

**PROBLEMS IN GIFT GIVING FOR LEARNERS OF JAPANESE:
ASSESSING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEDAGOGY, PROFICIENCY
AND PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE**

贈答表現の語用論的考察

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1. Introduction

Language textbooks generally portray an ideal form of the target language. There is often a gap, however, between these ideal forms and authentic forms used by native speakers. To some extent, this is inevitable and even useful for beginning learners. Beginning learners cannot master every possible form and must be taught the most basic or most accessible patterns. On the other hand, these gaps can cause problems in communication with native speakers, as learners are often only taught how to mimic idealized forms that stray from authentic use. This paper addresses the learning of a specific linguistic behavior, namely speech acts that take place in the context of gift giving among English-speaking American learners of Japanese as a second/foreign language (L2). In particular, I will focus on potential gaps between native norms and textbook explanations. Additionally, this study examines the relationship between the learner's L2 proficiency and their L2 behavior in order to determine if pragmatic competence improves as the proficiency level increases. The present study pays particular attention to the extent to which L2 learners' speech acts reflect their first language (L1) knowledge. I will use this analysis to offer pedagogical suggestions for ways to teach gift giving that better take into account gaps between native and target language norms. The central argument in this thesis is that learners at different proficiency levels encounter different problems in gift giving and that some of the problems faced by intermediate and advanced learners arise as a result of overly idealized and normative descriptions given by textbooks for L2 learners.

2. Literature Review

Previous Studies on Gift Giving

Gift giving is a central speech act in Japanese, which almost all learners will encounter sooner or later. Speech acts can be defined as utterances that hold more meaning than the literal semantic value of the utterance itself. Researchers of second language acquisition are attracted to speech acts, because they are difficult to perform in the second language, difficult to teach, and are deeply connected to cultural norms. According to the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition "Speech acts include real-life interactions and require not only knowledge of the language but also appropriate use of that language within a given culture" (CARLA 2009). Many types of utterances such as apologies, greetings, requests, complaints, invitations, compliments, refusals and gift giving, can all be considered speech acts.

Despite the fact that the pragmatics of gift giving has attracted significant attention in business communications, anthropological studies, and even in travel guides, linguists have paid little attention to gift giving. Rather, most linguistic studies have focused on speech acts such as apologies, requests, complaints, invitations, greetings, compliments, and refusals. (Ide 1998, Barnlund and Araki 1985, García 1992, Moriyama

1999, Nakabachi 1996, Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz 1990). This lacuna is striking, particularly because gift giving plays such an important role in both Japanese culture and in Japanese language education.

The speech act of gift giving in Japanese depends upon an understanding of variables such as hierarchy, social distance between the speaker and hearer, and formality of the situation. In her well-known anthropological study, Lebra (1976) describes gift giving as an example of reciprocity. She argues that this reciprocity involves *on* (“a culture-bond notion of reciprocity for the Japanese”) and *giri* (“social obligation”) which perpetuates the cycle of gift giving (Lebra 1976:46, 91). Since gift giving is a decidedly social and cultural practice, it cannot be understood by semantic means alone. With regard to pedagogy, the significant variance of gift giving related speech acts employed in different contexts could potentially create problems for learners of Japanese.

Cross-linguistic Influence/ Learner language

One of the main goals of this study is to examine how a learner’s native language may affect his or her ability to negotiate situations of gift giving. Recent work in second-language acquisition on cross-linguistic influence is particularly relevant for this topic. Cross-linguistic influence covers a wide range of phenomenon including language mixing and language (L1) transfer. Different forms of language transfer include transfer with regard to phonology, lexicon, syntax in interlanguage (learner language), conceptual transfer of semantics and pragmatics, etc. In learning a second language, knowledge of one’s native language influences how one learns the target language. In some cases this is a positive influence that helps the learner learn the target language more efficiently. In others, this influence has a negative effect that interferes with the learning process. Odlin characterizes the phenomenon of cross-linguistic influence as follows: “Transfer is the influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired” (Odlin 2005). This definition touches upon many of the key issues of pragmatic transfer that will be described below.

For the purpose of this study, the most relevant difficulties encountered by language learners are related to the field of pragmatics. Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics, which focuses on the language form, meaning, and use beyond the literal meaning of the sentence. According to pragmatics, therefore, conversational implicature is viewed as equally important to other forms of linguistic knowledge. As a result, learners of a second language need to be aware of the pragmatic aspects of language learning. The ability to understand and produce the implicature of a speaker’s utterance is called pragmatic competence. In addition to linguistic knowledge, the pragmatic aspect of L1 also influences second language learning. This is known as pragmatic transfer. If the norms of native (L1) communication style and the target (L2) communication style are similar, then pragmatic transfer helps facilitate communication. If the norms of L1 and L2 are significantly different, however, transfer may lead to miscommunication. Pragmatic transfer is a particularly fruitful means for understanding gift giving, as it is likely that both cultural and linguistic biases in the native (L1) language will influence the communication style in the target (L2) language (Bulum-Kulka et. al 1989).

At the same time, SLA research suggests that not all errors necessarily arise from L1 influence. Rather, many of the errors L2 learners make are neither target-like nor

first-language-like, but derive from a linguistic system created by the learner himself. Learner language, also known as interlanguage, is a term first coined by Selinker (1972) that refers to the language produced by learners. This language can be considered a “dynamic system” that follows systematic rules while at the same time constantly evolving and developing over time (Mitchell and Myles 2004: 38-39). In short, the concept of learner language is useful because it emphasizes that each learner may develop a system of rules that does not necessarily follow the rules of either the target language or the first language. As I will argue below, it appears that some learners of Japanese make errors based on what can be described as an “idealized” form of L2; in other words, the errors that learners make do not necessarily arise from L1 preconceptions. Learner language provides a model for interpreting these types of errors.

Moreover, the dynamic aspect of learner language is particularly important for my study. My research, which will be described in more detail below, suggests that the types of errors that learners of Japanese make with regard to gift giving differ depending on proficiency level. Using both theoretical concepts of pragmatic transfer and learner language may at first seem contradictory, as one posits that errors arise based on the learner’s native language and the other assumes that errors arise from a learner created system. However, I will suggest that these approaches can be successfully combined; at certain stages in the learning process pragmatic transfer accounts for most errors whereas at later stages errors arise from a linguistic system at least partially created by the learner.

3. Research Questions

1. How are Japanese people’s language behaviors for gift giving described in textbooks for L2 learners?
2. What are the norms of Japanese and English natives’ language behavior for gift giving?
3. Do textbooks for English-speaking Japanese L2 learners adequately reflect the Japanese gift-giving norms?
4. Are L2 learners’ language behaviors closer to the descriptions found of the target language in textbooks or to their own L1 knowledge?
5. Does English-speaking L2 learners' language behavior for gift giving become closer to those of Japanese natives as L2 proficiency increases?

4. Method

In order to investigate learner language with respect to the speech act of gift giving, I combined several methodologies to conduct my research. First I analyzed introductory and intermediate level textbooks²⁴ widely used in the U.S. Second, I conducted a survey to examine the cultural and linguistic norms with regard to gift giving. In addition to examining the norms, I used the data from this survey to assess potential problem areas for learners of Japanese.

In order to obtain language data, I recruited a hundred participants for this study from the New York and New Jersey areas. Detailed demographic information of the

²⁴ The textbooks I choose are Makino, Hatasa&Hatasa (1998), Ishizawa &Toyota (Eds.) (1998), Banno, Ohno, Sakane &Shinagawa(1999), Tohsaku. 2005 and Miura & MacGloin. 2008

participants is listed in Table 1.

Table 1 Demographic Information about the Participants

	Female	Male	Age Ave.	BA	MA	PhD	Enrolled in College	Other	Length of stay in the country (year)	Length of studying Japanese (hours/week)	Length of speaking Japanese (year)
Native Japanese	11	9	33	8	10	1	0	1	2.1	N/A	N/A
Native English	12	8	26	6	2	0	0	12	N/A	0	0
Elementary Learner	11	9	23	4	3	0	13	0	0	1.1	3.6
Intermediate Learner	11	9	27	5	12	0	3	0	2.0	3.3	2.8
Advanced Learner	7	13	31	5	8	5	2	0	5.0	6.9	9.7

The participants were asked to fill out a demographic information sheet and a survey. They were also asked to respond to each situation as they would in an actual conversation. The survey was composed of a dialogue completion task (DCT), which I used to assess expressions used in offering a gift. The DCT was composed of twelve situations. Each situation was a combination of three variables: formality, distance between speaker and the hearer, and status. The twelve-stimulus types are listed below.

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 (Formal-Higher-Close) | 7 (Formal-Higher-Distant) |
| 2 (Formal-Equal-Close) | 8 (Formal-Equal-Distant) |
| 3 (Formal-Lower-Close) | 9 (Formal-Lower-Distant) |
| 4 (Informal-Higher-Close) | 10 (Informal-Higher-Distant) |
| 5 (Informal-Equal-Close) | 11 (Informal-Equal-Distant) |
| 6 (Informal-Lower-Close) | 12 (Informal-Lower-Distant) |

Twelve questions were listed in a random order. The DCT was prepared in four different random orders to avoid order effect.

Data Coding

The collected data was analyzed in three ways. First, data was classified in accord with a semantic formula that I created. Drawing on the classification of Beebe, et.al. (1990) on refusal and Haugh (2004) on the concept of politeness (2004), as well as by examining responses from a pilot study that I conducted, I created the following classificatory formula:

1. Modesty
 - 1.1. Self-oriented politeness: formal (showing one does not think too highly of oneself)
 - 1.2. Self-oriented politeness: casual
 - 1.3. Other-oriented politeness: formal (showing one thinks well of others)
 - 1.4. Other-oriented politeness: informal
2. Non-Modesty
 - 2.1. Factual
 - 2.2. Simple offering
3. Comments for the occasion
4. Non-verbal
5. Other

I took three steps to analyze the data from my survey. First, the initial responses from the survey were categorized using the above semantic formulas. Then the frequency for each stimulus type (question) was calculated to see the typical response and tendency for

each group. Second, the order of the semantic formula was analyzed. For example, if the response was “*Haha kara no purezento desu. Dōzo.* (Lit. This is a present from my mother. Here.)”, the order of semantic formula would be formulated as ”1. Non-modesty (Factual), 2. Non-Modesty (Simple offering), 3. ----- ”. Third, in addition to analyzing the order, the content of the semantic formula was also examined.

5. Results

Textbook Analysis

In Makino et al. (1998), gift giving speech acts are introduced in chapter seven of book two. Book two would generally be used in a second year classroom. This chapter is appropriately entitled “gifts”. The lesson contains a question and answer section that introduces what the textbook considers to be a typical speech act used in situations of gift giving: “*nihon dewa okurimono o suru toki, yoku ‘tsumaranai mono desu ga’ to iimasu.*” (“In Japan, people often say ‘It’s not much...’ when they give gifts.”) (Makino et al. 1998: 334). This textbook mentions how speech style changes depending on formality. At the same time, it also gives examples of casual and very casual speech. Overall, the textbook provides several expressions for the three different levels of formality, but it fails to describe how speech styles may change depending on the social states or distance between two speakers. Modest expressions represent the focal point of the lesson.

In Banno et al. (1999), the gift giving speech act appears in lesson fourteen “Valentine’s Day” in book two, which would most frequently be used in a second year classroom. As is common in Japanese textbooks, gift giving is introduced along with giving and receiving verbs. However, this textbook lacks an explanation or cultural note for expressions for gift giving. In the dialogue section, Mary, one of the main characters in the textbook, who is an international student from America, gives a sweater on Valentine’s Day to Takeshi, who is a university student in Japan. Mary says “*Takeshi san, Hai, kore.*” (Takeshi, here you go.) (Banno et.al. 1999: 28). From the context of this textbook, it is clear that the situation is informal. Mary and Takeshi are equal in their social status as college students. The relationship between them can be considered close, because they are dating. Although the textbook does well to introduce this type of familiar and informal language, it fails to present any explanation that would enable learners to recognize these characteristics in the conversation. Moreover, this is the only example of gift giving in the entire book. Since this expression is informal and only acceptable between people in a close relationship and of equal status, the textbook risks limiting the learner’s ability to communicate effectively; the learner who only knows how to present a gift with this expression may be perceived as rude in other situations.

In “*Minna no Nihongo*” (1998), the speech act of gift giving appears in a comparatively early part of the textbook. As mentioned above, this textbook is written entirely in Japanese, so learners with different backgrounds and different native languages can use it. The preface of the book describes its main purpose as intended for learners who need to communicate in Japanese right away at work, home, school and in the community (3A network, 1998: Preface). Therefore, the content of the book aims to reflect Japanese social context, social life, and everyday life in Japan. For example, in the conversation between the learner Mr. Santos and his landlord in lesson two, Mr. Santos gives a gift saying “*anō, kore, honno kimochi desu.*”(Ah, this is a token of my feelings.) (3A Network, 1998: 15). This expression shows Mr. Santos’s modesty. In lesson twelve, there is a another conversation where the learner Mr. Miller gives a gift to

his landlord saying “*Kore, Kyōto no omiyage desu.*” (This is a souvenir from Kyoto.) (3A Network, 1998: 97). Both learners here have equal social positions to the landlord, but the difference is the closeness of their relationship. In the conversation with Mr. Santos, he had just moved to the apartment. Therefore, his relationship with the landlord was still not very close. On the other hand, Mr. Miller had lived in the apartment for a while so he knew the landlord well and had a closer relationship with him. This textbook, therefore, provides some examples of gift giving that take into account differences in the relationship between the giver and receiver of the gift. That said, the textbook gives no explanation on the differences in language, so it is entirely the responsibility of the teacher to point out these differences to the learners. Moreover, the textbook fails to provide other examples that take into account different hierarchical social relations and different levels of formality.

In Tohsaku (2005), the speech act of gift giving is introduced in chapter two of book II with a special language note that states, “Japanese people typically refuse when they are first offered food, gifts and favors. The person who is offering these things then says, *dōzo enryo shinaide kudasai.* (please don’t hold back/please don’t hesitate.)” (Tohsaku 2005:105). Another example expression given for presenting gifts is, “*anō, kore tsumaranai mono desu ga, dōzo*”(Well, it’s not much, but please have it)” (Tohsaku 2005:105). In a sample dialogue, the same expression is used to give a gift to someone who invited you to his or her house. This textbook is limited in that it only focuses on humble expressions and does not pay attention to potential situational differences.

Miura and MacGloin revised their widely used textbook in 2008. The speech act of gift giving appears in lesson nine called “gift giving”. This particular speech act is clearly emphasized, as it includes a page long cultural note regarding gift giving. This cultural note specifically addresses both modesty and formality in gift giving. Miura and MacGloin suggest that “*tsumaranai mono desu ga*” is too formal for exchange students to use to host parents and that “*taishita mono ja nain desu ga*” is more appropriate. They are both humble expressions, but for Miura and MacGloin, the formality is different. They support their case with example dialogues that express different situations of giving. Overall, this textbook shows significant concern for the formality of the situation of gift giving, but still emphasizes modest expressions.

In summary, four out of five textbooks introduce humble expressions with regard to gift giving. Although, Banno et al. (1999) introduces the situation between people in a close relationship in an informal situation using direct expressions, most of the examples in the other textbooks use formal situations or conversations between people who are not close. Therefore, textbooks prepare student for these types of situations and succeed particularly in teaching humble expressions. Although the better textbooks portray different levels of formality and distance between a speaker and hearer, all of the textbooks except Banno (1999) can be said to potentially overemphasize humble language. Of course textbooks have to be simple, but oversimplification is also not desirable and can create problems for learners of Japanese. In order to assess whether textbooks truly create problems by overemphasizing humble speech, it is necessary to investigate the norms of native speakers to find out whether textbooks reflect authentic Japanese. It will also be necessary to look at the speech patterns of learners of Japanese to assess the degree that they internalize the norms taught in textbooks.

DCT Statistics

a. Types of responses

Table 2 Initial responses by native Japanese speakers

Response Type \ Stimulus Type	1:Formal-higher-close	2:Formal-equal-close	3:Formal-lower-close	4:Informal-higher-close	5:Informal-equal-close	6:Informal-lower-close	7:formal-higher-distant	8:formal-equal-distant	9:formal-lower-distant	10:informal-higher-distant	11:informal-equal-distant	12:informal-lower-distant
Modest: self	45% (9)	0% (0)	0% (0)	25% (5)	20% (4)	0% (0)	85% (17)	0% (0)	0% (0)	45% (9)	25% (5)	35% (7)
Modest: other	40% (8)	0% (0)	0% (0)	5% (1)	50% (10)	35% (7)	15% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	20% (4)	15% (3)	20% (4)
Fact	15% (3)	25% (5)	15% (3)	45% (9)	0% (0)	50% (20)	0% (0)	40% (8)	10% (2)	25% (5)	40% (8)	35% (7)
Offer	0% (0)	10% (2)	0% (0)	25% (5)	0% (0)	15% (3)	0% (0)	20% (4)	15% (3)	0% (0)	15% (3)	10% (2)
Comment	0% (0)	65% (13)	85% (17)	0% (0)	30% (6)	0% (0)	0% (0)	40% (8)	75% (15)	0% (0)	5% (1)	0% (0)
Request	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	10% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Apology	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Joke	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Silent	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)

Note: The numbers in parentheses indicate the actual number performed in the DCT.

Table 2 shows the initial responses of native Japanese speakers (JJ). This suggests that JJs do not use modest expression as much as textbooks describe in formal situations with those of an equal or lower status. Instead of modest expression, JJs tend to use other strategies suitable for the situation such as commenting on the occasion or simply stating the factual aspect of the gift. The majority of JJs use modest expressions with higher interlocutors in both formal and informal situations.

Table 3. Initial responses by native English speakers

Response Type \ Stimulus Type	1:Formal-higher-close	2:Formal-equal-close	3:Formal-lower-close	4:Informal-higher-close	5:Informal-equal-close	6:informal-lower-close	7:formal-higher-distant	8:formal-equal-distant	9:formal-lower-distant	10:informal-higher-distant	11:informal-equal-distant	12:informal-lower-distant
Modest: self	5% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	5% (1)	0% (0)	5% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	10% (2)
Modest: other	5% (1)	0% (0)	10% (2)	10% (2)	0% (0)	25% (5)	40% (8)	10% (2)	0% (0)	25% (5)	0% (0)	35% (7)
Fact	55% (11)	30% (6)	25% (5)	70% (14)	45% (9)	55% (11)	55% (11)	45% (9)	55% (11)	65% (13)	60% (12)	50% (10)
Offer	15% (3)	35% (7)	50% (10)	20% (4)	15% (3)	20% (4)	0% (0)	25% (5)	20% (4)	10% (2)	40% (8)	0% (0)
Comment	15% (3)	35% (7)	0% (0)	0% (0)	35% (7)	0% (0)	0% (0)	20% (4)	25% (5)	0% (0)	0% (0)	5% (1)
Request	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Apology	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Joke	5% (1)	0% (0)	15% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Silent	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	5% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)

Note: The numbers in parentheses indicate the actual number performed in the DCT.

Table 3 shows the initial responses of native English speakers (AA). AA's major strategy for gift giving is simple offering. AA do use modest expressions, but they do not do so as much as JJ. More expressions of other-oriented modesty (32 responses out of 240) were used than those of self-oriented modesty (5 out of 240). There is no significant difference between how AA use self and other-oriented modesty. Modest expressions were used mostly in formal situation with higher and distant interlocutors. This corresponds with JJ's results. The difference is that AA used other-oriented modesty, but JJ used self-oriented modesty. Another interesting difference is that the strategy of a joke is something JJ did not use but AA did. As an initial response, jokes were used in formal-close situations.

Table 4 Initial responses by Learners of Japanese-elementary

Response Type \ Stimulus Type	1:Formal-higher-close	2:Formal-equal-close	3:Formal-lower-close	4:Informal-higher-close	5:Informal-equal-close	6:informal-lower-close	7:formal-higher-distant	8:formal-equal-distant	9:formal-lower-distant	10:informal-higher-distant	11:informal-equal-distant	12:informal-lower-distant
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Modest: self	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)
Modest: other	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)
Fact	60%(12)	60%(12)	55%(11)	50%(10)	55%(11)	50%(10)	50%(10)	60%(12)	55%(11)	50%(10)	50%(10)	45%(9)	50%(10)
Offer	35%(7)	35%(7)	35%(7)	45%(9)	40%(8)	40%(8)	45%(9)	35%(7)	40%(8)	40%(8)	45%(9)	50%(10)	50%(10)
Comment	5%(1)	5%(1)	10%(2)	5%(1)	5%(1)	10%(2)	5%(1)	5%(1)	5%(1)	10%(2)	5%(1)	5%(1)	5%(1)
Request	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)
Apology	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)
Joke	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)
Silent	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)

Note: The numbers in parentheses indicate the actual number performed in the DCT.

Table 4 shows the results for elementary learners of Japanese. Elementary learners used only three strategies, factual, offering, and comment. Usually the gift giving section is introduced in the latter part of the textbook, so at the time the survey was given, namely between September and November, most elementary level learners had not yet been formally exposed to gift giving in the classroom. At the same time, elementary learners have neither enough vocabulary to make comments on the occasion nor the ability to express jokes. Therefore, learners had to rely on what they know and the above data reflects these limitations. There are no signs of a tendency to change responses depending on the stimulus type. Many participants used the same strategy to answer all questions. Other than the fact that elementary learners did not use any modest expression, the results are closer to AA's responses than to JJ's. Most of the answers were simply "dōzo (here you go)" and "kore wa XX desu (This is XX)." This data suggests both that elementary learners of Japanese are at least partially affected by cross-linguistic influence and that their limited skill set restricts their ability to use diverse strategies in their responses.

Table 5 Initial responses by Learners of Japanese-intermediate

Response Type \ Stimulus Type	1:Formal-higher-close	2:Formal-equal-close	3:Formal-lower-close	4:Informal-higher-close	5:Informal-equal-close	6:Informal-lower-close	7:formal-higher-distant	8:formal-equal-distant	9:formal-lower-distant	10:informal-higher-distant	11:informal-equal-distant	12:informal-lower-distant
Modest: self	15%(3)	0%(0)	5%(1)	20%(4)	20%(4)	10%(2)	25%(5)	0%(0)	10%(2)	5%(1)	45%(9)	30%(6)
Modest: other	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	20%(4)	0%(0)	0%(0)	10%(2)	0%(0)	0%(0)	15%(3)
Fact	40%(8)	20%(4)	0%(0)	20%(4)	0%(0)	25%(5)	10%(2)	20%(4)	20%(4)	10%(2)	5%(1)	20%(4)
Offer	5%(1)	25%(5)	0%(0)	0%(0)	25%(5)	30%(6)	20%(4)	20%(4)	15%(3)	0%(0)	10%(2)	0%(0)
Comment	35%(7)	55%(11)	85%(17)	50%(10)	55%(11)	15%(3)	45%(9)	60%(12)	45%(9)	75%(15)	40%(8)	25%(5)
Request	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)
Apology	5%(1)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)
Joke	0%(0)	0%(0)	10%(2)	10%(2)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)
Silent	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	0%(0)	5%(1)	10%(2)	0%(0)	10%(2)

Note: The numbers in parentheses indicate the actual number performed in the DCT.

Table 5 shows the results for intermediate learners of Japanese. Intermediate learners tend to use comments for the situation as an initial response. An example of the type of comments they used in the survey is "osewa ni narimasu (Thank you for looking after me)" and various other similar greetings. Elementary learners did not or could not use modest expressions, but intermediate learners sometimes employed such expressions. Unlike AAs, who had the tendency to use more other-oriented modesty, intermediate AJ tended to use more expressions of self-oriented modesty than those of other-oriented modesty. In this sense, they seemed to use Japanese pragmatics more than their own L1 knowledge. However, the data does not suggest any tendency to change response type depending on the stimulus type. Although the total number of modest expressions used by AA and intermediate AJ is similar, the content differs greatly. Most of the AA's modest expressions were other-oriented modesty, whereas most of the intermediate AJ's modest expressions were self-oriented modesty. Intermediate AJ's initial responses did

not resemble either AA or JJ, and were therefore unique to intermediate AJ. This supports the idea of learner language theory, which states that learners of a second language create their own system that does not necessarily follow their native language but at the same time does not mirror the target language.

Table 6 Initial responses by Learners of Japanese-advanced

Response Type \ Stimulus Type	1:Formal-higher-close	2:Formal-equal-close	3:Formal-lower-close	4:Informal-higher-close	5:Informal-equal-close	6:Informal-lower-close	7:formal-higher-distant	8:formal-equal-distant	9:formal-lower-distant	10:informal-higher-distant	11:informal-equal-distant	12:informal-lower-distant
Modest: self	65% (13)	20% (4)	0% (0)	50% (10)	20% (4)	10% (2)	95% (19)	15% (3)	0% (0)	65% (14)	55% (11)	50% (10)
Modest: other	5% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	5% (1)	0% (0)	10% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	5% (1)	0% (0)	5% (1)	5% (1)
Fact	20% (4)	10% (2)	0% (0)	20% (4)	25% (5)	50% (10)	0% (0)	5% (1)	0% (0)	10% (2)	20% (4)	25% (5)
Offer	5% (1)	10% (2)	5% (1)	20% (4)	15% (3)	20% (4)	5% (1)	5% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	10% (2)	10% (2)
Comment	0% (0)	55% (11)	95% (19)	0% (0)	40% (8)	10% (2)	0% (0)	75% (15)	95% (19)	10% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Request	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Apology	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Joke	0% (0)	5% (1)	0% (0)	5% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	10% (2)	5% (1)	5% (1)
Silent	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	5% (1)	5% (1)

Note: The numbers in parentheses indicate the actual number performed in the DCT.

Table 6 shows the results for advanced learners of Japanese. Interestingly, advanced learners use self-oriented modesty the most as an initial response. 96 modest expressions were used by JJs and 37 modest expressions were used by AAs as an initial response. Elementary learners did not use any modest expressions, intermediate learners used 46 modest expressions and advanced learners used 97 modest expressions. As illustrated in the above table for JJ, JJ used 54 self-oriented modest expressions and 40 other-oriented modest expressions depending on the distance of the relationship with the hearer. The data does not show any indication of how AA and intermediate learners of Japanese decide which of the two different types of modest expressions to use. In the case of advanced learners of Japanese, 90 out of 97 modest expressions were self-oriented modest expressions and only seven were other-oriented modest expressions.

b. Order of the semantic formula

Table 7 Order of semantic formula

	American (AA)	Learners of Japanese (AJ-elementary)	Learners of Japanese (AJ-intermediate)	Learners of Japanese (AJ-advanced)	Japanese (JJ)
Stimulus type	Order (%)	Order (%)	Order (%)	Order (%)	Order (%)
1Formal-Higher-close	1.Fact2. -3. -(40%)	1.Fact2. -3. -(35%) 1.Fact2.Offer3. -(20%) 1.Offer2. -3. -(20%)	1.Fact2.Comm3. -(20%)	1.Modest: self-2. Request3. -(30%) 1.Modest: self2. -3. -(20%)	1.Modest: self2. Offer3. -(20%) 1.Modest: other2. -3. -(40%)
2Formal-Equal-close	1.Offer2. -3. -(20%) 1.Fact.2.Modest:other3. -(20%)	1.Fact2-3-(35%) 1.Fact2.Offer3. -(20%) 1.Offer2. -3. -(20%)	1.Comment2.Modest:other3. -(20%) 1Offer2.Fact3. -(15%) 1.Fact2. -3. -(20%)	1.Comment2.Fact3. -(40%)	1.Comment2.Comment3. -(15%) 1.Comment2.Fact3. -(15%)
3Formal-lower-close	1.Offer2. -3. -(40%)	1.Fact2-3-(40%) 1.Fact2.Offer3. -(20%) 1.Offer2. -3. -(30%)	1.Comment2.Fact3.Offer3. -(15%) 1.Comment2.Comment3. -(15%)	1.Comment2.Comment3. -(20%) 1.Comment2. -3. (20%) 1.Comment2.Fact3. -(15%)	1.Comment2.Comment3. -(50%) 1.Comment2.Fact3. -(15%)
4Informal-Higher-close	1.Fact.2.Modest:other3. -(25%) 1.Offer2. -3. -(35%)	1.Fact2-3-(35%) 1.Fact2.Offer3. -(15%) 1.Offer2. -3. -(40%)	1.Comment2. -3. -(15%)	1.Modest: self2. Request3. -(15%)	1.Fact2Offer3. -(15%) 1.Fact2.Modest:other3. -(20%)
5Informal-Equal-close	1.Fact2. -3. -(35%)	1.Fact2-3-(50%) 1.Offer2. -3. -(40%)	1.Comment2.Fact3. -(20%) 1.Comment2.Modest:other3. -(25%)	No Pattern had repeated	1.Fact2.Modest:other3. -(15%) 1.Modest: self2. -3. -(15%)
6Informal-Lower-close	1.Fact.2.Modest:other3. -(15%)	1.Fact2-3-(40%) 1.Offer2. -3. -(45%)	1.Fact2.Modest:other3. -(15%)	1.Fact2. -3. -(20%) 1.Fact2.Modest:other3. -(25%)	1.Fact3.Modest: self3. -(25%)

close	1.Fact2. -3. -(25%)		1.Offer 2. -3. -(20%) (15%)	1.Fact2Offer3. -(15%)
7Formal-Higher-distant	1.Fact.2.Modest:other3. -(25%) 1.Modest:other2. -3. -(15%)	- 1.Fact 2-3-(-) 1.Fact 2.Offer 3- (15%) 1.Offer 2. -3. -(35%)	1.Comment2. -3. -(30%) 1.Modest: self2. -3. -(25%) 1.Modest: self2. Offer3. -(30%) 1.Modest: self2. Request3. -(15%)	1.Modest: self2. Comment3. -(50%) 1.Modesy: self2. Modest:other3. Comment (15%)
8Formal-Equal-distant	1.Fact2. -3. -(50%) 1.Offer2. -3. -(20%) 1.Comment2. -3. (20%)	1.Fact 2-3-(45%) 1.Offer 2. -3. -(35%)	1.Offer2. -3. -(20%) 1.Comment2. -3. -(45%) (45%)	1.Fact2. -3. -(30%) 1.Offer2. -3-(15%)
9Formal-Lower-distant	1.Fact2. -3. -(35%) 1.Fact.2.Modest:other3. -(20%)	1.Fact 2-3-(40%) 1.Offer 2. -3. -(40%)	1.Comment2. -3. -(25%) 1.Comment2.Modest:oth er3. -(15%)	1.Comment2. -3. -(35%) 1.Comment2.Comment3. -(40%) 1.Comment2. -3. -(25%) 1.Comment2.Fact3. -(25%)
10Informal-Higher-distant	1.Fact.2.Modest:other3. -(25%) 1.Modest:other2. -3. -(15%)	- 1.Fact 2-3-(40%) 1.Fact 2.Offer 3- (15%) 1.Offer 2. -3. -(30%)	1.Comment2. -3. -(50%) 1.Modest: Self 2.Modest:other 3- (20%) 1.Modest: self 2.Request3- (20%)	1.Modest: Self 2.Offer3. -(15%)
11Informal-Equal-distant	1.Fact.2.Modest:other3. -(15%) 1.Modest:other2. -3. -(55%)	- 1.Fact 2-3-(40%) 1.Offer 2. -3. -(35%)	1.Modest: self2. Offer3. (30%)	-1.Modest: self2. -3. -(30%) 1.Fact 2. -3- (15%)
12Informal-Lower-distant	1.Fact.2. -3. -(30%) 1.Modest:other2. -3. -(20%)	1.Fact 2-3-(35%) 1.Offer 2. -3. -(50%)	1.Modest: self-2. -3. -(15%)	1.Modest: self2. -3. -(20%) 1.Fact 2.offer 3- (15%) 1.Fact2Offer3. -(20%) 1.Modest: self2. -3. -(25%)

Note: The numbers in parentheses indicate the percentage. Only patterns occurring three or more times are included.

Table 7 shows the order of the semantic formula. AA and JJ appear to have different styles. AA tends to use simpler sentences with fewer patterns. JJ tends to use a greater variety of patterns in their responses. There were three notable patterns that emerged from the data. First, JJ and advanced learners have similar patterns for most stimulus types. Second, AA and intermediate learners have similar patterns in the sense that they both frequently used other-oriented modesty in the second response. Third, 15 cases of the pattern [1.Modest: self 2.Request 3.-] were found in four situations with higher interlocutors by advanced learners of Japanese.

c. Content of semantic formula

In order to see the quality of responses more closely, the content of the semantic formula was analyzed. One feature of JJ's response was apology. Apology did not appear as an initial response, but appeared several times in the second or the third sentence. This response type appeared only in interactions with a higher interlocutor. "Sumimasen (sorry)" was the most frequent example of apology and it was often used with self-oriented modesty. This may be due to the speaker's shame/gratitude (*kyōshuku*) in situations with a higher interlocutor. On the other hand, AA and AJ used strategies of joking to give gifts that did not appear in JJ's responses at all.

For the choice of speech style, most JJ used formal speech styles, with the exception of the three informal situations with close equal, close below and distant below interlocutors. In these three situations, most JJ used casual forms. Most AA also used a formal style of speech, especially in formal situations with-below-close and below-distant interlocutors. Elementary learners used only formal speech styles. Intermediate learners also used only formal speech styles except for a few participants. Advanced learners had a tendency to use formal speech styles in many situations. This use of formal language further supports language learner theory in the sense that AJ use formal language in a way that neither mirrors their native tongue nor reflects authentic language used by JJ.

Self-oriented modesty was used quite frequently in JJ's and in intermediate and advanced AJ's responses. Within self-oriented modesty, JJ used a variety of phrases, but both intermediate and advanced learners' primarily responded with "*tsumaranai mono desuga*". Other-oriented modesty was frequently used by AA. AA's other-oriented modest expressions were always complete sentences. On the other hand, most of JJ's other-oriented modest expressions were incomplete sentences such as "*sukida to omotte...*" (I thought you may like it ...), "*ki ni iru to ii no desu ga*" (I hope you like it, but...), etc. This difference reflects the use of indirect speech when other-oriented modest expressions are used in Japanese.

There are clear differences in the way intermediate AJ and advanced AJ used these patterns of indirect speech with other-oriented modest expressions. Intermediate AJ tended to translate English other-oriented expressions directly. For example, "*anata ha wain ga suki da to omoimashita*" (I thought you may like wine), "*ki ni itte kureru to ureshii*" (I hope you like it), etc. Advanced AJ, on the other hand, used incomplete other-oriented modesty in a way that closely resembles JJ. Here, it is clear that some of the errors made by intermediate learners were based on their background in their native language. Advanced learners, on the other hand, effectively used JJ's strategy of indirect speech.

Factual description of the gift and expressions of offering were used by all groups in roughly the same way. "This is XX" is a typical example. However, some differences were identified in cases of offering. JJ's offerings often employed conditional phrases, such as "*yokattara dōzo*" (if you like, here you go) etc. On the other hand, AA's offerings were rather simple such as "This is for you," etc. Some of the intermediate and advanced learners also used conditional phrases, but elementary learners did not. Aoki and Okamoto (1998:111) mention that conditional phrases can be used for "softening an offer." At the same time, Aoki and Okamoto (1998:111) state, "These conditional phrases indicate that the speaker is not trying to impose his or her offer or invitation under any circumstances. They show that the speaker is paying respect to the addressee's feeling as well as his or her circumstances" (Aoki and Okamoto 1998:111). In this sense, JJ's offer with the conditional phrase may be considered as an expression that functions similarly to other-oriented modesty.

6. Discussion

This study addressed five research questions. The first question is "How are Japanese people's language behaviors for gift giving described in textbooks for L2 learners?" From analyzing five textbooks, most textbooks portray Japanese people's language behaviors for gift giving as humble. Self-oriented modest expressions are the focal point of gift giving in four textbooks out of five. Three out of five textbooks mention offering as another gift giving expression. However, textbooks neglect to mention when offering is an appropriate strategy to use. Two of the textbooks mention that students should be aware of the formality of the situation. However, textbooks suggest that learners use self-oriented expressions regardless of formality. Moreover, textbooks only mention changes in speech style and not the expression itself.

These shortcomings are partially due to the nature of the textbook. Textbooks need to simplify the material and tend to choose expressions that are unique and different from learner's L1 language. Textbooks do not necessarily choose the expressions most frequently used by native Japanese speakers, but rather select characteristic features of

the language. As a result, self-oriented modest expressions such as “*tumaranai mono desuga*” represent the focal point of the gift giving expressions in textbooks. Although such simplification is inevitable to some extent, teachers and learners need to be aware of the potential shortcomings of textbook explanations.

The second question is “What are the norms of Japanese and English natives’ language behavior for gift giving?” For the language behavior of native Japanese speakers, the DCT results show that they use modest expressions with higher status interlocutors in both formal and informal situations, but not with equal or lower status interlocutors. They tend to use more self-oriented modest expressions in distant relationships and other-oriented modest expressions in close relationships. I hypothesize that this is because people know what their close friends want or like for a gift, but gift givers in distant relationships are not necessarily as confident about what the recipient wants. As discussed in the textbook analysis section, self-oriented modest expressions such as “*tsumaranai mono desuga*” are emphasized in textbooks. In contrast, the DCT results suggest that JJs typically use self-oriented and other-oriented modesty half and half and use both strategies as the situation demands. Moreover, JJs also commonly state some factual information about the gift in various situations. Self-oriented modest expressions (54/164) were by no means the only way of giving a gift.

For English native’s language behavior, the DCT results show that they frequently use the strategy of offering the gift. They also use modest expression like JJs but the majority of modest expressions are other-oriented modesty. AAs’ other-oriented modest expressions are always complete sentence, whereas JJs’ other-oriented modest expressions tend to be incomplete sentences used to create an indirect feeling. Unexpected strategies unique to each group also appeared in the survey results. Data suggests that JJs occasionally use the strategy of apology and AAs use the strategy of joking. Native speakers have abundant linguistic experience and knowledge. Therefore, they differentiate their expressions depending on the context and employ various strategies in each situation.

The third question is “Do textbooks for English-speaking Japanese L2 learners adequately reflect Japanese gift-giving norms?” The above textbook analysis results suggest that many textbooks highlight one aspect of language behavior. In the case of gift giving, most textbooks focus on self-oriented modesty. Makino (1998) succeeds in introducing three different levels of formality, and Miura and MacGloin (2008) successfully introduce formality and distance. That said, all of the textbooks I analyzed in this research primarily focus on modest expressions. In reality, Japanese norms were more diverse than the forms presented in textbooks. This suggests that textbooks may be overly stereotyped. This can be a result of the nature of textbooks as well. Textbooks need to keep material simple. Moreover, textbooks also emphasize unfamiliar forms that differ greatly from the learner’s L1 language to facilitate the acquisition of culturally and linguistically challenging patterns. This causes textbooks to move away from authentic Japanese norms and became stereotypical. The conversation strategy books that were discussed briefly in the literature review section provide a wealth of linguistic data. The description about gift giving in Maynard (2009) was close to real Japanese norms. While recognizing the limits of the genre of the textbook, textbooks for intermediate and advanced learners in particular may be improved by paying closer attention to authentic language use.

The fourth question is “Is L2 learners’ language behavior closer to the descriptions of the target language found in textbooks or to their own L1 knowledge?” The DCT data shows that elementary learners only used the strategy of stating facts. This is closer to the behavior of AA’s. Therefore, elementary learners’ behavior is close to their L1 knowledge. Elementary learners need to use their L1 knowledge because they do not have control over L2 yet.

Intermediate learners’ behavior is different from both L1 norms and textbook description. Intermediate learners have learned the gift-giving expressions taught in textbooks, so they do use these phrases. However, the frequency of use was much fewer than JJs. Within modest expressions, intermediate learners used more self-oriented modesty than other-oriented modesty. However, the content of their other-oriented modest expressions was very different from JJs’ usage. Their other-oriented expressions were direct translations from L1. The pattern of using comments as an initial response cannot be seen in either AA or in textbook descriptions. Therefore, intermediate learners partially demonstrated cross-linguistic influence; they use L1 norms translated directly into Japanese, but also create their own rules that are different from both L1 and L2. That is because intermediate learners understand the L2 norm but do not have enough language proficiency to fully demonstrate their L2 knowledge. As a result, they employ a manageable strategy, which is often that of giving a comment.

Advanced learners’ behavior was very close to the textbook descriptions. As textbook analysis showed, modest expressions were the main forms used in gift giving. Advanced learners’ favorite responses can be categorized as self-oriented modesty. Except in formal-below situations, more self-oriented modesty was used than other-oriented modesty throughout. One plausible explanation for this frequent use of self-oriented modesty is that it results from transfer of training. Since most textbooks emphasize self-oriented modesty in teaching gift giving, it appears that advanced learners may have internalized these norms in a way that has actually made their language use mirror the textbook patterns rather than corresponding to authentic language use. This might be the reason why fluent Japanese speakers are often told they are “*nihonjin yori nihonjin rashii* (more Japanese than Japanese people)” by native Japanese speakers. The linguistic norms presented in Japanese textbooks shape learners’ language to make them follow an idealized form of Japanese that does not reflect real speech practices.

The fifth question was “Does English-speaking L2 learners’ language behavior for gift giving become closer to those of Japanese natives as L2 proficiency increases?” The simple answer is yes it does. The data from the DCT suggests that elementary learners of Japanese are at least partially influenced by their L1 knowledge. Elementary learners’ language behavior in L2 is similar to AAs’ language behavior. They use the same strategy as AA, but with less variety of expressions due to their limited knowledge.

The DCT results for intermediate learners supports the notion of learner language that states that learners create their own system that does not follow their native language, but at the same time is not a mirror of the target language (Mitchell and Myles 2004:16). Intermediate learners use expressions that JJs use, but the content was different from JJs’. Therefore it is reasonable to conclude that intermediate learners can mimic some of JJs’ language behavior, but they cannot reproduce it; therefore their language behavior is not close to native speakers.

The DCT results suggest that advanced learners' responses were closer to L2 norms than to L1. Advanced learners' other-oriented modest expressions often ended with incomplete sentences in the same manner as JJ. Although not used as an initial response, the strategy of apology also appeared in the content of advanced learners' responses. Advanced learners' average time spent in Japan was 5 years, whereas intermediate learners spent 2 years and elementary learner spent 0 years on average. Clearly, advanced learners had more language experience in L2 both in the classroom and in authentic situations. Therefore, advanced learners were better able to follow pragmatic strategies employed by native speakers than lower level students.

There were, however, two major differences between advanced learners and JJ that reveal some of the unique problems that advanced learners face. One is that advanced learners mostly used formal speech style, which differed from responses by both AA and AJ. This is likely a result of transfer of training and reflects an influence from textbooks. Learners practice formal speech style more than casual speech in the classroom because textbooks are written mostly in the formal style. Advanced learners, therefore, have been trained to speak more politely than native Japanese speakers. Second, advanced learners used far more self-oriented modest expressions than JJs. JJs used self-oriented modesty 54 times out of 97 total modest expressions. On the other hand, advanced learners used self-oriented modesty 90 times out of 97 total modest expressions. In this way, advanced learners were almost twice as likely to use self-oriented modesty than native Japanese speakers. As textbooks teach an idealized form of the language with regard to gift giving expressions, it seems reasonable to suggest that textbooks are at least partially responsible for advanced learners' overcompensation in employing self-oriented modesty, as these learners internalize the norms they are taught.

In sum, the findings of this study contribute to our better understanding of the development of pragmatic competence by English-speaking Japanese L2 students in at least three ways. First, the acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence is related to proficiency level, but increases in proficiency level bring about new pragmatic problems. In other words, while elementary level learners need to rely on their L1 knowledge due to their limited L2 knowledge, L2 pragmatic competence increases in general as L2 proficiency improves. L2 learners, however, appear to develop their own systematic L2 pragmatic competence that does not correspond to either their native language or to the target language. This supports the notion of learner language. However, learner language theory seems to apply more to intermediate and advanced students than it does to elementary students, who are more likely to rely on their L1 knowledge. Consequently, L2 proficiency needs to be considered in an examination of cross-linguistic influence and learner language.

Second, this study has suggested that learner language is not merely internally generated by the student, but also develops as a result of the way the language is presented to the student. Learners are always reconstructing their own language system based on the input they get in the classroom. Therefore, pragmatic competence in learner language cannot be explained only by an L1/L2 continuum; the influence of classroom instruction also needs to be considered.

Finally, this study has shown that textbook descriptions do not necessarily reflect the actual behavior of native speakers. Self-oriented modesty is the focal point of gift giving lessons in textbooks. Advanced learners tend to overcompensate and use the

textbook style of self-oriented modesty and formal speech style in situations where native speakers would be unlikely to employ such strategies. Thus, textbooks and pedagogy play a role in creating learner language.

Pedagogical Implications

In what ways can instruction of gift giving be improved from both cultural and linguistic perspectives? Although this study was not designed to offer practical suggestions for instructional intervention, some implications can be drawn from the findings of the study. First, the study has found that learners' pragmatic competence moves from L1-like to native-like as proficiency increases. This implies that learners have different needs depending on proficiency level. For example, it is important to introduce the most common norms for elementary learners, as they overly rely on their L1 pragmatic competence in making linguistic decisions. Precisely because elementary learners tend to closely follow L1 patterns, it is necessary to emphasize normative and sometimes even stereotypical forms of L2 to help them move away from their L1 norms. At the same time, even beginning students should be told that the most common norm is not the only possible expression in these situations. On the other hand, teachers can introduce diverse linguistic strategies in a variety of situations for advanced learners since they already know L2 norms and have sufficient L2 knowledge. One result of this study that could be helpful for teachers is the data of how native speakers actually behave in presenting gifts. Such data can be incorporated into classroom instruction to provide more authentic examples of gift giving.

This study has also shown that pedagogy plays a role in shaping learner language. Learner language is not created by the learner alone, but also stems from him or her internalizing perceived norms. Learners are constantly reconstructing their language system in response to new input. For this reason, teachers should be careful not to present overly systematic and stereotypical expressions. Most Japanese textbooks overemphasize the ideal forms of the language. Intermediate and particularly advanced learners tend to overuse stereotypical textbook norms. This actually inhibits their ability to follow authentic pragmatic practices. Advanced learners in particular are commonly transformed into idealized (i.e. inauthentic) Japanese speakers. Teachers need to be careful about relying on textbook descriptions. Instructors may need to fill in the gap between the actual norm of native speakers and the textbook description. I hope that the data on authentic use in this study can serve as a reference for teachers of Japanese.

A more diverse approach to teaching gift giving would help develop pragmatic competence as the learner's language ability improves. Making students more aware of these diverse expressions will give students a greater choice in their own production of language.

Limitations of the study

There remain several limitations to this study. The first limitation is concerned with the validity and the reliability of the classification scheme. It is likely that different classifications would lead to different results. Although I carried out a small numbers of pilot studies to help refine my classification scheme and to increase the validity of the data coding, several unclassifiable response types were identified. For example, jokes and apologies were unexpected responses that did not appear in my initial classification scheme. In future studies, these elements should be included from the start to make a more complete classification. Other classification schemes may also yield different

results.

The second issue concerns the validity of DCT. The DCT used in this study was constructed based upon hypothetical situations. Therefore, the participants' responses to the DCT may not accurately reflect their pragmatic competence. Performing role-plays and oral interviews could also be used as a method to gather additional data. Along with DCT, observations of L2 learners' language behaviors in real communicative situations would increase the reliability of the data.

Finally, this study focused on the giving part of the gift giving practice. However, gift giving is a dynamic speech act that involves both the giver and the receiver. Therefore, having the participants only complete the giver's part in the DCT is limited and incomplete. Thus, future studies should also examine the receiving part of the gift giving interaction.

7. Conclusion

This study examined the development of English-speaking Japanese L2 learners' pragmatic competence with respect to the speech act of gift giving. It explored gaps between the native norms and textbook explanations. The DCT revealed the differences of pragmatic knowledge depending on learners' proficiency. My data suggests that elementary learners of Japanese heavily depend on L1 knowledge. This is likely because they have not acquired enough pragmatic competence in L2 to use modest expressions. Intermediate learners, on the other hand, use a mixture of L1 and target language pragmatics. Advanced learners follow Japanese normative behavior, but often overuse idealized patterns that differ from authentic speech. In particular, problems with regard to appropriate levels of formality and the usage of self-oriented versus other-oriented modesty remain problematic for advanced learners.

The results of the DCT also suggest that learner language cannot be explained only by an L1/L2 continuum. Learners are constantly reconstructing their language system with new input. Therefore, instruction is also accountable for learner language.

The textbook analysis suggested that textbooks tend to present the material in a way that focuses on one aspect of language behavior to highlight an idealized form. The DCT survey revealed more diversity and complexity in actual language usage. In particular, the DCT survey showed that native Japanese use different types of modest expressions (either self-oriented modesty or other-oriented modesty) depending on formality and social distance. The language of native Japanese speakers contrasted greatly with American normative behavior, which often simply describes the gift or offers it. When English natives use modest expressions, they almost always use other-oriented modesty. Due to the presentation of the textbook, learners tend to respond stereotypically when giving gifts. This is especially true for advanced learners. Teachers can help overcome this problem by presenting more diverse expressions and paying close attention to factors such as formality and social distance.

By focusing on both proficiency level and textbooks, this study has shown how language pedagogy can train learners to follow idealized forms that stray from authentic speech patterns in mimicking superficial cultural norms. I have suggested that this can be remedied in part by introducing a variety of situations that contain different levels of formality, social distance and hierarchy in order to improve learners' pragmatic competence. This is not to say that teachers should push students into one style, but rather teachers should make students aware of the range of possibilities available. Such

an approach gives students more choice in producing their own utterances.

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