PRAGMATIC MATTERS

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERVISING EDITOR

It has been said that weather must be very important to sailors because they are always complaining about it. Come to think of it, everyone complains about the weather no matter what the temperature or season. These days, people moan that is "So hot", or "Too humid" yet a short few weeks ago they were distressed by the cold and sharp winds.

According to Webster 's dictionary, there are two definitions for the word *complain*: 1) To express feelings of pain, dissatisfaction, or resentment, and 2) To make a formal accusation. What this simple dictionary definition fails to point out is that complaints serve different purposes. Complaints may be used to raise another person's awareness of frustrations, stresses that they might in some way be seen responsible for in order to instigate changes.

However, complaints can also be used as a means of sharing frustrations with another person in a bid to build solidarity. Boxer, refers to these as "indirect complaints." However, as DuFon (1995) rightly pointed out, Boxer's use of the word 'Indirect' adds confusion since 'direct' and 'indirect' in this case do not refer to the "length of the inferential path needed to arrive at an utterance's illocutionary point" (Blum-Kulka, 1987, p.133). DuFon contends that they should be more accurately regarded as "gripes" to differentiate them from "complaints" as established in the literature (c.f. House & Kasper, 1981; Olshtain & Weinbach 1987, 1993).

Regardless of the label, complaints or gripes about the weather might be a bit misguided. As Pennsylvania State University geophysicist Richard Alley notes in his provocative book *The Two Mile*

Time Machine: Ice cores, Abrupt Climate Change, and Our Future, the climate we love to hate "is about as good as it gets." If you think the weather is crazy now, consider that Greenland's glaciers and other geophysical records tell us the norm for the past 110,000 years featured wild swings between hot and dry or cold and wet conditions, whose unpleasantness ranged far beyond anything in our cultural memory. We had better learn to love it, make the most of it and do nothing to upset it. Gripe and commiserate together if you must, but stop complaining about the weather - it's better now than ever. (References on page 2)

(Donna Tatsuki)

IN THIS ISSUE

SIG NEWS/BUSINESS

Pragmatics (affiliate) SIG:

Coordinator Sayoko Yamashita attended the June OGM held in Tokyo as PRAG SIG representative to JALT National. We became "affiliate" status (which is better than "forming"). We are on the road to full SIG status if we keep our membership numbers over 50 and continue publishing regular newsletters, participating in the JALT national conference (see page 7) and cooperating with JALT Chapters in regional events (e.g. the June mini-conference which was held in Kobe).

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HELP! Volunteers Needed!
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Japanese Language Translators

FEATURE ARTICLE

Tracking Pragmatic Development*

Jack Barrow   barrow@oiuw.oiu.ac.jp
Masao Tada   tada@oiuw.oiu.ac.jp

Osaka International University for Women

Tracking pragmatic development in learners is a complicated task so researchers usually will track one speech act such as requesting. Tracking more than one illocutionary act can be done reliably if the coding system used is simple and restricted to just a finite set. Imagine trying to code for all the possible illocutionary acts. Is it possible? Researchers in developmental pragmatics such as by Ninio and Snow (1996) argue that a finite system of distinct types of sociolinguistic concepts underlie utterance meaning and propose (Ninio, Snow, Pan, & Rollins, 1994) a comprehensive taxonomy to classify communicative acts in mother and child interactions. Does such a finite system exist? Researchers in the ethnomethodological tradition, however, might argue that meanings are created ad hoc and that utterance meaning is infinite, depending on how speakers recreate the intended meaning at a particular moment. Within the area of developmental pragmatics, Ninio and Snow (1996) place the following domains: a) the development of rules governing uses of speech, b) the development of conversation skills, and c) the development of the ability to produce extended discourse and genre-specific forms. Basically, the pragmatic-related ability to carry a conversation involves the ability to accomplish actions (Hutchby & Woofitt, 1998) or illocutionary acts within pairs of ordered utterances. This would include the class of formulaic speech acts such as thanking and requesting which serve as responses to the communication situation (Aijmer, 1995).

As an experiment, we adapted the Ninio, et. al. taxonomy to our study of Japanese EFL college learners developing conversation skills in English. We wished to see if such a coding system could be useful in tracking pragmatic development of young adults over time. We used the simplified coding system developed by Ninio, Snow, Pan, and Rollins (1994), the INCA-A, or Inventory of Communicative Acts –Abridged, also found in the CHILDES manual (MacWhinney, 2000). By using frequency analyses of codings made, we can find out the frequency and types of communicative acts performed by each speaker at both the beginning and end of a term of instruction.

Table 1 shows both interactional types and illocutionary acts for one pair of students. The spoken data taken from second-year female college students (T1= 10 minutes discussion about shopping; T2= 10 minutes discussion about junior and high school memories) was transcribed using the CHAT format and coded using the coding mode of the CLAN software (MacWhinney, 2000). Coding mode allows you to make your own coding system from which you can insert codes quickly using the hand-held mouse into a separate coding tier. To see examples how this is done, you can download the software, manuals and sample files from http://childes.psy.cmu.edu.

Table 1. Interactional types and illocutionary acts for one pair of students

T1 St L	T1 St H	T2 St L	T2 St H	Case 1 Interactional Types
8 $dcc:	7 $dcc:	18 $dcc:	14 $dcc:	discussing clarification of communication
19 $dnp:	32 $dnp:	24 $dnp:	26 $dnp:	discussing the nonpresent
			1 $dhs:	discussing hearer's sentiments
			2 $djf:	discussing joint focus of attention
8 $mrk:	1 $mrk:	3 $mrk:	2 $mrk:	marking the event: laughter, thanking, emotion
2 $nia:	8 $nia:		11 $nia:	negotiating the immediate activity; gambits (:DM)
1 $nma:	1 $nma:			negotiate mutual attentiveness and proximity

ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS based on Ninio, Snow, Pan, and Rollins (1994)

T1 st. L	T1 st. H	T2 St. L	T2 St. H	
3 $:aa	2 $:aa	4 $:aa	1 $:aa	answer in affirmative to yes/no question
	1 $:ad			agree to carry out an act requested
1 $:an				answer in negative to yes/no question
	1 $:ap			agree to proposition or proposal
	1 $:cl			call attention to hearer

				INTERACTIONAL MODIFICATIONS
2 $:cd:cc	1 $:cd:cc	2 $:cd:cc	5 $:cd:cc	Confirmation check
5 $:ct:sf	2 $:ct:sf	3 $:ct:sf		Correction; Self reformulation
	2 $:ct:te:ej	2 $:ct:te:ej		Other correction by translation (Williams, et. al.)
	1 $:ct:of	1 $ct:of:ej	4 $ct:of:ej	Other reformulation (includes translation ej/je)
1 $:rc				Clarification request
2 $:rt:sr	1 $:rt:sr	5 $:rt	2 $:rt	Repeat other's utterance; self-repetitions

T1 st. L	T1 st. H	T2 St. L	T2 St. H	
			1 $:dc	create a new state of affairs by declaration
	1 $:dm		9 $:dm	discourse marker
6 $:en	1 $:en	3 $:en	2 $:en	express positive emotion
2 $:eq	2 $:eq			self-elicitation of question during lapse
1 $:es				express surprise
2 $:mk				mark occurrence of event (thank)
2 $:pd	2 $:pd			promise
1 $:qn	4 $:qn	1 $:qn	6 $:qn	wh/ question
	3 $:rp			request, propose or suggest an action
1 $:rq				suggestion about hearer's wishes
2 $:sa	2 $:sa	4 $:sa		answer a wh-Q with a statement
1 $:si	1 $:si		3 $:si	state intent to carry out act by speaker
1 $:st	17 $:st	13 $:st	17 $:st	make a declarative statement
2 $:ta		1 $:ta		answer a limited-alternative question
2 $:tq	1 $:tq			ask a limited alternative yes/no question
7 $:ws		2 $:ws	1 $:ws	express a wish
2 $:yq	3 $:yq	1 $:yq	3 $:yq	ask a yes/no question
1 $:xa	1 $:xa	2 $:xa		exhibit attentiveness to hearer
21	19	12	12	Total number of types used
47	50	40	53	Total number of tokens
0.45	0.38	0.30	0.23	Type/Token ratio

The INCAA-A was developed for coding interaction between mothers and children and does not take into account the various interactional modifications that adult learners use in the negotiation of meaning. To code for the numerous modifications of adults, the authors devised an experimental tier of codes (See Interactional Modifications in Figure 1) for the DCC interaction type (discussing clarification of communication) to code modifications such as confirmation checks (Williams, et. al., 1998).

Initial interrater agreement was .75 followed by the two raters (ourselves) discussing each disagreement until agreement was met. Higher agreement should be attainable with more refinement of the coding and more coder training. In addition, we added a code for the use of discourse markers (DM) to track the use of formulaic sequences used in maintaining the cohesion of the conversation.

Looking at overall pragmatic development (Table 1) over a semester of conversation practice in pairs, the most dramatic increases for both higher fluency (H) and lower fluency (L) student are in the interactional area of DCC (discussing the clarification of communication) and in the ability to express propositions or statements (for L). Through collaborative dialogue over a semester, the number of interactional modifications generally doubled for H and L. Learners developed DCC use collaboratively in order to speed up the time required for meaning negotiation and return to the propositional network of the conversation. Thus, DCC use in the form of confirmation checks, corrections (self- and other-repair) and repetitions contributed to overall fluency by speeding up responses, filing pauses and avoiding lapses (pauses were measured in a separate analysis). In addition to this added degree of communicative performance (DCC interaction type), L student was able to contribute more to the conversation in terms of propositions (statements), indicating increased grammatical performance. Furthermore, H demonstrates her superior and improved discourse competence at T2 with the skilful use of formulaic discourse markers to guide the conversation along.

To conclude, we feel that the taxonomy and the analytical tools described above have merit in SLA studies although more work needs to be done to establish a taxonomy suitable for SLA. By tracking a wide range of illocutionary acts, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of how our learners develop pragmatically❀

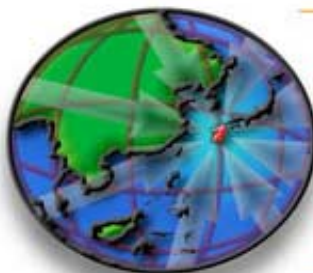| Interaction Type	Illocutionary Acts	Interactional Modifications
DCC: Discussing Clarification of Communication		
	DCC: CD: Clarification Demand	
		CO: Comprehension Check: JE/EJ (Same as TE)
		CC: Confirmation Check: JE/EJ (S as TE)
		RC: Clarification Request (TE Translation Request)
	DCC: CT: Corrections or modifications of previous words	
		SF: Self-reformulation: SG
		OF: Other-reformulation: JE/EJ
	DCC: RT: Repetition of previous words	
		SR: Self-repetition: SG
		OR: Other-repetition

Language Codes (switches) = JE, EJ, J
SG = (with signal from other to reformulate)

Figure 1. Suggested Coding Scheme for Interactional Modifications with EFL Learners

*This paper is part of what was presented in February at the 2001 American Association of Applied Linguistics conference in St. Louis.

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

Apologies in Computer-Mediated Communication

Brent Poole
Human International University

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.

Computer-Mediated Communication

To the best of my knowledge, e-mail communication has not been examined in regards to the production of apologies. The data collected from email exchanges is naturally occurring in that it is spontaneous. It reflects what is said as opposed to what people may think they would say if reacting to natural situations. The event has real-world implications, and the communicative event has an authentic source of pragmatic structures (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993 as cited in Cohen, 1996). Yet, how is e-mail communication different from face to face interaction or a telephone conversation and how does it relate to the second language of English?

Holliday (1999) contends that e-mail communication for second language learners is similar to that of native speakers of English. The linguistic features of e-mail tend to concur with those for personal letters and telephone conversations. E-mail is more interactive than letters and similar to conversations that are not face-to-face. Grosz-Gluckman (1997) characterizes e-mail communication vis-à-vis the EFL/ESL learner these ways:

- Communication via e-mail provides a situation where students can express themselves more freely; it promotes a more conversational style of interaction.
- E-mail exchanges can be sources of comprehensible input when learners have limited opportunities to use or interact with the L2. This allows the learner to generate meaning by exposure to authentic language in the form of message exchange.
- Reflection is encouraged because of the fact that it gives the learner time to formulate a response.
- Students, who are inhibited to speak out in class due to trait apprehension, may feel less anxiety and be more inclined to take risks in an e-mail exchange.
- E-mail exchanges create a sense of expectation for a response that can lead to the generation of more output.

The Study

The first year students of Human International University - Japan were required to have a key pal and to write to him/her at least once a week during summer session 2000, which was a 10-week quarter. A total of 86 students were involved with this project. There were 30 Japanese subjects and 56 foreign key pals. Roughly two thirds of the key pals came from non-English speaking countries (17 from Asia, 19 from other non-English speaking countries). The Japanese subjects were predominately female (F=25; M=5) and the average age was 19.4
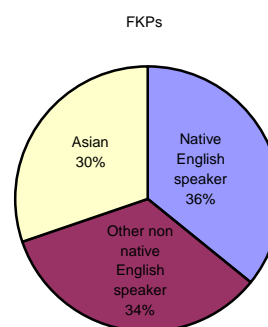

Figure 1. Foreign Key Pal Backgrounds

The Japanese students in this study (JS) wrote 211 e-mail messages to their key pals (KP) and they received an equal number of responses. The Japanese students averaged 159 words per e-mail and their key pals averaged 209. In terms of numbers of apologies produced, a large difference was found. The JS produced 100 apologies whereas their foreign key pals (FKP) produced 52. For both groups, the majority of the apologies occurred in the pre-opening sequence 56 percent (n=56) for the JS and 50 percent (n=26) for FKP. One subtle difference was in the number of apologies found in the body of the text (37% (n=19) of the FKP apologies as compared to 26% (n=26) for the JS. Also, the FKP realized this speech act in their pre-closing sequences 13 percent (n=7) of the time whereas the JS used it 16 percent (n=16) of the time. Another difference noted was 2 percent (n=2) of the JS apologies occurred in the closing (e.g. sorry!!! Bye Bye!!!).

The data was coded according the CCSARP coding manual (Blum-Kulka, S., House J., and Kasper G., 1989). As mentioned, these strategies are not mutually exclusive in that they are often combined. The IFID used with very little or no explanation was the preferred method of the JS group (51%) as compared to their FKPs (38%). The IFID with an explanation was the preferred strategy for the FKP group (48%) whereas the JS used it slightly less (46%). The IFID was used with repair twice

by the FKP group (12%) and three times (3%) by the JS. There was one individual from the FKP group who used the promise of forbearance strategy. The data did not indicate any evidence of the use of downgrading or responsibility as a strategy.
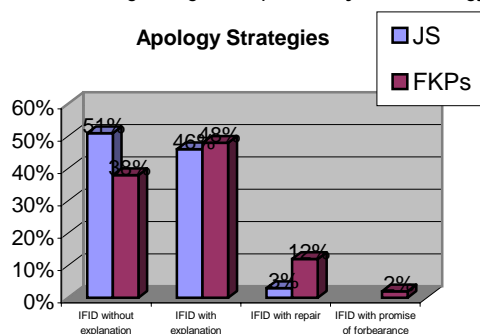

Figure 2. Apology strategies

As mentioned earlier, the infraction is highly contingent upon what apology strategy will be used. This is where my study is a bit unusual in that there was no way of controlling the variable violation. Be that as it may and knowing the context we can deduce that in most cases there was a slight infraction made.
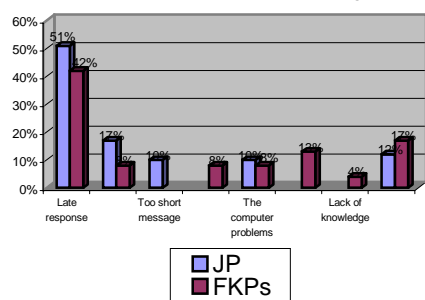

Figure 3. Reasons for apologies

The first few results are not surprising in that the infraction that was apologized most for by both groups was a late response JS 51% (n=51) and 51% (n=22) for the FKPs. The FKP apologized for their poor English ability on four occasions (8%) as compared to 17 occasions (17%) for the JS. The JS apologized 10 times (10%) for sending a message that was deemed too short but the FKP apologized four times (8%) for the sent text being too long. The JS apologized ten times (10%) for computer problems (e.g. failed delivery or did not know how to use a scanner to send a picture) and the FKPs did this four times (8%). The FKPs had apologized 7 times (17%) for asking too many questions or questions that may have hurt the feelings of the interlocutor. Two apologies (5%) by the FKPs concerned themselves with lack of knowledge. Twelve (12%) apologies sent by the JS were not coded, and eight (17%) by the FKPs.

Methodological Considerations

One of many problematic aspects of this study is that it is difficult to make generalizations about the FKPs because they represent a heterogeneous group. It was clear that the Asian FKPs apologized more than the non-Asians. In this case, it may not be a matter of negative pragmatic transfer in that the L1 cultural backgrounds are similar. The use of apology by the JS may be thought of as a humility/solidarity building strategy (Tatsuki, 2001, personal communication). This form of humbling the self is common in Japanese communication. For example,

when one gives a gift it is common practice to say "This is just something small for you" or when expressing an opinion to preface it with "In my poor opinion…" or when introducing a spouse to state "This is my foolish husband", etc. Although Olshtain (1989) argues that the use of the IFID implies that the speaker is taking responsibility for a violation, this may not be the case in the context of the study since more than half of the realized apologies occurred in the pre opening sequence. Since they functioned as an icebreaker or phatic communication, taking responsibility might not be the purpose of the JS apologies

It is rather difficult to make any definitive statements about how the overuse of apology by the JS subject was perceived by their interlocutors. There was one case in which the individual reacted negatively to this overuse. "Don't worry about not being able to reply for so long. It's OK. There is no need to say sorry. We are all busy right now." It is quite apparent that this individual did not consider the apology phatic communication.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the speech act of apology and how it is perceived in the literature. It has reviewed studies that have been carried out between subjects who share similar and different cultural backgrounds. The linguistic features and the methodological aspects of non-synchronous computer mediated communication were looked into as they related to the study that was conducted. The study itself revealed that Japanese students realized the speech act of apology in e-mail exchanges almost twice as much as compared to their interlocutors. This may indicate that the Japanese students were using the speech act more for the sake of phatic communication as opposed to acknowledging responsibility for the violation.

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BOOK WATCH

Selected Bibliography on L2 Pragmatics with Special Reference to Japanese Learners of English

--

Kenji SEKIYAMA, Akiko SAKUMA, Mariko OHASHI, Chiho SUNAKAWA and Masako K. HIRAGA

Abstract
This bibliography cites major publications written in English in the field of Second Language (L2) and Cross-Cultural Pragmatics with special reference to Japanese learners of English. In addition to individual collections by each author, a systematic search has been conducted to cover publications from 1980 to 2000 in major databases such as MLA Bibliography (Modern Language Association), NACSIS Webcat (National Institute of Informatics) [1], and Educational Research Information Center (ERIC) [1]. References are classified into ten categories: General and Theoretical Issues; Research Methodologies; Speech Acts; Discourse Analysis and Conversational Analysis; Sociolinguistics; Politeness Issues; Pedagogy and Learner-Oriented Research; Japanese Linguistics with Pragmatic Implications; Communication Styles; and Others. Some references are listed in more than one category.

Keywords
Interlanguage Pragmatics, Cross-Cultural Pragmatics,
English as a Foreign Language, Japanese, Sociolinguistics

[1] http://webcat.nacsis.ac.jp/webcat_eng.html
[2] http://ericir.syr.edu/Eric/

Small Talk
1st Edition
Justine Coupland (Ed)
2000 336 pages (est.) 0582-41427-X (Hardback)
0582-41426-1 (Paperback)
This study presents a new perspective on small talk and its crucial role in everyday communication. The new approach presented here is supported by analyses of interactional data in specific settings - private and public, face-to-face and telephone talk. They vary from gossip at the family dinner table and intimate 'keeping in touch' phone conversations, to interpersonally-focused talk in institutional settings, such as the government office and the university research seminar. Drawing on a range of methodological approaches, including Discourse Analysis and Pragmatics, Interpersonal Communication and Conversation Analysis, the author elevates small talk to a new status, as functionally multifaceted, but central to social interaction as a whole.

Identity and Language Learning
Gender, Ethnicity and Educational Change
1st Edition
Professor Bonny Norton
2000 200 pages (est.) 0582-38225-4 (Hardback)
0582-38224-6 (Paperback)
This study looks at the process of learning a second language and in particular how changing identities of the learner affect this process. Bonny Norton considers how language teachers can address the complex histories of language learners by integrating research, theory, and classroom practice.

PRAGMATICS SIG

AT PAC3 at JALT 2001

Saturday: November 24

SIG sponsored FORUM:
"Acquisition of Pragmatics"
[15:00-16:45 at AIM 3B]
  Moderator: Megumi Kawate-
      Mierzejewska, Temple University
      Japan
  Mariko Achiba, Woman's Christian
      University
  Ken Rose, City University of Hong Kong
  Donna Tatsuki, Kobe University of
      Commerce
  Sayoko Yamashita & Martin Willis, Tokyo
      Medical and Dental University &
      Woman's Christian University
  Discussant: Gabriele Kasper, University
      of Hawaii at Manoa

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, Kobe
      University of Commerce

Sunday, November 25

PRAGMATICS COLLOQUIUM:
"Pragmatics and its pedagogical
application"
[9:00-10:45 at Rm 33A]
  Moderator: Sayoko Yamashita, Tokyo
      Medical and Dental University
  Akemi Fu, University of Hawaii at Mano
  Keiko Sato, Nagoya Women's
      University
  Megumi Kawate-Mierzejewska, Temple
      University Japan
  Discussant: Donna Tatsuki, Kobe
      University of Commerce

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!

For more information, visit the website:
http://jalt.org/jalt2001/