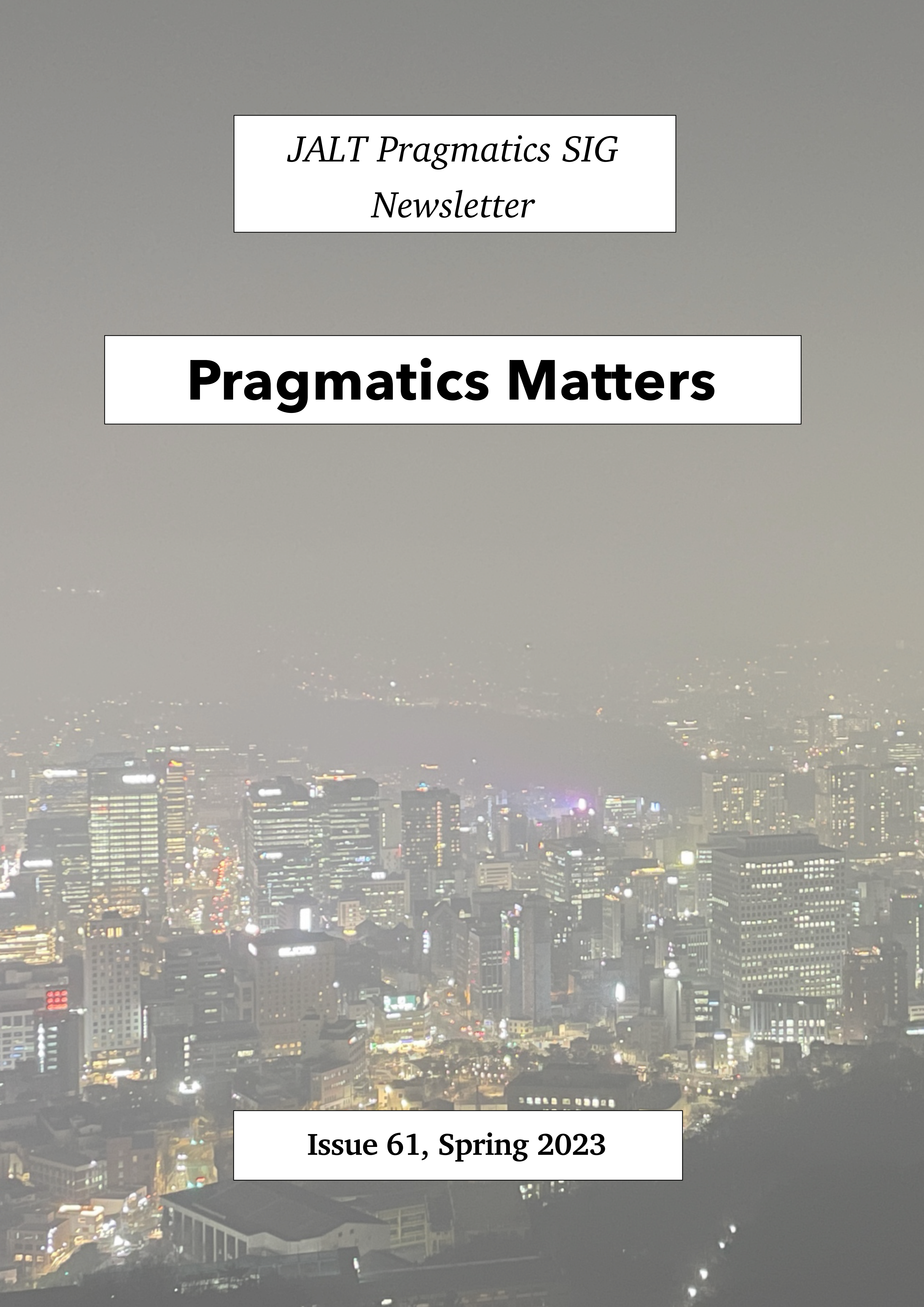
JALT Pragmatics SIG Newsletter

Pragmatics Matters



Issue 61, Spring 2023

From the Editor

Greetings to the members of the Pragmatics SIG! I hope your new academic year is getting off to a good start.

A big thank you to the contributors to this issue. We have two articles and reports on four presentations from the 2022 PanSIG and the 2022 JALT Conference.

Ian Munby wrote the article "A shopper's nightmare: dealing with false accusations of shoplifting." Munby began the article by arguing for using stories that have a variety of incidents to allow students to practice speech acts in a variety of interesting situations. He then went through an example of how such a story might be used with a story about being accused of shoplifting. Saki Araki contributed the article "A study of teacher beliefs about teaching L2 pragmatic competence: Insights into its value, methodology, and issues to be solved," based on her senior thesis, about the attitudes of teachers towards the teaching of pragmatics, using some Pragmatics SIG members as participants.

In addition, we have a report from the PanSIG conference from James Bury. He wrote about his presentation "Teaching varied discourse moves: Theory and method," which is related to how students can develop a greater variety of discourse moves.

Finally, we have two reports that cover three presentations at the JALT Conference. John Larsen-Campbell wrote about his presentation "Developing interactional competence: Turn-taking in learner talk," in which he covered various types of turn-taking strategies and how students can learn to increase their repertoire. Carol Rinnert contributed a report on two presentations she and Hiroe Kobayashi did, "Multilingual writers' argumentation writing" and "Use of metadiscourse." The two presentations were based on an analysis of essays written in English and Japanese by writers from North America and Japan.

For the next issue of the newsletter, we are accepting contributions related to ideas for teaching elements of pragmatics, aspects of pragmatics, a pragmatics-related presentation you'd be interested in reporting on, etc. If you would like to contribute, please email me at kkitao217@yahoo.com.

Kathleen Kitao
Editor

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Article

A shopper's nightmare: Dealing with false accusations of shoplifting

Ian Munby
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Level: Intermediate to Advanced.
Length of activity: 45-90 minutes.
Resources: Whiteboard, a copy of the story if you cannot remember it, and (optional) a jacket or two, and a bag.
Pragmatic focus: Dealing with false accusations.
Goals:

(i) to improve spoken fluency by eliciting and practicing a sequence of role-plays between a variety of characters in a story delivered orally by the teacher.
(ii) to practice language used in service encounters in clothing stores, such as exchanging unwanted goods.
(iii) to enable students to deal with false accusations of shoplifting.

Note: This activity requires knowledge of a wide range of speech acts and may be too challenging for some lower-level students.

Introduction
Peter Viney (2014) rightly described Robert O'Neill, who passed away in 2014 at the age of 81, as a huge influence in the world of English language teaching. When not writing textbooks, O'Neill spent his time traveling around the world going from classroom to classroom, observing lessons, being observed, training teachers, and teaching students. During one such trip to Tokyo in 1987, he visited the private eikaiwa school where I was teaching. Our best teacher was wheeled forward and O'Neill observed him in action. The lesson focused on asking for and giving opinions and involved extensive question-and-answer activities for developing spoken fluency. O'Neill was not impressed and was heard grumbling in the corridor after the lesson: "*Do you aguwee or disaguwee?" Legend has it that halfway through his observation of a lesson in a neighboring school about asking for and giving permission, he had asked politely if he may go to the restroom, left the classroom, and did not return.

While O'Neill certainly believed in developing fluency and focusing on language functions, his approach to achieving these goals was radically different from that of our group of teachers in the school. This is what we discovered when he allowed us to observe him teach a group of our best hand-picked students. O'Neill was interested in exploring the limits of his students' knowledge of English through emotionally-charged stories. He aimed to promote fluency and pragmatic competence by generating multiple dialogs from a simple narrative and practicing a variety of language functions within the context of the story. The story he chose for his demonstration lesson was about a shopper who takes a sweater back to a department store to exchange it for a larger one. After failing to find one in his size, he is arrested by store detectives while leaving the store. This story appears in one of his textbooks, New Success at First Certificate (O'Neill et al., 1997), although the story I present here contains numerous variations.

The story, which should be presented orally by the teacher, can be divided into seven parts. Each part may need to be repeated to assist learner comprehension.

Procedure for teaching the story in seven parts

1. The journey to the store.

The teacher could find it helpful to bring one or two jackets and a bag to class as props or ask to borrow them from a student. The story, written hereafter in italics, begins like this, (and I remember that O'Neill managed to elicit parts of the text through board work, supplying the first letter or letters of some words):

The jacket my aunt sent me for my birthday was too small/big (perhaps depending on what jacket you are using as a classroom prop). A friend drove me round to my aunt's house so that I could pick up the receipt on the way to the store. She invited me in for tea, but I explained that I couldn't because my friend was waiting.

Having established the beginning of the story, the teacher should ask the class to imagine what was said when ….

(i) I called my aunt about the jacket.
(ii) I called my friend to ask for a lift (ride) to the store.
(iii) I spoke to my aunt at her front door.

These three conversations are not central to the story and can be omitted to save time. However, they may help fulfill the important function of motivating the audience, or group of students, through the initial focus on a character with a goal whose mission shall be followed despite various obstacles that must be overcome, for better or for worse, until the end. In addition, these role plays serve as useful springboards for practicing basic language functions such as telephone conversations, expressing thanks for gifts, explaining problems, making arrangements, and declining offers. They also act as a basic introduction to the following teaching procedure.

To begin with, it may be helpful to frame the conversation by supplying the beginning and the ending of the dialogs and writing them on the board. For example, with the first conversation, my aunt may answer the phone and begin like this:

Aunt: Hello?
….
The narrator may end the conversation like this:
Narrator: Okay. See you soon.

Then, inform the class that the task is to provide everything which is said in between. Next, the teacher could take the role of the narrator and act out the dialog with the most proficient or confident member of the class. The teacher can, if necessary, then help the students to improve the conversations to make them more natural or pragmatically appropriate before having them repeat the role plays with open pairs, then with closed pairs. Open pair practice involves two students performing a dialog while the rest of the students in the class listen. With closed pair practice, all students perform the dialog with their partner simultaneously. Finally, selected students can enact the dialog in front of the class. This procedure, recommended by Thornbury (2005, p.73), could also be adopted for each of the following parts of the story.

2. Conversations with the shop staff in the store.

The story continues. *I explained to the shop assistant what I wanted. Unfortunately, they had only one jacket in my size. After trying it on, I decided that the color did not suit me. I put the old jacket back in my bag and told her that I would come back the following week when, she assured me, a lot of new stock would have come in.*

This time, the teacher may frame the conversation as follows:
Shop assistant: Good afternoon, may I help you?
….
Narrator: Thank you very much. You've been very helpful. I'll come back next week. Goodbye.

3. The confrontation with the store detective

As I dashed out of the store, there was a shout behind me. Rough hands grabbed me from behind, hurting my arm, and a man confronted me saying he was a store detective. He accused me of shoplifting, which I denied, and I showed him the receipt.

Although this series of conversations can be performed while seated, it can be made more dramatic if the teacher invites a student to take the role of the narrator and walks towards the classroom door, imagining he or she is leaving a store. The teacher, taking the role of store detective should then suddenly say:

Store detective: Stop right there! I'm a store detective. Have you paid for this jacket?
…..
Key language for dealing with the false accusations may include phrases such as:
I did not steal this jacket.
Why do you think I stole it?
What evidence do you have for your accusation?
You are making a false accusation.
I have a receipt for this item.

The end of the conversation is as follows:

Store detective: I don't believe your story. You could have got that receipt for something else. You are shoplifting. Come with me.

4. The small room.

The store detective took me to a small room, asked for my name, age, address, and telephone number and I gave him the information. He threatened to call the police, but I insisted that he speak to the sales assistant, who I was sure would remember me. He agreed but locked the door from the outside as he walked out, leaving me alone in the room.

Act out the conversation. The story then continues:

I decided to call my friend who was waiting outside in his car.

This conversation may begin with greetings, and apologies and continue with the explanation.

5. The manager.

About half an hour later, the manager entered the room and apologized for the ghastly mistake.

Before performing the dialog between the narrator and the manager, two conversations happened behind the scenes between parts 4 and 5 of the story, and both can be usefully exploited for further language practice. These are:

(i) The store detective spoke to the shop assistant.
(ii) The store detective spoke to the manager.
What did they say?
Following this, we continue with the narrative.

After apologizing profusely, the manager offered me 100 dollars in shopping vouchers, which I refused, saying that I would never come to the store again in my whole life. I then left the store after signing a paper that I did not bother to read.

The conversation begins with an apology and ends with a goodbye.

6. Back in my friend's car.

I apologized to my friend again for keeping him waiting. When I explained what had happened, he told me that I had made several mistakes. For example, he told me that I did not have to give my personal details to a store detective, only to the police. He said I should have called the police and made an official complaint. He also said that it was impossible to do this now because I had signed a paper that probably said that I would not complain about the incident and my treatment. I told him I wish he had told me this when I called him from the store.

The conversation also begins with an apology and ends with a thank you and goodbye.

For more information about what to do and not to do when falsely accused of shoplifting, refer to Colbey (2000) for a perspective from the UK, and Carey (2019) for a perspective from the USA. Combining the advice in these articles, shoppers who are falsely accused of shoplifting are not obliged by law to say anything to store detectives, to go anywhere with them, to allow their belongings to be searched, or even to show receipts. They should call a lawyer or law enforcement officer and remain where they are, saying as little as possible until they arrive.

7. Final conversation with my aunt.

I was about to fall asleep when my aunt called. I explained to her what happened in the store and the mistakes I made. She kindly offered to go back to the store with the receipt to exchange the jacket herself the following week, and to make a complaint about my treatment.

Act out the following:

(i) My telephone conversation with my aunt.
(ii) My aunt's conversation with the shop assistant the following week.

Follow up

A useful follow-up is to ask the students to write up the story for homework including all the dialogs. This is a good way to check how well students have digested the input and provide input regarding appropriacy of expressions. In my experience, students usually remember the story very well, probably because humans are hard-wired to remember stories like these better than information with no emotional context.

Conclusion

I conclude with an unreferenced quote from O'Neill from a 2000 article cited in Viney (2014).

> *What EFL needs today is writers capable of developing skills that writers in other genres regard as essential: they must be able to develop the kinds of story, plot, and character that can keep groups of very different learners interested in the language. The texts and conversations they write must exemplify as naturally as possible how people speak and write outside the classroom. However, the texts and dialogues must also serve a distinct pedagogic purpose.*

What O'Neill knew to be true 20 years ago is still true today, and probably forever will be.

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Article

A study of teacher beliefs about teaching L2 pragmatic competence: Insights into its value, methodology, and issues to be solved

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In this article, I report what I found through the interview survey I conducted for my undergraduate thesis on teachers' beliefs on teaching L2 pragmatics in the EFL pedagogical context. Since the emergence of second language pragmatics in the late 20th century, many studies on learners' pragmatic failures, the teachability and learnability of pragmatic competence, and teaching methods have been conducted. However, to my knowledge, relatively few studies have been done on teachers' beliefs on teaching second pragmatic competence in EFL classrooms. Examples include research examining teachers' pragmatic awareness and how they applied it to their teaching styles, such as van Compernolle and Henery's study (2015). However, teachers' beliefs studies in general, according to Sasajima (2014), are not easy to conduct since teachers' beliefs are so ambiguous and unconscious that the participants seem not to be able to verbalise what they really believe. Also, Vallenga (2011) argued that possible participants might not know the concept of pragmatics and not be confident in teaching pragmatic aspects in classrooms, which must be another reason why the number of surveys is still small.

Starting from this point, I thought scholars who specialise in pragmatics and its surrounding areas like discourse analysis and conversation analysis might have ideas that would be worth exploring and sharing. I called for participants within the Pragmatics Special Interest Group (SIG) of the Japan Association of Language Teaching (JALT) and found eight participants who contributed to this study through interviews that lasted 20 to 40 minutes. I asked them questions not only about their academic background but also their motivations for and experiences of teaching pragmatic competence, their teaching methods, and the outcomes. I also asked about their personal experiences and identities as English teachers and researchers living in this EFL country, Japan. Through the interviews, I tried to understand how the participants evaluated teaching and learning pragmatic competence in the classroom, how they approached the issue, and what kinds of issues remained. Findings from the present study are expected to provide examples of factors related to teachers' beliefs on teaching English pragmatic competence. In the following section, I list some of the notable findings from the interview data in relation to three research questions, with remarks that warrant special attention underlined for emphasis.

(1) How do English educators view the value of teaching second language pragmatic competence in EFL classrooms?

All of the participants agreed that embedding pragmatic instruction into English teaching because pragmatics is useful for authentic communications outside of classroom settings for social interactions, as shown through the following quote:

> *"I think overall <u>pragmatics is useful for when you enter the workplace or enter society,</u> to make a well-rounded individual as a person who is well-mannered and respects other people all this time."(T7)*

Also, their ideas for pragmatics seemed to be strongly connected to what they hope their students will be able to do in English, such as being able to say “no” to people of higher status. That is to say, they seemed to hope their students would be able to use speech acts appropriately when needed, and this willingness seems to be connected to the value they see in teaching pragmatic competence. In addition, their ideas appeared to be supported by factors such as their academic backgrounds, their language learning experiences, their teaching experiences, or working in a business environment, as can be seen in these illustrative quotes:

> *“I have a business background. I had experience with practical English communication. [...] I saw many pragmatic failures among Japanese colleagues."(T2)*
> *"I think, personally, one thing that my experience in doing research [in] pragmatics and teaching pragmatics, and just being an American living in Japan and communicating in Japanese, sometimes in English with Japanese people, is how [... for]communication, [...]it’s so much more than knowing grammar and vocabulary. "(T6)*

Their views are directly connected to how they approach teaching pragmatic competence to students, which will be discussed in the next section.

(2) How do English educators help their students to boost their L2 pragmatic competence and why do they introduce it that way?

In SLA, according to Fatemi and Vahedi (2014), there are two main ways of instructing, namely "bottom-up" and "top-down." From my interview data, it seems these two approaches can be applied to teaching L2 pragmatic competence, too. Fifty percent of the participants reported that they take a bottom-up approach. Within this 50%, their methods were varied but most tasks could be divided into three groups:

(a) giving example conversations and letting students analyse them;
(b) giving informative feedback after doing activities through a task-based approach; and
(c) giving their students as many chances to talk and discuss in English as possible.

Among these three different ways, getting students to analyse sample conversations seemed to be preferred the most by the participants.

One teacher reported that he gave useful tips that could be used in authentic interactions then checked whether his students could successfully use them or not, which seemed to be a top-down approach. Another teacher said she tried to bridge pragmatic learning and grammar learning by using university entrance examinations, which nowadays embed pragmatic competence, as Guest’s (2008) comparative study on the difference between *senta shiken* (Japanese universities entrance examinations) in 1981 and 2006 has shown.

They were also asked if they could see any improvements in students' pragmatic awareness or ability by carrying out their methods, and most of them could see positive effects on students' pragmatic views. Those positive results seemed to drive the participants forward more to try alternative methods of teaching pragmatics, which often seemed to be connected to their academic background or their own research findings.

(3) What issues related to second language pragmatic competence do English educators think still remain and how do they approach them?

Issues raised by the participants were varied but they could be categorised into common themes. Here I list three of them:

(a) Lack of teachers' awareness:
"Teachers do not have pragmatic awareness."(T2)
"I think teachers should know what a speech act is, right?" (T7)

(b) Japanese cultural and national norms (e.g. conversation styles) could interfere with learning pragmatic awareness:
"Students are reluctant to disagree on the whole in Japan."(T5)
"When Japanese students [try] to speak English, they're always waiting for the question, right? Yes, no one wants to jump and say something. "(T4)

(c) The grammar-based Japanese education system:
"So much Japanese English education is teaching about grammar and vocabulary, you know, and actually becoming communicatively competent is so much more than that. " (T6)

There was one more interesting finding which I would like to add here. There are a lot of studies done examining connections between pragmalinguistic perspective and sociopragmatic traits in language use or its teachability/learnability. For example, Kasper and Rose (2002) concluded that grammatical and pragmalinguistic knowledge does not cover socioculturally acceptable verbal behaviour in English communications. These distinctive aspects of pragmatic use of language might better be taught separately, so I asked the participants about the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects. When they were asked, "How do you organise your English classes considering the balance between sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic aspects in English use? ", half of the participants reacted as shown below:

"I've never thought too much about that." (T8)
"I don't know that I do." (T5)
"Oh, gosh, it's a big question. And to be honest, I don't have a clear and magical answer," (T1)
"Let's see. I'm not sure I ever considered that very carefully. So I'm not sure if I can answer that." (T6)

Those reactions might indicate that there is a need to come up with some methods for students to learn "XXX is pragmalinguistically correct, but sociopragmatically it might be unacceptable or someone might get offended." Even though there is a discussion on World Englishes going on, for EFL learners, understanding the sociopragmatic norms in language use is a vague and tough process, so if teachers explain or add some information that relates to how languages can authentically be used in context, this could be a great help to EFL learners.

In conclusion, the present study showed what English educators do in teaching pragmatic competence in English classes, the issues they think remain to be explored, and how they formed their teachers' beliefs based on their backgrounds and experiences.

One of the limitations of this study was the lack of divergence in the ethical, cultural, and academic backgrounds among participants since seven of the participants were from English speaking countries and only one was from Japan. Also, as said earlier, this study was conducted only with educators from the Pragmatics SIG, so the participants might have shared some common ideas. Therefore, a survey with a more diverse group would be likely to give broader perspectives than this study.

Even though some limitations remain, the participants are experts in pragmatics, and their ideas and thoughts about teaching second language pragmatics were greatly supported by their research findings, knowledge, and experiences. Therefore, these ideas provide valuable insights, especially for teachers who have less knowledge of pragmatics or limited teaching experience in this area.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the kind participation of the eight teachers in this study, I could finish writing my graduation thesis with enough time left for revising before submitting it. I really enjoyed all aspects, such as planning interviews, asking questions to the participants, coding and analysing, and writing the thesis in English (a language which I truly love learning). It was a wonderful and precious experience for me to conduct interviews with some of the Pragmatics SIG members. I could deepen my thoughts as a student who is interested in pragmatics and will pursue my master's degree on the same topic as an eternally enthusiastic language learner.

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Reports from PanSIG 2022

Teaching varied discourse moves: Theory and method

Presented by James Bury
Reported by James Bury
Shumei University

The presentation I gave at PanSIG this year focused on the inclusion and integration of different discourse moves into in-class interactions. This is an area that I have explored for a number of years now, from the first intervention conducted in a private high school in Saitama in 2013 (and published in 2014) to this most recent study conducted at two universities in Chiba. I have also presented on this topic before, leading to the inclusion of 'The Questionless Conversation' activity in the Pragmatics Undercover book in 2020.

As my previous presentations on this theme had focused mainly on the results of different interventions and their implications for classroom behaviors, I wanted this presentation to be more practice-based. Consequently, my main aim was to introduce different activities that I have used in my classrooms that have enabled a wide range of discourse moves to be successfully explained and practiced. However, to do this I first needed to cover the theory behind using a variety of discourse moves.

I began the presentation by highlighting the general tendency for classroom interactions to be dominated by questions (Thoms, 2012). This has been illustrated in IRE/F models where the teacher initiates the first move, a student responds, and the teacher then gives an evaluation and makes a follow up move, which most commonly comes as a question (Hall & Walsh, 2002). Exchanges such as these do provide the opportunity to start discussions in the classroom, but they may not be the best way of encouraging students to maximize their output (e.g., Bury, 2014). Following this, I introduced the 10 different moves that I used in the study and gave examples of them. The moves were reflective statements, speaker referrals, non-retrieval/imaginative questions, statements of interest, referential questions, declarative statements, display questions, yes/no questions, statements of mind, and back-channeling (See Bury [2019] for further explanation.) Data were then introduced demonstrating that students' responses to the moves varied both in terms of length (numbers of words) and quality/authenticity (variation from set structures and exam-style answers). Two distinct groups were identified, with the top six in the list above (reflective statements ~ declarative statements) consistently encouraging more student output than the last four (display questions ~ back-channeling).

In the final part of the presentation, I spoke about different activities that can be used in our classrooms to both introduce and practice different discourse moves. The four main types of activity were (i) using tables as points of reference and 'anchors', (ii) using table completion activities to encourage students to personalize different moves, (iii) analyzing dialogs with different discourse moves using comparison and substitution, and (iv) dialog writing and building activities.

Luckily, as the presentation was just before lunch and the room was not being used straight after, we were able to extend the question and comment part of the session. First, I was asked to clarify the difference between speech acts and discourse moves. I did this by defining speech acts as *what we are doing* and discourse moves as *how we are doing it*, for example offering help would be a speech act and a yes/no question would be the discourse move that we use to achieve that, i.e., "Would you like me to help you?" A question regarding the level of the students involved in the study was also asked as it was felt that some of the activities were too complex for lower-level students. While the students in this study were all university students with TOEIC scores ranging from 300-650, it was pointed out that discourse moves do not need to be explicitly introduced and explained, just their inclusion in classroom interactions can be enough for students of all levels to implicitly begin to learn how to respond appropriately to them. Following the session, I was invited to give a longer version of the presentation in the form of a Research on Language Learning (RoLL) Seminar hosted by the Research Institute of International Collaboration and Coexistence (RIICC) of Osaka Jogakuin University. This longer format (45-minute presentation and 30 minutes of Q&A) allowed me to go into more detail regarding the data collection and also how and why the discourse moves were chosen.

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Reports from JALT2022

JALT2022

JALT 2022 Report #1

Developing interactional competence: Turn-taking in learner talk

Presented by John Campbell-Larsen
Reported by John Campbell-Larsen
Kyoto Women's University

I was pleased to present at the 48th JALT national conference that took place in Fukuoka on November 11-14, 2022. Although the Saturday presentation slot was rather late (6:00 p.m.), I was happy (and relieved) that my talk was well-attended.

The genesis of this presentation was the realization that for many Japanese students of English, engaging in spontaneous spoken interactions in English can often be challenging, even after many years of formal English education. The idea that students 'can't speak' is something of an *idée fixe* in the world of English language education in Japan, and various reasons for this are advanced, from the credible and empirical (in much formal instruction strong focus is given to literacy skills) to the more speculative and unscientific (Japanese are shy). Over many years teaching English in Japan, I have sought to remedy the shortfall that often exists in students' speaking (i.e. interactional) skills in a principled and structured manner. The background to this has been the understanding of the nature of language in use that has emerged from the rigorous study of spoken interactions undertaken by practitioners of conversation analysis (CA).

I introduced my talk by referring to the foundational 1974 paper by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson which lays out the system of turn-taking in talk-in-interaction. In very simple terms, the system operates according to a basic set of rules. The current speaker can select the next speaker, or the next speaker can self-select to take a turn, or the current speaker can re-select themselves as the next speaker. In addition, turns are described as valuable and sought-after resources and turn transition should ideally align with a timing of no gap, no overlap. An understanding of these aspects of interaction can serve as a useful starting point to see why many spoken interactions carried out by students often seem halting and burdensome for speakers and listeners alike.

I then proceeded to detail some of the points of turn-taking that are relevant to the language classroom. Although there are several mechanisms that speakers can use to bring about speaker transition, many students seem to orient to a default of 'current selects next'. This may be their major experience of speaking in English based on the canonical 'initiation, response, feedback' (IRF) cycle which is a central feature of much classroom discourse. The result is that students seem to conceive of L2 conversation as an extended sequence of questions and answers, and my data of student interactions show this pattern in abundance. In a sense, the IRF sequence is not so much a turn-taking system but a turn-giving system. In addition, in the IRF sequence, the answers to display questions by the teacher will be evaluated not only for the factual content but also for their linguistic form. Thus, many teachers in the IRF sequence will give time for students to formulate their answer to the question, tacitly indicating that correct linguistic form is to be pursued at all times and that delays in turn uptake are a price worth paying for such lexical/grammatical accuracy. This may accustom students to unfeasibly patient interlocutors, in violation of the 'no gap, no overlap' metric for timings of turn transitions. Multi-second silences at turn boundaries are a common feature of student talk in my experience.

A further effect that may be attributable to the prevalence of the IRF sequence is the continual placing of the student in the second 'slot' for speaking. Students become accustomed to only speaking on demand and to respond in the minimal way that is required as a response during the IRF cycle. Even in cases where students engage in 'now ask your partner' or 'find someone who' type activities with classmates, the questioner is asking the question in response to a prompt, from the textbook or a handout or such. Thus, not only is the answer prompted, but the initial question is also prompted. The students may find it difficult to speak without such prompts. The underlying architecture of 'current selects next' as a turn-taking system permeates student speaking at many levels and inhibits the 'next speaker self-selects to take a turn' mechanism.

Another aspect of student talk that is centred on turn-taking mechanisms is the behaviour often found at turn boundaries in student-to-student talk. In addition to the often lengthy pauses at speaker transition points, there is a tendency for students to begin their turn with an L1 marker of some kind, usually '*etoh*' or '*anno*'. In a 2010 paper discussing spoken fluency Michael McCarthy stressed the importance of turn boundary behaviour in achieving what he terms *confluency.* The unconscious resort to L1 markers displaces the more common L2 turn openers such as 'yeah', 'well' and so on. At the other end of the turn, students rely heavily on the use of the fixed expression 'how about you?' to achieve turn transition, again showing an orientation to 'current selects next' as the go-to method of achieving turn transition. A final observation on student-to-student talk is that in groups of more than two, turn order often follows a predictable order. For example, in a group of three, student A asks a question to student B who answers and then nominates student C (often with 'how about you?'). This student answers the question and then nominates student A, (again, often with 'How about you?') thus completing what can be termed 'talking around the circle'. This goes against normal conversational practice. It was noted by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson in 1974 that in conversation, turns are not allocated in advance. This tendency to talk around the circle is at variance with freer flowing and locally managed turn allocation.

This completed the first phase of my presentation which sought to identify the particularities of student talk from the perspective of turn-taking systematics and suggest some of the causes of these practices. Namely, I suggested that the interactional architecture of the classroom that students have experienced thus far in their studies may have coloured the turn-taking behaviour of students who are placed in the position of conversational interactants without any instruction or practice of turn-taking mechanisms or any of the other means by which mundane spoken interaction outside the classroom is carried out. Following on from this descriptive phase I moved on to suggestions of courses of action that teachers may like to take to enable learners to deploy a more naturalistic set of turn-taking practices.

Firstly, I suggest that explicit teaching of the rules of turn-taking be explained to learners. In my own case I have video recorded student interactions during class time. Then I have shown the students the videos and asked them to notice the turn-taking practices that were employed. The presence of inter-turn pausing, use of L1 markers at turn onset, reliance on 'how about you?' to nominate the next speaker and all of the other features mentioned above initially seem to lie below a metacognitive horizon for learners. But when turn-taking is explicitly taught to students, these elements seem to jump out and students notice the practices in the videos.

Students can be taught various methods to expand their repertoire of turn-taking practices. Teaching turn opening discourse markers (DM) such as 'well' allows students begin a turn in a timely fashion. Even if the DM is followed by a pause while the students formulate the turn, it is still a signal that a turn has been taken (whether selected by the previous speaker, or a case of self-selection by the current speaker). Similarly, students can be taught to end turns in a variety of ways, such as use of discourse markers like, 'you know/you know what I mean?', general extenders such as 'and stuff/ and all that kind of thing/ and all those guys'. This broadens the discourse repertoire of speakers and helps listeners identify turn transition places. This also helps to steer students away from L1 turn ending practices such as '*owari*' (finished), *ijyou desu* (that's all) and the like, which I have heard on occasion when students wish to signal turn ending.

Students can also be taught explicit strategies for turn management that can be used in mundane classroom situations. For example, when a teacher enters a student group (either face-to-face or in online environments) students often suspend talk and the teacher initiates a new phase of interaction, often with a question. I suggest that students could be trained to offer a previous action formulation (PAF) upon the entry of the teacher into the interactional space. This involves a swift exchange of greetings and then one of the pre-present speakers self-selects to inform the incoming person of the current topic and content of the talk. A PAF formulation looks something like this. "Hi, John. We were just talking about part time jobs and Yuki was saying that she started work at a café last weekend.' This places responsibility on the student to manage the interactional framework and helps them bypass the expectation of always being in the second/responsive slot in talk with the teacher.

Building on these teachable points, I also suggested that a 'one and done' approach to developing students' turn-taking practices is not sufficient. I outlined the pedagogical logic of allowing students an extended period in each class for free talk. That is, time should be set aside for students to engage in talk in the L2 with no overt task, no topic cards or the like. As they become accustomed to engaging in non-evaluated, participant-managed speaking, interactional competence emerges as they escape the confines of the 'lesson' framework and start to orient to a more free-flowing conversational style where self-selection to take a turn becomes more normative and the old habits start to recede. I summed up my talk with the following points.

- Interaction is the basic use of language in all cultures.
- Interaction is based on a system of turn-taking.
- Classroom practices may affect student turn-taking habits.
- Some aspects of turn-taking can be explicitly taught.
- With regular and extended opportunities to engage in spoken interaction, turn-taking practices develop.
- Turn-taking is 'doing' not just 'knowing'

The talk was generally well-received and questions from the audience focused on particular strategies for teaching things like DM use and the timeline of introducing a free talk section of lessons and how long it takes students to orient to the reconfigured interactional architecture of a language classroom once turn-taking becomes a focus. I stressed that although I mostly teach students who have moved beyond basic level, these aspects of interaction can be introduced very early and are not unsuitable for learners even at the lower end of the proficiency scale. In addition to the Q&A section, I also spoke to several attendees after the session and a few days later my attention was drawn to a positive evaluation of my talk made by someone on Reddit!

There were just so many different lectures, it was difficult to choose which one to go to.

Did any of the ones you attended stand out for one reason or another? Anything that really impressed you?

1 Reply Give Award Share Report Save Follow

[redacted] · 2 mo. ago

John Campbell-Larsen's pres on turn taking should be essential viewing for anyone constructing a conversation class imo. It was nothing short of revolutionary for me.

8 Reply Give Award Share Report Save Follow

[redacted] · 2 mo. ago

Wish I had seen it. I'll look around for another opportunity.

2 Reply Give Award Share Report Save Follow

[redacted] · 2 mo. ago

I really really recommend reading him or even emailing him for the slides if your class has any conversation or discussion component. Completely changed the way I look at how students interact. It was the missing link between talking, and talking how normal people talk.

5 Reply Give Award Share Report Save Follow

[redacted] · 2 mo. ago

I'm researching cultural differences in turn-taking - has he written on that in the Japan context? It's a bit hard to seach JALT for publications, do you have a DOI for his paper, or the name of one of his papers?

JALT 2022 Report #2

Multilingual writers' argumentation writing: A new look

Presented by Hiroe Kobayashi and Carol Rinnert

How to be clear and engaging in academic writing: Use of metadiscourse

Presented by Carol Rinnert and Hiroe Kobayashi

Reported by Carol Rinnert
Hiroshima City University, Professor Emeritus

Although our two presentations focused on development of academic *writing* abilities, they belong to *pragmatics* too, since we analyzed how writers construct meaning in specific contexts. That is, rather than investigating grammatical/lexical complexity, accuracy, or fluency, we looked at rhetorical features and interaction between writers and readers in written texts. Taking the perspective of writing as a social act, both studies were based on analysis of 82 English and 103 Japanese essays on controversial social topics written by 8 groups of Japanese and North American writers with varying amounts of writing instruction/experience and language proficiency. The two presentations were taken mainly from Chapters 2, 3, and 10 of our forthcoming book, *Developing multilingual writing: Agency, audience, identity* (2023), which contains a series of interrelated cross-sectional and case studies of multilingual writers.

The first presentation, "Multilingual writers' argumentation writing: A new look" (by Hiroe Kobayashi and Carol Rinnert), shared the results of a study of similarities and differences across groups in overall rhetorical structure and internal components of L1 and L2 essays written by the same writers. After identifying three main discourse types (Argumentation, Exposition, Self-reflection), we looked closer at the Argumentation essays and found three subtypes: *justification* (presenting a position and supporting it with reasons and evidence), *exploration-1* (identifying issues relevant to a topic and exploring them from different perspectives to reach a position at the end), and *exploration-2* (putting forward a position and then explicating the thought process underlying it). We further analyzed *justification* (the most common subtype) and discovered three patterns: 1) Position with reasons only (R); 2) position with reasons + counterargument-refutation (RC/R); and 3) position with reasons + problem-suggestions (RS). Our results suggest an overall developmental pattern of more variety in discourse patterns with more writing experience; in essence, as writers acquired more discourse types, they also kept earlier types in their repertoires.

Regarding the *justification* essays, we found that when writers gained more experience and instruction, they tended to move from using mainly a justification (R) pattern to adding other essay components in (RS) or (RC/R) patterns, although we also found the latter two patterns were generally more challenging and could sometimes be confused by the writers. While the justification (R) pattern may be seen as too simplistic or formulaic at higher levels of writing proficiency, we found that some intermediate and advanced writers were able to construct convincing and sophisticated arguments in their Reasons-only essays by including both *Direct* and *Indirect* support for their positions, sometimes in complex or parallel ways. By direct support, we mean strong points of the position taken, whereas indirect support refers to weak points of the opposing position that support the writer's position indirectly.

We ended by presenting several pedagogical suggestions. Our three suggested teaching points (using sample essays) included: 1) Introduce justification subtypes depending on the level of the students (start with R; RS may not be necessary to teach because it seems to be familiar to Japanese students; later focus on RC/R, which is most challenging and believed to be more persuasive); 2) Introduce direct and indirect support (which can make a reasons-only essay more sophisticated); and 3) Explain how to create a counterargument-refutation (CA-Ref) component (for CA: refer to opposing side and give at least one reason supporting it; for Ref: show why it is not necessarily true or not important). Suggested classroom activities include: 1) Check what experience students have with argumentation writing in L1 and L2; 2) Have students create a structural plan for an essay in L1 or L2 individually and check it with a pair partner; 3) Ask students to write a draft, check it for coherence in pairs or groups, and then revise based on peer or teacher feedback.

The second presentation, "How to be clear and engaging in academic writing: Use of metadiscourse" (Carol Rinnert and Hiroe Kobayashi), reported on the changing use of metadiscourse across the same groups. Metadiscourse is defined as devices or markers that refer to the discourse itself, which can include the text, the writing process, the writer, and/or the reader. Following Hyland's (2005, 2017) interpersonal model of metadiscourse, we distinguished two types: 1) *Interactive* metadiscourse to guide the reader through the discourse (e.g., "Next,") or clarify points (e.g., "For example,"); and 2) *Interactional* metadiscourse to interact with the reader (e.g., emphasizing a point to show writer's attitude) or draw the reader into the text (e.g., asking a question). Although these two terms are confusing because they look so much alike, we decided to keep them because they are widely used in the literature. (It can be helpful to remember that "interactive" metadiscourse is more text-based, whereas "interactional" metadiscourse is more socially based, though they overlap to some extent.) We chose to look at metadiscourse, a popular topic of research in recent years (e.g., Hyland 2005, 2012, 2017; Li & Wharton 2012; Onder & Longo 2014), because it is used by writers to connect with prospective readers and can be difficult for developing writers to use effectively.

In the presentation, we focused on one kind of *interactive* metadiscourse (Paragraph Connectors) and two kinds of *interactional* metadiscourse (Hedges and Boosters). For all three kinds of metadiscourse, we found a rough developmental sequence (that was additive and non-linear) toward greater variety and more refinement of forms. For Paragraph Connectors, the sequence can be characterized as moving from mainly using *transitional markers* (e.g., "Also," "However,") to depending more on *frame markers* ("First," "Next,") to adding or substituting more *cohesive ties* ("this," "the same"; lexical repetition). In the case of Hedges (softeners), we found a developmental change from more use of the *frequency* type ("often," "sometimes," "usually") to more use of *degree* ("a little," "not too much," "slightly") and *likelihood* ("perhaps," "probably," "less likely") and more *-ly* adverbs. Two problems we found with Hedges included: 1) difficulties with English modals (both in terms of verb form and in the fact that they can have multiple meanings; for example, "can" can refer to ability, permission, or possibility, and only the last meaning is a Hedge); and 2) some instances of over-hedging (probably under the influence of Japanese), which can make the writer sound "wishy-washy" but can be solved by taking out some of the multiple Hedges in the same sentence.

As for Boosters (emphasizers), we found that writers tended to move from repeated use of a few boosters ("very", "most," "strongly") toward more variety, especially in *–ly* adverbs. For example, we can compare the first-year university returnees overuse of "really" and "actually" to advanced writers' use of such adverbs as "extremely," "certainly," "inevitably," and "increasingly." The only other problem we found with Boosters was use of absolute forms ("all," "no," "never") with no supporting evidence, which can sound "dogmatic." This problem is easily solved by adding a Hedge before an absolute Booster, e.g., "There <u>*appears to be*</u> <u>**no**</u> direct relation"; "<u>*Almost*</u> <u>**everything**</u>"; "<u>*Nearly*</u> <u>**all**</u>" (Hedges in underlined italics; Boosters in underlined bold). We also found that Advanced writers combined hedges and boosters in the same sentence to create more nuanced assertions, e.g.,

> "<u>**Not only**</u> is confidence <u>*potentially*</u> greater when young, <u>**but**</u> curiosity is <u>**as well**</u>." (NA-3)
> "[…] living with someone who has <u>**very**</u> different values from you <u>*can*</u> be a stressful thing." (Exp3-5)

Our pedagogical suggestions included the following: 1) Explain the importance of Paragraph Connectors to establish essay-level coherence and orient and guide the reader through the text; 2) For argumentation essays, introduce frame markers, especially for justification essays; add cohesive markers (deictics like "this" and repeating the same words across paragraphs); and finally encourage use of all three types of Paragraph Connectors; 3) Raise awareness of the importance of Hedges and Boosters: a) connection with readers by sharing writer's attitude and feelings; b) softening assertions with Hedges to show writer is cautious/reliable; c) emphasizing assertions with boosters to strengthen their force; 4) Encourage use of both Hedges and Boosters in the same sentence; 5) Present models of effective use of Paragraph Connectors, Hedges, and Boosters in paragraphs or essays; 5) Guide students to analyze use and non-use of metadiscourse in their own writing.

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