The book *Second Language Pragmatics*, authored by Wei Ren, provides an up-to-date overview of the current studies on second language pragmatics learning, teaching, and assessing, as well as learners’ cognitive processes during these procedures. As a recent addition to the Cambridge Elements in Applied Linguistics, the book provides valuable insights into the interdisciplinary field.

The book consists of seven sections. Section 1 prepares the ground for the following sections. Here the author clarifies that the term L2 in this book refers to an additional language of any status, whether foreign, second, third, fourth, heritage language or lingua franca. As to the notion of learners’ pragmatic competence, the author highlights the role of language by using linguistic and semiotic resources in parallel.

Section 2 provides a detailed review of empirical studies investigating learners’ acquisition in pragmatic production and perception. An underdeveloped area concerning investigation of learners at different ages is pointed out as the reviewed studies predominantly examine adult learners at college level. In addition, a lack of a solid theoretical orientation in pragmatic production studies is discussed. This is caused by the fact that studies often focus on nuanced data...
coding by comparing the use of certain pragmatic features between learners and native speakers. The examination of L2 pragmatics learning investigations on oral, written and internet-mediated communication reveals the scarcity of studies in learners’ written pragmatic competence.

Section 3 reviews research on L2 pragmatics instruction. This section concludes that results of previous studies agree that pragmatics is teachable and pragmatic instruction can facilitate learners’ L2 pragmatic development. As to the teaching approaches, relevant empirical studies have been examined in terms of implicitness and explicitness as many combine different teaching approaches in various ways. The review shows that the findings regarding the efficacy of teaching approaches are far from conclusive, and more research is needed to further explore this issue.

Section 4 examines what pragmatics assessment research has explored and achieved. A few early studies concerning this issue are introduced in terms of measures and ways to distinguish items, followed by the criticism that they fail to investigate learners’ pragmatic performance in authentic interactions. However, studies in recent years have attempted to remedy that by starting to assess learners’ interactional competence.

Section 5 identifies the major contributions and key methodological concerns related to the use of verbal reports in L2 cognitive processes pragmatics studies. The use of concurrent verbal reports and retrospective verbal reports provides in-depth insights into learners’ cognitive processes in production of speech acts and comprehension of conversational implicatures.

Section 6 presents two ongoing projects at length, both focusing on pragmatic production. One study investigates advanced L2 Chinese learners’ self-praise on social media, in which learners’ semiotic and multimodal resources are included in coding self-praise strategies in addition to linguistic resources. The other study explores ethnic minority children’s pragmatic competence, which challenges the concept of monolingual native speakers in L2 pragmatics and provides more empirical data to research children’s pragmatic development.

Section 7, the concluding one, points out a few potential areas to advance L2 pragmatics research, particular topics awaiting further exploration in those areas and also elements which need to be carefully considered when designing studies. The section suggests that the field needs to address issues concerning commonality versus particularity of pragmatic development and the relation between productive and receptive pragmatic competence. In addition, further well-designed studies from a wider range of L1 background and L2 target languages, investigating how learners achieve their desire via pragmatic resources, will benefit the field.
Overall, with a theme-based review, this book depicts well the current research agenda of L2 pragmatics in general. It also points out some potential areas and topics for future research in this field, such as a comprehensive coding scheme of learners’ translinguaging strategies. The book is of remarkable value for researchers interested in pragmatics and will encourage follow-up research to advance the field.