Introduction

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Teaching Pragmatics explores the teaching of pragmatics through lessons and activities created by teachers of English as a second and foreign language. This book is written for teachers by teachers. Our teacher-contributors teach in seven different countries and are both native-speakers and nonnative speakers of English. Activities reflect ESL and EFL classroom settings. The chapters included here allow teachers to see how other teachers approach the teaching of pragmatics and to appreciate the diversity and creativity of their endeavors. Taken together, the activities constitute a spectrum of possibilities for teaching pragmatics. Each submission provides novel insight into the ESL/EFL classroom and the fact that there is no single approach to the teaching of pragmatics. The variety of approaches means that pragmatics can be integrated easily into any classroom whether traditional or communicative.

What is pragmatics?

The study of pragmatics explores the ability of language users to match utterances with contexts in which they are appropriate; in Stalnaker's words, pragmatics is "the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed" (1972, p. 383). The teaching of pragmatics aims to facilitate the learners' sense of being able to find socially appropriate language for the situations that they encounter. Within second language studies and teaching, pragmatics encompasses speech acts, conversational structure, conversational implicature, conversational management, discourse organization, and sociolinguistic aspects of language use such as choice of address forms. These areas of language and language use have not traditionally been addressed in language teaching curricula, leading one of our students to ask if we could teach him "the secret rules of English." Pragmatic rules for language use are often subconscious,

and even NS are often unaware of pragmatic rules until they are broken (and feelings are hurt, offense is taken, or sometimes things just seem a bit odd). Neither does pragmatics receive the attention in language teacher education programs that other areas of language do. Nevertheless, rules of language use do not have to be "secret rules" for learners or teachers. A growing number of studies exist that describe language use in a variety of English-speaking communities, and these studies have yielded important information for teaching. From the teacher's perspective, the observation of how speakers do things with words has demystified the pragmatic process at least to the point that we can provide responsible and concrete lessons and activities to language learners. We are in the position to give assurance that they too can learn pragmatics in their second or foreign language and that they can be "in the club" of English speakers. Teachers can successfully decode the apparently secret rules for classroom learners.

Why teach pragmatics in language classes?

We advocate teaching pragmatics because quite simply, observation of language learners shows that there is a demonstrated need for it and that instruction in pragmatics can be successful.

Learners show significant differences from native speakers in the area of language use, in the execution and comprehension of certain speech acts, in conversational functions such as greetings and leave takings, and in conversational management such as back channeling and short responses. (See for example, Bardovi-Harlig, 1996, 1999, in press; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Kasper & Rose, 1999.) Without instruction, differences in pragmatics show up in the English of learners regardless of their first language background or language proficiency. That is to say, a learner of high grammatical proficiency will not necessarily show equivalent pragmatic development. As a result, learners at the higher levels of grammatical proficiency often show a

wide range of pragmatic competence. Thus, we find that even advanced nonnative speakers are neither uniformly successful, nor uniformly unsuccessful, but the range is quite wide.

The consequences of pragmatic differences, unlike the case of grammatical errors, are often interpreted on a social or personal level rather than a result of the language learning process. Being outside the range of language use allowed in a language, committing a type of pragmatic mistake, may have various consequences, as identified by the teachers contributing to this volume: It may hinder good communication between speakers (Takenoya), or make the speaker appear abrupt or brusque in social interactions (Lee), or rude or uncaring (Yates). Even maintaining a conversation in English requires a certain amount of knowledge underlying responses that prompt a speaker to continue, show understanding, give support, indicate agreement, show strong emotional response, add or correct speaker's information, or ask for more information, as Gallow points out; Berry also discusses the importance of learning how to take turns, and demonstrates that listening behaviors that are polite in one language, may not be polite (or recognizable) in another. Unintentional insult to interlocutors (Mach & Ridder) and denial of requests (Weasenforth) have also been identified as other potential pragmatic hazards.

Left to their own devices such as contact with the target language in and out of the classroom, the majority of learners apparently do not acquire the pragmatics of the target language on their own (Bouton, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, Bardovi-Harlig, in press; Kasper, in press). What makes pragmatics "secret" seems to be in some cases the lack of specific input, and in others the lack of interpretation of language use. Language classrooms are especially well suited to provide both input and interpretation. The first problem of input that instruction addresses is to make language available to learners for observation. Some speech acts, such as invitations, refusals, and apologies often take place between individuals, and so learners might

not have the opportunity to observe such language without being directly involved in the conversation. Some speech events such as office hours and advising sessions can generally not be observed by a third party. But closed events need not be as private as going to the doctor, as one of our graduate students pointed out: A person might want to know the conventions for talking to a hair stylist in a second language, something equally difficult to observe!

The second problem of input that instruction addresses is salience. Some necessary features of language and language use are quite subtle in the input and not immediately noticeable by learners; for example the turns that occur before speakers actually say "goodbye" and the noises that we make when encouraging other speakers to continue their turns are of this type. Differences in making requests by asking "Can I" (speaker-oriented) versus "Can you" (hearer-oriented) might not be immediately salient to learners. By highlighting features of language and language use, instruction can inform the learner.

Finally, classrooms are the ideal place to help learners interpret language use. Instruction can help learners understand when and why certain linguistic practices take place. It can also help learners interpret the input that they hear, in both actual comprehension ("What does this formula mean?") and interpretation ("How is this used?" or "What does a speaker who says this hope to accomplish?"). A classroom discussion of pragmatics is also a good place to explore prior impressions of speakers. For example, Americans are often thought of as being very direct. As Howard reports, her learners often tell her that "you don't have to be polite in English." Instruction provides the opportunity to discuss the lack of some types of politeness markers in English and the presence and function of others that may not be immediately recognizable to learners.

As discussed above, the need for pragmatics instruction is fairly easy to document. In addition there are recent studies that suggest instruction benefits pragmatic development in both production and comprehension. (For overviews see Kasper, 1997, and in press; for a collection of studies see Rose & Kasper, in press; for individual studies see Bouton, 1998, 1990, 1992, 1994).

What are the goals of teaching pragmatics? What are the ultimate benefits to the learners? The chief goal of instruction in pragmatics is to raise learners' pragmatic awareness and to give them choices about their interactions in the target language. The goal of instruction in pragmatics is not to insist on conformity to a particular target-language norm, but rather to help learners become familiar with the range of pragmatic devices and practices in the target language. With such instruction learners can maintain their own cultural identities (Kondo) and participate more fully in target language communication with more control over both intended force and outcome of their contributions. In her chapter Kondo notes that "successful communication is a result of optimal rather than total convergence" (Giles, Coupland, & Coupland, 1991). As the authors to the chapters have said, exposing the learners to pragmatics in their second or foreign language helps them expand their perceptions of the language and speakers of the language.

The classroom provides a safe place for learners to learn and experiment. In the classroom learners are able to try out new forms and patterns of communication in an accepting environment. For example, they can experiment with unfamiliar forms of address, or attempt shorter conversational openings or closings than they are used to that might at first make them feel abrupt or they might try longer openings or closings that initially might feel too drawn out, just to get the feel of it. The instructor and other student participants can provide feedback.

Instruction should allow for flexibility for the students in how much of the pragmatic norms of the culture that they would like to adopt or adapt to their own repertoire. No matter how much learners intend produce, as a result of the activities suggested in this book, they will be able to better interpret the speech of others. They will enjoy a greater level of acceptance or insight into the target culture. We believe that like the teacher-authors in this book, teachers reading this book will find that students genuinely enjoy participating in pragmatics lessons for reasons covered above, and because learning about pragmatics is like being let into a secret!

How can pragmatics be taught?

We emphasize that there is not a single best way to teach pragmatics. The teaching activities that we have included here represent a wide range of teaching styles and approaches. But regardless of method, they share some important pedagogical practices. Readers will find that 1) awareness activities generally begin the units described in the chapters, 2) authentic language samples are used as examples or models, and 3) input precedes interpretation by learners or production activities.

Instruction in pragmatics may utilize the learners' first language as well as the target language. Awareness raising activities can profitably involve demonstrations in the L1 or L1 language samples. Demonstrations may include the use of space, such as where people stand in a line, or nonverbal gestures that accompany certain types of talk, such as shaking hands during greetings or introductions. In Berry's lesson on listening behaviors, students demonstrate active listening behavior in their own language(s) before observing native speakers. L1 language samples can serve to introduce learners to ideas in pragmatics in a context in which they native control of the language. They can also serve for the basis of L1-L2 comparisons as in Howard's lesson on politeness in which L1 and L2 business letters are compared. It is worthwhile to keep

in mind that all languages have pragmatic systems, and with a little encouragement all learners will recognize that their L1s also have "secret rules."

Pragmatics is an area of language instruction where teachers and students can genuinely learn together. The use of authentic language samples is important because as Wolfson (1988) pointed out, the intuitions of native speakers regarding language use are notoriously poor (in contrast to intuitions about language form or grammar). As a result, teachers as well as students benefit from the use of authentic language. The use of authentic language as the basis of the lessons presented in this book (rather than intuitions) also makes possible the teaching of pragmatics by nonnative speakers of English. In the chapters throughout the volume, the teacher-authors demonstrate many ways to collect authentic language samples on which to base lessons—from tape recording, to messages on answering machines, making use of internationally broadcast English language talk shows, educational films, using the world wide web, and saving letters and correspondence, to name just a few.

The presentation of authentic language samples generally precedes interpretation or production activities, thus giving learners something to build on. It is important to take in to account the fact that, just as teachers cannot rely on intuitions in teaching pragmatics, learners cannot count on their intuitions about pragmatics in their second/foreign language prior to instruction.

Pragmatics can be integrated into the English-langauge curriculum at the earliest levels: There is no reason to wait to introduce learners to the pragmatics of a second language. In fact, the imbalance between grammatical and pragmatic development may be ameliorated by early attention to pragmatics in instruction. Kontra's lesson shows how pragmatics can be introduced to learners even at beginning levels.

Contents and organization

Each chapter has five main sections: description of the activity, procedure, rationale, alternatives or caveats, and additional pedagogical resources. The chapters specify the level of the learners for whom the lesson was designed, the time needed, resources, and the goal of the activity. The chapters open with a description of the activity followed by the step-by-step procedure for implementing it with language learners. In the rationale sections, teacher-authors review the reasons behind the development of the activities. Applications of the activities to other learners, settings, modes, or areas of pragmatics, as well as expansions, elaborations, and caveats are presented in the alternatives and caveats section. Examples appear throughout the chapters, with worksheets and overheads following the chapters.

This book is organized in five main sections. The chapters in each section are ordered according to the level of the learners for whom the lesson was designed, beginning with the activities for the lowest level learners and progressing to advanced learners. The first section, *Awareness*, presents teaching activities that focus on raising learners' awareness of pragmatic differences between languages. The sections following *Awareness* offer production activities. The activities that focus on production are organized by the area of pragmatics that they address: conversational management, conversational openings and closings, requests, and daily life. *Conversational Management* includes activities that address the mechanics of conversation, such as turn taking, active listening, relevant short responses, and using hesitation markers. *Conversational Openings and Closings* deals with the boundaries of conversations: how to begin and end conversations both in person and on the telephone.

Requests deals with the specific speech act of asking someone to do something. Finally, *Assorted Speech Acts* presents a variety of speech acts including complaining during service encounters, turning down invitations, complimenting, and responding to compliments.

Because each section contains chapters that are similar in some ways and different in others, this volume has an index designed to help teachers find activities that are appropriate for their students. The index is organized around major features such as level of learners, type of activities, content of activities, computer use, and nonverbal communication.

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Additional Readings

Overviews of teaching of pragmatics
These sources provide general orientations to the teaching of pragmatics, including general statements of methods and pedagogical philosophy.

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Practical examples of teaching pragmatics
These practical sources provide concrete lessons on specific pragmatic features, including textbook evaluations.

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Yoshida, K., Kamiya, M., Kondo, S., & Tokiwa, R. (2000). *Heart to Heart: Overcoming Barriers in Cross-Cultural Communication*. Tokyo: Macmillan Languagehouse,

Resources for teaching and language samples

The following series is dedicated, as its name suggests, to pragmatics and language learning. The wide variety of articles provides excellent language samples that can be exploited in teaching, as well as descriptions of language learning in the pragmatic domain. Articles serve as excellent needs assessments for teachers and programs that are implementing instruction in pragmatics. Volumes in this series are available directly from the University of Illinois, Division of English as an International Language.

Bouton, L. F., & Kachru, Y. (Eds.). (1990-1994). *Pragmatics and language learning*, (Vols 1-5). University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign: Division of English as an International Language.

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