

Pragmatics Matters

The newsletter of the JALT Pragmatics Special Interest Group

ISSUE 35 Feb 2011

Guest editors: Tim Greer and Donna Tatsuki

**Special
Issue on
PLL18**



Looking back on PLL18

The 18th International Conference on Pragmatics and Language Learning (PLL18) was co-hosted by the JALT Pragmatics SIG and Kobe University's School of Languages and Communication from July 16 to 19, 2010. Since this was the first time in its 23-year history that the event had been held outside the U.S. and the first time the SIG had hosted such a major international event, it was decided to produce this special feature issue of the Pragmatic Matters newsletter to look back and celebrate the many accomplishments we have achieved through this conference.

In the heat of the summer, Kobe was the cool place to be for L2 pragmatics researchers from over thirty different countries. Their input, along with the hard work of the dedicated conference committee, made for a stimulating three day event.



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WHAT IS PLL?

The Pragmatics and Language Learning Conference originated at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign in the 1980s. The conference serves as a forum for research in the pragmatics of the language learning process and encourages interaction between scholars involved in pragmatics and language pedagogy.

The next PLL conference (PLL19) will be held in 2012 at Indiana University Purdue University (IUPUI) in Indianapolis, USA.

WHO ATTENDED?

Over 250 classroom teachers, academics and graduate students took part in the three day conference. Presenters and participants came from Japan and other parts of Asia, the USA, Australia and Europe.

A report on the presentations at PLL18

With so many fascinating presentations at the conference, it would be impossible to review them all, so this report will pick up on just a few.

We will begin by taking a brief look at the three plenary sessions. The conference kicked off with an inspiring address by Jean Wong, who wove her personal family story into an account of how she came to be interested in Conversation Analysis (CA) and where she sees the relationship between CA and Applied Linguistics heading into the future. She also introduced some of her recent thoughts on “loose adjacency”.

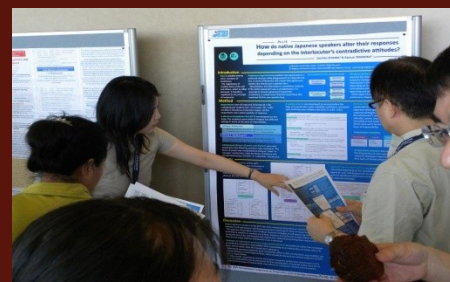
This Sunday plenary address by Haruhiko Yamaguchi was an intriguing glimpse into the way dictionaries are currently compiled in Japan, and the interplay between semantics and pragmatics throughout that process. The conference wrapped up with a captivating plenary address from longtime SIG member Carol Rinnert entitled, “Whose Pragmatic Norms? Cultivating Multicompetent Language Users”. Rinnert stressed that monolingual pragmatic norms are no longer appropriate for language teaching, but instead both L1 and L2 speakers should be consciously engaged in cross-cultural interaction, in order to achieve pragmatic multicompetence.

There was also a wide selection of panel sessions to choose from. Eric Hauser convened a panel on longitudinal CA in which each of the five speakers investigated changes in learners’ interaction across time. In Noriko Ishihara’s panel on instructional pragmatics, five university educators discussed how they incorporated pragmatics into their L2 teacher education courses. The panel featured a Skype link to Camilla Vasquez at the University of South Florida, who was unable to attend the conference in person. Another panel convened by Donna Fujimoto looked at the interactional

competence of L2 learners, with presentations by Noel Houck, Jean Wong, Donna Fujimoto and David Olsher on the ways that such competencies are manifested in the situated practices of turn design, preference and sequential structure. Finally, there was also a panel on the pragmatics of Japanese, which was held in that language. Yoshihiro Nishimitsu, Yoshinao Najima, Takuro Moriyama and Shigehiro Kato discussed the implications of pragmatics for Japanese language education.

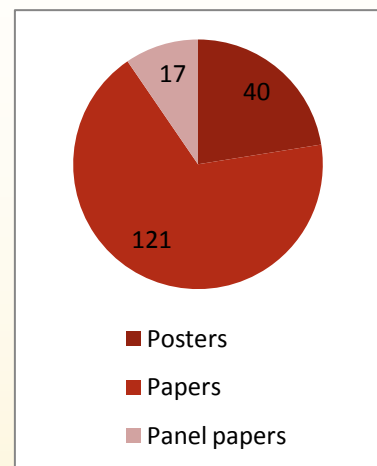
In addition to these panels, there were also two featured workshops; a CA-data session led by Jean Wong and an introduction to Narrative Analysis by Michael Bamberg. Both of these workshops were well attended.

But of course it was the paper and poster presentations that demonstrated the incredible variety of research that is currently being conducted into pragmatics in language learning contexts. While there are far too many to list in detail, some of the topics included gender, speech acts, pragmatic appropriateness, fluency, silence, emergent literacy, reciprocity, discourse markers and narrative roles. With a dedicated timeslot of their own, the poster presentations in particular were very well received, generating plenty of lively discussion and often giving the presenters more extensive feedback on their work than would be possible in a traditional paper presentation. A full list of presentations is available on the PLL18 website, and a selection of these studies will be published in the PLL13 volume, which is due out in 2012.



A breakdown of the presentations

In addition to the three plenary sessions, the PLL18 conference featured 178 presentations, including 121 paper presentations, 40 poster presentations and four panel sessions.



The presentations were broadly classified into seven topic strands, which included;

- Developmental pragmatics
- Theory and methodology
- Assessment of pragmatics
- Pragmatics and Language education
- L2 talk and/or text
- Computer Mediated Communication
- Other topics



Social program

At any conference, perhaps almost as important as the presentations themselves is the social program, which gives researchers a chance to meet others who are working in their field or to ask questions to presenters in a more relaxed setting. The Kobe PLL conference featured a number of different social events, including a welcome reception, a ticketed dinner and a variety of free pre-conference tours.

The pre-conference walking tours of Kobe were organized by under-graduate students as part of their English course. Each group of students researched a local area, designed a short walking tour and wrote an English description of the tour for the conference website. They then responded to overseas conference participants by email and made all the necessary arrangements to show them the city sights. This was a rare opportunity for students to carry out a challenging English task that had consequences in the real world. Conference goers also appreciated the chance to “meet the locals” and experience an unfamiliar city from their perspective.

The evening dinners, on the other hand, were a time to talk with other pragmatics researchers. The welcome reception at Kobe University

was the venue for the Sunday evening

dinner. Conference participants enjoyed a variety of Japanese dishes including original handmade tofu recipes.



Participant Feedback

According to the 43 feedback forms we received, most of the conference participants originally heard about PLL18 via the website, an email message or via a posting on the Linguist List, which underscores the.

Their general impression of the conference was very high (4.5 out of 5) and 90% of the respondents were keen to attend another PLL conference in the future. Some felt, however, that 25 minutes for paper presentations was too short, and the conference handbook could have been more user-friendly. 70% of the respondents took advantage of the early bird reduced rate and most found the cost fair.

What the participants said

“The organization in the presentations rooms was excellent, as was the organization of the conference in general. Thank you!” (A UK professor from Hiroshima)

“Having lots of water freely available onsite was nice” (An American professor from Kyoto)

“It’s been a great, enriching and stimulating conference. I’ve really enjoyed it” (A Vietnamese professor from Singapore)

“All staff and helpers were brilliant!” (A graduate student from the UK)

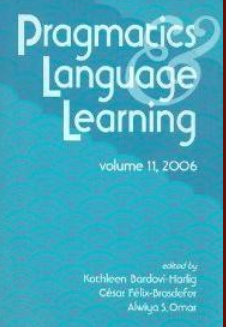
“Great price: extremely well-run” (Graduate student from New Zealand)

The Pragmatics and Language Learning Series

A collection of selected papers from the PLL conference

Although the PLL conference does not have a proceedings there is a fully peer-reviewed book that makes available a selection of the best papers that were presented at the conference. The 13th volume in that series will be based on papers from the Kobe conference and will be edited by Tim Greer, Carsten Roever and Donna Tatsuki. Due to be published, this book should be available in time for the next PLL conference, which will be held in Indianapolis in 2012.

Although earlier volumes in this series are no longer in print, Volume 11 (Bardhovi-Harlig et al 2006) and Volume 12 (Kasper et al, 2010) are available online via Amazon, or directly from the University of Hawai’i.



A word of thanks from to the committee

The Program Chairs would like to recognize all the hard work of those who volunteered to make the conference such a huge success.

An event of this magnitude requires an incredible amount of logistical planning. Early discussions began in 2006, when the Program Chairs (Tim Greer, Donna Tatsuki and Yuri Kite) were first approached about holding the conference in Kobe. Since each of them was closely involved with the Pragmatics SIG, it made sense that the SIG would become one of the co-hosts. From that point on, an extensive team of volunteers made up of SIG members and Kobe University staff and students helped put together the conference.

It began with the vetting of submissions, which took place in early 2010. We thank those SIG members around the country who took time to help out with that task— there are too many to name here, but your contributions are truly valued.

After the list of presenters had been settled, the task of registering them and preparing for the conference commenced, with the site committee beginning its job in earnest. As Site Chair, Tim Greer oversaw the entire conference and coordinated a truly dedicated team, most of whom had never organized a conference of this scale before.

Behind the scenes, Mio Tanaka, a 4th year undergrad student from Kobe University, was the life pulse of the conference, setting up a database of participants, and handling everything from to flower arrangements. Often her negotiations were carried out in not two but *three* languages, and they were always accomplished with the utmost professionalism. She devoted herself completely to the conference during the three months leading up to July, and astonished us with her organizational skills.

Other integral members of the Site Committee included Bruno Vannieu (Registration), Greg Sholdt (Treasurer), Pinter Gabor, Richard Harrison and Emiko Nakai (Technical), Takeo Uto and Donna Fujimoto (Social program), Kazuhito Yamato (Access), and Paul Cibulka (Graphic design). This group worked tirelessly throughout the first semester to prepare for the conference, and gave up their valuable end-of-semester hours to make sure everything went smoothly during the three-day conference.

With their Samurai Blue T-shirts, perhaps the most visible members of the organizing committee were the 19 student volunteers from Kobe University. Made up of both Japanese and international students from various faculties, it was the first time most of them had even attended an academic conference. Many of the participants commented favorably on the student volunteers' friendly attitude and the efficient help they offered, whether it was directing people from one building to another or simply keeping the bottled water table replenished.

Our thanks also go to the following people whose valuable assistance helped make the conference a success; Dean Masayuki Kato, Satoshi Asano, Prof. Yoshihiro Nishimura, Deborah Masterson and Dr. Bill Perry.

It was a pleasure and privilege to be part of this dynamic team. Of course, the outcome of all this hard work is that the importance of pragmatics, discourse, and language-in-use has been recognized and reaffirmed in ways that will resonate within the language teaching community here in Japan for years to come.



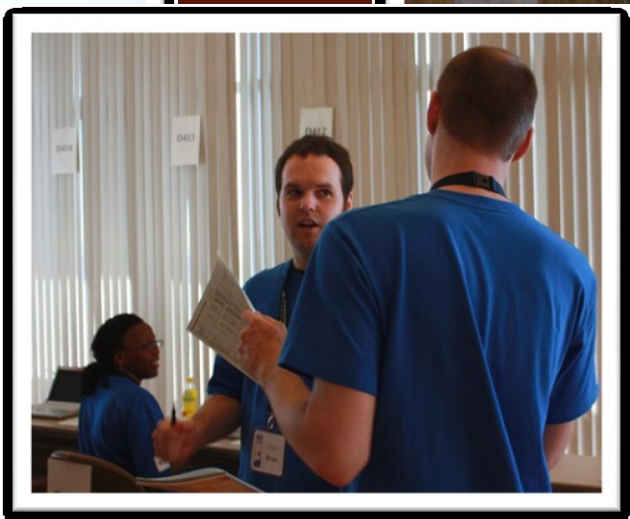
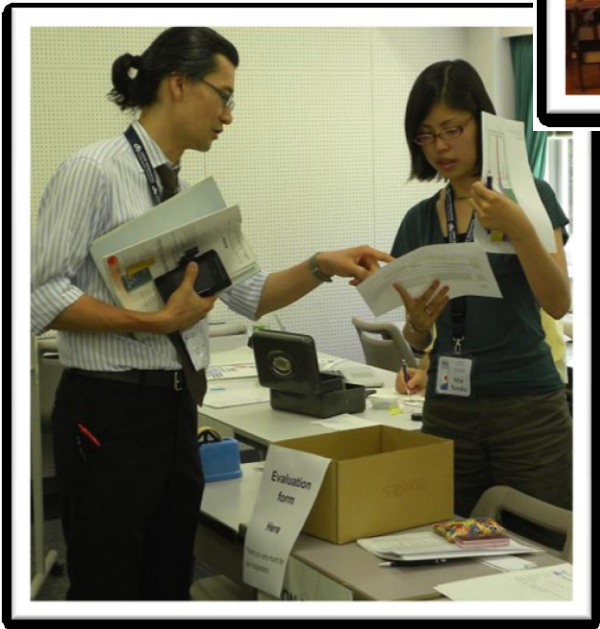
Putting on an international conference

PLL18 was the first time many of us had ever organized a major international conference, so there were so many things that had to be learned in a very short period of time. Emails concerning logistical issues, practical decisions and financial compromises were flying back and forth during the weeks and months leading up to the conference, but ultimately the experience was well worth it.

The process of preparing for the conference taught us all a lot; about the skills we hold as individuals and as a team, about how to work with different types of people, and about finding solutions to the challenges that faced us. Throughout it all, the team achieved a sense of camaraderie that made all the hard work worthwhile, and has in fact extended well beyond the conference itself.

Kobe University Associate Professor Kazuhito Yamato told me this conference was full of firsts for him; the first time he had helped organize an international conference and the first time he had delivered a paper in English. Among the many skills he developed was the ability to negotiate with others, both in English (during the conference) and in Japanese (such as with the university office staff)

A student in the Masters program at Kobe University, Anna Bordilovskaya served as a volunteer at the conference. She said, "It was a great experience for me to work at this conference. I tried my best and I hope I haven't messed up a lot my part of the job. I've made a lot of new friends and even some academic contacts thanks to PLL18."



Call for book proposals

Pragmatic Resources series is looking for new editor(s) with fresh proposals for future volumes.

There are now two volumes in the *Pragmatic Resources* series. The first volume *Pragmatics in Language Learning, Theory, and Practice* features practical and theoretical articles on the use of pragmatics in second language learning along with six short lesson-type articles on teaching pragmatics to second language learners. The articles delineate the role of pragmatics in the process of language learning, the on-going development of language/linguistic theory and the innovations of pedagogical practice. The second volume *Observing Talk: Conversation Analytic Studies of Second Language Interaction* features a collection of eight contemporary articles that explore second language interaction from the perspectives of the speakers themselves using a Conversation Analysis framework.

Recently a number of Pragmatics SIG members have expressed an interest in and need for a volume dedicated to teaching pragmatics/helping learners develop their pragmatic competence. Other members have expressed an interest in research on corpus-based pragmatics. If you have an idea or suggestions for themes and contents that you would like to see in the *Pragmatic Resources* series please let us know!

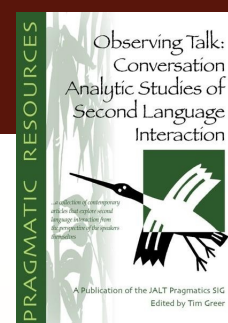
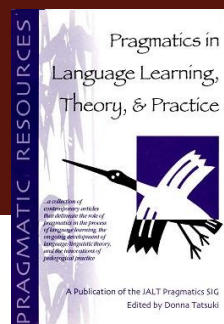
Pragmatic Resources series is looking for new editor/s with fresh proposals for future volumes. The volumes so far have been 150-200 pages in length (about 50,000 words--but, fewer if there are lots of tables or figures).

If you want more information please email me anytime. If you already have an idea for a thematic volume, fill in the proposal form and contact:

Publications Director

Donna Tatsuki

[<dhtatsuki@gmail.com>](mailto:dhtatsuki@gmail.com).



Proposal form

About the proposed volume

1. The proposed manuscript
 1. Editor's name
 2. Tentative title of the book
 3. Estimated length (in number of words and pages)
 4. Number of tables
 5. Number of figures and/or plates
 6. Number of contributions
 7. Other special features
2. Outline of the book
 1. What do you see as the volume's main selling points? Emphasize the unique aspects regarding origin, content, style and methodology. We would appreciate it if you also briefly outline your motivation and particular qualifications to edit the work.
 2. Include any new findings of fact, statements, theory or viewpoint that the book will contain.
 3. If the proposed book is a textbook, you should clearly mention the intended level of its audience, and if the materials have been field-tested in the classroom, please let us know with the details. Are you going to use the textbook yourself for a course, and do you know of other places where the book may be used?
 4. Please send a copy of the table of contents and a concise description of the proposed volume.
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SIG News

Apart from the PLL18 conference, the Pragmatics SIG members were busy throughout 2010, with some publishing papers in the second book in the SIG's Pragmatic Resources series, and others giving presentations at the International JALT conference, which was held in Nagoya in November.

That meeting also gave interested SIG members an opportunity to get together and talk about future directions at the SIG's annual general meeting. First of all, a number of new officers were elected. Tim Greer is filling in as coordinator for Donna Tatsuki while she is on sabbatical in Italy during 2011. Donna Fujimoto takes over as Program Chair from Sayoko Yamashita and Megumi Kawate-Mierzejewska, while the incoming newsletter editor will be Tim Knight. Our thanks go to Sybil Armstrong and her team for all their work on PM during the past couple of years. While there are too many to mention here, a full list of current SIG offers appear to the right of this column. It is fantastic to see so many people becoming active within the group, since speaking from experience, the more you put into a SIG, the more you get out of it.

The SIG has already got plenty of plans for 2011 as well. We will be supporting the TUJ Colloquium in Osaka on February 13, and Donna Fujimoto has organized a variety of panels and presentations. We are also co-

hosting the Pan-SIG conference in Nagano this May, and the call for presentations that event is currently available online. Don't forget also to get your abstracts in for the International JALT conference, which will be held in Tokyo in November. Further details about these and other pragmatics-related conferences can be found on page 6.

If you haven't yet done so, please join the SIG's online email discussion group to make sure that you keep up-to-date with the very latest information about our activities.

Once again, let me offer my sincere thanks to all of the outgoing SIG officers, and encourage all of our members to take part in the SIG's activities in 2011.

Tim Greer, SIG coordinator

SIG Officers (2011)

Coordinator *Tim Greer*
Treasurer *Noriko Ishihara*
Program Chair *Donna Fujimoto*

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Megumi Kawate-Mierzejewska

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New SIG Publication

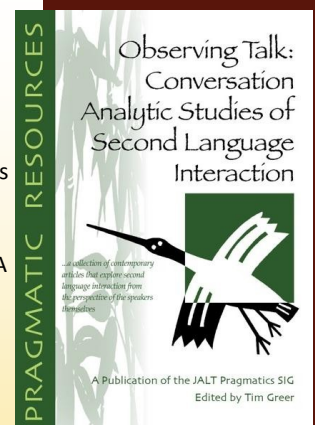
Observing Talk: Conversation Analytic Studies into Second Language Interaction

The second volume in the SIG's Pragmatics Resources series is out now.

The new collection includes eight chapters by Japan-based CA researchers who are interested in second language interaction.

SIG members should have received a complimentary copy in November 2010, but the volume is also on sale to non-members via the SIG website at

www.pragsig.org/publications.html.





About the SIG

The JALT Pragmatics SIG is a not-for-profit organization whose purposes are to stimulate research in pragmatics including cross-cultural pragmatics, interlanguage pragmatics and other pragmatics-related areas, support its development through exchange between researchers, and increase networking opportunities among language professionals who are interested in pragmatics.

PRAGMATIC MATTERS
ISSUE 35 February 2011

Upcoming Events

Temple University Japan (TUJ) Applied Linguistics Colloquium

The Pragmatics SIG will be organizing two panel discussions as well as a variety of pragmatics-related presentations at this one-day event, which will take place on 13th of February 2011, at [TUJ's Osaka campus](#).

Pan-SIG Conference

The [10th Annual Pan-SIG conference](#) will be held at Shinshu University in Nagano on May 21st and 22nd 2011. The Pragmatics SIG is one of the co-sponsors of this collaborative event, which will feature the latest research by various JALT SIGs.

International Pragmatics Association Conference (IPrA)

This biannual conference is the largest international conference on pragmatics. Some of our SIG members will be presenting at [this year's event](#), which will take place in Manchester, UK from 3rd to 8th of July, 2011.

JALT National Conference

The National conference returns to Tokyo this year. The call for presentations is now [online](#) and the deadline for submissions is April 22nd, so start thinking about a pragmatics-related proposal now.

JALT Pragmatics SIG

www.pragsig.org

To submit an article to the newsletter please contact the editor,
Tim Knight
tknight303@gmail.com