語用論の指導：ELT テキスト活用による語用論の指導力に関する評価および考察

Teaching Pragmatics: An Evaluation and Discussion of the Ability to Teach Pragmatics through an ELT Textbook

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This paper reviews and discusses the importance of including pragmatics in English language teaching curricula. It first provides a literature review of pragmatic competence acquisition, and pragmatics in language pedagogy. An archetypal textbook is then presented and analysed within established pragmatic frameworks to obtain some general characteristics. The findings of this study suggest that textbooks alone may be an insufficient resource for achieving desirable communicative proficiency. Suggestions for adapting such textbooks are described.

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1. Introduction

A recent occurrence was the motivation behind the focus of this research study. A student of mine was leaving the room after class when she courteously said, “see you again sometime”, even though we had class the following morning. I smiled and asked whether she was intending to attend the next class or, as her utterance implies, she foresees a longer period of absence. This experience led to considerations of how significant the mistake was, why she opted to choose that leave-taking option at that time, and whether it warrants pedagogical attention in the classroom. In many language classes in Japan, the textbook is the primary resource for input, and an important teaching tool, so I decided to look more closely at its role in teaching pragmatic skills. The following research questions are posed:

1. To what extent does my class textbook teach pragmatic skills?
2. Where the textbook is insufficient, ineffective, or inappropriate, how can pragmatic skills be taught?

This paper first outlines some of the salient literature pertaining to the teachability of pragmatic skills. A textbook is then analysed in terms of politeness strategies and speech acts. Finally, based on the findings, recommendations are made for improving pragmatic pedagogy. I hope the findings of this study can be used to help provide better learning opportunities for my students.

2. Pragmatic competence and teachability

Crystal defines pragmatics as “the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using the language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication” (1985, p. 240). There are several key words in this definition which warrant highlighting. Firstly, ‘users’ and ‘social interaction’; when we teach students language, our efforts should focus on having the students use language in authentic and realistic ways, rather than presenting an abstract model that is driven by linguistic accuracy. Secondly, ‘choices’; each situation encountered in the infinite combinations of contextual factors presents linguistic choices. In contrast to what some students believe, and how some textbooks present language, speakers are rarely constrained by single choices. Finally, ‘effects’; a key concept of pragmatics is the effect an utterance has in a given context. L2 users are often prone to miscalculating the effects of pragmatic utterances. Pragmatics, therefore, is a complex and wide-ranging field that not only looks at how things are done with words, but also how these words respond to and shape situations and social relationships (Austin, 1962).

Kasper (1997) points out that a considerable amount of L2 pragmatic ability already exists in learners, due to the universal nature of some aspects of pragmatics. Kasper refers to conversational features such as turn-taking, and indirect speech acts, that are either known by the learner, or can be easily transferred from their native language (L1) to their L2. This is known as *positive transfer.* An example of this is a Japanese L1 using an indirect interrogative for the purpose of inviting in English. Easily, and appropriately, this speaker can apply (or transfer) the same pragmatic feature of this speech act from Japanese to English. Of course, there are deeper issues of context which may constrain the choices here, but in essence there is, more or less, an amount of pragmatic capital to be utilised. In addition, Kasper points out that even though learners are able to transfer available knowledge, they do not always do so. Conversely, *negative transfer* and *overgeneralisation of perceived L2 pragmatic norms* can also occur, and it is my experience that these phenomena are prevalent in English Language Teaching (ELT) in Japan. The former occurs when learners incorrectly assume that their L1 pragmatic norms apply, and the latter occurs when learners develop an incorrect hypothesis about L2 pragmatic norms and apply it with the belief that they are communicating appropriately (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). In Japan, these overgeneralisations are commonplace, resulting from a belief that Americans (encompassing all varieties of English) are quite direct, and consequently English should also be direct. Concerning the correlation between proficiency and negative pragmatic transfer, findings have been inconclusive (Kasper & Roever, 2005).

Assuming, from here, that learners (a) require pragmatic competence to be able to communicate effectively and appropriately, (b) not all pragmatic competence can be positively transferred, and (c) some pragmatic competence may be negatively transferred or overgeneralised, then the issue of its 'teachability' is both relevant and important. Studies have shown that with no instruction in pragmatic skills, learners will take a considerable amount of time to acquire them naturally (Kasper & Rose, 2002). Olshtain and Blum-Kulka's (1985) study of positive politeness strategies in Hebrew showed that it can take up to ten years to perform at a level indistinguishable from native speakers. Bouton's (1994) study of advanced L2 English speakers showed that although comprehension of some implicature types naturally developed over time in an English speaking environment, other types of implicature resisted improvement. The inclusion of pragmatic instruction in a curriculum, however, is not without its problems. As Cohen (2008) points out, decisions need to be made regarding *what* pragmatic skills are to included, *how long* each skill should be spent on, and *how* (and what materials) they should be taught. Cohen provides an example of 'extending condolences at a funeral'; one may suggest that such a speech act is rare enough to warrant omission from a textbook or curriculum, which indicates that there is indeed some 'boundary' of speech acts to consider when designing curricula and textbooks.

Despite the above issues, research has shown positive results for instruction. Tateyama et al. (1997) researched low-proficiency Japanese L2 learners' use of *pragmatic routines*. They found improvements in pragmatic performance in both cases of explicit and implicit instruction, with the former being more effective, especially in complicated situations, than the latter. Kubota's (1995) study of intermediate L1 Japanese learners of English at university also showed stronger improvements for the instructed group over the control group; however, the group which received inductive instruction outperformed the group which received deductive instruction. Perhaps this contrast with Tateyama et al.'s study suggests that more implicit and inductive instruction is beneficial for learners with higher proficiency levels. Concerning the need and methods of pragmatic instruction, the prominent theory of acquisition is the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990). This hypothesis states that language (or in this case a pragmatic skill) must be 'noticed', or brought to the learner's attention, before it is acquired. Teachers, curriculum designers, and textbook writers can be charged with this responsibility of bringing pragmatics to the attention of learners. In addition, pragmatic instruction is particularly desirable since "opportunities for input and interaction outside the classroom are often limited and formal instruction serves as the only regular source of L2 knowledge" (Nyugen et al., 2012, p. 416).

3. Pragmatic analysis of textbook

I chose 'Person to Person' (Richards, Bycina, &Wisniewska, 2005, hereafter P-to-P) for this study due to its archetypal qualities; that is, its adherence to a task-based methodology closely resembles other contemporary language teaching textbooks, thereby allowing this study's findings to be more easily transferable. A unit comprises of two focal dialogues, followed by a dissection of the functional components with related short tasks, and finishes with an extended task (usually a role-play).

Politeness

Lakoff defines politeness as "what we think is appropriate behaviour in particular situations in an attempt to achieve and maintain successful social relationships with others" (1972, p. 910). Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness attempts to model both this behaviour and situation. They claim that while we enter and maintain social relationships, "we have to acknowledge and show an awareness of the face, the public self-image, the sense of self, of the people that we address" (Cutting, 2002, p. 45). When a face threatening act (FTA) is unavoidable, speakers can redress the threat with one of the following strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987): (i) *do the FTA*, (ii) *off record* (an indirect speech act with mitigating devices), (iii) *on record: baldly* (a direct speech act with no mitigating devices), (iv) *on record: with positive politeness* (directed to the addressee's positive face), or (v) *on record: with negative politeness* (directed to the addressee's negative face, his wants to have his freedom unhindered). The choice of strategy is determined by: (i) the social distance between the speaker and the hearer, (i) their relative power, and (iii) the size of the imposition in the cultural context.

Looking at P-to-P, I have identified two instances of politeness for discussion. Firstly, while introducing herself in Unit 1, a speaker says, *"Patricia. But please call me Pat."* (p. 2). From the limited information provided, mostly through inferences, we know that the two interlocutors are unknown to each other (social distance), and are both students probably of similar age (relative power). The cultural context, however, is difficult to determine. The speaker, faced with an FTA (i.e. the use of first names may be too informal in some contexts), uses a positive politeness strategy by attempting to make the hearer feel more comfortable, and inviting him to progress further in the relationship by using first names. From a pedagogical point of view, the use of this strategy is valid; however, there is not enough information about the interlocutors for it to effectively be used for pragmatic instruction. As it is, the students are given only one assessment of an FTA, and may infer that this strategy is appropriate in all situations. It does not reflect the reality that first names may not be appropriate given greater social distances, a greater gap in relative power, or different cultural contexts.

A second instance of politeness can be found in Unit 9 when a speaker makes a request by asking, *"...do you think I could borrow your cell phone?"* (p. 70). The social distance, relative power, and cultural context is exactly the same as the first example. Here the speaker is faced with an FTA and attempts to redress it with a negative politeness strategy. The conventionally indirect question gives the hearer an 'out' but at the same time stays 'on record'. The unit continues to develop the students pragmatic skills by separating 'small' and 'larger' requests; therefore, attending to the 'size of the imposition' component of the FTA assessment.

A close look at the breakdown of social relationships and relative power between the interlocutors in the textbook model dialogues (see Appendix) highlights two areas of concern when considering the use of politeness. Firstly, there seems to be scarce discourse between interlocutors who are socially close to each other. It could be argued that, in reality, most of our spoken discourse occurs in close relationships (i.e. between close friends, co-workers, partners, or family members), yet this is not reflected in the proportion of dialogues in P-to-P. This, I believe, mirrors the transactional focus of EFL textbooks, where casual conversation in informal contexts may be neglected. There are only two dialogues (from a total of 24) where the interlocutors are socially close.

In addition to a lack of 'close' dialogues, we can also see a lack of variety concerning discourse between interlocutors with uneven power. Although there are staff/customer and student/counsellor dialogues, there is little representation of more common relationships, such as student/teacher, or worker/superior. Using Brown and Levinson's model, these instances of uneven power demand different linguistic choices to be made; for instance using correct titles, and using more indirect speech acts. Overall, P-to-P could be considered to be 'too friendly'. LoCastro (1997) reminds us that politeness occurs in FTAs; therefore, students should be exposed to more dialogues where FTAs occur and are dealt with, thereby exemplifying the target structures.

Speech Acts

Described as the cornerstone of pragmatics (Archer, Aijmer & Wichmann, 2012), speech acts are how we get things done by language. The fundamental premise of Speech Act Theory proposed by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) is that human language is an exchange of utterances that serve certain social functions. A speech act consists of three related acts (Yule, 1996): (i) the *locutionary act* (the basic and literal act of an utterance), (ii) the *illocutionary act* (the communicative force of an utterance), and (iii) the *perlocutionary act* (the intended effect of an utterance).

A frequent speech act in communication is 'leave-taking' or 'closing a conversation', and will be the focus of this component of the textbook analysis. It is important to make clear that although only one speech act will be looked at closely in this research, it does not imply that other speech acts are appropriately covered, nor suffer from the same insufficiencies that I will attempt to illustrate exist with the speech act of leave-taking. I do, however, believe that a similar discussion of 'context' and 'choices' can be applied to each speech act that is presented in a textbook.

A study of leave-taking by Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1989, cited in Bardovi-Harlig et al., 1991) revealed that English learners are often unable to appropriately end conversations, pointing towards the learners' inability to successfully recognise relevant markers in discourse, or unknowingly entering into a closing sequence without actually fulfilling the perlocutionary act of leaving. Bardovi-Harlig et al. (1991) outline the essential components of a felicitous closing: the *terminal exchange*, the *pre-closing*, and the *shut-down*. Table 1 shows the number of dialogues in P-to-P that provide instances of leave-taking.

Table 1. *Frequency of leave-taking styles.*

P-to-P Dialogue	Frequency
Incomplete dialogues with no leave-taking	17
Terminal exchange only	5
Pre-closing and terminal exchange	1
Shut-down, pre-closing and terminal exchange	1

To illustrate this further, I will look at two examples. Unit 4 Conversation 1 (p. 28) shows the following dialogue ending:

Vanessa: *Come on...you know it's a great idea.*
Kazu: *OK, Vanessa! I'll be there around 8:00. See you then!*

This leave-taking is interesting as it has all three components of leave-taking; however, they are offered in a single utterance with no exchange. There is no resemblance or adherence to the initiation-response structure of terminal exchanges. One may consider such a leave-taking as being abrupt, and certainly difficult to respond (or not respond) to. It seems, therefore, a deficient model for teaching the speech act of leave-taking. The following is another example found in Unit 6, Conversation 1(p. 44):

Debby: *Oh! I'm late! I have to go to class.*
Masato: *All right. I'll call you tonight and tell you the time.*
Debby: *Great. Talk to you then.*

Here we can see all three components successfully exchanged. The use of interjections (i.e. 'oh', 'all right' and 'great') are also appropriate in this speech act; that is, they are used as pragmatic markers that signal pre-closing. Learners may only know 'great' and 'all right' as descriptive adjectives; therefore, they would benefit from knowing their other pragmatic uses.

4. Recommendations for the classroom

The above analysis of P-to-P shows some key areas in which pragmatic competence has been, more or less, attended to in the textbook. It also illustrates that if a teacher in my situation were to follow the textbook as intended by the writers, the students would most likely fail to properly develop a wide range of pragmatic competence. Other research has found that this deficiency is common in most ELT textbooks (Ishihara, 2010a). This is due to a number of reasons, such as wash-back effects from language testing, the sheer amount of speech acts, and textbook writers' inauthentic intuition (Ishihara, 2010a). This leaves two clear pedagogical options that will be explored: adapt the book, or use supplementary materials. In addition to the choice of materials, the method of teaching is of equal salience in this discussion. Bardovi-Harlig et al. (1991) outlines four steps for integrating pragmatically appropriate language into the classroom (p. 5): (i) identification of the speech act, (ii) data collection and description, (iii) text and materials evaluation, and (iv) development of new materials. Although this pedagogy is focussed on speech acts, issues of politeness can, and should, be attended to within this framework. During the data collection phase, the teacher should observe not only the ‘appropriateness’ of language, but also ‘politeness’. An existing knowledge of L1 politeness traits would benefit the teacher when making related judgement calls.

Adapting the course textbook would seem the most economical and practical solution for introducing more pragmatically focussed activities; a typical language teacher is challenged to find or justify the additional time that is needed to find new resources. Bardovi-Harlig et al. (1991) suggest a number of methods for adapting the textbook, which I have adapted in Table 2.

Table 2. *Adapting the textbook.*

Method	Description
Structured approach	The students discuss and compare felicitous and in felicitous speech acts from the textbook dialogue. Incomplete dialogues are discussed and students are asked to supply their own ideas for appropriate

	and polite fillers.
Classroom Guest	After a textbook activity is completed, another teacher is asked to enter the room and elicit natural responses related to the target speech act.
Role-play	After a textbook activity is completed, students are asked to act out variations of a speech act. These variations may include the social distance, the relative power, or the size of the imposition.

As a comment on the 'discussions' of the textbook dialogues, an obvious danger would be the potential to discredit the textbook as a whole. I would recommend a `supplementary' rather than a `reparative' approach with students.

In the event that the textbook is found to be ineffective and unadaptable, the teacher should look at producing new materials for class. Ignoring time and budgetary constraints, I believe these materials to be substantially more authentic and pragmatically relevant. Although not limited to these, pragmatic teaching guides, such as Ishihara and Cohen (2010), recommend media technology (such as television shows, movies, and the internet) and linguistic corpora. The use of media technology brings with it increased interest and motivation, and since the discourse is not created for teaching purposes, it provides relatively authentic language models (Ishihara, 2010b). Language corpora are also valued for providing access to naturally occurring data; as Sinclair points out, "language cannot be invented: it can only be captured" (1997, p. 31), and trying to construct text naturally is unreliable. A search for key words that are typically found in a given speech act will enable the researcher (teacher and/or student) to view authentic utterances that comprise the speech act being researched.

I will attempt to illustrate the above recommendations for a lesson designed for teaching the speech act of leave-taking in my context. As was shown in the analysis, Unit 6 contains a dialogue that accurately reflects leave-taking between friends with equal power; therefore providing a solid foundation for the lesson. After explicitly drawing the students' attention to the three components of closing a conversation, I would discuss the choices, and related language connected to each choice, that can be made. As the textbook has only one combination of exchanges, it is then necessary to provide a wider range of input. At this stage I would use media and corpora. The students could be asked to view a 30-minute television drama and record as many instances of leave-taking that occur. The observation protocol should include the language, the context, and information (i.e. social distance, relative power, and size of imposition) about the interlocutors. After sharing the results with classmates, the students would be in a much better position to practice this new skill. Using Bardovi-Harlig et al.'s (1991) structured approach, some of the dialogues in the textbook that do not have closings could be then completed by the students and modelled for the class.

5. Conclusion

This paper first looked closely at the literature on pragmatic competence in the classroom. A widely used textbook was then analysed in terms of its ability to attend to politeness and speech acts. It is clear that this study is lacking in scope; only one speech act was analysed. I believe, however, that we can make certain inferences regarding the remaining speech acts, albeit without empirical evidence. This paper showed that P-to-P was limited in its ability to provide quality pragmatic information and opportunities. It showed that teachers need to alter what is presented in the textbook, and in some instances, go beyond the textbook itself. Vellenga (2004) is optimistic about the future of ELT textbooks; she believes that current research in pragmatics can positively contribute to textbook design. I look forward to working with such teaching resources.

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Appendix

Assessment of FTAs in P-to-P dialogues.

Unit	Social Distance	Reason	Relative Power	Reason
1-1	far	first time encounter	even	both interlocutors are students
1-2	far	- first time encounter - customer/staff relationship	uneven	customer / staff relationship
2-1	medium	interlocutors know each other but do not have information about the other's family	even	interlocutors are friends
2-2	medium	interlocutors know little more than names about each other	even	both interlocutors are students
3-1	medium	interlocutors seem to be nothing more than classmates	even	both interlocutors are students
3-2	close	- interlocutors are co-workers and share an office space - the discourse is friendly and casual	even	interlocutors are co-workers
4-1	reasonably close	friends who speak on the phone and at least one interlocutor knows the other's birthday date	even	interlocutors are friends
4-2	far	complete strangers (one is asking for information)	even	complete strangers
5-1	reasonably close	friends who know each other's holiday details and (at least) have lunch together	even	interlocutors are friends
5-2	close	either good friends or partners who are on holiday together	even	interlocutors are either friends or partners
6-1	medium	interlocutors are classmates who seem to know only basic information about each other	even	both interlocutors are students
6-2	reasonably far	interloctors met at a party one before	even	interlocutors are acquaintances
7-1	far	- first time encounter - customer/staff relationship	uneven	customer/staff relationship
7-2	far	- first time encounter - customer/staff relationship	uneven	customer/staff relationship
8-1	far	- first time encounter - customer/staff relationship	uneven	customer/staff relationship
8-2	far	- first time encounter - customer/staff relationship	uneven	customer/staff relationship
9-1	reasonably close	- interlocutors are classmates -one interlocutor seems comfortable enough to ask the other for a small money loan	even	both interlocutors are classmates
9-2	far	- first time encounter - customer/staff relationship	uneven	customer/staff relationship
10-1	far	first time encounter	even	both interlocutors meet at a social

				gathering
10-2	reasonably far	two friends who have not met in a long time	even	both interlocutors are (or at least used to be) friends
11-1	medium	interlocutors are acquaintances who do not know each other's previous travelling experiences	even	interlocutors are acquaintances
11-2	reasonably close	interlocutors are friends who know each other's previous travelling experiences	even	interlocutors are friends
12-1	reasonably far	a school counselor would be expected to be friendly with but not friends with the students	uneven	one interlocutor is a school counselor, and the others are students
12-2	medium	interlocutors are classmates who do not know details about each other's future hopes and goals	even	interlocutors are classmates

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