

*Strategies and interlanguage pragmatics:  
Explicit and comprehensive*

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Abstract

Explicit instruction in strategies for interlanguage pragmatic learning is fundamental to the development of a comprehensive set of pragmatic abilities in the target language. In this article, we begin by providing an overview of previous work in the area of language learner strategies directed at the teaching and learning of pragmatics. We then offer an extension of Cohen's (2005, 2014) framework of strategies for learning, using, and evaluating the use of interlanguage pragmatics in four domains: knowledge, analysis, subjectivity, and awareness (Sykes, Malone, Forrest, & Sadgic, forthcoming). Examples from current projects are provided to exemplify the critical importance of a strategies-based approach to the teaching and learning of interlanguage pragmatics. The article concludes with ideas for future research and implementation.

*Keywords:* interlanguage pragmatics; learning pragmatics; pragmatics learning strategies; strategy instruction

## 1. Introduction

Any approach to explicit pragmatic instruction in the world language classroom must address both the patterns and variation in the way humans communicate with one another. This chapter explores an explicit, strategies-based approach to the learning of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP), or the learners' ability to communicate and interpret meaning in interaction. The paper begins with an overview of a strategies-based approach to ILP development. Drawing on learning and use strategies, the paper then addresses a fundamental need for explicit instruction using examples from a variety of languages and offers a synthesis of the various approaches to explicit strategies-based instruction (e.g., by goal, by function, or by skill). Finally, it explores ILP strategies through the lens of a comprehensive model that includes pragmatic knowledge, the ability to analyze pragmatic components of language, learner choice (i.e., subjectivity), and emotional awareness. Classroom examples are included throughout.

## 2. An introduction to a strategies-based approach to ILP development

Explicit instruction is fundamental to the development of a robust ILP repertoire that can be applied across interactional contexts as speakers co-construct a shared meaning. It is a daunting task for a learner to gain control of target language (TL) pragmatics. For starters, the pragmatic components of a given language cannot be reduced to a set of specific semantic formulae to be applied or a set of pre-determined rules to be followed. Take, for example, the phrase *Are you busy tonight?* While it could serve as a genuine inquiry into someone's schedule, it could also serve as a pre-invitation turn, a pre-request for help, or a suggestion. Thus, understanding the intended meanings and the factors which may influence pragmatic choices is essential to language learning and language use. Learners must learn words and structures, but must also develop the ability to understand the ways in which their intentions may, or may not, be realized in any given interaction, regardless of whether the grammar is correct. Of course, at times the grammar is accurate but reflects structures that are seen by native and highly competent nonnative speakers (NNS) as less appropriate in a given situation – such as when using a simple present form command for requests, as opposed to the past progressive plus the conditional with a modal (*Give me. . .* as opposed to *I was wondering if you might be able to give me. . .*). Shared meanings vary based on a myriad of factors, including the willingness and ability to dynamically co-construct that meaning with one's interlocutor(s). Explicit strategy instruction (SI) produces the conditions under which learners can become nimble intercultural interlocutors capable of adapting to dynamic shifts in communicative interaction.

For the purpose of this article, the term *communicative scenario* will be used. Communicative scenarios refer to any general, overarching communicative event, such as responding to an invitation. Within each communicative scenario, learners may find themselves having to perform various *speech acts*, namely, the situationally-appropriate utterances in a given TL situation. The performance of common speech acts usually involves choosing from a set of possible strategies, some of which may involve the use of what could be viewed as other distinct speech acts, and for this reason the term *speech act set* was introduced some years ago (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983). For example, in complaining, you could include a threat, which constitutes a speech act distinct from complaining (e.g., *OK, then. If you won't turn your music down, I'll call the police!*), or in apologizing, you could also add criticism (e.g., *Sorry I bumped into you, but look where you're standing!*). Looking closely at speech acts, we see that there are some strategies which are relatively unique to that particular speech act set, such as the offer of repair in an apology. In addition, there are strategies that can be applied to various speech acts, such as an opener consisting of a greeting like *Hi*, serving as an attention getter. This opening might be found in requests, complaints and numerous other speech act sets. In this article, the term *speech act* will be used to refer to any potential component of a speech act set or a series of components. The following section provides an overview of the ways in which explicit instruction from a strategic perspective enables learners to engage with a variety of communicative scenarios.

### 3. Explicit instruction in ILP pragmatics and in strategies for ILP development

#### 3.1. An explicit approach

The dynamic nature of pragmatic behavior, the underlying cultural assumptions, individual preferences, and language variety can all make the learning of appropriate pragmatic behaviors challenging. For example, let us say that in the learner's first language (L1) the options for greeting someone may be routinely limited to just a few, such as by indicating the time of day. It can then be a pragmatically challenging task to learn how to greet someone in a language that has a myriad of options. The learner may choose the option that is preferred in the L1 or perhaps overgeneralize the use of only one of the various TL options. Coming to grips with pragmatic variety in the TL can make performing speech acts a real challenge. In fact, language experts have come to the conclusion that much of TL pragmatics needs to be explicitly taught. The research results on explicit, as opposed to implicit, teaching of pragmatics are, by and large, positive. While one meta-analysis had inconclusive results, attributed to too much variation in

the details of how each study operationalized these two kinds of instruction (Jeon & Kaya, 2006), two meta-analyses had positive results in favor of explicit teaching of pragmatics (Rose, 2005; Taguchi, 2015). With regard to individual studies, one case study (Riddiford & Holmes, 2015) and a host of other studies found explicit teaching of pragmatics to be more effective than implicit teaching (see, e.g., Eslami-Rasekh, Eslami-Rasekh, & Fatahi, 2004; Eslami, Mierzaei, & Shadi, 2015; Fukuya & Martínez-Flor, 2008; Ghobadi & Fahim, 2009; Hasler-Barker, 2016; Martínez-Flor, 2016; Mugford, 2016; Nguyen, Pham, & Pham, 2012; Tateyama, 2001; Vyatkina & Belz, 2006).

This article draws from Cohen's (2018) new book on pragmatics (Ch. 8, *The learning of pragmatics*), in an effort to further explore a strategic approach to ILP development. It summarizes the critical components of ILP strategies and integrates this approach with an extended model of interpretation. To help underscore the importance of explicit instruction in ILP pragmatics as a means for shoring up learners' strategies for ILP development, a good place to start is with basic greetings. Language instructors invariably teach greetings in all beginning-level language courses. Take, for example, a French class where learners are taught the speech act *bonjour* ("good morning, good day, hello") as the greeting. The problem is that it is often not made clear when and how to use *bonjour* or what other speech act might be part of the set needed to greet in some contexts. For starters, English native speakers (NSs) may have difficulty using it late in the afternoon if they assume it mostly means "good morning." But its use is more complex than that. For example, when asking a railway attendant for the track of a departing train in Paris or when requesting a baguette in a bakery shop in a French town, the pragmatics of both situations would call for strategically using a greeting (e.g. *bonjour*) before launching into the request. Given that acquiring a working understanding of the *illocutionary force* (i.e., the intended function of the speaker) of *bonjour* in a French-speaking community can be a challenge, a strategic approach for learners would be to get coached on the function of greetings in the given language. It is not enough just to memorize the various greetings for different times of day. It is crucial to know the when, how, and why of using them.

### 3.2. Different ways to classify strategies for ILP development

One of the difficulties faced in interpreting an ever-growing language learner strategy (LLS) literature is that there are numerous different and sometimes competing systems for classifying language strategies. Oxford (2017, p. 48) offers a comprehensive definition intended to provide closure at the definitional level. Among other things, she indicates in her definition that strategies are contextually-specific thoughts and actions that can be both mental and physical;

that they can be combined in clusters or chains; that they can have cognitive, emotional, and social roles to play as determined by the individual; and that their use in self-regulation is complex in nature. Notwithstanding the advent of this comprehensive definition, there nonetheless remain differing approaches to describing strategies. Here are seven of these:

1. *By goal*: Strategies for *learning* the TL – for example, identifying, distinguishing, grouping, and memorizing strategies – and strategies for *performing* in the TL – that is, performing your knowledge, such as retrieval, rehearsal, communicative, and cover strategies. *Cover strategies* are used by learners to look good, even when they do not have a clue as to what they are hearing, saying, reading, or writing.
2. *By function*: Strategies may assume a metacognitive, cognitive, social, or affective role or function from one moment to the next, depending on the nature of the interaction.<sup>1</sup> In other words, the very same strategy of, say, asking a woman passerby on the street for directions in Buenos Aires in Spanish (*Disculpe. Usted podría decirme cómo llegar a la embajada de los Estados Unidos? "Excuse me. Could you tell me how to get to the US Embassy?"*) could take on one of the four functions enumerated above and could fluctuate back and forth from one function to another. For example, if the learners are attending to the age factor in how they make their request for directions to this woman, this strategy has a *metacognitive function* at the moment they are planning to ask the woman for directions. That same strategy assumes a *social function* when the learners are determining whether, in fact, it is acceptable to ask this passerby for directions, given the person's gender and age. The strategy takes on a *cognitive function* while the language users are searching in their mind for the pragmatically appropriate forms given their relative ages and genders. In this case, the learners would be selecting the appropriate form of *you* (e.g., whether to use *tu*, *vos*, or *usted* in Argentinian Spanish). The use of this *asking a passerby on the street for directions* strategy may take on an *affective function* if, say, the passerby responds that she is new to the city and is therefore unable to give directions, if the response is too fast or abrupt, or if the request is ignored altogether. In other words, the affective function is activated if

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<sup>1</sup> See Cohen and Wang (2018) for a research study undertaken to substantiate the claims that strategies assume one of these four roles or functions from one moment to the next. The study found that there can be fluctuation from one function to the other for the same strategy and across strategies, since strategies are often used in pairs, sequences, or clusters.

the learners feel frustrated (which can happen frequently during efforts at TL use). If the learner is persistent, then this moment of negative affect is likely to activate the metacognitive function in that the learner now plans how to ask a new passerby and may even turn the affect positive. Determining which language material to use involves the cognitive function, and the social function may play a brief role if considerations as to gender and status crossed the learners' mind.

3. *By skill*: A third way of classifying pragmatic strategies would be by language skill: listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, or translation strategies with regard to the TL. The skill approach provides a popular way to classify strategies, especially with regard to the two productive and two receptive skills, plus the skill of vocabulary learning. Less attention has been given to how language learners deal with the skill areas of translation and grammar, both of which can benefit greatly from well-placed strategizing (see Cohen, 2002, with regard to translation, and Cohen & Pinilla-Herrera, 2010 and Pawlak, this issue, with regard to grammar).
4. *By age*: Certain strategies may best be used by younger learners, teenagers, adults, or seniors, or when addressing people at those stages in life.
5. *By proficiency level*: Higher- and lower-proficiency learners may use the very same strategies, but may employ them in sometimes subtly different ways with regard to the nature of their use and the quality derived from the use (e.g., subtle differences in intonation or in the timing of the utterance).
6. *By TL more generally or a specific variety of the TL*: Certain languages may have features which call for strategizing, such as marking the gender of verbs in Hebrew and Arabic tenses. In addition, strategies may vary within a given variety of the TL according to socioeconomic status, occupation, or religious sect.
7. *By subculture*: There may be strategies that apply in certain TL communities for addressing women or seniors, for example.

Given such diverse descriptions, to operationalize an explicit approach to SI, there needs to be clarity as to the way that the strategies are classified before attempting to include them in any given approach aimed at ILP development. A classification scheme for pragmatics strategies that was published some years ago (Cohen, 2005, 2014) used the goal-oriented approach to dealing with strategies, as described in (1) above. This scheme looked first at strategies for learning TL pragmatics, then strategies for using pragmatics, and finally metapragmatic strategies for evaluating how effectively the learners used the pragmatic material.

In designing the classification scheme, a decided effort was made to avoid providing vague statements of behavior, but rather to include strategies that

would, for example, help learners deal with often subtle pragmatic behaviors. For example, one strategy for learning pragmatics was to conduct a *lay* cross-cultural analysis by identifying the forms to use consistent with the local pragmatic norms (e.g., whether to use the word *apologize* or *sorry* in the expression of an apology, and whether to intensify the apology with *really*, *awfully*, or *so*). Strategies in this classification included the suggestion that the learners attend to and make use of resources around them, such as asking native speakers (NSs) to verify whether the relative age and status of the interlocutors and the given situation have a bearing on how to perform the speech act. For instance, the learner may ask something like: *Was it because the person asking for directions was younger that she was so polite in her request? Or was it just because she was asking a stranger? Would it have something to do with her gender or age?* (see Cohen, 2018, for numerous examples of learners' strategic partnering with their instructors in an effort to enhance their understanding of TL pragmatics).

#### 4. A goal-oriented, comprehensive approach to strategizing about pragmatics

Even if instructors are explicitly addressing ILP in the language classroom, learners may not be fully aware of the extent to which they can strategize in order to gain control of more subtle pragmatic elements. Since the learning of pragmatics involves so many disparate bits of information, it is helpful to have learners use their own strategies for the initial learning of TL pragmatics, for performing pragmatics, and for evaluating their performance. As indicated above, this classification scheme put the emphasis on the goal (i.e., learning vs. use), rather than on the functions of a given strategy (metacognitive, cognitive, social, or affective) or on specific skills (e.g., listening, speaking, reading, or writing) (Cohen, 2005). In this section, we consider this goal-related orientation within a comprehensive approach to ILP development, focusing on pragmatic knowledge, pragmatic analysis, learner subjectivity, and learner awareness.

Drawing on previous work, both in terms of intercultural communicative competence as well as ILP development, the common dimensions of 54 theoretical models were brought together to emphasize the elements appearing across all models, and, as a result, deemed most critical for ILP competence (Sykes, 2016; Sykes, Malone, Forrest, & Sadgic, forthcoming). This synthesis of common dimensions across models suggested a framework with four interwoven components of *knowledge*, *language analysis*, *awareness of emotions*, and *subjectivity*. Rather than representing mutually exclusive categories with firm boundaries, these components comprise the four key elements of ILP development found across the literature, all of which need to be taken into consideration when addressing the teaching and learning of TL pragmatics. In addition, the

role that each of these elements plays may not be readily apparent in any given instance of pragmatic performance. For example, when analyzing the language forms that learners select for a given apology, they most likely determine which to use both on the basis of the knowledge that they have regarding the speech act, as well as on the basis of their emotional awareness of the delicate nature of the interaction. The intention of the framework, therefore, is to move beyond an approach which privileges the structural components (knowledge) of ILP, but rather to include in the model learners' analysis of how to use that knowledge as well as their attention to conscious subjective choices and their awareness of emotions that arise before, during, and after their pragmatic performance. In the section that follows, we further explore each component as they apply to the strategic approach of learning and performance.

#### 4.1. A strategic approach to language knowledge and awareness of emotions

The first two components of an extended model of ILP development critical to ILP development are *language knowledge* and *analysis*. The first component, language knowledge, focuses on the ways in which semantic formulas and other structural elements such as turn-taking, implicature, syntax, and lexicon are enlisted to arrive at appropriate pragmatic behavior. Take, for example, the communicative scenario in which a learner of Spanish apologizes to a friend for being late. The knowledge necessary to participate in this speech event would include the grammatical structures and lexicon needed for the various purposes involved. First, there is likely to be a greeting (one speech act). Then, the learner extends an apology (another speech act), involving one or more strategies, such as offering a direct expression of apology, giving an excuse for being late, offering repair by paying for the friend's coffee, and (especially if this has happened before) promising that this will not happen again. Finally, the learner may suggest that they go somewhere specific for coffee (yet another speech act, that of suggestion).

The second component of the model focuses on analysis skills or, the learner's ability to determine which speech acts to use (e.g., whether it is appropriate to apologize at all in the given culture), the order in which to use them, the content of those structures, and the determination of the context based on their interlocutor and other contextual relevant factors for making that decision. Moreover, the skill of analysis includes, for example, the ability to determine the illocutionary force an utterance might have based on the learners' pragmatic understanding of the given situation. For example, in the apology scenario above, the analysis component emphasizes the order in which the apology speech act might occur (as well as the ordering of the strategies within the apology), the extent to which detail needs to be included, and the ability to appropriately adjust



the intensity of the apology in real time. The components of the model involving awareness of emotions and possible use of subjectivity may then come into play depending on the situation and on the given learner.

The majority of research examining strategies for ILP development has focused on these two areas of language knowledge and analysis, with a special emphasis on the former. The following sections further explore the elements of knowledge and analysis (4.1.1.) and learner subjectivity and emotional awareness (4.1.2), as related to strategies for learning pragmatics.

#### 4.1.1. Language knowledge, analysis, and strategies for learning pragmatics

A strategic approach to applying the elements of knowledge and analysis to their ILP learning could start with having learners: (1) select a communicative scenario in the context in which it is to be performed, and then (2) identify the speech acts to focus on in terms of knowledge and the skills of analysis necessary to fine-tune the strategies appropriate for the given speech act. In doing so, they would deploy the following criteria:

- a) the frequency of use of the selected speech acts in common situations encountered by the TL speaker in the given speech community (e.g., requesting, refusing, and thanking);
- b) their potentially high-stakes value in discourse (e.g., apologizing and complaining); and
- c) their special role in the given *community of practice* within the speech community or the society, such as in creating solidarity (e.g., the use of cursing for the purpose of bonding, see Daly, Holmes, Newton, & Stubbe, 2004).

Once learners have identified the speech acts of interest, they need strategies for collecting data as to their frequency of use, their role in discourse, and any special role they may have in a given community of practice (e.g., cursing among fellow students at the university or among soldiers in an army unit). Learners will also need to strategize regarding the aspects of performance to which they will attend. For example, they need to decide how much they will focus on the comprehension of the given speech act and how much on the production of it, and how much attention (if any) they will give to the speakers' tone of voice, facial expressions, and gestures in the delivery of the given speech acts? By addressing each of these areas, they are empowered to learn not only what to say, but also the skills needed for when and how to say it. While it is undoubtedly challenging for learners to collect these data on their own, it may give them more ownership of the task, and hence increase their motivation to

do the task, and contribute to the learning process. If they are currently taking a class, the learners can then report back to the class as the experts since they are the ones with the fresh information, perhaps collected from speakers in a certain subculture of interest.

If learners have the energy to do so, they could sharpen their pragmatic analysis skills by gathering information (through interviews and observation) on how these speech acts are performed by members of one or more communities of practice within a given speech community (e.g., at the workplace: making requests of age mates, refusing requests made by people of higher status, and thanking people in service, such as cafeteria workers or custodians). In addition, learners could observe what NSs do by paying attention to what they say when speaking naturally or when they are prompted to do so, as in an oral discourse completion task (DCT), how they say it (e.g., their speed of delivery and tone of voice), and their nonverbal behavior as well (i.e., their facial expressions, body posture, and gestures).

Still in the interests of collecting basic information on speech acts and increasing their ability to analyze ILP, NSs could be asked to model performance of the speech acts as they might be realized under differing conditions, and possibly be asked to answer questions about their performance as well. A key goal of the learner – using whatever strategy set they enlist – would be to see if there is variation in the realization of the speech act(s) according to:

- the magnitude or seriousness of the issue prompting the speech act (e.g., apologizing for missing a meeting vs. spilling hot coffee on a friend);
- the relative age of the speaker and of the addressee (e.g., making a request to a senior professor or to a young child);
- the relative status of the speaker and of the addressee (e.g., making a request to the senior vice president of a firm or to a custodian);
- the relative roles of the speaker and of the addressee in the relationship (e.g., making a request to the chair of the board meeting or to a waiter in a restaurant); and
- the length of acquaintance of the interlocutors (e.g., making a request to a stranger about switching seats upon boarding an airplane as opposed to making an appeal for assistance to a longtime friend over morning tea).

Another useful exercise for learners would be to engage in cross-cultural analysis by thinking through and even writing out what the appropriate things to say would be for that speech act (or other pragmatic behavior) in the given scenario within the given context in the L1 speech community of the learners as compared to how it is done in the TL speech community. For example, in the case of invitation refusals, the comparison could involve the following elements:

- identifying the cultural norms for the performance of an invitation refusal in the L1 and TL communities, namely, the circumstances under

which learners would or would not use the speech act; for example, they need to decide whether to refuse right away and soften that refusal as the invitation progresses, as is often the case in many varieties of Spanish, or whether to be more implicit about the refusal throughout, as would be the case in many varieties of English;

- identifying the speech-act-specific strategies that tend to be used with the given speech act in that situation (e.g., whether the strategy of *offering an explanation* is expected to be used in that invitation refusal situation);
- obtaining a viable interpretation for the cross-cultural differences by asking members of the TL speech community, which could mean members of a particular community of practice such as a group at the workplace, or social or friendship group (e.g., asking whether it is appropriate for a college student to give an outright refusal to the department chair's invitation to dinner and whether the refusal could include – even in jest – an informal phrase like *No way!*);
- identifying the language forms to use (e.g., whether to use the expression *I can't* in the expression of the refusal or just *Hago lo que pueda* "I'll do what I can," whether to repeat the refusal more than once, and whether to intensify with words like *really*, *awfully*, or *so*);
- upon establishing similarities and differences between the two cultures, making a mental note or a notebook entry regarding these differences, such as appropriate explanations (e.g., it is acceptable for a formal family event but not for work) or in whether to invoke G\_d's name in the refusal, as might be the case for NS speakers of Arabic apologizing in Arabic (Al-Masaeed & Waugh, 2017).

As this cross-cultural comparison occurs, it also becomes necessary to employ the components of the ILP model presented above that deal with learners' awareness of their emotions and with their exercise of subjectivity (to be discussed in Section 4.2 below). The ultimate goal is to give learners the expertise needed to be competent performers in multilingual discourse. Sometimes, this can mean accommodating to NS patterns, and other times, it can mean making choices about which norms may not apply based on their relationship to the discourse community(ies) with which they interact.

#### 4.1.2. Learners' resources for reinforcing their ILP strategies

Many resources are available to learners as they work with ILP material in the domains of knowledge and analysis, many of which provide a strategic approach with a research base underpinning it. A good source of basic information on key speech acts is the CARLA speech acts website, which offers an annotated bibliography of research in this area as well as pragmatic examples in nine different languages. These

materials are especially useful for learners interested in languages with a smaller amount of empirical data and minimal curricular resources available in their TL.

Two websites, also hosted by CARLA, offer an explicit strategies-based approach to the learning of Japanese (Cohen & Ishihara, 2005) and Spanish (Sykes & Cohen, 2008, 2012). The Japanese website includes resources for teachers, students, and researchers, as well as seven instructional modules focused on speech acts in Japanese (i.e., an introductory module followed by modules on apologies, compliments, refusals, requests, and thanks, as well as one on being strategic). A semester-long study of 22 intermediate learners of Japanese who used the Japanese website found that the resource made a contribution to the learners' ILP pragmatics. The module on requests yielded the most impact, as measured by DCTs and email reflective journals (Cohen & Ishihara, 2005). The Spanish website includes ten modules, each targeting a specific speech act (e.g., compliments, requests, and apologies) and uses audio, video, and communicative activities to engage learners in a pedagogical process of observation, analysis, and reflection. A small-scale study found that participating in an introductory session about this website for a few hours provided 10 Spanish learners with a sense that they were more adept than previously at using Spanish pragmatics strategies from the website (Cohen & Sykes, 2012). Although it does not have a focus on learner strategies, learners can find information on Russian in a corpus-based site dedicated to the learning of Russian pragmatics (Furniss, 2016).

#### 4.2. A strategic approach to learner subjectivity and awareness of emotions

As indicated above, the extended framework targeting interwoven areas of ILP development also includes an explicit focus on the ways that learners perceive their experience – such as through their awareness of emotions that come up for them as they plan and perform TL pragmatics. *Subjectivity* is defined by Ishihara and Tarone (2009) as a dynamic approach to learners' identity and informed choice-making. From a strategies perspective, subjectivity refers to learners' making language choices based both on conscious choices to conform to or diverge from the expected pragmatic patterns, as well as on what feels right. Learners could be encouraged to explore their stand with regard to agency by reflecting on how they feel about the use of a particular speech act in a given situation. This is because the expression of learner subjectivity may mean the avoidance of certain strategies that NSs are most likely to use.

In addition, the framework includes the subjective choices that learners make. If deviation from TL normative behavior is the result of subjectivity, the question becomes one of just how aware the learner is that a given norm is

being breached. Learner affective awareness is what extends subjectivity beyond the micro – to the macro-level – to an understanding on the learner's part as to the role pragmatic behavior plays more generally in the given language community, or community of practice within that community, and what the consequences of not abiding by the appropriate pragmatic norms might be.

The current interest in learners' subjectivity and their awareness of that subjectivity helps to update Cohen's (2005, 2014) model, which at the time focused on other elements in the affective domain, such as the function of a given strategy, including the affective function. The recent study by Cohen and Wang (2018) helps to highlight just how often learners may be experiencing the affective domain of language use by having affective moments, such as when the use of a given strategy results in success or failure. Their study revealed numerous moments of frustration or annoyance when learners found that their use of a given strategy was unsuccessful. Given the complexity of pragmatic behavior, it is likely that learners will experience numerous moments of this kind in their ILP development. The remainder of this section will consider performance strategies which demonstrate not just how learners draw upon their knowledge base when performing their pragmatics and their powers of analysis, but also how this performance utilizes the affective aspects of subjectivity and awareness.

#### 4.2.1. Visualization strategies

Learners could use visualization strategies to retrieve the speech act material that has already been learned and imagine the impact that their language choices might have. A visualization strategy could, for example, entail the learners visualizing their knowledge base about apologies through a continuum of pragmatic options ranging from the most minimal expression of apology in the TL (e.g., *slixa* "sorry" in Hebrew) to the most formally apologetic (*ani mitnatzel* "I apologize"). Bringing in the affective side of visualization, learners could visualize the likely impact of their choice, depending on whether they make a divergent pragmatic choice (providing a minimal apology consistent with their subjective face maintenance whereas the norms call for a more robust one) or a convergent one (more consistent with the local norms). This strategic process would ensure that they not only are aware of their options, but also have agency in the type of pragmatic behaviors which they select.

Additionally, a mnemonic device could be used to retrieve material not on a continuum, such as the various categories for when the subjunctive would be expected to be used in Spanish (e.g., WEDDING representing "wish," "emotion,"

“doubt,” “desire,” “impersonal,” “negation,” and “general possibility”).<sup>2</sup> While accessing the subjunctive aspect is not in and of itself a pragmatics issue, it could become one since there is a fine line between grammar in its own right and grammar as a vehicle for being pragmatically appropriate. So, pragmatic inappropriateness could result from the use of the indicative which might sound too bossy, as opposed to the subjunctive, which sounds more mitigated (\**Quiero que lo hace ahora*. \*“I want you to do it now” rather than *Quiero que lo haga ahora*. “I would like you to do it now”). From the awareness perspective, knowing that there is a significant interface between grammatical structures and pragmatic expression adds depth to ILP development. As learners retrieve semantic formulae, they could also imagine pictures or images which reflect their pragmatic intention with each structure that they choose.

#### 4.2.2. Strategic practice

Strategic practice of those aspects of speech act performance could involve the learners doing mind games, where they engage in imaginary interactions, perhaps focusing on certain pragmalinguistic (i.e., related to the choice of TL forms to realize a given function) aspects of the speech act (e.g., while riding their bikes somewhere or while waiting in line for a latte at a coffee shop). This imaginary play would entail using strategies for operationalizing the skill of visualization, such as by envisioning a continuum of possible apologies from the most minimal (*Oh, sorry about that*) to the most elaborate (*I would like to apologize profusely for . . .*). The goal would be twofold, that is: greater comfort in using the given speech act and practice to sharpen and elaborate learning. Learners could also engage in speech act role play with fellow learners of the TL or with NSs playing the other role. Similarly, emergent technologies afford the opportunity to engage with strategic practice through simulated immersive environments (Sykes, 2012, 2014; Taguchi & Sykes, 2013; Taguchi, Li, & Tang, 2017), place-based augmented reality (Holden & Sykes, 2011, 2014), and social networking sites (Belz & Thorne, 2005; Gonzales, 2013, 2012). Not only do these play spaces enable the practice of and engagement with pragmatic knowledge and analysis skills, but they also afford learners the opportunity to exercise subjectivity and to be aware that this is happening.

A less common but fruitful activity would be for learners to engage in *real play* with NSs in the speech community, where the NSs (perhaps the students' friends or acquaintances) perform their usual roles (e.g., that of a lawyer, a doctor, or a shop clerk), with the added knowledge that the learners are simply practicing

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<sup>2</sup> See an example in the Grammar Strategies Website. Retrieved from [http://carla.umn.edu/strategies/sp\\_grammar/strategies/form/moods/subjunctive/wedding.html](http://carla.umn.edu/strategies/sp_grammar/strategies/form/moods/subjunctive/wedding.html). Accessed 22 November 2017.

speech act sets and may say things that are contrary to fact (e.g., apologizing for an infraction that, in reality, they did not commit). Since professionals may not wish to interrupt their busy work schedule to engage in real play during business hours, it may be necessary to conduct such sessions during off hours or in the evenings. The successful completion of these activities would call for a series of strategies on the part of the learners, with the realization of each strategy potentially activating more than one function (i.e., fluctuating from a metacognitive function to a cognitive one, from a cognitive to an affective and/or a social one, and so forth).

Of course, another option would be for learners to engage in interactions with NSs without the interlocutors being aware that the purpose for the learners is actually for them to practice speech acts. This could be both face-to-face and via digital technologies. Synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC) and telecollaboration (i.e., virtual communication between learners of two languages with multilingual interactions) have long been shown to have meaningful impact, both positive and negative, on learners' ILP development (see, e.g., Sykes, 2005; Vyatkina & Belz, 2006). In-class reflection on these experiences is highly beneficial for ILP development, both in terms of the knowledge gained, and the ability to make individual choices (i.e., subjectivity) as well as the general awareness of pragmatic issues in the TL. If the conditions are feasible, these reflections could include learners talking about their own ILP choices, using recordings of themselves as they are engaged in the interactions. Nowadays it is possible to record a selfie video on a cellphone or log a chat.

#### 4.2.3. Using strategies consistent with learning style preferences

Learners might wish to select strategies that are consistent with their learning style preferences during their efforts to practice performing TL pragmatics. First, learners determine their learning style preferences, ideally through some style preference inventory, such as the generic one available on the Spanish Grammar Strategies Web-site at CARLA.<sup>3</sup> Then, they try out an approach to speech act delivery that is consistent with the results. For example, if the learners find themselves having a more reflective style preference, then they may wish to think through the elements in the speech act before performing the speech act; if they are more impulsive in nature, then they may wish to try it out spontaneously and see what the response is. Students who are eager to engage in pre-planning of speech act delivery could track the strategies that they use consistent with this learning style preference. Students who prefer to online it could track the strategies that they actually use and the results.

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<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from [http://carla.umn.edu/strategies/sp\\_grammar/pdf\\_files/CohenOxfordChi-StyIeSurvey.pdf](http://carla.umn.edu/strategies/sp_grammar/pdf_files/CohenOxfordChi-StyIeSurvey.pdf). Accessed 31 July 2016.

If the learners are currently studying in a class, they could report back to the class or to a small group in the class the strategies that they found themselves using in delivering a given speech act, and how well this use fit with their learning style preferences. Perhaps the students could record themselves as they engage with the communicative function and then record their retrospective self-observation as a means of exploring the rationale behind their strategy use. Likewise, pairs of students could take turns being the performer or the one collecting the verbal report data such as think aloud protocols where learners explain why they made choices or the application of specific strategies (see Cohen, 2013, for more on collecting verbal report data).

#### 4.2.4. Using communication strategies to get the message across

Sometimes communication strategies might be used to help pave the way and to avoid uncomfortable situations and make interlocutors aware the learner know that pragmatic expectations are a key part of interaction. Learners could, for instance, use the strategy of alerting the addressee just before the delivery of one or more speech acts that their delivery may not be completely appropriate (e.g., *I want to say I'm sorry, but I'm not sure how to say it right . . .*). Then just afterwards, if the learners have a sense that the performance did not work as intended, they could use a strategy to try to repair the situation (e.g., *I have a sense that I didn't say that right. Please help me out here. How would you make this request/apology/complaint? If it is of any help, this is how I would say it in my native language . . .*).

#### 4.2.5. Expressing agency

Learners may find it helpful to do an exercise based on their emotions to determine the extent to which they resist being nativelike in their pragmatics. In this activity, learners look for instances when they have the requisite knowledge to perform the speech act appropriately but, as an expression of agency or subjectivity, remain true to their own inclinations in their speech act delivery, rather than being nativelike in their performance (see Ishihara, 2009). For example, American learners of Japanese may purposely refrain from using honorific verbs in talking about people of higher status (for instance, using *taberu* "to eat" instead of the honorific verb *mesheagaru*). If appropriate, the learners could use the strategy of sharing with their interlocutors the fact that they purposely avoid using such honorifics in order to treat everyone equally might cause conflict but might also give learners the opportunity to explain their own choices.

The need for this strategy, in combination with communication strategies (see 4.2.4.) will be especially true in instances of divergence based on learner



subjectivity. For example, this phenomenon is the well-documented case of female learners of Japanese choosing not to adopt the gendered honorific system while studying abroad. Adept learners may be able to diverge from the typical NS pattern while remaining successful by using strategies to indicate their awareness of the expected patterns but also their choice to diverge from them.

#### 5. The metapragmatic function in handling of strategies for ILP development

As noted in Section 3 above, the use of a strategy could activate a metacognitive, cognitive, social, or affective function. If a strategy for learning or performing ILP takes on a metacognitive function (i.e., for planning pragmatic behavior, monitoring some ongoing pragmatic behavior, or evaluating some pragmatic performance), then in this case it could also be considered a metapragmatic function, since the focus is on pragmatics. For example, in an effort to avoid pragmatic failure, learners may monitor for the level of directness or indirectness in the delivery of TL pragmatics (e.g., in making a request of a stranger on an airplane); for the appropriateness of the selected term of address (e.g., referring in the TL to Dr. Stephen Blake as *Doc*, *Steve*, or *you*); or for tone, facial expressions, and gestures. Whereas an actor usually gets coached in such matters, language learners are, in many cases, left to figure it out by themselves, which at times can be a daunting undertaking.

#### 6. Conclusions and implications for future research

This article has demonstrated how a systemic look at strategies for ILP development applies across an extended framework of ILP which includes language knowledge, analysis, learner subjectivity, and an awareness of emotions. As such, the ILP model constitutes a framework within which learners are better able to understand the pragmatics involved in the co-construction of human language. The aim is to enhance learners' ability to determine what to say, when to say it, how to say it, and when to diverge from the norm. In Sections 2 and 3 we have attempted to synthesize the ways in which learning and performance strategies can extend to all four domains of ILP. Section 4 further describes ways in which this strategies-oriented approach might be applied in the future. It is our view that a focus on a strategies-based approach to ILP teaching and learning can play a crucial role in the development of future curricular innovations and assessment measures. As the number of studies which focus on a strategic approach to pragmatics increases, so does the possibility for curricular innovation.

In terms of such curricular innovations, a significant one would be to include viable strategies focus in curricular materials being made available for language

classrooms across languages. In the past two years, a website focused on Russian pragmatics (Furniss, 2016) and a digital simulation focused on Chinese pragmatics (Taguchi, Li, & Tang, 2017) have appeared. While neither has an explicit approach to strategy instruction, both are useful for the explicit teaching and learning of interlanguage pragmatic content. Most recently, a mobile application has been developed which offers a fully-strategic approach to the teaching and learning of ILP in Spanish. The launch of the free mobile application *LingroToGo* (<http://lingrolearning.com>) is a notable advance in the availability of on-the-go materials available for the teaching and learning of Spanish pragmatics at the novice and intermediate levels. Available for iOS (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/lingrotogo/id1273904866?mt=8>) and Android (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.lingrolearning.LingroToGo&hl=en>), *LingroToGo* is a game-based app for the learning of Spanish which places communicative functions, language learning strategies, and ILP development at the core of learning. Structured around communicative scenarios, the application engages learners in 60 such scenarios. Each scenario includes key vocabulary, but, more importantly, is centered around the teaching and learning of pragmatic knowledge, analysis skills, subjectivity, and awareness. As more applications of this type become available, we expect to see an increased presence of explicit strategies instruction in classrooms, as well as a growth in the depth and type of curricular materials available.

Future research endeavors which take advantage of this increased presence could include, for example, an examination of the role of ILP instruction on learners' abilities to build knowledge, analyze a variety of TL pragmatic behaviors, make conscious choices about their own behaviors, and recognize the value of ILP in interaction. Furthermore, a comparison of a traditional course with pragmatic content to that with an embedded strategic approach to explicit ILP instruction would add empirical value to the models and taxonomies synthesized in this paper. Knowing more about how and when to apply a strategic approach would greatly extend this reach.

Finally, as we move forward, it becomes increasingly important to develop a meaningful assessment which looks at more than just ILP knowledge. This measure should also include analysis skills, subjectivity measures, and a focus on general pragmatic awareness. While previous work has made strides in this area (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Félix-Brasdefer, 2007; Roever, 2013; Roever, Fraser, & Elder, 2014), a comprehensive approach to ILP skills is still missing. Digital simulations offer a means of delivering the individualized experience fundamental to ILP development while also providing a mechanism for validating and scaling the assessment across measures (Sykes, Malone, Forrest, & Sadgic, forthcoming). Much work remains to be carried out, but the potential for utilizing emerging technologies for strategy-based curricular innovation and assessment continues to be at the heart of the work in the field.

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