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This collective volume primarily presents works on second language (L2) pragmatics research, teaching and assessment using various technology-mediated instruments. The main body consists of ten empirical studies (Chapters 2 to 10, two studies in Chapter 2) that fall into two parts: Part I (Chapters 2 to 6) and Part II (Chapters 7-10). Part I exhibits the implementation of technological tools in L2 pragmatics research and Part II addresses the application of technology to teaching and assessment. The results of the ten studies illustrate the purpose (Chapter 1) of this book, that is, to enrich our understanding of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) through the lens of technological instruments employed in L2 pragmatics research, teaching, and assessment.

The first two studies (Chapter 2 and 3) introduce the utilization of computer-mediated techniques in L2 pragmatics research. Taguchi (Chapter 2) presented two examples of adopting technological tools in listening comprehension tasks among L2 learners of English. She used two programs, *PsyScope* and *SuperLab Pro*, to capture learners’ response times for comprehension of conversational implicatures. These two studies expanded the measurement of pragmatic comprehension from accuracy to response speed (recorded as response times), which provides researchers new insights into the levels of processing load that is required to understand pragmatic meanings in implicature.

With a focus on the amount of pragmatics practice, Li (Chapter 3) computerized instructional materials on the software *Revolution* to investigate how many instances of pragmatics practice (input-
based and output-based practice) needed to promote accuracy and speed in recognition and production of requests in L2 Chinese. Participants’ outcome was evaluated by a computerized Pragmatic Listening Judgment Task (PLJT) and an Oral Discourse Completion Task (ODCT). The findings showed that regardless of the modality of practice, four instances of pragmatics practice were sufficient for the treatment group to outperform the control group in the production performance, while more than eight instances were needed to improve the speed performance.

In addition to computerized programs and tasks, virtual environments provide another platform for L2 pragmatics research. Sykes (Chapter 4) explored the efficacy of Croquelandia, a synthetic immersive environment (SIE), in improving learners’ ability to perform L2 Spanish apologies. Participants interacted with the non-player characters to apologize and received feedback from the in-game tips and tricks. The pre- and post-Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) revealed that participants shifted their apology strategies from the speaker-oriented to the hearer-oriented perspective, which approximated the native speakers’ norms. In another study (Chapter 5), González demonstrated the effectiveness of text-based synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC) in developing pragmatic skills. She documented one L2 Spanish learner’s interaction with native speakers on Livemocha, an online social network site. The analysis of conversation closings showed that the learner improved on the use of politeness strategies at leave-taking over one academic year.

Chapter 6 introduces corpus-based techniques in L2 pragmatics research. Urzúa used the corpus of Learner Corpus of Academic English at the University of Texas at El Paso (ULCAE), which includes different types of essays generated by L2 English learners. Drawing on part of this corpus, Urzúa traced a group of learners’ developmental patterns in the use of self-positioning strategies in L2 English writing. The frequency analysis of first and second person subject pronouns found that learners made great progress on pronominal choice as learners moved from one course level to the next.

In Chapter 7, Holden and Sykes investigated the effects of feedback via a place-based mobile game, Mentira, on L2 Spanish pragmatics learning. This digital gaming environment provides learners with four individualized, complex pragmatic feedback, i.e., game feedback, environmental feedback, peer feedback, and instructor feedback. The analysis of the gameplay data, interviews, and the in-class instruction demonstrated that the four types of feedback are valuable resources for pragmatic
development. As a pioneering study, it also sheds light on the design and the use of the in-game feedback for future research.

Chapter 8 by Takamiya and Ishihara addressed the utilization of blogging in L2 pragmatics teaching. The study focused on pragmatic development of refusal by an advanced American learner of Japanese via blogging with native speakers in Japan. The triangulated data included the interaction in blogs and the audio-recording face-to-face instruction of speech acts. The analysis discovered that the cross-cultural interaction via blogging facilitated the development of both pragmatic awareness and production.

Shifting from L2 pragmatics research and teaching, the last two chapters introduce the use of technology in L2 pragmatics testing (Chapter 9) and L2 writing assessment (Chapter 10). Drawing on data from a web-based test of L2 pragmatics, Rover (Chapter 9) analyzed test taker’s computer familiarity, their use of vocabulary assistance, and answer times. The results demonstrated the practicality and validity of using computer-based tests (CBT) in L2 pragmatics testing. Compared with paper-and-pencil testing, CBT affords advantages with regard to test design, test delivery, scoring and data analysis.

In the final chapter, Zhao and Kaufer (Chapter 10) applied a text-visualization and genre analysis software, DocuScope, to L2 classroom teaching and writing assessment in China. DocuScope was originally developed for composition classification according to 17 projected pragmatic functional clusters. Each cluster has its specific function and become active when a text includes the words or phases under that cluster. This study expanded the use of the software to L2 writing assessment for three genres (description, narration, and information). Learners uploaded their essays to DocuScope. Then DocuScope immediately compiled assessment results of the three genres by analyzing the pragmatic functions in each genre. The valid assessment results demonstrated the potential application of DocuScope as a pragmatic assessment tool for L2 writing.

In the closing words, Cohen urged researchers, instructors, and learners to become aware of the new options provided by technologies in pragmatics research and teaching. In the prologue, the two editors highlighted the advancement of technology in the areas of ILP research and teaching. For the future research, they called for more types of instruments (e.g., recorded responses, eye-tracking, and mobile apps) for data collection and analysis. They also called attention to four digital-mediated environments for L2 pragmatics teaching and learning: online authorship, social networking, mobile experiences, and digital games. Finally, they encouraged researchers and practitioners to expand their
pragmatic repertoires and areas of inquiry via digital tools to take a full advantage of technological capacities in L2 pragmatics research and teaching.

This volume introduces several ways of incorporating technology into L2 pragmatics research and teaching; however, the book did not address data-driven instruction in L2 pragmatics teaching. The paucity of authentic instructional materials and practice is one of the weaknesses in L2 pragmatics teaching, particularly, in foreign language teaching. Technology may play an important role in providing authentic materials and an authentic environment for practice. For example, computer-mediated communication (CMC) allows learners to interact with native speakers or peer learners for practice. Meanwhile the communication between these users can serve as sources for instructional materials. This data-driven instruction has advantages in drawing learners’ attention to the use of specific pragmatic features in an authentic communicative environment.

As is shown in this volume, technology affords many advantages in data collection, data management, data analysis, language teaching, and assessment. For instance, the virtual environments can provide learners with authentic communicative environments and give just-in-time, personalized feedback (e.g., Sykes, 2009; Sykes, Reinhardt, & Thorne, 2010). The two studies (Chapters 4 and 7) in this volume are in line with this increasing interest in learning pragmatics via virtual spaces. However, the improvement of pragmatic development revealed in both studies was marginal. Additionally, these studies primarily focused on description about pragmatic development over a period of time of virtually immersive experience. Few explanations have been discussed for the development and non-development of the pragmatic features. It leads to an important question: what aspects of pragmatic development can benefit from technology-enhanced learning? Our knowledge about the relationship between the development of pragmatic competence and technology-based instruments is still insufficient. Results revealed in the studies in this volume vary: some studies show marked improvement with the pragmatic features, while others indicated marginal enhancement. This collective volume can serve as a cornerstone for future exploration in response to the inquiries on the benefits of using technology in L2 pragmatics research and teaching.
References

