



Pragmatic Knowledge in Japanese High School EFL Textbooks

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Background of Study

- Developing learners' pragmatic competence is essential to use L2 effectively (Barron et al., 2024).
- Pragmatic competence is a component of communicative competence (Bachman & Palmer, 1982).
- The latest Course of Study (2018) emphasizes learners' communicative abilities.
- Pragmatic language instruction is often absent from language curricula (Rover 2022)

Research Questions

RQ1. What types of pragmatic knowledge are introduced in the selected EFL textbooks?

RQ2. How is the identified pragmatic knowledge presented and practiced in these textbooks?

RQ3. Does the inclusion of pragmatic knowledge progress or expand within a series as learners advance through grade levels?

Data

- Instances of explicit mentioning pragmatic knowledge presented in the selected EFL textbooks

Textbooks

- Tokyo Shoseki (2021) *All Aboard English Communication I*
- Tokyo Shoseki (2022) *All Aboard English Communication II*
- Sanseido(2021) *Vista English Communication I*
- Sanseido (2022) *Vista English Communication II*



Table 2
Treatment of Pragmatic Knowledge

Material	In Dialogue	In Dialogue with Examples	In Prose	With Examples Only	Cloze Dialogue Practice	Creative Expression
Vista I	16 (84%)	3 (16%)			19 (100%)	
Vista II	18 (69%)	2 (8%)	3 (11.5%)	3 (11.5%)	20 (77%)	3 (11.5%)
All Aboard I	5 (100%)				5 (100%)	
All Aboard II	8 (80%)	2 (20%)			10 (100%)	

Results

Table 1
Instances with Explicit Mentioning Pragmatic knowledge

Explicit Mentioning Pragmatic Information	Vista I	All Aboard I	Vista II	All Aboard II	Total
Request	1		1	1	3
Seeking Agreement			1		1
Seeking Permission				1	1
Assessment	1		1		2
Compliment	1		3		4
Encouragement			1		1
Thanking			1		1
Agreement	4		4		8
Asking for Opinions	1		2		3
Disagreement	1		1		2
Exchanging Opinions		5		8	13
Expressing Opinions	1		5		6
Expressions Used for Discussion			1		1
Backchannels	2				2
Filler			1		1
Intensifying	1				1
Mitigation	3		1		4
Repairing			1		1
Turn-giving			2		2
Politeness	1				1
Service Encounters	2				2
Total	19	5	26	10	60

Discussion

- Pragmatic language use is not a primary instructional target.
- Exchanging/Expressing opinions is a prominent focus in the Course of Study.
- Explicit instruction on pragmatic markers in the materials could provide valuable opportunities for learners to understand language use.
- The lack of communicatively designed tasks and minimal integration of contextual information may impede learners' pragmatic competence.
- Inconsistent increase in pragmatic knowledge may have limited impact on fostering pragmatic competence.

Concluding Recommendation

- To bridge this gap, it is essential for educators to supplement textbook content with their own insight on pragmatic knowledge. By doing so, teachers can create richer, more contextually relevant learning experiences that empower learners to select language more effectively according to situational demands.

References

- Bachman, F., & Palmer, A. (1982). The construct validation of some components of communicative proficiency. *TESOL Quarterly*, 16(4), 449-465.
- Barron, J., Celaya, M. L., & Watkins, P. (2024). *Pragmatics in language teaching*. Routledge.
- MEXT. (2018). Course of Study for senior high school foreign language (English).
- Rover, C. (2022). *Teaching and testing second language pragmatics and interaction*. Routledge.