PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION: CULITVATING LEARNER AUTONOMY AND STRATEGIC LEARNING OF PRAGMATICS

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Abstract

Three decades after the emergence of communicative competence models (e.g. Canale & Swain, 1980), pragmatic competence has established a recognition that learning a language extends beyond grammar. However, language curriculums and instructional materials are seldom pragmatics-focused. Although grammar appears systematically in course syllabi, pragmatics is usually addressed randomly as questions arise, often in conjunction with culture topics. Lack of the systematic appearance of pragmatic features, along with limited range of communicative situations and functions in classroom discourse and textbooks, has led to a general concern that classroom learning is poor in opportunities for pragmatic development (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001). To address this concern, this paper discusses autonomous learning and strategy training as a model of pragmatics pedagogy. Based on the data collected from Japanese ESL students in an immersion setting (Taguchi, 2012), I will illustrate a case of a strategic learner who cultivated a variety of self-directed resources for pragmatics learning, which led to a strong development of pragmatic competence. Based on this case study and drawing on the recent model of strategic self-regulation (Oxford, 2011), I will present the taxonomy of strategy instruction as a way of promoting autonomous learning of pragmatics. Strategy training can be an alternative form of formal instruction, assisting learners to take initiative in learning pragmatics from everyday, non-pragmatics-focused materials.

1 Introduction

Pragmatics involves a complex interplay among linguistic forms, context of use, and social actions. Crystal (1997) defines pragmatics as "the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction, and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication." In order to be pragmatically competent, L2 learners must attend to multipart mappings of form, meaning, force, and context. They need to know how to say what they want to say with the level of formality, politeness, and directness required in a situation, or sometimes not to speak at all and communicate intention only non-verbally. Basic parameters of context, such as speakers' relationship, role, setting, topics, and assumptions about what speakers already know or do not know, and perceived impact of their language on the listener, guide learners' linguistic choice.

In this paper, I will discuss self-regulated learning strategies as potentially useful tools for overcoming a challenge of learning pragmatics. I will argue that, by directly teaching students how to pay attention to pragmatics and how to monitor, control, and evaluate their

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own learning processes, teachers can equip students with the ability to develop pragmatic awareness and knowledge on their own. My paper has two parts. First, I will present findings from my previous study to illustrate a case of a successful L2 learner who showed strong pragmatic development by cultivating a range of self-learning strategies. Then, I will present the taxonomy of pragmatics learning strategies to illustrate how strategy instruction can be usefully implemented for teaching pragmatics. I will conclude with implications of the taxonomy and future directions.

2 Strategic pragmatics learning: A case study

The difficult and slow-developing nature of pragmatic competence has been documented in several longitudinal studies that traced the same learner(s) over time to document their patterns of pragmatic development (for a review, see Taguchi, 2010). As a case in point, Taguchi (2012) assessed 48 Japanese ESL students in an English-medium university on their ability to produce two speech acts − requests and opinions − over one academic year. Students completed a 12-item spoken discourse completion test (DCT) delivered via computer in which they read a situational scenario and produced the target speech act. The DCT had two types of situations. One situation type depicted a formal situation where the speech act involved a high-degree of imposition and was addressed to a person of a higher rank and power (e.g., expressing concerns to a teacher about his/her class), whereas the other illustrated an informal situation where the speech act involved a low-degree of imposition and was produced for a person in an equal relationship (e.g. passing a frank opinion to a friend about clothes). See the sample item of a formal situation:

> Situational scenario:
> You're in Professor Young's French Culture class. You like the professor, but she talks about French history most of the time and doesn't address recent things. You're more interested in French pop culture and music. One day after class she says, "What do you think about the class?" What do you say to Professor Young?

Four native speakers evaluated students' speech acts on a 5-point scale for overall appropriateness. Results showed that the production of informal, low-stake speech acts showed strong progress, but the ability to perform formal speech acts showed only a negligible gain because students rarely used syntactic and lexical mitigations to soften the tone of speech.

However, individual-level data gleaned from a subset of eight participants revealed considerable variations among students. Mitsu (pseudo name) was one of the few students who showed strong progress with formal speech acts. Although he started out with a below-average score at the beginning of the study, he made a large gain after a semester and surpassed the group mean by almost one point on a 5-point rating scale, when the average score increase of the entire group (48 participants) was only 0.3 points. He continued to improve afterwards and achieved the perfect score after the second semester.

Qualitative data from interviews and class observations revealed that Mitsu's attention to the sociocultural aspect of language, combined with his use of self-directed strategies for learning pragmatics, contributed to this development. In the interview, Mitsu said that, in

English or Japanese, people vary their ways of speaking according to context in order to encode different levels of politeness and directness. He gave a Japanese example of honorifics, which often signal age and rank differences between interlocutors. When asking for a favor from a close friend, people say *yatte kureru?* (do + donative auxiliary verb *kureru* in informal form), but *yatte moraemasenka?* (do + donative auxiliary verb *moraeru* in formal negative form) is more appropriate when speaking to someone older and of higher status. Mitsu acknowledged that such formal vs. informal speech variations also exist in English. He said that "can you" + verb is the equivalent of Japanese *yatte kureru,* while "could you/would you" + verb is the equivalent of *yatte moaremasenka?* Mitsu was trying to understand different social meanings that different pragmalinguisic expressions convey. He was able to articulate these differences verbally and use the pragmatic knowledge to guide his linguistic choice in the given situation.

Mitsu's pragmatic awareness became evident in the interview data. The researcher conducted introspective interviews with individual participants, that is, asking them to report their thought processes upon producing the target speech acts. Mitsu produced a formal and informal request and provided an account of his pragmalinguistic choices (p. xx).

> Informal request (asking a friend for a pen):
> > *Hey Ken, I forgot my pen. Can I use yours?*
> Formal request (asking a teacher for an extension of an assignment):
> > *Excuse me, I have something to tell you. Actually I have a cold and I did, I did my homework, but I'm afraid I need more, two extra days, so is it possible to put off my deadline?*

> The second one is to a professor, so I was careful not to use casual language. I tried to add more words so that it sounds softer. I explicitly said the reason, "I caught a cold". I probably won't give a long excuse like this if I were talking to a friend. I compared the expressions "I think" and "I'm afraid" to frame "I need two extra days". I decided to use "I'm afraid" because it conveys a regret, and it's politer than "I think". I learned it after I entered the university through an English conversation book published from NHK (Japanese Broadcasing Corporation). I didn't know that "I'm afraid" had a meaning of regret before I saw it in the book. I used the expression "Is it possible?" because "Can I?" didn't sound right here. I thought that "Is it possible?" is more formal and polite, but now I feel that I could have used "Would it be possible?" to make it even politer.

This interview excerpt presents evidence of Mitsu's sociopragmatic awareness and conscious assessment of pragmalinguistic forms. Mitsu used a different form of request to a friend and a professor, reflecting his awareness of situational differences. He used a syntactic mitigation "I'm afraid" in the formal request, which he learned from his self-study material, and he was able to articulate how it is different from another seemingly equivalent form, "I think", on the level of politeness cost. He also re-evaluated the request-making form "Is it possible to?" that he used. He said that it could be further mitigated by using the modal "Would" as in "Would it be possible to?" These multiple layers of knowledge and thoughtful analyses of target form-function-context mappings are an indication of Mitsu's pragmatic awareness. He was

able to identify and use appropriate lexical and syntactic devices that could alleviate the potential face-threat of a formal speech act.

Mitsu's attention to pragmatics was triggered by an instance that occurred when he participated in the North-East Asian Students Conference. A group of Korean students came to the school and had a debate with Japanese students on a variety of international issues. During the event, he met a senior Japanese student, a business major, who had been to Korea several times. The senior student lamented that very few Japanese students can speak proper, appropriate English in professional business meetings. This incident triggered Mitsu to apprehend the concept of situationally-appropriate language use. Since then, he became conscious about register variation in English and started to pay attention to the sociocultural meaning behind linguistic expressions. For example, one day he found the expression "I'm afraid" in a conversation book with a footnote indicating that the expression is more formal than "I think". He wrote this information down in his notebook so that he could actually use it to mitigate disagreement in a class discussion. At another time, he found the expression "Is there any reason for that?" in a movie and memorized it as a useful expression to soften the tone of disagreement, which he used in the DCT task. In addition, whenever he checked the dictionary for an unfamiliar word, he developed a habit of looking for usage notes. If the dictionary said that the word has a formal usage, he recorded it in his notebook and then tried to use it in a formal situation such as giving a presentation in class.

As shown in these descriptions, Mitsu was clearly a strategic learner. He was consciously directing his attention to pragmatic functions of everyday language use and making mental notes as he encountered them. This self-directed learning habit helped him to notice and mentally rehearse target pragmalinguistic forms, and he was committed to actually trying them out when opportunities arose. Mitsu's case suggests that if learners have strategies for learning pragmatics, they can turn everyday materials into opportunities for pragmatics practice. They can look for pragmatics information behind the ordinary usage of the forms or analyze different forms for their underlying function and impact on the listener. These bits of information that learners accumulate elsewhere over time could lead to a body of pragmatic knowledge and become available for retrieval on occasion, as shown in Mitsu's strong progress with speech acts.

3 Taxonomy of pragmatics learning strategies

This case history underscores the usefulness of autonomous learning for pragmatics and prompts us to consider strategy instruction as an alternative approach to pragmatics teaching. Strategy instruction could offer solutions to two existing problems in pragmatics instruction. One problem is the paucity of pragmatics-focused input and opportunities for pragmatic practice in a classroom. A general consensus in the literature is that classroom learning is poor in opportunities for pragmatics learning. Previous studies, mainly textbook analyses, found that classroom discourse involves a restricted range of communicative situations and resisters, as well as a limited amount of authentic information about pragmatics norms and variations (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Diepenbroek & Derwing, 2014; Nguyen, 2011; Vellenga, 2004).

Direct pragmatic instruction, however, has its own problem when the coverage of target pragmatics features are concerned. Taguchi (2015) conducted a review of instructional intervention studies in pragmatics published from the 1990s up to 2014. A tendency that emerged in this analysis of 58 studies was the narrow scope of pragmatics features taught in these studies: out of 58 studies, only five studies taught more than one pragmatic target (e.g. a request and apology). This tendency leaves a question about the usefulness of pragmatic instruction. Instruction can be effective in generating knowledge, but we do not know whether learning one pragmatic feature can facilitate the learning of another pragmatic feature. A more efficient approach would be a method that can promote transfer of learned pragmatic knowledge from one area to another domain.

Strategy instruction could be a solution to these problems of classroom pragmatics and instructional studies. Learning strategies are defined as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (Oxford, 1990, p.8). By developing learners' self-directed strategies for dealing with pragmatics, learners can gain autonomy and take initiative and responsibility for their own learning. Strategy training can enhance efficiency and productivity in learning because strategies can transfer to different settings and different learning targets. Cohen (1998, p. 70) observes in the following:

> The strategy training movement is predicted on the assumption that if learners are conscious about and become responsible for the selection, use, and evaluation of their learning strategies, they will become more successful language learners by . . . taking more responsibility for their own language learning, and enhancing their use of the target language out of class. In other words, the ultimate goal of strategy training is to empower students by allowing them to take control of the language learning process.

Four decades after Rubin's (1975) seminal work on learning strategies of good language learners, research in language learning and language use strategies has multiplied in a number of directions, including taxonomies and models of learning strategies, assessment of strategies, and strategy instruction (for a review, see Chamot, 2001; Cohen, 1998; Cohen & Macaro, 2007; Manchon, 2008; Oxford, 2011; Oxford & Griffiths, 2014). In the massive amount of existing publications, however, we find very little literature on pragmatics. To my knowledge, Cohen (2005) is the only paper that presented taxonomy of strategies dedicated to pragmatics. He provided a list of speech act learning strategies encompassing three categories: strategies for the initial learning of speech acts (e.g. gathering information about speech acts), strategies for using learned speech acts (e.g. using a memory aid to remember speech act expressions), and metapragmatic strategies (e.g. monitoring and evaluating their own speech act performance).

What follows is an effort to succeed this pioneering work by presenting a model of strategic learning of pragmatics with concrete tactics and guidelines. Drawing on Oxford's (2011) strategic self-regulation model, I will illustrate how learning strategies can be implemented in the area of pragmatics to enhance learners' pragmatic awareness.

3.1 Strategic self-regulation

Oxford (2011) introduced the strategic self-regulation model (S^{2}R) as a model in which learners can actively and constructively use strategies to manage their own learning process. The model draws on the concept of self-regulation. Self-regulated learning means that a learner approaches a language-related task by selecting the tactics most suitable to the situation and using them effectively to cope with the task (Winne & Perry, 2000). In this sense, learning involves two independent but intertwined dimensions: performing the task and overseeing the learning process. Self-regulated learning strategies involve conscious, deliberate, and goal-oriented attempts to manage and control efforts to learn the target language (Afflerbach, Pearson & Paris, 2008).

The S^{2}R model presents strategies in three dimensions: cognitive, affective, and sociocultural-interactive strategies. The cognitive dimension deals with the process of constructing, transforming, and applying L2 knowledge, while the affective dimension deals with mental aspect of learning, i.e., creating positive emotions, attitudes, and motivation. The sociocultural-interactive dimension, on the other hand, is dedicated to the areas of communication, sociocultural contexts, and identity and facilitate learners' interaction with the community and learning of the target culture. Each of these dimensions comprises of a set of metastrategies and specific strategies. Metastrategies help manage and control L2 learning in general terms and manage the use of specific strategies. They assume the executive-control functions such as planning, obtaining resources, implementing plans, monitoring, and evaluating. For instance, meta-affective strategies help learners be aware of and manage their affect and regulate the use of specific affective strategies, i.e., activating positive emotions and generating motivation.

The structure of the S^{2}R model with example tactics is displayed in Figure 1 (adapted from Oxford, 2011, p. 24). In the next section, I will draw on the S^{2}R model and present a preliminary list of pragmatics learning strategies with examples and suggested tactics. Due to the space limit, I will focus on the metacognitive and cognitive strategies.
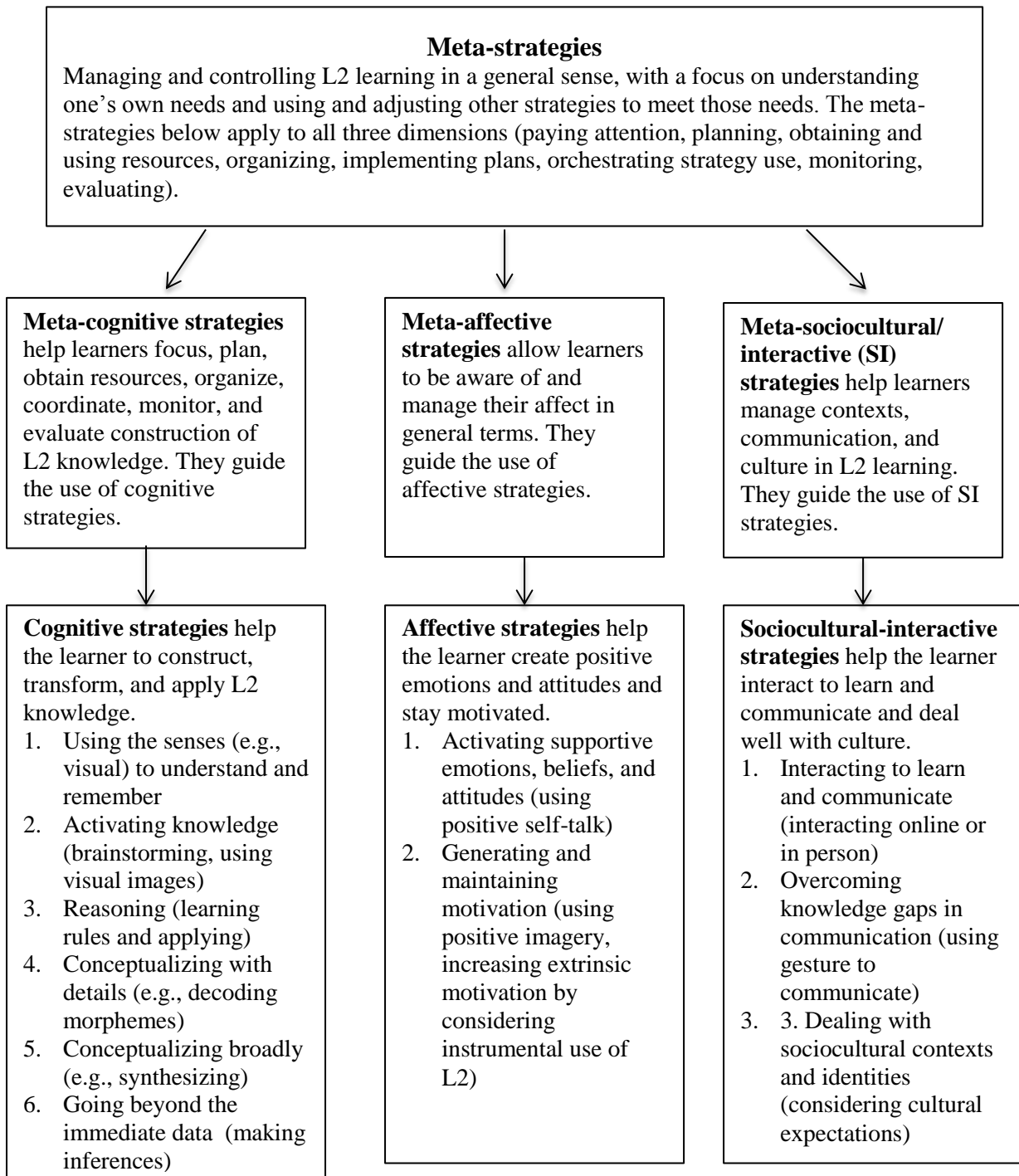

Meta-strategies
Managing and controlling L2 learning in a general sense, with a focus on understanding one's own needs and using and adjusting other strategies to meet those needs. The meta-strategies below apply to all three dimensions (paying attention, planning, obtaining and using resources, organizing, implementing plans, orchestrating strategy use, monitoring, evaluating).

Meta-cognitive strategies help learners focus, plan, obtain resources, organize, coordinate, monitor, and evaluate construction of L2 knowledge. They guide the use of cognitive strategies.

Meta-affective strategies allow learners to be aware of and manage their affect in general terms. They guide the use of affective strategies.

Meta-sociocultural/ interactive (SI) strategies help learners manage contexts, communication, and culture in L2 learning. They guide the use of SI strategies.

Cognitive strategies help the learner to construct, transform, and apply L2 knowledge.
1. Using the senses (e.g., visual) to understand and remember
2. Activating knowledge (brainstorming, using visual images)
3. Reasoning (learning rules and applying)
4. Conceptualizing with details (e.g., decoding morphemes)
5. Conceptualizing broadly (e.g., synthesizing)
6. Going beyond the immediate data (making inferences)

Affective strategies help the learner create positive emotions and attitudes and stay motivated.
1. Activating supportive emotions, beliefs, and attitudes (using positive self-talk)
2. Generating and maintaining motivation (using positive imagery, increasing extrinsic motivation by considering instrumental use of L2)

Sociocultural-interactive strategies help the learner interact to learn and communicate and deal well with culture.
1. Interacting to learn and communicate (interacting online or in person)
2. Overcoming knowledge gaps in communication (using gesture to communicate)
3. 3. Dealing with sociocultural contexts and identities (considering cultural expectations)

Fig. 1. Structure of metastrategies and strategies in the S^{2}R model

3.2 Strategic self-regulation model as applied to pragmatics

Oxford refers to metacognitive strategies as a construction manager who manages and controls the knowledge-building dimension of learning in general. These strategies help learners focus, plan, obtain resources, organize the environment, coordinate, monitor, and evaluate the process of knowledge construction. She presented eight types of metacognitive strategies with sample functions, which I grouped into three categories, as shown in Table 1. The first two columns display the metacognitive strategies and basic functions adapted from Oxford (2011, p. 102–107). The third column shows the basic functions as applied to learning pragmatics.

Table 1. Metacognitive strategies and functions for learning pragmatics

Strategy	Basic function	Basic function as applied to pragmatics
Focus and plan	• Pay attention to specifics and general • Set goals and plan	• Pay attention to pragmatics-related concepts and set goals in attending them
Obtain resources, arrange environment, and implement plans	• Obtain resources • Organize the learning environment and materials • Put the plan into action	• Obtain resources for observing communicative acts • Obtain opportunities for participating in communicative acts
Monitor and evaluate	• Monitor and evaluate performance and strategy use	• Monitor and evaluate the process of performing and interpreting communicative acts

3.2.1 Metacognitive strategies for leaning pragmatics

The first group of metacognitive strategies involves paying attention to general and specific aspects of language, and setting goals as to what to focus on. In pragmatics, this means that learners are encouraged to look at language through pragmatics lenses. Learners can be introduced to key concepts and frameworks of pragmatics so they can apply those concepts when observing language use and participating in communicative practices. The concept can be introduced as two layers of meaning involved in utterances. According to Thomas (1995), meaning has two levels: the utterance meaning referring to the literal meaning of an utterance, and the speaker meaning referring to the speaker's intention behind the utterance. For example, if someone says "It's dark in here", it could mean the actual brightness of the room. But it could also mean the speaker's intention of asking to turn on the light, which is an indirect speech act of request. L2 learners are probably more used to comprehending literal information through classroom instruction, so it is important to direct their attention to both layers of meaning – utterance meaning and the communicative act that the utterance intends to perform (e.g. request).

Once learners are taught the form-function relationship, the next step is to introduce its connection with context. Linguistic forms in communicative acts – be it grammar, lexis, or semantic moves – are anchored in the context of use. As a listener, we need to understand the speaker's intention by interpreting both verbal and non-verbal contextual cues. As a speaker, we need to decide which forms to use to convey our intentions at the level of formality and

politeness required in a situation. Our linguistic choice is guided by our understanding of parameters of context, such as speakers' relationship and identity, role, setting, topics, and shared assumptions. Our use of language is also bound by consequentiality. What we say and how we say it has direct impact on the listeners' interpretation of the message, impression that they form about the speaker, context, or interaction, as well as their subsequent actions. See the example:

> Sign here, please.
> Could I have your signature here?

These utterances involve the same communicative act of asking for a signature, but we choose one form over the other depending on context. At the event of a bank transaction when a signature is required as part of the process, the first form would be appropriate. In contrast, when we are asking a professor to sign an override form after the add/drop period, we are likely to use the second form because there is a certain degree of imposition posed in the request.

Gee (2005) contends that discourse has both linguistic and sociocultural aspects, with the former referring to language in use, while the latter refers to discourse situated in a given place and time. He summarizes six elements of context: (1) the social identity of the speaker in a particular sociocultural setting (power, relationship, and social distance), (2) the social activity that he/she is trying to accomplish (degree of imposition involved in the act), (3) the setting where the activity is done (type of interaction), (4) prior communication, (5) shared assumptions and knowledge, and (6) the social, cultural, cognitive, material, and political effects of all of these elements. These can be brought to learners' attention so they can observe these contextual elements and linguistic choices across contexts. Some of the guiding questions in the observation process include: (1) What does the speaker say?; (2) What does the speaker mean by saying it?; and (3) What contextual features are associated with the form and meaning? Learners can practice with these questions using language samples in their native language.

The next group of metacognitive strategies includes obtaining resources, arranging the learning environment, and implementing plans. Once learners understand what to pay attention to and how, and set the goals of attending them consciously when observing and performing communicative acts, they can look for materials that allow them to implement their plans. If learners are in the target language community, field observation and interaction with local community members could provide such opportunities. Learners can act as amateur ethnographers and collect information about pragmatics. If in a foreign language context, on the other hand, films, TV dramas, and video clips are useful resources because they depict everyday social interactions and are readily available in a foreign language context. Contextual information such as the speaker, setting, social activity, and prior communication are visually accessible without much explanation. Subtitles could help learners extract language and other non-verbal cues (e.g. facial expressions, gaze, gestures) used to convey intentions.

Social networking sites are other resources that provide authentic interactional opportunities. Social computing has proliferated as a promising platform for L2 practice recently with Web

2.0 applications. Computer-mediated communication (CMC) occurring in social networking sites provides an invaluable context for learning pragmatics because learners gain opportunities to engage in meaningful interaction and to experience intercultural communication. E-mail, blogs, written and voice chat, online gaming, discussion forums, and video-conferencing (e.g. Skype) provide a context-rich, high stakes environment where learners can practice pragmatic aspects of language with target language speakers.[1]

The last group of metacognitive strategies refers to monitoring and evaluating performance and strategy use. Learners can go back to the pragmatic concepts from the planning stage and use them as criteria in assessing their interpretation and performance of communicative acts. Sample reflective questions include: (1) Do I understand the connection between form and function?; (2) Do I understand contextual information?; (3) What did I say when I performed a communicative act and why?; (4) Was I able to convey my intention successfully? What was the listener's reaction?; (5) Are there other forms that I could have used? These questions can help learners stay focused on the key concepts of pragmatics (form, function, context). At the same time they help learners apply those concepts to their immediate situations. These experiences could help learners reflect on their own communicative acts from the point of appropriateness and acceptability, as well as from their impacts on the listener. In this way, the concepts go beyond the level of abstract objects: they give relevance and meaning to learners' lives.

3.2.2 Cognitive strategies for leaning pragmatics

While metacognitive strategies are for managing and controlling L2 use in general, cognitive strategies help construct, transform, and apply L2 knowledge with the explicit goal of learning the knowledge. Oxford (2011) calls cognitive strategies construction workers who are responsible for information processing and knowledge building. Table 2 displays cognitive strategies and their basic functions adapted from Oxford (p. 108–113). Basic functions and tactics for pragmatics learning appear in the last column.

The first metacognitive strategy is activating knowledge. In pragmatics, knowledge of first language pragmatics can be highly useful. Adult L2 learners are in a unique position because of the co-existence of L1 and L2-based pragmatic systems. Unlike children, whose pragmatic and linguistic competences develop simultaneously, adult learners are already competent in the pragmatics of their native language, having developed a rich foundation of universal pragmatic knowledge within their native culture (Mey, 2001). They already possess implicit knowledge of communicative functions such as greeting and leave-taking. They are familiar with the concepts of politeness and face-saving and how these social concepts are expressed in their native language. They are also exposed to different communicative situations on a daily basis as well as variations of language use across situations. Taking advantage of this situation of adult pragmatic acquisition, we can activate learners' L1 pragmatic knowledge first as a strategy. Learners can analyze L1 pragmatics data by paying attention to contextual

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[1] The followings are sample social networking sites: Mixxer (http://www.language-exchanges.org), Wespeke (http://en-us.wespeke.com), Busuu (http://www.busuu.com/enc/), Language Exchange (http://www.mylanguageexchange.com), Ling (http://www.lingq.com), Lang-8 (http://lang-8.com), Lingualia (https://www.lingualia.com/en/social/), and Tounguetide (http://www.tonguetide.com).

factors that influence communicative behavior. Then, they can reflect on how a communicative act in a similar situation can be performed in L2.

The next cognitive strategy is reasoning. Oxford distinguishes two types of reasoning, deductive and inductive. Deductive reasoning occurs when learners are provided with explicit information about pragmatics and then apply the information to analyze examples and data. Learners can apply learned pragmatics expressions to real-life situations by using them in communication or collecting samples of the same expressions through observation. An example of this is found in the case of Mitsu described in the previous section. He learned the expression of mitigation, "I'm afraid" in the self-study material and consciously used it in class discussion when he had to disagree with his classmates' opinions. Learners can also think about other situations where the same expressions might apply and create imaginary scenarios using the expressions. On the other hand, inductive reasoning occurs when learners discover rules and norms of pragmatic behavior on their own by analyzing data. They can analyze samples of communicative acts by identifying contextual factors and the speaker's intention and explain the pragmatic rules, i.e., what linguistic forms are used to convey what kind of intentions and why.

Table 1. Cognitive strategies and functions for learning pragmatics

Strategy	Basic function	Basic function as applied to pragmatics
Activate knowledge	• Brainstorm what is already known	• Activate pragmatic knowledge in L1 – how a certain communicative act is performed in L1. • Reflect on how the same communicative act might be performed in L2.
Reasoning	• Use inductive and deductive reasoning	• Inductive reasoning o Analyze a communicative act by identifying contextual factors and the speaker's intention. Explain why certain forms are used in a given situation. • Deductive reasoning o Apply pragmatic expressions to practice. o Think about other contexts where the same expressions might apply.
Conceptualize in details and broadly	• Make distinctions, compare, and categorize • Synthesize information	• Categorize expressions by function and situation. • Conduct a cross-cultural comparative analysis of a communicative act.

The last cognitive strategy involves conceptualizing in details and broadly, which mainly deals with organizing information and making it available for deeper-level understanding. Conceptualization can happen at the level of details by analyzing and decoding units of information, making distinctions among the units, categorizing and sequencing them in hierarchies, and comparing and contrasting across languages. In pragmatics this could be done by categorizing expressions by function and situation. Not all expressions carry the same degree of pragmatics force. In some expressions the speaker's intention is direct, explicit, and straightforward, but other expressions convey the intention indirectly with hedging and circumlocutions. Just like how Mitsu distinguished between the expressions

"I'm afraid" and "I think" as the former conveying regret and the latter not, learners can pay attention to variant forms and classify them according to how they differ in terms of their context of use and the social meaning that they create. Those forms can be ordered and sequenced according to different communicative situations, as well as the perceived level of directness or indirectness and the different degrees of impact on the listener.

Distinction and classification of forms and functions lead to the next level of conceptualization – conceptualizing broadly, which involves synthesizing across several sources and combining/linking similar items. In pragmatics, the observation and analysis of a communicative act itself presents a task of synthesizing because learners inevitably assemble multiple dimensions of information – form, function, context, and consequence of communication. Extracting variant linguistic forms for performing the same communicative function (e.g. different forms of opening and closing a phone conversation) can be elevated to the level of broad conceptualization if learners can create a semantic map linking similar expressions and their contexts of use.

There are several additional forms of synthesizing. After formulating a hypothesis of how to say things in what situation and why based on the analysis of available samples, learners can test the stability of the hypothesis by gathering information from other sources, e.g., interviews with native speakers or people who have spent time in the target community, posting questions on the discussion board, or asking classroom instructors. By synthesizing information gathered from multiple sources, learners might find a common pattern in the hypothesis by combining/linking similar patterns, or they might realize that they have to modify the hypothesis to accommodate different patterns. In addition, a cross-linguistic comparison of how a specific communicative act can be performed in L1 and L2 could help learners synthesize materials across two different language systems. They can again combine and link similar cross-linguistic patterns and classify different patterns, and reflect on larger cultural values and norms that might govern the similarities and differences.

4 Conclusion

This paper has discussed the potential usefulness of self-regulation and strategy instruction in developing L2 learners' metapragamtic knowledge and awareness. The taxonomy of pragmatics learning strategies presented in this paper is a preliminary effort that needs to be validated in future studies. Two central questions remain in the validation effort: (1) Are L2 learners able to utilize the strategies, and what kind of support do they need to understand and apply the strategies in their practice?; and (2) Does strategy instruction actually help equip learners with the facility to pick up pragmatics nuances of everyday language use to the extent that it leads to development of pragmatic knowledge? In investigating these questions, several issues and challenges become evident.

One major challenge is material development. The taxonomy I have presented here are at the level of list of ideas and suggestions. They have not been materialized in a format of guidebooks, textbooks, or syllabus, and thus much work needs to be done in the actual process of material development.

Second, pragmatics involves a complex connection among language, function, and context of use, which is largely implicit and invisible. As such, it is not certain whether learners are able to attend to the connection in input and extract it for recording and analysis. In addition, a communicative act can be hard to identify in naturalistic interaction. It is not always expressed in a straightforward, one-to-one correspondence between form and function. Rather, it is often interactive and dynamic, and is jointly constructed between the speaker and hearer and negotiated over turns. For these reasons, threshold level proficiency might be the pre-requisite to strategy instruction. Similarly, to make strategy use manageable, teachers might have to organize observation and recording in a structured manner. For instance, teachers can use e-journals, blogs, and diaries with a set of guiding questions so learners are constantly reminded of what to attend to. Teachers can be instrumental by providing a list of pragmatic functions and features, such as specific speech acts, terms of address, conversation starters, and discourse markers and fillers so students know what to focus on.

Finally, strategy instruction can be particularly challenging in pragmatics because it is an underrepresented area of learning. Most previous studies on strategy training were conducted in four skill areas, along with vocabulary and grammar. Because these areas are emphasized in classroom teaching and curriculum, the usefulness of strategies might be relatively transparent to students. However, pragmatics is rather an invisible dimension of language learning, and as such the importance of strategies for learning pragmatics may not come across as obvious to all students. This is a potential problem because self-regulated learning draws on the idea of a learner as an active participant who takes initiative and responsibility in learning. Because learners' attitudes and beliefs are critical for successful strategy instruction, cultivating learners' interest and motivation toward learning pragmatics is critical in order to attach value to strategy instruction.

As described above, there is an assortment of challenges and problems with the actual implementation of learning how to learn pragmatics. Still, being an unexplored territory, strategy instruction has potential in providing an array of opportunities for autonomous, independent learning in a way that traditional classroom or instructional studies are not able to afford. Whether strategy training proves a useful option for pragmatics teaching remains a question for future empirical investigation.

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