

PRAGMATIC MATTERS

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MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERVISING EDITOR

With Kyushu as the location of the JALT/ PAC3 conference, thinking of a long soak in the hot water of an onsen is only natural. Saying that someone is *in hot water* can be good or bad depending on your culture or language however. In English, being *in hot water* means being *in trouble* but in Japanese there does not seem to be such a negative connection since *getting into hot water* merely refers to taking a bath. An African proverb states, "The frog enjoys himself in water but not in hot water," pointing out that we all have limitations. Here too hot water is represented as a problematic condition. In China, the proverb "Cold water has to be carried; hot water has to be heated" means "Don't be wasteful." So water, whether hot or cold, brings a challenge with it. In Korea hot water brings with it the pain of experience as in "He who has been burned by hot broth will blow even on cold water." Likewise in Scotland "A scalded cat fears cold water." In France, where there is a similar expression, the fear belongs to a dog.

Hot water is usually connected to images of baths. In Poland carefulness is recommended by the proverb "The world is like a vapor bath; the higher up one is the more one sweats" while in Denmark carelessness is warned against in the expression "throw not the child out with the bath." My personal favorite though is from Yiddish: "In the bathhouse all are equal." The only negative comment in connection with hot water that I could find in Japanese was a pun in which a big

talker is compared to the contents of a bathtub—*Yuu dake* [saying only]

JALT 2001 in Kyushu promises much more than just hot water at the local onsen or just talk at various conference venues. This conference marks the third anniversary of the founding of PRAGMATICS SIG and as mentioned in previous newsletters there are more than 50 presentations or events of interest to the "pragmatically inclined" ranging from colloquia and paper presentations to poster sessions and meetings. (Donna Tatsuki)



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Many thanks to Mariko Oohashi and Sayoko Yamashita for their help with the translation of newsletter items

SIG NEWS/BUSINESS

Call for Nominations

At our SIG Annual Business Meeting during JALT/PAC3 in Kyushu we will have an election of officers to continue the hard work and leadership on behalf of PRAG SIG. Nominations will be accepted from the floor. The SIG has grown to over 70 members thanks to the efforts of the current roster of officers and volunteers. They gladly encourage other willing members in the SIG to step forward and do their part.

Also, a hearty welcome and thanks goes to Bill Hogue who founded and is maintaining our online news group JALTPRAGSIG. He has helped even the most computer illiterate among the officers to use and contribute this valuable SIG resource. Thank you Bill!



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FEATURE ARTICLE

The Place of Pragmatics in the Teaching/Learning of Language and Culture

Donna Tatsuki

In order to visualize the place of pragmatics in the teaching of language and culture one must start by defining and locating culture. To do this it is helpful to refer to the pioneering work by Geert Hofstede who looked at the way local culture was a part of and expressed in corporate culture (in this case IBM worldwide). Hofstede (1991) differentiates between culture in the narrow sense of education, art, or literature with culture as viewed in social or cultural anthropology. In this broader view, culture is seen as patterns of thinking, feeling and acting. He visualized the position of culture in the following diagram:

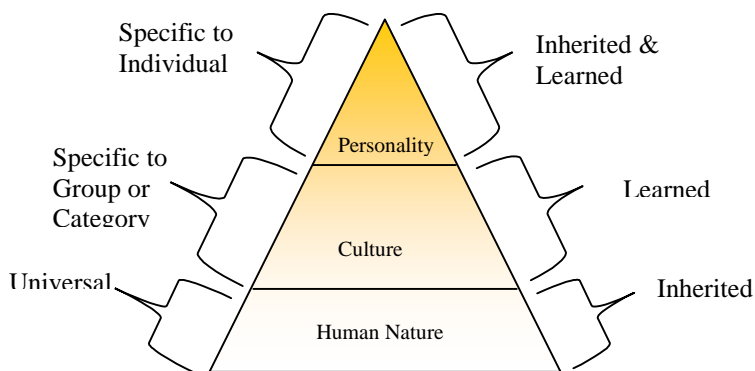


Figure 1. Three Levels of Uniqueness in Human Mental Programming (adapted from Hofstede, 1991, p. 6)

In Hofstede's conceptualization, culture straddles the gap between the universal commonalities among all humans and the specific idiosyncrasies that each person displays in their personalities. Although the lines in this diagram are solid, it should be noted that the use of gradient color is symbolic of the overlap and indistinctness of each level.

Hofstede used an onion diagram to illustrate his view of culture as a many-layered concept. At the heart of everything he places *Values*. Values are defined as broad tendencies to prefer certain states to others among dichotomies such as ugly-beautiful, dirty-clean, unnatural-natural, abnormal-normal, paradoxical-logical, irrational-rational, etc. The next layer out is labeled *Rituals*, which stand for collective activities such as greeting, paying respect, social/religious ceremonies, etc. Beyond *Rituals* is the layer labeled *Heroes*, which refers to persons alive or dead, real or imaginary who possess characteristics prized in the culture. According to Hofstede, the cultural purpose of heroes is to provide models for behavior. The final and outermost layer is labeled *Symbols*. It is in this layer that Hofstede places words (language),

gestures, pictures, objects, clothing, hairstyles or other superficial (in his estimation) expressions of culture. Cutting through all of these layers he introduces the notion of *Practice*—the means by which a culture coherently and cohesively inculcates its values at each level of expression.

The word *practice* comes from the same roots as the term used to describe the modern scholarly field of Pragmatics. "Pragmaticus" found in Late Latin and "pragmaticos" in Greek, both mean "being practical" and are used to describe customs, conventions, norms or traditions of behavior. In linguistics, *pragmatics-as-use* looks at ways people use language (and other signs, rituals or symbols) to accomplish communication goals. In addition, *pragmatics-as-effects* includes research into the effects on listeners as well as the effects on those who learn and use a particular language and the cultural views embedded in it. Researchers into pragmatics begin by making observations of language in use and then look for patterns, rituals and connections that lead to understanding of the values that underlie them. The basic unit of analysis is

usually an utterance or speech act. So pragmatists start with what can be directly observed and try to build up a their understanding of how patterns in these observations offer insight into the underlying values. So to summarize, culture is learned human behavior specific to a group in which values are shared and expressed through various practices. These practices depend very heavily (although not exclusively) on language.

A central problem to the study of pragmatics (and culture) is the distinction between what is *desirable* and what is *desired*. *Desirable* refers to how people think that the world ought to be. In this case the norm of behavior is absolute—right/wrong, agree/disagree. On the other hand, *desired* is what people want for themselves. In this case the norm is statistical—

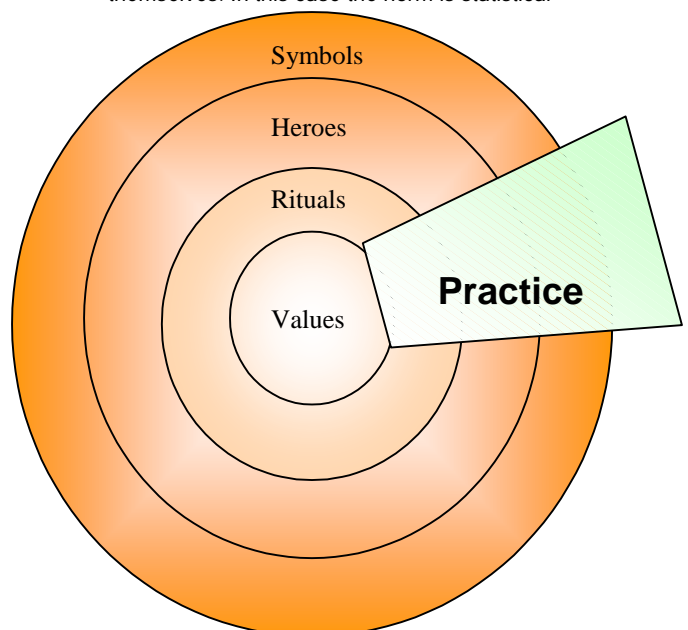


Figure 2. Hofstede's Onion Diagram (1991, p. 9)

based on actual behavior. The gap between *desirable* and *desired* behavior is parallel to some extent with the *competence* and *performance* distinction in that performance of language users (even native speakers) does not exactly match their competence. What we know and what we do is not always the same. Here is an extremely simplistic example. Let's look at a common ritual of greeting:

A: How are you?

B: Fine, thanks [and you] or [How are you]?

The question is not seeking information but is rather seeking a solidarity building exchange by sharing the conversational floor. When given a "How are you?" prompt in a data collecting instrument such as a DCT (Discourse Completion Test) this is the likely exchange that will be reported. Such a response corresponds to what is considered to be *desirable* behavior.

However as we all know and have experienced, there are times when B might answer differently:

A: How are you?

B: Well, [here begins a long monologue].

This corresponds to what is *desired*. In this case, speaker B has a need to unload information to the other person even if it violates an expected absolute norm. So, when might this be appropriate? If A and B are intimates (family, close friends) then the question might be interpreted as a true information seeking question since solidarity building can be done in other culturally appropriate ways (through touching, physical nearness, etc.). What is difficult to decide in this case is where to draw the line of who is an "intimate" and who is not. Even among native speakers, there are times when we have started with the ritual, expected the ritual response and were dismayed by getting the long-winded version.

If native speakers get it wrong, imagine the pitfalls that await the language learner. The inclusion of a pragmatics component in language learning raises the awareness of these situations and provides the means and vocabulary to explain the whys and wherefores of appropriate use in an actual context. It also encourages the learner to look for a possible parallel situation in his or her own language and cultural context. If a parallel does exist the learner can note where, how and how much they overlap. If the learner finds no obvious parallel in his or her own language, the pragmatic awareness-raising task has offered some models of appropriate use in a context and opportunities for practice. Focusing on a cultural behavior that can be directly observed and then examining the specifics of the context can accomplish all of this.

So where does *desirable* and *desired* fit on Hofstede's triangle (see Figure 3)? Clearly, individual personality types and traits will influence behavior. The influence of personality (in combination with context and other situational factors) may explain variance from what is generally agreed to be culturally desirable. Pragmatics-as-use research strives to clarify which observed (primarily linguistic) behaviors exemplify collective values and which observed behaviors are individual expressions. Pragmatics-as-effect research examines the changes and adaptations that people make as they develop language from childhood to maturity as well as those which

learners make as they use a new language. The direct benefit to language learners is reliable information about language use in defined contexts and the effects of such use.

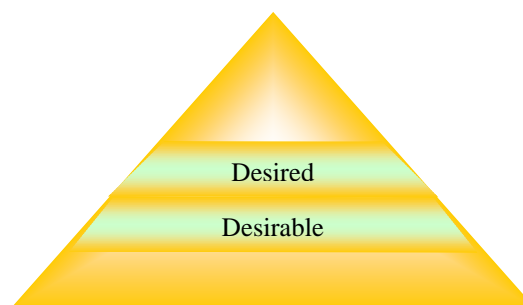


Figure 3. Desired and Desirable in Relation to Human Behavior

Now some might argue that culture is much more complex than this and that the key to intercultural training is through simulations in the native language that make people aware of and perhaps adapt their cultural values. Of course this kind of awareness building is valuable and I do not dispute that. So why not just study culture? It has often been said, "Who understands the language understands the world." Note that it does not say, "Who understands the world understands the language." Such a statement is clearly nonsense. It is quite clear that understanding a language is a necessity for ultimately understanding a world (or a culture). In fact some intercultural trainers assume a certain level of target language competence before the intricacies of training and adaptation begin. Furthermore, because language plays such a strong role in constructing reality one can never come even close to understanding the reality of another until one uses the same words to construct similar images. From my own experience of slowly and painfully learning Japanese, I know that with every gain in language use there is a gain in insight, empathy and an ever so subtle change in my own behavior repertoire. Language permeates virtually every aspect of culture and cultural learning. Therefore providing learners with the tools and opportunities for meaningful interaction using the target language is an act of cultural learning. Pragmatics provides the tools, communicative language teaching, the opportunities and the target language, the access for learning a culture.



MATERIALS WATCH

Pragmatic Tasks with a Purpose

Robert Long

If you are like many teachers, you probably have been using a textbook that relies heavily on situational/grammar routines, along with a few references to functions. Popular textbooks that use this approach include *English Firsthand*, *Interchange*, *True Colors*, *Headway* among others; typical situations include dating, personalities customs, getting around town, movies, and meeting classmates. At first glance this approach seems the most sensible approach to teaching communicative oral English; however, unless one has very motivated students, this approach (especially after the several weeks) tends to fall flat, with teachers initiating most of the routines, and students ending up trying to memorize words and phrases.

Even in the best of circumstances, it is difficult to make this approach work since it is a collection of unrelated conversational routines and vocabulary with no connection to the speaker's own identity and context. Language is tied to context and to identity, taking away these two crucial elements leaves students with only a very superficial knowledge of English structures. A second issue relates to the tendency of some teachers to believe that their students are becoming more fluent if they master more grammar and conversational role plays. Knowledge of English, however, does not lead to interactive competency. Since language involves emotions, communication breakdowns can easily occur when a speaker is being persuaded, pressured, or annoyed.

In short, I found that the act of rehearsing communication tends to be superficial, and predictable since the only motivation to speak is to receive a grade. When language instruction and textbooks ignore the importance that one's emotions and identity has on communication, students will have difficulty being motivated.

Stepping Out with Strategic Interactions

Back in 1998 I first began using Robert DiPietro's strategic interactions (SI), since it provided students with an agenda and motivation to speak. The motivation to speak (just as it is in real life) comes from trying to solve problems, interact and form relationships, and to project one's own identity and views. The procedure for SI has three stages: (a) the rehearsal stage where participants discuss and negotiate the problem-solving strategies and discuss which functional expressions are applicable to given situation, (b) the performance stage in which students perform the scenario in front of participants, and (c) the debriefing stage, a time in which students (and the teacher) will discuss their reactions to the scenario and whether or not their responses were appropriate and accurate. The principle aim of strategic interactions (SI) is to develop student confidence, fluency, linguistic accuracy, and pragmatic competency. Students are cast in various contexts in which they are reacting to questions, comments, observations, opinions, invitations, problems, and conflicts. DiPietro writes that strategic interactions are more than a glorified role play insofar that they are open-ended allowing teachers to explore differences in language and outcomes; furthermore, they can be episodic,

covering two or more events. Second, not only is there a shared context, but also the participants have their own agendas and identities that are linked to the real world. Scenarios can be group-oriented, multiple-roled, data-based, and open-ended (below).

Situation 6: Won't Gain Weight?	
Role A - for the subject (an employee at a bakery)	
You are working at a small bakery in a large shopping center. The boss told you that you would get a special bonus if all the items sold out three days in a row. Thanks to your effort, all the items sold out the last two days. By the way, low-calorie cakes are one of this bakery's specialties, which is in the newspaper advertisements. You sold the entire supply for today except a couple of fattening ones. It is freezing and snowy outside there have been a few customers around. It's 20:50, and the closing time is 21:00. You are about to tell the boss honestly that you have to give up the bonus because of the bad weather. Someone is coming in. Prepare yourself to sell the unsold cakes.	

Improving DiPietro's Strategic Interactions

As you might imagine, many students, especially at lower levels, would have a difficult time with this particular scenario. A further problem, that I encountered early on, was that students could not relate to the particular situation, or found finish their scenarios too quickly. There was also no means of assessing what most students actually did in most classes with 25 or more students. In addition to this, there was a simply a lack of variety to the tasks and activities, so many students would easily get bored. To solve these particular problems, I decided to use five pragmatic tasks before presenting students with a particular scenario.

Written Discourse Completion Tasks	any pragmatics measures that oblige examinees to (a) <i>read</i> a written situation description and then (b) <i>write</i> what they would say next in the situation.
Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Tasks	any pragmatic measures that oblige examinees to (a) <i>read</i> a written description then (b) select what they think would be best to say next in the situation from a list of options.
Oral Discourse Completion Tasks	any pragmatics measures that oblige examinees to (a) <i>listen</i> to a situation description (typically from a cassette recording) and (b) <i>speak aloud</i> what they would say next in that situation (usually into another cassette recorder).
Discourse Role-Play Tasks	any pragmatic measures that oblige the examinees to (a) <i>read</i> a situation description and (b) <i>play a role</i> with another person in the situation.
Discourse Self-Assessment Tasks	any pragmatic measures that oblige examinees to (a) <i>read</i> a situation description and (b) <i>rate</i> their own ability to perform pragmatically in that situation.

In time, I found it very helpful to sequence activities, starting with easier multiple-choice discourse completion tasks, and discourse self-assessment tasks followed by written discourse completion tasks, before moving on to more open-ended discourse role plays; see tables 1 and 2 for a description of novice and intermediate-level activities that have proven successful in developing interactive competency. In general, I have students sit in pairs, read through the tasks before deciding on how they would respond to each situation. Afterwards, one student will randomly select situations and initiate the simulation (gambit).

Table 1: Novice-Level Strategic Interactive Tasks

Activity	Competency Procedure	Examples
Better Said <i>Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Tasks</i>	Orientation: Providing word / phrase level information about oneself or interests. Procedure: Have students read and mark their responses. Afterwards, provide answers. Discuss and have students interact with one reading aloud the prompts, another responding.	Prompts <i>I am interested in rap music.</i> -Oh, really--I think it is garbage myself. -Wow! I didn't know anyone like that stuff. -Hmmm--I always wanted to know more about it. -Oh--great.
I Stand Corrected <i>Discourse Role-Play Task</i>	Orientation: Correcting misinformation about one's background or history, or in regards to location, process. Procedure: Have students select various ones to ask their partner. After changing partners and roles, have students speak longer and faster.	Role A: 1. Isn't your name Haga? 2. I heard that you have 6 people in your family? 3. Mr. Long said you like playing volleyball. 4. If I remember correctly, you said you like chess. Role B: 1. Is it true that you were born in Hokkaido. 2. Is today really your birthday? 3. I like running just like you. 4. So how long have you practiced kendo?
Are You Free <i>Role-Play Self-Assessment</i>	Socialization: The focus is on making invitations, and establishing common interests. Procedure: This is done in groups of 5; 4 students extend various invitations to the remaining student who must accept and reject them. Students change roles, and afterwards, they decide which student did the best.	Recipient: (accepts or rejects invitations, ideas) Student A: How about dinner, let's go to that soba shop across the street. Student B: Hey, let me treat you to dinner at McDonalds. Student C: Would you like to have dinner at that new Italian restaurant. It has REAL Italian food. Student D: There is a BBQ party at my place. Could you bring some beer. It's at 7:00 p.m.
In Context <i>Discourse Self-Assessment Task</i>	Various Contexts Procedure: Students read through various situations and rate their competency. Afterwards, they choose one or two of the situations, and write out how they would respond.	Scale: 1 - Very easy 2 - Somewhat challenging 3 - Difficult 4 - Very Problematic 1. You meet a beautiful woman / handsome man who is from New Zealand. Introduce yourself, and invite him / her out to dinner. [] 2. Your friend has had your favorite CD and you want it back. You think he/she might have lost it. Ask about it. []

You Don't Say <i>Written Discourse Completion Task</i>	Problem-solving: Respond to various complaints, and issues. Procedure: Have students read through and write down how they would respond to problems. Then in pairs, with one student giving advice, and the other responding to various complaints, and problems. Change partners so students can work on fluency.	Issues: -I have always lost at pachinko, mahjongg & poker. -I don't like learning English; it's too difficult. -I like playing baseball, but our team is really bad. -I have such a busy schedule! I wish I had more time. -Do you have ANY free time lately? I don't know what to do. -I have no friends here; everyone is too busy!
Face to Face <i>Written Discourse Completion Task</i>	Problem-solving: Respond to situational-based issues. Procedure: Again, have students read and write down how they would respond before acting out the practice. After doing several situations, have students change partners. Students who respond do not read aloud their response. Work on fluency	Situation: Your club captain wants the team to have more practice each week--two more hours! How do you respond? Club Captain: I've been looking for you. You know, I have been thinking that what the team really needs to have more practice. So we are going to practice 4 hours on Saturday instead of two. You: _____ Club Captain: Did you know that other school and city teams practice 5 hours each weekend? You: _____
For The Record <i>Discourse Role-Play Task</i>	Conflict-Resolution: Have students affirm or deny a variety of rumors or misunderstandings. Use two versions for pair work. Procedure: Have students in rows read through and respond to each other's prompts.	Set 1: -How can you be so lazy and relaxed all the time? -Someone said that you are always show up late? -Did you really cheat on the entrance exam? Set 2: -Am I to understand that you spend 90,000 a week on clothes? -So, do you like wearing old clothes all the time? -Why did you say that I can't speak English?
What If <i>Written Discourse Completion Task</i>	Conflict-Resolution: Have students listen and evaluate various solutions to a series of issues. Procedure: Students act as if they ask soliciting advice for a friend. In groups of 4, one student will listen and decide on the best answer for each cue. Act out.	Comment: Someone told my friend that he was boring for not liking baseball. Best Solution _____ What if someone told you that you were not good looking. Best Solution _____ What if you overheard someone say that you didn't look that strong or smart. Best Solution _____

"But What DO I DO?" —Teacher Tasks

1. Observe the dynamics of the pair / group, paying attention to body language, non verbals, and to turn-taking.
2. Suggest options if the pair / group appears to be stymied.
3. Be prepared to model utterances in the target language.
4. Give explanations, but do not make them lengthy.
5. In evaluating the grammar / accuracy of student output students can check whether their responses were accurately recorded, and correct any errors in grammar or spelling.

Table 2: Intermediate to Advanced Level Tasks

Activity	Competency Procedure	Examples
We Believe <i>Written Discourse Completion Tasks</i>	Orientation: Providing word / phrase level information about various issues and ideas. Procedure: Students in pairs decide on they would both would respond to a list of comments from people abroad. Afterwards, students change partners, chose if who reads and who responds, and work on their oral responses.	Jerry Fostrum , from New York City, writes: "Many people think sumo is the national sport of Japan. Therefore, don't you think it should be limited to just Japanese participants?" Our response: _____ Carlos Servito (Manila, Philippines): "I think baseball is not all that interesting. I am puzzled why Japanese like it so much." Our response: _____
Do's and Don'ts <i>Oral Discourse Completion Tasks</i>	Orientation: Correcting misinformation about some aspect in Japanese life and culture. Procedure: Have one row of students read out the following comments to their partners (who is not allowed to see the prompt). Students read and write down what their partners says.	Prompts concerning Japanese food: 1. Japanese put a lot of ketchup on <i>natto</i> . 2. I heard most Japanese have five bowls of <i>miso</i> soup in the morning. 3. Always put salt on your sashimi. 4. Make lots of noise when you are eating udon or steak; it's normal. 5. Always eat half of what is put on your plate; otherwise, people will think you eat like a pig.
How About <i>Discourse Role-Play Tasks</i>	Socialization: The focus is on responding to invitations and ideas. Procedure: This is done in groups of 3; one student is a reader and decides which response is best.	Classmate: (Jim Cook, American, 19) Comment: "Say I heard that many families like to get together during <i>Shogatsu</i> and go to three temples. Can I join you and your family?" --Student Response-- Comment: "It would be such a wonderful opportunity to go with someone's family-- and to videotape everthing too!" --Student Response--
Explain It Again <i>Oral Discourse Completion Tasks</i>	Socialization: The idea here is that students will try to help a foreigner out by expaining the background of some game, cultural convention, concept, etc. Procedure: Teachers read a loud a situation to a groupof students who then state how they would respond. This can also be done on tape with students giving their best response.	Susan Heverston , New Zealand, JET at Fukui High. 1. <i>"I like to learn a Japanese game to impress my friends. Some friend tried to tell me, but I just didn't understand. What do you think is the easiest game, and can you teach me?"</i> Bill Hapner , British, businessman, Tokyo. 2. <i>"I just can't understand which game is harder: Gomokunaraabe or Igo, and why?"</i> Richard Nichols , 34, American Tourist. 3. <i>"A friend of mine said that video games are very bad for Japanese children since they learn nothing from them. He said that traditional games teach children how to think.</i>

		<i>How do you feel about this."</i>
Paired Gambits <i>Discourse Self-Assessment Tasks</i>	Problem-solving: Procedure: In groups of five, students read through various situations and rate how they would do, giving reasons. Students then choose one person to act out how he/she would roleplay the situation.	Scene 1 American Friend Role A <i>You know, I think you should meet my [sister /brother]. He / she is very lonely. I know you could make him / her very happy.</i> Your response: _____ [] Scale: 1 - Very easy 2 -Somewhat challenging 3 - Difficult 4 - Very Problematic <i>It would really mean a lot to her/him if you could go out for a movie and dinner.</i> Your response: _____ [] Scale: 1 - Very easy 2 -Somewhat challenging 3 - Difficult 4 - Very Problematic
Perhaps Its Best <i>Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Task & Written Discourse Completion Task</i>	Problem-solving: Present students various intercultural issues and optional responses. Also give students a chance to state how they would initiate or respond to the given option. Procedure: Have studentsread through the various options, marking the best response, as well as writing down what they would say/write in that situation.	1. Your home stay family keeps taking you to parks.(they love parks), but you find this boring. A) Say nothing because whatever you might say would be insulting. B) Leave a written note about your feelings. C) Say that you don't like parks. D) Suggest an idea of visiting a museum. E) Give various excuses for not going; find other people who will take you where you want to go F) Have the son/daughter relay your feelings My oral / written comment would be _____
You Should Have Said <i>Written Discourse Completion Task</i>	Conflict-Resolution: The aim here is to have students understand various inappropriate replies and to give better ones. Procedure: Have students in pairs, find out how their partner would respond better to the prompts. There are 2 versions, one for each student.	Version 1 Someone calls you a cheater during a ball game. But you didn't cheat. So you say: <i>"I am VERY sorry. I better leave."</i> Should have said: _____ Your best friend from Canada doesn't like the way you explain the rules to shogi, so you say: <i>"FINE! If you DON'T like the way I explain, find another teacher."</i> Should have said: _____

These can then be turned into the teacher who can then identify common problems and have various examples to refer to in lectures. This paper examines the speech act of apology occurring in non-synchronous computer-mediated communication among people of different cultural backgrounds. Cohen, Olshtain, and Rosenstein (1986), Olshtain (1989), Trosborg (1994) found that

there were not many differences in main apology strategies but this finding can be attributed to that fact that the groups under study were from similar cultural backgrounds. On the other hand, one will find more variation when one compares two groups from distance cultures. Kasper, Maeshiba, Ross, and Yoshinaga (1996) examined transfer and proficiency of apologies between Japanese students of English at intermediate and advanced levels, native speakers of Japanese, and native speakers of English at two different universities in Hawaii. This study showed an overall agreement on the perception of the context. However, status differential between the speaker and the interlocutor produced different apology strategies. The Japanese native speakers and both of the subject groups who were learning English apologized less strongly by not using as many up-graders. Twice as many advanced learners of English intensified their apology as compared to the intermediate learners. Advanced learners and native English speakers offered repair in the "food on the customer" context much more readily than the other two groups. This may suggest that the advanced learners, who have spent more time in the target culture, may have developed more native like pragmatic ability.

Writing Your Own Strategic Interactive Tasks and Gambits

Table 3. Influence of Pragmatic Aspects

Tension	Ambiguity	Roles	Misunderstandings	Context
Emotion, passion	Evidential meaning	Role expectation	Sociolinguistic	Cultural
Commitment	Irrelevancy claims	Responsibilities -Acceptance -Denial	Lexical	Sub-cultural
Evaluation Compliments Criticism	Assumptions	Stereotypes -Positive -Negative	Semantic	Institutional norms
Apprehension Challenges Support	Attitudes Sincere Trustworthy	Status of speakers	Implicit discourse norms	Climate
Requests -Indirect -Direct	Fragmented speech	Competitive Cooperative	Misinterpretations	Group atmosphere
Confirmation -Rumors -Heresy	Environmental factors	Simple Complex	Phonetic triggers	Leadership factors
Obligation -Promises	Nonverbal communication	Personality -Insular -Socialized	Code-switching	Security
Competency	Irony / humor	Relationships	Pragmatic	Perceptions

Issue 1. Being mindful of pragmatic influences: Be aware that any of the five pragmatic aspects can influence dialogues.

Adapting textbook dialogues (or writing your own) should take into consideration some of the above elements.

Issue 2. The Appropriate Context: Identify a realistic situation that your students could have involving a foreigner, situations that would be familiar, meaningful and realistic. In the real world, Japanese students rarely would speak English to each other except for situations like English clubs meetings; therefore, it seemed logical to have situations based on four intercultural contexts (a) orientation (in which students ask for directions, or help foreigners in some manner), (b) socialization, (c) problem-

solving, and (d) conflict resolution.

Issue 3. Variety. Include diverse questions and opinions in your gambits, see Table 4 for 27 ways of asking questions, and Table 5 for six kinds of opinions.

Table 4: 27 Ways of Asking Questions

Can	Could	Will	Would	Shall	Should	May
Why	Do	Did	Does	Who	What	Might
Which	When	How	Where	Must	Has	Have
Am	Is	Are	Was	Had	Were	

Table 5: Six Kinds of Opinions

Comparison - contrast:	"I think Osaka is a better place to live than Tokyo."
Critical observations:	"Tokyo is a terrible place to live." "I will never learn Japanese."
Complimentary:	"You have a BEAUTIFUL girlfriend." "Your mother is SO nice."
Educated Guesses:	"It should take 5 hours to go to Osaka." "I think it costs 5,000 yen, but you will really like it."
Preferences:	"I like to go to the park before lunch."
Assumptions:	"I think you are the kind of guy who likes spicy food."

Issue 4. Include primary, secondary, and complementary acts.

Gradually introduce in your gambits various expressions that are used in daily interactions, stallers (umm.....well.... I don't know about that.), boosters (Oh, for heaven's SAKE), checks (Now....what did you say again?).

Issue 5. Grammar: Identify specific language forms that the tasks will address.

Issue 6. Pilot: Be ready to experiment and to change tasks several times with different kinds of students. Do not necessarily make changes after the initial rehearsal but after several random reviews when students have become very familiar with the goals of the task. Ask for student input on the tasks that you implement. Interview students who have gone abroad or have contact with foreigners for real life situations. Keep an updated list of tasks and gambits that succeed and fail. Try to identify reasons why certain tasks or gambits did not work.

Issue 7. Introducing Conversational Strategies: Many scenarios either ending too quickly or turning into an interrogative bout of questions and answers. I decided to emphasize conversational strategies, using the direct approach (Richards, 1990) of teaching fixed expressions. As Dornyei and Thurrel (1994) maintain, "polished conversationalists are in command of hundreds of such phrases and use them, for example to break smoothly into a conversation, to hold the listener's interest, to change the subject, to react to what others say, and to step elegantly out of the conversation when they wish" (p. 41).

Conclusion

In conclusion, I found using SI-based activities made my class far more interactive and interesting. It allowed me to put aside the shopping list of functions and conversational routines that textbooks offer and allowed me to lead my students into some real conversations.

Robert Long is co-editor of JALT's The Language Teacher and coordinator of the Crossing Cultures (forming) SIG. He can be contacted at long@dhs.kyutech.ac.jp

CONFERENCE WATCH

PRAGMATICS SIG AT PAC3 at JALT 2001 Featured Events



Saturday: November 24
SIG sponsored FORUM: "Acquisition of Pragmatics"

[15:00-16:45 at AIM 3B]

Moderator: Megumi Kawate-Mierzejewska

Mariko Achiba

Ken Rose

Donna Tatsuki

Sayoko Yamashita & Martin Willis

Discussant: Gabriele Kasper

SIG SPONSORED SPEAKER:

Gabriele Kasper, U of H at Manoa

"Can pragmatics be learnt in foreign language classrooms?"

[17:00-17:45 at AIM 3B]

PRAGMATICS SIG SWAP MEET:

[18:00-18:45, AIM 3B]

Moderator: Donna Tatsuki

Sunday, November 25

PRAGMATICS COLLOQUIUM:
"Pragmatics and its pedagogical application"

[9:00-10:45 at Rm 33A]

Moderator: Sayoko Yamashita

Akemi Fu

Keiko Sato

Megumi Kawate-Mierzejewska

Discussant: Donna Tatsuki

PRAG SIG AGM

(Annual General Meeting)

[11:00-11:45 in the VIP Room!]

*Officers, please prepare for the annual reports!

*Pragmatics SIG members, please bring your friends to the meeting and let them sign up!

Conference Report: 8th International Conference on Cross- Cultural Communication at Hong Kong Baptist University

by Brent Poole

This conference was held in HKSAR at Hong Kong Baptist University on July 24-28, 2001. There were approximately 250 presentations scheduled and participants came from every corner of the world. On the first day, a cyclone that had swept through Southern China resulted in the government hoisting a warning that virtually shut down the city including the conference. Like the participants, there were a great variety of topics that were presented. This being a pragmatics journal, this article will highlight three presentations for the like-minded.

Broadening Language use Options in Formal Discourse: The Malaysian Experience

Rodolfo Jacobson who is from the University of Texas at San Antonio gave a presentation on code switching practices in formal contexts in Malaysia. It was argued that Malaysian code switching techniques are unique for several reasons. First, the behavior is unique in terms of code switching discourse in that it often occurs in more formal settings as opposed to being restricted to an informal medium of communication. Second, modes are best conceptualized by putting them on a continuum from individual insertion of words to long quotations. Hence, intersentential and intrasentential switches occur in formal contexts.

Third, formal settings such as hearings at the Higher Court, corporate meetings, and faculty meetings at universities are distinguished by the occurrence of the Malay and the English language. But this is contingent upon a host of factors such as: when the contextual interest are conducive to such language performance, when the interaction is among multi-ethnic individuals, or when the individuals involved in the interaction agree that switching is suitable. Moreover, the possibility of switching

behavior in formal contexts is a function of the individuals in the interaction. Staff members and meeting facilitators are constrained by the authorities in the power structure as well as in the areas of content that are addressed.

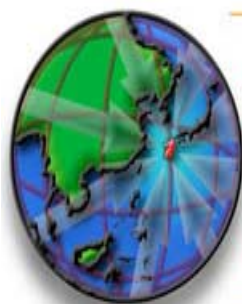
When the type of formal setting is taken into consideration, code-switching behavior was most flexible in faculty meetings at universities. There were more frequent clausal and phrasal embeddings in this setting as compared to others with the number of full sentences most evident when the Dean was serving as the chair of the meeting. Code switching in Malaysia does not seem to undermine the national language in that most of the speakers that were studied could produce monolingual utterances that indicated that they were proficient in both languages.

Openings and Closings of State of the Nation Addresses: A Cross-Cultural Comparison

Mirjana N. Dedaic, who is a doctoral student at Georgetown University, talked about the openings and closings of three State of the Nation addresses. The public figures that were studied include: Nelson Mandela in South Africa, Bill Clinton in the United States, and Franjo Tudjman in Croatia. These speech events were analyzed in light of Goffman's framing and footing, discourse analysis, Wierzbicka's cross-cultural pragmatics, Gumperz interactional linguistic analysis, and Lackoff's application of Gricean maxims. She examined the two most extreme parts of each opening and closing. Specifically, the initial statement and greeting in the opening of the speech as well as the statement that came after the farewell in the closing. The following paragraph will focus on one aspect of the opening. First, she looked at who each politician addressed as it relates to the level of formality. Tudjman addressed nine individuals or groups who were in the audience, Mandela lists seven, and Clinton five. Individuals who represent political components of certain areas of the power structure were first addressed by all three politicians. After this formalization of the greeting, all three politicians gave recognition to guests and members of the parliament. Tudjman's opening was found to be the most formal in that he also gave recognition to three other veins of the Croatian power structure. He was also more particular in his initial token of recognition. The reason for this seems to be twofold. The first factor, as one can imagine, is cultural and the second concerns itself with geo-political history.

A Contrastive Analysis of Hedges in Chinese and English Scientific Writings

Gao Xiaofang, who teaches at Normal University P.R. China, presented on the use of hedges in scientific journals. The data was rather limited in scope in that the researcher only used five journal articles in English and the same number in Chinese. She examined the articles using both a quantitative and qualitative approach. Insofar as the former is concerned, both groups used hedges but a great deal of differentiation was found. Of the 5 articles that were examined, the Chinese used 103 hedges as compared to the other group who used 457. The Chinese scientists tended to use hedges in the discussion and results section of the articles as compared to the English articles where they were more evenly distributed. The reason why there were fewer hedges in the introduction and materials and methods section may be due to L1 transfer and cultural differences. In relation to the latter it was argued that scientists, like teachers, in China are thought to know everything. One of the more salient qualitative differences was how each group used their hedges. The hedge 'this result suggests' (closest translation from Chinese) was used by both groups. However, scientists writing in English used it in conjunction with other hedges to add to their mitigating function. The Chinese writers tended to use the phrase in an isolated fashion usually not with other hedges. It was argued that Chinese writers didn't perceive this genre as a means of interaction and/or communication. If they used too many hedges, the reader may extrapolate that the research is too precarious. "They act more like authorities rather than researchers."



PAC3 at JALT2001
2001: A Language Odyssey
November 22-25, 2001; Kitakyushu, Japan

WEB WATCH

Journal of Asian Pacific Communication 10:1 (2000)

The concept of self and apology strategies in two cultures

Keiko Okumura and Li Wei

The speech act of apologizing aims at maintaining, restoring and enhancing interpersonal relationships. Most of the existing studies of apology in different languages and cultures follow the Brown and Levinson (1987) approach and describe apology as a 'negative politeness' strategy. In this paper, we study the use of apology by two groups of women from Japanese and British cultural backgrounds, in conjunction with an examination of the cultural conception of 'self'. Using both standard test (Twenty Statements Test, TST) and questionnaire data, we demonstrate that important differences exist in the self concept of the two groups, and these differences are reflected in and impact on the women's use of apologies in social interaction.

Facework in Chinese service encounters

Yuling Pan

This study investigates politeness phenomena in Chinese service encounters, contrasting the use of face work in two types of service encounters: state-run vs. privately owned stores. I argue that politeness is a dynamic process, which involves participants' perception of a social setting and the assumed interpersonal relationship in a given situation. It is shown that social distance and the type of social relationship play an essential role in Chinese politeness behavior and that the use of face work in service encounters signals a change in discursive practice due to social and economic changes in China.

An analysis of the metaphorical usage of campaign slogans in the 1996 presidential campaign in Taiwan

Jennifer M. Wei

This paper explores a variety of metaphors notably, war, revenge, and a journey of spirituality awakening — used by the 1996 presidential and vice-presidential candidates in Taiwan. It uses the 1996 presidential election rhetoric as a case study to analyze how political ideologies; tactics and strategies are incorporated in metaphors in presidential slogans. It adopts Lakoff & Johnson (1980)'s proposal of metaphor as symbols that

orient our perception and influence how we structure our actions. Kennedy (1998)'s treatises on political rhetoric are introduced as theoretical background for further analysis, following a short sketch of the socio-political context of recent democratic developments in Taiwan. Studies of the election rhetoric, its contributions and limitations are then examined. Data for analysis were collected from newspapers, official memoranda and pamphlets available to the public over the campaign period, roughly from late January to late March in 1996. The results show overlaps and contrasts of metaphorical usage among the four sets of candidates. In conclusion, metaphorical usage not only orients the campaign style of the candidates but also shapes voters' perceptions.

Understanding Asian students' oral participation modes in American classrooms

Jun Liu

Second language acquisition (SLA) researchers have not adequately explored English as a Second Language (ESL) students' use of English in academic settings other than the language classroom. Social contexts of language learning, such as students' content course classrooms, affect not only the amount and the type of input learners receive, but also the extent to which learners are able to engage in meaningful real-life communication in the target language. An increasing educational concern in American academic settings is some ESL students' minimization of the importance of verbal communication in their content courses. To challenge the linguistic explanation of the inability of ESL students to adapt to active oral participation modes in their content courses, this study, by focusing on Asian graduate students in different majors in a US university, examined multiple pertinent factors affecting their oral participation modes via both classroom observations and interviews. Sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive, affective, and pedagogical/environmental factors were found to influence these students' oral communication in their content courses, with socio-cultural factors exerting the largest influence on students' classroom reticence.

http://www.benjamins.com/jbp/journals/Japc/Japc_101.html

BOOK WATCH

THE PRAGMATICS OF UNCERTAINTY: Its Realization and Interpretation in English and Japanese

TANAKA Noriko

(2001) Shumpusha

THE PRAGMATICS OF UNCERTAINTY attempts to examine how 'uncertainty' is employed in interaction, to develop the concept of 'uncertainty', and to consider its implication for cross-cultural interaction.

The illocutionary force of an utterance may not always be determined in our interaction, but can be left uncertain intentionally.

Although this was not seriously considered at the earlier stage of pragmatics, it has been more carefully studied these years. Tanaka focuses on the concept of 'ambivalence' introduced by Leech 1983 and Thomas 1986, and develops this concept.

She argues that there are different types of ambivalence: *ambivalence-strategic*, *ambivalence-genuine*, and *discoursal ambivalence*. To support her argument, Tanaka takes various examples from daily interactions in English and Japanese. She also examines English and Japanese TV chat shows to see how the interviewer and the interviewee exploit various kinds of 'uncertainty' in this particular *activity type* (Levinson 1979).

The final part focuses on the implication of 'uncertainty' for cross-cultural interaction. It demonstrates that 'uncertainty' may be a cause of communication breakdown especially in cross-cultural settings.

Focusing on the interaction between English and Japanese speakers, Tanaka discusses '*pragmatic failure*' (Thomas 1983). With the examples from her own experience, she shows how 'uncertainty' can be a major cause of misunderstanding when we interact with people who may have different norms or conventions in how to use ambivalence.

With various types of examples, this book shows how 'uncertainty' can be a useful strategy to achieve a particular purpose, and how it may prevent the addressee from understanding the speaker's intent properly.

Of Related Pragmatic Interest:

Rethinking conversational code-switching: Codes, speech varieties, and contextualization

Celso Alvarez-Cáccamo, (1990)

[Published in: Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society, February 16-19, 1990. General Session and Parasession on The Legacy of Grice. Berkeley: Berkeley Linguistics Society, pp. 3-16]

This is a paper on the use of code switching (Galician and Spanish) as a signaling device in face-to-face interaction. One point of interest is the author's contention that code-switching enables a speaker to "manage the speaker's 'ambiguous' or dual group identification." He comments that "Research on code-switching (particularly Heller's and Scotton's work) has highlighted the role of language choices in managing the speaker's ambiguous roles and social identifications."

This paper is available at:

<http://www.udc.es/dep/lx/cac/bls90.htm>