

Abstract

DISSERTATION: The Effectiveness of Online Pragmatics Instruction with Video Clips for Learners of Arabic

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In the last two decades, there has been an upsurge of interest in second language (L2) pragmatics instruction. This increase in attention comes as a result of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) studies' consistent reports that even when L2 learners have an advanced proficiency level in the target language and a considerable length of stay within the target culture, the achievement of pragmatic competence or fluency might not be guaranteed (e.g., Al Masaeed et al., 2020; Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011; Kasper & Rose, 1999). Though a significant number of studies have focused on pragmatics teaching methods, researchers still lack certainty about a suitable approach. This dissertation contributes to the field of ILP from the instructional perspective by investigating the effectiveness of pragmatics instruction in three speech acts for learners of Arabic via asynchronous online instruction and from a cognitive theoretical perspective. Two theoretical cognitive approaches in L2 acquisition are considered in this study: (1) Rose's (1994) pragmatic consciousness-raising and (2) Schmidt's (1990, 1993, 2001) noticing hypotheses.

Specifically, this study examines the effects of this instruction using dubbed video clips on the development of the comprehension of the speech acts (request, refusal, and apology) over

a period of eight weeks. Fifty intermediate Arabic L2 learners with different L1 backgrounds participated. The treatment group (n = 25) received online pragmatics instruction with dubbed video clips via a self-access website. The control group (n =25) did not receive any instruction. The data were mainly obtained through a multiple-choice test (MCT) given to both groups as a pre- and post-test. In addition, both groups answered a few questions regarding their experience learning the three Arabic speech acts after the study.

T-test, permutation test, and logistic regression results showed that the online pragmatics instruction positively influenced the participants learning of the Arabic speech acts. The treatment group significantly outperformed the control group in overall comprehension. In addition, within-group performance improved from the pre- to post-test. Although the results revealed no significant differences in performance among the three speech acts, suggesting that all three had the same difficulty level of difficulty for the participants, the majority of the participants agreed that the speech act of refusal is the hardest of the three to learn. From a pedagogical perspective, the findings indicate that language learning strategy instruction (LLSI) for L2 pragmatics is beneficial for Arabic learners, particularly tasks that are explicit and provide learners with metapragmatic information. Moreover, this approach can help Arabic learners especially those who lack opportunities to learn colloquial Arabic in the formal context of a classroom. For example, it is important that Arabic learners be exposed to selected patterns of colloquial Arabic that occur naturally to communicate politely and appropriately. Other pedagogical implications and suggestions for future research are discussed.