1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last few decades, the theme of interlanguage pragmatics and in particular the link between language and culture has gained increasing appeal internationally and has enjoyed attention in the field of language education. It is probably fair to say that pragmatics has become a mainstream concern in second language (L2) teaching and learning. Nonetheless, there is a noticeable gap between what research in pragmatics has found and how language is generally taught today. This article is intended to encourage efforts to close that gap. Attention is given both to classroom lessons and to websites featuring material based on empirical investigations rather than the intuition of materials writers. The primary characteristics of pragmatics instruction are described and illustrated, drawing both on published literature and on strategies-based internet sites for L2 learner self-access.

2. THE CASE FOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT IN PRAGMATICS

Pragmatics deals with meaning that speakers need to co-construct and negotiate along with hearers within the given sociocultural context (Thomas, 1995; LoCastro, 2003, 2012; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). Pragmatics manifests itself in numerous ways. One way is through conversational management such as in learning how to take turns in a conversation and how to give feedback to the conversational partner through back-channeling. Another way is through speech acts, namely, the specific social functions that people carry out in speaking and writing such as apologizing, complaining, making requests, refusals, complimenting or thanking.

While speech acts are just one area of pragmatics (see LoCastro, 2012), they nonetheless have commanded a good deal of attention from researchers. One reason for their popularity in the research literature is that their occurrence is often readily identifiable (e.g. greetings, thanks, compliments) and therefore easily researchable. Even those speech acts may be indirect, subtle, and only perceived after a series of conversational turns (e.g. an indirect request, a refusal, an apology or a veiled criticism) may have a high-stakes function that makes them significant enough for special attention by researchers. Actually, their very complexity and illusiveness helps to make them an intriguing target for study. The fact that these behaviours can differ, even radically, from culture to culture and subculture to subculture makes them even more fascinating to investigate. Furthermore, respondents may well enjoy participating in speech act research involving elicited data, depending on the nature of the situations that they are asked to perform (such as discourse completion tasks and role-plays). The fact is that speech act studies have multiplied dramatically in recent years so that what started as an anecdotal area has burgeoned into one replete with...
studies, especially for certain speech acts such as requests, compliments and apologies. The positive consequence of this development is that whereas in the past, textbooks were often written based on the writers’ intuitions as to how people perform speech acts, there is now empirical data to inform the textbook writing process.

Despite this growing empirical base for information on L2 pragmatics, textbooks still tend to provide only limited coverage of how language in context conveys messages directly and indirectly (e.g. Vellenga, 2004; McGroaty & Taguchi, 2005; Shimizu, Fukasawa & Yonekura, 2007, 2008; Usó-Juan, 2008; Nguyen, 2011). So teachers should not be surprised to find that learners memorize words and phrases without knowing where to use them and how to use them effectively. All the more reason, then, for teacher educators to consult books and other materials that do provide pre- and in-service teachers with materials that cover instructional approaches, examples of classroom practice and suggested means for assessing pragmatic performance. The moment seems propitious to narrow the gap between what research looking at pragmatic use in first language (L1) and L2 has revealed, and how language is generally taught today. This focus on empirically-validated pragmatics in teacher development programmes would ideally result in greater emphasis on it in the L2 classroom.

A key need for teacher educators is to enhance new and more experienced teachers’ ability to recognize, interpret and explain to learners the often subtle sociocultural meanings associated with oral, written and nonverbal communication. While teacher educators are, in fact, performing an invaluable function when they provide practical insights as to how teachers can incorporate a pragmatics component into their L2 instruction, it would appear that teacher development programmes are not necessarily paying much attention to pragmatics. Instead, if such programmes have dealt with pragmatics at all, Vásquez and Sharpless (2009) found from their survey work that the coverage tends to remain largely at the level of theory, rather than being focused on how to teach pragmatics in the classroom. These researchers referred to the sub-field of interlanguage pragmatics concerned with assisting instructors in teaching and assessing L2 pragmatics as instructional pragmatics (also see Ishihara, 2010).

Let us now take a look at directions taken by the research literature on instruction pragmatics – first looking at the learning of pragmatics by immigrants, then by students in study-abroad programmes, then by those in specialized fields, and finally considering how the term pragmatics is operationalized in terms of the authenticity of the language samples and the framework used for delivering the pragmatics instruction.

3. INSTRUCTIONAL PRAGMATICS IN THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

According to Sykes (2009), there are at least eight reasons why instruction in L2 pragmatics has been lacking: (1) limited support (up to now) for curricular development in pragmatics in the literature, (2) the view (however well-based) that authentic input for teaching materials is lacking, (3) limited knowledge on the part of instructors as to how to teach pragmatics, (4) a dominant focus in the curriculum on micro-features of language in the foreign language context, (5) perceived time limitations in the classroom, (6) individual differences and learner subjectivity (vis-a-vis adhering to the norms for target-language
pragmatics), (7) challenges in giving feedback to learners and in assessing their pragmatic abilities, and (8) dialectal variation impacting pragmatic norms. Not so surprising then, most of the coverage of pragmatics has tended to stop at the level of theoretical background (see Vasquez & Sharpless, 2009) and perhaps reports of research studies, rather than dealing with specifics of instruction and assessment that the classroom often demands. Hence, the focus has not generally been on teaching pragmatics to learners. Fortunately, in recent years there has been an upsurge of interest in enhancing learners’ control over the pragmatics of the language at a practical level, though curiously only recently has there been interest in how to build pragmatics into a teacher development programme (see Eslami, 2011; Ishihara, 2011; Vásquez & Fioramonte, 2011).

There are also numerous publications that have emerged which provide summaries of research on the teaching of pragmatics. One of the first efforts to review the impact of classroom instruction on pragmatic performance was by Kasper and Rose (2002). Using a series of published studies as a basis, they asked whether pragmatics was teachable, whether instruction in pragmatics produced results that outpaced exposure alone, and whether explicit and implicit instruction yielded different outcomes. Their assessment of the results of these studies was that most aspects of L2 pragmatics were indeed teachable, that instructional intervention was more beneficial than no instruction specifically targeted at pragmatics, and that for the most part, explicit instruction combined with ample practice opportunities resulted in the greatest gains. They did, however, find limits to the effects of instruction, particularly in cases where an insufficient control of processing was an issue. They also noted that there was considerable room for improvement in the research methodology employed to examine the effects of instruction in pragmatics.

3.1. LEARNING OF PRAGMATICS BY IMMIGRANTS

A study that could be considered representative of interventionist work on English-as-a-second-language (ESL) pragmatics was conducted in Australia and set about to investigate the impact of explicit instruction in an area where exposure alone does not seem to work, namely, with the mitigation of requests (Wigglesworth & Yates, 2007). The researchers pointed out that this issue was rarely addressed explicitly in instructional programmes, and that relatively little was known about how speakers negotiated and softened more complex, multi-turn requests. In their study, complex role-play requests made by native speakers (NSs) were analyzed for various kinds of mitigating devices, and compared with similar data from NNS role plays. Five experienced ESL teachers working with the Australian Adult Migrant English Programme recorded themselves and another NS role-playing the same requests for which there were already NNS data. The situation was having four weeks of leave for the year and requesting to take three of them at one time – and at a busy time for the given workplace.

The four teachers collected 54 NS-NS role plays. These results were compared with those from 16 NNS-NS (teacher) role plays. With regard to the level of directness in the principal request, NSs used a far greater range of structures than the NNSs, and the latter failed to mitigate their requests, but rather kept them abrupt. With regard to syntactic mitigation, 25% of the NSs used embedding mitigated by the continuous “I was wondering
if...” and used the past imperfect tense extensively to situate wants and desires, which the NNSs did not. At the sociopragmatic level (i.e. what is socioculturally acceptable), NSs worked on developing rapport and a sense of shared responsibility for the consequences of their requests, rather than seeking a favour. With regard to lexical mitigation, the NSs used downtoners like “just”. With regard to propositional mitigation, which was considered a part of sociopragmatic control, NSs used more disarmers such as minimizing the distance between boss and employee and de-emphasizing the hierarchy, and sympathy with the boss situation. Regarding the use of greetings, NSs were more likely to start their request with a greeting than were NNSs, though neither group used them extensively. With regard to the structure of the request sequence, NNSs tended to signal a problem more while the NSs used a “let’s talk” routine more, which served as a positive politeness strategy to create solidarity.

At the pragmalinguistic level (i.e. the language forms that are appropriate for the given situation), NSs were found to use more mitigating devices more flexibly than NNSs. So while both groups used direct requests, the NSs softened them more with mitigators. The NSs expressed their request compellingly and reduced the threat to their interlocutor’s face, using greetings, and reasons for the request, along with disarmers and syntactic modifications. They found that NSs did not use traditional requests like “Can I...?” or “Would I...?” Their requests tended to be assertive, rather than “apparently advisory” or “apparently negotiable” or “negotiable”. No NNSs used the imperfect progressive, “I was wondering if...”. NNSs used the past and modals but not with as much softening of their requests. For example, while the NNSs did use a bit of understating (“a couple of” weeks), they did not use hedging as NSs did. Likewise, NSs used many more disarmers, and if NNSs used them, they tended to be bold. The results were seen to suggest areas for instruction at both the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic level, and the research in fact provided rich material for subsequent instruction of immigrants in how to make more appropriate requests in Australian English.

3.2. LEARNING OF PRAGMATICS THROUGH STUDY ABROAD

The literature would suggest that in study-abroad contexts, learners are able to achieve some untutored gains in pragmatics (Kasper & Rose, 2002). Marriott (1996), for example, provided evidence of language gain among Australian HS students in Japan for a year. In this study, the learners’ politeness formulas (i.e. opening and closing conversational routines) improved in oral proficiency interviews. They also increased their use of plain forms. A more negative set of findings emerged from Hoffman-Hicks’ (1999) research on the development of pragmatic skills among fourteen study abroad students from Indiana University in France. The study focused on greetings and leave-takings and on compliments, using a production questionnaire administered on three occasions over a period of sixteen months. The analysis revealed that the learners did exhibit pragmatic development over time but that this development was often slight and limited in scope. Among her conclusions were that spending time in the target community was no panacea and that length of residence was not a reliable predictor.
A more recent study (Cohen & Shively, 2007) involved an experimental group that received a 3-hour pre-departure orientation including a PowerPoint on speech acts in general and on requests and apologies in particular (including a discourse completion task), before spending a semester in a Spanish- or French-speaking country. The students also received a study abroad guide (Paige, Cohen, Kappler, Chi & Lassegard, 2006) with a brief section on requests and apologies, without mention of speech acts specific either to Spanish or French. During their semester abroad, the experimental-group students were in weekly contact with one of three TAs assigned to them. The findings were that all the study abroad students improved their request and apology performance over the course of one semester, as rated by the Spanish and French native speakers. In addition, whereas there were no statistically significant differences between the experimental group and the control group in their rated speech act performance overall, a qualitative analysis of speech act development among learners of Spanish (N = 67) helped to identify areas in which their performance on requests and apologies either resembled that of native speakers or diverged from it. Although fewer students than native speakers used the “query preparatory with verbal downgrading” in their requests (e.g. *sería posible que* “would it be possible”), there appeared to be some increase in the use of this strategy by study-abroad students from pre- to post-test, especially among the experimental group students, perhaps suggesting that for some of these students awareness about mitigating requests was enhanced by the brief treatment that they received and the presentation in the guide book (Paige, Cohen, Kappler Mikk, Chi & Lassegard, 2006).

Shively (2011) went on to conduct a more in-depth study of L2 pragmatic development in study abroad, reporting on research which focused on service encounters recorded in situ between seven L2 learners of Spanish and local Spanish service providers in Toledo, Spain. The data consisted of naturalistic audio recordings that participants made of themselves while visiting local shops, banks and other establishments. The study was longitudinal with recordings made at the beginning, middle and end of the semester by each student, for a total of 113 recordings. Additional data included students’ weekly journals and interviews with participants. The findings reported on involved openings and requests and the ways in which students’ pragmatic choices shifted over time, considering the role of language socialization and explicit instruction in pragmatics in that development. Overall, the changes in openings and requests suggested to the researcher that students learnt and adopted some of the pragmatic norms of service encounters in the Toledo speech community. Shively (2011) reported that both explicit and implicit socialization processes were implicated in students’ learning. Explicit socialization was seen to take place through instruction by the host family and implicit socialization to occur through reactions from service providers (which students perceived as negative), students’ observations of Spanish customers doing service encounters and repeated interactions in these setting. Explicit in-class instruction on requests also appeared to have an impact on some of the students’ requesting behaviour.

Based on their review of the study abroad literature at the time, Kasper and Rose (2002) identified numerous factors relevant to the learning of pragmatics while studying abroad. Here are some of them:
3.3. LEARNING OF PRAGMATICS FOR SPECIALIZED FIELDS

With regard to research on pragmatics in specialized fields, one popular approach is through analysis of corpus data (see Koester, 2002). The spoken-English corpus for this study consisted of 66 workplace conversations between colleagues at work, recorded in eight different offices in a variety of locations in the US and Britain (university offices, editorial offices of publishers, and sales and accounts offices of small businesses). It included giving instructions, making arrangements, briefing and joint problem solving. First, a number of devices used to perform speech acts were analyzed in the corpus as a whole, and then the transcripts of two workplace conversations were examined in order to ascer-
tain how two particular speech acts – giving advice and giving directives – were performed.

As an example of an interventional study, Trosborg (2003) looked at the handling of customer complaints by business language students. She explained why it can be tricky for an ESL learner to handle a complaint even if the learner has a sense of the L2 genre for the interaction. She provided an elaborate figure for how to respond to everyday complaints: opting out, using evasive strategies (minimizing, querying pre-condition, blaming someone else), apologizing (directly or indirectly – acknowledging responsibility and giving an explanation) and engaging in remedial acts (offering repair, showing concern for the hearer, giving a promise of non-recurrence). She also gave a recipe for how to respond to a customer’s complaint (Trosborg, 2003: 259) and provided a figure with possibilities (ritual acts – thanking and explaining, or apologizing; attending to the complaint – promising immediate attention/correction and asking for information; or remedial acts – offering repair, checking customer satisfaction, looking for ways to prevent future mistakes). Trosborg then described a study carried out by Shaw and Trosborg (2000), where learners acquired new pragmatic routines through both explicit and implicit teaching. In a study involving both a deductive and an inductive group (N = 15), the researchers found a slight advantage to deductive/explicit instruction over inductive/implicit instruction. The researchers found dramatic changes in the way the complaints were handled after limited teaching over a short time. Trosborg’s conclusion was that learners’ pragmatic behaviour is more open to conscious modification than is their syntax or phonology. She felt that these routines were easier to learn because they had a clear purpose which was meaningful within the learners’ own cultural repertoire. Also, the values such as “the customer is always right” helped in giving clear guidelines.

As an example of an e-mail study, Jensen (2009) looked at the use of discourse strategies in e-mail negotiation. The analysis revealed how relations between the participants developed through the use of specific discourse strategies in their e-mail communication, during which the relationship progressed from initial contact to an on-going business relationship. The study provided insights into naturally occurring language in an e-mail communication between a Danish company and its business contact in Taiwan. During the three-month period observed, the two parties reportedly used increasingly similar interpersonal strategies as the relationship progressed towards a more contextually stable and more personalized level of communication as trust was seen to be established and power relations to become structured within the legal framework of the contract.

As an example of a workplace interventional study focusing on the communication challenges facing migrants with professional qualifications, Holmes, Joe, Marra, Newton, Riddiford and Vine (2011) described how linguists can work with laypeople to identify and research areas of mutual concern. They presented findings from a study designed around a course aimed at providing well-educated migrants with the sociopragmatic skills they needed to analyze workplace interactions for themselves. The course included both classroom instruction and workplace experience, and drew on previous analyses of effective workplace communication by the research team, as well as current workplace interactions in which the learners were involved. The course and the related research involved people who were fundamentally disadvantaged in a wide variety of ways when they joined a new
society, because of their lack of social power, as well as their unfamiliarity with societal norms. The aim of the research was to take an approach aimed at empowering the participant immigrants, rather than simply attempting to make them fit into the host culture.

3.4. THE NATURE OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL INTERVENTION

While there is some agreement that interventions such as those described above are beneficial, the research literature is inconclusive as to preferred approaches for this endeavour. One example is whether to use a deductive approach, where the pragmatic norms are simply provided, as opposed to using inductive, guided discovery as a means for getting learners to retain information about pragmatics. A study by Rose and Ng (2001) on compliments, for instance, found that although both inductive and deductive instruction had a positive impact on pragmalinguistic proficiency, only deductive instruction appeared to contribute to the development of sociopragmatic proficiency.

A meta-analysis by Jeon and Kaya (2006) supported the Rose and Ng finding by suggesting that explicit teaching about how language functions in discourse may generally be more beneficial than leaving learners to figure pragmatic behaviour out for themselves. In contrast, a study by Takimoto (2008) found that learners who had to discover the underlying rules for downgrading requests were better able to process information about the target features and store it in working memory than those who simply received explicit information about making requests, without having to link the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic features in the information to various meanings conveyed by means of downgrading requests. So it is still an open question as to how best to instruct learners regarding pragmatics, probably in part because learners differ as to their learning style preferences (see, for example, Cohen, in press-a).

With regard to the curricular materials for pragmatics instruction, Tatsuki (2006) looked rigorously at what authenticity of pragmatics materials actually means. She pointed out that it includes looking at the authenticity of the language (both of the language material used and of the learners’ interpretation of that material), the authenticity of the given language tasks, and the authenticity of the given classroom context. She questioned what “real,” “natural” or “genuine” meant in the selection of “authentic” language samples, and came to the conclusion that teachers actually need to deal with degrees of authenticity from genuinely authentic input to altered, adapted or simulated authenticity. She offered a set of questions that classroom teachers might wish to ask themselves in order to determine whether a given set of materials are authentic enough for their purposes:

- How would you characterize the language that is being used? In other words, how might the age of interlocutors impact the language that they use, what role might gender play in their interaction, and what is the nature of their relationship?
- In what context is the interaction taking place and what are the reasons that the participants have for interacting?
- How is the language being transmitted in the interaction? In other words, is it by phone, by written memo or by e-mail? Are the boundaries between oral and written language clear or are they blurred? (Tatsuki, 2006: 5)
While she saw it as the teachers’ role to select materials and to frame them appropriately for their students, she nonetheless recommended having the learners engaged in out-of-class efforts to become more pragmatically aware, so that they were taking part in the process of identifying and acquiring authentic language. She provided as an example of the search for authentic materials through the work that she conducted with colleagues to study popular films as a source for natural and authentic language material to use in teaching L2 pragmatics (Tatsuki, 2006: 5–8).

Another central issue in the teaching of pragmatics is the framework use. One of the more comprehensive ones was developed by Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan (2006) and termed the 6Rs Approach (namely, researching, reflecting, receiving, reasoning, rehearsing and revising). It was aimed at providing English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) lecturers with a pedagogical tool that might help them integrate pragmatics into their language syllabi. Drawing on previous approaches and techniques from the field of interlanguage pragmatics, the framework focused on requests and suggestions as two speech acts that could threaten the hearer’s face and, therefore, needed to be performed in an appropriate way in order to avoid pragmatic failure. For example, at the “researching” stage, they provided an awareness-raising worksheet with both pragmalinguistic questions (e.g. “How many forms (i.e. head acts) did you find for each speech act?”) and sociopragmatics questions (e.g. “Which different request/suggestion forms have you found depending on the degree of familiarity that exists between the speakers?”). At the “reasoning” stage, the learners were led through a process of inquiry in order to arrive at the determination that a given utterance was either a suggestion or a request in the given context, based on an analysis of the role relationship between the speaker and addressee, their respective occupations, the speaker’s intention and the setting.

Now let us turn to pedagogical practice with regard to pragmatics, taking a look both at available textbooks that cover pragmatics and at websites as well.

4. INSTRUCTIONAL PRAGMATICS IN PRACTICE

Given the previous lack of materials for teachers on how to deal with L2 pragmatics in the classroom, it is reassuring to the field that an increasing number of colleagues have recently produced books intended to fill this gap. The materials now available include suggested curricular materials and concrete lesson plans, as well as internet sites for L2 learner self-access.

4.1. TEXTBOOKS FOCUSING ON PRAGMATICS

One of the earlier volumes that covered both theoretical and more applied aspects of pragmatics was that by LoCastro (2003). The volume provided a rigorous introduction to pragmatics, including a focus on what politeness meant and a consideration of learner subjectivity and how it could influence language learning and performance. In other words, subjectivity could lead learners to resist communicating in a pragmatically appropriate way, particularly if it meant adhering to normative behaviour inconsistent with their sense of self-identity. For example, a learner of Japanese as a second or foreign language
(JSL/JFL) might know to use honorific verbs but resists doing so out of a sense that they unnecessarily distinguish people by status. Empirical investigation of resistance to performing pragmatics like native speakers can be found in a case study of a Western woman, Mary, learning JSL (Siegel, 1996), in a study assessing the degree to which Korean ESL students’ preferences for North American English influenced their willingness to use Australian-English routines while studying in Australia (Davis, 2007), and in a study exploring the stated reasons that advanced JFL learners at a US university provided for their pragmatic choices in previously completed tasks (multiple-rejoinder oral DCT and role-play) (Ishihara & Tarone, 2009).

As of now, there have also appeared a series of volumes which offer model lessons for conducting pragmatics instruction. The first of this kind was edited by Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003) and explored the teaching of L2 pragmatics through lessons and activities created by teachers. This edited collection features chapters by 30 teacher-contributors who were teaching in seven different countries and were both native-speakers and non-native speakers of English. Activities for both ESL and EFL classroom settings were included. The activities purposely reflected a variety of approaches so that teachers could get a sense of how pragmatics could be integrated into both more traditional and more communicatively-orientated classrooms.

A new collection for teachers of pragmatics along the same lines has appeared in the *TESOL Classroom Practice Series*. The first edited volume addresses how to raise learner awareness of pragmatic appropriateness in ESL/EFL through research-based, field-tested activities. There are suggested lessons by experts on how to do the following: soften requests such as through indirect requests and making e-mail requests, give advice, express an opinion, provide constructive peer-to-peer feedback on academic writing, make an indirect complaint and negotiate refusals. In addition, the volume describes the process of collaboration through an online tool called Talkpoint, and also deals with the challenging issue of how to assess pragmatic ability in the classroom (Tatsuki & Houck, 2010). The companion volume (Houck & Tatsuki, 2011) offers materials intended to replace scripted, sometimes unnatural dialogues with dialogues based on more authentic-sounding utterances and sequences. The chapters in this edited collection include the issues of turn-taking, initiations and responses for formal academic and informal conversation, thanking expressions, apologies, compliments and compliment responses, differences in complimenting behaviour between men and women, opening and closing telephone conversations, and the use of responders such as *oh, uh-huh/mm-hm* and *yeah*.

There have also emerged examples of authored textbooks which are empirically-based and in some cases designed for a given domain. For instance, Riddiford and Newton (2010) published a volume intended for business/workplace ESOL classes or communication training courses. The units deal with small talk, requesting, refusing, making suggestions, disagreeing, making complaints and making apologies, and are based around recordings of workplace interactions (including e-mails) in English as they naturally occurred in a range of professional workplaces. The emphasis on how people really interact at work in English highlights the many subtle features of communication which may well be left out of artificially-constructed conversations. Similarly, Ishihara and Maeda (2010) published a textbook focusing on pragmatics for intermediate to advanced students dealing
with Japanese conversation. The textbook concerns itself with listening and speaking in real-life situations, using authentic sample dialogues from native Japanese speakers to demonstrate the generally preferred language use. Like the Riddiford and Newton text for ESL, this one for JSL/JFL learners is organized according to frequently used speech acts: requesting, apologizing, refusing, thanking and complimenting. It also deals with how to support learners in being more sensitive to the social context (i.e. the social status, the level of familiarity and the content of the speech).

A volume by Ishihara and the current author also constitutes a research-based and, in this case, more generic treatment of L2 pragmatics for the classroom (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). Special attention is afforded to instructional approaches and classroom processes. Although speech acts are given major attention in the book, they are not equated with pragmatics, nor is it suggested that speech acts should dominate the L2 curriculum that incorporates pragmatics. The learning of pragmatics is viewed not only as a cognitive process, but also as a social phenomenon, consistent with current views as to the nature of language teaching and learning. Consequently, social aspects in the learning of pragmatics are highlighted, and readers are invited to consider how learners’ social being relates to the instructional and evaluative practices of teachers. The last portion of the book considers aspects of L2 pragmatics that have received more limited attention in the literature. For example, one chapter looks at what might constitute successful strategies in speech act performance and offers a proposed taxonomy of learner strategies for acquiring pragmatics. Another engages the reader in the issue of how to approach the assessment of learners’ pragmatic ability, and offers suggested strategies for assessing pragmatics. And a third takes a more close-up view of classroom-based assessment of pragmatics, and provides samples of assessment materials, learner language and teacher feedback.

Finally, another teacher-oriented volume is that by LoCastro (2012), which has as its aim to make pragmatics accessible to students and instructors through raising awareness and increasing knowledge and understanding of how language is used in real situations to engage in social action. The book offers numerous examples, mostly of natural speech from collected data sources, in a departure from sometimes stilted textbook dialogues.

4.2. PRAGMATICS THROUGH WEBSITES

Another way to obtain material on pragmatics is through websites specializing in pragmatics, with a special interest in material based on empirical investigations rather than the intuition of materials writers. With funding from the Office of International Education to the Language Resource Center at the University of Minnesota’s Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA), a project was initiated to provide self-access Internet sites for the learning and performance of L2 pragmatics. The first project involved the construction of a pragmatics website for teachers, curriculum writers, and learners with detailed information about the six speech acts for which there were sufficient empirical studies available to facilitate such descriptions (requests, refusals, apologies, complaints, compliments and thanking) in as many as ten different languages (see http://www.carla.um
n.edu/speechacts/. Suggested strategies for teaching the particular speech acts and sample teaching materials are provided, along with an extensive annotated bibliography (updated in 2011) which includes information on other areas of pragmatics as well.

After the construction of the general website, a project was undertaken to construct a JSL/JFL website, Strategies for Learning Speech Acts in Japanese, http://www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/japanese/introtospeechacts/index.htm. It 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 strategies for learning and using JSL/JFL pragmatics: comparisons of L1 and L2 norms, examination of contextual factors influencing each speech act, self-evaluation of linguistic behaviour 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. The website was intended to be used either on a stand-alone basis or as a supplement to an intermediate course in Japanese (for more on the website, see Cohen & Ishihara, 2005; Ishihara, 2007; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010).

Subsequent to the construction of the Japanese pragmatics website, a Spanish as a second- or foreign-language (SSL/SFL) website was constructed, Dancing with Words: Strategies for Learning Pragmatics in Spanish (http://www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/sp_pragmatics/home.html). Its construction drew on lessons learnt 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 interactions 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 (for more on the website, see Sykes & Cohen, 2008).

Another pragmatics website focusing on SSL/SFL and still under development was constructed at Indiana University (http://www.indiana.edu/~discprag/). It is designed for teachers, learners and researchers with information and pedagogical materials for teaching and learning pragmatics and general linguistics. The website includes sections covering pragmatic variation, politeness, speech acts, Spanish voices and culture around the Spanish-speaking world, the teaching of pragmatics, pragmatic development and exercises in pragmatics.

5. CONCLUSION

The intention of this article has been to encourage efforts to close the gap between what research in L2 pragmatics has found and how language has generally been taught today.
Fortunately, there are now numerous studies available dealing with how L2 speakers perform pragmatically in their L1 and L2. Areas still in need of investigation include, for example, differences between crosscultural and intercultural pragmatics, where the latter represents a dynamic and complex domain for pragmatics research (see, for instance, Cohen, in press-b). It is encouraging to see that empirical work on pragmatics is now being systematically applied in some L2 classrooms and that commercially-available textbooks are beginning to offer research-informed instruction. A remaining challenge is for teacher education programmes to include instructional pragmatics among their core offerings. Another challenge is to make more widely available in the L2 classroom explicit guidance in how to be pragmatically appropriate.

As indicated above (Eslami, 2011; Ishihara, 2011; Vásquez & Fioramonte, 2011) a beneficial teacher development programme in pragmatics would engage the developing teachers in classroom-oriented tasks that are designed to help them become able to do the following:

- identify research-based information about pragmatics;
- identify possible causes of learner errors and choices in cross-cultural communication;
- understand second language acquisition theories that support their classroom practices;
- develop a pragmatics component to their instruction utilizing research-based information;
- design classroom-based assessments;
- better support learners in being more strategic about their learning and performance of speech acts;
- incorporate technology into their instructional offerings for the learning of pragmatics; and
- develop a pragmatics-focused curriculum.

Since the successful integration of pragmatics instruction into the curriculum depends in part on the knowledge, understanding and skill of the L2 teacher, there may be challenges along the way, but it would seem that the benefits that can accrue to learners would warrant this effort.

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