Pragmatics Matters

Issue 53, Autumn 2018

語用論事情

2018年秋第53号

JALT Pragmatics SIG Newsletter

全国語学教育学会 語用論部会 ニュースレター

Contents:

Page

From the editor

Autumn is here and the heat has subsided at last. Many teachers will be busy with teaching, research projects, conferences and all of the other business of being a language professional in Japan as we get into the run up to the year-end break. The main event in the autumn calendar for many JALT members is the annual conference. Its full name is the '44th Annual International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning & Educational Materials Exhibition', which is a bit of a mouthful whichever way you look at it, and it usually gets referred to simply as 'JALT national'. This year's conference is being held in Shizuoka city at the Shizuoka Convention & Arts Center (Granship) over the weekend of November 23rd to November 26th (Friday to Monday). Your editor will be in attendance and will be giving presentations on the Saturday. A full conference preview is found below. Also in this edition there is a review of the Annual KOTESOL International conference that took place in Seoul over the weekend of 13th 14th October and a review of the Conversation Analysis retreat that was held in Hatoji in the summer. Philip Riccobono introduces his podcast series on language and pragmatics and there is the usual conference round-up. Hope to see you all at JALT national in late November for what promises to be a stimulating weekend of presentations, workshops, exhibitions and, may we speculate, post-conference socializing in the shadow of iconic Mt Fuji.

KOTESOL 2018 Review

John Campbell-Larsen
Kyoto Women's University

KOTESOL 2018 KOTESOL International Conference was held at Sookmyung Women's University in downtown Seoul over the weekend of 13th-14th of October. I decided not to cancel any classes this year and head off to KIX after teaching a full day. This meant that I didn't get checked into my hotel in Seoul until about 11 P.M. But, seeing as I was right downtown in Itaewon, replete with a huge variety of pubs, bars, and restaurants I still found the energy to pop out for 'just the one'. I mention this by way of showing that for some teachers who do not have the option of cancelling classes to attend conferences, it is still perfectly feasible to make the quick hop over to Korea on Friday evening after work.

The conference theme this year was 'fluency' which is a topic I am particularly interested in, both in its abstract, academic and, dare I say it, philosophical sense and also as it pertains to the quotidian business of language learning. One problem is that many people talk about fluency, fluency development and the like without actually giving any definition of what it is. Jill Murray, one of the invited speakers went some way to addressing this issue in her feature talk The Pragmatics of Fluency and Disfluency: Teaching and Testing Implications. The presenter really got to grips with some of the key issues surrounding what it means for language learners. The concept of disfluency was examined and Dr. Murray made the key point that not all native speakers proceed through their talk without some performance factors, hesitations, restarts, repairs and the like. This was a theme that I also raised in my own presentation 'Fluency: What it is and how to teach it' where I raised the issues of fluency in connection with the related concepts of disfluency, confluency and hyper-fluency and pointed out that fluency is a jointly constructed thing and that many of the models of speaking in teaching materials are devoid of the performance features mentioned above and set an unrealistic goal for learners. Native speakers are, in effect, 'fluently disfluent' in their speaking. For those interested in investigating fluency more, I can thoroughly recommend a 2010 paper by Michael McCarthy. (See the link at the end of this article)

Another worthwhile presentation at the conference was the talk 'Improvisational Fillers in Pechakucha' by Yosuke Ogawa. Despite the previous presenter running over by a significant amount (a pet peeve of mine) an some tech issues at the beginning, the speaker delivered a fast-paced, entertaining and really informative talk on the practices deployed by students as they delivered Pechkucha presentations. One item that I found particularly interesting was the tendency for some speakers to backchannel themselves during their talk. I had encountered this before but I had never really attended to it. Ogawa's talk was a great example of a presentation that was both entertaining and informative, and a reminder to other presenters that you don't have to be one or the other.

Stephen Krashen's plenary gave a lot of food for thought, dealing as it did with the case studies of people who had become fluent in second (third/fourth and so on) languages. Whilst the individuals that were showcased were certainly impressive, I wasn't fully convinced it was largely due to I+1 and comprehensible input schemas of learning. As in all fields of human endeavor, there are outliers and the fact remains that for most people who study a foreign/second language, full, native-like fluency is not attained.

All in all, I had an enjoyable and stimulating experience at this year's conference. Partly it was due to the large number of quality presentations I attended, (not all of them mentioned here) and partly due to the conference theme being of particular interest to me. KOTESOL will remain a fixture on my conference calendar.

Reference
McCarthy, M. (2010). Spoken fluency revisited. *English Profile Journal*, *1*. 1-15.
Link:
https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=spoken+fluency+revisited+&btnG=

2018 Hattoji CA Retreat

Amar Cheikhna
Kobe University

The Conversation Analysis Network Asia (CAN-Asia) is a research group based in Japan that uses CA methods to investigate interaction in formal and informal settings. Every year this group holds several events related to their research. From August 9th to 11th , 2018 a group of CA researchers participated in a summer retreat focused on second language interaction. The event took place at Hattoji Sanso, a traditional Japanese-style house in the mountain village of Hattoji, Okayama. The place is beautiful and ideal for a group who seeks quiet time to focus and escape the noise of big cities.

Participants settle down for dinner

This year's retreat focused on data from interaction in EFL classrooms in a Japanese university. The participants worked on building collections of similar cases from the data. During the first day, we held a focus data session on the teachers' practices in introducing new activities in classrooms. During the second day, we divided into two groups, with each focusing on parts of data the to build collections of similar cases. We worked from morning to evening and put together a variety of observations on the data. On the last day we all gathered together and presented our findings. Both groups came up with thought-provoking ideas and collections. For example, we build a collection of how teachers use "absurd case formulations" in pursuing a missing response from students. The practice shows how teacher provide candidate responses with one absurd candidate response. In addition, we also investigated many other practices such as teachers' use of gestures to pursue responses and students' resistance when participating in learning activities.

The event was fruitful and enabled the participants to come up with many new directions in their research. It was also an excellent opportunity for researchers from the same field to get to know each other much more closely than is possible at a conference. By the end of the retreat some of the participants had formulated plans to collaborate on other projects and papers in the future.

PragCast: Introducing the Podcast of Pragmatics SIG

Philip Riccobono

Introduction

As part of the Web 2.0 generation toolbox, podcasts have been produced to teach and learn English- from a myriad of topics designed for listening enrichment to learners engaging in speaking activities in English (Abdunnazar, 2017; Nethi & Murray, 2015). However, podcasts also foster a conduit to professional development (PD) in TESOL and the newly formed, *PragCast,* speaks to this: serving to share the work of those practitioners in the field of TESOL via audio format over the Internet, specifically Pragmatics within and freestanding of the JALT Pragmatics SIG.

Background

Nethi and Murray (2015) inform that practitioners join Professional Learning Networks (PLN): one who subscribes to multi-platforms for PD, pedagogy and networking as seen in Figure 1. Within the realm of PLN (and its all-encompassing substantial multi-media presence), podcasts have emerged as a relevant form of PD. Within PLN, "educators are able not only to find cutting edge information and resources but also to learn about opportunities for collaboration and professional development" (Nethi & Murray, 2015, p. 70); in-line with this notion, *PragCast,* aims to create such a community.
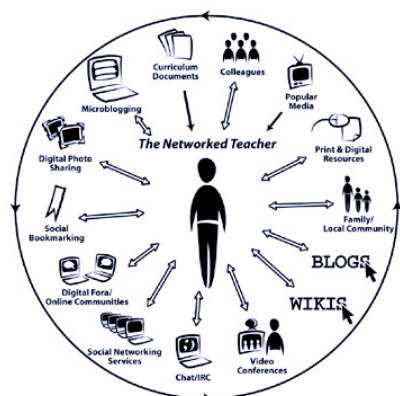

Figure 1. The networked teacher (Couros, 2008 as cited in Nethi & Murray, 2015). Creative Commons license (BY-NC-SA).

Quantitative research findings from Seaman and Tinti-Kane (2013), suggest usage of podcasts for N= 7,969 participants in education. This study investigates how and to what extent American university faculty members utilize social media, focused on only the most well-known online sites and technology-enabled tools: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, wikis, blogs, and podcasts. The study concluded that 14.3% of participants use podcasts as one form of a tool in higher education. In the last half a decade this number may have very well grown exponentially with an increase in podcasting as an affordable, low-tech medium growing exponentially and with more available technology at our fingertips i.e., smartphones, tablets, more compact notebooks (Karr, 2018).

Qualitative findings inform of future TESOL teacher educators' attitudes toward podcasting as part of practitioner training (Kim & King, 2011). The goal of the study was to understand participants' experience of an assignment as they shared their projects with others on the Web as podcasts, interacting with other colleagues in the process. This study concluded that *N= 3* newcomers to podcasting expressed attitudes which shifted from anxiety to

confidence in completing tasks reflecting on teacher training, and they enjoyed their experiences as new podcasters (Kim & King, 2011).

Discussion

In keeping with such data, which suggests that perhaps unfamiliarity with podcasting occurs at first and attitudes may change, *PragCast* serves as a vehicle for new contributors to gain experience in creating digital content. Accordingly, Pragmatics SIG opens this platform to interested contributors or those who wish to expand their PLN. To gain familiarity with other PD-centric podcasts, the author has found some relevant TESOL shows in i.e., TEFLOLOGY (Japan-based), International House (CELTA), The TEFL Show, TEFL Training Institute all found on podcast catchers across the Internet.

PragCast calls for contributors to record and share audio segments for programming:
- Interviews with pragmatics related researchers, presenters
- Conference presentations
- Clips of CA or DA along with researcher/practitioner commentary
- Other related content

The author will assist in editing and uploading it as a podcast.

Conclusion

Two episodes in, *PragCast* serves as a community for Pragmatics SIG members to contribute in varying aural formats. Podcasts act as a form of reflection of our research or praxis and thus intends to creates a community of growth amongst the Pragmatics SIG and alike across the World Wide Web. Whether you have used podcasts in the classroom or not with ELLs, Kim and Kang (2011) found that creating new podcasts addresses the importance of learning new skills in teacher education, particularly for learners who are *digital natives* (Prensky, 2001). With that, we encourage you to join the *PragCast* community as a contributor with opportunity for professional development, to learn and dialogue productive experiences as practitioners in growing a community for interaction and collaboration. If you have an interview, comments, questions or anything related to the field of Pragmatics, please forward MP3 files to psricc@gmail.com.

Figure 2. Screenshot of *PragCast,* www.PragSIG.org

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Abdunnazar, P. (2017). Teaching and Learning English as Second Language through Podcasting. *Language in India*, [online] *17*(11). Available at: http://www.languageinindia.com/ [Accessed 1 Sep. 2018].

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Nethi, V. & Murray, A. (2015). Proactive professional development: A connected educator. In P. Clements, A. Krause, and H. Brown (Eds.), *JALT2014 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: JALT.

Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants. *On the Horizon*, *9*(5), 1-2.

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Conference Calendar

There are a number of conferences coming up that will be of interest to the Pragmatics SIG membership. Following are some details of conferences, some of which you may already know about and some of which might not be on your radar yet. Some of the calls for submissions are already closed, but you can always attend as a non-presenter or make a note of the conference title for future reference and possible attendance in coming years. It's always useful to know what is going on and make plans accordingly.

International Conference: Interactional Competences and Practices in a Second Language (ICOP-L2) Mälardalen University, Västerås, Sweden, 29–31 May 2019

Link here: http://mdh.se/forskning/event/icop-l2

Following the success of the first Interactional Competences and Practices in a Second Language (ICOP-L2) conference organized by the University of Neuchâtel (Switzerland), we are delighted to organise the second ICOP-L2 conference to be held at Mälardalen University in beautiful Västerås, Sweden, on 29-31 May 2019.

Interactional practices in second and additional languages (L2s) have increasingly been researched in language classrooms and other institutional settings as well as in non-institutional contexts that include practices of 'learning in the wild'. Principles of ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, membership categorization analysis, and usage-

based linguistics have equipped researchers with tools to investigate how users of L2s engage in sense making practices, and how they learn and teach in interaction. This social and qualitative trend in L2 interaction research has also fueled a growing body of studies into interactional competence.

In the last decade, interactional competence has become one of the central concepts in Applied Linguistics, contributing to research on language development, the dynamics of L2 use, teaching, teacher education, and oral proficiency assessment. Special issues in Classroom Discourse (Routledge) and Language Testing (SAGE) as well as edited volumes and book-length manuscripts (e.g. Hall, Hellermann and Pekarek Doehler, 2011; Salaberry and Kunitz, forthcoming) have been published to present how interactional practices are manifested and locally managed by users of L2s in institutional and non-institutional settings.

This growing body of research has great potential to inform teaching, teacher education, and testing at practitioner level, and there is more need now than ever for bridging research and practice for uncovering the interactional dynamics of teaching and learning. One of the central aims of this conference is to address these broad issues by bringing together researchers who work on interactional practices in L2s to present, discuss, and disseminate cutting-edge research.

Plenary Speakers

Simona Pekarek Doehler, University of Neuchâtel
Steven Thorne, Portland State University
Johannes Wagner, University of Southern Denmark

Methodology Workshops

CA as a method to study interaction in the classroom and in the wild
Silvia Kunitz and Niina Lilja

Tracking change over time using Conversation Analysis
Evelyne Berger and Klara Skogmyr Marian

Collecting and analyzing online L2 interaction data
Ufuk Balaman

Submission

Proposals are invited for individual papers, panels (colloquia), and posters. All abstracts (300 words maximum) need to be submitted electronically by 30 November 2018.

Important dates:

Submission and registration opening: October 2018
Submission deadline: 30 November 2018
Notification of acceptance: December 2018 - January 2019
Registration closes: 3 May 2019
Pre-conference methodology workshops: 29 May 2019
Conference: 29-31 May 2019

PANSIG 2019

The annual JALT PANSIG conference will be held at Konan University CUBE campus, Nishinomiya, Hyogo Prefecture on the weekend of May 18th and 19th 2019. The call for submissions is now open with a deadline of December 22nd 2018 for those wishing to present. See the following link for more details:
http://pansig.org/

JALT 44th Annual International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning & Educational Materials Exhibition

The annual JALT International Conference is just around the corner and I anticipate a high turnout, as usual. This conference is a fixture on the language teaching conference here in Japan and this year the conference is being held from **Friday, November 23, to Monday, November 26, 2018** at the Shizuoka Convention & Arts Center (Granship) Shizuoka City, Shizuoka, Japan. This is a familiar venue from previous JALT conferences and I'm sure there will be a wide variety of presentations, forums and posters that will appeal to attendees of every interest. The pragmatics themed presentations are listed below, so be sure to attend and find out what your peers in the field are up to.

JALT 2018 Pragmatics presentations & posters

Time	Room No.	Presenter	Title	Format	My Schedule
Nov 24 (Saturday); 11:00 AM - 11:25 AM	A/V Hall (2F)	Oyama, Kyoko - Waseda University; Oyama, Mai - Bath University	Awareness Raising to Develop Pragmatic Competence	Research-Oriented Short Presentation	
Nov 24 (Saturday); 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM	Tenji Gallery (6F)	Fujimura-Wilson, Kayo - Yamaguchi University	Criticism in Academic Book Reviews	Poster Session	
Nov 24 (Saturday); 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM	Tenji Gallery (6F)	Hamamoto, Satoko - Yasuda Women's University	ESL Learners' Interactional Competence Abroad	Poster Session	
Nov 24 (Saturday); 11:35 AM - 12:35 PM	Practice Room 2 (B1)	Roever, Carsten - University of Melbourne	Learning, Teaching, and Testing of L2 Pragmatics	Practice-Oriented Long Workshop	
Nov 24 (Saturday); 12:45 PM - 2:15 PM	901	Kawamura, Akihiko - Seijo University; Koseki, Kimiko - Seijo University; Gardner, Scott - Okayama University	Should L2 Pragmatic Usage of Jokes Be Taught?	Forum	
Nov 24 (Saturday); 3:45 PM - 4:30 PM	906	Fujimoto, Donna - Osaka Jogakuin University	Pragmatics SIG Annual General Meeting	SIG AGM	

Nov 24 (Saturday); 5:50 PM - 6:15 PM	Rehearsal Room (B1)	Howard, Anne McLellan - Miyazaki International College	Students' Resources in Peer Evaluation	Research-Oriented Short Presentation	
Nov 24 (Saturday); 5:50 PM - 7:20 PM	910	Hauser, Eric - University of Electro-Communications; Greer, Tim - Kobe University; Nanbu, Zack - Kobe University	Understanding in L2 Interaction	Forum	
Nov 25 (Sunday); 9:15 AM - 10:15 AM	903	Roever, Carsten - University of Melbourne	Key Themes in Second Language Pragmatics	Practice-Oriented Long Workshop	
Nov 25 (Sunday); 9:15 AM - 9:40 AM	1201	Trent, Nobuko - Aoyama Gakuin University	Analysis of Student Email, SNS, and Grice's Maxims	Research-Oriented Short Presentation	
Nov 25 (Sunday); 2:50 PM - 3:15 PM	910	Rafieyan, Vahid - Yamanashi Gakuin University; Imaki, Jun - Yamanashi Gakuin University	Pragmatics in Japanese as a Foreign Language	Research-Oriented Short Presentation	
Nov 25 (Sunday); 4:35 PM - 5:00 PM	Hikae 1 (1F) (JJ)	Ton Nu, Tuy Anh - Macquarie University	Pragmatic Input in Vietnamese EFL Textbooks	Research-Oriented Short Presentation	
Nov 25 (Sunday); 4:35 PM - 5:00 PM	906	Chiba, Akiko - University of Hong Kong	Non Native Students Disagree in Academic Contexts	Research-Oriented Short Presentation	
Nov 25 (Sunday); 5:10 PM - 5:35 PM	1003	Nakamura, Ian - Okayama University	Chances for Student Inquiry in Talk With Teachers	Research-Oriented Short Presentation	
Nov 25 (Sunday); 5:45 PM - 6:10 PM	Hikae 1 (1F) (JJ)	Nakazumi, Yukiharu - Kagawa University	Quality of Example Sentences in SHS Textbooks	Research-Oriented Short Presentation	
Nov 25 (Sunday); 6:55 PM - 7:20 PM	1003	Kato, Kazumi - Tokai University	Methods and iPad Materials for Pragmatic Awareness	Practice-Oriented Short Workshop	

The 4th International Conference Thinking, Doing, Learning: Usage Based Perspectives on Second Language Learning

The 4th international conference **Thinking, doing, learning: Usage based perspectives on second language learning** will be held in the University of Jyväskylä, Finland, on June 17-19, 2019.

The aim of TDL is to advance our understanding of what it means to take a usage-based approach to L2 learning and L2 research. We invite researchers to explore a wide variety of topics related to language usage, language learning, and cognition. These include questions such as what it means to interact in L2 in different social contexts, how speakers accomplish social actions in moment-to-moment sense-making activities, and what is the nature of language use environments as well as sediments of usage events left as "acquired linguistic constructions" in the individual language learner. This variety of questions involves strong, empirical and theoretical considerations of language, learning, and cognition:

- what is language – constructions or interactional competence?
- what is learning – social action or long-term portability?
- what is cognition – an individual property or a socially distributed phenomenon?, and
- what are the implications for L2 teaching?

The four keynote speakers will address the conference themes from their respective viewpoints:

Ewa Dąbrowska – *Between productivity and fluency: The fundamental similarity of L1 and L2 learning*
Hannele Dufva – *Interactivity, time and space: Distributed perspectives on language learning*
Søren Eskildsen – *Building a semiotic repertoire for social action: Towards an interactional usage-based approach to L2 research*
Tim Greer - *The Ecology of Explaining*

The conference programme will also include an invited symposium Dynamic usage-based approaches to teaching organized by Marjolijn Verspoor. In addition, participants can register to one of the two pre-conference workshops (placed filled on a first-come first-served basis): (1) Marjolijn Verspoor – *Dynamic analysis of longitudinal data: A toolkit* or (2) Niina Lilja & Leila Kääntä – *Multimodal approach to language learning in social interaction*.

JALT PRAGMATICS SIG

THE JAPAN ASSOCIATION FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING

Call for Contributions
Pragmatics Undercover: (Subtitle TBD)
Deadline: December 31st, 2018

Editors:
Donna Fujimoto (fujimotodonna@gmail.com), Jim Ronald (jmronald@gmail.com), Jerry Talandis Jr. (talandis@gmail.com)

This is a call for contributions for a new teacher-resource book in the ***JALT Pragmatics SIG Pragmatics Resources*** series. The purpose of ***Pragmatics Undercover*** is to help language teachers help their students understand and use pragmatics to speak English more naturally and appropriately. Written especially for practicing language teachers, the starting point is the stilted or inadequate treatment of language found in many English textbooks. It will offer general guidance for identifying gaps that textbooks leave unaddressed and then for bridging these gaps with ready-made teaching activities. Advice for reviewing, expanding, and assessing pragmatic language will also be provided. This resource book is for busy teachers keen on exploring new ways to help their students speak English better, whether they have heard of pragmatics or not.

The book has a two-part structure designed to help teachers embed pragmatics into their teaching practice. The introductory chapters in Part 1 explain and illustrate the process of uncovering, teaching, reviewing, and assessing pragmatic language. Part 2 is a collection of classroom-ready activities to help teachers put into practice the ideas and information discussed in Part 1. Each activity aims to address something observed to be lacking or problematic in common language textbooks or classroom activities. Step-by-step directions are given for uncovering, understanding, and practicing specific elements of pragmatics, such as how to make a suggestion, give longer answers, continue conversations, listen more actively, or use natural classroom language. While the collection will include speech acts, we especially welcome activities that cover other aspects of pragmatic competence. Each chapter will also contain activity-specific suggestions for reviewing and assessing highlighted pragmatic elements. In other words, each activity chapter in Part 2 serves to "fix" something lacking in the materials we use, with the aim of helping learners engage in more natural interaction.

Contributions should be around 1,000 words (typically two or three A4 pages) and include any references, handouts, or other materials. In addition, make sure to test out your activity with your students before submitting it, and write it more like cookbook recipe than a scholarly article. In other words, do not add too many references, and make it clear and easy to follow. Send your ideas to: ***talandis@gmail.com***. For guidance, please refer to the sample chapter, "Giving Peer Feedback" and the following checklist of chapter contents:

At-a-glance guide
Include short descriptions for each of the following: *Activity Name*; *Level*; *Preparation*; *Resources* (materials, equipment needed); *Activity Length* (in minutes); *Problem* (something lacking in common ELT textbooks); *Pragmatic Focus* (pragmatic element to be practiced); *Goals* (overall objectives of the activity). Complete sentences are not required.

Introduction
The first paragraph points out and addresses a problematic or puzzling aspect of language found in ELT materials or activities. This will usually center around some sort of unnatural language or something lacking in textbooks. While we should not "name names" of actual books or cite actual extracts, authors may provide a reconstructed example to illustrate the problem at hand. Next, introduce the pragmatic element that will address this problem. This may be some correction to what was uncovered in the problematic example, or the addition of something that was lacking. Finally, provide a short preview of the activity in a few sentences. *Take care not to over-reference this section*.

Procedure
The basic step-by-step directions for the activity. Each step should contain only one basic action and be written in a very clear and easy to follow manner, recipe book style.

Follow-up
This section should contain ideas for further review and expansion of your activity. Doing it once in one class is unlikely to result in much learning, so what can teachers do to ensure that this pragmatic element is revisited in subsequent classes?

Assessment
Provide guidance on how to evaluate learners' proficiency with the pragmatic language featured in your activity. For example, you can identify level descriptors for a marking rubric or discuss what to look for when assessing this construct in real-time on a speaking test. Advice for students' evaluation of their own progress through reflection or peer-assessment is also welcome.

Appendices
Here is where you can include any worksheets, handouts, or other photocopiable resources.

For More Information
In addition to the references, feel free to recommend other useful titles, websites, or other resources.
If you have any questions, please get in touch. We are happy to send you more detailed information. We are looking forward to working with you on your submission in order for it to be the best it can be.

Peer Feedback
Jim Ronald
Level: Lower intermediate to advanced
Preparation: For Class 1, prepare clothing, accessories; For Class 2, give a short presentation and prepare copies of feedback slips (Appendix I) for each student. For Follow-Up or Assessment, you can use Appendix III or make a handout of slides that are in need of advice.
Resources: Black/Whiteboard, clothing accessories, equipment for projecting presentation
Activity length: 30 minutes in each of two classes
Problem: The language that high school students learn for making suggestions is not suitable for use in peer feedback, in which the pointing out of mistakes or weaknesses may be a typical element.
Pragmatic focus: Softening language and strategies for giving advice
Goal: For learners to be able to give each other advice on presentations without causing offence

Peer feedback on presentations or reports is an increasingly common feature of classes, but many students are not equipped with the language they need to give feedback in an appropriate manner. At high school, students do learn some language for making suggestions, such as where to go sightseeing or what to eat, using language such as *"You should…"* or *"Why don't you…?"* However, neither they, nor perhaps their teachers, may be sensitive to the difference between this type of suggestion and the constructive criticism often contained within peer feedback. With peer feedback, while one part may – and should – be recognition of good aspects of the presentation or report, feedback should also contain criticism, pointing out weaknesses or mistakes. If learners want to keep good relationships with classmates or, in the working world, with colleagues, they need to learn how to soften this criticism.

One way of softening face-threatening acts such as feedback that contains criticism is to use mitigators: hedges or other softening devices (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 171) such as *maybe* in *Maybe you should…* or *a little / a bit* in *Your hat is a little / a bit strange*.

Preparation:
Prepare clothing and accessories, ready for putting on or adjusting in class. For Class 2, be prepared to give a short presentation.

Procedure:
Class 1: Feedback on clothing
   Raise awareness of the pain caused by inappropriate language
   1. Make various adjustments to your clothes (but nothing illegal or offensive!). For example, wear different colour socks, take off one shoe, fill your pockets with board markers, put on a hat and sunglasses, wear two ties or scarves, put your jacket on backwards… ideally so that there is one item requiring change for every two students in the class.
   2. Stand in front of the class. Ask students to stand and give you advice. Each time you receive unmitigated advice, such as *"Take off your hat!"*, *"Your socks are strange!"*, or *"You should take out the pens!"*, respond with an *"Ouch!"* of pain.
   Elicit advice-giving language
   3. When a student gives advice starting with *"You should…"*, write it on the board, with a line in front of it: _____ *you should…* and ask what can go before. Either a student suggests *Maybe*, or you write it in, making *Maybe you should…* Ask for suggestions about how to make it softer, and add *Maybe you could…* Also, if a student says something like *"Your hat is strange"*, write *"Your hat is __ ___ strange"* and elicit or write in *"Your hat is a bit/little strange"*.

Respond to suitable advice

4. Now ask again for advice. Each time a student gives suitably mitigated advice using the language on the board, say thank you, adjust your clothing in response, and tell that student, and to sit down. In larger classes, two students can sit down for one good piece of advice. Continue until all the students are seated and your clothes are returned to normal.

Over to the students

5. Depending on how confident the students are, ask them to adjust their clothing in a couple of ways, then, in groups of three or four, give each other mitigated advice, as above. (This step can be omitted.)

Class 2: Presentation feedback

1. Review the language introduced in Class 1.
2. Hand out feedback slips (Appendix I).
3. Give a presentation that is far from perfect, in terms of visuals, language, and delivery.
4. Students watch the presentation and write feedback on the slips.
5. (Optional) Read out the collected feedback slips; students respond by nodding for feedback that is softened or calling out "Ouch" for feedback that is not.

Follow-up

The best follow-up is for students to give feedback on each other's presentations or oral reports. Alternatively, or in addition, a reflective type of follow-up, as in Appendix II, is worth doing. Appendix III can also be used in class, or as homework, with students giving feedback for each slide.

Assessment

An ideal form of assessment of learning and use of the feedback language is to collect or photograph the students' completed feedback slips for each other's presentations. A more test-like form of assessment could be to show a video of a presentation, during which students complete feedback slips. Alternatively, students could write feedback slips for faulty presentation slides, as in Appendix III.

For More Information

Brown, S., & Levinson, P. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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Appendix I

Peer feedback slip   From _____   To _____

Something good
Some advice

Appendix II: Suitable for small class or groups. Or as homework, maybe prior to class discussion.

Reflection on giving advice

Look at the picture and think about this question:

Why is getting advice sometimes like being slapped with a fish?

Have you ever had an experience like this? If you don't mind, please tell us about it.

(Best if the teacher tells of a painful experience first)

What's the difference between these:

Giving a suggestion Giving advice   Giving an order   Criticizing

What do you think about softening advice?

Is it better to soften advice? Always? When? Who with?

What are some good ways to soften advice?

How about…

Next time you can speak more loudly.

Your voice is small… but I like your smile!

More eye contact please! ☺

Is it different for speaking and writing? (How?)

There is an English expression – also a song (from the musical *Mary Poppins*) with the words:
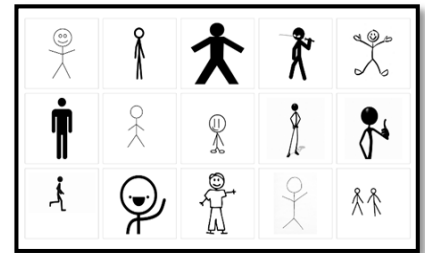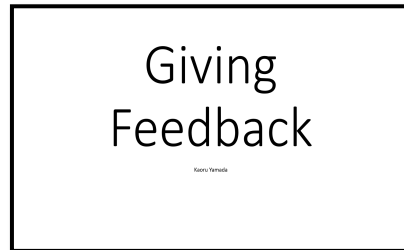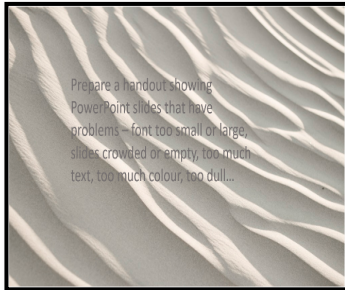
A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down!

Explain what it means – and give examples!

Any more ideas or thoughts?

What advice would you give about how to give advice?

Appendix III
Give feedback for each of the following slides

Giving
Feedback

Kaoru Yamada

Peer feedback on presentations or reports is an increasingly common feature of classes, but many students are not equipped with the language they need to give feedback in an appropriate manner. At high school, students do learn some language for making suggestions, such as where to go sightseeing or what to eat, using language such as "You should…" or "Why don't you…?" However, neither they, nor perhaps their teachers, are sensitive to the difference between this type of suggestion and the suggestions often contained within peer feedback. With peer feedback, while one part may – and should – be recognition of good aspects of the presentation or report, feedback should also contain criticism, pointing out weaknesses or mistakes. If learners want to keep good relationships with classmates or, in the working world, with colleagues, they need to learn how to soften this criticism.

Afterword

That's all for this issue of the newsletter. I hope to see many of you in Shizuoka both at the presentations and also at the Pragmatics SIG annual general meeting which will be on Nov 24 (Saturday) from 3:45 PM - 4:30 PM in room 906. And remember, if you have any news, info or updates for the PragSIG community, whether it be reviews of events, news of upcoming events, book reviews, or your own take on a matter of pragmatics, language teaching or learning, you can always mail me, the editor, at the following address:

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