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From the editor

Greetings to all Pragmatics SIG members. After a busy round of conferences and events in the autumn, many of us will be enjoying a well-earned rest. (Or perhaps a refocusing away from the pressures of teaching and administration towards the more solitary endeavors of writing up research, proofreading final drafts or simply turning one's attention to those files sitting in the 'works in progress' folders that are sitting on the hard drive!) This issue has a wide ranging selection of articles from a conference review of JALT 2018 by yours truly, to information on a fascinating web resource by Noriko Ishihara, an update on the 'Pragcast' podcasts by our web manager Philip Riccobono and a list of recently available pragmatics reference books by Jim Ronald. I trust there is something there for everyone. The JALT PanSIG conference is just around the corner, (May 18th and 19th) and there will be a PragSIG forum organized by Philip Riccobono and also, if previous years are anything to go by, a good showing by the pragmatics community in general. See you in Nishinomiya!

JALT 2018 Review

John Campbell-Larsen

Kyoto Women's University

The 44th Annual International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning & Educational Materials Exhibition (or, JALT National as it is usually called by my friends and acquaintances) took place in Shizuoka City at the Shizuoka Convention & Arts Center from 23rd to 26th of November. The theme of this year's conference was 'Diversity and Inclusion' and there was a wealth of interesting talks and presentations. I travelled up to Shizuoka on the Friday evening after work and was on site in time for the kick-off on Saturday morning. The program was absolutely packed with items I was interested in and I ended up attending something in every slot, right until the close of the day at 7:15. Normally I try to avoid fatiguing myself and have a break somewhere in the afternoon, but such was the quality of this year's conference that I found myself hustling from one room to the next to catch the next talk.

Among the highlights was the plenary talk by Diane Larsen Freeman in which she outlined the view of language from the standpoint of complexity theory. Borrowing the methodology and terminology from an academic field more often associated with mathematics and the 'hard sciences', Larsen Freeman demonstrated that language can usefully be seen as a complex system, similar to a jungle ecosystem in nature where multiple components affect each other in real time and despite the complexity and apparent chaos, there is an underlying order that helps keep the whole thing in balance. The connection to pragmatics was clear in that each instance of language use is delicately shaped by its environment and also is shaped by users of language to fit that particular environment, at that time, in that place and with those participants. Environment, participants and language are intimately connected in a delicate symbiotic system. Immediately after the conference I ordered the book *Complex Systems and Applied Linguistics* by Dianne Larsen-Freeman & Lynne Cameron, and found it a very worthwhile read. For me, this is what academic conferences are all about, listening to interesting talks that guide you in new directions and open up new insights into language, teaching and language teaching.

As mentioned above, there was a wealth of excellent presentations and there is no room here to list them all. I would like to single out the forum that took place on the Saturday evening in which Eric Hauser, Tim Greer and Zack Nanbu looked at L2 language form an interactional perspective. Making lavish use of video data, the presenters investigated the ways that L2 speakers utilized the linguistic resources available to them to participate in interactions, achieve intersubjectivity and make their understandings relevant in classroom interactions, testing situations and mundane conversations. The session was informative and persuasive and even though it was a late slot, the audience was engaged and lively. It is gratifying to see this interactionalist approach being applied to the language in use by L2 speakers.

In addition to this forum, there was also a forum sponsored by the JALT Pragmatics SIG on Saturday afternoon. The presenters have written up their talks and they are included below. All in all a very successful conference and one that I was very pleased to have participated in. Well done the organizing committee!

What's happening on *PragCast*?

Philip Riccobono

Kyoto Women's University

PragCast serves as the podcast for Pragmatics special interest group (SIG) Japan Association for Language Teaching. It's produced and hosted by Philip Riccobono, Website and Social Media Officer. JALT 2018 International at Shizuoka provided for an opportunity to record multiple podcasts. In episode 3, we catch up with JALT Pragmatics SIG Coordinator, Donna Fujimoto and Jim Ronald at JALT International 2018 in Shizuoka, Japan. Donna and Jim discuss the call for contribution for *Pragmatics Undercover*, a new teacher-resource book in the JALT Pragmatics SIG Pragmatics Resources series. The purpose of *Pragmatics Undercover* is to help language teachers help their students understand and use pragmatics to speak English more naturally and appropriately. Rounding out the weekend with episode 4, we had a sit-down with Jerry Talandis Jr., another co-editor of the upcoming *Pragmatics Undercover*. Jerry touched on the aims of the book, inclusive of it serving as a Pragmatics activity supplement to standard textbooks, "a recipe style cookbook". Finally, he shares his advice of teaching Pragmatics consistently, not just a one-off lesson. You may find all *PragCast* episodes on our website www.pragsig.org or here: soundcloud.com/pragcast

An invitation to "INVITATIONS" and "GREETINGS": New resource pages on the CARLA database

Noriko Ishihara

Hosei University

You may have taken a look or heard of this “good ol’” speech act database housed under CARLA (the Center for Advanced Language Acquisition) at the University of Minnesota. I’m pleased to announce the arrival of two new speech act pages: Invitations and Greetings.

Among the several projects included in the “Pragmatics and Speech Acts” section of the CARLA website is the “Descriptions of Speech Acts” site. In the early 2000s, this database was designed under the direction of Dr. Andrew D. Cohen (now a professor emeritus) with the help of a few research assistants then including myself. Our intention has been to offer research-established information on the realizations of well-researched speech acts at one place in an accessible language, especially for busy language teachers who do not necessarily have the time to go and find research articles scattered in various academic journals. The site now has 9 speech acts, including the new sites, Invitations and Greetings, as in the following screenshot:

The screenshot shows the CARLA website interface. At the top, there is a dark red header with the University of Minnesota logo and name, a search bar, and the CARLA logo. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for HOME, Research & Programs, Professional Development, Resources, and About CARLA. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column is a sidebar with a list of categories under 'Pragmatics and Speech Acts', with 'Descriptions of Speech Acts' selected. The right column is titled 'Descriptions of Speech Acts' and contains introductory text, a list of speech act categories with links, and a brief description of the site's purpose.

Each speech act page has information on multiple functions of the act, realizations of the speech act described in plain English in at least a few languages, some statistical information found in relevant research articles, and tips for teaching the speech act.

The construction of the new pages was funded by Ishihara’s Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C) offered by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. The development of the Invitations page launched in 2015 with the assistance of Akiko Chiba, now a lecturer and doctoral candidate at the University of Hong Kong, who summarized the realization of invitations in American English (e.g., invitation sequences like pre-invitations, responses to pre-invitations, revising invitations, responding to rejections). There also is intriguing information on invitations in Persian (Farsi), especially about its genuine and ostensible invitations in relation to the cultural conceptualization of *ta’arof* (ritual politeness). In 2016, Kim Morris, now Assistant Professor at the University of Wisconsin at La Crosse, joined and added information on Spanish invitations based on her expertise. Morris also drafted the Greetings page, which carries information on greeting routines in American English, Australian English, and French.

Our major challenge in constructing these pages was the issue associated with copyright permission. Even though we summarized current works on invitations and greetings, you see only some of them online today because CARLA's requests for permission to reproduce part of the analysis and language excerpts were not necessarily granted or granted at a reasonable fee. Still, it is hoped that the research-established information and resources shared on those pages will serve as a useful starter in investigating pragmatic language use in context and sharing that awareness with language learners.

Invitations: <http://carla.umn.edu/speechacts/invitations/index.html>

Greetings: <http://carla.umn.edu/speechacts/greetings/index.html>

Also see the "Pragmatics and Speech Acts" section on the CARLA website (<http://carla.umn.edu/speechacts/index.html>) for a searchable bibliography of pragmatics/speech acts, self-access learner modules for learning Japanese speech acts, and strategies for learning pragmatics in Spanish.

Pragmatics SIG Forum At the 2018 JALT International Conference

Should L2 pragmatic usage of jokes be taught?

Part I: Why jokes and humour?

Akihiko Kawamura

Seijo University

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As an introduction to our joint forum, I talked about reasons why jokes and humour were important in the EFL context, with particular emphasis on Japanese learners of English. One major reason is that learners' unfamiliarity with jokes can cause serious pragmatic failures. Brown and Levinson's face theory is among the first approaches to jokes as a strategy in communication, but what people find funny may vary across cultures despite their claim of universality. There are also psychological factors which may influence our appreciation of jokes.

I began my part by citing a classic example of a pragmatic failure from Leech and Thomas (1987/91). It is common for a British teacher to instruct a student to read a passage: 'James, would you like to read this passage?' However, a foreign student could easily misinterpret the teachers' intent and reply: 'No, thank you' (Leech & Thomas 1987/1991: F12). The teacher may use the polite formula, 'would like to' in the interrogative when directing the student to read a passage because he or she does not want to sound too forceful; in other words, the teacher tries to be polite. Unfortunately, a foreign student could easily fail to recognise the teacher's intent, or the illocutionary force of directing, and could take it literally as a question as to whether he or she 'would like to' read the passage. The student could thus answer the teacher's question politely using the polite formula of 'No, thank you.' Such a misunderstanding is simply caused by the student's limited command of English, but Leech and Thomas point out that the teacher may take the student's reply 'as being very rude, or as a bad joke.' (ibid.). It is not to be overlooked that they place a bad joke on the same level as a rude remark. This is an important feature of a pragmatic failure. Thomas states as follows:

Unlike a grammatical error and a mispronunciation, a pragmatic failure is sometimes extremely difficult to recognize; it could be taken as the manifestation of the learner's true intent without sufficient knowledge about the pragmatic differences between English and the learner's native language. (Thomas 1983)

As mentioned at the outset, it will be more likely that a pragmatic failure can occur when the speaker and the hearer do not share the same or at least similar cultural backgrounds. When it comes to Japanese learners of English, the difference between the Japanese notion of コーモア and the Western notion of *humour* may be a case in point. While they are often confused and wrongly identified in Japan, they are especially different in the following respects: コーモア is basically unharmed, attaching special importance to a harmonious relationship among people, but *humour*, including irony/sarcasm, is basically aggressive (Dews et al. 1995; Colston 1997; Okamoto 2013). Here is an example:



The above cartoon appeared in *Le Canard Enchaîné*, a French newspaper on 11 September 2013, 3 days after Tokyo had been officially chosen for the next Olympic Games in 2020. It expresses the author's negative opinion toward the choice of Tokyo for the Games, cynically implying that Japan is a dangerous place, unable to control the potential dangers from the Fukushima disaster. When Japanese people saw this cartoon, the response was mostly shock. It was reported that even Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga was about to make an official protest against the cartoon, but Mr. Louis-Marie Horeau, the editorial Chief argued that it was simply an expression of humour. While most Japanese rejected the cartoon, there were many western people who accepted it as an expression of humour. One thing is clear; what people find funny and/or acceptable varies across cultures and can cause serious misunderstandings.

I then considered a joke which was chosen as the 'world's funniest' in Laughlab, a large-scale psychological study of jokes:

A couple of New Jersey hunters are out in the woods when one of them falls to the ground. He doesn't seem to be breathing and his eyes have rolled back in his head. The other guy whips out his mobile phone and calls the emergency services. He gasps to the operator: "My friend is dead! What can I do?" The operator, in a soothing voice, says: "Just take it easy. I can help. First, let's make sure he's dead." There is a silence, then a shot is heard. The guy's voice comes back on the line. He says: "OK, now what?" (Laughlab 2002: 4)

I used the joke in one of my lectures on Intercultural Communication in July 2018 and distributed a questionnaire asking students how they liked it. A total of 161 students answered my questionnaire and as many as 117 of them answered that they did not like it because they believed death was not something one should carelessly mention in a joke. Most of them said they preferred an unharmed joke which did not imply hurting others. Wiseman, a psychologist in charge of Laughlab said 'Many of the jokes submitted received higher ratings from certain groups of people, but this one [the above hunter joke] had real universal appeal' (ibid.). However, this was not the case with my Japanese university students.

Sakamoto and Sakamoto (2004) also point out that Japanese people and English-speaking people assume different attitudes toward jokes. According to them, while an English speaker tells a joke to show they are relaxed or to show that they can control a situation even when they are expected to be nervous, a Japanese speaker may not expect jokes in such situations and so take jokes as irrelevant or even insincere (2004: 14-8). Japanese people and English-speaking people have different likings about jokes, and they also have different opinions as to the acceptance of jokes in particular contexts. All these can collectively make a joke more likely to cause a serious pragmatic failure.

To make things more complicated, people usually and often wrongly tend to think what they have in mind is well understood by others. This is called the illusion of transparency (cf. Gilovich, Savitsky, & Medvec 1998), and is pointed out to be a major cause of miscommunication (Okamoto 2010). For example, English-speaking teachers might get mildly

hurt if their Japanese students do not laugh at their jokes, but there is a possibility that their students are simply not aware that their teachers are telling them. While teachers believe that their intentions are well understood by their students, there is no such guarantee especially when they do not share the same cultural backgrounds. I think I must assure some of the readers that if students do not appreciate a teacher's jokes, it does not mean that their jokes are not good enough or that the students' English is not strong enough.

At the end of my part, I returned to our original question, 'Should L2 pragmatic usage of jokes be taught,' and gave my plausible answer in Part I: Yes, but partly. Learners need to be aware of such cultural differences as above, but it should go without saying that teachers should not force or even expect students to appreciate particular types of jokes. It's entirely up to them how and whether they enjoy a joke. We should instead help them recognise jokes and understand the joker's true intentions. Unlike grammar or pronunciation, pragmatics often reflects one's values and/or outlook on the world (Thomas 1983). When giving instruction in pragmatics, teachers only have to alert their students to cross-linguistic and/or cross-cultural pragmatic differences rather than intervene in their view of the world (House & Kasper 1981).

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Should L2 Pragmatic Usage of Jokes Be Taught?

Part 3

Scott Gardner

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My presentation summarized my analysis of humor appearing in junior high school level textbooks, in Japan and elsewhere, focusing on humorous statements within dialogues between characters in listening exercises. Humor appears in numerous textbooks in many different forms, but I wanted to focus on when it appears as part of friendly talk between characters in dialogues, what is called "conversational humor" or "interactional humor" (see Norrick, 2003).

While pragmatic instruction may not be the main purpose of writers who put humor in textbooks, I wondered if these humorous passages could still shed some light on how real people use humor for their conversational purposes. In short, I had two questions: 1) What purposes for humor seem evident in textbooks dialogues? 2) What forms does the humor take?

Of the many attempts to make a definitive catalogue of the pragmatic *purposes* of humor in everyday conversation, I chose that of Schnurr (2010), who gave three major purposes:

Reinforce solidarity
Do power
Express resistance and challenge (p. 311-314)

A simple outline of possible *forms* that conversational humor might take has been provided by Norrick (2003):

Canned jokes
Personal anecdotes
Wordplay
Irony (p. 1338-1341)

Using these criteria I speculated as to how conversational humor in scripted textbook dialogues would appear. For instance, I hypothesized that most of the interactional humor between characters in textbooks would be friendly gibes between friends or family (reinforce solidarity). Conversely, I suspected there would be very little humor in the way of challenging or resisting. Formally, I doubted that humor would appear as canned jokes, wordplay or irony, simply due to the linguistic and cognitive challenges I thought they would present for young language learners.

I then went to the textbooks in my study to categorize those instances of conversational humor that appeared in scripted dialogues. I went through 32 junior high school-targeted textbooks in total, roughly half from Japan and half from other international publishers. The table below shows a very informal summary of what was found:

Table 1: Interactional humor in language teaching textbooks: yes or no?

Purpose/Form	Speculated	Found
Reinforce	Yes?	Yes! (including teasing)
Do power	No?	A bit
Resist/challenge	No!	A bit
Canned jokes	Depends on mind of textbook writer	One
Personal anecdotes	Yes?	Not in dialogues
Wordplay	If done right, yes	A bit
Irony	Tricky...	Yes

The purposes and forms of interactional humor in the textbooks were far more varied than I suspected they would be. Hierarchy-reinforcing purposes of humor (*do power, resist*) appeared to a small degree in nearly every textbook, contrary to my assumptions. Some example dialogues included school trip chaperones or guides exerting humorous authority over students, or children making mild fun of their parents.

On the formal side, ironic statements appeared more often than I anticipated. For example, in one dialogue a Japanese student, Kenta, is telling an American exchange student about Korean students' over-the-top study habits, but the exchange student replies that perhaps Kenta should study more like the Koreans do, implying humorously that Kenta is not a good student.

Teaching ideas

In my presentation I also discussed possible pedagogical benefits from taking account of these humorous dialogues. Some possible activities that could be done with students include:

- Analyzing funny dialogues in conversation-analytic terms, such as guessing relationships between speakers and what their pragmatic goals might be, according to what they say. (This of course can apply to any dialogues in the textbook, not just the funny ones.)
- Removing humor from the funny dialogues to see how interesting the conversation is without it. Conversely, looking at a different, unfunny dialogue in the textbook to see what could be added to make it (even slightly more) humorous.
- Getting feedback from students on how well the joke "worked".
- Joking with students a bit before and after class. (Although "doing power" humor may seem like the default purpose of conversational humor in teacher/student context, remember that reinforcing relationships is another purpose.)

Pedagogical implications

Should pragmatic usage of jokes be taught in a language class? As Wagner & Urios-Aparisi (2011) put it:

Every [language] educator should have thought about the role that humor plays 1) in the target language culture, 2) as pedagogical tool in the world language classroom, and 3) in students' personal pragmatic development. (pp. 427)

Humor "in the target language culture" is most often expressed in everyday interactions. Teachers who treat "target language humor" as mainly canned jokes or funny movie scenes, while neglecting everyday conversational wit, overlook a great deal—of humor as well as of conversational content.

Humor "as pedagogical tool" not only infers the presumed purpose of writers who include humor in their textbooks, but also the possibility of interactive humor in the learning context—student/student and student/teacher.

The "personal pragmatic development" of humor in students is perhaps the most important goal teachers should have in regard to students' appreciation of target language humor. Since humor can play such an important role in everyday conversation, teachers need not—and should not—remove it from their learners' second language communication experience simply because it might be challenging or require extra explanation. The humor in these textbooks showed that even a small amount of easily forgettable wit can still add to the "naturalness" of an interaction. Rather than treat textbook humor as entertainment at best or as distraction at worst, teachers should treat it as the important communicative and pragmatic tool that it can be in our daily conversations.

Morreall (1983) says, "The essence of humor lies in the enjoyment of incongruity" (p. 47). L2 learners live in an incongruous space between their first language/culture and the language/culture they are studying. Appreciating more incongruity, whether in funny textbook dialogues or in funny real-time dialogues in class, may aid them not only in humor appreciation, but also in language acquisition and identity development. Incongruity means difference between what is expected and what is, and as Diane Larsen-Freeman stated in her plenary presentation at JALT2018, "Difference teaches."

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Should L2 Pragmatic Usage of Jokes Be Taught?

Kimiko Koseki

Seijo University

As L2 teachers, we might ask ourselves and our colleagues, "Should we teach English jokes to our students?" Is it enough for our students to be able to simply communicate information correctly? Will teaching English jokes help our students build a better relationship with their interlocutors? The answer should be yes. However, many Japanese English teachers think and say that understanding and telling English jokes are far advanced skills for Japanese learners because many of them even cannot make themselves understood sufficiently. Then, what do students themselves think about learning English jokes? I thus decided to conduct research on my students to find out their opinions about it.

In my background reading, I found that Bell (2011) indicated that humor should be taught to L2 learners because it was pervasive in native English speakers' interaction but understanding and creating humor was challenging even for advanced L2 learners. Bell and Pomerantz (2016) also recommended that teachers teach humor especially humorous language play in class. They defined language play as "any manipulation of language that is done in a non-serious manner for either public or private enjoyment" (Preface ix). Vandergriff and Fuchs (2009) called what Bell and Pomerantz called language play "interpersonal language play" (p. 26). Vandergriff and Fuchs (2009) indicated that language play in L2 would contribute to learners' vocabulary and interlanguage development. Furthermore, they stated that L2 interpersonal language play could allow "learners to display their individual identity" (p. 27) among participants because speakers and hearers must share a particular semantic script.

Research has indicated that there are many functions of teaching humor and jokes in L2 classrooms. Bell and Pomerantz (2016) found that functions of humor in the classroom included: relieving tension, coping with difficult situations, sharing emotions, feeling close, making friends, maintaining and increasing their affiliation, reinforcing group identification, probing for shared interests and values, and showing politeness when they say self-deprecating humor. Similarly, Atardo (1993) indicated that social functions of humor are mainly twofold: decommitment and group identification. He explained that decommitment was, for example, to probe the hearers' reactions if they would approve a behavior, or to salvage a situation that was becoming socially unpleasant.

However, research has also indicated that there are intercultural differences in humor and people often have difficulty in understanding the humor of L2 language jokes. Rogerson-Revell (2007) noted that "transporting humor across national and cultural boundaries" (p. 4) was difficult. Similarly, Bell and Pomerantz (2016) stated "What counts as funny varies across people and changes over time" (p. 23). Furthermore, Rogerson-Revell (2007) indicated by citing Mulholland (1997) that "...joking, teasing or leg-pulling between Australians in business interactions can make Asians very uncomfortable" (p. 5). Rogerson-Revell also introduced Marsh's (1988) finding that "...showing too much feeling can offend Asian codes of business behaviour, especially to the Japanese" (p. 5).

In fact, the differences between jokes in English and those in Japanese may not differ only in quantity but also in quality. Murata (2014) compared humor in business meetings between New Zealand and Japan. He videotaped actual meetings in a company in Osaka, Japan and compared it with video recordings in a company in New Zealand. He found that the purpose of jokes at the workplaces, which was to strengthen solidarity, was the same in both companies, but the shared cultural expectations behind their behavior were different. In a meeting in New Zealand, the members teased their boss for his slip of the tongue. On the other hand, in a meeting in Japan, people in authority initiated jokes and other members contributed to create team spirit. Murata indicated that a shared cultural expectation in the New Zealand company was egalitarianism while a shared cultural expectation in the Japanese company was group-orientation.

In my research study, I asked the following questions:

- (1) Do Japanese college students want to study English humor and jokes and why?
- (2) What kind of jokes might be interesting for Japanese students?
- (3) How do Japanese college students think English native-speakers' and Japanese senses of humor are similar and different? Will their opinions on these issues change by studying some English jokes in class?

In three of my university compulsory reading and writing courses, 64 sophomores received instruction about jokes and responded to questionnaires before and after the instruction.

The first research question was: Would Japanese college students like to study English humor and jokes and why? The actual question in the questionnaire was "Would you like to be able to understand English jokes more?" About 84% of the students answered yes while 16% of the students answered no. Major reasons for the affirmative answers were: (1) I can enjoy conversations with native speakers more and advance a close relationship with native speakers (2) I can have a better cultural understanding of English. (3) I am able to enjoy English movies, dramas, and animations more. (4) It is useful to understand English. (5) I am happy when I understand jokes. On the other hand, major reasons for negative answers were: (1) English jokes are not interesting. (2) I do not think I can understand English jokes due to cultural differences. (3) I studied English jokes in class but could not understand the humor. (4) I do not want to know jokes which may insult me or us. (5) I want to understand ordinary English first.

The second research question was "What kind of jokes might be interesting for Japanese students?" The jokes students enjoyed the most were national stereotypical jokes. On the other hand, the least number of students enjoyed a humorous road sign and students showed the least interest in a sexual stereotypical joke. However, the students' comments about the jokes that they had studied in the first instruction showed that if students enjoyed a certain joke or not might not be due to the type of jokes but rather if they had already known both meanings of words or expressions of the double scripts of the joke as well as if they had already had some background knowledge about it so that they could imagine the target people or situations well.

The third research question was "How do Japanese college students think English native speakers' and Japanese senses of humor are similar and different? Will their opinion on these issues change by studying some English jokes in class?" The number of comments about differences between English and Japanese laughs were predominantly higher than the number of comments about similarities. However, the number of comments about differences were nearly unchanged between pre-instruction and post-instruction questionnaires. However, the number of comments about similarities considerably increased from the pre-instruction questionnaire to the post-instruction questionnaire.

The main similarities students mentioned were twofold: (1) the purpose of jokes is to break tension in both English and Japanese language culture, and (2) both cultures have puns. Actually, in the pre-instruction questionnaire, three students wrote that Japanese had puns but English did not. Therefore, some students seemed to be surprised to know that English had puns.

On the other hand, the main differences between English and Japanese laughter that students mentioned were: (1) In the pre-instruction questionnaire, the largest number of students commented that "English jokes are used in everyday conversations while Japanese say few jokes in everyday conversations". They explained that "Japanese laugh mainly by watching comedians' shows intending to make people laugh; therefore, laughs in Japan are a form of entertainment designed by professionals". However, this type of comment decreased in the post-instruction questionnaire. (2) In the pre-instruction questionnaire, the second largest number of students commented that "Japanese say jokes only to close friends; therefore, they do not say jokes to people of a higher status in workplaces because it creates a bad impression". These comments slightly increased in post-instruction questionnaire. (3) The third largest number of students' comments about differences between English and Japanese laughter was about a different sense of humor between English native speakers and Japanese. (4) Furthermore, the most drastically increased comments about differences between English and Japanese laughter were about English black jokes. Some students seemed to be offended by English sarcastic jokes and racist jokes. Some of them indicated that "Japanese like self-deprecating jokes rather than making fun of other people". (5) Additionally, no student commented about word play in the pre-instruction questionnaire, but four students did in the post-instruction questionnaire.

Finally, regional cultural differences seem to exist in Japan even though no theories about it have been found yet. It is because many comments about regional cultural differences in Japan as well as Osaka people's black jokes were found on the Internet. Therefore, even among Japanese, attitude about black humor and jokes might be different depending on the region.

Our research question was if L2 pragmatic usage of jokes should be taught. My answer to this question is that we should teach jokes in our English classes even though the present research was too limited to answer this question. It seems to be "valuable for L2 students to gain some level of L2 humor competence" (Wulf, 2010, p. 156). It is partly because many of my students wanted to study English jokes to reduce the psychological distance with their foreign interlocutors and enjoy conversations with them more. It is also partly because even my limited instruction seems to have given students some ideas about English jokes which might have raised their awareness of English humor. What would you think about our research question? Should we teach English jokes to our students in English classes?

Finally, some implications from the present research include: (1) Japanese students may like national stereotypical jokes and puns but teachers should choose ones whose punch lines consist of words and phrases that students already know well. (2) Japanese students seem to like neither sarcastic jokes nor jokes that look down on people though there seems to be regional differences in Japan. Therefore, how about beginning teaching humor and jokes which are "intended to elicit a feeling of mirth in their hearers or readers" (Bell & Pomerantz, 2016)?

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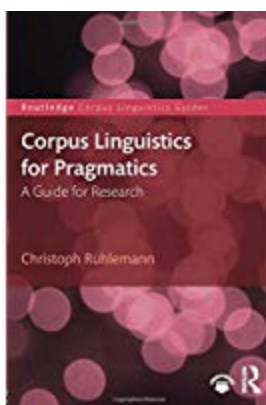
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Afterword

I hope that you found some useful information and resources in this edition of *Pragmatics Matters*. If you follow up on any of the resources, and apply them in your teaching, then why not write up a report to let your fellow PragSIG members know how it went? Likewise, if you read any of the books (or others) and fancy writing a review, you can always send it to me here and I will include it in an upcoming issue. We can't attend every conference and event, nor can we read every book and article or peruse every website. Help spread the knowledge you have and keep the conversation open.

I will be attending the upcoming PanSIG conference in Nishinomiya in May and also the International Pragmatics Association (IPrA) conference in Hong Kong in June. I hope to see some (many?) of you there and hopefully get some conference reviews for the membership who can't attend. Until next time.

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