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“Perceptions about English Pragmatics Inclusion in the Learning Plan of EFL”

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Resumen

Esta síntesis de investigación tuvo como objetivo descubrir las diferentes percepciones sobre la inclusión de la pragmática en el contexto de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (ILE). En este escenario, se han recopilado quince estudios realizados en diferentes niveles y entornos educativos. Algunos de los estudios analizados tenían propósitos adicionales además de mirar las percepciones, y algunos contenían la comparación entre las percepciones de los profesores y los estudiantes. Un criterio para la selección de los estudios fue que todos debían estar dentro del contexto de inglés como lengua extranjera, y todos tenían como participantes a profesores y / o estudiantes. Los estudios se analizaron para examinar las percepciones de estudiantes y profesores, contrastando las percepciones positivas y negativas, centrándose en cómo experimentaron los participantes la inclusión pragmática. Esto se hizo con el propósito de sacar conclusiones sobre si fuera conveniente o no prestar más atención a la pragmática en el contexto de ILE. Las percepciones se centraron en varios aspectos de la inclusión de la pragmática como su utilidad, el material relacionado con la pragmática, las dificultades y la novedad en esta área lingüística. El análisis ayudó a concluir que la pragmática fue percibida principalmente de manera positiva por ambos grupos. Adicionalmente, esta síntesis de investigación condujo a la inferencia de la necesidad de mejorar los aspectos pragmáticos dentro del contexto de ILE.

Palabras claves: Pragmáticas. ILE. Percepciones. Conciencia pragmática.



Abstract

This research synthesis aimed to discover the different perceptions on pragmatics inclusion inside the EFL context. In this context, fifteen studies, conducted at different educational levels and settings, have been gathered. Some of the analyzed studies had additional purposes besides looking at perceptions, and some contained the comparison between teachers' and students' perceptions. A criterion for the selection of the studies was that they all needed to be inside the EFL context, and they all had teachers and/or students as participants. The studies were analyzed to examine students' and teachers' perceptions by contrasting positive and negative ones, by focusing on how they experienced pragmatics inclusion. This was done with the purpose of drawing conclusions on whether it might be worthy or not to address more attention on pragmatics in the EFL. The perceptions focused on several aspects on pragmatics inclusion such as its usefulness, pragmatics related material, difficulties, and the novelty on this linguistic area. The analysis helped to presume that pragmatics was mainly positively perceived by both groups. Additionally, this research synthesis led to the inference of the need for improving pragmatics aspects inside the EFL context.

Keywords: Pragmatics. EFL. Perceptions. Pragmatics awareness.



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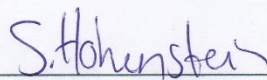


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Dedication

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to my mom, grandma, and grandaunt for always supporting and guiding me in my decisions. I owe them great parts of the reached goals on my educational path. And even though we are now physically apart, they have always given me their approval and transmitted me their pride which has made me very happy. We used to say, “shared joy- is doubled joy”!

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Introduction

The knowledge about cultural aspects and how to develop an understanding about differences between languages through culture represent an important facet in the context of language learning (Irún Chavarría & Baiget Bonany, 2006). In this context, this research synthesis was conducted in order to put emphasis on the importance of pragmatics for English learning/teaching, and most importantly, to identify the different perceptions on pragmatics in the context of EFL education. This was done by searching for studies that contained teachers' as well as students' perceptions on pragmatics aspects. This study thus attempts to answer the following question: What are English teachers' and students' perceptions regarding pragmatics inclusion in the EFL classroom?

Through the analysis of the perceptions, this study aims at determining whether pragmatics content in EFL classes was perceived positively or not and use this information for members of the educational community. This research synthesis consists of five chapters. Chapter I contains the description of the research, clarifying background, statement of the problem, rationale, and the research question with the pertaining objectives. Chapter II creates the basis for this project as it contains the theoretical framework with the most important concepts and terms around the linguistic field of pragmatics. Chapter III encompasses the literature review of the studies that were used for the analysis of this paper as well as additional studies on the topic. Chapter IV provides information about the methodology, mentioning the databases and inclusion criteria used in this project. Chapter V contains the analysis of the data with seven categories of analysis in total. The last two focus on the perceptions of students and teachers and were divided into several subcategories. Finally, chapter VI closes with the conclusions about the analyzed studies and recommendations for further research and the educational context.



CHAPTER I

Description of the research

1.1 Background

Pragmatics, in linguistic terms, refers to the study of languages beyond what verbally could be expressed and its study on context dependable situations. According to the Cambridge dictionary, pragmatics is defined as

“the study of how language is affected by the situation in which it is used, of how language is used to get things or perform actions, and of how words can express things that are different from what they appear to mean” (Cambridge, 2019).

According to Jacobs and Jucker (1995), pragmatics

ranges from discourse analysis to the speech act theory and from the study of presuppositions to relevance theory. Some approaches in pragmatics focus on communication in general and on the human cognitive processes that make communication possible, while others concentrate on specific languages on the communicative meaning of specific elements (e.g. speech acts or discourse markers) in specific languages. (p. 3)

Observable in this definition is that pragmatics entails a wide range of studied aspects. Over decades, this concept has not been considered while learning a foreign language. Instead, learning was mainly focused on mechanical aspects such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Consistently, those are main bodies of language, but for the natural application of language, the cultural and the social aspects should not be forgotten. Some language approaches such as The Direct Method, The Grammar Translation, and The Structural Approach primarily concentrate on pronunciation, memorization, and complex grammar



structures. None of them takes into consideration the legitimate usage of language in context. Because of these reasons, the importance of pragmatics in the linguistic field earned its pertinent recognition finally in the 70's. In 1987, the International Pragmatic Association was founded, and most research has been conducted in the United States and North European countries. Since then, pragmatics has succeeded in being recognized as an independent linguistical subfield by reason of treating daily practical meaning (Liu, 2005).

However, even though almost half a century has passed, there is still a considerable lack of knowledge regarding the appropriate inclusion of pragmatics into the teaching plan of foreign language learning.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Decades over decades, English has been taught on a grammar-focused basis. If language would be used as in a sterile classroom, it would not represent a problem. However, language is something that depends on its context, on the people who use it, and the society it entails. Including aspects of grammar, writing, reading, listening, and speaking into a class is, without doubting it, essential. Nonetheless, especially focusing on the last included skill, speaking, there is something else to consider. Speaking is learned and required to be natural, and precisely to be successful in this facet. For this reason, language teaching, in this specific case, English teaching, is important to be based on a cultural integrated method. One of the English teachers' tasks is to be aware of how to find a balance between grammar, the four skills, and additionally another linguistic element that should be generally included which is the invisible pragmatical aspect. According to Irún Chavarría and Baiget Bonany, (2006), "developing intercultural awareness is essential for learners to become good communicators in a foreign language, able to handle communicative exchanges with native and non-native users of English smoothly and effectively" (p. 134). Pragmatics not only aims to communicate



more naturally, but also to give a cultural understanding of how, in this case, English speaking societies work and live. Shokouhi and Rezaei (2015) argue that foreign language learners should be given the opportunity, inside the classroom, to analyze and recognize different circumstances. In such a way, students can learn the corresponding and appropriate linguistic forms for those situations. As already mentioned in the background, there is still quite an uncertainty about what pragmatics entails, but one element is for sure, which is the cultural understanding of communication. This element is going to be the most considered in the subsequent work. Likewise, there exists controversy whether to teach pragmatics implicitly or explicitly (House, 2003).

Focusing on the perceptions about pragmatics in this research synthesis the author will consider this analysis compulsory for present and future teachers who will be able to select decisive information and use it for their English teaching. It is also significant because there is still a considerable lack of research about the pragmatics approach, especially in Latin America, and perchance other people might get elated by continuing research.

1.3 Rationale

Adjoining grammar and the four skills, pragmatics has also a great relevance in modern English teaching. Irún Chavarría and Baiget Bonany (2006) state that “the development of socio-pragmatic competence is a key factor in the process of learning a language” (p. 134). Nonetheless, pragmatics is still not given the adequate attention it deserves. As Mehdaoui (2016) mentions, culture in foreign language classes should be treated not as an additional but as a main skill. Concerning the teachers, the author reminded them that the main goal of teaching foreign languages is to develop learners’ intercultural understanding and communication.



Even though a lot of research has been conducted throughout all the years since pragmatics first arose, there is still a lack of knowledge about it and a gap, especially in Latin America, in the exploration of this field. Thus, this research synthesis, which analyzes the perceptions about pragmatics inclusion in an EFL classroom, becomes an indispensable medium for the examination of the most important literature in order to decide about the most effective teaching ways and the most common perceptions concerning pragmatics inclusion in language teaching.

1.4 Research Question

What are English teachers' and students' perceptions regarding pragmatics inclusion in the EFL classroom?

1.5 Objectives

General objective:

To analyze positive and negative perceptions about pragmatics inclusion in the EFL classroom.

Specific objective:

-To contrast teachers' and students' perceptions regarding pragmatics inclusion in the EFL classroom.



CHAPTER II

Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

It is important to establish a background about the definition of pragmatics and to elucidate the implied aspects of this linguistic field. For the present synthesis, the following terms will be clarified: First, the term pragmatics will be defined and some key data about its history will be given. Second, the relationship between language and culture will be explained. After this, the term cultural awareness and its relationship inside language classrooms will be explained. Finally, the concept about what pragmatic failure means closes the section of the theoretical framework.

2.2 Defining pragmatics and giving some key data about its history

Pragmatics, in linguistic terms, refers to the study of language by constructing an understanding about the relationship between the uttered language and the real message behind, taking it beyond what verbally could be expressed (Murray, 2009). According to the Cambridge, dictionary pragmatics is defined as

the study of how language is affected by the situation in which it is used, of how language is used to get things or perform actions, and of how words can express things that are different from what they appear to mean. (Cambridge, 2019)

The word “pragmatics” was first introduced by Charles Morris in 1938 (LoCastro, 2013), who made the first approach of having a linguistic focus on the interpreters of language. Though this term was not much considered until the 80s. Only then authors began to consider the aspect of pragmatics more and worked on defining this linguistic field. First, this field only included explicitly expressed aspects of language. However, over the years also, cultural rules and gestures have been included. There are still some different definitions regarding this field. According to Jacobs and Jucker (1995), pragmatics



ranges from discourse analysis to the speech act theory and from the study of presuppositions to relevance theory. Some approaches in pragmatics focus on communication in general and on the human cognitive processes that make communication possible, while others concentrate on specific languages on the communicative meaning of specific elements (e.g. speech acts or discourse markers) in specific languages. (p. 3)

Additionally, LoCastro (2013) mentions the term of intentionality. This term describes, in other words, how conscious language users comprehend and produce pragmatic meaning.

2.3 Language and Culture

Nevertheless, regardless on which specific aspect some subcategories of pragmatic focus, everything related to pragmatics analyzes the actual use of language and the connection to culture. Therefore, it is important to bare this connection in mind while teaching a foreign language. As Seidl (1998) mentions, “it is not a new idea that different language communities use language to categorize reality in ways that suit them” (p. 102). As Sybing (2011) asserts, “teaching culture in connection with language is a necessity; what is required with teaching the lingua franca is a greater awareness and sensitivity for cultural differences so that respect for all cultures is achieved” (p. 469).

Regarding the term cultural awareness, Alcón and Jorda (2008) define it as “the conscious, reflective, explicit knowledge about pragmatics. It thus involves knowledge of those rules and conventions underlying appropriate language use in particular communicative situations and on the part of members of specific speech communities” (p. 193). As stated by the same authors, in an educational context, pragmatic awareness is related directly to the guidance of teachers who attempt to achieve communicative competence in their students. To



this competence pertains the sociocultural one which “refers to the speaker’s pragmatic knowledge, i.e. how to express messages appropriately within the overall social and cultural context of communication. This includes knowledge of language variation with reference to sociocultural norms of the target language” (Celce-Murcia, 2008, p. 46).

2.4 Cultural awareness in language classrooms

Murray (2009) suggests that the process of constructing cultural awareness would be appropriate in an analytical way. Students should be exposed to several situations where they are able to observe and draw their own conclusions. Those activities would be more appropriate under a creative and motivating design to aid an easier understanding of certain speech acts in the target language. With the appropriate persistence, and engaging activities “learners will gradually induce the broader principles that govern the choices we make in language in order to effectively and appropriately convey meaning” (Murray, 2009, p. 295). Having the general principles clear will activate the students’ ability of making language choices to communicate effectively. Altogether, Murray appeals in having pragmatic awareness taught in consistency between the theory of cultural rules itself and the opportunity for students to analyze and reflect on speech acts to use the language themselves. Regarding activities for students that help to raise their awareness, Eslami-Rasekh (2005) affirms that they

acquire information about pragmatic aspects of language—for instance, what strategies are used for apologizing in their first language (L1) and second language (L2), what is considered an offence in their culture compared to the target culture, what are different degrees of offence for different situations in the two languages, and how the nature of the relationship between the participants affects the use of apologies. (p. 200)



On the other hand, Baker (2012) asserts that understanding cultural contexts to raise awareness needs to be developed beyond the cultural field, taking it to an intercultural level. Above all considering English as an internationally spoken language, the pertaining awareness is to be considered also in that global context. This author states that “knowledge of specific cultures has to be combined with an awareness of cultural influences in intercultural communication as fluid, fragmented, hybrid, and emergent with cultural groupings or boundaries less easily defined and referenced” (p. 66).

2.5 Pragmatic Failure

Including pragmatic aspects into a language class helps students to avoid pragmatic failure, which is the misunderstanding or misuse of language in communication (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2015). Thomas (1983) clarified the differences between the different types of errors. Pragmatic failure is the type of error which is difficultly recognizable. A speaker who does not apparently dominate all the structures of a language is almost expected to commit mistakes without any further consequences. Even though this type of mistake may interrupt the communication, the listener is aware of the mistakes. On the other hand, a speaker who seemingly masters a language without major grammatical mistakes is often mistaken when it comes to cultural rules. When the speaker commits the mistake of uttering something which is considered inappropriate in the target language, he/she is easily labeled as unfriendly or impolite. According to Thomas (1983), this pragmatic failure “reflects badly on him/her as a person. Misunderstandings of this nature are almost certainty at the root of unhelpful and offensive national stereotyping: 'the abrasive Russian/German', 'the obsequious Indian/Japanese', 'the insincere American', and 'the standoffish Briton’” (p. 97). In the same light, Wolfson (1989) mentioned that those failures of understanding something correctly, can even lead or strengthen negative images about a society. Having



possible consequences like these in mind, the use of a correct cultural behavior and language is proved even more important.

House and Thomas stated that “cross-cultural variables have been identified as important in the potential for ‘sociopragmatic failure’, misunderstood messages resulting in communication breakdown” (as cited in Ebsworth & Ebsworth, 2000, p. 122). The opposite of pragmatic failure would be pragmatic competence which, according to LoCastro (2013), is defined as “the knowledge that influences and constrains speakers’ choices regarding use of language in socially appropriate ways” (p. 307).

Now that the most relevant terms about pragmatics and its implied components have been clarified, it is possible to proceed to the literature review.



CHAPTER III

Literature Review

In this part we can find a brief summary of some of the revised literature for the research synthesis. The studies have been classified into sections which give general information about the approach to teach pragmatics and the students' perceptions in that regard. Those sections are cultural aspect on language teaching, pragmatics teaching awareness, and student perceptions about pragmatic inclusion into an EFL/ESL classroom.

3.1 Cultural Aspect on Language Teaching

It is important to consider pragmatics, which among other characteristics, focuses on the different possible messages to be transmitted in communication. To involve it into a language classroom it is important to connect to the cultural aspect of a society. Jiang (2000) demonstrates how closely words are bound to the people's association. His research was composed by a survey which was applied to two different groups: one group of 28 Native Chinese speakers and another of 28 Native English speakers. This survey aimed to show how words and expressions transmit the culture of the involved language. Jiang (2000) states that

language reflects culture, and is influenced and shaped by it. In the broadest sense, it is also the symbolic representation of people, since it comprises their historical and cultural backgrounds, as well as their approach to life and their ways of living and thinking. (p. 328)

Through the employment of the survey this statement was entirely confirmed. The used items of each group of participants reflected actively their culture which shows that language and culture cannot exist without being closely connected.

According to Bardovi-Harlig et al. (1991),



speakers who do not use pragmatically appropriate language run the risk of appearing uncooperative at the least, or, more seriously, rude or insulting. This is particularly true of advanced learners whose high linguistic proficiency leads other speakers to expect concomitantly high pragmatic competence. (p. 4)

Taking the mentioned expectation of native speakers into account, we are able to recognize that even among them, confusions could arrive due to the fact that confronting somebody with an advanced English level, they also await the corresponding cultural behavior to that level.

One study by Kiss and Weninger (2017) focuses on cultural learning in the EFL Classroom, specifically on the role of visuals. In their research they examine what meanings language learners associate with an image in an EFL textbook. A total of 147 students, 57 from Hungary and 90 from Singapore, formed part of the participants. In the outcomes of how students interpreted the image it is easy to notice that there are a lot of varieties that may depend on cultural meanings but also on individual ones. The learners created their interpretations based on experiences and their membership to a certain culture. The authors Kiss and Weninger (2017) state that

it is clear that the meanings traditional content analyses assign to an image in a textbook may be significantly different from those that other users—learners and teachers—may create. This leads us to reassert that meanings are not locked into the materials: they are created through an interaction. (p. 8)

To take the different perspectives and interpretations into account while talking about culture, Baker states that an “active class participation is not only desired, but it is a must when it comes to cultural learning and developing learners’ intercultural communicative competence and awareness” (as cited in Kiss and Weninger, 2017, p. 2).



A distinct study which did not treat exclusively the cultural aspect but may also offer us some valuable information about how students react to pragmatics teaching was conducted by Taguchi and Kim in 2014. This study focused on collaborative dialogue in learning pragmatics. A total of 74 second grade girls' junior high school students formed the participants and were divided into three groups. One collaborative group (CP), one individual group (IP) and one control group (CP). The first group received explicit metapragmatic information on request, while the IP received the same information but had to fulfill the task individually. The control group however did not receive any instruction. One of the research questions asked for the effect of task-based pragmatic instruction. In total the study was conducted over six weeks, and participants had to work on tasks and their aloud thoughts were recorded. At the end, a discourse completion task was applied. The outcomes of the study showed that the group that completed the tasks collaboratively produced more pragmatic-related episodes and target-like request acts. This would confirm the appropriateness of treating pragmatics in group like a class is. However, the authors mentioned that after a while students' performance changed and that the group also spoke only for a small sample.

Finally, a study by Derakhshan and Arabmofrad (2018) who worked with 97 Iranian EFL learners provided some important results for pragmatics teaching. Their study confirmed that pragmatic features in apology, request, and refusal are apt of being taught and that students benefitted from the comprehension and conscious raising on pragmatics, what made them outperform other groups from the study.

3.2 Pragmatics teaching awareness

Sybing (2011) specifies that the students' interest in culture and the involvement of the teacher, being conscious about learner's anxieties, defines the awareness of cultural perspectives inside a language classroom. Even in the worst-case scenario, that no cultural



aspect is integrated into the official planning of a language class, a devoted teacher could modify the classes on his own by adding some valuable additional information for his students.

Povolná (2012) investigates how important future teachers consider pragmatics. The participants of this research were formed by three student groups, 151 students in total, who had participated in a pragmatics course. Most of them had already some teaching experiences. The main aim of this research was to find what types of suggestions students made regarding the principles of pragmatics. The outcomes show a strong agreement with the importance of pragmatics. However, something notable during the revision of the participants answers is that they concluded this importance only after having participated themselves in a pragmatic course. The results of the study show that students who are going to become teachers benefit from the study of pragmatics through the fact that they not only enrich their personal linguistic facets, but also are able to transmit that knowledge to future students. In the case of Prakash (2018), responses from the 25 participating English teachers from Thailand indicated a lack of knowledge on pragmatics. However, similar to what Povolná mentioned, teachers felt a need for effective communication and were willing to participate in future pragmatics workshops in order to include those aspects into the EFL context.

Another study by Crandall and Basturkmen (2004) focused on evaluating pragmatics-focused materials also touched on the topic of awareness. The study consisted mainly in the development of additional material with more appropriate cultural content than common textbooks usually include. That material was used in four classes which were videotaped and who had a duration of five to six hours. After having used the material, 18 students were asked to complete a questionnaire. The most relevant outcomes of this study were first, typical textbooks provide students with common expressions assuming that students know and are able to employ them in the right context. As to the second outcome which is with



respect to the participants' reaction to the applied material is that learners "made links between what was being taught in class, and what the norms were in their culture" (p. 40). That was exactly the awareness the researchers aimed to raise in the students.

When it comes to materials on how to teach pragmatics, Garita & Elizondo (2016) suggest in their study to teach those aspects using videos. Five language instructors and 35 learners provided data on their thoughts and the actual reality. It became apparent that videos were not really used with the purpose of teaching something specific but to motivate students. However, the researchers recommended to exploit the potential of videos, based on students' responses calling for more variety, and to show samples of authentic conversations and to use "the realistic and culturally rich language portrayed in video clips" (p. 233) to cover the necessity of including pragmatics aspects into classes

The relationship between motivation and pragmalinguistic awareness was analyzed in a study by Takahashi (2005). The participants were 140 Japanese from which the data collection from 80 of them was used for the study. The instruments were a motivation questionnaire, proficiency measure, and materials for the sessions. English classes taught by this researcher. The aim of the study was "to explore Japanese EFL learners' pragmalinguistic awareness in processing L2 implicit input and to what extent their awareness of the target features is related to motivation and proficiency" (p. 96). The results show that in the case of implicit input, Japanese learners are more likely to focus on discourse markers and idiomatic expressions than complex request head acts. It was also confirmed that pragmalinguistic awareness is associated with the learners' motivation but not with their proficiency. Consequently, we know that if we can increase students' motivation, a positive side effect could be that they notice implicit pragmalinguistic features.



A different study analyzes email politeness with English as a lingua franca. This study by Economidou-Kogetsidis (2015) therefore examined how a number of university EFL learners' authentic emails were evaluated by British English (native speakers) lecturers. The participating students had an advanced English language proficiency. The assessors of the mails on the other hand were 24 university lecturers from 12 universities in the United Kingdom. For their assessment they were provided an online perception questionnaire. The outcomes were clear and evidenced that EFL learners' pragmatic choices in English as a lingua franca email communication can cause pragmatic failure between native speaker and nonnative speaker interaction. Though, some choices might be acceptable, but when it comes to the target language community this could lead to pragmatic failure. Specifically, one email was considered impolite and despite being that language learners can be judged negatively for their personality. The author at the end suggests that the responsibility of language teachers is great, and they should raise student's awareness of the possible pragmatic implications that their linguistic choices can have.

3.3 Perceptions about Pragmatics Inclusion into an EFL/ESL Classroom

Besides the educational reasons to consider the inclusion of culture and pragmatics into an EFL classroom, now it is decisive to take the students' perceptions about this topic into account. Research has been conducted to apply pragmatic material into a class and to document the point of view of the participants. Chen (2009) in his study about learner perceptions asked 40 English majors, after having participated in a pragmatics class, to write about the perceptions in relation to the explicit instruction of pragmatics. The exercised lesson was based on the 3Ps methodology (present, practice, produce) and was according to this division into several steps. The successive answers to the stated questions showed the following conclusions. Even though a few students suggested arranging the rules into a more dynamic way by for example showing certain social situations as complaints in movies, most



of the learners had positive perceptions about the instruction of pragmatics and they considered it as a benefit for their own learning.

Kim (2016) in his study with 56 students from a university in South Korea provided pragmatics classes over nine weeks to look at the perceptions among the participants towards pragmatics instruction. Students were asked on five categories, being those the following: interest, usefulness, importance, motivation, and difficulty. The results showed a general accordance among the participants in the aspects of pragmatics being received as interesting, useful, and important. Only in terms of difficulty, the responses varied between intermediate and low learners, stating the latter ones to have difficulties because of inexperience on the taught expressions.

Another study a few years later, offered similar positive results. According to the authors Yuan, Tangen, Mills, and Lidstone (2015), it was found that students reacted positively on the intend of including pragmatics into their classes. The study was conducted in China with 237 local EFL learners from a College English course. Those students had to answer a questionnaire that included questions about pragmatics in the English learning context. The results were evident in showing that the grand majority of participants considered it important to learn about pragmatics by expanding the traditional learning plan which commonly results in a high mechanical performance, but a low linguistic competence. Additionally, “more than 65% of the students believed that the knowledge of how to use the language pragmatic knowledge was equally important as linguistic knowledge in learning a target language” (p. 5).

One of the same authors, Yuan, had already been focusing on learners’ perceptions three years ago. In his study, Yuan (2012) asked 237 first-year university students from Shanghai to complete a questionnaire on their perceptions about pragmatics. Their responses indicated a high interest in linguistic and pragmatic knowledge as well as in learning how to



communicate with people. All in all, the part of Yuan's study that focused on the learner's perceptions revealed positive attitudes towards pragmatics content in classes and students also expressed their preference on more communicative aspects than the traditional learning way.

Even though this section has until now looked only on students' perceptions, it would be interesting to also consider the other perspective, the one of the teachers. A doctor thesis by Vu (2017) included a research section about teachers' perceptions. This study was applied to 29 lecturers of English at the Faculty of Foreign Languages at a university in Vietnam. The researcher used surveys questionnaires, interviews and focus group, classroom observations and documents. The focus was on how teachers at the Faculty of Foreign Languages perceived pragmatic knowledge. The collected data confirmed that the teachers agreed on the importance of learning and teaching linguistic and pragmatic knowledge in a communicative way. Though, 58% of them thought that raising awareness of obtaining information on culture and appropriate language is more useful than teaching specific pragmatic knowledge. Some of the participants stated that they had taught pragmatic knowledge to their students without knowing that it was pragmatic. Finally, all the participants thought that teaching pragmatics is justified because through this knowledge it is possible to avoid the misuse of language. Likewise, a master's thesis by Olsen (2018) included a section on teachers' perceptions. For this, 10 Norwegian EFL teachers were interviewed. Responses indicated unawareness on pragmatics aspects among the teachers. However, they agreed that those aspects were important to include into the English classes even though they had not done anything similar before.

Asuman (2015) also concentrated on teachers' perceptions with a special emphasis on discourse markers. 104 Turkish EFL instructors from different universities participated in his study based on the completion of an online questionnaire. Overall, their responses showed an agreement on the value of discourse markers for language learners and the usefulness of them



towards the comprehension of conversations. Some teachers stated to already include some pragmatics elements in their classes. However, some also expressed insecurity about the capacities of the students to be native-like, the moment of inclusion, and the uncertainty whether to focus on the American or the British model.

Shirkhani and Tajeddin (2017) explored 345 Iranian teachers' perceptions about pragmatic corrective feedback and came to the following results; more than half of them agreed on the fact that correcting pragmatic errors is important, and that paying more attention to those errors is necessary. As in the other studies, participants admitted that "pragmatic competence helped learners communicate more effectively in the second language" (p. 38).

With the studies mentioned above, some results of including pragmatics into language classes have been shown. We had an overview of some articles which state the importance of considering pragmatics in the language classroom. Evidently, only few studies have been conducted in South America which possibly points out a research gap in the field of pragmatics. Therefore, the purpose of this research synthesis is to inform about the effectiveness of pragmatics inclusion into an EFL classroom and giving emphasis on the perceptions of students and teachers who have experienced this cultural integration into their classes.



CHAPTER IV

Methodology

A research synthesis is a bibliographic revision which is exploratory and descriptive in nature (Norris & Ortega, 2006). In this case, having a documentary and explanatory research, the aim was not only to collect but to explore already existing information. The main goal of this research was to discover perceptions about pragmatics inclusion into an EFL classroom. Based on the realized research, the information was searched on Google Scholar, and academic databases such as ERIC, SpringerLink, and ResearchGate. Under the used sources were studies published in journals such as Applied Linguistics, Cultura, lenguaje y representación: revista de estudios culturales de la Universitat Jaume, English Language Teaching, English Teaching & Learning, ELT journal, Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences, Language and Linguistics Compass, Revista de Lenguas Modernas, Teaching English Language, The Electronic Journal for English as a second language, and Theory and Practice in Language Studies. The following criteria was taken into account for the selection of the data: the chosen articles were mainly from journals because of reliability. Additionally, all the papers were in English as the focus is on its instruction. Regarding the inclusion criteria, most of the sources were from 2000 and upwards through the fact that language and its included fields constantly change. Though some theoretical information was taken from before 2000, looking back to the beginnings of pragmatics. Preponderance of studies focused on EFL teaching and learning, which was chosen because of the future career as a teacher in this area. As focusing on EFL there was no exclusion criteria in terms of the countries of the studies. Keywords used for my research were pragmatics inclusion, EFL classroom, pragmatics awareness, and perceptions about pragmatics. As the research was based on a linguistic field and its communicative members, mainly empirical qualitative studies were included. And since perceptions were commonly collected and maintained in form of



interviews and questionnaires, the majority of selected studies can be considered qualitative. The studies were divided into the following categories: analysis about pragmatics teaching and learning awareness and teachers' and students' perceptions on pragmatics inclusion into EFL classes.

**CHAPTER V****Analysis of the Data****5.1 Introduction**

For the research synthesis, 15 studies were gathered from different sources, and they were classified according to the nature of their contribution to this paper, which is to analyze the awareness of teaching and learning pragmatics, and mainly to explore the perceptions of pragmatics inside an EFL context. The year and the continent of publication, as well as the educational level and the language proficiency were considered for this paper. The main categories are raising pragmatics awareness and most importantly students' and teachers' perceptions. Additionally, those two latter categories are further divided into subcategories.

5.2 Publication Year of the Studies

Table 1

Publication Year of the Studies

Year of Publication	Author(s)	No. of studies
2000- 2010	Chen (2009); Crandall & Basturkmen (2004); Takahashi (2005)	3
2011-2020	Asuman (2015); Derakhshan & Arabmofrad (2018); Economidou-Kogetsidis (2015); Garita & Elizondo (2016); Kim (2016); Olsen (2018); Povolná (2012); Prakash (2018); Shirkhani & Tajeddin (2017); Vu (2017); Yuan (2012); Yuan, Tangen, Mills & Lidstone (2015)	12

Note. N=15

Table 1 shows the number of studies according to their year of publication. They were divided into two periods of time which correspond to 10 years each. Most of the studies have been published since 2011 (Asuman, 2015; Derakhshan & Arabmofrad, 2018; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2015; Garita & Elizondo, 2016; Kim, 2016; Olsen, 2018; Povolná, 2012; Prakash, 2018; Shirkhani & Tajeddin, 2017; Vu, 2017; Yuan, 2012; Yuan, Tangen, Mills &



Lidstone, 2015), while three were published at an earlier period of time. This suggests a greater interest in pragmatics during the last years. This confirms Jucker's (2008) position who states that pragmatics, particularly in recent years, has experienced a cardinal development towards a "more encompassing view of its respective subject matters" (p. 895). Moreover, practical research which contains data about the implementation and perceptions appears to be more frequent since the beginning of the 21st century, which is accountable to the modern facilities of research such as the development of corpus methodologies and personal computers for data processing, leading to proper research methods (Jucker, 2008). Despite this, still at the beginning of the 21st century there are complications in implementing the sociolinguistic aspect into an EFL classroom, which Baiget, Cots and Irún (as cited in Chavarría & Bonany, 2006, p. 135) assume that it is related to the deficiency of realistic material, and suitable information for teachers and learners. However, the studies by Crandall and Basturkmen (2004) and Garita and Elizondo (2016) worked on the suggestion of materials such as visuals and videos to introduce pragmatics content into an EFL classroom. Moreover, with the exception of two, the studies that concentrate on perceptions are from 2011 and beyond (Asuman, 2015; Chen, 2009; Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004; Garita & Elizondo, 2016, Kim, 2016; Olsen, 2018; Povolná, 2012; Prakash, 2018; Shirkhani & Tajeddin, 2017; Vu, 2017; Yuan, 2012; Yuan, Tangen, Mills & Lidstone, 2015).

5.3 Location of the Studies

Considering English as a world language, and the fact that EFL classes, which is the learning context of this paper, are imparted mostly all over the world, the location where the studies were conducted was considered important for this paper.



Table 2

Continent of the conducted studies

Continent	Author(s)	No. of studies
America	Garita & Elizondo (2016)	1
Asia	Asuman (2015)*; Chen (2009); Derakhshan & Arabmofrad (2018); Kim (2016); Prakash (2018); Shirkhani & Tajeddin (2017); Takahashi (2005); Vu (2017); Yuan (2012); Yuan, Tangen, Mills & Lidstone (2015)	10
Europe	Asuman (2015)*; Economidou-Kogetsidis (2015); Olsen (2018); Povolná (2012)	4
Oceania	Crandall & Basturkmen (2004)	1

Note. N=15 *country lays on two continents

Table 2 presents the location where the studies were conducted. Looking at a deeper analysis by country (see **Annex 1**), something evident is the variety of countries. Almost none of them is repeated, which could be assumed that pragmatics is a field of great international interest. Out of 13 countries, one is in America, nine are in Asia, three in Europe, one (Turkey) in Asia and Europe, and one in Oceania. The fact that most of the studies have been conducted in Asian countries might be explainable because there English plays an important role of encouraging the national development as well as being an instrument for global communication (Chang, 2011). Only few studies about pragmatics, and almost none about perceptions on it, have been conducted in South America. That possibly points out a research gap in the field of pragmatics.

5.4 Educational Level

The following table shows the participants' educational level. This is important data for this research synthesis since it could provide information on where the pragmatics field is



the most applied. Additionally, it gives information about where, according to the authors, it might be convenient to introduce it.

Table 3

The Educational Level

Educational Level	Author(s)	No. of studies
High School	Olsen (2018)	1
University	Asuman (2015); Chen (2009); Crandall & Basturkmen (2004); Economidou-Kogetsidis (2015); Garita & Elizondo (2016); Kim (2016); Povolná (2012); Takahashi (2005); Vu (2017); Yuan (2012); Yuan, Tangen, Mills & Lidstone (2015)	11
Language Institute	Derakhshan & Arabmofrad (2018); Prakash (2018); Shirkhani & Tajeddin (2017)	3

Note. N=15

As it can be noticed in Table 3, only one study has been conducted in a high school (Olsen, 2018). From the subcategory of language institutes, one was conducted in an English language institute in Iran (Derakhshan & Arabmofrad, 2018), while another study from the same country included a sample of teachers from several language institutes (Shirkhani & Tajeddin, 2017). The third study was carried out at an academic institute under the direction of the Office of Higher Education Commission in Thailand (Prakash, 2018). The remaining studies (Asuman, 2015; Chen, 2009; Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2015; Garita & Elizondo, 2016; Kim, 2016; Povolná, 2012; Takahashi, 2005; Vu, 2017; Yuan, 2012; Yuan, Tangen, Mills & Lidstone, 2015) took al place at a university. This could be explained through the complexity of the linguistic field itself. However, it could also indicate a gap in exploring perceptions in other educational levels.



5.5 Language proficiency

In the context of the studies on pragmatics, the aspect about language proficiency played an important role. Table 4 indicates the researcher's language proficiency requirements for the study's participants, which in some cases were students but in others also teachers or teacher trainees.

Table 4

Language Proficiency & Learning Experience from students & teachers

Language Proficiency & Experience	Author(s)	No. of studies
Studies that required English learning experience (in years)	Crandall & Basturkmen (2004); Kim (2016); Takahashi (2005)	3
Studies that required comprehension ability	Chen (2009); Economidou-Kogetsidis (2015); Derakhshan & Arabmofrad (2018); Yuan (2012); Yuan, Tangen, Mills & Lidstone (2015)	5
Studies that required experienced teachers	Asuman (2015); Garita & Elizondo (2016); Olsen (2018); Povolná (2012); Prakash (2018); Shirkhani & Tajeddin (2017); Vu (2017)	7

Note. N=15

After revising the studies, it became evident that some researchers established the criteria that participants needed to have experience in English instruction. Certain studies (Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004; Kim, 2016; Takahashi, 2005) established the criteria of years; in those cases, the required English learning experience varied from 6 to 10 years. In other studies (Chen, 2009; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2015; Derakhshan & Arabmofrad, 2018; Yuan (2012; Yuan, Tangen, Mills & Lidstone, 2015), the years of experience were not detailed, yet the researchers mentioned that the participants needed to be able to understand and follow instructions and to have conversations in some cases. It is also important to state that in other studies (Asuman, 2015; Garita & Elizondo, 2016; Olsen, 2018; Povolná, 2012; Prakash, 2018;



Shirkhani & Tajeddin, 2017; Vu, 2017), English trainees or teachers were included as participants, with the purpose of finding an advanced level and an adequate knowledge of the language among them.

5.6 Raising Pragmatics Awareness in EFL education

As it has already been mentioned in the theoretical framework and in the literature review, the term pragmatics awareness plays an important role when talking about pragmatics inclusion into a language classroom. That is why the following studies have been classified according to that term, making difference between raising pragmatics teaching and pragmatics learning awareness.

Table 5

Raising Pragmatics Awareness

Raising Pragmatics Awareness	Author(s)	No. of studies
Pragmatics Teaching Awareness	Asuman, 2015; Olsen (2018); Povolná (2012)*; Prakash, 2018; Shirkhani & Tajeddin (2017); Vu (2017)	6
Pragmatics Learning Awareness	Chen (2009); Crandall & Basturkmen (2004); Derakhshan & Arabmofrad (2018); Economidou-Kogetsidis (2015); Kim (2016); Povolná (2012)*; Takahashi (2005); Yuan (2012); Yuan, Tangen, Mills & Lidstone (2015)	9

Note. N=15 **this study is included in both subcategories*

Raising awareness on pragmatics goes hand in hand with its instruction. While some studies actively explore the effects of pragmatics instruction and how this aims to raise pragmatics awareness (Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004; Derakhshan & Arabmofrad, 2018; Takahashi, 2005), diverse studies about pragmatics mention the term but not with the same emphasis. As illustrated in table 5, most of the studies in this paper mention raising learner's pragmatics awareness (Chen, 2009; Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004; Derakhshan &



Arabmofrad, 2018; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2015; Kim, 2016; Povolná, 2012; Takahashi, 2005; Yuan, 2012; Yuan, Tangen, Mills & Lidstone, 2015). However, six studies also take pragmatics teaching awareness into account (Asuman, 2015; Olsen, 2018; Povolná, 2012; Prakash, 2018; Shirkhani & Tajeddin, 2017; Vu, 2017). In five of those studies (Asuman, 2015; Olsen, 2018; Povolná, 2012; Prakash, 2018; Shirkhani & Tajeddin, 2017), the outcomes emphasized on the importance of raising awareness on pragmatics among teachers. Through this, teachers will be able to implement pragmatics content effectively in their classes as well as creating awareness among students. In the case of Vu (2017), some surveyed teachers agreed with the fact that awareness raising activities should be included as a way of teaching pragmatics to students.

On the other hand, when it comes to raising pragmatics learning awareness, studies revealed that students were conscious about the importance of acquiring pragmatics knowledge (Chen, 2009; Kim, 2016; Povolná, 2012; Takahashi, 2005; Yuan, 2012; Yuan, Tangen, Mills & Lidstone, 2015). Some students also demonstrated a high interest in improving their communicative competence and demonstrated awareness that pragmatics could be a way towards this improvement (Takahashi, 2005, Yuan, 2012). Additionally, the studies by Crandall and Basturkmen (2004), Chen (2009), and Derakhshan and Arabmofrad (2018) show positive changes in students' awareness after having received pragmatics instruction, including awareness raising activities. In Crandall and Basturkmen (2004), for example, it was observed how students made links between the materials' given content and their own culture, creating the wanted awareness. Finally, in Economidou-Kogetsidis (2015), pragmatics failure in writing emails indicated the lack of pragmatics awareness among participants. The author specifically suggests creating pragmatics awareness among students by the usage of awareness raising activities to avoid pragmatics transfer from their own culture.



5.7 Teachers' Perceptions

This category aims to answer the first part of the research question: What are English teachers' and students' perceptions regarding pragmatics inclusion in the EFL classroom? For this, the following table shows six studies that have been conducted with EFL teachers as participants. The aspects of analysis are perceptions on novelty, pragmatics-based materials, and the usefulness of EFL pragmatics instruction.

Table 6

Teachers' Perceptions on Pragmatics

Teachers' Perceptions	Author(s)
Perceptions on the novelty	Garita & Elizondo (2016)*; Olsen (2018)*; Prakash (2018)*; Vu (2017)*
Perceptions on pragmatics-based materials	Asuman (2015)*; Garita & Elizondo (2016)*; Vu (2017)*
Perceptions on the usefulness of pragmatics instruction	Asuman (2015)*; Olsen (2018)*; Prakash (2018)*; Shirkhani & Tajeddin (2017); Vu (2017)*

Note. N=6 * *Studies appear in several subcategories*

Table 6 presents four studies that mention perceptions on the novelty on pragmatics content. Even though some teachers already include content in their classes that directly or indirectly focuses on pragmatics (Garita & Elizondo, 2016), in other studies teachers still seem to have a lack of knowledge on it (Olsen, 2018; Prakash, 2018; Vu, 2017). When asking about their definition of pragmatics, many personal interpretations appear (Olsen, 2018; Prakash, 2018). Besides insecurity in defining the term itself, some teachers unconsciously make use of pragmatics aspects and mention that classes should include communicative skills and rules (Garita & Elizondo, 2016; Olsen, 2018; Prakash, 2018; Vu, 2017).



In two of the three mentioned studies about perceptions on pragmatics materials, teachers state that they have been including pragmatics materials into their classes (Asuman, 2015; Garita & Elizondo, 2016). Nonetheless, either themselves (Asuman, 2015), or their students (Garita & Elizondo, 2016) state that those used materials still could be improved. To be more specific, students in Garita and Elizondo (2016) stated the lack of videos and the overuse of materials such as fill-in-the-blanks exercises. On the other hand, in the case of Vu (2017), answers from teachers revealed that the lack of focusing on teaching pragmatics was also apparent in the textbooks that they used.

As table 6 indicates, only one study does not state explicitly the usefulness of pragmatics instruction, while the rest do (Asuman, 2015; Olsen, 2018; Prakash, 2018; Shirkhani & Tajeddin, 2017; Vu, 2017). Nearly all the participating teachers of the five studies agreed on the importance of including pragmatics into English classes. As revealed by Shirkhani and Tajeddin (2017) “eighty-nine percent [of the teachers] agreed that pragmatic competence helped learners communicate more effectively in the second language” (p. 38).

Nevertheless, the outcomes show that some teachers are not clear about when and how to include pragmatics into their own classes. For example, in Olsen (2018) and Prakash (2018), teachers responses revealed their lack of pragmatics knowledge, while in Shirkhani & Tajeddin (2017), teachers actively expressed that they felt not prepared to teach pragmatics.

To sum up, the overall positive teachers’ perceptions on the importance of pragmatics knowledge, combined with the existing lack of preparation, call for the need of pragmatic inclusion in EFL instruction.

5.8 Students’ Perceptions

Regarding the second part of the research question which deals with students’ perceptions, in the present table seven studies were selected. Those perceptions are classified into four



subcategories, making difference between perceptions on novelty, difficulty, pragmatics-based material, and the usefulness of pragmatics instruction in an EFL classroom.

Table 7

Students' Perceptions on Pragmatics

Students' Perceptions	Author(s)
Perceptions on the novelty of pragmatics content	Chen (2009)*; Garita & Elizondo (2016)*; Povolná (2012)*; Kim (2016)*
Perceptions on the difficulty	Chen (2009)*; Crandall & Basturkmen (2004)*; Kim (2016)*
Perceptions on pragmatics-based materials	Chen (2009)*; Crandall & Basturkmen (2004)*; Garita & Elizondo (2016)*; Yuan (2012)*
Perceptions on the usefulness of pragmatics instruction	Chen (2009)*; Crandall & Basturkmen (2004)*; Kim (2016)*; Povolná (2012)*; Yuan (2012)*; Yuan, Tangen, Mills & Lidstone (2015)

Note. N=7 * *Studies appear in several subcategories*

For most of the participants of the studies in the subcategory on novelty, to receive instructions on pragmatics was a new and unknown or, at least, a rare experience (Chen, 2009; Garita & Elizondo, 2016; Povolná, 2012; Kim, 2016). In Chen (2009), 34 out of 40 participants answered that learning about how to complain in English had been a “special and new experience” (p. 158), while students in Kim (2016) accentuated that there were aspects of pragmatics they had not known until they received explicit pragmatics instructions. A lot of them also noted that they were not aware that English had also -comparing to their own culture- politeness rules, and to learn those aspects of the language helped them move towards a better communication as well as to improve their motivation to learn English. Those responses lead to the assumption, that pragmatics inclusion into an EFL classroom is many times considered unimportant not because of the content itself, but because of the lack of experience and knowledge on the same.



As it can be seen in table 7, in three studies, participants mentioned the aspect of difficulty while receiving pragmatics instruction in their language classroom. Some students uttered having difficulty with the content of pragmatics (Kim, 2016; Chen, 2009, Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004). In Kim (2016), for example, a difference between the low and intermediate level was found. Low learners found pragmatics content to be more challenging to learn, while intermediate learners did not mention anything related to that. In Chen (2009) however, difficulties were more related to the amount of time, and according to most of the students 10 hours for receiving totally new content was challenging for them. Nevertheless, this complication might not arise when talking about a regular inclusion of pragmatics content into EFL classes. On the other hand, participants in the study by Crandall and Basturkmen (2004) mentioned to not find the instructions overly difficult.

Moving to the subcategory of perceptions on pragmatics-based materials, two studies applied brought along, partly self-developed, pragmatics materials (Chen, 2009; Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004), while other researchers asked students about the already used class materials (Garita & Elizondo, 2016; Yuan, 2012). In the case of Chen (2009) and Crandall and Basturkmen (2004), students perceived the materials as positive and learned from them. Many participants in studies conducted by Garita and Elizondo (2016) and Yuan (2012) noted their preference on using videos or movies to improve communicative skills, and simultaneously they expressed their discontent with the current used materials.

As table 7 evidences, six out of seven studies include perceptions on the usefulness of pragmatics instruction inside an EFL classroom. On that perception, most of the study's participants agreed in a positive way (Chen, 2009; Crandall & Basturkmen (2004); Kim, 2016; Povolná, 2012; Yuan, Tangen, Mills & Lidstone, 2015;). For example, in Chen (2009), Kim (2016), Povolná (2012), Yuan (2012), and Yuan, Tangen, Mills and Lidstone (2015) most of the participants perceived pragmatics instructions as important and helpful. In the



same way Povolná (2012) concludes that “students as (future) teachers of English benefit from the study of pragmatics, and are ready to apply most of their theoretical knowledge as well as practical skills in their own teaching”(p. 157). However, some negative perceptions appeared among participants from Kim’s study (2016). Some of them claimed that the content of the instructions was neither interesting nor useful, since they usually had no opportunity to apply it with native English speakers. The latter reason also negatively affected their responses in the category of motivation.

Throughout this analysis, the impact of pragmatics inclusion has been interpreted. The category on pragmatics awareness after receiving pragmatics instructions has shown the importance of raising its awareness. In the last two categories, teachers’ and students’ perceptions on pragmatics inclusion have been compared, looking at both, positive and negative opinions. All in all, those perceptions were mainly positive in both groups, with minimal negative perceptions among 1197 participants out of 11 studies. Thus, pragmatics inclusion should be considered for EFL classes.



CHAPTER VI

Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

The purpose of this research project was to explore teachers' and students' perceptions on pragmatics inclusion into EFL classes by comparing both groups as well as contrasting positive and negative perceptions. Throughout the analysis, those aims have been fulfilled and the conclusions are presented in this chapter.

To begin with, one of the first things that became clear during the analysis was that most of the studies were conducted at higher educational levels such as universities, and that many researchers had implications regarding participants' language proficiency. This leads to the conclusion that in the cases of those studies, researchers wanted to focus on more advanced English students, however leaving behind a lack of information on other students.

Based on what the studies presented, the reaction concerning the novelty of the appearance of pragmatics content contributes to the conclusion that there exists a lack of pragmatics content in EFL classes. Both teachers and students were mostly unexperienced when it comes to pragmatics (Chen, 2009; Garita & Elizondo, 2016; Kim, 2016; Olsen, 2018; Povolná, 2012; Prakash, 2018; Vu, 2017), and what Alcón and Jorda (2008) define as cultural awareness being "the conscious, reflective, explicit knowledge about pragmatics" (p. 193) was missing. However, it is not new that language reflects the reality of the correspondent culture (Seidl, 1998).

Another aspect that has become clear throughout the analysis regards the commonly used class materials, which, as pragmatics, are often unperceived. Reactions by teachers and students indicated that the type of materials that were used could be still improved and diversified towards a greater emphasis on pragmatics aspects (Asuman, 2015; Garita &



Elizondo, 2016; Yuan, 2012). Additionally, the studies that worked with specially developed pragmatic material suggested positive perceptions by the students (Chen, 2009; Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004). This leads to the idea of applying an improvement on materials towards more pragmatics aspects in all EFL classes, bearing in mind to also create students' opportunities for an analysis on different language uses and comparisons between their own and the target language (Murray, 2009).

As revealed by the analyzed students' and teachers' perceptions, both groups agree that inclusion of pragmatics into EFL classes is useful. It could be said that, after experiencing pragmatics inclusion, most of the studies' participants felt that learners could achieve better communication through pragmatics content. This is confirmed by Kim (2016) and Yuan, Tangen, Mills and Lidstone's (2015) who agree on the importance of considering pragmatics in English classes. Regarding negative perceptions including pragmatics into EFL context, these were found to be marginal. This motivates to include more pragmatics content into EFL classes, supporting the purpose of this research synthesis. The only concerns that may appear are in terms of difficulty. According to what some studies (Kim, 2016; Chen, 2009, Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004) revealed, there were students who found it more or less difficult to learn about pragmatics.

Finding a balance between language and culture inside an EFL classroom and having teachers and students aware of pragmatics is important as it is pointed out by Asuman (2015), Chen (2009), Kim (2016), Olsen (2018), Povolná (2012), Prakash (2018), Shirkhani and Tajeddin (2017), Takahashi (2005), Yuan (2012), and Yuan, Tangen, Mills and Lidstone (2015). Even though it might not be possible to cover every aspect of culture in class, it is necessary to make the connections between language and culture, and to create "a greater awareness and sensitivity for cultural differences" as it is confirmed by Sybing (2011, p. 469).



In the case of some studies, students conveyed explicit interest in obtaining a better communicative competence because they wanted to be able to apply the language in a real context with native English speakers (Takahashi, 2005, Yuan, 2012). At the same time in other studies, pragmatics was often closely connected to students' opinions regarding the improvement of their ability of communicating through the learned content. As students mentioned, including pragmatics into their classes had a positive impact on their motivation towards learning English. This is relatable through the fact that they learn on how the language is influenced by the context of usage (Cambridge, 2019), showing comprehension about sociocultural differences in communication (Celce-Murcia, 2008), and that through this, they feel better prepared when it comes to the use of English. The key point to succeed in creating a favorable basis in students is also connected to the teacher's attitude, which relates to Alcón and Jorda's (2008) statement about teachers as guides towards developing communicative competence in their students through pragmatics.

All in all, teachers' and students' perceptions revealed some concerns about pragmatics inside the EFL context that still need to be adjusted. Most importantly is that on one hand their positive reactions spoke for pragmatics inclusion, while on the other hand their lack of knowledge on pragmatics made clear that the change towards more pragmatics focused EFL classes is yet ahead.

6.2 Recommendations

During the study, it has become clear that there is lack of research on pragmatics and that this area seems sometimes unperceived. There were surprisingly few studies about teachers' and students' perceptions that have experienced this inclusion. At this point, more research which includes the implementation of pragmatics into EFL classrooms and the corresponding perceptions from participants, is necessary. Additionally, the lack of studies on



pragmatics perceptions in South America indicated a research gap which needs to be considered due to the fact that in most of these countries pupils receive many years of English education. Regarding the educational level where studies took place, it is also recommended to conduct more research at other levels, not only in universities, and perhaps even without limitations in regard to language proficiency.

Introducing such an extensive field as pragmatics could lead to issues of time as it has been the case in the study by Chen (2009). For this reason and also the fact that most of the studies have been conducted during a short period of time, it is important to consider the fact of the duration of a study and maybe it would be worthy to observe the changes in students by including pragmatics during several months.

As for the educational context, pragmatics is a still developing field which should receive more attention in EFL. For instance, the awareness of teaching pragmatics becomes decisive for the context of English teaching. Based on the insecurity some teachers (Shirkhani & Tajeddin, 2017) expressed on how to involve pragmatics into their classes, it is recommended to pay more attention in the context of teacher training and to raise the awareness on pragmatics among future teachers. Also, to avoid difficulties, teachers should plan carefully when and how to include pragmatics, paying attention to student's perceptions.

Finally, it is important to mention that culture and language go hand in hand and for this reason, including and appreciating pragmatics should be considered as the culmination of English classes. Forming part of the EFL community implies having a different culture than the one taught in English books. Preparing students to be ready to confront other habits than their own and to avoid uncomfortable situations through pragmatic failure, should be the goal of every teacher in the EFL context.



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Appendix

Annex 1

Country of Publication	Authors
China	Yuan (2012), Yuan, Tangen, Mills & Lidstone (2015)
Costa Rica	Garita & Elizondo (2016)
Czech Republic	Povolná (2012)
Greece	Economidou-Kogetsidis (2015)
Iran	Derakhshan & Arabmofrad (2018); Shirkhani & Tajeddin (2017)
Japan	Takahashi (2005)
New Zealand	Crandall & Basturkmen (2004)
Norway	Olsen (2018)
South Korea	Kim (2016)
Taiwan	Chen (2009)
Thailand	Prakash (2018)
Turkey	Asuman (2015)
Vietnam	Vu (2017)

Note. N=15