When in Rome:
Evaluations of L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors[*]

Eli Hinkel*

ESL Program, Xavier University, 3800 Victory Parkway, Cincinnati, OH 45207-2511, USA

Abstract

Research has found that perceptions of and attitudes toward an L2 affect language acquisition. This study focuses on the effect that perceptions of L2 pragmalinguistic norms and behaviors can have on their acquisition. In two experiments, a total of 240 speakers of Chinese, Indonesian, Korean, Japanese, and Arabic responded to a questionnaire containing 29 statements dealing with various aspects of L2 politeness, subjects' awareness of it, and perceptions of L2 pragmalinguistic norms. The subjects and control groups of 61 NSs of American English ranked the statements according to their agreement or disagreement on a 10-point Likert scale. The results of the study indicate that the NNSs recognized pragmalinguistic behaviors accepted in the U.S. However, despite their evident recognition of L2 pragmalinguistic norms, NNSs often viewed L2 behaviors critically, compared to those accepted in L1 communities, and were not always willing to follow them.

1. Introduction

Russians and Germans are abrasive, Asian Indians and the Japanese are obsequious, Americans are insincere, and the British are standoffish. According to Thomas (1983), these are perceptions often noted, of course, by those who do not belong to the ethnic group in question. Thomas also notes that almost all ethnic groups are perceived to display certain speech-related traits that are typically assigned to them by members of other groups. Speech behaviors accepted within a group are rarely objectively and nonjudgmentally observed by those who do not belong in the majority (Gumperz, 1987). For that matter, common native speaker (NS) speech acts, behaviors, and conversational expressions encountered by

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* Phone: +1 (513) 745 3712 (office)

non-native speakers (NNSs) who reside in a NS community are often accompanied by subjective judgments, similar to those noted by Thomas.

Notions of what is polite and appropriate differ widely among language communities. In the past few years, Brown and Levinson's (1987) seminal study and findings, titled *Some Universals in Language Usage*, have been re-examined, and several researchers have indicated that universals in linguistic politeness may be less numerous than it appeared (Fraser, 1994). Notions of group harmony and solidarity that underlie politeness strategies in many non-Western societies appear to differ from those outlined in Brown and Levinson's model based on an individual's positive and negative face and strategies for accommodating them (Gu, 1990; Matsumoto, 1988). The disparity between cultures in what are considered appropriate pragmalinguistic behaviors is bound to influence how different language speaking communities view one another's behaviors and speech acts that are used to maintain social and interactional relationships.

This paper will examine NNS perceptions of and attitudes to L2 pragmalinguistic norms and behaviors as a crucial influence on the NNSs' willingness to adhere to L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors.

2. L2 pragmalinguistic competence and behaviors

A large body of literature published in the past twenty years has addressed NNSs pragmalinguistic and politeness-related behaviors. In socio-linguistics and L2 research, a great deal of work has been devoted to the learning of L2 socio-cultural and pragmatic norms. Many researchers have determined that L2 learners exhibit behaviors different from those of native speakers (NSs) when performing various types of speech acts, such as apologies (Olshtain, 1983, 1989), requests (Blum-Kulka and House, 1989; Kitao, 1989; Walters 1979a,b), compliments (Wolfson, 1983a,b; 1988), expressions of gratitude (Borkin and Rinehart, 1978; Hinkel, 1994a; Yoon, 1991), and refusals (Bardovi-Harlig and Hatford, 1993). Experts on L2 learning and acquisition have advanced hypotheses to explain the differences that exist between NS and NNS pragmalinguistic behaviors in similar situations and/or in responses to elicitation questionnaires (Wolfson, 1989).

Two intuitively reasonable explanations for different speech act behaviors of NSs and NNSs are the transfer of politeness rules and formulae from L1 to L2 (Blum-Kulka, 1983; Wolfson, 1983b, Hinkel, 1994b) and interlanguage politeness strategies that are developmental in nature (Kasper and Dahl, 1991; Blum-Kulka, 1989; Bardovi-Harlig, 1991). In the first case, NNSs 'default' to L1 strategies when they do not understand or are not familiar with the appropriate L2 strategies. In the second case, NNSs behave according to an incomplete and evolving hypothesis of appropriate L2 behavior. On the other hand, Blum-Kulka (1991: 269) explains that highly proficient NNSs choose to behave differently than NSs and that NNSs' "intercultural style" of behavior functions as a disidentifier to establish "a role distance between the speaker and his or her native interlocutors". In her view, being different helps to preserve an ethnic and/or cultural identity of the speaker.

However, on the whole, the findings of research devoted to L2 pragmatics and the acquisition of L2 socio-cultural norms present a complex and, occasionally, conflicting picture. Some experts have proposed that both transferred and developmental strategies have a place in the acquisition of L2 pragmalinguistic norms and that over time, learners' exposure to L2 interactions results in an approximation of NNS behaviors to those of NSs (Olshtain and Blum-Kulka, 1985; Blum-Kulka, 1991). Others have noted that NNSs who had been exposed to the norms of L2 communities for periods over 10 years displayed judgments of appropriateness systematically different from those of NSs (Adamson and Regan, 1991; Ioup, 1989).

Some investigators have also commented that NNSs' subjective evaluations of American socio-pragmatic behaviors and speech acts are often based on misinterpretations of the purposes of L2 polite speech acts (Park, 1979; Richards and Schmidt, 1983; Schmidt, 1993). Thomas (1983) notes that American expressions of overt and exaggerated friendliness contribute to the perceptions of Americans as insincere and superficial. In Wolfson's (1983a) opinion, these perceptions of Americans and evaluations of their pragmalinguistic behaviors are frequently caused by NNS misunderstandings of the pragmatic force in "invitation-like forms" (p. 77) (e.g. *I'll call you soon and we'll have lunch*) and polite formulaic compliments.

Ethnographers and experts on cross-cultural communication have observed that socio-cultural norms and pragmalinguistic behaviors fundamentally depend on shared cultural knowledge. Saville-Troike (1989: 22) states that cultural competence represents "the total set of knowledge and skills" which are specific to norms and behaviors accepted within a group and which interactants bring into the situation. In her view, interpreting the meanings and social implications of pragmalinguistic behaviors requires having the shared knowledge of meanings of these behaviors. She further states that members of different speech communities evaluate one another's intentions and situational behaviors on the basis of different interpretive paradigms and that NNSs often view American pragmalinguistic behaviors as inappropriate and devoid of purpose. Similarly, Hymes (1994) stipulates that norms of interaction may be subject to various interpretations when members of different speech communities participate in communication and that relations between members of different cultural groups are often affected by misunderstandings.

Gallois et al. (1988) found that members of groups that do not belong in the dominant group may have a different orientation and perceive the norms of the majority to be inadequate, disidentify themselves from the outgroup, and "counter-attune to outgroup members interpersonally" (p. 166). Other researchers have similar views (Forgas, 1988; Cushman and Kincaid, 1987), and some question whether simply being outside the dominant group evinces a lack of communicative competence (Philipsen, 1987). For example, as Pearce and Kang (1987) report, the quiet responsiveness of highly proficient Korean immigrants is often perceived as coldness and a lack of openness by NSs of American English. These authors further indicate that an outcome of Korean-NS interactions may lead to an increasing distance between the two communities, despite an apparent lack of language barrier.

3. L2 attitudes, perceptions, and politeness

Studies of language attitudes among school age learners have occupied a prominent place among the studies of L2 acquisition. Researchers have found that attitude can be a predisposing factor in the success of second language learning; conversely, it can also be an outcome of a language learning experience. Gardner (1972, 1983, 1985, 1990), Gardner and Lambert (1972), Ely (1986), and Roberts (1992) showed that a bi-directional relationship exists between learner proficiency and attitudes to a second language and the communities in which it is spoken. Gardner and Lambert (1972: 3) state that "the successful learner of a second language must be psychologically prepared to adopt various aspects of behavior which characterize members of another linguistic-cultural group". Mantle-Bromley and Miller (1991) state that "positive attitudes are related to increased achievement in second language acquisition, ... and increase desired student behaviors" (p. 474). Baker's (1992) detailed study of the relationships between language attitudes and language learning specifies that conformity to views and ideas accepted in an L1 community and culture may affect one's perceptions of and willingness to learn a second language. Notably, few studies have dealt with language learning attitudes among adults (Gardner, 1990).

On the other hand, Bradac (1990) found that perceptions of language and/or its specific features trigger impressions and "an evaluative reaction" for the purposes of social comparison (p. 403). He states that the basis for systematic language perceptions that affect beliefs about socio-cultural norms are often unclear and can stem from a variety of cognitive processes, some of which involve social and group solidarity.

For adult learners, L2 perceptions are culturally constrained by the observers' L1 paradigms of polite behaviors and their knowledge of the world (Fowler and Turvey, 1982; Turvey, 1974; Schachter, 1983, Seliger, 1988). Adamson (1988) states that L2 learners may fail to behave according to L2 socio-cultural norms in spite of living in an L2 community for extended periods of time because they "don't desire" to follow its pragmatic behaviors (p. 32). Other researchers have established that there may be little connection between linguistic proficiency and the willingness to adhere to L2 socio-pragmatic norms (Schumann, 1978; Schmidt, 1983). Jin and Cortazzi (1993) found that among advanced Chinese university students raised in cultures where group harmony and solidarity represent fundamental cultural values, group judgments and evaluations of behaviors accepted in the host community represent a formidable force that often precludes NNSs successful adjustment to the host community norms.

Learning a language in a traditional sense is fundamentally different from the learning of L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors. While many years of formal and other training are usually devoted to the former, few ESL/EFL institutions address the latter in depth. Furthermore, although a great deal of time and effort is spent on measuring learners' linguistic proficiency, to date no means of measuring socio-pragmatic competence exist, and few standardized tests incorporate items relevant to this aspect of language learning (Fraser, 1990).

This study proposes that NNS perceptions of appropriateness in NNS socio-cultural behaviors and linguistic politeness enactments may fundamentally affect learner L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors. That is, given an understanding or correct hypothesis of appropriate L2 behavior, a learner's perception of and attitude toward the behavior may have a determining influence on his or her actual behavior. The purpose of this study is to establish whether relatively advanced linguistic proficiency and exposure to L2 environments lead to NNS awareness and recognition of distinctions between L1 and L2 rules of appropriateness and a willingness to follow L2 socio-pragmatic norms.

4. The study design

Baker (1992) and Gardner (1990) voiced caution in interpreting results of behavioral and cognitive measurements because they are most frequently self-reported and, therefore, their validity may be diminished. Because few methodologies for eliciting learner perceptions have been developed, this study is based on self-reports dealing with various pragmalinguistic behaviors and politeness enactments.

To overcome the shortcomings inherent in studies based on self-reports, two mutually exclusive approaches were considered. One entailed selecting a small population sample to which the questionnaire could be administered, followed by extensive observation and analysis of the subjects' actual pragmalinguistic behaviors to validate the questionnaire responses. Such an investigation would necessarily be based on a limited sample size, which would preclude establishing the questionnaire reliability and diminish the applicability of the findings. Another approach involved administering the questionnaire to a large group of subjects to develop a statistically reliable instrument. With a large sample, however, it would not be possible to analyze subjects' actual pragmalinguistic behaviors and determine whether these are consistent with questionnaire responses. Because case studies involving small groups of subjects may not produce generalizable data, the second approach was adopted. To validate findings, the questionnaire was administered to two large groups of subjects in two separate experiments approximately two and a half years apart.

5. The questionnaire

The questionnaire contained 29 statements, each of which the subjects rated according to their agreement or disagreement on a 10-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 – Strongly Disagree to 10 – Strongly Agree (Gardner, 1985; Gardner and Lambert, 1972). For purposes of analysis, the statements were divided into three sets, each dealing with various pragmalinguistic norms, subjects' awareness of L2 appropriateness, and perceptions of L2 socio-pragmatic norms. The first set consisted of 6 statements, labelled *Recognition of L2 Pragmalinguistic Behaviors* (Table 1), the second set of 8 statements, *Evaluations of L2 Pragmalinguistic Behaviors* (Table 2), and the third set of 15 statements, *Self and L2 Pragmalinguistic Behaviors* (Table 3).

After the data were collected, they were compiled to obtain average rankings for each statement by L1 groups, i.e. group rankings given by the Chinese, Indonesians, Koreans, Arabs, and the Japanese. Cronbach's alpha was selected as a conservative measure of reliability for items on an unweighted scale and was calculated for average rankings in each set of items to obtain internal consistency measurements.

This investigation largely addressed group trends, rather than individual subject variability. Several studies have shown that among NNSs raised in cultures based on group harmony and solidarity, opinions of individuals rarely markedly deviate from those of accepted in the group (Jin and Cortazzi, 1993; Lebra, 1986; Park, 1978). As has become common in literature associated with L2 politeness behaviors, the findings are presented for comparison in the form of average rankings assigned to each statement by L1 groups (Baker, 1992; Blum-Kulka, 1987; Carrell and Konneker, 1981, Hinkel, 1994a,b). These are discussed thematically.

6. Experiment 1

6.1. Subjects

Of the 148 NNS subjects who participated in Experiment 1, 67 were speakers of Chinese (CH), 30 of Indonesian (IN), 25 of Korean (KR), 15 of Arabic (AR), and 11 of Japanese (JP). All NNSs had been admitted to a large U.S. university and were pursuing studies toward their graduate or undergraduate degrees; their TOEFL scores ranged from 550 to 630 with a mean of 583. The NNSs had resided in the U.S. for periods of time ranging between 1.6 and 4.1 years with a mean of 2.8. As much as possible, an attempt was made to control for developmental linguistic variability, and subjects were selected on the basis of high L2 proficiency and a relatively extensive exposure to the politeness norms of the L2 community (1.5 years or longer).

Representative of international student enrollment figures in the U.S., approximately two thirds of the subjects (64%) were males who had arrived in the U.S. with the purpose of obtaining American graduate or undergraduate degrees (*Open Doors*, 1992). Specifically, 112 were enrolled in graduate and 36 in undergraduate programs. Approximately two thirds indicated that upon completion of their studies, they hoped to remain in the U.S. and seek employment in their professions. One third stated that they planned to return to their home countries. Subjects' ages ranged from 22 to 33, with a mean of 26.

In addition, 33 NSs of American English, raised in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana, responded to the portion of the questionnaire dealing with the pragmatic force in linguistic politeness formulae accepted in the U.S. (see Table 3 below). All NSs were taking an introductory course in linguistics and were enrolled in various departments at the university. The purpose for including the NSs in the study was to establish whether the NNSs recognized L2 politeness formulae and their pragmatic usage similarly to NSs. NNS assessment of the pragmatic force in formulaic expressions commonly used in politeness routines in American English was compared to NS judgments.

6.2. Recognition of L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors

The inclusion of Items 1–6 (Table 1) had the goal of establishing the subjects' pragmatic competence and their awareness of L2 pragmalinguistic norms (Kasper, 1990). Items in Table 1 specifically addressed several major issues discussed in research. In particular, Item 1 focused on apologies (Olshtain, 1983, 1989; Holmes, 1989), Item 2 on invitations (Wolfson, 1983a), Item 3 accepting/rejecting offers and expressing thanks (Coulmas, 1981; Yoon, 1991), Item 4 responding to compliments (Wolfson, 1983b, 1989), Item 5 making requests (Blum-Kulka and House, 1989; Kitao, 1989), and Item 6 refusals (Bardovi-Harlig and Hatford, 1993). NSs of American English (see Subjects) also evaluated the pragmatic force in routine expressions of politeness commonly used in American English. The average NS rankings of items provided a standard against which the responses of NNSs were compared. The alpha reliability (0.96) demonstrates a substantial amount of internal consistency among subjects' rankings.

Table 1

Recognition of L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors ($\bar{X}$) ($N=181$)

	NS	CH	IN	KR	AR	JP
(1) In the U.S., if I miss a class I need to apologize to the teacher.	5.18	5.29	4.13	4.56	6.73	3.90
(2) In the U.S., when someone says: "Let's have lunch sometime", they really want to have lunch with you.	5.55	4.36	5.10	4.52	5.20	4.27
(3) In the U.S., if I am offered something to eat or drink, I should first say "no, thank you".	4.61	2.61	3.60	3.44	2.80	2.27
(4) In the U.S., when someone gives compliments it is appropriate to respond: "Thank you".	9.12	8.50	7.63	8.44	8.27	6.36
(5) In the U.S., when you need information, it is more appropriate to say "Tell me ..." than "Could you/Would you tell me ...".	4.42	4.73	4.27	3.88	6.27	2.73
(6) In the U.S., when someone invites you somewhere, but you don't want to participate, it's acceptable to say: "I'd like to come, but I can't".	7.82	8.12	7.93	7.84	8.00	7.82

$\alpha=0.96$ ($n=6$)

Overall, NNS subjects demonstrated appropriateness judgments of L2 formulaic expressions that closely approximated those of NSs. The rankings of Item 1 *In the U.S., if I miss a class I need to apologize to the teacher* show that the Chinese subjects' perceptions of appropriateness most closely approximated those of NSs,

and were followed by those made by Koreans and Indonesians. The average rankings of the Arabic (6.73) and the Japanese subjects (3.90) were, respectively, higher and lower than those of NSs.

The rankings of Item 2 *In the U.S. when someone says: "Let's have lunch sometime", they really want to have lunch with you* showed that NSs and NNSs similarly agreed and displayed proximate perceptions of the pragmatic force in the formulaic expression and its social function (Wolfson, 1983a). To a greater or smaller degree, the majority of subjects in all groups disagreed with the appropriateness of first saying "no, thank you", when offered something to eat or drink in Item 3 (Coulmas, 1981). In fact, NNSs assigned this item lower rankings than NSs did.

All groups of subjects strongly agreed with Item 4 *In the U.S. when someone gives compliments it is appropriate to respond: "Thank you"*. All, except speakers of Arabic, found the direct request in *Tell me ...* less polite than *Could you/Would you tell me*. El-Sayed (1990) mentions that *Tell me ...* is considered polite in Arabic, with the rising tone being the primary politeness marker. Subjects across the six L1 groups displayed a great deal of uniformity when judging the appropriateness of the refusal in Item 6. Overall, the rankings of Items 1–6 demonstrate that NNSs were astute observers of L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors. The correlation matrix below shows high and significant correlations between the politeness judgments of NSs and all NNSs, except the Japanese, for Items 1–6 (Table 1):

Rank correlation matrix
Recognition of L2 specific pragmalinguistic behaviors

	NSs	CH	IN	KR	AR	JP	
NSs	1.00						
CH	0.83[a]	1.00					
IN	0.87[a]	0.89[a]	1.00				
KR	0.90[a]	0.94[a]	0.96[a]	1.00			
AR	0.72[a]	0.85[a]	0.66[a]	0.68[a]	1.00		
JP	0.45	0.69[a]	0.81[a]	0.79[a]	0.28	1.00	

[a] $p < 0.001$

6.3. Evaluations of L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors

The set of statements in Table 2 consists of 8 items that were based on research dealing with L2 pragmalinguistic norms and had the purpose of eliciting subjects' perceptions of the norms of L2 linguistic politeness. Although the rankings by Indonesians and Arabs show a weak agreement with Item 1 *The rules of polite speech accepted in the U.S. are very complex,* those by Koreans and the Japanese display a disagreement (see Table 2). The subjects displayed a degree of realism and either marginally agreed or disagreed with Item 2 *In the U.S. people don't always follow rules of polite speech*. However, the rankings of most subjects confirmed Thomas' (1983) and Wolfson's (1983a) observation that Americans are often perceived as insincere (Item 3).

Table 2
Evaluations of L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors ($\bar{X}$) (N=148)

	CH	IN	KR	AR	JP
(1) The rules of polite speech accepted in the U.S. are very complex.	5.06	5.53	4.64	5.40	3.91
(2) In the U.S., people don't always follow rules of polite speech.	5.28	5.97	4.44	5.60	4.82
(3) In the U.S., people often pretend that they care about one another in order to be polite.	7.33	6.83	6.92	7.47	6.18
(4) People in the U.S. try to make their interactions run smoothly.	8.39	7.87	7.68	8.40	7.82
(5) In the U.S., many people feel that everyone needs to follow the same rules of polite speech that they do.	6.02	5.70	5.44	6.87	5.45
(6) In the U.S., people often don't like it when someone follows different rules of polite speech.	6.15	6.13	5.76	6.93	6.00
(7) People in my country speak more politely than people in the U.S. do.	6.72	6.70	6.28	7.33	6.73
(8) Sometimes I feel that the rules of polite speech accepted in the U.S. are inappropriate.	5.12	6.30	5.04	6.07	4.91

α=0.94 (n=8)

Similarly, their rankings of Item 4 *People in the U.S. try to make their interactions run smoothly* establish the subjects' recognition of attempted interactional cooperativeness (Grice, 1991). They further agreed that conformity to socio-cultural norms (Item 5) extends to them as it does to members of the L2 community (Item 6). This finding implies that NNSs also recognized that following different norms, such as those accepted in subjects' L1 communities, may not always be appropriate in L2. In the perceptions of NNSs, however, people in their L1 communities were more polite than Americans (Item 7). A majority of subjects in all L1 groups, except the Japanese, perceived the speech behavior norms accepted in U.S. as not always appropriate (Item 8). An implication of this finding can be that NNSs may transfer L1 politeness rules to and use them in L2 environments simply because they perceive L1 rules to be 'more appropriate'.

6.4. Self and L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors

The 15 items in this set of statements (see Table 3) were presented to the subjects in random order, and the coefficient of reliability (α=0.95) was computed to establish scale internal consistency. The items in this set had the goal of establishing subjects' perceptions of L2 socio-pragmatic norms, willingness to follow them, and self-evaluations of L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors, and for the purposes of analysis they were divided into three subgroups.

While the majority of all subjects indicated that they liked *how people in the U.S. speak politely to one another* (Item 1), they also noted that sometimes Americans

Table 3
Self and L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors ($\bar{X}$) (N=148)

		CH	IN	KR	AR	JP
Perceptions of L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors						
(1)	I like how in the U.S. people speak politely to one another.	6.68	6.57	6.48	6.27	6.18
(2)	Sometimes, Americans offend me and don't even notice.	5.13	5.50	5.00	5.20	5.00
(3)	In the U.S. people don't always realize that there are many ways to be polite.	7.55	6.27	6.80	7.47	5.36
(4)	Sometimes, I feel that the rules of polite speech in the U.S. have little meaning for me.	6.39	6.06	5.40	6.13	5.91
Conforming to L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors						
(5)	In the U.S., there are so many rules of polite speech that I cannot follow them all.	5.13	5.43	3.72	3.53	4.18
(6)	Being polite in the U.S. is difficult for me.	3.06	3.40	2.92	3.26	2.18
(7)	I want to follow the rules of polite speech accepted in the U.S.	7.00	7.03	7.12	6.47	5.64
(8)	It is important for me to follow rules of polite speech accepted in the U.S. when I live here.	7.78	7.37	6.76	5.60	6.45
(9)	Because I am not an American, I don't have to follow the rules of polite speech accepted in the U.S.	3.67	3.60	3.40	3.53	2.81
(10)	Frequently, people in the U.S. don't expect me to follow rules of polite speech.	3.91	4.23	4.00	4.33	3.36
Self-evaluation of L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors						
(11)	When I am in a classroom in the U.S., I try to follow the rules of polite speech as American students do.	5.97	5.93	4.92	5.13	5.00
(12)	If Americans can be rude with me, I can be rude with them, too.	6.97	6.27	5.88	5.20	4.73
(13)	When I speak with people in the U.S., I use the same rules of polite speech as when I speak with people from my country.	6.76	6.40	6.60	7.93	6.18
(14)	In general, I am not concerned if people in the U.S. think I am impolite.	4.75	5.23	4.48	4.93	4.09
(15)	I don't always try to follow the rules of polite speech accepted in the U.S.	5.81	5.70	4.35	5.47	4.27

α=0.95 (n=15)

also offend them (Item 2). Subjects in all groups agreed that Americans may not recognize enactments of politeness other than those accepted in the U.S. (Item 3). The agreement rankings with Item 4 *Sometimes I feel that the rules of polite speech in the U.S. have little meaning for me indicate* some alienation that subjects may experience in the L2 community (Jin and Cortazzi, 1993).

The majority of Koreans, Arabs, and Japanese disagreed that it was difficult for them to follow numerous L2 socio-pragmatic norms (Item 5); most of the Chinese

and Indonesians had a different view. None of the groups agreed that *Being polite in the U.S. is difficult* (Item 6). The majority of subjects in all groups indicated both that they 'wanted to follow' L2 speech behaviors (Item 7) and that it was important for them to do so (Item 8).

As has been mentioned, all NNSs in the study were students, and because students are frequently temporary sojourners in a host community, their relatively short residence in the U.S. may affect their perceptions to L2 linguistic politeness and willingness to follow L2 community norms. The inclusion of Item 9 *Because I am not an American, I don't have to follow the rules of polite speech accepted in the U.S.* had the goal of determining whether the "tourist" mentality (Acton and Walker de Felix, 1986: 22) plays a role in learner perceptions of L2 politeness. Subjects in all groups disagreed with Item 9. The Japanese and Koreans ranked Item 9 the lowest. The purpose of Item 10 *Frequently, people in the U.S. don't expect me to follow rules of polite speech* was to verify the responses to Item 9, which appear to be reasonably congruous. The responses to Items 5–10 give evidence of a fairly strong, albeit self-reported, desire to follow the rules of polite speech accepted in the U.S. and a clear recognition that not being an American did not free one from the obligation to follow the rules of polite speech accepted in the U.S. It should be remembered that two thirds of the subjects indicated that they hoped to remain in the U.S. after obtaining their degrees.

The relatively weak agreement with Item 11 *When I am in a classroom in the U.S., I try to follow the rules of polite speech as American students* does not exhibit a great deal of enthusiasm and willingness to speak 'as American students'. In fact, the rankings by Koreans and the Japanese show a disagreement with this statement. The rankings of Item 12 *If Americans can be rude with me, I can be rude with them, too* imply potential misunderstandings and misinterpretations (Hymes, 1994; Lii-Shih, 1988; Thomas, 1983).

A comparatively strong agreement with Item 13 *When I speak with people in the U.S., I use the same rules of polite speech as when I speak with people from my country* demonstrates subjects' awareness of L1 to L2 transfer of pragmalinguistic behaviors. The weak disagreement with Item 14 *In general I am not concerned if people in the U.S. think that I am impolite* reflects the subjects' possible reluctance to follow the L2 norms, particularly as indicated in the agreement rankings by Indonesians (5.23). In fact, according to Blum-Kulka (1982, 1983, 1989) and Olshtain (1983, 1989), one could expect a greater amount of disagreement in response to this item. Blum-Kulka (1991) observes that intentional sources in interaction are such that "speakers strive to achieve ... [their goal] with maximum effectiveness and politeness" and are constrained by the available "pragmalinguistic repertoire" (pp. 257 and 259, respectively). The rankings of Item (13–14) indicate, however, that this may not be uniformly true. Most Chinese-, Indonesian-, and Arabic-speaking subjects agreed with Item 15 *I don't always try to follow the rules of polite speech accepted in the U.S.*, and thereby recognized their occasional unwillingness to follow L2 socio-cultural norms. Furthermore, the strategy of conformity (Lakoff, 1975; Fraser and Nolen, 1981; Leech, 1983) displayed in responses to Items 7–10 does not seem to hold true for self-reports on L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors.

The responses to some of the items in this section seem incongruous. On the one hand, subjects displayed willingness to conform to L2 pragmalinguistic norms (Items 7 and 8), and on the other, their self-reported behaviors (Items 11–15) did not support this position. Responses to items that addressed behavior rather than belief indicate that NNS are less willing to follow L2 rules of politeness than might be expected. Ajzen (1988) and Gardner (1990) indicated that in behavioral studies based on questionnaires, subjects may respond according to what they think presents them in the best light. Items that addressed L2 linguistic politeness only in very general terms lent themselves to agreement: being polite is considered a virtue in most cultures (Brown and Levinson, 1987). However, the reason for the apparent disparity in responses to some of these items could be that although NNSs understand the need to be polite in L2, they do not necessarily act in accordance with this understanding, and they are aware that they do not.

7. Experiment 2

The purpose of Experiment 2 was to verify the results of Experiment 1 by controlling for possible population sample biases in Experiment 1. Conditions for administering of the questionnaire described for Experiment 1 approximated those described in Experiment 2.

7.1. Subjects

Of the 92 NNS subjects who participated in the study, 42 were speakers of Chinese (CH), 15 of Indonesian (IN), 16 of Korean (KR), 7 of Arabic (AR), and 12 of Japanese (JP). All NNSs had been admitted to the university and were pursuing studies toward their graduate or undergraduate degrees; their TOEFL scores ranged from 540 to 633 with a mean of 573. The NNSs had resided in the U.S. for periods of time ranging between 1.0 and 3.8 years with a mean of 2.1. The NNS subjects were taking the same courses toward their degrees and were largely representative of the international students enrolled in U.S. universities. Their ages ranged from 20 to 39 with a mean of 28.2.

In addition, 28 NSs of American English, raised in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana, responded to the portion of the questionnaire presented in Table 4. All NSs were enrolled in various departments at the university. As in Experiment 1, the purpose for including the NSs in the study was to establish whether the NNSs recognized L2 politeness formulae and their pragmatic usage similarly to NSs; NNS rankings of the questionnaire statements were compared to NS judgments.

7.2. Results and discussion

The responses to the questionnaire in Experiment 2 seem to be similar to those in Experiment 1, and NNSs in all groups demonstrated judgments similar to those of NSs. This portion of the questionnaire proved to be fairly reliable, with α=0.90.

Table 4
Recognition of L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors ($\bar{X}$) ($N=120$)

	NSs	CH	IN	KR	AR	JP
(1) In the U.S., if I miss a class I need to apologize to the teacher.	6.67	5.15	6.31	5.05	4.68	7.07
(2) In the U.S., when someone says: "Let's have lunch sometime", they really want to have lunch with you.	5.79	5.29	5.18	5.38	2.54	5.33
(3) In the U.S., if I am offered something to eat or drink, I should first say "no, thank you".	4.62	3.83	3.01	3.94	2.13	3.91
(4) In the U.S., when someone gives compliments it is appropriate to respond: "Thank you".	9.16	8.71	7.76	8.90	7.82	8.25
(5) In the U.S., when you need information, it is more appropriate to say "Tell me ..." than "Could you/Would you tell me ...".	4.56	4.33	3.64	3.29	3.44	5.13
(6) In the U.S., when someone invites you somewhere, but you don't want to participate, it's acceptable to say: "I'd like to come, but I can't".	8.80	8.16	7.27	8.44	7.47	9.19

$\alpha=0.90$ ($n=6$)

Subjects in all groups, except Arabs, agreed that in the U.S. if they miss a class, they need to apologize to the teacher (Item 1). While a small majority of all subjects, except the speakers of Arabic, displayed a marginal agreement that a formulaic expression *Let's have lunch some time* (Item 2) may indicate an actual desire to have lunch. Notably, as in Experiment 1, more NSs agreed with this item than subjects in any other of group. Only a minority of subjects agreed that it is not appropriate to first say "no, thank you", when offered food or drink (Item 3). Similar to the findings in Experiment 1, NSs displayed the strongest agreement with this item. The majority in all groups, particularly NSs, agreed that it is appropriate to respond "thank you" *when someone gives compliments* (Item 4) and disagreed that "*Tell me ...*" (Item 5) is a more appropriate form of request than "*Could you/Would you tell me ...*". The Japanese showed a weak agreement with this Item (5). To a greater or smaller degree, the majority of subjects agreed that the refusal in Item 6 was appropriate; the Japanese gave this item the highest and the Indonesians the lowest rankings. The rank correlation matrix (see below) presents significant correlations between the appropriateness judgments of NSs and NNSs in all groups for (Items 1–6, Table 1).

Rank correlation matrix
Recognition of L2 specific pragmalinguistic behaviors

	NSs	CH	IN	KR	AR	JP
NSs	1.00					
CH	0.89[a]	1.00				
IN	0.94[a]	0.94[a]	1.00			
KR	0.93[a]	0.94[a]	0.89[a]	1.00		
AR	0.83[a]	0.83[a]	0.94[a]	0.71[a]	1.00	
JP	0.89[a]	0.88[a]	0.93[a]	0.83[a]	0.89[a]	1.00

[a] $p<0.001$

7.3. Evaluations of L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors

Although the speakers of Arabic found *the rules of polite speech accepted in the U.S.* to be moderately complex (Table 5, Item 1), the majority in other groups disagreed. Similar to the subjects in Experiment 1, most NNSs in Experiment 2 noted that *in the U.S., people don't always follow rules of polite speech* (Item 2). The majority also confirmed Thomas' (1983) and Wolfson's (1983a) observations that Americans are often perceived as insincere (Item 3) and exhibited recognition of interactional cooperativeness within the L2 community (Item 4). It should be noted, however, that the Chinese ranked this item the highest and the Japanese the lowest, with a difference of 2.90 points. The majority of subjects in all groups, except Japanese, also recognized that the strategy conformity has a place in L2 interactions (Item 5).

Table 5
Evaluations of L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors ($\bar{X}$) (N=92)

		CH	IN	KR	AR	JP
(1)	The rules of polite speech accepted in the U.S. are very complex.	5.00	4.93	5.04	5.18	4.97
(2)	In the U.S., people don't always follow rules of polite speech.	7.62	5.80	7.63	7.00	6.58
(3)	In the U.S., people often pretend that they care about one another in order to be polite.	6.73	6.63	6.91	6.87	6.17
(4)	People in the U.S. try to make their interactions run smoothly.	7.98	5.67	7.13	5.86	5.08
(5)	In the U.S., many people feel that everyone needs to follow the same rules of polite speech that they do.	5.50	5.13	6.75	5.57	4.50
(6)	In the U.S., people often don't like it when someone follows different rules of polite speech.	5.67	4.40	6.19	5.71	5.17
(7)	People in my country speak more politely than people in the U.S. do.	6.89	5.18	6.23	6.13	6.12
(8)	Sometimes I feel that the rules of polite speech accepted in the U.S. are inappropriate.	5.38	5.33	5.53	5.55	5.00

α=0.96 (n=8)

The weak agreement rankings of Item (5) were also reflected by those of Item 6, *In the U.S., people often don't like it when someone follows different rules of polite speech*, although most Indonesians had a different view. The agreement with this item implies the subjects' recognition that enactments of politeness other than those accepted in the L2 community may not be appropriate. In keeping with the results in Experiment 1, it is not particularly surprising that NNSs found people in their L1 communities to be more polite than those in L2 (Item 7). In addition, most subjects in all groups, except the Japanese, indicated a weak agreement with Item 8, with an implication that NNSs may prefer L1 politeness rules to those in L2 pragmalinguistic frameworks.

7.4. Self and L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors

Subjects' rankings of Items 1–4, Table 6 appear to resemble those of Items 1–4, Table 3 (Experiment 1): the majority agreed that they liked how Americans speak 'politely to one another', but NNSs also noted that they occasionally feel offended. A relatively strong agreement rankings of Item 3, *In the U.S. people don't always realize that there are many ways to be polite* exhibited only minor variations. To a smaller or greater degree, the majority in all groups agreed that the rules of polite speech have little meaning for them (Item 4), thus confirming the rankings of this item in Table 3.

Again, most of the NNSs displayed an overt willingness to conform to L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors (Items 5–10, Table 6). They indicated that they could follow L2 rules of polite speech (Item 5) with reasonable ease (Item 6) and that they wanted to follow L2 politeness rules (Items 7 and 8). They were also aware that it was expected of them to do so (Items 9 and 10).

However, as is apparent from the rankings of Items (11–15) dealing with the self-evaluation of L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors, only Koreans showed a weak agreement with the statement *When I am in a classroom in the U.S., I try to follow the rules of polite speech as American students do* (Item 11), and the majority of all other subjects marginally disagreed. Most NNSs indicated that they transferred rules of 'polite speech' from L1 to L2 and were aware of the transfer (Item 13). As in Experiment 1, they also weakly disagreed with Item 14 *In general, I am not concerned if people in the U.S. think I am impolite*. The majority of subjects in all groups noted that they do not always try to follow L2 politeness rules (Item 15). The agreement rankings with this item were somewhat more pronounced than those in Experiment 1.

It should be noted that subjects' responses to some items differed in the two questionnaire administrations. For example, in Experiment 1 Arabs agreed that in the U.S., if they miss a class they should apologize to the teacher (Item 1, Table 1), and the Japanese disagreed. On the other hand, in response to this item in Experiment 2 (Item 1, Table 4) Arabs marginally disagreed and the Japanese agreed that in this situation an apology would be necessary. Similarly, the opinions of Arabic- and Japanese-speaking subjects differed in response to Item 5 (Tables 1 and 4) *In the U.S., when you need information, it is more appropriate to say "Tell me ..." than*

Table 6
Self and L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors ($\bar{X}$) (N=92)

		CH	IN	KR	AR	JP
Perceptions of L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors						
(1)	I like how in the U.S. people speak politely to one another.	6.91	6.79	6.75	6.72	6.92
(2)	Sometimes, Americans offend me and don't even notice.	6.76	6.53	6.89	6.43	6.50
(3)	In the U.S. people don't always realize that there are many ways to be polite.	7.12	7.00	7.56	6.95	7.13
(4)	Sometimes, I feel that the rules of polite speech in the U.S. have little meaning for me.	7.43	6.40	6.25	6.07	6.92
Conforming to L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors						
(5)	In the U.S., there are so many rules of polite speech that I cannot follow them all.	3.85	3.43	4.01	3.07	3.77
(6)	Being polite in the U.S. is difficult for me.	3.05	3.10	3.13	2.85	2.98
(7)	I want to follow the rules of polite speech accepted in the U.S.	8.12	8.13	8.00	7.93	8.15
(8)	It is important for me to follow rules of polite speech accepted in the U.S. when I live here.	8.26	8.00	8.44	7.83	8.43
(9)	Because I am not an American, I don't have to follow the rules of polite speech accepted in the U.S.	3.45	4.29	3.94	3.27	4.33
(10)	Frequently, people in the U.S. don't expect me to follow rules of polite speech.	4.64	4.93	4.93	4.43	4.75
Self-evaluation of L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors						
(11)	When I am in a classroom in the U.S., I try to follow the rules of polite speech as American students do.	4.57	4.33	5.64	4.31	4.52
(12)	If Americans can be rude with me, I can be rude with them, too.	6.74	6.69	6.87	6.62	6.92
(13)	When I speak with people in the U.S., I use the same rules of polite speech as when I speak with people from my country.	6.69	7.47	8.15	6.67	7.58
(14)	In general, I am not concerned if people in the U.S. think I am impolite.	4.56	4.40	5.29	4.27	5.25
(15)	I don't always try to follow the rules of polite speech accepted in the U.S.	6.77	6.02	6.01	5.75	6.17

α=0.95 (n=15)

"Could you/Would you tell me ...". Occasionally, all NNSs in Experiment 2, except Indonesians, displayed a lower opinion of American interactional cooperativeness (Items 2 and 4, Tables 2 and 5) but indicated a greater desire to conform to L2 politeness norms (Items 7 and 8, Tables 3 and 6) than those in Experiment 1. As has been mentioned, NNSs who participated in Experiment 1 were younger, had received a more extensive exposure to L2 pragmalinguistic norms, and had obtained a slightly higher English proficiency than participants in Experiment 2.

8. Conclusions and implications

The findings reported in this study are preliminary, and the analysis of NNSs' rankings of questionnaire statements was carried out in the form of L1 group averages. There is no doubt that a thorough investigation of the NNS judgments and evaluations of L2 pragmalinguistic norms is necessary before definitive conclusions can be made. On the whole, however, the questionnaire seemed to be a fairly reliable instrument, with α coefficients ranging from 0.90 to 0.96.

In general terms, the results of study demonstrate the NNSs' awareness of L1 and L2 norms of politeness and appropriateness and their recognition of specific pragmalinguistic behaviors accepted in the U.S. It further appears that despite their evident recognition of L2 socio-pragmatic norms (or maybe because of it), NNSs often viewed them critically, compared to those accepted in L1 communities and, therefore, were not always willing to follow L2 polite speech behaviors. The findings further indicate that because NNSs may simply view L1 behaviors as 'more appropriate', learners transferred L1 rules of appropriateness to L2 environments and were aware of the transfer.

Gardner (1990: 203–204) states that "[a]lthough there are undoubtedly some exceptions, by and large, people who are highly motivated to learn the language are interested in making contacts with the other language community, have favorable attitudes toward the community, are probably interested in other languages as well, and evaluate the learning context positively". However, it may be that in this study, subjects have learned English because a high L2 proficiency, a requisite in most U.S. academic programs, brought them closer to their goal of obtaining American university degrees. Therefore, these learners, possibly highly motivated to attain the needed linguistic proficiency measured by standardized tests, may become aware of L2 socio-cultural norms and linguistic politeness by virtue of their exposure to L2 interactional and pragmatic frameworks, rather than because of a desire to follow them. Although most agreed that following L2 politeness norms is important, as NNS average group rankings demonstrate, adhering to the pragmalinguistic norms of the L2 community may occupy a relatively low priority among their goals. Of particular interest is the finding that while most subjects displayed an overt self-reported willingness to conform to L2 pragmalinguistic norms, their self-reported behaviors largely did not support this inclination.

Most studies of attitudes to learning a second language carried out in foreign language classes have acknowledged that many students take them to fulfill high school or college language requirements. A need to meet graduation requirements, rather than an interest in learning a second language, has been recognized as a factor in low student motivation and achievement scores (Mantle-Bromley and Miller, 1991; Roberts, 1992). NNS evaluations of L2 pragmalinguistic behaviors and their perceived diminished value compared to L1 socio-cultural norms, the sense of estrangement from the L2 community, and possibly, potential misunderstandings can help explain why trained and advanced NNSs may not follow L2 pragmalinguistic norms.

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