Second Language Pragmatic Competence:
Individual Differences in ESL and EFL Environments

Lauren Wyner[1]

ABSTRACT

Pragmatic competence is as an essential aspect of communicative competence. Does environment have an effect on developing pragmatic competence? Do levels of pragmatic competence differ between English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) students? Most studies have shown greater pragmatic awareness among ESL students than EFL students, indicating that the target language (TL) environment has a positive influence on the appropriate use of sociopragmatics. Some studies, however, have yielded a different outcome that not only challenges previous research but defies the assumption that living in the TL environment allows pragmatic competence to better develop. This review of the literature finds that input alone is insufficient for pragmatic competence; learners must notice linguistic forms in their use. A deeper analysis also reveals that individual factors such as pragmatic transfer and learner motivation have a more complex role to play than exposure.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the goal of most second language (L2) learning has been to become communicatively competent and use the language necessary for a given social context (Hymes, 1972). The construct of pragmatics has been recognized as an essential aspect of communicative competence (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980), especially as it is tied to grammatical knowledge (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). Only recently, however, has pragmatics been recognized as a distinct construct worthy of research and assessment in its own right to discover implied meaning through the use of contextual, sociolinguistic, sociocultural, psychological, and rhetorical factors (Purpura, 2004). Attempts to define pragmatic competence require a definition of pragmatics as a whole, a task that has been difficult because of the inherently fluid nature of this construct that is context-dependent (Grabowski, 2009). Perhaps the clearest and most concise is an oft-cited definition from Crystal (1985) that focuses on the interactional nature of this construct:

> Pragmatics is the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social

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[1] Lauren Wyner received her MA in TESOL from Teachers College, Columbia University. She is currently the Academic Manager of the Program in Bilingual/Bicultural Education at Teachers College and is an EdM candidate in the Program in Applied Linguistics. Her research interests include sociolinguistics and pragmatics in second language pedagogy and learning. She can be reached at lauren.wyner@tc.columbia.edu.

interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication. (p. 240)

Based on this social definition, pragmatic competence can then be defined as knowledge of how to use language to achieve goals in language interaction, or rather, competence of language interaction in a sociocultural context (Kasper, 1997). As pragmatic competence entails whether or not an utterance is acceptable and appropriate to other users of the language in conveying the speaker's intended meaning, it can be further divided into pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic components. According to Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983), pragmalinguistics refers to the linguistic resources needed for communicative acts (e.g., strategies and routines) and pragmalinguistic failure, therefore, refers to simply using inappropriate linguistic forms. Sociopragmatics, on the other hand, comprises the sociological realm of pragmatics and refers to proper social behavior in the target language where learners must become aware of the consequence of their pragmatic choices. Sociopragmatic failure is then regarded as more difficult to overcome than pragmalinguistic failure because of the need for awareness.

The consequences of pragmatic failure (both sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic) can be serious in a variety of spheres from formal international politics (e.g., translation errors that impede diplomacy) to interpersonal relationships (Takahashi & Beebe, 1987, p. 133). If pragmatic competence is then essential to successful communicative language ability, what is the effect of environment on developing pragmatic competence? In particular, do levels of pragmatic competence differ between English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) students? To date, most studies have shown greater pragmatic awareness among ESL students than EFL students (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Schauer, 2006; Tagashira, Yamato, & Isoda, 2011), thus indicating that the TL environment has a positive influence on the appropriate use of sociopragmatics. ESL learners invariably receive more pragmatic input through their daily lives if they are motivated to interact with the TL community and have positive social interactions. The classroom also provides a setting for pragmatics instruction as teachers model and demonstrate how to perform tasks. In addition, questions about language use in context naturally arise in the ESL classroom when students bring in their outside experiences, for example, and ask why something happened to them in a particular way when communicating with a native speaker (NS) or if a word or phrase could be used to convey alternative meanings.

Some studies, however, have yielded a very different outcome (e.g., Niezgoda and Röver, 2001; Taguchi, 2008) that not only challenges previous research, but defies the common-sense assumption that living in the TL environment with exposure to authentic input would better help pragmatic competence flourish in ESL learners than in their EFL peers. These studies shed light on the notion of individual differences, such as motivation and pragmatic transfer, as factors in overcoming the burden of environment and contribute to existing research on the effect of positive attitude in acquiring language (Schumann, 1986).

The purpose of this paper is to investigate what role the ESL and EFL environment plays in L2 learners' pragmatic competence and whether individual differences can have a more effective influence than the constrains of the language-learning environment itself. First, the effect of the environment on developing pragmatic competence will be addressed with regards to the role of pragmatic transfer. The effect of motivation on pragmatic knowledge will then be discussed, followed by a discussion of the findings and methodological issues in measuring

pragmatic competence in ESL and EFL settings. Finally, recommendations for future research as well as important sociological considerations with regards to NS norms will be addressed.

THE ROLE OF PRAGMATIC TRANSFER

One factor in developing pragmatic competence in an L2 is pragmatic transfer, the "influence of the learners' knowledge of other languages and cultures on their pragmatic use and development on the use of the L2," (Kasper, 1992, as cited in Ishihara & Cohen, 2010, p. 78). While some pragmatic knowledge is strictly tied to individual languages and thus can lead to overgeneralizations and pragmatic failure, some pragmatic knowledge is universal (Ochs, 1996), and some can be transferred from learners' first language (L1) (Kasper, 1997).

One of the earliest investigations into the differences in pragmatic awareness between ESL and EFL populations was Takahashi and Beebe's (1987) qualitative study among Japanese L2 learners of English. The researchers sought to find evidence of pragmatic transfer (i.e., transfer of L1 sociocultural norms in L2 communication) while investigating the effects of L2 proficiency levels and environments. Two main questions guided this research: 1) Will there be evidence of pragmatic transfer in both learning contexts (EFL and ESL) and at both proficiency levels (low and high)? and 2) Will there be a difference in the amount of transfer according to the different learning environments and proficiency levels? The researchers analyzed the written refusals of Japanese ESL and EFL learners, compared to Japanese and American NSs' respective refusals. All of the participants completed a discourse completion test (DCT) where participants had to insert a refusal to interlocutors of different statuses in the following categories: requests, invitations, offers, and suggestions.

After examining the typical order of formulas for Japanese NSs and American English NSs, Takahashi and Beebe (1987) compared the refusal data of the ESL and EFL participants, finding evidence of pragmatic transfer in both the ESL and EFL contexts, as well as at both proficiency levels. In particular, there was more evidence of pragmatic transfer in the EFL context than in the ESL context, in spite of the EFL learners' higher average proficiency. Therefore, the tendency toward pragmatic transfer may be explained by the EFL learners having fewer opportunities for authentic input, causing them to rely more heavily on their L1. Alternatively, as the ESL population was more direct in their refusals and thus more TL-like, this could be explained by their lower proficiency and lack of knowledge of less direct, more complicated expressions. Nonetheless, the EFL learners appeared less pragmatically competent than their ESL peers because they used their more advanced L2 skills to convey L1 expressions and sentiments.

Yamagashira (2001) researched pragmatic transfer in 9 Japanese ESL learners without an EFL component. He used a DCT and a follow-up interview to study how his participants reacted to refusals and to determine if pragmatic transfer occurs when Japanese speakers refuse in English, if time spent in the TL community affects pragmatic transfer, and if explicit metapragmatic instruction has an effect as well. Like Takahashi and Beebe (1987), lower proficiency participants tended to transfer more often than their higher proficiency peers. However, results also indicated that increased time spent in the TL environment caused participants to respond in a more TL-like fashion, thus indicating that the length of exposure in the environment has an effect on transfer. In addition, explicit instruction in pragmatics—

whether in a formal classroom setting or through interactions with NSs—allowed participants who took advantage of such instruction to become more pragmatically competent.

Barron (2003) investigated the effect of a prolonged stay in the TL community on the development of L2 pragmatic competence without a comparison to a foreign language group. She focused on a group of 33 advanced Irish L2 learners of German over a ten-month study-abroad period in Germany. Her research questions were: 1) Is there evidence of changes in learners' L2 pragmatic competence towards or away from the L2 norm over time spent in the TL community? 2) Does pragmatic transfer increase or decrease with time in the TL culture? 3) What implications do any changes or lack of changes in learners' L2 pragmatic competence have for our understanding of the development of L2 pragmatic competence? and 4) Can one speak of stages of acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence? She performed a quantitative analysis in the form of production questionnaires administered before and after the study-abroad experience, as well as a qualitative analysis focusing on retrospective interviews. Data was elicited three times over the year abroad and was compared to L2 data gathered from 34 German NSs and L1 data from 27 Irish English NSs.

The study showed that exposure to L2 input helped many participants achieve more TL-like pragmatic competence. The Irish learners' increased use of pragmatic routines indicated an increase in fluency, efficiency in communication, and the potential for membership into the L2 speech community. The NS norm, however, was rarely reached. Data revealed that many of the learners "associate language use with an individual's personality and identity rather than with the foreign language itself," (Barron, 2003, p. 349). As the participants felt secure in their own personalities, they did not see any reason to change their L1 preferences of language use and transferred (either consciously or not) their L1 sentiments into the L2. Therefore, pragmatic transfer had a mostly negative effect on these participants, who, in addition, may not have taken full advantage of the study-abroad experience by not establishing deep relationships with NSs (Schmidt, 1993), thus failing to either notice, or be motivated to change their speech.

Like Barron (2003), Shimizu (2009) chose to study the development of L2 pragmatic competence on a language other than English. He investigated compliment responses of Japanese as a foreign language (JFL) and second language (JSL) learners by administering oral DCTs because of the more natural and spontaneous nature of speech production than written DCTs. The oral DCTs were analyzed for compliment response strategies, patterns of semantic formulas, and lexical/phrasal characteristics to determine adherence to Japanese pragmatic norms.

Shimizu (2009) found that although JSL and JFL participants differed from Japanese NSs in their use of positive and negative strategies, the JSL group was still closer to more TL-like responses. As only the JSL participants used TL-like avoidance strategies, the JSL learners used more pragmatically appropriate and TL-like avoidances in compliment responses, while the JFL learners emphasized negation at all three levels. Interestingly, Shimizu found that unlike Takahashi and Beebe's (1987) Japanese ESL and EFL data, the JSL and JFL responses differed significantly from the American NSs' own English responses, thus implying that L1 transfer alone does not account for their divergences in Japanese. Instead, he implied that it was "transfer of training" (Saito & Beecken, 1997, as cited in Shimizu) that could account for the emphasis on negation strategies. Classroom instruction, he contends, emphasizes the "modesty maxim" in Japanese culture, thus leading to an overuse of unnatural or inauthentic strategies (Shimizu, 2009, p. 182). In fact, Shimizu found that the textbooks employed in his study encouraged learners to use rejection strategies above all others. Therefore, it is likely that the L2 participants learned that rejection is the only appropriate response to compliments. Follow-up participant

interviews confirmed his assumption and revealed that the JFL tendency toward negation may have stemmed from their textbooks (i.e., transfer of training), rather than L1 transfer.

Importantly, it is possible that the JSL learners' interactions with NSs gave them opportunities to modify the knowledge gained from textbooks. In line with both Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis and Schmidt's (1993) Noticing Hypothesis, the JSL participants noticed that Japanese NSs used positive and avoidance strategies more frequently than had been taught in JSL classes. This account has clear pedagogical implications for teachers to use more authentic, real-life examples of language use and not rely on textbooks to provide accurate pragmatic instruction, as textbooks often include gross oversimplifications in terms of pragmatic instruction (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Vellenga, 2004). Shimizu added that this is especially true for EFL learners who have "little opportunity to engage in authentic interaction and revise their hypothesis about the target pragmatic norms formed through transfer of training" (p. 187).

Finding that environment has a definite but complex role to play in the acquisition of pragmatic competence, Taguchi (2008) set out to determine if there are differences in the development of speedy and accurate comprehension of implied speaker intentions between learners in ESL and EFL environments. Her study included 60 Japanese EFL learners and 57 ESL learners in the U.S., all enrolled in college and between the ages of 18-28. Importantly, three of the EFL students had 9-11 months prior residency in a TL country, thus making them unique in comparison to the EFL participants in previous comparison studies. Nonetheless, both participant groups had beginning level proficiencies based on TOEFL scores administered at the start of the study, thereby eliminating proficiency as a factor in this study.

Taguchi (2008) administered a computerized listening task that measured the ability to comprehend indirect refusals (e.g., providing an excuse to a request without explicitly denying said request) and indirect opinions (e.g., expressing a negative opinion of a movie by saying, "I'm glad when it was over.") and analyzed the results for speed and accuracy to provide a developmental account of pragmatic comprehension. The task was administered to each group twice, before and after approximately 120-130 hours of classroom instruction. Results indicated that the EFL learners made many more gains in accuracy than speed, while the ESL learners greatly improved their speed, but only minimally improved their accuracy. In particular, the EFL group made significantly greater improvement than the ESL group in the accurate comprehension of indirect refusals, but not of indirect opinions. This could be a general issue of second language acquisition where refusals are learned before opinions, but it may also be an instance of pragmatic transfer. Both Japanese and English share certain patterns of refusal (e.g., provide a reason for refusing an invitation), but not of indirect opinions. Based on the EFL learners' wide gains over their ESL peers in the realm of indirect refusals, it seems that pragmatic transfer had more of an effect on developing pragmatic competence than the environment itself. "The actual environment of learning may thus be of secondary importance as long as it affords sufficient instruction and practice to promote general listening skills," (Taguchi, 2008, p. 443). Therefore, Taguchi argues that length of residence itself is an insufficient variable to developing pragmatic competence. In addition, as there were greater pragmatic gains among the EFL participants, it is important to note that these students were studying in an English immersion program in Japan. Thus, the EFL students chose this institution because of their strong motivation to study English at an advanced level.

The results of these studies that investigate the effect of transfer on pragmatic competence demonstrate that failure to acquire L2 pragmatic competence cannot be fully accounted for by proficiency, length of stay, etc. Most importantly, the level of motivation to

actively notice pragmatic transfer or explicit instruction remains unclear, necessitating qualitative research with more participants over a prolonged period of time. The next section will focus directly on the role of motivation in developing pragmatic competence in ESL and EFL environments.

THE ROLE OF MOTIVATION

L2 classroom evidence attests to the fact that motivation is a key factor in successfully learning a language (Brown, 2001). It is no surprise then that many studies in the last few decades have focused on the relationship between L2 language learning environments and motivation, with special attention to pragmatic competence.

Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) seminal case study showed the advantage of the ESL environment over the EFL environment in attaining pragmatic competence, particularly in terms of the motivation that positive experiences in the TL community gave to the ESL learners. The authors based their experiment around three key questions: 1) Does the environment influence pragmatic awareness/do ESL and EFL learners show the same degree of awareness? 2) Does the learners' level of proficiency influence their degree of awareness? and 3) Do learners and teachers show the same degree of awareness?

Two participant samples contained a total of 708 participants. The primary sample consisted of 173 mixed-proficiency ESL students in the U.S. and 370 EFL students in Hungary. In addition, 28 NS ESL teachers and 25 Hungarian EFL teachers participated. The second sample consisted of 112 Italian EFL teachers. The authors developed a video with contextualized grammatical and pragmatic judgment tasks to measure sentences that were pragmatically appropriate but ungrammatical, sentences that were grammatical but pragmatically inappropriate, and sentences that were both grammatical and appropriate. The speech acts included were apologies, refusals, requests, and suggestions. Participants also completed a questionnaire on their language learning background and proficiency.

Both the EFL learners and their teachers identified and ranked grammatical errors as more serious than pragmatic errors, while ESL learners and their teachers did the opposite, ranking pragmatic errors as more serious. The Hungarian and Italian EFL students both rated the pragmatics errors significantly lower than the grammatical errors, and as the two groups had drastically different backgrounds, this may then be a characteristic of the EFL environment. One reason for this difference may be the nature of EFL tests, which often focus on form rather than communicative competence (Hudson, Detmer, & Brown, 1992). This study implies that ESL and EFL learners differ in developing pragmatic knowledge. One obvious factor is proficiency, as a learner with limited grammatical knowledge would not have the resources to select alternative utterances. On the other hand, even with a sufficient command of L2 grammatical and lexical knowledge, adult L2 learners often are not able to produce pragmatically appropriate language (Koike, 1997). Indeed, higher proficiency levels without accompanying pragmatic competence can give learners "the rope to hang themselves with," (Takahashi & Beebe, 1987, p. 151) as they use the L2 to express their L1 sentiments.

Another issue raised by Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) is residency, as the length of stay in an English-speaking country has an effect on perception of pragmatic appropriateness. The authors found that the longer an ESL student lived in the U.S., the higher their awareness of pragmatic errors. This is likely due to time spent outside of the classroom in an English-speaking

environment interacting in the TL, as well as a larger number of hours spent in the classroom and dealing with administrative tasks for successful residency in the TL community.

Most importantly, Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) maintain Schmidt's (1993) hypothesis that in addition to salient input, a motivational factor—relationships—leads to pragmatic awareness. According to Schmidt, "those who are concerned with establishing relationships with the target language speakers are more likely to pay close attention to the pragmatic aspects of input and to struggle to understand than those who are not so motivated," (p. 36). Intriguingly, recent ESL arrivals rated pragmatic errors less severely than did those who had been in the country longer. The assumption here is not that the length of residency itself enhances pragmatic awareness, but the depth of interaction in the TL provided by a prolonged stay in the L2 community coupled with the chance to establish relationships with NSs and notice and replicate their speech patterns are what helps ESL learners develop more TL-like pragmatic competence. The newer arrivals simply had not had the time to develop motivating relationships.

Niezgoda and Röver (2001) replicated Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) study with ESL learners in Hawaii and EFL learners in the Czech Republic. Their study was based on two questions: 1) Does the learning environment influence learners' awareness of pragmatic and grammatical errors? and 2) Does the learners' proficiency influence their degree of awareness of pragmatic and grammatical errors? Specifically, the authors wanted to test Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's results by discovering if the handicapping effects of the EFL environment are inevitable, or if a group of particularly advanced students can "overcome" them (Niezgoda & Röver, 2001, p. 63). The ESL participants comprised 48 L2 learners of various proficiency levels studying English at a private language school in Hawaii. Participants came from six different countries and had, on average, been living in the U.S. for 4.7 months, close to the 5.3 months' residence average for Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) ESL participants. The 124 Czech EFL learners, however, represented a particularly advanced group of students studying to become English teachers who all received 14-20 hours of monolingual English instruction weekly for the duration of their five-year program, providing them with a more ESL-like input environment than the traditional EFL scenario.

While Niezgoda and Röver (2001) utilized Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) video instrument and questionnaire, they reached contradictory results. The EFL participants in this second study recognized more pragmatic errors than the ESL learners and rated those errors as more severe than their ESL counterparts. In addition, the low proficiency learners in both ESL and EFL environments recognized more pragmatic than grammatical errors and rated the pragmatic infelicities as more severe than the grammatical ones. Niezgoda and Röver did, however, observe one important correlation to Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's original results: The ESL participants also rated pragmatic errors as more severe than grammatical errors.

Based on their results, Niezgoda and Röver (2001) concluded that environment "may not be the most important factor accounting for learners' pragmatic awareness," (p. 76) as pragmatic competence was acquired in their Czech EFL setting. Furthermore, they asserted that the outcome of their results "lies in an interaction between exposure to grammatical and pragmatic input and individual learner characteristics, specifically the degree to which learners actively attend to input" (p. 77). The Czech EFL students, as future English teachers, were highly motivated to gain pragmatic awareness. This motivation may have accounted for their increased sensitivity to pragmatic errors.

Takahashi (2001) used different degrees of input enhancement to determine Japanese EFL learners' development of request forms in a study that included four different treatment

groups who completed pre- and post-test DCTs, communicative practice, written retrospectives, and follow-up questionnaires measuring motivation. Only one group received metapragmatic instruction, and this was the group that outperformed all others in the development of pragmatic competence. The self-reports, however, revealed that the more motivated learners noticed and readily adopted TL norms, thereby gaining confidence in their accuracy, while less motivated learners were more resistant. The lack of motivation then caused the input enhancements themselves to be less effective teaching tools in the development of pragmatic competence. Her findings thus took Niezgoda and Röver's (2001) belief that motivation has a crucial role to play in directing learner attention to pragmatic input one step further by suggesting that motivation is perhaps the most significant variable in directing learner attention to TL cultural perspectives (Takahashi, 2001). In addition, her study reveals the positive motivating factors of explicit metapragmatic instruction, which makes learners aware of what they already may know through pragmatic transfer, yet motivates them to use it in L2 contexts (Kasper & Rose, 2002).

In her replication of Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) study, Schauer (2006) allowed participants to correct errors in post hoc interviews, thereby providing a link between pragmatic awareness and pragmatic production, or proof of competence. She further developed Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's original methodology by focusing on two questions: 1) Do EFL and ESL contexts display differences in their recognition and rating of pragmatic and grammatical errors? and 2) Do ESL learners increase their pragmatic awareness during an extended stay in the target environment? The latter question was in response to Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's residency hypothesis.

Schauer (2006) used Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) exact videotape instrument and questionnaire, and, unlike Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei or Niezgoda and Röver's (2001) replication, she conducted original post hoc interviews. There were 53 university participants in total: 16 German ESL students studying in the U.K., 17 German EFL students studying in Germany to become interpreters and translators—none of whom had ever lived in an English-speaking country—and 20 British NSs. However, unlike Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's study and similar to that of Niezgoda and Röver, the EFL students received much more classroom-based input because of their accelerated language program. Thus, Schauer sought to determine if mixed-proficiency ESL students exhibited more pragmatic awareness than their advanced EFL counterparts.

Schauer's (2006) interview component was an important addition because it allowed her to discover whether the participants had selected a true error or a "false error," (p. 272) as well as shed light on their decision-making process and their experiences interacting with NSs. These interviews were recorded in the participants' L1 and were later translated. Her data confirmed Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) original findings and did not support Niezgoda and Röver's (2001) opposite results as the EFL participants were less aware of pragmatic errors than their ESL counterparts and EFL students perceived grammatical errors to be more salient than did the ESL students. This was corroborated by the qualitative interviews. Schauer found the EFL results disturbing because "it means that individuals who are studying to explicitly help people to be effective in intercultural communication are less aware of one of the central building blocks of successful communication—pragmatic rules and regulations," (p. 307), echoing Takahashi and Beebe's (1987) fears about the severity of pragmatic failure.

Lastly and most importantly, the length of residency in the U.K. had a positive impact on pragmatic awareness for the ESL students because of exposure to authentic input, as indicated by Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998). Schauer (2006) found that her participants' pragmatic

awareness continued to improve during their time in the TL community, particularly because they had rich opportunities to observe everyday NS interactions and become aware of their own output, thus allowing them to modify their language. It was this motivation to not only become aware of their language use, but to try to adapt it to the TL norm that helped her ESL participants develop more TL-like pragmatic competence.

Through a longitudinal study, Kinginger (2008) used the study abroad context to measure the development of sociolinguistic variation in French. She studied 24 American learners of French over the course of one semester and assessed gains through a pre- and post-semester interview that attempted to measure learner knowledge of address forms, colloquialisms, and other speech acts (e.g., leave-taking expressions). While the TL context allowed all participants to gain significant pragmatic knowledge, qualitative data revealed that the learners who were motivated to interact the most in the TL and with NSs made the most gains. Interestingly, while access to NSs and therefore the theoretical potential to establish relationships was available to all participants, those who were lucky enough to have engaging host families, for example, developed much more pragmatic knowledge than their peers who were not so lucky and maintained their closest home relationships with friends and family over the Internet. While positive interactions with NSs is surely a motivating factor to have more interactions, Kinginger's findings are important in that they reveal the potential to "become discouraged" (p. 608) and not take full advantage of the study abroad context.

Tagashira et al. (2011) also extended Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) study to focus solely on the relationship between motivation and pragmatic awareness among Japanese EFL learners. While Niezgoda and Röver's (2001) results imply that "motivational factors may play a role in pragmatic development" (Tagashira et al., 2011, p. 8), few studies have examined this specific relationship (e.g., Takahashi, 2001, 2005). In response to questions raised by Takahashi's (2005) experiments on Japanese EFL learners' awareness of L2 pragmalinguistic features, they based their study around two key questions: 1) To what extend do Japanese EFL learners' patterns of motivation influence their pragmatic awareness? and 2) In what way are these differences caused by learners' motivational profiles in terms of error recognition or error severity rating for pragmatic errors? The large participant group was comprised of 162 Japanese university EFL learners who were all at an intermediate proficiency level in English. Participants completed a questionnaire adapted from Hiromori (as cited in Tagashira et al., 2011) that would group participants into four motivational levels: moderate motivation, self-determined motivation, absence of motivation, and externally regulated motivation. The researchers also used Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) original questionnaire, yet, for practical purposes, they did not employ Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's video format but instead converted it into a written questionnaire. With this, they changed part of the original answer sheet to separate items for pragmatic and grammatical appropriateness to overcome the vagueness that Schauer (2006) reasoned might account for a "false error" (p. 272).

The results showed that motivation accounted for differences in recognition of pragmatic errors, but not grammatical errors. Additionally, the self-determined or more intrinsically motivated learners showed the keenest perception of appropriateness of the utterances once they had decided an error was present (Tagashira et al., 2011, p. 19). While it is not exactly clear how motivation has an effect on learners, the researchers believe that it may be motivation's effect on "selective attention," as more motivated learners "will value pragmatic aspects of language use, and they will be inclined to detect the stimuli containing pragmatic information and utilize this information for more elaborate analysis" (Tagashira et al., 2011, p. 20). Their study thus

confirms previous assumptions (Niezgoda and Röver, 2001; Takahashi, 2001) of the effects of motivation on pragmatic awareness.

Like Barron (2003) and Kinginger (2008), Taguchi (2011) developed a rare longitudinal study to assess pragmatic development in a study-abroad context. Her study focused on two main questions: 1) What patterns of pragmatic development can we observe among different pragmatic functions and attributes in an L2? and 2) In what ways do individual differences and learning context affect the course of pragmatic development? The participants were comprised of 48 Japanese EFL students in an English immersion program who were tested on their ability to produce requests and opinions three times over one academic year by completing a computerized oral DCT, while a subset of 12 participants also provided qualitative analyses in their L1 three times during the second semester.

Complementing previous conclusions (e.g., Kinginger, 2008), Taguchi's (2011) qualitative data revealed that quantitative score variation was closely linked to motivation to interact in the TL. As all participants were part of the immersion program with ample access to TL input, every participant made some gains in pragmatic competence. However, in line with Schmidt's (1993) reasoning on the importance of developing relationships in the TL, it was the participants who actively sought TL contact and experiences (e.g., through email with NS teachers who provided explicit feedback) that saw the most consistent quantitative gains.

Most recently, Rafieyan, Majid, and Eng (2013) sought to determine if familiarity with the cultural features of the TL environment and an interest in learning those features are the main factors in determining a learner's level of pragmatic comprehension. They designed their study around three questions: 1) Do language learners have positive attitudes toward the incorporation of TL cultural components into their classroom instruction? 2) Does the incorporation of TL cultural components into classroom instruction enhance language learners' level of pragmatic comprehension? and 3) Is there a relationship between language learners' attitudes toward TL culture instruction and their level of pragmatic comprehension? They collected data through a Likert scale attitude questionnaire and two pragmatic comprehension tests adapted from Taguchi (2008)—a pre-test and a post-test after 48 hours of instruction that included authentic videos— for 32 intermediate-level learners from seven countries at a language academy in Malaysia. Results indicated that a positive attitude toward learning the TL culture led to a higher level of pragmatic comprehension. There was a strong statistical correlation between interest/motivation in learning about the TL culture and success on the pragmatic comprehension tasks. The L2 learners who had a "neutral" attitude toward learning about the TL culture scored in the middle range of the implicature tasks, while those who expressed positive or highly positive attitudes performed much better.

Interestingly, the majority of L2 learners agreed or strongly agreed that some cultural components should be part of every language class, and they felt encouraged to take classes in American culture. These findings suggest that not only should learners be exposed to positive features of the TL culture, but those features should also be included in textbooks, which are often the only direct access EFL learners have to the TL culture. Because of the dearth of pragmatic information in many textbooks, the responsibility of conveying pragmatic awareness usually falls on the teacher (Vellenga, 2004). This is not, however, guaranteed—especially in EFL environments where the teacher may not be pragmatically competent in the TL. Thus, learners need authentic materials and exposure to the TL culture because these unfamiliar aspects may not be salient enough to be noticed (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996). This and other critical issues

will now be synthesized in a discussion of the above studies that also addresses limitations of the research.

DISCUSSION

Kasper (1996) describes three conditions to attain pragmatic knowledge: "There must be pertinent input, the input has to be noticed, and learners need ample opportunity to develop a high level of control" (p. 148). The studies above demonstrate that input alone is insufficient for pragmatic competence; learners must notice linguistic forms in their use, a factor often more readily available in ESL than EFL contexts. However, while most studies indicate that length of stay in the TL environment has a greater effect on pragmatic competence than proficiency, a deeper analysis of results reveals that individual factors such as pragmatic transfer and learner motivation have a larger, more complex role to play than simple exposure. These results offer several insights into the nature of pragmatics learning and the difficulty investigating pragmatics development.

To start, the ESL/TL environment is often more beneficial than the EFL environment in developing pragmatic competence. This is not necessarily due to greater access to authentic input in an ESL environment, but to the intensity of interaction with NSs that causes noticing (Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei, 1998; Kinginger, 2008; Schauer, 2006; Shimizu, 2009). The temporal factor of an extended stay in the TL community is an insufficient variable in developing pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Taguchi, 2008). Instead, it creates more opportunities for relationships with NSs to develop, thus making salient pragmatic aspects of the TL language.

However, motivation to learn the L2 and interest in its culture(s) can overcome the burden of the EFL environment in the development of pragmatic competence (Niezgoda & Röver, 2001; Rafieyan et al., 2013; Takahashi, 2001; Tagashira et al., 2011; Taguchi, 2011), even when opportunities for authentic TL interaction are scarce. Authentic input, therefore, is less important in developing pragmatic competence than fostering motivation.

Next, pragmatic transfer can have a negative effect on the development of such competence (Barron, 2003; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987; Yamagashira, 2001) in the TL environment, especially if issues of learner identity come into conflict with adapting to NS norms. Similarly, a transfer of training can have a negative effect on the development of pragmatic competence in any environment, but EFL learners have less of an opportunity to notice classroom overgeneralizations because of their lack of interaction in the TL environment (Shimizu, 2009). In addition, pragmatic transfer can aid the development of pragmatic competence where the L1 and L2 use similar strategies (Taguchi, 2008). In particular, the relationship between pragmatic transfer and motivation regardless of the L2 learning environment seems to exist (Barron, 2003; Yamagashira, 2001), but more research is needed to account for how much of this positive transfer is intentional, how much is luck, and how much relates to learner desire to adapt to the NS norm, to express an L1 identity in the L2, or to adopt a new L2 identity solely for L2 communication.

The studies above contained several methodological shortcomings. Some would have benefited from a more even comparison between the second language learners and foreign language learners based on background, L1, gender, proficiency, number of classroom hours, institution goals, pedagogical approach, and familiarity with research test tasks for their

respective program (Barron, 2003; Niezgoda & Röver, 2001; Rafieyan et al., 2013; Schauer, 2006; Taguchi, 2008, 2011; Takahashi and Beebe, 1987). The addition of more proficiency levels is of particular importance because it has been known for several decades that grammatical competence does not directly equate to pragmatic competence, as research on speech acts in EFL settings have indicated (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Bouton, 1988; Boxer & Pickering, 1995; Kasper, 1997; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Yamagashira, 2001). Even grammatically proficient or advanced learners may suffer from pragmatic failures. Therefore, a broader range of levels would reveal more nuances about the nature of pragmatic transfer.

Other methodological limitations of these studies revolve around the structure of the research task itself. Written DCTs often assess pragmatic comprehension or awareness, while oral DCTs assess pragmatic production. Some studies indicated that higher pragmatic awareness does not directly correspond to production (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Taguchi, 2008). Importantly, awareness and competence are often conflated in the studies, even though the former is a necessary condition to the latter. Much of the research does not address this separation. Nor is it clear from these studies if comprehension and production occur simultaneously or if there is even a directional or linear relationship between the two. Taguchi (2011) notes that the online demand of uniting sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics while simultaneously conveying content knowledge distinguishes production from comprehension. The assumption that a written answer could correspond to natural speech neglects to consider issues of proficiency variation between the language skills, as well as the potential for writing fatigue or the association of timed writing with academic test-taking. While both assess forms of pragmatic knowledge, a direct comparison cannot be easily made from the responses on each type of task. The relationship between pragmatic awareness and production among L2 learners has thus not been addressed in these studies.

Issues of inauthenticity seem to plague the DCT format. The written DCT format can give participants extra time to plan what they would like to say, rather than what they would actually do in an online scenario (Takahashi & Beebe, 1987; Yamagashira, 2001). In addition, aspects of pragmatic knowledge that can be decoded through gesture, discourse and sequential features (Taguchi, 2008, p. 445) were lost. Similarly, Taguchi's (2008) listening task was highly controlled and decontextualized, in addition to containing artificial dialogues. It is unclear if this task even elicited authentic language use. Whereas multiple choice tasks and DCTS could measure the effect of input and receptive knowledge, only role plays and other more authentic, immediate productive uses of language that measure output could really measure pragmatic knowledge (Grabowski, 2009; Tsutagawa, 2012). However, in oral DCTs or post hoc interviews, participants may still provide what they believe is expected of them (Shimizu, 2009; Taguchi, 2011), instead of the norm they wish to emulate.

This issue of the NS norm and its role on motivation, as well as transfer, deserves more attention. Indeed, "the choice of an L2 norm involves consideration of regional, gender, social class and age-based variation" (Barron, 2003, p. 75). Considering the global spread of English, conceptions of NS norms vary widely across and within countries (e.g., African-American Vernacular English), cultures, and across formats (e.g., Internet English). As English has become a lingua franca, many L2 speakers have not found it necessary to reach optimal levels of NS interactional behavior. Instead, both NSs and non-native speakers (NNSs) often do not expect TL-like English from NNSs, and by accepting deviations from the norm, they make non-TL speech acceptable (House & Kasper, 2000, p. 111, as cited in Barron, 2003). In fact, non-TL use

can elicit positive responses from NSs and NNSs alike, especially when it is considered "innovative, creative, or even charming" (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010, p. 76).

Indeed, learner identity is so intertwined with not only their L1, but also how they use language more generally, that they may deliberately choose to avoid appropriating NS norms (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). As noted in the studies where L2 learners used the L2 to express L1 sentiments (Barron, 2003; Takahashi and Beebe, 1987), the refusal to give up aspects of one's linguistic identity makes an L2 learner appear less pragmatically competent than may objectively be true. Any study that compares L2 speakers to NSs assumes that the L2 speakers wish to emulate their NS peers, and that this is the group whose pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic choices they should adopt. L2 learners may purposefully diverge from the norm to deliberately not identify with the L2 community and retain their L1 identity (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010, p. 86). Studies situated in a controlled research scenario that lacks the authenticity of online, real-world interaction often ignore the conflicting concepts of disidentification or willfully wishing to adhere to another group's norms (e.g., adopting slang), while simultaneously failing to take into account negative NS views of learner L2 pragmatic competence. For example, Janicki (1985, as cited in Barron, 2003) has shown that NSs often dislike L2 learners' use of in-group membership speaking styles, such as slang, obscenities, or very informal speech.

Lastly, as students do not always make use of potential positive pragmatic transfer (Kasper, 1997), these studies need more detailed interviews or think-aloud protocols to allow the researchers to find out why the participants employed a particular strategy, or if they were even cognizant of their choices. However, Barron (2003) found that the off-line questionnaire meant that learners had more time to think about their answers and were not overloaded by stress or other factors that hinder on-line data collection. It remains unclear what effect the off-line questionnaire itself has on the measurement of pragmatic knowledge, and if the results from an on-line questionnaire would be comparable.

CONCLUSION

While ESL environments generally afford more opportunities for pragmatic development than EFL settings, the dynamic relationships between environment, motivation, and pragmatic transfer all indicate that individual differences have a greater role to play than just exposure in the TL community. Thus, theory, research and, most importantly, language pedagogy must evolve to address the complexity and difficulty of developing and assessing pragmatic competence.

The aspect of motivation requires closer attention as it is keenly tied to sociopragmatics and therefore awareness. Tajeddin and Zand Moghadam (2012) assert that "the first thing EFL learners are motivated to acquire is how to use language appropriately. Their high pragmatic motivation can be a strong impetus for their noticing ability, which can be scaffolded by more pragmatically competent learners or teachers" (p. 367).

Furthermore, more studies are needed to investigate the specific relationship between learner motivation (i.e., relationships) and pragmatic acquisition, not just language learning in general. Specifically, more research that investigates the intersection of pragmatic awareness, cognitive processes of noticing, and motivation is needed (Tagashira et al., 2011) to account for learners' transition from noticing to comprehending pragmatic infelicities.

Goals and motivation for learning an L2 differ widely among individuals. Some L2 learners, particularly in an EFL setting, may learn English for only a special purpose, such as reading trade articles, thus rendering pragmatic knowledge "superfluous" (Barron, 2003, p. 77). Therefore, an important area for future research is the definition of the NS norm and its effect on motivation in ESL and EFL environments. Current research is mostly cross-sectional rather than longitudinal. More longitudinal studies are needed to measure pragmatic awareness and production prior to arrival and during and after stay in an ESL context (Barron, 2003) and to study the evolution of L2 learners' attitudes toward the NS norm.

As pragmatic competence "containing cultural aspects and features of social context and conventions cannot be conceptualized without a target language and culture in mind" (Timpe, 2012, p. 171), future research should also make explicit how the TL features to be measured are tied to the TL culture at hand and what effect deviations from the pragmatic norm have on overall communicative competence, as well as their relationship to both pragmatic transfer and motivation.

In addition, more attention should be given to the role of pragmatic transfer in both ESL and EFL contexts to determine how it is related to awareness and the pedagogical implications of helping students become aware of universal transfer. This is of particular importance in an EFL context where students may also draw on preconceived cultural stereotypes (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010), which can be further reinforced by lack of authentic interaction in the TL with NSs (Barron, 2003). Rafieyan et al. (2013) have shown that the problem of negative transfer can be mitigated when learners are familiarized with and motivated to learn about the L2 culture. Research on the distance between L1 and L2 cultures may have a greater effect on NNS familiarity with TL pragmatic norms (Kecskes, 2003) and inform classroom approaches to making input salient.

Lastly, research (e.g., Ishihara & Cohen, 2010) indicates that ESL learners improve as a direct result of pragmatic instruction within the classroom environment. It is then imperative that EFL teachers also incorporate a pragmatic element to their instruction, particularly if student motivation is not high. However, while many TESOL teacher-training courses stress a theoretical knowledge of pragmatics, few provide practical techniques for teachers to integrate into their respective classrooms (Vásquez & Sharpless, 2009). Therefore, if pragmatic knowledge is indeed essential for any language teacher, TESOL teacher-training courses should mandate coursework in pragmatics and its instruction not to provide "learners with new information but to make them aware of what they know already and encourage them to use their universal or transferable L1 pragmatic knowledge in L2 contexts" (Kasper, 1997, p. 4). A demonstrated proficiency in this area should be a requirement for a certificate or diploma for any future EFL or ESL teacher.

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