Consciousness-raising in L2 Pragmatics through Project-based Instruction

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1. Introduction

This paper reports an attempt to explicitly teach second language (henceforth L2) pragmatics to Japanese university students who are learners of English as a foreign language. Recent studies in Interlanguage Pragmatics indicate that explicit instruction of L2 pragmatics is necessary and effective in foreign language teaching. At the same time, content-based instruction, project-based learning, and process syllabus are thought to be effective approaches to facilitating L2 communicative skills. These approaches share the characteristics of involving learners in using language as a means of attaining specific goals, and putting emphasis on the process of learning in addition to the product of learning. In this study, therefore, an attempt was made to enhance learners' awareness of the role of pragmatics in L2 communication through project-based instruction.
2. Literature Review

2.1. Interlanguage Pragmatics and the effect of explicit instruction

According to the Course of Study designated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the goals of foreign language education in junior-high and high schools in Japan are to enhance attitudes towards active communication and to develop practical communicative competence, which is the ability to comprehend and convey information and intentions. In the age of globalization, demands for communicative skills in English have become increasingly higher. Therefore, English education at university level should also aim to enhance learners’ communicative competence.

In spite of such goals and current needs for English skills, instruction of L2 pragmatics is not very common in foreign language education in Japan. Canale and Swain (1980) claim that communicative competence consists of grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Sociolinguistic competence is further divided into sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence, which includes the ability to comprehend and convey linguistic intentions appropriately according to social contexts. Bachman’s model (1990) defines Language Competence, an essential element of Communicative Language Ability, as comprised of organizational competence and pragmatic competence. Pragmatic competence in Bachman’s model consists of illocutionary competence, that is, the ability to comprehend and convey language functions appropriately in contexts, and sociolinguistic competence, that is, the ability to differentiate among various language forms according to sociolinguistic norms.

Research in L2 acquisition indicates that pragmatics is an area that is especially prone to cross-linguistic influence. There are numerous studies that report instances of L2 errors caused by sociopragmatic transfer as well as pragmalinguistic transfer (Jarvis & Pavlenko 2007). Sociopragmatic transfer results from transferring sociopragmatic decisions on whether or not a particular speech act should be carried out and which speech act is considered appropriate in different social contexts according to the norms of the specific speech community, whereas, pragmalinguistic transfer results from transferring the specific linguistic expressions which realize particular language functions (Ellis 2008). Empirical studies which have examined Japanese learners of English include Takahashi (1996) and Takahashi & Beebe (1993). Takahashi (1996) showed that even relatively advanced learners of English transferred Japanese sociopragmatic norms in expressing indirect requests, and tended to choose English structures
that resembled polite forms in Japanese. In Olstain’s study (1983), learners of Hebrew tended to apologize more frequently than native speakers. Takahashi and Beebe (1993) showed that Japanese learners of English were likely to decide which L2 expressions to use based on the social status of the interlocutor rather than social distance, reflecting Japanese sociolinguistic norms. Eisenstein & Bodman (1993) also report instances of pragmalinguistic errors, in which Japanese learners of English use apologetic expressions to realize gratitude.

It has been noted that linguistic errors caused by lack of organizational competence such as knowledge in pronunciation, vocabulary, or morphosyntax, are usually interpreted by native speakers as stemming from incompetent L2 skills, whereas errors caused by lack of pragmatic competence lead to the risk of the speaker being misunderstood as rude or impolite rather than linguistically incompetent (Gass & Selinker 2008). Such misunderstanding could result in serious intercultural communication failures. Thus, enhancing pragmatic competence is a crucial factor in developing communicative competence in L2. Despite this, school textbooks for English education in Japanese junior high and high schools rarely treat pragmatic aspects of English in any systematic way.

According to L2 acquisition studies, pragmatic competence does not develop in parallel with grammatical competence. Hence, even advanced learners of L2 can lack pragmatic competence, especially in a foreign language environment. Although the pragmatic aspects of L2 are better learned by learners in the L2 environment, it is still considered difficult to acquire pragmatic competence to a native-like level (Kasper & Rose 2002). Taguchi (2011) reports that even in language immersion programs in which students have plenty of opportunities for L2 input and interaction, pragmatic competence seems to develop more slowly than organizational competence.

In a foreign language environment such as Japan, the goal of English education may not necessarily be to attain native-level competence. Nevertheless, it seems quite important for learners to become aware of how pragmatic errors may lead to communicative failure. Schmidt’s (1990, 2001) Noticing Hypothesis stipulates that noticing is a prerequisite for language acquisition. Cross-linguistic differences in pragmatics and discourse level features are less salient compared to differences in phonology, morphosyntax, and lexicon. Therefore, it seems particularly important to assist learners in noticing the differences (Schmidt 1993).

Studies that have investigated the effect of instruction on developing L2 pragmatic competence generally imply that instruction is effective. It has also been shown that explicit
Instruction is more effective than merely exposing learners to various exemplars of expressions used in different contexts. Explicit instruction of L2 pragmatics has also been shown to be more effective when it is accompanied by abundant communicative practice (Soler & Martinex-Flor 2008).

2.2. Project-based learning

Up to the 1980s Communicative Language Teaching tended to focus basically on meaning, with the expectation that language forms will develop through meaningful use of language in communicative situations. However, more recent approaches of Communicative Language Teaching, namely Focus on Form instruction, has recognized the importance of explicitly focusing on teaching particular forms which could influence communication and/or which seem particularly problematic to the learners. Task-based instruction (Willis & Willis 2007, Ellis 2003), task activities (Takashima 2011) and project-based instruction, all of which are types of Focus on Form instruction, have been proved to be effective. These are teaching approaches that involve learners in problem-solving activities that necessitate the use of language to attain a particular goal. They also emphasize negotiation of meaning and experiential learning through communicative activities. However, tasks and projects differ in that, while tasks are commonly activities which are completed during a single lesson and focus on attaining a linguistic or communicative goal, projects could take several weeks to even a year to complete and focus on specific contents. These contents may be themes such as environmental issues or social problems, or particular fields such as anthropology or biotechnology.

Project-based learning (henceforth PBL) can take various forms according to what content it focuses on, how long the project continues, and how much control the teacher has over the content of the project. There are, however, common characteristics shared by all PBL. In PBL:
- Different language skills are incorporated and not just the product but also the process of achieving the goal is emphasized (Haines 1989).
- Activities are learner-centered, encouraging learner autonomy and subjectivity thus, the learning content is relatively flexible (Skehan 1998).
- Learners can be expected to develop a sense of responsibility and mutual trust through cooperative learning (Fried-Booth 2002).

Furthermore, empirical studies examining the effectiveness of PBL have shown that learners are able to engage in authentic linguistic experience, and hence, learners’ motivation, involvement,
curiosity, imaginative ability, and confidence tend to rise. Learners also become more capable of planning their own study and engage in autonomous learning, resulting in improved problem-solving ability and critical analysis skills (Hedge 2000).

The current study takes the aforementioned characteristics of PBL into consideration and adopts Stoller’s (2006: 24) definition of PBL in planning the course syllabus; namely, PBL should (a) have a process and product orientation; (b) be defined, at least in part, by students, to encourage student ownership in the project; (c) extend over a period of time (rather than a single class session); (d) encourage the natural integration of skills; (e) make a dual commitment to language and content learning; (f) oblige the students to work in groups and on their own; (g) require students to take some responsibility for their own learning through the gathering, processing, and reporting of information from target language resources; (h) require teachers and students to assume new roles and responsibilities; (i) result in a tangible final product; and (j) conclude with student reflections on both the process and the product.

Based on the above definition of PBL, an attempt was made to examine the effectiveness of instruction that aims to encourage learners’ noticing of the importance of pragmatic competence in L2 communication.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The participants were 70 second-year university students majoring in English. The students were divided into three classes, two of which experienced PBL during the first semester, and one during the second semester of the academic year 2011. Each semester lasted for 15 weeks. The course was compulsory for the English majors to fulfill their requirements for graduation. Students’ English proficiency level was intermediate to advanced, with TOEIC-IP scores ranging from 640 to 990, and an average of 832.

3.2. Course syllabus and objectives

All lessons were conducted in English only. In Lesson 1, the course aim, content, and requirements were described, followed by a short lecture defining key terms, such as
“pragmatics” and “projects.” Finally, a pre-course questionnaire was conducted to find out about students' English learning background, their speaking skills based on a self-evaluation of Can-do statements developed based on the Common European Framework of Reference (henceforth CEFR), and their experience of some common speech acts in English (See Appendix A).

During Lessons 2 to 5, preparatory activities for PBL were implemented: namely, (1) reading introductory articles that explained basic concepts such as pragmatics, language function, Politeness Theory, and speech act, followed by activities to summarize important points of the articles and discussing in groups; (2) watching online materials, TV programs, movies, etc. outside class, and bringing lists of useful expressions for various language functions to class for comparison and discussion; and (3) forming groups, each with a specific language function in focus for PBL.

Aside from the introductory reading materials given to the whole class, each group was provided with a short excerpt from Yoshida (2000) that explained the particular function the group had its focus on. All groups were instructed to search for additional English and Japanese sources that could be used for their research. The teacher assisted the students when groups had difficulty finding relevant references and/or when the references they found were too technical to understand. In addition, audiovisual examples of a few language functions were provided for the students, and they were instructed to search for more based on their own interests and group goals.

During Lessons 6 to 13, a short lecture was given at the beginning of each lesson to review the procedures for carrying out the project and to clarify what tasks were to be completed during each lesson and in preparation for the following lesson. A worksheet was distributed every lesson to guide the student activities (See Appendix B for a sample worksheet). After the lecture, students worked in groups to conduct research on a particular function of their choice. The language functions that were chosen comprised of six speech acts: requests, compliments, refusals, complaints, disagreements, and apologies.

For research, students were required to (1) do a literature review, (2) gather and examine oral samples collected from media, (3) decide on what aspect of the particular language function to focus on as a research topic, (4) prepare and conduct interviews to obtain answers to their research topic, (5) analyze replies to the interviews, (6) summarize their results, and prepare for a group presentation at the end of the semester.

Students were allowed to refer to Japanese sources as well as English ones, but were
encouraged to use at least a few English sources for the literature review. Whether the source was in Japanese or English, students were required to write an English summary of the important information gained from references. The aim of the literature review was to encourage students to search for references on their own, read for information pertaining to their research topic, and summarize information in their own words.

Students were instructed to watch various English programs and movies individually to collect sample oral data exemplifying the language function of their focus. The expectation was that students would enjoy watching English programs and movies that they had chosen themselves, which in turn, would increase their exposure to English input outside of class. It was also expected that students would listen to English analytically compared to simply viewing as a leisure activity.

The project involved a number of different activities including gathering data through literature review and collecting oral data from media, developing a group research question, preparing questionnaires and/or interview questions to find answers to the research question, analyzing collected data, figuring out an answer to the research question, and putting the research findings together in the form of a presentation. It was hoped that these activities would also contribute to enhancing the students’ academic research skills.

Interview participants were native English speakers and Japanese learners of English that the students knew personally as well as English Advisors at the English Learning Center which the students could visit on appointment. Students were expected to use English to communicate with these participants, and therefore have the opportunity to use English outside of class. For the final presentation, students were required to prepare a handout with PowerPoint, and were not allowed to “read out” scripts. Thus, they were encouraged to rehearse their presentation so that they could present it while maintaining eye contact with the audience.

In Lessons 14 and 15, students presented their research findings to the entire class. Each group was allotted 20 minutes for the presentation, followed by a 10-minute question and answer session and some time to fill out a peer evaluation sheet (See Appendix C). Students evaluated their classmates’ presentations and self-evaluated their own presentations.

At the very end of the final lesson, students were asked to answer a post-course questionnaire, consisting of seven items. Students assessed themselves in terms of how involved they were in the PBL based on a five-point Likert scale; 5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=somewhat agree, 2=somewhat disagree, 1=disagree. The items were as follows:
1) I contributed to the group project very much by actively collecting data and discussing issues with group members.
2) I watched/listened to oral sources (e.g. movies, dramas, online materials, etc.) for many hours for the project.
3) I searched for and read many references (e.g. articles, books, etc.) for the project.
4) I always tried to use English during group activities to improve my speaking skills.
5) I spent a lot of time, carefully preparing for the presentation.
6) Overall, I participated very actively in the group project.
7) Overall, I performed very well in the group presentation.

Finally, as a term paper, students were required to write a 1000-word essay of the title, “What I learned from PBL.” The entire course syllabus was planned with the aim of raising learners’ awareness of the importance of pragmatic competence in L2 communication through conducting research on language functions, and learning through the process of research, incorporating all four language skills in and outside of classroom, and enhancing practical and academic language skills in English.

4. Results
4.1. Pre-course questionnaire

The pre-course questionnaire revealed that most of the English learners self-evaluated their speaking skills as being at the B1 or B2 level according to their replies to Can-do statements based on CEFR. None of them had experienced PBL before, but all of them had experience of group work such as group activities and group presentations. Only a limited number of students seemed to have a rich experience of various speech acts in English. In Lesson 2 it was also revealed that few of them had explicit knowledge of the distinction between language form and function.

In general, they seemed to lack pragmatic knowledge compared to grammatical knowledge in English.

4.2. Group activities and presentations

Below are some example research topics that the students addressed in the final presentations. The list includes one example topic for each of the six language functions that were selected:
- How to improve English education: Teaching requests communicatively
- Native speaker vs. non-native speaker compliments
- The influence of social distance on refusing heavy requests
- Power relationship and complaints in business situations
- How to disagree verbally and non-verbally
- The semantic formula for apologizing politely in English

We can see that the topics that students chose to research were quite substantial, with a focus on foreign language education, a comparison of native vs. nonnative performance, an investigation of semantic formulas and non-verbal means of expressing language functions, and analyses of how sociolinguistic factors such as social status in business scenes, social distance, and degree of imposition may affect the choice of expressions. Different groups also came up with ideas to present their points effectively such as by including a role play, asking the audience to participate in a mini-task, and providing a useful list of helpful expressions depending on different social context.

There were cases in which students seemed to overgeneralize their findings or present certain native speaker expressions as prescriptive norms. To this, the teacher suggested that pragmatic decisions vary from person to person and from context to context even among native speakers, so that, compared to areas such as grammar and vocabulary, it is often difficult to decide which expression is the “best/correct” one to use in a certain situation. A class discussion was held to reconfirm the variability of pragmatic rules and to talk about whether it is really necessary to follow those rules, if any, as a nonnative speaker with one’s own first language identity. It was concluded that although it is important to know the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic differences between first and second language cultures to enable smooth communication, it may not always be obligatory for language learners to comply with the native speaker norms.

4.3. Post-course questionnaire

Students self-evaluated how involved they were in the PBL. In response to item 1 (contribution to the group project and active participation), the majority of students answered strongly agree or agree, with an average reply of 4.2 on the five-point Likert scale. It is worth mentioning that none of the students in any of the three classes dropped out during the semester. Although it is true that most students at the institution where the study was conducted are
relatively motivated and serious about passing a compulsory class, it is quite usual for several students to drop out after a semester. There are also so-called repeaters who have dropped out of class the previous year and are taking the class again. A few of these students tend to drop out again the following year. However, nobody dropped out of any of the classes that were based on PBL, and all the repeaters seemed to be actively involved in the group activity, taking responsibility for fulfilling their roles as a member of a research group. The fact that item 5 (time spent on preparing for presentation) and item 6 (active involvement in group project) in the post-course questionnaire were also rated highly, with an average response of 4.3 for item 5 and 4.1 for item 6, supports the abovementioned observation.

At the same time, however, two major shortcomings of the current PBL were revealed. All lessons were conducted in English and students were encouraged to use English all the time in class, but according to the replies to item 4 (use of English during group activities), quite a few students used Japanese from time to time for discussions in group activities, with an average rating of 2.8. Use of Japanese was frequently observed during group discussions especially when the students were trying to solve a difficult problem or attempting an analysis of complicated data. There was also variability according to groups, with some groups using English most of the time, whereas others seemed to resort more to Japanese. This was partly due to the speaking proficiency of the group members and the group dynamics that resulted from a combination of students of different speaking abilities. Overall, it was apparent that discussions involving meta-level analysis of data were difficult for the students to conduct solely in English. Thus, although the students used English in class discussions and presentations, this was not always true when it came to individual group discussions.

Another activity that appeared to be difficult for the learners was the literature review. The majority of the students answered “somewhat agree” to item 3 (searched and read many references), with an average rating of 3.6. Students reported that they sometimes had difficulty finding relevant sources, and that some of the sources which they did find were too technical for them to understand and incorporate effectively into their survey. In comparison, the learners’ reply to item 2 (listened to/watched many oral sources) was higher, with an average rating of 4.0. These results suggest that students spent more time listening to oral sources than reading written sources for the project outside of class.

Finally, responses to item 7 (overall performance in final presentation) had an average of 3.7, implying that learners were more or less satisfied with their own performance in the
presentations but were not highly satisfied. Some points of improvement were mentioned by the students themselves. These included statements such as, “We should have used more tables and figures to make our point clear,” “We could have created a more appealing PowerPoint handout,” “We didn’t rehearse enough before our presentation, so we weren’t quite sure what our group members were going to say,” and “We weren’t able to handle the question and answer session very well.” All of these statements pertain to how they should have presented rather than what they should have presented. Thus, the learners seemed less satisfied with their performance in the presentation compared to their research results.

4.4. Reflective essays

As their term paper, students were required to write a reflective essay on what they thought they had learned from the PBL experience. The following are comments that appeared most frequently in these essays:

- I learned that there are many variations of expressions to realize the same language function.
- I became aware of differences between native speakers’ speech and my own speech that I didn’t notice before.
- Expressions differ according to social status, social distance, the degree of importance of the topic, the degree of imposition caused by the speech act, and the speaker’s age, gender, social experience, and geographical origin among other factors.
- It was difficult to plan interview items so that we could collect answers to the research questions we addressed. It was also difficult to conduct the interviews the way we wanted to.
- We had a hard time finding appropriate references for our group topic that were not too technical.
- It was a challenge to analyze data and deduce a general tendency or rule out of them.
- I have done some group work in English classes before, but it was my first time to experience PBL which required group work for an extended period of time. I felt responsible for contributing to the group project.
- I am going to try to learn new English expressions from now on by taking into consideration the variety of expressions according to different social settings.
- It was very interesting and helpful to learn practical expressions by watching many movies and programs for samples of expressions. I would like to continue doing this listening activity on my own.
In sum, learners became aware of the variety of L2 expressions used to realize language functions according to a range of social, linguistic, and contextual factors. They also seemed to become aware of the difficulty of conducting research. Furthermore, some of them appeared to be encouraged to work on their own to increase exposure to L2 use in context.

5. Discussion

This section discusses the achievements and limitations of the current attempt to implement PBL in the EFL classroom as a means of raising students’ awareness of the importance of pragmatic competence in L2 communication.

PBL proved to be successful in that positive effects claimed in previous research were confirmed, namely:

- Learners incorporated all four skills of English language in order to carry out their projects.
- Learners were able to notice the importance of pragmatic competence in L2 communication.
- Through the experience of deciding on their research topic, searching for and reviewing relevant literature, collecting oral data, analyzing data, and presenting their research findings, learners gained hands-on experience in conducting academic research, which most likely has enhanced their abilities in problem-solving and critical analysis.
- Projects were learner-centered and encouraged autonomous learning in and outside the classroom, resulting in a higher sense of responsibility, cooperation, self-organization, and mutual trust. Most learners seemed to participate actively in the learning process.
- Surveys conducted outside of class such as the literature review and collecting oral samples gave learners additional opportunities to be exposed to and use English.
- The interviews with native speakers and the use of English for communication in class gave learners a chance to try out their English, and experience authentic language use.
- Pragmatic noticing fostered learners’ willingness to communicate in English and encouraged them to learn more English expressions together with their language functions in context.

At the same time, some of the limitations that were recognized include the following:

- Due to the fact the research topics became rather technical, the literature review proved to be a challenge to some of the learners, and resulted in an insufficient review of relevant literature. Thus, the time spent on reading outside of class was rather limited compared to the time spent on listening to English.
- Although class discussions, presentations, and interviews with native speakers of English
were all conducted in English, some groups had a tendency to resort to using Japanese during group activities. In particular, they seemed to use more Japanese when they were trying to deal with meta-level discussion which involved an objective analysis of pragmatic samples.

- Some learners stereotyped or overgeneralized responses obtained from native speaker informants. It was necessary to tell them that pragmatic decisions involve more variation than other language levels related to organizational competence.

- Learners' consciousness towards L2 pragmatics was raised through PBL and learners were capable of acquiring some knowledge in L2 pragmatics. However, this does not guarantee that their ability to perform speech acts has improved. More communicative practice in real context would be essential in enhancing the learners’ ability to actually employ appropriate speech acts in various situations.

Some of the limitations mentioned above can be reduced by improving coordination across different English language courses that the students must take. As for developing reading skills, students are taking courses in English literature, linguistics, and cultural and area studies, in which they are trained to read extensively and intensively. Research skills, especially skills involved in searching for relevant literature is enhanced in other language courses, such as the writing class which focuses on essay and research paper writing and in the speaking class which focuses on speech and debate. In another speaking class, students have opportunities to work on tasks, some of which involve practicing speech acts, and an activity in which they are required to record their speech, transcribe and correct their output, and perform again to improve both language accuracy and fluency. With a closer coordination among these different English courses, I believe more chances to practice the pragmatic aspects of language that the students have learned through PBL can be provided. Such an initiative would be especially helpful in a curriculum in which each English course is offered only once a week. Furthermore, more time could be allotted in the PBL class to practicing various speech acts. It would be crucial to provide learners with as many opportunities as possible to use English within the limitations of a foreign language learning environment.

Since the PBL class was part of a compulsory program that the students were required to take, the class had the added advantage of having learners who were mostly motivated to learn English and who had already mastered the basic grammar and vocabulary of English. Comments in the reflective essays written by the students revealed that the PBL class contributed
to their willingness to learn more about L2 pragmatics and study new English expressions with pragmatics in mind. Thus, it is expected that more autonomous learning will take place as a result of their experience in PBL.

Self-evaluation of the students’ final presentation included comments that expressed students’ desire to be able to perform better in the presentation. Therefore, another cycle of PBL with an additional opportunity to give presentations as well as more time spent on practicing speech acts in the form of task-based learning should be effective in improving learners’ research skills as well as facilitating their ability to perform speech acts appropriately in English.

It should be noted, however, that the teacher’s burden in a PBL class could become quite heavy. Although the current PBL class was mostly learner-centered, it did not mean that the teacher could just stand by and watch students work on their projects. Students had to be guided through various steps of the research in order to complete their projects. Hence, support in accordance to the needs of individual groups was given throughout the course. This meant helping students decide on research topics, suggesting relevant literature to review, correcting their written summaries, supporting them in preparing interview questions, and giving feedback on their analyses of collected data, among other needs-based assistance. The teacher was also required to have knowledge in interlanguage pragmatics so that projects could be directed at focusing on areas that are especially problematic to L2 learners.

Since the current PBL involved dealing with a content related to a particular field of study, it was also difficult to keep a good balance between learning about the content, gaining research skills, and improving language performance in the L2. There was a tendency for the content-learning and research skills development to be given more priority than language practice. Incorporating task-based learning to increase the amount of communicative practice in PBL would most likely help find a better balance.

Note

1) The English Language Center is located in the university and supports students’ English learning by providing e-learning materials, speaking sessions, an AV library, and writing workshops. English Advisors are language tutors who teach at the English Language Center. Students can meet these English Advisors in speaking sessions upon appointment. The students in the current PBL class conducted their interviews in these speaking sessions.
[Appendix A: Pre-Course Questionnaire]

Q1: About yourself

1.1 Name in Kanji (   ) in Roman letters (   )
1.2 Student ID: (   )
1.3 E-mail address: (   )
1.4 Interested course: ( a. 言語情報  b. 総合文化  c. 地域国際  d. 特化)
1.5 TOEIC(-IP) score: (   )/TOEFL PBT•IBT•CBT score: (   )/
   STEP[英検] level: (   )/ other standard test scores: (   )
1.6 Experience living abroad: Where? When? How long?

   

1.7 Questions/request/personal message:

   

Q2: English Communication Skills

2.1 Overall Spoken Interaction Skills

Choose the statement that best describes you. a) is the highest proficiency level.

   a) I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a
good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can
express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely.
If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the
difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.

   b) I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious
searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively
for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and
opinions with precision and relate my contribution skillfully to those of
other speakers.

   c) I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes
regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an
active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.

d) I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst traveling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).

e) I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can’t usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.

2.2 Spoken Language Quality

How well do you think you can speak in English in terms of the following aspects if the topic is not very difficult or familiar to you? [ 4=very confident / 3=relatively confident / 2=not very confident / 1=not confident at all ]

2.1.2 Fluency 4 3 2 1
2.1.3 Grammatical accuracy 4 3 2 1
2.1.4 Appropriacy according to situation (i.e. who you talk to; about what; which level of formality, etc.) 4 3 2 1

2.3 Situational Skills

① Have you ever tried the following activities in English? Choose Yes (Y) or No (N).

② What is your degree of confidence for each activity? (If you have never experienced the activity before, answer what you THINK about yourself.) Choose the number that best describes you. [ 4=very confident / 3=relatively confident / 2=not very confident / 1=not confident at all ]

2.3.1 Listening / Speaking

a) Discuss familiar topics (e.g. issues at school, everyday life, etc.) with your classmates. [ Y / N ] [ 4 3 2 1 ]

b) Negotiate with people around you about your immediate needs. [ Y / N ] [ 4 3 2 1 ]
2.3.2 Reading / Writing

a) Write E-mails on familiar topics to people around you.
   \[ Y / N \] \[ 4 \ 3 \ 2 \ 1 \]

b) Write a relatively long paper on what you are studying or are interested in (e.g. over 1000 words, or 3 pages or more on A4-size paper.)
   \[ Y / N \] \[ 4 \ 3 \ 2 \ 1 \]

c) Create PowerPoint slides.
   \[ Y / N \] \[ 4 \ 3 \ 2 \ 1 \]

d) Write a questionnaire to survey topics about what you are studying or are interested in.
   \[ Y / N \] \[ 4 \ 3 \ 2 \ 1 \]

e) Read articles and understand the main points if the topics are not very difficult or about what you are studying or are interested in.
   \[ Y / N \] \[ 4 \ 3 \ 2 \ 1 \]

f) Conduct Internet research on what you are studying or are interested in.
   \[ Y / N \] \[ 4 \ 3 \ 2 \ 1 \]

2.4 Effective language use

① Have you ever tried to communicate in English for the following purposes? Choose Yes (Y) or No (N).

② What degree of confidence do you have regarding how appropriately and effectively you can communicate for these purposes? (If you have no experience of using English for the purpose, answer what you THINK about yourself.) Choose the number that best describes you. \[ 4=very confident / 3=relatively confident / 2=not very confident / 1=not\]
③ Describe any experiences you’ve had where you faced difficulty communicating your intention appropriately or effectively. (e.g. When I was studying in the US, a friend invited me to go to a concert. I didn’t want to but I didn’t know how to refuse the invitation in a polite manner.)

a) Complement someone around you.
   [Y / N] [4 3 2 1]

b) Express your gratitude to someone who has done you a big favor.
   [Y / N] [4 3 2 1]

c) Ask somebody around you to do a big favor for you.
   [Y / N] [4 3 2 1]

d) Refuse a request or invitation from people around you.
   [Y / N] [4 3 2 1]

e) Express complaints that are likely to occur in daily life situation (e.g. wrong delivery on your purchase, broken product, poor service etc.)
   [Y / N] [4 3 2 1]

f) Apologize to people around you for a mistake you’ve made.
   [Y / N] [4 3 2 1]
g) Propose and explain something that you believe is a good idea to people around you.  
   [ Y / N ]  [ 4 3 2 1 ]

h) Disagree with an idea proposed by people around you.  
   [ Y / N ]  [ 4 3 2 1 ]

i) Please describe any other difficulty in communication or miscommunication that you've experienced in English.

2.5 Learning background

2.5.1 Project management

① Have you ever worked on a project in English under the following conditions?  Choose Yes (Y) or No (N).

② What is your degree of confidence? (If you have not done them before, answer what you THINK about yourself.)  [ 4=very confident / 3=relatively confident / 2=not very confident / 1=not confident at all ]
   a) As a team  
      [ Y / N ]  [ 4 3 2 1 ]
   b) Individually  
      [ Y / N ]  [ 4 3 2 1 ]

2.5.2 Learning Resources

Do you know learning resources available for self-studying English? (e.g. website, booklist, friends etc)  Choose the statement that best describes you.

   a) I know a lot of such resources
   b) I know some
   c) I don't know much
   d) I don't know them at all
[Appendix B: Sample Worksheet]

Listening Activity (1) ————————————————————————————————————

Watch the short dialog between Rachel and Terry in the sitcom, *Friends*, Episode 9, and fill in the blanks in the following script. Then answer the questions below.

R: Terry, I, I, I know that I haven't worked here very long, but 1)____________________, do you think 2)__________________________ on my salary?
T: An advance?
R: 3)__________________________________________ with my family.
4)____________________, every year we would go skiing in Vail* and normally my father pays for my ticket, but I've 5)____________________ started this 6)____________ independent thing, 7)____________________, which is 8)____________________ why I took this "job." (*Vail: ski resort in Colorado, U.S.A.)
T: Rachel, Rachel, sweetheart, you're a terrible, terrible waitress. Really, really awful.
R: Okay, I, I hear what you're saying. 9)_________________________. Um... but I, but I'm trying really hard, and I think I'm, I'm doing better. 10)_________________________. Does anybody need coffee?
Customers: Yeah, over here!
R: Oh, look at that.

1. What language function can you see in this dialog?

2. What is the social relationship between Rachel and Terry?

3. What expressions are used for the preparatory phase, focal stage, and final stage? List them and explain the function (i.e. the purpose for which that expression is used) of each expression.

   Preparatory phase:
   Focal stage:
   Final stage:
4. List the hedges and intensifiers that Rachel uses to effectively convey her intended message.

Figuring out pragmalinguistic rules

- General rule of thumb
  more social distance
  more asymmetry in _________________________ → more __________________
  more face-threatening (i.e. imposing) more elaborate expressions

- Compare what you would say in the following situations. How would you change the way you would ask?
  1. when you want to borrow 100 yen from a classmate that you met for the first time vs. when you want borrow 100 yen from a close friend
  2. when you want to borrow 1000 yen from a close friend vs. when you want to borrow 1000 yen from a teacher whom you know very well
  3. when you want to borrow 100 yen from a close friend vs. when you want to borrow 10,000 yen from a close friend

Starting the project: Brainstorming

- As a group, submit the following information by the end of the lesson.
  A. Group members, and e-mail addresses.
  B. Language function to focus on in the group project
  C. List as many situations where the language function in focus might be used. Also, list the expressions that might be used in each situation.

Listening Activity (2): Assignment

A. Browse through the websites introduced on the last page of this handout. Search for situations in the websites where the language function which is your project focus is being expressed. Make a list of as many situations as possible: Describe the social distance, power relation, and the relative degree of imposition/FTA (heavy vs. moderate vs. light), as well as the expressions that are used in those situations.

B. Search for additional example situations where the language function of focus is being used.
Try to find scenes from TV dramas and/or movies. Make a list of all the sources that you have searched. Find at least one clear example of the language function in use, write a script of the situation (i.e. dictation), and analyze the social distance, power relation, and relative degree of imposition of the scene as we did for the dialog in Friends in Listening Activity (1). Save the sources and bring your information to class so that you can share them with your group members later.

C. Search the library and the Internet for sources in English that might be helpful in conducting research on the language function in focus. Bring the references to class.

D. Bring your survey results for A, B, and C above to next class to share with your group members. As a group, you will summarize the group members’ survey results and use that as the foundation to prepare a questionnaire for further research.

[Appendix C: Peer Evaluation Sheet]

As an audience of the presentations, evaluate the following points based on a 5 point scale:
5=very good / 4=good / 3=mediocre / 2=rather poor / 1=very poor.

Circle the number that best reflects your impression.

Group [ ] Language function ________________________________

Was the presentation:
1. informative? (i.e. Were you able to learn something new from the presentation?)
   5 4 3 2 1

2. well-prepared?
   5 4 3 2 1

3. based on good team work?
   5 4 3 2 1

4. clearly focused / easy to understand?
   5 4 3 2 1

5. interesting/unique?
   5 4 3 2 1

Overall evaluation of the presentation:
   5 4 3 2 1

Comment/Question:
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プロジェクト・ベース学習による第二言語語用論の指導の試み

吉冨 朝子

近年中間言語語用論の研究が盛んになり、外国語指導においても第二言語の語用論的な側面を明示的に指導することの効果が実証されている。同時に、実践的コミュニケーション能力を育成する指導の一端として、タスク・ベース指導、プロジェクト・ベース学習、あるいはプロセス・シラバスなど、何か明確な到達目標のために外国語を用いることで外国語能力を伸ばし、学習のプロセスに重きを置いた指導が行われるようになっている。そこで、本研究では、外国語としての英語の語用論的な知識を、プロジェクト・ベースの授業を通じて学習する効果を検証することを目的とした。

調査対象は、大学で英語を専攻している中上級レベルの英語学習者70名である。授業は1学期15週間に渡って行われ、プロジェクト・ベースで6つの言語機能について学ぶことを目的とした。授業はすべて英語で行われ、グループ学習の形式をとった。受講者は、クラスで語用論に関するリーディングを通して基礎知識を学んだのち、グループごとに特定の言語機能についてのリサーチに取組み、調査結果をクラスに報告するプレゼンテーションを行なった。リサーチに際しては、グループが調査対象としている言語機能に関する文献を探し、リーディング・要約活動を行うこと、音声データ収集のために映画・テレビ番組・YouTubeの視聴や、英語母語話者へのインタビューを介してのリスニング・スピーキング活動を行うこと、グループ発表および期末レポートのためのスピーキング・ライティング活動を行なうこと課した。つまりプロジェクトを通して、言語の4技能を総合的に使用しつつ、言語機能に関する知識を身につけ、リサーチ方法について学び、プレゼンテーション・スキルを伸ばすことを目的とした。

成果として、学習者主体の授業であったことから、履修脱落者が一名もでなかったこと、リサーチのために相当量のリーディング・リスニングを行なったこと、コミュニケーションにおける語用論的知識の重要性に対する気づきがあること、リサーチとはどういうものであるのかについて実践的に学んだことなどが挙げられる。いっぽうで問題点としては、「正解」が規定しにくい話用論において、「こういう場面ではこう言えればいい」というステレオ・タイプを形成しがちであるということや、メタレベルで第二言語話用論について英語のみすべての議論を行うことが難しく、グループ活動における日本語の使用が時として目立ったことなどが挙げられる。