Pragmatics Matters

Issue 55, Summer 2020

語用論事報

2020 年夏第 55 号

JALT Pragmatics SIG Newsletter

全国語学教育学会　語用論部会　ニュースレター

Contents

From the interim editor

I would like to begin with an apology. No, this is not a culturally Japanese-like opening—it is an <u>actual</u> apology for our newsletter being late. I know, to mitigate an apology, it is sometimes followed by an excuse or account. Yes, okay, we can blame the Corona virus. Here's the account: Our previous newsletter editor, John Campbell-Larsen stepped down last year, and with everyone being super busy, I suggested "a newsletter team," with members taking turns acting as editor. It was a great idea….but busy schedules intervened…health issues arose….in the end, it didn't work. So, I have stepped in as interim editor for this issue. (しょうがない).

Before continuing, I speak for everyone in expressing our gratitude to John for five years as our editor. Thank you, John!

COVID-19 has had a silver lining. As a SIG, our members are scattered all over Japan, and thus members either got together only at regional face-to-face sessions or at the PanSIG or the annual JALT conference. Now, however, we can meet online, and with the publication of our latest book, *Pragmatics Undercover*, two of the editors, Jim Ronald and Jerry Talandis, Jr. and one of our Program chairs, Yosuke Ogawa will host a Book Launch zoom meeting on Sunday, July 26, 2020. This is the first time to hold a Pragmatics event online.

I would like to encourage members to be creative and propose other pragmatics-related events. Suggestions are welcome. The newsletter also welcomes articles, book reviews, personal musings, classroom suggestions, etc…Oh, BTW, are there any volunteers to be interim newsletter editor? Let me know.

Donna Fujimoto

Arguing the case for pragmatics as an explanation for the transfer of Japanese turn-taking in English group talk

Perhaps like some of you, I have noticed that my Japanese students tend to take turns in English discussions quite differently to how native speakers of English do. In a 2018 paper, I analysed the phenomenon as part of a comparison between elicited meetings performed by Japanese company employees (in English) and the same scenarios performed by native speakers of English (Mergel & Williamson, 2018). In the paper, I used a business communication concept – *discursive leadership* (Fairhurst, 2008) – to compare different features of turn-taking along with different features of discourse framing (topic management) and different features of conflict resolution.

I concluded that there were very different cross-cultural meeting styles at work. I adopted from Aritz and Walker (2014) the term *collaborative* discursive leadership for the native speaker style, and *cooperative* discursive leadership for the Japanese style (please see my paper for a detailed comparative analysis, Williamson, 2019). Tsuchiya (2016) also used the term *cooperative* to describe how an English discussion group made up of three Japanese students performed turn-taking. She found that a female-dominated ELF group of Japanese, Venezuelan and Korean students also preferred this style, but an all-male ELF group of Japanese and Libyan students did not. Tsuchiya labelled this different style *intrusive* turn-taking.

Like me, Tsuchiya found two distinct styles of turn-taking. What's more, the two styles we had identified resemble each other. In my study, the Japanese *cooperative* meetings featured 'significant pauses between turns, (with few) interruptions' and their turns were more often than not 'allocated by (the) chair in an egalitarian order'. There are similarities to Tsuchiya's *cooperative* turn-taking floor where turn grabs are also rare and interruptions only made to help co-construct, to clarify, or to provide encouraging backchannel tokens. In my study, turns in *collaborative* meetings tended to be 'allocated by individual initiative' and featured much 'overlapping and interrupting'. Tsuchiya's *intrusive* discussions also featured frequent intra-turn interruptions and also with turns the function of which was either topic change or disagreement.

From these and other studies, it is obvious that there are (at least) two distinct styles of turn-taking in group discussions. Of particular significance to English teaching in Japan, is that there are inherent conflicts across the style preferred by Japanese English speakers and that of some other groups (including L1 English speakers). What this means is that without a degree of accommodation, these two groups may find it difficult to talk to each other. ELF researchers frequently report how pragmatic differences such as turn-

taking are negotiated *in situ* (e.g. Ehrenreich, 2016; Tsuchiya, 2016), and Tsuchiya's Japanese-Libyan discussion group would seem to bear this out. The Japanese participant, she reports, adapted his turn-taking behaviour producing more mid-turn interruptions to converge with the behaviour of his Libyan partners. Yet, evidence from corporate training needs analyses suggests that for many Japanese BELF (English as a business lingua franca) users, this accommodation is far from easy. Table 1 shows some trainee comments from aggregated needs analyses carried out at a large Japanese engineering and construction corporation that bear this out.

Table 1. Turn-taking issues in English meetings

1	I can't work out when they've stopped speaking and so I can't judge when to speak 間が読みにくい
2	I can't work out when is an appropriate time to start speaking 話しを挟むタイミングが分かりづらい
3	It's hard to get the timing right of when to speak 発話をするタイミング
4	It's difficult to work out when it's okay to start speaking 話し始めるタイミング
5	It's difficult to work out when to speak 話すタイミングが難しい
6	I can't participate (grab a turn) in talk when it's between native speakers. The gaps are too short (I can't 'get in') ネイティブ間の会話に入り込めない（間が短い）

In 2018, an article was published in *The Language Teacher* that explained this difficulty in terms of language structure (Young, 2018). The author, Davey Young, argues that word order differences across English and Japanese means that the function (pragmatic force) of English utterances is decipherable to its listeners comparatively earlier than in similar Japanese utterances. For example, question words appearing at the beginning of English sentences give English speakers an early warning that an answer will soon be required.

In contrast, it is not until the end of a sentence that Japanese listeners are likely to get confirmation that they are listening to a question. It is this linguistic feature of English, Young argues, that allows its fluent speakers to accurately predict both when and how to take up the floor more easily than Japanese, resulting in discourse with lots of overlaps and minimal intervals. In English discourse, Japanese suffer from being less able to make such predictions and therefore face challenges in making appropriate interruptions.

Young's argument, coherent though it was, left out pragmatics as an explanatory factor. This seemed to me to be a crucial omission for the following reason. Sociopragmatic cultural norms, such as those related to turn-taking, reflect the ways cultures manage face-risk. Doing things differently risks face loss. In other words, conventions of turn-taking are politeness conventions and breaking them is akin to behaving impolitely. To me, this explains why students have such 'problems' with *collaborative/intrusive* turn-taking. Putting aside the question of whether or not they *can* interrupt, it is likely that they *prefer not to*. It is extremely difficult to behave in a way that goes against one's politeness instincts, as I found in 10 plus years of teaching meetings in corporate training contexts. Trainees often agreed with native English-speaking instructors' demands for more *collaborative/intrusive* turn-taking but almost never actually did it in practice meetings with their company colleagues.

I put my counter-argument in a response article and submitted it to *The Language Teacher* soon after Young's original article came out. Eight months later, it appeared in the magazine (Williamson, 2019). To my relief, Young proved magnanimous and wrote me an appreciative email thanking me for my additional perspective. Unfortunately, due to me neglecting to check one of my university email accounts, I only noticed he had sent it recently. Sorry, I wasn't intentionally ignoring you! I am well aware that academic dialogues can be combative. Reputations are enhanced (and diminished) in the process. It was not my intention to seek a fight, but to further the process of research. This experience reminded me that pragmatics is not a common approach to analysis outside dedicated forums like the Pragmatics SIG, yet, I continue to believe that the notion of sociopragmatics offers a good explanation for many of the language use issues that English teachers struggle with in Japan. I believe that arguing this case is therefore important.

As well as the Pragmatics SIG, I am a member of the Business Communication SIG. My teaching background is business training, where I worked for over 10 years (and still sometimes do). Despite now working in university contexts, the business use of English in Japan still informs my approach to research and teaching. This nowadays means BELF (Business English as a Lingua Franca). BELF is how the majority of

university students are going to need English in the future. It is also where they will need English most crucially, and therefore it is why English is such a focus of public education in Japan. The stakes are high in business in ways that they are not on a five-day vacation to America. The consequences of not being able to influence a meeting with foreign partners, for example, can be significant, financially, and otherwise. There are obviously pragmatic areas of BELF that Japanese struggle with, but there is very little research revealing why. I want to know, and I also want to know how teachers can help. This is the basis of my research and my area of interest.

If, like me, you share this interest, there are occasionally Japan-related articles published in *The International Journal of Business Communication*, the *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca* and the *Journal of English for Specific Purposes* as well as JALT publications. Unfortunately, each tends to use slightly different terminology and refer to a slightly different set of literature despite the fact that the phenomena being discussed are essentially the same. Such is life. I am interested particularly in sociopragmatic acts which seem to be challenging for Japanese. As well as meeting participation, this includes business (strategic) small talk and other aspects of rapport management. I am also beginning to study rhetoric styles in the context of presentations. I am always looking for likeminded souls. If that is you, why not contact me and who knows, we might find a joint project to pursue.

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Teaching Positive and Negative Politeness

I teach a one-semester English medium class on pragmatics. One of the topics that I discuss is Politeness Theory, particularly the idea of positive and negative politeness in relation to requests. This is a concept that my Japanese students have considerable difficulty with, but I've found a useful way to teach the concept. In this article, I will briefly summarize the concept of positive and negative politeness and then introduce the activity I have successfully used to make it clear to students.

Requests are difficult to make because when the speaker (S) makes a request, they are asking the hearer (H) to do something that benefits S, and which may cost H in time, effort, money, etc. Therefore, S needs to mitigate a request, that is, to make the request "softer" and less offensive.

In order to understand why requests are difficult and how S mitigates that difficulty, Brown and Levinson (1978) proposed Politeness Theory, which is based on Goffman's (1955) concept of face, which has to do with our public self-image, our social identity. Brown and Levinson proposed two types of face, positive face and negative face. Positive face is the desire to be liked, to be well thought of, and negative face is the desire not to be imposed on by other people, to be autonomous. S needs to recognize that H has these desires, and part of social interaction involves cooperation among the participants to support each other's positive and negative face. Ideally, S tries to show others that he/she likes them, or at least avoids appearing to dislike them, as well as to try to avoid

imposing on others.

When S says something threatening to H's desire to be liked or to their desire to be unimposed on, this is called a face-threatening act (FTA). For example, a request is a threat to negative face, because it might result in being imposed on, while a refusal is a threat to positive face, because H might conclude that if S liked her, she would agree to the request.

One way to mitigate the face threat in a request is through either positive or negative politeness. In positive politeness, S uses strategies that recognize H's desire to be liked and appreciated and confirm that S and H are friendly with each other and part of the same group. Positive politeness strategies include:

1) noticing and attending to H (for example, by complimenting H)
2) exaggerating interest in, approval of, or sympathy for H
3) using in-group identity markers (for example, forms of address such as calling a person by their first name or a nickname; using jargon or slang)
4) seeking agreement and avoiding disagreement
5) presupposing or asserting common ground
6) joking
7) offering or promising
8) being optimistic (i.e., express confidence that H will agree to the request)

In negative politeness, S uses strategies that recognize H's desire to be unimposed on; H acknowledges the imposition and the attempt to "soften" it. Negative politeness tacitly acknowledges that S and H are not part of the same group, and H does not have an obligation to S. These strategies include:

1) not assuming that the request will be agreed to (for example, by asking permission "Could I ask you to do something for me?")
2) using a question form
3) apologizing ("I'm sorry to bother you, but…")
4) indicating reluctance to make the request ("I'm afraid I need some help…", "I hate to ask you this, but…")
5) minimizing the imposition ("a small favor;" "help me for just a minute")
6) giving an overwhelming reason (i.e., showing how very much you need what you are requesting)
7) being conventionally indirect (Could you…?)
8) being pessimistic (You couldn't lend me 10,000 yen, could you?)

9) not pressuring the other person; offer something in return (If you'll _____, then I'll _____.)

When I first taught Politeness Theory, I felt that students had a great deal of difficulty understanding the concepts of positive and negative politeness. However, I found a scene from the movie *You've Got Mail,* referred to as the "supermarket scene," in which one character uses negative politeness and another character uses positive politeness for the same request. I've used that scene in my classes, having students identify which character is using negative politeness and which is using positive politeness. They must also identify the specific type of strategy, and it helps students understand the concepts of positive and negative politeness and how they are used.

When I teach about Politeness Theory, I go over the above (along with some other context) and then have the students watch the supermarket scene along with the transcript below. (You can find this scene by entering the keywords "You've Got Mail supermarket scene" in YouTube search. It is less than two minutes long.) I put a QR code on the handout so students can find it easily on their own cell phones or show it to all students on a large screen. Students then work together in groups to identify which character uses which type of politeness as well as the strategies for each type.

Below is the handout that I use. I have entered my answers in red, though different interpretations are possible.

<div align="center">

You've Got Mail – Positive and Negative Politeness

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Use what you learned about positive and negative politeness to evaluate the following conversation. Who uses more positive politeness? Who uses more negative politeness? What specific strategies are used?

[Kathleen uses negative politeness; Joe uses positive politeness.]

Kathleen is shopping and a cashier has just finished adding up her purchases.

Cashier: $72.27.

(*Kathleen holds out a credit card.*)

Cashier: This is a cash-only line. Cash only.

Kathleen: Oh, my God. I just have a credit card. I'm sorry. [Apologizing] Is that okay? [asking permission (not assuming)]

Customer 1:   No, it's not okay. There's a sign.

Kathleen: I'm sorry. I'm very sorry. [Apologizing] I never do this. [Indicating reluctance] But I ask you to make an exception in this one case. [Minimizing imposition ("in this one case")]

Customer 1:   You have no cash? She has no cash.

Customer 2:   No, she has no cash.

Customer 3:   Get on another line, lady.

Kathleen: I have a dollar. That's all I have. I have a dollar. One dollar. [Giving overwhelming reasons] Is there anything you can do? [Not assuming; using a question]

Joe, an acquaintance of Kathleen's, comes up to her. He offers her cash, but when she refuses, he turns to the cashier.

Joe: Rose. That is a great name. Rose. [Noticing and attending to H; exaggerating interest in H; complimenting H] This is Kathleen. I'm Joe. [Using in-group identity markers (first names)] This is a credit card machine. Happy Thanksgiving. It's your turn to say "Happy Thanksgiving" back. [Establishing common ground; involving H]

Cashier: Happy Thanksgiving back.

Joe: Knock, knock.

Cashier: Who's there?

Joe: Orange.

Cashier: Orange who?

Joe: Orange you going to give us a break by zipping this credit card through the credit card machine? [Joking; involving both S and H in the activity (through the joke)] Come on. You can do it. Zip, zip. There you go. [Being optimistic]

OMG. I just have a credit card.

(Note: It will probably be necessary to explain knock-knock jokes. If you are not familiar with them, there is an explanation at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knock-knock_joke.)

After discussing the answers with students, you can follow up by having the students do role plays, write dialogues, etc.

Something I always warn students about is their choice of positive or negative politeness. If positive politeness is used with a person who does not consider themselves a friend or a part of your group, they might be offended. Calling a person by their first name or nickname, for example, may backfire if that is not a form of their name that they

normally use. Similarly, H might be offended if S expresses optimism or assumes that H will agree to the request. Japanese students often have the idea that English does not have politeness or that English speakers are very informal, so they may use positive politeness without realizing that, in a particular context, it might be offensive. Conversely, using negative politeness, especially if S is overly polite, with a close friend or for a small request may sound sarcastic and therefore be offensive.

In order to communicate competently, it is important for learners of English to gain an understanding of politeness in English. By providing concrete examples of positive and negative politeness in context, this activity can help students develop an understanding of this aspect of politeness.

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Pragmatics Undercover: Now in 3D
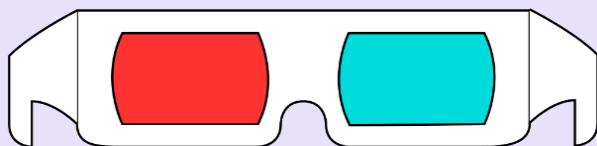
Last November at the annual JALT Conference in Nagoya, I reconnected with the Pragmatics SIG after many years being out of the loop. I went to the Forum, where some of the contributors to the new volume *Pragmatics Undercover* demonstrated their lesson plans. The idea of *Pragmatics Undercover* is that no matter what textbook we use, whether by choice or by mandate, teachers can use a pragmatics perspective to

enhance the nuance and authenticity of their textbook lessons and make them more relevant and useful for learners.

The volume's contributors build upon the foundations within their own textbooks; in turn, during the forum, I was inspired to build upon the ideas presented – in this case, by taking an idea up off the page and applying it in 3-dimensional space. Amir Feroze and Yuki Mizutani (2020) began the Pragmatics SIG Forum by showing how they elaborated on a textbook lesson about making plans. They took a simple three-turn exchange (invite – accept or reject – respond) from their textbook and developed it into a fuller, more realistic interaction by adding greetings and closings, negotiation of details (time and place), and ways of softening a rejection. They used a flow chart to present this more complex interaction to students on a handout. This chart represents the stages, choices and dependencies of this interaction, and includes useful expressions for each stage.

Seeing this clear visual presentation, I imagined students could easily follow the interactions, taking turns in pairs reading their parts to each other, getting more familiar with the phrases, and starting to feel how much more natural this interaction is over the simpler one presented in their books. Feroze and Mizutani rounded out their activity with additional roleplay situations and an easy-to-use self-assessment form.

My inspiration had less to do with pragmatics itself, and more about classroom management and task design, inspired by lessons from brain science. (Like many JALT members, I have joined different SIGs – TBLT and the BRAIN SIG, for example – to round out my professional life.)

Seeing the wonderful potential of the Feroze and Mizutani activity, I asked myself the question which I ask about almost any activity: Would it help to get students out of their seats to practice this? While not every activity is better done standing up, it occurred to me that Feroze and Mizutani's flow chart looked like a top-down view of a classroom. I imagined students in pairs, moving physically through the room as they move through the interaction, with the sections of the flowchart blown up and posted on the wall or placed on a desk to mark each area of the room.
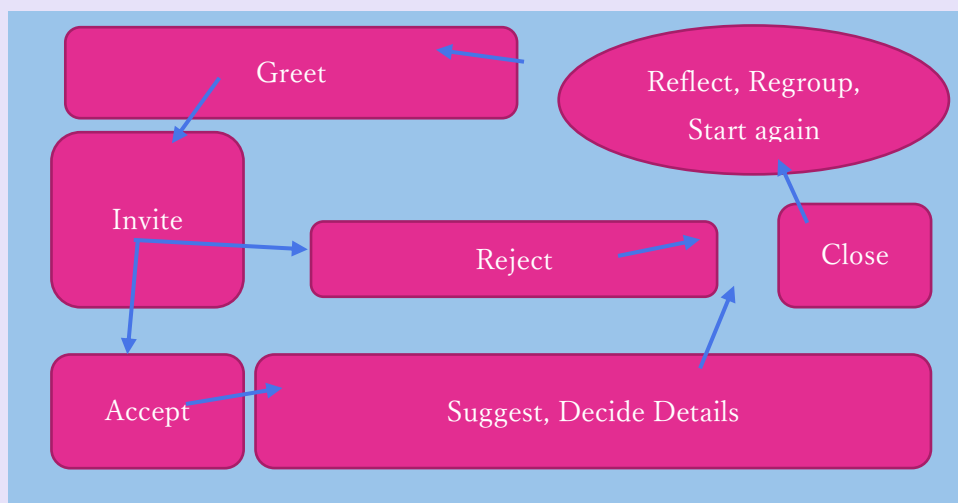
A Classroom in 3D, based on the flowchart handout from <u>Pragmatics Undercover</u> -- Making Plans by Feroze & Mizutani (2020).

Including the phrases for each stage would allow students to leave their own handouts behind; and the teacher could let students know that they'd be removing the phrases at the end, to give students incentive to commit them to memory. Once they had memorized the phrases after several rounds (5 or so minutes), students would be given the schedule from Feroze and Mizutani with busy and free times and instructed to complete the schedule with a variety of meetings with friends, a naturalistic task which presents a manageable layer of challenge through its constraints. Students get equal practice with accepting and rejecting invitations as their schedules gradually fill up with plans. Finally, to round out the task, they can use the simple CEFR-based self-assessment form also provided in the activity.

   Practicing this way "in 3D" can bring several benefits to learners and teachers. Physical movement increases blood oxygen levels to the brain, which boosts cognition and memory (Conyers & Wilson, 2015). If not overused, this technique can bring novelty to a lesson, which assists with memory and learning (Krokus, Plaisant, & Varshney, 2019). Activating spatial orientation has long been used to assist memory as well (Rieser, 1999). Getting students' eyes up off of the page and into the interaction incentivizes deeper processing, and may even help them connect with the emotion of the interaction. Teachers can place themselves around the room to remind students to express these emotions through their intonation. This also gives teachers a richer way to monitor students' progression through the interaction, and see where students need more help.

   I admit that I have not had a chance to try this with a class of my own, so it may take some iterations to make it run smoothly. But the principle here is that as we

complexify the interactions to make them more pragmatically relevant, we may want to use classroom techniques that can assist students with their memory and recall.

by Mary Christianson

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Izakaya pragmatics: A beginning

This report outlines the early stages of an ongoing project, which involves the analysis of the socio-pragmatic elements of *izakayas* in Japan. An *izakaya* is "an informal Japanese pub that provides spaces for after-work alcohol consumption" (Futamura & Sugiyama, 2018, p. 102). Although *izakayas* are ubiquitous in Japan, there is limited work in this area, particularly from pragmatic and sociolinguistic perspectives. The information reported on here comes from a paper presented at the 1st Symposium on East Asian Pragmatics in Dalian, China in September 2019. In this paper, I focused on the sociocultural and pragmatic significance of the *izakaya* in a Japanese context. In this report I discuss some of the pragmatic elements of an *izakaya* in relation to previous studies.

The data for this study derives from a Japanese drama called, 深夜食堂 *Shin'ya Shokudō* ('Midnight Diner'). Episodes from season 1 of this drama were approximately 30 minutes in length. In cinematic terms, the genre of the drama reflects "naturalism", which depicts mundane experiences of people which may or may not develop into a complete plot, with superficial and arbitrary sequences of events. Arguments for and against this type of data have been made in previous studies. For example, Barke (2010) noted that dramas often "represent ideological notions regarding verbal behaviour held by script writers and their audiences" (p. 461). This refers to the fact that the data are not "natural speech" but rather expected linguistic forms situated in a particular cultural and social milieu. In addition, Liu and Allen (2014) also noted that "dramas are required to exhibit up-to-date characteristics of language use and reflect real situations in people's daily life in the society" (p. 655). This is so that dramas are successful and appeal to as many people as possible.

I transcribed and analysed all scenes of the drama that took place in the *izakaya*. Once transcribed, I focused on the owner ("Master") of the *izakaya* and analysed his interactions with his customers. By focusing on the Master, I found two significant findings. Firstly, while he is the main character of the drama, his interactions with his customers are limited. The analysis showed that the Master did not verbally perform often. For each episode, the characters' turns were calculated to determine how many times each character spoke. (Note: A turn is "a time during which a single participant speaks, within a typical, orderly arrangement in which participants speak with minimal overlap and gap between them (Budevac, Arcidiacono & Baucal, 2017, p. 54.)) In total, the customers had 1,152 turns while the Master spoke only 222 turns. These results indicate that the Master's portion of interactional involvement was only 19.2% over the entire season of the show. We would assume that an *izakaya* Master would have more interactional involvement with his/her customers; however, upon analysis, the drama contradicts this assumption. One reason for this could be explained by *Ba Theory*. This refers to "a theory of contextual interdependence… which speaks directly to what we commonly call situatedness, indexicality, co-presence, and context" (Hanks et al., 2019, p. 64). That is, the context (Secondary *Ba*) of the *izakaya* establishes a set of expectations of behaviour, in which the Master and his customers adhere to. 'Secondary *Ba*' refers to the physical and embedded space in which communication takes place. This includes the when, where, why and who of a particular interaction (Hanks, et al., 2019).

Secondly, I analysed the way in which initial interactions (Haugh & Pillet-Shore, 2018), particularly service encounters, took place in the *izakaya* between the Master and his customers. These initial interactions unfold as a type of pragmatic ritual. During

pragmatic rituals (Kádár & Mills, 2013), particular linguistic forms are expected (i.e., polite forms between server and customer). However, examples from the data are slightly contradictory to these 'norms' in Japanese society. For example, the Master often responds to customers using the shortened polite form *irasshai* 'welcome' when they enter the *izakaya*.

Typically, during service encounters in Japanese restaurants and department stores, servers often use the polite phrase *irasshaimase* to welcome customers. While the utterance is in a polite form it is often shortened in the drama, possibly as a means to close the gap between speaker and addressee, demonstrating familiarity. This is because the customer does not perceive this as impolite and responds positively to the interaction. Similarly, casual forms are used when taking orders for food or beverages between customer and server. The following excerpt demonstrates both the casual form of 'welcome' as an example of an initial interaction, and an example of how the Master receipts the request for beverages as a service encounter in bold:

```
Miki (customer): ((enters the izakaya))
                 domo
                 'hello'
Master:          irasshai
                 'welcome'
Miki:            toriaez biru
                 'beer for starters'
Master:          aiyo
                 'sure'
```

Excerpt 1 Initial interaction and service encounter

Excerpt 1 demonstrates what Kádár and Mills (2013) described as ritualized performances and behaviours. These behaviours are a "mimetic performance, which re-enacts certain social or interpersonal values, and as such it facilitates interaction; ritual thus comes into operation as memes, by transmitting cultural/societal ideologies" (p.144). In other words, these behaviours are situated, and reveal a sociocultural layer of behaviour in the Japanese context. This is observed in both the Master's responses and the customer's request. Similarly, the notion of *tachiba* (立場 'the place where one stands') can also be applied to Excerpt 1. For example, Haugh and Obana (2011) explained,

> …*tachiba* can account for a broad range of normative politeness behaviours, not only in more formal situations where it is expected that honorifics will be used, but also in instances where the use of honorifics is not generally expected, such as in interactions between family or close friends of a similar age (p. 148).

In this case, *tachiba* can account for how polite language is manipulated in a casual manner, to exert both expected behaviour and demonstrate solidarity with and closeness to the customer (Liu & Allen, 2014).

The interactions that take place between Master and customer show how several pragmatic theories can account for the behaviours of the interactants. By breaking down the interactions into segments, it shows how the *izakaya* is a salient context in which to examine pragmatics in Japanese. One reason for why various theories can be applied to the behaviours exhibited in this drama is because several interactional actions between speakers and listener take place. For example, in this drama series, joking, discussing taboos, engaging in gossip, disagreeing with one another, and many other pragmatic events take place in this data set, making it worthwhile for linguistic study.

While the study discussed in this report highlights the significance of the *izakaya* as a focus of pragmatic and sociological inquiry, there are of course limitations. Namely, the data are not naturally occurring. However, future studies may capture naturally occurring data, and we can analyse it not only from a contextual perspective but also investigate the interactions between Master and customer sequentially (using conversation analysis). This may be challenging though, as consent might be difficult to obtain, due to the consumption of alcohol.

To conclude, this discussion has highlighted the significance of *izakaya*s as a focus of study in pragmatics. Several conversational behaviours may be explored by researchers by examining the activities of *izakaya* that are typically not present in other contexts (e.g., taboo, gossip, etc.). This researcher will continue to examine the *izakaya* from two perspectives: (1) the pragmatic performances and social activities by those who participate in these places using various frameworks, and (2) the socio-cultural significance of *izakaya*s in various regions of Japan.

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Pragmatics and the Age of COVID

In March of this year, I began to notice, not only my own behavior, but also those of others, when it came to greetings and leave takings. In the age of COVID-19, much has changed, and indeed our pragmatic behavior has also changed. Before we had to socially isolate ourselves, people just bowed or they had to touch elbows in greeting rather than hug or shake hands. Then when we could only meet digitally, what we said or wrote also changed. For example, at the beginning of an interview in a podcast (which I regularly listen to), the interviewer said, "How ARE you and how is your family?" Having listened to this interviewer for years, I noticed her greeting was different. She put stress on "are," and it was not usual for her to include the family in her customary greetings. Clearly this was a different greeting from the usual.

Searle (1969), Jucker (2017) and many others consider greetings and leave takings as speech acts which are generally formulaic, and they lack propositional content. Duranti (2009) strongly disagrees, as this conclusion trivializes this behavior, and it obscures important details which can be learned through closer ethnographic investigation. Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (1998) see greetings as socially important in establishing conversational relationships, and Firth (1972) and Goffman (1971) consider greetings to be about the continuity of relationships. Sacks and Schegloff (1973) made a significant contribution by identifying greetings and partings as adjacency pairs, where the sequential order is important: The first utterance (How ARE you and how is your family?) requires a second utterance, and this second utterance is dependent on the first.

Before COVID-19, the second utterance was more likely to be an automatic reflex ("I'm fine."), but now the person making the first utterance is expecting a truer emotional response. Thus, one of the qualitative differences in this new era seems to be expressions of concern for the welfare and well-being of one's conversational partner.

When we are unable to meet family, friends, and colleagues face-to-face for an extended period of time, our greeting is truly information seeking, and, in turn, the response tends to be longer than a perfunctory "Fine, thanks."

In the same way, our leave takings have also changed qualitatively. I kept a list of partings I have heard or read recently: "Stay well," "Be well," "Please stay safe!" "Stay healthy" "Take good care" "Until I can see you, be good." "I hope you are staying safe and well during this chaotic time." Yes, these are quite different from how we ended conversations pre-COVID. I truly hope all of you are healthy, sane and happy!

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Member Focus

This is a new feature where we will introduce a Pragmatics SIG member.

Benio Suzuki is an assistant professor at Utsunomiya University in Tochigi prefecture, and he has been a member of the Pragmatics SIG since 2018. He first got interested in pragmatics when he was doing his MA work at the University of Barcelona. "One day, I made an appointment for a consultation with a professor. When I entered her office, I said, "Thank you for your time." Apparently, the professor thought it was unusual, as she expected that this expression of gratitude should take place at the <u>end</u> of the meeting. This incident sparked a conversation about the differences between Japan and Spain regarding expected pragmatic behavior. "This moment is probably the starting point of my academic journey in researching L2 pragmatics."

Benio's first MA thesis from the University of Barcelona was on requests and refusals in L2/L3 English, and his second MA through Sophia University focused on how repair sequences and topics are managed in peer interaction. He said, "I am interested in how language learners in an EFL context acquire L2 pragmatics….I am trying to employ Conversation Analysis as a method to investigate L2 interactional competence. Currently, I am interested in how learner cognition about academic discussion affects interactional sequences in L2 English."

"Recently, I delivered a short faculty development workshop on pragmatics. In my current workplace, we usually use one movie to teach for two academic semesters, (not this year because of the coronavirus). I believe that using movies to teach English is efficient, but the teachers need some tips to raise students' pragmatic awareness. In the end, I learned that it is not easy for teachers to use ideas from pragmatics for their classes because they are not familiar with it. In the future, I do hope that I can help my colleagues use some ideas from pragmatics to teach."

Asked what his interests are aside from research, he answered, "I enjoy music, movies, traveling, and various foods around the world. I usually listen to Sekai no Owari and Sheena Ringo. I also look forward to the new movie titled, "Pain and Glory" directed by Pedro Almodóvar. When I stay at home, I always leave the TV on and watch concert videos to revive myself and feel the atmosphere."

Benio hopes to get to know other SIG members through online communication, where he looks forward to discussing L2 pragmatics research. He wants to develop workshops on pragmatics-related classroom activities which will help teachers who are not yet familiar with pragmatics.

Let's meet Benio online soon!

If you would like to introduce yourself or if you have another SIG member you would like to recommend for Member Focus*, please be sure to contact* Pragmatics Matters. *(fujimotodonna@gmail.com)*

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Great Gratitude
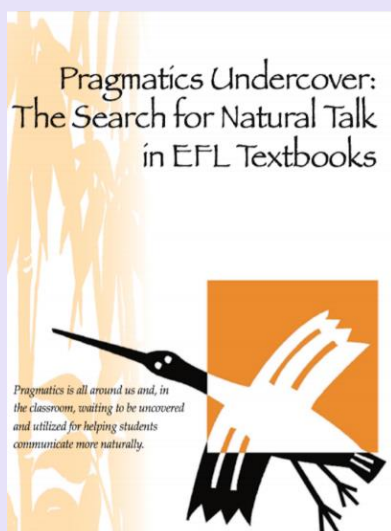
The latest book in the Pragmatic Resources series has been published! Titled, "**Pragmatics Undercover: The Search for Natural Talk in EFL Textbooks**," this book provides step-by-step classroom activities to help students speak more naturally. We wish to thank **Noriko Ishihara** and **Donna Fujimoto**, who were co-editors of this book. Special gratitude and kudos go to **Jerry Talandis Jr.** and **Jim Ronald**, who spent many hours working closely with the authors to hammer out each of the chapters. Without their dedication, this book could not have been completed. Thank you!!

Do you ever look at the back cover of books? (few people do)

Riddle: What is different about the back cover of this book, which is different from the other books in the Pragmatic Resources Series?

Answer: the detective illustration (right). It has replaced two of our ever-present birds. The title, "Pragmatics Undercover" conjures up the image of a detective…and <u>we</u> are the undercover detectives searching between the covers of textbooks for more natural language.

Next question: **Where did we get this illustration?**

The artist is **Lily Sanger**. We would like to thank Lily for producing our back cover illustration. Lily is a 15-year-old high school student who lives in Hiroshima city. She enjoys creating all kinds of art and visiting exhibitions. She also likes listening to music and reading.
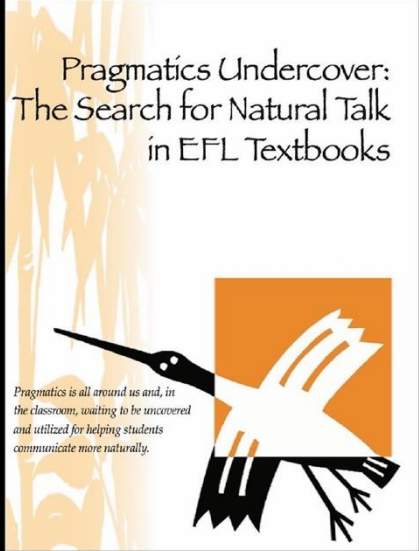
This is Lily's illustration of herself.

We also wish to extend our gratitude to **Rob Olson**, who is our Publicity Co-Chair and also a talented graphic artist. He made most of the illustrations in this newsletter, despite a super busy schedule. Thank you, Rob!

This is Rob's illustration of himself.

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Up Coming Events:

Book Launch Event: Sunday, 26th July 2020

Pragmatics Undercover:
The Search for Natural Talk
in EFL Textbooks

Pragmatics is all around us and, in the classroom, waiting to be uncovered and utilized for helping students communicate more naturally.

With presentations of online and classroom activities by chapter authors of Pragmatics Undercover, this Launch is as practical as the book itself: identifying real language needs and responding to these. With 21 step-by-step activities (six in the Launch!), Pragmatics Undercover aims, quite simply, to help language teachers enable their students to communicate better: more naturally, actively, and sociably. More than this, the aim is not only to have a fun time in the classroom (although that, too) but, through follow-up and assessment as part of each activity, to help learners add to their active repertoire of essential pragmatic skills and strategies.

Pragmatics Undercover will be launched by Jerry Talandis Jr., Jim Ronald, & Yosuke Ogawa
4pm – 6pm via Zoom
RSVP: Donna Fujimoto (fujimotodonna@gmail.com)
https://www.pragsig.org

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CONTRIBUTIONS

If you would like to help with putting together our Pragmatics Matters newsletter, please contact us. (fujimotodonna@gmail.com)