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## **Book reviews**

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### **TEACHING AND TESTING SECOND LANGUAGE PRAGMATICS AND INTERACTION: A PRACTICAL GUIDE.**

*Roever, C.*

*Routledge, 2022.*

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Pragmatics – how social context affects the way we do things with language – plays a critical role in managing social interaction and interpersonal relationships. Despite decades of research on second language (L2) pragmatics, practical resources for teaching and assessing L2 pragmatics have continued to remain relatively scarce. *Teaching and testing second language pragmatics and interaction: A practical guide* by Roever (2022) is the first comprehensive hands-on guide written for language practitioners who wish to interweave aspects of pragmatics into their classroom teaching, curriculum design, and assessment instruments. The purpose of this book is to familiarise target readers with ways in which pragmatics can be systematically taught, as well as tested, in either teacher-designed or large-scale exams. The content is accessible to audiences with only minimal experience in L2 teaching; readers need not have extensive knowledge of L2 learning and teaching theories to find the book intriguing or useful.

The book is organised into seven chapters. Chapter one provides a general introduction of the book content and an outline, along with a brief list of terminology to be covered throughout the book. Chapter two offers an in-depth discussion of the four pillars that form the bedrock of pragmatics: (a) speech acts (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969, 1976) and politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987); (b) implicature (Grice, 1975); (c) routine formulae (Coulmas, 1981); and (d) interactional competence (IC) (Hall & Pekarek Doehler, 2011). After situating each pillar within its theoretical origin, Roever (2022) describes learners' developmental characteristics within each area based on extant literature on L2 pragmatics. The chapter ends with a comparison of pragmatics

and IC. As Roever (2022) explains, most researchers tend to categorise speech acts, implicature, and routine formulae under the umbrella of pragmatics (stemming from anthropological work on politeness) while treating IC (rooted in sociology) as its own category. In reality, speech acts are used in extended discourse – speakers attend to not only how an action (e.g., request) can be pragmalinguistically formulated, but also how it is sequentially organised in interaction within a given social context. Roever (2022) thus views pragmatics and IC as complementary to each other in teaching and testing. For example, a teacher can introduce phases of an extended request sequence (from greeting to closing) to familiarise learners with its structure using diagrams (see chapter 5). In testing, role plays or elicited conversations are effective for evaluating test takers' abilities for use (see chapter 6).

Chapter three introduces the sheer range of research-informed instruments for teaching and assessing L2 pragmatics at different language proficiency levels. These instruments are broadly categorised into receptive tools (metapragmatic judgment tasks and multiple-choice tasks) and productive tools (discourse completion tasks, role plays, and elicited conversations), each of which is elaborated in detail with practical examples taken directly from L2 pragmatics research.

Chapters four through to seven constitute the core sections of the book, which present Roever's (2022) novel perspective on teaching and assessing pragmatics. Chapter four covers specific aspects of pragmatics to be taught at different proficiency levels and how a pragmatic curriculum can be structured according to learner's developmental readiness. To achieve this, Roever (2022) uses the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020) as a general guide and proposes teaching goals and activities that align with learner's language development at each CEFR level, ranging from A1 (basic user) to C2 (proficient user). Chapter five shifts the focus away from curriculum design to teaching L2 pragmatics. Discussions centre on common approaches to pragmatics instruction (explicit vs. implicit, deductive vs. inductive, and provision of feedback), useful resources for teaching pragmatics (e.g. textbooks, corpora, movies, and TV shows), and the stages of a pragmatic lesson (orientation/reactivation, inductive presentation, metapragmatic explanation, awareness raising/deductive presentation, receptive practice, and productive practice) along with recommended activities for each stage. The

chapter ends by providing a demonstration of a pragmatic lesson that targets a specific feature, namely requests. Details are provided concerning how to facilitate learners of different proficiency levels to notice, produce, respond to, and become aware of requests across a variety of scenarios.

Chapter six focuses solely on testing pragmatics both in the classroom and in large-scale assessments. Roever (2022) first walks readers through the generations of L2 pragmatics assessment over the past few decades, followed by discussions of existing pragmatics assessments, critical issues associated with pragmatics tests such as what defines pragmatic norms, differences between classroom-based and standardised testing, and validation of large-scale exams. Roever (2022) demonstrates how to validate large-scale pragmatics assessment step-by-step within Kane's (2006) argument-based validity framework (see also Chapelle, 2021). He then focuses on using multi-faceted Rasch measurement (MFRM) as a robust tool for examining test taker's ability, item difficulty, and rater severity to understand how well a test has worked. The chapter ends with Roever (2022) directing the reader's attention to issues of fairness and bias in assessing pragmatics, which has important implications for test validity. Chapter seven offers an outlook on the future of teaching and assessing L2 pragmatics, including adopting a spiral curriculum for teaching pragmatics in general, using task-based language teaching (TBLT) for specific purposes pragmatics, and utilising technology to enhance reliability and practicality in large-scale pragmatics assessments.

By adopting an innovative perspective on teaching and assessing L2 pragmatics, Roever (2022) is a perfect introductory guide for language teachers, curriculum developers, and testers who value pragmatics as an essential component of language abilities. Throughout the book, Roever (2022) keeps his audience groups in mind by succinctly presenting relevant theories and concepts, supported by easily understandable examples to elucidate each point. The most significant contribution of this book to the field of L2 pragmatics is its establishment of a clear bridge between theories and practice. The book contains a plethora of research-informed, ready-to-use materials that can be easily adapted to fit learners' needs across different teaching and testing contexts. A caveat, which the author also recognizes, is that most of the examples in the book are in English, an area on which L2 pragmatics research has historically focused. However, the gap should motivate readers to experiment with curriculum structures,

activities, and assessment instruments involving other less commonly taught or researched languages. Similarly, Roever's (2022) focus on requests as a prominent feature throughout the book should equally inspire readers to create activities or testing instruments that target other common pragmatic features relevant to learners, such as apologies, compliments, or complaints. Finally, most of the activities presented in the book involve face-to-face communication. As technology has become increasingly integrated into most aspects of our lives, it would have been informative for Roever (2022) to comment on ideas for designing pragmatics lessons and test instruments with scenarios that learners and test takers are likely to encounter in the virtual world, such as writing a customer review, replying to a social media post, or collaborating with colleagues remotely.

To summarise, the rich and accessible content delivered by Roever (2022) has substantial practical implications for language practitioners in the classroom and in large-scale assessments, thereby bridging the gap between L2 pragmatics theories, research, and practice. Language teachers will find Roever's (2022) research-informed activities and step-by-step activity procedures useful. Curriculum developers can benefit from Roever's (2022) careful selection of suitable pragmatic features to be introduced at different proficiency levels. Language testers will find Roever's (2022) discussion of assessing L2 pragmatics within the argument-based approach to validity insightful, in addition to gaining a general understanding of how to tackle critical issues such as fairness and bias in the testing of pragmatics. The book is therefore highly recommended for language practitioners who wish to integrate aspects of pragmatics into the design of their lessons, curricula, or standardised exams.

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