Wrongful Moves in Unfamiliar Meaning Spaces: Gesture Usage and Implications for Cross-Cultural Gestural-Pragmatic Failure

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Abstract

Abstract: Gestural expression whether accompanied by speech or not, is fundamental to human interaction. We are continuously enacting meaning (Zeuschner, 1997). These meanings are sieved through the cultural landscapes of the users who use them, within a shared cultural-speech community, without much disruption. Conversely, in cross-cultural and inter-cultural interactions, a much greater likelihood exists for pragmatic "failure"; that is an interlocutor misinterprets the intended pragmatic force of an utterance resulting in potentially unfulfilled speaking objectives. This paper considers this situation from the perspective of gesture, henceforth, referred to as *gestural failure* [this author] focusing in on specific, culture-bound gestures in a Japanese L1 context, which can be problematic in the L2 (English). As a result, negative consequences arising from non-verbal, culturally-imbued "sign-posts" can occur if not otherwise noticed and consciously applied (Schmidt, 1993). Therefore, a rich array of interactive, and "real world" cross-cultural and intercultural experiences need to be provided, that take into consideration opportunities existing in Japan, for Japanese L2 learners to draw their attention to the importance of gestures and the pragmatic weight they can carry, outside their own cultural scope. By doing so, the broader gains can not only co-compliment pragmatic competence development but also intercultural and cross-cultural competence.

Keywords: cross-cultural competence, intercultural competence, pragmatic (i.e.gestural) failure, pragmatic competence; gestural competence; pragmatic transfer; situational-based utterances (S.B.Us)

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"You can't not communicate" (Zeuschner, 1997, p. 86)

Picture the following EFL conversational situations in Japan. In a small group adult conversation class at least one male student sits with his arms crossed whether speaking or not during much of the lesson. In another half-lesson, half casual conversation scenario at a coffee shop, the same gesture is exhibited in a one-to-one encounter. Additionally, the interlocutor removes their watch and puts it on the table.

Back in another classroom, some students can be seen doing pen-twirling actions repeatedly while otherwise seeming to pay attention. When one of them is called upon they raise their finger to their nose and say "me?" In another instance, a serious topic dealing with Japan's policy towards accepting more foreign refugees mostly produces silence and embarrassed smiles, nervous laughter or perhaps a strained sounding cough or two.

These are just a handful of examples of how gestures as well as the mannerisms, which may accompany them, may not be entirely understood (i.e. misunderstood) or desired by those outside the learners own cultural milieu. Such occurrences can 'throw off' or adversely affect otherwise meaningful and positive communicative interaction, whereby chasms between cultural values and assumptions are inevitable; especially in an ESL environment of widely disparate cultural-linguistic communities (Hinkel, 2014). Conversely, such episodes could be considered acceptable or at worst unsophisticated yet mostly tolerated (Brosnahan, 1990) in a user's own speech community; excluding the most severe social violations. It would therefore naturally seem that in a Japanese cultural context, latitude for incorporating what might appear to be misuse of non-verbalized communication would be greater due to its "fit" into the cultural-linguistic community space it arises from. However outside Japan and its classrooms, a greater likelihood for misconstrued messages might occur. In such cases, not only communication could be affected. More intangible, yet equally important, factors such as rapport building and even empathy from the host language community, could suffer from similar disadvantages and serious setbacks. With such a fundamentally overarching realization, the stakes for building not only *pragmatic competence*, here defined by Ellis (2008) as both the knowledge base used by both listeners and speakers "to engage in communication" as well as how "speech acts are successfully performed"(p.975) but also *intercultural* and *cross-cultural competence*, (that is, having the abilities and skills (i.e. socio-cultural as well as pragmatic knowledge base) to interact appropriately with members of different speech communities regardless of the

confluence of cultures), including the gestural knowledge that accompanies it, would therefore seem high.

In view of this assessment, the centrality of non-verbal communication upon how we interact, seems indisputable. As evidenced earlier, this role as "meaning enhancer" becomes even more tenuous in cross-cultural and intercultural encounters. From this awareness, several key areas of gesture will be focused upon that will hopefully taper into more specific discussion of its importance for L2 learners, as part of a skill area for developing pragmatic competence. In the first section, a general overview of gestural types and some related claims will be discussed. Next will follow some considerations of various theoretical positions and concurrent research both from a wholly gestural (i.e. "stand-alone") stance (Gullberg, 1998, 2010; Holler, Kelly, Hagoort & Ozyurek, 2012; Hoshino, 2013; Kendon, 2000; Kita, 2000; LeBaron & Streeck, 2000; MacNeill, 1992, 2000; Stam & Ishino, 2011) and a more pragmatically oriented one, dealing with issues such as implications between consciousness and pragmatic awareness (Schmidt, 1993; Baars, 1983), *situational based utterances* (henceforth SBUs) framed around pragmatic acts (Kecskes, 2010; 2014) and suggestions of unsuccessful *pragmatic transfer* (Beebe & Takahashi, 1987) that could conceivably impact gestural usage (Stam, 2006) more broadly affecting successful communication. Continuing on in the third section, some distinct examples of Japanese gestural behavior that seem "locked into" a Japanese speech community, and a few others that are not, will be used to try and demonstrate how 'transfer-like qualities' (Kecskes, 2014) might lead to occurrences of pragmatic failure in cross-cultural/intercultural settings (Charlebois, 2003). The final section will provide further thought for classroom learning and pedagogical implications, as well as suggested ideas for teaching, with room for some concluding remarks and suggestions. It is hoped that by following such suggestions, gestural usage could be given more prominence in EFL/ESL classroom instruction. Ultimately making learners more aware of the importance of gestural impact as it applies to pragmatic socio-cultural aspects, both cross-culturally and inter-culturally, (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan and Reynolds, 1991; Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003; Hinkel, 2014; Özüorçun, 2013; Thomas, 1983; Thornbury, 2005, 2013) could also serve to more actively and perhaps effectively draw them into more enriching communicative interaction.

Background of Relevant Gestures

Gestures have been defined in numerous ways which in all their semantic graduations will not be analyzed here in depth. (For a more concise and detailed description, the reader is advised to refer to Gullberg, 1998; Kendon, 1988; McNeill, 1992). However generally speaking, they involve bodily movement whether by the hands, arms, feet, legs, facial extremities or overall body posture. They can be non-verbal or accompany speech. There is also varying forms of gestures, ranging from gesticulation (with no conventionalism, but speech attributable) to highly conventional (and speech attributable) such as sign language. This was put into illustrative form most famously by Kendon (1988) and subsequently coined as *Kendon's continuum* (McNeill, 1992, p.37). Thornbury (2013) points out that along this continuum, it is possible to make a key distinction between what constitutes substitution for speech versus enhances speech.

Types of Gesture

McNeill (1992) mentions *iconic* gestures that share semantic qualities with speech as well as *metaphoric gestures;* whereby more abstract concepts rather than concrete ones are depicted. There are also *beats* that utilize two movements, whereas a majority of gestures rely on three, pointing or *deictics* and lastly, *pantomime* and *emblems*. (The latter are particularly useful to teach and will be singled out in further detail). Certainly, this is only a very basic definition because manual movement is not always connected to language meaning, such as rubbing one's eye or scratching. Therefore, what would seem more important is that they are backed by communicative intent to the concurrent speech act (Gullberg, 1998).

As part of becoming "gesture smart" in any cross-cultural setting, emblems should be well understood by learners. Before going further though, a distinction should first be made between emblems and pantomime. Both share the commonality to essentially act out and represent an entire concept and replace speech altogether. Consequently, the gestures presented are still entirely meaningful and in the case of emblems, are often strongly culturally-referenced, or "culturally codified" (Stam & Ishino, 2011, p.4). However, mime is often a much more conscious effort done as part of artistic performances for example. Gullberg (1998) tells us that emblems on the other hand are highly conventionalized, often greatly lexical in meaning, and clearly

formed. This means emblems relevant to the TL should be taught. For learners, their relatively small number among gestural usage means acquisition is feasible (Thornbury, 2013), whereas most gestures do not easily conform to instruction due to their spontaneity and unconventionality. It is also for this reason that specific cultural knowledge would be most advantageous for learners to be aware of (McNeill, 1992) and should be highlighted as part of any pragmatic/socio-cultural awareness regime.

Some Speech-Gestural Relationship Claims

In addition to defining gestures, there have also emerged some very interesting proposals as to the relationship existing between gesture formation and speech. McNeill (1992) has claimed that gestures are far from being random movements that act on their own. Kendon (2000) has echoed similar notions calling the relationship between speech as being "co-expressive" and "composed together as components of a single overall plan"(p.60). Perhaps most daringly, in contrast to proponents of the McNeill/Kendon position, has been LeBaron & Streeck's (2000) claim that gestures are not mind-centered (i.e.cognitive-centered speech), but rather arise from the kinesthetic (i.e.tactile) and practical experiences that speakers naturally form as they work their way through "hands-on" processes. In other words, by virtue of these experiences, our hands "pick up" these natural embodiments of represented actions. Therefore, it would, as McNeill (1992) mentions, seem that having the know how to read them could reveal their rich meanings that complement those of spoken language. Taking this into account, guiding learners towards more awareness of gestural impact could help offset some potential misunderstandings that can often occur in intercultural and cross-cultural encounters.

Various Gestural Research Conducted to Date

General

Interest in gestural influences upon speech, in both L1 speaker communities as well as cross-cultural communication issues, has been looked at for some time. Perhaps one of the most famous early pioneers of gestural research in modern times has been David Efron. In the early 1940's, he examined the gestural usage of Jewish and Italian communities in New York to try and determine how much of their gestures

were influenced by L1 and L2 environments, or ethnicity. In the end, he distinguished and grouped four main gestures: batons, pictographs, ideographs and emblems as well as compared assimilated and less assimilated groups and found that those who were more assimilated displayed less L1 gestural behavior (Tozzer, 1942, pp.715-716). In more recent decades, seminal research has been done by David McNeill and Adam Kendon, both of whom have written extensively, about themes including language and thought and gestures and language origins, among others. This has led more recently to a concurrently paralleled and robustly focused interest upon pragmatics and sociolinguistic-cultural related issues affecting ESL/EFL education, illustrating the exciting and still unfolding importance, that gestures are proving to have on how well we communicate both cross-culturally and intra-culturally. However, by first briefly touching upon several more general-oriented gestural studies, further implications of the importance of gesture in establishing one as either pragmatically competent or not in the L2 can hopefully be drawn attention to. In turn, this will set the stage for several ensuing co-complementary pragmatic-oriented studies.

The effect of numerous studies looking at specific gestural behaviors and assessing their potential impact over communication, seems to return back to the integral conception of the speech-gesture-unit (McNeill, 1992) which is "assumed to be an integral unit" (Stam & Ishino, 2011, p.8). Moreover, within such a broad range of inquiry, one can find issues from the effect of gaze direction upon comprehension in co-speech encounters and the facilitating role of iconic gestures (Holler et al., 2012) to gesture effects and their impact upon self-repair attempts (Hoshino, 2013).

This view of gestures and language belonging to the same underlying system has essentially been upheld to varying degrees by more recent research. Gullberg (2010) has examined the connection of gesture to SLA and bilingualism, with an interest towards knowledge and its gestural representations as a language product, as well as their deployment in real time and how they might be altered during acquisition. A similar interest has been to try and discover what characterizes gestures in different languages and how they can be interpreted. More recently, it has been shown how gestural usage will be affected differently by essentially the same lexical item (2015). Thus, this helps to illustrate the "language specificity of representational gestures" (Kita, 2000, p.167) which has been demonstrated in similar work by Kita and others.

Pragmatic

As has been brought up previously, what seems to be a valid co-joining of pragmatics and gesture will now selectively consider further possible influences on gestural usage in L2 contexts, such as consciousness (Schmidt, 1993; Baars, 1983) formulaic extension to situational usage (Kecskes, 2010, 2014), and how either "successful" verses "failed" (oral) transferal effects might bear upon gesture usage and learner's acquisitionary grappling of the L2 (Beebe & Takahashi, 1987; Stam, 2006) either in the classroom (Charlebois, 2003) or as a cross-cultural issue (Thomas,1983). Ultimately, the need then arises for providing instruction in order to build up pragmatic (i.e. gestural) competence (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003; Hinkel, 2014; Johnson & Rinvolucri, 2010; Thornbury, 2005, 2013) or provide certain advantages for learners to achieve it.

Pragmatic Implications for Consciousness

The ability to become atuned to one's communicative landscape seems to require a willingness to also notice and this includes manners of usage. Conversely, "over-noticing"could potentially lead to overgeneralization of pragmatic cues (in this case gestural) and result in their less effective utilization by learners. Several interesting observations illustrate these two trajectories. In Schmidt (1993), the question arises if pragmatic knowledge (i.e. competence), is gained consciously or not. He acknowledges that we often can not go back and consider why we may or may not have inferred something. As a result, even stimuli readily available will sometimes not become part of our conscious knowledge if not noticed. When applied to pragmatics, Schmidt has said about his own language learning experiences that "each case of successful learning also involved more than just noticing the forms used, but also an application of their functional meaning" (p.31). This might very well carry over to gestures as well and will be brought up again in possible implications for pedagogy and suggestion activities. Baars (1983) took a more cognitive-informed position with consciousness and though he did not take pragmatics specifically into consideration, there are certain interesting parallels with Schmidt concerning noticing verses not. However, his reasoning for stimuli going unnoticed was due to non-incorporation into what "has been called a global data base" or something having "a striking resemblance to 'working memory' " (p.42). Conversely, when information was widely available to all neural processors, noticeability occurred. The potential downside

from this could also result in informational redundancy, if experienced repeatedly, causing undefined (i.e. irrelevant) stimuli to possibly go unnoticed. Again, there could be some interesting claims drawn to Baars ideas, which might help to provide another point of reference, for viewing a possible trajectory between consciousness (i.e. noticing) and gestural acquisition for L2 learners.

SBUs

Situational influence bears what would seem to be a clear impact over gestural usage. Therefore, it would seem reasonable to posit a possible relationship to SBUs, which are "highly conventionalized, prefabricated pragmatic units" (Kecskes, 2010, p.2891) and are "tied to particular social events and situations" (Kecskes, 2014, p.71). As their name implies, they are lexical-oriented with a pragmatic function. Although this author is not aware of any direct studies linking SBUs to gesture, might there perhaps also just as easily exist the possibility of a gestural co-compliment to SBUs? That is, are there gestures which arise under the same conditions (i.e. formulaic patternings)? Since "formulaic language use makes language use native-like" (p 71), it might therefore seem to warrant more scrutiny to closely examine and discover what type of gesture might parallel such highly ritualized speech conventions.

Effects of Transfer

Studies concerning the effects of pragmatic transfer (or the influence of L1 pragmatic know leage upon the L2) involving verbal interaction have been relatively numerous, though they will not be examined in much depth here. However, at least one of them, Beebe & Takahashi (1987) has been singled out due to interesting questions raised towards a broader implication of gestural-pragmatic failure. In their study, higher level Japanese learners exhibited more transfer effects than lower level learners. That is, having more overall L2 knowledge became more of a detriment than enhancer. This suggests learners with more L2 knowledge might fare a greater likelihood for pragmatic failure than those with less. One wonders if this same "constraint by resources" might impact gestural flexibility as well? In another case, involving possible effects of gestural transfer, Stam (2006) looked at how gesture relates to SLA in order to try and get a more concise picture of "learners' thought processes in action" (p.3). Using Slobin's (1987) *thinking for speaking hypothesis* as a chief

influence, (which suggests languages are not learned only by adhering to rules and their constraints, but also by the unique imposition languages bear upon their users' meanings, further influencing our thinking for speaking), she examined gesture usage between monolingual Spanish and English speakers, as well of those of English learners, and found gestural manifestations of both the L1 and L2 in their speech. From this undertaking, Stam surmised gesture suggested a possible way of glimpsing learners' acquisition processes as reflected by their thinking processes. Interestingly, Ellis (2008) has referred to the same phenomenon as "gesture interlanguage" (p.378). With this in mind, might it be equally possible to try and get closer to understanding where L1 and L2 visible (gestural) communication crosshatches itself in failed pragmatic attempts arising from L1 culturally-imbued, thinking-for-speaking processes? Thus, perhaps pragmatic acquisition including gestural aspects might be better tracked and scrutinized much as their counterparts involving lexical, phonological and syntactical development, have been.

Gesture as Pragmatic Failure

Some Japanese Non-Verbal Examples and Analysis

In the beginning of this paper, a typical classroom scenario that can be found playing itself out in countless classrooms across Japan, illustrated various non-verbal communication examples and their accompanying mannerisms. Looking back briefly again to see how they might loop back to some previously mentioned theoretical concerns is important for developing broader aims of: (a) demonstrating the importance of *gestural competence* (this author) or an ability to gauge appropriateness of gestural usage from contextual cues vis-á-vis the sociocultural background they occur in and (b) the impact it might have upon social interaction, to learners as both communicative enhancer and facilitator by (c) subsequently, giving more robust consideration and recognition to gestural competence as a subset skill area within pragmatic competence, needs encouragement and to be drawn attention to when considering pragmatic aspects for instruction. To not do so otherwise, would seem to have the potential for setting up learners for situations whereby "not understanding the socio-cultural expectations can negatively impact learners' ability to function in an L2 community" (Hinkel, 2014, p.3). In the coming examples, some more recognizable gestures and other non-verbal behaviors occasionally encountered both inside and

outside Japanese classrooms will be assessed for possible detrimental effects on communicative interaction if misappropriated in an L2 context. By doing so, this hopefully might result in ideas for the creation of classroom "contingency plans" for helping learners to recognize and better avoid issues of gestural failure.

As an immediate disclaimer, the five examples chosen have been ranked by their assumed "violation severity" (one being least and five being most) in non-Japanese settings (i.e. North American) from least likely to provoke serious repercussions to most likely. They are as follows:

1) **Pointing towards one's face (particularly nose) to confirm oneself as the recipient of information.** This deictic gesture seems to occur anywhere as it is commonly part of any sort of conversation. It is not bound to cause any serious problems cross-culturally and when accompanied by "me?" bears little chance of being misunderstood. What then might be cause for concern? In this instance, the biggest drawback might be bemusement and/or confusion on the part of a NS/NNS of English towards what would seem to be a "self-identity" issue. Taken in a more serious context, it could appear as if the individual were perhaps not taking things seriously enough. In certain formal situations (i.e. at a job interview), this could severely backfire. Moreover, with the wrong non-Japanese NS/NNS interviewer, the possible feeling of being "played for a fool" might arise if overused, and our learners could lose both credibility and chances for a job.

2) **"Hands up" gesture** is an emblem most often seen by this author in the classroom, but it is suspected that it might arise whenever perceived or actual intervention occurs. Essentially, it also could be viewed as a "give up" or ceding of authority sign. Typically it might come up while leaning over a student's desk to place something in front of them, write on a paper and so forth. Similar to nose pointing, the overall effect towards pragmatic failure in a classroom is not severe and might result more in amused reactions or perhaps mental notes of "why are you doing that?" For teachers, it might also offer a chance to reassess student confidence or intrinsic motivation. The more serious side of this would be a failure to understand it as a command for example, outside the classroom, where it needs to be obeyed in certain situations rather than its actual usage.

3) **Putting one's watch on the table or desk** As both a metaphoric (?) gesture and mannerism, it seems harmless enough; a widespread, practical phenomena seemingly tolerated in Japanese classrooms by instructors in classrooms without clocks. However, in a cross-cultural setting, the interpretation might be less

sympathetic towards what could instead seem like impatience and boredom. A professor or interviewer or even a newly made friend might think they are being told to "get on with it" because "my time is precious." A case in point outside the classroom: While meeting an acquaintance at a coffee shop in Japan, for what was meant to be half lesson, half casual conversation, their watch surprisingly came out and stayed upon the table until we parted. Imagine the effect if it were done in an actual L2 environment in such otherwise casual settings. So this begs to ask why? While this author has no clear answer, practical considerations aside, it might be worthwhile to include a closer examination of possible socio-cultural factors (i.e. chronomics; that is how a culture perceives time and expresses it non-verbally). Regardless of the reasoning, this would seem to be a non-verbal behavior (gesture + mannerism), that Japanese learners in certain L2 environments or cross-cultural encounters might be made mindful of.

4) **Folded arms across the chest** There are different positions for holding one's arms some higher, some lower. If arms are folded across a table, it might just seem a person is relaxing and neutral. Conversely, arms held higher across the chest tends to seem more defiant and perhaps give the impression of wanting to remain inaccessible. (While not specifically a fixture of Japanese culture, this variant has been noted somewhat interestingly in smaller English oral communication classes and more oftentimes amongst male learners than female). Nevertheless, while it is possible that arm crossing might simply serve as a "psychological protection(s) in moments of nervousness" (Brosnahan, 1990, p.85), how it is expressed could lead to an unintended negative impression in L2 cross-cultural settings.

5) **Giving the middle finger** There is no mistaking the generally insulting value of this emblem which seems broadly recognized. Despite this, it offers an interesting example of how an obviously powerful gesture does not always carry the same degree of semantic weight, cross-culturally. Consider the following example in a Japanese junior high school, observed by this author, whereby a PE teacher openly "flipped off" a student all seemingly in good banter, during the course of some animated exchanges. While it is difficult to provide with any certainty what would appear to be its more neutral usage in Japan, possible future research might draw attention to attitudinal differences towards issues as disparate as sexuality, for example. Despite this possibly interesting cultural backdrop, for our learners the need to address this potential misuse is paramount. To not do otherwise, could result in the severest forms of pragmatic failure (i.e. threatening situations including perhaps even bodily injury).

Teacher Gestural Usage

One final note worth mentioning for gestural examples in the Japanese context is those that the teacher may make. If non-Japanese, any culturally-based expectations regarding learning flow, rapport, and other classroom dynamics essential for a positive and productive learning experience could be affected. Kusanagi (2015) has pointed out the benefits of "teacher gesture" which teachers tend to use to help guide learners. She mentions that among other things, clarification, speech reinforcement, and speech redundancies can be lessened through their usage. Students and teachers can and do rely on gestures as mediational aids. Certainly learners should be actively encouraged and supported to try using some gestures for getting their point across more easily or carrying along a story better. On the other hand, if teachers are not aware or mindful of their own L1 gestures and mannerisms, students can also be left with negative impressions. Such examples include postural behavior. Traditionally, Japanese learners are not used to seeing teachers lean against furniture or sit on desks or tables or even walk around the classroom while lecturing (Brosnahan, 1990). Fortunately, the last example does not seem to be an issue anymore for most students in L2 courses.

Implications for Teaching and Some Possible Activity Suggestions

From the previous section, it was shown how certain selected gestures that feature commonly in Japanese classrooms, as well as daily life, could set learners up for what this author introduced in the beginning as gestural failure and thus, drawn into the deeper chasms of pragmatic failure. Unquestionably, this is a situation which teachers should try and prepare their students for. However to do so, requires some foresight and perhaps a multiple approach for trying to work out what cross-cultural issues might be at stake. Initially, it would seem that it might be necessary to try and assess what might produce gestural-pragmatic failure. Culture, being as complex as it is, connects individuals deeply whether visibly or not. As teachers we often do not realize the broader impact that our own cultural assumptions and values make upon the classroom any more than our learners do (Hinkel, 2014). As a result, an unceasing wash of differing cultural values, norms, and ideas are a regular and dynamic part of every classroom. This means that any attempts to allow in understanding and empathy are also important for making a more "open" classroom.

Learning about how others live and more importantly think about life should be

a logical place to start for any L2 course. Nevertheless, this may not be as simple as it might seem, particularly in an EFL learning environment, where opportunities and resources for creating the same volume and dynamically stimulating range of authenticity found in many ESL settings may be lacking in comparison. How would be the best way to address this? Without meaning to entertain an idealistic chimera more than necessary, a productive first step might involve ample consciousness raising (CR) activities that allow learners to actively explore outside the classroom. This might entail creating heightened opportunities for students to interact with speakers outside their own language community. Perhaps somewhat ironically, our learners in Japan might actually benefit by experiencing "communication breakdowns" on familiar territory. From this, broader rewards towards putting them more closely in touch with those scattered pockets of NS/NNS and the L2 being learned, could arise.

By learning firsthand how gestural misinterpretation is an illustration of not being familiar with issues of cross-cultural diversity (Özüorçun, 2013) and the complexities it involves, new ways of thinking might in turn also open our students up towards potentially gaining more intercultural competence. Among other things, this means gaining more awareness and familiarity with not only other cultural norms and beliefs but also their own. By doing so, cultural stereotypes might be re-assessed and empathy-building towards others outside one's own cultural group could occur more (Johnson & Rinvolucri , 2010). This seems to meld well with several ideas suggested by Bardovi-Harlig et al. (1991) aimed at CR for pragmatic competence (though verbal communication is assumed, non-verbal could also be conceivably included), and a strive towards authenticity. In the first instance, a surprise "guest" enters the classroom, whereby students witness how their teacher might happen to interact (i.e.model) using the appropriate pragmatic features of the interactional situation. Another focuses on data collection of authentic TL outside the classroom. Thornbury (2005) suggests having learners venture out on planned outings, one successful and the other not (p.4). Extending this to a gestural "fact-finding mission," (this author), another option might be having learners interview non-Japanese in Japan perhaps noting gesture usage cross-culturally and how it might aid or inhibit communicative interaction of the participants. Further enhancement might come from trying to interview communities who are not necessarily on the radar of many of our students when foreigners are thought of : (i.e. Myanmarese, Brazilian-Japanese, residents of lesser known South East Asian countries, various individuals from African nations and so forth. Besides creating a very eye-opening and valuable learning experience, the CR and noticing

activities promoted could also provide added benefits towards encouraging more intercultural competence development as well as pragmatic competence supplementing classroom pragmatic instruction (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998). Naturally, all such activities would require careful planning and consideration of learner needs and aims. Thornbury (2005) feels that we should apply any cultural awareness-raising tactfully, as it can be risky to do or even irrelevant to do so otherwise.

Learners need chances to become more attuned to the importance of non-verbal communication and how it affects their pragmatic skills to manage a number of different social situations. As it has been mentioned increasing pragmatic awareness is one of the key ways to do this. Charlebois (2003) tried to pin point what might cause cross-cultural pragmatic failure and has advocated better teaching of pragmatic competence in Japanese classrooms. While he mentioned "pragmatic L1 based transfer to L2 usage, inadequate pragmatic knowledge and different realizations of speech acts cross-culturally" (pp.36-40) as three main reasons, which are certainly reasonable, the full situation might not be as straightforward. If we consider what Kecskes (2014) tells us "'Transfer' may not exactly be the right term to describe what takes place in the bi-and multilingual mind" (pp.77-78). In actuality, cultural values and norms borrowed from the L1 may in fact cause varying disparities of errors in lower level learners and some occasionally unnaturally composed (i.e. "out-of-tune") constructions at higher levels (i.e.Beebee & Takahashi).

Conclusion

As Hinkel (2014) mentions "not understanding the socio-cultural expectations can negatively impact learners ability to function in an L2 community"(p.3). In this paper, a number of issues have been looked at which cross both boundaries of pragmatic and gestural competence. What has been termed failure can occur in each area when socio-cultural aspects of the L2 are not known or adhered to. Factors such as the influence of consciousness, to help with noticing non-verbal language of possible importance, and the prospective usefulness SBUs might offer learners to memorize not only formulaic speech segments, but also those gestures that might more recognizably accompany them, might be worthwhile for additional study and application. Lastly, as teachers, we need to give our learners the opportunities to "test out the culture" in safe and comfortable ways. With this also comes a responsibility for equipping them with the knowledge they need for making informed choices about how to self-monitor

and be attentive to aspects of their own non-verbal language in other socio-cultural environments, which might otherwise be misunderstood or cause offense. Subsequently, if allowed enough latitude as Thomas (1983) believes, learners can even "flout pragmatic conventions" (p.110) just as NS do, again with the realization of what they are doing, or in other words, have control of the meanings they are making. Thus we must attend to our own body language in our learners' meaning-spaces too. In the end, what we choose to show whether with words or not, creates meaning, and with that, the choice to be empowered or disempowered.

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