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Conceptions of L2 Grammar: Theoretical Approaches and their Application in the L2 Classroom

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Chapter 3

A Grammar of L2 Pragmatics: Issues in Learning and Teaching

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Introduction

A grammar represents knowledge of given linguistic forms and rules for their use. The most typical grammar presents a description of the lexicon, morphology, and syntax of a language, as well as rules for their appropriate usage according to a given standard. The grammar addressed in this chapter centers on pragmatic expressions and their use, particularly for second language (L2) learners. Because this pragmatic grammar is tied to communication, realized through linguistic structures and embodying sociocultural norms, it is inherently a grammar that interfaces pragmatics, language structures, the lexicon, and culture. As such, it provides a richer base of information for learners than a grammar that simply describes linguistic elements. Thus this chapter addresses a broad conceptualization of a grammar of L2 pragmatics and related issues for teaching and learning.

Attempting to formulate a grammar of pragmatics is not a simple task. Indicating the complexity of pragmatics, Kasper states, "Pragmalinguistic knowledge requires mapping of form, force, and context, which are sometimes obligatory (as in the case of prepackaged routines) and sometimes not (as in the case of indirectness)" (2001, p. 51). Regarding issues of teaching such complexities to learners, she points out that errors of pragmatic form may be fairly easy to identify and recast, but issues of sociopragmatics—that is, relating contextual factors with communicating meanings (such as deciding whether to complain, or using an inappropriate politeness style)—are more difficult to isolate (pp. 51–52).

This chapter takes the position that to represent an accurate L2 grammar of pragmatics and to unite the different kinds of knowledge that are necessary for its proper realization in language use, it is important to contextualize the L2 grammar within a natural context of interaction. Supporting the proposal that learners should link language learning to and within interaction, it is noted that proponents of the importance of talk in L2 language learning have based many of their ideas on the concept of *communicative competence* (Hymes, 1974), which highlights effective and appropriate language use as the basic measure of linguistic proficiency. Adopting Hymes's social perspective on language use as a point of departure, communication and discourse become the most important features. Theoretical notions to account for second language acquisition such as the output hypothesis (Swain, 1985) and the interaction hypothesis (Long, 1996) recognize a strong link between talk and L2 acquisition for at least some of language's many facets.

Central to this pedagogical proposal are three aspects important to the realization and use of a L2 pragmatic grammar:

1. A focus not on a set of speech acts, but rather on the larger communicative goals of pragmatic instruction, aiming for overall successful interaction between learners and native speakers. This goal entails a set of expectations of how coherent and cohesive target language talk should flow.

2. The kinds of knowledge—grammatical, pragmatic, and sociocultural—that are required to communicate successfully.

3. A knowledge of the sociolinguistic variation inherent in speech communities, such as affiliatory expressions, and other dynamic social factors such as gender, relationship, and register, which influence the realization of pragmatic expression.

Each of these three topics is discussed individually in this chapter, after which their application to form a usage-based approach to a grammar of pragmatics is presented.

Aspect 1 of L2 Pragmatic Grammar: A Focus on Goals of Pragmatic Instruction

A focus not on a set of speech acts but rather on the larger communicative goals of pragmatic instruction, aiming for overall successful interaction between learners and native speakers

Following the early work on speech acts by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), and based largely on politeness theory as proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), pragmatics researchers have investigated native speaker production (e.g., García, 1992, 2004; Koike, 1994, 1998) as well as learner expression (e.g., Félix-Brasdefer, 2003, 2004; Koike, 1995; Pearson, 2006) of such acts as requests, compliments, and suggestions. The most common means of data collection has been through the Discourse Completion Test (DCT—Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984), which is a series of role-play situations to which respondents react, presumably by providing the speech act in a manner and form appropriate to the context according to the individual's judgment.

Although the DCT is invaluable for targeting the production of the desired speech act(s) in the shortest amount of time possible, because of its artificial nature, it does not situate the act within the previous and subsequent interaction that often occurs in true face-to-face encounters. It also does not always yield the additional language (e.g., ways to lead into a speech act) that would normally accompany the given act in a true dialogue. Thus the results of the DCT lack the interactions that illustrate how speech acts often develop over the course of several turns between interlocutors (Arundale, 1999).

By extension, the DCT context has been used to investigate speech act production by learners of a given L2 grammar, which is then compared with the

speech act production of the native speakers of the target language to show cross-linguistic and cross-cultural differences in speech acts (e.g., García Fernández, 1992; Pearson, 2006). Because speech acts are undeniably a basic component of communication, the results have immediate implications for second language learners, who must learn how L1 and L2 speech act realizations differ in various contexts. However, there are still limitations for interaction. Although the information gained is invaluable, the DCT does not provide enough insights to address the question of the interactional goals that presumably lie at the basis of all L2 learning.

Speech acts can be presented to L2 learners up to a point as discrete units and as part of linguistic routines (Tateyama, 2001), but other, more complex related implications are quickly revealed. [1] Such issues include the development of speech acts over multiple turns instead of single turns, the task of processing and expressing implicatures (those expressions that are communicated indirectly), variability of form, and personal speech styles, most of which are related to the broader level of discourse.[2]

The discussion in this chapter assumes that most L2 teachers and learners do not aim for a goal of native or native-like individual speech act production, but rather for a goal of successful overall interaction with native speakers (see, for example, Kramsch, 1997; Firth & Wagner, 1997; Young & Miller, 2004). This goal is a broad and somewhat vague target, as "successful interaction" is not easily defined and determined. For the purposes of this chapter, a successful interaction is considered one in which there is an exchange of intentions and interpreted intentions expressed through given reactions, even if the interpretation may not exactly represent the speaker's original intention. Success is also determined by whether the interactants eventually achieve an intersubjectivity and alignment through their communication, working together to try to communicate with each other (Atkinson, Churchill, Nishino, & Okada, 2007; Koike, 2005). *Intersubjectivity* refers to the notion that dialogue participants can come to share each other's points of view and conceptions of their social reality (Rommetveit, 1974; van Dijk, 1985). Along similar lines, *alignment* denotes the achievement of cooperation and affiliation with the other participant (Koike, 2005) as well as the adjustments that talk participants make to conform to what their interlocutor is saying (van Dijk, 1985). Secondarily, it implies a degree of understanding of the other in social and cultural dimensions.[3]

If this goal is considered to be the one for which most teachers and learners aim in their instructional and learning practices, then the individual speech act approach to L2 learning will not serve them well. The information that can be gained from studies of individual speech acts is normally limited to individual utterances or the utterances that occur within one exchange. The learners learn only what a native speaker (NS) might say in the first turn after the initial situation is realized or perhaps how another interlocutor might respond, but learn little or nothing about how the interaction might develop. The learners do not come to acquire expectations of how the talk may unfold. In other words, although the initial speech acts are important and valuable linguistic and sociocultural information can be obtained through an analysis of them, they are limited to only one or possibly two turns in an exchange.

In sum, what is lacking is a model of a L2 learning system that guides learners from the discrete elements of language to their functional use in shorter to longer utterances, to their use in dialogue. The use of language in dialogue, however, entails a knowledge not only of a linguistic code and its functional use, but also of how talk is expected to unfold in a given speech society. Much of the research reviewed in this section points to the need for an interactional approach to language learning.

Aspect 2 of L2 Pragmatic Grammar: Attention to Knowledge Required to Communicate Successfully

Attention to the kinds of knowledge—grammatical, pragmatic, and sociocultural— that are required to communicate successfully

The ability to communicate successfully in a L2 grammar with native speakers is linked to knowledge of the grammatical, pragmatic, and sociocultural norms of the target language. Some of the knowledge can be transferred successfully from the L1 grammar when the norms are the same or very similar, but much of it must be learned as new information. The information must also be gained in actual practice for it to be applied fluidly in spontaneous conversation.

"Grammatical" knowledge refers to the purely linguistic elements of a language—the lexicon, morphology, syntax, formation rules, and so on. "Pragmatic" knowledge, by comparison, focuses on how the grammatical knowledge is used to convey and interpret speakers' intentions, and how it is used to respond to utterances in the context in which they occur. By extension, pragmatic knowledge entails knowledge of the target society and culture—for example, values and perspectives on social issues, rules for interaction, and social hierarchies. This knowledge guides the use of the grammatical knowledge in pragmatic functions.

Bachman and Palmer (1982) divided communicative competence into two components: a grammatical competence and a pragmatic competence (the latter including sociolinguistic and illocutionary competence, and addressing cohesion and textual organization). Thus knowing the parts of a language and knowing how to use them are intertwined in the enterprise of communicating. This inclusion of a pragmatic competence in the overall goal of L2 communication highlights the fact that pragmatics is present not only as discrete units in routinized talk, but also as larger discourse in part of an evolving dialogue, privileged by linguistic, pragmatic, and sociocultural knowledge of and experience with the target language.[4]

Even more important is an understanding of what lies at the heart of pragmatic expressions in a given society. That is, to teach learners about such expressions, one needs to know not only how the expressions are realized, but also what the motivation for such utterances is and what is normally expected as talk continues. Arundale (1999) argues that the study of pragmatics and, by extension, of interaction should be approached via the expectations that interlocutors have of the talk. For example, in looking at speech acts in terms of expectations, one can

see that the selection of strategies for expressing the act is based on the speakers' expectations of how the act should be expressed most appropriately for the context and their intentions; their expectations of how the listeners would like to hear the utterances; and expectations of what should follow (see also Winter, 1998, and Yamada, 2003, for more research on expectations).

Expectations are based on prior knowledge of the language and sociocultural norms and experiences gained from interacting in similar situations. In the case of L2 learners, expectations initially result largely from instruction and from transfer of knowledge and experience from the L1. Similarly, listeners' interpretation and reactions to the pragmatic expressions and to the overall communication are based on their expectations of what is being said, derived again from prior knowledge and experience. Therefore, it seems appropriate and necessary that this grammar of L2 pragmatics address learners' expectations to prepare them for coherent and cohesive use of L2 pragmatic expressions in L2 interactions with native speakers. That is, for learners to participate successfully in L2 conversations, they need to know how to anticipate, understand, and produce a coherent "flow" of talk and, by implication, understand and anticipate issues of coherence in the L2.

A L2 grammar of pragmatics, therefore, must reflect the three types of knowledge, illustrating the grammatical forms that are used to express and interpret pragmatic intentions. Focusing on pragmatic expressions, the grammar should include the following main pragmatics areas:

- Speech acts (e.g., requests)
- Discourse markers (e.g., *Pero bueno*—"But oh well")
- Implicatures [e.g., Chelo (*a su hermana*): *¿Dónde está mi collar*? Bea: *¿Dónde está tu dinero*?—"Chelo (to her sister): Where is my necklace? Bea: Where is your money?" (implying a bribe is in order)]
- Humor, metaphor (e.g., *En cuanto a la comida, eres un pajarito*—"Where food is concerned, you are a little bird")
- Deictic expressions (e.g., *aquí, allí*—"here, there")

The grammar should also include some notes on logical developments of talk in the particular contexts.[5]

Aspect 3 of L2 Pragmatic Grammar: Knowledge of Sociolinguistic Variation

A knowledge of the sociolinguistic variation inherent in speech communities, such as affiliatory expressions, and other dynamic social factors such as gender, relationship, and register

Given that a L2 pragmatic grammar reflects language use, and that use invariably illustrates language variation according to myriad idiosyncratic and contextual factors such as the gender of the participants, their social relationship, and the individual registers with which they choose to communicate, the grammar also must acknowledge the sociolinguistic variation that interacts so closely

with pragmatic realization. Pragmatics information for learners in textbooks often consists of lists of expressions that native speakers use, but does not fill in the gaps so that learners know when to select from among the options. Learners also must confront issues of dialectal variation, which textbooks often include while at the same time stressing "standard" norms. Therefore, the grammar must also recognize in some way the linguistic variation that can occur, and provide information on how speakers work toward alignment with one another using pragmatic expressions.

Execution of the Grammar

The grammar proposed here encompasses linguistic, pragmatic, and sociocultural information in a situated context. As a consequence, its execution is necessarily more complex than that of typical grammars that describe only one aspect of language. Four central components in the execution of this grammar are: (1) the type of presentation and feedback; (2) the written grammar; (3) links between the three types of information in the grammar; and (4) production by learners in dialogues in a progression toward greater elaboration.

This proposed L2 pragmatic grammar could be presented in several stages over the course of several years of study.[6] This proposal is not in complete disagreement with that of others who have found that learners do not acquire certain pragmatic expressions until they are more advanced in their experience with and exposure to the language (Pearson, 2006). Certain basic speech acts (e.g., requests with the modal *poder,* "to be able"), most deictic elements (e.g., *aquí,* "here"; *allí,* "there"), and certain discourse markers (e.g., *pues,* "well") that are similar to the learners' L1 grammar can be presented in the early stages of university language programs, whereas those pragmatic expressions that are less discrete and require more processing should be presented in later stages. At first, learners' activities and output would be probably be more limited to the sentence level, but over time their input would be realized in increasingly longer segments of discourse and conversations.

The more difficult expressions include some discourse markers, implicatures, humor, and metaphor, and they may require different kinds of presentation and teacher intervention. Kasper (2001) notes that the pragmatic preferences and options that emerge from interaction itself can be addressed best through metapragmatic discussion.

Type of Presentation of Grammar and Feedback

To begin with the example of speech acts, the L2 pragmatic grammar would be presented in several steps.

Step 1. Following many studies that have argued for the advantages of implicit over explicit presentation and feedback, the grammar here is introduced initially in an inductive way.[7] In keeping with the proposal to present contextualized pragmatics in dialogue, learners first see and hear an example of talk in a videotaped segment and must identify the speakers' intentions.[8]

Example 1
Ana habla con su madre (Ana talks to her mother)

Ana: *Mamá, dame veinte dólares para ir al cine con mis amigas, ¿vale?*
          ("Mom, give me $20 to go to the movies with my friends, okay?")
Mamá: *Toma estos veinticinco dólares, hija. Y no los gastes en tonterías.*
          ("Take $25. And don't waste it on buying foolish things.")
Ana: *Gracias mamá. Hasta luego.* ("Thanks, mom. See you later.")
Mamá: *Después me lo pagas.* ("You'll pay me back later.") (They exchange
          kisses.)

The learners then answer the following questions alone (either in English or
in the target language) that call their attention to certain aspects of what they
have seen.

   1. What is Ana asking her mother?
   2. Is this (a) an invitation, (b) an expression of gratitude, (c) a request, or
      (d) a suggestion?
   3. Is Ana talking to her mother in a direct or indirect way?
   4. Do you think Ana is being rude to her mother by expressing the utter-
      ance in such a way? Why or why not?
   5. If she were talking to an elderly person she did not know well, would
      Ana say the utterance the same way? Why or why not?
   6. How would you make the same request to your mother in English?
   7. When you talk to your mother, would she normally address you as
      "daughter" or "son"?
   8. Do you and your mother usually exchange kisses when you say good-bye?
   9. Is the mother referring to money when she says that her daughter will
      repay her?

This set of questions is aimed at discerning the learners' comprehension of the
message (question 1); understanding the intent (question 2); understanding il-
locutionary force (question 3); observing the expression of politeness (question 4);
observing variation (questions 5 and 6); deriving cross-cultural pragmatic and
semantic differences (question 7); understanding social practices associated
with the speech act (question 8); and manifesting humor through implicature
(question 9).

Step 2. Next, the learners review their answers to the questions with the instruc-
tor, who highlights linguistic (e.g., Ana's use of the imperative-familiar form of
the verb in *dame,* but also use of the tag question *¿vale*? to soften the force of the
utterance), pragmatic (e.g., request type of speech act, politeness), and sociocul-
tural issues (e.g., how one formulates requests with close acquaintances versus
with strangers, and social hierarchies in the L2 culture) illustrated in the exam-
ple. The feedback given during this discussion should also be implicit, so that the
learners are not given the correct answer but rather must derive it themselves.

Step 3. The learners now work with other examples of contextualized dialogues that illustrate the same concepts discussed earlier, but that offer other linguistic options. The following example is based on the same speech act of requests learners might see.

Example 2
Ana habla con su colega del trabajo ("Ana talks to her colleague at work")

Ana: *Oye Jorge, ¿ me prestas veinte dólares? Es que hoy tengo clase y ayer se me olvidó comprar el libro. Te devuelvo el dinero mañana, te lo prometo.* ("Hey, Jorge, will you lend me $20? It's just that today I have class and yesterday I forgot to buy the book. I'll return the money to you tomorrow, I promise.")

Jorge: *Bueno, de acuerdo, no te preocupes.* ("Well, okay, don't worry about it.")

Ana: *Mil gracias Jorge. Te lo traigo mañana.* ("A thousand thanks, Jorge. I'll bring it to you tomorrow.")

Jorge: *Y me invitas a un café también.* ("And you will take me out to coffee, too.")

Example 3
Ana habla con el abuelo de su amiga (Ana talks to her friend's grandfather)

Ana: *Disculpe Sr. Contreras. Tengo que pedirle un favor muy grande, y me da vergüenza. Tengo que comprar un libro para mi clase hoy y se me olvidó el dinero. ¿Podría Ud. prestarme veinte dólares? Traté de llamar a mi madre pero no se encuentra. Mañana le traigo el dinero sin falta.* ("Excuse me, Mr. Contreras. I have to ask a big favor, and I am embarrassed about it. I have to buy a book for my class today and I forgot the money. Could you lend me $20? I tried to call my mother but I can't locate her. Tomorrow I will bring you the money for sure.")

Sr. Contreras: *Claro que sí hija. No me hace falta, así que me lo pagas cuando puedas.* ("Of course, my dear. I don't need it, so you can pay me when you can.")

Ana: *Muchísimas gracias señor. Ay, qué alivio. Es una clase muy importante.* ("Thank you so much sir. Oh, what a relief! It is a very important class.")

Sr. Contreras: *De nada hija. A la orden.* ("You're welcome, dear. Happy to help you.")

These examples would again be followed by questions that help learners notice linguistic, pragmatic, and sociocultural features, and that focus their attention on the linguistic variation that corresponds to the different contextual characteristics (e.g., variables of participant relationships, the formality of the talk, the gravity of the request, the history of their talk). The discussion should show how the speaker softens the request through the use of features such as

explanations, politeness markers (e.g., *por favor,* intonational contours). The fourth step, in which learners practice what they have learned, is detailed later in the chapter.

The Pragmatic Grammar

This section addresses the actual pragmatic grammar that the learners would see after working with the examples. It is to be used as a reference—perhaps in a text or online.

An important part of the grammar would be to link the three types of information. For example, based on Example 1, in which Ana asks her mother for some money, learners might see the following pragmatic and discourse features, language elements and structure, and sociocultural issues.

Example 1: Pragmatic and Discourse Features

1. Speech act: request (intimate). Here the learner sees a description of the request speech act, describing how this act can be realized in Spanish according to different speech registers and politeness styles, with special reference to Example 1. Regarding dialectal variation, the instructor could point out how the dialogue in Example 1—in particular, Ana's first utterance—may be considered a good example of an informal request in the Peninsular dialect of Spanish, but many Latin American speakers might consider it too direct or rude. This contrast could be illustrated with examples of how the utterance could be appropriately expressed in other dialects (e.g., *Mamá, ¿me podrías prestar el dinero?*: "Mom, could you lend me the money?")

2. Parts of the speech act, and how the act develops and is modified over turns. The learner sees the various parts of the speech act (e.g., head act, adjuncts[9]) and how the speaker modifies it over a series of turns. A description of how such a speech act is often accepted or rejected by the other interlocutor is included here, thereby showing a response to the first speech act.

3. Softeners,[10] politeness elements. The learner sees a description of what softeners are, how they can be realized in Spanish, and which factors would influence the selection of a particular form, with reference to Example 1. A description of how, for example, a request is approached after an explanation to soften its force would be given here, or how a rejection of the request would be softened or signaled beforehand.

4. Intonational contours to soften. Along with the explanation in point 3, a note is made of how the force of a request can be softened and modified through intonation, as exemplified in Example 1 with the question marks.

5. Humor. The learner receives a brief explanation of how humor is derived through implicature, and sees what effect it has on the conversation in Example 1.

These pragmatic descriptions are accompanied by the following linguistic and sociocultural factors:

Example 1: Language Elements and Structure

1. Imperative mood (familiar *tú* forms, affirmative and negative)

2. Tag questions (e.g., *¿vale*?: "Okay?")

3. Present tense to express future events

   Explanations associated with each one would be simple and straightforward, showing how the basic elements are formed and demonstrating their use relative to the example.

The grammar must also include sociocultural information, such as the following, which also refers to Example 1.

Example 1: Sociocultural Issues

1. Terms of endearment [e.g., *hija:* "daughter" (lit.)]

2. Manners of leave-taking

3. Cohesion and expectations of how the talk proceeds, with reference to the example

Examples 2 and 3, in looking at these same categories, would show some similar features but also add new ones. For example, Example 2 reveals the following features.

Example 2: Pragmatic and Discourse Features

1. Discourse markers (e.g., *Es que* to signal an explanation)

2. Lengthy explanation given

3. Two promises of returning the money

4. Humor

5. Approaching a face-threatening request (or signaling that the request is considered face-threatening)

6. Ways to show reluctance or hesitation

Example 2: Language Elements and Structures

1. Present indicative mood used for future actions

2. Attention callers/vocatives (e.g., *Oye Jorge:* "Hey, Jorge")

Example 2: Sociocultural Issues

1. Situation of relationships among colleagues at work

2. Invitations to have coffee, wine, and so on

This information is targeted for learners to discover by themselves as much as possible, and to compare it with their L1 realizations of the same message content. However, the proposed instruction is not intended to focus on a great deal of metalinguistic/metapragmatic discussion. Instead, learners should move past

this discussion and begin to practice the language in dialogues—first in dialogue contexts that are more tightly controlled in the beginning stages and then become more open, followed by role-play situations that become progressively longer. This step of instruction allows learners to practice what they have just watched, heard, discussed, and read.

Production by Learners in Dialogues in a Progression to Greater Elaboration

Step 4. Given that the focus of this chapter is on a pragmatic grammar and not a complete outline of its use, a very brief description of this fourth step is presented here. After learners work with the samples, they can refer to the written grammar explanations on request speech acts and work further with the instructor. In Step 4, the learners themselves begin to produce the speech acts in dialogues. In Example 5, a more controlled dialogue is presented in which learners must fill in the blanks.[11]

> Example 4
> Complete the following dialogue between a student and a teacher to create a coherent conversation. Jaime has a problem, and the teacher responds with some gentle **suggestions** to help him. A translation of the following is found in the endnotes.[12]
>
> | Jaime: | No sé porqué nunca saco notas buenas en mis composiciones. Aún cuando escribo exactamente lo que Ud. quiere, saco una nota baja. ¿Será que Ud. no puede leer mi letra? |
> |---|---|
> | Maestra: | (choose one) Sí, es difícil leer lo que escribes. |
> | | 1. ¿No puedes escribir con bolígrafo? |
> | | 2. Escriba con bolígrafo.[13] |
> | | 3. ¿Es posible escribir con bolígrafo? |
> | | 4. ¿Por qué no escribes con bolígrafo? |
> | Jaime: | Bueno mire, es que prefiero usar la computadora. |
> | Maestra: | Entiendo. Entonces, (choose one) |
> | | 1. ¿vas a pedir permiso para traer una computadora? |
> | | 2. ¿cuándo vas a traer una computadora? |
> | | 3. ¿no quieres traer una computadora a la clase? |
> | | 4. ¿puedes traer una computadora? |
> | Jaime: | 1. Pues, no sé.... La computadora que uso no es mía. |
> | | 2. No sabe lo que dice. La computadora que uso no es mía. |
> | | 3. Sí. La computadora que uso no es mía. |
> | | 4. Está bien. La computadora que uso no es mía. |
> | Maestra: | Vamos. (choose one) |
> | | 1. Pídale permiso para traerla.[14] |
> | | 2. ¿Qué tal si la traes sólo de vez en cuando? |
> | | 3. ¿Vas a pedir permiso para traerla? |
> | | 4. ¿Has pensado en pedir permiso para traerla? |
> | Jaime: | Está bien. Ya sé lo que voy a hacer. |

Example 5
Complete the following dialogue to create a coherent conversation between
these two friends. Mari asks Tina what she thinks she should do to be able to
buy a certain dress (*vestido*), which her mother will not buy for her.[15]

Mari:	Tina, ayúdame. Mi mamá me dice que no va a comprarme el vestido que tanto me gusta porque cuesta demasiado.
Tina:	Oye, _____
Mari:	¿Sí? _____
Tina:	Pues, _____
Mari:	Ay, no sé. No es tan fácil.
Tina:	_____
Mari:	_____

The next step would be production elicited through role-play situations between
two students.[16] The dialogue must show at least two turns per speaker, as in the
previous examples.

Example 6
*Debes ir a una fiesta de despedida para una buena amiga, pero tu coche no fun-
ciona. Tienes que pedirle a tu hermana que te lleve a la fiesta o que te preste su
coche.* (You need to go to a good-bye party for a good friend, but your car doesn't
work. You have to ask your sister to take you to the party or to lend you her car.)

This context exemplifies an intimate relationship between the participants, so the
dialogue must reflect this relationship in linguistic, pragmatic, and sociocultural
features.

Earlier, it was proposed that learners must have both knowledge and experience
in target language talk to interact successfully in the L2 grammar with a native
speaker. For this reason, the opportunities to interact with L2 native speakers are
also necessary in this type of program that emphasizes language use. To this end,
two suggestions are offered: videotaped interactions and Internet chats, both writ-
ten and face-to-face through Web cameras.

Videotaped Interactions. This activity can be done at home, as a group, in
pairs, or in a laboratory situation. The design of the program would be that of an
interactive computer program, possibly using edited segments from profession-
ally produced commercial Spanish language films or professionally developed
media made by a language publishing house expressly for this kind of program.
Learners see a filmed segment of a native speaker who speaks to them directly on
the screen. At first, the learners respond by saying aloud a response selected from
a group of possible responses they see before them. Later, they give a response
that the software either accepts or rejects. If the response is accepted, it leads to
further interaction with the virtual native speaker.

Internet Chats. Internet chats have been used for some time now, usually within
members of the same class of non-native learners, or with the teacher corresponding
synchronously with the class. It is more difficult to arrange external chats, but it has

been done in written form with bilingual-heritage Spanish speakers at the same university (e.g., Blake & Zyzik, 2003) and with native speakers in other countries (e.g., Herring, 1996). As Web cameras and corresponding software and computer memory have become less expensive and more accessible, the chats can be realized in face-to-face oral interactions, which is the preferred kind of interaction in the absence of opportunities for native speakers and learners to talk in or outside of class.

These opportunities to interact with native speakers must be built into a pragmatic approach to language learning. For learners to acquire the knowledge and experience with the L2 language and culture beyond simply observing and becoming aware of its features and norms, they must have opportunities to experience these kinds of interactions. Such encounters serve not only to reinforce what they have learned, but also to allow learners to build expectations of how linguistic interactions occur with native speakers.

Advantages of a L2 Pragmatic Grammar

There are several advantages of presenting a L2 pragmatic grammar like the one described in this chapter.

First, this concept of a "situated, contextualized grammar" presents language in a holistic way, because it includes grammatical, pragmatic, and sociocultural information in its presentation. Learners benefit not only from having this more complete information, but also from seeing its functional presentation in a situated context that illustrates the social dynamics of talk. Such a context allows for additional discussions of L2 sociocultural norms that operate in interactions. Moreover, the fact that the grammar is shown through dialogue (1) reinforces the focus on language use; (2) links the language to participants and settings; and (3) shows language in a dynamic (rather than static) dimension.

Second, such an approach to grammar presentation fosters the notion of linguistic variation because it illustrates how linguistic selections are made according to factors such as participant relationship, speaker intentions, settings, and linguistic and cultural expectations. In fact, it highlights the crucial role that expectations play in shaping talk, especially in pragmatic realizations. This kind of pragmatic grammar has the potential to reshape the entire scope and sequencing of the language learning presentation, from beginning to intermediate levels. As stated earlier, the sequencing at the beginning of the program may require that learners concentrate on more semantically transparent, smaller units in short (one or two exchanges) dialogues, and then progress to more complex expressions in longer dialogues as they acquire more language and linguistic skills and cultural knowledge.

According to Ninio (1992), it is not adequate to claim that social interaction plays a central role in acquisition; rather, it is important that social aspects be represented directly in the grammar itself. Such an endeavor has been addressed in the L2 pragmatic grammar proposed here, which remains to be empirically verified for its effectiveness and accuracy in leading learners to interact successfully with native speakers.

Notes

1. Recently, researchers have examined the kind of teacher intervention that most effectively promotes the acquisition of L2 pragmatics—for example, through explicit or implicit instruction and feedback on speech acts (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Koike & Pearson, 2005; Alcón Soler, 2005). See also Mir (2001) and Rose (2003) for other studies proposing the teaching of pragmatics in the language classroom. A notable tool for teaching pragmatic awareness is the University of Minnesota's CARLA website entitled "Strategies for Learning Pragmatics in Spanish," available at http://www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/sp_pragmatics/home.html.

2. One line of research that successfully connects pragmatics and L2 interaction is that related to conversation analysis (see Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974), in which the turn-by-turn unfolding of interaction between native speakers, non-native learners, and native speakers with learners has been carefully documented in detailed analysis (e.g., Young & Miller, 2004; see Hall, 2004, for a commentary on the value of CA for SLA). Such analysis provides useful information to include in a L2 grammar of pragmatics.

3. The success in the overall communication would go beyond the simple transmission and understanding of a message or intention. It would also include a perception, to some extent, of the other participant as a social being (e.g., personality, character, values) and as a representation of a given cultural background, however complex that background may be.

4. According to Canale (1983, p. 97), pragmatic competence is part of sociolinguistic competence. He describes the latter as representing both "appropriateness of meaning" and "appropriateness of form."

5. An excellent example of research that provides this kind of discursive information on which to base instruction to build discourse expectations is that of Liddicoat and Crozet (2001), who examine the acquisition of L2 interactional norms through instruction. Pointing out that many past studies have shown that differences in culturally based expectations have caused cross-linguistic breakdowns (e.g., Gudykunst & Kim, 1992; Wierzbicka, 1991), they attribute the problems in expectations to differences in actual speech act realizations or to broader issues of discourse organization and speech styles. In their own study, these researchers find that there is a marked difference in responses expressing a particular linguistic routine by Australian English speakers in comparison with native French speakers. After teaching the French learners in their study how native French speakers normally realize this linguistic routine, the learners reflected on how they felt about "acting French," leading to how they might accommodate themselves between the Australian and French cultural norms.

6. The L2 grammar of pragmatics could very easily be established as a stand-alone component for any language program.

7. At least two theoretical notions support this kind of presentation. One is focus on form, in which the learners are exposed to meaning-based activities in which their attention to form is embedded within the task (Long, 1991). The other is consciousness-raising, in which the learner sees data and is asked to formulate implicitly or explicitly a rule for those data (Schmidt, 1990; Sharwood Smith, 1981). In both concepts, the point is that the learner must notice or become conscious of the presence of a given linguistic feature in the input. How this goal is achieved is open to various approaches.

8. Learners would not see the English translation as they view the example.

9. A "head act" of a speech act is the nucleus of the speech act. For example, in the request "I hate to bother you like this, but I would really appreciate it if you would move your car," the head act would be the actual core of the request—that is, "move your car." An adjunct is the other part or parts of the utterance that are used to make the request.

10. "Softeners" are those parts of the utterance that make its force less strong, so as to achieve an effect of politeness. For example, the lexical item "please" is a softener, used to make the rest of the utterance more agreeable to the listener.

11. Examples 4 and 5 are from Koike and Pearson (2005).

12. The translation of Example 4 is provided here:

Jaime: I don't know why I never get good grades on my compositions. Even when I write exactly what you (formal) want, I get a low grade. Can it be that you (formal) can't read my writing?

Teacher: Yes, it's hard to read what you (informal) write.
    1. Can't you write in pen?
    2. Write (you-formal) in pen.
    3. Is it possible to write in pen?
    4. Why don't you write in pen? (All the forms of address in 1, 3, and 4 are informal.)

Jaime: Well look, it's just that I prefer to write on the computer.

Teacher: I understand. So,
    1. are you going to ask permission to bring a computer?
    2. when are you going to bring a computer?
    3. don't you want to bring a computer to class?
    4. can you bring a computer?

Jaime: 1. Well, I don't know . . . The computer that I use isn't mine.
    2. You don't know what you're talking about. The computer that I use isn't mine.
    3. Yes. The computer that I use isn't mine.
    4. Okay. The computer that I use isn't mine.

Teacher: Come on.
    1. Ask (you-formal) him for permission to bring it.
    2. How about if you bring it only now and then?
    3. Are you going to ask for permission to bring it?
    4. Have you thought about asking permission to bring it?

Jaime: Okay. I already know what I'm going to do.

13. Given than the teacher uses the informal *tú* form of address with the student, the sudden change to the formal *Ud.* form would be inappropriate. Option 3 is neither a grammatically nor a pragmatically appropriate option for the teacher, because she is the one who would tell others which instrument they could use to write. If she were asking the student to write in pen, she could say, "*¿Es posible que escribas con bolígrafo?*" ("Is is possible for you to write in pen?"). Finally, because the focus of the example is on giving suggestions, this option would be the most appropriate and clear suggestion speech act.

14. As in the earlier example, this option would not be appropriate because the teacher suddenly uses the *Ud.* (you-formal) form instead of the informal form that she had used previously with the student. All the other options are in the appropriate informal forms of address.

15. The translation of Example 5 is provided here:

Mari:	Tina, help me. My mom says that she won't buy me the dress I like so much because it costs too much.
Tina:	Look ————————————————————————
Mari:	Really? ————————————————————————
Tina:	Well, ————————————————————————
Mari:	Oh, I don't know. It's not so easy.
Tina:	————————————————————————
Mari:	————————————————————————

16. See García Fernández (1996), for example, for ideas on teaching invitations.

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