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Introduction: Second Language Pragmatics for Intercultural Understanding

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Introduction

The field of second language pragmatics (L2 pragmatics) has achieved increased prominence in recent years, with a notable flurry of monographs and edited volumes, and the establishment of new journals that emphasise pedagogical issues. Historically, the teaching and learning of second language pragmatics has been strongly influenced by the interlanguage perspective within SLA, which is heavily informed by structuralist views of language and acquisitionist metaphors of learning which focus on the attainment of nativelike proficiency in the target language. This has meant that the research agenda in second language pragmatics has long been dominated by attempts to understand divergences between L2 learners and “native speakers” in pragmatic comprehension and production and how learners can be encouraged to move towards the native baseline (McConachy & Spencer-Oatey, 2020). This does not necessarily mean that language teachers themselves have always sought to impose the norms of native speakers on their learners, but it does mean that the dominant theoretical understandings of learning, embodied in popular conceptions of pragmatic competence, persistently define learning in terms of nativelikeness (see also Tajeddin & Alemi, 2021). This has presented difficulties for theorizing the teaching and learning of pragmatics as a process whereby learners’ existing linguistic knowledge and understandings of the social world dynamically interact with new input and experiences and lead to deepened understanding of the role of culture in the negotiation of meaning and interpersonal relationships.

Building on recent work within an intercultural perspective (e.g., Kecskes, 2014; Liddicoat, 2006, 2017, Liddicoat & McConachy, 2019; McConachy, 2013, 2018, 2019, 2021; McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016), this book seeks to promote the development of intercultural understanding as a clear goal for the teaching and learning of pragmatics in second and foreign language education. We seek to achieve this by bringing into prominence the dynamic ways in which language learners and teachers interpret language use as a form of culturally embedded practice and mediate between cultural understandings associated with the use of different languages within the learning process (Liddicoat, 2014; McConachy & Liddicoat 2016). This does not mean ignoring the importance of developing functional language abilities. It means looking at the nature of these abilities, their purpose, and their development through a lens that recognises the interlingual and intercultural nature of learning and the challenges and opportunities that such learning entails. In this volume, we define *intercultural understanding* as awareness of and respect for diverse (linguistic) behaviours, beliefs, and values in different linguistic and cultural communities, particularly awareness of how assumptions about social relationships, social categorisations, and power interface with speakers’ judgments about language use in context.

In the following sections, we explain the significance of such a view of intercultural understanding for the teaching and learning of pragmatics in second language education and address a number of conceptual barriers to theorizing intercultural understanding within this field.

Conceptual barriers to theorizing intercultural understanding in L2 pragmatics

The potential for theorizing intercultural understanding in the teaching and learning of pragmatics has been constrained in a number of ways, both at the level of ontology of language and epistemology of learning (McConachy, 2019). The issue of ontology of language pertains to how “pragmatics” itself is conceptualized. Research and pedagogy in L2 pragmatics has frequently oriented towards the pragmatic domain as a contextually constrained system from which individuals are required to make “appropriate” linguistic selections to carry out social actions. As one example, such a construction of pragmatics in language education can be seen in the work of Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000), who explain pragmatics for language teachers as:

conventional, culturally appropriate and socially acceptable ways of interacting. These rules of appropriacy result in regular and expected behaviours in language use (p. 20).

In this quote, pragmatics is expressed as a codified and regularised set of practices that can be drawn on to construct utterances. While these authors acknowledge variability in speech acts, they describe such variability in terms of variations in “contexts, situations, and settings within which such language uses occur” (p. 19). The implication is that language learners need to learn to attend to context and then make the right matches of the conventions to context. These matches are normally assumed to represent the “consensus” within a particular national or regional variety of the target language, though, in reality, this is mostly an assumed rather than a robust empirically supported consensus (c.f. Alcón-Soler & Safont Jordà, 2008). Such an ontology of language has typically been placed within a view of learning which entails coming to understand and accommodate to native-speaker norms of appropriateness. In this sense, the teaching of pragmatics has often conformed to the prescriptivist tradition in language education in which learners are presented with linguistic practices that they should adhere to and their learning is understood in terms of their adherence to those rules. Each language is treated as a closed, autonomous system, frequently located within a single cultural context, and pragmatic abilities are treated as language and culture internal. One consequence of this is that pragmatic knowledge and pragmatic practices are seen as compartmentalised and interrelationships between learners’ existing pragmatics knowledge and practices and those which they need to acquire in the new language are downplayed or treated only in terms of the ways they support or impede the development of a new enculturated system (Kecskes, 2014). Existing pragmatic knowledge is thus understood within a model of interlanguage development in which transfer of pragmatics abilities has the potential to be positive where practices of language use or negative where the norms of the two languages do not align and so L1 practices produce pragmatic errors (see Félix-Brasdefer, 2020).

More recently, there has been an increase in research that attempts to move away from narrow conceptions of pragmatic norms and emphasise the importance of learner subjectivity, agency, and awareness in the learning process (e.g., Ishihara, 2019; Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018; van Compernelle, 2014; van Compernelle & McGregor, 2016). With respect to the notion of pragmatic norms, Taguchi & Roever (2017) argue that “[t]he form-context relationship is considered to be fundamentally adaptive and contingent. There is no one-to-one, straightforward correspondence between the form and context that applies to all situational dynamics (p.7). Such recognition is important as it opens up the possibility for considering diverse understandings of what it means to use language appropriately in context and how language learners can be encouraged to develop a sense of ownership over their own language use. This is congruent with the increased attention to learner subjectivity, issues such as pragmatic resistance, and the importance of empowering learners to make their own decisions about how they want to interact (Ishihara, 2019). We, note, however, that it is difficult to understand such phenomena without theorizing the ways that learners’ culturally shaped understandings of languages and the social world dynamically interact in the learning process. This necessitates the adoption of an explicitly interlingual and intercultural perspective on learning.

An additional constraint here is that models of intercultural learning tend to background the role of language (Dervin & Liddicoat, 2013). In many models of constructs such as intercultural competence or intercultural communicative competence, reference to language is often omitted or is considered somewhat generically as part of communication. This invisibility of languages in theorising about intercultural communication renders the task of connecting language and the intercultural more difficult and misrecognizes the fundamental place of language in any form of communication and the fundamentally interlinguistic nature of most intercultural communication. Even in models where language-related competences are incorporated, such as in Byram and Zarate’s model of intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997, 2021; Byram & Zarate, 1994), intercultural competence is separated out from language components. This separation of the intercultural from language competences obscures the points at which the ability to understand and use language itself necessitates awareness of how culture shapes meaning, as is specifically the case in pragmatics. This theoretical obscurity has consequences for teachers, who may similarly struggle to bring pragmatics and intercultural learning together. Schauer (this volume) suggests that for the English language teachers in her study, the main focus for the intercultural was on abstract psychological phenomena such as adaptability and empathy or on concrete cultural products and practices such as food and festivals, and that language was often marginalised in their conceptualisations of the intercultural, except possibly for politeness. Schauer’s study and that by Ishihara and Porcelatto (this volume) also suggest that many teachers do not recognise or understand pragmatics as an area of language, something which is also found in other studies (e.g., Savvidou & Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2019).

The combination of these two issues means that pragmatics, as a significant point of interconnection between language and culture, has often been marginalised both within

language education and the broader field of intercultural communication. Moving towards the goal of intercultural understanding in the teaching and learning of pragmatics necessitates bringing pragmatics and culture together within a view of learning that is centered on the interpretation of meaning within an interlingual and intercultural perspective. This entails moving away from code-oriented views of pragmatics that oversimplify issues of pragmatic appropriateness in order to highlight the dynamic ways that language learners interpret and evaluate language use.

L2 pragmatics learning as a process of intercultural understanding

In this volume, we adopt a view of language as a form of culturally embedded practice within which patterns of language use represent pathways for meaning established by and for cultural groups at different scales of social organisation, from small cultural groups such as families and local clubs to larger scale groups such as national and transnational communities of practice. In this sense, we wish to emphasize that what is regarded as “normative” language use depends on the assumptions about social roles and relationships that become activated within different situational and interpersonal contexts (c.f. Holliday’s 2019, p.11 notion of “cultural environment”). Pragmatic patterns are central to the coordination of activities and the ongoing construction and maintenance of interpersonal relations, and thus are deeply intertwined not only with speakers’ (unconscious) assumptions about social roles and relationships but also their moral intuitions concerning what constitutes “appropriate” behavior. This means that language learners’ conceptions of pragmatic norms are a point of emotional investment and also a foundation of moral judgments of self and others (McConachy, 2019).

As has become increasingly highlighted in interdisciplinary work in the field of intercultural pragmatics, speakers’ sense as to the relative appropriateness of linguistic choices in different situational and interpersonal contexts is not simply shaped by expectations about what is likely to happen but by what speakers think *should* happen (Spencer-Oatey & Xing, 2019). Speakers’ sense about what is likely to be said and how it is likely to be said in a given context can be seen in terms of what the social psychologist Robert Cialdini (2012, p.297) calls *descriptive norms*. He contrasts these with *injunctive norms*, which relate to morally charged expectations. In using the simple binary of “appropriate/inappropriate” to frame pragmatic norms, research in L2 pragmatics has tended not to differentiate those norms that derive from simple regularity of occurrence from those that are closely tied to the value judgments of speakers and thus locate their basis in the wider universe of cultural values and ideologies, what is increasingly referred to as “the moral order” in pragmatics scholarship (see Garcés-Conejos Blitvich & Kádár, 2021). The moral order can be understood in a broad sense as the amalgam of normative assumptions and principles that individuals use to ground their perceptions (often post-facto) of how things should be and the evaluative judgments of concrete behaviors and people that arise from these perceptions (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021). It not only includes the verbalizable norms that pertain to everyday behavior but also the broader values evoked, for example, when norms are violated. This can include appeals to notions such as “politeness”, “fairness”, “dignity”, “honesty”, “loyalty”, and many other such moralized notions which are variably understood both within and across cultures.

The recognition that pragmatic judgments of appropriateness are not simply neutral “linguistic” judgments is highly consequential, as it helps bring attention to the ways that social categorizations and power relationships are implicated in how language use comes to be labelled as “(im)polite”, “(un)professional”, “(im)modest”, and how these attributes become easily mapped onto individual speakers or entire groups (McConachy, 2019). As mentioned earlier, much treatment of norms in the L2 pragmatics literature seems to assume a consensus perspective, within which there is a high degree of agreement about what the norms are and that these norms do not inherently privilege any groups or power interests in society more than others. This obscures the fact that pragmatic judgments that relate to the “appropriateness” of carrying out speech acts such as requests, offers, apologies etc., are inevitably influenced by social cognition and referenced against as the group affiliations and social identity characteristics that speakers see themselves and their interlocutors as having (Pizziconi, this volume; Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021). Judgments about the appropriateness of language use are referenced against social categorizations related to gender, age, region, and cultural designations at the national (e.g., “English culture”, “Indonesian culture”) supranational (“Asian culture”, “European culture) or even hemispheric (“Western”, “Eastern’) (McConachy, 2018; Pizziconi, this volume). Judgments are thus inevitably linked to categories whose boundaries, assumed membership, and attributes are subject to ideological definition and thus constantly under the influence of dominant discourses circulating within social spaces (McConachy, 2019). As can be seen in Savić & Myrset’s chapter in this volume, such processes are evident even in the metapragmatic reflections of primary learners.

This point is of particular importance for the language learner, who is likely to be at a disadvantage when it comes to negotiating relationships within new linguistic territory due to the potential to be categorized (e.g., “foreigner”, “non-native speaker”) and judged as unusual from the vantagepoint of native speakers of the target language (Liddicoat, 2016). This is not to say that such recognition has been absent from the literature on L2 pragmatics. In fact, the situation is quite the contrary. Within much of the literature, the rationale for incorporating a focus on pragmatics is very frequently tied to the need for the learner to avoid “cross cultural pragmatic failure” (e.g., often referring to Thomas, 1983), which essentially means saying something which might upset a native speaker. What might be called the “dominant evaluative lens” within L2 pragmatics has been one in which the language learner needs to be fearful of the potential for negative judgment from a native speaker and thus has to furnish oneself with the knowledge and skills necessary for avoiding offence. In this way, the rationale for teaching pragmatics is cast within a “discourse of risk” and an almost unilateral burden placed on the learner to mitigate the risk in order to carry on successful interpersonal relations (McConachy, 2019). Needless to say, such a framing is highly problematic from the perspective of power relations, as the burden for making communication work is not something that can be solely placed on L2 speakers (c.f. Tajeddin’s 2021 call for a “critical applied pragmatics”; Yates, 2004).

The fact that the dominant evaluative lens within the field has been constructed in favour of the native speaker has meant that conventional understandings of constructs used in L2 pragmatics such as pragmatic competence and (meta)pragmatic awareness neglect the fact that

learners, too, are actively interpreting communication and making evaluations of others' pragmatic behaviors. Pragmatic competence continues to be defined primarily in terms of what learners can "do" with language, and (meta)pragmatic awareness is still often framed in terms of whether learners can approximate native speaker judgments (see McConachy & Spencer-Oatey, 2020). As Sanchez-Hernandez and Maiz Arevalo (this volume) note, this idea has also been central not only to teaching but also to the ways that pragmatic abilities have been assessed and, in reality, reveals an *intralingual* and *intracultural* rather than an *interlingual* and *intercultural* approach to pragmatics. Within such a framing, the ability to conform to L2 norms, or at least show awareness of them, is considered *ipso facto* evidence of pragmatic competence and, by implication, cultural understanding. The multilingualism of learners is thus often either ignored or treated as an element that influences L2 pragmatic ability either positively or negatively. Kecskes (2014), however, has argued that learners' pragmatic competence is more correctly understood as a unitary construct that incorporates learners' different languages and that the relationship between pragmatic knowledge associated with these languages is synergistic rather than separated in the mind. He points out that when pragmatic competence is defined as the ability to communicate successfully in an L2 with interlocutors of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, it is difficult to draw a clear distinction between pragmatic competence and intercultural competence. Pragmatic competence entails drawing on the languages at one's disposal to create meanings that serve the communicative and relational needs of those party to a given encounter. Such a communicative process involves not only taking into account pre-existing sociocultural and pragmatic norms relevant to a given setting or relational context but also being willing to adapt to potentially unexpected communicative practices and ways of orienting towards social relationships and being able to use awareness of language and culture to create mutual understanding (Kecskes, 2015). Such processes, in our view, are also central to the learning of pragmatics.

This volume sees the learning of pragmatics as a process which involves negotiating new ways of behaving and coming to operate within alternative frameworks for conceptualizing social reality and managing social relationships. This involves learning to negotiate one's positioning as a user of a new language and establishing a sense of legitimacy in one's own eyes and the eyes of others (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). A central understanding here is that the learning of pragmatics is not a psychologically neutral process – it is a process that deeply engages the whole person as a social and moral being, as pragmatics itself is tied up with the enactment of social practices and judgments about "appropriate" behavior within social contexts and relationships. It involves dealing with the adaptive demands of needing to carry out social acts through language in ways which may conflict with one's existing identity or assumptions about social relationships, and thus it involves learning to manage potentially ethnocentric judgments towards new pragmatic behaviours and people (McConachy, 2018; Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021). The learning of pragmatics is a challenging yet potentially enriching process whereby the individual expands their capacity for understanding both how meaning making processes influence social relationships and how assumptions about social relationships influence how people interpret and use language in context. It is within such a view that we argue that the ultimate goal of teaching and learning pragmatics should be the development of *intercultural*

understanding. Essentially, this locates pragmatics within a humanistically oriented conception of learning where success is defined relative to the enrichment of human understanding and appreciation of difference, beyond any reductionist notions of “effective” communication defined according to the essentialized standards of one particular group. As we argue in this book, intercultural understanding is not an “add on” to language learning but is rather central to the learner’s ability to understand and construct meaning (in interaction) with individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

The decision to foreground the notion of “understanding” (as opposed to “competence”) is due to our desire to emphasize that the process of learning and using a second language is driven by interpretation and reflection (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). The process of interpretation is not simply the bringing to awareness a singular correct interpretation of a meaning as in Schleiermacher’s (1977) understanding of interpretation. We would argue that such a view of interpretation, which ultimately would require an assimilation of the understanding of one participant to that of another, lies outside what is meant by adopting an intercultural position. It is nonetheless a common view of interpretation found in the literature on interlanguage pragmatics, which assumes that native-speakers’ interpretations of language use are always the correct resolution of pragmatic differences and assimilation to such interpretations is “appropriate” language use. Rather, the process of interpretation involved in developing intercultural understanding is one that acknowledges that interpretation is inherently diverse and situated both in the local context in which communication occurs and in the life histories and languages of the participants (Gadamer, 1960). Understanding, thus, does not aim at identifying a singular correct meaning but rather acknowledging and bring into relationship the meanings that are present for participants, understanding how these meanings come into being, and recognising their value for the participants involved (Gadamer, 1960; Ricoeur, 1965). It is engagement with the plurality of interpretation that lies at the heart of intercultural understanding. Intercultural understanding is not a state of simply “knowing”; it is a dynamic process whereby the individual is constantly making attempts to interpret language use in light of the social categorisations, social relationships, and power dynamics relevant to the context. In this sense, “understanding” should be seen as a verb rather than a state – as a process of engagement that is forever in development.

One major point of emphasis in the chapters in this volume is that the process of developing intercultural understanding through the learning of pragmatics is closely connected to the development of an interculturally oriented metapragmatic awareness (McConachy, 2013; McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016). In an interculturally oriented metapragmatic awareness, it is important that such awareness go beyond a focus only on the linguistic aspects of language in use and recognition of the linguistic action being performed by particular utterances in context (Mey, 1993; Verschuren, 2000). It also involves more than mapping linguistic forms onto context and awareness of the contextual constraints on linguistic resources for achieving particular pragmatic acts and the influence of context on judgments of pragmatic appropriateness (Kinging & Farrell, 2004; Safont Jordá, 2003). These views of metapragmatic awareness focus on the idea of appropriateness and see awareness in terms of knowing what is appropriate in which context, but do not necessarily emphasize consideration

of why language forms are appropriate or not in context (McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016). They also tend to focus on pragmatic knowledge as something that exists within languages rather than across languages and so do not capture the ways that knowledge is available to and used by multilingual speakers. In intercultural contexts, superficially similar language forms can have significantly different interpretations in context and individuals bring into interaction cultural concepts and frameworks relevant to different languages to arrive at interpretations of pragmatic acts. The conceptual frameworks which underlie languages in a speaker's repertoire inevitably influence each other and as capability in a language develops and interactional experiences diversify, individuals construct interpretations which bring together cultural meanings from originally disparate frameworks in unique ways (Kesckes, 2014). To negotiate such divergences in interpretation, language learners need to understand why forms have particular communicative effects in different languages and cultural contexts rather than simply knowing that something is or is not appropriate. In this sense, metapragmatic awareness has parallels with Kramsch's (2006, 2011) symbolic competence in that it involves understanding of the process of communicating and developing ways of intervening in communication to challenge and redefine established meanings. As discussed in the chapters in this volume, such an understanding of metapragmatic awareness has important implications not only for learning but also for teaching, teacher education, and assessment of pragmatic abilities within an intercultural framing.

If metapragmatic awareness is viewed as intercultural, pragmatics teaching needs to move beyond prescriptivism and rules of thumb for using linguistic forms (van Compernelle, 2014). A prescriptivist view of pragmatics not only adopts an inherently within language rather than a cross-language perspective but also seeks to render out the complexity and the situatedness of language in use and in so doing emphasises the what of language use not the why. It thus forms a barrier to developing metapragmatic awareness rather than providing a resource for it. Moreover, such prescriptions are always inevitably rules of thumb as they are unsystematic, incomplete and may be framed in ways that can mislead learners in understanding how to use language (Liddicoat, 2006). Rather than viewing the acquisition of pragmatics as the assimilation of rules, it is important to consider how experiences of language in use can form the basis of a new understanding of the communicative potential of language and its relationship to cultural contexts; that is, learning needs to include a hermeneutic dimension in which learners come to understand language in use and develop insight into the ways in which communication happens and the contributions of languages and cultures to meaning making and interpretation (Liddicoat, Forthcoming a; McConachy, 2018). In this sense, in teaching second language pragmatics for intercultural understanding, it is important to develop metapragmatic awareness that goes beyond acquiring the knowledge necessary to function according to the norms of the other. Metapragmatic awareness needs to be seen as a more reflexive form of understanding that involves deeper awareness of how language functions in the creation of interpersonal meaning within and across languages and cultures (McConachy, 2018).

The development of metapragmatic awareness involves helping learners (and teachers) to build understanding and insight through reflection on experiences of language in use and one's own

reactions and responses to different ways of making and interpreting meaning. This involves cultivating a willingness to reflect on the nature of one's own cognitive, affective, and behavioural tendencies, one's successful and unsuccessful communicative encounters, and one's assumptions about social relationships that affect linguistic decision-making. Processes of intercultural mediation are central to such learning, both in the sense that learners consider pragmatic phenomena across languages and cultural contexts and in the sense that teachers help learners connect their existing knowledge to new input and experiences. In this sense, this act of mediation is not simply that of being an intermediary between parties to communication in order to solve problems, but also involves making connections between contextually and culturally shaped understandings of language use within and across different languages (Liddicoat, Forthcoming-a & b). It is thus an active engagement in the processes of interpretation in which teachers and learners work to identify multiple potential meanings and understand how those meanings come into being and the act on those meanings to enable communication to proceed. As Ishihara & Porcelatto's chapter in this volume shows, processes of interpretation and reflection take on increased importance in teacher professional learning programmes that aim to develop teachers' own metapragmatic awareness and their ability to help learners explore linguistic and cultural diversity.

The development of metapragmatic awareness through processes of interpretation and reflection is not only aimed at understanding meanings and the different ways they can be constructed and interpreted but also at helping the learner consider one's future actions (McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016). In making decisions about future behaviour learners exercise agency over the own language production (Liddicoat & McConachy, 2019). In exercising agency, learners have multiple possible responses to any particular way of using language; assimilating to native-speaker norms, however these are understood, represents only one possible valid way of deciding on future language use. As Ishihara and Porcellato (this volume) note, resistance to such norms is also agentic, and there are also numerous possibilities lying between the two extremes, such as those described by Liddicoat and McConachy (2019). In thinking about learners' agency in language use, it is important to bear in mind that agency is not an exercise of free will but rather a mediated capacity to act (Ahearn, 2001); that is agency is constrained by the social contexts and social structures in which individuals act. In language use, these constraints are closely linked to speakers' ability to achieve communicative, identity and social goals. If we consider a learners' language repertoire to be a set of deployable symbolic tools for achieving desirable outcomes (Swidler, 1986), then agency is mediated by whether or not the ways of speaking learned in one language have the capacity to achieve the same goals in another. If particular ways of speaking are incompatible with particular goals, then continuing to use those practice to achieve those goals will be unsuccessful. In order to exercise agency, therefore, learners need to understand the multiple and sometimes contradictory affordances of the symbolic tools at their disposal. That is, they need metapragmatic awareness of the possible uses and contextualised meanings of the linguistic resources on which they can draw for constructing communicative actions and this metapragmatic awareness requires an understanding of why particular ways of communicating achieve particular goals and not only what ways of speaking could be deployed in particular contexts.

Overview of the Volume

Chapters in this volume analyse teachers' and learners' ways of making sense of pragmatics, how their assumptions about social relationships impact on their perceptions of language use, and how reflection on pragmatic judgments opens up possibilities for developing intercultural understanding. They also show, however, that this is not necessarily a smooth or unproblematic process. For teachers and learners alike, deep engagement with pragmatics can mean confronting language ideologies and cultural stereotypes that give shape to judgments of appropriateness, thus experiencing challenges to one's own preferred ways of looking at social relationships and one's own identity. The chapters all point to different ways in which reflection on language use provides opportunities for exploring pragmatic forms and practices in a context-sensitive way, continuing to ask whether practices and meanings in one context apply in others, and bringing into awareness the assumptions that give shape to the meaning-making process.

The volume opens with a chapter by Troy McConachy and Hanako Fujino which looks at how learners of L2 Japanese from the UK developed their understandings of politeness practices within the context of negotiating interpersonal connections and personal positioning during study abroad in Japan. The analysis within this chapter foregrounds the different ways that learners' understandings of Japanese speech styles was shaped by their own relational goals and sense of belonging within different networks of social relations, and that the learners real communicative needs often led them to question the politeness rules they had internalized in formal learning. The authors argue that the teaching of L2 Japanese politeness should promote more reflexive exploration of how learners' themselves perceive politeness practices relative to their participation in different social spheres and their relational and identity-related goals.

In Chapter 2, Milica Savić and Anders Myrset examine metapragmatic discussions conducted by 9-, 11- and 13-year-old learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) in a Norwegian primary school to consider the manifestations of young learners' metapragmatic awareness in terms of the various interpretative frames, assumptions, cultural stereotypes and evaluative stances articulated by these learners in the process of reflecting on the speech act of requesting. This chapter shows that learners' sense of what is important when making a request is closely related to their intergroup perceptions; namely, their perspective that people in England are more polite, and that these perceptions are justified with reference to linguistic elements such as the verbosity of English language discourse as well as non-linguistic elements such as tea drinking culture. The chapter effectively demonstrates that, even for young learners, the process of deciding how to communicate appropriately in English engages a broad range of linguistic and cultural knowledge, as well as stereotypical perceptions of cultural groups.

In Chapter 3, Barbara Pizziconi looks at the impact of macro cultural categorizations on the interpretation of pragmatic and cultural behavior, analysing how the notions of "Asia" and the "West" functioned as dominant categorial frames in the sense-making of one learner of Japanese as she navigated her own complex identity issues and pragmatic learning. This chapter brings to the fore the powerful impact that macro categorizations have on how learners

attribute meaning to target language pragmatic features and the forms of resistance that surface when there is a perceived mismatch between a learner's desired identity characteristics and cultural affiliations and those that become projected onto the target language. Importantly, this chapter shows that the meanings of macro categories are not stable but subject to redefinition in accordance with the learner's desire to deal with identity-related tensions and construct new identity positioning.

The fourth chapter, authored by Peju Alfred and Chantelle Warner, explores the potential of a literary pragmatics approach for helping learners of L2 German explore their own and others' assumptions about social and linguistic norms. The chapter analyses learners' engagement with the short poem "du verstehn" by Manfred Sandheigl (1984), which was used to subvert the emphasis on dominant celebration practices in a unit on festivals and holidays in the designated textbook. Close analysis of students' responses to the text during phases of digital social reading and in a post-lesson survey show that literary dialogue can provide a rich space for learners to explore and reflect on the meaning making potentials of different pragmatic and stylistic choices and the ways in which they position the fictional and readerly addressees of the text.

In Chapter 5, Andrew Barke and Momoyo Shimazu look at how pair and small group metapragmatic discussion between L1 and L2 speakers of Japanese facilitated exploration of the meaning potential of Japanese addressee honorifics and plain forms beyond the ideologically sanctioned rules that tend to be salient in language textbooks and common-sense understandings of Japanese politeness. The authors look specifically at how collaborative reflection on TV drama excerpts facilitated the co-construction of interpretations of pragmatic choices in ways that allowed for the articulation and negotiation of diverse assumptions and frames of understanding. Importantly, this chapter shows that this negotiation was not simply a matter of L1 speakers telling L2 speakers what the correct choices are and why. Rather, L1 and L2 speakers mobilized their respective assumptions about social relationships and language use to create interpretative synergies within the discussion that contributed to metapragmatic and intercultural awareness.

In Chapter 6, Natalia Morollón-Martí reports on the design and implementation of a Concept-Based Instruction (CBI) intervention to teach the concept of (im)politeness to Danish university students studying L2 Spanish. The chapter discusses key design principles in the intervention and analyses one learner's verbalizations as she works with the pragmatic concepts of *context*, *role*, *social effect*, *face-work*, *autonomy* and *affiliation* to aid in the internalization of the concept of (im)politeness. The analysis shows how these concepts gradually mediated the learner's understanding of (im)politeness in Spanish by helping her represent her emerging understanding of the context-sensitivity of meaning and the different ways that speakers make strategic choices in order to attend to face needs and cultural expectations. This chapter shows that cross-cultural comparisons played an important role in helping the learner probe the cultural understandings of social roles and broader values that shape pragmatic behavior and that these were also central to the learner's exploration of her own cultural positioning.

In Chapter 7, Noriko Ishihara and Adriana Porcellato look at how language teacher education can support teachers to adopt a non-essentialist approach to L2 pragmatics instruction that supports the development of their learners' translingual agency. The chapter examines teachers' co-constructed understanding of contextual variability in pragmatic language use and multilingual pragmatics as it occurred in a teachers' summer institute specifically focused on instructional pragmatics and intercultural awareness. The analysis shows that although teachers initially struggled to make sense of the notion of "pragmatics" as a formal concept, processes of metapragmatic reflection and discussion led teachers to the realization that pragmatics was embedded in their intuitive understandings of language use and some of their existing classroom practices. The chapter argues for the particular importance of dealing with pragmatic variation and pragmatic resistance as part of broader processes of developing the metapragmatic awareness and translingual agency of language teachers.

Chapter 8 sustains the focus on language teachers with a contribution from Gila A. Schauer on how in-service EFL teachers in Germany perceive the notion of intercultural competence and its relevance to the teaching of pragmatics. The chapter reports on the results of an online survey administered to 64 teachers in three different teaching contexts primary (level 1), secondary (level 2) and higher/adult (level 3) which focused on the language-related aspects they considered important for their teaching, as well as how they evaluated the IC components in their teaching materials. The analysis shows that the majority of EFL teachers consider intercultural competence to be a multi-faceted construct including both language and non-language related components, and that they view knowledge of politeness norms and the ability to use situationally appropriate language in the foreign language as part of intercultural competence. However, it also identified different emphases on linguistic vs non-linguistic elements of intercultural competence depending on the level of schooling. This chapter speaks to the difficulty that many teachers have in reconciling pragmatic and intercultural domains and suggests the need for further research on links between teachers' perceptions and their teaching realities, including available materials.

In Chapter 9, Ariadna Sanchez Hernandez & Carmen Maiz-Arevalo consider the assessment of intercultural competence and pragmatic ability from an integrated perspective, focusing in particular on the potential for using metapragmatic awareness to link these two perspectives within assessment. The authors explore the assessment of Spanish EFL students' metapragmatic awareness and intercultural adaptability through critical reflections of intercultural incidents according to three broad levels: initial ICC level, intermediate ICC level, and mature ICC level. The chapter identifies concrete indicators of pragmalinguistic awareness, sociopragmatic awareness, and intercultural adaptability at each of these levels. The analysis shows that the majority of learners were able to recognize pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic causes of misunderstanding only at an "initial ICC" level and that the potential for divergent perceptions of social relationships was explored less frequently as a cause of misunderstanding than more overt linguistic issues. It also shows that learners sometimes struggled to move beyond their immediate interpretations of critical incidents in order to embrace multiple perspectives.

Taken together, the chapters push us to see the learning and teaching of the pragmatics of a second language as a highly nuanced process that is dynamically shaped by learners' and teachers' assumptions about language and social reality and processes of interpretation and reflection whereby these assumptions become externalized for inspection. Chapters, thus, push us to recognize that the learning of pragmatics is educationally significant in its own right – it has the potential to lead to deeper thinking about language, culture, and the ways that they interrelate to shape communication, and to intercultural understanding.

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