

Review: Trubnikova, Victoriya, & Garofolin, Benedetta. (2020). *Lingua e interazione. Insegnare la pragmatica a scuola* [Language and interaction. Teaching pragmatics at school]. Edizioni ETS.

SARA GESUATO
University of Padua

Book review

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ABSTRACT

EN This volume presents a theoretical and practical approach to the teaching of pragmatics in primary and secondary educational contexts. Targeting first language (L1), second language (L2), and foreign language (FL) teachers, the volume starts by introducing key concepts in pragmatics, providing an overview of theoretical notions in communicative competence, and drawing pedagogical implications from these notions. The book then reports findings from a survey conducted among language teachers on their views on and experience with the teaching of linguistic pragmatics. Finally, a 5-step inductive-explicit pedagogical model is put forward for raising metapragmatic awareness and developing receptive and productive pragmatic skills among learners of varied age groups. A rich set of sample activities illustrates how to put the model into practice and to adapt it to learners' specific needs.

Key words: PRAGMATICS TEACHING, METAPRAGMATIC AWARENESS, L1/L2/FL TEACHERS, PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION, INDUCTIVE-EXPLICIT PEDAGOGY

ES Este volumen presenta una aproximación teórica y práctica a la enseñanza de la pragmática en contextos educativos de primaria y secundaria. Dirigido a profesores de lengua primera (L1), segunda lengua (L2) y lengua extranjera (LE), el volumen comienza introduciendo conceptos clave en pragmática, brindando una descripción general de las nociones teóricas en competencia comunicativa y extrapolando las implicaciones pedagógicas que surgen de dichas nociones. Asimismo, este libro recoge los resultados obtenidos a partir de una encuesta realizada entre profesores de idiomas sobre sus puntos de vista y experiencias en la enseñanza de la pragmática lingüística. Finalmente, se propone un modelo pedagógico inductivo-explicito que consta de 5 pasos para aumentar la conciencia metapragmática y desarrollar habilidades pragmáticas receptivas y productivas entre estudiantes de diferentes grupos de edad. Un amplio conjunto de actividades de muestra ilustra cómo poner en práctica el modelo y adaptarlo a las necesidades específicas del alumnado.

Palabras clave: ENSEÑANZA DE LA PRAGMÁTICA, CONCIENCIA METAPRAGMÁTICA, DOCENTES L1/L2/LE, EDUCACIÓN PRIMARIA Y SECUNDARIA, PEDAGOGÍA INDUCTIVO-EXPLICITA

IT Questo volume presenta un approccio teorico-pratico all'insegnamento della pragmatica in contesti di istruzione primaria e secondaria. Rivolgendosi a insegnanti delle lingue madre (L1), seconda (L2) e straniera (LS), il volume si apre con una presentazione dei concetti chiave della pragmatica, offrendo una panoramica delle nozioni generali sulla competenza comunicativa e delineando le implicazioni pedagogiche che ne derivano. Il libro riporta poi i risultati di un sondaggio condotto tra insegnanti di lingue sul loro punto di vista e sulla loro esperienza con l'insegnamento della pragmatica. Infine, viene proposto un modello pedagogico induttivo-esplicito composto di cinque fasi per raggiungere una consapevolezza metapragmatica e per sviluppare competenze pragmatiche sia recettive sia produttive tra studenti di età diversa. Un ricco repertorio di attività illustra come mettere in pratica il modello e adattarlo ai bisogni specifici degli studenti.

Parole chiave: DIDATTICA DELLA PRAGMATICA, CONSAPEVOLEZZA METAPRAGMATICA, INSEGNANTI DI L1/L2/LS, ISTRUZIONE PRIMARIA E SECONDARIA, PEDAGOGIA INDUTTIVO-ESPLICITA

✉ **Sara Gesuato**, University of Padua
sara.gesuato@unipd.it

1. Volume overview

Victoriya Trubnikova and Benedetta Garofolin's (2020) *Lingua e Interazione. Insegnare la pragmatica a scuola* ([Language and interaction. Teaching pragmatics at school], Edizioni ETS, addresses the question of the relevance of pragmatics to the teaching and learning of first, second, and foreign languages (L1s, L2s, and FLs) at all proficiency and schooling levels. It does so with the aim of fostering the development of learners' productive and receptive communicative skills in social, cultural, and situational contexts. Indeed, as aptly pointed out in the preface, it fills a long-overdue gap in language pedagogy, namely that of making pragmatics accessible as a theoretical construct to language practitioners, pointing out the crucial bearing it has on language development, and showing how it can be fruitfully implemented in daily classroom activities. Starting from theoretical considerations and taking stock of teachers' own needs, the volume offers general guidelines and practical suggestions on how to make focused reflection on pragmatic aspects of communication a recurrent, motivated, and easy-to-implement educational practice. Its main tenet is that it is possible to foster effective and conventionally appropriate language learning and language use by exploring the interrelatedness of form, function, and context and their effects on interactants. This, the authors argue, can be achieved through a gradual, supervised process of discovery, analysis, and conscious re-use of communicative strategies and phraseologies motivated by an understanding of context.

The book, which targets primary and secondary education teachers, is divided into two sections. The first section, which consists of an introduction and two chapters, has a theoretical slant and introduces key notions both in pragmatics and in educational linguistics, with a special focus on pragmatics, thus setting the context for the second section. The second section consists of two chapters and a conclusion. It explores the relationship between language teaching and pragmatics, and offers detailed pedagogical suggestions on how to include aspects of pragmatics in curricular activities. The book ends with a rich references section and four appendices: one presents a data collection instrument (i.e., the questionnaire administered to teachers to explore their views on pragmatics at school), two are sample concrete illustrations of how to apply in the classroom the pedagogical model put forward by the authors in Chapter 4, and one is an assessment instrument that learners can use to give one another peer feedback on their pragmatically-oriented communicative tasks.

2. Chapter content

The Introduction argues for the importance of including pragmatics in language teaching, since it accounts for how linguistic choices shape and are shaped by context, thus enabling action, interaction and socialisation. It also sets out the goals of the book, and provides an overview of its content.

Chapter 1 defines pragmatics. It outlines fundamental notions, phenomena, and theoretical frameworks (i.e., deixis, speech acts, the cooperative principle of conversation, discourse markers, and politeness) that account for how language is used effectively and appropriately in context so as to achieve communicative, interactional, and transactional goals. It also illustrates how language use varies non-randomly across situations—characterised by flexible configurations of event types, participants' role-relationships, and discursive contributions—as well as across cultures, which may assign different values to given communicative and socialisation practices.

Chapter 2 clarifies what communicative competence is and the role that pragmatic competence plays in it. It also presents theories put forward by leading scholars on how pragmatic competence is acquired or developed. Most importantly, it draws pedagogical implications from these theoretical considerations, tackling thought-provoking questions such as what should be taught and how, how the teacher and the learner should play and orchestrate their complementary roles to foster successful learning, and how pragmatic skills are to be assessed. A strong case is made for the implementation of an inductive-explicit teaching method—which is all too often disregarded in language pedagogy (cf., Glaser, 2013)—meant to raise learners' awareness of pragmatic phenomena, to develop their metapragmatic competence, and to enable them to decide to what extent to approximate the standards of a target language and the (tacit) conventions of the native speakers who use it. This is a method in which overt theoretical information about patterns and conventions is presented at the end of a process of consciousness-raising activities and guided discovery of communicative practices.

Chapter 3 reports on the findings of an investigation into primary and secondary school teachers' awareness of and views on the role of pragmatics in language teaching, and the scope of their experience in its instruction. Through a mainly quantitative survey of 410 participants, the authors found that teachers were interested in the field, but lacked confidence and adequate background preparation. They also expressed a need for suitable pedagogical material for developing and honing students' metapragmatic awareness. The findings

point out similar perspectives on pragmatics among teachers across school levels, but also draw attention to a stronger need for pre-service and on-the-job training, especially for primary school teachers. This type of research is in line with recent investigations in applied pragmatics, which engage in needs analyses of language educators (e.g., Cohen, 2018; Costa & Pladevall-Ballester, 2018; Pavan & Gesuato, 2021).

Chapter 4 presents an innovative five-step pedagogical model which aims to sensitise learners to the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic aspects of L1, L2 and FL communication, to raise their metapragmatic awareness, and to gradually develop learner autonomy. The model, which draws on insights from previous works, is the highlight of the book. By applying an inductive-explicit approach, and without requiring teachers to devote much time to extensive preparation, it shows how everyday interactional situations and authentic discourse material can illustrate pragmatic phenomena which can be made part of a standard teaching syllabus. The approach serves to introduce learners to the formal, strategic, and context-relevant features of their own and others' discourse, to raise their awareness of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural differences, and to alert them to the meaning, value and impact of their language use through guided peer assessment practice.

The Conclusion sums up the main point of the volume. First, it stresses the pragmatic dimension of language use—for action, interaction, and socialisation. Second, it emphasises the importance of supervised reflection on effective and appropriate language production and language reception. Finally, it outlines future perspectives in pragmatics-focused research and pedagogy, vouching for joint projects involving materials developers, scholars, and language practitioners.

3. Overall conclusions

This publication has many reasons to be recommended: its clear exposition and balanced content, but especially the authors' mastery of and original insights into the subject matter, and their original scientific contribution to pragmatics research. First, it is reader-friendly. In a lucid prose, it expounds on important and, at times, complex concepts, phenomena, and principles in pragmatics, making them accessible to a wide readership of language educators, without assuming any background knowledge in linguistics. Metadiscursive statements (i.e., introductory, transitional, and concluding sentences or paragraphs) guide the reader throughout the text, highlighting the relatedness and mutual relevance of the issues addressed, and making explicit the thematic connection of the topics covered in neighbouring parts of the text (e.g., on p. 32 [end of Section 1.2.2 and beginning of Section 1.3] and p. 43 [end of Section 1.3.3. and beginning of Section 1.4], among several others).

Second, the book is rigorous and exhaustive. It accurately presents the multi-faceted nature of pragmatic issues, pointing out how researchers' findings led to advancements in their fields. Yet, it does not hide the limitations of the insights thus gained, as a result of which knowledge gaps were identified, which paved the way for new thought-provoking discoveries. The authors not only cover the historical milestones of research in pragmatics and educational linguistics, but also present the state of the art in both fields, reporting on the most up-to-date trends and achievements in current research practices.

Third, it combines a theoretical and a practical approach to the inclusion of pragmatics in language teaching and learning. After providing a contextualising overview of current models for the teaching of pragmatics and examining language practitioners' perspectives on linguistic pragmatics, it convincingly puts forward a practical pedagogical model—clearly presented in its motivation, requirements, and goals—which is exemplified with ample teacher-friendly activities. These are original not only because they cater to the needs of primary and secondary school students and teachers, engaging the former as ethnographers and the latter as guides in the exploration of the many-to-many correlations between form, function, and context, but also because they tackle various pragmatic phenomena (i.e., discourse markers, implicatures, deixis, speech acts).

Overall, this is a top-notch publication. However, I would like to point out a few marginal shortcomings:

- 1) In reporting the results of their investigation (in Chapter 3), the authors inform us that, in the second part of the questionnaire, they gave respondents a range of options to choose from that would prevent them from providing non-committal responses. This was a wise methodological choice, which, however, does not appear to have been implemented in the first part of the questionnaire too. On the same topic, it appears that, in Appendix 4, multiple choice Questions 3 and 4 on p. 166 are redundantly echoed in the first two open-ended questions on p. 167.
- 2) Although it is possible to appreciate the similarities and differences in teachers' responses across education levels, one does not know whether or to what extent they vary across other demographic variables like respondents' gender, years in service, or geographic origin.

- 3) In Chapter 4, the authors repeatedly state that pragmatics can only be subject to continuous assessment; however, they do not suggest how teachers should, or could, implement this form of assessment—e.g., whether it should be conducted along the same lines as peer feedback—so as to present it as valuable (i.e., “worthwhile”) to the learners.
- 4) In outlining future perspectives, it would have been helpful to recommend a few specific publications or other resources (e.g., online video-recorded lectures) that teachers could turn to learn about pragmatics.
- 5) One instance of linguistic sexism can be found on p. 50, where “l'uomo” [the man] could have been replaced by “l'essere umano” (the human being).
- 6) Finally, formal oversights are few and far between, such as the occasional typo (e.g., *dwefinisce* instead of *definisce* on p. 79; 64% instead of 65% on p. 91) or mismatch between intra-textual references (e.g., Bianchi (2003) is mentioned on p. 21, while Bianchi (2009) is listed in the references).

The above, however, are very minor and easily forgivable inaccuracies. This articulate, informative, and insightful book fully delivers what it promises, making the reader feel intelligent in the process of discovering what pragmatics is and how to “put it into practice” in daily school activities. It is to be highly recommended as an enriching opportunity for on-the-job training for all teachers.

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Sara Gesuato, University of Padua
sara.gesuato@unipd.it

- EN** **Sara Gesuato** (Ph.D. in Linguistics, Università di Padova, Italy and University of California at Berkeley, USA) is associate professor at Università di Padova, Italy, where she teaches English language and linguistics. Her research interests include genre analysis, pragmatics, and corpus linguistics. Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, she has investigated catenative verbs, written academic discourse, oral and written initiating, and responding speech acts, and she has explored pedagogical applications of speech act analysis. She has also organised various conferences and published over 100 works.
- ES** **Sara Gesuato** (Doctora en Lingüística, Università di Padova, Italia, y University of California at Berkeley, USA) es profesora en la Università di Padova, Italia, donde enseña lengua y lingüística inglesas. Sus intereses de investigación incluyen estudios de género, pragmática y lingüística de corpus. Combinando enfoques cualitativos y cuantitativos, ha investigado acerca de los verbos catenativos, el discurso académico escrito, los actos de habla orales y escritos de iniciación y respuesta, y ha explorado las aplicaciones pedagógicas del análisis de los actos de habla. Asimismo, ha organizado varios congresos y cuenta con más de 100 publicaciones.
- IT** **Sara Gesuato** (dottorato in Linguistica, Università di Padova, Italia, e University of California at Berkeley, USA) è professoressa associata all'Università di Padova, dove insegna lingua e linguistica inglese. La sua ricerca abbraccia analisi dei generi testuali, pragmatica e linguistica dei corpora. Unendo approcci qualitativi e quantitativi, ha studiato i verbi catenativi, il discorso accademico scritto e gli atti linguistici iniziativi e reattivi nello scritto e nel parlato; ha anche esplorato le applicazioni pedagogiche dell'analisi degli atti linguistici. Ha inoltre organizzato diversi convegni e pubblicato più di 100 lavori.