

# Pragmatic Transfer in Student - Generated Conversations

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## Interference and Language Transfer

Second Language Acquisition studies have long been concerned with the affects of the L1 on the ability to learn a foreign language. How, and to what degree elements in a speaker's first language are thought to help to or hinder the learner are questions which have shaped a wide variety of studies in interlanguage development. Behaviorist accounts of foreign language learning, in their emphasis on stimulus and response as the vehicle of learning, viewed the L1 as 'interfering' in the process of habit formation which was regarded as necessary for learning a new language. Basing their theories on the work of Watson(1924) and Skinner(1957), many second language researchers held in essence that to learn a second language one needed both to break old habits and to form new ones.

'Learning as habit formation' served as the structural basis for a number of subsequent theories of language learning which promoted repetitive structural techniques designed to strengthen response to a variety of linguistic stimuli. In his attempts to isolate areas for intensive focus in language instruction, Lado (1957) proposed the 'Contrastive Analysis'(CA) of different languages as a means of locating lexical, syntactic, phonemic and morphemic differences. CA studies were aimed at determining points of intersection and divergence in the L1 and L2 that could then be used to predict areas of learning difficulty. Initial indications were that the areas of least similarity between two languages would necessarily pose the greatest challenge for learners. Among the

possible ways that languages were observed to differ, the areas regarded as most problematic were:

- 1) elements which exist in the target language but which are absent from the L1. English articles would be such a case for Japanese learners whose language does not possess such markers.
- 2) single elements in the L1 for which there is more than one realization in the target language. An example here would be the Japanese term *oseji* which might be translated as either “compliment” or “flattery”.

Research in Contrastive Analysis, beginning as it did before the Chomskian framework for a universal grammar had gained currency, took as the data for its investigations surface elements described by structuralists such as Bloomfield(1933) and Fries(1952). Despite assertions concerning the lack of universal linguistic categories on which to base comparative studies, research in cognitive theories of grammar(Chomsky, 1965) provided increasing evidence of such a linguistic common ground and encouraged a number of CA studies(Stockwell and Bowen, 1965).

The principal linguistic elements discussed in CA research were morphemic, phonemic, syntactic, and to a lesser extent lexical. Unsurprisingly, phonological differences among languages were an early focus. What is described as a ‘foreign’ accent was noted as one of the most easily recognizable manifestations of interference from the L1. Lexical items, as Sridhar(1980) has pointed out, received less attention perhaps due to the assumption among researchers that differences in vocabulary are somewhat obvious and did not merit an extensive analysis. Other CA research focused on syntactic areas since these are often less apparent than vocabulary differences and more easily quantifiable than factors on a phonological continuum. Extensive studies in contrastive syntax of major European languages and English were conducted throughout the

late 1960's and early 1970's.

Among the major criticisms leveled at CA theory during this time was the degree to which learner errors can be attributed solely to interference. Beginning with a series of articles by Corder (1967; 1971; 1974), a number of studies came to question the influence of the L1 on learner error. Of particular interest was that of Dulay and Burt (1973) whose contention that only three percent of errors could be attributed to transfer seemed to advise against expending further energy on these studies. Although subsequent research suggested higher percentages, the earlier contention that *most* error derived from the L1 was no longer widely accepted. Research into 'interlanguage' or 'approximative systems' (Nemser, 1971; Selinker, 1972) lent force to the argument that much learner error was 'developmental' and followed a type of built-in syllabus. Second language learners were said to engage in a process of trial and error (hypothesis testing) as they progressed along a natural language continuum.

These studies presented the CA hypothesis with a major challenge. If errors were developmental and served as evidence of progress in language learning, then extensive comparative studies, whether or not they were able to target areas for intensive study, appeared to serve little practical function. Extensive lists of syntactic, phonemic and morphemic differences, so meticulously gathered during initial contrastive studies were now considered by some to be of purely academic value. The focus of much research shifted to discovering the natural order of acquisition learners were said to follow as interlanguage developed.

In addition, the degree of difference in these areas, as subsequent studies illustrated, did not necessarily indicate learning difficulty. English speaking learners of European languages often discover - to their great distress - that lexically similar items can serve as some of the most troublesome aspects of learning a language. 'False cognates', such as the Spanish word 'embarasada' (pregnant) when used by beginning

learners as a translation for the English 'embarrassing', are the cause of much anecdotal hilarity-or consternation. In fact, some areas of difference seen by the learner as salient- and therefore noticeable- can be less troublesome than other areas which are not as pronounced.

Frequently overlooked by both studies of interference and error analysis, however, was the early suggestion made by Lado concerning the comparative study of cultures and, by analogy, the ways in which different cultures use language to accomplish things. Pragmatic studies have, of course, taken this theme as a central focus, but until recent years, have rarely undertaken systematic comparative analyses of larger units of discourse across cultures.

### **Bases of comparison: Universality and Relativity theories**

It is difficult to begin a discussion of a cross cultural analysis of pragmatic knowledge, without first examining more closely how it is possible for either linguistic or discoursal elements to be viewed against some common frame of reference. As seen earlier, the intercultural comparison of segmental elements such as morphemes or phonemes has been the principal focus of research in past years. This work presupposes that the phonemic basis for such comparisons is rooted in a physical capacity to produce sounds within a defined range whether or not individual languages employ the full scale or only a limited part. The comparison of morphemic and syntactic differences among languages is also assumed to be biologically based although at a deeper level hinted at through theoretical studies of the structural nature of language.

At the level of discourse or language in context, however, the question of a universal basis of comparison begins to break down. At what point, it has been asked, do comparisons across cultures begin to lose their ability to reflect what is innately human about language and enter into the realm of language specific sociocultural variation. The debate is

founded on an historic division between what have been called theories of 'universality and relativity'. Stated briefly, a strict theory of universality holds that all reality shares certain common foundations which are generally obscured by a variety of surface manifestations shaped through interaction with specific environments. Linguistic universals, as with the Chomskian Universal Grammar, are those properties from which broader variation in language develops and as such, the fundamental goal of linguistic universals, in the words of Janney and Arndt (1993), is the 'transcendence' of such variation.

Much current research on linguistic universals has been influenced by the works of several modern philosophers who have dealt with the interaction of social or cognitive systems and language form. Foremost among these is the social philosopher Dell Hymes whose work on the taxonomy of the components of speaking (1971) helped lay the foundation for research into what is known as 'communicative competence' - broadly, usage of the social rules of speaking.

In their attempts to formulate a framework for the examination of various speech events, linguists have also drawn heavily on the conversational 'maxims' proposed by H. P. Grice (1975) whose 'cooperative principle' suggests that propositions can be judged as to how well they conform to standards of 'sincerity'. The principle states that conversational participants, in order to accomplish specific communicative goals, must adhere to certain logical constraints. Such rules as being 'truthful' or avoiding obscurities are held to be inherent in all social interaction and to explain the principles on which conversations are predicated.

Interest in sociolinguistic universals was also sparked by the 'speech act' theories of Austin and Searle (1965) who defined functional categories for linguistic propositions based on a speaker's intentions. A speech act, in this view, is one which, through its utterance, performs a certain communicative task. The minister's "I pronounce you man and wife" is one such example (a 'performative') since the words themselves, upon

being spoken, essentially accomplish the act of marriage. In contrast to Grice's more linguistically defined propositions, speech act theory distinguishes between the 'relational' or standard meaning of an utterance and the 'intentional' meaning. Intent depends less on specific grammatical or syntactical forms than on what Austin calls 'implicature' - what the speaker implies by a certain proposition. Seen as a universal linguistic given, it is assumed that speakers in all languages attempt to accomplish certain tasks by means of similar speech acts.

The theoretical work of Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) also has received considerable attention among pragmatics researchers since it attempts to outline certain sociopsychological categories through which universals of linguistic politeness might be established. In much the same way that Grice emphasizes sincerity as a guiding principle, Brown and Levinson see politeness strategies as being governed by underlying rules. Ideas of maintaining 'face' through such means as holding or relinquishing control of the 'floor' or being more or less specific are thought to contribute to the maintenance of smooth relationships and patterns of communication. Here again, it is assumed that these universals of politeness behavior hold true across cultures and with different languages.

In contrast to the shared assumption of the above theories that various phenomena can be referred to a common set of criteria, relativity theories seek to locate the exclusive qualities of these phenomena. Applied to linguistics, relativity theory is associated with attempts to illustrate what are often considered to be unique or untranslatable properties of various languages. Although discussed by a number of linguists before them, the best-known proponents of the modern version of linguistic relativity are Benjamin Whorf and Edward Sapir whose 'Sapir-Whorf' hypothesis focuses on the essential interplay of language and culture insofar as:

...users of markedly different languages are pointed...toward different

types of observations and different evaluations of externally similar acts of observation, and hence are not equivalent as observers but must arrive at somewhat different views of the world (Whorf, 1956).

There are both strong and weak versions of such relativity theories. According to the strong version, true comparisons of cultural or linguistic phenomena are viewed as essentially impossible since fundamental conceptual differences offer no basis upon which to make such judgements. Weaker versions merely claim that cultural differences will be reflected in linguistic forms which complicate cross-cultural or linguistic comparisons. To what degree such strictures apply is perhaps a more realistic way of looking at the debate between universalist and relativist theories. Most current research argues against any strong version of linguistic relativism since its strict application demands that we believe in inherent or inborn cultural traits of the type promulgated, for example, by extreme nationalists or linguistic purists.

### **Social psychological language transfer**

Current research in language transfer then is founded on the premise that, although cultural and linguistic relativism may help to explain the variety of phenomena found in comparative studies, there exist fundamental categories - however broadly defined - upon which comparisons can be based. The early focus of transfer studies on segmental aspects has given way to studies of larger discoursal units involving such cultural and social perceptions as logical orderings in narratives (coherence) or the salience of certain linguistic functions such as apologies or complaints. Transfer of this type may be said to fall within the scope of sociolinguistic or pragmatic research and has been referred to variously as cross-linguistic influence, discourse accent, sociolinguistic transfer, or pragmatic transfer, each of these emphasizing a different aspect of either L1 influence or avoidance strategies.

Bebee (1988) suggests a further sub-categorization of sociolinguistic transfer into three separate types: socially-motivated transfer, sociolinguistic rule transfer, and pragmatic transfer. In Bebee's view socially motivated transfer is language which is transferred due to the speaker's desire to maintain an identity or tone in the target language even in cases where the correct form is known. The specific language used may or may not have separate social meaning, that is, it is not necessarily linked to variations associated with the sex or age of the speaker or with the speakers desire to use a certain style for social reasons. An example of socially motivated transfer might occur when a speaker intentionally employs an inappropriate grammatical or lexical form in the target language because of its perceived similarity in feeling or mood to their native language.

Sociolinguistic rule transfer, on the other hand is the transfer of a linguistic form which varies according to some social characteristic. The specific intonation, grammatical or lexical form chosen or the stylistic emphasis placed on an utterance will depend on the age, sex or class of the speaker. Language serves as a social marker denoting ones affiliation with a certain group. An illustration of this type of rule is when, for example, the high-pitched, low-volume speech common among young Japanese females is transferred into English (often resulting, it has been noted, in unwarranted negative evaluations of linguistic competence.)

Bebee's third category, referred to as pragmatic transfer, is perhaps the most illusory of the three types. It deals with the speaker's knowledge of the social uses of language and how linguistic forms can function differently in a variety of situations. Pragmatic transfer occurs most often when speakers attempt to use nuanced language or when speakers are placed in situations requiring a skillful application of language in order not to offend or upset the interlocutor. An English speaker might comment sarcastically on the unpleasant weather by saying "What nice weather we're having, huh?" If transferred directly into Japanese such a



comment would likely elicit perplexed glances rather than the expected nods of agreement. Since the linguistic component of the above utterance can be interpreted variously to mean either "It's a nice day" or the inverse "It's not a nice day", how the listener interprets it depends on their understanding of the social uses of language: situational context, personal relations, tone of voice or other paralinguistic features.

Other sources of pragmatic transfer not related strictly to the illocutionary aspect of language, can be found in the differing discursal ordering patterns of native and target languages. In their studies of refusals, as one example, Beebe and Takahashi (1990), found that both Japanese native speakers and Japanese ESL students varied significantly from native English speakers in the order and placement of various refusal strategies within the conversation. Brown and Levinson (1978), among others, discuss pragmatic transfer in terms of politeness values and their variance across cultures. Ide (1989) has elaborated on these values arguing, in essence, that certain cultures lend different weights to different forms of politeness. While noting these various realms of pragmatic influence, the discussion that follows, will focus largely on the transfer of illocutionary force in speech acts.

### **A study of student conversations: materials and procedures**

A survey of student-generated conversations was made in an effort to locate evidence of the different varieties of language transfer in the above discussion with a particular focus on pragmatic influences. Although cursory tabulations of relative frequencies was made, totals are tentative as yet and only speculative results can be presented here. Data collection differed from the standard Discourse Completion Test (in which subjects respond to predetermined situations) in that students were provided only with a range of discussion topics from which to choose and asked to formulate, document and record their own contextualized conversations.

Kasper (1992) reasons that certain predetermined DCT situations do not necessarily correspond to those in which students naturally place themselves, and conversely, that students often generate contexts which might not occur to a test designer. Nevertheless, the effect of the testing instruments cannot be neglected and it was felt that, given differentials in time and stress factors between spoken and written conversation, discrepancies were inevitable. However, because of the dual nature of these tests - a memorized spoken test with written preparation in advance - it is felt that some measure of the spontaneity of natural speech was captured.

The task was given to 48 separate groups of 18-19 year old, second year college students, four students in each group, as part of an ongoing program of spoken evaluation. Groups were asked to choose from a list of 20 different topics which included such items as Foreign Workers in Japan, Job Hunting, Pollution, Nuclear Power, and Women's Role in Japan among others. Vocabulary lists and discussion starters enabled students to begin constructing conversations. The instructor offered no advice beyond the stated topic and time guidelines, allowing students to construct their own short conversations of between 5-7 minutes in length over a two-week period. Students were asked to memorize and then to 'perform' the conversations which were then recorded for later reference. Transcripts were collected and used to verify speakers and to clarify meaning.

Since distinguishing between appropriate usage - in which students generalize from their interlanguage - and positive transfer was deemed methodologically difficult, the results were confined exclusively to negative transfer. Nevertheless, examples of what were likely to be positive influences were found in such exchanges as:

A: I sang many songs.

B: Oh, that's good. (O, sore wa ii.)

but without some form of controlled analysis, this is simply conjecture. Since fewer formal equivalents exist between Japanese and English than with languages linguistically closer - as with the French and English equivalents 'Why not?' (*Pourquoi pas?*) - we can assume, of course, that positive transfer will occur less frequently. A number of studies have, in fact, shown transfer of such form-function expressions (Blum-Kulka, 1982; French and Kasper, 1989) between linguistically related languages.

Statistical comparisons with a standard native dialect were not made in this study and therefore variance cannot be reported. However, in the section on pragmatic influences, categories of speech acts in which earlier studies have documented cross linguistic influence were used to classify a variety of examples the instructor judged as representative. Judgements were based on the assessment of three individual native North American English speakers who ruled the examples chosen as either acceptable or inappropriate/non-native like. Examples ruled as acceptable were then excluded.

### Lexical and syntactic influences

Before focusing on the broader discourse patterns central to this paper, a brief examination of both lexical and syntactic influences was made in order to provide a clearer distinction between segmental/sentential and discoursal transfer. Lexical transfer was apparent in a variety of utterances, a sampling of which is offered in Table 1. In each of the examples, student intentions were verified in a short interview after the recording and Japanese translations were noted. Except for such examples as items 2 and 5 ('Exaggerated!', 'free part timer') in which students have simply employed a one-to-one lexical equivalent to the Japanese, the majority of examples are translations of entire semantic phrases (e.g. 'Let's go running!').

Table 1.

1.	<u>Why</u> do you know that?	(to mean 'How do you know that?')
2.	Exaggerated!	(as a stand alone exclamation to mean 'That's a little overstated, don't you think?')
3.	Let's go running!	(to mean 'Hurry up! Let's go!')
4.	Maybe I will be a <u>free part timer</u> .	(to mean 'free - lance part time worker')
5.	Kimiko Date <u>player</u> is very good.	(inclusion of the athlete's title 'player')
6.	I was profit.	(to mean 'I saved money by shopping at this store.')
7.	Could you <u>teach</u> me how to cook it?	(to mean 'Could you <u>show</u> me how to make it?')
8.	<u>Could</u> you see sunrise soon?	(to mean 'Did you see the sunrise <u>soon after arriving</u> ?')

Although less frequent, the transfer of syntactic patterns was also in evidence as with the examples listed in Table 2. Again for all items, student intentions were verified in a short post-test interview. Except for the items listed, few other instances of radical syntactic displacement such as the direct transfer of Japanese 'object-complement-verb' order were noted. Whether this is due more to the effect of formal instruction or to student interlanguage developmental processes is not within the scope of the present study. It is likely, however, that both instruction and IL played an interactive role since 1) at the college level, students' cumulative exposure to common English syntactic patterns cannot be discounted and 2) students' IL is generally seen to inform basic syntactic parameters.

Table 2.

1.	...orange juice is just a little.	(to mean '...there is just a little orange juice.')
2.	3D jobs is dislike Japanese people.	(to mean Japanese people dislike 3D jobs.)
3.	It's difficult that foreign workers are gettting on with <u>an area of inhabitants</u> .	(to mean 'the inhabitants of an area')
4.	That place can't parking.	(to mean 'You can't park in that place.')
5.	Let's fight each other.	(to mean, roughly, "Good luck to us all")

### Sociolinguistic influences

Due to the relative homogeneity of the sample, cross group comparisons were not made although it was felt that the influence of peer association and solidarity markers linked to age or gender was often a factor in L2 performance. Frequent use of 'choral' speech or what might be described as 'heave-ho' utterances (following the Japanese 'sei no!') suggested either socially-motivated or variable rule transfer. Since a separate study of these influences is beyond the scope of the current study, and because the boundary between sociolinguistic and pragmatic influences is often rather tenuous, discussion here is limited to the preceding examples.

### Pragmatic influences

Apart from the above instances of lexical of syntactic transfer, the largest source of L1 influence appeared to be in examples such as those listed in Table 3., which we will refer to here as pragmatic transfer.

Table 3.

	Speech Act/ Function		Utterance or exchange
1.	reassuring		A: What happened? B: No. I left my wallet on the desk.
2.	encouraging	a.	A: <i>Do your best in anything you do.</i> B: Thank you.
		b.	A: I think so. <i>In many ways, let's fight.</i>
3.	showing envy or admiration	a.	A: Can you make cookies? B: Of course. It's very easy. I'm good at cook. A: <i>You have great confidence.</i>
		b.	A: Did you come here by your car? B: Yes. C: Wow! <i>You are rich.</i>
4.	showing respect	a.	A: Oh, in environment study? B: Is it difficult? C: Oh, yes. But I'm very interested in them. A: Great! <i>I respect you because I'm weak in it.</i>
		b.	A: <i>Does Shoko</i> often go skiing. B: I hardly ever go skiing.
		c.	A: <i>What does Yasuko's mother do?</i> B: She's a nurse.
5.	showing earnestness	a.	A: I think Japan should save human rights of illegal workers. B: Yes, yes. <i>We have to think of their situation.</i>
		b.	A: <i>We must reflect on how to accept them.</i>
		c.	A: <i>From now we have to put in a head about it.</i>
		d.	A: <i>We should make efforts to stop waste for saving an environment.</i>
		e.	A: As soon as the examination finish, its vacation come. B: <i>Let's work hard.</i>
6.	agreeing		A: They continues coming in Japan till now, and so I think that I should be easy to them. B: <i>You say a good thing.</i>
7.	asking for advice		A: <i>Would you tell me</i> best way to slim? B: O.K. Why don't you jog every morning?
8.	showing regret		A: I hardly ever cook in my house. B: Really? I always cook. C: Sorry. I can't cook.

As can be seen, the examples are neither simply lexical (although frequently having lexical equivalents), nor syntactic, since most examples follow appropriate English syntactic patterns.

Examples were categorized according to what was deemed the dominant speech act or function as judged from both the context of the discussion and from post-test interviews.

A number of the examples exhibit patterns relatively common in Japanese speech but which differ dramatically from standard English usage. Item 1. in Table 3. in which B responds 'No', was intended, according to the speaker, as a reassurance to the listener that nothing overly serious had occurred. The reassurance also implies that the question 'What happened?' (Do shitano?) should be taken more in the sense of 'Is something wrong?' The speaker clarified the meaning in Japanese as 'Iie' (generally translated as 'no'), a common form of reassurance.

In items 2. a and b, encouragement is offered in terms which might normally appear rather dramatic to a native English speaker, certainly when exchanged between college friends. The apparent suggestion of violence in 2. b 'In many ways, let's fight.' was clarified afterwards by the speaker whose translation 'Iroiro gambaro!' (roughly, 'Let's give many endeavors our best effort') explains the classification here as an expression of encouragement. The rather strained translation indicates the absence of even a rough English equivalent either in form or function implying possible reliance on L1 pragmatic norms.

The examples classified as 'showing envy or admiration' (3. a, b), appear to differ from native speech in several ways. As direct statements of fact, 'You have great confidence' and 'You are rich' would not at first seem out of place. Upon closer examination, however, they emerge not so much as simple declarative statements as expressions of admiration. Subsequent interviews confirmed that this was indeed the intent ('Sugoi jishin ga aru!'; 'Wa, kanemochi da'). While similar expressions of admiration are not implausible from native English speakers, more common,

for example, would be 'I admire your confidence' or 'You really must be doing well!' If the examples in Table 3. are, in fact, expressions of admiration or envy, it is certainly conceivable that L1 pragmatic influence is operative.

The two very different examples of showing respect in item 4. illustrate how similar illocutionary acts can be realized both through various linguistic forms and equally across a range of directness in speech. Through the employment of a performative verb, the speaker in example 4a. makes an unconditional declaration of respect which the three native speakers judged as sounding 'blunt', 'direct' or 'native'. In the post test interview, students insisted that the Japanese equivalent ('Ah, sugoi. Sonke shichau wa.') was perfectly natural and that it was used commonly even among intimates.

The following two examples (4. b and c) illustrate a pattern which reoccurred in many of the groups and which at first does not appear to be inappropriate at all. The problem emerges when one realizes that the names used in both examples refer to the persons addressed and not to a third party. Whereas proper usage would require 'Do you often go skiing, Shoko?', a significant number of speakers avoided the use of the second person 'you' and instead employed the direct English equivalent of the Japanese 'Shoko wa ski ni yoku iku no?' Although not strictly a speech act, the example was classified here to suggest the difficulty of separating illocution from other variables such as directness or politeness. A number of researchers (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Blum-Kulka, et. al, 1989; Ide, 1989; Ervin-Tripp, et. al, 1990) have pointed to the influences of such variables and the inherent problems involved in isolating illocutionary force. We might speculate that these speakers are attempting to accomplish though the use of indirect reference what might otherwise be realized by the use of some type of honorific.

The examples which follow (5. a-e) illustrate a pattern widely employed by many of the 48 groups. Labeled here as 'showing earnest-



ness', all of these examples appear to express a desire on the speaker's part to demonstrate their sincerity, resolve or good intentions towards some particular endeavor. Most noticeable perhaps in all of the examples is the use of the first person plural to refer to a generalized as opposed to a specific group ('We must reflect on how to accept them'). It was felt that native English speakers would typically choose to distance themselves a step from the implied responsibility by the more common use of 'one has to...' or 'you really have to...'. These latter forms do not seem to convey a comparable feeling of determination, however, and it is this, more than the linguistic form alone, that suggests the possibility of pragmatic influence.

In item 6., the second speaker expresses agreement not with a direct opinion such as 'I absolutely agree', but rather by characterizing the first speaker's opinion as 'a good thing' (Ii koto o iuta). More than a simple lexical transfer, this expression, ruled as non-native-like by the three judges, appears to imply the speaker's reliance on L1 pragmatic rules in determining a proper form of agreement.

The speaker in item 7. has translated the Japanese 'Yaseru no nichiban ii hoho o oshiete kureru?' using a form which, to a native English speaker, would generally appear to be both overly formal (in this particular context) and, perhaps, somewhat ingenuous. 'Would you tell me the best way to slim?' appears to imply that one is addressing someone unfamiliar who possesses some specialized knowledge, yet as we have seen, this group is fairly homegenous as far as age, background and current status. We have not addressed the obvious problem of basic linguistic development and resources as a factor in determining production. The speaker's failure here to employ a more appropriate form may simply be a matter of the their not having acquired the necessary language. In a study on L1 influences with apologies, for example, Olshtain and Cohen (1989) attributed learners failure to transfer to a lack of L2 knowledge rather than any specific pragmatic influence. In any

case, the speaker's reliance on L1 pragmatic resources for an acceptable option cannot be totally discounted.

## Conclusion

In this examination of pragmatic influences on L2 production, discussion has been limited largely to content—that is, the specific linguistic forms or strategies students employ in realizing certain communicative goals. Besides the brief mention of socially motivated transfer in the section on social psychological language transfer, however, little has been said regarding either why speakers transfer or whether transfer occurs in some contexts more than others. If the insights gained from comparative studies of pragmatic knowledge and its influences on language production are to be usefully employed by language instructors, not only what is transferred but why some learners choose to transfer and the conditions under which they do so will need to be studied.

The examples given in Table 3. have been labeled collectively as pragmatic transfer without attempting to distinguish between transfer that is largely a matter of linguistic form and that which is more socially influenced. Leech (1983) uses the terms 'pragmalinguistic' and 'sociopragmatic' to discuss two separate areas in which influence varies along a scale with linguistic variables at one end and social variables at the other. In his adaptation of this model for research on cross linguistic influences, Thomas (1983) identifies two types of pragmatic failure with these terms.

Using examples from the current study to illustrate this distinction, we might consider that the expression of encouragement in Table 3.(2.a) 'Do your best in anything you do.' might be realized with an expression more acceptable to a native English speaker (e.g. 'Good luck') and still satisfy the speakers intention of encouragement. The problem is more one of linguistic form since native English speakers do, in fact, use

encouragement in similar contexts. We might consider this as an example of a 'pragmalinguistic' distinction in Thomas' terms. The 'second example (2.b), 'In many ways, let's fight', on the other hand, illustrates a pattern often noted in Japanese conversation but largely absent in native English speech (outside of, say, the situationally-focused pep talks given by sporting team coaches), of encouraging one's group to be strong and resolute in its proposed endeavor. The speaker has searched for an L2 linguistic realization and discovered a workable, if somewhat tortured, phrase to fill the slot. This does not mean, however, that they have succeeded in conveying the original illocutionary force, politeness level or social distance into the L2. Seen as an example of sociopragmatic failure, we might say that the speaker has, in spite of L2 limitations, forced function into form.

The implications for both curriculum design and error correction derive largely from this general distinction between linguistic competence on the one hand, and more socially based knowledge on the other. Whereas pragmalinguistic distinctions may be taught and reinforced without asking learners essentially to alter their own L1 patterns of social interaction, this cannot always be accomplished so easily with more sociopragmatic differences between languages. Asking students to learn a variable linguistic rule which conforms in social terms with their own L1 norms is not the same as requiring them to change learned patterns of social interaction, in essence dictating what is acceptable behavior. Since most adult students come to the language classroom with fully-formed notions of socially appropriate language behavior, a strict insistence on adherence to L2 sociopragmatic norms may often be asking too much too soon. In order to avoid the inherent pitfalls in dealing with pragmatic failure, language teachers clearly need to take different motivations for transfer into account when considering what can realistically be expected from their students.

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## Abstract

Attempts by second language learners to accomplish certain conversational goals by drawing on socially-based linguistic knowledge from the L1 has been defined variously as cross linguistic influence, discourse accent, sociolinguistic or pragmatic transfer. Following a background discussion of general L1 influences, this paper goes on to illustrate how transfer occurs within larger discourse patterns and generally with language in context. Examples from student-generated conversations are provided first of L1 lexical and syntactic influence and then of more contextualized language of the type described in a number of studies involving sociolinguistic or pragmatic transfer. The conclusion looks at implications for curriculum and evaluation design which might build on different aspects of pragmatic failure.