

Pragmalinguistic Awareness: Is it Related to Motivation and Proficiency?

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Previous research on interlanguage pragmatics revealed that, under implicit pragmatic instruction, some learners noticed the target pragmalinguistic features, whereas others receiving the same instruction did not. This suggests possible effects of individual difference (ID) variables on learners' noticing of pragmalinguistic features. Among the ID variables, this study focused on motivation and proficiency, exploring their relationships with Japanese EFL learners' awareness of six types of L2 pragmalinguistic features under an implicit input condition. Eighty Japanese college students first completed a motivation questionnaire and a proficiency test. They then took part in a noticing-the-gap activity as the treatment task. The degree of the learners' awareness of the target pragmalinguistic features was assessed through a retrospective awareness questionnaire administered immediately after the treatment. The following two major findings were obtained: (1) The learners differentially noticed the target pragmalinguistic features; and (2) the learners' awareness of the target features was correlated with motivation subscales, but not with their proficiency. In particular, the learners' intrinsic motivation was found to be closely related to their pragmatic awareness. An attempt was made to further examine whether current models of attention in SLA are relevant in accounting for the noticing of L2 pragmalinguistic features.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of attention and awareness in second language acquisition (SLA) has been explored in the framework of Schmidt's (1990, 1993, 1994, 1995, 2001) Noticing Hypothesis. The hypothesis claims that learners have to *notice* L2 features in the input for subsequent development to occur in the L2. The Noticing Hypothesis has been a driving force in advancing research on implicit versus explicit learning at the morphosyntactic level (e.g. Doughty 1991; Alanen 1995; Robinson 1995b, 1996, 1997; see Doughty and Williams 1998; Long and Robinson 1998 for an overview).

As a parallel to mainstream SLA research, interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) researchers have also explored instructional effects on learners' developing L2 pragmatic competence in the framework of implicit vs. explicit learning. These previous studies have shown a superior effect for explicit metapragmatic instruction over instruction that does not provide such metapragmatic information (e.g. Billmyer 1990; House 1996; Tateyama *et al.* 1997;

see Bardovi-Harlig 2001; Kasper and Rose 2001 for an overview). The same line of research was followed by Takahashi (2001), who examined the effects of differential degrees of input enhancement on Japanese EFL learners' learning of target request forms. The target request forms were all *request head acts*, that is, minimal core units for request realization in the request sequence, which had bi-clausal forms such as 'I was wondering if you could VP' and 'Would it be possible to VP?' Those bi-clausal forms were the most appropriate forms of request realization, reflecting native speakers' norms in target request situations. However, these forms were less likely to be observed in requests made by Japanese EFL learners in the same situations at the pre-test stage; they tended to rely on mono-clausal forms such as 'Will/ Would you VP?', showing a lack of mastery of these bi-clausal request forms. In Takahashi (2001), four input (treatment) conditions were set up, all of which contained the target complex request forms: one of them was an explicit teaching condition, and the remaining three were implicit learning conditions realized by differential degrees of implicitness. Takahashi found that several learners in the three implicit input conditions noticed the target request forms; however, only some of them identified the functions of those forms in the particular request contexts. This simultaneously revealed that levels of noticing differed from one learner to another, suggesting that there might be some effects of learner characteristics, such as motivation, aptitude, learning strategies, and proficiency, on the allocation of attentional resources.

Of particular interest was learners' prioritization of attention in input processing in one of these implicit conditions, the *form-search condition*. In this condition, learners were asked to find any 'native(-like) usage' in the input as their treatment task, and this task provided us with the following insightful information: the learners in this condition tended to attend more often to idiomatic expressions and discourse markers such as 'you know' and 'well' than to the target bi-clausal request forms. These findings stress the importance of a further, more systematic investigation into the focus of learners' attention in processing L2 implicit input. In other words, the question that arises is what learners attend to in L2 input presented implicitly—can they notice the bi-clausal request head-act forms or is their attention more directed to other pragmalinguistic features?

Robinson (1997, 2002a, 2002b) argues for investigating the interaction of individual difference (ID) variables with specific learning processes such as attention and noticing. An increasing number of empirical studies have been conducted within this framework, but they have exclusively focused on morphosyntactic features (e.g. Robinson 1997, 2002c; Kormos 2000; Mackey *et al.* 2002; Ranta 2002; Philp 2003). In view of the growing importance of this kind of research, it would be advisable to pursue the possible constraints of ID variables on the processing of L2 pragmatic input, as suggested in Takahashi (2001). As a follow-up study to Takahashi (2001), the current investigation intends to examine what Japanese EFL learners actually attend to and notice in their processing of L2 request-realization input provided

implicitly, and to what extent their noticing of the target features is related to ID variables.

ATTENTION AND AWARENESS IN SLA

Theoretical background

Schmidt (1990, 1993, 1994, 1995, 2001) argues that noticing is central to SLA, and learners must first notice the surface structures of utterances in the input to acquire virtually every aspect of SLA. Schmidt maintains that 'consciousness' is the key concept of the Noticing Hypothesis, claiming that *conscious* noticing or awareness is a necessary and sufficient condition for converting input into intake, by excluding the possibility of *subconscious* noticing. In more concrete L2 learning contexts, we often witness learners who become aware of a mismatch or gap between what they can produce and what they need to produce, or between what they produce and what proficient target language speakers produce. By experiencing this *conscious* 'noticing-the-gap', learners can develop into more proficient L2 speakers (Schmidt and Frota 1986; Gass 1988, 1997; Swain 1993, 1995, 1998; Ellis 1994).

Tomlin and Villa (1994) propose a model of attention in language learning that is based on research conducted in the fields of cognitive psychology and neuroscience. According to them, attention involves *alertness*, *orientation*, and *detection*. Alertness is an overall, general readiness to deal with incoming stimuli and is related to motivation. Orientation is responsible for directing attentional resources to particular sensory information and is related to some input enhancement techniques in L2 tasks. Detection refers to the 'cognitive registration of sensory stimuli' (Tomlin and Villa 1994: 192), and both alertness and orientation enhance the likelihood of detection. The three distinguishing features of Tomlin and Villa's model are: (1) the three functions of attention are separable; (2) detection is the most important subsystem of attention for language processing, and alertness and orientation are not required for detection; and (3) detection without awareness (i.e. preconscious registration) is possible, and thus awareness can be dissociated from attention. This suggests that awareness is not required for any of the three functions of attention (see also Truscott 1998 for a similar view).

Simard and Wong (2001), however, dismiss Tomlin and Villa's model by stating three points that argue its irrelevance to SLA. First, Tomlin and Villa's model is based on theoretical and empirical claims in cognitive psychology and neuroscience, which tend to concentrate more on micro-level human behaviour such as visual location. Hence, it is not relevant to generalize the model to SLA, which deals with higher-order level tasks that are involved in processing language data. Second, alertness and orientation also play crucial roles in SLA. It is possible that all three attentional functions are activated at the same time in processing language data. Third, due to the complex nature

of SLA and the failure to find an appropriate operational definition of the construct of awareness, it would be premature to conclude that detection without awareness is possible in SLA. This third point has been particularly controversial because empirical studies on attention and awareness attempted different operationalizations for the construct of awareness (e.g. Doughty 1991; Fotos 1993; Alanen 1995; Jourdenais *et al.* 1995; Robinson 1995a, 1995b, 1996, 1997, 2002c; Leow 1997, 2000; Rosa and O'Neill 1999; Kormos 2000; Philp 2003). However, a finding common to all those attention studies is that, directly or indirectly, awareness plays a crucial role in accounting for SLA. For instance, Leow (1997) found that different levels of awareness entailed differences in processing Spanish as L2 and identified facilitative effects of awareness on the learning of the target language. In his 2000 study, Leow observed that aware learners significantly increased their ability to recognize and produce the target forms in L2 Spanish, whereas unaware learners did not. Rosa and O'Neill (1999) also revealed that higher levels of awareness resulted in stronger effects on the intake of Spanish as L2. All these studies simultaneously demonstrated that 'attention and awareness are not all-or-none entities but are instead "graded properties"' (Simard and Wong 2001: 118).

It should further be noted that, as Simard and Wong (2001) argue, any model of attention and awareness in SLA should also account for the interaction with ID variables and any other variables responsible for variations in attention. In order to attain this goal, it is clearly necessary to explore which factors influence attention and awareness in SLA.

Individual differences in attention and awareness

Robinson (1995a, 1995b, 1996, 1997, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c) has investigated the differential effectiveness of the conscious and unconscious learning of L2 rules within the framework of Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis. In his 1997 study, Robinson specifically focused on the effect of 'aptitude' on task performance in input conditions manifesting four different degrees of implicitness, providing the base for his claim that 'aptitude-treatment interaction research' is significant (Robinson 2002a, 2002b). Thereafter, in this research framework, Robinson investigated the effects of some ID variables on the treatment tasks for the same learning conditions and concluded that, in incidental learning, awareness was positively and significantly related to 'aptitude' and 'working memory', but not to 'intelligence' (Robinson 2002c). Similar findings were reported by some other SLA researchers. Ranta (2002), for instance, revealed that 'good language learners' in a communicative language teaching environment (i.e. a predominantly implicit/incidental learning condition) possessed superior language analytic ability as compared to poor language learners. Mackey *et al.* (2002) identified that working-memory capacity alone cannot determine the noticing of interactional feedback, suggesting that factors other than working

memory, for instance, grammatical sensitivity, field independence, and sociopsychological factors, may influence noticing. All these indicate that ID variables do affect attention and awareness in L2 learning processes.

Motivation as a factor affecting attention and awareness

Gardner's (1985) socioeducational model and its revised versions are grounded in social psychology with *integrative motivation* as the central construct (see also Gardner and MacIntyre 1993). An emphasis on the integrative aspects of motivation is attributable to social psychologists' interest in explicating the motivation to learn the languages of other communities for successful interethnic communication and affiliation, often seen in multicultural environments; thus, a focus has been placed on the *social* dimension of L2 motivation (Dörnyei 1994, 1996, 2001, 2003). Crookes and Schmidt (1991) argue, however, that this macro perspective of motivation research is not very compatible with SLA researchers' interest in the micro-level cognitive processing of L2 stimuli and language learning in various classroom settings. Their central argument is that the *cognitive* dimension of L2 motivation should also be substantially explored, with a special focus on situation- or task-specific accounts of motivational phenomena at various conceptual levels (see Dörnyei 1990; Skehan 1991; Oxford and Shearin 1994; Julkunen 2001 for similar views on L2 motivation). One of the remarkable proposals by Crookes and Schmidt is the investigation of the motivation/attention interface.

Based on research done by Eysenck (1982), Keller (1983), Maehr and Archer (1987), and Pintrich (1989) in the areas of education and psychology, Crookes and Schmidt strongly contend that there is a definite link between attention and motivation. They argue that the allocation of attention may be initiated by one's voluntary decision, and 'it is this kind of voluntary control of attention for which motivational factors are most obviously relevant' (Crookes and Schmidt 1991: 484). Furthermore, according to them, one's motivation is maintained by a factor of 'personal relevance', and, as long as personal relevance is assured in language input, one is better able to maintain the necessary levels of alertness or even increase one's alertness, providing a basis for more chances of selective attention.

Since the emergence of a new approach to L2 motivation, as proposed by Crookes and Schmidt (1991), much effort has been invested to examine the nature of L2 motivation as a complex, multifaceted phenomenon. Researchers following this new approach mostly analysed the relationships between motivation and various language learning variables such as L2 achievement, learning strategies, and willingness to communicate (e.g. Ehrman 1996; Schmidt *et al.* 1996; Noels *et al.* 2000; Noels 2001a, 2001b; Schmidt and Watanabe 2001; Ushioda 2001; Dörnyei 2002; MacIntyre *et al.* 2002; see Masgoret and Gardner 2003 for a meta-analysis of L2 motivation

research). However, none of them specifically focused on a possible link between motivation and attentional allocation.

In the area of ILP, Takahashi (2001) speculated that motivation could be one of the most influential ID variables to account for differences in learners' noticing of target request forms. The possible inclusion of the motivation variable in future research was also suggested in several other ILP studies. Schmidt (1993) argued that integratively motivated learners are more likely to pay close attention to the pragmatic aspects of input than those who are not so motivated. Niezgoda and Röver (2001) suggested that motivation might influence Czech-speaking English learners' sensitivity to grammatical and pragmatic errors. Cook (2001) also pointed out the possibility that exceptionally highly motivated JFL learners notice pragmatic functions that are taught and can judge what constitutes a polite speech style in Japanese. A similar observation was made by Tateyama (2001), who found that highly motivated JFL learners showed better performance in a role-play in which a Japanese routine formula, 'sumimasen', had to be produced. All these ILP studies suggest that motivation is one of the ID variables that highly constrain pragmatic attention and awareness, yet without systematically exploring a potential link between motivation and attention. Thus, considered together, we should wait for future research that will directly address the issue of the motivation/attention interface to gain a deeper understanding of L2 learning processes.

Proficiency as a factor affecting attention and awareness

The relationship between L2 proficiency and attentional allocation has been investigated in the framework of the information processing theory (e.g. McLaughlin *et al.* 1983; Nation and McLaughlin 1986; Bialystok 1988, 1993, 1994; Hulstijn 1990).¹ Among them, Bialystok has extensively explored the relationship between learners' selective attention in L2 input processing and their proficiency in the target language.

Bialystok's (1993, 1994) model distinguishes two dimensions: the *analysis* dimension (related to mental representation) and the *control* dimension (related to executive procedures). Learners' L2 proficiency develops in accordance with the change in their knowledge representation from unanalysed to analysed states, and with a change in levels of control of selective attention from lower to higher levels. Of particular interest is the control dimension of the model. Bialystok's model predicts that learners with higher proficiency can allocate processing resources more efficiently than those with lower proficiency. In other words, advanced learners have at their disposal more automatized basic linguistic skills, which allow them to allocate more attentional resources to more difficult tasks (see Nation and McLaughlin 1986 for a similar argument). By specifically referring to the development of pragmatic competence, Bialystok (1993) proposes that more proficient learners are able to give selective attention to the target pragmatic

features more accurately (and faster) than less proficient learners (see Hassall 1997; House 1996 for observations supporting Bialystok's model). The information processing model thus suggests that proficiency is among the essential determinants of learners' attentional allocation in processing L2 pragmatic input.²

At this point, it is an entirely open question whether and in what ways the proficiency/attention interface in L2 pragmatics relates to the motivation/attention interface. There is a possibility that motivation and proficiency may jointly operate on attention and awareness in pragmatic input; that is, highly motivated learners with higher proficiency may be superior in their pragmatic awareness to those with lower motivation and lower proficiency. But in a different scenario, motivation and proficiency could operate on pragmatic awareness independently so that motivation may override proficiency or vice versa. Hence, it is necessary to examine the relative contribution of each of the two factors on pragmalinguistic awareness.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to explore Japanese EFL learners' pragmalinguistic awareness in processing L2 implicit input and to what extent their awareness of the target features is related to motivation and proficiency. My central concern is to examine to what extent Japanese EFL learners notice bi-clausal complex request forms. In my previous study, those forms were the *most appropriate request head acts* but were not among the learners' initial repertoires of primary request-realization strategies. It was thus extrapolated that noticing-the-gap tasks could lead the learners to notice these strategies and incorporate them into their interlanguage, but, instead, the students tended to attend to other pragmalinguistic features in the request discourse. Because the task for the form-search condition in Takahashi (2001) allowed learners to attend to any kind of form or feature in the treatment input, this input condition was judged to meet the current research objectives well. Hence, the present study exclusively focuses on learners' attentional allocation in this particular implicit input condition.

The following two research questions are addressed in this study:

- 1 Do Japanese EFL learners notice bi-clausal request forms to a greater extent than other pragmalinguistic features in request discourse in the implicit input condition?
- 2 In the implicit input condition, are there any relationships between learners' noticing of the target pragmalinguistic features and two ID variables, motivation and proficiency?

It should be noted that, because the current study is not intended to examine the *learning outcome* of the form-search task, no research questions related to this aspect are posited.

TARGET PRAGMALINGUISTIC FEATURES

In the treatment task for the form-search condition in Takahashi (2001), the participants were asked to compare native-speaker requesters' English in role-play transcripts with non-native-speaker requester's English in the same situations. They were then instructed to write down the native-speaker expressions that differed from the non-native-speaker English expressions, along with any comments on the native-speaker English. All expressions and comments provided by the learners were examined, and the following six categories of pragmalinguistic features, manifesting contextualized form-function mappings, were identified as the learners' attentional targets in the request-realization discourse:³

(a) Request head acts:

- 1 Request form 1 (hereafter, 'REQ-1'): for example, 'I was wondering if you could VP' (=a mitigated-preparatory statement: *The speaker states a preparatory condition by embedding it within another clause*).
- 2 Request form 2 (hereafter, 'REQ-2'): for example, 'Is it possible to VP?'/ 'Do you think you could VP?' (=a mitigated-preparatory question: *The speaker asks a question concerning preparatory conditions or a permission question by embedding it within another clause*).⁴
- 3 Request form 3 (hereafter, 'REQ-3'): for example, 'If you could VP' (=a mitigated-want statement (without a main clause): *The speaker states his or her want or wish that the hearer will perform the action in hypothetical situations*).

(b) Non-request features:

- 4 Discourse marker (hereafter, 'DMA'): for example, 'well', 'you know', 'maybe'.
- 5 Idiomatic expression (hereafter, 'IDE'): for example, 'This has to do with', 'How ya doin'?'.
- 6 Non-idiomatic expression (hereafter, 'N-IDE'): for example, 'I live next door', 'I don't want to bother you'.

In the present study, the above six categories of pragmalinguistic features were presented to participants as targets. Among them, REQ-1, REQ-2, and REQ-3 are complex bi-clausal request forms, which are all *request head acts*. The remaining three are non-request features. DMA includes an interjection 'well', a comment clause 'you know', which are among the pragmatic markers defined in Redeker (1990), and an epistemic marker 'maybe'. They all manifest interactional features contributing to effective floor management, which are not shared with the other two in the category of 'Non-request features'. IDE and N-IDE differ from each other in terms of the degree of idiomaticity or formulaicity; the sentences and phrases

categorized as IDE are more likely to be perceived as memorized chunks, and those categorized as N-IDE are not.

OPERATIONALIZATION OF AWARENESS

In this study, the terms 'noticing' and 'awareness' are used interchangeably. Precisely speaking, however, 'noticing' is a higher-order concept of 'awareness', and following Schmidt (1990, 1993, 1994, 1995, 2001), 'noticing' is defined here as 'detection with conscious awareness and subsequent subjective experience'. Because it is judged as easier to link learners' *interest* in the attended input to their 'subjective experience', the concept of awareness or noticing is operationalized here as the extent to which learners can consciously detect a particular feature as an *interesting* target for intake (see Leow 2000 for a similar approach). Differences in learners' interest in the attended targets entail different levels of noticing or awareness (see Robinson 1995a; Leow 1997, 2000; Rosa and O'Neill 1999; Simard and Wong 2001; Skehan 2002; Philp 2003 for the graded nature of awareness). Hence, this study deals with the conscious detection of targets, accompanied by different levels of interest in those targets. Concretely, the degree of awareness is assessed on the following seven-point scale:

- 3 = I did not detect it at all (and thus was not interested in it at all).
- 2 = I did detect it but was hardly interested in it.
- 1 = I did detect it but was not so interested in it.
- 0 = I did detect it, but cannot say whether I was interested in it or not.
- +1 = I did detect it and was a little interested in it.
- +2 = I did detect it and was interested in it.
- +3 = I did detect it and was very interested in it.

In order to make claims concerning evidence of the awareness of target features, some researchers have used retrospective reporting, normally relying on a post-exposure debriefing questionnaire (e.g. Robinson 1995a, 1995b, 1996, 1997, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c). Other researchers, however, have insisted that post-exposure questionnaires for capturing awareness during task completion cannot provide evidence of participants' attention to and noticing of target features, or of their rehearsal of them in short-term memory in input processing. Instead, following Schmidt (1990, 1993, 1994, 1995), they have determined participants' awareness of target features by means of some form of verbal protocol collected during input processing: think-aloud protocols (e.g. Rosa and O'Neill 1999), think-aloud protocols and post-exposure assessments (e.g. Leow 1997, 2000), and immediate recall (e.g. Philp 2003). In the present study, a relatively large number of participants are required to assess their awareness of the designated features in a manner that allows a clear comparison across participants. For this purpose, an immediate retrospective questionnaire format was judged to be a more effective method than a concurrent verbal protocol.

METHOD

Participants

This study was a part of a larger research project on individual differences in L2 learning conducted by this researcher, in which a total of 140 Japanese college students learning EFL participated. Among them, 80 students were involved in the data collection for the present study. Their mean age was 19.4 ($SD = 0.870$), and there were 44 sophomores majoring in mechanical engineering and 36 freshmen majoring in agriculture or education. None of them had ever resided in English-speaking countries for more than two weeks, and all of them had received formal English instruction in Japan for seven to eight years.

Instruments

Four kinds of data eliciting instruments were prepared. The first instrument was the Motivation Questionnaire (see Appendix A available on the journal website: www.applij.oupjournals.org), adopted from Schmidt *et al.*'s (1996) motivation measure. Schmidt *et al.*'s motivation questionnaire was chosen because it was developed based on models in motivational and educational psychology which specifically referred to the motivation/attention interface, such as Keller (1983), Maehr and Archer (1987), and Pintrich (1989). Since their motivation measure was developed for Egyptian learners of EFL, however, some of the items were changed so that they were more suitable to the EFL learning context of Japan. As a result, from the original 50 items in Schmidt *et al.*'s questionnaire, I reduced the total number of items to 47.

The second instrument was the proficiency measure. I used the Listening Comprehension and the Reading Comprehension sections of the General Tests of English Language Proficiency (G-TELP) developed by the International Testing Services Center at San Diego State University. The listening section consisted of 24 question items and the reading section had 30 items.⁵ The raw scores were subsequently converted so as to make 100 the full score for each section.

The third instrument included the materials for the treatment session. Because the current study focused on learners' attention and awareness in the form-search condition, as reported in Takahashi (2001), I prepared the same treatment materials as in my previous study.

I specifically chose the following two situations as the input situations for the treatment: the 'Violin' and the 'Questionnaire' situations. Both of them were request situations in which requests were made from a lower status person to a higher status one. In the 'Violin' situation, the requester asks her next-door neighbour to stop her daughter's violin practice at night, and in the 'Questionnaire' situation, the requester asks her next-door neighbour to fill out a questionnaire, which was requested earlier, and to return it as soon as possible. In both scenarios, previous studies had shown that native-speaker requesters used bi-clausal complex request forms as the most

appropriate request head acts (Takahashi 1987, 1996; Takahashi and DuFon 1989). I prepared the following three types of treatment materials: (1) transcripts of NS–NS role-plays for the two situations; (2) transcript of NS–NNS role-plays for the same situations (see Appendix B available on the journal website: www.applij.oupjournals.org); and (3) an instruction sheet (see Appendix C available on the journal website: www.applij.oupjournals.org). The role-play data were obtained from Takahashi (1987) and Takahashi and DuFon (1989), respectively. It should be noted that the non-native-speaker English data were elicited from Japanese learners of English, and their requests were exclusively realized with mono-clausal request forms such as ‘Will/Would you VP?’ Thus, it was judged that the participants in this study, who had a similar English educational background to the Japanese EFL learners in the role-plays, were more likely to be able to project their own use of request forms onto the NNS requests.⁶

The fourth instrument was a set of materials for the immediate retrospection session. Among them was the Awareness Retrospection Questionnaire, which had two forms: Form 1 for the ‘Violin’ situation and Form 2 for the ‘Questionnaire’ situation. The expressions categorized into the six target features (REQ-1, REQ-2, REQ-3, DMA, IDE, and N-IDE) were presented along with filler expressions. All the targets had been perceived to be ‘native(-like)’ expressions by at least three participants in the treatment for the form-search condition in Takahashi (2001). Fillers were the expressions that had been listed by one or two participants in the same treatment session. Precisely speaking, the task also required the participants to point out distinctively native English usage in the *requestee’s* discourse, in addition to the *requester’s*; thus, the fillers came from both the requester’s and the requestee’s turns. Form 1 contained 11 target expressions and 27 fillers; 10 target expressions and 24 fillers were contained in Form 2 (see Appendix D available on the journal website: www.applij.oupjournals.org for the target expressions). Each expression was followed by the 7-point rating scale described above (see Appendix E available on the journal website: www.applij.oupjournals.org). Furthermore, for both input situations, I also prepared role-play transcripts in which all expressions included in the awareness questionnaire were underlined (see Appendix F available on the journal website: www.applij.oupjournals.org).⁷

Procedures

Data were collected in the regular general English classes taught by this researcher. At the beginning of the semester, the participants completed the motivation questionnaire and the proficiency test. Two weeks later, the participants were asked to do the treatment/retrospection tasks.

The treatment/retrospection session was held over three weeks (90 minutes per week). In the first week, the participants performed the warm-up task, in which they listened to the NS–NS role-plays for the two

input situations while reading the transcripts and then wrote summaries of the interaction (in Japanese) by focusing on the relationship between the interlocutors. In the second week, following Takahashi (2001), the participants carried out the form-search task for the 'Violin' situation, which consisted of two sub-tasks: Sub-tasks A and B. In Sub-task A, the participants read the transcripts at their own pace, compared the NS requester's English with the NNS requester's English in the corresponding situation, and listed the NS expressions that were distinctive from the NNS English expressions. In Sub-task B, the participants examined the NS requestees' English in the role-play transcripts and listed any expressions that they thought they were not able to produce with their existing L2 competence. This form-search task could be considered as a kind of noticing-the-gap activity. Immediately after the task, when the memory for the thought sequences was still available, the participants were asked to fill out Form 1 of the Awareness Retrospection Questionnaire while reading the role-play transcripts in which all the questionnaire items were underlined. In the third week, the same procedures as those for the second week were repeated for the 'Questionnaire' situation.

Data analysis

With regard to Research Question 1, for each participant, the awareness rates of the questionnaire items (from both Forms 1 and 2) were averaged for each of the six target features. A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was performed on the means of the target features, with the awareness rate as the dependent variable ($\alpha = .05$). Additionally, a Pearson product-moment correlation was performed to identify the degree of association among the six target features in terms of awareness.

For Research Question 2, the first task was to process the data from the Motivation Questionnaire. The negatively worded questionnaire items were reverse coded. The Cronbach alpha internal consistency reliability of the entire questionnaire was .82 (see Appendix A available on the journal website: www.applij.oupjournals.org). The data were then factor analysed (principal component analysis with oblique rotation) to extract the underlying factors. It should be noted here that the factor analysis was carried out for the sample size of 131, not 80, because a factor analysis requires no less than 100 participants. Specifically, the motivation data from 80 participants for the present study were combined with those available from 51 participants for another study in my larger ID research project. This procedure was judged not to be problematic because the additional data were elicited from Japanese college students (sophomores and freshmen) enrolled in the same institute as the participants for the current study. Then, for each participant ($N = 80$), the mean rate was computed for the questionnaire items loading on each extracted factor. The means for awareness, motivation, and proficiency (the means for listening scores, reading scores, and total scores, respectively) were converted to standardized

scores (*z* scores) for each participant. The standardized data were then analysed by performing a Pearson product–moment correlation and step-wise regression ($\alpha = .05$).

RESULTS

Research question 1: Effect of pragmalinguistic features

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was performed to investigate the effect of pragmalinguistic features, and Table 1 shows the results of this univariate analysis. The means and standard deviations for the effect are presented in Table 2. As indicated in the ANOVA table, the effect of pragmalinguistic features was found to be significant ($F(5, 395) = 23.419$, $p < .0001$) (see also Figure 1), showing that the target features were differentially noticed by the learners. The targets are ranked in terms of levels of awareness, from most to least, as follows:

DMA > IDE > REQ-1 > REQ-2 > N-IDE > REQ-3
($p < .05$) ($p < .05$) (ns) (ns) ($p < .0001$)

Table 1: Results of one-way repeated measures ANOVA: Effect of pragmalinguistic features on awareness

Source	df	SS	MS	F
Participant	79	254.736	3.225	
Features	5	171.663	34.333	23.419*
Features × Participant	395	579.067	1.466	

Note: * $p < .0001$ $N = 80$

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations for the effect of pragmalinguistic features

Feature	Mean	SD
REQ-1	.594	1.816
REQ-2	.294	1.314
REQ-3	−.492	1.249
DMA	1.408	1.144
IDE	.972	1.193
N-IDE	.248	1.113

Notes: REQ-1 = ‘I wonder if you could VP’, REQ-2 = ‘Is it possible to VP?’, REQ-3 = ‘If you could VP’, DMA = discourse marker, IDE = idiomatic expression, N-IDE = non-idiomatic expression

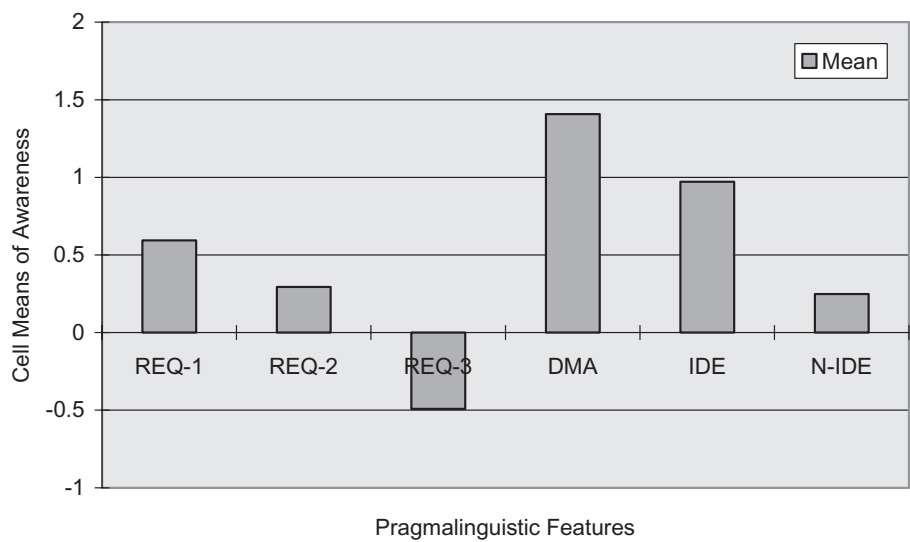


Figure 1: Awareness ratings of pragmalinguistic features

Table 3: Correlations between the pragmalinguistic features in terms of awareness

	REQ-1	REQ-2	REQ-3	DMA	IDE	N-IDE
REQ-1	1.00					
REQ-2	.235*	1.00				
REQ-3	.185	.234*	1.00			
DMA	.040	.124	.011	1.00		
IDE	.120	.089	.059	.299**	1.00	
N-IDE	.426***	.079	.352**	.085	.209	1.00

Notes: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .0001$ $N = 80$
REQ-1 = ‘I wonder if you could VP’, REQ-2 = ‘Is it possible to VP?’, REQ-3 = ‘If you could VP’,
DMA = discourse marker, IDE = idiomatic expression, N-IDE = non-idiomatic expression

The learners were more likely to attend to DMA and IDE than to the bi-clausal complex request forms, as a whole. Consequently, these Japanese EFL learners did not appear to notice the bi-clausal request forms to a greater extent than the other pragmalinguistic features in the implicit input condition. The findings of the current study thus replicate those of Takahashi (2001).

Table 3 presents the correlations between the target features in terms of awareness. Two points are noteworthy here: (1) The learners who noticed

N-IDE were significantly more likely to attend to REQ-1 ('I wonder') ($r=.426$, $p<.0001$) and REQ-3 ('If you could VP') ($r=.352$, $p<.01$); and (2) the learners who became aware of IDE tended to notice DMA ($r=.299$, $p<.01$). The first point suggests that learners who have language analytic abilities for detecting and analysing the structures of non-idiomatic sentences may also be good at detecting and analysing complex forms of request realization or vice versa. The second point leads us to assume that learners who want to attain native-like communication by using chunked, idiomatic expressions may also try to gain the mastery of effective floor management of discourse or vice versa. Furthermore, significant correlations ($p<.05$) were found between REQ-1 and REQ-2 ('Is it possible?') ($r=.235$), and between REQ-2 and REQ-3 ($r=.234$), respectively. In other words, the learners who noticed a particular request head act in a bi-clausal form were likely to also notice the other complex request head act(s), although a definite tendency could not be established due to the low correlation coefficients.

Considered together, in answering Research Question 1, we can observe that the target pragmalinguistic features were differentially noticed by the learners. The bi-clausal complex request forms were less likely to be noticed, whereas the participants attended more closely to the other pragmalinguistic features. Among other tendencies, the learners' analytic abilities for examining language structures appear to be a key requirement for noticing the complex request head acts.

Research question 2: Awareness in request discourse and the individual difference variables

Motivational profiles

A factor analysis was carried out for the data from the Motivation Questionnaire, using a principal component analysis with oblique rotation ($N=131$). The following criteria were used to determine the number of factors to be extracted: (1) The minimum eigenvalue is 1.0; (2) each factor must account for at least 3 per cent of the total variance; and (3) the minimum loading of questionnaire items on each factor is .45. (The standard minimum value for salient loadings is above .30. However, in order to avoid cross-loadings, I used the higher minimum loading of .45.) As shown in Table 4, a nine-factor solution was obtained, which accounted for 54.4 per cent of the total variance in the learners' L2 motivation. Table 5 presents the factor loadings for the questionnaire items for each factor, along with the Cronbach alpha internal consistency reliability for each subscale.

Although Schmidt *et al.* (1996) also yielded a nine-factor solution, somewhat different configurations were obtained for the Japanese EFL learners in the present study, in the following two respects: (1) They were

Table 4: Factor analysis for motivation

	Label	Eigenvalue	Variance (%)	CumVariance (%)
Factor 1	Need for achievement	7.494	15.9	15.9
Factor 2	Intrinsic motivation	4.394	9.3	25.2
Factor 3	External expectation	2.753	5.9	31.1
Factor 4	Class anxiety	2.416	5.1	36.2
Factor 5	Attitudes to TL community	2.175	4.6	40.8
Factor 6	Self-devaluation	1.818	3.9	44.7
Factor 7	Test anxiety	1.643	3.5	48.2
Factor 8	Interest in TL culture	1.512	3.2	51.4
Factor 9	Affiliative motive	1.415	3.0	54.4

Notes: $N = 131$

Cum = cumulative, TL = target-language

Table 5: Cronbach alpha, questionnaire items, and factor loadings of the items for each motivation subscale

Subscale (Factor)	α	Questionnaire items	Loading
1: Need for achievement	.86	46. I often think about how I can learn English better.	.824
		17. If I learn English better, I will be able to get a better job.	.767
		10. Being able to speak English will add to my social status.	.738
		19. If I can speak English, I will have a marvellous life.	.724
		12. I want to learn English because it is useful when travelling in many countries.	.684
		45. I plan to continue studying English for as long as possible.	.672
		6. English is important to me because it will broaden my view.	.646
		15. I need to be able to read textbooks in English.	.613
		18. Increasing my English proficiency will have financial benefits for me.	.517

(Continued)

Table 5: Continued

Subscale (Factor)	α	Questionnaire items	Loading
2: Intrinsic motivation	.75	2. Learning English is a hobby for me.	.819
		4. I don't enjoy learning English, but I know that learning English is important for me. (reverse coded)	.779
		1. I enjoy learning English very much.	.735
		3. Learning English is a challenge that I enjoy.	.631
		5. I wish I could learn English in an easier way, without going to class. (reverse coded)	.526
3: External expectation	.41	8. I want to do well in this class because it is important to show my ability to my family/friends/teachers/others.	.788
		7. The main reason I am studying English is that my parents (my family or someone close to me) want me to improve my English.	.626
4: Class Anxiety	.63	39. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class.	.833
		38. I feel uncomfortable if I have to speak in my English class.	.655
5: Attitudes to TL community	.63	34. Americans are very friendly people.	.794
		37. American culture has contributed a lot to the world.	.597
6: Self-devaluation	.59	29. If I don't do well in this class, it will be because I don't have much ability for learning English.	.753
		41. I am afraid other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	.652
		40. I don't like to speak often in English class because I am afraid that my teacher will think I am not a good student.	.498

(Continued)

Table 5: Continued

Subscale (Factor)	α	Questionnaire items	Loading
7: Test anxiety	—	42. I think I can learn English well, but I don't perform well on tests and examinations.	.750
8: Interest in TL culture	.42	36. Most of my favorite actors and musicians are Americans.	.744
		35. The British are conservative people who cherish customs and traditions.	.669
9: Affiliative motive	.66	22. My relationship with the teacher in this class is important to me.	.700
		30. If I learn a lot in this class, it will be because of the teacher.	.659
		25. This English class will definitely help me improve my English.	.632

Notes: $N = 131$

very concerned about expectations displayed by others towards themselves, which might increase the levels of anxiety both in classroom activities and examinations and lead to the underestimation of their own L2 abilities ('External expectation', 'Class anxiety', 'Test anxiety,' 'Self-devaluation'); and (2) they were concerned about maintaining good relationships with their teachers in the process of L2 learning ('Affiliative motive'). However, some similarities could also be found between Schmidt *et al.* (1996) and the present study in terms of the structural components of L2 motivation. Specifically, Schmidt *et al.*'s 'Determination' almost corresponds with 'Need for achievement' in this study, though the latter shows more instrumental orientations. Both studies identified an intrinsic orientation, that is, learning L2 due to inherent pleasure and interest in the learning activities ('Intrinsic motivation'), and positive attitudes towards the target-language people and their culture ('Attitudes to foreign culture' for Schmidt *et al.* and 'Attitudes to TL community' and 'Interest in TL culture' for this study).

Table 6 shows the means and standard deviations for the questionnaire items loading on each of the identified nine motivation subscales ($N = 80$). It was found that the Japanese EFL learners in the current study had a relatively strong disposition to improve their L2 ('Need for Achievement' (Mean = 4.353)) and showed positive attitudes toward English-speaking (American) people ('Attitudes to TL community' (Mean = 4.000)).

Table 6: Means and standard deviations for the motivation subscales

Subscales (Factors)	Mean	SD
1. Need for achievement	4.353	.912
2. Intrinsic motivation	3.197	.922
3. External expectation	2.506	1.014
4. Class anxiety	3.531	1.017
5. Attitudes to TL community	4.000	.911
6. Self-devaluation	3.104	.898
7. Test anxiety	3.237	1.022
8. Interest in TL culture	3.356	1.023
9. Affiliative motive	3.775	.788

Notes: N = 80

Table 7: Means and standard deviations for the English proficiency

Section	Mean (out of 100)	SD
Listening	52.837	11.760
Reading	68.912	12.062
Overall proficiency*	60.875	9.805

Notes: N = 80 *full score adjusted to 100

Proficiency profiles

The results of the means and standard deviations for the listening and reading sections of the proficiency test are presented in Table 7 (N = 80). The mean of the overall proficiency scores was also calculated by combining the listening scores with the reading scores. The Japanese EFL learners in the current study obtained relatively high reading scores, and, in fact, the mean for the reading section was found to be significantly larger than that for the listening section ($t = 10.627$, $df = 79$, $p < .0001$). Moreover, the standard deviation for each skill section was quite large. Thus, the L2 proficiency of the learners in the present study was characterized by relatively unbalanced skill development (as a within-subject feature) and wide variation in both skills (as a between-subject feature).

Correlations with motivation and proficiency

Table 8 presents the correlations between the learners' awareness of the target pragmalinguistic features and the two ID variables (N = 80).

Table 8: Correlations between the awareness of pragmalinguistic features and the individual difference variables

	REQ-1	REQ-2	REQ-3	DMA	IDE	N-IDE
Factor 1	.094	.153	-.054	.149	.183	.083
Factor 2	-.041	.317**	.275*	.118	.369***	-.024
Factor 3	-.062	-.123	.027	.051	.199	.146
Factor 4	.065	.012	-.175	.002	.045	.130
Factor 5	.015	.011	.128	.225*	.140	.058
Factor 6	.114	.076	.027	-.164	.064	.124
Factor 7	.022	.098	.003	-.008	-.010	-.021
Factor 8	-.126	.067	.031	.071	.143	.090
Factor 9	-.078	.150	-.025	.205	.282*	-.001
Listening	.030	.189	-.147	.038	.003	.016
Reading	.213	.037	-.084	-.005	-.015	.127
Overall proficiency	.149	.136	-.139	.019	-.008	.088

Notes: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ $N = 80$

REQ-1 = 'I wonder if you could VP', REQ-2 = 'Is it possible to VP?', REQ-3 = 'If you could VP', DMA = discourse marker, IDE = idiomatic expression, N-IDE = non-idiomatic expression

Factor 1 = Need for achievement, Factor 2 = Intrinsic motivation, Factor 3 = External expectation, Factor 4 = Class anxiety, Factor 5 = Attitudes to TL community, Factor 6 = Self-devaluation, Factor 7 = Test anxiety, Factor 8 = Interest in TL culture, Factor 9 = Affiliative motive

Only REQ-2, REQ-3, DMA, and IDE were significantly correlated with three of the motivation subscales (Factors 2, 5, and 9). There were no significant correlations between awareness of the target features and any of the proficiency subcomponents or overall proficiency.

Specifically, the learners' intrinsic motivation (Factor 2) was involved in their noticing of REQ-2 ('Is it possible?') ($r = .317$, $p < .01$), REQ-3 ('If you could VP') ($r = .275$, $p < .05$), and IDE ($r = .369$, $p < .001$), respectively. Likewise, the learners' positive attitude toward the target-language community (Factor 5) was related to their awareness of DMA ($r = .225$, $p < .05$). Furthermore, the orientation toward maintaining good relationships with teachers in the process of L2 learning (Factor 9) was correlated with IDE ($r = .282$, $p < .05$). While all of these correlations were found to be significant, however, the correlation coefficients for 'Factor 2 vs. REQ-3' (.275), 'Factor 5 vs. DMA' (.225), and 'Factor 9 vs. IDE' (.282) were all relatively small. Hence, salient relationships were identified only between Factor 2 (intrinsic motivation) and REQ-2 and IDE.

Step-wise regression analyses further revealed the following: (1) Intrinsic motivation alone accounted for about 10 per cent of the variance in the

learners' awareness of REQ-2, about 8 per cent of the variance for REQ-3, and about 14 per cent of the variance for IDE, respectively; and (2) the motivational subscale related to the learners' attitudes toward the target-language community was responsible for only about 5 per cent of the variance in their noticing of DMA.

All these indicate that intrinsically-motivated learners are most likely to notice some forms of bi-clausal complex request forms, in particular, the 'Is it possible?' form (REQ-2) and L2 idiomatic expressions. In light of these findings, we can answer Research Question 2 in the following manner: when L2 input is presented implicitly, learners' noticing of the target pragmlinguistic features is associated with some motivational factors but not with L2 proficiency. *Intrinsic motivation* is related to the noticing of the target features to the greatest extent, in particular, to bi-clausal request forms realized in question forms and L2-specific idiomatic expressions.

DISCUSSION

Attentional allocation in L2 request discourse

The results revealed that the bi-clausal request head acts were less likely to be noticed than the other pragmlinguistic features such as DMA and IDE (for Research Question 1). As discussed in Takahashi (2001), Japanese EFL learners tend to believe that they have already mastered L2 request realization with mono-clausal request forms as the most appropriate forms for making English requests in particular request situations. Such a feeling of mastery might further be strengthened by the fact that the native-speaker interlocutor in the NS-NNS role-plays did not give any negative feedback to the non-native-speaker's mono-clausal request forms (Takahashi 2001). All these might lead the learners not to notice the bi-clausal request forms.

The learners, in fact, gave attentional priority to interactional features ('you know', 'well', 'maybe') rather than to the request head acts. A possible explanation is that, during the task, the learners might assume that the use of appropriate 'discourse-level' interactional markers, rather than 'sentence-level' request forms, is more likely to express the relatively high level of linguistic politeness required for effective communication in the scenarios. Thus, they may have been more interested in finding out how native English speakers actually realize such an interactional strategy, resulting in greater attention to such pragmatic markers. In fact, Japanese college students rarely have opportunities to encounter and use these markers in interactions conducted in English in their college English classes, which can explain why they find the frequent use of such discourse markers by native English speakers particularly interesting. It is noteworthy that, in the role-play data collected from Japanese EFL learners in Takahashi (2002), the learners rarely used such discourse markers, suggesting that they had few chances of

receiving instruction in colloquial English, especially in the effective use of discourse markers. In summary, the novelty of the interactional features may have lent them special salience in the learners' perception and engaged their attention to them.

Similarly, the high awareness ratings for IDE also indicate that the learners felt a necessity to master such expressions (e.g. 'That sounds good', 'How ya doin'?') (see Appendix D available on the journal website: www.applij.oupjournals.org). The learners seemed to believe that these idiomatic expressions enable them to communicate more naturally in English, something that is not possible with their existing L2 communicative competence. Hence, the learners were strongly interested in the native-speaker use of these idiomatic expressions in the role-play transcripts, resulting in a relatively high degree of awareness of such features.

In light of these explanations for why it might be that the learners were more aware of DMA and IDE, the crucial factor determining learners' differential attentional allocation appears to be the 'relevance' of the targets in achieving more effective L2 communication (Crookes and Schmidt 1991). From the learners' perspective, both DMA and IDE are perceived to be relevant to their learning goal, yielding a significant positive correlation between them.

In contrast, the learners were barely aware of REQ-3 ('If you could VP'). As pointed out in Takahashi (2001), a possible explanation is that this form is not recognized as a 'request' because of its elliptical form and the primary meaning of subjunctive if-clauses. Both of these features may render the form too opaque to convey the pragmatic meaning of requesting.

Finally, there were significant correlations between REQ-1 ('I wonder') and N-IDE and between REQ-3 and N-IDE. As indicated earlier, we can assume that the learners' language analytic abilities required for detecting and analysing the features of non-idiomatic sentences may be equally available for the detection and analysis of the bi-clausal request forms and vice versa. If our assumption is correct, learners' language 'aptitude' may be deeply involved in pragmalinguistic awareness, and this ought to be explored in future research.

Pragmalinguistic awareness, motivation, and proficiency

The correlational analysis revealed that, among the nine motivation subscales, three factors were related to the awareness of four of the six pragmalinguistic features in L2. Hence, we can definitely claim that motivation is a manifold cognitive construct, which is closely related to attention and awareness in processing L2 input, as contended by Crookes and Schmidt (1991). At the same time, the finding clearly indicates that different motivational profiles are concerned with the awareness of different aspects of pragmalinguistic features (Kasper and Rose 2002), and this implies a complex interplay between learners' motivational dispositions and their attentional targets at the pragmatic level.

Among the three motivation factors, 'intrinsic motivation' (Factor 2) was found to be greatly involved in the noticing of REQ-2 ('Is it possible?'), IDE, and, to a lesser degree, REQ-3 ('If you could VP'). The 'Is it possible?' and 'If you could VP' forms are among the bi-clausal request head acts that enable learners to attain sufficiently appropriate linguistic politeness at the sentence level. Likewise, the mastery of L2-specific idiomatic expressions assures learners of more natural patterns of communication, as deployed by target-language speakers. Intrinsically-motivated English learners are greatly interested in the English language and enjoy learning activities for gaining skills for more successful L2 communication. In view of this, one can assume that learners with this motivational orientation perceive these pragma-linguistic forms as ones that allow them to achieve their language learning goals successfully, resulting in greater attention to these features.

The relationships found between 'Attitudes to TL community' (Factor 5) and DMA and between 'Affiliative motive' (Factor 9) and IDE are also noteworthy here, although the associations are not so strong. The attitudinal (and thus emotional/affective) factor (Factor 5) is, to some degree, associated with an awareness of the discourse markers as the strategy relevant to the students' learning goals. Furthermore, a good teacher-student relationship (Factor 9) is assumed to be an important variable affecting students' attentional allocation in their efforts to obtain positive evaluations from their teachers.

All this suggests that learners' motivation as affected by factors of 'personal relevance with respect to their learning goals' and 'expectancy of success in L2 learning' is a crucial determinant of attentional allocation to pragmalinguistic features in L2 input (see Crookes and Schmidt 1991). As learners' perception of personal relevance and expectancy of success are the outcomes of their appraisal of stimuli under their *volitional* control, motivation as such should also be *conscious* motivation. However, the relationship between motivation and consciousness is admittedly a controversial issue (Dörnyei 2001).

According to Tomlin and Villa (1994), attention involves three subsystems—alertness, orientation, and detection—with detection as the most important function in attentional allocation, whereas alertness and orientation are not required for detection. As opposed to Tomlin and Villa, however, I would argue that both alertness and orientation are required for the detection of pragmalinguistic features. The current study demonstrates that motivation is related to learners' awareness of pragmalinguistic features. According to Tomlin and Villa, alertness is associated with motivation. Therefore, alertness appears to be essentially involved in detecting pragmalinguistic features. This simultaneously suggests that orientation, which mediates between alertness and detection, is also an essential mechanism for the detection of pragmalinguistic features. In processing pragmatic input, the three attentional subsystems may not really be separable but simultaneously activated (see Simard and Wong 2001 for a

similar view). As Schmidt (2001) argues, each of these cognitive mechanisms is inherently involved in the emergence of attention.

As regards the relationship with L2 proficiency, no significant correlation coefficients were obtained between the learners' pragmlinguistic awareness and their proficiency. Less proficient learners may or may not notice the target pragmlinguistic features to the same extent as more proficient learners. According to Bialystok's (1993) model, more proficient learners are able to execute selective attention to target pragmatic features more accurately than less proficient learners because of the former's automatized basic linguistic skills, which enable them to allocate more attentional resources for pragmatic targets. However, this was not the case in the context of the present study, suggesting that differences in linguistic proficiency (as measured by a standardized proficiency test) do not predict learners' levels of attention and awareness in L2 pragmatic input. Furthermore, Matsumura (2003) reports an indirect effect of proficiency on pragmatic competence via exposure. This also suggests that proficiency may not be a primary factor in determining learners' attention and awareness of L2 pragmlinguistic features.

In summary, this study suggests that motivation and proficiency operate on pragmlinguistic awareness independently rather than jointly, and that motivation plays a more crucial role than proficiency in learners' allocation of attention to pragmatic input.

CONCLUSION

This study evidenced that, when L2 input is provided implicitly, Japanese EFL learners are more likely to focus on discourse markers and idiomatic expressions than complex request head acts. As pointed out earlier, this is probably because Japanese EFL learners in instructional settings are less likely to learn colloquial English and have fewer opportunities to expose themselves to longer stretches of native-speaker discourse containing a large number of discourse markers. The 'input-poor' environment of the typical EFL college classroom may encourage students to look for such pragmlinguistic features when the opportunity arises, as was the case in the form-search task.

The current study also indicates that it is hard for Japanese EFL learners to notice bi-clausal complex request forms, in particular, the 'If you could VP (REQ-3)' form. This may be due to the lower saliency of these request forms in the treatment input, which seems to arise from the learners' (incorrect) assumption that they have already mastered the forms of L2 request realization.

It was also confirmed that pragmlinguistic awareness is associated with the learners' motivation, in particular, their intrinsic motivation, but not with their proficiency. This suggests that, if we could increase learners' motivation in one way or another, we might be able to increase the chances

that they notice pragmalinguistic features in implicit conditions. The non-significant correlation of awareness with proficiency suggests that motivation overrides proficiency in learners' attentional allocation (cf. Philp 2003). However, in order to conclusively claim this, we need to undertake further investigation into the relationships among pragmalinguistic awareness, motivation, and proficiency, particularly in second language contexts, where different results may be obtained.

Future research

In the current study, a retrospective forced-assessment format was adopted as the data eliciting method. This approach ensured that we could examine the learners' awareness of the target items, which the participants might not have referred to in unprestructured verbal protocols. However, the learners may have noticed some pragmalinguistic features that were not targets for assessment in the questionnaire. In view of this, concurrent verbal protocols should also be obtained from learners in future studies in order to obtain a more precise picture of their L2 pragmatic awareness. Furthermore, future research needs to examine the possible effects of modality on attention and awareness (Wong 2001). This study had the learners both listen to and read the transcripts; however, their main task was to read the role-play transcripts. If learners were asked to listen to the L2 input, we may be able to identify differences between reading and listening modalities in the threshold for detecting targets.

Apart from methodological issues, future research should also probe into the effects of the following ID variables on the noticing of pragmalinguistic features: (1) situation-specific or task motivation (Julkunen 2001; Dörnyei 2002; Dörnyei and Csizér 2002), unlike the current study that focused on the effect of 'trait motivation'; (2) willingness to communicate (McCroskey and Richmond 1991; MacIntyre *et al.* 1998; MacIntyre *et al.* 1999; MacIntyre *et al.* 2001); (3) emotion (MacIntyre 2002); (4) learning strategies and instructional preferences (Schmidt and Watanabe 2001); and (5) aptitude (Robinson 1995b, 1997, 2002c). The influence of learning contexts should also be explored (Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei 1998; Niezgoda and Röver 2001). In particular, the current study needs to be replicated in an ESL context, which would enable us to investigate the effect on L2 awareness of integrative motivation, the central construct of the socioeducational model (Gardner 1985, 2001). Most importantly, this study should be followed up by an examination of the relationship between learners' awareness of the target pragmalinguistic features and learning outcomes, and of the effects on both of motivation and proficiency. Such a study would be able to contribute to SLA theory construction in the framework of the Noticing Hypothesis.

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NOTES

- 1 In this study, the construct 'proficiency' is understood as knowledge and ability to use L2 grammar as it is measured by standardized proficiency tests.
- 2 ILP research has amply documented the effect of learners' proficiency on their pragmatic competence and performance in L2. While learners' poor performance in L2 often stems from their inadequate L2 linguistic proficiency (e.g. Blum-Kulka 1982; Trosborg 1987; Tanaka 1988; Beebe and Takahashi 1989a, 1989b; Olshtain and Cohen 1989; Maeshiba *et al.* 1996), it has been consistently found that high proficiency is not matched by native-level pragmatic performance (e.g. Takahashi and Beebe 1987; Takahashi 1996; see also Bardovi-Harlig 1999, 2001; Kasper and Rose 2002). To further our understanding of the construct of proficiency in the learning of L2 pragmalinguistic features, it would also be advisable to include proficiency as one of the ID variables to be investigated in research on attention and awareness.
- 3 The learners' listing of the expressions in this task was considered evidence of their attention to those expressions in the treatment, but there might have been other English expressions that the learners attended to but did not write down.
- 4 Mitigated-preparatory questions differ from mitigated-preparatory statements in terms of indirectness. Following Takahashi (1987), degrees of indirectness are determined based on the extent to which the request form allows a requestee to make an excuse for not complying with the request. With a preparatory question, a requestee may not be able to disregard the requester entirely because the former is expected to give some response to the latter due to its 'interrogative' form. Thus, a preparatory question is less indirect than a preparatory statement (in a declarative form). Accordingly, all bi-clausal questions in this study are categorized as 'mitigated-preparatory questions'.
- 5 This particular test was a pilot version. It is reported that a correlation coefficient of .787 was obtained between TOEFL-ITP and G-TELP (Sugimori 1998).
- 6 In this study, a pre-test was not administered to check the participants' knowledge of L2 request realization. Because the participants in this study had similar English educational backgrounds to those in the form-search condition in Takahashi (2001), it was judged that they are also most likely to use mono-clausal request forms such as 'Will/Would you VP?'
- 7 Since the learners in the form-search condition in Takahashi (2001) simply commented that the native speakers of English in the role-plays very often used 'well', 'you know', and 'maybe' (i.e. DMA), I could not identify which

specific cases of such words or phrases in the role-play transcripts they were referring to. Hence, in the Awareness Retrospection Questionnaire, I elicited the participants' response to discourse markers in a statement such as, 'The

native English speakers in these conversations frequently use "well" while speaking' (see Appendix D). Accordingly, the target words or phrases were not underlined in the transcripts.

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