

Pragmatics for Language Educators: Acquisitional and Cross-Cultural Pragmatics (REQ / 3 cr.)

Graduate School for Language Sciences
Kanda University of International Studies
Fall 2025

Instructor: Noriko Ishihara, Ph.D.

Email: ishi0029@gmail.com

Course Dates

9/21 (Sun. 10:00-17:00)	10/19 (Sun. 10:00-17:00)	11/23 (Sun. 10:00-17:00)
12/21 (Sun. 10:00-17:00)	1/18 (Sun. 10:00-17:00)	

Note: Additional tasks equivalent to **6 hours** are required via online work.

Course Description

Second language (L2) learners need not only the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary but also the ability to understand and use culturally appropriate language according to the given social context (pragmatic or sociolinguistic competence). However, linguistic politeness (pragmatic aspects of the L2) has generally received little attention in the L2 curriculum and teacher development.

This course focuses on the learning and teaching of L2 pragmatics. The goals of the course are for you to: 1) enhance your understanding of what pragmatics is, 2) learn how pragmatics is closely intertwined with culture, identity, and multilingualism, and 3) develop awareness and skills for addressing pragmatic competence in teaching and assessing learners' pragmatic development in an L2.

The course will start by exploring concepts related to politeness, face, implicatures, speech acts, and discourse, and examine samples of research in cross-cultural, acquisitional, and intercultural pragmatics. The course will also introduce various data collection instruments and theoretical frameworks, which we will critically evaluate in relation to our view of language learning as a cognitive, psychological, social, and emotional activity. Moreover, due to the special focus placed on the pedagogical considerations in this course, we will take a close look at effective teaching practices and explore issues related to classroom assessment of learners' pragmatic competence. You will be encouraged to practice reflective teaching as you design (and engage in) pragmatics-focused instruction.

Key Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, participants will:

1. Demonstrate an awareness of sociocultural aspects of language learning and teaching (**DP 1, 5**).
2. Enhance their ability to identify learners' needs in intercultural communication (**DP 4**).
3. Become familiar with current theories and approaches to the teaching of L2 pragmatics and develop a pragmatics-focused lesson plan that incorporates research-based information (**DP 2, 6**).
4. Demonstrate a deeper awareness of the link between learners' sociocultural identities and expressions of linguistic politeness and consider culturally sensitive instruction and assessment based on this awareness (**DP 5, 9**).
5. Collaborate and network with other participants within and beyond their immediate teaching environment (**DP 10**).

Note. DP is an abbreviation for Diploma Policy statements. TESOL Program statements (objectives) can be found [here](#). Numbers correspond to the statement(s) emphasized in each course outcome.

Course Website

Go to the course Google Classroom (GC) and enter your username and password to sign in.

Course Requirements

Your Responsibilities:

- To attend all class meetings and participate in activities and discussions at all levels.
- To complete the required readings before class and engage in reflection on your current teaching practice.
- To complete all assignments outlined below in a timely manner.
- To gather resources and information from existing literature and the CARLA pragmatics database related to your topics. Do independent research for at least **three hours**.
- Spend at least **three hours** reading and learning from the papers and lessons of your peers.

Assignments:

Pragmatic language analysis journal (2 entries): due 2nd & 4th course meetings

The purpose of this assignment is to provide you with an opportunity to analyze authentic language use from a pragmatics or discourse point of view that goes beyond the lay observation of language.

For the **first** entry, identify a short, AUTHENTIC (naturally-occurring or naturalistic) language sample in English (or L2 Japanese) spoken or written by one or more pragmatically competent users of the language **other than yourself**. It could be an email message in your inbox, a series of Facebook/SNS post interactions, or an audio or video recording of your dinner conversation. In the case of oral data, transcribe it for analysis. Language used in the **high PDI context** is recommended as you are likely to find more pragmatic strategies in such data.

For the **second** entry, **if you used written data in your first entry, try an oral interaction this time; if you used oral data earlier, choose written pieces this time**. Again, your language sample should be authentic (naturally-occurring or at least naturalistic), spoken or written by one or more pragmatically competent users of the language **other than yourself**. Your data can be elicited through DCTs and/or role-plays or ideally captured in its ecological setting through field observation, audio/video recording of natural talk or interaction in the media. Some of the data can be used in your final lesson plan below if appropriate.

Use the **terms and concepts** introduced in this course and analyze them both linguistically and culturally. Indicate which parts of your data represent certain pragmatics/discourse strategies, **express face, (in)directness, (in)formality, or (im)politeness, communication or accommodation strategies, familiarity, solidarity, respect, or compassion, index certain relationships or identities, display power and dominance, create potential for misunderstanding**, and so on.

Each entry should be approximately **400 words** excluding your language data. Submit each entry in a **Google Doc** in the “Pragmatic Language Analysis Journals” section of our course Google Classroom (GC) **before the second and fourth course meetings**.

Pragmatics-focused literature review (mid-term paper): due 3rd course meeting

You will be asked to select and research a component of pragmatic competence or a discourse feature of your choice for your mid-term paper. Start by using **the course book** and books in the program library to **read and report empirically-based information** on your selected topic. It is a good idea to **identify your topic early and find resources to review**. Browse through **the tables of contents of the course book and the books in the program library** as well as the online resources listed at the end of this syllabus. For example, if your topic is a speech act, see if it is covered in Chapter 4 of the course book and on CARLA’s “Descriptions of Speech Acts” website, and identify relevant chapters in the program books. Submit your mid-term paper **in a Google Doc before the start of the 3rd course meeting and be prepared to discuss it informally in class**. Spend at least one hour reading mid-term papers of your peers to learn about a wider range of topics. You will receive written feedback from the instructor within a week. See the guidelines for the details on this assignment.

Pragmatics-focused lesson plan (final paper): due 5th course meeting

Based on the topic selected for your mid-term paper, you should develop an instructional intervention (lesson plan) that aims to improve learners’ **pragmatic awareness** and/or **use** of that specific pragmatic feature. You are welcome to adapt published lesson plans or create one on your own. Post your presentation materials in the Stream for sharing, and you will receive suggestions and feedback from other course participants when you present it in the final course meeting. **Also submit your final paper in a**

Google Doc by the start of the last course meeting. Instructor feedback will be given on your final paper. Please spend at least two hours reading your peers' mid-term papers/presentations. See the guidelines for the details on this assignment.

Assessment

Below is a synopsis of how assignments will be reflected in the final course grade:

Participation (Attendance/participation in class and online)	20%
Assignment A: Language analysis journal entries (15% each)	30%
Assignment B: Mid-term paper	20%
Assignment B: Final paper write-up and presentation	30%

Evaluation: Letter grade

A scale to be used for the final grade: A+ 100-95; A 94-85; B 84-70; C 69-60; F 59-0.

Tentative Course Schedule

Date	Topics	Readings/Assignments
9/21/25	➤ Introduction to the course ➤ Terms, concepts, and definitions ➤ Background in L2 pragmatics ➤ Teacher development and instructional pragmatics	Hinkel, I-2022 (Ishihara coursebook) Ch.1 (Optional readings: Bardovi-Harlig)
10/19/25	➤ Overview of cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics ➤ Research on refusals in cross-cultural/interlanguage pragmatics ➤ Example of pragmatics-focused instruction ➤ Data collection instruments ➤ Guidelines for the mid-term paper	I-2022 Ch.3, 4, Eslami (optional: Yule Ch 5-8, Polensky & Zhuang) Language analysis journal #1 due
11/23/25	➤ Mid-term paper sharing/discussion ➤ Example of pragmatics-focused instruction ➤ Textbook analysis and adaptation ➤ Causes of learners' pragmatic failure/choice ➤ Peace linguistics and pragmatics ➤ Pragmatic language analysis journal #2 ➤ Final project guidelines	I-2022 Ch 5 (text only pp. 76-109), Fordyce, Knight (Optional: I-2022 Ch 7-8, Ishihara, Orihashi, & Clark, Taguchi, Wong) Mid-term paper submission due
12/21/25	➤ Cognitive theories related to the learning of L2 pragmatics ➤ Linking theory and practice in acquisitional pragmatics ➤ Example of pragmatics-focused instruction ➤ Psychological, social, and post-structuralist views related to the acquisition of pragmatics	I-2022 Ch6, Houck & Fujimori (Optional: Carroll, Riddiford & Newton, Furmanovsky, Liu et al., Schauer) Language analysis journal #2 due
1/18/26	➤ Final paper presentations ➤ Assessment of learners' pragmatic competence ➤ The pragmatics of English as an International Language ➤ Wrap-up reflection	I-2022 Ch 12 (Optional: Lee & McChesney, Tajeddin & Alemi, Taguchi & Ishihara) Final paper submission due

Required/Optional Course Readings

Textbooks

Ishihara, N. (2022) with Cohen, A.D. *Teaching and learning pragmatics: Where language and culture meet* (2nd ed.). Routledge.* ("I-2022" above) (with guest contributor Cohen, A. D. writing Chapter 10, ISBN: 978-0367767082) *Please use the 2nd edition, not the first with the same title.

Optional text:

Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.

Ishihara, N. (author/translator) & Cohen, A. (author). (2015). 多文化理解の語学教育 語用論的指導への招待 (abridged translation and revision of *Teaching and learning pragmatics: Where language and culture meet*, 1st edition) Kenkyusha.

Online Course Packet (both required and optional readings)

For course meeting #1

Hinkel, E. (2014). Culture and pragmatics in language teaching and learning. In M. Celce-Murcia, D. M. Brinton, & M. A. Snow (Eds.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (4th ed., pp. 394-408). National Geographic Learning.

Bardovi-Harlig, K. (2020). Pedagogical linguistics: A view from L2 pragmatics. *Pedagogical Linguistics*, 1(1), 44-65.

For course meeting #2

Eslami, Z. R. (2010). Refusals: How to develop appropriate refusal strategies. In A. Martínez-Flor & E. Usó-Juan (Eds.), *Speech Act Performance: Theoretical, empirical and methodological issues* (pp. 217-236). John Benjamins.

Polensky, L., & Zhuang, J. (2019). A meta-analysis of L2 pragmatics instruction. In N. Taguchi (Ed.), *Routledge handbook of second language acquisition and pragmatics* (pp. 287-307): Routledge.

For course meeting #3

Fordyce, K. (2012). What's in the name? In J. Ronald, K. Fordyce, C. Rinnert & T. Knight (Eds.), *Pragmatics: Bringing pragmatics to second language classrooms* (pp. 9-11). The Japan Association for Language Teaching Pragmatics Special Interest Group.

Knight, T. (2012). I was wondering if... you could make that request more politely. In J. Ronald, K. Fordyce, C. Rinnert & T. Knight (Eds.), *Pragmatics: Bringing pragmatics to second language classrooms* (pp. 105-108). The Japan Association for Language Teaching Pragmatics Special Interest Group.

Ishihara, N., Orihashi, T., & Clark, Z. (2019). Innovations in elementary classrooms: Integrating the teaching of English, history, and peace linguistics. In H. Reinders, S. Ryan, & S. Nakao (Eds.), *Innovations in Language Learning and Teaching: The Case of Japan* (pp. 47-69). Palgrave Macmillan.

Taguchi, N. (2022). Teaching and learning pragmatics. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of practical second language teaching and learning* (pp. 499-512). Oxford: Routledge.

Wong, J. (2011). Pragmatic competency in telephone conversation closings. In N. Houck & D. Tatsuki (Eds.), *Pragmatics: Teaching natural conversation* (pp. 135-152). TESOL.

For course meeting #4

Houck, N., & Fujimori, J. (2010). "Teacher, you should lose some weight": Advice-giving in English. In D. Tatsuki & N. Houck (Eds.), *Pragmatics: Teaching speech acts* (pp. 89-103). TESOL.

Carroll, D. (2011). Teaching preference organization: Learning how not to say "no". In N. Houck & D. Tatsuki (Eds.), *Pragmatics: Teaching natural conversation* (pp. 105-118). TESOL.

Riddiford, N., & Newton, J. (2010). Small talk. In N. Riddiford & J. Newton, *Workplace talk in action: An ESOL resource* (pp. 9-17). School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, Victoria University of Wellington.

Fermanovsky, M. (2020). Developing advice-giving pragmatic skills through dialogs focusing on ethical dilemmas. In J. J. Tarandis, J. Ronald, D. Fujimoto, & N. Ishihara (Eds.), *Pragmatics undercover: The search for natural talk in EFL textbooks* (pp. 133-142). The Japan Association for Language Teaching Pragmatics Special Interest Group.

Liu, X., Lamb, M., & Chambers, G. N. (2022). Bidirectional relationship between L2 pragmatic development and learner identity in a study abroad context. *System*, 107, 102823. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2022.102823>

Schauer, G. A. (2022). Teaching L2 pragmatics to young learners: A review study. *Applied Pragmatics*, 4(2), 137-158.

For course meeting #5

Lee, J. S., & McChesney, B. (2000). Discourse rating tasks: A teaching tool for developing sociocultural competence. *ELT Journal*, 54(2), 161-168.

Tajeddin, Z., & Alemi, M. (2021). Pragmatics pedagogy in EIL: A historical perspective. In Z. Tajeddin & M. Alemi (Eds.), *Pragmatics pedagogy in English as an international language* (pp. 1-18). London: Routledge.

Taguchi, N., & Ishihara, N. (2018). The Pragmatics of English as a Lingua Franca: Research and Pedagogy in the Era of Globalization. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 38, 80-101.

Useful Online Resources (also check physical books in the office)

Plan to spend at least **3 hours** taking advantage of these resources.

Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition. *CARLA Speech Act Databases*.

- **Description of speech acts:** <https://archive.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/descriptions.html>
- **Learning speech acts in Japanese.** Self-access learner modules for learning five speech acts: <https://archive.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/japanese/introtospeechacts/index.htm>
- **Dancing with words: Strategies of learning pragmatics in Spanish.** Self-access learner modules for learning eight speech acts: https://archive.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/sp_pragmatics/home.html

Office of English Programs, U.S. Department of State. (2003). *Teaching pragmatics* (Bardovi-Harlig, K., & Mahan-Taylor, R., eds.) Teachers' resource book for teaching pragmatics: [Teaching Pragmatics | American English \(state.gov\)](https://teachingpragmatics.state.gov) (or google "Teaching Pragmatics Department of State" as they change the link frequently)

Indiana University. *Pragmatics & Discourse*. Language and culture resources for instructors, students, and researchers of Spanish (and English) linguistics: <https://pragmatics.indiana.edu/>