

JOURNAL WATCH *edited by Akiko Hagiwara*

I am going to introduce several different types of articles this time. There are quantitative studies and qualitative studies, and some use natural discourse and some are experimental.

Taguchi, Naoko. (2007). Development of speed and accuracy in pragmatic comprehension in English as a foreign language. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41:2, 313-338.

Quantitative analyses of pragmatic phenomena have been popular, but many of them deal with production data. Comprehension studies are hard to find. Taguchi (2007) studied how Japanese learners of English acquire the skills of comprehension of indirect utterances. She measured the development of the speed and the accuracy of comprehension using experimental methods. She combined several types of data collection methods including a listening comprehension task, a lexical access speed test, TOEFL ITP. She discusses the fact that EFL situations do not necessarily hinder the development of pragmatic inference skills, because L1-based inference skills can be utilized with limited exposure to the target pragmatic norm. Overall, while English proficiency and the accuracy of comprehension were related, accuracy and the speed of comprehension were not.

Takano, Shoji (2005). Re-examining linguistic power: strategic uses of directives by professional Japanese women in positions of authority and leadership. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 37, 633-666.

This article is not particularly new, but being someone who works with a senior female professor, I was intrigued by the title. Many people who are in a similar situation may enjoy reading the findings of this study. The study asserts that there is a gender difference in their use of language in Japanese workplace, and female bosses are utilizing various types of linguistic forms and conventions to survive in the situation. Their dynamic use of language is a reflection of traditionally shaped female language use and

the demand of modern society that requires females in leadership positions.

Wang, Ning et al. (in press). The politeness effect: Pedagogical agents and learning outcomes. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies* (2007). doi: 10.1016/j.ijhcs.2007.09.003. (available through Elsevier Science Direct)

E-learning has been implemented in many types of educational settings. This article investigated whether “polite” language plays a role in e-learning conditions. The focus of the study is actually not the relationship between learning with a human instructor and learning with a computer. Rather it investigates how politeness theory interacts with motivation theory, and the results show that students performed better with polite instructions rather than direct instructions, which indicates that e-learners perceive online pedagogical agents as social actors. This article strongly suggests that findings in pragmatics can be applied in e-learning.

Vinagre, Margarita (in press). Politeness strategies in collaborative e-mail exchanges. *Computers & Education* (2006), doi:10.1016/j.compedu.2006.10.002. (available through Elsevier Science Direct)

A growing number of studies are conducted in computer-mediated communication. It is fundamentally different from face-to-face communication and supposedly shows different characteristics. This study examines how politeness strategies are utilized in e-mail exchanges between two groups of students living in two different countries, Spain and US. Spanish students were learning English and American students were learning Spanish. The author analyzed bilingual e-mail messages based on Brown and Levinson’s politeness strategies. The results show that the learners heavily depended on positive politeness strategies rather than the expected negative politeness strategies.