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**L2 pragmatics as ‘intercultural pragmatics’:
Probing sociopragmatic aspects of pragmatic awareness**

One of the important ‘current issues in intercultural pragmatics’ is how conceptual, theoretical, and empirical developments in this field can be used to help reconstitute the teaching and learning of second languages as an intercultural endeavor. The field of intercultural pragmatics raises important questions and presents challenges to prevailing perspectives within language teaching on what it means to know and use languages for intercultural communication, particularly how notions such as pragmatic awareness should be understood. This paper links recent views of pragmatics as social and moral practice (E.g. Kádár & Haugh, 2013; Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2016) with sociocognitive perspectives on pragmatic interpretation (Kecskes, 2014; Author 1 2013; Author 2 2018) to offer a reconceptualization of pragmatic awareness for second language learning. The paper draws on data from an English language classroom in Japan to illustrate some of the ways in which collaborative meta-pragmatic reflection in the classroom opens up possibilities for exploring various cultural assumptions drawn from the L1 and L2 that come into play when interpreting aspects of L2 pragmatics. This will be used to suggest a conceptualisation of pragmatic awareness as a layered phenomenon that is inherently multilingual and intercultural.

Introduction

Theoretical and empirical developments within the field of intercultural pragmatics raise important questions and present challenges to prevailing perspectives on what it means to know and use additional languages, with implications for how notions such as pragmatic awareness are understood (Kecskes, 2014). Within language education, the notion of pragmatic awareness has been theorised largely within the dominant “interlanguage” perspective on learning (Author & Other 1, Forthcoming) which originated in the work of Selinker (1972) and was then applied to the L2 pragmatic realm by Kasper and Dahl (1991). The notion of interlanguage emerged at a time when SLA was dominated by highly structuralist views of language and in which language learning was seen primarily as a matter of acquiring a linguistic code (Firth & Wagner, 1997). Although the adoption of the “interlanguage” concept to frame L2 pragmatics learning succeeded in broadening the domain of SLA, it also imported an ontology of language as a highly rule-governed system and the assumption that native-like knowledge is the end goal of learning. In this paper, I argue that these paradigmatic assumptions have had an excessive constraining effect on how the notion of pragmatic awareness is understood within L2 learning, particularly with regard to awareness of the sociopragmatic domain. In particular, this paper problematises the rigid conception of sociopragmatic norms and the narrow conception of ‘appropriateness’ that this has engendered within interlanguage pragmatics. The paper then considers how theoretical and empirical insights gained from recent work within sociocultural and intercultural pragmatics can help expand the language ontology underpinning notions of pragmatic awareness within language education. Specifically, I link recent views of pragmatics as social and moral practice (E.g. Kádár & Haugh, 2013; Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2016) with sociocognitive perspectives on pragmatic interpretation (Kecskes, 2014; Author 1; Author 2) to foreground the cultural foundations of pragmatic judgments and articulate a view of pragmatic awareness as an inherently intercultural phenomenon. The paper draws on data from an English language classroom in Japan to illustrate some of the ways in which collaborative meta-pragmatic reflection in the classroom opens up possibilities for exploring various cultural assumptions drawn from the L1 and L2 that come into play when interpreting aspects of L2 pragmatics

Views of pragmatic awareness and underlying assumptions within L2 learning

Within language learning, the conceptualisation of any form of language awareness is necessarily influenced by intertwined ontological and epistemological assumptions. Ontological assumptions relate to the kind of entity ‘language’ is assumed to be, while epistemological assumptions relate to the nature of awareness and its role within the larger process of learning. The field of interlanguage pragmatics has tended to draw on the work of scholars such as Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983) in adopting a view of language as a form of social action that is primarily enabled by conventionalized mappings within a language between linguistic forms, functions and contextual elements (Kasper & Rose, 2001). These mappings are seen to constitute ‘pragmatic norms’, with pragmalinguistic norms being constituted by conventionalized mappings between linguistic forms and functions (mainly speech act realizations and social deixis), and sociopragmatic norms being constituted by associations between form selection and contextual features such as situation, age, gender, occupation, role, relationship, imposition of a particular speech act etc. Importantly, the

associations are not seen as random but rather as representing the normative consensus of native speakers in regards to ‘appropriate’ language use (Félix-Brasdefer, 2016).

Much theoretical discussion and empirical research on pragmatic awareness within interlanguage pragmatics has thus been concerned with the question of how learners can develop the ability to comprehend and use the L2 in line with pre-existing systemic conventions, particularly when facilitated by pedagogical interventions. Based on Schmidt’s (1993) highly influential work on awareness within SLA, L2 pragmatic learning is seen as a process by which learners first ‘notice’ the co-occurrence of linguistic forms and functions with contextual features and then gradually ‘understand’ the significance of the associations in terms of underlying principles, thus requiring attention, pattern detection, and gradual formalization of knowledge (Schmidt 2010). Such a conception of awareness in terms of noticing and understanding therefore reflects and helps reinforce the ontology of language as a normative system of form-function-context mappings. Much research has sought to understand the relative effects of implicit and explicit pragmatic instruction on learner’s ability to comprehend and use L2 pragmatic features in line with native speaker norms (e.g. Alcón, 2005; House, 1996; Jeon & Kaya, 2006; Rose & Ng, 2001; Taguchi, 2015a; Takahashi, 2010; Cheng, 2016). However, such research does not always explicitly operationalize or elicit learner’s pragmatic awareness per se, but rather infers from linguistic behaviour that awareness is present.

Much empirical research that has explicitly dealt with pragmatic awareness has tended to focus on whether L2 learners are able to recognize the pragmalinguistic realization patterns that might be considered most ‘appropriate’ for carrying out a particular speech act given short contextual descriptions. For example, representative research has looked at language learners’ ability to correctly infer the illocutionary force of indirect speech acts (e.g. Garcia, 2004; Takahashi, 2010), to identify dispreferred speech act realization strategies in simple scenarios (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Bardovi-Harlig & Griffin, 2005; Niezgodá & Roever, 2001; Schauer, 2006), to understand the social indexicality of pronoun choice (e.g. Kinginger and Farrell, 2004) and to evaluate the relative appropriateness of speech act realization patterns in view of context (Safont, 2003). As reflected in data elicitation methods such as discourse completion tasks or pragmatic judgment tasks, the sociopragmatic domain tends to be operationalized primarily in terms of whether learners can make correct linguistic selection based on assumptions about interpersonal categories such as ‘professor’ or ‘friend’, the kind of social distance or power distance that can be expected in an interaction with a person from that category, and then how these variables would determine appropriate selection (Meier, 1999; Author & Other 3). The scenario below is taken from a list of items devised to investigate L2 learners’ detection of pragmatic infelicities in Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei’s (1998:261) seminal study which has been highly influential. The hash symbol denotes pragmatically inappropriate language.

Anna goes to ask her teacher to fill in a questionnaire. She knocks on the office door.

A: (knocks on the door)

T: Yes, come in.

A: #Hello. My name is Anna Kovacs. If you don't mind, I would like you to fill this in for me.

One can assume that what is considered problematic in this example is that Anna's choice to express her request with a directive (I would like you to...) rather than with an ability question or similar interrogative form (e.g. Would you mind...) is inappropriate given the power distance that is likely to exist between a teacher and student. It should be noted that learners in this study were asked to respond with a 'yes' or 'no' in regards to whether the language used was problematic, as well as rank the seriousness of the problem from 'Not bad at all' to 'Very bad'. The fact that learners have room to rank the seriousness of the problem notwithstanding, pragmatic judgment tasks based on such scenarios essentially represent sociopragmatic (in)appropriateness as a clear-cut phenomenon. Whilst the pragmalinguistic selection in the scenario above is likely to be unconventional for native speakers, it is clear from the student's greeting, careful self-introduction, and use of a grounder prior to the request that the student is making efforts to attend to the teacher's status through politeness. This can too easily become obscured if the question of sociopragmatic appropriateness is excessively focused on individual utterances and whether L2 learners'/users' pragmatic judgments concord with the form-function-context mappings that are assumed to represent the consensus of native speakers.

Such a narrow orientation to the sociopragmatic domain within interlanguage pragmatics has been criticised by an increasing number of scholars (e.g. Dewaele, 2008; Ifantidou, 2014; Liddicoat, 2016; Other 2 & Author, Forthcoming; Author 2; Meier, 2003; Ren & Han, 2016; van Compernelle, 2014). Taking up the issue of 'appropriateness' within the domain of politeness, van Compernelle (2014) is highly critical of the use of pragmatic rules of thumb, which present particular pragmalinguistic realisation patterns as inherently more polite than others, thereby treating politeness as a by-product of the linguistic system rather than a meaning-making achievement of speakers. He also problematizes the ways that sociopragmatic notions such as 'social distance' are uncritically used in pragmatic norm descriptions within teaching materials, pointing out that such concepts are not necessarily transparent, nor culturally neutral. This echoes Meier's (2003) critique of the tendency to treat context as a static, reified phenomenon that determines linguistic selection rather than something that is interpreted by speakers on the basis of cultural assumptions. Although speakers of a language inevitably possess a certain degree of normative consciousness regarding language use that could be regarded as clearly *inappropriate* in particular contexts, the realm of what can be construed as meaningful and effective in ordinary language use is much more flexible and fundamentally dependent on how speakers interpret their relationships with others and negotiate meaning within the flow of discourse (Haugh, 2010). Rather than being determined by context, language use is a highly dynamic and situated phenomenon that is actively *constructed and interpreted* by participants on the basis of morally charged expectations about language use relative to roles, relationships, and situational context (Kádár & Haugh, 2013).

This tendency to approach the sociopragmatic aspects of language use largely in terms of sociocultural conventions can be seen as a reflection of the disposition within an interlanguage-based perspective on learning to view language as a primarily systemic entity, and learning as a process of acquiring systemic knowledge. That is, the emphasis remains primarily on predictable associations within the linguistic system, particularly at the utterance level. Whilst pragmalinguistic phenomena can be treated in a systemic way in terms of form-function mappings, the evaluative judgments that constitute the sociopragmatic domain cannot be

reduced to binary notions of appropriateness/inappropriateness or deterministic relationships between context and language use. In other words, the sociopragmatic domain cannot be encapsulated within such a narrow ontology of language, and pragmatic awareness needs to be seen as much more than whether learners are able to make contextual assessments and related linguistic selections as native speakers do. Such a position has informed recent work within the framework of sociocultural theory (e.g. Henery, 2015; van Compernelle & Kinginger, 2013; van Compernelle, 2014), which has adopted more of an agent-centred (first order) rather than system-centred (second order) perspective on pragmatic norms and pragmatic awareness. In terms of language ontology, this work is underpinned by the view that perception of context is primary, and that it is individual's sociocultural schemas and concepts that mediate the selection of linguistic forms. There is a notable shift away from pragmatic norms dictated by the system to first-order sociopragmatic understandings. This work therefore looks at pragmatic awareness not only from the perspective of whether learners know L2 pragmatic conventions, but more fundamentally in terms of how learners conceptualise sociopragmatic notions such as 'distance' or 'formality' and how sociopragmatic reflection allows learners to explore possibilities for marking or creating such impressions through linguistic choices, which is not necessarily constrained by narrowly conceived L2 conventions. The epistemological standpoint is that when learners' pragmatic awareness is characterized by heightened awareness of sociopragmatic meaning potential, they are able to see interactional options as more complex than simply a matter of acting out pragmatic prescriptions (van Compernelle, 2014).

Whilst this represents significant progression in terms of moving away from an overly static view of context and foregrounding pragmatic awareness as it develops based on sociopragmatic reflection, there is still a lack of attention to culture in both the ontological and epistemological realms. In terms of language ontology, there is still a lack of clarity within interlanguage pragmatics and the field of pragmatics more broadly as to how culture relates to language use, particularly the sociopragmatic domain. This is partly due to the relative neglect of the sociopragmatic domain within the field of pragmatics more broadly (Haugh, Kádár & Terkourafi) and the tendency to exclude culture as a theoretical concept in interlanguage pragmatics research (Author 2; Meier, 1999). As will be taken up in more detail in the next section, sociopragmatic judgments that invoke notions such as appropriateness, politeness, directness etc., are ultimately anchored in culturally shaped assumptions regarding the rights and responsibilities of speakers in concrete situational and interpersonal contexts, yet awareness of the link between culture and sociopragmatic judgments has not been adequately theorised within language teaching. This is one reason for the disproportionate focus on pragmalinguistics over sociopragmatics within interlanguage pragmatics research (Taguchi, 2015).

In terms of epistemology, the tendency to operationalise pragmatic awareness primarily in terms of learners' awareness of L2 pragmatic norms has marginalised the role of learners' L1-based pragmatic awareness and the influence that cultural assumptions associated with the L1 (and any other additionally acquired languages) has on how language learners come to understand L2 pragmatic phenomena as meaningful (Cenoz, 2007). Whilst it is not unreasonable to posit a central role for cognitive processes such as noticing in the development of pragmatic awareness, what comes to be noticed by learners is not simply a matter of input detection but is also crucially dependent on the kinds of sociocultural assumptions that guide

learners when they attempt to interpret the significance of the context of interaction and what is said amongst participants. In other words, what learners actually notice depends partially on what they are primed to notice based on their L1-based pragmatic awareness (Liddicoat, 2006) and other assumptions about the material and social world. It can also be assumed that what learners notice about the L2 also comes to be referenced against L1 knowledge. The tendency within an interlanguage-based perspective on learning to treat learners as developing native speakers rather than multilingual individuals has had a significant constraining effect on the development of a theoretical lens for understanding the nature of pragmatic awareness and its development from a more multilingual and intercultural perspective (c.f. Safont & Portolés, 2015), particularly in regard to the sociopragmatic domain.

Pedagogical literature on interlanguage pragmatics often advocates reflection on cross-cultural pragmatic differences (e.g. Eslami, 2005; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Li & Gao, 2017), but the pragmatic awareness that might be generated from such processes is primarily discussed as a means of avoiding unintended negative transfer rather than generating multilingual and intercultural insights. Due to the emphasis on language as a system that constitutes a significant part of the interlanguage legacy within SLA, cultural and intercultural influences have tended to remain outside the remit of interlanguage pragmatics. Therefore, there is an important question at this point as to how insights drawn from intercultural pragmatics could contribute to an enlarged conception of pragmatic knowledge/awareness within L2 pragmatics learning and teaching. Clearly, such a large question cannot be completely tackled within the scope of one paper. What I will aim to do in the next section is to draw on key insights from sociocultural and intercultural pragmatics regarding links between culture and pragmatic judgments that help elaborate the sociopragmatic domain of language use, and then consider the implications of these insights for how pragmatic awareness is understood.

Unpacking the sociopragmatic domain within an intercultural perspective

In order to theoretically enhance the language ontology that underpins conceptions of pragmatic awareness, it is crucial to unpack the sociopragmatic domain with reference to recent perspectives on pragmatic norms in sociocultural and intercultural pragmatics. These perspectives attempt to foreground the evaluations of language use made from the first-order perspective of language users rather than simply seeing norms in terms of systemic pragmatic conventions (e.g. Kádár & Haugh, 2013; Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2016). This is not simply a matter of surveying individuals on the situational language use that they regard as appropriate or inappropriate, but involves close attention to the ways that speakers make judgments about the social and moral qualities of others on the basis of the way they communicate. In other words, the focus is on interpersonal evaluation on the basis of pragmatic triggers. Kádár & Haugh (2013:61) explain that “interpersonal evaluations involve casting persons or relationships into certain valenced categories according to some kind of perceived normative scale or frame of reference”. Interpersonal interaction is permeated by explicit and implicit evaluation of language use in terms of meta-pragmatic categories such as polite/impolite, direct/indirect, friendly/unfriendly, sincere/insincere etc., which appeal not simply to notions of linguistic appropriateness in a narrow sense but to preferred ways of being in the world vis-à-vis others. Such terms can be seen as constituting meta-pragmatic frames in that they provide ways of attributing morally charged characteristics to instances of language use and of placing language users into morally valenced categories (Author 2). The notion of moral valence here implies that to place a speaker in the category of ‘sincere’ or ‘polite’ for example is to attribute

a positive characteristic to an individual, whereas to evaluate a speaker of 'insincere' or 'impolite' would be to attribute a negative characteristic.

Inevitably, interpersonal evaluations are informed by a range of assumptions concerning the interpersonal rights and responsibilities of individuals in roles and relationships, which are constantly calibrated by cultural discourses and ideologies around notions such as care, kindness, fairness, loyalty, authority, and a range of other moral foundations (see Haidt & Kesebir 2010). For example, a claim that a particular instance of language use is 'impolite' is not simply recognising that the language use is unconventional but rather than it commits a moral violation by failing to attend to the 'face', 'dignity', 'status', 'gender' etc. of the interlocutor, which is considered valuable within broader cultural discourses on interpersonal relations and potentially also resonates with deep-seated cultural beliefs and values (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2016). In this sense, one of the main ways that pragmatics interfaces with culture is through the moral order that individuals consciously and unconsciously invoke when evaluating self and others. That is, individuals draw on culturally derived cognitive resources (e.g. schemas for roles, rights and obligations in interpersonal relations, normative knowledge of speech act realisation strategies etc.) developed through one's history of interpersonal interactions for making judgments about self and others in social and moral terms (Author 2). This is not to imply that individuals from the same national background will necessarily converge in the ways they make pragmatic judgments, but rather that there is likely to be shared recourse to broad frames of reference and discourses on interpersonal relationships and preferred social behavior that are ideologically constructed within and beyond the nation (e.g., through media, education, folk-pragmatic discourses etc.) (Jaffe, 2009; Verschueren, 2004).

Whilst interpersonal evaluation is a salient aspect of all human interaction, there are particular dynamics that come into play in intercultural encounters. Work in intercultural pragmatics has supported the findings of interactional sociolinguists (Gumperz et al., 1979; Sarangi, 1994) that there is a very thin line between evaluations of language and evaluations of people, and it is not uncommon to slip from one to the other, particularly in intercultural encounters (e.g. Mak & Chui, 2013; Spencer-Oatey & Xing, 2003). One of the reasons this comes about is that the evaluation of L2 language use and users is frequently mediated by cognitive resources largely anchored in experiences interacting in one's native linguistic and cultural environment (Dewaele, 2018; Kecskes, 2014). It is well attested now that individuals frequently apply L1-based notions of preferred pragmatic behaviour when interpreting the pragmatics of an L2, but may not be aware that they are doing so or necessarily see it as problematic to do so (Ishihara & Tarone, 2009; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2016). When ideologically sanctioned assumptions drawn from one's own culture appear not to work or appear to be in conflict with those of other L2 users, it is common to cast the other into the category of 'strange' or worse (though positive evaluations are also possible). The ethnocentric judgment of L2 users on the basis of unacknowledged assumptions is not only mediated by L1-based pragmatic assumptions but also by ideologically constructed perceptions (e.g. stereotypes) of own and other cultural groups (Menard-Warwick & Leung, 2017). These ideologically constructed perceptions tend to take the form of essentialist notions that particular cultural groups uniquely embody characteristics such as 'politeness', 'shyness', 'aggressiveness', 'indirectness' etc. (Holliday 2011), and therefore when one speaker interprets an interlocutor from a different cultural group as 'rude' or 'friendly', such attributions are frequently informed by pragmatic assumptions filtered through the lens of out-group stereotypes (Roberts, 1998). Thus, pragmatic

interpretation is not simply a linguistic or sociocultural process but also a social psychological one.

Such processes of interpersonal evaluation are not limited to intercultural interactions but are also an inevitable part of the L2 learning process, particularly when learners engage with L2 pragmatic features that diverge noticeably from the L1 and may represent different assumptions about social relations (Author & Other 2). In the process of pragmatics learning, L2 learners draw on existing assumptions regarding situational language use, the degree of power and distance of given role relationships, the scope of the rights and obligations of individuals in particular relationships, as well as norms associated with the realisation of particular speech acts. These assumptions mediate the ways learners interpret the L2 pragmatic contexts and features they are exposed to in teaching materials, the way they orient to performance tasks in the classroom, as well as the ways they make sense of their own interactional experiences inside and outside the classroom (Author 2). As discussed by Ishihara & Tarone (2009), for individuals from a background in which egalitarian ideologies are dominant, it can be a difficult experience to learn the pragmatics of an L2 which places more emphasis on hierarchical distinctions, particularly if an individual's own deep-seated and ideologically sanctioned assumptions are brought into awareness and questioned for the first time. Such an encounter with pragmatic differences does not necessarily lead to a careful and reflective analysis, but rather can trigger strong cognitive and emotional reactions in language learners which trigger ethnocentric judgments and stereotypical reasoning (Author & Other 2). What this means is that the particular norms and assumptions that drive the L2 pragmatic judgments of learners often remain unarticulated and out of awareness.

In expanding the notion of pragmatic awareness within language learning, it is crucial for more emphasis to be placed on interpersonal evaluations, particularly from the interpretive viewpoint of learners – how do language learners make judgments about other L2 speakers, and how do they justify their evaluations? How do assumptions attached to L1 pragmatics influence the interpretation of L2 pragmatics? How do ideologically constructed views of self and other influence the interpretation of L2 pragmatics? Most importantly, how can reflection on such aspects lead to awareness of links between culturally derived assumptions about language use in context and interpersonal evaluation? In looking at pragmatic awareness from this perspective, the focus is not necessarily on whether learners are aware of L2 pragmatic norms but on reflexive awareness of the foundations of their own pragmatic judgments. In the section below, I will present extracts of classroom discourse from an EFL classroom in Japan which shows some of the ways in which awareness of links between language use, cultural assumptions, and ideological perceptions become collaboratively constructed through meta-pragmatic reflection. Both of these extracts are taken from a classroom of four intermediate learners who were taking a special course on English communication and intercultural awareness taught by the author of this paper in Tokyo in 2009.

Extract 1

The extract below presents classroom discussion involving two Japanese students of English in their early twenties and their teacher (this author) who is also competent in Japanese. Whilst these students were studying English, the focus of the discussion here is on thanking behaviour in the Japanese language, particularly the difference between two linguistic forms which are conventionally utilised for thanking but under different constraints. The students and teacher

work together to explore not only contextual constraints on the use of these forms but also part of the underlying cultural logic in terms of a Japanese emic value.

- 1: Teacher So, just before we were thinking about the differences between “*sumimasen*” for “Thank you” and “*arigatou gozaimashita*”. During the break have you thought about this any more? What are you thinking Seiji?
- 2: Seiji Um, I think its difference comes from hierarchy.
- 3: Teacher What kind of hierarchy? Age?
- 4: Seiji Yeah, or situation. Like I imagined that if the inferior gave some gifts to superior, superior might say “*arigatou gozaimasu*”. And in contrast, a superior gave something to an inferior, an inferior might say “*sumimasen*”. I just think so. So I think it is because of hierarchy system.
- 5: Teacher Okay. So do you think that they are just saying “I’m sorry” or the feeling is really “I’m sorry”?
- 6: Seiji feeling.....um little bit feel sorry because superior is thinking of the inferior. Superior *ga kidukai wo shimeshita* (The superior showed concern/care), so it’s....inferior might think...
- 7: Teacher It’s not necessary?
- 8: Seiji ..um no...if I were inferior I feel I let him to do so. So it’s little bit impolite.
- 9: Teacher So you think it’s connected to the idea of *kidukai*? So basically you are saying that somebody in a lower position should not make someone in a higher position do *kidukai*. But if they do, then you should say “*sumimasen*”?
- 10: Seiji It just my opinion but I think so.
- 11: Teacher Could you agree with that Tai?
- 12: Tai Yeah, I often do the mistakes when I got the gift. I don’t know this comes from my personality or experience, but when someone give me the gift I say “*arigatou gozaimasu*” most times.
- 13: Teacher Do you think other Japanese people would think it’s bad?
- 14: Tai Hmm, maybe, yes I think so.

The discussion here is essentially oriented towards exploring the ‘differences’ between these two forms, as although both of them can be used for thanking, ‘*sumimasen*’ is also used for apologising, which is one of the reasons that the speech acts of thanking and apologising often overlap in Japanese discourse (Sugimoto, 1998). In Line 2, Seiji puts forward the idea that what distinguishes the two forms is ‘hierarchy’, which he attempts to unpack in Line 4 after being prompted by the teacher in Line 3. In representing the notion of hierarchy, he invokes the notion of ‘superior’ and ‘inferior’, and then explains that the choice of forms depends on who is giving

and receiving the gift. His interpretation of the pragmatic norm is that the receipt of a gift or favour by an 'inferior' would normally require the use of 'sumimasen'. Thus, at this point in the discussion, a pragmatic norm has been articulated in terms of a basic form-function-context mapping, but the link with underlying assumptions and values has not yet emerged. In order to deepen the meta-pragmatic analysis, in Line 5 the teacher encourages the students to consider whether the use of 'sumimasen' embodies a feeling of being sorry even when used for thanking. Seiji indicates that he does believe that there is such a feeling and that this feeling derives from the fact that the superior 'showed concern/care' (kidukai) to the inferior (Line 6) and that it would be 'a little bit impolite' to receive such concern/attentiveness without hesitation. Thus, the emerging interpretation is that 'sumimasen' is used to index recognition of the fact that the 'superior's' expression of good will to an 'inferior' through gift giving is not expected or taken for granted. This formulation is pulled together by the teacher on the basis of previous comments in Line 9. Interestingly, in Line 12 and Line 14, Tai positions himself as deviant vis-à-vis these norms and underlying cultural ideas due to a tendency to use 'arigatou gozaimasu' in most cases, which is closer to a pure expression of thanks.

Within this short discussion, it can be seen that reflection on differences between the two linguistic forms leads to the identification of 'hierarchy' as a crucial contextual element, framed in terms of social positioning as 'superior' or 'inferior', which is a dominant frame for understanding Japanese interpersonal relations (Nakane, 1967; Yokose & Hasegawa, 2010). Whilst the precise cultural meaning of these relational categories is not problematised in this case, they are used to construct an account of thanking norms in which speakers need to show explicit recognition of the 'kidukai' directed at them, relative to their status within the hierarchical social order. In constructing this account, the students appeal to ideologies of hierarchy within Japanese society which construct social relations in terms of 'superior' and 'inferior' and generate different politeness expectations based on the display or receipt of 'kidukai' in these relative social positions (Matsumoto & Okamoto, 2003). Thus, whilst the students are clearly considering what is pragmatically appropriate, awareness of the sociopragmatic domain goes beyond looking at 'hierarchy' as an external variable that determines language forms. Rather, through the talk they draw explicit links between pragmatolinguistic realisation patterns, the speech act of thanking, and broader cultural logic surrounding the ethic of 'kidukai', which is nested in the ideologically sustained hierarchical system of Japanese social relations (Ide, 2006).

Extract 2

The particular reflective discussion presented in the extract below occurred within a classroom activity in which students were encouraged to reflect on critical incidents they had encountered when travelling overseas, particularly instances in which they had encountered pragmatic behaviour that stood out to them as being different to what they normally encounter in Japan.

1. Misato: So, when I went to San Fransisco the staff asked me, "Where did you come from, Tokyo or Osaka?" I said, "I from Osaka", and last he asked me to shake hands.
2. Tai: Weird
3. Misato: Yeah, at last I feel a little strange. So because he asked me many things.
4. Tai: Yeah, I think maybe he was too friendly.
5. Misato: And it because I foreigner and tourist so maybe he was too friendly, I think.
6. Tai: Ah, but I think the relationship between customer and staff is equal in....

7. Misato: Abroad?
8. Tai: Abroad? Yeah, I don't know about that, but maybe Western.
9. Teacher: Yeah, that's an interesting point. I actually feel like sometimes the shop staff are up here and the customer is down here. Sometimes in Australia you are friendly to them but they are not so friendly to you. It's kind of reversed.
10. Misato: I think it's because in Japan, there is the concept of "*okyakusama wa kamisama*" (The customer is a God). So many customers are arrogant, I think.
11. Tai: Ah, but this idea "Customer is God" was not natural in Japan because I learned that in tourism class. One hotel manager thought up have this idea and ordered his staff, "Don't be rude to customer". Until then, the staff say something impolite to customer like, "This is not my job". But now, even some job is not staff's job, they do it.

The discussion is launched by Misato who begins constructing a descriptive account of an interactional episode she experienced in a customer-service context whilst visiting San Francisco. Misato does not take up a particular evaluative stance regarding the greetings of the shop staff, but Tai does immediately in line 2, where he labels the behaviour as 'weird'. This functions to initiate an evaluative trajectory within the classroom talk between lines 2-5. Misato follows up with her own evaluation of 'strange' in line 3, which she justifies by referring to the fact that the store staff had deviated from the expected script by asking a lot of questions irrelevant to the normal interactional goals in such a context. It is important to note that Tai's contribution in line 4 constitutes both an evaluative and an explanatory account, in that he locates the cause of the behaviour in the overfriendliness of this particular staff member. This shifts in line 5 as Misato instead begins to consider the possibility that the staff member had behaved in a friendly way especially for her based on his recognition of her status as a 'foreigner' and 'tourist' in this interaction. Here, thus, she moves away from seeing his behaviour as a reflection of a norm to an interactional accommodation based on consideration of role-relations in this particular context. Nevertheless, at this point, her assessment of 'too friendly' remains in place.

In line 6, Tai's use of 'Ah, but' signals a partial disagreement (Pomerantz, 1984), and helps to shift the focus away from assessment of this particular individual and more towards a cultural explanation based on consideration of a relatively 'equal' relationship between customers and staff in the West. Here, he interprets that an underlying cultural value of equality allows for store staff to adopt a more personal footing in interactions with customers, which may be relevant to Misato's experience. This turn towards cultural explanation is also carried on by the teacher, who voices his perspective that an ethos of equality can even lead to customers being friendlier than service staff, based on his experiences in Australia. Following this comment, in line 10 Misato takes the focus of the discussion to the Japanese context, specifically referencing the well-known Japanese cultural idiom '*okyakusama wa kamisama*' as a factor shaping customer behaviour in service contexts, not simply in that staff are expected to be polite but that it can lead conversely to rude behaviour from customers. In line 11, Tai again leads with 'Ah, but' to add an alternative perspective, namely that the notion of '*okyakusama wa kamisama*' was strategically propagated within the hospitality industry to serve the ideological purpose of constructing hierarchy between customers and service providers, thereby engendering stronger obligations to provide good service. In this sense, he exposes that this commonly cited cultural idiom within Japan is not a reflection of an enduring

Japanese politeness, but is rather a linguistic artefact that helps construct an ideology of politeness within the customer-service domain (Jaffe, 2009). His comment, therefore, adds an important layer of complexity to the reflective discussion, as it signals that taken-for-granted assumptions about the normality of role-based behaviour and politeness itself require scrutiny.

Throughout this classroom talk, it can be seen that the collaborative analysis and reflection which started from description of a short interactional episode came to encompass (negative) interpersonal evaluations, followed by consideration of the potential impact of role relations on behaviour, potentially different orientations towards hierarchy/equality, as well as ideological notions which shape the perception of role schemas and expectations around politeness (Nishida, 1999). Clearly, in considering this classroom discussion from the perspective of pragmatic awareness, the argument here is not that learners have necessarily become aware of a particular pragmatic norm but rather have used interpersonal evaluation as a trigger for reflection which generates insights into some of the ways that cultural assumptions inform perceptions of appropriate behaviour in context. As discussed earlier in this paper, learners' interpretations of L2 pragmatics in context are frequently influenced by underlying assumptions about appropriate behaviour that are associated with the L1. In the classroom talk above, it surfaces that the assessments of the staff member as 'too friendly' were largely informed by perceptions of what is normal in Japanese customer service interaction, which is a greater degree of distance. This then led to reflection on why distance tends to be preferred in Japanese customer service interaction. Thus, when learners engage in meta-pragmatic reflection, these cultural assumptions can be teased out and made explicit as learners attempt to justify their interpretations, generate cultural explanations, and make cross-cultural comparisons. Even when the focus in the classroom appears to be on the L2, learners will implicitly and explicitly engage knowledge of other languages and cultures as a reference point for interpreting the material they are exposed to and constructing comparisons that serve to elaborate the emerging interpretations.

Within the context of the kind of interpretive and reflective processes seen in the extracts above, pragmatic awareness itself is a complex, multi-layered phenomenon that is inherently intercultural in nature. However, the prevailing view of pragmatic awareness in interlanguage pragmatics that focuses primarily on whether learners 'know' L2 norms cannot encapsulate this complexity. My argument is that we need to move beyond a view of pragmatic awareness that is built upon a view of language use as a tight normative system centred primarily on form-function-context mappings which are evaluated with reference to the central criterion of 'appropriateness'. Awareness of the more tightly constrained pragmatic conventions within a language that can be definitively evaluated as appropriate or inappropriate is of course important. However, in line with theoretical insights from sociocultural and intercultural pragmatics and the data presented above, more recognition is needed of the fact that the interpretation and learning of L2 pragmatics is closely linked to broader processes of interpersonal evaluation. These evaluations clearly extend beyond simple judgments as to whether language use is 'appropriate' or not, and rather serve to attribute particular social characteristics to people, such as 'friendly' or 'strange' etc. Whilst it has long been taken for granted in the field that pragmatics is a form of 'social action', it is clearly also a form of *moral action* in that it is through language use that individuals are interpreted through the lens of morally valenced categories (Kádár & Haugh, 2013). As discussed and illustrated above, these evaluations are dependent on a range of layered assumptions about roles, relationships and the

perceived cultural characteristics of particular groups. In conceptualising the ‘object’ of pragmatic awareness thus, it is important to include not only form-function-context mappings but also the linkages between norms, assumptions, ideologies, and values as discursively articulated by speakers (Author 2). In other words, beyond understanding of L2 pragmatic conventions and common perceptions of appropriate language use, learners also need to be critically aware of how interpersonal evaluations work and how normative language use is ideologically constructed -- i.e. subject to rationalisations that invoke moral presuppositions (Kádár, 2017). This provides a way of fleshing out the sociopragmatic aspects of awareness in terms of learners’ recognition that context is not a static entity that sits outside language and determines how it should be used but rather is something that is ideologically and culturally constructed, and ultimately dependent on the interpretation of individual speakers in concrete instances of language use.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have begun by critiquing the narrow orientation to pragmatic awareness within interlanguage pragmatics, particularly in regards to the sociopragmatic domain, and then gone on to suggest how recent insights from intercultural pragmatics could offer new possibilities for looking at pragmatic awareness from an enlarged multilingual and intercultural perspective.

It is clear that the pragmatic interpretation of an L2 invokes cultural assumptions associated with multiple languages, particularly when interpersonal evaluations are involved. Whilst the field of interlanguage pragmatics has tended to focus predominantly on learners’ L2 pragmatic awareness as an independent entity, more empirical attention is needed now to the ways that assumptions associated with the pragmatics of different languages influence each other in the process of learning. Within this conception, the reflexive dimensions of awareness and the ability to bring existing assumptions into awareness are particularly important. This is not to argue that pragmatic awareness should be seen exclusively in terms of reflexive awareness, but that there is a need to incorporate such reflexive elements into our theoretical understanding of pragmatic awareness (Author 2). I should acknowledge that this paper has only scratched the surface of hugely complex issues, but it is clear that there is a need for greater synthesis between sociocultural and intercultural pragmatics, social psychology, and language teaching in order to develop more nuanced understanding of how culture is implicated in language use and how individuals’ pragmatic awareness can serve as a resource in L2 pragmatic development. This means recognising that the multilingual mind is a place where cultural assumptions associated with different languages interact in complex ways to inform learners’ perceptions of interpersonal behaviour and their interpretation of self and other as social and moral beings. In this sense, it could be said that engagement with L2 pragmatics is itself ‘intercultural pragmatics’.

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Author & Other 2

Author & Other 3

Other 2 & Author

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