL teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills and instructional techniques and raise their awareness of pragmatics issues such as politeness, impoliteness, socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic failures. How to test pragmatics learning has been regarded in the second part as it deals with testing learner's pragmatic proficiency and addresses some important practices in testing this aspect in EFL/ESL classroom as well as in examinations.*

KEYWORDS: Pragmatics, Teaching and Testing, Pragmatic Proficiency, EFL/ESL Contexts

EFFECTIVE PRAGMATICS INSTRUCTION IN SL/FL CLASSROOMS

Pragmatics is considered an area of language that has been given little attention in the EFL/ESL classroom. The internal make-up of language in terms of grammar, phonology, structure and syntax, semantics, etc. has been predominating language learning and teaching (Jianda, 2007; Cohen, 2008; Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei, 1998; among others). Learners are required to follow exam-oriented approaches by getting acquainted with vocabulary lists and linguistic forms and structures that make them able to do well in examination, without even having reference to the vividness of language as a social tool for interaction and performing communicative functions in a particular speech community. Traditionally speaking, pragmatics integration in the language classroom was introduced first through the utilization of pragmatics-focused materials which were largely dependent on the presentation of lists of useful expressions, conversations and dialogues which offer pragmatically inaccurate models whose aim is to develop learners' pragmatic competence (Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004; Murray, 2010; Bardovi-Harlig, 1996).

Teaching pragmatics to EFL/ESL learners this way looks as if these learners are paid lip service, especially to the importance of context to meaning, even if they gleaned the

relationship between from and meaning. They are deprived from the applicability of language forms to social situations and encounters in a way in which the spiritual values of language productivity are extracted out from the very basic breath sources of language socialization. In this sense, it has been argued that little emphasis has been kept on Bachman's (1990) suggestion of identifying the pragmatic conditions which govern the determination of whether what is said is acceptable/ not acceptable to other users of the language as an act, or the performance of an intended function (Murray, 2010). Such traditional ways of dealing with pragmatics instruction do not provide learners with increased opportunities to explore the general principles of pragmatics or social grammar that help unveil the strong tie between language forms and the particular situations of their development, neither do they provide learners a helping hand in developing an appreciation of the effect of these pragmatic principles on how to recognize meaning.

From the last decade onwards, the literature on pragmatics instruction has addressed the need for productive teaching techniques and materials that make the learning/teaching process more effective in terms of awareness raising, interactive practice, and having ultimate control over aspects of communication (Yates, 2004, Islami-Rasekh, 2005; Murry, 2010; Bardovi-Harlig, et al., 1991; Kasper, 1997; Tanaka, 1997; among others). New approaches have been suggested each of which represents using innovative teaching techniques and classroom activities whose purpose is to develop learners' pragmatic competence which includes their ability to deal with the appropriate use of pragmalinguistic strategies, semantic formulas and linguistic forms, as well as of sociopragmatic information governing language choice according to particular social situations. These approaches will be discussed in terms of two large-scaled perspectives; namely, explicit and implicit instruction (Murray, 2010; Kasper, 1997). The implicit type of instruction represents an inductive observational analysis of speech acts; for example, in a way that leads to an understanding of general principles governing appropriate language use through learners' engagement in awareness-raising and interactive practice activities. In contrary, explicit instruction signifies the role of deductively presented information, explanations, descriptions, or putting input into practice in developing learners' awareness and appreciation of the universal principles responsible for appropriateness in language use. With these universal rules and principles (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Yates, 2004), learners will come to an understanding that they operate in all languages, even in their own L1. They will discover that they have learned and unconsciously applied these rules during the process of L1 acquisition, but such rules have never been brought to consciousness or articulated. Such explicit instruction is said to have a greater impact on providing EFL/ESL learners with a toolkit (Murray, 2010) which enables them to analyze the performance of speech acts in particular social interactive situations.

Using a complementary approach which integrates both implicit and explicit types of instruction in a step-by-step process seems to be of benefit to the teaching and learning of pragmatics. Put differently, Both inductive and deductive representations of knowledge and analysis can be used in the dynamic process of learning and teaching which inherently begins with awareness-raising focus (through both teacher-centered and learner-centered approaches). As awareness-raising is not enough, it should be followed by inductive interactive practice exemplified by a set of practical activities such as observation, exploration, comparison, noticing, translating and performing acts, role-playing, recoding, analysis, discussion, research, production, reflection, and feedback (Uso-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2007, Murray, 2010; Islami-Rasekh, 2005; Yates, 2004; Kasper, 1997; Olshtain & Cohen, 1991; Tanaka, 1997; Tarone & Yule, 1989; Hall, 1999) with a great deal of attention

given to learner-centered approach to teaching (Uso-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2007; Kasper, 1997).

The inherent concept of practice in both explicit and implicit instruction seemingly provides both teachers and learners with deeper and insightful enlightenments into the process of becoming communicatively competent in both EFL and ESL contexts. This integrative eclectic approach also supports the fact that both culture and language are inseparable and that learners' should be equipped with intercultural awareness of the universal secret rules of appropriateness (Meier, 1997; Uso-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2007; Yates, 2004); the awareness type that prepares learners for cross-cultural communication and understanding interaction in English across various linguistic and cultural backgrounds in different international social encounters.

I over-heartedly agree with what Yates' (2004) suggestion to approach pragmatics instruction to adults through eclecticism, integration and reflection. It is considered that adults have already participated in language socialization in different communities of practice; therefore, it is necessary that they should be introduced to pragmatic aspects of language use right from the beginning of the language learning process in a way that ensures their reception of explicit, relevant and sufficient input. As they are introduced to the available input, this input has to be noticed (Bialystok, 1993; Schmidt, 1993) in terms of pragmaliguistic and sociopragmatic features, the stage after which learners are encouraged to reflect upon and experiment with the new ways of interacting in a safe and non-threatening environment. Moreover, this eclectic, integrated and reflective approach (Yates, 2004) can be proposed in a multi-phased linear fashion where some phases can be joint together for the sake of enhancing the learning-teaching process. In other words, effective pragmatics instruction should take into account the aforementioned implicit-explicit complementary perspective in which different instructional phases are unfolded and reviewed by Yates (2004: 15) in a semi-systematic process to include:

1. Explicit models based on authentic language as illustration
2. Noticing activities to focus on pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features
3. Explicit metapragmatic comment
4. Reflection, comparison and sensitive discussion of sociopragmatic values and pragmalinguistic resources of L1/C1 and L2/C2
5. Practice and experimentation in various contexts inside and outside the classroom
6. Exploration and debriefing of personal reactions and likely community reaction to the use of various features by learners
7. Developing learners' ability to research interactive practices for themselves.

Teachers' explicit metaprgamatic guidance represented by the provision of authentic language, illustrations, descriptions (i.e. sufficient input) may have a great effect on awareness-raising, the initial step of effective pragmatics teaching. The focus of such a step may be on cross-cultural variations in the performance of speech acts, L1/L2 ways of appropriate language use, etc. Such explicit pedagogical intervention is helpful in making learners more attentive to pragmalinguistic forms and strategies and sociopragmatic information that governs the use of these forms in particular social situations; let alone, their attentiveness to the importance of context in meaning interpretation and successful communication. Once input has been provided, teachers can then introduce the next stage by using noticing activities whose focus is on the pragmalinguistic and socioragmatic aspects of

language-in-use before requiring learners to practice and experiment what they have acquired in various contexts inside and outside the classroom, when applicable. Culture-teaching approaches (Murray, 2010; Meier, 1997; Yates, 2004) exemplified here by the ideas of reflection, exploration, and observation will furnish the ground for the presentation of a useful framework of analysis that guides learners in the development of their abilities and skills as researchers of interactive practice in the speech community (Tanaka, 1997; Tarone & Yule, 1989; Hall, 1999; Uso-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2007; Cohen, 2008). Put simply, learners, through interactive practice of exploring, observing, recording, and analyzing, can become researchers of their own in both ESL and EFL contexts, although the opportunity for applying such an approach in ESL environments is greater due to the availability of input through contact with the target language community speakers outside the classroom.

As an alternative, multimedia and technological advancements like audio or video recordings, films, etc, (Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei, 1998; Kasper, 1997; Islami-Rasekh, 2005) provide a rich source for input (i.e. speech-act content) and analysis to learners in EFL contexts. Learners may be asked to bring film excerpts; for example, and conduct research in identifying pragmalinguistic aspects (linguistic forms, strategies and semantic formulas) along with sociopragmatic aspects concerning contextual factors such as power, social distance, and rank of imposition. This learners-as researchers approach represents the stage that comes after learners' motivation, noticing, explorations, reflections, observations, and discussions, being described as a tool for offering learners "enough clues to use the new language in ways that are contextually appropriate." (Islami-Rasekh, 2005, p. 206). In other words, learners will not be able to be researchers of their own unless their lay abilities are awakened in terms of both theory and practice (Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004; Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Islami-Rasekh, 2005; Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei, 1998).

To sum, pragmatics instruction in a foreign or second language classroom cannot be effective unless learners' pragmatic awareness is raised as an initial step which requires other practical approaches to be implemented in a way that allows learners to get involved into practice. Teachers in this case should ensure the provision of pertinent input, the noticing of input (learners' attention to linguistic forms, functional meanings, and relevant contextual features), as well as opportunities for their learners' to develop high level of control and understanding. The teaching of pragmatics should integrate a multimodal systematic perspective where inductive and deductive instructional approaches can be combined in a way that makes learners able to theorize practice and practicalize theory during the learning process. All classroom activities and teaching materials encapsulated in whatever the teaching approach is should preferably be based on recent interlanguage pragmatics research findings, especially the cross-cultural comparative and the acquisitional observational (Alcon & Martinez-Flor, 2008).

One more last thing that may facilitate the teaching of pragmatics is the use of technology inside and outside the classroom through utilizing videos, films, helpful sketches, video- or audio-taped elicited role-plays as a rich source for pragmatics input and practice, as well as by establishing Internet websites for teaching of cross-cultural pragmatics. These websites will be helpful for both teachers' preparation and lesson planning and for learners' self-study and the development of their metacognitive strategies (Cohen, 2008). They are also helpful for material writers as they will be enabled to devise pragmatics-focused materials and textbooks that take into consideration learners' desires and local needs. Such utilization of materials based on local needs and desires takes us to a coin-flipping direction that not all

English language learners wish to behave pragmatically like NSs; a fact that should clearly be considered by teachers to "acknowledge and respect learners' individuality and freedom of choice and their systems of values and beliefs." (Islami-Rasekh, 2005, p. 207). Of course, learners should be informed about NSs' linguistic behavior, but they should also be given choices in the learning process as they may wish to develop a new interlanguage and project their own identity (Grundy, 2004; Cohen, 2008; Meier, 1997; Islami-Rasekh, 2005).

Dealing with language learners' sociopragmatic failure
As research on interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) has dealt with the division of pragmatics into two types of knowledge; namely, linguistic and social, both Thomas (1983) and Leech (1983) sought to address pragmatics from a different angle through dividing it into two componential types: pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. Pragmalinguistics concerns itself with the linguistic resources used to convey communicative acts and interpersonal meanings; it refers to knowledge of how to mitigate or strengthen the force of an utterance. In contrary, sociopragmatics places interest on the social perceptions that underlie participants' interpretation and performance of speech acts with reference to knowledge of the particular means that govern the most successful use of an utterance in a given situation (Alcon & Martinez-Flor, 2008). Any inappropriate use of these linguistic and social means which must be attached to context of use may result in pragmatic failure, either in the linguistic forms and strategies (i.e. pragmalinguistic failure) or in the social means, contextual features, and principles that determine what should be said in a particular social encounter (i.e. sociopragmatic failure).

The body of literature on pragmatics (Kasper, 1997; Thomas, 1983; Leech, 1983; White, 1993; Uso-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2007) has defined socioprgmatic failure as the situation where L2 speakers lack proper knowledge of relevant social and cultural values and of how to vary in their speech strategies in cross-cultural communication. For example, this failure can occur when an American male compliments on his, let say, Iranian or Arab female workmate's dress, without knowing that such use of language is socially and culturally inappropriate as it is culturally interpreted as sexual harassment, and thus will lead to the woman's embarrassment. Here, it seems obvious that the differences in value judgments between the two cultures are the main source for the occurrence of soicopragmatic failure. Such failure can also be seen in cross-culturally different assessments of relative power and social distance between interlocutors in different speech encounters. For example, it would be pragmatically inappropriate to request an American taxi driver to get you to the hotel where you are staying by saying *"Excuse me, would you mind taking me to White Pearl Hotel"* instead of *"White Pear Hotel, please"*. The inappropriacy of such use of language in this situation is due to a foreign speaker's judgment of relative power and social distance differently from native speakers. Put simply, the choice of linguistic expressions should be directly related to hearers' or peoples' different social status during interaction.

I personally experienced such kind of failure when I first came to North Cyprus in 2010. One day, and as I wanted to see Professor X, I went to her office and asked the secretary "Is it possible to meet Doctor X?" and the secretary directly and repulsively corrected me "Professor X". I noticed that I was inappropriate in the choice of the word, although it is acceptable in my own culture where the word "Doc." applies to all university instructors whatever their academic rankings are. Recognizing the context of use as well as the negative transfer from my own culture, I came to an understanding that I should use the Turkish word "Hocam" to address all university instructors so as to avoid such pragmatic failure. In other

words, to be pragmatically appropriate, I have adjusted my speech strategies to the contextual factors that govern the choice of linguistic forms in this academic social community.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987, as cited in Uso-Juan & Martines-Flor, 2007), three sociopragmatic parameters should be identified and be aware of to appropriately perform speech acts and thus the learning of pragmatics will take place. These parameters involve power (i.e. the social status of the speaker in relation to the hearer), social distance (i.e. how familiar is the relationship between the interlocutors), and rank of imposition (i.e. the type or degree of severity of imposition exerted by the speaker over the hearer). Knowledge of these contextual interactional factors is necessarily needed to be acquired by learners so as to make them able to overcome communication problems while using the target language. Teachers in this case carry the burden of raising their students' awareness of these contextual factors and sociopragmatic information that govern appropriate language use. But, this is also questionable in the sense that whether the existing textbooks and teaching materials at hand include such information, and whether teachers themselves are aware of these sociopragmatic aspects of language. Unfortunately speaking, lack of this awareness is resulted from the limited opportunities for learners to be provided with sufficient exposure to such kind of sociopragmatic information in textbooks and teaching syllabi (Uso-Juan & Martines-Flor, 2007). A large body of literature has asserted the criticism that the majority of textbooks and pragmatics-focused materials do not prepare EFL/ESL learners for successful communication in various social encounters in the target language (Uso-Juan & Martines-Flor, 2007; Boxer & pickering, 1995; Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004; Yule et al., 1992; Seedhouse, 1996; White, 1993; Bardovi-Harlig et al., 1991; Kasper, 1997; Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei, 1998; among others).

Increasingly, what is found in the instructional materials is presented in terms linguistic forms and semantic formulas (i.e. what should be used in terms of expressions and strategies), without taking into consideration the importance of context to communication and meaning interpretation. Dialogues and conversational structures are taken out from their larger social picture where contextual factors like the relationship between the interloculators, their social power, status, and distance, that underlie the language used in such dialogues, are implicitly inherent in the context of use (Boxer & Pickering, 1995; Uso-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2007; Bardovi-Harlig et al., 1991; Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004). In other words, what governs the content (i.e. what is said in the dialogues) is taken out of its context (when, where, with whom, how and why it is said). As such, these used textbooks which mostly focus on speech acts realizations do not provide a theoretical basis for noticing the general principles of the social use of language (i.e. social grammar) in a way that seeks to raise learners' awareness of, not only pragmaliguistic aspects, but also the sociopragmatic information concerning how to use the language appropriately in particular social contexts.

EFL learners may have misconceptions about the target language culture and its people, with some stereotypical judgments as being rude, mysterious, impolite, tough, too direct, etc. Teachers as well as material writers in this case play a major role in providing learners with sufficient input and help to recognize the pragmatics aspects of language use. For material writers and syllabus designers, the effort should be on devising pragmatics-oriented materials and activities which give credit to the teaching of cultures with the presence of examples (dialogues, activities, audio and video excerpts, etc) that contain speech-act content performed cross-culturally between different users of English, either native or non-native speakers, in international encounters. Teachers' role lies in using the most applicable teaching

approaches, techniques, and instructional activities which contribute to provide learners with sufficient pragmatic knowledge and to get them involved in interactive practice through interpersonal and inferential activities of exploration, observation, analysis, recording, discussion, production and research, etc. (Kasper, 1997; Uso-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2007; Islami-Rasekh, 2005; Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004; Murray, 2010, Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei, 1998). Importantly, it should not be forgotten that teachers, especially in EFL contexts should be experienced and equipped with metalinguistic awareness activities and explanations through their training; a thing which directly indicates the importance of inclusion of how to teach pragmatics in teacher-education and teacher-training programs (Islam-Rasekh, 2005; Cohen, 2008).

An interesting example of dealing with sociopragmatic failure can be taken from Islami-Rasekh (2005) and Kasper (1997) where it is suggested that after the awareness-raising motivational phase and providing focus through discussions, learners should be invited to become as researchers to observe NS data, either naturalistically in ESL contexts, or structurally in the EFL classroom (watching video or audiocassettes, films or TV). Then, they are asked to collect data and detect what the important contextual factors may be in the communicative performance. In the structured way, learners may be provided with an observation sheet which gives reference to the categories that should be specified and observed in terms of interlocutors' gender, dominance, social status, familiarity to each other, and intensity of what is said. This activity clearly indicates that awareness-raising is not enough for teaching how to deal with sociopragmatic failure, and that learners should practice and use speech acts so as to feel how contextual factors like power, social status and distance play a key role in understanding and interpreting social meanings. Additionally, supplying learners with film excerpts containing communication breakdowns due to cultural differences, differences in value judgments, and cross-culturally different assessments of relative contextual factors like power and social distance, will be an important and rich source for making students aware of these social factors that govern the way we speak in particular situations. They will be helped in noticing the key role played by context in interpreting the intended meaning in a way that prevents misunderstandings while cross-cultural communication.

As a final remark, following Grundy's (2004) suggestion of democratizing the teaching of pragmatics, I find Byram's (1997) intercultural communicative competence is more appropriate as a goal for the teaching of English language with all of its aspects including pragmatics. Equipping learners with cultural knowledge that raises their awareness, develops their ability to understand and appreciate cultural and linguistic differences, and builds up their skills of interpretation and discovery, will help these learners to be cross-culturally competent in a way they are able to overcome misunderstandings and communication problems in different social situations. With ability to communicate cross-culturally, a person is said to be pragmatically competent in the cross-cultural and cross-varietal target language use. The best example for preparing learners' pragmalinguistically and sociopragmatically can be represented in devising pragmatics-oriented materials for study-abroad programs in which students spend some time learning the pragmatics and the linguistic behavior of the language of the native-speaking country in which they are going to pursue their studies. Such preparation, I believe, will be highly important in simplifying communication with the target language speakers and in shortening the time for acquiring NSs' linguistic behavior, depending on their interests to do so.

Testing language learners' pragmatic proficiency

Assessment of learners' pragmatic proficiency assumes that learners have learned pragmatics in the classroom and have developed their linguistic behavior. There are a number of approaches that can be used to assess learners' pragmatic proficiency. Using discourse completion tasks (DCTs), role-play, or even real play (i.e. through learners' interaction with real-world individuals as part of class activities) may be one of these approaches whereby learners are provided with written or oral tasks containing social situations and asked to reply to them (e.g. orally or multiple-choice mode). But, such DCT approach runs the risk of not being able to create a workable situational context by means of a single prompt (Cohen, 2008). If more detailed information is added to the prompt, this will require longer responses; a thing which poses another problem concerning the difficulty in the making of prompts and in participants' ability to read and respond to them (Varghese & Billmyer, 1996; Roever, 2004). To avoid such problematic issues of DCTs, it has been suggested by Varghese and Billmyer (1996) that it is possible to construct a prompt for every single situation in a way that ensures the inclusion of not only information about the prompt's goal, social distance and dominance, but also the interactants' gender, their relationship, the length of acquaintance, the frequency of interaction, and a description of the setting (Cohen, 2008). I believe prompts with such details allow test-takers to see the larger picture and to better understand the social situations so that they may reply and answer these prompts easily.

Multiple-rejoinder DCTs as a more reflective type of DCT, especially of the conversational turn-taking of natural speech (Cohen & Shively, 2002/2003), can also be used for assessing pragmatic ability. In this type, respondents are required to give appropriate initial responses to situations before they are asked to provide no less than two responses provoked by the given rejoinders for each situation. At the time of assessment, test-takers should be told to read carefully the situation in terms of the descriptions and the rejoinders provided prior to writing what they want to say for each situation in the given vignette. This type of rejoined DCTs may be helpful in assessing test-takers' pragmatic knowledge in terms of how severe what is said is (e.g. apology, requests, and so on), how high/low the social distance is, and how high/low the social status of the replier is. The multiple-rejoinder type could be more effective than the traditional DCTs clearly because it creates a situation that encourages testees to be part of the interaction, approximating their answers to the real-world interaction. With regards answers rating, it has been pointed out by Cohen (2008) that knowledge of which strategies are minimally required in each case is said to be useful in making the raters' task in judging testees' responses easier and in reducing scoring differences between individual rates.

The question that should be asked here is that when we want to assess how learners are pragmatically proficient, what should we test? And are there any areas that we need to focus n for assessment? Reviewing the literature on the suggested areas for the assessment of pragmatic proficiency, a number of examples concerning the pragmatic issues to be tested have been revealed. Language teachers could possibly assess their learners' ability to use the appropriate semantic formulas for a particular speech act situation (Bardovi-Harlig, 2006; Kasper, 1997; Cohen; 2008; Jianda, 2007). For example, they may be asked to provide the speech-act-specific strategies which, either unaccompanied or combined with other strategies, serve to create and appropriately perform the speech act (e.g. explanation/response, apology

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expression, promise of non-occurrence, offer of repair) (Cohen; 2008). Increasingly, this kind of assessment of semantic formulas will not be effective or of value unless this set of strategies are instructed in the material and acquired by learners in a way that makes assessing and measuring them of ease. In addition, semantic formulas as a term seems to be "unfortunate" and does not "need to be formulaic, either in the acquisitional or target sense, and indeed they are often not" (Bardovi-Harlig, 2006, p. 4).

Adherence to sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic norms of appropriateness (Thomas, 1983; Leech, 1983; Cohen, 2008) could be another area that teachers can check their students' pragmatic proficiency. Teachers can test their learners' knowledge of the socioprgamatic norms of behavior that are intended for the realization of the given speech act in a given situation, considering the involvement of culture, interlocutors' age and gender, their social class, distance and occupations, and their power roles and status in interaction. They could also assess their learners' pragmalinguistic norms; the norms that represent their ability to appropriate linguistic forms to express what they intend while performing the speech act, taking into consideration the norms of behavior that could be functionally applied in the given context. Furthermore, an area that could be significantly valid for assessing pragmatic proficiency is testing learners' ability to make appropriate modifications in the delivery of the speech act. This ability can be showed in terms of whether learners can mitigate or intensify what should be said in a particular situation, or whether they are capable of adjusting the speech act for different contextual factors such as gender, age, and interlocutors' social class, dominance, status, distance, or occupations (Uso-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2007; Islami-Rasekh, 2005; Cohen, 2008; Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei, 1998; Jianda, 2007).

Rating answers and scores seems to include some problematic issues, especially those concerning anchoring learners' answers to baseline data from native speakers for testing criteria. The literature on testing pragmatic proficiency has indicated the role that NS data plays in serving a model for rating learner language, but even such modeling may be risky in the sense that NS baseline data may be neither complete, nor detailed and joined (Jianda, 2007; Cohen, 2008; Rose, 2000). Teachers can also follow their subjective ratings depending on their pre-determined criteria for the speech act they taught; they may determine an intuitive coding style and give an impressionistic rationale for it. For example, they take notes on what is incorrect and inappropriate for each rejoinder inside a given vignette (Cohen, 2008).

Interestingly, pragmatic behavior naturally varies according to cultural contexts even in native-speaking countries; a thing which indicates that a native-speaker model may not appropriate for testing pragmatic aspects as language (the use of linguistic forms, strategies, and semantic formulas) is differently used in various native-speaking cultures (Rose, 2000; Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei, 1998; Jianda, 2007). Following this, testing could encouraged to be based on a unified form of baseline data to be taken from a variety of native speakers' cultures, so that validity and reliability of scoring and anchoring learners' responses may become appropriately ensured. What is more, learners' language proficiency, local needs of speech acts, learning styles and preferences, personality (Rose, 2000; Cohen, 2008; Jianda, 2007; Grundy, 2004; Uso-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2007), and the desire to project their own identity (Cohen, 2008; Grundy, 2004; Meier, 1997) must be taken into account in the very basic concept of testing their pragmatic knowledge and ability.

Moreover, due to this variability in the linguistic behavior, it is suggested that collecting data from various measures is the best approach to testing pragmatics as these measures can be regarded as an approximation of the learners' speech-act ability (Jianda, 2007; Cohen, 2008; Uso-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2007). A helpful example that comes from within this multimodal approach is given by Cohen (2008) where he advocates the use of a cumulative portfolio of measures, which goes on throughout the learning process by asking students to put together a collection of samples of oral and written speech act performance over a period of time and in different situations under several conditions. Interestingly, technology can also be integrated in the testing of pragmatics through students' collections of their digital portfolios that may contain video- or audio-taped excerpts, films, movie sketches, or their recorded speech-act elicited DCTs and role-plays. Both teachers and learners will have a greater opportunity to benefit from pragmatics-oriented websites and blogs where teachers can select what fits in relation to his/her learners' local needs and cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and where learners themselves can develop those metapragmatic strategies (i.e. planning, monitoring, effort-evaluation, etc.) that help them to turn into pragmatically proficient at both productive and receptive skills, and at self-assessment (Cohen, 2008).

Teaching impoliteness in SL/FL classroom
Talking about impoliteness in the ESL/EFL classroom may be surprising to most language teachers who usually contest to consider it in their classes. It looks as if impoliteness situations are devoid from everyday life communication that is reflected in the foreign or, to some extent, to second language classroom, let alone in the instructional materials. This may lead one to ask a set of thought-provoking questions like *do impolite situations represent the dark side of life that should not be addressed in the language classroom? Does teaching impoliteness make a difference in the teaching/learning situation?* Or let's say, *what barriers or problems are those that can be addressed if we are to teach impoliteness in SL/FL classroom? As long as they are part of everyday interaction, what makes impoliteness un-teachable? And should there be any factors affecting when and how to teach impoliteness to EFL/ESL learners?* Answering such questions will tackle some critical and theoretical underpinnings to the presentation and teaching of impoliteness along with politeness in the foreign/second language classroom in terms of what, how, and when to teach it.

Such impoliteness situations including Banters or light-hearted jokes seem to be taken and learned quickly, clearly because they include fun which makes them easy to be learned and remembered. I personally can prove this through my experience with different people. For example, I saw many EFL students who were eager to remember and use banters from different languages as they were having contact with their classmates from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They were more than willing to use each others' banters for the sake of having friendship and smooth interaction. Interestingly, in a multicultural classroom where English is taught, the teaching/learning of banters could be given a credible stance for using English for such a vivid-living purpose of interactive language use. But the teaching of such culturally-related aspects of language should be gradually implemented and carried out, taking into consideration a set of important factors including learners' language proficiency level, and their awareness of context and of intercultural communication. Both L2 proficiency and context are highly valued when it comes to the teaching of impoliteness; it is through context, the impolite language use can be identified, and it is through having a higher level of L2 proficiency, perceptions of impoliteness can be determined (Mugford, 2008).

Learners, when encountered with impolite situations, seem to be highly reluctant or silent as they do not know what to say and how to say it in the target language. This fact has been asserted by Mugford (2008) when reporting on the results of his study where the participants stated that they were left unable to reply to impolite language use due to "the unexpected contextual spontaneity of the remarks" that were uttered (Mugford, 2008, p. 378). Therefore, the teaching of impoliteness should focus on providing learners with those language patterns that can be used to reply to impolite linguistic expressions when confronted with impolite situations. It is with these language forms and patterns learners as well as L2 users can be better supplied with choices whereby they will be able to decide how to react the way they want.

Teaching impoliteness in EFL classrooms is a very difficult and challenging task, clearly because, within the framework of normative L2 practice (Watts, 2003; as cited in Mugford, 2008), it can be gleaned as either breaking social norms or showing disrespect to the hearer. The difficulty can also be inherent in how differently the seriousness of face-threatening acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987) are interpreted and perceived in both the first and the target language of the interactants; let alone, the problematic issue that is encapsulated in the hearer's intuitive perception and judgment that an utterance may be impolite although there is no intension to do so on the speaker's part. To this end, It can be concluded that impoliteness can be studied in terms of certain steps that begin with identifying various ways to understand face-threatening acts, discerning degrees of impoliteness, and examining the hearer's perceptions. Taking Culpeper's (2005, as cited in Mugford, 2008) definition of impoliteness as something that "comes when a speaker communicates face-attack intentionally, or the hearer perceives and/or constructs behavior as intentionally face-attacking" (p. 376), Mugford (2008) states that impoliteness in this case is understood within the framework of speaker construction and hearer perception. Such understanding will give EFL teachers the opportunity of tackling and discussing intentionality and L1-L2 judgments with reference to impoliteness. Put differently, impoliteness can be taught in terms of what is intended by the speaker as well as of how what is said is perceived as polite/impolite in students' native and target language.

Importantly, it seems that awareness-raising activities (Islami-Rasekh, 2005; Kasper, 1997; Murray, 2010; Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei, 1998; Mugford, 2008; Uso-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2007, among others), adopting both inductive and deductive approaches (Uso-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2007; Murray, 2010; Islami-Rasekh, 2005) to the teaching of pragmatics are highly valued in making learners able to understand that impoliteness is part of daily interaction that should not be neglected in instruction and should be dealt with in the ESL/EFL classroom. They are also helpful in encouraging learners to discuss intentionality of impoliteness, compare its constructions in both L1 and L2, and reflect on their own perceptions and value judgments of impoliteness in their own culture and the target language culture.

A fact that should be considered is that impoliteness is seemingly the aspect of language that cannot be captured unless learners have a higher or an advanced L2 proficiency level. Even, being able to make jokes or appropriately reply to impolite L2 language use is what a native- or near-native speaker is characterized with (Davies, 1996); a thing which mostly comes through experience and contact with the target language speech community. As such, learning impoliteness is not an easy task for learners as they need authentic contact to the target language to learn more about the culture. Following this, it could be noted that it is

easier to teach impoliteness in the ESL classroom even in the awareness-raising stage through a socially situated comparison of behavior and learners' reflections on how their own culture differs to what they have experienced in the target language culture. Differences of opinions about how impoliteness is cross-culturally differently constructed and perceived may open up new opportunities for syllabus designers and material writers to explore and evaluate the content of the existing textbooks and add or generate some useful real language patterns to be included in the instructional materials.

As there a limited opportunity for learners to have contact with the target language speaker in EFL contexts, using multimedia advancements like videos, films, drama, comedies, etc. may be an alternative to the teaching of impoliteness in the EFL classroom. Teachers could introduce impoliteness deductively or inductively by showing learners some real or approximated samples of interaction containing impolite situations in the target language use. Then, they can encourage learners to discuss L1-L2 differences and reflect on how they perceive impoliteness in terms of its degrees (i.e. a personal attack 'individual impoliteness', an attack to their social roles 'social impoliteness', an attack to their ethnic group 'cultural impoliteness', or a banter 'a playful use of impolite language') (Mugford, 2008, p. 377).

EFL teachers should play an important role in helping their L2 learners to identify the content of impolite remarks so as to extend their functional competence which may ensure their ability to deal with impoliteness in L2. They should also discuss social judgments reflected by impoliteness with their learners; let alone, the need to provide learners with the opportunity to examine affective and contextual factors that have a say to how impoliteness is perceived; thus, they will be able to compare their and target language attitudes, experiences and values. In addition, teachers ought to be encouraged to make modifications to existing textbook exercises that echo communication and lay bare how impoliteness can now and then surface and discuss achievable ways of how to cope with impoliteness (Mugford, 2008). Of course, what is needed from EFL teachers requires them to have knowledge of how to be impolite in the target language; consequently, there should be a crucial role for teacher-education and teacher-training programs (Cohen, 2008; Mugford, 2008) in helping teachers to increase their awareness of face-threatening acts and to have the ability to offer strategies for dealing with L2 impoliteness. As a final remark, learning L2 impoliteness along with politeness is an important aspect of pragmatic ability that, when mastered, learners will be more confident and motivated to use language outside the classroom.

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