Pragmatic development and stay abroad

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Editorial

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This Special Issue on *Pragmatic Development and Stay Abroad* further extends the research on pragmatic development, focusing in particular on pragmatic learning in a stay abroad context. The present introduction contextualises the papers and draws on key themes shared across papers. In so doing, it provides several impulses for future research on the study of pragmatic development in the stay abroad context. Specifically, the topics focused on include learner status, levels of pragmatic analysis, the use of corpus-linguistic and computerised technologies in interlanguage pragmatic data analysis and finally the influence of length of stay, intensity of interaction and also learner perceptions of input on the development of pragmatic competence during stay abroad.

1. Pragmatic development and stay abroad: an explosion of research

Steady increases in student mobility in recent years (cf., e.g. European Commission, 2015) mean that language learners are increasingly experiencing language in a stay abroad context, a context described as one that "remains instructed, despite incorporating elements of naturalistic L2 acquisition" (Coleman, 1997:4). Despite a slow start to research interest in this area, recent years have seen an "explosion of research on pragmatic development" in this context (cf. Barron, 2017; cf. also Barron, forthcoming). Indeed, a meta-study of 49 articles published on pragmatic development in a stay abroad context finds, for instance, that more than half (53.1%) of all studies in the database were published between 2011 and 2015, with studies up to 2005 (1995–2005) only accounting for 18.4% of all studies (cf. Barron, 2017; Barron, forthcoming, cf. 3 for further details of the study). Further evidence of the recent explosion in stay abroad pragmatic research is seen in the array of monographs available (cf., e.g., Barron, 2003; Cook, 2008; Schauer, 2009; Devlin, 2014; Ren, 2015; Taguchi, 2015a) and in the multitude of recent overview articles (Kasper and Rose, 2002; Hassall, 2012; Taguchi, 2015b; Barron, 2017, forthcoming; Taguchi and Roever, 2017, 2018; Pérez Vidal and Shively, 2019).

L2 pragmatic stay abroad research shows a link between stay abroad and second language (L2) pragmatic acquisition, with developments recorded for several pragmatic features, such as for the use of conventional expressions, pronouns of address, speech act strategies and modification, listener responses and sequences (e.g., Barron, 2003, 2006, 2007; Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos, 2011; Schauer, 2009; Taguchi, 2011; Shively, 2015; cf. also Taguchi, 2015b; Pérez Vidal and Shively, 2019 for an overview). On the other hand, however, this same scholarship also shows the difficulties of L2 pragmatic acquisition in the stay abroad context, highlighting areas of a lack of development and non-linear developments. The research also draws attention to the fact that outcomes are dependent on the pragmatic feature focused on, given different rates of development for different pragmatic features. In addition, outcomes depend on length of stay, intensity of stay and also individual differences (cf., e.g. Pérez Vidal and Shively, 2019 for an overview).

The papers in the present Special Issue examine pragmatic development in a second language over the course of a sojourn abroad and touch on such issues and more. The present introduction isolates a number of particularly salient issues addressed in the studies at hand, issues which will also serve as a stimulus for future research in the area. Specifically, the paper first addresses learner status in stay abroad studies, the focus of pragmatic analysis, the use of corpus linguistic and computerised technologies in the analysis of stay abroad pragmatic data and finally the influence of length of stay, intensity of interaction and learner perceptions of input (relating in particular to the acquisition of localised features) during stay abroad on the development of L2 pragmatic competence. The paper closes with an overview of the seven individual papers in the Special Issue. We begin with the issue of learner status during stay abroad.

2. Learner status during stay abroad

Traditionally, our concept of a stay abroad student is that of third-level students of language in an institutional context embarking on a stay abroad within the context of their studies to a university in the target speech community (e.g. via Erasmus in a European context) and then returning to the institutional context after this limited time-frame and continuing to study the language in question in an institutional context. In this traditional case, frequently also termed study abroad, the learners stay in a context in which their target language is spoken as an L1 by the majority of the speech community, as for instance, when an Italian student of English engages in study abroad in England. The focus of much of the research on L2 pragmatic development during stay abroad focuses on the traditional and prototypical learner status type sketched above. In reality, however, the group of L2 learners on stay abroad is much more heterogeneous than the traditional conceptualisation sketched. Students embarking on stay abroad may, for instance, not be students of language at all, but rather students of a wide-range of subjects. In addition, third-level students may embark on a stay abroad in a lingua franca context rather than a target speech community context and so complete their study abroad in a language which is not the L1 of the majority. In such situations, the student communicates with others within the context of a lingua franca, as when German students embark on study abroad in Sweden equipped with English but without any knowledge of Swedish or motivation to learn Swedish. Indeed, this latter English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) context is increasingly important given the global status of English and the increase in the number of courses of study at university level offered in English in countries where English is not the L1 of the population (cf., e.g., Mitchell, 2016). Another constellation not recognised in traditional conceptualisations of stay abroad is that not all third-level students study when on a stay abroad. Rather, they may, for instance, complete a stay abroad in the context of a sojourn as an au pair or embark on an internship, work-placement or voluntary work as part of their studies. In addition, a selection of stay abroad students are heritage learners, typically early bilinguals, who embark on stay abroad due to ethnic, religious, linguistic or national connections with a particular ancestral country or region (cf. Taguchi and Roever, 2017; Xiao-Desai, 2019). A further group not encompassed by the traditional stay abroad definition are school-goers or school leavers who go abroad to improve their competence in a foreign language. Finally, some students register in long-term programs of study in the second language context and remain there for an extended period.

In the traditional stay abroad constellation described above, learners have had formal instruction in the second language in an institutional foreign language context. Consequently, they tend to view the L2 for the most part as subject matter, i.e., as consisting of rules and principles to be attended to (cf. Barron, 2003). During stay abroad, however, they experience language in its social context of use and typically aim to increase their competence over time spent abroad. Freed (1995:4) speaks therefore of a stay abroad sojourn as a "… special case of second language acquisition …" given that the context of learning during stay abroad is natural, but prior and future instruction mean that language is also viewed as a subject matter. Thus, "[t] heir [the study abroad students'] learning remains instructed, despite incorporating elements of naturalistic L2 acquisition" (Coleman, 1997: 4). In addition, stay abroad in the traditional conceptualisation is of limited duration, with students returning to the formal language learning context (cf. Edmondson, 2000: 365; Barron, 2003: 57; Devlin, 2014: 5). This limited time frame has many repercussions: Firstly, students know that following stay abroad they will return to the formal language setting where language is again viewed as a subject matter and where standard usage is demanded. Secondly, the limited time frame has repercussions for students' motivations when embarking on study abroad and thus also for their identity construction (cf. Grieve, 2015). Thirdly, as discussed in 5 below, the limited time frame has consequences for the amount and intensity of input and interaction stay abroad participants experience. (cf. section 5).

As we have noted, learner status in stay abroad is much more diverse than the traditional conceptualisation. In some of the variant cases of stay abroad noted above, such as in the lingua franca setting or in the longer term student setting, the stay abroad experience may differ from that just described. While prior experience in a formal language classroom is shared, learners will have different motivations while abroad; also, they will return to different contexts. To date, the effect of learner status is an area which has received relatively limited research interest. However, such variation needs to be addressed in stay abroad pragmatic research particularly since factors such as learner motivation and presence or absence of future institutional context may influence learners' pragmatic development (cf. Grieve, 2015). The present Special Issue offers a wide range of studies with different conceptualisations of stay abroad. The five longitudinal studies in the Special Issue offer an insight into a range of study types. Magliacane and Howard (2019), for instance, take learner status as a specific focus, contrasting the pragmatic development of au pairs and university students in the production of *like* as a discourse marker over time (cf. section 6 for further details). In addition, Sell et al. (2019) offer a focus on school-goers on a stay abroad. Sánchez-Hernández and Alcón-Soler (2019) deal with ESL students in their first semester of longer term study in the US, and finally, the papers by Barron (2019b) and Greer (2019) track the development of students within a traditional stay abroad context.

3. Focus of pragmatic analysis

Traditionally, the conceptualisation of pragmatic competence within interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) has focused on speech act competence, such as how learners use a range of strategies and modifiers to formulate a request or an apology in an appropriate manner. Speech act competence in this conceptualisation was long viewed as the locus of individuals alone, i.e. a learner-internal L2 competence or as van Compernolle (2013: 327) puts it, an "acquired toolkit to be applied later in appropriate contexts". In recent years, however, also with the emergence of the concept of interactional competence (IC) (cf. He and Young, 1998; Young, 2013), some awareness has emerged that actions are not individual actions but rather jointly

constructed in interaction. In other words, pragmatic competence does not just include functional competence, but rather competence in interactional practices, such as, for instance, repair, topic management and turn-taking (cf. also Barron, forthcoming; Young, 2019 for an overview of stay abroad studies investigating the development of interactional competence).

In line with these developments, a broad view is taken on pragmatic competence in the present context. To support this view, the five levels of pragmatic analysis introduced in Schneider (1988), and recently supplemented by a sixth, stylistic level (Félix-Brasdefer, 2012), are adopted in the present context. These six levels of pragmatic competence include (1) the stylistic level, (2) the formal level, (3) the actional level, (4) the interactional level, (5) the topic level and (6) the organisational level. The stylistic level encompasses pragmatic analysis of polite/plain styles and pronominal address forms. Analyses on the formal level include form-function matches /function-form analyses, recognising that a single form may realise different functions and vice versa that a single function may be realised using different forms. Examples of pragmatic features analysed on this level include discourse-pragmatic markers, pragmatic routines and tag questions. The actional level deals with speech act analyses, such as invitation refusals, responding to thanks, giving advice and complaints. Analyses on this level typically focus on the strategies employed in realising a speech act (pragmalinguistic level) and on the appropriate use of these strategies in context (sociopragmatic level). Analyses on the interactional level extend beyond the individual speech act and examine how speech acts are employed in interaction, e.g. in the context of adjacency pairs, interchanges, interactional exchanges or phases. The topic level deals with analyses of the propositions of individual utterances as well as with macro-propositions. It includes, in particular, analyses of topic selection and topic management. The organisational level focuses on turn-taking and involves analyses of interrupting behaviour, repair, overlap, minimal responses, back-channels or inter-turn silence. Empirical analyses may also combine a number of levels. Dings (2014) study, for instance, on developments in speaker selection, alignment activity and topic management in the six 30-minute conversations between an American learner of Spanish and a Spanish native speaker (NS) during a one year study abroad period in Spain combines both the organisational and topic levels.

In a previous meta-study employing these six levels of analysis, Barron (2017) sheds some light on the levels of pragmatic analysis analysed in stay abroad research (cf. also Barron, forthcoming). Starting with a definition of a stay abroad as focusing on students or school-goers who spend a limited period abroad either in a target language or lingua franca environment as part of their studies, the study, conducted in 2016, analyses the bibliographic data generated using a range of bibliographic databases (The Modern Language Association (MLA) International Bibliography, Web of Science (Core Collection), Scopus (Elsevier), Bibliography of Pragmatics Online (John Benjamins), Online Contents Linguistik) and the table of contents of the recently established journals not yet indexed in these data bases *Chinese as a Second Language Research* and *Study Abroad Research in Second Language Acquisition and International Education*. The analysis finds that all six levels of analysis have been focused on in stay abroad research. The actional is the level best represented at 57.1% of all studies in the sample followed by the stylistic level (30.6%) (cf. Table 1). Table 1 focuses on combined research in production, comprehension and meta-pragmatic awareness. However, as seen in Table 2, the focus on the actional level is constant across all study types. If we focus on the analytical level for production, comprehension or perception/metapragmatic awareness treated individually (cf. Table 2), we see that the preference for analyses on the actional level followed by the stylistic level remain for production (actional: 54.8%, stylistic: 40%) and perception/metapragmatic awareness (actional: 50%, stylistic: 30.6%). The comprehension data, limited to two studies, focuses on the actional level. There is, thus, a clear demand for stay abroad pragmatic research on a range of levels, particularly on levels other than the actional level.

The papers in the present Special Issue add to the stay abroad research on several levels. Some are situated on the traditional actional level, but others add to the very limited research on the formal and interactional levels. On the formal level, Magliacane and Howard (2019) focuses on learner developments in use of the discourse marker *like* over time in the target speech community, while Sánchez-Hernández and Alcón-Soler (2019) is a longitudinal study focusing on developments in routine recognition over time. On the actional level, Barron (2019b) focuses on the development of learner apologies in a stay abroad context, while Ren (2019) and Sell et al. (2019) examine developments in request production. Finally, Devlin (2019) looks at the influence of residence abroad on requests for advice. In some studies, some overlap is seen between levels of analysis. For example, Barron (2019b), a study on the actional level examining apologies looks at routine realisations, thus approaching the formal level (cf. section 6 for further details).

Table 1
Analytical level of L2 pragmatics studies (Barron, 2017)[a].

	Total (n = 49)
Formal level	8.2% (4)
Actional level	57.1% (28)
Interactional level	22.4% (11)
Topic level	2.0% (1)
Organisational level	8.2% (4)
Stylistic level	30.6% (15)

[a] Figures do not sum to the total numbers given in this table given that multiple levels of analysis are also possible in empirical analyses.

Table 2
Analytical level of linguistic data by study type[a].

	Comprehension (n = 2)	Production (n = 42)	Metapragmatic awareness (n = 20)	Total (n = 49)
Formal level	−	7.1% (3)	5% (1)	8.2% (4)
Actional level	100% (2)	54.8% (23)	50% (10)	57.1% (28)
Interactional level	−	23.8% (10)	25% (5)	22.4% (11)
Topic	−	−	5% (1)	2.0% (1)
Organisational level	−	9.5% (4)	−	8.2% (4)
Stylistic level	−	31% (13)	40% (8)	30.6% (15)

  [a]   Cf. footnote 1.

4. Corpus-linguistic and computerised technologies in ILP data analysis

The use of corpus linguistic methods or other computerised analytical technologies in ILP stay abroad research is extremely limited; in learner pragmatic research in general it has slowly increased in recent years (cf. Callies, 2013; Staples and Fernández, 2019:247). The comparatively slow start in ILP's use of corpus-linguistic methods can be explained by the fact that corpus pragmatics itself, i.e. that area of pragmatics concerned with the use of electronic corpora for pragmatic research, is a recent addition to the field of pragmatics (cf. e.g. Aijmer and Rühlemann, 2015, Staples and Fernández, 2019). In addition, corpus linguistic techniques are typically employed on corpora created without targeted elicitation. In other words, a corpus is generally designed not to elicit a target feature, such as a speech act, but rather to sample naturally-occurring data of (a) particular genre(s) or register(s). In contrast, ILP research has traditionally focused on analyses of speech act realisations (cf. section 3 above) (elicited via discourse completion tasks (DCTs) (also termed production questionnaires) or roleplays). Many speech acts (e.g. apologies) may not occur with adequate frequency in such corpora making speech act analyses potentially difficult (cf. Callies, 2013; Staples and Fernández, 2019). In addition, even if a speech act does occur with sufficient frequency in such corpora, identification may be difficult given a lack of form-function equivalencies and the fact that pragmatic meaning is negotiated in context (Jucker, 2009). Thus, the same form may have a different meaning in a different context, as when the form 'Hello' functions as an attention-getter in one context and as a greeting in another. While a production questionnaire or roleplay can control for the desired illocution by means of the situational description and the hearer response given to informants, this is not possible in the case of naturally-occurring data. Consequently, speech act identification is complex. For this reason, automatic tagging of pragmatic categories does not widely exist (cf. Weisser, 2017).

Despite these difficulties, recent years have seen some increase in the number of learner corpora available (cf. Centre for English Corpus Linguistics (CECL) at the Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL) for a listing; cf. also Romero-Trillo, 2018 for an overview). In addition, there has been an increase in the use of smaller context-specific corpora (cf., e.g. The Language LINC Corpus, a corpus of spoken telecollaborative e-tandem interactions (Barron and Black, 2015)). Much of the research which does exist on L2 corpus pragmatics contrasts learner language use (on occasion across proficiency levels) with NS language use (cf., Staples and Fernández, 2019:243—245 for an overview of studies; cf. also Barron and Black, 2015). Longitudinal corpus linguistic studies are few and currently focus only on small numbers of informants. Belz and Vyatkina (2008), for instance, examines the development of stance markers in the German of two L2 learners across a two month period of telecollaboration via chat and email accompanied by instruction in stance markers. Polat (2011), using a corpus of twenty-four interviews with an immigrant Turkish speaker, examines the development of three discourse markers (*you know*, *like*, *well*) over the first year after immigration. Apart from these studies, corpus studies of learner pragmatic development remain a research desideratum, particularly those in the stay abroad context. The most frequent focus in corpus analyses of pragmatic features is on the analysis of discourse markers and routine speech acts given that such pragmatic elements, in contrast to speech acts or other more complex pragmatic features, are comparatively easy to search for and extract (cf. Romero-Trillo, 2018; Staples and Fernández, 2019: 242).

Corpus linguistic methods, such as collocations, key word analysis, cluster analysis and the word list function, may, however, also be employed to facilitate pragmatic analyses on elicited data, such as DCT data or roleplay data, given that they allow recurrent patterns of use to be analysed, and also in general provide information on the company which lexemes keep. As such, they enable fine-grained studies of learner pragmatics. In this context, corpus-linguistic methods may aid in highlighting variant mitigation patterns or sequences of use. They may also draw attention to learner-preferred and learner-specific uses. Barron (2019b), a study on the actional level, for instance, employs corpus linguistic tools in a bottom-up analysis of the development of learner apologies over time in the target speech community. The analysis focuses on a corpus of elicited DCT data. It reveals the primacy of explicit apologies in the data and facilitates an in-depth fine-grained quantitative and qualitative analysis of routines which includes the traditional level of the strategy but which also goes beyond it to focus on routine variants, modification specific to a routine and learner-specific realisations. In addition, two further papers in the present Special Issue employ computerised technologies in their data analysis. Magliacane and Howard (2019) is a study on the formal level which employs the corpus linguistic software, AntConc, to extract *like* tokens from her corpus of sociopragmatic interviews. This involved an initial quantitative search for the tokens followed by a qualitative search taking context and function into account. In addition, Sell et al. (2019) also on the actional level, carries

out a lemma analysis of learner DCT requests over time and discusses its use in contrast to a more traditional functional analysis (cf. section 6).

5. Length of stay, intensity of interaction and learner perceptions of input

Traditionally, study abroad in a university context often took the form of a so-called "year abroad". For some time now, this trend has been changing in the USA, with stays becoming progressively shorter and increasingly taking the form of between semester stays or semester long stays (cf. Hulstrand, 2006; The Institute of International Education, 2015). In the European context, Erasmus-funded student mobility funds stays for study or training for between three and 12 months. An interesting question from the perspective of research on the development of pragmatic competence in the stay abroad context is thus, whether the length of stay influences L2 pragmatic development. Overall, studies show that a certain degree of pragmatic knowledge can be acquired in a short time-frame, but they also point out that many features remain undeveloped. In addition, previous research shows that different pragmatic features develop quicker or slower than others over time (cf. Matsumura, 2001; Barron, 2003, 2007; Hassall, 2013; Khorshidi, 2013).

In addition to research on the duration of study, a branch of L2 pragmatic research on stay abroad also recognises that different stay abroad informants experience different degrees of input and interactional opportunities, and, as research shows, such factors have consequences for L2 pragmatic development. Taguchi (2008), for example, finds considerable variation in the amount of speaking and reading time which students report to have had in stay abroad. She finds gains in comprehension speed to correlate with the reported amount of speaking and reading time spent by students outside of class time. Similarly, a case-study-based study by Kinginger and Blattner (2008) on awareness of colloquial phrases and pronouns of address in IL French also finds an advantage for those learners who engage in more interaction with speakers of various ages and backgrounds (cf. also Kinginger and Farrell, 2004).

As well as researching the effect of differing amounts of input and interactional opportunities on L2 pragmatic development, recent stay abroad research has also examined the intensity of contact and the effect of different degrees of intense contact on L2 pragmatic development. In researching both the amount and nature of interaction in the foreign language in the stay abroad context, researchers need to treat these variables as dynamic, and open to change with time spent in the target speech community (cf. Taguchi et al., 2016 on time-varying variables; cf. also Umino and Benson, 2016). In general, intensity of interaction has been found to play a more decisive role than duration (cf. Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos, 2011). Such studies focus on whom students spend time with, how frequent and extensive and close such contact is and in what situations informants use the L2. Taguchi (2015a), for example, in a study of four case studies in a Japanese study abroad context, highlights the importance not only of contacts, but of close relationships in the L2 context. She points out that regular, close and stable social contacts are vital to pragmatic development (cf. also Marriott, 1995; Jin, 2012). In addition, such research also shows that learners may have difficulty in accessing NS input as NS may use foreigner talk to learners and treat them in a different manner to other NS (cf. Jin, 2012). Also, negative feedback from NS may be limited (cf. also Shively, 2011 and Hassall, 2013 on lack of corrective feedback). Another aspect of the research on input has shown that as well as NS influence, input from fellow L2 learners can have a positive effect on L2 pragmatic development. Hassall (2015) is an innovative study in this regard. Hassall finds that not only are learner productions a source of input, but that learners also discuss pragmatic issues with each other explicitly in the context of discussions, correcting each other or planning pragmatic action.

Finally, an aspect of input which has not received any attention in the stay abroad context but which has been researched recently in studies on the development of pragmatic competence among immigrants is the question of learners' awareness of, attitudes towards and perceptions of localised non-standard pragmatic features in the input (cf. Barron, 2019a for an overview). Clause final *like* in Irish English (cf. Diskin, 2017) and *now* in Irish English (Migge, 2015) represent two such examples of pragmatic features which differ in function, and in the case of *like* also in position, from similar forms in British English. Findings to date on non-standard regional pragmatic features in non-native speaker (NNS) input suggest that L2 speakers (immigrants) are aware of non-standard pragmatic features, but generally employ such features only to a low level. Studies also report that context-specific constraints of such localised pragmatic features may remain unnoticed among L2 users (cf. Davis, 2007; Nestor et al., 2012; Migge, 2015; Diskin, 2017; Kanwit et al., 2018). Inter-speaker variation in the use of such localised features is, however, particularly interesting. While some learners may purposefully employ non-standard pragmatic features to index a localised identity, others reject their use in favour of the standard variety taught in a previous (and future) institutional context. Other factors influencing L2 users' awareness and use of regional pragmatic features include exposure, including both exposure to local speakers' use in the community and prior exposure in a classroom setting. L2 speakers may also think that local speakers might hold negative attitudes towards their use of in-group features and thus refrain from using regional features. The context of use may also influence L2 speakers' use of a localised pragmatic feature. Thus, while a regionalised pragmatic norm may be rejected in a global context, it may be accepted in a local context as a means to display alignment with local speakers. Moreover, the complexity of a particular pragmatic feature and its functional range may influence L2 use. Such questions of learners' awareness of, attitudes towards and perceptions of such aspects of NS are particularly relevant in stay abroad contexts in which non-standard varieties are spoken as a L1. In addition, such questions are also relevant for the development of pragmatic features indexing social uses and judgements according to socio-economic class, age, gender and ethnic identity (cf. Diao, 2016; Davydova et al., 2017). These questions remain research desiderata in stay abroad research.

Three papers in the present Special Issue have a particular focus on the effect of intensity of input. Employing the paradigm of loci of learning, Devlin (2019) examines the correlation between the length of stay abroad and informants' relative access to a range of micro-learning contexts (conversational, institutional, media loci). She also analyses the influence of intensity and diversity of interaction on the subsequent development of her L2 informants' sociopragmatic competence. She finds a correlation between length of stay and input type, with informants with more than one year stay abroad experience having access to institutional, conversational and media loci. Stay abroad informants with shorter aggregate stays in contrast show a bias towards the institutional locus. On the level of language use, the study finds those learners in the stay abroad context for a longer duration to index sociopragmatic variation using a wider and more complex range of strategies and sub-strategies (cf. section 6 for further details). The paper by Sánchez-Hernández and Alcón-Soler (2019) investigates the effect of intensity of language contact (and sociocultural adaptation (composed of behavioural and cognitive adaptation)) on learners' developing recognition of pragmatic routines. This paper reports a positive influence of intensity of interaction (i.e. amount and variety of interactions) on learners' developing routine recognition. Similarly, learners' willingness to acculturate into the target speech community also positively influenced the development of routine recognition. However, intensity of interaction was found to be the main predictor of pragmatic gains. Sánchez-Hernández and Alcón-Soler also report a positive role for co-nationals' input in supporting sociocultural adaptation (cf. section 6 for further details). Finally, Magliacane and Howard's (2019) study of the acquisition of *like* in the Irish English context addresses the development of L2 competence in the acquisition of localised features to some extent, reporting on particular functional uses of *like* which are "emblematic" of Irish English. The authors also address potential learner awareness of stigmatised uses of *like* in Irish society. Their analysis only touches on such features but it underlines the need to analyse pragmatic features with reference to informants' awareness of and attitudes to such indexical features.

6. The papers

The present Special Issue explores changes in L2 pragmatic competence during a sojourn in the target community from a wide range of perspectives. Six of the seven papers were presented at the 15th meeting of the International Pragmatic Association (IPrA) in Belfast, five of these within the context of a panel on *Pragmatic development and stay abroad* organised by the present author. A further paper by the present author was added at a later stage. The papers in the Special Issue include two cross-sectional studies (Ren, Devlin) and five longitudinal studies (Barron, Greer, Magliacane and Howard, Sánchez-Hernández and Alcón-Soler, Sell et al.). The papers focus on the development of L2 pragmatics during a sojourn abroad from a wide range of perspectives (production, comprehension), for a range of first and target languages (e.g. L1: Italian, German, Brazilian Portuguese, L2: Chinese, English) using a variety of production data (e.g. sociolinguistic interview, DCT, role-play, dinner-time recordings) and recognition data (e.g. routine recognition test) supplemented with further instruments, such as a language contact questionnaire, case study interviews and a sociocultural adaptation questionnaire. All studies point to the benefits of sojourns abroad for the development of pragmatic competence. Although some aspects of pragmatic competence remain stable, all studies point to some changes in L2 pragmatic competence over time. Some of these changes represent developments towards the L2-norm; others show evidence of a non-linear developmental path.

The overview of the papers in the following is organised according to the level of analysis (cf. section 3). The first two papers by **Sánchez-Hernández and Alcón-Soler** and **Magliacane and Howard** are situated on the formal level, the former focusing on the development of receptive competence in a selection of pragmatic routines; the latter concerning the development of discourse markers over a stay abroad. Four of the papers in the Special Issue are on the actional level, with **Barron** focusing on the development of apologies, **Sell et al.** and **Ren** focusing on requests and **Devlin** focusing on requests for advice. Both **Barron** and **Sell et al.** also illustrate how ILP analyses might be supplemented with corpus linguistic methods of analysis. The final paper in the Special Issue by **Greer** adds to the limited literature on pragmatic development in stay abroad on the interactional level.

The first paper by **Sánchez-Hernández and Alcón-Soler** is a longitudinal study, focusing on the development of ESL learners' recognition of pragmatic routines (e.g. *do you think you could make it?*, *that works for me*, *help yourself*) over a period of four months, or one semester. It also examines the effect of sociocultural adaptation (composed of behavioural and cognitive adaptation) and intensity of language contact on this development. Data is elicited from 31 Brazilian ESL students of intermediate and advanced proficiency at the beginning and end of their first semester of study in a US university. Quantitative data is collected via a routine recognition test, a sociocultural adaptation questionnaire and a language contact survey; qualitative data analysed is from semi-structured interviews with two of these participants. The study adds to the limited number of studies focusing on the interdependence of intercultural and pragmatic competences, sociocultural adaptation representing an element of intercultural ability. The study also fills a research gap for longitudinal studies investigating the relationship between L2 exposure and the development of pragmatic recognition (cf. Table 2 which shows that only 4.1% of studies in the meta-analysis conducted by Barron, 2017 examined learners' developing comprehension) (cf. section 5). Specifically, it addresses a demand for studies on routine recognition, existing studies being primarily cross-sectional in design (cf. also section 3). Finally, the study is one of a small number of studies designed to examine the relationship between these three components, intercultural competence, intensity of interaction and L2 pragmatic acquisition. Findings reveal increases in pragmatic recognition scores over time. However, the study also highlights some variation on longitudinal gains depending on the routine at hand, a finding the researchers explain with relation to insufficient input in some cases and with respect to high pre-test scores. Turning to factors influencing L2 development, the study shows learners' willingness to

acculturate into the target speech community coupled with exposure to recurrent situations to both positively influence the development of routine recognition, with intensity of interaction (i.e. amount and variety of interactions) found to be the main predictor of pragmatic gains. In this regard, the study shows the need for L2 learners to develop social skills (behavioural adaptation) to enable them to interact in the L2 context and also the need for learners to understand cross-cultural differences and the sociocultural values of the target speech community (cognitive adaptation). The authors also point out that support from co-nationals as well as NSs supports sociocultural adaptation and thus also the development of L2 pragmatic competence, a fact not generally recognised in research on sociocultural adaptation.

Magliacane and Howard is a longitudinal study examining the development of learner productive competence in the use of the pragmatic marker, *like*, by thirty Italian learners of English (15 au pairs, 15 study abroad students) over a six-month stay in Ireland. The data collection instrument used is the sociolinguistic interview. Tokens were extracted using corpus linguistic technology (AntConc) and the analysis is quantitative and qualitative, focusing on learners' frequencies of use of *like*, also differentiated by pragmatic function, as compared to baseline Irish English NS data (cf. section 4). This study is innovative in three important ways: firstly, it focuses on the development of discourse markers, pragmatic features which have only enjoyed limited research interest in ILP to date (cf. Barron, 2017, forthcoming (cf. section 3); secondly, the paper takes up the issue of learner status discussed above in section 2 by comparing the pragmatic development of a cohort of au pairs, a group whose pragmatic development in the foreign language has not been extensively researched to date, with the pragmatic development of these learners studying abroad in the context of an Erasmus placement. Thirdly, the paper also touches on the development of particularly localised pragmatic functions by learners (cf. section 5). Focus here is, for instance, on the hedging function in Irish English realised via clause-final *like* (e.g. *That's what I think like* (Murphy, 2015: 69)), a feature, the use of which is claimed to relate to a desire in Irish English for consensuality and commonality, as well as high uses of focuser and quotative *like*. Findings reveal many similarities in learner developments across the study abroad and au pair learner groups over the six month period. Both groups revealed increases in their levels of use of the discourse marker *like* over time in the target speech community. However, in contrast to previous research, neither group approached Irish English NS use, a factor Magliacane and Howard explain with relation to the shorter time-frame abroad. On a functional level, the authors recorded increases in both groups in *like* as a discourse structurer (e.g. *it's really expensive and depending on like where you go it can be totally dangerous* (Beeching, 2016: 132)) and as a focuser device (e.g. *there's loads of stories in the newspapers recently about um a couple who went abroad and like she's been found dead …* (Beeching, 2016: 132)). Such developments are explained with reference to high uses of both of these functions in the input. On the other hand, the study finds the au pair cohort's overall functional range of discourse marker *like* to be more similar to that of the NS group relative to the study abroad group, with the study abroad group employing *like* to a higher degree as a hesitation device supporting their communicative needs. Hedging *like* remained absent in the au pair data while reaching comparatively low levels of use in the study abroad group. The authors conclude by noting that the acquisition of features may not only be related to the actual input present but rather also to learner perceptions of that input (cf. section 5). They underline the need for more research on the role of discourse markers in localised identity construction and also — given in particular some stigmatisation in the use of *like*, for research examining learner perceptions of social perceptions of discourse marker use and the influence of such perceptions on language use (cf. section 5).

Barron and Sell et al. are two longitudinal papers on the actional level which are innovative in examining how technology can assist in analysing the interaction between the formal and functional level of language description. The longitudinal study by **Barron** examines the development of learners' knowledge of routine apologies over time spent in the target speech community. The paper addresses the need for developmental studies focusing on languages other than English as an L2 (cf. Barron, 2017, forthcoming). It also endeavours to unite the formal and functional levels (cf. section 3) by conducting a fine-grained analysis of routine formulae in realisations of speech acts, previous studies having overridingly focused on either the use of individual routine formulae or the use of a range of apology strategies. In addition, the study is innovative on a methodological level, employing corpus linguistic methodologies and technologies to investigate the learner data at the formal level and also the interaction between the formal and functional levels (cf. section 4). Thus, wordlist analysis, collocation analysis, cluster analysis and keyword analysis are employed to shed light on recurring patterns of use within a learner group over time and also between learner and native speaker groups. In contrast to much of the ILP analyses of pragmatic development, the focus is therefore not only on learner explicit strategy choices, but also on routine variants, routine modifications and learner-specific realisations. Using a production questionnaire, data was elicited from 33 Irish students of German who spent ten months studying in the target speech community, Germany. Baseline data was also elicited from 30 German NS and 27 NS of Irish English NS. The approach taken to the analysis is bottom-up, the first step being to generate a quantitative wordlist highlighting those lexical items of particular relevance. This initial analysis sets the focus on routine apologies. These are analysed on a sub-function level as in traditional speech act analysis. In addition, a fine-grained analysis of the company kept by those recurrent lexemes identified is conducted. Findings over time reveal a stable and heightened learner preference for explicit apologies relative to the German NS norm, a pattern explained by transfer from learners' L1, English, by the status of routines as islands of security, and also by the status given to routines in foreign language textbooks. The *TUT MIR LEID* ('sorry') illocutionary force indicating device continued to enjoy high rates of employment in the learner data over time, due to the all-purpose token 'sorry' in the learners' L1 and also due to the use of a playing it safe strategy which potentially blocked other IFIDs from developing. Consequently, other IFIDs, such as *ENTSCHULDIGEN*, *VERZEIHUNG/VERZEIHEN* and *SORRY*, also employed by German NS, are only used to a minimal extent by learners. The fine-tuned formal analysis also reveals that widespread upgrading via thematic designation by the German NS (e.g. via a demonstrative pronoun: Das tut mir

leid) was not recorded either at the beginning or end of the learners' stay abroad. Apart from these stable features, learner developments towards an L2 norm are also recorded. Examples include increases in the sociopragmatic appropriateness of learners' choice of *ENTSCHULDIGEN* and *ENTSCHULDIGUNG*, and a more diverse use of lexical upgraders. Non-linear developments are also present and include a decrease in the use of the all-purpose-upgrader *sehr* ('very') and an increase in non-L2-like learner-specific realisations of *ENTSCHULDIGEN*. The developmental path of particular routines is suggested to depend on such factors as the complexity of the routine, the potential existence of an equivalent routine in the L1 and on the potential existence of a further form fulfilling the same function. The study concludes with a discussion of the potential for corpus linguistic methods in further pragmatic research, whether using elicited or naturally-occurring data.

Like Barron, the longitudinal study by **Sell, Renkwitz, Sickinger and Schneider** also employs computerised analysis in its analysis of learner speech act data. Sell et al. investigate developments in the production of requests by a group of 17 German school-goers over a ten month stay abroad period in Anglophone Canada. Learner and Canadian NS data are elicited using a DCT. The study adds to the research on study abroad in its focus on school-goers, the majority of stay abroad studies on the pragmatic level dealing with student samples (cf. Barron, 2017, forthcoming) (cf. section 3). In addition, the paper is innovative in supplementing the normative functional analysis routinely conducted on speech act data with a computerised analysis on the lexical level designed to match individual lemmas and so deliver a more fine-grained analysis of the speech act realisations (cf. section 4). Findings from the functional analysis show an over-use of the conventionally indirect request strategy by learners in time one (T1) relative to the Canadian NS data. Within the conventionally indirect category, a small overuse of the ability strategy (*can you/could you*) is recorded. Over time in the target speech community, learners' use of conventionally indirect requests remains stable but their strategy preferences within this category change from use of an ability strategy to use of a willingness strategy (*would you mind*), a development representing an overuse relative to the Canadian NS data. On the formulaic level, realisations of the willingness strategy show learners' acquisition of the chunk *would you mind doing X*. Findings from the lexical analysis point to an overall increase in lexical overlap with a NS norm for the learner group at T2 compared to at T1. The analysis, by enabling exact quantification, also shows huge increases in learners' utterance length from T1 to T2 and also a much longer utterance length relative to the NS data, the latter fact pointing to the development of waffle (Edmondson and House, 1991). In sum then, the lexical analysis conducted supplements the functional analysis and provides information on lexical choices and utterance length as well as on developments on both parameters. As the authors point out, it is, in contrast to the functional analysis, automatised and therefore free of researcher subjectivism. In addition, the lemma procedure provides researchers with an insight into intra-individual longitudinal development. In other words, even if the strategy and modification employed by a particular learner is the same, the manner in which the request is realised can differ. The authors also outline possible future extensions of this lexical analysis tool, such as the analysis of matching formulaic sequences (e.g. *would you mind* …), the analysis of position (pre-/post-grounders), the analysis of prototypical utterances or the analysis of overlap between situational descriptions and learner utterances.

Also, on the actional level, **Devlin** focuses on the development of requests for advice. Similar, to Sánchez-Hernández and Alcón-Soler (cf. above), she addresses the correlation between duration abroad, access to interaction and the development of L2 sociopragmatic competence. Hers is a two part study: employing the paradigm of loci of learning, Devlin looks firstly at the relationship between duration abroad and intensity and diversity of micro-learning contexts. In a second step, the influence of intensity and diversity of interaction on L2 sociopragmatic competence in requesting advice in an institutional and conversational context is investigated. The study is a cross-sectional study of highly advanced NNS of English from a range of different first language backgrounds. Based on the duration of their stay abroad experiences, they are divided into three groups: a) ≤ 60 days; b) 120 days — one year; c) > one year. Data on the duration of stay abroad experiences and information on informants' experience with a range of locis of learning is elicited via a language contact profile questionnaire. Actional data takes the form of roleplay data and the speech act data is analysed for the use of conventionalisation and directness as well as for use of the substrategies of solidary moves (e.g. backchannels, grounders, hints, providing alternatives) and non-solidary moves (e.g. questioning, avoidance, interruptions, rejections). The study is innovative firstly in its investigation of the intensity and diversity of micro-learning contexts and secondly in its focus on the development of sociopragmatic variation and particularly on the question as to whether this ability to vary language by situation relates to the intensity and diversity of micro-learning contexts experienced (cf. section 5). Findings reveal informants with ≤60 days of stay abroad experience to use language above all in the institutional locus. Informants with between 120 days and one year continue to show a bias (slight) towards institutional communication. Their contact with the conversational locus increases over the former groups' but appears to be highly individualised. Finally, informants in the stay abroad context for over a year reported a more balanced contact over all loci. They have extensive interaction in the conversational locus and more than both other groups in the media locus via contact with newspapers. Devlin concludes therefore that a duration of one year is necessary to enjoy communication in a range of loci. Shorter stays tend to be dominated by the institutional locus, and are thus rather fixed, invariable and repetitive. Findings on the actional data show that all learners display some degree of variation by context. However, learners in the stay abroad context for a longer duration index sociopragmatic variation using a wider and more complex range of strategies and sub-strategies. For instance, informants with ≤60 days of stay abroad displayed only minimal variation on the level of the strategy and sub-strategy in requesting advice. They used a higher number of conventionally indirect strategies in institutional discourse, for instance, as congruent with the demands of the situation. Informants with stays of between 120 days and one year in the target speech context varied their realisations of requests for advice in a differential use of backchannels and nonsolidary moves. Finally, the use of language by informants who were over a year in a stay abroad context revealed greatest variation at a strategic and sub-strategic level which enabled them to fit the

communicative needs in both the conversational and institutional context. Overall then, Devlin finds that a longer length of sojourn in the target speech community increases the intensity and diversity of interaction which learners experience, with informants spending more than one year in the stay abroad context having access to a broader range of loci of learning and consequently indexing sociopragmatic variation using a wider and more complex range of strategies.

In a further cross-sectional study, **Ren** examines the development of requests in Chinese as an L2 among three groups of informants with differing amounts of experience in the stay abroad context. A total of forty informants of various L1s were divided into three groups: those with 8–10 months stay abroad experience (10), those with 15–21 months experience (16) and those who had been in the stay abroad context for between 28 and 75 months (average: 38.29 months) (14). Data is elicited via six open roleplay situations, all of which were varied by power relation (+P, -P, =P). Learners' requests were compared to a Chinese NS norm. The study is innovative in its focus on Chinese as an L2, many stay abroad studies focusing on English (cf. Barron, 2017, forthcoming). In addition, it adds to the literature by focusing on learner development over longer stay abroad periods. Findings show learners in all stay abroad groups to use more indirect request strategies and less direct strategies than Chinese NS. With increasing time spent in the target speech community, learners, in a movement away from the NS norm, increase their use of conventionally indirect request strategies. Ren suggests that this non-NS-like development be related to learner insecurity, and specifically to a feeling among learners that they may not have the same standing as NS and thus not the same right to request in a direct manner. An alternative explanation put forward by Ren is a lack of soci-opragmatic awareness and a lack of pragmalinguistic resources to encode indirectness using NS-like modifiers. With regard to modification, the study finds learners in group one with one year stay abroad experience to use less external modification than NS, but for learner uses to increase in learner group two with further experience in the target speech community. Finally, in a movement away from the NS norm, the frequency of external modification decreased again after three years in the target speech community. Situational uses of external modification were similar to NS uses, and due to high levels of salience, Ren claims, easier to acquire. Finally, learners employed internal modification to a lower extent than NS – due it is claimed to lower degrees of salience. Such uses, however, increased with time in the target speech community. In sum then, Ren's study illustrates that rates of development and development trends may differ for different pragmatic features. It also emphasises the need for longer stays abroad.

The final paper in the Special Issue by **Greer** adds to the limited literature on pragmatic development in stay abroad on the interactional level (cf. Barron, 2017, forthcoming) (cf. section 3). It is also innovative in its focus on development of learner *news-of-the-day tellings*. It reports on a longitudinal conversation analytic case-study investigating the socialisation of an L2 learner in a homestay context in Australia into recurrent *news of the day tellings* during dinner-time talk over a period of three weeks. Greer's analysis is based on four separate naturally-occurring dinner-time interactions involving the study abroad student and his home-stay family. Findings show that dinner-table interactions are an important socialisation setting. Over time, the L2 learner reveals a growing familiarity with the narrative routine, recognising news of the day initiations, such as *How was your day?*, as an invitation to tell a story rather than to merely deliver an assessment. Initially, the learner's responses to home family initiations are short with only basic narratives. This led to a series of post-expansion sequences by the family designed to encourage the learner to say more about the topic. Over time, the learner's responses become more complete and competent and increasingly resembled a narrative. Nonetheless, it is noted that the learner does not follow the normative pattern of initiation – partial report –endorsement of topic by initiator – news report. Rather, the initiation is responded to with an acknowledgement *okay* followed by a news report. In addition, and in line with the basic principles of the study of interactional competence, the study also recognises that interaction is jointly accomplished (cf. section 3). Specifically, it shows some adaption of host-family practices to support accommodation to the learner, as for instance in the use of NS post-expansions in response to initial inappropriate learner assessments and also in the use of initiations more clearly framed as story-telling initiations.

Acknowledgements

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