

### Reaction and Reflection: Pragmatics

I greatly appreciated learning about pragmatics, because I've more or less been aware of what it is, without having a word to express it. I know that the way we phrase our sentences, the way our faces look when we speak, and our body language all affect how we are interpreted and our ability to communicate, but I didn't really know there was a precise word for it. I also know that major cultural differences exist in appropriate forms of communication, but I'm more accustomed to being told of such differences in casual settings, or by just finding out the hard way. Analyzing the impact our utterances can have certainly could tie in to Communicative Language Teaching because communicating effectively is more than just speaking grammatically correctly or being able to express oneself and be understood. There is an opportunity to communicate in socio-culturally valid, acceptable ways.

I wonder how I would go about trying to explain sociocultural norms to my students. My main challenges are that I've only spent 9 months in a Francophone country two years ago, and it wasn't even France; how relevant could my knowledge really be? Many of the sociocultural norms that I learned about were from my family, so it was hard to be sure how much of the norms were actual "Belgian" culture, and how many were just my family being strange (do all Belgians insist on peeling their apples? Do they all speak over each other at the dinner table? Do they all think Americans do laundry too often? Do they all insist on wearing slippers indoors, with a strange fear of bare feet? Who knows). That being said, I could still give students little snippets of knowledge if they were to visit- like knowing that dinner often takes far longer than what Americans are used to, that people may switch to English to speak to you, things like that. That said, is it not more valuable to let students experience a little "culture shock"?

I think if students are so very culturally aware that nothing about their possible studies abroad surprises them, then that's a shame. There is, presumably, a line between being too aware and being too ignorant.

I found it interesting that "speech acts" get divided into the following categories: a request, an apology, a suggestion, a command, an offer, a rebuke, or an invitation. Are there not more options? For example, some people may just say things without desiring a particular response – such as, "Man, I'm tired" or "I'm bored" or "I can't help wondering why I'm on this Earth" or "I miss when pumpkin ice cream was popular", and so on. I certainly believe that some people just say things to be heard, or to give information (If you turn left on that street, you're near where my aunt lives, etc.), or give compliments, and other possible options. I do not feel that the above categories are sufficient.

I appreciated learning about Face-Threatening Acts because, as with Pragmatics, I simply didn't know what the word was for this phenomenon I am otherwise familiar with, but I knew I had encountered them. In Western Washington, saying "We should definitely get coffee sometime" was actually more of a strategy to save face, rather than saying "I don't want to commit to making plans right now". In Hawaii, calling a non-relative "aunty" or "uncle" was not only a term of endearment, but could be a way of saving face if one didn't know someone's name or the correct way to address them. I appreciated this segment because cultural sensitivity and being aware of FTA's are not only vital because I will need to teach my class about cultural issues and FTAs in French culture, but I will also have to try to be sensitive to students from different cultures that I will encounter in future classes. This section was a helpful reminder that my students will certainly not come from the same cultural background(s) that I did.

How has your thinking about teaching grammar evolved during the semester? Write a description of how you think people learn/acquire L2 grammar and how you teach it.

In the beginning of the semester, I was still very much set in my conceptions of grammar based on former experience in high school, where there would be textbook and workbooks, with in-class drawings of word conjugation tables on the board- and that was it. Throughout the course of the class, I learned there are far more ways to teach, learn, and acquire grammar. For example, there are flipped-classroom methods accompanied by in-class group work, there are drills, there are deductive and inductive methods, there are different styles of error corrections to ameliorate grammar, and so much more. As someone who does not yet teach grammar, I do not feel fully prepared to discuss how I think others learn and acquire L2 grammar, but I do know how I learn grammar. Personally, I still feel most comfortable working on my grammar by doing exercises in a workbook; that's what I did over the summer to try to improve my French grammar- but I don't feel confident that I retained it all, so clearly, that is not the most efficient way. I also learn grammar by speaking with a native speaker, which I have been able to do lately, but that is still a slow process, as it takes me being corrected many times before I cease making the same mistakes. When I do teach, I'm going to try to teach grammar several different ways, since every student will learn and retain grammar differently. For starters, students would have to start learning grammar at home with the flipped-classroom model. Otherwise, I envision some drills (to help students who benefit from repetition), some explicit grammar instruction (as some students appreciate that most- and I will have to study the day before to communicate that effectively), some error correction (for those who integrate corrections better than I do), and especially giving as many examples as possible that enable students to deduce rules and structures from authentic TL texts and materials. Personally, I believe repeated exposure to rich, authentic input in the TL is the most helpful for learning both vocabulary and grammar. I say this because when I was a young child, almost all of my

vocabulary and writing style was heavily influenced by the many books I read- and I do think that I learn French similarly to how I learned English; just about entirely from reading and communicating, rather than explicit grammar study. I imagine when I actually start teaching, I will see how grammar instruction actually pans out!