タイトル	Pragmatic Failures and Language Ideologies:Challenges in the Japanese EFL context
著者	Jeremie, Bouchard
引用	北海学園大学人文論集(49): 69-141
発行日	2011-07-30

Pragmatic Failures and Language Ideologies: Challenges in the Japanese EFL context

Jérémie Bouchard

Abstract

This paper addresses pragmatic failures produced by Japanese high school EFL learners (JES) while using the target language. It argues that an overemphasis on question/answer patterns in oral English classes in Japan oversimplifies genuine L2 communication processes. This argument is framed by a discussion on linguistic ideologies in the Japanese EFL context. Pragmatic instruction is seen as an essential component of English language education in Japan. It is further argued that any discussion on pragmatics in EFL cannot be divorced from a discussion on the socio-cultural elements which frame the target language.

Keywords: pragmatic failure, pragmatic instruction, language ideology

Introduction

This paper addresses pragmatic failures produced by Japanese high school EFL learners (JES) while using the target language, either amongst each other or with native speakers. It is argued that an overemphasis on question/answer patterns in oral English classes in Japan oversimplifies genuine L2 communication processes, thus pushing students to develop a "false" impression of what it means to communicate in English. This argument is framed by a discussion on the ideological assumptions which often emerge when JES use English to communicate. It is argued that linguistic ideologies are deeply rooted in the Japanese EFL context, often acting as an obstacle to the development of L2 pragmatic competence.

Sections 1 and 2 provide both a review of the literature on pragmatics and a discussion on relevant issues, from which further arguments can take roots. Section 3 overviews pragmatic failures, and Section 4 analyzes 3 short samples which include such failures. The small amount of data limits the scope of this paper, but nevertheless acts as a trigger for a larger discussion on the relationship between pragmatics and language ideology. On the basis of observations made in Sections 3 and 4, Section 5 argues for the need to teach pragmatics explicitly to Japanese EFL learners. Section 6 suggests a variety of pragmatic teaching methodologies, and also ways to go about teaching pragmatics in the classroom. Sections 7 and 8 bring out the central argument of this paper: language ideologies concerning the L2 complicate the language learning process. Section 9 puts pragmatic instruction as an effective method to counter this problem. Finally, Section 10 shows how to avoid turning pragmatic instruction into a push towards acculturation.

It is hoped that this paper can add support for Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh's (2008) assertion that "there is a need [in EFL contexts] for instruction to focus on pragmatics of the language" (p.179). This paper also hopes to become further argumentation in support of the plethora of research and studies pointing towards the beneficial effects of pragmatic instruction aimed at raising EFL learners' pragmatic awareness. Yet, the motivation behind this paper is the argument that any discussion on pragmatics must involve a further discussion on how social and ideological factors position the target language within a particular community. If pragmatics is about "getting things done" through the use of a language, how people actually use that language must then form the core of pragmatic studies, especially when instruction is the end goal. This is why pragmatic use of a particular language cannot be divorced from the socio-cultural elements which frame that language.

1. Pragmatics: some defining features

Anyone who has experienced pragmatic failure in communication, especially in cross-cultural communication, knows that such failure can negatively influence communication by affecting the interlocutors' emotional state. This is because such failure is very much unlike a grammatical error, which is more often than not overlooked in a naturally occurring conversation. House (2000) points out that an emotional reaction during the communicative process is often the major factor responsible for a deterioration of rapport. It also leads to the mutual attribution of negative personal traits, which in turn complicates further understanding of pragmatic norms of the target language and culture. This argument pervades throughout this paper, forcing the following question to surface: if a grammatical error is less threatening than a pragmatic failure, shouldn't educators be more concerned with the latter?

Good communication is essentially something that happens when speakers understand each other, when meaning isn't lost because of problems involving interpretation of message. To achieve this, interlocutors need more than knowledge of words and grammar. They need pragmatic competence — a central component of Hymes' (1970) communicative competence. Historically, the field of pragmatics — simplified here by Childs (2005) as accomplishing things with language — began "in reaction to the definition of linguistic competence as consisting of mastery of syntax and vocabulary." (p.15) What one speaker means by an utterance and what a hearer understands that speaker to mean is an aspect of communication that goes beyond linguistic competence. Indeed, a poor understanding of the context and the purpose of communication leads to pragmatic failure, which then impede communication. Section 4 will discuss three samples of Japanese EFL learner conversations in English which demonstrate this process. It will show how problems in processing the illocutionary forces of questions can impede the natural flow of communication.

Essentially, pragmatic competence in a language refers to the ability to interpret not just words and sentences, but the intentions and implications that these express. Pragmatics was, for a time, considered to be the third element of language analysis after syntax and semantics. With Austin's *How to do things with words* (1962), the concept of speech act became ever more prominent in the field of language studies. Searle (1969) solidified this concept by establishing the necessary conditions in which speech acts could occur.

A speech act is, according to Austin (1962), comprised of a) a locutionary act (the putting of words and sounds together to create a message), an illocutionary act (the intended meaning created by the message directed at another interlocutor), and c) a perlocutionary act (how this message is received). These highlight the role of comprehension, i.e. listening, in successful communication. Also, whether the speech act is successful or not depends on certain felicity conditions. (Searle, 1969) These are a set of conditions that make a statement meaningfully true. For example, the request "Please, look outside the window" implies that there is first a window to look through, and that there is something outside the window to look at. It also implies that there is another interlocutor present, and that (s)he can see. A particular statement can be successful only when all the felicity conditions are met (thereby supporting its actuality). If one of them is not met, the statement ceases to have illocutionary force. Language use (or speech act) possesses illocutionary force only when it possesses propositional content (the felicity conditions). In other words, speech acts can only be realized through collaboration. One source of pragmatic failure is when one or some of the felicity conditions are not met. Another related source is when an interlocutor fails to successfully interpret the intended meaning of an utterance which is not equivalent to the meaning inferred (later referred to as *implicature*). Section 3 will discuss this condition in more detail.

Austin and Searle's speech act theory portrays the relationship between word and meaning as often indirect, decipherable through an understanding of context, situation, purpose, and other elements which shape communication. The following exchange between two women discussing their children, adapted from Wierzbicka (1991), exemplifies how meaning is indirectly transmitted:

A: How is Tom going at school?

B: Ah, well ... you know what they say: *boys will be boys*.

A: Yeah, but girls are no easier ... you know what Jess did the other day? ...

The expression "*boys will be boys*" is used here to suggest that Tom is being a bad boy. Instead of stating "Tom is being a bad boy", the mother uses an expression to communicate more than one meaning: a) to mitigate the fact that her boy is acting badly, b) to call for some degree of sympathy from another mother, and c) to avoid expanding on a perhaps uncomfortable subject.

This phenomenon is called *implicature* (Grice, 1967), and forms a significant portion of everyday communication. Implicatures are created when one of Grice's 4 maxims of quality (truthfulness), quantity (informativeness), relation (relevance) and manner (clarity) are broken. This can become problematic for second or foreign language learners who might not possess sufficient pragmatic understanding of the target language and culture for rapid interpretation leading to a response. (Lantolf, 1999) Non-native English speakers often follow one of Levinson's (2000) three principles that guide conversational implicatures: the Q-Principle. This principle states that when a speaker chooses a maximally informative expression (that is true) to convey meaning, the listener assumes that the speaker has chosen a maximally informative expression (that is true). This assumption can thus confuse language learners when attempting to interpret messages, leading Pohl (2004) to argue that understanding the pragmatics of everyday communication mainly involves understanding implicatures.

Looking at fundamental structures of communication, Brown and Levinson (1987) sought to uncover universal rules of pragmatics. By extending the concepts of *face*, originating from Durkheim's (1915) and Goffman's (1967), they tried to delineate common threads between cultures and languages. *Face-saving*, according to Goffman (1967) is essentially a process that determines the "traffic rules" of social interactions. The problem here is that these rules are very much dependent on not just cultural but also contextual information.

Pragmatic universals may be of some use to language learners, especially if essentialist views of language use are promoted (e.g., "Japanese is a more polite language than English"). Yet, with the increasing relevance of studies on World Englishes (see Kachru, 1993, for more details), recent pragmatic literature refrains from making sweeping cross-cultural observations in the hope of uncovering fundamental principles of language use. Wierzbicka (1991) argues that certain elements of Grice's and Brown and Levinson's works are ethnocentric, containing a strong "anglo-centric bias", and further cautions against "attempts to formulate language universals at the expense of culture-specifics. One reason is that much of SLA research, including pragmatics research, has been centered on ESL and EFL." (pp.67-68) Terkourafi (2007) adds that,

> "contrary to the original Asian construal of *face*, the scientific term found in the socio-pragmatics literature is characterized by an emphasis on Other's face [...], an emphasis on the individual rather than the group, and an emphasis on saving *face* and the possibility of threatening *face*. Since these features are inherited from Western folk terms, it should not come as a surprise that this scientific term seems ill-fitted to serve the demands of a universalizing principle." (p.321)

With time, the difficulty with universalizing *face* pulled researchers and thinkers away from research on pragmatic universals, and motivated them to think of pragmatics as essentially a study on how language use varies according to context.

A quarter of a century after Brown and Levinson's work, the focus has been recalibrated on the tremendous practical importance of identifying and describing culture and context-specific pragmatic norms, effectively redefining pragmatics as a study of variations in language use. Because pragmatics is aimed at determining what people actually accomplish with language, the quest to find pragmatic universals is, as Wierzbicka (1991) would argue, beside the point. Consequently, cross-cultural pragmatics should be taught through a) analysis of actual language use in context; b) learners analyzing their own language use; and, c) learners forming educated opinions (pragmatic awareness) on how they wish to use the target language. Section 6 will focus on pragmatic instruction.

Borrowing from pragmatic research, Barron (2003) defined pragmatic competence as such:

- knowledge of the linguistic resources available in a given language for realizing particular illocutions;
- knowledge of the sequential aspects of speech acts; and finally,
- knowledge of the appropriate contextual use of the particular languages' linguistic resources. (p.10)

Similarly, Pohl (2004) suggests seven constructs that L2 learners need to become aware of in order to become more pragmatically successful communicators in the target language:

- *mental sets*: a frame of mind involving an existing disposition to think of a problem or a situation in a particular way; e.g. what is the meaning of an offer of coffee after a meal; is it an invitation by the host to stay a little longer or a polite hint to guests that it is time to leave?
- *schemata*: a pre-existing knowledge structure in memory involving a certain pattern of things; e.g. what constitutes an apartment, a holiday, a school, a restaurant etc.
- *scripts*: a pre-existing knowledge structure for interpreting event sequences; e.g. a visit to the doctor, shopping at a supermarket, phoning to make an appointment at a hairdressing salon, etc.
- *speech events*: a set of circumstances in which people interact in some conventional way to arrive at some outcome; eg. how does one make a request, a compliment, express disagreement or a complaint etc.?
- *sociocultural norms*: these determine culturally appropriate paralinguistics, phatic utterances, opening/closings, turn-taking, the use of silence, etc.
- *linguistic etiquette*: determined by factors such as relative social distance between interlocutors, social power or authority, the degree of imposition associated with a given request or other face-threatening act, etc.
- *pragmatic accent*: aspects of a person's talk which indicate what (s)he assumes is communicated without being said.

According to this scheme, developing pragmatic competence in the target language requires some sort of working knowledge of these seven areas. In Section 4, three of Pohl's seven constructs will be used.

Pragmatic instruction should not limit itself to a study of speech act only (as it is often understood), but also emphasize the following pragmatic features: implicatures, formulaic routines, politeness, nonverbal behavior, back-channeling, dialect and language variation, discourse markers, levels of directness, metapragmatics, phatic expressions, pre-sequences, prosodic features, register, and turn-taking among others.

This section reviewed some concepts central to pragmatic studies. It argued that, while pragmatic universals may be insightful to some learners, attention should instead be paid to the contextual elements that shape communication. The underlying assumption here is that, for a pragmatic teaching approach to yield the best results, it should emphasize raising learners' awareness of pragmatic phenomena as they shape communication, instead of teaching pragmatic "rules" in much the same way grammar rules are taught. After all, presenting pragmatic norms as "rules" may be presumptuous, and also limit learners' sense of freedom and agency in using the target language.

2. Contrastive Pragmatics

In order for EFL learners to avoid cross-cultural pragmatic failures, they need to develop pragmatic awareness. This can be achieved by observing how pragmatic notions vary cross-culturally. For this, it is useful to contrast L1 and L2 use. However, some caution is needed here, for observations in contrastive pragmatics can be overly magnified. As it will be argued later, the Japanese EFL context is victim to ideological constructs which tends to position the Japanese language and culture as somehow opposed to English and western thought. It is common for some to think of Japanese and western communication styles as oppositional: western communication being based on camaraderie and Japanese communication on deference. But a simple glance at everyday communication between two Japanese interlocutors in their L1, for example, can help dispel this assumption: not all communication in Japan is based on deference. In fact, one can easily find examples of both Japanese communication and western communication that share more similarities than differences. This reiterates the argument that essentialist views on language use can impede the development of interlanguage pragmatic awareness.

In effect, no particular language can be said to be more "polite", more pragmatically "refined" or pragmatically "intense" than another. Saying, for example, that the use of *yoroshiku onegaitashimasu* (perhaps difficult to translate in English verbatim) effectively positions the Japanese language and culture as more formal and polite than English is based on a misconception of politeness. It should even raise some eyebrows as to the intentions behind such claim. Kristiansen and Geeraerts (2007) question this essentialist approach to contrastive pragmatics in a two-fold rebuke:

1. even if there is no literal translation [for certain expressions found in a language], does that really mean that [other] languages do not possess the same or similar concepts? Idiomatic expressions, stock phrases, metaphors and lexemes, even syntactic variants are resources which speakers can, and do readily draw on in order to evoke a given concept. Is it legitimate to focus on one type of expression only [...]?
2. how frequent does a word have to be in order to be characteristic of

a given culture? To what extent does frequency of occurrence of a lexical item reflect the "central values of a given culture" at all? How, in other words, do we establish cultural centrality on the basis of a lexical analysis? (p. 262)

A common misconception among Japanese EFL learners is that, because their L1 emphasizes formulaic politeness (polite forms being literally encoded in verb endings), then the language is *de facto* more polite than English, which does not follow the same strategies. A contrastive pragmatic approach to language use questions the reasons behind such assumptions. It argues, for example, that politeness is an entirely negotiated communicative phenomenon. As such, while formulaic routines can be useful in expressing politeness, they do not ensure it. Being "polite", as Bourdieu (1991) would argue, is having "a feel for the game". Such "feel" cannot be simply encapsulated in formulaic routines: it has to be negotiated within context, as communication unfolds. What is important to remember here is that pragmatics is concerned with variations in language use. The kind of information revealed by a non-essentialist pragmatic analysis helps language learners contrast various ways the L2 can be used in different contexts and situations, thus paving the way for pragmatic awareness.

In the same vein, Japanese EFL learners should not overlook intra-language pragmatic variations. There is always a danger in viewing a language as a monolith, originating from one single culture. This is especially true in the case of English, where the vast majority of speakers do not come from countries of the inner circle. According to writers such as Pennycook, Canagarajah and Kachru (in Kachru, 1992), as English is increasingly used as the world's *lingua franca*, it is simultaneously appropriated by speakers and used in ways that reflect local norms and customs. Thus, English can no longer be considered a product of the western world, and its use regulated by western pragmatic norms of communication. Moreover, non-native English speakers nowadays do not always use the language when speaking with native speakers. Grundy (2007) states that,

> "with regard to numbers of interactions, it is routinely held that in 80% of the interactions in English involving a second language user, the interlocutor is also a speaker of English as a second language. [...] the international status of the language means that a vast number of non-native speakers (NNS) routinely interact with other NNS." (p.239)

Considering English's role as the world's *lingua franca*, its use can therefore only be understood through the plurality of cultures and people that actually use it. Spencer-Oatey (2000) observes that,

> "the culture of a group is inextricably linked with the regularities that occur within the group and that help bind the members together as a group. However, this does not mean [...] that a given social group necessarily has to manifest regularities in each of the elements listed above in order for it to be regarded as having its own culture." (p.339-341)

In other words, an English speaker (native or non-native) has the choice of either following western communicative strategies or following other strategies as well. In foreign language learning, this means that native speakers' (NS) norms should not form the only reference for appropriate use of the target language. Non-native speakers of the language do bring their own cultural baggage, which then influences the way they choose to use the target language. This understanding is central to a sensitive approach to pragmatic instruction, and will be discussed later in Section 10.

Coming back to the initial argument of this section, it is nevertheless important to survey some language-specific pragmatic notions pertaining to both Japanese and English, even if it entails venturing into some overgeneralizations. The following example of cross-cultural pragmatic failure between a Japanese-English speaker and a native English speaker involving an expression of gratitude, adapted from Richards and Sukwiwat (1983), demonstrates how such failure can be produced despite the absence of grammatical error:

NS: Look what I've got for you! (a gift)
JES: Oh! I'm sorry.
NS: Why sorry? (p.116)

Here, both interlocutors have diverging conceptions of politeness. Most Westerners might have judged 'Thank you', or 'Oh, you shouldn't have.' as more pragmatically appropriate replies. But in Japanese, 'Thank you' as an expression of gratitude does not always sound sincere enough. Kawate-Mierzejewska (2005) claims that Japanese people are more concerned with maintaining *face* over the course of a relationship more than in immediate situation, while western English speakers wish to maintain *face* during the communicative exchange rather than over time. Linguists such as Matsumoto, Ide, and Mao, all cited in Spencer Oatey (2000), explain this cultural contrast by claiming *social identity* as a crucial element of both Japanese and Chinese societies.

The example above involved the speech act of thanking, or expressing gratitude. Similarly, commenting on Japanese EFL learners' performance of refusals in English, Kondo (2008) points out that,

> "the Japanese preference for the expression 'I'm sorry' is meant to maintain harmony with an interlocutor by humbling themselves. Japanese prefer this humble approach rather than taking a rational explanatory approach to restore the relationship with an interlocutor. [...] Japanese give formulaic non-specific reasons in refusals [...] this tendency is transferred when they are speaking English." (p.169)

This strategy of humbling oneself is, for the Japanese, applicable to various communicative contexts. When refusing, thanking, disagreeing, or requesting, for example, a Japanese speaker easily resorts to such strategy. Understanding this process can become valuable information for such speaker when engaged in Japanese-English contrastive pragmatic analysis.

The area of politeness is one where negative evaluation of others' communicative behavior often leads to pragmatic failure. Robin Lakoff (1973) suggests three rules of politeness: don't impose; give options; make the other person feel good, be friendly. Yet again, people have personal beliefs — often forged by local cultural norms — about what constitutes polite behavior. They are also very quick at evaluating such behavior in others. Such norms are forged by personal, historical and sociocultural developments, making them highly marked processes. What is polite in one culture may not be polite in another. Likewise, what is considered polite by some may not be considered polite by others. This shows how pragmatic failures can initiate negative evaluation of others, and to a deterioration of rapports. In such case, it is difficult to ask the question *who is being impolite?* A better question is *why is a certain behavior considered impolite by some?*

Leech (1983) formulated six politeness maxims:

1. *tact*: a) minimize cost to other, and b) maximize benefit to other
2. *generosity*: a) minimize benefit to self, and b) maximize cost to self
3. *approbation*: a) minimize dispraise of other, and b) maximize praise of other
4. *modesty*: a) minimize praise of self, and b) maximize dispraise of self
5. *agreement*: a) minimize disagreement between self and other, and b) maximize agreement between self and other
6. *sympathy*: a) minimize antipathy between self and other, and b) maximize sympathy between self and other. (p.137)

In the Richard and Sukwiwat (1983) conversation example above, what guides the JES (despite the high probability that both speakers know each other) is the Modesty maxim. He is using *negative face*: he doesn't want to be imposed upon, and therefore doesn't want to impose.

There are many other language-specific pragmatic norms that can be brought to EFL learners' attention. Dufon (2008) points out that, "Japanese culture places a high value on form and outward appearance.

This value is evident in pragmatic routines as well as other aspects of the culture." (p.33) Another specificity of Japanese language use concerns turn-taking strategies. Japanese speakers can remain silent for a longer stretch of time than what most English speakers may deem appropriate. For the Japanese, the strategy of silence is not always to opt out of a conversation, but often to take time to reflect on an issue, or to position themselves in such a way as to avoid face-threatening acts head-on. They also tend to avoid interrupting others, unless the element of power is especially marked. In Western cultures, on the other hand, hierarchical relationships — while very much prevalent — tend to be masked by a preference for more symmetrical discourse structures.

Yet, solidarity politeness is not the exclusive domain of western pragmatics. Japanese people will often use self-depreciating formulaic language to empower the other person, and since both interlocutors are expected to do the same, a sense of solidarity is emphasized. Ironically, extensive use of such formulaic politeness strategies often gives the impression that Japanese communication does strive towards symmetrical discourse.

Bridging this discussion with the core subject of this paper, it must be stated, however, that little research has been done on how Japanese high school EFL learners negotiate politeness in both Japanese and English. We can assume, to some extent, that these learners juggle often paradoxical notions of language use. They might at times, use self-depreciating language to empower the other person. But then again, they might aim for a more symmetrical discourse structure on other occasions. Sometimes a rule may apply, but not always. Here again, one must refrain from relying on overgeneralizations.

As such, a study of actual, real life, contextualized language use becomes imperative. But with limited chances to use the target language outside the classroom, figuring out target language pragmatic norms can be a daunting task for many Japanese EFL learners. Nevertheless, as long as essentialist interpretations of language use can be labeled and then avoided, pragmatic instruction can significantly improve learners' chances for mastery of L2 use. It can also be an important motivating factor in language learning.

This section has argued that, in contrastive pragmatics, learners and teachers should refrain from making essentialist observations in regard to language use. This argument will surface again in Section 8. As such, NS norms should not form the only reference for appropriate use of the target language. But at the same time, contrasting the L1 with the L2 (which does include an analysis of NS use) can reveal vital information to language learners.

3. Pragmatic failures

What actually happens when a pragmatic failure occurs? As argued earlier, failures often occur when the felicity conditions (Austin, 1962) are violated. They also occur when implicatures are misinterpreted. In this sense, a pragmatic failure can be understood as the product of an inability to fully comprehend the intention behind an utterance, which may originate in a lack of awareness of target language and cultural norms. Thomas (1983) defines pragmatic failure as "the inability to understand 'what is meant by what is said'". (p.91)

Riley (1989) provides another perspective: "Pragmatic errors are the result of an interactant imposing the social rules of one culture on his communicative behavior in a situation where the social rules of another culture would be more appropriate" (p.234). A failure may also be rooted in a certain disregard of contextual information. This can be either intentional or unintentional. In the Japanese EFL context, a learner' pragmatic failure may not be solely rooted in a lack of pragmatic awareness or competence, but perhaps in an ideological structure which, according to Riley (1989), pushes one to impose a certain social rule when another would be more appropriate.

Thomas (1983) and Riley's (1989) explanations underscore the need to make an important contrast between pragmatic "failure" and "error". Errors can usually be explained by means of prescriptive rules, as in grammatical errors. They are violations of established rules that can be learned or forgotten. But a pragmatic failure is not always so discernable, and a straightforward solution not always available. It is true that the pragmatic force of an utterance can be judged inappropriate in a specific context. As such, pragmatic failures can be explained. But that does not qualify them as "errors", in the sense that they break hard-and-fast rules. In fact, unlike grammatical errors, which are most likely unintentional, pragmatic failures can be intended. For example, when someone resists certain aspects of the target culture (resistance, being an important aspect of L2 learning), or when someone wishes to express discontent with someone or something, they might either violate, opt out, flout, or clash against Grice's (1967) 4 maxims. This, as stated earlier, constitute an implicature. It is important, then, not to think of such communicative moves as failures *per se*. Again, in pragmatics, the interlocutors' intentions must always be considered when evaluating the success or failure of a communicative act.

When addressing pragmatic failures in the classroom, a further distinction needs to be made between two types of pragmatic failures: pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic. A pragmalinguistic failure involves a mismatch between the pragmatic force of an utterance and that normally assigned to it by the speaker. A sociopragmatic failure, however, comes from diverging assumptions of what polite or appropriate communicative behavior is believed to be. Developing pragmatic awareness is not an obvious task for language learners, especially if they have been focusing on the study of language forms for too long. To avoid further confusion, it is important for learners to analyze language use by considering the differences between these two types of pragmatic failures.

Kasper (1996) explains that pragmatic awareness can develop if three conditions are met: "There must be pertinent input, the input has to be noticed, and learners need ample opportunities to develop a high level of control." (p.148) Tagashira, Yamato and Isoda (2011) add that, "the learner has to notice the pragmatic information in the input and understand its function in the surrounding context (i.e., pragmatic awareness)." (p.6-7) In other words, if input cannot be noticed, there is very little chance for development of pragmatic awareness. Schmidt's (1993) Noticing Hypothesis, referred to here by Kasper and Tagashira, Yamato and Isoda, is very much relevant to an understanding of the development of pragmatic awareness.

Advanced linguistic knowledge in the target language does not always correlate with advanced pragmatic knowledge. For that to happen, learners' attention must be brought specifically towards pragmatic elements that guide target language use. The study by Tagashira, Yamato and Isoda (2011) leads them to the conclusion that,

> "learners who are motivated to attain a good command of the target language [...] 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. In contrast, learners who are not willing to expend effort on learning the language [...] will avoid deep analysis and take on a superficial processing." (p.20)

In short, a high degree of motivation to learn the target language for actual use (not just for exam purposes), and not necessarily a high level of linguistic knowledge, seems to determine if learners are going to notice pragmatic information in the first place, and consequently if this noticing can then translate into pragmatic awareness.

This section surveyed some concepts related to pragmatic failures, contrasted errors against failures, and distinguished two types of failures. It also discussed the need for learners to notice pragmatic information, and how this can lead to the development of pragmatic awareness. The next section includes samples of pragmatic failures from interviews and in-class role-play performances in the target language.

4. Samples of pragmatic failures

This section attempts to exemplify, in a very limited way, actual

Japanese EFL learners' pragmatic failures produced while using the target language in communicative situations. It includes three samples of actual conversations in English, two of which are in a classroom setting. They were all videotaped by the author. Each sample is a short segment of a longer stretch of conversation. Each failure will be analyzed, following three of Pohl's (2004) seven constructs (see Section 1): speech events, sociocultural norms, and pragmatic accent. It will be argued that such failures occur frequently in Japanese EFL classrooms because of the recurrent use of simplistic communicative activities based on question/answer patterns, which are attempts at reducing genuine communication to simple exchanges of information that have no apparent genuine communicative purposes. This further magnifies the gap between classroom language learning and actual language use.

The following rules of transcription have been observed: backchannels and other conversation management strategies occurring while the other speaker is speaking are included using slash marks. Punctuation and capital letters have been omitted (except for the first person singular pronoun "I"). Periods indicate sudden stops, three periods indicate longer pauses, italics indicate emphasis or longer-than-usual stress pattern, columns indicate stretching out word-final sound, and question marks indicate rising tone. Non-verbal cues are included in parenthesis.

Sample 1: a proficient Japanese high school EFL student, on her EFL learning experience

The following sample is a segment of an interview conducted by the author and a proficient Japanese third year high school EFL students (JHS) studying at a private school. The questions were aimed at eliciting various responses from the student about her language learning experience and the role of English in shaping her future. The interview lasted a little over one hour. This sample occurred approximately one third through.

Interviewer:	next year you are going to go to a different university. euh: you were mentioning before that your university doesn't have...euh: very strong english department and everything like this. euh: can you talk a little bit about what's going to happen to you next year in terms of english?
JHS:	to you?
Interviewer:	Yeah. like...yeah. How are you going to maintain your english how are you going to euh speak English /ah:/ how are you
JHS:	that is the trouble /uh/ that is a big problem for me

This sample involves a problem with interpreting pragmatic accent (assumption about what is communicated without being said), which originates in a problematic linguistic interpretation of speech event (how does one make a request for further information). The question "Can you talk a little bit about what's going to happen to you next year in terms of English" establishes a specific genre of speculative storytelling, and as such it is meant for public consumption. Hence her question "To you?" seems to be appropriate at first glance. But in fact, this reply is inappropriate almost midway through the interview, since there are no other interlocutors present, and that the reply would obviously have to be directed at the interviewer. Moreover, the interviewee had, until that point, been engaged in self-reflective story telling all along.

Consequently, the pragmatic failure is rooted in a problem with pragmalinguistic awareness. More specifically, it originates from a misinterpretation of the illocutionary force of the interviewer's request "Can you talk a little bit about what's going to happen to you next year in terms of English". The failure occurs because the JHS did not perceive *Can you* as a request but rather as a question about her ability to perform a specific action, as in "Can you do *such and such*". Only when the interviewer rephrases the request as "How are you going to maintain your English" does the JHS interpret the question as an actual request for further information. The interjection "Ah" indicates that shift. This is not triggered by herself but rather by the interviewer's rephrasing of the question.

The particular shape of interview conversations can help uncover the roots of this problem. In interviews, power is distributed unequally. The interviewer has control over what is being communicated, while the interviewee needs to respond to such cues. In the Japanese EFL context — especially in the way questions are used as fact or knowledge checks in the English language classroom — an answer is often understood as having only truth value (referring to facts or to accurate knowledge, expressed in a grammatically accurate manner), intensifying the lack of power balance. Questions are rarely seen as ways to elicit narratives. As a result, a learner will try to shape her/his answer in a way that ensures truth value, while remaining focused on the grammaticality of the answer.

This perception also originates from Japanese ideological assumptions regarding cross-cultural communication in English. These assumptions position the native English speaker as both model and authority for target language use. In Sample 1, it is not just the interviewer but the native speaker who controls the means of communication. While this sample does not demonstrate such phenomenon extensively, it is important to specify that, as the JHS tried to deal with pragmatic gaps throughout the interview, she could not always transcend the perception that her language skills were somehow being assessed by a more "legitimate" speaker. Even though questions from the interviewer were meant to elicit a self-narrative, the student often perceived them as checks. This pressure had a significant impact on how the interview unfolded. In short, because she could not always move beyond language ideology, the JHS never fully engaged in self-narrative.

Sample 1 is from an interview between the author and a proficient Japanese high school English speaker. Therefore, it can be said to involve pragmatic failures of cross-cultural nature. Due to the highly structured nature of interviews, chances to find pragmatic failures were limited. When a failure was detected in the interview, it generally involved the adjustment of perlocutionary force to illocutionary force of questions from the interviewer, and as such could be categorized as a problem involving the interpretation of pragmatic accent. This underlines two arguments made earlier: 1) pragmatic failure occur even if the NNS is proficient in the target language, and 2) the role of comprehension, or listening, in speech act rendition is fundamental.

The following two samples are segments of in-class role-play performances by four proficient Japanese high school EFL students at a private school, videotaped by the author (who was not a participant). Before role-plays were performed, the two interlocutors in each conversation were given a general conversation topic and were allowed eight minutes to rehearse a two-minute long conversation. This did not leave them enough time to choose all necessary vocabulary and polish their grammar before the performance. It only gave them enough time to ensure some degree of flow and continuity. It is believed that adding time pressure in the planning stage can yield more instances of genuine JHS pragmatic failures during the performance stage.

Sample 2: role-play between two proficient Japanese high school EFL students on the subject of receiving allowances from parents

JHS 1:	so (name) when we were in elementary school did you get an allowance
JHS 2:	uh yeah I I didn't...get any allowance when I was little
JHS 1:	oh really /yeah/ so:...uh how did you get something you want when you: went out with your friends
JHS 2:	uh when you...when I was go to odori or playing with my friends I asked my parents to give some money
JHS 1:	/1 seconds/ [Japanese back-channel *so*]:...
JHS 2:	/3 seconds/ uh and so how about you
JHS 1:	oh...when I was in elementary school uh: I got an allowance but it's a few allowance mmh yeah
JHS 2:	just for: book or: stationery or something like that

This sample shows that the question/answer segment which initiated the conversation was the most thoroughly rehearsed part of the performance. But the subsequent utterances become less organized and more tentative. The pragmatic failure occurs after the response "When I was go to Odori or playing with my friends I asked my parents to give some money." At that point, JHS 1 fails to maintain the flow of communication. Moreover, she switches code. The extended "So..." is a Japanese back-channel. As such, it shows a lack of understanding of sociocultural norms (culturally appropriate turn-taking strategies and use of silence).

A common reply to the response "When I was go to Odori or playing with my friends I asked my parents to give some money" may have been "Oh, you are lucky", or "So do my parents". These would have embodied a push towards communicative collaboration. But after a while, JHS 2 is forced to ask "How about you" to ensure that the conversation flow is maintained. In other words, JHS 1 opts out of the Cooperative Principle (Grice 1967).

Such failures are common for Japanese EFL students, even in rehearsed role-plays. They seem to have trouble with turn-taking and general conversation management strategies when using the target language. One explanation is that the overemphasis on question/answer patterns during EFL classroom speaking activities seems to create an expectation in learners that, if communication in the target language is to occur at all, an initial question is required. Also, once an answer has been provided, this type of instruction fails to teach learners how to pursue a conversation naturally and smoothly. This is related to a problem with L2 sociopragmatic awareness. Section 6 will discuss ways to avoid the use of simplistic speaking activities in the EFL classroom.

Sample 3: role-play between two proficient Japanese high school EFL students on the subject of books

JHS 1:	yes...I think I should start uh I I should start read books but...I don't know how to choose the book I want to read
JHS 2:	uh I read...mmh some novels in...the library at this school I think...reading book...I can learn many vocabularies... especially *kanji*
JHS 1:	(gestures in approval) /5 seconds/ yeah /so/ yes so if you have time please tell me...mmh...some some good books please
JHS 2:	mmh ok
JHS 1:	thank you

The five second silence produced by JHS 1 exemplifies a problem with using conversation management strategies to sustain communication flow. Hence, this is another problem with understanding socio-cultural norms. Except for the token approval gesture, no response is given to the thought that reading can help with *kanji* knowledge. Again here, JHS 1 chooses to opt out of the Cooperative Principle.

The three samples above may appear as mere routine interlanguage difficulties. Some might even wonder if these problems actually constitute pragmatic failures. This paper argues that they do. These common types of Japanese EFL learner errors are not simple lapses during conversational exchanges: they have wider implications. Pragmatic failures, as discussed earlier, occur when interlocutors get the wrong message, or fail to interpret the intended message. This actually includes two interlocutors failing to achieve speech act rendition because the illocutionary force of a question is insufficient to impact subsequent utterances. In conversations, utterances have an impact upon one another, creating a "chain of meaning" essential for communication. For example, if an interlocutor asks "How was your weekend?" and the other interlocutor responds "I had a good time at the beach", an immediate reaction to such statement is needed to ensure that meaning has been communicated and interpreted. This reaction indicates that the previous utterance has had an effect upon the thrust of the communicative act. As such, the person who heard the "I had a good time at the beach" statement might reply "Oh, that's great. I haven't been there in a while". This creates a necessary platform from which meaning can then be explored and constructed collaboratively. Otherwise, if by asking a question, an interlocutor doesn't feel the need to react to the answer in any way, it is hard to measure the force of such exchange, and thus difficult to qualify such use of question/answer pattern as genuine speech act rendition. A question which lacks illocutionary force is often colloquially referred to as an inane question.

In short, resorting to simple question/answer patterns (the ubiquitous "interview your partner" exercise) in an attempt to recreate genuine communication in the target language can affect learners' perception of communication in the target language. Ultimately, such oversimplifications of communicative acts can lead to a negative evaluation of communicative tasks in the language classroom.

Negative interpretations of speakers and tasks can also occur when one of Pohl's (2004) seven constructs for pragmatically successful communication in the target language are broken. These can create the conditions in which emotional reactions lead to deterioration of rapport and mutual attribution of negative personal traits, as described by House (2000). The samples above come from an educational setting where both language teachers and learners are constantly involved in an observation of language form and meaning. Therefore, negative evaluations do not necessarily surface when failures do. In schools, learners are expected to make mistakes when using the L2. This, perhaps, marks the most significant gap between real-life, day-to-day communication and target language use in the classroom.

It is possible that the pragmatic failures exemplified in samples 2 and 3 above were the result of negative perceptions of the language task itself. Students may have felt that having to perform a short conversation on an assigned topic without much preparation, while being videotaped, was an 'acting' task as opposed to a genuine task involving real exchanges of meaning. They may have felt tired that day, and consequently not really interested in performing to the best of their language ability. As a result, this emotional state, or problem with perception of the task, may have affected speech act rendition. Students are very much aware that the language classroom is a language laboratory where communicative experiments can be made, and where failures do not have the same implications as in communicative contexts outside the classroom. Hence, more samples of JESs' real-life communicative exchanges are necessary to measure the effects of current teaching methodologies in the Japanese EFL context onto actual target language use. These would likely reveal learners' limited understanding of L2 pragmatic norms, and thus point towards the need for explicit pragmatic instruction.

Coming back to the failures discussed above, because such failures are so common, it is important to teach learners some communication management strategies. These include: speech act rendition, formulaic routines, nonverbal behavior, back-channeling, discourse markers, phatic expressions, pre-sequences, prosodic features, and turn-taking. For that, a metapragmatic language needs to permeate classroom talk. The use of such metalanguage would form the heart of explicit pragmatic instruction.

An explicit pragmatic teaching approach would contrast interviews with natural conversations, and have students determine how various pragmatic strategies are employed. Then, further role-playing could help solidify this awareness into procedural knowledge. Section 6 will specifically deal with various pragmatic teaching techniques. The next section will discuss the current EFL context in Japan and the benefits of pragmatic teaching to learners' development of communicative competence in the target language.

5. The need for pragmatic instruction in the Japanese EFL context

Since Canale and Swain's (1980) three-component framework for communicative competence — including grammatical competence, strategic competence and sociolinguistic competence — is no longer debated and has become an established reality within SLA theory, arguing for the necessity to include pragmatic teaching in second and foreign language pedagogy is almost a truism. Yet, surprisingly enough, in the Japanese EFL context, it has yet to form an operative portion of EFL methodology. As it will be argued in Section 7, this shortcoming is not due to lack of knowledge but is instead largely a product of the language ideology that pervades throughout the system.

A central argument of this paper is that the Japanese EFL context must integrate some form of sensitization of learners to the variety of socially accepted patterns in the target language. This can help them interpret speech acts, especially indirect illocutionary acts, more readily. Eslami and Noora's (2008), in their research on pragmatic development of request strategies by Persian learners, have found that there is,

> "a need to help [EFL] learners to develop awareness and sensitivity for their own second language use [...] Therefore, the responsibility of language educators is to remind learners that in order to communicate effectively and successfully in a second language, as they would in their native language, acquiring grammatical knowledge alone is not sufficient; rather learners may also have to acquire and practice different sets of sociolinguistic rules by studying and paying attention to what is considered to be generally appropriate in the target culture." (p.326)

This instruction should include specifications on how English is used in various contexts to achieve various purposes, and also on English language variations. As mentioned earlier, one approach to analyzing L2 use is to contrast interviews with natural speech, and help learners realize that information in the target language is not conveyed solely through the use of question/answer patterns, but rather through "self-talk" and comments. In fact, when Japanese EFL learners are actually analyzing real-life conversations in the L2, they are often surprised to see the rarity of straightforward questioning. Thus, sensitizing learners to the variety of socially accepted patterns in the target language will also help them address some of the stereotypical views they may have towards target language use. This would include developing an awareness that communicating in the L2 does not necessarily mean chaining a series of questions one after another.

Martínez-Flor and Alcón Soler (2007) argue, along with many other researchers (Jeon & Kaya, 2006; Olshtain & Cohen, 1990; Rose, 2005; Safont, 2005; Wildner-Bassett, 1984, 1986; Rose & Kasper, 2001; all cited in Martínez-Flor and Alcón Soler, 2007) that pragmatic instruction is both necessary and effective. (p.49) They add that, "explicit and deductive instruction is more effective for pragmatic learning than implicit and inductive teaching." (*ibid*) Explicit teaching involves bringing learners to focus on the target forms so as to develop an awareness of how they are used. In contrast, implicit teaching is about raising awareness while avoiding metalinguistic explanations so as not to complicate the learning process and to ensure that the flow of communication is not interrupted. Takahashi (2001) argues that implicit instructional approaches are not always as effective as explicit approaches in the Japanese context. However, this distinction has yet to be clearly delineated. For the time being, considering that pragmatic instruction of any kind rarely forms any part of day-to-day Japanese EFL pedagogical practices, one can assume that both explicit and implicit approaches can yield positive results.

The point is that, as the samples in the previous section showed, pragmatic competence is not something that develops naturally with the expansion of linguistic knowledge. Even proficient Japanese EFL learners face problems with interpreting implicatures and using conversation management techniques. Also, because Japanese EFL instruction rarely emphasizes speech act rendition, learners often fail to both generate and recognize illocutionary and perlocutionary forces of speech acts. Thus, pragmatics should be brought to the forefront of language teaching through both explicit and implicit teaching methodologies.

Now that the argument in support of explicit pragmatic teaching has been made, it is important to specify what content should form such instruction. Much of language use is composed of formulaic routines that follow socially accepted references. Those are multi-word collocations which are stored and retrieved holistically rather than generated as "unique creations" with each use. Collocations, fixed expressions, lexical metaphors, idioms and situation-bound utterances are examples of formulaic language.

The problem with this type of language production, especially as it applies to cross-cultural communication in English, is that it requires some kind of common understanding of cultural frames of reference, which is not always available. (see Lantolf, 1999) Also, everyone has a unique world view. Meaning does not come from linguistic forms alone but from interlocutors' interpretation of utterances. As such, L2 speakers have their own intended meaning as well. The following example of pragmatic failure involving a formulaic expression, taken from Kecskes (2007), demonstrates how this can impede communication:

Chinese student: I think Peter drank a bit too much at the party yesterday.

Turkish student: Eh, <u>tell me about it</u>. He always drinks much.

Chinese student: When we arrived he drank beer. Then Mary brought him some vodka. Later he drank some wine. Oh, too

much.
Turkish student: Why are you telling me this? I was there.
Chinese student: Yes, but you told me to tell you about it. (p.191)

"Tell me about it" is a formulaic expression that, even if phrased as a request, is meant to express mutual understanding and solidarity between interlocutors. But in this case, the perlocutionary force fails because it is processed as a request for more information. Grundy (2007) argues that,

> "viewed as a principle of economy, the goal of language evolution is to have many times more meanings than utterances, with the very obvious consequence that the recovery of meaning has to depend on pragmatic strengthening. As uses of language become less indexical, they become more economical in the sense that they permit an ever increasing number of interpretations. Linguistic formulas are relevant, not because they are indexical and convey some message equally recoverable from the coincident context, but as a result of the addressee's ability to supply a complementary context, or array of such contexts." (p.223)

The use of formulaic language, supplemented with contextual information, is aimed at both simplifying language use and magnifying possibilities for meaning. But misusing or misunderstanding such language features can actually lead to opposite results. Teaching target language formulas is highly beneficial because they are a rich source of pragmatic and cultural knowledge. They also help learners define target language use.

Of course, as mentioned earlier, the use of polite formulaic routines does not ensure politeness. This means that memorizing formulaic language is not always a sure way to be pragmatically appropriate. The main objective in teaching formulaic routines (collocations, fixed expressions, lexical metaphors, idioms, etc.), just like in teaching vocabulary, is to allow learners to understand where, when and how these are used, and what they can achieve in real communication. In other words, this type of teaching should be functionally-oriented. As Butt et als. (2003) argue, "when we first operate in a second language we may know the words but not the appropriate contexts; we really only understand other speakers when we share, not only words and grammar but also *which* words and *which* grammatical choice are appropriate for a situation." (p.14) Teaching formulaic routines must involve an analysis of how these are actually used in context.

The speech act of greeting also offers many opportunities to effectively teach formulaic language. It is crucial for EFL learners to know how to perform a greeting successfully in the L2, and all EFL curricula should prioritize such instruction. Greetings initiate conversations. They, in effect, establish the rules by which communication is to unfold subsequently.

In greetings, contextual information is especially salient. As such, we should question the ubiquity of the routine "Hi. How are you? I'm fine, thank you. And you? I'm fine, too" in Japanese EFL classrooms. This greeting pattern, used at the beginning of most EFL classes at pre-university levels, in fact occurs very rarely in natural speech. This type of greeting is used not to reinforce target language use for actual greeting purposes, but instead to follow a culturally-marked Japanese classroom opening sequence. The unfortunate result is that Japanese EFL learners follow this routine in most situations in and outside the classroom, thinking that this is how greetings are done in English. But a rapid glance at corpus data and video samples of actual speech reveals the scarcity of its use. The formula "Hey+name" — just to mention one — is exponentially more common. Therefore, formulaic routine instruction must first select routines on the basis of frequency in natural speech, and always consider contextual information.

The speech act of requesting is another rich source of formulaic language. It is one of the most challenging acts for EFL learners to perform, and one which has fortunately benefitted from the largest body of pragmatic research. Part of the task of teaching requests in the L2 — how to initiate, express, and close request acts — can be achieved by bringing relevant formulaic routines to the forefront, such as "Sorry to ask you this, but...", "Would it be possible if...", "No problem", and "My pleasure".

Of course, a request act is not entirely shaped by pre-determined, socially accepted formulaic expressions alone. In developing skills for speech act rendition, learners should develop the ability to frame formulas with unique language generated "on the spot", the kind of language that requires some level of grammar understanding. They should know that, in performing a request act, it is common to:

1) open the conversation with an appropriate greeting which sets the mood;
2) check if the other person is ready for the request;
3) provide background information before the phrasing of the request;

4) make the request within the appropriate level of directness;
5) give a reason for making the request;
6) apologize for the imposition placed by the request; and finally,
7) thank the person, whether the request was granted or not.

Once these steps have become easier to perform, and learners have been able to use formulaic expressions, the teacher can then introduce new contextual information, so that learners can observe how language changes as a result, how different formulas are employed as a consequence of such changes, and then learn to become comfortable in performing requests in various contexts. All the while, learners should be aware that each of these steps could potentially be interrupted for various reasons. They should then be taught to respond to such interruptions in appropriate ways.

Unfortunately, requests remain a grey area for Japanese EFL learners. Tanaka (1988, in Woodfield 2008) reports that learners tend to maintain stereotypical views of the target language when it comes to requests. She found that Japanese learners performed requests within inappropriate levels of directness. In other words, the students she observed believed that direct requests are appropriate in the L2 in any situation because English has been presented to them as prizing directness over indirectness.

This means that the teaching of request formulas (and speech acts in general) has traditionally been limited to a handful of expressions, taught without consideration for contextual information. In her research, Locastro (1997, in Woodfield 2008) found that Japanese high school English language teaching materials "not only provide little appropriate exposure to politeness for the adolescent learners, but also, due to the focus on the development of linguistic competence, forms or patterns are presented without any attention to their communicative function." (p.254)

As it was demonstrated in the analysis of language samples earlier (albeit minimally), an overemphasis on question/answer patterns in Japanese EFL language classroom speaking activities has limited the development of genuine L2 pragmatic competence. This practice robs target language use of its authenticity because communicative objectives are ill-stated. Except for the creation of superficial exchanges of information that rarely lead to genuine communication of ideas, such activities have little value. This can result in a simulation of communication, or a "parody" of language use. In effect, learners most often fail to perceive such exercises as purpose-driven communicative acts. Gradually, they begin to see target language use as "acting up". This perception can be a great impediment to the development of pragmatic competence.

So how can students attempt to approach native-like target language use? The following section deals with methodologies that introduce in-class L2 use as genuine communication. The aim is that the development of pragmatic awareness — and ultimately pragmatic competence — in the L2 can be facilitated. It will also present task-based language teaching as one of the ideal pedagogical approaches for both explicit and implicit pragmatic teaching.

6. Pragmatic teaching methodologies

Pragmatic instruction should not be aimed solely at serving advanced and proficient EFL students' L2 learning. Nor, should it be a complementary pedagogical approach. As Childs (2005) argues,

> "pragmatics is not an optional add-on. It is a necessary facet of language and of language learning. That is because the whole point is no longer grammatical form but communication of meaning, and that is based on situations. The emphasis is on appropriate patterns, whether they are grammatical or not." (p.23)

While this argument highlights the importance of teaching pragmatics in the language classroom, it does not denigrate the importance of grammar knowledge in communicative competence. When dealing with potential pragmatic failures, a combination of grammar knowledge and pragmatic awareness creates the necessary conditions in which strategies for repair can be deployed. As learners notice pragmatic gaps, they should be able to access both grammar knowledge and pragmatic awareness to see if appropriate interpretation of meaning can be restored.

Language learners need to perform key speech acts when they enter the language classroom: greeting the teacher, chatting with classmates, responding to instruction, questioning the input ("why do people use that expression?"), verifying understanding ("what is this?"), clarifying ("Can you repeat that again?" / "I don't understand"), etc. The day-to-day language of the classroom can form an important part of pragmatic instruction, especially at the early stages. Knowing how to use classroom language formulas in the L2 allows learners to initiate and participate in genuine communicative acts.

The literature includes a great number of recommendations for creating and implementing productive and beneficial pragmatic approaches in the classroom tailored to learners' needs. Fujimori and Houck (2004) suggest four steps teachers can follow in the design of activities centering specifically on speech act rendition. Accordingly, teachers should:

1. decide what students need to learn about a particular act;
2. determine what students already know about performing the act in the L2;
3. decide what students need to know, or are able to do; and,
4. determine what kinds of activities will be most effective in achieving established goals.

These steps allow educators to ensure that a particular pragmatic unit will focus only on what is deemed necessary, and avoid dragging learners through unnecessary, complicated instruction. Kakiuchi (2005) extends this approach by suggesting effective ways to focus pragmatic teaching on actual language use:

1. the speech acts under focus must be pertinent to the learners' needs and interests (echoing Fujimori and Houck, 2004);
2. the use of NSs' naturally occurring speech samples in the classroom is needed for learners to develop observational and analysis skills.
3. teaching materials in the class must be evaluated so as to be repre-

sentative of naturally occurring speech; and,

4. a revision of such materials based on resulting observation must be effectuated.

The use of naturally occurring speech in the classroom, either through recordings or video samples, is vital in a classroom focused on pragmatics. Otherwise, if the teacher's intuitions alone become the main source of pragmatic information, learners may miss a wealth of information regarding pragmatic target language use.

Alcón Soler and Martínez-Flor (2008) suggest an interesting and enriching approach: "In contrast to classroom interaction and textbook conversations, the use of audiovisual input has been reported as being useful to address knowledge of a pragmatic system and knowledge of its appropriate use in [EFL] contexts." (p.9) Tatsuki and Nishizawa (2005) compared the use of audiovisual input with naturally occurring instances of language use, and have found that "television interviews, like films, are reliable models of pragmalinguistic behavior." (p.95)

One type of awareness-raising activity gaining prominence within the English Department at Hokkai Gakuen University is the use of short (10 to 20 seconds) clips of television shows categorized into speech acts. Students are shown, for example, around 30 short clips featuring the act of complimenting from different shows, and are asked to take notes as these are played continuously. They note the most commonly used lexico-grammatical items — or compliment formulas — the types of responses, as well as salient contextual cues. These notes can then form the basis for further language analysis and role-play production.

Another activity favored by the author involves bringing learners' attention to the importance of illocutionary force in the exchange of meaning during conversational exchanges. A conversation starts with a question, which then triggers an answer. The task becomes then to create a chain of comments between both interlocutors that require illocutionary and perlocutionary force to be successfully evaluated in order for the exchange to have meaning. For example, A may start by asking "Have you ever eaten *inago* (or locust, a Japanese delicacy widely considered as strange by Japanese people)?" B's reply may be "No, never. I have never eaten that before", to which A's reaction becomes necessary. This could be "Well, I have never tried it either, but I'd like to one day". This statement would then require a further comment from B, such as "I wouldn't like that at all. I prefer normal food". The important point in this exercise is to limit the use of questions to one: the question which initiates the verbal exchange. That way, students are not caught up in the process of asking questions one after another without assessing the force of each answer. They need to evaluate the illocutionary force of each statement in order for their verbal exchange to have any legitimacy at all. This, in a way, is a sharp contrast to the use of the overly simplistic question/answer pattern described earlier. It also deals directly with pragmatic awareness, and how this awareness leads to appropriate pragmatic use of the target language. Also, it positions both interlocutors within a more or less equalitarian power structure. Both speakers have an equivalent impact on how the conversation unfolds.

As suggested earlier, pragmatic teaching should not be limited to the teaching of speech act routines. As stated in Section 1, pragmatic instruction should include instruction on speech act rendition, implicatures, formulaic routines, politeness, nonverbal behavior, back-channeling, dialect and language variation, discourse markers, levels of directness, metapragmatics, phatic expressions, pre-sequences, prosodic features, register, and turn-taking among others. According to Jung (2002), when L2 learners are focusing on pragmatics, they should develop the following abilities:

1. the ability to carry out speech acts;
2. the ability to produce and interpret non-literal meanings;
3. the ability to use politeness strategies;
4. the ability to carry out discursive functions; and,
5. the ability to use cultural knowledge.

According to Takimoto (2007) "to teach pragmatics, instruction must promote learners' conscious noticing of both the relationship between forms and meanings of target structures and the relationship between strategies for realizing speech intentions, linguistic forms used to express these intentions, and social conditions governing language use." (p.3-4) In short, learners need to become aware of both the differences and the relationship between pragmalinguistic and socio-pragmatic information. This allows them to choose the forms needed to express intended meaning (strategies for speech act rendition), and the social norms that regulate their use. In addition, such understanding can develop following a certain progression. Judd (1999) structures an approach to developing L2 pragmatic competence in three sub-groups:

1. cognitive-awareness raising activities (presentation, discussion, consciousness raising)

2. receptive skills development by using teacher generated materials or natural data;
3. productive skills teaching through role playing.

This progression from awareness to comprehension to production mirrors most pedagogical taxonomies on pragmatic teaching. Common to all of them is the role-play activity. Role playing is an ideal activity for students to practice specific communicative acts in various situations that are similar to daily communication. Rehearsing the same role play several times by changing contextual information can be highly beneficial for learners because it helps them understand how pragmatic information affects the linguistic codification of the message they wish to convey.

Of course, role-playing should not end up being a mere exercise in "acting out" in English. The goal is not for learners to "pretend" to be English speakers for a few minutes. As mentioned above, a "parody" of language use must be avoided. Limiting language production activities to role-playing alone would not ensure learners' ability to use the target language in real-life situations. In-class role-playing is usually aimed at rehearsing language. For genuine, unrehearsed, instantaneous, goal-oriented language production to occur, a task-based approach is ideal.

A task-based approach can integrate role-playing in the following way: learners are first asked to plan role plays based on scenarios or situations. Then they perform. Those performances should be recorded. After that, the instructor establishes specific pragmatic criteria for analysis, from which learners can then analyze their production.

Following that, learners can bring changes to their subsequent language productions. Additional role-playing helps solidify this type of learning. Throughout this process, it is important not to prevent failures of any kind. Teachers often have the impulse to teach preemptively, so as to avoid errors or failures. But pragmatic awareness (leading to competence) is developed through noticing and through trial-and-error.

Also, an important feature of task-based learning is that form is noticed only through failure. When learners notice a mismatch between form and function, the form itself becomes more apparent to them. If there is no such mismatch, communication unfolds without much attention on form. Letting students produce first, then addressing issues as they come up, is a good way to ensure that learners assess their own production. It also makes the language classroom student-centered. In short, it is the traditional language classroom turned upside down.

Instead of specific language units, language functions should become more prevalent in pragmatic instruction and task-based learning. Van der Branden (2006) points out that,

> "task-based curricula formulate operational language learning goals not so much in terms of which particular words or grammar rules the learners will need to acquire, but rather in terms of the purposes for which people are learning a language, i.e. the tasks that learners will need to be able to perform." (p.3)

Language learning tasks should:

1. be goal-directed;
2. make these goals clear to learners;
3. require target language use to be performed;
4. involve interactions between learners;
5. relate to actual tasks learners will be required to perform in the real world;
6. not focus on specific linguistic items but instead focus on holistic and functional communicative tasks;
7. keep learners focused on language meaning rather than form;
8. require pragmatic processing and use of the target language, so students can learn to use the L2 appropriately;
9. make learners feel like language users and not just language learners;
10. lead to assessment strategies that measure learners' L2 communicative proficiency.

Task-based learning is not a complete novelty in SLA. In fact, most language educators do follow task-based approaches in their everyday practices, but perhaps fail to realize and capitalize on it. Nunan (2004) suggests three types of task-based activities:

1. *Information-gap*: transfer of given information from one person to another;
2. *Reasoning-gap*: deriving some new information from given information through processes of inference, deduction, practical reasoning, or a perception of relationships or patterns;
3. *Opinion-gap*: identifying and articulating a personal preference, feeling, or attitude in response to a given situation.

These three types of activities include: dialogs and role-plays, Q&As, matching activities, conversation management activities, visual activities based on pictures or performances, puzzles and problems, and of course discussion and debate activities.

A task-based approach is ideal for the development of pragmatic awareness because, instead of dictating "moral codes" of how to behave, it allows students to behave in ways they see fit, according to functional goals. This is why teaching pragmatic awareness should not be approached as a process entirely based on NS norms. Instead, it should be structured in a way that allows learners to analyze their own language use not just from a grammatical but also a functional perspective. The information collected from such analysis can form the content of the pragmatic classroom.

In a task-based approach to teaching, functional objectives take precedence over language objectives. Therefore, a degree of flexibility must integrate the lesson plan, as the forms learners are going to use and experiment with during the task are less predictable. In short, much of what the students need to learn should be determined by them. As such, objectives are often uncovered as the classroom evolves. If learning objectives are stated at first, learners assume that they are meant to do only one thing: what has been prescribed by the teacher. This leaves very little room for genuine pragmatic failures to surface. Again, failures form an essential part of productive language analysis in the L2 classroom. For task-based activities to unfold smoothly and naturally, and for genuine pragmatic development to occur, objectives should initially be stated in very general terms.

This describes a very ambitious agenda, and some teachers working in the Japanese EFL context might shy away from it. Especially if pragmatic knowledge is not going to be tested down the line, the sheer implications of shifting the focus of current EFL classrooms from language forms to language use may be discouraging, if not idealistic. Language learning is already a time-consuming process, peppered with difficult challenges.

Yet, as argued earlier, and supported by Kondo (2008), EFL learners are not necessarily engaged in mimicking model native speakers with the goal of speaking like them. Whether they are aware of it or not, Japanese EFL learners are actually creating an interlanguage. The key in this process is to offer them the chance to observe various ways in which the L2 is used, and to let them reflect on their own language use. That way, learners can form educated language choices. After all, learners do not move from monolingualism to bilingualism because they are taught to do so. Ideally, they should move along a continuum that stretches between both poles, propelled by a sense of agency.

For these methodologies to be successfully integrated in EFL curricula and classrooms, Pohl (2004) argues that, “teachers must be sufficiently socialized to L2 pragmatic practices, so that they can comfortably draw on those practices as part of their communicative and cultural repertoire, and so that their metapragmatic awareness enables them to support students’ learning of L2 pragmatics effectively.” Rampton (1990, cited in Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh 2008) summarizes this argument as such: “language teachers have to be experts in the target language rather than native speakers of it.” (p.193)

This last point is related to a particular kind of language ideology common within EFL contexts. The next section will discuss how this concept, as it pervades throughout the Japanese EFL context, limits the possibility for the inclusion of a comprehensive pragmatic teaching methodology in the language classroom. In short, any discussion on pragmatic instruction implies a discussion on language ideology.

7. Pragmatics and language ideology within the Japanese EFL context

To understand the place of pragmatics within the Japanese EFL methodology, it is essential to survey how the language is framed by the ideology of English maintained here in Japan. If pragmatics is about how language takes shape through use, we must then consider the ideologies that motivate — or impede — language use. As it is argued here, current linguistic and cultural ideologies in the Japanese EFL context negatively affect English language learning, rendering the goal of pragmatic instruction ever more challenging.

Woolard (1998) defines the concept of language ideology as such: "ideologies of language are never solely about language, but instead about the ties between language and other social factors (such as gender, class or nationality)." (p.4) Michael Silverstein (1979) points out that, "ideologies about language, or linguistic ideologies, are any sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure or use" (p.25). Seargeant (2009) provides a more detailed explanation of ideology:

"In so far as ideologies are classifications of the world according to a specific system of values shared by a community, they reproduce hierarchies within society and thus are, in the final instance, determined by and productive of power relations (they are the habitual cognitive behaviors that enable the reproduction of such power relations)." (p.27)

Since it is determined by and productive of power relations, ideology is a belief system that reflects the intentions of influential groups within society (i.e., government, companies, etc.). These intentions then influence how everyday communication takes shape among the population. A good starting point in this analysis is to observe how the Japanese government determines its language policies. As the following discussion will show, the image of English in Japan is a complex one. It represents the outside world, and paradoxically helps reinforce a national identity. This dual function has, ever since the beginning of the Meiji Period, been serving the objectives of the ruling class in this country.

In October of 2006, the Japanese Minister for Education, Bunmei Ibuki proposed a revision to the current educational approaches across the country by emphasizing respect for tradition and the fostering of patriotism. Central to his approach was the framing of Japan as an "extremely homogeneous country" (Burgess, 2007). As such, English was deemed, in the Minister's own words, a more or less "frivolous" language, unlike Japanese which was considered "healthy", genuine and central to the creation of a Japanese identity. According to his vision, foreign language education is not aimed to give Japanese students the tools necessary to engage in a global world. Instead, it becomes another instrument used by the education system to reinforce the governmental agenda of strengthening national identity.

Bourdieu's (1984, in Lin, 2008) concept of symbolic violence provides a theoretical framework through which this process becomes understandable. Symbolic violence is "the imposition of representations of the world and social meanings upon groups in such a way that they are experienced as legitimate. This is achieved through a process of *misrecognition*". (p.206) The representation of the world here is the "essentialization" of Japanese culture and language. This is created by powerful entities through various strategies, which include cultural branding (Holt, 2004, in Lin, 2008, further discussed in Seargeants, 2009) as a central method of achieving misrecognition. The fixed identity of Japan as a homogeneous nation is presented to the public in a self-validating way (through the *nihonjinron* ideology). With limited opportunities to challenge such views, the public is then left to accept this vision as legitimate (either willfully or by being unwilling to resist). This is how such an ideology can spread and reinforce itself.

The education system is, unfortunately, the ideal context in which this process can achieve its intended objectives effectively. Teachers and administrators who fail to see beyond this nationalistic veil become active agents. The persistent systematization of the target language into discrete units of learning, easily measurable through an array of language tests such as STEP, TOEFL, and TOEIC (and most university entrance exams) divorces this language from its communicative purpose. McVeigh (2002) calls this context an "educatio-examination regime". As English ceases to be a tool for communication and greater internationalization, and becomes a tool to strengthen the *status quo*, its contribution to the essentialization of Japanese culture and society becomes apparent. With Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence and Holt's cultural branding, it is easier to form an understanding of the inherent philosophical contradictions within the Japanese EFL context, namely that the language is not taught for communicative purposes but rather for measurement purposes. It also helps explain why genuine attempts to rescue English language education from antiquated teaching practices, such as the *yakudoku* method, have failed.

English, as it is currently framed by Japanese language ideology, is another educational tool to mold Japanese students into obedient individuals ready to enter the job market, which is perceived as essentially mono-lingual. Quoting Dougill (1995): "the grammar-translation and memorization methods so popular in Japan are further evidence of the tradition of insularity, for they reflect the one-way importation of knowledge and information which characterized Japan's desire for modernization while retaining its own identity." (p.70) The underlying sentiment here is explained by Maher and Yashiro (1995) in most simple terms: "Japan is not an expressly multilingual society, or at least, does not self-attest to being such." This effectively echoes Minister Ibuki's apparently controversial (yet widely perceived as common-sensical) statement.

In 2003, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) drew up a 5-year proposal (2003–2008) entitled 'Action Plan to Cultivate "Japanese with English Abilities"' (this was an improvement of its Course of Study, proposed in 1998). In the proposal, the Ministry recognized the importance of English to the future of Japan and to the world generally:

> "English has played a central role as the common international language in linking people who have different mother tongues. For children living in the 21st century, it is essential for them to acquire communication abilities in English as a common international language. In addition, English abilities are important in terms of linking our country with the rest of the world, obtaining the world's understanding and trust, enhancing our international presence and further developing our nation (MEXT, 2003)."

The principal intentions were to encourage Japanese learners to develop logical thought through language learning, and develop the necessary skills for interacting with the world. Yet, while such objectives were only stated in general and vague terms, and that some distant references to pragmatic notions of target language use in MEXT-produced and approved policy statements and language textbooks were made, no reference to the ubiquitous *juken eigo* (English for exam purposes) were made. As a matter of fact, for over a century, *juken eigo* has remained the "ghost curriculum" in the Japanese EFL context. As such, one has to question whether a) the 2003 policy statement went far enough, and b) whether *juken eigo* is not the actual, official language policy promoted by the Japanese government.

Perhaps most important to this discussion is the fact that no existing language assessment methodology is suggested in the document. If teachers are to teach students to become better communicators in the L2, why is it that learners' pragmatic competence in the target language is not being measured? It is highly doubtful that this is the result of a mere lack of awareness of issues involved. In short, despite the apparent desire to make learners better L2 communicators, the relevant pedagogical and assessment approaches that could actually help teachers achieve this mission are purposefully not specified. How can one succeed in teaching something that remains undefined, elusive, and not part of any assessment strategy?

The fact that key aspects of communicative competence are mentioned only in vague terms throughout the document, without any mention of assessment strategies, should first raise some eyebrows. Once this detail has come to the surface, a further question becomes unavoidable: is this particular phrasing of educational policies a symptom of philosophical contradictions? But most importantly, one can actually begin to understand how language ideology shapes language policy, and how this eventually translates into actual language classroom practices.

MEXT (2011) has just produced a revision of its earlier plan. In the overall objective, the elusive concept of "fostering a positive attitude toward communication through foreign languages" is included. However, some operative definitions of language mechanics are readily provided (e.g., "to become familiar with the basic characteristics of English sounds such as stress, intonation and pauses and pronounce English sounds correctly" (p.1)). This is the kind of terminology that facilitates assessment. But communicative competence is phrased in vague terms. The objective of speaking "accurately to the listener(s) about one's thoughts and feelings, or facts" (p.2) is rather vacuous. How does one speak accurately about one's feelings and thoughts?

The goal of surveying students' "thoughts and feelings" is, in fact, a major component of functional grammar, and as such should be considered a valid policy addition; the other two being transactions and textuality. But a quick glance at how this goal is actually being translated into classroom practices reveals an obvious methodological gap: it is not part of either formative or summative language assessment strategies. The concept of "sharing one's thoughts with others", repeated throughout the document, is then subjected to all kinds of interpretations. This language policy approach renders actual language use — or target language pragmatics — an invisible (thus avoidable) construct.

One is forced to question whether this casual phrasing of educational policies is intentional or not. Without asking the policy makers themselves, one is left to speculate. Nevertheless, it is clear that there are contradictory objectives: communicative competence development in the L2 (a dynamic catch word) versus the learning of English lexico-grammatical forms to serve *juken eigo* purposes. This paper agrees with McVeigh (2002) in that maintaining this contradiction serves the concrete goals of this educatio-examination regime.

Browne and Wada (1998) provide a good explanation for current EFL practices in Japan:

> "When one considers that the vast majority of English teachers in Japan receive no formal teacher training [...] and that every MEXT approved textbook comes with a teacher's manual that has detailed lesson plans emphasizing translation and drill-focused teaching techniques, it is not surprising that a wide gap exists between the communicative goals of the guidelines and

actual classroom practice." (p.105)

The new educational approach proposed by MEXT has met with both approval and resistance. On the one hand, it must be said that, compared with language teaching practices of post-war Japan, there is now a greater emphasis on oral-aural skills in the Japanese EFL classrooms. With the introduction of the JET Program in the late 1980's (which has allowed a majority of the Japanese public to have at least direct contact with foreign nationals in Japan) and the Super English Language High School (SELHi) Program this last decade for example, some JTEs and school administrators have experienced a sort of awakening to new EFL teaching methodologies. These educators have become more willing to question existing practices, which has motivated some to bring about necessary changes. Despite a poor understanding of what L2 language use actually means (and how it should be taught), teaching English as a tool for communication has become somewhat of a trendy concept within the Japanese English teaching community. On the other hand, the *yutori kyooiku* (relaxed education) policy, of which this new EFL educational approach has come to be identified with, is now seen as one of the main reasons why Japanese students seem gradually more detached from the education they are receiving. Many analysts and critics claim that the system is failing miserably in one of its central task: preparing students to face the job market. As a result, educational institutions react by intensifying their focus on examinations.

Strangely enough, few actually question the absence of assessment methodologies that could measure learners' communicative competence. Most simply follow test-oriented language objectives and fail to connect the dots. Because approximately 50% of high school students go on to higher education — making university entrance exam preparations a priority for most high schools — and that employment opportunities after university are increasingly dependent on high proficiency test results, English education both at the high school and university level is victim to this educatio-examination regime.

However, while it is clear that this paradoxical situation persists at the pre-university level, universities in Japan have, in recent years, attained a great deal more self-determination. Because there are no national guidelines for foreign language teaching at Japanese universities at the present, such institutions have gained more control over their educational approaches. Yet, raising students' TOEIC test results in order to increase employment opportunities is still very much a pressing concern.

This section has attempted to define the philosophical contradictions at the heart of the Japanese EFL context. The next section will discuss how these affect language learning.

8. Language ideology and language learners

The process of learning a second or a foreign language requires dedication, creativity, and a lot of time and energy. It also raises fundamental questions of identity, as language is a principal tool in the construction of identities (see de Fina, Frin & Bamberg, 2006; Lin, 2008, for further discussion). As Japanese EFL learners are faced with the task of learning English throughout their regular education, they are consequently forced to make considerable investments in the language learning process, this over many years. These investments include a reevaluation of their status and identity within Japanese society. In an "extremely homogeneous" society (as described by Minister Ibuki in 2006), becoming a bilingual/bicultural individual becomes problematic. Fortunately, some learners overlook these issues and focus on the task of learning the language for communicative purposes. But for many others, such "leap of faith" is not so obvious to make. A negative assessment of the relationship between English language learning and "being Japanese" can lead some learners to construct various ideologies which actually increase the distance between the target language and culture and their own experience. From that point, English ceases to be a tool that these Japanese EFL learners can use for real communication.

This language ideology also positions learners outside the realm of English language users. In Japan, there is a widely shared assumption that English represents the "foreign world", and is thus something fundamentally "un-Japanese". Matsuda (2003, quoted in Seargeant, 2009) surveyed a group of Japanese high school students about their attitudes to English as an international language. She found that the overarching perception was that English belonged to native speakers of the language. In short, these students couldn't conceive of themselves as English speakers because they hadn't been born in the target language community. Correlated to this view is the widely held perception that the Japanese language is ambiguous, indirect and mysterious, whereas English is logical and direct (coming back to an earlier argument on essentialist views on language use). The complex connection between national identity, native language, and foreign language, especially as it relates to learning, becomes more apparent here.

This process of separation between national character and foreign language learning is certainly magnified by the persistent emphasis on language testing and the classification of language learners into ranks. No wonder so many students become discouraged, and come to believe that being Japanese means having difficulties learning English. When it comes to communicating in it, the fear is further magnified because of the implications it has on the process of negotiating identities. Moreover, as this supposed "incompatibility" between national character and foreign language learning creates a sort of objectification of English, positioning the language as something outside "Japanese-ness", essentialist views on target language use surface (e.g., Japanese as indirect, mysterious, and more polite; English as direct and not as polite). This has negative implications for the teaching of pragmatics. Also, as observed in the Section 4 samples, such views can push learners towards a simplistic understanding of actual communication in the target language. A such, these learners fail to solve problems with interpreting pragmatic accent and sociocultural norms, and fail to develop turn-taking and general conversation management skills to sustain communication flow. In short, language ideology affects language learning, and thus language use.

This perception of English as "foreign object" further creates the belief shared by many Japanese speakers that learning the language is dependent on the NS for model. An NNS is thus perceived as being an incomplete or illegitimate speaker of the language. For example, when two JES are asked to speak in English to one another in the language classroom, a sense of discomfort is often felt. Kachru (1992) lists two main fallacies associated with English, which are prevalent in EFL teaching programs:

a) that English is learned to interact with native speakers (fallacy). Problem: pragmatics is localized and culture bound therefore native speakers do not [always] offer a valid model;
b) that localized varieties are interlanguages (fallacy) [assuming that] speakers are striving to be more native like. Rather, in the international contexts, English represents a repertoire of cultures, not a monolithic culture. (p.362)

The concept of interlanguage, as opposed to the monolingualism/bilingualism dichotomy, can help both teachers and learners conceive of language learning process as a continuum, a progression which involves pertinent questions of ideology and identity. Once the belief that NSs are ultimate models for target language use ceases, NNSs can begin to develop a sense of ownership of the L2. The next section discusses how Japanese EFL teachers and students can transcend this current ideological deadlock, and learn to appreciate English as a real tool for communication.

9. A way out of the impasse

As mentioned earlier, observing how L1 and L2 pragmatic norms affect communication in both languages is a simple way to help bridge the gap between the L2 as object of study and the L2 as an actual tool for communication. Once this has been acknowledged, a further consideration needs to be made: it is only by questioning original assumptions — or existing language ideologies — that the development of pragmatic awareness in the L2 is possible. Not only is teaching pragmatic awareness a necessary aspect of foreign language instruction, this paper argues that it also helps learners conceive of the possibility of developing a bilingual/ bicultural identity.

For example, by bringing students' understanding of the concept of politeness out of the confines of Japanese-ness, and observe how it unfolds in different situations in the L2 (i.e., levels of formality, levels of directness, how FTAs can be mitigated in power relationships), learners can question their ideological assumptions. They can then begin to rebuild a new relationship with the target language. From that, hopefully a more sensitive understanding of local and global cultures, and of national identity, might take shape.

Is Japanese society and culture the roots of the problem? Seargeant (2009) warns against such interpretation by saying that,

> "there is a danger that in pursuing this approach the suggestion becomes that English is something for which Japanese society itself will have to alter before it can be properly adopted and effectively taught. The pedagogical significance of this is that the 'foreignness' of English, as both code *and* cultural practice, is foregrounded." (p.60)

To avoid this danger, EFL learners and educators need to realize that their language classroom does offer plenty of opportunities for pragmatic development. As Kasper and Rose (2002) point out, not all FL classrooms are poor sources of pragmatic information. To become aware of this pragmatic potential, both NS teachers and JTEs must learn to examine how their own "personal histories and their cultural assumptions affect their classroom practices, their expectations of themselves and their students." (Dufon, 2008: p.37) In short, educators must be willing to move beyond the confines of the current educatio-examination system. This is the make-or-break criteria. For that, they must be able to transcend the ideologies that impede EFL teaching and learning in Japan.

To achieve this change, language ideologies must be directly addressed in the language classroom. As such, the ideas of the native speaker as model and of British and American English as standard varieties should be seriously questioned by both teachers and learners. Being non-native speakers of the language, Japanese EFL learners should be strongly encouraged to communicate with each other, to hear each other read out loud, and to analyze each others' use of the L2.

The possibility of a Japanese-English variety should even be raised, considering that there are numerous variations out there. Indian-English, Singaporean, Jamaican, Turkish, etc. For Japanese EFL learners to form a sense of ownership of the target language, and even for the prospect of a Japanese variety of English to be recognized, this paper argues that explicit teaching of pragmatics in Japanese EFL classrooms is necessary. At least, it can make a significant contribution towards a reevaluation of current linguistic and cultural ideologies. With this new understanding of language ideology, of how it affects language learning, and of the beneficial role of pragmatic instruction, a re-conceptualization of the Japanese EFL classroom as a forum for students' pragmatic development in the L2 can begin. The next section will highlight a necessary caution when approaching pragmatic teaching.

10. Is pragmatic instruction a form of acculturation?

Pragmatic instruction should not aim at reducing learners' pragmatic failures in the L2 in ways that limits their sense of ownership of the target language. Mey (2007) reminds language educators that, "people have the right to conserve, but also to change and adapt their culture and language whenever they feel the need to do so." (p.174) As such, language learners do have a sense of agency right at the onset of, and throughout, the language learning process. It is they who will eventually become L2 users, and so it is they who should determine how this process will unfold. Pohl (2004) argues in similar fashion:

> "Striving for intercultural competence does not mean assimilation into the target culture. Rather, intercultural language learning involves the development of a "third place" between the learner's native culture and the target culture, i.e. between self and other [...] Language learners need to understand what native speakers mean when they use the language, even if they do not choose to replicate native speakers' behavior." (p.6)

As argued in Section 7, task-based methodologies are dependent on learners making choices throughout the learning process. Of course, some of these choices concern the level of adjustment to L2 norms. Nevertheless, Thomas (1983) and Takimoto (2007) point out that teaching the difference between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic failures allows learners to form pragmatic decisions to break the rules if they wish. Davies (1986) supports this idea: "Rather than being taught to be polite, learners should be given the possibility of choosing to be either polite or impolite."

When people of different cultures meet and communicate, cross-cultural pragmatic failures are, in a way, inevitable. That is because no norms can be considered universal. In fact, the general assumptions people make while communicating is that their own norms are best because they have been socialized that way. Also, beyond cultural differences being potential triggers for pragmatic failures, people often have divergent goals in communication. In short, however much one tries to dissect communicative acts systematically, either within inter- or intra-cultural contexts, (s)he is always brought back to relativist conclusions. The fact remains that misunderstandings are an essential part of everyday communication, and should be expected to happen.

When teaching pragmatics (i.e., through language analysis, situation role-playing, etc.), teachers should always raise issues of intentionality, ideally at the starting point. This can act as the framework from which students can begin to select and sort formulaic routines and language forms. Once the communicative intention (or task for that matter) as been determined, the teacher can then address linguistic issues more closely.

In short, pragmatic teaching should not be an exercise in prescribing moral codes to learners. Teachers and learners have to consider NNS norms, NS norms, and intentionality when teaching target language use. At no point should teachers assume that NS norms define pragmatics. If any cultural "bridging" is to be made between the L1 and the L2, it must be through learners' conscious choices, and not because they have been told to do so by teachers. As a result, the teachers' main task is to make those choices clear and available to learners through language analysis and functional language use.

This section has argued that pragmatic teaching must include processes of cultural convergence and divergence. EFL learners need to be made aware that a desire to digress — or resist — is perfectly natural, and in fact to be expected.

Concluding remarks: Overcoming cross-cultural pragmatic failures

Intercultural pragmatics is concerned with problems arising in communication between people who possess different cultural backgrounds and different cultural expectations. Such problems are inevitable. Yet, EFL learners can learn to mitigate them by developing pragmatic awareness.

For EFL teachers, however, pragmatic instruction is not something to be done when and if time allows. As Kramsch (1993) puts it,

> "if language is seen as social practice, culture becomes the very core of language teaching. Cultural awareness must then be viewed both as enabling language proficiency and as being the outcome of reflection on language proficiency. [...] Once we recognize that language use is indissociable from the creation and transmission of culture, we have to deal with a variety of cultures." (p.8-9)

This need is ever so present in the Japanese EFL context, where a) language learners do not have the same exposure and opportunities for practice as ESL learners, and where b) language ideology impedes the development of communicative competence in the L2.

Japanese EFL learners who truly wish to develop communicative competence in the L2 probably understand that their endeavors can — and hopefully will — propel them into a speech community which does not operate along the same cultural or social assumptions they are used to. But this does not need to be an obstacle. In fact, the best way for learners to get a grip on this new speech community is through the lens of pragmatic awareness, which has the potential to unite them with the L2. Of course, pragmatics is not just a field that studies and prescribes cultural norms of language use. It is most dynamic and beneficial when it transcends the level of cultural standards of communication and correct cultural practices, and moves into the area of actual language use, as it occurs within context. That is how pragmatics can benefit language learners most.

But for pragmatics to have this kind of empowering effect on learners, social and ideological issues must be addressed. As such, pragmatic instruction is not a straightforward matter. It requires courage on the part of language educators. According to Roberts, Jupp and Davies (1992), language use across cultures is guided by an unconscious interactive process which can reinforce cultural stereotypes, which in turn can lead to judgmental attitudes. Examining this process can be threatening because it forces individuals to examine their own behavior and motivation. But then again, the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of identities, all of which is achieved through discourse and language use (de Fina, Schiffrin & Bamberg, 2006), forces individuals to do the same. In short, people are faced with these issues in everyday life.

This paper began with a discussion on pragmatic failures produced by Japanese high school EFL learners (JES) while using the target language. Such failures, of which the three short samples in Section 4 provided examples, became the trigger for a larger discussion. This discussion linked the common use of question/answer patterns in oral English classes in Japan with the oversimplification of genuine L2 communication processes, with the creation of stereotypical assumptions of target language use, with the language ideology which frames that language, and finally with pragmatic instruction as being one of the most effective methods of addressing issues of ideology. Hopefully, this paper has allowed the reader to ponder on the fundamental connection between the fields of pragmatics and language ideology. It is also hoped that Japanese EFL teaching practices begin to actively integrate explicit teaching of pragmatics in ways that make such instruction an enrichment of the L2 learning experience. Ideally, the foreign language learning process should encourage EFL learners to see themselves as potential bilingual/bicultural individuals who are comfortable using not the one but the two languages they spend so much time and energy learning.

References

Alcón Soler, E., Martínez-Flor, A. (2008) *Investigating pragmatics in foreign language learning teaching and testing*. Buffalo: Multilingual Matters.

Austin, J. L. (1962) *How to do things with words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Barron, A. (2003) *Acquisition in interlanguage pragmatics: Learning how to do things with words in a study abroad context*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Bourdieu, P. (1991) *Language and symbolic power*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Browne, C. M. & Wada, M. (1998) Current issues in high school English teaching in Japan: An exploratory survey. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 11-1: 97-112.

Brown, P. & Levinson, S. (1987) *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Burgess, C. (2007) 'Multicultural Japan' remains a pipe dream: Ideology, policies, people not ready for major influx of foreigners. The Japan Times, Tuesday, March 27, 2007.

Butt, D., Fahey, R., Feez, S., Spinks, S. & Yallop, C. (2003) *Using functional grammar: An explorer's guide*. Sydney: NCELTR.

Canale, M. & Swain, M. (1980) Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1: 1-47.

Childs, M. R. (2005) The place of pragmatics in language learning. In D. Tatsuki (Ed.), *Pragmatics in language learning, theory and practice* (pp.13-24) Tokyo: JALT Pragmatics SIG.

Davies, E. (1986) Politeness and the foreign language learner. *Anglo-American Studies* 6: 117-130.

de Fina, A., Schiffrin, D. S. & Bamberg, M. (Eds.) (2006) *Discourse and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dougill, J. (1995) Internationalization - As if it mattered. In K. Kitao (ed.), *Culture and communication* (pp.61-73). Kyoto: Yamaguchi Shoten.

Dufon, M. (2008) Language socialization theory and the acquisition of pragmatics in the foreign language classroom. In E. Alcon Soler & A. Martinez-Flor (Eds.), *Investigating Pragmatics in Foreign Language Learning, Teaching and Testing* (pp.25-44). Buffalo: Multilingual Matters.

Durkheim, E. (1915) *The elementary forms of the religious life*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

Eslami, Z. R. & Eslami-Rasekh, A. (2008) Enhancing the pragmatic competence of non-native English-speaking teacher candidates (NNESTCs) in an EFL context. In E. Alcon Soler & A. Martinez-Flor (Eds.), *Investigating Pragmatics in Foreign Language Learning, Teaching and Testing* (pp.178-197). Buffalo: Multilingual Matters.

Eslami, Z. R. & Noora, A. (2008) Perceived pragmatic transferability of L1 request strategies by Persian learners of English. In M. Putz & J. Neff-van Aertselaer (Eds.), *Developing contrastive pragmatics: Interlanguage and cross-cultural perspectives* (pp.301-333). New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Fujimori, J. & Houck, N. (2004) Practical criteria for teaching speech acts. *The Language Teacher*, 28-5: 3-8.

Goffman, E. (1967) *Interaction ritual: Essays on face-to-face behavior*. London: The Penguin Press.

Grice, P. (1989) Logic and conversation. In P. Grice (Ed.), *Studies in the way of words* (pp.22-40). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Grundy, P. (2007) Language evolution, pragmatic inference, and the use of English as a lingua franca. In I. Kecskes & L. R. Horn (Eds.), *Explorations in pragmatics: Linguistic, cognitive and intercultural aspects* (pp.219-256). New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

House, J. (2000) Understanding misunderstanding: A pragmatic-discourse approach to analyzing mismanaged rapport in talk across cultures. In H. Spencer-Oatey (Ed.), *Culturally speaking - Managing rapport through talk across cultures* (pp.146-164). London: Continuum.

Hymes, D. (1970) The ethnography of speaking. In J. Fishman (Ed.), *Readings in the sociology of language* (pp.99-138). New York: Mouton.

Judd, E. L. (1999) Some issues in the teaching of pragmatic competence. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Culture in second language teaching and learning* (pp.152-166). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jung, J. Y. (2002) Issues in acquisitional pragmatics. *Working Papers in TESOL & Applied Linguistics*, 2-3: 1-13.

Kachru, B. (1992) Teaching world Englishes. In B. B. Kachru (Ed.), *The other tongue: English across cultures* (pp.355-365). Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Kakiuchi, Y. (2005) Greetings in English: Naturalistic speech versus textbook speech. In D. Tatsuki (Ed.), *Pragmatics in language learning, theory and practice* (pp.61-85). Tokyo: JALT Pragmatics SIG.

Kasper, G. (1996) The development of pragmatic competence. In E. Kellerman, B. Weltens & T. Bongaerts (Eds.), *EUROSLA 6: A Selection of papers* (pp.103-120). Tilburg: Toegepaste Taalwetenschap in Artikelen.

Kasper, G. & Rose, K. R. (2002) *Pragmatic development in a second language*. Malden: Blackwell Publishers.

Kecskes, I. (2007) Formulaic language in English lingua franca. In I. Kecskes & L. R. Horn (Eds.), *Explorations in pragmatics: Linguistic, cognitive and* *intercultural aspects* (pp.191–218). New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Kondo, S. (2008) Effects on pragmatic development through awareness-raising instruction: Refusals by Japanese EFL learners. In E. Alcon Soler & A. Martinez-Flor (Eds.), *Investigating pragmatics in foreign language learning, teaching and testing* (pp.153–177). Buffalo: Multilingual Matters.

Kramsch, C. (1993) *Context and culture in language teaching*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kristiansen, G. & Geeraerts, D. (2007) On non-reductionist intercultural pragmatics and methodological procedure. In I. Kecskes & L. R. Horn (Eds.), *Explorations in pragmatics: Linguistic, cognitive and intercultural aspects* (pp.257–285). New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Lakoff, R. (1973) The logic of politeness; or minding your p's and q's. *Papers from the Ninth Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society* 8, 292–305.

Lantolf, J. P. (1999) Second culture acquisition. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Culture in second language teaching and learning* (pp.28–46). Cambridge: Cambridge university Press.

Leech, G. N. (1983) *Principles of pragmatics*. New York: Longman Group Limited.

Levinson, S. (2000) *Presumptive meanings: The theory of generalized conversational implicature*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Lin, M. Y. A. (2008) *Problematizing identity: Everyday struggles in language, culture and education*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Maher, J. C. & Yashiro, K. (Eds.) (1995) *Multilingual Japan: An introduction*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Martínez-Flor, A. & Alcón Soler, E. (2007) Developing pragmatic awareness of suggestions in the EFL classroom: A focus on instructional effects. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 10–1: 47–76.

McVeigh, B. J. (2002) *Japanese higher education as myth*. New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc.

Mey, J. L. (2001) *Pragmatics: An introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

MEXT. (2003) *Regarding the establishment of an action plan to cultivate "Japanese with English abilities"*. http://www.mext.go.jp/english/topics/

03072801.htm. Accessed 10 Oct, 2009.

MEXT, (2011) *Outline of the revision of the course of study*. http://www.mext.go.jp/component/english/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2011/03/17/1303755_013.pdf. Accessed April 30, 2011.

Nunan, D. (2004) *Task-based language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pohl, G. (2004) Cross-cultural pragmatic failure and implications for language teaching. *Second Language Learning and Teaching*, Vol. 4.

Richards, J. C. & Sukwiwat, M. (1983) Language transfer and conversational competence. *Applied Linguistics*, 4-2: 113-125.

Riley, P. (1989) Well don't blame me! — On the interpretation of pragmatic errors. In W. Oleksy (Ed.), *Contrastive pragmatics* (pp.231-249). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Roberts, C., Jupp, T. & Davies, E. (1992) *Language and discrimination: A study of communication in multi-ethnic workplaces*. London: Longman.

Schmidt, R. (1993) Consciousness, learning and interlanguage pragmatics. In G. Kasper & S. Blum-Kulka (Eds.), *Interlanguage pragmatics* (pp.21-42). New York: Oxford University Press.

Seargeant, P. (2009) *The idea of English in Japan*. NY: Multilingual Matters.

Searle, J. R. (1969) *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Silverstein, M. (1979) Language structure and linguistic ideology. In P. Clyne, W. Hanks & C. Hofbauer (Eds.),*The Elements of a Parasession on Linguistic Units and Levels* (pp.193-247). Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Spencer-Oatey, H. (2000) Rapport Management: A framework for analysis. In H. Spencer- Oatey (Ed.), *Culturally speaking — Managing rapport through talk across cultures* (pp.11-46). London: Continuum.

Tagashira, K., Yamato, K. & Takamichi, I. (2011) Japanese EFL learners' pragmatic awareness through the looking glass of motivational profiles. *JALT Journal*, 33-1: 5-26.

Takahashi, S. (2001) The role of input enhancement in developing pragmatic competence. In K. R. Rose & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Pragmatics in language teaching* (pp.171-199). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Takimoto, M. (2007) The effects of input-based tasks on the development of learners' pragmatic proficiency. *Applied Linguistics*, 30-1: 1-25.

Tatsuki, D., Nishizawa, M. (2005) A comparison of compliments and compliment responses in television interviews, film, and naturally occuring data. In D. Tatsuki (Ed.), *Pragmatics in language learning, theory and practice* (pp.87-97). Tokyo: JALT Pragmatics SIG.

Terkourafi, M. (2007) Toward a Universal Notion of Face for a Universal Notion of Cooperation. In I. Kecskes & L. R. Horn (Eds.), *Explorations in pragmatics: Linguistic, cognitive and intercultural aspects* (pp.313-344). New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Thomas, J. (1983) Cross-cultural pragmatic failure. *Applied Linguistics* 4: 91-112.

Van der Branden, K. (Ed.) (2006) *Task-based language education: From theory to practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wierzbicka, A. (1991) *Cross-cultural pragmatics: The semantics of human interaction*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co.

Woodfield, H. (2008) Interlanguage requests: A contrastive study. In M. Putz & J. Neff-van Aertselaer (Eds.), *Developing contrastive pragmatics: Interlanguage and cross- cultural perspectives* (pp.231-264). New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Woolard, K. (1998) Language ideology as a field of inquiry. In B. Schieffelin, K. Woolard & P. Kroskrity (Eds.), *Language ideologies* (pp.3-47). Oxford: Oxford University Press.