

UDK: 37.091.3:81'243]:81'27
Review paper

USING TASKS IN TEACHING PRAGMATICS

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ABSTRACT

Although pragmatics has been incorporated into pedagogy for many years now, it has often remained on the margins of L2 language teaching where the primary focus was placed on teaching grammar and vocabulary. In the past two decades, however, there has been an increase in interest in teaching L2 pragmatics as it has been claimed that second language acquisition cannot be successful without familiarization with the pragmatics of the second language. This paper aims to give an overview of the research done in second language teaching with a specific accent on TBLT/TSLT as being the framework in which L2 pragmatics teaching can be successful. Tasks are of great importance in teaching pragmatics as they can give a review of a real-work situation in the classroom and in this way bring the learners closer to understanding L2 pragmatics. One special aspect of task-based language teaching is certainly computer-mediated TBLT which can facilitate the creation of tasks and in such a way promote L2 task-based pragmatics teaching.

Key words: L2 language, L2 pragmatics, grammar and vocabulary, TBLT/TSLT.

INTRODUCTION

Within the field of second language acquisition, since 1980 there has been a steady increase in interest for incorporating pragmatics into pedagogy (Taguchi, Kim, 2018). Traditionally, teaching pragmatics did not receive as much attention as other areas of teaching language as a second language. With the increase of interest in developing second language pragmatic curricula, there have been attempts to establish a sound proficient method of teaching second language pragmatics that would focus on the students' interlanguage pragmatic development and try to successfully incorporate these ideas into the syllabus. Task-based and task-supported language teaching (TBLT and TSLT) have also received significant attention within the field of applied linguistics, but they have not often overlapped with second language pragmatic teaching until recently. Since the early 2000s, however, a steady increase in combining these two spheres has emerged and an increasing number of research papers and volumes have been published to offer and establish good practice and a successful way of teaching second language pragmatics by using TBLT or TSLT.

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) developed from communicative language teaching (CLT) which was an alternative to the more traditional approaches to language teaching (Ellis, 2017). Two approaches emerged, differentiated by the way they approach tasks. One was TBLT, and the other was task-supported language teaching (TSLT) which was a "weaker" form of TBLT in the sense that it was still structural and incorporated tasks alongside exercises. The educational philosophy of the two could be described as learning-to-do for TSLT and learning-by-doing for TBLT. Despite the differences in the two approaches, both have one thing in common – they include tasks in language learning. However, although the focus of tasks in language learning has been attracting researchers for over two decades now, the advocates of the approach have yet to agree on a set of principles and procedures that should be adhered to. (Ellis, 2017).

One of the main criticisms of TBLT is that there are no clear rules to determine what a task actually is, and how to draw a line between a task and an exercise. Ellis (2009) established four criteria to distinguish a task and an exercise; (1) a primary focus on meaning, (2) a communicative gap that motivates language use, (3) participants using their own resources, and (4) a clearly defined communicative outcome. Consequently, most scholars in the field responded to criticism and reached an agreement as to what constitutes a task. Firstly, a task is meaning-oriented, communicative in nature and the focus is put on the meaning of the message and the language itself. They are goal-oriented and should be authentic

– meaning that they should strive to replicate real-world situations and not just justify the performance of a task. Secondly, the student is supposed to be doing something with the language, not just learning something about the language. This is a chief principle of TBLT. Finally, in TBLT, the goal is language acquisition and not just communicative effectiveness (Gonzalez-Lloret, 2017).

Since pragmatic knowledge is inherently knowledge about the real world, it does make sense to connect TBLT/TSLT and teaching pragmatics, as teaching through tasks (if correctly planned out) can bring new ways of teaching to the students, and if the tasks resemble real-world conditions as much as possible, then the learning process is facilitated. Within TBLT and TSLT there are different kinds of tasks that can be incorporated into language teaching, some of them being role-play, collaborative writing tasks, discourse completion tasks, etc. All of them have received an equal amount of attention in the literature and different authors researched different aspects of these tasks and tried to measure the impact that such tasks had on second language acquisition pragmatics.

Pragmatics entails two separate linguistic grounds of knowledge: pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. The first refers to the linguistic forms that are available for performing a language function, while the second refers to the language user's understanding of the context in which those forms are used (Kim & Taguchi, 2015). When acquiring a second language, L2 learners must be aware of the two forms, as they need not only adopt the linguistic form, but also understand the context in which the forms can be used. This is another point in case if using tasks while teaching pragmatics, as it can create a real-world context for students who would otherwise have no opportunity to engage in such events. Although lack of authenticity of tasks is one of the main criticisms, it simply does not have an alternative in an instructed classroom environment, and performing tasks such as role-play or discourse completion tasks will surely facilitate the learners' L2 pragmatic acquisition. The criticism can also be addressed by creating situations which are familiar to students so they can identify with a role and feel comfortable while performing the role.

This paper will review recent literature that has dealt with L2 pragmatics acquisition, and the use of TBLT in instruction will be analyzed. The aim is to see if TBLT is a proper framework for L2 pragmatics teaching and which tasks work best in teaching pragmatics. One section will be devoted to computer-mediated TBLT as such a language teaching framework is crucial for the future of teaching. This is something which 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic made us truly realize as all of us (i.e. teachers) were confined to our computers and laptops and various online tools in order to continue teaching. While some will argue that computer-

mediated teaching simply cannot replace the traditional face-to-face classroom teaching environment, it does have its merits and there is no need to discard such a way of teaching *a priori*.

TASKS IN L2 PRAGMATICS TEACHING

Baron, Celaya and Levkina (2020) published a paper called “Learning pragmatics through tasks. When interaction plays a role” in which they argue that using tasks in teaching L2 pragmatics is beneficial for learners and that such an approach has not been researched sufficiently. They performed a study on 50 EFL learners at the B2 proficiency level. The students were divided into three groups for the purpose of the study. The first group (G1) was instructed in pragmatics with the help of tasks, the second group (G2) had only instruction without tasks, and the third, control group (G3) had neither instruction nor did they do any tasks. The instrument which they used to test the pragmatic learning was role-play. The design of the study was making a pre- and post-test in which two role-plays were used to elicit speech acts of giving opinion, agreeing/disagreeing, interrupting and acknowledging the interlocutor. The same students carried out the pre- and the post-test.

The analysis of the pragmatic production in this study was data-driven. The analysis showed that for both role-plays, G1 showed statistically significant differences from the pre- to the post-test when interrupting – the expression became more indirect, and it showed significant differences in acknowledging the interlocutor. However, the data showed no significant statistical difference between the pre- and post-test in giving opinion and agreeing/disagreeing.

For G2 no statistically significant difference was found between the pre- and post-test for the first role-play in giving opinion, agreeing/disagreeing and in acknowledging the interlocutor, but there was a significant difference when interrupting. For the second role-play, no significant difference was found between the pre- and post-test for any of the speech acts tested. As far as the control group was concerned, no significant difference was shown for any of the speech acts analyzed for any of the role-plays.

The results indicate that only those who received pragmatic instruction (G1 and G2) made a change in one of the speech acts analyzed (interruptions), where they tended to be more indirect after the instruction. This shows that a certain form of pragmatic instruction can yield results and students will adopt new strategies in conversation. The study also reported that only G1, i.e., the students who had a task-supported approach along with the instruction, acknowledged the

interlocutor more, wherein they asked for their opinion or for more information or options. This showed that tasks can help develop the students' interactional skills and sociopragmatic competence. Some of the speech acts (agreeing/disagreeing and giving an opinion) were unchanged from the pre- to the post-test, concurring with Alcon's (2005) claim that some speech acts are harder to acquire than others. Finally, the study claims that explicit or implicit instruction is beneficial while teaching L2 pragmatics, but that tasks are a great tool to add to instruction because they help the students engage in life-like situations which will help them put all the theoretical knowledge into practice. The paper strongly advocates for the use of task-supported material to teach L2 pragmatics.

Gilbert and Baron (2013) researched how task complexity, interaction and interlanguage pragmatics affect the learners' usage of L2. The goal was to "analyze how increasing the cognitive demands during the interaction may affect the use of pragmatic moves in L2" (Gilbert, Baron, 2013). The study was quantitative in nature, and it hypothesized that dealing with more complex tasks would result in a wider variety of pragmatic moves as learners had to deal with multiple issues. The study included 36 participants, aged 19-21, who were Catalan/Spanish bilinguals taking an EFL course. They were all at the B1 level of proficiency and had not been given any pragmatic instruction during the data elicitation process. The research questions were designed to find the impact of increasing task complexity on the overall number and variety of pragmatic moves and the number and variety of specific pragmatic moves.

Two tasks were used; the first was a problem-solving task, and the second a role-play. Each of the tasks had a simpler and a more complex version which were used to show how increasing the task complexity would influence the usage of pragmatic moves of learners. The results of the research showed (not surprisingly) that the learners found the more complex version of the tasks more difficult, and it took them longer to complete them. The students were also less accurate in estimating how long it would take them to complete the more complex tasks. Learners used a larger number of pragmatic moves when task demands were higher. The authors explained this by asserting that "higher task demands imposed a higher cognitive load at the level of conceptualization" (Gilbert, Baron, 2013). While dealing with more complex problems, learners needed to consider more reasons, more alternatives and more solutions which led to including the use of a wider range of pragmatic moves. As far as the variety of specific pragmatic moves is concerned, the findings indicate that learners did not use a very large variety of pragmatic moves – they opted to repeat only a small number of moves multiple times. The authors assigned this to the fact that the learner did not receive any

pragmatic instruction prior to or during the data elicitation process, so they must have been unfamiliar with a wider range of pragmatic moves that could have been employed. This leads to the conclusion that using task complexity alone is not enough to get the students to use a wider variety of pragmatic moves. The question remains: what can push students to use a wider range of pragmatic moves; is it pedagogical intervention, input enhancement, input elaboration, or does it, in fact, rely on other factors, such as the students' proficiency level, and not task complexity. It is clear that task complexity does elicit an overall wider range of pragmatic moves, but not a wider range of specific tasks used. Students tend to stay in their comfort zones and rely on the knowledge they are familiar with. So, the biggest question of the study remains how to get students to start taking more risks and moving out of their comfort zones to employ a wider range of pragmatic moves.

Kim and Taguchi (2015) conducted a study on the role of task complexity in acquiring pragmatic knowledge. The focus of the study was the adoption of request-making expressions in L2 by which pragmatic competence was measured. The authors defined pragmatic competence as the knowledge of pragmalinguistic forms that are associated with certain contexts. This knowledge is implemented as the ability to understand the power, distance and the degree of imposition between interlocutors – following Brown and Levinson's three contextual variables – and then to use proper pragmalinguistic forms that match the situation. The research included 73 Korean high school students, aged 13 and 14 from three intact classes. Each class was assigned to one of the following groups: simple, complex and control. The target request was implemented as a request that has a higher (PDR-high) or a request that has a lower (PDR-low) level of imposition. A PDR-high request would be, for example, a student asking a professor for an extension on an assignment, and a PDR-low request would be asking a friend for a pen. PDR-high requests were chosen as the target to teach the students, as they are psychologically perceived as being more challenging to perform, but they were introduced along with PDR-low in order to highlight the contrast. In the PDR-high situations, two categories of pragmalinguistic forms were targeted in the task-based instruction which the students received prior to the drama script construction task which was used to measure the acquisition of request-making speech acts. The two forms were a request head act and modifications. The request head act is the core unit that conveys the illocutionary force of an utterance and modification mitigates the illocutionary force of the head act. They may involve a *preparator* that will prepare the hearer for a request, and a *grounder* that will offer an explanation or a reason for the request.

Both the simple and complex groups carried out a collaborative writing task over two consecutive days, which included 90 minutes of instruction time. Following the instruction, they completed a drama script construction task, where students had to write a text based on given pictures. Overall, the study was conducted over a six-week period, where on day 1 the simple, complex and the control group all wrote a pre-test (DCT) in order to measure the learning outcomes. The simple and complex group then performed a collaborative writing task, which was followed up with a post-test (DCT 2) which all three groups sat. All three groups then took a TOEFIC Bridge test in order to measure their level of English proficiency. A delayed post-test (DCT 3) was administered after three weeks.

The results showed that the complex group produced more pragmatic related episodes (PREs) targeting the discussion of the given context, the head acts and the preparators. As far as the correct usage of the request-making speech act in the collaborative written task, there was no difference between the simple and complex group in their scores. As far as the learning outcomes were concerned, the pre-test and the post-test showed that the simple and complex group outperformed the control group in acquiring knowledge of the request-making speech act, which in itself is no surprise. However, there were no significant differences between the simple and complex groups on the immediate post-test, but the complex group outperformed the simple group on the delayed post-test. The findings show that task complexity does affect the long-term learning of pragmalinguistic forms as cognitively demanding tasks provoke students to engage more in the task and thus acquire knowledge.

Kim and Taguchi (2016) did a follow-up study on collaborative pragmatic tasks where they focused on learner-learner interaction. As most of the studies on task-based interaction have focused on grammar and vocabulary, they wanted to examine if the same applies to pragmatics and if those findings can be generalized. Their study aimed to investigate if and to what extent task complexity affected the occurrence of interaction-driven learning opportunities during pragmatic tasks and whether the effect differed between tasks that involved differing pragmatic characteristics. The study included 49 participants from two intact classes in South Korea, aged 13 and 14. The two classes were divided into a simple and a complex group, where the first received simple versions of the tasks and the other received complex versions of the tasks. As the goal of the study was to teach different levels of pragmatic demands that depend on power, social distance and level of imposition (PDR), both groups performed PDR-high and PDR-low writing task designs; one was a cognitive task demand and one a pragmatic task demand in

which the students were required to write television drama scripts involving request-making expressions based on pictures provided. The participants created a total of five scenarios over two days. The study was designed to investigate whether different task complexity in the two different groups affected the occurrence of interaction between learners when learning request-making expressions and whether that effect differed between situations involving PDR-high and PDR-low characteristics. The study showed that the more complex tasks elicited a greater amount of interaction based on the number of turns taken by students than the simple versions of the tasks, regardless of pragmatic task demands. However, during the pragmatic learning episodes where students discussed the usage of certain pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic language, no significant difference was found for pragmalinguistic forms, but cognitive task demands promoted student discussion on sociopragmatic forms. The results of the study are thus in line with previous research in that students perform more language-related episodes where they discuss the usage of certain linguistic forms during more complex rather than during simple tasks, but only where the discussion was aimed at the context and not request-making acts.

Nguyen (2018) made a longitudinal investigation of L2 e-mail requests which focused on pragmatic development in an instructed context. The research lasted for eighteen months and reported the impact of explicit instruction on the learnability of different aspects of e-mail requests. The study was conducted on university students, and the purpose was the fact that students frequently write e-mails to professors in order to achieve different communicative functions, requests seeming to be the most dominant type. When making a request, students need to be aware that a dose of pragmatic sophistication is needed with respect to the power-status relationship between students and professors or the faculty as an institution. Infelicitous use of language may occur if students use language in a status-inappropriate way, where they might issue directives to the professor assuming that they are obliged to fulfill the request with no appreciation for their time. Another infelicitous usage of language is the omission of greeting and using inappropriate forms of address.

The study included 32 Vietnamese female students, aged 19 and 20, with an intermediate proficiency level of English. The students were from two intact classes, of which one was the instruction and one the control group. The instruction group received six hours of explicit meta-pragmatic instruction over a period of four weeks. The control group followed their normal syllabus in which they had only one lesson about making requests in everyday and work-related scenarios. It should be noted that the two groups were taught by different teachers and that the

results might differ because of their teaching styles. The author acknowledges this drawback.

Data was collected by using a discourse completion task (DCT) consisting of three request scenarios. The DCT was conducted at four different points in time: prior to the instruction, immediately after the instruction, one month after the instruction and eight months after the instruction. The results showed that the instruction enabled students to write socially appropriate e-mails to their professors from the scale of “not so appropriate” in the pre-test to “adequately appropriate” in the post-tests. The control group retained a “not so appropriate” level both in the pre- and post-tests. This is in accordance with previous research done on the topic, and would imply that explicit instruction is beneficial in raising students’ awareness regarding making polite e-mail requests. The research question was thus answered positively, but the question remains whether the different teachers who taught the two groups influenced this result, and the fact that the research was gender-biased does not work in its favor.

Alcon-Soler (2018) researched whether task-supported teaching (TSLT) had an impact on learners’ knowledge and usage of e-mail request mitigators. The research focused on discovering if TSLT is effective for learning how to mitigate e-mail requests. A total of 48 ESL students participated in the study, with an average age of 20.5. The students were divided into three random groups: the first was a teacher-student interaction group, the second a student-student interaction group and the third was the control group. The first two groups received metapragmatic instruction in writing high-imposition e-mails: in the first group, the whole instruction and three TSLT sessions were led by the teacher, and in the second group, the instruction was done by a teacher, but the TSLT sessions were led by a student. The control group did not receive any instruction. The study lasted for eight weeks and consisted of a pre-test, the instruction, the TSLT sessions, a post-test and a delayed post-test.

The results of the study showed that TSLT gave good results in increasing the correctness in writing high-imposition e-mail requests. When the pre-test and the two post-tests were compared, the results showed an increase in the usage of internal request mitigators, softeners and different syntactic structures (e.g., “Could you...?”, “I was wondering if...?”) in the first two groups and no difference in usage in the control group. That means that the instruction and the TSLT sessions were successful in teaching students how to correctly mitigate high-imposition e-mails. One interesting finding was that no difference was found between the first and second group at the immediate post-test, but there was a difference in the delayed post-test, where the student-student interaction group

outperformed the teacher-student interaction group. This goes to show that the level of participation and attention in different learning environments plays a key role in acquiring new knowledge. This also goes to show that collaborative tasks during pragmatic teaching sessions benefit the acquisition of new knowledge, and in addition, that the type of instruction and classroom interaction play a role on the impact of the students' knowledge so this is something that teachers should take into consideration when designing a class.

COMPUTER-MEDIATED TBLT IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Gonzalez-Lloret and Ortega (2014) promoted a technology mediated TBLT. They raised the question of how TBLT and CALL (computer-assisted language learning) could be integrated into a sensible and organized whole. Reflecting Ellis' criteria of distinguishing a task and exercise, they claim that the first issue of implementing technology in TBLT is to make sure that new technologies are linked with real tasks, and not mere exercises. They go on and list their five key features of a task: (1) primary focus on meaning, (2) goal orientation, (3) learner-centeredness, (4) holism, and (5) reflective learning.

Gonzalez-Lloret (2017) argues that TBLT is ideal for designing a curriculum that would include and realize technology and technological innovations in language teaching, especially Web 2.0 technology as being a natural match for TBLT. Using Web 2.0 tools helps promote the *learning by doing* philosophy of teaching as they can be integrated as a medium for interaction among learners through computer-mediated video, audio or text communication, and they can work collaboratively while writing wikis, blogs, maybe even fanfiction sites and so on. The main asset of this is that the audience is authentic which is essential in TBLT. Incorporating such tasks into a curriculum could help improve learners' motivation and creativity as it would open up an authentic language environment. For this reason, the author calls for a clear definition of technology-mediated tasks as confusion can arise about the way this approach can be successfully implemented. Often activities from a face-to-face context are simply translated onto a computer platform and this is simply not enough as it is limiting the possibilities of a technology-mediated TBLT, whereas the Web 2.0 tools extend the learning opportunities that would be quite difficult to organize in a traditional classroom.

Research on the connection between technology and TBLT is still scarce, and it has been focused on the interaction produced by students. That is why it is important to conduct further research and implement many more concepts and develop a sound research agenda. This, however, could be a difficult task as

technology-mediated TBLT is not without its drawbacks. One that comes to mind immediately is the fast pace in which technology evolves. Within a year, many of the tools used become obsolete, hence it may seem imprudent to invest the time investigating something that is so short-lived. However, there could be a way to conduct research on more general concepts and characteristics of a certain medium that would remain unchanged in spite of the frequent updates and improvements.

The implementation of technology is never neutral as it brings a new context into the equation, especially if we incorporate real-world tasks into the curriculum. If we incorporate e-mail correspondence about writing a business letter, that would force the student to learn the pragmatics of such a medium for the task, but also the pragmatics of writing such a letter. It is the same with all other real-world tasks; the changing context allows for the creation of a good environment in which to teach pragmatics. Asking for directions and allowing learners to use their smartphones could transform a simple task into a more elaborate one, as they would first need to know how to use the medium to complete the task, but since the newer generations generally know how to use their smartphones (it could be argued that they love to use them), they could relate to the tasks more as they would resemble their everyday activities. This is necessary for the successful teaching of pragmatics.

When talking about technology being integrated into second language acquisition, one of the chief assets that the pandemic has brought is the fact that now we can integrate the classic face-to-face activities with online tools. The online activities do not have to be solely an extension of classic face-to-face classes. Till now, if a student did not feel well and could not come to class because they were ill, they had to miss the lesson and they do the work on their own or come to consultations to try to understand what they had missed. However, with the help of real-time conferencing tools, we can integrate the face-to-face classes along with online ones. Students are thus be able to follow the lessons and not miss anything, and most importantly, they can participate in the lesson as well. All of this, of course, depends on the technology we possess and our ability to keep up with it, but, as Gonzalez-Lloret (2017) claims, the generations born after 2000 were born into technology, so it is perfectly natural for them to have the ability to take lessons in such a fashion. Prensky (2001) called the generation “digital natives.”

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Gonzalez-Lloret (2020) published a paper in which she advocated further integration of technology-mediated tasks into the curriculum. As teachers were forced to teach remotely during this period, it made sense to develop a curriculum that would not just be an “emergency plan,” but that would act as a tool for developing and integrating new technology into second language teaching. While there were numerous recommendations on how to teach

online, most of these overlooked the necessity of incorporating tasks and activities that provoked the students to use language in a productive way. The author asserts that it is difficult to incorporate output in an online language teaching curriculum, while input can be secured not only through the lessons, but also through an abundance of online multimedia (YouTube, blogs, podcasts, etc.). Therefore, she advocates for the implementation of collaborative tasks to get the students to produce language and engage in communication to secure that student output is worked on as well. Collaborative learning encourages understanding, fosters relationships, builds self-esteem, reduces anxiety, and stimulates critical thinking. In the paper, the author gives a few examples of technology-mediated tasks that could be used to encourage collaborative tasks.

The first type of task the author focuses on is small-group tasks. These kinds of tasks can be successful by using one of the available video conferencing tools that can allow each of the group members to participate in the tasks. The tasks are inspired by everyday usage of the Internet in our mother tongue, so the task can be anything from shopping, banking, ordering take-out to finding a yoga class or checking the weather anywhere in the world. These kinds of tasks have the potential to be more authentic and relevant to students and more importantly, they can easily be done online. The author then goes on to give three examples with detailed procedures on how to perform them. As an addition to these, the author also asserts the need to incorporate tasks which build class community as online classes can lead to isolation and low self-esteem which can result in low achievement and even dropping out. The tasks that can be done to achieve this are usually discussion topic which the teacher imposes, but they give a chance to students to share something about themselves and in this way connect with the rest of the class. Such tasks would be short ice-breaking activities, where students would talk about what is there in their refrigerator or their closet, or introduce a family member or a pet, or report what is going on in their life at the moment.

The author then focuses on the learning of the target culture where virtual reality can bring new possibilities that a traditional classroom could never incorporate. Examples of these are virtual museums where students could be given tasks to visit them virtually and then describe what they saw or give a tour of the museum to other students. Another possibility is the use of Google Maps or Google Earth to engage students in giving them a tour of their own city, giving directions, tagging monuments, landmarks, restaurants or bookstores they visit. All of these are a great source to start a discussion between them and to exchange experiences.

Finally, the author states that collaboration using Web 2.0 tools beyond the classroom is another possibility that can be implemented to connect learners to the target language via mobile apps, YouTube, Twitter, blogs, e-mail, Skype, Hangouts, Meet, Facetime, WhatsApp and social networks. Students can use these tools to collaborate with others from their class, but they can use them on their own to connect and collaborate with other speakers of the target language with similar interests in order to develop their writing skills.

All of the collaborative technology-mediated tasks described above are a good resource to help our students learn, especially in times like these when we are forced to implement distance learning, but they could also become an integral part of the syllabus if implemented correctly as they offer much more than a traditional approach would. However, there are a few things that have to be taken into consideration. First and foremost, most of these activities require a fast and stable Internet connection and before planning to make such tasks part of the syllabus, we should know if our students possess such a connection. This can be solved by conducting a needs analysis at the start of the semester and then giving those students who need it, extra support and training in digital competences so that they do not fall behind. It is also important to have realistic expectations about the work load that online courses produce for teachers, as the majority of the work is solely based on the motivation of the teacher to find good materials, develop the tasks and engage the students in those tasks. It goes without saying that the teacher has to have a profound technological understanding and knowledge and has to know their way around Web 2.0 tools. The question remains whether this is something that we can take for granted or if we should first invest time and resources in finding out how much the teachers actually know and then to give them the training required to provide them with all the tools needed to execute these tasks.

DISCUSSION

The aim of the paper was to review the most recent articles connected to the L2 pragmatics acquisition and the use of tasks in L2 teaching. It must be highlighted that the number of papers available on this topic is still relatively limited. Taguchi (2015) compiled all the research done in instructed pragmatics and he tried to give an overview to find common patterns in instructed pragmatics research and to try to give recommendations for the future of the discipline. Since no such task was done afterwards, the aim of this paper was on later research done on the topic, but with a narrower scope. Where Taguchi included everything connected

with instructed pragmatics, this paper is concerned primarily with TBLT/TSLT in teaching L2, and teaching L2 pragmatics in particular. As can be seen from the papers reviewed, tasks do facilitate the acquisition of language, but not only the grammatical aspect of language or vocabulary – something which is often the predominant aspect and choice of language teaching – but it also develops students' skills and manner in approaching certain situations in which they might feel uncomfortable or would simply have no idea how to act. An example of this can be seen in Alcon-Soler's research (2018) in the usage of tasks in teaching e-mail mitigators. The students have clearly developed skills needed to properly address their professors, something which is not so obvious to students at first, especially if they come from a completely different culture.

A number of papers also reported that task complexity plays a crucial role in the acquisition of pragmatic knowledge, as students who had to deal with more complex tasks usually outperformed other students on the post-test, if not in the immediate post-test, then most certainly on the delayed post-test. This also shows that when devising a study on the acquisition of pragmatics, it is vital to devise the research properly, as the immediate and the delayed post-tests do sometimes give different data. Some studies not having a delayed post-test is obviously not a critical flaw of the research, but it should be taken into account that the result might be different if the post-test had been administered.

Another aspect that was reviewed was the rising popularity of computer-mediated TBLT in L2 teaching. Although the papers reviewed do not necessarily deal with L2 pragmatics teaching, these papers were included in the study to show the benefits of this framework, which is highly important in the post-COVID teaching environment. A number of tasks that can easily be done online and offered to students to facilitate not only their learning, but the whole experience of online classes is something which every teacher should try to incorporate in their teaching. Computer-mediated TSLT is a great addition to traditional classroom teaching as it gives new perspectives to students and makes them more engaged in the teaching process. This is especially true if we take into account the fact that the newer generations of students are born into technology, and they use many online tools, applications and websites daily as part of their routine. Including some of their favorite online activities could potentially hugely benefit their learning process.

Computer-mediated TBLT/TSLT for teaching L2 pragmatics is an area which has not been researched so far, or has been scarcely touched upon, so future research could potentially try to see how tasks in a virtual environment benefit and facilitate the acquisition of L2 pragmatics. Although teaching e-mail mitigators and similar

research do involve the usage of computers and technology, still the instruction given and the tasks performed to help students gain such knowledge are done in a traditional classroom setting. True computer-mediated TBLT might be one of the major tools for teachers teaching L2 pragmatics in the future.

In spite of all the criticisms which TBLT has received about not being authentic, it is still by far the best tool to teach L2 pragmatics and that is why it deserves more attention from language researchers and practitioners.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the field of second language pragmatics teaching has been gaining popularity steadily over the course of the past four decades, although it is still not where it should be. As this paper has shown, the problem still revolves around the creation of a well-rounded framework which would allow the inclusion of good teaching practices and methods in the teaching process. Task-based and task-supported language teaching has been recognized as a tool which could be of great significance in teaching second language pragmatics, as it allows the creation of real-world-like scenarios in the classroom which are essential for the acquisition of L2 pragmatics.

A lot of work is still needed in order to put the field on steady feet, but the research is being developed and the future does look promising. One of the things that needs to be included in future research and curriculum development is certainly computer-mediated TBLT as it is not the future, but the present of teaching, as this past pandemic year has shown. Unfortunately, there are few advocates of computer-mediated TBLT and this is one part of the field which certainly needs more attention, so future research should deal with it more.

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UPORABA ZADATAKA U NASTAVI PRAGMATIKE

SAŽETAK

Iako je pragmatika već dugi niz godina uključena u pedagogiju, često je ostajala na marginama nastave jezika L2 gdje je primarni fokus bio na nastavi gramatike i vokabulara. U posljednja dva desetljeća, međutim, došlo je do povećanja interesa za poučavanje L2 pragmatike jer se tvrdilo da usvajanje drugoga jezika ne može biti uspješno bez upoznavanja s pragmatikom drugoga jezika. Ovomu je radu cilj dati pregled istraživanja provedenoga u nastavi stranoga jezika s posebnim naglaskom na TBLT/TSLT kao okvir u kojem L2 pragmatika može biti uspješna. Zadaci su od velike važnosti u podučavanju pragmatike jer mogu dati pregled stvarne radne situacije u učionici i na taj način približiti učenike razumijevanju L2 pragmatike. Poseban aspekt podučavanja jezika temeljenoga na zadacima svakako je računalno posredovani TBLT koji može olakšati izradu zadataka i na taj način promovirati poučavanje pragmatike temeljeno na zadacima L2.

Ključne riječi: L2 jezik, L2 pragmatika, gramatika i vokabular, TBLT/TSLT.