The Role of Grammatical Competence in Shaping Pragmatic Performance: A Study of L2 Learners' Requests in English

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Abstract

This study was a comparative analysis of data collected from two participants: a native speaker of English and a second language (L2) learner of English. The L2 learner was a female Arab student learning English at level 3 in an intensive English program at an American university. The native speaker was a female undergraduate student majoring in International Studies in her second year. The data consisted of responses to various situations in which participants made written requests to fictional interlocutors. The situations featured different contexts and degrees of imposition, and the statuses of the interlocutors were alternated in each situation to elicit different responses. The purpose of the study was to compare the L2 learner's responses to those of a native English speaker in terms of form and function and to assess whether these aspects play a role in making and perceiving requests. Another aim of the analysis was to investigate the contribution of the L2 learner's level of linguistic and grammatical competence to her level of interlanguage pragmatics in making requests. The results revealed that the learner's level of linguistic competence influenced her interlanguage pragmatics in both form and function. In conclusion, it is recommended that more interlanguage analyses should be conducted to examine the different proficiency levels of L2 learners and how these contribute to their development of interlanguage pragmatics. Also, the study provides implications for second language acquisition and English language teaching.

Keywords: speech acts, L2 learners, pragmatic competence, grammatical competence, interlanguage, English language learners, teaching

1. Introduction

The field of cross-cultural pragmatics has been a central focus for many researchers, in particular, studies focused on comparative analysis and formulations of requests in different languages (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Reiter. 2000; among many others). The main focus of cross-cultural studies in pragmatics is on the similarities and differences in how speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds produce speech acts such as making requests or apologies. Such studies are essential for understanding intercultural communication, especially given that learners of a second language have to adhere to not only grammatical accuracy but also to socio-pragmatic appropriateness.

Thus, cross-cultural pragmatics is concerned with understanding how to use a language appropriately in specific social contexts so as to promote both the linguistic and the communicative competence of language learners. For example, even grammatically correct requests can be misinterpreted if they do not align with what is culturally appropriate, polite, or formal, indicating that pragmatic competence should be developed alongside grammatical competence to adhere to the cultural norms of the target language.

1.1 The Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are twofold. First, it aims to examine how L2 learners of English differ from native English speakers in their request-making strategies, specifically in terms of linguistic forms and social appropriateness. Second, it seeks to investigate the extent to which grammatical competence influences pragmatic performance in L2 learners when making requests. By analyzing request formulation patterns and comparing them with those of native speakers, the study provides insights into how L2 learners develop interlanguage pragmatics and whether their grammatical proficiency affects their ability to make socially and linguistically appropriate requests.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

One of the key challenges L2 learners face in second language acquisition is the ability to produce pragmatically appropriate speech acts. Despite achieving grammatical accuracy, many L2 learners struggle with making requests that are appropriate with the sociocultural norms of the target language. This can lead to pragmatic failure, where requests may be perceived as too direct, impolite, or inappropriate by native speakers. The issue is particularly relevant for Arab L2 learners of English, as previous studies suggest that they often transfer directness from Arabic to English, which may not always be suitable in English-speaking contexts. This study addresses this problem by examining the role of grammatical competence in shaping pragmatic competence in request-making among Arab L2 learners.

While numerous studies have examined L2 pragmatics and speech acts, much of the existing research has focused on cross-cultural differences, politeness strategies, and the role of L1 transfer in shaping L2 pragmatic competence. However, limited attention has been given to the direct influence of grammatical competence on pragmatic performance. Previous studies have explored pragmatic development among advanced L2 learners, but there is a need for more research focusing on learners whose grammatical limitations may significantly affect their pragmatic ability. This study seeks to fill this gap by analyzing how grammatical knowledge influences request-making strategies and whether limited linguistic competence hinders the development of pragmatic competence.

1.3 The Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the field of second language acquisition by highlighting the relationship between grammatical competence and pragmatic development. Understanding how L2 learners make requests and the extent to which their grammatical proficiency influences their pragmatic performance can provide valuable insights for language instructors and curriculum developers. By identifying specific areas where L2 learners struggle with pragmatic appropriateness, the findings of this study can inform the development of pedagogical strategies that integrate pragmatic instruction into grammar teaching. Additionally, the study has implications for interlanguage pragmatics research, as it sheds light on how grammatical and pragmatic competencies interact during the language acquisition process.

2. Review of the Literature

In second language pragmatics, linguistic competence plays a crucial role in determining the level of pragmatic development an L2 learner can achieve. The formulation of speech acts, such as requests, is influenced by several interrelated factors, including length of stay in the target language environment, exposure to L2 input, and native language influence. However, these factors alone do not fully define a learner's pragmatic proficiency at any given stage of language acquisition. The ability to produce socially appropriate language is shaped by both linguistic accuracy and pragmatic awareness, and a gap between these competencies often leads to pragmatic failure in L2 communication. Given the role of grammatical competence in shaping pragmatic performance, it is essential to examine how speech acts, particularly requests, are realized across different linguistic and social contexts. This discussion is best framed within the Speech Act Theory, which provides a theoretical foundation for understanding how requests are structured and interpreted in L2 communication.

The Speech Act Theory, as proposed by Austin (1962) and later developed by Searle (1969), provides the foundations for analyzing how language is used to perform actions, including making requests. Requests are a major focus in cross-cultural pragmatics because they encompass various aspects of sociolinguistic competence, including the capacity to understand the degree of imposition, politeness, and social context. A pivotal project in this area was Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) study, Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP), as it provided the first comprehensive framework for addressing requests cross-culturally and exploring differences among speakers from different linguistic/cultural backgrounds in the pragmalinguistic features of the strategies they use in making requests.

Several studies have compared the speech act of making requests between Arabic and English speakers, including Arab L2 learners of English and native English speakers (for example, Aubed, 2012; Umar, 2004;). Beyond the universal values governing speech acts of making requests in both languages, the overall findings of the previous studies have demonstrated a number of variations on different social, cultural, and linguistic levels. The interplay among these three factors determines the form the request takes and ultimately influences the message conveyed by the request.

A recent study by AlTameemy et al. (2024) examined the request strategies employed by EFL native-Arabic speakers in both Arabic and English natural settings. The research highlighted that socio-cultural differences and the learning environment significantly influence the choice of request strategies. Notably, the study found evidence of pragmatic transfer, where learners applied request forms from their native language into English contexts, sometimes leading to pragmatic inappropriateness.

Pragmatic competence, which has been a key focus in second language acquisition research (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999), refers to the ability to use language appropriately in particular contexts. Even when grammatical competence is sufficient, L2 speakers' language may be perceived as inappropriate or impolite, which is known as pragmatic failure. This failure often occurs when L2 learners transfer L1 sociopragmatic norms to L2 communications because they are unaware of the different levels of directness, politeness strategies, or context-specific phrases that are culturally appropriate in the target language. This transfer is especially likely to occur when the learners' L1 and L2 are linguistically and culturally disparate, as in the case of Arabic and English (Al-Issa, 2003). Thus, pragmatic competence is an essential component of communicative competence that does not depend solely on linguistic knowledge, and pragmatic failure can be a barrier to successful communication in the target language, cause anxiety among L2 speakers, and even result in consequential misunderstandings in cross-cultural communications. A study by Lv, Ren, and Li (2021) explored the relationship between pragmatic competence and willingness to communicate among Chinese as a Second Language (CSL) learners. The research found that learners with higher pragmatic awareness and comprehension were more willing to engage in communication, highlighting the interplay between pragmatic skills and communicative confidence. In another study, Tai and Chen (2021) examined the effect of proficiency on the pragmatic comprehension of speech acts, implicatures, and routines among Chinese learners of English. The findings indicated that higher proficiency levels enhance learners' ability to comprehend implied meanings and perform speech acts appropriately, underscoring the importance of developing both grammatical and pragmatic competencies concurrently.

The speech act of requests has been studied as a main area in the field of second language acquisition and learning. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) discussed how cultural factors influence the forms and strategies for making requests, which are highly influenced by power relations between interlocutors, their social status, and the degrees of imposition of requests. In particular, several studies focusing on

Arab L2 learners of English have shown that L1 transfer plays a significant role in the development of L2 pragmatic competence (Umar, 2004; Aubed, 2012). Umar (2004) found that advanced Arab L2 learners of English often struggle with selecting appropriate levels of politeness in their requests. Similarly, Aubed (2012) compared requests in Arabic and English and found that direct strategies are used more frequently in Arabic, which Arab L2 learners of English tend to transfer to the target language, ultimately resulting in pragmatic failure when interacting with native speakers. Similarly, in an examination of sociocultural transfer in Arab L2 learners' speech acts, Al-Issa (2003) noted that culturally specific notions of politeness and social status in Arabic often influence how Arab L2 learners formulate requests in English. Martínez- Botey Riaza, Barón, and Martínez-Flor (2023) investigated the interface between second language proficiency and pragmatic awareness, focusing on compliment responses among Spanish learners of English. The study revealed that higher language proficiency correlates with increased pragmatic awareness, suggesting that as learners' grammatical skills improve, so does their ability to navigate complex social interactions in the L2.

These studies highlight that L2 learners' grammatical competence is not always matched by their pragmatic competence. Moreover, differences in the use of internal and external modifiers (e.g., politeness markers and grounders) between native speakers and L2 learners further emphasize the gap in pragmalinguistic knowledge (House & Kasper, 1981). Arab learners often rely on directness, which is culturally acceptable in Arabic but may be interpreted as presupposing or impolite in English. Such findings highlight the importance of explicitly teaching politeness markers and culturally specific language use to L2 learners, an issue addressed in the current study.

While the aforementioned studies and many others have highlighted the role of sociocultural transfer and politeness in request-making strategies among Arab learners of English, most were focused on advanced learners or did not specifically address the relationship between grammatical competence and interlanguage pragmatics. This study helps to fill this gap by providing an analysis of the grammatical competence of an intermediate-level Arab L2 learner of English and its influence on her pragmatic competence. To control situational variables and focus specifically on form and function in request-making, a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) was employed. Thus, the aim of this study is to provide a focused analysis of the types of grammatical and pragmatic errors made by an L2 learner, and how these errors impact their communications in English.

3. Methodology

3.1 The Study Participants

The study involved two participants: an L2 learner of English and a native speaker of English. The L2 learner was a 23-year-old Saudi female student who had, at the time of data collection, been receiving English language training in an intensive English program at the intermediate level for about a year. Her previous exposure to English was only in public schooling, and she had not taken any standardized English language tests. The native speaker was a 20-year-old American female undergraduate student in her second year of majoring in international studies. A participant with minimal previous exposure to the field of linguistics was selected to reduce the potential influence of formal knowledge of the field on her responses to the situations presented.

The selection of these participants was based on specific criteria relevant to the study's objectives. The L2 learner was chosen as she represented an intermediate-level English speaker, a stage where pragmatic and grammatical competence is still developing. The native speaker was included to provide a baseline for comparison, allowing for an analysis of how request strategies differ between L2 learners and native speakers. This design aligns with prior research in interlanguage pragmatics, where comparisons between native and non-native speakers provide insights into pragmatic transfer and competence (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Kasper & Rose, 2002).

3.2 Instruments

The Discourse Completion Task (DCT) employed consisted of nine written situations that referenced the relative social position of the participants when interacting with fictional interlocutors in specific settings. The task was developed after consulting different pioneer resources in the field, most notably the works of Blum-Kulka et al. (1984) and Reiter (2000).

The scenarios included descriptive information with enough details to elicit the participants' perceptions of their social relationship with the requestees. The participants responded to each situation by making a request in writing. There was no time limit for the task to be completed, so participants could carefully consider the form of request they judged as being suitable for the situation and reduce anxiety, which is usually present in studies of this nature. If a situation was unclear, it was further explained to the participant.

Each scenario in the DCT was carefully constructed to reflect authentic communicative contexts relevant to daily life, particularly focusing on scenarios typical in academic, social, and informal settings. Situations varied according to interlocutors' social distance, relative power, and the degree of imposition of the requests to accurately capture participants' pragmatic behaviors. For example, some scenarios included interactions between peers (equal status), interactions with authority figures (high status), and casual interactions with friends or family members. The scenarios explicitly provided contextual details, such as the interlocutors' roles, relationships, and situational settings, allowing participants to clearly interpret the social dynamics involved. The careful selection and detailed presentation of these contexts aimed to elicit genuine pragmatic responses that reflected the participants' understanding of appropriate language use.

The Discourse Completion Task (DCT) was chosen as the primary data collection instrument due to its effectiveness in eliciting speech act realizations in a controlled setting. Previous studies (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Golato, 2003) have demonstrated that DCTs provide a reliable method for capturing pragmatic knowledge by presenting participants with situational prompts that replicate real-life communication. While naturalistic data collection methods, such as role-plays or ethnographic observations, offer a more spontaneous

representation of language use, DCTs allow for greater control over contextual variables, ensuring consistency in the elicited responses.

3.3 Procedure

The data collection process followed a structured approach to ensure reliability. Each participant was individually provided with a printed version of the DCT and was instructed to read each scenario carefully before responding in writing. The L2 learner was given the task in English without access to a dictionary or translation tools to ensure that responses reflected her spontaneous pragmatic competence. The native speaker completed the same task under identical conditions. To maintain consistency, the researcher was available to clarify the task instructions if needed but did not provide linguistic or pragmatic guidance.

The participants completed the DCT in a classroom. Prior to starting the task, instructions were provided to ensure comprehension of each situation. The responses were collected for analysis upon completion.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using a qualitative approach, focusing on both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of request-making. The pragmalinguistic analysis examined the linguistic structures used in request formulations, such as modality, politeness markers, and supportive moves. Sociopragmatic analysis assessed how the participant adapted requests based on contextual factors, such as power dynamics and degree of imposition. The analysis framework was based on the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), which categorizes requests into direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect strategies.

The data were analyzed to identify instances that involved pragmatic features by both the L2 learner and the native speaker in order to compare instances between the two participants and account for their occurrences, particularly those by the L2 learner.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Analysis of the Form

These findings address the first question of the study, highlighting the influence of linguistic competence on the pragmatic competence of request-making strategies as used by the L2 learner. The results of the analysis of the L2 learner's internal sentence modifications and how her request formation compared to those of the native speaker are reported. These include her use of vocabulary and downgraders in making requests (House & Kasper, 1981).

First, the L2 learner's overall performance demonstrates a consistent pattern of request formation and word choice. She used fewer internal modifiers than the native speaker and generally avoided complex lexical items and syntactic structures, which likely increased the difficulty of making requests. She almost exclusively used the modal verb *can* to begin a request regardless of the nature of the difference between the interlocutors' social status in each situation. Her failure to use a variety of request openers may be an indication that she had not yet acquired the necessary linguistic knowledge to help her adapt her initiation of a request to a situation and/or relationship with an interlocutor. It may also indicate her preference for the simple present over the conditional tense (e.g., *could*) in this type of sentence, a concept that she might not yet have acquired. Her syntactic repertoire, however, enabled her to use this verb in the correct position for a request. In comparison, four responses from the native speaker show the use of different modals when making requests (*would*, *could*).

While the L2 learner predominantly used the modal verb "can," her avoidance of other modals (e.g., "could," "would," "may") indicates a limited pragmalinguistic repertoire. This reliance on direct requests suggests that her grammatical competence restricted her ability to apply sociopragmatic strategies appropriately. Previous studies (e.g., Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Al-Issa, 2003) have shown that L2 learners with restricted grammatical resources often resort to simpler, more direct linguistic forms, which can result in pragmatic failure. This observation aligns with the concept of interlanguage pragmatics, where learners gradually refine their language use as they gain grammatical proficiency.

The following examples from the data show instances of interjections and downgraders by the L2 learner:

1. *'Hey Sarah…'*
2. *'Hey professor…'*
3. *'Mathew, please can you help me?'*
4. *'Oh, I forget my credit card.'*
5. *'Please my friend I want to…'*

Out of nine responses, the L2 learner used the lexical downgrader *please* only twice, in different social situations. The native speaker, on the other hand, used this politeness marker more frequently though not in all the responses. Interestingly, the L2 learner frequently addressed the fictional interlocutors by name before starting her request. She also used the non-lexical filler *oh* and the interjection *hey*, probably to call the interlocutor's attention to her request. Out of nine situations, she started with *hey* six times, even when her social status was lower than that of the interlocutor. Apart from the question of politeness or impoliteness, starting the request with *hey* may reflect L1 transfer or cross-cultural variations in social appropriateness. However, this observation needs further analysis and targeted tasks to investigate its possible cause. The native speaker also used the interjection *hey* in three situations: when requesting from her father, from her student, and from an employee under her supervision. Her use of this interjection when initiating a request was specific to

certain status relationships.

In general, the sentence structure of the L2 learner is indicative of her understanding of how to form a request within her limited lexicon and pragmalinguistc tools. Differences in degree of imposition and social status did not have a clear effect on her choices of vocabulary and syntactic structures. However, there are some similarities between her responses and those of the native speaker in terms of adding other elements to head acts. Her use of the politeness downgrader *please* and the expression "Can you help me?" fill the illocutionary force gap with a simple structure rather than a more complex one. This could also explain her exclusive use of the straightforward verb *can* to initiate the request rather than elaborated syntactic modifications like "Do you mind if…" or "I was wondering if you…", which were used by the native speaker.

These findings show that the L2 learner's strategies in making requests were constrained by her limited linguistic competence, as can be seen in her consistent reliance on simple modal verbs (e.g., *can*) and her minimal use of politeness markers (e.g., *please*). On the other hand, the native speaker showed greater linguistic flexibility and adherence to social norms, as was evidenced by her use of a range of modal verbs (e.g., *could, would*) and other appropriate lexical choices. The difference between the two participants highlights the transfer of the L2 learner's Arabic to her interlanguage pragmatics as revealed by her reliance on limited lexical items and directness when making requests.

Table 1. Analysis of the form summary of the two participants

	Direct Requests	Conventionally Indirect Requests	Non-Conventional Indirect Requests
L2 learner	85%	10%	5%
Native speaker	30%	45%	25%

As shown in Table 1, the L2 learner relied on direct request strategies (85%), while the native speaker employed a broader mix of both conventionally and non-conventionally indirect requests. This pattern aligns with previous research (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al., 1989), which highlights L1 pragmatic transfer and a lack of L2 pragmatic awareness as key factors influencing request strategies.

The L2 learner's inconsistent use of politeness markers suggests that her grammatical limitations influenced her ability to modify request forms appropriately. While she occasionally used "please", it was absent in situations where politeness would be expected, such as when addressing a higher-status interlocutor. Previous studies (e.g., House & Kasper, 1981) emphasize that the pragmatic competence of L2 learners is often constrained by their limited access to formal linguistic structures. Unlike the native speaker, who adapted her politeness strategies depending on the social context, the L2 learner's politeness patterns appeared formulaic rather than contextually driven.

4.2 Analysis of the Function

These findings address the second question of the study suggesting that the L2 learner demonstrated a basic knowledge of making requests in English, yet limitations in her grammatical competence are reflected in her underdeveloped pragmatic competence.

An analysis of the L2 learner's responses shows that she underused supporting moves when making requests. However, her use varied between pre- and post-supportive moves. Compared to the native speaker, she generally did not employ verbose supportive moves in her responses. Most of what she used as adjuncts to head acts were the details that were already presented in the situations and which she employed as grounders for her requests. In three out of nine situations, she used grounders as justifications. These were two instances in which the requestee was socially superior to the requester, and one instance of equal status relation as the following unedited examples from the data show:

6. *Hey professor, Can I use the plug neer from you becaus I need charge my laptop?*
7. *Hey dad, can I borrow $200 from you? becaus I want to buy new cell phone but I don't have all the price for the iphone.*
8. *Hey Ahmad I hear you a good mechanical. Can you help me? my car has some problem I want to fix my car as soon as possible becaus I want to travel on this holiday.*

As for the native speaker, she used grounders in four situations where the degree of imposition was higher:

9. *Oh, by the way, were you able to make it to class yesterday? I had a doctor's appointment and couldn't go. If you took notes, I was wondering if I could take a look so I don't miss anything!*
10. *Hey dad, I totaled my phone and need a new one. Is there any chance you could loan me some money and I'll pay you back as soon as I have it?*
11. *Hi! I'm gonna be studying in Munich in the Fall. Do you think I'd be able to stay with you and sister for a few days while I look for an apartment when I get there?*
12. *Hey, Tom! The office really needs that paperwork from you as soon as possible. Think you could get it submitted by the end of the day?*

Both the L2 learner and the native speaker used other supportive moves. For example, the L2 learner used the preparator "Can you help me?" when requesting from a student and an employee to both of whom she was superior, and a stranger. Also, both participants used the promise of reward when the degree of imposition was high regardless of social status. The L2 learner used it once and the native speaker twice, both in scenarios that involved borrowing money.

13. L2 learner: *oh, I forget my credit card. Can you pay for me and pay for you back?*

14. Native speaker:

a. Oh man, I just realized I left my wallet at home! If I pay you back on Venmo right away, are you able to cover me?

b. Hey dad, I totaled my phone and need a new one. Is there any chance you could loan me some money and I'll pay you back as soon as I have it?

The L2 learner's interlanguage grammar influenced how she made requests in English. Because she had not yet acquired sufficient pragmalinguistic tools, she avoided using complex sentence structure, as was evident in her limited use of supportive moves like grounders and pre-supportive phrases. Also, varying situational variables such as different degrees of imposition did not elicit variation in linguistic forms, which further showed how her limited grammatical competence hindered her pragmatic production.

The findings suggest a direct relationship between the L2 learner's grammatical competence and her ability to use supporting moves effectively. Since supportive moves often require complex syntactic structures (e.g., "I was wondering if I could borrow your notes"), a limited grammatical repertoire may restrict L2 learners' ability to use indirect and nuanced pragmatic strategies. The native speaker's responses contained a variety of syntactic structures that softened the request and enhanced politeness, while the L2 learner's responses were generally shorter and more direct. These results align with previous research (e.g., Taguchi, 2011), which suggests that higher grammatical proficiency contributes to more pragmatically appropriate request formulations.

5. Conclusion

The outcomes of the study indicate that grammatical competence is likely to precede pragmatic competence in the development of L2 communicative proficiency. Situational variations did not seem to affect the L2 learner's ability to produce requests similar to those of the native speaker when responding to situational differences. Thus, it can be inferred from the results that pragmatic competence cannot be fully attained until sufficient grammatical competence has been acquired. L2 learners may be able to make requests based on the limited grammar and lexical items at their disposal, but their performance may be judged by native speakers based on factors such as politeness, appropriateness, and other social factors.

It should be noted that this study is exploratory and limited by the small number of participants. For further insight into discrepancies between L2 learners' grammatical and pragmatic competencies, it is recommended that future studies involve larger samples of participants as well as compare the pragmatic competencies of L2 learners at two or more different levels of linguistic competence.

Nonetheless, the nature of the study in integrating grammatical and pragmatic competencies in the investigation of the interlanguage of an L2 learner of English provides implications for second language acquisition and language teaching. As for second language acquisition, the study provides evidence of the relationship between grammatical competence and pragmatic competence by demonstrating that the former is a prerequisite for the latter. L2 learners of English with limitations in their grammatical capacity may face challenges in making requests that are pragmatically appropriate due to their lack of sufficient linguistic resources. Balancing learners' development of both competencies may minimize their production of inappropriate interlanguage features. Additionally, L1 transfer is inferred from the L2 learner's consistent use of direct requests and her limited use of politeness markers. This pattern suggests she defaults to her L1 sociocultural practices when structuring request sentences in English due to her lack of sufficient linguistic resources to conform to L2 pragmatic norms.

This study also has implications for second-language pedagogy. Enhancing English language learners' pragmatic competence can be achieved with explicit instruction in pragmatic conventions of the target language, such as different politeness strategies and strategies for making high-imposition requests. It is important to raise learners' awareness of the target language's sociolinguistic variables through activities that convey the values of communicative situations (Lenchuk & Ahmed, 2013, p.83). Providing contextualized language practice in real-world scenarios can facilitate producing appropriate pragmatic sentences. Such practice takes the form of role-plays, which can help learners develop the ability to respond to changing variables, such as degrees of imposition, status relationships, and diverse situations. Ideally, curricula can be designed to combine explicit teaching of pragmatic language and strategies with grammar and vocabulary instruction to synchronize learners' development of both dimensions of L2 acquisition and effectively prepare them for authentic and successful communicative practices.

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Authors' contributions

Dr. Khalid M. Alotaibi was responsible for the entire study.

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