Chapter 7
Conclusion

Abstract In this final chapter, an overview of the major findings will be generalized and consolidated, and a conclusion (Sect. 7.1) will be drawn based on the present study's findings. Sect. 7.2 will discuss the implications for learning and teaching routines. Finally, Sects. 7.3 and 7.4 will discuss the present study's constraints as well as future possible L2 research on pragmatic routines.

Keywords Major findings · Implications · Learning and teaching routines · Constraints · Future suggestions

7.1 Summary of the Findings

The present study was a cross-sectional, snapshot-design investigation into pragmatic competence of routines among Chinese English learners. The objective of this study was to examine the influence of English proficiency and study-abroad experience on multiple facets of pragmatic competence of routines, such as routine production, recognition, comprehension, and perception.

The contextualized productive pragmatic competence of routines among all participants involved is quite excellent, as evidenced by the advanced establishment of ASC-PC mappings altogether. In productive tasks, all learners' mastery of ASC knowledge greatly exceeded that of PC knowledge, displaying as greater access to ASC reminders but more limited retrieval of pragmalinguistic forms based on their PC knowledge. Furthermore, ASC information is a critical prerequisite for routine production, and any divergence will result in unsuccessful mappings. However, simply comprehending ASC reminders was not sufficient assurance for their PC equivalents. In contrast, learners' mastery of PC knowledge ultimately influences the pragmalinguistic target-likeness of their output, highlighting the significance of their interplay that much more. On the other hand, because of the formulaic nature of routine production, all aspects of learners' production of routines were almost independent of proficiency, including situational bound, constitutive shortness, and linguistic simplicity, but profoundly influenced by study-abroad experience, and both factors combined particularly made striking pragmatic gains in routine production. Its

advantage stems mostly from a greater range of possibilities to observe local community members' preferred linguistic form selections and to rehearse those target-like patterns via daily involvement in social events.

In terms of contextualized routine recognition, the easiest task modality reckoned by all-group learners as a whole resulted in a pretty adequately higher recognition achievement. Prompts, embedded in the ASCs, are required for effective routine recognition. On the other hand, PC knowledge is also acknowledged to be a requirement for the ultimate accurate pragmatic recognition of target routines. A weaker role of proficiency in routine recognition was also observed, owing to routines being shorter and having less linguistic complexity. Routines, on the other hand, have proven to be much easier to acquire in study-abroad conditions, as they have great connections with colloquial communicative circumstances. More critically, these characteristics appear to have different effects on the acquisitional degree through different routines. Some features are taken up to a higher amount as a result of extensive immersion in target-like norms while overseas, whilst others do not necessarily require a long duration of residence to become completely absorbed.

In terms of decontextualized comprehension of routines, learners demonstrated a high level of confidence in providing plausible definitions based on their PC knowledge rather than specifying their functional use conditions in the specific ASCs, displaying learners still did not know how to map their precise PC knowledge onto a specific actual situational context. Similarly, comprehension of routines was almost unaffected by proficiency due to the syntactic simplicity, fixedness in terms of construction, and intrinsically situation-bound features of routines, but significantly correlated with study-abroad experience. Thus, the study-abroad environment would have many opportunities to encounter such situations in which routines might occur.

In terms of decontextualized routine perception, the learners performed the worst in this segment, as seen by the difficulties of formation into the PC-ASC mappings. That is, learners' PC knowledge does not develop concurrently with their acquisition of ASC traits; in other words, there is no direct mapping between pragmalinguistic forms and their sociopragmatic use conditions. Furthermore, proficiency is only marginally important in routine perception, because such perception modality prioritizes learners' sociopragmatic knowledge of cultural conventions and norms rather than more rigorous parsing of the target language. In contrast, study-abroad experience and the interaction of both factors revealed a somewhat substantial influence, because appropriately functional language use relies on conventions, norms, beliefs, and native-speaker norms, all of which are abundantly available in study-abroad contexts.

7.2   Implications of the Present Study

In terms of the implications for learning routines, this study addresses some of the approaches used to promote routine competence: (1) at-home students should (a) actively pay more attention to routine expressions and their use conditions both

inside and outside the classroom; (b) in their everyday life, a wider variety of practical methods, such as watching American dramas, original books, or other suck kind of online resources, will undoubtedly facilitate at-home learners' internalization process of accurate context knowledge; (c) quality practice or continuous communication with native speakers can strengthen their pragmatic awareness by providing quick feedback, modeling, modifying, and directing, thereby minimizing negative impact produced by the negative transfer of their L1; (2) from a motivational standpoint, proficient learners with abroad experience, in particular, ought to actively improve the frequency of effective and quality interaction with local community members, as well as participation in social communicative activities in the target language environment, thus emphasizing the significance of a pragmatic approach to enhancing communicative competence (Halenko, 2018).

Regarding pedagogical implications for routine teaching, (1) additional pragmatic intervention and explicit teaching on routines should be implemented in classroom instruction. Because, unlike the study abroad context, the classroom context may highlight the practice-learning relationship more explicitly as it is a confined space, students' pragmatic performances should be promptly rectified and given direct feedback (Taguchi & Roever, 2017). In other words, such salient linguistic forms from instructional observation in the at-home classroom setting can be tracked for a long time to see how at-home learners develop in routine competence and what factors in the at-home classroom (e.g., teacher guidance and correction, or peer interaction) motivate their pragmatic development; (2) computer-animated simulation assignments should be widely used in routine instruction and evaluation to increase the quality and efficiency of target language input practice and output while also cultivating students' meta-pragmatic awareness.

Throughout individual characteristics, learner identity can be added to the list presented by Bardovi-Harlig (2001) of factors that affect L2 pragmatic development, which includes a broader range of factors such as input, instruction, proficiency, duration of stay in the target language community, and L1 language and culture. In reality, the study-abroad setting is not a consistent notion (Taguchi & Roever, 2017), since learners' particular traits and the attributes that the context affords will decide whether or not they may use their study-abroad experiences for routine promotion. However, just accessing natural knowledge while studying or living in the target language countries cannot always increase students' pragmatic competence (Ren, 2019), with the intensity of interaction being more important.

7.3 Limitations of the Present Study

The limitations of the present study are acknowledged in this section and are so highlighted as follows. The first constraint is related to the overall study-abroad participant selection. The 33 high-level students engaged in the present study (as a comparison group for high-level individuals without study-abroad experience) were all master's and doctorate students pursuing diverse majors in the US, without

recruiting more less-advanced study-abroad peers. As a result, it would be welcome news to include an additional experimental group for possible statistical analyses, where study-abroad participants are from a range of lower proficiency levels, in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of the effect of study-abroad experience on learners' pragmatic competence of routines.

A second limitation is incorporated in the snapshot design used in this cross-sectional empirical investigation, as no longitudinal observations or follow-up examinations on routine use circumstances have been conducted by all groups at home and abroad. Furthermore, the study-abroad context is operationalized as pure exposure to the target language, ignoring other features such as intensity of interaction (Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011).

Finally, the cross-sectional analysis raises the question of whether the between-group disparities may be due to proficiency and study-abroad effects. It should be noted that the influencing factor in the present study was solely focused on these two major factors, with no intention of eliciting data on other vital individual variables, such as individual motivation or personal willingness, as well as the socio-cognitive factor in terms of conceptual socialization.

7.4 Suggestions for Future Research

Regarding the limitations discussed above, several suggestions for research consideration are summarized and proposed in this section in order to ascertain feasible possibilities in L2 pragmatic competence of routines.

To begin with, one potential route for future research should be to include a larger variety of study-abroad individuals with varying L2 proficiency levels to evaluate the generalizability of empirical findings in this study. More multidimensional empirical investigations, rather than being limited to snapshot designs, should be encouraged to investigate both productive and receptive pragmatic competence of routines throughout time. Furthermore, more research is needed in this area to determine the effectiveness of predominantly multifaceted factors, such as intensity of interaction, conceptual socialization, or individual willingness and motivation, on multi-dimensional pragmatic modalities from various theoretical perspectives, such as the combination of the complex dynamic systems theory and L2 pragmatic research (i.e., Li & Ren, 2020), or the application of the socio-cognitive approach into L2 pragmatic research.

Furthermore, only a limited number of routine situations with low production and reception derived from earlier studies were used to assess learners' pragmatic competence in routines. Future research in the field should be broadened to include more diverse and conventional routines of this type. Future study should also use increasingly difficult routine tasks to explore the development of pragmatic competence of routines in both proficient and less-advanced learners.

Finally, based on the findings described in this study, the use of the computer-animated elicitation task throughout the routine testing phases has proven to be a

stimulating alternative to traditional patterns of input and evaluation. This pattern also provides practitioners with various particular methods in which the computer-animated tool and technology may be maximized in usage and significantly contribute to varied routine learning and pragmatic testing in the future experiment. Practitioners should also consider the importance of incorporating this type of pragmatic training and instruction into study-abroad courses, as indicated by research findings that a portion of routines were not merely acquired by learners during their abroad stay.

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