

# Chapter 2

## Literature Review



**Abstract** This chapter is divided into two sections: the first is a general overview of routines in Sect. 2.1, which includes the leading terms, definitions, and classifications in various research fields, and the relevant literature is primarily reviewed in Sect. 2.2 based on different research variables.

**Keywords** Routines · Terms · Definitions · Classifications · Literature review

### 2.1 A General Picture of Routines

#### 2.1.1 Definitions and Shared Features of Routines

The definitions of routines are divided into two categories: those obtained from the SLA literature and those derived from L2 pragmatics. Routines, for example, “have received much attention recently in the field of SLA due to the recognition that many linguistic forms are formulaic in nature” (Taguchi, 2013: 109). In Fig. 2.1, 57 different terminological descriptions from the early literature, such as prefabricated routines (Hakuta, 1974), formulae (Coulmas, 1981), phrasal chunks (De Cock, 1998), and formulaic sequences (Schmitt, 2004), have been widely studied and comprehensively depicted. Formulaic sequence, as the dominant term in SLA literature, was commonly defined as “a sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other elements, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar” (Wray, 2002: 9).

Routines are also well known for its richness of terminologies within L2 pragmatics (Bardovi-Harlig, 2019), with the dominant labels including conventional expressions (Bardovi-Harlig, 2009, 2014), formula (Bardovi-Harlig, 2012), routine (Bardovi-Harlig, 2019; Roever, 2005, 2012; Taguchi, 2013), and situation-bound utterances (SBUs, Kecskes, 2000a, 2003, 2015; Kecskes et al., 2018). Specifically, conventional expressions in L2 pragmatics, for example, emphasized the social aspect of use, that is, a speech community’s preference for a particular string in a particular context (see Bardovi-Harlig, 2009; Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011). In the field of interlanguage pragmatics, the formula comprised of two major fundamental parts:

**Fig. 2.1** Terms used to describe aspects of formulaicity (Wray, 2002: 19)

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amalgams – automatic – chunks – clichés – co-ordinate constructions – collocations – complex lexemes – composites – conventionalized forms – F[ixed] E[xpressions] including I[dioms] – fixed expressions – formulaic language – formulaic speech – formulas/formulae – fossilized forms – frozen metaphors – frozen phrases – gambits – gestalt – holistic – holophrases – idiomatic – idioms – irregular – lexical simplex – lexical(ized) phrases – lexicalized sentence stems – listemes – multiword items/units – multiword lexical phenomena – noncompositional – noncomputational – nonproductive – nonpropositional – petrifications – phrasemes – praxons – preassembled speech – precoded conventionalized routines – prefabricated routines and patterns – ready-made expressions – ready-made utterances – recurring utterances – rote – routine formulae – schemata – semipreconstructed phrases that constitute single choices – sentence builders – set phrases – stable and familiar expressions with specialized subsenses – stereotyped phrases – stereotypes – stock utterances – synthetic – unanalyzed chunks of speech – unanalyzed multiword chunks – units

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acquisitional and social formulas. SBUs are defined as “highly conventionalized, prefabricated pragmatic units whose occurrence is tied to standardized communicative situations” (Kecskes, 2000a: 606) from a socio-cognitive pragmatic perspective. SBUs had radically distinct functional connotations, compared to their compositional equivalents. The pragmatic functions were not stored in or inferred from these literal linguistic units, necessitating the reception of their situational charge, which was further seen as the prominent characteristic of SBUs. As a result, when learning such expressions, the target information of the L2-dominant norms was crucial, because “SBUs are functional units whose meaning can be explained only as functions of habitual usage” (Kecskes, 2000a: 607).

A large number of terminologies from various domains did not share the same features in all circumstances. Nonetheless, they shared a certain ubiquitous nature, as outlined by Taguchi (2013) and Taguchi and Roever (2017), that is, (1) multiword sequences; (2) fixed syntactic strings with slots for flexibility in usage; (3) phonologically coherent (articulated without hesitation); (4) syntactically irregular; (5) community-wide in use; (6) attached to regular speech events.

In the present study, routines are defined as “those sequences that are used frequently by speakers in certain prescribed social situations” (Bardovi-Harlig, 2009: 757) and are further indicative of recurring utterances whose presence is intimately connected to specific contexts and communication purposes (Bardovi-Harlig, 2012, 2019). Routines can also “convey the illocutionary force of a communicative act based on tacit agreements on their form, meaning, and use in a speech community” (Taguchi & Roever, 2017: 222). Routines are widely available in daily communication as the prevalent linguistic forms in the target community, further supporting our optimal involvement with social pragmatic norms.

Indeed, pragmatic competence is strongly associated with the use of routines due to its distinguishing trait of group identity. Simultaneously, pragmatic competence can be defined in language use in a variety of ways, including lexical selection, small

talk, and formulaic language, to name a few, where routines serve as “one of the main reflections of pragmatic competence” (Kecskes, 2015: 429), are the sole focus of the present study.

### 2.1.2 Classification of Routines

When it comes to pragmatic routine classification, three grouping standards can be used, as shown below: (1) the syntactic structure; (2) the pragmatic function; and (3) the formulaic continuity.

In the SLA domain, some labels incorporate fixed expressions (e.g., *Here you go*), whilst others relate to semi-fixed elements such as slot-and-frame patterns or syntactic strings (i.e., “I was wondering if + {object clause}”). Routines can be divided into two categories throughout the L2 pragmatics literature (Roever, 2005, 2012): situational routines, which specifically denoted these fixed expressions tied to specific situations (e.g., *For here or to go?*) and functional routines, which are generally not situation-bound (i.e., *Do you have the time?*). The socio-cognitive approach (SCA) places routines on a formulaic continuum, with formulaicity rising from left to right. Because of their obligatoriness and predictability in social contexts, SBUs obtain the top two formulaic positions because their usage is significantly impacted by the situation (Kecskes, 2000a, 2000b).

According to Kecskes’ (2013) formulaic continuum, the routines in the present study eventually consist of three subcomponents (see the red circle in Fig. 2.2): situation-bound utterances (e.g., *I’m just browsing* and *Thanks for having me*), speech formulas (e.g., *That works for me*), and phrasal verbs (e.g., *I’m looking for...*).

It is worth noting that differing categorization standards will make expressions overlap with each other. For example, the fixed phrase *No problem* can be thought of as either situational routines or SBU. Similarly, the phrasal verb *I’m looking for...* was classified as both a semi-fixed expression and a functional routine. The rest of the elements in the continuum not listed are eliminated from the scope of this study since they cannot convey illocutionary forces or may not be linked to specific communicative functions. As a result, routines, as a covering terminology in this study, include both fixed (e.g., *Nice to meet you*) and semi-fixed expressions (e.g., *I’m searching for...*) syntactically, encapsulating both functional (e.g., *Do you have the time?*) and situational routines (e.g., *For here or to go?*).

Routines are essential in L2-driven learning since they foster socialization into target-like social norms and “provide low-level learners with a quick repertoire of

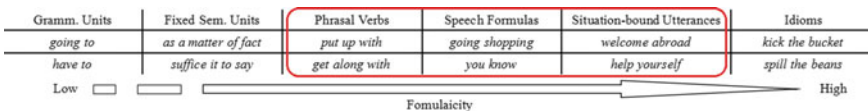


Fig. 2.2 Formulaic continuum (Kecskes, 2013)

target language resources, allowing them to outperform their competence” (Roever et al., 2014: 382). Routines, in contrast to other major elements of the pragmatic construct (Roever, 2011), emerge rather infrequently in L2 pragmatics research. As a result, the following section focuses primarily on a comprehensive review of L2 pragmatic competence of routines.

## 2.2 Development of L2 Pragmatic Competence of Routines

A revived interest in empirical explorations of routine made the early twenty-first century as a dividing line. Scarcella (1979) was the first to perform a production study using a DCT task with a specific focus on routines in the pragmatics domain. Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992), on the other hand, pursued a conventional research route in terms of non-empirical modality. The active investigation into routines within L2 pragmatics (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, 2006, 2008, 2010a, 2010b, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2019; Barron, 2003; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; House 1996; Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993; Kecskes, 2000a, 2003, 2007, 2010, 2013, 2015; Kecskes et al., 2018; Scarcella, 1979) “parallels interest in formulas in SLA (i.e., Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Schmidt, 1983; Schmitt & Carter, 2004; Yorio, 1989) more generally, with early studies in the 1970s” (see Bardovi-Harlig, 2009: 757) and a second peak in the recent decades. The common trait deduced from the L2 pragmatics literature is the underuse of routines in particular. Influencing variables like as L2 proficiency, learning environment (at home or abroad), duration of abroad residence, and intensity of interaction have all been proposed to have a dominant role in the acquisition of pragmatic routines (Bardovi-Harlig, 2019).

As a result, this cross-sectional design draws on full-dimensional modalities of pragmatic competence of routines (dependent variables), with English proficiency and study-abroad experience alongside their interaction addressed as independent factors. The literature will be reviewed in order to discover the relationship between each contributing element and L2 pragmatic competence of routines.

### 2.2.1 *Proficiency and Pragmatic Competence of Routines*

A comprehensive view of L2 pragmatic studies compared learners’ performances on specific pragmatic targets across different proficiency levels using standardized exams or grade levels (e.g., Félix-Brasdefer, 2003, 2007; Rose, 2000; Roever, 2005; Taguchi, 2007, 2009, see Taguchi, 2011b for review). Within the L2 pragmatic discipline, cross-sectional studies have been dedicated to investigating the influence of proficiency in production (e.g., Félix-Brasdefer, 2007), comprehension (e.g., Taguchi, 2008a, 2008b, 2009a), or pragmatic control of processing (Taguchi, 2007). These studies contributed to the contradictory generalizations that higher-level proficiency learners either develop stronger mastery of pragmatic knowledge or do not

consistently achieve more native-like L2 pragmatic norms. These findings follow exactly the same pattern as their equivalents in earlier SLA work.

Within L2 pragmatics, proficiency is the most frequently examined variable (Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011). A wide range of previously reported studies have yielded mixed conclusions to the fundamental question of the effect of proficiency in L2 pragmatic routines. Previous research has clearly demonstrated a positive association between L2 proficiency and pragmatic practices. In Bardovi-Harlig (2009)'s study of 122 L2 English learners, for example, a mixed-task evaluation of routine recognition combined with a production test (oral DCT) was conducted. Both task outcomes improved dramatically from the lowest to the second-lowest level, illustrating the enormous influence of proficiency, but, surprisingly, routine recognition stagnated.

Production, on the other hand, continued to rise at a moderate rate. Furthermore, learners had worse performances in production of routines than recognition of routines. In particular, two routine expressions in service encounter contexts, *I'm looking for...* (acceptance of salesperson's offer of help) and *I'm just looking around/browsing* (rejection of salesperson's offer of help), are highly identifiable to non-native speakers yet do not produce much. These findings support the notion that various kinds of abilities are necessary for recognizing and producing constitutionally-acceptable routines (Taguchi & Roever, 2017).

Furthermore, studies from Chinese researchers indicating a positive link between L2 proficiency and pragmatic competence of routines corroborate this. Through a multiple-choice discourse completion test, Liu and Huang (2012) explored whether various proficiency levels demonstrated differential pragmatic competence based on routines and other pragmatic targets. Language proficiency was represented by three groups of English learners at various levels. The results revealed that there was a substantial difference between various level groups in terms of routine performance. Li and Bin (2014) used DCTs to conduct a mixed-modality examination into both pragmatic production and recognition of English routines among Chinese EFL learners. The data was collected from 281 English majors at a university in Guangdong Province, China. The findings confirmed that as their proficiency level increased, so did their overall routine competence. It is worth noting, however, that the two modalities (production vs. recognition) did not share the same developmental pattern, as productive pragmatic competence of routines improved greatly while recognition equivalents stagnated. Following the trends in determining the effect of this most widely researched variable, Wang (2020) completed a parallel experiment designed to investigate the effect of English proficiency on pragmatic competence of routines among 227 non-English major participants from different Chinese universities. Instead of routine recognition, the results revealed that English proficiency had a stronger influence on productive competence of routines and their overall pragmatic competence of routines.

Indeed, "the impact of proficiency seems to be more limited for routine formulae" (Roever et al., 2014: 382). Roever (2005, 2012) and Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011) discovered comparable findings that supported the aforementioned generalizations. In Roever's (2005) study, no significant difference was found between

lower-proficiency groups. According to Roever (2012), routine knowledge was still not subject to proficiency and that the effect of abroad residence had outstanding precedence over proficiency. Similarly, Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011) observed that proficiency had no dramatically favorable influence on routine recognition.

The preceding section provided a summary of the role of proficiency in L2 pragmatic routines by exhibiting distinct aspects of proficiency levels, both positive and negative correlation, and various types of pragmatic practices within different levels of L2 proficiency.

### ***2.2.2 Study-Abroad Experience and Pragmatic Competence of Routines***

By far, the study-abroad context has yielded “the most empirical findings in pragmatics” (Taguchi, 2018: 127), reflected as two different strands (productive vs. receptive modality and cross-sectional vs. longitudinal design) within L2 pragmatic research. Numerous research examined L2 individuals’ performances of different pragmatic aspects from two distinct lines using study-abroad context as exposure to input or a category label (in contrast to at-home context). One approach is to examine the unique feature of study-abroad context in L2 pragmatic development using a single participant group (i.e., Barron, 2003, 2006, 2007; Kinginger, 2008; Schauer, 2004; Xu et al., 2009, see Taguchi, 2011b for review) or both groups (e.g., Ren, 2015; Schauer, 2006, 2008, 2009). With a few exceptions (i.e., Félix-Brasdefer & Hasler-Barker, 2015; Taguchi, 2008a, 2008b), a cross-sectional snapshot approach was adopted by contrasting learners with study-abroad experience and their comparison group in a domestically and formally instructional setting (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Félix-Brasdefer, 2007; Niezgodna & Roever, 2001; Roever, 2005; Schauer, 2006; Taguchi, 2011b).

Another strand gleaned from these study-abroad explorations rests in the modality: pragmatic production (e.g., Barron, 2003; Schauer, 2004, 2008, 2009), comprehension or perception (i.e., Bardovi-Harlig, 2014; Roever, 2005; Taguchi, 2008b), or both under limited discussion (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, 2009). These vastly disparate outcomes were represented in the facilitative and superior role over the at-home environment, as well as the uneven and non-linear effect, which was mediated in part by individual, contextual, and interactional variables. Previous cross-sectional and longitudinal research have provided and identified such generalizations about the study-abroad effect.

This section looks at the study-abroad context as a category term and a potential component in routine competence. Previous research has proposed and addressed the fundamental premise of whether study-abroad experience is useful for L2 pragmatic competence of routines, leaving relatively unclear and contradictory evidence in the realm of L2 routine research, as will be demonstrated below.

Above all, the study-abroad setting has a beneficially superior influence on routines. The fact that learners with overseas residency outperform their non-resident counterparts makes intuitive sense given the significant links between routine expressions, social behaviors, and target conventions. Interview data demonstrated that the improvement of competency in utilizing routines while overseas was significantly connected to the learners' qualified participation in the local community (Dörnyei et al., 2004). This might imply that routine learning is mostly determined by cultural assimilation and social networking. Pragmatic recognition of routines is more reliant on recurrent iterations of routines and less on proficiency, where duration of residence abroad has been a tremendously crucial factor. Roever (2012), for instance, conducted a systematic receptive knowledge evaluation with a total of 262 ESL and EFL learners. He discovered that learners who spent only two months in the host community had more formulaic knowledge. A lengthy duration of residence (12–24 months) resulted in a more widespread enhancement of formulas knowledge during recognizing routine items. It was also observed that not all routines could be acquired in the same way, in line with Bardovi-Harlig (2009). The vast majority of EFL learners with no residency were familiar with such items (*Hello on the phone* and *Nice to meet you* for first-time encounters). Other routine expressions, on the other hand, need more time for acquisition and solid development.

Furthermore, previous research has shown that routine comprehension is highly susceptible to study-abroad experiences, although there may be no substantial connection with L2 proficiency. This is due to the pervasiveness of routines, which are used throughout the community and are tied to ordinary speech events. In terms of pragmatic comprehension, few studies to date have directly compared study-abroad and at-home groups of participants (Taguchi, 2011b). His study further supported the study-abroad advantage, wherein 25 native English speakers and a total of 64 Japanese English learners in three groups with varying proficiency levels and study-abroad experience completed a pragmatic listening assessment. It was found that EFL learners who had studied overseas outperformed their counterparts without abroad experience on routine comprehension, demonstrating that study-abroad experience was useful particularly for EFL learners when interpreting routines.

In contrast, counter-evidence revealed that study-abroad context, as a disputable variable, did not always guarantee completely unambiguous pragmatic advantages in comprehension or production of routines. Frequent interactions in the host society may be inadequate for non-native speakers to shift “sociopragmatic norms and conventions concerning appropriateness developed through L1” (Kecskes, 2015: 421). This may be linked to a variety of characteristics including person characteristics (such as agency, willingness, and motivation), context, and interactional environment. Furthermore, “length of study is often confounded with proficiency” (Bardovi-Harlig, 2019: 52) due to a lack of authentic input or inadequate commitment in target study-abroad activities (Halenko, 2018). Kecskes (2000b), for example, tested the capacity of 33 native speakers and 88 non-native speakers to comprehend and produce routines (i.e., *get out of here* or *piece of cake*) in one experiment. This study included three types of written tasks that all respondents in the current task were required to complete: (1) two discourse completion tasks, (2)

a problem-solving test, and (3) a dialog interpretation task. The findings demonstrated that the learners' ability to comprehend the figurative/functional meaning of situation-bound utterances was impaired. They, on the other hand, mainly relied on the literal/compositional meaning of routines. Even learners who had spent more than two years abroad in the local community had a restricted selection of preferred native-like expressions. This may lead the author to conclude that more exposure or duration of residence abroad in the actual abroad community does not guarantee target-like production of routines. To be more specific, despite obtaining a sufficient degree of grammatical and linguistic proficiency, international visiting students sometimes fail to correctly formulate conventional speech acts (Halenko & Jones, 2011). According to Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011), the length of stay, measured in months, had no effect on production of routines.

### ***2.2.3 Interaction of Proficiency and Study-Abroad Experience and Pragmatic Competence of Routines***

A large body of research literature that has investigated the combined effect of proficiency and study-abroad experience combined on L2 pragmatic competence (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011; Félix-Brasdefer, 2003, 2007; Geyer, 2007; Roever, 2005; Taguchi, 2011a, 2011b, 2013; Wang, 2022; Wang & Ren, 2022), which is still limited in the literature of L2 pragmatics (Ren, 2022; Taguchi & Roever, 2017). Proficiency bridged the gap between exposure and pragmatic advantages (Taguchi, 2018). According to previous study on L2 pragmatic routines, "development in learners' recognition and production ability for routines is non-linear and related to both exposure and proficiency" (Taguchi & Roever, 2017: 159). However, research on L2 pragmatic routines that has evaluated and analyzed the influence of both components combined on routine competence is still scarce (Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011; Taguchi, 2011b), providing enough potential for follow-up, in-depth analyses of L2 pragmatic routines. The investigations listed below found inconsistent results regarding the influence of proficiency and study-abroad setting on L2 routine competence.

There is ample evidence that it is the combination of proficiency and study-abroad environment, rather than study-abroad experience alone, that will make a significant contribution to routine production. Taguchi's (2011b) cross-sectional study used a spoken DCT to investigate the impact of general proficiency and study-abroad experience on L2 pragmatic comprehension. Taguchi's (2013) research featured the same participant group but different modalities. It challenged participants to respond to a succession of contextual scenarios in the production task using native-like routine expressions. The combined variable provides substantial pragmatic advantages for high-proficiency participants with a given duration of study-abroad experience outperforming their low-level, no-residence peers, according to the results. On the contrary, study-abroad experience alone does not contribute to native-like



routine production, as indicated by the fact that equal-level groups with and without study-abroad experience received identical ratings.

In addition, 229 ESL and EFL learners took a web-based pragmatics test with 12 items in Roever et al.'s (2014) Poisson regression study. Rather than examine background factors separately and weigh their relative impact on the dependent variables (i.e., recognition of routines), this study was to analyze the effect of several independent variables (e.g., proficiency and length of residence). It was discovered that proficiency was a surprisingly dominant predictor for routine recognition, while the length of residence was a smaller but noticeable predictor for recognition of routines.

Furthermore, Roever (2005) investigated routine comprehension using a 12-item written assignment that entailed inferring meaning from context. He further classified routines into two types: situational routines (fixed expressions tied to specific situations, *For here or to go*) and functional routines (*Do you have the time*). The remarkable impact of study-abroad experience on routine comprehension was discovered, since temporary residence abroad results in striking gains in routine knowledge, and a longer duration contributes to greater improvement. On the contrary, proficiency had no influence, since the lower-proficiency groups did not vary from one another.

In this context, Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011) investigated the combined impacts of proficiency and duration of stay on L2 English learners' competence of identifying and producing routines in a US university. ESL learner levels varied from low-intermediate to low-advanced in four categories. The length of stay had little influence on routine recognition or production, suggesting that simply being abroad does not guarantee a substantial impact on L2 routine competence. Instead of tangible residence in the target language community as a simple catch-all factor, this repeated-measures logistic regression model demonstrated that intensity of interaction ("degree of engagement with the target language" or "the quality of social contact while abroad") accounted most profoundly for pragmatic gains in recognition and production of routines. Proficiency, on the other hand, is even more important in routine production through a spoken DCT. However, in terms of student performance, as measured by the self-reported recognition task, where respondents stated the frequency of the target expressions they had heard, it is not necessarily a distinct advantage.

Elucidating the issue of learner background factors, Taguchi (2013) and Taguchi et al. (2013) both offered support to the positive and constructive linkage between study-abroad experience and routine competence, with another variable initial-level formulaic competence remaining clearly at play. The previous production study included three groups of Japanese English learners and validated the weaker role of proficiency levels. Furthermore, when developing routines using a DCT task, the higher-proficiency group with study-abroad experience consistently outperformed the lower-proficiency group without such experience on productive appropriateness. However, the higher proficiency group without abroad experience did not outperform the lower proficiency group on appropriateness, indicating that exposure is more significant than proficiency with routines. Overall, the "two-variable" study found

that study-abroad experience mediated impacts of proficiency to give maximum pragmatic advances in routine production.

### 2.3 Summary

From the standpoint of influencing variables, a larger assessment of relevant research on learners' routine competence has been demonstrated. The evidence provided here demonstrates several critical gaps in L2 pragmatic competence of routines that should be promptly filled.

Instrumentally, previous research in L2 pragmatics has been inclined to utilize an oral DCT for naturally occurring data elicitation or collection, although this instrument still raises some suspicions. The computer-animated elicitation task can provide fairly realistic settings in the form of short movies with prompts, providing a one-turn authentic speaker (machine)-hearer (human) interaction that can avoid being "uncoached" (Kecskes, 2013: 114) to a larger extent. Unsurprisingly, the clear assessment criterion is essential for data analysis; nevertheless, earlier research tended to utilize holistic scoring and focused on appropriateness or correctness.

The present study, on the other side, developed an explicit rating band corresponding to formulaic production, derived from Bardovi-Harlig's (2019) elaboration, which was further divided into two fundamental constructions, namely "mastery degree of actual situational context" and "mastery degree of prior contexts". Despite the general agreement that L2 pragmatic competence includes both productive and receptive skills (Ren, 2015), only a few cross-sectional studies have assessed both abilities across three participant groups at the same time.

To the best of our knowledge, L2 pragmatics literature existed primarily in learners' productive pragmatic competence. "Only a few studies investigate learners' receptive pragmatic competence" (Ren, 2018: 126), and even fewer explore both elements (Ren & Li, 2018) alongside the cognitive processes throughout each routine task. Until yet, limited research has investigated how multiple factors interact in determining L2 pragmatic competence of routines across different proficiency groups with or without study abroad experience, as well as in treating abroad residence as learning contexts (see Ren, 2018; Roever et al., 2014 for an exceptional attempt).

Prior research has examined participants "with a European language or Japanese as their first language" (Ren, 2015: 4), but less attention has been paid to Chinese learners of English from the socio-cognitive approach, particularly in terms of prior and actual situational context knowledge. While existing studies have shed light on routine comprehension in L2 pragmatics, the limitations mentioned above reveal that with this domain, there are only a small number of studies that extend their paradigm to the notion of context knowledge into L2 pragmatic routines. Many concerns remain unresolved concerning the process of prior and actual situational context knowledge in meaning inference and usage of routine expressions.

Additionally, it has been discovered that longitudinal design might find more intricate development process of routines. However, "only a few cross-sectional studies

have explored the effect of study abroad in the L2 community on learners' pragmatic production" (Ren, 2018: 122) and other task modalities to date. In fact, while cross-sectional approaches do not allow for direct observations of developmental patterns of learners' pragmatic competence, they do provide insight into development by identifying variations across different sections (Kasper & Rose, 2002). Furthermore, cross-sectional studies may more readily evaluate students who study abroad for a longer period of time at the same time.

With respect to the investigative variables, "the impact of proficiency is less pronounced for routine formulae while not absent" (Taguchi & Roever, 2017: 175). Although the relationship between intercultural competence, pragmatic competence, and social contact is plausible, the connection has not been fully attested in the present literature and thus remains an agenda for future research (Taguchi & Roever, 2017).

Ultimately, far more literature is more skewed towards contrastive differences in routine performances between native speakers and bilingual learners (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Kasper & Rose, 2002), with the use or production of routines being the dominant area (Bardovi-Harlig, 2009), despite the fact that native-speaker norms are harshly criticized. In truth, when it comes to defining pragmatic competence, it is widely acknowledged that "the monolingual native speaker norm, which echoes SLA research from the early 1970s, needs to be viewed with a great deal of caution" (Taguchi & Roever, 2017: 21). Simultaneously, native-speaker norms (also known as preferred ways of saying things, see Pawley & Syder, 1983), an index of pragmatic competence of routines, still play a significant role in determining appropriate production or use of routines, as routines serve as "the heart and soul to make language use native-like" (Kecskes, 2015: 429).

With the aforementioned themes in mind, this study seeks to fill the gaps in the previous literature and address the following research questions:

- (1) To what extent do proficiency and study-abroad experience influence productive pragmatic competence of routines among Chinese learners of English?
- (2) To what extent do proficiency and study-abroad experience affect receptive pragmatic competence of routines among Chinese learners of English?
- (3) What are learners' cognitive processes when completion of productive and receptive pragmatic routine tasks?

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