島根大学教育学部紀要（人文・社会科学）第33巻　57頁～68頁　平成11年12月

When Just 'Please' Won't Do

— Communicative Competence and Politeness in Japanese and English[1] —

Sean A. WHITE* and Masayoshi YAMADA**

[Keywords: politeness; communicative competence; sociolinguistics; contrastive linguistics; Japanese and English]

Communicative Competence and Politeness

This paper begins with the assumption that human language is first and foremost a social phenomenon. The mere notion of language implies interaction and communication between speaker and listener, writer and reader. Despite the fact that most language professionals would agree with this assertion, very often the social aspects of language are given insufficient attention in foreign language textbooks and classrooms. While it is not the intention here to downplay the importance of syntax in foreign language instruction (for grammatical accuracy is important in conveying meaning, including social), it will be argued that social components of language deserve greater emphasis in both instructional materials and classroom exercises.

In the 1970s, the Communicative Competence (CC) movement arose as a response to Chomskyan and Universal Grammar theories which explain language acquisition simply and succinctly as innate competence (knowledge of grammar). Critics of this view, chief of whom was Dell Hymes, pointed out that even if children, in acquiring their native language, can generate an infinite number of grammatical sentences with scarcity of input, grammatical competence alone can not account for functional competence and communication. Hymes (1974), coining the term 'Communicative Competence,' proposed a model of language competence which contained not only knowledge of grammaticality ('Possibility') and semantic acceptability ('Feasibility'), but also, and equally important, notions of context sensitivity ('Appropriateness') and actual execution and delivery ('Performance').

Hymes' work was to give birth to a wealth of theorizing on CC. The best known CC model to emerge since then is that of Canale and Swain (1980). Like Hymes, Canale & Swain proposed four elements of communicative competence: (1) Grammatical competence; (2) Sociolinguistic competence; (3) Discourse competence; and (4) Strategic competence. There are many strengths to Canale and Swain's model. First, it includes both (Chomsky's) grammatical competence and (Hymes') sociolinguistic competence. In addition, they give prominent roles to both discourse competence (the managing of larger chunks of language) and strategic competence, defined as knowledge of compensatory skills in managing inadequacies due to lack of language ability. The term Pragmatic Competence (PC) is used in this paper to refer to 'functional competence' and encompasses all of Canale and Swain's sociolinguistic competence and parts of discourse, and strategic competences.

Sean A. WHITE* Teaching Assistant, Dept. of East Asian Languages & Cultures, The University of Kansas.
Masayoshi YAMADA** Professor of English Linguistics. Department of English, Faculty of Education, Shimane University.

While there is still disagreement over exactly what CC is (as witnessed in the many problems encountered in the CC-based Oral Proficiency Movement in the area of second/foreign language instruction), what is clear is that an individual's ability to communicate effectively does not depend solely on his/her grammatical competence or knowledge of phonological and syntactic rules and lexical meaning. Effective communication also depends on the ability in handling 'predictable and conventional exchanges' that make up a large amount of discourse (for example, "Hi, how's it going?" "Fine thanks, how are you doing?"), as well as an ability to evaluate the speaker-hearer relationship in determining socially appropriate utterances (Tanaka 1997). This means that a learner of a second/foreign language who is considered to be communicatively competent is one who has acquired a certain degree of grammatical as well as pragmatic competence/knowledge of the sociocultural rules of speaking (Tanaka 1997).

Despite a paucity of research on the pragmatic aspects of second/foreign language (L2) learners' speech, most studies indicate the difficulty of acquiring pragmatic competence in showing that even advanced learners quite often make pragmatic errors, particularly when responding to compliments, apologizing, or dealing with potentially face-threatening speech acts such as making and refusing requests. Acquiring pragmatic competence is a long and difficult process likely to take years and many learners may never achieve it, just as the acquisition of cultural knowledge (Cultural Competence) is a lifelong process. Nevertheless, facilitating learners' acquisition of pragmatic competence must remain an important goal of second- and foreign language instructors for two important reasons (Tanaka 1997). First, pragmatic failure may make it difficult for a learner to establish social relationships with target language speakers who could provide him/her with input and interactional opportunities. Furthermore, pragmatic failure might deny the learner access to valuable academic or professional opportunities. As has been shown elsewhere, "while native speakers of a language tend to be tolerant of grammatical errors, they are less tolerant of pragmatic ones" (Tanaka 1997: 15).

'Pragmatic competence' is a rather broad term and can be seen to include a variety of features of language, including terms of address and reference; styles (registers); dialects; ritual language; linguistic taboo; speech associated with gender, class, and occupation; turn-taking; kinesics; prosodic features and paralinguistic features among others. Prominent in this group is the aspect of register and speech-styles in general, and linguistic politeness in particular.

Following years of research neglect, the topic of linguistic politeness has experienced a surge in scholarly interest over the course of the last two decades in a variety of theoretical fields of investigation, particularly in response to the seminal work of researchers such as Grice (1975) and, especially, Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987). According to Ide (1993: vii-viii), the word "Politeness" has developed into "a term describing one of the constraints of human interaction according to which people behave without friction." Applied to language, "it refers to principles encompassing strategies for language use and choices of linguistic forms associated with smooth communication."

Brown and Levinson's work on linguistic politeness (and many other's since) presupposes universal principles of language use; specifically, they describe politeness as a number of active strategies employed by speakers in order to maintain the "face" of their listeners in potentially face-threatening interactional situations. Subsequent studies (particularly those of non-Western languages) by other researchers have cast certain doubts on universal politeness theories, while others have simply proposed modifications of the hypothesis. However, one the most important of all criticisms aimed at Brown and Levinson's work

has been the fact that it focuses on only one aspect of linguistic politeness. According to Ide (1993: viii), "[w]hat has been left out is politeness as an everyday concept, the matter of etiquette and protocol." This has led to a distinction being drawn between two types of linguistic politeness: (1) normative ('first-order') politeness, characterized as everyday politeness based on etiquette, social norms, and the like, and (2) instrumental ('second-order') politeness, encompassing the strategies that are the focus of universal theories of politeness à la Brown and Levinson.

The purpose of this paper is to make clear both the similarities and differences in how politeness is expressed linguistically in Japanese and in English, and in light of this discussion, to make certain suggestions in teaching both languages. It is believed that the analysis presented here may perhaps be of only limited use for some language learners, but it is important for the instructor to have a solid understanding of the similarities and differences between politeness in the two languages when choosing materials and methods designed to facilitate students' acquisition of pragmatic competence. According to Thomas (1983):

> "Language teachers... cannot afford to be satisfied with simply recording the fact of pragmatic failure. Rather, they must concern themselves with investigating its causes and doing something about it. ... To give the learner the knowledge to make an informed choice and allowing him/her the freedom to flout pragmatic conventions... is to acknowledge her/his individuality and freedom of choice and to respect her/his system of values and beliefs" (cited in Turner 1996: 9).

Brown and Levinson's Universal Politeness Principles

In their now famous cross-linguistic study, Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987) begin by claiming that linguistic politeness is a universal phenomenon consisting of strategic uses of language employed in order to maintain the listener's 'face' in so-called 'face-threatening' situations. Based on the work of Goffman (1967; cited in Fraser 1990), 'face' may be understood in Brown and Levinson broadly as an individual's self-esteem, and more specifically as follows (Fraser 1990: 229):

> Negative Face: "The want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others," (Brown and Levinson 1987: 62) ... "[the] want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded" (Brown and Levinson 1987: 129).
>
> Positive Face: "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others," (Brown and Levinson 1987: 62) ... "[the] perennial desire that his wants should be thought of as desirable" (Brown and Levinson 1987: 101).

As Fraser states, "[f]ace is something that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and any threat to face must be continually monitored during an interaction." Furthermore, "since face is so vulnerable, and since most participants will defend their face if threatened, the assumption is made that it is generally in everyone's best interest to maintain each other's face and to act in such ways that others are made aware that this is one's intention" (1990: 229).

The underlying premise in Brown and Levinson's work is that "some acts are intrinsically

threatening to face and thus require softening..." in order to ensure the listener's cooperation (Fraser 1990: 229). Terming these "face-threatening acts" (FTA's), Brown and Levinson propose that in order to soften such acts, a group of language users develops "politeness principles" that become the basis of linguistic politeness strategies. Brown and Levinson claim that these acts are inherently face-threatening to either one or both of the participants. They further categorize FTA's in the following manner (as summarized by Fraser 1990: 231):

1. Acts threatening to the hearer's [H's] Negative Face (freedom of action): e.g., ordering, advising, threatening, warning.

(1) Open the window!
(2) You'd better do this.
(3) You'd better do this, or else!

2. Acts threatening to the hearer's Positive Face (desirability of wants): e.g., complaining, criticizing, disagreeing, raising taboo topics.

(4) I don't like it!
(5) You didn't do it right.
(6) You're wrong!

3. Acts threatening to the speaker's [S's] Negative Face: e.g., accepting an offer, expressing and accepting thanks, promising unwillingly.

(7) Yes... umm, thanks for your offer.
(8) Thank you. I'm indebted.
(9) No, not at all. Don't mention it.

4. Acts threatening to the speaker's Positive Face: e.g., apologizing, accepting compliments, confessing.

(10) I'm sorry. It was bad of me.
(11) Oh? No, really it was nothing.
(12) I'm sorry. I was wrong.

Brown and Levinson (1987: 91) go on to state that:

> "We have claimed that a face-bearing rational agent will tend to utilize... FTA-Minimizing strategies according to a rational assessment of the face risk to participants [in particular, to the hearer, rather than the speaker]. He would behave thus by virtue of practical reasoning, the inference of the best means to satisfy stated ends."

According to Brown and Levinson, in any given FTA situation, the speaker will choose one of the five courses of action described below.

1. without redressive action, baldly (clear and unequivocable imposition; no politeness): 'Open the window!'
2. positive politeness (attending to the hearer's and speaker's desirability of wants; roughly, the expression of solidarity): 'Aren't you hot? Let's open the window.'
3. negative politeness (avoidance of impeding on the hearer's and speaker's freedom of action; the expression of restraint): 'I'm sorry, since it's warm in here, would it be all right if I opened the window for a moment?'
4. off record (avoidance of unequivocable impositions; requires inference on the part of the hearer): 'It sure is warm in here (...)'
5. don't do the FTA

Brown and Levinson claim that a speaker determines the degree of seriousness of an FTA in terms of "three independent and culturally-sensitive variables, which they claim subsume all others that play a principled role" (Fraser 1990: 230):

1. Social Distance (D) between the speaker (S) and the hearer (H); in effect, the degree of familiarity and solidarity they share;
2. Relative Power (P) of the speaker with respect to the hearer; in effect, the degree to which the speaker can impose will on the hearer;
3. Absolute Ranking (R) of impositions on the culture, both in terms of the expenditure of goods and/or services by the hearer, the right of the speaker to perform the act, and the degree to which the hearer welcomes the imposition. (Brown and Levinson 1981: 74*ff*; cited in Fraser 1990: 231)

In Brown and Levinson's model, the (estimated) seriousness or risk of face-loss ("weightiness") Wx of an FTA is determined by the equation

$$Wx = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + Rx$$

where each of the three variables can be measured on a scale of 1 to n (n being a relatively small number). Thus, the value of Wx will determine the degree of politeness that the speaker perceives to be required for any FTA, 'X'. Fraser (1990: 231) further states:

> ... none of the variables can be viewed as a constant between individuals; participants vacillate in their social distance when job and anger intervene, relative power is altered as the roles and responsibilities change back and forth even over short periods of time, and the specifics of an act or the circumstances of the participants at the time can easily cause a change in the ranking of degree of imposition. The choice of a specific linguistic form is to be viewed as a specific realization of one of the politeness strategies in light of the speaker's assessment of the utterance context.

According to Brown and Levinson's account, the most common strategy that speakers use to express politeness consists of what are known as linguistic 'hedges'. In a narrow definition, a 'hedge' is "a

particle, word, or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or noun phrase in a set; it says of that membership that it is partial, or true only in certain respects, or that it is more true and complete than perhaps might be expected" (Brown and Levinson: 1987: 145).

(13) A swing is sort of a toy.
(14) I'm pretty sure I've read that book before.
(15) You're quite right. (Brown and Levinson 1987: 145)

However, often certain usages of hedges convey hedged performatives – that is, they modify the force of an entire speech act (Lakoff 1972: 213; cited in Brown and Levinson 1987: 145). Overall, the use of hedges is meant to make a particular FTA more indirect and thus less of an imposition to the hearer and in doing do, more polite.

(16) Won't you open the door? (Brown and Levinson 1987: 145)

According to Brown and Levinson, (16) can be glossed as 'I hedgedly request that you open the door' (1987: 145). Thus, the force of the original speech act (essentially, an order to open the door) has been modified through the use of interrogative and negative forms in order to reduce the threat to the hearer's negative face (desire for freedom of action) and, to ensure the hearer's cooperation. Hedges such as in the example above, which are used as politeness strategies, may consist of such things as apologies, the use of interrogative, conditional, potential, and negative forms, and many other items which hold no clear or logical meaning and serve merely to make an utterance more indirect and therefore, polite. The following example shows several hedge items in a typical English language sentence.

(17) I'm sorry, but would it be all right if I opened the window for just a minute?

According to Brown and Levinson, it is the use of such hedges in (17)(apology, interrogative, conditionals 'would ... if' , FTA minimizing expression 'for just a minute') that make the utterance polite. Clearly, such hedges carry no essential meaning in terms of the speech act, the clearest expression of which would be an explicit order or some sort of direct request. Rather, the use of hedges is meant to, either consciously or unconsciously, make the act more tentative and less presumptive, less direct an in so doing, more polite.

Brown and Levinson's account contributes much to our understanding of linguistic politeness. However, there are problems with their analysis. For example, some researchers have questioned their presentation of 'face' as the motivation for politeness, citing evidence that notions of face and how it is maintained vary from culture to culture (Ide 1989; Matsumoto 1988; Matsumoto 1989). As another example that is important to the currents study, Brown and Levinson attribute the existence of honorifics in various languages to strategic uses of language that over time became fossilized. Other researchers have pointed out that despite such origins, honorifics tend to reflect what Ide (1989), using Japanese as an example, has termed 'discernment' (Jpn: *wakimae*) – that is, a rather passive matching of specific and graded honorific forms with various individuals (as either referent or addressee) based upon social norms for language use. Thus, although it is clear that Brown and Levinson's Universal Politeness Principles convincingly do much to explain linguistic politeness, it generally focuses on only one aspect of it (as strategic language use), which happens to form the major part of politeness in quite a few (mostly European)

languages. Following Ide (1993) and Turner (1996), a distinction must be made then between what will be called instrumental politeness and normative politeness. The former refers to the strategic use of language, in particular, illocutionary hedges, as described by Brown and Levinson, while the latter refers to politeness forms such as honorifics which are based on etiquette, social norms, and the like.

Politeness in English and Japanese

This paper accepts, in a general sense, Brown and Levinson's assertion that linguistic politeness is a universal phenomenon. That is to say, we begin by stating that politeness is a feature of both the English and Japanese languages. At first glance it would seem that the task of comparison here is rather straightforward. Most accounts of politeness in Japanese usually focus exclusively on the language's honorific system (*keigo*), which includes both referent (subject and object) honorifics and addressee honorifics.[2] The following are a few examples of Japanese honorifics.

(18) Sikai ga happyoosya ni memo wo watasita. (neutral)[3]
Chairperson NOM presenter DAT note ACC transfer. Past/Nonpolite
'The chairperson handed the presenter a note.'

(19) SeNsei ga seito ni hoN wo o-watasi ni natta. (SH)
Teacher NOM student DAT book ACC HON transfer. CONT ADV become. Past/Plain
'The teacher honorably handed the student a book.'

(20) Seito ga seNsei ni hoN wo o-watasi sita. (OH)
Student NOM teacher DAT book ACC HON transfer. CONT do. Past/Nonpolite
'The student humbly handed the teacher a book.'

(21) Sikai ga happyoosya ni memo wo watasimasita. (AH)
Chairperson NOM presenter DAT note ACC transfer. Past/Polite
'The chairperson handed the presenter a note.'

Example (18) is a sentence which contains no honorific forms and may be considered neutral. Examples (19) and (20) are sentences containing referent honorifics which linguistically elevate the syntactic subject or object of each respectively (in both sentences *sensei* 'teacher'). Example (21) semantically has the exact same meaning as (18), but contains the addressee honorific morpheme-*mas*. Frequently addressee honorifics are described as simple politeness toward the listener. Both referent and addressee honorifics may be combined, as in the following examples.

(22) SeNsei ga seito ni hoN wo o-watasi ni narimasita.
Teacher SUB student DAT book OBJ HON transfer. CONT ADV become. Past/Polite
'The teacher honorably handed the student a book.'

(23) Itu amerika kara o-kaeri ni narimasita ka.
When America from HON return. CONT ADV become. Past/Polite
'When did (you) return from America?'

In (24) the subject-honorific referent and addressee-honorific referent are not the same person, while in (25) both the subject-honorific referent and addressee-honorific referent are the same.

As we saw above, the use of honorifics in Japanese is most often triggered by culturally specific factors related to etiquette and rather explicit social norms. Generally speaking, referents and addressees of greater power, social status, age, and less familiarity are usually elevated through the use of honorifics. While no longer mandatory, honorifics are still ideally considered to be obligatory. Sanada (1993) has shown that, at least in one rural community, the use of honorific forms is largely a passive process where most speakers uniformly match specific honorific verbs and other items with various individuals of different levels of perceived status in the community. Failure to use honorifics correctly or appropriately usually results in negative evaluation. Based upon the extensive honorific system (?) in Japanese and the focus it has received in the literature, we would naturally be quick to classify the language as one relying mostly on expressions of normative politeness. As we will see below, though, such a classification is somewhat problematic.

While Japanese does have an extensive set of honorifics, English, appears to lack anything comparable. Instead, we see that linguistic politeness in English is largely undertaken in the manner described by Brown and Levinson. In other words, politeness in English may be direct and imposing. As the following examples show, the major forms used in English in doing so include the interrogative, negative, hypothetical, potential, in addition to other various imposition-minimizing hedge items and strategies.

(24) Open the window. (command; no politeness strategy)
(25) Will you open the window? (interrogative)
(26) Won't you open the window? (negative, interrogative)
(27) Would you open the window? (hypothetical, interrogative)
(28) Can you open the window? (potential, interrogative)
(29) Could you open the window? (potential, hypothetical, interrogative)
(30) I'm sorry, but would you mind opening the window for just a moment? (apology, hypothetical, imposition minimizing item 'just a moment')

While it is difficult to make the case that any one form is more 'polite' than others, utterances that combine more than one form, and other items such as apologies [for example, (29) and (30)], are generally perceived to be more polite, most likely because they are the least direct. Naturally, we would be perceived to be more polite when we change the speech act from a demand or request to one seeking the hearer's permission, as in the following example.

(31) I'm sorry, would it be all right if I opened the window?

The degree of politeness and the particular forms used to achieve this will be determined by the speaker through an evaluation (conscious or unconscious) of several factors, including the social distance between him/herself and the hearer(s), the relative power relationship, and the degree of imposition of a particular utterance, although other factors may also influence choices that lie outside Brown and Levinson's equation (for example, the speaker's own presentational desire based on his/her self image).

Based upon the above discussion, we might simply classify Japanese as a language which relies

primarily on normative politeness through the use of honorifics, while English may be classified as a language that engages in instrumental politeness, through linguistic hedges and other strategic uses of language. It is clear, however, that the above description is a rather simplistic one as seen in the following examples.

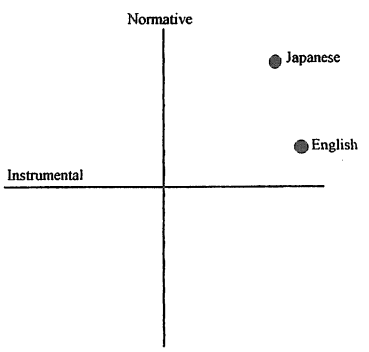
(32) Sumimasen ga, sukosi no aida dake mado wo akete mo
End. NEG/Nonpast/Polite but little GEN while only window ACC open. CONT even
ii (yorosii) desyoo ka
good (good. HON) copula.
PRESUM/Nonpast/Polite. Q.
Excuse me, but would it be all right if I opened the window for just a little while?

(33) Is professor Williams available, please? (said, for example, on the telephone)

Given examples (32) and (33), it is clear then that politeness in Japanese does not consist solely of the use of normative honorifics, nor does English exclusively involve itself with instrumental/strategic uses of language in expressing politeness. Example (32) is the Japanese counterpart to example (17) illustrating the use of linguistic hedges in a typical English sentence. As we can see, its Japanese counterpart employs several of the very same 'strategies' (namely, an apology, use of interrogative, and use of expressions such as 'sukosi no aida' and 'dake') in an attempt to minimize the perceived imposition to the hearer. In (33) we have an example of a more normative use of language to indicate politeness directed toward the referent by use of the title 'professor'. Generally, the use of titles (Mr., Mrs., president, professor, etc.) in English reflects a more normative conception of politeness.

Thus, perhaps a better way of viewing the two languages in relation to each is to place them on a continuum, with normative and instrumental politeness on either end. However, this neglects the fact that in terms of the use of instrumental politeness, the two languages do not really differ to any large degree based upon the example in (32). Rather, we must consider normative politeness to be a separate dimension altogether. This is clear in (33) above, where in addition to strategic hedges normative honorifics may be simultaneously employed, as indicated in parentheses with *yorosii*, an addressee honorific form of the adjective 'good'. Thus we may conceive of linguistic politeness along normative and instrumental axes, as illustrated in Fig.(1).

Fig. (1)—Normative and Instrumental Politeness in Japanese and English



While Japanese possesses an extensive honorific system which places it high on the normative politeness axis in Fig. (1), its speakers also engage in a large degree of instrumental politeness strategies, characterized largely by the use of linguistic hedges, which also places it rather far to the right on the instrumental politeness axis. By comparison, linguistic politeness in English is usually characterized as being exclusively instrumental and thus we may place it further to the right on the instrumental politeness axis than Japanese. It is clear, however, that there are normative elements in English politeness as well, as indicated in Fig. (1), though nowhere near the extent of Japanese normative politeness that exists in Japanese honorifics. As we can see then, politeness in both languages include both normative and instrumental language uses, although they do differ by degree to which each is employed.

Implications for Language Teaching and Learning

In light of the above discussion of politeness in both Japanese and English, we must finally ask of what use this might be to foreign language instructors and learners. It is our hope to have presented both instructor and learner a clearer picture of linguistic politeness in each language; that there are differences, but also similarities between the two that may help to understand how politeness is expressed in each language. With a better understanding, it is believed that the foreign language instructor may better help students, and in turn, the students better help themselves, in the process of acquiring pragmatic competence, an essential element of communicative competence. All too often language learners, even at advanced levels, are led to believe that, for example, in Japanese politeness consists exclusively of the use of honorifics, or, that in English, politeness consists entirely of the use of certain 'polite' words such as 'please'. Clearly, politeness is a much more complicated phenomenon and requires sufficient attention in the foreign language classroom.

From the intermediate level onward, the use of authentic materials containing naturally occurring language is recommended for using as instructional materials and models. In the absence of access to native speakers, the use of video (from target language movies and television shows) and audio (taken, for example, from target language radio broadcast) is preferred. Furthermore, over time students should be exposed to a wide range of speech acts and interactional situations, covering not only the most polite uses of language, but also the most casual as well.

Any number of instructional strategies and class exercises may be used in order to teach different aspects of politeness in the target language. Tanaka (1997) recommends the use of investigation activities followed by journal writing in which students, through their interaction with and questioning of native target language speakers, then make hypotheses regarding politeness in the target language which are to be tested and reformulated. According to Tanaka, when access to native target language speakers is not possible, similar exercises may be performed using movies and other video-taped materials.

The use of model dialogues (ideally obtained from authentic material) is still a common practice in foreign language classes. Very often, students memorize the lines of a particular character, or occasionally the entire dialogue, which they then recite in class when instructed to do so. Although not without value, such exercises tend to be rather mechanical and lacking of true communicative content since it is based on memorization. Alternatives to the memorization of dialogues include "Talk and Listen" exercises where a dialogue is divided into parts, with the different parts written on separate cards or pieces of paper (Matreyek 1983: 152). Without knowing the lines of the other participants, the student is forced to listen

and then respond to others who are speaking (of course, students must understand the situation, participants, their feelings and attitudes, etc., in order to undertake such an activity).

The use of model dialogues, however, is most effective when it is combined with a communicative follow-up activity. Role-playing and skit activities have proved to be particularly effective activities, provided there is sufficient support from the instructor for the exercises. For example, students first practice with a model dialogue with a partner or in groups. Then they are each given a card with the setting, their role, description of other participant(s), and the type of activity they are to undertake with broad guides as to what they should say. Alternatively, students may create their own dialogue/skit which they may then perform. This last activity may be transformed into a larger group or class project in the form of a longer play. Depending on the activity, the video-taping of the activity for later reflection and evaluation by the students might be a useful later follow-up activity. As Matreyek (1993) points out, however, it may take some time before students begin to feel comfortable with activities such as this.

The above activities, of course, may be used to teach any aspect of a target language, not just politeness. However, each may be adapted to focus on politeness, using authentic materials as models. As was stated in the introduction to this paper, the acquisition of pragmatic competence (as an essential component of communicative competence) in a target language should be an important goal in the foreign language classroom, given the importance placed on politeness in language communities and that competence usually often takes quite a long time to achieve. Instructors must therefore be aware of and understand both the nature of politeness in both the native and target language in order to best design classroom activities which will aid students in beginning to acquire pragmatic competence in the target language.

References

Brown, P. and Levinson, S. C. 1978. "Universals in Language Usage: Politeness Phenomena". In *Questions and Politeness*, ed. by E. Goody, pp. 56-289. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

_____. 1987. *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Canale, M. and Swain, M. 1980. "Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing." In *Applied Linguistics* 1, pp. 1-47.

Chomsky, N. 1965. *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax.* Cambridge: M.I.T. Press.

Fraser, B. 1990. "Perspectives on Politeness." In *Journal of Pragmatics* 14, pp. 219-236.

Goffman, E. 1967. *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face to Face Behavior.* Garden City, N. Y.:Doubleday.

Grice, H. P. 1975. "Logic and Conversation" (originally unpublished paper, 1967). Later published in *Syntax and Semantics, Vol. 3: Speech Acts*, ed. by Peter Cole and Jerry Morgan, pp. 41-58. New York: Academic Press.

Hymes, D. 1974. "On Communicative Competence." In *Sociolinguistics,* ed. by J. B. Pride and J. Holmes, pp. 269-293. Middlesex (England): Penguin Education.

Ide, S. 1989. "Formal Forms and Discernment: Two neglected Aspects of Universals of Linguistic Politeness." In *Multilingua* 8/2-3, pp. 223-248.

_____. ed. 1993. *Special Issue: Linguistic Politeness III. Multilingua* 12, 1.

Lakoff, G. 1972. "Hedges: A Study in Meaning Criteria and the Logic of Fuzzy Concepts." In *Papers from the Eighth Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistics Society,* pp. 183-228. Chicago.

Matreyek, W. 1983. *Communicating in English: Examples and Models 1-Functions.* New York: Pergamon

Press.

Matsumoto, Y. 1988. "Reexamination of the Universality of Face: Politeness Phenomena in Japanese. In *Journal of Pragmatics* 12/4, pp. 403-426.

_____. 1989. "Politeness and Conversational Universals-Observations from Japanese. In *Multilingua* 8 /2-3, pp. 207-221.

Sanada, S. 1993. "The Dynamics of Honorific Behavior in a Rural Community in Japan." In *Multilingua* 12/1, pp. 81-94.

Shibatani, Masayoshi. 1990. *The Languages of Japan.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tanaka, K. 1997. "Developing Pragmatic Competence: A Learners-as-Researchers Approach." In *TESOL Journal* 6/3, pp. 14-18.

Thomas, J. 1983. "Cross-cultural Pragmatic Failure." In *Applied Linguistics* 4, pp. 91-112.

Turner, K. 1996. "The Principal Principles of Pragmatic Inference: Politeness." In *Language Teaching* 29/1, pp. 1-13.

Notes

1 The authors are grateful to Akira Yamamoto, departments of Linguistics and Anthropology, University of Kansas, for his comments on and many suggestions for earlier drafts of this paper.

2 Traditionally, Japanese scholars have divided honorifics into four categories: *sonkeigo* ('respect language'), *kenzyoogo* ('humble language'), *teineigo* ('polite language'), and *bikago* ('beautified language'). In the present discussion, referent honorifics refers to the Japanese *sonkeigo* and *kenzyoogo*, or subject and object honorifics, while addressee honorifics refers to the Japanese *teineigo*. Of the four categories, *bikago* is the least significant and is therefore left out of the current discussion.

3 The following abbreviations are used in this paper: Nom=nominative case particle; DAT=dative case particle; ACC=accusative case particle; HON=honorific prefix; CONT=continuative; NEG=negative; PRESUM=presumptive; Q=interrogative; SH=subject honorifics; OH=object honorifics; AH=addressee honorifics.