
Pragmatics in Chinese as a Second/Foreign Language

Naoko Taguchi
Carnegie Mellon University

Abstract

This paper reviews the current literature in teaching and learning pragmatics in Chinese as a second language. An exhaustive and inclusive literature search was conducted both electronically and manually to locate data-based studies on Chinese learners' pragmatic competence and development published until 2015, yielding a total of 14 studies. These studies were grouped into three categories: (a) studies that documented pragmatic development in a study abroad context; (b) studies that examined heritage learner pragmatics; and (c) studies that tested the effectiveness of pragmatic-focused instruction. The paper discusses three generalizations emerged from the findings: (1) Chinese learners develop their pragmatic abilities while abroad, but initial ability, general proficiency, language contact, and social participation affect the development; (2) Heritage language learners have an advantage in pragmatics learning; and (3) Instruction helps pragmatics learning, but the effect varies across modalities of practice.

Keywords: Chinese, pragmatics, second language acquisition

Socio-economic and political situations in current days have advanced Chinese as a critical language to study in the U.S. and worldwide. According to ACTFL surveys of K-12 public schools in U.S.A. (ACTFL, 2011), Chinese classes recorded the largest growth in enrollment from the year 2004 to 2008, increasing by 195%. In U.S. higher education, Chinese is ranked as the 6th most studied language in 2009, with its enrollment more than doubled in the last decade (MLA, 2010). Open Doors data from 2011-2012 has placed China as the 5th most popular destination for study abroad (IIE, 2013).

The upsurge of Chinese language learners indicates that Chinese is quickly becoming the language for intercultural communication. Competence in Chinese will no doubt help people connect with others over cultural interests, business practices, and political opportunities in the global society. But what makes someone a competent speaker of Chinese? We can think of a variety of knowledge components and skill areas, such as grammar, vocabulary, character knowledge, and pronunciation and tone. In this paper, I will discuss one area that draws on these basic abilities yet is distinct and presents a challenge for second language (L2) learners to master – pragmatic competence.

Pragmatics studies linguistic phenomena in relation to their use in a social context. Learning a language involves more than learning grammar and vocabulary. The rules of communication, such as how to speak with the level of politeness and formality required in a situation, or to understand another person's intention communicated indirectly, are critical skills in order to become a competent speaker in the target culture. Learners need to have a range of linguistic forms at their disposal to perform a language function (e.g., complaint). At the same time, they need to understand the sociocultural norms and rules that govern the use of these forms (e.g., which forms to use to complain to whom). Lack of this knowledge may lead to not saying things appropriately, consequently causing a cross-cultural miscommunication. Hence, an important aspect of Chinese study involves learning pragmatics of Chinese.

Previous literature has discussed Chinese pragmatics in terms of linguistics behaviors, and cultural norms and values that govern the behaviors. Mao (1994) argues that Chinese politeness closely reflects the concept of 'face.' In order to be polite, people need to know 'how to attend to each other's *li n* (脸) and *miànzi* (面子) and to perform speech acts appropriate to and worthy of such an image' (p. 19). Mao describes that in the speech act of invitation, the speaker often uses lexical mitigations (e.g., "It is *only* a casual dinner.") in order to protect her/his own face and to reduce the imposition on the hearer. On the other hand, when the hearer turns down an invitation, he/she mentions the speaker-side cost or burden as a reason for refusal, again as a way of showing consideration to the speaker's face. Ma (1996), on the other hand, illustrates the concept of 'contrary-to-face-value communication' (p. 259) identified in Chinese culture. She describes the case of saying "yes" for "no" when communication is other-serving and explained that it reflects the Chinese cultural characteristics of avoiding confrontation with others. Pan (2000) also claims that politeness behaviors are shaped by "deep-rooted beliefs concerning the perception of power relations, concept of self and other, and understanding of interpersonal relationships" (p.5). Formality of social contexts influences the use of politeness strategies. Kadar and Pan (2011) revealed that self-deprecating, compliment response behaviors such as 哪里哪里 ("no, no") tend to occur in formal situations rather than daily, informal contacts. These literatures

illustrate how sociocultural concepts and norms such as face, power, and hierarchy are encoded in linguistics behaviors and social interaction in Chinese.

Nearly two decades ago, Kasper (1995) edited a volume *Pragmatics in Chinese as Native and Foreign Language*. It is the first and only book that devotes its entire attention to pragmatics of L1 and L2 speakers of Chinese. However, despite its title, five chapters in the volume were about native Chinese speakers' realization patterns of different speech acts (requests, refusals, compliments, and complaints). Only one chapter was about L2 Chinese learners, describing their observations and experiences of learning pragmatics during sojourn in China (e.g., invitation-refusal sequences in Chinese, compliment responses, and terms of address). The chapter concluded with a strong call for L2 Chinese pragmatics research that investigates Chinese learners' interactions in a variety of situations and discourse domains.

Two decades after Kasper's volume, this paper will present the current landscape of L2 Chinese pragmatics research by reviewing existing empirical findings in this area. I conducted exhaustive electronic bibliographic searches to include all studies in L2 Chinese up to January of 2015. All the refereed journals, books and book chapters, and conference monographs were searched through the databases of LLBA, World Cat, and ERIC using three key words: 'pragmatics,' 'Chinese,' and 'second language.' With the additional results from Google search and expert consultations, this search process uncovered 14 unique data-based studies that examined L2 Chinese learners' pragmatic ability and pragmatic language use (marked with * in the bibliography).

All studies except one followed traditional practice of L2 pragmatics research and examined typical constructs of speech acts (request, refusal, and compliment response), implicature, and routines (or formulaic expressions). Methods of investigation used in these studies also aligned with the mainstream practice, using common questionnaire-based instruments such as oral/written discourse completion tests (DCT)¹, multiple-choice questions, and judgment tasks. One study conducted a sociolinguistic investigation by analyzing Chinese learners' use of the particle DE (的) in informal speech. Six studies used a cross-sectional design by comparing pragmatic performance between learners of Chinese and native Chinese speakers, between students in a study abroad and domestic instructional setting, between heritage and non-heritage learner groups, as well as between learners of different proficiency levels. Four other studies used a longitudinal design by tracing development of pragmatic abilities in a study abroad program. One study also examined study abroad as a context for pragmatics learning by analyzing interview data. The remaining three studies were instructional intervention studies that investigated whether explicit teaching leads to the learning of a speech act of request in Chinese. Essentially all 14 studies involved adult learners enrolled in Chinese language courses in U.S. universities or study abroad programs.

My review of these 14 studies is guided by what these studies inform us about L2 Chinese learners' pragmatic abilities in different learning contexts. I grouped the studies into

¹ DCT, originally developed by Blum-Kulka (1982), is a data collection instrument that has been used widely in pragmatics research to elicit speech acts. A typical format involves a brief scenario describing the situation, followed by a dialogue which has at least one turn as an open slot to be completed by the participant. Participants are asked to 'imagine' the hypothetical situation and produce the response as if they were in the situation performing the role.

three categories: (a) studies that traced pragmatic development in a study abroad setting; (b) studies that examined heritage learner pragmatics; and (c) studies that tested the effectiveness of instruction. After analyzing the findings for commonalities and discrepancies, I have uncovered three general findings:

- (1) Chinese learners develop their pragmatic abilities while abroad, but initial ability, general proficiency, language contact, and social participation affect the development.
- (2) Heritage language learners have an advantage in pragmatics learning.
- (3) Instruction helps pragmatics learning, but the effect varies across modalities of practice (production vs. comprehension).

Given the paucity of the existing studies, these generalizations are certainly not conclusive. Future research is needed to assess their stability and to carefully consider variations in the findings. Below I will discuss these tentative generalizations one by one, as a stepping stone for future investigations of L2 Chinese pragmatics.

1. Chinese learners develop their pragmatic abilities while abroad, but initial ability, general proficiency, amount of language contact, and participation in social activities affect the development.

Longitudinal studies conducted in a study abroad context have examined pragmatic development in the areas of speech acts (Jin, 2012; S. Li, 2014; Winke & Teng, 2010) and formulaic expressions (Taguchi, Li, & Xiao, 2013). Essentially all studies revealed significant pragmatic gains while abroad, despite different locations and program types (Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin), different time periods (8 weeks to one semester), and varying proficiency levels (from beginning to advanced). Advantage of study abroad was also found in a cross-sectional study, which showed that the students who studied in Shanghai during the summer were more articulate in explaining appropriate request-making strategies to use than their counterparts with no study abroad experience (Zhang & Yu, 2008).

Taguchi, Li, & Xiao (2013) examined the development of Chinese learners' ability to produce formulaic expressions during a 14-week study abroad program in Beijing. Formulaic expressions are fixed or semi-fixed syntactic strings that occur frequently in specific situations and carry certain communicative functions. An example is 便宜点吧 (*pián yi di n ba*, "A little cheaper."), a typical expression used to bargain with a street vendor in China. Variants of this phrase may be possible but are not common, which gives it the status of formulae – fixed expressions tied to certain situations and functions. Formulae are syntactically simple but can be notoriously difficult to master for L2 learners because of the exactness required in the forms. Deviant forms with wrong word order or word choice may obscure meaning. For example, changing one character in 便宜点吧 and saying 便宜点儿 or adding extra units as in 你可以便宜吗? (*N k y pián yi ma?*, "Could you make it a little cheaper?") makes the expressions non-formulaic, as these are not typical ways of responding in a bargain situation. Hence, ability to select and produce exact strings of preferred forms, which Pawlye and Syder (1983) call "native-like selection," is an indicator of L2 formulaic competence.

Taguchi et al.'s study revealed a strong gain in formulaic competence in L2 Chinese. Participants completed a computerized speaking test consisting of 24 formulae-use situations

at the beginning and end of their study abroad. Each item displayed a scenario in English. Participants responded orally in Chinese with what they would say in that situation. Participants' expressions were scored for the native-likeness. The pre-post test comparison revealed a significant score increase with a large effect size ($\eta^2=0.71$).

However, there was a large variation among formulaic expressions. While 7 out of 25 formulae approximated target patterns at post-test, 12 showed almost no improvement or even slid backward, changing toward non-target-like formulae. Learners became able to use the core lexical items, but fell short of using the exact forms of formulae. For example, when asking for a cashier, learners used the core unit 在哪儿 (*zài nǎr*, "in where") at post-test but combined it with a wrong element as in 付钱在哪儿? (*Fù qián zài nǎr?*, "spend money in where?") or 付在哪儿? (*Fù zài nǎr?*, "spend in where?"), resulting in non-target expressions. Learners also overgeneralized one expression over different situations. In three different leave-taking situations, learners used the same expression 再见 (*zài jiàn*), but native speakers used different forms. In the situation of leaving a friend's house or a party, they used the core element of 走了 (*zǒu le*, "leaving"), whereas in a situation of leaving a phone conversation, they used {就/先} 这样 (*{jiù/xiān} zhè yàng*, "that is it"). Learners in this study were not yet quite able to adjust their formulaic expressions to express different nuances across situations, although their formulaic competence as a whole improved during their semester in China.

The positive role of study abroad for formulaic development makes sense, considering that formulaic language permeates our everyday communication, assisting our social participation and daily functioning. As such, formulae are best learned through exposure and participation in real-life communicative events, which study abroad settings are most likely to offer. However, the link between language contact and formulaic development was found to be not so straightforward. Taguchi et al. administered the Formulae Contact Questionnaire, which asked participants to report how often they thought they had encountered each of the 24 formulae-use situations during study abroad. No significant relationship was found between the reported frequency of encounter and gains in formulae scores. However, regression analysis revealed a significant interaction effect of both frequency of encounter and pre-test scores on the gain. The learners who started out with low formulae scores benefited more from (perceived) frequency of encounter with formulae-use situations. These findings suggest that the effect of study abroad on formulaic competence can be understood when other factors, in this case the initial formulaic competence, are considered.

Factors mediating the link between pragmatic development and study abroad experience are also found in other studies, for instance general proficiency in S. Li's (2014) study. Using a spoken DCT, he compared development in the speech act of request (e.g., asking your classmate to lend you his notes) between intermediate and advanced-level learners during a semester in Beijing. Although both groups showed a significant pre-post change on the appropriateness of request (scored on a five-point scale), effect size was larger for the intermediate group ($r=.86$) than the advanced group ($r=.69$). In contrast, the advanced-group improved on fluency (faster speech rate when producing requests), but the intermediate group showed no change. Because the intermediate group had a lower appropriateness score at pre-test, their larger gain during the semester than the advanced group indicates that they had more room to grow. The advanced group was more advantaged in improving their

fluency, because they had a threshold level of linguistic ability at the start of their sojourn: all they needed was the actual practice and exposure to further improve their fluency.

Jin's (2012) study charted four learners' change in their knowledge of compliment response patterns in Chinese in relation to participant agency and affordances in the context. Data involved weekly interviews with the focal participants and their blog entries, as well as the researcher's observation journals. Analyses revealed how various influences from context helped participants develop *emic* understanding of compliment response over eight weeks in Shanghai. Although textbooks taught that rejecting a compliment by saying 哪里哪里 ("no no") is the norm in Chinese, learners' repertoire of response strategies expanded over time to include other expressions (e.g., 谢谢, "thank you") and strategies (e.g., shifting credit to others). More importantly, these learners developed sophisticated understanding of form-function-context mappings through observation and participation. One learner uncovered that people tend to say 哪里哪里 when they receive a compliment on personal quality (e.g., intelligence or physical appearance), but 谢谢 ("thank you") is more appropriate when the compliment is directed to tangible things (e.g., clothes). Several learners realized that 哪里哪里 is outdated based on the negative reactions from their interlocutors, while others learned that 哪里哪里 is more accepted with a hand gesture. They also identified the cases of 'quasi-compliments' and developed strategies to respond to those insincere compliments. The data indicates that linguistic affordance provided in the study abroad context, together with learners' agency to invest in their cultural practices, refined their pragmatic knowledge.

To summarize, previous findings are encouraging in showing that Chinese learners register notable improvements with their knowledge of formulaic expressions and speech acts while abroad with a large effect size. Although study abroad context provides ample venues for learning new pragmatic information, which often goes beyond what students learn in textbooks or classroom instruction, context alone is not sufficient to understand what actually leads to development. Available findings indicate that initial-level pragmatic knowledge, general proficiency, agency, and opportunities for practice – be it amount of language contact or linguistic affordances – could explain whether or not learners can take advantage of this unique learning environment to shape their understanding of pragmatic behaviors.

2. Heritage language learners have an advantage in pragmatics learning.

Study abroad has been the most studied context in L2 Chinese pragmatics research, and very few studies have examined heritage language learning context. Valdés (2000) defines heritage language speakers as individuals who grew up in homes where a language other than the societal/dominant language is spoken. They are bilingual, to some extent, in the heritage and dominant language, although the former is in the first order of acquisition (Polinsky & Kagan, 2007). Heritage language maintenance is the primary concern in Chinese education in the U.S. because of a recent expansion of Chinese immigration, together with increasing ethnic awareness of minorities in general. Correspondingly, the demand for Chinese heritage language schools has increased, with enrolment increasing from 82,000 in 1996 to 140,000 in 2005 (Chao, 1997; McGinnis, 2005).

Two existing studies in Chinese heritage pragmatics compared heritage and non-

heritage learners on the request speech act (Hong, 1997) and comprehension of implicature (Taguchi, Li, & Liu, 2013). Unfortunately, these studies did not reveal learners' intricate engagement in heritage learning context in promoting (or not promoting) their pragmatics learning. More studies looking into the construct–context intersect in heritage learner pragmatics is necessary, but with the absence of such studies in the current literature, I will summarize the two existing studies below, with an extension of how these studies can be developed further to include 'context' as central investigative concern.

Using a written DCT, Hong (1997) analyzed request strategies produced by second-year learners of Chinese in a U.S. university. Of 20 participants, 12 had prior exposure to Chinese before taking Chinese courses, while 8 had no prior exposure. Although Hong did not use the term "heritage learners" in referring to the former group, they are considered to have heritage background because they had "home exposure to Chinese" (p. 99) and "Chinese language environment when they were brought up" (p. 103). Hong analyzed the request strategies on two aspects: accessibility (clarity of illocutionary force) and acceptability (appropriateness of the request strategies in a given situation). She found that students with and without home language exposure were similar in their production rates of *accessible* requests (100% vs. 94%), but the percentage of *acceptable* requests was much higher for the group with home exposure (93%) than their non-exposure counterparts (65%). These findings indicate that heritage learners excelled at the sociopragmatic aspect of speech act production: they were able to convey their intention at the level of politeness, directness, and appropriateness required in a situation, although they were still limited in their use of internal and external modifications, such as 请 (*qǐng*, "please"), 对不起 (*duìbuqǐ*, "excuse me"), or 劳驾 (*láojià*, "may I trouble you to").

Superior pragmatic performance of heritage over non-heritage learners was also found in Taguchi, Li, & Liu's (2013) study in comprehension of implicature. Conversational implicature (Grice, 1975) refers to the indirect meaning that the listener draws from an utterance by decoding linguistic and contextual cues. This is a challenging task for L2 learners because they have to recognize the gap between the literal and intended meaning, and infer the latter based on contextual information and knowledge of conversation mechanisms.

Using a computer-delivered listening test, the authors compared implicature comprehension between heritage and non-heritage learners enrolled in the same advanced-level Chinese class in a U.S. university. Three types of implicature were included in the test:

(1) Conventional refusals

Refusal intention is expressed indirectly by giving a reason. For example, to refuse an invitation to a party, one can say:

明天我要和朋友一起去看电影呢。

Míng tiān wǒ yào hé péng you yì qǐ qù kàn diàn yǐng ne.

"I am going to watch a movie with my friend tomorrow."

(2) Conventional implicature

Meaning is expressed indirectly via conventional linguistic devices. For example, to reject someone's suggestion, one can use an avoidance strategy by saying:

再说吧。

Zài shuō ba.

(Let's) talk about it later.

(3) Non-conventional implicature

Meaning is expressed indirectly without conventional linguistic patterns. For example, to comment positively on someone's cooking skill, one can say:

他可以去开一个饭馆了!

T k y qù k i yí gè fàn gu n le!

He can run a restaurant!"

Participants listened to a series of short conversations that involved implicature and responded to multiple-choice questions. Heritage learners outperformed non-heritage learners on accurate comprehension of implicature. They also demonstrated uniform performance across implicature types. The non-heritage group, however, had significantly lower comprehension scores for non-conventional implicature (mean=6.72). Lack of linguistic conventions in this item type made comprehension difficult for non-heritage learners, but this characteristic was not particularly challenging for heritage learners because their average score (mean=10.84; 12 point maximum) was very close to that of native speakers (mean=11.67). Different from accuracy results, the heritage group did not excel at comprehension speed: regardless of item type, no significant difference was found between the two groups on the average amount of time taken to respond to items correctly.

A distinct feature of the heritage language context is the exposure and practice of spoken Chinese in their home environment. This contextual characteristic seems to provide an additional edge for heritage learners because they demonstrated the ability to deal with more advanced aspects of pragmatic competence. Although in Hong's study both heritage and non-heritage learners were able to communicate request intention clearly, heritage learners demonstrated additional layer of competence, i.e., making a request politely and appropriately by incorporating sociopragmatic consideration into their choice of request strategies. Similarly, different levels of indirectness encoded in utterances affected non-heritage learners' comprehension, as found in their difficulty in comprehending non-conventional implicature. This was not a problem for heritage learners, who comprehended all types of implicature equally well. The advantage of heritage learners, then, can be summarized as follows: they can deal with a wider range of pragmatic functions and dimensions, ranging from pragmalinguistics to sociopragmatics, from conventional to non-conventional implicature.

This benefit of heritage learning context, however, is just an assumption without analysis of the 'context' itself. Linguistic exposure, oral/aural practice, rich cultural input, feedback and modeling, and socialization – common labels used to characterize heritage learner environment – need to be scrutinized to reveal type, amount, and nature of pragmatic practice available in this context. For example, DCT scenarios used in Hong's study involved request situations over different settings and interlocutor relationships, such as asking a mother to buy a bicycle or asking a teacher for an extension of an assignment due. Heritage learners' performance can be analyzed across different situations to see if situation type affects their speech acts in a way that it favors their home language context. If there is no difference across situations, types of linguistic input at home can be analyzed to see how the home environment can provide linguistic practices that are likely to occur outside the home context (e.g., asking a professor for an extension).

Quantitative and qualitative methods used in the study abroad research, such as language contact survey, interviews, blogs, reflective journals, and observations, can be used

to gain an understanding of learning opportunities in the heritage environment. Identity is another interesting concept to explore in heritage learner pragmatics because pragmatics learning is often influenced by learners' desired identity – how they want to be seen and perceived as a L2 speaker. Whether a learner positions him/herself as a speaker of the heritage language who strives to master their ancestral language, or as a speaker of the societal language who wishes to integrate into the mainstream society inevitably affects his/her pragmatic choice and learning (Brown, 2013). Heritage language context serves as a site for a struggle between conflicting identities, which in turns offers valuable implications on how learners' agency, attitudes, and motivation shape the course of pragmatic development.

3. Instruction helps pragmatics learning, but the effect varies across modalities of practice (production vs. comprehension).

In this last section I will turn to the teaching of Chinese pragmatics. While study abroad and a heritage language environment can serve as sites where pragmatic development occurs naturally, formal classroom is considered poor in opportunities for pragmatics learning. Grammar-based instruction, restricted range of communication situations, and limited authentic language use are some of the features of classroom discourse, which do not favor for pragmatics learning. Several studies revealed learners' skewed pragmatic knowledge in a classroom setting (Hong, 2011; X. Li, 2010). X. Li showed that the particle DE (的) appears often in classroom instruction and textbooks, which characterizes DE as a marker of formal register. But L2 Chinese learners overuse DE in their informal speech, indicating their lack of the understanding of sociolinguistic variation of this particle. These findings support Bardovi-Harlig's (2001, p. 29) observation that learners who do not receive instruction in pragmatics have noticeably underdeveloped L2 pragmatics systems.

Importance of teaching pragmatics is evident in a dozen teachers' guides and resource books with ready-made lesson plans available in pragmatics (e.g., Houck & Tatsuki, 2011; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). Empirical studies of pragmatic instruction have also flourished in the last few decades, resulting in a number of instructional intervention studies that have measured the degree of learning from pre- to post-instruction. Taguchi's (2015) review of 58 instructional studies presents the current landscape of pragmatics teaching, but the review critically points out the paucity of research in L2 Chinese. Only three studies exist to date, all of which were conducted by a single author (S. Li, 2012, 2013; S. Li & Taguchi, 2014).

S. Li investigated whether or not different amounts of practice lead to different levels of learning of a speech act of request. In his 2012 study, college students of Chinese were assigned to three groups: an intensive training group, a regular training group, and a control group. The intensive and regular training groups received explanation of request forms and then practiced them via receptive-skill exercises. The intensive group practiced twice as much as the regular group. A listening appropriateness judgment task and an oral DCT were used to assess learning. Results revealed no group difference on correct judgment of request forms. A difference was found in the response times: the intensive group became faster after practice, while no such effect was found in the regular group. As for the production, there was no significant practice effect on fluency, but there was on accuracy: the intensive group outperformed the regular group after practice. Results support the skill acquisition theory:

declarative knowledge (accuracy) is shared across different skills (listening and speaking) but procedural knowledge (fluency) requires skill-specific practice (DeKeyser, 2007).

In subsequent studies, S. Li used input- and output-based practices to reveal how much practice is needed to promote accurate and fluent production and recognition of requests. The input group practiced the requests via input-based activities, and the output group practiced them via output-based activities. A listening judgment task and an oral DCT assessed learning. Results showed that, regardless of practice modality (input- and output-based), four instances of processing of request strategies were sufficient for learners to accurately judge and produce request forms, but more than eight instances were needed for them to develop fluency in performance (S. Li, 2013). The effects of input- and output-based practice were shared across task modalities on measures of accuracy, but not on measures of fluency: input-based practice led to fluency with the receptive skill task (appropriateness judgment) but not with the productive skill task (oral DCT), and vice versa, which again support the skill acquisition theory (S. Li & Taguchi, 2014).

In short, these findings clearly show that instruction helps learners develop their pragmatic competence in Chinese. A more important insight is that different dimensions of pragmatic competence (accuracy and fluency) are affected differently by different treatment conditions (input vs. output-based), as well as by a different amount of practice. If a treatment task involves the same modality as an assessment task, instructional effects can be found both in accuracy and fluency, and the effect is generally greater with an increased amount of practice. However, in a treatment condition where practice taps on a different modality than the assessment task, the effects appear in accuracy but not in fluency, because practice in that skill area is needed to develop fluency.

4. Conclusions and implications for future research

In this paper, I have synthesized empirical findings on the development and learning of pragmatics among Chinese learners in study abroad, heritage language environments, and laboratory-based instructional settings. A body of 14 studies, located through literature searches up to January of 2015, has yielded three generalizations as presented above. At the same time, analyses of the existing research have identified several areas that are subject to future investigations in L2 Chinese pragmatics.

One future direction involves going beyond the traditional units of analysis by examining pragmatic features other than speech acts, implicature, and routines. Related to this, we need methodological innovation by moving beyond typical tasks of DCT and multiple-choice tests. One promising direction is to analyze pragmatic competence in extended interaction. With the surge of discursive pragmatics (Kasper, 2006) and interactional competence (Young, 2002, 2011), the framework of analysis has recently shifted from ‘pragmatics-within-individuals’ to ‘pragmatics-in-interaction-in-context,’ focusing on dynamic and dialogic aspects of pragmatics.

To illustrate this, traditional research in speech acts assumes one-to-one correspondence between an utterance and force. For example, a speech act of request is usually associated with conventional forms of 可以 (*k y . . . ma?*, “Would/May I . . . ?”) or 能 (*néng . . . ma?*, “Can I . . . ?”). Mainstream practice has been to identify these linguistic

forms that convey illocutionary force, and compare them with those produced by L2 learners. In a real-life interaction, however, a speech act does not occur in isolation from context. It arises in the course of interaction through participants' reactions to each other's contributions to the on-going discourse. Traditional approach disregards this interactive and dynamic nature of a speech act. As a result, learners' pragmatic competence is in display as isolated linguistic forms used to convey illocution, and their ability to adapt and reciprocate in a changing interaction is discounted. Future research can explore this pragmatics-in-interaction in L2 Chinese to examine how learners of Chinese co-construct a pragmatic act and how such ability can index their Chinese pragmatic competence.

Similarly, by moving away from traditional units of analysis and methods of investigation, we can explore features of pragmatics that are unique to Chinese language. Cross-linguistic pragmatics analysis has been done extensively over the last few decades (e.g., Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; Chen, 2010) by comparing pragmatic behaviors across different languages. These studies typically used speech acts as a common unit of analysis and documented, for example, how speakers of Chinese and English differ in the choice of linguistic strategies in refusals or compliment responses (e.g., Cheng, 2011). Although using a common metric like speech acts help us see cross-linguistic variations, the downside is that this approach does not account for unique pragmatic features in individual languages. To give an example, refusals in Japanese are often analyzed by identifying main linguistic strategies such as direct refusals (e.g., "I can't see you this week."), reasons for refusals (e.g., "I will be out of town."), and expressions of alternatives (e.g., "I can see you next weekend instead."). However, by analyzing refusals on these common strategies, we miss features of refusals that are unique to Japanese. In Japanese, it is crucial to use honorifics when speaking to someone superior, and lack of this polite language is probably more detrimental than using wrong refusal strategies. This important aspect of Japanese refusals is neglected when we analyze the speech act using the universal coding framework.

There is a need to turn our attention from the universality of pragmatics to pragmatics-specific-to-languages. Chinese can certainly play a leading role in this direction with its rich representation of linguistic forms foregrounded in cultural norms of interaction. We can begin by asking a question: what makes someone pragmatically competent in Chinese? Answers to this question will naturally lead to a range of pragmatic devices in the structure and discourse of Chinese language, for instance, how people convey appropriate levels of politeness in Chinese, or what linguistic resources they use to communicate meaning indirectly. We can describe what Chinese pragmatics entails, linguistically and culturally, and how they could be applied to the analysis of L2 Chinese competence. One such example is sentence final particles (e.g., *a*, *la*, *ba*, *ma*), which usually occur in informal or colloquial speech in Chinese (Lee-Wong, 1998; Sun, 2006). These particles often serve pragmatic functions: they add an affect or stance by softening tone or emphasizing an utterance. Given this unique nature, these particles can be examined as a yardstick of Chinese pragmatic competence.

Finally, heritage language learner context can be explored further as a site for pragmatics learning in future research. Previous studies revealed that heritage learners have advantages in pragmatics learning, but these studies did not explain why and how such advantages arise. Analysis of opportunities for pragmatic practice in this specific environment will certainly enhance our understanding of the context-pragmatics intersect in a way that is different from study abroad research. Heritage learner pragmatics also provides a venue to

explore pragmatic competence in a bilingual model. Heritage learners are bilinguals who grow up acquiring two languages – home language and societal/school language – and are concerned about the study and maintenance of their ancestry languages (Valdés, 2005). This circumstance gives rise to a unique context where pragmatic development occurs concurrently within two languages and cultures.

More than two decades ago, Bialystok (1993) proposed the ‘two-dimensional model’ that distinguishes pragmatics learning between adults and children. The model specifies that, for children, pragmatic and linguistic competences develop simultaneously as they are socialized into the society, but adult learners are already competent in the pragmatics of their native language. Therefore, adult learners must address the added burden of controlling pre-existing pragmatic representations while acquiring a new set of representations in L2. Under this model the position of heritage learners is ambiguous. They are similar to children acquiring pragmatics through socialization, but they also represent adults’ pragmatics systems because pragmatic socialization occurs in two separate domains, home language context and societal language context. In this sense, it is not appropriate to examine heritage learner pragmatics from the discrete point of L1 vs. L2 pragmatic competence. The focus should be bilingual pragmatic competence. Expansion of Chinese heritage learners and increasing demands for heritage language maintenance in the U.S.A. present an optimal condition to explore such bilingualism in pragmatic development.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank Shuai Li and Feng Xiao for their assistance with locating primary studies. Additional thanks goes to Feng Xiao for checking the Chinese examples used in this paper. I am responsible for all the errors that may remain.

References

- ACTFL. (2011). Language enrollments in K-12 public schools: Are students prepared for a global society? Report summary. Retrieved from: <http://www.actfl.org/enrollment-survey>
- Bardovi-Harlig, K. (2001). Evaluating the empirical evidence: Grounds for instruction in pragmatics? In G. Kasper & K. Rose (eds.), *Pragmatics in language teaching* (pp. 13–32). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bialystok, E. (1993). Symbolic representation and attentional control in pragmatic competence. In G. Kasper & S. Blum-Kulka (eds.), *Interlanguage pragmatics* (pp. 43–63). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Blum-Kulka, S. (1982). Learning to say what you mean in a second language. *Applied Linguistics*, 3, 29–59.
- Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. (1989). *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Brown, L. (2013). Identity and honorifics use in Korean study abroad. In C. Kinginger (ed.), *Social and cultural dimensions of language learning in study abroad* (pp. 269–298). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Chao, T. H. (1997). Chinese heritage community language schools in the United States. ERIC Digest.
- Chen, R. (2010). Compliment and compliment response research: A cross-cultural survey. In A. Trosborg (ed.), *Handbook of pragmatics: Pragmatics across languages and cultures* (pp.79–101). New York/Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Cheng, D. (2011). New insights on compliment responses: A comparison between native English speakers and Chinese L2 speakers. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43, 2204–2214.
- DeKeyser, R. (2007). Skill acquisition theory. In B. VanPattern & J. Williams (eds.), *Theories in second language acquisition: An introduction* (pp. 94–113). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Grice, P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. Morgan (eds.), *Syntax and semantics vol. 3* (pp. 41-58). New York: Academic Press.
- Houck, N., & Tatsuki, D. (2011). *Pragmatics from research to practice: New directions*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL.
- *Hong, W. (1997) Sociopragmatics in language teaching: with examples of Chinese requests, *Journal of the Chinese Language Teachers Association*, 32, 95–107.
- *Hong, W. (2011). Refusals in Chinese: How do L1 and L2 differ? *Foreign Language Annals*, 44, 122–136.
- Institute of International Education. (2013). *Top 25 Destinations of U.S. Study Abroad Students, 2010/11 -2011/12. Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*. Retrieved from: <http://www.iie.org/opendoors>
- Ishihara, N., & Cohen, A. (2010). *Teaching and learning pragmatics: Where language and culture meet*. Harlow, UK: Pearson Longman.
- *Jin, L. (2012). When in China, do as the Chinese do? Learning compliment responding in a study abroad program. *Chinese as a Second Language Acquisition Research*, 1, 211–240.
- Kadar, D., & Pan, Y. (2011). Politeness in China. In D.Z.Kadar & S. Mills (eds.), *Politeness in East Asia* (pp. 125–146). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

- Kasper, G. (1995). *Pragmatics of Chinese as native and target language*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center.
- Kasper, G. (2006). Introduction. *Multilingua*, 25, 243–248.
- *Kasper, G., & Zhang, Y. (1995). 'Its' good to be a bit Chinese': Foreign students' experience of Chinese pragmatics. In G. Kasper (ed.), *Pragmatics of Chinese as native and target language* (pp. 1–22). Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center.
- Lee-Wong, S. M. (1998). Face support-Chinese particles as mitigators: A study of BA A/YA and NE. *Pragmatics*, 8, 387–404.
- *Li, S. (2012). The effects of input-based practice on pragmatic development of requests in L2 Chinese. *Language Learning*, 62, 403–438.
- *Li, S. (2013). Amount of practice in pragmatic development of request-making in L2 Chinese. In N. Taguchi & J.M. Sykes (eds.), *Technology in interlanguage pragmatics research and Teaching* (pp. 43–70). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- *Li, S. (2014). The effects of different levels of linguistic proficiency on the development of L2 Chinese request production during study abroad. *System*, 45, 103–116.
- *Li, S., & Taguchi, N. (2014). The effect of practice modality on the development of pragmatic performance in L2 Chinese. *Modern Language Journal*, 98.
- *Li, X. (2010). Sociolinguistic variation in the speech of learners of Chinese as a second language. *Language Learning* 60: 366–408.
- Ma, R. (1996). Saying “yes” for “no” and “no” for “yes”: A Chinese rule. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 25, 257–266.
- Mao, L. (1994). Beyond Politeness Theory: *Face* revisited and renewed. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 21, 451–486.
- McGinnis, S. (2005). From mirror to compass: The Chinese heritage language education section in the United States. In D.M. Brinton, O. Kagan, & S. Bauckus (eds.), *Heritage language education: A new field emerging* (pp. 229–242). London/New York: Routledge.
- Modern Language Association. (2010). *Enrollments in languages other than English in United States Institutions of Higher Education*. Retrieved from: http://www.mla.org/pdf/2009_enrollment_survey.pdf
- Pan, Y. (2000). *Politeness in Chinese face-to-face interaction*. Stanford, CT: Ablex.
- Pawley, A., & Syder, F. (1983). Two puzzles for linguistic theory: Native-like selection and native-like fluency. In J. Richards and R. Schmidt (eds.), *Language and communication* (pp. 191–226). London: Longman.
- Polinsky, M., & Kagan, O. (2007). Heritage languages: In the ‘wild’ and in the classroom. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 1 (5), 368–395.
- Sun, C. (2006). *Chinese: A Linguistic Introduction*. Cambridge University Press.
- Taguchi, N. (in press). Instructed pragmatics at a glance: Where instructional studies were, are, and should be going. State-of-the-art article. *Language Teaching*.
- *Taguchi, N., Li, S., & Liu, Y. (2013). Comprehension of conversational implicature in L2 Chinese. *Pragmatics and Cognition*, 21, 139–157.
- *Taguchi, N., Li, S., & Xiao, F. (2013). Production of formulaic expressions in L2 Chinese: A developmental investigation in a study abroad context. *Chinese as a Second Language Research Journal*, 2, 23–58.

- Valdés, G. (2000). The teaching of heritage languages: An introduction for Slavic-teaching professionals. In Kagan, Olga, Rifkin, Benjamin. *The Learning and Teaching of Slavic Languages and Cultures*. (pp. 375–403). Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers.
- Valdés, G. (2005). Bilingualism, heritage language learners, and SLA research: Opportunities lost or seized? *Modern Language Journal*, 89, 410–426.
- *Wen, X. (2014). Pragmatic Development: An Exploratory Study of Requests by Learners of Chinese. In Z. Han (ed.), *Studies in Second language acquisition of Chinese* (pp. 30-56). Bristol/New York: Multilingual Matters.
- *Winke, P. & Teng, C. (2010). Using task-based pragmatics tutorials while studying abroad in China. *Intercultural Pragmatics* 7-2, 363–399.
- Young, R. (2002) Discourse approaches to oral language assessment. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 19, 105–132.
- Young, R. (2011). Interactional competence in language learning, teaching, and testing. In H. Hinkel (ed.) *Handbook of research in language learning and teaching* (pp.426–443). New York: Routledge.
- *Zhang, D., & Yu, Y. (2008). Context of learning and requesting in Chinese as a second language: An exploratory study of students learning Chinese in study abroad and at home contexts. *Journal of Chinese Language Teachers' Association*, 43, 73–92.

The II International Conference «METHODS OF TEACHING ORIENTAL LANGUAGES: Actual problems and trends». Abstracts Methods of Teaching Chinese. If we make a survey of language teaching in China, either teaching English as a foreign language for Chinese students, or teaching Chinese as a foreign language for international students in China, we may find some problems in language teaching under the guidance of TBLT. In terms of tasks, there exist the following problems Chinese as a Second Language (Chang & Wang, 2007). The journal of the Chinese Language Teachers Association, USA, Vol. 54, Issue. 3, CrossRef. Google Scholar. Google Scholar Citations. View all Google Scholar citations for this article. Learner background factors and learning of second language pragmatics. International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching, 52, 377-401. Rosseel, Y. (2012). Lavaan: An R package for structural equation modeling. Journal of Statistical Software, 48, 1-36. Taguchi, N. (2007). Task difficulty in oral speech act production.