

Variables to consider upon having decided to include pragmatics in the teaching of languages

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Abstract

The relationship between the systems of language and of culture has been put forward and abundantly discussed since the late 60s, given that the second influences greatly the pragmatic level of the first. This issue has been explored in various empirical and experimental studies, particularly within the area of intercultural discourse, and thereon has been well documented in various analyses investigating pragmalinguistic (PML) failure. These linguistic pitfalls have been mostly justified and explained through applying the approach of the language transfer hypothesis to show that L1 conventions are inappropriately and unsuitably transferred from the L1 to the L2. However, there is reason to feel that approaching this failure from another standpoint is due, and that doing so will contribute to increased success in the teaching and learning of languages. This text initially presents the topic by drawing on examples from various studies, and it discusses this PML aspect in the teaching of a L2: a) to disclose its role in the communication tools used between native and non-native speakers by looking at an array of different types of L1s and language teaching setups, and b) through fingering distinctions between international and minority languages under the framework of intercultural communication. Various questions are raised and discussed, across a range/variety of opposing poles (e.g. the world's largest and most influential to less commonly taught languages, teach/not teach, explicit/implicit), in order to produce answers that would help each language teacher find their own answers to tackle and overcome problems of what to include in their teaching and how to go about it. To draw the text to an eloquent end, teaching proposals that integrate digital technologies are presented.

Keywords: teaching of languages, pragmatics, pragmalinguistic failure, intercultural communication

Introduction

Our living in a communication age makes L2 learning essential for all individuals. Depending on the language education school one has chosen to adhere to, L2 language proficiency and interactional competence (Kramsch, 1986) for effective communication can be accomplished either through exerting hard work, that being considered a dynamic, non-linear and episodic process (Schulze and Smith, 2015 in Eslami & Derakhshan, 2020) or by acquiring it in a natural fashion (Krashen & Terrel, 1983). In either case, L2 communicative ability requires both linguistic knowledge, composed by grammatical knowledge, and pragmatic competence (Thomas, 1983). The former refers to the 'abstract' understanding of the L2 structural systems (e. g. phonology, syntax, semantics, etc) while the latter refers to the capacity to use a language suitably (encode messages) in different linguistic contexts, in order to fulfil a certain goal, and further to understand meanings because it is those that are intended by speakers (decoding of messages). This level of pragmatic competence is very much related to the culture one language is primarily linked to, along with the L2 structures and used as a principal means of communication. It is then understood that culture is a strong element in L2 communication and learners need to become aware of it and the ways it affects the

learning of a L2. This element (culture) has been proposed to be seen as a 'way of life' (Gordon, 1973), which can, in parallel with language competence, be witnessed in a *productive* and *receptive* fashion. In the former case (productive), it is a way people live and encode both social (through paralinguistic features) and linguistic (through a linguistic code) messages. In its latter manifestation (receptive), culture relates to the analogous decoding/deciphering of actions and language. Here, when the two (encoding and decoding) processes are consistent, that is, when messages are decoded as these were encoded by the communicators, there is usually not a problem in communication and messages are sent and received with their desired effect. On the other hand, communication breakdown occurs either by a deficiency in the incubation/encoding of messages, in a way suitable to the context and culture fashion, or a failure in the interpretation/decoding of messages as these were intended by the speaker/writer. In unfortunate situations (intercultural, and to a lesser extent intracultural), failure in communication often generates dire results leading not only to misunderstandings, but also to frustration or even worse, a cessation of interaction. Most problems of this type are discernible in intercultural communication, or in the communication between individuals of different cultures; through use of either a common code which is the L1 of one of the two persons involved, or of a third, language common to both communicators.

The term often used in linguistics for such infelicities is *pragmalinguistic* (PML) failure, which describes a situation in which the problem is not identified at the structural level of the language but rather by examining a pragmatic weight certain words or expressions carry in a given culture, particularly when speakers unsuitably phrase their intentions in a way that is not accepted by the recipients in the specific context. Notice that, although the learning of L2 structures is fairly straightforward, as there are prescribed rules to follow, the understanding of how the L2 operates at the pragmatic level is more complex and demanding, as guidelines (wherever these exist) are fuzzy and depend on a multitude of different variables, e.g., the specific situation, the acquaintance and relationship level between the communicating parties, the context, etc. Several studies (among others, Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990, 1993; Eslami & Derakhshan, 2020; Omar, 1991; Hafez & Memari, 2022) have shown disanalogous L2 learning development of L2 learners between their grammatic (usually higher) and pragmatic knowledge (typically lower). In this respect, teaching the pragmatic level of a L2 is challenging and additionally chances conflicting with the personality of the learner and the teacher (see below). In the specific act of persuasion in application letters for a scholarship, matters become even more challenging as:

- a) the product to be promoted is the self of the individual and this act has its own characteristics, and
- b) when expressed in writing, communication failure is worse, as the author does not have an immediate second chance to correct him/herself they do in speech (based on the reaction of the listener), not having immediate contact with the other.

Collecting data from students, involves fabricating a realistic environment for this speech act which with students are familiar. Thereon, it is expected that subjects respond to the call realistically. Last, the benefits of this research would not only lay with the student population globally but would also aim to contribute to intercultural understanding and, as an offshoot, increase awareness of the 'other'.

This study initially discusses succinctly the main interconnected constructs, i.e. PML failure, persuasion and rhetoric, and investigates the latter two, by examining them contrastively. The research context unfolds, and examples of PML failure from

experimental studies are presented (in a protocol letter at the APPENDIX), illustrating how this undesirable linguistic upshot is exhibited in the writing of scholarship application letters, a consequence which affects not only communication but arguably has also sociolinguistic impairments in intercultural communication. These are related to the fact that PML failure inevitably affects the image of the person who commits it as this is often erroneously judged as the user being impolite or worse, due to the fact that native speakers (or recipients of messages) fail to understand the reason for the linguistic problem, proceed to make a judgement concerning the speaker's character (which formulates a receptive failure, Miller, 1974; Riley, 1989). Aristotle was the first to deliver the idea of interpretation of events, which in his mind was subjective and reflected the individual's perception of reality.

As a consequence, the interpretation of an event, which is claimed to be someone's subjective reality, reveals part of his/her ideas and personality as well. It is in this light that the teaching of this linguistic parameter is considered and discussed. In certain cases, a set of several questions (as independent variables that need to be educed) are phrased and arguments are raised and debated, not to provide prescribed answers to the topic's concerns but, very importantly, to help the readers shape their own practical decisions regarding the teaching of this linguistic phenomenon. It needs to be noted at this stage that, although a polarisation approach is not recommended, it is employed here only to illuminate the arguments used. In the *Teaching of Pragmatics* and the *Conclusions* sections of the paper, more focussed questions are offered, concerning the most influential or the less commonly taught languages, for teachers who feel they want to be able to consider and shape their answers and practices as they see fit.

Given this aspect, this is not an article that is able to or intends to provide answers or recipes for the teaching of pragmatics in language education but rather, keeping in line with a Socratic approach, it aims to increase awareness on the topic by analysing some of the variables involved and assist the teachers towards making their own decisions concerning their teaching. The teaching of this linguistic feature with the assistance of technology is also briefly considered in the *Conclusions*.

Pragmalinguistic failure

Thomas' definition of PML failure is quite-well accepted and the scholar describes it as a "...cross-cultural communication breakdown..." which "...occurs when the pragmatic force mapped by a speaker onto a given utterance is systematically different from the force most frequently assigned to it by native speakers of the target language, or when speech act strategies are inappropriately transferred from L1 to L2" (Thomas, 1983, p. 99). Notice that in this extract Thomas underlines one of the assumptions concerning the origin of the problem and claims by following a contrastive analysis hypothesis that this is due to a transfer of L1 conventions to the L2 (James, 1980, 1998). Further, it can be understood that Thomas focuses on a PML failure only in circumstances of intercultural communication between a native and a non-native speaker and does not take into her consideration the use of international languages as a means of communication in cases where none of the communicators is a native speaker of the common language. Even though the discussion concerning the case of English as an international language is focussed upon, other languages being used for intercultural communication are also mentioned (French, Spanish).

While PML failure is mostly understood as a purely linguistic problem, it carries sociopragmatic consequences and implications as pointed out by Blum-Kulka and Olhstain (1986, p. 169) who stress the social level of this undesirable linguistic state; " ...

pragmatic failure might carry serious social implications". On the other hand, the opposite (positive) impression is marked when speakers communicate messages in a suitable manner, carrying an accepted pragmatic force, and are seen as polite or clear and as a result gain many advantages when interacting with other speakers (Leech, 1974, p. 99).

In this light, PML failure is not to be considered only as a linguistic phenomenon but subsequently an incident with social implications as well (socially related); the impression given relates to the personality of the person who commits it. Therefore, there seem to be two sides of the problem that would need to be tackled in L2 pedagogy:

- a) one relates to the study of pragmalinguistics as an aspect of language which would ideally provide information not only about the differences at the level of pragmatics between the languages studied (usually in dyads - L1 and L2), but also
- b) how this affects the images of the persons involved (the social or personality side that is projected through language) so that increasing linguistic tolerance of the 'other'.

Examples of PML failure have been provided in several studies with Greek (James, Scholfield, & Ypsilandis, 1992; Ypsilandis, 1994; Psaltou-Joycey & Ypsilandis, 2000), Farsi (Farnia, Ypsilandis, & Ghasempour, 2019), German (Böttger, Ickinger, Költzsch, & Ypsilandis, 2021), Korean (Shin, 2019), Chinese (Yuanmin & Gailin, 2017; Shi, 2022), and Arabic (Al Abbad, Al Mansur, & Ypsilandis, 2019) participants. Results of pragmatic implicature with English used as an international code of communication (global English, Crystal, 1997) were also investigated in James, Scholfield and Ypsilandis (1994). At this point in the text, including an abridged outline of their study is beneficial. In their study, a protocol letter (see Appendix), containing most types of PML failure as recorded in the letters produced by the subjects of their earlier work (James et. al., 1992), was evaluated by other non-native speakers of English from Poland, Germany, Portugal, France, Greece and Syria (English as an international language setup). It was found that the perceptions of those 5 groups of subjects, concerning the suitability of the argumentation used by the Greek writers in the 1992 earlier study, was different from the perceptions of the English natives from the UK who evaluated the letters of the 1992 study (differences in the perceptions among the subjects of the 1994 study were also noted). In more detail, in Table (1) below (from James et al., 1994), it is possible to identify two cases (1 and 9) of the protocol letter which seem to be linguistically acceptable persuasive universals between the cultures involved in the study, two cases (4 and 10) in which the perception of all the non-native participants is different from the ones of the English native speakers (these argument structures could be safely used in the writing of applications in these non-native English cultures but may need to be considered; be rephrased or totally avoided in UK English), three cases (2, 7, and 8) in which the judgement of the non-native participants is neutral but not negative (these are to be used with caution), and finally two cases (3 and 6) in which the judgement of the non-native participants is divided; there is not an agreement between them (these are to be avoided with certain cultures while they can be used with some others (e.g. Greek and Syrian).

PART		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Eng-NSs	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	
Other NNS	+	X	S	+	-	S	X	X	+	+	

Table 1: Perceptions of English by native and non-native speakers (from James et al., 1994), legend: + = considered acceptable, S = neutral judgment, - = considered unacceptable, X = NNSs were divided.

The findings of this work provided insights that may illuminate the context of the teaching of English pragmatics when this task deals with an international language, and support some of the arguments presented below. In addition to the language transfer hypothesis, Kasper (1992) provided evidence for both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic transfer), there are other possible hypotheses that have not been equally explored. These are phrased here to invite future studies in the framework:

- a) an *interlanguage development hypothesis* at the level of pragmatics which needs to be explored in order to explain the interlanguage stage of the learner who apparently has not at a given point mastered the specific pragmatics of the L2, a feature which is claimed not to develop in parallel to grammar (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990, 1993; Eslami & Derakhshan, 2020; Omar, 1991; Hafez & Memari, 2022), and may be also due to possible faulty teaching (see the textbook TASKWAY 2, written by Dendrinos, et al., 1987, p. 12) in which a sample letter proposed for an analogous situation contained some of the failure committed in James, et al. 1992 study by Greek learners of English, and
- b) an *accommodation hypothesis attempt* which may suggest that learners “are dealing with (mistaken) beliefs about the language” (Riley, 1989) into which they try to converge (in relevance to the accommodation theory - Giles, 1973, 1984).

Persuasion and rhetoric

The terms persuasion and rhetoric appear in the bibliography of discourse analysis, often describing a similar process of convincing. Despite the differences between the two constructs, discussed below, both persuasion and rhetoric arguably appear in three basic forms:

- a) in their *strong form*, which is expected to lead to action inducement (Guerini, Stock, & Zancanaro, 2004) aiming for audience not only to change their beliefs and values but also their feelings, intentions, and, mostly, attitudes, which are expected to result to analogous actions (resulting from Simons, 1976; Lakoff, 1982; Hardin, 2010; Mintz & Agaard, 2012),
- b) in their *weak form*, which requires a person to concur with an action however remain passive, without being involved in any activities, and
- c) in an *odd form*, which would incorporate cases in which individuals are persuading or are being persuaded of one thing, although they act in the opposing direction (e.g. individuals being convinced that smoking damages health while they keep smoking).

Both *persuasion* and *rhetoric* are deployed into two basic arrangements:

- a) in a *converging surface semantic form structure*, in which meaning is transparent to the audience because speaker and audience share cultures with common L1 and L2 argumentative pragmatic elements, and
- b) in a *diverging deep pragmatic level form structure*, in which speaker's intentions are being obscured due to language/cultural differences observed between the communicator and the audience, or due to pragmatically unsuitable encoding by the communicator or even erroneous decoding by the recipients.

A middle scale case between (a) and (b) may also be added. Arguably, there is a third c) level in which the two parties involved in a discussion have been trained in international communication and have acquired skills to cope with such acts or are equipped with intercultural awareness and tolerance of the ‘other’ (Nostrand, 1991 as referred in Kramsch 2003).

Materials on intercultural competence are offered by the European Language Competence institute at <http://elc-consult.com/Home>. The two constructs (persuasion and rhetoric) can be better understood when contrasting them, as is done in Al Abbad, Al Mansur, and Ypsilandis (2019):

- a) while persuasion is based on awareness, rhetoric is based on knowledge,
- b) persuasion is understood as the ability to convince using awareness of relative, previously acquired knowledge, while rhetoric is understood as the ability to convince by deciphering/decoding and encoding strategically,
- c) persuasion uses arguments while rhetoric uses strategies,
- d) in persuasion, arguments are typically adopted or developed by the individual, while in rhetoric strategies are typically created or become selected, organized and are structured by an orator,
- e) persuasion is deployed mostly through the medium of language but other means may be used as well, while rhetoric is only deployed through the medium of language,
- f) persuasion is often downgraded to a skill or an act, while rhetoric is upgraded to an art,
- g) persuasion is simplified, while rhetoric is elaborated,
- h) persuasion follows structured or unstructured formats, while rhetoric unfolds methodically,
- i) persuasion is predominantly deliberate but not only (it can happen accidentally when people become unintentionally role models for others), while rhetoric is only deliberate.

Differences in rhetorical strategic deployment between cultures were noticed by Kaplan as early as 1966, and later in 1972. Among others, there is a longitudinal experimental contrastive study on PML failure in persuasive writing which started with Greeks writing in English and later continued with the involvement of other nationalities, by following an identical methodology, employing subjects of different cultures (Iranians, Saudis, Germans, Spanish, Russians), namely, James, Scholfield and Ypsilandis (1992) with Greeks writing in English, Psaltou-Joycey and Ypsilandis (2000) with Russians and Spanish writing in Greek, Farnia, Ypsilandis, and Ghasempour (2019) with Iranians writing in Farsi and English, Al Abbad, Al Mansur, and Ypsilandis (2019) with female Saudis writing in Arabic, and Böttger, Ickinger, Költzsch, and Ypsilandis, (2021) with Germans writing in English. The above studies investigated the problem experimentally following the exact same procedure in each study to explore argumentative writing in the L1 and the L2 (with English as an intercultural communication tool, but also with minority or less widely taught languages – Greek, Farsi). The scholars asked university students to write a letter of application for a fictitious scholarship in English (combining an area of persuasive linguistic ability, a form of self-advertising) which was then evaluated at the pragmatic level (without any specific indication of how provided) by native speakers of the English language (the original idea came from Carl James, University of North Wales, Bangor). In some of these studies mentioned above, comments by English natives concerning PML failure in English were judged to contain,

- a) use of emotional blackmail in arguments of affective appeals,
- b) inclusion of egocentric statements often seen as uncomfortably direct, or
- c) addition of extensive flattery, in order to positively bias the recipient.

In most studies, the failure recorded was attributed to language transfer and violations of Grice's (1975) maxims of politeness. Under this scenario, supported theoretically and in several contrastive studies, culture was claimed to influence the argumentative

development in L1 and from there on, the L2. Some of the infelicities recorded in the James, et. al. 1992 study resulting from the use of ethos and pathos arguments were also adopted by other nationalities as well, except in the case of Saudis who showed a remarkably high sense of patriotism in their applications. The element of religious belief was found to be strong in both Saudi and Iranian applications written in Arabic and Farsi respectively. It needs to be pointed out that, the proposed language transfer hypothesis for persuasion has been argued to be dynamic and developing, and it can be claimed to have a rebound effect as well, as rhetoric was stated initially by Kaplan (1966, 1972) and later by Kobayashi and Rinnert (2012a+b, 2013) to be fluid and evolving. In particular, in the Kobayashi and Rinnert's longitudinal studies, the scholars investigated the writing development of a Japanese subject who was given the pseudonym Natsu, who advanced into a multilingual multicompetent writer in the three languages she studied in Australia (English) and later in China (Chinese). Natsu developed into a "multilingual writer in the three languages over time" (which included her own L1) integrating in her writing her experience and individual perceptions from the L2 and the L3, incorporating in the textual process social aspects from the three cultures, with boundaries becoming "blurred among both the textual and cultural identity" which affected her text construction and composing process (2013:4). These findings concur with earlier claims by Cook (1991, 1992) who supported the idea of *multicompetence* described as "the compound state of a mind with two grammars", a type of a "merged language system rather than two separate systems" (1991: 112), placed at a Selinker's (1972) *interlanguage stage* which can be applied to the area of pragmatics as well. In a recent study by Vasilopoulou and Ypsilandis (forthcoming) in which a body of Greek judges (all professional primary and secondary education teachers) evaluated the persuasion strategies used by Albanians writing an application letter in Greek, it was found that, the ethos and pathos arguments used by the subjects were declared unsuitable to be utilized for this purpose (scholarship application writing to a Greek audience). Note that, the exact same types of ethos and pathos arguments were recorded as those being employed also by the Greek postgraduate learners of English (in the analogous context, design, and procedure earlier study by James, Scholfield, and Ypsilandis, 1992). In addition, though, inclusion of these ethos and pathos arguments were found to be suitable by other Greek postgraduate students in the 1994 work of the same authors (which followed) and confirmed reliability of argumentation recorded in their earlier study). Findings of the 3 studies mentioned above, when combined, could further support a claim that persuasive arguments develop in a culture as the culture grows/develops itself, having as a consequence ethos and pathos arguments not to be found suitable any more for application letters written for a Greek audience. Alternatively, this might be understood as an instance of inconsistency between the recorded suitable employment of such arguments by the Greeks in the 1992 study, and their later evaluation as unsuitable by other Greek nationals of the same educational level (in Vasilopoulou and Ypsilandis' work) when employed by Albanians. In this light, it can also be taken as an example showing that individuals become stricter when they act as evaluators. A hypothesis in this direction might be that there is the possibility that this may be a case displaying that individuals behave linguistically differently, depending on which side of the hill they are found on, on each occasion (productive or receptive when writing application letters). The above hypotheses, when pursued, will further illuminate the issue as we proceed.

The teaching of pragmatics in the L2 pedagogy

Given the above evidence of PML failure occurring in intercultural communication, it can be expected that this linguistic element be of concern to language educators and more detail particularly on how it is going to be taught in the language classrooms would be a source of discussion. Rather than providing strategies and techniques for the teaching of pragmatics in foreign language pedagogy (prolific works already exist on the subject, such as Kramsch, 1993; Hinkel, 1999; Rose & Kasper, 2001; Sarigul & Ashton-Hay, 2005; Tatsuki, 2010; Houck, Tatsuki, & Dantas-Whitney, 2011; Lopriore & Vettorel, 2015) that might be beneficial for L2 competence (Yousefi & Nassaji, 2021), this work considers the implications of that very basic question of whether this type of knowledge should even be included in the L2 education curriculum or not. Alternatives are examined together with the arguments concerning the variables considered below. Note that the answers to the questions raised and examined do not have to be the same for every teacher in all teaching circumstances as they would probably differ and depend upon every particular teaching situation.

1) SYLLABUS-RELATED CONSIDERATIONS

Initially implications related to composition of the syllabus would need to be considered, in particular, those associated with the linguistic genre aimed at across, a) the global variation spectrum (Gray, 2010), and b) the social ladder within the target L2 (this is related to James' (1998) idea of horizontal and vertical division). The first variable (global) concerns the variation and spread of a L2 across the world (horizontal spread), and its existence can be noticed in certain international languages, e.g. French, English, Spanish. The question to be addressed here is the following: *which of the many native Frenches, Englishes or Spanishes across the globe would a teacher target to teach?* In many cases these languages are used as an official and/or a majority language (e.g. English in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, or Spanish in Spain, Mexico, Argentina) while in other cases they are used as an official but minority language (e.g. English in India, some south and central African countries, Pakistan, or Spanish in the USA). The second variable complicates the genre decision even further and relates to the different social genres that exist within a given country (vertical spread) where the L2 is used as an L1. It is understood that within every official language there are different genres that are used by different social or financial groups (social tribes) through which individuals express themselves better and feel associated with their peers. Further to that, every person has his/her own idiolect and that marks their personal identity. Despite that every individual uses the same sounds, nouns, verbs, etc. within the same more or less accepted syntax, each one speaks their L1s in a different way which distinguishes them as individuals, and doing so is a characteristic of their personality. Thereon, ideally, one would wish to retain his/her personality/identity when s/he speaks an L2 and would thus prefer that this matter would be respected by the teacher. It becomes then clear that this decision inevitably also brings with it some ethical issues that would additionally need to be addressed; e.g. *what right and knowledge do language teachers have to direct or influence learners' linguistic behaviour in the L2?*, or even more perilous, *what right do language teachers have to impose a new personality/identity on L2 learners when speaking a L2?* In this light, a teacher would have to consider the learners' background and personal communicative targets, unless these become apparent as, e.g. in Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) classes in which the syllabus is mostly dictated by the specific to the target language genre aimed at (e.g. Business English, English for Tourism/Hospitality). This related issue, together with the technological input, is discussed in the *Conclusions*.

1.A) A question that immediately arises from the above discussion, that suggesting a converging teaching process, is the following: *would users of English around the globe have to conform to the native Englishes pragmatics?* (argued in Kachru, 1981), particularly in communications in which none of those involved are native speakers of the language. In support of the non-convergent (divergent) to the UK or USA native English attitude is Widdowson (1994) who has maintained that due to the global spread of English around the globe, the language has ceased to be the cultural property of any particular group of speakers (in a sense it no longer has *sui generis* existence). In such a case, it would be expected that groups of such speakers when using English would commit less PML failure in specific situations if they had maintained their own L1 pragmatic values (see results of Greeks and Syrians in James et al. 1994). In the 1994 James et al. study discussed in the chapter above, it became clear that along with the pragmatics of the native Englishes that exist in the world (Kennedy, 1986 offers a list of different occurrences of Englishes), there are the pragmatics of specific groups of English users who learned it as a L2, which are found to be different from those of the UK English natives although it is often implied in various textbooks that all learners of the English language are required to conform to the pragmatics of the standard UK native speaker variety. Should this latter be the case, then there is fear that the ‘soul’ of the different native or non-native Englishes around the world would be lost (this is the way different populations see and describe things; the poetry behind the words, if you wish, e.g. Indian or Italian English has its own poetry). One suggestion put forward to overcome the problem of many L2 speaker Englishes was the teaching of an fabricated variety of the English language titled *International or nuclear English*, which has been described to be “as culture free as calculus, with no literary, aesthetic, or emotional aspirations” (Quirk, 1981), a form of lackluster language. A counter argument to this proposed solution, would be that the proposed language may end up not being English at all, despite it containing the structure patterns of the target L2. Notice also that non-native talk is often treated with “tolerance, at other times showing amusement, while often expressing irritation” (Kachru, 1981, p. 15) which may place the learner in an uncomfortable situation. It is however interesting to see that, other ungrammatical variations of native English genres have always existed and are now accepted in the society, e.g. African American English vernacular (see, the Steve Harvey show). The final decision of what to include in lessons and how to teach elements of what is appropriate for such an implied new syllabus is often placed in the hands of the willing teacher; it is considered extremely complex and by consequence places him/her in the shoes of the *deus ex machina* of the language classroom (a role some, but not all teachers wish to play) and affects learner autonomy (Eslami & Derakhshan, 2020). A rather advanced and open-minded idea is put forward by a now-retired, university colleague, Dr Edgar Joyce in a recent discussion which is recorded here, in that language education requires a different kind of teacher and learner, someone who has a different education and enjoys challenges. These kinds of teachers and learners seem to be needed to enrich education systems which by consequence would need to affect teacher education/training (relieve education from the ‘just do what I have been told to do’ attitude, and move towards a ‘being an aware, decision maker who discusses and chooses what to do’). The extract from Ager (1986) “Language teaching has always suffered from the necessity for teachers (to feel they want) to play God” (added text in the brackets) demonstrates this tendency by teachers be those who make decisions for their learners and take all matters into their own hands but also, if one wishes to see and accept the sarcasm in the above extract, the writer further implies that learners do need to be taken into consideration as it is their personality/identity that it is at stake, not simply the

learning a some pre-set language points. This changes the role of the teacher; they will have to become willing to make decisions about issues of what to include in a course and be given appropriate training and support about how to do this. Apart from such changes being the case for the syllabus-related issue, similar will apply to changes that will emerge about the method and materials used to teach.

2) METHOD RELATED CONSIDERATIONS

A fitting stepping point to direct the content of this chunk of the article on method and methodology is consideration of the distinction relieve education from the 'just do what I have been told to do' attitude, and move towards a 'being an aware, decision maker who discusses and chooses what to do' between a *foreign language teaching* setup and a *second language acquisition* situation (Kachru, 1981). Bardovi-Harling and Dörnyei (1993) claimed that EFL learners ranked grammatical errors as being more serious than pragmatic errors; ESL learners/acquirers claimed exactly the opposite to be the case. In the latter case, learners' motivation is usually to learn an international language (mostly English nowadays) out of the love for the country, its music, literature, humour, etc., and living in it, while the rest deem the required effort to be simply for professional development and advancement. Having this information in hand will influence decisions about the amount of L2 pragmatics to include in lessons and in material. The issue of this balance is also relevant in this final point about those learners who wish to learn an internationally and widely spoken language for communication with other cultures. In some of the above cases, it is possible to claim that there is more space for the teaching of a native genre that culturally binds pragmatics as it is the learner who makes the *selection* of the target language. In such cases, learners are expected to be positively predisposed towards the language and the culture. They may want to know about L2 pragmatic knowledge. The same circumscription may be true for the teaching of minority languages, such as Greek or Slovak which are selected predominantly as a gate opener to the culture rather than a tool for professional or international communication purpose. What makes for further consideration about the methodology and content of lessons is the teacher's native language., Should the language teacher be a native speaker of the learners' L1, the learners may be more inclined to follow his/her recommendations concerning the L2, as learners may be more willing to accept pragmatic recommendations from teachers of their own culture. On the other hand, in the case of second language acquisition setups, individuals who immigrate to the L2 country typically learn the L2 out of *need* in order to improve their professional and thereon their financial and social status. However, it may be expected that in such cases learners may be more sensitive to their perceived need to maintain their self-image and personal linguistic identity (Riley, 2007) in the new host country. This is expressed also through the L2, and thus these individuals may not accept the L2 local standard pragmatics. These learners besides having to deal with the language botheration, typically face relocation (transition) anxiety and thereon frequently wish to maintain a personal learning agenda and this occasionally affects their attitude towards the L2 culture (Schumann & Schumann, 1977). Moreover, Bailey (1983) suggested that nugatory self-image can debilitate, and resulting anxiety can be increased by having to behave linguistically in the pragmatically expected, yet unfamiliar, manner and thereon, as a consequence, cause avoidance of contact with the source of perceived stress. This affects the effectiveness of teaching L2 pragmatics. Teachers must consider this and reflect on it when planning how to teach. Often the reaction of many immigrants is to remain within the boundaries of their own family (Schumann and Schumann's *nesting patterns*) and their own national groups and societies, as they often believe that this is a

way to maintain their identity, religion and their culture (Ghosn & Bilge, 2020), and L1 pragmatics. Given this, quite often these individuals live at the edge of the society. Therefore, when considering the methodology to use, inclusion techniques and L2 awareness sessions would need to employ and incorporate into the L2 teaching materials, but care has to be taken not to create a negative reaction.

2.A) Decisions concerning the strategical and methodological path to follow in the teaching of pragmatics, once the decision has been made, given the makeup of the particular learner assemblage, that this has to be in the syllabus, no matter what the extent, can be considered also through the explicit/implicit division; *should teachers be teaching and correcting pragmatics in an implicit way or explicitly?* (Gray, 2010). Although the investigation of the value and effect of feedback on pragmatic errors is limited (Ajabshir, 2014; Nguyen, Pham, & Nguyen, 2017), the controlled restrained findings from previous research on this issue are controversial (Khada wardi, 2021), with the latest trend resting on the implicit side in order to engage learners in cognitive problem solving and self-editing tasks (Ferris, 2002, 2003, 2004). Studies examining the effect of implicit and explicit feedback on pragmatic productions (Ajabshir, 2014; Nguyen, Pham, & Nguyen, 2017; Shirkhani & Tajeddin, 2017; Yousefi & Nassaji, 2019) concluded that, over time, implicit feedback is more helpful. A recent study investigating correction of PML failure by Vasilopoulou and Ypsilandis (forthcoming), has found that most language teachers who participated in their study claimed to handle these linguistic problems implicitly. Should this strategical path be implemented, it would be cost effective which means that in the meantime and before learners could decipher the L2 at this level, and further acquire this aspect of the L2 themselves, quite a few offences may be given and taken. In a different case, explicit correction, as the one which is evident in the YOUTUBE video below, may offer faster results, however, may cause also rebound problems related to the intrusion into the personality of the learner, as these are discussed in (a) above. Consider the explicit teachers' reactions at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hkXtTxcX90>. In this video, infelicities of pragmatic nature are treated as errors and are corrected straightforwardly, occasionally in manner insulting to the learner. Here are some examples: e.g. 1. in one case the teacher clearly says that "Students often have problems when they behave as they would in their own country". In this case, the teacher speaks of a behaviour (not clear if it is linguistic or social) without understanding the reason for the linguistic problem that has occurred and further insults the individual learner and her country. In another case, the teacher uses a direct way to offer advice with the auxiliary 'should' which indicates obligation, a form of duty, in the teaching of manners by criticizing someone's language and making assumptions about their character, even those reflecting a sense of inferiority. "you should ask politely and.....", this being contrary to Joosten's (2016) advice of an indirect and non-authoritative way to correct errors. Notice that the use of the word 'politely' implies that the other person is rude; not that she is not linguistically proficient. A further direct insult is in the following example: e.g. 2 "...what might be common in your culture could be too personal in some English-speaking cultures..." Two problems arise out of this: a) one is the insinuation about ALL the English-speaking cultures that are implied to be different from ALL the other cultures, although it is not clear whether all English native tongues carry the same pragmatics. Last, b) there is an already known division; your culture vs my (English) speaking culture or *you* vs *us*, that separates individuals and may aggravate the problem rather than contribute to its understanding. Finally, it should be pointed out that the dichotomy between natives and non-natives is "too broad since it gives the impression of a homogeneity within these two types" (Kachru, 1981, p. 16), a

condition which is far from reality. Notice also that in all cases presented at the above marked video, communication is ALWAYS between a non-native speaker of English and a native speaker (Australian in this case). Other non-native variables are not considered. In such a case, the Ancient Greek Golden Middle may be applied, only that in this case the middle does not have to be mathematically calculated, but rather concern a decision mutually agreed by both the teacher and the learner. The methods and methods used must take this on board, along with the ramifications of the type of syllabus adopted. There is a challenge in that course designers may need to and be able to draw on greater knowledge and flexibility, but a set of lessons that include pragmatics in a way that has been designed and taught to match the learners will likely be rewarding, successful and gratifying.

3) LEARNING-RELATED CONSIDERATIONS

How might learners feel about the consequences of the changes in their classes that would come about? Further problems arise because of learners' *studial* capacity (Palmer 2014), a quality that is not limitless; incontrovertibly there will be a substantial increase in the learning workload. As a consequence, the amount of time usually dedicated to L2 learning is affected. Would this need to be considered? The question, '*Would learners be able to conquer this linguistic addition within the given teaching time usually allocated for the teaching of languages in educational systems?*' has to be considered. Since having L2s become a strong means of professional development, it would seem only natural that L2 teaching time be increased and L2 learning become included earlier in education systems, ideally starting in kindergartens or in primary education; it is the case that in many countries this is already happening. This would clearly also require new teaching materials, novel methodologies, strategies, techniques and teaching targets, with the pragmatics of the L2 included in the curriculum.

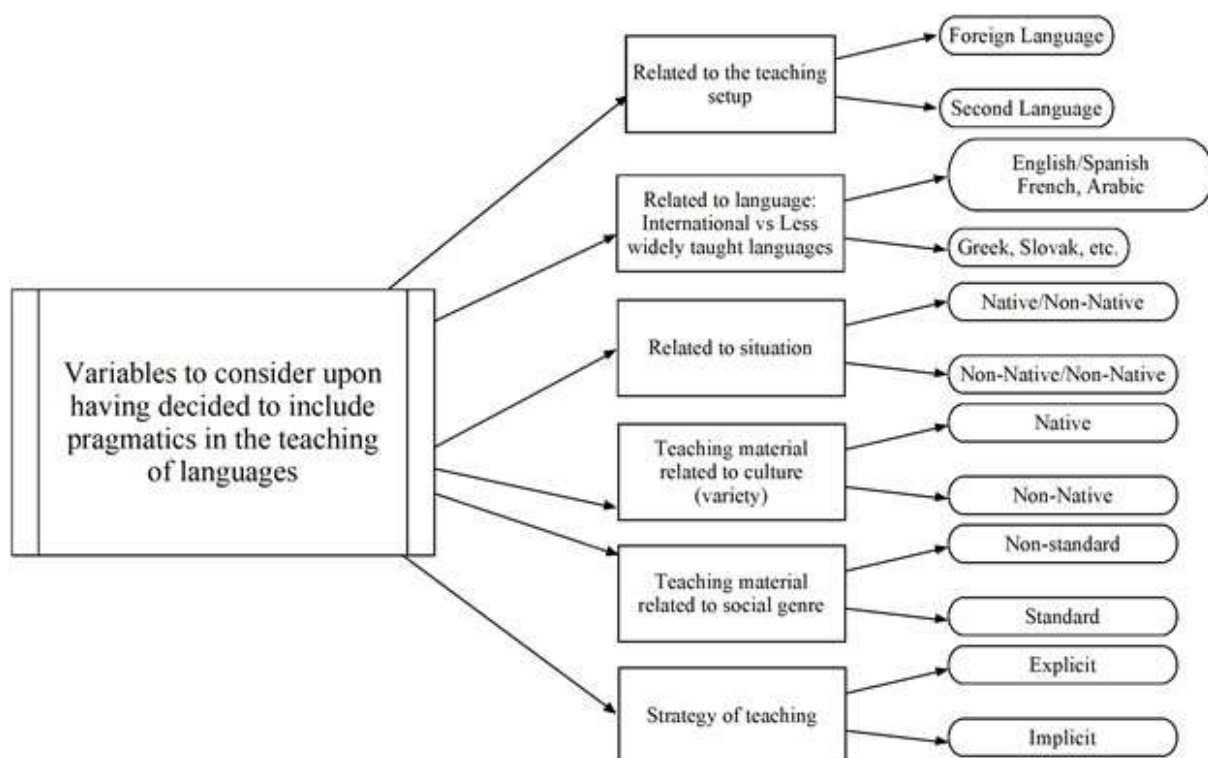
3.A) This, brings forward the next question: *should the teaching target be to create an 'ersatz' (Cook, 1993) native speaker?* To produce a sound answer, two ramifications need to be handled here: 1) The first is to realise that the final target, reaching the language level of a native speaker, is not feasible. Cook (1992) argues that non-native speakers will never reach the level of the native speaker of the L2 they are seeking to learn. Consequently, learners of a L2 will always be somewhere between the L1 and the L2 systems, following Selinker's (1972) interlanguage theory although it is doubtful whether an *ersatz* speaking individual will be accepted by the speakers of the L2 in question. A study by Chiba, Matsuura and Yamamoto (1995) revealed that subjects with more instrumental motivation, i.e. practical reasons for studying the L2, are more positive towards non-native English accents than those with less instrumental motivation, while those more familiar with native accents are more favourable to native-speaker accent. On the other hand, native speakers, while being successful comprehending meaning of foreign talk, find it amusing (Kachru, 1981 and references within; Ludwig, 1982), interesting, arousing questions concerning the origin of the individual or, in some cases, they become impatient. 2) Alternatively, learners who succeed to the English standard RP risk being judged as pretentious, fakes or even facing suspicion of hiding their true origin/identity.

This situation gives the impression of the verity of a vicious circle, and it may be a challenging puzzle that every individual teacher would need to solve for his/her class by considering the above discussed variables, consequently being responsible for making decisions given the selection of material to include (native and non-native accents and

languages) and the teaching targets to set. Finally, while some irregular accents may not be accepted by native speakers when produced by non-natives, these are now within the accepted genre in an L1 (the pronunciation of 'ask' as 'ax' in some American English genres). However, it needs to be pointed out that if it were to be the teacher who makes these decisions, the situation would lead back to a teacher centred environment, a setup which is out of the current methodological fashion (being learner centred). Again, this may be a case in which the teacher would need to offer options and let the learner decide which direction to go.

Conclusion and outcomes

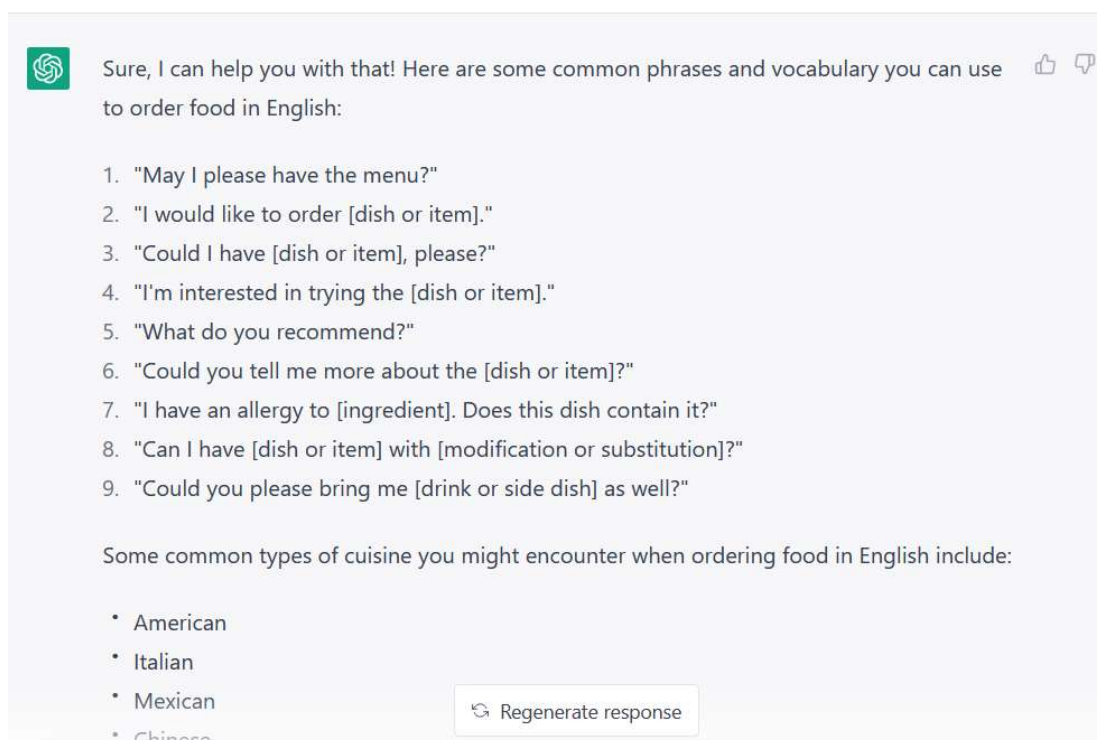
This paper has tried to take the discussion for the teaching of pragmatics a step further by pinpointing more focussed questions on the subject. In more detail, it has tried to discuss some of the problems that arise from a decision to proceed with its teaching, while it also explores the implications, from moving in the opposite direction. The paper concentrated on the issues of the syllabus to be selected, the methodology to be applied and any learning consequences which may affect its teaching. In this direction, Gray (2010, p. 35) stated that "For teachers this raises issues of which variety to teach, what kind of cultural content to include and how explicitly it is to be addressed." A few more variables, which have been discussed above and would need to be thought of in language teaching are included in the following diagram.



The first variable relates to the *teaching setup* which influences both the teaching material to be selected and the teaching targets to be addressed. In Second Language setups, teachers need to understand the circumstances second language learners are found in and include additional language awareness raising sessions to invite learners understand the host culture and its language pragmatics. Increasing learners' awareness of the specific L2 language functions may assist the understanding of the host community language operations and thereon help them make the decisions for themselves and

integrate the society. Note that this procedure seeks to increase their awareness of the L2 pragmatics and functions, and thereon protect them from getting themselves into situations that may cause them embarrassment rather than oblige them to behave linguistically in a predetermined mode. In this event, experiences of learners from personal encounters may be brought to the classroom and analysed. In Foreign Language setups YOUTUBE videos, Reels from INSTAGRAM or FACEBOOK which include humorous social interactions with natives and non-natives of usually the English language can be utilised to present cases that can be discussed in class. Today it is possible to find loads of Reels (short videos) on various communication applications which are full of innuendos and can be used as a source of native talk and be incorporated in the language curriculum. Learners have access to those, as many are registered in these applications, which makes it be possible for a teacher to ask learners provide those they feel are difficult to understand, provided that these can be shown in class and be explored for language teaching. The second concerns the specific language and its place in the world; should this be an international communication code or a less widely taught/spoken language. While the second case is more easily approached, as it is often learned by individuals who are fond of the target culture first and as a result wish to learn its language, the first case is more complicated as decisions would have to be made concerning the particular variation that has to be aimed at from the many that exist in the world. Material based on both native and non-native talks and the many social variations may have to be included in order to equip learners with the necessary knowledge of the differences in the pragmatics among them. Clearly, the teaching list here cannot be exhaustive but merely an introduction to the different variations principally designed to increase awareness. Learners can be exposed to the material and asked to consider the differences. In both cases, ChatGPT may be utilized to provide different ways of performing the same linguistic task and be used as a database for learners to explore different possibilities (see picture below with the results to a question concerning the order *of food in English*).

YP order food in English



Sure, I can help you with that! Here are some common phrases and vocabulary you can use to order food in English:

1. "May I please have the menu?"
2. "I would like to order [dish or item]."
3. "Could I have [dish or item], please?"
4. "I'm interested in trying the [dish or item]."
5. "What do you recommend?"
6. "Could you tell me more about the [dish or item]?"
7. "I have an allergy to [ingredient]. Does this dish contain it?"
8. "Can I have [dish or item] with [modification or substitution]?"
9. "Could you please bring me [drink or side dish] as well?"

Some common types of cuisine you might encounter when ordering food in English include:

- American
- Italian
- Mexican
- Chinese

Regenerate response

ChatGPT is an *engine optimizing language models for dialogue* which *interacts* in an *artificial conversational way* and answers questions posed by users. It is free of charge and offered on the internet at <https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/>.

This brings out the third parameter to be considered which concerns the particular situation (native/non-native or non-native/non-native). When the communication involves a native and a non-native speaker, the situation may look straightforward as the non-native may be expected to converge to the linguistic norms of the L2 used as the medium of communication to avoid PML failure. In this case, the natives' contribution to the interaction would be to approach the situation with increased tolerance. Following this attitude to the situation, both parties would show that they try to avoid misunderstandings and wish to join efforts for understanding the 'other'. In the case of linguistic encounters between individuals none of which is a native speaker of the language, matters are different and both parties would ideally need to become equipped with intercultural communication techniques. Further, PML failure research may contribute to the question by focussing on specific speech acts (application writing related to argumentative writing) and thereon investigate where there are pragmatic universals that can be safely used among cultures and cases that may cause friction with certain cultures. Lists of PML failure gravity in relation to certain cultures can be discussed, while learners may be invited to make their own choices as to how to proceed. In this case, learners of L2s would be made aware of the possible consequences and further decide for themselves which linguistic direction to follow. The accommodation theory may provide a solution to the problem as the communicator may be instructed to consider the audience in his/her communication and thus decide to converge or diverge to their pragmatics.

Clearly, in every particular case the communicator would need to be informed of the possible consequences of his/her decisions. On the other hand, evaluation bodies of applications for scholarships may need to increase their tolerance to PML failure and concentrate on the facts and figures of applications, rather than the persuasive arguments included in these. This here is a crucial element and would therefore need to be carefully considered. Questions related to the specific targeted language genre, discussed in (a) above, may find solutions if these consider the horizontal and vertical options, and present a wider spectrum of genres for each speech act taught, linked also to different contexts for the accomplishment of the same language task by several personalities in different circumstances, e.g. order food in different forms by different individuals (professors, students, businessmen, laymen, etc.), in a wide variety of establishments (take away, pub, elegant restaurant, etc.), and in different countries where the L2 is an official language in order for the learner to select which one suits his/her character best. Since this would be time consuming to be covered entirely in a language classroom, given the genuine time limitations, some of the linguistic material presenting different linguistic genres, through YOUTUBE videos, other than the standard variety, could be studied either individually or collaboratively out of class to enrich learners' previous knowledge, and later discussed in class with the teacher (following a Socratic Collaborative Inverted Teaching Approach, Ypsilandis, 2023). This decision will affect the selection of the didactic material at the level of pragmatics, and bonds with the target linguistic code variable; whether this is to be used mainly for communication with groups of native speakers of the language or whether it is to be used with other non-native speakers (international communication setup). The linguistic genre to be selected is very much related to the personality of the user and therefore it may help learners be acquainted with different genres in order to find the one closer to their own in their L1.

The last set of variables in the above diagram concerns the teaching and correction policy. While an *implicit* strategical procedure would require time to produce any results, it would seem to be the way forward, unless learners specifically ask to be corrected *explicitly*. As for PML correction policies, it is advisable that unsuitable utterances are to be corrected in an indirect and not authoritative way (Joosten, 2016) and from then on words of obligation such as 'should' 'need to' 'must' etc could be avoided or replaced by more tentative choices such as 'could' or other alternatives. Finally, while in the above diagram the variables are presented in a polarized format, the procedure policy may need to be more sensitive as the answer can be found somewhere in the middle and agreed between the teacher and the learner. The ancient Greek idea of the golden middle has been suggested above to be applied after the exact policy is agreed with the learners. While in mathematics the golden middle is placed in the exact half distance between the two poles, in pragmatics and language teaching this may not be the case and the golden middle may slide to different positions between the poles depending on the various independent variables that may affect it. In the case of persuasive writing for scholarships (where careers are at stake), often conducted through the medium of an international language (English), PML universals can be further researched to record cases of pitfalls that would need to be integrated in the syllabus in order for applicants to safely use the arguments. An internationally agreed format of application writing based on mere facts and figures without the argumentative part may serve to produce better selections. Alternatively, learners can be asked in class about the persuasive arguments they would use in their L1 and later consider what the implications would be should these be transferred to the L2.

The Technology input: Internet TANDEMs may offer a chance for authentic live language exchange between learners of different L1s in different setups:

- A) In its traditional form, TANDEM language exchange involves members whose L1s is the target L2 of their mirror learner. In such cases, members in dyads meet through the net via a communication application of their choice and discuss topics of common interest half the time in one language and the other half in the other. This way, both TANDEM members benefit from the process. Pragmatic differences can be discussed between the members in a relaxed, anxiety-free, out of class environment, devoid of peer or teacher interference which affects learning (Walqui, 2000). While finding a TANDEM member for international languages is simple, the possibilities for less widely spoken languages are smaller.
- B) Communities of less spoken heritage languages, living in a L2 dominant environment may provide the ideal setup for such language practice. Members of these communities wish to maintain bonds with the homeland by keeping their parents' language and can as a result be mobilised to play the role of a TANDEM partner. In this light, they can be invited to become TANDEM partners with learners from their metropolis wishing to learn their dominant L2 while they themselves may benefit from the learning of their heritage language. This would be an ideal situation for language learning in which the pragmatics between the two languages can be discussed without creating any friction.
- C) A final proposal can be the TANDEM of international languages in which none of the members is a native speaker of the target L2. This is to be used with caution as a false language may be adopted as uptake (Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001) by both participants. In-class preparation before TANDEM meetings could be designed by the teachers to avoid pitfalls. Topics that could create friction could be avoided and suggestive language could be instructed to equip learners with the necessary linguistic input for the encounters.

The final target would need to be to assist the L2 learner maintain his/her personality in another language and be able to communicate effectively through the L2, and this personality to be presented in a way that it is accepted to the L2 culture through messages phrased in a way that are understood in the L2 as intended. Last, it is hoped that users of a L2 would be able to construct sentences that accurately describe their intentions, matching receivers' linguistic norms or are part of their awareness spectrum.

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APPENDIX

PROTOCOLE LETTER

1. I'm writing in connection with the "travel scholarships" that your organisation offers to students that study in British Universities.
2. First of all, I would like to congratulate you on this initiative of yours and secondly to express my concern to take part in this competition. I know that the number of awards is very limited and that it will not be a very easy task since there would be many candidates to compete with.
3. By the way I am a very hard-working student and I strongly believe that I consider myself a good candidate for this award.
4. I speak four languages - English, French, Chinese and Greek and therefore, I do not have problems in socialising with other people. Also, I hold one degree already in Social Policy with specialisation in Clinical Justice; now, I'm in my final year in the Sociology and Linguistics joint honours degree at the University College of North Wales.
5. Moreover, I have just started taking courses in computer wordprocessing. Actually, to tell the truth, I find this quite hard and I'm thinking of postponing it for the time being.
6. Your scholarship is my only chance to make a study visit to the U.S.A. since my financial state would not permit me to do such a thing at my own expense.
7. Finally, I have to admit making a study visit to the U.S.A. is my sole opportunity to complete my research on Crime and Deviance; data from the U.S.A. would be very helpful for this.
8. I am sure you will take my application into serious consideration, and I hope you will not refuse me the chance of a lifetime.
9. I'd be very grateful if you could send me a leaflet about the universities that the study visits include. I enclose a postal order for £5 to cover the mailing expenses.
10. Thank you in advance for your cooperation, I am looking forward to hearing from you as soon as possible.