World Englishes, intercultural communication and a business negotiation module within an English course at IUJ

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Abstract

This paper identifies a tension at IUJ between two types of socio-cultural model of English: "standard" English and the "non-standard" "World Englishes" which many overseas students bring with them to the IUJ campus. Differences in pragmatic conventions mark the most significant differences between the two models. At IUJ, the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) curriculum designers/instructors' attempt to promote awareness of and adherence to the "standard" pragmatic conventions can run into difficulty because within IUJ's self-contained campus community the large number of students who are not enrolled in English classes tend to be forceful representatives of alternative pragmatic conventions. In the search for a better understanding of the dynamics of of IUJ's multi-cultural student community and the ways in which they affect attitudes to the "standard" pragmatic conventions, Smith's "five senses" intercultural communication framework is mapped onto two recurrent stages in the fortunes of the "standard" pragmatic conventions: the summer recess stage and the regular terms stage. The elegance of the fit between the "five senses" and the known outcomes of the two stages leads to the decision to utilize the "five senses" as primary determinants in the design of a "standard" pragmatics module within one of the EAP courses. This design work, which results in the business negotiation module, is guided by the need to swim with, and not against, the main socio-cultural flows on the campus.

Key Words: World Englishes, intercultural communication

1. INTRODUCTION

The acceleration in the global spread of English over the last twenty years is very similar in one important respect to the globalization of western business enterprise: globalization only sometimes means standardization and may often mean localization. As Braj Kachru and fellow documenters of "World Englishes" have pointed out, despite the agendas of linguistic imperialists in the UK, the USA and Australia" (Kachru, 1997: 73), the adoption of English around the world in the last half century has represented more a process of appropriation and adaptation than it has represented a process of dissemination. To an increasing extent, English is used for communication among speakers who do not belong to the "Inner Circle" (Kachru, 1992) of countries which are conventionally labeled the countries in which English is the "native" language. These two related developments, the localization of English and its partial disconnection from its "roots" in the "Inner Circle," have raised questions about both the feasibility and the desirability of maintaining both the theory and practice of a "standard" English (e.g., Pennycook, 2000) which speakers all around the world should adhere to. Since much of the localized appropriation and adaptation of English is

driven by the needs for cultural and social identity (Kachru, 1992; Pennycook, 2000), these questions are especially pertinent in regard to the theory and practice of "standard" English pragmatics.

At the International University of Japan (IUJ), these questions are not hypothetical. The campus is predominantly an English-speaking environment, but within the student community there is an eclectic mix of pragmatic behaviors which reflect the differing cultural and social identities of the students and their attempts to negotiate communication with each other. At the same time, many of the students have a practical need to develop some competence in the academic and professional pragmatic norms of "standard" English. In most circumstances, meeting this practical need would be a fairly straightforward matter, but at IUJ the presence of large numbers of students who come from socio-cultural environments where English has been fused with local identities, local values and local behaviors makes the development of a syllabus module which focuses on "standard" English pragmatic norms a lot less straightforward than it first appears.

2. OVERVIEW

This paper presents one attempt which has been made to find a practical solution to the problem of how to reconcile the competing claims of "standard" English pragmatics and "non-standard" English pragmatics within the MBA program at IUJ. It connects the predominance of "non-standard" pragmatic norms among the MBA student body at IUJ not only to the variety of "World Englishes" which many of the students bring with them, but, also to the intercultural communication process which takes place on the campus. The paper uses Smith's (1987) "five senses" analysis of intercultural communication to understand this process and to suggest the relative weakness of conventional "direct" pedagogical approaches to pragmatic skills development when these come into conflict with the students' sense of their own identities and with the socio-cultural environment in which they are immersed. One such conventional approach at IUJ, with its short-term successes and its decidedly mixed longer-term fortunes, is charted. The paper draws upon Smith's analytical framework to create a basis for a systematic approach to pragmatic skills development in a multi-cultural academic context such as IUJ where it would be unwise to assume that "standard" pragmatic norms will automatically secure respect in terms of validity and allegiance in terms of practice. It then describes how the application of Smith's analytical framework to the multi-

cultural complexities of the MBA student community at IUJ leads to a set of design maneuvers which culminate in the creation of a "negotiation module" as a vehicle for reconnecting some of the MBA students to some significant "standard" pragmatic norms without subjecting these students to either the reality or the appearance of pragmatic dissonance.

3. A DEFINITION OF PRAGMATICS

For the purpose of this paper, "pragmatics" is understood to mean "communicative action in its socio-cultural context." ... [or, more precisely] "interpersonal rhetoric – the way speakers and writers accomplish goals as social actors who do not just need to get things done but attend to their interpersonal relationships with other participants at the same time" (Kasper, 1997: 1). This broad, and broadly accepted (e.g., Crystal, 1985; Leech, 1983), definition is useful for this paper in that it does not draw an arbitrary line between the macro and micro levels of interpersonal discourse strategy and the formulaic speech act, while still recognizing that there is a domain of discourse competence or "textual competence" which lies outside the purely interpersonal domain of pragmatic competence (Bachman, 1990, cited in Kasper, 1997). Given this definition, the author understands the terms, "pragmatics," "interpersonal language behavior," and "language behavior" to be interchangeable referents to a common set of phenomena.

4. "NON-STANDARD" ENGLISH PRAGMATICS AND IUJ STUDENTS

IUJ and its English-medium International MBA Program represent an interesting instance of the tug of war between "Standard English" and the centrifugal forces of what Kachru (1997: 69) calls the "Circles" of English outside the "Inner Circle." On the one side, the English-medium international MBA is very much an American-inspired and American-influenced creation. Academic values, curricula, textbooks and even sometimes faculty members are imported from the USA. Like the other MBA English support programs of which it is aware, the English support program at IUJ bases its curriculum on models of English for Academic Purposes which have been developed in the "Inner Circle" countries, and predominantly in the USA. As far as it is possible for the English support program instructors to judge, the students accept, follow and try to implement the academic and

linguistic standards which the models incorporate. There is, for example, only sporadic resistance among the students to the concepts of linear text coherence and cohesion and of a standard American English grammar and lexicon and plenty of evidence that the students try to apply these standards to their written work.

On the other side, the location of the university in Japan and the composition of the student body work against the forces of English standardization. Japan is located in Kachru's "Expanding Circle" of English-using countries. In the local community outside IUJ there is no large body of "native speakers" from Inner Circle countries. Within IUJ itself such "native speakers" are in a very small minority within the student body. A significant number of the students in the English-medium International MBA Program come from the "Outer Circle" countries such as India, the Philippines and Singapore and several African countries where English is a lingua franca or a well-established second language. A larger number of the students come from the Expanding Circle countries such as Indonesia, Japan and South Korea, where English is taught but is not often used for everyday communication, and a small number of students come from other countries such as Mongolia where English has not yet sunk deep roots.

Within such a social environment, the dissemination of a "standard" English pragmatic competence is problematic for several reasons. One reason is that there is a strong tendency for the appropriation of English within an existing cultural and social identity to involve the transfer of the students' local pragmatic norms. Pennycook writes about how:

> ... it is local pragmatic norms of communication that become attached to English: when Korean and Indonesian students communicate in English in a café in Sydney, British or American norms of language and culture are not significant ...

> (2000: 123)

The fact that a large majority of the students are resident on campus creates an intense on-campus socialization process, which encourages the tendency for "non-standard" pragmatic norms to be attached to English. Another reason is that the absence of a large "native speaker" community on or off the campus means that implicit language socialization (Kasper, 2001) can not play a role in any attempt to disseminate a "standard" English pragmatic competence. A third reason is that, unlike linguistic knowledge, pragmatic knowledge resists easy written description. There are no clear-cut guidelines for "standard" academic English pragmatics which might serve to regulate the interpersonal language behaviors of IUJ's

students outside the EFL classroom. The abandonment in the mid-1990s of the use of the classical Harvard Business School case method (Barnes, Christensen & Hansen, 1994) within the Graduate School of International Management (GSIM) has effectively severed the one experiential connection which IUJ's students used to have with a well-defined set of western academic discourse norms.

For these reasons, the student campus community at IUJ represents a continuing and largely unregulated experiment in the bringing together of a wide mix of pragmatic norms. This pragmatic mix leads to a mix of communicative outcomes in the form of conflict, tolerance and compromise, the balance among which varies from year to year. Whatever the outcomes, however, there is a strong sense that this campus community is quite different from the student campus communities which typify universities in the Inner Circle countries.

5. THE IUJ ENGLISH INSTRUCTORS' MODEL OF "STANDARD" ACADEMIC ENGLISH PRAGMATICS

It would be an exaggeration to claim that research-based models of "standard" academic English pragmatics are available to the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) instructor at IUJ. As is often the case in EAP, the "models" reflect the experience and judgment of the instructors as much as they reflect research findings. Research has focused on many areas which are adjacent to the domain of English academic interpersonal oral communication such as routine conversational speech acts (e.g., Kasper, 2001), cross-cultural and intercultural business communication (e.g., Hendon, Hendon & Herbig, 1996; Trompenaars, 1993) and genre-type studies of language behavior in specific academic and professional discourse communities (e.g., Bhatia, 2002). There has been little systematic research, however, into the notion of English academic discourse as a unified register even within the domain of written discourse (Bhatia, 2002) and there has been even less research within the domain of spoken discourse (Robinson et. al., 2001). As Bhatia points out, even the development of English academic writing textbooks has almost always been based on the *experience* of the authors rather than on any systematic *research*. In the same way, at IUJ the EAP teachers have developed a construct of "standard" academic English pragmatics through their own experience and reading of research findings in adjacent areas.

This construct focuses on a limited set of interpersonal oral communication behaviors which are regarded as likely either (1) to lead to communication breakdowns or difficulties if they involve speakers of English from Anglo-Saxon academic cultures or (2) to be regarded

as inappropriate by speakers of English from Anglo-Saxon academic cultures. The behaviors which the EAP instructors at IUJ try to promote comprise the following:

- frequent explicit attention to negotiation of meaning and resolution of communication breakdown
- pro-active approach to turn-taking
- direct and "rational" communication of views
- democratic "give and take" in discussion which requires objective recognition of valid elements in others' statements
- some attention to saving "face" through linguistic softening devices such as hedges

Some confirmation that there is considerable divergence from these targeted language behaviors in other cultures can be found in the general literature. Clyne (1999), for example, in his summary of intercultural communication research, indicates that variations in face-saving practices across cultures lead to a variety of culturally determined responses to communication breakdown, including the decision to ignore it (504). In reference to business negotiation contexts, Hendon, Hendon and Herbig (1996) point out that many who come from a non-Western tradition may adapt to its confrontational aspects without understanding the expectation for give and take (46). Turn-taking is one area which has been investigated by EFL researchers and the findings which are summarized by Robinson and his colleagues (2001: 350) show significant variations in turn-taking behavior according to cultural identity, with East Asian students more passive than non-Asian students and, within the East Asian group, Japanese students more passive than Chinese students.

6. THE FUNCTIONAL VALUE OF THESE LANGUAGE BEHAVIORS FOR MANY IUJ STUDENTS

Within IUJ's campus student community, the targeted language behaviors which are listed above are often more notable for their absence than for the presence. There are, however, some good reasons why the EAP instructors at IUJ should persist in trying to help their students to be aware of and, to some extent, to produce these behaviors. First, and most important, the frequent incongruity between language behaviors in the EAP classroom and in the wider campus is not a valid excuse for avoiding this domain. As a matter of educational principle, students who freely choose to study at an English-medium institution should try to develop an understanding of the interpersonal dimension, as well as of the more formal dimensions, within English academic discourse.

The second reason for paying some attention to these behaviors is that many of the students will reap practical benefits if they are able to understand and produce them. At IUJ, students often need to interact on a one-on-one basis with members of the teaching faculty. Although a majority of the teaching faculty come from countries which lie outside Kachru's Inner Circle of English-speaking countries, nearly all of the faculty have obtained advanced degrees from institutions located in this Inner Circle and many demonstrate a considerable degree of allegiance to western English academic values and behaviors. Furthermore, an important reason why many students choose to study at IUJ is that they expect that after their graduation they will need to use English in a variety of professional and academic contexts where appropriate English communication skills will be very important. The professional contexts include working at international companies based in Inner Circle countries, being sent overseas to branch offices in Inner Circle countries and working for United Nations agencies. The academic contexts include enrollment in advanced degree programs in Inner Circle countries and working for international research agencies. When planning their curricula, therefore, the EAP programs at IUJ need to take into account not only campus conditions but also the wider needs and ambitions of the students.

7. THE "FIVE SENSES" INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK

In view of the fact that the IUJ campus hosts a multi-cultural student community within which there are significant variations in pragmatic norms, the planning of courses which involve the teaching of interpersonal language behaviors needs to consider the extent to which intercultural communication processes outside (and sometimes inside) the classroom are likely to promote or hinder the acceptance by students of the targeted interpersonal language behaviors. The "five senses" analytical framework which was developed by Smith (1987), was not specifically designed for the purposes of curriculum planning, but it has proved very useful for this curriculum planner because it identifies clearly some major factors which shape intercultural communication behavior. Understanding these behavioral factors can help the curriculum planner who is operating within a multi-cultural environment to understand, and, to some extent, to predict how well or how poorly the behaviors which are encouraged within the classroom will survive contact with the social environment outside the classroom.

Smith regards all intercultural communication as *negotiated* communication because "using a common language such as English does not change the interactors' cultural assumptions and expectations about what is not appropriate language behavior in particular situations" (3). Smith naturally assumes that this negotiated communication occurs mainly within the domain of everyday discourse. The language instructor in a multi-cultural language classroom can to some degree break free of this negotiation constraint because he/she enjoys a privileged position of status and power within the classroom. If the language instructor is particularly persuasive or forceful, the students may take on trust the instructor's explanation of the appropriateness of certain language behaviors. Even when the language instructor decides to adopt a less assertive role, the students often look to the instructor to adopt the roles of guide and referee in the process of negotiating communication in the target language.

Although in the classroom Smith's analytical framework is mediated by the privileged role of the instructor, there is much less mediation in the discourse which takes place outside the classroom. At IUJ, it is possible to identify and, in part at least, to understand this wider campus domain of English use. The socially responsible curriculum designer/instructor team, who want to facilitate language learning which is robust enough to survive contact with the wider world, will therefore try to take into account and make adjustments for the degree of congruence or incongruence between the factors which motivate communication in the classroom and those which shape intercultural communication in the students' sphere of communication activity outside the classroom.

Smith's "five senses" framework provides a means of analyzing and assessing these motivation factors. Smith's five senses are:

(1)   a sense of self
(2)   a sense of the other
(3)   a sense of the relationship between the self and other
(4)   a sense of the setting/ social situation
(5)   a sense of the goal or objective

(1987: 3)

This framework will be used to help explain: (a) why the pre-matriculation summer IEP enjoys apparent success in teaching standard academic English language behaviors, (b) why this apparent success does not carry over into the post-matriculation MBA environment at IUJ[1] and (c) how the negotiation module within the English for International Management

(EIM) course represents a principled response to the challenges of the post-matriculation MBA environment.

8. THE TWO SOCIO-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENTS AT IUJ

8.1 The pre-matriculation summer IEP environment

The pre-matriculation summer Intensive English Program (IEP) environment places its curriculum planning and instruction team in an unusual situation where the English-speaking socio-cultural groups inside and outside the classroom are almost identical. Most of the "regular" students, many of whom are from Outer Circle countries where English is a lingua franca or a fully established second language, depart the campus, the second year students because of graduation and the first year students for other reasons, and they are replaced by the forty to fifty students, including about one third of the new MBA students, who are enrolled in the eight-week long residential IEP. It is rare for any of the students enrolled in the IEP to be from the Outer Circle countries; almost all of them come from the Expanding Circle countries such as Japan and Indonesia and from other countries such as Laos and Cambodia where English is a relatively new language. The result is that the IEP community and the wider campus community comprise virtually the same people. The congruence between the two communities is further enhanced by the broad educational agenda of the IEP, which includes a wide range of extra-curricula activities.

Such a self-contained English environment is the envy of many curriculum designers, but for the IEP designers it has the paradoxical effect that it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to impress on the IEP students the impact of the larger and much more heterogeneous campus community which exists between September and June. Rather than "cry wolf" when there is no wolf to be seen, the IEP, and its Oral Communications Course in particular, make pedagogical decisions that make sense within the socio-cultural parameters of the IEP community. The coherence and insularity of this community means that the standard English academic pragmatic norms which are disseminated in the IEP classroom can not only survive contact with the wider campus community but may actually flourish within it.

This apparent success can be understood in terms of Smith's framework in the following way:

(1) a sense of self:
a member of a group with shared academic English learning goals

(2) a sense of the other
both similar and different

(3) a sense of the relationship between the self and other
(a) equal & largely informal (with other students)
(b) instructors usually present at extra-curricula social events

(4) a sense of the setting/ social situation
(a) the EAP classrooms are permeated by a construct of a "standard" academic
English pragmatics, a construct moderated by professional EAP instructors
(b) the summer campus community is dominated by the members of the IEP

(5) a sense of the goal or objective
(a) shared goal of improving academic English communication skills
(b) no reason to reject the validity of the construct of a "standard" academic English
pragmatics

8.2 The post-matriculation MBA environment

The post-matriculation MBA environment places the EAP curriculum planning and instruction team in a situation which is the opposite of the situation which prevails through the summer recess. The first difference is that the student community becomes more heterogeneous. The IEP student group as whole becomes a minority within a wider first year student community which numbers between one hundred and twenty and one hundred and forty students. The twenty-five to thirty MBA students who attended the summer IEP also find themselves in a minority within a first year MBA student community of between seventy and eighty students.

The second, and most important, difference is that at least half of the new MBA students bring with them a great deal of confidence about their proficiency in English, a level of confidence which is considerably greater than the confidence of those students who attended the IEP. This confidence derives from two types of learning experience. The first type of experience is characteristic of the students from the Outer Circle countries such as India, the Philippines, Singapore and several African countries who have used English intensively for a wide variety of purposes from an early age. Rejecting the notion that sustained contact with Inner Circle native speakers is a pre-condition for the "native speaker" appellation, these students often describe English as their "native language." The other type of learning experience is characteristic of students from Expanding Circle countries and, in a few cases, from other countries, who have chosen to pursue the study of English as a major

lifetime mission. A few of these students have had the opportunity to live and study in the Inner Circle countries, but a large majority of them have developed their English language proficiency in their home country, a process which often culminates in enrollment in one of the English-medium undergraduate institutes which are rapidly appearing in countries outside the Inner and Expanding Circles. These students tend to reject the notion that sustained contact with Inner Circle native speakers is necessary in order to develop an advanced level of English proficiency.

Once these new students arrive on the campus, the IEP students find that the roles and identities which they developed in response to their experiences of education in English as a foreign language do not necessarily fit the dynamics and norms of the new MBA student community. Applying Smith's "five senses" framework to the new MBA community suggests concisely both how jagged can be the transition between the IEP community and the new MBA community and how difficult it might be for the IEP students to maintain recently learned "standard" pragmatic norms of behavior:

(1) a sense of self
   (a) a member of a group with shared MBA goals
   (b) many of the new students perceive their English communication skills to require no further improvement because they are "native speakers" or have obtained undergraduate degrees from self-proclaimed "English-medium universities" or have high TOEFL scores

(2) a sense of the other
   more different and less similar than during the IEP

(3) a sense of the relationship between the self and other
   (a) equal & largely informal with other students (as before)
   (b) teachers not usually present at out-of-class events (which are less frequent than those during the IEP)

(4) a sense of the setting/ social situation
   (a) the 1st year MBA classroom is large (50+ students) and impersonal – interpersonal communication opportunities limited
   (b) outside the MBA classroom, several study groups work on homework assignments; discussions often dominated by the more "proficient" students who did not attend the IEP; native speakers few and far between

(5) a sense of the goal or objective
   (a) shared MBA goals
   (b) many non-IEP students assume that their English goals have already been achieved

Not surprisingly, there is strong anecdotal evidence in both written and oral form[2] that the intercultural communication negotiation process which takes place in this setting tends to be dominated by the highly confident members of the new MBA student cohort. The evidence indicates that in several instances this biased negotiation process results in the very antithesis of the target language behaviors which the IEP instructors modeled and disseminated during the summer. Examples of frequent violations of the IEP-instructed norms include:

- the neglect of the negotiation of meaning and of the resolution of communication breakdown because of overconfidence on the part of some discussion participants
- the breakdown of turn-taking protocols
- muddles caused by failures to communicate expectations explicitly
- assertive, even emotional, communication of opinions
- a lack of attention to the use of face-saving protocols such as linguistic softening devices

The IEP students have often complained privately about these deviations from their expectations, especially when they lead to serious communication failures. At the same time, however, many of them have felt powerless to argue in favor of IEP-instructed norms or any other norms of language behavior because the other students are in possession of the ultimate power, the power of possessing the reality, at least in terms of purely linguistic knowledge and fluency, and the status of advanced language proficiency. While it is far from being the case that all their intercultural communication experiences have run counter to the expectations induced by the IEP, the IEP students themselves have stated that more often than not they set aside the IEP-instructed norms of language behavior and "patiently" adapt themselves to whatever norms of language behavior emerge from the interpersonal discourse which involves their more proficient student colleagues.

The fact that IEP students frequently complain about the deviations from their language behavior expectations shows that many of them continue to believe to some extent in the *validity* of the norms which underlie these expectations. Nonetheless, the passive response of the same students to violations of these norms suggests that they regard the IUJ campus community as a place where the *viability* of these norms is doubtful. The daily encounters with violations of the norms awakens them to the reality of World Englishes where immersion in an English-speaking environment does not necessarily mean immersion in Anglo-Saxon norms of language behavior. The IEP students quite rightly start to doubt

that the international professional and academic worlds are as simple as the ones they imagined before and during the IEP.

As already explained, it is the belief of the EAP instructors at IUJ that certain language behaviors associated with Anglo-Saxon cultures which are targeted in the IEP will be of considerable value for many of the students in their future professional or academic careers. The opportunity to re-orient a large proportion of the IEP students to these targeted behaviors exists in the form of English courses which are provided on a non-intensive basis and concurrently with the 1st year MBA courses. The courses are designed for the less proficient students and thus tend to be populated by the same students who enrolled in the IEP. This segregation is convenient, but it serves to ameliorate rather than remove the main challenge which the curriculum/course designer faces. This challenge exists at two levels: (1) how to innoculate the targeted language behaviors from the students' post-matriculation experience of failure and (2) how to go beyond innoculation to the creation of some new face validity for these behaviors.

9. THE NEGOTIATION MODULE

Expressed in terms of Smith's five senses framework, the curriculum/course designer's challenge can be formulated as a challenge to identify various aspects of each of the five senses and to appeal to those aspects which will lend only positive reinforcement to the targeted language behaviors. In addition, the curriculum/course designer needs to make sure that the selected aspects are mutually consistent in terms both of their underlying logic and their surface appearance. The curriculum/course designer knows that the alignment of the five senses which was helpful during the IEP has been compromised by the students' post-matriculation experience. The best prospect, therefore, lies in identifying those aspects of the students' five senses which were not involved in any significant way during the IEP.

In the event, this curriculum/course designer (the author) decided that a narrowly focused business negotiation module could best engage aspects of the students' five senses which appeared to be unaffected by previous negative experiences and which were, at the same time, mutually consistent. The analysis which led to this decision is presented below:

(1) a sense of self
appeal to the students' strengthening professional identity & confidence

(2) a sense of the other
appeal to the students' shared professional identity

(3) a sense of the relationship between the self and other
contamination by the post-matriculation experience is reduced because (a) the IEP students are re-united and (b) there is an appeal to a post-IUJ future

(4) a sense of the setting/ social situation
simulated, but has face validity: a large number of the MBA students aspire to work in international business environments which involve cross-border exchanges

(5) a sense of the goal or objective
students can accept that international business negotiation is only weakly biased by imbalances in linguistic knowledge and fluency; any significant asymmetrical distribution of power derives from superior bargaining positions which reflect competitive advantage and/or superior financial resources
furthermore, in situations where the distribution of power between the negotiating parties is symmetrical, the choice of language behavior may be significant in fostering or in hindering the development of a long-term business relationship

9.1 The language behaviors targeted by the module

Since the main purpose of the negotiation module is to put the IEP students back in touch with the interpersonal language behaviors which were identified and promoted during the IEP, as far as possible the module is designed in such a way that these behaviors contribute significantly to outcomes which the participants perceive to be "successful." Once again, these behaviors are:

- frequent explicit attention to negotiation of meaning and resolution of communication breakdown
- pro-active approach to turn-taking
- direct and "rational" communication of views
- democratic "give and take" in discussion which requires objective recognition of valid elements in others' statements
- some attention to saving "face" through linguistic softening devices such as hedges

The author identified two main design factors which would be critical. The first design factor was the careful selection of negotiation models which illustrate the importance of all five types of behavior. The author already knew that the small number of EFL textbooks which focus on business negotiation all pay attention to these behaviors. The choice finally fell on the negotiation models in the textbook, *Negotiating* (O'Connor, Pilbeam & Scott-Barrett, 1992). The two main reasons for the choice were the sharp focus on the behaviors and the consistent portrayal of all the negotiation actors as either employees of international British

and American companies or as their cosmopolitan and English-proficient negotiation counterparts. Examples of some key pragmatic exponents taken from the textbook and highlighted in the module can be found in Appendix A. The second design factor was the development of negotiation simulations which (a) would require the students to focus on pragmatic acceptability, (b) because of the absence of distracting complications, would allow the students to focus on pragmatic acceptability and (c) would be plausible and interesting enough for the students to feel that they had face validity as *negotiations*.

9.2 Design parameters for the module simulations

Given the three development constraints, the design of the negotiation simulations turned out to be the most delicate part of the module's creation. Because of his knowledge of the students' recent intercultural communication experiences within the MBA program, the author devoted most time and effort to honoring the first development constraint. Since the elimination of possible perceptions of pragmatic ambiguity was critical, the design of the simulations always paid attention to four key elements: geographical affiliation, orientation to English, even distribution of negotiation power and desire for a long-term relationship. The companies presented in the negotiation scenarios were identified as international companies which had their home bases in Inner Circle countries, as international companies such as Nestlé which are essentially "homeless" or, in a few cases, as very large international companies with home bases in Expanding Circle countries. Companies which have home bases in Outer Circle countries were ruled out. At the beginning of the module, the students were informed that all the negotiation actors had an Inner Circle orientation to English either because they were citizens of Inner Circle countries or because they (1) had been educated at tertiary level and MBA level in these countries and (2) had also worked for some time in these countries. With regard to the desirability of having an even distribution of negotiation power and the desire for a long-term relationship, the scenarios emphasized that the negotiation parties had mutually beneficial interests and had long-term planning horizons which encouraged them to look to the future as well as to the current deal. Figure 1 presents an example of a negotiation scenario prompt.

10. CONCLUSION

This paper demonstrates an intercultural communication approach to designing pragmatics-focused course modules in an institutional environment where there is significant

competition between "standard" English pragmatic conventions and other pragmatic conventions. As the speakers of World Englishes become increasingly self-assertive and as international English-medium education outside the Inner and Outer Circle countries continues to expand, we should expect to see further instances of this competition on university campuses in Japan and elsewhere. English language programs at such universities will often find that they will have to take the lead in fashioning a careful response to forces which involve fundamental issues of personal identity and behavioral norms. For these programs, the traditional sensitivity of the EFL professional in the classroom will not be enough. The programs will also need to respond to these issues in a systematic way appropriate for an academic institution. It is the hope of this paper that it illustrates one way in which a program can respond to the issues not only with sensitivity but also with some academic confidence.

Figure 1

A sample prompt for a practice scenario within the negotiation module

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Negotiation Scenario #2

Two parent companies have formed a joint venture to produce, bottle, market and distribute soft drinks. The two companies are:

(1) Suntory Corporation of Japan

(2) Nestlé Thailand, Nestlé's subsidiary in Thailand. Nestlé Thailand's primary business in the past has been food manufacturing and distribution.

The two joint venture partners are confident that their business interests are complementary and mutually beneficial. The joint venture's initial ten year plan assumes that all the activities of the joint venture will take place in Thailand.

The representatives of the two companies are now meeting to negotiate the two main issues:

(A) the proportion of the start-up financing which each parent company will contribute

(B) the extent to which the top executives – chairman, president, CEO etc. – will be provided by Suntory Corporation and the extent to which they will be provided by Nestlé Thailand

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NOTES

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APPENDIX A

Sample pragmatic exponents taken from the negotiation module

Language Summary

Asking for clarification   **Confirming and expanding**

So,	*if I understand you*	*you feel that....?*	*That's right.*	*What's more...*
	if I'm not mistaken		*Exactly!*	

Asking for clarification of details   **Correcting and expanding**

You mean	*a French name*	*then?*	*Not necessarily.*	*It could be...*
Do you mean	*an agency fee*	*when you say....?*	*That's not quite what I meant.*	*What I'm trying to*

Reasons and proposals   **Sympathetic reactions and reservations**

Reason

The name Clark-Maxwell is familiar to multinational clients

Sympathetic reaction

I see what you mean. That's something we'll have to take into account.

Reason

The name is not known in France and sounds very English.

Reservations

I appreciate that. Of course the sound of the name is important	*However,...*
I take your point about the English sound of the name	*but....*

Proposal

Maybe a better solution would be to combine both our names.

Sympathetic reaction

That's certainly worth considering.

Reservations

It certainly sounds good on paper, but I'm not sure

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