The effects of motivation on the development of pragmatic awareness in an EFL context

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SLA studies on the development of pragmatic awareness have primarily illuminated the impact of proficiency and learning contexts, whereas motivation has largely escaped scrutiny in interlanguage pragmatic research (Kasper & Rose 2002). Thus, this paper is a response to the need for such studies. The purpose of this study is to examine whether motivation makes a difference in L2 pragmatic development and particularly how different types of motivation, (i.e., integrative, instrumental, intrinsic and extrinsic) are related to the development of L2 pragmatic awareness. The study was designed using a mixed methods approach, with a primary quantitative research instrument being supported by secondary qualitative data. Three groups of Chinese learners of English with different proficiency levels were involved in the study. Motivation was measured by a questionnaire adapted from Gardner’s Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (2004), and L2 pragmatic awareness data were collected through an Appropriateness Judgement Task (AJT) (Schauer 2009 & Ren 2015) and semi-structured interviews. Correlation analyses revealed that motivation was positively correlated with the performance of L2 pragmatic awareness. Moreover, findings supported Takahashi’s (2005) claims that learners’ intrinsic motivation was closely related to their pragmatic awareness. The qualitative findings showed that the learners’ limited L2 metapragmatic knowledge and lack of L2 use opportunity would hinder their L2 pragmatic awareness development. The study provided some evidence for L2 pragmatic development among learners with different proficiency levels.

Reference

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