Dancing with Spanish Words: Teaching Pragmatic Awareness Through

Speech Acts

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by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this Report to my parents. Thank you for lovingly supporting me in all my endeavors.

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Abstract

This Report answers three questions: (a) Why is teaching pragmatic competence important? (b) What are the approaches to teaching pragmatic awareness? Specifically how do instructors teach Spanish requests?, and (c) What role does technology play in pragmatic awareness instruction? The first chapter explains why I chose to write my Report on developing pragmatic awareness through speech act instruction. Chapter two discusses development of pragmatic awareness. Chapter three and four address approaches to teaching pragmatic knowledge and technology's role in pragmatic instruction. Chapter five proposes a lesson for an intermediate university Spanish class grounded on speech act theory. Materials and a rubric for classroom use accompany the lesson (Appendices A-C). The chapter concludes with a discussion of pedagogical challenges as well as pedagogical recommendations for teachers. Chapter six concludes the Report by answering my guiding questions succinctly, summarizing the pedagogical

lesson proposed, and explaining the reasons why I think the lesson is a useful resource

for teachers.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I first became interested in pragmatics when taking a course offered in the Spanish department at the University of Texas at Austin. The meaning of language in context was not a foreign concept to me, because I had experienced many a failed interaction with native speakers during my time studying abroad in Spain; however, my reflections from the two weeks of intensive immersion classes in Spain combined with instruction on pragmatics and discourse analysis in the US made me realize how important it is for learners to be pragmatically aware. After this realization I was hooked! Pragmatic awareness instruction was definitely going to have a place in my future classroom.

From this course, I learned: speech acts (language is rule-governed behavior), implicature (speakers and listeners co-construct the meaning of language), presupposition (speakers have assumptions about speech in context), and deixis (language requires referencing people, places, and things – pointing). Before the course, I quite frequently connected my second language to my first in a very remedial way, translating what I wanted to say in Spanish, directly from the way I would say it in English. After the course, I understood better how language is constructed, and why my English-inspired utterances were not as well received by native speakers as some of the more candid expressions I had learned in class.

Later, when I reflected on the course, one thing that really intrigued me was how to incorporate authentic examples of the meaning of language in context in foreign language teaching classrooms. This concern motivated me to review the literature on pragmatic awareness development and speech act instruction with the following questions in mind:

1. Why is teaching pragmatic competence important?

2. What are the approaches to teaching pragmatic awareness? Specifically, how do instructors teach Spanish requests?

3. What role does technology play in pragmatic awareness instruction?

Answers to these questions are uncovered in the following five chapters. Chapter two considers how second language learners (L2s) develop pragmatic awareness. Approaches to teaching pragmatic knowledge are discussed in chapter three. Chapter four reviews technology's role in pragmatic instruction and chapter five proposes a lesson plan based on my interpretation of the literature reviewed through the eyes of my experiences and reflections. Finally, chapter six answers the guiding questions listed above, summarizes the pedagogical lesson proposed, and explains why I think the lesson is a useful resource for teachers.

CHAPTER 2

DEVELOPING PRAGMATIC AWARENESS

Introduction

Recently, much attention has been given to the development of pragmatic knowledge in second language (L2) acquisition. Scholars looking at L2 pragmatic acquisition suggest that L2 grammatical competence may not develop at the same rate as L2 pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei, 1998; Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003; Bardovi-Harlig & Griffen, 2005; Infantidou, 2010; Kasper, 2010; Koike, 1989; Koike & Pearson, 2005) mainly because even advanced language learners display a noticeable difference between their pragmatic and grammatical knowledge (Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei, 1998). In this chapter, I define the term pragmatics, address why pragmatic competence is important, and explain research findings on the differences between English and Spanish requests.

What is Pragmatics?

Pragmatics is the systematic study of meaning by virtue of, or dependent on, the use of language. To put it more simply, it is the relationship of language use to its context (Weigand, 2010). When communicating, it is the listeners' job to interpret the meaning of a speakers' language, in a given context. According to Wintergerst and McVeigh (2010), listeners need to interpret the following features of spoken languages:

1. Clustering (grouping of words)

2. Reduced forms (like contractions)

3. Performance variables (hesitations, pauses, filler words)

4. Colloquial language (informal terms)

5. Rate of delivery (speaker controlled)

6. Stress, rhythm, and intonation (helpful in conveying meaning).

Wintergerst and McVeigh also argue the following:

> A speaker's intended meaning is conveyed through language that is either correctly interpreted or misinterpreted in different cultural contexts because each speaker and listener brings along his or her own cultural norms of interpretation, underlying worldview, and cultural thought patterns. (p. 41-42)

Infantidou (2010) surmises that a pragmatically-aware L2 user is someone who is able to correctly interpret implicated conclusions, (irony, humor, or contempt) from pragmatically inferred effects, such as those resulting from the features listed above. Just like other aspects of second language learning, pragmatic awareness develops "in stages of increasingly growing sophistication" (Infantidou, 2010, p. 329). Pragmatic failure occurs when speakers do not use and/or do not understand situational appropriate language. Put more simply, when listeners fail to see through the grammar and retrieve the speaker's intentions, conversation breaks down (Bialystok, 1993). Therefore, it is incredibly important to provide pragmatic awareness instruction in our classrooms, diving into the cultural meaning behind language in context. One way to do this is through the incorporation of speech acts.

Speech acts, or communicative acts that transmit an intention, are the vehicle often used to aid in pragmatic awareness instruction. During a speech act, intentions are co-constructed by interlocutors and must be understood by the hearer and speaker so that a meaning transfer is successful. Common examples of speech acts that have been researched by pragmalinguists and sociopragmatic researchers are requests (Shively, 2011), compliments (Lorenzo-Dus, 2001), polite expressions (Haugh, 2007), suggestions (Koike & Pearson, 2005), and refusals (Placencia, 2008). These researchers agree that promoting awareness of these and other speech acts in language classrooms is ideal in order to diffuse possible cross-cultural miscommunications.

As Koike and Pearson (2005) put it "[P]ragmatic information is so context sensitive…the attitude of textbook writers and curriculum developers has been that it is learned through experience with the target language and culture over time" (p. 483). It is perhaps because of this belief that most teachers and textbook writers have shied away from including instruction on pragmatics in foreign language classrooms and textbooks. Yet, pragmatic competence is a necessary skill for language learners. The next sections of this chapter discuss why this skill is so important and review research findings on speech act requests.

Why is Pragmatic Competence So Important?

According to Taft Kacanas, Huen & Chan (2011), "it is important…that bilingual speakers of a language be aware of the preferred rhetorical organization of that

language if they are to avoid being disadvantaged when having their written work evaluated by a native speaker" (p. 514). Bardovi-Harlig (2009) goes on to specify that recognition of conventional expressions in an L2 is a necessary condition for production, but it is not sufficient. Lesser use of conventional L2 expressions by learners may have multiple sources: lack of familiarity with some sayings, overuse of familiar phrases, level of language development, or a learner's level of sociopragmatic knowledge.

The very definition of Speech Act Theory states that people use language not just to say things, but to do things (Austin, 1962). Cohen and Shively (2007) inform us that the functional value of language in a speech act is derived from how the language behavior (e.g., a refusal, an apology, a complaint, etc.) is executed and interpreted in a given context. Breaking down the intention of a speech act results in a combination of three forces: locutionary (the actual words uttered), illocutionary (the intention behind the words), and perlocutionary (the effect the illocution has on the hearer). Speech acts may be classified as direct (the sentence type prompts an illocutionary force) or indirect (the sentence type does not relate directly to the illocutionary force) (Huang, 2007, p. 115). Subsequently, the head act is the utterance that conveys the force of a request (Felix-Brasdefer, 2007) and is usually classified as direct, indirect or non-conventionally indirect (Pinto & Raschio, 2007; Bataller, 2010). The head act is the part of the speech act called "the nucleus" (Pinto & Raschio, 2007). Pinto and Raschio remind us that, "the head act is the unit that can constitute the speech act, while the other elements are adjuncts or supportive moves" (p. 136). A common Texas English example of an indirect

head act would be, "These eggs have no flavor. Can you pass the hot sauce, please?" The nucleus of this request is the combination of words "can you pass," because it is the glue of the speech act. In other words, in this example, the hearer knowing that they are perfectly able to pass the hot sauce (locutionary force) does not simply reply with yes, but infers (the illocutionary force) from the question that the speaker would like him or her to pass the hot sauce, resulting in an action made by the hearer of picking up the hot sauce and handing it to the speaker (perlocutionary force).

While the head act is the nucleus of the speech act, the end of the speech act is what is defined as downgrading. The politeness marker "please," a downgrader, works together with the rest of the speech act to mitigate the request and make it sound even less like the speaker is asking something of the hearer. Mitigation, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), is considered negative politeness, because it is an attempt to protect the hearer's face (their feelings).

Research Findings on Pragmatic Differences Between English and Spanish Requests

English and Spanish requests, as well as requests in other languages, have been heavily researched. Requests may have attracted so much research attention because they are easily measureable as they can be broken down into smaller parts: head acts and downgraders.

Pinto and Raschio (2007) reviewed several studies on English and Spanish requests and surmised that researchers are in agreement: Spanish speakers use direct

head act strategies and less mitigating devices than their American or British English speaking counterparts, while English speakers typically use more indirect strategies accompanied by a higher frequency and a wider variety of downgrading.

Pinto and Raschio's study focused on the differences between 40 undergraduate university students who were native speakers of English (NSE), 22 native speakers of Spanish (NSS) living in Mexico, and 21 heritage speakers of Spanish (HS) who were also undergraduate university students. The research questions investigated were: (a) Is there a difference between the three groups when analyzing the level of directness of the head act combined with the frequency of downgraders? (b) Is there a difference between the three groups when analyzing only the level of directness of the head act? (c) Is there a difference between the three groups when analyzing only the frequency of downgraders? Data was obtained through a written Discourse Completion Task (DCT) which was submitted via the internet. The instructions were in English for the NSEs and in Spanish for the NNSs and HSs. What Pinto and Raschio found was that HSs have a tendency to produce more indirect head acts in Spanish which did not fall in line with their Mexican monolingual counterparts. They proposed that HS learners may be more like second language learners (L2Ls) in this one area of speech act production. Finally, they concluded that while English-speaking cultures are generally characterized by negative politeness, Spanish-speaking cultures tend to be more oriented toward positive politeness, "the practice of establishing solidarity between interlocutors" (p. 136).

In a study on the acquisition of requests by second language learners of Spanish at different levels of study, Pinto (2005) informed us that (a) lower-level students' requests are often more pragmatically ambiguous and unconventional than those of advanced learners, but not necessarily more direct, (b) advanced learners rely largely on L1 request behavior, but show signs of improvement, and (c) when there are regional, social, or contextual differences (cross-linguistic variation) between the L1 and L2, learners at all levels experience more difficulties. These findings came from an analysis of DCTs and background questionnaires completed by 44 native Spanish speakers, and 20 English speaking learners of Spanish at four stages of undergraduate language study. All participants were between the ages of 18 and 36. In order to compare responses across studies and across languages, Pinto used the same request scenario DCTs (e.g., drink, notes, favor, and permission) administered in other studies.

Bataller's (2010) exploratory study focused exclusively on service encounter requests. Instead of using written DCTs like in Pinto (2005), and Pinto and Raschio (2007), Bataller used open role-plays with Spanish native speakers (32: 12 males, 20 females) because she believes that role-plays allow for the researcher to control social variables and to obtain a greater variety of pragmatic features in spoken discourse than written DCTs. She found that 31 second language learners (L2Ls) of Spanish (16 males, 23 females) who were studying abroad in Valencia, Spain, for four months changed some aspects of their request production moving away from indirect query permission (e.g., *Puedo tener X?/Can I have X*?) and need statement requests (e.g., *Necesito X/I*

need X); however, other aspects remained unaffected. L2Ls did not overwhelmingly adopt native Spanish speakers' more direct strategies like the simple interrogative (e.g., *Me pones un café?/Will you give me a coffee?*).

The findings in these studies show why there is a need for both teachers and students to explain, demonstrate, and understand the MANY pragmatic differences and similarities between the L1 and the L2 in the foreign/second language classroom. Researchers working with participants in the aforementioned studies (Pinto & Raschio, 2007; Pinto, 2005; Bataller, 2010), however, did not provide strategy-building instruction for their participants as part of their research design. Their explanation for not including instruction was that they wanted to solicit what the participants already knew.

Cohen and Shively (2007) and Shively (2011), already aware of the research completed in requests, added the variable of strategy instruction to their research. Cohen and Shively (2007) sought the answers to these research questions: (a) Is there a difference in Spanish and French students' speech act performance after 1 semester of studying abroad? (b) Is there a difference in speech act performance between Spanish and French students who received a strategies-based intervention and those who did not receive an intervention? (c) How can the development of semantic formulas in speech acts by Spanish learners from beginning to the end of the study-abroad period be categorized? The participants were 86 U.S. university students participating in one

semester of study abroad either in a Spanish speaking country or a French speaking country and 12 native Spanish speakers living in Minnesota. They were randomly assigned to either the experimental group or the control group. For 82 students, English was their L1; the other 4 listed the following L1s: French, Bosnian, Russian, and Hmong. Data was collected in the following ways:

1. The *Speech Act Measure of Language Gain* (Cohen, 2005) with 10 written DCT vignettes was administered pre- and post- study abroad to all university student participants, and was judged by the 4 native Spanish speakers and 2 native French speakers.

2. The experimental students read: *Maximizing Study Abroad: A Students' Guide to Strategies for Language and Culture Use* (Paige, Cohen, Kappler, Chi, & Lassegard, 2002)

3. The experimental students attended a pre-departure orientation about the *Guide*, the research, and a 1-hour speech act intervention.

4. The experimental group was required to submit seven electronic journal entries (e-journals) during their semester abroad.

The researchers argue that they used DCTs because they are more reliable. DCTs allow researchers to collect a large amount of data efficiently, as compared with acquiring similar natural data which, as they put it, would have taken weeks or months. The study results revealed that, overall, as a whole, the participants' performances on

the pre- and post-tests reflected a statistically significant improvement, and that although fewer students than native Spanish speakers used the query preparatory with verbal downgrading strategy, there appeared to be some increase in the use of this strategy by study-abroad students from the pre- to post-test among the experimental group. This finding suggests that, for some of these students, awareness about mitigating requests was enhanced by the instruction. However, the changes in their request strategies could have simply been the result of the many natural interactions that they experienced over the course of their time abroad (4-5 months = one semester). There was no comparison of Spanish and French students who received/did not receive the intervention.

Natural interactions were the focus of Shively's (2011) study. Shively's goal was to examine the ways in which students' pragmatic choices changed over time and to consider how language socialization and explicit instruction contributed to pragmatics development. Participants were 7 U.S. undergraduates from a Midwest public university studying abroad in Toledo, Spain for 14 weeks (3.5 months). At the beginning of their time abroad they received 1-hour of instruction on pragmatics, and roughly a third of the way through the semester they received 1-hour of explicit instruction on service encounters (an area that lends itself to the request speech act). Data was collected via tape recorded interactions between students and shop keepers, a pre-study abroad background questionnaire, post-study abroad semi-structured interviews, and forms the students filled out with the following information: type of shop, reason for encounter,

characteristics of the interlocutor, how they felt it went and why, and journal entries (once a week for 11 weeks). The results revealed that participants slightly changed their request sequences, but no structural changes resulted, which corroborated Cohen and Shively's (2007) findings. The students reported feeling good about the way they spoke Spanish, which might signify that the socialization process and the small-scale pedagogical intervention contributed to the students' boost in self-confidence and identity as a Spanish speaker. Finally, the most prevalent change noted was the shift from speaker-to hearer-oriented verbs in requests. This shift is not simply the result of syntax and semantics. It denotes an understanding of the target culture's influence on language well beyond vocabulary and grammar.

We also learn from Shively (2011) that the student participants learned and adopted some of the pragmatic norms of service encounters in the Toledo speech community either by being told norms explicitly by a host family member with whom they had a poor interaction, or by acquiring it implicitly through negative reactions of service providers when the student did not say/do the pragmatically appropriate thing/behavior during that interaction.

The question why pragmatic awareness and instruction is important in the foreign/second language classroom can be answered by the simple truth that language is associated with users. It helps define social cooperation and order in linguistic interaction. If the importance of pragmatic awareness can be understood by learners

through speech act instruction, the question is then what type of instruction is the most appropriate catalyst to deliver such important information? The next chapter tries to answer this question.

CHAPTER 3

Approaches to Teaching Pragmatic Knowledge

Introduction

As Bardovi-Harlig and Griffen (2005) claim, classroom activities can raise L2 pragmatic awareness and provide learners with the information they need to become competent users of the target language. Yet, for these activities to be successful, teachers should select appropriate instructional goals, approaches, and materials. Chapter three is divided into four sections grounded in teaching pragmatic knowledge. Section one addresses the question: Are pragmatic features teachable? Section two reviews literature on explicit versus implicit approaches to teaching pragmatics. Sections three and four discuss focus on form versus focus on forms approaches, and traditional versus experiential approaches to teaching pragmatics. Finally, section five examines textbook driven versus online driven approaches.

Are Pragmatic Features Teachable?

After reviewing multiple studies investigating the effects of pragmatic instruction, Rose (2005) comes to the conclusion that research conducted thus far provides ample evidence in support of the teachability of pragmatic features. He draws the following conclusions: (a) learners who receive instruction in pragmatics consistently outperform those who do not, (b) pragmatic instruction appears to outpace exposure alone, and (c) without instruction, in an environment that presents learners with ample

opportunity for meaningful use of and exposure to the L2, learners can acquire some, if not many, pragmatic features. Diving into research addressing the debate on explicit vs. implicit pragmatic instruction, he finds that there is considerable support for explicit instruction and thereby the noticing hypothesis. Rose does not dispel the idea of learning pragmatics implicitly. He purely summarizes findings in the literature that confirm the facilitative role of pedagogical interventions. Finally, he concludes that:

> …there is considerable evidence indicating that a range of features of second language pragmatics are teachable. These include a variety of discoursal, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic targets of instruction, such as discourse markers and strategies, pragmatic routines, speech acts, overall discourse characteristics, and pragmatic comprehension. (p. 397)

Thus, on the basis of the empirical evidence reviewed by Rose, we can conclude that pragmatics *is* teachable, and that learners that receive explicit instruction tend to outperform their non-explicitly instructed counterparts.

Explicit vs. Implicit Approaches

To elucidate Rose's (2005) findings further, a few research studies involving the role of explicit and implicit instruction in pragmatic awareness teaching are reviewed in brief detail. Koike and Pearson's (2005) study involving 99 third-semester second language learners of Spanish from two U.S. public universities (The University of Texas at Austin, and Bowling Green State University) revealed that explicit instruction and feedback are effective in helping learners understand pragmatic elements. Participants were divided into 5 groups: (a) explicit pre-instruction with explicit feedback (EPEF), (b)

explicit pre-instruction with implicit feedback (EPIF), (c) Implicit pre-instruction with explicit feedback (IPEF), (d) implicit pre-instruction with implicit feedback, and (e) no pre-instruction and no feedback. The treatment parameters exercised were modified from those set by Rosa and Leow (2004) to include explicit, implicit or no instructor feedback because Koike notes that some form of feedback is expected by learners. As can be inferred by the division of participant groups, the experimental procedure included both explicit or implicit pre-instruction, and either explicit or implicit feedback by instructors; excluding the control group which received neither pre-instruction nor feedback on the suggestion task. Both the EPEF and the EPIF groups received a list of ways to express Spanish suggestions and to respond to them. All experimental groups saw Spanish suggestions demonstrated in multi-turn dialogues across three lessons. The dialogues reflected conversations between two friends where one had a problem, and the other suggested solutions. The friend with the problem was not easily accepting of the suggestions offered, so conversation followed. The experimental tasks included the completion of both a multiple choice and an identification task. Learners used common suggestion forms, but were also allowed to indicate the types of suggestions they themselves would use to communicate the suggestions. Finally, pre-, post- and delayed post-tests were administered. All tests were formatted the same. The pretest and the delayed posttest were identical, but the posttest differed in content. The results of their study suggest that implicit instruction and feedback in the form of recasts (i.e., a correct rephrase of the language that the learner stated by the instructor or other more

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advanced speaker of that language) might be helpful in the production of appropriate pragmatic utterances by learners.

Ifantidoue (2010) examined whether genre-specific conventions can be acquired through explicit instruction, if pragmatic competence and language knowledge are positively correlated, and if pragmatic competence can develop by explicit instruction using genre-based applications. Her objective was to observe learners' performance in two courses in order to investigate correlations between language tasks (e.g., between synthesis and summary) and pragmatic tasks (e.g., between metapragmatic analysis and genre conversion). She assessed the correlations and looked for strengthening effects of one aptitude on the other. The study results indicated that (a) it is possible to teach genre-specific competences and have improved candidates' performance be the outcome of similar description-of-data tasks, (b) linguistic proficiency is positively correlated with genre-specific competences, (c) language knowledge is positively correlated with pragmatic competence, and (d) for low proficiency learners, performance in pragmatic competence tasks does not improve when accompanied by explicit pragmatic instruction. Ifantidoue's argument does not discourage explicit instruction for intermediate or high-proficiency language learners, simply low proficiency ones.

Fukuya and Martinez-Flor (2008) investigated whether different types of instruction (explicit and implicit) affected learners' use of pragmatically appropriate and

linguistically accurate suggestions differently depending on the tasks they performed. Participants were 49 native speakers of Spanish who had learned English as a foreign language in Spain. They were randomly divided into two groups according to type of instruction: implicit and explicit. On average the implicit group had studied English for roughly one year longer than the explicit group. Background data was gathered via a questionnaire. A placement test indicated both groups had an intermediate proficiency level, with the implicit group testing slightly higher than the explicit group. Both groups completed two tasks (e-mail and phone messages) in DCT form two weeks prior to instruction and one week after instruction. E-mail and phone were chosen instead of traditional DCT fill-in the space tasks because the researchers argued that DCTs by phone and e-mail were less limiting, more open ended, and psychologically real; participants expressed their own intentions. The pragmatic competences taught and measured were suggestions and downgraders. Instruction took place during six 2-hour long sessions. The explicit group received instruction which moved the learner from awareness-raising to production. Seven videos of native speakers performing suggestions and downgraders were utilized over the course of the sessions. After their awareness was raised, a table of target forms was presented to the learners. Finally, to review, they completed a multiple choice test and acted out role-plays. The implicit group watched the same videos as the explicit group, but the implicit group's videos were enhanced by captions and preliminary descriptions of the social situations. They also partook in listening and reading tasks and role-plays; however, the transcripts for

their role-plays had the suggestions and downgraders bolded. When learners used the wrong pragmalinguistic form for the situation, the teacher, one of the researchers, used a recast system created by Fukuya and Zhang (2002). Answers to the pre- and posttests were assessed based on pragmatic appropriateness and linguistic accuracy. This study provided further evidence that learners receiving explicit instruction slightly outperform their implicitly instructed counterparts on posttest assessment. In this particular study, performance on the phone task was higher for the explicit group, while participants' performance in the e-mail task was on par. The researchers argue for urging teachers to use a variety of assessment tasks to rate pragmatic performance because performance in one form of assessment might cause inappropriate evaluation of the learners' knowledge.

Focus on Form vs. Focus on Forms Approaches

The debate on instruction includes the roles of focus on form versus focus on forms in the classroom (Long, 1991). When teaching pragmatics, focus on forms instruction is the traditional way to assist students in the reproduction of explicitly taught conventional phrases, while focus on form instruction teaches the meaning behind those conventional phrases implicitly. Both Koike and Pearson (2005) and Soler (2005) favor Schmidt's (1990) noticing hypothesis, which states that learners notice specific target language features as a result of instruction which, in turn, promotes learning. As was inferred earlier in chapter 2 section 2: Why is Pragmatic Competence So Important, noticing is particularly essential for pragmatic learning because the

pragmatics of a language are specific to each dialect, as well as culture and sub-culture of a language. Thus, as language teachers we should continue to be encouraged to include explicit, implicit, focus on form, and focus on forms instruction in our classrooms in order to help our learners notice the differences and similarities between pragmatics across languages. But, now the question is, what is the best venue for teaching this awareness: the traditional classroom or abroad?

Traditional vs. Experiential Approaches

Different genres of pragmatics have been taught in classrooms in the past but, have they been taught in a meaningful and comparable manner which at least attempts to provide learners with pragmatically, level-appropriate language? Gilmore (2004) investigated discourse features of seven dialogues published in textbooks between 1981 and 1997; then, compared them to authentic interactions. He found that the language differed considerably–not in favor of textbooks. His research questions were: (a) how artificial have dialogues in the average textbook been, and what is it exactly that makes them less real?, and (b) would inclusion of any missing features make materials less effective, as suggested by Widdowson (1998), or does it depend on the individual characteristics of each one? To limit the research to one genre of pragmatics, service encounter dialogues were selected from the textbooks surveyed. Also, service encounters were easily replicable outside the classroom, which aided in the collection of similar, meaningful, and comparable authentic data. Transcripts from the

aforementioned textbooks were reviewed. The information receiver's (listener) questions were noted, reformulated, and exercised in authentic encounters outside the classroom. In the end, the results clearly showed that textbooks from 1981-1995 lacked in comparable authentic dialogue. However, new-at-the-time textbooks--*New Headway Intermediate* (1996), *Getting Ahead* (1999), and *Cutting Edge* (2001)--rated higher on the eight discourse features measured in the earlier textbooks (1981 - 1997), even though they were still lacking considerably in comparison to their authentic data counterparts. Reasons suggested by Gilmore as an educated explanation for these differences were:

1. Materials writers have started to include discourse features in their dialogues.
2. Materials writers traditionally tended to use dialogues as a medium to reinforce grammar or present vocabulary and functional language.
3. Materials writers have had structural/functional pedagogic aims.
4. Materials writers may have deliberately chosen not to include authentic-like dialogs, although it is more likely that they had just not considered doing so in the past.

While Gilmore does not answer his research questions directly, he does infer that (a) dialogues in the average textbook have been substantially limited compared with those expected in authentic language, and (b) inclusion of missing pragmatic features, at least for service encounters, would not make the materials less effective, rather it would enrich the text.

If enriching the text by including missing pragmatic features would not make the materials less effective in a traditional classroom (i.e., a classroom where the teacher teaches from a chosen textbook), then one could make the argument that student

participation in a study abroad program would either render the non-enriched materials less effective, or prove the enriched materials helpful. Shively (2011) used enriched materials by including a speech act intervention, and a non-traditional textbook: *Maximizing Study Abroad: A Student's Guide to Strategies for Language and Culture Learning and Use* (Paige, Cohen, Kappler, Chi, & Lassegard, 2006). While it is difficult to argue whether or not these enriched materials proved helpful, results of the study reveal that participants adopted some pragmatic norms of the Toledo speech community. As already noted, the most prevalent change in speech was a shift from speaker-to-hearer-oriented verbs in requests. However, this change did not have an impact on interactional consequences perhaps because Toledeños are used to interacting with foreigners. Even though students' adoption of pragmatic norms did not have a great impact on interactional consequences, in the discussion, Shively notes that the simple instruction and reflection on these differences made them aware that there are differences in the meaning behind language in context. These reflections prompted changes in students' speech, and left them feeling good about the way they spoke Spanish. This study suggests that the combination of instruction, reflection, and practice boosted participants' self-confidence and helped them reflect positive identities as Spanish speakers. This combination of explicit classroom instruction and implicit real-world encounters learning seems to have yielded proficient and confident L2 speakers. But, what is a foreign language teacher to do if they do not have access to a Spanish speaking community for their learners to practice with? In the next section we will

discuss further the use of textbook materials versus the use of online materials in pragmatic awareness instruction.

Textbook-Driven vs. Online-Driven Approaches

If instruction on pragmatics surfaces in textbooks, it generally appears in short little blurbs, grouped together with "culture" at the end of the chapter as we observed with Gilmore (2004). Wintergerst and McVeigh (2011) agree that teaching about the target culture, including a focus on intercultural communication instead of focusing on the sound system, grammar, and vocabulary is a "relatively recent development in language teaching" (p. 119). They emphatically encourage language teachers to break out of the traditional way of teaching culture, of which pragmatic awareness is a major component, and bring a general awareness about it into FL classrooms. One suggestion of theirs is to get students involved through contact assignments and experiential learning. In areas where the target language is spoken, these types of assignments are more easily implemented. As long as students are carefully prepared for the assignment or task, the opportunity to experience intercultural communication in their own backyards can have an especially positive effect on students' confidence levels (Wintergerst & McVeigh, 2010).

However, if learners do not have access to authentic pragmatics acquisition opportunities through textbooks or in their own backyard, then the Internet is an alternative outlet to find good resources. But how do teachers know which technology

source or webpage to use? Which one will be the most helpful in scaffolding the acute and obtuse differences between dialects? Which source will provide students with the most logical and comprehendible base knowledge that will promote a healthy desire to learn more about these important subtleties? The next chapter discusses the strengths and weaknesses of video conferencing, other computer-mediated communication (CMC), corpus data usage, and websites. Of course technology is ever changing and very soon the statements made in the next chapter will become out of date. It is advised that teachers continually educate themselves on available technology resources.

CHAPTER 4

Technology's Role in Pragmatic Instruction

Introduction

In her state-of-the-art review, Belz (2007) derived three basic observations of computer mediation (CM) and computer-mediated communication (CMC) in L2 pragmatics instruction and research:

1. L2 pragmatic development is facilitated by the delivery and connections afforded to language learners through CM, which increases access to genuine materials and opportunities to participate in meaningful interactions. These materials and opportunities may take many forms: self-directed websites housing project-based interactions with NS keypals (aka: telecollaboration), or multimodal NS pragmatic performance examples accompanied by explicit discussions of pragmatic knowledge.
2. Corpora can be constructed from CM interactions between NS and NNS, or NNS and NNS. These corpora can then be tapped to track L2 learners' pragmatic competence development over time.
3. CM provides a context of authenticity where L2 learners' may be made aware of their emerging L2 pragmatic competence through carefully designed and executed pedagogical interventions which direct learners' attention to NSs' operationalization of focal pragmatic features. (p. 63).

This chapter reviews some research findings on CM and pragmatic competence published in the last decade. First, section one discusses the use of video conferencing and computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools. Then, section two discusses the application of corpus data. Finally, section three addresses the function of websites.

Video Conferencing and CMC Tools

Video conferencing use for teaching pragmatics has been researched by Sardegna and Molle (2010). Even though their participants were neither second language learners of Spanish, nor learning speech act requests, teachers can still glean some insights from this study into the effectiveness of using video conferencing as a tool for teaching pragmatics. The participants were Japanese English as a foreign language (EFL) students (5 active, 30 observers). The pragmatic knowledge taught through a two-hour videoconference, and later analyzed by the researchers, were verbal backchannel signals and reactive expressions. Besides finding evidence in favor of the effectiveness of teaching pragmatics through videoconferencing, the researchers also noted some problems they faced as a result of the medium: (a) the videoconferencing technology interfered at times with the nature of communication in the form of lags or muffled dialogue interchange, and (b) the U.S. instructors found it very difficult to establish eye contact with participants and observers. From this study we gain an important understanding of the challenges that teachers may be up against when using video-conferencing as a tool to promote pragmatic awareness.

Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) reports on pragmatically inappropriate email requests by EFL learners and the affects they have on faculty. She investigated the following research questions: (a) What is the degree of directness and amount of lexical/phrasal and external modification employed in the English e-requests of Greek

Cypriot university students? (b) What forms of address do Greek Cypriot students (NNSs of English) employ in their e-mails to faculty? (c) To what extent to British native speaker lecturers perceive unmodified and direct e-mails from students as abrupt and inappropriate? Participants in her study were 24 lecturers (11 female and 13 male), all from various universities in the UK with ages ranging from late 20s to over 50. Lecturers took a perception questionnaire on-line that consisted of six e-mail messages where they were asked to judge each e-mail's appropriateness on a 5-point Likert scale as if it were from one of their university-aged students with whom they were not close to, but were familiar with. The Likert scale rated the messages on politeness and abruptness. Lecturers quantitatively explained the linguistic features from the messages that affected their perceptions of the e-mails. E-mails judged were authentic, selected from a bank of 200 that were sent to 11 faculty members over the course of 18 months and written by NNSs of English studying at a major, private, English-medium university in Cyprus. Economidou-Kogetsidis found that direct strategies employed by the NNSs can spur pragmatic infelicities by appearing to give the faculty no choice in request compliance. The following contribute to the former statement: the omission of greetings and closings, underuse of lexical/phrasal downgraders, and notable variation of address forms. While this study does not report on how to teach pragmatic awareness through instruction on e-mail, it is one of the few, along with Fukuya and Martinez-Flor (2008) that suggest NNSs could benefit from explicit e-mail instruction not

only supplied by ESL/EFL teachers, but from the incorporation of such instruction in curricula and textbooks.

From the perspective of speech act theory, Sykes (2005) studied the influence of synchronous CMC (SCMC) on pragmatic development. Specifically, she studied the application of head acts (HAs) and supporting moves (SMs) in invitation refusals. Participants were 27 third-semester L2 learners of Spanish. The effects of three types of synchronous discussions were investigated: (a) face-to-face (F2F), (b) oral chat (Wimba), and (c) written chat (local program). The treatment consisted of participants first being video-taped in F2F oral role-plays (pretest). Then, they received F2F classroom instruction. Next, in a computer lab, students took part in a 20-minute self-directed online instructional component which incorporated videotaped model dialogues. After that, the learners were assigned to synchronous discussion groups: F2F, oral chat, or written chat. Within their groups, they employed their respective communicative mode to practice refusal dialogues together and discuss questions pertaining to invitation refusal. Finally, learners again participated in videotaped F2F oral role-plays (posttest). Sykes's findings showed that the group that used the most complex HAs and largest variety of SMs was the written chat group. Sykes proposes that this finding may be explained by the simple fact that when writing, more time is afforded for both construction of responses and reflection and that this group was the only one that received multimodal processing (oral practice/instruction and written practice/discussion). Belz (2007) commenting on this study states, "This is an important

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finding for the design of classroom tasks that speaks to the advantages of blending, that is, the alternation of CM with more traditional forms of instruction" (p. 53).

As reported by Belz (2007), Cohen and Sykes's (2007) presentation on *Strategies, CMC, and learning pragmatics* at the 17th international conference on pragmatics and language learning in Honolulu, HI, on March 26-28 brought the prospective value of video games for the development of pragmatic competence in L2 Spanish to the discussion table. The idea is that learners would use the manmade, virtual, 3-D, immersive environments to develop pragmatic competence by engaging in a variety of speech acts through different modes of communication: written, oral, gestural, and environmental. The advantages of these kinds of interactions are many: individually-paced instruction, adoption of various participant roles, multimodal processing opportunities, and possible high emotional payoffs for low risk interactions (p. 53).

The advantages of using other forms of CMC, like e-mail, text chat, oral chat, or video chat, besides video-conferencing are that the learner is usually having a more intimate conversation or experience with the data either synchronously or asynchronously, and that "communication is language based to an even greater extent than before" (Egbert & Hanson-Smith, 2007, p. 68). However, when using these other forms of CMC learners' are still slightly removed from the context of the situation and they might miss key body language, which helps convey a speaker's message. As Egbert and Hanson-Smith state:

The language of e-mail, for instance, is less formal than other written language because it is written with greater speed and less attention to detail (e.g., spelling mistakes are tolerated) and because it is generally private rather than intended for large audiences; yet because it is written rather than spoken and because of the distance between sender and receiver, e-mail retains some qualities of written language…This intermediate language also presents new challenges to language learners already struggling with variation in genre and style in the target language (p. 68).

Basically, learners easily fall into the eavesdropper role even though they have the ability to transcend that status (p. 69).

Corpus Data

With Corpus data, L2 learners may easily fall into the role of eavesdropper as well. Without instruction that scaffolds their learning, learners could easily read the corpus data, notice the differences between native speakers' language and their own, but not adapt any of the noticed nuances. Besides, there are many different types of corpora that may include one or more of these data sources:

1. Native speaker data
2. L2 learner data
3. Data from a select group of native speakers/L2 learners
4. Data from a select time frame
5. Longitudinal data
6. Data from different contexts
7. Data created from class projects.

Belz and Vyatkina (2005) essentially created their own corpus of data from a classroom telecollaboration among L2 learners. Their productions were simultaneously entered into a corpus as they were composed. This process enabled researchers to

access learner output on a day-to-day basis. Not only did the researchers create their own sub-corpus of data, but over the course of the telecollaboration, their learners' interactions were added to the existing Telecollaborative Learner Corpus of English and German (Telekorp) which had existed for 5 years at the time of their article's publication. The strength in Belz and Vyatkina use of the Telekorp is that they included not one but multiple pedagogical interventions, which "included focused instruction (FI) in semantics, syntax, and pragmatics of the target MPs [modal particals]" (p. 25). Modal particals are "non-declinable 'small words,'…that are of vital importance to the accurate interpretation of interaction in German because they index the speaker's attitude towards particular utterances and interlocutors…" (p. 18) Basically, Belz and Vyatkina's study was highly effective in exhibiting the successful use of corpora with focused instruction in aiding learners in the adoption of modal particals over the course of a one-semester telecollaboration project. Their study may not be generalized to other pragmatic awareness instruction efforts, but it is worth noting that, because the telecollaboration project was long-term and project-based, it enabled the performance of typically examined speech acts: apologies, refusals, expressions of modality, and refusals. Mainly, Belz and Vyatkina emphasize that, "Telecollaboration facilitates the compilation of learner corpora because the electronic nature of the process data obviates both digitization and transcription" (p. 41). Most corpora are not used or created in this way. Therefore, there are many other weaknesses associated with using corpora to teach pragmatic awareness that were not mentioned in the Belz and

Vyatikina's article. If language teachers use a corpus that was not developed through a telecollaboration in their classroom, then the students would most likely not be familiar with the context or the principal speakers. Most corpora, like Telekorp, have data from different learners at different points in time, with different learning environments. All of these factors can result in a great deal of authentic data that is hard for learners to navigate through without the aid of an instructor.

Websites

A website, on the other hand, has the capability for students to learn the context of the data (written, oral, and visual) from the written text provided on the website as well as through audio and visuals. In the near-future, I do not doubt that we will see video-based corpora, but for now websites that incorporate audio and visual examples of authentic interactions will help learners understand the material a great deal more than if the information is only presented explicitly in class. Websites like *Dancing with Words*, set up by the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA): http://www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/sp_pragmatics/home.html, incorporate learner awareness through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. In comparison, websites like *Discourse Pragmatics* (http://www.indiana.edu/~discprag/index.html) developed in 2007 by César Félix-Brasdefer, Ph.D. at Indiana University, offer limited aid to learners: definitions and examples of different speech acts without audio or video. On the

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website, it appears that there is a listening function, but upon multiple visits to the site, I found the sound option not available.

Dancing with Words is dedicated to strategies for learning Spanish pragmatics. Spain's Spanish pragmatic knowledge is not the only focus. Pragmatic knowledge for different dialects of Spanish are represented throughout the web-pages. *Dancing with Words* brings to light an awareness of different cultural beliefs, values, attitudes and norms through small video clips and written transcripts of authentic speech acts as well as descriptions in English of background information associated with each speech act. The background information facilitates student comprehension of what they are watching. Additionally, the site provides pictures as spring boards for discussion of cultural perspectives. These pictures accompanied by personal pictures or similar pictures found on the web would be useful resources for activating schema and prior knowledge of specific cultural features (Barnes-Karol & Broner, 2010), before directing students to the website.

Cohen (2008), concerned with potential miscommunications learners might have, completed a small-scale study which examined both how learners' used strategies-based materials on of the website *Dancing with Words: Strategies for Learning Pragmatics in Spanish* and the effect experienced by website users to learn the speech acts (apologies, service encounters, and requests) during real-time interaction. Participants were 10 advanced learners of Spanish. Assessment took the form of a

pretest which consisted of three role-plays: (request) borrowing a host sister's class notes, (service encounter) buying souvenirs, and (apology) ruining host sister's notes. A written DCT was included as well: 5 situations similar to the ones found on the website (2 requests, 2 apologies, 1 service encounter). After the pretest, participants completed a content orientation session focused on strategies. Next, learners completed three online modules from the website. Then, they participated in a 10-20 minute reflective interview. A posttest immediately followed which was similar to the pretest: virtual role-play with avatars, but with a different apology and request. Finally, there was a delayed posttest–identical to the pretest. Participants' tasks on the website and orally were recorded using the *Camtasia Studio* screen recorder

<www.techsmith.com/camtasia.asp>. Quantitative and qualitative analyses of recordings were conducted. Results were positive. Participants reported an increase in strategy use in addition to overall awareness of what native speakers (from different Spanish cultures) say and how they say it. Students were found to want even more information about the speech acts they were interested in, in addition to requesting more activities and practice (p. 230). Some students considered general awareness of sociopragmatic strategies associated with the given speech act. For example, one participant said, "I may not know exactly what to say, but I am more aware of what is going on" (p. 230). The learners understood the meaning of language used as it related to the context. The main take-away message for teachers, Cohen states, is to give initial guidance through strategy instruction and pre-selected websites, but then to leave the

students to the actual learning and practice of pragmatic material according to their own interests.

There are many websites available to language learners. A review of all these websites falls outside the scope of this Report. However, of the two reviewed, *Dancing with Words* was chosen for use in a lesson to teach pragmatic awareness through speech acts as it teaches pragmatics explicitly and incorporates authentic video examples of the pragmatic knowledge explained. Research by Herron, Cole, Corrie, and Dubreil (1999), and Bueno (2009) support the use of videos for culture learning in the classroom. It should be noted that the use of instructional technology as an approach to teaching culture is supported by Levy (2007), Alstaedter and Jones (2009), and Jourdain (1998). Intercultural or pragmatically appropriate communication is only successful when learners have at least a basic understanding of the target culture. As explained earlier in this Report, it is important for learners to be exposed to authentic examples of language in use. An added benefit to the *Dancing with Words* website is that it engages the learner in critical analysis of authentic examples of the Spanish language and culture in context.

CHAPTER 5

Incorporating Pragmatic Awareness in Our Classrooms: Lesson Proposal

Introduction

Now that we have learned what pragmatics is, why it is important, and that it is teachable, we are better informed to incorporate pragmatic awareness in our classrooms. Research shows that in deciding what topics, resources, and activities to use for a lesson that focuses on developing pragmatic knowledge, we should consider target language input (explicit vs. implicit, focusing on form vs. on forms), cross-cultural communication strategies and needs (Speech Act Theory), the importance of pragmatics in communication, the textbook, access to experiential learning, and the use of technology (telecollaboration, CMC, corpus data, websites) as a resource. Students need to feel prepared and ready to tackle whatever task we present them. In order to carefully prepare one's learners for intercultural interactions, it is important to discuss the features of spoken language. That is why our role as teachers is to scaffold and facilitate learning, including outside resources like *Dancing with Words*, rather than to continuously lecture from the textbook and monopolize classroom time with our own words. It is with the aforementioned research in mind that I developed the lesson plan for a low-intermediate college-level Spanish class. The lesson teaches a particular speech act: requests during service encounters.

The Lesson

Why Teach Requests in Service Encounters?

Service encounters are everyday occurrences. Gilmore (2004) defines service encounters as, "instances where two people, normally strangers, come together with one requesting information from the other" (p. 364). If students choose to continue learning Spanish they will be presented with many instances where they will have to know how to go about requesting information from strangers. Some examples of service encounters are: interactions with shopkeepers, waiters, bartenders, bankers, etc. It is important that learners are aware of the cultural differences that exist in these situations. Shively (2011) states that "cross-cultural pragmatic variation in service encounters includes differences in length of greeting routines, request directness, acceptability of non-transactional talk, and content of closing sequences" (p. 1818). Additionally, Shively argues that it is important for learners to be exposed to both explicit instruction and implicit self-instruction, through observing social interactions, as both types of instruction "play a role in facilitating learners' pragmatic development" (p. 1818). That is why, in my lesson, learners are explicitly taught what service encounters are, some of the pragmatic strategies they can use, different forms of requests, and how they can evaluate contextual and social factors that accompany the service encounters. In addition, learners are subject to distinctions between service interactions in a variety of different Spanish dialects. The majority of this explicit instruction is found on the CARLA Spanish website: *Dancing with Words*. Additionally, learners are subject to

implicit self-instruction because they watch the videos on the website showcasing some semi-authentic (preconceived and videotaped) service encounters.

Class Description:

This class is a first semester Spanish class at a private college. The learners are low intermediate. Their ages range from 18-22 years-old. They meet three times a week for an hour. The class covers six chapters of an institution selected textbook in one semester. There are roughly 10 students and they sit in a rectangle so that they may view one another and feel comfortable participating in class. The technology tools and resources available for instruction include enough computers for all students and the instructor, a digital projector, a protection screen, a blackboard, chalk and paper.

Timetable Fit:

Students are currently revisiting their textbook chapter on shopping (chapter 3 of *Puntos de Partida*: An invitation to Spanish, 8th edition). The students have already been introduced to vocabulary about shopping in a former lesson. Because the textbook does not introduce the students to the pragmatic knowledge they need for carrying out requests during service encounters, students have also been introduced to and become familiar with the CARLA Spanish website: *Dancing with Words* as we have referenced it for other class/homework assignments before. One of the tasks that the students complete in this lesson is a role-play. The students have completed many role-plays in the past and are familiar with the exercise. Before this lesson, part of their homework

was to think about how they request objects, favors, etc. with their family, friends, and strangers.

Learning Outcomes:

I expect the learner to develop awareness of the differences in requests during service encounters in a variety of situations between their first-language culture and their second-language culture. The expected outcome for learners is for them to identify a few variations of appropriate leave taking language, and to practice varying their use of said language appropriately. This outcome is measurable because at the beginning of class, information will be solicited from the students; students will be asked questions pertaining to what they know about requests during service encounters, and how they are handled in the United States as well as in Spanish speaking countries in different settings: a book store and a market. For homework, they will reflect on the information presented in class as well as their visit to the CARLA Spanish website: *Dancing with Words* which focuses on pragmatics in speech act performance (Cohen, 2008). There they may obtain more information about requests, service encounters, and other speech acts in Spanish across dialects.

Teacher and Student Roles:

As the teacher, I will facilitate the students' learning by creating a comfortable environment for discussion, awareness, and reflection. The students are expected to be active participants in classroom discussion and tasks.

Table 1. Activities, Procedures, and Timing for My 50 Minute Lesson

Activity/ Aids	Interaction	Procedure	Time
Schema Activation	Whole class participation	The teacher, speaking in Spanish, will elicit responses from the students about different service encounters while displaying pictures on the projector (Appendix A). Some example questions include, but are not limited to: **Service Encounters:** ¿Cómo es la relación entre tú y un vendedor: formal o informal? ¿Le conoces bien? ¿Cómo le saludas? ¿Qué dices cuando quieres comprar algo que el vendedor tiene que conseguir para ti en el mercado o en una librería? ¿Qué haces y/o dices cuando quieres comprar algo en una tienda? *(What is the relationship between you and the sales person: formal or informal? Do you know him/her well? What salutation would you use? If there is something that you want to buy at the market or in a book store that the sales person has to get for you, what do you say? What do you do or say when you want to buy something in a store?)*	10 min.

Table 1, cont.

Activity/ Aids	Interaction	Procedure	Time
Listening activity	Whole Class	The students are asked to use computers in the classroom to go online to a pre-selected website: http://www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/sp_pragmatics/Service%20Encounters/home_service_enc.html and learn about requests in Spanish. In particular, they are directed to the requests webpage and the service encounters webpage. Students are instructed to summarize how the Spanish speakers used language when interacting in the two provided service encounters. There is a brief discussion in class focused on what they noticed on the website.	15 min.
Extension Activity	Pair Work	Students practice role playing different situations that are on handouts (Appendix B) designed to elicit polite requests during service encounters in Spanish. Both students read the role-play cards and act out the different situations. They are expected to use the strategies that they learned from the website. The teacher walks around the room and helps students with their vocabulary and grammar while they interact with their partners.	15 min.

Table 1, cont.

Activity/ Aids	Interaction	Procedure	Time
Wrap-up	Whole Class	The teacher praises the students for staying on task and for asking good questions. There is a brief discussion about how the students felt using the strategies and phrases they learned from the website which includes the question: ¿Qué aprendimos hoy sobre cómo interactuar con una persona de servicio? (*What did we learn today about how to interact with a sales person?*) After the discussion concludes, the teacher gives out the homework for the evening which is to go back to the website, walk through all the different links for service requests and write a half page, double spaced reflection in Spanish on what they learned from the discussion in class as well as the information on the website. They will need to include their answer in Spanish to the following question: ¿Qué aprendimos hoy sobre cómo interactuar con una persona de servicio? (*What did we learn today about how to interact with a service person*?)	10 min.

Challenges:

One potential problem I foresee resulting from the characteristics of this student population is that the students may want to use many words they do not know in Spanish, and perhaps resort to English words instead. To avoid this problem, I will supply them with Spanish/English dictionaries in the classroom, and I will direct them to

helpful Spanish translation websites on the Internet like Word Reference (http://www.wordreference.com/). Another potential challenge is that students may not have thought about their different service encounter interactions and how they go about carrying them out in English, let alone how they may be carried out in Spanish; even though they were asked to do so before the class. This problem may cause the discussion at the beginning of class to be limited and possibly awkward. In addition, the reflection the students are required to write for homework may prove difficult as a great deal of the explanation about speech acts they receive from the website is in English. Thus, the students may have trouble articulating their opinions about the speech acts in Spanish; however, they are not writing about their comprehension of the speech acts directly, but thinking critically about what language is used, how it is used in speech acts in different cultures, and what those different variations of language imply about each respective Spanish culture. To assist them in completing this critical analysis task, I included a brief in-class discussion in my lesson plan where students were introduced to language needed for their essays.

Pedagogical Recommendations for Teachers:

The participation in class (discussion, role-plays, etc.) should be a part of the students' overall participation grade. Their homework assignment and the reflection should be graded holistically as it contains personal opinions of each individual student and the focus of the assignment is more on what the student understood (of the content provided) from the discussion, role-plays and website search rather than simply

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their formation of grammatically correct sentences. Williams (2005) states that written tasks should "require students to write for a purpose rather than simply to demonstrate their proficiency with a specific grammatical structure or range of structures…sentence-level accuracy should not be the exclusive goal of writing assessment" (p. 129). As such, students should be made aware of their grammatical mistakes, but not be greatly penalized for them. If grammar mistakes are so much so that the teacher has trouble understanding the content of students' work, then the teacher may have to ask the student to explain what he/she wrote. In such cases, the student will be graded down because the content of their essay would not be comprehensible. The rubric for this lesson plan is provided in Appendix C. It was created keeping in mind Williams (2005) aforementioned statement about written tasks.

Closing Remarks

This lesson, as is, might not fit neatly into every intermediate university Spanish teachers' classroom. It should be implemented with caution as it has not been executed in a live classroom. The lesson design was derived from the research reviewed in this Report and my personal beliefs of what should be included in an intermediate university L2 Spanish classroom.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter again summarizes why I chose pragmatic awareness as the subject of this Report. Then it answers the following guiding questions:

1. Why is teaching pragmatic competence important?

2. What are the approaches to teaching pragmatic awareness? Specifically, how do instructors teach Spanish requests?

3. What role does technology play in pragmatic awareness instruction?

After that, it concludes by summarizing the pedagogical lesson proposed, and why I think the lesson is a useful resource for teachers.

Why I Chose Pragmatic Awareness

I chose to write my Master's Report on developing pragmatic awareness because after studying abroad in Spain, traveling to Peru, Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands, and completing a B.A. in Spanish at Austin College, I found myself in a graduate course learning about pragmatics for the very first time. Once I learned the different genres of pragmatics (speech acts, implicatures, presupposition, and deixis), the teachability of pragmatic knowledge, the different approaches to teaching pragmatic knowledge and the role technology plays in pragmatic instruction, I felt compelled to develop a lesson plan for my future L2 Spanish classroom. The reflections on my pragmatic failures and successes blended together with my familiarity with foreign language learning

classrooms resulted in a lesson plan which utilized speech act requests as a vehicle for transferring pragmatic knowledge to L2s of Spanish.

Answers to My Guiding Questions

Why is teaching pragmatic competence important?

Language is not only used to say things, but also to do things (Austin, 1962). Social cooperation and order in linguistic interaction are determined by a speaker's language used and the meaning of the language interpreted by the listener (Wintergerst and McVeigh, 2010).

What are the approaches to teaching pragmatic awareness? Specifically, how do instructors teach Spanish requests?

Authentic examples of the meaning of language in context have not always been incorporated in second language learning textbooks (Gilmore, 2004). In Spanish classroom and study abroad research, explicit instruction has been shown to have more positive effects than implicit instruction (Fukuya and Martinez-Flor, 2008; Koike and Pearson, 2005). Subsequently, Koike and Pearson (2005) and Soler (2005) have shown support for a combination of focus on form and focus on forms in pragmatic awareness instruction. However, Infantidou (2010) recommends reserving explicit pragmatic instruction for intermediate or high-proficiency language learners. For L2 Spanish language learners studying abroad in Spain, a combination of explicit classroom

instruction on, and implicit real-world encounters with requests was ideal (Shively, 2011). Now, for Spanish language learners without access to real-world encounters, websites that supply learners with authentic language in action (specifically, speech act requests), like *Dancing with Word*s, have been shown to work as successful alternatives when combined with traditional classroom instruction (Cohen, 2008).

What role does technology play in pragmatic awareness instruction?

The role of technology depends on the genre of pragmatics you aim to teach. Backchannel signals and reactive expressions have been taught successfully through telecollaboration. Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) suggests that e-mail request instruction be added to textbooks and supplied by ESL/EFL teachers. Invitation refusals were learned best by L2 Spanish students whom were exposed to both CMC through written chat and traditional classroom instruction (Sykes, 2005). Modal particals were adopted by L2 learners of German when they were exposed to a combination of a personally created corpus and traditional classroom instruction (Belz & Vyatkina, 2005). Finally, for speech act requests, the best technological instrument at this time is the CARLA website, *Dancing with Words: Strategies for Learning Pragmatics in Spanish* (Cohen, 2008). Therefore, the role of technology in pragmatic awareness instruction, specifically speech act requests, at this time, is to support and blend with traditional instruction approaches by supplying more authentic examples of language in context than is currently/will ever be found in a paperback textbook.

Lesson Recap

The lesson proposed was derived from my personal views of what should be included in an intermediate university L2 Spanish classroom and supported by the research reviewed in this Report. It combines traditional classroom instruction with computer mediation – supported by Belz (2007).

Why this Lesson is a Useful Resource for Teachers

For intermediate L2 learners of Spanish, this lesson helps them to develop pragmatic awareness through speech act instruction. Instruction in class activates their speech act request schema and makes learners perform speech act requests in real time. The class discussion and homework engages students in critical analysis and reflection.

Final Remarks

The way people talk, why they talk that way, and the way their talk is received by others interests me. Language is complicated. Every word carries with it history, culture, traditions, definitions, and interpretations. I hope this Report encourages language teachers to reflect on the textbooks they use and if those textbooks lack in pragmatic competence instruction, to seek out and utilize researched technology outlets where authentic pragmatic instruction is supplied.

Appendix A:

Pictures as Springboards:

Appendix B:

Role-Play 1:

En parejas, una persona es el cliente, la otra es el vendedor (shop keeper).

El cliente entra en una librería y quiere ser amable con el vendedor ¿Cómo le saluda*? ¿De qué hablan? ¿Qué le dice cuando quiere salir?

*saludar = to say hello

> *(In partners, one person is the customer, the other is the shop keeper.*
>
> *The customer enters into a book store and wants to be nice with the shop keeper. How would you say hello? What do the two of you talk about? What do you tell him/her when you want to leave?)*

Role-Play 2:

En parejas, una persona es el cliente, la otra es el vendedor (vendor).

Quiere comprar algo para tu cena esta noche. Conoces al vendedor personalmente. ¿Cómo le saludas? ¿De qué hablas? ¿Qué le dices cuando quieres salir?

> *(In partners, one person is the customer, the other is the sales person.*
>
> *You want to buy something for dinner tonight. You know the sales person personally. How do you say hello to him/her? What do the two of you talk about? What do you tell him/her when you want to leave?)*

Appendix C:

Proposed Rubric:

5pts	Student provided a thorough, accurate essay that incorporated thoughtful reflection on the discussion, role-play, and website and at least 4 phrases they learned.
4pts	Student provided a somewhat thorough, accurate essay that incorporated slightly thoughtful reflection on the discussion, role-play and website and at least 3 phrases they learned.
3pts	Student provided an essay that incorporated reflection on the discussion, role-play and website and at least 2 phrases they learned.
2pts	Student provided an essay but only incorporated their reflection on one or two of the following: discussion, role-play, and website and at least 1 phrase they learned.
1pt	Student provided an essay that did not incorporate a reflection or the phrases they learned.

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