<u>Dissertation Summary</u>

<u>論文内容の要約</u>

The Effects of Implicit Instruction and the Influence of Communication Anxiety
on EFL Learners' Pragmatic Development

英語学習者の語用論的能力の発達における
暗示的教授方法の効果とコミュニケーション不安の影響

A Dissertation Presented to
the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences,
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Matsuoka, Yaoko
松 岡 弥 生 子

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SUMMARY

Chapter 1. Introduction

  This dissertation examined the effects of implicit instruction of pragmatics on the development of Japanese EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners' competence of making *suggestion* through the instructions with different modes of communication: computer-mediated communication (CMC) and face-to-face communication (FTF). Pragmatics refers to the study of speaker and contextualized meanings of how more gets communicated than is said, and of the expression of relative distance (Yule, 1996) or "the study of the relations between language and context that are basic to an account of language understanding" and "the study of deixis (at least in part), implicature, presupposition, speech acts, and aspects of discourse structure" (Levinson, 1983, p.21, p.27). Implicit instruction was defined as an instruction without an explanation of the target language features in meta-language. Focusing on the effect of personal factors, this study also investigated the influence of learners' communication anxiety (CA) on their pragmatic development in CMC and FTF environments. The research consisted of a pilot study and a main study, employing a quasi-experimental design involving two experimental groups and a control group. Overview of the research design is shown in Figure 1.

  For this dissertation, speech act of *suggestion* was chosen as the target of research, motivated by the present researcher's teaching experience that Japanese EFL students tend to lack in pragmatically appropriate *suggestion* strategies and hesitate to give negative feedback to the classmates' oral presentations. *Suggestion* is defined as ''an utterance that the speaker intends the hearer to perceive as a directive to do something that will be to the hearer's benefit'' (Banerjee and Carrell, 1988, p.319). Making a suggestion may often be a face-threatening act for a hearer. When a person suggests something, he/she is stating his/her own preference or choice that may be different from that of other people, and there

is possibility that their relationship may be damaged when the suggestions are made inappropriately.

Many studies of pragmatics instruction have focused on comparison between explicit and implicit instructions. According to a meta-analysis by Jeon and Kaya (2006), explicit instruction (i.e., learners receive metapragmatic information or direct explanation of the target features followed by practices) may produce more effects than implicit instruction (i.e., learners are provided with input of pragmatic components and opportunities to interpret, practice, and develop pragmatics ability). However, there is still concern about whether explicit instruction is undoubtedly superior to an implicit one, due to the lack of studies examining implicit instruction and methodological issues such as unequal treatment lengths for explicit and implicit instruction and difference in data collection methods (Jeon & Kaya 2006). To fill these gaps, it is important to investigate how and in what ways implicit approaches can be applied to the teaching of pragmatics.

In the present research, the following two research questions were posed based on the assumption that implicit instruction of pragmatics is feasible.
1. Assuming that an implicit instruction of teaching *suggestion* using recast is feasible, which mode of communication is more effective in developing Japanese EFL learners' pragmatic competence: on-line forum discussion, or face-to-face discussion?
2. When an implicit instruction using recast can have a certain degree of positive results on Japanese EFL learners' pragmatic development in making a *suggestion*, how does the learners' trait, such as communication anxiety, affect these results? Which mode of instruction is more suitable to what kind of students?

This study seems to be significant as it addresses the lacuna in the field of pragmatics research in that it dealt with the unexplored aspects of pragmatics instruction that will help develop L2 learners' pragmatic competence: implicit instruction of

pragmatics, application of information and communication technology (ICT) to pragmatic instruction, and relation between pragmatic development and communication anxiety.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

To clarify the background of the present study, the literature of the different but relevant areas that provide underpinnings for the discussion on the effective pragmatics instruction was reviewed: major theories of pragmatics, SLA theories relevant and applicable for pragmatics instruction, and second language learners' communication anxiety.

Pragmatics Theories

The most notable and influential theories of pragmatics may be Co-operative Principle (Grice, 1991), Speech Acts (Searle, 1969), Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1995), and Politeness Theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Grice (1989) proposed a set of guidelines for the efficient and effective use of language for conversation, which he called *Conversational Maxims*. Questioning an old assumption that to say something is always and simply to *state* something, Austin (1962, p.12) argued that "in some cases *to say something is to do something*", which concept forms the very basis of the speech acts theory.

There have been numbers of instructional intervention studies on interlanguage pragmatics (ILP: the study of learner's use of second language) (e.g., Bouton, 1994; Kasper, 1996; Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993; Takahashi, 2001; Tateyama, 2001). Some interventional studies (e.g., Fukuya & Martinez-Flor, 2008; Fukuya & Zhang, 2002; Tateyama, Kasper, Mui, Tay, & Thananart, 1997; Tateyama, 2001) positively investigated the effects and feasibility of implicit pragmatics instruction. They provided the evidence that, like an explicit instruction, an implicit instruction for pragmatics were also feasible, though its relative effectiveness was not always admitted.

SLA Theories

Examination of the theories of *Second Language Acquisition* (SLA) also seems to be of great benefit for interlanguage pragmatics instructions, since the study of interlanguage pragmatics developed as a branch of SLA (Kasper & Rose, 2001) and some of the theoretical frameworks offered by SLA researchers will facilitate our understanding of how language learning works (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). In this section, the discussion focuses on *Noticing Hypotheses* (e.g., Schmidt, 1990, 1993) in relation to an *Awareness-Raising Approach*, *Output Hypothesis* (e.g., Swain, 2005), *Interaction Hypothesis* (e.g., Long, 1981), and *Second Language Socialization Theory* (e.g., Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Several studies on implicit pragmatic instructions connect implicit approaches to Schmidt's (1993) noticing hypothesis. As "there is little if any learning without attention" (Schmidt, 2001, p. 11), noticing or attention plays a significant role in the instruction with implicit teaching method such as recasts. Taguchi (2015, p.11) suggests "the implicit approach can be just as effective in causing changes in learners' pragmatic systems, as long as the approach involves activities that draw learners' attention to the targeted pragmatic forms and form-function-context mappings".

Communication Anxiety

Much SLA research has displayed the influence of affective factors, such as learners' attitudes, motivation, language aptitude, and language anxiety on the effects of second/foreign language learning. *Communication anxiety* or *communication apprehension* (CA) has been studied widely in the area of second language learning since the 1990s, in addition to earlier research on anxiety in experimental psychology and clinical psychology. As developing communication competence has become one of the major goals of EFL/ ESL classes and more communicative tasks have been introduced in those classes, affects of communication anxiety on foreign language learning seem to have increased. Recent findings, including possible causes (e.g., Sarson et al., 1991) and treatment (Docan-Morgan

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& Schmidt, 2012), of CA are discussed. In WTC (willingness to communicate) model proposed by MacIntyre *et al*. (1994), CA is one of the two influential variables, together with perceived communication competence, while L2 anxiety is one of the four latent variables of WTC in MacIntyre and Charos' model (1996), together with perceived L2 competence, integrativeness, and attitudes towards the learning situation. WTC researchers (e.g., Yashima, 2002) suggest that promoting WTC is not only a process of learning L2 but should also be a suitable goal of L2 1earning. Generating WTC has become an important component of L2 pedagogy.

Chapter 3. Instructional Approaches of Pragmatics

This chapter examines practical aspects of instructional approaches for pragmatics in details and seeks for the effective instruction of pragmatics for EFL/ ESL learners. First, it clarifies the nature of pragmatic competence. Subsequently, effectiveness of explicit and implicit instructions is examined, and the feasibility of implicit instruction for pragmatics is illustrated in order to establish the premise of the research question 1 in this study. Recast and other instructional techniques are explained in details, and effective outcome measures and treatment instruments of L2 pragmatic competence are described. Then, it discusses burgeoning impact of the application of technology to the pragmatic instruction (e.g., Beltz, 2007; Blake, 2008) with examination of some of the limited numbers of studies on pragmatic instruction based on computer mediation (CM). Lastly, theoretical frameworks for implicit pragmatics instruction are discussed with consideration to the idea of a learning community.

Chapter 4. Pilot Study

Prior to the main study, a five-week pilot study was conducted in 2013 spring for the sake of trialling the main study and discovering major problems of the proposed research,

aiming to examine whether the implicit approach of pragmatics with recast would be feasible. The pilot study was performed on sophomore students of the information science department of a coeducational university in Kanagawa, where the present researcher also conducted the main research. It included a pretest, a posttest, and three treatment sessions, using two experimental groups and a control group. The results indicated that a longer time should be used for the main experiment; discussion groups of each experimental groups should be in smaller size to facilitate students' conversation; DCT pretest and posttest should include more items so that the participants' pragmatic competence in producing language can be assessed more accurately; and some kinds of qualitative data should be collected in addition to quantitative data.

Chapter 5. Main Study

Overview of the Main Study

Based on the findings of the pilot study previously implemented, the main research was conducted over 10 weeks in the 2013 fall semester at a private university in Kanagawa prefecture, involving 150 undergraduates. The data were collected through a pretest and a posttest, Background Questionnaire, Communication Anxiety Test, and Final Questionnaire. The pretest and posttest were designed as the form of a discourse completion task (DCT), including eight situations (increased from four in the pilot study) based on the studies by Pishghadaml and Sharafadini (2011) and Martinez-Flor and Fukuya (2005). Communication Anxiety Test was developed based on the Communication Anxiety Inventory (CAI) Form Trait (Booth-Butterfield & Gould, 1986) as a self-assessment tool of the participants' degrees of CA. This study employed the mixed methods research design, where data collection and analysis were conducted by both qualitative and quantitative exploration.

Participants of the experimental groups received eight treatment sessions with different communication modes (i.e., FTF and CMC), and teacher recast was applied in both modes of communication. Control group was not given any instruction. A pretest and a posttest were conducted as the assessment instruments on the first/last day of the research. Recast is a type of negative feedback used to correct the inappropriate use of language implicitly and provide correct usage by repeating the language in various situations. For instance, in child language development, adults recast children's incorrect expressions to facilitate their L1 acquisition (e.g., children's grammatical competence in Saxton, 2005), and in the L2 language classroom, teachers use recast as an instructional technique to correct learners' linguistic errors (e.g., pragmalinguistic development in Martínez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005).

The main findings of the research are summarized as follows.

Main Research Findings

The first research question examined the effects of implicit pragmatics instruction employing recast with different communication modes: FTF and CMC. In FTF group, the teacher orally gave implicit feedback using recast for the students' pragmatically inappropriate expressions, while in CMC environment, the teacher recast was conducted via the online written forum discussion. Control group did not conduct any discussions. *Suggestions* made by the students were assessed using numerical scores, following the criteria adapted from Fernández Guerra and Martínez-Flor (2006). Students' pragmatic development was examined by comparing the score change from pretest to posttest in each group. Although the mean score improvement from pretest to posttest of both FTF and CMC groups was slightly higher than that of the control group, the difference was not statistically significant according to the quantitative analysis. This result might be attributed to the several factors: time length of the treatment, teacher's instructional

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technique of recast, students' noticing of recast, and the participants' proficiency level of English.

The second research question investigated the influence of communication anxiety on the learners' pragmatic development. For the data analysis, each of the FTF, CMC, and control groups were further divided into two groups according to the learners' levels of small group communication anxiety (SGA). Accordingly, the data were analyzed separately in terms of three high SGA groups (high SGA FTF, high SGA CMC, and high SGA Control) and three low SGA groups (low SGA FTF, low SGA CMC, and low SGA Control). Results from the analysis of valiance (ANOVA) followed by the Tukey's multiple comparison show that significant difference was found between high SGA FTF and high SGA Control, with $p = 0.03$ at $\alpha = 0.05$ (Table 1). This means that FTF group with high SGA performed significantly better than the other high SGA groups. However, no significant distinction was evident among the three low SGA groups. It was primarily assumed that students with high degrees of SGA might learn more effectively in a CMC environment than in traditional face-to-face oral discussion because communicating through computers does not require direct face-to-face contact with other attendees of the discussion and this might reduce the learners' CA, hence, would yield better learning effects than participating in a FTF communication. However, the results indicate that face-to-face communication is still important and effective in acquiring pragmatic competence, regardless of the high degree of SGA. At the same time, problems of the self-assessment of CA are also suggested, that is, there is a possibility that the degree of CA was over-estimated by the participants.

Chapter 6. Discussion and Conclusion

This research attempted to fill the gap between the increasing awareness of the needs for teaching pragmatics in EFL education and the lack in the research on implicit

instruction for pragmatics. It was found in this research that in implicit instruction, the mode of communication does not significantly affect the pragmatic development of the learners when their level of CA is low. On the other hand, when the learners have high levels of CA, specifically, SGA, the communication mode of instruction has a significant effect on their pragmatic development, and face-to-face instruction was the most effective for these learners. In an EFL setting, compared to that of ESL, students have little opportunity to be exposed to the target language, and therefore, the role of instruction is quite important. Many issues should be considered when examining the effects of instruction on the learners' acquisition of pragmatic competence. As Koike and Pearson's (2005) findings about the role of implicit feedback suggest, an implicit approach is likely to correct inappropriate pragmatic features and teach appropriate forms of pragmatic expressions in a more natural way than an explicit approach, without interfering with the flow of conversation. Introducing pragmatics courses in mainstream university English programs or weaving the contents of pragmatics carefully into the subject matters of language classes, and teaching the production of the pragmatic language may be arduous tasks. Taking this into account, pragmatics researchers and practitioners should develop the ways to teach learners pragmatic features more effectively and this should ideally go beyond the discussion of explicitness and implicitness.
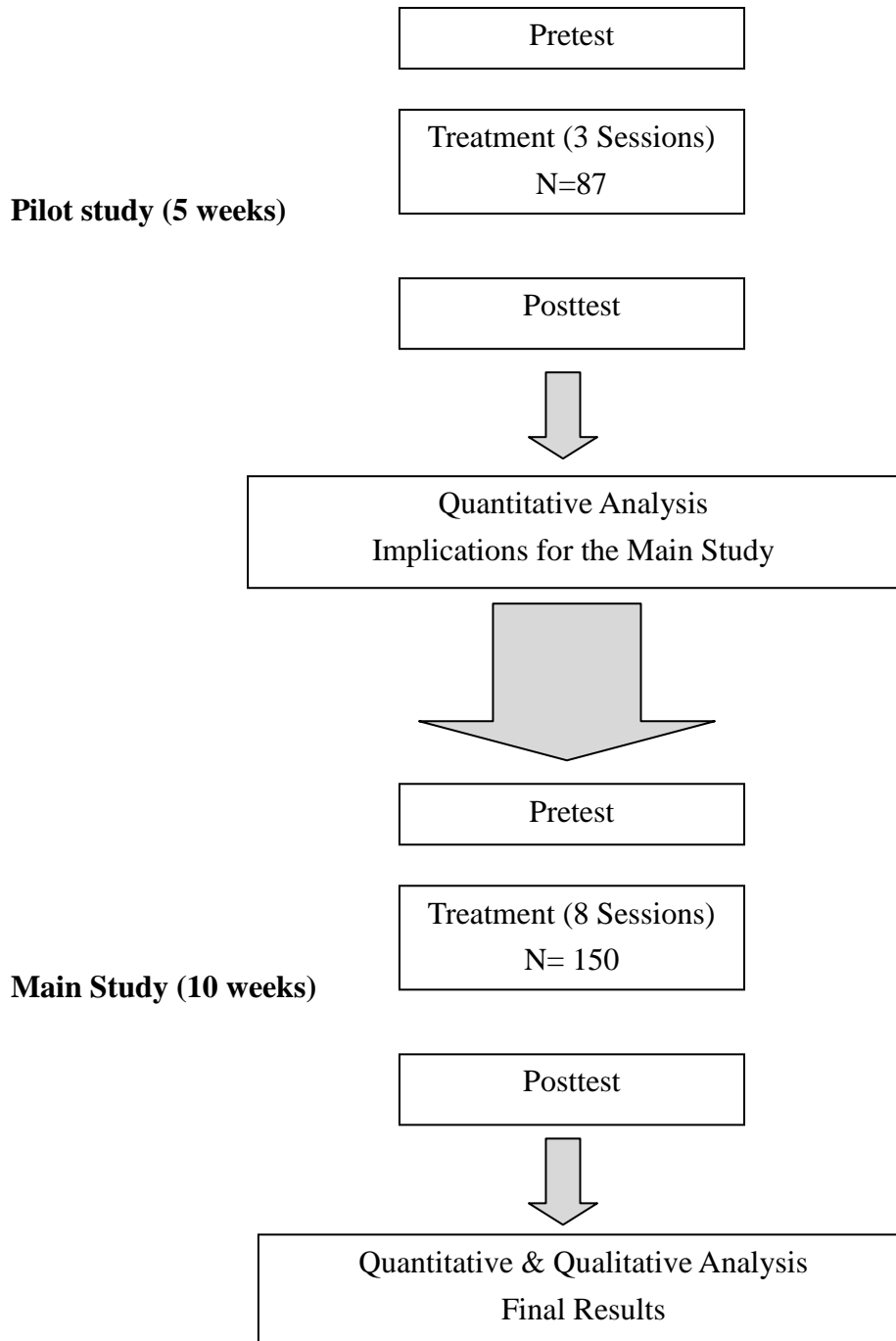
Figure 1.   Overview of the Research

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                        ┌─────────────────────────┐
                        │        Pretest          │
                        └─────────────────────────┘

                        ┌─────────────────────────┐
                        │  Treatment (3 Sessions)  │
                        │         N=87             │
Pilot study (5 weeks)   └─────────────────────────┘

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                        │        Posttest         │
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            ┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
            │         Quantitative Analysis           │
            │     Implications for the Main Study      │
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                        ┌─────────────────────────┐
                        │         Pretest         │
                        └─────────────────────────┘

                        ┌─────────────────────────┐
                        │  Treatment (8 Sessions)  │
                        │        N= 150            │
Main Study (10 weeks)   └─────────────────────────┘

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                        │        Posttest         │
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                                    ↓
            ┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
            │   Quantitative & Qualitative Analysis    │
            │              Final Results               │
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Table 1: *Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the Effects of Instructional Mode and SGA on the Score Development in the High SGA Groups*

Equality Distribution	Levene			
Dependent Variable	*F-value*	*df1*	*df2*	*p-value*
Value	0.33	2	73	0.72

ANOVA				
Factor	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*
Instructional Mode	38.59	2	19.3	3.25[*]
Error	433.56	73	5.94	
Total	472.16	75		

*p<.05

Multiple Comparison	Tukey					
Level 1	Level 2	*M1*	*M2*	*Mean Difference*	*Std. Error*	*p-value*
HSGA FTF	HSAG CMC	2.42	1.65	0.77	0.68	0.49
HSGA FTF	HSGA Control	2.42	0.67	1.76	0.69	0.03[*]
HSGA CMC	HSGA Control	1.65	0.67	0.99	0.69	0.33

*p<.05