L2 Pragmatics: Six Principles for Online Materials Development and Implementation

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Abstract

The article starts by calling attention to what is often a divide between theory and research on language teaching on the one hand, and classroom practice on the other, and especially when it comes to second language (L2) pragmatics. Numerous theoretical models emphasize the importance of pragmatic instruction and present various means by which pragmatics can be incorporated and assessed in L2 learning experiences (see, for example, Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Belz, 2003, 2005; Cohen, 2005; Ishihara, 2007; Judd, 1999; Koike, 1994; LoCastro, 2002; Salaberry and Cohen, 2006). Despite ongoing research in this area, pragmatics is generally ignored in the second language classroom and curricular materials development (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Félix-Brasdefer, 2002). Furthermore, many of the existing materials draw on intuition and perceptions of language rather than empirically driven content development (Ishihara, 2007). In an effort to bridge this gap and add additional insight into materials creation and implementation for L2 pragmatic development, we first describe three types of computer-based materials that have recently been created and/or utilized for L2 pragmatic learning. We then present six principles relevant to both the creation of online materials as well as their implementation in L2 learning contexts.

Keywords: L2 pragmatics, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), curricular development

1. Introduction

The bridge between theory and practice can often be a slippery, treacherous, and difficult one to cross. This is especially true in the case of pragmatics (i.e., “meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader)...and [to be able to interpret] people’s intended meanings, their assumptions, their purposes or goals...” [Yule, 1996, p. 3-4]). Second language (L2) pragmatic abilities are especially difficult to acquire and teach.¹ Numerous theoretical models emphasize the importance of L2 pragmatics instruction and present various means by which pragmatics can be incorporated and assessed in L2 learning experiences (see, for
example, Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Belz, 2003, 2005; Cohen, 2005; Ishihara, 2007; Judd, 1999; Koike, 1994; LoCastro, 2002; Salaberry and Cohen, 2006). Based on this theoretical and empirical work, we can make a number of generalizations pertaining to pragmatics instruction. These are presented in (1) – (9) below.

(1) Pragmatic features of language are teachable, though care needs to be taken by both instructors and learners in identifying the objectives and educational outcomes (Kasper, 1997; Rose, 2005).

(2) Both implicit and explicit instruction improves pragmatic competence, but the explicitly-taught students tend to perform better. Different pragmatic features require different lengths of instructional periods and different measures of effectiveness (Kasper, 1997; Rose, 2005).

(3) Pragmatic instruction can be included at beginning levels of L2 acquisition; however, very little empirical research examines the stages of pragmatic development (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Kasper, 1997).

(4) Input plays an essential role in determining L2 pragmatic competence. Quality input is necessary for positive L2 pragmatic development (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001).

(5) Different aspects of pragmatic competence require the use of different instructional techniques and assessment measures; there is a “strong situational effect” (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001, p. 29) on the acquisition of pragmatics (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Judd, 1999; Rose, 2005).

(6) Empirical data can serve as a rich resource for pragmatic instruction and should be utilized when possible (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 2005; LoCastro, 2003).

(7) Thus far, the majority of research on pragmatic instruction has been in the area of production as opposed to comprehension. Both aspects of pragmatic competence should be addressed when examining ILP development (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Koike, 1994; Rose, 2005).

(8) Learner strategies play an important role in ILP development (Cohen, 2005).

(9) Assessment and evaluation of pragmatic competence is not to be neglected. This means distinguishing what learners know vs. what they can actually use. It also means assessing both comprehension and production (Koike, 1994; Judd, 1999; Roever, 2004; Rose, 2005; Salaberry and Cohen, 2006).

The generalizations presented in (1)-(9) are not meant to represent everything investigated in pragmatic instruction, but rather to make salient the current research findings most relevant for materials development and implementation in online contexts. As can be seen from the points above, pragmatic competence requires the mastery of
various skills (e.g., recognition, comprehension, and production), as well as exposure to
a variety of tasks and interactions so the skills being practiced can be developed and
nurtured. Despite ongoing research in this area, pragmatics remains virtually ignored in
the L2 classroom and in curricular materials development (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Félix-
Brasdefer, 2002). Furthermore, many of the existing materials draw on intuition and
perceptions of language rather than empirically-driven content development (Ishihara,
2007).

Online environments (e.g., websites, blogs, chat rooms, and virtual worlds) offer
means by which these considerations can be addressed in a variety of ways relevant to
the development of L2 pragmatics (Belz, 2005, 2008; Gonzalez-Lloret, 2008; Ishihara,
2007; Sykes, 2005, 2008; Sykes and Cohen, 2008). As noted by Belz (2008), computer-
mediated environments are useful for delivering information and providing authentic,
meaningful interaction through telecollaboration, and other means of interaction in the
target language.

In an effort to bridge the gap between theory and practice, as well as to lend
additional insight to materials development and implementation for L2 pragmatic
development, this article explores six principles relevant to both the creation of
computer-mediated materials, as well as to their implementation in L2 learning contexts.
We first describe three types of online spaces that have been recently created/utilized
for the learning of L2 pragmatics (i.e., two websites for learning Japanese and Spanish
pragmatics; computer-mediated communication tools such as email and chat rooms, and
a synthetic immersive environment). Then, using examples from each, we present six
principles for materials development and implementation.

2. Online Spaces for the Learning of L2 Pragmatics

In this section, we briefly describe materials and activities that have been
developed and implemented to enhance the acquisition of L2 pragmatics in a variety of
languages (e.g., Japanese, Spanish, German, English, Chinese). These include two self-
access websites dedicated to awareness-raising and to strategies for learning and
performing L2 pragmatics, various computer-mediated communication activities, and a
synthetic immersive gaming environment dedicated to learning how to apologize and
request appropriately.

Websites for Learning L2 Pragmatics

One of the major barriers to L2 pragmatic instruction is the lack of curricular
materials, an especially frustrating situation for language teachers. In response to
instructors who were asking for teaching materials related to pragmatics, two learner-focused websites were developed for the learning of Japanese (Cohen & Ishihara, 2005) and Spanish (Cohen & Sykes, 2006) pragmatics. Funding for the sites was provided through the Center for the Advanced Research of Language Acquisition (CARLA) at the University of Minnesota. Each site was created with the intention of providing learners with salient information about target-language pragmatics using a strategies-based approach (Cohen, 2005) to pragmatics, drawing from empirical research relevant to each language.

The Japanese website, Strategies for Learning Speech Acts in Japanese, (http://www.iles.umn.edu/IntroToSpeechActs/) is composed of an introductory module with five additional modules, each dedicated to the learning of specific speech acts in Japanese. These include apologies, compliments, requests, refusals, and expressing gratitude. As part of each module, learners interact with audio clips of native-speaker (NS) dialogues and complete approximately ten activities specifically designed to assist learners in developing appropriate pragmatic strategies in Japanese: comparisons of L1 and L2 norms, examination of contextual factors influencing each speech act, self-evaluation of linguistic behavior, and focus on the semantic formulae which characterize each speech act – that is, the speech act-specific strategies which alone or in combination with other strategies serve to constitute the speech act, such as an offer of repair when apologizing.

Dancing with Words: Strategies for Learning Pragmatics in Spanish (http://www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts), the Spanish website, draws on lessons learned from the development of the Japanese website, as well as advances in web technology. It was launched in August of 2006. The site consists of an introductory unit and eight additional modules: (1) Compliments, (2) Gratitude and Leave Taking, (3) Requests, (4) Apologies, (5) Invitations, (6) Service Encounters, (7) Advice, Suggestions, Disagreements, Complaints, and Reprimands, and (8) Considerations for Pragmatic Performance. Each module includes unscripted video interchanges between native speakers of various regional varieties of Spanish, and utilizes activities with varying levels of difficulty for the purpose of addressing the learners’ varying levels of language/pragmatic ability. All instructional material is in English with the examples, transcripts, and activities being completed in Spanish.

In the creation of both websites, the intention was for learners to be able to access all material individually with no interaction from an instructor. This allows for access as part of one’s coursework, but also makes each of the sites especially useful for learners abroad or in non-institutional contexts. In each case, speech acts are dealt with sequentially: first as a core, then in interaction, and then as a naturally occurring
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sequence. As previously mentioned, one important feature of the websites is their extensive strategies overlay for the materials (Cohen 2005). This includes strategies for learning pragmatics, using pragmatics, and analyzing pragmatic aspects of the target language. Currently work is being done to replicate the Japanese and Spanish sites in both Portuguese and English. While we certainly recognize that websites and presentation of pragmatics materials should not be the only type of pragmatics materials available to learners, they do offer information which is not otherwise readily available. Using content-based sites in conjunction with other types of tools and instruction can be helpful for learners (Cohen and Ishihara, 2005; Sykes and Cohen, 2008).

Computer-Mediated Communication Tools & L2 Pragmatics

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools provide an especially beneficial interactional context for L2 pragmatics development (see Belz, 2008 and Sykes, 2005 for a review). CMC tools include asynchronous tools (e.g., email, discussion boards, and blogs) and synchronous tools (e.g., chat rooms and instant messengers). These tools can be used in a variety of ways to enhance and/or facilitate L2 pragmatic development (see Table 1).

While the examples presented below are just a taste of what is possible in CMC environments, they provide insight into the wide-range of possibilities available to instructors and curriculum developers.

Synthetic Immersive Environments (SIEs)

The final online environment to be presented here is a synthetic immersive environment (SIE). SIEs are “engineered [3-d, immersive] spaces which integrate the many benefits of online gaming to produce explicitly, educationally-related outcomes in simulated, relevant, interactional contexts” (Sykes, 2008, p. 11). Multiuser virtual environments (MUVEs) are especially important emerging technologies for acquisition of L2 pragmatics, as well as for language learning in general. They offer the added benefits of: (a) effective, multilevel environmental feedback, (b) co-construction of the interaction, environment, and social networks to fit individual needs, (c) individualized, adaptable experience, (d) high level of engagement, and (e) inherently collaborative and social gameplay (Sykes, 2008).
Table 1  Sample Activities in CMC for L2 Pragmatic Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Sample Reference(s)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Practice Activities</td>
<td>NNS use oral and written chat to create practice dialogues and discuss analysis questions related to model dialogues.</td>
<td>Sykes (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Analysis &amp; Literary Discussion</td>
<td>NNS interact with NS of the target language to discuss cultural topics (e.g., family structures) and parallel texts (e.g., <em>Aschenputtel/Cinderella</em>) as part of their in-class assignments</td>
<td>Belz (2002, 2003, 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project-based Learning Task</td>
<td>Students (NS and NNS) work together to create a website containing a bilingual essay relevant to topics/ideas previously discussed in other interactions. Students (NS and NNS) compile and research an itinerary for a vacation.</td>
<td>Belz (2002, 2003); Gonzalez-Lloret (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Conversation</td>
<td>Learners engage in a free conversation task in which they can talk about anything they wish (e.g., travel, personal information, daily routines)</td>
<td>González-Lloret (2008)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Croquelandia_, created by Sykes and a team of programmers at the University of Minnesota, is the first 3-d, immersive space created with the objective of L2 pragmatic development. In the SIE itself, learners are able to collaborate and interact in three primary spaces – their host family’s house, a central plaza and marketplace, and a professor’s office at the university. They can move seamlessly among the three spaces using an interactive map. All of the graphical content in the space was created utilizing photos taken by the researcher in various countries (i.e., Mexico, Spain, Ecuador, Peru, Costa Rica) of the Spanish-speaking world (see Figure1) as well as a university campus in the midwestern United States. The photos were then adapted and redesigned into the space by the graphic design and programming team.
While in *Croquelandia*, the participants can collaborate with their group members using voice or written chat and can interact with the environment by clicking on different items, walking around the space, and, as can be seen in Figure 2, “talking” with non-player characters (computer-generated avatars present in each of the spaces). All avatar speech was created based on contextualized conversations with native speakers that was recorded and mapped onto the simulated character interactions. Upon hearing the oral speech of the non-player characters, the learners could then select their own response, to which the non-player character would react appropriately (either happy or angry, based on the message portrayed by the learner’s choice).

Each of the online materials and tools presented in this section represents a distinct approach to L2 pragmatic development. However, their existence is not enough to ensure successful creation of additional materials in other languages, nor the implementation and adaptation of those currently in existence. The following section presents six principles for the design, creation, and implementation of online materials for acquisition of L2 pragmatics. Each of the principles are presented with accompanying examples of the online contexts described above. They address design, task creation and administration, and feedback and assessment.
3. Principles for Online Materials Creation and Implementation

Design

1. Objectives are cooperative, dynamic, and socially-constructed to allow for authentic and realistic pragmatic practice.

This principle advocates socially-constructed learning environments through the combination of constructivist and dynamic learning models within CMC and SIEs (Aldrich, 2005; Bergeron, 2006; Hung and Chen, 2003; Prensky, 2001). This approach leads to the co-construction of learning, based on the interaction between learners, instructors, and observers without the imposition of prescriptive tasks, which can limit communication and active learning. This is especially important to pragmatic development because it allows for individual variation among learners (e.g., they can practice ‘being rude’) without disruption of the overall goal of the lesson (e.g., learning to respond to a compliment appropriately in various social contexts).

It is important to note that the co-construction of learning objectives does not imply a lack of structure or planning, but rather a built-in flexibility. For example, in the Spanish website, the objective is specifically stated as follows:

This website is designed to help you learn strategies for learning pragmatic features of Spanish, as well as give you some specific examples from native speakers that you can use to start building your repertoire.
Therefore, the skills you gain from this website should be very helpful for you in any Spanish-speaking community. However, having said that, we want to caution you in generalizing pragmatic practices to any Spanish-speaking region or language variety. While tendencies do exist, there are no set rules governing how to perform specific communicative acts. Sometimes pragmatic failure even occurs between two native speakers. Furthermore, if Spanish is being used as a lingua franca by two nonnative speakers, the pragmatic tendencies will also be different. Therefore, you should always serve as your own data collector when interacting with native speakers. The strategies given in this website are a good start to developing your observational and interpretation skills. (http://www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/sp_pragmatics/for_students.html)

The objective of this particular website is two-fold. First, it aims at raising awareness and highlighting pragmatic features while not at providing prescriptive ideal or native-speaker model. Second, all the activities are built around giving learners the skills they need to be successful in any environment. These include skills such as data collection, observation, and analysis. It is clear and organized, yet still gives learners flexibility in learning skills that are most relevant to their own language learning experience.

Successful implementation of online L2 pragmatics learning requires that “although specific goals are constantly evolving, general directions in objectives remain relatively stable” (Hung and Chen, 2003, p. 10). Positive evidence for the co-construction of tasks in pragmatic instruction is further advocated through the application of student-generated Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) in the L2 classroom (McLean, 2005). A socially-constructed online collaborative learning environment presents a viable and positive theoretical framework for setting up pragmatics instruction. In online environments, learners can experience authenticity, creativity, and individuality that may not be possible in a face-to-face discussion. Moreover, this engaging, dynamic practice allows for more exposure to authentic L2 pragmatics.

An additional theoretical framework supporting the socially-constructed use of online environments for pragmatics instruction is the creation of cooperative e-learning environments through detailed, formative, and evaluative processes focusing on instructional design. This framework further advocates the importance of cooperation as it unfolds in the learning environment, by identifying key components of interaction and re-developing tasks which best fit the technology (Linder and Rochon, 2003). Utilizing a detailed analysis of an unsuccessful pragmatics lesson
surrounding the execution of a speech event (i.e., business telephone calls in English by NSs of German), the researchers establish the importance of a dynamic approach to the construction of lessons on L2 pragmatics within the online environment, where participants can be actively engaged in the learning process. For example, in Croquelandia, learners have a number of quests to complete. These can be done in any order or in any way the learner chooses. Ideally, learners would also create their own quests for other participants in the SIE.

The framework presented by Linder and Rochon also emphasizes synchronous computer-mediated communication as a socially-constructed interaction, influenced by the content, technology, target group, and learner support. The collaborative, socially dynamic systems of immersive gaming environments are especially useful for this type of cooperative learning (Belz, 2002; Bryant, 2006; Ducheneaut et al., 2007; Prensky, 2001; Taylor, 2006). When including online materials in L2 pragmatics instruction, it is essential to maintain their dynamic nature since this authentic interational environment is exactly what makes SCMC beneficial for the practice of pragmatic skills. In the case of websites, this can mean giving learners choices about the modules they complete and the order and manner in which the materials are utilized.

The final theoretical framework to be discussed in this section assumes an interdisciplinary approach to the use of SCMC for pragmatic development, as supported by empirical evidence. Utilizing the concept of “common ground,” first proposed by Clark and Brennan, 1991 (as cited in Vandergriff, 2006), this approach emphasizes the role that negotiation plays in communicative tasks for establishing “joint action where speaker/sender and listener/recipient work collaboratively to ensure that what has been said (or typed) is understood” (Vandergriff, 2006, p. 114). This framework also lends itself to pragmatic instruction because it requires the expression and interpretation of meaning, which can differ based on different strategies for L2 pragmatics and social contexts. Participants work together to complete a communicative task.

2. Educational outcomes of the activities are explicitly defined and supported with accurate content.

While establishing a theoretical framework for the implementation of online materials as instructional tools in L2 pragmatics is essential, the actualization of this framework by means of measurable goals and instructional outcomes is critical. These goals must reflect the cooperative and socially-constructed online environment and
must be established prior to technology selection and task creation. In terms of goal setting:

There is a need to provide a problem that is co-formulated by the community (learners, teachers, and practitioner). The problem can be simulated into a CMC [online/SIE] learning environment after being co-formulated. The specific goal must be related to real-life cases according to the realities of the community of practice. (Hung and Chen, 2003, p. 11)

This type of goal setting has a number of pedagogical implications for L2 pragmatic instruction. First, learners should have some input into the contexts utilized for pragmatic practice (co-formulation). This is difficult in the case of static websites or specific CMC activities, yet can be realized by involving learners themselves in the creation process. For example, throughout the creation of the Japanese website, learners were part of the development and piloting project.

The second component of goal setting advocated by Hung and Chen (2003) is the relation of “real-life cases” to the instructional unit. This means that all contexts used in the online tasks should be those which could also be possible in real life (Aldrich, 2005; Michael and Chen, 2006). At times, this may require intervention of the designer/instructor to ensure that the chosen contexts are appropriate for the pragmatic feature in question. All of the online materials described in this article attempt to include authentic and real tasks to the learning process. This is an especially beneficial element of telecollaboration tasks where learners and NSs interact in authentic and meaningful ways.

To improve the formulation of educational outcomes, it is also essential to include goal formulation and prediction of learner behavior in the evaluative process of curriculum development and lesson planning. In fact, these steps constitute the first two stages in the formative evaluation model presented by Linder and Rochon (2003). Furthermore, the “pedagogical objective should guide the actual implementation of the task...exemplified with any type of technological device” (Salaberry, 2000, p. 9). This means that all goals should be based on the intended educational outcomes (i.e., learning to apologize in Japanese) and not on the integration of technology (i.e., using an SIE because it is new and visually appealing). Salaberry points out that innovative technology often undermines the pedagogical goals of the lessons and may be perceived by instructors, materials developers, and researchers as overly positive, when it is in fact, merely more efficient.
Finally, the use of empirical data is critical to the creation of accurate materials. While we fully recognize the benefits of the use of natural data in pragmatics research and the language classroom, we also assert the importance of using carefully selected, simulated examples that provide salient access to the features of pragmatics that are in question. At times the use of elicited data is the only expeditious way to compare L1 and L2 pragmatics in certain contexts. Nonetheless, corpora are potentially of value in garnering pragmatics information as well. A recent study, for example, compared elicited approaches to data collection with the collection of corpus data, and found that while there are advantages to collecting elicited data, it is valuable to complement these data with corpus data as well (Schauer and Adolphs, 2006).

At the same time, we must recognize the importance of the currently available material and not completely throw it out in our pursuit of more natural data. If we accept the argument that the only way to get truly authentic data is by means of natural data, we are faced with situations where an apology, for example, could extend over numerous turns, interwoven with compliments, requests, and perhaps even complaints also extended over numerous turns. Furthermore, it may be that none of these speech acts is direct enough to be readily perceptible, even to the native interlocutor. Pragmatics in natural data often shows up in ways that are largely imperceptible to L2 learners. Hence, if we want to provide a pedagogically-oriented materials, such as those found on the Spanish and Japanese websites, we must be willing to provide perhaps idealized models for how language may be used, knowing full well that we cannot begin to capture actual language with all of its richness and nuances. We endorse the use of both carefully constructed instructional models, as well as natural and authentic data for practice and further development.

As a result of these issues and observations, in the Japanese and Spanish websites, we use simulated, but unscripted, role-plays. In order for learners to use Spanish in a meaningful way, the sample dialogues were recorded in the most natural way possible. Figure 3 is a sample page demonstrating the video and conversation transcript included in the apologies module on the Spanish website.

While all conversations in both the Japanese and Spanish sites are role-plays, only the overarching context was given to the speakers. This allows for the creation of spontaneous speech that is appropriate for learning. This is suggested as a first step in the process of developing L2 pragmatic ability. After learners become more familiar with the various speech acts and pragmatic features, they can then move on to more complex analyses of natural data as they occur in the real world. The strategy-based approach to learning makes this a viable option because it gives learners the necessary tools for dealing with many different types of language.
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We should note that even the simulated conversations are fairly difficult for the learners. They contain many of the features found in natural conversation (e.g., multiple turns, overlap, and self-corrections). Therefore, it is recommended that with these materials instructors encourage learners to focus on the appropriate use of the target language, not grammatical accuracy or analysis of linguistic form. Learners can begin to develop a tolerance of ambiguity while focusing on the main idea and appropriate use of the target language, rather than worrying about understanding every single word used in samples.

Figure 3 Sample Video and Transcript from Dancing with Words

Task Creation and Administration

3. Tasks reflect the determined objectives and outcomes through multiple involvement opportunities, realistic contexts, and varied participant roles.

Task creation specifically refers to the creation of activities that best fit the pragmatic features being targeted. As noted in the previous sections, the most critical aspect of task creation, in terms of online environments, is the formation of a socially-constructed learning environment, which facilitates authenticity, co-formulation of problems, and the dynamic nature of conversations that are essential to the development of L2 pragmatic competency. The tasks themselves can facilitate the incorporation of these overarching theoretical underpinnings. Furthermore, they should be specifically designed to realize the intended learning outcomes of the lesson (Aldrich, 2005; Hung
and Chen, 2003; Linder and Rochon, 2003; Prensky, 2001; Salaberry, 2000). Some ways in which this can be accomplished are through the inclusion of scaffolded tasks which allow for ample interactional opportunities by all participants, the construction of realistic negotiation between participants, and the freedom to take on a variety of participant roles (Hung and Chen, 2003). Table 2 demonstrates how each of these techniques can be applied to the instruction of requests and apologies.

Table 2  Principles of Task Design and Example Application to Requests and Apologies
(Adapted from Hung and Chen, 2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle of Task Design</th>
<th>Example Application: Requests/Apologies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scaffolded tasks with ample interactional opportunities</td>
<td>During the task students are given multiple (10-20) request contexts in which they can practice by taking on varied participant roles. The contexts all vary in terms of difficulty and complexity. Learners are then given time in which they can practice as many of the situations as they would like through interactions CMC or SIE environments. They are then given additional time outside of the online space to discuss their perceptions of the contexts chosen for interaction and the interactions themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of realistic negotiation between participants</td>
<td>A jigsaw task (or the creation of multiple roles) in which each participant has a different responsibility and requires the use of negotiation to complete the apology. By requiring the learners to construct their own negotiation, authentic interaction is more easily facilitated and constructed as part of the instructional space. Similarly, learners in a group could each be responsible for a specific module in a website and then share what they learned with other members of their group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of participant roles</td>
<td>The various contexts given for various pragmatic situations also allow for the adoption of participant roles. One might encourage the learners to portray co-workers while another might include two family members. This gives learners exposure to, and practice in, various situations where pragmatics plays a role.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to creating tasks that simulate authentic interaction, the use of realistic instructional materials is also essential for pragmatics instruction. Many times NS intuitions vary greatly from actual practice. Therefore, as noted above, it is
essential to utilize empirical evidence in constructing the material to be taught. In terms of task design, the importance of empirical evidence can be taken a step further. For example, “effective tasks...can therefore only be achieved by adopting an evidence-based approach for the assessment and redesign of [SCMC-SIE] tasks, learning material, tools, and learning support” (Linder and Rochon, 2003). Further research examining SCMC and SIE task design and pragmatic instruction is essential to understanding additional benefits of their integration in the L2 classroom.

4. The online platform is user-friendly and supported by initial training and ongoing support.

The creation of the tasks themselves must also facilitate feasible administration within the learning environment. In each of the empirical studies analyzed for this review, the administration of the tasks in the learning context played a significant role in the success (or failure) of the pragmatic instruction. A detailed look at the most unsuccessful execution of L2 pragmatic instruction utilizing SCMC provides the most insight into important administration considerations.

An evaluative analysis of the participation of 19 learners of English (native speakers of German), revealed that improper administration can lead to learner confusion, de-motivation, and loss of authenticity in the SCMC environment (Linder and Rochon, 2003). Through a formative evaluative analysis, five suggestions for improvement were given by the researchers: (1) adjust the timing, (2) clarify instructions and materials, (3) ensure proper moderation and monitoring, (4) use a chat tool supporting tasks, and (5) address learner needs through training related to the technological tool in use.

Feedback and Assessment

5. Instructors play a passive, yet interested, role during tasks. Feedback should be reserved for follow-up and processing.

The role of the instructor presents many complexities in pragmatic instruction. First, due to the complex responsibilities of the instructor as the facilitator, technical support personnel, and evaluator, it is suggested that the instructor not maintain a participatory role. This has been shown to cause confusion for the learners and does not allow the instructor ample time for positive corrective feedback in the form of overall synthesis. In addition, a back-up plan should always be in place in the case of
technical difficulties. Finally, the instructor must be well-acquainted with the platform
being used. Lack of training addressing how to use the technology itself can result in a
failed activity, despite excellent activity development. While the level of
 technological expertise needed will vary based on the online environment being used
(e.g., less technical knowledge is needed in using a website than a SIE), instructors
must make every attempt to be familiar with the tool.

At first glance, it may appear that the existence of the co-formulation of goals,
problems, and solutions, in conjunction with the socially-constructed online
environments, lessens the role of the instructor. However, this misperception could
result in critical failure of the overarching goal of utilizing online tools for increasing
L2 pragmatic competence. The role of the instructor is essential to construct a positive
interactional environment and implement sound pragmatic principles. Technology-
driven activity construction should never replace content design and implementation
based on pedagogical goals (Salaberry, 2000). The instructor is critical in maintaining
this pedagogically sound environment for L2 pragmatic instruction.

6. Ancillary support is given for each lesson.

In addition to the learning materials themselves, we also advocate giving
learners access to any ancillary materials that might be helpful (Cohen and Ishihara,
2005; Ishihara, 2007). In the case of both the Japanese and Spanish websites, this
includes references and abstracts of all of the empirical resources used in the materials
creation and well as links to additional website focused on pragmatics. Figure 4 is an
example of a screen from the resources page of the requests module on the Japanese
website. While this may not appeal to all learners, it is especially helpful for those
wishing to pursue further study in this area.

Other types of ancillary materials offered to learners include references to film
clips or television programs, online computer-mediated communication resources such
as blogs, chat rooms, and discussion boards, and classroom discussions relating to the
specific pragmatic features being addressed in the online discussion. Furthermore, in
the case of CMC and SIEs, the native speakers and virtual environment exist as
inexhaustible resources. We advocate the encouragement of L2 pragmatic exploration
in as many contexts as possible.
4. Conclusion

In this article, we have presented a general overview of currently existing materials and technological tools for the acquisition of L2 pragmatics. In addition, utilizing examples from these recent projects, we have outlined six principles to aid in the creation of addition materials in L2 pragmatics, as well as additional uses of those currently in existence. While each of these principles has yet to be empirically tested, it is our hope that this paper sparks additional interest in the area of materials creation for L2 pragmatics. Moreover, we aim to provide instructors and curriculum developers greater access to the theoretical assertions relevant to practical implementation in order to build a stronger bridge between theory and practice. There is no doubt that the acquisition of L2 pragmatics is complex; yet, with the right tools and resources, it can be a reality for many language learners.

NOTES

1. Kasper and Schmidt (1996) define interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) as “the development and use of strategies for linguistic action by nonnative speakers” (p. 150)
2. See Sykes, Oskoz, and Thorne (2008) for a further discussion of pragmatic development in various types of MUVEs.

3. These principles were originally presented in Sykes (2008) specifically related to SIEs. They have been reformulated here to include other online contexts (e.g., websites, CMC, and other types of MUVEs).

References
L2 Pragmatics: Six Principles for Online Materials Development and Implementation


